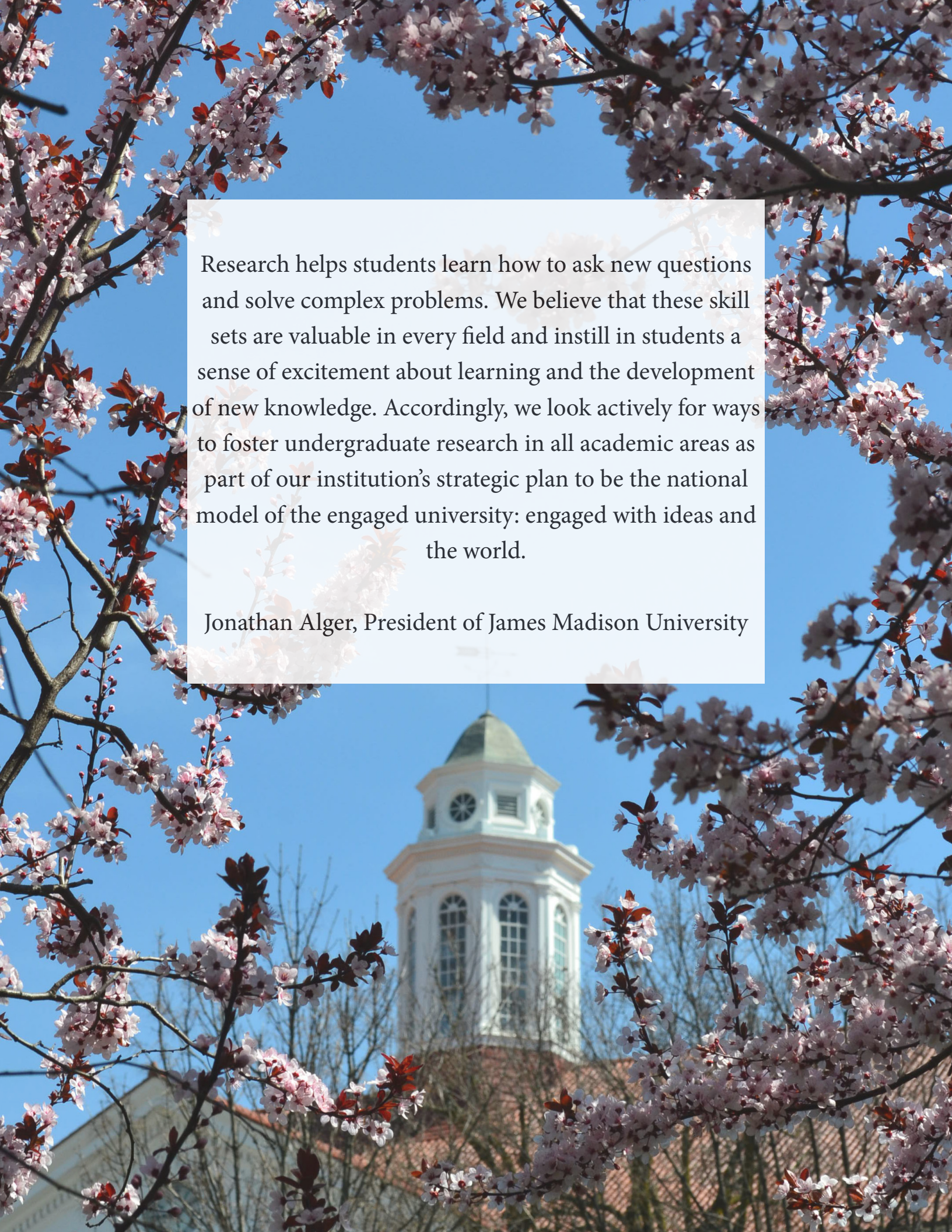




# **JAMES MADISON** **UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH JOURNAL**

Volume Four 2016-2017





Research helps students learn how to ask new questions and solve complex problems. We believe that these skill sets are valuable in every field and instill in students a sense of excitement about learning and the development of new knowledge. Accordingly, we look actively for ways to foster undergraduate research in all academic areas as part of our institution's strategic plan to be the national model of the engaged university: engaged with ideas and the world.

Jonathan Alger, President of James Madison University

# James Madison Undergraduate Research Journal

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Reader,

We are proud to present Volume Four of the James Madison Undergraduate Research Journal.

This volume features six submissions by five students from four JMU undergraduate disciplines. It represents the diversity of undergraduate research that exists here on campus, showcasing work from areas such as Film Studies, Architectural Design, and Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication. Our first multimedia submission, which appears both here in print and online through Atavist, is also included in Volume Four.

Our design team worked tirelessly to reconstruct our brand, complete with a new logo and document design. Additionally, they crafted the new “Call for Submissions” poster that appears on the back inside cover of this volume. Remaining active on Facebook, the design team also hosted JMURJ’s second photography contest. Christina Telep’s winning photograph appears on the front cover of this volume.

Beyond the journal, the JMURJ Editorial Board consisted of 22 members from 12 different majors and 12 other minors, which is the largest team we’ve ever had. To accommodate so many editors, we found a new home this past spring in an EPIC classroom on the fourth floor of the Student Success Center. The updated space allowed us to engage with new technologies (wall-mounted monitors and HDMI connections at every table) and encouraged more opportunities for collaboration.

We’d like to extend a special thank you to the JMU faculty members, administrators, and administrative assistants who have provided us continuous support throughout the years. The Editorial Board is incredibly proud to have worked alongside such individuals to create a volume that truly represents the time and hard work that we’ve put into completing it. We are excited to continue growing in the years to come and are pleased to have you, the reader, along for the journey.

All the best,

The *JMURJ* Editorial Board

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Thanks to the Office of Research and Scholarship for their encouragement and assistance in outreach, endorsements, and material support: Dr. Yvonne Harris, Vice Provost; Ms. Becky Rohlf, Fiscal Technician; and Mr. Ben Delp, Director of Research Development and Promotion. Thanks are also due to Dr. Brad Newcomer, Dr. Phil Frana, Mr. Jared Diener, and Ms. Tammy Steele and Ms. Dianne Fulk of the JMU Honors College for their enduring interest in the journal's success. Dr. Traci Zimmerman, Director of Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication, has been a longtime advocate, offering logistical and curricular support. Ms. Laura Drake Davis, Digital Collections Librarian, has helped us over the past three years to publish our work on JMU's Scholarly Commons. Finally, we thank President Jonathan Alger, whose insights into undergraduate research begin this volume.



# ***TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD, THE HELP, AND THE REGENERATING OF THE WHITE SAVIOR***

**BRETT SEEKFORD**



*Filmmakers continue to use the “White Savior “ archetype to construct racialized messages in the post-Civil Rights era. These protagonists, who resolutely defend the rights of African Americans, ultimately focalize whiteness and marginalize black characters and voices. Though a white savior features prominently in both To Kill a Mockingbird (1962) and The Help (2011), The Help’s regendering of the archetype invites viewers to imagine a world in which a white savior is no longer necessary. The Help’s update on the white savior trope from Atticus Finch to Skeeter Phelan allows for deeper development of black characters and a different ending, and creates opportunities for a further shift in filmic protagonists.*

**ABSTRACT**

The white savior has been a common trope in many films featuring African American characters. These men and women, through acts of benevolent courage, bring the issues and concerns of black characters to the fore and consequently serve as their advocates. In essence, they make black characters palatable or sympathetic to a white audience. While numerous filmic analyses note the recycling of the white savior, these studies pay little attention to the role gender plays in the construction of this hero figure. *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962) and *The Help* (2011), almost fifty years removed from each other, illuminate the evolution of this character by drawing on stereotypical assumptions of gender. This phenomenon of popular culture has taken many forms in its approach to racial politics, but the filmic discourse of the white savior has at least partially shifted, with the introduction of a female archetype, from one of male logic and reason to one focused on female emotion and sentimentality. *To Kill a Mockingbird's* Atticus Finch, a lawyer defending Tom Robinson from false allegations of raping a white woman, embodies the model white savior. *The Help's* creation of Eugenia "Skeeter" Phelan alters this trope by presenting a female perspective, projecting a niceness that characterizes African Americans in a way that Atticus's distance from them prevents. Antagonistic racist foils to the saviors further place the focus on white characters in each film, pitting differing gender performances against one another while cementing the stereotypical qualities defining Atticus and Skeeter. Although both films employ a white savior who ultimately emphasizes whiteness and "others" black characters, *The Help's* Skeeter goes further than *To Kill a Mockingbird's* Atticus by giving voice to Aibileen and Minny, the two central black characters, through a female sensibility.

*These men and women, through  
acts of benevolent courage,  
bring the issues and concerns  
of black characters to the fore.*

The construction of Atticus as an archetype exemplifies a struggle between competing brands of Southern masculinity that ultimately creates spaces for the advent of a female hero. In *Southern Masculinity: Perspectives on Manhood in the South since Reconstruction*, Craig Thompson Friend describes the formation of a virile masculinity that came out of Reconstruction and extended into the future. Detailing the distinction between masculinity—a term associated with white middle-class privilege and manhood ascribed to uncivilized African Americans and other people of color—Friend details the essence of an emergent masculinity in the twentieth

century: "'Manhood,' then, meant courage, valor, virility, honor, and every other noun and adjective that characterized Robert E. Lee and could be applied to any man to indicate that he was morally or physically equal to all and superior to most other men" (xv). Masculinity came to be associated with a sense of violence and a fierce insistence on the virtues of a Southern upbringing. Atticus Finch, however, departed from these teachings to found a more compassionate iteration of manhood.

*The Help modifies this formula in  
constructing Skeeter Phelan, a young  
woman whose close connections to  
black women in Mississippi  
lead her to serve as their advocate.*

The earlier brand of virility, founded on notions of Southern pride and hostility, stood opposed by a white liberal understanding of what it meant to be a man in the South. Dissatisfied Southerners concocted their own form of masculinity, carving out spaces for themselves in the region as socialist William Raoul did: "Raoul's story highlights an upper-class man who sought commonality with regional lower classes. He shaped his manliness within the context of an emerging southern liberalism that argued for social responsibility even as it maintained racial and gendered structures of regional life" (Friend xv). *Mockingbird's* Atticus Finch aligns with this liberal masculinity that seeks out justice while the film's antagonist, Bob Ewell, falls into the earlier, more aggressive brand of masculinity. Atticus's own brand of masculinity ultimately triumphs, suggesting a more compassionate, reasonable manhood will govern the South in the future. Gender, as a social construction, naturally creates binaries; therefore, because the film portrays a just and reasonable masculinity that prevails in Atticus's character, a more sentimental and emotional counterpart is necessary to supplement his manhood. *The Help* modifies this formula in constructing Skeeter Phelan, a young woman whose close connections to black women in Mississippi lead her to serve as their advocate. The historical evolution of Southern masculinity, imagined by the creators of *To Kill a Mockingbird* as one in which the noble gentleman is victorious, creates a space for a distinguished white female savior in future films.

While Atticus embodies the traditional understanding of the American man, *The Help's* Skeeter mirrors the filmic interpretation of Jean Louise "Scout" Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Gregory Jay details the connotation still associated with Atticus Finch, positing that his

personality is in keeping with a history of masculinity opposed to traditional femininity:

That eloquent performance reinforced [Peck's] character's claims to the status of representative American man, an idealized embodiment of white male normativity updated for modern liberalism but still rooted firmly in the tradition of the founding fathers and of Transcendentalism's allegiance to higher laws. (488)

Atticus's daughter Scout, however, does not embody feminine ideals. Scout's family repeatedly treats her tomboyish behavior as a phase, but her symbolic viewing of her father in the courtroom, watching from the black balcony, allies her with minority groups. Jay further argues that Scout's treatment of Boo Radley at the film's end indicates her own desire to suppress her queerness: "Scout remains at liberty, but, as I have suggested, that freedom depends on projecting the condition of the closet, along with its shame, loneliness, and stigmatizing, onto Mayella and Boo" (519). Scout's occasionally masculine traits relegate her to the margins, granting her a lens of isolation through which she sees the world.

*The Help* similarly fashions Skeeter as a woman whose ostracism informs her worldview. Shana Russell explains Skeeter's racial awakening: "Her position as a marginal figure in the community of women—due to her awkwardness, her education, and her inability (or refusal) to marry—transforms into a willingness to challenge, even in secret, the racial dynamics of Jackson" (75). Skeeter seems to be an extension of the Southern outsider embodied by Scout. Because she does not conform to traditional gender norms, Skeeter can defy the pervasive racism that defines Mississippi in the 1960s. Her embrace of her outsider status forces her to evaluate social conventions and, consequently, leads her to reject gender and racial norms. The criticisms Skeeter receives for her gendered choices lead to a feeling of shared struggle that allows her to ally herself with African Americans. Skeeter, reminiscent of Scout, exemplifies a slightly atypical femininity that positions her to assume the white savior mantle already granted to Atticus because of his privileged manhood.

*Because she does not conform to traditional gender norms, Skeeter can defy the pervasive racism that defines Mississippi in the 1960s.*

The first scene of each film exposes viewers to the level of intimacy they can expect as the films progress. A young Jean Louise "Scout" Finch stands on her porch as a poor

man, Walter Cunningham, Sr., ambles up their driveway to repay Atticus in food for his work. *The Help* begins in the home of Aibileen Clark, a black domestic worker who is participating in an interview for a book Skeeter is writing about the lives of women like Aibileen. The films' similar openings expose the different approaches that the white protagonists adopt in grappling with the thorny issues of segregation and racism. The porch of the Finch home is a safe space where the dangers of the world cannot harm their family. Rachel Watson explains the importance of the porch's parameters: "As an in-between space, the porch ensures this safety by conveying the proper limits of sympathetic access, and the social good to be gained from respecting such limits" (438). The black houses in *The Help*, however, create a space that fosters interracial bonds between black women and their eventual white savior. As Russell argues, Skeeter's trespassing of racial boundaries allows the film to ignore the white protagonist's privilege and power in these settings:

Skeeter returns from Ole Miss on the outskirts of her own social circle, naturalizing the intimate bond she develops with Aibileen and Minny, one that obfuscates the dynamics of privilege between them as though her antiracism is a natural extension of her feminist awakening. (76)

The black home allows the women to cultivate an intimacy necessary for an interracial sisterhood to develop. The differences in black-white relations play out as the plots of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Help* develop. The opening scenes set the tone for the racial dynamics as the films move forward.

The distance or closeness created through the white saviors' relations with African Americans indicates the necessary establishment of differences when employing a female hero. For instance, viewers never see Atticus enter Tom's home; they only see him stand on the black family's porch through Jem's point of view as Atticus gains insight into his case. Watson substantiates the argument that the porch divides between the worlds of whiteness and blackness:

The film's repeated spatial logic of the porch thereby creates a fantasy place/position from which one can employ a homogenizing notion of race as a way of sympathetically identifying with others: in effect, creating the illusion of moral sentiment while reinscribing the very racial ideology that such empathic imagining purports to fight. (437)

Despite Atticus's lecture to Scout about sympathizing with the plight of others near the beginning of the film, one never sees him sympathizing or relating personally to the black characters. The porch acts as a buffer



between the privileged world of whiteness that the Finch family inhabits and the inescapable world of degradation consuming the Robinsons. Atticus' rationality, a seeming byproduct of his masculinity, helps him avoid the need for a close-knit relationship with Tom.

*The Help*, on the other hand, places Skeeter in the segregated part of the city to fashion a plausible scenario where she can instill sisterly trust and confidence in her black sisters. The film repeatedly flashes back in time after the opening scene, and Skeeter quickly enters the black area of Jackson, Mississippi. The settings of these two films present another layer of contrast: Atticus never ingratiates himself in the black community while fighting vigorously in Tom's defense, whereas Skeeter's repeated appearances in the *other* part of the city lead Aibileen and the rest of the black community to accept her as their own. The scene where Skeeter enters Aibileen's house to find several black women waiting for her arrival demonstrates this phenomenon, as the women announce they are ready to contribute their stories to Skeeter's manuscript. While Aibileen expresses fear in having a white woman in her home, the black community's willingness to welcome Skeeter into their homes does not reflect historical reality, as civil rights scholar Luminita M. Dragulescu argues: "That black servants would allow a white mistress into the inner sanctum of the black community . . . particularly in a time and place when race relations were so tense, is a problematic premise" (20). But this acceptance is necessary to cultivate of a sisterhood that permits Skeeter both to find success and to assist black women in her community. Despite being historically erroneous, Skeeter's integration into the black community acts as a precursor to the emotional connections formed with black women which inform her sense of heroic duty. *The Help*, therefore, uses the space of the black home to foster an intimacy that makes Skeeter's acceptance believable while Atticus' place on the porch marks him as morally bound to justice but still separate.

*Atticus views Tom as a legal case rather than as a human with whom he can engage empathetically*

Personal relationships with black characters also distinguish Skeeter's female white savior archetype from that of Atticus. *To Kill a Mockingbird* includes a strange scene where Atticus shoots a rabid dog because it presents a threat to the community. This event seems to foreshadow Tom's eventual gunshot death after escaping police custody and running into the distance. These scenes, when read in conjunction, lead to the conclusion that Tom transforms into a danger to the white system of control—no longer evoking sympathy—and must be put

down like a mad dog. Atticus laments Tom's behavior after hearing of his death because he believed that an appeal offered the prospect of a more favorable hearing. In his review of the film, Roger Ebert argues Atticus's acceptance of the sheriff's explanation for Tom's death strains credibility due to his reputation for liberal reason: "That Scout could believe it happened just like this is credible. That Atticus Finch, an adult liberal resident of the Deep South in 1932, has no questions about this version is incredible." His comments reveal his allegiance lies with the law, not a belief in *racial* justice or equality. Consequently, Atticus views Tom as a legal case rather than as a human with whom he can engage empathically.

*Skeeter's crusade against racial injustice deepens as she bonds with the black women of Jackson.*

*The Help* reverses *To Kill a Mockingbird's* narrative of white male objectivity by including Constantine, the domestic worker in Skeeter's family home. Skeeter finds out that her mother fired Constantine, and this childhood connection serves as the foundation upon which Skeeter seeks to write the stories of "the help." Grounded in the common humanity she feels in response to the harrowing history of discrimination against African Americans in the South, Skeeter's crusade against racial injustice deepens as she bonds with the black women of Jackson. These intensely emotional relationships, with their origins in Constantine's love, serve as the impetus for her writing as she departs from the stoic distance employed by Atticus. This additional difference shows that a judicial rationale defines Atticus's ideology and informs his decision to defend Tom. Skeeter, on the other hand, comes to sympathize with the plight of women like Aibileen and Minny through her relationship with Constantine.

The whitewashing of black women in *The Help* acts as a form of stereotype that portrays them as objects of sympathy. The film places Constantine, Aibileen, and Minny into the stereotypical "mammy" role through their devotion to the children and families they serve. The prevailing image of the mammy casts black women as asexual, domineering women who take great joy in caring for white people and their children, often to the detriment of their own families. Micki McElya reveals one explanation for the reproduction of the mammy:

The myth of the faithful slave lingers because so many white Americans have wished to live in a world in which African Americans are not angry over past and present injustices, a world in which white people were and are not complicit, in which the injustices themselves—of slavery, Jim Crow,

and ongoing structural racism—seem not to exist at all. (3)

As Melissa Harris-Perry, a popular American writer and television show host, discussed on her eponymous network program, *The Help* strips black women of any semblance of racial politics to render them palatable to mainstream white audiences. In effect, the film pigeonholes black women to make them less threatening and therefore worthy of white audiences' sympathy. Once *The Help* places black women into this racial mold, white viewers become amenable to their stories.

The process of telling their stories falls to the misfit Skeeter, a white woman who bolsters her racial awareness by listening to these women's narratives. Dragulescu explains how the film constructs Skeeter so her ownership of black narratives is not overtly problematic, for her struggles become associated with the larger oppression of other societal outcasts:

A victim of trauma thus needs an ally: a sympathetic audience to help his or her narrative come through . . . Looking beyond Skeeter's goal to achieve her freedom by finding a journalistic position up North, at the risk of exposing her subjects, she is portrayed as an unlikely but sympathetic and involved listener. (21)

This feminine sympathy, coupled with the fact that she is saving the South's cherished mummies, separates her from the judicially minded Atticus, who defends a black character of little depth. Stereotypically gendered assumptions inform Skeeter's sympathy, establishing her as more emotional and sympathetic. Her interactions with Aibileen and Minny reveal these traits, while Atticus's male white savior archetype draws on rational and contemplative qualities often attributed to the masculine ideal.

*The racist foils for Atticus and Skeeter in the two films further display the gendered transformation of the white savior.*

The racist foils for Atticus and Skeeter in the two films further display the gendered transformation of the white savior. Two scenes in particular show how racist white characters like Bob Ewell in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Hilly Holbrook in *The Help* work to center the white savior figure while the concerns of blacks remain at least partly marginal; for instance, after the jury rules against Tom, Atticus returns to the Robinson home to speak with the family. While there, a seemingly intractable Bob

Ewell appears. After the jury sides with Bob in suggesting Tom raped Mayella Ewell even though evidence suggests her father engaged in abuse, Bob remains embittered by Atticus's demonization of him in the courtroom and seeks to settle the score. A confrontation between Atticus and Bob takes place outside of the Robinson home, complete with a close-up shot of the two men staring with animosity toward each other that ends when Bob spits in Atticus's face. This scene suggests the real concern of the movie is the tension between these competing forms of masculinity — Atticus's contemplative rationality versus Bob's unjust criminality. The courtroom setting that prevails throughout the movie, moreover, contrasts Atticus's just behavior with Bob's unjust behavior. As the scene near the Robinson home progresses, the attention given to this collision of opposing masculinities overshadows revelations about Tom's character.

*The Help's ending takes a different approach, as Skeeter leaves for New York City after offering Aibileen and other black women in Jackson a voice through her book. .*

*The Help* includes a scene where Hilly interrupts a conversation Skeeter has with Hilly's maid, Yule May, that emphasizes conflict between differing feminine approaches to racial issues. Hilly accuses Yule May of asking Skeeter for money, which Yule May requested earlier of Hilly to send her children to college. After Yule May exits, a jarring divide develops between the two women that exposes Hilly and Skeeter's opposing femininities, Hilly's rooted in callousness and Skeeter's based on sympathy. Skeeter's feminine sympathy allows her to cultivate a niceness that leads women like Yule May to become sympathetic, developing the maids as characters who can ultimately earn a voice. Both films focus on whiteness by including white savior protagonists. However, issues of race in the films are further complicated by the re-gendering of the white savior role.

Scenes in which black characters act outside white systems of control cement the argument that *The Help*, in creating a female white savior archetype, adopts a feminine sensibility to address racial issues. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, viewers never see Tom Robinson run from the police after being found guilty. Had he instead relied on Atticus, the powerful white lawyer, he could have been found innocent. The belief in the possibility of Tom's acquittal, of course, fails to reflect a long history of white juries in the segregated South ruling against African

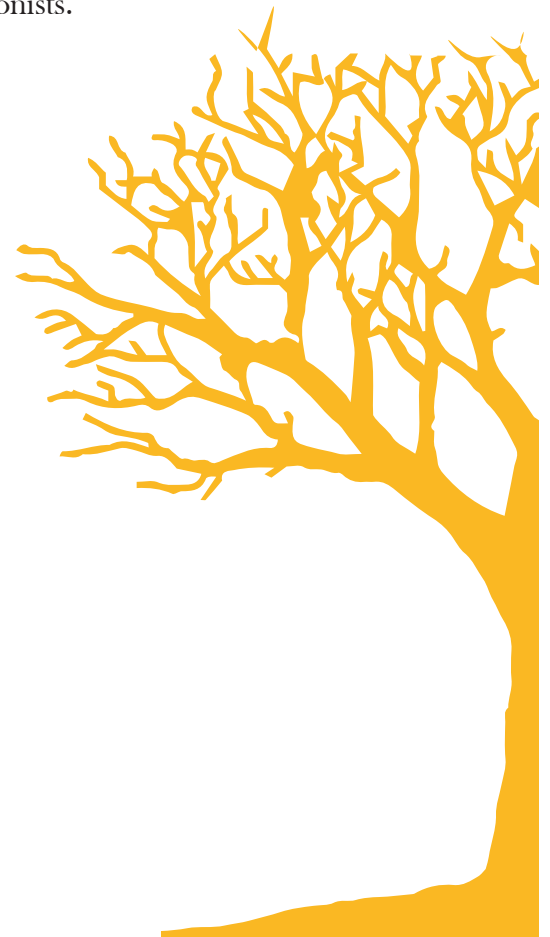
Americans, but Atticus's frustration regarding Tom's escape from custody advances the notion that his death was unavoidable. The black community in Maycomb stands and applauds Atticus's efforts in an earlier high angle shot, suggesting to viewers that Atticus's moral code and sense of reason are worthy of praise. In other words, black men need white men like Atticus because he is just. The film establishes his judgment as sound regarding Tom's demise despite the fact that viewers never receive Tom's point of view.

*The Help's regendering of the character allows the female white savior archetype to transfer her agency to African Americans.*

*The Help's* ending takes a different approach, as Skeeter leaves for New York City after offering Aibileen and other black women in Jackson a voice through her book. After the white savior figure leaves Mississippi, Hilly accuses Aibileen of theft. The scene concludes with Aibileen labeling Hilly hateful and mean-spirited, saying, "Ain't you tired?" Hilly runs off in tears. Aibileen's question to Hilly effectively exposes the feminine shield that masks Hilly's horrid behavior. In effect, the white savior transfers her own power to the victim once she leaves. The relationship created between Skeeter and Aibileen reveals Skeeter's inherent niceness, a product of her stereotypical femininity. Minny's hapless employer, Celia Foote, similarly possesses both a niceness and an unbelievable racial naiveté that grants Minny a more powerful voice that is not transferred to Aibileen until the film's end. Minny may seem to subvert racial codes of conduct with the scatological pie she delivers to Hilly, but this act has dire consequences, namely that Minny faces more abuse from her husband. Similar to the dynamic between Celia and Minny, Aibileen's connection to Skeeter grants her the power to stand up to Hilly and assert her autonomy. Without Skeeter delivering money to Aibileen and Minny for their contributions to her book, Aibileen's decision to confront Hilly would endanger her safety and livelihood. In a scene reminiscent of Atticus in the courtroom, a high-angle shot depicts Aibileen marching away from Elizabeth's house after being fired. The black victim is able to save herself after relying on a white hero. The ending encourages viewers to applaud a black Aibileen instead of a white man like Atticus. Skeeter's transfer of power to Aibileen is only possible because the film intimately involves its viewers in the interracial bonds ignored in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The employment of the male savior figure suggests the need of black men and women to rely on this superior figure, but *The Help's* re-gendering of the character allows the female white savior archetype to transfer her agency to

African Americans like Aibileen so they can develop a voice against their white oppressors.

The construction of the female white savior archetype relies on the same basic formula for creating the male figure, but a female hero allows for the inclusion of female traits and a sisterly transfer of power. *The Help* adopts the white male savior embodied by *To Kill a Mockingbird's* Atticus Finch and constructs a plot line that allows viewers to distinguish the differences inherent to the new female savior. *The Help* creates a female savior who departs from Atticus's strict adherence to reason and decides instead to use her emotional awareness to voice the mistreatment of African Americans by crafting an atmosphere that lends itself to the development of black-white relationships. Most importantly, this female white savior archetype, while still problematically central to the story, at least transfers her voice to oppressed blacks by the film's end. Unlike in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the use of the white savior model in *The Help* invites viewers to imagine a world where a white savior is no longer necessary. In turn, under a twenty-first century framework of greater racial progress, Skeeter's emotive tact keeps alive the white savior model while meeting the needs of the moment. The continued evolution of the white savior, while gradual, reduces its rigidity, exposing its fundamental malleability in adapting to different racial attitudes and time periods. With further progress, marginalized characters like Aibileen and Tom could come to replace Skeeter and Minny as filmic protagonists.



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# A MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE:

Horatio Robinson Storer and Physicians' Crusade Against Abortion

**RYAN JOHNSON**



*Abortion has not always been a controversial topic in American politics. The modern debate can be traced back to physicians' crusade against abortion in the second half of the 19th century, led by Harvard-educated and New England-based Horatio Robinson Storer. Storer launched the crusade in 1857, in part to criminalize abortion and in part to bring respect to the medical field in a time when doctors were not highly esteemed. This paper surveys Storer's publications and correspondence and analyzes the motives and results of Storer's campaign.*

**ABSTRACT**

The issue of abortion on the eve of the Civil War was one of the most contentious topics in the United States. Abortion was legal with virtually no restrictions for much of the 19th century; however, by 1900, abortion was a criminal offense almost everywhere in the U.S. Such a drastic shift in national policy was not a sudden occurrence, but the result of a long campaign by physicians to denounce the practice of abortion. At the helm of the physicians' crusade was a Boston doctor named Horatio Robinson Storer, a graduate of the Harvard Medical School and a specialist in obstetrics and gynecology. In 1857, Storer publicly launched what became one of the most successful public policy crusades in American history, as it led to the creation of anti-abortion statutes in every state.<sup>1</sup>

Abortion is the intentional early termination of a pregnancy by removal of the fetus. In the early 19th century, and for many centuries before that, abortion was an accepted practice and a private issue that the government did not regulate in the U.S. A majority of the American public did not consider abortion to be immoral, and the practice was often viewed as helpful to a woman because it was a way of avoiding the public humiliation of giving birth to a child out of wedlock.

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<sup>1</sup> To understand the anti-abortion movement in the U.S., one must first understand what abortion is. In order to do this, see Rita J. Simon, *Abortion: Statutes, Policies, and Public Attitudes the World Over* (Westport, CT; Praeger, 1998). To understand general abortion policy in the U.S., see Simone M. Caron, *Who Chooses?: American Reproductive History Since 1830* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008); Andrea Tone, *Controlling Reproduction: An American History* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1997); Rosemary Nossiff, *Before Roe: Abortion Policy in the States* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001); and Leslie J. Reagan, *When Abortion Was a Crime: Women, Medicine, and Law in the United States, 1867-1973* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). For information about the status of physicians in U.S. in the 19th century, see William G. Rothstein, *American Physicians in the Nineteenth Century: From Sects to Science* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972); and Richard Harrison Shryock, *Medicine in America: Historical Essays* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966). For more information about the physicians' crusade against abortion, see James C. Mohr, *Abortion in America: The Origins and Evolution of National Policy, 1800-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979). Also, see Frederick N. Dyer, *The Physicians' Crusade against Abortion* (Sagamore Beach, MA: Science History Publications, 2005). Both Mohr and Dyer's books are two of the best studies of the physicians' crusade. Information about Storer can be found in Frederick N. Dyer, *Champion of Women and the Unborn: Horatio Robinson Storer, M.D.* (Canton, MA: Science History Publications, 1999). Finally, there are many primary sources that show the attitudes of physicians at the time, such as Horatio Storer, *Why Not? A Book for Every Woman* (Boston, MA: Lee and Shepard, 1866); and Horatio Storer, *Is It I? A Book for Every Man* (Boston, MA: Lee and Shepard, 1868).

Furthermore, a doctor-induced abortion was considered a safe procedure with minimal risks to the mother's health. It was also considered acceptable to obtain an abortion any time before "quickening" occurred, which refers to the fetus's first movements in the womb that the mother could physically feel.<sup>2</sup> Similarly to contemporary arguments, women believed that abortion was a personal decision that should be made by women and women only. There were no criminal statutes in place to prevent a woman from receiving an abortion before quickening, and restrictions only applied after it occurred.<sup>3</sup>

*A doctor-induced abortion was considered a safe procedure with minimal risks to the mother's health.*

While abortion was an acceptable practice in the U.S. during the 19th century, it was often difficult to diagnose a pregnancy and abortion techniques were sometimes performed on women who were not actually pregnant. Because there were no foolproof methods to test for pregnancy, a woman often had to wait until she could feel the fetus move to confirm that she was pregnant, which is why such emphasis was placed on quickening.

Physicians and medical professionals believed that conception occurred because a woman's menstruation was blocked and, if left untreated, a blocked menstrual cycle could wreak physical harm on a woman's body.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it was imperative that a woman's natural cycle be restored. Because understanding of conception and pregnancy was so limited, physicians would sometimes even cut a woman on a part of her body to try and start the menstrual cycle.<sup>5</sup> Also, it was not uncommon for a woman to seek a physician to relieve a stopped menses, which would result in a procedure that would abort the fetus.

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<sup>2</sup> "Quickening" usually occurred around the 4th month of pregnancy. Great emphasis was placed on the fetus' first movements as society did not believe the fetus was a human until after quickening (including the Catholic Church). The term "abortion" was originally used to refer to pregnancy terminations that occurred after quickening.

<sup>3</sup> Established in 1803, British common law stated that abortion was illegal after quickening; Mohr, *Abortion in America*, 3, 16, 18; Caron, *Who Chooses?*, 3; Simon, *Statutes, Policies, and Public Attitudes*, 1; Rosalind Petchesky, *Abortion and Woman's Choice: The State, Sexuality, and Reproductive Freedom* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990), 68-69.

<sup>4</sup> Physicians believed that a woman's menstruation cycle could be interrupted by factors such as diet and weather patterns.

<sup>5</sup> 19th-century physicians believed that letting blood from any part of the body would flush the womb in the same way that a woman's menstrual cycle would.

Abortion was administered in several different ways in the 19th century. Many women used home remedies that were passed down from generation to generation. These remedies included the consumption of plants such as aloe, black hellebore, indigo, turpentine, and mistletoe—many of which, while effective, also severely compromised the health of the mother. In fact, there were many available books that listed plants and natural remedies that would facilitate an abortion. Furthermore, pharmacies throughout the country sold over-the-counter drugs that induced an abortion and restored a woman's menstrual cycle. The prevalence of abortion-related material throughout society reflects women's increased implementation of the practice. Another procedure often performed by a physician, or sometimes even the mother herself, included sticking a probe into the uterus. This procedure would tear the uterine sack containing the fetus, resulting in an abortion.<sup>6</sup>

*Abortion rates rose by nearly 300 percent from the early 19th century to the second half of the 19th century.*

As a result of the limited restrictions and easy access to abortion, the birth rate in the U.S. plummeted from about seven children per woman to about four during the 19th century. Abortion rates in the U.S. were on the rise and the abortion industry was booming. Abortion rates rose by nearly 300 percent from the early 19th century to the second half of the 19th century. By the 1840s, abortion was no longer taboo to discuss; rather, it was an acknowledged social reality. In fact, it was not uncommon to see an advertisement for abortion-related products in newspapers, which show that there was a thriving market for abortions and that many women accepted this practice. Early in the century, usually only poor, single mothers sought abortions; however, white, middle-class, and Protestant women were now seeking abortions. In fact, by the second half of the 19th century, about 67 percent of women seeking abortions were married—something that upset the more conservative, traditionalist groups.<sup>7</sup>

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6 Janet Farrell Brodie, *Contraception and Abortion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 42, 70-71; Caron, *Who Chooses?*, 16; Reagan, *When Abortion Was*, 8-9.

7 Caron, *Who Chooses?*, 14-16; Joanna N. Lahey, "Birthing a Nation: The Effect of Fertility Control Access on Nineteenth-Century Demographic Transition," *Journal of Economic History* 74, no. 2 (June 2014): 482, 486; Tone, *Controlling Reproduction*, 80; Mohr, *Abortion in America*, 46-47.

In an indirect response to the spike in abortions,<sup>8</sup> the first legislation regulating the practice was passed beginning in 1821 in Connecticut. This law prohibited a woman from taking any poisons or toxins with the intent to miscarry after the woman was quick with child—the punishment for the offense being life imprisonment. This legislation was significant because it was the first criminal statute that explicitly confronted the abortion issue. What previously fell under the jurisdiction of the common law was now being written into the legal system. Following Connecticut's landmark law, Missouri (1825), Illinois (1827), and New York (1828) each passed legislation that addressed abortion. The Missouri and Illinois statutes removed the quickening specification, making it illegal to ingest poisons to abort a fetus at any time during the pregnancy. Overall, early legislation was more geared towards poison control than the anti-abortion issue itself, and the practice of abortion was left relatively unaffected. However, this legislation served as a foundation upon which American physicians would build their anti-abortion crusade.<sup>9</sup>

Physicians in the U.S. during the 19th century were not held in high esteem, and they looked to professionalize the practice of medicine. The medical profession was unreliable, and physicians had a difficult time treating even simple ailments. In fact, newspapers commonly denounced and insulted the medical profession. For example, the *Reporter* announced that the entire medical guild was "a stupendous humbug."<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, in the 1850s, the editor of the *Cincinnati Medical Observer* explained that "It has become fashionable to speak of the medical profession as a body of jealous, quarrelsome men, whose chief delight is in the annoyance and ridicule of each other."<sup>11</sup> This description of the medical field by someone involved in medicine showed the true disastrous nature of the profession. There were few medical schools established during this time, and no regulations existed that required physicians to attend medical school in order to practice.<sup>12</sup> While the state of medicine in the 19th century was in disarray, there were select physicians who attended the nation's reputable medical schools and were committed to practicing sound, scientific medicine. These physicians wanted to professionalize medicine, to establish standards for the

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8 Abortion was still not viewed as a social evil by the American public early in the nineteenth century, but some legislation appeared during this time period that targeted the practice of abortion.

9 Mohr, *Abortion in America*, 20-21, 25-26; Reagan, *When Abortion*, 10.

10 Found in Shyrock, *Medicine in America*, 151.

11 Found in Shyrock, *Medicine in America*, 151.

12 The medical schools of the time were not administered as they are today where an applicant must meet certain standards in order to be admitted. They were often run as private, profit-focused businesses with few applicants were turned away because the doctor who would teach the students did not want to lose any money.

practice, and to denounce the amateurs who dominated the field. In an effort to do so, the American Medical Association (AMA) was founded in 1847.<sup>13</sup>

*These physicians wanted to professionalize medicine, to establish standards for the practice, and to denounce the amateurs who dominated the field.*

The AMA was formed as a way for physicians to set nationwide standards and to recognize those physicians who practiced medicine correctly, for the benefit of the American public. One of the AMA's earliest missions was to criminalize abortion. Many AMA-recognized physicians did not perform abortions because they believed it violated the Hippocratic Oath,<sup>14</sup> and as a result, women looked elsewhere for the procedure.<sup>15</sup> In effect, by not performing abortions, physicians forced their patients to seek the procedure from amateurs or the medically untrained. Therefore, AMA physicians believed that they could gain more control over the practice if abortion was outlawed altogether. This notion caused many problems amongst physicians, and Dr. Evan Rush attributed "the whole odium of the hostility of physicians" to "their competition for business and money."<sup>16</sup> Many physicians wanted to end this strife and believed that ending abortion would help achieve this goal.<sup>17</sup>

Physicians wanted to outlaw abortion for several reasons, but the driving force behind their campaign was a sincere belief that abortion was an inherently immoral practice. Because there was no way to prove exactly at what point life began, physicians assumed that life began at conception. Therefore, physicians thought that aborting a fetus in the womb at any point of pregnancy was nothing short of murder. Also, abortion was explicitly forbidden in the Hippocratic Oath, and physicians viewed it as a direct violation of ethics. Furthermore, physicians wanted more respect for their practice, and

they believed that if they portrayed abortion as a social evil, the practice of medicine would be viewed as a just and moral profession.<sup>18</sup>

At the head of the crusade to criminalize abortion was Dr. Horatio Robinson Storer. A graduate of Harvard Medical School, one of the few prestigious medical schools in the country, Storer followed in his father's footsteps as a specialist in gynecology and obstetrics. He quickly rose in the medical profession and made a name for himself as an expert in reproductive health. His father was also a well-respected physician, and as a result of heritage and education, Storer became associated with excellence. By the end of the 19th century, Storer would become one of the most recognizable names in the country. Through public forums, popular literature, and publications, Storer revolutionized the medical profession.<sup>19</sup>

*Horatio Robinson Storer became the undisputed leader in the effort to criminalize abortion.*

Horatio Robinson Storer became the undisputed leader in the effort to criminalize abortion. Earlier physicians such as Hugh L. Hodge and Storer's father, David Humphreys Storer, were influential. The elder Storer was chosen to speak to the Massachusetts Medical Society in 1851, and he criticized abortion in the medical practice. His 1855 introductory lecture at Harvard College also deeply influenced his son. In his Harvard address, D. H. Storer explicitly stated with regard to abortion laws that "Reason should be dealt with; moral suasion should be used, and *no one can exert a greater influence than the physician.*"<sup>20</sup> The fact that Storer, a respected physician and expert in gynecology, believed physicians could single-handedly change abortion laws in the U.S. helped make the possibility of a physicians' crusade a reality. Another prominent physician Hugh L. Hodge wrote an essay on criminal abortion in 1854 that explained abortion was a "crime against the natural feelings of man—against the welfare and safety of females—against the peace and prosperity of society."<sup>21</sup>

Horatio Storer took the developing anti-abortion sentiments within the medical field and united them

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13 Mohr, *Abortion in America*, 32-34; Brodie, *Contraception and Abortion*, 269; Rothstein, *American Physicians*, 18-21.

14 The Hippocratic Oath is an oath that all doctors take before they start practicing medicine. While the specifics of the oath itself have evolved, the 19th century oath included a provision that forbade a physician to abort the fetus of a pregnant woman through the use of medicines.

15 Women would seek abortions from mal-practicing physicians and rely on home remedies.

16 Shryock, *Medicine in America*, 157.

17 Brodie, *Contraception and Abortion*, 269-270; Mohr, *Abortion in America*, 34-38.

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18 Mohr, *Abortion in America*, 163-168.

19 Mohr, *Abortion in America*, 148-149; Dyer, *Champion of Women*, 43.

20 Found in Dyer, *Champion of Women*, 83-84 (my emphasis).

21 Hugh L. Hodge, *On Criminal Abortion: A Lecture Introductory to the Course on Obstetrics, and Diseases of Women and Children* (Philadelphia, PA: T.K. and P.G. Collins Printers, 1854), 15.



under one cause.<sup>22</sup> As Storer began his campaign, the most important aspect was the issue of morality. Raised as a Utilitarian by his family, Storer converted to Episcopalianism in 1869 and later to Catholicism in the 1880s. Throughout his life, Storer was an active member of his church and was even named a trustee of his parish, St. Joseph's. His deep religious roots were a driving factor in his belief that abortion was inherently immoral. In fact, he converted to Catholicism in the 1880s due to the Church's strict stance against abortion.<sup>23</sup> He, and other physicians, decried abortion from a moral standpoint in an effort to make the medical profession more respectable and professional, which was their primary concern. Storer's first step in initiating the physicians' crusade was to write doctors across the nation in 1857, inquiring about abortion statutes in their state. Responding to Storer's request, C. W. LeBoutillier, a doctor from Minnesota, explained:

The practice of producing abortion is frequently resorted to in our vicinity, and it is not un-frequent for married women of high social position to apply for medicines which will produce an abortion—and I regret to say that Regular physicians have in many instances assisted in these damnable practices. The law as it stands is to us worthless, and unless it is amended, the evil will not soon cease.<sup>24</sup>

LeBoutillier's response outlining the unenforceable laws against abortion motivated Storer to lead a campaign to restore morality to the medical profession—something Storer thought would be missing as long as abortion was an accepted practice.

Furthermore, physicians such as Dr. J. Berrien Lindsley of Nashville and former AMA president Dr. Charles Pope, in their letters responding to Storer's request, encouraged Storer to present his anti-abortion message to the American Medical Association. Responses such as these motivated Storer to pursue his mission to criminalize abortion and showed him that he had a strong national backing. In fact, Dr. Thomas Blatchford of New York was so enthusiastic about Storer's campaign that he wrote him: "I am glad, right glad, you have got hold of the subject of criminal abortion—a crime which 40 years ago, when I was a young practitioner, was of rare and secret occurrence has become frequent and bold."<sup>25</sup> While corresponding with many physicians across a vast area, Storer only solicited such assistance

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22 Unlike late 20th-century activists, Storer's focus was not on the fetus or the notion that the fetus had any rights—his sole focus was on the health of the mother.

23 Dyer, *Champion of Women*, 138-139.

24 C. W. LeBoutillier, "Letter to Horatio Robinson Storer," *Letters to Horatio Storer* (28 March 1857).

25 Thomas W. Blatchford, "Letter to Horatio Robinson Storer," *Letters to Horatio Storer* (23 March 1857).

from doctors who were already committed to the anti-abortion movement.<sup>26</sup>

After building a base of support from important physicians across the country through the mail, Storer decided to bring his anti-abortion campaign to the public. On 28 February 1857, Storer gave a long presentation on the topic of criminal abortion to the Suffolk District Medical Society in Boston, Massachusetts using the information that he gathered through his correspondence. Referencing his father's address in 1855, Storer called upon the society "to take such steps as would alike further ensure the innocence in this matter of all its members" and "show to the community the sincere abhorrence with which they viewed the crime [of abortion]."<sup>27</sup> By lobbying such an influential medical society to criticize the practice of abortion publicly, Storer showed his desire to unite the medical profession in opposition of abortion, which would further professionalize the industry.

*Dr. Thomas Blatchford of New York was so enthusiastic about Storer's campaign that he wrote him: "I'm glad, right glad, you have got hold of the subject of criminal abortion."*

In addition to criticizing abortion as a practice, Storer also suggested to the Suffolk Medical Society that a committee be formed to "consider whether any further legislation is necessary in this Commonwealth, on the subject of *criminal abortion*" and to report any "such other means as may seem necessary for the suppression of this abominable, unnatural, and yet common crime." His suggestion would remove the practice of abortion from the hands of incompetent, amateur physicians. Then, such a report would be "recommended to the Massachusetts Medical Society as a basis for its further action." Storer wanted to further professionalize medicine, as a report to the most powerful medical society in the state would send a strong message that physicians everywhere were united in their efforts to fight abortion.<sup>28</sup>

The Suffolk District Medical Society (SDMS) accepted Storer's submissions and designated him to head the committee that would suggest legislation. Storer and his

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26 Charles A. Pope, "Letter to Horatio Robinson Storer," *Letters to Horatio Storer* (24 March 1857); J. Berrien Lindsley, "Letter to Horatio Robinson Storer," *Letters to Horatio Storer* (4 July 1857); Dyer, *Physicians' Crusade*, 32.

27 Horatio R. Storer, "Criminal Abortion," *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 56, no. 14 (May 7, 1857): 283.

28 Storer, "Criminal Abortion," 282-283.

committee of three members delivered their report to the SDMS on April 25, 1857. The report addressed the fact that criminal abortion was not punishable by law and had “found public and unblushing defenders, who have so blunted the moral and religious sense of the people, that many respectable women do not hesitate to avow their belief that abortion is no crime.”<sup>29</sup> Storer criticized abortion from a moral standpoint and argued that those who support abortion corrupted the values of Americans. Physicians, then, according to Storer were moral and upright people.

*Because of the printing wars between the major medical journals, the anti-abortion crusade gained credibility as more and more people sided with Storer.*

While many physicians across the country were fully devoted to Storer’s movement, the support was not universal. Medical journals such as the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* published articles that criticized Storer’s actions with the SDMS committee. In fact, Charles Edward Buckingham, a physician, complained that Storer’s committee report “seems to have thrown out of consideration the life of the mother” and that the “Committee will fail to convince the public that abortion in the early months is a crime.”<sup>30</sup> Surprisingly, as a result of this small amount of protest to Storer’s campaign, many large, respected journals such as the *New Hampshire Journal of Medicine*<sup>31</sup> and the *Medical and Surgical Reporter*<sup>32</sup> of New Jersey condemned the protestors and publicly endorsed Storer’s efforts. Because of the printing wars between the major medical journals, the anti-abortion crusade gained credibility as more and more people sided with Storer. In fact, after it was chastised for publishing the criticism of Storer, the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* recanted its statements and came out in support of him.<sup>33</sup> After these events, what began as a small movement had now grown into a formidable force for change. Storer emerged from

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29 Horatio R. Storer, “Criminal Abortions,” *American Medical Gazette and Journal of Health* 8, no. 7 (July 1857): 391.

30 Charles Edward Buckingham, “Report upon Criminal Abortions,” *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 56, no. 17 (May 28, 1857): 346.

31 *New Hampshire Journal of Medicine* 7, no. 7 (July 1857): 216.

32 “Criminal Abortion,” *The Medical and Surgical Reporter* 10, no. 4 (April 1857): 207.

33 “The Report of the Committee upon Criminal Abortion,” *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 56, no. 19 (June 11, 1857): 386-387.

this opposition stronger than before and showed that he was more than capable of leading the physicians’ crusade against abortion.<sup>34</sup>

Up to this point, Storer was only well known in the Northeastern states; however, in 1858 he decided to try to expand his crusade nationally. With the support of Dr. Samuel D. Gross, the leading surgeon of the era and editor of the *North-American Medico-Chirurgical Review*, Storer wrote a series of articles about obstetric jurisprudence.<sup>35</sup> Storer used a moral argument as reason to outlaw abortion when he observed: “if abortion be ever a crime, it is, of necessity, even in isolated cases, one of no small interest to moralist, jurist, and physician.” Here he makes a blatant connection comparing physicians to moralists in an effort to depict physicians as justly fighting a moral war against abortion. Furthermore, Storer depicted the physician as a protective figure when he explained that “medical men are the physical guardians of women and their offspring” and it is their duty to fulfill this role. Once again, Storer took the moralistic perspective in an effort to depict physicians as principled in order to bring credibility to the practice.<sup>36</sup>

As another example of his widening national campaign, Storer prepared a report for the national meeting of the AMA in Louisville, Kentucky in 1859. Storer’s objective was to convince the AMA to take a public stand against abortion. While Storer’s popularity was growing, only medical journals and small medical organizations such as the SDMS had come out in support of the anti-abortion crusade. However, if the AMA, the official national organization for recognized practicing physicians, supported Storer, his campaign would grow exponentially. Storer asked the AMA “publicly to enter an earnest and solemn protest against [the] unwarrantable destruction of human life.” Once they completed this request, the AMA would be tasked with encouraging “the several legislative assemblies of the Union” to change their abortion laws. By soliciting the support of the AMA, Storer tried to expand his mission of criminalizing abortion.<sup>37</sup>

The report stated several reasons for the country’s generally degrading morals, such as the false importance that was placed on quickening.<sup>38</sup> Also, Storer chastised

34 Dyer, *The Physicians’ Crusade*, 40-45.

35 Obstetric jurisprudence refers to the legal issues surrounding abortion and reproductive rights.

36 Horatio R. Storer, “Contributions to Obstetric Jurisprudence: Criminal Abortion,” *North-American Medico-Chirurgical Review* 3 (January 1859): 64, 66.

37 “Minutes of the 12th Annual Meeting of the AMA,” *Transactions of the American Medical Association* 12 (May 1859): 27.

38 Storer believed that life began at conception, not at the first perceivable movements by the fetus. He thought the emphasis on quickening caused more confusion than anything else.

those within the medical profession who condoned abortion stating that physicians “themselves are frequently supposed careless of foetal life.” He challenged physicians to break the stereotype that those in the medical field were cold-hearted, immoral people. Also, he separated physicians who support and physicians who do not support abortion (putting the anti-abortion group in more respectable light), which created a clear distinction between the two camps. By making a moral plea to physicians, Storer asked the medical community “by every bond we hold sacred, by our reverence for the fathers in medicine, by our love for our race, and by our responsibility as accountable beings, to see these errors removed and their grievous results abated.” Storer portrayed the current generation of physicians as moral crusaders whose duty it was as citizens to rid the world of the corrupt and evil abortion laws put in place by earlier generations.<sup>39</sup>

*Storer portrayed the current generation of physicians as moral crusaders whose duty it was as citizens to rid the world of the corrupt and evil abortion laws put in place by earlier generations.*

Storer’s proposals were unanimously adopted by the AMA committee and highly praised by all. Dr. Thomas W. Blatchford, writing to Storer, excitedly commented that “I cannot tell you the number of Gentlemen who have spoken to me about your Report since I read it nor can I begin to tell you the high encomiums, bestowed upon it without a single drawback.” This acceptance of the anti-abortion movement by the official national organization of physicians was a huge victory for Storer and further brought his works to the national stage. Also included in Dr. Blatchford’s letter was a reference to Storer’s moral strategy, which indicated that their “labors are appreciated by our brethren when those labors have been bestowed in the cause of humanity is a precious cordial for one’s soul in this old and thankless world.” This remark further illustrates the strong moral based argument that the anti-abortion crusaders were using to make physicians appear to be compassionate individuals.<sup>40</sup>

Around the same time that he delivered his report to the AMA, Storer published several articles on criminal

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<sup>39</sup> Horatio R. Storer, “Report on Criminal Abortion,” *The Transactions of the American Medical Association* 12 (May 1859): 75, 77.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas W. Blatchford, “Letter to Horatio Robinson Storer,” *Letters to Horatio Storer* (5 May 1859).

abortion in which he focused on the individuals involved in the process.<sup>41</sup> Whereas Storer’s goal was to portray physicians as moral, upright people, in these articles he wanted to portray those involved as wicked and hedonistic. In a scathing description of the women who procured abortions, Storer observed:

It has been said that misery loves companionship: this is nowhere more manifest than in the histories of criminal abortion. In more than one instance, from my own experience, has a lady of acknowledged respectability, who had herself suffered abortion, induced it upon several of her friends, thus perhaps endeavoring to persuade an uneasy conscience, that, by making an act common, it becomes right. Such ladies boast to each other of the impunity with which they have aborted, as they do of their expenditures, of their dress, of their success in society. There is a fashion in this, as in all other female customs, good and bad. The wretch whose account with the Almighty is heaviest with guilt, too often becomes a heroine.<sup>42</sup>

Storer depicted women who received abortions almost as temptresses, slowly corrupting society around them in an effort to justify their own actions. By drawing this comparison, Storer made the physician appear to be the savior of humanity by ending the practice of abortion. Storer then stated “Under these circumstances, therefore, it becomes the medical profession to look to [ending abortion], lest the *whole* guilt of this crime rest upon themselves.” The physicians were at the helm of the anti-abortion crusade, and it was their responsibility to bring credibility to the practice.<sup>43</sup>

Now that the majority of the medical profession supported Storer and his anti-abortion crusade, it was time to begin focusing on convincing the general American public of the evils of abortion. In 1864, *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* published an editorial that called for a propaganda campaign against abortion, explaining that “Society needs a thorough awakening upon this subject” of abortion and it should be “taught in every school book of physiology, and every public print should reiterate” that life begins at conception. Physicians were ready to take their arguments to the American public, and Storer was ready to lead the charge.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> i.e., the mother, father, physician, midwife, nurse, etc.

<sup>42</sup> Horatio R. Storer, “Contributions to Obstetric Jurisprudence: Its Perpetrators,” *North-American Medico-Chirurgical Review* 3 (July 1859): 466.

<sup>43</sup> Horatio R. Storer, “Contributions to Obstetric Jurisprudence: The Duty of the Profession,” *North-American Medico-Chirurgical Review* 3 (November 1859): 1039.

<sup>44</sup> “Infanticide,” *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 71, no. 3 (August 18, 1864): 66-67.

In response to this editorial that was popular amongst medical professionals, the AMA decided to “offer a premium for the best *short and comprehensive tract* calculated for circulation among females, and designed to enlighten them upon the criminality and physical evils of forced abortion.”<sup>45</sup> This offer was significant because by rewarding physicians to write material for the general public about the evils of abortion, the AMA sparked a propaganda campaign. At the annual AMA meeting in Boston in 1865, the Committee of Prize Essays<sup>46</sup> announced that Horatio Storer won the award with his essay, “The Criminality and Physical Evils of Forced Abortion,” which was later published by the AMA in book form entitled *Why Not? A Book for Every Woman*.<sup>47</sup>

Throughout his prize-winning essay, it was evident that Storer wanted to improve the image of the medical profession. For example, when discussing physicians who wanted to provide abortions to patients, Storer argued that “the law should offer him its protecting shield, saving him even from himself, and helping him to see that the fee for an unnecessarily induced or allowed abortion is in reality the price of blood.”<sup>48</sup> Storer took the focus off the physician and put more blame on the law for allowing abortions to occur. Up to this point, Storer had painted abortion as an astronomical evil, but he did not want the reputation of physicians to be diminished because of this campaign. Therefore, he offered the public a scapegoat—the law—in an effort to prevent the destruction of the status of physicians. And to further emphasize the position of the profession, Storer explained that “Physicians have now arrived at the unanimous opinion that the foetus in utero is *alive* from the very moment of conception.”<sup>49</sup> Storer’s resounding rhetoric was not an actual reflection of the position of the entire medical profession, but an effort to unite physicians.

Furthermore, in “The Criminality and Physical Evils of Forced Abortion,” Storer portrayed physicians as noble trailblazers for justice. Fed up with the outstanding silence on the issue of abortion for the previous century, Storer explained that it was time for physicians “to strip down the veil” and that “the physician needs courage as well as the patient, and may well overflow with regretful

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45 “Minutes of the 15th Annual Meeting of the AMA,” *Transactions of the American Medical Association* 12 (June 1859): 50.

46 The Committee was made up entirely of Bostonians and the head of the Committee was none other than David Humphreys Storer, Horatio’s father. This combined with the fact that the meeting was held in Storer’s home state of Boston led many to believe that Storer’s prize winning essay was the result of internal collusion.

47 Mohr, *Abortion in America*, 158.

48 Storer, *Why Not?*, 26.

49 Storer, *Why Not?*, 28.

sympathy.”<sup>50</sup> Here Storer depicted the medical profession as heroically revealing the truth about abortion to the public, while at the same time being a compassionate profession.

After publishing *Why Not? A Book for Every Woman* in 1866 to great public acclaim, Storer wrote a book on abortion addressed to men.<sup>51</sup> Because he had already addressed women in his prize winning essay, Storer

*Storer depicted the medical profession as heroically revealing the truth about abortion to the public, while at the same time being a compassionate profession.*

wanted to inform men on the evils of abortion. His book, *Is It I? A Book for Every Man*, was published in 1867 and depicted physicians as noble crusaders. For example, while describing abortion, he explained that “a voice will go out into every corner of the land, caught up and re-echoed by all the medical men thereof, that will cause those who care either for their souls or their bodies, to pause and tremble.”<sup>52</sup> Storer believed that the physicians of the U.S. would be the voice of truth and restore morality to the country. Furthermore, Storer explained that “Indelicacy in the physician lies rather in ignoring. . .these problems, that lie beneath all social life and all domestic happiness, than in sensibly studying their phenomena, and throwing upon them the light of science.”<sup>53</sup> Once again, Storer depicted the physician as empathetic and understanding in an effort to prove to society that it was a moral profession.

After successfully informing all of the American public about the evils of abortion, Storer decided to address lawmakers by convincing them that the United States was in need of anti-abortion laws. In a book addressed to lawmakers, *Criminal Abortion: Its Nature, Its Evidence, and Its Law*, Storer criticised abortion from a legal standpoint. He began by explaining that physicians and lawyers were “associates working together for the common good of society.” Storer compared lawyers and physicians in an effort to put the medical practice on the

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50 Storer, *Why Not?*, 35.

51 Some believe that Storer’s second book was also submitted to the AMA award committee in 1864, but his father believed his address to women would be more powerful. Therefore, his address to women won the prize and his address to men was left to be published at a later date.

52 Storer, *Is It I?*, 58.

53 Horatio R. Storer, “On Self Abuse in Women: Its Causation and Rational Treatment,” *The Humboldt Medical Archives* 1, no. 2 (October 1867): 121.

same level of respectability as law.<sup>54</sup> He included statistics that showed that rates of birth in the United States were much lower than in European countries because of abortion. He used these points to show the ethical decay in society and called for widespread federal laws banning abortion to restore moral structure.<sup>55</sup>

Storer's book was one of his last published works as his health soon began to decline in the late 1860s, and by 1872 he had to leave the country to search for medical

*Between 1860 and 1880, more than 40 anti-abortion statutes were written into state and territorial law codes.*

treatment. Despite losing its leader, the anti-abortion crusade continued on and influenced the passing of legislation across the country. Between 1860 and 1880, more than 40 anti-abortion statutes were written into state and territorial law codes. More importantly, such statutes approved the physicians' claim that abortion during any term of pregnancy was a crime and the government had a responsibility to inhibit access to abortion.<sup>56</sup>

One of the most significant anti-abortion laws occurred in Connecticut in 1860. The state passed a statute that dismissed the quickening doctrine and made abortion a felony that was punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$1,000 fine. Also, both the woman seeking the abortion and the abortionist would be held responsible for the act, not one or the other. In addition, the Connecticut statute outlined anti-advertising clauses that resulted in fines if violated. Thus Connecticut became the first state in the Union to pass full-fledged anti-abortion laws, undeniably as a result of Horatio Storer's revolutionary physicians' crusade—Connecticut passed this legislation in the same year that the AMA publicly adopted Storer's anti-abortion policy. Soon after, states across the nation adopted laws similar to Connecticut, and by 1900, anti-abortion became national policy. While it is absolutely certain that Storer's campaign was successful in changing national policy and outlawing abortion; however, the crusade completely excluded women from the debate. The effort to criminalize abortion was created and dominated by men in the medical profession hoping to gain respect. The female perspective was all but ignored, which makes Storer's

crusade a one-sided affair.<sup>57</sup>

The success of Storer's efforts to professionalize medicine and improve the status of physicians is a little more unclear. There is no doubt that the credibility of the medical field increased substantially throughout the 19th century; however, the evidence of such improvements was not apparent until at least 1900. Also, such improvements were not a direct result of Storer's efforts to enhance the image of physicians. There were several new innovations to the medical field that drastically improved the practice of medicine in the 19th century and professionalized medicine as a result. For example, nitrous oxide (better known as laughing gas) began to be used during surgery as an anesthetic around 1847, which improved the quality of treatment during surgery. Also, Joseph Lister discovered that the use of antiseptics during operations would prevent infections, which was a groundbreaking discovery as infections during surgery was a tremendous problem in the 19th century. Furthermore, towards the end of the 19th century, medical schools began setting standards for admissions and increasing their academic curriculum to become more demanding. These are just a few of the improvements to the medical field in the 19th century that dramatically improved the reputation of physicians and the medical field as a whole. Storer's physicians' crusade was an attempt to professionalize medicine and improve the image of physicians, but it had a very limited impact in this respect compared to the innovations in medicine. Overall, Storer's efforts contributed to a gradual improvement of the medical field by advocating for women's rights and were instrumental in changing national policy. Although Storer perceived his crusade as advocating for women's rights, women saw a "decline in their power and status."<sup>58</sup> By removing a woman's right to choose, some women felt that they lost over their bodies; this sentiment would lead to further controversy in the realm of women's rights in the future.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Law at this time period was a well-respected profession.

<sup>55</sup> Horatio R. Storer and Franklin F. Heard, *Criminal Abortion: Its Nature, Its Evidence, and Its Law* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1868), v, 60.

<sup>56</sup> Mohr, *Abortion in America*, 159, 200-201; Petchesky, *Abortion and Woman's Choice*, 78-84.

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<sup>57</sup> Mohr, *Abortion in America*, 201-202.

<sup>58</sup> Petchesky, *Abortion and Woman's Choice*, 68.

<sup>59</sup> Shryock, *Medicine in America*, 150; Rothstein, *American Physicians*, 250-293.

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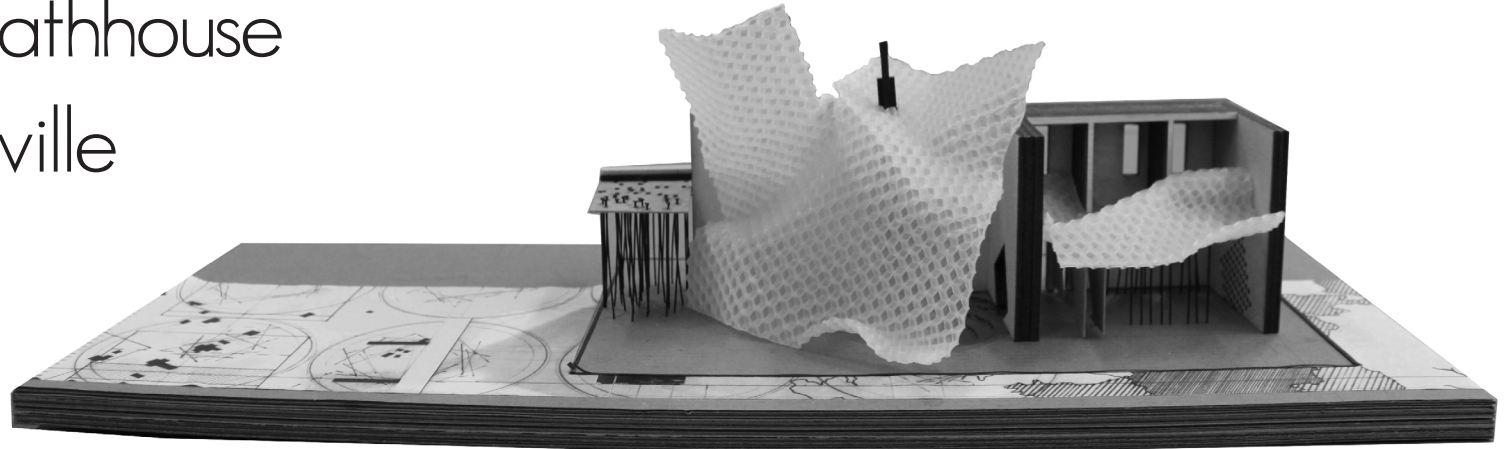
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# PROVENANCE OF PLACE AND PAST:

## Designing a Bathhouse for Charlottesville

**MAYA CHANDLER**



In Architectural Design courses, we try to rethink the way that we as architects *and* everyday citizens imagine spaces as well as discover ways of making meaningful and original architectural form. In each of the main studio courses, our design process volleys between two- and three-dimensional forms of idea development; we employ this process in order to shake any preconceived ideas or forms we might try to impose onto the site, instead using research to develop a final proposal that physically and ideologically embodies the thematic elements of our project. The body of work shown below is comprised of the pieces I created for my third studio course, presented in chronological order.

For *Studio III: SITE*, our task was to transform the historic Albemarle County Jail in downtown Charlottesville, Virginia, into a bathhouse whose design was heavily place-based. The course structured our work around an investigation of the site and

challenged our understanding of that term. Site, to an architect, should comprise not only the topographical and physical markers of the place, but also the cultural, historical, atmospheric, ritualistic, or intangible qualities of place. Therefore, the project served as an opportunity to question the ways that we think about a place and as an opportunity to design a project for a site out of the wealth of information that the place itself offers. It asked us to examine what has preceded the proposed architecture and invite it into the work that we place on a site—not ignoring the past, mowing it down, or covering it up—but allowing it to point us in the direction of an architectural intervention.

My bathhouse acknowledges several key elements in the Albemarle County Jail’s historical past and transforms them from negative aspects into a source of rejuvenation and renewal in the center of Charlottesville.

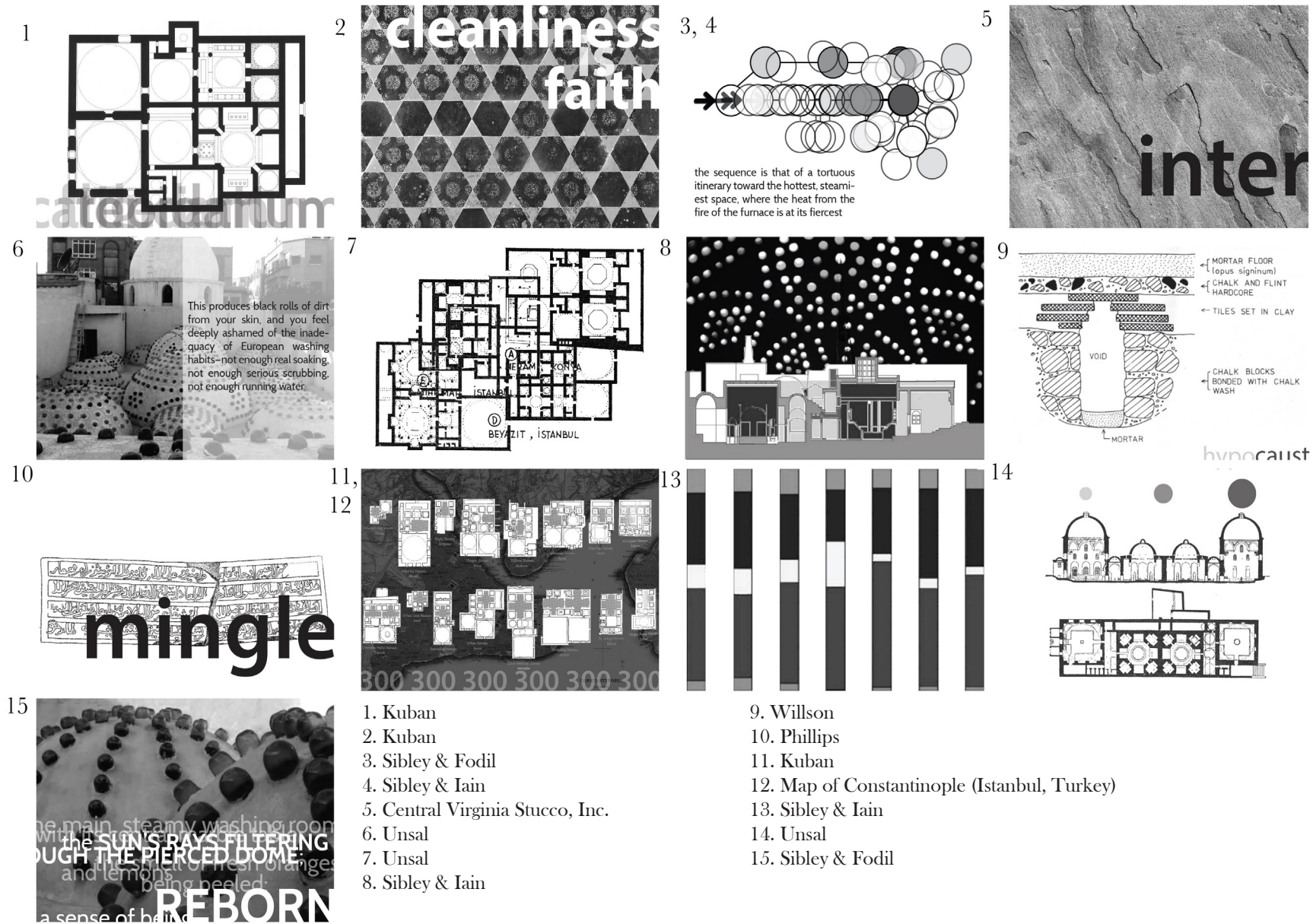
### EDITOR’S NOTE

The *James Madison Undergraduate Research Journal* is pleased to present this “print” version of its first multimedia publication.

Within the landscape format, we have sought to value Maya Chandler’s design project as the primary text, instead of as a supplement to her research statement.

In the accompanying “online” Atavist version—available at [jmu.edu/jmurj](http://jmu.edu/jmurj)—readers can chart their own paths, either appreciating Chandler’s designs and captions as a unified project or dipping into her research statement for further explanation.





- 1. Kuban
- 2. Kuban
- 3. Sibley & Fodil
- 4. Sibley & Iain
- 5. Central Virginia Stucco, Inc.
- 6. Unsal
- 7. Unsal
- 8. Sibley & Iain
- 9. Willson
- 10. Phillips
- 11. Kuban
- 12. Map of Constantinople (Istanbul, Turkey)
- 13. Sibley & Iain
- 14. Unsal
- 15. Sibley & Fodil

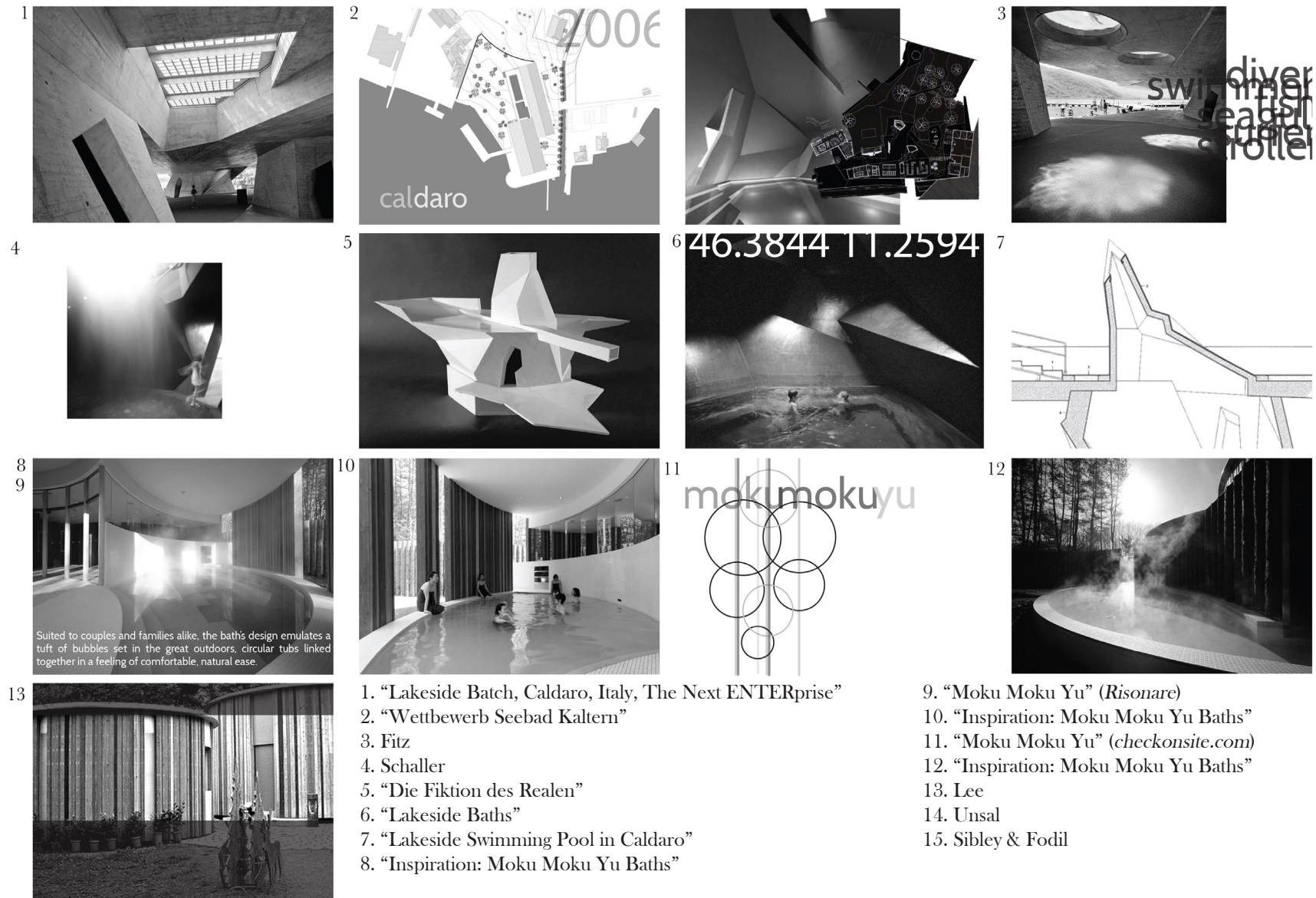
Figure 1: Page 1 of Typology Research Cards, compiling research about the hammam. This card set combines images, information, themes, and quotes from the research. For example, the third card in the top row overlays the basic organization of seven hammams, with grayscale circles to represent the intensity of the heat. This reveals a linear progression while approaching the caldarium, and then shows that smaller rooms typically surround the caldarium, into which bathers can escape the heat. The twelfth card (row three, column four) uses a similar language to show how the varying temperatures line up with a plan and section of an existing hammam, as well as offering a comparison of size in terms of the initial changing area and the caldarium. The photographs throughout offer views of the glass orbs that provide colored light below; others showcase the variety in floor plans, illustrate material textures, compile data, or provide anecdotal illustrations of the hammam experience.



- 1. Gulliford
- 2. Bruchac
- 3. Bucko
- 4. Bruchac
- 5. "Moon Rocks"
- 6. "Vintage Tree Print"
- 7. Gulliford
- 8. Price

- 9. "Indian Community"
- 10. Bucko
- 11. Bucko
- 12. Price
- 13. Hansen
- 14. "Indian Community"
- 15. "Indian Community"

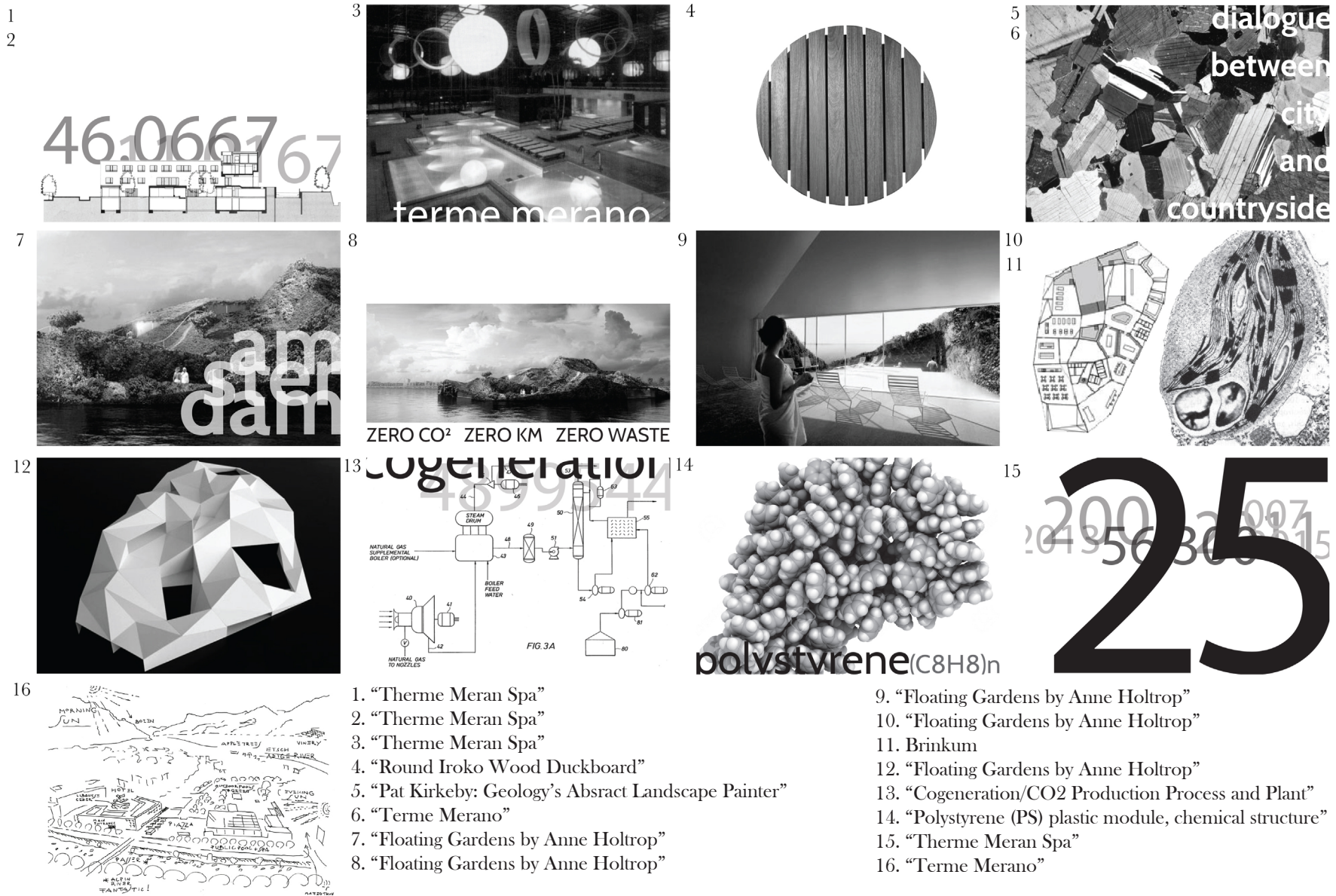
Figure 2: Page 2 of Typology Research Cards, compiling research about Native American sweat lodges. This card set combines images, information, themes, and quotes from the research. For example, the first card in the second row combines information about materials used in sweat lodges. The image in the background is a photomicrograph of igneous rock, the type of rock used to create the steam in a sweat lodge, and in front of it is the silhouette of *salix laevigata*, a type of willow branch used in construction of some sweat lodges. Other cards highlight interesting phrases found while researching, including a poem and two quotes that offer creative ways of understanding a sweat lodge. Cards 8, 12, and 13 (counted from the top left) are images of the work of Chris Cornelius, a contemporary Native American architect whose work, though not historical, also offered a unique way of thinking about sweat lodges.



1. "Lakeside Bath, Caldaro, Italy, The Next ENTERprise"
2. "Wettbewerb Seebad Kaltern"
3. Fitz
4. Schaller
5. "Die Fiktion des Realen"
6. "Lakeside Baths"
7. "Lakeside Swimming Pool in Caldaro"
8. "Inspiration: Moku Moku Yu Baths"

9. "Moku Moku Yu" (*Risonare*)
10. "Inspiration: Moku Moku Yu Baths"
11. "Moku Moku Yu" (*checkonsite.com*)
12. "Inspiration: Moku Moku Yu Baths"
13. Lee
14. Unsal
15. Sibley & Fodil

Figure 3: Page 3 of Typology Research Cards, compiling research about contemporary bathhouses. This card set primarily combines images as a visual catalog of what a bathhouse might be. The top eight images showcase the Lakeside Baths in Caldaro, Italy, with interior views of the spaces, as well as drawings and models of exterior views. The last five cards focus on a Japanese bathhouse, called Moku Moku Yu. These images also describe the quality of the interior spaces, as they illustrate the exterior appearance and overall layout of each circular building.



1. "Terme Meran Spa"
2. "Terme Meran Spa"
3. "Terme Meran Spa"
4. "Round Iroko Wood Duckboard"
5. "Pat Kirkeby: Geology's Abstract Landscape Painter"
6. "Terme Merano"
7. "Floating Gardens by Anne Holtrop"
8. "Floating Gardens by Anne Holtrop"
9. "Floating Gardens by Anne Holtrop"
10. "Floating Gardens by Anne Holtrop"
11. Brinkum
12. "Floating Gardens by Anne Holtrop"
13. "Cogeneration/CO2 Production Process and Plant"
14. "Polystyrene (PS) plastic module, chemical structure"
15. "Terme Meran Spa"
16. "Terme Merano"

Figure 4: Page 4 of Typology Research Cards, compiling research about contemporary spas. This card set combines images, information, themes, and quotes from the research into contemporary spas. In card eight, the fourth card in the second row, I compared a sketch of the floating spa in Amsterdam with an image of a cell; while this comparison is unrelated to Anne Holtrop's project, it offered an opportunity to project the research I was uncovering into other realms. Here, my comparison might ask what similarities can be drawn, or offer a new route of investigation later in the process. The other cards present information about the type of technologies or materials used in the each of the two case studies and illustrate their very different relationships to their site.

## THE BATHHOUSE: TYPOLOGY CARDS

Before undertaking any site-related research, we explored what the term “bathhouse” means—both in the past and today. Our first step was to construct a typology of bathhouses and convey that visual and textual information in a series of research “cards.” This method forced us not only to educate ourselves on the topic through traditional research, but also to begin compiling it visually, which helped us translate the themes of our research into a format that could be useful later on in the design process. My research focused on two historical types of “bathhouse,” as well as two contemporary ones: the Islamic *hammam* and the Native American sweat lodge, along with modern spas and bathhouses.

The Islamic hammam became an important precedent for my project, as hammams are not only grounded in ritual and social traditions, but are also incredibly atmospheric (see Figure 1). The hammam was a tradition born out of the Roman public baths, the Roman *thermae*, but it continued in the Islamic world long after public bathing fell out of fashion in the West (Williams). The practice of bathing was initially popular in the Islamic world because it fulfilled one of the important parts of the Islamic faith: ablutions before prayer (Rahim 672). *Wudu* was a form of this ritualistic washing, in which one cleanses portions of the body, such as the hands or face, but the more common form of ablutions in hammams was *ghusl*—a vigorous scrubbing of the entire body (Sibley and Jackson 155). Over time, the hammam evolved from a purely spiritual experience; it became a place of social interaction, cultural perpetuation, and relaxation.

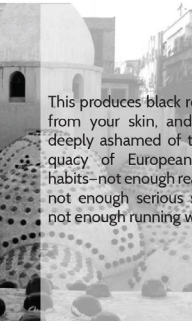
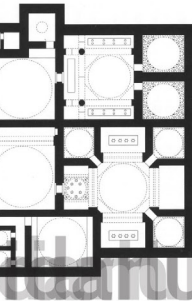
Although hammams sometimes differed in spatial organization or size, each encouraged a standard sequence of movement. Bathers first entered the hammam from the street, whose exterior was typically

plain or nearly unnoticeable (Boggs 64). Once inside, they changed from street clothes into a striped cotton wrap called a *pestemal* or *fouta* and into wooden sandals, *nalin*, to prevent from slipping on the damp floors. As the largest room—and as the only access point—this changing area was the place where people chatted, trading recipes, discussing news or upcoming events, or talking business and politics (Sibley and Jackson 155; Sibley and Fadli 108).

What then followed was a progression from room to room, through which the temperature of the steam steadily increased. Unlike what we might imagine of a Roman bath, the hammam did not feature swimming pools. Instead, the rooms were moistened by steam, requiring that bathers sit for prolonged periods of time in order to “soak.” In some hammams, people began in a *frigidarium*, a room with cool steam—although not every hammam included this initial step. Next came the *tepidarium*, a room with warm steam, and then finally the *caldarium*, the hottest room in the sequence (Petersen 108).

The caldarium was the central hub of the hammam, and in many cases it was physically located in the center of the building (Sibley and Jackson 161). Some hammams featured marble benches around the perimeter of the room, but it was most common to simply sit on the floor. While lying on the warm stone, or on a raised table under the central dome, bathers would be scrubbed by an attendant with a rough mitt made of camel hair, a *kese*. The room was also lined with secluded niches for more private washing because the bathers were never supposed to be fully exposed (155, 156). Once clean, bathers could rinse off by pouring water from a small, central basin over themselves, and sometimes light refreshments might be served, like lemonade (Sibley and Jackson 155; Sibley and Fadli 104). Despite the





This produces black r  
from your skin, and  
deeply ashamed of t  
quacy of European  
habits—not enough re  
not enough serious  
not enough running w



amy washing  
PRAYS FILTER  
ERCED DOM  
bit of fresh OM  
ing peeled  
REBO

variations in spatial organization, the caldarium was the final destination for any Islamic bather.

Architecturally, the caldarium is also important for its atmospheric conditions, primarily for the fact that each niche within it features a domed ceiling, into which large, rounded glass semi-circles have been set. These windows, ranging in color from green to blue to red, cast beams of colored light into the space below. Most rooms in the hammam featured selective lighting, but the caldarium enjoyed the most architectural emphasis. This interesting use of dim lighting, through circular windows, became an architectural detail—not simply a conceptual idea—that I carried through into my design.

However, I found myself most interested in the play between the negatives and positives within the hammam. In one account, author Magda Sibley recalls her childhood experiences of visiting the hammam. She describes it as a “tortuous itinerary towards the hottest and steamiest space, where the heat from the fire of the furnace is at its fiercest and where the steam from the water creates a thick mist” (Sibley and Fadli 108). It was a peculiar event—one that she feared and found uncomfortable but later “metamorphosed into nostalgic, happy memories” (104). Somehow, the painful scrubbing and unbearable heat was eclipsed by the joy of the social event itself, and it became a tradition she continued into adulthood. Despite the fact that Sibley’s language alone makes it seem like an unpleasant experience, her larger appreciation endorses the hammam’s enduring, beloved place in Islamic culture. Her gender also exposes a second conflict, as public bathing for women was somewhat controversial in Muslim society, despite being gender-segregated. While women were meant to remain fully covered in the public sphere, bathing was an essential part of purifying oneself before prayer (Semerdjian 261); this complicated matters and meant

that hammams were oftentimes a morally disputed part of life in the Islamic world.

I then examined the general characteristics of sweat lodges across many Native American tribes in order to get the most holistic view of this type of bathing across Native American culture. The first commonality between my historic types was in their formal structure (see Figure 2). As in the hammam, sweat lodges emphasized the circle and dome shape, and again the experience centered around hot steam. Here, the shape takes on spiritual significance, mirroring the arc of the sky, or acting as ribs of the sweat lodge’s spiritual entity: sometimes in the form of a turtle, sometimes a bear, or sometimes simply as “the Creator” (Bruchac 30). It was also tied to the compass directions and the inherent circle therein. The circle became a common theme in both hammams and sweat lodges, and an element I returned to in my design.

The rituals for sweat lodges, however, were entirely different. Most sweat lodges were used for ceremonial purposes, particularly before rites of passage. Unlike the hammam, which was open to the public, sweat lodges were open only to a few people at a time, sometimes segregated by gender, sometimes not (Bucko, “Sweat Lodge”). The sweat lodge was predominantly a non-permanent structure set into a shallow pit dug into the ground (Bucko, “Sweat Lodge”). And in some cases, a cold plunge into nearby water followed the sweating session (Cohen 256). Additionally, there was a recurring theme of the sweat lodge as a source of rejuvenation, even a way to cast off the past—which was perhaps the most central theme in my later design. For example, the Lakota Sioux regarded it as the “lodge of the life-breath,” or “the place where they renew life” (Cohen 255). More literally, it was a form of medication to rid the body of sickness and, as with the rite of passage, a way to welcome in a new era in someone’s life (Cohen 257). Despite the

differences between hammam and sweat lodge rituals, both provided rejuvenation or renewal.

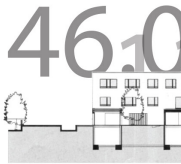
As with my research of hammams, I uncovered themes of juxtaposition—of an unexpected negative in what seemed to be a positive experience, of bad amid good—in sweat lodges, too. For example, a sweating session can be quite dangerous. Aside from the 107° temperature, which in itself can be a danger, the source of the steam can also pose a threat (Cohen 261). The steam is created by pouring water over a group of hot rocks in the center of the lodge—but selecting the rocks is a special task (Bruchac 36). The rocks must be treated with utmost respect with tobacco offerings, and only certain types of rocks can be chosen (Bruchac 36). Many types of rocks feature tiny pockets on their surface, which, when doused with hot water, can cause the rock to shatter. This explosion is powerful—hence the need for careful selection. The best rocks are round igneous rocks, like the volcanic rock used by Mesoamerican tribes, and can be as large as a human head (Bruchac 36). Despite these dangers, sweat lodges were commonplace and are still utilized today. This possibility for negative experiences amid a positive, cleansing experience, as in the hammam, became the direction for my later research into the Charlottesville bathhouse site.

My research cards also examined several instances of contemporary spas and bathhouses, which, unlike the historical information, helped expand my understanding of what a bathhouse could be. For my bathhouse precedents, I looked at the Lakeside Baths in Caldaro, Italy, by Next ENTERprise Architects and the Moku Moku Yu bathhouse in Japan, by Klein Dytham Architects (see Figure 3). For both of these designs, I considered their formal structure (their shapes), the qualities of the spaces, their materiality, and the activities they foster. The Lakeside Baths encourage activity with many places to

walk, swim, and play. There are various sizes of spaces as well, each with different qualities of light: small, geodesic rooms with tiny pools; windows through the bottom of a pool to let light into submerged passageways; and open-air swimming pools. The whole building is done in assertive geometric forms of cast concrete, perhaps to contrast the soft forms of the landscape around it. Moku Moku Yu, on the other hand, is a modest series of circular buildings, wrapped in vertical strips of colored timber (see Figure 3). The shapes are meant to resemble a cluster of bubbles on the landscape, and each circle contains a single, separate function. The buildings are for “changing, showering, mixed or single-sex bathing, and indoor or outdoor bathing” (Fairs). However, the general mood, when compared to the baths at Caldaro, values stillness, relaxation, and calm.

For contemporary spas, I looked at the Hotel Terme Merano spa facilities in Italy and an unrealized project by Anne Holtrop for a floating garden/spa in Amsterdam (see Figure 4). Again, both of these designs suggested possibilities for a bathhouse in terms of materiality, shape, and function—whether that be a completely man-made island to house a buried spa retreat or a completely exposed pool complex that showcases the surrounding countryside.

This investigation into bathhouse design and compiling a typology was an exercise in design-based research, which allowed us to identify themes, compare information visually, and identify several case studies, as well as examine them in a way that could become active in the later design. As I worked through my own research, I uncovered the themes that would become central to my later work: the transformation of negatives into positives, an emphasis on the circle, a soak in hot steam followed by a cool plunge, and a resulting renewal from the experience.



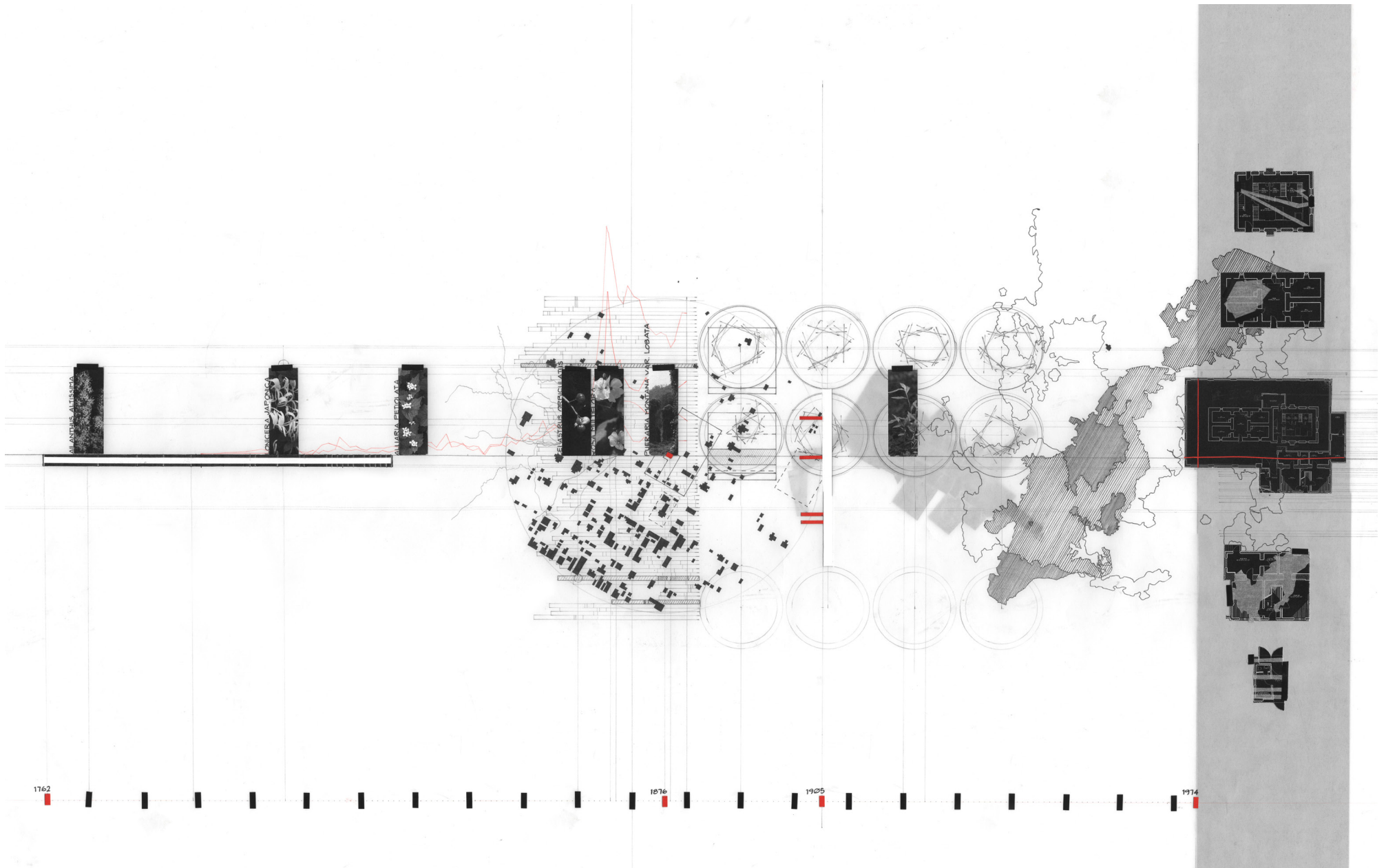


Figure 5: Site Map of 409 East High St., Charlottesville, VA. This map takes the form of a timeline, which covers 200 years of history relevant to the former Albemarle County Jail. Important dates are marked in red along the timeline at the bottom of the page (1762, the founding of Charlottesville; 1876, the opening of the jail; 1905, the last legal hanging in Albemarle County 1974, the closing of the jail). The map highlights negative events in the jail's or Charlottesville's past, on the themes of death, disease, decay, and debt.





## THE LOCATION: SITE MAP

We then turned our attention to the site of our project: 409 East High St., Charlottesville, Virginia. We were tasked with making a map, but the goal was not simply to act as cartographers. Instead, we were to map out the many elements that make a place unique. What about that location, that building, that city might be important to consider when redesigning a historical landmark?

Maps, as we typically understand them, try to capture or communicate the physical aspects of a place, so that any reader can quickly orient themselves where they are, or with where they're attempting to go. But a place is as much about its history as its present physical features—arguably more so, since the past is what has caused whatever conditions now occupy a site. After beginning some initial research about Charlottesville, I discovered that many of the important facets of the site, or at least those that stood out to me, fell in vastly different periods of time. In fact, they seemed to come at almost even hundred-year intervals, around when the jail was founded. Particularly at this jail, its past seemed integral to the state that it is now in, so it seemed important to include those aspects (site-specific, local, and regional) in my map. Therefore, my map took the shape of a timeline, which extends across the two hundred years of relevant history in the story of the jail (see Figure 5). It starts at the left with the founding of Charlottesville, centers on the date of the jail's opening, and ends with the year the jail was officially closed. I used the themes from my typological research to drive my study of Charlottesville by examining the negative elements of its past, both as a jailhouse (independent of its location) and as a part of the larger city of Charlottesville. This theme also resonated with the project because, as a jailhouse, the site is inseparable from certain unpleasanties.

For example, the jail was the location of the last legal hanging in Albemarle County—of the mayor of Charlottesville, no less. Having been accused of the gruesome murder of his wife, the mayor was housed and then executed at the county jail. His 1905 hanging is represented by the vertical bar, just right of center, with red notches to its left. Horizontally, the bar aligns with the year of the hanging along the main timeline across the bottom of the map. The red notches then mark four key locations from the 1904 murder, as they align with an 1877 Charlottesville map created just one year after the jail was opened (the Charlottesville map is the series of rectangles and squares at the very center of my map). In this case, my representation of the event was a purely metaphorical one; I have translated this powerful event as a sudden gash in the town's history. Books were written about this event, the town was fascinated by the “whodunnit” mystery, and the murder was particularly painful because of the mayor's involvement in the case. It was also a turning point, as it was the last legal hanging in Albemarle County; in this sense, breaking the timeline seemed fitting. I also took color into account. Rather than inserting a sudden black bar, I chose to make the rectangle white—indicating an absence of something, rather than a sudden addition. The white rectangle marks the loss of two lives, and the end of legal hangings. The four red notches, then, serve as a reminder that the event was a bloody one; while I have marked this event as an absence, it did leave a stain on the city.

When the jail was opened, it served primarily as a debtor's prison, so I also included data about the levels of debt in the country at that time period. The thin horizontal bars drawn lightly in the center of the map, and the thin red line that approaches the center from the left, register a spike in debt just before the jail's opening. This information was found in several statistical atlases from the 1860s to the 1890s, which also charted



information about death from disease in the form of circular calendars. These calendars marked spikes in certain diseases throughout the year for males and females. These graphs can be seen in pencil just right of center. In this instance, my representation was literal rather than metaphorical. I reduced the graphs to lines and shapes without translating their information as I had with the story of the hanging. Instead, I simply combined the male and female data and applied it to the portion of the timeline it most closely relates to, allowing the data to combine with other elements of the map.

These graphs also led me to thinking about diseases of another kind: invasive species. Because Virginia at the time of the jail's opening was largely open land, I began thinking about how diseases of the landscape might also have had a significant role in the timeline of Albemarle County. Therefore, I included information about some of the most highly invasive species in the county: oriental bittersweet, Japanese stiltgrass, garlic mustard, tree of heaven, multiflora rose, Japanese honeysuckle, and kudzu ("Natural Heritage Committee"). On my map, I featured each plant as a photograph, locating them in conjunction with the date on the timeline when they were introduced in the United States.

Later, during our visit to the jail in Charlottesville, I photographed the peeling paint on the walls of the jail. This image is traced onto the end of the timeline at the right side of my map, suggesting how the jail has deteriorated over time and representing the theme of decay due to neglect. This line is then paired with a map of the vast area around Charlottesville that is affected by invasive species (their intersection is shown by varying degrees of cross-hatching at the right). Bringing the line and the map together is a reflection of how both of these elements jump from the historical past to today and offers new information related to their form by their combination.

Lastly, my map acknowledges the presence of Thomas Jefferson. While this may not seem to fit with the theme of "negative" historical events, our visit to Charlottesville and to the Charlottesville Historical Society (CHS) presented a unique view of Thomas Jefferson's legacy. Our conversation with the CHS volunteer revealed that there are many other elements to Charlottesville's history, and yet Thomas Jefferson tends to overshadow all other elements of the city's past (or present). While his legacy is certainly not a bad one, I found this slant interesting: that Jefferson's impact largely obliterates any other significant events or people from the area. I therefore gave a nod to his presence, but I left it rather subdued. I marked his impact with a horizontal black bar at the far left of the drawing and then nearly obscured the rectangle with a strip of white paper on top. The bar runs the length of his life, and at crucial years in his career, a small slot is cut out of the drawing. In this way, his impact is significant but understated. It could have been one of the most noticeable points on the page, but it is instead completely unmarked and covered by a smaller piece of paper.

I also included some speculative elements on the far right of my map where I overlaid the themes of my drawing into building plans of the jail itself, more so as questions or possibilities of what could be. This speculation was a way to begin projecting the information developed within the map into spatial design; I pulled themes, shapes, and ideas, into suggestions of interventions within the existing space.

Although my timeline is a non-traditional approach to a map, it allowed me to explore the intangible qualities of site that the course was meant to emphasize. This process was highly important in evolving both the way I think about a place and in expanding the way I think about drawing.

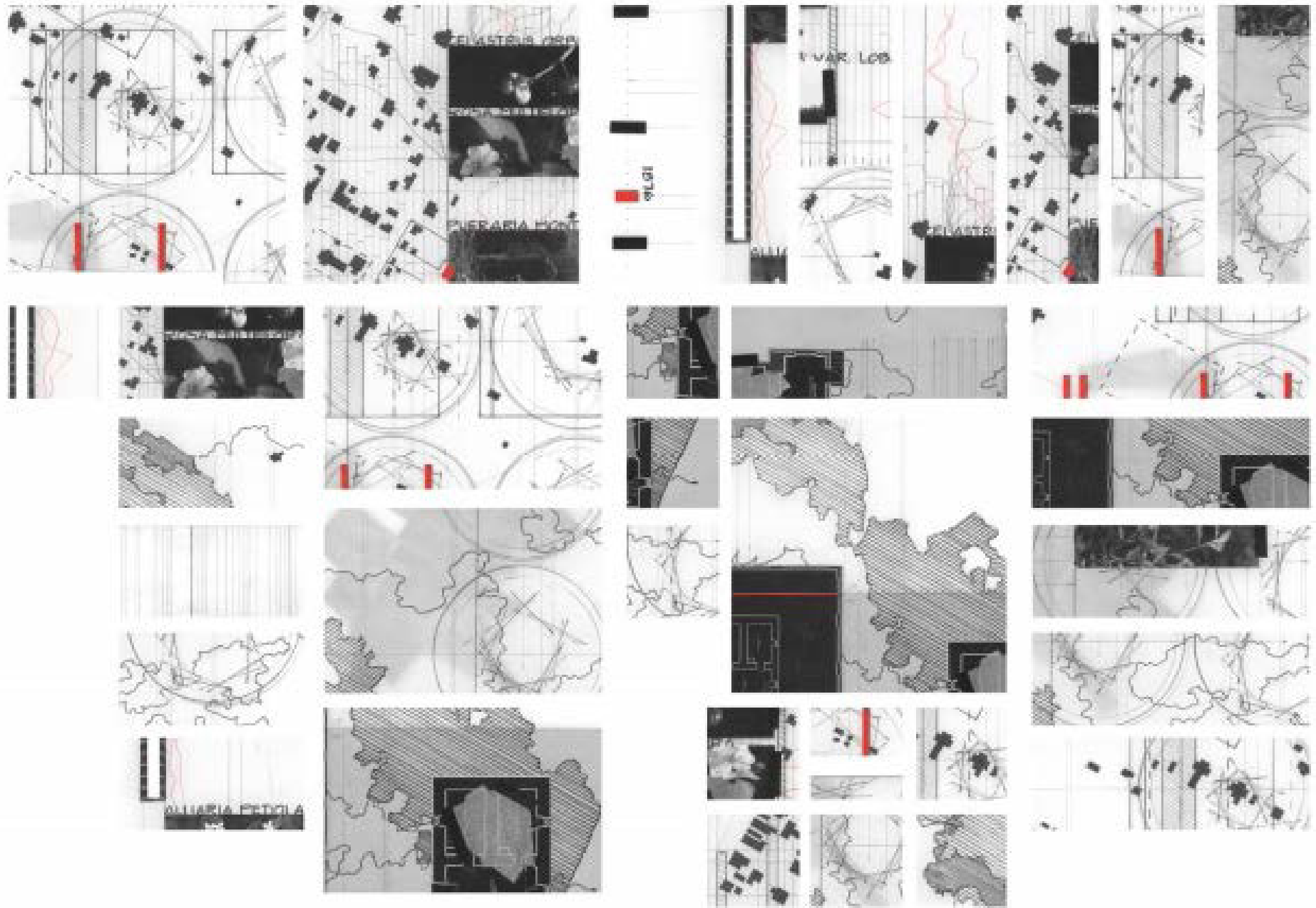


Figure 6: Site Map Image Fragments. This image compiles the smaller fragments of the site map from which models were later generated. For example, the horizontal image in the second row down at the right, with four red bars running across the bottom, was developed into the model seen in the center of Figure 7.

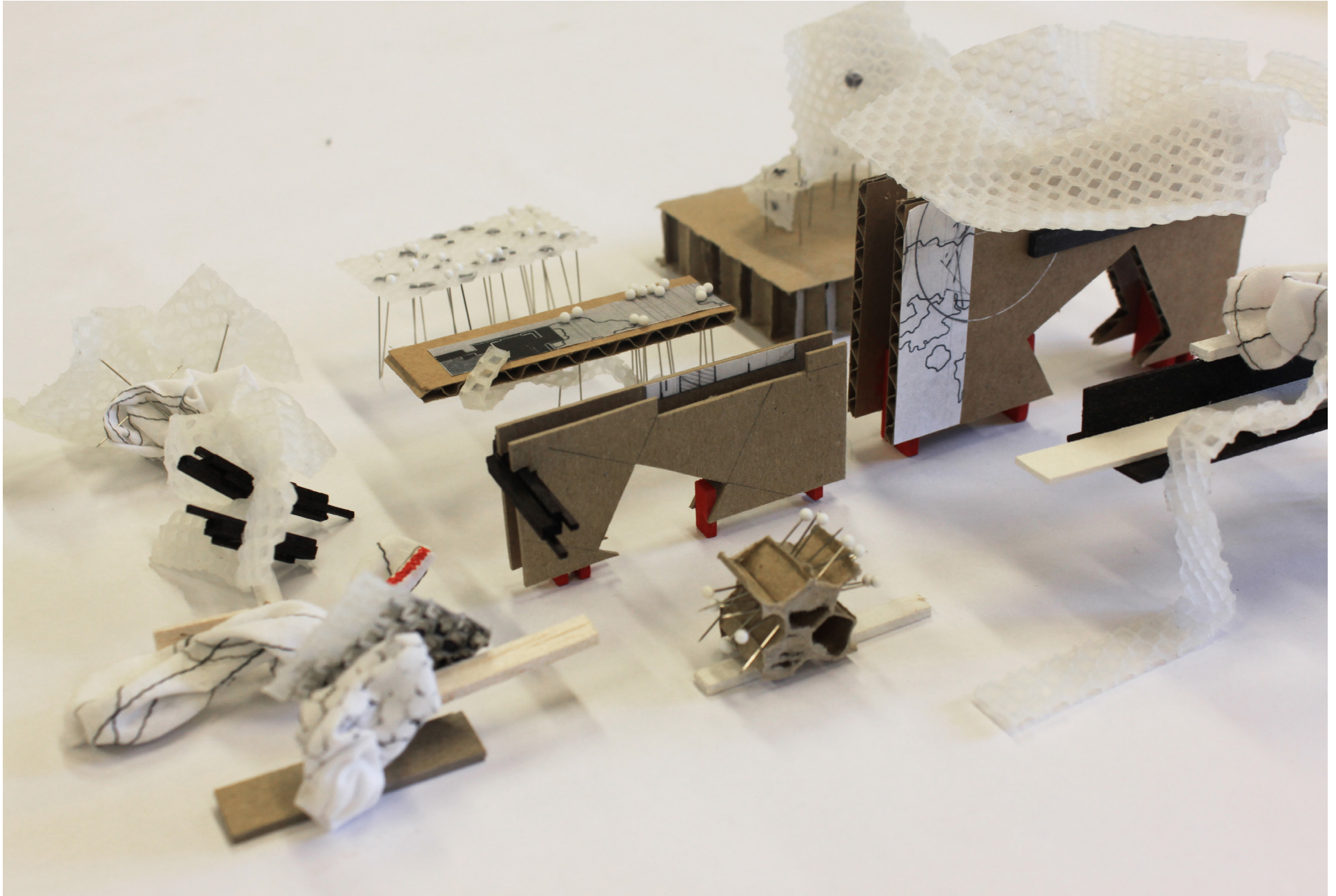


Figure 7: Fragment Models and Model Developments. This image shows eight of the twenty-five fragment models, at the left and center, and three of the model developments at the right. The models on the left were experimental in terms of material, process, and spatial quality, where at the right they begin to approach something more suggestive of space.

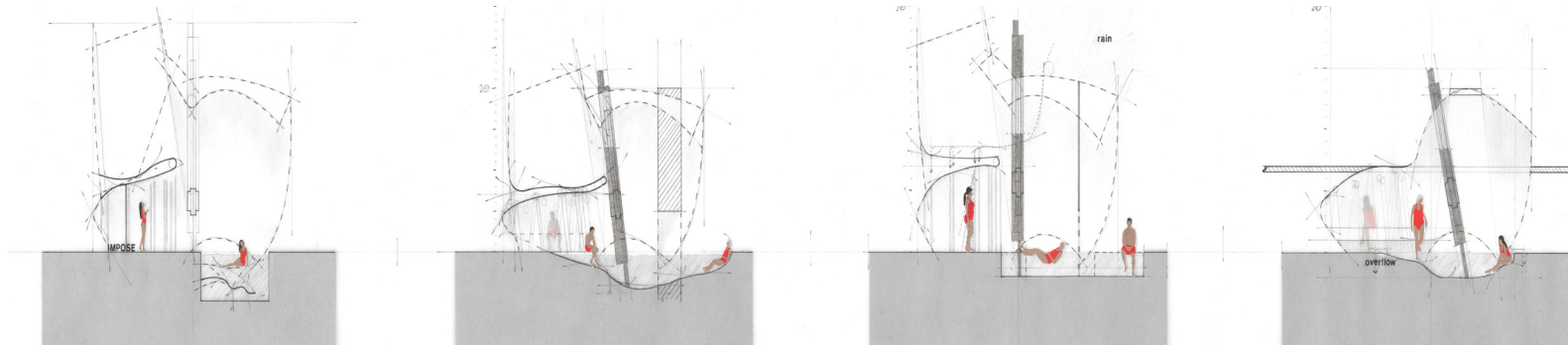


Figure 8: Section Development 1. This series of sections develops a model with the function of sauna/soak room. From left to right, I tested a variety of changes, most visible in roof height, interior wall thickness, and pool profile. The final design is most similar to iterations two and three.

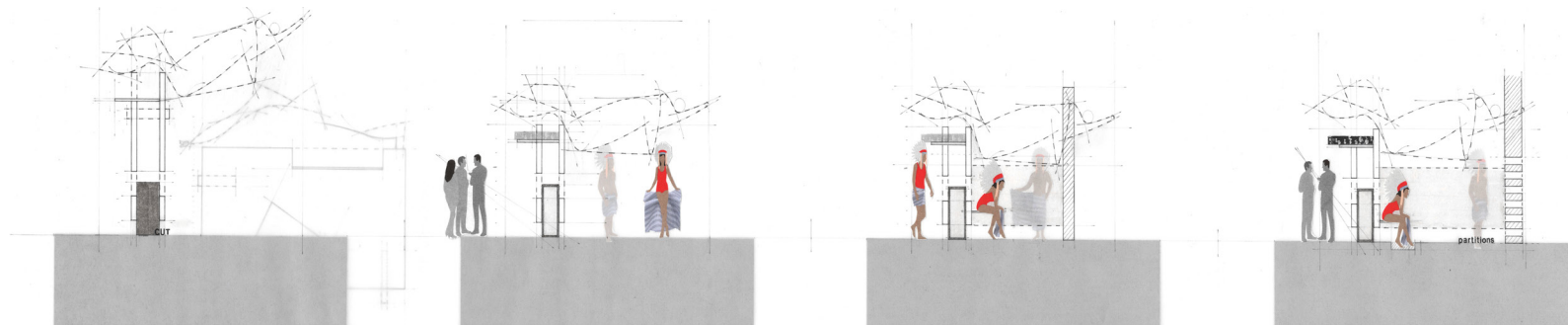


Figure 9: Section Development 2. This series develops a model with the function of a changing area. From left to right, I tested changes such as roof height and room size. I also introduced an element of the hammam into the final iteration: the wall at the right is pierced by a grid of circular windows, similar to the roof of a hammam calderium. In the final design, this room is most similar to the fourth version, and the windows across the hammam-inspired wall also serve the purpose of holding fresh towels, so that as bathers arrive, the windows open up to allow in more light.

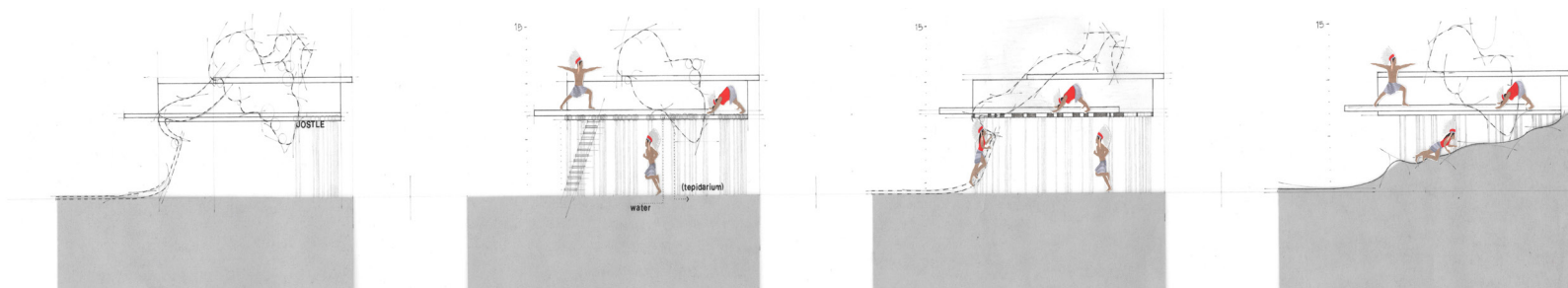


Figure 10: Section Development 3. These sections develop a model as the exercise area. Here, I established the exercise primarily as running through an obstacle course of tight-grouped poles; I also considered yoga as a possible exercise in each image, although this did not remain for the final proposal. Furthermore, I adjusted how people might move from a lower level to an upper level, and I introduced a series of small windows through that floor surface to the area below.



## GENERATING SPACE: FRAGMENT MODELS

After completing our 2D maps, we moved into the three dimensions—an important step in the process of designing architecture. We were told to single out small one- to three-inch squares or rectangles of our map to read as sections, or vertical cuts through a space (see Figure 6). We then constructed twenty-five models of these image fragments in a variety of materials, allowing the “cut-outs” of our larger site map to indicate layers of space (see Figure 7).

For my fragment models, I combined linear elements like chipboard, cardboard, colored basswood, and straight pins with flexible materials like embroidered fabric and sheets of beeswax. The resulting models are not meant to act as small rooms or buildings—they do not even need to make much spatial sense. Because the translation from two-dimensions, or even simply from thought, is often the most difficult for architects, it was important simply to make objects, with less emphasis on their logic. Instead, the initial models were a way of developing a relationship between materials and objects as a means of suggesting what a larger whole might become; they could resemble space, at any scale, but that is not necessarily the goal. After that first set, we selected our best fragments and developed three larger models. In order to develop their complexity, we combined models and re-examined our site maps for more information to include.

Several of my fragment models are included in the photograph, as well as my three developed models, at the right (Figure 7). The progression is most visible between the second model in the second row and the larger model to its right. I built my initial fragment model from the section of my mapping that references the murder and subsequent hanging that took place at the

jail (note the four red “legs” that correspond to the four red notches on the drawing). I then evolved this model into the version just to the right by adding a roof piece and developing elements from the first iteration, like the the cut-out in the upper right-hand corner.

This method—pulling form straight out of a drawing—is a relatively basic design move, but it can be a simple way to develop form that is conceptually rich. We were able to develop form quickly and effectively, which saved time for more careful design revisions later. The approach also taught us to read drawings in an atypical way: instead of viewing them as two-dimensional compilations of information, we interpreted them as three-dimensional drivers that blurred the distinction between flat image and form.

## TWO-DIMENSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE SECTION FRAGMENTS

Once again, we returned to drawing to accomplish what is usually more time-consuming in model-making: enacting enacting small, subtle changes. Many elements can be worked through differently on paper than in three dimensions, which is why we switch back and forth between the two to develop our projects. Problems that are not visible on paper become clear when modeling and vice versa. Therefore, we drew and enhanced our section models on paper, which provided an opportunity to think both about the function of the space and the logic of its arrangement. Where before our sections didn't need to make sense, it now became important for them to be coherent. I worked on three of the spaces in my developing bathhouse in a series of three drawings, each featuring four iterations from left to right.

In one section, I began to consider the portion of my bathhouse meant for the sauna and soaking area (see



suited to couples and families  
raft of bubbles set in the gr  
together in a feeling of comfort



Figure 8). The model had featured an arching sheet of beeswax, with a prominent black skewer pierced through it. In my development of the physical model, I had begun thinking that there were two zones: a shower/sauna area and a pool, separated by the aforementioned black rod. Across my four drawings, I made changes to the size of the space, the floor of the pool, the angle of the central rod, the proximity to surrounding walls, and the function of rainwater collection. I questioned indoor versus outdoor, and I tested the possibilities of having a shower or a sauna. I also began to bring in elements of my research: a hammam-style roof is visible at the left of the second and fourth section cut.

In the next section, I worked on the changing room of the spa (see Figure 9). We were also asked to question who the space was meant for within these explorations. Because I wanted the bathhouse to be a place that any person in Albemarle County could visit, not one specific group, I made my figures reflect the research that the work was influenced by—the hammam and the sweat lodge. In this section development, I also worked on the height and materiality of the space and considered which elements might be more open or more secluded, as in the hammam. I also began thinking about how the invasive plant life might play into my project, what the nature of the surrounding space might be, and whether there could be small foot-pools in the room. In the final iteration, I developed the idea that there would be a thick wall at one end, with small circular windows cut into it (as in a hammam), into which fresh towels would be placed. Then, as guests used towels throughout the day, the windows would slowly be revealed to allow in more light.

Finally, for the last section development, I explored how exercise could become a part of the experience, because both hammams and sweat lodges value sweating as a

way to rid oneself of the bad (see Figure 10). Because of the layout of the jail, with a narrow grassy courtyard that surrounds the building, I decided my form of exercise would be in running laps around the building before re-entering the sauna/pool area. Therefore, I developed the idea that a series of tightly packed poles might serve as obstacles in the path of runners—thus increasing the level of physical activity and providing a unique method of physical exertion. I also tested adjustments to the terrain and methods for accessing an upper level. Finally, I used the hammam-style roof as a way of lighting the space below that platform by including a circular window where a pole meets the surface above.

The process of developing models through drawing allowed for experimentation with form and with programmatic elements by forcing us to view the sometimes strange objects we had modelled as feasible spaces. This kind of “what if” thinking is crucial in design, as it helps expand the realm of possibilities in terms of what we can create. The process of drawing out subtle changes also forced us to spend a long time making sense of the objects we had modelled and bringing in the conceptual drivers from our research.



- 1. ENTRANCE
- 2. CHANGING AREA
- 3. EXERCISE COURSE
- 4. SAUNA
- 5. LAP POOL
- 6. EXIT

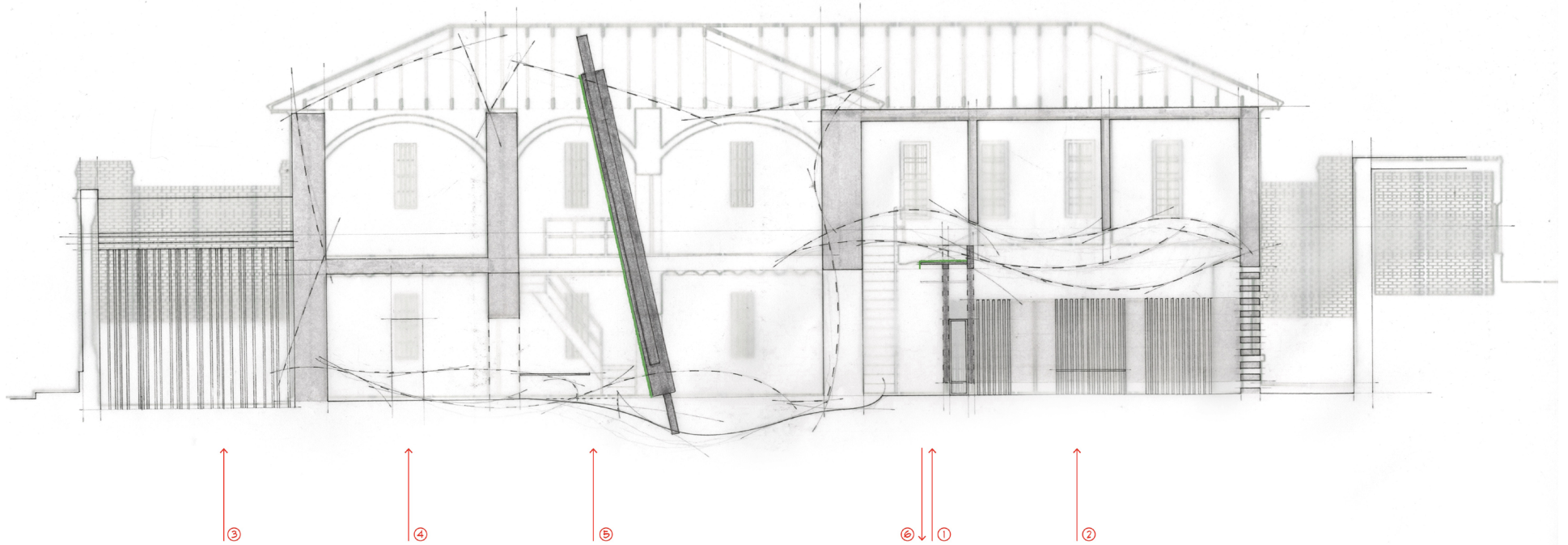


Figure 11: Longitudinal Section. This section showcases the final design of the bathhouse. The main entrance falls between the right edge of the pool and the two dark gray lines just to the right. The changing area is at the rightmost side of the jail; bathers enter from the front of the building, progress to their right, and then out the back of the building (directly across from the main entrance). They proceed left and around the building, through the exercise area, and back into the building at the back left corner. From there, bathers pass into a sauna, which leads into the final room with a high ceiling and a shallow pool in which to recline.



1. ENTER THROUGH MAIN GATE, BATHHOUSE ENTRANCE, AND PROCEED INTO CHANGING AREA
2. EXIT CHANGING AREA AND REAR BATHHOUSE DOOR
3. RUN EXERCISE COURSE BEHIND JAIL
4. CONTINUE THROUGH COURSE
5. ENTER BATHHOUSE THROUGH REAR VESTIBULE. PROCEED INTO SAUNA ROOM
6. OR, OPTIONALLY CONTINUE LAPS AROUND BUILDING
7. EXIT SAUNA ROOM INTO LAP POOL AREA; SOAK
8. EXIT LAP POOL, RE-DRESS IN CHANGING AREA, RETURN THROUGH FRONT ENTRANCE AND MAIN GATE

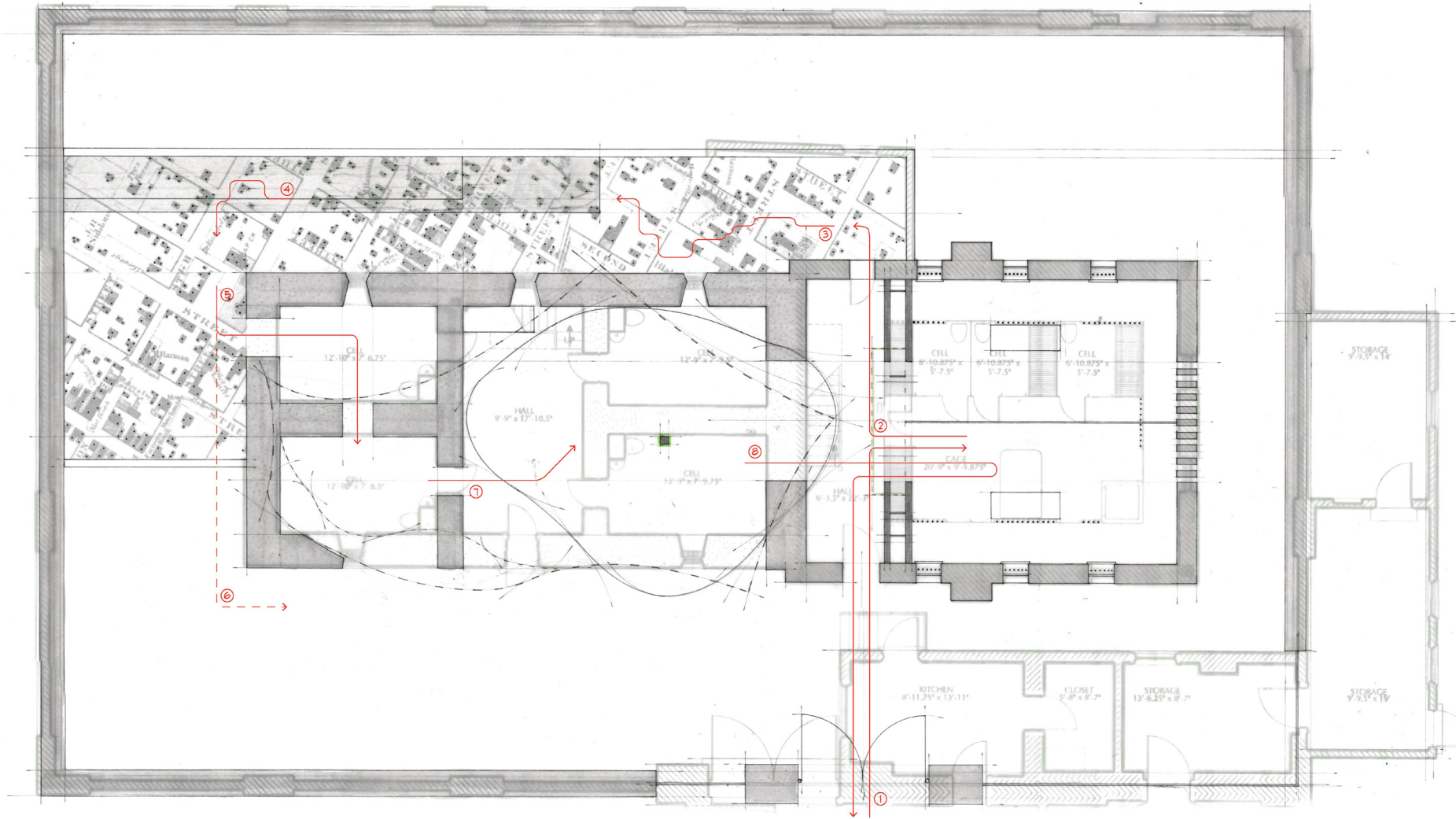
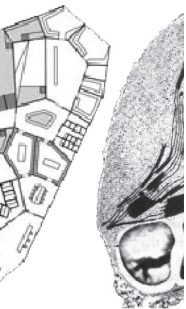


Figure 12: Building Plan. This plan showcases the final design of the bathhouse. The main entrance falls between the right edge of the pool and the two dark gray lines just to the right. The changing area is at the rightmost side of the jail; bathers enter from the front of the building, progress to their right, and then back out to the back of the building (directly across from the main entrance). They proceed left and around the building, through the exercise area, and back into the building at the back left corner. From there, bathers pass into a sauna, which leads into the final room with a high ceiling and a shallow pool in which to recline.



## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: THE PLAN AND SECTION

The final plan and section drawing are where each of the separate elements from above meet each other, along with the existing jail (see Figures 12 and 11, respectively). Using plan and section drawings of the jail, provided by the Historical American Buildings Survey, we began working through where each of the elements might make sense within the existing structure—or in some cases, where the existing structure might have to be adjusted to meet the new elements we designed.

I also then developed the sequence of events in terms of the architectural experience—not only what order they ought to go in, but how this became placed in the jail (left to right, top to bottom, or in my case, spiraling counterclockwise through and around the jail). First, one enters through a small existing door just right of center in the jail. Here, a series of canted rectangular doorways on either side reveals the soaking area to the left (the final room of the bathhouse). Instead of moving left into the exposed pool though, bathers move to the right into the changing area. They pass under a ledge, off of which a vine hangs in reference to the invasive species in my site research. In the original jail, this section housed a central “cage” of cells, which housed prisoners at the center of the room and allowed a guard to walk around the perimeter. As the changing area, many of the bars still remain, with several new additions to divide the space into a male and female dressing rooms and to cordon off several smaller, more private areas within. I also repurposed the old metal mattress shelves from the preexisting cells as benches, underneath a translucent, undulating ceiling that allows light in from the upper floors. This ceiling is a loose reference to the hammam in that the room below is dim and lit diffusely from above. The thick exterior wall at the far end of the jail has become the towel wall of

my previous section developments, which also provides the kind of light that harkens back to what one would experience in a hammam.

Once redressed in bathing suits or towels, bathers go back through the doorway of the changing area, again viewing the final room, but once more avoiding it by moving out through the back of the jail. To their left, they encounter the thicket of poles at the start of a running circuit at the start of a running circuit, through which they must dodge on each circle around the jailhouse in order to work up a sweat. This circuit can be repeated as many times as desired and at any pace—but when ready, bathers enter the jail through a new door at the back left corner. This circular path, which offers bathers a visual reminder of the destination of their journey (one can see the curving roof piece and a portion of the pool), also emphasizes the importance of circles within both the hammam and the sweat lodge. Bathers re-enter through an untouched jail cell in the back left portion of the jail and into another cell repurposed as a hammam caldarium. Benches line some of the walls, while in other places the surface of the roof piece wraps around and serves as also a place to sit. This roof piece is translucent and features the round glass windows of a hammam, allowing beams of light to be cast inward. Here, the bathers can rest for a time, soaking in the damp air and rinsing off, before entering the main space.

Finally, they arrive at the pool they have glimpsed multiple times throughout their circular journey. In my proposal, the floor above is removed, so the ceiling becomes double-height. Also, the windows that remain at the back of the old jail replace the circular windows of the steam room as a combination of the hammam’s precedent and the history of the site as it is (the jail windows now function as hammam windows). The bottom of the shallow pool is gradually sloped so that



there is a bathhouse in Charlottesville  
and a steam room within it  
dotted with colored globes  
which filter the light

a few steps farther, under the vaulted, translucent ceiling  
a pool  
the rubble of the past laying dormant in its shallow depths,  
life crawling upwards in-between;  
new imposed over old

this, in its quietude, is the tumultuous crescendo  
a meeting of bodies--and of time  
where the juxtaposition of gritty past and optimistic future  
soak together

all of the death, disease,  
debt, and decay  
deteriorate in the mist

exchanged  
by exertion--by sweat--  
as one spirals inward

not as a "tortuous itinerary," not as entrapment,  
but instead circling  
as the compass, as the clock,  
as the rocks laid out before a vision quest

a continuous evolution--  
revolution--  
from hindrance to help

Figure 13: Project Narrative. This poem compiles the ideas that I had imagined halfway through the semester, and acts as an attempt to pin down the qualities of my imagined space.

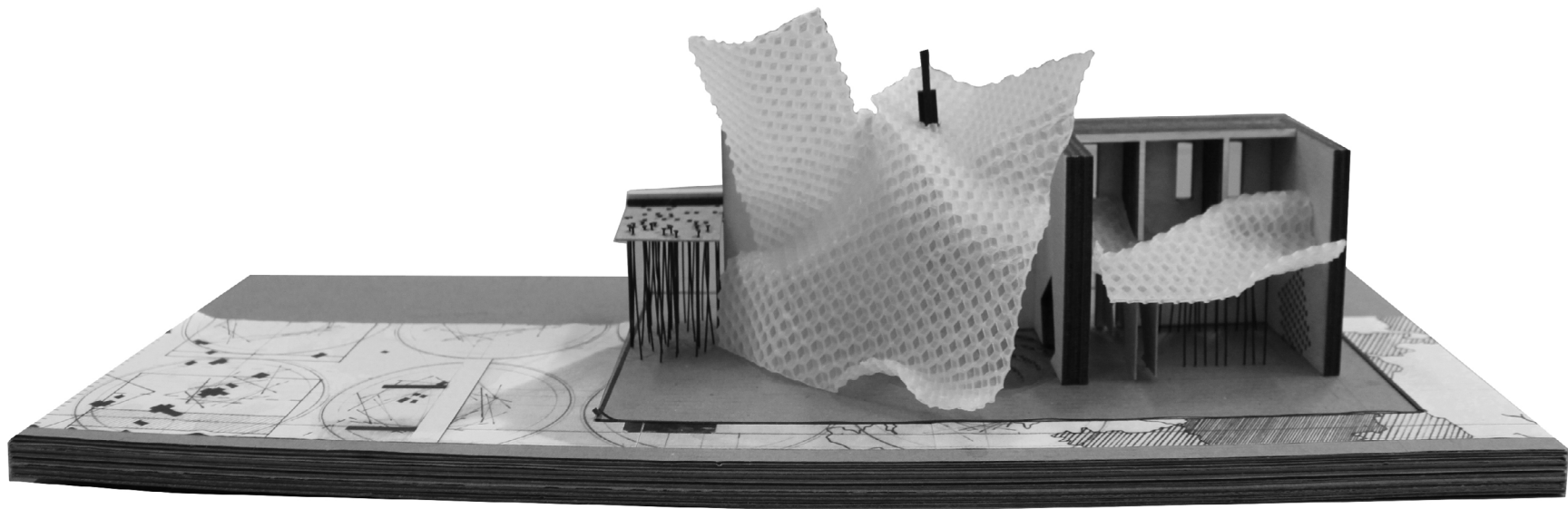


Figure 14: Final Model. This model tries to demonstrate the most important elements of the final proposal, instead of capturing precisely what the full building would look like. As an act of further investigation (not only documentation), this piece pointed out moments that would need to be defined should the project continue: how exactly does the room piece meet the existing structure? Which parts of the front of the jail remain? These ideas would most likely become illustrated in drawings that zoom into portions of the jail to address these questions at a smaller scale.

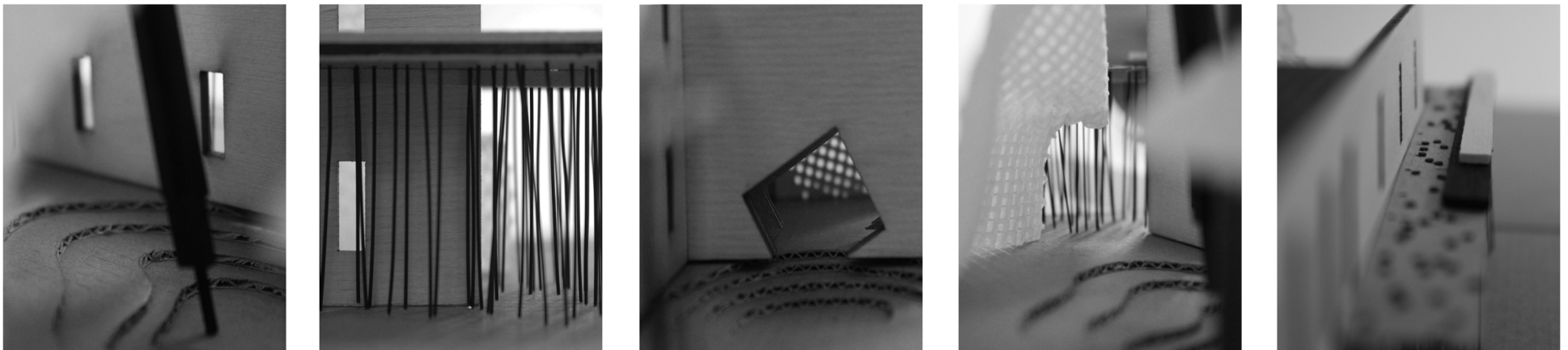


Figure 15: Interior Views of Final Model. From left to right, these images illustrate the soak room pool, the exercise obstacle course, a view through the soak room to the far wall of the changing room, an opposite view through the bathhouse, and a view of the upper level above the exercise course. Again, they serve to communicate spatial qualities, and provide information about which spaces need further development or design.

bathers can lie on the floor itself, relaxing in the mild water, or float out in the center. And although the water isn't icy cold, this plunge into cooler water reflects the tradition of sweat lodge experiences. The black rod from my fragment models remains in the center of the room; it too has a vine climbing up it, growing between the water and the ceiling high above. When bathers are ready to leave, they wade out through the final canted doorway, change back into their clothes, and exit through the same door they through which they first entered, thus completing the circle where they began.

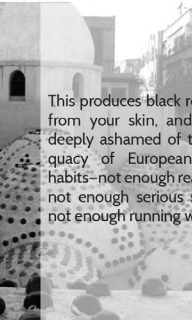
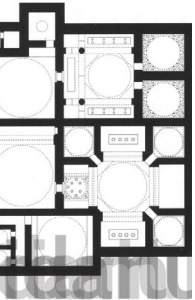
## OTHER ELEMENTS: THE SITE NARRATIVE, FINAL MODEL, AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Halfway through the design process—long before we had finalized any elements of our designs—we were asked to write a “narrative” about our space. In so doing, we were meant to characterize the feeling of these spaces in an effort to further realize them and to narrow down the “thesis” of our project (see Figure 13). For this assignment, I chose to write a poem; writing a poem in phrases seemed the only fitting way to talk about a place that I only knew in bits and pieces.

In my final model, I represented the important aspects of those final drawings three-dimensionally (see Figure 14). Since it was not possible to include all of my design changes at such a small scale, I created the model to give a general impression of what the new site would look like. I have also demonstrated the idea that these forms were built off of site-based, historical research by including elements of the drawing on its base and demonstrating the physical manifestations where possible. I then photographed portions of the model to give a better idea of what the interiors might feel like (see Figure 15).

These project elements were supplemental to the main design processes; they served to further my thoughts about the design and convey the finished proposal when presenting the project. The poem, for example, helped me clarify the purpose and central themes of my project, and the photographs captured the qualities of light or space that might, if there were time, suggest further revisions or additions to the design of each space. As with every other step along the way, each of these approaches not only communicated a static design, but also contributed in some way to my understanding of it.





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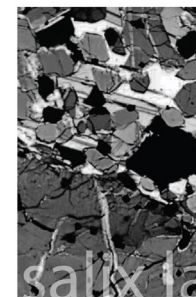
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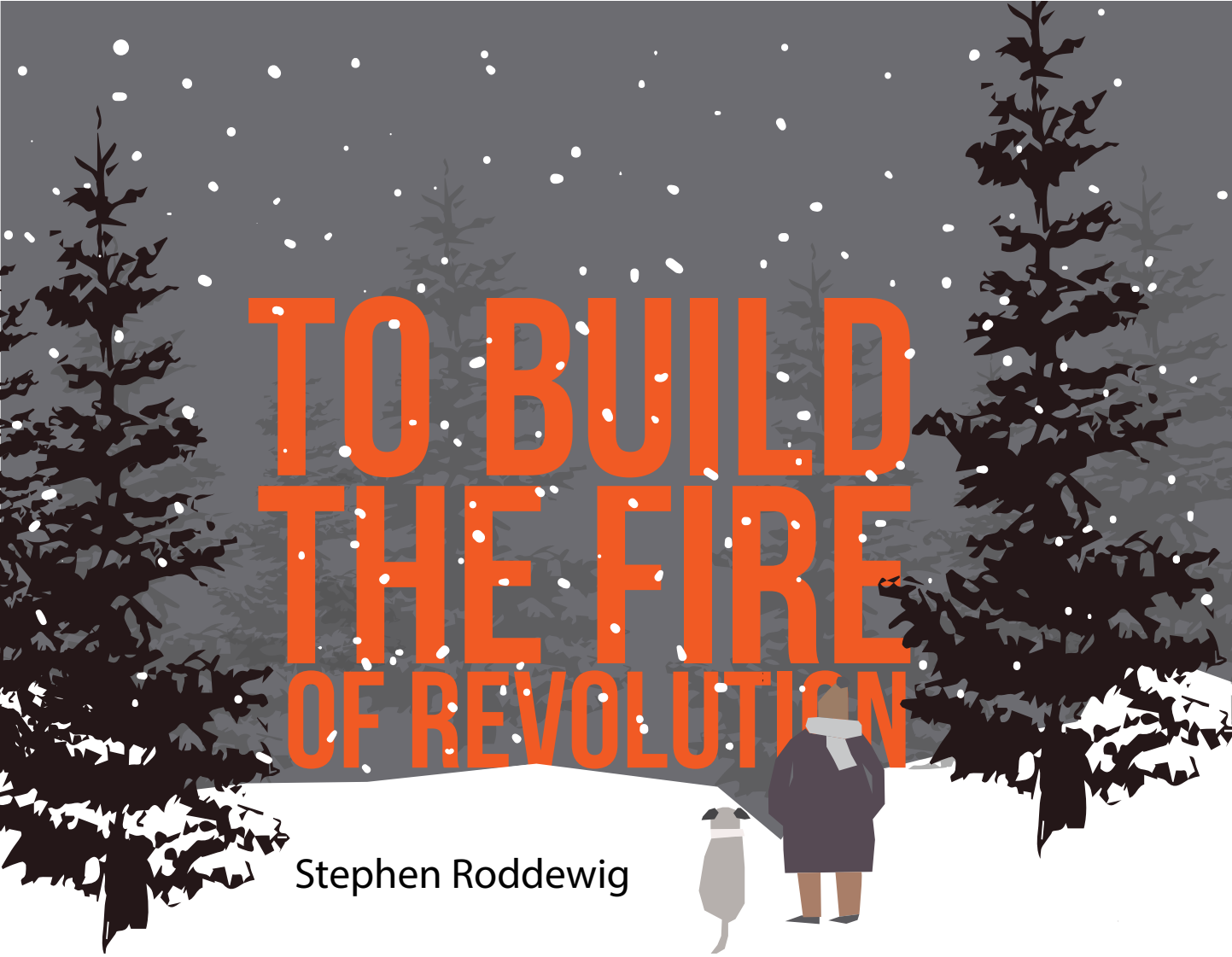
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# TO BUILD THE FIRE OF REVOLUTION

Stephen Roddewig

*Scholarly examinations of naturalism in Jack London's 1908 short story "To Build a Fire" often overlook the influence of the socialist political movement. After surveying the American Socialist Party movement and London's activism in "How I Became a Socialist," this essay uses the frame of Marxist rhetorical criticism to inspect sociopolitical themes in London's famous story. London's critiques of Individualism in "How I Became a Socialist" parallel one of his concerns in "To Build a Fire" as his unnamed protagonist progresses through the Yukon with the larger ideals of American society and the capitalist economy guiding his actions. Although masculinity, individualism, environmental dominance, and capitalist commodification lead the character to believe he can succeed, his slow death represents an implicit critique of Western culture and its ideologies.*

ABSTRACT

Jack London's renowned short story "To Build a Fire" features the brutal fate of an unnamed protagonist fighting against the elements in the frozen Yukon at seventy-five degrees below zero. Published in 1908, the work serves as a prime example of naturalist writing by showcasing a hostile world that threatens to kill with indifference. However, the story ranges beyond the naturalist emphasis on the physical significance of man's fight for survival into veiled socialist themes. Examined through the lens of Marxist ideology, which guided socialist movements at the turn of the century, and London's own beliefs, "To Build a Fire" critiques Western culture's encompassing ideologies: individualism, masculinity, environmental domination, and even classical capitalism during the period of the rising American Socialist Party and the broader Progressive Movement.

## PHYSICAL SIGNIFICANCE VERSUS SOCIALIST THEMES

One criticism of contemporary interpretations of London's short story is scholars' attempts to place "To Build a Fire" into metaphysical categories, thus creating new significance for the tale in the high-vaulted ideas of philosophy, a pitfall I will avoid in my own analysis. As described by Charles May in his essay "'To Build a Fire': Physical Fiction and Metaphysical Critiques," once a critic has chosen a grouping, "If the work fits, even in the coarsest fashion, with... limbs lopped off, it is declared to have value because the category does" (19). With the bloody imagery of amputating a work to fit it into a category, May makes it abundantly clear that he disapproves of such a practice.

This distaste drives May's larger argument that London's short story contains significance as a work of physical fiction, not in the abstract categories of theories. The assertion is articulated in a passage that derides a conventional idea that the protagonist's nameless identity shows that he represents the "Everyman," a character that stems from sixteenth century plays as a metaphor for the soul (22). May rejects such an existential theme in the story, favoring the naturalist interpretation which asserts humans' close relations to animals: "a naturalistic version of Everyman is simply Everyman as a body. And this is precisely what the protagonist is in London's story, and it is why the story has physical significance only" (22). The importance of this assertion lies in the final clauses, where May unflinchingly declares that "To Build a Fire" contains "physical significance only," equating it to the surface story of a man's struggle and eventual death at the hands of nature without any underlying philosophies (22).

I, however, will contradict May's argument, and assert that to declare London's work as significant only in its

physical setting and hardships constitutes reductionism. Such a simplification loses sight of both the historical context of 1908 and London's own experiences. Indeed, to reduce London's work to the label of physical fiction is to simply place it into another such category, albeit one less hypothetical than the metaphysical interpretations.

I do not mean to assert that "To Build a Fire" is an artifact of socialist propaganda or that the ideology is the explicit impetus for its creation. To do so would reduce London's work to another schema: the Marxist category. If the author sought to promote such a worldview, spending paragraphs describing the cold and his character's attempts to light a fire would not improve the work's efficacy, especially if the explicit purpose was to promote a critique of capitalism. However, several themes within the story coincide with Marx's criticisms of Western culture, and these themes form an undercurrent to the story as a whole.

*"To Build a Fire" critiques Western culture's encompassing ideologies: individualism, masculinity, environmental domination, and even classic capitalism.*

Marxism itself purports to be grounded in the material world, which complements May's argument that "To Build a Fire" is centered in the concrete. The followers of the ideology focus on the mode of production, which decides how resources are used and how material goods are distributed in a society. According to Marx, the consciousness of humanity itself is rooted in the material world. In early history, the method of survival defined how humans categorized the world about them (Collins and Makowsky 34-35).

This logic is applied to the modern capitalist system, to which humans now turn to meet their basic needs. Marxism argues that the economy perpetuates worldviews based on economic position or class, termed "class consciousness." The culture that guides worldview is advocated by those in power to perpetuate the system. As written in *The Communist Manifesto*, "The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class" (Marx and Engels). Thus, ideas of individualism, masculinity, environmental domination, and wealth accumulation proliferate through society, driving us to work harder in the economic system. More than a century after London published "To Build a Fire," these mindsets remain in American culture just as they appear in the short story despite the efforts of socialist movements in the past century.

I therefore suggest an alternative perspective on “To Build a Fire” that both supports May’s physical emphasis and engages with the metaphysical ideologies of individualism, masculinity, and environmental domination present in the story. Reinforced by an exploration of biographical and historical context, I will offer a more comprehensive picture of the socialist themes within the tale beyond its well-established naturalist themes.

## **SOCIALIST BACKGROUND OF “TO BUILD A FIRE”**

“To Build a Fire” was published in 1908, during the height of the Progressive Movement. The political initiative is remembered for curtailing the power of big business and supporting unionism, exemplified by federal actions against the large monopolies that had dominated the Gilded Age of the previous century. Reformism became a political movement under progressivism, as Robert Wiebe writes in his essay “Business Disunity and the Progressive Movement, 1901-1914”: “the widespread desire for reform gained respectability and momentum during the Roosevelt administration, grew restive in the interlude of William Howard Taft’s presidency, and finally culminated in Woodrow Wilson’s New Freedom” (665). The desire for change took more radical political forms in leftist camps.

Amid the larger movement against marketplace domination, the American Socialist Party was founded in 1901, according to *The American Socialist Movement (1897-1912)* by Ira Kipnis. Over the years, many have shrugged off the recurring socialist movements of the 20th century as mere reactionary groups and anarchists, but Kipnis argues that the socialist party of the turn of the century cannot be shrugged into obscurity:

“The American Socialist Party cannot be so easily dismissed. At the height of its power it had over one hundred and fifty thousand dues-paying members, published hundreds of newspapers, won almost a million votes for its presidential candidate, elected more than a thousand of its members to political office, secured passage of a considerable body of legislation, won the support of one third of the American Federation of Labor, and was instrumental in organizing the Industrial Workers of the World” (5).

Clearly, for its brief historical moment, the American Socialist Party wielded palpable influence. The party represented values found not only in the political sphere, but the cultural arena, as Kipnis states: “the Socialist Party should be studied both as a political party and as a social movement” (5). As seen with the more moderate Progressive Movement, the political agenda of the socialist party reflected and harnessed the sentiments of dissatisfied social groups. Literature has served as a

vehicle for both forms of organization, capturing cultural ideals, as demonstrated in Zora Neale Hurston’s “The Eatonville Anthology,” and political calls, exemplified in the infamous satire “A Modest Proposal” by Jonathan Swift.

*The American Socialist Party  
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American public.*

Kipnis concludes the introduction of his book on the history of the party by declaring, “To dismiss the advocates of socialism... is to ignore the great social unrest of the twentieth century and the real gains made by their party” (5). With a strong membership base and an impressive number of votes for presidential candidate Eugene V. Debs, the American Socialist Party harnessed the reformist sentiments of a growing sector of the American public. An even larger swath of the population desired more moderate change under the Progressive Movement, or “a more equitable balance of privilege and power in American society” (Wiebe 665).

## **LONDON’S SOCIALIST BIOGRAPHY**

London joined the American Socialist Party in its first year of existence and discussed the subject in both his fiction and nonfiction. To understand the author’s reasons for his political stance and to identify themes found in “To Build a Fire,” I turn to London’s article “How I Became a Socialist,” first published in *The Comrade* monthly magazine in 1903 and collected in the provocatively-titled 1905 book *War of the Classes*. The anthology of political essays serves as an argument for the author’s beliefs, presenting both logical and anecdotal evidence as reinforcement. “How I Became a Socialist” follows the latter strategy, discussing London’s experiences as a young laborer and his discoveries as he traveled and observed the elderly, disabled, and unfit workers at the lowest rungs of society. The article employs pathos to gain the audience’s sympathy for both the author and the subjects of his writing.

London immediately highlights one of the common targets of socialist criticism in his opening passage: “I was very young and callow, did not know much of anything, and though I had never even heard of a school called ‘Individualism,’ I sang the paean of the strong with all my heart.” Describing his early life, London remarks, “I must confess I hardly thought of them at all, save that I vaguely felt that they, barring accidents, could be as good as I if they wanted to real hard, and could work just as well,” demonstrating that he never thought much of the poor

and the marginalized (“How I Became”). This passage highlights the central implication of Individualism.

Marxist theory drove the platforms and ideas of the socialist movements, which guided London’s ideas in the article. As evidence, Marx also addressed Individualism directly, arguing that the mindset places the blame solely on the individual for poverty and avoids any criticism of the larger economic system that created the conditions. Indeed, Marx argued that capitalism relies on the surplus army, a base of unemployed laborers that can be used to threaten unions and labor activists with replacement. Thus, poverty becomes a tool of the system to stamp out dissent, a method that Marxists argued capitalism perpetuated (Collins and Makowsky 41).

London continues to describe his early individualism, equating it to ideals of masculinity: “I was a rampant individualist. . . . Wherefore I called the game, as I saw it played, or thought I saw it played, a very proper game for MEN” (“How I Became”). London took pride in his physical labor, building a masculine image. Moreover, he believed that the purpose of life was to work hard: “In short, my joyous individualism was dominated by the orthodox bourgeois ethics. I read the bourgeois papers, listened to the bourgeois preachers” (“How I Became”). London demonstrates Marx’s theory of the ruling class’s dominance over ideas, describing how his beliefs in the merits of individualism originated in the surrounding culture.

London’s “bourgeois” views did not last, however: “I found there all sorts of men, many of whom had once been as good as myself . . . sailor-men, soldier-men, labor-men . . . twisted out of shape by toil and hardship and accident, and cast adrift by their masters like so many old horses” (“How I Became”). The author discusses the fear that he may find himself in the same state: “All my days I have worked hard with my body and according to the number of days I have worked, by just that much am I nearer the bottom of the Pit” (“How I Became”). London uses the imagery of the hole to describe the plight of the working class: trapped from the start.

For London, it was not socialism’s economic arguments or its broad concepts of class struggle that were convincing, but rather the concrete reality of laborers at the bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid. According to him, “no economic argument, no lucid demonstration of the logic and inevitableness of Socialism affects me as . . . when I first saw the walls of the Social Pit rise around me and felt myself slipping down, down, into the shambles at the bottom” (“How I Became”). Such a definitive declaration indicates that the socialist themes in his fiction should not be disregarded. Indeed, all the issues London explicitly engaged in his political writing appear implicitly in “To Build a Fire.”

*For London, it was not socialism's economic arguments or its broad concepts of class struggle that convinced, but rather the concrete reality of laborers at the bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid.*

London did not embrace socialism solely in his personal writing, but also in his political activities and professional writing. According to Kipnis, London participated in the American Socialist Party’s intra-party politics: “Among those who engaged in ‘monstrous’ attacks upon the party policy of winning political office so that the state could conduct the gradual inauguration of socialism, few were as effective between 1905 and 1910 as Jack London” (298). London earned his place in the party’s official history as an active voice for socialism.

Even more revealing is London’s argument for a more radical approach than the leadership’s focus on elections to effect change from inside the American government. London advocated his vision with his most refined skill: writing. According to Kipnis, “perhaps the Left wing’s most effective single piece of propaganda was London’s novel, *The Iron Heel*, first published in 1907” (299). The novel’s plot leaves no question about the author’s beliefs, describing the “efforts of its hero, Ernest Everhard, to convince his fellow socialist leaders that while they talked of victory at the polls, a capitalist oligarchy, the *Iron Heel*, was destroying American democracy” (Kipnis 299). This blatant cultural commentary illustrates that London not only wrote about socialism, but also attempted to influence the platform of the larger American Socialist Party through his fiction.

## **BUILDING THE FIRE**

Such a broad ideology as socialism may not appear evident when first reading London’s short story. One of the central themes supporting May’s assertion that London’s short story is significant for its physical fiction and not for any metaphysical symbolism is the protagonist’s focus on constructing a fire. The title of “To Build a Fire” bolsters the claim. But in the frigid setting of the Yukon, such an act means the survival or demise of a frail biological system, suggesting a form of symbolism that contradicts the reductionist strategy before the socialist themes even appear.

In the short story, the author introduces such a biological system: the unnamed protagonist, venturing boldly and confidently through the Yukon in Arctic winter. Though never explicitly stated, the character adopts the same

material focus as capitalism: “He was quick and alert in the things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances. Fifty degrees below zero meant eighty-odd degrees of frost. Such fact impressed him as being cold and uncomfortable, and that was all” (“To Build”). Marxism also focuses on material conditions as the driver of human actions. However, the man sees only a cold tundra before him, while Marx saw the basis of consciousness derived from such environments (Collins and Makowsky 34). The protagonist has no such ruminations.

*This individualist mindset, rooted in the capitalist ideal that declares every man will gain what his abilities merit, will lead to the protagonist's doom.*

The man embodies the capitalist attitude of domination, material focus, and individualism. The third ideal is already embodied by the very plot of the story, which places him alone on a hostile tundra with only his strength to guide him. He is confident in his ability, “quick and alert,” resembling London’s description of working class laborers. The individualist theme is further reinforced by the man’s willingness to strike out on his own: “He was bound for the old claim on the left fork of Henderson Creek, where the boys were already. They had come over across the divide from the Indian Creek country, while he had come the roundabout way to take a look at the possibilities of getting out logs in the spring from the islands in the Yukon” (“To Build”). The man has abandoned the safety of the collective group, one of the basic blocks of socialist action, trusting in his individual abilities. This individualist mindset, rooted in the capitalist ideal that declares every man will gain what his abilities merit, will lead to the protagonist’s doom.

At first, the notion of capitalism and free market values operating at the northern tip of the world seem far-fetched, but, already, setting and point of view have proven that Individualist ideology guides the protagonist. Furthermore, the quotation above points to wealth accumulation as another motive. He abandons the company of “the boys” and ventures on a “roundabout” trek all for the sake of examining “the possibilities of getting out logs” for profit (“To Build”). The protagonist sees the world in material terms and acts on material needs.

From the capitalist view, nature is a space to be commodified and dominated for the purpose of production. The protagonist follows the ideal of

environmental domination, exemplified by his attitude toward his canine companion: “there was no keen intimacy between the dog and the man. The one was the toil-slave of the other, and the only caresses it had ever received were the caresses of the whip-lash” (“To Build”). The language of “toil-slave” and “whip-lash” further reinforce the image of nature’s creature bent to the will of the man through violence, a potent show of superiority.

However, the individual’s dominance over nature as a commodity does not last as the plot progresses. The man travels alongside the Yukon River until his foot punctures the ice. With his boots wet, the next moments prove critical if he is to save his feet from freezing. He builds a fire beneath a copse of pines, his confidence maintained: “Well, here he was; he had had the accident; he was alone; and he had saved himself” (“To Build”). The reader, at this point in the narrative, believes such a calm individual can succeed.

In his confidence, he even asserts the sexism that coincides with the other attitudes perpetuated by capitalism: “The old-timer had been very serious in laying down the law that no man must travel alone in the Klondike after fifty below. . . . Those old-timers were rather womanish, some of them, he thought. All a man had to do was to keep his head, and he was all right. Any man who was a man could travel alone” (“To Build”). The dichotomy is clear: strength belongs to a man who can “keep his head,” while any who encourage caution are “womanish,” implying that action is for the masculine (“To Build”).

*The dichotomy is clear: strength belongs to a man who can "keep his head," while any who encourage caution are "womanish," implying that action is for the masculine.*

The language of the protagonist mirrors that of London’s own reflections on individualism and masculinity as he experienced it in his work: “I called the game, as I saw it played, or thought I saw it played, a very proper game for MEN” (“How I Became”). The emphasis on “MEN” is revealing, implying that London related individualism, strength, and masculinity to being a physical laborer. In the economic culture that promotes the dichotomy between gender attitudes, it becomes plausible to imagine a young London declaring that any “man who was a man” could succeed by his will (“To Build”). But, as London discovered in his travels, strength is not the cure-all that Individualism expounds. The protagonist

realizes the same wisdom, but, unlike the author, his epiphany comes too late.

A wind blows, causing the canopy above the fire to shift and drop snow on the flames. The man attempts to rebuild the fire, but the cold has already seeped into his hands. He continues to fight against the elements as his fingers lose all feeling, until his second attempt at fire also fails. Eventually, the protagonist decides to face death with dignity, finally understanding the shortcoming of his individualistic ways: “You were right, old hoss; you were right,” the man mumbled to the old-timer of Sulphur Creek” (“To Build”). Having failed to reach the safety of the collective and knowing his fate, the man concedes the basic wisdom of socialism with his final breath.

*Through its allusions to masculinity, individualism, environmental domination, and capitalism, the short story's ending contains an implicit critique of Western culture.*

The foreboding tone of the narrative implies the man's efforts will fail from the start: “The cold of space smote the unprotected tip of the planet, and he, being on that unprotected tip, received the full force of the blow. The blood of his body recoiled before it” (“To Build”). Indeed, the capitalist themes found throughout the story, followed by their failure to preserve the man in the end, imply that a socialist critique operates beneath the surface plot. The same sense of inevitability pervades London's public reflection on his own birth into socialism, published five years before “To Build a Fire” in 1903. Referencing the days he spent working, he acknowledges that he is “nearer the bottom of the Pit” (“How I Became”). The Pit surrounds London's doomed protagonist from the beginning; it is represented by both the physical cold and the capitalist mindset that blinds him and guides him to his end.

## CONCLUSION

Regarding London's short story “To Build a Fire” as significant only in its physical realities ignores its historical context and the biography of the writer himself. Instead, considering the Marxist perspective, which focuses on both material conditions and the social ideals they create, reveals the influence of broader socialist themes underneath the material realities of the frozen setting and the naturalist plot. Through its allusions to masculinity, individualism, environmental domination, and capitalism, the short story's ending contains an implicit critique of Western culture. Using similar contextual frameworks, Marxist theory offers a lens to

discover capitalist ideologies and their socialist critiques embedded in the fiction of socialist authors at the turn of the twentieth century.

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# A REEVALUATION OF THE DAMAGE DONE TO THE UNITED STATES BY SOVIET ESPIONAGE

APRIL PICKENS



*Popular opinion and many historians portray the effects of Soviet espionage on the United States as disastrous. Although covert Soviet efforts undeniably harmed America, their extent and gravity has been greatly exaggerated. This paper evaluates primary and secondary sources on the subject to strike a delicate balance between minimizing and inflating the effects of Soviet activities. It acknowledges that espionage did some damage, but questions the legal status, extent, and effect of much of the Soviets' "stolen" information, ultimately arguing that most Soviet espionage was actually more harmful to the Soviet Union than to the United States.*

**ABSTRACT**



## RUSSIAN COLONEL IS INDICTED HERE AS TOP SPY IN U.S.<sup>1</sup>

### CHIEF 'RUSSIAN SPY' NAMED BY M'CARTHY:

Senator Says He Has Link With State Department—  
Tydings Speeds Hearing on Charge<sup>2</sup>

### ATOM AIDE IN WAR CALLED SOVIET SPY:

Hickenlooper Says Photograph Shows  
Bomb Project Official With Russian Agents<sup>3</sup>

### Telegrams Show Genius In Soviet's Spy Setup<sup>4</sup>

These headlines from national newspapers in the 1940s and 1950s epitomize the popular perception that Soviet espionage was everywhere in the United States and that such espionage was continually exacting disastrous consequences on the nation. Although many historians argue to this day that the results of Soviet spying changed American history for the worse, it was not nearly as devastating as popular portrayals would have the nation believe.

The following pages argue in support of this assertion, based on a delicate balance between belittling and exaggerating the effects of Soviet activities. Although Soviet espionage did result in some damage, most espionage was actually more harmful to the Soviet Union than the United States. The most dangerous spies were actually Americans, not Soviets, and United States counterintelligence substantially reduced the harm done by the Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Mildred Murphy, "Russian Colonel is Indicted Here as Top Spy in U.S.," *New York Times*, August 8, 1957, accessed November 7, 2015, from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/114187738?accountid=11667>. This news article described the arrest of illegal Soviet agent Rudolf Ivanovich Abel.

2 William S. White, "Chief 'Russian Spy' Named by M'Carthy," *New York Times*, March 22, 1950, accessed November 7, 2015, from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/111481689?accountid=11667>. The article reports on M'Carthy's attempt to reveal information based on some vague disclosures by his personal friend, J. Edgar Hoover, hence the inconclusive nature of M'Carthy's accusations and Hoover's refusal to cooperate by disclosing VENONA files.

3 "Atom Aide in War Called Soviet Spy," *New York Times*, July 1, 1951, accessed November 7, 2015, from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/112214568?accountid=11667>

4 Igor Gouzenko, "Telegrams Show Genius in Soviet's Spy Setup," *Washington Post*, August 9, 1948, accessed November 7, 2015 from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/152034537?accountid=11667>. This is a report by the Soviet defector Gouzenko on part of the Soviet's elaborate spy system.

5 My sources are necessarily secondary in most cases, insofar as I have no security clearance to view classified FBI, CIA, and

Any argument downplaying covert Soviet endeavors must begin with an admission that some espionage unquestionably led to detrimental consequences for the United States. Navy Chief Warrant Officer and communications specialist John Walker betrayed nuclear submarine secrets, information about the United States Navy, and plans during the Vietnam War, which led to countless unnecessary deaths.<sup>6</sup> In the words of former CIA National Clandestine Service director Michael Sulick,

John Walker's compromising of US naval capabilities cost the government millions of dollars to develop countermeasures. . . . Moreover, the damage caused by espionage cannot be calculated only in dollars. When Walker spied for the KGB, he had access to information about US bombing raids against North Vietnam. He passed that information to the Soviets, who in turn passed it to their North Vietnamese allies. In various towns and cities across the United States, a father lost a child, a son lost a father, or a sister lost a brother who was a pilot shot down over Vietnam because of a spy's betrayal.<sup>7</sup>

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KGB files. But I have located authors who either were former KGB, FBI, or CIA agents, or authors granted special permission to access the archives of these agencies. An excellent overview of the consequences of Soviet espionage is found in Jerrold Schecter and Leona Schecter, *Sacred Secrets: How Soviet Intelligence Operations Changed American History*, (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, Inc., 2002). A comprehensive analysis of Soviet espionage from the viewpoint of a former CIA agent can be found in the two books by Michael Sulick: *Spying in America: Espionage from the Revolutionary War to the Dawn of the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2012), and *American Spies: Espionage against the United States from the Cold War to the Present*, (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2013). One of the best sources from a KGB defector is Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (New York: Basic Books, 1999). One of the authoritative sources on the important Venona documents is John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), and a good source on the briefly opened KGB archives is John Earl Haynes, Harvey Klehr, and Alexander Vassiliev, *Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America*, with translations by Philip Redko and Steven Shabad (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009). A final note concerning my sources: since the nature of my argument is comprehensive (the overall effect of Soviet espionage), I have lightly touched upon dozens of instances and persons rather than delving deeply into any specific instance. For further research into each case, see the bibliographies of the sources listed in this paper.

6 Sulick, *Spying in America*, 240.

7 Sulick, *American Spies*, 14.

Due to the treachery of Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess, two British officials in Washington D.C. who were working for the Soviets, the Soviets “had full access to American strategic planning and operational orders for the Korean War. . . . Maclean and Burgess forwarded the date for MacArthur’s offensive north of the 38th parallel, November 26, 1950, to the Kremlin.”<sup>8</sup>

Because of such advance notice transferred from Moscow to the Chinese, Mao Zedong was able to spring a trap on MacArthur, costing many lives and a strategic setback. Some time later, the same two agents informed Moscow of President Truman and the United Nation’s intention not to use the atomic bomb in the war—information that greatly emboldened the Communists.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the above instances of true injury to the United States military, John Haynes, Harvey Klehr, and Alexander Vassiliev in *Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America* list countless other American traitors in the government, military forces, and elsewhere who have now been definitively proven Soviet spies by KGB archives, the decoded VENONA messages, and the testimony of defectors. Strategically positioned traitors included Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Harry Dexter White and atomic bomb chemist Harry Gold.

White graduated from Harvard with a PhD in economics and quickly started work in the United States Department of the Treasury in 1934, becoming the most influential individual in the department besides the actual Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, Jr. Although not a Communist himself, White was a “fellow traveler,” an agent who was fully aware of the destination of the information that he passed on through spy handler Nathan Gregory Silvermaster. White was also partially responsible for Operation Snow, an indirect Soviet mission that resulted in the United States’ hardline ultimatum against Japan just before Pearl Harbor. In addition, White exposed US diplomatic positions before key conferences following World War II, enabling the Soviets to safely push their own demands because they knew American priorities ahead of time. White also wheedled permission from the Treasury Department to give the Soviets the plates and information necessary to print the new West German currency, Allied Marks (AM), in East Germany. When the Soviets subsequently mass produced the marks in East Germany while the United States was carefully trying to regulate the same marks in West Germany, the entire German economy was completely destabilized. This destabilization forced the United States to reform the currency in West Germany to prevent economic collapse. The irritated Soviets responded to the currency

reform and several other Allied actions with the Berlin Blockade of 1948-1949.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the gravity of these instances, the Soviet Union acquired most of its potentially harmful information legally. If the war *had* broken out between the two nations, the intelligence gathered would definitely have set the United States at more of a disadvantage than if no such spying had occurred. But according to former head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, J. Edgar Hoover,

Many phases of Soviet intelligence gathering . . . do not involve violations of [US] laws. The Soviets exploit fully the democratic freedoms of this country and gather legally much data in the public realm. One defector has estimated that the Soviet Military Attaché’s office in the United States is able to obtain legally 95% of the material useful for its intelligence objectives.<sup>11</sup>

In other words, the damage done exclusively by *illegal* espionage was not nearly as devastating as popularly perceived.<sup>12</sup>

*Despite the gravity of these instances, the Soviet Union acquired most of its potentially harmful information legally.*

Another common misconception is that the United States was infested with Russians sent straight from the Soviet Union to steal the top secret files in Washington,

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10 Sulick, *Spying in America*, 221-226; Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, *Spies*, 258-262; Schechter and Schechter, *Sacred Secrets*, 119-123; David Rees, *Harry Dexter White: A Study in Paradox* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1973), 9-13. Schechter and Schechter in *Sacred Secrets*, 122, cite an NKVD message from the Russian Intelligence Archives clearly indicating that the Soviets were responsible for urging White to obtain these plates and permission from the United States: “MAY [Stepan Apresian, NKVD resident in New York] reported 14 April that LAWYER [code name for Harry Dexter White] following our instructions passed through ROBERT [Silvermaster] attained the positive decision of the Treasury Department to provide the Soviet side with the plates for engraving German occupation marks, namely the consent was given to produce for the Red Army two billion occupation marks. Signed OVAKIMIAN. Note: Immediately inform t. [for tovarich Comrade] Mikoyan.”

11 J. Edgar Hoover, “The U.S. Businessman Faces the Soviet Spy,” *Harvard Business Review* 42, no. 1 (January 1964): 143, accessed November 8, 2015, from Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost.

12 Sulick, *American Spies*, 15.

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8 Schechter and Schechter, *Sacred Secrets*, 191-192.

9 Schechter and Schechter, *Sacred Secrets*, 192-193.

D.C. In reality, very few Russians had direct access to anything of interest to the KGB or its predecessor, sister, and successor agencies.<sup>13</sup> In the opinion of Yuri Modin, KGB controller of an English spy ring called the Cambridge Ring, “We [the Soviets] were leery of sending people out of the Soviet Union for fear of defections. Most of our officers worked in Moscow, with the result that the few men posted in foreign countries had a workload so crushing that many of them cracked under the pressure.”<sup>14</sup> Instead, a few Soviet “handlers” operated networks of American traitors who were strategically positioned to acquire valuable information. For example, Viktor Cherkashin, Soviet head of the counterintelligence in Washington, D.C., was trained specifically to recruit US traitors and transmit their harvests of classified materials back to the Soviet Union. Cherkashin did not disappoint. He was responsible for recruiting and collecting information from CIA officer Aldrich Ames (who betrayed several CIA agents operating in the Soviet Union to their deaths) and FBI special agent Robert Hanssen (who sold information to the Soviets). But Cherkashin himself was not invading the FBI files or discovering CIA double agents.<sup>15</sup>

*All major espionage crimes were committed by Americans in positions of high trust and arguably never could have been accomplished by native-born Soviets.*

Thus, while Soviets were needed to initially recruit and subsequently instruct and receive documents from American agents, all of the major espionage crimes were committed by Americans in high positions of trust (Hiss, White, Weisband, and the Rosenbergs, among many others), and arguably could never have been accomplished by native-born Soviets. As the Schecters point out in *Sacred Secrets: How Soviet Intelligence Operations Changed American History*, “the success of Soviet intelligence depended on Americans being duped

into hurting themselves.”<sup>16</sup> And indeed, those Americans who betrayed the largest secrets actually sought out KGB agents with whom to share their materials. For example, Julius Rosenberg, betrayer of important information on the atomic bomb, was originally an enthusiastic member of the Young Communist League and independently offered his services to Jacob Golos, a leader in the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) and an agent handler for the Soviets. In the representative examples listed above, Soviets per se did not cause substantial damage to the nation or its interests abroad.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, the use of American traitors was actually a flaw in the Soviet espionage system that caused considerable angst for them and joy among their American counterparts in the FBI and CIA. Motivations for Americans to turn over information to the Soviets, whether ideological or monetary, often became irrelevant or led to the discovery of American traitors. One of the more common motivations for Americans to betray their country in the 1920s and 1930s that was later abandoned was ideological. Members of the CPUSA and other sympathizers viewed the Soviet Union as the ideal political system and utopia on earth and saw themselves as supporters of a great cause. Such traitors frequently scorned any monetary remunerations offered and considered Soviet medals of honor the highest reward possible.<sup>18</sup>

One such ideologically motivated spy was Harry Gold, a Jewish-American atomic chemist who became an information courier for the Soviet project “Enormous” (the espionage operation that enabled them to accelerate their construction of the atomic bomb). Gold stated that he had “never intended any harm to the United States. For I have always steadfastly considered that first and finally I am an American citizen.”<sup>19</sup> Instead, he said the Soviets “did a superb job of psychological evaluation on me . . . on three principal themes. The first was the matter of anti-Semitism. . . . [T]he only country in the world where anti-Semitism is a crime against the state

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13 For an overview of the evolution of the various Soviet intelligence agencies and their heads see the appendices pp. 305-315 in Robert Pringle, *Historical Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Intelligence*, Historical Dictionaries of Intelligence and Counterintelligence 5 (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2006).

14 Yuri Modin, *My Five Cambridge Friends* (London: Headline, 1994), 133. Cited in Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield*.

15 Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield*, 434; Viktor Cherkashin with Gregory Feifer, *Spy Handler: Memoir of a KGB Officer, The True Story of the Man Who Recruited Robert Hanssen and Aldrich Ames* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

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16 Schecter and Schecter, *Sacred Secrets*, 187. This page also summarizes some of the major negative results of espionage by well-meaning American traitors.

17 Haynes and Klehr, *Venona*, 295, 333. Others who sought out Soviets were Theodore Hall, Gregory Silvermaster, Charles Kramer, and Victor Perlo.

18 Haynes and Klehr, *Venona*, 333-335; Schecter and Schecter, *Sacred Secrets*, 187; Sulick, *American Spies*, 7-10; Sulick, *Spying in America*, 266-267.

19 Harry Gold, Sentencing Statement, July 20, 1950. Legal Papers of Augustus S. Ballard, Special Collections, Paley Library, Temple University, cited in Allen Hornblum, *The Invisible Harry Gold: The Man Who Gave the Soviets the Atom Bomb*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 364.

is the Soviet Union.”<sup>20</sup> Whenever he began to doubt the value of his covert work, Gold reassured himself with “the idea of helping the people of the Soviet Union, helping these people live a little better than they had before.”<sup>21</sup> However, after the general economic poverty and shortcomings of communism began to show during Stalin’s purges and pact with Hitler, many Americans became disillusioned with the system and no longer considered the Soviet Union worth supporting. As a result, they defected and revealed to the FBI and CIA whatever they knew about the Soviet system and the extent of American secrets already betrayed to the Soviet Union. In Harry Gold’s case, he slowly realized that the Soviet Union was not the utopia he had envisioned: “I looked at what was happening in the countries that the Soviet Union was taking over. I thought I was helping destroy one monstrosity, and I had created a worse one, or helped strengthen another one.”<sup>22</sup> When Gold defected, he revealed critical evidence about the entire Soviet “Enormous” project, including the activities of such agents as the Rosenbergs. In short, ideological motivation proved hazardous to the Soviet Union because it quickly vanished as the Cold War progressed.<sup>23</sup>

*The Great Depression made Soviet offers of financial assistance particularly persuasive and undermined some Americans' faith in the West's capitalist system.*

The more common incentive, especially later in the clandestine conflict between the superpowers, was money. The Department of Defense concluded that between 1947 and 2001 “Americans most consistently have cited money as the dominant motive for espionage and over time money has increased in predominance among motives. . . . Of individuals who professed a single motive for espionage, one-fourth of the civilians

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20 Hornblum, *The Invisible Harry Gold*, 305.

21 Hornblum, *The Invisible Harry Gold*, 306.

22 “Scope of Soviet Activity in the United States,” hearing before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and other Internal Security Laws, Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, Eighty-fourth Congress, second session, April 26, 1956, p. 1045, cited in Hornblum, *The Invisible Harry Gold*, 306.

23 Hornblum, *The Invisible Harry Gold*, x-xii; Haynes and Klehr, *Venona*, 333-335; Schechter and Schechter, *Sacred Secrets*, 187; Sulick, *American Spies*, 7-10; Sulick, *Spying in America*, 266-267. For a detailed description of another such ideologically motivated and then disillusioned Soviet agent, see Whittaker Chambers’s book *Witness* (New York: Random House, 1952).

and three-fourths of the military claimed they had spied for money.”<sup>24</sup> Even before communism proved unable to create an earthly utopia, the Great Depression made Soviet offers of financial assistance particularly persuasive and undermined some Americans’ faith in the West’s capitalist system that had allowed such a global economic disaster. But once again, this motivator had a built-in exposure mechanism: the American intelligence agencies could identify individuals who suddenly and inexplicably became wealthy. This tell-tale sign most often occurred among military enlisted men, such as army administrative specialist Clyde Conrad.<sup>25</sup>

Conrad spent the majority of his espionage career in the 8th Infantry Division in Germany after World War II and funneled to the Soviets information about the United States’ missile sites, oil supply pipelines, and ammunition dumps. In return, he was given over one million dollars; these riches eventually proved to be his downfall. In their search for the source of the information leak, US counterintelligence was able to track down Conrad because of the discrepancy between his meager pay and his suddenly extravagant lifestyle, complete with expensive art and inexplicable bank deposits of nearly ten thousand dollars each. As Sulick observed,

Often the very motives that drive one to spy lead to their exposure. The person who spies for the thrill of it takes unnecessary risks and is caught. . . . And the one who spies for money, in spite of warnings by his handlers, will spend beyond his means; and his sudden, unexplained wealth will raise suspicions and lead to his demise.”<sup>26</sup>

In all, choosing Americans to do their information gathering came with built-in and sometimes debilitating side effects for the Soviets.<sup>27</sup>

Aside from the Soviets’ faulty channels, it can be argued that in most cases the material that they managed to obtain did only limited harm to the United States. Recent revelations (the Mitrokhin Archive, VENONA, and various defectors) have established beyond a doubt that the Rosenbergs, Harry Gold, and others transmitted enough information to the Soviet Union for them to build their first nuclear weapon. But since they would

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24 Katherine Herbig and Martin Wiskoff, *Espionage against the United States by American Citizens 1947-2001* (Monterey, CA: Defense and Personnel Security Research Center, 2002), quoted in Sulick, *Spying in America*, 266.

25 Haynes and Klehr, *Venona*, 333-335; Schechter and Schechter, *Sacred Secrets*, 185-187; Sulick, *American Spies*, 7-10.

26 Sulick, *American Spies*, 10-11.

27 Sulick, *American Spies*, 141-148; Haynes and Klehr, *Venona*, 333-335; Schechter and Schechter, *Sacred Secrets*, 185-187; Sulick, *American Spies*, 7-10.

have developed such weapons independently, given a few more years, such espionage simply accelerated the process and reduced the cost. According to Haynes and Klehr in *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America*, “Given time and resources, the Soviet Union’s talented scientists and engineers would certainly have been able to construct an atomic bomb without assistance from spies.”<sup>28</sup> And although such an argument is quite tenuous, one could even say that because the Soviet Union developed nuclear power, the Cold War never became hot. Both sides feared what was called MAD (“mutually assured destruction”), which was a realization that a war between nuclear powers would be devastating and might not result in a clear victory for either side.<sup>29</sup>

Another result of Soviet connivance that actually aided the United States was Operation Snow, in which Harry Dexter White drafted an ultimatum against Japan which ultimately led to Pearl Harbor. This operation, though it did contribute to US involvement in World War II, helped to end the Great Depression. Economists and historians alike agree that World War II finally ended the Depression by moving a large swathe of the workforce into the armed forces and by tremendously increasing the demand for workers to produce supplies and weapons for the troops. The war certainly killed millions of people and destroyed much of Europe, but it did end one of the darkest economic periods in America’s history. And the United States’ entrance into the war was helped along by Soviet tool Harry Dexter White in Operation Snow. Although White’s role was not decisive, it did at least facilitate such a decision, and thus initiate the process of economic recovery from the Great Depression.<sup>30</sup>

While this case for Soviet espionage benefiting the United States may be somewhat dubious, such activities almost definitely set the Soviet Union itself at a disadvantage. An inherent flaw in the Soviets’ policy of pilfering as much information as possible from the United States

was that the Soviet Union was necessarily always a step behind the US. No matter how many nuclear secrets, B-25 bomber blueprints, and commercial engine designs they stole, the Soviets could only match their rival’s weapons, not exceed them. In the opinion of Soviet rocket scientist Sergo Beria, whose father Lavrenti Beria had helped produce the first Soviet atomic bomb, “in the 1930s and 1940s, Soviet intelligence was like a vacuum cleaner, sucking up whatever technology it could lay its hands on. The take included atomic bomb secrets, proximity fuses, the design for safety shaving razors, the process for refining sugar, and the formula for synthetic rubber.” But despite all of the benefits, “Beria believed this pattern for developing technology led to the demise of the Soviet Union. No society can prosper, he said, if it always has to try to recreate the technology after it has already succeeded elsewhere.” In a very apt analogy, Beria continued: “Every street thief runs out of the money he has stolen; he can never get ahead because he has not learned how to make money. Thus . . . stealing technology leaves the thief permanently trailing behind those he has robbed.”<sup>31</sup> One can logically conclude, then, that not only did the United States not suffer as greatly as is commonly thought, but the Soviet Union actually experienced negative consequences from its own espionage.<sup>32</sup>

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Another ironic result of increased Soviet activities was the United States’ decision to build and strengthen its own intelligence agencies. Because the Soviet Union refused to share enough information during World War II, the United States decided to break the code of its “ally’s” messages with the original intention of coordinating its efforts better. In the words of William Crowell, Deputy Director of the National Security Agency (1994-1997), “The Russians were a critical part of success in the war. At that time they were the key to victory in Europe. We had no idea from them how they were doing. They just weren’t telling us.”<sup>33</sup> In 1943, Army intelligence suggested decoding the Soviet messages, that they had been collecting since Stalin had

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28 Haynes and Klehr, *Venona*, 333.

29 Haynes and Klehr, *Venona*, 333; Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, *Spies*, 143. The independent development of nuclear capacity by other nations is also proof that the Soviet Union would have eventually developed such weapons even without the assistance of US traitors. A detailed treatment of the MAD policy and variations on it can be found in Corbin Fowler’s “U.S. Nuclear Warfighting Policy: A Critique,” *Public Affairs Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (July 1988): 85–95, accessed November 21, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40435686>.

30 For one treatment of WWII’s role in ending the Great Depression, see J. R. Vernon’s “World War II Fiscal Policies and the End of the Great Depression,” *The Journal of Economic History* 54, no. 4. (December 1994): 850–68, accessed November 21, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2123613>. Schecter and Schecter, *Sacred Secrets*, 22-45.

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31 Interview with Sergo Beria by Vyacheslav Luchkov, Kiev, 1996, quoted in Schecter and Schecter, *Sacred Secrets*, 298.

32 Hoover, “The U.S. Businessman Faces the Soviet Spy.”

33 Interview with William Crowell, Maryland, September 23, 1997, quoted in Schecter and Schecter, *Sacred Secrets*, 93.

signed the Non-Aggression Pact with Hitler in 1939, and started amassing intelligence officials to carry out this job. In this way, the United States uncovered what has come to be called VENONA, about 2,900 Soviet messages containing a wealth of evidence that hundreds of Americans in high places were spying for the Soviets in ways that an ally should not have been. The small extant intelligence agencies in America were greatly expanded and invigorated once the United States realized the threat posed by Soviet and other espionage: "World War II created a vast expansion in the nation's security and counterintelligence apparatus that included an expanded and powerful FBI, an active military intelligence division in the War Department, the Manhattan Project's vigilant, if not always effective, security staff, and the officious House of Un-American Activities Committee."<sup>34</sup> In other words, thanks to Soviet attempts at infiltration, the United States' counterintelligence improved markedly.<sup>35</sup>

*In other ways, too, US counter-intelligence proved successful in retarding or ameliorating Soviet damage.*

Nor, as some would argue,<sup>36</sup> was US counterintelligence ineffective. Persistent naïveté did indeed delay Americans from admitting that there were traitors in their midst. According to Sulick,

Despite increased security measures and offensive counterespionage attempts to penetrate hostile intelligence services, America remained plagued by its chronic tendency toward disbelief that its citizens in positions of trust would betray the nation's secrets. . . . During the Cold War every US government agency involved in national security, with the exception of the Coast Guard, fell victim to espionage.<sup>37</sup>

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34 Katherine Sibley, "Soviet Military-Industrial Espionage in the United States and the Emergence of an Espionage Paradigm in US-Soviet Relations, 1941-45," *American Communist History* 2, no. 1, (June 2003): 21, accessed November 8, 2015, from *Humanities International Complete*, EBSCOhost.

35 See Haynes and Klehr's excellent book *Venona* for more information on the decoding of these messages and their contents; Schecter and Schecter, *Sacred Secrets*, 96.

36 One historian that supports this view is Athan Theoharis in his book *Chasing Spies: How the FBI Failed in Counterintelligence but Promoted the Politics of McCarthyism in the Cold Wars Years* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002).

37 Sulick, *Spying in America*, 267.

Even the CIA and the FBI were infiltrated by Soviet agents Aldrich Ames and Robert Hanssen, respectively. But, in many cases, counterintelligence succeeded. They decoded VENONA and used it to neutralize the effect of many Soviet breaches into top secret information, removing various suspects from positions of access and changing military plans and locations. Even though American counterintelligence did not release the VENONA files to the public—thus depriving the courts of much-needed evidence to prosecute American traitors—this decision was extremely well thought out. In the analysis of J. Edgar Hoover, "the defense attorney would immediately move that the messages be excluded, based on the hearsay evidence rule [because] neither the person who sent the message [a Soviet official] nor the person who received it [a Soviet official] was available to testify and thus the contents of the message were purely hearsay as it related to the defendants." Hoover went on to explain that even if the VENONA messages were accepted as evidence, "the fragmentary nature of the messages themselves, the assumptions made by the cryptographers in breaking the messages, and the questionable interpretations and translations involved, plus the extensive use of cover names for persons and places, make the problem of positive identification extremely difficult." But the strongest argument against using VENONA as evidence in court was that the defense would demand access to the messages, and as FBI Assistant Director Alan Belmont noted in a February 1, 1956, memo,

request to have its cryptographers examine those messages which [the Army Security Agency] has been unsuccessful in breaking...on the premise that such messages, if decoded, could exonerate their clients. This would lead to exposure of Government techniques and practices in the cryptography field . . . [and] act to the Bureau's disadvantage since the additional messages would spotlight individuals on whom the Bureau had pending investigations.<sup>38</sup>

Summed up briefly, the VENONA messages stood little chance of standing as convicting evidence in the courts and, if left unexposed, they were useful in providing leads for collecting actual convicting evidence. So the counterintelligence, far from being the incompetents depicted by some historians, very probably made the wiser decision in keeping VENONA classified.<sup>39</sup>

In other ways, too, US counterintelligence proved successful in retarding or ameliorating Soviet damage, forcing the Soviets to abandon methods of espionage.

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38 FBI Office Memorandum from Belmont to Boardman, 7, quoted from Schecter and Schecter, *Sacred Secrets*, 142.

39 Sulick, *Spying in America*, 267-268.

Although Kim Philby (a British spy recruited by the Soviets as a double agent with access to US, Canadian, and Australian counterintelligence) and William Weisband (a US Army Intelligence cryptanalyst) eventually told the Soviets about VENONA, allowing the Soviet Union to change its codes and methods, so many US traitors had been exposed that the Soviet Union could no longer actively use these sources. Almost no one was prosecuted for espionage (FBI agent Judith Coplon was successfully convicted of transferring classified information to Moscow but never sentenced, and the Rosenbergs were some of the only American traitors to suffer the death penalty for their crimes), and yet hundreds of agents were neutralized for fear of providing the FBI hard evidence for prosecution and confirming the testimony of such defectors as Whittaker Chambers, Elizabeth Bentley, and Harry Gold. Thus, the KGB ceased using Harry Dexter White after Elizabeth Bentley defected and betrayed incriminating information about him.<sup>40</sup>

Any assessment of Soviet espionage that claims the consequences were minimal must begin, as this essay did, with an admission that the Soviet Union managed to injure the United States through agents such as John Walker and Harry Gold. But popular opinion has exaggerated the extent and nature of the harm beyond all reasonable proportions. The purpose of this essay has been to correct these misperceptions by demonstrating that the damage was done primarily by American agents, that many of the consequences proved mildly beneficial to the United States and harmful to the Soviet Union, and that US counterintelligence successfully combatted or neutralized the effects of much of Soviet infiltration.

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40 Sulick, *Spying in America*, 211-217; Sulick, *Spying in America*, 209. Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, *Spies*, 261; “Plan of measures,” March 1949, KGB file 43173, v.2c, pp. 25, 27, Alexander Vassiliev, *Black Notebook [2007 English Translation]*, trans. Philip Redko (1993-96), 75, cited in Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, *Spies*, 402-403. For a full account of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg’s nuclear espionage for the Soviet Union, see “Chapter 2: Enormous: The KGB Attack on the Anglo-American Atomic Project,” from Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, *Spies*, 33-144.



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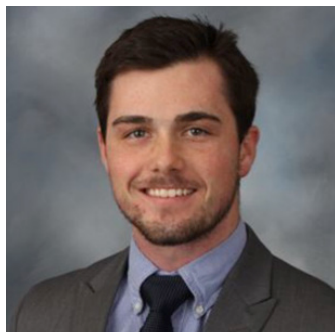
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