

## Marshall University Marshall Digital Scholar

---

Theses, Dissertations and Capstones


---

2017

# Surviving Fallout in Appalachia: An Examination of Class Differences within Civil Defense Preparation in West Virginia During the Early Years of the Cold War

Tristan Miranda Williams  
[allen172@marshall.edu](mailto:allen172@marshall.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://mds.marshall.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Appalachian Studies Commons](#), [Cultural History Commons](#), [Social History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Williams, Tristan Miranda, "Surviving Fallout in Appalachia: An Examination of Class Differences within Civil Defense Preparation in West Virginia During the Early Years of the Cold War" (2017). *Theses, Dissertations and Capstones*. 1113.  
<https://mds.marshall.edu/etd/1113>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Marshall Digital Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses, Dissertations and Capstones by an authorized administrator of Marshall Digital Scholar. For more information, please contact [zhangj@marshall.edu](mailto:zhangj@marshall.edu), [beachgr@marshall.edu](mailto:beachgr@marshall.edu).

SURVIVING FALLOUT IN APPALACHIA:  
AN EXAMINATION OF CLASS DIFFERENCES WITHIN CIVIL DEFENSE  
PREPARATION IN WEST VIRGINIA DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF THE COLD  
WAR

A thesis submitted to  
The Graduate College of  
Marshall University  
In partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
in  
History  
by  
Tristan Miranda Williams  
Approved by  
Dr. Greta Rensenbrink, Committee Chairperson  
Dr. Kat Williams  
Mr. Nat DeBruin

Marshall University  
August 2017

## APPROVAL OF THESIS

We, the faculty supervising the work of Tristan Miranda Williams, affirm that the thesis, *Surviving Fallout in Appalachia: An Examination of Class Differences Within Civil Defense Preparation in West Virginia During the Early Years of the Cold War*, meets the high academic standards for original scholarship and creative work established by the Department of History and the College of Liberal Arts. This work also conforms to the editorial standards of our discipline and the Graduate College of Marshall University. With our signatures, we approve the manuscript for publication.



Dr. Greta Rensenbrink, Department of History

Committee Chairperson



Date



Dr. Kat Williams, Department of History

Committee Member



Date



Mr. Nat DeBruin, Archives and Special Collections

Committee Member



Date

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I honestly cannot fathom where to begin with thanks. I want to thank the amazing history teachers and professors that I have had up until this point. I struggled for many years about whether or not to pursue my education in history beyond my undergraduate degree. Thankfully I made the decision to continue at Marshall and was introduced to the amazing faculty in the history department. I want to thank Dr. Rensenbrink for her patience at the times I felt as though I was clueless and out of my depth, not to mention her excellent editing skills. Her support and enthusiasm through the research, writing, and beyond was more than I could have hoped for. Very nearly each of the faculty members in the history department have played some role throughout the process of this project. I also want to thank my supervisors at Marshall University's H.E.L.P. Program, who would encourage me and be a shoulder to cry on when I needed it most. As well, I want to thank my students who have been a reminder as well for why I want to be in a classroom. Thanks is also due to the amazing cohort I was able to be a part of during my time in the graduate program. You all pushed me to be a better historian and provided me with coffee, skittles, and a support when I needed it. You each played an important role in this process and I cannot thank you enough for becoming some of the best friends I have ever had. Special thanks need to be given to Katie though, without her willingness to drive me to the Archives in Charleston, help watch my youngest during meetings with Dr. Rensenbrink, and generally being an awesome friend, it is hard telling where this project would have ended up. Above all, thanks must be given to my family. To my parents for helping along the way. And especially to my husband Derek for his patience when I needed it most, for picking up where I was lacking during this project as a partner and parent. Thank you. I couldn't have done this without you, we are off to bigger and better things. And thank you to my children, Leo and Penelope, who have been the driving force behind my success. Mommy did it!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract-----	v
Introduction-----	1
Chapter 1: How to Survive the Apocalypse: The Necessity of Civil Defense-----	14
Chapter 2: Preventing Red Dawn Over Appalachia: Civil Defense in West Virginia-----	35
Chapter 3: Red Alert!: Citizens React to Nuclear Annihilation-----	59
Conclusion-----	78
Bibliography-----	81
Appendix A: Letter From the Institutional Research Board-----	87
Appendix B: Curriculum Vitae-----	88

## **ABSTRACT**

Civil defense and West Virginia are not likely to be considered in tandem. What would make West Virginia significant during the Cold War? West Virginia is a state that has been synonymous with family feuds, hillbillies, moonshine, and coal mining. Few have considered West Virginia beyond these stereotypes and scant work has been done beyond that. The impact of the Cold War has been looked at through multiple angles but few have looked at the significant role West Virginia played during this time. Possibly, few have even considered that it played a role at all. Through examination of primary sources and oral histories of the period, a fuller picture can be painted about what exactly was happening in West Virginia during the early years of the Cold War. It is no secret that the state was impoverished with a significantly poorer economy than other states but how did this impact civilians' nuclear war fears? Civilians were presented with civil defense films that portrayed middle class families who could store food or construct their own fallout shelters; how did this impact those who could not afford to do the same? What efforts were taken to help citizens in West Virginia protect themselves and did it help at all? While atomic attacks never came, the threat was ever lingering for all citizens, with the difference between the two being how the working class and middle class responded.

## INTRODUCTION

There have been a few questions that I have been asked repeatedly during this project: why civil defense, and above all, why civil defense in Appalachia? To keep it simple, I chose Appalachia because this is my home. I grew up in Southern Ohio, a stone's throw away from both West Virginia and Kentucky; it just made sense to write about what I know and I know the heart of Appalachia. Civil defense though, that was a different beast entirely. The idea to examine the civil defense aspect struck me while I was playing a wholly historically inaccurate video game, *Fallout 4*. The game is centered in the not too distant future, when America had the upper hand economically and politically, as well as a massive stockpile of nuclear weapons. Nuclear technology reigned supreme; cars and household appliances all ran on nuclear power.<sup>1</sup> These portrayals are not a far cry from the hope the American public had with the dawn of the Atomic Age.<sup>2</sup>

Within the world of *Fallout*, a series of nuclear bombs fell and citizens of the game scattered into vaults or what would be the equivalent to fallout shelters in our world. Within the ruins of post apocalyptic Boston in *Fallout 4* I found the inspiration for my research. If a bomb had fallen, how would Appalachia have been impacted? What was the plan for Appalachia, or rather specifically West Virginia, if an atomic attack took place? This region has been used for its resources, such as coal and timber, and has been generally poorer than the rest of the nation. I needed to know, did West Virginian lives matter during an attack in that respect? Even in the fictional world of *Fallout*, middle class values are evident everywhere, not unlike the civil

---

<sup>1</sup> *Fallout 4*, directed by Todd Howard (Bethesda Game Studios, November 10, 2015), video game.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*, (New York: Pantheon, 1985) 15.

defense films from the very era this game seeks to emulate with its imagery, music, style of clothing, and kitschy use of Coca Cola-like advertisements for the game's Nuka Cola.<sup>3</sup>

A civil defense film from the era, *Modern Minutemen*, depicts a middle-class family in a nice home with both a son and a daughter. The mother tucks the youngest into bed while the father and son sit and talk with the grandfather, who recounts his time as a Civil Defense officer during World War II.<sup>4</sup> Another film, *A New Family in Town*, starts off by showing a pristine neighborhood where “everybody knows everybody else.” Children are seen walking to school, husbands on their way to work, and mothers walking their babies in their “prams.”<sup>5</sup> These films sought to portray a specific reality of America, one where everything was pristine and capitalism worked for everyone, a certain reality that would be utterly devastating if destroyed by an attack from the communist Soviet Union.

These civil defense films are clearly geared towards a specific group of people: white, middle class, nuclear families. Unfortunately, not everyone in the United States fit within that social construct, especially those living within West Virginia and Appalachia in general. Appalachia saw 32% of its population living in abject poverty.<sup>6</sup> The 1950s proved to be a difficult time for families living throughout West Virginia; while the rest of the country saw tremendous job growth, West Virginia experienced significant job loss. The region was marked by poverty and at times substandard living conditions that were in such a state that President

---

<sup>3</sup> Cameron Koch, “The Movies, Literature And Video Games That Influenced The 'Fallout' Series,” *Tech Times*, November 06, 2015, accessed June 03, 2017, <http://www.techtimes.com/articles/103340/20151106/the-many-influences-of-fallout.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> *Modern Minutemen*, film. Produced by the Bell Telephone Company, 1952. <https://archive.org/details/72192CivilDefenseModernMinuteMen>

<sup>5</sup> *A New Family in Town*, film. Produced by the Federal Civil Defense Administration, 1956. <https://archive.org/details/72742CivilDefenseANewFamilyInTown>

<sup>6</sup> Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness and West Virginia University for the Appalachian Regional Commission, *Appalachia Then and Now: Examining Changes to the Appalachian Region Since 1965* (February 2015).



John F. Kennedy and President Lyndon B. Johnson pushed for legislation and organizations to uplift the region; out of this was born the Appalachian Regional Commission.<sup>7</sup>

These economic realities were made worse by attitudes from outside West Virginia. Thanks to films such as *Wrong Turn*, *The Wild and Wonderful Whites of West Virginia*, and *The Mothman Prophecies*, West Virginia has been viewed as a state full of superstitious, inbred, drug addicts. In addition, stories of the coal fields from *October Sky* and *Matewan* leave others to assume there is nothing more than dead end coal towns in the state. West Virginia has a history that often ends at the coal fields, leaving out so much of its vibrant history. West Virginia during the Cold War is rarely mentioned in books, being discussed in passing on limited issues like the influx of coal production and President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society Policy. Many have assumed that civil defense was not important to the state, or that West Virginia did not matter in the grand scheme of the Cold War, but that simply has not been the case.<sup>8</sup> The state had completed its first Emergency Operations Plan in 1950 and was well on its way to preparations for any emergency, nuclear or otherwise.<sup>9</sup> Not to mention that President Eisenhower believed the state to be the best location for the federal government's top secret bunker underneath the Greenbrier Resort. West Virginia's significant difference from the rest of the United States lies in the fact that the state is primarily poor and working-class folk, thus its people's stories go largely unheard in the history of civil defense.

---

<sup>7</sup> Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness and West Virginia University for the Appalachian Regional Commission, *Appalachia Then and Now: Examining Changes to the Appalachian Region Since 1965* (February 2015).

<sup>8</sup> "Junior League Hears Discussion of State, County Defense Plans," *The Charleston Daily Mail*, February 09, 1951. "Tridelpia Woman's Club Studies Civilian Defense," *The Beckley-Post Herald*, January 18, 1952.

"Civil Defense Activity Grows Hotter," *The Huntington Advertiser*, December 19, 1950.

<sup>9</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1958.

The Cold War was a battle of nuclear anxieties between the United States and the Soviet Union. Following World War II, European powers had been so greatly eroded by the devastation of war that the only two world powers that were left were the United States and the Soviet Union. The ideologies of these two nations did not mesh with each other, the United States being a capitalist nation, while the Soviet Union was a communist one. The United States feared that the Soviet Union was going to spread communism and wanted to stop it at all costs, thus flexing their nuclear muscles to intimidate the Soviet Union into backing down. In return, the Soviet Union developed and amassed their own nuclear weapons and so began the nuclear arms race.<sup>10</sup> Civil defense became a way for Americans to deal with their anxieties surrounding what seemed like an impending nuclear attack. A civil defense program provided some hope that maybe civilians could survive and keep the American Dream alive.

Civil defense historiography is massive in scope but falls short in examining regional differences regarding the program by applying all of the research to everyone in the United States. Keeping in mind this reality, it becomes easier to scrutinize the literature and what it actively tells us and what it chooses to leave out. One of the earliest books to tackle civil defense history was Thomas Kerr's 1983 *Civil Defense in the U.S.: Band-Aid for a Holocaust*. Kerr synthesizes civil defense history and largely focuses on the bureaucratic aspect, diving into the policies of the various Cold War presidents. He claimed that the American government was dealing with an apathetic public and that the push for civil defense just was not there. Because of their lack of interest, civilians would be wholeheartedly unprepared to deal with the devastating aftermath of a thermonuclear attack. Since Kerr focused solely on the governmental red tape, there is no delineation between class, region, or how those of a different race or class would have

---

<sup>10</sup> Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 27-53.

perceived the bomb differently. The closest that Kerr comes to speculating about population differences is when he noted that early focuses on civil defense were on “heavily populated areas.”<sup>11</sup>

While Kerr assumed that the public was apathetic, Paul Boyer suggested a public that was far more invested in the bomb, at least in the beginning. *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* focuses on the culture that evolved from the first atomic bomb. The American public feared the bomb at first but gradually began to accept this new technology into their lives. Soon films, books, and even cocktails were made with the atomic bomb in mind. Boyer suggested that the bomb, either through threat or idolization, was very much a part of American lives. Boyer's interpretation of the public was a stark contrast to the apathetic public that Kerr had discussed.<sup>12</sup> While Kerr lacked social history in his book, Boyer made up for it in his. Combined, the two provide a cursory look at the atomic age, but unfortunately what is still left out are societal differences and how they were impacted by the bomb and how that might have translated into civil defense. Despite Boyer providing a fuller cultural picture, his period falls short of true atomic fear and what that experience meant for African Americans or the working class.

A synthesized, in depth history finally came on the scene in 1988 with Spencer Weart's *Nuclear Fear: A History of Images*. Weart combined both legislative history with cultural history and presented a picture of the Atomic Age from start to finish. The argument that Weart made is that the early years of civil defense saw a government that was more concerned with the appearance that civilians were prepared, rather than having civilians who were prepared. Weart

---

<sup>11</sup> Thomas J. Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.: Bandaid for a Holocaust?*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983), 102.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*, (New York: Pantheon, 1985), XVII-XXII.

claimed that the government was aware that civilians were not prepared; therefore, in 1951 the Federal Civil Defense Administration pushed out twenty million copies of a pamphlet titled *Survival Under Atomic Attack* and a film by the same name, in addition to a traveling civil defense exhibit. Weart uses the twenty million copies being printed as evidence to prove that everyone in America soon became afraid and all were clamoring to prepare for the atomic threat.<sup>13</sup> What he does not examine was which people had access to this information. As with Kerr and Boyer, Weart too fails to distinguish various racial and class differences within the context of civil defense preparedness or nuclear fear.

A better examination of civil defense during the atomic age is found in Allan Winkler's 1993 *Life Under a Cloud: American Anxiety About the Atom*. While Weart suggested that the government cared more about the appearance of preparation, Winkler suggested that the government was far more indifferent on the matter of civil defense. Winkler claimed that the decisions surrounding civil defense were only halfheartedly made but that for the most part the government remained rather undecided about what to do. The government backed a plan that left civil defense solely up to the civilians; General Harold R. Bull went as far as to state that the military should have no part in civil defense and it should be left up to the people on how to prepare for an atomic attack.<sup>14</sup> For the most part, state and federal policies followed this rationale. The federal government provided the material to the state, the state handed it out to the people. There is no indication though that this information was made available to African Americans in segregated states, or if African Americans were active participants in civil defense planning. Dissemination of information alone follows Weart's argument that the government

---

<sup>13</sup> Spencer R. Weart, *Nuclear Fear: A History of Images*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 129-133.

<sup>14</sup> Allan Winkler, *Life Under a Cloud: American Anxiety About the Atom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 111-113.

only cared on the surface, but like Kerr, Boyer, and Weart, there was still no discussion about how various states or even regions handled civil defense.

Kerr was not the only one to be overly critical about the public's apathy towards preparation. Guy Oakes' *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture* did so, but was also the first to mention class specifically. Oakes argued that the middle class was too lazy and completely incapable of preparing for a nuclear war. He argues further that the civil defense planners found it difficult to believe Americans were capable of preparation and survival due to the mindless self-indulgences of the middle class.

While he provided the first mention of class, Oakes also provided a different interpretation of the 1950s than many are used to seeing.<sup>15</sup> Oakes was the first one who really latched on to the idea that there might be something about class difference and civil defense preparation. If the middle class was too self-absorbed to develop a decent civil defense system, where did this leave the working class? Where would this have left African Americans? How would this have translated into the poor areas of America, such as the South and Appalachia? Despite it being an overly critical interpretation, his argument did open the doors for further debate in areas untouched by previous scholars.

Following Oakes book, discussion of, or at the least published literature regarding, civil defense during the Cold War seemed to cease. One of the first histories to be published following this silence came out in 2000. Laura McEnaney's *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties* elaborated on the same argument that Winkler made, that the government was indifferent and that civil defense was a civilian issue. Another major difference between the two was that Winkler suggested that the government only helped haphazardly, while

---

<sup>15</sup> Guy Oakes, *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 21.

McEnaney made the case that their goal was familial independence as well as a small budget. She also argued how the Federal Civil Defense Administration faced additional struggles in planning and implementing evacuations, because they wanted to avoid mixing various classes and races together in community shelters. The logical conclusion that the government came to was to push home shelters to avoid mixing race and class. Her research suggested then that the FCDA was cognizant that the lower classes could not afford to prepare the same as middle class families but still pushed for home shelters.<sup>16</sup>

McEnaney was one of the first historians to explore the incongruities of the Cold War civil defense program. The plans that civilians were faced with were unrealistic and worked against keeping families together. If the bomb was to drop, children would be in school shelters, fathers in shelters near their work, and mothers left to fend for themselves elsewhere. The push for home shelters was to avoid breaking up families but also to keep in place the rigid social structure that had developed during the 1950s. McEnaney also acknowledged the struggles faced by civil defense planners in attempting to avoid mixing races and classes in a single shelter. Her chapter “Equal in Suffering: Race, Class, and the Bomb” is what set McEnaney’s work apart from previous histories. She dove in to the struggles of race and class, noting that suburbanization, while happening at the same time as the buildup of civil defense, was almost exclusively a white phenomenon. But still, this work would have benefitted from a regional analysis.<sup>17</sup>

McEnaney’s book provides a great segue into regional struggles with civil defense. Published in the same year, “Segregationist Liberalism: The NAACP and Resistance to Civil-

---

<sup>16</sup> Laura McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 146

<sup>17</sup> McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home*, 123-149.

Defense Planning in the Early Cold War, 1951-1953,” an article by Andrew Grossman, addressed the struggles of civil defense in a segregated South. Grossman argued that President Harry Truman’s Administration accepted the segregationist social structure and incorporated this social structure into civil defense planning. Within this article Grossman examines how the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was uncertain about how to handle segregated civil defense. What resulted was a battle of resources between urban and suburban areas.<sup>18</sup> Grossman’s work was significant, not just to the overall history of civil defense, but because unlike Kerr, Boyer, Weart, Winkler, and Oakes, Grossman addressed the broader issue of civil defense in a segregated South. His argument could have been taken further and examined more closely the question of whether or not civil defense leaders just assumed only white citizens would have access to fallout shelters.

Taking civil defense preparation in a slightly different direction, Kenneth Rose argued in *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture* that relatively few civilians participated in constructing their own fallout shelters, primarily because they felt it would be futile in an atomic attack. Rose examined the culture surrounding fallout shelters in much the same way Boyer did, by examining films, comics, books, and other primary sources. Unfortunately, he did not touch on how fallout shelter culture might have affected racial and class issues. Rose applied his findings to all groups of people without taking into consideration regional locations and what those differences might have been.<sup>19</sup> It is unfortunate that Rose did not consider these differences because Rose built his work on Boyer and Winkler and their cultural analyses of the nuclear age, but he left a lot of information out. Grossman suggested that

---

<sup>18</sup> Andrew D. Grossman, “Segregationist Liberalism: The NAACP and Resistance to Civil-Defense Planning in the Early Cold War, 1951-1953,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 13, no. 3 (2000): 477-97.

<sup>19</sup> Kenneth Rose, *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture*, (New York: New York University Press, 2001).

the NAACP was taking the issue of civil defense preparation seriously but Rose ignored how the differences might have impacted both family and public fallout shelters.

Another argument that arises in the history of civil defense is that suburbanization was partly taking place because of atomic fears. According to Kathleen Tobin in her article “The Reduction of Urban Vulnerability: Revisiting 1950s American Suburbanization as Civil Defence,” civil defense planners urged urban populations to move out into suburbs to reduce the number of casualties in an atomic attack. Because of this push, civil defense planners also helped move along the development of the interstate system we know today. Tobin pulled her thesis from pieces of Boyer and Winkler’s work. They touched on the idea of suburbanization as a means of civil defense but only in passing. Tobin really dug in to the argument and examined it at length.<sup>20</sup>

Recent scholarship has taken greater care to address the issues of class and race. Tracy Davis’s *Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense* examined all areas of Cold War civil defense, including outside of the United States. She mentioned class differences, gender struggles, and racial problems but did not really examine how they were significant to the larger struggle in civil defense planning.<sup>21</sup> A good work that picks up on what Grossman and Tobin were discussing is David Monteyne’s *Fallout Shelter: Designing for Civil Defense in the Cold War*. Monteyne discussed class differences in preparedness and suggested that the lack of cohesive preparation might have been intentional on the part of civil defense planners. Class differences were part of what McEnaney had suggested, that civil defense planners were aware of a variety of struggles but deliberately chose to leave them alone. Class differences were seen

---

<sup>20</sup> Kathleen A. Tobin, “The Reduction of Urban Vulnerability: Revisiting 1950s American Suburbanization as Civil Defence,” *Cold War History* 2, no. 2 (2002): , doi:10.1080/713999949.

<sup>21</sup> Tracy C. Davis, *Stages of emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).



to a somewhat lesser degree in Winkler's argument, where he claimed that the government was only halfheartedly helping. The common thread in these arguments was that civil defense leaders could have done more for those in the lower, working classes. Civil defense leaders just decided against it. In an attempt to address the racial issues within civil defense, Monteyne noted that a sociologist, Dean MacCannell, argued that early shelter plans were designed to ensure the survival of the citizens who fit the ideal of core American values, white and middle class.<sup>22</sup> Monteyne gave a general picture of national civil defense and only touched upon regional and class struggles but acknowledged that even in shelter design, the only individuals that were considered were white ones. It would be interesting to see how his argument holds up in examining shelter plans from southern states and especially segregated areas.

Published in the same year as Monteyne was Jonathan Leib and Thomas Chapman's article "Jim Crow, Civil Defense, and the Hydrogen Bomb: Race, Evacuation Planning, and the Geopolitics of Fear in 1950s Savannah, Georgia." Leib and Chapman specifically examined the racial issues surrounding civil defense planning in a segregated city. Despite not explicitly addressing segregation in civil defense plans, Leib and Chapman argued that the concern for maintaining segregation was still paramount. Leib and Chapman argued that "Cold War fears were used to reinforce the South's Jim Crow segregation system." White Southerners, Leib and Chapman claimed, not only feared the Soviet nuclear threat but also the unrealistic threat white Southerners felt they faced against African Americans. Maintaining segregation, even in times of emergency, was a manifestation of those Cold War fears. Leib and Chapman also related the extreme reactions to cases like *Brown v. Board of Education* as being another manifestation of

---

<sup>22</sup> David Monteyne, *Fallout Shelter: Designing for Civil Defense in the Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 32-33.

those very fears.<sup>23</sup> Leib and Chapman's interpretation is fascinating and deserves a more extensive examination, because these fears could have been applied to a segregated West Virginia.

What is missing in these early civil defense histories is a regional focus, or at the least a regional acknowledgement, as well as thorough gender analysis. What the public has been presented with is a purportedly national case study on civil defense. The United States is a very large nation, with very different social structures across the country. The films and the histories belie the reality of the diversity of 1950s American society. Kerr, Boyer, Weart, and Winkler all assumed a proactive and harmonious civil defense program. They failed to take into account where these programs were unrealistic socially. The social structures of the North are not applicable to the Jim Crow system in the South, and those with money could afford to construct home shelters, while those without would be left in fallout.

This thesis will build on existing historiography by providing a regional analysis and arguing that civil defense was a different experience based upon one's class, gender, and race. West Virginia provides the best location for examining these differences, given the stark economic variance to the rest of the United States. The first chapter examines civil defense on the national level, synthesizing the historiography into a clear narrative as well as examining the civil defense films that were produced at the time. This chapter also examines the differences in presidential policies regarding civil defense and how each administration helped to shape the various civil defense programs that cropped up during the early Cold War years.

---

<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Leib and Thomas Chapman, "Jim Crow, Civil Defense, and the Hydrogen Bomb: Race, Evacuation Planning, and the Geopolitics of Fear in 1950s Savannah, Georgia," *Southeastern Geographer* 51, no. 4 (2011): 578-95. doi:10.1353/sgo.2011.0034.

The other two chapters focus on West Virginia exclusively. The second chapter examines civil defense policies within the state and how the program evolved over the years, looking primarily at the success and failures of the program. The second chapter highlights the fact that West Virginia was not a bystander state during the Cold War but was active at the national level by providing a covert fallout shelter for Congress as well as evacuation points for the Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation. The third chapter examines civil defense efforts on the part of the citizens of the state. For this chapter, the response of citizens is critical. Did they care, were they participating, and who was participating? By examining civilian participation, we can learn that civil defense was a concern for all classes but the government concern was limited to themselves.

## CHAPTER 1

### HOW TO SURVIVE THE APOCALYPSE: THE NECESSITY OF CIVIL DEFENSE

An old black and white film opens with a title screen, *Operation Doorstep*. There is fire in the background and blast winds devastate a house, destroying it to the point that there are only bits of wood and splinters left. A narrator with a stern voice alerts the viewer that this devastation was wrought by the equivalent of fifteen thousand tons of TNT. The home sat a mile outside a nuclear blast, one of nearly a dozen tests that took place in Nevada during the early 1950s. The blasts were to show reporters and other civilians the power of a nuclear weapon and why it was critical to prepare for the inevitable explosion. The reality that it was unlikely that anyone could survive such a blast did not mean Americans should not protect themselves from it.<sup>24</sup> How did the United States get to this point? Why was there so much concern surrounding these new weapons? Was there really anything that could be done to save the public? For years after the first nuclear explosion the government and public became fascinated by the destructive force of a nuclear weapon and grew to obsess over how to survive in the fallout of an enemy attack.

During Labor Day weekend in 1949, an Air Force plane on a standard weather reconnaissance mission collected air samples that detected above average radioactivity. The higher levels of radioactivity were surprising because as scientists and President Harry Truman believed, there was no reason for that to be. More samples were tested and the federal government concluded that the Soviet Union had conducted their first nuclear test. Upon confirmation, President Truman announced the findings to the country, simply stating, “We have

---

<sup>24</sup> 1953 Civil Defense Film *Operation Doorstep Nevada Atomic Bomb Test 28072*, YouTube video, 10:16, Civil Defense Film, posted by “PeriscopeFilm,” April 10, 2015, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uIWAs\\_avpbY&t](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uIWAs_avpbY&t).

evidence that within recent weeks an atomic explosion occurred in the U.S.S.R.”<sup>25</sup> It was suddenly apparent that the United States was not the only super power with the capability of producing nuclear annihilation. The American public and government feared communists could now strike at any moment without warning. When the United States tested the first nuclear weapon in 1945, World War II was still raging with Japan. The weapon was born out of necessity, to end the War and prevent massive casualties that would come with a land invasion, as well as to impede growing Soviet aggression.<sup>26</sup> In 1949, there was no war being waged against the Soviet Union; this was now a matter of intimidation. When the War ended, the only two global powers that remained were the United States and the Soviet Union. This reality made relations between the two nations tense, but what did this mean for the world? Nuclear research could have unlimited possibilities but overall seemed threatening. In the public mind though, fear was the gut reaction. How could the public save themselves from certain death and was it even possible?

The United States’ government dealt with fears from the American public during World War I and World War II and handled them by developing a program to aid in defending the home front. In World War I, President Woodrow Wilson allocated funds for the Council of National Defense, which was civil defense in its infancy. Despite attacks on civilian ships like the Lusitania, there was little civilian fear of being attacked on American soil. The focus of the National Defense Council was to promote morale and offer programs that utilized untapped female labor. California’s civil defense, for example, was made up of both volunteers from County Councils of Defense and Women’s War Work Activities. While policy dictated that

---

<sup>25</sup> Allan Winkler, *Life Under a Cloud: American Anxiety About the Atom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 67.

<sup>26</sup> *The World at War*, “The Bomb,” produced by Jeremy Isaacs, by Laurence Olivier, and Carl Davis (Great Britain: Thames Television, 1973), DVD.

civilians remain vigilant about any anti-American activities, civilians were also supposed to help with food rationing as well as promoting public health.<sup>27</sup> The Council was disbanded shortly following the war and the concept would not be picked up again for two decades.<sup>28</sup>

When World War II began in Europe, Americans heard tales of the Blitzkrieg in London and the possibility of an attack appeared likely despite the United States' plan of isolation.<sup>29</sup> First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt witnessed the aftermath first hand on a trip to London in early 1941. It was at her urging, and that of the American people, that President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order in May 1941 creating the Office of Civilian Defense. The OCD intended to help civilians at home cope with wartime changes such as rationing, providing aid for women joining the workforce, planting victory gardens, and salvaging scrap metal.<sup>30</sup> Throughout the war years, the program also helped prepare civilians for an enemy attack by training civilians to scan the skies for enemy aircraft, fly planes, conduct blackout drills, and fight fires caused by incendiary bombs. What had started out as both a social and defense program became predominantly about defending American homes during wartime, so President Harry Truman disbanded the OCD in 1945 following the end of World War II.<sup>31</sup> With the advent of Soviet Union nuclear weapons and fear of communism spreading, the American public wanted the government to provide some reassurance about their safety. Because of public fears, President Truman was pressured into developing a new incarnation of civil defense.

---

<sup>27</sup> *Report of the Activities of the California State Council of Defense from April 6, 1917 to January 1, 1918*, (Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1918), Accessed January 10, 2017, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.c096619480>.

<sup>28</sup> *Annual Report of the United States Council of National Defense*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919), Accessed January 10, 2017, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/osu.32435056349954>.

<sup>29</sup> *The Civilian Serves*, YouTube video, 13:34, Civil Defense film, posted by "PeriscopeFilm," February 10, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBv5IYDpc9o&t=90s>.

<sup>30</sup> "Teaching Eleanor Roosevelt Glossary: Office of Civilian Defense," The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project, accessed March 01, 2017, <https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/teaching/glossary/office-civilian-defense.cfm>.

<sup>31</sup> Matthew Dallek, *Defenseless Under the Night: The Roosevelt Years and the Origins of Homeland Security*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 6-12.

Following the confirmation that the Soviet Union had their own nuclear weapons, it became clear to the United States government that a policy was necessary to determine how to handle the threat of a nuclear attack. The Joint Intelligence Committee was given the task of assessing the Soviet nuclear threat to the United States. In February 1950, the Joint Intelligence Committee released their report, “The Implications of Soviet Possession of Atomic Weapons.” This report found that the best-case scenario would be having all nations, meaning the only two that had nuclear weapons, give up those weapons. Yet, the Joint Intelligence Committee projected that the Soviet Union could and would stockpile nuclear weapons and that an offensive attack would be likely at any point between 1951 and 1954.<sup>32</sup> While the public feared the threat of a nuclear attack, the federal government’s own research found that an attack was a certainty and needed to plan accordingly.

In the minds of United States government officials, a Soviet attack was guaranteed. The National Security Council (NSC) was given the job of determining the options of how to approach the Soviet threat. In April 1950, the NSC handed President Truman a document entitled “United States Objectives and Programs for National Security,” more commonly referred to as the NSC-68. The NSC-68 presented President Truman with four options: maintain the current policy, isolationism, preemptive attack, or amassing a stockpile of nuclear weapons while building the economy. Maintaining the current situation would require intense negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Negotiations would encourage public support and diminish the likelihood of nuclear war by negotiating ridding the nations of nuclear weapons. Isolationism would require the United States to withdraw from international relations

---

<sup>32</sup> “A Report by the Joint Intelligence Committee on Implications of Soviet Possession of Atomic Weapons-1950,” PBS Primary Sources, accessed November 28, 2016, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/bomb/filmmore/reference/primary/jointintelligence.html>.

completely, not just Soviet relations. The isolationist option assumed that eventually the public would favor a surprise nuclear attack on the Soviet Union and its territories for the sake of ensuring American superiority. The third option, a preemptive attack, would result in all-out war. The final option would require the United States to build up its nuclear arsenal, economy, and political strength.<sup>33</sup> The committee believed that in the wake of World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union were the only two dominant powers in the world and the Soviets needed to learn their place.

The United States had to come to some conclusion on how to handle the Soviet situation. The committee feared that given the Soviet Union's new position as a global super power that their immediate goal would be to expand communism:

The fundamental design of those who control the Soviet Union and the international communist movement is to retain and solidify their absolute power [and] achievement of this design requires the dynamic extension of their authority and the ultimate elimination of any effective opposition to their authority [...] The United States, as the principal center of power in the non-Soviet world and the bulwark of opposition to Soviet expansion, is the principal enemy whose integrity and vitality must be subverted or destroyed by one means or another.<sup>34</sup>

The Soviet Union's position as a super power meant that the isolation option was no longer viable. Due to the Soviet Union's new position, there was no public support for a preemptive attack. What was left was a combination of negotiations and growing the United States' nuclear arsenal. President Truman had greenlighted the hasty development of the hydrogen bomb as well as an increase in military spending.<sup>35</sup> The way the United States government had decided to deal with the Soviet Union was through a policy of nuclear intimidation and hope that the fear of

---

<sup>33</sup> "NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security- April 14, 1950," Federation of American Scientists, accessed December 01, 2016, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm>.

<sup>34</sup> "NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security- April 14, 1950," Federation of American Scientists, accessed December 01, 2016, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm>.

<sup>35</sup> Winkler, 73.



mutually assured destruction would be enough to dissuade a nuclear attack. President Truman authorized the buildup of the nation's military and reintroduced the civil defense program to quell the fears of the public.

After reviewing the NSC-68, the decision to continue nuclear weapons development was an easy one for President Truman, but he was not without opposition. For President Truman, it appeared that if the Soviet Union could develop and build their own nuclear weapons, then America needed to do it first and needed to do it better. There were those who cautioned against developing more destructive weapons; a major dissenter was Robert Oppenheimer. Oppenheimer was a well-known scientist who had been one of the prominent figureheads on the Manhattan project that developed the first nuclear weapon at Los Alamos in New Mexico. Oppenheimer, following the Trinity Test at White Sands, New Mexico, quoted the *Bhagavad Gita*, "Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds." Oppenheimer was vehemently against further development of nuclear weapons and strongly opposed President Truman's desire to be the first to have a hydrogen bomb and expressed that at the very least restraint should be practiced regarding these new weapons. It was from this desire to control nuclear weapons that, with the help of Oppenheimer and other nuclear scientists, the Atomic Energy Commission was created.<sup>36</sup>

The Atomic Energy Commission approached President Truman about his lack of hesitation and sense of urgency to develop a new bomb. David Lilienthal, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, argued against the creation of a hydrogen bomb but President Truman was not hearing any of it. The Atomic Energy Commission registered their opposition to developing the hydrogen bomb, arguing that it was unnecessary. President Truman claimed that it was unlikely that a hydrogen bomb would ever be used but it would be a vital bargaining tool

---

<sup>36</sup> Winkler, 17-39.

with the Soviets, to which Lilienthal later commented that expressing their dissent to Truman was like “saying no to a steam roller.” Truman was determined to beat the Soviets in the arms race and to ensure American dominance. There was no way he was going to back down on the issue of the hydrogen bomb. On January 31, 1950, President Truman announced to the public that the development of nuclear weapons would continue, including a new “super bomb.”<sup>37</sup> With the hydrogen bomb the nuclear threat in the world grew and a greater need to defend the home front through civil defense arose.

While the government worked to develop a policy for Soviet relations, the American public grew increasingly concerned about the state of their safety. After the Soviets dropped their own nuclear weapons, news outlets started a discussion about bomb shelters and Americans began to demand that the government attempt to do something to help prepare the country for an atomic attack.<sup>38</sup> In an attempt to quell their fears, President Truman moved to develop programs to help mentally prepare civilians for an atomic attack. As in previous wars, civil defense became a hot topic of discussion among both government officials and citizens. In September 1950, the Defense Production Act created the Office of Defense Mobilization. On December 1 of that year President Truman signed Executive Order 10186 that made the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) an official government entity. Just a couple of short weeks later he signed another executive order that incorporated the Office of Defense Mobilization (ODM) into the Executive Office of the President.<sup>39</sup> These organizations circulated pamphlets that were given to state civil defense agencies so that information regarding nuclear weapons could reach everyone in the country.

---

<sup>37</sup> Winkler, 73-74.

<sup>38</sup> Spencer R. Weart, *Nuclear Fear: A History of Images*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 129-133.

<sup>39</sup> Wilbur Cohen and Evelyn Boyer, “Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950: Summary and Legislative History,” *Social Security Bulletin*, April 1951, <https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v14n4/v14n4p11.pdf>.

Early civil defense efforts were a combination of private and government organizations that worked together to define adequate civil defense measures. The *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* published an article “The Only Real Defense,” in which experts firmly argued for dispersal of American cities as a means of protection.

Ever since the atomic bomb became a probability (and soon afterwards, a reality), atomic scientists have forecast that dispersal of large industrial agglomerates will be the most important if not the only answer to the threat of atomic aggression.<sup>40</sup>

Logically it made sense. Large industrial cities were easy targets for a nuclear attack. Cities such as Detroit and New York were known for their industry around the world. Though a move like this would be costly, experts felt that it was the only way to minimize civilian casualties.<sup>41</sup> The cost of such an undertaking would have been astronomical and unrealistic; due to this the plan to disperse cities was largely ignored by the government. The Truman Administration focused their efforts on more cost-effective measures for civil defense.

Having rejected the suggestion of atomic scientists, the Truman Administration needed to devise their own plans for civil defense and came up with two options: evacuation or shelters. For many, the option of evacuation would be the best scenario. Civilians would need to be prepared with supplies ready at a moment’s notice to empty out large urban areas at the first notice of an enemy attack. Early nuclear weapons were delivered by airplane, which would provide most regions with anywhere between forty-five minutes to an hour for evacuation. Urban centers would then be emptied out to designated rural regions to wait out the attack. Federal agencies hoped that they could rely on the generosity of willing private homes not only to house evacuees but to feed them as well. These early years provided a lot of confusion for the public

---

<sup>40</sup> “The Only Real Defense,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 7, no. 9 (1951): 242-243, doi:10.1080/00963402.1951.11457203.

<sup>41</sup> “The Only Real Defense,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 7, no. 9 (1951): 242-243, doi:10.1080/00963402.1951.11457203.

about what to expect in the event of an atomic attack, and preparation plans were not always clear.<sup>42</sup> In any case the probability of evacuation diminished as stronger weapons were developed.

In 1953, the Soviet Union tested their first hydrogen bomb. The difference in strength between an atomic bomb and a hydrogen bomb was staggering. A standard atomic bomb, such as the ones that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, releases around 20,000 kilotons of energy, with damage being contained in a roughly two- to five-mile radius. The hydrogen bomb has a damage radius of a minimum of twenty miles. These estimates do not account for fallout after the explosion or the differences there were between an air and a surface blast. The surface blast would be far more devastating, leading to more fallout after an explosion.<sup>43</sup> The focus shifted to protecting oneself from the bomb itself, rather than trying to outrun it.

Shelters became the most popular option for civil defense preparation among both officials and civilians. The first shelters were designed with the idea of withstanding a direct blast, making them bomb shelters rather than fallout shelters. The focus on surviving fallout, while considered, was not paramount to surviving the blast. Coming out of World War II and seeing the destruction from bombs on civilian streets, it made sense that the only problem considered would be survival of a direct blast.<sup>44</sup> Officials and civilians were taking their lead from civil defense programs from World War II. The reality of the kind of devastation that a nuclear weapon could bring about had not permeated throughout the public just yet.

---

<sup>42</sup> David Monteyne, *Fallout Shelter: Designing for Civil Defense in the Cold War*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 14.

<sup>43</sup> "Hydrogen Bomb-1950," Atomic Heritage Foundation, accessed December 01, 2016, <http://www.atomicheritage.org/history/hydrogen-bomb-1950>.

<sup>44</sup> Winkler, 110.

Despite the knowledge of what nuclear weapons could do, the Truman Administration did not focus on civil defense as heavily as proponents for it would have liked, primarily due in part to not wanting to spend the money. Most government officials agreed that civil defense precautions were of some necessity but the funding and resources requested by civil defense agencies was not made available. Initial civil defense suggestions, namely the dispersal of cities, had been deemed unrealistic and therefore not given any serious thought. The bomb shelter program, despite being the most popular option, still faced the problem of funding. Bomb shelters were extremely expensive to build, with initial estimates of a national bomb shelter initiative being \$32 billion over five years. Even conservative estimates at \$16 billion were still too high for President Truman to push forward any real effort on civil defense. Even the Federal Civil Defense Administration could not secure the funds they had requested; they had hoped to receive \$535 million to finance their efforts but only received \$75 million.<sup>45</sup> While \$75 million may still seem a pretty hefty sum, the FCDA was meant to provide civil defense expertise to the whole nation on that figure; financing shelters across the country was just not feasible.

Civil defense education was achieved through cooperation of federal and civilian groups to make the best of the funds the FCDA had available to them. During the final years of President Truman's administration, the FCDA printed and disseminated millions of copies of the pamphlet *Survival Under Atomic Attack*. A film by the same name was produced by the FCDA but created through a civilian organization. Despite the key message to the public to take cover, early efforts by the FCDA were aimed at keeping the public calm. *Survival Under Atomic Attack* sold millions and the pamphlet sold equally as well.<sup>46</sup> The film was a significant piece of propaganda that examined the destruction that was left in the aftermath of Hiroshima and

---

<sup>45</sup> Winkler, 112-113.

<sup>46</sup> Weart, 130.

Nagasaki. The narrator, with his cool Transatlantic accent, calmly states that the Japanese could have avoided all this death and devastation if they had only been prepared for such a weapon, failing to acknowledge that this was the first and only time such a weapon was used on human beings. The film then shifts to a typical suburban home stateside and the narrator lists all the precautions that would ensure the survival of the civilians in the film and the civilians watching. The film, which started with the horrifying images of burned Japanese civilians and buildings in ruin, ignores the reality that a doorway or cellar is not enough to survive an atomic attack. Yet the film assures the viewer that these precautions would be enough. Despite showing the shadows burned on the ground left behind by humans who were incinerated in the blast, the film shows the viewer that taking cover under a table would minimize the damage from heat and radiation.<sup>47</sup> Despite completely ignoring the reality of atomic and hydrogen bombs, this film and its pamphlet counterpart were incredibly popular.

The film was used in conjunction with the pamphlet, both providing information about atomic weapons and how to protect themselves; civil defense leaders felt that knowledge would quell panic. The pamphlet defined blast radiuses and the full scale of fallout zones. Despite acknowledging the dangers of fallout, both the film and pamphlet downplayed the true dangers surrounding radioactivity.<sup>48</sup> The federal government was fully aware of the dangers the public faced relating to radiation; it is likely that they downplayed the severity in the film and pamphlet to prevent public panic.<sup>49</sup> Throughout the film the point was made numerous times and quite

---

<sup>47</sup> *Survival under Atomic Attack*, by Edward R. Murrow (Washington, DC: The Federal Civil Defense Administration, 1951), online, <https://archive.org/details/Survival1951>.

<sup>48</sup> Federal Civil Defense Administration, *Survival Under Atomic Attack* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950).

<sup>49</sup> Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, *The Effects of Atomic Weapons: Prepared for and in Cooperation With the United States Department of Defense and the United States Atomic Energy Commission*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950).

forcefully that the Japanese recovered from radiation sickness quickly. The survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were able to go on and lead normal, productive, healthy lives. Survivors of the two atomic bomb blasts even had children with no issue. Radiation sickness was described as being as minor as the common cold or flu, survivable so long as civilians took the precautions necessary to protect themselves.<sup>50</sup> The dangers were unacceptably diminished to quell the fears of the public.

In order to reach out to the public, other methods were devised for those who could not see the film or had yet to get their hands on the pamphlet. To fill these gaps within the public the “Alert America” campaign was established by the FCDA to make civilians aware of the importance of civil defense. The “Alert America” campaign was a traveling exhibit that reached out to more than a million civilians across the country. The exhibit included information and photographs of the devastation in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.<sup>51</sup> Information for lectures and slide shows were distributed by the FCDA for use in classrooms and various organized events. Schools too would advertise times that they would be showing civil defense films during and after school functions. Women also began to get involved in civil defense efforts, providing a platform from which their local civil defense directors could speak directly to them about the program’s significance.<sup>52</sup> Civil defense officials in Evergreen Park outside of Chicago grew concerned about the lack of participation from its citizens, so much so that they set off a series of explosions around town to get their attention. When frightened neighbors called in to report them or ask about what happened, they were directed to attend the next civil defense meeting. Not

---

<sup>50</sup> Federal Civil Defense Administration, *Survival Under Atomic Attack* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950).

<sup>51</sup> Weart, 130.

<sup>52</sup> “Home-School Group Scans Civil Defense,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Jan 1, 1951. “Women to Promote Civil Defense Program Here,” *The Courier-Gazette*, October 13, 1952. “Ritter Stresses Importance of Civil Defense at PTA Meeting,” *Panama City News-Herald*, January 20, 1952.

surprisingly they had record attendance in the weeks that followed.<sup>53</sup> The goal of the FCDA became to inform the public in any way they could, even if it meant blasting them in.

Women became one of the driving forces in civil defense preparation. During World War II, women were the ones behind civil defense. It was the women who were growing the victory gardens, salvaging the scrap metal, and benefiting from the programs that Eleanor Roosevelt had implemented as Assistant Director of the Office of Civilian Defense.<sup>54</sup> As civil defense reappeared, women unsurprisingly took up the cause again. Women's groups such as Junior Leagues and other clubs routinely featured films, held discussions, and invited guest speakers to lecture about preparing the home for an attack. The FCDA organized the National Civil Defense Advisory Council of Women in 1951, making women the most important part of civil defense planning. It was women who were leading youth groups like the Girl Scouts, 4-H Clubs, and Future Homemakers where the message of civil defense was integrated into the programs' curricula. Women were involved at many different levels of the community, from the schools to the churches, and in the home. Civil defense preparation was a skill that was deemed to be as easily cultivated as learning first aid and how to cook.<sup>55</sup> Civil defense became an extension of the domestic sphere. Women might not have been able to take up arms in the military, but what they could do was prepare their homes and communities if war came to them.

While mothers were preparing their homes and teachers the schools, children became an important part within the foundation of civil defense. While the information that was given to them might have been horrifying by today's standards, it was made palatable by presenting

---

<sup>53</sup> "Blasting Them In," *The Times Herald*, January 31, 1951.

<sup>54</sup> Matthew Dallek, *Defenseless Under the Night: The Roosevelt Years and the Origins of Homeland Security*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 6.

<sup>55</sup> Tracy C. Davis, *Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007) 40-41.



children with films that were jovial, yet informative. *Duck and Cover* was a film that featured an overly cautious cartoon character named Bert the Turtle. The main message of the film was for children to seek shelter as quickly as they could by making sure to duck and cover. The tune was catchy and it presented children with the serious threat of a nuclear attack without the horrifying imagery that was seen in *Survival Under Atomic Attack*.<sup>56</sup> Children would continue to be the mainstay of civil defense, especially during President Dwight Eisenhower's Administration.

One of the most important civil defense mechanisms to come out of the Truman Administration was the Control of Electromagnetic Radiation or CONELRAD warning system. In an emergency, CONELRAD would interrupt radio and television broadcasts with an emergency message. This system was meant to ensure that critical and accurate information would reach the public in a timely fashion and inform them how to proceed during an attack. The public would be told whether to evacuate or to remain where they were, and informed about the nature of the attack. This system remained the primary method for getting out emergency warnings for nearly a decade.<sup>57</sup> Thus, while President Truman attempted to develop a strong civil defense program, his efforts were stunted by his desire to stock up America's arsenal rather than evolve the program.

The Eisenhower Administration made a greater effort to expand on civil defense policies and military organizations. Unlike his predecessor, President Dwight Eisenhower had not favored the use of atomic weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.<sup>58</sup> This dissent is likely why his efforts surrounding civil defense were far more active and forceful than President Truman's.

---

<sup>56</sup> *Duck and Cover*, (New York: NBC Universal, 1951).

<sup>57</sup> Tracy Davis, *Stages of Emergency*, 114-116.

<sup>58</sup> "Dwight Eisenhower's View on Using the Atomic Bomb," Nuclear Files: Project of the Nuclear Age of Peace Foundation, <http://www.nuclearfiles.org/menu/key-issues/nuclear-weapons/history/pre-cold-war/hiroshima-nagasaki/opinion-eisenhower-bomb.htm>. Accessed May 01, 2017.

An aide to President Eisenhower, James M. Lambie, was convinced that civil defense was of the utmost importance. Lambie was behind civil defense advertisements in newspapers, on the radio, and on busses. By the mid-1950s the emergency warning system, CONELRAD, began to interrupt broadcasts to keep the public on their toes. Towns began to set up exercises with air raid sirens as part of a program known as “Operation Alert.” Lambie also helped to organize the Ground Observer Corps with the sole purpose of keeping civilian eyes on the sky for Soviet bombers.<sup>59</sup> The Eisenhower Administration continued to pave the way for more elaborate and extreme civil defense training exercises that attempted to get communities to work together.

The Truman Administration was fully aware that bomb shelters on a national scale would be a costly endeavor. Despite the cost of bomb shelters though, experts viewed a shelter program as being in the best interest of the public. By the late 1950s anxieties surrounding the bomb continued to soar. The impracticality of bomb shelters pushed the FCDA to consider new ways to protect the public. In 1958 Eisenhower implemented a National Shelter Policy which encouraged utilizing already existing buildings as fallout shelters rather than bomb shelters.<sup>60</sup> Building new shelters was cost-prohibitive on the government’s dollar, and the FCDA began to urge civilians to take their survival into their own hands by building private family shelters. Putting the responsibility of survival solely on civilians would only cost the government \$1 million versus the billions of dollars for national shelter construction.<sup>61</sup> The push for private shelters was not unlike the policies that President Truman favored; it appeared that private home preparation would be the only way to save the nation.

---

<sup>59</sup> Weart, 131.

<sup>60</sup> Winkler, 120.

<sup>61</sup> Tracy Davis, 130-131.

The FCDA became a beacon of guidance for home preparation while still advocating the availability of public shelters.<sup>62</sup> Under President Eisenhower the FCDA became the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization (OCDM) and differed from President Truman's FCDA by encouraging a stronger civil defense presence in the public. The civil defense program was still underfunded but continued to push out informational packets to help civilians plan for nuclear attacks.<sup>63</sup>

The Eisenhower Administration did more than the Truman Administration to involve the public in civil defense. Operation Alert was a unique program that began in 1954 and involved a series of mock attacks that were conducted throughout the country to test civil defense and military planning. Television and radio stations tested their emergency alert systems (CONELRAD) and mass evacuations took place. This was such an elaborate program that even federal government officials were evacuated to designated bunker sites, making President Eisenhower the first sitting president to ever fly by helicopter. The scenarios became more elaborate with each year to test the public's efficiency in taking cover and the ability of the government to mobilize appropriately. President Eisenhower referred to Operation Alert as being the equivalent to "war games." War games could be viewed as neither bad nor good but a relatively neutral area that afforded both officials and civilians training and invaluable experience in surviving an attack.<sup>64</sup> A newsreel for Operation Alert 1954 describes a theoretical attack on New York City, showing herds of people rushing towards shelters followed by empty city streets. Ominous music played as the narrator described the horrific number of hypothetical

---

<sup>62</sup> Winkler, 120-121.

<sup>63</sup> Guy Oakes, *The Imaginary War*, 102-103

<sup>64</sup> Guy Oakes, 92-93.

casualties.<sup>65</sup> The Operation Alert program in 1956 was a five-day event during which thousands of government officials were taken out of Washington D.C. and placed in secure bunkers. Citizens throughout at least seventy-five cities tested their civil defense readiness. Streets of major metropolitan areas were left completely empty, as if the whole world had stopped.<sup>66</sup> This was civil defense on a scale that was not seen during the Truman years, and it was these scenarios that made it appear that civil defense was paramount to the Eisenhower Administration.

Cities across the country did their best to ensure that the mock drills during Operation Alert appeared as authentic as possible. In Ohio, one hospital evacuated patients and staff over twenty miles outside of the city. Children in Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts volunteered to take on the role of patients to help plan for an accurate evacuation.<sup>67</sup> Boy Scouts were also trained to memorize all CONELRAD frequencies and were given the task to keep shelters stocked. During the late 1950s the Boy Scouts handed out civil defense fliers in target areas and passed out *Handbook for Emergencies* as a way to get their communities involved in civil defense preparation. The Boy Scouts were all over the country and made their efforts known in not just urban areas, but rural as well.<sup>68</sup> Making the drills believable was imperative for successful survival and children helped to make that happen.

It quickly became apparent during Operation Alert that there needed to be a better means for evacuating large cities. Highways tended to be small two-lane systems that would easily

---

<sup>65</sup> *Operation Alert 1954 Newsreel*, YouTube video, 1:25, a newsreel regarding Operation Alert, posted by "CONELRAD6401240," January 05, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m13zknLHF-8>.

<sup>66</sup> *Operation Alert: Mock H-Bomb Attack Tests Civil Defense – 1956 – CharlieDeanArchives*, YouTube video, 1:32, newsreel discussing Operation Alert, posted by "Charlie Dean Archives," December 19, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XevJclt3OZo>.

<sup>67</sup> Oakes, 94.

<sup>68</sup> Davis, 27.

become clogged in a mass evacuation. The Federal Highway Act of 1956 created the interstate highway system. A massive interstate system had been considered during the New Deal under President Franklin Roosevelt but unfortunately been placed on the back burner. President Roosevelt had imagined building a transcontinental highway system that would have connected the United States more completely and efficiently. The interstate system under President Roosevelt never quite took off the way it needed to and only managed to construct 6,500 miles of highway before President Eisenhower took office. President Eisenhower allocated the funds necessary to complete the highway system over a ten-year period.<sup>69</sup> It was through his insistence on his “war games” that it became apparent that a working interstate system could be vital in saving American lives.<sup>70</sup> The highways not only reshaped the way Americans traveled but were essential to a successful civil defense program.

While there were plans in place to ease evacuation of city centers, there was still significant concern about how to make shelters accessible for everyone, especially those who could not evacuate. Fallout finally became a crucial concern under President Eisenhower as the public began to accept and understand its devastating effects. *What You Should Know About Radioactive Fallout* was a pamphlet that was distributed in 1956 that outlined what fallout was and how a civilian could protect themselves from it. The pamphlet stated that fallout is “visible as dust; depending on the clarity of the sky at the time of attack, the mushroom cloud can serve as a warning towards the direction that fallout will travel.”<sup>71</sup> Fallout can travel hundreds of miles after a blast. The significant danger is within the first few days of the blast. According to the

---

<sup>69</sup> *National Interstate and Defense Highways Act of 1956*, HR 10660, 84<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess., *Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789-1996*, accessed December 01, 2016, <https://www.archives.gov/files/historical-docs/doc-content/images/natl-interstate-act.pdf>.

<sup>70</sup> Winkler, 117.

<sup>71</sup> *What You Should Know about Radioactive Fallout* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956).

pamphlet, everyone in the country lived within range of potential targets, meaning they lived within range of potential fallout as well. In order to survive, the pamphlet noted, people could build shelters in basements or inner rooms of homes, which needed to always be stocked with enough supplies for three to four days.<sup>72</sup> Deadly fallout was the primary reason for the shift from evacuation to taking shelter; it would be easier to stay put than to congest the highways trying to leave.

President Eisenhower can be credited with providing the United States with the civil defense legacy many are familiar with today. Mock evacuations and grand drills took place under his tenure and were not seen again once President John F. Kennedy took office. The understanding that surviving fallout was more important than surviving the blast also took place under President Eisenhower's leadership. Civil defense memory should be attributed to President Eisenhower, despite civil defense existing before and after, because he was the only president who went to great lengths, such as mock drills, to unite and involve the nation. Civil defense as it is known today is because of the efforts of the Eisenhower Administration.

A change in administration did not lessen the drive for civil defense and nuclear survival in the eyes of the public, however. President Kennedy made civil defense part of his election platform and promised to provide more resources for the OCDM. It became clear that the nation's defense was of the utmost importance and that defeating the Communist threat was vital for that defense. Kennedy attempted to make good on his promises to secure the United States from communism during a failed invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in 1961. Cold War tensions ran high and were further exacerbated by the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Tensions during the

---

<sup>72</sup> *What You Should Know about Radioactive Fallout* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956).

Kennedy Administration made the use of nuclear weapons a possibility for the first time since the Korean War.<sup>73</sup> Civil defense preparation was needed then more than ever before.

In addition to the tensions the United States faced with neighboring Cuba, there was the additional complication of dealing with the Soviet Union having set down an ultimatum regarding West Berlin in Germany. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev demanded that Western military forces abandon occupation of West Berlin or face war. Despite knowing that this situation could easily result in a nuclear war, President Kennedy remained firm in not giving into Khrushchev's demands.<sup>74</sup> President Kennedy made a speech that urged the public to prepare for war and do what they could to protect their families. The speech sparked concern among citizens, and the OCDM was bombarded with letters about what citizens needed to do to prepare. It appeared that the Cold War was about to go hot.<sup>75</sup>

To prepare for war, tactics of using films and pamphlets were still the preferred method of civil defense preparation. Films were produced that were instruction guides on how to build home shelters in basements and what to expect if one were surviving in a public shelter. The OCDM still strongly advocated for home shelters and individual responsibility regarding civil defense but greater efforts were made to locate and mark adequate shelters for use by the public.<sup>76</sup> President Kennedy approved of the same policy of home preparation as the president before him, though he offered to provide more funding for the OCDM. The OCDM was moved to the Pentagon so that civil defense efforts could be more closely coordinated with the military. Still, discussion was always centered around what the public could do for themselves. Funding was eventually appropriated to shelter plans, but overall discussion of civil defense began to

---

<sup>73</sup> Winkler, 124-125.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 126.

<sup>75</sup> Weart, 255.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 107-109.

simmer down by the mid-1960s as the United States became increasingly involved in the Vietnam Conflict.<sup>77</sup> The use of nuclear weapons against Vietnam was considered only briefly and it appears that if the United States was not going to use them against the communist threat then, it was likely that they were not going to be used at all.<sup>78</sup> Civil Defense went on to exist as an agency for the decades that followed the Cuban Missile Crisis but the efforts of the organization shifted from atomic survival to providing support during a natural disaster.

Civil defense became a constant in the lives of individuals across the United States after the Soviets developed their own nuclear weapons. There were opposing views across the board on how to properly handle this new frontier of nuclear warfare. President Truman, President Eisenhower, and President Kennedy knew that civil defense was crucial to calming the American public but each handled civil defense differently. Regardless, civil defense permeated throughout everyday life and popular culture; Americans were concerned about what the outcome would be if a bomb were dropped on their home.

---

<sup>77</sup> Winkler, 127.

<sup>78</sup> Neil Sheehan et al., *The Pentagon Papers: The Secret History of the Vietnam War* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1971).



## CHAPTER 2

### PREVENTING RED DAWN OVER APPALACHIA: CIVIL DEFENSE IN WEST VIRGINIA

The scene opens, planes can be heard in the background as two individuals look towards the sky with concern on their faces. The narrator describes the unfortunate circumstances of this new Atomic Age and the necessity to prepare for one's survival. To prepare, Americans must understand the weapon that now threatens their very existence. An explosion is heard and a mushroom cloud rises to the sky, while the narrator comments that the explosion destroys through blast, heat, and radiation. Cut to scenes of the devastation wrought by the bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. He notes that many lives could have been spared had the Japanese sought proper protection. The most important lesson the narrator wanted viewers to take away from this film was that the United States had the hindsight of what happened to Japan and was better able to prepare for an atomic bomb.<sup>79</sup> Preparation was the key to survival and an attack could strike at any time or place, even in West Virginia.

In 1950, the federal government requested that every state develop their own civil defense programs with some guidance from the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA). It was the mission of the government that a plan should be in place for the "protection of life and property in the United States from attack."<sup>80</sup> The threat of attack on the United States was real and the possibility of West Virginia being a target was also a reality. On the surface, West Virginia might seem irrelevant to the story of Cold War danger and intrigue. For many generations, West Virginia has been placed in an isolated box with popular culture resigning its

---

<sup>79</sup> *Survival under Atomic Attack*, by Edward R. Murrow (Washington, DC: The Federal Civil Defense Administration, 1951), online, <https://archive.org/details/Survival1951>.

<sup>80</sup> Wilbur Cohen and Evelyn Boyer, "Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950: Summary and Legislative History," *Social Security Bulletin*, April 1951.

people to the hillbilly trope. Coal companies have exploited the region, a tradition that to this day still lives on. Coal companies were not the only industries to exploit West Virginia; the state was faced with exploitation by the government for the survival of elected officials. Towns in West Virginia were used as the evacuation points for the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The state was exploited in other ways from 1952 to 1963; for instance, Huntington was the site of a covert factory that produced nickel carbonyl powder used for the enrichment of uranium. The continuity of the federal government depended on the survival of West Virginia, as the Greenbrier Resort in White Sulphur Springs housed a top secret, secure bunker. Despite these significant contributions to the Cold War effort that made the state vital and vulnerable, little effort was made to help protect West Virginia's citizens.

Not only was West Virginia important in federal civil defense, West Virginia offered vital resources such as timber and coal, with coal production booming during the 1950s.<sup>81</sup> Logistically, it would make sense for an enemy to knock out a large industrial region. By damaging the coal or steel industries, the Soviet Union could edge ahead in the military arms race and become the dominant super power. While it may have appeared absurd to the nation to be concerned about the fate of a bunch of hillbillies, the manufacturing industry was strong enough in West Virginia that a surprise attack was a real prospect.

In the beginning, it appeared as though West Virginia was going to have a solid civil defense plan. In 1949, Governor Okey Patteson, in tandem with the Federal Defense Administration, organized the State Council of Defense. The Council was made up of eight individuals, including the governor and Stewart Smith, president of Marshall College. Council members came from all over the state: Ohio County, which contains Wheeling; Berkley County,

---

<sup>81</sup> Ronald Lewis, "Coal," *West Virginia Encyclopedia*, accessed March 01, 2017, [www.wvencyclopedia.org](http://www.wvencyclopedia.org).

which contains Martinsburg; Fayette County, and Randolph County. The West Virginia Civil Defense Council designated Wheeling as a possible site for a Soviet Union attack. Martinsburg was significant for being the evacuation location for the Department of Justice.<sup>82</sup> The Council included representation from the eastern panhandle, the northern panhandle, the southern coal fields, the western Ohio Valley, and the central part of the state. Having representation from each region of West Virginia would guarantee that each region's interests were represented which would result in an inclusive civil defense plan. The Council developed the state's first civil defense emergency manual in 1950, *The State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan* (SEOP).<sup>83</sup> The early framework for this plan would be carried out through subsequent plans, primarily being added to by the Council as the times changed and technologies advanced.

In 1951, the West Virginia Civil Defense Agency (WVCDA) expanded on the first civil defense act with the West Virginia Civil Defense Act. This act updated protocols and civil defense operations that had been in place during World War II. The act clarified the responsibilities of the governor outside of natural disasters and what the procedure was to develop an efficient civil defense program.<sup>84</sup> The Council had the 1950 SEOP laid out before the passage of legislation which ensured that the governor had the powers that the document called for. These powers included free reign to call on any branch of the state government, and to seize both public and private property for use by the state.<sup>85</sup> These powers allowed for the state to

---

<sup>82</sup> *Charleston Gazette Mail*, January 23, 2011.

<sup>83</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1950.

<sup>84</sup> West Virginia Civil Defense Act 1951.

<sup>85</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1950.

guarantee that they could take care of the population in the event of an emergency, as well as streamline the bureaucratic process.

There was little to no funding available for civil defense in West Virginia. The early years saw a relatively weak, fledgling civil defense program in the state when placed against states that were generally richer than West Virginia. Ohio, for example, already had their State Highway Patrol participating in mock drills as early as 1950.<sup>86</sup> In the 1950 SEOP, the Council instructed civilians to rely heavily on the generosity of organizations like the Red Cross and private church groups to help prepare and recover from an attack. The Council had high expectations of what civilians were supposed to be doing by stating in the 1950 SEOP, “It is the responsibility of each citizen to be thoroughly trained to counteract the possible results of any disaster that may strike in peace or in war.”<sup>87</sup> Yet there was little civil defense training and education available for the public to use in 1951, with the state relying heavily on the films and pamphlets handed out by the Federal Civil Defense Administration to make their case. Government Officials hoped that simply telling citizens to do something would be enough to get the people prepared so that regardless of the emergency, property damages and human casualties would be minimized.

Involving all aspects of the community was key to a successful civil defense program. Being able to call on businesses who provided services that would be desirable in times of emergency was part of that community involvement.<sup>88</sup> Restaurants could be called on to hand out their food, truckers could be used to transport displaced citizens, and schools could be turned into makeshift hospitals and places of refuge. In fact, there was a civil defense film released by

---

<sup>86</sup> “Ohio State Highway Patrol 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: 1950s,” Ohio.gov, accessed March 01, 2017.

<sup>87</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1950.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

the Federal Civil Defense Administration that elaborated on the necessity of using various industries in times of emergency. The film shows truckers working with the Red Cross and other volunteers to help stranded flood survivors get to safety. The scene cuts to a man sitting at the bar of a diner, ordering food, exhausted after transporting flood survivors. Another trucker sits next to him and after learning about what he did proceeds to tell him about how his town must use the truckers at a moment's notice in case of attack.<sup>89</sup> Convincing citizens to volunteer would be the only way that the civil defense program could be successful.

The 1950 SEOP sought to keep chaos during an emergency at a minimum by dividing the state into smaller areas, focusing on the key industrial areas of the state: Charleston, Huntington, and Wheeling. Charleston's significance was both its industry and the fact that it was the state capital; each state's capital was considered a possible enemy target.<sup>90</sup> The Huntington metropolitan area had critical refineries, plants, and other various forms of industry including the covert location of nuclear weapon components. Inco Alloys International, today known as Special Metals, a plant located along the Guyandotte River in Huntington, housed the top-secret site that produced nickel carbonyl powder used for uranium enrichment. Enriched uranium was then used in atomic weapons development. While this was not known to the public, it was something that the governor might have been aware of, especially at the time the first SEOP was being developed. Construction on the clandestine section of the plant began in 1951 when the Atomic Energy Commission purchased a piece of land from the International Nickel Company,

---

<sup>89</sup> *Rehearsal for Disaster*, produced by America's Trucking Company with the cooperation of the Federal Civil Defense Administration, (Capital Film Studios, 1957), accessed February 03, 2017, <https://archive.org/details/28192RehearsalForDisaster>.

<sup>90</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1950.

Inc. From then on, only individuals who worked specifically with the irradiated materials knew of its existence. The rest of the employees within Inco Alloys International knew nothing.<sup>91</sup>

The areas outside of the target zones were intended to be support zones in the event that one of the targets was attacked. These regions, as guided by the SEOP 50, needed to be just as prepared as the target areas because at any point they could be taking on the populations of the state's major cities. If Huntington was to be attacked, citizens living in those areas, as well as those from the other target areas, would be evacuated into support zones for the sake of safety.<sup>92</sup> The support zones would be safe havens for citizens devastated by an emergency. The assumption was that civilians in the support zones would be more than willing to help their neighbors.

The 1950 SEOP placed significant assumptions on what was capable of being done; it had assumed that citizens had access to the information they needed to become well informed about both the procedure and the effects of nuclear weapons. The SEOP was an essential tool to help guide civil defense officials about what citizens needed in order to guarantee their survival and to keep both parties informed regarding who was in charge so citizens would know who to turn to.<sup>93</sup> The SEOP served the dual purpose of keeping the bureaucratic part of civil defense on track as well as guiding civil defense volunteers. Knowing who was in charge and what steps came next would promote unity rather than disarray, keep chaos at a minimum, and would be the best-case scenario for survival.

The 1950 SEOP directed training of civil defense officials on how properly to educate and inform citizens about the effect of nuclear weapons. The SEOP placed explicit emphasis on

---

<sup>91</sup> Jim Ross, "Special Metals Says It Was Kept In Dark," *Herald Dispatch*, May 03, 2001.

<sup>92</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1950.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

accurately informing the public, claiming that it was critical to keep the public informed when an emergency arose in order to keep people calm. It was strongly urged by the Council that civil defense leaders tell the public the truth, regardless of what that truth might have been. If an attack took place, civil defense leaders were charged with keeping citizens up-to-date on the information they were receiving from emergency personnel. It was the hope of the Council that by having a constant flow of information, morale could be lifted and people would be far more likely to lend a hand.<sup>94</sup> The assumption was that high morale would make voluntary efforts a certainty rather than leaving individuals on their own.

Education and information were critical for understanding what an atomic attack meant for the country. Many individuals, particularly in the less educated corners of the state, would have been completely unaware of what nuclear fallout was. Cited in the 1950 SEOP was a physicist from West Virginia University, Dr. Thomas, who stated that it was the responsibility of the community to train teachers on radiological equipment and how to treat radiation sickness.

The layman must be taught how to protect himself against the invisible radiations of radioactivity in much the same way as he is taught to protect himself against the many other life hazards which he cannot see, such as bacteria and viruses... We must have an educational program that will give us a clear perspective of the greater principle that we are to protect and defend, namely, the Democratic Way of Life. *For that purpose we must educate for defense against atomic warfare (emphasis in the original).*<sup>95</sup>

Dr. Thomas argued that the public needed to become aware of the consequences of radioactivity as well as its positive applications so as not to fear the new technology, just the weapon. Dr. Thomas also insisted that by having this information, civilians could properly protect themselves and repress any irrational fears they might have about nuclear technologies outside of the bomb.<sup>96</sup> Dr. Thomas, a scientific expert, placed the importance on radiation defense needing to

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

be the number one goal of civil defense. However, the 1950 SEOP only touched the discussion of radiation briefly, in fact limiting it to Dr. Thomas's comments.

The West Virginia Civil Defense Agency took many steps in the right direction with the 1950 SEOP by providing a clear progression of necessary actions. The SEOP, for all its flaws, still provided a guide for newer editions. Unfortunately, it lacked concrete direction about what citizens needed to be prepared, repeatedly stating only that they needed to be vigilant and do their part. The entirety of the 1950 SEOP was based on assumptions that citizens would be willing to help their communities and relying on organizations that were outside of the government. What this plan did correctly though, was provide insight on what future plans needed to focus on, namely the issue of preparing and surviving fallout radiation.

It was not until 1958 that a new SEOP was released. This new plan adjusted to the shift in Administrations between President Truman and President Eisenhower, where President Eisenhower sought to involve the nation more fully in civil defense preparations. President Truman thought that increasing the nuclear arsenal was plan enough, while President Eisenhower thought the nation needed to train and take a more proactive role in preventing a catastrophic situation during an attack. Aides to President Eisenhower worked within the Administration to impose the importance of civil defense efforts on the nation through newspaper ads, radio broadcasts, and television programs. Using the emergency system implemented by the Truman Administration, the Eisenhower Administration began to interrupt television and radio programs regularly with CONELRAD alerts to keep the public on their toes. The nation also coordinated exercises with air raid sirens, mass evacuations, and mock disasters known as Operation Alert.<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup> Weart. Nuclear Fear, 131.



These events helped to shape the SEOP in West Virginia, making preparedness a community effort.

President Eisenhower was a major advocate for civil defense and saw West Virginia as the perfect place for a top-secret bunker. President Eisenhower authorized the construction of a military bunker underneath the Greenbrier Resort in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. President Eisenhower convalesced at the Greenbrier Resort when it was the Ashford General Hospital during World War II and thought the Greenbrier would be the perfect location for a bunker being within 250 miles of Washington, D.C., a quick trip by train or helicopter. Not to mention the resort was known for catering to the top tier members of society.<sup>98</sup> In 1955, Eisenhower proposed the construction of a bunker because of the resort's proximity to the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, the interstate, and private runway. In 1956, the North American Summit Conference met at the Greenbrier Resort where President Eisenhower met with the President of Mexico and the Prime Minister of Canada. The conference was actually a ploy to cover a meeting that President Eisenhower had with Walter Tuohy, owner of both the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway and the Greenbrier Resort. Construction on the bunker began in 1958 under the pretext that a new wing was being added on to the resort.<sup>99</sup>

With the federal government's renewed interest in civil defense, the Council updated the SEOP and released a new version in 1958. The new 1958 SEOP had expanded the bureaucratic structure of the West Virginia Civil Defense Agency, involving more people and more branches than previously. New branches that came out of the updated organization ranged from mobilization, education, industry, and the continuity of government. Mobilization focused on moving supplies in and out of emergency zones, as well as evacuating civilians. Education

---

<sup>98</sup> Greenbrier Bunker Tour, February 28, 2017.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

focused solely on the role of schools in preparing for an emergency and in times of one. Industry focused on how various West Virginia companies could be used to support the civil defense effort. Each appendix broke down what the organization was, how the organization was to prepare, how it was to act in an emergency, and how it was to help the state recover in the aftermath. The only portion that was still recognizable from the initial 1950 edition, was the emphasis on government continuity.<sup>100</sup>

Since the 1950 SEOP covered the importance of an informed and educated community, the 1958 SEOP provided guidance for the schools with the Emergency Education Service (EES) branch. The 1950 SEOP focused on educating adults where the 1958 SEOP emphasized educating children. Its role was to educate children and school personnel on self-protection techniques, evacuation plans, radiological defenses, and shelters. The SEOP 58 stated that the head of the EES would be the State Superintendent of Schools, who would be appointed by the governor. The superintendent was tasked with implementing training programs within the schools and ensuring that the schools were well stocked and prepared for an emergency.<sup>101</sup> Children were used as tools in educating the greater public, namely their parents and other family members, who might not have had access to media resources informing them of the hazards of fallout. Civilians might not have had access to media resources due to their own poverty or lack of education. Informing the youth at school was a critical component of West Virginia's civil defense program.

To ensure that these students were armed with vital information, the 1958 SEOP broke down the EES into specific divisions to ensure that all areas were covered. These divisions were

---

<sup>100</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1958.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

the Survival Division, the Training Division, and the Facilities Division. The goal of the Survival Division was to organize, coordinate, and supervise all planning for the schools. Each school was then responsible for either evacuation or providing shelter, radiological defenses, and self-preservation techniques. The Training Division was tasked with implementing “public survival training programs.” What is unclear is what the writers of the 1958 SEOP meant by “public survival training.” There is little direction if “public survival training” was supposed to imply civilians outside the student population and staff; the inclusion of the public is significant because there was little emphasis on adult training programs. The SEOP dove into a variety of aspects of civilian life that could be used for civil defense, auxiliary police, and firefighters for example, but does not offer specific instructions or solutions on how to go about including every citizen in the civil defense discussion.<sup>102</sup> The lack of direction is problematic because it does not provide a solution or any guide about how to involve citizens who lack the finances needed to prepare their homes.

The first place the Council assumed that the public would flee to in an emergency would most likely be the local school, church, or community center. It was through the Facilities Division that the EES hinted at helping individuals outside of the school by transporting citizens to and from the schools as well as housing more than just the students if citizens needed to take cover. The Facilities Division was subdivided into three other groups: the Transportation Branch, the Housing Branch, and the Commissary Branch. Transportation was to ensure that there were vehicles that would be ready for use for both public or private schools, either to transport children for an evacuation or to their homes. The Housing Branch made sure that all schools would be suitable as a receiving site for evacuees or first aid stations, while the Commissary

---

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

Branch was charged with making sure school cafeterias were stocked and capable of feeding large groups of people.<sup>103</sup>

As a means to ensure that the public remained informed, the 1958 SEOP created a convoluted branch that was created solely for the dissemination of information. The Emergency Information Services (EIS) had the responsibility of guaranteeing that important information that was accurate and free from language that would create panic and chaos made its way to citizens. The EIS was divided into four branches: the Press Branch, the Radio and Television Branch, the Special Projects Branch, and the Editorial Branch. The Press Branch was devoted to disseminating information within newspapers and magazines.<sup>104</sup> The process of how this was to be done and what information was to be included exactly is a little murky. There were occasionally articles that appeared in local newspapers that discussed the necessity of civil defense. These articles were usually editorials written by local citizens but occasionally a few would slip in that were syndicated from national newspapers.<sup>105</sup> The authority on which articles to include in West Virginia newspapers came down to the Press Branch. In that same respect, the authority on which civil defense programs aired on West Virginia's radios and televisions came through the Radio and Television Branch of the EIS. The Special Projects Branch coordinated speaking engagements for civil defense leaders.<sup>106</sup> Speaking engagements and broadcasts were some of the common means of distributing information.<sup>107</sup> Small local groups such as the Junior

---

<sup>103</sup> Ibid

<sup>104</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1958.

<sup>105</sup> *The Huntington Advertiser*, "Civil Defense Chief Says Cities Will Not Be Mass Evacuated," December 01, 1950. *The Huntington Advertiser*, "Civil Defense Activity Grows Hotter," December 04, 1950. *The Raleigh Register*, "Atomic Explosions, Civil Defense, Blood Program Discussed," November 21, 1951. *The Raleigh Register*, "OCD Sends Out an SOS: Thousands Needed to Take First Aid Training in State," June 16, 1953. Roscoe Drummond, "Though It Irks Soviets We Need Civil Defense," *The Charleston Daily Mail*, June 14, 1961.

<sup>106</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1958.

<sup>107</sup> The FCDA and the OCDM would print civil defense lesson plans to be used in meetings outside the classroom.

League, Women's Club, or any other society club would regularly host state civil defense directors as guest speakers during their meetings.<sup>108</sup> Finally, the Editorial Branch aimed to collect all manner of information about civil defense services as well as coordinate efforts towards properly editing the information.<sup>109</sup> These branches were required to remain on high alert at all times, tirelessly working to prepare for any emergency that may come their way.

An interesting point to note about the SEOP 58 was that the plan never came out and discussed civil defense training beyond the school house for civilians without children or children in school. Civil defense training was never elaborated on outside of the schoolhouse for citizens in the 1958 SEOP. There was guidance for drills for those actively involved in the fire and police auxiliary forces; there was a diagram that plainly laid out the chain of command, but for the civilian who was not an active civil defense volunteer, there was very little to go on. It is surprising that there was not direct guidance for adult civilians when considering that a vast majority of the civil defense films and pamphlets available were aimed at an adult audience rather than a youthful one. The one film that was prominent for children was *Duck and Cover* featuring Bert the Turtle. This film has catchy lyrics for children on how they needed to follow Bert's example if they see the flash of atomic light:

*He'd duck and cover, duck and cover.  
He'd hide his head and tail and four little feet,  
He'd duck and cover!  
He hid beneath his little shell until the coast was clear,  
Then one by one his head and tail and legs would reappear.  
By acting calm and cool he proved he was a hero, too.  
For finding safety is the bravest wisest thing to do.<sup>110</sup>*

---

<sup>108</sup> "Home Defense Will Be Stressed At The Civil Defense Workshop," *The Raleigh Register*, September 24, 1958; "Practical Nurses Assn., YWCA," *Sunday Gazette-Mail*, October 09, 1960; "Pi Psi Chapter," *The Charleston Daily Mail*, June 19, 1961; "Civil Defense Is Theme of Princeton Club Meet," *The Beckley-Post Herald*, January 22, 1961.

<sup>109</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1958.

<sup>110</sup> *Duck and Cover*, (New York: NBC Universal, 1951).

This film made its debut in 1951 and the films that followed were increasingly geared towards a much older audience. Occasionally films would be broadcast on television, such as *Atomic Attack* during the Motorola Television Hour and some women's groups would occasionally show films during meetings.<sup>111</sup> However, none of these were touched upon in the SEOP 58. There was no clear plan for how to reach the wider population outside of the schoolhouse.

Heeding the advice of Dr. Thomas in the 1950 SEOP, the 1958 SEOP set the foundation for a radiation education program. All that was available in the 1950 SEOP was the letter that Dr. Thomas had written expressing his concern about radiation. The 1958 SEOP clearly defined a branch whose sole purpose was preparing for fallout radiation. This branch of West Virginia's civil defense program was the Emergency Radiological Service (ERS). The ERS was given the explicit task of providing the state with information and advice that would help limit any damaging effects of radiation. By all accounts, the ERS was the most important part of the 1958 SEOP due to the fact the Federal Civil Defense Administration had scrapped the idea of trying to survive a direct hit. The pamphlets and films all prescribed taking shelter to avoid fallout radiation; *Facts About Fallout* was released as a pamphlet by the Federal Civil Defense Administration in 1955 that explained what fallout was. A few years later a film was released by the same name, both with the expressed intent of warning the public about fallout and how to avoid it. Irradiated fallout particles were displayed, the narrator informed the viewer that just a few particles are harmless, minor radiation surrounds us every day in some form or another, but the trouble lies when there are billions of irradiated particles, such as those found after a nuclear explosion. These particles, the narrator goes on, can cause sickness and death. A scrolling screen

---

<sup>111</sup> *Atomic Attack – The Motorola Television Hour 1954*, YouTube video, 50:09, civil defense broadcast, posted by “Nuclear Vault,” August 16, 2009, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6J3HOaU9E5U&t](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6J3HOaU9E5U&t;).; *The Beckley-Post Herald*, Junior Women Study Civil Defense Work, November 10, 1951.

warns viewers that a nuclear attack would be devastating for the areas hit but the greater threat is the fallout which has the potential of devastating and killing a great many more than the first blast.<sup>112</sup> Unfortunately, though the ERS had been acknowledged as an established branch within the 1958 SEOP, it was far from a developed program.<sup>113</sup>

While there were significant problems with the education plan outlines by the SEOP, that was not the only weakness. The effectiveness of West Virginia's civil defense program was called into question at the Governor's Conference Committee on Civil Defense in 1961. The Committee did a comparison of all fifty states and where they stood in terms of preparation. West Virginia ranked as one of the lowest in nearly every position. When it came to being informed, the Governor's Conference noted that the 1958 SEOP focused heavily on education and public information but lacked any concrete plan for shelters that the communities needed. In the brief moments when the 1958 SEOP discussed shelter, it was with the assumption that civilians had a home that was capable of providing adequate defense against fallout. The only places of refuge explicitly discussed in the plan were schools and hospitals.<sup>114</sup> There was never any clear instruction about additional community shelters aside from schools and hospitals. Baseline assumptions were made by the Council that every citizen had a home that was appropriate protection from fallout.

The Governor's Conference estimated that there were only about fifty family fallout shelters in the state. West Virginia's warning system was vastly outdated and terribly slow, taking at least forty minutes to warn the entire state. The warning time was disappointing

---

<sup>112</sup> Federal Civil Defense Administration. *Facts About Fallout*. Washington D.C.: GPO, 1955.; Federal Civil Defense Administration, *Facts About Fallout*, film, Washington D.C.: GPO, 1955.

<sup>113</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1958.

<sup>114</sup> "Governor Conference Committee on Civil Defense," 1961, William W. Barron Papers, West Virginia State Archives.

especially compared to neighboring Kentucky, who had a warning time of less than ten minutes, and Ohio who could warn the whole state in around five minutes. Scientists at Los Alamos had advised that a minimum of thirty minutes warning would be necessary for optimal survival.<sup>115</sup> In addition to poor warning times, the Governor's Conference called out West Virginia for their weak radiological defense program, the very defense that Dr. Thomas had claimed was the most critical for the preservation of the American way of life. In the 1958 SEOP it appeared that the state was well prepared for any disaster or attack that could take place, but the reality was quite the opposite. Even in the area of school education, which the plan had emphasized, the EES provided no organized activities and only a minuscule percentage of schools even touched the subject of fallout.<sup>116</sup> Despite the advances in information and technology, West Virginia was only slightly more prepared than they were in 1950.

With those criticisms of the Governor's Conference in mind, the state developed another SEOP in 1963. This new plan was still unable to improve upon the failures of the previous SEOPs. Many of the branches remained intact but what failed to be elaborated on was the radiological program. The 1963 SEOP had noted (in the section where the framework of the radiological program should have been) that someone in some capacity of authority would alert available staff on what they needed to do if there was an attack.<sup>117</sup> These deficiencies in the 1963 SEOP were acknowledged by the program's own civil defense director William J. Matthews. Matthews wrote to Mr. Herschel Rose, an attorney in Fairmont and the Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army, and laid out each area where he claimed the state's civil defense program

---

<sup>115</sup> Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, *The Effects of Atomic Weapons: Prepared for and in Cooperation With the United States Department of Defense and the United States Atomic Energy Commission*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950).

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1963.



was lacking, starting with the warning system. Matthews regarded the communications system as having the “appearance of a Rube Goldberg contrivance.”<sup>118</sup> Matthews also discussed the severe deficiencies in the radiological monitoring program, noting that “Of the nearly 20,000 monitors needed, less than 5% have been trained and only 324 of the 2,539 monitoring stations needed have been established.”<sup>119</sup> While there were many updates to the SEOP between 1950 and 1958, there were few changes to the 1963 SEOP, especially regarding radiological defense efforts. Progress seemed at a standstill, which should have been inexcusable when the importance of radiation education was stressed so early in the creation of the West Virginia Civil Defense Agency. The first civil defense council that was established was made aware of what radiation was and the risks of fallout were stressed in nearly every civil defense film.<sup>120</sup>

The 1950 SEOP was optimistic about what the citizens could accomplish within West Virginia’s civil defense program. The SEOP had provided a skeleton for which future plans could add on with the guidance from the Council about where West Virginia civil defense needed to go next. The 1958 SEOP was far more developed than the 1950 one by designing various branches for a more detailed civil defense program. It heavily emphasized education but lacked in the areas that the 1950 SEOP had found to be one of the more important aspects of civil defense, radiological defense. Having been criticized for its shortcomings by the Governor’s Conference, the 1963 SEOP did not resolve any of those issues. The reason for all these deficiencies lie in the lack of money that was being spent on the civil defense program.

---

<sup>118</sup> Rube Goldberg was a cartoonist known for depicting super complicated devices that performed very simple tasks; for example, a marble might roll down a track that would knock over some dominoes, those dominoes would then trigger another chain reaction, possibly a boot to kick a ball, the ball would roll down a ramp to another device, and so on and so forth. All of that for the expressed purpose of turning on a light or other equally simple task.

<sup>119</sup> Letter to Herschel Rose from William J. Matthews, September 30, 1964, Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization Papers, West Virginia State Archives.

<sup>120</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1963.

As true in every other state and at the federal level, funding was a struggle for West Virginia at every stage of their civil defense program. President Truman, though recognizing the need for a civil defense program, did not want to devote too much money. President Eisenhower and President Kennedy thought a civil defense program was a necessity but could not get excess funds approved, especially when a lot of spending was devoted to closing the “missile gap” between the Soviet Union and the United States.<sup>121</sup> Funding was a clear struggle in West Virginia where the state lacked adequate communication equipment, educators, and a sufficient radiological program. When Governor Okey Patteson established the civil defense agency in 1949, there was no funding available for this specific endeavor. Governor Patteson made funds available from the Governor’s Contingent Fund for Incidental Expenses.<sup>122</sup> In the early years of the state’s program, they were not spending the money they did have on the resources that were necessary for a successful program. During the 1951-1953 fiscal year, a separate spending unit was set up for civil defense, which had set aside \$32,820 for the year but only spent \$19,298. Out of that only \$3,525 was used for educational supplies and equipment, medical supplies and equipment, technical supplies, and printing and binding. The total figures excluded salaries of five civil defense personnel, the State Director and support staff.<sup>123</sup> It is possible in the early years that, despite a guideline of what was needed with the 1950 SEOP, the civil defense program did not know how to spend the money where it was needed.

While the push from both the public and federal government for civil defense preparation remained strong throughout the late 1950s into the early 1960s, West Virginia still set aside

---

<sup>121</sup> Winkler, *Life Under a Cloud*, 130.

<sup>122</sup> A Brief History of Civil Defense in West Virginia, 1960, Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization Papers, West Virginia State Archives.

<sup>123</sup> State of West Virginia Board of Public Works Budget Document for the Biennium, 1953, Budget Documents, West Virginia State Archives.

meager funds. In 1958 the total spent by the Department of Civil and Defense Mobilization was \$26,672 of the \$27,380 that was set aside for them. Changes from the previous years' budget included an office building, additional vehicles, and new staff, which would explain the apparent increase in spending. While much of the salaries were paid through tax dollars, it was noted on the 1958 budget document that, "West Virginia's progress in civil defense is due in large degree to the cooperation of industries and local county and municipal organizations."<sup>124</sup> The state officials were the only ones who received any of the money. The state relied heavily on the support of private entities to help fund civil defense efforts. The local levels had very little to contribute in terms of tax revenue but had the support of many faithful volunteers.

The financial situation did not improve much over the years, but the federal government began to offer more support by 1962, which covered about half of the total costs for salaries, equipment, and general services.<sup>125</sup> When compared to other states, as was done at the Governor's Committee, aside from lagging behind in education and radiological defenses, the state also lacked adequate shelters. The SEOP clearly stated that it was the responsibility of the Office of Civil Defense to provide guidance for fallout shelters but it was up to state and local organizations to survey existing buildings that could be converted as well as locations for new shelters.<sup>126</sup> It is important to note that they were declaring the need for fallout shelters, not bomb shelters; bomb shelters would have been far costlier than fallout shelters. None of the shelters that were constructed, even the one under the Greenbrier, could withstand a direct hit from a

---

<sup>124</sup>State of West Virginia Board of Public Works Budget Document for the Biennium, 1958, Budget Documents, West Virginia State Archives.

<sup>125</sup> State of West Virginia Board of Public Works Budget Document for the Biennium, 1963, Budget Documents, West Virginia State Archives.

<sup>126</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1950.

nuclear weapon. The singular purpose of the shelters was to protect citizens from fallout radiation.

Fallout protection was left to the citizen, most of whom were just not financially able to do so. Citizens would have to rely on the kindness of their neighbors or hope that there was a local shelter near their home that they could make it to. After all, that was exactly what the propaganda films depicted. A quick getaway to the community shelter, where neighbors waited patiently, and tempers never flared. The reality would have been quite different; individual anxieties would be pushed to their limits and groups of people who did not know each other packed tightly together would have resulted in some sort of conflict.<sup>127</sup> Success or failure to survive was determined under the assumption that citizens would have had easy access to a community shelter.

A massive downside of fallout shelters was the fact that they left so many people outside and were not necessarily open to the general public. An Informational Bulletin was sent out by the Department of Defense in 1961 that outlined the costs of constructing a home shelter. The Plywood Association provided the figures, stating that the cost of an underground single-family shelter would be between \$1,400 and \$1,500. Basement shelters could be built for around \$250 and an above ground shelter for \$500.<sup>128</sup> Just for comparison, \$250 in 1960 would be worth roughly \$2,000 by today's standards.<sup>129</sup> A shelter was completed by the West Virginia civil defense program in the basement of the Governor's Mansion, as well as one completed under the capitol, both for use by government officials only. Outside of Charleston there was one that was

---

<sup>127</sup> *Public Shelter Living: The Story of the Shelter – 1964 Educational Film – S88TV1*, YouTube video, 29:41, civil defense film about living in a fallout shelter, posted by “Tomorrow Always Comes,” December 27 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EE7ARZ-uwBo&t=330s>.

<sup>128</sup> Department of Defense and Office of Civil Defense, “Information Bulletin,” November 20, 1960.

<sup>129</sup> Figured with an inflation calculator, [www.saving.org](http://www.saving.org).

to be constructed on the grounds of Marshall College that could accommodate 1,000 people.<sup>130</sup> Shelters that were constructed and open were stocked and ready to go.<sup>131</sup>

With the inability of many families to afford constructing their own home shelters, these realities meant many citizens would have to hope there was a public shelter near them. The first public shelter in the Huntington area was not constructed until 1961 and was located in South Point, Ohio in the Rollyson Aluminum Plant.<sup>132</sup> Schools and hospitals were reserved as shelters for those who were in either the schools or hospitals. A shelter survey was conducted by the state civil defense agency in Huntington and Charleston by 1961, and by October 1962, in the Huntington area at least, the effort to post fallout shelter signs on buildings began in earnest.<sup>133</sup> A major problem with the shelter survey was that while there may have been a registry of which buildings were adequate shelters, many of those buildings had not been labeled with signs so the public could know where to go. In the state's civil defense budgets, there was no expenditure set aside for "Shelter Construction."<sup>134</sup> The likelihood of finding shelter became more probable as time went on, especially in the cities where both Charleston and Huntington had made the effort to mark public ready buildings.

Despite the fact that home shelters were cost prohibitive to many West Virginians, advertisements for special fallout shelter materials or loans for shelters were peppered throughout newspapers.<sup>135</sup> President Kennedy pushed harder for citizens to prepare in the wake

---

<sup>130</sup> Unfortunately there is nothing that verifies whether or not Marshall College completed construction of the shelter.

<sup>131</sup> "Governor Conference Committee on Civil Defense," 1961, William W. Barron Papers, West Virginia State Archives.

<sup>132</sup> WSAZ Broadcast, September 1961, WSAZ Television Newsfilm Collection, Marshall University Special Collections.

<sup>133</sup> WSAZ Broadcast, October 1962, WSAZ Television Newsfilm Collection, Marshall University Special Collections.

<sup>134</sup> State of West Virginia Board of Public Works Budget Document for the Biennium, 1958, Budget Documents, West Virginia State Archives.

<sup>135</sup> *The Raleigh Register*, *The Herald Dispatch*, 1960s.

of the Berlin Crisis, where Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev had threatened war if Western military powers did not end their occupation of West Berlin. However, President Kennedy stood his ground and refused to give into Soviet demands.<sup>136</sup> President Kennedy used this crisis as a talking point, suggesting that Americans needed to be prepared for the possibility of attack. The way to do this was to make sure that the public had access to shelters and President Kennedy wanted to embark on a \$93 million shelter survey initiative that would hopefully provide fifty million civilians with access to fallout shelters.<sup>137</sup> Though a private shelter was not completely out of the realm of possibility, citizens could apply for a Federal Housing Administration loan in order to construct a home shelter; all they needed to do was submit the plans of the shelter and have it inspected upon completion.<sup>138</sup> Despite the availability of loans, it still made home shelters only accessible to those who could afford to make payments, leaving out the poorest civilians in West Virginia.

West Virginia was cognizant of their deficiencies regarding their civil defense program for years, doing little to nothing to rectify it. The SEOPs stated that civil defense preparations were meant to safeguard the survival of human life, however the lack of funding and foresight for shelters would have meant failure in an attack. Most of the heavy lifting was done by volunteers such as woman's groups, social clubs, and the Red Cross and a lot of the funding came from them. West Virginia's civil defense agency noted numerous times throughout budget documents that West Virginia's civil defense program would not have been possible without the support of volunteers. The Greenbrier Bunker offered no possibility of protection for the citizens who helped to build it, making the massive shelter available for federal government officials

---

<sup>136</sup> Winkler, 126-127.

<sup>137</sup> "Americans Urged To Invest In Survival Insurance," *The Raleigh Register*, December 07, 1961.

<sup>138</sup> "Fallout Shelter Loan Rules Set," *The Beckley-Post Herald*, December 06, 1961.

only. In addition to limited civilian access to some of the best fallout shelters, the 1958 and 1963 SEOPs went to great lengths to map out who was in charge, rather than focus on the distinct lack of a radiological program. The focus on leadership and government shelters shows more of a concern for the continuity of government, rather than the perpetuity of civilian life. The shift to relying on fallout shelters during an attack took place between the 1950 and 1958 SEOP; the information was disseminated by the Federal Civil Defense Administration but it is clear that the West Virginia Civil Defense Agency did not adjust their plans accordingly. The only shelters that the state built were the ones underneath the government buildings and their attempt to mark potential shelters were lackadaisical at best. In addition to these shortcomings the state did little to update their warning systems and their radiological program.

In 1961, the *Twilight Zone* created a frightful scenario surrounding a potential atomic attack. "The Shelter" begins with a group of friends celebrating the birthday of doctor Bill Stockton. Everyone is sitting around the table, laughing, and having a grand old time. Some of the neighbors joke with the doctor about all the noise he makes at night working on a fallout shelter in his basement. He brushes the jokes off and remarks that it is better to be prepared than left with nothing at all. The doctor's son comes rushing into the party, raving about how the television broadcast cut out and advising everyone to tune into the CONELRAD stations. By tuning into the CONELRAD station the public is alerted to flying objects coming into American airspace. The party quickly dissolves, leaving the doctor and his family to rush to their shelter. The doctor, having the only shelter on the street, has to deal with his neighbors pleading with him to let them in. Does he try to help his friends, or save his family? The doctor makes the decision that his family needs protected and that he had tried to warn his neighbors that an attack could happen. The neighbors form a mob, losing their humanity, and try to break down the door

to the shelter to get in.<sup>139</sup> The goal of civil defense should have been to avoid scenarios such as these in the event of an attack. Would West Virginia's civil defense program have been up to the task of preventing such a catastrophe? It is a good bet that it would not.

---

<sup>139</sup> *The Twilight Zone*, "The Shelter," September 1961.



## CHAPTER 3

### RED ALERT!: CITIZENS REACT TO NUCLEAR ANNIHILATION

A trumpet and drum play an ominous tune while the screen displays the civil defense logo in black and white. A dark circle with a white triangle in the center, containing the letters “CD.” A stern male voice bounds in, “You are the target of those who would trample the liberties of free men. You are in the cross hairs of the bomb site an enemy is centering on you. You are a citizen of the free world. A citizen of the United States of America.” The film continues to inform the viewer that they are a likely candidate for Soviet Union target practice, no matter where they are located. The film advocates a plan of evacuation as well as taking shelter, but one theme is clear. The only way survival will take place, is if the individual is responsible and prepared.<sup>140</sup>

Individual accountability has been the staple of civil defense for much of its existence. As seen in the previous chapter, West Virginia was counting on individual accountability for the success of its civil defense program. It was noted repeatedly that the civil defense program would not have been possible without the help of volunteers and donations at the municipal level.<sup>141</sup> These volunteers were largely middle-class women working towards preparing their homes, families, and communities. These volunteers worked together to ensure that their way of life would be preserved in the event of an atomic attack, and many times at the expense of their poorer and minority counterparts. Three West Virginians kindly volunteered to tell their story for this thesis. Reverend Dr. Ronny Dower started his career in civil defense as a volunteer in 1957

---

<sup>140</sup> *Target You – 1950’s Educational Film – S88TV1*, YouTube video, 8:36, educational film about civil defense, posted by “Tomorrow Always Comes,” January 03, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGARVPYRDMs>.

<sup>141</sup> State of West Virginia Board of Public Works Budget Document for the Biennium, 1958, Budget Documents, West Virginia State Archives. State of West Virginia Board of Public Works Budget Document for the Biennium, 1959, Budget Documents, West Virginia State Archives.

with his father and finished his career in a paid position in 1977. Diane Williams and Renna Moore were children during the early years of the Cold War but recall much from their childhood. Their experiences are invaluable for understanding what the climate of West Virginia was like during this time.

The involvement of women's groups led to a predominantly middle-class civil defense organization across the nation. Films portrayed women in the homes as being active participants in the planning stage of civil defense. The reality is that the people involved were those that had the money and time to volunteer for the cause. In West Virginia, this was no different. It was the middle-class women of the state that pushed forward the cause of civil defense. The Tridelphia Women's Club in Wyoming County did a showing of the film *Survival Under Atomic Attack* which was followed by discussion about civil defense measures in the home and community.<sup>142</sup> These organizations featured the best of West Virginia society; their daughters were the debutantes, their children were in the schools, and they were trying to preserve their homes.<sup>143</sup>

Women's groups typically involved women who were middle class and had the means to coordinate meetings specifically discussing civil defense or take the time away to attend civil defense conferences. Women's groups used West Virginia's civil defense program by requesting that individuals, such as the Deputy State Director of Civil Defense Lieutenant Colonel Edward M. Sites, come in and speak to their group. These meetings were taking place as early as 1951, with one of the first speeches being requested by the Beckley Women's Club.<sup>144</sup> Civil defense leaders took part in a tour that examined civil defense operations in three cities in West Virginia:

---

<sup>142</sup> *The Beckley-Post Herald*, "Tridelphia Women's Club Studies Civil Defense," January 18, 1952.

<sup>143</sup> *The Herald Dispatch*, Society Pages. (These were the debutante pages. They would show a picture of the girls and their parents; a lot of the time their mothers were involved in Junior League, Rotary Club, or various other women's groups).

<sup>144</sup> *The Raleigh Register*, "Lt. Col. E. M. Sites To Speak At Civic Department Meet," November 18, 1951.

Wheeling, Fairmont, and Charleston. The tour showed healthy and active civil defense operations predominantly from women. A Woman's Conference that took place in Wheeling at the YWCA saw over 200 participants. There were men involved in the civil defense effort, but a lot of the early volunteer work can be attributed to women, or at the very least women's groups.<sup>145</sup> The continual involvement of women to bolster civil defense is surprising considering how morbid and gritty a topic civil defense was, which according to the films was death and the end of the world. Women's involvement in civil defense both contradicted traditional gender roles, while simultaneously doing exactly what tradition dictated. These women were not taking up arms and marching to the battlefield but were making their homes safe havens in the event of an emergency, mostly due to this being the gender appropriate action for them to take. Men were still involved but they were involved in the more militarized aspects of civil defense, auxiliary police, and fire forces, as well as shelter managers and any positions of authority.<sup>146</sup>

Civil defense films portrayed the dutiful housewife preparing the homes for an attack. In *Survival Under Atomic Attack*, it was a woman that was shown walking through the house and stocking the basement with provisions.<sup>147</sup> Women were also the ones training the children for the civil defense effort as well; this might be through Girl Scouts, Future Homemakers, or 4-H Clubs. Films were presented at meetings and the girls would take first aid classes; at one point girls were given civil defense kits with the hope that they would take them home to show their families how to prepare. Civil defense training for Girl Scouts would prepare them for an active role in community civil defense efforts.<sup>148</sup> The girls were not alone in their preparedness

---

<sup>145</sup> *The Weirton Daily Times*, County Rescue Operations Highlight State Exhibits, March 23, 1956.

<sup>146</sup> WSAZ Broadcasts, WSAZ Television Newsfilm Collection, Marshall University Special Collections.

<sup>147</sup> *Survival Under Atomic Attack*, by Edward R. Murrow (Washington, D.C.: The Federal Civil Defense Administration, 1951), online, <https://archive.org/details/Survival1951>.

<sup>148</sup> *The Weirton Daily Times*, "Girl Scouts See Movie On Civil Defense," February 17, 1955. *The Beckley-Post Herald*, "Civil Defense Kits Are Given to Girls," October 07, 1960.

endeavors; the Boy Scouts took part in civil defense measures as well. The Appalachian Council moved to have the Boy Scouts ready to mobilize in civil defense efforts alongside state and local civil defense agencies. Troops in general participated in civil defense, with one troop going as far as to stay in a shelter for a week rather than going on their traditional camping trip.<sup>149</sup> Children involved in both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts were used across the nation for civil defense drills; this was no different in West Virginia.<sup>150</sup>

Where youth was concerned, it was no surprise that Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) across the state took an active role in civil defense. The West Virginia State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP) in 1958 focused on schools as key locations for shelter, either from fallout or as evacuation centers. The PTA would offer evenings where the discussion would be centered around civil defense measures. The meetings were always opened to the public and the PTA would show a film, followed by discussion. Providing information to parents during PTA meetings was one way to get the community, rather than just the women's groups, concerned about civil defense. Films were shown and discussed in schools, students took part in "duck and cover drills" but what the schools and PTA wanted was parental involvement.<sup>151</sup> If the parents took the emergency seriously, so too would their children. Diane Williams recalled that her father was, as she affectionately put it, a news junkie. Vividly she remembers that her father regularly had their black and white television set tuned to the news. At the age of seven she distinctly remembered the Bay of Pigs Invasion, primarily because she was confused about all

---

<sup>149</sup> *The Raleigh Register*, "Boy Scout Council Lay Plans for Mobilization," November 30, 1950. *The Weirton Daily Times*, "Troop 31 to Participate in Defense Program," February 27, 1962. *The Weirton Daily Times*, "Why a Fallout Shelter? Scouts Provide Answer," June 24, 1964.

<sup>150</sup> Oakes, *The Imaginary War*, 94.

<sup>151</sup> *The Beckley-Post Herald*, "Civil Defense is Subject of Talk at PTA Meeting," March 24, 1954. *The Weirton Daily Times*, "Broadview PTA Hears Talk on Civil Defense," March 14, 1957. *The Weirton Daily Times*, "Hanover Civil Defense Director Addresses PTA," February 22, 1962.

the fuss surrounding pigs. Despite taking these words at their literal meaning, she grew fearful overhearing her father discuss with her mother the prospect of the country going to war. Her family was certainly concerned about the bomb but coming from a working-class home, finances prevented them from being able to construct their own shelters, despite her begging for one after learning of neighbors having their own shelter.<sup>152</sup>

Rev. Dr. Dower had claimed ignorance about the nuclear threat as a child but his father, a school science teacher, insisted that they both become involved in civil defense. It was in 1958 that the two of them attended their first civil defense course in shelter management. His father was adamant that science was the key to civil defense and worked exclusively within the radiological defenses while teaching the community about the significance of radioactive fallout. They were located in Chapmanville and the only fallout shelter in the town was underneath the high school. His father, with other civil defense leaders, was fully aware that the single shelter would not be enough to accommodate everyone in the town and urged the community to learn how to protect themselves from fallout. For Dr. Dower, the concern was never a direct hit but the aftermath of the explosion.<sup>153</sup> Understanding the likelihood of a direct hit and the reality of fallout further displays the responsibility the schools had in reaching out to the public. The SEOPs relied heavily on the schools to disseminate information about radiation, which was one of the severe critiques from the Governor's Conference Committee in 1961. The committee had analyzed West Virginia's civil defense preparedness and compared it to the other fifty states,

---

<sup>152</sup> Diane Williams (West Virginia citizen) in a discussion with the author, May 2017.

<sup>153</sup> Reverend Dr. Ronny Dower (former civil defense volunteer and employee) in discussion with the author, April 2017.

finding that one of the pitfalls was the education system's dependence on teachers, rather than trained civil defense instructors.<sup>154</sup>

There were other organizations that reached out for the cause of civil defense. The local Lions Club held meetings regarding civil defense preparation and its significant role in the community. In addition to the Lions Club, the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary worked on civil defense plans, although the Auxiliary group spoke out about the significance of preparation more.<sup>155</sup> It is clear that at the very least, civil defense mattered greatly to those who were involved in these programs. They regularly discussed civil defense plans for their communities and why they were significant for their family's survival and even attempted to bring awareness outside of their club, still leaving out the working class as well as minority citizens in their communities.

For the most part, civil defense appeared to be a very middle-class endeavor, not unlike the causes that were taken up by middle class women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had found a way to eschew their domestic lives in a way that was deemed appropriate by instituting programs such as the Young Women's Christian Association, Women's Educational and Industrial Union, and the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union. These organizations were created by and mostly made up of middle-class women.<sup>156</sup> Civil defense in the 1950s and 1960s was much the same concept. It provided women with socially appropriate gender roles outside the home, as well as an outlet for their anxieties regarding the bomb.

---

<sup>154</sup> "Governor Conference Committee on Civil Defense," 1961, William W. Barron Papers, West Virginia State Archives.

<sup>155</sup> WSAZ, News Broadcast, July 23, 1954. *The Weirton Daily Times*, "Much Progress Noted in Civil Defense Program Since Inception," April 6, 1955. *The Charleston Gazette*, "American Legion Auxiliary Holds Meeting on Civil Defense," March 09, 1956. *The Beckley-Post Herald*, "Civil Defense Program Given at Lions Meeting," February 10, 1962. *The Raleigh Register*, "Civil Defense Director Speaks to American Legion," April 16, 1968.

<sup>156</sup> Mari Jo Buhle, Teresa Murphy, and Jane Gerhard. *Women and the Making of America*, (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009) 400-423.

Women could have shelters constructed in their homes, work on stockpiling provisions, in addition to warning the community about the dangers of an atomic attack. Conferences showed a variety of techniques that could be used to help stockpile provisions from food preservation through canning and first aid.<sup>157</sup> Due to the cost of conferences and time needed to travel to them, conferences devoted to civil defense training was an area that working class individuals might not have had access to.

Female civil defense volunteers were at times condescendingly reported on when it came to what they were doing in the community, despite being the ones discussing civil defense. One news broadcast in 1954 noted that the women, the first female volunteers of an auxiliary volunteer force, were housewives who needed to find babysitters to make it to the training meetings.<sup>158</sup> These were volunteers who went out and became involved in the physical part of civil defense rather than watching films and holding discussions. Looking through newspapers and news broadcasts, it seems that most of those involved at the ground level, or domestic level, were coming from female-centric organizations. The Women's Civic Council in Charleston conducted early talks of civil defense, hosting the then deputy director Col. Edgar M. Sites.<sup>159</sup> It was a Mrs. Ralph Klein that was chairman of the Civil Defense committee for the Weirton Woman's club who spoke to the local PTA about the need for civil defense preparation in the homes, schools, and community.<sup>160</sup> The Woman's Club of Nitro hosted the director of civil defense to discuss the role of civil defense in Nitro.<sup>161</sup> Few women went above and beyond outside their groups to actively participate in the outside effort of civil defense. It appears

---

<sup>157</sup> *The Weirton Daily Times*, "County Rescue Operations Highlight State Exhibits," March 23, 1956.

<sup>158</sup> WSAZ, News Broadcast, July 16, 1954.

<sup>159</sup> *The Charleston Daily Mail*, "Co. E. M. Sites Will Speak At Meeting," January 07, 1952.

<sup>160</sup> *The Weirton Daily Times*, "Broadview PTA Hears Talk On Civil Defense," March 14, 1957.

<sup>161</sup> *The Charleston Daily Mail*, "Nitro Club's Civil Defense Program Slated," February 17, 1961.

though, that most of the work for civil defense among women was done through more gender appropriate channels rather than shoulder to shoulder with auxiliary police and fire departments. Women's efforts were centered more towards defending and preparing the home which would involve food preservation, preparing a home shelter (not building one), and caring for the ill or injured during an attack.<sup>162</sup>

At the very least, if women were not effecting any sort of change, they were possibly putting their minds at ease if there were an atomic attack. Two women interviewed by WSAZ were pleased with the civil defense efforts regarding an upcoming evacuation rehearsal. One of the women stated that she believed in civil defense and appreciated that it gave her a plan that involved her child in an emergency.<sup>163</sup> All of the SEOPs stressed the need to keep the public calm and morale high, the civil defense program's success depended on it.<sup>164</sup> Even if planning fell apart during a real attack, fears of an attack would have been minimized by practice evacuations and preparation techniques. Rev. Dr. Dower had mentioned that he and his family never really feared the bomb but for him, the knowledge he got from the courses he took and discussing the possibilities involved in an atomic attack felt freeing rather than fearful.<sup>165</sup>

To give a little more background on Rev. Dr. Dower's experience, he started his work as a civil defense volunteer with his father in 1957 and finished his time in a salaried position with the West Virginia Civil Defense Agency in 1977. He grew up in Chapmanville where both of his parents were teachers in the local schools. His father, a science teacher, was especially interested

---

<sup>162</sup> WSAZ, News Broadcast, May 05, 1957. *The Charleston Daily Mail*, "Home Sick Care Course Scheduled," January 13, 1952. *The Beckley-Post Herald*, "Women Discuss Fallout Shelters," January 22, 1962.

<sup>163</sup> WSAZ, News Broadcast, April 1959.

<sup>164</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1950. West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1958. West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1963.

<sup>165</sup> Reverend Dr. Ronny Dower (former civil defense volunteer and employee) in discussion with the author, April 2017.



in civic action and eventually turned his attention to civil defense. Rev. Dr. Dower stated his father worked at a TNT plant as an electrician during World War II. His father was very public-spirited and worked as a volunteer fire fighter before his civil defense involvement and was an armed watchman, which would be the equivalent to a police officer today. When they arrived in Chapmanville, his father helped to create the fire department in that community and was quickly seen as a community leader. From his involvement in the community he felt it was one's civic duty to be involved in some form of emergency preparedness.<sup>166</sup>

Rev. Dr. Dower claimed he was oblivious to what was happening around him, stating that he did not recall ever participating in "duck and cover" in the classroom. This was a reference to the civil defense film, *Duck and Cover* that portrayed youth as active in civil defense drills.<sup>167</sup> Other films discuss how civil defense is one's patriotic duty; to do anything less would have been treasonous,<sup>168</sup> while others depict a harmonious environment within community shelters.<sup>169</sup> Throughout each of these, the government was offering very little help. Successful survival was completely dependent on an individual, their family, and their community. Groups like the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, a variety of women's groups, the Red Cross, and Salvation Army cropped up and worked together to take on the cause for civil defense.<sup>170</sup> These groups were the very foundation on which civil defense was built.

Club meetings and watching films were not the only way civilians prepared for a nuclear attack. Many actually got up and joined local auxiliary police and fire department organizations.

---

<sup>166</sup> Reverend Dr. Ronny Dower (former civil defense volunteer and employee) in discussion with the author, April 2017.

<sup>167</sup> *Duck and Cover*, (New York: NBC Universal, 1951).

<sup>168</sup> *Our Cities Must Fight*(1951), YouTube video, 8:56, civil defense film, posted by "Nuclear Vault," September 04, 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7RNcTnvTJa0>.

<sup>169</sup> *Three Reactions to Life in a Fallout Shelter 1950s Civil Defense Film 29142*, YouTube video, 29:27, civil defense film, posted by "PeriscopeFilm," May 06, 2015.

<sup>170</sup> Tracy Davis, *Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

The Civil Air Patrol provided training for individuals between the ages of fifteen and twenty to teach them how to use a map properly.<sup>171</sup> Mapping skills would be invaluable as citizens evacuated town centers and into the more rural parts of the state. West Virginia civil defense groups coordinated evacuations and mock attacks beyond those that President Eisenhower began with Operation Alert. Operation Alert was a mock civil defense drill that involved the entire country as a way to prepare for a possible attack. One drill ran a scenario in which South Charleston was hit by small nuclear devices. Civil defense planners used this drill as an opportunity to repair a portion of the road that was scheduled for construction as a form of training to keep vehicles moving in an evacuation. The drill was not only a test for evacuation but a training exercise for rebuilding the highway as well.<sup>172</sup> Drills were helpful for the civil defense agencies to know where work needed to be done and if the community really was ready for an atomic attack.

In 1956, another full scale drill took place in conjunction with Operation Alert. This time the scenario was set in St. Albans, just a few miles outside of South Charleston. The scenario that was given was an explosion had taken place in Wheeling, West Virginia and all of St. Albans was shut down. The National Guard was called in to assist and protect various command posts throughout the area. An alert had come through that warned of deadly radioactive fallout that would be making its way into the St. Albans area. Boy scouts worked as messengers to relay information between civil defense organizers and citizens. Drills such as this one were critical for a prepared community.<sup>173</sup>

---

<sup>171</sup> WSAZ, News Broadcast, August 01, 1955, WSAZ Television Newsfilm Collection, Marshall University Special Collections.

<sup>172</sup> WSAZ, News Broadcast, May 18, 1955, WSAZ Television Newsfilm Collection, Marshall University Special Collections.

<sup>173</sup> WSAZ, News Broadcast, July 20, 1956, WSAZ Television Newsfilm Collection, Marshall University Special Collections.

Large scale drills tested how well state governments and the federal government worked together. The intention of these drills was to hopefully limit the number of casualties if the real bomb ever did fall. Operation Alert remained a staple of civil defense training throughout the Eisenhower Administration and West Virginia proudly took part. In 1957, the state had been given a rough period of when a mock attack was to take place but not the exact day, as a way to incur the element of surprise that a real attack would bring. When the alarms sounded, civil defense organizers were notified that the scenario was that a number of nuclear weapons had been detonated across the country. The sirens signaled that everyone was to stop what they were doing and take cover.<sup>174</sup> Huntington and Wheeling were two cities hit by these hypothetical bombs, and area civil defense leaders acted accordingly. Civil Defense Director Lt. Col. Edgar Sites stated that everything went according to plan.<sup>175</sup>

When the Eisenhower Administration ended, so too did Operation Alert. Despite this, schools and communities still conducted drills and continued to prepare their homes for an inevitable attack. The large-scale drills brought communities together and provided a benchmark for civilians to meet and exceed in the event of an emergency. Training drills were also helpful outside of theoretical atomic attacks when communities used civil defense agencies to assist in natural disasters. One woman recalled that when she was a child her father had taken part in a civil defense auxiliary fire department. For her, her memories were not of mock drills and fear of fallout, but of her father using his training to help with flooding in the mid-1960s.<sup>176</sup> Civil defense was not always a morbid experience and it proved to be helpful in other areas of the community.

---

<sup>174</sup> *The Charleston Gazette*, "State Agencies Participate in Defense Test," July 09, 1957.

<sup>175</sup> WSAZ, News Broadcast, July 12, 2957, WSAZ Television Newsfilm Collection, Marshall University Special Collections.

<sup>176</sup> Mary Johnson (librarian) in discussion with the author, January 2017.

Outside of large scale community drills, schools provided their own level of training for students. Two schools in Wayne County were tasked with demonstrating how quickly they were able to evacuate while Civil Defense Director Lt. Col. Edgar Sites was on hand for a visit. The students had to move from their classrooms to the basement as quickly as possible. The teachers managed to guide more than seven hundred students to their proper safety points in less than five minutes.<sup>177</sup> At schools in Wyoming County, the local civil defense organization provided training for their high school students. Civil defense leaders passed out “Family Radiation Measurement Kits” and taught students how to use them. Police further trained students to help aid in evacuation processes if an event were to occur. The demonstration ended with a discussion on the importance of home and community shelters and the hopes to have a more intensive training program.<sup>178</sup> Providing the training and proper civil defense education at school would hopefully lead to children taking this information home to their families. Unless their families were active in the PTA and local social clubs, it is quite possible that many were oblivious to what an atomic attack would mean for their homes and communities.

Another civil defense measure that involved children was handing out identification tags. West Virginia’s civil defense agency sponsored a set of identification tags that were handed out to the Junior Camp Fire Girls, and other groups. These tags were meant to alleviate confusion when it came to identifying children in an emergency.<sup>179</sup> These tags would have been extremely helpful in incidents where children might be separated from their families. However, there is still a rather morbid connotation behind them, that these tags would be used to identify bodies in the

---

<sup>177</sup>WSAZ, News Broadcast, December 10, 1954, WSAZ Television Newsfilm Collection, Marshall University Special Collections

<sup>178</sup> *The Beckley-Post Herald*, “Police Training Proposed for High School Students,” March 02, 1962.

<sup>179</sup> WSAZ, News Broadcast, January 30, 1960, WSAZ Television Newsfilm Collection, Marshall University Special Collections.

event of an attack. The parents might well have known the uses of these tags but children might have been completely oblivious.

State civil defense agencies provided classes that trained the public in how to use radiological equipment. Of all the experiences from Operation Alert, the most important training should have been training with the radiological monitoring equipment because of the emphasis on protecting against radioactive fallout. In the 1950 SEOP, Dr. Thomas had stressed the importance of defending oneself and the community against the dangers of radiation. Dr. Thomas had argued that surviving a direct blast was not the concern but the silent radiation that fell from the skies after an explosion.<sup>180</sup> By 1959, it appeared that civil defense leaders were heeding the advice of Dr. Thomas when Marshall College offered training courses that trained community leaders how to use radiological equipment. Instruction from the Marshall College course also offered instruction about family fallout shelters and working together for community shelters and evacuation.<sup>181</sup> These classes took place at fire stations and police stations as well as colleges across the state.<sup>182</sup> Despite the importance of these classes, class sizes hovered around twenty individuals and were restricted to larger population centers in West Virginia.

An involved community was stressed repeatedly in films and in the SEOPs that dictated West Virginia's civil defense plans. Each SEOP stressed the need for the community to work together in order to make civil defense a success.<sup>183</sup> Operation Alert was heralded as a success in

---

<sup>180</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1950.

<sup>181</sup> WSAZ, News Broadcast, July 28, 1959, WSAZ Television Newsfilm Collection, Marshall University Special Collections. WSAZ, News Broadcast, January 01, 1960, WSAZ Television Newsfilm Collection, Marshall University Special Collections.

<sup>182</sup> WSAZ, News Broadcast, May 05, 1957. WSAZ, News Broadcast, June 06, 1958. WSAZ, News Broadcast, April 17, 1960. WSAZ, News Broadcast, October 16, 1960, WSAZ Television Newsfilm Collection, Marshall University Special Collections. WSAZ, News Broadcast, October 18, 1961, WSAZ Television Newsfilm Collection, Marshall University Special Collections.

<sup>183</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1950. West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency:*

West Virginia and proved that communities could work together if a real attack were to happen.<sup>184</sup> Civil defense was also successful by branching out of the nuclear threat and working with communities during natural disasters. West Virginia was not the only state that saw civil defense as a means to help out communities in the event of a natural disaster. By the end of the 1960s, civil defense agencies across the country were repurposing auxiliary civil defense organizations for help during floods, fires, and other natural disasters. Rev. Dr. Dower attested to this fact by claiming that when the role of civil defense as the defender against fallout abated, civil defense agencies refocused their efforts as disaster relief.<sup>185</sup>

One of the consequences of community shelters was that groups who did not usually interact with each other would be forced to do so in close quarters. Forcing civilians together who did not usually interact presented a myriad of problems from personality clashes to social anxieties that bubbled to the surface. In the film *Three Reactions to Life in a Fallout Shelter* the FCDA attempted to prepare civilians for the variety of experiences that they might encounter in a community shelter. This film, like many others, failed to cover the issue of class or race differences but depicted the volatile emotions that would arise in close quarters with individuals who were not familiar with one another. The film explains that individuals, referring to men specifically, live with many comforts that they take for granted. These comforts range from homes, the post office, the police, the milkman, and even the toaster; so many comforts that “man” probably does not even consider them all until they are suddenly ripped away, as they would be in a nuclear attack. Attempting to adjust to life in a shelter without the middle-class

---

*State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1958. West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1963.

<sup>184</sup> WSAZ, News Broadcast, April 17, 1959, WSAZ Television Newsfilm Collection, Marshall University Special Collections.

<sup>185</sup> Reverend Dr. Ronny Dower (former civil defense volunteer and employee) in discussion with the author, April 2017.

comforts that “man” is used to can elicit a range of emotions, especially when forced to be in close quarters with other individuals that they do not know. Rage, depression, and mania were all possibilities, but the issue of racial integration was never examined.<sup>186</sup> This film in particular was created in the 1950s, during the early years of the modern Civil Rights struggle.

The discussion of the African American experience has been largely left out of the civil defense narrative. There is no acknowledgement of African Americans preparing nor are they portrayed in the films released by civil defense organizations. Each film was focused on white, middle class families. The African American community was not represented within films, nor civil defense literature. In addition to that, within West Virginia there were no overt declarations against African Americans in community shelters but there are no declarations welcoming them in either. West Virginia was a segregated state and there was no mention of how to handle the social problem of segregation.<sup>187</sup> Nothing in the emergency manuals was discussed and no laws were presented that delved into the issue of segregation in fallout shelters. Yet segregation should have been a struggle that civil defense leaders were aware of. Rev. Dr. Dower commented that African Americans were not even considered when it came to his civil defense training. He claimed, reiterating the awfulness of it, that it was assumed that only white citizens would end up in the fallout shelters that were available in the white part of town.

Jim Crow was not as severely legislated in West Virginia as in other states but what remained was still a strong social protocol regarding race relations. During Operation Alert 1955, Martinsburg and Shepherdstown were key evacuation points for the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. They were within 250 miles of Washington D.C., making

---

<sup>186</sup> *Three Reactions to Life in a Fallout Shelter 1950s Civil Defense Film 29142*, YouTube video, 29:27, civil defense film, posted by “PeriscopeFilm,” May 06, 2015.

<sup>187</sup> West Virginia schools were segregated well into the 1960s but cursory research has shown no civil defense efforts within the black community at the moment.

them easily accessible by helicopter. Unknown to the public then was its proximity to the Greenbrier Bunker which was to house the members of Congress, including the President. When Operation Alert was carried out and the organizations evacuated to their respective locations, Jim Crow proved to be an issue. Attorney General Herbert Brownell faced a problem trying to find accommodations for his black chauffeur in Martinsburg, as well as the chauffeur being faced with problems when attempting to run errands. He was not allowed into the same buildings that his employer was in nor was he allowed into the shops to run errands simply because he was black.<sup>188</sup> There was no discussion on how this issue was resolved but simply that it existed. As far as this experience goes, there was a clear divide between civil defense and Jim Crow in West Virginia but little of it was ever mentioned in civil defense planning documents.

West Virginia is not the only place that race and civil defense seemed incompatible. A study was done on civil defense in Savannah, Georgia, and the problems that civil defense officials faced from the public. In Savannah, a deeply segregated city, civil defense officials had to contend with either providing two different fallout shelters or ensuring that the shelters they had remained segregated in an emergency. What resulted were evacuation plans that kept Jim Crow in mind, deliberately working to keep the races as segregated as possible, even at the expense of black lives.<sup>189</sup> The racial hatred was so entrenched, that even a life and death scenario would not budge a white southerner's opinion on sharing the same space as an African American. Renna Moore, an African American in West Virginia, does not recall any civil defense training or films during her childhood. She admits that this might be because she was so young at the time, but discusses the racial climate for her growing up. She recalls the first time

---

<sup>188</sup> *Charleston Gazette Mail*, West Virginia's Role, January 23, 2011.

<sup>189</sup> Jonathan Leib and Thomas Chapman, "Jim Crow, Civil Defense, and the Hydrogen Bomb: Race, Evacuation Planning, and the Geopolitics of Fear in 1950s Savannah, Georgia," *Southeastern Geographer* 51, no. 4 (2011): 578-95. doi:10.1353/sgo.2011.0034.



she ever feared Caucasians was after the assassination of President John Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. For the most part, she says that life was relatively calm, her family was one of the first to integrate her neighborhood and were greeted kindly, dealing with only a handful of instances of racial aggression towards her.<sup>190</sup>

Despite Ms. Moore's experience, many West Virginia schools remained segregated for over a decade following *Brown v. Board of Education*. The state had emphasized civil defense in the schools yet there is no evidence to suggest that they pushed this same agenda within the black schools, or even how they handled civil defense in black communities. Unfortunately, many of the black newspapers from this time period have been lost to time and many individuals have been reluctant to speak about their experiences. Throughout the 1950 SEOP the message was clear, *all* citizens needed to be prepared. In every section that referenced individual accountability, every citizen was meant to be as equally prepared as the next. There was no distinction between race and class.<sup>191</sup> The SEOP gave the appearance that West Virginia's black community was included in civil defense preparedness, but there is no indication what the civil defense situation was.

In the early 1960s, race relations were contentious enough that legislators sought to create the state's first Human Rights Commission. West Virginia still saw discrimination on the ground level in employment and in still segregated schools. The first annual report noted that their efforts were "...to eliminate all discrimination in employment and places of public accommodations by virtue of race..." which would suggest numerous public spaces were

---

<sup>190</sup> Renna Moore, (West Virginia citizen) in discussion with the author, May 16, 2017.

<sup>191</sup> West Virginia Department of Civil Defense, *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1950.

deemed off limits to individuals of color.<sup>192</sup> What was never specified were which spaces were segregated but given the trend in other Southern states, segregated shelters are not out of the realm of possibility. For some civil defense leaders, the possibility of black citizens in predominantly white shelter spaces was simply not a possibility.<sup>193</sup> History dictates that the likelihood of harmonious race relations in close quarter shelter spaces would have been virtually unheard of in segregated states.

Women's organizations were guilty of neither considering nor including their African American counterparts. The ramifications of this meant that entire groups of individuals were excluded from planning exercises, community involvement, and access to the materials necessary to prepare their own homes. In all the newspapers, there was no mention of African American groups and civil defense, nor reporting in news broadcasts.<sup>194</sup> The lack of any mention regarding African Americans further divides civil defense on not only a class line but a racial one as well. The cost of shelters was astronomical and unattainable for the average individual, yet virtually all the propaganda pointed to private home shelters. These shortcomings in civil defense would mean that the only individuals who would have the opportunity to survive radioactive fallout were those with the money and time to devote to civil defense efforts.

---

<sup>192</sup> "The First Annual Report of the Human Right Commission of West Virginia," 1961-1962, William W. Barron Papers, West Virginia State Archives.

<sup>193</sup> Reverend Dr. Ronny Dower (former civil defense volunteer and employee) in discussion with the author, April 2017.

<sup>194</sup> *The Charleston Daily Mail*, "Co. E. M. Sites Will Speak At Meeting," January 07, 1952. WSAZ, News Broadcast, July 23, 1954. *The Weirton Daily Times*, "Much Progress Noted in Civil Defense Program Since Inception," April 06, 1955. *The Charleston Gazette*, "American Legion Auxiliary Holds Meeting on Civil Defense," March 09, 1956. *The Weirton Daily Times*, "Broadview PTA Hears Talk On Civil Defense," March 14, 1957. *The Charleston Daily Mail*, "Nitro Club's Civil Defense Program Slated," February 17, 1961. WSAZ, News Broadcast, May 05, 1957. *The Charleston Daily Mail*, "Home Sick Care Course Scheduled," January 13, 1952. WSAZ, News Broadcast, April 17, 1959. *The Beckley-Post Herald*, "Women Discuss Fallout Shelters," January 22, 1962. *The Beckley-Post Herald*, "Civil Defense Program Given at Lions Meeting," February 10, 1962. *The Raleigh Register*, "Civil Defense Director Speaks to American Legion," April 16, 1968.

An atomic attack was not only a middle-class concern. If a bomb fell, radioactive fallout would not discriminate against the individual; however, the means for protection were limited only to those who could afford to do so. Knowledge about nuclear war was readily accessible but futile if people could neither afford to protect themselves nor set aside meager provisions. The desire to protect one's home and family but the inability to do so was problematic especially for the working class and poverty stricken in West Virginia. At both the national and the state level, those without the money to save themselves were left out of civil defense discourse.

## CONCLUSION

If the citizens of the United States were to be better off than the Japanese following Hiroshima and Nagasaki, then preparation was key. Civil defense was centered around the idea that preparation would save lives, that knowing what to do when the sirens went off, civilians could preserve the American way of life. Without preparation, there was no hope for the United States. The downfall of civil defense in America was how many people were not considered during planning. Federal civil defense organizations over the years only provided guidance and minimal funding to supplement civil defense programs at the state level. Civil defense organizations pumped out propaganda that was designed to strike fear in civilians and inform them about what to expect during an attack. While everyone might have had access to the information, not everyone could protect their homes.

West Virginia provided an excellent example of a state that worked towards a comprehensive civil defense program but ultimately failed in the long term. The state had created a plan that required individual accountability among its citizens but failed to consider that many of its citizens could not prepare in advance in any meaningful way. Those that were actively involved in municipal level civil defense programs were predominantly middle-class women, leaving out the working class and African American communities. It would be hard to promote home fallout shelters when most of the community civil defense advocates would be speaking to an audience that cannot afford to construct their own, leaving most civil defense discussion to tightly knit woman's clubs.

Despite the limited audience, nuclear fallout was a real concern among the working class. The unfortunate circumstance was that they could not afford to do anything about it. The government was working to include everyone in the civil defense discussion but because of the

standards they had set, was inadvertently leaving out many civilians. West Virginia attempted to adjust their planning to include other areas of preparedness out of the home fallout shelter. West Virginia's Civil Defense Council updated plans to provide multiple branches of civil defense that focused on education, mobilization, and dissemination of information. West Virginia civil defense planners pushed to have citizens educated about nuclear bombs and radioactive fallout but refrained from expanding the emergency plans where it was needed most, in radiological preparedness and an accessible community shelter program.

West Virginia failed yet again. Despite expanding the initial plans, they still left many of their citizens out. Given the demands of mobilization training, which included events like mock attack drills, the working class would not be able to take the time off work. Not only could they not construct their own home shelters, they also would not be able to take part in necessary training procedures. They would need to rely upon community shelters and the generosity of their neighbors. The working class was unable to participate financially and minorities were not even considered within the civil defense process. There was no discussion on how to help these two groups so that they may survive an attack as well. Further research needs to be done to fully understand the implications of leaving minorities out. A case study in the South would be significant for numerous reasons, specifically seeing how the segregation issue was handled in the event of an emergency. Would the prejudices of white citizens carry over into a situation that was life and death? Some works have explored that within the context of highly segregated Georgia, such as Leib and Chapman, who suggest that white Southerners would not be able to allow themselves to survive with either lower class statuses or other races.<sup>195</sup>

---

<sup>195</sup> Jonathan Leib and Thomas Chapman, "Jim Crow, Civil Defense, and the Hydrogen Bomb: Race, Evacuation Planning, and the Geopolitics of Fear in 1950s Savannah, Georgia," *Southeastern Geographer* 51, no. 4 (2011): 578-95. doi:10.1353/sgo.2011.0034.

West Virginia civil defense plans were not all inclusive. State civil defense planners ran on the assumption that everyone was able to take part. West Virginia was meant to be used as a haven for government officials during an attack but failed to be a haven for the people who lived and worked in the state. Safety plans were designed with the middle class in mind, meaning those individuals who had homes where they might be able to convert a basement into a shelter. The middle class were the ones who could afford to set some food aside, never taking into consideration that some citizens might be living paycheck to paycheck. The federal government inundated the public with propaganda about the necessity of home preparedness and how survival was one's patriotic duty to defeat the Commies. Yet the state offered no contingency plans for those who needed the help the most.

Examining the incongruities of emergency preparedness between classes is critical for understanding the problems faced by the working class and poverty-stricken individuals today when emergencies strike. Looking at racism and classism in the emergency management system then, might lead to answers about why some areas have taken longer to recover after natural disasters, for example Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina. Closer to home, flash flooding across West Virginia from the summer of 2016 has areas of the state still in the process of recovery as of July 2017. Understanding the changes that needed to take place in civil defense during the 1950s and 1960s can lead to understanding where emergency preparedness needs to change today. It is rare to hear of any struggles faced by predominantly affluent communities after a disaster, be it caused by tornadoes, hurricanes, or flooding. The system forgets the working class when the working class needs the help the most; civil defense is just one example that did not end in tragedy.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Collections

- Budget Documents. West Virginia State Archives.
- Cecil H. Underwood Collection. West Virginia State Archives.
- Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization Papers. West Virginia State Archives.
- William W. Barron Papers. West Virginia State Archives.
- WSAZ Television Newsfilm Collection. Marshall University Special Collections.

### Primary Sources

- Annual Report of the United States Council of National Defense*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919. Accessed January 10, 2017.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/osu.32435056349954>.
- California State Council of Defense. *Report of the Activities of the California State Council of Defense from April 6, 1917 to January 1, 1918*. Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1918.
- Cohen, Wilbur and Evelyn Boyer. "Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950: Summary and Legislative History." *Social Security Bulletin*, April 1951.  
<https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v14n4/v14n4p11.pdf>.
- Department of Defense and Office of Civil Defense. *Fallout Protected Schools*. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1967.
- Department of Defense and Office of Civil Defense. "Information Bulletin." November 20, 1960.
- Department of Defense and Office of Civil Defense. *In Times of Emergency: A Citizen's Handbook on Nuclear Attack and Natural Disasters*. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1968.
- Department of Defense and Office of Civil Defense. *Nondiscrimination in the Civil Defense Program*. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1965.
- Department of Defense and Office of Civil Defense. *Schools Built with Fallout Shelter*. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1966.
- "Dwight Eisenhower's View on Using the Atomic Bomb." Nuclear Files: Project of the Nuclear Age of Peace Foundation. Accessed May 01, 2017.  
<http://www.nuclearfiles.org/menu/key-issues/nuclear-weapons/history/pre-cold-war/hiroshima-nagasaki/opinion-eisenhower-bomb.htm>.
- Eisenhower, Dwight D. *The White House years: Mandate for change*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963.

*Fallout 4*. Directed by Todd Howard. Bethesda Game Studios, November 10, 2015. Video Game.

Federal Civil Defense Administration. *Facts About Fallout*. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1955.

Federal Civil Defense Administration. *Survival Under Atomic Attack*. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1950.

Federal Civil Defense Administration. *What You Should Know About Radioactive Fallout*. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1956.

Federation of American Scientists. "NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security- April 14, 1950." Accessed December 01, 2016.  
<https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm>.

Greenbrier Bunker Tour. February 28, 2017.

Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory. *The Effects of Atomic Weapons: Prepared for and in Cooperation With the United States Department of Defense and the United States Atomic Energy Commission*. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1950.

*National Interstate and Defense Highways Act of 1956*. HR 10660. 84<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess., *Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789-1996*. Accessed December 01, 2016.  
<https://www.archives.gov/files/historical-docs/doc-content/images/natl-interstate-act.pdf>.

Office of Civil Defense. *Building with Fallout Shelter*. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1966.

Office of Civil Defense. *Labor's Role in State, County, and Local Civil Defense: Guide for the Instructor*. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1966.

Office of Civil Defense. *Schools and Civil Defense*. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1964.

"Ohio State Highway Patrol 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: 1950s." Accessed March 01, 2017. Ohio.gov.

"The Only Real Defense." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 7, no. 9 (1951): 242-43.  
doi:10.1080/00963402.1951.11457203.

PBS Primary Sources. "A Report by the Joint Intelligence Committee on Implications of Soviet Possession of Atomic Weapons-1950." Accessed November 28, 2016.  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/bomb/filmmore/reference/primary/jointintelligence.html>.

Sheehan, Neil, Herrick Smith, E. W. Kenworthy, Fox Butterfield, and Daniel Ellsberg. *The Pentagon Papers: The Secret History of the Vietnam War*. Toronto: Bantam Books, 1971.



United States. *Your Car and Civil Defense: Four Wheels to Survival*. Washington, DC: GPO, 1955. Accessed December 01, 2016.  
<http://www.ohiomemory.org/cdm/ref/collection/p267401coll32/id/2162>.

*West Virginia Civil Defense Act of 1951*.

West Virginia Department of Civil Defense. *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1950.

West Virginia Department of Civil Defense. *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1958.

West Virginia Department of Civil Defense. *State of West Virginia Civil Defense Agency: State Emergency Operations Plan*, 1963.

## Films

*About Fallout*. Film. Produced by Wilding Picture Productions, Inc. Produced by U.S. Department of Defense, 1955. <http://www.archive.org/details/prelinger>.

*The Atomic Cafe*. Directed by Kevin Rafferty, Jayne Loader, and Pierce Rafferty. New York: New Yorker Films, 1982. DVD.

Charlie Dean Archives. *Operation Alert. Mock H-Bomb Tests Civil Defense – 1956 – Charlie Dean Archives*. YouTube. December 19, 2013.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XevJclt3OZo>.

CONELRAD6401240. *Operation Alert 1954 Newsreel*. YouTube. January 05, 2011.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m13zknLHF-8>.

*Duck and Cover*. Film. New York: NBC Universal, 1951.

*Facts About Fallout*. Film. Washington, D.C.: Federal Civil Defense Administration, 1955.

*Modern Minutemen*. Film. Produced by the Bell Telephone Company, 1952.  
<https://archive.org/details/72192CivilDefenseModernMinuteMen>

*A New Family in Town*. Film. Produced by the Federal Civil Defense Administration, 1956.  
<https://archive.org/details/72742CivilDefenseANewFamilyInTown>

Nuclear Vault. *Atomic Attack – The Motorola Television Hour*. YouTube. August 16, 2009.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6J3HOaU9E5U&t>.

Nuclear Vault. *Our Cities Must Fight (1951)*. YouTube. September 04, 2009.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7RNcTnvTJa0>.

PeriscopeFilm. *1953 Civil Defense Film Operation Doorstep Nevada Atomic Bomb Test* 28072. YouTube. April 10, 2015. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uIWAs\\_avpbY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uIWAs_avpbY).

PeriscopeFilm. *Civil Defense Film Public Fallout Shelter Organization and Staff* 29082. YouTube. April 23, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1WxN9PmehLU>.

PeriscopeFilm. *The Civilian Serves WWII Civil Defense Corps Promotional Film* 49884. YouTube. February 10, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBv5IYDpc9o&t>.

PeriscopeFilm. *Facts About Fallout 1955 Civil Defense Film Fallout Shelter Program* 71642. YouTube. April 10, 2015. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Cff\\_0bHVZA&t=125s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Cff_0bHVZA&t=125s).

PeriscopeFilm. *Three Reactions to Life in a Fallout Shelter 1950s Civil Defense Film* 29142. YouTube. May 06, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvnGmxp8LCg>.

*Rehearsal for Disaster*. Film. Produced by America's Trucking Company with the cooperation of the Federal Civil Defense Administration. Capital Film Studios, 1957. Accessed February 03, 2017. <https://archive.org/details/28192RehearsalForDisaster>.

*Survival Under Atomic Attack*. Film. Produced and sponsored by the Federal Civil Defense Administration. Directed by Edward R. Murrow. 1951. <https://www.archive.org/details/Survival1951>.

Tomorrow Always Comes. *Public Shelter Living: The Story of the Shelter – 1964 Educational Film – S88TVI*. YouTube. December 27, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EE7ARZ-uwBo&t=330s>.

Tomorrow Always Comes. *Target You – 1950's Educational Film – S88TVI*. YouTube. January 03, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGARVPYRDMs>.

*The Twilight Zone*, "The Monsters are Due on Maple Street." Netflix. Directed by Ron Winston. 1960. Los Angeles: CBS/Netflix, 2016.

*The Twilight Zone*, "The Shelter." Netflix. Directed by Lamont Johnson. 1961. Los Angeles: CBS/Netflix, 2016.

*The Twilight Zone*, "Third From the Sun." Netflix. Directed by Richard L. Bare. 1960. Los Angeles: CBS/Netflix, 2016.

*The World At War*, "The Bomb." Produced by Jeremy Isaacs. Directed by Laurence Olivier and Carl Davis. Great Britain: Thames Television, 1973. DVD.

## Newspapers

*The Beckley-Post Herald*  
*The Charleston Daily Mail*

*The Charleston Gazette*  
*Charleston Gazette Mail*  
*The Courier-Gazette*  
*The Herald Dispatch*  
*The Huntington Advertiser*  
*Panama City News-Herald*  
*The Philadelphia Inquirer*  
*The Raleigh Register*  
*Sunday Gazette-Mail*  
*The Times Herald*  
*The Weirton Daily Times*

## Secondary Sources

Boyer, Paul S. *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*. New York: Pantheon, 1985.

Buhle, Mari Jo., Teresa Murphy, and Jane F. Gerhard. *Women and the Making of America*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009.

Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness and West Virginia University for the Appalachian Regional Commission. *Appalachia Then and Now: Examining Changes to the Appalachian Region Since 1965*. February 2015.

Dallek, Matthew. *Defenseless Under the Night: The Roosevelt Years and the Origins of Homeland Security*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Davis, Tracy C. *Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

Eller, Ronald D. *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008.

Foster, Stuart J. *Red Alert!: Educators Confront the Red Scare in American Public Schools, 1947-1954*. New York: P. Lang, 2000.

Grossman, Andrew D. "Segregationist Liberalism: The NAACP and Resistance to Civil-Defense Planning in the Early Cold War, 1951-1953." *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 13, no. 3 (2000): 477-97.

Homeland Security National Preparedness Task Force. *Civil Defense and Homeland Security: A Short History of National Preparedness Efforts*. September 2006, accessed September 11, 2016, <https://training.fema.gov/hiedu/docs/dhs%20civil%20defense-hs%20-%20short%20history.pdf>.

- “Hydrogen Bomb - 1950.” Atomic Heritage Foundation. June 19, 2014. Accessed December 01, 2016. <http://www.atomicheritage.org/history/hydrogen-bomb-1950>.
- Kerr, Thomas J. *Civil Defense in the U.S.: Bandaid for a Holocaust?* Boulder: Westview Press, 1983.
- Koch, Cameron. “The Movies, Literature and Video Games That Influenced the ‘Fallout’ Series.” *Tech Times* November 06, 2015, accessed June 03, 2017. <http://www.techtimes.com/articles/103340/20151106/the-many-influences-of-fallout.htm>.
- Leib, Jonathan, and Thomas Chapman. “Jim Crow, Civil Defense, and the Hydrogen Bomb: Race, Evacuation Planning, and the Geopolitics of Fear in 1950s Savannah, Georgia.” *Southeastern Geographer* 51, no. 4 (2011): 578-95. doi:10.1353/sgo.2011.0034.
- Lewis, Ronald. “Coal.” *West Virginia Encyclopedia*. Accessed March 01, 2017. [www.wvencyclopedia.org](http://www.wvencyclopedia.org).
- McEnaney, Laura. *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Monteyne, David. *Fallout Shelter: Designing for Civil Defense in the Cold War*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
- Oakes, Guy. *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Rose, Kenneth. *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2001.
- “Teaching Eleanor Roosevelt Glossary: Office of Civilian Defense.” The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project, accessed March 01, 2017. <https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/teaching/glossary/office-civilian-defense.cfm>.
- Tobin, Kathleen A. “The Reduction of Urban Vulnerability: Revisiting 1950s American Suburbanization as Civil Defence.” *Cold War History* 2, no. 2 (2002): 1-32. doi:10.1080/713999949.
- Weart, Spencer R. *Nuclear Fear: A History of Images*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Whitfield, Stephen J. *The Culture of the Cold War*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.
- Winkler, Allan M. *Life Under a Cloud: American Anxiety About the Atom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

APPENDIX A: LETTER FROM THE INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH BOARD



Office of Research Integrity

June 5, 2017

Tristan Williams  
482 County Road 1  
South Point, OH 45680

Dear Tristan:

This letter is in response to the submitted thesis abstract entitled "*Surviving Fallout in Appalachia: An Examination of Class Differences Within Civil Defense Preparation in West Virginia During the Early Years of the Cold War.*" After assessing the abstract, it has been deemed not to be human subject research and therefore exempt from oversight of the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Code of Federal Regulations (45CFR46) has set forth the criteria utilized in making this determination. Since the information in this study does not involve human subjects as defined in the above referenced instruction, it is not considered human subject research. If there are any changes to the abstract you provided then you would need to resubmit that information to the Office of Research Integrity for review and a determination.

I appreciate your willingness to submit the abstract for determination. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Integrity if you have any questions regarding future protocols that may require IRB review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Bruce F. Day'.

Bruce F. Day, ThD, CIP  
Director

APPENDIX B: CURRICULUM VITAE

**TRISTAN M. WILLIAMS**

EDUCATION

<i>West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia</i> <b>PhD Student in History</b>	<b>In Progress</b>
<i>Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia</i> <b>M.A. in History</b>	<b>2017</b>
<i>Ohio University, Athens, Ohio</i> <b>B.A. in History</b>	<b>2012</b>
<i>Ohio University, Athens, Ohio</i> <b>B.A. in Psychology</b>	<b>2012</b>

EXPERIENCE

<i>Marshall University H.E.L.P. Program, Huntington, West Virginia</i> <b>Graduate Tutor</b>	<b>August 2015 – May 2017</b>
<i>Boyd County Public Library, Ashland, Kentucky</i> <b>Information Specialist</b>	<b>April 2013 – July 2015</b>

CONFERENCES AND AWARDS

Dr. Robert F. Maddox Memorial Thesis Research Award

Tristan Williams, “Preventing ‘Red Dawn’ Over Appalachia: Civil Defense Preparation During the Cold War,” Queen City Colloquium, April 2017.

Tristan Williams, “Ku Klux Klan Corruption in Mississippi: The Case of Mississippi Burning,” Queen City Colloquium, April 2016.