MISSION STATEMENT

The Ohio University Undergraduate Journal of History was founded in 2010 with the goal of highlighting the scholarship of undergraduate history students. In doing so, the journal aims to develop and encourage academic achievement, to forge an intellectual dialogue between peers, familiarize students with the publishing process, and encourage student-faculty collaboration. Published every spring by members of Phi Alpha Theta, the journal is dedicated to presenting outstanding undergraduate work.

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Dear Reader,

It is with great excitement that I introduce the inaugural issue of the Ohio University Undergraduate Journal of History. The journal seeks to showcase the talents of undergraduate students of history and to offer an opportunity for students to familiarize themselves with the publishing process, which is so integral to the history profession. Journals are an important vehicle for the exchange of ideas and the presentation of original research. The editorial board is confident the OUUJH shows just how bright the future of our profession is. During my years as an undergraduate, I have been inspired by the support and enthusiasm of my professors, and I hope the creation of this journal in some small way contributes to a department that transforms students day after day. We believe the excellence of paper submissions, the support from the department, and the integrity of our review and editing process will ensure the journal’s growth as OU students work to maintain a forum through which students and professors recognize the outstanding historical scholarship of undergraduates.

From religion in the Netherlands to rebellions in Peru and from how Abraham Lincoln is remembered to Jimmy Carter’s 1980 election campaign, the first volume of our journal has something that can pique the interest of everyone. The authors have meticulously researched and written their papers; their passion for historical inquiry is clear. We have enjoyed the process of working with authors to transform a class assignment into a published article, and we hope they have learned as much as we have throughout this journey.

The publication of these articles was the collaborative effort of many people. The OUUJH would like to express warm gratitude to Ohio University’s Department of History for its commitment to undergraduate development and its unreserved support for this project. Dr. Brian Schoen was instrumental in the creation of this journal, providing endless hours of guidance. He deserves special thanks. Finally, without the journal’s editors who contributed a significant amount of time and energy to ensure the success of this new undertaking, the journal would not have been possible.

Chrissy Matzen
Editor-in-Chief
Athens, Ohio
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Legitimacy, Power, and Religious Syncretism in Late Eighteenth-Century Peru: The Tupac Amaru Rebellion as a Window into Colonial Hybridity

Jonathan Olivito

In the 1760s, José Gabriel replaced his paternal surname of Condorcanqui with Tupac Amaru. Originally part of his efforts to claim the vacant mayorazgo of Nusta Beatriz, by 1780, José Gabriel Tupac Amaru’s assumption of the last Inca’s name had become a potent recruiting tool and source of legitimacy for his rebellion. For colonial-era Andeans, the title of Inca invoked both a political and religious role. In his assumption of the Inca identity, Tupac Amaru took on both of those roles. However, while the political significance of the position may have had a fairly straight-forward meaning, the religious role embraced by Tupac Amaru involved an intricate balance between Christian and Andean religion. His adoption of Christian practices could seem contradictory at times. For instance, once, immediately before ordering his troops into battle, Tupac Amaru warned his followers that those who called on Jesus or confessed before dying would not be resurrected. Yet, during a dispute between Tupac Amaru and a faction of his army, when a number of Tupac Amaru’s followers asked him to remove all Catholic priests from their ranks, he reportedly rejected their request, citing that without priests, “who would absolve us in the matter of death?”

As these two accounts suggest, Tupac Amaru cultivated an often complicated relationship with the Catholic Church and its clergy. While in some instances he appealed to Andean religious beliefs and rejected Catholic practices, at other times he

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2 Ibid.
embraced the Church for the political power and legitimacy that it could bestow on his rebellion. This tension between Andean and Christian religions and their roles in the rebellion surfaced in Tupac Amaru’s proclamations and his correspondences with the Bishop of Cuzco. Although his actions may seem contradictory, they reveal an underlying consistency in Tupac Amaru’s pursuit of political legitimacy.3

Central to understanding Tupac Amaru’s actions, religion in the late eighteenth-century Andes involved a complicated melding of Christian and indigenous beliefs and ideas. In the same way that the hybrid cultural structures of colonial Peru derived from both European and Andean elements, religion in colonial Peru incorporated aspects of Christian dogma while still retaining many features of pre-Hispanic Andean beliefs. Only through the lens of this often-convoluted syncretic religious structure can one appreciate Tupac Amaru’s use of religion to garner legitimacy for his rebellion.4

**The Political and Religious Figure of the Inca**

As Tupac Amaru appropriated the identity of the Inca he not only took on the role of a political leader, but also the mantle of a religious and spiritual guide. Both the writings and oral tradition of the colonial era, as well as the recent historiography recognize the figure of the Inca as inherently religious. Indeed, recollections of the Inca Empire identified the Inca as the descendant of Manco Capac, who Andeans believed to have descended from the Sun. As such, Andeans worshipped the Inca as the son of the Sun up until the Spanish conquest.5

Prior to Inca rule in the Andes, Indians worshipped their ancestors as well as deities and holy places generally known as *huacas*. *Huacas* could encompass a wide variety of objects ranging from caves or fountains to animals and birds. As described by the priest Christoval de Molina, pre-Inca Andeans often referred to *huacas* as their place of origin or the progenitor of their lineage.6 Because early Andeans believed that they originated from different sources, they also created differing myths to explain their origins. Under Inca rule, these local beliefs persisted and according to Christoval de Molina, Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui even instituted a celebration known

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6 Clements R. Markham, ed. and trans., *Narratives of the Rites and Laws of the Yncas* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1873), 4-5.
as the *Ccapac-cocha* in which the Inca distributed children, cloth, livestock, gold, and silver to sacrifice to the provincial *huacas*.7

While both Inca and Andean deities existed together, they did not always enjoy a harmonious relationship. In the case of the regional *huaca, Pachacamac*, the Inca incorporated the shrine of this widely venerated deity into their own religious network by constructing a shrine to the Sun next to *Pachacamac’s* temple. In addition to the physical encroachment on *Pachacamac’s* influence, the Inca also altered myths surrounding the deity’s creation of humans by reinventing *Pachacamac* as a son of the Sun. In other instances regional *huacas* did not share such an obsequious relationship with the Inca. In the village of Chacalla the people prayed to their *huaca* that “Topa Inca Yupanqui, Guyna Capac’s father, might die.” After learning of their prayers, Topa Inca Yupanqui ordered that all of the male villagers be killed.8 At times, the Inca consulted regional deities for predictions on important events. The predictions that priests divined from deities often invoked strong reactions from the Inca. Whereas accurate oracles strengthened a *huaca*’s reputation and wealth, an inaccurate prediction of an Inca’s death led Guayna Capac to order the destruction of a *huaca*’s shrine. Despite the occasional conflicts stemming from the veneration of lesser *huacas*, worship of the Sun occupied the dominant position in the Andean religious hierarchy under the Inca Empire.9

The Inca admired their ruler as descending from this exalted religious figure of the Sun; however, not until the rule of Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui did the worship of the Sun acquire its lofty status. Prior to a great battle, Inca lore tells of a vision sent by the Sun to Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui promising him victory in the upcoming confrontation. After routing his enemies, as the Sun had predicted, Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui elevated the Sun above all of the other Andean deities and ordered the remodeling of the Temple of the Sun. From these myths of divine extraction came the Inca’s most important “instrument of political unification,” the cult of the Sun.10 Having glorified the position of the Sun and secured the blessing of its legitimacy on his lineage, Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui made the worship of the Sun requisite of conquered ethnic groups. The figure of the Inca stood at the pinnacle of this State sponsored cult, acting as the nexus between the divine and the temporal due to his asserted relationship to the Sun. By requiring all conquered ethnic groups to worship the same deity, the cult of the Sun established a common religious belief among the many and diverse *huacas* and deities worshipped by Andeans prior to Inca rule. Through their worship of the Sun, ethnic groups not only displayed their submission

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9 Ibid., 55-60, 62.
10 Ramírez, *To Feed and be Fed*, 80.
to the Inca’s chosen deity but also their acquiescence to Inca rule. The cult of the Sun thus served as both a religious and a political unifier for the Inca.\footnote{Markham, *Narratives of the Rites and Laws of the Yncas*, 4-5, 8-9; Andrien, *Andean Worlds*, 157; MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes*, 55-60, 62; Ramirez, *To Feed and be Fed*, 98-99, 60.}

The cult of the Sun and the claim to divine extraction imparted on the Inca such a sacred air that his followers considered him a “semi-divine being,” with whom no one could have direct physical contact.\footnote{Gonzalo Lamana, *Domination without Dominance: Inca-Spanish Encounters in Early Colonial Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 51.} An account of the first encounter between the Spaniards and Atahualpa reveals the strict prohibitions established to safeguard the divine personage of the Inca. When trying to speak with Atahualpa, Pizarro’s messengers first had to convince the camp guards that they were worthy of speaking directly with the Inca. After finally making their way to Atahualpa, Captain Soto futilely attempted to speak directly with Atahualpa only to have his dialogue redirected through the Inca’s port-parole. Finally, Soto offered a ring to the Inca as a parting gift; however, in the process he advanced unacceptably close to Atahualpa so that “his horse’s breath blew the fringe that was the royal insignia.” In response to this affront, Atahualpa “angrily ordered that the ring be returned and the capitos [captains] leave.”\footnote{Ibid., 50-52.}

As this brief rendezvous illustrates, the Inca’s sacred aura acted as a firm boundary that set his personage apart from lesser political figures who did not possess the legitimacy of the Sun. Although Tupac Amaru did not decree any type of interdict on physical contact with his body or the need to be addressed through intermediaries, his identification as Inca established him as a religious leader. Assuming this religious role within the context of Andean religious syncretism, Tupac Amaru claimed to act both “on behalf of the Christian God” and “as the divine Inca, the spiritual leader of the Andean world.”\footnote{Stavig, “Tupac Amaru, the Body Politic,” 45.}

The Melding of Christian and Andean Religious Beliefs

By the time of the late eighteenth-century when Tupac Amaru claimed to act on behalf of both the divine Inca and the Christian God, Christian and Andean beliefs had already been in close interaction for over two centuries. The amalgamation of Christian and Andean religious beliefs began around the time of the conquest period, when Spanish priests and missionaries came into long term contact with the indigenous peoples of Peru. In addition to facing the challenges of communication, cultural disconnects, and accessibility, aspiring missionaries had to confront the pre-existing religious beliefs of their prospective converts. While priests did impart Christian beliefs and ideas onto many Andeans, they failed to completely eradicate their converts’ previously-held beliefs.
To many Spaniards, Andean religion represented a form of demonic illusion. Through the lens of early modern Christian analysis, the idolatry and religious unorthodoxy of the Andes appeared as the latest battlefield in the ageless fight between good and evil. Spaniards felt that unlike themselves or other peoples already exposed to the word of God and the illusions of the devil, Andeans lacked the knowledge and training to identify these deceptions for their face value. The cult of the Sun figured as a major source of these demonic illusions. However, with the collapse of the Inca Empire, the cult of the Sun and other empire wide religious observances quickly waned. For many Andeans, the Inca imposed the cult of the Sun on them to legitimate Inca rule and assert their subjugation to the empire, but with the decline of the Inca, Indians went back to worshipping their own ancestors and *huacas*. Spaniards took heart in this rapid decline of “public idolatry,” yet while early conversion efforts made what appeared to be outward progress in correcting the erroneous beliefs of Andeans, Church officials soon realized that local and regional Andean religious beliefs persisted even after the Inca had long faded.¹⁵

An example of this persistent adherence to Andean religion, even after the fall of the Inca, comes from one of the empire’s last rulers, Manco Inca. Assembling his weary and disconsolate followers after their failed siege of Cuzco, Manco Inca informed them that he would be leaving to take refuge in the Andes. Before setting out to Vitcos, Manco Inca instructed the Indians on how they should behave under Spanish rule. Among his various pieces of advice, Manco Inca stressed that “most importantly, if by chance they tell you that you should worship what they worship—that is, some painted sheets that they say are the Viracocha but are only sheets—and tell you to adore them like a *huaca*, do not worship them but worship what is ours instead.” The Inca continued, instructing that “when you can’t avoid it any longer, do it in front of them but do not forget our ceremonies.”¹⁶ Taken from Titu Cusi Yupanqui’s chronicle of the *History of How the Spaniards Arrived in Peru*, this retelling of Manco Inca’s parting charge to his followers proved to be rather prescient considering the continued observance of Andean religious practices and the formation of syncretic religious beliefs.¹⁷

The celebration of traditional Andean festivals in outwardly Christian settings figured as one of the more prominent examples of religious syncretism during the colonial period. The Inca calendar and schedule of festivities revolved around the agricultural cycle. The two most important Andean festivals, Inti Raymi and Qhápaq Inti Raymi, roughly coincided with the June and December solstices, respectively. The Inti Raymi festival in June celebrated the end of the agricultural year and the regeneration of the Sun. Similarly, the Qhápaq Inti Raymi festival, held during the December solstice, praised the Sun at its apex on the longest day of the

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¹⁷ Stavig, “Tupac Amaru, the Body Politic,” 34.
year. The Inti Raymi celebration also happened to fall within the general timeframe of the Christian Corpus Christi celebration. Manco Inca presided over the last official Inti Raymi celebration in April 1535, yet some of the spirit of the Inti Raymi celebration lived on under the guise of indigenous participation in Corpus Christi. In their observance of the Corpus Christi celebrations, Andeans wore traditional clothing and carried “emblems of their places of origin, much as they had done for Inti Raymi.” Andean performances during the Corpus Christi celebrations generally included elements that had pre-Hispanic origins. Spaniards viewed some of these acts with suspicion and found it impossible to evaluate their true meaning. Priests feared that instead of celebrating Christ’s triumph over sin, indigenous displays may have embodied another form of hidden idolatry. Yet, in other displays, Spaniards welcomed the Indians’ use of traditional Andean dress and performances. Spaniards encouraged caciques to wear native costumes during Corpus Christi and even dressed some mestizo choirboys in Inkaic regalia. As long as “the space for worship and the focus of worship were Christianized,” Spaniards approved of Andean displays.

Thus, both Christians and Andeans co-opted the Corpus Christi celebrations to serve their purposes and express their own meanings. For Spaniards, Corpus Christi served as an opportunity to guide Andeans away from their erring religious beliefs and assert the triumph of Christianity over Andean religion. On the other hand, Andean performances during Corpus Christi allowed indigenous peoples to negotiate their identity and position in the colonial hierarchy.

Another example of co-opting Christian structures to serve Andean purposes comes from the Indian understanding of religious conversion. Traditional Andean religious beliefs centered on the worship of ancestors and huacas. As Gonzalo Lamana points out, by worshipping and offering sacrifices to these deities, huacas imparted čámac on to their devotees. Described as a “powerful generative essence,” čámac assured an individual’s success in their personal, military, and political life. This understanding of čámac sheds light on Andean desires to convert. Rather than viewing conversion from the Western perspective of a whole-hearted acceptance of new beliefs and a rejection of prior beliefs, Andeans viewed the Christian God as yet another huaca. Through Christian conversion, they could “establish a relation with,
and gain knowledge of, the Viracochas’ *huaca*” while at the same time continue to live and worship as they had before.22

From the point of view of Spanish priests, incomplete conversion or the continued worship of *huacas* represented unorthodoxy, idolatry or even apostasy. However, from an Andean perspective, their actions did not appear contradictory or opposed to proper faith. As historian Ward Stavig describes, for most Andeans, “being religious meant being an observant Christian without having abandoned the Andean gods.”23

In a more subtle way, syncretic religious beliefs emerged in the writings of colonial indigenous and mestizo authors. Recording their histories and chronicles of the Inca Empire, thinkers and writers such as Juan de Santa Cruz Pachacuti, Guaman Poma, and El Inca Garcilaso engaged in what Jeffrey Klaiber refers to as “the posthumous Christianization of the Inca Empire.”24 Klaiber notes that these indigenous and mestizo chroniclers attempted to reconcile the Inca past with Christianity. To some degree their efforts took the form of apologies for the Inca religion, yet they nonetheless highlighted the melding of religions that occurred not only in the colonial present but also in colonial reconstructions of the past.25 In his *Relación de Antigüedades deste reyno del Perú*, Santa Cruz Pachacuti attempts to establish a parallel between biblical events and Andean history. First relating the descent of the Andeans from Adam and Eve, Santa Cruz Pachacuti moves on to describe the era in the Andes known as the Purun-pacha, when Hapi-ñuños (devils or demons) wandered the land tormenting and attacking people. According to Santa Cruz Pachacuti, this period of darkness and roving demons ended with Jesus’ death on the cross. In a story also depicted by Guaman Poma, Santa Cruz Pachacuti tells of a wandering preacher who spread the word of the one true God throughout the Andes; the Andeans referred to him as *Tonapa Viracocha*, but Santa Cruz Pachacuti identified him as St. Thomas.26 Like the account of Santa Cruz Pachacuti, Guaman Poma’s chronicle also attempted to link biblical events with occurrences in the Andes. By Guaman Poma’s consideration, Jesus Christ was born during the reign of Cinche Roca Inca; furthermore, the three wise men who adored the baby Jesus included “Melchior the Indian, Balthasar the Spaniard, and Gaspar the black.”27

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22 Ibid., 199. Italics are mine.
23 Stavig, “Tupac Amaru, the Body Politic,” 44.
25 Ibid., 507-512.
both of these chronicles, Christian and Andean understandings melded, revealing the intermeshed nature of religion in colonial Peru.

In El Inca Garcilaso’s account, Christian and Andean history does not meld in the same way that they do in the chronicles of Santa Cruz Pachacuti and Guaman Poma. Instead, El Inca Garcilaso presents the Inca as preparing the way for the arrival of Christianity by serving as a “Natural Light” for the less civilized Indians to see “the face of the true God.”28 While not openly interweaving Christian and Andean histories, El Inca Garcilaso’s account relates the Inca from a partially Christian perspective. The Inca role as the forebears of the Spaniards rings of a biblical allusion to John the Baptist’s coming to prepare the way for Jesus. Like the work of Guaman Poma and Santa Cruz Pachacuti, El Inca Garcilaso’s account further illustrates the amalgamation of religious understanding in colonial Peru.

**Ecclesiastical and Secular Disputes over Authority**

Notwithstanding the syncretic melding of Andean and Christian religion, by Tupac Amaru’s time, the Catholic Church had long since supplanted the cult of the Sun as the dominant religious belief in the Andes. In its predominant position, the Catholic Church often acted as an appendage to the monarchy, reinforcing and legitimizing the will of the Crown. In fact, due to the right of royal patronage as conceded to the King of Spain by the Pope in 1493, the Church in both Spain and the colonies fell under the dominion of the monarch.

In spite of royal oversight and the Crown’s right to nominate Church officials, the Church in both Spain and the colonies enjoyed some latitude in its affairs. Although the Pope might grant the right of royal patronage to a king, by divine authority the Pope still theoretically held supremacy over kings. Furthermore, the Church had the protection of the “ecclesiastical fuero,” which granted it legal immunity and ceded all cases concerning the clergy to the ecclesiastical courts.29 As a result, disputes over authority and jurisdiction between secular and ecclesiastical officials arose frequently in the colonies. Through their often syncretic interactions with Christian religion and their observation of disputes between Church and State, discontented indigenous subjects, such as Tupac Amaru, recognized the Church as a potential ally against the colonial government.

Minor jurisdictional disputes occurred somewhat regularly in Peru, but larger level confrontations between Church and State occurred much less frequently. Perhaps the most notable Church-State conflict in colonial Peru erupted on February 20, 1684 with the issuance of a controversial viceregal decree by the Viceroy Duque de la Palata. Investing corregidores and other lower level Spanish officials with the

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authority to investigate and report on complaints against the clergy, Viceroy Palata’s decree enraged the Church. Historically, only upper level Spanish colonial officials, such as oidores, governors, and viceroys, had any degree of jurisdiction over Church affairs. The situation quickly deteriorated when Archbishop Liñán y Cisneros of Lima gave a sermon denouncing the decree and labeling it as a violation of ecclesiastical immunity. In response to the archbishop’s disapprobation toward his order, Palata ordered a ban on printing so that the Church could not disseminate its objections. Tensions subsided after a public encounter between the two officials; however, they flared up once again after nearly a year and a half of calm when the archbishop criticized the viceroy for his infringement on the sanctuary of the cathedral. By 1688, the dispute had created such a tumult that the Papacy became aware of the disagreement. Rome applied its weight to the conflict in favor of the archbishop. Facing increasing pressure from the Vatican, the Spanish Crown directed the new Viceroy of Peru, Conde de la Monclava, to suspend the contested decree and meet with Archbishop Liñán y Cisneros. The entire affair dragged on for nearly four years, encompassed two viceroys, and severely tested the Church-State relationship in the colonies. In that time, a notable amount of Church and State resources were devoted to the internal disagreement. As this lengthy episode illustrates, Church-State disputes had the potential to significantly weaken the colonial system.30

A Church-State dispute of a smaller scope arose in the Cuzco region in early 1780. Involving Juan Moscoso y Peralta, the Bishop of Cuzco, and Antonio de Arriaga, the Corregidor of Tinta, the conflict divided Crown and ecclesiastical officers and scandalized the region as civil officials and priests chose sides in what progressed from a personal animosity to a confrontation of Church-State jurisdiction. In the first of two incidents, the Indians of San Pablo de Cacha made a request to their priest to set up the village’s nativity scene for Epiphany. The priest refused their request, so in response the community made a number of complaints about the priest. In March of 1780 the situation in San Pablo de Cacha spun out of control when the priest’s slave spread a rumor that the priest had sent for Corregidor Arriaga and that he was coming to the town to kill all of the natives. In the ensuing confusion, many Indians fled the village and one even fell off of a bridge and drowned. Although Arriaga expelled the priest’s slave from the province, the slave’s volatile rumor had created a fear and hatred of Arriaga that could not be undone.31

Arriaga’s troubles with the Church continued when several months later he became involved in a dispute between Bishop Moscoso and Don Justo Martínez, the priest of Yauri. The bishop wanted to oversee the Church property in Yauri and demanded that Justo Martínez submit to his orders. Facing a recalcitrant Justo

Martínez, Moscoso dispatched Don Vincente de la Puente and Don Juan José Palomino to remove the priest. De la Puente and José Palomino’s arrival in the village provoked some unrest among the Indian villagers who confronted the two for breaking down the door to Justo Martínez’s residence. After this first encounter, Moscoso ordered De la Puente back to the village to arrest Justo Martínez; however, the Indians resisted the bishop’s representatives and a scuffle ensued. In the midst of the tumult, several people were injured. Hearing of this incident, Moscoso demanded that Arriaga punish the villagers who were responsible for the melee. Instead of heading the demands of Moscoso, Arriaga sided with the villagers. The dispute quickly became an argument over jurisdiction. While Moscoso insisted that the guilty villagers be tried in ecclesiastical court, Arriaga held that the bishop’s authority did not extend to the current situation. The culmination of the dispute came on July 27, 1780, when Moscoso excommunicated Arriaga for obstructing his authority and “for protecting sacrilegious natives.” Only after multiple entreaties from the Audiencia of Lima did Moscoso lift the excommunication against Arriaga. Beyond the scandal of a bishop excommunicating a Crown official under questionable pretexts, the entire dispute degraded Arriaga’s reputation and diminished his authority.

Tupac Amaru set his rebellion in motion several months after the episode between Moscoso and Arriaga. With Arriaga at a low point in his influence and with the Church seemingly at odds with the local apparatus of State, Tupac Amaru capitalized on the instability brought about by the conflict. At the same time that Tupac Amaru attempted to take advantage of Arriaga’s vulnerability, he also made efforts to bolster his relationship with the Church. As the dispute between Moscoso and Arriaga escalated, Tupac Amaru became closer to Moscoso as a result of their shared enmity for the Corregidor. Although observers most likely exaggerated the extent of Moscoso and Tupac Amaru’s relationship, many contemporaries assumed that the two were close friends. This popular perception of his close connection to the Church did not escape Tupac Amaru. As the Bishop of Cuzco, Moscoso occupied a position of considerable authority. Subsequently, Tupac Amaru tried to align the bishop’s position of authority to his personal aspirations.

After the start of the rebellion, Tupac Amaru sent several letters to the bishop asking him to bless the uprising and praise the rebel cause. In one letter, Tupac Amaru wrote of the justness of his cause and the abuses of the colonial government.

In another letter, dated January 3, 1781, Tupac Amaru attempted to solicit

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32 Ibid., 241.
Moscoso’s support, writing of the legitimacy that the Church could lend to his rebellion. Defending himself from charges of colluding with the rebels, Moscoso later claimed that he did not respond to Tupac Amaru’s pleas, but in his January 3 letter, Tupac Amaru made reference to a response from Moscoso. Additionally, several individuals declared that Tupac Amaru read letters allegedly written by the bishop as he traveled from village to village to enlist Indians in his ranks. However, as Moscoso argued, Tupac Amaru may have fabricated Moscoso’s response because of the authority and status an association with the Church and the bishop could grant him. Whether real or perceived, the rebels valued this tie to the Church, as it not only had the potential to bolster Tupac Amaru’s claims to being a Christian religious figure but also represented real political power given the autonomy of the Church within the colonial system.36

Tupac Amaru’s early efforts to gain the blessing of Moscoso did not produce the intended results, and after the massacre of royalist troops and destruction of the church at Sangarará, Moscoso excommunicated Tupac Amaru and warned that anyone associating themselves with the rebels would be excommunicated as well. Indians had ambivalent attitudes toward the excommunication. While some observed the Church’s admonishment and refused to assist in the rebellion for this reason, others ignored Moscoso’s decree or even felt content “to be rid of Christianity’s hold.”37 Tupac Amaru wrote to Moscoso after learning of his excommunication to insist that he did not wish to injure the Church or the clergy. Stressing his sincere “Catholic zeal” and professing his Christian belief, Tupac Amaru claimed that his only goal was to liberate his “people from tyranny and make sure that the holy Catholic law be respected.”38 As his correspondence with the bishop demonstrates, Tupac Amaru sought to maintain the legitimacy of his Christian religious appeals despite falling out with the Church and his former acquaintance, Moscoso.

Even after Tupac Amaru’s execution, the rebels continued making attempts to establish ties with the Bishop. Moscoso wrote that Diego Cristobal Tupac Amaru sent him a letter on November 5, 1781, asking for his support. Once again, Moscoso argued that he did not respond to the rebels. Tupac Amaru and Diego Cristobal’s repeated attempts to gain Moscoso’s support reveals the importance they placed on acquiring the Church’s backing. Moscoso illustrated this point in one of his letters of self defense where he mentioned encountering Diego Cristobal prior to his execution. Sitting in the chapel after being sentenced to die, Diego Cristobal chastised the bishop for tricking the rebels and bemoaning that he would never have been captured had Moscoso assisted in the rebellion. Diego Cristobal, like Tupac

36 Bishop Juan Manuel Moscoso y Peralta, Documents pertaining to the rebellion of Tupac Amaru, and to other political and ecclesiastical affairs of Peru [manuscript] 1779-1791, VAULT Ayer MS 1197, Edward E. Ayer Manuscript Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago.
37 Stavig and Schmidt, The Tupac Amaru and Catarista Rebellions, 74-75.
38 Ibid., 75-76.
Amaru, understood the legitimacy associated with the Church and the political leverage that it carried.39

Conclusions

Religion in the late eighteenth-century Andes involved an elaborate mixture of Christian and Andean beliefs and practices. The fall of the Inca Empire signaled the end of the imperial religion of Sun worship in the Andes, yet it did not mean an end of Andean religion. Andeans maintained their local and regional religious practices and continued to worship their ancestors and huacas much as they had before and during Inca rule. Soon after the Spanish conquest, priests began to spread Christianity in the Andes. Early conversion efforts initially appeared successful; however, Church officials soon discovered that while Andeans attended mass and outwardly worshipped as Christians, they continued to follow their traditional religious beliefs. Despite the Church’s efforts at extirpating idolatry, religious syncretism continued to define Andean religious understanding throughout the colonial period. Indian displays at the Corpus Christi celebrations, Andean conceptions of conversion, and indigenous Christianization of the Inca past all attest to this religious hybridity.

The sometimes precarious balance of power between Church and State in the colonies indirectly assisted Tupac Amaru’s intentions. The protracted struggle between Corregidor Arriaga of Tinta and Bishop Moscoso placed Corregidor Arriaga in a vulnerable position and helped to construct the popular perception of Tupac Amaru’s close ties with the Church. Taking advantage of the opportunity presented by this Church-State dispute, Tupac Amaru captured and executed the politically weakened Arriaga, hoping to obtain the approval of the Corregidor’s nemesis—Bishop Moscoso—in the process. In spite of a previous acquaintanceship with Moscoso, Tupac Amaru did not gain the approval of the bishop. Failing to receive the support from the Church that he desired, Tupac Amaru still asserted the Christian nature of his uprising.

Within the context of religious hybridity, Tupac Amaru appealed to both Andean and Christian beliefs to draw support for his rebellion. While Tupac Amaru appealed to Andean religious understandings to bolster his legitimacy among his indigenous supporters, he also asserted his loyalty to the Church in order to further strengthen his claim to political power. Although Andeans often practiced their Christian religious beliefs in unorthodox ways, after several centuries of hybrid religious melding associations with the Church resonated with many indigenous peoples. In light of religious syncretism, Tupac Amaru’s seemingly contradictory appeals made perfect sense to his followers.

39 Bishop Juan Manuel Moscoso y Peralta, Documents pertaining to the rebellion of Tupac Amaru, and to other political and ecclesiastical affairs of Peru [manuscript] 1779-1791, VAULT Ayer MS 1197, Edward E. Ayer Manuscript Collection.
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A Southern Strategy: The *Atlanta Constitution* and the Lincoln Centennial, February 1909

Frank Cirillo

In the days surrounding the centennial of his birth in February 1909, Abraham Lincoln emerged from beyond the grave to take center stage once more in the American public eye. Newspapers saturated their columns with Lincolnian headlines, detailing lavish celebrations and sublime speeches in Chicago, New York, and Lincoln’s adopted hometown of Springfield, Illinois. The *Atlanta Constitution*, a newspaper based in the former Confederate state of Georgia, was no exception, featuring over fifteen articles on Lincoln in the days before and after his February 12 birthday. The articles all shared a common theme: praise for the former president.

Southern laudation of Lincoln was nothing new; the mainstream southern press had moved from detesting the Union leader as a crude tyrant during the Civil War to admiring him as the quintessential American amid the spirit of reconciliation in the 1880s. The *Constitution*’s coverage of Lincoln, however, represented an unprecedented version of white southern adulation. Whether addressing southern commemoration ceremonies, the involvement of Southerners and southern symbols in northern events, the connection between Lincoln and the South, or the relationship of the former president to racial matters, the *Constitution*’s articles all attempted to co-opt the centennial, and Lincoln himself, to assert southern primacy within the new nation. As David Blight has noted, practitioners of the “Lost Cause,” the pro-Confederate narrative of the causes and outcomes of the Civil War, used the rhetoric of reconciliation and racism to foster an American memory of the war “on Southern terms.”¹ In a similarly assertive vein, the *Constitution* forged the figure of

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¹ According to Blight, three narratives vied for primacy in the American memory of the Civil War: the reconciliationist narrative, emphasizing the valor of both sides; the white supremacist narrative, emphasizing white male solidarity against the dangers posed by African-Americans; and the
Lincoln and the occasion of his centennial into instruments for creating a national union dominated by a white southern values system, or set of moral, cultural, and racial beliefs, such as the importance of honor, the sanctity of Confederate symbols, and the righteousness of segregation, that clearly derived from the white South.

The Constitution’s portrayal of Lincoln denoted a new stage, or at least a singular case, in the evolution of white southern thought respecting the fallen American president. Lincoln’s transition from an object of southern scorn to icon in the southern pantheon of heroes is a well-covered historical subject.\(^2\) The memory of Lincoln in the South began during the American Civil War itself. As historian Harold Holzer and Michael Davis demonstrated, Confederate authors portrayed Lincoln in an overwhelmingly negative fashion—an unsurprising treatment, given that the election of Lincoln precipitated southern secession in the first place.\(^3\) Southern views of Lincoln began to shift after the end of the war and Lincoln’s emancipationist narrative, stressing the Civil War as a crusade for the liberation of an unjustly-enslaved people. The reconciliationist and white supremacist narratives together crowded out the emancipationist narrative by the late 19\(^{th}\) century, and would continue to do so until the 1960s. See David Blight, Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2001), 1-5.


\(^3\) See Holzer, “Confederate Caricature”: 23-33 and Davis, The Image of Lincoln, 62-72. Some southerners lampooned him as the “Illinois Ape,” the hapless and uncouth mid-westerner who, as ardent Confederate John McCabe, Jr. wrote in his 1863 novel The Aide-de-Camp: A Romance of the War, was “a weak tool in the hands of the wicked rulers of his [Republican] party.” John McCabe, Jr., The Aide-de-Camp: A Romance of the War (Richmond, 1863), quoted in Davis, The Image of Lincoln, 70. Others, like the author of a November 1862 cartoon in Southern Illustrated News in which Lincoln removes his face to reveal the visage of Satan underneath, attributed the blame of war to Lincoln rather than to his Republican overlords. Masks and Faces,” Southern Illustrated News (November 1862), depicted in Holzer, “Confederate Caricature”: 31.
assassination in 1865. With the onset of Radical Reconstruction, and as their narrative went, its oppressive treatment of white ex-Confederate Southerners, many residents of Dixie came to believe, or at least to publicly claim, that the kind-hearted Lincoln, if alive, would have checked the bloodlust of Republican congressmen and provided the South with a more lenient reconstruction. As Michael Davis and Richard N. Current illustrated, the former leaders of the Confederacy, including Jefferson Davis, combined antipathy for Lincoln’s role in the war with regret at the consequences of his assassination. To these ex-Confederates, Lincoln was still the enemy, but was the lesser evil when compared to men such as Thaddeus Stevens.

The predominant white southern view of Lincoln further changed in the 1880s with the rise of the “New South” and its associated ideals. Historians such as C. Vann Woodward and Edward Ayers chronicled the rise of the New South starting in the mid-1870s, as investors began pouring money into southern sawmills and coal mines, railroads began connecting the southern landscape, and southern cities like Atlanta began to modernize and grow at astonishing rates. In what Woodward termed a “colonial economy,” northern industrialists and railroad magnates poured capital into developing the South, both transforming the South into the producer of raw materials for northern factories and relegating southern elites to positions as middling executives for northern-owned banks, railroads, and corporations. Increased economic ties hence fostered a spirit of sectional reunion. Men like Henry Grady, the editor of the Atlanta Constitution in the 1880s and the voice of the New South, urged both sections to put aside wartime animosities in favor of national progress through intersectional cooperation.

For Grady and other proponents of the New South, Lincoln became a rallying point around whom Northerners and Southerners could reunite. In his “New South” speech given in New York in December 1886, Grady put forth the

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4 Indeed, Lincoln’s “Ten Percent Plan” of December 1863, in which a former Confederate state could rejoin the Union after ten percent of its voters swore allegiance to the United States, was lenient compared to the plans of the Radical Republicans. Moreover, Lincoln pocket-vetoed the radical Wade-Davis Bill in 1864. Current, Speaking of Abraham Lincoln, 88-90.

5 Current, Speaking of Lincoln, 147-148 and Davis, The Image of Lincoln, 111-112. For example, Jefferson Davis, writing in his 1883 The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government, declared, “For an enemy so relentless in the war for our subjugation, we could not be expected to mourn; yet, in view of its political consequences, it could not be regarded otherwise than as a great misfortune to the South.” Jefferson Davis, The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1881), 683.

6 See C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951) and Edward Ayers, Southern Crossing: A History of the American South, 1877-1906 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Urban growth in the South occurred at twice the national average from the 1880s and into the early 1900’s. Southern cities were also the first to receive modern infrastructural elements, such as electric rail-cars and electric lights. Ayers, Southern Crossing, 14, 38.


idea that America was comprised originally of the northern “Puritans” and the southern “Cavaliers.” He then asserted that Lincoln was “the sum of Puritan and Cavalier, for in his ardent nature were fused the virtues of both.” Lincoln was “greater than Puritan, greater than Cavalier,” in that he was “the first American,”—the prime example of a purely national specimen.9 Lincoln transcended sectional bounds, incorporating the mores of both North and South. Grady left these transsectional values ambiguous, but Puritans and Cavaliers alike could see such commonly-held tenets as a love of liberty and republicanism, a strong work ethic, and a belief in white male superiority reflected in his speech.10 The former president was hence the appropriate symbol for a reunified nation. By including Lincoln in their pantheon of worship, Southerners could display their commitment to reunion and intersectional progress. Early twentieth-century southern historians such as J.H. de Roulhac Hamilton reported and reflected the continuation of Grady’s patriotic view of Lincoln in the twentieth century.11

One of the most defining features of the Grady model of Lincolnian, transsectional values was its cautious approach towards racial issues. As mentioned above, Grady no doubt implied that a belief in white supremacy, at least in a casual sense, was a common American value. He refrained, however, from casting the form of racial hierarchy practiced in the South as a part of the Lincolnian national heritage. Grady was no opponent of institutionalized racism; in his “New South” speech he emphasized to his New York audience that “it should be left to those among whom his [the African-American people’s] lot is cast” to handle race relations, meaning that Northerners should leave the South a free hand in maintaining freed slaves in racial subjugation. But he also thereby cast southern racial policy as a decidedly sectional institution, rather than a national one. He needed to urge the North to tolerate southern practices because northern tolerance was not a given; a common feeling of white male pride was one matter, but northern support for the extremities of the Jim Crow laws was quite another. Institutionalized racism was not a trans-sectional tenet, but a source of potential sectional contention. Thus, Grady shied away from directly portraying the “first American” as a supporter of racial hierarchy, only mentioning African-Americans in the same breath as the former president in noting that Lincoln had freed the slaves.12 Grady cast Lincoln as a national hero possessing ambiguous trans-sectional values, but he did not explicitly include southern-style racial views as a Lincolnian, or national, trait.

As historians have noted, other strains of southern attitude towards Lincoln developed in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some unreconstructed

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9 Grady, “New South’ Speech.”
10 Grady discussed the common northern and southern blood shed in the American Revolution and the rise of assiduous industry in both sections, among other issues. His views on race are discussed further below. Ibid.
11 As Hamilton notes, “…everything has tended to implant in the minds of this generation of Southerners, reverence for his [Lincoln’s] memory as part of their heritage.” Hamilton, “Lincoln and the South,” 137.
12 Grady, “New South’ Speech.”
Southerners, such as the Virginian Charles Minor, never surrendered their hatred of Lincoln. Other prominent Southerners began to put forth an explicitly white supremacist view of Lincoln into the mainstream in the years surrounding the Lincoln centennial. For example, virulent racists such as Senator James Vardaman and the authors Thomas Page and Thomas Dixon claimed kinship between their views and Lincoln's on the “Negro question.” Some of these white supremacists, such as Dixon, went as far as to claim Lincoln as a Southerner. One of the protagonists of his 1905 novel The Clansman, Mrs. Cameron, told President Lincoln that she recognized him as a Southerner “by your looks, your manner of speech, your easy, kind ways…” The most important facets of Lincoln’s “southern-ness” were his “ways” regarding race, evinced in his declaration later in the novel that “I can conceive of no greater calamity than the assimilation of the Negro…as our equal.” Dixon hence used Lincoln to justify southern race relations by showing that Lincoln was a Southerner, or at least a southern sympathizer, when it came to the “Negro question.”

Dixon thus incorporated the southern method of racial hierarchy—segregation—into the Grady formulation of Lincoln. The author of The Clansman thereby adopted a more assertive position than the former editor of the Constitution; rather than endowing Lincoln with a haze of vague characteristics, he stressed that the “first American” held decidedly southern racial views. In doing so, Dixon thereby affirmed that institutionalized racism was an explicitly Lincolinian—meaning a transsectional—value. He thus implied that Northerners, as true Americans, should not only leave white Southerners a free racial rein, but should adopt the southern racial hierarchy as a national policy. Lincoln became a figure through which Dixon could transform the white southern answer to the “Negro question” into the proper American formula. Couching southern racial policies in Lincolinian rhetoric, Dixon

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13 Minor, in The Real Lincoln (Richmond, VA: Everett Waddey Company, 1901) deconstructed the heroic view of Lincoln piece by piece. For example, Lincoln was not respectful of religion but was “an infidel.” He did not behave with dignity while in office, but his “gross jokes and stories” constituted “grossly unseemly behavior,” Minor, The Real Lincoln, 25, 29-32.

14 See Peterson, Lincoln in American Memory, 168-170; Current, Speaking of Abraham Lincoln, 33-34; and Davis, The Image of Lincoln, 145-152.

15 See Current, Speaking of Abraham Lincoln, 33-34; Frederick Curtiss, “A Southerner’s View of Abraham Lincoln, February 12, 1909,” Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society 69, Third Series (Oct., 1947- May, 1950): 308-330; Thomas Dixon, Jr., The Clansman (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1905); and Dixon, The Southerner: A Romance of the Real Lincoln (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1913). Vardaman, for example, constantly cited Lincoln’s denunciation of racial equality during the Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858, as well as Lincoln’s support for colonization and gradual, compensated emancipation. Lincoln did indeed come out against racial equality at Charleston, Illinois in September 1858, and supported colonization and gradual emancipation even years into the war. However, Vardaman and other white supremacists tended to ignore the speeches and actions of Lincoln that contradicted their claims. Moreover, they ignored the evolution of Lincoln’s views on race over the course of the war. Current, Speaking of Lincoln, 29-34 and Davis, The Image of Lincoln, 147.


17 Ibid., 46.
could assert the propriety of his section’s racial equilibrium, and could even export such a solution to the rest of the union.

Historians, however, have looked more towards Grady than towards Dixon in explaining how Southerners viewed and co-opted the memory of Lincoln during the 1909 centennial. Scholars like Merrill Peterson and Michael Davis have noted the discrepancy in how different groups of Southerners viewed the Lincoln centennial. Compared to centennial-related activities in northern cities like New York and Chicago, southern celebrations were scarce.\(^{18}\) Some Southerners, including Thomas Page, went to the national capital and the North to deliver speeches on Lincoln.\(^{19}\) Others opted for celebrations in the South involving Confederate and Union veterans.\(^{20}\) As Davis asserted, the southern festivities that did occur focused on the image of Lincoln as a national hero or deity, in the same vein as Grady and Kentucky newspaperman Henry Watterson.\(^{21}\) Indeed, southern newspapers like the *Baltimore Sun* fit Peterson and Davis’s model, declaring in editorials that Lincoln’s “unfaltering and supreme patriotism, compel the admiration...of all Americans...”\(^{22}\) The *Sun* further channeled Grady by devoting entire sections of its February issues to letters from prominent Southerners praising the section-less and “American” character of Lincoln.\(^{23}\)

Despite the continuity that the *Sun* evinced, however, changes had occurred in the South between 1886, the year of Grady’s speech, and 1909. Numerous scholars have noted the resurgence of southern pride and assertiveness that began in the 1880s and 1890s. David Blight chronicled a shift among “Lost Cause” practitioners from mourning defeat to asserting the role of the South in the national

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\(^{18}\) Whereas an estimated million people participated in centennial-related events in New York City, and 20,000 attended the Reverend Jenkins Lloyd Jones’ stereopticon lecture on Lincoln on February 13\(^{rd}\) in Chicago, nothing of such scale occurred in the South. Though a number of banquets and celebrations did occur, festivities were largely confined to major cities and towns. Memphis and Little Rock were the only cities to form centennial commissions, and Arkansas was the only state to declare the day a half-holiday. Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory*, 183-191 and Davis, *The Image of Lincoln*, 166-168.

\(^{19}\) Curtiss’ “A Southerner’s View of Abraham Lincoln” reproduced Page’s February 12\(^{th}\) speech at a centennial gathering in Washington, D.C.

\(^{20}\) This occurred in northern celebrations as well. Davis, *The Image of Lincoln*, 166-168.

\(^{21}\) Davis, *The Image of Lincoln.*, 168. Watterson argued in an 1895 speech that Lincoln was “one of God’s own”—a divine instrument to purge the nation of slavery and sectionalism, so that the nation could move forward in unity. Watterson in Davis, *The Image of Lincoln*, 165.


\(^{23}\) Jacksonville, Florida Mayor (and former Confederate soldier) William Sebring, for example, wrote that “every American citizen, whether he be a North man or a South man, should be proud of the character of so noble and so able a statesman as Mr. Lincoln.” William H. Sebring, “Lincoln’s Great Heart,” *Baltimore Sun*, 7 February 1909. Another former Confederate, United States Senator from Kentucky James B. McCreary, declared that Lincoln was a “true patriot and a capable, honest man.” James B. McCreary, “He Was a True Patriot,” *Baltimore Sun*, 7 February 1909.
A Southern Strategy

Writers like Page aimed literature at northern audiences, while Confederate heritage groups and monuments began to multiply. As Nina Silber and others have shown, southern men reasserted themselves as masculine and martial contributors to the nation, especially after the Spanish-American War, in which the first American to die was a Southerner. Southern men, and the South itself, achieved new prominence in the national eye following the war, as both southern and northern authors praised the glories of southern manhood. Though Silber emphasized the channeling of newfound southern assertiveness into nationalistic sentiments, some Southerners used resurgent Dixie pride to promote the position of the South within the Union. Lincoln, Grady’s quintessential American, was the perfect instrument for such schemes. By making the former president stand for southern positions, Southerners could advertise and spread their values to the rest of the country as Lincolnian—and hence properly American—mores. Dixon’s novels, for example, co-opted Lincoln to export the South’s vision of racial hierarchy nationwide.

In 1909, the Atlanta Constitution abandoned the moderate trail blazed by its former editor Grady—and carried into the centennial year by the Sun and other southern newspapers—in favor of the assertive Dixonian tone that was beginning to enter the southern psyche. Moreover, the Constitution went beyond the course set by The Clansman. Besides fighting for a national implementation of southern racial policies in a novel way, the newspaper worked in its coverage of the Lincoln centennial, and of Lincoln himself, to portray the South as the moral and cultural soul of—and hence the superior partner in—the reunited nation. Though it is unclear if the editors of the Constitution intended to coordinate their articles in a concerted strategy or not, different articles nonetheless used various approaches to arrive at the common conclusion: the right of the South to cultural, moral, and racial dominance within the union.

For instance, the articles covering the centennial celebrations that occurred in Atlanta turned the Grady formula on its head, subtly using the rhetoric of reconciliation to establish the South’s moral superiority within the reunited nation.

26 According to Silber, the South prior to the 1890s was largely seen in feminized terms, as the subordinate and unruly partner of the North. This changed amid the cult of patriotism and masculine ethos of the 1890s. Nina Silber, The Romance of Reunion (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 159-196 and Ayers, Southern Crossing, 258.
28 Ibid., 196.
29 Minor, who railed against the deification and idolization of Lincoln that had occurred in the North, inadvertently illustrated how popular Lincoln had become. Minor, The Real Lincoln, 9-10.
“Atlanta’s Significant Tribute to Lincoln,” an article from February 14 commenting on the official celebrations that would take place that night at Trinity Church, seemingly deployed the rhetoric of patriotism and nationalism. The Constitution began by praising the planned ceremony, which would involve speeches from members of both the United Confederate Veterans and the Grand Army of the Republic, and would thus “bring together in common cause to honor the memory of the great American, the veterans both of the blue and of the gray.” The memory of Lincoln could facilitate fraternal reconciliation, since the former president “belong[ed] to the whole United States,” and since “[h]is work was not sectional, but national…” Hence, in a Grady-like summation, southern celebration of Lincoln was “evidence of a triumphantly restored nationalism.” In words that could have come from 1886, the author stressed the ability of the Lincoln centennial to foster national unity.

While the author paid lip service to Grady, he ultimately revealed an ulterior, sectional agenda. In a reconciliationist vein, the author praised the “victory of fraternal spirit over the deep-rooted enmities of civil strife”—a moral triumph without which no celebration was possible. The “mutual tribute which confederate survivors, together with those who stood in opposing ranks” would pay to Lincoln evinced a spirit of fraternalism. The laurels of moral victory, however, tipped to one side in the reunion. Northerners, in paying tribute to Lincoln, were honoring their “most abiding of friends.” Southerners, on the other hand, were honoring their “most generous of enemies”—a kindly former nemesis, to be sure, but their conqueror nonetheless. Thus, the “south’s [moral] victory [was] greatest,” since it “had not only to erase the enmities of war, but to crush and blot out the rankling bitterness of defeat.” Southerners had to overcome their loss in the war and their associated resentment of Lincoln. Their ability to celebrate Lincoln’s birthday was thus a tribute to their moral strength, grounded in their distinctively southern sense of honor. Northerners, who underwent no such trials, displayed a lack of moral courage—an inability to magnanimously overcome past enmities. In claiming victory, the anonymous author thus turned military defeat into a display of moral superiority over the North. By implication, the South and its honor-based values, as the ethical hearts of the nation, thus deserved national pre-eminence.

The Constitution’s report following the Trinity Church ceremony revealed the same pattern. The article “Blue and the Gray Join in a Tribute to Lincoln,” from February 15, discussed the splendor of veterans in blue and gray standing side by side and then detailed the various speeches, lingering on excerpts from the sermon of the Trinity Church pastor, the Reverend Dr. James W. Lee. The excerpt included the Grady-like rhetoric of sectional reconciliation, in which Lee praised Lincoln as “one of our race…who live[s] again not only in eternity, but throughout all time.” The memory of Lincoln would rightfully persevere. In practical terms, Lincoln could also foster national unity, since “soldiers in blue, and soldiers in gray…are able to

30 “Atlanta’s Significant Tribute to Lincoln,” Atlanta Constitution, 14 February 1909.
31 Ibid.
Northerners and Southerners could build ties over their mutual adoration for Lincoln, thus furthering sectional reunion.

At the same time that he praised sectional harmony, however, Lee also made the case for the right of the South to moral authority within the reunited nation. Towards the end of the article, Lee declared that “[s]o great are we [the former Confederacy] as a people that it has taken only fifty sad heart-rending years to bring us to a national level of good will” in which they could honor not only dead Confederates but also “those who fought on the side of victory.” As in the previous article, the South had become the epitome of honorable morality, overcoming suffering to display good will towards its former enemies. The Lincoln centennial was an occasion for a southern display of ethical greatness. Lee made southern moral superiority over the North explicit later in the article. The reverend declared that “the time is not far distant when memorial services like this will be held in the great cities of the north in honor of Jefferson Davis.” He cited as an example President Roosevelt’s “climb[ing] high enough above sectional lines to congratulate the people of Mississippi” on producing such a great man as Davis. While the North would someday honor Davis, it did not do so for his centennial in 1908. The North, while it offered the occasional compliment, could not yet place Davis in its pantheon of heroes. Thus, the only section that had the present courage to honor its former chief adversary was the South. Lee looked forward to the day when the North would follow the South’s moral footsteps and display the same level of goodwill. The South was thus the moral guide of the nation. The anonymous author concluded his article with these excerpted statements, thereby ensuring that his readers would above all carry away the theme of southern ethical dominance from the piece.

While the Constitution asserted the moral superiority of the South through its coverage of the Atlanta ceremony, it emphasized the rightful prominence of Southerners and their symbols in the identity of the reunited nation through its coverage of northern commemoration events. An article from February 13, entitled “Lincoln Paid High Tribute at Old Home,” summarized centennial celebrations across the United States, including those in New York, Chicago, Memphis, and Birmingham. The city of Little Rock announced its intention to hold a banquet for the centennial, in which “confederate flags [would] mingle with the stars and the stripes in the decorations.” This southern ceremony mixed the symbols of the two former enemies, symbolizing a southern willingness for reconciliation.

Below these notices, however, was an item under the blaring headline of “Removed Confederate Flag.” This item detailed the removal of a Confederate flag from decorations for the Lincoln celebration in Indianapolis following “vigorous

32 The Reverend Dr. James W. Lee, quoted in “Blue and the Gray Join in a Tribute to Lincoln,” Atlanta Constitution, 15 February 1909.
protests…by veterans of the civil war."\textsuperscript{35} While the author did not voice his opinion on the subject, the juxtaposition of this event, in which Northerners refused to allow the symbol of the Confederacy on their soil, with the southern events provided a clear message. As Silber noted, the martial reconciliation ceremonies that began in the 1890’s included symbols from both sections, such as military uniforms.\textsuperscript{36} As seen in the Little Rock ceremonies, white Southerners embraced intersectional symbolism for the Lincoln centennial, viewing it as another event of national reconciliation. The North, however, refused to do so. The author thus subtly criticized northern actions, evincing the South’s moral superiority. Moreover, he implied that the Confederate flag deserved a role in celebrations of national heritage, especially one honoring the quintessential American. The article, in subtly protesting an alleged injustice, asserted the right of a southern symbol to prominence on the national stage.

Other articles used the occasion of the Lincoln centennial to thrust another southern symbol, the song “Dixie,” into national prominence. In “Singing of ‘Dixie’ No Act of Treason,” from February 7, the Constitution explored a controversy over the singing of “Dixie” in the North. The article began with the following question: “Did any authorized…person in Chicago forbid as an act of treason the singing of ‘Dixie’ in the public schools during the Lincoln celebration?” The author then related that a rumor confirming such a ban had circulated among Southerners. As with the Confederate flag article, the author did not make his own explicit judgments. Nevertheless, the use of the word “treason” in the question practically invited a sense of outrage among readers. For Southerners, who mixed southern and national symbols at their own celebrations of Lincoln, there was nothing traitorous about the presence of a southern cultural symbol at an intersectional event. Any accusations to the contrary thus insulted southern honor. A letter from a member of the New Orleans Progressive Union to the Chicago Association of Commerce president, reprinted in the article, said as much, declaring that the ban should be rescinded if “Chicago wishes to make any progress in the south.” As with the Confederate flag article, the article used the occasion of Lincoln’s centennial to assert the rightful place of “Dixie” on the national stage. Chicago officials concurred, denying that a ban had existed.\textsuperscript{37}

While the article took advantage of the opportunity that the Lincoln centennial provided—a national celebration to push for the prominence of southern symbols nationwide, it also co-opted Lincoln in the service of southern cultural dominance. Under the heading of “Lincoln Liked Dixie,” the article reprinted the words of Joseph Nimmo, Jr., a surviving friend of Lincoln who responded to the Chicago rumor by recalling Lincoln’s discussion of “Dixie” in 1865. Nimmo noted how Lincoln traced the song from its northern roots to its southern co-optation during the war. Lincoln then wryly noted that, since “Dixie” was now captured Union property, a band before him could strike up the tune. Thus, as Nimmo

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{36} Silber, The Romance of Reunion, 178-179.

\textsuperscript{37} “Singing of ‘Dixie’ No Act of Treason,” Atlanta Constitution, 7 February 1909.
concludes, the “good-natured humor of Abraham Lincoln” made “Dixie” a “truly national song.”

In one sense, Lincoln nationalized a song that was northern in origin, taking it back from the grasp of the South. Indeed, the notion of captured property implied as much. In another sense, however, Lincoln legitimized a southern symbol as an American icon. As time had shown, the wartime association of “Dixie” with the South was indelible. Thus, the article credited Lincoln with the diffusion of a southern icon into the national psyche. Whether Lincoln wanted to recapture “Dixie” from the South or to mask his affection for the now-southern song in the language of the mock conqueror, the “first American” nonetheless enabled “Dixie,” with its southern cultural stamp, to become a national symbol. The Constitution hence co-opted Lincoln to stress the legitimacy of “Dixie” and the southern values it stood for as American values. The authors of an untitled article from February 8 smugly announced the actualization of the southern cultural coup, noting that they were “now listening to the National song of ‘Dixie’ at a Lincoln celebration.” By aiming to transform southern icons and values into national symbols and mores, the Constitution worked to further southern cultural dominance of the national identity. With respect to “Dixie,” at least, the paper succeeded.

The Constitution articles, besides emphasizing the right of southern symbols to national cultural participation or even hegemony, also used the occasion of the northern centennial events to assert the prominent role of the southern people in the Union. Many articles focused on the experiences of the Southerners who went north to participate in the centennial celebrations in major northern cities. “Congressman Howard to Be Lincoln Orator,” an article from the February 11 issue of the Constitution, discussed the invitation of Georgia Congressman William Howard to northern centennial events. After speaking in Decatur, Illinois, he would go to Springfield as the “guest of the state celebration committee—the ceremonies...being not only of state-wide, but of national interest.” The article not only spotlighted the presence of a Southerner at northern celebrations, but also emphasized the propriety of such a southern role. The Illinois centennial commission, recognizing that the Springfield celebration was a national ceremony, naturally made a Southerner its guest of honor. The Lincoln centennial was a platform from which all could affirm the right of Southerners to prominence in national events.

Other articles focused on Judge Emory Speer of Georgia, who delivered a centennial oration on Lincoln’s birthday at the Twelfth Regiment Armory in New York City. These articles went beyond asserting the presence of Southerners at national events, declaring the right of the denizens of Dixie to advance clearly

38 Ibid.
39 For example, the band accompanying the congressional declaration of war on Spain in 1898 played both “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” and “Dixie,” symbolizing the reunited marital prowess of North and South. Silber, The Romance of Reunion, 178-179.
40 “Article No. 2—Untitled,” Atlanta Constitution, 8 February 1909.
41 “Congressman Howard to Be Lincoln Orator,” Atlanta Constitution, 11 February 1909.
southern views at such ceremonies. The *Constitution* articles discussing Speer’s upcoming speech all emphasized his role as a Southerner. “Judge Speer Goes to New York,” from February 10, notes that, “[as] a Southerner, he [Speer] will be heard with much interest.”42 The article thus clearly implied that Speer traveled to New York as a bearer of his southern sectional identity. An earlier article from February 7, “Judge Speer to Speak at Lincoln Centenary,” likewise noted that Speer’s speech on Lincoln would be fascinating due to Speer’s “southern loyalty and patriotism” and his ability to “represent in true form the southern outlook.”43 Speer was a vessel through which southern views could enter into a national celebration of the first American, and on northern soil no less.

Speer’s own speech, excerpted in an article from February 13, explained the national implications of a southern presence at the Lincoln centennial. He devoted much of his speech to a Jefferson Davis-like lamentation at the consequences of Lincoln’s “taking off” for the South, leaving no doubt in the minds of his audience that he was speaking from a southern point of view. The first part of his speech, then, emphasized the right of a Southerner to advocate his sectionalist views on a national stage. Speer then declared the resurgence of southern patriotism, asserting “the old American spirit is again flaming in our hearts.” The South would forever defend the American nation because “southern men worthy of the name ever cherish a common, tender sympathy for the homogenous population” and for the “primitive virtues of the brave and kindly American stock.”44 Speer thus cloaked his ultimate agenda in the language of reconciliations. At least some Northerners took the bait, embracing Speer’s speech as a paean to reunion. The *New-York Tribune*, for example, highlighted the reconciliatory aspect of the speech in a February 13 article, excerpting little of the address beyond Speer’s discussion of Lincoln’s benevolence and the Georgian’s affirmation of a southern patriotic spirit.45

Speer, however, had an endgame in mind other than mere reconciliation. As the *Constitution* article noted, Speer invoked Lincoln in discussing the “primitive virtues.” In one sense, Speer thus reflected Grady’s notion of Lincoln as the “first American,” binding the sections together through his quintessentially American values. Speer, however, invoked Lincoln by “referring to the fact that he was southern born.”46 He drew on a strong American belief in the connection between a person’s values and his heritage. For example, on the same day as Speer’s speech, then-President Roosevelt explicitly linked the former president’s values to his geographical origins, speaking about Lincoln’s character at his birthplace in Kentucky.47 Hence, in invoking Lincoln’s southern heritage, Speer implied that

Lincoln also ran the gamut of southern values. Lincoln’s affinity with the southern mindset was not limited to racial views, as Dixon had emphasized, but extended to the entire corpus of southern social and cultural mores. Speer could stress southern views at a Lincoln centennial because Lincoln’s values were southern values.

Moreover, since Lincoln did indeed epitomize the national character, southern values were the true American mores. Speer supported a reunion based on the traits of Lincoln because such a reunion cast southern values as the purest form of American ideals. Lincoln and his values became the means through which the southern way of life could dominate the American values system, and through which an American icon and the language of reconciliation could legitimate southern pre-eminence in the Union. Thus, the Constitution’s articles on southern symbols and speakers at northern events asserted the right of southern mores to a presence in—or dominance of—the national heritage.

A series of articles and advertisements furthered Speer’s ideas, connecting Lincoln to the South and thus legitimizing southern dominance of the still-developing national psyche. An advertisement from February 1, though not an official opinion of the Constitution and its writers, nonetheless fit in with the newspaper’s strategy of stressing the connection between Lincoln and the South. The ad, under the title of “The Real Menace of Pistol Toting,” publicized the February 1909 issue of Uncle Remus’ The Home Magazine. Included in the issue was a reprinted story by the late creator of the magazine, the southern writer and former Constitution associate editor Joel Chandler Harris, on “The Kidnapping of Lincoln.” The fictional story dealt with the “historical attempt…to steal the person of the President from Washington…and hold him in the South as a hostage of war.” Harris, the ad noted, “through the traits of his own sympathetic nature, was peculiarly fitted to understand Lincoln, whose creed was also one in which love and laughter found conspicuous place.” Harris could portray Lincoln because of their similar beliefs and behavior. Harris, as a southern icon, possessed the values of Dixie. Hence, Lincoln too was, at least temperamentally, a son of the South. Thus, Harris returned to the pages of the Constitution in 1909 to co-opt Lincoln as a southern symbol. With the “first American” a Southerner, Speer’s vision of southern domination was only a short leap away.

Other articles explicitly marked Lincoln as a man of southern blood. In the article “Virginia Claims Abraham Lincoln” from February 15, a reporter for the

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48 Harris worked at the Constitution from 1876-1900. The creator of the “Uncle Remus” stories, his Uncle Remus’ Magazine merged with another publication to become Uncle Remus’ The Home Magazine following his death in 1908. Hugh T. Keenan (Ed.), Dearest Chums and Partners: Joel Chandler Harris’ Letters to His Children (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1993), 507.


50 The substance of the story reaffirmed the ad’s implications: as Michael Davis noted, Lincoln ultimately escaped an untimely fate in the story by revealing his southern personality. In the story, Billy Sanders of Georgia traveled to Washington, D.C. to kidnap Lincoln. Upon meeting Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln, however, Sanders fell under the sway of their southern charms. He ultimately abandoned his plot, choosing fraternity over malice. Davis, The Image of Lincoln, 143-145.
Constitution discussed Lincoln’s southern roots. The correspondent noted that Lincoln “sprang from a very old Virginia family,” and accurately explained how his ancestors migrated from Virginia to Kentucky. While technically correct, the author’s misleading emphasis on Lincoln’s direct connection to Virginia, and his omitting of the Lincoln family’s moves beyond Virginia and Kentucky, seemed to create the impression that the Lincolns had never left the South. Indeed, the article included a picture of Abraham Lucius Lincoln, a member of the Virginia Lincolns, with a caption falsely describing him as the “Lineal Descendant of President Abraham Lincoln.” At the end of the article, the correspondent mentioned the remarks of Reverend W.W. Staley, who, at the ceremony for Abraham Lucius’ graduation from Elon College in 1908, remarked that the student physically resembled the former president. Staley then urged him to “build a character” of equally strong resemblance. The article, in alternating between the Illinoisan Lincoln’s Virginian ancestors and his spitting-image Virginian “descendant,” all but portrayed Lincoln as a Virginian himself. Given the belief in the connection between heritage and values that Speer and Roosevelt illustrated, the author’s implication was clear: Lincoln’s southern origins begot southern values.

Moreover, the article depicted Lincoln as yearning to establish a formal connection to the South. The news around which the article focused was the discovery of letters from Lincoln to Abraham Lucius’ grandfather from 1848. The letters were, in the words of the correspondent, “pathetic efforts to establish and prove his [Lincoln’s] claims to Virginia ancestry.” The Constitution reprinted the letters in a concurrent article as proof. Lincoln, the Southerner by birth, having recognized the affinity between his mores and those of the South, applied for admission into the ranks of the southern people. Lincoln’s correspondence earned the author’s sympathy because of the earnestness with which Lincoln sought to establish a connection between himself and the Virginian nobility, a connection that would garner him recognition as the possessor of legitimately southern values. The article thus tied Lincoln to the South through both his heritage and his willful intent. Lincoln’s greatness, then, stemmed from his conscious efforts to embrace and emulate the ideals of his southern ancestors. The South made Lincoln the man he

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52 By the early 1900’s, Kentucky—originally a part of the Old Northwest—was considered a southern state. Thomas Lincoln and his family, including son Abraham, had left Kentucky and moved to Indiana and then Illinois, consciously rejecting a slaveholding society. Current, Speaking of Lincoln, 162-163.
53 “Virginia Claims Abraham Lincoln,” Atlanta Constitution. The article itself demonstrated that Abraham and Abraham Lucius Lincoln were not lineally related. The ex-president’s grandfather and Abraham Lucius’ great-grandfather were brothers, but their lines diverged henceforth.
56 “Unpublished Correspondence as to Lincoln’s Ancestry,” Atlanta Constitution, 15 February 1909.
was. As the literal and moral progenitor of the great American, the South thus deserved recognition as the soul of the American civilization.

The Constitution’s coverage of the Lincoln centennial duplicated Dixon’s assertiveness to further southern domination of the American moral and cultural entity as a whole. At the same time, the newspaper confronted and expanded upon the issue that preoccupied Dixon: the race question. At the heart of the issue in 1909 was the desire of white Atlanta elites for a stable racial hierarchy. Since the segregation of railroad cars in the 1880s, the separation of whites from African-Americans had become the norm across the South. The white-dominated society imposed upon African-Americans constant reminders of their social inferiority. Beginning in the early 1900s, black resistance to the racial status quo gathered around the sociologist W.E.B. DuBois and his Georgia-based Niagara Movement, formed in 1905, which called for black equality in all spheres of life. As David Godshalk noted in his study on the subject, fear of the side effects of the New South system combined with rising racial tensions due to the Niagara Movement’s agitations, to precipitate a race riot in Atlanta in September 1906. Following the multi-day riots, which left at least twenty blacks dead, African-Americans increasingly turned to radical agitation, leading to the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909.

White elites seeking to restore calm and stabilize race relations looked to their black “ally,” Booker T. Washington. Washington had gained national prominence following an 1895 speech that established his principle of the “Atlanta Compromise,” in which blacks should publicly renounce claims on an arena already lost to them, namely politics, and focus instead on achieving economic progress. White elites immediately latched on to Washington’s proposals, seeing in them a way to maintain proper race relations in an orderly fashion. Following the 1906 riots, Atlanta’s white elites reached out to Washington to establish biracial efforts at order

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57 Ayers, Southern Crossing, 100, 267. As an example of institutionalized racism, blacks needed to doff their hats when entering public spaces reserved for whites, while whites did not remove their hats for blacks, even when entering an African-American home. Blacks were also not allowed to walk, shake hands, or fraternize with whites in public. Ayers, Southern Crossing, 89.

58 The riot began in central Atlanta, the home of the unofficial organ of the Niagara movement, Jesse Max Barber’s Voice of the Negro. In addition to racial tensions, the effects of rapid industrialization, commercialization, and urbanization, such as the proliferation of saloons and brothels in central Atlanta, led whites to seek a scapegoat on which to blame the moral ills of their society. African-Americans provided such a scapegoat, especially after white newspapers like the Georgian and the News inflamed the public over the summer through repeated reports of black assaults on white women. David Godshalk, Veiled Visions: The 1906 Atlanta Race Riots and the Reshaping of American Race Relations (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005) 1, 31-34, 39-41.

59 Godshalk, Veiled Visions, 1-3.

60 Washington’s ideas were more complicated than white newspapers such as the Constitution, which called the Atlanta Compromise “the beginning of a moral revolution in America,” made them out to be. For example, by 1900 he was spending thousands of dollars behind the scenes to fight segregation and even disfranchisement across the South. White newspapers tended to overlook or ignore such acts. Ayers, Southern Crossing, 162-167, 267.
and cooperation. Washington, fighting a rear guard action against increasing black opposition to his policies, reciprocated, tying himself more closely to white elites.61

Biracial cooperation did not entail a more progressive attitude towards African-Americans. Indeed, as Scott Sandage noted, Atlanta passed disfranchisement and discrimination laws against African-Americans a month before the Lincoln centennial.62 The Constitution, not known for progressive racial sentiments, displayed none in its coverage of the Lincoln centennial.63 Two articles, “Protest by Negroes” from February 1 and “Three Great Countries Honor Abraham Lincoln at Springfield Banquet” from February 1 mentioned black criticism over their exclusion from the Lincoln centennial banquet in Springfield, Illinois.64 The February 1 article noted how a black organization condemned their exclusion from the banquet as an act “absolutely in violation of the very principle for which Abraham Lincoln fought hardest.”65 The February 13 article described and briefly quoted the protests of a black minister.66 Neither article, however, offered a word of endorsement for African-American inclusion.

Racial justice was not on the Constitution’s agenda in the era of Dixon or, for that matter, in the earlier era of Grady. Racial stability, however, was on the docket. The Constitution hence used the Lincoln centennial and, unlike Dixon, manipulated the words of Washington to firm up its vision of racial hierarchy.67 At the same time, the paper worked to co-opt or neutralize the so-called “emancipationist narrative,” popular among blacks and some northern whites, which called for the use of the memory of Lincoln—the “Great Emancipator” of the slaves—to fight racial injustice.

61 White leaders offered Washington and a selective few other Atlantan black elites the prospect of interracial law-and-order dialogue and organizations. Washington felt that such actions would prove his belief that interracial dialogue could best ameliorate racial tensions. A biracial civil league hence formed in November 1906. Godshalk, Veiled Visions, 126, 151.
63 For example, Clark Howell, the editor and owner of the Constitution, publicly opposed black education in his run for Georgia governor in 1906. He opposed disfranchisement laws such as literary tests only because they would qualify poor whites alongside their intended target of blacks. Godshalk, Veiled Visions, 49.
64 Jim Crow maintained a presence at the banquet, as well as at William Jennings Bryan’s speech and other events in Springfield. Peterson, Lincoln in American Memory, 183.
65 “Protest by Negroes,” Atlanta Constitution, 1 February 1909.
67 Dixon did profess his admiration for Washington on a number of occasions, but also found even Washington’s moderate vision of race relations to be too radical in some respects. The author asserted in an article on Washington in 1905 that the Tuskegee Institute founder’s emphasis on black industrial education was misplaced, since “no amount of education” could “bridge the chasm of centuries which separate him [the African-American man] from the white man in the evolution of human nature.” Dixon thus criticized Washington, rather than co-opting him as an ally in the southern racial crusade. As evidenced below, the Constitution opted for another approach. See Samuel K. Roberts, “Kelly Miller and Thomas Dixon, Jr. on Blacks in American Civilization,” Phylon 41, no. 2 (2nd Quarter, 1980): 202-209.
in the present day. An article from February 13 excerpted a centennial speech that Washington gave the previous day in New York. Washington’s speech included a number of provocative elements. He lauded Lincoln as the “Great Emancipator,” spreading the principle that man everywhere must be physically free but also “must be enlightened.” Education and intellectual progress were the legacies that Lincoln bequeathed to blacks. Moreover, Lincoln emancipated the white race of the need to keep blacks in ignorance. In saying that “no man…need feel constrained to fear or hate of his brother” thanks to Lincoln, Washington criticized those men who continued to pursue discriminatory policies. Finally, he drew a parallel between Lincoln and blacks. Like blacks left bondage, Lincoln “unfettered himself” of the burdens of prejudice to see the truth of racial harmony. Hence, through comparison Washington created a measure of equality between blacks and the former president.

The Constitution article reprinted none of these provocative passages in its article. As Godshalk noted, the paper had a tendency of selectively excerpting Washington’s words to extract its desired message. Under the headline of “Example to Negro Race, Says Booker Washington,” the author used Washington’s speech to promote the white southern version of race relations. Omitting his discussion of enlightenment and his comparison between Lincoln and blacks, the article reprinted Washington’s exhortation for blacks to follow Lincoln’s example by being “simple, without bigotry and without ostentation.” Whereas Washington had paired such advice with a call for education, and with a leveling of the plane between Lincoln and blacks, the Constitution reduced him to reminding blacks to lead simple lives and to accept their places as inferiors unworthy of extensive education or grand dreams. The Constitution also kept Washington’s declaration that “Lincoln…was a southern man by birth,” albeit one that recognized the immorality of keeping “another group of humanity…in ignorance.” By stressing Washington’s depiction of Lincoln as a white Southerner, the article strengthened the claim of the white South on Lincoln, and hence on the national identity. Lincoln’s southern-ness was a universal truth, to the point that even an African-American leader admitted it.

Moreover, Washington’s qualification of Lincoln’s southern nature proved irrelevant, since white Southerners were not racial oppressors but emancipationists. The Constitution allowed Washington to call Lincoln “the great emancipator of my [the black] race,” but only because Washington immediately followed this statement with a tribute to the “white men of the south who…are today working …to uplift

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70 Godshalk provided numerous examples of the Constitution, as well as other papers, distorting Washington’s messages. In an August 30 speech, for example, he briefly criticized “black vagabonds before launching into a denunciation of lynching as the ultimate obstacle to southern economic prosperity. The Constitution ignored the latter criticism, opting instead for the title “Law-Breaking Negroes Worst Menace to Race.” Godshalk, Veiled Visions, 83.
the negro in the south and complete the emancipation that Lincoln began.” Though these Southerners “saw in Lincoln’s policy the ruin of all they believed in and hoped for,” they loyally accepted the results of the war and set about fulfilling Lincoln’s goals with regard to the African-American race.72 Here was the southern argument for moral superiority; since Southerners had to come farther than Northerners in learning to accept the postwar world, they deserved recognition as the moral force of the nation. Here was the southern claim to cultural predominance; Southerners, as the practitioners of Lincoln’s policies, were also heirs to his title of “first American.” And here was the subversion of the emancipationist narrative to serve the white southern view on race relations: since southern whites were the heirs of Lincoln, they could cloak racism under the emancipationist guise as policies meant to protect their wards. Through his use of Washington, the anonymous author left opponents of southern race relations with an impossible choice: accept the status quo or abandon Lincoln. The article emulated and expanded upon the work of Dixon, pushing the southern racial solution towards national acceptance by co-opting both Lincoln and the leaders and narratives of the African-American community.73

The Constitution again worked to subvert the emancipationist narrative in the article “Lincoln Paid High Tribute at Old Home.” In discussing the ceremonies at Lincoln’s birthplace in Kentucky, where President Roosevelt delivered a speech, the author noted that African-American attendance at the event was low. The mixing of the few blacks that were present “among the whites,” however, showed “that none had been kept away by race prejudice.”74 The author hence established the benevolence of white Southerners, who did not deny blacks a role in the ceremonies. At the same time, the author challenged the connection between blacks and Lincoln, which the emancipationist narrative espoused. Blacks consciously avoided the ceremony out of a seeming lack of respect towards the former president. Hence, either the emancipationist narrative’s claim that blacks were the prime recipients of Lincoln’s grace was a lie, or African-Americans were ungrateful. The article thus posed another dilemma for opponents of southern race relations, all the while showing that white Kentuckians respected Lincoln. Southerners had adopted the northern president as their own. In the same way, Northerners should emulate the southern racial system.

The Constitution’s coverage of the Lincoln centennial thus moved beyond reintegrating the South into a section-less nation and towards asserting southern moral and cultural superiority within the national union. The Atlanta newspaper’s articles did indeed display a desire for a complete, fulfilled reunion. The southern version of a national reunion, however, entailed their moral and cultural dominance.

72 Ibid.
73 While Blight discussed extensively the emancipationist narrative as a contrast to the white supremacist and reconciliationist narratives of Civil War memory, he did not mention the ways in which white southerners directly engaged with and twisted the emancipationist narrative to further their modern-day sectional aims. For example, see Blight, Race and Reunion, 344.
Through the figure of Abraham Lincoln and the celebrations surrounding his centenary, the Constitution asserted the South’s role as the nation’s moral compass, its cultural source, and its wise sage on racial matters. The publication thus deformed Lincoln’s character and the beliefs that he defended. Lincoln’s memory became a weapon in a renewed, albeit bloodless, sectional war. An effective weapon it was, given the lasting import and power of the Civil War and its figures in American memory. Indeed, the inclusion of southern symbols like “Dixie” at national centennial events demonstrated the ability of the Constitution and other southern advocates to use the memory of the Civil War to successfully further the position of the South in the present. That the Constitution’s strategy worked made the journal’s conscious twisting of the character, values, and actions of Lincoln all the more nefarious.
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No More Traipsing Through the Peanut Fields:
Jimmy Carter, Campaign Advertising and the Failure of
1980

Nick Andersen

It was a presidential election cycle unlike any other in American history. The beleaguered, unpopular president—beset with economic and foreign policy crises and forced to deal with an upstart challenger from the far wing of his party in the primaries—had to summon up the strength and financial resources to beat back a surprisingly resolute opposition candidate in the general election. Despite a series of major campaign gaffes from the challenger and a sharply divided internal organization, the opposing candidate won the White House, ushering in a new understanding of the role of the president and his election in modern American life.

The 1980 election cycle would be unique if it had not been nearly duplicated during the 1976 election. Both elections stunned observers and proved to be lasting indications of the direction that American national politics would take as the twentieth century entered into its final quarter. In the election of 1976, the Democratic Party regained the White House in the person of Jimmy Carter, an obscure populist and former Georgia governor. Carter ran an expansive grassroots campaign from the primaries through the November election. His success seemed to suggest a tentative new way of winning national elections for the American Left through regional coalitions of unlikely political actors. On the Right four years later, former Governor Ronald Reagan of California swept his party’s primaries and rode a wave of national sentiment calling for political change to resoundingly defeat Carter in 1980.

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Beyond the strikingly similar narratives of each cycle, these two presidential elections had much in common in the widespread use of television advertisements as a method of conveying thematic candidate images to the general public. The effects of television ads in political campaigns are still widely debated, but many studies suggest that the electorate’s opinion of a candidate’s image and therefore overall electability is greatly influenced by exposure to political advertisements.  

While all presidential candidates can be aided by the images their advertisements project, no candidate was helped and later hurt by his advertisements quite like Carter. Many factors contributed to Carter’s loss in 1980: the hostage crisis in Iran, the specter of economic stagflation and a splintering Democratic electorate helped stall Carter’s earnest efforts at reelection. But his inability to create a concrete and positive public image in his second presidential campaign was a major—and often ignored—aspect of his failure to win reelection. This was not an issue in Carter’s first campaign; indeed, observers often cited Carter’s “winning” image in the 1976 election—his smile, emotional speeches and eager campaigning style—as a principal factor in his path to the White House. Combining his folksy, people-power populism and down-home-Dixie upbringing with vague promises to the electorate, Carter’s 1976 campaign ads shaped popular understanding of the former peanut farmer turned politician. Running as an outsider to the corrupt ways of Washington, D.C., Carter projected the image of a principled, honest idealist on whom the country could depend. But in 1980, four years into an unpopular and difficult presidency, Carter was no longer able to run as the Washington outsider. Instead, his campaign produced ads that tried and ultimately failed to paint the president as a man who was presidential and therefore more capable than his rival to lead the country. Carter’s re-election campaign seemed unsure what approach to take, combining a jumbled hodge-podge of various political methodologies into a cocktail of disaster. The image Carter presented—that of a worn, incapable incumbent more knowledgeable and worldly than his friendly populist challenger—worked just as poorly for him as it did for the man he beat in 1976, President Gerald Ford. And although Carter’s staff recognized the distressing similarities between the president in 1980 and his predecessor in 1976, Carter often seemed to ignore their advice as he copied many unsuccessful elements of the Ford re-election campaign. By shifting the focus of his popularly understood image away from the folk populism that served him so well in 1976 towards an inconsistent desire to appear presidential, Jimmy Carter hurt his reelection efforts in 1980. This failure, best interpreted

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through a reverse-chronological lens, can offer lessons for those who direct more recent political stagecraft.

**Image as Politics**

While political portraiture is nothing new in American government and elections, such imagery has changed significantly in the last sixty years. In a transient political climate in which voters’ personal interpretations of the issues and candidates obscure more traditional party associations, individual candidate perception takes on heightened importance. Media scholar Dan Nimmo wrote that voting behavior responds to the perceived character of the potential candidates, making this constructed image a central factor in so-called “candidate-centered” election cycles.9 Who the candidate is—or claims to be—and how he or she relates to the general public through carefully orchestrated media events and advertising is just as important as his stated opinions on the issues at hand. As political media scholars Lynda Lee Kaid and Mike Chanslor contend that political image can be conceived as “a combination of physical attractiveness and surface-level communications skills such as the ability to speak convincingly into a television camera.”10 How a candidate invents and perfects this image has formed the backbone of many recent presidential elections. Modern political candidates are as much a product of the media environment as of the political sphere in which they operate, and as such, the advent of television must be considered when analyzing contemporary political campaigns. At times, the line between the world of politics and the world of mass media is blurred, and television is a key player in this obfuscation of public spheres and figures.

The rise of television as a major communication medium has dramatically shifted the nature of the public’s interaction with its political candidates and elected officials. Historian David Greenberg focuses extensively on television, describing how its instant access to the living rooms and break rooms of millions of Americans created an environment in which a candidate’s image held more gravitas than did the candidate himself.11 Furthermore, this image, formerly constructed through deliberate and exhaustive grassroots campaigning efforts across the country, could now be created just as effectively with a few well placed, timely television advertisements. Noted political analyst Thomas E. Patterson determined that the 1970s saw a political field in which “advertising [had] become the most costly

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activity of the campaign, demanding funds that previously would have been invested in the candidates’ grass-roots efforts.”

Reagan’s Second Coming and Jerry Ford 2.0: The Failure of 1980

As in 1976, the 1980 presidential election was remarkable for its candidates’ fixations with media and political image maintenance. By way of a deeply unpopular president and an affable political outsider running on the opposition ticket, 1980 stood to be just as unusual as the year that first brought Carter to power. Pat Caddell, Carter’s longtime pollster and political analyst, admitted that Reagan in 1980 had many of the positive characteristics that Carter himself used for victory in 1976: “Governor Reagan was viewed as very strong, very decisive…a very good governor of California…a man of vision.”

In a series of earlier internal memos on campaign strategy, Caddell and other reelection staffers recognized larger, more troubling parallels to the last election. These documents highlighted Carter’s similarities to former President Gerald Ford, the man whose political weaknesses he exploited to win the presidency, suggesting that the administration should have been well aware of the nature and extent of the challenge Reagan presented in the upcoming general election. A 1980 memo from Caddell to Carter directly quoted from the 1976 Ford campaign strategy book, deceptively substituting Carter’s name for Ford in opinion polls before revealing the memo’s true origins: “The President is perceived as being boring, a poor communicator and lacking empathy.” The pollster made clear how general disinterest and disappointment in Ford’s accomplishments as president ultimately doomed his reelection bid. Caddell went on to emphasize that Carter, despite his similarities to Ford, suffered from greater negative personal ratings than Ford ever did, stressing the need for a different kind of campaign to overcome the tandem difficulties of a strong opposition and a weak public image. While repeating a common Carter campaign assertion that Reagan was an unintelligent, simplistic populist lacking any ability to run the country, Caddell argued that those attacks had to be made by campaign surrogates and through subtle inference, not by Carter himself.

In his own memo to the president, Carter advertising guru Gerald Rafshoon, then the White House Communications Director, strongly underlined the image dilemma facing Carter as the general election approached. Despite the strengths of the 1976 campaign, Carter the president could not wander through his peanut fields in attempts to woo voters. Rafshoon called for high-quality print and television ads

to emphasize the Carter administration’s successes as a way to counter the increasingly prevalent public view that Carter was shaping up to be a “failed, inept” president. The advertising guru went on to encourage Carter to avoid being perceived as a distant, uncompassionate politician, identifying Ford as a figure who should not be emulated. Furthermore, Rafshoon asked Carter to surround himself with the noble imagery of the presidency, reserving a single day each week for campaigning while using the incumbency and the power and apolitical nature of national leadership to win public sympathy. In short, he told Carter to do a good job at being president as a way to keep that same job in the election. Reagan was not to be mentioned by name in campaign speeches in order to avoid demonizing the likable candidate.

Taken as a whole, these and other carefully worded campaign memos presented a fairly clear path to victory for Carter: emphasize personal accomplishment, appear presidential and avoid direct criticism of his opponent, all the while avoiding Ford’s disastrous thematic choices in a similar political scenario. Above all, internal campaign literature was quite clear in its recognition of Carter’s inability to run as an outsider in his second election effort, criticizing the “rushed and uncertain” election campaign of 1976. Why the Carter campaign ultimately failed to follow any of these suggestions is murky at best. Indeed, Carter’s reelection strategy in the general election bears striking similarities to that of Ford’s, going so far as to record television advertisements that were directly influenced by the former President. Even as the campaign recognized aspects of their own 1976 campaign in the Reagan camp—the exploitation of the image of a credible, optimistic outsider in a time of crisis and concern—it never seemed fully to acknowledge its own duplication of the losing efforts of that earlier election. A 1977 memo written by former Ford Chief of Staff Dick Cheney highlighted the difficulty of running a comprehensive re-election campaign as an incumbent: campaign too aggressively, and the president becomes yet another candidate, thereby losing the defined image appeal of his office. While it is extremely unlikely that Carter’s campaign staff read this memo in their perusal of Ford’s campaign strategy books, they clearly did not follow its cautionary advice in the development of their 1980 campaign.

As the campaign progressed, Carter worked his way through each one of his pre-campaign cautionary warnings. The campaign never seemed to get on board with its decision to tout the administration’s shaky record in office, presenting a divided image of a man standing strong behind his record while admitting the sheer weight of the office he held. It would prove to be difficult for Carter to claim he had been an

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effective, decisive President if he spent just as much time claiming that the presidency was a hard job that didn’t always produce ideal results. Indeed, the crippled economy, lingering hostage crisis in Iran and soaring energy costs proved this inconsistency of results without Carter’s help. Yet, his ads continued to proclaim this split message. The 1980 spot, “Oval Int,” described the Presidency as an agonizing, important job—presenting Carter as a man who was capable of making those decisions; indeed, perhaps the only man qualified to do so.\(^{20}\) This and other ads were meant to build up public perception of the supreme authority of the presidency in an effort to make voters questions Reagan’s supposedly loose qualifications for that office.\(^{21}\) Inexperience was a charge Carter had previously been forced to deflect himself in 1976, but the failure of that particular Ford strategy did not seem to faze Carter’s campaign. The ads “Streetgov” and “State 60” seemed to be lifted from Ford’s campaign strategy guide, either directly or indirectly questioning the opponent’s competence in yet another shift from pre-campaign strategy plans.\(^{22}\) The former featured a series of California residents addressing an unseen cameraman as they proclaimed their support for the former Governor Reagan, but fear of a potential President Reagan.\(^{23}\) The latter, an almost rote copy of clips in Ford’s 1976 “Leadership” ad, showed Carter acting presidential while in a limo, interacting with foreign leaders and attempting to project an aura of leadership.\(^{24}\) These ads managed to violate several of Rafshoon and Caddell’s warnings, criticizing the opponent and incorporating a variety of Ford thematic choices. Each is indicative of a larger campaign trend that drove Carter into a defensive posture, thereby whittling away at the strength of his already weak reelection efforts.

An October 13, 1980 essay in The New Yorker’s “Talk of the Town” section tells much about the tone of the presidential campaign raging at the time. It decried the negative twist in the campaign efforts of both parties, noting in particular the national impression that the contest was more of a struggle to keep either candidate out of the office, rather than keep the incumbent in.\(^{25}\) This disapproving tone was likely in response to the Carter’s growing image as a petty, sniping hack—the so-called “Mean Jimmy” phenomenon inflamed by the press—insulting his opponent while offering few solutions to the nation’s problems.\(^{26}\) Carter actively tried to present Reagan as an incompetent idiot; his internal campaign literature was filled with comparisons of the erudite, knowledgeable President and his “dumb,” “stupid”

\(^{21}\) Moore, The Campaign for President, 199.
\(^{22}\) Jack Germond and Jules Witcover, Blue Smoke and Mirrors, 243-244.
or “untested” opponent. Carter ignored his own staff’s advice, thereby assuming the role of the campaign’s political challenger even though he was the incumbent President.²⁷ Post-mortem campaign literature indicated that some of these attacks were spontaneous speech choices made by Carter himself, but the campaign largely ignored its prior suggestion of surrogate attack dogs’ suggestion in the general election, much to its eventual detriment: “the President felt at times the instinct to get into it himself and did, sometimes not necessarily to his total advantage.”²⁸ By running counter to the image cultivated during the 1976 campaign—that of a kind, decent, and compassionate person—the 1980 campaign destroyed any chance that Carter had of running and winning on his previously established and highly effective image.

Reagan was a strong challenger in a difficult campaign season. His friendly, personable appearance and soaring campaign rhetoric propelled him to a natural leadership position in the Republican Party; those strengths helped lead him to a clear victory in the primaries and gave him the added bonus of a unified national party operation early in his campaign.²⁹ Even more, despite all the parallels between Reagan and the first campaign of his opponent Carter, the California governor had the advantage of a larger national profile at the time of his primary run. His near theft of the Republican nomination in 1976 had given Reagan wide exposure, and his ability seamlessly to blend back into the national party after almost splitting it into two put him in the good graces of both the public and the party elite.³⁰

Reagan had much greater control over his image in the 1980 campaign than did Carter; Reagan could shape his exposure on the national stage as he wished. The Reagan campaign made an active choice to amplify the candidate’s positive aspects—experience, leadership qualities and sense of powerful change—before it began criticizing Carter. This allowed for the development and maturation of the “Mean Jimmy” trend.³¹ That Reagan himself ran a series of highly negative, critical television advertisements seemed to escape many voters and commentators, for Reagan was generally perceived as a kindhearted, warm man who had fallen victim to false and mean-spirited sniping from the President.³²

Image in the Carter Camp: The Early Days

Although Carter’s 1980 campaign staff did not seem to remember their own image craft tactics from the 1976 election, no presidential candidate in recent

²⁸ Moore, The Campaign for President, 208.
³⁰ Moore, The Campaign for President, 15-16.
³¹ Ibid, 212.
memory benefited more from his own deliberate image creation as much as had Jimmy Carter in the election of 1976. Indeed, Rafshoon admitted in 1979 that “Jimmy Carter wouldn’t be President if his campaign hadn’t been covered by television,” and that paid television advertisements were a central tenet of said television coverage.\textsuperscript{33} It is not entirely surprising that television ads became a focal point in the development of political campaigns. The short, simple delivery of a pre-packaged message or symbol was relatively easy to produce and even easier for the public to consume. Patterson wrote that watching television—unlike other national news and content mediums—required little to no effort on the part of the viewer, easing the delivery of any message, political or otherwise.\textsuperscript{34}

From the outset of his unlikely campaign, Carter focused heavily on image creation and distribution. A campaign volunteer guide for Carter’s 1970 campaign for Georgia governor—filled with images of the candidate and his wholesome, all-American family—urged supporters to spread the word about Carter, a supposedly non-partisan politician with real solutions for the state.\textsuperscript{35} Two years later, as the national Democratic Party foundered in the 1972 presidential election with the increasingly marginalized liberal candidate Senator George McGovern, Carter met with close aides—including Rafshoon and his future chief of staff, Hamilton Jordan—in Atlanta to discuss his national political future.\textsuperscript{36} At this and other early meetings, Carter’s future campaign staffers agreed that any pending run for higher national office would have to be ripe with carefully orchestrated imagery, highlighting the governor’s winning personal attributes while recognizing his unusual qualifications for president; indeed, emphasizing those attributes as the fundamental reasons for his ability to effectively govern. Longtime Carter staffer Jody Powell’s personal briefcase from the 1976 campaign trail included a memo emphasizing some of Carter’s central themes. The memo argued that Carter’s apparently contradictory, complex personality—a local non-politician running for national office, a conservative Baptist aiming for the liberal Democratic mantle—only indicated the candidate’s fundamental honesty and thus heightened his appeal to a national electorate searching for a different kind of politician.\textsuperscript{37} In what was perhaps the most important document to come out of these meetings, Jordan stressed early aspects of Carter’s nascent image: “I believe that your farmer-businessman-military-religious-conservative background would be well received...you should attempt to develop the image of a highly successful and concerned farmer living in a small rural town,

\textsuperscript{33}Gerald Rafshoon, in discussion with David Alsobrook (Presidential Papers Staff), found online at http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/library/exitInt/Rafshoon.pdf.
\textsuperscript{34}Thomas E. Patterson, The Mass Media Election, 57.
speaking out on the pertinent issues of the day.” These early discussions would come to play a large role in the 1976 campaign cycle four years later.

The national political mood in the mid-1970s was one of general disgust. President Richard Nixon’s involvement in the notorious Watergate affair brought the country to uncharted political territory, as a once-popular president resigned in shame and a former congressman—never elected to national office—assumed the highest office in the land. As the 1976 campaign approached, it became clear that this particular race to the presidency would be different than any other before it, if only for the feeling of national apathy towards politics. Carter and his campaign sought to capitalize on the unique set of circumstances surrounding the 1976 election as they prepared to create his national image. Carter, Rafshoon said in a 1974 memo on image, was an ethical, Southern, religious non-lawyer and a farmer who had never been privy to the Washington political game. In previous election cycles, these attributes could have been serious political liabilities—no man had been elected President from the heart of the old Confederate South since before the Civil War—but the Carter campaign realized that Carter’s quirk and marked difference from other national political figures of the time could help carry him through the primaries, into the national election and all the way to the White House. Above all, Carter’s sunny, simple idealism broadened his appeal in primary contests and beyond, preaching the virtues of a better America only just over the horizon.

These concepts were highly visible in Carter’s early campaign advertisements and stump speeches. The candidate was often the central focus of the ads, speaking plainly and directly addressing his unseen audience with a gentle smile and a calm gaze; campaign memos often stressed Carter’s “John Kennedy-esque smile” as an asset. The national ad, “South,” with Carter strolling through peanut fields in his native Plains, Georgia as a twangy musical background underscored a reassuring voiceover, were representative of the overall Carter television campaign. Carter’s narration promised honesty and fairness for all people, and the images presented the candidate as an everyman farmer and commoner, yet still a leader by virtue of his forthright speech and clear vision of a better America for “common folks” just like him. Ads like this were important both in the general campaign and in the primaries; according to Rafshoon’s campaign memos, the campaign spent many thousands of dollars on ads in individual state and regional television markets throughout the primary and general election season. The advertisements that Carter’s campaign

39 Greenberg, Nixon’s Shadow, 71-72.
41 Anderson, Electing Jimmy Carter, 33-34.
44 Advertisement Costs, Hamilton Jordan’s Subject Files as Campaign Director, “Advertising Costs – Jerry Rafshoon,” Box 198, Jimmy Carter Library.
ran during his madcap, “run-everywhere” primary campaign were more reactive than thematic, defending the candidate’s record and diffusing potentially harmful comments made by his immediate Democratic rivals for the nomination. The ads reflected the campaign’s desire to establish Carter as a known, viable national candidate. Once he proved his worth and won the nomination, his general election ads would come to focus more on carefully nuanced image.

At times, public perception of these ads called for more substance. Brief, 30-second spots on the candidate’s biographical background or family life could be readily recalled and easily attributed to a specific candidate, giving these ads greater weight than dry policy papers and the like. Still, a September 1976 briefing in *Time* Magazine cited a Patterson study indicating that the efficacy of both candidates’ advertisements was harmed in part by the overemphasis on imagery: “all the footage of Jimmy Carter traipsing through the peanut fields.” But the common thread of Carter as the simple man of the people rang true throughout any primary and general election advertisement.

Carter the candidate was a man of the South, a man of the people, and perhaps most importantly, a man who had never served in Washington. A common stump speech line often ran, “I’m not a lawyer...I’ve never worked in Washington...I’ve never met a Democratic President.” Carter’s longstanding political aims were obscured by the campaign’s ads and themes—including a powerful five minute biographical spot that strongly emphasized Carter’s small-town background and successful career as a naval officer and small-business owner. Jordan and Rafshoon made a last-ditch attempt to attach the then-governor’s name to the doomed McGovern presidential ticket at the 1972 Democratic Convention, and Carter served as chairman of the 1974 Democratic congressional campaign committee to help House and Senate candidates with their mid-term election efforts. Additionally, Carter had served for four years as governor of one of the largest states in the country, making his anti-politician campaign pitch a seemingly unlikely one. But Carter benefited from his general anonymity on the national stage in 1976, giving him the opportunity to dictate the terms of his exposure to a larger audience. Patterson posits that mass public consumption of political imagery generally focuses on a single, specific aspect that tends not to change once developed—incumbency, political novelty or personality among these aspects. This single-issue orientation was a political boon for Carter. Constantly battling a widely-held assumption among officials in both parties that voters did not readily identify who he was, Carter could easily run as an outsider despite his decidedly insider

connections. It is also worth noting that Carter’s down-home folk rhetoric, with its emphasis on his family’s history as hard-working but poor Georgian farmers, was mostly a myth. Recent analysis of Carter’s genealogy revealed that Carter descended from a line of wealthy English planters in the former colony of Georgia. Carter’s reliance on the outsider image was a real strength in the peculiar context of the 1976 campaign.

Jimmy Goes National, Jerry Goes Home: November 1976 and Beyond

President Gerald Ford had none of the advantages and all the problems of Carter entering into the general election. Ford, a former House minority leader who was appointed vice president in the hectic final months of Nixon’s administration and later assumed the presidency after the latter resigned, had never actually been elected to a national or statewide office. As such, the presidential campaign trail was just as foreign to Ford as it was to Carter, made even more difficult by the lack of partisan support and positive public image memory, held sacrosanct for an incumbent in the television age. There were no lingering images of candidate Ford from a previous national election, making the President an unusually unknown public figure in the most public of American offices. Ford was also saddled with his party’s overwhelmingly negative image after the Watergate affair. Indeed, that Carter barely won the election at all is sometimes attributed to the fact that he happened to run as a Democrat in, as the editors of Time Magazine wrote, “a year in which nearly any respectable Democrat should have triumphed.” Additionally, Ford was forced to beat back an intra-party primary challenge from Ronald Reagan, a popular governor from California. In both the bitter primary challenge and the national election, Ford’s campaign had to work double duty, spreading a positive background image of a man largely derided as the man who pardoned Nixon while also running on the supposed strength of the incumbency. Ford pursued the so-called “Rose Garden” strategy as a way to highlight his fundamental qualifications for the office he already held, avoiding large campaign events by staying actively involved in the day-to-day responsibilities of governing.

Reagan’s primary challenge in 1976 reveals much about the issues that would plague Carter in his own later battle with the conservative Californian. While Ford emphasized his incumbency, Reagan ran as an outsider “citizen politician.” But with a truncated two-year term in office full of media mishaps—the infamous Air

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56 Witcover, Marathon, 530-531.
Force One stumbling incident chief among them—and foreign policy difficulties, Ford was an easy target for the “citizen” politician. In reflections and memoirs, Ford’s campaign staff readily admitted that the challenge from the right wing of the Republican Party forced the re-election effort to clarify its message and strengthen its organizational structure.\(^5^9\) While the image of the President is often perceived as beneficial to a candidate, in 1976 and 1980 the public preferred political neophytes to the beleaguered incumbent. Even if an incumbent could control the media environment—the presence of the President at an event immediately made it a news item worth reporting—he could not control the public debate over his legacy and efficacy in office.\(^5^9\) By presenting himself as a more “presidential” figure through his exemplary leadership qualities and careful criticism of the incumbent, an opponent like Reagan or Carter could assume an aura of charismatic leadership benefitting the Presidency, even as he besmirched the powers of his desired office.\(^6^0\)

The general election season unfolded in a sometimes-unpredictable fashion. Typical campaign gaffes plagued both candidates—misstatements, flubbed press events, policy errors—and turned what was once considered a shoe-in election for the Democrats into an exceptionally close race; Carter staff memos often joked that the election would have been a landslide if the candidate had simply rested on the strength of his considerable post-convention public opinion ratings and avoided campaigning altogether.\(^6^1\) Carter’s infamous interview with *Playboy* magazine was among the low points of an election cycle fixated on imagery and personal perceptions of the candidates.\(^6^2\) This interview is notable for both the public uproar that surrounded it—Ford’s campaign produced an ad featuring Pastor W.A. Criswell subtly denouncing Carter for appearing in the pornographic magazine—and for the relevancy of its actual content when compared to the larger aims of the Carter campaign.\(^6^3\) In the nearly twenty-page interview with reporter Robert Scheer, Carter spoke frankly, offering a confusing image of a peculiar modern man that nevertheless followed Powell’s earlier recommendation that Carter’s unusual and contradictory background gave him an honest veneer.\(^6^4\) The most famous comment of the interview—in which Carter admitted he had looked at women other than his wife “with lust” and “committed adultery in [his] heart many times”—came from Carter’s deeply personal interpretation of his Baptist faith; this did not stop political cartoonists and comic commentators across the country from pouncing on the odd statement.\(^6^5\) And though the Ford campaign sought to capitalize on this apparent campaign flub, Carter continued to defend his words, if not the decision to sit down

\(^5^8\) Moore and Fraser, *Campaign for President*, 38-39.
\(^5^9\) Stovall, “Incumbency and News Coverage,” 621-622.
\(^6^1\) Moore and Fraser, *Campaign for President*, 131.
\(^6^5\) Ibid, 461.
for the interview. This stubborn refusal to clarify his complicated public image indicated much about Carter’s personal interpretation of himself and would surface again in the distant 1980 campaign.

Aside from the candidate characteristics that made the 1976 election unique, the televised campaign debates and news cycle brought a special focus on image perception and control. The rapid, visual format of broadcast news at the time lent itself to the so-called “horse-race” election coverage model as described by policy analyst C. Anthony Broh, in which the disparate elements of a campaign—candidate image, public relations, volunteers and strategic choices—were joined together as a supposedly complete package of election news. This packaging allowed viewers to digest election news in heavily visual, easily digested chunks that glorified the imagery and symbolism of a campaign while serving as visual cues themselves.

The 1976 campaign was particularly notable, not only for its lack of party identification but also for its abundance of campaign information. In their analysis of the election, Steven H. Chaffee and Sun Yuel Choe argued that voters who entered an election cycle without strong party identification tended to be the most active interpreters of campaign media materials. The 1976 election saw a large number of such voters, making each candidate’s television advertisement campaigns part of a winning strategy. Even more, the very existence of campaign media strategies could generate significant news coverage within the horse-race election model. The “pseudo-event,” as defined by historian Daniel Boorstin, was “a staged happening that becomes news not for intrinsic reasons but because those who cover the news deem it so.” Theatrical events—Ford speaking from the Rose Garden, Carter addressing an adoring crowd in central Georgia—could borrow from imagery defined in campaign ads and literature and in doing so served to reinforce cultural understanding of a candidate. Presidential debates could also alter this image. The three debates of the 1976 election were generally seen as beneficial to each candidate in some fashion, either giving Carter greater exposure to outline his national vision or allowing Ford to chip away at his opponent’s ‘holier than thou’ assumption of pre-presidential leadership qualities—although a gaffe claiming that Poland wasn’t under Soviet control in the debate hurt Ford in the polls.

Ford’s campaign advertisement strategy reflected his desire to maintain control over the incumbency through specific examples of leadership. Warm, congratulatory ads like “Leadership,” “Children/Achievements” and “Peace” show Ford as a dependable, noble man with a firm grasp of the duties and responsibilities

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66 Moore and Fraser, Campaign for President, 144.
69 Greenberg, Nixon’s Shadow, xix-xx
70 Moore and Fraser, Campaign for President, 141-143.
of the president. Cheery music, smiling faces and images of Ford making presidential decisions in the Oval Office and in his presidential limo underscored the campaign’s desire to inject a personal touch into the race for leadership. This strategy depended on a vast reformation of Ford’s public image. While the media campaign on this front was aggressive, the public side of the strategy saw Ford stepping back from anti-Carter campaign stumps and generally sticking fast to his central theme of reelection as redemption. An especially notable ad was the October spot, “Man on the Street – Democrats,” in which nominally Democratic Atlanta residents told an unseen interviewer that Ford has shifted their support away from their former governor. This ad embodied many of the Ford campaign themes—Ford’s competency and universal appeal, Carter’s questionable ability to lead and tendencies to alienate people—all the while avoiding direct personal attacks by Ford himself. Under a different President, many of these concepts and strategies would resurface in an election four years later.

A Symbolic Presidency and A Failed Mandate

With 50.1 percent of the vote to Ford’s 48.0 percent, Carter managed to squeak by to victory in the low-turnout 1976 election. He pledged to govern with an eye for the common man and the betterment of all, but his four years in office managed to hurt his public image just as much as it had mixed effects on the lives of the American electorate that had hesitantly placed him in office. Members of Carter’s administration often called for a “symbolic” Presidency filled with orchestrated acts of inflated importance as a way of carrying the themes of the 1976 election into the White House. Emphasizing humility, decency and honesty in acts as varied as walking down Pennsylvania Avenue in the Inaugural campaign and eliminating the traditional “Hail to Chief” musical greeting of the president, Carter’s administration worked hard to cement its campaign rhetoric in concrete physical and symbolic gestures. But by late 1979 and into 1980, the only national themes readily apparent were general malaise, economic uncertainty, and foreign policy disaster. Carter ran into image issues early on in his presidency—polls showed that the public failed to grant the new president the traditional “halo effect” of warm feelings after an election, giving his term an immediate air of uncertain expectancy. By running as an outsider in 1976, Carter had already set himself up for a difficult

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72 Witcover, Marathon, 533-535.
74 Witcover, Marathon, 643.
77 Germond and Witcover, Blue Smoke and Mirrors, 23-24.
presidency. In his campaign, Carter hesitated to assume leadership of the national Democratic Party during the primaries, reluctantly cloaking himself in the industrial labor union/urban minority coalition of that same party once he won the nomination and thereby muddling his already complicated image. Once in office, Carter’s continuing status as an outsider (genuine or not) made passing legislation a constant struggle.

While enviable desirable as a campaign theme, the role of the outsider in politics became a liability once the election was over and real governing began. For Carter, the careful manipulation of his party affiliation in his campaign efforts allowed him to ride an anti-Washington populist wave to electoral victory. This strategy did not endear Carter the President to the Democratic House and Senate that he inherited in 1976. Indeed, the Democratic Party’s kingmakers and leaders—men like House Speaker Tip O’Neill and Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy—were deeply suspicious of Carter and his out-of-nowhere rise to the White House. Kennedy’s scrappy, nearly successful effort for the Democratic nomination on the strength of his progressive purity message typified Carter’s relationship with the Democratic machine. Most importantly for Carter, who used his populist outsider character to great benefit in 1976, it would be impossible for an incumbent President to run as an outsider again after a four-year record in office, even as his stalled legislative agenda continued to suggest his alienation from his own party. A posthumous analysis of the Carter administration’s legislative record by a policy analyst suggested that the President’s staff were “fine human beings who simply do not know the territory...whose goals may have been noble and worthy [but] floundered for lack of capability in ‘working the hill.’” This inability to cope with the challenges of governing a pluralistic Congress would come back to harm Carter in the election of 1980.

The Aftermath and Beyond: A Conclusion

On election day 1980, Reagan took 44 states and nearly 51% of the popular vote, sweeping to victory on what many called a mandate for change. Ultimately, the election was seen as a repudiation of the Carter administration’s failures. But in two election cycles filled with conflicting and influential imagery, Carter’s inability to carry a single, winning public visual element through his first term as President and into his botched reelection efforts certainly hindered his ability to effectively govern or campaign. Carter the hopeful symbol promised many things to many people—

78 Moore and Fraser, Campaign for President, 6.
79 Drew, “Phase: In Search of a Definition,” 73.
82 Ibid., 5.
83 Jerry Roschwalb, “Grading the Incumbent,” Change 12, no. 6 (1980), 44.
84 Dover, Presidential Elections in the Television Age, 165-166.
honest government, reform of Party politics, affordable energy, and a safer and more just world for all. The incoherent shifts he made to his symbolic image throughout his national political career are likely one of a few key causes that truncated his Presidency.

Just as television created and nurtured Jimmy Carter the candidate, so too did it foster a growing depreciation of his national value. It is of course pure supposition to consider how Carter the consistent candidate might have changed his political fortune; perhaps by acknowledging his own political advisers in 1976 and 1980, he would have won a resounding victory in both cycles. Carter’s campaign staff showed a real knack for honest assessment of their candidate. In 1976, Rafshoon correctly pointed out Carter’s national overexposure, and in 1980 he and Caddell pushed for a cautious and strategic reelection effort. Their limited recognition and incorporation of selected elements of the Ford campaign strategies was occasionally helpful, but movement towards the strategies that harmed Ford ended up being just as harmful to Carter. Perhaps Carter, by pushing onwards in both cycles in his own decisive and independent fashion, was staying true to his personal vision even as he warped and ruined the image his handlers had carefully helped him craft.

In his defense of the *Playboy* interview, Carter admitted his lack of judgment in appearing in a publicly questionable publication, but refused to retract his words. Carter’s His image followed a similar pattern. It may well be the medium and not the message that ended Carter’s Presidential career. Molded in the quick-fire format of modern television campaigning, Carter ultimately destroyed his image and reelection.
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“Putting Off Her Womanly Weakness”: Wives and Mothers among Dutch Anabaptist Martyrs

Laura King

*The Randolph Stone Award for Historical Writing* is given in honor of the first teacher of English history at Ohio University to promote and reward excellence in the writing of history. These awards are made annually for the best undergraduate term papers on historical topics. There are two categories: research papers and short essays. The following paper is the 2010 winner of the historical research category.

The centrality of martyrdom in sixteenth-century Dutch Anabaptism had a profound effect on all those who joined the movement and created conflict for Anabaptist women whose commitment to the church competed with their domestic duties. Women’s opportunities in the sixteenth-century centered on the household, and both mainstream Protestants and the more radical Anabaptists encouraged women to fulfill their duties as wives and mothers according to a biblical model. Anabaptist spiritual life centered on the community of believers, however, and the primacy of the church often superseded the domestic duties of women who became martyrs for the faith. These women struggled to reconcile their spiritual commitments to the church with their “ordained” roles as wives and mothers. Anabaptism emerged as a radical reform movement in Switzerland in 1525, and quickly spread to southern and northern German states, Austria, and the Netherlands. Like mainstream Protestants, Anabaptists preached the sole authority of scripture and salvation through faith. Anabaptists also insisted on adult baptism, or “baptism of believers” (“believers’ baptism”), based on the idea that the community should only consist of a disciplined group of individuals who had voluntarily committed their lives to Christ. Other Protestant sects and Catholics believed that baptism was necessary for salvation and feared that delaying baptism could imperil the lives of infants. Because Anabaptists believed that baptism represented repentance and a voluntary separation from the world, they opposed infant baptism. As a result,

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Anabaptists were heavily persecuted during the sixteenth-century and into the seventeenth by both other Protestants and Catholics.\(^1\)

Anabaptists were thus considered radical, even more so due to the development of a cult of martyrdom under the leadership of Menno Simons. Dutch Anabaptists created a martyrlogical identity, which characterized the movement from the late 1530s to the end of the sixteenth-century. Simon’s theology centered on the belief that the “righteous have always been offscourings and a prey to the unrighteous,” and he traced the martyrlogical heritage of the Anabaptists to the time of the early church.\(^2\) Believing that “persecution was a sign with which Christ marked his congregation,” sixteenth-century Mennonites recognized a dichotomy between the persecuted “true church” and the “people of the devil” who persecuted them.\(^3\) Therefore, “executions were…confirmation of the very meaning of being Christian,” and constituted a significant part of the Anabaptists’ identity as the “true” church of Christ.\(^4\)

Because of the importance of martyrdom, commitment to the Anabaptist faith had profound implications for the individual believer. According to Cornelius Dyck, “the possibility of martyrdom had a radical impact on all who joined the group on their priorities, status, and self-consciousness. Becoming an Anabaptist was the most radical religious and social commitment a person could make.”\(^5\) While other Protestant reformers emphasized personal faith, for Anabaptists, the church as a community of believers was primary. According to historians C. Arnold Snyder and Linda Huebert Hecht, the Anabaptist movement was not a reform of society, but a reform of the church, the “calling of individual women and men ‘out of the world’ and into the ‘true church.’”\(^6\) Temporal matters, including familial relationships, all came secondary to one’s obligation to the church as a spiritual body. In his treatise on martyrdom, Anabaptist leader Menno Simons states, “any man who is not ready for this hated and scorned life of sorrow, and who does not hate father and mother, son and daughter, husband and wife…cannot be the Lord’s disciple.”\(^7\) Because of this theologically-driven view of social interactions, members of the Anabaptist community, especially women, were faced with difficult choices as their commitment to the church superseded all familial relationships.

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1 C. Arnold Snyder, Anabaptist History and Theology: Revised Student Edition (Kitchener, ON: Pandora, 1997), 5.
3 Ibid., 224.
7 Simons, The Complete Writings of Menno Simons, 583.
Historians of Anabaptism have sought to define women’s roles and opportunities in sixteenth-century Anabaptist society, several emphasizing the increased opportunities for women relative to other sixteenth-century reform movements. Snyder and Hecht argue that women had wider individual choice and greater opportunities in Anabaptism because of the “informal leadership roles” available to them as writers of hymns, teachers, and martyrs. Harold S. Bender similarly argues that Anabaptism provided new perspectives on the role of women on account of its emphases on voluntary membership, adult baptism, and personal commitment. George Williams maintains that women served as peers and companions in the “fellowship of believers” by dying as martyrs alongside men. Focusing on the impact of the Reformation on the family, Roland Bainton suggests that the home became the “arena for exemplification of Christian virtue,” and that family formed the basic unit of society. According to Bainton and these other authors, the increased importance of family life marked a movement toward equality, as women took on a spiritual leadership role within the family.  

Other historians deny that Anabaptism provided women with the same opportunities as men, arguing instead that although the Anabaptist reformers preached the “priesthood of all believers,” and both men and women practiced martyrdom, no fundamental change took place in women’s status in society. Despite the “new perspectives” on Anabaptist women, Bender notes that “after the creative period of Anabaptism was past,” Anabaptist societies adopted the patriarchal attitudes characteristic of sixteenth-century society, and the participation of women decreased. Joyce Irwin states that spiritual equality did not necessitate social equality, and that while a “subordinate role could bring recognition” to a woman through martyrdom, the attitudes toward women confirmed the status quo of the sixteenth-century. Likewise, Miriam Chrisman argues that the emphasis on marriage as an ideal made women “partners in pursuit of the Christian life” but subordinate to men in society and the church.  

The writings of Anabaptist community leaders prescribe proper behavior for the Dutch Anabaptist communities and suggest patriarchal attitudes toward women. They express the relative importance of martyrdom in the lives of Anabaptists by presenting it as a central component of their theology. Thieleman van Braght’s *Martyrs Mirror* describes the persecution and execution of thousands of Anabaptists between 1525 and 1660. It includes various chronicles, memorials, and testimonies of martyrs, as well as prison letters written by husbands and wives that give insight

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into the spousal relationships of martyrs. Hermina Joldersma and Louis Grijp present a collection of hymns, letters, and testaments produced by female Anabaptist martyrs in the Low Countries. Testaments written from martyred mothers to their children reveal the tension between the spiritual commitment of Anabaptist women and their compliance with the social order of the community.

This evidence suggests that while Anabaptist attitudes toward women generally confirmed the patriarchal social order of the sixteenth-century, female martyrs often digressed from their prescribed roles by becoming martyrs. This paper will focus on the tension between the establishment of a patriarchal society suggested by Bender, Irwin, and Chrisman, and the broadened perspectives regarding women resulting from their roles as martyrs. How did the spiritual commitments of female martyrs as members of the fellowship of believers coincide with the centrality of family life? Did the loyalties of Anabaptist women lie foremost with the church, or did their domestic duties discourage martyrdom and active participation in the church? This paper will analyze the impact of martyrdom on the roles of women in their prescribed roles of wife and mother, focusing on the tension between maintaining the status quo and forsaking the social order for the community of believers.

Because the commitment to the church superseded all “earthly” commitments, the decision of a woman to become an Anabaptist was particularly radical, for it meant not only forsaking her life, but also her ordained role as a wife and mother. The spiritual life of Dutch Anabaptism centered on the community of believers, and Anabaptist leaders taught that suffering marked the “true church” of Christ. The relationship between husbands and wives became characterized primarily by their identities as “brothers and sisters” in the church. Women who became martyrs and could no longer provide for the material needs of their children emphasized their role as spiritual leaders and examples to their children. Therefore, the nature of women’s roles as wives and mothers adapted according to their faith, and the spiritual aspects of their relationships superseded their fleshly bonds.

The Protestant reform movement broke from Catholicism and opposed the teachings of the Catholic Church, which they believed were not biblically based. They endeavored to return to an earlier, more pure form of Christianity, and preached *sola scriptura*, the doctrine that the Bible contained all knowledge necessary for salvation and holiness. Protestant reformers in the sixteenth-century consequently established patriarchal societies based on the authority of scripture. Protestant reformers denied the scriptural basis of the traditional Catholic view of sacramental marriage and redefined the nature of marriage in primarily physical terms for the perpetuation of the species and channeling the sex drive.¹⁰ Martin Luther, for example, opposed the Catholic virtue of celibacy, and advocated marriage “in order

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to produce offspring, for that is the chief duty of marriage.”

Marriage within Protestantism, therefore, served as “an ideal state in which Christians could exercise their faith without ignoring their created, sexual natures,” and thereby ceased to signify a “life-long spiritual union of two persons.” Thus, Protestant leaders encouraged marriage as a temporal arrangement, without a significant spiritual component.

Reformers generally restricted the duties of women to the household, and women expressed their religious convictions in a domestic setting, where they provided religious instruction for their children. According to Luther, “God created her body to be with a man, bear children and raise them.” He reasoned that “men have broad chests and narrow hips; therefore they have wisdom. Women have narrow chest and broad hips. Women ought to be domestic; the creation reveals it, for they have broad backsides and hips, so that they should sit still.” Thus, men expressed their faith in public roles, actively participating in church leadership and ministry, whereas women’s opportunities remained limited to the private, domestic sphere.

The advent of martyrdom within Anabaptism introduced new perspectives on the “proper” role of women. Anabaptist reformers preached that all believers should “forsake all fleshly bonds” and “take up their cross” in the tradition of Christ and his Apostles. The spiritual calling of Anabaptist women challenged traditional gender divisions in the church and in the household, and women who had previously had a limited public role were welcomed as “sisters” in the fellowship of believers and peers in faith. The nature of marriage, therefore, changed in accordance with the primacy of the community of believers, and spiritual matters ultimately took precedence over temporal relationships.

Unlike Protestant movements in which the household constituted the primary unit of church and society, the Anabaptists preached that the church was primary and took precedence even possibly over the domestic lives of believers. Before 1540 David Joris spearheaded the Anabaptist movement in the Netherlands, emphasizing the spiritual relationships of members of the church over their temporal relationships. By the 1540s, Menno Simons had emerged as the most influential leader in Dutch Anabaptism. His theology focused on separation from the world, and the importance he placed on non-resistance and martyrdom sustained the movement in its most troublesome days of persecution.

The importance of separatism and martyrdom in Anabaptist theology established the institution of marriage as secondary to the spiritual calling of martyrs,

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12 Safley in Marr, “Anabaptist Women of the North,” 351.
14 Luther, *Luther on Women*, 141.
15 Ibid., 28.
and Simons maintained that “anyone who has no need for this [marriage], and who can maintain himself pure and undefiled in a state of virginity in order to serve the Lord better and without hindrance, is even more highly praised.” For Anabaptists who chose to marry, spousal relationships fell under the domain of the church, and Anabaptists submitted the question of their union to “God’s will.” In letters written from prison, husbands and wives addressed each other as “chosen,” and “my dear husband in the Lord, whom I married before God and His church.” The Thirty-Three Articles of the Faith written in 1617 stated that Anabaptists must not “bind themselves in marriage with those who have not been reborn and in this way take on a strange yolk with unbelievers who are not regarded as brothers or sisters by the church, through the faith and Christian baptism in the fellowship.” Thus, the identities of Anabaptists as peers in the faith formed the foundation of their relationship in the church as well as in the institution of marriage.

Both men and women were imprisoned and persecuted for their faith, and spouses who became martyrs wrote letters from prison offering each other mutual support, often emphasizing their spiritual bond. Therefore, while they forsook all “carnal” relationships, they continued to support each other as husband and wife. Jerome Segers wrote to his wife Lijsken from prison, “I thank you, O my love, for all your pure love and sincere friendship, and I also thank you much for the sleeves you made me…one friend helps the other in time of need, but much more yet husband and wife.” In response to the reality of persecution, the nature of marriage became primarily spiritual in nature, and husband and wife became first and foremost “brothers and sisters” in the church. Because the Anabaptists viewed the church as one body suffering at the hands of the world, their familial relationships became secondary to the bonds of the church, for “in this struggle, the Anabaptists did not contend on their own. They did so as members of the church, the ‘brotherhood.’”

By suffering as members of the “true church,” women became spiritual equals to men. Anabaptists emphasized the work of the Spirit in enabling women to serve as martyrs. David Joris instructed “female warriors” to “fight knowledgeably against the cursed, crooked, sly serpent which has deceived and beaten you.” He thus encouraged women to diverge from their traditional roles, and instructed them to “no longer be children nor women but be like men, and men like angels...Therefore,

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19 Koop, _Confessions of Faith in the Anabaptist Tradition 1527-1660_, 238.
20 Van Braght, _The Bloody Theater_, 958.
pray for wisdom, knowledge and understanding.” The martyr Jerome Segers encouraged his wife to become a martyr, writing that “I should be an example unto you, and...you may follow me as valiantly as I, through the grace of the Lord, who has made us both worthy to suffer for his name.” Claudine, then, an Anabaptist martyr, “having put off her womanly weakness, and in place of it, by the grace of God, received through illumination of the Holy Spirit in her heart a manly courage...a memorable example to all followers of Christ.” Anabaptist women were thus admired for their spiritual leadership as martyrs, and established a spiritual ideal for women that extended beyond the realm of the household.

The spiritual calling of Anabaptist women as members of the community of believers often superseded their duties as wives. Lijsken Segers, the wife of martyr Jerome Segers, wrote to her husband from prison that the authorities asked of her “why do you trouble yourself with the Scriptures? Attend to your sewing.” Her husband Jerome responded, “though they may tell you to attend to your sewing, this does not prevent us: for Christ has called us all, and commended us to search the Scriptures, since they testify of Him.” In sixteenth-century society, women’s knowledge of scripture was relegated to the household, where they instructed their children according to the Bible. Yet female Anabaptist martyrs proved themselves to be knowledgeable in theology, expressing their faith publicly, for “Lijsken clearly confessed and explained the grounds of her faith to the people.” In interrogations of martyrs, women argued complicated theological concepts and demonstrated a thorough knowledge of scripture. One Anabaptist woman’s husband “often said of his wife that it was astonishing how well she was versed in scriptures. For whenever he could not find a passage, he would ask his wife Claudine, who would at once clearly indicate to him what he sought.” Anabaptist women therefore began to express their religion publicly, adhering to a spiritual model that superseded the limitations of their prescribed domestic role.

Paradoxically, Anabaptist reformers in the Netherlands shared the view that the proper place of women was within the household, where they remained subservient to their husbands. David Joris emphasized the spiritual bond between husband and wife, thereby distinguishing Anabaptism from mainstream reform movements in which sexuality and reproduction were the primary functions of marriage, yet he did not suggest that men and women had equal status. He advocated male leadership, arguing that “the wife must be one with her husband and not the husband with the wife...Therefore the wife should listen to her husband, and she

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23 Van Braght, The Bloody Theater, 520.
25 Ibid., 515-516.
26 Ibid.
27 Weisner, Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe, 227.
28 Van Braght, The Bloody Theater, 737.
must follow him. If he follows her, he castrates himself and loses his beard.”

Thus, although Joris introduced a spiritual element to the relationship of husbands and wives within Anabaptism, his attitude toward women complied with the patriarchal nature of mainstream society in the sixteenth-century.

According to Snyder and Huebert Hecht, Anabaptism under the leadership of Menno Simons became a “steady movement away from spiritual legitimation, to increasing reliance on literal Scripture as providing the ‘rule of life’ for the Body of Christ on earth.” Like other Protestant reformers who preached “biblical submission,” Anabaptists accredited women with the origin of man’s sinful nature, and as the “weaker” vessel, “she must consider her will an abomination and completely disregard it, so that she will not again soften the man, nor rob him of his honor and love.” Anabaptists instructed women to “bear with all modesty your husbands, whom the Lord and His church have given you, that you should live with them in all subjection and obedience.” Thus, the prescribed domestic duties of women became part of creating a “true church” theology in Anabaptist communities.

Because Dutch Anabaptists limited women’s responsibilities to the household, women did not play an active public role in the institution of the church. In 1551, a Dutch Anabaptist woman wrote to Menno Simons on behalf of her husband, who had been ordained an elder. Fearing for her husband’s life, she requested that Simons release him of his duty. Simon replied that “the church…has called him to this service,” and instructed her to “strengthen your husband and do not weaken him.” This letter indicates that Anabaptists did not expect women to join their husbands in ministry, but rather to support their husbands from home. In a treatise on Christian discipleship, Simons instructed women to “attend with discreet prudence to your office, and into which you are placed by the Lord, that you be obedient to your husbands…and bring up your children in such a manner that you can account for it before God.” Women’s roles within Anabaptism, therefore, remained primarily centered on their roles as wives and mothers.

Reformed societies in the sixteenth-century preached that the role of women centered on the household, and most importantly, on the nurture of children. Even though Anabaptists committed themselves primarily to the community of believers, the proper care and discipline of children constituted a crucial part in the formation of the Christian church. In his treatise on the nurturing of children, Simons commands Anabaptists to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” because they are “by nature born of our flesh and blood, and are so solemnly committed to our special care by God.” Like marriage, the duty of childrearing

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34 Ibid., 695.
35 Ibid., 950.
36 Ibid.
became a divinely ordained role for women. Because of the “sinful” nature of children, Anabaptist parents had the responsibility of disciplining them according to the commandments of God, and thus became responsible for their spiritual, as well as temporal, well-being.

Despite the importance of proper Christian parentage in Anabaptist communities, the supremacy of the church in the lives of Anabaptist women often led them to forsake their commitment to their children. In a testament written to his wife, John Claess instructs her to “bring up my children, in all good instruction,” yet he warns her to “love neither yourself nor your children more than the Lord and his testimony…whatever you do, forsake not the Lord for a little mess of pottage.”  

In a letter to the church, one martyr claims that “this is a carnal mind: to love father, mother, children, or aught that is of the world, more than God, or for their sakes to cease to follow the truth, or…because we have many children and have anxiety how we are to provide for them.” Despite the importance of motherhood in reformed communities, Anabaptist martyrs distinguished the “carnal” care of their children from the “spiritual” call to martyrdom.

When faced with persecution, women were forced to abandon their duties as mothers, and often the authorities forced women to part with their children upon arrest. In the case of Claudine Le Vettre, who died in Flanders in 1568,

[T]hey endeavored to move her by her maternal love for her infant, which hitherto had been nourished at its mother’s breast in prison. The child therefore was taken from her and put out to a wet-nurse, which was the greatest affliction she suffered during her imprisonment, and on account of which she wept many a tear.

Upon her arrest, one woman “was very roughly handled, and cruelly bound, without the least mercy or compassion, though she was pregnant…But notwithstanding all this, they took her with them, though her little children cried and wept piteously.” Although the religious and political authorities may have expected Anabaptist women to fulfill their duties as mothers, according to societal expectations, Anabaptist martyrs considered the loss of their children part of the cost of their discipleship.

According to John Klassen, “the impact of their parents’ choice of faith could be economically and psychologically shattering to youth.” Orphaned children of Anabaptists faced abandonment and poverty as a result of their parents’ decision to become martyrs. The children of Andrew Claessen “had to wander about in poverty and misery, yet were supported by some kindly disposed persons, though not

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38 Ibid., 642.
39 Ibid., 737.
40 Ibid., 481.
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without peril.”⁴² Although mainstream reformers and Anabaptists alike were charged with the proper upbringing of children, the children of martyrs, 

[As] poor, forsaken orphans, were put out among strangers, which, as may easily be supposed, must have caused no small sorrow and anxiety to the hearts of these imprisoned parents: nevertheless they remained unchanged in their faith, refusing to apostatize therefrom, notwithstanding their love to their afflicted children.⁴³

By heeding the instructions of Anabaptists leaders to forsake the world, Anabaptist martyrs inevitably neglected to care for the temporal needs of their children.

Though failing to provide for material needs of their children, martyred Anabaptist women remained concerned with their spiritual edification. In a testament to her daughter, Janneken Munstorp wrote that “though I and your father are now taken from you, know that you have a Father in heaven, who will doubtless well provide for you.”⁴⁴ Just as they saw their suffering in terms of the will of God, Anabaptist martyrs “commended” their children to the will of God. Anneken of Rotterdam instructed her son to “flee the shadow of this world; become united with God; fear Him alone, keep His commandments, observe all His words.”⁴⁵ Similarly, in a testament to her children, Soetken van den Houte instructed her son to “guard yourself against bad companions and against playing with bad fellows in back alleys…Love one another without fighting or quarreling…obey the Commandments of the Lord.”⁴⁶ Thus, even as they died as martyrs, Anabaptist women remained concerned with the proper upbringing of their children within the church for which they were dying.

Martyred Anabaptist women did not deny their duty to bring up their children according to scripture. Rather, they saw suffering as an inevitable part of discipleship, which ultimately took precedence over their temporal roles as mothers. They believed that by becoming martyrs, they were “traveling the path of the Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs…the path…which Jesus Christ…himself and no one else traveled.”⁴⁷ In letters written to their children, martyred women encouraged their children to follow in their example. Mayken Boosers wrote, “I, your mother, hope to travel this road before you: note in what way, and in what manner, I go before you, and do not attend to the honor of this world, but consider it an honor to suffer for the name of our God.”⁴⁸ Similarly, Maeyken Wens instructed her children to “follow me in this if you, all of you, love your souls, for there is no other path to

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⁴² Van Braght, The Bloody Theater, 481.
⁴³ Ibid., 1111.
⁴⁴ Ibid., 984.
⁴⁵ Ibid., 454.
⁴⁷ Ibid., 65.
⁴⁸ Ibid., 177.
salvation than this one.” In the very act of martyrdom, Anabaptist women could instruct their children according to what they believed to be biblical truth.

Female Anabaptist martyrs did not directly challenge their roles as wives and mothers. Yet by committing themselves to the “true church of Christ,” they redefined their “ordained” roles according to the primacy of the church and their call to martyrdom. Anabaptists emphasized the spiritual bond between spouses, and wives became peers in faith by their commitment to the fellowship of believers. The role of Anabaptist women as mothers shifted in accordance with their “higher” calling to martyrdom, and because they forsook the “world,” they failed to provide for the physical needs of their children. Anabaptist women continued to value their identities as mothers, but by becoming martyrs, they altered the expression of their temporal responsibilities. Adapting their responsibilities as mothers to their faith commitments, they emphasized the spiritual betterment of their children. By instructing their children in the “way of the Lord,” and leading their children by their “godly” example, Anabaptist women expressed their commitment to the church as well as to their family.

Anabaptism differed from other Protestant movements by providing opportunities for women outside of the private sphere of the household. The centrality of martyrdom in Anabaptist theology, which resulted from their persecuted status, set new parameters for the role of women within Anabaptist society, granting them increased spiritual status as “sisters” in the church. Yet while the radical nature of martyrdom forced Anabaptist women to practice their faith publicly and assume new responsibilities, formal leadership roles in the church remained limited to men. Ultimately, the establishment of a church institution based on scripture confirmed women’s subservient role in marriage and in the institution of the church.

The conflicting expectations of Anabaptist women in the sixteenth-century reveal the paradox inherent in the creation of a church founded on martyrdom. Like mainstream Protestants, Anabaptists based their faith on scripture and valued familial relationships. The persecution of the Anabaptists, however, shifted the focus of their theology, and the nature of their “earthly” relationships changed accordingly. Whereas mainstream Protestant movements focused on establishing permanent, institutionalized societies centered on the household, the threat of persecution caused Anabaptists to focus on spiritual rather than temporal relationships. Because spouses became foremost “brothers and sisters” in the church, women digressed from their subservient role within the household. Similarly, the expectations of Anabaptist mothers shifted in order to allow women to forsake their “worldly” relationships and practice their faith.

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49 Ibid., 189.
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