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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Chicago Studies



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2020

Andrus Hatem
Iris Roos Jacobs
Samuel Buckberry Joyce
Alexandra C. Price
Jarrett Shapiro

MANAGING EDITOR

Daniel J. Koehler

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Preface



A

As the University of Chicago emerges from a second COVID-19 winter, I am reminded of the insights of John Dewey and George Herbert Mead, early members of the faculty who might be seen as deep ancestors of the Chicago Studies Program. Both famously taught that social reality is protean and warned against schematic explanations and easy assumptions; rather, the way to know the world is to engage it in an experiential way that accounts for its mutability. The pandemic has resisted our best attempts to forecast and plan, and this is true not only of infection rates and variants but of the social consequences that have emerged since 2020. The global pandemic has had impacts on our local urban and campus environments that would have been difficult to predict at the outset. The way to know the city of the pandemic, and the city that emerges from it, is to observe and take stock.

A list of topics that have claimed ground in Chicago's public life, whether new or increasingly visible, could be very long. As elsewhere, public health mandates have generated new oppositions and alliances that complicate the politics of the city: one thinks of restrictions on public gatherings, felt acutely in religious spaces, for example, or the vaccine requirement for entry to stores and eateries. Attitudes toward

education and public schools have changed markedly. The housing market has developed in ways that are not advantageous to first-time buyers, which has trained sharper attention on the racial wealth gap and the future of affordable housing. The labor market is profoundly different, along with expectations about the nature of work and the value of face-to-face collaboration. What this means for the future of urban planning and the central city is not yet clear. These are not only important local trends, but affect the ways that global urban trends were manifested in the local during the pandemic. For the Chicago Studies Program, topics like these are of especial interest. They affect the lived experience, and often the social commitments, of students and faculty who make the city their home. They also bridge this experience with subjects of classroom analysis and larger scholarly concerns.

In the 21–22 academic year Chicago Studies has turned attention to such matters of scale in several ways, above all through the conversation series Climate and the City, cosponsored with the Program on the Global Environment. Autumn term witnessed the launch of the “Urban October Lecture” as a feature of the annual Urban October hosted by the Mansueto Institute for Urban Innovation. Loyola University Chicago Professor of History Harold L. Platt lectured from his 2018 book *Sinking Chicago*, which explores Chicago’s long struggle against climate shifts, as seen in the reversal of the river, the elevation of streets, and responses to floods and heat waves. The conversation has continued over the winter term with a variety of local thinkers, activists, and policy makers, all of whom are looking beyond grim forecasts to intervene creatively in their respective areas of expertise. Discussions to date have examined the prospects for mass-transit development, new approaches suggested by data visualizations of climate change, and the use of inclusive communicative strategies to engage Chicago neighborhoods in sustainability and resilience. A full listing of Climate and the City events is available at chicagostudies.uchicago.edu/events/climate-and-city.

Chicago Studies relies on faculty partners across the University to offer a rich menu of courses, events, workshops, and excursions. We have therefore been excited to support the work of the Faculty Working Group of the Committee on Environment, Geography, and Urbanization (or CEGU, for short), which intends to offer a new platform for research and pedagogy on many dimensions of climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental transformation. While Chicago Studies aligns with every field represented in the College, an interdisciplinary hub of this kind, located in the Division of Social Sciences, holds expansive opportunities for our undergraduates to study and engage with the city of Chicago.

The *Chicago Studies Annual* remains the intellectual endpoint for the program, the culmination of students’ engagements with the city and region. As before, this year’s contributions represent the finalists from the Chicago Studies Undergraduate Research Colloquium, chosen from dozens of submissions, mostly BA theses, and reviewed by a committee of experts. Our five theses reveal the quality of research taking place in undergraduate programs in anthropology, environmental and urban studies, history/Russian and East European studies, history/science and medicine, and public policy, even as the submissions to the colloquium originated in disciplines from creative writing to geographical sciences to theater and performance studies. What also distinguishes these contributions is their keen observation of the life, people, and history of the city, gained through acts of local citizenship and service. The Chicago Studies website features podcast discussions with many of the authors from prior volumes. I strongly encourage you to tune in and consider some of the ways they have channeled their experiences and knowledge into research topics and postgraduate pursuits.

In “When Aldermen Break with Their Voters,” Andrus Hatem, AB’20 (Public Policy Studies), analyzes the politics of Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s 2011 decision to close six of the city’s twelve mental health clinics. Though this measure responded to a deep budget shortfall, it was contested and

approved in a changing landscape of popular attitudes and advocacy about mental health services. Hatem investigates why the Emanuel administration was able to cut public services with such ease that were so at variance with the movement of public opinion.

Iris Roos Jacobs, AB'20 (Anthropology and History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Science and Medicine), guides us through a global debate about the display and ownership of human remains by illuminating the local practices of the Field Museum of Natural History. Jacobs shows that debates about the status of human remains are rooted in broader discussions of what museum exhibitions ought to do and the scientific authority they communicate. The exhibition policies of the Field Museum, from the Gilded Age to the present, express this changing relationship, as we see in analyses of colonial acquisitions, museums as places of education or entertainment (or both), and repatriation efforts by indigenous groups.

Tree canopy is at once integral to the Chicago's identity and branding—think of the city's motto, *Hortus in Urbe*—and under acknowledged as part of its lived experience. Sam Joyce, AB'20 (Environment and Urban Studies), gives an imaginative and scholarly account of the distribution of the tree canopy across the city, using a wide variety of data sets to pose new questions about vegetation in Chicago and to arrive at new conclusions about where and why one sees concentrations of healthy, mature trees. Readers learn a good deal about the relationship between the organic and the built environment, and urban planners will find evidence for correcting environmental inequities based on race and class.

Alex Price, AB'20 (History and Russian and East European Studies), received the 2020 Chicago Studies Undergraduate Research Prize for her submission, “*Finding Yiddishland in America*.” This essay pursues a rich cultural analysis of Chicago’s Yiddish-language press between the years 1918–32 to reconstruct a variety of approaches within the Jewish community to assimilation pressures. Price ultimately finds that the press

not only offered a space for the formation of opinions about Americanization, but helped to create a vision of Yiddish identity in American that immigrants could accept.

The history of a Confederate monument in Oak Woods Cemetery serves as an access point to Civil War memory and North-South reconciliation debates in the Gilded Age in Jarrett Shapiro’s essay, “Chicago’s ‘Harmonious Forgetfulness.’” Shapiro, AB’20 (History), guides us through the economic, social, and racial dimensions of local support for the erection of a Confederate memorial at the cemetery in 1895. Centered on the figure of John Cox Underwood, a former Confederate lieutenant-colonel from Kentucky, this essay captures the intersection of reconciliation with the civic ambitions and growing economic power of Chicago.

The last years have asked us to look in new ways at the life and relationships of our city, and we are fortunate to have intellectually curious and resourceful students in the College who endeavor to do just that. It is a pleasure to thank James Dahl Cooper, AB’76, for supporting this issue of the *Annual*, which ensures that our students’ work finds the readership that it deserves.

Daniel J. Koehler, AM’02, PhD’10 (History)
Deputy Dean of the College for Academic Affairs

Acknowledgments



ANDY HATEM | I am indebted: to my preceptor, Anthony Farmer, to my second reader, Sorcha Brophy, to those who agreed to speak with me during my research, and to far too many others to list.

Since graduating, I have worked as a political data analyst, with a focus on state and local campaigns. I ran the Vermont Democratic Party's data shop in 2020 and joined the Missouri Democratic Party in 2021 as the party's data manager. In Vermont I worked with candidates up and down the ballot, from races for statewide and federal office to school board races decided by three votes. In Missouri I have provided data analysis and support to the citizens' commissions responsible for drawing new legislative districts. In January 2022 one of these commissions approved a House map that cuts partisan bias by half, increases competition, and improves minority representation. The commission completed its work without court intervention for the first time in forty years.

IRIS JACOBS | Thanks first and foremost to my interviewees, Élisabeth Daynès, John Gurche, Janet Hong, Robert Martin, Samuel Redman, Helen Robbins, and Jodi Simkin, for taking hours out of your busy schedules to answer my philosophical questions. Your perspectives were integral to this thesis. Special thanks to my principal investigator, Zeray Alemseged, for

your mentorship throughout this process and for connecting me with experts in paleoart. I am grateful to my advisors, Michael Rossi, María Cecilia Lozada, and Robert Richards. Your support, guidance, and inspiration helped shape this thesis, as well as the ways I think about history, humanity, and knowledge production. Thanks to my preceptor, Ashley Clark, and fellow students in History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Science and Medicine for your constant encouragement and detailed feedback throughout this project. Finally, thanks to anyone who is currently reading this thesis! I appreciate you.

Following graduation, I consulted as a field archaeologist in the cultural resources management sector on infrastructure projects throughout California. Recently, I have moved to Adelaide, South Australia, for a graduate program in maritime archaeology. I remain interested in issues of archaeological ethics, biopolitics, and community engagement.

SAM JOYCE | Thank you to everyone who made this research possible. I could not have completed this thesis without the encouragement, guidance, and insights of my faculty advisor, Alison Anastasio. Thank you as well to Ilana Ventura, Dexter Locke, Jarlath O’Neil-Dunne, David Nowak, Lydia Scott, Lindsay Darling, and the students of the fall 2019 Environmental and Urban Studies colloquium for their assistance throughout the research and writing process. Finally, thank you to Dan Koehler, Chris Skrable, Sabina Shaikh, and everyone else involved in the Chicago Studies program for the opportunity to publish my work. I am currently a second-year JD student at Stanford Law School, where I serve as a managing editor of the *Stanford Law Review*.

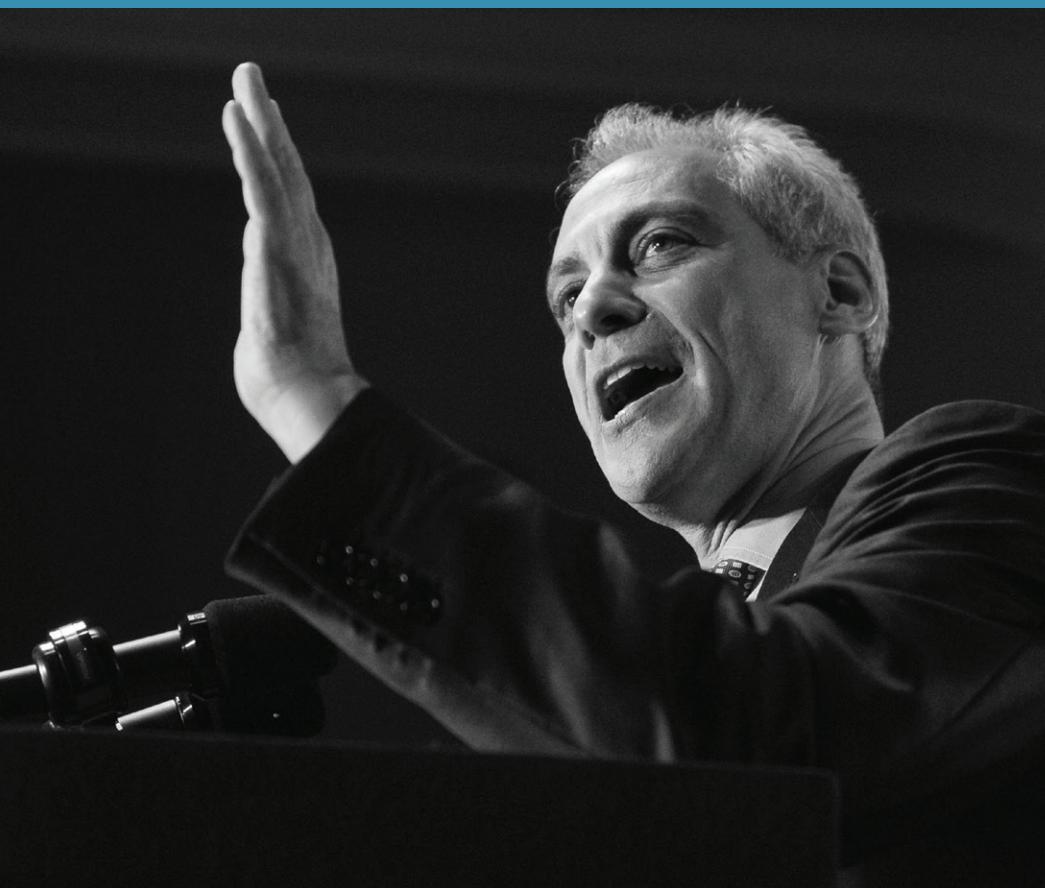
ALEX PRICE | My research would not have been possible without the generous support of many. I would like to express particular gratitude to my faculty advisors, Tara Zahra and William Nickell, as well as my preceptor, Zoya Sameen, for providing such thoughtful guidance throughout the writing process. I am also deeply grateful to Jessica Kirzane for supporting my study of Yiddish and to the Russian and East European Studies

department for planting the seeds of this research through its Chicago Studies coursework on Eastern European immigration to Chicago. A special thank you to Robert Bird (1969–2020), whose mentorship helped me to become the writer and thinker I am today. Finally, I thank my parents for their constant support. Since graduation I have launched a career in social impact at the nonprofit, Civic Consulting Alliance, whose mission is to make Chicago a better place for everyone to live in and work.

JARRETT SHAPIRO | This article would not have been possible without the support of those around me. I wish to thank my colleagues in my thesis seminar group—Angel Chacon, Silvia Diaz, Anna Hackemer, Andrew Huff, and Isabelle Sohn—for their constant encouragement and feedback. Next, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my two thesis preceptors, Alexander Hofmann and Serena Covkin, for their unwavering commitment to meet, recommend scholarly sources, and provide constructive criticism. I also wish to thank my faculty advisor, Jane Dailey, for steering my research in the right direction. Finally, I wish to acknowledge my editors, Dan Koehler and Joanne Berens, who helped push this publication across the finish line. An underappreciated aspect of historical research is that it is often a group endeavor, and without the support and encouragement of so many, this story may have remained untold.

Since graduating from the University of Chicago, I have been working in Washington, DC, as a senior legal assistant for the whistleblower practice of Sanford Heisler Sharp, LLP, a national plaintiffs’ law firm specializing in civil rights and employment law. I have also been fortunate to continue my engagement with history and the built environment as a member of both the Landmarks and the Government Affairs Committees for the DC Preservation League, the city’s chief nonprofit advocating for historic preservation. I plan to apply to law school in the near future, and I ultimately hope to forge a career at the nexus of law and cultural heritage preservation.

When Aldermen Break with Their Voters



Understanding and Mediating Public Preferences on Mental Health Clinics in Chicago

ANDRUS HATEM, AB'20

Introduction

Mayor Rahm Emanuel released his first city budget in October of 2011. Chicago faced a \$635 million deficit, and Emanuel was determined to close that gap without new taxes.¹ In place of taxes, he proposed “innovative reforms and efficiencies.”² Among the casualties were six of the city’s twelve mental health clinics. Emanuel proposed to close them by April 2012. He argued that the population of many neighborhoods had been dropping for years, and patient visits were following suit. The city could provide comparable mental health services at a substantially lower cost by “consolidating” half the city’s clinics and directing patients to larger facilities or private providers.³

1. Yasmin Rammohan, “City Council Approves Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s 2012 Budget Plan,” *WTTW*, Oct. 12, 2011, www.chicago.gov/content/city/en/depts/mayor/press_room/press_releases/2011/november_2011/city_council_approves_mayorrahmemanuels2012budgetplan.html.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Ben Joravsky, “Before the Schools, Mayor Emanuel Closed the Clinics,” *Chicago Reader*, Mar. 26, 2013, www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/mayor-emanuel-closes-city-mental-health-clinics/Content?oid=9145051.

Mental health activists saw things differently. In their view, mental health services in Chicago had never been adequate. Caseloads in city clinics—which sometimes approached one hundred per therapist, compared to twenty or thirty in private practice—were moving back towards normalcy.⁴ Closings threatened to reverse that progress. Mental health advocates found twenty-eight friendly aldermen and braced for a fight.⁵ They never got one. A month later, the Chicago City Council passed Emanuel’s budget unanimously.⁶ The council agreed to his mental health cuts “without a hearing, study, or any other independent review of the mayor’s claims.”⁷ But the story did not end there. As the city shuttered clinics (six in 2012 and one in 2013), activists and advocates would not let the closings go.⁸ The closings resurfaced in 2013, as Emanuel proposed the largest school closings in Chicago’s history, and again in 2015, as Emanuel sought reelection.⁹ They remained contested even after

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Mayor’s Press Office, “City Council Approves Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s 2012 Budget Plan,” Office of the Mayor, Nov. 16, 2011, www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/mayor/press_room/press_releases/2011/november_2011/city_council_approves_mayorrahmemanuels2012budgetplan.html.

7. Joravsky, “Before the Schools.”

8. Mattie Quinn, “This Is What Happens When a City Shuts Down Mental Health Clinics,” *Governing*, Oct. 2018, www.governing.com/topics/health-human-services/gov-chicago-mental-health.html.

9. Joravsky, “Before the Schools”; Noreen S. Ahmed-Ullah, John Chase, and Bob Secter, “CPS Approves Largest School Closure in Chicago’s History,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 23, 2013, www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2013-05-23-chicago-school-closings-20130522-story.html; Alisa Hauser, “Rahm Confronted on Mental Health Clinic Closures during Wicker Park Forum,” DNAInfo Chicago, Mar. 25, 2015, www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20150305/wicker-park/rahm-emanuel-confronted-on-mental-clinic-closures-during-wicker-park-forum.

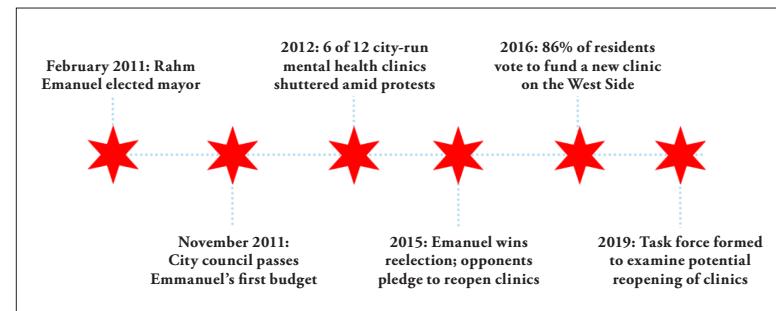


Figure 1: Timeline of Mental Health Clinic Closings in Chicago.
Illustration by author.

Emanuel left office in 2019, when the city council formed a task force to reexamine the closings (see fig. 1).¹⁰

But all the activists’ organizing and protests never quite bore fruit. The clinic task force, initially seen as a hard-fought victory, became a microcosm of activists’ frustrations. Judy King, the Chicago Community Health Board’s representative on the task force, summed up these frustrations: “[The task force] met as a group once on May 16, 2019. The public was excluded. Two of us objected. It was the only meeting.”¹¹ And the clinics stayed closed.

There is evidence in hindsight that opposition to mental health cuts had staying power in Chicago. Over the course of seven years, activists and advocates challenged their elected leaders’ framing of the closings, mobilized patients and the public to focus attention on the issue, and sought to transform the closings from settled policy to a hotly contested

10. Shannon Hefferman, “Chicago Mental Health Task Force to Hold Public Hearing,” *WBEZ*, June 13, 2019, www.wbez.org/shows/wbez-news/chicago-mental-health-task-force-to-hold-public-hearing/72eb814d-1b68-48b1-85f4-da4676985f8c.

11. Jim Daley, “What Happened to the Mental Health Task Force?” *Chicago South Side Weekly*, Feb. 4, 2020, southsideweekly.com/happened-mental-health-task-force.

measure that should be reexamined. Why did the city council unanimously back closings, if mental health activists and advocates had this much public support? Why did the council hold the line, despite protests, referenda, and wins for pro-clinic candidates? How, in other words, did a wide gap persist between public sentiment on the one hand and the actions of public officials on the other?

Answering these questions requires a more detailed account of the way political leaders and the public understood the clinic debate. Aldermen had limited information to form their views on Rahm Emanuel's budget, but this lack of information only goes so far to explain the gulf between public sentiment and public officials' actions. To explain this gulf, I examine the way that Mayor Emanuel and activists/advocates sought to frame the debate over clinic closures. To understand how the early opposition of twenty-eight aldermen became unanimous support, and how clinic closings remained in effect despite evidence of public opposition, I detail the mechanisms by which local officials understand and prioritize issues and the ways in which outside actors—most of all the mayor—can manage officials' perceptions. The results help explain why Chicago closed its mental health clinics, only to revisit the topic years later; they also illustrate how political issues are discussed and contested in local government.

This thesis draws on the literature of power in government to examine the workings of Chicago's city government. The sociologist, C. Wright Mills, argued in 1956 that American society was dominated by a small coterie of "power elites."¹² The political theorist, Robert Dahl, challenged this view, arguing in *Who Governs?* (1961) that political elites and the masses governed together in an arrangement Dahl called "pluralism."¹³

12. Alan Wolfe, "The Power Elite Now," *American Prospect*, Nov. 16, 2001, prospect.org/api/content/e7f4c59d-1129-5028-a93a-19c478bd2b4e.

13. Floyd Hunter, review of *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*, by Robert A. Dahl, *Administrative Science Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (1962): 517–19, doi:10.2307/2390734.

Later scholarship questioned Dahl's optimism, presented evidence that the private stances of Dahl's subjects belied their public claims, and suggested that Mills' power-elite theory held more truth than Dahl believed.¹⁴ Yet even Dahl's skeptics admit that the public wields some influence over government. I do not claim to settle the Mills-Dahl debate, but, for the purposes of this study, I assume some level of public influence over government, in keeping with recent scholarship, and seek to explain the public's limited impact on mental health cuts in Chicago.

I will examine two questions central to the literature on citizen influence in local politics. First, I trace the ways in which officials (in this case, Chicago's aldermen) gather information and make decisions about issues. Second, I examine the ways in which external actors (Mayor Emanuel on the one hand and activists on the other) compete to shape this process. I seek to explain why public opinion took a back seat in officials' minds early on; how public resistance shaped the stances and actions of the city council; how Emanuel countered activists' efforts and blunted their impact on policy; and how political actors can manipulate the salience of public opinion to advance their interests in a wide range of settings.

The core of this study is inductive, with limited reliance on prespecified empirical expectations. Still, it is worth describing general patterns and dynamics that I expected to encounter. Like Dahl, I expected to find public sentiment exerting at least some influence on the actions of policy makers and elected officials. I expected to identify particular mechanisms (the aldermanic town hall, for instance) that could facilitate this process by helping officials gauge their constituents' views. I expected to identify ways in which Emanuel and his staff limited the influence of these mechanisms (a short timeline for passage of a budget; alternative

14. G. William Domhoff, "Who Rules America: Who Really Ruled in Dahl's New Haven?" *Power in America*, n.d., accessed Nov. 9, 2019, whorulesamerica.ucsc.edu/power/new_haven-old.html.

measures of the public's preferences, such as Emanuel's 2011 win; and efforts to tie closings to other council and voter priorities). I mapped the use and relative influence of these political strategies where I noted them. Finally, I expected to find activists using public engagement strategies (protest marches, media coverage, petition drives) to undermine the mayor's efforts over time, to increase the impact of public opinion on officials' stances, and to push the council to reexamine clinic closings.¹⁵

Having outlined the puzzle at hand, I surveyed the relevant literature, detail known mechanisms that mediate the impact of public opinion on policy, and describe institutions and structures in Chicago that fit into this framework. I draw on statements, messaging materials, and the words of activists, officials, and members of Emanuel's administration to explain how each group navigated the debate over mental health clinics and shaped the debate's outcome. Finally, I consider the implications of these findings for scholars' understanding of the debate over mental health clinics in Chicago and the influence of public opinion on the actions of local government more broadly.

Literature Review

Existing research offers some insights relevant to this study, but has limitations. One line of research on the role of interest groups in policy debates pays limited attention to local politics. Another strand considers the balance of power between the electorate at large and narrow interest

15. Activists continue to protest for more mental health clinics during the COVID-19 epidemic, and Chicago's current mayor, Lori Lightfoot, continues to argue that the clinics closed nine years ago have been adequately replaced by funding to South and West Side organizations. See Marissa Nelson, "Chicago's Mental Health Care Plan Invests in Services, Not Yet Reopening Clinics," *WTTW News*, Apr. 13, 2021, news.wttw.com/2021/04/13/chicago-s-mental-health-care-plan-invests-services-not-yet-reopening-clinics.

groups or elites, again on a larger scale. Some scholars have applied these two lines of research in local contexts, and I draw on their comparisons of local and national politics. Finally, my methodology is informed by two recent works that cast light on an understudied dimension of interest group competition: the subjective way in which political debates are constructed by participants and observers alike.

Interest Groups

A well-developed literature examines the formation and operation of political interest groups. David Truman's *The Governmental Process* (1951) argues that wherever substantial interests in a political outcome exist interest-group formation will follow as people join interest groups to advance group goals.¹⁶ Mancur Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965) challenges this view, pointing to collective-action problems that characterize the activity of interest groups. Olson calls for an understanding of interest-group formation and structures focused on the self-interest of individuals and the exclusive benefits that groups provide to draw members.¹⁷

Later studies have built on Olson's collective-action model to develop a detailed understanding of interest-group formation and maintenance. Moe (1981) argues that selective and nonselective incentives can work in tandem to attract new interest-group members.¹⁸ Salisbury (1969) describes interest groups in terms more reminiscent of business than activism, arguing that "entrepreneurs" who catalyze group formation and develop

16. David B. Truman, *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion*, 2nd ed. (New York: Knopf, 1971).

17. Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).

18. Terry M. Moe, "Toward a Broader View of Interest Groups," *Journal of Politics* 43 (1981): 531–43, doi:10.2307/2130382.

a set of benefits to attract members play a key role.¹⁹ Walker (1983) casts light on the role that corporations, government agencies, foundations, or wealthy citizens can play in interest-group formation. For Walker, a key contributing factor for interest-group success is the availability of wealthy sponsors whose patronage helps groups thrive and survive.²⁰ Finally, Bosso (2005) finds that it aids nonprofit groups to adopt the methods of business.²¹

Another pertinent branch of the interest-group literature examines what interest groups *do* once established, but these authors focus on national and, more rarely, state politics. Local government has suffered from a dearth of research. Nownes (2006) offers one of the few accounts of local lobbying, examining land use and procurement, two hotly contested domains that have drawn limited attention.²² Nownes's work is relevant for two reasons: first, even as Nownes examines patterns of local interest-group activity, he finds that the topic remains understudied despite his best efforts; second, Nownes singles out procurement as the focus of a great deal of local lobbying, raising the possibility that a locality's decision to provide services through the public sector, private actors, or federal programs may enlist the interest and efforts of a wide variety of actors. My study contributes to this literature by examining the mechanics of advocacy in Chicago and the role of procurement in cementing a new status quo.

19. Robert H. Salisbury, "An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 13 (1969): 1–32, doi:10.2307/2110212.

20. Jack L. Walker, "The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America," *American Political Science Review* 77 (1983): 390–406, doi:10.2307/1958924.

21. Christopher J. Bosso, *Environment, Inc.: From Grassroots to Beltway*, Studies in Government and Public Policy (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005).

22. Anthony J. Nownes, *Total Lobbying: What Lobbyists Want (and How They Try to Get It)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Theories of Representation

An equally relevant strand of literature attempts to map the influence of interest groups on the workings of government and details the mechanisms of representation that shape policy. Lasswell (1936) inaugurated this line of inquiry, defining politics memorably as "Who gets what, when, and how?"²³ Lasswell answered this question by studying the attitudes and activities of political elites, and this line of inquiry dominated the field for over two decades. Mills's *The Power Elite* (1956), which focuses on a small cadre of American political, military, and commercial elites, may be the purest expression of this view.²⁴

Downs's *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957) represents a stark contrast. For Downs, governments are best understood as a constellation of strategic vote-seeking politicians, beholden to voters who maximize their own utility rationally.²⁵ Citizen influence can be measured primarily by the value of their vote—a strikingly egalitarian vision of representation.

Dahl (1961) fills the yawning gap between these views with a theory he calls "pluralism," according to which no single group dominates the actions of government. Instead, Dahl's observations in New Haven lead him to describe American society as a polyarchy—a political and social arrangement whereby policy outcomes result from competition between a broad constellation of groups, with elites and masses governing jointly.²⁶ Lindblom (1977) builds on this view, incorporating the outsize

23. Harold D. Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1936).

24. C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

25. Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1957).

26. Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

sway of corporate interests into Dahl's mapping of influential groups.²⁷ And Bachrach and Baratz (1962) take a broad view of the scope for pluralist competition, arguing that decisions to put issues on the agenda (or not) and to include certain interests in a debate (or not) represent highly consequential steps with policy impacts.²⁸

Finally, for Mayhew (1974), debates about policy, agendas, and inclusion or exclusion of particular interests can all be understood through the prism of elections. In *The Electoral Connection*, Mayhew describes officials as single-minded seekers of reelection.²⁹ This concern for reelection extends beyond Downs's sole focus on voters and encompasses the desires of a wide variety of groups whose actions can influence election outcomes, but in Mayhew's view constituent preferences remain the primary determinant of a legislator's actions. While the specific influences on reelection that Mayhew identifies in national politics are secondary to this study, his argument that reelection is not only *a driver* of decisions, but *the driver* of officials' decisions, is invaluable.

The literature on political representation offers diverging perspectives on the impact of citizens' preferences but agrees on one point: officials' *perception* of the political landscape—be it the preferences of elites, the views of their voters, or the stances and resources of groups with power to sway elections—matters. Yet this literature focuses primarily on dynamics of representation in the US Congress. Dahl is one of a handful of researchers to devote attention to the dynamics of representation in state or local politics. Stone (1989) examines the relationship between politicians, bureaucracies, and interest groups in Atlanta, drawing on

the findings of Lindblom and others to update Dahl's understanding of local politics.³⁰ Jones and Bachelor (1986) merge the influence of business interests with politicians' concern for reelection, framing local government as a mechanism by which political and business leaders balance these two sets of priorities.³¹ Oliver et al. (2012) challenge the transplantation of insights about national politics to a local context by detailing crucial differences between local and national elections. For Oliver et al., partisanship, ideology, and group appeals have limited importance in local contexts; instead, local leaders are judged by their performance and their connections to voters embedded deeply in a community.³² These studies are useful insofar as they clarify the relevance of insights drawn from national politics in a local context. But with the exception of Oliver et al., they still explain policy outcomes by reference to some objective external reality perceived by officials, which shapes the workings of government. Limited attention has been paid to the ways in which officials, interest groups, and voters construct reality, relying on an imperfect, subjective understanding of elections, interest groups, and policies as they seek to read and shape the political landscape.

With the benefit of half a century of scholarship, Dahl's view of local representation can be updated and expanded. My research focuses on the gap at the intersection of these lines of research. I begin by mapping the landscape of interest groups with a stake in mental health care provision in Chicago. I examine different actors' perceptions of this landscape to determine how local political actors interpreted representation. By understanding the ways in which these actors' subjective perceptions shape

27. Charles E. Lindblom, *Politics and Markets: The World's Political Economic Systems* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

28. Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, "The Two Faces of Power," *American Political Science Review* 56, no. 4 (1962): 947–52, doi:10.2307/1952796.

29. David R. Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974).

30. Clarence N. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946–1988* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989).

31. Bryan Jones and Lynn Bachelor, *The Sustaining Hand: Community Leadership and Corporate Power* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986).

32. Eric Oliver, Shan E. Ha, and Zachary Callen, *Local Elections and the Politics of Small-Scale Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

local outcomes, I aim to clarify scholars' understanding of similarities and differences in the workings of local and national politics.

Assessing the Subjective Dimension

Two recent works shape my approach in this study. *The Politics of Resentment* (2016), Cramer's examination of rural consciousness in Wisconsin, makes the case that political scientists have construed political self-interest too narrowly. In Cramer's view, scholars have focused on supposedly objective assessments centered on material circumstances, while ignoring voters' subjective construction of their social and political context.³³ Ewing's *Ghosts in the Schoolyard* (2018) examines school closings in Chicago and reveals that not only voters but also high-level activists, policymakers, and practitioners understand political phenomena in subjective and personal terms.³⁴ Together, these studies highlight a dimension of politics that quantitative or deductive studies cannot fully capture. I examine the role this subjectivity played in the clinic debate.

Methods

Local Context and Constraints

This study treats clinic closings in Chicago as a choice, rather than a product of natural trends. Some observers might point to long-term economic, demographic, and medical trends that made clinic consolidation attractive. These concerns likely influenced city leaders' decisions, but clinic closings were not self-implementing: they were a conscious budget choice and a break with existing policy. It seems reasonable to

33. Katherine J. Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

34. Eve L. Ewing, *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

discuss the city's 2012 budget as a deliberate result of political processes and to assess the impact of voters, activists, and Mayor Emanuel on aldermen's decisions.

Mayhew and other scholars have documented the constraints officials can face under certain conditions.³⁵ At the federal level, many votes can be predicted on the basis of a handful of factors: public opinion polling on an issue, the partisan lean of an electoral district, and sometimes the preferences of actors or institutions that can affect a legislator's odds of re-election.³⁶ Few of these constraints are present at the local level: opinion polling is scarce, issues are less obviously partisan, and voter preferences are more malleable. Political actors and interest groups in a local environment should enjoy greater influence, and officials may be persuaded to see a wider range of actions as beneficial. Thus, activists and city hall had room to shape aldermen's perceptions of their self-interest—and gain an edge by doing so.

A paucity of systematic, objective electoral and opinion data, which may limit the relevance of Mayhew's theories in local contexts, also makes it difficult for researchers to examine local politics through a quantitative lens. Qualitative methods are well suited to the complex, indirect, and nuanced task of reconstructing officials' decisions. For example, in the absence of data, local officials' reading of the political landscape tends to be more qualitative and impressionistic. Also, officials may hold private views that differ from their public statements, which require researchers to interpret their reasoning. Any study of their decisions must, therefore, incorporate qualitative, impressionistic factors. Accordingly, I conducted a qualitative analysis of the debate over clinic closings in Chicago. I began with the public statements and actions of the actors involved, supplemented this with contemporary accounts of different parties' actions behind the scenes, and drew on interviews with

35. Mayhew, *Congress*.

36. Ibid.

activists, advocates, elected officials, and senior political staff to validate conclusions drawn from contemporary data.

Contemporary statements, actions, and accounts of behind-the-scenes maneuvering offer a comprehensive portrait of different actors' strategies. Because these data are contemporaneous and from a mix of primary and secondary sources, they are unvarnished by hindsight or subsequent shifts in strategy. These data may offer the truest account of the battle over mental health funding in Chicago, to the extent that they allow us to draw conclusions about the strategies that different actors pursued.

Yet, a portrait based solely on contemporaneous data would be incomplete. Even the most talented reporter's best approximation of private deliberations and negotiations can never tell the full story. Accordingly, I supplement my analysis with interviews designed to capture the perspectives of activists, advocates, current and former elected officials, and senior political staff. These interviews lift the veil of secrecy around closed-door deliberations and negotiations, contextualize the public actions of key parties, and identify factors shaping different actors' subjective and personal interpretations of the political landscape. Interviews conducted years after the events in question, with subjects who may now wish to paint their actions in a different light, are necessarily an imperfect tool. They can provide a more complete picture, but hardly a neutral one. Accordingly, I use these interviews to contextualize, to supplement, and to validate conclusions drawn from other data, but do not treat any one interview as a definitive account.

Data Collection and Processing

My study focuses on the actions and perceptions of aldermen, activists, mayoral staff, and providers. I needed to explain aldermanic decisions and reasons for voting in 2011 to close the clinics. Activists represented the most politically active portion of these aldermen's constituencies; the

mayor's office was the driving force behind consolidation; and mental health providers' staff and advocacy professionals were in a position to speak to the interests of providers as well as their patients. While political deliberations can involve a wide variety of actors, the actions of these parties were especially pertinent and I focused my data collection on them. I considered two key variables particularly relevant to the decisions made by politicians and community activists and advocates. First, in the absence of widely available and reliable polling at the local level, I paid attention to the information channels and methods that aldermen used to gauge public opinion. Second, I explored how political actors sought to shape public opinion, looking for similarities and differences in approach, emphasis, and desired results.

My analysis of public statements and actions draws on a range of contemporaneous data. These include videos of public events by activists, aldermen, and the mayor's office; documents and communications materials produced by them; and press accounts of the clinic debate. I retrieved primary and secondary data from a range of publicly available sources. I collected mayoral communications and city agency reports from the City of Chicago website; council proceedings from the City Clerk of Chicago website; and online publications, videos, and posts from the websites and social media of activist groups. These groups included the Mental Health Movement (a coalition opposed to clinic closings) and Southside Together Organizing for Power (a general activist group heavily involved in the clinic fight). I also studied media accounts of mayoral activities, activist events, and political processes, drawing on neighborhood outlets (*South Side Weekly*, DNAInfo Chicago, Block Club Chicago), local periodicals (*Chicago Reader*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Chicago Tribune*), television coverage (CBS, NBC, and ABC), and national media (*New York Times*, *Governing*).

I supplemented this qualitative data with interviews. My interviews focused on the private and subjective aspects of actors' decisions. Two

advocacy professionals agreed to full and recorded interviews: Deb McCarrel, director of policy and government affairs for the Illinois Collaboration on Youth, and a former staffer for an official involved in mental health policy, who wished to remain anonymous. A group of seven interviewees allowed me to take notes but asked me not to record our meetings or use their names: they are three former candidates or elected officials, a former aldermanic staffer, a former legislative aide, a government relations professional familiar with mental health funding, and an employee of a nonprofit with city partnerships. To ensure interviewee confidentiality, I identify interviewees with generic titles (e.g., a longtime alderman) or other terms agreed on with a subject. Identifying information has been redacted from quotes or other data, where necessary. I worked with anonymized transcripts and notes, while retaining audio files for a limited time period in secure storage. These precautions protected subjects' privacy and allowed them to speak freely on sensitive topics.

Finally, I collected field notes during three public events to contextualize the impact of closings and to learn about residents' attitudes in Woodlawn, home to one shuttered clinic. These events were organized by Southside Together Organizing for Power (STOP), an aldermanic campaign, and the Obama Community Benefits Agreement coalition.

Data Analysis

As I compiled contemporaneous statements, materials, and press accounts and paired these materials with interview data, I noted interview comments relevant to my key variables: aldermen's approach in gauging public opinion and political actors' approach to shaping public opinion (see Appendix 1). I also noted themes that appeared in multiple respondents' comments and that might point to other relevant factors. My interview protocol included a question designed to allow snowball sampling, based on subjects' knowledge of other relevant actors (see Appendix 2). This allowed me to refine my target population over time,

to draw on the domain knowledge of experienced practitioners, and to investigate factors relevant to my research topic, but overlooked in my initial data collection.

Next, I conducted preliminary analyses of my data. First, I assessed the implications of my data to my key variables. Second, I identified additional variables of potential interest. In this second round of analysis, I examined the incentives each stakeholder faced and contextualized subjects' public actions. Finally, I drew on subjects' assessments of each other's goals and actions, gleaned from interview data, to shed light on interactions among key political actors.

This study is not without its limits. Idiosyncratic factors and individual personalities may well have shaped the debate about mental health in Chicago. Extraneous forces, such as the fiscal pressures of the Great Recession, certainly had an impact. Even a detailed review of primary and secondary sources, supplemented with interviews, cannot capture all viewpoints. Any study of recent and contested events forces the researcher to parse subjective and sometimes self-serving accounts. I sought to mitigate the impact of these factors by collecting a wide range of data from a wide array of sources, but future evidence will inevitably correct some particulars laid out below.

These limitations are real, and worth noting, but they are not fatal to this study's purpose. My goal is to adapt Mayhew's work on legislators' decision-making to a local context. I do not seek to have the last word on local politics, but to document and describe certain dynamics of local representation. I set out to collect perspectives from political actors, compare them to expectations based on current research, answer a few narrow questions, raise several broader ones, and place old debates on representation in a new context. I found the methods detailed here fit for that purpose. Where I raised new questions, evidence from Chicago alone cannot provide final answers, but it can provide a first look at these questions and offer some tentative evidence. I interpreted my data and

findings with an eye towards these broader goals. Readers may find it helpful to do the same.

Analysis

As I note above, I focused my analysis on two variables: (1) How did political actors and interest groups understand and interpret public opinion in the absence of reliable polling?; and (2) How did different actors aim to reshape the political landscape and advance their interests? Below, I propose answers and seek to explain why the debate over Chicago's mental health clinics unfolded as it did. Activists did their best to showcase opposition to clinic closings and budget cuts, and their framing superseded Emanuel's in public discourse. Although Emanuel relented on other budget cuts, clinic closings stayed in his budget, and the clinics shut down months later, despite protests.

In 2011, Emanuel was fresh off a decisive electoral win, and his claims to public support rang truer to aldermen than those of activists.³⁷ I argue that these and other structural advantages helped Emanuel sway aldermen to his view in 2011. These advantages would fade over time as activists continued their protests, attacked Emanuel's policies and honesty, and garnered press coverage supportive of their view. Once the city shut down several clinics, activists' path forward grew more daunting: not only did they have to amplify opposition to closings, they needed to generate enough public outrage to roll back enacted policy over Emanuel's veto. An occasional protest or friendly news column could not generate this kind of momentum. Despite public support for the clinics and lingering doubts about the closings among some local leaders, Emanuel's cuts remained in place and the clinics remained closed. A 2019 task force to

37. In a crowded field of six candidates, Emanuel received 55.3 percent of votes; his closest opponent received 23.9 percent. See "Rahm Emanuel," Ballotpedia, n.d., accessed January 27, 2022, ballotpedia.org/Rahm_Emanuel#cite_note-17.

reexamine closings went nowhere. Activists' efforts continue, but some old allies have moved on. If the clinics stay closed, I argue that the explanation lies in the first days of this battle, when the city council passed Emanuel's budget unanimously and he gained an advantage that activists could never fully overcome.

Early Successes for Emanuel

Why did Emanuel's views carry the day in 2011 while his opponents fell short? Why were aldermen willing to fight for library hours, free water for nonprofits, and graffiti removal, but not for mental health clinics? Emanuel's efforts to avoid discussing clinic closings, the circumstances and timing of his first budget, and the delay before the impact of the closings was felt proved crucial. These three factors bolstered Emanuel's case in 2011, but favored the activists' case in later years. Yet, even as activists' efforts gained momentum, they did not generate the pressure needed to push the city council to buck Emanuel or prod his successor, Lori Lightfoot, to reopen clinics. Proponents and opponents sought to frame the debate as each camp made its case to the council and the public. Their rhetorical choices in 2011 had lasting consequences, and I believe these choices help explain why the clinic fight unfolded as it did.

Emanuel faced an unenviable task: curtailing or eliminating an existing public program is far more difficult than blocking a new one. The political scientist, Robert Light, sums up the dilemma Emanuel faced: "Americans cannot live with government, but they cannot live without it. Government may be wasteful toward others, but not toward them."³⁸ Enacted programs create their own constituencies of beneficiaries, grow entrenched, and become increasingly difficult to reverse. Clinic closings and privatization produced a clear set of losers who had a strong incentive

38. Paul C. Light, "The Tides of Reform Revisited: Patterns in Making Government Work, 1945–2002," *Public Administration Review* 66, no. 1 (2006): 12, doi: 10.1111/j.1540-6210.2006.00551.x.

to resist Emanuel's proposal and to highlight its costs. Moreover, this debate took place in Chicago, an overwhelmingly Democratic city whose voters are generally sympathetic to more expansive government's services.

Light points to a potential solution to Emanuel's conundrum: "Asked whether government programs should be cut back ... approximately 55–65 percent of Americans consistently say they want programs maintained to one degree or another. Asked next whether the bigger problem is that government has the wrong priorities or that it has the right priorities but runs its programs inefficiently, approximately 55–65 percent of Americans consistently pick the latter response."³⁹ Emanuel did not challenge the need for mental health care or the importance of some public funding. Rather, Emanuel and his staff argued for reduced city spending on grounds of efficiency, framing clinic consolidation and privatization as enhancing patients' access to treatment: "While the 2011 clinic closures saved the city \$3 million, Emanuel said the move was primarily designed to expand the types of treatment available to residents and deliver those services more efficiently."⁴⁰ On the eve of the budget vote, the mayor's office stated that "the Administration is firmly committed to providing Chicago residents with the highest level of patient care across all of our programs, including mental health services. The budget proposal would allow the City to partner with community providers, delivering needed services at a lower cost while still maintaining a high level of care for uninsured patients and those most in need within their own neighborhoods and communities."⁴¹

39. *Ibid.*, 12.

40. Heather Cherone, "Demand for City-Funded Mental Health Clinics to Take Center Stage at City Hall—Again." Block Club Chicago, Dec. 11, 2019, blockclubchicago.org/2019/01/16/demand-for-city-funded-mental-health-clinics-to-take-center-stage-at-city-hall-again.

41. "Aldermen Weary of Mental Health Cuts," *NBC5 Chicago*, Nov. 15, 2011, www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/alderman-weary-of-mental-health-cuts/1898137.

Emanuel used similar language during his first budget address; while the address did mention cuts (ranging from police anti-terrorism efforts to garbage collection to traffic lights), far more often he discussed proposals "to combine similar functions" or "to extend healthy competition to ... essential city services" or "to realize those savings."⁴² The closest Emanuel came to backing cuts directly as a fiscal measure, rather than as a by-product of efficiency, was his response to the city council on the eve of a crucial budget vote: "I made the choices on that budget because I think they're the right thing to do for the city's future. ... We have to find those savings. That's the destination. If people have a different road to that destination, great."⁴³

Presidential scholars would find this approach familiar. For decades, presidents have claimed expansive powers on the basis that they alone answer to the entire nation and that they alone are in a position to act for the good of the nation, even if some interests suffer.⁴⁴ Emanuel framed the clinic closings, and his budget cuts more generally, in the same way: as a leader rising above the fray of individual neighborhoods or aldermen, unconcerned about particular losers of his cuts, and focused on the good of Chicago as a whole. Emanuel's framing sidestepped the most powerful arguments against clinic closings and complicated the work of activists who opposed consolidation. Rather than wage a battle against Republican austerity and appeal to the partisan sympathies of the average Chicagoan,

42. Rahm Emanuel, "Mayor Rahm Emanuel's Budget Address: Remarks as Prepared," Office of the Mayor, Oct. 12, 2011, www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/mayor/Press%20Room/Press%20Releases/2011/October/10.12.11BUDGETremarks.pdf.

43. Derrick Blakley, "28 Aldermen Sign Letter of Concern over City Budget Cuts," *CBS2 Chicago*, Nov. 2, 2011, chicago.cbslocal.com/2011/11/02/28-aldermen-sign-letter-of-concern-over-city-budget-cuts.

44. William Howell, "The Stewardship Theory of the Presidency," (lecture, PLSC 25215 "The American Presidency," University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, Jan. 7, 2019).

they had to challenge and undermine a Democrat's claims and credibility. Emanuel never made a direct case for reduced mental health services; he argued simply that his plan represented a more efficient way to provide services. This cast the closings as a question of technocratic management, which was territory well-suited to the expertise of Emanuel's staff and health department, but outside the purview of politicians and community activists. In other words, Emanuel found a way to wage a difficult fight on friendly ground.

A coalition of activists opposed to the closings resisted Emanuel's framing of the issue. Formed in 2009, when Mayor Richard M. Daley sought to close four South Side clinics, the coalition had successfully mobilized activists, providers, and clinic workers' unions. This time around they joined forces with others affected by budget cuts, such as library workers, police officers, firemen, 911 dispatchers, and the nascent Occupy movement.⁴⁵ Unlike Emanuel, they were not shy about labeling cuts as cuts. For activists, Emanuel's proposal was not a question of efficiency; privatization and consolidation meant closings, not savings. Over weeks of protests, activists echoed this framing. Take the chant at one raucous protest organized by STOP:

Protest organizer. When they say cutbacks, we say fight back!

Protest organizer. When they say cutbacks ...

Crowd. We say fight back!

Protest organizer. When they say cutbacks ...

Crowd. We say fight back!⁴⁶

45. Blakley, "28 Aldermen Sign Letter."

46. Southside Together Organizing for Power, "Privatization of Health Care Protest October 2011," video, Oct. 12, 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyHh5lyo-aE.

A speaker at the rally, Gail M. Davis, who identified herself as a patient at the Beverly/Morgan Park Clinic, repeated the message: "We are in an ongoing fight to preserve our vital services and programs, essential to everyone's quality and longevity of life. Mental, physical, and public health cannot and will not be privatized or divided. They are neighbors. They are interconnected, joined at the hip, and they cannot be separated from each other. You give millions in subsidies to big corporations, and nothing but cuts and privatization for our communities."⁴⁷ Vocally and consistently, activists used strong and unambiguous language to resist Emanuel's "consolidation" frame. They kept the debate focused on the expected impact of closings on the most vulnerable. In a scheduled speech at the Greater Grand Mental Health Center, Health Commissioner Bechara Choucair was greeted by a hostile crowd of clinic workers and activists; one attendee welcomed him: "They're closing six mental health clinics. People are going to die."⁴⁸ Choucair tried to quiet the crowd, failed, and eventually left.⁴⁹

At first, some in the city council appeared persuaded either by the protesters' arguments or by their numbers. In a letter to the mayor dated October 31 (days before a budget hearing), twenty-eight aldermen raised concerns about library, public health, and emergency services cuts.⁵⁰ The aldermen were unmoved by Emanuel's argument that his budget would not affect these services: "A 'degradation of service' may not be foreseen by some, but we are concerned this will have an immediate and negative

47. Ibid.

48. Southside Together Organizing for Power, "Rahm's Clinic Closer CHASED OUT of the South Side," video, Dec. 21, 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Phwj7beHP_o.

49. Ibid.

50. Ricardo Muñoz et al., Letter to Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Oct. 31, 2011, 1, files .ctctcdn.com/a88ea5d5101/cf28bfff-d3ab-4fa2-b28b-2602ced7cf7f.pdf.

effect.”⁵¹ In a city where the council is often the mayor’s rubber stamp, this sign of dissent did not go unnoticed. A reporter noted that the letter “almost feels like a rebellion. … Most of the City Council is standing up to Emanuel and saying, ‘not so fast’ when it comes to some of his proposed budget cuts.”⁵²

Faced with more resistance than expected in his first budget skirmish, Emanuel adjusted his strategy. Within days, Emanuel scaled back proposed cuts to libraries, graffiti removal, and free city water for churches and nonprofits—but not clinics.⁵³ These concessions were enough for the city council, the revolt was over before it began, and Emanuel’s budget passed unanimously.⁵⁴

Activists Frame the Closings; Emanuel Downplays Them

Emanuel’s mayoral bully pulpit and press office were powerful tools for shaping media coverage and public discourse. He had the power to elevate issues merely by engaging with them or to remain silent and refuse to amplify activists’ messaging. Addressing clinic closings directly in the announcement of his upcoming budget or to the media would draw attention to the issue; in retrospect, his efforts to avoid the subject in public seem wise. Activists, in turn, put pressure on the mayor through public protests and unannounced appearances at city hall that received considerable media coverage. They framed the closings in terms of the

51. Ibid.

52. Blakley, “28 Aldermen Sign Letter.”

53. “Emanuel Budget Changes,” Huffpost, Oct. 4, 2011, www.huffpost.com/entry/emanuel-budget-changes-wi_n_1076663.

54. Don Terry, “A Sit-In Fails to Save Clinics,” *New York Times*, Nov. 19, 2011, www.nytimes.com/2011/11/20/us/sit-in-fails-to-save-chicago-mental-health-clinics.html.

human costs that were missing from Emanuel’s dry call for efficiency. They also used Emanuel’s boast of transparency against him, arguing that his backroom budget deals were old-school machine politics dressed in a new corporate suit.⁵⁵ But as long as Rahm refused to serve as a foil, the reach of these tactics was limited.

In retrospect, it is remarkable how little Emanuel discussed clinic closings. In his October 12, 2011, budget address, Emanuel touched on savings large and small: \$82 million from the police and fire departments; \$20 million saved through a city employee wellness program; \$7 million saved by reducing library hours; \$3 million from collecting on tickets owed by city workers.⁵⁶ The words “mental health” or “clinic” are absent from the address and the accompanying press release.⁵⁷ The Department of Public Health’s “Healthy Chicago” plan acknowledged the closings in a roundabout way, noting that “public funding for mental health services has decreased significantly. Illinois has restricted eligibility for some mental health services. … *Media reports have indicated that staff are being cut and fewer services are now available, in the face of growing demand.*”⁵⁸ The most explicit reference to closings in any city hall publication from this period is a single paragraph buried on page seventy-five of the nearly two hundred-page budget overview.

55. David Moberg, “Life during Rahm Time: Is Emanuel’s Chicago the Future of Urban Politics?” *In These Times*, June 20, 2012, inthesetimes.com/article/life-during-rahm-time.

56. Mayor’s Press Office, “Mayor Rahm Emanuel Outlines 2012 Budget Proposal to Secure Chicago’s Future,” Oct. 12, 2011, www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/mayor/Press%20Room/Press%20Releases/2011/October/10.12.11BUDGET.pdf.

57. Ibid.; Emanuel, “Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s Budget Address.”

58. [Emphasis mine.] Chicago Department of Public Health, *Transforming the Health of Our City: Chicago Answers the Call* (Chicago: City of Chicago, 2011), 20, www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/CDPH/PublicHlthAgenda2011.pdf.

[The Chicago Department of Public Health] will also consolidate its 12 mental health clinics to six sites and partner with community providers to offer improved mental health services at a lower cost. The focus of these clinics will be offering care to the City's most vulnerable patients by maintaining services for the 990 current uninsured patients in a more cost-effective manner and support insured patients by finding other high-quality locations for their care. These changes will be effective as of July 2012, and the funding outlined on the following pages reflects the cost of operating the program through the first half of 2012.⁵⁹

Emanuel boasted of his transparency: "One of the first changes we made in this budget was the process we used in putting it together. This budget was not drawn up behind closed doors. We opened up the process and invited everyone in."⁶⁰ Yet his own public health department was left to rely on press accounts of the mayor's plans, and Emanuel's public announcements buried the closings below far less controversial items.

There are two possible reasons that Emanuel played down the clinic closings. Perhaps he considered the closings a minor tweak—a few changes of locations and providers—which offered modest savings with little impact on care. Yet Emanuel's budget does address other, less controversial cost cuttings, such as competitive bids for recycling collection and \$1.1 million in savings from retrofitted traffic lights.⁶¹ Clinic closings were a major change by comparison. Just two years after activist outcry forced Mayor Daley to withdraw a similar proposal, Emanuel would likely have

59. Rahm Emanuel, *2012 Budget Overview* (Chicago: City of Chicago, 2011), 75, www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/obm/supp_info/2012%20Budget/2012BudgetOverview.pdf.

60. Emanuel, "Mayor Rahm Emanuel's Budget Address."

61. *Ibid.* 3, 29.

been aware of closings' political ramifications.⁶² A second, more plausible explanation for Emanuel's silence is that the mayor anticipated resistance and tough media coverage. The mayor and his advisors may have reached a private assessment that any argument for clinic closings would face resistance and would raise the profile of the issue. Better to close the clinics, take some flak, and move on.

If Emanuel was silent on the clinic closings, what did he discuss instead? He opens his budget address by saying that "nearly five months ago, we joined together in Millennium Park to take the oath of office. The people of Chicago gave us a mandate for change. They recognized that the status quo was not working—either for them or for their city. The clear evidence was the broken city budget and its huge deficits. It's time to provide Chicagoans with an honest city budget—one that focuses on current needs while still investing in our future."⁶³ He framed his budget in terms of honesty, suggesting that spending cuts were natural and inevitable. The theme of honesty would reappear over the next month, which bears the mark of a coordinated message (see Appendix 3). The *Chicago Tribune*, the city's conservative newspaper, praised Emanuel for dealing "honestly with the city's financial situation rather than 'kicking the can down the road.'"⁶⁴ Joe Moore, alderman of the 49th Ward and a mayoral ally, declared: "It is an honest budget."⁶⁵ Perhaps the mayor's office framed spending cuts as natural and inevitable to place them outside the bounds of debate, which suggests that Emanuel

62. Steve Rhodes, "Mental Health Reprieve," *NBC5 Chicago*, Apr. 8, 2009, www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/daley-relents-on-closing-mental-health-clinics/1877853.

63. Emanuel, "Mayor Rahm Emanuel's Budget Address."

64. Hal Dardick and John Byrne, "Emanuel's Budget Unanimously Approved," *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 16, 2011, www.chicagotribune.com/politics/chi-emanuel-budget-expected-to-pass-easily-today-20111116-story.html.

65. *Ibid.*

expected resistance to his budget but hoped to limit the damage by keeping the profile of cuts low. A former aldermanic staffer concurs and describes honesty as a common frame for unpopular decisions.⁶⁶

If Emanuel and his administration expected dissent, the weeks that followed proved them right. Patients, activists, and providers fought hard to keep clinics on the agenda and in the public's mind. A motif of activists' messaging was to call attention to the mayor's reluctance to discuss closings or meet with activists and to attack Emanuel's honesty, transparency, claims of public support, and responsiveness to constituent concerns. Gail M. Davis said at a protest that

the Mental Health Movement has tried to talk to Rahm Emanuel since November of last year. Before he became Czar of Chicago. ... The problem is that we are [inaudible] to let him know what his constituents want. Because he has not been willing to meet with us. ... We do not need our clinics privatized, we do need health care, and we do need psychiatrists. ... We want you folks to know that you are being represented, and that your mayor knows what your needs are. So that he can no longer say, "I don't know, but I think this is what should happen." We are telling him what should happen. When we give over these 3,900 letters, we believe that Czar Emanuel will then consider and recognize what his people are telling him: no privatization of health care of any kind.⁶⁷

STOP's online presence echoed this language, highlighting the failure of the mayor and the health commissioner to meet with activists or listen

66. Former aldermanic staffer, interview with author, Mar. 15, 2020.

67. Southside Together Organizing for Power, "Privatization of Health Care Protest."

RECENT PRESS COVERAGE:
[Emanuel discusses health agenda but dodges protesters - CBS](#)
[Mayor dodges protesters asking questions about the city's mental health services - ChicagoNow](#)
[Protest the Threat of City Clinic Privatization - NewsTips](#)
[Commissioner fails to show at mental health town hall meeting - We the People](#)



Figure 2: STOP Press Coverage, 2011.

Southside Together Organizing for Power, "Home Page," n.d., accessed Feb. 2, 2020, web.archive.org/web/20110925104917/http://www.stopchicago.org.

to their demands. A sample of press coverage on STOP's website in late 2011 illustrates this pattern (see fig. 2).⁶⁸

Other advocates drew attention to Emanuel's low profile more directly. Che "Rhymefest" Smith, a Grammy-winning artist and 2011 aldermanic candidate, pointed to Emanuel's absence during a protest outside his office: "Don't think that Rahm Emanuel is not here right now, cause there's somebody right here telling him inside there that we out here, and we gon' demand justice. ... We are not drug addicts, we are not crazy, but we are sick, and we are your community, and we are voters, and we are your constituents, and you. Owe. Us. Rahm. Emanuel."⁶⁹ Eventually, a harried staffer emerged to speak with the protesters. It went poorly. The crowd

68. Southside Together Organizing for Power, "Home Page," n.d., accessed Feb. 2, 2020, web.archive.org/web/20110925104917/http://www.stopchicago.org.

69. Southside Together Organizing for Power, "Privatization of Health Care Protest."

chanted: “Who are you? Who are you? Who are you?”⁷⁰ When the staffer introduced himself as Andy Orellana, a mayoral press aide, the crowd voiced its displeasure with a call-and-response:

Who do we want?

Rahm!

Who do we want?

Rahm!

Who do we want?

Rahm!

We’ll be back!

We’ll be back!

We’ll be back!⁷¹

STOP repeated the same message in a video (see fig. 3).

Attacks on the transparency and honesty of Emanuel’s reforms continued in the years to come. He faced a contingent of Chicago protesters at a 2012 fundraiser for Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett in Wisconsin. Barred from entering the fundraiser, the protesters staged a demonstration outside. Against the backdrop of the venue’s brick façade, speakers assailed Emanuel’s reforms and his transparency, with one saying that the mayor “closed half our clinics [to save] two million dollars. … They are trying to privatize everything. … When you walk into a private clinic, … taking care of their bottom line, you think you gonna get care if you don’t have insurance?”⁷² Paul Napier of the Illinois Nurses Association added: “We

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid.

72. Michael McIntee, “Protest of Rahm Emanuel at Tom Barrett Fundraiser,” video, Mar. 30, 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEogS0UOxHI.

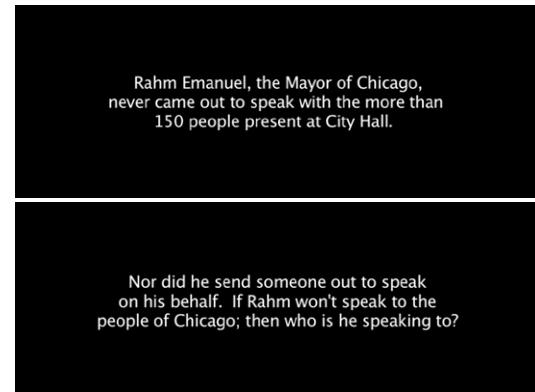


Figure 3: Video Stills, 2011. Southside Together Organizing for Power, “Privatization of Health Care Protest October 2011,” video, Oct. 12, 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyHh5lyo-aE.

cannot get public hearings to discuss the impacts of these closures and of these privatizations of our clinics.”⁷³

Activists again confronted Emanuel in 2015 at a campaign event in Wicker Park during a close runoff against County Commissioner Jesús “Chuy” García.⁷⁴ Debbie Delgado, a former patient at the Northwest Mental Health Clinic, raised protesters’ concerns:

I had two kids shot, okay. … I have been taking my youngest one to [the] mental health clinic in Logan Square. Three years ago, you closed our clinics down. My son was getting help. Now, they diagnose him with major depression, borderline disorder, ADHD, post-trauma, anxiety attacks, and everything else. And I [have] three questions to ask you: Do you and your family deal with mental

73. Ibid.

74. Hauser, “Rahm Confronted on Mental Health Clinic Closures.”

health? Two, what are you going to do in our community? (The last four years, you have showed us certain things, and I'm not proud of you, of what you did, as someone who lives in this neighborhood.) And the third question is, you talk so much about police stops, ... but you never talk about mental health. You spend so much money on commercials, but we only need \$3 million to save people's lives. ... I would like to know ... if you [are going] to open our clinics up, because we are dying out here.⁷⁵

The mayor's staff gave the activists a frosty reception. A security guard interjected: "This is absurd. This is not an open forum. We're going to have to have you removed. Would you please leave? (*Protester offers flyers to attendees.*) Would you please leave? Would you please leave? Please."⁷⁶

Emanuel launched into a response about the 606, a new park. Delgado cut him off:

Delgado. But my question is about us dying in the street.

Cameraman. The last time you didn't answer, somebody died.

Emanuel. You probably ... as you probably know, privacy matters as it relates to health care. You don't talk about anyone's individual health care coverage. You don't ... (*Delgado interrupts, both talk over each other.*)

Emanuel. ... actually, one of the first bills I worked on in Congress deals with medical privacy. So, you can't ask me about any member ... (*Delgado interrupts.*)

75. Southside Together Organizing for Power, "I Lost My Son, Why Did You Close My Mental Health Clinic?—The Real Rahm," video, Mar. 5, 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-QaoExhXK4.

76. Ibid.

Security guard. Ma'am, you need to let him speak. Otherwise, we're going to ask you to leave.

Emanuel. Second, I'm the person ... that helped pass the mental parity, so insurance companies could not cut you off.⁷⁷

Emanuel asked to speak with the protesters in private; they said later that their questions went unanswered.⁷⁸ Answers may not have been their goal: STOP had finally achieved a public confrontation with the mayor. The following day, STOP posted a video of the confrontation. It remains their most viewed clip.⁷⁹

Advocates' Framing Dominates the Conversation

In 2011, Emanuel and his staff were constrained. They couldn't match activists and protesters point for point, story for story, testimonial for testimonial. Doing so would elevate a fight Emanuel was unlikely to win in voters' minds. This made for a one-sided messaging battle. After Emanuel refused to engage with activists directly, they turned to the media, filling the void created by the mayor's silence with compelling stories.⁸⁰ Each story highlighted by STOP, the Mental Health Movement, and their allies offered stark and dramatic examples of the points activists were

77. Ibid.

78. Hauser, "Rahm Confronted on Mental Health Clinic Closures."

79. Southside Together Organizing for Power, "I Lost My Son."

80. Ironically, Emanuel's press secretary had endorsed the same approach a few months earlier: "It's all about storytelling. Never forget that telling stories is the best way to reach someone's head, and more importantly their heart. It's so impactful if you make people feel what others are feeling. I think that's success." See John Trybus, "Part 10: Tarrah Cooper and What Cause-Based Communicators Can Learn from City Hall," Center for Social Impact Communication, Georgetown University, n.d., accessed Feb. 6, 2020, csic.georgetown.edu/?post_type=people&p=1121.

trying to drive home. Emanuel's office largely held back, preferring to cede most points to activists rather than raise the profile of the closings. By and large, news coverage highlighted the activists' perspective and ended with only a brief response or formality from the mayor's office. Emanuel could talk about the technocratic efficiencies of clinic consolidation without providing health statistics on improved care, but activists could draw on personal narratives of treatments disrupted and cases gone wrong.⁸¹ Such stories appealed to voters' emotions and aversion to a loss of services, which no technocratic argument could defuse.

The risk of suicide stands out for its resonance at protests, at public meetings, and in the media. Take one patient's statement at a town hall: "In ninety-six, my son got killed. I tried to commit suicide but I went to Auburn/Gresham [Mental Health Clinic]. ... In 2005, they found me on the street. I had blood on my brain, I was in a coma. ... It took me six years to get to where I'm at today. So I know that mental health works."⁸² Another exchange between a protester and Health Commissioner Choucair captures the asymmetry between activists' messaging and city hall's responses:

Protester: I've been raped over two times. Didn't know where my family was, didn't know where nobody was, didn't have nobody around me.

Choucair: I would be happy to chat with you. Right now, we're in a staff meeting. ... This is a staff meeting.

81. Ben Joravsky, "Rahm Still Hasn't Told the Public Why He Closed Mental Health Clinics," *Chicago Reader*, July 29, 2014, www.chicagoreader.com/chicago-city-council-mental-health-clinics-closures-hearing/Content?oid=14436533.

82. Southside Together Organizing for Power, "Rahm's Clinic Closer CHASED OUT."

Protester: I tried to commit suicide, but you wanna walk out of here.⁸³

N'Dana Carter of the Mental Health Movement, a coalition of community groups opposed to the move, took her story to WGN's evening news, saying that treatment at a city clinic "took me off the chopping block of my desire to kill myself. A lot of things were happening, and my therapist helped me. She helped me walk through some of the problems I was having, and four years later I'm able to process things easier, work through my challenges."⁸⁴ A report by the Mental Health Movement underlined the "life or death" imperative and suicide prevention provided by local clinics (see fig. 4). The report hammered home the message that clinic closings would kill patients.⁸⁵ This message would remain a fixture of activists' messaging as they dogged Emmanuel during public confrontations. Activists followed Emanuel to a fundraiser in 2012 and spoke of a "life-and-death struggle" to save clinics, and they confronted Emanuel in 2015 at a public event to declare that patients were "dying in the street."⁸⁶ Stories like these were the centerpiece of forceful and emotional messaging, and activists made full use of their power.

83. Ibid.

84. Paul Lisnek, "Mental Health Movement on CLTV's Politics Tonight," video, Jan. 28, 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=GswipUeeYMs.

85. Mental Health Movement, *Dumping Responsibility: The Case Against Closing CDPH Mental Health Clinics* (Chicago: Mental Health Movement, Jan. 2012), 1–6, documents.pub/reader/full/dumping-responsibility-the-case-against-closing-cdpf-mental-health-dumping.

86. McIntee, "Protest of Rahm Emanuel"; Southside Together Organizing for Power, "I Lost My Son."

"Without the clinics some people will commit suicide. ... The clinics help me be a better parent because you cannot do anything without a stable mind."

Trina Carpenter,
patient, Beverly Morgan Park MHC



"For me, my therapist is a matter of life or death because I have no one and I am alone. I am lucky to have my therapist because he makes me think of things I can do."

Helen Morley,
patient, Beverly Morgan Park MHC



Figure 4: Statements by Trina Carpenter and Helen Morley, 2011. Mental Health Movement, *Dumping Responsibility: The Case Against Closing CDPH Mental Health Clinics* (Chicago: Mental Health Movement, Jan. 2012), 1, 4, documents .pub/reader/full/dumping-responsibility-the-case-against-closing-cdpf-mental-health-dumping.

Structural Factors Benefit Emanuel in 2011

Emanuel's decision to downplay the impact of closings reflected the structural advantages he enjoyed: his February electoral triumph, high approval ratings, and the coincidence of his proposed budget with ward remapping. Emanuel seemed to be leading a charmed political life in 2011, consolidating and cementing his power like the Daleys before him.⁸⁷ These advantages put the onus on activists to win aldermen over in a lopsided battle. Emanuel had the mayoral bully pulpit, an extensive staff, and vast connections to counter activists' lower public profile, bare-bones staff, and limited influence. Time was also on his side. Emanuel announced his proposed closings in the autumn, leaving activists only a few weeks to overcome the mayor's initial advantage. They did their best to convince aldermen that the mayor's budget would harm clinic patients. As N'Dana Carter of STOP told the *New York Times*: "This could absolutely follow them into the voting booth. ... [Aldermen] are paid to represent us, not the mayor."⁸⁸ Given the same resources and the same platform that Emanuel enjoyed, they might have stood a chance.

All the evidence before the aldermen pointed to a single conclusion: to get along, go along—and don't cross the mayor. Emanuel's 2011 victory (he carried forty of the city's fifty wards and won outright majorities in thirty-six) was a powerful signal of public support.⁸⁹ An August 2011 poll found that 70 percent of Chicagoans considered Emanuel honest, 72 percent felt he had the right priorities for the city, and 79 percent

87. Ben Joravsky, "All the King's Aldermen," *Chicago Reader*, Sept. 21, 2006, chicagoreader.com/news-politics/all-the-kings-aldermen.

88. Terry, "Sit-In Fails."

89. David Nir, "Map of Chicago Mayoral Election Results by Precinct," Daily Kos, Feb. 24, 2011, www.dailycos.com/stories/2011/2/24/948968/.

approved of his performance to date.⁹⁰ Activists predicted aldermen would pay a price for supporting Emmanuel's budget, but these predictions hinged on several uncertain factors: did voters hear the activists' message, did they care, and did clinics outweigh a host of other issues? Whether voters favored the mayor's cuts or simply lacked strong feelings on them was unknown (and was immaterial to Emanuel); they had backed him at the polls and their current support for him was real, not hypothetical.⁹¹ Emanuel took pains to emphasize the results of the mayoral election, which he referenced a minute into his first budget address: "The people of Chicago gave us a mandate for change."⁹² His closing did the same: "The cost of putting political choices ahead of practical solutions has become too expensive. It is destroying Chicago's finances and threatening the city's future. And, as tough as this budget is, it only addresses part of our deficit problem. ... It is up to us, as Chicago's elected leaders, to rise to this challenge. It's what the people of our city demand—and deserve."⁹³

Patients and activists claimed that the public was with them, but in the absence of polling and with limited time to gauge public sentiment, aldermen had to rely on the signs of public support at their disposal. Emanuel's ballot-box success and strong approval ratings were concepts the city council understood. Such concerns made aldermen reluctant to break with the mayor, and this was enough for Emanuel: he did not need the council to

90. Rich Miller, "Emanuel's Poll Shows He Has Huge Job Approval Rating," Capitol Fax, Aug. 23, 2011, capitolfax.com/2011/08/23/emanuels-poll-shows-he-has-huge-job-approval-rating.

91. Emanuel "didn't initiate a study or put together a task force" to justify closing 50 percent of the city's mental health clinics, which suggests that the mayor was confident of the council's rubber stamp. See Joravsky, "Rahm Still Hasn't Told the Public."

92. Emanuel, "Mayor Rahm Emanuel's Budget Address."

93. Ibid.

love his plan or to trust him. He just needed aldermen to stick by him and see closings through before activists could mobilize support and outrage. With limited evidence and little data to back up activists' claims to support, few on the city council were willing to bet against the mayor.

Emanuel held two other levers of power over the aldermen: ward remapping and his massive campaign war chest. The city council had to balance dissent against Emanuel's budget cuts with the prospect of mayoral retribution. The decennial census was a special concern for Black aldermen in wards that had lost population. As the *Chicago Reader*'s Ben Joravsky noted: "Aldermen tell me that there's a good chance that black wards will be lost on the Southwest Side, the Near South Side, and the West Side."⁹⁴ Joravsky connected the 2011 remapping to the feeble aldermanic response: "People who depend on public mental health clinics ... aren't exactly movers and shakers in this city. They didn't even get help from the usually outspoken members of the council's progressive caucus. That's because the clinic closings came as the mayor's allies were redrawing ward maps, and even the boldest of aldermen were cautious about taking on the mayor when he was literally shaping their futures."⁹⁵ The prospect of mayoral support or opposition for their reelection campaigns was also on aldermen's minds. Emanuel spent over \$12 million on his 2011 campaign, and would bring in more than \$30 million for his reelection bid.⁹⁶ The mayor's fundraising machine could fill his friends' coffers or back well-funded challenges to his foes.

94. Ben Joravsky, "Carving Time Approaches," *Chicago Reader*, Feb. 24, 2011, chicagoreader.com/news-politics/carving-time-approaches.

95. Joravsky, "Rahm Still Hasn't Told the Public."

96. Mark Guarino, "Rahm Emanuel: Will Big Bucks Decide the Chicago Election?" *Christian Science Monitor*, Jan. 28, 2011, www.csmonitor.com/USA/Elections/2011/0128/Rahm-Emanuel-Will-big-bucks-decide-the-Chicago-election; "Chicago Campaign Cash," *WBEZ91.5*, Feb. 16, 2016, interactive.wbez.org/campaigncash.

In public, Emanuel claimed a sweeping mandate and boasted of public support; behind the scenes, he enlisted allies on the city council to keep the clinic cuts off the agenda. The council's closest brush with the topic came on November 9, 2011, during the council's first meeting since Emanuel compromised on other budget cuts and its last before the 2012 budget was approved. Alderman Willie Cochran, whose 20th Ward was home to the Woodlawn Clinic (one of six slated for closure), tried to raise the issue: "I'd like to ask that we suspend the rules for the consideration to hear a resolution calling for public hearings concerning Chicago health clinics."⁹⁷ Carrie Austin, chair of the budget committee and an Emanuel ally, shut him down: "We don't have a copy of that. ... We need to refer that to committee, alderman. Can we? During the call of the wards? ... We'll raise it at that time, alderman? Okay, we'll get a copy and we'll raise it at that time. Thank you."⁹⁸

Austin's maneuver not only squashed Cochran's dissent, it prevented the council from holding public hearings. Deb McCarrel of the Illinois Collaboration on Youth says that "constituents drive legislators, because those are the people that vote for them."⁹⁹ One of the most effective ways for constituents to influence their aldermen is to tell their personal stories. Hearings would have offered a chance to place sympathetic patients before the council and news cameras and to mobilize public support. Instead, this tactic was foreclosed. A week later, on November 16, Emanuel's budget passed without any hearings or debate on the record over the clinics' fate.¹⁰⁰

97. Office of the City Clerk, "City Council Meeting," video, Nov. 9, 2011, chicago.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=70.

98. Ibid.

99. Deb McCarrel, interview with author, Apr. 3, 2020.

100. Dardick and Byrne, "Emanuel's Budget Unanimously Approved"; Joravsky, "Rahm Still Hasn't Told the Public."

In late 2011, Rahm Emanuel's claims to public support were backed by too much evidence to be easily dismissed. Activists' claims that voters wanted clinics to remain open were backed by too little evidence to sway the city council. The next few years would show that public support for the mayor was far from ironclad. But available evidence in 2011 was kind to Emanuel, and his opponents lacked the resources to undermine his real and perceived support. This task would take years; activists had weeks. Still, when the last votes were cast, activists were undeterred. "The fight continues," said N'Dana Carter, "We don't plan to go away."¹⁰¹

Activists Persist and Win Support

Patients, providers, activists, officials, community members, and leaders had protested—to no avail. The next mayoral election was four years away, and its outcome was far from certain. This gave Emanuel time to put the clinic closings behind him, but it also gave activists an opening. They had been forced to mobilize against budget cuts in a matter of weeks; now, it would take months to shut down the clinics slated for closure and years to resolve expected and unexpected difficulties created by the transition to private clinics. Emanuel's critics had time to regroup and moved to demonstrate that the public stood with them.

As the April closings drew nearer, protesters barricaded themselves inside clinics and mounted vigils by the doors. Dozens were arrested.¹⁰² Activists who were protesting a NATO summit joined Occupy leaders and mental health advocates outside the Woodlawn Clinic and in front

101. Terry, "Sit-In Fails."

102. "10 Arrested Outside Woodlawn Mental Health Clinic," *Chicago Tribune*, Apr. 24, 2012, www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2012-04-24-chi-arrests-made-outside-woodlawn-mental-health-clinic-20120423-story.html.



Figure 5: Aaron Cynic, “Protesters Stage Sit-In of Woodlawn Mental Health Clinic,” *Chicagoist*, Apr. 13, 2012, chicagoist.com/2012/04/13/protesters_stage_sit-in_of_woodlawn.php.

of Emanuel’s North Side home.¹⁰³ Closing plans moved ahead and protests continued, focused on the deadly impact of cuts (see fig. 5).¹⁰⁴ In response, Emanuel’s administration insisted that its clinic plan was rational and would improve service: “The Administration is committed to promoting the health and wellness of Chicagoans in every neighborhood. The Department of Public Health is implementing reforms that

103. Susanna Song, “Anti-NATO Protesters Join Movement to Reopen Mental Health Clinics,” *CBS2 Chicago*, May 8, 2012, chicago.cbslocal.com/2012/05/18/anti-nato-protesters-join-movement-to-reopen-mental-health-clinics/; “400 Protesters Head to Rahm’s House,” *NBC5 Chicago*, May 19, 2012, www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/mental-health-protest-heads-to-rahms-house/1957018.

104. Aaron Cynic, “Protesters Stage Sit-In of Woodlawn Mental Health Clinic,” *Chicagoist*, Apr. 13, 2012, chicagoist.com/2012/04/13/protesters_stage_sit-in_of_woodlawn.php.

will increase the total number of people who will be served by City resources throughout Chicago with high-quality, vital health and mental health services, and better support people without health insurance. Because of these reforms residents will have access to new services, more services, and better services.”¹⁰⁵

After the clinics closed, city hall’s work grew more challenging, as weak points in Chicago’s mental health services drew scrutiny. The number of patients using public clinics dropped from 2,798 in 2012 to 998 in 2014; only 366 went to the new private clinics, while 1,434 (51 percent) left the system entirely. Reporter Kari Lydersen said that “the drop in number of psychiatrists in the system has been precipitous.”¹⁰⁶ Other journalists drew parallels between Emanuel’s arguments for clinic closings in 2012 and his controversial 2013 plan to close schools on the South and West Sides, which generated massive resistance.¹⁰⁷

A major obstacle for activists in 2011–12 had been a lack of polling data to support their position. By 2015, a survey by Saint Anthony Hospital on the city’s West Side found that residents saw mental health treatment as the biggest health issue in their community.¹⁰⁸ A year later, residents demonstrated a willingness to back those poll responses with votes and money. The Coalition to Save Our Mental Health Centers joined forces with activists and clergy across the West Side on a ballot initiative that would increase property taxes to fund a new mental health

105. Song, “Anti-NATO Protesters Join Movement.”

106. Kari Lydersen, “Falling through the Cracks,” *Chicago Reporter*, Apr. 27, 2015, www.chicagoreporter.com/falling-through-the-cracks.

107. Joravsky, “Before the Schools.”

108. Arturo Carrillo and Caitlin L. O’Grady, “Residents List Mental Health Care as Top Need,” *Health Progress*, Jan.–Feb. 2018, www.chausa.org/publications/health-progress/article/january-february-2018/residents-list-mental-health-care-as-top-need.

center: 86 percent of voters backed the proposal.¹⁰⁹ Michael Snedeker, the coalition's head, seized on the results as evidence that Emanuel was out of touch: "Clearly, people in the community view mental health as a critical part of their community, and our government hasn't viewed it the same way. People have been able and have a hunger to restore their own mental health services."¹¹⁰ Jackie Ingram, a coalition organizer, said: "We are a neighborhood that's lost, and this referendum sent a message, that you have to listen to us, we have to be heard. We are willing to help ourselves get out of this hole."¹¹¹

Cook County leaders, freer than aldermen to speak their mind without mayoral reprisals, lent their status and support to arguments advanced by mental health activists. Tom Dart, the county's sheriff, noted that the county jail had become the country's largest mental health hospital. Reporter Mike Puccinelli said that Dart "wants you to be shocked by [a graphic video], because he says it proves there are people behind bars who should not be there. ... It's dangerous behavior that Sheriff Tom Dart says is common in a jail: 'This is every day. This isn't unique. ... The heart of it is that we are not a mental health facility. These people shouldn't be here.'"¹¹² Dart went on to blame lawmakers who cut programs for the rise in arrests of people with untreated mental illnesses.¹¹³ Dart repeated his criticisms in 2018, saying that the clinic

109. Paris Schultz, "West Side Residents Approve Higher Taxes for Mental Health," *WTTW Chicago Tonight*, Dec. 5, 2016, news.wttw.com/2016/12/05/west-side-residents-approve-higher-taxes-mental-health.

110. Ibid.

111. Ibid.

112. Mike Puccinelli, "Sheriff's Office Releases Shocking Video of Mentally Ill Inmates," *CBS2 Chicago*, Feb. 13, 2013, chicago.cbslocal.com/2013/02/13/sheriffs-office-releases-shocking-video-of-mentally-ill-inmates.

113. Ibid.

closures "absolutely did not help at all. ... Over the years, I've talked to numerous detainees, who personally told me it didn't help."¹¹⁴ Chuy Garcia, a Cook County commissioner, also criticized Emanuel's decision during the 2015 mayoral race: "The mental health clinics that were closed were another of the blunders of this administration and Mayor Emanuel. ... The pleas not to close them went unheard."¹¹⁵ Emanuel narrowly survived a runoff election against Garcia, and "many" respondents to a *New York Times* survey of Emanuel's mayorship "identified the closings as one of the reasons why they didn't vote for Mr. Emanuel" in 2015.¹¹⁶

Public Support Leads to Few Changes; Closings Become Entrenched

Once clinic closings took effect, reversing them became a more daunting challenge. Even as activists and the press produced hard evidence that the public was sympathetic to their position, Emanuel's changes to the mental health system had become entrenched as the new status quo.

At least two aldermen who had voiced concern about Emanuel's cuts in 2011 now criticized efforts to reopen or replace clinics.¹¹⁷ A reporter quoted Alderman Walter Burnett of the 27th Ward, who echoed the mayor's argument in his criticism of the West Side ballot initiative:

114. Kim Janssen, "Emanuel's Mental Health Clinic Closures Curiously Absent from Kennedy Forum," *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 16, 2018, www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-met-rahm-mental-health-0117-chicago-inc-20180116-story.html.

115. Rachel White, "Chuy Garcia 'Committed' to Reopen Public Mental Health Clinics (Chicago)," video, Mar. 5, 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=g60bYrJzoB0.

116. "Chicago under Rahm Emanuel: Readers Respond," *New York Times*, Mar. 3, 2015, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/03/03/us/chicago-under-rahm-emanuel-readers-respond.html.

117. Muñoz et al., Letter to Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

But not every stakeholder believes that building a brand new facility is in the best interest of taxpayers. One West Side alderman says he'd rather see residents utilize services that already exist on the West Side, including the Bobby Wright Center on Kedzie Avenue and Madison Street. "We do have some facilities on the West Side like Bobby Wright that do offer mental health help, a lot of people don't take advantage of it. ... Some of those organizations that are already in place need more funding."¹¹⁸

Burnett was joined by Alderman Willie Cochran of the 20th Ward. Cochran had tried to put clinics on the city council agenda in 2011, but he was hostile to an effort STOP called the Healing Village in 2018, which was "an imaginative place-based organizing venue at 61st Street and Greenwood Avenue in Woodlawn" that offered art therapy, a garden, and gathering spaces for survivors of gun violence.¹¹⁹ Amika Tendaji of STOP said that the Healing Village's goal was to "challenge what mental health could be, looking at community building as an aspect of healing." Cochran "told the activists to move, so they packed up the structures and set up at 61st and Greenwood instead. ... After organizers moved, Cochran drove by to tell them in person that he still did not like the space they had built. Cochran ... put a cease-construction order on the lot and told organizers that a bulldozer would be coming." STOP held activities through the summer of 2018, but the Healing Village closed that fall.

Opposition from providers also faltered as Emanuel's reforms produced their own constituencies, such as the nonprofit providers who

118. Schultz, "West Side Residents Approve Higher Taxes."

119. All quotes in this paragraph are from Dani Adams, "Democratizing Mental Health," *Chicago South Side Weekly*, Feb. 4, 2020, southsideweekly.com/mental-health-advocates-put-public-services-back-on-table.

promised "that they stood ready to serve more patients."¹²⁰ Private providers opposed any effort to roll back Emanuel's changes; they had expanded, held city contracts, and stood to lose funding and patients if public clinics reopened.¹²¹ In 2019, they argued their case in a *Chicago Sun-Times* op-ed that mirrored Emanuel's arguments years earlier: "Mayor-elect Lori Lightfoot ran for office on a pledge to improve mental health care in Chicago. The goal is laudable and critical. The question is how to achieve it. During the mayoral campaign, candidates were asked repeatedly whether they supported reopening six city-run mental health clinics that were closed in 2012, as if that were self-evidently the best way to improve care. This, in our opinion, is the wrong question."¹²²

Evidence continues to demonstrate that public opinion was on the side of activists. A 2019 poll found that 69 percent of Chicagoans "would be willing to pay higher taxes to get quality mental health services across the city."¹²³ Yet this public support has produced little policy change. The city council created a task force in 2019 to examine the possibility of reopening mental health clinics, with forty-eight aldermen voting in favor of the resolution.¹²⁴ Advocates characterized the task force as an

120. Curtis Black, "It's Time to Reopen Chicago's Closed Mental Health Clinics," *Chicago Reporter*, May 9, 2019, www.chicagoreporter.com/its-time-to-reopen-chicagos-closed-mental-health-clinics.

121. Joel Johnson and Sheryl Potts, "Why Lori Lightfoot Should Not Reopen Six Mental Health Clinics," *Chicago Sun-Times*, Apr. 29, 2019, chicago.suntimes.com/2019/4/29/18619801/why-lori-lightfoot-should-not-reopen-six-mental-health-clinics.

122. Ibid.

123. Normington, Petts & Associates, "Mayoral Runoff Election Poll," *WTTW Chicago*, Mar. 18–20, 2019, news.wttw.com/elections/voters-guide/2019/mayoral-runoff-election-poll.

124. Daley, "What Happened to the Mental Health Task Force?"; Office of the City Clerk, "R2018-1398 Resolution," Jan. 23, 2019, chicago.legistar.com.

exercise in public relations. Judy King, one of several community representatives on the task force, recalled that “as a body, the task force didn’t accomplish anything. … The individuals initially invited to the task force … met as a group once on May 16, 2019. The public was excluded. Two of us objected. It was the only meeting.”¹²⁵ King added that a final public meeting in June “was not an official hearing of the task force. We never voted on it.”¹²⁶ Leticia Villarreal Sosa, a professor of social work who moderated the June meeting, drafted a report based on testimony from participants.¹²⁷ She admits that “unfortunately, as far as I know at this point, the [Chicago Department of Public Health] has not used … the report to inform any of their decisions.”¹²⁸ Villarreal Sosa gave aldermen copies of the report, but to date it has not generated any policy changes.¹²⁹ Allison Arwady, the city’s newly appointed commissioner of public health, promised to revive the task force in 2020.¹³⁰ Those plans were halted by the COVID-19 pandemic.¹³¹

125. Ibid.

126. Ibid.

127. Leticia Villarreal Sosa, *June 13, 2019 Public Hearing on the Public Mental Health Service Expansion Resolution: Results and Recommendations. Final Report* (Chicago: Public Mental Health Clinic Service Expansion Task Force, Sept. 2019), 4ca87a51-067b-4891-87b6-3e8f9d9cdffa.filesusr.com/ugd/a93a18_5b9b7c56a82e4b03b22ddfaed030ed70.pdf.

128. Daley, “What Happened to the Mental Health Task Force?”

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid.

131. Kim Brooks, “Allison Arwady Has a Plan,” *Chicago Magazine*, Mar. 16, 2021, www.chicagomag.com/chicago-magazine/april-2021/allison-arwady-has-a-plan.

Conclusions and Implications

The terms of debates over Chicago’s public mental health clinics have shifted since 2011. In 2011, Rahm Emanuel, using all the power and prestige of his office, claimed a mandate from his recent election and asked the city council to trust that voters would accept clinic closings. Emanuel framed budget cuts as a matter of efficiency, took pains to avoid high-profile confrontations, and sought to carry out his proposed changes as swiftly as possible. While the mayor had the ability to raise the issue’s profile overnight and declined to do so on tactical grounds, activists felt they had a winning case but could not generate the level of attention they needed. Their message was persuasive, but they lacked the means to bring it before the public and had few ways to convince aldermen that voters backed their view. This mismatch in power and resources reduced the clinic battle to a series of minor skirmishes with time on the mayor’s side. Activists scored minor wins every day but couldn’t stop the train that Emanuel had set in motion. In 2012, six of the city’s twelve public clinics closed.

Once clinics were shuttered, activists faced a tougher challenge. They had more time to make their case and to generate evidence that the public stood with them, but reversing standing policy was a heavier lift and some former allies began to move on. It is too early to say that activists failed. They’re still fighting, and future elections may change their fortunes. But in the past decade, activists have encountered new obstacles and the new status quo may be difficult to change. The future of Chicago’s defunct clinics may be out of activists’ hands.

Some lessons can be drawn from Chicago’s experience and applied to local politics in other settings. First, there is reason to believe that local officials enjoy heightened “mandate” effects. Just as presidents point to election victories as evidence of support for their policies, Emanuel cast

his 2011 victory as the public's endorsement of changes in his budget.¹³² Emanuel's success suggests that local officials can invoke mandates with the same effectiveness as federal officials. If anything, mandates may work better locally than nationally: presidential mandate claims can be evaluated critically in the polling-rich environment of federal politics, while election results are one of the few data points available to gauge public opinion at the local level. Thus, local political actors may be more likely to put stock in electoral mandates than federal legislators.

A second, related insight is that local officials may suffer from a lack of personnel and institutional expertise. Professional opposition parties and interest groups exist at the state or national level to oppose presidential or gubernatorial agendas. These actors supply legislators with information and expertise above and beyond their staff's capacity. Legislatures in Washington, and in some state capitols, also have access to independent research offices. Legislators in need of policy expertise have no shortage of options. Such external support is rarer at the local level, and policy expertise tends to be housed in city agencies. These agencies, in turn, answer to local executives above all. Legislators seeking independent analysis may find their options may find few options. Thus, local legislators with limited personnel and little access to independent analysis may give mayors more latitude and place more stock in the judgments of city agencies than their state or federal counterparts. Legislators who wish to assert their independence from a local executive could benefit from independent sources of policy expertise and reliable methods to gauge public sentiment. Given the funding constraints that local governments face and the limitations of existing public input processes, these are challenging problems in a local context.

Finally, these findings point to several avenues of inquiry that may yield useful answers. Additional studies are needed to shed light on

similarities and differences between the public and private advocacy process, on the ways in which political actors interpret each other's actions, and on the conditions under which mayors can be forced to reverse policies. Further research that supplements my analysis with newly available data may provide more detailed answers to the questions raised in this work or raise new ones. As subsequent examinations complement, supplement, and correct the rough draft of history laid out in this thesis, Chicagoans may finally have a complete account of the months that saw their clinics shuttered for good. ○

132. Julia R. Azari, "Institutional Change and the Presidential Mandate," *Social Science History* 37, no. 4 (2013): 484, www.jstor.org/stable/24573940.

Appendix 1: Overview of Data Sources used in Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

City Council Actions and Proceedings

SOURCES	ASPECTS OF INTEREST
• Recordings (city clerk website)	• Budget hearings
• Aldermanic communications (ward websites)	• Aldermen's reactions to and framing of mayoral actions

Mayoral Messaging and Framing

SOURCES	ASPECTS OF INTEREST
• Annual budget address video/transcripts (city and city clerk websites)	• Themes/framing, key quotes, audience/council reactions
• Mayoral events (<i>Tribune</i> , <i>Sun-Times</i> , CBS, NBC, ABC videos)	• Themes/framing, quotes, audience reactions/interaction
• Mayoral press releases/other press communications (city website)	• Themes/framing, quotes, links to subsequent press coverage
• Public health departmental reports (city website)	• Framing/presentation of clinics in context of agency work

Activist Messaging

SOURCES	ASPECTS OF INTEREST
• Groups' websites (Internet Archive and social media presence)	• Themes/framing, visuals, highlighted press coverage, reaction to official decisions
• Video of demonstrations (STOP YouTube account)	• Points of emphasis at activist-driven event; interactions with city officials
• Mental Health Movement publications (websites/Internet Archive)	• Themes/framing, patient-centered messaging
• Community/activist group events (attended in person)	• Notes on recent messaging patterns/trends
• Activist media availabilities (CBS, NBC, ABC websites and social media)	• Activists' major themes, narratives, and messaging frameworks

Contemporary Accounts of Political Processes

SOURCES	ASPECTS OF INTEREST
• Keyword searches of <i>Tribune</i> , <i>Sun-Times</i> , CBS, NBC, ABC websites; searches of press archives, including local weeklies and national outlets	• Context, interpretation, links between different actors' actions/framing, facts checking, reporting independent of groups' messaging, etc.

Subjective Interpretation of Key Actors' Actions and Messaging

SOURCES	ASPECTS OF INTEREST
• Interviews with staff and elected officials	• Recordings/transcripts of themes, interpretation, and quotes; notes/informal conversations of themes and interpretation, but not quotes

Appendix 2: Interview Protocol¹³³

- ❑ What was your position in 2011?
- ❑ What did your day-to-day work look like?
- ❑ What did your interactions with [the Chicago City Council, Mayor Emanuel, Mayor Emanuel's staff, activists, or advocacy/interest groups] look like?
- ❑ What about interactions with the general public?
- ❑ [For city council members] What factors do you consider when deciding how to vote on an issue?
- ❑ How [do or did] you go about figuring out how the public [in your ward or in the city] [feels or felt] about different issues?
- ❑ What's the role of people outside your office/organization in that process?
- ❑ [For city council members] What are some situations where you might vote in a way that doesn't align with your constituents' preferences?
- ❑ Before 2011, what kind of experience did you have with mental health policy?

133. My BA thesis research was approved by a University of Chicago Institutional Review Board under the study title, "Shaping the Electoral Connection: Understanding and Mediating Chicagoans' Preferences on Mental Health Clinic Closings" (IRB19-1865). The board approved these general interview questions and the possibility that I might ask follow-up questions in response to subjects' answers. The principal investigator was Sorcha Brophy, who was then an assistant instructional professor at the university's Harris School of Public Policy. I have omitted the IRB consent protocol and contact information that I shared with the subjects.

- ❑ What was your first reaction to Mayor Emanuel's plan?
- ❑ What sort of reaction did you see from the public [in your ward or in the city]?
- ❑ Behind the scenes, what were you seeing and hearing from [the city council, Mayor Emanuel, Mayor Emanuel's staff, activists, or advocacy/interest groups]?
- ❑ How did you go about deciding how to [respond or vote]?
- ❑ How did you go about explaining that decision to [subject's constituency]?
- ❑ What did you see other groups doing to change the public's thinking?
- ❑ At one point, groups opposed to the closings said they'd found twenty-eight aldermen willing to vote against them. How did the closings end up getting approved?
- ❑ The outcome was mostly in line with what Mayor Emanuel had proposed months ago. Why do you think this debate turned out so well for him?
- ❑ How did the public react at first to six clinics closing in 2012 and another closing in 2013? Did you see that change over time?
- ❑ Did your own thinking about the clinic closings change with time? Why?
- ❑ What did you or the people you worked with do to shape the public's reaction and thinking about this issue?
- ❑ What did you see other groups doing to shape the public's thinking?
- ❑ What did these dynamics look like with the 2015 mayoral election coming up?
- ❑ What sorts of changes did you see after Mayor Emanuel's reelection?
- ❑ Did you see any changes in the public's thinking during Emanuel's second term? Why do you think that was?

- ❑ What about the city council's thinking? Why do you think that was?
- ❑ What were groups outside the city council doing to shape how this played out?
- ❑ What do you think were the biggest factors in the city council's decision in 2019 to reexamine the clinic closings?
- ❑ How do people you talk to view the closings now?
- ❑ Did the change from Mayor Emanuel to Mayor Lightfoot have an impact?
- ❑ What do your interactions with [the city council, Mayor Lightfoot, Mayor Lightfoot's staff, activists, or advocacy/interest groups] look like these days?
- ❑ [If relevant] How are you approaching this new debate about mental health funding? Has your approach changed since 2011?
- ❑ As this new debate about the mental health clinics gets underway, what are you most excited about?

Appendix 3: Mentions of Honesty in Connection with Rahm Emanuel's First Budget

Favorable Mentions

Calls 2012 budget honest (city council address)	2011	Rahm Emanuel
Calls the budget honest (newspaper quote)	2011	Alderman Joe Moore (mayoral ally)
Report on the city council vote	2011	<i>Chicago Tribune</i> (the city's conservative newspaper)
Honesty as a framing device for unpopular decisions (interview)	2020, recalling 2011	Former aldermanic staffer

Unfavorable Mentions

Protests during budget fight (video)	2011	STOP
Website	2011	STOP
Protest at a Milwaukee fundraiser (video)	2012	Michael McIntee, activist, posting on behalf of a coalition of activist groups
Protest at a Chicago fundraiser (video)	2015	STOP video

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Taking the Skeletons out of the Closet



Contested Authority and Human Remains Displays in the Anthropology Museum

IRIS ROOS JACOBS, AB'20

Introduction

Museums exhibit what society deems worth seeing and worth preserving at a specific period in time. They reflect societal biases, political influences, and shifting cultural authority. A museum's authority is especially important when it displays human remains.¹ These displays in anthropological collections pose contentious issues around who can claim ownership of bodies and who writes the narratives about those bodies. Claimants in this debate include descendants of displayed individuals, scientists who generate knowledge on behalf of humanity, museums as stewards of cultural heritage, owners of land or nation-states in which these bodies were found, and lawmakers with the authority to broker compromise between claimants. Past narratives have upheld colonial, pseudoscientific, and scientific ideas; only in the last sixty years have indigenous ideas and repatriation claims written by indigenous people entered the narrative.

1. *Human remains* are the bodies of deceased individuals, regardless of the state of decomposition of those bodies.

Zeresenay Alemseged holds the 3.3 million-year-old remains of an *A. afarensis* infant.

The history of displaying human remains is long, multifaceted, and often contentious, particularly in anthropology. While many groups, from the Chinchorro people of South America to medieval Christians, displayed the bodies of their dead as religious iconography, the secular practice of bodily display gained momentum in Western science from the late nineteenth century to the present.² In Europe, and later North America, professional and amateur collectors amassed human remains from around the world, which were increasingly organized in museums.³ The display of the human body in anthropology collections was integral to the construction and promotion of ideas about race, ancestry, and human prehistory, and although these displays have shifted in response to ethical, political, cultural, and historical debates in the twentieth century, fascination with human remains continues to draw visitors to museums.⁴

The Field Museum of Natural History is an illuminating case study in the history of human-remains display due to its centrality as an institution in Chicago's cultural formation, its cultural status as a state-of-the-art museum, and its ambitions to global scholarship. Historians of American cultural patronage in the Gilded Age highlight how civic leaders, like Marshall Field, promoted stewardship as well as social control through Chicago institutions in a more explicit manner than

2. Samuel Redman, "Reconsidering *Body Worlds*: Why Do We Still Flock to Exhibits of Dead Human Beings?" Conversation, Apr. 8, 2016, theconversation.com/reconsidering-body-worlds-why-do-we-still-flock-to-exhibits-of-dead-human-beings-57024.

3. Frank Howarth, "Trends and Influences on Museum Anthropology and the Study of Indigenous Peoples," ICOM, Aug. 6, 2018, icom.museum/en/news/trends-and-influences-on-museum-anthropology-and-the-study-of-indigenous-peoples; Samuel J. Redman, *Bone Rooms: From Scientific Racism to Human Prehistory in Museums* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

4. Samuel Redman, video conference with the author, Jan. 8, 2020; Redman, "Reconsidering *Body Worlds*," Conversation.

did social elites in cities like Boston or New York.⁵ Smaller museums that display human remains, such as the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard or the Penn Museum in Philadelphia, may have a more specific anthropological focus, yet they lack the scope and public recognition of the Field Museum.⁶ The Smithsonian Institution, the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and the British Museum may reach a greater number of visitors with grander national aims, but the Field Museum, like other large natural history museums, established its objective to spread the "lattice of ... research, collections, and anthropological scholarship across space and through time to the far corners of the planet," according to a centennial curatorial anthology on the museum's past and future.⁷ At the same time, it "has been deeply intwined with the history of Chicago."⁸ Through interviews with various claimants, this thesis traces anthropological displays of the human body at the Field Museum of Natural History, starting from the World's Fair of 1893 to repatriations in the twentieth century and current exhibits.

The anthropologist Franz Boas and the showman P. T. Barnum both conceived of separate anthropological spectacles of bodies and human

5. Clarke A. Chambers, review of *Noblesse Oblige: Charity and Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago, 1849–1929*, by Kathleen D. McCarthy, *American Historical Review* 88, no. 2 (Apr. 1983): 483–84, doi.org/10.1086/ahr/88.2.483.

6. "Highlights of the Collection," Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University, accessed Apr. 10, 2020, www.peabody.harvard.edu/node/473.

7. "The Most Visited Museums in the World," Museums.EU, accessed Apr. 10, 2020, museums.eu/highlight/details/105664; John W. McCarter, Chambers, forward to "Curators, Collections, and Contexts: Anthropology at the Field Museum, 1893–2002," ed. Stephen E. Nash and Gary M. Feinman, special issue, *Fieldiana*, no. 36 (Sept. 2003): 1, www.jstor.org/stable/29782663.

8. Ibid.

specimens at the 1893 World's Fair.⁹ In the years leading up to the fair, Frederic Ward Putnam, a curator at the Peabody Museum at Harvard, worked with Boas to amass objects and bodies (up to one hundred collections for display), which was one of the most significant cultural events in the development of American anthropology museums.¹⁰ As well, “commercial enterprises combined with fair organizers in attempts to bring indigenous people to the fair as living exhibits” on the Midway fairgrounds outside the fair’s main exhibition buildings, where they reconstructed traditional villages, wore traditional dress, and were sometimes accompanied by human skeletal remains and mummies.¹¹ The exhibits introduced an unprecedented number of the public to the emerging fields of physical anthropology and archaeology.¹² At the same time, these displays of both living and deceased bodies portrayed indigenous people as “savage and primitive natives,” which reinforced nineteenth-century racial hierarchies as a scientifically “classifiable and seemingly static lens for fairgoers to interpret humanity.”¹³

Following the fair, the state of Illinois chartered a new natural history museum, the Columbian Museum of Chicago, to house the fair’s artifacts, and local business magnate Marshall Fields donated \$1 million

9. “P. T. Barnum’s ‘What the Fair Should Be,’” World’s Fair Chicago 1893, Dec. 31, 2017, worldsfairchicago1893.com/2017/12/31/p-t-barnums-what-the-fair-should-be; Susan Hegeman, “Franz Boas and Professional Anthropology: On Mapping the Borders of the ‘Modern,’” *Victorian Studies* 41, no. 3 (Spring 1998): 455–83, www.jstor.org/stable/3829344.

10. Redman, *Bone Rooms*, 44–45.

11. Ibid.

12. At the height of the fair, attendance reached 713,646, which was “peerless in history.” Many of these visitors would have also visited the ethnographic villages on the Midway. “Record Columbian Expo Attendance Previous Day,” *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 10, 1893.

13. Redman, *Bone Rooms*, 45.

towards the endeavor, which was renamed the Field Columbian Museum in his honor.¹⁴ The *Chicago Times* lauded the new museum’s opening on June 2, 1894, for being “like a memory of the fair.”¹⁵ Franz Boas, “America’s most influential anthropologist,” was again the curator of the anthropology collection.¹⁶ The museum’s collection continued to grow, surpassing the available space in the fair’s original home in the Palace of Fine Art, and the museum moved in 1921 to its current location in Grant Park.¹⁷ Today, the museum’s anthropology department holds over 1.5 million artifacts and employs more than 150 researchers who conduct research expeditions worldwide, conveying their findings through publications, exhibitions, and public programs.¹⁸ Surpassed only by the Smithsonian and possibly the American Museum of Natural History in

14. “Field Museum History,” Field Museum, accessed Feb. 25, 2020, www.fieldmuseum.org/about/history. The museum became the Field Museum of Natural History in 1905, the Chicago Natural History Museum in 1943, and reverted to the Field Museum of Natural History in 1966. See Ed Yastrow and Stephen E. Nash, “Henry Field, Collections, and Exhibit Development, 1926–1941,” in “Curators, Collections, and Contexts: Anthropology at the Field Museum, 1893–2002,” ed. Stephen E. Nash and Gary M. Feinman, special issue, *Fieldiana*, no. 36 (Sept. 2003): 127–38, www.jstor.org/stable/29782675.

15. Cited in Steven Conn, “Field Museum,” in *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. James R. Grossman, Ann Durkin Keating, and Janice L. Reiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 292–93, www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/450.html.

16. “The new museum divided natural history into four categories: botany, zoology, geology, and anthropology. This last category represented a new science, and it constituted some of the most extensive and attention-grabbing displays.” Ibid.

17. The Palace of Fine Arts now houses the Museum of Science and Industry. Ibid.

18. “Research & Collections,” Field Museum, accessed Feb. 25, 2020, www.fieldmuseum.org/science/research.

New York in “size, influence, and prestige,” the Field Museum is an important producer of narratives about museum anthropology for professionals and the public.¹⁹

The Field Museum has long been a site of contestation and conversation about the historical and scientific narratives that underpin displays of human remains. As demonstrated by its centennial publication, the museum has recently begun to reflect on its place in anthropological study, in response to these debates and to the shifting role of the museum in society.²⁰ For these reasons, the Field Museum is an excellent location to examine perspectives of different stakeholders in human-remains display, such as curators, repatriation specialists, exhibitions managers, indigenous activists, and the viewing public. I interviewed nine subjects with current or past connections with the Field Museum or connected to human-remains repatriation or research (see Appendix). I also integrate perspectives from historical and modern newspapers, congressional testimony, legal documents, sociological commentators, and metanarratives produced by the Field Museum. Sources not related directly to the Field Museum contextualize and situate the museum within the global history of human-remains display or present narratives and perspectives surrounding debates that affect the museum.²¹

19. Conn, “Field Museum.”

20. Stephen E. Nash and Gary M. Feinman, “Introduction: A Glorious Foundation: 109 Years of Anthropology at the Field Museum of Natural History,” in “Curators, Collections, and Contexts: Anthropology at the Field Museum, 1893–2002,” ed. Stephen E. Nash and Gary M. Feinman, special issue, *Fieldiana*, no. 36 (Sept. 2003): 7, www.jstor.org/stable/29782664.

21. Field Museum archival documents related to exhibits of human remains are not inventoried and would take “several years” to review, according to the archivist. Documents related to ethnographic exhibits at the 1893 World’s Fair are either located in other institutions or did not survive the 1920 move from the museum’s previous location at the Palace of Fine Arts to its current location in Grant Park. Thus, the research presented here is far from exhaustive;

The first section on transcultural ethics demonstrates that no single story links bodies within museums. It discusses how colonial ideas shaped museum science and the repatriation debates that have arisen in response to this history. The challenges posed by these practices have resulted in growing societal unease over displays of human remains with some parties believing that such displays are unethical under any circumstances.²² The section concludes by examining objections to the violation of individual consent and claims by indigenous groups to repatriate the bodies of their descendants.²³

The second section on museums and spectacle considers tensions between entertainment and education that recur throughout the history of human-remains display. These tensions occurred first in public dissections in anatomy schools, cabinets of curiosity, freak shows, and displays of human remains for profit. This tension continued within anthropology museums, which seek to balance scientific research with the growing need to attract visitors and funding.

The third and final section on museum narratives and authority questions the role that museums play: Who controls the narratives within the museum? Who owns the dead? Indeed, these ambiguities have led to a “crisis of cultural authority” among scientific institutions, indigenous groups, and governing bodies worldwide.²⁴ I first analyze the evolution of narratives within the ranks of museum professionals by considering dioramas, sculptures, and other forms of “paleoart” exhibitions at the

there is much more to investigate surrounding the history of human remains at museums such as the Field. I conducted research in Internet archives and in the Biodiversity Heritage Library.

22. Jodi Simkin, telephone interview with the author, Jan. 13, 2020.

23. *Repatriation* in this context is the process of returning a body to its “owners,” such as from a museum to the body’s closest living cultural affiliations.

24. Tiffany Jenkins, *Contesting Human Remains in Museum Collections: The Crisis of Cultural Authority* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2011), 6.

Field Museum. I conclude with the twenty-year legal debate surrounding the Kennewick Man to analyze controversies over legal ownership, human identity, and scientific narrative.

Transcultural Ethics in Scientific Displays of Human Remains

Many natural history museums include anthropology departments with large collections of human remains, but the displays of selective human remains may be a minor part of institutions devoted to the collection, study, and display of the natural world.²⁵ Increasingly, activists and museumgoers have begun to express concern over the ethics of these displays. Jodi Simkin, director of cultural affairs and heritage for the Klahoose First Nation, believes that under no circumstances should the body of a deceased human be displayed without the individual's consent.²⁶ Simkin, a repatriation activist, speaks regularly at conferences and professional events against the practice of collecting human remains, which she considers an ethical violation, and she supports indigenous groups seeking to repatriate the remains of their ancestors from museums. This perspective resonates with some museumgoers. A 2014 study of visitor perceptions of human-remains exhibits at the Museo de las Momias in Guanajuato, Mexico, the Milwaukee Public Museum, and the traveling *Body Worlds* exhibits reveals that many were fascinated by these displays yet troubled by the ethics behind them.²⁷ Viewers cite

25. Joshua J. Tewksbury et al., "Natural History's Place in Science and Society," *Bio-Science* 64, no. 4 (Apr. 2014): 300–310, doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biu032.

26. In this circumstance, *consent* means that a person agrees voluntarily to have their body on public display, was informed about the nature of the display, and understood the implications of the display. Jodi Simkin, telephone interview with author, Jan. 13, 2020.

27. Amanda Balistreri, "Putting the Dead on Display: An Exploration of Visitor Perceptions and Motivations Regarding Preserved Human Remains in Museums

concerns about depriving the deceased of a proper burial, disbelief that informed consent was obtained, and taboos against exhibits seen as "ghoulish," "bizarre," "inappropriate for children," and "voyeuristic."²⁸

Despite these recent concerns, ethical objections and taboos surrounding human-remains display have been culturally discontinuous throughout history. Numerous groups displayed human remains for spiritual, religious, scientific, or entertainment purposes long before the Nuremberg Code of 1947 introduced a new ethical standard.²⁹ Some of the fascination with human remains stems from their connection with mortality: interacting with the dead in many cultures is an opportunity to reflect on selfhood, community, and lineages of ancestors.³⁰ The Chinchorro people of what is now northern Chile mummified and transported their dead during nomadic journeys (6000–2000 BCE); scholars think the mummies were central to the social lives of the Chinchorro as a means of communication with ancestors.³¹ From the Inca period through the colonial era (c. 1400–1821), Andean people displayed and visited mummified remains of ancestors for spiritual reasons.³² In medieval Europe the relics of saints or religious figures were displayed in monasteries, cathedrals, ossuaries, and

with Particular Emphasis on the Museo de las Momias de Guanajuato and *Body Worlds & the Cycle of Life*" (master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2014).

28. Ibid., 86, 92, 101, 112, 168, 123.

29. Joel Sparks, "Timeline of Laws Related to the Protection of Human Subjects," Office of NIH History & Stetten Museum, National Institutes of Health, June 2002, history.nih.gov/about/timelines_laws_human.html.

30. Barra O'Donnabhain and María Cecila Lozada, eds., *Archaeological Human Remains: Global Perspectives* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2014), 1.

31. Konrad Spindler et al., eds., *Human Mummies: A Global Survey of Their Status and the Techniques of Conservation* (Vienna: Springer, 2013), 136.

32. Ibid., 136.

other religious contexts, acting as a “special locus of access to the divine.”³³ On the other end of the spectrum of display, nineteenth-century circus sideshows in the United States displayed bodies of people with congenital abnormalities, known as “freaks,” for public entertainment.³⁴ Although the freak show is no longer widespread, the public’s fascination with anatomical specimens continues, as demonstrated by the popularity of the *Body Worlds* exhibitions, which have displayed dissected, “plastinated” human remains to over fifty million visitors worldwide since 1995.³⁵

The ethical ground of displaying human bodies in museums for scientific purposes remains unstable. Each display is part of a larger network of historical contingencies and brings the belief systems of diverse groups under scrutiny. Analysis and public display of human remains have been instrumental in establishing the Western scientific tradition, first in anatomy, medicine, and public education.³⁶ Early anatomy museums, such as the Museum of Human Anatomy of the University of Bologna, established circa 1288 CE, were more likely to display wax models than cadavers due to the difficulty of preservation.³⁷ Mondino de Liuzzi performed the first public anatomical dissection of a human corpse in 1315

in Bologna for the education of medical students.³⁸ These dissections spread to medical schools throughout Europe and soon attracted artists interested in the human figure and members of the general public drawn to the spectacle.³⁹ In the sixteenth century, anatomy theaters accommodated increasingly larger crowds.⁴⁰ Later anatomical museums, such as the Mütter Museum at the College of Physicians in Philadelphia, displayed a greater variety of preserved human remains.⁴¹ These institutions were established for medical education, but also integrated a voyeuristic aspect by displaying bodies with rare medical conditions in a manner similar to the “freak show.”⁴²

The anthropology museum began to play an increasingly major role in scientific research in the sixteenth century.⁴³ Some amateur collectors and enthusiasts accumulated bones haphazardly and opportunistically.⁴⁴ Other wealthy collectors amassed private “cabinets of curiosities,” small-scale displays of human remains, artifacts, and natural materials to “tell stories about the wonders and oddities of the natural world” and

33. Caroline Walker Bynum and Paula Gerson, “Body-Part Reliquaries and Body Parts in the Middle Ages,” *Gesta* 36, no. 1 (1997): 4, doi.org/10.2307/767274.

34. Rachel Adams, *Sideshow U.S.A.: Freaks and the American Cultural Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 129.

35. “Philosophy,” Body Worlds, accessed Jan. 7, 2020, bodyworlds.com/about/philosophy; “Plastination Technique,” Body Worlds, accessed Jan. 7, 2020, bodyworlds.com/plastination/plastination-technique.

36. O’Donnabhain and Lozada, 12.

37. Venkatesh Vishwanath Kamath, Biswabeena Ray, Shakuntala R. Pai, and Ramakrishna Avadhani, “The Origin of Anatomy Museums,” *European Journal of Anatomy* 18, no. 2 (2014): 64, eurjanat.com/v1/journal/paper.php?id=130361vk.

38. Sanjib Kumar Ghosh, “Human Cadaveric Dissection: A Historical Account from Ancient Greece to the Modern Era,” *Anatomy and Cell Biology* 48, no. 3 (Sept. 2015): 156, doi.org/10.5115/acb.2015.48.3.153.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. “Collections,” Mütter Museum, accessed Jan. 12, 2020, muttermuseum.org/collections.

42. Adams, 135.

43. Anita Herle, “Anthropology Museums and Museum Anthropology,” Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology, Oct. 6, 2016, www.anthroencyclopedia.com/entry/anthropology-museums-and-museum-anthropology.

44. Redman, *Bone Rooms*, 19.

the human's place in it.⁴⁵ By the late sixteenth century, some "cabinets" came to occupy entire buildings.⁴⁶ The Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology at Oxford was likely the first "cabinet of curiosities" to become a museum. In 1683 it was a "building used for the presentation and illustration of objects" and by the 1820s it housed ethnological materials from local and foreign cultures.⁴⁷ The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, founded in 1866, was the first museum dedicated to anthropology and archaeology.⁴⁸ Museums featuring anthropological materials proliferated throughout the world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with displays often playing a role in nationalist narratives, as will be elaborated later.

Anthropological materials in natural history museums are rooted in the Western idea (prominent in science, art, and literature) of primitivism, which held that humans were originally "natural beings" who lived in nature in accordance with "natural laws" of society.⁴⁹ According to this view, displays of "primitive man" belonged with botanical, geologic, and zoological exhibits.⁵⁰ Scientists considered those living in tribal societies, so-called savages, to be at the same intellectual level as the earliest human

45. "Cabinet of Curiosities," British Library, accessed Jan. 13, 2020, www.bl.uk/learning/timeline/item107648.html.

46. Don D. Fowler, "A Natural History of Man: Reflections on Anthropology, Museums, and Science," in "Curators, Collections, and Contexts: Anthropology at the Field Museum, 1893–2002," ed. Stephen E. Nash and Gary M. Feinman, special issue, *Fieldiana*, no. 36 (Sept. 2003): 12, www.jstor.org/stable/29782665.

47. Ibid, 13.

48. Alaka Wali, Rosa Cabrera, and Jennifer Anderson, "Museum Anthropology," Oxford Bibliographies, May 6, 2016, www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199766567/obo-9780199766567-0053.xml.

49. Fowler, 15.

50. Ibid.

ancestors. They were in a "primitive" stage of societal development, functioned as proxies for "original humanity," and revealed truths about the origins of our species.⁵¹ Scientists feared that these societies, so crucial to understanding human origins, were vanishing and that they were duty-bound to collect indigenous artifacts and bodies, which accounts for their accumulation in museums during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵² A central assumption of primitivism is that "the good" is inherently "the natural." By contrast, members of "highly evolved, complex societies," i.e., Western-influenced cultures, perceived their "modern" lifestyles, though superior, as "artificial, corrupt and alienating."⁵³ Studying and thereby possessing the "essence" of "natural folk" through seeing them in museums was essential to the "alienated folk of high civilizations."⁵⁴

Worldwide, colonial power structures influenced how archaeological human remains were initially displayed in museums. European powers routinely plundered the graves of their colonized subjects and brought mummies, skulls, shrunken heads, and bodies back to Europe for study and display as "curiosities."⁵⁵ Museum researchers and curators were "transfixed by the issue of race" and furthered narratives that exoticized indigenous groups or painted them as inferior.⁵⁶ For instance, during Argentina's push for independence in the early nineteenth century, leaders established their national identity as European, at the expense of

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Scientists did not always nostalgically mourn the loss of the natural; some viewed the loss as an inevitably result of progress that could be mitigated by scientific "possession" of knowledge of the primitive. Ibid.

55. Redman, *Bone Rooms*, 11.

56. O'Donnabhain and Lozada, 7.

indigenous populations. Argentinian museums collected and displayed the remains of indigenous peoples with the aim of documenting their “Otherness.”⁵⁷ In neighboring Brazil, researchers at the National Museum in the 1920s were influenced by eugenics and French and German craniometrics in their investigations of the African component of the Brazilian population.⁵⁸ From an academic perspective, human bones in museums were considered objects. Human remains were exhibited as “curiosities of scientific interest,” generally with little regard for the concerns or beliefs of the indigenous people involved.⁵⁹

The most established scientific tradition of biological anthropology and anthropology museum collections is in the United States.⁶⁰ The development of this discipline owes much to the tradition of collecting bodies for anthropological science in the “bone rooms” of museums.⁶¹ By 1776, Western European museums and collections had begun amassing the bodies of colonial subjects, both living and deceased.⁶² The tradition of collecting remains in the United States traces back to Thomas Jefferson, who exhumed Native American graves.⁶³ In the early nineteenth century, American museum professionals noted that the Old World possessed “vastly superior and more significant relics,” which implied Europe’s

cultural superiority.⁶⁴ Nascent US museums aimed to “catch up” and “began collecting bodies … with heretofore unseen zeal.”⁶⁵ This practice grew after the Civil War and during the westward expansion.⁶⁶ Museums gathered both foreign remains and the remains of the “red Indian” in the American West.⁶⁷ Most of the collected bodies belonged to non-white individuals, used by white researchers to prove scientific theories surrounding race.⁶⁸ As a result, about ninety percent of human remains in US natural history museums are Native American.⁶⁹ The racialized excavation of pre-Columbian graves contrasts with the historical study of gravesites containing bodies of Europeans; the result is that natural history “museums now hold the results of two centuries’ worth of scientific racism.”⁷⁰

During this race to procure human remains, natural history museums came to view acquiring collections of skeletons as an investment in the emerging discipline of physical anthropology.⁷¹ This attitude was

64. Redman, *Bone Rooms*, 20.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid., 17.

67. Ibid., 20–21.

68. Ibid., 16.

69. Stephen E. Nash, “The Skeletons in the Museum Closet,” *Sapiens*, Oct. 29, 2018, www.sapiens.org/column/curiosities/natural-history-museum-human-remains.

70. Ibid; *scientific racism* is the manipulation of empirical evidence to support racial discrimination. Anthropological methods such as craniometry, racial typography, and racial hierarchies presented some “races” of humans as superior to others. Scientific racism condoned the politics of racial discrimination, though not all “scientific racists” were necessarily “political racists.” Craniometry is now only used to identify bodies of victims in forensic cases. See Paul A. Erickson and Liam D. Murphy, *A History of Anthropological Theory*, 5th ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 152.

71. Redman, *Bone Rooms*, 17.

57. Ibid., 2.

58. Ibid., 4.

59. Ibid., 17.

60. Redman, *Bone Rooms*, 3–4, 11.

61. Samuel Redman, video conference with the author, Jan. 8, 2020.

62. Ibid.

63. Gene Zechmeister, “Jefferson’s Excavation of an Indian Burial Mound,” Monticello, Oct. 2010, www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/jeffersons-excavation-indian-burial-mound.

influenced by the prolific craniologist Samuel George Morton who amassed around eight hundred skulls in the mid-nineteenth century, produced numerous highly regarded studies on brain size, and framed future debates in physical anthropology.⁷² Eager to produce their own “racial taxonomies,” curators obtained remains opportunistically from distant contacts, acquaintances, and other sources with poorly verified provenance.⁷³

The approach to excavations and acquisitions before 1890 was not systematic or scientific.⁷⁴ Professional archaeologists in the American West who excavated indigenous gravesites were far outnumbered by amateurs who looted and robbed graves and who sent the remains to museums.⁷⁵ Even professional archaeologists and anthropologists admitted to thievery: Franz Boas, who shipped bodies from indigenous gravesites in Canada to the United States under falsified invoices, lamented: “It is most unpleasant work to steal bones from a grave, but … someone has to do it.”⁷⁶ Facilitated by the newly reliable US postal network, “mysterious packages would arrive at museums—sometimes accompanied by vague, handwritten notes with brief descriptions of the bones inside”; knowing a bone’s supposed “racial origin” was often enough for admission into a collection, even without its individual identity or associated cultural affiliation.⁷⁷

72. Morton’s studies are now regarded as unsystematic, pseudoscientific, and racist. See *ibid.*, 17, 23.

73. *Ibid.*, 17.

74. Donald Collier and Harry S. Tschopik Jr., “The Role of Museums in American Anthropology,” in “Curators, Collections, and Contexts: Anthropology at the Field Museum, 1893–2002,” ed. Stephen E. Nash and Gary M. Feinman, special issue, *Fieldiana*, no. 36 (Sept. 2003): 23, www.jstor.org/stable/29782666.

75. Redman, *Bone Rooms*, 18, 35.

76. Julian Smith, “Insider: Who Owns the Dead?” *Archaeology Magazine*, Jan./Feb. 2011, archive.archaeology.org/1101/departments/insider.html.

77. Redman, *Bone Rooms*, 18.

The unethical underpinning of natural history museums includes the Field Museum. Early exhibitions and publicity reflected primitivism and similar ideas, such as the “subjugation of the natural world in the name of Progress,” which implied the inferior place of “natural man” in the hierarchy of civilization.⁷⁸ While the Field displayed “primitive man” to a “civilized” audience, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Science and Industry displayed the “high art” and technology of “civilized man,” respectively.⁷⁹ This narrative paradigm remained prevalent until indigenous groups in the 1960s and academic critics in the 1970s decried the hierarchical symbolism of anthropological exhibitions in natural history museums and questioned the ideas that underpinned these institutions.⁸⁰ Their efforts sparked an ethical conversation that forced natural history museums to reckon with the past investigative aims of scientific racism, colonialism, and national pride and to consider the cultural histories and interests of tribes and families and their ancestors. Complicating this reckoning is the fact that the study of human remains from other cultures within the discipline of anthropology derives from different academic traditions.⁸¹ “Many bioarchaeologies”

78. *Ibid.*, 19.

79. *Ibid.*

80. *Ibid.*, 20.

81. The fields of anthropology that study human remains are interdisciplinary, have varied academic histories, and often use overlapping terminology. They encompass physical anthropology, biological anthropology, bioarchaeology, skeletal biology, osteology, human osteology, osteoarchaeology, and paleoanthropology, among others. The diversity of terminology reflects differences in academic, linguistic, and cultural traditions in which the study of the human body has evolved. Biological and physical anthropology are equivalent terms and approach human evolution and biosocial variation. All other categories can be considered subdisciplines of biological anthropology.

have emerged, each with its own terminologies and methodologies.⁸² For example, biological anthropologists were initially focused not on medical knowledge, as medical museums were, but on racial classification.⁸³ Consequently, there is no one unified story of how human remains came to be displayed in anthropological contexts.⁸⁴

Movements for the repatriation of human remains from museums to their living descendants for reburial gained currency in the wake of civil rights movements in the 1960s and 1970s, with groups worldwide challenged the prevailing notion of the indigenous body as an object for study.⁸⁵ These demands were particularly vociferous among Native groups in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States. Many Native American groups objected to museum displays of their ancestor's bodies, which violated traditional burial practices.⁸⁶ Repatriation activists contended that museum displays violated their rights to care spiritually for their ancestors, that displays were shrouded in legacies of colonialism and racism, and that the dead never gave consent for their

82. O'Donnabhain and Lozada, 12.

83. Museum anthropology predates the establishment of the four-field method in the 1920s, which divides anthropology into physical, sociocultural, archaeological, and linguistic studies. This approach is attributed to Franz Boas, but historian of anthropology Dan Hicks points to anthropologist Augustus Pitt-Rivers's earlier diagrams as delineating the fields of anthropology. See Dan Hicks, "Charter Myths and Time Warps from St. Louis to Oxford," *Current Anthropology* 54, no. 6 (2013): 753–63; see, also, Adam Kuper, "Anthropology: Scope of the Discipline," in *The International Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, ed. Hilary Callan (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2017), 1–25, doi.org/10.1002/9781118924396.wbiea1591.

84. Kuper, 1.

85. Chip Colwell, *Plundered Skulls and Stolen Spirits: Inside the Fight to Reclaim Native America's Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 5.

86. Ibid.

remains to be treated in this manner.⁸⁷ Lacking strong social and legal standing, indigenous protesters chained themselves to museum display cases, enacted citizen's arrests of bioarchaeologists studying ancestral bones, and picketed archaeological sites.⁸⁸

Indigenous repatriation movements were highly effective in swaying social perceptions and persuading legislators to act. Museum policy and legislation in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand now recognize the rights of indigenous descendants to ancestral remains, although these rights are not codified in a single transnational law.⁸⁹ The National Museum of the American Indian Act (NMAIA) of 1989 and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990 covers all Native American human remains in the United States. The remains are the property of the tribes, although within a museum they are under federal "control." Museums that receive federal funds are required to inventory collections of human remains and associated funerary materials and to consult with indigenous groups to return the remains to descendants or otherwise reach agreement on disposal.⁹⁰ As of May 14, 2010, NAGPRA § 10.11 required museums or federal agencies to initiate consultation with tribes to transfer remains to descendants,

87. Chip Colwell, "The Long Ethical Arc of Displaying Human Remains," *Atlas Obscura*, Nov. 16, 2017, www.atlasobscura.com/articles/displaying-native-american-remains.

88. Ibid.

89. Cressida Fforde, Jane Hubert, and Paul Turnbull, eds., *The Dead and Their Possessions: Repatriation in Principle, Policy and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 3.

90. Francis P. McManamon, "An Introduction to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)," National Park Service, 2003, www.nps.gov/archeology/tools/laws/nagpra.htm.

which many indigenous activists regard as a legal victory.⁹¹ Due to increased social awareness of the ethical problems associated with displaying human remains and increased legal protections achieved by repatriation movements, the display of colonial-era indigenous remains is no longer commonplace or socially acceptable in North American and Australasian museums.

The rhetoric of indigenous activism in the 1960s and 1970s focused on righting the wrongs of past colonialism worldwide.⁹² The case for repatriation took a three-pronged approach, with arguments centered around spirituality, racism, and consent. Activists argued that museums violated their indigenous religious freedom and prevented them from practicing traditional ways of caring for ancestors, that the history of museum collection of indigenous people was steeped in racism, and that the people displayed in museum exhibits never consented to have their remains treated in this manner.⁹³ Susan Shown Harjo (Cheyenne and Hodulgee Muscogee), the executive director of the National Congress of American Indians, made the case for legal protection against the use of American Indian remains in museums in 1989:

What if museums, universities and government agencies could put your dead relatives on display or keep them in boxes to be cut up

91. Prior to NAGPRA indigenous groups had to initiate repatriation claims. See “43 CFR § 10.11: Disposition of Culturally Unidentifiable Human Remains,” Legal Information Institute, Cornell Law School, accessed Oct. 28, 2021, www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/43/10.11; Clayton W. Dumont Jr., “Contesting Scientists’ Narrations of NAGPRA’s Legislative History: Rule 10.11 and the Recovery of ‘Culturally Unidentifiable’ Ancestors,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 5, doi.org/10.1353/wic.2011.0009.

92. Dumont, 17.

93. Colwell, “The Long Ethical Arc,” *Atlas Obscura*.

and otherwise studied? What if you believed that the spirits of the dead could not rest until their human remains were placed in a sacred area? The ordinary American would say there ought to be a law—and there is, for ordinary Americans. The problem for American Indians is that there are too many laws of the kind that make us the archeological property of the United States and too few of the kind that protect us from such insults.⁹⁴

Harjo urged Congress to enact legislation to prevent museums treating human remains as artifacts. Compellingly, she noted that the 1.5 million living American Indians are outnumbered by the deceased stored in museums, educational institutions, federal agencies, and private collections.

A diverse coalition, including American Indian tribes, the American Civil Liberties Union, eighteen religious denominations, the Society of American Archaeology, and the American Association of Museums, supported legislation.⁹⁵ The emotional resonance of repatriation concerns and the persuasive rhetoric of Harjo and other activists helped sway public opinion and earn the support of American lawmakers. Morris K. Udall (D-AZ) introduced NAGPRA in the House on July 10, 1990, and

it received strong bipartisan support.⁹⁶ Framed as civil rights legislation,

94. Susan Shown Harjo, “Last Rites for Indian Dead: Treating Remains Like Artifacts Is Intolerable,” *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 16, 1989, www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1989-09-16-me-21-story.html.

95. Alison Jane Edwards, “Grassroots Social Action and the National Museum of the American Indian” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2015), 177–78, dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/16461039/EDWARDS-DISSERTATION-2015.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y; Steve Johnson, “Museum’s Blackfeet Remains to Go Home,” *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 20, 1991, www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1991-10-20-9104040573-story.html.

96. C. Timothy McKeown, “Implementing a ‘True Compromise’: The Native

John McCain (R-AZ) supported the bill in the Senate on October 26, 1990: “The passage of this legislation marks the end of a long process for many Indian tribes and museums. The subject of repatriations is charged with high emotions in both the Native American community and the museum community. I believe this bill represents a true compromise.”⁹⁷ President George H. W. Bush signed it into law on November 16, 1990.⁹⁸ The unanimous passage of NAGPRA made the museum display of American Indian remains illegal in government-funded exhibitions.

At the Field Museum, curators took many artifacts off display in the Native North America Hall. The hall, first opened in the 1950s under the name “Indians before Columbus,” was a repository of cultural items from numerous American Indian groups.⁹⁹ In 1991, the museum’s vice president, Jonathan Haas, attested that no Native American remains had been displayed at the Field Museum since 1989 and “few were before that.”¹⁰⁰ NAGPRA also required that museums repatriate associated funerary artifacts. A journalist reported that a “visitor to the museum

American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act after Ten Years,” in *The Dead and Their Possessions: Repatriation in Principle, Policy and Practice*, ed. Crescida Fforde, Jane Hubert, and Paul Turnbull (New York: Routledge, 2002), 108; Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, H.R. 5237, 101st Cong., (1990), www.congress.gov/bill/101st-congress/house-bill/5237.

97. Congressional Record, Oct. 26, 1990, p. S17173.

98. “Native American Graves Protection and Repatriations Act of 1990, 25 U.S.C. § 3001 (1990),” www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/25/3001.

99. Lauren Frost, “Changing the Narrative in the Field Museum’s Native North America Hall,” *WBEZ*, Oct. 29, 2018, www.wbez.org/stories/changing-the-narrative-in-the-field-museums-native-north-america-hall/4646fd66-8839-43fc-9c8c-f6eafa8dd3c8.

100. Johnson, “Museum’s Blackfeet Remains to Go Home,” *Chicago Tribune*.

these days will find … some interesting absences” as “artifact removal forms litter the exhibits” and display cases are left empty.¹⁰¹ After NAGPRA, the Field Museum consulted with the Hopi, Iroquois, Pawnee, Blackfeet, and Blood tribes, among others, on the “appropriateness of its exhibits.”¹⁰² Viewers began to realize that the displays (over six-decades old) in the Native North America Hall were “outdated, “misrepresentative,” and “frozen in time.”¹⁰³ The Field Museum plans to open a modernized version of the exhibit in May 2022 with greater collaboration between museum curators and Native people.¹⁰⁴ In the meantime, Chicago-based artist Chris Pappan (Kaw) has superimposed multimedia ledger-style¹⁰⁵ “art interventions” over existing displays, bridging the gap between the colonialist narrative and the revised narrative, which will “bring Native voices to the museum.”¹⁰⁶

NAGPRA, and the associated National Museum of the American Indian Act, remain the most significant pieces of legislation worldwide surrounding repatriation, yet many points of contention and implementation

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid.

103. Frost, “Changing the Narrative,” *WBEZ*.

104. “Field Museum & Indigenous Partners Announce Name, New Opening Date of Groundbreaking Native North America Hall Renovation,” Field Museum, Nov. 23, 2021, www.fieldmuseum.org/about/press/field-museum-indigenous-partners-announce-name-new-opening-date-groundbreaking-native.

105. Plains Indians warriors created so-call ledger drawings in accountant ledger books during the late nineteenth century. See *Keeping History: Plains Indian Ledger Drawings*, Smithsonian, Nov. 13, 2019–Jan. 31, 2010, americanhistory.si.edu/documentsgallery/exhibitions/ledger_drawing_1.html.

106. Allison C. Meier, “An Artist Addresses the Field Museum’s Problematic Native American Hall,” *Chicago Magazine*, Jan. 8, 2018, www.chicagomag.com/arts-culture/January-2019/Chris-Pappan-Field-Museum-Native-American-Halls; “Field Museum to Renovate,” Field Museum.

remain unresolved.¹⁰⁷ In the thirty years since NAGPRA became law, institutions have documented 197,280 human remains, but as of September 2019, archives still hold 188,187 remains, “pending consultation and/or notice.”¹⁰⁸ Only 40 percent of museums subject to NAGPRA have “resolved all Native American remains under their control.”¹⁰⁹ Museums often have poor collection records and tracing historical cultural affiliations of remains to federally recognized tribes is an archival and bioarchaeological puzzle on a massive scale.¹¹⁰ The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography, for example, had never inventoried its vast stores of human remains, which were in an “unprofessional state of affairs.”¹¹¹ Other, smaller museums lack funds to comply with NAGPRA deadlines. Further, descendants may choose to keep remains in museums, and returning remains may result in dissension rather than harmony within the group receiving them.¹¹² Some Native American groups disagree over which is more closely affiliated to specific remains: some indigenous people think unprovenanced material should be reburied in the general area of origin, whereas others argue that such remains should be retained by the museum.¹¹³

107. Fforde, Hubert, and Turnbull, 7.

108. National Park Service, *Fiscal Year 2019 Report: National NAGPRA Program* (Washington, DC: US Department of Interior, 2019), 5, irma.nps.gov/DataStore/DownloadFile/659339.

109. Ibid.

110. McManamon, “An Introduction to NAGPRA,” National Park Service 2003.

111. Ibid.

112. Fforde, Turnbull, and Hubert, 7.

113. Other countries, like Australia, also face insufficient inventories and disputed repatriation claims. Ibid., 6

The Field Museum has experienced similar difficulties staying on schedule with the NAGPRA inventory project, according to repatriation director Helen Robbins.¹¹⁴ The Field has a large inventory from the 1980s, but its older inventory includes labels (once deemed scientifically sufficient), such as “at minimum one individual with extra femurs,” which under NAGPRA would indicate many people.¹¹⁵ Robbins wryly comments on the widespread inventory problems found across institutions: “When you have a skeleton that consists of five different people from five different races all jumbled up … in a damp box, that’s, well, not very good” for repatriation.¹¹⁶ When Robbins began the repatriation project in November 2002, the museum estimated completion within three years, but Robbins is still at it—seventeen years later. At first, she worked alone, but recently, a part-time bioarchaeologist and an assistant help with the intensive research required to fulfill repatriation claims.

The Field Museum has received over twenty-two federal NAGPRA repatriation grants, but the museum itself paid for one of the most high-profile repatriation incidents.¹¹⁷ Inuit leaders in Labrador, Canada, learned in 2008 that the Field housed the skeletal remains of twenty-two people who had been excavated from marked graves in the Moravian missionary village of Zoar in 1928 and requested their repatriation.¹¹⁸ NAGPRA does not mandate or fund reparation of international claims. The museum

114. Helen Robbins, interview with the author, Nov. 22, 2019.

115. Ibid.

116. The Field Museum does not store remains in damp conditions, but Robbins witnessed numerous state repositories housing remains in damp cardboard boxes in basements. Helen Robbins, interview with the author, Nov. 22, 2019.

117. Ibid.

118. William Mullen, “Field Museum to Return Inuit Remains,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 19, 2010, www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2010-07-19-ct-met-inuit-remains-repatriated-20100719-story.html.

agreed to the “expensive endeavor,” which included renting a plane and a longliner for the transfer to Labrador, because “it was very plain that the Field Museum was in the wrong.”¹¹⁹ The bodies were returned in 2011, and the Field Museum presented a formal apology letter to the Inuit signed by the chairman of the Board of Trustees, which Robbins is “pretty sure no other institution has ever done for a specific group.”¹²⁰ In response, the Labrador Inuit sent the Field Museum a letter of forgiveness, which was “very generous because they did not need to do that. . . . I was honored.” In 2017, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, an organization representing the rights and interests of the Inuit people, gave the Inuit Cultural Repatriation Award to the Field Museum and the Nunatsiavut Government for their commitment to “reconciliation” and an “ongoing positive relationship.”¹²¹

Not all anthropologists share Robbins’s commitment to collaborating with indigenous people on repatriations. Physical anthropologist Elizabeth Weiss recounts her experience of feeling like a pariah for studying dead bodies during an emotionally charged post-NAGPRA discussion at an archaeology conference:

Weren’t we innocent until proven guilty? No, we were guilty for the sins of others; those anthropologists of the past who studied race differences, the Europeans who came and took the land, and any other historical group who displaced the minorities. I realized this when another Native American spoke up and said that I didn’t know how it felt to be a victim and, therefore, shouldn’t be voicing my opinion. According to them, I did not come from an oppressed

119. Ibid.; Helen Robbins, interview with the author, Nov. 22, 2019.

120. Mullen, “Field Museum to Return Inuit Remains,” *Chicago Tribune*.

121. “National Inuit Org Honours Return of Stolen Nunatsiavut Remains,” *Nunatsiaq News*, Sept. 26, 2017, nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/65674national_inuit_org_honours_return_of_stolen_nunatsiavut_remains.

or victimized social group. An anthropologist then spoke the unthinkable, comparing me to a Nazi while tears were running down her cheeks. She said she never wanted to touch another skeleton in her life.¹²²

Weiss devotes a chapter of *Reburying the Past* (2008) towards making the case for “Anthropologists as the Good Guys,” in which she argues that modern criticisms judge past archaeological collection practices through today’s morals.¹²³ According to Weiss, NAGPRA gives too much credence to Native American cultural traditions and oral histories in determining repatriation: “The oral traditions of alien abductions in New Mexico” are just as valid as “the creation myths of the Native Americans.”¹²⁴ Weiss objects to NAGPRA positing Native beliefs as equal to science in explaining reality, claiming that the spirituality grounding many repatriation claims is a less legitimate form of knowledge production than science.¹²⁵

In counterpoint to the Labrador Inuit, not all indigenous people are eager for reconciliation. Sociologist Clayton W. Dumont Jr. (Klamath Tribes) condemns archaeologists and anthropologists who defend NAGPRA §10.11 as hypocritical and guilty of historical revisionism.¹²⁶ Dumont says NAGPRA is a legal “victory in the centuries-long struggle of Native peoples to protect our dead . . . from scientists” and contends

122. Elizabeth Weiss, *Reburying the Past: The Effects of Repatriation and Reburial on Scientific Inquiry* (Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science, 2008), 2.

123. Ibid., 25, 29.

124. Ibid., 41.

125. Ibid.

126. Dumont,” 5–41. Dumont, a professor of sociology at San Francisco State University, studies the history of science from a post-structural perspective. He is not affiliated with the Field Museum but comments on the actions of museums like the Field.

that critiques of section 10.11 reveal the extent to which archaeologists have used “colonial prerogative” to paint a self-serving, rosy narrative of cooperation between museums and Native people.¹²⁷ He argues that although museums emphasize their relationships with indigenous people, their actions and words demonstrate a persistent prioritization of the “scientific,” the objectification of “our dead as data,” and the “masquerading the colonizer’s needs as everyone else’s.”¹²⁸ Dumont observes that scientific professional organizations “did their best to weaken” the amendment before calculating cynically that it was “politically astute to ‘get on board,’ lest they have to cease their incessant declarations of respect and admiration for Native peoples.”¹²⁹ He warns scientists that “their tenacity will be matched, step for step, by Native peoples—and then some” in the ongoing fight over Native bodies.¹³⁰

To some, the reluctance of museums to display human remains in the wake of NAGPRA may in itself constitute an exercise of colonial power when it censors indigenous groups’ reasons for displaying their own dead. The Casa de Cultura in the central Mexican town of Xaltocan chose to display human remains, which conformed to the ethical guidelines espoused by the Vermillion Accord on Human Remains and Tamaki Makau-rau Accords on Human Remains and Sacred Objects.¹³¹ Some

127. Ibid., 32.

128. Ibid.

129. Ibid., 33.

130. Ibid., 34.

131. Indigenous community members established, curate, and run the museum; Canadian and Mexican archaeologists contributed to its establishment. Lisa Overholtzer and Juan R. Argueta, “Letting Skeletons out of the Closet: The Ethics of Displaying Ancient Mexican Human Remains,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 24, no. 5 (May 28, 2018): 517, doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2017.1390486. In 1989, World Archaeological Congress adopted the Vermillion Accord on Human Remains, which provides basic ethical guidelines; it was followed in 2006

North American archaeologist collaborators “criticized and censored” the museum and refused to include photographs of its displays in their publications, despite assurances that the community had given permission. The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) insisted that any photographs of human remains would be pixelated or removed from its publication, *Advances in Archaeological Practice*.¹³² Xaltocan community members were baffled; they viewed the displays as an extension of Mesoamerican beliefs and practices, such as *Día de los Muertos*, which made them “accustomed to coexist[ing] with death.” A person said that “when we unearth the bones, we don’t get scared because they’re a part of us.”¹³³ The Canadian archaeologist, Lisa Overholtzer, and the Mexican archaeologist, Juan Argueta, argue that the SAA’s censorship amounts to the imposition of judgments of North American authorities on Mesoamericans and, thus, is a perpetuation of colonial practice.¹³⁴ They insist that the SAA and other organizations should not homogenize or ban representations of indigenous remains but instead should use “ethnographic methods to capture local norms and provide insight into what is considered proper treatment for human remains in particular contexts.”¹³⁵

Interviewees expressed varied opinions in regards to this contentious and multifaceted cultural debate. The Field Museum’s repatriations director says the most important consideration is that a curator or an exhibitions manager “first ask the question” about the histories of bodies

by the Tamaki Makau-rau Accord on the Display of Human Remains and Sacred Objects. See “Code of Ethics,” World Archaeological Congress, accessed Feb. 15, 2019, worldarch.org/code-of-ethics.

132. Overholtzer and Argueta, 517–18.

133. Ibid., 521–23.

134. Ibid., 525.

135. Ibid.

that inform decisions on possible display.¹³⁶ Such questions should cover ethical rights, accession history, the tribal origins of the remains and descendants' wishes, the reasons for display, and public benefit. For example, Robbins and Janet Hong, project manager for exhibitions, think that the display of Tibetan flutes made from human femurs is not unethical, because the flutes are a celebrated part of Tibetan spirituality and the Dalai Lama attended the exhibit opening, which suggests Tibetan approval of the display.¹³⁷ Robbins noted that some groups may object to the scientific study of their ancestors' remains for reasons related to colonial history, rather than current spiritual practices. Robbins paraphrases the concerns of Tasmanian repatriation claimants:

You [scientists] came here, you murdered us, you tried to destroy us, you stole our generations by putting us in boarding schools and now you want to do science on the remains of human beings you murdered and took away. ... Are you freaking out of your mind? ... That's not about science, that's about genocide. So I was trying to express ... complex arcs of belief and history and how complicated it is for everybody. ... I think the history of museum collections is complicated because history and science are intertwined in these ways and sometimes indigenous groups are against the science because of the history not because of the cultural beliefs.¹³⁸

136. Helen Robbins, interview with the author, Nov. 22, 2019.

137. Ibid and Janet Hong, video conference with the author, Dec. 24, 2020; Lara Dimitroff-Thompson, "Dalai Lama to Visit Chicago as Part of Exhibit," *Northwest Indiana Times*, Aug. 8, 1999, www.nwitimes.com/uncategorized/dalai-lama-to-visit-chicago-as-part-of-exhibit/article_ff9563d3-a62d-5ec4-a61f-ae341351c621.html.

138. Helen Robbins, interview with the author, Nov. 22, 2019.

The Canadian repatriation activist, Jodi Simkin, stresses that cultural consultations with Native groups should lead to museums take action, not further hesitation: "A lot of institutions are almost paralyzed by not wanting to do the wrong thing, but doing the wrong thing is the same as doing nothing."¹³⁹ When advising museums and tribes, Simkin is clear that collaboration is critical. She stresses the importance of involving indigenous people, who are still rare in museum leadership, in constructing new museum narratives, but she remains hopeful that the "conversation is changing" among the scientific community, the cultural heritage sector, and the indigenous community.¹⁴⁰ She also stresses the need to refrain from vilifying museum workers, who were not responsible for the past actions of their institutions, with the caveat that museum leaders who do not collaborate with indigenous and other concerned parties repeat the faults of the past.¹⁴¹

Retired anthropology curator, Robert Martin, speaks of the need to "find an appropriate balance" between the "feelings of the population" from which human remains have been taken and the "legitimate interests of research" at the Field Museum and worldwide.¹⁴² His concern is that repatriation and reburial hinder scientific research. Simkin points out that not every indigenous community is opposed to scientific research, which may reveal aspects of their history. Martin insists that removing funereal objects from display creates insular communities and closes a door on the "opportunity for intercultural dialogue" that museums present.¹⁴³

Opinions vary as well among indigenous groups. Many indigenous groups and scientists in the Americas are collaborating to present

139. Jodi Simkin, telephone interview with author, Jan. 13, 2020.

140. Ibid.

141. Ibid.

142. Robert Martin, email message to author, Feb. 7, 2020.

143. Ibid.

narratives of human remains that move beyond colonial ideals. In Mexico, some bioarchaeologists are using dental and skeletal specimens as a “venue for cultural reassertion of the modern Maya.” The Maya Museum in Mérida has been designed to “reach out also to indigenous visitors.” Displays include 3D facial reconstructions of the skull of Bernardino Cen, a Maya Caste War hero, and other Native individuals and integrate narratives of various aspects in Maya society.¹⁴⁴ However, as Simkin explains, the exhibit is curated primarily from an archaeological rather than an indigenous perspective, whereas Canadian museums display very few indigenous remains.¹⁴⁵ Canadian institutions are moving towards narratives that focus on the history of aboriginal peoples. For example, the Royal British Columbia Museum, which once exhibited the remains of First Nations people, now consults with Native peoples about museum narratives, and the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia co-curates displays with indigenous community members.¹⁴⁶

In contrast, certain indigenous communities, such as Maya-speaking groups in Yucatan and Guatemala, have not sought repatriation of the bodies of their ancestors, which may be due to the imposition of European modes of thought on indigenous populations.¹⁴⁷ Spanish colonists forced the assimilation of the Maya as a means to forge a new, “Christianized” colonial society through cultural repression and destruction of Native heritage. As a result, some modern-day Mayan speakers do not see

144. Vera Tiesler and Andrea Cucina, “Past, Present and Future Perspectives in Maya Bioarchaeology: A View from Yucatan, Mexico,” in *Archaeological Human Remains: Global Perspectives*, ed. Barra O’Donnabhain and María Cecila Lozada (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2014), 171.

145. Jodi Simkin, telephone interview with author, Jan. 13, 2020

146. Ibid.; Anita Herle, “Museums and First Peoples in Canada,” *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, no. 6 (Oct. 1994): 46, www.jstor.org/stable/40793553.

147. O’Donnabhain and Lozada, 176.

themselves as culturally affiliated with pre-Hispanic human remains. A similar mentality is evident in some modern Peruvians who are indifferent to the display of human remains; bodies on display are seen as belonging to “indigenas,” while some Peruvians today identify more with Spanish cultural heritage.¹⁴⁸

Repatriation claims, contrary to the prognostications of some physical anthropologists, have not eliminated the practice of displaying human remains. With the exception of Native American or Australasian aboriginal bodies, museums around the world still exhibit remains.¹⁴⁹ A case in point are Egyptian mummies, which frequently tour worldwide. Western fascination with Egyptian mummies date to Napoleon’s conquest of North Africa in 1798.¹⁵⁰ This fascination is still apparent in contemporary displays, such as at the Field Museum, where CT scans allow the public to unwrap specimens digitally.¹⁵¹ The practice of displaying Egyptian mummies continues largely without ethical censure, because modern Egypt communities, which are primarily Muslim or Coptic Christian, do not claim cultural continuity with the pharaohs in the same way that Native Americans or Australian Aboriginal groups relate to their ancestors. While it is certain that European archaeologists plundered ancient Egyptian gravesites for colonial purposes, some scholars, such as the anthropologist Chip Colwell, argue that their treatment of Egyptian mummies “glorified ancient Egypt while Native American skeletons were long collected to dehumanize indigenous peoples.”¹⁵²

148. María Cecila Lozada, interview with the author, Nov. 6, 2019.

149. Herle, 45.

150. Colwell, “The Long Ethical Arc,” *Atlas Obscura*.

151. “Inside Ancient Egypt,” Field Museum, Nov. 11, 2010, www.fieldmuseum.org/exhibitions/inside-ancient-egypt.

152. Colwell, “The Long Ethical Arc,” *Atlas Obscura*.

Further, modern Egypt's dependence on tourism guarantees that pharaohs will continue to be displayed.¹⁵³

Egyptian demands for the repatriation of ancient Egyptian artifacts, sometimes including bodies, are based on nationalist rather than ethical claims. These arguments maintain that it is the prerogative of Egyptians to display their cultural heritage in national museums, but they do not question the ethics of human-remains display *per se*. Repatriation activists from other cultures would find the explicit display methods of repatriated Egyptian remains troubling if applied to remains of their own heritage.¹⁵⁴ The opening of the Grand Egyptian Museum, now planned for November 2022, will present all of King Tutankhamun's tomb artifacts "in an incredibly realistic manner that enables visitors to experience the tomb just as it was" and will feature "intimate glimpses into his life," even the bodies of Tutankhamun's two stillborn daughters.¹⁵⁵ The museum's general director, Tarek Sayed Tawfik, wants to "welcome guests from all over the world, but mainly ... new Egyptian generations," whom he hopes will take "pride in their ancient culture."¹⁵⁶

The Ethiopian government acted on similarly nationalist principles when displaying the fossilized bones of *Australopithecus afarensis*, says Zeresenay Alemseged, the paleoanthropologist who discovered a specimen of this early human ancestor who lived around 3.3 million years

153. Arwa Gaballa, "Egypt Uncovers Chamber of Mummies, Sees Life for Tourism," *Reuters*, May 13, 2017, www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-archaeology-discovery-idUSKBN1890F8.

154. Jodi Simkin, telephone interview with author, Jan. 13, 2020.

155. Allison Keyes, "For the First Time, All 5,000 Objects Found Inside King Tut's Tomb Will Be Displayed Together," *Smithsonian Magazine*, Dec. 21, 2016, www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/grand-egyptian-museum-next-big-thing-180961333.

156. *Ibid.*

ago.¹⁵⁷ Ethiopia took such great pride in the discovery that they asked Alemseged to meet President Barack Obama as Ethiopia's national representative.¹⁵⁸ Today, "Selam" and another *A. afarensis* fossil, "Lucy," reside in the National Museum of Ethiopia, which links the fossils to statues of nineteenth- and twentieth-century heroes and other nationalistic items. This biological-cultural narrative is summarized in the exhibition title, a "Million Years of Life and Culture in Ethiopia."¹⁵⁹

Museums and Spectacle: Science v. "Edutainment Extravaganza"

The display of human remains has been fraught with tensions between public education and spectacular entertainment from the period of dissections in Renaissance anatomy schools to nineteenth-century freak shows, and from seventeenth-century cabinets of curiosities to Victorian-era public mummy unwrapping, to current *Body Worlds* traveling shows. Investigating these tensions exposes a dilemma over what the anthropology museum should be: a place for the public to engage with serious science or to experience popular entertainment.

The scientific community contributed to and fed off of the US public's curiosity with human remains in the nineteenth century. Museums encouraged the public to "collect" human remains and donate them to museums, promoting what today would be characterized as grave

157. Zeresenay Alemseged, interview with the author, Nov. 13, 2019.

158. *Ibid.*

159. "The National Museum of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa," Independent Travellers, accessed Jan. 29, 2020, independent-travellers.com/ethiopia/addis_ababa/national_museum.

robbing.¹⁶⁰ The public read about scientific specimens in newspapers and fiction, which strengthened their eagerness to see the bodies themselves. Archaeological discoveries, such as mummies discovered in 1875 in the Aleutian Islands, were of “momentous” interest both to the “scientific world” and the average citizen.¹⁶¹ Newspapers advertised the display of human remains in popular exhibitions at the first US World’s Fair, the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Fictionalized accounts and popular histories of Southwestern prehistory, such as *The Delight Makers*, *Some Strange Corners of Our Country*, and *The Land of the Cliff Dweller*, enjoyed great popularity in the 1890s.¹⁶² Human remains became a significant attraction, while being presented as “scientific commodities” and “tools for solving riddles connected to race and time.”¹⁶³

These “scientific” display of human remains sometimes had a tenuous connection to scientific research. Showmen and entrepreneurs, such as P. T. Barnum, sought to cash in on scientific cachet by presenting historical and pseudoscientific ideas in dramatized contexts.¹⁶⁴ In the *North American Review*, Barnum proposed an exhibition of the mummy of Rameses II, believing that Americans would rush to “know the countenance of the

160. In 1900 and 1904 military officials added Native bodies killed in American military conflicts and other buried Native remains to the Army Medical Museum collection and later transferred them to the Smithsonian. For this and other narratives about amateur collectors’ and grave robbers’ contributions to anthropology museums, see Redman, *Bone Rooms*, 35, 53.

161. “Alaskan Mummies,” *New York Times*, Jan. 18, 1875, www.nytimes.com/1875/01/18/archives/alaskan-mummies-what-capt-hennig-found-in-the-aleutian-islands-an.html.

162. Redman, *Bone Rooms*, 18, 47.

163. Ibid., 19.

164. Ibid., 36.

despot” of the Old Testament and see the “marvel” of embalming.¹⁶⁵ He planned to purchase the “corpse of the King” for a sum of \$100,000, with crowds of paying customers at the World’s Columbian Exhibition bringing him an excellent return on his investment.¹⁶⁶ Barnum’s proposal combined attention-grabbing headlines, showmanship, and snippets of education to attract the morbid curiosity of crowds.¹⁶⁷ Although Barnum died before the fair opened, numerous exhibitions of Egyptian mummies throughout the nineteenth century became highly profitable enterprises.¹⁶⁸

In Gilded Age America, archaeological discoveries of human remains found closer to home might lack the glamor of distant Egyptian kings, but small towns took pride in displaying them before they headed to large anthropological museums.¹⁶⁹ In 1892, a Durango, Colorado, newspaper announced free local exhibitions of mummies of remarkable caliber, containing “ten mummified bodies and eighteen or more skulls some with hair on them in a good state of preservation,” boasting that “it is questionable, indeed, whether [sic] the Smithsonian Institute in Washington possesses so complete and varied a collection of relics of an extinct race.”¹⁷⁰ The newspaper stressed the scientific value of the exhibits, arguing that they provide “abundant food for study and investigation.”¹⁷¹

165. “P. T. Barnum,” World’s Fair Chicago 1893.

166. Ibid.

167. Redman, *Bone Rooms*, 36.

168. S. J. Wolfe and Robert Singerman, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America: Ancient Egyptians as Artifacts* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009).

169. In 1904 a Forest Service employee found a mummified body in Gila County, Arizona, which was displayed in a drugstore window of a nearby town for “a couple of days” before shipment to the Smithsonian. Redman, *Bone Rooms*, 42–43, 304 (note 66).

170. Ibid.

171. Ibid.

In contrast to showmen or ad hoc displays in the Southwest, early museum curators did not differentiate between the professional scientist and the public, with “no concessions to the limits of interest and attention span of the average visitor.”¹⁷² In its early decades, the “museum men” at the Field felt an obligation to educate the public without catering specifically to them.¹⁷³ Early programs, popular lectures, and publications served educational purposes, but museum vitrines displayed a maximum of specimens with a minimum of interpretation.¹⁷⁴ They were more like open storage, with chronological and geographical labels; viewers were expected to use an “empirical approach” to study the exhibits and draw their own conclusions.¹⁷⁵

Today, the Field Museum draws a sharp distinction between academic and amateur uses of collections and has moved away from displays of “open storage” without interpretive guidance. Exhibitions managers’ paramount consideration in designing new exhibits is to capture public attention. Hong, who has worked on several exhibitions containing human remains over seventeen years at the Field, explains that the modern museum exhibit draws on “a whole field of studies of public behavior, for instance in shopping malls or amusement parks, that tries to encourage certain behaviors.”¹⁷⁶ The museum uses similar principles to shopping-mall design, not to elicit a purchase, save for perhaps in the gift shop, but to prompt viewers to learn, discuss, and engage with research about scientific concepts. Managers use a “star object,” for example, SUE the *T. rex*, which will “have an immediate attraction” for visitors, and they pay attention to “flow” to create “an Aristotelian narrative

172. Collier and Tschopik, 25.

173. Ibid.

174. Ibid.

175. Ibid.

176. Janet Hong, video conference with the author, Dec. 24, 2020.

structure with a beginning, middle, and end,” which guides the viewer’s reception and reaction to the presentation.¹⁷⁷ In the case of human remains, such as an Egyptian mummy, Hong emphasizes that significant cultural consultation goes into decisions regarding the display of such an “object.”¹⁷⁸ Increased museum professionalism and societal awareness of the ethical issues of human-remains display have changed who can see human remains at the Field Museum, which bodies can be displayed, and for what reasons. According to Robert Martin, curator of biological anthropology (2001–13), the museum keeps human remains in locked storage and grants access only to “bona fide research workers” with approved research proposals.¹⁷⁹ Exhibitions staff and curators today play a larger role in guiding the public’s engagement with science, which makes it increasingly critical to examine the perspectives of those who create the displays and the motives behind which bodies are displayed and which are absent.

Human remains are undeniably “star objects.” The Field’s display of over twenty mummified individuals from Peru and Egypt was a major draw in 2012.¹⁸⁰ The museum recorded over 165,000 visitors in two months with an adult admission of twenty-nine dollars to *Opening the Vault: Mummies*, and the national tour “bolster[ed] the museum’s bottom line.”¹⁸¹ Martin considers it “immaterial” whether a display is free or

177. Ibid.; “SUE the *T. rex*: Get to Know the Dinosaur Known as Specimen FMNH PR 2081,” Field Museum, Feb. 5, 2018, www.fieldmuseum.org/blog/sue-t-rex.

178. Janet Hong, video conference with the author, Dec. 24, 2020.

179. Robert Martin, email message to author, Feb. 7, 2020.

180. Helen Robbins, interview with the author, Nov. 22, 2019.

181. Steve Johnson, “A First Look at the New ‘Mummies’ at the Field Museum,” *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 14, 2018, www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/museums/ct-ent-mummies-field-museum-0315-story.html.

accessible with an admission fee, as long as the display is “respectful and educational.”¹⁸² Hong elaborated on this point by differentiating between two models of exhibition: the principled educational museum versus the “edutainment extravaganza,” much akin to a sideshow, whose sole purpose is profit.¹⁸³ Museum professionals have long argued that while museums may not profit directly from exhibitions, exhibitions attract visitors and prestige, which are critical for seeking donations from foundations, federal agencies, and philanthropists.¹⁸⁴ Museums may be tempted to mount displays of mummies and other human remains to raise their profile, which has its own set of ethical concerns.

Hong says that the World Columbian Exposition’s sensationalism and showmanship is an example of an “edutainment extravaganza.” However, as the successor of the 1893 World’s Fair, the Field Museum blurs this distinction. The very same bodies from the World’s Fair, which are now in the Field Museum’s collection, were displayed in the *Opening the Vault* exhibit, albeit with a scientific focus on CT technology for noninvasive visualizations.¹⁸⁵ Although the show was exceptionally well-received by the public, some were frustrated by the display. Simkin, the director of cultural affairs and heritage at the Klahoose First Nation, which seeks to repatriate the remains of their ancestors from museums internationally, noted that

182. Robert Martin, email message to author, Feb. 7, 2020.

183. Janet Hong, video conference with the author, Dec. 24, 2020.

184. Janet Hong, video conference with the author, Dec. 24, 2020. In the 1940s Donald Collier, Field Museum curator, reflected that “most museums are becoming increasingly dependent upon public support” and have vested financial interests in their collections and exhibits. The high cost of planning and executing exhibits does not keep pace with visitors’ demand for novelty. He concluded that “exhibits can never pay for themselves” and museums must turn to philanthropic support. See Collier and Tschopik, 27.

185. Johnson, “A First Look,” *Chicago Tribune*.

mummies are big business in the museum industry. We take great pains to bring traveling exhibits like *Mummies* from the Field Museum, which as you probably know allows a three-dimensional look inside the mummies, and the belongings that accompanied them. This was a temporary exhibit that toured, visiting I think four or five major communities—that, to me, is *horrific!* And I mean, I get it, I get that people have an interest in that, but the idea that we have exhumed someone’s remains and put them on display … that just doesn’t sit well with me. I think, if that were my ancestor or my relation, how devastating that would be. … We have to steer away from that. And yet at the same time, we have great prestige associated with those kinds of exhibits.¹⁸⁶

Simkin believes that no deceased person should be displayed without their consent, regardless of when that person lived or the political or scientific context of the display. Simkin’s reaction reveals that what seems unambiguously “respectful and educational” to some may be “horrific” to others. It reveals as well that the subtle boundaries between respectable museum practice and “edutainment extravaganza” are currently shifting.

The most glaring instance of “edutainment extravaganza,” are the *Body Worlds* exhibitions that have toured worldwide since 1995 with over fifty million visitors, which makes it the “most successful traveling exhibition of all time.”¹⁸⁷ *Body Worlds* features the plastinated bodies of deceased people, most of them donors. These presentations add a “gloss of scientization to the dead,” while encouraging visitors to engage emotionally with health education and the concept of death.¹⁸⁸ *Body Worlds* focuses on anatomy rather than anthropology, but plastination, a process patented in

186. Jodi Simkin, telephone interview with author, Jan. 13, 2020.

187. “Philosophy,” *Body Worlds*.

188. Redman, “Reconsidering *Body Worlds*,” Conversation.

1977 where body fats and fluids are replaced by plastic, is a modern form of mummification.¹⁸⁹ To a greater extent than the Field Museum's *Opening the Vault*, these exhibits have conquered both the museum and popular entertainment market, selling tickets at accredited museums, including Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry, but also at the Luxor Resort and Casino in Las Vegas.¹⁹⁰ "While museum administrators voiced concern that visitors would be horrified viewing actual human bodies on exhibit, the public has instead proven to have an almost insatiable thirst for seeing scientized dead."¹⁹¹

In 2004, *Der Spiegel* magazine implicated *Body Worlds* in a scandal over the source of bodies in its exhibits. The German anatomist, Gunther von Hagens, who is responsible for the showcases, agreed to return seven corpses to China, admitting that certain bodies in his exhibitions "might have" been executed prisoners.¹⁹² At a *Body Worlds* center in China "at least two corpses out of some 647" had "bullet holes in their skulls."¹⁹³ The center was near "three prison camps housing political detainees and Falun Gong practitioners, where dissidents are executed by shots to the head."¹⁹⁴ Von Hagens denied previous accusations of "buying remains of prisoners, homeless, and mentally ill people in Russia" and "insisted that

189. "Philosophy," *Body Worlds*; "Plastination Technique," *Body Worlds*.

190. "Our Exhibitions Worldwide," *Body World*, n.d., accessed Mar. 12, 2022, bodyworlds.com/exhibitions/tickets; "Bodies: The Exhibition," Luxor Las Vegas, n.d., accessed Mar. 12, 2022, luxor.mgmresorts.com/en/entertainment/bodies-the-exhibition.html.

191. Redman, "Reconsidering *Body Worlds*," Conversation.

192. Luke Harding, "Von Hagens Forced to Return Corpses to China," *Guardian*, Jan. 23, 2004, www.theguardian.com/world/2004/jan/23/arts.china.

193. Ibid.

194. Ibid.

all the people who appear in his exhibitions had signed releases prior to their death."¹⁹⁵

More than a problem of museums' colonist past, the *Body Worlds* scandals demonstrate that the potential for "grave robbing" persists today, especially when profit is a primary motive for showing human remains. As Samuel Redman, a historian of human-remains collections, says, "follow the money and there's usually an interesting answer."¹⁹⁶ Investigating the lingering controversies associated with human-remains displays is important for stimulating ethical debates about contemporary public opinion and about the need for cautious practices in displaying mummified remains in museums and for-profit organizations.

Authority and the Construction of Museum Narratives

A unifying theme in this thesis is who has the power to collect and own these bodies and who defines the narrative in human-remains display. This section explores narrative authority in depth. I first provide a brief history of museum authority, followed by two case studies, which explore (1) the narratives communicated by museum professionals through "paleoart" displays at the Field Museum, and the evolution of these narratives from racial pseudoscience and evolutionary superiority in the mid- to late twentieth century to current narratives of evolutionary connectivity and diversity; and (2) the emergence of alternative narratives outside of museum walls by Native groups seeking repatriation of Kennewick Man.

Museums in Europe and the United States adopted ideas of the French Revolution to transform the museum from a private collection of randomly chosen artifacts to "rational" public displays of artifacts

195. Ibid.

196. Samuel Redman, video conference with the author, Jan. 8, 2020.

within a narrative of progress.¹⁹⁷ Museums were “repositories and narrators” of official nationalism.¹⁹⁸ Tony Bennett argues that opening the museum to the wider public was a “regulating mechanism” of the state to civilize the working class through exposure to the “pedagogical mores of middle-class culture,” and Pierre Bourdieu argues that museums produce a dominant ideology as state-sponsored cultural institutions, which contribute to capitalist society and reproduce structural inequalities and ideals of nationhood.¹⁹⁹ Over the past fifty years, continuous scrutiny and criticism have destabilized the museum’s “cultural authority” to frame and affirm the pursuit of truth and to define what is historically and culturally significant.²⁰⁰ Various theories (postmodernism, postcolonialism, feminism, Foucauldian) have questioned the authority of the museum.²⁰¹ These ongoing debates reveal that the construction of a museum narrative is subjective and that museums can no longer claim an uncontested objectivity as the source of authority and truth.²⁰² Prior to the 1980s, most museum literature contained reports about exhibitions, with only marginal commentary on the social and educational role of museums.²⁰³ After the 1980s, scholars rejected the notion that

197. Jenkins, 57.

198. Ibid.

199. Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 57.

200. Jenkins, 54–55.

201. Ibid., 63.

202. Ibid.

203. Nick Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case: The Past, the Heritage and the Public* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991).

museums present value-neutral facts.²⁰⁴ Feminist and Foucauldian reflections on institutional power over the body called attention to the political ramifications of human-remains displays, and postcolonial theories influenced repatriation efforts and the view that museums were a “damaging reflection of the prejudices of European cultures.”²⁰⁵

A relevant case study for examining changing museum narratives is the display methods for representing long-deceased individuals, now known as “paleoart.”²⁰⁶ These displays seldom contain human remains and, as such, avoid the ethical considerations discussed above. They are, however, a historic record of how museum professionals embody, capture, and present humanity within a scientific narrative. Ideas of scientific racism and primitivism, which made the anthropological collection and display of the physical remains of indigenous people acceptable, were reflected in the sculptural art in the Field Museum’s Hall of the Races of Mankind (1934–68) and the Hall of Prehistoric Man (1933–88).²⁰⁷ With shifts in the anthropological narrative, the discipline has moved

204. Jenkins, 63.

205. Ibid., 63, 117.

206. “The term paleoart was introduced in the late 1980s by the natural history illustrator, Mark Hallett (1986). … Paleoart became a catchy synonym to paleontological sculptures and paintings. Since then, this term has been widely used both in academic and informal media to refer to any artistic representation of a prehistoric organism or environment.” Marco Ansón, Manuel H. Fernández, and Pedro A. Saura Ramos, “Paleoart: Term and Conditions (A Survey among Paleontologists),” in *Current Trends in Paleontology and Evolution 13: Conference Proceedings* (Cerdilla, Spain: Early-Stage Researchers in Paleontology, April 15–18, 2015), 28, www.researchgate.net/publication/275408446_Paleoart_Term_and_Conditions_A_survey_among_paleontologists.

207. “Looking at Ourselves: Rethinking the Sculptures of Malvina Hoffman,” Field Museum, accessed Apr. 21, 2020, www.fieldmuseum.org/exhibitions/looking-ourselves-rethinking-sculptures-malvina-hoffman; Yastrow and Nash, 130, 135.

from racial differences and evolutionary progress to displays of evolutionary lineage among prehistoric and historic humans in the *Evolving Planet* exhibit (2006–present).²⁰⁸

Henry Field²⁰⁹ conceived of the Hall of the Races of Mankind and approached the sculptor, Malvina Hoffman,²¹⁰ in the late 1920s to produce “morphologically accurate and emotionally expressive” life-sized figures representing the “155 racial types.”²¹¹ The plan was winnowed down to twenty full-length figures, twenty-seven life-size busts, and one hundred life-size heads. For a fee of \$109,000 plus expenses, Hoffman traveled the world to observe all the “human types” featured in her work.²¹² Unveiled in 1934, the wildly popular sculptures, based on living individuals, strove to capture racial types, “with particular emphasis being laid on primitive and lesser known peoples of the world.”²¹³ The museum dismantled the exhibit in 1968, by which time the “concept of race had

208. Kevin McKeough, “‘Evolving Planet’ Prompts Thoughts of Past, Future,” *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 13, 2006, www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2006-03-13-0603130211-story.html.

209. Grand-nephew to the museum’s benefactor, Marshall Field, and curator of anthropology at the Field Museum. See S. J. Redman, “Yesterday’s City: Henry Field’s Legendary Expeditions,” *Chicago History*, Fall 2006, 45, issuu.com/chicagohistorymuseum/docs/2006fall-chm-chicagohistory-vol34-no3/s/11440618.

210. For a nuanced analysis of Hoffman’s contributions to the Field Museum’s racial typologies, see Tracy Lang Teslow, “Reifying Race: Science and Art in Races of Mankind at the Field Museum of Natural History,” in *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture*, ed. Sharon Macdonald (London: Routledge, 1998), 53–76.

211. Yastrow and Nash, 131.

212. Ibid.

213. Henry Field, *The Races of Mankind: An Introduction to Chauncey Kepp Memorial Hall* (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1933), 13, archive.org/details/racesofmankindin30fiel/page/n27/mode/2up?view=theater.

become anathema to anthropologists.”²¹⁴ Though not strictly depicting human prehistory, this exhibit was part of a primitivism narrative, demonstrating how certain races were more representative of “original man” than others and, thus, conveyed a static vision of racial hierarchy. The reconfigured narrative of the current exhibit of fifty bronzes, *Looking at Ourselves: Rethinking the Sculptures of Malvina Hoffman*, considers the individuality of the subjects: the curators searched Hoffman’s notes for names and, where those were unspecified, did their best to ascribe each sculpture to an ethnic group.²¹⁵

The Hall of Prehistoric Man, featuring bones of prehistoric humans and life-size sculptures of human ancestors, narrated an early concept of evolution that conflated biological evolution, cultural “advances” towards European society, and technological “progress.”²¹⁶ In the late 1920s, Henry Field asked sculptor Fredrick C. Blaschke to create realistic statues of prehistoric humans engaged in daily rituals to illustrate both societal and evolutionary progress. Starting with *Homo erectus*, then the earliest-known human ancestor, the hominid models were arranged in dioramas featuring real tools obtained from archaeological digs.²¹⁷ The exhibit featured the recently acquired skeleton of the Magdalenian Girl, then “the most complete European Upper Paleolithic skeleton in any museum in North America.”²¹⁸ An opening-day crowd of twenty-two hundred came to see “miss Cro-Magnon,” and the museum’s director

214. Yastrow and Nash, 135.

215. “*Looking at Ourselves: Rethinking the Sculptures of Malvina Hoffman*,” Field Museum.

216. Yastrow and Nash, 135.

217. Ibid., 136.

218. Ibid., 137; Stephen E. Nash, “The Blockbuster Exhibit that Shouldn’t Have Been,” *Sapiens*, Nov. 30, 2021, www.sapiens.org/column/curiosities/magdalenian-girl.

could “hardly believe his eyes.”²¹⁹ Field remarked that this was the “first exhibit to capture the public and press imagination” so thoroughly, and he encouraged the president and Board of Trustees to finance more life-like dioramas.²²⁰ Installed in 1933, the Hall of Prehistoric Man remained virtually unchanged for half a century, despite dated cultural notions and chronology. The museum dismantled it in 1988.²²¹

The modern successor of the Hall of Prehistoric Man is *Evolving Planet*. This exhibition contains the sculptural reconstruction of Selam, the juvenile *A. afarensis* fossil, 60 percent intact, found at Dikika, Ethiopia, in 2000 by the paleoanthropologist, Zeresenay Alemseged.²²² Selam’s bones are displayed in Ethiopia, but Alemseged collaborated with paleo-artist Élisabeth Daynès to reconstruct what Selam might have looked like when she lived 3.3 million years ago. Daynès says that her sculptural work is the result of “uninterrupted dialogue” with scientists, anatomists, anthropologists, paleopathologists, and paleogeneticists to provide the most lifelike vision of the individual possible.²²³ When remains are intact, she makes casts of the cranium and other bones; when remains are fragmented, she works with laboratories and scientists to reconstruct the bones digitally, then “materializes it” using 3D printing.²²⁴ Her forensic analysis of the bones produces an “identity card” of the subject, comprising such factors as age, sex, pathologies, diet, and living conditions. The

219. Yastrow and Nash, 136.

220. Ibid.

221. Ibid.

222. “DIK-1-1,” Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, accessed Mar. 13, 2022, humanorigins.si.edu/evidence/human-fossils/fossils/dik-1-1; “Dikika Research Project,” California Academy of Science, accessed Mar. 13, 2022, www.calacademy.org/scientists/projects/dikika-research-project.

223. Élisabeth Daynès, email message to the author, Mar. 9, 2020.

224. Ibid.

identity card and references to other hominids inform her vision of the individual as she “fleshes out” its body; she acknowledges the more the paleoartist “moves away” from the bone structure, the more the likeness becomes subjective and interpretive.²²⁵

In contrast to the racialized narratives of the Halls of Prehistoric Man and the Races of Mankind, Daynès and Alemseged stress the modern viewers’ connection to diverse prehistoric humans. For Daynès, her representations are both scientific—a “synthesis of knowledge on the origins of man” and as accurate as possible—and visceral—a “face-to-face meeting between these individuals and the public” so that they can experience looking into the eyes of someone who lived millions of years ago.²²⁶ Precision and details generate “empathy and understanding” to guide the public to “be sensitive to the human family” and to “question our origins.”²²⁷ Alemseged believes that paleoart allows visitors to “communicate with their ancestors,” giving them an “enriched passion” and prompting scientific curiosity. He notes that people point naturally to themselves, then to their family and friends, in photographs. Presenting Selam as a human encourages viewers to relate to her as a part of the story of human evolution. From there, he says, people can envision our situation as a species within deep time and can understand the place of *Homo sapiens* within the broader biodiversity of our planet.²²⁸ *Evolving Planet*’s physical representations of Selam, and another *A. afarensis* fossil, Lucy, do not present living humanity, *H. sapiens sapiens*, as superior to the past, but as a small stage of a long evolutionary lineage.

A primary objective of human-remains exhibits in museums has been to satisfy longstanding curiosity about our origins, histories, mortality,

225. Ibid.

226. Ibid.

227. Ibid.

228. Zeresenay Alemseged, interview with the author, Nov. 13, 2019.

and identities. This curiosity drives the persistent popularity of these displays.²²⁹ Rather than dismiss the desire to see the remains of the dead as morbid, perverse, or voyeuristic, Hong says, “I don’t think people should be denigrated for being titillated by things they don’t know.”²³⁰ “Even to the most nihilistic isolationist human being,” says Robbins, “contemplation is important—that knowledge [the viewer] can get from the human body about who [these people] were, or what they did.”²³¹ Seeing the human body displayed in an anthropological setting provides a unique opportunity for viewers to reflect on their humanity, an opportunity which many museum visitors crave. Alemseged says that evoking the viewer’s “scientific curiosity” and their “nostalgic curiosity” through displaying human remains can encourage deeper thinking: “We are dealing with a very symbolic species. *Homo sapiens* love to imagine,” so the best way to encourage reflection is to have viewers look at “something that’s part of them.”²³² To Alemseged, displaying human remains harnesses the psychological mechanism of humans to relate themselves to the things they see, in order to “present the public with the [scientific] data that they need to understand where they come from.” Repatriation Director Robbins also stresses the responsibility of the museum for scientific accuracy, musing that “if you portray an *Australopithecus* riding around on a Tasmanian devil … that’s unethical.”²³³ Paleoartist John Gurche takes this farther, emphasizing that the museum has an obligation to the public to demonstrate that evolution is more than a “fantasy” concocted by some scientist, but is a concept that viewers can comprehend

229. Samuel Redman, video conference with the author, Jan. 8, 2020.

230. Janet Hong, video conference with the author, Dec. 24, 2020.

231. Helen Robbins, interview with the author, Nov. 22, 2019.

232. Zeresenay Alemseged, interview with the author, Nov. 13, 2019.

233. Helen Robbins, interview with the author, Nov. 22, 2019.

through their own experience.²³⁴ Finally, Alemseged believes that communicating a scientific understanding of our past could be critical to the future survival of our species, by generating understanding of our connection to the broader biodiversity of the planet and affecting the questions we ask and decisions we make going forward.²³⁵

The Field Museum dismantled the Hall of the Races of Mankind in 1968 and the Hall of Prehistoric Man 1988 in response to alternative narratives that arose from the repatriation and civil rights movements in the 1960s and 1970s. These narratives altered not only how museum professionals develop exhibits, such as the *Evolving Planet*, but also establish alternative authorities on managing human remains within or destined for museums. To understand this expansion of authority, the next case study considers the repatriation debate of Kennewick Man and exposes the “crisis of cultural authority” within museums. Repatriation cases concern five claimant groups over the ownership of human remains. The first is direct descendants, such as indigenous groups claiming ancestry or cultural affiliation under NAGPRA. The second is scientists who assert their right to study the body to generate knowledge. The third is museums, affiliated with scientific authority, who draw on institutional and cultural prestige to safeguard those remains. The fourth is the land-owner where the body was found or the nation-state to which the body belongs. A final claimant is the lawmakers and courts, who have the authority to broker a compromise between other parties. All these claimants had a stake in the discovery of Kennewick Man.

234. John Gurche, telephone interview with the author, Jan. 11, 2020.

235. Zeresenay Alemseged, interview with the author, Nov. 13, 2019.

Kennewick Man, or the Ancient One, lived nine thousand years ago.²³⁶ Found in Kennewick, Washington, in 1996, the discovery led to a twenty-year court battle between scientists and indigenous groups. The Umatilla people and a coalition of other tribes, citing their cultural beliefs, claimed the remains for reburial under NAGPRA. The landowners, the US Army Corps of Engineers, sided with the Umatilla, but two archaeologists, James Chatters and Douglas Owsley, backed by the Smithsonian, filed a lawsuit on behalf of the rights of scientists to study Kennewick Man.²³⁷ The archaeologists argued that the bones resembled the Ainu rather than modern Native Americans.²³⁸ A “court ruled in 2002 that the bones were not related to living tribes: thus NAGPRA did not apply. The judge ordered the corps to make the specimen available to the plaintiffs for study.”²³⁹ A subsequent study found that Kennewick Man’s origins could not be determined via DNA.²⁴⁰ Chatters and Owsley revisited cranial measurements in 2014 and hypothesized that Kennewick Man was related to Pacific Rim seafarers, overturning the theory that inhabitants of the Americas arrived via the Bering Land Bridge.²⁴¹ Their

study was not peer reviewed and used antiquated techniques.²⁴² New DNA sequencing methods in 2015 showed the presence of mitochondrial haplogroup X2a and Y-chromosome haplogroup Q-M3, found almost exclusively in Native Americans.²⁴³ The remains were returned to the tribes for reburial on February 17, 2017.²⁴⁴

As with the Kennewick Man case, when asked whether the Field Museum owns the bodies it displays, interviewees expressed differing opinions. Hong, an exhibition manager affiliated with the museum, responds definitively: “Yes, I do.”²⁴⁵ Robbins—as the museum’s repatriation director and situated between the descendants, the scientists, the museum, and the legalities of NAGPRA—takes a more nuanced perspective: “Legally the Field Museum does own some bodies. … But I think, if you ask certain lawyers, they will say you cannot own human remains, certainly in Britain under the Human Tissue Act. … In anthropology certain issues, like consent, factor in. … Maybe the question is not *can* you own a body, but *should* you. Ownership is just so socially contingent, I really don’t think anybody *knows* [if you can own a body].”²⁴⁶ Simkin, who works with descendants, frames ownership as an issue of belonging: human remains belong at “home” with their Native communities, and she feels a profound responsibility to bring the deceased, “who can’t do anything for themselves,” back to their relatives and to help the community can

236. “Kennewick Man Skeletal Find May Revolutionize Continent’s History,” ScienceDaily, Apr. 26, 2006, www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2006/04/060425183740.htm.

237. Douglas Preston, “The Kennewick Man Finally Freed to Share His Secrets,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, Sept. 2014, www.smithsonianmag.com/history/kennewick-man-finally-freed-share-his-secrets-180952462.

238. Ibid.

239. Ibid.

240. Morten Rasmussen et al., “The Ancestry and Affiliations of Kennewick Man,” *Nature* 523 (2015): 455–58, doi.org/10.1038/nature14625.

241. Preston, “The Kennewick Man Finally Freed,” *Smithsonian Magazine*.

242. John Stang, “Burke Archaeologist Challenges Smithsonian over Kennewick Man,” Crosscut, Nov. 1, 2012, crosscut.com/2012/11/kennewick-man-critique.

243. Rasmussen et al., 455–58.

244. “Tribes Lay Remains of Kennewick Man to Rest,” *Spokane Spokesman-Review*, Feb. 20, 2017, www.spokesman.com/stories/2017/feb/20/tribes-lay-remains-of-kennewick-man-to-rest.

245. Janet Hong, video conference with the author, Dec. 24, 2020.

246. Helen Robbins, interview with the author, Nov. 22, 2019.

“heal.”²⁴⁷ Alemseged, as a scientist who navigates political considerations to bring his research to the public, comments that in one sense the Ethiopian government owns the story of Selam, whose *A. afarensis* remains are displayed in Addis Ababa, but that all humanity can claim ownership to Selam’s story of human evolution.²⁴⁸

As seen in the shift of museum narratives from racialized “progress” to evolutionary connections and in the successes of the repatriation movement, museums have become sites of theoretical debate about the construction of national histories and the representation of cultural groups. Although museum professionals have not relinquished claims to authority, they now avoid a singular scientific narrative in favor of collaborations with Native groups and engage in a “politics of recognition” of cultural narratives.²⁴⁹ Field Museum curators consult increasingly with Native descendants, and the Native North America Hall features Native voices and artwork. The Field is now, “first, asking the questions” that lead to sensitive, intentional displays of human remains.²⁵⁰ These essential questions should include, Who is affected by the way this science is portrayed? Have we consulted with the people represented by this narrative? What is the intention and purpose behind these exhibits, and what is ultimately being conveyed to the viewer?

247. Jodi Simkin, telephone interview with author, Jan. 13, 2020.

248. Zeresenay Alemseged, interview with the author, Nov. 13, 2019.

249. Jenkins, 62.

250. Helen Robbins, interview with the author, Nov. 22, 2019.

Summary

Museum exhibits, whether they educate, titillate, entertain, or provoke, reflect a culture’s understanding of what is worthy of display within a given period in time. The politics, science, and ethics of museum displays are a microcosm of a society’s biases, influences, and authority. They disseminate what is seen as truth, which ideas are groundbreaking, and whose perspectives are given weight. The Field Museum is a single locus in an international network of anthropological collections and displays. This analysis of the Field’s historical trajectory reveals how museum narratives are constructed, challenged, and changed.

The rhetorical argument, “how would you feel if *your* grandmother’s grave were opened” and her remains put on display, presented by Cheyenne spiritual leader Bill Tall Bull to the US Senate, holds less sway when the person in question is not anyone’s grandmother, but a very distant ancestor.²⁵¹ Cultural differences also color whether one perceives ancestry to human remains on display. The controversy of Kennewick Man, for example, reveals the perception of ancestry as a cultural, and sometimes individual, sentiment.²⁵² The Umatilla people’s claim to the Kennewick Man is based on their spiritual connection to their ancestors, a belief not shared by the scientific community. At the same time, Egyptian or Peruvian mummies, which are not as old as Kennewick Man, remain on display for nationalistic or commercial reasons.²⁵³

251. Stan Hoig, Paul Rosier, and Ada Elizabeth Deer, *The Cheyenne* (New York: Infobase, 2009), 100.

252. Rasmussen, 455–58.

253. Native Americans, visiting the Field Museum to repatriate their ancestors, had no qualms about seeing Egyptian mummies on display. Helen Robbins, interview with the author, Nov. 22, 2019.

For some, emotional gravity diminishes when viewing the fossil of a hominin that lived millions of years ago. Newer, more philosophical methods of displaying human remains seek to expand how visitors relate to ancestors who lived in deep time. John Gurche, whose work is featured at the Field Museum, makes three-dimensional reconstructions of hominins and believes the distinction we draw between “human” and “non-human” species when thinking of early hominin ancestors is artificially; these ancestors are “gradually becoming human.”²⁵⁴ He notes the “irony” that, while early anthropological displays objectified the bones of more recently deceased humans, his work seeks to *personify* the bones of prehistoric hominins and to imbue the bones of protohumans with something that is, if not distinctly human, *beingness*.²⁵⁵ He uses biomechanical and anatomical knowledge to bring to life a being that is not simply a “fantasy,” as it would be if he were to make an artistic representation without scientific accuracy.²⁵⁶ In parallel to the collectors who felt a responsibility to collect remains before, they feared, tribes would go extinct, Gurche feels a responsibility through his artwork to preserve the fossils of prehistoric hominins for the future: “We’re not necessarily going to find another Lucy in the next generation.”²⁵⁷ But perhaps unlike collectors who sought institutional ownership of remains, Gurche believes that they belong conceptually to all humanity. Although museums may be most qualified to maintain physical stewardship of these fossilized bones, paleoart encourages the viewer to relate to the exhibited individuals as living breathing beings and to share the stewardship that comes with that relationship.

This thesis asks what it means to own a body and what it means to lay claim to one’s ancestors. It examines how the attempt to pin down “what is a human” is part of an ever-changing narrative. Museum displays of human remains reveal the history of how individuals, cultural groups, institutions, and governments vie for authority to present, construct, and define what it means to be human. The ways the dead are displayed reflect on both the viewers and the institution, as well as their place in both the past, the present, and the future world. How viewers relate to the dead—as an ancestor or their heritage—situates their lives in relation to time and space. How an institution displays the dead—as scientific specimen or cultural being—has the power to promote and shape future worldviews. ○

254. John Gurche, telephone interview with the author, Jan. 11, 2020.

255. Ibid.

256. Ibid.

257. Ibid.

Appendix: Interviews

The University of Chicago Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board approved my study outline and proposed interview questions (IRB19-1623). I interviewed nine subjects with divergent viewpoints surrounding repatriation, museum displays, exhibitions, curatorial practices, and bioanthropological research.²⁵⁸ I contacted interviewees via email, offered them their choice of interview format (email, in-person, etc.), and sent them IRB-approved questions tailored to each subject prior to the interview. Question involved (1) professional roles and responsibilities; (2) interactions with displays of human remains; and (3) philosophical concerns, such as, “From your perspective, who owns a dead body?”; “At what point should a hominin, or early human primate ancestor, be considered human?”; and “Do you think that the field of archaeology is making progress in displaying the human body?” I intended interviews to last a half hour, but they often continued for over an hour. I recorded and transcribed interviews and kept email correspondence.

258. I was unfortunately unable to include the perspective of an indigenous person who had successfully sought repatriation from the Field Museum due to the sensitivity of such an inquiry and a thesis deadline. I will include such a perspective should I expand the thesis in the future. I do include published perspectives of repatriation activists in different historical eras and in relation to different institutions.

Zeresenay Alemseged, Donald N. Pritzker Professor of Organismal Biology and Anatomy, University of Chicago, interview, Nov. 13, 2019

Élisabeth Daynès, paleoartist, email, Mar. 9, 2020

John Gurche, paleoartist, telephone interview, Jan. 11, 2020

Janet Hong, project manager for exhibitions, Field Museum of Natural History, video conference, Dec. 24, 2019

María Cecila Lozada, Peruvian bioarchaeologist and codirector of the Spanish language program, Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Chicago, interview, Nov. 6, 2019

Robert Martin, curator emeritus, Negaunee Integrative Research Center, Field Museum of Natural History, email, Feb. 7, 2020

Samuel J. Redman, associate professor of history, University of Massachusetts Amherst, video conference, Jan. 8, 2020

Helen Robbins, repatriations director, Field Museum of Natural History, interview, Nov. 22, 2019

Jodi Simkin, director of cultural affairs and heritage, Klahoose First Nation, telephone interview, Jan. 13, 2020

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Renters, Buildings, and Scale



A Spatial Analysis of Urban Tree Cover in Chicago

SAMUEL BUCKBERRY JOYCE, AB'20

Introduction

Cities are human constructions, planned and organized to suit human needs, wants, desires, and goals. As a consequence, when a tree appears in a long-established urban center, someone, at some point, made the decision to plant that tree. There is a natural aspect to that decision: trees grow best in sites with appropriate soil, light, and water. But there is also a human aspect: the decision to plant a tree reflects the values and priorities of landowners, present and past. The original landowner (or resident) had to want to plant a tree and subsequent landowners had to value the tree enough not to cut it down. Differences in financial priorities, resources, cultural values, and expected tenure in the neighborhood can all influence the decision to plant and maintain a tree, which produces the eventual variation in tree cover across a city.

Once in place, urban trees are not passive scenery. Beyond their role as habitat for birds and other animals, trees provide an array of essential ecosystem services: stormwater management (Berland et al., 2017), temperature control (Coseo & Larsen, 2014), air pollution reduction (Nowak et al., 2006), and carbon sequestration (Kendall & McPherson, 2012),

among others. Although the general term *tree cover*, or *tree canopy cover*, is not a perfect proxy for what trees provide, because of different benefits related to age and species (Riley & Gardiner, 2020), places with more tree cover tend to have more of these benefits. Therefore, the uneven distribution of trees across a city can contribute to inequities among different neighborhoods and socioeconomic groups.

Recent research of urban tree distribution has focused on the relationship between homeownership and tree canopy cover. The landmark paper by Perkins et al. (2004) of a Milwaukee tree-planting program found a statistically significant positive correlation between homeownership and canopy cover at the census-tract level in residential neighborhoods and a corresponding negative correlation in census tracts with more renters. They suggest that two factors may produce this relationship: residential mobility (more transient renters are less likely to ever benefit from the trees they plant) and housing maintenance (renters probably do not invest in improvements that enhance property values and cause rents to rise). Other studies in various cities and at various spatial scales have corroborated an inverse correlation between rentership and tree cover (Heynen et al., 2006; Landry & Chakraborty, 2009; Koo et al., 2019). Scholars have, however, understudied the role of the built environment. Renters tend to live in neighborhoods with more paved surfaces and larger buildings that leave less space for planting trees; the observed relationship between renters and tree cover may merely be the product of renters living in neighborhoods with less space for trees. This paper addresses this gap in the literature by investigating the relationship between tree cover, rentership, and the built environment of Chicago.

A “traditional” model of Chicago, which uses socioeconomic indicators, will show a negative relationship between rentership and tree cover in Chicago, in line with the general academic consensus. In this study, however, I found that adding aspects of the built environment to the model, including single-family housing, age of housing, and use of public

transportation, erases the apparent relationship between rentership and tree cover. This finding indicates that the previously accepted explanations for the relationship between tree cover and rentership—residential mobility, housing maintenance, and the political influence of homeowners discussed by Landry and Chakraborty (2009)—have to be reevaluated in the light of this new evidence to account for other factors that influence the distribution of urban trees. While additional research is necessary to confirm that the observed relationship between rentership and tree cover is the product of land use, these results provide a preliminary indicator that previous explanations may not fully reflect all drivers of tree distribution. This has broad-ranging implications for urban tree-planting programs and other policy initiatives that seek to redress environmental inequities in urban environments.

Literature Review

Importance of the Urban Forest

The first and perhaps most obvious role of urban trees is to provide habitat for surrounding plants (Wittig & Becker, 2010) and animals, including birds (Parsons et al., 2006), cottontails (Abu Baker et al., 2015), ants (Yasuda & Koike, 2009), bats (Rhodes et al., 2006), squirrels (Merwe et al., 2007), and several other species (LaMontagne et al., 2015).

Second, urban trees contribute to human health. One such service is stormwater management. Tree canopies capture rain that would otherwise fall to the ground, mitigating the impact of heavy rainfall on sewer systems, and tree root networks loosen the soil, promoting water flow (Berland et al., 2017). Canopies and root networks also reduce nitrogen runoff that contributes to algal blooms in lakes, rivers, and ponds (Dennman et al., 2006).

Third, trees help mitigate the “urban heat island” effect, which increases temperatures in urban areas compared to surrounding rural areas. After

impervious surfaces (such as asphalt or concrete), tree canopy is the second most important variable for daily nighttime air temperatures in Chicago (Coseo & Larsen, 2014). Large-scale tree planting in Chicago could reduce citywide temperatures by up to 1.4°C (Akbari et al., 2001). This was a specific goal in Chicago's Climate Action Plan, which emphasized tree plantings by the Park District and the Bureau of Forestry (Coffee et al., 2010).

Fourth, urban trees reduce carbon emissions. In Chicago, trees planted adjacent to buildings can reduce energy demand by providing shade and wind deflection, resulting in a reduction of carbon emissions from 3.2% to 3.9% for buildings with 33% tree cover and from -0.2% to 3.8% with 11% tree coverage (Jo & McPherson, 2001). Urban trees can produce seasonal cooling-energy savings of up to 30% and heating-energy savings of 10% to 15% (Akbari et al., 2001). Carbon dioxide reduction through photosynthesis, though, is fairly minimal: in Chicago, the carbon stored in urban trees amounts to just 0.3% of citywide emissions (McGraw et al., 2010). The authors argue that tree-planting programs, despite this minor effect, could still be worthwhile, because they are deployed relatively easily and have significant additional benefits.

Fifth, urban trees increase residential and commercial property values. An early study in Athens, Georgia (Anderson & Cordell, 1988), demonstrated that a front-yard tree increased a house's sale price by approximately 1.1%. Subsequent studies, using a range of methodologies, have consistently found that urban trees increase property values. In Los Angeles, a novel model that controlled for spatial autocorrelation to evaluate the effect of "green cover" (determined by remote sensing) found that trees increased nearby housing prices substantially (Conway et al., 2010). A study using site-specific field measurement, rather than remote sensing, found that assessed property values increased on average by \$1,586 per tree on a property (Escobedo et al., 2015). A hedonic price

model¹ found that the number of street trees fronting a property increased home values (Donovan & Butry, 2010).

Finally, public opinion on urban trees is not driven substantially by any of these benefits. An extensive research survey found that urban residents value trees primarily for aesthetic and psychological benefits; while residents mentioned trees' role as wildlife habitat fairly often, they rarely mentioned property values and carbon storage (Peckham et al., 2013). Another research survey confirmed that aesthetic and psychological benefits play a strong role in shaping where people live: 75% of residents said trees on a property were important in selecting a home, and 77% said trees in a community were important in selecting a community (Zhang et al., 2007).

Spatial Inequities in the Urban Forest: The Case of Renters

Several studies have used spatial patterns to identify a relationship between tree cover and concentrations of low-income or minority residents. One of the oldest found a strong negative relationship between tree cover and the percentages of the non-white population and the poverty rate in New Orleans (Talarchek, 1990). Other work has found that high canopy cover correlates with higher levels of education and older housing stock (Heynen & Lindsey, 2003). The relationship between income, education, and dense tree cover was also observed in Brazil (Pedlowski et al., 2002) and Canada (Greene et al., 2018). Although these studies did not investigate the relationship between tree cover and homeownership specifically, they show that a neighborhood's tree cover can be influenced by its social and economic composition.

1. "Hedonic pricing is most often seen in the housing market, since real estate prices are determined by the characteristics of the property itself as well as the neighborhood or environment within which it exists" (Hargrave, 2021).

There is a well-established connection between high concentrations of renters and less tree cover, in part because rentership often correlates closely with the socioeconomic metrics used in other studies on this subject (Vlist et al., 2002). In Milwaukee's tree-planting program, for example, low homeownership correlated to low tree density (Perkins et al., 2004). A later work demonstrated that this relationship applied to residential canopy cover throughout Milwaukee, beyond the context of the city's planting program; the study concluded that renters, who move more frequently, may be less willing to plant trees and that landlords often see trees as maintenance nuisances and insurance liabilities (Heynen et al., 2006). In some cities, residential programs may simply exclude renters as a matter of course by requiring proof of homeowners' insurance (Ragsdale, 2012). A study in Tampa, Florida, of tree cover in residential rights-of-way confirmed the same mechanism identified in Perkins et al.; it concluded that homeowners understand the relationship of trees to property values and use their political influence to demand public tree planting in their neighborhoods (Landry & Chakraborty, 2009). The "opportunity cost" of trees on private land, which occupy ground that homeowners could otherwise use for a swimming pool or patio, means that they may see a higher net benefit from public trees than private ones (Pandit et al., 2013).

Several other studies have used various quantitative methods to measure the relationship between urban vegetation and renter-occupied housing. Remote sensing data and field observations of canopy cover and carbon storage potential show a negative correlation with the percentage of renters and no other neighborhood demographic indicators (Raciti et al., 2014). An innovative methodology—mapping street greenery through Google Street View—found a significant and positive association between owner-occupied units and vegetation (both private gardens and trees) (Li et al., 2016). A longitudinal study found that Atlanta's urban canopy has a consistently negative relationship with the proportion of renters in a neighborhood in both 2000 and 2013, even

as the city's demographic makeup changed and the relationship between African American and Hispanic American populations and tree cover shifted from a negative to a positive correlation (Koo et al., 2019).

Some research suggests that historic demographic patterns also influence tree cover. Rates of owner-occupied housing in inner-city Baltimore correlated positively with yard stewardship and expenditures, but not tree stewardship, which suggests a "legacy effect": trees planted before white flight in the 1960s contribute to the present-day tree canopy (Troy et al., 2007). Later work, also in Baltimore, found that historic demographic patterns are more predictive of the current urban canopy than present demographics (Boone et al., 2010).

A handful of studies found no clear relationship between homeownership and tree cover, but unique characteristics explained the relationship in each case, and these are unlikely to apply to Chicago, the focus of this study. A positive correlation between renters and backyard vegetation in Montreal may be the product of the city's history as a "city of tenants," where home ownership is rarer than comparable North American cities; also, Montreal contains a unique mix of housing types where high-rises border owner-occupied detached houses surrounded by planted yards (Pham et al., 2013). The laws in some cities discourage homeowners from planting trees. For example, there is no significant relationship between owner-occupied housing and tree canopy in Portland, Oregon, where the municipal code states that the city owns all trees in rights-of-way but requires homeowners to maintain them (Ramsey, 2019). Home ownership and management duties for trees in the public right-of-way may vary between municipalities, streets, and even road segments, potentially explaining some variation between cities, though no study has examined this effect directly across multiple cities (Fischer & Steed, 2008).

Spatial Inequalities and Neighborhood Preferences

Grove et al. (2006) introduced the concept of neighborhood lifestyle characteristics to explain the finding that lifestyle behavior—not demographic variables—is the best predictor of tree cover on both private lands and public rights-of-way in Baltimore. These characteristics, developed for marketing, classify households into sixty-two consumer categories in an attempt to capture the complexity of American social class. Household land management decisions may be driven by a desire to “uphold the prestige of the household’s neighborhood,” suggesting that neighborhood inequalities may be the product of different values assigned to urban trees by different lifestyle groups (Grove et al., 2006, p. 592). Social class distinctions may explain seemingly counterintuitive results, such as the patterns in Philadelphia, where neighborhoods with more renters tended to have more tree canopy, except in areas of higher land values, where the relationship was reversed (Locke et al., 2016).

However, research that investigates the direct preferences of renters seems to contradict the idea that renters are less invested in the prestige of their neighborhoods. In New Haven, Connecticut, existing tree canopy displayed a moderately negative association with the percentage of renters, but requests for new trees came equally from all neighborhoods, including where renting is commonplace; this suggests that renters are at least as interested as homeowners in developing the canopies of their neighborhoods (Locke & Baine, 2015). Another survey found that both homeowners and renters felt overwhelmingly positive about having trees on their property, with no statistically significant difference between the two groups (Winter, 2017). A study in Portland, Oregon, found that both renters and homeowners were willing to pay more to live on a property with a nearby tree (Donovan & Butry, 2011). Survey research in a Toronto suburb “suggests that the factors associated with lower tree canopy in neighborhoods with low-income residents, renters, and large

minority populations may not be a result of reduced desire for trees or lower support for policies” (Conway & Bang, 2014, p. 242).

These studies indicate that some mechanism related to renting, beyond the lifestyle preferences identified by Grove et al. (2006), could be responsible for the observed differences in canopy cover between renters and homeowners. Opposition to urban forestry programs among renters may reflect concern about “green gentrification,” where the development of environmental amenities threatens to raise property values, raise rents, and produce displacement (Dooling, 2009; Checker, 2011; Wolch et al., 2014). Anguelovski et al. (2019) and others have described this pattern, where environmental amenities burden established low-income residents, as an “environmental rent gap” (p. 1066). Although renters may have similar preferences as homeowners for urban vegetation, they may be suspicious of organized tree-plantings that are harbingers of higher rents and eventual displacement.

Large-scale displacement by green gentrification or an environmental rent gap appears unlikely, though, based on studies of the effect of trees on property values and rents. An assessment of a tree-planting program in Los Angeles found that an individual tree raised property values only \$1,100 to \$1,600 over the course of thirty-five years, less than \$50 in added property values per year (McPherson et al., 2008). In Portland, Oregon, yard trees increased monthly rents by an average of \$5.62 and adjacent public trees increased rents by around \$21 (Donovan & Butry, 2011). While these small rental increases may affect some very low-income families, they would not result in large-scale displacement. Residential opposition can shape the distribution of some tree-planting programs (Carmichael & McDonough, 2018), but teasing out the relationship between past negative experiences with city tree maintenance, concerns about gentrification, and the renter-homeowner dynamic will require additional research.

The Urban Forest and the Built Environment

Pham et al. (2013) found that characteristics of the built environment, such as urban form and land-use types, were more important than demographics or local borough administration in determining urban vegetation. A study of four neighborhoods in suburban Toronto found that available planting space and resident attitudes correlate strongly with canopy cover and tree density, while the traditional suite of socioeconomic variables showed no significant relationship (Shakeel & Conway, 2014). Similarly, Jesdale et al. (2013) and Solecki et al. (2005) found that renters are more likely to live in areas with no tree cover and high impervious surfaces. Architectural styles also determine the physical availability of planting space (Ossola et al., 2019), and efforts to develop “green infrastructure” in Philadelphia were more difficult in neighborhoods with high rentership, due to both the program’s structure and to properties that simply did not have room for vegetation, including street trees (Heckert & Rosan, 2016).

In summary, the existing literature shows a clear relationship between rentership and tree cover in a variety of urban areas: higher levels of tree cover, an important environmental amenity, are disproportionately present in areas with fewer renters. The mechanism behind this relationship, however, is uncertain. Some authors have suggested that this inequity results from characteristics unique to rentership, such as the higher mobility of renters, landlord reluctance, or the impact of trees on property value or rents. A handful of studies have identified built form as an influential factor for this relationship: urban renters often live in areas where the built environment leaves little room for trees. My study aims to further investigate the relationship between rentership and the built environment. I will analyze the role of the built environment in shaping the relationship between renters and tree cover using neighborhood-level data on a number of aspects of the built environment in Chicago. The

data I have selected—impervious acreage, auto dependence, walkability, housing size, house crowding, and housing-cost burden—have been used only rarely or never in past research, which will hopefully makes this study an important contribution to the current conversation.

Methodology

Study Area

The study area is the city of Chicago. While most other studies have assessed the distribution of urban trees at the census-tract or block-group level, I use the community area, a neighborhood-equivalent unit unique to Chicago, as my primary unit of analysis (Smith & Betancur, 2016). Chicago is divided into seventy-seven community areas, ranging in size from 1.61 km^2 to 27.71 km^2 , with an average of 7.6 km^2 (see fig. 1). Researchers and government agencies have used community areas since the Local Community Research Committee at the University of Chicago defined them in the 1920s (Seligman, 2005; Smith & Betancur, 2016). The Chicago Department of Public Health, for example, presents its Chicago Health Atlas by community area, and the Department of Planning and Development’s Green Healthy Neighborhoods defines its focus by specific South Side community areas. Community-area boundaries often reflect socioeconomic barriers that divide Chicago: in 2010, only around a third of community areas qualified as “integrated,” and area boundaries often correspond to unofficial neighborhood boundaries (Emmanuel et al., 2017). By conducting my analysis at a scale that approximates local neighborhoods, I am able to examine the urban forest at the scale associated with New Urbanism principles of city planning (Talen, 2005). Furthermore, by using a locally meaningful definition of community, I am able to present my findings in a way that will resonate with local policymakers and residents.

In order to ensure that the relatively large unit of the community area

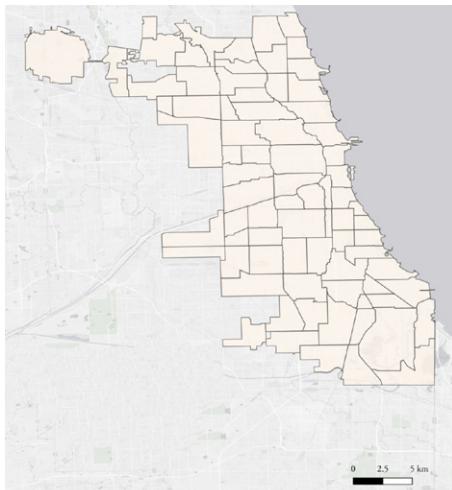


Figure 1: Chicago Community Areas (Chicago Data Portal, n.d.)
Map made by author using QGIS.

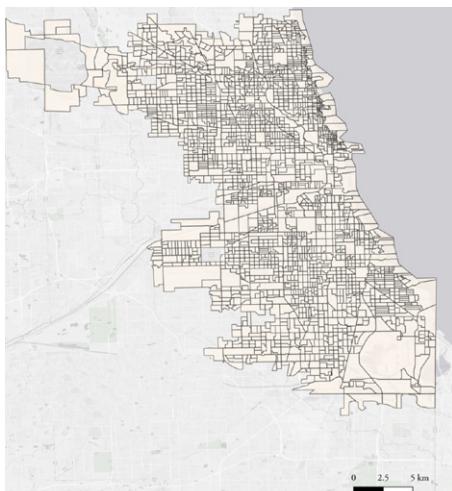


Figure 2: Chicago Census-Block Groups (US Census Bureau, 2021)
Map made by author using QGIS.

does not miss important distinctions that occur at a finer scale (Locke et al., 2017), I replicated my procedure at the census block-group level for all block groups (2,335) that overlap the city of Chicago (see fig. 2). Block groups range in area from 0.004 km^2 to 17.74 km^2 , with an average of 0.30 km^2 .

Data

This paper relies on the Chicago regional land-cover dataset produced by the University of Vermont's Spatial Analysis Laboratory (SAL) (Chicago Regional Land Cover Dataset, 2016). This data is the most detailed and accurate land-cover dataset for Cook County. It uses LiDAR² and high-resolution imagery (1 m^2) from a range of years to classify the entire study area into seven categories: tree canopy, vegetation (foliage under ten feet), bare soil, water, buildings, roads/railroads, and other paved surfaces. Tree canopy overhanging other classes was assigned to the tree canopy category. For every community area and block group, I calculated the percentage of land area covered by tree canopy using the SAL's Tree Canopy Assessment Tool in ArcGIS.³

At the community-area scale, I draw almost all demographic, housing, land use, and other variables from the Community Data Snapshots prepared by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP, n.d.). I used the November 2018 release, as it includes data through 2016, the year the land-cover dataset was published. I draw the underlying data primarily from the 2012–16 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, which CMAP prepared by aggregating ACS estimates from the census-tract and block-group levels to the community-area

2. LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) “allow scientists and mapping professionals to examine both natural and manmade environments with accuracy, precision, and flexibility” (NOAA, 2021).

3. ArcGIS is a software used to create maps and to analyze demographic and lifestyle data (Esri, 2021a).

level. When possible, I attempted to use data collected in the year 2016 in order to avoid the uncertain geographic context problem (Kwan, 2012a; Kwan, 2012b). CMAP prepared two additional variables from sources other than census data: it calculated annual vehicle miles traveled per household, a metric of automobile dependency that serves as a proxy for automobile-oriented land-use patterns, using data from the ACS, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, and the Illinois Secretary of State; it calculated open space per one thousand residents from ACS data and its own land-use inventory. This data allows me to account for variation in community-area demographics and to investigate which of these demographic variables are correlated with tree cover and health. The City of Chicago's Health Atlas provided three additional variables: individual poverty rate, the percentage of residents living in crowded housing, and the percentage of residents paying more than 35% of their income on housing (Chicago Health Atlas, n.d.). The city calculated these variables at the community-area level from the ACS 5-Year Estimates for 2012–16.

I joined the data discussed above to a shapefile⁴ of Chicago's community areas downloaded from the City of Chicago's Data Portal (Chicago Data Portal, n.d.). I then added the land-use percentages, which I calculated from the Chicago regional land-cover dataset for each community area, using the University of Vermont's Tree Canopy Assessment Tool in ArcGIS, to produce a single file containing all metrics of tree distribution and demographic variables by community area.

I replicated this procedure at the block-group level, using 2012–16 ACS 5-Year Estimates for all variables included at the community-area level, with the exception of open space per one thousand and average vehicle miles traveled, which the ACS does not track. I used the SAL land-cover dataset to calculate impervious acres per household. I joined

4. "A shapefile is a simple, nontopological format for storing the geometric location and attribute information of geographic features" (Esri, 2021b).

this data to the 2016 TIGER/Line shapefile⁵ of all 2,325 populated block groups partially or entirely within the city of Chicago, then added the land-use percentages.

I selected socioeconomic and built-environment variables based on their use in previous work on the topic and evidence of some association with urban tree cover (see tables 1a & 1b). I drew all socioeconomic variables from prior studies that used the same or similar variables. I have added several novel variables in the built-environment variables (impervious acreage, auto dependence, walkability, housing size, house crowding, and housing-cost burden) that reflect aspects of housing and transportation not present in prior studies on the topic. I include descriptive statistics for all variables at the community-area (CA) and block-group (BG) level (see tables 2a & 2b).

Regression Diagnostics and Analysis

I used the software GeoDa (version 1.14.0.10) to perform a three-step process.

Step 1: I conducted two ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions, one using the covariates in Table 1a and the other using the covariates in Tables 1a and 1b. The percentage of tree canopy cover was the dependent variable in both cases, producing a basic understanding of how the various covariates in each community area or block group related to the canopy cover in that block group.

Step 2: I removed errors by testing for spatial autocorrelation. Spatial autocorrelation occurs when values at certain locations are more similar to (or different from) nearby values than a random distribution would

5. TIGER/Line shapefiles are "extracts of selected geographic and cartographic information from the U.S. Census Bureau's Master Address File/Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (MAF/TIGER) database" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021).

produce, violating the assumption of independent observations used in standard models; in other words, if neighborhoods with many trees tend to border neighborhoods that also have many trees, spatial autocorrelation is present. Failure to identify and account for spatial autocorrelation can produce inaccurate regression estimates and higher standard errors (Schwarz et al., 2015), which can influence the results of studies like this one: Duncan et al. (2014) found that an OLS regression indicated a significant inverse relationship between African American neighborhoods and tree density in Boston, but, once they accounted for spatial autocorrelation, no significant relationship remained. I used a Moran's I test to test for spatial autocorrelation. If the Moran value is near zero, there is little or no spatial autocorrelation; a value close to -1 suggests that areas with large and small values of canopy cover are likely to be neighbors; and a value close to 1 suggest that adjacent neighborhoods are likely to have similar tree cover.

Step 3: If spatial autocorrelation is present, then I use the variables in the original OLS regression in a new spatial autoregression model, as described in Anselin (2005) (see the appendix for more detail). By controlling for spatial dependence, I can improve the model fit and generate a model that does not violate the assumption that observations are independent. In both cases, I used a queen's contiguity spatial weights matrix with one order of contiguity, which treats community areas as neighbors if they share a boundary or a corner.

Results

Regression Output

An ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, considering all socioeconomic covariates in Table 1a with canopy cover as the dependent variable, displayed substantial spatial dependence, with a remarkably high Moran's I value of 5.45 ($p<0.001$). The Lagrange multiplier tests for lag

($p=0.00005$) and error ($p=0.00018$) are both significant, which provides further confirmation that spatial dependence is present in the data. The robust Lagrange multiplier test for lag is not as significant ($p=0.12$), but substantially more significant than the robust Lagrange multiplier test for error ($p=0.70$), both of which suggest that adding a spatially lagged dependent variable will do more to correct for spatial dependence than adding a spatially lagged error term. In particular, the results of the robust Lagrange multiplier test for error suggests that most of the error dependence detected in the simple LM test would be addressed through a spatial lag model. The Lagrange multiplier test for a spatial autoregressive moving average (SARMA) is also significant ($p=0.00027$), but less so than either the standard LM-lag or LM-error tests. It is likely that the LM-SARMA statistic is simply detecting the need for a spatial lag or error model, rather than suggesting the need for a higher-order model (Elhorst, 2010). Using the decision rules from Anselin (2005), these results suggest that adding a lag dependent variable would address the error dependence. As a result, this paper relies on a spatial lag model (SAR_{lag}) in order to control for spatial dependence.

Table 3 shows the regression result of two models: the SAR_{lag} model with canopy cover as the dependent variable, considering only the demographic variables used in prior literature (the "socioeconomic model"), as well as a SAR_{lag} model that incorporates additional variables that reflect characteristics of the built environment (the "combined model").

The results of the demographic model indicate that, of the variables tested, only rentership and four-year college education display any significant association with urban tree cover. Based on the literature, these results make sense: education tends to correlate positively with tree cover, while rentership tends to correlate negatively, both confirmed in these results. Once I added the built-environment variables from Table 1b, however, foreign-born population, poverty rate, and median age also display a significant association with tree cover, as do work commutes via modes other

than single-occupancy vehicle (carpool, public transit, bicycle, or on foot), crowded housing rate, housing-cost burden, median number of rooms, and the percentage of single-family homes. The increase in R-squared and log-likelihood values and decrease in the AIC and Schwarz criterion also demonstrate that the combined model is a better fit. The lower, less significant value of the Breusch-Pagan test also indicates that heteroskedasticity is less of a problem in the combined model. The relatively large coefficient for ρ in the demographic model indicates that the spatial lag term may be standing in for other important variables, while the much smaller coefficient in the combined model suggests at least some of those variables have been addressed in the new model.

Figure 3 displays how this relationship functions spatially: the map of rentership on the left looks fairly similar to the map of non-single-occupancy vehicle commutes on the right. Areas where few people rent are also areas where the largest percentage of people commute by single-occupancy vehicle, and, as Figure 4 displays, these are also the areas with the most tree cover. This relationship, however, only goes so far: while the significance of the built-environment variables confirms the hypothesis that these variables could explain a significant amount of the variation in tree cover, it is difficult to speculate why age and foreign-born percentage are also significant in the combined model. Notably, several demographic variables often used in past research, including race, income, and population density, displayed little relationship to canopy cover in either model, though this may simply be the result of the small sample size of seventy-seven community areas. Similar past studies have relied on larger samples: Koo et al. (2019) included 288 block groups in their study of Atlanta, Duncan et al. (2014) used 167 census tracts in their study of Boston, and Ramsey (2019) used 442 block groups in his study of Portland, Oregon.

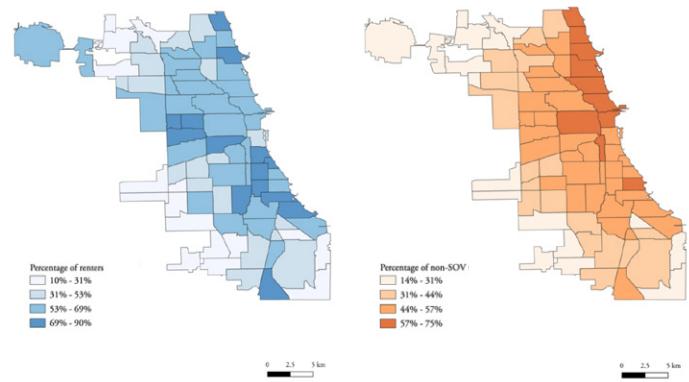


Figure 3: Rentership and Trips by Non-Single-Occupancy Vehicle, both by Community Area

Maps made by author using QGIS, Jenks natural breaks classification ($n=4$), and colors from colorbrewer2.org.

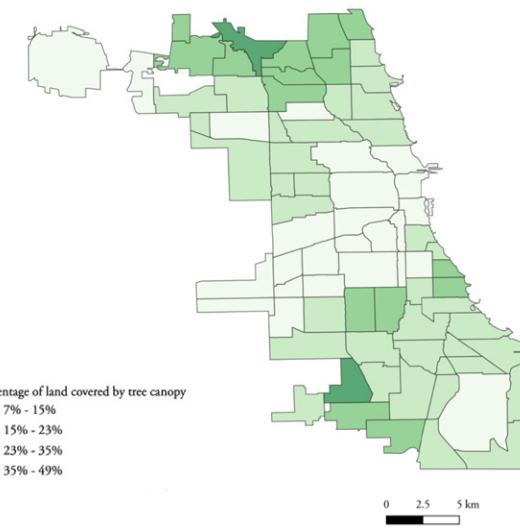


Figure 4: Canopy Cover by Community Area

Map made by author using QGIS, Jenks natural breaks classification ($n=4$), and colors from colorbrewer2.org.

Scale Sensitivity

The aggregation to the community-area level (as well as the small sample size) may have masked important variation that explains the relatively low number of significant variables and the lack of significance for race, income, and population density in the community-area model. The boundaries of community areas, while based on community boundaries determined by sociologists, are ultimately arbitrary units, which raises the possibility of ecological fallacy problems (Openshaw, 1984). In order to test this, the procedure was replicated at the block-group level, the smallest geographic unit for which most of the data used was available, using the 2,325 populated block groups that overlap with the boundaries of the city of Chicago.⁶ The only modification to the procedure described in the methodology was the use of a spatial weights matrix with two orders of contiguity rather than one to account for the smaller scale of block groups. An OLS regression, considering all covariates in the combined model with canopy cover as the dependent variable, displayed substantial spatial dependence (Moran's $I=28.6$, $p<0.001$). The Lagrange multiplier tests for lag ($p<0.00001$) and error ($p<0.00001$) are both significant, indicating that spatial dependence is present. The robust LM test for lag ($p<0.00001$) and error ($P=0.00002$) are both highly significant, as is the Lagrange SARMA ($p<0.00000$); though the difference between the two is extremely slight, the results of the robust tests suggest using the SAR_{lag} model.

Table 4 shows the regression results of the demographic model at the block-group level. It confirms the significance of rentership and bachelor's degree attainment in determining local tree cover. Additionally, several new variables—population density, foreign-born percentage,

6. I intended to replicate this procedure using census tracts, but I lost access to the University of Chicago Library's computers with ArcGIS as a result of the 2020 coronavirus pandemic.

linguistic isolation, median age, unemployment rate, and several racial variables—show a significant relationship to tree cover. Also notable are the high results for the Breusch-Pagan test, suggesting heteroskedasticity in the model, and the likelihood ratio test, suggesting that the introduction of the spatial lag term has not fully controlled spatial effects.

As in the community-area model, adding the transportation and housing variables changes the model dramatically. Several of the housing variables—housing age, single-family housing, number of rooms, median house value, and impervious surfaces per capita—are highly significant, the R-squared is significantly better, and the improvements to the log likelihood, AIC, and Schwarz criterion are all relatively apparently. The Breusch-Pagan test and likelihood ratio test, however, remain highly significant, suggesting that the additional variables have not addressed all of the underlying sources of misspecification. Additionally, the fairly large value of the coefficient of ρ in both models suggests that unmeasured important variables may continue to exist that are not captured in the model.

Discussion

Previous studies have observed that neighborhoods with a higher proportion of renters correlate with lower tree canopy cover (Heynen et al., 2006; Koo et al., 2015). One theory is that renters are less motivation to plant and steward trees, because they move more than homeowners and are less likely to reap the benefits of a tree that may take twenty years to grow; further, homeowners may exert political influence to demand public tree planting, because trees raise property values (Landry & Chakraborty, 2009). Renters, by contrast, would oppose higher property values that are passed on in the form of higher rents and eventual displacement (Wolch et al., 2014).

My study of Chicago appears initially to support findings in the past literature: rentership has a strong negative correlation with tree canopy. In

the model of tree cover containing only demographic variables, rentership stands out: along with education, it is the only variable with a significant relationship to tree cover ($p<.05$). However, once variables reflecting the built environment—auto dependency, age and composition of housing stock, and neighborhood-level open space—are added to the model, the relationship flips: rentership demonstrated a significant and positive correlation with canopy cover, and the overall explanatory power of the model increases. The higher R-squared, higher log likelihood, lower AIC value, and lower Schwartz criterion all indicate a much better model fit for the combined model relative to the demographic model.

Several of the variables associated with higher tree canopy cover—percentage of single-family homes, size of dwelling units, and vehicle miles traveled—are typical features of more suburban-style residential areas with fewer multiunit buildings and less mass transit. This relationship between canopy and variables associated with low density supports the hypothesis that rentership itself is not the variable that determines areas of low tree cover, but rather the product of renters disproportionately living in dense areas with many multiunit buildings, where land use allows less space for vegetation. This finding agrees with findings that urban form and land-use type are the most important factors in determining urban vegetation (Pham et al., 2013) and that found property characteristics and resident attitudes are more significant in determining canopy cover than a traditional suite of socioeconomic variables (Shakeel & Conway, 2014).

However, these results do not fully support the hypothesis from studies of urban New Jersey (Jesdale et al., 2013) and nationwide (Solecki et al., 2005) that renters tend to live in areas of high impervious surfaces where trees cannot grow. Impervious surface area per capita did not appear significant in the community-area model, but it was highly significant in the block-group model. In the community-area model, variables related specifically to housing, such as the percentages of homes built before 1940

and of single-family homes, had a significant positive relationship with higher tree cover. These results suggest that impervious surfaces do not provide a full explanation for areas of low tree cover, at least not at the large spatial scale of community areas. Instead, considering the impacts of residential built form and transportation networks is essential to understanding patterns of tree canopy cover in urban environments.

The results at the block-group level demonstrate a similar pattern, with some additional caveats. While rentership displays the same flip from a negative to a positive coefficient, it is not at all significant in the combined model; instead, a variety of additional demographic variables are significant in both the demographics-alone and the combined model. Additionally, while the R-squared demonstrates a similar improvement, the other statistical tests indicate that the additional variables do not fully address the heteroskedasticity and spatial effects that may be affecting the model. While the initial results at the community-area level present a nice and clear-cut verdict on the importance of built-environment variables in the relationship between renters and tree canopy cover, the block-group results suggest that further investigation of all the contributing aspects to this relationship is needed. Some of the difference between the community-area and block-group results is likely explained by the modifiable areal unit problem (MAUP): correlations that appear pronounced when using geographically larger units can often vary substantially at smaller scales (Fotheringham & Wong, 1991).

Limitations

A limitation of this study is the lack of historical data, which prevents a comprehensive test of the “legacy effect” (Troy et al., 2007; Boone et al., 2010). Some historical statistics, such as race, are available from the decennial census at the community-area level, but more complex modeling of “lifestyle clusters” (Boone et al., 2010), such as historic data on home values, incomes, occupations, and education levels, was beyond

the scope of this paper. I would need to do additional testing of historic demographic variables to rule out fully any “legacy effects” in the results.

Another limitation is the lack of any policy data. Past research has demonstrated that municipal ordinances and other legal measures to encourage the growth of tree cover can have a substantial impact (Landry & Pu, 2009). It is possible that programs at the neighborhood or ward level in Chicago could account for some of the apparent differences across the city, but it was not possible to model these programs and their effects in this paper.

Finally, the results of the block-group analysis show that neither the OLS regression nor the SAR_{lag} model captures all the variables influencing the distribution of tree canopy adequately. One possible explanation is that I need to consider other influential variables or that a more sophisticated regression would better account for spatial effects. It is possible that both may be necessary to produce a regression that closely matches the actual distribution of tree canopy at the block-group level, which opens an extensive avenue for further research.

Conclusions

Urban trees deliver important benefits to nearby residents, including pollution reduction, energy savings, and stormwater and noise control. Ensuring that this environmental amenity is distributed equitably is an important consideration for city planners, particularly given the history of other environmental inequities in cities generally (Downey, 2007) and Chicago specifically (Pellow, 2002; Hardy, 2017). The literature on the current distribution of urban trees is substantial and shows consistently that trees are distributed unevenly among socioeconomic groups across many cities (Talarchek, 1990; Pedlowski, 2002; Heynen et al., 2006; Landry & Chakraborty, 2009; Koo et al., 2019). Many of these studies identified renters as a group that would naturally be associated with fewer trees.

None of those studies, however, considered the array of built-environment variables included in this study. When those variables are included, the relationship between renters and tree cover disappears or reverses. It appears that *renters* do not prefer Chicago areas without trees, rather they just happen to live in the kinds of *built environments* that typically lack trees. These results suggest that future research into urban environmental inequities should attempt to account for the history and development of the city; older, more densely populated urban areas tend to have less tree cover than suburban-style developments on the outskirts of the city. Current environmental inequities, in other words, may have less to do with the people living in the city today and more to do with land-use decisions made more than a century ago, which should influence the strategies used to redress those inequities.

This study also highlights the importance of scale in future research. Most studies of urban tree cover have relied on census tracts or block groups. These may miss features of the relationship between urban trees and people that only become apparent when using spatial units, such as community areas in Chicago that mirror how local residents define their own neighborhoods. At the same time, municipalities and local nonprofits interested in addressing these issues should take care to account for important relationships that are not apparent at the neighborhood level, but can be detected at smaller spatial scales like the block-group level. Ultimately, these results highlights the need for additional research into the relative influence of the built environment in determining the spatial distribution of environmental amenities, as well as the implications of that distribution for strategies to address distributional inequities. ○

Table 1a. Socioeconomic Variables

Description	Previous Studies Using Variable	Source
Rentership (%)	Koo et al., 2019; Landry & Chakraborty, 2009; Landry & Pu, 2010; Li et al., 2016; Locke & Baine, 2015; Perkins et al., 2004; Pham et al., 2013; Ramsey, 2019; Riley & Gardiner, 2020; Shakeel & Conway, 2014	2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
Median age	Landry & Chakraborty, 2009; Landry & Pu, 2010; Shakeel & Conway, 2014	2012–16 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (prepared by CMAP at the community-area level)
African American (%)	Duncan et al., 2014; Koo et al., 2019; Landry & Chakraborty, 2009; Li et al., 2016; Perkins et al., 2004; Ramsey, 2019	2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
Asian American (%)	Koo et al., 2019; Ramsey, 2019; Shakeel & Conway, 2014	2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
Hispanic American (%)	Duncan et al., 2014; Koo et al., 2019; Landry & Chakraborty, 2009; Landry & Pu, 2010; Li et al., 2016; Ramsey, 2019	2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
White (%)	Landry & Pu, 2010; Li et al., 2016; Locke & Baine, 2015; Ramsey, 2019	2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
HS diploma or higher	Locke & Baine, 2015; Ramsey, 2019	2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
Bachelor's degree or higher	Conway, 2014; Li et al., 2016; Pham et al., 2013; Riley & Gardiner, 2020; Shakeel & Ramsey, 2019	2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
Median household income (\$)	Greene et al., 2018; Landry & Chakraborty, 2009; Locke & Baine, 2015; Perkins et al., 2004; Pham et al., 2013; Ramsey, 2019; Riley & Gardiner, 2020	2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
Unemployment rate (%)	Ossola et al., 2019	2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
Poverty rate (%)	Duncan et al., 2014; Koo et al., 2019; Riley & Gardiner, 2020	2012–16 ACS (Chicago Health Atlas)
Population density (per km ²)	Duncan et al., 2014; Locke & Baine, 2015; Ramsey, 2019; Pham et al., 2013; Riley & Gardiner, 2020	2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
Foreign born (%)	Pham et al., 2013	2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
Linguistic isolation (%)	Pham et al., 2013 (as “recent immigrants”)	2012–16 ACS (CMAP)

Table 1b. Built-Environment Variables

Description	Previous Studies Using Variable	Source
Pre-1940 built homes (%)	Koo et al., 2019; Landry & Chakraborty, 2009; Landry & Pu, 2010; Pham et al., 2013; Ramsey, 2019; Shakeel & Conway, 2014	2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
Detached single-family homes (%)	Landry & Pu, 2010; Pham et al., 2013; Shakeel & Conway, 2014	2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
Median number of rooms		2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
Median house value	Landry & Pu, 2010	2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
Vacancy rate (%)	Heynen et al., 2006; Landry & Pu, 2010	2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
Severe (35%+) housing-cost burden (%)		2012–16 ACS (CHA)
Crowding: >1 person per room (%)		2012–16 ACS (CHA)
Impervious area per household (m ²)	Heckert & Rosan, 2016	UVM SAL
Open space per 1,000 residents (acres)	Duncan et al., 2014; Heckert & Rosan, 2016; Pham et al., 2013; Shakeel & Conway, 2014	CMAP
Non-single-occupancy-vehicle (SOV) commutes		2012–16 ACS (CMAP)
Average vehicle miles traveled (VMT)		CMAP

Table 2a. Socioeconomic Descriptive Statistics

Variable Description	Mean		Standard Dev.		Min		Max	
	CA	BG	CA	BG	CA	BG	CA	BG
Tree canopy cover (%)	19.19	20.01	7.20	8.53	7.27	0.59	48.78	76.20
Rentership (%)	52.83	52.26	19.05	24.48	9.82	0	89.58	100.00
Median age	35.41	36.24	4.80	8.40	21.30	13.9	47.12	85.40
African American (%)	38.25	34.73	39.59	40.59	0.47	0.00	99.06	100.00
Asian American (%)	5.99	5.12	10.71	9.77	0.00	0.00	75.18	97.11
Hispanic American (%)	26.07	25.99	28.14	29.79	0.00	0.00	92.62	100.00
White (%)	27.94	32.71	27.24	31.64	0.38	0.00	88.66	100.00
HS diploma or higher (%)	82.05	82.87	10.71	13.74	50.36	30.81	98.39	100.00
Bachelor's degree or higher (%)	30.27	32.92	21.25	25.59	5.00	0	82.77	99.33
Median household income (\$)	48,931	\$4,795	22,166	31,781	14,287	0	108,146	207,969
Unemployment rate (%)	13.65	12.67	8.08	11.07	3.22	0	36.93	91.58
Poverty rate (%)	22.98	21.44	12.21	16.15	1.60	0	65.8	92.79
Population density (per km ²)	5,018	7,905	2,676	9,126	380	58	12,330	25,3318
Foreign born (%)	20.38	18.93	15.94	16.68	0.88	0	62.33	96.15
Linguistic isolation (%)	13.95	8.48	13.03	10.56	0.36	0	53.11	66.18

Table 2b. Built-Environment Descriptive Statistics

Variable Description	Mean		Standard Dev.		Min		Max	
	CA	BG	CA	BG	CA	BG	CA	BG
Tree canopy cover (%)	19.19	20.01	7.20	8.53	7.27	0.59	48.78	76.20
Pre-1940 homes (%)	41.25	44.70	31.76	25.72	1.40	0	83.38	99.14
Detached single-family homes (%)	33.67	33.75	25.59	30.48	1.87	0	88.17	100.00
Median number of rooms	5.44	4.99	0.74	0.96	3.72	0	7.20	9.00
Median house value (\$)	21,3351	24,2221	94,392	151,417	56,875	0	488,678	1,104,200
Vacancy rate (%)	13.20	12.67	6.88	10.40	4.75	0.00	35.44	70.00
Severe (35+%) housing-cost burden (%)	37.09	44.08	9.14	23.28	14.6	0.00	56.00	100.00
Crowding: >1 person per room (%)	4.37	4.31	2.99	5.53	0.50	0.00	14.30	
Impervious area per capita (m ²)	153.50	142.28	138.30	335.18	48.41	3.69	1051.55	11949.05
Open space per 1000 residents (acres)	2.91	n/a	2.83	n/a	0.02	n/a	15.59	n/a
Non-SOV commutes (%)	44.16	44.25	13.24	18.47	14.16	0.00	75.34	100.00
Average vehicle miles traveled (VMT)	12,639	n/a	3,974	n/a	6,581	n/a	31,817	n/a

Table 3. SAR_{lag} Model Results for Canopy Cover at the Community-Area Scale

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error	z value	Coefficient	Standard error	z value
Rho	0.483***	0.111	4.35	0.0952	0.0951	1.00
Constant	122	99.8	1.22	-196*	80.6	-2.43
Rentership	-28.3**	9.03	-3.14	62.9***	13.7	4.58
Median age	0.135	0.260	0.520	0.529*	0.21	2.56
African American	-104	97.3	-1.07	68.4	71.5	0.957
Asian American	-124	93.6	-1.33	67.1	71.6	0.937
Hispanic American	-110	94.3	-1.17	70.9	71.1	1.00
White	-99.0	97.1	-1.02	78.6	71.5	1.10
HS diploma	-13.5	21.6	-0.625	4.68	15.8	0.295
Bachelor's degree	28.8*	11.6	2.49	58.4***	9.65	6.05
Median income	-0.000104	0.000115	-0.902	6.05e-05	0.000101	0.600
Unemployment rate	2.96	18.2	0.163	19.6	13.2	1.49
Poverty rate	0.378	0.209	1.81	0.299*	0.146	2.04
Population density	-0.000135	0.000319	-0.424	-0.000174	0.000348	-0.500
Foreign born	-21.2	19.5	-1.09	45.9**	16.3	2.82
Linguistic isolation	35.7	33.4	1.07	-35.5	24.2	-1.47
Pre-1940 homes				6.48	4.41	1.47
Detached single-family homes				38.5***	9.95	3.87
Median number of rooms				8.48***	1.90	4.46
Median house value				-2.22e-05	1.81e-05	-1.23
Vacancy rate				-8.84	13.3	-0.664
Housing-cost burden				0.272**	0.129	2.11
Crowding				0.649**	0.331	1.96
Impervious area				-0.00679	0.00662	-1.03
Open space per 1000				0.293	0.209	1.40
Non-SOV commutes				-30.7**	10.3	-2.97
Average VMT				-0.000181	0.000284	-0.638
Community areas	77	77				
R-squared	0.535		0.835			
Log likelihood	-234		-192			
Akaike information criterion	500		438			
Schwarz criterion	538		501			
Breusch-Pagan test	85.4***		37.0			
Likelihood ratio test	14.9***		0.949			

*p<0.05, **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

Table 4. SAR_{lag} Model Results for Canopy Cover at the Block-Group Scale

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error	z value	Coefficient	Standard error	z value	
Rho	0.701***	0.0304	23.0	0.339***	0.0223	15.2	
Constant	1619.02***	5.09	3.73	35.9***	3.70	9.70	
Rentership	-3.51***	0.835	-4.20	1.73	0.890	1.94	
Median age	0.0392	0.0208	1.89	0.0376*	0.0148	2.54	
African American	-11.0*	4.59	-2.39	-7.48*	3.10	-2.41	
Asian American	-14.4**	4.92	-2.93	-9.18**	3.33	-2.76	
Hispanic American	-11.9**	4.56	-2.61	-7.91*	3.09	-2.56	
White	-10.6*	4.61	-2.29	-7.50*	3.12	-2.41	
HS diploma	-3.58	1.91	-1.87	-2.61*	1.33	-1.97	
Bachelor's degree	4.82***	1.17	4.13	6.12***	0.900	6.81	
Median income	5.48e-06	7.71e-06	0.711	-1.74e-06	5.58e-06	-0.312	
Unemployment rate	4.91**	1.48	1.30	2.99*	1.27	2.35	
Poverty rate	1.32	1.33	0.99	-0.330	1.05	-0.315	
Population density	-9.70e-05***	1.69e-05	-5.75	8.86e-05***	1.21e-05	7.30	
Foreign born	-5.47**	1.90	-2.88	-1.83	1.32	-1.39	
Linguistic isolation	5.73*	2.36	2.43	4.31**	2.07	2.74	
Pre-1940 homes					3.4.37***	0.488	8.95
Detached single-family homes					3.60 ***	0.710	5.07
Median number of rooms					0.478*	0.195	2.45
Median house value					4.55e-06***	9.70e-07	4.70
Vacancy rate					1.02	1.12	0.913
Housing-cost burden					0.0374	0.484	0.0772
Crowding					-0.286	2.17	-0.132
Impervious area					-0.450***	0.00914	-49.3
Non-SOV commutes					2.36***	0.715	3.30
Number of observations	2,325				2,325		
R-squared	0.383				0.719		
Log likelihood	-7766				-6814		
Akaike information criterior	15564				13679		
Schwarz criterior	15656				13822		
Breusch-Pagan test	255***				1326***		
Likelihood ratio test	648***				251***		

*p<0.05, **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

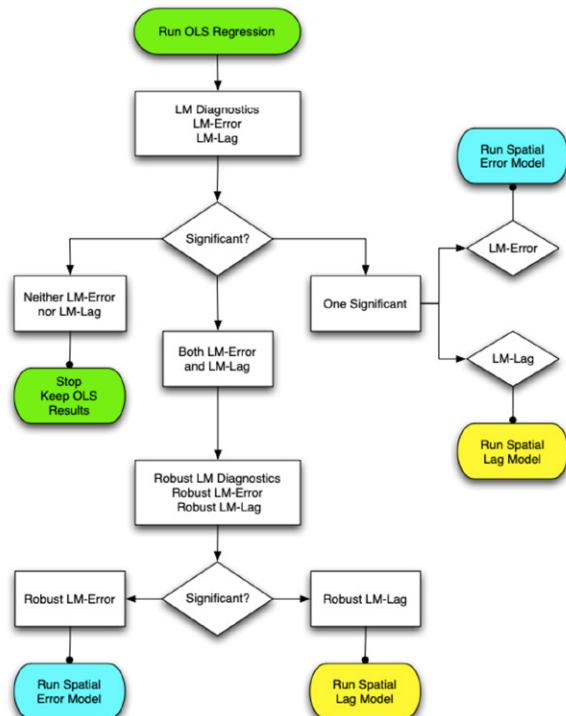
Note: The 2012–16 ACS 5-Year Estimates, which form the basis of this table, did not include open space per capita and average vehicle miles traveled, which explains their absence here.

Appendix

GeoDa provides five variations of Lagrange multiplier tests to identify whether spatial autocorrelation is present in an OLS regression and, if the answer is yes, whether the problem can be best addressed by adding a spatially lagged dependent variable or a spatial autoregressive error term, following the decision process depicted below (Anselin, 2005).

The simple Lagrange multiplier tests for lag and error test for a spatially lagged dependent variable and a missing error term, respectively, while the robust forms of each test for a missing lagged dependent variable in the possible presence of error dependence, and vice versa, respectively.

Spatial Regression Decision Process (Anselin, 2005)



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Finding Yiddishland in America



Chicago's Yiddish-Language Press and the Challenges of Americanization, 1918–1932

ALEXANDRA C. PRICE, AB'20

Introduction

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, waves of Central and Eastern European Jews fled the pogroms that ravaged their native villages and sought new homes in Chicago. Upon arriving in Chicago, these immigrants faced the immediate question of how they should build their new communities in a young nation that was radically different from those they had left behind. Should they try to reconstruct the tight-knit yet isolating community structure of Eastern European shtetls¹? Should they retain the language of the Old Country (Polish,

1. Shtetls were small towns in Eastern Europe inhabited mostly by Jews, existing from the thirteenth century through the mid-twentieth century, when shtetl life in Eastern Europe was completely destroyed as a result of the Holocaust. See Yaffa Eliach, *There Once Was a World: A 900-Year Chronicle of the Shtetl of Eishyshok* (New York: Little, Brown, 1998); Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *The Golden Age Shtetl: A New History of Jewish Life in East Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

Lewis Hines, *Waiting for the "Forwards" - Jewish paper - at 1 A.M.*, 1913

Russian, German, Yiddish) or seize the expanded economic and social opportunities promised by the adoption of English? Finally, and most broadly, what defined their new community, and how should it fit into the broader American society?

There was little agreement about how to answer these questions. Some believed that Jewish immigrants should maintain a distinct way of life and favored insular communities that would allow them to easily obey religious laws, such as kosher dietary restrictions. Others supported varying degrees of assimilation, and a growing number of Jews—especially in New York—aligned their efforts with other working-class immigrants in support of secular ideologies such as socialism and anarchism. Yet regardless of where they stood on questions of schooling, religious practice, socialism, or Zionism, one aspect of cultural heritage remained central to many immigrants' understanding of themselves: their *mame-loshn*, or mother tongue, Yiddish. Despite the social and economic pressures to assimilate, a significant number of Eastern European Jewish immigrants in Chicago continued to choose Yiddish as a means of retaining their ties both to the past and to their local immigrant community, whether by attending shows at the Yiddish theater, sending their children to a Yiddish-language day school, or subscribing to a Yiddish newspaper. In doing so, they embodied the words of Yiddish journalist and anarchist Arne Thorne, who said in an interview near the end of his life: "Yiddish is my homeland."²

In an immigrant community that lacked a territorial homeland to call its own, language was a central element in constituting a cohesive identity. Yiddish had a particular draw—unlike Hebrew, which was then seen as a primarily religious language that would not have been used to discuss the mundane, Yiddish was the "language of the secular, the home, and

2. Claire Ehrlich, "The Lost World of Yiddish Anarchists," *Jewish Currents*, Jan. 15, 2019, jewishcurrents.org/the-lost-world-of-yiddish-anarchists.

the street."³ As such, it provided Eastern European Jewish immigrants with a unique linguistic space where they could retain their ties to the Old World through language while simultaneously locating their debates squarely in the society around them. Another reason Yiddish was uniquely equipped to help immigrants navigate their new environments was because it was ever-changing, adapting to its speakers' new environments and adopting words from local vernaculars. By the early twentieth century, New York's Yiddish dialect had become a "jargon" unto itself, incorporating English words such as "typewriter," "fountain pen," and "movies" instead of their Yiddish equivalents, to the chagrin of famous Yiddish writers such as Isaac Bashevis Singer.⁴ In other words, the use of Yiddish allowed Jewish immigrants to exist in two spaces at once—in the "Old Home" of "Yiddishland" on the one hand and in the physical and social reality of their chosen new home on the other.

It is no coincidence that Arne Thorne, the man who spoke about Yiddish as homeland, was a member of the Yiddish press. Indeed, no other public organization participated so fully in the construction of Yiddishland while also providing maps for immigrants to navigate daily life in the new country. In his book about the Yiddish press, *Bad Rabbi*, Eddy Portnoy jokes that journalism was "the national sport of Yiddishland."⁵ The sheer number of different periodicals on Yiddish newsstands (see fig. 1) reflected the diversity of the Jewish immigrant community—from anarchist manifestos to Zionist fundraisers, satirical cartoons to religious op-eds, and even information about vegetarianism,

3. Cristina Stanciu, "Strangers in America: Yiddish Poetry at the Turn of the Twentieth Century and the Demands of Americanization," *College English* 76, no. 1 (Sept. 2013): 60.

4. Isaac Bashevis Singer, "Problems of Yiddish Prose in America (1943)," trans. Robert H. Wolff, *Prooftexts* 9, no.1 (Jan. 1989): 6, 9.

5. Eddy Portnoy, *Bad Rabbi and Other Strange but True Stories from the Yiddish Press* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017), 2.



Figure 1: Yiddish, Russian, German, and English newspapers for sale in Chicago's Maxwell Street neighborhood, ca. 1925. Irving Cutler, *Jewish Chicago: A Pictorial History* (Chicago: Arcadia, 2000), 22.

Jewish gangs, local business, and new literary debuts, all of it could be found in the pages of the Yiddish press.⁶ These newspapers provide an unparalleled historical record of Jewish life during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, giving readers a glimpse into how these immigrants lived, what issues were important to them, and how their communities negotiated the threats and opportunities of assimilation.

The issue of assimilation became particularly acute after the First World War, when the United States lurched into a period of nativism and isolationism, beginning with the country's refusal to join the League of Nations. Congress adopted the first restrictions on European immigration to the United States when it passed the Johnson-Reed Act (also known as the Immigration Act of 1924), which significantly limited the number of immigrants allowed each year from Southern and Eastern Europe. The

6. Ibid., 2–5.

lack of “annual, monthly, weekly infusions of Yiddish speakers” into the United States meant that the effects of assimilation were more acutely felt by the Yiddish press, as rates of assimilation in the Jewish community climbed and there were no new immigrants to replace lost readership.⁷ Ku Klux Klan membership grew to over four million in the mid-1920s, which demonstrates the disturbing extent to which hate groups—including anti-semitic groups—had gained prominence in the United States, beginning at the turn of the century and continuing through the 1920s.⁸ As the growing prevalence of antisemitism increased pressures to assimilate and restricted immigration limited the number of Yiddish speakers entering the country every year, the landscapes of Yiddish-speaking communities in New York, Chicago, and elsewhere began to change dramatically. Yiddish newspapers had no choice but to respond to the challenge of heightened assimilation, formulating new ideas of what the Yiddish-speaking community in America should look like.

This paper analyzes the Yiddish-language press in Chicago in the critical years of 1918–32 and argues that the press ultimately played a dual role in the lives of Eastern European Jewish immigrants: it challenged the demands of Americanization by keeping its readers connected to the broader linguistic territory of Yiddishland, while at the same time facilitating the process of immigrants' assimilation into American society through an increased focus on American topics and a slow shift towards English-language content, among other trends. My analysis focuses on two Chicago-based Yiddish-language newspapers, the *Daily Jewish Courier* and the Chicago edition of the *Jewish Daily Forward*. I argue that both of them, despite their enormous differences regarding politics,

7. Dan Libenson and Lex Rofeberg, “Tony Michels: American History of Yiddish,” *Judaism Unbound*, podcast, episode 207, Jan. 30, 2020, www.judaismunbound.com/podcast/episode-207-tony-michels.

8. Beth S. Wenger, *The Jewish Americans: Three Centuries of Jewish Voices in America* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 201.

religion, and what American Jewish identity should look like, performed the dual function of contesting and facilitating Americanization in the Chicago Jewish community. I look in depth at two ways in which they performed these roles: 1) in their explicit arguments about Americanization and the extent to which the American Jewish community should assimilate; and 2) in their debates about education and language, two topics that were central to both newspapers' overarching vision for the future of the American Jewish community.

Historiography

Numerous scholars have engaged with the history of the Yiddish press over the years, many of them interested in the ways in which Jewish immigrants negotiated the process of Americanization. The first scholars to study the immigrant press were contemporaries of the newspapers' readers and columnists, and they were fascinated by the transformation in urban landscapes caused by immigration. In his landmark 1922 study, *The Immigrant Press and Its Control*, sociologist Robert Ezra Park described this historical moment and the unique role that the press played within it: "Our great cities, as we discover upon close examination, are mosaics of little language colonies, cultural enclaves, each maintaining its separate communal existence within the wider circle of the city's cosmopolitan life. ... Each one of these little communities is certain to have some sort of co-operative or mutual aid society, very likely a church, a school, possibly a theater, but almost invariably a press."⁹

The Yiddish press in particular captured Park's attention. He was intrigued by the journalistic methods of Abraham Cahan, the editor in chief of the New York *Forward*. The *Forward* was the most popular and enduring of all Yiddish periodicals—indeed, it exists to this day, albeit in

9. Robert Ezra Park, *The Immigrant Press and Its Control* (New York: Harper, 1922), 7.

an exclusively online format since 2019.¹⁰ What most fascinated Park about Cahan was the *Forward*'s specific dialect of Yiddish. Rather than using a standardized form of Yiddish, or a common Eastern European dialect, Cahan eliminated "unnecessary" Russian, Lithuanian, and German elements, simplified the language, and incorporated the Anglicisms of New York Jews. Soon, "Die boys mit die meidlach haben a good time" ("The boys have a good time with the girls") was considered "excellent American Yiddish."¹¹ Cahan insisted that his staff use this Americanized Yiddish, which he argued was the language "spoken in the street, the shops, the factories, and the homes of the people it desired to reach."¹² The *Forward*'s linguistic inventiveness proved effective; soon, the daily paper had a circulation of over 140,000.¹³ Furthermore, Park argued, Cahan's choice made the *Forward* a uniquely American creation—a publication specifically aimed at helping New York's working-class immigrants organize, learn about socialism, and assimilate into American society.

Ultimately, Park argued that the immigrant press—through its Americanized topics and language—promoted assimilation in the long term, acting as an entry point into American society for newly arrived immigrants. Mordecai Soltes, Park's contemporary, agreed that the Yiddish press was an "Americanizing agency" and highlighted the ways in which the Yiddish press helped its readers navigate the maze-like complexity of the United States. For many working-class Jews in New York, Soltes observed that the Yiddish press "is practically the only source of information to which most of them have access. It guides them in the

10. "The Forward, 122-Year-Old Jewish Publication, Ends Its Print Edition," *Haaretz*, Jan. 17, 2019, www.haaretz.com/us-news/the-forward-122-year-old-u-s-jewish-publication-ends-its-print-edition-1.6849712.

11. H. L. Mencken, *The American Language* (New York: Knopf, 1919), 156; also cited in Park, 81.

12. Park, 101.

13. Ibid., 91.

early stages of their process of adjustment to the new and complex American environment.”¹⁴ Journalist Ido Joseph Dissentshik makes a similar argument in his 1966 study of two New York Yiddish dailies, in which he contends that Yiddish newspapers instilled their readers with a uniquely American spirit, helping them to assimilate into their new society while maintaining a distinctly Jewish identity.¹⁵ Current scholarly accounts of the Yiddish press—and other immigrant periodicals—continue to reflect Park’s nearly century-old arguments about the immigrant press’s assimilative function. In a 2016 article titled “Revisiting the Immigrant Press,” Andrea Hickerson and Kristin Gustafson argue that many aspects of Park’s characterization of the immigrant press remain relevant, particularly the ways in which the immigrant press aids processes of assimilation.¹⁶ Prominent American Jewish scholars have echoed these arguments, especially in their analysis of Cahan’s New York *Forward*. In *The Jewish Americans*, a documentary history of American Jewry, historian Beth Wenger states simply that “under its editor Abraham Cahan, *The Jewish Daily Forward* was an Americanizing agency.”¹⁷

14. Mordecai Soltes, “The Yiddish Press—An Americanizing Agency,” *American Jewish Year Book* 26 (Sept. 29, 1924–Sept. 18, 1925): 174, www.jstor.org/stable/23601184. Soltes was the director of extension education in the Bureau of Jewish Education in 1924 and the director of the Jewish National Welfare Board in 1925, both in New York City. “Dr. Mordecai Soltes, Educator, Is Dead; Retired Director, Professor of Yeshiva,” *New York Times*, June 29, 1957, www.nytimes.com/1957/06/29/archives/dr-mordecai-soltes-educator-is-dead-retired-director-professor-of.html.

15. Ido Joseph Dissentshik, “New York’s Two Yiddish Dailies: ‘The Day Morgen Journal’ and ‘Forward’—A 1966 Study,” *Kesher*, no. 6 (1989): 45e–52e, www.jstor.org/stable/23901054.

16. Andrea Hickerson and Kristin L. Gustafson, “Revisiting the Immigrant Press,” *Journalism* 17, no. 8 (Nov. 2016): 956–58, doi.org/10.1177/1464884914542742.

17. Wenger, 155.

She gives several examples, including an amusing article in which the *Forward*’s editors tried to explain the rules of baseball to its readers.¹⁸ Deborah Dash Moore similarly focuses on the New York Yiddish press in her sprawling 2017 history of the city’s Jewish community, paying special attention to the *Forward*.¹⁹

Wenger and Moore have been careful, however, to avoid Park’s tendency to generalize. While they focus most of their attention on the *Forward*, they qualify their statements about the Yiddish press in general and acknowledge the lack of consensus in the early twentieth-century Jewish community on most issues. Wenger notes the more complex dual function of the Yiddish press, stating: “The Yiddish press … emerged as a medium that expressed and fortified immigrant Jewish culture while helping Jews adapt to American society.”²⁰ However, beyond listing the vast array of orientations represented in the press—anarchist, conservative, Zionist, and more—Wenger does not examine much of the actual content of the Yiddish press outside of the *Forward*. Additionally, while she provides a nuanced look at the question of Americanization among the Yiddish-speaking Left and “is … careful to acknowledge that [they] had a more ambiguous stance toward the Americanization project”²¹ than is often recognized, Wenger’s scope remains limited to New York City’s socialist context and does not incorporate the voices represented in other types of Yiddish publications. Jerome Chanes has a similar critique of Moore’s *Jewish New York*, arguing that while “Moore rightly

18. Ibid.

19. Deborah Dash Moore et al., *Jewish New York: The Remarkable Story of a City and a People* (New York: NYU Press, 2017), 136–38.

20. Wenger, 98.

21. Daniel Soyer, review of *History Lessons: The Creation of American Jewish Heritage*, by Beth Wenger, *Journal of American Ethnic History* 32, no. 2 (Winter 2013): 119, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/jamerethnhist.32.2.0117.

emphasizes the role of the socialist *Forverts*,²² the regnant Yiddish newspaper in this arena ... she ignores the role and impact of another important newspaper, the *Freiheit*,²³ which competed with the *Forward* in political ideology and its views on Americanization.²⁴ Chanes's comment captures the most significant limitation of the existing scholarship on the Yiddish press in the United States in regards to its response to Americanization: its relatively narrow scope, with the vast majority of scholars focusing on New York City and the *Forward* in particular.²⁵

While this paper builds upon the work of all of these scholars, contributing to the literature on the Yiddish press's role in facilitating Americanization, it will also use close readings of Chicago's newspapers to show the extent to which assimilation did *not* appear inevitable to many. It will demonstrate that even when Yiddish-language newspapers were contributing to the process of Americanization they were not always doing so willingly or knowingly, like Cahan's *Forward* in New York City. Indeed, many newspapers—conservative, socialist, and otherwise—were explicit about the ways in which they sought to be a part of Yiddishland,

22. The Yiddish name of the *Forward* newspaper.

23. *Freiheit* means freedom in Yiddish.

24. Jerome A. Chanes, review of *Jewish New York: The Remarkable Story of a City and a People*, by Deborah Dash Moore, *American Jewish History* 103, no. 3 (July 2019): 386, doi:10.1353/ajh.2019.0041.

25. It should be noted that there are many incredibly robust studies of the Yiddish press (still mostly limited to the New York context) that focus on issues other than the question of assimilation, Americanization, and American Jewish identity. Tony Michels, one of the foremost scholars on the Yiddish press, has mostly focused on Yiddish socialists in New York, looking at the ways in which they engaged in transnational networks of revolutionary Yiddish thought and highlighting the role of the press in speaking to New York's Jewish working class. Rebecca Margolis focuses on many of the same issues that are featured in this paper, but in the Canadian context, focusing on Montreal.

whether through their ties with a transnational Yiddish community, their membership in Yiddish revolutionary movements, or their commitment to a Yiddish language education for their children. While most scholars acknowledge the deeper complexity in the Yiddish press's engagement with the issue of assimilation, little work has been done to explore it and to bring out the voices of Yiddish writers who resisted assimilation or attempted to negotiate its demands.

This paper will, therefore, fill the following gaps in the scholarship on the Yiddish press in America. First, it will focus attention on Chicago, a city with a rich Yiddish-language history that is underrepresented in scholarship. A study of Chicago's Yiddish press will complement the extensive scholarship on New York, providing examples of the ways in which Chicago's newspapers addressed Americanization, often in less explicit and more nuanced ways than Cahan's self-consciously Americanized *Forward*. In this way, this paper will build on scholarship about the Yiddish press as an Americanizing agency but will emphasize the different approaches that publications took in this process. This paper will also showcase the voices of the Yiddish writers who sought to test the limits of Americanization, demonstrating the ways in which they dwelt in Yiddishland while simultaneously creating new homes in America.

Throughout this paper, I use the terms "assimilation" and "Americanization" frequently, reflecting the ways in which both scholars and immigrants have referred to the issues at the heart of this paper. Both are intended to refer, generally speaking, to "the process through which individuals and groups of differing heritages acquire the basic habits, attitudes, and mode of life" of the United States.²⁶ However, some Yiddish immigrant writers resisted these terms by insisting that it was possible to simultaneously "Americanize"—to participate actively in American politics and society—while retaining strong cultural and personal ties

26. "Assimilation," *Merriam-Webster*, accessed Apr. 29, 2020, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/assimilation.

to the immigrant community. In other words, these immigrants defined “Americanization” as exercising one’s citizenship rights, celebrating the Fourth of July, or watching baseball and used the term “assimilation” to indicate a more complete social, cultural, and linguistic integration into American society.

American Jewish historian Deborah Dash Moore has taken issue with the terms “assimilation” and “Americanization.” In her 2006 essay, “At Home in America?: Revisiting the Second Generation,” she critiques the ways in which contemporary American historians have continued to use terms like “assimilation” to judge the extent to which immigrants have “become American.”²⁷ This framework of understanding immigrant experiences, she claims, is far too simplistic, and moreover, it leaves second-generation immigrants in a particularly poignant position—they are at home “neither in the parental world nor in the United States,” lacking deep ties to their homeland but unable to ever fully assimilate.²⁸ Moore argues that this framework ignores the creative ways in which second-generation immigrants creatively adapted the institutions of their parents to the society around them, finding ways not to *become* American, but to “be at home in America.” Moore’s concept of being “at home” in the United States allows for a much more nuanced understanding of assimilation, making space for a wide range of experiences and degrees of assimilation. The idea of Yiddishland also fits snugly within Moore’s theory. As the first, second, and later generations of America’s Yiddish-speaking Jews searched for ways to carve out small Yiddishlands in their American communities, they participated in the institutional innovations

27. Deborah Dash Moore, “At Home in America?: Revisiting the Second Generation,” in “Immigration, Integration, Incorporation, and Transnationalism: Interdisciplinary and International Perspectives,” ed. Elliot R. Barkan, John J. Bukowczyk, and Madeline Hsu, special issue, *Journal of American Ethnic History* 25, no. 2/3 (Winter–Spring 2006): 160, www.jstor.org/stable/27501693.

28. Ibid.

that Moore wrote about, making the traditions of the Old World compatible with the new home.

Thus, while I will use the term “assimilation” to refer to the general process of adjusting to life in the United States, I will use the term “Americanization” to refer to Moore’s idea of immigrants becoming “at home” in America. This framework allows for a more optimistic, individually oriented understanding of the immigrant experience. Instead of casting the “Americanizing” function of the Yiddish press as a tragic flaw that contributed to its own demise, we can read the story of Americanization as the creation of a new home that exists somewhere in between the old and the new. Ultimately, this is what I will argue the Yiddish press facilitated: it allowed Chicago’s Eastern European Jews to create their own unique community in a new land—to remain a part of Yiddishland, but also to become “at home” in America.

Chicago’s Two Yiddish Dailies

In the early twentieth century, as Yiddish-speaking Jews arrived in Chicago by the thousand, they didn’t have to go far to find a place that looked something like home. The Near West Side, near the railroad stations where immigrants arrived from the East Coast, was a “teeming, transplanted Eastern European shtetl atmosphere” inhabited almost entirely by Russian and Polish Jews.²⁹ On the bustling streets of the Maxwell Street area, as it came to be called, newly arrived immigrants found comfort in familiar Jewish institutions—kosher butchers, fruit stands, textile shops, and the like—that had been native to the Eastern European shtetl. These neighborhoods contrasted starkly with those of the established Jewish communities in the city. The Jews of Maxwell Street stood out for their more Orthodox approaches to religion, their

29. Irving Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago: From Shtetl to Suburb* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 58.

devotion to Yiddish, their lower socioeconomic status. By contrast, the German Jews who had arrived in the mid-nineteenth century were already partially assimilated and middle class. To some German Jewish immigrants in Chicago and elsewhere, the newly arrived Yiddish-speaking Jews were an embarrassment that potentially threatened the “enviable reputation” that German Jews had earned in the United States.³⁰ Some Russian and Polish immigrants, especially the more religiously Orthodox among them, returned the sentiment: the adoption of more liberal religious practices such as allowing men and women to sit together in the synagogue—or worse, using Sunday as the primary day of worship—was a disgrace.³¹ The tensions between these two groups and their contrasting visions of what it meant to be Jewish in America would eventually color the pages of the Jewish press, especially for the Yiddish writers and readers who remained deeply connected to their traditions and language well into the twentieth century.

By 1910, Maxwell Street was lined with newspaper stands full of Yiddish periodicals, but the press did not take off immediately. When Eastern European Jews first arrived in Chicago in the late nineteenth century, many of them had had little exposure to secular Yiddish literature; there were few such publications in the Russian Empire at the time due to strict governmental restrictions on minority publications.³² It took several years for the Yiddish-language press in the city to take off, and the 1880s were littered with failed publications that went under in a matter of years or months. However, as the immigrant population of Chicago increased, the Yiddish-language press became a central part of the city’s Jewish life, representing the voices of the newly arrived immigrants from Russia and

30. Gerald Sorin, “Mutual Contempt, Mutual Benefit: The Strained Encounter between German and Eastern European Jews in America, 1880–1920,” *American Jewish History* 81, no. 1 (Autumn 1993): 35, www.jstor.org/stable/23884361.

31. Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago*, 59.

32. Ibid., 138; Portnoy, 3–4.

Poland whose outlook and lifestyle contrasted starkly with that of the largely Americanized German Jewish and Anglo Jewish populations on the South and North Sides.³³ The few remaining German Jewish newspapers were religious in nature, with religious figures as their editors. Yiddish newspapers, by contrast, spanned the breadth of the ideological spectrum. Their publications were edited “by a diverse group of union leaders, printers, business owners, and journalists.”³⁴ Yiddish bound all of these individuals together, but their understandings of Yiddish—of its function in the community and of its relative importance compared to Hebrew, for example—differed greatly.

By 1920, there were two prominent competing Yiddish dailies in Chicago that make up the majority of the source material for this paper: the *Daily Jewish Courier*, which represented an Orthodox, Zionist perspective, and the Chicago edition of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, a regional branch of the famous New York daily, which was socialist and secular in outlook.³⁵ While these dailies did not represent all of Jewish Chicago (many liberal and Reform newspapers could be found in English or German), they did represent two crucial opposing perspectives among Jews who remained committed to Yiddish.

The *Forward* opened its Chicago branch in 1919, but its New York counterpart was well-known in the city long before then as one of the

33. The conflicts between the two groups ranged from religious disagreements to class antipathy, with the earlier arrivals generally looking down upon the working-class Jews from Eastern Europe.

34. Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago*, 138.

35. The Chicago *Forward* seems to have been relatively independent from the New York edition, publishing a significant number of articles about the local Chicago context, which comprises the source material of this paper. However, it is unfortunately difficult to tell to what extent the Chicago *Forward* reprinted materials from the New York edition.

primary periodicals representing the Jewish working class. According to an article printed in the Chicago *Forward* in 1929, a campaign set up in the years before the *Forward* came to Chicago had rallied to open a branch in the city in order to support the labor movement.³⁶ In his history of Chicago's Jews, Irving Cutler describes the *Forward*'s reputation in the city: "[It was] known for its warm, often argumentative style, which produced coverage that was frequently punctuated with razor-sharp wit and barbs."³⁷

The Chicago *Forward* participated in processes of Americanization rather explicitly, as it had in New York; in Abraham Cahan's own words, published in the Chicago *Forward* in 1927: "The *Forward* was called into being for a double purpose: (a) To organize the Jewish workers into trade unions and disseminate the principles of Socialism among them. (b) To act as an educational agency among the immigrant Jewish masses in the broadest sense of the word, and to spread among them high ideals

36. "Editorial," *Forward*, Jan. 1, 1929, subject codes: Jewish, II.B2.d1 IE, translated and edited by the Chicago Public Library Omnibus Project, Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey, Newberry Library (hereafter CFLPS), flps.newberry.org/#/item/5423972_5_0811/. "Organized in 1936 as a project under the Works Progress Administration of Illinois, the Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey sought to translate and classify selected news articles appearing in Chicago's foreign language press from 1861 to 1938. ... The history departments of the University of Chicago and Northwestern University provided notable aid and direction for the project, particularly through University of Chicago historian Bessie Louise Pierce, who helped direct the survey." "Descriptive Summary," Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey Records, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, accessed Oct. 22, 2021, www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/scrc/findingaids/view.php?eadid=ICU.SPCL.CFLPS.

37. Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago*, 140.

of humanity."³⁸ The *Forward* sought to influence identity construction for the growing American Jewish community by encouraging its readers to embrace secularism and socialism, but it also retained a firm focus on Jewish readers through the choice of Yiddish and through news related to the state of the American Jewish immigrant community and workers. It recognized the importance of Yiddish to Jewish immigrant identity, especially as Eastern European Jews became the majority of America's Jewish population, while pushing Jews to engage with the larger community rather than isolate themselves as they had done in the shtetls of Eastern Europe. The *Forward* wanted them to engage with the world as socialists, citizens, and workers—it chose Yiddish because it saw Yiddish as the secular Jewish language, a language of the working class and a language that could speak to Jewish immigrants' hearts.

Over the years, however, the *Forward*'s commitment to the Yiddish language expanded beyond the language's role as the working-class vernacular. Beginning in the 1920s and continuing into the 1930s, the *Forward* joined ranks with cultural organizations such as the Workmen's Circle, which were dedicated to preserving the Yiddish language and culture through education. The *Forward* began to promote evening classes, such as "Jewish history" and "Yiddish reading," as a means of connecting Chicago's secular Yiddish-speaking community to a broader idea of Yiddishland.³⁹ This shift was a result both of the increasing pressures of assimilation and of the *Forward*'s ties to broader, transnational Yiddish socialist movements, specifically the Bundist movement. The Bundists, who had originally formed Yiddish socialist parties across

38. "By Abraham Cahan, Editor-in-Chief of *Forward*," *Forward*, May 1, 1927, subject codes: Jewish, II.b2.d1 IE, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#/item/5423972_5_0820/.

39. "[Classes of the Educational Committee of the Workmen's Circle]," *Forward*, Oct. 6, 1920, subject codes: Jewish, II.B2.f, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#/item/5423972_5_1508/.

Eastern Europe, had also agitated for the right to what they called “cultural autonomy”—essentially, the ability to practice their culture and speak their language in peace. When many of them left Eastern Europe due to political turmoil, they brought a powerful ideology of identity centered on *Yiddishkayt* (“Yiddish-ness”) and *doikayt* (“hear-ness”) with them to the United States, launching a revival of “Yiddish culture” in American Jewish immigrant communities, especially those aligned with the socialist cause.⁴⁰ The *Forward* was deeply involved in these efforts.

The perspective of the *Daily Jewish Courier*, which branded itself as the voice of Chicago’s Orthodox community, contrasted greatly with that of the *Forward*. Despite these differences, the *Courier*, too, simultaneously encouraged Americanization in some ways while articulating a traditionally Eastern European Jewish identity in others. Established in 1887, the *Courier* was among the oldest Yiddish periodicals printed in the United States, and it was one of few Jewish newspapers in Chicago that survived from the late nineteenth century into the twentieth. Furthermore, it was the first Yiddish daily to be published—and to achieve success—outside of New York City.⁴¹

From the start, the *Courier* attracted the attention of other Jewish newspapers. In 1894, *The Occident*, an English-language newspaper that associated itself with Reform Judaism (and proudly declared itself the “first Jewish reform paper to come into existence in the world”⁴²), took note of the *Courier* in an article discussing four prominent Jewish news-

40. Frank Wolff, “The Home that Never Was: Rethinking Space and Memory in Late Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Jewish History,” in “Space/Time Practices,” ed. Sebastian Dorsch, special issue, *Historical Social Research* 38, no. 3 (2013): 202–3, www.jstor.org/stable/23644532.

41. Arthur A. Goren, “The Jewish Press in the U.S.” *Kesher*, no. 6 (1989): 13e, www.jstor.org/stable/23901046.

42. *The Occident*, “Jewish Publications of Chicago,” Apr. 6, 1894, subject codes: Jewish, II.B2.d1, CFLPS.

papers in Chicago. Of the four, three were published in English; only the *Courier* had the distinction of being printed in Yiddish, or as *The Occident* put it, “in Hebrew characters in the Russian and Polish dialect.”⁴³ It circulated, according to *The Occident*, “among the twenty-five thousand Russian and Polish Jews of the city,”⁴⁴ making it the primary periodical for Chicago’s Eastern European Jewish population. Throughout the 1920s, the *Courier* was also featured, albeit rather unfavorably, in the Chicago *Forward*. In 1921 the *Forward* accused the *Courier* of lying about its circulation: while the *Courier*’s official 1921 circulation was 42,040, the *Forward* insisted that it was closer to eight thousand.⁴⁵ Regardless of what the true circulation numbers were, there is no doubt that the *Courier* was prominent among Chicago’s Yiddish periodicals, and that it remained so—in the minds of its supporters and detractors—for the first half of the twentieth century, as most other Yiddish newspapers failed.

The *Courier* published articles about education, international news, Chicago’s Yiddish cultural activities and various religious institutions, editorials, fiction and poetry, and advertisements. Occasionally the *Courier* even published serialized translations of lengthy European literary works, such as *The Count of Monte-Cristo*, highlighting their self-perceived role as a source of culture to Yiddish-speaking readers. Like many Yiddish newspapers, the *Courier* stood apart for the sheer variety of genres that it published, which allowed it to play an outsized role in the cultural life of Chicago’s Orthodox community.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. “[No headline],” *Forward*, May 14, 1921, subject codes: Jewish, II.B2.d1, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#/item/542397250892/; “The Truth about the *Courier* Circulation,” *Forward*, May 15, 1922, subject codes: Jewish, II.B2.d1, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#/item/542397220574/.

The editors were proud to call the *Courier* a “particularly” Yiddish paper. Responding to criticism that the Jewish press was “old-fashioned,” the editors explained in a 1923 editorial in English what they considered to be the defining qualities of the Yiddish press.⁴⁶ Other newspapers, they claimed, accused Yiddish newspapers of focusing too little on “the human side of things,” calling them dull because they “carry no social column, do not publish stories relating to crime and divorce scandals, and carry no bedroom stories and so forth.”⁴⁷ The *Courier*’s response was that they did not publish such stories simply because their readers would not enjoy them; their readers had different, unique tastes. Yiddish readers, they wrote, “want their newspaper to be a political, literary, social, economic, and religious world history of yesterday.”⁴⁸ The editors pointed out that in shaping their material to the tastes of their readers, the Yiddish press was not unique. Many foreign presses catered to the interests and needs of their particular readership. The editors concluded: “If the Yiddish daily is old-fashioned, then one might say that the French, English, or Italian dailies are also old-fashioned because they are so fundamentally different from the average American daily, yet no one claims that they are old-fashioned, because they serve the purpose of their readers and fit their taste.”⁴⁹ The arguments made by the *Courier*’s editors were not, in fact, true of the Yiddish press as a whole—the *Forward* certainly could not be accused of lacking articles on cruder topics such as crime, sex, and scandal.⁵⁰ What these assertions about the Yiddish press *do* show, however, is how the editors of the *Courier*

46. “Is the Jewish Press Old-Fashioned?” *Daily Jewish Courier*, May 27, 1923, subject codes: Jewish, II.B2.d1, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#/item/5423972_5_0859/.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. Portnoy, 79, 131.

envisioned the role of the Yiddish press in the community, and why it carried special significance for its readers. This self-image contrasts sharply with that of the socialist, “Americanized” New York *Forward*; the *Courier*, instead, catered to the tastes of Yiddish-speakers from the Old Country. It was a piece of Yiddishland in America.

While it was much more committed to the traditions and continuities of Eastern European Jewish life compared to the *Forward*, the *Courier* supported Americanization in its own way. It both emphasized Jewish news with a particular interest in Zionism and encouraged Chicago’s Jewish immigrants to take an active role in the political life of their new community. During the First World War, the *Courier* highlighted the war effort, urged Jews to buy Liberty bonds, and criticized federal anti-immigration legislation. A 1918 article asked readers to show their loyalty by participating in Fourth of July parades.⁵¹ Unlike the *Forward*, the *Courier* expected its readers to retain their commitment to the Jewish faith and traditions. Yet, it did not seek isolation, either. By educating its readers about American political and social life—and by even promoting patriotism in readers—the *Courier*, too, nurtured the process of becoming “at home” in America.

Both the *Courier* and the *Forward* facilitated Americanization while advancing their unique articulations of Jewish immigrant identity in the United States and the role that Yiddish should play in constituting this identity. The *Forward* urged Jewish immigrants to become more secular and socialist, engaging with their communities politically and economically. For the *Forward*, Yiddish was largely chosen for practical reasons—it was the language of the Jewish working class that the editors hoped to reach, and it had the added benefit of being a “secular” Jewish language—not the language of the Torah, but the language of the street

51. J. Leibner, “On the Community Stage: Fourth of July Celebration,” *Daily Jewish Courier*, June 23, 1918, subject codes: Jewish, II.b3.a, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#/item/5423972_8_1_1391/.

and the home. In the 1920s and early 1930s, a redefined idea of Yiddish culture became increasingly important to the *Forward*'s vision of the immigrant Jewish community, as evidenced by their evolving commitment to the transnational Yiddish socialist community. The *Courier*, on the other hand, maintained a more traditional, Orthodox standpoint on Jewish identity and saw Yiddish as a central part of this identity. Yiddish was the language of the home and community, as well as a potential language for religious instruction. The *Courier* encouraged Americanization—a becoming “at home” in America—without desiring cultural assimilation; it saw its readers as individuals who lived distinctly Jewish (mostly Orthodox) lives, and many of the national and international political issues covered in the newspaper displayed these loyalties.⁵²

The Issue of Americanization in the Press

“Jewish life in the United States has entered a new phase,” the *Forward* announced in 1926. “With the sudden cessation of immigration and the practical disappearance of the greenhorn, the Jewish masses are rapidly becoming Americanized.”⁵³ The mid-to-late 1920s presented new challenges to Chicago’s Jewish immigrant community as mass immigration ended and as immigrants who had been living in Chicago for a few decades increasingly abandoned Yiddish. Yet the solution to these challenges was elusive, and few members of Chicago’s Yiddish-speaking community completely rejected “Americanization” or embraced isolation.

Among immigrant groups to the United States in the late nineteenth

52. Specifically, *Courier* was an active supporter of Zionism, running frequent fund-raisers for Zionist causes and providing coverage on Zionist conferences in Chicago, which was then a hub for Zionist activity.

53. “Workmen’s Circle to Win Jewish Youth,” *Forward*, Feb. 7, 1926, subject codes: Jewish, III E, III G, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#/item/5423972_9_1_1367/.

and early twentieth centuries, the Jews of Eastern Europe were one of the groups to show the deepest feelings of loyalty to the United States early on. Jews from the Pale of Settlement had no state to call their own in Europe and spoke a different language from surrounding nationalities, whose increasing violence and persecution had led Jewish immigrants to flee to the “Golden Land.” Many found opportunities for work and education in America that would have been impossible to achieve or even imagine in the Old Country. In the words of one columnist writing in the *Reform Advocate*:

The Jewish American, I am quite sure, experiences feelings of pride and patriotism on seeing the flag, only very much intensified. Reviled, hunted, and persecuted even to death for centuries by all the world, the Jew comes to America where he is accorded freedom, protection, and the same rights as are granted to people of other creeds. America has become the haven of refuge for our persecuted co-religionists and has granted them an equal chance to rise in the world. The flag of the United States should awaken within his bosom, feelings of love, loyalty and devotion to the flag and to the country which it represents.⁵⁴

At the same time, however, Chicago’s Yiddish-speaking Jews were one of the immigrant groups most concerned about maintaining their distinct identity in the face of increasing assimilation, and the pressures to assimilate were multiplying rapidly in the early 1920s, which created a sense of urgency for many in the Yiddish press. The working-class Jews who had originally settled in the shtetl-like environment of Maxwell Street on Chicago’s Near West Side were gradually entering the middle

54. Leopold Deutelbaum, “The American Flag,” *Reform Advocate*, June 13, 1931, 495, National Library of Israel, www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/refadv/1931/06/13/01.

class and moving out of this Yiddish-speaking quarter. Some of them moved to the largely Yiddish-speaking neighborhood of North Lawndale, but others relocated to less distinctly Jewish communities on the North and West Sides. Learning English brought with it incredible economic and social benefits, causing many of Chicago's Jews to abandon their *mame-loshn*, which exacerbated the blow to Yiddish newspapers' readership numbers. A more harrowing factor spurring increased Jewish assimilation was the intensification of antisemitic sentiment in the United States during the 1920s, not only among hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, but also among upper-class Americans such as Henry Ford.⁵⁵ In 1923, in the face of these mounting challenges, the *Courier*'s editorial board reflected: "If we do not attempt to create new boundaries in the Jewish life of America, if we do not establish certain principles for our life as a whole, it is difficult to see how the American Jewry can have a future."⁵⁶

The Yiddish-speaking press in Chicago responded to the increasing pressures of assimilation in two ways. The first response was to reinforce the community's commitment to old traditions and values. It emphasized connection to Yiddishland as a means of establishing continuity in the Jewish community and forming the next links in the "golden chain." This "conservative" approach was often invoked by the *Courier*, which identified with a more traditional form of Orthodox Judaism.

The second response—taken up by both the *Forward* and the *Courier* as time went on—focused on fostering a sense of common purpose that would unite the community in both present and future. The main disagreement between the *Forward* and *Courier* concerned *what* the community should organize itself around. In general, writers from the *Forward*

encouraged Jewish immigrants to let go of the old-fashioned traditions of the Old Country, particularly religious traditions, and to coalesce around a secular Jewish identity grounded in the experiences of being Jewish in America or being a part of a transnational Yiddish socialist movement (in other words, rooted in the Bundist ideals of *Yiddishkayt* and *doikayt*.) While writers from the *Courier* were less willing to cast aside tradition and saw it as critical to the future of the Jewish community, they, too, had a series of "future-minded" ideals that they hoped would unite American Jewry in the decades and centuries to come. The *Courier*'s primary future-oriented ideal was Zionism, which led to increased enthusiasm for Hebrew language education among some of the *Courier*'s columnists. Throughout the 1920s, columnists from both papers wrote pieces that followed a common structure: they defined the problem of assimilation and then proposed a form of community engagement—often focused on the youth—in order to rekindle the flames of connection between members of Chicago's Yiddish-speaking community.

The *Courier* wrote such an editorial in 1923, entitled "Build a Dam," which described the problem of assimilation metaphorically as a "threatening deluge" or flood.⁵⁷ The community seemed less and less engaged in Jewish institutions, and the youth seemed to be slowly drifting away from its Jewish roots. The *Courier* called for the construction of a "dam" to stop the outflow of individuals from the Jewish community and its traditions, caused by the unprecedented threat of assimilation.⁵⁸ Thankfully, this dam was already being built by a community organization, Adath B'nai Israel, a group that sought to "attract the youth to Jewish traditions; [organize] the youth on a religious and nationalistic basis; [and] ... restore the Sabbath and all the other great institutions of the

55. Wenger, 201.

56. "What Are the Principles? (Editorial)," *Daily Jewish Courier*, May 18, 1923, subject codes, Jewish, III.C, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#/item/5423972_9_1_0482/.

57. "Build a Dam," *Daily Jewish Courier*, Mar. 23, 1923, subject codes: Jewish, III E, II D 6, III A, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#/item/5423972_9_1_1394/.

58. *Ibid.*

Jewish religion.”⁵⁹ For the *Courier*, religious and cultural traditions were absolutely central to the continuation of Jewish identity as they knew it.

The *Courier* saw Zionism as a natural extension of the “dam building” in the United States. As laudable as it was to strive to preserve Jewish cultural institutions in the Diaspora, argued an English-language editorial, it would ultimately not be enough, “for the forces of assimilation are as irresistible as their operation is universal.”⁶⁰ In order to preserve the traditions of the Jewish community in the long term, a country and language of its own was necessary.⁶¹ In addition to making this larger argument about the necessity of Zionism, the *Courier* also used Zionism as a means of bringing Chicago’s Yiddish-speaking community together. The *Courier* reported on the Zionist Congresses that took place with some frequency in Chicago, promoted Zionist youth groups, such as Young Judea Clubs, and advertised programs hosted by the Chicago Zionist Organization, such as a 1931 course on the history of Zionism.⁶² By bringing the Chicago Yiddish community—especially its youth—together around traditional Jewish institutions and the Zionist cause, the *Courier* hoped to prevent the community from being “washed away” by the tides of assimilation.⁶³

Although less protective of tradition than the *Courier*, the *Forward* was similarly committed to renewing the commitment of Chicago’s

59. Ibid.

60. “A Definition of Zionism (Editorial in English),” *Daily Jewish Courier*, Apr. 19, 1923, subject codes: Jewish, III A, I A 2 b, III H, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#/item/5423972_8_1_0500/.

61. Ibid.

62. “Zionists Announce Interesting Course on Zionism,” *Daily Jewish Courier*, Jan. 10, 1931, subject codes: Jewish, II B 2 f, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#item/5423972_5_1185/.

63. “Build a Dam,” *Daily Jewish Courier*.

Jewish community, particularly its youth, to Yiddish culture. A 1926 editorial, entitled “Workmen’s Circle to Win Jewish Youth,” begins by defining the complex processes affecting Jewish immigrants:

The Jewish masses are rapidly becoming Americanized; not assimilated, acclimatized best describes what is going on. … [However], we have little to fear from acclimatization in America. The American Jews will doubtless look, talk, and act differently from their Polish and Russian brethren, but only outwardly. Intrinsically and essentially the Jew in the United States will be just as Jewish as the Polish or Russian Jew.⁶⁴

By stating their indifference towards retaining the traditions and mannerisms of Eastern European Jewry, the *Forward* rejected a Yiddish identity grounded in its connection to the Old Country. Whereas an outward appearance of continuity and religiosity was important to the *Courier*’s writers, as it was for many Jews living in Eastern Europe, the *Forward* seemed to accept social assimilation, identifying Yiddish identity as something internal. The *Forward* emphasizes this further, stating that although Jews had changed their language, manners, occupations, and ideas many times in the Diaspora, “the golden chain was not broken … [and] they did not cease to be Jews.”⁶⁵

However, the *Forward* recognized that Yiddish culture would not continue to flourish of its own accord. Using similar metaphorical language to that of the *Courier*, the *Forward* called the Yiddish-speaking community to action: “A bridge must be built to open the river of time which separates the European-born fathers from their American-born sons.”⁶⁶ Lest this

64. “Workmen’s Circle to Win Jewish Youth,” *Forward*.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

sound too similar to the *Courier*'s calls for commitment to Eastern European religious tradition, the *Forward* makes it clear in the next sentence that they are referring to the long tradition of Yiddish secular socialism: "A technique ... must be evolved, a way found, to unite present day American-Jewish life with the idealism of the older generation of Jewish radicals."⁶⁷ The solution to this dilemma was the Workmen's Circle, which was dedicated to keeping the Yiddish language and culture alive in the United States through educational programs and community gatherings that would create a "bridge between generations."

These two orientations—conservative and Orthodox versus secular and socialist—are apparent in the ways in which the *Courier* and the *Forward* spoke about their commitment to the Yiddish language itself. The *Courier* usually argued that Yiddish was important specifically because it helped the children of Jewish immigrants remain connected to their parents' culture and religious traditions. The *Forward*, on the other hand, saw Yiddish as one means of fostering cohesion among the American Jewish community in the present and future and as a means of uniting the international Yiddish socialist movement. However, many argued that the Yiddish language was not necessary to accomplish these goals, as long as Jewish youth were being educated about Yiddish culture and communities around the world. Indeed, one *Forward* columnist argued in 1931 that there was little use in trying to force the "familiar mother tongue" onto the youth; did any such thing even exist anymore, after the immigrants had left Europe? Further, the writer acknowledged that the socialist and secular educational initiatives of the Workmen's Circle schools were probably Americanizing the children just as much as anything else, teaching them "to love the America of [Eugene] Debs and [Abraham] Lincoln—the America of idealism."⁶⁸ Teaching Yiddish

67. Ibid.

68. "Jewish Education in America," *Forward*, Mar. 14, 1931, subject codes: Jewish: II.B.2.f, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#/item/5423972_5_1173/.

was, thus, not as much about preventing Americanization but about continuing to foster the growth and beautification of the Yiddish language and culture, even within their new Americanized setting.

At the heart of these debates about politics, Yiddish, and Americanization was the question of belonging in the new home. Despite their disagreements, the *Courier* and the *Forward* both envisioned a Jewish community that was committed to Yiddish, Jewishness, and finding a place for itself within the new home—in other words, both were seeking ways to be truly "at home" in America, to feel at once connected to their heritage and to their surroundings. What the papers contested was the extent to which Yiddish was connected to Jewish religious traditions and the importance of outwardly appearing "Jewish" or "American." For the *Courier*, being "at home" in America meant being free to participate in American politics and society while remaining firmly rooted in Jewish culture and religion, which could be accessed through Yiddish and Hebrew, respectively. The *Forward*, by contrast, encouraged its readers to become more outwardly "American," to cast off religion and tradition, and to retain Yiddish primarily as a means of cultural autonomy and community cohesion.

The Centrality of Education and Language in Journalists' Conceptions of Jewish Immigrant Identity

Chicago's Yiddish journalists wrote explicitly about assimilation only on occasion. More often, they would debate specific topics of community importance in ways that reflected their broader ideas about Americanization and the future of Chicago's Yiddish community. They would write about intermarriage and religious practice or pen regular satirical columns that poked fun at immigrant stereotypes while providing commentary on recent happenings. Education was by far one of the most contentious and

prominent topics. Over the course of several years, columnists and lay-people alike wrote hundreds of articles about the importance of a Jewish education, the proper form of such an education, the importance of language in an immigrant's upbringing, and more.

Debates about these topics appeared in editorials and letters to the editor in the *Courier* in the early 1920s and in the *Forward* in the early 1930s. These debates provide glimpses into two distinct moments in the history of the Eastern European Jewry in Chicago. In the early 1920s, which forms the early time boundary of this paper, immigrants were still arriving in Chicago in waves (albeit in smaller numbers than before the war). Additionally, the United Kingdom's Balfour Declaration in 1917 supported the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The declaration had energized Zionists around the world, but especially in Chicago, which *Courier* columnist J. Loebner proclaimed was "the first place to begin organizing Jews on behalf of Zionism."⁶⁹ The *Courier* was an outspoken supporter of Zionism, and many of its most prominent columnists, such as Philip P. Bregstone, were known across the Midwest for their active support of Zionist causes.⁷⁰ The concerns expressed in the *Courier*'s education debate of 1922 reflects its historical moment. Its contributors worried about Americanization, but not to the extent that they would in later years, after immigration had nearly ceased and ever-increasing numbers of Jews were abandoning Yiddish; their immediate questions concerned how to foster support for Zionism among Chicago's Jewish youth or how to foster a deeper connection between children and their parents. In these opinions, the *Courier*'s self-description as the voice of Chicago's Orthodox community also shines through.

69. J. Loebner, "When Petty Politicians Make Statements," *Daily Jewish Courier*, June 11, 1922, subject codes: Jewish III.B.4, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#/item/5423972_8_1_1685/.

70. For a brief biography of Bregstone, see "Philip P. Bregstone Papers," Newberry Library, accessed Oct. 23, 2021, mms.newberry.org/detail.asp?recordid=1709.

By contrast, in the early 1930s, concerns about assimilation were felt much more urgently. It was becoming increasingly difficult for the Yiddish press to retain its audience and relevance due to lower rates of new immigrants and the movement of existing Yiddish-speaking Jews out of the Maxwell Street area. By 1930, Chicago's Jewish community was much less divided by class and geographical location. Eastern European Jews had settled in North and West Side neighborhoods such as Albany Park, Rogers Park, Lake View, Uptown, Humboldt Park, and North Lawndale.⁷¹ No longer geographically isolated along Maxwell Street, they began to assimilate into their new neighborhoods, both within the Reform communities of German Jews and the broader non-Jewish communities in Chicago. Due to the differences in the editorial staffs' conceptions of American Jewish identity, the *Forward* took a lighter approach to the situation than the *Courier* had in the twenties when the threat of assimilation was less. The *Courier* emphasized the importance of religion, language education, and Zionism to maintaining a coherent Jewish identity in the face of Americanization. In contrast, the *Forward* was less concerned about Jews becoming culturally American and leaving behind religion; it emphasized the importance of cultural activities and community organizations to help Chicago's Yiddish-speaking Jews retain ties to the Jewish community as a whole.

71. Irving Cutler, "Jews," in *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. James R. Grossman, Ann Durkin Keating, and Janice L. Reiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 437, www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/671.html.

The *Courier* Education Debate, 1922

On January 3, 1922, a person writing under the pen name Ger Ve-Toshav⁷² launched a lively debate about language and educational policy in Chicago's Jewish community. His letter to the editor levelled a number of critiques at the Grenshaw Street Talmud Torah,⁷³ arguing that in order to "tear [the Jewish child] away from the abyss of assimilation and self-contempt" the school would need to reconsider its teaching methods.⁷⁴ Specifically, they needed to stop teaching the Pentateuch in Yiddish translation, a method which left Jewish children with "no understanding of Hebrew, [no knowledge] of our history, and ... not the slightest knowledge of our literature, either old or new."⁷⁵

To illustrate his concern, Ger Ve-Toshav described an incident that he witnessed during a visit to the Grenshaw Street Talmud Torah. The instructor, who was leading the students through a recitation exercise, would read aloud a passage of the Pentateuch, which the students repeated after him. The teacher first read in Hebrew, "and they went away from Him in peace," and then repeated the passage in Yiddish, "*un zey*

72. This is a play on words in Hebrew: *Ger* means alien and *Toshav* means resident. According to a translator for the Foreign Language Press Survey, the nickname implies that the writer is a resident of Chicago but an outsider in the realm of Hebrew school politics.

73. A Talmud Torah is a religious school where children are taught the scriptures. These schools are meant to prepare students to continue their studies in a more serious manner at yeshiva, if they so choose. While this type of religious school would nowadays almost certainly include an emphasis on Hebrew, in early twentieth-century Chicago, many Talmud Torah schools were based on the Ashkenazic model and were taught in Yiddish.

74. Ger Ve-Toshav [pseud.], "About Old-Fashioned Schools," *Daily Jewish Courier*, Jan. 3, 1922, subject codes: Jewish, II.B2.f, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#/item/5423972_5_1462/.

75. Ibid.

zaynen avekgegangen fun ihm in frieden." Upon hearing the word *frieden*, the student performing the exercise—who spoke only English with his fellow students—believed that he had heard the English word "freedom." He repeated after the teacher, "and they went away from him in freedom."⁷⁶ After the lesson, Ger Ve-Toshav confronted the student:

I asked the child what the Hebrew word *Sholem* meant. At first, he did not know what to answer, but when I told him the entire sentence, he exclaimed: "and they went away from him in freedom." I asked him what freedom meant, and he replied, "Don't you know? Washington fought England and won our freedom." This is only one illustration out of many which could be used against the practice of translating Hebrew words into Yiddish to an American child.⁷⁷

Ger Ve-Toshav used this anecdote to illustrate his overarching argument: without a proper Jewish education, which should include intensive training in Hebrew, an emphasis on Zionism, and extensive reading of famous Jewish literary and religious works, the American Jewish community was doomed to succumb to the "poisonous gases of assimilation and indifference" and to lose the distinctions that connected them to their past.⁷⁸ Although Ger Ve-Toshav was writing about education—and the specific methods in one specific religious school—his argument tapped explicitly and implicitly into larger discussions about assimilation and Americanization in the Chicago Jewish community.

N. S. Herman, an instructor at the Talmud Torah in question, responded to Ger Ve-Toshav in a column of his own six days later. Herman

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

did not dispute the point that a Jewish education was necessary to combat assimilation, nor did he dispute that it was important to inculcate Zionist sympathies in American Jewish students as a means of connecting them to a larger Jewish community. Regarding the language question, however, he strongly disagreed and launched an impassioned defense of Yiddish:

Once and for all, we must recognize the fact that as long as we, in America, have strict, Orthodox, synagogue Jews, who maintain the Jewish traditions and do not speak any other language except Yiddish; as long as the American-Jewish press—which brings us Jewish news, and everything about the Jews in which we are interested, their achievements, their ambitions—is printed in Yiddish; as long as the rabbis, preachers and speakers of our Orthodox synagogues deliver their speeches in Yiddish; as long as the parents wish their children to preserve their Judaism and not to become estranged from them; as long as parents and children strive to understand one another so that they won't feel themselves to be strangers—just so long will the Pentateuch, and only the Pentateuch, with a Yiddish translation, be taught in our Talmud Torah, which was founded and is being maintained by Orthodox Jews.⁷⁹

For Herman—as well as for many of the *Courier*'s writers and readers—Yiddish was seen in precisely this way: it was the language of the Old World, the language of Orthodoxy, and the language of a proper Jewish education. For Ger Ve-Toshav, however, Yiddish education was part of the problem.

79. N. S. Herman, "A Reply to Ger Ve-Toshav," *Daily Jewish Courier*, Jan. 9, 1922, subject codes: Jewish, II.B2.f, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#/item/5423972_5_1449/.

On January 22, 1922, the *Courier* published a second letter from Ger Ve-Toshav. He opposed Herman's argument about the importance of Yiddish to Chicago's Orthodox community by pointing out that most of Chicago's Talmud Torah schools had already switched to the *Ivrith Be'Ivrith* (Hebrew taught through Hebrew) system. Yiddish may have been the language of the parents—many of whom had themselves stopped speaking the language regularly by this point—but Hebrew was the language of the Torah, as well as Jewish literature, history, and folktales. Ger Ve-Toshav concluded by attacking the Workmen's Circle and their "pseudo-socialist comrades," a reference meant to refer, among others, to the readership of the *Forward*. He associated Yiddish with the socialist mission of these groups, which had founded schools to "teach American children Socialism in Yiddish, so that they won't become estranged from their parents."⁸⁰ Hebrew education, by contrast, retained a purely Jewish mission, untainted by socialism—to connect Jewish children to their heritage.

The *Forward* Education Debate, 1931

Interestingly, less than a decade later, when the *Forward* launched its own op-ed debate about education, it began with this very issue: the estrangement of children from their parents. In response to a series of opinion articles from the Workmen's Circle community that had argued for the importance of teaching Jewish children Yiddish in order to bring them closer to their parents, a *Forward* columnist argued that Yiddish language education was not the answer. Instead of teaching the Yiddish language to American Jewish children—which would only serve to alienate them further by teaching them a language not even their parents continued to speak—the Workmen's Circle and American Jewish schools

80. Ger Ve-Toshav [pseud.], "Once More on the Old-Fashioned School," *Daily Jewish Courier*, Jan. 22, 1922, subject codes: Jewish, II.B.2.f, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#/item/5423972_5_1433/.

needed to focus on “the nourishing of a spiritual development” that would bring parents and children together.⁸¹ In other words, they needed to foster a deeper love for “Yiddish *culture*,”⁸² which this columnist insisted could exist without Yiddish, in an entirely American context.

By eliminating Yiddish from the American Jewish schools, Jewish education could focus instead on “a complete understanding of American life” and on a Yiddish culture that would be attuned to this new way of life—a culture that would be “nearer to our present environments and conditions.”⁸³ Such a shift would be better for both the Workmen’s Circle and for the socialist movement, which many of the *Forward*’s readers found even more important than connections to Jewish tradition. For many, socialism in America was merely a new phase in Jewish life, following after the many different phases that had come before it in many different lands. For the *Forward* and the Workmen’s Circle, in contrast to the *Courier*, *Yiddishkayt* was not about maintaining ties to the Old Country as much as about maintaining a general sense of community and direction. As long as Yiddish was effective in making the Chicago Jewish community feel cohesive, then it was worth supporting. As soon as it lost its appeal, the *Forward* was more willing than the *Courier* to abandon tradition and to foster an entirely new kind of Jewish identity in English, in Chicago.

One week later, on March 14, 1931, the *Forward* published another article on the issue of Yiddish language education entitled “Jewish Education in America,” which appears to have been written by a member of the Workmen’s Circle (or by someone involved with its Yiddish educational activities). The author concedes several of the points made in the

March 7 article, namely that it did not make sense to try to teach immigrant children the “language of their parents,” since immigrant parents often spoke distinct dialects that were no longer taught.⁸⁴ However, that did not make Yiddish language education irrelevant. Rather, advanced proficiency in Yiddish was necessary to connect young Jews with the literature of Sholom Aleichem, Sholom Asch, and others and would allow the Yiddish language to “grow and become enriched and beautified to the greatest extent.”⁸⁵ This was a crucial part of the secular Yiddish education that the *Forward* was increasingly committed to, and in the author’s view, would only serve to enrich and deepen students’ commitment to the secular Yiddish culture that the *Forward* was constructing.⁸⁶

The *Forward* was not alone in its support for more secular Yiddish language education. Another organization that embraced the ethos of “Yiddish as homeland,” where the Yiddish language itself constituted a claim and connection to a larger identity, was the Sholem Aleichem Folk Institute, which ran several Yiddish-language secular schools in Chicago and New York. The schools were based on four principles: secularity, Yiddish, “everywhereness,” and child-centeredness. Their founders believed that “the first place in the curriculum should be assigned to language (Yiddish), to Yiddish literature and Jewish history. Jewish religion was considered from the cultural-historic viewpoint—the child was told about Jewish customs and beliefs.”⁸⁷ They emphasized the choice of the Yiddish language over all else; Yiddish was not a way to connect to the Jewish religion or to Eastern Europe, but rather a way to maintain

84. Jewish Education in America, *Forward*, Mar. 14, 1931, subject codes: Jewish, II.B.2.f, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/article/5423972_5_1173/.

85. Ibid.

86. Ibid.

87. Saul Goodman, *Our First Fifty Years: The Sholem Aleichem Folk Institute (A Historical Survey)* (New York: Sholem Aleichem Folk Institute, 1972), 50.

81. “The Jewish Immigrants and Their Children,” *Forward*, Mar. 7, 1931, subject codes: Jewish, I.B.3.b, CFLPS, flps.newberry.org/#/item/5423972_2_0053/.

82. Ibid. Emphasis is mine.

83. Ibid.

a connection to forefathers and to the “language of the Jewish secular milieu,” which for nineteen hundred years had facilitated the flourishing of Jewish culture in the Diaspora.⁸⁸ In other words, the choice of Yiddish was based on its connection to some sort of unique cultural space that could only be accessed through the language; what students chose to do with the language once they learned it—in their religious practice, in political engagement, or otherwise—was less important, as long as they engaged with the language and through it, contributed to Jewish life in some way.

The Sholem Aleichem Folk Schools, like the press, contributed to Americanization and strengthened students’ sense of a unique, separate Jewish identity. It fostered a feeling of connection to the transnational Jewish community while also encouraging students to engage actively with the world around them in Chicago, whether through their support of socialist causes or through their engagement with the city’s Jewish community. Saul Goodman echoes this argument in his 1972 essay “The Path and Accomplishments of the Sholem Aleichem Folk Institute,” which was published in a historical survey looking at the first fifty years of the institute’s existence: “The Sholem Aleichem ideology … affirmed America, and it strove to ‘harmonize general American, and Jewish secular educational ingredients.’ In present terms, this implies secular Jewishness should be integrated with American culture in order that we develop as a creative, unique people in America.”⁸⁹ In their attempts to help their students become a “creative, unique people *in America*,”⁹⁰ the Sholem Aleichem schools fought against complete assimilation by promoting a specifically Jewish approach to Americanization.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid. Emphasis is mine.

Overall, the debates surrounding education constituted a large portion of the debates around Americanization in Chicago’s Yiddish-speaking community. The various opinions that appeared in the press aligned with the general perspectives on Jewish immigrant identity to which the *Courier* and *Forward* adhered: some favored an approach that prioritized connection to tradition and Orthodox values and which valued language education first and foremost as a means by which to connect children to their traditions and (more immediately) to their parents; others preferred to experiment with new models of Jewish immigrant identity, casting off the religious traditions of the “Old Home” in favor of new (often socialist) definitions of Jewish values. The latter approach tended to value learning the Yiddish language not for a connection to the past, but for its ability to create a cohesive community in the present and future. Both, in their debates, attempted to define new ways of relating to their heritage, to the Yiddish language, and to the larger Jewish immigrant community in America.

Conclusion

There exists a popular narrative of the history of Yiddish in the United States that focuses on the ultimate demise of the Yiddish press, viewing Yiddish periodicals as victims of American Jewish assimilation. Indeed, while the Yiddish press was remarkably resilient, outlasting most other foreign-language presses from the early twentieth century, the challenges that the Yiddish press faced throughout the 1920s only increased in the 1930s and 1940s. Due to a variety of factors that gradually led Chicago’s Jews away from Yiddish, the *Courier* ceased publication in 1944, with the Chicago edition of the *Forward* following in 1951. To many, this seemed to confirm the assertions of scholars like Robert Park, who claimed that the immigrant press was, whether willing or unwilling, doomed to take part in the process of Americanization and ultimately to cease to exist.

Yet, to view this history as one of decline would be to take a simplistic

and overly pessimistic perspective and to disregard the vibrant debates and passionate appeals that characterized the Yiddish press in the period following its golden age and preceding its decline. Yiddish writers and readers engaged with debates about community in the pages of the Yiddish press because these debates mattered—they helped the community to navigate the unique challenges of immigration to the United States while remaining committed to their communities and to one another. These newspapers guided Chicago's Yiddish-speaking community through the process of "Americanization" while allowing them a space in which they could debate what they wanted "Americanization" to look like and continue to cultivate their ties to Yiddishland. The story of the Yiddish press in Chicago is not a story of decline; it is a story of remarkable resilience and creativity, and one that continues to this day as young people are reviving Yiddish, whether for personal or scholarly purposes. While it is true that no Yiddish periodicals exist in Chicago today, Yiddish speakers in Chicago have access to the Yiddish edition of the *Forward* online and to contemporary Yiddish podcasts, such as the Massachusetts radio program *Yiddish Voice* or the feminist Yiddish podcast *Vaybertaytsh*, that continue to engage in debates over the role of Yiddish in American Jewish identity.

The Yiddish press demonstrates the ways in which Chicago's Yiddish-speaking immigrants were not passive spectators to the process of Americanization. Rather, they were active agents who negotiated the terms of their new home, finding creative and unique ways to combine elements of the language and culture of the Old Country with their new lives in America. In the pages of the press and beyond, Yiddish Chicago debated and ultimately invented its own ways of being "at home" in America. ○

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Chicago's “Harmonious Forgetfulness”



John Cox Underwood and
the Meaning of Reconciliation
at Confederate Mound,
1885–1896

JARRETT SHAPIRO, AB'20

Introduction

On Decoration Day weekend¹ in 1895, nearly ten years after a failed attempt to perform a national display of reconciliation in Philadelphia, United Confederate Veterans Major-General John Cox Underwood, a former Confederate lieutenant-colonel and lieutenant governor of Kentucky, completed his mission to unite Union and Confederate veterans in a gigantic spectacle attended by thousands of Chicagoans (see fig. 1).² The cause was the erection and dedication of a monument commemorating the approximately four to seven thousand Confederate soldiers who perished at Camp Douglas, a Civil War Union training camp and later

1. Now called Memorial Day.

2. Underwood claimed that over 100,000 attended the dedication in Oak Woods Cemetery, which would have represented close to 10 percent of the population of Chicago. See John C. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings Incidental to the Erection and Dedication of the Confederate Monument*, souvenir ed. (Chicago: W. M. Johnston Printing, 1896), 6, 125, hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t3dz0n74x.

Five unidentified prisoners of war in Confederate uniforms in front of their barracks at Camp Douglas Prison, Chicago, Illinois, Library of Congress.

a notorious prison.³ The monument sits in a rather quiet, unassuming plot in the southwestern corner of Chicago's Oak Woods Cemetery.⁴ Beneath the ground lie the bodies of these soldiers, and the site is popularly known as Confederate Mound.⁵ Few people today know of its existence.⁶

The existence of a monument honoring Confederate prisoners in Chicago is surprising, given Chicago's fierce pro-Union sentiment and its growing African American population after the Civil War. Yet the construction and dedication met little resistance in 1895. The federal government gave its blessing to the ex-Confederate Association of Chicago, the organization that conceived the monument, and a group of Chicago

3. "From careful investigation it appears that over 6,000 Confederate soldiers died in Douglas prison. . . . There being 4,317 names on the registers of the cemetery and over 400 additional names on mortuary lists in the war department at Washington who died with smallpox, . . . to which should be added some 1,500, the record of whom was either burned or lost." Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 106–7; see footnote 54 for modern estimates of the death toll.

4. National Cemetery Administration, "Confederate Mound," U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, last updated Aug. 28, 2017, www.cem.va.gov/cems/lots/confederate_mound.asp.

5. "The name Confederate Mound seems to have originated in about 1902." National Cemetery Administration, *Federal Stewardship of Confederate Dead* (Washington, DC: Department of Veterans Affairs, July 2016), 238, www.cem.va.gov/CEM/publications/NCA_Fed_Stewardship_Confederate_Dead.pdf; see also, National Park Service, "Confederate Mound at Oak Woods Cemetery Chicago, Illinois," U.S. Department of the Interior, n.d., accessed Dec. 20, 2019, www.nps.gov/nr/travel/national_cemeteries/Illinois/Confederate_Mound_Oak_Woods_Cemetery.html.

6. Meribah Knight, "Chicago's Forgotten Civil War Prison Camp," *WBEZ*, Mar. 11, 2015, www.wbez.org/shows/curious-city/chicagos-forgotten-civil-war-prison-camp/2aea8281-878c-436f-8311-62747b7be31f; Ted Slowik, "Chicago Houses Confederate Monument at Well-Known Cemetery," *Chicago Tribune*, Aug. 15, 2017, www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/daily-southtown/opinion/ct-sta-slowik-confederate-mound-st-0816-20170815-story.html.

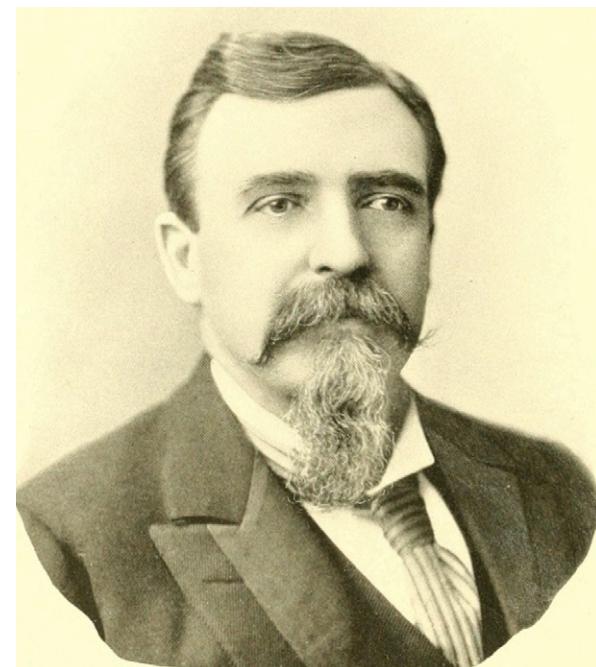


Figure 1: John Cox Underwood.

John C. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings Incidental to the Erection and Dedication of the Confederate Monument* (Chicago: W. M. Johnston Printing, 1896), 2, www.cem.va.gov/cems/lots/confederate_mound.asp.

leaders organized a committee to help Underwood plan the two-day dedication.⁷ Most local and national papers wrote glowing reviews of the ceremonies, praising Underwood and the other distinguished participants for their efforts to heal the country. In the end, barring a couple of noteworthy exceptions, the affair lacked any major controversy or dissent.

Underwood's *Report of Proceedings Incidental to the Erection and Dedication of the Confederate Monument* is itself a monument to the author's determination and a record of his philosophy. His efforts in Chicago

7. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 6, 106, 270.

were part of growing trends in the 1880s and 1890s toward a reconciliation between the North and South; the revalorization of the Confederacy and the Confederate soldier who fought for a “lost cause”; and the renunciation by Northern and Southern white elites of the racial and social egalitarianism of the Reconstruction period. Scholars have written extensively about reconciliation, focused mainly on reconciliationist efforts in the American South; few have tracked the history of reconciliation in the North or in Chicago in particular. Exploring the motivations and actions of Chicagoans and ex-Confederates to memorialize the soldiers who died at Camp Douglas helps illustrate that reconciliationist Civil War memory was a nationwide movement.

This paper uses the Confederate monument at Oak Woods Cemetery as a case study. It looks to the man behind the monument, John Cox Underwood, to explore how the ceremonies in Chicago both reflected and engendered manifestations of reconciliation between ex-Confederates and Unionists and emboldened Southerners to leave a material reminder of the Lost Cause in the heart of Union territory. It examines Underwood’s failed effort to promote a national reconciliationist display in Philadelphia in 1885, analyzes the major themes that emerged in the ceremonies at Chicago, and surveys the backlash to the monument.

Despite the event’s magnitude, few scholars have investigated Underwood’s story, and important questions about the nature of reconciliation in Chicago, and the North at large, remain unanswered.⁸ Why did the demonstration that Underwood organized in Philadelphia fail to evince

8. Rachel Coleman, a PhD student of American history, has written about Underwood’s endeavor for an online writers’ forum; see Rachel Coleman, “The Troubling History of Chicago’s Confederate Mound,” Medium, Aug. 17, 2017, medium.com/@rachel.coleman/the-troubling-history-of-chicagos-confederate-mound-2205951e5545. The US Department of Veterans Affairs discussed Underwood in a thorough survey of Confederate cemeteries; see National Cemetery Administration, *Federal Stewardship of Confederate Dead*, 80–83.

his desired spirit of reconciliation?⁹ What do Underwood’s record of Chicago, the events, and the monument itself reveal about contemporary understandings of the themes of reconciliation, specifically concerning the role of women as a symbol for the country’s peaceful future, sectional culpability over slavery and racial violence, Northern and Southern economic prosperity, the struggle to promote imperialism and white supremacy, and the collective framing of the historical legacy of the Civil War for future generations? Are there any reasons why Chicagoans, especially prominent residents who helped organize the ceremonies, might have appeared so receptive to embracing their former enemies? Finally, given the unexpected nature of the events, what kinds of resistance did organizers encounter?

Underwood, among others, recognized that the commemoration of the monument at Oak Woods presented a chance for both Unionists and ex-Confederates to acknowledge veterans’ shared valor and dedication to their causes in the Civil War and to craft uplifting sentiments of reconciliation. He minimized anti-reconciliationist sentiment against the celebrations and the monument itself by gaining the support of leaders in the press, the military, the church, and the government. Underwood’s efforts to build and dedicate a monument to Southern soldiers in one of the great metropolises of the North helped to forge economic ties between the North and South. Equally important, his efforts redefined the moral and historical legacy of the Lost Cause and presented this altered narrative to future generations. Ultimately, Underwood shaped reconciliation into a dominating vision of “harmonious forgetfulness,” the collective silencing of the evils of the cause for which the South fought.¹⁰

9. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 4–5.

10. Underwood coined the term *harmonious forgetfulness*, as noted in David W. Blight’s *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 203.

Following the Civil War, three strands of thoughts emerged in the public life of the nation: reconciliation, white supremacy, and emancipation.¹¹ Through reconciliation, the North and the South dealt with the memory of the Civil War as a collective body; both sides united to celebrate the virtues of the common soldier and minimized the separate causes for which he had fought. White supremacy's "terror and violence"—often in the South, though by no means limited to the region—was an attempt by whites to restore their antebellum political superiority over African Americans.¹² Emancipation emerged out of a uniquely African American memory of the war, with former slaves and free blacks realizing various forms of political liberation, including the end of slavery and equality under the law.¹³ These ideas undergird three related historiographies: Civil War memory; monumentality, memory, and public space; and Civil War Chicago. John Cox Underwood's construction of the Oak Woods Confederate monument engages with each of these historiographies and offers new avenues for the study of the cultural, political, and economic motivations and effects of reconciliation in the late nineteenth century.

Various historians have explored Civil War memory. David Blight's *Race and Reunion* and Barbara Gannon's *Americans Remember Their Civil War* demonstrate how reconciliation and white supremacy emerged in the late nineteenth century as the dominant visions of Civil War memory at the expense of African American emancipation efforts.¹⁴ W. Fitzhugh

11. Historian David Blight defined these three strands in *Race and Reunion* (2001). In the intervening two decades, historians engaged in memory scholarship have almost universally been in conversation with Blight's now "traditional" ideas, regardless of their divergences. See Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 2.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.; 205; Barbara A. Gannon, *Americans Remember Their Civil War* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2017), xv.

Brundage's *The Southern Past* and Kirk Savage's *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves* study the material manifestation of Civil War memory in the public sphere, investigating the role that space played and continues to play in furnishing as well as diminishing these visions.¹⁵ Theodore Karamanski and Eileen McMahon's *Civil War Chicago* applies these contributions to track the effects of the war on the economic development of the city and its memory for different social groups: African Americans, Union veterans, and civilians.¹⁶

Civil War scholars have collectively called for greater attention to the study of Lost Cause monuments in Union territory. This paper answers that call by examining how the forces of reconciliation, white supremacy, and enshrining memory in the built environment coalesced within the context of one such ceremony in Chicago. I hope it will enrich historians' understanding of the legacy of such events. A close reading of Underwood's *Report*, published in 1896, contributed heavily to my study. This nearly three hundred-page report includes the speeches made by Chicago and Southern political, religious, economic, and military leaders during the ceremonies; the biographies and contributions of prominent Chicagoans who helped finance the monument's erection and dedication; and the correspondence between Underwood and Chicago institutions that preceded the monument's construction. Underwood organized the report chronologically around four main ceremonies: the private reception at the Palmer House (May 29); the banquet at Kinsley's restaurant in downtown Chicago for distinguished guests (May 29); the citywide parade down Michigan Avenue (May 30); and the dedication

15. W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 10; Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 5–6.

16. Theodore J. Karamanski and Eileen M. McMahon, eds., *Civil War Chicago: Eyewitness to History* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014), 1, 284–88.

of the monument at Oak Woods Cemetery (May 30). I also read nineteenth-century articles in Philadelphia and Chicago newspapers to understand public sentiment towards reconciliation and the Confederate Monument prior to, during, and after its construction.¹⁷ The celebration of the monument garnered national attention, which led me to read newspapers from other cities and in the African American press. It was particularly important to examine instances of opposition from the Grand Army of the Republic, the abolitionist Thomas Lowther, and African Americans.

I believe this project constitutes the first major analysis of Underwood's work. It reveals how Confederates and Chicagoans attempted to shape the trajectory of reconciliation at the conclusion of the nineteenth century. Beyond confirming that reconciliation was the dominant philosophy of Civil War memory in 1890s Chicago, this project strives to address two interesting and surprisingly overlooked subjects: What did reconciliation mean to the people who participated in the dedication efforts in Chicago? And how do the events, writings, speeches, and the monument itself expose and complicate these understandings? This project looks beyond the material evidence available in the diaries of Confederate soldiers, which scholars writing about the memory of Camp Douglas have long used as a primary source of analysis. Instead, it turns to the story of John Cox Underwood to answer those questions.

17. Underwood included a few excerpts from newspaper articles in the report, but as might be expected, he selected articles that endorsed his project. See Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 143, 145, 155, 157–59, 161–63.

Philadelphia

Why Underwood's First National Attempt at Reconciliation Failed

On June 27, 1885, John Cox Underwood arrived at Fairmount Park, the largest municipal park in Philadelphia. Accompanying him was his cousin and second-in-command, Colonel H. L. Underwood of Kentucky, and many national guardsmen and state troops from the North and South, the "sons of veterans who wore both blue and gray."¹⁸ John Underwood had planned a week-long encampment, military exercise competitions, and reception for participants and distinguished spectators. He hoped that this display of unity before a massive audience at the competitions would advance the cause of reconciliation between the North and South. Since his failed attempt at the governorship of Kentucky in 1879, John Underwood had helped organize many local and state affairs promoting reconciliation, though Philadelphia was by far his most grandiose attempt to date.¹⁹

Underwood's choice of his cousin as his second-in-command is revealing. H. L. Underwood had fought for the Union, his brother had died at the Battle of Shiloh, and his father had been a federal officeholder and an ardent supporter of President Lincoln and the Union cause.²⁰ Perhaps John Underwood wanted to prove to the people of Philadelphia that his own family's journey towards reconciliation was a microcosm of the nation's future and that his personal experience made him the right person to lead this movement.

18. *Ibid.*, 4.

19. *Ibid.*

20. "The National Encampment: Some Citizens Offended by the Lithographs Posted by Governor Underwood," *Times-Philadelphia*, June 2, 1885, Newspapers.com. (Unless otherwise noted, the archival source is Newspapers.com.)

Local military authorities and even some of Underwood's own staff disagreed with his choice for the encampment's location; nonetheless, Underwood maintained that Philadelphia presented the necessary conditions for a successful display of reconciliation. Philadelphians, he argued, were "liberal."²¹ They would be open-minded and tolerant of his and other Southerners' presence because of their commitment to the cause of reconciliation.

However, three major obstacles threatened to undermine Underwood's project. First, two lithographs that Underwood posted conspicuously throughout the city were controversial. The first showed lines of Union and Confederate soldiers with Union and Confederate artillerymen behind them firing a volley in salute of two aged generals (one Union and one Confederate) as they rode down the line. The Confederate soldiers had the initials C.S.A. inscribed on their belt buckles. All of the troops carried the United States flag. The second lithograph portrayed the Union and Confederate generals of the Board of Military Control with staff carrying an olive branch. Underwood claimed that the posters represented peace and harmony between the North and the South.²² Philadelphians were eager to include Southerners in their conception of a reunited nation, but the lithographs, which included Union soldiers saluting a Confederate general, left locals believing that Underwood was promoting the idea that the Confederate and Union causes were equally just. A Philadelphia banker who had originally agreed to cosponsor the event declined after seeing the lithographs: "I was glad ... to do my part in welcoming the men of the South to Philadelphia as members of the National Guard of the United States, but I will have no part in welcoming men with the badge

21. Ibid.

22. "Venting His Ire: Governor Underwood's Opinion of Philadelphia," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 31, 1885.

of rebellion on their breasts."²³ Similarly, Theodore E. Weidersheim, commander of the 1st Regiment of the National Guard of Pennsylvania, argued that it was a mistake to include the initials of the Confederate States of America in the lithographs and to allow ex-Confederate soldiers to wear Confederate rather than United States uniforms in the competitions.²⁴ In the minds of many Philadelphians, the lithographs demonstrated the persistence of sectional division. Underwood denied that the uniforms made the event any less suitable for reconciliation; he told a reporter that the images were allegorical and demonstrated unity between former enemies, plus, all of the troops were carrying the United States flag. His arguments did not sway public sentiment, however, and Underwood scrambled to save the enterprise. On June 1, aides found him in his room at the Continental Hotel scribbling out C.S.A. from copies of the lithographs that he had planned to send throughout the entire country.²⁵

The second problem was that Philadelphians were disappointed that their own state and local militia would not be participating in the encampment. Philadelphia soldiers had pushed unsuccessfully for Pennsylvanian inclusion in the competitions, knowing that their participation would raise locals' spirits and perhaps allow the event to advance more smoothly, but the governor had refused, explaining publicly that the participation of the Pennsylvania National Guard would keep them from standard duties and create security concerns.²⁶ None of Pennsylvania's military organizations greeted the Southern militias. While they were cordial to the Southern soldiers at Fairmount Park (bringing ice cream,

23. "The National Encampment," *Times-Philadelphia*, June 2, 1885.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. "Militia in Camp: Troops from Various States Congregating at the Quaker City," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, June 30, 1885.

pound cake, fruits, and cigars), most Philadelphians remained upset at the absence of their own militia.²⁷

The third, and arguably most important setback, was that many Philadelphians believed Underwood was turning the encampment into a money-making spectacle equivalent to a circus show. Sensing the encampment to be an excellent opportunity for profit, the Pennsylvania Railroad offered an affordable half-cent-per-mile fare for visitors and soldiers.²⁸ Vendors set up concession stands, and workers constructed bleachers (fifty cents admission) for twenty thousand spectators with standing room (twenty-five cents) for an additional thirty thousand. As one onlooker observed, the encampment turned into an “amusement exhibition on a large scale.”²⁹ The soldiers participating in the encampment were disgusted by the commercial aspect as well. Many claimed that the organizers had lured them with the promise of prizes funded by wealthy private donors in a free public display, only to discover that vendors were charging spectators for admission. These soldiers did not want to be part of a circus display. Dismayed by the entire affair, those that did participate came for the “sole purpose” of winning prize money, rather than to advance the noble cause of reconciliation.³⁰

The appearance of financial gain was the most damning impediment to Underwood’s effort. Though tens of thousands still attended the competitions, many Philadelphians and the military organizations that Underwood had invited accused him of profiting from the endeavor, a claim that he and his compatriots denied vehemently. H. L. Underwood

27. “Pulling Up Tents: Half the Soldiers Leave Camp for Home,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 6, 1885.

28. “Venting His Ire,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 31, 1885.

29. “Troops in the Park: Thousands of Spectators at Belmont and Chamounix,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 29, 1885.

30. Ibid.

wrote: “There is not a dollar in it for us. … Governor Underwood’s idea was purely a patriotic one in the beginning, and his motives seemed to have been questioned in a manner which would make it undignified for him to reply. I can assure you he is disinterested from a financial standpoint.”³¹ Such labels offended John Underwood, who had dedicated much of his postwar life to bringing the country together. The accusations were inescapable, however. Underwood was eager to put the fiasco behind him: “I have nothing whatever to say in regard to the encampment. … I am paying off what obligations are outstanding against the management, and when that is finished I wash my hands of the whole business.”³²

Reflecting on the matter about a month later, and perhaps still smarting from the accusation of petty profiteering, Underwood issued a thinly veiled warning to Philadelphia, hinting that the city’s own profits would suffer if it remained hostile to a Southern presence in the North: “I think Philadelphia has made a serious mistake. If the ex-Confederates are to be ostracized there they will doubtless accept the ban, and keep themselves and their business away from a people who hold themselves too good to meet them on an equality. Philadelphia might easily have made the tongue of every visitor an advertiser of her advantages and attractions, and filled every mouth with her praise, instead of spreading the story of her narrow partisan spirit and prejudice.”³³ Underwood’s claim that ex-Confederates would “doubtless accept the ban” reflected Southerners’ belief in their own honor. Despite the South’s desperate need for Northern investment, he knew that Southerners would be too proud to accept Philadelphians’ condemnation. As he would later do in Chicago, Underwood suggested that

31. “The Camp in the Park: Troops Expected to Arrive To-Morrow,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 26, 1885.

32. “The Park Uninjured: \$1,000 Will Put It as It Was Before the Encampment,” *Times-Philadelphia*, July 8, 1885.

33. “Venting His Ire,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 31, 1885.

a truly great city must tend its reputation together with its pocketbook —Philadelphia risked being labeled provincial for not seeking the higher ground of North-South reconciliation.

Underwood was greatly surprised that his endeavor failed. Reconciliation intersected with emerging international values and movements. By 1885, the United States had begun to move beyond attending to internal affairs and was establishing the nation on the global stage. In the race for power and recognition, adopting reconciliation as a unifying philosophy was necessary if the United States were to pursue policies of imperial expansion and vie for dominant industrial prosperity in an increasingly competitive world market. The growing popularity of theories of white supremacy and Social Darwinism undergirded these efforts. In 1885, the bloodshed and division of the Civil War still haunted the minds of many Americans, the vast majority of whom had either lived through the war or entertained themselves with the stories of those who had. Though many were not yet ready to forgive and forget, war memories were beginning to fade.³⁴ As America looked outward, reconciliationist forces in both the North and South began to consolidate around shared ideas of whiteness and social superiority as markers of a modern capitalist nation.

Underwood remained bitter about the Philadelphia endeavor long afterwards. Eleven years later, he penned a brief aside about Philadelphia in his introduction to the Chicago monument report: “The demonstration was a military success, but the movement was attempted either too soon or the place unfortunately selected: anyway, the purpose failed, and although it was approved by all the most prominent generals living, who had served in both the Union and Confederate armies, yet the

34. Edward J. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865–1898* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 4–6.

populace started the cry of ‘rebels in the park.’”³⁵ Yet despite his outward frustrations, Underwood himself recognized that perhaps the country was not ready to unite en masse. Nonetheless, the language that Underwood used in his report portrays Philadelphians as biased against the South. In reality, Philadelphians wanted to accommodate Southerners into the nation, but they were unwilling to compromise on the principles that they had fought for during the Civil War. Moreover, it is clear that Underwood was trying, much as he had after the event, to emphasize the successes of his enterprise and to circumvent some of the more unfortunate truths behind it.

Moving Westward

Grant’s Funeral March and Incomplete Efforts in Columbus and Chicago

Former Union Commander General and President Ulysses S. Grant lost a lengthy battle with throat cancer two weeks after the Philadelphia encampment. His death on July 23, 1885, plunged the country into deep mourning. More than 1.5 million people attended his funeral ceremony in New York. His pallbearers included former enemies: Union generals William Tecumseh Sherman and Phil Sheridan, Confederate generals Simon Bolivar Buckner and Joseph Johnston, Union Admiral David Porter, and Senator John Logan, a former Union general, the founder of

35. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 4–5. Support by prominent generals of Underwood’s Philadelphia effort is questionable; for example, Underwood asked H. W. Slocum, a former Union general, to assume command of the encampment, but Slocum backed down, allegedly dissatisfied with the entire affair. See “Gen. Slocum Refuses: He Will Not Take Command of the National Military Encampment,” *Pittston Evening Gazette*, July 2, 1885.

Decoration Day, and the head of the Grand Army of the Republic.³⁶ In this regard, Grant's funeral march was the nation's largest successful display of reconciliation, and many viewed it as an opportunity to unite the country. Buckner concluded: "I am sorry General Grant is dead, ... but his death has yet been the greatest blessing the country has ever received, now, reunion is perfect."³⁷ Grant's peace with Confederate General Robert E. Lee at Appomattox had allowed the South to rejoin the nation. The symbolism of Grant's funeral gave the United States another chance to heal. Though it is unknown whether Underwood himself was present at the funeral, he and other Confederates noted that Grant's funeral procession motivated them to put together the reconciliationist display at the Confederate burial site in Chicago.³⁸

His faith reinvigorated, over the next five years Underwood moved westward from Philadelphia and attempted two meaningful displays of reconciliation. In the fall of 1889, he set his sights on Columbus, Ohio, where he planned a military reception and exercise competition, a parade, and a ball for former Union and Confederate military officials and those affiliated with his fraternal order, the International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.).³⁹ Underwood's efforts to perform reconciliation involved activities that would have appealed to elite citizens, but interestingly, he did not rely on local leaders as he had in Philadelphia. Perhaps he wanted to attract larger donors, or perhaps he was concerned that local narrow-mindedness would once again overshadow his grand vision.

36. H. W. Brands, *The Man Who Saved the Union: Ulysses S. Grant in War and Peace* (New York: Doubleday, 2012), 633–35; "General John A. Logan," National Museum of the United States Army, n.d., accessed Jan 14, 2022, armyhistory.org/general-john-a-logan-memorial-day-founder.

37. Joan Waugh, "'Pageantry of Woe': The Funeral of Ulysses S. Grant," *Civil War History* 51, no. 2 (June 2005): 152, doi:10.1353/cwh.2005.0035.

38. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 6.

39. "20,000 Odd Fellows in the Superb Parade," *Dayton Herald*, Sept. 19, 1889.

This time, the activities were a success. Unfortunately, however, Underwood fell from his horse and suffered a severe concussion and bleeding in his brain during the parade, an accident that "nearly cost [him] his life."⁴⁰ Forced to sit out the reception the following day, Underwood ceded control to his staff.⁴¹ As he recovered, Underwood longed for a triumphant return.

Underwood turned his attention to attention further westward, determined to vindicate his failure in Philadelphia. In August 1890, he put together a large civic-military display with the I.O.O.F. in Chicago. While the demonstration brought together many Northerners, including citizens not affiliated with the order, it lacked strong attendance from Southerners, thus failing in its reconciliationist purpose.⁴² Ultimately, though, these two partial successes were only temporary obstacles in the path toward the commemoration of the Confederate monument in Oak Woods: they proved Underwood's dogged commitment to the cause and contributed to his growing reputation in the North.

A Brief History

Camp Douglas and the Basis for the Confederate Monument

In July 1861, Governor Richard Yates of Illinois established Camp Douglas to train Illinois recruits for the Civil War. The camp was located in what is now the Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago. It covered approximately sixty acres, roughly east to west from Cottage Grove Avenue to

40. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 5.

41. "Grand Drills at the Fair Grounds the Order of the Day: Nature Again Lavishes Her Treasures on the Visiting Militants," *Dayton Herald*, September 20, 1889.

42. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 5, 71.

present-day Giles Avenue and north to south, from 31st Street to present-day 33rd Place (see fig. 2).⁴³ From late 1861 to early 1863, around forty thousand recruits passed through the camp, although the camp did temporarily detain eight thousand Union soldiers awaiting formal parole after their capture during the brutal Union defeat at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, in late 1862.⁴⁴ Beginning in January 1863 and continuing until the surrender at Appomattox in April 1865, Camp Douglas was a Confederate prisoner-of-war camp. By the war's end, approximately 26,060 Confederate soldiers had passed through the camp.⁴⁵

Many of the Confederate prisoners housed at the camp were from the western frontier's deadliest battles, including soldiers captured at Shiloh, Chickamauga, and Vicksburg.⁴⁶ The first 4,500 prisoners arrived in the camp on February 27, 1862, following their defeat at Fort Donelson in Tennessee.⁴⁷ Those transferred from overpopulated prisons, such as Camp Morton in Indiana, were pleasantly surprised at the state of the camp.⁴⁸ William Huff, captured at Chickamauga and imprisoned at Camp Douglas from October 1863 until May 1865, said that the prisoners' barracks "are as comfortable as could be expected for a prison."⁴⁹ Despite these first impressions, the Confederate prisoners soon realized that prison conditions were horrific. Sewage problems had plagued the camp since inception;

43. Dennis Kelly, *A History of Camp Douglas Illinois, Union Prison, 1861–1865* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1989), 3–4; National Cemetery Administration, *Federal Stewardship of Confederate Dead*, 77–78.

44. George Levy, *To Die in Chicago: Confederate Prisoners at Camp Douglas 1862–1865* (Gretna, LA: Pelican, 1999), 38.

45. Ibid., 28.

46. Keller, *The Story of Camp Douglas*, 69, 72.

47. Ibid., 69.

48. Ibid., 70.

49. Ibid., 72.

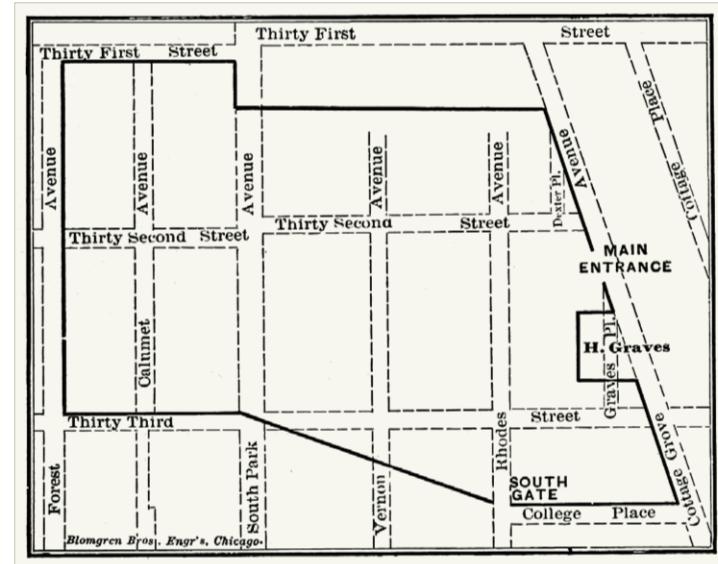


Figure 2: Plan of Camp Douglas 1878, with Superimposed 1884 Streets.

A. T. Andreas, *History of Chicago: From the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, vol. 2, *From 1857 until the Fire of 1871* (Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1885), 301, archive.org/details/historyofchicago02andr.

the flimsy barracks lacked heat; and the prisoners, most from warm climates and wearing thin, worn uniforms, suffered during Chicago's harsh winters. Weary, hungry, and cold, many prisoners succumbed to dysentery, pneumonia, smallpox, and typhoid fever.⁵⁰

The camp's Union guards were infamous, and many prisoners recorded the guards' inhumane punishments and torture in diaries. John M. Copley, a member of the 49th Tennessee Infantry held at Camp Douglas from December 1864 to June 1865, described a particularly brutal form of the punishment called "reaching for corn." Guards marched every prisoner in a barrack into the freezing cold and deep snow, formed them in a

50. Lonnie R. Speer, *Portals to Hell: Military Prisons of the Civil War* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1997), 135.

line, and forced them to reach into the snow, under which there “could be found plenty of corn for them to parch and eat.” The guards pointed their cocked pistols at the prisoners’ heads and make them bend over until their hands touched the ground under the snow and ice. Copley described the scene:

They would be compelled to stand in this position from half an hour to four hours. ... Frequently many of those who were being punished in this way would become so exhausted and fatigued that they would fall over in the snow in an almost insensible condition; these were apt to receive a flogging with a pistol belt, administered by the guard, or receive several severe kicks and blows. Often these men would stand in that position until the blood would run from the nose and mouth; the guard would stand by and laugh at it.⁵¹

This sadistic punishment physically tortured men who were vulnerable to cold climates and mentally tortured men who were starving.

By the end of the war, records listed the official death total at 4,454, with some 1,500 “unaccounted for.”⁵² Modern estimates of the death toll range “somewhere between the 4,243 names contained on the monument at the Confederate Mound at Oak Woods Cemetery and the 7,000 reported by some historians.”⁵³ Poor record keeping, the improper care

51. Keller, *The Story of Camp Douglas*, 155.

52. Death Register from Camp Douglas Chicago, Illinois, 1865, record group 109, National Archive identifier no. 3854696, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, National Archives, Washington, DC, www.docsteach.org/documents/document/death-register-from-camp-douglas-chicago-illinois.

53. Keller, *The Story of Camp Douglas*, 179–80. The US Department of Veterans Affairs estimates the death toll to be 4,039 to 7,500. See National Cemetery Administration, *Federal Stewardship of Confederate Dead*, 77–78.

of the bodies, and the loss of records after the Chicago Fire make the exact numbers uncertain, though David Keller noted that the best estimates are between five and six thousand deaths.⁵⁴

Until Underwood’s arrival in Chicago in 1890, the collective memory of the dead Confederate soldiers of Camp Douglas had faded into obscurity. The US government had first interred 4,275 Confederates bodies in the City Cemetery near Lincoln Park in 1865. It then reinterred them twice: to the smallpox cemetery adjacent to Camp Douglas in 1866 and in Oak Woods Cemetery in 1867.⁵⁵ The government had returned camp land to the original owners in 1866 and had either returned personal effects to the dead soldiers’ families or auctioned them off, together with camp structures.⁵⁶ In the first fifteen years following the war’s conclusion, the camp did appear in newspaper debates over the relative inhumanity of guards at Andersonville Prison in Georgia, the most infamous of the Confederate prisons, and Camp Douglas.⁵⁷ Throughout the 1870s, both Northern and Southern newspapers featured sectional attacks against

54. Keller, *The Story of Camp Douglas*, 179–80.

55. Kelly, *A History of Camp Douglas Illinois*, 158.

56. *Ibid.*, 155.

57. “Andersonville: Was Jeff Davis Responsible for Its Horrors? How the Confederate Prisoners Were Treated At Camp Douglas,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jan. 20, 1876, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Daniel Cameron, “Camp Douglas vs. Andersonville,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jan. 20, 1876, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; “Andersonville: The Rebel Prison Pen in 1865,” *New York Times*, Jan. 30, 1876, www.nytimes.com/1876/01/30/archives/andersonville-the-rebel-prison-pen-in-1865-a-commentary-on.html; Secretary of the Society, “The Treatment of Prisoners during the War between the States,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 1, no. 3 (Mar. 1876): 1–109; “The Treatment of Prisoners of War: Rebel Versions of Their Cruelty,” *New York Daily Tribune*, June 29, 1865, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

each other's former enemy, but by the close of the 1880s, newspapers began to report on and defend attempts at reconciliation.⁵⁸ In the 1870s and 1880s, Union veterans began decorating the Confederate burial ground in Oak Woods as a sign of respect; Confederates often reciprocated by decorating Union headstones in the South.⁵⁹

58. A poignant example of reconciliation followed the ex-Confederate Association of Chicago's announcement that they were raising funds for the monument at Oak Woods. An op-ed writer decried Southern newspapers' criticism of Underwood asking Northerners for donations: "There was nothing undignified or unbecoming in this. It is a matter of no consequence what motives inspire the givers. One man may give because his sympathies were with the cause in which these men died; another because they were men who, though hopelessly in the wrong, yet added laurels to American valor. ... There is a narrowness about some of these exponents of southern sentiment which is not attractive. Yankee money put into a monument will do them no more harm than Yankee cash invested in southern mills." Note that the op-ed writer recognized that economics factored into Southern motivation to reconcile. See "The South on Its Dignity," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Aug. 19, 1889, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

59. The practice of soldiers "decorating" the graves of the fallen with flowers occurred annually on Decoration Day. See "Decoration-Day: Memorial Services Yesterday at the Various Cemeteries," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 30, 1880, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Jessie Kratz, "The Nation's Sacrifice: The Origins and Evolution of Memorial Day," *Pieces of History* (blog), National Archives, May 28, 2018, prologue.blogs.archives.gov/2018/05/24/the-nations-sacrifice-the-origins-and-evolution-of-memorial-day.

Underwood Turns to Chicago

The Leadup to the Commemoration and Dedication of the Monument

By August 1889, Confederate veterans in Chicago, inspired by Grant's funeral procession, had formed the ex-Confederate Association of Chicago for the sole purpose of erecting a monument in Oak Woods Cemetery to their fallen comrades.⁶⁰

On June 26, 1891, the association resolved to appoint John Cox Underwood as a "committee of one, with power to take any necessary action, to raise funds for the purpose of building a monument over the 6,000 Confederate dead in Oakwoods [sic] Cemetery."⁶¹ The association had already secured ownership of the Confederate graves and permission to erect a monument from the federal government, but Congress did not appropriate money for the cause.⁶²

To Underwood, this cause was personal. As a Confederate lieutenant-colonel, he had been captured near Tullahoma, Tennessee, in a retreat with General Bragg's army. He spent the next one-and-a-half years in Union prisons in Louisville, Cincinnati, and Boston before receiving parole.⁶³ He quickly realized that unlike his previous endeavors farther east, his new position as major-general of the association enabled him

60. "The South on Its Dignity," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Aug. 12, 1889; Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 106, 251.

61. Ex-Confederate Association of Chicago, *Register of Confederate Soldiers Who Died in Camp Douglas, 1862–65, and Lie Buried in Oakwoods Cemetery, Chicago, Ills.* (Cincinnati: Cohen, 1892), 4, babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t6ww7tp9c&view=1up&seq=7.

62. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 106.

63. *Ibid.*, 2.

to reach a broader Southern audience.⁶⁴ This audience would hopefully fund the construction and dedication of the monument and allow Underwood to realize his dream of leading a successful national display of reconciliation.

Underwood's first "Appeal for Monumental Aid" lists the main fundraising targets as "Former Comrades in Arms, Sympathizing Citizens of the Southern States, and to Whomsoever Else it may Concern,"⁶⁵ which suggests that Underwood expected Southerners and Confederate veterans, rather than Chicagoans, to respond to the appeal.⁶⁶ This idea is reinforced by his melancholy description of Southern soldiers buried far from home:

To die at any time is the hardest service a soldier can render to his people, but to die in a prison hospital far from family and friends and be buried beneath soil away from home and in a then adverse section, is the giving of life for the "lost cause," under such circumstances, as might well awaken sympathy even among the most unimpressionable. The soldiers of the Confederacy who died within the borders of Southern States have not been forgotten, and their graves are kept green and constantly cared for by loving hands; is it

64. Underwood had joined the ex-Confederate Association of Chicago in the summer of 1891. See *ibid.*, 5.

65. Ex-Confederate Association of Chicago, *Register of Confederate Soldiers*, 5.

66. I organize the main actors in the paper into three groups: *Southerners* reside in the former territory occupied by the Confederate States of America and either experienced the war (as soldiers or civilians) or were their descendants. *Confederate veterans* fought and survived Civil War; most lived in the South but smaller enclaves were spread throughout the United States. *Northerners* lived above the Mason-Dixon line, including people who later accepted the righteousness of the Southern cause.

then not ... a sectional duty from comrades and Southern people to contribute as they can afford—to monument American valor and mark the hero remains of those, who, almost unknown, in a hostile prison camp, ended their service to the cause in the grave?⁶⁷

Compared to this fulsome rhetoric, his appeal to Northerners is a more subdued nod to a "noble charity."⁶⁸

Underwood raised \$24,647.52, slightly less than \$850,000 in today's dollars. Surprisingly, in spite of Underwood's Southern fundraising strategy, more than three-quarters of the funds came from Chicagoans and other Northerners, with only about \$5,000 from Southerners.⁶⁹ Underwood did ask people in every Southern state to contribute a large number of seeds from Southern flowers and trees to scatter on the grounds surrounding the monument; this symbolic gesture would allow the dead soldiers' final resting place in Chicago to be in "southern" soil.⁷⁰

No direct evidence confirms the exact reason why Northerners contributed heavily toward the monument, but I posit two potential explanations. First, for decades, reconciliationist sentiment had been rising in Chicago, due to civic elites who sympathized with the Southern cause and its plight following the Civil War. Potter Palmer's wife, Bertha Honoré, who helped host the private reception for the ceremonies in Chicago at the Palmer House, hailed from a wealthy Louisville family;

67. Ex-Confederate Association of Chicago, *Register of Confederate Soldiers*, 5–6.

68. *Ibid.*, 6.

69. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 14–15.

70. "They Wore the Gray: Confederate Monument Will Be Dedicated May 30," *Chicago Inter Ocean*, Apr. 1, 1895.

and the McCormicks' ties to Virginia dated to the eighteenth century, with some family members having worn the gray during the Civil War.⁷¹

Second, the main donors were prominent Chicago businessmen with expansive interests in the city and around the country.⁷² Forging strong relations with Confederate veterans would give these businessmen a competitive advantage in Southern markets. For instance, George Pullman, the Chicago railroad tycoon and a large donor, stood to profit immensely from the increasing number of train routes using his signature cars that connected Chicago to the South in the 1870s, eighties, and nineties.⁷³ In turn, Southerners reciprocated Northern generosity at the conclusion of the ceremonies, when Underwood worked with the city of Atlanta to invite Chicago businessmen, public officials, and press members to the Atlanta Cotton Exposition later in 1895.⁷⁴ The primary purpose of the exposition was to foster greater trade relations with Latin American countries; it provided a platform for Southerners to introduce their technology to the world and for Chicagoans to promote their own goods and services to the entire South.⁷⁵

71. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 26–27; Leander James McCormick, *Family Record and Biography* (Chicago: printed by the author, 1896), 255, 338–39.

72. For a list of the businessmen and others who donated to the monument effort, see Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 258–63.

73. Illinois Central Railroad Company, *Map of Illinois Central R.R.*, 92 x 62 cm (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1892), www.loc.gov/item/98688682.

74. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 274–80.

75. Bruce Harvey and Lynn Watson-Powers, “The Eyes of the World Are Upon Us: A Look at the Cotton States and International Exposition of 1895,” *Atlanta History: A Journal of Georgia and the South* 39, no. 3–4 (Fall–Winter 1995): 5–11.

May 29–30, 1895

The Major Themes of Reconciliation

An evening reception for distinguished Confederate veterans and prominent Chicago citizens took place at the Palmer House in downtown Chicago on May 29, 1895. Later that evening, the Citizen's Committee of Chicago held a banquet at Kinsley's restaurant for officers of both armies. The evening ended with eighteen prolonged toasts. Decoration Day, May 30, began with a public parade from the Palmer House, south on Michigan Avenue to the 12th Street Illinois Central train depot. Debarzing at 60th Street, the celebrants completed the memorialization by dedicating the monument at Oak Woods Cemetery. Throughout the two days, reconciliation was the cord that bound all events together. Reconciliation informed the demeanor of the guests, their manner of dress, and the decorations around them; it was symbolized in the purity of womanhood; it legitimized remembrance of the Confederate dead and forgetfulness of slavery; it advanced the shared economic interests of the North and South; and it absolved the sins of the recent past and created a historical narrative for future generations, one grounded in shared American virtues of valor, heroism, and honor.

Immediately, there were noticeable differences between the reactions of attendees at Philadelphia and at Chicago. Chicagoans and their guests were undisturbed by sectional fashion displays: “Tiny examples of the American flag were displayed on the corsages of beautiful women with evident pride, and on the bosom of a fair one here and there was pinned a badge of the stars and bars side by side with the stars and stripes.”⁷⁶ The use of the Confederate and American flags as women’s adornments rather than as a soldier’s battle standard, as was the case in Philadelphia, appeared to signify an endorsement of unity and peace. Additional “[Confederate] flags covered the rotunda of the hotel and other memorials

76. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 23.

reminded the southerners that Dixie's land had not been forgotten in Chicago.⁷⁷ The decoration of Chicago's most famous hotel with Confederate flags would not have surprised anyone who attended the private reception. Bertha Honoré Palmer was personally acquainted with Underwood—he had asked her to welcome former Confederate President Jefferson Davis's wife, Varina, and their daughter, Winnie, during the World's Fair in 1892.⁷⁸

Women were a prominent presence in the entire affair. Reporting from the Palmer House, the *City Press of Chicago* wrote: "And against this background of military shoulders, of noble heads, of tales of daring and suffering were outlined the grace and high-bred beauty of the American woman, the northerner and the southerner, exchanging sisterly affection."⁷⁹ Throughout the report, Underwood describes the women as "beautiful," "fair," "noble," and "devoted."⁸⁰ By contrasting women "against" militaristic men, women symbolized a departure from past violence and a pure new beginning for the country. After the brutal destruction of the Southern homeland, Southerners claimed that "the close of the civil war of 1861–1865 found the south destitute of almost everything save the manhood of the few surviving men and the purity of its women."⁸¹ In part due to this status, it was Southern women who performed symbolic acts during the celebrations. On May 30, Eliza Washington, Isabelle Armstrong, Margaret Cox, Virginia Mitchell, and Laura Mitchell tugged on a rope to ring the Columbian Liberty Bell at the start of the Michigan Avenue parade

77. *Ibid.*, 20.

78. John Cox Underwood to Bertha Honoré Palmer, 1892, folder 1, John Cox Underwood (1840–1913) Papers, Manuscripts and Folklife Archives, Western Kentucky University, digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_mss_fin_aid/1475.

79. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 28.

80. *Ibid.*, 23, 101, 120, 141.

81. *Ibid.*, 105.

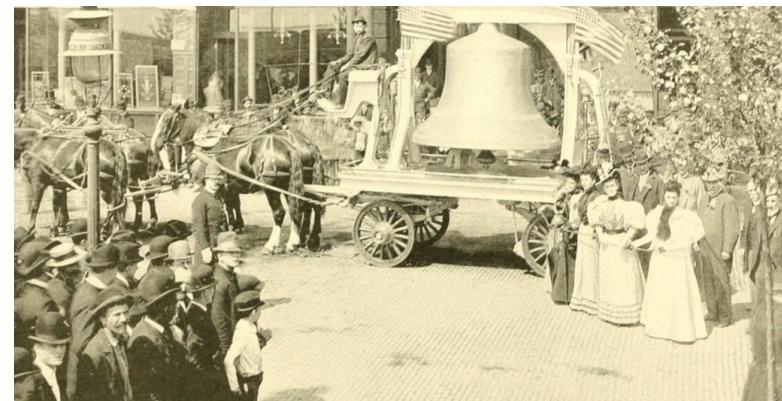


Figure 3: Ringing the Liberty Bell, Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 100.

(see fig. 3).⁸² Later at Oak Woods, Lucy Lee Hill, Alice Pickett Akers, Laura Mitchell, Isabelle Armstrong, and Katie Cabell Currie consecrated the four Georgia cannons surrounding the monument and dedicated them to the memory of the valor of the dead soldiers (see fig. 4).⁸³ Southern womanhood was a necessary touch to give the ceremony additional Southern character; and it was Southern women who helped bring about a united future by ringing a bell representing peace and freedom before a crowd of mostly Northerners.

Unlike gender, slavery was on everyone's mind but seldom on anyone's tongue. Underwood wrote that "it is not now profitable to discuss the right or wrong of the past, which has been settled by arbitrament of arms, neither should the question be raised as to the moral of Massachusetts selling her slaves and South Carolina holding hers, nor as to the profit of merchandising the negro on the block in New York or from the sugar cane fields of the Mississippi 'coast' and cotton plantation in other

82. *Ibid.*, 101.

83. *Ibid.*, 135–37.

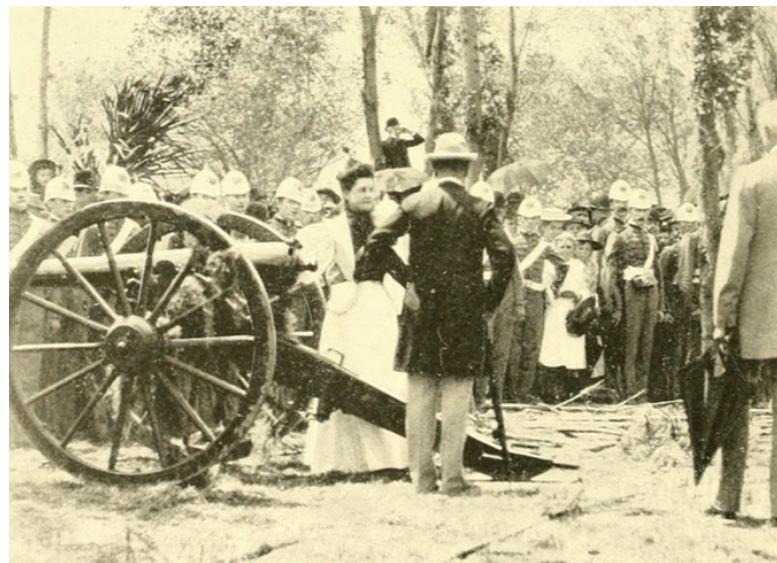


Figure 4: Consecrating One of the Guns, Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 136.

parts of the south.”⁸⁴ Underwood went further than others in casting the sin of slavery on both the North and South, and he framed his argument in both moral and economic terms: Northerners acted in self-interest by selling slaves, and Southerners did the same by maintaining the institution. Lieutenant-General Stephen D. Lee of Mississippi supported Underwood’s effort to distance America from its past in his banquet toast: “But was it not worth it all to solve these awful problems, which our forefathers could not solve, but bequeathed to us? The clock of the universe had struck the hour when slavery should be no more; when our Union should be made complete; when the sin of north and south alike should be redeemed by the blood of the patriot.”⁸⁵ Lee built

upon Underwood’s claims that the entire country was responsible for the sin of slavery and that this was a sin of their fathers that should not be bequeathed to the sons. The message was clear: “the Great God” had settled the problem of slavery.⁸⁶ The newly reconciled Nation would be devoted to *selective* remembering of the shared valor of soldiers on both sides—slavery must be forgotten.

A recurring theme of the evening’s toasts was the hope that fraternal feelings would help establish and cement business ties between the North and the South. Lee concluded his toast with the following statement: “My friends, . . . we accept your friendship with the same generous spirit with which you offer it; that we invite you again to invade us, not with your bayonets this time, but with your business.”⁸⁷ The loss of slavery as an economic foundation required the South to move to a more industrial economy, which required Northern technical knowledge and investments in Southern markets. Confederate Major-General Matthew C. Butler of South Carolina echoed this sentiment:

In the most candid manner, and taking a material view of it—a practical view, outside of the sentiment which you have been indulging in to-night, I doubt very much if there is an old rebel anywhere in the south, who wants to buy anything, who will not say: “Well, I believe I will go to Chicago. (Laughter.) They treated our old chieftains, Hampton and Longstreet and Fitzhugh Lee and Stephen D. Lee and all of those old rebels kind of honestly when they got up there, and I think we will send up there when we have got to buy.” That is the practical side of it. (Laughter.)⁸⁸

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid., 37.

88. Ibid., 48–49.

84. Ibid., 8.

85. Ibid., 61.

The laughter that followed Butler's remarks was a tacit understanding that mutual financial gain was a motivating factor in bringing about this event. Southerners would secure Chicagoans' investment in their markets, and Chicagoans would emerge as prime beneficiaries of Southerners travelling to purchase their goods along newly constructed railroads linking Chicago to many of the South's most important cities.⁸⁹

At Oak Woods Cemetery, a final theme appeared in the speeches and through the monument itself: memorializing the Confederate dead created a new historical and Christian narrative that would determine the way future generations understand the Civil War. The Reverend Horace Wilbert Bolton said that "as we turn from the past to grapple with the priceless commodities left us, let us remember that to have lived in the nineteenth century in America will be an awful account to meet in the roll-call of eternity. There are 65,000,000 free spirits to be educated and directed in the view of perpetuating the glory we have inherited."⁹⁰ Reconciliation was a holy endeavor, a gift from God bestowed upon those who had fought in the Civil War or otherwise participated in the evils of the nineteenth century, such as slavery. The duty to spread this gospel to future generations was also an opportunity for its messengers to purify themselves before God in the "roll-call of eternity." Bolton's call for "65,000,000 free spirits to be educated" underscored the need to promote reconciliation to the entire population of the United States and especially children, those furthest removed temporally from the Civil War whom supporters hoped would carry on this narrative. To this end, Unionists and Confederates would visit schoolhouses to instruct younger generations with their interpretation of the history and legacy of the Civil War. General John C. Black of Illinois told those gathered at Kinsley's that he had addressed a group

89. Whet Moser, "How the Deep South Came to Chicago," *Chicago Magazine*, Aug. 26, 2014, www.chicagomag.com/city-life/August-2014/Chicagos-Mississippi-Legacy-and-Iowas-Chicago-Legacy.

90. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 112.

of one thousand schoolchildren that morning.⁹¹ He attempted to leave them with a legacy of the Civil War that emphasized reconciliationist values: "To us, the survivors of the two armies, is left the rarest privilege, and that is, that we shall, in the same generation that carried on war, bind up all the wounds of war (applause) and leave to those that are to come after us only the heritage of affectionate remembrance of deeds of American valor, American heroism and American honor."⁹² Black confirmed Bolton's sentiment. The veterans who had caused so much evil in the world were fortunate to have the chance to eliminate the past as they saw fit and to, as Chicago Judge Richard S. Tuthill wrote in a letter read at the reception, "forget that we ever differed."⁹³

The Monument

Emblem of the Lost Cause

The Confederate monument in Chicago was a part of a larger project to represent Southern white men as tragic heroes of a noble, but lost cause (see fig. 5). Following the Civil War, Southerners, primarily, began to pepper public squares with statues glorifying the Civil War.⁹⁴ The African American press was the first to condemn these statutes for their expressed purpose of intimidation, as evinced in this report of the 1890 unveiling of the Robert E. Lee monument in Richmond, Virginia: "Of course Afro-Americans took no part in the ceremonies. They were, in the main, silent

91. Ibid., 51.

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid., 75.

94. Peaks in the erection of monuments correspond with the Jim Crow and Civil Rights eras. See, "Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy," Southern Poverty Law Center, Feb. 1, 2019, www.splcenter.org/20190201/whose-heritage-public-symbols-confederacy#lost-cause; Brundage, *The Southern Past*.

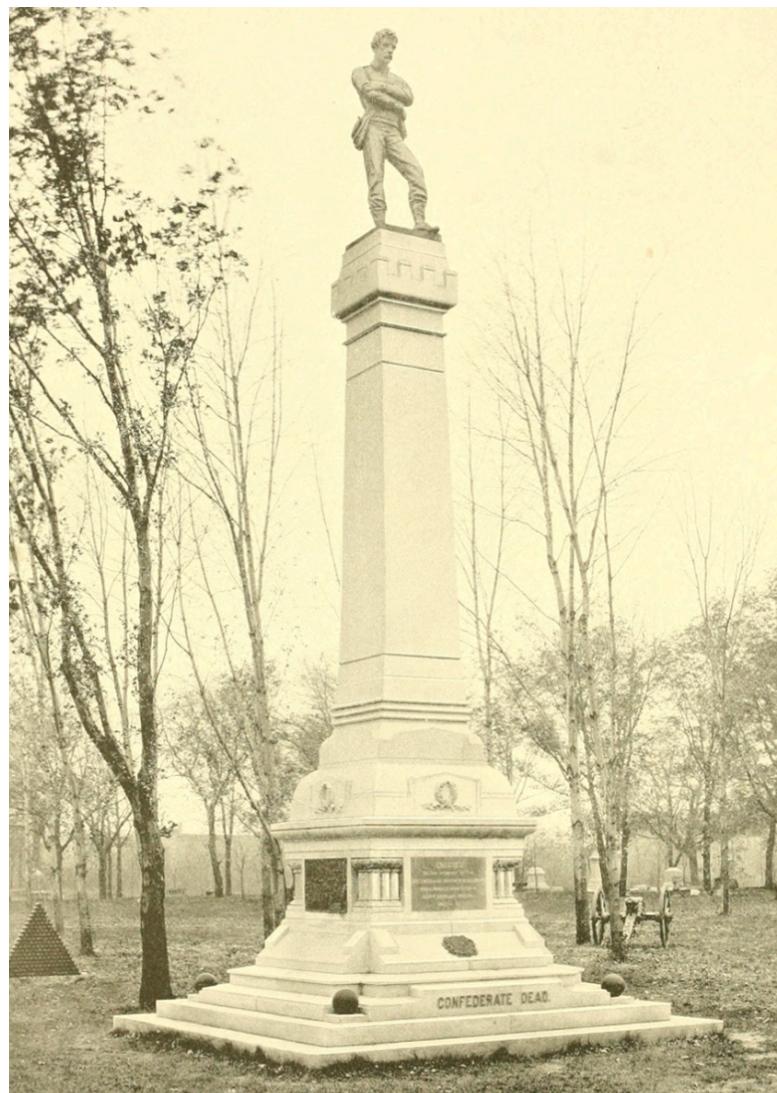


Figure 5: The Monument. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 86.

spectators. Perhaps no celebration ever took place in the history of mankind in which a whole race stood by, silent and unsympathetic while another race was simply deliriously vociferous and enthusiastic with measureless interest. ... In no other country in the world could the celebration, symbolizing disloyalty and disunion, have taken place.”⁹⁵

Just five years after the unveiling of the Lee statue in Richmond, some Southerners skirted the issue of whether to invoke the Lost Cause in the North. In dinner toasts and at the dedication, speakers chose their words carefully before a massive crowd of Chicagoans and guests from around the country, including President Grover Cleveland and his entire cabinet.⁹⁶ Underwood’s design of the monument showed no such hesitation.

The monument features four panels on its base, each facing a cardinal direction. The north panel displayed an inscription: “Erected to the memory of the six thousand Southern soldiers, here buried, who died in Camp Douglas Prison, 1862–5” (see fig. 6).⁹⁷

The east panel represents the “call to arms” at the outset of the Confederacy in 1860 (see fig. 7). The figures exemplify class diversity: “The laborer, artisan and professional man” gesture toward each other to enlist in the Confederate Army at a Southern courthouse.⁹⁸ The panel urges

95. “An Incident of the Lee Monument Unveiling,” *New York Age*, June 7, 1890, NewsBank African American Newspapers. Richmond removed the statue in 2021; see Gregory S. Schneider and Laura Vozzella, “Robert E. Lee Statue Is Removed in Richmond,” *Washington Post*, Sept. 8, 2021, www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/robert-e-lee-statue-removal/2021/09/08/1d9564ee-103d-11ec-9cb6-bf9351a25799_story.html.

96. “Where Heroes Sleep: Exercises Held in the Cemeteries of the City,” *Chicago Inter Ocean*, May 31, 1895.

97. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 92. It is quite possible that Underwood instructed the architect of the monument, Louis R. Fearn, to use the figure of six thousand deaths to heighten the sense of loss; see *ibid.*, 87.

98. *Ibid.*, 91.

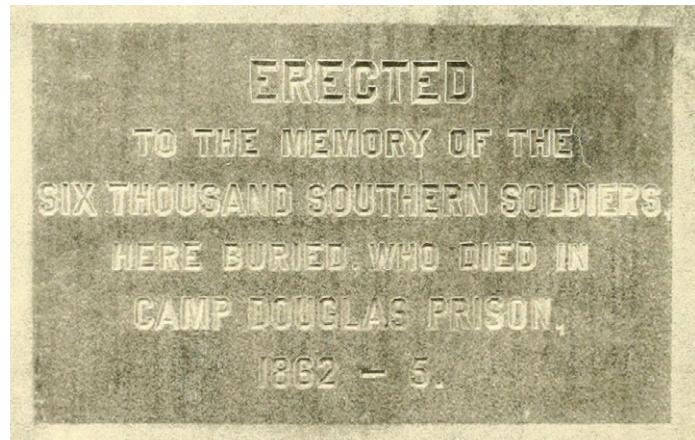


Figure 6: The Inscription, Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 92.



Figure 7: The Call to Arms, Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 90.

viewers to witness the valor of the white men who took up the cause of the Confederacy, regardless of circumstances of birth or occupation. Women figure significantly in the background, encouraging brothers, fathers, and husbands to fight for the cause. This panel expresses great hope and a genuine belief that if they fought together, the South would emerge triumphant.

The south panel depicts a Confederate private dying on the battlefield (see fig. 8). He has received a fatal wound and has crawled under the shade of a tree to die. Any soldier would have seen such a death, however lonesome it appears, as honorable. Nearby lies a dead horse, a gun, and various pieces of military equipment. The moon is out, indicating the end of the day's battle. On the far left of the panel, one can make out a faint Confederate flag. The tattered flag still stands, suggests that while this soldier may have lost his life, his sacrifice for the cause allowed the Confederacy to persist.

The west panel shows an unarmed Confederate soldier returning home (see fig. 9). With bowed head, he surveys the ruin of his log cabin's broken door and collapsed roof. He is surrounded by his devastated farm's leafless trees, barren ground, and discarded farm equipment mingled with a cannon. The panel creates an aura of isolation and loneliness, "that of a blighted hope and a ruined substance, portraying the cause that is lost."⁹⁹ The sun, barely visible, must clearly be setting on the old South, and the promise of a new dawn is far off.

At eight-feet-tall, the statue of the soldier atop the column is perhaps the most imposing part of the monument (see fig. 10). Based on the circa 1888 painting, *Appomattox*, by John Adams Elder, the statue depicts a typical Confederate infantryman at the surrender.¹⁰⁰ His clothes and shoes are torn and stained, representing the hardships of war. Overall,

99. Ibid., 91.

100. Ibid., 89; *Appomattox*, Encyclopedia of Virginia, n.d., accessed Jan. 13, 2022, encyclopediavirginia.org/1121hpr-8d12cd82a791b3.

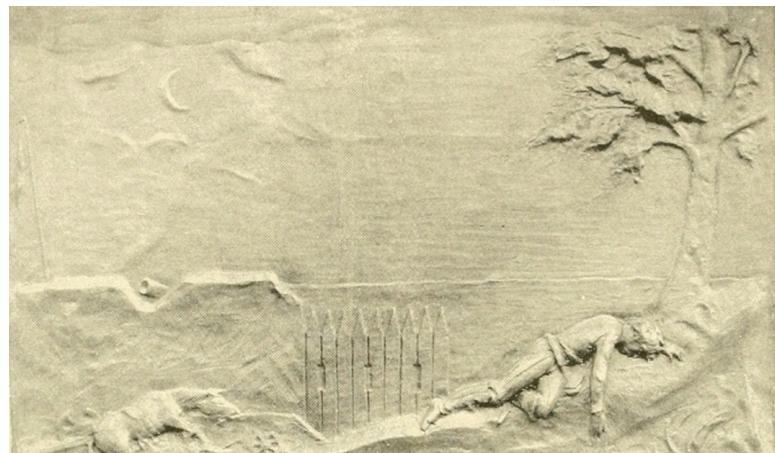


Figure 8: A Soldier's Death Dream, Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 92.

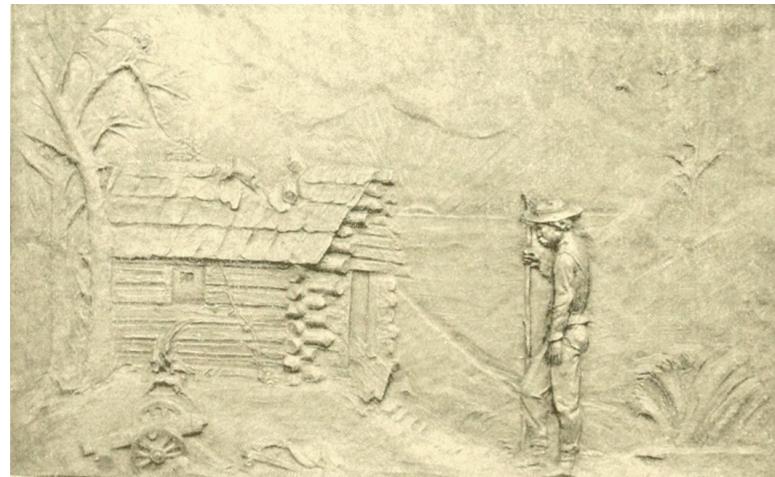


Figure 9: A Veteran's Return Home, Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 90.

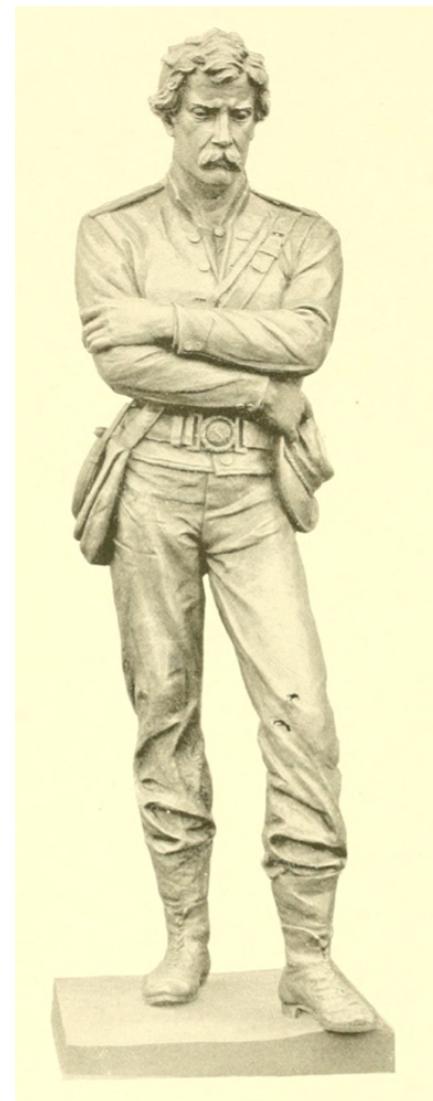


Figure 10: Bronze Statue of Confederate Infantry Soldier Surmounting Capital of Column. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 88.



Figure 11: Seal of the Confederate States on the Monument.

Photograph by Nancy Stone, 2017. Nereida Moreno, “Confederate Monument Stands on Chicago’s South Side as Questions Swirl Around the Country,” *Chicago Tribune*, Aug. 17, 2017.

the soldier has a strong look of regret as he watches over his fallen comrades buried below him.¹⁰¹

The Seal of the Confederate States is embedded in the base below the dedicatory panel. It depicts a bas-relief of General George Washington on his horse, surrounded by the agricultural bounty of the South (cotton, sugar cane, rice, tobacco, and corn) (see fig. 11).¹⁰² Perhaps Underwood was attempting to claim ownership of Washington on behalf of the South: most Americans at the time considered Washington to be the perfect embodiment of the American patriot, and he was, after all, a Virginian Southerner and a slaveholder. If Washington had the fallible distinction of being at once a slaveholder and the father of the Republic, then history might even begin to look kindly on Southerners as well.

101. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 88–89.

102. Ex-Confederate Association of Chicago, *Register of Confederate Soldiers*, 87.

Backlash to the Monument

The Grand Army of the Republic, the “Ugly Rock” Cenotaph, the African American Press, and the Emancipation Monuments

At the conclusion of the ceremonies, the distinguished participants and thousands of the spectators headed to a Chicago armory for a final informal reception.¹⁰³ Guests conversed as a concert of popular Northern and Southern songs entertained them. Underwood was pleased with the outcome of the endeavor and appreciative of Chicago’s efforts to welcome the South: “No city could have done more, no people could have shown greater liberality; the church, the press, the state, united and vied with each other in the discharge of the duty of harmonization.”¹⁰⁴ With the backing of prominent leaders from every sector of society, Underwood hoped that the Chicago memorial events would overpower the criticisms that had marked his failure in Philadelphia.

While those present at the ceremonies were indeed supportive of the monument, groups in other parts of the country objected to it for various reasons.¹⁰⁵ The Grand Army of the Republic criticized the monument’s commemoration on Decoration Day.¹⁰⁶ The G.A.R. was the largest fraternal

103. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 146–47.

104. *Ibid.*, 149.

105. Note: members of the Illinois National Guard did not share the Union veterans’ objections to the monument. See, “Illinois Militia Will Co-Operate: Company Will Participate in Dedication of Confederate Monument,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Mar. 31, 1895, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

106. A chief aim of the group was the celebration of Decoration Day. Senator John Logan, a pallbearer at Grant’s funeral and the G.A.R.’s commander in chief, “requested members of all posts to decorate the graves of their comrades on May 30,” beginning in 1868; see Library of Congress, “The Grand Army of the Republic and Kindred Societies,” n.d., accessed Apr. 27, 2020, www.loc.gov/rr/main/gar/garintro.html.

organization of Union veterans, peaking at more than four hundred thousand members in 1890.¹⁰⁷ In early May, Joseph Thayer, a Massachusetts commander of the G.A.R., voiced his opposition to the monument's location and planned dedication on May 30: "It is giving a false impression to the rising generation to picture the Confederate this way. The monument is out of place, decidedly, north of Mason and Dixon's line; but our principal objections is that this monument should be dedicated on Memorial Day. ... Memorial Day belongs to the Union soldier, and has been set apart as a day in which to commemorate the deeds of the men who died to save the Nation."¹⁰⁸ He made a point to emphasize that the G.A.R. was not out of step with the national mood of reconciliation: "There is perfect harmony in Massachusetts between the members of the Grand Army of the Republic and the ex-Confederates."¹⁰⁹ G.A.R. chapters around the country joined the Massachusetts G.A.R. in opposing the dedication, and G.A.R. headquarters announced that none of its chapters would be attending the dedication ceremonies.¹¹⁰ A week after the dedication and flush with success, Confederate General Wade Hampton, who had given the

107. The Encyclopedia Editors, "Grand Army of the Republic," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, last updated May 21, 2018, www.britannica.com/topic/Grand-Army-of-the-Republic.

108. "That Confederate Monument Question: Thayer Insists that It Should Not Be Dedicated Memorial Day," *New York Times*, May 4, 1895, [timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1895/05/04/issue.html](http://www.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1895/05/04/issue.html).

109. Ibid.

110. "Chicago G.A.R. Men Disagree with Commander Thayer," *Washington Evening Star*, May 3, 1895; "Many G.A.R. Men Protest: Veterans Hope to Prevent the Erection of a Confederate Monument," *Chicago Inter Ocean*, May 4, 1895; "Late News by Wire," *Leavenworth Herald*, May 11, 1895, Newsbank African American Newspapers; "G.A.R. Will Not Be Present at the Dedication of the Confederate Monument at Chicago," *Savannah Tribune*, June 1, 1895, Newsbank African American Newspapers.



Figure 12: Cenotaph Erected by Thomas D. Lowther.

Photograph by R. Learch, 2020. "Thomas D. Lowther," Find a Grave, Oct. 24, 2017, www.findagrave.com/memorial/184580707/thomas-d_lowther.

dedicatory oration at Oak Woods, pointedly referenced Thayer in a Virginia newspaper: "Chicago cannot be too greatly praised for persistency in her noble and generous deed, in spite of the sneers and scoldings administered by Massachusetts."¹¹¹

The most visible and lasting criticism of the Confederate monument at Oak Woods rests on the edge of the mound itself. A large granite cenotaph honors the memory of Southern abolitionists (see fig. 12). Confederate sympathizers call the cenotaph "Ugly Rock." They feel that

111. "Chicago's Confederate Monument: The Dedication To-Day Considered to Be the Greatest Event that Has Ever Taken Place in this Country to Cement the North and the South," *Norfolk Weekly Landmark*, June 5, 1895.

its location and inscription insult the memory of the Confederate soldiers buried nearby:¹¹²

To those unknown heroic men,
Once resident in the southern states,
Martyrs for human freedom,
Who at the breaking out of the Civil War,
Refused to be traitors to the Union;
Who, without moral and material support,
Stood alone among ruthless enemies,
And, after unspeakable suffering, either
DIED AT THEIR POST OF DUTY,
Or, abandoning home and possessions,
SOUGHT REFUGE,
And scant bread for their families,
Among strangers at the North;
To those pure patriots who,
Without bounty, without pay,
Without pension, without honor,
Went to their graves
Without recognition even by their country,
This stone is raised and inscribed,
By one of themselves,
An exiled abolitionist.¹¹³

112. Steve Scroggins, “The Ugly Rock ‘Cenotaph’ in Chicago’s Oak Woods Cemetery: Insult to Camp Douglas Confederate POWs,” n.d., accessed Dec. 20, 2019, www.scvcamp1399.org/uglyrock.php.

113. “Cenotaph,” Find a Grave, Oct. 24, 2017, www.findagrave.com/memorial/184580707/thomas-d_lowther.

Thomas D. Lowther funded the cenotaph’s construction in 1896. Lowther was born in England and spent much of his antebellum life in Florida. After neighbors forced him out of his home during the Civil War for his abolitionist beliefs, Lowther later moved to Chicago and engaged in business pursuits.¹¹⁴ He dedicated the monument to Southern abolitionists like himself.¹¹⁵ Lowther claimed that the G.A.R. supported his endeavor, but the organization ignored his petition to erect the cenotaph.¹¹⁶

Lowther recognized that a monument dedicated to the Lost Cause in Chicago emboldened Southerners: “The Confederates have been treated so magnanimously by the North that they have come to assume the position that they were entirely right in the war, and that anything which can be construed into a criticism of their attitude is contemptible and unpatriotic.”¹¹⁷ Like the ex-Confederates who had supported the monument, Lowther focused on its ramifications for the education of future generations: “I know that in their schools and in other ways they are educating their children to look forward to a time when they shall lift again the banner of the ‘lost cause.’”¹¹⁸ Lowther was well aware that

114. “It Tells His Life Story: Abolitionist Shaft in Oakwoods Erected by T. D. Lowther,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 9, 1896, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Michael Zimecki, “Monumental Evil,” *Another Chicago Magazine*, Dec. 5, 2019, anotherchicagomagazine.net/2019/12/05/monumental-evil-by-michael-zimacki.

115. “It Tells His Life Story,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 9, 1896. One could infer that the cenotaph also honored slaves as another group of “resident[s] in the Southern states, / martyrs for human freedom.”

116. Ibid. A few G.A.R. veterans held positions in Congress and had served on the committee that granted federal approval for the monument, which perhaps explains the group’s reluctance to support Lowther. See “Commander Thayer Should Apologize,” *New York Times*, May 23, 1895, www.nytimes.com/1895/05/23/archives/commander-thayer-should-apologize.html.

117. Ibid.

118. “It Tells His Life Story,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 9, 1896.

Southerners were succeeding where the former abolitionists had not. With each passing day, those who had lived through the war were dying and the number with no memory of it was growing. It was essential for Lowther to correct the historical record with the principles for which the abolitionists had fought.

Reaction to the Confederate monument in the African American press was muted. The *Savannah Tribune* and the *Leavenworth Herald* printed several articles about the monument itself as well as objection to it by Thayer and the G.A.R.¹¹⁹ For the most part, the stories ran without editorial comment, although the editorial tone of one *Tribune* article was incredulous (“without a parallel,” “does not appear … anywhere else on the face of the globe,” “never been witnessed”).¹²⁰ Another unsigned *Tribune* editorial stated simply that “the [Civil War] is surely ended,” if a Confederate statue could be erected in the North.¹²¹ African American editors scoured the wire services for any mentions of African Americans nationwide and filled their local newspapers with this news. Seeing the negative reaction to Lowther’s and the G.A.R.’s criticisms, perhaps they concluded that it was prudent not to join the choir of opposition about this particular monument. The mood of reconciliation that pervaded the event and the rise of racial violence in the 1890s may have also been a factor.

119. “Late News by Wire,” *Leavenworth Herald*, May 11, 1895; “Federal Monuments in the South,” *Savannah Tribune*, June 1, 1895; “G.A.R. Will Not Be Present,” *Savannah Tribune*, June 1, 1895; “Monument to Confederate Dead Unveiled,” *Savannah Tribune*, June 8, 1895. All articles from NewsBank African American Newspapers.

120. “Without a Parallel,” *Savannah Tribune*, June 8, 1895, NewsBank African American Newspapers.

121. “The war is surely ended … ,” *Savannah Tribune*, June 8, 1895, NewsBank African American Newspapers.

Effective criticism of Civil War symbols in the built environment only gained momentum in the twenty-first century in response to the rise of violence by white supremacists, such as the killing of African American parishioners at a Charleston church in 2015 and the Charlottesville riot of 2017.¹²² Since 2015, the Southern Poverty Law Center has identified the removal of 114 Confederate symbols, including monuments, school names, and flags, among others.¹²³ In Chicago, groups and individuals have criticized the presence of the Confederate monument in what is now a majority African American neighborhood and in a cemetery that includes the graves of the activist Ida B. Wells and Chicago’s first African American mayor, Harold Washington.¹²⁴ The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which maintains the memorial, has no plans to remove or alter it.¹²⁵

For African Americans at the conclusion of the nineteenth century, vigorous public protests would have been impossible. Their response to

122. Jason Horowitz, Nick Corasaniti, and Ashley Southall, “Nine Killed in Shooting at Black Church in Charleston,” *New York Times*, June 17, 2015, www.nytimes.com/2015/06/18/us/church-attacked-in-charleston-south-carolina.html; “Charlottesville Removes Confederate Statues,” Equal Justice Initiative, July 13, 2021, eji.org/news/charlottesville-removes-confederate-statues.

123. Whose Heritage?” Southern Poverty Law Center, Feb. 1, 2019.

124. Adeshina Emmanuel, “How the South Side Came to House a Not-So-Controversial Confederate Memorial,” *Chicago Magazine*, Sept. 21, 2017, www.chicagomag.com/city-life/september-2017/chicago-south-side-confederate-mound; Rachel Hinton, “Community Organizers Want Confederate Monument Removed from Oak Woods Cemetery,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, Apr. 7, 2018, chicago.suntimes.com/2018/4/7/18406056/community-organizers-want-confederate-monument-removed-from-oak-woods-cemetery; Katherine Cavanaugh, “Chicago: ‘No Monuments to Racism,’” *Workers World*, Apr. 12, 2018, www.workers.org/2018/04/36554; Zimecki, “Monumental Evil,” *Another Chicago Magazine*, Dec. 5, 2019.

125. National Cemetery Administration, *Federal Stewardship of Confederate Dead*, 79–87.

the Lee monument in Richmond demonstrates awareness that the purpose of Confederate monuments was to silence as well as to celebrate.¹²⁶ Rather than provoke Southerners by protesting the construction of monuments devoted to new historical narratives of reconciliation and the veneration of the Lost Cause, African American elites focused their attention on the creation of monuments honoring their own history of Emancipation.

From 1889 to 1892, a group of African American leaders in Illinois attempted to erect a monument to the Emancipation and Civil War soldiers and sailors, first in Springfield and later at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.¹²⁷ They concluded by denouncing the exposition's commissioners that rejected their effort:

We asked for a space of 55 x 55 feet and after promise upon promise for a year and over, the commissions of the World's Columbian Exposition, imbued with a spirit of hate, and actuated by a caste prejudice that has characterised their every ruling in the recognition of the colored race, they ruled us out, even though the crowning act of American valor and principle was Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, and the bravery of the colored soldier and sailor who "snatched victory from defeat" and saved the Union flag.¹²⁸

126. "An Incident of the Lee Monument Unveiling," *New York Age*, June 7, 1890.

127. "The Emancipation Monument to Be Erected in Springfield, Ills.," *Indianapolis Freeman*, Jan. 11, 1890; "The Monument Association," *Washington Bee*, June 28, 1890; "Emancipation Monument," *Detroit Plaindealer*, Aug. 21, 1891. All articles from NewsBank African American Newspapers.

128. "National Emancipation Monument," *Indianapolis Freeman*, Dec. 24, 1892, NewsBank African American Newspapers. See, also, Elizabeth R. Varon, "The Statue that Never Was," John L. Nau III Center for Civil War History, July 6, 2020, naucenter.as.virginia.edu/statue-never-was.

Various other African American groups planned monuments around the country throughout the 1890s. In 1890, a Brooklyn group launched a separate effort to erect "a monument to the Afro-American soldiers and sailors who were killed in the war of the rebellion."¹²⁹ In 1891, a G.A.R. post in New Orleans sought funds for a statue of Captain André Cailloux, "the first Negro officer killed in the Union army."¹³⁰ In 1898, a national group organized in Chicago attempted to honor the thirty African American sailors killed by the explosion of the *U.S.S. Maine* during the Spanish-American War.¹³¹ John G. Jones, the group's president, said that "we as a race of people owe it to the memory of those brave soldiers who sacrificed their lives on the battle field in defense of national honor."¹³² Finally, following the death of Fredrick Douglass in 1895, the African American activist, John W. Thompson, succeeded in erecting a monument of Douglass in Rochester, New York, in 1899—the statue still stands today (see fig. 13).¹³³

129. "Race Doings," *Leavenworth Advocate*, Oct. 11, 1890, Newsbank African American Newspapers.

130. It is not clear whether the New Orleans G.A.R. post was fundraising for a separate Cailloux monument or the Illinois group's Emancipation Monument, which would have been topped by a statue of Cailloux. See "Race Gleanings," *Indianapolis Freeman*, Nov. 14, 1891, Newsbank African American Newspapers.

131. "A Worthy Cause," *Springfield Illinois Record*, July 16, 1898, Newsbank African American Newspapers.

132. "The National Colored Soldiers' [and Sailors'] Monument Association," *Indianapolis Freeman*, Apr. 30, 1898, Newsbank African American Newspapers.

133. "Doings of the Race," *Cleveland Gazette*, Apr. 18, 1896, Newsbank African American Newspapers; "Fredrick Douglass: Memorial Monument," National Library of Scotland, Oct. 4, 2018, www.nls.uk/exhibitions/treasures/fredrick-douglass/monument.



Figure 13: Frederick Douglass Monument, Rochester, NY.

Photography by John Howe Kent, c. 1899. Box 5, folder 128, Walter O. Evans Collection of Frederick Douglass and Douglass Family Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/17374014.

Conclusions

On November 19, 1863, Abraham Lincoln spoke at the Gettysburg battleground: “We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives, that that nation might live.”¹³⁴ After the conclusion of the Civil War and throughout the nineteenth century, Americans on both sides of the conflict, including John Cox Underwood, sought to remember the approximately 620,000 soldiers who perished during the war.¹³⁵

Beginning in his home state of Kentucky in the late 1860s, Underwood executed small gatherings of veterans from both armies to come together under a banner of friendship, but these reunions never garnered much attention outside of local presses.¹³⁶ By 1885, national sentiments for reconciliation were on the rise. Underwood saw his chance to realize his project before a larger audience in Philadelphia, but his publicity posters for the event backfired due to their Confederate imagery—what today would be called “bad optics.” The poorly executed project left the Philadelphians feeling financially cheated and distrustful of Underwood’s insistence that his aims were genuine. The united Confederate and Union pallbearers at Grant’s funeral in the summer of 1885 convinced Underwood to attempt another display of reconciliation in Columbus, Ohio, in 1889, which succeeded. Underwood moved to Chicago in 1890. He had become a better publicist and fundraiser, a

134. Abraham Lincoln, “The Gettysburg Address,” Cornell University Library, Nov. 19, 1963, rmc.library.cornell.edu/gettysburg/good_cause/transcript.htm.

135. American Battlefield Trust, “Civil War Casualties,” n.d., accessed Dec. 20, 2019, www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/civil-war-casualties.

136. “I, as far back as the later ‘sixties’ ... determined that I would attempt through a life work if necessary, to bring about a general recognition of the valor and endurance displayed by both of the formerly opposing elements [of the Civil War].” Underwood, *Report of Proceedings*, 4.

skilled organizer, and a savvy political strategist. He convinced Southern ex-Confederates and Chicago elites from every sector of society to support his vision. They helped him mount a massive spectacle that silenced most of the opposition and managed what would have once seemed improbable: the erection of a monument to Confederate prisoners of war in a Northern city.

John Cox Underwood fulfilled his twenty-five-year quest to further national reconciliation with the Confederate Monument in Chicago. Honoring the Confederate soldiers who had died at Camp Douglas was but a small piece of a larger puzzle. He made a persuasive argument for reconciliation based upon the necessity of North-South economic commerce and the elimination of slavery from the national conversation. This dual argument created a bond that linked Chicagoans to Southern markets and accelerated the South's journey out of the destruction wrought by the Civil War. Ultimately, Underwood's vision of "harmonious forgetfulness" was part of the wider movement to silence the underlying evil of slavery for which the South had fought, a movement that would culminate in the separate-but-equal decision of *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 (the same year as the publication of Underwood's *Report*) and the prolonged era of Jim Crow in the South.

Scholars often frame reconciliation as a method of "dealing with the dead."¹³⁷ Ironically, the Chicago ceremonies to honor the Camp Douglas dead were as much, if not more, about the living. Reconciliationist events were a forum to bury the past sins of the living; to celebrate the symbolic role of womanhood in a new era of harmony for the nation; to valorize the nobility of Southern manhood and the purity of Southern womanhood, which had survived the brutality of the Civil War; and to secure what they hoped would be their future legacy with new historical narratives. They embedded these narratives into the built environment with a growing number of memorials to the Lost Cause, which reminded Southerners

of their inherent superiority and intimidated African Americans in their nascent efforts to exercise the full rights of citizenship. Those standing at the podium in Chicago spoke across the country to many Americans. In the end, they hoped to secure their own legacies, to reinforce incomplete narratives, and to dismiss one of the most tragic tales in American history. Those narratives etched in stone sheltered the dead at Confederate Mound and served as a permanent, tangible reminder of what so many tried for so long to hide. ○

137. Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 2.

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