> categories were dead and useless: "The idea of a 'left' has outlived its historical time and needs to be decently buried, along with the false conservatism that merely clothes an older liberal tradition in conservative rhetoric."

Finney was what Norman Mailer described as a "left conservative"—someone who "thinks in the style of Marx in order to attain certain values suggested by Burke." That is, a left conservative accepts Marx's insight that Western liberalism (subjective individualism and centralized corporate-state control) is incompatible with the maintenance of "family, home, faith, hard work, duty, allegiance."

Mailer also knew that Western liberalism has too often gone under the auspices of "flag conservatism" in American political history. People who want "family" and "loyalty" and "duty" to be pious puffs of smoke. Good for a few votes in flyover country and then quick! hoist up the no-social-judgment zone around "private" consumptive choice.

Finney and the left conservative tradition were not really something new in American history.

But Finney and the left conservative tradition were not really something new in American history (though the Ministry of Consensus Enforcement has effectively chiseled the alternative tradition from American monuments and has cast its heroes down the memory hole). Finney directly associated herself with the prairie populists of the Nineteenth century, who in turn were direct political descendants of the Anti-Federalists and the Spirit of '76.

While the Anti-Federalists lost the constitutional debate to the centralizers, their principles endured in the emergence of the old Republican Party under Thomas Jefferson (not to be confused with Lincoln's Republicans). The Jeffersonians advocated for the popular, decentralized, and rural rights of yeoman over and against the aristocratic, citified and industrializing prerogatives of the Federalists.

> But populism and left conservatism has always had its own progressive temptation—the urge to combat abuses of state power by giving the government even more power. The populists tried this in the early Twentieth century when they gave the federal government the power to tax income and Finney also illustrates this danger.

After balancing the state budget and holding the line on general fund spending, Finney urged other elements of government to do the same. She was furious when school districts ignored her and kept right on spending. In what she called "unconscionable," the school districts went on what she called a "spending spree" which "made a mockery of efforts to cut spending and live within our means."

Finney railed that "this irresponsible action by Kansas school districts is nothing more than a concentrated attempt to blackmail the State of Kansas into raising state taxes to pour more aid into schools. ... This is an outrage!" (GOP legislators, are you taking notes?)

But after reaming public schools, this left conservative Democrat gave in to the fateful temptation: "It is time to take a hard look at the suggestion of a Shawnee County District Judge that school district monies are state resources and perhaps warrant more vigorous state oversight or control." Oops.

Finney's statement amounts, when viewed in light of the recent Kansas Supreme Court mandated school finance debacle, to a blackly ironic monument to the law of unintended consequences. The lesson remains that power corrupts, and distributing that power as widely

as possible is the only remotely satisfying response. How conservatives today wish for Finney's initiative and referendum to overthrow the growth of state power in our courts, at Cedar Crest, and in the statehouse!

How conservatives today wish for Finney's initiative and referendum to overthrow the growth of state power in our courts, at Cedar Crest, and in the statehouse!

The question ripe for asking, then, is where are Kansas' left conservatives today? I would take a slew of left conservatives with "Ds" after their names over today's rotten stew of putative "conservatives" who spend like there is no tomorrow; cow-tow to courts and other power elites; have become distracted from their duty by the lame preferments of the dome; and don't have a fraction of the belly-fire displayed by Dame Finney.

Of course the left liberalism of Sebelius and her ilk are as far from Finney's left conservatism as can be. Pox on both their houses.

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Liberty Opinion: 11 September 2008

Curtains up on the Kansas Commission on Judicial Performance, a Topeka parody of a democracy where only the lawyers vote. Caleb Stegall reviews the passing charade.

Performance artists

For years, petty dictators in banana republics have hidden behind the farce of popular sovereignty. Saddam Hussein was repeatedly elected President of Iraq with 100% of the vote. Cubans kept Fidel Castro in power for over fifty years on the strength of "free elections." So too, various sub-Saharan potentates regularly follow military coups with stunning electoral successes. Who can argue with the will of the people?

Still, not many in western democracies take these results seriously. As one British official put it after Iraq's 2002 elections: "You can't have free elections when the electorate goes to the polls in the knowledge that they have only one candidate and the penalty for slandering that sole candidate is to

have one's tongue cut out." Indeed.

Enter the Kansas Commission on Judicial Performance, a group established by the Kansas Legislature in 2006 to "grade" our judges and tell Kansans—sorry, "recommend"—whether they ought to he retained. The Commission, like everything else concerning our third hranch of state government, is in the vice-like control of the Kansas Bar, an exclusive club of Kansans whose only qualification (such as it is) for rule is having passed the har exam.

Most Kansas judges (and all appellate judges in the state) are selected by the Bar and then required to stand for regular "retention" election. During these elections, the judge's name is the only one to appear on the ballot, with the voter ahle to either check "yes" or "no" to the question: "Shall this judge he retained?" Not surprisingly, judges are systematically and universally retained by huge margins (see, e.g., Iraq, above).

In recent years, some friends of liberty have become concerned with the clear unaccountability of the judiciary to the people. These stalwarts of democracy have advocated various judicial reform measures intended to wrest control of the judiciary away from the lawyers and place it back with the people. To calm these concerns, the Commission on Judicial Performance was created to evaluate judges; provide voters with allegedly "objective" performance ratings; and give a recommendation on how to vote.

Lost in all of the newspaper reports on the Commission's "recommendations" is the astonishing fact that our government is now telling us how to vote.

Far from providing greater citizen control over the judiciary, however, the Commission actually cements the status quo. By giving the Bar a monopoly on the right and ability to render decisions on who is or is not fit to hold public judicial office, the Legislature has entirely abdicated its responsibility to maintain a republican form of government.

Lost in all of the newspaper reports on the Commission's recent "recommendations" is the astonishing fact that our government is now telling us how to vote. This simple truth should offend and outrage all freedom loving small-d democrats and small-r republicans in our great state.

Digging into the inner workings of the Commission provides cause for deepening alarm. For example, a significant portion of the judicial evaluation is based on the judge's "legal ahility" which includes whether the judge uses his "discretion to reach a fair decision." It is simply untenahle to argue that

such standards can be measured in any "objective" fashion.

Similarly, a large component of the evaluation of district court judges is the opinion of appellate court judges. Now, apparently, in addition to the constitutional authority to overrule a lower court, our higher courts have been given the power to determine which district court judges are suitable for office.

Still more troubling is the rule adopted by the Commission that: "All judges are expected to cooperate with the efforts of the Commission to evaluate their performance. Failure or refusal of a judge to cooperate may be considered by the Commission in its evaluation." Resistance is futile! O for one judicial hero of the people who would stand up to this blatantly anti-democratic power-grab and tell the Commission and its "performance review" to go to hell, come what may.

Finally, the astute observer will note that the Commission is given tremendous power to disseminate its "recommendation," including taking out tax-payer funded paid advertisements. Pity the poor judge who gets on the wrong side of this Commission.

This is not a partisan point. The consolidation of power in the hands of the few is the enemy of any free society, especially when it occurs under the guise of giving more power to the people.

The picture painted by all of this ought to deeply trouble every engaged citizen of the state. This is not a partisan point. The consolidation of power in the hands of the few is the enemy of any free society, especially when it occurs under the guise of giving more power to the people. Make no mistake, the Commission is a powerful tool for further centralization of judicial power in the hands of an unelected few and it is a frightening deterrent to anyone who might harbor a dissenting view. It's true, no tongues will be cut out, but bucking the system will now, more than ever, be considered an act of professional suicide, for judges and lawyers alike.

And, in fact, the system will generate exactly what it is intended to generate. A "unanimous" (or near unanimous) government hiding behind the fiction of being "freely elected" by an "educated and informed" public. As Castro's dissidents can tell you, if this is being educated, please let me be ignorant and free!

The sacred cow of "judicial independence" is the rejoinder so often proffered by defenders of our current system. And it's true, judicial independence from the other branches of government is vital to our system of a divided government of checks and balances.

We have now entered a period of judicial captivity, not to another branch of government, but to a wholly unelected group of shadow rulers.

But the judiciary was never intended to be independent of the people. A system of selection and retention controlled by the Kansas Bar isn't judicial independence but its opposite—for we have now entered a period of judicial captivity, not to another branch of government, which would be bad enough, but to a wholly unelected group of shadow rulers.

The judiciary, like the rest of our government, legitimately draws its power from only one source—the people. And until that fact is properly recognized and structurally accounted for either through competitive direct elections or through unfettered executive nomination and legislative consent with life tenure (the Federal system), the true democrat has only one option at the polls: make your protest heard and vote against the Commission's recommendation.

Kansas Liberty columnist Caleb Stegall is a lawyer and writer in Perry, Kansas. His book on the history of prairie populism in Kansas is forthcoming from ISI Books in 2009.

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The Week in Review

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Liberty Opinion: 02 October 2008

The bailout of Wall Street is the triumph of the wealthy establishment, right and left, over what we used to call the 'working class.' Today, it's called the middle class and it includes most Americans. Caleb Stegall finds a lesson—and a hero—in Kansas' past.

Sockless Jerry rides again

In 1890, the brand-new Kansas People's Party (later to become the national Populist Party) routed the Republican state establishment in the fall elections, winning control of both the state government and the state's congressional delegation.

The race that best typified the mood of the day was the U.S. House contest pitting People's Party candidate Jerry Simpson, the marshal of Medicine Lodge and a former Greenbacker, against Colonel James R. Hallowell, coifed and cosseted member of the GOP elite.

Hallowell, a former legislator, was so respected that, without irony, he went by the name "Prince Hal." During one encounter, Simpson mocked Hallowell's fine clothes and silk stockings, to which Prince Hal wrinkled his nose and said silk was preferable to dirty men who wore no socks at all.

From that point forward Simpson campaigned as "Sockless Jerry," spinning his lack of hosiery into the elusive political gold of authenticity.

The *Topeka Capital Journal* described the race as one pitting sober adults against a childish mob. "The opposing candidates are opposites in every way. Colonel Hallowell is a brilliant, experienced and competent man who would add strength to the Kansas delegation; Jerry Simpson is an ignorant, inexperienced lunkhead ... who would disgrace the state in congress; scarcely able to read and write, unacquainted with public affairs, without experience as a legislator, raw, boorish, [and] fanatical with the fanaticism of sheer ignorance."

Fanatical or not, Sockless Jerry really was a man of the people. Dirt-man and long-time third (or fourth) party activist, the sockless one stood poised to strike a blow for home and hearth and against the monied interests. Simpson also shared the gallows humor of a people who—by virtue of scratching a living from the earth—understood the principles of scarcity and solidarity.

During one debate, upon hearing that Prince Hal was a man experienced with laws, Simpson reached for a statute book and pointing to a law imposing a tax upon dogs said something to the effect that if Hal's laws tax bitches, they ought to also tax sons of bitches, for the People's Party "believes in equal and exact justice to all!" It brought the house down.

> Noted Kansas newspaperman William Allen White, contrary to the *Capital-Journal's* description, also described Simpson as a man of deep learning and understanding. White wrote that Sockless Jerry "has read more widely that I," regularly quoting Carlyle and various seventeenth-century poets, and "even persuaded me to try Thackeray, whom I had rejected until then."

While the record does not bear out the establishment's characterization of the People's Party as spoiled and ignorant children, the real difference highlighted was one of *class*. Prince Hal and his ilk believed rule was their birthright, and urged the masses to "leave it to the grownups" to address complex issues such as monetary policy.

There are fascinating parallels between the situation in Kansas in 1890 and today—though of course, they come with the caveat that history doesn't repeat, it rhymes.

For it was the money supply that was at the heart of the prairie populist revolt of 1890. The sturdy agrarian class of the prairie were labor and land rich, but cash poor. They were also deeply in hock to the central banks and railroads, in the form of both public debt (and the resultant tax burden) and private mortgage debt. Sockless Jerry and the rest of the People's Party railed against the centralized control of the money supply by eastern interests.

Simpson was convinced that the people were wealthy—they were largely self-sufficient and were the greatest agrarian producer class the world had yet seen—but "were without a medium [of exchange]." In fact, there were less than ten dollars per capita in circulation. In such a deflationary economy, wage and commodity prices were held down while interest, taxes, and transportation costs were breaking the backs of farmers everywhere. With a loosened money supply and the resulting inflation, wages and commodity prices would rise and debts would become easier to repay.

There are fascinating parallels between the political and economic situation in Kansas in 1890 and today—though of course, they come with the standard caveat that history doesn't repeat, it rhymes.

> The failure of Congress to pass legislation bailing out the credit markets by absorbing up to $700 billion of bad debt has been widely described as a populist revolt against the elite managers of our society and economy. David Brooks suggested that the House Republicans voting "no" were "nihilists" who "listened to the loudest and angriest voices in their Party."

Instead of this, Brooks pleads for the reassertion of an adult elite; the firm hand of authority and legitimacy; the sort "wielded ... by rich men in private clubs." Brooks envisions a future of stability premised not on constitutional legitimacy or even democratic legitimacy, but on the "wisdom and public spiritedness of those in charge."

While watching the markets tank after the failure of the bailout bill on Monday, Ross Douthat echoed Brooks: "If the defeat of the bailout is a victory for liberty, it's a victory whose costs [to stability and order] I'm not prepared to bear."

There are many directions the discussion can go from here.

- Is liberty a necessary precondition to order (the position I would argue for), or must order come first?
- What kind of stability is most conducive to the conservative ideal of free and self-sufficient men—spontaneous order or managed order? Again, I would argue for the former.
- Is legitimacy itself a virtue worth defending, and is it fatally undermined by what has been called the "illegitimacy of failure"?

But for my purposes here I want to look just at the eerie similarities to 1890. For, once again, the debate circles around the difficult question of money supply.

The experts tell us that what we are suffering through is a "liquidity crisis" or a "credit crisis." There's not enough money out there and banks are clamming up. The doomsayers predict a death spiral roughly along these lines: no credit; failed businesses; lost jobs; further reduced spending; bank failures; bank runs; more failures; higher unemployment; etc. And once again, the debate has squarely pitted the establishment, centralized-manager class against the "populist" man-on-the-street.

> The difference is that this time around, it is the managerial class agitating for looser money supply and nationalization of large sectors of the economy while the "populist" class largely views this as an inflationary move that shifts the burden of bad debt from irresponsible fat cats onto hard working Joe Six-pack whose real wages, unlike those of the fat cats, will now dramatically decline.

This seemingly incongruent historical reversal can best be understood by the fact that today's monied classes are now the sellers (or middlemen) in a consumer rather than a producer economy. The prairie populists of 1890 were likewise the sellers, but in a producer economy. A loose money supply tends to benefit producers and middlemen (largely farmers in 1890, and global producers teamed with American delivery systems today), especially those who must take on debt to provide capital necessary to meeting demand. It also feeds the cycle of economic bubble and burst.

The most important lesson is perhaps that while the arguments have changed, the central feature of the debate—that of class—has not.

One lesson that might be drawn from this is that the populist classes have largely lost the

moral authority (not to mention the economic leverage) of being producers rather than consumers. But the most important lesson is perhaps that while the arguments have changed, the central feature of the debate—that of class—has not.

In fact, class consciousness is reasserting itself with a somewhat distracted vengeance in America. Vengeful, because there is real and palpable anger in America against the managerial elites; distracted (and therefore dangerously malleable) because this anger is rudderless and directionless, largely as a result of the fact that it represents no real economic constituency—not labor, not agrarian, not small business. The "buy American" constituency comes the closest, but even this is not sufficient to create a coherent and genuinely healthy populism, as opposed to a merely angry mob (dubbed the "lumpenleisure" class).

> The defeat of the bailout in Congress is a good example. The bill was clearly opposed by a left-right alliance that fed off of anger on the street but articulated its opposition in mutually exclusive terms. Democratic opposition came from those wanting greater federal control and management over perceived wrongdoers while Republican opposition came from those suggesting market correctives and fearful of encroaching socialism. Daniel Larison has pointed out the painful fact that this kind of "crisis populism" has no future.

What can be done? There really is a bubble waiting to burst. Or rather, several bubbles. We are in the middle of the bursting of the housing and credit bubbles. The entitlement bubble looms. And the mother of all bubbles—peak oil—silently grows while we mostly turn away because to watch is just too painful.

The overriding mission of the managerial class is obviously now to keep people in line and dutifully turned away—to disallow discussion of the obvious and keep the bubble intact as long as possible, pushing the ultimate consequences of a massive burst off on our children or our children's children.

The overriding mission of the managerial class is obviously now to keep people in line as long as possible, pushing the consequences of a massive burst off on our children.

The only clear political cause the anti-bailout coalition could coherently rally around is the anti-Federalist one. A platform of localism and "opting out" of the federal system could take many forms, but it would require that the left give up its dreams of an egalitarian utopia and of running everything by federal fiat and it would require the right to give up its dream of a Christian nation with social control and corporate giveaways.

Both would have to retrench for fights and discussions on the local level which can only happen if and when the leviathan is put back in the cage. The development of an economic constituency is perhaps even more difficult and would require the turning of consumers into local producers in a local economy.

What flag might this party fly? I suggest this one.

Kansas Liberty columnist Caleb Stegall is a lawyer and writer in Perry, Kansas. His book on the history of prairie populism in Kansas is forthcoming from ISI Books in 2009.

Send comments to caleb.stegall@kansasliberty.com

The Week in Review

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Liberty Opinion: 29 January 2009

It's a day to celebrate cranks and crazies and Carrie Nation. It's Kansas Day. Caleb Stegall welcomes you to the middle of the country, where, if you're sane, you're completely surrounded by people who aren't, and have no plans to be soon.

The 10th Muse

Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth

Than those old nine which rhymers invocate

- *Shakespeare, Sonnet 38*

The history of our fair state is replete with references to its near Biblical stature as a promised land and all that implies: a land of milk and honey, enormous crops and near Edenic fertility; a land swarming with prophets, zealots and gunslingers; crackpots and crooks; cranks and kooks. Kansas held out the promise of riches and destitution, fresh starts and bad ends, boom or bust, plague and famine and pestilence, flood and drought, cyclones, blizzards, rolling prairie fire and the hand of God.

Kansas was the first and last state founded expressly on a political ideal and the blood spilled

to achieve it. A vast inland prairie sea that drove men mad with longing for the horizon, the future, and always, endless possibility—a *tabula rasa* writ large on which men with gumption might scratch themselves into history or be swallowed up trying; a place where well-water has been said to boil and the sun is blotted out with clouds of insects and John Brown, Carrie Nation, Bat Masterson, Sockless Jerry, Susan Anthony, Wild Bill, Wyatt Earp, Mary Ellen Lease, the Dalton Gang and Harry Kemp the tramp poet of Kansas stride the landscape with hot blood pounding their ears and wild, googly eyes.

A place where the only two required beliefs were in free silver and a hot hereafter, and the only three sure resources were said to be sunshine, sunflowers and sons-of-bitches. Reactionaries and radicals and eternal optimism; Bleeding Kansas and blowing dirt; red and black—the apocryphal state.

One early travelogue written for ladies' drawing rooms in Boston and New York opined that "Kansas is, and always has been, a State of freaks and wonders, of strange contrasts, of individualities strong and sometimes weird, of ideas and ideals, and of apocryphal occurrences. ... A State like nothing so much as some scriptural Kingdom. ... It has a more American population, greater wealth, more women running for office, more religious conservatism, more political radicalism, ... more individualism, and more nasal voices than any other State."

Enough to send a shiver through any socialite, to be sure.

> One early 20th century observer speculated that Kansas's apocryphal character could he explained by its peculiar combination of pioneering spirit and Puritanical commitment to freedom: "Even the very young men and women of Kansas are not far removed from pioneer forefathers, and it must be remembered that the Kansas pioneer differed from some others in that he possessed a strain of that Puritan love of freedom which not only brought his forefathers to Plymouth, but brought him overland to Kansas, as has been said, to cast his vote for abolition. Naturally, then, the zeal which fired him and his ancestors is reflected in his children and his grandchildren. And that, I think, is one reason why Kansas has developed 'cranks.'"

Colonel Nelson, the eminent Kansas City man and founder of the *Kansas City Star*, railed against the unproductive East: "New York is running the big gamhling house and show house for the country. It doesn't produce anything. It doesn't take any more interest in where tbe money comes from than a gambler cares where you get the money you put into his game. Kansas is the greatest state in the Union. It thinks. It produces things. Among other things, it produces crazy people. It is a great thing to have a few crazy people around! The men who started the Revolution [were crazy]."

Cranks and crazies—long may they endure. And by and large, they have, here in Kansas.

Cranks and crazies—long may they endure. And by and large, they have, here in Kansas, pushing the leading edge of everything from civil rights to the culture wars. And there are even still some here who, as it was noted of the early settlers, "will stand in the wind, eating the dirt that blows into their mouths, and tell you what good soil it is."

In 1922, the great Kansan William Allen White wrote that "Kansas is a state of the Union, but it is also a state of mind, a neurotic condition, a psychological phase, a symptom, indeed, something undreamt of in your philosophy, an inferiority complex against the tricks and manners of plutocracy social, political, and economic. Kansas is the Mother Shipton, the Madam Thehes, the Witch of Endor, and the low barometer of the nation. When anything is

going to happen in this country, it happens first in Kansas. ... Kansas, fair, fat, and sixty-one last month, is the nation's tenth muse, the muse of prophecy."

In one of my favorite exchanges in all of literature, the Scarecrow tells Dorothy that he cannot understand why she should want to leave the beautiful Land of Oz to return to the admittedly dusty plains of Kansas. "That is because you have no brains," says Dorothy. "No matter how dreary and gray our homes are, we people of flesh and blood would rather live there than in any other country, be it ever so beautiful."

> The Scarecrow concedes: "Of course I cannot understand it. If your heads were stuffed with straw, like mine, you would probably all live in the beautiful places, and then Kansas would have no people at all. It is fortunate for Kansas that you have brains."

Here, Frank Baum captures perfectly the prairie populist's eye-twinkling, slightly self-deprecating sense of the superiority of humbly standing on one's own two feet in one's own country, the devil take the rest.

> I suspect that with the economic ju-jitsu that has been inflicted on us by panderers and thieves, bankers and lawyers, gilded tricksters and mendicants all, Kansans may return to these roots and once again take up the fight against all the brainless, straw-headed Technicolor razzle-dazzle men who attack and threaten our homes, hearths and posterity.

So if you start to feel a little bit crazy, your eyes a little googly, a bit like a propbet, mad as a march hare, cheer up, for you are a true son or daughter of the prairie. The pansies and delicate flowers in the sophisticate, go-along-to-get-along crowd aren't worthy to taste the soil and call it good.

On this Kansas Day, let us remember that the prairie is our country, and wake the 10th muse.

Kansas Liberty columnist Caleb Stegall is a lawyer and writer in Perry, Kansas. His book on the history of prairie populism in Kansas is forthcoming from ISI Books in 2009.

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The Week in Review

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Steadfast and Loyal

A Covenanter in the Great War

Author's Note: William Coleman was killed in battle on the Western Front in October 1918. He left behind a young wife and daughter, and over 60 letters describing the circumstances and events surrounding his military service. This brief history is dedicated by its author with words once put to similar effect by John Adams: "This account was written by a great-grandson from a veneration of the piety, humility, simplicity, prudence, frugality, industry, and perseverance of his ancestors in hopes of recommending an affirmation of their virtues to their posterity."

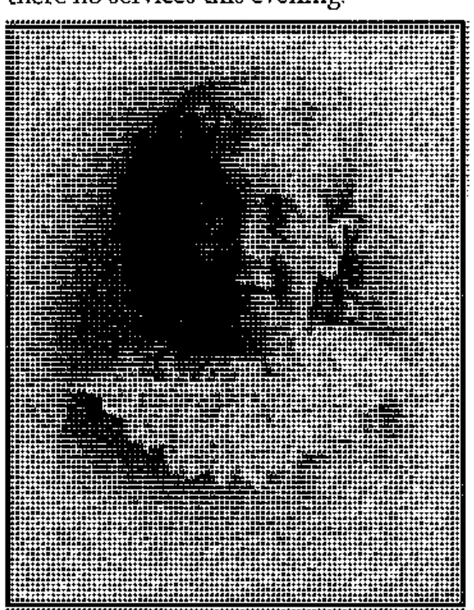
Part One
Into the Breach

On a chill Sunday evening in January 1916, Reverend William Coleman thought to take in evening services at the Cambridge, Mass., Reformed Presbyterian Church. At 27, Coleman was a newly minted pastor, only recently installed in a small church in White Cottage, Ohio. He had traveled east on this occasion at an invitation to fill the empty pulpit in Boston.

That evening, finding no one at the Cambridge church, Coleman took his time strolling the grounds, admiring the architecture and the surroundings on Antrim Street. Coming around the corner, he encountered two young ladies, bundled against the cold, emerging from the back door.

"Oh," said on of the girls, giving a sideways look at the other, "You must be Mr. Coleman. I am Callie Morton, and this is my sister, Greeta."

"I'm pleased," said Coleman as he touched his hat and bowed slightly. "Are there no services this evening?"



"Oh no. Just the young people's meeting, from which we've just come." Then, hearing that the young and eligible reverend was to return disappointed to Boston, the Morton sisters insisted that he not go without salvaging something of the evening. He must meet Mr. and Mrs. Morton, and take in a warm supper.

The Morton home was pleasantly arranged, and the company congenial. Callie Morton was an outgoing and lively hostess, her pretty cheeks tinged red with the excitement. In contrast, Greeta was a picture of silent composition; her alabaster skin and formal posture giving the distinct impression of quiet strength concealed beneath a fragile beauty. Demure, she spoke little that evening, but on the occasions her glance met his, he smiled.

Beginnings

William Carithers Coleman was born the youngest of four sons on Jan. 30, 1889, in Beaver Falls, Pa. His father was a professor of politics at Geneva College. Three years later, the family moved to Allegheny, Pa., when Dr. Coleman took up the pastorate of the Allegheny Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Will grew up rambunctious, good-natured, and witty, as many youngest brothers do. Naturally athletic, he ran track throughout his youth, often boasting of races won against older brothers. John, George, and Paul Coleman were, each in his way, more serious and earnest than Will. Early on, each of the older three had committed to joining their father as ministers of the gospel in the Covenanter Church. Will, however, preferred poetry and track to what, at the time, seemed a stodgy and boring, if somewhat noble, profession.

Following his graduation from the University of Pittsburgh, Will Coleman entered Columbia University for graduate study. Many years later, Dr. Coleman would remark that it was during those years that "Paul persuaded Will to become a preacher." Thus, after receiving his masters degree from Columbia, Coleman began at the Reformed Presbyterian Seminary in Pittsburgh. Following seminary, in the fall of 1915, Coleman moved across the state line, to White Cottage, Ohio, to take the reigns of a small Covenanter church there.

The parishioners at White Cottage took an instant liking to their new pastor. Coleman was not a large man. He stood well under six feet, and weighed less than

By Caleb Stegall

Caleb Stegall is an attorney in Topeka, Kan. He and his wife, Ann, along with their four sons, are members of Grace Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Lawrence, Kan.

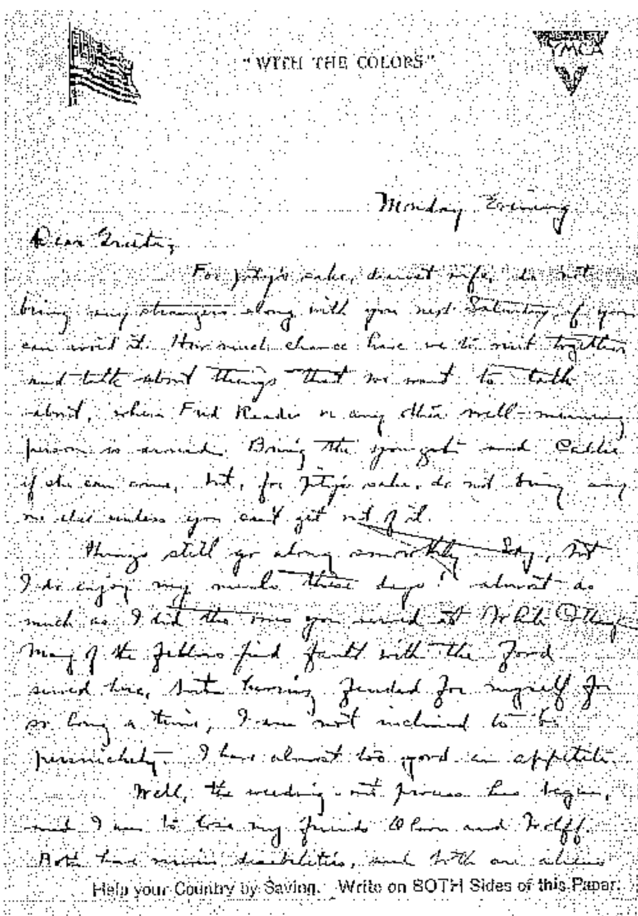
150 pounds. But his body was lithe and gave the appearance of constant motion. His face was not striking, but was easy. With a prominent nose and shock of unruly brown hair, Coleman was possessed of an infectious smile, and often used it to winning effect. His eyes were always bright, seeming to say that if things must take a serious turn, they would only stay serious for a short time.

As was his practice, Coleman gave himself wholeheartedly to his new profession. By all accounts, he was happy with it, despite earlier reservations. He gave his considerable energies to organizing the church—prayer meetings and a young people's society and home visits to all of the members. Whereas some pastors would win the respect and admiration of their parishioners through great teaching and exposition, Coleman undoubtedly was endeared to the people of White Cottage by his quick wit and easy manner.

At one point, Coleman nailed a small wooden box to the rear of the sanctuary and invited sermon suggestions from the congregation for evening services. The teenage boys, hoping to create a bit of mischief, were quick to request a sermon drawn from the most intimate portions of the Song of Solomon. Recognizing the prank as one he might have taken part in just a few years before, Coleman accepted the challenge. "This sermon was a wonderful triumph!" he declared in a letter to Dr. and Mrs. Coleman, "for all romantic meaning was so beautifully camouflaged that none of the giddy young things cracked a smile, or indulged in a smirk during the entire sermon!" One can imagine Coleman greeting the confused faces of the young boys afterwards with a knowing wink as they shuffled out the door.

A Young Family

Apart from the initial meeting in the Cambridge churchyard on Antrim Street, there remains no description of the courtship between Coleman and Greeta Morton. Coleman had been so impressed by Greeta that, upon returning to Ohio, he struck up a correspondence with her; one that bore fruit six months later in marriage. Greeta moved to White Cottage and set up housekeeping. Becoming a minister's wife fit well with her domestic tastes and aspirations.


"WITH THE COLORS"

YMCA

Monday Evening

Dear Greeta,

[illegible]

Help your Country by Saving. Write on BOTH Sides of this Paper.

A letter from William Coleman to his wife, written from Camp Devens. He looked forward to seeing her on her next visit, and noted that the military food, for a man who had been a bachelor for years and had had to fix his own food, wasn't bad.

The young family soon expanded with the birth of a first child, a daughter, on Sept. 19, 1917. In a letter to Mrs. Morton, Coleman gave this description of the baby: "She has dark blue eyes, black hair, a very respectable little nose, Cupid's bow mouth which looks very attractive at times, and the very faintest beginning of a chin." Coleman joked to Callie Morton, that, due to hospital food, Greeta was "getting a double chin, and as I have always held that a double chin is the only proper ground for divorce, I am anxious to get her home and at work." Before she returned home, a friendly debate raged on in the extended Coleman family over what name should be given to the newest Coleman.

Soon after the birth, Dr. Coleman wrote that he had been "thinking of Christine" as a fine name, but Jane also stood high with him. The name Ellen was bandied about, and approved by most of the Coleman women. "I despise both names that Father is proposing," gushed Coleman's sister, Mary, "please don't put in Jane . . . for I have [in mind] only the idea of a suffragette!" In the end, all suggestions were ignored as Coleman announced the new child as Grace Winifred Coleman, named after a prominent educator of the day. Dr. Coleman provided Greeta with a prophetic coda to Winifred's arrival, "We are praying that you and the little girl will be strong, and live long for one another."

The War Encroaches

But Will Coleman, despite familial bliss, was not unaware of events in the wider world that seemed to be circling ever closer. The Great War in Europe had been raging for over three years by the time of Winifred's birth. The most adamant and vocal Covenanters had maintained from the beginning that the carnage was divine retribution against the nations for their failure to recognize God's headship. At the time, the Covenanter churches of America and Europe had long accepted the position that because American civil government (and European governments) had "built her political house

upon the shifting sands of the will of 'we, the people'," the Covenanter's first allegiance to Christ forbade them from "incorporating by any act with the political body in its rejection of God and His Son and His law."

In 1915, the North American Synod appointed a special War Committee to state the American Covenanter's official views on the war. In its first report, the committee intoned that "God has a controversy with the nations for their attitude toward Him and His Anointed," and affirmed support for Woodrow Wilson's policy of American isolationism. Again in 1916, Synod adopted the resolutions of the committee, which attributed the war to God's judgment and condemned the growing hawkishness of the American people. "We are grieved at heart that as a nation we are cultivating the war spirit instead of putting our trust in God."

However, 1917 would bring a string of reversals, both in American attitude towards the war, and in the Covenanter Church's attitude towards America. Most Americans at that time were ignorant of the Old World politics that were engaged in committing a spectacular and prolonged suicide on the European battlefields, but they did become aware that German hunger for *Lebensraum*—"living space" or territory—would not end at the European shores, and that it must be quelled by force. Having won reelection on an anti-war platform in 1916 ("He Kept Us Out of War!"), President Wilson was finally brought to the realization that, like it or not, war had come to America.

On Mar. 1, 1917, the American papers published an intercepted telegram sent by German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmerman to the German embassy in Mexico. The "Zimmerman telegram" urged Mexico to join with Germany in war against the United States. The telegram went so far as to promise to Mexico lands in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. In early April, 1917, America declared war on Germany, and entered the Great War at the beginning of its final act.

With America's entry into the war, the Covenanter Church was put in a quandary. Civil service for a Covenanter had long been anathema: everything from voting to holding political office. Likewise, military service for a Covenanter was forbidden, as the various military oaths of allegiance violated the strict prohibition on swearing support for a government and Constitution which did not explicitly recognize Christ's claims. Disputes erupted. Should the war effort be supported? More to the point, would the young men of the church be permitted to show their support by active military service?

The Synods of the Irish and Scottish Covenanter Churches had previously faced similar decisions. The oath of military service in Great Britain required the soldier to swear loyalty to the Crown—an oath that would, as the Irish Synod put it, "violate their covenant engagements to the Lord Jesus Christ by swearing allegiance to a [government] that has dethroned Him." The Irish would not compromise. Young Irish Covenanters were directed to not take the "sinful oath" and to remain conscientious objectors. The Scottish Synod took a more flexible approach, deciding that "those who have joined the forces [out of] patriotic courage" would have reserved "for them their places and privileges as members of the Church" despite the technical violation of pledging themselves to an unholy rule.

In America, the Covenanter Synod convened in Sterling, Kan., in June 1917 with war questions hanging heavily.

Difficult Decisions

In America, the Covenanter Synod convened in Sterling, Kan., in June 1917 with war questions hanging heavily. Quickly, general agreement was found in support of America's entry into the war—"believing that America must be saved from the Kaiser if it is to be won to Christ." The question of military service, however, was not so easily resolved. Not surprisingly, soon after the declaration of war, questions came pouring in from congregants: Could the officer's oath, which required the swearing of allegiance to the Constitution, be taken? Could the enlisted man's oath of allegiance to the government and president be taken? Could one take the oath of naturalization in order to join the war effort as an American citizen? Given the relatively short period of time to consider the new circumstances, and given the lack of consistency from sister synods across the Atlantic, the Sterling Synod equivocated, giving temporary answers, and appointing committees to study and resolve the complex issues.

A New York parishioner's request seeking citizenship was denied. Those seeking to take the officer's oath were similarly denied permission. In keeping with the Scottish Synod, provisional permission was granted to anyone seeking to take the enlisted man's oath. However, recognition was given to the fact that this position was widely viewed with suspicion, if not downright hostility; and young men were permitted, and in some quarters encouraged, to exempt themselves as a matter of conscience from the enlistment oath. Following the Sterling Synod, the drumbeat of complete dissent from military service was quickly sounded. Coleman's older three bothers joined in the growing effort to restrict even enlisted service in the armed forces; Paul Coleman going so far as to begin drafting a Synod resolution explicitly restricting members from swearing to the enlistment oath.

One particularly influential circular arguing the separatist's position condemned any Covenanter taking the enlistment oath as a "modern would-be Naaman...bowing down in the house of Rimmon." Such activity could not be "justified on the plea of military necessity." These preachings and teachings had the desired effect, generally swinging Covenanter opinion against active service, and providing a means of exemption for young men and their families.

Coleman, however, was not convinced the church was setting the right course. "The tide of defection is running strong among our young men," he bemoaned in a letter to his father in the spring of 1918. Coleman rather mercilessly excoriated

members of his congregation who exempted themselves from the draft. He claimed to feel "no responsibility" for the "considerable popular disesteem" encountered by such young men after he had questioned their motives: a pronouncement he made on "every one who should fail to go simply because he was afraid of hardship and possible wounding or death."

Coleman was quick to join the national coalition of Covenanter leaders—led principally by Dr. R. J. McKnight—beginning to forcefully assert the duty of Covenanter men to fight on behalf of their country. Coleman began to preach and teach and write that as American citizens, it was not sufficient to simply claim a higher citizenship when service was required. Just as Naaman had received a special dispensation to bow in the house of Rimmon in service to his king, though it cost him his life, so too were faithful Christians required to serve their countrymen. Coleman argued that "in this crisis there was of necessity no conflict between loyalty to country and loyalty to Christ." This was not a dispute of principle versus principle, but rather one of principle versus community. In this case, Coleman claimed the dispensation of Naaman "left [the Christian] free" to be loyal to community and country without doing violence to higher allegiances.

Consistent with this view, McKnight began to urge the American Covenanters to adopt a well-defined policy encouraging young members to serve as enlisted men while simultaneously refusing service as officers. On logical grounds, this distinction is questionable. The enlistment oath differed from the officer's oath only in that it required sworn allegiance to the United States government and the President, rather than to the Constitution. In this, the American enlistment oath was no different than the oath required by the British Crown and condemned by the Irish and Scottish Synods. However, this position allowed McKnight, Coleman, and others to present a compromise; one that retained fidelity to both country and principle; one by which, as McKnight put it, "a loyal follower of Jesus Christ could render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." It was a way McKnight acknowledged to be "beset with difficulty [and] hardship" and Coleman described as coming with suffering and persecution.

The Nerve to Follow Through

As tension grew within the Covenanter Church over this issue, Coleman began, reluctantly (he "did not wish to pose"), to view himself as a "modern Curtius"—the Roman soldier of legend who cast himself into a widening breach in the earth in order to heal it and save the city. "The thought of a wholesale scrap and split in the church over the . . . oath" was weighing "considerabl[y]" on his mind, Coleman wrote to his father. So much so that Coleman became convinced that he must be "willing to go into the army" as he had urged others to do. "The more I have thought about the matter from that standpoint, the better satisfied I have been," he confessed. All that remained was to "have the nerve to follow out my convictions in matters where I will be left free." By April 1918, the decision was all but made: Coleman would resign his commission in the church and enlist for service in the war as a private.

> *After all the church politics and propaganda, Coleman's decision was an intensely personal one; one he knew was opposed by most of his family; and one he knew could lead to an unmarked grave and a bereft young wife and daughter.*

Coleman's decision—what he described as his "wild venture"—put a great strain on his family relations. He and his brothers were immediately estranged. His parents no doubt urged another course. But through all, Greeta was a steadfast support. And his decision was seized upon by others for their own purposes. A Covenanter pastor swearing allegiance to an unholy government provided something of a *bête noire* to those still opposed to Covenanter involvement. Though there is little record of it (Coleman records howls of "indignation and protest"), it is not difficult to imagine the wider reaction of some in the church; of outrage and even insult that a Covenanter pastor should resign to join the fighting forces as a private. On the other hand, McKnight latched onto Private Coleman as something of a celebrity, publishing an article announcing and defending Coleman's decision in the widely read periodical *The Christian Nation*.

But after all the church politics and propaganda, Coleman's decision was an intensely personal one; one he knew was opposed by most of his family; and one he knew could lead to an unmarked grave and a bereft young wife and daughter. Coleman's conviction was not without doubt, but he leaned heavily on those he loved and stood to hurt the most to strengthen his resolve. To his parents and siblings, he wrote: "I know that you are all inclined to give me the benefit of the doubt, and that, even if you are firmly convinced that in this matter, at least, I seem to have lost my head, there is yet a special providence that takes care of fools, and I am therefore comparatively safe." And much later, to Greeta: "Time and the hour runs through the roughest day or year, and I must do my bit now, and will be all the happier when we get together again. None but the brave deserve the fair, and though I am not very brave, you make up for it by being very fair in body, mind, and soul. Believe me, dear, I am not such a dolt that I do not know myself for one of fortune's fortunates, and I . . . assure you that I am very well and very happy and very hopeful and very contented in the thought that ere long I will be with you once again. Kiss Winifred for me and teach her to say 'Daddy.'"

In the end, Coleman intuitively knew that he could not claim to have found the right and true choice, but only the least evil of a set of bad choices. And he knew that to order himself rightly towards that truth, he had to make that least bad choice in as sacrificial a way as possible. Thus, Reverend William Coleman was off to war.

(Continued next month)

Steadfast & Loyal (Part 2)

A Covenanter in the Great War

Will Coleman with daughter Winifred

The convictions of the young pastor of a small RP Church in Ohio had made him the focal point of a controversy in the denomination over how to support the U.S. in World War I and hold true to convictions regarding the giving of oaths to a government that didn't recognize Christ's authority.

William Coleman's story, chronicled in his personal letters, is here recounted by his great-grandson.

By Caleb Stegall

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Part Two

Boston's Own

William Coleman had determined to resign the pulpit at White Cottage, Ohio, and join the Army as part of America's contribution to the Allied fight in World War I. The transition from parish to barracks was made quickly. Coleman was able to obtain a training assignment at Camp Devens in Massachusetts, near to Cambridge and to Greeta's parents. Within the first two weeks of April 1918, the Colemans had sold most of their furniture. Coleman joked that the only things they were keeping were "some thousands of secondhand books, hand-picked and guaranteed to be too dry to suffer from dampness in storage."

It is readily apparent from his letters that Coleman was a voracious reader. His writing was a spring of classical allusio[n] and literary quotation. He managed t[o] incorporate snippets and ideas with th[e] grace and ease of one who has lived lon[g] with his sources, as with a well-loved an[d] worn blanket. A quick review of his letter[s] turns up Homer and Thackeray, Virg[il] and Voltaire, Milton and Shakespear[e], Lord Byron and Lord Bacon, Hawthorn[e] and Jack London, the Bible of course, an[d] a host of other well- and lesser-know[n] authors and poets. Coleman managed [a] style that was textured without losing i[ts] boyish enthusiasm; his descriptions ar[e] detailed without becoming pretentiou[s] and, to the reader, his wry wit seems to b[e] always lurking around the next corne[r]. Coleman deprecated his own abilities as [a] public speaker. Whether or not this wa[s] true, as a writer he excelled.

On Apr. 26, with wife, child, and book[s] in tow, Coleman left White Cottag[e], Ohio, for the last time, and traveled b[y] train to Boston. Greeta and Winifred wer[e] quickly and comfortably installed in th[e] Morton home, and sister Callie's pre[s]

ence was surely an added comfort to Greeta. Without delay, Coleman made his way to Camp Devens and officially enlisted with the American Expeditionary Force.

There were many cares and concerns flooding Coleman's mind during these days, but one predominated. By May 1918, the question of the soldier's oath had not yet been resolved by the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the June meeting of the Synod in Beaver Falls, Pa., was quickly approaching.

As May drew to a close, Coleman's nervous anticipation of the upcoming Synod was growing. The centerpiece of debate, discussion, and decision would almost certainly be the church's war policy, particularly relating to the taking of the soldier's oath. This would implicitly center on Coleman himself and his very public and personal commitment to the war effort. Certainly Coleman wished he could be there to stand in his own defense; but he needn't have worried, for he had his champions. Most notably, and likely as a direct consequence of Coleman's decision to join up, both R. J. McKnight and Dr. Coleman himself (Will's father) were appointed to the influential War Committee. It must have been with a great deal of gratification and sense of humility that Coleman received reports of the defense given by his father. In a similar gesture of family solidarity, the voices of Coleman's three older brothers—each had strongly supported a position of separation—fell largely mute. In Coleman's words, he had "been dealt with" by his family most "considerately and tenderly."

Halfway through Synod, George Coleman wrote to his brother at Camp Devens, telling "quite a little about the general drift of things at Synod." Coleman noted to Greeta, "In many ways, it seems rather favorable." Indeed, the drift favored Coleman. The War Committee read its report recommending adoption of the policy advanced by McKnight—one that allowed and encouraged Covenanters to accept the duty of enlisted men in the military, swearing loyalty to the government, but prohibiting the taking of the officer's oath of loyalty to the Constitution. Synod adopted the report without alteration. The preamble to the resolution read:

> We...hereby pledge our loyalty to our beloved land and call upon our members everywhere to support our country by every means within their power; to give generously of their time and money that the munitions of war may be supplied in abundance; to dedicate their sons to serve in the ranks of our army and navy, and their daughters to serve in relief work, and to render cheerful obedience in the Lord, to the commands of the President of the United States.[1]

It was a complete and total victory for Coleman. McKnight would later exalt the role Coleman played in leading the church to the ground of dual loyalty: "Let no one think for one moment that Will Coleman was foolhardy or that these services were rendered as an exhibition of bravado,... [for] the record of this beloved son and brother is unique. It is *sui generis.*" McKnight credited Coleman with being the one who "believed and taught that in this crisis...there was a way by which a loyal follower of Jesus Christ could render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. The way was beset with difficulty. It involved hardship. But it was the way to which he pointed others, and, when the moment came, he himself took that way." In conclusion, McKnight argued, "history will vindicate the course he took. There are no chevrons on the khaki shroud that mantles the form of our dear friend, but methinks there is a peculiar brightness in his crown of life that shall never fade away."[2]

> *Coleman "believed and taught that in this crisis...there was a way by which a loyal follower of Jesus Christ could render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.*

How Coleman felt about the cathartic vindication provided by the Beaver Falls Synod is not recorded in any of his many letters.

However Coleman viewed the Synod goings-on, he would soon find that the practical challenges to his theory of "dual loyalty" posed a greater hazard to his convictions than his fellow Covenanter pastors had. In keeping with his theory, it is evident that Coleman began his military service with a clear distinction in his mind between his role as a Christian and his role as a soldier. He wanted more than ever to excel at both, yet he quickly came to feel himself an all-around failure.

As a soldier, he offered this evaluation to Greeta from camp: "I often lament very bitterly my own weakness...and think of what could be done by a stronger man.... I am very conscious of failing to live up to the possibilities of the situation." And, "I wish I had a strong body.... We no-talent fellows certainly have a great temptation to lie down on the job because we feel our weakness."

As a Christian, Coleman was likewise keenly aware of his "moral weakness." In one typical passage, Coleman accused himself of not having the foresight to pay for Greeta's train fares during a weekend visit: "I was ashamed after you had gone. ...It is just another example of my unparalleled stupidity and awkwardness.... I feel like a man who has always received great kindnesses and done very little, and as one who has not been worthy of his family and friends." He summed it up, "I am afraid I'm still a rather poor excuse, both as a Christian and as a soldier."

Whether a poor excuse or not, Coleman continued to view Army life through these dual lenses during his time at Camp Devens. He despised a certain characteristic he found common among the men.

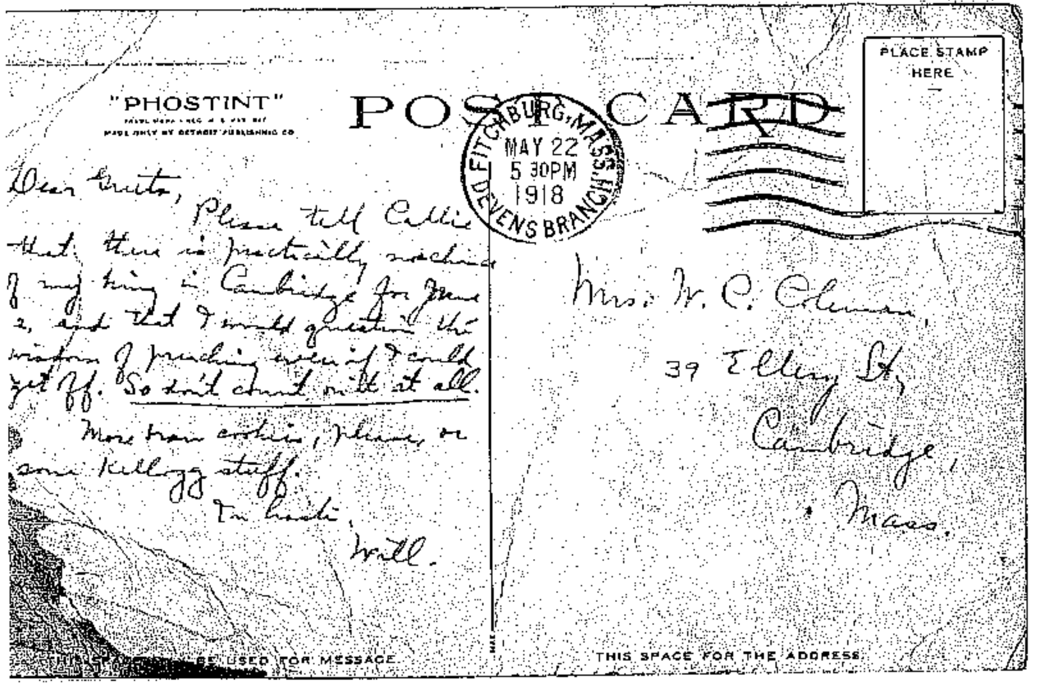
He called it "would-be wickedness"—the covering up of insecurities and weakness with loud talk and bad behavior. "It is the same old camouflage, and gets to be quite a bore at times. I hope that when we come back, we will be men instead of boys, and that there will be no more of this would-be tough stuff."

Coleman found one particular example of this in Paul, the "underdog" of Coleman's platoon. Paul was the loser of the group, always finishing last, always drawing the ire of his superiors. Despite Coleman's attempts to befriend Paul, his advances were met with cool detachment. Coleman supposed this was because the men considered him a "most harmless and insipid saint" who would not "engage in any of the puppy-dog wickedness which [they] glory in having taken part in." But Coleman was determined, and resolved that "in spite of my nauseous goodness, if I am able to run faster or farther than any man in the company, [Paul] may yet yield to my friendship." If the men could not be won over with a prudish character, perhaps a strong constitution would do the trick.

This approach was certainly a blind spot in Coleman's dealings with the men, and with himself. And it caused him a great deal of misery. His deepest desire was to "play the man." To his friend Burt Wilson he wrote: "I am trying hard to play the man." To Greeta: "I am hoping that I will be able to play the man, and that I will be able to bear some testimony." Citing the fact that his "grandsire drew a long bow at Hastings," Coleman often reminded himself and others of the "necessity of doing my bit." And yet his chosen dual roles seemed constantly at cross-purposes. Coleman was unable to synthesize his understanding of what it meant to be a Christian with what it meant to be a soldier and come away with any clear sense of what it might mean to "play the man."

As a result, he was beset with self-doubt and insecurity on all fronts. He was continually aware of his tendency to be viewed as a prude—or a "molly-coddle," as he put it. Moreover, at the start of each new task he assured himself of pending doom and disaster. Announcing to Greeta that training on the rifle range would begin the following day, Coleman wrote, "I have little doubt that I will be the poorest shot in the company." And should he happen to perform well at something, he was quick with an excuse proving it a mere fluke, or the luck of the loser. After winning a platoon race and proving himself the fastest man, he deprecated himself in a letter to Wilson, "As you may imagine, they are not a very swift bunch, or I would have been beaten badly."

Coleman's letters show an intense scrutiny of this problem, and, in consequence, an evolving set of standards. From England, he admitted to Greeta that he was toying with the idea of writing a "treatise dealing with the [life] of the private soldier—his ideas of manliness and the means which he commonly intends to prove himself a man, and the standards by which he judges other men." For Coleman, this study became his obsession, and his need to resolve these questions went far beyond intellectual curiosity, reaching to the depths of his own desire to meet in full the challenges that lay ahead. The progression of his thinking reveals a developing conflict within his psyche. He began to find it more and more difficult to maintain the distinct standards of "Christian" and "soldier." His lingering self-doubt brought to mind disturbing questions. Is performance or character the fundamental measure of a man? Coleman acknowledged that it seemed strange to him that he thought primarily "about men's abilities, when their character is the really important thing." But his conviction concerning the latter seemed to be flagging. Isn't the fellow who can carry men to victory by virtue of the strength in his back to be preferred, regardless of his moral habits? What about the poor upright chap who can't shoot straight at a mere 50 yards?



A quick note to Greeta from Fort Devens

Following this questioning, the separate measuring sticks of Christian character, on the one hand, and soldierly ability on the other, were slowly replaced in his mind with the singular ideal of *brotherliness*. Instead of trying to impress Paul with either morality or speed, he simply began to give him his sleeping spot whenever Paul came in late to find a full tent. (He "came in late [again] last night—no place for him to sleep—so he coughed and snored into my right ear all night.") Be-

fore, Coleman had found the typical complaints of Army men against the food, the command, the weather, or the job to be "tiresome and even disgusting." Later, he noted with some approval that the "men carry out Voltaire's motto: 'While awaiting the tragedy, enjoy the farce.' . . . If anyone feels any discomfort, and lacks the ability, as some of us do, to do justice to it in language, there are always several men within hearing who feel the same discomfort, and are more than able to express themselves with force and fluency. The inarticulate brother hears and is amused and relieved."

Thus, as the fight neared, Coleman accepted a more nuanced resolution to his quest to find the measure of a man. He came to an understanding that in the crucible of war, what he called "moral camouflage" is stripped away, and what remains is neither wholly character nor wholly action, but an indivisible whole. Bodily strength becomes a mark of character, and steadfastness of mind a mark of high performance. The old standards of moral weakness so present in Coleman's earlier letters—cursing, carousing, drinking, smoking—fade from view, as do the old standards of soldierly virtue—physical strength and marksmanship. What remains is simply a standard of commitment, in body, mind, and spirit, to one's brothers in the trenches.

There is a certain ambiguity in this, and its acceptance by Coleman is truly remarkable. Yet having found this standard for judging a man, for judging himself, his doubts and insecurities seemed to fall away. By the time Coleman made it to the Front, he felt totally at ease with the other men of his company, ready to accept their "puppy-dog wickedness" without so much as a passing comment, even seeing some virtue in it. When at the Front, after becoming part of a family of men "who have taken part in very serious engagements," Coleman became "convinced that, with God's help, I will be able to play a man's part." If it had been written at the time, Coleman might have paraphrased the child heroine from Flannery O'Connor's story, "A Temple of the Holy Ghost," and said that, though he no longer thought he could be a saint, he was pretty sure he could be a martyr, if they killed him quick.

The heavy matters that hung on Coleman's heart did not consume the full measure of his days. His training took most of his time and energy. There were marches and practice on the rifle range and physical fitness training, as well as becoming familiar with the intricacies of Army hierarchy, discipline, and command. There were nights of entertainment at the "Hostess House," and a great deal of letter writing and reading. These were interspersed with cherished visits from Greeta and Winifred, and sometimes Callie. After one visit, Coleman rhapsodized that it had been "a perfect day to me, and the hours with you and Winifred . . . were very sweet." Coleman was particularly protective of such times, admonishing Greeta in friendly tones after one unsuccessful visit: "For pity's sake, dearest wife, do not bring any strangers along with you next Saturday, if you can avoid it. How much chance have we to visit together and talk about things that we want to talk about, when Fred or any other well-meaning person is around?"

"I am appreciating my home and my wife and my baby more than ever as the days pass, [though] there is little chance of my seeing any of them for a long time to come."

In the absence of family, there were always thoughts and memories of Greeta and Winifred to turn to. "I revel in memories of our home in White Cottage." And from England, "I am appreciating my home and my wife and my baby more than ever as the days pass," though "there is little chance of my seeing any of them for a long time to come."

By the end of June, Coleman had word that his company would be shipping out. "Boston's Own," as they were called, were scheduled to board the military transport to England on July 4—Independence Day. Plans were quickly made for Greeta and Winifred to join Coleman at Camp Devens for the final days before his departure. They spent the time in preparation for the trip and for what lay beyond. Socks were mended, and patches put on the uniform. Visits were made to the camp store for minor supplies and a few comforts. Coleman's more bulky belongings—what he was to leave behind—were packed up. And certainly, many tears were shed; and deep conversations shared; and tender play made with Winifred.

On the evening of July 3, the time for separation had come. Coleman made his way to the Devens station, lugging numerous boxes and suitcases, Greeta at his side with Winifred in her arms. He remained cheerful throughout. After kisses and hugs, he loaded his little family on the train, no doubt with admonitions not to worry, he would be home soon. As the passenger cars pulled away, Coleman remained on the platform, waving to Greeta as she settled into her seat by the window.

Years later, Winifred would remember that "Mother held close to her heart the picture from the train window of Daddy cheerfully smiling and waving his hand to us. Some time later, the words of James Whitcombe Riley's poem came to her: 'With a cheery smile, and a wave of his hand / He has wandered into an unknown land. / And left us dreaming how very fair / It needs must be, since he lingers there.'"[3]

(Concluded next month)

[1] John W. Pritchard, *Soldiers of the Church*, 126-127 (Christian Nation Publishing Company, 1919).

[2] R.J. McKnight, "Private William C. Coleman," *reprinted in* Prichard, 59.

[3] Winifred Elliott, *A Family History*, 20 (1997).

Editor's Note: Citations were inadvertantly omitted from Part One; these will be provided by the Witness *or the author upon request.*

Steadfast & Loyal (Conclusion)

A Covenanter in the Great War

The convictions of the young pastor of a small RP Church in Ohio had made him the focal point of a controversy in the denomination over how to support the U.S. in World War I and hold true to convictions regarding the giving of oaths to a government that didn't recognize Christ's authority.

William Coleman's story, chronicled in his personal letters, is here recounted by his great-grandson. In this month's conclusion, Pastor Coleman, having seen much resolution in the doctrinal battle of his denomination, faces the certain prospect of military battle at the Front.

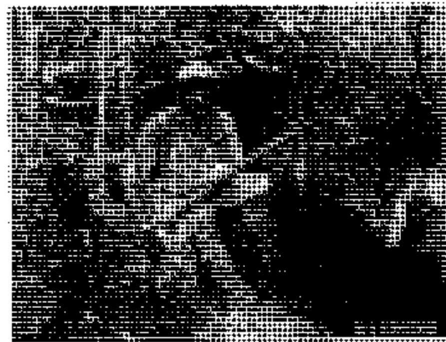
Part Three

Playing the Man

William Coleman arrived in France in mid-August 1918. After the Atlantic passage and a brief respite in England, Coleman began to grow eager for the challenges ahead. Continually relating his experiences to the trials of Jesus, he wrote to Greeta, "My present feeling reminds me of the text from the life of Christ, when He said, 'I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straightened until it be accomplished.'"

By Caleb Stegall

Caleb Stegall is an attorney in Topeka, Kan. He and his wife, Ann, along with their four sons, are members of Grace Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Lawrence, Kan. Copyright © 2003 by Caleb Stegall.



A doughboy of the 58th—Coleman's regiment—rests in the Brieulles Wood on Oct. 2, 1918.

Certainly, Coleman was beginning to feel the oncoming rush and press of his "crowded hour." "[I have] a great eagerness," he wrote, "to meet that [which is] to be the great struggle of my life."

While in England, Coleman had successfully agitated to be one of those chosen to be transferred to a fighting division. "Strange to say, I am more than willing to go," Coleman wrote after his transfer orders came through, "because I am likely to have the satisfaction of knowing that I am in the middle of things, and am doing my bit with the rest of the boys."

Detesting all things halfhearted, Coleman treated war no differently. "If a fellow goes to war, he might as well go the whole way, and go willingly....'If a man compel thee to go a mile, go with him two.'...With this point of view, the more suffering one endures, the more satisfaction he has."

Becoming "Ivy"

On Aug. 20, Coleman arrived by rail at Rimaucourt to join his new division—the Fourth. The "Ivy" Division, so called because of its green ivy insignia, had arrived at Rimaucourt a week earlier badly i[n] need of recuperation, replacement troops and supplies.[38] Coleman was assigned ac[-]cording to the shortages in the variou[s] units, ending up in the 58th Infantry, H Company. The spirit of the men of th[e] Ivy Division during those weeks of Au[-]gust 1918 was one of tired relief. The[y] were now veterans of the Great War, hav[-]ing participated in some of the heavies[t] fighting to date.

The men of the 58th Infantry treate[d] the replacements with respect, but als[o] approached them with "the exalted air o[f] a successful father telling of the world t[o] a wide-eyed son."[39] Discussing the veter[-]ans and their superior experience[,] Coleman described them as "very modes[t] men—most of them!" Certainly this wa[s] Coleman's initiation into the realities o[f] war as he was regaled with stories of life i[n] the trenches, poison gas, and Germa[n] areoplane bombing runs.

More importantly, the stories served t[o] wipe away the last of Coleman's lingerin[g] self-doubt. Hearing accounts of war first[-]hand did much to lift his spirits. He wrot[e] that the "more I hear about the life at th[e] Front from these men who have take[n] part in very serious engagements ther[e] the more convinced I am that, with God['s] help, I will be able to 'play a man's par[t]' when I get there myself."

Replacement troops for the 4th Division arriv[e] by rail at Rimaucourt in August, 1918.

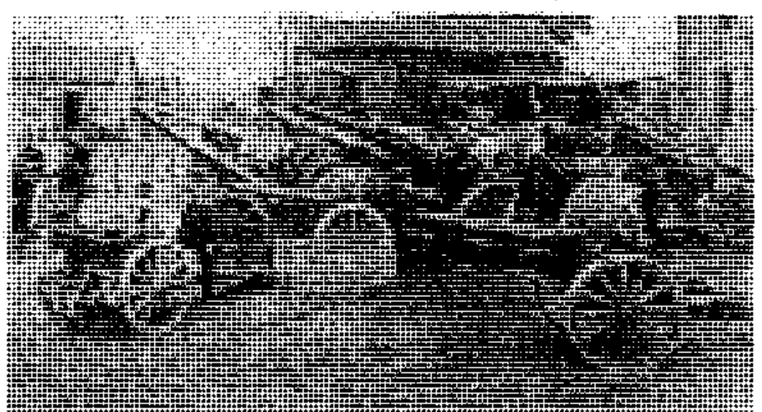
During Coleman's time at Rimaucourt, his primary diversion was writing letters to friends and family back home, Greeta most of all. Regulations requiring that letters be written only on one side of a page made writing paper scarce. Further regulations required that all letters go through army censors, who made certain that no sensitive information was being passed on, unawares or otherwise. Coleman also found himself in the unenviable position of having lost his pen. At the mercy of his fellows for a writing instrument, short of paper, and restricted to working on the schedule of the censors, getting word home became a stressful preoccupation.

Knowing how an absence of word might be interpreted by those at home, Coleman managed at one point to explain the more probable reason of lack of communication: "Please do not imagine, if you fail to hear from me for a while, that I have 'gone west.' There is always a far more prosaic reason—no paper, no pen, no ink, no time, or no opportunity to have the letter censored immediately."

Difficulties persisted. On Aug. 26, Coleman received back from the censors all of the letters he had written since his landing for transgressing the "one-side-only" rule. It is not known how many letters were lost, but it was, to Coleman—and perhaps to posterity as well—"nothing less than a calamity!"

Despite less than ideal conditions—midnight marches, shortages of all amenities, and distance from loved ones—Coleman's inimitable spirits did not flag. He was "still happy as ever and having great good fortune," considering himself a part of the "best company in the Regiment, best platoon in the company, best squad in the platoon, and best man in the squad." The last of those statements was the only one about which he had "any doubt whatever." Coleman considered any discomforts he might have experienced as "so mild as not to be worth mentioning."

Though many of his fellow soldiers were succumbing to various sicknesses brought on by the new climate, or unaccustomed disease, or other such maladies, Coleman remained unfailingly healthy, never once having to answer to sick-call. All told, Army life at Rimaucourt was, for Coleman, "very enjoyable," and, in fact, "a vacation with pay." During this time, Coleman continually recounted to Greeta his deepest desire not to be found a "tin solider." He set forth his creed of war again and again, and writing it became a kind of self-comforting reflex: "All in all, or not at all. The real thing, or nothing."



German guns captured by the 4th Division on Sept. 26, 1918.

During Coleman's 10 days at Rimaucourt, the 58th Infantry gelled into a cohesive fighting force. The men fell into friendships that seemed to them to have existed for a lifetime. Coleman had no trouble befriending officer and fellow enlisted man alike. He was very impressed with the leadership of his company, writing that the officers were fine men who could "be strict and at the same time companionable." Of Lieutenant Frazier, the company commander, Coleman remarked "he is on the *qui vive* all the time and expects us to be the same. He will try to keep us from being tin soldiers; and I, for one, am glad of it!"

A lonelier feeling could not be conceived by the men than the one that enveloped them upon first sight of the Front. For Coleman, such a scene—such a circumstance—could not have been farther from his pleasant ministrations at White Cottage.

Lieutenant Frazier was an able commander, requiring nothing of his men that he himself was not willing to undertake first. His leadership was disciplinary, but encouraging, and the men responded well to it. So much so that, for Coleman at least, service in H Company became almost as much an act of personal service to Frazier as it was to country. Other officers were equally impressive in the eyes of Coleman. Malcolmson, Coleman's platoon sergeant, and Thompson, Coleman's squad corporal, both received high praise in letters home.

While Coleman seemed to get along with all, he formed particularly close bonds with his tentmates, Arthur L. Trottier and Edward Horton. Trottier was a particularly big man for his day, weighing nearly 200 pounds. Horton and Coleman, being smaller, slept one on each side of the bigger man so as to more easily shed rain water that had leaked into their tent. In addition to Trottier and Horton, Coleman counted Leonard Wilmott among his close circle of friends. Wilmott was an English farmer from Massachusetts in much the same circumstance as Coleman, having left a young wife, nine months pregnant at home.

At the time of their meeting at Rimaucourt, Wilmott had yet to receive word from home on the outcome of the pregnancy. No doubt Coleman, having so recently become a father, encouraged Wilmott that all would be well and shared with him stories of new fatherhood. In fact, Coleman was so enthusiastic in his babying discussions with Wilmott that he had convinced the expectant father on the merits of many of his non-traditional parenting techniques. In one instance—concerning bedding the youngster down out of doors in a homemade sleeping bag—Wilmott was so taken with Coleman's idea that he requested Coleman to have

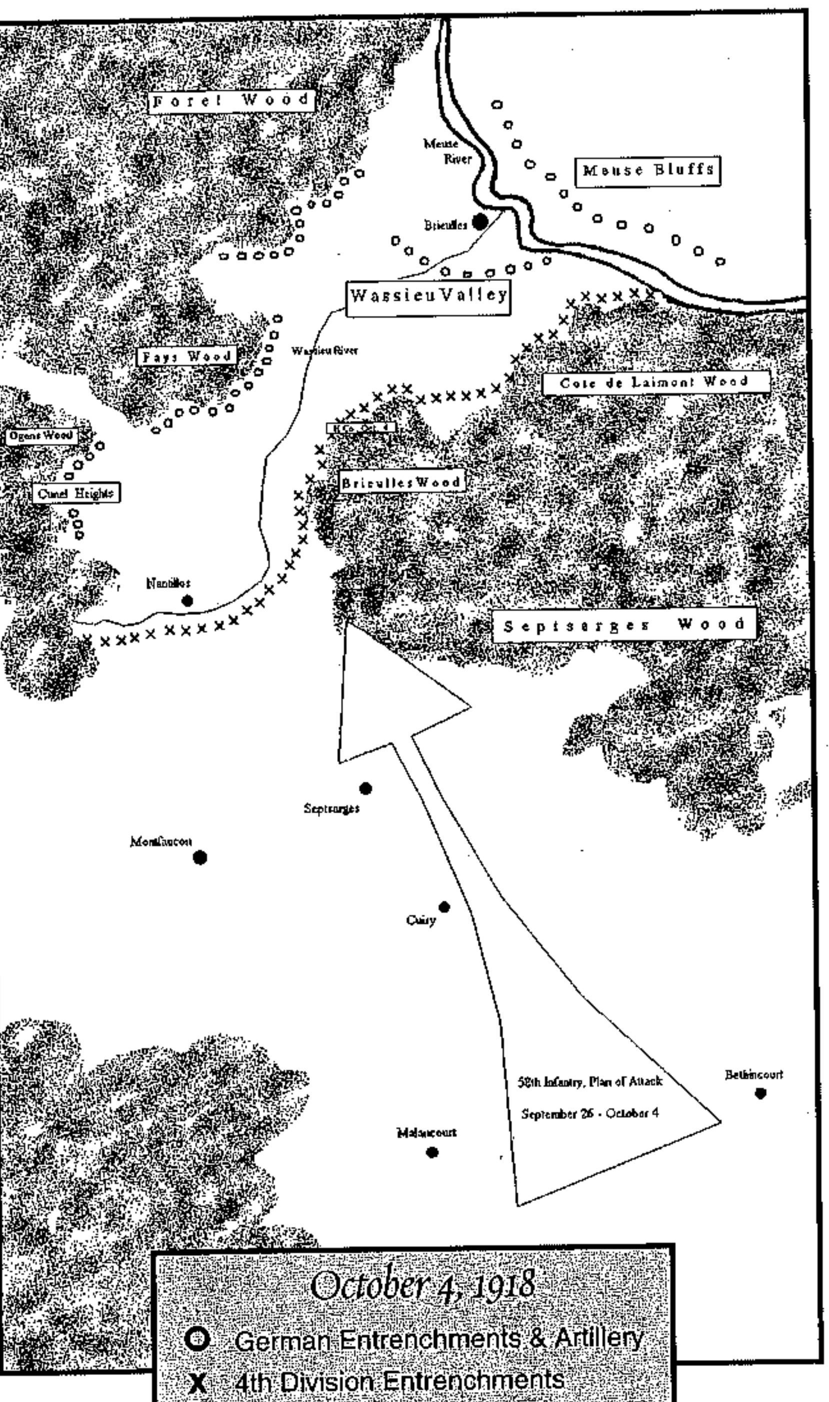
his wife forward instructions for such a sleeping bag on to Wilmott's own wife. Coleman promptly made it so.

Word soon spread among the troops that a large scale offensive was being prepared.[40] The men were full of expectancy and were eager to be off. On the morning of Sept. 1, the Ivy Division broke camp at Rimaucourt and loaded ammunition, weaponry, men, and supplies into a monstrous caravan of trucks and headed east to Vavincourt.[41]

The "Real Mechanism" of War

At Vavincourt, the division was close enough to the Front to require vigilance against enemy air attacks.[42] Coleman and the other men of the 58th were restricted from open roads and streets except in the case of absolute necessity.[43] Coleman, Trottier, Horton, and the others took great care to conceal their tent and campsite from aerial view. Only dry wood was burned to reduce smoke.[44] From the time of their arrival at Vavincourt, the 58th Infantry was engaged in staged maneuvers, perfecting attack techniques and improving lines of communication.

On Sept. 7–8, the 58th moved by bus to the Toulon sector, southeast of Verdun, France, one of the oldest battlefields of the war.[45] The Allied and German lines were as entrenched here as at any other section of the Front. The earth between lines—"no man's land"—bore witness to terrible suffering. Shell holes pockmarked the ground, overlapping, and devolving into a churned soup of mud and rock. Roads were nonexistent. What were once vibrant woods of the French countryside had been reduced to the occasional blackened stump, or trunk with forlorn and broken branches hanging askew, forgotten. No man's land was choked with reams of barbed wire run every which way in a tangled mass. Bloated bodies lay rotting, unrecoverable, in the cesspools and swamps created by the nearly incessant cold rain. The landscape was one of death, and destruction, anc desolation.[46] A lonelier feeling could noı be conceived by the men than the one thaı enveloped them upon first sight of the Front. For Coleman, such a scene—sucl a circumstance—could not have been farther from his pleasant ministrations a White Cottage, or the carefree days spen in Cambridge with Greeta.



While the 59th Infantry took up positions in the intricate system of trenche that made up the Front Coleman and the rest o the 58th bivouacked ir support just behind.[47] The section of the Fron now occupied by the Iv Division lay on the fa northwestern edge of th St. Mihiel salient.[48] Earlier that summer, th German Army had commenced what would b its last, and perhap greatest, push. Targetin three points on the Allied lines, the German created three salients, o fingers of German occupation, pushing toward the heart of France threatening to crush th Allied forces and establish the Kaiser's contrc over the whole of th western Occident. Th necessary Allied counteroffensive began wha was to become the la great battle of the Worl War. The Battle c France began on July 1 1918, with the Allied reduction of the Marr salient in the Secon Battle of the Marne. Following the elimination of the Marne salien the British and Frenc forces destroyed tl Montdidier salient. The last remaining German salient on the Fro was at St. Mihiel. To reduce it and reestabli the Allied lines in tl

regions beyond was the task given to the American Army at the beginning of September 1918.[51]

From Coleman's position with the 58th Infantry, he did not take a direct role in the St. Mihiel Offensive. Still, it provided quite a show. At exactly 1 a.m. on the morning of Sept. 12, one of the greatest concentrations of artillery fire ever seen was unleashed on the German positions in the salient. As Coleman and his buddies watched, it was as if the whole northern horizon had caught fire. Garish orange and red flashes lit the sky as the thousand guns flashed their payloads from muzzle to target. Long-range naval guns joined the fray, with the land-based "75's" penetrating deep into German occupied territory.[52]

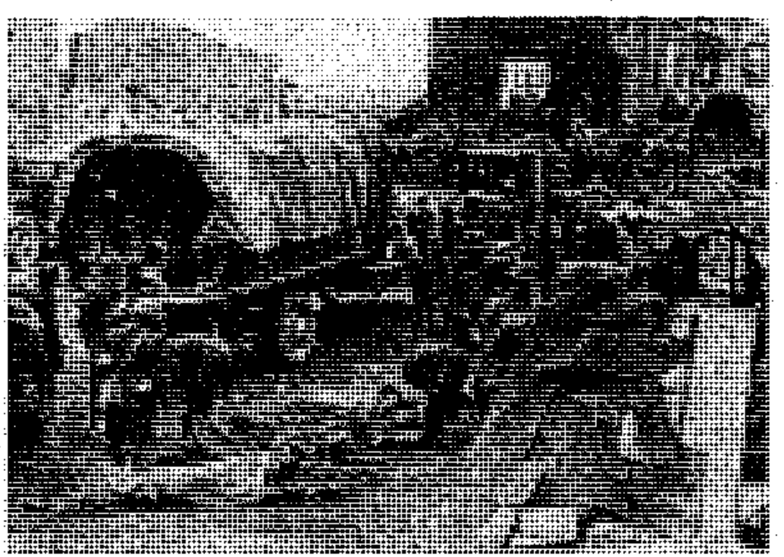
The show stretched as far as one could see, east to west. One officer commented with awe that it was "like a great white way."[53] Adding to the fireworks was the steady thump-thump-thump of the exploding shells, which could be felt, even by the men in reserve in the knees as well as the ears.

As the night wore on, the onslaught did not let up. The twisted outline of curling smoke and gas now streaked the night sky and, with each new flash, created a ghoulish yellow silhouette. The shelling lasted until 7:30 a.m. that morning. Dumbstruck, green soldiers such as Coleman had just come face to face with the "real mechanism" of the Great War—the destructive power of modern artillery.[54]

The Hopeful Realist

Faced with these awful realities, Coleman's letters take another subtle turn in mood and tone. Gone are the naïve and hopeful proclamations of assured safety; or of being certain to see Greeta and Winifred someday soon. In its place, Coleman begins to work towards an understanding—for himself as much as for Greeta—of the all-too-real possibility that he will not make it home. Optimism gives way to a hopeful realism based not on anything observed, but on the grace of God. "Of course, the future is a little uncertain now," he wrote, "but I am not at all anxious, as I feel that we are in God's hands, and He will do what is best for us all." Coleman took confidence only in the providence of God. "If my work in the world is not done, I will bear a charmed life, and nothing can harm me. Man is immortal until his work is done."

Along with sobriety, an almost euphoric sense of gratitude is ambient in Coleman's last letters. In one such letter, Coleman remembers that he "does not know exactly what the future holds," and that his "position is a dangerous one." However, he tells Greeta, "I want you to know that you and Winifred are constantly in my mind these days. It would be hard for me, with my limited powers of expression, to tell just what you and Winifred mean to me, but I often feel that God has given me great gifts, far greater than I have deserved." His thankfulness penetrated his daily routine; finding himself grateful simply "to eat when hungry" and to "lie down and sleep when tired."



Wounded of the 58th Infantry in Cuisy. In the background, Coleman's company is assembled by the remains of a church building.

At the close of this reverie, Coleman finally shuts the book on his decision to join the Army, making mention of it for the last time. "Considering all this, I have never for an instant regretted my not claiming exemption." And then, in what was perhaps an unspoken and hoped-against farewell to Greeta and Winifred, Coleman writes that, "as always, the woman suffers more than the man, but such has ever been the case, and yours will be the greater reward. And as to the future, I have no anxiety [for Winifred], for I know that you will do your utmost to make her well and strong and intelligent and good, and she will make a noble woman by and by."

The bombardment of Sept. 12th was a huge success. The German forces within the St. Mihiel salient were reduced to small pockets of machine gunners holed up in strategic areas throughout the sector. Over the next day and a half, the American infantry advanced with relative ease to a position north of St. Mihiel.[55] With the closing of the St. Mihiel salient, the Ivy Division readied for what would be the final, and most important, conflict of the Great War.[56] The Allied forces were poised to end the war. All that remained was to break through the German fortifications bounded on the west by the Argonne Forest, and on the east by the Meuse River.

To advance north—between the French towns of Malancourt and Bethincourt, through Cuisy and Septsarges, and into the Fays and Foret Woods—was the task given the 58th and 59th Infantry. Once into the Foret Woods, the American forces were to pivot to the east, forcing the German army back to the Meuse River at the town of Brieulles. The plan was, in effect, to open a door in the enemies' lines, allowing Allied forces to capture key supply trains just north of Brieulles, and thereby choke the Kaiser into submission.

From Sept. 26 to Oct. 2, the 58th and 59th Infantry fought in leapfrog fashion, one regiment advancing through the lines of the resting half to push the Front another mile, or half-mile, or hundred yards forward. By Sept. 30, the first phase of the Meuse-Argonne campaign was nearly complete. The 58th Infantry had reached the Brieulles Wood, just north of

Septsarges, and had begun to dig in, resupply, and set up communication lines in preparation for the final push into the Foret Wood.

During one interval between fighting, while Coleman and the other men were burying horses, or suffocating inside their gasmasks after a German areoplane raid, or freezing and starving in waste-deep mud and muck, or being driven too near madness by the ever present plague of lice, a man happened to remark to Coleman, "This is hell, isn't it?"

"After you've been in hell for a while, you will look back to this as very comfortable play," Coleman replied.

It was this eternal perspective which enabled Coleman to maintain—in his letters home, at the least—a steadfast spirit in the most awful circumstances imaginable. Recounting the incident later to Greeta, Coleman summoned, without even a hint of irony, the lines spoken by Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost* to buttress his point: "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make of heaven a hell, of hell a heaven." "Believe me," Coleman concluded, "I will always be able to say . . . that I have had 'fellowship in their sufferings.'"

The only building left standing in Septarges served as Regimental headquarters for the 58th during the second phase of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.

Playing the Man

The 58th Infantry was given the initial opportunity to take the Foret Wood. During the night of Oct. 3, Coleman's company moved forward through the Brielles Wood and took up their pre-attack positions in the deep trenches lining the northern edge of the wood.[57] The tree line faced northwest across a narrow section of the Wassieu Valley. Bordered to the south by the Brielles Wood, the valley was hemmed at its northern edge by the Fays and Foret Woods.

From Coleman's position, the ground sloped downhill for a quarter of a mile to the Wassieu River, which stretched across the bottom of the valley. The river itself, in better times, was little more than a meandering stream, drifting gently through the French fields on its way to the Meuse a mile and a half upstream. Now, however, it was little more than a marsh. Stagnant pools of polluted water filled shell holes, one trickling into the other, surrounded for yards in all directions by mud.

On the northern side of the Wassieu, the terrain rose quickly over the next half mile to a grassy ridge about 160 feet above the valley floor. Beyond the ridge the French countryside dipped shallowly before rising another quarter of a mile to the next ridge, where the fields were swallowed up by the trees of the Fays Wood. Coleman could see, a mile to the west, the Cunnel Heights rising to the highest point in the region. The Heights stood sentinel over the Wassieu Valley, guarding its western edge and providing a clear line of sight for its occupants all along the valley's length to the waters of the Meuse. Crowning the Heights was a thick cover of trees, the Ogons Wood, making the spot of strategic importance along this section of the Front.

To the east, the valley opened up to a width of three miles, bordered to the north by the Foret Wood and to the South by the Cote Laimont Wood. The wide fields to Coleman's right lay along a wide bend of the Meuse River, which formed the eastern edge of the valley. High bluffs sat on the opposite bank of the Meuse and overlooked the fields below. Thus, t
Wassieu Valley was exposed to higl
ground on all four sides—the ridges of t
Fays and Brielles Woods to the north a
south, and the Cunnel Heights and Me
Bluffs to the west and east.

On that morning, the entire Wass
Valley was no man's land. The Gern
army, having recognized the strategic va
of the Cunnel Heights, was heavily dug
with machine gun and artillery units
the Ogons Wood. Anchored by its pr
ence on the Cunnel Heights, the Gern
troops occupied the forests all along
northern edge of the Wass
Valley from the Fays Wooc
the Foret Wood and on to
Meuse. Moreover, Gern
heavy artillery guns sat a
the bluffs on the eastern b
of the Meuse. Thus, pu
from the perspective of fi
power, the Germans do
nated the entire Wassieu V
ley, able to pour project
down onto the French fie
from three different directic
Facing the German Fi
Army, the American Ar
held the portion of the fr
stretching from the Meuse
the hills southwest of
Cunnel Heights.[58]

At 5:25 a.m., the Ameri
artillery bombardment beg
The seemingly ceaseless rains had stop
for the moment, and the Wassieu Va
was shrouded with a thick, low-lying m
The men of the 58th could see nothing,
they heard the whines and explosion
the heavy guns.[59] They waited in sil
anticipation, breathing shallowly, e
drawing from the depths of whatever
of courage he had available. Colen
reached into the inner linings of his u
form and drew out a small photograpl
Winifred. Greeta had enclosed it in
of her letters. "The picture is a great co
fort and will help me to play the r
when we come to grips with the enen
Coleman had written back—and su
he was comforted.

The men knew that the artillery barr
was scheduled to last precisely 24 m
utes. Coleman and the others glanced
peatedly at their wristwatches as the ha

slowly moved to the appointed time. At 5:49 a.m., the men of the 58th scrambled up out of their trenches, and over the top into the wasteland. Coleman "was as calm and without fear as any man I have seen," Corporal Thompson would later write to Dr. Coleman. The men advanced easily down the hill for 200 yards or so, in the cover of the fog, when, as if on some divine cue, the mist lifted, disclosing their position to the enemy.[60]

Immediately, hostile fire poured into the valley from three sides, with American artillery still thundering away from behind. The sky lit up under the macabre display, flashing with the sickly colors of war—burnt yellow and blood red. German machine gun fire from the Fays Wood raked the valley, hurling streams of lead into Allied positions. German artillery and high explosives whined and barked from both flanks, sending sheets of metal and shrapnel into the field, cutting men down as they floundered in the mud. Shells of poison gas exploded overhead, forcing the men to fight forward with their masks on. German areoplanes then appeared, strafing Allied troops from above.[61] The churning fields of the Wassieu were wreathed with wisps of gas, and steam rising from the pools of water, and smoke. The dying cries of wounded men were largely covered by the steady roar of heavy guns.

Struggling forward near Coleman, Private Wilmott was blown backwards by an exploding artillery shell, his arm nearly severed. Wilmott would survive that morning, and send an account of the battle home from his hospital bed. Mrs. Wilmott forwarded his letter to Greeta. "Believe me," he wrote, "the sky and ground were an infernal hell . . . there were our shells going over our heads and [German] shells were behind us, in front of us, and everywhere. They were bursting in the air and on the ground while the shrapnel was whistling off our helmets and the dirt was flying."

Coleman struggled on, somehow making it across the Wassieu River and up the opposite side of the valley. As the remaining men of the 58th were reaching the relative shelter of the Fays Wood, Coleman was struck and killed by machine gun fire or flying shrapnel. It was nearly 7 a.m. on Oct. 4, 1918.

There is only one eyewitness account of Coleman's death. Corporal Thompson, fighting along-side Coleman, had also managed to reach the Fays Wood. Writing to Dr. Coleman, he recounted how the men had crossed the valley, and how when "we were about to enter the forest, I missed William, and I made several efforts to try and find him, but they were all in vain."

[illegible] *Brieulles.*

William Coleman died as he lived, full of faults and foibles, but remaining always steadfast and loyal. With full confidence in the providence of God, and bearing as best he could the necessary humility and thankfulness, he committed the whole of his life to the right as he saw it.

In the last of his letters ever to reach Greeta, trying to put her in good humor, Coleman recited a portion of her favorite poem, "Casa Guidi Windows" by Elizabeth Browning. Though he couldn't have known it, these last of Coleman's known words provide a fitting benediction to his life:

I love no peace which is not fellowship
And which includes not mercy—I would have
Rather the raking of the guns across the world
For such things are better than a peace that sits
Beside a hearth in self-commended mood,
And takes no thought how wind and rain by fits
Are howling out of doors.

Epilogue

A few days after Coleman fell, the 58th Infantry, along with the rest of the Ivy Division, broke through the German lines between the Argonne and the Meuse. Within weeks, Germany surrendered, and the Great War was over. After recovering from the shocking news of Will's death, received in December 1918, Greeta did, in fact, go on to "do her utmost to make Winifred well and strong and intelligent and good," and Winifred did, in fact, "make a noble woman by and by." She married Howard Elliott, and together they had 5 daughters, 18 grandchildren, and, to date, 16 great-grandchildren.

"Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands, for his children will be mighty in the land" (Ps. 112:1-2).

38. Christian A. Bach & Henry Noble Hall, *The Fourth Division, Its Services and Achievements in the World War*, 127 (Issued by the Division 1920).
39. *Ibid.* at 131.
40. *Ibid.* at 136.
41. *Ibid.* at 138.
42. *Ibid.* at 139.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.* at 143.
46. *Ibid.* at 143-44.
47. *Ibid.* at 144.
48. *Ibid.* at 143.
49. *Ibid.* at 152.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.* at 146.
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.* at 147.
55. *Ibid.* at 148.
56. *Ibid.* at 149.
57. G.L. Morrow, *The Fifty-Eighth Infantry in the World War*, 106 (The 58th Infantry History Association, 1919).
58. *Ibid.* at 106.
59. *Ibid.* at 107.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.* at 109.

BOOKS

[*Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*, Bill McKibben, Times Books, 261 pages]

Price, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness

By Caleb Stegall

IN 1947, two titans of 20th-century economic theory, Ludwig von Mises and Wilhelm Röpke, met in Röpke's home of Geneva, Switzerland. During the war, the Genevan fathers coped with shortages by providing citizens with small garden allotments outside the city for growing vegetables. These citizen gardens became so popular with the people of Geneva that the practice was continued even after the war and the return to abundance. Röpke was particularly proud of these citizen farmers, and so he took Mises on a tour of the gardens. "A very inefficient way of producing foodstuffs!" Mises noted disapprovingly. "Perhaps so, but a very efficient way of producing human happiness" was Röpke's rejoinder.

Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future by Bill McKibben is essentially a book-length recapitulation and exploration of the Mises-Röpke exchange. McKibben's task is first to demonstrate the failure of established economic theory to provide an adequate and sustainable account of human well-being and second to develop an alternative paradigm that offers a more durable way forward. On the former count, *Deep Economy* must be considered a rousing success. On the latter, more difficult score, it is disappointing. McKibben provides valuable insight and important stories of resistance, but he would have benefited from a more thoroughgoing appreciation of the insights of the communitarian Right.

Deep Economy begins with some simple questions: What does it mean to be rich? Is more necessarily better? Why aren't we happy? McKibben argues that while our preoccupation with utilitarian economics has produced unprecedented growth and material wealth, it has faltered when it comes to providing human happiness and satisfaction. For example, McKibben points out that the established measure of economic growth—the Gross National Product—incorporates perverse incentives for economic exchange such that the most productive (read "happy") citizen is "a cancer patient who totals his car on his way to meet with his divorce lawyer." Obviously, evaluating human welfare requires a more supple set of tools.

Far more alarming to McKibben, however, is that the "American way of life"—easy mobility, hyper-individualism, mass consumerism, and the commodification of all things at the altar of the market—has made our society dangerously unstable. "Peak oil" (the phenomena of global oil demand outpacing declining supplies) and global warming feature prominently in McKibben's argument. He likewise cites studies and anecdotes describing Americans' general sense of malaise and unease, the widening gap between the haves and have-nots, our obscenely high rate of incarceration, and so on—all despite the continued growth of GDP. This litany amounts to well-trodden ground, and McKibben ably covers it again.

For anyone paying attention, the suggestion that our current economic and social arrangements are like a rickety house just waiting for the roof to fall in is not a hard sell. It is clear that the era of abundant growth and progress driven by a nearly insatiable appetite for the earth's accumulated stores of cheap fossil energy is nearing an end. It is clear that our political and economic elites are mostly in denial about what this means for our social order. It is clear, whether one buys McKibben's global-warming alarmism or not, that our sprawl mania is ecologically unsustainable, causing dangerous depletions of natural resources from top soil to water. It is clear that the financial sector is hopelessly overburdened with a legacy of cheap money (which means high debt) backed solely by the presence of cheap oil. It is clear that policy makers in Washington are intent on continuing to provide centralized subsidies to this stumbling behemoth thereby squelching the possible development of true alternatives. Finally, it is clear that as the billions of consumers in the developing world come online and begin to want and expect what we want and expect, the age-old law of scarcity will reassert itself with a vengeance.

Thus the age of "happy motoring"—as James Howard Kunstler has dubbed it—is all but over. McKibben is justifiably worried that the collapse of the postwar economy may bring down the tattered remnants of the social arrangements (not to mention the ecological foundation on which they were built) that stood for centuries. The totality of these complex arrangements are encapsulated for McKibben in the word "community," which is the real subject of his book. Much of *Deep Economy* is taken up with the stories of those who are trying to salvage the wealth of true communities before they completely slip from living memory.

It is at this point that McKibben's assets as a journalist become most valu-

> WHILE OUR PREOCCUPATION WITH **UTILITARIAN ECONOMICS HAS PRODUCED UNPRECEDENTED GROWTH AND MATERIAL WEALTH**, IT HAS **FALTERED** WHEN IT COMES TO PROVIDING **HUMAN HAPPINESS AND SATISFACTION**.

able to his argument. His prose is lively and engaging, anecdotal rather than systematic. McKibben tells of his "year of eating locally" during which he attempted to obtain all his food from the valley in which he lives. In the course of this experiment, McKibben details the massive global food industry which produces, packages, and delivers virtually every bite to our lips across an average of 1,500 miles. Trying to eat locally was simply an "artificial attempt to persuade myself that some other view of 'the economy' was even remotely plausible, that in the absence of the industrial food system I wouldn't starve."

McKibben describes less artificial attempts as well. He introduces the reader to small farm experiments in Vermont and Cuba, both redolent of Röpke's citizen gardens in Geneva. Burlington is home to the Intervale, a 200-acre stretch in an industrial area that at one time served as the city dump and is now leased in small plots to citizen farmers who share equipment, know-how, and good times. The Intervale provides 8 percent of all the fresh food consumed in Burlington. When Cuba faced global isolation following the collapse of the Soviet Union, its system of food production had to change radically. "What happened," writes McKibben, "was simple, if unexpected. Cuba learned to stop exporting sugar and instead started raising its own food again, growing it on small private farms and in thousands of pocket-sized urban market gardens." Moreover, "in so doing, Cubans have created what may be the world's largest working model of a semisustainable agriculture, one that relies far less than the rest of the world does on oil, on chemicals, on shipping vast quantities of food back and forth."

The upshot of these experiences demonstrates that "if all you are worried about is the greatest yield per acre, then *smaller farms produce more food*. ... You get more food per *acre* with small farms; more food per *dollar* with big ones." Subservience to the economic prime directive of maximizing every dollar actually diminishes the quality and potential quantity of our food supply—not even mentioning the cultural, communal, and political goods that attend production on small farms. As one Intervale farmer, who also happens to be the chairman of Vermont's House Agriculture Committee, said, "There's an incredible resurgence of people in a directionless society suddenly wanting to find their roots. There's real satisfaction in producing your own food." Or put more succinctly by one newly minted Cuban farmer: "[Before], I was fat, a functionary. I was a bureaucrat."

McKibben describes similar stories of plausible alternative economies in a dizzying array of sectors and places around the world: from rabbit farmers in China to a community-owned general store in Wyoming to locally produced radio entertainment to creative mass public transportation in Brazil to peasant farms in Bangladesh. For McKibben, the lesson in all of these stories is that we remain capable, if pushed, of defending and developing what he dubs the durable "economics of neighborliness."

For all of these virtues, *Deep Economy* falls short of its more ambitious goal of laying a theoretical framework for thinking about human happiness, community, and, well being. To the simple question, "Why aren't we happy?" McKibben offers no compelling reply to the obvious rejoinder from most Americans: "Speak for yourself, I am quite happy." Or perhaps more honestly: "I rather enjoy being unhappy in my sprawl, my weekend getaway, my three car garage, and all of the accoutrements of lumpenleisure" (another Kunstlerism). Here *Deep Economy* would have benefited from the more compelling argument, articulated by communitarians of the Right (from Tocqueville to Robert Nisbet) that hyperutilitarianism makes citizens less free.

As Tocqueville argued, a benevolent yet centralized power will "cover the surface of society with a network of small, complicated rules, minute and uniform" until man's will "is not shattered, but softened, bent, and guided." By this process, society "is reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals of which the government is the shepherd" of an "innumerable multitude of men, all equal and alike, incessantly endeavoring to procure the petty and paltry pleasures with which they glut their lives." This form of total control is "combined more easily than is commonly believed" with "outward forms of freedom" and can even be established under the "sovereignty of the people."

Absent this insight, McKibben is left with the far weaker argument that hyper-individualism simply makes us unhappy. "We need, in short, a new utilitarianism," announces McKibben—a utilitarianism to measure human happiness. To that end, he turns to economist Richard Layard who writes, "We now know that what people say about how they feel corresponds closely to the actual levels of activity in different parts of the brain, which can be measured in standard scientific ways." McKibben concludes that the "idea that there is a state called happiness, and that we can dependably figure out what it feels like and how to measure it, is extremely subversive. It would allow economists to ... stop asking 'What did you buy?' and to start asking 'Is your life good?'" To the contrary, claims granting vast new powers to elite experts do not strike me as subversive in any good way. It is at this point that I wish McKibben would have recalled the far more subversive and anarchical wisdom of Wendell

BURLINGTON IS HOME TO THE INTERVALE, A 200-ACRE STRETCH IN AN INDUSTRIAL AREA THAT AT ONE TIME SERVED AS THE **CITY DUMP** AND IS **NOW LEASED IN SMALL PLOTS TO CITIZEN FARMERS** WHO SHARE EQUIPMENT, KNOW-HOW, AND **GOOD TIMES.**

Berry (to whom *Deep Economy* is dedicated) who wrote, "As soon as the generals and the politicos / can predict the motions of your mind, / lose it. Leave it as a sign / to mark the false trail, the way you didn't go." Instead, McKibben's only recourse is to the stale status-quo of social-science data purporting to assign "happiness scores" to various socio-economic groupings.

Again, the question of community is not a question of happy feelings but one of social power, as Robert Nisbet so forcefully argued. This truth is illustrated clearly by a group of villagers McKibben visited in Bangladesh. An international expert was selling genetically enhanced grain, allegedly to resolve vitamin deficiencies in local diets. McKibben notes that rather than object on the more decadent, happiness-oriented, Western grounds that genetically modified food is "icky" and "not organic," the Bengali wisely understood that the true stakes were much higher. They "instantly realized that the new rice would require fertilizer and pesticide, meaning both illness and debt." In fact, they recognized rather easily what we Americans seem so slow to grasp—that giving up access and control over their own food supply meant giving up real power over their own lives.

The primary characteristic of the disease McKibben describes so well is only hinted at in *Deep Economy*, but never adequately named. That characteristic is not too much freedom but rather the loss of the freedom of communities to exercise real social power and authority due to oppressive and totalitarian systems of centralized political and economic control by bureaucrats, experts, and functionaries. To start a recovery project with a "new utilitarianism" of "happiness scores" is to fit the wolves with tailor-made wool. Lord spare us both the blowhards from the Department of Commerce and the busybodies from the Ministry of Happiness! ■

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and strongest body, and maintaining peak sexual performance. We cannot die. Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we shall live.

So much for mortality. As for guilt, somehow our society has bought the lie that guilt is no problem at all, unless it is felt. All fingers must point to the professions of psychology and psychiatry for forging this deception, and selling it after the model of the most talented con artists and snake oil salesmen. The feeling of guilt is now a medical disability; the reality of guilt must at all costs be denied.

I recall vividly an experience from some 20 years ago, as I sat eating in a restaurant within hearing distance of two men who had no interest in keeping their comments private. "Look, she made the decision to have the abortion," the conversation went. "Well, that's that. Now she feels sad all the time because she feels guilty. The doctor told us that we have to be tough with her for her own good, and tell her to knock it off, quit moping, and get on with it."

Funny how the doctor knew that would happen. Probably, as my experience of sidewalk counseling has made me know, one of these heroes was the sperm donor who, after a bit of pleasure, had to muscle his girl into making what he considered to be the responsible decision. First the girl was deprived of her child, and now she is deprived of her mourning, her conscience—her soul. Part of her very inconvenient humanity had to be eradicated, of course for her own good, just as the child was exterminated for its own good. It's always for their own good: "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel" (Prov. 12:10).

The feeling of guilt, even when it is another doing the feeling, gets in the way of sheer pleasure. The feeling of guilt is a malady, and must be treated by searing the conscience with a hot iron. After that, one can sleep nights, if not with peace, at least without painful, annoying distractions.

Thank God for Ash Wednesday. We are reminded by the words, "Remember, O Man, that thou art dust, and unto dust shalt thou return," that death is a certainty, and we can cease from endless, tireless labors to stay young and naturally immortal. We can focus on something bigger: the eternity into which we most surely shall enter.

We are reminded also that guilt is not so much a feeling as it is a fact, a fact of our fallen sinful lives. We do not have to eradicate the feeling of guilt, and we can cease from the hopeless struggle to deny it. The feeling of guilt must lead us to God, and that fact of guilt be dealt with by Christ, who alone cures that fact and creates a restful conscience. Our consciences can live quite powerfully, and we should not consider it a sickness, but rather the greatest health of the soul leading us to seek absolution with repentance. When we in faith give our conscience its place of effect and power, we face mortality without fear.

So I find comfort in the themes of mortality and guilt on Ash Wednesday. It is the world, not I, that is mad. ⌖

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Opening Saint Exupery's Box

Caleb Stegall *on Cloning & the Knowledge of Man*

Antoine de Saint Exupery's *The Little Prince* is one of the twentieth century's best-loved stories. It is a fable about the secret of happiness. *The Little Prince* begins when a fictional Saint Exupery crashes his airplane into the Sahara Desert and encounters a most unlikely interplanetary visitor—a boy, the Little Prince. The boy is a traveler from a tiny planet no bigger than a house where he has lived alone with his fabulous possessions. But pride in those possessions has driven the Little Prince on his stellar journey and landed him in the middle of the Sahara.

The boy immediately, but politely, demands of Saint Exupery, "If you please, draw me a sheep." Saint Exupery, taken a bit aback, begins to draw—to great cries of disapproval from the Little Prince. Saint Exupery's sheep simply does not capture the essence of sheepness. Finally, in frustration, Saint Exupery draws a square box and explains to the Little Prince that the sheep lives inside the box.

Delighted, the boy is satisfied, content with the sheep he cannot see that meets all of the sheep qualities of his imagination. In this opening sequence of the story, Saint Exupery hints at the "very simple secret" the Little Prince will later learn more explicitly from another character: "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."

In early 1997, the sensational story of Dr. Ian Wilmut and his scientific team's achievement of cloning a sheep awed the world. Saint Exupery would have relished the irony. For here, Wilmut demonstrated skill in

the representational arts far surpassing that of the fictional Saint Exupery—with a sheep nonetheless! One wonders if the Little Prince would have been more satisfied with Wilmut's sheep than he had been with Saint Exupery's drawings.

Picking up on the theme, the French Paper *Courrier International* soon ran a story with the ominous headline "Draw Me a Man." The *Courrier* recapitulated the demand of the Little Prince—only upping the ante from sheep to man—and wondered implicitly which course we would take: Would we choose the new man science could "draw" for us, or, like the Little Prince, would our heart's eye choose to know imaginatively the man housed in Saint Exupery's box?

Unanswered Question

This question remains, as yet, unanswered. But it looms near, as fundamental as any with regard to the ultimate direction and character of the nascent century.

As I write this in late November, the *New York Times* reports that "a small, privately financed biotechnology company said yesterday that it had created the first human embryos ever produced by cloning." President Bush says that he is "unequivocally . . . opposed to the cloning of human beings either for reproduction or for research." The House of Representatives last summer passed a bill (H.R. 2505) that would ban the cloning of all human beings, including human embryos. Currently pending in the Senate is Kansas Senator Sam Brownback's version of the House anti-cloning bill.

Meanwhile, proponents of the potential benefits of cloning technologies to human health and happiness are carrying big rhetorical sticks. Representative Jim McDermott argued on the floor of the House this summer that opponents of cloning are like the pope who "told Galileo to quit making those marks in his notebook. The Earth is the center of the universe, he said. We all know that. . . . Now, here we are making a decision like we were the house of cardinals on a religious issue when, in fact, scientists are struggling to find out how human beings actually work." Thus the passage of H.R. 2505 would be a "papal event," he said.

Similarly, in 1997, a seemingly outraged Senator Tom Harkin declared that there could be no "appropriate limits to human knowledge." To those "who are saying 'Stop, we can't play God,' I say 'Fine. Take your ranks alongside Pope Paul V, who in 1616 tried to stop Galileo.'"

Certainly the use and abuse of scientific knowledge is a hot topic in the political and cultural arenas. But one fascinating and less often discussed aspect of this debate is its rich treatment within our literary tradition. From Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* to H. G. Wells's *The Island of Dr. Moreau* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, writers have long been fascinated with the implications for society of scientific manipulation of human beings.

The warnings typically center on some experiment gone monstrously awry, or some mind control technology turned by a malevolent government against its citizenry. These stories, however, tend not to accurately project the uses of bio-technical wizardry. Rather, cloning will likely be put to less fantastic but more practical uses in the real world: curing infertility, curing disease, extending life, and generally making us happy. At least that is what the proponents of the cloning gospel would have us believe.

Two early pioneers of cloning—if not of the science, at least of the public relations campaign—Gregory Pence and Lee Silver, make sure to argue this point emphatically. According to Pence and Silver, the soothsayers' tales of an underling race of clone-slaves are nonsense. Cloning is only feared because it is not understood. And what needs to be understood, from the perspective of Pence and Silver, are the wonderful potential benefits cloning offers.

Pence imagines a time 100 years from now when perfectly healthy centigenarians will "thank [their] parents" for cloning them from healthy genomes. These old ladies and gents will remember their parents as "real pioneers" who gave them "35 extra years of good life because of what they did." Silver, though not quite so optimistic, comes to the same conclusion: "It is individuals . . . who will seize control of these new technologies" and use them "to help their children achieve health, happiness, and success."

Kass's Repugnance

Emerging as the leading voice of dissent from the Pence/Silver line of reasoning is ethicist Leon R. Kass, who argues that the "wisdom of repugnance" counsels strongly against cloning. Kass makes his case essentially from natural law; from what we all "intuit and feel, immediately and without argument."

For Kass, cloning represents the most intimate "violation of things that we rightfully hold dear." Our

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naturally imbued defense against such things is repugnance. "Repugnance . . . warn[s] us not to transgress what is unspeakably profound" and "may be the only voice left that speaks up to defend the central core of our humanity. Shallow are the souls that have forgotten how to shudder." Kass makes an effective and necessary argument against cloning.

However, the wisdom of repugnance will likely be viewed as strangely remote, even inappropriate, in the face of such miracles as therapeutic cloning—a technique that would allow your doctor to extract a few of your own cells, clone them, and then zap them in just the right way so as to stimulate them to grow into a new heart to replace your old, worn-out heart. Tennessee law professor Glenn Reynolds says Kass "simply thinks that it's a bad thing for people to live longer, healthier lives and that it's desirable for us to die at around 70." To which Reynolds adds, "you first, Leon."

Reynolds's discussion is a deliberate caricature of Kass's argument. He recognizes that the issue is more complex, but his point is well made—and well taken. Are ethicists truly prepared to stand in the way of cloning, particularly of therapeutic cloning, which promises people the opportunity to give themselves, their spouses, and their children the chance to be cured, to be happy, and to live a better life?

The great double-cross of the cloning debate is that cultural conservatives who decry the advances of cloning science are doomed to be defeated—rhetorically at least—by that which they hold most dear: the preciousness of the gift of life. For the wisdom of repugnance will recede like flood waters when a parent is confronted with a child from whom that gift is slipping and a doctor who thinks cloning technology just may save him.

Still, Kass is doing valuable work because he makes clear that there are truths that all people "intuit and feel, immediately and without argument." But against repugnance must be set another truth all people intuit without argument—that it is good to heal and that death is unnatural. When arguing against a new method of bettering life, more than an appeal to natural repugnance is needed. Otherwise, the response, to which there is no reply, will always be, "you first."

The faint outlines of that "something more" that is needed can be found, I think, by dipping again from the well of literary wisdom. Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "The Birthmark" is a cautionary tale directed, for all practical purposes, at the likes of Pence, Silver, and Reynolds. Its lesson is that scientific zeal for the material good can cloak a failure to pursue the greater Good.

The central character of the story is the scientist Alymer. Alymer's beautiful wife, Georgiana, has only one flaw: a birthmark scarring the side of her face. Despite Georgiana's near perfection of character and figure, Alymer becomes more and more obsessed with her birthmark.

In a desperation born out of a confused mixture of selfish pride and genuine love for his wife, Alymer works frantically in his lab to concoct a potion that will remove the mark. Finally successful, Alymer presents Georgiana with the draught; and it works. The birthmark fades, and disappears. But Alymer's triumph turns to despair, for soon after the mark is gone, Georgiana is overcome by the potion and dies.

Alymer's mistake, hidden from his own understanding by his desire for Georgiana's bodily good, proved deadly. In the context of cloning, it remains to those of us trying to apply the brakes to bio-technological progress to determine and articulate the contours of the mistake we suspect is being made by cloning apologists. It is a mistake that is philosophical rather than scientific in nature, a mistake not in the physical results but in the doing itself.

Known by Heart

Cloning may "work" in the scientific sense, as Alymer's potion did not work. However, it will fail on more fundamental counts if we accept what the Little Prince would not: that the essence of sheepness (or humanness) is merely genes and cells and bodies.

In so doing, we will forsake that which the Little Prince did not: call it heart-knowledge. As the poet Wendell Berry has said, there are "things that can be known only by cherishing." These things must be known "not just conceptually but imaginatively as well. . . . They must be pictured in the mind and in the memory; they must be known with affection, 'by heart.'"

When boxes are opened, when human cells are cracked, when genetic codes are broken, secrets tend to be forgotten. If we are destined to open Saint Exupery's box and lead clonal man out—which we seem to be—it is essential that we discover new ways to remember "by heart" the old secrets. The secret that the Little Prince learned: that "it is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye." The secret that Alymer learned: that the ultimate cure for the blemishes of humanity will not be found in a lab.

It is the secret that, in the words of C. S. Lewis, "pierces us like a rapier at the smell of a bonfire, the sound of wild ducks flying overhead, the title of *The Well at the World's End*, the opening lines of *Kubla Khan*, the morning cobwebs in late summer, or the noise of falling waves." It is the secret that we were not made for this world—and neither can we make *ourselves* for this world. It is the secret of happiness. ✥

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Reviewed by Caleb Stegall

SEARCHING FOR A USABLE PAST

OF TIME AND PLACE

by Richard Quinney.

Ivan R. Dee (Chicago), 192 pp. $28.00 cloth, 2006.

THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE has always existed in tension with, if not outright hostility towards, the strictures of time and place. By the very nature of its settlement and political birth, America was conceived as a "new world." A place of renewed opportunity, second chances, and a fresh start. Alexis de Tocqueville went so far as to describe America in Biblical terms as a Mount Ararat of sorts; a pristine continent newly risen from the floodwaters ready to be claimed by Europe's castaways. Stephen Tonsor has noted that in America, "the notion of a 'fresh start' takes on the proportions of a national purpose." Going even further, Henry James once suggested that America could not even qualify as a state in the European sense of the word as it has no defining institutional presence:

> [N]o aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen, no palaces, no castles, nor manors, nor old country-houses, nor parsonages, nor thatched cottages, nor ivied ruins; no cathedral, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches; . . . no literature, no novels, no museums, no pictures, no political society.

To the extent America has developed an institutional culture, it has done so in keeping with its founding, as a wholly voluntaristic venture premised less on external social bonds than on rational individual choice.

Michael Oakeshott wrote that the man of pure rational choice must have a "deep distrust of time" stemming from "an impatient hunger for eternity." Likewise, his mind has no home, "no atmosphere, no changes of season and temperature." According to the dominant American mythos of the fresh start, Oakeshott's rationalist is the ideal American: a man unbound by time or place, restrained only by the scope of his own imagination and will. "He strives to live each day as if it were his first, and he believes that to form a habit is to fail."

These ideals of new beginnings and a fresh start have imprinted themselves forcefully on the American soul, giving us everything from the frontier spirit and entrepreneurial innovation to the rugged individual and rags-to-riches fairytales. Americans still view themselves as liberated from Old World limitations: the dead weight of ancient blood-and-soil loyalties; the stultifying expectations of parochial locales; and the suffocating blanket of the-way-it's-always-been.

Freed from these bonds, Americans have experienced, on the one hand, stunning material progress unleashed by wave after wave of creative dynamism and, on the other hand, the tragic alienation of loosing their identity as part of a particular "people" within time and place. Yet over the past half-century, with the increasing exhaustion of Progress as an ideal, there has been a renewed interest in discerning the limits necessary to a functional identity. As such, traditionalists (or at least those hungry for an identity they believe a tradition might supply) have engaged in a variety of heritage recovery projects in order to preserve or perhaps discover a usable past and an alternative American myth from which, to paraphrase Eliot, fragments might be shored against our ruin.

The genealogical craze in America might be considered one symptom of this desire, and on a deeper level, the emergence of the genealogical memoir as a kind of populist literary genre exemplifies the felt need for recovering a distinctly personal heritage. With *Of Time and Place*, Richard Quinney's scrapbook-like account of his ancestry and their farm in Wisconsin, Quinney takes this genre to new levels of introspection.

"This place, to which I am native, I want you to know about." With these words Quinney begins his slender volume, and for the next eighty pages of graciously subdued prose set against everyday photographs of his family and farm, Quinney relentlessly pursues this theme. In many respects, the story itself is not very interesting. There are births and marriages, small successes and small failures, family scandals and changing machinery—and photos of nearly all of these things. Through all of this, the character Quinney brings most forcefully to life is the place itself. We see the various ways the land was lived on and made to produce, the tools and craft of preserving and using the fruit of the land, the love-hate relationship Quinney himself has with the farm.

Quinney is most insightful in his self-awareness of the disorienting tension between being part of an American family's fresh start and his settled life as part of multi-generational family farm.

> Being a descendent of emigrants naturally sets the pace for a life. No doubt all emigrants, the generation that left the old country, experienced the pains of entering a new land. They lived their lives never again feeling at home any place in the world. For those attempting a return, even for a visit, a break had occurred that could not be healed. And in the new land, few emigrants ever made a home that they knew for certain would be theirs. Once you leave home, your native land, no matter how tenuous your hold has been, you can never feel at home anywhere you live.

Quinney characterizes his family's life as forged "on the borderland." The borderland experience haunts Quinney and is the abiding specter of his memoir which, as he notes, is his "way of keeping the ancestors with us, as if alive." At times during his quest Quinney feels he is "lost in other times and places." In his real life, he struggles between his desire to "leave this God-forsaken place [the farm]" and his inability, no matter how far he runs, to do so.

Finally, crucially, Quinney recounts his efforts in retirement to preserve the farm. Most tellingly, there are no photographs of future generations of Quinney farmers. No one younger than Quinney appears at all. In fact, all the evidence suggests that Quinney is the last of the line. The farm will not be farmed again, at least not by a Quinney. In place of that living thread, Quinney arrives at the photographic metaphor of a still life, the metaphor at the heart of *Of Time and Place*. "My self-imposed project is to photograph the artifacts, to make a record of the things that remain of the life that once was here. . . . These old and inanimate things now have an afterlife as they rest among the ruins." Quinney peppers the last pages of his memoir with these still lifes—photographs of old artifacts, no longer used, piled against walls, in tool sheds, on shelves. The impression is one of an uncovered Egyptian tomb, all worldly possessions waiting patiently to be used again, in the afterlife. Quinney confirms the impression: "I am haunted by the mysteries of time and place. Fortunate I am to have my camera to see into the afterlife of things."

Quinney's narrative is pungent with the invitation to trespass. It is profoundly unsettling, as if Quinney has compensated for a failure of issue with a public embalming. The reader begins to sense something unseemly about his presence. We know we should not be here. But Quinney beckons

us in, tempting us to unearth the dead, a desire both vaguely grotesque yet also strangely compelling for an America cut adrift. In this, *Of Time and Place* teaches its most important lesson unwittingly—that America is all too ready to settle for a "still life" of its past; unearthed, framed, and stuck on the wall (or in the scrapbook), awaiting the afterlife. In doing so we trespass against the past, ending up haunted, as Quinney is, forever hearing sounds that come "from another land and another time." In the end, most will succumb to the kitschy traditionalism of suburbs with streets named Poplar Lane and "distressed" furniture purchased as talismans to ward off the ghosts.

The need for an alternative American myth—one that is situated in a usable past of a particular time and place—is real and pressing. But housing that past in a museum is a false remedy, partaking of the same derailments of therapeutic management that grip the man with a pathological need for endless fresh starts. The human need for belonging is fundamentally outside our control; it is something achieved only in submission. The most basic lesson may be that a usable past requires a usable present. When I was young, our family frequented the cemetery in which my ancestors were buried. We picnicked there and the children played hide-and-seek among the gravestones. It is an apt and pregnant image. A living heritage picnics on the graves of its ancestors. That is no trespass, but is instead an act of loving continuity with the past. And the successful inhabitation of a place requires transmitting the intimacy of that fidelity, not in "still life" to strangers, but across generations within the ties that bind. Those ties that bind—buttressed by a mutual effort for survival under conditions of hardship and scarcity—form the only existential context within which the ghosts rest easy.

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Essay by Caleb Stegall

STEALING DOROTHY: 'THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ' AND MY FORTUNATE HOME

IF EVER AN ASSOCIATION between a book and state has been stamped on the national consciousness it must be the up-and-down literary-geographical marriage between Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and the State of Kansas. As any Kansan who has traveled outside our fair state can testify, he will be repeatedly accosted by various Munchkins with the gleeful nostrum that he "isn't in Kansas anymore." Worse, he will be forced to suffer the snickering of sophisticates as they offer their greetings to Dorothy and Toto back home.

Not to be outdone, our enterprising state government even launched an expansive campaign to brand Kansas as the "Land of Ahs" back in the 1980s. The irony of this reversal was apparently lost on the punning geniuses at the Kansas Tourism Department. Unfortunately, these giants of literary perception (both inside and out of our state) do as much of a disservice to Baum's masterpiece as they do to Kansas. In fact, the Kansas of popular imagination—a desolate cultural wasteland of drudgery and boredom from which only a lucky few escape—is not

A farmstead in Gray County, Kansas, 1939.

a product of Baum's vision at all, but rather of Hollywood's bastar[...] interpretation.

In the 1939 film adaptation The *Wizard of Oz*, Judy Garland's Dorothy i[...] stuck in the grey world of Kansas, home of dust, tornadoes, and nothing t[...] do. She pouts and pines and sings that "Some day I'll wish upon a star" an[...] go "Somewhere over the rainbow / Way up high." Soon her wish is grante[...] as she is whisked off by the dreaded twister to the Land of Oz. To empha[...] size the transformation, Dorothy emerges from the black and white Kansa[...] landscape into the full Technicolor world of Oz with all of its delights an[...] strange, exotic occupants. Definitely not in Kansas anymore.

By the end of the film Dorothy has learned the moral that she has alwa[...] had the power to go home because she never really left. She carries Kansa[...] with her wherever she goes, just as, it is clearly implied, she will carry O[...] with her back to Kansas when she returns. This mythical ability to go and b[...] everywhere and nowhere at once has become a staple of modern children[...] literature—appealing as it does to the deracinated angst of children wh[...] have never really been at home anywhere.

To hammer the point home, after the incantation "there's no place lik[...] home," Garland's Dorothy wakes up back in Kansas to find out that, literall[...] she never left. It was all a dream, one that will no doubt inspire Dorothy to s[...] out into adulthood forever chasing another Technicolor dream, comforte[...]

by the sugary confection of the home she takes with her everywhere.

This profoundly anti-place notion of "home" was just what the nation didn't need as the European continent descended into the darkness of World War II. In fact, the 1939 film version of *Wizard* (complete with goose-stepping bad guys) quickly became the anthem for Allied—and especially American—participation in World War II. The war became the social watershed of the twentieth century, with its massive mobilizations that gutted Middle America and left it for dead in the purported cause of its defense.

Soldiers marched to Germany singing "We're off to see Herr Hitler" and beleaguered Britons wished upon a star singing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" during the Blitz. A hundred thousand American farm boys carried their homes with them to foreign fields, found Technicolor bullets waiting, and never woke up. That scion of Kansas, Dwight Eisenhower, did come home—to Washington—and comforted the nation with a grown-up Dorothy-complex.

The film's message and prominence as a vehicle for mobilization undoubtedly influenced a little-known cartoonist named Theodor Geissel, who was busy at the time producing anti-isolationist tracts and generally agitating for America's entry into the war. Geissel, better known as Dr. Seuss, would crystallize that moral in his 60-odd children's books, none moreso than his last, *Oh, the Places You'll Go!*

With echoes of magic shoes and brains, Seuss tells his young charges:

> Congratulations!
> Today is your day.
> You're off to Great Places!
> You're off and away!
> You have brains in your head.
> You have feet in your shoes.
> You can steer yourself
> any direction you choose.

But, Seuss warns, don't get stuck in "a most useless place. / The Waiting Place":

> NO!
> That's not for you!
> Somehow you'll escape
> all that waiting and staying.
> You'll find the bright places
> where Boom Bands are playing. . . .
> So get on your way!

Kansas—life's waiting room. Land of Ahs, here we come.

Nothing has been as damaging to the real Middle West than this up wardly mobile notion now infecting its third generation of prairie dwel ers. Get smart and get out. Even better, you don't even have to really leav when, as Milton's Saran once reminded us, "the mind is its own place."

If Hollywood and General Eisenhower stole Dorothy from Kansas (onl to have her later filched by the progressive-transgressive gay-pride move ment), I'm stealing her back.

While it was the political and social mobilization of World War II tha defined the reception of Hollywood's *Wizard*, it was an entirely differen social context that gave meaning to Dorothy's adventures in the origina Published in 1900 at the height of the populist revolt in Kansas again eastern interests and powers, Baum's *Wizard* is animated by the same popu list spirit in defense of home.

The lion William Jennings Bryan roared at the 1896 Democrat Convention: "We are fighting in the defense of our homes, our famili and posterity. We have petitioned, and our petitions have been scorned. W have entreated, and our entreaties have been disregarded. We have begge and they have mocked . . . We beg no longer; we entreat no more; we pet tion no more. We defy them!" So too, Baum's Dorothy defies the easter powers of "Oz" in the Emerald City (where everything is a shade of gree in defense of her homeland.

Gone are the sickly characteristics of the film's Dorothy—there is n a hint in the book of Dorothy pining to go somewhere over the rainbo Baum's Dorothy is full of pluck and folk wisdom rather than the simpe ing, helpless provincial of the film; the real Dorothy has no truck wi Hollywood's sentimental vision of "home" and bears instead love and a fection towards a real place. Completely absent from the book is the d structive moral that "the mind is its own place." In fact, Baum gives the opposite lesson: places are real, Kansas is real, Oz is real, their inte ests do not always align, and to truly belong to one place, we must reje other places. Ultimately, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is an Odyssean tale forsaking the Technicolor dream of immortality in favor of the dirt th is one's own.

In perhaps my favorite exchange in all of literature, the Scarecr tells Dorothy that he cannot understand why she should want to leave t beautiful Land of Oz to return to the admittedly dusty plains of Kans "That is because you have no brains," says Dorothy. "No matter how drea and gray our homes are, we people of flesh and blood would rather l there than in any other country, be it ever so beautiful." The Scarecr concedes: "Of course I cannot understand it. If your heads were stuff with straw, like mine, you would probably all live in the beautiful plac

and then Kansas would have no people at all. It is fortunate for Kansas that you have brains."

Baum captures perfectly the prairie populist's eye-twinkling, slightly self-deprecating sense of the superiority of humbly standing on one's own two feet in one's own country. Dorothy did indeed have brains.

Fortunate daughter of Kansas—fortunate home.

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Ghostly Echoes: A Eulogy for Covenanter Psalmody[1]

Caleb Stegall

I.

The great bulk, if not the entirety, of contemporary literature in Reformed and Covenanter circles concerning the subject of psalmody approaches the issue in theological terms, as a question of moral rightness or correct exegesis of history and sacred texts. Without denying that these approaches can be appropriate, it is curious that the practice of Presbyterian psalmody, and particularly of Covenanter psalmody, has rarely elicited discussion of perhaps its core character, which is primarily social in nature.

That is, psalmody as a practiced art is a ritual of worship which carries a potent social authority to create a particular kind of spiritual economy which defines a particular "People of God." In today's parlance psalmody is a "worship distinctive." A great deal of self-understanding is lost, however, in that euphemism. And while much effort has been expended defining and defending Covenanter distinctives, virtually no study has been done trying to understand how and why distinctives work in the first place. This essay attempts to remedy this deficiency by considering the practice of Covenanter psalmody in its historic, communal, and social dimension. This may strike some as an odd approach to a subject they have always held to be theological or exegetical in nature. Consider, however, the ways our understanding of marriage, for example, would be impoverished if we focused exclusively on its legal character and entirely ignored its social importance as formative of its members, its progeny, and the wider community. Similarly, should we fail to understand the communal nature of psalmody, we are left with a substantially weakened and wholly inadequate account of this great Covenanter "distinctive."

II.

Paul Tillich wrote that history is "dominated by one problem, to have a society which is guided by a present reality of a transcendent divine character ... to have the holy present."[2] In her important study of the English and Scottish Reformations, Debra Shuger notes that during any reformational moment, a key aspect will be the attempt to relocate the manifestation of the "holy" or the "present reality of the transcendent" in society.[3] "Viewed one

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[1] This essay is adapted from a lecture delivered in Lawrence, Kansas on November 18, 2006, entitled, "Crown, Covenant, and Compromise: The Covenanter Experience as a Type for American Protestant Life".

[2] Paul Tillich, A History of Christian Thought from Its Judaic and Hellenistic Origins to Existentialism, ed. Carl Braaten (New York, 1967), pp. 154-55.

[3] Debra Shuger, *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance* (University of Toronto Press, 1997), pp. 121-22.

way, Protestantism represents a denial of the need for visible, institutional holiness. In opposition to Catholics like Sir Thomas More who stressed the visibility and continuity of the Roman church, Protestants tended to redefine the 'holy, catholic, and apostolic church' of the Creed as the invisible church of the predestined.

Thus the church could not be identified with any specific historical church: it was not an institution but 'the whole multitude of the faithful.'"[4] From this phenomena Tillich derived what he would famously call the "protestant principle" which he defined as a "living, moving, restless power" which advances the "protest against any absolute claim made for a relative reality."[5]

The Covenanters in Scotland in the 16th and 17th centuries were no exception to this basic reformational trend. They were iconoclastic strippers of the altar. They rejected virtually every cultural manifestation of the holy or transcendent, from the transcendent authority of the English Crown to the actual church buildings themselves. As the Covenanters developed as a particular "People of God" they were confronted with this conflicting need to deny the symbols of their adversaries any transcendent efficacy while at the same time preserving or establishing new symbols and sites of the holy. In other words, of prime importance for the Covenanters was figuring out how, as a movement founded in iconoclastic fervor, to socially consolidate on-the-ground gains and reestablish an effective succession of new symbols and practices of truth and right order across the generations.

Covenanters accomplished this by relocating the holy ground in two things: first, in scripture, and second, in a highly regimented and traditional social structure that orbited around a particular identity with several very distinctive social markers. Included among these markers were the Scottish nationalism of the various political covenants, the economic interdependence of a pre-industrial agricultural community, and the social solidarity of a persecuted and oppressed minority. Within this political, economic, and social context, one practice and ritual stands out as exemplary for its ability to symbolically and compactly reflect this shared identity to one another and to the outside world—*a cappella* psalmody.[6]

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 140.

[6] The Covenanters were not the only group to revive the practice of psalmody during the Reformation era. Calvin himself advocated psalmody and other reformed groups, notably the Dutch Reformed, began with a strong commitment to psalmody. *See, e.g.,* J. Kortering, "Psalm Singing: A Reformed Heritage," available at http://www.prca.org/pamphlets/pamphlet_37.html. Other reformed practices of psalmody, however, differed significantly from Covenanter psalmody. For example, Dutch Reformed psalmody was never exclusive. *See, e.g.,* Council of Dordt, Church Order, Article 69 (1618-19).

The psalms are the spirituals of a once enslaved people who are still, by turns, on the run, oppressed, and besieged. The psalms cry out for deliverance, they call down the wrath of the Lord upon their enemies, they cling with tenacious ferocity to the promise that their line shall not perish from the earth, they speak lyrically of generational faithfulness and its attendant blessings, and they audaciously place their hope in the unseen world of the spirit to overcome the seen reality of sword and chariot turned against them. As with the development of the American negro spiritual hundreds of years later, the practice of *a cappella* psalmody lent itself perfectly to Covenanter existence—furtive worship gatherings in hiding during the "Killing Times," communal singing while working the fields, and the soulful lament and exuberant praise of a people dispossessed of everything but their own voices. Thus, in both form and substance, *a cappella* psalmody was a remarkably effective and authoritative bond among Covenanters. As a communal art and confession, the practice defined and consolidated the fullness of the Covenanter identity as a particular, historical "People of God."

It is this historically particular, corporate act which consummates Covenanters as members of one people that I am referring to as "Covenanter psalmody"—something real and tangible which is set apart and distinct from any externalized defense, rationale, or justification for it. The rationales may be good and even necessary, but the rite and ritual is where the authority of Covenanter psalmody "takes."

III.

During the 18th Century, as Covenanters began to emigrate in large numbers to America and the New World, their historic identity began to be tested and strained in new ways. In short, the Covenanters—like many traditional European groups—ran headlong into the ethos and pathos of America, what one commentator has called a desire for endless fresh starts.[7] America was the Protestant principle writ large, and whether Old World

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Perhaps for this reason, Dutch and other continental reformed bodies more quickly adapted to the practice of hymnody during the 18th and 19th centuries, especially in America. Moreover, Dutch Reformed and other continental forms of psalmody were rarely practiced *a cappella* as organs and other instruments were quickly put into use by these ecclesial bodies. *See, e.g.,* Bret Polman, "A History of Music in the Christian Reformed Church" (Grand Rapids, July 18, 1979), and available at http://www.calvin.edu/worship/about/crc/polman.php. Following the publication of a new Dutch Psalter in 1773, "organ accompaniment to congregational singing was the rule."

[7] Steven Tonsor, "A Fresh Start," collected in *Equality, Decadence, and Modernity* ed. Gregory Schneider (ISI 2005), p. 129 (In America, "the notion of a 'fresh start' takes on the proportions of a national purpose.").

Protestant communities could survive in the New World they had begat was very much in question.

The point of the problem was that much sharper in the Covenanter context because their symbols and social markers were so perfectly attuned to and representative of their Old World experience. During the slow transition which occurred between, say, 1800 and the 1940s, as the Covenanters went from a poor, rural, agrarian, politically and socially outcast people to increasingly mercantile, middle class, (sub)urban, and politically and socially connected people, the symbols of Covenanter identity began to "leak." That is to say, the symbolic significance of Covenanter psalmody and indeed its entire function as a symbol illuminating the community's corporate identity became opaque over time. Like a darkening pane of glass, the meaning of and beyond Covenanter psalmody grew harder and harder to see as each passing generation became further removed from the original experiences that had engendered the ritual—both its meaning and authority—in the first place.

For example, communal worship through *a cappella* spirituals loses its capacity as a compact carrier of social identity when its context shifts from the fields to the factory, or, even worse, the office. Key to understanding the "bleeding out" of Covenanter identity is understanding that this is not mere nostalgia for a bygone era. It is no coincidence that the fallout from this transition over the last seventy-five years has been a decline in the Covenanter church: fewer congregations, fewer members, fewer missionaries, and most dramatically, fewer Covenanter adults who were once Covenanter children. This is because as vitally important social symbols such as *a cappella* psalmody leak truth, they likewise leak authority. In other words, they lose their stickiness; their ability to bind the allegiance of successive generations to the truth, identity, and memory they carry. This is the way peoples die.

IV.

To illustrate let me turn to one Covenanter writer's poignant grappling with these problems in a story still familiar to us: Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. Irving was born in 1783 of strong Scotch Covenanter stock into a family of aspiring New York merchants. His father's stern and austere Presbyterianism remained a heavy influence on Irving throughout his writing life. In 1819 he published a collection of essays and stories—including both *Rip van Winkle* and *Sleepy Hollow*—which would make him the most famous American author of his generation. As the 19th Century in America got underway, scientific rationalism and deism were dominant. They were also the natural result of the process, begun during the Reformation, of repeatedly relocating the ground of transcendence in society. By that time, people began to suspect whether the transcendent and holy existed at all. This "disenchantment" of the world was a dominant spiritual posture and gave rise

to a loose school of artists and writers who sought to incorporate European romanticism and spiritualism in an American context by depicting the natural world as the locus of an "almost real" supernatural presence. From the transcendentalism of Emerson to the naturalism of Thoreau to the landscapes of the Hudson River School, these artists all reflected the experience of people who have been stripped of every last altar; who have given up any reasoned or objective claim to transcendence—they become haunted.

Washington Irving was perhaps the first and most explicit of these artists, inventing as he did the modern genre of "ghost stories." His greatest ghost story, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, concerns the gangly and awkward schoolteacher, Ichabod Crane, without a doubt the most celebrated Covenanter in all of literature.[8] It would be incorrect to claim *Sleepy Hollow* as an allegory of Covenanters in the New World. It is something at once less and more: the literary outworking of a man who is dealing in an ambient way with the changes wrought on his own identity. Ichabod Crane is a Scottish Presbyterian, a Covenanter, who has moved to the village of Sleepy Hollow, a Dutch enclave in the Hudson River Valley, to take the position of headmaster at the village schoolhouse. He is a bachelor, hardworking, and presented as someone who is honest and good yet socially awkward and, at times, insufferable.

Significantly, perhaps the most distinctive characteristic Irving gives Ichabod is that of a psalm singer. He is never without his handy pitch-pipe and he moonlights as a voice coach teaching some of his Dutch charges how to sing the psalms. Notice Ichabod's position: he is alone, yet intent on joining the community of Sleepy Hollow; he is a teacher of others' children, yet has none of his own; he is the representative of empirical rationalism who nonetheless, Irving is clear to tell us, has an earnest belief and interest in witches, ghosts, and spirits. With Ichabod Crane, Irving evokes the melancholy and ambiguity of Covenanter identity as it endured the transition from Old World to New World.[9]

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[8] All quotes and descriptions from *Sleepy Hollow* taken from Washington Irving, *The Sketch Book* (New York, 1819).

[9] Though there is no space here to develop the point, it is also instructive to consider Irving's genius in naming his fading Covenanter character Ichabod. For "Ichabod" was the iconoclastic call of the Covenanters against every form of "popery" and "tradition of men." See, *e.g.*, Walter Scott's Covenanter novel, *Redgauntlet* (Edinburgh, 1824), set during the Jacobite revolution of 1745, in which one Covenanter "did nothing for six days but cry out, 'Ichabod, Ichabod, the glory is departed from my house!' and on the seventh he preached a sermon." See also, *e.g.*, Thomas Sproull, "The Duty of Social Covenanting," (Pittsburg, 1841). Sproull was the pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Pittsburg. He wrote: "It is time for those churches that have been long indifferent to their duty [to the national covenants of Scotland] to awake. Will they too

As the story unfolds, Ichabod becomes a romantic contestant for the hand of the young Dutch heiress of Sleepy Hollow. His rival is Brom Bones, the strapping Dutch boy, Sleepy Hollow's most eligible bachelor, who is given all the dynamic qualities of the New World itself—opportunism, optimism, high-spirits, independence, and rugged individualism. Brom Bones desires nothing more than to see the back of Ichabod Crane. He torments Ichabod with an escalating series of taunts, pranks, and social embarrassments. Tellingly, at one point, Bones trains his dog to whine in a manner intended to mimic and mock Ichabod's incessant Psalm singing.[10]

Ichabod is steadfast, however, and will not be driven out of Sleepy Hollow so easily. Brom Bones is forced, finally, to capitalize on Ichabod's lingering Old World fascination with spirits and ghosts. At a youthful fireside party, Bones regales the huddled gathering with the tale of the Headless Horseman, a specter haunting the woods around Sleepy Hollow. Later, while riding home from the party, Ichabod is accosted by none other than the ghost of the Headless Horseman (who is in fact Bones himself) and flees Sleepy Hollow in terror, never to be seen again. Irving provides two explanations of Ichabod's fate, both equally true. The first account comes from a farmer who visited New York City and tells the residents of Sleepy Hollow that Ichabod Crane is alive and well, living as a member of the merchant class in the city following a career in the law and politics. The second account is told by "the old country wives" who are "the best judges of these matters" who "maintain to this day that Ichabod was spirited away by supernatural means." Irving concludes: "The school-house being deserted, soon fell to decay, and was reported to be haunted by the ghost of the unfortunate pedagogue; and the plough-boy, loitering homeward of a still summer evening, has often fancied his voice at a distance, chanting a melancholy psalm among the tranquil solitudes of Sleepy Hollow."

With this final passage, Irving suggests that in the New World, psalmody—the clearest social identifier of Covenanters—may itself become one of the ghosts haunting the demythologized American scene as its practitioners become cut off from the experience and membership of their forbearers.

V.

Sleepy Hollow raises a key question: as traditional Old World identity markers are threatened by such distancing and encounters with the pluralism of other forms—like Brom Bones's whining dog—how should those threatened respond? With Ichabod Crane, Irving gives us a poignant example of the danger of what I will call an "over articulated" reaction. That is to say, Ichabod's Old World commitments are turned against him, causing him to flee in favor of the worldly consolations of mercantile success and the reduction of his Old World identity to a ghostly inhabitant of old wives' tales.

The authentic posture of a member of a community towards his community is one of those natural and deeply human things that may easily become highly unnatural and potentially turned against itself when it becomes articulated. Nothing will kill a friendly fellowship faster than incessant and explicit talk about "the community." The problem is especially acute within traditional, Old World economic, cultural, and religious communities in a highly mobilized, mechanized, and pluralistic state in which they become conscious of what they have lost or are rapidly losing. Attempts to compensate, renew, or restore often only increase the problem of over articulation.

As the great political philosopher Eric Voegelin has said, a "human society," such as the Covenanters, "is not merely a fact, or an event, in the external world." In other words, it does not exist by dint of external controls or boundaries drawn from some allegedly objective and explicit vantage. Rather, "it is as a whole a little world, a *cosmion*, illuminated with meaning" by the succession of people who "bear it as the mode and condition" of their existence and identity. Those who bear the Covenanter *cosmion* as a particular community of whom it has been said "you will be my people, and I will be your God" experience their "little world" as more than a happenstance, more than a theological choice, and even more than a boundary obeyed; they experience it as "their human essence."[11]

Most Covenanters rightly resist when they sense a declining or weakening commitment to Covenanter psalmody. Their complaint communicates something true and wise. But it is shadowed and obscured by the false habit of thought evidenced by the common substitution of the theological phrase "exclusive psalmody" when what most Covenanters really mean to protect and

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slumber till the day of wrath overtakes them? ... Such churches may well be called 'Ichabod.' Tekel is written upon them" (available at http://www.covenanter.org/TSproull/dutyofsocialcovenanting.htm). In *Sleepy Hollow*, Irving thus recognizes that those who build on a foundation of "Ichabod" may ultimately find themselves torn down by the same standard.

[10] It is also significant that Irving provides a Dutch-American setting for Ichabod Crane's demise. Clearly, psalmody is no longer practiced widely in Sleepy Hollow as evidenced by Ichabod's having to instruct the Dutch children in its practice. Moreover, contrasting the Americanizing Dutchman, Brom Bones, with the more traditional Scotsman, Ichabod Crane, cannot help but elucidate the formative power of Covenanter psalmody vis-à-vis other forms of already dissipated reformed psalmody.

[11] Eric Voegelin, *New Science of Politics*, Collected Works vol. V (University of Missouri Press, 2000), p. 109.

defend is the practice of Covenanter psalmody. In other words, the real complaint has very little to do with theological boundaries. Rather, the real complaint, the real truth and wisdom at work within the complaint, is the perhaps inarticulate sense of losing a socially authoritative identity which might bind one's children and one's children's children. This wisdom need not be set against the theological truth in question. It merely penetrates beneath and behind such questions, rendering them at best, irrelevant, and at worst, a matter for seminarians which is little remarked upon outside such rarified air.

The practicing art of psalmody in the context of being a Covenanter in a healthy community of Covenanters means lighting up a whole "little world" or *cosmion* that is binding. Membership in that *cosmion* is what makes one a "true Covenanter." Obscuring the wisdom of the complaint with externalized and objectivized defenses of exclusive psalmody leads inexorably to the mistake of thinking that merely by singing psalms *a coppella* we might fortify and restore the lost or receding world. But this has becomes transparently false in practice as the full ironic tragedy of over articulation becomes apparent; rituals descend into mere ritualism and the final death of the *cosmion* is hastened by those who thought to defend it.

Let me put my central claim as succinctly and clearly as possible: exclusive psalmody as a theological defense and rationale is not the same thing as Covenanter psalmody, the act and symbol it purports to defend. Whatever its merits as a theological position (and this essay has no quarrel with that position), a commitment to exclusive psalmody can never perform the function of Covenanter psalmody, namely, to create a *cosmion*, to wield the communal authority necessary to bind a particular People of God. The church that expects such things will crack under the weight and strain of it. The *cosmion* will evaporate like a wisp in a New England wood leaving behind only haunted formalists on the one hand and disenchanted liberals on the other. Neither group retains the social capacity to do the necessary work of restoring the lost *cosmion*. It is my fear and lament—hence the eulogy of the title—that Irving has finally proven prophetic and that the communal practice and art of Covenanter psalmody has disappeared as a living location of the holy and transcendent capable of consummating a people. What remains is, instead, a ghostly echo that haunts us with the tragic knowledge of all that we have lost.

Quaffing Immortality

On Reading the Unwritten Word

by Caleb Stegall

Woody Allen used to say that he was kicked out of school for cheating on his metaphysics final—he looked into the soul of the boy next to him. We laugh because we recognize both the essential absurdity and essential truth of the joke. We are, all of us, burdened with existence—where did I come from? where am I going? and perhaps most pressing, am I alone? With the burden comes the task of discovering the order of existence and ultimately its meaning. And if we are to live without cheating, we must look into our own souls in the quest for life lived in fidelity to the true order of existence.

"The order of history emerges from the history of order." So begins Eric Voegelin's masterwork, *Order & History*, in which he endeavors to show how history itself can only be understood as the ongoing human struggle towards experiencing and communicating order. In other words, history only emerges when a society is put in conversation with itself through the stories it tells: stories about where it came from and where it is going. For Voegelin, history itself is meaningless—and even nonexistent—apart from this conversation.

So it is with us. We are put on the path of discovering the meaning of existence by reading and hearing stories, and then by reflecting on ourselves as both readers of and characters in those same stories. In this, we are put in conversation with the past, with others, with ourselves, and sometimes, with God. The conversation is driven forward by our overwhelming fear of the dark—by a deep awareness that apart from this conversation is only the abyss of nothingness.

This essay is a short exercise in anamnetic retrospection on myself as a reader, undertaken with these lines from T. S. Eliot's poem "Little Gidding" in mind:

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.

This is the benediction Eliot pronounces near the end of his own profound retrospective look at himself as a character in and reader of the great story. I have taken it and tried to make it my own, and in keeping with its deep truth, I want to tell this story in a way that circles back on itself. It ends with the discovery that becomes the very ground of its telling.

As I reflect on my education, the dominant impression I have is of being nurtured in an identity crisis. It is a crisis I have since discovered is shared by many, if not all, religiously educated people in our late modern era. Put simply, I learned and developed a keen longing for the kind of intellectual and political authority afforded by scientific methods of knowing—only to discover

[illegible] I could keep [illegible] the head or the heart, I [illegible]. This is the [illegible] "modern" problem, birthed [illegible] during the Renaissance and [illegible] and [illegible] Descartes's [illegible]. And if this is the [illegible] modern problem, the [illegible] is to understand and resolve the [illegible] split between heart and mind, body and soul, individual and community, authority and conscience, church and heresy—a split which [illegible] of [illegible] "sacred canopy" of belief.

These difficulties began to impose themselves on and through my education at an early age. I can remember struggling, for example, with the difference between knowing and believing. One day [illegible], when I was nine or 10 years old [illegible], I was discussing Noah and his ark with my father. The evidence in favor of the story seemed to me [illegible]. I [illegible] that he prove to me that Noah really did load all those animals into the ark and float about for 40 [illegible] nights. He said he couldn't, and [illegible] that in the absence of proof, he couldn't know for sure that the story was true. He replied [illegible] that he knew [illegible] of the story because he believed it.

I have allowed these words to [illegible] for my [illegible]. They seemed to [illegible] what I knew about how we know. The development of my [illegible] way of [illegible]. I [illegible]

[illegible] respecting the [illegible] of the [illegible] and [illegible]

The [illegible] of the [illegible] religious education [illegible] schools, [illegible] church [illegible] to make me the [illegible] I am. [illegible] in a [illegible] of the Church that could trace its lineage directly back to the 16th century Scottish [illegible] and whose religious practice and [illegible] values hadn't changed much in the intervening time. I [illegible] a deep appreciation for old ways and old things.

At the same time, however, I was being educated in a [illegible] and modern [illegible], it [illegible] a hermeneutic of "separation"—that is, it posited a strict separation between the reader and what is being read. As the knower and the known pull apart, a negative space is created which must be negotiated and crossed by some very precise method before meaning and knowledge can be had. The more [illegible] that the boundary between the knowing self and its epistemic ground, the more important is the interpretive method used to bridge that gap. The hermeneutic, rightly applied, brought me the [illegible] of the Bible and of other things [illegible]. I was taught to say with Calvin that "scripture exhibits fully as clear evidence of its own truth as white and black things do of their color, or sweet and bitter things do of their taste." In so doing I learned to privilege rational, [illegible] and [illegible] methods of arriving at certain truth.

The [illegible] independent and [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible]

[illegible]

> *I was educated in the doomed effort of a rational consciousness to sustain a traditional order.*

This [illegible] at Geneva. I learned [illegible] about the concept of worldview, the lenses through which we all see the world and decide what is [illegible]. I learned to diagnose the worldviews of various artists, writers and thinkers from the telltale signatures present in their work. I learned that God's truth will not accept relegation to the realm of private belief; that all truth is God's truth; and that Jesus is Lord of every aspect of life. In many ways, the [illegible] provided the means of a decent antidote to the [illegible] tendency of modern modes of thought. But in the end, it seemed fated to fall prey to one of the very pitfalls of the [illegible] of which it remained a part. [illegible] knowledge was [illegible] and colored by a person's worldview, [illegible] the Christian worldview was objectively true and could be demonstrated by proper exposure to the right material. As such, the worldview education I received at Geneva partook of a curiously [illegible]

[illegible]

Then I encountered [illegible] John Milton and St. Augustine [illegible] Dr. Paul Smith and Dr. Byron [illegible] I found for the first time a description of the problem of rational consciousness and the suggestion of a [illegible]

[illegible]

I was educated, then, in the [illegible] the doomed effort of a rational consciousness to sustain a traditional [illegible]

after accepting the Christian Scriptures (going as he did from the materialist [illegible] of the Manicheans, the talk, how [illegible] he became sympathetic to the Christian faith [illegible] when he began to read Scripture in its "spiritual sense." But he was still held back by his Manichean-driven [illegible]: "I wanted to be just as certain about things which I could not see as I was certain that seven and three make 10. . . . By believing I might have been cured." Here, Augustine had achieved the necessary breakthrough to move beyond his material and materialist ways of thinking. *By believing I might have been cured.* It would take some more time before Augustine would actually believe, but from this point of that insight, he began to favor the faith he would eventually adopt. [illegible]

I felt that the Catholic faith showed more modesty and more honesty than did the Manicheans, who made rash promises of certain knowledge.

Here, I thought, was an insight worth pursuing. Still, for me at that time Augustine's belief [illegible] I was then working on my senior English thesis, the problem of evil in *Paradise Lost*. What struck me then most on reading and re-reading the epic poem [illegible] *Paradise Regained* [illegible] the very embodiment of [illegible] Christ [illegible] Milton [illegible] At the end of the [illegible] Satan [illegible] Heaven:

Then hear, O Son of David, virgin-born!
For Son of God to me
is yet in doubt.
Of the Messiah I have
heard foretold
By all the Prophets; of
thy birth, at length
Announced by Gabriel
with the first I knew,
And of the angelic song
in Bethlehem field,
On thy birth-night, that
sung thee Saviour born.
From that time seldom
have I ceased to eye
Thy infancy, thy childhood,
and thy youth,
Thy manhood last,
though yet in private bred;
Till, at the ford of Jordan,
whither all
Flocked to the Baptist,
I among the rest
(Though not to be baptized),
by voice from Heaven
Heard thee pronounced
the Son of God beloved.
Thenceforth I thought thee
worth my nearer view
And narrower scrutiny,
that I might learn
In what degree or
meaning thou art called
The Son of God.
Therefore, to know what more
thou art than man,
Worth naming the Son of God
by voice from Heaven,
Another method I must
now begin.

After watching Jesus grow from an infant to his baptism, and observing him [illegible] scrutiny, and hearing him pronounced the Son of God from heaven, Satan remains uncertain. Like a good modern [illegible], he needs [illegible]. "Another method I must now begin."

I remembered [illegible]

cut off from the very ground of his sub-
sistence. We, likewise, are exiled from that
ground, and in return each we might
choose can be [illegible] expressed by the
facts we glean from existence, because it
is the very truth of existence we are
exiled from and to which we seek a
return. But for Milton, this was not some
external event or action but rather an
absence. Knowledge for Milton did not
flow from external facts gathered from
the depths of a past but rather from an
unfolding consciousness, out of which
the world would restore itself in the
forms and shades which must be given
the starting point. The knower must
"quell sensuality" before he could see
God. One commentator notes that for
Milton, "you have to know what some-
thing means before you see it and then,
when you see it, the meaning you
already know it to have will be persua-
sive. [illegible] collecting evidence, gathering, [illegible] [illegible], or
tests. Thus, truth and knowledge are not
achieved by reasoning from evidence
gathered to discover laws or general con-
clusions" but rather by "putting in place
general conclusions in the light of which
evidence will then appear. Rather than
confirming or disconfirming belief, the
external landscape, in all of its detail,
will be a predicate of belief."

As I worked through the poem, it
became clear that Milton was describing
for me, in [illegible] terms, what
Augustine had meant when he said "by
believing I might have been healed." For
[illegible] Milton
described a [illegible] path of trust and
complete dependence and adherence on
the fact of [illegible] on the belief
that God is God and no other is God. In
[illegible] terms, Milton experiences
consciousness as an [illegible] of participa-
tory [illegible]. There is no

appropriate separation between the
knower and the known, but rather it is a
consciousness of participation, the perme-
ating context where the knower is belong-
ing [illegible] the known. It is this incremental par-
ticipation of the soul in the sustaining
ground of its own existence. There
remains unexpected work to be done,
and reason is to be applied, but the defin-
ing character of participatory conscious-
ness is not a quest for certainty but for
adherence. It is a movement of the soul;
it is a [illegible] to the sense
[illegible]
[illegible] by longing for the presence of
and participation and the [illegible] of
dependence.

In Christian Doctrine, Milton writes
about what he calls the "double
scripture." "There is the external
scripture of the written word and the
internal scripture of the Holy Spirit
which he, according to God's promise,
has engraved upon the hearts of believ-
ers." And there is a clear hierarchy
between the two: "[illegible] the evidence of
scripture itself, all things are eventually
to be referred to the Spirit and the
unwritten word."

There is a true spiritual risk in mak-
ing the unwritten word. What if this per-
ception of participation, of connecting, is
but the [illegible] ground of existence
becoming [illegible] to me, but rather
[illegible] to
the fear of being alone. [illegible] every read-
ing, [illegible] is always
what George Steiner has called a "wager
on transcendence." It is not empirically
certain. According to Augustine, [illegible]
[illegible] is the very essence of Christianity.
[illegible] the substance of things
hoped for is nowhere to be found but in
faith itself, and [illegible]
[illegible]
very [illegible]. The participatory faith is

ordered by what the soul in experience toward God: the seeking, the periods of aridity and dullness, guilt and despondency, contrition and repentance, forgetfulness and hope against hope, the silent seasons of love and grace, trembling on the verge of a certainty that it prefers to lose." For Voegelin, "the very lightness of this labor may prove too heavy a burden" for the rational consciousness and its "lust for massively possessive experience."

At Geneva, I recognized myself in both Milton and Augustine and have continued to explore that recognition ever since—with its risks and rewards. I have learned the most from those writers and thinkers who have enacted a particular contrariness and who have understood its implications for the lived in the late modern period: T. S. Eliot, C. S. Lewis, Wendell Berry, Alan Tate, G. K. Chesterton, George Santayana, Neil Postman, Ivan Illich, Annie Dillard, Jacques Ellul, Michael Polanyi, Wallace Stevens, George Steiner, Eric Voegelin, and others. All have what a friend of mine calls "deep conviction"—that is, an eternal commitment to the [illegible] of transcendence and the possibility of meaning and understanding.

Reading will do no good if it is undertaken with a lust for a massively possessive experience—that is, with an expectation that there is secret knowledge that might be possessed. Apart from the reading itself, too often we only want to know what is the right reading of a text, what is the true meaning, what evidence can be adduced, what truth claim can be made. Despite the dream of trying to cheat by looking into the soul of the boy next to us, it remains our greatest temptation. It is too easy to fall in with Satan in his pursuit of yet more knowledge about the Christ.

On the other hand, we can remember the empowering wisdom of T. S. Eliot: "You are the music while the music lasts." Reading as a participatory event in transcendence makes us responsive—and responsible—to the divine ground of existence that becomes luminous to us as we dive deep into the conversation and remember who is God, and who is not. ■

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The Home of American Intellectual Conservatism — First Principles August 27, 2013

Joining In: Wendell Berry and Friends

Caleb Stegall - 02/20/08

Review of Jason Peters, ed., *Wendell Berry: Life and Work* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 349 pp. $35.

"We're dealing in goods and services that we didn't make, that can't exist at all except as gifts. Everything about a place that's different from its price is a gift. Everything about a man or woman that's different from their price is a gift."—Wheeler Catlett

"The relationship of amicitia *is mutual; it cannot be forced through an élan of human passion but presupposes the love of God toward man, an act of grace through which the nature of man is heightened by a supernatural form. The loving orientation of man toward God is possible only when the faith of man is formed through the prior love of God toward man."—Eric Voegelin*

Risking reviewer's purgatory, let me tell you about the cover of this book. It is a sepia-toned photograph of a man standing, arms loosely folded, on a Kentucky ridge. He wears trousers, a work shirt unbuttoned at the collar, a metal-band watch, an overlarge glasses case clipped into his breast pocket, and a smiling face. From clothes to smile he looks remarkably like how I remember my grandfather, who for much of his life was a Presbyterian pastor and handyman in the tiny farming hamlet of Winchester, Kansas. The man on the cover is Wendell Berry, and the book is *Wendell Berry: Life and Work*, edited by Jason Peters.

As do many of the distinguished contributors to *Wendell Berry*, I will start with the memory of my first encounter with his work. I was fresh out of law school with a young family and only a vague ambition to build something worthwhile and lasting in what appeared to me to be a cheap and disposable age. That ambition had begun to cohere, in my mind at least, around a notion I thought of as practicing a discipline of place. This seemed to consist of resisting the pervasive spirit of mobility, becoming rooted, enduring the shortfalls of myself and my neighbors, learning intimately the highways and byways of my particular locale, and investing my life in its land, people, and culture. As for what this meant, beyond a certain schoolboy romanticism, I had no idea.

Shortly thereafter, while visiting an uncle in Washington, D.C., and tentatively imagining out loud the possibility of what it might mean these days to be a country lawyer, my uncle suggested I read some stories by Wendell Berry about a fictional country lawyer named Wheeler Catlett. He said the stories would help.

I will always be grateful for Wheeler Catlett. Here was the strength to forge ahead; the strength of a road little traveled, but traveled nonetheless. In the years following, I have read and savored nearly everything I could get my hands on by and about Berry—not always with agreement, but always with a satisfying and deep sense of fellow feeling. In that course, not a few friendships have been forged, and these are probably the most pleasing fruits of all. Several of these friends, I am happy to report, contributed essays to the volume at hand.

These essays by Berry's friends and admirers cover the virtuoso gamut of Berry's work. For example, there is Berry's commitment to the local and particular over the abstract and universal:

> [Berry's] country is that which is within the range of his love, his understanding: not a bloodless (if bloodthirsty) abstraction at the other end of a TV tube but rather the dirt of his backyard. (Bill Kauffman)

Described is Berry's love of the land and pursuit of the agrarian virtues in the face of losing odds:

> We agrarians are involved in a hard, long, momentous contest, in which we are so far, and by a considerable margin, the losers. I believe that this contest between industrialism and agrarianism now defines the most fundamental human difference, for it divides not just two nearly opposite concepts of agriculture and land use, but also two nearly opposite ways of understanding ourselves, our fellow creatures, and our world. (Allan Carlson quoting Berry)

Discussed is Berry's complex and brilliant exposition of the subtle relationships between

sexuality, a consumer economy, and human community and responsibility:

> In the essay "The Whole Horse" Berry describes our culture and economy as patterned on "the one-night stand." What he means is that in an industrial economy, relationships of significance or meaning have been severed even as the pursuit of pleasure or satisfaction intensifies. For instance, in a one-night stand buyers and sellers do not really know one another before the event. They enter into it more or less anonymously and then commit to stay away from one another, and deny all consequences, after the transaction is complete. (Norman Wirzba)

And:

> In contrast to the sexuality of the global industrial economy rooted in the contractual politics of commodified possessions and litigation, the sexuality of community as Berry defines it is rooted in the trust of marriage and its *leitourgia*—the visible and social cultivation of the works of love. . . . Those liturgically bound in the sacraments of love may not afford to be thus litigiously "liberated" from the communal disciplines of affection and loyalty, lest they find they have become alienated selves in a shared world characterized by suspicion, competition, and violence where all human eye contact has become uncomfortable, indeed dangerously untrustworthy. (P. Travis Kroeker)

There is much on Berry's distrust of modern institutions of "merit":

> Berry recognizes that a primary function of a healthy culture is to make important knowledge widely available by "submerging" and "embodying it in "traditional acts." He has mad the Chestertonian observation that tradition is democratic, humane—fair. Conversely, to uproot, dislocate, or otherwise severely disturb a traditional people and its culture is to injure most those with the fewest intellectual resources and to condemn them to survive more or less on their own. This, of course, is precisely the aim of a meritocracy. (Jeremy Beer)

And:

> Self-awareness, the pleasures we take in what Wendell Berry calls our "wakefulness in this world," our pilgrimage toward becoming what he calls "responsible heirs and members of human culture"—little of this registers in the education mall, where the diploma retailers promise a campus so luxurious that there are e-mail kiosks between urinals. (Jason Peters)

Many of the authors struggle to come to terms with Berry himself and his remarkable capacity for *wholeness* in a fractured and fracturing world. For example:

> Wendell is . . . a man imbued with such a strong faith that he is at peace even amidst the changes he deplores and has spent his whole life fighting. I cannot think of anyone who has fought harder and yet is more at peace. This is one reason some people revere Wendell: he has that quality of detachment that comes from the very strongest fidelity—from love, real love, for a real place and for real people, weeds and weaknesses and all. (Kate Dalton)

There is much more.

All of these aspects of Berry's work, and others unmentioned, are vital to us today; and to the possibility, dim as it often seems, of us collectively relearning the discipline of place. A lifetime is not sufficient to do justice to the truths this collection gestures towards and which all of us are responsible to husband. Even so, what emerges most singularly from this volume is not Wendell Berry's new-radical-old-traditional ideas or penetrating cultural analysis, but rather its account of friendship.

Multiple selections in *Wendell Berry* recount the author's friendship with Wendell and Tanya Berry. New friendships and friendships of long endurance; friendships from next door, across the country, and across the oceans; friendships carried on by mutual work, long correspondence, deep conversations, and lively spirit-soaked visits. These are friendships born of a mutual affection—for one another, yes, but also for something more fundamental: for the possibility of being human and for the land that sustains such a possibility.

This kind of friendship subsists in a spiritual economy the ancients called *amicitia*—the loving partnership between God, Creation, and Man. *Amicitia* finds its opposite number in today's economies of moral materialism, to use Santayana's phrase, wherein people and things are esteemed exclusively for their utilitarian value. As a civic mode of being, *amicitia* is profoundly political. And Berry's friendship with the authors of this book is perhaps his most politically radical act. It suggests the possibility of a community that, beneath everyday disagreements and squabbles, is fundamentally at peace with itself and its place.

This kind of friendship is something so natural and true, and yet so absent from our often absurd, grasping, and deracinated lives, that the force of it strikes one with the exhilaration of nature's occasional intrusion—by turns, violent, brilliant, or delicate— upon our unnatural existence. These are conversionary moments. One must either forcibly resist the revelation or submit to its truth and resolve to live as best as one can in its new light.

This has been less a review than a personal reflection and reminiscence. That is the necessary consequence of Berry's unique authority and power in American letters. Wendell Berry the poet, essayist, farmer, friend, man, emerges from and thoroughly eclipses *Wendell Berry* the book, demanding more than a mere *review*. This is the measure of the book's achievement. Like everything good in the cosmos, Wendell Berry and *Wendell Berry* are a grace and a gift. No thanks required (as if the accounts could ever be balanced)—just joining in.

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Grand Illusions

TOO MANY SUBURBAN CHRISTIANS ARE IN THE WORLD—AND ALSO OF IT.

DEATH BY SUBURB: How to Keep the Suburbs from Killing Your Soul
David L. Goetz
HarperSanFrancisco, 224 pages, $23.95

FROM THOREAU'S description of men who lead "lives of quiet desperation" to James Howard Kuntsler's recent castigation of our landscape as a "geography of nowhere" to critics such as Russell Kirk, John Lukacs, and Wendell Berry, dissidents have argued that the American suburban experiment is toxic to the human soul. Joining this tradition is David Goetz.

Raised on a windswept prairie of North Dakota—Goetz once thought he would take over his grandfather's farm only to be told that his grandfather would not "wish that on you"—Goetz ended up in Wheaton, by reputation that most evangelical of suburbs, and his wife's hometown. In his telling, suburban life revolves around competing for what Goetz calls "immortality symbols"—"the four-bedroom home with the Pottery Barn colors, the L.L. Bean underwear and outerwear, the fuel-guzzling truck, the purebred dog, the family pilgrimage to Disney World, and the athletic and scholarship-bedecked college-bound freshman."

For Goetz, the defining ethos of suburbia is catering to "the overindulged self" in an "environment of security, efficiency, and opportunities," all of which create a faux spirituality among Christians who live there. According to Goetz, their faith is really little more than busy avoidance of reality. The false image of the "good life" offered by the suburbs creates what Goetz calls a "bloated, tiny soul." Goetz's harsh judgment is tempered by his admission of his own acute sensitivity to what others think of him and his guilty joy in finally getting that SUV.

In the swamp with us, Goetz offers several spiritual disciplines to fight back—including solitude, repentance, commitment, rest, service, and friendship—all starting with "the simple admission that the suburbs are an illusion." *Death by Suburb* is best when Goetz deals head on with the central issue confronting suburban living and its soul-sucking power—suffering and its corresponding liberation to the sweetness of a life abandoned to Christ.

The real spiritual battle, according to Goetz, is overcoming the illusion. Because suburban life so privileges the self—its instant gratification, its desire for greener pastures always over the next fence, its search for ease and comfort—the Christian life aimed at crucifying the old man of sin is handicapped, perhaps fatally. Goetz recognizes that the principle of self-love at work in suburbia manipulates Christian desires and offers the illusion of spirituality and religion as just one more product to be acquired.

Goetz's suburban experience, which he mines to give the book much of its strength, also proves to be its greatest weakness. For Goetz is, apparently, not interested in calling anyone to actually sacrifice the structures of suburbia. "I don't need to escape the suburbs," he tells us. "I need to find Jesus here."

Well, yes and no. In an effort to make it clear that the sin and illusion reside inside of us, not in external trappings, Goetz underestimates the "cult"

ISTOCK

| reviewed by CALEB STEGALL |

in culture, the gravitational pull the places, habits, and structures of our lives exert on our souls. In the quest to "find Jesus," much, perhaps everything, may hinge on the environment of the hunt.

The problem Goetz runs into is his unwillingness to offer the prescription of Christ: If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. If suburbia is a spiritual "Alcatraz," as Goetz describes it, I suggest literal escape plans, even if they must be carried ont patiently over the course of a lifetime. Instead, Goetz advises the inmates to live a disembodied spiritual life as the only "escape" available. But we are creatures, the material world is ever present with us, and Goetz's solution, while

perhaps sufficient for a few saints, is unworkable for the rest of us, who require an external and embodied expression of life ordered under God.

Caleb Stegall, an attorney and editor of The New Pantagruel website, lives with his family in rural Kansas.

The Faith of Our Founders

SCHOLAR SAYS DIVERSITY OF BELIEF DID NOT OBLITERATE CONSENSUS ON KEY ISSUES.

JAMES H. HUTSON, chief of the manuscript division of the Library of Congress, edited *The Founders on Religion: A Book of Quotations* (Princeton, 2005). The book, unlike some earlier, less scholarly collections of Revolution-era sayings, is organized by topic rather than by proper name, allowing easier searches. Stan Guthrie, a CT senior associate editor, spoke with Hutson about the religious beliefs of the Founders and their relevance for today.

What are people's biggest misconceptions about the Founders?
One is that there was a monolithic point of view on certain religious topics. There was a wide variety of opinion on a wide variety of subjects. But the subjects on which there was a kind of consensus emerged very clearly in the book. I have found no one among the Founders who didn't believe in Providence being actively at work, who didn't believe that religion was vital for social well-being, who didn't believe in liberty of conscience.

bookmarks

TURNING AROUND THE MAINLINE: How Renewal Movements Are Changing the Church
Thomas C. Oden • Baker Books • 272 pages • $17.99

Picture a broad battlefield. Arrayed on one side are the big mainline denominations. They are undisciplined, hemorrhaging members, and theologically starving.

On the other in newfound coalition are the Confessing Christians from within these mainline groups. With growing numbers and accomplishments, they plan to hold their ground and win back even more.

Tom Oden, a self-confessed former Bultmannian, has long been setting up the command structure and marshalling the Confessing troops. Here he is a combination of herald, troubadour, and chronicler of the gathered forces as they engage the entrenched mainline hegemony.

Oden is blunt, pulling no punches about the "implosion" of mainline churches. He is confident, almost verging on triumphalism. He is comprehensive, showing readers a broad array of renewal groups, theological statements, and battle tactics. And he is encouraging, rallying the evangelical troops.

—*James D. Berkley*

PROLIFE FEMINISM: Yesterday and Today
Mary Krane Derr, Rachel MacNair, Linda Naranjo-Huebl, eds. • Xlibris • 476 pages • $24.99

Quaker abolitionist and women's suffrage champion Susan B. Anthony supported needy women and children so formidably that a male friend once told her, "With your great head and heart, you, of all women I have met, ought to have been a wife and mother."

"I thank you, sir," she answered. "But sweeter even than to have had the joy of caring for children of my own has it been to me to help bring about a better state of things for mothers generally, so that their unborn little ones could not be willed away from them."

This anthology (updated from the 1995 edition) offers about 70 profiles of feminists

Caleb Stegall

A Call To Arms

Look Homeward, America: In Search of Reactionary Radicals and Front-Porch Anarchists by Bill Kauffman. ISI Books, 2006.

It is an occasional convention in conservative literature to talk about the "real split" in the world that animates contemporary political and cultural disagreements, a split deeper than the more pedestrian divide of Republicans versus Democrats. Russell Kirk liked to quote Eric Voegelin's remark that the "great line of demarcation in modern politics...is not a division between liberals on one side and totalitarians on the other." Rather, it is between materialists who recognize only a temporal order and those who admit to a higher, transcendent order. To Voegelin, liberals and totalitarians of various stripes were essentially alike in their progressive materialism, the price of which was "the death of the spirit."

In this he concurred with Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who in his famous 1978 Harvard Address, referring to Western liberalism and Eastern communism, said that, "The split in the world is less terrible than the similarity of the disease plaguing its main sections." For Solzhenitsyn, the disease plaguing both sides was the belief that man's chief task was to "search for the best ways to obtain material goods and then cheerfully get the most out of them."

More recently John Lukacs described the real split in America as being between "progressives" (more often than not misnamed "conservatives") and "conservationists." "It is the division between people who want to develop, to build up, to pour more concrete and cement on the land, and those who wish to protect the landscape (and the cityscape) where they live." It is the divide between those who cultivate a "true love" of their country and those with only a "rhetorical love of symbols such as the flag, in the name of a mythical people," between a home-loving domesticity and a wandering nomadic life, "between the ideals of stability and those of endless 'growth.'"

In *Look Homeward, America*, Bill Kauffman offers a detailed and often idiosyncratic look at the "real split" underlying American society and politics. To paraphrase Gore Vidal, one of Kauffman's unlikely heroes, that real split lies between those who love the old American republic and those progressive dreamers who would sell their patrimony for a bowl-full of the centralized, mechanized American Empire. Be forewarned: this is not a book for those seeking confirmation of their already accepted political stereotypes. Rather, *Look*

Caleb Stegall is a Kansas lawyer and the editor of the online journal *www.newpantagruel.com*.

Homeward, America is Kauffman's quest through American history and its living landscape to find those he lovingly calls "reactionary radicals and front-porch anarchists."

The result is, by design, impossible to categorize. Kauffman's collection of throwbacks and throwaways, retreads and retrofits, hillbillies and hell-raisers, poet politicians and insubordinate patriots is a stinging rebuke to political categorizers, taxonomers of the soul, and those who reduce humanity to the talking heads and soundbitten ghosts of American punditry. Kauffman describes himself as an "outsider even among outsiders" and "the love child of Henry Thoreau and Dorothy Day, conceived amidst the asters and goldenrod of an Upstate New York autumn." His is

> a Middle American, profoundly un-imperial patriotism based in love of American music, poetry, quirks and commonalities, historical crotchets, holy fools and eminent Kansans. ...I celebrate, I affirm old-fashioned refractory Americanism, the home-loving rebel spirit that inspires anarchists and reactionaries to save chestnut trees from the highway-wideners and rural schools from the monstrous maw of the consolidators, and leads along the irenic path of a fresh-air patriotism whose opposition to war and empire is based in simple love of country.

This is what binds Kauffman and the subjects of *Look Homeward, America* together: their unbought love of home, of their own patch of ground, of their communities and the heritage of their region.

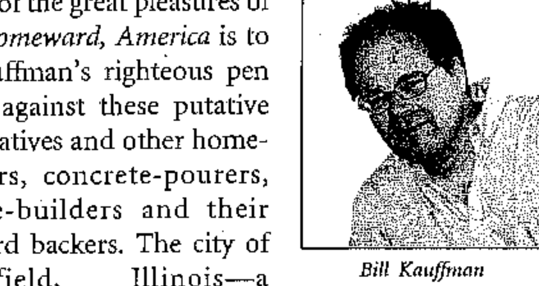
Kauffman is an exuberant guide on this joyous head-trip across the country roads of American politics and culture, and along the way everything you thought you knew about what it means to be a patriot, a conservative, or a Christian will be turned upside-down and inside-out. And as with travel on a country lane, the ride is slow, the details are savored, the conversation is a delight, and the destination is not the fruitless, rootless, nowhereness of the freeway ("I'm outta here!"), but instead the welcome embrace of a large front porch and a place called home.

Not home in the deracinated sense of wherever you happen to hang your hat. Kauffman defends and describes an older and more robust concept of home as an entire social realm that is dominated neither by the state nor by the desires of a random assortment of individuals. Home in Kauffman's telling encompasses not just the front porch (an apt symbol for his vision), but all of the highways and byways that weave together the strands of memory, kin, church, work, craft, and play into a place of belonging. Home in this sense is and ought to be experienced as the focal point of man's material existence in contact with a transcendent God, with the divine and holy ground of being.

Among those embraced by Kauffman as reactionary radicals are politicians like Eugene McCarthy and political operatives like Karl Hess; poets and farmers such as Wendell Berry and regional artists such as Grant Wood and John Steuart Curry. Under examination Kauffman shows the pacifist, distributist Catholic Worker Dorothy Day, with her defense of rooted tradition, to be a far more reliable conservative than Henry Kissinger, the man honored at a gala by *National Review* a day after Day's death. In a similar reversal we discover that the feminist and liberal icon Mother Jones "detested the middle-class reformers who sought to transfer household functions to the market or the state. She suspected that capitalists were scheming to force women into the paid labor force and children into daycare, and the prospect did not please her." Kauffman compares Jones to Lamar Alexander, who made his fortune and rose to power as an executive with Corporate Family Solutions, Inc., operating nearly one hundred high-powered daycares for

Fortune 500 companies. "Making millions off daycare—separating infants from mothers for eight hours a day, five days a week: as the abortionist says whilst laving his hands in disinfectant, 'It's a living.'" Kauffman's dry response: "Mother Jones or Lamar Alexander: you tell me who's the real conservative."

One of the great pleasures of *Look Homeward, America* is to see Kauffman's righteous pen turned against these putative conservatives and other home-wreckers, concrete-pourers, Empire-builders and their blowhard backers. The city of Springfield, Illinois—a "mottled concrete moonscape of the land where Lincoln walked at midnight"—has been "urban-renewed into Gehenna." Christian neoconservative apologists are "soft young men in three-piece suits who write their little pamphlets proving that whatever slaughter our government is currently engaged in is a 'just war'": they "should be laughed back to the seminaries they quit." On school consolidation: "a profoundly anti-community movement conceived by progressives of the Big is Beautiful stripe that was given wing by the militarism of those allegedly halcyon 1950s, when the chimera of well-drilled little Ivan Sputnik was used to regiment the comparatively anarchic American educational system." Kauffman's special ire is saved for progressive bureaucrats like "the pestiferous Robert Moses," whose name ought never to be mentioned "without a parenthetical fustigation." Kauffman's fustigation of Moses—the man who evicted half-a-million New Yorkers from their homes to build 627 miles of road in and around the city—extends far beyond the parenthetical. "Moses sat blissfully distant from the wrack and ruin of his acts. The bastard never even learned how to drive. Not that such ignorance has ever deterred New Yorkers from telling *others* how to drive." Direct hits, every one, and there are many more on nearly every page of *Look Homeward, America*.


Bill Kauffman

Against these and others from among the unholy axis-of-evil of lawyers, guns, and money, Kauffman and his "militia of love" assemble an armament of wit and poetry, Friday night high-school football games, sweet tea and dandelion wine, banjoes and rocking chairs, gardens and quilts, local culture and quirks, all held together by mothers and fathers and sons and daughters. No one is exempt from choosing sides, and Kauffman's advice is clear: "Stay with your family. Your tribe. Your neighborhood. Your town."

To be sure, Kauffman rattles the conservative cage in ways many will not appreciate. He is staunchly anti-war, verging on the pacifistic; he places little importance on markets (though a great deal of importance on freedom); his anarchic vision tends, at times, to gloss carelessly over intractable questions of order, hierarchy, and power. Still, *Look Homeward, America* is a welcome challenge to a conservatism often grown complacent and wonkish in its political ascendancy.

At his best, Kauffman reminds me of another American eccentric who rattled establishment cages and became a conservative luminary in the process: Whittaker Chambers. Like Kauffman, Chambers centered his entire political outlook in a love of the particular rather than in grand abstractions which he had learned to abhor and fear during his time as a Communist. Chambers describes his own love of home, and by extension his conservatism, in one luminous paragraph in terms wholly human:

Our farm is our home. It is our altar. To it each day we bring our faith, our love for one another as a family, our working hands, our prayers. In its soil and the care of its creatures, we bury each day a part of our lives in the form of labor. The yield of our daily dying, from which each night in part restores us, springs around us in the seasons of harvest, in the produce of animals, in incalculable content.

Kauffman artfully describes the same central truth of man's life, struggles, work, and effort:

[T]he most ennobling work we do is seldom remunerated in greenbacks. Bearing and raising a child, cultivating a garden, just being there for a sibling or friend to lean on: this "work" is compensated in a currency far more valuable than Uncle Sam's paper. This, in fact, is the work that should be honored on Labor Day. The work we do for "nothing." (For everything, really.) The work that enriches us as human beings; that binds us to our families and our neighbors; that shrouds even the most commonplace of lives in glory. This is the work whose coin, whose only coin, is love.

The coin of love? Is he crazy? He probably is: all God's children are. Romantic? Absolutely, the mark of a true American conservative. Hopeless? Certainly, nothing ever comes right in this world. But Kauffman's reactionary radicals and front-porch anarchists have something even more important than hope—they are worthy of the fight, they are worthy of their homes and of the best that America can be. And in the end, one day, they will merit their own special verse in the song that will lament the passing of the darling old republic.

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Kansas farmer and lawyer **CALEB STEGALL** argues that this nation of alienated citizens should reclaim its destiny from power elites

In the 1980s, the historian and social critic Christopher Lasch pronounced dead the conventional political categories of right and left and argued for a revitalization of politics through a redefinition of terms.

"The idea of a 'left' has outlived its historical time and needs to be decently buried, along with the false conservatism that merely clothes an older liberal tradition in conservative rhetoric."

Since that time, a number of third-party candidates have tried to do just that — from Pat Buchanan to Ross Perot to the perpetual candidacy of Ralph Nader — with a mixed record of success and virtually no electoral victories.

Yet there remains a growing sense that the times finally have caught up with the prophetic Mr. Lasch. Could it be that the old political stereotypes and national parties are no longer capable of addressing the needs of the nation? Could we be on the verge of a tectonic shift in American politics?

There are signs. Peggy Noonan recently wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* that due to popular discontent with the widening gulf "between those in power and those who put them there," the time is here for a successful third-party run in American politics.

A few days later, writing in *The New York Times*, Charles Morris explicitly confirmed Ms. Noonan's populist suspicions by likening current widespread uneasiness during a growing economy to what historians call the "great depression" of the 1870s — which, it turns out, wasn't a depression at all. In fact, production, consumption and employment all rose sharply, and economic indicators were uniformly good. "By the end of the decade," writes Mr. Morris, "people were better housed, better clothed and lived on bigger farms. Department stores were popping up even in medium-sized cities. America was transforming into the world's first mass consumer society."

Yet most people in the Gilded Age seemed desperate. A growing disparity between the haves and have-nots brought on by "unbridled entrepreneurialism," a dramatic increase in both social and geographic mobility, the spread of centralized corporate control over consumer goods and globalizing markets vulnerable to forces far, far away all contributed to a sense of unease and insecurity. Populist fervor swept the middle and lower classes as they felt their livelihood and way of life threatened by collusion between their government and rapidly expanding commerce, industry and mass cultures of transportation and communication.

And so it is today. Midwestern towns are drying up and blowing away like so much tumbleweed. Our inner cities too often function as prisons without bars; suburbia is a blighted, soulless landscape of nowhere; and the yeoman freeholder who was once

See **STEGALL** *Page 5P*

we continue to insist that somehow there's a solution on the physical border — and it's so naïve to think that this is all about a 2,000-mile strip of land — you can see small fires like this breaking out throughout the country, where everybody's taking the law into their hands. There's a case to be made with the urgency of getting on with [reform] now and not letting it get more complex.

What are the risks of allowing this to go unresolved through the election or of adopting the House bill?

The president has made it clear that we have to have comprehensive reform, and anything short of comprehensive reform will fall short will backfire. This is a debate that's taking place by one-liners. People are finding it very safe to park their position on "secure the borders." People don't have time to think through it, so they accept the one-liners, the talking points, the bullet points. That's the danger here: that we don't teke the time to think through it.

We can throw ever[y]thing we have at th[e] border, and we're still going to have [a] problem unless we do something abo[ut] interior enforcement, and interior enforcement mea[ns] figuring out what [to] do about documentation.

In my long life, I have known

overreach, says **MARK DAVIS**

As Americans, we never get a guarantee of a lifetime of Supreme Court decisions we will agree with. From the mysterious discovery of a federal right to abortion three decades ago to this past year's rulings recklessly expanding the scope of eminent domain, I, like most average citizens, have struggled to come to terms with judicial missteps from our nation's highest bench.

But when the high court's misplaced logic hampers a war in progress and thus endangers our chances for victory, it is not just another topic for national debate. It is an occasion to ask what in the world these people are thinking, and who they think they are.

In an abominable 5-3 ruling Thurs-

war that is his to run. The specific case involved one detainee at Guantánamo, Salim Ahmed Hamdan, who used to be Osama bin Laden's bodyguard and driver. Bin Laden had to smile from his cave lair as America's highest court stuck up for his lackey and stood against the U.S. war effort.

Five justices found fault with the proposed war crimes tribunals envisioned by President Bush for the enemy combatants plucked from the battlefield and relocated to Guantánamo. They found the president's plan violated both the law and Geneva Conventions.

Contrary to the court's majority opinion, there is no legal requirement for a commander in chief to jump through a congressional hoop to establish methods of adjudication for enemy warriors in custody during wartime. Even if there were an argument to be made on that point, Justice Antonin Scalia's dissent

"no court, justice or judge shall have jurisdiction to hear or consider an application for a writ of habeas corpus filed by or on behalf of an alien detained by the Department of Defense at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba."

As for the Geneva Conventions, Justice John Paul Stevens, writing for the majority, seems stunningly unaware of when they apply and when they do not.

They apply when we are at war with a uniformed enemy of a country that is a signatory to and practitioner of the Conventions' protections. None of those conditions applies to captured combatants in the war on terror.

This war is not fought against us by any given nation. We are fighting a vast, unarrayed horde from various nations, fighting on behalf of a cause, not under a flag. And none of these warriors seems particularly interested in extending such civility as required under the Conven-

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the backbone of rural America is virtually extinct. Pollsters wonder why George W. Bush isn't getting more credit for strong economic numbers. Perhaps it is because what are signs of health driven by rampant consumerism are experienced by most Americans as symptoms of economic and spiritual rot — their own and their country's.

Americans, many of them at least, are awakening to the truth articulated more than 50 years ago by writer Whittaker Chambers: that the modern world's "vision of comfort without effort, pleasure without the pain of creation, life sterilized against even the thought of death, rationalized so that every intrusion of mystery is felt as a betrayal of the mind, life mechanized and standardized" does not "make for happiness from day to day" — and further, that it may mean "catastrophe in the end."

My guess is that what all the commentators are sensing is something real. Could it be that unconstrained growth, hypermobility and global markets actually produce social and political instability?

In the mid-20th century, economist Joseph Schumpeter argued that capitalism — the acknowledged world-historical champion in terms of producing wealth and prosperity — would, by a process he called "creative destruction," eventually undermine the very social institutions that gave it birth and guarded its existence. He pointed out that market capitalism exposed more natural ordering structures — the "ties that bind" — to a brutal new calculus. Commitment

It's not left vs. right any

DAVID BROOKS says today's issues call for new politics: the people vs. the elites

If American politics could start with a clean slate today, the main argument wouldn't be between liberalism and conservatism — words that have become labels without coherent philosophies.

The main fight would pit populist nationalism against progressive globalism.

The populist nationalist party would be liberal on economics, conservative on values and realist on foreign policy. It would bring together a wide array of people who are disenchanted with their respective parties' elites and who would find they have a lot in common. It would bring Kevin Phillips together with Pat Buchanan, the Virginia senatorial candidate James Webb together with Lou Dobbs, Al Sharpton together with James Dobson.

Here's how a populist nationalist candidate would sound: "We are the ordinary, burden-bearing people of this country. We are the ones who work hard and build communities. It's time for us to come together and recognize that our loyalty to our fellow Americans comes first.

"That means we can't waste our precious blood and treasure on poorly planned, pie-in-the-sky wars to bring democracy to the Middle East. We

Associated Press

nothing is safe, where everything can be swept away by a serious illness, a divorce or a terrorist's bomb."

Populist nationalism of this sort would be politically potent. It would be against the war without seeming dovish. It would be against corporate power without seeming socialist. It

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to a brutal new calculus. Commitment to kin, community and place entail making heavy economic sacrifices and provide benefits not easily entered on a balance sheet. The more cost-efficient process of market economics fomented an ongoing progressive revolution that eventually rendered those social and family ties largely superfluous. Lord Acton observed that "every institution tends to perish by an excess of its own basic principle."

This tendency of our political and economic culture toward a state of permanent revolution is the hallmark of any modern progressive society. And if there is one deity today to which every politician, right and left, will pay obeisance, it is the god of progress.

Progressives of all political stripes learn early and often that to get on, they better get out, move on, follow every rainbow. "Oh, the places you'll go," crooned Dr. Seuss, and Americans went and went and went until we became a rootless itinerant people — which, it turns out, is exactly the kind of workers required by an economy built on creative destruction. Nanny-state leftists and corporate-state rightists have long been in bed together promoting the wage-entitlement economy with its instantly mobile and fetter-free worker and 100 percent out-of-the-home servitude.

There is a tremendous cost to the health of the republic, to the common good, that comes with the creative yet destructive power of unlimited economic and political progressivism. The vital role property-owning and self-sufficient families, small towns and regional governments play in a free republic has been recognized for centuries. The civic virtues associated with widespread ownership of land, decentralized systems of trade, commitment to the common good of one's tribe and the moral sturdiness of belonging to a tradition are necessary to the continued independence of a free people.

And the loss of these goods will always strike the middle classes first and hardest. When they are lost, they are felt as loss — loss of an entire way of life. And just as the masses of dispossessed and alienated fought back during the Gilded Age, they are likely to again.

At the 1896 Democratic Convention, the populist lion William Jennings Bryan roared against the elite and monied interests controlling America: "We are fighting in the defense of our homes, our

democracy to the Middle East. We need to get out of Iraq now. That means we can't sell our ports to our enemies. That means we must secure our borders against terrorists and illegal immigrants who break the law, take our jobs and drive down wages.

"We need to stand up to the big-money interests who value their own profits more than their own countrymen, who outsource jobs to China and India, who destroy unions and control Washington. We need to fight off their efforts to take away our Social Security and Medicare. Instead of widening inequality and a race to the bottom, we need universal health care and decent wages. We need a government that will stand up to Internet porn and for decent family values.

"We're tired of both the corporate elites and the cultural elites. We want leaders who understand our anxieties and are, like us, tired of a world where

power without seeming [illegible] would tap the passions aroused by immigration and outsourcing and cohere with the populist uprisings taking place around the world.

The progressive globalists, on the other hand, would be market-oriented on economics, liberal on values and multilateral interventionists in foreign affairs. The leading spokesman for this movement would be Tony Blair. Domestically, it would be led by the major presidential aspirants, who don't differ much: John McCain, Hillary Clinton, Mitt Romney, Mark Warner and Rudy Giuliani.

Here's how a globalist might sound: "We're inspired by the opportunities a globalizing and flattening world open up before us. We embrace technological dynamism and cultural diversity and reject beggar-thy-neighbor policies. But we understand that globalization means interdependence, and we have

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And now we are on the cusp of a new wave of populism in search of its own Bryan to rise up on behalf of the people and defy their progressive masters.

Whoever he is, however, he ought to take a close look at the first generation of American populists who often identified themselves as progressives. When Bryan fought for home, family and posterity, he tapped directly into the heart of the American middle classes. But the populist reforms intended to return political and economic power to the ordinary American were fatally flawed.

The introduction of the federal income tax, the nationalization of the railroads and the direct election of U.S. senators were all major reforms accomplished by the progressive populists of Bryan's day. But rather than putting a hedge of protection around home, family and posterity, each exposed the institutions of middle America to further exploitation. By empowering centralized planning authorities to directly control Americans' income, mobility and elections via taxation, bureaucratic infrastructure and national political parties,

the populists ended up giving the elites far greater control of the people than they had previously had.

There's an irony inherent in a system like our own that identifies the individual as the fundamental unit of political, social and economic order. Because it shears the individual of the republican virtues cultivated within communities of tradition in the name of empowering him, it actually makes the individual subject to tyranny. Limitless emancipation in the name of progress is, it turns out, the final and most binding mechanism of control.

When the oldest sources of order — which are at root religious — are abandoned along with their traditions and taboos, the resulting void of meaning is by necessity filled with some ideology promising one form or another of perfect happiness in the here and now. And these systems of self-salvation creep not toward liberation, but toward total control.

Populism in its progressive form is not immune from this utopian yearning, which must always end in disaster. So our neopopulist moment ought to be approached with sober awareness that an angry mob is probably worse than a corrupt bureaucrat. The same bureaucrat who has harnessed the anger of the mob with progressive dreams is far more terrible than both.

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This modernizing progressivism would also be politically potent. It would thrive among the educated, among aspiring suburbanites, among hawks and among immigrants who look to the future more than the past.

Of course, these alignments won't come about instantaneously. Our political institutions and habits have staying power, and the politics of globalization is lagging far behind the reality of it. But the issues that realigned politics in the 1960s are fading, and issues like immigration, trade and interdependence are rising to the fore.

Politics is becoming less about left vs. right and more about open vs. closed. Or, to put it in starker terms, the populists are getting more populist, while the elitists are getting more elitist.

David Brooks is a columnist for The New York Times.

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What is called for is an anti-progressive populism; an anti-movement movement; a return to what is near, known and particular. What is called for is what I think of as regional populism. Its first political task will be to rediscover the ways citizens of the old American republic used to think and talk.

To begin with, we ought to look to the rich heritage of regional populism left by the somewhat misnamed "Anti-Federalists" at the time of America's founding. While the Anti-Federalists lost the constitutional debate to the centralizers, their principles endured in the emergence of the old Republican Party under Thomas Jefferson (not to be confused with Lincoln's Republicans). The Jeffersonians advocated for popular and rural rights of yeoman over and against the aristocratic, citified and industrializing prerogatives of the Federalists.

Because of this primary commitment to local and regional interests, culture and norms over national ideologies, this "folk" populism will not look like any one thing in particular, but rather like many things. It requires people who are rooted by a love of what T.S. Eliot called the "permanent things" and who are loyal above all to the tradition and membership of their "little platoons" — Edmund Burke's term for the small groups and associations to which each person belongs and which, in Burke's view, hold society together.

Folk populism requires people willing to make sacrifices to defend what they love from encroaching destruction via spaghetti-like superhighways, foreign entanglements, megacorporations and megachurches, technological developments, mass media and hypermobility.

All of these features of modernity are systems of control by other, less violent means. As Mr. Lasch cogently argued, they have the effect of harnessing and neutralizing populist discontent. How? By creating a cycle of dependence whereby local goods — intellectual, fiscal, cultural and generational capital (in the form of children) — are drawn into the maw of the centralized corporate-state. They are returned in the form of processed "goods" — products and services that prove to be remarkably habit-forming in a culture of dependency.

Here's how it works. Midwestern wheat farms are largely owned by massive agribusinesses that function as industrialized, oil-dependent factories dedicated to efficient mass production of their widget, which happens to be the wheat berry. The wheat berry is shipped to other factories for processing and packaging, shipped again to Wonder Bread Inc. for further refinement into a "bread product." This, in turn, is shipped to stadium-size retail "food outlets," purchased by the hurried and haggard farm laborer (who used to own the land the wheat was grown on) and taken home to make sandwiches for the kids to eat in front of the TV.

There's something profoundly unnatural, indeed fundamentally wrong with a consumer-driven system that alienates people from their land, their neighbors and their traditions for the sake of satisfying consumer desire. We've got to break the cycle that turns self-sufficient yeomen into docile consumers who, in the immortal words of Samuel Adams, "crouch down and lick the hands which feed them." This is the only way we will realize Bryan's dream of defending our homes, our families and our posterity.

What would this kind of regional populism look like in an actual political platform? Broadly speaking, it would seek at every turn to end the dependence of its constituents on elites. It would oppose, for example, the nationalization of any sector of our economy, from health care to agriculture. Instead, it would seek creative ways to open regional markets for regional goods.

It would seek to permit regional cultural and religious particularities to emerge from the fog of federalized regulation and be made manifest in our schools, courthouses, businesses and civic organizations. And it would provide incentives to keep cultural capital local. It would encourage people to work, study and raise families close to where they grew up. It would seek ways to promote local culture and would cultivate loyalty

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But in the end, what this kind of vibrant regionalism requires is something much more difficult to obtain than a slogan. It is a renewed appreciation for society over and against both the individual and the state. Society defined by what the agrarian essayist Wendell Berry calls "membership" — a network of social interconnectedness and shared obligation. To be a member of this kind of social order is the best hedge against manipulation by the central planning committee for "growth" and "prosperity." It is, to put it plainly, to be free.

It may be too late, things too far gone, for the kind of Anti-Federalist regional populism I am describing to become politically viable in our day. If so, we will likely be tossed between the tyranny of a militantly nationalist populism and the stifling bureaucratic rule of a progressively universalizing liberalism. Neither is a welcome alternative.

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A Kansas Primer on Education Funding

Volume II: Analysis of Montoy vs. State of Kansas

Caleb Stegall

Advocating free enterprise solutions in education, fiscal policy and health care.

Formerly known as Flint Hills Center for Public Policy, Kansas Policy Institute was founded in 1996 and advocates for free enterprise solutions and for the protection of personal freedom for all Kansans. We're in the process of changing our name to emphasize that we focus on the entire state of Kansas and not just a particular region.

Various elements of our name change will evolve over the next few months as we develop a new web site. Until then, our existing web address and e-mail addresses will remain intact; our phone numbers and mailing address will not change. We will keep you posted on our progress and hope to keep the transition as smooth as possible.

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Kansas Policy Institute is committed to delivering the highest quality and most reliable research on state and local issues in Kansas. The Institute guarantees that all original factual data are true and correct and that information attributed to other sources is accurately represented.

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Preface

Perhaps no subject in Kansas has been more controversial in recent history than school funding. Years of court battles earlier in the decade culminated in 2005 with the Kansas Supreme Court ruling in favor of plaintiffs in *Montoy vs. State of Kansas* and ordered the State to increase funding by $853 million. State aid to schools increased by $646.1 million between the 2004-05 and the 2009-10 and total funding to schools has increased by $1.36 billion. A severe decline in State tax receipts ($498 million / 8.6% for FY 2009, with the first quarter of FY 2010 down 10.2%) prompted the Legislature and Governor Parkinson to reduce school funding for FY 2010, and schools are threatening to file yet another lawsuit as this is written.

Despite the unprecedented controversy, surprisingly little is really understood about how much money schools actually receive, how that money is spent or even the basis upon which the court ruled in the Montoy decisions.

Education is extraordinarily important to the success of our State and to each individual. It is imperative that students receive an education that prepares them to enter the workforce, whether directly into their chosen field or first into higher levels of education. But while education is of critical importance we must balance our approach to defining and funding a proper education with other essential needs; we must also have adequate funding for other necessary government services, and the revenues required to fund all services cannot be so high as to necessitate a tax burden that impedes economic growth.

A Kansas Primer on Education Funding provides a high level of transparency and analysis so that taxpayers and legislators are empowered to make informed decisions going forward. The Primer is being published in four separate volumes in October and November of 2009.

Volume 1: The History of Education Finance traces school funding developments, starting at the inception of statehood in 1863 and leading up to the filing of the above-mentioned Montoy lawsuits.

Volume 2: Analysis of Montoy vs. State of Kansas provides a detailed examination of the legal and political forces at play during the Montoy litigation. It also identifies existing barriers that prevent or restrict efforts to reform the system and offers specific recommendations for overcoming those barriers.

Volume 3: Analysis of K-12 Spending in Kansas identifies how court-mandated funding increases were spent by Kansas school districts and compares per pupil spending by district in search of minimum spending levels that, at least under current curriculum standards, produce adequate results. It also offers specific alternatives to "just spend more" that provide reasonable funding to schools without raising taxes or eliminating other necessary government services.

Volume 4: Defining and Funding a Proper Education examines whether Kansas schools are providing a basic education that gives students the opportunity to gain substantial skills for citizenship, further education and adequately prepares them to function in today's job market. It also offers proposals to improve the current education delivery process, explores alternatives to the current funding methodology and examines existing and alternative methods of measuring student (and school) performance.

The development of the Primer has been an extraordinary undertaking by a relatively small group of very dedicated and talented people. The authors, whose names and biographies are contained within each volume, were greatly assisted by intern Chris Brito, who helped with data collection; Government Transparency & Operations Manger Grace Harris assisted with data collection and proofreading; Paul Soutar designed the timeline in Volume I; VP for Advancement & Marketing Gretchen Colón designed the layout for the Primer and managed the distribution process.

We are very passionate about the future of education and hope that this Primer can in some way serve to inspire citizens and legislators. The road to excellence is not an easy one to navigate but is well worth the journey. Along the way, we must remember the words of Henry Ford, who said "Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal."

We welcome constructive thoughts and suggestions as we strive to improve the educational climate in our state and to be responsible stewards of the finances which fund education.

Dave Trabert

President, Kansas Policy Institute

About the Author

Caleab Stegall is a legal scholar for Kansas Policy Institute and an attorney, writer, conservationist, speaker, and part-time farmer. Born in Topeka, Stegall is a life-long resident of Douglas and Jefferson counties in northeast Kansas. A 1999 graduate of the University of Kansas School of Law, Stegall served on the Kansas Law Review, was awarded the Order of the Coif, and upon graduation clerked for the Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. He practiced in the civil litigation and government relations practice groups at Kansas' largest law firm, Foulston Siefkin, before becoming the founder and principal of The Stegall Law Firm in 2005.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The financial outlook for Kansas during the foreseeable future is dire as the state faces many hundreds of millions of dollars in projected budget shortfalls for fiscal year 2011. In hindsight, the massive appropriations made in 2005 and 2006 by the Legislature in direct response to the Kansas Supreme Court's school finance decision and order in *Montoy v. State* is both a cause of the current crisis and a symptom of the deeper pattern of reckless spending and disregard for fundamental principles of republican forms of self-government that has taken hold of both Kansas lawmakers and judges in the past decade.

The *Montoy* decisions also set a number of novel precedents that now exist as formidable hurdles to school finance reform in Kansas. The changes on the Kansas Supreme Court during and since *Montoy* have created a majority of justices who are poised to rule in the next school funding case that education is a fundamental right, thus increasing the legal scrutiny that will be applied to any challenged legislation. Furthermore, the Court demonstrated in *Montoy* its willingness to delegate the Legislature's lawmaking and appropriation powers to private consultants and attach constitutional significance to demonstrably biased cost studies. Beyond mandating that the Legislature *must* use the cost study approach in an effort to base future school funding increases on the "actual costs" of providing an "outcome"-oriented education to all Kansas students, the Court has asserted complete power to determine the validity of all future cost studies. The Court took upon itself the full weight and power to set and enforce education policy for Kansas by establishing circuitous definitions of a "suitable" education in Kansas that function less as legal judgment and more as judicial price-fixing and policy judgment. Finally, the Court has raised the subject of public education in Kansas to the status of a political and legal "third rail," thus increasing the burden of proof on any person or agency that would seek to defend the Legislature's prerogative to set the educational policy of the state.

There are three ways out of this morass. One is funding reform, which perhaps given the current economic and political climate is not a realistic resolution. The second possible path to reform is structural in nature, takes a long view, and has as its end a reform of the *actual costs* of providing a suitable education in Kansas. Such reforms may include plans to consolidate districts or other such structural changes intended to cut costs. The difficulty with these options lies in the nature of public education in Kansas as a state monopoly and the inherent biases and predetermined results incorporated into Kansas's scheme for determining costs as discussed above. However, one possibility for true structural reform that has a chance of success is to introduce some measure of school choice, which would utilize true market forces to establish costs all while continuing to meet the state's court-mandated obligations regarding funding. Finally, and most importantly, legislators must consider constitutional reform. Until then, taxpayers will be held hostage by a powerful special interest with constitutional carte blanche to spend with virtually no limit.

I. Introduction

During its 2009 regular session, the Kansas Legislature, faced with a projected budget deficit of $328 million for the upcoming 2010 fiscal year, was forced to make sweeping cuts to government agencies in order to balance the books for the coming year.[1] Included in these cuts were double-digit percentage cuts for several state agencies and nearly $163 million in cuts to public schools.[2] While the cuts to the public schools represented a base state aid decline of 4.1 percent from fiscal year 2009, total school aid after the cuts was still $646 million,[3] or 27 percent, more than in fiscal year 2005, the year of the vast expenditures made in the wake of the *Montoy v. State* Supreme Court decision.[4] Moreover, even after the cuts, state expenditures for the public schools remained at over 52 percent of the state's general tax revenues.[5]

The decision of the Kansas Supreme Court in *Montoy v. State*, issued on June 3, 2005, ordered the Legislature to appropriate an additional 853 million dollars to finance public education. This usurpation by the Court of the exclusive powers and prerogatives of the legislative branch of government stripped the people of Kansas of their due process rights to be represented in public discussions and determinations of "political questions" such as "what constitutes a suitable education for our children?" and "where and how much money should the state spend on various public goods and necessities?" The decision in *Montoy* has been described by some as one large step down the road towards what Thomas Jefferson called rule by "the despotism of an oligarchy."

When convened by Governor Sebelius in special session in June 2005, the Legislature had the unasked for, yet necessary, duty to defend its prerogatives and the liberty of all Kansans to enjoy the republican form of government that is their heritage. Rather than standing its ground, the Legislature complied and appropriated an additional $147 million (in addition to the $142 million increase in school funding that it had already appropriated during the regular 2005 session) for the 2005-2006 school year. Several months later, during the 2006 Legislative Session, in addition to the total increase of $289.5 million from the 2005 regular and special sessions, the Legislature appropriated over $466 million in additional funding for the next three school years (for a total increase in funding of $755 million in direct response to the court order in *Montoy III*).[6]

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[1]*See* John Hanna, *O'Neal: Furloughs in Budget Mix*, TOPEKA CAPITAL-JOURNAL, April 25, 2009, http://cjonline.com/news/Legislature/2009-04-24/oneal_furloughs_in_budget_mix; John Hanna, *Analysis: Kansas Budget Debate Really about Schools*, TOPEKA CAPITAL-JOURNAL, Aug. 24, 2009, http://cjonline.com/news/state/2009-08-24/analysis_kansas_budget_debate_really_about_schools [hereinafter *Really About Schools*].

[2]AP, *Budget Cuts Contemplated*, TOPEKA CAPITAL-JOURNAL, Aug. 20, 2009, http://cjonline.com/news/state_government/2009-08-20/budget_cuts_contemplated.

[3]According to Department of Education figures. The Capital-Journal article reported total state aid at $770 million higher than fiscal 2005 and a 4.8% reduction in base aid. See *Really About Schools*, *supra* note 1; AP, *supra* note2.

[4]See *Really About Schools*, *supra* note 1; AP, *supra* note2.

[5]*Really About Schools*, *supra* note 1.

[6]*See* Montoy v. State (*Montoy IV*), 138 P.3d 755, 761 (Kan. 2006).

Today, Kansas faces the prospect of being several hundred million dollars short in fiscal 2010 revenue collections and a projected budget shortfall of $530 million for fiscal year 2011. Schools are now consuming an unprecedented 52 percent of state general tax revenues yet once again, the lawyers for the plaintiffs in *Montoy* are calling for litigation in order to force the Legislature into appropriating ever more money to an insatiable public school system.[7] On top of the Supreme Court's sacrifice of the republican ideals of due process, judicial restraint, and separation of powers in order to enable an inefficient public school system (and the Legislature's apathetic, even supportive, attitude toward such action), the state is now on the verge of bankruptcy and facing possible litigation in front of an even more progressive Court than existed in 2005.[8]

This paper will set forth a detailed examination of the legal and political forces at play during the *Montoy* litigation in order clarify for policy makers exactly what has happened in Kansas's system of school finance to bring the state to the financial brink. This paper will then outline the specific barriers currently in place preventing and restricting efforts to reform this system. Finally, this paper concludes with specific recommendations for policy directions that may prove fruitful in overcoming these barriers.

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[7]John Hanna, *Some Kansas School Districts Considering New Funding Lawsuit*, LAWRENCE JOURNAL-WORLD, Sept. 22, 2009, http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2009/sep/22/some-kansas-school-districts-considering-new-fundi/; *see* The Capital-Journal Editorial Board, *Editorial: No Time for SFFF*, TOPEKA CAPITAL-JOURNAL, Sept. 29, 2009, http://cjonline.com/opinion/2009-09-29/editorial_no_time_for_sfff.

> News reports earlier this month said [Alan] Rupe and other attorneys involved in the initial lawsuit were consulting with school districts to perhaps file another lawsuit over school funding. Never mind that lawmakers cut other areas of the budget more deeply than education. Never mind that thousands of Kansas workers have lost their jobs and businesses have suffered, making the idea of tax increases ludicrous. Nope. The SFFF [School for Fair Funding] ringleaders are once again determined to get theirs. What an outrage. Sadly, it's not the first one in this case. Remember, SFFF is the same organization that fought to keep its spending records secret, even though it was funded almost entirely by taxpayers. It took a challenge from this news organization to prompt a court to rule that SFFF was a public agency and pry the records away from the group. Then came the bombshell -- the $892 million soaking that taxpayers suffered when SFFF leveraged the court against the citizens and their representatives. Now, as then, the issue appears to be how much the state must spend to provide a "suitable education" for K-12 students. Interesting word, "suitable," which means "appropriate to a given purpose or occasion." Funny, we can't think of a better description for reductions in state spending during the most staggering economic falloff in generations. What's not suitable, on the other hand, is for SFFF to keep holding a gun to taxpayers' heads and demanding more, more, more.

Id.

[8]*See infra* note 189and accompanying text.

II. Montoy

A. Prior Litigation History

Before *Montoy*, the Supreme Court had never struck down a school finance bill as unconstitutional, let alone ordered the Legislature to spend a specified amount of additional funds on public education. However, *Montoy* was not the first time that litigation had successfully challenged the constitutionality of the state's school funding system in lower courts, nor was it the first time that the Supreme Court had weighed in on the issue. Before the Supreme Court finally reviewed the school financing system in *U.S.D. 229 v. State* (a 1994 case wherein the Court upheld the constitutionality of the newly created School District Finance and Quality Performance Acts (SDFQPA)), the state's financing system had been successfully challenged in three district court cases, the earliest dating to the early 1970s. In each of these district court cases, the courts' decisions either "ruled the school finance law unconstitutional or cast serious doubt on its constitutionality," but instead of being reviewed on the merits by the Supreme Court, each district court decision had the effect of spurring the Legislature to rectify the alleged constitutional infirmities.[9]

The first of the three district court cases was *Caldwell v. State*,[10] a 1972 case involving an equal protection challenge to the school finance system. The financing system at the time relied chiefly on local revenues to fund the local school districts in the area. The court ruled that because state aid did little to rectify funding disparities between districts, the education any given child received was "essentially the function of, and dependent on, the wealth of the district in which the child resides."[11] The district court ruling in *Caldwell* spurred the Legislature to pass the School District Equalization Act (SDEA), which sought to address the alleged inequities in the previous system.[12]

The next district court case, *Knowles v. State Board of Education*,[13] involved a challenge to the newly passed SDEA. The district court initially held that the act was unconstitutional because it "provided unequal benefits to school districts and imposed unequal burdens on taxpayers without any rational basis."[14] When the Legislature amended the law before the district court issued a remedy in the case, the district court dismissed the case as moot. On appeal, the Supreme Court elected not to rule on the merits of the case, but rather reversed the district court's mootness ruling and remanded the case back to the trial court. On remand and after the case was transferred to another district, the Shawnee County district court dismissed the case, finding that the amended school finance law was constitutional.[15]

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[9]Richard E. Levy, Gunfight at the K-12 Corral: Legislative vs. Judicial Power in the Kansas School Finance Litigation, 54 U. KAN. L. REV. 1021, 1035 (2006). This historical survey of prior litigation relies heavily on the account provided in Professor Levy's article.
[10]No. 50616, slip op. (Kan. Dist. Ct. Johnson County, Aug. 30, 1972).
[11]Levy, *supra* note 9, at 1035 (citations omitted).
[12]*Id.*
[13]547 P.2d 699 (Kan. 1976).
[14]Levy, *supra* note 9, at 1035 (citations omitted).
[15]*Id.* at 1035-36.