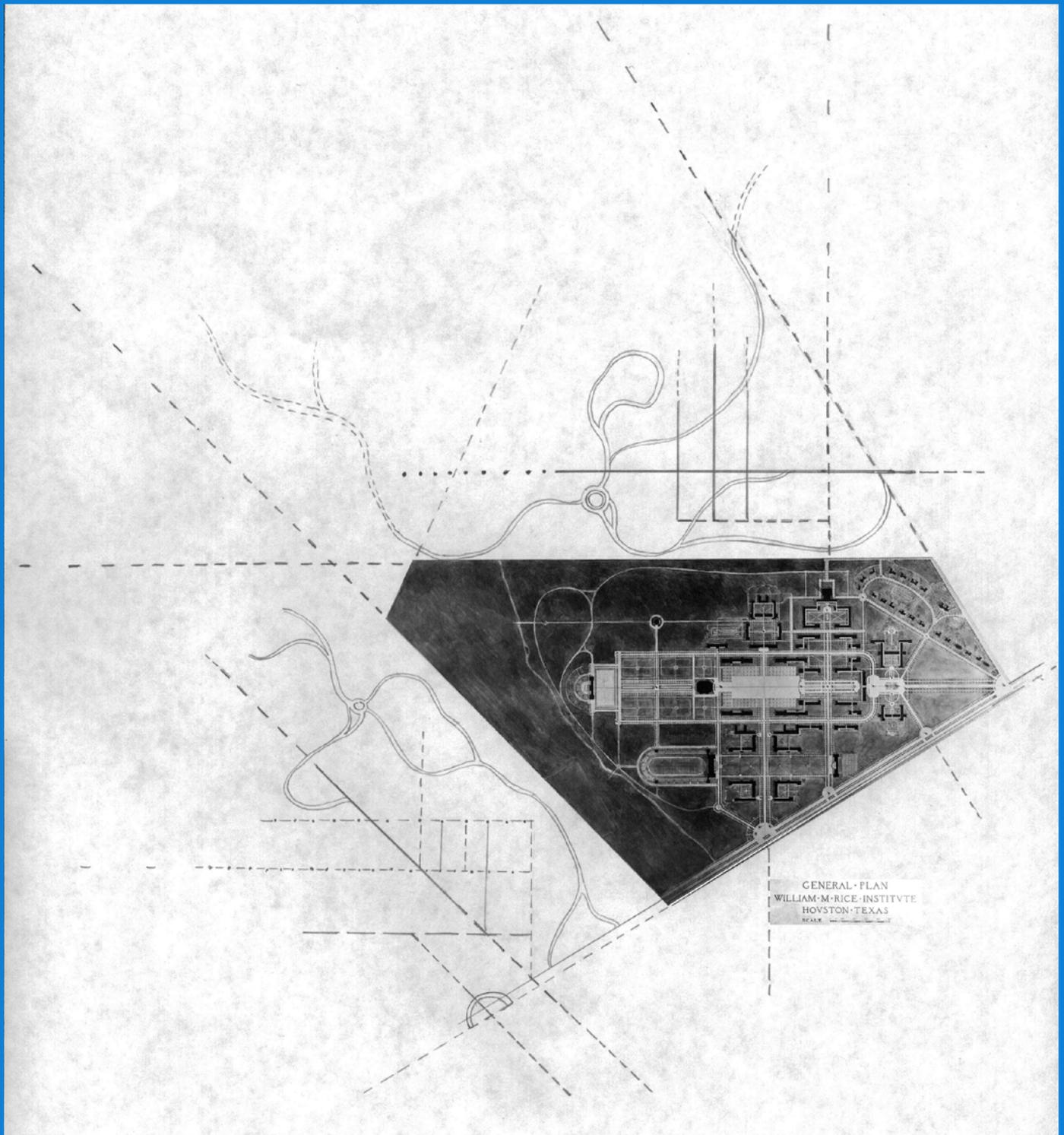


# RICE HISTORICAL REVIEW

## THE INAUGURAL ISSUE



SPRING 2016

VOLUME I

# About the Rice Historical Review

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The Rice Historical Review is a student-run, open access journal published online and in print. It features outstanding historically focused papers written by Rice undergraduates. All Rice undergraduates, regardless of major, are welcome to submit their work to the journal.

With this journal, we seek to emphasize the diversity of study within Rice's History Department. We hope to foster discussion of historical topics on campus and in the greater Rice community. We accept submissions on a rolling basis between late November and mid-January. For more information about submitting a paper, please visit our website: [ricehistoricalreview.org](http://ricehistoricalreview.org).



## FOUNDING

# Editorial Board



Mary Charlotte Carroll | History & Asian Studies, Class of 2016

Co-Editor-in-Chief

Mary Charlotte has been involved with the Rice Historical Review since its inception in the spring of 2015. After graduating from Rice, she plans to study international relations and politics at Cambridge University in England before attending law school.



Rachel Landsman | History & Visual and Dramatic Arts, Class of 2016

Co-Editor-in-Chief

Rachel has been involved in building the Rice Historical Review from its earliest stages as co-editor-in-chief. After graduating from Rice, she will work as a research associate at Bancroft PLLC, a law firm in Washington, DC.



Ephraim Griffith | History Class of 2017

Managing Editor

As the managing editor, Ephraim is responsible for overseeing the review process, facilitating communication between authors, board members, and the faculty board. When not studying, he can be found playing video games or taking walks around campus and Hermann Park.



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Assistant Managing Editor

Roger's responsibilities include communicating emails between faculty and students, overseeing the double-blind process, and assisting with the editing process. When he is not studying, he can probably be found reading a good book at some coffee shop around Houston, at the recreational center, or in the lab.



Christina Hahn | History, Political Science & Asian Studies Class of 2017

Director of Publishing

Christina has worked to produce the journal's aesthetic by creating the logo and designing the journal in its entirety. Additionally she peer-reviews submissions and oversees the publication process of the journal. When not studying, she can be found serving in various leadership roles on campus.



Monica Melendez | History & Latin American Studies, Class of 2016

Director of Media & Technology

Monica's responsibilities include peer-reviewing submissions, overseeing the journal website, and facilitating in the design of the online and print journal templates. After graduation, she will work as a Teach for America corps member at Yes Prep Public Schools before pursuing graduate school.



Katie Beiter | History Class of 2016

Director of Copy Editing

As an associate editor, Katie has overseen the copy editing process and has managed the journal's social media presence on Twitter and Facebook. After graduating from Rice, Katie plans on becoming a journalist.



# Faculty Board

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A special thanks to our incredible Dr. Spiro for making this journal a reality!

# Welcome from the — Editors —

We are honored to present the inaugural issue of the Rice Historical Review, a publication that holds a special place in our hearts.

The idea for the journal first came about as we sat together in a classroom on the third floor of the Humanities Building. As two junior history majors, we chatted about our current research projects and discussed our mutual love of the history faculty. We lamented the fact that although we knew classmates who were conducting fascinating historical research, their work was not being shared with the Rice community as a whole.

Almost exactly one year ago, we approached Dr. Lisa Balabanlilar, director of undergraduate studies in history, about the possibility of creating a space for students to share their historical scholarship. With her enthusiastic support, we embarked on a journey towards making Rice's first undergraduate history journal a reality. We are proud to share the result of these efforts with you.

This project would not have been possible without the incredible support we have received from so many. First and foremost, Dr. Balabanlilar, who has been a source of unending encouragement, wisdom, and cheer. Next, Dr. Lisa Spiro, who taught us everything we know about journal publishing and continues to provide expert guidance and motivational sweets, and our faculty reviewers, who happily joined us in this endeavor. Finally, we are eternally grateful to Christina, Ephraim, Katie, Monica, and Roger, our fearless editorial board. This journal is the result of our collective hard work, and we could not have asked for a better team.

We would also like extend our gratitude to Dr. Caroline Quenemoen and the Rice Center for Civic Leadership, the Dr. Bill Wilson Student Initiative Grant, the Department of History, Department Chair Dr. Alida Metcalf, and Fondren Library. We are overwhelmed by the campus-wide support we have received since we began this project. As this journal demonstrates, Rice is a place where student initiative is truly valued.

We look forward to watching this journal flourish in the coming years. It is our fervent hope that the Rice Historical Review will become a cherished tradition in the scholarly community at Rice and beyond.

In this issue, we offer five exceptional essays. Turn to page 7 to begin reading.

With gratitude,



Mary Charlotte Y. Carroll



Rachel S. Landsman

Founding Editors-in-Chief

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# The Blockade of Leningrad & the Mixed Results of Sovietization

Dane Burrough

**Abstract:** *The Siege of Leningrad, a joint German-Finnish operation during World War II, lasted for 880 days and took the lives of a large number of the citizens of the city. The city was entirely cut off from the rest of the Soviet Union, causing mass starvation that was far deadlier than the military operations of the siege. Many scholars have argued that the Second World War served as the catalyst to fully “Sovietize” the populations of the various Soviet Republics. Examining primary sources from the siege, this paper explores the extent to which that process of Sovietization actually occurred in Leningrad and how the unique experiences of the blockade imprinted on the citizens a sense of independence from the greater Soviet state.*

Sovietization was the multi-faceted process by which Soviet central planners endeavored to subordinate the whole U.S.S.R. to the power of the Communist government and thereby transform ordinary citizens into driven communist ideologues. Many scholars have argued that World War II, which Russians termed the Great Patriotic War, served as the catalyst to fully “Sovietize” the populations of the various Soviet Republics. However, this Sovietization failed to occur in the city of Leningrad, which suffered a joint German-Finnish siege for 880 days.<sup>1</sup>

During the siege and subsequent blockade which lasted from 1941 until 1944, the citizens of Leningrad starved on an unprecedented scale. Estimates of how many citizens died during the siege vary; the official Soviet figure claims a death toll of 632,253,<sup>2</sup> but many historians place the number in a range from 750,000<sup>3</sup> to 1,500,000 deaths out of a prewar population of 2,500,000.<sup>4</sup> During the blockade, citizens resorted to both criminal activity and religious practice as a means of survival. Both



religion and criminality violated the basic tenets of Soviet society and these accounts were therefore censored from the records of the blockade published after the war. The freezing and starving citizens of Leningrad were more concerned with their individual survival and the survival of their proud city than they were with the fate of the Stalinist regime; as a result, their previously patriotic attitudes faded. The remarkable physical and emotional losses rendered some Leningraders fiercely independent and more proud of their city than of the Soviet Union. The Siege of Leningrad was possibly the most lethal siege in the history of warfare. The siege began in early September 1941 after the Army Group North of the *Wehrmacht* or German army moved through the Baltic States to join with Finnish forces surrounding Leningrad and cut off the railroad connection between Moscow and Leningrad at the tiny village of Mga. In doing so, German and Finnish forces effectively surrounded the city and cut off its communication with the rest of the country. Throughout the siege, the *Wehrmacht* shelled and bombed the city to smoldering ashes. The Soviet leaders of Leningrad failed both to understand the gravity of the situation and to properly ration for a prolonged siege until it was too late to save much of the population from imminent starvation. Most of the Soviet deaths due to starvation occurred in the winter of 1941. According to Soviet official figures, likely vastly underreported, 101,583 people, or roughly four percent of the Soviet prewar population, died in January 1942 alone.<sup>5</sup> The harshness of this

winter, one of the coldest in memory for many diarists, was exacerbated by the German bombardments that had cut off power to the city in the fall. Though the siege continued until 1944, the majority of the damage and casualties occurred in the winter of 1941.

During the siege, the citizens of Leningrad went to extreme measures to procure food for themselves and their families, frequently resorting to crime and the bartering of valuable pre-war goods to obtain bread. The bread itself was frequently mixed with sawdust and other fillers because the blockade had created a major grain shortage in the area. People even resorted to boiling belts and eating binding glue and other barely edible items to satiate their hunger.<sup>6</sup> The sight of dead bodies frozen in snow or corpses being dragged on children's sleds became a common sight during the height of the winter of 1941. Inhabitants' contemporary diaries provide a vivid account of their daily struggle to survive on meager rations of food. In late November 1941 the Red Army, or Soviet ground troops, established an Ice Road across Lake Ladoga that served both as an evacuation route and a way to import supplies into the city. The route however was dangerous and inefficient because the German army frequently bombarded it and transport conditions were often terrible.<sup>7</sup> After the winter, fewer Leningraders died of starvation, and rations became less restrictive primarily due to collective gardening in residential areas and because there were fewer mouths to feed. The Red Army conducted various offensives throughout 1942 to break through the blockade, but its first successful operation, Operation Iskra, did not occur until January 1943. Even after the Red Army broke the blockade, constant shelling from the German forces would continue until the Soviets permanently broke the blockade on January 27, 1944.<sup>8</sup>

“ Although the siege destroyed any sense of normalcy for the citizens of Leningrad, the survivors held immense pride in their ability to survive and preserve the spirit of their city.

The citizens of Leningrad met the beginning of the war in the summer of 1941 with a mixture of shock and intense patriotism. A week after the war began Yura Riabinkin, a teenage diarist, wrote, “[a]t first I felt a certain sense of pride, then a wave of fear—the first eventually got the upper hand of the second.”<sup>9</sup> Georgi Kniازهv, the Director of the Archives of the Academy of Sciences, wrote in July, “[t]his is my city... can it really be true that it is threatened by the danger of an enemy occupation? No, no, no!”<sup>10</sup> Kniازهv's observation is indicative of the greater sentiment shared amongst the Leningrad intelligentsia as well as the Soviet leaders in the Smolny, the communist headquarters in Leningrad. It reflected the lack of preparedness for the imminent siege and blockade. If Kniازهv heard rumors of Germany marching towards Leningrad with the intent to occupy, the policymakers in the Smolny must also have had intelligence on the *Wehrmacht's* movements. However, Andrei Zhdanov, the communist boss of Leningrad, and his staff did not believe that the Nazis would ever make it to Leningrad. Zhdanov had put responsibility for the defense of Leningrad on his own shoulders in August,<sup>11</sup> mainly in response to the political maneuvering occurring in the Kremlin in Moscow. Thus, Soviet leaders made multiple mistakes that sparked distrust amongst the Leningraders.

One such mistake that proved to be fatal was the creation of the so-called People's Levy. Immediately after the war began, the Soviet

authorities called for citizens to volunteer for military service. Officials ordered women and children to dig fortifications along the Luga Line and trained men to fight in battle. These troops, however, were vastly underprepared and ill equipped, resulting in large numbers of casualties among volunteer units. Of the plight of these volunteers, one diarist wrote, “[t]he entire cream of our Leningrad youth suffered especially, forced to enlist as volunteers and in civilian battalions, driven to slaughter.”<sup>12</sup> American journalist and author Harrison E. Salisbury wrote of the volunteer regiments, “[the] officers were no more experienced than the men.”<sup>13</sup> This deadly mix of desperation and ineptitude did not engender support for the Soviet cause from the average Leningrader; instead, it bred resentment among the population once the blockade took its deadly toll.

By September 1941, Leningrad had become a dangerous place; German shelling had become a common occurrence as the *Wehrmacht* began closing in on the blockade ring. At first, the Leningraders failed to understand the gravity of their situation; the diarist Elena Kochina wrote, “[a]ll roads to Leningrad are cut off. Is something about to happen?”<sup>14</sup> One diarist noted that, “Bread rations began to be cut on September 1,”<sup>15</sup> while another recalled the bombing raids: “Every time there was a bombing raid I expected to die.”<sup>16</sup> While citizens tried to adjust to life under siege, a dramatic political war erupted between the Kremlin and the Smolny over who was at fault for the city’s lack of preparation. A telegraph from the Kremlin to Zhdanov read, “[w]e are disgusted by your conduct. All you do is report the surrender of this or that place, without saying a word about how you plan to put a stop to all these losses... Perhaps you have already decided to give up Leningrad?”<sup>17</sup> In late September, Moscow sent a document to the Smolny to prepare for the worst, instructing them “to verify the matter of preparations for blowing up and destroying enterprises of important installations and bridges in

Leningrad in the event of the forced retreat of our troops from the Leningrad area.”<sup>18</sup> The public noticed these ultimately unnecessary contingency actions and increasingly feared that the government would surrender the city to the Nazis.

Once the siege began, the Leningraders’ attitudes towards Stalin and the U.S.S.R. became more apparent. Many Leningraders, particularly intellectuals and people whose family members Stalin had purged in the 1930s, became hostile towards Stalin and the Soviet Union. One diarist wrote, “[a]s for Stalin, he has been grinding us to a pulp for the past twenty years. He detests Leningrad—no one here has known him or seen him since the Revolution.”<sup>19</sup> After Stalin adopted the title of Marshal, a diarist commented, “[a] man who possesses everything in the world... still needed the title, the simple combination of sounds, the word ‘marshal,’ an innocent acoustical window-dressing!”<sup>20</sup> Another survivor recalled in an interview after the fall of the Soviet Union, “[n]o one talked about the leaders... Of course, the people didn’t like Zhdanov, because he was a ‘fat cat,’ the only fat cat we saw.”<sup>21</sup> Contrastingly, many historians have noted that during and immediately following the siege, more pictures of the Leningrad communist leader Zhdanov were hung in citizens’ houses than those of Stalin or Lenin. Still, not all citizens shared these negative descriptions. One survivor remembered:

[We] fought for the Motherland... but Soviet... we thought less about it... Stalin, yes, but for the Soviet system... Stalin commanded our armed forces... in him we saw our eventual victory... we thought he knew everything in his head... we believed in him like a God. But, whether we were defending Socialism I personally was not thinking about that.<sup>22</sup>

While the diarists held varying opinions of Stalin, they were united behind a strong devotion to the city of Leningrad. The people of Leningrad felt much pride for their city with a great appreciation for its immense beauty.



Christina Hahn, 2016

Kniazev captured this feeling when he wrote, “[i]f things turn out badly, it would be better to die here, somewhere along the embankment or in the deep waters of the Neva... But our city—and I firmly believe this—will never fall into the hands of the enemy!”<sup>23</sup> In a later entry Kniazev wrote, “[t]he ring can only be broken from the outside, and if this does not happen, then the only thing left will be to die, defending our native city.”<sup>24</sup> Even during the first siege winter, Leningraders were still ferociously proud of their city’s independence, history, culture and art.

Riabinkin wrote, “[o]ur dead bodies will rot, our bones will crumble to dust, but Leningrad will stand on the banks of the Neva for all eternity, proud and invincible.”<sup>25</sup> Remarkably, the diarists rarely extol the virtues of the Soviet Union in the same way or even mention the Soviet Union at all. Their pride was for Leningrad alone.

Soviet leaders pounced on this sense of perceived heroism. Propaganda posters urged Leningraders to remain strong, conserve their food, and continue fighting for the Motherland. The propaganda posters worked. As one survivor recalled, “[p]eople were absolutely unprepared for war, because our communist propaganda... was still effective. It worked. Mass propaganda always reaches the people quickly and spreads quickly among them. And people were so patriotic.”<sup>26</sup> In contrast, Kochina noted, “[t]he hurricane of war has torn off these rags: now everyone has become what he was in fact, and not what he wanted to seem. Many have turned out to be pitiful cowards and scoundrels.”<sup>27</sup> Kniazev seemed perplexed by his fellow citizens’ heroic portrayal. In the fall of 1941 he wrote, “[w]e are very ordinary people, nothing at all remarkable, and I have nothing that is in any way heroic to record.”<sup>28</sup> Although both

statements were penned before the blockade winter, they are still indicative of Leningraders' general mood. To them, days were not about committing heroic acts to save the Soviet Union, but rather about surviving another day and gaining a sense of normalcy amongst the rapidly deteriorating conditions. Writing in March of 1942, after the worst of the winter season, one diarist noted that the idealized Soviet acts of heroism were coupled with, "How often have they demonstrated brutality, cruelty, often completely unnecessary and senseless. And how much deception and baseness!"<sup>29</sup> This recollection illustrates the terrible circumstances Leningraders endured in the winter of 1941. Another diarist wrote, "[o]rdinary people simply reeked of Soviet heroism, a heroism simply impersonal... Everything living, everything truthful was inadmissible. Uncensored tragedy wafted through several lives."<sup>30</sup> These are not the sentiments of Soviet patriots as they were portrayed by Stalin's propaganda. Rather, they are the sentiments of people bitter about their terrible experiences and frustrated at their inability to share those experiences with the outside world. The authorities exploited their people's deprivation and hunger to further the causes of Soviet unity and victory. As the siege progressed into a blockade, it became clear to Leningraders that the daily bombings were a lesser cause for concern than the leaders' ineptitude. Historian Anna Reid comments: "Failure to lay in adequate stores of food and fuel before the siege ring closed was due to the same lethal mixture of denial, disorganization and carelessness of human life as the failure to evacuate the surplus civilian population."<sup>31</sup> Some of this incompetence stemmed from the siege of Moscow and Stalin's perceived indifference towards Leningrad. The Kremlin was far more concerned with the situation around Moscow than they were about food shortages in Leningrad.<sup>32</sup> By October, rationing had become more severe and citizens were starting to feel the effects of food deprivation, yet they maintained their patriotic zeal for the

Soviet Union. Kniازهv wrote in November of 1941, "Leningrad must defend itself, whatever the outcomes might be. There can be no talk of surrender! We must bear all the burdens and ordeals that have fallen to our lot, including hunger."<sup>33</sup> The feelings of Kniازهv and his fellow patriots, however, were not representative of the majority of the population. Many others became despondent and unable to think of anything but food. Riabinkin wrote in late October that, "[t]o remain in Leningrad from now on is a sentence of death."<sup>34</sup>

**“ For most citizens, basic human needs trumped wartime patriotism. ”**

The hunger that the blockade brought to Leningrad dampened the wave of loyalty among the city's citizens. For many, the food shortages served to crystallize their feelings about the Soviet Union as a whole; for some, hunger created feelings of despondency. To demonstrate their unrest, several resorted to activities that were anti-Soviet in theory: crime and religion. Nevertheless for most of the citizens trapped in the city, the blockade meant they only thought of food. Kachina wrote, "I dreamed that large white rabbits with eyes like cranberries had gotten caught in the mousetraps. I woke up and rushed to the traps. They were empty! ... All the mice had evidently died off long ago."<sup>35</sup> Riabinkin wrote, "I have absolutely no desire to study at all. The only thoughts occupying my head are ones about food and about the bombing and shelling."<sup>36</sup> The hunger made Leningraders indifferent to everything, including each other. It destroyed personal relationships and caused people to betray their closest friends and family members. These actions were characteristic not of heroism but of people desperate to survive.

Crime became rampant during the winter, as people were increasingly willing to do anything

to survive. First-hand accounts of crime frequently went unpublished or were censored out of published accounts because they contradicted the heroic narrative of the blockade that the Soviet government wished to promote. The crimes that Leningraders committed range from the macabre, such as the widespread recollections of cannibalism, to the sad, like the crimes committed by Kochina's starving husband Dima. Kochina's relationship with her husband tragically suffered as a result of the rampant hunger. The couple bickered frequently over food and came to resent each other. Kochina's first run-in with crime occurred when one of the many trade school boys roaming the streets in search of food stole her daily ration of bread.<sup>37</sup> She was extremely unhappy when, in late December, her husband turned to stealing bread with the sharpened end of a cane. After a woman caught Kochina's husband stealing, the woman demanded from him half of the bread, "'grabbed the bread... and began to cram it greedily into her mouth. Then he sat down beside her and ate his half. Thus they sat and ate, now and then cursing one another, until they'd eaten all the bread."<sup>38</sup> Despite the shame this brought her, she also attempted to justify his actions, "Well after all, the salespeople really are robbing us blind. In return they have everything they want. Almost all of them, without shame at all, wear gold and expensive furs."<sup>39</sup> Kochina was not alone in witnessing or detailing the increase in crime. One diarist writes, "I myself was a witness when a teenager tore a piece of bread from the hands of a weakened old woman, quickly shoved it into his mouth, and then fell onto the floor with his face to the ground and started to chew it feverishly."<sup>40</sup> Crimes committed for food ran rampant in Leningrad during the blockade. The accounts, however, were frequently suppressed because they did not portray the heroism that Stalin wished to promote. The ideal of selflessness was paramount and extolled as a virtue; fulfilling basic human needs did not stoke the Soviet propaganda in the same way.

The most infamous of the crimes committed during the siege winter, and therefore the most censored in Soviet accounts, was cannibalism. Harrison Salisbury was the first historian to discuss at length the rumors of cannibalism that had escaped the censors. He recounts the story of a young man who was lured into an abandoned building to exchange bread for boots, but when he finally got there he realized that the man was a member of a cannibal collective and had brought him there to eat him.<sup>41</sup> Reid discredits this particular story, but historians have unearthed proof of cannibalism in besieged Leningrad following the release of Soviet police records in 2004. For the survivors of the siege winter, cannibalism became the subject of countless rumors. The acclaimed Soviet poet Olga Berggolts recorded what one friend told her about a cannibal couple who first ate the small corpse of their child and then entrapped three more children to eat as well.<sup>42</sup> According to Reid's police records, around 2,000 people had been arrested by June of 1942 for either cannibalism or corpse-eating.<sup>43</sup> The authorities' desperate attempts to quash these rumors indicate that Soviet policymakers viewed rumors of cannibalism as incompatible with their greater heroic narrative about the siege survivors. Crime driven by hunger accompanied Leningraders' increasing numbness towards death and dying. Kochina wrote, "[d]eath is not a casual visitor now. People have gotten used to it. It's constantly hanging around among the living."<sup>44</sup> Kniazev wrote, "[e]ach of us can hear the swish of the scythe"<sup>45</sup> and that "[i]t is difficult to die, but it is extremely hard to be dying."<sup>46</sup> In addition, hunger turned people into single-minded beings. One diarist commented, "excruciating hunger forces a person to think and talk only about one thing—about food."<sup>47</sup> These reflections and diary entries all illustrate that hunger did not cause the citizens of Leningrad to act more patriotically; rather, it served to evaporate much of the patriotism that had arisen immediately after the war began. People had

little time for ideology when they were worried about survival. The realities of under-siege Leningrad, partly a consequence of poor pre-siege planning, contradicted the Soviet assertion that people were starving as part of the patriotic struggle.

The increased practice of religion also directly counteracted the process of Sovietization. One survivor interviewed in the early 2000s claimed that “along with bread the only other valuable commodity she recalled was the religious icon.”<sup>48</sup> Riabikin addressed the intangible side of religiosity during the blockade writing, “[o]nly God, if such exists, can give us deliverance.”<sup>49</sup> He also noted that his mother remarked,

“ [a]ll my hope now is in God. Here I am, a Communist Party member, but I believe in God.”<sup>50</sup> Religious life remained a private matter during the blockade, as the NKVD or Soviet secret police, continued to crack down on religious assemblies. But more and more people turned to religion as a way of consoling themselves as their situations became untenable. Once again, the Stalinist censors were quick to eliminate any pro-religious comments or discussions of God in the accounts they allowed published.

As Leningraders emerged from the siege winter of 1941, the worst was behind them. People’s allotted rations grew because many had either died or escaped on the Ice Road, which evacuated around 500,000 people in four months.<sup>51</sup> Because of this mass death and displacement, many of the diaries did not continue past the spring of 1942, making it increasingly difficult to accurately gauge the thoughts of the Leningraders. However, Kniazev’s diary includes a telling late entry regarding a poster that withstood the winter: The Leningraders have stood by their city. In a few years’ time—50 to 100 years, say—this

poster will be the pride of some museum. Those who come after us will bow their heads before it. This tattered sheet, carefully preserved, will tell the story of what Leningrad went through better than hundreds of pages of print.<sup>52</sup> His diary serves as one of the great reminders of the fierce pride in Leningrad many citizens had. A woman interviewed after the collapse of the Soviet Union described the aftermath of the siege: “[a]nd then the victory. This was also a tragic moment. For when those salutes of arms began, everyone was already so worn out they took them to be a routine attack on the city.”<sup>53</sup> One diarist writing about the end of the siege commented, “[o]ur life must now change, Leningraders have to begin to live in a completely different way. I don’t know what it will be, but it will be completely different!”<sup>54</sup> Vera Inber, a poet and one of the few diarists who continued to write through the spring of 1942, described the end of the siege as, “[t]he greatest event in the life of Leningrad... Here words fail me.”<sup>55</sup> Interestingly, Inber was not a native Leningrader and had only arrived in the city at the beginning of the war, yet the experiences of the blockade bound all of the so-called *blokadniki* to one another. During and after the blockade, the NKVD and the Kremlin did not endear themselves to the average Leningrader. Reid explained that there was no revolt within the city because “[t]his was in part a case of better the devil you know.”<sup>56</sup> The NKVD stayed active during the siege to suppress any anti-Soviet thought. One historian writes of the actions of the NKVD and other Stalinist forces during the blockade: “Leningraders suffered—but not in the name of a good cause, and no more than under the allegedly ordinary circumstances of Stalinist peacetime.”<sup>57</sup> The historiography of the Siege of Leningrad and validity of the primary sources are of interest in discussing the mixed results of the Sovietization of the citizenry of Leningrad. Even today, Russians are fascinated by the experiences of the *blokadniki*. One commenter notes that when the topic is discussed in

modern Russia, “[t]he issue of ideology remains a thorny topic in siege discourse. Interestingly, ideology is rarely if ever discussed in contemporary siege testimonies published in Russian newspapers and journals.”<sup>58</sup> Moreover, people who were children during the blockade and did not live through the Stalinist purges of the 1930s account for many of the contemporary accounts of the blockade. This fact may explain the pro-Stalinist sentiments expressed by some of the surviving *blokadniki*. The negative accounts, however, may have been influenced by the anti-Soviet feelings that emerged from the 1980s. Kirschenbaum notes that accounts from the 1980s and ‘90s, “[b]ecame a heroic defense of the ideals and traditions of St. Petersburg—Leningrad, rather than those of the Soviet state.”<sup>59</sup> However, this does not undermine the validity of these new sources, but rather provides more nuance and balance to the preexisting narrative of the blockade. This new historical approach to the experiences of the citizens during the blockade demonstrates that the nature of the experiences did not conform to the dominant narrative about the blockade constructed by the Soviet authorities. 

## NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Harrison E. Salisbury, *The 900 Days: The Siege Of Leningrad* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 567.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 514

<sup>3</sup> Anna Reid, *Leningrad: The Epic Siege of World War II, 1941-1944* (New York: Walker Books, 2012), 418.

<sup>4</sup> Salisbury, *The 900 Days*, 515-516.

<sup>5</sup> Reid, *Leningrad*, 419.

<sup>6</sup> Daniil Alexandrovich Granin, *Leningrad Under Siege: First-Hand Accounts of the Ordeal*, trans. Clare Burstal and Dr Kisselnikov (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword, 2007), 114.

<sup>7</sup> Salisbury, *The 900 Days*, 407-422.

<sup>8</sup> Vera Inber, *Leningrad Diary* (London: St. Martin’s Press, 1971), 181.

<sup>9</sup> Granin, *Leningrad Under Siege*, 10.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Bidlack and Nikita Lomagin, *The Leningrad Blockade, 1941-1944: A New Documentary History from the Soviet Archives*, trans. Marian Schwartz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 91.

<sup>12</sup> Cynthia Simmons and Nina Perlina, *Writing The Siege Of Leningrad: Women’s Diaries, Memoirs, and Documentary Prose*, 1st edition (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005), 68.

<sup>13</sup> Salisbury, *The 900 Days*, 191.

<sup>14</sup> Elena Kochina, *Blockade Diary: Under Siege in Leningrad, 1941-1942*, trans. Samuel C. Ramer, (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1990), 40.

<sup>15</sup> Simmons and Perlina, *Writing the Siege*, 22.

<sup>16</sup> Granin, *Leningrad Under Siege*, 57.

<sup>17</sup> Reid, *Leningrad*, 114.

<sup>18</sup> Bidlack and Lomagin, *The Leningrad Blockade*, 116.

<sup>19</sup> Simmons and Perlina, *Writing the Siege*, 24.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>22</sup> James Clapperton, “The Siege of Leningrad as Sacred Narrative: Conversations with Survivors,” *Oral History* 35, no. 1 (2007): 57-58.

<sup>23</sup> Granin, *Leningrad Under Siege*, 18. Georgi Kniazev in *Leningrad Under Siege*, 18.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>25</sup> Granin, *Leningrad Under Siege*, 143.

<sup>26</sup> Simmons and Perlina, *Writing the Siege*, 173.

<sup>27</sup> Kochina, *Blockade Diary*, 44.

<sup>28</sup> Granin, *Leningrad Under Siege*, 68.

<sup>29</sup> Simmons and Perlina, *Writing the Siege*, 30.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>31</sup> Anna Reid. *Leningrad*, 161.

<sup>32</sup> Bidlack and Lomagin, *The Leningrad Blockade, 127-128*.

- <sup>33</sup> Granin, *Leningrad Under Siege*, 85.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.
- <sup>35</sup> Kochina, *Blockade Diary*, 58.
- <sup>36</sup> Granin, *Leningrad Under Siege*, 100.
- <sup>37</sup> Kochina, *Blockade Diary*, 55.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.
- <sup>40</sup> Simmons and Perlina, *Writing the Siege*, 98.
- <sup>41</sup> Salisbury, *The 900 Days*, 480.
- <sup>42</sup> Reid, *Leningrad*, 286.
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 290.
- <sup>44</sup> Kochina, *Blockade Diary*, 64.
- <sup>45</sup> Granin, *Leningrad Under Siege*, 166.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.
- <sup>47</sup> Simmons and Perlina, *Writing the Siege*, 60.
- <sup>48</sup> Clapperton, "The Siege as a Sacred Narrative," 56.
- <sup>49</sup> Granin, *Leningrad Under Siege*, 152.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.
- <sup>51</sup> Reid, *Leningrad*, 278.
- <sup>52</sup> Granin, *Leningrad Under Siege*, 194.
- <sup>53</sup> Simmons and Perlina, *Writing the Siege*, 117. <sup>54</sup>
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.
- <sup>55</sup> Inber, *Leningrad Diary*, 181.
- <sup>56</sup> Reid, *Leningrad*, 303.
- <sup>57</sup> Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad, 1941-1995: Myth, Memories, and Monuments*, 1 edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 248.
- <sup>58</sup> Clapperton, "The Siege as a Sacred Narrative," 51.
- <sup>59</sup> Kirschenbaum, *Legacy of the Siege*, 252.

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# Extirpating the Loathsome Smallpox: A Study in the History and Demise of Smallpox, as Aided by Thomas Jefferson

Anna Durham

**Abstract:** *This essay explores the history of smallpox variolation and vaccination with particular emphasis on the contributions of Thomas Jefferson to the spread of both methods in the United States. The research draws mainly upon contemporary histories of the disease and modern medical insights, as well as primary sources in the form of correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and his contemporaries. Jefferson's motivation in performing his own experiments with variolation and vaccination becomes clear when considering his Eastern and British forerunners, and the enthusiasm with which he writes on the subject points to his emotional involvement. This research makes clear the significance of Jefferson's experiments to scientific progress and the importance of his efforts to alert the American people of the procedures' value.*

“Future nations will know by history only that the loathsome smallpox [sic] has existed and by you has been extirpated,” Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1806, closing a letter to the revolutionary physician Edward Jenner.<sup>1</sup> That Jefferson's proclamation rings true is surely a testament to the efforts of Jenner, whom Jefferson praises, but also to the efforts of Jefferson himself. After millennia of destruction without regard to class or motive, the extirpation of naturally occurring smallpox epidemics began just before Jefferson's lifetime and became increasingly more efficient in the late eighteenth century, supported by his own efforts. The history of smallpox is a rich and devastating one, dating back beyond recorded history and continuing into the present day. This essay will trace that history, from some of the first instances of the virus in Europe and the New World through the Western “discovery” of variolation and vaccination in the eighteenth century. In particular, the



virus's effects in the lifetime of the late Thomas Jefferson, and his efforts in combatting it through the adoption and promotion of inoculation, are of particular interest when examining the rise and decline of smallpox itself. Jefferson's contributions to the health and welfare of mankind through his treatment of smallpox variolation and later vaccination are often overlooked by today's public, but it is clear to those who study this history that this swift and almost miraculous medical progress could not have occurred, or would at least have been greatly retarded, without the support of Jefferson.

Smallpox, identified as the two virus variants *Variola major* and *Variola minor* by modern scientists, is a highly contagious disease with devastating physiological effects. It is spread through close contact in several ways. The most common method occurs when the virions in the infected person's mouth ulcers are expelled in sneezes or coughs, so that the healthy person inhales them and becomes infected as well. Smallpox may also be spread through physical contact with the clothing, bedding, or skin of a diseased individual whose sores have burst or become pierced by some other means. After an incubation period of one to three weeks, the virus begins to present itself in the form of a high fever accompanied by vomiting and pain in the limbs and abdomen. Just three days after the onset of these initial symptoms come the reddish spots, which develop into the characteristic smallpox rash as illustrated in the artwork and literature of countless cultures

throughout the centuries. Those reddish spots develop into fluid-filled vesicles that become opaque and begin to scab. In those who survive smallpox, most of the scabs are gone from the body (with the exception of the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet, which take longer to heal) after four weeks from the first observed symptom. In the place of those scabs are deep, depigmented scars that force survivors to bear the pocked appearance of the disease for the rest of their lives, and its high fevers commonly resulted in neurological damage or blindness, particularly in the very young.<sup>2</sup>

Those scarred individuals, however, were the lucky ones. The general mortality rate of the disease ranged between twenty and sixty percent, but for the weak, especially children, this mortality rate was much higher, at eighty percent of cases or higher resulting in death. Since its first occurrence in 10,000 B.C. in Northeastern Africa, smallpox has swept across the world from its origin to India and then Europe, spreading through trade, migration, and other contact across cultures, until its reach became global. Smallpox is at least partly responsible for several of history's most dramatic events. The Roman Empire first began to fall in 180 A.D. as smallpox ravaged Roman troops on their return home from the Middle East, killing between three-and-a-half and seven million people in what became known as the Plague of Galen. Mexico's population decreased dramatically from twenty-five million to fewer than two million between 1518 and 1620 after Spanish and Portuguese conquistadors brought with their colonial ambitions and violence the deadly disease.



**As a biological  
terror, smallpox  
made no distinction  
between rich and poor,  
powerful and weak.**

It is responsible for the death of governmental

figures from Marcus Aurelius to King Louis XV of France, as well as countless citizens. In the late 1700s, for example, over four hundred thousand Europeans died annually of the disease and its complications.<sup>3</sup>

How, then, were victims of smallpox treated, and what steps were taken to prevent the spread of the disease? For most of the Western world through the late eighteenth century, these were questions that had yet to be answered. Even today there exists no cure for smallpox, and treatment even in the twentieth century focused on addressing individual symptoms, such as fever and dehydration, rather than the virus itself.<sup>4</sup> For Europeans and European-Americans in the New World, smallpox was an enigmatic killer, unavoidable and insurmountable. That survivors of smallpox would not fall victim to the disease once again was obvious, but Europeans until the eighteenth century had no notion of how to use this knowledge to their advantage; encouraging an individual to develop a full case of smallpox so that they might avoid it in the future is an illogical idea. In the Eastern world, however, physicians and early scientists understood that one might cause a deliberate, milder viral infection that nevertheless confers immunity to the individual. This process, called variolation after the virus *Variola*, was a form of inoculation practiced for centuries in China, Africa, and the Ottoman Empire before Europeans gained the same knowledge through contact with those cultures.<sup>5</sup>

As Europeans started traveling to these eastern regions, particularly Turkey, in the early eighteenth century, reports of this curious practice trickled into their mother countries. These early reports, such as those given in 1714 by Emanuele Timoni and 1716 by Giacomo Pilarino to the Royal Society of London, however, did little to influence European physicians of the time, who were reluctant to experiment with Eastern medicine and especially with such a devastating disease as smallpox. Just a few years later in 1718, an

English aristocrat named Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, wife to the British ambassador to the Sublime Porte in Turkey, observed the Turkish practice of variolation and demanded that her own son be inoculated by the embassy surgeon. When she returned to England in 1721, she had her daughter inoculated as well—this time in the presence of the British court physicians and the president of the Royal Society, the result of both her close connection with the premier court physician Charles Maitland and her own reputation as a knowledgeable “witness to the Orient.”<sup>6</sup> This was the first variolation performed in England and its prominence and success led the British monarchy to authorize trials by Dr. Maitland. His trials were certified a success by the Royal Society and the College of Physicians, and knowledge of variolation spread generally throughout England by 1722.<sup>7</sup> Around the same time, across the ocean in America, another individual was discovering the value of inoculation in preserving the health of large populations. Cotton Mather, well known in American history as a Puritan minister and for his support of the Salem witch trials, was also responsible for quantifying—and thus rendering more acceptable—the effectiveness of variolation in the New World. Like Timoni and Pilarino, Mather wrote to the Royal Society of London about the Eastern practice of variolation. However, his 1716 letter was not the result of travel to the East, but rather a conversation with “[his] Negro-Man Onesimus, who is a pretty Intelligent Fellow.” Onesimus, an African slave purchased for Mather by his congregation in 1706, had shown Mather a peculiar scar on his arm. Onesimus explained that this scar was the result of undergoing variolation while still in Africa. Mather’s letter noted that while the inoculation gave Onesimus “something of ye Smallpox,” the result was that the slave was “forever preserved” from getting the disease again.<sup>8</sup> Just five years after Mather sent this letter, a smallpox epidemic overtook Boston, killing almost nine hundred people by the year’s end.<sup>9</sup>

With the knowledge that variolation had protected Onesimus from further bouts of smallpox and news of Lady Montagu’s success in England, Mather attempted to provide that same protection to the rest of the Massachusetts colony. At the time of the 1721 outbreak, Mather called upon every doctor in Boston to perform variolation on the colonists to protect the city from further harm, but prejudices ultimately prevented widespread use of the procedure. Because Mather’s knowledge came primarily from a slave, and because practice of the procedure was done only in Eastern, non-Christian countries, all but one of the Boston doctors resisted the experiment—much as the conservative English doctors had done around the same time.

The one doctor that took Mather’s risk, however, contributed much to making inoculation widespread throughout the colonies. Dr. Zabdiel Boylston inoculated 244 individuals with smallpox, only 6 of whom died. This mortality rate of two and a half percent, compared with the mortality rate of colonists who did not undergo variolation at fourteen percent, demonstrated the effectiveness of variolation.

Further, the careful records of Mather and Boylston quantified this effectiveness, providing hard evidence that opposed Western prejudices against the procedure. As smallpox outbreaks occurred in areas throughout the colonies, more and more doctors trusted the evidence of the 1721 Boston outbreak. As their successes mirrored Boylston’s, variolation became widespread throughout the colonies, though it was not universally accepted.<sup>10</sup> Born in Virginia on April 13, 1743, Thomas Jefferson reached maturity in the midst of these smallpox outbreaks and debates over variolation. Jefferson was a brilliant man, well educated in an incredible number of topics, with interests ranging from gardening to politics. Jefferson’s education, though he did briefly attend the College of William and Mary, was primarily conducted of his own volition,

through correspondence with the experts of his time in every conceivable field. Jefferson certainly tried to satiate his thirst for knowledge throughout his lifetime, keeping constantly abreast of technological and scientific progress in a wide variety of fields, including medicine, even from a young age.<sup>11</sup> Not every doctor was as proactive in discovering and analyzing medical advances; indeed, most of the doctors during Jefferson's lifetime, and particularly his youth, were of the same sort as the conservatives in England and in Boston who were reluctant to take risks with their patient's health on new ideas. Jefferson often expressed a preference for self-treatment, generally preferring to call a doctor only "when he felt he was suffering more than a common illness."<sup>12</sup> Indeed, in 1799 Jefferson wrote to friend William Green Munford that the "state of medicine is worse than that of total ignorance."

"It was not, [Jefferson] was wont to observe, to physic that I object so much as to physicians,"<sup>13</sup> explained Jefferson's friend and original University of Virginia faculty member, Dr. Robley Dunglison in his *Personal Memoranda*. This observation is perhaps the best way to understand Jefferson's approach to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century medicine. He trusted absolutely that which he understood and saw evidence for (physic), though he did not place blind trust into the practitioners of medicine themselves (physicians). It was a testament to the scientific validity of a new medical procedure, therefore, when Jefferson did put his trust into the operation. One such procedure that proved rational and quantified enough to pass Jefferson's scrutiny was variolation. Though variolation was well known throughout the colonies by the time Jefferson reached maturity, it was not universally accepted, and brought with it some considerable risk. Jefferson's decision to undergo the procedure was a bold one, putting his health at risk based solely on his faith in science and medicine.

In 1766, roughly forty years after the efforts of Lady Montagu, Onesimus, and Mathers brought variolation into prominence in the Western world, Jefferson himself experienced variolation. Because of Virginia's strict laws governing the practice, Jefferson took his first ever trip out of the Virginia colony and traveled alone to Philadelphia, where he was meant to meet his close friend, Frank Willis.<sup>14</sup> There, Jefferson underwent the variolation procedure performed by prominent doctor William Shippen, Jr.<sup>15</sup>



**Jefferson's trust in the procedure is incredible not only when considering his skepticism of the state of medicine, but also when considering the procedure itself.**

Variolation, as a form of inoculation that uses the smallpox virus itself, is incredibly dangerous when compared with the future method of vaccination, another form of inoculation that did not use the actual smallpox virus. Inoculation took advantage of the fluid-filled vesicles symbolic of a smallpox infection, using that virus-containing fluid to soak a thread or thin piece of cloth so that the thread becomes impregnated with a weak version of the virus itself. Allowed to dry for at least twenty-four hours before use, the thread itself could be preserved for months before its use in variolation. To inoculate an individual, a physician would make small incision normally on the arm, just deep enough to expose the blood. A physician would place the smallpox soaked thread into the incision site, then cover the wound for at least a day with cloth or plaster. In the most successful cases, the inoculated person would develop a mild case of smallpox and subsequently be kept quarantined, cared for only by those previously

infected or inoculated.<sup>16</sup> Dr. Shippen's inoculation of Jefferson was one of these successful cases, producing a mild bout of smallpox in Jefferson and granting him lifelong immunity.<sup>17</sup> This personal experience with smallpox inoculation proved influential through Jefferson's life, as he defended the practice, applied it to his own family, and looked towards its improvements with hope and confidence.

The value of inoculation in securing Jefferson's health was not lost on him, and he felt strongly that consenting individuals ought to be able to undergo this procedure just as he had. These convictions led Jefferson, while he was still practicing law, to take on a controversial legal case in Norfolk, Virginia in 1769.<sup>18</sup> Restrictive Virginia laws, founded in fear and ignorance of the process of variolation, encouraged the public's beliefs that inoculation was dangerous. These fears were taken to a violent extreme in 1768, when several angry citizens of Norfolk formed a mob and rioted against a local doctor who performed inoculations, burning his house down.<sup>19</sup> Jefferson took on the duty of defending the doctor, Dr. Archibald Campbell, representing not only the victim but in effect "the side of science and modern medicine."<sup>20</sup> Though he lost the case, Jefferson continued to defend the right of doctors and their consenting patients to practice inoculation as he served on the Virginia General Assembly. As a legislator, Jefferson and other assemblymen worked to repeal at least parts of the Act of 1769, which effectively outlawed any variolation procedure by prohibiting the import of "any variolous or infectious matter" to be used in inoculation.<sup>21</sup> These efforts culminated in the Virginia General Assembly's "Bill concerning Inoculation for Smallpox," presented in 1777. While the extent to which Jefferson was involved in the formation of this bill is unknown, its character and phrasing bears an unmistakable resemblance to other Jeffersonian documents testifying to the rights of man to progress, such as the Declaration of

Independence. In part, the 1777 bill reads, "it hath been proved by incontestable experience that the late discovery's [*sic*] and Improvements therein [i.e., variolation] have produced great Benefits to Mankind."<sup>22</sup> One wonders if the "incontestable experience" to which the bill refers is, at least in part, Jefferson's own.

The value of inoculation was quickly becoming clear to the colonists, particularly those elite and influential colonists that we today refer to as "founding fathers." Indeed, the disease itself played an important part in the American Revolution. Given the usage of smallpox blankets to deliberately infect the Ottawa Indians by British troops during the French and Indian wars, Revolutionary leaders feared and even expected to be treated the same way.<sup>23</sup> Their fears were not unfounded; in 1775 and 1776, as the British lay siege to Boston, a smallpox outbreak occurred within the city. There is no evidence that the British caused this outbreak, but they exploited the opportunity, allowing—or forcing—some of the infected individuals to leave the city so that the disease might spread. Washington, all too aware of the contagion and dangers of smallpox (he himself had suffered a bout while in his teens) did not allow any of his troops to make contact with the infected individuals and quarantined all those who showed any symptoms that could be smallpox-related.<sup>24</sup> In response, Congress created a 1776 investigating committee on which Thomas Jefferson served. Jefferson's committee interviewed several individuals, one of whom claimed that "the small pox was sent out of Quebec by Carleton...for the purpose of giving it to our army."<sup>25</sup>

Convinced by Jefferson's investigating congressional committee that the threat of biological warfare was real, Washington considered his options. Jefferson and other influential figures in the American Revolution, such as John Adams who was inoculated in 1764, encouraged the use of inoculations for



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everyone. Indeed, in 1776 Adams demanded that his wife and children be inoculated as the outbreak occurred in Boston.<sup>26</sup> While Washington trusted his fellow Revolutionary leaders and noted that smallpox was responsible for several of his military retreats and losses, he was reluctant to perform any kind of mass inoculation of his soldiers. Variolation, after all, confers a mild case of smallpox, but it is a case of smallpox nonetheless, and Washington feared large numbers of his soldiers would be rendered incapable of fighting. Nevertheless, he eventually realized the value of inoculation and began a campaign in which all new soldiers would be inoculated, gradually creating a smallpox-immune army that was up to British attacks.<sup>27</sup>

Smallpox continued to ravage the continent wherever outbreaks occurred even after the thirteen colonies became the United States, and thus still weighed heavily on Jefferson's mind. Jefferson seems to have become increasingly concerned for the health of his

family and household, beginning with a decision to inoculate his slave, James Hemings, against smallpox in 1775.<sup>28</sup> Jefferson then requested that his wife, Martha, accompany him to Philadelphia to be inoculated in 1776<sup>29</sup> Martha, however, was unable to make the trip. Two years later, another of Jefferson's slaves, Bob Hemings, was inoculated successfully as well.<sup>30</sup> After Martha's death on September 6, 1782, which devastated her overworked husband, Jefferson mourned so deeply that friends and acquaintances took notice. Perhaps afraid of losing his daughters as well, Jefferson, only two months after Martha's death, traveled with them to Chesterfield County. There, they stayed with family friend Archibald Cary while Jefferson had his daughters and some of Cary's family inoculated; Jefferson himself, already immune, served as their nurse. James Madison, who took note of Jefferson's grief and suspected that going abroad would help him heal, asked Jefferson for a second time to be the United States' negotiator of peace to France.<sup>31</sup> Jefferson accepted, and once again

demonstrated confidence in the power of inoculation in 1787: when he knew that a third slave, Sally Hemings, would accompany his daughter Polly on her trip to his home in Paris, he ordered that Sally, like the rest of his household, be inoculated, so as to prevent the introduction of smallpox into his Parisian home.<sup>32</sup>

Twelve years after Jefferson required Sally Hemings to be variolated with the smallpox virus—until then, the only method of inoculation of which to speak—English physician Dr. Edward Jenner made a groundbreaking discovery. After years of fascination with the common lore that milkmaids, who often contracted cowpox, could not contract smallpox, Jenner came upon an opportunity to test that theory. In May 1796, milkmaid Sarah Nelmes became infected with cowpox and developed characteristic cowpox vesicles. Using the same method of inoculation as variolation, Jenner ran a thread through one of Nelmes’s vesicles and used it to inoculate James Phipps, an otherwise healthy child. To test Phipps’s immunity against smallpox, Jenner performed a variolation on the boy just six weeks later; instead of developing a mild case of smallpox, as a variolated individual is wont to do, Phipps remained healthy and uninfected. When Jenner repeated the variolation months later and again produced no infection, he excitedly wrote to the Royal Society, expressing his discovery in hopes of finding support. Instead, he was met with disbelief, criticism, and even threats; told “not [to] promulgate such a wild idea,” Jenner nevertheless decided to self-publish his findings.<sup>33</sup> Instrumental in bringing those findings to prominence in America, and especially to the eyes of Thomas Jefferson, was Rhode Island doctor Benjamin Waterhouse.<sup>34</sup>

Waterhouse encountered Jenner’s self-published article and was immediately taken with the idea. Variolation, while still preferable to contracting smallpox in the natural way, came with serious risks. Between

two and three percent of variolations were unsuccessful, resulting in the death of the variolated individual, the deaths of those tending the variolated individual (or even a new outbreak), or the development of other illnesses that were present in the individual from whom the variolation thread came.



**While vaccination, or the use of the cowpox vaccine rather than the smallpox vaccine in inoculation, did not prevent the risk of contracting unintended illnesses from the donor, it did eliminate the risk of death and epidemic.**

Cowpox was a much milder disease, even less likely to harm through inoculation than in its natural state.<sup>35</sup> Convinced by Jenner’s article, Waterhouse vaccinated his own family in July 1800, then confidently exposed them both to variolation and patients with smallpox to demonstrate the vaccine’s effectiveness. Waterhouse’s efforts provoked a storm of controversy in his day, but he was nevertheless anxious to spread Jenner’s new discovery throughout his own country. To do so, Waterhouse went to the very top, writing to then-president John Adams in 1800. When Adams’s response was not enthusiastic, Waterhouse turned to the next best thing: vice president Thomas Jefferson.<sup>36</sup>

In his December 1 letter to Jefferson, Waterhouse enclosed Jenner’s pamphlet on vaccination with cowpox (commonly referred to as “kinepox,” “kine-pock,” and the like). Jefferson, who received Waterhouse’s letter on Christmas Eve, was apparently fascinated, for he read the pamphlet and drafted his reply to be sent on Christmas day.<sup>37</sup> Thus began what

would be a long and fruitful correspondence between Jefferson and Waterhouse. Jefferson, for his part, immediately took to the idea of vaccination; he saw in it the merits he saw in inoculation, with the benefit of being safer. In July 1801, Waterhouse wrote to Jefferson, who was now president, stating that he received letters from throughout the country, both requesting samples of the vaccine and decrying that vaccination could only be infective. In order to persuade the public one way or the other, Waterhouse proposed that “a series of experiments may be directly instituted by [Jefferson]” because “if [the results] came from Mr. Jefferson, it would make, like a body falling from a great height, a deep impression.” These experiments, Waterhouse proposed, might be done on Jefferson’s slaves in Virginia, and he even included images and information on the expression of the disease in African Americans.<sup>38</sup> Jefferson, anxious to see vaccination in person and unable for the time to leave Virginia, requested that Waterhouse send the vaccination materials to Dr. Edward Grant in Washington instead.<sup>39</sup> When the vaccination did not occur, Jefferson proposed a new way of transporting the material—“how might it answer to put the matter into a phial of the smallest size, well corked, & immersed in a larger one filled with water & well corked”—which succeeded in preserving the material enough that the vaccinations in Washington conducted by Dr. Grant were a success.<sup>40</sup>

Once he returned to Monticello, Jefferson conducted his own experiments with vaccination. After writing personally to Edward Jenner requesting that samples of Jenner’s vaccine be sent to the Jefferson family physician, Jefferson arranged for that same physician, Dr. William Wardlaw, to visit Monticello when Jefferson would arrive in the summer of 1801.<sup>41</sup> Keeping close records and all the while reporting back to Dr. Waterhouse, Jefferson’s vaccine experiments, at first intended to encompass the slaves of his household, eventually extended to his family

and throughout the neighborhood. In a November 1801 letter to John Vaughan, Jefferson estimates the toll at “about 70 or 80 of my own family, my sons in law about as many of theirs, and including our neighbors who wished to avail themselves of the opportunity our whole experiment extended to about 200 persons.”<sup>42</sup> In all, Jefferson’s experiments were an overwhelming success. The careful data that Jefferson collected not only influenced those who knew him to support vaccination, but was also used by Waterhouse in his campaign to popularize vaccination in the United States, culminating in an 1802 medical article in which Waterhouse explicitly cited Jefferson’s 1801 experiments at Monticello as evidence for the efficacy of the practice.<sup>43</sup>

Perhaps one of the most notable events of Jefferson’s presidency was the westward expedition of Captain Merriweather Lewis and Second Lieutenant William Clark. Such was the wide influence of smallpox and vaccine technology that even this expedition, commissioned by Thomas Jefferson shortly after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, was affected by Jenner’s discovery. After Jefferson sent a copy of the first draft of his instructions to his Attorney General, Levi Lincoln, Sr., Lincoln read and responded, in almost a passing comment, “As Capt Lewis may have in his company, some who have not had the smallpox, would it not be best to carry some of the matter for the kinpox with him?”<sup>44</sup> For this suggestion to be so logical and casually mentioned, with no need for clarification or qualifying with warning, would have been impossible just two years before. The successes of vaccinations were becoming well known, and vaccination thus more widely accepted, especially by the educated and those in Jefferson’s inner circle. Jefferson took Lincoln’s suggestion and included it in his instructions to Lewis, telling him to take a sample of the cowpox vaccine with him and to educate his party on “it’s [*sic*] efficacy as a preservative from the smallpox; and instruct & encourage

them in the use of it.”<sup>45</sup>

“ **Although Jefferson’s correspondence and notes about smallpox, variolation, and vaccination began to decline upon his retirement, his influence in establishing vaccination as a valid and superior medical procedure remained.**

His 1806 letter praising Jenner for the pending extirpation of “the loathsome small-pox” was perhaps too modest; Jefferson himself, along with the likes of Waterhouse and all those with whom he corresponded, did much to hasten smallpox’s demise as well.<sup>46</sup> Within Jefferson’s lifetime, Congress, under his successor President James Madison, drafted an Act to Encourage Vaccination, signed into law in 1813. The act established a National Vaccine Agency and gave franking privileges, or free postage, to anyone shipping vaccine matter in the United States, providing both a governmental and financial incentive to perform vaccinations. In 1855, nearly one hundred twenty-five years after the devastating 1721 smallpox outbreak, Boston became the first city to require mandatory vaccination for public schoolchildren. Instances of smallpox became more and more rare as scientists and the general public developed the concept of herd immunity.<sup>47</sup> Finally, in 1980, more than two hundred years after Jefferson took a gamble and traveled to Philadelphia to undergo variolation, the 33rd World Health Assembly declared that smallpox was globally eradicated.<sup>4</sup>

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## NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Jefferson, “A Tribute of Gratitude to Dr. Edward Jenner” in *Thomas Jefferson: Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1984), 1162-1163.

<sup>2</sup> Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, “Smallpox,” *Armed Forces Institute of Pathology*, last modified October 9, 2007, [http://www.afip.org/Departments/infectious/sp/text/1\\_1.htm](http://www.afip.org/Departments/infectious/sp/text/1_1.htm).

<sup>3</sup> Nicolau Barquet and Pere Domingo, “Smallpox: The Triumph over the Most Terrible of the Ministers of Death,” *Annals of Internal Medicine*, last modified October 15, 1997, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/13887407\\_Smallpox\\_The\\_Triumph\\_over\\_the\\_Most\\_Terrible\\_of\\_the\\_Ministers\\_of\\_Death](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/13887407_Smallpox_The_Triumph_over_the_Most_Terrible_of_the_Ministers_of_Death).

<sup>4</sup> Mayo Clinic Staff, “Smallpox: Treatments and drugs,” *Mayo Clinic*, last modified August 16, 2014, <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/smallpox/basics/treatment/con-20022769>.

<sup>5</sup> Union of Concerned Scientists, “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Immunity,” *Union of Concerned Scientists*, last modified August 2014, <http://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/legacy/assets/documents/center-for-science-and-democracy/founding-fathers-vaccines.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Diana Barnes, “The Public Life of a Woman of Wit and Quality: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Vogue for Smallpox Inoculation,” *Feminist Studies* 38 (2012): 345-346.

<sup>7</sup> Barquet and Domingo, “Smallpox: The Triumph over the Most Terrible of the Ministers of Death.”

<sup>8</sup> Steven J. Niven, “Onesimus, slave and medical pioneer...”, *Hutchins Center for African & African American Research*, 2013, <http://hutchinscenter.fas.harvard.edu/onesimus-fl-1706-1717-slave-and-medical-pioneer-was-born>.

<sup>9</sup> Union of Concerned Scientists, “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Immunity.”

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

- <sup>11</sup> Text not included in bibliography: citations in the format of “Boles, Number” refer to chapter numbers in Dr. John B. Boles’s Thomas Jefferson biography manuscript.
- <sup>12</sup> John M. Holmes, *Thomas Jefferson Treats Himself: Herbs, Physicke, & Nutrition in Early America* (Fort Valley, VA: Loft Press, 1997), 25.
- <sup>13</sup> Holmes, *Thomas Jefferson Treats Himself*, 27.
- <sup>14</sup> Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia, “Invisible Heroes: Battling Smallpox,” *Th. Jefferson: Monticello*, 2015, <https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/inoculation>.
- <sup>15</sup> Boles, 1.
- <sup>16</sup> Union of Concerned Scientists, “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Immunity.”
- <sup>17</sup> Boles, 1.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.
- <sup>19</sup> Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia, “Invisible Heroes.”
- <sup>20</sup> Boles, 3.
- <sup>21</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 2:124.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:122-124.
- <sup>23</sup> Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia, “Inoculation,” *Th. Jefferson: Monticello*, 2015, <https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/inoculation>.
- <sup>24</sup> Mary V. Thompson, “Smallpox,” *George Washington’s Mount Vernon*, 2015, <http://www.mountvernon.org/research-collections/digital-encyclopedia/article/smallpox/>.
- <sup>25</sup> Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia, “Inoculation.”
- <sup>26</sup> Howard Markel, “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Vaccines,” *The New York Times*, February 28, 2011, [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/01/health/01smallpox.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/01/health/01smallpox.html?_r=0).
- <sup>27</sup> Thompson, “Smallpox.”
- <sup>28</sup> Boles, 11.
- <sup>29</sup> Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia, “Inoculation.”
- <sup>30</sup> Boles, 11.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.
- <sup>33</sup> Barquet and Domingo, “Smallpox: The Triumph over the Most Terrible of the Ministers of Death.”
- <sup>34</sup> Byrd S. Leavell, “Thomas Jefferson and Smallpox Vaccination,” *National Center for Biotechnology Information*, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2441396/pdf/tacca00105-0168.pdf>.
- <sup>35</sup> Barquet and Domingo, “Smallpox: The Triumph over the Most Terrible of the Ministers of Death.”
- <sup>36</sup> Byrd, “Thomas Jefferson and Smallpox Vaccination.”
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 34: 273-277.
- <sup>39</sup> Boles, 22.
- <sup>40</sup> Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 34: 640-641.
- <sup>41</sup> Boles, 22.
- <sup>42</sup> Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 35:572-573.
- <sup>43</sup> Boles, 22.
- <sup>44</sup> Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 40: 175-176.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 40:179.
- <sup>46</sup> Jefferson, “A Tribute of Gratitude to Dr. Edward Jenner,” 1162-1163.
- <sup>47</sup> Union of Concerned Scientists, “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Immunity.”
- <sup>48</sup> “World Health Organization declares smallpox eradicated 1980,” *PBS*, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aso/databank/entries/dm79sp.html>.

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## Editors' Note:

The following essay ["Consumerism, Commodification, and Beauty: Shiseido and the Rise of Japanese Beauty Culture" by Jessica Guerra] was originally accompanied by eighteen images, which the author discusses in detail throughout the piece. Unfortunately, the Rice Historical Review was unable to obtain permission to print these images alongside the essay. Nonetheless, we felt this essay had great value and deserved to be included in the journal. We encourage readers to view the images in the online gallery from MIT Visualizing Cultures, about which more information can be found in the bibliography.



# Consumerism, Commodification, and Beauty:

## Shiseido and the Rise of Japanese Beauty Culture

Jessica Guerra

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**Abstract:** *This research focuses on the development of advertising in interwar period Japan (between World War I and World War II) and the growing prevalence of the Modern Girl. As women with a certain aesthetic were popularized through advertisement campaigns, this aesthetic was disseminated to a wider audience and incited cultural change. For the purposes of this research, the cosmetics company Shiseido and its advertisements will be used, in order to illustrate the effects of one major Japanese company on the spread of the Modern Girl throughout Japan and the surrounding regions. Advertisements from an MIT database were examined from the period, and are analyzed in the following work. I have attempted to gauge the prominence of the Modern Girl figure, her appearance, and various other visual factors. After conducting this project, I have concluded that Shiseido played an integral role in the rise of Japanese beauty culture and in the spread of the Modern Girl phenomenon.*

### Background

The term “Modern Girl” refers to the Japanese *moga*, literally Mo(dern) Gi(rl). These women, like American flappers and French *garçonnes*, exhibited Western-style dress by abandoning the traditional Japanese kimono in favor of shorter dresses, donning shorter and less traditional hairstyles, holding preferences for luxurious clothing and cosmetics, and rejecting traditional behaviors and attitudes. These women also proclaimed their revolutionary autonomy by joining the workforce. Traditionally, Japanese women remained at home until they were married, and then resided in the homes of their husbands or their husbands’ families. Therefore, to reside on their own was thus a rebellious, “modern” action and a rejection of traditional Japanese conventions.



The “New Japanese Woman” was the compromise Shiseido created in order to maintain a diverse consumer base and generate widespread appeal within Japan. Given that the *moga* were viewed as excessively Western in their habits, dress, and actions, the restriction of Shiseido advertising to the image of a “Modern Girl” would have narrowed their consumer base and created more of a niche interest. Shiseido, instead, invoked the image of the “New Japanese Woman” who was somewhat more “modern” and “Western” in her appearance but not to the extent of the *moga*. Tempering modernity with Japanese tradition is reflected in the use of the “mimi-kakushi” hairstyle, which is discussed in greater depth below. This new hairstyle was shorter and typically covered the back of the neck and the ears.

### Introduction

Beginning in 1915, the Shiseido Company’s advertisements evolved from black and white pencil sketches featuring simple shapes and text into vibrant female figures and a cosmopolitan aesthetic that appealed to a diverse array of women. These advertisements were meant to appeal to both the traditional and modern women of interwar Japan and to a global consumer base. They suggest that Japanese society was heavily impacted by the advent of the ideal women prototypes, “Modern Girl” and the “New Japanese Woman,” as Shiseido hired women that fit this look as models and spokespeople. As the idea of the “Modern Girl” spread, companies used the concept to sell their products and to associate them with

self-improvement, social mobility, and modernity. Shiseido's adoption of the "Modern Girl" as a spokesperson provided the latter with a wider audience and an international platform both resulting in the commodification of the "Modern Girl." The image was marketed and sold to the masses as an ideal form of beauty. Through focusing on the evolution of Shiseido's advertisements and their implications on consumer bases both in Japan and abroad, it seems that the Shiseido Company began to revolutionize the cosmetics industry in Japan, especially with the introduction of the "Seven Colors Face Powder." Shiseido and its consumers shared a feedback loop relationship wherein the two constantly and simultaneously influenced each other's behaviors.

Mass consumerism contributed to the rise of beauty culture in Japan by reinforcing beauty-centric advertising campaigns; the rise of beauty culture in advertising increased mass consumerism as companies adopted new, more appealing beauty-centric campaigns to sell their products. By 1938, the company had become international and thus had a major impact on the spread of beauty culture across Asia, especially the Modern Girl phenomenon of the early 20th century.

### **Methods**

In this paper, I contextualize the company's official history and examine advertisements used by Shiseido from 1915 to 1938 found at the MIT Visualizing Cultures Archive. From studying these images, a cultural narrative emerged that indicated the relationship between Shiseido and consumers, the commodification of the Modern Girl, and the rise of beauty culture and consumerism. I reviewed articles focusing primarily on the Modern Girl phenomenon, the growth and design of the Shiseido Company, the rise of global beauty culture, and the effect of Shiseido on Japanese and international communities. Through these avenues of research, I constructed my argument focusing

on the importance of Shiseido to the popularization of the Modern Girl in East Asia and the spread of beauty culture and cosmetics on a global scale.

### **Brief Historical Overview**

Arinobu Fukuhara, who founded Shiseido, set up the first pharmaceutical store in 1872. As the first Western-style pharmacy in Japan, Shiseido originated from cosmopolitanism and cultural exchange.<sup>1</sup> As Kazuo Usui, a professor and historian of Japanese marketing methods, notes, "Shiseido's growth was slower in the cosmetics field, although it had started earlier." This was due to a focus on pharmaceuticals.<sup>2</sup> By 1888, Shiseido introduced toothpaste to consumers, gaining recognition in Japan for its hygiene products.<sup>3</sup> Shiseido began producing and selling cosmetics in 1897 and focused on "lotion, perfume, and hair oil."<sup>4</sup> In 1915, Shiseido adopted the Camellia or "Hanatsubaki," as the company's trademark.<sup>5</sup> Two years later, Shiseido released the "Seven Colors Face Powder," the first cosmetic product that allowed for user customization and diversity.<sup>6</sup> Through different combinations of the seven provided colors, consumers could create their own shades and color palettes. Understandably, this would mean increased international appeal and marketability as racially diverse consumers could purchase "Seven Colors Face Powder" and create their own personalized shades based on preference. In 1924, Arinobu's son, Shinzo Fukuhara, became the first official president of the Shiseido Company.<sup>7</sup> Educated at Columbia University, he had unofficially taken control in 1915 and shifted the company's focus from pharmaceuticals and hygienic products to cosmetics. He further established a cosmopolitan aesthetic.<sup>8</sup> Shinzo introduced the chain store distribution system to Shiseido and to Japan, revolutionizing the cosmetics industry.<sup>9</sup> The Shiseido incarnation of the Western system produced a sales organization meant "to avoid competition, to develop mutual prosperity, and to develop co-existence

among retailers.”<sup>10</sup> As Nobuo Kawabe writes: It first organized retailers, which handled only Shiseido brand cosmetic products. It also went into the operation of beauty salons in order to support retailers by demonstrating its cosmetics. At the wholesale level Shiseido established a dealer contract system. Wholesalers were required to sell products to only “Shiseido Chain Stores” at established prices in order to avoid cut-throat competition, to develop co-existence and mutual prosperity, and to establish an orderly transaction system. In 1927 Shiseido thought it would be good for itself and its retailers to develop wholesale organizations which would handle only Shiseido products, and in this way it integrated its marketing activities. Thus, its wholesalers became sole agents and eventually grew into sales companies located throughout the nation.<sup>11</sup>

Kawabe’s summary of the Shiseido Company’s innovative distribution system demonstrates the revolutionary methods Shiseido employed to guarantee continued, even if relatively slow; growth throughout the interwar years; the integration of Western-style business and marketing practices into Japanese society; and the production of a more cosmopolitan and thus internationally appealing company. By 1931, Shiseido had exported cosmetics to other Southeast Asian countries and had entered fully into the international business community, creating a multinational platform for Japanese cosmetics and for the “Modern Girl.”<sup>12</sup> Throughout the 1930s, Shiseido would employ other marketing strategies such as the establishment of beauty salons designed to exhibit their products, the creation of a consumer club through which members received significant loyalty incentives such as coupons, the distribution of a free monthly magazine, and invitations to beauty courses.<sup>13</sup> These initiatives would further ensure the continued growth of the Shiseido Company, enabling it to outlast its competitors through the formation and indoctrination of a loyal consumer base. The company’s official history

noticeably omits the World War II years, as Japan’s industrial economy became focused on the war effort. Therefore, this essay focuses on the years from 1915 to 1938, when the “Modern Girl” and “New Japanese Woman” peaked in popularity.

### **Advertisements: Evolution through the Interwar Years**

As Figures 2, 3, and 4 demonstrate, Shiseido advertisements initially focused on traditional Japanese women, text, shapes, and the brand itself. Figure 2 portrays a Japanese woman drawn in a traditional style reminiscent of Japanese wood-block prints, with long hair, an elaborate kimono, and a fan incorporated into the background.<sup>14</sup> The text surrounding the woman is the main focus of the magazine advertisement, encompassing a greater area in the advertisement; thus the main purpose of the ad is to educate the reader on the product, with the woman provided as association with traditional Japanese visuals and beauty standards. Figure 3 is much simpler, with text central to the poster.<sup>15</sup> The simpler aesthetic, which uses shapes, can be interpreted as an attempt to appeal to a broad audience;

“

**by avoiding associating the Shiseido brand with a racial or ethnic consumer, the company could potentially possess international appeal.**

Figure 4 is another simple advertisement: though more intricate than Figure 3, it still relies on simple shapes (stripes and triangles in the background) and text in the foreground to elicit appeal and interest.<sup>16</sup> This 1917 advertisement also incorporates the trademark Camellia blossom and Shiseido Japanese logo more prominently than Figure 3, indicating a



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move towards greater brand recognition.

Following Shiseido's advertisements in 1915 and 1917, new marketing and ad campaigns were created for magazines, such as those seen in Figures 5 and 6. Figure 5 depicts the first incarnation of the Shiseido English logo, with a silhouetted Western, stylistically Victorian woman.<sup>17</sup> She holds the trademark Camellia in her left hand, and is proportionally more balanced with the text incorporated into the ad. Figure 6 illustrates a distinct shift towards adopting the "Modern Girl" as the Shiseido mannequin-figure, with a short haircut reminiscent of a modern bob, and an elegantly sleek, relatively low-cut, form-fitting dress.<sup>18</sup> The woman perches upon an upholstered, Western-style stool, casting her eyes downward demurely. She combines the modern styling of Western culture (short hair, Western-style dress and furniture) with traditional Japanese ideals of feminine aesthetics (her demure glance, the simplicity with which she is drawn). This advertisement features a different style for the English Shiseido logo, indicating the Shiseido Company was most likely still experimenting with international appeal and with the construction of a recognizable brand and logo. Figures 7, 8, 9, and 10 depict poster advertisements employed by Shiseido throughout 1925, portraying a variety of women in different poses, color palettes, and with diverse facial expressions. These figures mark a shift to vibrant, colorful poster advertisements, in an attempt to catch the consumer's eye; an additional shift towards more prominent feminine figures and away from text is also apparent, indicating a rising amount of female commodification. Figure 7 shows a pale-skinned, black-haired woman with an upturned face in profile, looking towards the sky as she touches her face.<sup>19</sup> Her expression of elation and bliss may be interpreted as joy at the touch of her skin; as she strokes her cheek she appears to be lost in thought and pleasure. Figure 8, alternatively, depicts a pale-skinned, blonde woman glancing down modestly, her eyes shut and the

trademark Camellia blossom dangling from her mouth.<sup>20</sup> Garbed in a sleek, form-fitting gown and shawl, she exudes a discrete sex appeal and sense of modernity. She seems content, and appears to originate from a higher social class. Figure 9 also illustrates a woman, with a shorter hairstyle and donning a sleeveless green dress, who conveys a sense of modernity and sex appeal.<sup>21</sup> She fixates on the product in front of her, her facial expression one of ravenous desire and happiness. The flowers and bird included in the ad hold no interest for her; she is solely interested in the Shiseido product before her. Although the text is more central in this poster, the woman is more visually appealing due to a vibrant color palette surrounding her. Figure 10 contrasts the other three posters, as it lacks a vibrant palette and, instead, relies on a silhouetted female figure as the central visual.<sup>22</sup> This advertisement uses a different strategy; the woman is portrayed gazing into a surface (most likely a mirror), possibly applying makeup to her face. Her figure is prominently featured, with text to the right and bottom of the advertisement. The Camellia trademark is also included in the lower-right corner, demonstrating Shiseido brand recognition.

The introduction of a more prominent cosmopolitan aesthetic is evident in Figures 11 and 12, the poster advertisements pictured below. Figure 11 centers on a woman with red hair in a short hairstyle, wearing a thick, luxurious fur coat.<sup>23</sup> Her skin is pale, her cheeks tinged with blush. Her styling communicates an upper-class status, modernity, and sophistication. Two different Shiseido logos are located on her left and right, conveying global interests. The Camellia is located in the upper-right corner, furthering brand recognition for the Shiseido Company and its trademark. Figure 12 focuses on a blonde, presumably Western-European woman in a blue-patterned, form-fitting dress, with her legs shown.<sup>24</sup> She lounges on a couch, expressing relaxation and cosmopolitanism as she rests her hand on her hip and delicately

holds a (trademark) Camellia blossom. The English and Japanese logos are featured, as well as text to the right of the woman depicted.

“ **These two figures represent the quintessential Modern Girl aesthetic: modernity as a means to attain social mobility, luxury, and self-improvement through consumerism.**

Figures 13 and 14 originate from magazines in 1932, illustrating the continued prevalence of the Modern Girl and her development into an advertising tool. Figure 13 displays a woman’s head and left arm in the center of the advertisement, with the product advertised in the upper-right corner.<sup>25</sup> What is visible of her attire is elegant and modern, as is her shorter hairstyle. Her expression is calm as she casts her gaze towards the ground; she evades eye contact with the viewer. The product itself is more central to the advertisement than in previous campaigns, revealing the continued development of consumer culture in Japan. The woman in the advertisement indicates the continued emergence of beauty culture, as she represents the “ideal” modern New Woman (specifically selling the appearance all women should strive to achieve). The Camellia trademark is located in the lower portion of the advertisement. Figure 14 portrays a strikingly similar woman, also accompanied by a Shiseido product.<sup>26</sup> The female figure wears the same hairstyle as the previous woman, and also garbs herself in elegant, modern evening dress. Her dress provides a silhouette of her slender body, and her arms are delicately positioned. Also glancing down, she exudes sophistication and grace. Adjacent to her, the product is disproportionately large, shifting the focus from the woman to the advertised merchandise. As such, the woman is reduced,

as the product becomes the central focus of the ad. As the 1930’s arrived, the Modern Girl phenomenon expanded further across the globe, marking a departure from conventional conceptions of femininity and the cementation of rapid globalization and cultural exchange. As depicted in the 1933 poster ads in Figures 15, 16, and 17, the Shiseido Company internalized these developments, and expanded its advertising to explicitly include consumers with diverse racial and or ethnic backgrounds. Figure 15 illustrates a dark-complexioned woman wearing pearls, a short hairstyle, a pearl necklace, and a sleeveless gown.<sup>27</sup> She holds a Shiseido product, which takes a central position in the advertisement; the dark background emphasizes the cosmetic good, as the vibrant salmon color of the product draws the viewer’s attention. Figure 16 features a light-skinned, dark-haired woman in a similar stance.<sup>28</sup> This woman also holds a Shiseido product, which is more central to the advertisement and is highlighted by the contrast between its light color and the vibrant pastel background. The woman’s cheeks are tinted with rouge, and she wears a similar hairstyle to that of Figure 15. Conversely, this woman appears to wear a traditional Japanese kimono, thus appealing to a more traditional Japanese woman. Figure 17 features two light-skinned women; one blonde, one black-haired.<sup>29</sup> Both hold the same Shiseido product in different shades (indicated by the differing lid colors), and stand in the same position. Noticeably, the advertisement spotlights the presumably East Asian woman, positioning her in front of her blonde, Western-European counterpart. The two share tinted cheeks, modern attire (sleeveless dresses), and markers of higher socio-economic standing (earrings, a veil). The Camellia blossom trademark appears in the lower-right corner, and the advertisement only uses the Japanese company logo.

The final advertisements I present for examination are Figures 18 and 19, concluding this study in the year 1938 (prior to the

Sino-Japanese war). These images signify a transition to a more realistic appearance for women, shifting from sketches and drawings portraying cartoonish figures, to an art style based on realistic facial features. This adjustment represents a complete cultural transformation, as beauty culture and a realistic ideal develop, so too do unrealistic expectations for women and the mass consumption of an unattainable aspiration.

**“No longer is the Modern Girl used to merely sell products and style, she is now used to sell beauty itself, and the “ideal” woman crafted by society.**

Figure 18 displays a blonde, Western-European woman wearing a fashionable beret and a fur collared-coat.<sup>50</sup> This magazine ad marks the first usage of color in this format, and the first incarnation of the Modern Girl that makes eye contact with the viewer. Although the image is of a Western-European, the advertisement uses Japanese characters and text, conveying a cosmopolitan impression. Figure 19 exhibits a Western-European woman in profile, with a calm countenance and accompanied by Japanese text and the Japanese Shiseido logo.<sup>51</sup> This poster advertisement also is the first to reveal a woman's ears in the image, marking a significantly shorter hairstyle, and signifying its gaining popularity in mainstream culture. The prevalence of blossoms in the two images may be associated with the variety of colors available in Shiseido cosmetics, or may exist simply to catch the viewer's attention.

### Image Analysis and Conclusions

Through tracing the development and history of advertising and marketing of the Japanese cosmetics company Shiseido, I illustrated the remarkable evolution of a medium over the course of two decades and the concomitant

progression and popularization of the “Modern Girl” phenomenon. As Barbara Sato points out,

**“ [the “Modern Girl”] represented the possibilities for what all women could become. She also symbolized consumption and mass culture, phenomena identified with women after the Great War.’<sup>52</sup>**

The history of the “Modern Girl” portrayals also reflects the history and origins of consumer culture. Women formed the large portion of consumers due to their traditionally domestic roles which allowed them purchasing power, the freedom of choice that consumerism promised women, and the accompanying promise of upward social mobility. Under these historical conditions, companies such as Shiseido sought to appeal to as many female consumers as possible as the cosmetics industry expanded along with beauty culture. The images discussed above illustrated the manner in which the “Modern Girl” was appropriated by Shiseido and modified for mass consumption. Shiseido popularized a “mimi-kakushi” hairstyle as a compromise between traditional and modern hairstyles which initiated a long history of appealing to a diverse consumer base.<sup>53</sup> Modern women enjoyed the hairstyle as a departure from the strict, traditional Japanese coiffure; traditional women appreciated the hairstyle as a respectable, innovative hairstyle.<sup>54</sup> One of the main reasons the hairstyle caught on was the moderate nature of new styling which included covering the ears because uncovered ears were considered radical at the time.<sup>55</sup> As such, Shiseido promoted a Western-representative style influenced by Japanese values; a style the company excelled at creating and marketing.

Aside from popularizing the “Modern Girl” concept through moderate interpretations of her

style, Shiseido also commoditized her; she developed into an “ideal archetype” that the company sold to the masses. Through connecting self-improvement to beauty, and by promising their products would aid women in “beautifying” themselves, Shiseido directly contributed to the development of Japanese and international beauty culture. Through claiming to sell exterior “beauty,” and connecting the improved exterior to improved inner “beauty” and effort, Shiseido generated a culture in which cosmetics represented a noble attempt to develop oneself, not vanity or shallowness. Women who purchased cosmetics gained possession of a form of social mobility: if attractive enough, a woman could marry well or prove herself an asset to her family and community through her beauty. In creating this deeper connection, Shiseido gave the “Modern Girl,” as its model, that same social mobility and sense of nobility; with that nobility, Shiseido gave the “Modern Girl” universal appeal and praise. Shiseido, however, also ensured that the “Modern Girl” became an ideal it marketed to the masses, appealing to men’s gazes and women’s desires to appear attractive and praiseworthy by conventional beauty standards. Thus, Shiseido’s appropriation of the “Modern Girl” represents a historical turning point in the development of consumer culture, modernity, and the rise of the beauty industry. Alternatively, the global nature of the “Modern Girl” phenomenon provided a universally understood form of communication Shiseido used to increase its international consumer base and to diversify and expand its business. As such, the two profoundly affected each other’s development and growth. The Japanese “Modern Girl” was linked to consumerism, luxury, refinement, and high social status through Shiseido’s advertisements, and that she, in turn, allowed Shiseido to appeal to a diverse range of people throughout Southeast Asia using the “Modern Girl” image as universal language. The relationship between the two serves as a microcosm of the intrinsic link

between modern consumer culture, beauty culture, marketing, and advertisement campaigns. 

#### NOTES:

- <sup>1</sup> "History," *Shiseido Group*, 2015, <http://www.shiseidogroup.com/company/past/history/index.html>.
- <sup>2</sup> Kazuo Usui, *Marketing and Consumption in Modern Japan* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 46-64.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-64.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-64.
- <sup>5</sup> "History," *Shiseido Group*, 2015.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup> Usui, *Marketing and Consumption in Modern Japan*, 46-64.
- <sup>9</sup> Nobuo Kawabe, “The Development of Distribution Systems in Japan Before World War II,” *Business and Economic History* 18 (1989): 33-44.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-44.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-44.
- <sup>12</sup> "History," *Shiseido Group*, 2015.
- <sup>13</sup> Usui, *Marketing and Consumption in Modern Japan*, 46-64.
- <sup>14</sup> Gennifer Weisenfeld, "Ads & Posters: 1875-1941" in "Selling Shiseido, III: Image Galleries," MIT Visualizing Cultures (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2009). [http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/shiseido\\_03/sh\\_gal\\_01\\_thumb.html](http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/shiseido_03/sh_gal_01_thumb.html)
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Barbara Hamill Sato, *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar Japan* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003), 49.

<sup>33</sup> Usui, *Marketing and Consumption in Modern Japan*, 46-64.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 46-64.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

Sato, Barbara Hamill. *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar Japan*. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003.

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[http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/shiseido\\_03/sh\\_gal\\_01\\_thumb.html](http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/shiseido_03/sh_gal_01_thumb.html)

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# From Welcoming to Wary:

## The SPD's Rhetoric on the Flüchtlingspolitik

Jungbin Lim

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**Abstract:** *This paper traces the response of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) to the European migrant crisis in the fall of 2015. In particular, I explore the change in the party's position, which initially had pledged full support of the admission of refugees to Germany but toned down its support over the course of the fall. I discuss this development against the backdrop of the rightward shift of the SPD. I argue that a possible explanation of the change in the SPD's position is the decision of Chancellor Merkel, leader of the rival party Christian Democratic Union, to grant admission to hundreds of thousands of refugees on September 5th, 2015. Mainly based on the SPD's own publications and media coverage of the party's activities, this paper examines the shift in the language of the SPD.*

Since its inception in the mid-nineteenth century, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) has represented the working-class and the German left at large. After the West German Communist Party was banned in 1956, the SPD became the sole party in the Federal Republic on the left for nearly three decades before other leftist parties entered the political scene in the early 1980s. This included the Green Party (established in 1983) and the Party of Democratic Socialism (established in 1990). However, the SPD has been inching to the center since the 1990s—the SPD and the center-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU) are now almost indistinguishable on several policies. In light of such development of the SPD, the party's responses to the current migrant crisis, which has become a very controversial topic in German politics since August 2015, illustrates the SPD's rightward shift. From the outset of the Syrian Civil War in 2011 to the first week of September 2015, the SPD strongly supported admitting hundreds of thousands of refugees.



The party asserted that refugees have a right to a safer and better future in Europe and that Germany has a responsibility to provide refuge to victims of war. Some party members even suggested that the inflow of refugees would benefit the German economy. However, over the month of September, the party changed. Presumably influenced by CDU leader and German Chancellor Angela Merkel's momentous decision on September 4 to open Germany's doors to refugees stranded elsewhere in Europe, the SPD has become increasingly wary of admitting a large number of refugees, even though the number of refugees that have entered Germany so far this year does not differ much from the number predicted by party leaders months before. In this paper, written in November 2015, I argue that, in September 2015, the SPD changed its rhetoric on the refugee policy (*Flüchtlingspolitik*) from welcoming to wary, which stemmed at least in part from the SPD's—especially party chairman Sigmar Gabriel's—political maneuver to take over the center. Since this paper analyzes an ongoing phenomenon, it faces the challenge of studying a limited perspective of a historical event that is still unfolding. Nevertheless, the value of the paper lies primarily in the documentation of changes among the Social Democrats, especially in the context of the party's long-term evolution.

Through a survey of German newspapers—namely, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (heretofore FAZ), *Der Spiegel*, and *Die Zeit*—I trace the SPD's rhetoric and the response

of the media to it. A reason behind the preponderance of newspapers is simply the dearth of secondary literature. Given how recent the change in policy took place, few non-media sources exist. Other non-German media sources include *the Associated Press*, *Politico*, *the New York Times*, and *Stern*. *The American Institute for Contemporary German Studies*, *German Politics and Society*, *the Journal of Refugee Studies*, and *the Migrant Policy Institute* are non-newspaper sources of information on the SPD's history and the German political landscape. Lastly, the SPD website and Facebook page provided statements released directly by the party. The party's Facebook page proved particularly useful. Since Facebook posts are normally brief, they serve as one of the most direct forms of contact between the party and the public, and they often represent the core of the party's messages. For this reason, while only two sources in the paper come from the SPD Facebook page, Facebook played a crucial role in the research process.

Before the first week of September 2015, in which Merkel announced her decision to suspend European Union (EU) asylum rules and allow refugees stranded in other EU countries to enter Germany, the SPD enthusiastically supported admitting refugees, even though many of the party leaders recognized the challenge of a large influx. The SPD website demonstrates the party's support of the admission of refugees. The website published an article on the press conference of SPD leaders on August 31, in which Malu Dreyer, the Minister-president of Rheinland-Pfalz, and Martin Schulz, the President of the European Parliament, discussed where the party stands on the *Flüchtlingspolitik*. Dreyer and Schulz focused on three tasks: "humane admittance of refugees, social cohesion of Germany, and united European politics." On the whole, they called for more help for local communities in order to implement a "humane refugee policy," while exhorting the CDU to "at last undertake responsibility." Dreyer and Schultz

acknowledged the ever-growing challenge of absorbing nearly a million refugees, but the SPD emphasized the humanitarian cause of the *Flüchtlingspolitik* throughout the conference, suggesting that refugees legitimately deserve help.<sup>1</sup> On the same day, the SPD website released another article, titled "SPD-Resolution: *Flüchtlingspolitik* in Germany," that covered the same press conference in more depth.<sup>2</sup> Again, refugees were described as people in need who have a right to European assistance:



**"[refugees] seek freedom and security, they hope to be able to live in a better society, in which justice and solidarity are real. The refugees count on our fundamental values!"**

Notably, the SPD left economic migrants out of the picture and instead argued that it is only right that Germany should lift refugees out of misery. In framing the issue in terms of freedom and justice, the SPD assumed a risk: once they described refugee's claims to asylum as legitimate, any action less than full accommodation of refugees would be seen as reneging on earlier promises of delivering justice. Later in the article, the SPD positioned itself as a counterforce to "isolation and deterrence" (*Abschottung und Abschreckung*) that the Social Democrats ascribed to the political right. Germany was "not only economically strong, but also formed of great humanity" (*Mitmenschlichkeit*).

The SPD leadership's optimistic stance in the last week of August is representative of the line that the party had been treading for the past several months. Party Chairman Sigmar Gabriel was quoted on the SPD Facebook page on August 19th as saying "we will accomplish

it” (*wir werden das schaffen*) on the *Flüchtlingspolitik*.<sup>3</sup> Considering the criticism Merkel received over the past two months for her optimistic slogan *We will do it* (*Wir Schaffen Das*), from which even the SPD distanced. This did not deter Gabriel’s own assurance that Germany “will accomplish it,” which evinced the enthusiasm with which the SPD supported the admission of refugees. On August 9, the German weekly *Stern* reported on the meeting between Gabriel and filmmaker Til Schweiger. The latter had received both positive and negative attention in the media for his active support of refugees, as well as for tirades against those who demanded severe restrictions on the number of incoming refugees.<sup>4</sup> Given Schweiger’s reputation as a strong supporter of the admission of refugees, this meeting sent a sign of approval. Gabriel presumably made a statement on where he stands on the *Flüchtlingspolitik* through the meeting (which both Gabriel and Schweiger publicized on their Facebook pages). All in all, two points have to be emphasized on the SPD’s stance up to September. First, the SPD did not mention the *limits* to Germany’s capacity or *realism* with respect to the *Flüchtlingspolitik*, despite both the mainstream media and Gabriel projecting earlier in 2015 that nearly a million refugees would enter Germany that year.<sup>5</sup> Second, the SPD viewed refugees, except those they considered economic refugees, as deserving a place of security and freedom in Germany. Accordingly, the admission of refugees was the humane and right decision.

Between the last week of September and November 2015, when this paper was written, there has been a noticeable shift in the rhetoric of the SPD—the party now emphasizes the limits to Germany’s capabilities and the word *realism*. A joint statement titled “With Confidence and Realism” (*Mit Zuversicht und Realismus*) by Gabriel and Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the Minister of Foreign Policy and a top SPD leader, was released on the SPD website on October 9. They spoke against both the “We Will Do It” slogan that represents

Merkel’s position and the “The Boat is Full” (*Das Boot Ist Voll*) slogan used to characterize the position of the Christian Social Union of Bavaria (CSU), the more-conservative sister party of the CDU, which calls for restrictions on the number of refugees. Gabriel and Steinmeier stressed that states and communities are overburdened by the vast number of refugees and demanded that Germany have “an honest discussion about realistic capabilities” (*Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten*).<sup>6</sup>



**The word “realism,”  
hardly used before  
September, now  
characterizes the current  
vacillation of the SPD.**

When the CSU and PEGIDA (an anti-Islamic, far-right movement that has been staging demonstrations in major cities since late 2014) supporters insist that Germany is not capable of accommodating the large influx of refugees, the call to “realism” takes on a distinct meaning. Also on October 9, the newspaper *Der Spiegel* published an interview with Sigmar Gabriel, in which he criticized Merkel and again highlighted the limits to Germany’s ability to take in refugees.<sup>7</sup> Gabriel refused to directly attack Merkel, the leader of the Grand Coalition between the CDU/CSU and the SPD. He denied that Merkel’s decision was to blame for the high number of refugees aspiring to receive asylum in Germany. However, Gabriel remarked, “next to confidence we also need realism...many places in Germany are already overburdened.” Later, he made an elusive statement that “naturally the right of asylum knows no limits (*Obergrenze*), but there are factual limits to the capability of the towns and communities.” In other words, the new position of the SPD reads, the Basic Law of Germany legally allows all refugees to live in Germany, but there are practical limits to how many Germany can admit. At the party congress on October 11, the SPD leadership again stressed

that Germany has limits and lambasted the CDU for inadequately handling the situation. Gabriel asserted that Germany cannot constantly absorb a million refugees year after year. Merkel too knows it, but “she does not speak about it”<sup>8</sup> according to him.

Most of the SPD party leaders have taken part in the rhetoric shift from welcoming to wary, including Thomas Oppermann, chairman of the SPD parliamentary group. In September 2013, Oppermann posted on Facebook that it was “good” that Syrian refugees should come to his state, Lower Saxony. He called it an “imperative of humanity” that Germany should accept them; he even said that Germany should do more than simply take in merely 5,000 out of nearly 6 million Syrian refugees.<sup>9</sup> A year later, in November 2014, Oppermann maintained the same message, saying it was a “good chance” for Germany that refugees should stay for the long term, since the German economy needs manpower and many Syrian refugees are well educated.<sup>10</sup> On October 5, however, the newspaper *Die Zeit* ran an article on the SPD in middle of the “refugee dilemma,” in which Oppermann was quoted to have said that Merkel should “say clearly” that a million refugees will exhaust Germany’s capacity to integrate them.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, the newspaper *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* asked him whether people in his circle believe Merkel when she says “we accomplish it” (*wir schaffen das*). He gave a qualified response, saying that Germany could accomplish it if Europe develops a common refugee policy and clear decisions can be made quickly in Berlin and Brussels.<sup>12</sup> Oppermann represents the new, reserved tone among the party leadership on the *Flüchtlingspolitik*. Given how sanguine Oppermann had been a year earlier about refugees entering Germany, his change in opinion highlights the discrepancy in the SPD’s statements before and after September.



**The migrant crisis has divided the SPD between its left wing faction that wants to continue admitting refugees and skeptics who want to restrict the influx.**

The newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* focused on the party’s internal discord in early October. The newspaper reported Sigmar Gabriel saying that “we must urgently achieve a clear reduction of the number of refugees in the coming year.”<sup>13</sup> While party leaders like Steinmeier and Oppermann echo his message, others, like *Jusos* (SPD’s youth wing) leader Johanna Uekermann, said that it is not “worthy of social democracy” to join the opposition against the admission of refugees. On November 9, the *FAZ* released a detailed article titled “Where does the SPD stand in the migrant crisis?” The article likewise delved into the divisions within the SPD. In particular, it noted the “horizontal” division between the student council that actively engages in aiding refugees and “the traditional representatives of the workforce” among whom “social political fears and cultural reservations [against refugees] dominate.”<sup>14</sup> In sum, the crisis has thrown the SPD into confusion. The Grand Coalition between the CDU/CSU and the SPD is replete with tensions among all three parties. Within the SPD, there is disagreement between the left wing and the party leadership (though the SPD is known for strong party discipline). Lastly, Gabriel himself gives conflicting messages. He speaks of both limiting the number of refugees and advocating the earlier stance of providing refuge to those in need.

However, the SPD’s change is more a shift than a reversal; by no means has the SPD turned its back on refugees. Despite its warnings and the caveats, the SPD still supports allowing hundreds and thousands of

Syrians, Afghans, Eritreans and others to resettle in Germany. Moreover, the SPD staunchly defends the right of asylum. The Social Democrats have been in the frontline against the PEGIDA and right radicals who commit violence against refugees. In response to CDU politician Markus Söder, who questioned the right of asylum itself, SPD General Secretary Yasmin Fahimi declared that the right of asylum is “not negotiable.”<sup>15</sup> Still, the change in the SPD’s position is unmistakable. *Die Zeit* perceived the nuanced changes in the statements from the party leaders; Lisa Caspari, editor of *Die Zeit*, analyzed the SPD’s shift in an article titled “the SPD in the Refugee Dilemma” on October 5. “What is going on? Does the SPD now position itself to the right of Merkel?” Caspari asked. In particular, she brought attention to the fact that now “warnings instead of optimism” are heard over and over from the SPD.<sup>16</sup>

There could be many reasons that motivated the Social Democrats to tone down its support of the admission of refugees, and the sheer number of refugees entering Germany must be counted among the most significant factors. The influx of refugees has already exceeded the capacity of numerous communities to accommodate them. Since Merkel’s momentous decision on September 4, her approval ratings have taken a severe hit, causing many to wonder whether the days of her government are numbered.<sup>17</sup>

“ **Many Germans fear the strain refugees exert on the treasury, the cultural change newcomers entail, and the instability following the influx of a million people.** ”

Discontent has risen not only among the general population but also among rank-and-file Social Democrats themselves. In

1993, amidst the then refugee crisis following the onset of the Yugoslav Wars, the Bundestag (German parliament) amended Article 16 of the Basic Law, which guaranteed the right of asylum, to add restrictions that reduced the number of permissible refugees from Eastern Europe. The SPD opposed amendments to Article 16 before 1993, but, as Wolfgang Bosswick argues, eventually the pressure to allow the amendment came from “within the party from the level of communities” that had to cope with hundreds of thousands of refugees.<sup>18</sup> The SPD has been the party of the working-class since the nineteenth century. Under current circumstances, the working-class are among the most vociferous opponents of allowing potential immigrant competitors who could limit access employment and social services. On October 14, Magdeburg mayor Lutz Trümper, a member of the SPD since 1990, walked out of the party over the *Flüchtlingspolitik*. He criticized the regional party policy on refugees as “unrealistic,” demanding the limitation of the number of refugees given asylum.<sup>19</sup> The Trümper incident demonstrates the challenge that the party leadership faces in addressing the discontent among party members at the local level.

However, a consideration that makes one question whether the discontent from below fully explains the SPD’s shift is that the SPD, especially Gabriel, had projected earlier in 2015 that between 800 thousand and one million refugees would enter Germany in 2015. The SPD already backtracked on its policy in 1993 due to the mounting number of refugees. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to surmise that party members must have known the implications of a resettling a million refugees for local communities and national politics when they spoke repeatedly in support of the admission of refugees. Insofar as a change in rhetoric, let alone in a change in policy, presents a liability for a political party, it is noteworthy that the SPD had been so supportive of admitting refugees before



Amber Wang, 2016

September, even though it was aware of the complications that would eventually arise.

The SPD's aspiration to become the governing party could be another reason that the SPD changed its stance. Currently, the SPD is part of the Grand Coalition with the sister parties CDU/CSU. Since 1998, the support for the SPD has gradually dwindled, in terms of party membership and votes; the SPD now faces challenges from both left and right: the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and PEGIDA from the right and the The Left and the Greens from the left. Meanwhile, the polls indicate that only around 25 percent of the population supports the Social Democrats—a disappointing number for the second largest party of Germany.<sup>20</sup> In an article published in 2008 on an earlier coalition during the first Merkel government, the international affairs scholar Angelika von Wahl touches on the “ideological convergence and increasing moderation” in the SPD and the CDU. As more and more party members leave the parties, von Wahl argues that “pragmatists vying for the median voter” gain a stronger voice in both parties.<sup>21</sup> In this context, the SPD's support of restrictions the number of refugees can be interpreted as a political maneuver to exploit Merkel's vulnerability and expand the party's support base. Sigmar Gabriel has long supported the move to the center, which has been noted by the media for some time. In an article on August 3, *Politico* described the SPD as representative of center-left parties in Europe that try to gain more support by moving to the center. The SPD, “a party without a clear profile,” does not differ much from Merkel in terms of policy. Gabriel supports the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) trade agreement opposed by the The Left and the Greens, who protest the loosening of trade and financial regulations that would result from the trade agreement. Gabriel “tried to walk a fine line” on Greece, in order to alienate neither the party base nor the majority of the population.<sup>22</sup> Gabriel himself does not deny

the criticism that he inches toward the center. At the party congress in Mainz on October 11, he declared to the party that anyone “who shuns the center does not wish to win.” He added, “[the party] should not shy away from reaching to the programmatic center of society.”<sup>23</sup> Gabriel already announced on October 28 that he will run for Chancellor in the 2017 election. According to *Die Zeit*, defeating Merkel as chancellor was previously considered unrealistic even by the SPD, but since Merkel shifted the CDU's position on the *Flüchtlingspolitik*, the chancellorship is no longer out of reach for other parties.<sup>24</sup> The SPD's motivation behind the decision to distance itself from the earlier position on the *Flüchtlingspolitik* is not clear, but the decision nonetheless corresponds to Gabriel's vision to take the SPD to the center and once again become the ruling party.

The migrant crisis will likely alter Germany's political landscape. Merkel has already created a rift between the CDU and the CSU because of her September 4th decision, while the Grand Coalition between the CDU/CSU and the SPD is divided over the *Flüchtlingspolitik*. The PEGIDA and the AfD—suspicious of mainstream politics and antipathetic to refugees—have gained support in the meanwhile. In this context, the SPD shifts further to the center, with a gesture that makes the SPD appear almost as if the party turned its back on refugees. Where the SPD heads henceforth will have a far-reaching effect on German politics. The SPD could either decide to maintain its traditional position on the left, or it could attempt to become the governing party once again by assuming the center. For this reason, the SPD's responses to the current migrant crisis carry special significance for the future of German politics. 

**NOTES:**

<sup>1</sup> “Deutschland Schafft Das!” SPD, August 31, 2015, accessed October 30, 2015, [https://www.spd.de/aktuelles/130200/20150831\\_fluechtlingspolitik.html](https://www.spd.de/aktuelles/130200/20150831_fluechtlingspolitik.html).

<sup>2</sup> “SPD-Beschluss: “Flüchtlingspolitik in Deutschland“,” SPD, accessed October 29, 2015, [https://www3.spd.de/presse/Pressemitteilung/130198/20150831\\_beschluss\\_fluechtlingspolitik.html](https://www3.spd.de/presse/Pressemitteilung/130198/20150831_beschluss_fluechtlingspolitik.html).

<sup>3</sup> *SPD’s Facebook Page*, August 19, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/SPD/?fref=ts>.

<sup>4</sup> “Neue ziemlich beste Freunde für Flüchtlinge?” *Stern*, August 9, 2015, accessed November 1, 2015, <http://www.stern.de/lifestyle/leute/hilfe-fuer-fluechtlinge--til-schweiger-und-sigmar-gabriel---neue-ziemlich-beste-freunde--6376108.html>.

<sup>5</sup> “Flüchtlingspolitik in Deutschland,” SPD.

<sup>6</sup> “Mit Zuversicht und Realismus,” SPD, accessed November 1, 2015, [http://www.spd.de/aktuelles/130748/20151009\\_namensbeitrag\\_sg\\_fws.html](http://www.spd.de/aktuelles/130748/20151009_namensbeitrag_sg_fws.html).

<sup>7</sup> Florian Gathmann and Roland Nelles, “Gabriel zur Flüchtlingskrise: Wir nähern und den Grenzen unserer Möglichkeiten,” *Spiegel Online*, October 2, 2015, accessed October 29, 2015, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/sigmar-gabriel-zur-fluechtlingskrise-belastungsgrenze-bald-erreicht-a-1055747.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Horand Knaup, “SPD gegen Union: Schluss mit Kuscheln,” *Spiegel Online*, October 11, 2015, accessed October 30, 2015, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/spd-kongress-sigmar-gabriel-wagt-angriff-auf-union-a-1057244.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Oppermann, *Thomas Oppermann’s Facebook Page*, September 11, 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/OppermannTho/>.

<sup>10</sup> “Oppermann: Flüchtlinge sind “grosse Chance,” *Stern*, November 30, 2014, accessed

October 27, 2015, <http://www.stern.de/news2/oppermann--fluechtlinge-sind--grosse-chance--3241390.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Gathmann and Nelles, “Gabriel zur Flüchtlingskrise: “Wir nähern und den Grenzen unserer Möglichkeiten.”

<sup>12</sup> “Europa braucht gemeinsame Flüchtlingspolitik,” SPD Fraktion, accessed October 30, 2015, <http://www.spdfraktion.de/presse/interviews/europa-braucht-gemeinsame-fl%C3%BChtlingspolitik>.

<sup>13</sup> Christoph Hickmann, “Flüchtlinge entzweien die SPD,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, October 4, 2015, accessed November 22, 2015, <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/asyldebatte-fluechtlinge-entzweien-spd-1.2676085>.

<sup>14</sup> Reinhard Bingener, Majid Sattar, and Matthias Wyssuwa, “Wo steht die SPD in der Flüchtlingskrise?” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 9, 2011, accessed November 22, 2015, [http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/fluechtlingskrise/wo-steht-die-spd-in-der-fluechtlingskrise-13901184.html?printPagedArticle=true%20-%20pageIndex\\_2](http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/fluechtlingskrise/wo-steht-die-spd-in-der-fluechtlingskrise-13901184.html?printPagedArticle=true%20-%20pageIndex_2).

<sup>15</sup> “Asyl-Grundrecht nicht verhandelbar,” SPD, accessed October 30, 2015, [http://www.spd.de/aktuelles/130704/20151005\\_fluechtlingspolitik.html](http://www.spd.de/aktuelles/130704/20151005_fluechtlingspolitik.html).

<sup>16</sup> Lisa Caspari, “Die SPD im Flüchtlings-Dilemma,” *Die Zeit Online*, October 5, 2015, accessed October 28, 2015, <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2015-10/spd-fluechtlinge-sigmar-gabriel>.

<sup>17</sup> Almut Möller, “Has Merkel’s Power Peaked,” *European Council on Foreign Relations*, October 8, 2015, accessed October 29, 2015, [http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_has\\_merkels\\_power\\_peaked\\_4065](http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_has_merkels_power_peaked_4065).

<sup>18</sup> Wolfgang Bosswick, "Development of Asylum Policy in Germany," *Journal of Refugees Studies* Vol. 14, No. 1 (2000): 49.

<sup>19</sup> "Kritik an Flüchtlingspolitik: Magdeburger Bürgermeister verlässt die SPD," *Spiegel Online*, October 14, 2015, accessed November 22, 2015, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/lutz-truemper-magdeburger-ob-verlaesst-spd-wegen-fluechtlingspolitik-a-1057832.html>.

<sup>20</sup> "Aktuelle Umfrage Forsa," *Spiegel Online*, November 17, 2015, Accessed November 22, 2015, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/sonntagsfrage-umfragen-zu-bundestagswahl-landtagswahl-europawahl-a-944816.html>.

<sup>21</sup> Angelika Von Wahl, "From Family to Reconciliation Policy: How the Grand Coalition Reforms the German Welfare State," *German Politics and Society* Vol. 26, No. 3 (88) (Autumn 2008): 40, accessed November 19, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23742861>.

<sup>22</sup> Matthew Karnitschnig, "Sigmar Gabriel's fall," *Politico*, August 3, 2015, accessed October 29, 2015, <http://www.politico.eu/article/sigmar-gabriel-unemployment-economy-minister-germany-growth/>.

<sup>23</sup> Horand Knaup, "SPD gegen Union: Schluss mit Kuscheln."

<sup>24</sup> Katharina Schuler, "Hauptsache einig," *Die Zeit Online*, November 5, 2015, accessed November 22, 2015, <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2015-11/fluechtlinge-grosse-koalition-gipfel-angela-merkel>.

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# Preserving the Spirit of National Parks:

## The U.S. Army in Yellowstone

Tim Wang



**Abstract:** *As the flagship U.S. National Park, Yellowstone, throughout its administrative history, has set many precedents for park management policies and practices across the United States. This essay examines the period of administration of the park by the United States Army from 1886 to 1916, which was especially formative for Yellowstone. The army reversed the trend of ineffective leadership in administering the park. The policies enacted during that period – regarding nature, wildlife, and tourism management – laid the groundwork for the administration of Yellowstone. In turn, many of these best practices were adopted by subsequent national parks. Most importantly, the army’s work served as a major factor in the very preservation of the national parks system. Therefore, the park administration by the United States Army left a lasting legacy that is still evident in both Yellowstone and many other national parks today.*

Yellowstone National Park is one of the world’s premier national parks. As the first national park in the world, Yellowstone received its namesake from the Yellowstone River,<sup>1</sup> which runs through the heart of the park. The park encompasses over 2.2 million acres of land and is extremely biodiverse. There are presently over 75 species of mammals, 322 species of bird, 16 species of fish, and 1,100 species of native plants.<sup>2</sup> The park is also famous for its geological wonders. It is home to one of the largest volcanic craters in the world, containing over 10,000 thermal features and 300 geysers. In addition, the park boasts one of the world’s largest petrified forests, as well as over 290 magnificent waterfalls.<sup>3</sup>

The significance of Yellowstone extends beyond its physical space. In the words of scholar Susan Clark,

“Yellowstone has also become – in addition to a place, a park, and a region – an idea about nature and our relationship to it, as well as an ethic, calling to our mind our responsibility for our world.”<sup>4</sup>

As the flagship U.S. national park, Yellowstone, throughout its administrative history, has set many precedents for park management policies and practices across the United States. The period of its administration by the U.S. Army, from 1886 to 1916, was especially formative because the army reversed the trend of ineffective leadership in administering the park. The policies enacted during that period – regarding nature, wildlife, and tourism management – laid the groundwork for the administration of Yellowstone. In turn, many of these best practices were adopted by subsequent national parks. Most importantly, the army’s work in Yellowstone served as a major factor in the very preservation of the national parks system. This paper examines how the park’s administration by the United States Army left a lasting legacy that is still evident in both Yellowstone and many other U.S. national parks today.

### Pre-Administration (1805 – 1872)

Before analyzing the army administration of Yellowstone, it is important to understand the

history of the park leading up to that point. Yellowstone first entered the American consciousness through brief glimpses during early nineteenth century expeditions and remained clouded in mystery for the next half century. The Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1805 constituted the earliest recorded encounter with Yellowstone by white Americans. As the leaders of the Corps of Discovery, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark explored the land the United States purchased from France in the 1803 Louisiana Purchase. During their exploration, Lewis and Clark came across the Yellowstone River at the site where the river makes a ninety degree turn.<sup>5</sup> With no desire to detour from his journey, Clark did not explore the area in further detail. He merely records in his journal that “The Roche [Roche Jaune – i.e. Yellow Stone], passes out of a high rugged mountain covered with snow.”<sup>6</sup> A few years later, a fur trapper named John Colter inadvertently elucidated more details about Yellowstone through a solo quest for beavers in the region. From the end of 1807 to 1808, Colter trekked into the valley of the upper Yellowstone and likely came in contact with “at least one of [the park’s] thermal areas.”<sup>7</sup> Over the next few decades, the Yellowstone region remained mostly unexplored. While the fur trade continued until 1840,<sup>8</sup> several white Americans interacted with Yellowstone, but none of them significantly expanded the general American consciousness about the region. In the 1850s, a white American named Jim Bridger built upon his friendly relations with the Native Americans to create a map of the Yellowstone region.<sup>9</sup> In addition, Bridger described the natural features of Yellowstone to other Americans. Bridger, however, had a notorious reputation as an uncouth mountain man and a teller of tall tales.<sup>10</sup> This reputation diminished Bridger’s credibility, especially among his contemporaries, to whom Yellowstone remained more myth than reality. Yellowstone was finally explored in detail by a series of expeditions in the late 1860s that collectively illuminated features of the region.

In 1869, the privately financed Cook-Folsom-Peterson Expedition traveled across the Yellowstone River to explore the heart of the Yellowstone region.<sup>11</sup> An account of their trip was published in the *Western Monthly* magazine in 1870 detailing Yellowstone’s awe inspiring natural features. One particular passage epitomizes the spirit of their descriptions:

*[We] found the most gigantic hot springs we had seen. They were situated along the river bank, and discharged so much hot water that the river was blood-warm a quarter of a mile below. One of the springs was two hundred and fifty feet in diameter, and had every indication of sprouting powerfully at times... although we experienced no bad effects from the passing through the ‘Valley of Death,’ yet we were not disposed to dispute the propriety of giving it that name.*<sup>12</sup>

While Cook tries to stick to facts in his descriptions, his astonishment at the sheer scale of the natural features in Yellowstone is clear. One year later in 1870, the Washburn-Langford-Doane Expedition traversed into the Yellowstone region for further exploration.<sup>13</sup> Their published work in news outlets informed and inspired U.S. Representative William D. Kelley to initiate the movement that ultimately resulted in the establishment of Yellowstone National Park. The Hayden Geological Survey of 1871 further supported Kelly’s efforts for a national park.<sup>14</sup> This comprehensive report detailing the features of Yellowstone convinced the United States Congress to remove the region from public auction. In fact, Hayden’s survey included sightings of destructive frontier-esque behavior. Haines argues that “the process of subduing the Yellowstone wilderness had been begun in the style of the American frontier... and surely it would have gone the way of many another pristine locality” had it not been made into a national park.<sup>15</sup> The expeditions illuminating the richness and diversity of Yellowstone culminated in the United States government’s

decision to establish Yellowstone National Park through the Act of Dedication in 1872. Under the “exclusive control of the Secretary of the Interior,” Yellowstone National Park became the first federal institution of its kind.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the creation of Yellowstone sparked a bigger phenomenon now known as the United States Park Movement. Thus turning Yellowstone into a national park was a monumental achievement, but many unforeseen challenges lay ahead.

### **Early Administration (1872 – 1886)**

In the fledgling years of Yellowstone as a national park, the administration faced a number of obstacles. The United States government had virtually no previous experience in dealing with a national park. Historian Richard Bartlett reflects that “the creation of Yellowstone National Park was an experiment in government; administering such a region hardly fell within [traditional arenas of U.S. government authority] ... with no experience to fall back on, the first administrators had no profound underlying philosophy to guide them in [administering the park].”<sup>17</sup> In other words, the first few park superintendents experienced trial by fire. Through their failures, they helped identify policy areas crucial to the successful maintenance of a national park. Moreover, their struggles ushered in the era of administration by the U.S. Army, which proved to be a turning point for the growth of Yellowstone. Nathaniel Langford, the park’s first superintendent, suffered from a lack of financial and legislative resources to effectively regulate the park. The creation of the park drew national attention toward Yellowstone, which naturally led to an influx of visitors to the area. Unfortunately, the tragedy of the commons, whereby a common unregulated resource is drained by the individual behavior of those who benefit from it, occurred in full force. The visitors exploited the park’s wildlife to the point where it “cause[d] harm to the area.”<sup>18</sup> When Langford turned to Congress for

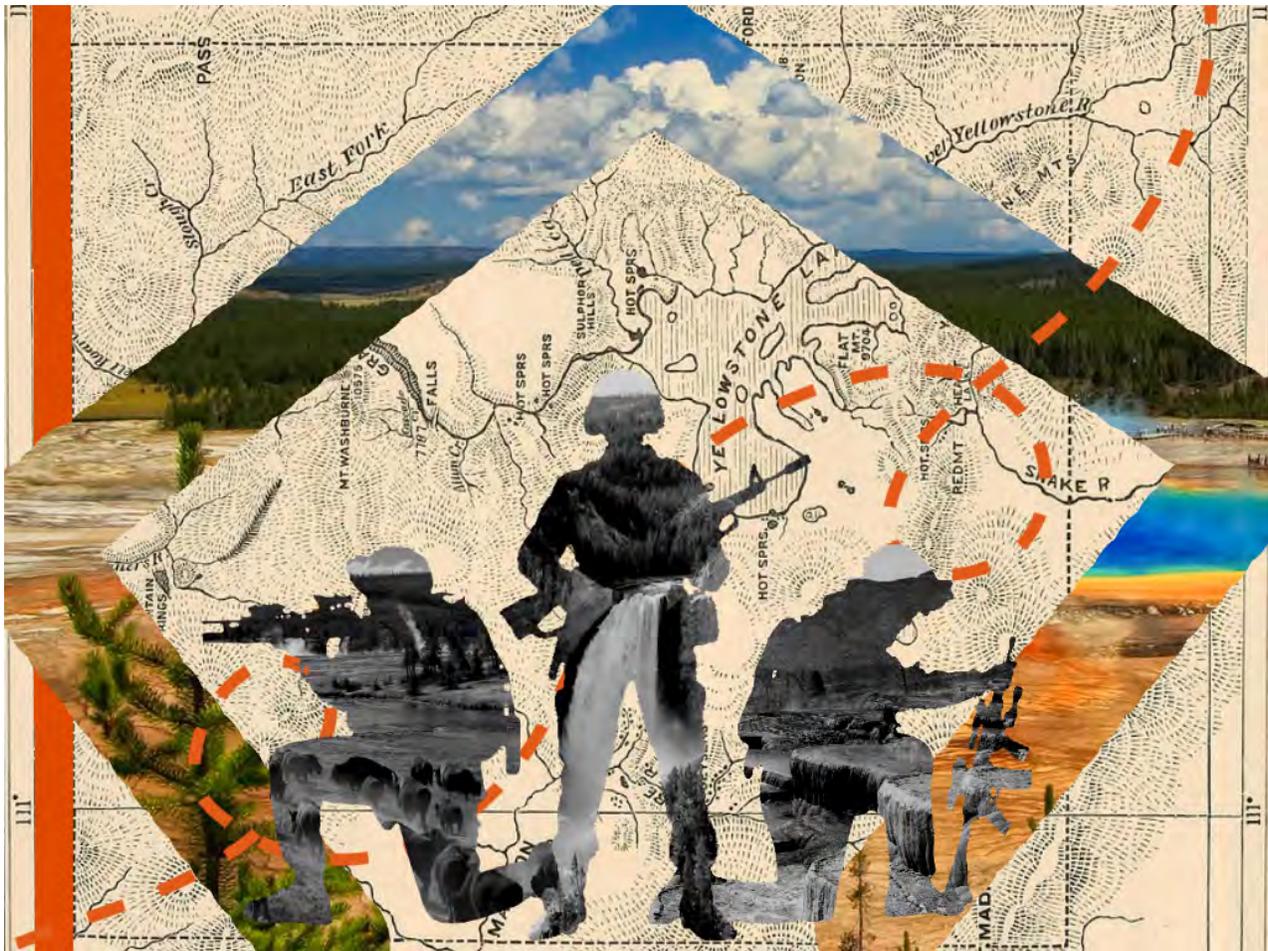
public funds to install a policing force, he was completely turned down.<sup>19</sup> Historians speculate that Congress had likely only agreed to create Yellowstone if no cost was initially incurred. Yellowstone historian Hiram Chittenden explains that, “Congress would not have created this reservation had it not believed that no additional public burden was to be incurred thereby.”<sup>20</sup> Langford’s hands were tied. In addition, due to the lack of policy precedent for national parks, Langford was unable to enact legislation to regulate the park.<sup>21</sup> To make matters worse, since the superintendent job did not pay a salary, Langford lived outside of Yellowstone and had a day job as a bank examiner. As a result, his time actually in the park was limited, which contributed to the dysfunction of park regulation.<sup>22</sup> Ultimately, Langford was removed from the post in 1877 after earning a reputation as ineffective. The next superintendent, Philetus W. Norris, better handled the issues that plagued Langford and left a much greater administrative mark on Yellowstone. In the domain of protection of resources, Norris set regulations to outlaw poaching and exploitation of wildlife. In a report to the secretary of the interior, Norris states that, “during the spring of 1875, more than 2,000 elk hides, plus many bighorn sheep and antelope hides, had been taken from the park, and hundreds of bison and moose had been slaughtered.”<sup>23</sup> To fight this endangerment of wildlife, Norris created a set of policies, which included the restriction of long-range rifles and the domestication of certain wildlife, such as the bison.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, he secured funding from Congress to hire a gamekeeper to enforce the regulations.<sup>25</sup> In the domain of scientific study within the park, Norris – who was the “ethnologist, zoologist, archaeologist, and geologist [of] the park” – contributed greatly to the scientific understanding of the ecological niches of the park. This knowledge, both quantitative and qualitative, enabled the introduction of more informed administrative policies for the park.

Norris oversaw the construction of fences, roads, and utility buildings. In addition, he built the first administrative buildings in the park that protected the park from vandalism, increased accessibility for visitors and officials, and provided basic services to the public.<sup>26</sup> Norris's leadership of the park was cut short in 1882 due to political pressures stemming from the 1880 presidential election.<sup>27</sup> He left a powerful legacy by setting a positive precedent on how to place the park onto a track of effective administration. However, his work was almost undone over the next decade by a combination of external pressures, events, and the short and limited reigns of three ineffective successors.<sup>28</sup> During this period, railroad and mining interests lobbied the government to enter the park. Moreover, the park direly lacked federal support on both financial and policy fronts due to its low legislative priority.<sup>29</sup> As a result, there was a substantial increase in park policy violations, which ranged from vandalism to poaching, within the park.<sup>30</sup> Fortunately for Yellowstone, the U.S. government turned control of the park to the U.S. Army in 1886 as a last resort. This ended the era of early park administration, which, though mostly ineffective, provided a necessary starting baseline for future park management endeavors. United States Army Administration (1886 – 1916)

After Congress decided not to appropriate any money for the superintendent of Yellowstone, the Interior Department turned to the army to preserve the national park. Over the course of the next 30 years, the U.S. Army broke new ground in administrative policy for Yellowstone. Moreover, the army's policies became the paradigm from which subsequent national park policies were derived. The army arrived at an abused and endangered Yellowstone in 1886. Bartlett recounts that "the park was indeed in a chaotic state. Tourists were more prevalent than ever, drifters located their tents or lean-tos wherever their inclinations directed, and there was no satisfactory enforcement of regulations."<sup>31</sup>

While the army's potential for efficient management of a park was unproven, there were no doubts about their ability to enforce their policies. Bartlett emphasizes that "the 'army way' involved regulations, good, bad, and stupid, and by the Eternal, they were to be enforced."<sup>32</sup> Over the course of their control of the park, the army experienced great administrative success. Rydell evaluates that "while there were some setbacks... the military succeeded to a large extent in protecting the park's natural curiosities and much of its wildlife and in building an infrastructure of administrative facilities that is still in use today."<sup>33</sup> Before analyzing the policies involved, it is important to understand the factors that contributed to the successful reign of the army. First, the army brought its tough brand of discipline that mandated responsibility and enforcement of rules. This brought credence to the policies that it created and garnered respect from Congress and civilians alike. Furthermore, the army had sufficient manpower to do the aforementioned enforcement throughout the entire park. The number of stationed officials in the park at any time was at least 34 men and reached as high as 136 men.<sup>34</sup> Finally, the military superintendents were generally "good managers of people" and capable.<sup>35</sup> Bartlett reflects that "the officers appear to have been brusque, spit-and-polish men who went by the book and yet possessed the intelligence to recognize that the command was handling a peacetime policing action, not a military operation against an enemy."<sup>36</sup> Thus, these factors empowered the army to achieve their main administrative goals – namely to fight vandalism, establish wildlife and resource management, and set tourism policies.

In the fight against vandalism, the army built a series of forts and outposts to monitor park activity. Most notably, Fort Yellowstone was built in 1891 to quarter the troops patrolling the park.<sup>37</sup> This fort, along with many other smaller outposts, provided permanent residence for the troops working in the park.



Christina Hahn, 2016

The army implemented year-round patrols from strategically placed outposts. The increased permanent presence proved to be effective in reducing vandalism in the park.

While the views concerning wildlife and resource management policy varied slightly among army superintendents, there was a common goal of protecting wildlife. Some were in favor of absolute protection of wildlife, as part of the larger “Yellowstone Crusade” movement, while others were more in favor of the enjoyment of the wildlife as natural curiosities.<sup>38</sup> However, even the less stringent superintendents, such as Frazier Boutelle, had policies that reflected the administration’s appreciation for wildlife. For example, the army administration worked to preserve the bison population in the early 1900s. They built a buffalo ranch and hired a salaried buffalo keeper to replenish the wild herd. In fact, by

1916, the 72 bison herd roaming the park was the last remaining wild herd in the United States.<sup>39</sup> Along these same lines, the army restocked the park’s rivers and lakes with fish, with up to 150,000 trout and salmon introduced by 1890.<sup>40</sup> Over the course of their administration, the army added an estimated 9 million fish.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, the network of troopers in the park prevented poaching and exploitation of natural resources. A poaching incident in Yellowstone directly influenced the passage of the Lacey Act in 1900, the first federal law protecting wildlife.<sup>42</sup> This monumental law banned “all hunting, or the killing, wounding, or capturing at any time of any bird or wild animal [except to protect human life],”<sup>43</sup> and provided the legal backing to effectively enforce preservation regulations.

The army also addressed tourism and public

access to the area. The administration limited the influence of private enterprise in the park. The first superintendent, Moses Harris, stated that he was “very forcibly impressed with the danger to which [the park] is subjected by the greed of private enterprise.”<sup>44</sup> Because the threat was keenly recognized by the park administration, private enterprise never took major hold within the park.

“ **Tourism in the park increased exponentially at the beginning of the twentieth century, which, in turn, caused a myriad of problems.**

To account for all the visitors, the administration established a registration system through outposts throughout the park. Also, the army dealt with the issues of unclean campsites by creating permanent campgrounds, so camping could be more closely regulated. In particular, these campsites were created with the support of the Interior Department at the Upper Geyser Basin, Yellowstone Lake, and Canyon.<sup>45</sup> Another issue that accompanied the tourists was the lack of visitor facilities. By the early 1900s, the Army Corps of Engineers had built roads and trails to improve visitor access to points of interests, such as Lone Star Geyser and Inspiration Point.<sup>46</sup> Finally, viewing facilities and outhouses were also built to improve the visitor experience, and informational signs were put up around the park for directions and to improve visitor safety. Many of these improvements greatly benefited both the park and the American public.

The Buffalo Soldiers also played an essential role in park administration. The Buffalo Soldiers were African Americans who served in specific army regiments at the time.<sup>47</sup> During the army’s reign in Yellowstone, many Buffalo Soldiers served as the earliest form of

park rangers. In addition, they developed the park infrastructure, created maps, fought wildfires, and thwarted poachers.<sup>48</sup> A legislative representative for the National Parks Conservation Association stated, “What I think is important about [the Buffalo soldiers’ stories] is that the early American West was a far more diverse place than we originally believed. African Americans have always been in these parks and on these Western landscapes, far more than we knew.”<sup>49</sup>

By 1916, given the combination of the relative maturity of Yellowstone and pressing external needs for military force, the army handed the administration of the park back to civilians. The policies implemented by the army stabilized the park in terms of resource management and rule enforcement. At that point, it would have been unfair to the army for them to continue administering the park, as that would continue to apply their appropriations from Congress toward the responsibilities of the Interior Department.<sup>50</sup> In addition, wars such as the Mexican Revolution and Civil War in the 1910s pressured the army to end their park duty.<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, many conservationists and some of the Interior Department called for the return of Yellowstone to civilian management.<sup>52</sup> As a result, the National Parks Service Organic Act was passed on August 25, 1916, to establish the National Park Service that would work solely in the administration of Yellowstone and the 35 other national parks at the time.<sup>53</sup> Legacy Over the course of 30 years, the United States Army left an everlasting impression on both Yellowstone National Park and the entire national parks system. Their administration of the park helped to legitimize its management and gain national reverence. Historian Duane Hampton comments that while the army had “little to do with the establishment of Yellowstone...it had much to do with [its] preservation.”<sup>54</sup> As a testament to the contribution of the army, notable conservationists John Muir and Robert

Underwood Johnson were both openly impressed by the army's work and in turn called for military control of the entire public domain.<sup>55</sup> To help ease the transition process, a small group of 21 veterans remained behind in Yellowstone as permanent, salaried park rangers.<sup>56</sup> They proved critical to the early years of civilian administration because they were already experienced in managing the park. This empowered the National Park Service to refine and build upon the army's administrative policies in order to display and preserve Yellowstone's natural magnificence.

Since the National Park Service has taken over, they have instituted new policies and revised preexisting ones to adapt to the changing times and needs of the American people. However, the fundamental guiding principles of the park, especially regarding preservation and management, remained constant from the period of army administration. In fact, the very bill that created the National Park Service was heavily influenced by the spirit of army administration in Yellowstone. The bill aimed to protect the park through regulations and conservation, while still providing the opportunity for the American people to experience the natural magnificence of the national parks. The bill specifically states:

*[The NPS's] fundamental purpose [is to] conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as we will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.*<sup>57</sup>

This mindset, along with many administrative policies, has been successfully applied to other major national parks around the country, such as Yosemite, Sequoia, and General Grant.<sup>58</sup> While the army administration in Yellowstone fulfilled its duty of preserving a beautiful piece of nature, it achieved the far greater goal of preserving the very idea and spirit of national parks. By protecting the first national park, the

army established transformative legislative and cultural precedents.

This influence is aptly summarized by the National Park Service's own rendition of its history:

*The national park idea was part of a new view of the nation's responsibility for the public domain. By the end of the 1800s, many thoughtful people no longer believed that wilderness should be fair game for the first person who could claim and plunder it. They believed its fruits were the rightful possession of all the people, including those yet unborn.*<sup>59</sup>

Essentially, Yellowstone became the paradigm for the national parks idea, which gradually took hold in the consciousness of the American public. Since then, the National Park Service has grown significantly in size and influence. Today, the national parks system contains over 400 areas, which covers over 84 million acres across all 50 states.<sup>60</sup> Regardless of the changing times, the spirit of the Yellowstone policies under the army remains firmly embedded in the core values of the National Park Service. Thus, over the course of its 30 year administration, the army not only saved Yellowstone National Park but elevated and empowered all national U.S. parks for generations to come.



**NOTES:**

- <sup>1</sup>The river was named “Mi tse a-da-zi” by the Minnetaree tribe, which translates into “Yellow Stone.” “Yellowstone Basic Facts.” *National Park Service*. U.S. Department of the Interior, 18 Nov. 2015. Web. 19 Nov. 2015.
- <sup>2</sup> “Yellowstone National Park - Main Information.” *Yellowstone National Park*. Yellowstone Media, 2013. Web. 19 Nov. 2015.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>4</sup> Susan G. Clark, *Ensuring Greater Yellowstone's Future: Choices for Leaders and Citizens* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2008), 1.
- <sup>5</sup> George Black, *Empire of Shadows: The Epic Story of Yellowstone* (New York: St. Martin's, 2012), 20.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> Black, *Empire of Shadows*, 31; Aubrey L. Haines, “The Lewis and Clark Era (1805-14)” in *Yellowstone National Park: Its Exploration and Establishment* (Washington: U.S. Dept. of the Interior National Park Service, 1974). [https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online\\_books/haines1/ieet.htm](https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/haines1/ieet.htm)
- <sup>8</sup> Black, *Empire of Shadows*, 50.
- <sup>9</sup> Haines, “The Fur Trade Era” in *Yellowstone National Park*.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> Haines, “The Folsom Party” in *Yellowstone National Park*.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> Haines, “The Park Movement” in *Yellowstone National Park*.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> Haines, “The Park Movement” in *Yellowstone National Park*.
- <sup>17</sup> Richard A. Bartlett, *Yellowstone: A Wilderness Besieged* (Tucson, AZ: U of Arizona, 1985), 214.
- <sup>18</sup> Kiki Leigh Rydell and Mary Shivers Culpin, *Managing the "Matchless Wonders": A History of Administrative Development in Yellowstone National Park, 1872-1965*. N.p.: n.p., n.d., 2.
- <sup>19</sup> Rydell and Culpin, *Managing the "Matchless Wonders,"* 2.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., 3.
- <sup>22</sup> Bartlett, *Yellowstone*, 217.
- <sup>23</sup> Rydell and Culpin, *Managing the "Matchless Wonders,"* 6.
- <sup>24</sup> Bartlett, *Yellowstone*, 272.
- <sup>25</sup> Rydell and Culpin, *Managing the "Matchless Wonders,"* 7.
- <sup>26</sup> Bartlett, *Yellowstone*, 272.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., 228. During this time, there was political pressure from different railroad companies that influenced decisions in Congress. Norris's enemies took the opportunity in the 1880 election to remove him from power.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., 235.
- <sup>29</sup> Rydell and Culpin, *Managing the "Matchless Wonders,"* 13.
- <sup>30</sup> “Fort Yellowstone,” *National Park Service*. U.S. Department of the Interior, 16 Nov. 2015. Web. 19 Nov. 2015.
- <sup>31</sup> Bartlett, *Yellowstone*, 259.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., 251.
- <sup>33</sup> Rydell and Culpin, *Managing the "Matchless Wonders,"* 25.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>36</sup> Bartlett, *Yellowstone*, 262.
- <sup>37</sup> “Fort Yellowstone,” *National Park Service*.
- <sup>38</sup> Rydell and Culpin, *Managing the "Matchless Wonders,"* 41.

- <sup>39</sup> H. Duane Hampton, "The Army and the National Parks." *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 22.3, Yellowstone: The First Century (1972): 64-79. *JSTOR*. Web. 19 Nov. 2015.
- <sup>40</sup> Rydell and Culpin, *Managing the "Matchless Wonders,"* 43.
- <sup>41</sup> Hampton, "The Army and the National Parks," 77.
- <sup>42</sup> "Lacey Act," U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services - International Affairs. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services, n.d. Web. 19 Nov. 2015.
- <sup>43</sup> Rydell and Culpin, *Managing the "Matchless Wonders,"* 44.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.
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- <sup>48</sup> Tristan Scott, "African-American 'Buffalo Soldiers' Protected National Parks before Rangers." *Missoulian.com*. Missoulian, 18 Dec. 2011. Web. 19 Nov. 2015.
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- <sup>50</sup> Hampton, "The Army and the National Parks," 78.
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.
- <sup>52</sup> Rydell and Culpin, *Managing the "Matchless Wonders,"* 74.
- <sup>53</sup> "History (U.S. National Park Service)," *National Park Service*. U.S. Department of the Interior, 16 Nov. 2015. Web. 19 Nov. 2015.
- <sup>54</sup> Hampton, "The Army and the National Parks," 64.
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.
- <sup>57</sup> Rydell and Culpin, *Managing the "Matchless Wonders,"* 74.

<sup>58</sup> Hampton, "The Army and the National Parks," 65.

<sup>59</sup> "History of the Park," *Yellowstone Resources and Issues Handbook* (2015): n. pag. National Park Service. Web.

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# THE INAUGURAL ISSUE

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The Blockade of Leningrad and the Mixed Results of Sovietization

Dane wrote this paper for Professor Cohen's history seminar, The Second World War: A Political History. After graduation, he will be moving to San Antonio to work with Teach For America.



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Extirpating the Loathsome Smallpox: A Study in the History and Demise of Smallpox, as Aided by Thomas Jefferson

Anna wrote this paper for Professor Boles's history department seminar, Thomas Jefferson and His Age. Her interests include British literature, American history, and twentieth-century film.



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Consumerism, Commodification, and Beauty: Shiseido and the Rise of Japanese Beauty Culture

Jessica wrote this paper for Professor Barlow's history seminar: Modern Girl & the Asia in the World.



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Amber produced the cover art for this journal. She also produced the accompanying art for "From Welcoming to Wary." Her interests are painting, product-design, and social entrepreneurship.

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Preserving the Spirit of National Parks: The U.S. Army in Yellowstone

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# Additional Information

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