

DePauw University

## Scholarly and Creative Work from DePauw University

---

Student Research

Student Work

---

5-1-2011

### Pioneer, Popularizer and Politician: John Clark Ridpath as a Public Intellectual

Tyler Archer  
*DePauw University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.depauw.edu/studentresearchother>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Archer, Tyler, "Pioneer, Popularizer and Politician: John Clark Ridpath as a Public Intellectual" (2011).  
*Student Research*. 13.

<https://scholarship.depauw.edu/studentresearchother/13>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at Scholarly and Creative Work from DePauw University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Research by an authorized administrator of Scholarly and Creative Work from DePauw University. For more information, please contact [bcox@depauw.edu](mailto:bcox@depauw.edu).

**Pioneer, Popularizer and Politician:**

**John Clark Ridpath as a Public Intellectual**

**Tyler Archer**



**History Senior Thesis**

**2010-2011**

**Table of Contents:**

**Introduction: A Forgotten Scholar.....1**

**Chapter 1: Early Life and Indiana Asbury Years.....5**

**Chapter 2: The Rise of a Public Intellectual.....27**

**Chapter 3: Ridpath the Historian.....49**

**Chapter 4: A Politician and Statesman.....83**

**Conclusion: Ridpath’s Legacy.....103**

**Appendix I: Bibliographic Essay.....109**

**Appendix II: Bibliography and Works Cited.....119**

**Appendix III: The Writings and Publications of John Clark Ridpath.....125**

### **Dedication:**

This project would not have been possible without the numerous people who assisted and supported me throughout the process. My primary advisors for this project, Prof. Glen Kuecker and Prof. John Schlotterbeck provided invaluable assistance, guidance and critiques as I drafted my essay. The rest of the history department including my academic advisor Prof. Julia Bruggemann and Interim Department Chair Prof. David Gellman were also particularly helpful and supportive of my efforts. My research would not have been nearly as fruitful without the assistance of DePauw University Archivist Wesley Wilson's help and the aid of his staff.

I am especially indebted to Prof. Kuecker's Fall History Seminar students who assisted me in peer editing and consultation about my project, most notably Kate Pickering and Lacey Berkshire who were my primary peer editors and Nancy Tobik who assisted me with the bibliographic essay. Also, thanks to the countless history majors and friends who provided input, suggestions and edited various sections of the project, especially Emily Terrell who proofread the completed essay.

Finally, a special thanks to my parents Keith and Melissa Archer and my sister, Ashlyn, who provided helpful critiques of my work and have been supportive of my academic endeavors my entire life.

## **Introduction:**

### **A Forgotten Scholar**

On May 28, 1894, John Clark Ridpath wrote Indiana University Professor James Woodburn and described the effort he had expended to complete his most recent historical volumes. “I have just returned from a long absence in New York,” he wrote, “where I have been detained for eighteen months with the publication of my work on the Great Races of Mankind. More recently, I have been in the Bermudas, whither I went in early April, on account of a little break in my health, following quite illogically the completion of a task to which I have devoted five and a half years of work, besides a good part of the preceding ten years in study and preparation.”<sup>1</sup> Although Ridpath exhausted substantial effort to produce massive amounts of scholarship he published over his lifetime, those efforts have been consistently ignored by scholars of historical writing. As a writer Ridpath was a transformational figure in historical scholarship as it moved from primitive, storytelling methods of the past and into the infancy of professionalization. As a popular historian Ridpath produced over one hundred volumes during his career. In light of the quantity of histories Ridpath published and sold, his often overlooked contributions to American historical literature and intellectual discourse needs reconsideration.

Nineteenth century Americans experienced tremendous transformations as the nation changed from rural, agrarian, states to a centralized industrial nation. In the late nineteenth century a class of men dedicated to educating the public and influencing national policy came to prominence that attempted to make sense of the nation, its problems, and future possibilities. In spite of their contributions a number of popular nineteenth century writers and public

---

<sup>1</sup> “Ridpath Letter to J.A. Woodburn, May 28, 1894,” James Whitcomb Riley Papers, The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind.

intellectuals have been overlooked, including George Bancroft and future President Theodore Roosevelt, who often wrote dramatic, triumphant, narratives which described the superior character of the nation through its history. John Clark Ridpath, narrowly interpreted as a historian who practiced popular history as the discipline became professionalized, is one of these forgotten intellectuals and writers whose work amassed considerable influence among Americans near the end of the century.

John Clark Ridpath was born in Fillmore, Indiana, in 1840 and attended Indiana Asbury University (now known as DePauw University). He became a teacher and administrator at his alma mater and a writer of popular, multi-volume subscription histories that lined the bookshelves of middle class homes well into the twentieth-century. In his later years, Ridpath unsuccessfully sought Congressional office as a Populist-Democrat and served as a popular commentator and reform editor for *The Arena*, a progressive political magazine. In spite of his immense popularity, Ridpath's contributions have been mostly ignored by contemporary historians, his work dismissed as that of a popular writer whose lack of professional training negatively impacted them and them unsatisfactory in light of the emerging empirical history. One historian noted that the most negative accusations about popular historians, such as Ridpath and his contemporaries, were that they were, "not original scholars, that they borrowed too heavily from others, that they failed to use their sources critically, and that they put too little emphasis on the use of primary sources."<sup>2</sup> Another historian speculated that because Ridpath chose to ignore academic history, "In response, academic historians, who came to dominate the field, chose to ignore him." Further, Ridpath "lost ground with readers who did not always share

---

<sup>2</sup> Chris Smith, "A Plea for a New Appreciation of Popular History: John Clark Ridpath, a Case Study," *Indiana Magazine of History* 77, no. 3 (1981): 225.

his penchant for grand abstractions.”<sup>3</sup> A closer examination of Ridpath’s historical writings reveals the author embraced popular history writing conventions of his time in order to appeal to a literate, middle class audience, but that he was also influenced by academic issues and debates. Ridpath’s histories show his views developed in relation to empiricism, Social Darwinism and race, and the role of man in history, all topics debated by contemporary historians and intellectuals. Ridpath’s work was affected by his location in rural Indiana during a time of rapid industrialization, his relatively humble beginnings, and a desire to provide civic education to the American people to ensure continued growth and development of democracy. Because of his background and views on the importance of education, Ridpath became an advocate for the common man first as an educator, then through historical writings, and later political pursuits. His audience was “the average American...for the practical man of the shop, the counter, and the plow,” rather than the academic audience and elite classes later professional historians attempted to reach.<sup>4</sup>

Ridpath has been incorrectly interpreted strictly as a historian rather than more broadly as a public intellectual who made significant contributions to the education of the ordinary Americans and the nation’s political debates. Like better known historians and public intellectuals Frederick Jackson Turner, Charles Beard and V.L. Parrington, Ridpath sought to make sense of a changing nineteenth century America for the nation’s populace,

They were in the vanguard of a new generation of Midwestern scholars who were deeply involved in the critical ferment that was felt at the beginning of the century, rebellious about the neglect of their own region, eager to make up for the past failure of historians to deal with the interests of the common man and with the historic merits of monuments of reform. They attempted to find a usable past related to the broadest needs of a nation

---

<sup>3</sup> Gregory M. Pfitzer, *Popular History and the Literary Marketplace, 1840-1920* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008): 178.

<sup>4</sup> John Clark Ridpath, *A Popular History of the United States of America From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day* (New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1878): iii.

fully launched upon its own industrialization, and to make history an active instrument of self-recognition and self-improvement.<sup>5</sup>

This paragraph describes the work of John Clark Ridpath and indicates how his career and experiences ought to be more broadly interpreted. While Ridpath shared many traits with the new progressive historians, including an emphasis on economic forces, class conflict, the role of the common man in history, and Midwestern origins, his work pre-dated their efforts, which received greater academic notoriety. Nineteenth century society turned towards men such as Ridpath to understand issues facing America and give meaning to the country's contemporary problems. Focusing only on Ridpath's historical works trivializes the efforts of a man who wrote extensively and with as much breadth as any of his intellectual counterparts.

Ridpath should be understood foremost as a prolific public intellectual who overcame a humble upbringing to become a respected authority on the nation's history, advocated for Indiana and Midwestern literature, desired to mediate between academic and popular history for average Americans, and attempted to enact social change as a Populist-Democrat political candidate and editorial writer. Ridpath's work as an historian is a significant part of his life and writing but to examine him through this lens alone fails to capture the entirety of his contributions to writing in the late nineteenth century and the influence his work had on his readers.<sup>6</sup> By interpreting Ridpath more broadly as a public intellectual and writer his motivations, efforts, and beliefs can be more thoroughly understood and his power as a voice for the people better contextualized amongst his peers.

---

<sup>5</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *The Progressive Historians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968): xvi-xvii.

<sup>6</sup> Because of the volume of work Ridpath produced during his lifetime, it was necessary to sample his publications to understand his views and motivations as a writer. Although a great deal of Ridpath's published work exists the lack of his personal correspondence remaining as a result of "unjustifiable carelessness" on the part of Ridpath somewhat limited the potential for providing personal understanding of his thoughts and ideas. A complete list of Ridpath's known published works and editions appear in Appendix III of this essay.



## Chapter 1:

### Early Life and Indiana Asbury Years

John Clark Ridpath was born in Fillmore, Indiana, on April 26, 1840, to Abraham Ridpath and Sally (Matthews) Ridpath of Montgomery County, Virginia. After their marriage on July 4, 1839, Ridpath's parents migrated west to Indiana and over the next eighteen years raised seven children, John Clark being the oldest.<sup>1</sup> Remarkably, all seven of Abraham and Sally Ridpath's children grew to adulthood and remained in Putnam County their entire lives. The Ridpath family experienced "circumstances of great discouragement and hardship" in rural Indiana.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless Ridpath appreciated his rural upbringing and admiringly described his father as "A pioneer, a patriot, a humble farmer. He helped to hew down the forest of my native state, the jewel of the Ohio valley. He cut away the thickets and joined with his neighbors in casting up a highway and gathering out the stones for the coming day."<sup>3</sup> In spite of their pioneer beginnings education was important for the Ridpath family.

Ridpath's parents encouraged their children to pursue an education. When Ridpath exhausted the curriculum of the rudimentary log cabin school he attended at the age of eleven, a biographer noted "there were at least a few books at home to fall back upon; and his father and uncle...did everything in their power to provide him with such reading matter as the region afforded."<sup>4</sup> In 1894 Ridpath's secretary Tucker Taylor observed Ridpath was largely self-taught, and ultimately "young Ridpath's talents and peculiarities were noted by the neighbors," in spite

---

<sup>1</sup> Clinton D. Nordyke, "Descendants of John Ridpath," Local History Section Putnam County Public Library, Greencastle, Ind.

<sup>2</sup> "Ridpath, John Clark," *Appletons' Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 1900. John Clark Ridpath Papers, DC 37, Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, DePauw University, Greencastle Ind.

<sup>3</sup> John Clark Ridpath, "To the Memory of a Workingman- Abraham Ridpath," Ridpath Collection.

<sup>4</sup> Albert Shaw, "James Clark Ridpath: A Typical Man of the Ohio Valley and the Old Northwest," *The Review of Reviews* 11 (January-June 1895): 295.

In this review of Ridpath, Shaw misidentifies Ridpath as "James Clark Ridpath" throughout the piece.

of the haphazard nature of his education.<sup>5</sup> At seventeen, Ridpath taught students in a local school, many of them older than himself, to save funds for college. At nineteen, Ridpath enrolled in a six-year course of study at Indiana Asbury University in nearby Greencastle, Indiana.<sup>6</sup>

Ridpath's funds proved insufficient for the six years of his enrollment at the college. Tuition costs at Indiana Asbury were quite high, seven dollars per term in the Preparatory Class and ten dollars per term in the Classical Department.<sup>7</sup> Ridpath funded his education by working as a part-time salesman but that did not disrupt his academic work. Ridpath's Great-Granddaughter recalled, "His clothes were a little shabbier than many of his classmates but his grades seemed to compensate for the clothes."<sup>8</sup> Ridpath was proud of his ability to overcome these early disadvantages and Hoosier Poet James Whitcomb Riley described Ridpath's ability to do so in a poem he wrote for the historian's fiftieth birthday. Riley wrote, "The like of you at College! But you went there. How you paid your way nobody's astin' - but you worked- you haint afraid!"<sup>9</sup> Ridpath's origins as a poor fledgling student of the Indiana frontier were reflected throughout his work as a writer, historian, and politician.

Ridpath's struggle to afford an education at Indiana Asbury did not hinder his abilities as a student. Ridpath's journal from early 1861 provides a window into the life of a twenty year old growing into adulthood and developing opinions and ideas about the world. The entries of Ridpath's diary indicate his diligence and industriousness as a student and served as a forum to

---

<sup>5</sup> Tucker Woodson Taylor, "John Clark Ridpath: A Brief Biography, 1894," Ridpath Collection.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

In the same year Ridpath began his studies at Indiana Asbury, his mother passed away. It is unclear whether or not this led to significant emotional challenges for Ridpath, although it does not appear to have disrupted his educational plans.

<sup>7</sup> "Annual Catalogue of Indiana Asbury University, 1860." Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, DePauw University, Greencastle Ind.

<sup>8</sup> Jeanne Chattin, "Grandfather Ridpath and His Friends," Ridpath Collection.

<sup>9</sup> James Whitcomb Riley, "Lines to J.C. Ridpath, A.M., LL.D, 1891" "Tucker W. Taylor Collection, L235." Indiana State Library Manuscript Collection, Indianapolis Ind.

practice different genres of writing. On many occasions Ridpath referred to the significant amounts of time he invested in studies and efforts to become successful. Instead of spending his weekends socializing, Ridpath used them to practice his writing, “This is Saturday, the students’ Sabbath; but as I have never found anything at all agreeable in resting, that is to say in idleness, I always contrive something upon which to feed of sufficient interest to keep up a genial glow of feeling.”<sup>10</sup> Ridpath’s work ethic as a young adult translated to prodigious output as a professional writer. A later entry elaborated on these habits and shows how Ridpath was driven by long term ambitions rather than short term frivolity,

Mirth and jollity have issued forth into the streets, and the music of sleigh bells is in the air, a continued strain of music. But joyousness and festivity are not without their contrast; for the abodes of poverty, the dwelling places of wretchedness, and the haunts of degradation are here; miserable hovels where gaunt starvation and hollow-eyed famine eye each other, and ragged want stalks forth in the habiliments of iniquity are here; wickedness and woe and suffering are here; vice and passion and groveling thought overcharged with the rank germs of evil are here.<sup>11</sup>

This remark reveals Ridpath was aware of class differences and his degraded status, but also believed that through hard work he could overcome the limitations of poverty. On another Saturday, Ridpath chastised the “despicable habit which students have of calling upon their neighbors, and whiling away the precious hours of our only life in such a style.”<sup>12</sup> Self-importance and superiority over his fellow students is evident as motivation and drive to have his work appreciated.

Ridpath saw himself as a successful student, and appreciated his studies. Classical coursework began with Latin, English Grammar, Arithmetic, and Greek followed by courses such as Logic, Chemistry, Geology, Rhetoric, Mental Philosophy and History of Civilization

---

<sup>10</sup> John Clark Ridpath, John Clark Ridpath Diary, Jan. 5, 1861, Ridpath Collection.

<sup>11</sup> Ridpath Diary, Jan. 12, 1861, Ridpath Collection.

<sup>12</sup> Ridpath Diary, Jan. 19, 1861, Ridpath Collection.

taken in the Junior and Senior year.<sup>13</sup> Ridpath excelled in his studies and at the beginning of January 1861 wrote, “Find my lessons not such a burden after all; nor indeed is anything else.”<sup>14</sup> An Indiana Asbury grade report from December 23, 1862 charts his studiousness as he received high marks in his courses, a 93 in “Mental and Moral Sciences,” a 94 in “Belles Lettres and History,” a 90 in “Elocution” and a 100 in “Department.”<sup>15</sup> Ridpath’s enjoyment of class work and the level of success he attained show he possessed the faculties necessary to become well educated. Ridpath’s love for academics is apparent, and explains why he was inclined to become an educator upon graduation. He completed a six year course of study in only four years and graduated in the spring of 1863.<sup>16</sup>

As a hard-working student Ridpath harbored ambitions for a successful future. His journal is replete with references to wishes for fame and hopes to become a published writer. He also expressed concern for not accomplishing enough, “It is an astonishing something how much a man may do without accomplishing anything; we labor on from year to year, from the morning dawn to the hoary winter of our existence, and when all is done what is done?”<sup>17</sup> This apprehension speaks to Ridpath’s personal character and desire for accomplishment, yet also harkens to his early life in which he and his siblings were motivated to achieve an education and make an impression on the world. An entry from mid-March revealed more of his desire. “I am ambitious of distinction, and anxious for success in my literary labors, and these must be prosecuted in the few moments which I have to spare from my regular studies.”<sup>18</sup> Ridpath’s expressions of self-doubt indicate he was not only driven by the pursuit of notoriety, but also a

---

<sup>13</sup> “Annual Catalogue of Indiana Asbury University, 1860.”

<sup>14</sup> Ridpath Diary, Jan. 7, 1861, Ridpath Collection.

<sup>15</sup> “Indiana Asbury University Grade Report, John Clark Ridpath, December 1862,” Ridpath Collection.

<sup>16</sup> Taylor, “John Clark Ridpath: A Brief Biography, 1894,” Ridpath Collection.

<sup>17</sup> Ridpath Diary, Jan. 23, 1861, Ridpath Collection.

<sup>18</sup> Ridpath Diary, March 17, 1861, Ridpath Collection.

fear of failure throughout his lifetime. In his journal, Ridpath presented himself as unrestrained by his humble economic means, and instead, hopeful for the great possibilities his future held.

As a student at Indiana Asbury, Ridpath's early views of politics, religion and history emerged. Although the diary does not reveal Ridpath's personal views about the slavery or the Civil War, it does provide a starting point for analyzing his career and intellectual concerns. In a discussion of his friends' return to campus on January 5, he wrote, "We number eight; all Republicans, and all brave and chivalrous."<sup>19</sup> This fleeting reference provides a foundation for Ridpath's early political views. It is unsurprising he identified with Republicans, coming from northern frontier family, yet Ridpath seemed unenthusiastic about politics. On March 4 he lamented, "Abe Lincoln is President. Who cares?" The very next day he wrote, "Oh! Ye Union, I suppose thou art not saved. A new party is inaugurated into power and an old one is inaugurated out. Long may they both hold their positions."<sup>20</sup> Although Ridpath gave the impression that he was politically apathetic, this later proved inaccurate.

Ridpath was deeply involved in the Philological literary society at Indiana Asbury and was elected Vice President on June 14, 1861. In his diary he made regular references to his participation in the association which debated contemporary issues of the time, such as secession, the Civil War, and slavery. Members of the association also maintained a library, wrote essays, and delivered orations on various topics of interest. These literary societies provided forums for discussion, and "respected reason, nurtured intellect, and subjected much that was established to scrutiny and debate."<sup>21</sup> The society discussed a variety of topics were discussed when Ridpath was active in the society and provided a place to practice skills of

---

<sup>19</sup> Ridpath Diary, Jan. 5, 1861, Ridpath Collection.

<sup>20</sup> Ridpath Diary, March 4, 1861, Ridpath Collection.

<sup>21</sup> Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), 141.

writing and oratory he would use as a public intellectual.<sup>22</sup> The society considered the question of “Should the South be invaded?” as well as “Is the allegiance of the citizens of the United States due to the state in which they have their domiciles, or to the national government?”<sup>23</sup> In September of 1861, members considered whether or not “It would be expedient for the President of the United States to emancipate slaves.”<sup>24</sup> It is not clear where Ridpath came down on these issues, but he certainly debated and discussed major political questions of his college years. Most importantly, Ridpath gained extensive experience writing and communicating by delivering frequent orations and writing numerous essays as an active association member.

Ridpath painted himself as a pious youth who conformed to Methodist religious doctrines. The university was directly affiliated with the Methodist Church and students were expected to be practicing Christians. Quoting faculty policies on January 13, 1861, Ridpath wrote “Each student shall attend church twice (or church and lecture which is all the same) on each Sabbath.”<sup>25</sup> Ridpath’s journal account of 1861 affirms that he indeed participated in these services and lectures each week and was critical of those who lamented the long sermons each week. “How it is to be presumed when people go to church that they go fully prepared to do while in Rome as Rome does- that is sit still, pay attention and say nothing about it after they go away.”<sup>26</sup> Ridpath argued the people he referred to should be more dutiful and respectful and behave more like him by conforming to Methodist religious traditions. These entries do not fully establish Ridpath as a strong Methodist, but his rhetoric throughout the journal, presence at a Methodist institution, and eventual return to the school indicates his early religious convictions.

---

<sup>22</sup> “Philological Literary Society Minutes, 1854-1874.” Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, DePauw University, Greencastle Ind.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

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

<sup>25</sup> Ridpath Diary, Jan. 13, 1861, Ridpath Collection.

<sup>26</sup> Ridpath Diary, March 3, 1861, Ridpath Collection.

Ridpath also read works of major historians of the day, including George Bancroft. On January 5, Ridpath remarked specifically about the article, “A Day with Lord Byron” by Bancroft in *The Ledger*. Ridpath’s exposure to writers such as Bancroft (who advised Ridpath later in life) gives a context for sources of his historical views. Ridpath also spoke about “the Philosophy of History” during his Valedictorian Address upon graduation from Indiana Asbury and thus considered issues related to the field of history in the public discourse.<sup>27</sup> Ridpath revealed some his own opinions in a January entry about the relationship of himself and his Indiana Asbury companions,

History is written from annals, that is to say, daily annotations imprinted in the memory or elsewhere as the subject wanders up and down in the [sic] of life, and is amplified or contracted, extended or narrow in compass, just in proportion to the fullness or meagerness of the said annals. In the case of the subject before us the annals are full even to a fault, a great portion of which, valuable as they may be, we are under the painful necessity of suppressing, lest the historian might be censured for the indiscretions and youthful follies of the subject concerning which he treats.<sup>28</sup>

In this passage, Ridpath argued that histories may be adjusted, extended or contracted as necessary to fit narrative purposes. Some histories, he suggests, are more valuable than others, and the history that is ultimately preserved is significant. Although Ridpath reflected on college antics in this passage, it provides a humorous critique for the proposition that history is facts alone. Ridpath valued written narratives and believed it could be used to enhance the importance of recorded events. As a writer Ridpath was eager to assemble narratives for his readership and direct the public conversation about issues of the day. The short works of poetry scattered throughout the diary supports the interpretation that Ridpath was first a writer, engaged in the practicing his craft. The variety of writings within the diary suggests that Ridpath hoped to

---

<sup>27</sup> Clifton J. Phillips, *History at DePauw University* (Greencastle, IN: DePauw University, 1985), 3.

<sup>28</sup> Ridpath Diary, Jan. 5, 1861, Ridpath Collection.

achieve fame and was motivated to write and become influential rather than write within a specific genre.

The most important narrative which emerges from Ridpath's diary is that of an impoverished student struggling with a paltry amount of funds. Ridpath's poverty is a theme constantly present in his account of his youth and education. Late in February he wrote, "I am out of money- out of clothes- out of time- out of energy- out of everything unless it be an occasional glean of hope for a "better day a coming."<sup>29</sup> On March 10 he wrote with a similar feeling, "all tattered and torn, but poverty is good for one; it awakens effort, and energizes man's nature, and warms up the dull listless tide of thought into something like a general flow, and of nothing but soft sickly sentiment comes forth as the fruit thereof, that is better than remaining a pillared column of brick and mortar."<sup>30</sup> Ridpath's frequent acknowledgement of his poverty throughout his time at Indiana Asbury suggests that it had a powerful influence over him as a student, but he never seems to suggest he valued riches. Ridpath's wants were to be viewed as a successful writer, not necessarily to become a wealthy man. Ridpath was hopeful for his future potential as a consequence of his impoverished agrarian youth. Ridpath connected with his frontier origins, and recalled them in the "Introduction" to Author Augustus Mason's *The Romance and Tragedy of Pioneer Life*, which he wrote in 1884. Ridpath described pioneers as a people of heroic virtue, "the hardiest breed of adventurers that ever foreran the columns of civilization."<sup>31</sup> As in his own life, Ridpath believed through hard work it was possible to overcome the challenges of poverty. Ridpath understood himself as a humble pioneer of the frontier, and these origins continued to resonate with him.

---

<sup>29</sup> Ridpath Diary, Feb. 24, 1861, Ridpath Collection.

<sup>30</sup> Ridpath Diary, March 10, 1861, Ridpath Collection.

<sup>31</sup> Augustus Lynch Mason, *The Romance and Tragedy of Pioneer Life*, (Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers and Company, 1884), 13.



Before graduating from Indiana Asbury in 1863, Ridpath married Roxana Smythe of Greencastle, four years his junior, on December 21, 1862. Roxana gave birth to five children, one of whom died in infancy in spring 1873.<sup>32</sup> Ridpath left Greencastle and Indiana Asbury in the summer of 1863 with a wife and an education his father and late mother had worked so tirelessly to provide. Ridpath pursued a teaching career and assumed an instructor's post in Thorntown, Indiana, for two years, before he became Superintendent of Education at Lawrenceburg, Indiana until 1869.<sup>33</sup> Ridpath completed a Master's Degree at Indiana Asbury in 1866 and was later recruited by his alma mater to join its faculty as Professor of English Literature and Normal Instruction in 1869.<sup>34</sup> During his first few years, Ridpath taught a variety of courses including Political Economy, Logic, Rhetoric, English Literature, and History.<sup>35</sup> These courses were intended to provide value for students' education, and according to the course catalog in these courses, "every effort is made to render those studies of practical utility to the student in shaping his modes of expression."<sup>36</sup> To teach such a breadth of subjects, Ridpath acquired an extensive subject knowledge that proved valuable in future writing endeavors.

In 1871 Ridpath was appointed Professor of Belles Lettres and History and taught courses that embraced "rhetoric, history (American and general), English language and literature, logic, political economy, history of civilization, and international law."<sup>37</sup> Classes were lecture based, and students were required to "analyze and master the subject as to be able to recite

---

<sup>32</sup> Nordyke, "Descendants of John Ridpath."

<sup>33</sup> Taylor, "John Clark Ridpath: A Brief Biography, 1894," Ridpath Collection.

<sup>34</sup> Clifton J. Phillips, "John Clark Ridpath, DePauw Teacher and Historian," *DePauw Alumnus*, December 1957: 1.

<sup>35</sup> "Annual Catalogue of Indiana Asbury University, 1869." Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, DePauw University, Greencastle Ind.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> "Annual Catalogue of Indiana Asbury University, 1871." Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, DePauw University, Greencastle Ind.

without the formality of questions.”<sup>38</sup> Ridpath delivered a significant number of lectures and in this role “came to his full estate as a teacher and lecturer on great subjects.”<sup>39</sup> As an institution, Indiana Asbury pioneered the study of history. At his appointment, Ridpath was one of the few professors at any American college or university to hold an appointment in American history.<sup>40</sup> Prior to Ridpath’s hiring, the university had been one of the first schools to teach the history of the United States, albeit in a rudimentary philosophical form, beginning in 1854 with Professor Bernard Nadal.<sup>41</sup> The school’s early adoption of history as a core curriculum component indicates the university was dedicated to the practice of teaching history before it was commonplace among peer institutions.

Ridpath’s tenure occurred during a critical time for the university’s development and survival. Ridpath was largely responsible for acquiring funds from Washington Charles DePauw, a prominent Methodist, who saved the school and transformed it from Indiana Asbury University to DePauw University. Ridpath gained recognition for his efforts and also developed a personal relationship with the philanthropist. After DePauw’s death in 1887, Ridpath described the benefactor as well intentioned in his efforts to endow the university, and noted “the primary motives which underlay the enterprise were at once philanthropic and religious. Washington Charles DePauw wished well to the human race. He was especially in love with the American people, and still especially with the people of the West.”<sup>42</sup> More specifically Ridpath cited DePauw as a staunchly religious Methodist, with great “personal devotion to the institution

---

<sup>38</sup> “Annual Catalogue of Indiana Asbury University, 1871.”

<sup>39</sup> Taylor, “John Clark Ridpath: A Brief Biography, 1894, Ridpath Collection.

<sup>40</sup> Pfitzer, *Popular History and the Literary Marketplace, 1840-1920*, 148.

<sup>41</sup> Phillips, *History at DePauw University*, 1.

<sup>42</sup> John Clark Ridpath, “Washington Charles DePauw, Founder of DePauw University,” *The Methodist Review* 6, (1890): 389.

which he had planted.”<sup>43</sup> Just as Ridpath wanted to achieve notoriety through his publications, DePauw was both motivated to secure his legacy and make a positive impact on the American people. As men of ambition they had much in common. The endowment secured the school’s future, and Ridpath respected the “strict regard for dignity” with which DePauw acted.<sup>44</sup> The transaction which secured the endowment to the university was completed January 17, 1884, and on May 5, the name of the institution was officially changed from Indiana Asbury to DePauw University.<sup>45</sup> Facilitating DePauw’s gift gave Ridpath institutional influence, and fostered one of his many relations with elite members of society.

In addition to financial challenges the school faced, the university’s curriculum also underwent a transformation during John Clark Ridpath’s tenure. Efforts to provide a more philosophical education, offer more electives, and encourage accomplished students to undertake honors courses suggest the school made efforts to distinguish itself academically from its peers by experimenting with new directions in its curriculum. During the 1874-75 and 1876-77 school years, Indiana Asbury infused its degree tracks with a more philosophical curriculum with emphasis placed on English, composition and rhetoric.<sup>46</sup> This change was insignificant in terms of content, but intended to elevate the curriculum and increase its respectability outside of the institution with the issuance of Bachelor of Philosophy degrees.<sup>47</sup> Mental and moral philosophy, logic, Greek, botany, biology, mathematics and the arts remained important core components of

---

<sup>43</sup> Ridpath, “Washington Charles DePauw, Founder of DePauw University,” 393.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 395.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 392.

<sup>46</sup> George M. Manhart, *DePauw Through the Years, Vol. 1* (Greencastle, IN: DePauw University, 1962), 90.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

the curriculum and continued to be considered foundational courses of a traditional liberal arts education.<sup>48</sup>

The refined curriculum also began allowing students to supplement their education with a limited selection of elective courses, including Mechanics, Greek and French.<sup>49</sup> Indiana Asbury President Thomas Bowman noted in 1867 that this change was made so that students could obtain “a little wider latitude in the selection of studies, to suit the tastes and pursuits of the students.”<sup>50</sup> This was significant reform that came about as a result of Harvard President Charles William Eliot’s experimentation with the elective principle in 1872.<sup>51</sup> Elective courses were incorporated into college curriculum throughout the country in response to the concern that college students were “insufficiently stimulated” and that the traditional variety of courses were not fulfilling their needs.<sup>52</sup> Indiana Asbury adopted such curricular reforms much earlier than many peer institutions, including Harvard. More locally Wabash College first added elective courses in 1900 after a bitter struggle.<sup>53</sup> Indiana Asbury’s leadership, Ridpath among them, were among the more academically progressive of the era. Honors coursework began at Indiana Asbury in 1879, which required “a study, beyond regular class work, adequate in quantity and quality” for students with demonstrated academic ability.<sup>54</sup> These changes show that as history became a more important field of study, other academic changes were occurring that raised intellectual standards for future students. The changes to academic requirements that took place

---

<sup>48</sup> Manhart, *DePauw Through the Years, Vol. 1*, 90.

<sup>49</sup> “Annual Catalogue of Indiana Asbury University, 1874.” Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, DePauw University, Greencastle Ind.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>51</sup> Rudolph, *The American College and University*, 294.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

<sup>54</sup> Manhart, *DePauw Through the Years, Vol. 1*, 104.

during Ridpath's tenure at Indiana Asbury do not appear to have been resisted, and instead show the school made efforts to improve its standing in relation to other colleges and universities.

With a Masters Degree, Ridpath was among the most educated members of the university's faculty. From the early years of the institution well into its time as DePauw, the school's instructors "were generally men without formal training beyond the four-year college course...although several of them had given themselves rather thorough training in special fields, by travel abroad or by private study."<sup>55</sup> Many academics published, but needs of a nineteenth century university required faculty to work outside the classroom in order to improve the institution rather than pursue individual recognition or promotion through publication. In addition to attending to regular faculty meetings to discuss operational issues, faculty engaged in a variety of administrative duties to support the fledgling institution.

Professors were to 'aid support and advise the President in the General administration of discipline'; to select the textbooks with the approval of the president and although each might 'pursue his own method of instruction,' they were to maintain discipline over their students during the recitations; they should 'keep a daily record of attendance and merit of recitation of every student,'<sup>56</sup>

On top of these academic responsibilities, faculty members were required to report on students' activities and represent the university within the community.

At the end of every term report absences and average grades; they should note all infractions of college discipline coming under their observation and report them to the president or to the next faculty meeting; and should all 'be present at prayers.' The president and professors might perform duties for each other 'when their mutual accommodation or the interest of the University may require.' They were also to meet once a week 'to enquire into the conduct and progress of the students, and to devise means for their welfare and improvement.'<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Manhart, *DePauw Through the Years*, Vol. 1, 101

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

Faculty also participated in odd jobs around the university including repairs and maintenance, inquiring at local drinking establishments to determine whether or not students were visiting them, and helping to raise funds for the institution.<sup>58</sup> Faculty worked for the preservation of the school itself, and publication was not a priority for retaining faculty positions.<sup>59</sup>

Although not required Ridpath's publications did not make him unusual among fellow academics of the era, but Ridpath's publications met and exceeded the university's requirements for faculty members. By 1881, Ridpath was well compensated as Vice President, receiving a \$2,000 annual salary in comparison to the \$1,700 annual salary of most professors. Because of the university's financial hardships that ultimately led to rescue by W.C. DePauw, salaries were often reduced to keep the doors of the school open.<sup>60</sup> Ridpath also served Indiana Asbury within the community. He was active in the social and intellectual life of Greencastle and served as a link between town and gown.<sup>61</sup> His Great Granddaughter recalled "Ridpath and his wife made it possible for seventeen students to attend college by taking them into their own home."<sup>62</sup> Ridpath's efforts as a faculty member outside of his intellectual pursuits contributed to his standing in the community.

Students found considerable favor with Ridpath's teaching style and manner. Ridpath was an imposing classroom presence, stood nearly six feet tall, a slender one hundred eighty

---

<sup>58</sup> Manhart, *DePauw Through the Years*, Vol. 1, 115.

<sup>59</sup> *American Association of University Professors 1915 Declaration of Principles*, <http://www.campus-watch.org/article/id/566>.

Faculty tenure did not arise until publication of *The American Association of University Professors 1915 Declaration of Principles* that stated academic freedom for instructors was comprised of "freedom of inquiry and research; freedom of teaching within the university or college; and freedom of extra-mural utterance and action."

<sup>60</sup> Manhart, *DePauw Through the Years*, Vol. 1, 118.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>62</sup> Chattin, "Grandfather Ridpath and His Friends," Ridpath Collection.

pounds and had a long, red beard.<sup>63</sup> Ridpath was an effective professor despite a somewhat eccentric classroom manner.

He called the roll as if he detested it- a waste of precious time. Then with a straightening jerk at his flowing beard, which led it back to the straight and narrow way of orthodox whiskers, a cruel wrench at the stolid dog's head which guarded either arm of his chair, he would plunge at a single bound into any epoch or condition from the laws of Ancient Egypt to the laws of modern Embargo."<sup>64</sup>

A.L. Mason, a student, remarked that Ridpath “filled his pupils with undying ardor for historical study,” while yet another noted the professor’s “interesting talks instead of lessons.”<sup>65</sup> Ridpath’s pedagogy was primarily rhetorical and recitation and this style emerged in the content of his published histories. His books were typical of early, classical historians, recounting facts, dates and events, and his lectures likely had similar characteristics. Students appreciated his style, and two of Ridpath’s pupils, Jesse Weik and Albert Beveridge, became respected historians. Ridpath’s ability to recall knowledge on such an immense number of historical subjects endeared him to his students the way his writer later endeared him to readers.

---

<sup>63</sup> Taylor, “John Clark Ridpath: A Brief Biography, 1894,” Ridpath Collection.

<sup>64</sup> Phillips, “John Clark Ridpath, DePauw Teacher and Historian,” 2.

<sup>65</sup> George M. Manhart, *The Department of History of DePauw University* (Greencastle, IN: DePauw University, 1969), 5.



An early sketch of Ridpath during his years as a faculty member at Indiana Asbury University<sup>66</sup>

Ridpath's early writing emerged from his practices as a teacher and provide evidence for his commitment to the academy from the outset of his career. In addition to being recognized as an exceptional teacher, Ridpath achieved considerable acclaim for his first publications, *A History of the United States, Prepared Especially for Schools* (1874), and *A Popular History of the United States* (1876). These books were initially intended for student audiences, and the 1874 Indiana Asbury Course Catalog indicates that he used his own text for the freshman year course, "History of the United States."<sup>67</sup> Ridpath was the first faculty member at Indiana Asbury to use a textbook of his own authorship in a course.<sup>68</sup> Although Ridpath specialized in popular histories and biographies, his first audience was university students. Ridpath's early focus on academic

---

<sup>66</sup> Ridpath Collection.

<sup>67</sup> "Annual Catalogue of Indiana Asbury University, 1874."

<sup>68</sup> Phillips, *History at DePauw University*, 3.



work grounded him in the academy and afforded him credibility before he shifted his focus towards popular audiences. Although utilized as textbooks, Ridpath did not provide references, footnotes, or citations. This was typical of textbooks of the time which were generally compilations of secondary material lacking the authority of citation.<sup>69</sup> In all probability, Ridpath's volumes were based on his classroom lectures, which he honed for several years prior to publication. In recognition of his academic efforts, Ridpath received an honorary Doctor of Letters degree from Syracuse University in 1880, indicating his esteemed reputation outside of Indiana.

Ridpath's early histories took an academic approach to historical writing. In the 1878 edition of *A Popular History of the United States*, history is presented as chronology, arranged according to historical highlights such as wars and Presidents. The table of contents is extensive, with the items discussed listed in chronological order rather than thematically. The list-like presentation of the table of contents also suggests Ridpath made hardly any attempt at crafting a larger more interrelated master narrative of events and instead focused on macro narratives.

Early in his career when Ridpath did make historical judgments, they were rarely controversial. Rather than delve into the political debates surrounding the adoption of the Constitution, Ridpath presented its writing merely as a response to the failed Articles of Confederation.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, Ridpath praised the Louisiana Purchase as the "greatest event of Jefferson's administration" and noted the character of Lincoln and his humble beginnings.<sup>71</sup> Even one of the more contentious parts of the history, a section on the Civil War, laid out causes of the war without placing emphasis on any particular cause and only briefly described "the evil

---

<sup>69</sup> Ruth Miller Elson, *Guardians of Tradition* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), 11.

<sup>70</sup> Ridpath, *A Popular History of the United States of America From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day*, 358.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 379, 483.

influence of demagogues” and political leaders on the ultimate result of the conflict.<sup>72</sup> Ridpath also praised the motives of revolutionary leaders and blamed the violent war on the British, “the result has been the grandest and most promising example of republican government in the history of the world.”<sup>73</sup>

It is difficult to discern Ridpath’s personal biases and beliefs from *A Popular History of the United States*. Although he occasionally took positions and made moral judgments, he refrained from alienating readers. Ridpath understood the larger purpose of history for students and readers, and acknowledged that “the past has taught its lesson, the present has its duty, and the future its hope.”<sup>74</sup> As opposed to Ridpath’s partisan pieces, he avoided taking sides and passing judgments in his early histories. As a result, Ridpath established credibility as a public intellectual for making sense of a generation’s challenges throughout the nation’s history. Most importantly he utilized academic conventions in his discussion of historical ideas and events, in particular, the importance of empiricism, Social Darwinism, and the role of man in history.

In his production of large, popular historical volumes, Ridpath belonged to a class of historical writing described as “consensus histories” that provided a master historical narrative of the nation which was made up of “one people, forming one nation, with one history. Those whose stories did not fit this master narrative were shunted to the side.”<sup>75</sup> This history unified and generated pride for a noble, common national background, but disregarded those aspects of the narrative which inconveniently complicated the past. Nineteenth century historians worked to explain why the United States was a model for the world because of its unique national fabric

---

<sup>72</sup> Ridpath, *A Popular History of the United States of America From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day*, 489.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 285.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 636.

<sup>75</sup> Peter Charles Hoffer, *Past Imperfect* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007): 13.

and the industrious nature of its people.<sup>76</sup> These narratives dominated history writing during Ridpath's time and provide a context from which his histories emerged. After his early publications, Ridpath approached his writing with a concern for academic issues and worked to bridge popular and academic history so that it could be utilized and understood by the reading class. Ridpath wrote that he intended to provide basic civic knowledge of the nation and assumed that for them, "attainment of that knowledge ought to be made easy and delightful."<sup>77</sup> The issues Ridpath confronted as an historian were no different from those contemporary public intellectuals and historians George Bancroft (1800-1891), and Francis Parkman (1823-1893), Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924), and Frederick Jackson Turner (1861-1932) addressed in their work. Ridpath strove to offer history as a scientific and objective discipline, but also written in engaging narratives. Ridpath acknowledged his struggle was writing with a refined historical philosophy, while avoiding "partiality, partisanship, and prejudice."<sup>78</sup> In the first issue of *The American Historical Review* in 1895, William Sloane noted that this challenge was one facing many professionals in the new field of history,

The doctrine of the unity of history has been so emphasized that the consequences are simply revolutionary, scientific methods having by its means been introduced into a discipline hitherto venerated as the highest department of prose literature, to be sure, but esteemed by the great critics, and by mankind generally, as on the whole vague and imaginative, as being a picture of the writer's own mind rather than a presentation of facts in an external world, and of reliable deductions from them.<sup>79</sup>

Ridpath's humble background and his view that the common man required civic education to maintain democracy influenced how he wrote about and conceived of the historian's role, but his contemporaries also grappled with this issue as they produced histories for popular audiences. In

---

<sup>76</sup> Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994), 114-116.

<sup>77</sup> Ridpath, *A Popular History of the United States of America From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day*, iii.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> W.M. Sloane, "History and Democracy," *The American Historical Review* 1, no.1 (1895): 2.

order to pursue a usable history for his readers, Ridpath struggled with mediating between the idea of history as both a science and narrative.

Though he would achieve a legacy as a popular historian, Ridpath disdained popular history and popular historians. Ridpath argued that behind popular history, “there is another and real history of which the book history is but a passing shadow.”<sup>80</sup> Ridpath viewed himself as an academic writer and intellectual and believed his work had academic credibility, but was concerned popular histories were not academic enough. The crop of new professional historians of the mid-nineteenth century in which Ridpath belonged “simply changed consensus history from a branch of nationalistic literature to an academic science.”<sup>81</sup> The work of these historians, “was still built on a series of comforting falsehoods...plagiarism- repeating, without citation and without criticism, the old self-sustaining truisms...and fabrication, the passing on of unsupportable racist opinions as historical facts.”<sup>82</sup> This criticism of Ridpath’s generation of historians is fair and deserved. The profession embraced ideas of science and objectivity that came out of Enlightenment philosophy, but these principles were generally employed to support constant re-packaging of secondary material without citation and master narratives, such as racism. A contemporary understanding of history suggests Ridpath’s early work was far from scholarly, but his professional academic experience kept him engaged in intellectual issues long after he left DePauw.

On June 8, 1885, John Clark Ridpath resigned from his position at DePauw University. He cited a “somewhat extended term of service,” and sought to be relieved from his position as

---

<sup>80</sup> John Clark Ridpath, “The Man in History: An Oration for the Columbian Year,” *Indiana Historical Society Publications* 2, no. 7 (1893): 277.

<sup>81</sup> Hoffer, *Past Imperfect*, 14.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

Vice-President and Professor of History and Political Philosophy.<sup>83</sup> This was not the first time Ridpath had attempted to resign his posts, having done so first in 1875 and once again in 1884, but this time his resignation was accepted with great praise from the Board of Trustees. It is unclear why Ridpath attempted to resign twice before, but in a letter from the Board Secretary, Ridpath was commended for his “distinguished ability and force of character” exhibited “in the discharge of his official duties both as a teacher and a representative of the institution before the public.”<sup>84</sup> With this recognition, Ridpath’s sixteen-year career at his alma mater closed. Already well regarded at the school for his facilitation of a financial gift from W. C. DePauw to rescue the university from financial ruin, Ridpath’s resignation ensured him more time to devote to his writing.<sup>85</sup> From his resignation until his death in 1900, a mere fifteen years, Ridpath experienced his most productive years as a writer while his ideas about the changing nature of history as a discipline, the role of historians, and his outlook on the world emerged.

Ridpath’s letters to the Board of Trustees did not elaborate on his reasons for wanting to leave DePauw, but events taking place at the university about the time of his resignation make it possible to conjecture why Ridpath would leave his post. Jeanne Chattin observed that although her Great-Grandfather held the Vice-Presidency of the university, “he could never be President of this Methodist founded school because he was not an ordained minister.”<sup>86</sup> As a result, Ridpath likely felt professionally unfilled after giving sixteen years to the university and achieving fame and recognition but without the possibility of ever becoming DePauw’s President. Ridpath also supported the view that religion was an obstacle to the secular education

---

<sup>83</sup> “Ridpath Letter to the Board of Trustees, June 8, 1885,” Ridpath Collection.

<sup>84</sup> “Letter to Ridpath from the Board of Trustees, July 1, 1885,” Ridpath Collection.

<sup>85</sup> Taylor, “John Clark Ridpath: A Brief Biography, 1894,” Ridpath Collection.

<sup>86</sup> Chattin, “Grandfather Ridpath and His Friends,” Ridpath Collection.

needed by America's people, which likely led to tensions at the Methodist school.<sup>87</sup> Perhaps most accurately, however, Ridpath's decision to leave academia was motivated by his desire to become well known for his writing and publications. At the time of his resignation Ridpath had been publishing historical volumes for more than a decade and he possibly possibly saw this moment as the opportunity to fulfill the ambitions of his youth. Nonetheless, his professional experience at Indiana Asbury established a foundation for his methods and solidified his purpose. It was only by departing Indiana Asbury that John Clark Ridpath could fully dedicate himself to fulfilling the role of writer, popular historian, and public intellectual.

---

<sup>87</sup> John Clark Ridpath, "The Mixed Populations of Chicago," *The Chautauquan* 12, no. 4 (1891): 493.

## Chapter 2: The Rise of a Public Intellectual

John Clark Ridpath's contributions to the institutional viability of DePauw University and his well regarded publications made him an influential figure in the university's first century. After his retirement from the school, Ridpath remained in Greencastle and resided on East Washington Street until his death, but became even more as a writer and intellectual during these years.<sup>1</sup> After leaving DePauw in 1885 John Clark Ridpath involved himself in a variety of pursuits as a public intellectual through the promotion of regional literature as a member of the Western Association of Writers and later as Editor of *The Arena*. He also emphasized the importance of civic education and wrote a number of well-received popular histories and biographies. Through his work and efforts to educate the public Ridpath helped Americans cope with dramatic changes occurring at the end of the nineteenth century and face the changing nature of society as the nation grew into its role as an emerging global power.

After his retirement Ridpath made writing his primary occupation and focused on the production of popular histories and biographies intended for general consumption. If Ridpath's reflections on his career are to be believed, after the first edition of *A Popular History of the United States* was published in 1876, his motivations for writing were modified. At this time, Ridpath began writing for an audience made up of the ordinary, reading public rather than students. Two incidents seem to have influenced Ridpath's professional direction. First, Ridpath's father, Abraham, passed away in 1877. Both Ridpath's mother and father had influenced his pursuit of education, and following his father's death Ridpath committed himself to the cause of ordinary Americans in a way he had not previously expressed. In a reflective

---

<sup>1</sup> "Marker Dedication is Set for Oct. 17, Ridpath, Weik to be Honored," *The Daily Banner*, October 12, 1965.

obituary written about his father in 1896, Ridpath recalled Abraham Ridpath as a man of the common people,

He was a toiler—I will take up the task of his hands and the purposes of his heart. He was one of the common people. I also will be one of the common people, I will love them, and honor them, and defend them. I will believe in them, as he did, and will trust them. IF THEY EVER HAVE A CAUSE, THAT CAUSE SHALL BE MINE. If they have a hope or an aspiration, I will share it. Whoever attempts to injure them, to take away their rights, to oppress them, to enslave them, shall be my enemy- not because I hate or would do him hurt, but because he is unjust and cruel.<sup>2</sup>

Because this piece was written nearly twenty years after his father's death, it can be argued that Ridpath wrote this in part because of his political engagement in Populist Democratic activities. The fact that Ridpath identifies 1877 as a transformative year, just more than a century after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, indicates his desire to put the common man first in the republic once more. Ridpath's dedication to this cause indicates that he wrote in part to address the distance between men and the government as a public intellectual and extended his role as a college teacher to college audiences.

More evidence of a change in Ridpath's purpose for writing appeared in another obituary he wrote, this one for his grandfather, John Ridpath, Sr. in 1879. In the piece, Ridpath cited his grandfather's resourcefulness in acquiring an education despite never having formal schooling.<sup>3</sup> Ridpath wrote, "Through his whole life my grandfather was a hard-working man. He was a producer. He had no affinity for, and but little knowledge of that class of creatures who live by subtlety and intrigue...he was a planter rather than a producer of that thing we call civilization."<sup>4</sup> The devotion of Ridpath to the image of his grandfather as a common man, self educated and responsible for the labor that moved the nation forward is reflected in Ridpath's writings and his

---

<sup>2</sup> John Clark Ridpath, "To The Memory of a Workingman- Abraham Ridpath," Ridpath Collection.

<sup>3</sup> John Clark Ridpath, "To the Editor of the Boone Standard, Oct. 27, 1879," Ridpath Collection.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



pleas in favor of ordinary, working class Americans. Ridpath maintained a sense of his common, humble background his entire life, but these two deaths galvanized his views and purposes for writing and contributed to his endeavors upon retiring from DePauw.

The work Ridpath wrote at the end of the nineteenth century was intended for the common, everyday, predominantly Anglo-Saxon, middle class reader. Ridpath referred to these readers as “the average American...for the practical man of the shop, the counter, and the plow,” and his writing was reflective of the specific era and geographic location he experienced.<sup>5</sup> The “common man” Ridpath wrote for existed in a particular generation, faced specific societal changes, and engaged in particular activities and interactions. Ridpath’s presence in Indiana and the Midwest influenced his understanding of who the common reader was that read and consumed his work. These readers experienced substantial changes in their lives as the nation underwent an economic transformation from a primarily agrarian, rural nation, to one of emerging industrial capacity.

In the late stages of the nineteenth century the United States experienced a steady decline in the number of individuals engaged in agriculture, a consequence of new farming technologies that simultaneously allowed the amount of arable farmland to be increased.<sup>6</sup> Across Indiana, the number of farm workers needed diminished and many of these individuals found themselves working in unfamiliar industrial environments, even in small towns like Greencastle. For some individuals this meant a complete transformation of daily life. In Indiana these changes were fueled the production of coal and the increase in natural gas that allowed industrialization to be possible.<sup>7</sup> Although these changes improved the lives of many workers and their families some

---

<sup>5</sup> Ridpath, *A Popular History of the United States of America From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day*, iii.

<sup>6</sup> James H. Madison, *The Indiana Way: A State History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), 147.

<sup>7</sup> Herbert G. Gutman, ed., *Who Built America? Volume I* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), 525.

workers found “that industrial jobs brought low pay, long hours, tedious, unsafe, and demeaning work, and periods of unemployment.”<sup>8</sup> The industrial age brought mixed results for the average, “common man” in Indiana and around the country, and these common people were especially vulnerable during the economic depressions which occurred in the years of 1873-1878 and 1893-1896.<sup>9</sup>

Greencastle was not spared from development as the region’s economy was transformed from a reliance on subsistence work to a more diverse, market agriculture and industrial economy.<sup>10</sup> Following the Civil War, local factories employed significant numbers of residents in industrial jobs. The Greencastle Iron and Nail Company, for example, employed more than one hundred and fifty people from the area.<sup>11</sup> As more factories sprung up in the region, union activity was also present, with more than one hundred men organizing a manufacturing union of workers in the city in 1870.<sup>12</sup> Ridpath experienced economic changes that transformed the county.

In spite of the changes that were improving the lives of many Americans, there was a growing feeling of discomfort and discontent rising by the latter part of the nineteenth century. Walter LaFeber argued that “by the 1880s, however, the weeds of discontent began to clutter this garden of the world,”

Supposedly limitless frontiers started to snap shut on every side. A resurgence of good European wheat crops after 1881 forced agricultural prices downward until the cost of raising wheat amounted to one-third more than its selling price...A horrible winter in

---

<sup>8</sup> Madison, *The Indiana Way: A State History*, 164.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 151..

<sup>10</sup> Putnam County Sesquicentennial Committee, *Putnam County History, Indiana Sesquicentennial 1966*, 167.

<sup>11</sup> Jesse W. Weik, *History of Putnam County Indiana*, (Indianapolis, IN: B.F. Bowen & Co., 1910), 242.

<sup>12</sup> George William Pierce, “Industrial History of Greencastle,” March 1, 1929, “History Seminar Papers, Greencastle 1929.” Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, DePauw University, Greencastle Ind., 31-32.

1885-1886 and the 1886-1887 freeze nearly ruined the range cattle industry...At the same time the death rattle of the railroad frontier could be heard.<sup>13</sup>

These incidents, the uncertainty of labor unrest, and declining agricultural revenues were a cause for the concern. As LaFeber noted, “many Americans who had unquestioningly accepted the results of the Civil War as insurance for an indefinite period of American greatness were now shaken, never to regain their full confidence.”<sup>14</sup> As a Populist, Ridpath attempted to directly influence policy, but as a popular writer his work served as an outlet for revitalizing a national political culture and informing the people about democratic ideals. Although his histories did not address the contemporary concerns of citizens’ daily lives, Ridpath’s political writings indicate that he was influenced by changing economic conditions during his lifetime and thought that because of his writing, readers would be better prepared to address and discuss the nation’s changing conditions.

Ridpath’s decision to pursue writing and become a public intellectual, divorced from a specific academic institution, coincided with a rise of anti-intellectualism in nineteenth century America. Prior to the 1890s, it was necessary for academics to forge a relationship with an academic institution because it was nearly impossible to make a living on writing alone.<sup>15</sup> The academic class largely lacked cohesion until around 1890 when they “became restless with the constraints of gentility and conservatism, and took up arms against American society.”<sup>16</sup> Academics responded to the state of the nation by speaking “realistically about corruption and

---

<sup>13</sup> Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963), 13.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 405.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 406-407.

exploitation, sex and violence.”<sup>17</sup> In spite of this, academics felt they had failed to fulfill their role as societal critics, and many found themselves associated with an elite, patrician class.

Ridpath was no exception, maintaining connections with such wealth benefactors as W.C. DePauw and simultaneously claiming to serve the interest of ordinary Americans. Some intellectuals expressed concerns about an inherent contradiction arising between these two extremes. Hofstadter noted, “at the very moment when their sensibilities and concerns were deviating more than ever from those of the public at large, they were trying far more than ever to espouse political causes that supposedly represented the case of the people against special interests.”<sup>18</sup> Ridpath’s departure from DePauw indicates a shift away from identifying with the elite patrician class and restoring kinship with the humble class associated with his father and grandfather. Unable to become DePauw’s President, Ridpath’s connections in academia could have landed him a similar position elsewhere. Instead Ridpath’s decision to dedicate himself to writing for the public was intentional, a natural manifestation of his desire to write for general audiences. Ridpath wrote narratives ordinary people could use, prompting *Indianapolis News* writer Wayne Guthrie to describe Ridpath’s histories as “written for the average layman- not for scholars- giving a homespun insight into the understanding of history.”<sup>19</sup> Ridpath described a personal desire to write for ordinary Americans and declared that for the most part historical works had been “incommensurate with the demands of the common reader.”<sup>20</sup> In doing so, Ridpath wrote for non-academic readers, but also wanted to be perceived as a successful writer, a public intellectual engaged in the affairs of the nation.

---

<sup>17</sup> Hofstadter, *Anti-intellectualism in American Life*, 405.

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

<sup>19</sup> Wayne Guthrie, “Ringside in Hoosierland,” *Indianapolis News*, April 30, 1965.

<sup>20</sup> John Clark Ridpath, *Cyclopedia of Universal History, Vol. II* (Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers Publishing Company, 1885), 5.

Ridpath remained engaged in academic issues and his secretary Tucker Taylor noted that Ridpath was “profoundly concerned about the literary reputation of his state.”<sup>21</sup> Nowhere was Ridpath’s concern more evident than in his participation and membership in various state associations, including the Indiana Historical Society and the Western Association of Writers. The Western Association of Writers was founded on July 30, 1886, a little over one year after Ridpath’s resignation from DePauw.<sup>22</sup> The purpose of the group was “to cultivate the highest and purest style of literary work, and to encourage and assist in the development of a true and healthy American literature.”<sup>23</sup> The association held meetings and conventions each year where members shared their work and discussed issues of the day until 1907.<sup>24</sup> In many ways it was similar to the Philological literary society Ridpath participated in as an Indiana Asbury student. Emerging from a feeling of discontent about the state’s literary reputation, the organization was formed in response to the number of Hoosiers who “were moved by the literary impulse” and felt slighted by the Eastern elites that set themselves apart from writers on the frontier.<sup>25</sup> The establishment of the organization had clear objectives that were connected to the principle of enhancing the region’s literary standing.

(1) to form an association of the literary profession for mutual strength, profit and acquaintance (2) to discuss methods of composition, and all topics pertaining to the advancement of literature in America (3) to produce and publish a representative volume of Western Authors from the miscellaneous poems, stories and sketches read during the convention.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Taylor, “John Clark Ridpath: A Brief Biography, 1894,” Ridpath Collection.

<sup>22</sup> Ray E. Boomhower, “The Western Association of Writers,” *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History*, Spring 2003, 42.

<sup>23</sup> “Articles of Association and By-laws, 1887,” Western Association of Writers Papers, L217, Indiana State Library Manuscript Collection, Indianapolis Ind.

<sup>24</sup> Boomhower, “The Western Association of Writers,” 42.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> J. L. Smith, “Development of Indiana Literature,” Smith Collection, Indiana State Library Manuscript Collection, Indianapolis Ind.

The organization became a forum where dialogue about literature took place and provided an opportunity for writers with a western background to collaborate and counteract the east-coast dominated literary establishment. By 1893 the organization had more than two hundred members.<sup>27</sup> The association pledged “there is no narrow or sectional purpose known to the Association, and earnest thinkers and workers from any and all of the central, western, southern or northwestern states, or from Canada, are and will continue to be most cordially welcome.”<sup>28</sup> Ridpath was active in the organization from its founding, attended the association’s first meeting, read a paper in June 1886, and served as president in 1891.<sup>29</sup> The association was dominated by Hoosiers, and served as the foundation for Ridpath’s relationship with James Whitcomb Riley, fellow member and Indiana poet.

As editor of *The Arena*, a progressive reform publication based in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1897 and 1898, Ridpath corresponded extensively with Riley about literature, the association, and his respect for the poet as a writer. In letters between the two literary figures, a sense of mutual admiration emerged suggesting the association not only helped in the promotion of literary work of the region but also facilitated lasting relationships between its diverse members. Ridpath lauded the poet’s reputation, “You must know, well enough, that there isn’t a magazine in Christendom that wouldn’t gladly snatch at a contribution of yours; and swear by it in the dark- and among the sons of men there is none more gratified at this fact than am I.”<sup>30</sup> In a subsequent letter Ridpath lamented, “the ten pages at my disposal were not twenty” for the placement of Riley’s work in *The Arena*.<sup>31</sup> Far from modest in his accolades, Ridpath wrote Riley and thanked him for a submission noting, “you have surpassed me in literary fame- and I

---

<sup>27</sup> Smith, “Development of Indiana Literature,” Smith Collection.

<sup>28</sup> “1895 Membership Application,” Western Association of Writers Papers.

<sup>29</sup> Smith, “Development of Indiana Literature,” Smith Collection.

<sup>30</sup> “John Clark Ridpath Letter to James Whitcomb Riley, April 26, 1897,” James Whitcomb Riley Papers.

<sup>31</sup> “Ridpath Letter to Riley, May 10, 1897,” James Whitcomb Riley Papers.

am glad of it, but one is always modest in the matter of liberties with those who are in advance.”<sup>32</sup> Such praises were typical in Ridpath’s letters to Riley, and although they might be misinterpreted as an editor in need of work from one of the nation’s rising literary stars, the constant references to their personal friendship and Ridpath’s desire to visit Riley during his trips to Indiana from Boston suggests the admiration was genuine. As men of letters, a great deal of mutual respect existed between them.

Riley demonstrated his mutual respect for Ridpath and praised his loyalty to the literature of Indiana, “God bless you for your more than liberal goodness to me and all our kind. Your laurel crown should weigh a ton—its every leaf wrought out of rarest emerald and dewed with dripping diamonds.”<sup>33</sup> Riley also praised Ridpath as a historian and noted the scholarly significance of his *Great Races of Mankind* series,

You know my limitations in the scholarly line, but you also know that I am blest with an unerring sense, at times, of justly estimating really intricate and profound intellectual performances, which otherwise I [want] not of but in most vacant, empty, idiotic way; and only because I know you know this peculiar fact, do I venture any opinion whatever on the merits of a work so deep and erudite—so seriously, logically, soundly yet all gracefully performed.<sup>34</sup>

Mutual expressions of appreciation between these nineteenth century literary figures are representative of relationships the Western Association of Writers was sought to facilitate, and indicates the network of individuals the association created was influential by the turn of the century. Ridpath’s correspondence also indicates that he was accepted as a member of the association not as an historian or academic but more broadly as a writer. Ridpath’s effort to promote the region through literary pursuits supports the notion that Ridpath was primarily a writer and public intellectual who focused on production of historical narratives.

---

<sup>32</sup> “Ridpath Letter to Riley, August 17, 1897,” James Whitcomb Riley Papers.

<sup>33</sup> “Riley Letter to Ridpath, April 9, 1892,” James Whitcomb Riley Papers.

<sup>34</sup> “Riley Letter to Ridpath, October 14, 1895,” James Whitcomb Riley Papers.

The Western Association of Writers became highly regarded for its ability to bring literary recognition to the Midwest. The organization filled a void for the region's writers and upon the founding of the organization in 1886 the *Indianapolis Sentinel* noted "the time is ripe for a systematic union of the literary fraternity, which has never before been formed in America."<sup>35</sup> Nearly a decade later in 1895, a news clipping described the impact of the organization in its first decade and suggested "the three large volumes published by the Association are compilations of much of the most representative literature of this section of the United States."<sup>36</sup> In this same article, Ridpath was mentioned specifically as a member who made a significant contribution to the organization's early years. The association was influential among regional intellectuals and writers of the time, and its most significant legacy was "its ability to provide a needed spark to the creative process for hundreds of writers in Indiana and the Midwest."<sup>37</sup>

After he was named editor, Ridpath utilized *The Arena* as a vehicle for promoting the work of the Association's members. In a letter to James Whitcomb Riley in 1897, Ridpath wrote, "I think I can make out my entire selection [of poems], with perhaps one exception, from members of the Western Association of Writers," and exclaimed that "without saying anything about it, I am endeavoring, in the June number, to give the W.A.W. a pretty good exploitation."<sup>38</sup> Ridpath's correspondence clarified his motivation to promote the works of his Midwestern colleagues. After taking over the publication, Ridpath wrote to Riley that "You are right in thinking that I shall do my best to promote the interests of the Western Association of Writers."<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> "Indianapolis Sentinel Article, July 25, 1886," Western Association of Writers Papers.

<sup>36</sup> "News clipping from Dec. 31, 1895," Western Association of Writers Papers.

<sup>37</sup> Boomhower, "The Western Association of Writers," 47.

<sup>38</sup> "Ridpath Letter to Riley, April 12, 1897," and "Ridpath Letter to Riley, April 26, 1897," James Whitcomb Riley Papers.

<sup>39</sup> "Ridpath Letter to Riley, March 1, 1897," James Whitcomb Riley Papers.



This can hardly be misinterpreted as anything but an acknowledgement of his intention to promote the literature of his home region. In exchange for these efforts, Ridpath expected association members to reciprocate by supporting the publication, once addressing the membership that it was, “within the power and the opportunity of the members of the W.A.W. to do me a great good by a disinterested rally in support of the enterprise which I now represent.”<sup>40</sup> Ridpath was motivated to widen the influence of *The Arena*, and also upheld his end of the bargain by using the progressive magazine as a way of exposing Americans to the works and ideas of his self-identified literary fraternity.

The fraternity of writers belonging to the organization was extremely diverse, including figures such as Riley, Meredith Nicholson, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Booth Tarkington and Lew Wallace. The association’s members did not practice any particular profession, although they likely held similar progressive political beliefs as Ridpath. Ridpath welcomed Terre Haute Socialist labor organizer Eugene V. Debs’ essays in *The Arena*. Not surprisingly, Ridpath described Debs as “one of the most masterful orators that had ever been reared on American soil.”<sup>41</sup> Indiana literature historian and retired DePauw professor Arthur W. Shumaker described James Whitcomb Riley as having been “loved and entertained” by Debs, who called Riley the “God gifted Hoosier poet.”<sup>42</sup> This common association with a partisan political figure and fellow Hoosier, coupled with Ridpath’s appeal to the association’s membership to read *The Arena*, a well known progressive magazine, suggests common political views held by some of its members. Inclusion of Dunbar, an African-American poet, made the organization racially inclusive and its members were motivated by a shared love for letters and writing undivided by

---

<sup>40</sup> “Ridpath Letter to Riley, February 23, 1897,” James Whitcomb Riley Papers.

<sup>41</sup> Bertha K. Ehrmann, “Reminisces of Max Ehrmann,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 46, no. 3 (Sept. 1950): 250.

<sup>42</sup> Arthur W. Shumaker, *A History of Indiana Literature* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1962), 217.

prejudice. Members experimented with various forms of writing, and even Ridpath wrote poetry, some of which he published in issues of *The Arena*. Ridpath's membership in the Western Association of Writers establishes his peers as respectable writers in their own right and his motivation to build a legacy as a well-known public intellectual rather than strictly as an historian.

Shumaker's 1962 study of the "Golden Age" of Indiana literature established criteria for determining who should be considered a Hoosier writer. An Indiana writer is "a person born in Indiana who spent all or most of his life in the state," "a person not born in Indiana who spent all or most of his life in the state," "a writer not born in Indiana who spent a few years here which were very productive in his literary career," or "a person whose Indiana background influenced strongly his later writing."<sup>43</sup> Based on these generous criteria, Ridpath certainly qualifies as a Hoosier writer. Unfortunately Shumaker did not include non-fiction writers among his study and as a result Ridpath was excluded from his selections. Although he acknowledged "the twenty year history of this group [the Western Association of Writers] is intimately connected with the spirit which produced the Golden Age of Indiana literature," Shumaker omitted Ridpath from his analysis of the period and interpreted him strictly as a historian.<sup>44</sup> This decision slighted Ridpath's diverse writing and political interests even though his involvement in the association placed him among the literary luminaries of this generation. Membership in an organization that included a diverse, talented pool of individuals also illustrates Ridpath's importance as an individual thinker among writers and academics of his time.

---

<sup>43</sup> Shumaker, *A History of Indiana Literature*, 14.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-18.

The most significant context for Ridpath's work was the focus he placed on education. Ridpath viewed the common man as needing a lesson in civics, in order to correct the ills that ailed society. To facilitate the growing industrial economy, the nation's populace needed more and more education about democracy because a traditional agricultural education in a one-room school house was insufficient. For historians and public intellectuals, popular histories were a means of civic education. The growing desire and need for education provided a market for subscription histories, books that were sold at a relatively low price in multiple volumes across the country in the nation's classrooms and homes. By writing first for students, Ridpath's volumes were well suited for this general audience. In Indiana, the enrollment of children in schools between the ages of five and eighteen was less than fifty percent in 1863 but grew to more than eighty percent by 1880.<sup>45</sup> As more children attended school adults were also engaged in obtaining further education with the growth of libraries and Sunday schools.<sup>46</sup> An age in which a much greater focus was placed on the education of common people provided Ridpath a market for his work in homes, schools and libraries.

Although the bulk of Ridpath's published work were popular histories, as a public intellectual he was also concerned with the illiteracy of Americans and the types of writing the American populace consumed. In an unpublished paper, "Our Best Literature: Is it Read?" Ridpath argued that unfortunately, lower brow work, such as periodical literature, flourished while high class fiction and poetry went unread.<sup>47</sup> Ridpath estimated that half of the nation's people were readers, but "perhaps one man in five has read one book" in the past year.<sup>48</sup> Ridpath

---

<sup>45</sup> Madison, *The Indiana Way: A State History*, 180.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>47</sup> Ridpath, "Our Best Literature: Is it Read?," Undated and Unpublished. Ridpath Collection. Although this particular piece was not dated and remained unpublished, Ridpath's reference to the commercial success of Ulysses S. Grant's memoirs indicates it was written after they were published in 1885.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

praised the advent of reading clubs and literature groups that sprung up throughout the nation and suggested families ought to provide healthy literature for their children.<sup>49</sup> In making this argument, Ridpath's experience as a youth emerged as did his dedication to the education of ordinary people. Even in his pessimistic observation that the best literature of the nation was not read, Ridpath wrote encouragingly, "the time may speedily come when our best literature will not be as it is now is the least known but will assume its true proportions."<sup>50</sup> Through the proper education of the nation's youth, Ridpath believed it was possible to raise the intellectual engagement of the nation's people.

Ridpath adamantly believed that through secular, civic education, the national intellectual culture could be revitalized. In an analysis of the diversity of the population of the city of Chicago Ridpath noted that "It is right here that the struggle is to be waged. There is just one safe and sure ground of an American policy, and that is the universal, compulsory, secular, primary education of the people."<sup>51</sup> Ridpath contended that education ought to be free of the influence of Protestants or Catholics, and as a result Chicago's foreign populations "will evolve in the next generation into a magnificent Americanism."<sup>52</sup> By educating Americans about their nation's history Ridpath sought to reconcile his audiences to changes occurring throughout the country in a way that could prepare the common people for their role in the evolving nation. In his view education served as a remedy for those feeling the pressures of growing industrialization, urban development, and greater ethnic diversity.

Ridpath believed his popular histories filled the void most Americans experienced in terms of civic education. In *A Popular History of the United States*, Ridpath claimed that "the

---

<sup>49</sup> <sup>49</sup> Ridpath, "Our Best Literature: Is it Read?," 17.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>51</sup> Ridpath, "The Mixed Populations of Chicago," 493.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

universal secular education of the people” was necessary in order to preserve American democracy.<sup>53</sup> Ridpath argued that civic education was necessary because of the condition of the state itself, noting “monarchies govern their subjects by authority and precedent; republics by right reason and free will.”<sup>54</sup> For Ridpath civic knowledge was more important than wealth. He noted that “power, of whatsoever kind, in its application is to be subordinated to the controlling influence of knowledge.”<sup>55</sup> For the aspiring middle class, Ridpath observed that knowledge was necessary to facilitate achievement, for “knowledge has made men free, wealth has made them great.”<sup>56</sup> Historians like Ridpath believed civic education as an important motivation for writing but they also believed the public desired to understand history.<sup>57</sup> As an historian Ridpath was motivated to inform the reading public and also advance the notion that an educated people were critical for the development of the nation.

As a public intellectual, Ridpath was not alone in his desire to write in order to educate his audiences about civics and citizenship. A more respected academic, Frederick Jackson Turner harbored similar views about the purpose of writing history. In Turner’s 1891 essay, “The Significance of History,” Turner wrote of history’s “most practical utility to us, as public school teachers, is its service in fostering good citizenship.”<sup>58</sup> Both academics and popular historians believed secular education was necessary, and Turner suggested “Historical study has for its end to let the community see itself in the light of the past, to give it new thoughts and feelings, new

---

<sup>53</sup> Ridpath, *A Popular History of the United States of America From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day*, 638.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> John Clark Ridpath, “The Relation of Wealth to Knowledge Manuscript (Undated),” Ridpath Collection.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> John Clark Ridpath, *Cyclopedia of Universal History, Vol. II* (Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers Publishing Company, 1885), 5.

<sup>58</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of History” (1891), *The Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1938), 65.

aspirations and energies. Thoughts and feelings flow into deeds. Here is the motive power that lies behind institutions.”<sup>59</sup>

In order to make these citizenship lessons accessible, public intellectuals were forced to contend with the challenge of mediating between creating pride for country and the critical assessment of history. By evaluating the civilization of the United States, nineteenth century geographies and histories were valuable for both critiquing the nation itself while celebrating its unique character. Instead of presenting an argument that historians possessed academic responsibility alone, Turner, like Ridpath, believed there was a higher purpose of civic education and socialization to consider when writing for popular audiences. As a result it is unlikely Ridpath and Turner saw these lines being crossed when they wrote for popular audiences.

To reach readers and provide them with these citizenship lessons, writers needed to create a dialogue between the authoritative texts and their audiences. In *A Popular History of the United States*, Ridpath wrote, “I surrender the book, thus undertaken and completed, to You- for whom it is intended.”<sup>60</sup> Ridpath intended for his audience to feel connected with the text, and commitments to the people were common in popular histories and underscored the author’s motivations for writing.<sup>61</sup> Popular history sought to reinvent the way in which history lessons were taught to the masses, now accessible to millions through books rather than strictly limited to those with access to archives, artifacts, or belonging to local historical societies.<sup>62</sup> As he wrote, Ridpath concerned himself with the readership of historical texts. Ridpath once observed that few people read historical works, and “most persons have enough to do they think to manage

---

<sup>59</sup> Turner, “The Significance of History,” 67.

<sup>60</sup> Ridpath, *A Popular History of the United States of America From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day*, iv.

<sup>61</sup> Pfützer, *Popular History and the Literary Marketplace, 1840-1920*, 5.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

the present and provide for the future without delving into the past.”<sup>63</sup> Ridpath was motivated as a result to encourage and engage readers in the greater volume of material that was suddenly available to those who had once lacked access to historical knowledge.

The mass market economy was partially responsible for the success of the distribution of popular histories. Industrialization and the rise of inexpensive printing made it possible for more books to be printed, audiences to grow, and “imagined communities” of readers having a shared experience to form.<sup>64</sup> These historical volumes were sold by subscription, at a cost between five and twelve dollars each.<sup>65</sup> Because the cost of the books was often too high for individuals to own, copies tended to be shared, as texts were passed around among families or placed in libraries.<sup>66</sup> Access to these books did not guarantee they were read by their intended audiences, but it would have been rare to invest in them without anyone reading them. Books such as subscription texts and those written by popular authors such as Ulysses S. Grant and Mark Twain were criticized by elites as being of lower quality than those produced by established publishers, “clinging to a conservative vision of publishing as an elevated, gentlemanly affair, the leading firms stood apart from the expanding mass market cultivated by the purveyors of cheap books and the entrepreneurs of popular journalism.”<sup>67</sup> The emerging mass consumption and the frustration of elites with the availability and quality of texts indicates publishing was no longer dominated by the elites, and that more and more people of lower classes obtained published materials and works, such as the histories written by Ridpath. The particular publisher that Ridpath utilized most frequently, Jones Brothers and Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio, fit this description

---

<sup>63</sup> Ridpath, “Our Best Literature: Is it Read?,” Undated and Unpublished. Ridpath Collection.

<sup>64</sup> Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, 100.

<sup>65</sup> Smith, “A Plea for a New Appreciation of Popular History: John Clark Ridpath, a Case Study,” 213.

<sup>66</sup> Pfitzer, *Popular History and the Literary Marketplace, 1840-1920*, 8.

<sup>67</sup> Robert A. Gross, “Building a National Literature: The United States 1800-1890,” in *A Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 326.

as a regional rather than a national publishing house. Larger New York and Philadelphia based publishers often produced the later editions.

It is also reasonable that many purchased popular histories were never read and instead appreciated merely for their artistic value. Popular histories were collected as a type of artwork because their outward appearance was pleasing to the eye, and the pictures and graphics within them were seen as inherently valuable for their aesthetic rather than historical value.<sup>68</sup> Ridpath's large and multivolume works were filled with illustrations, and *A Popular History of the United States* included a three page table of contents dedicated to images and illustrations alone. Individuals and families that collected these books would have been among the wealthier of Ridpath's readers in the emerging bourgeoisie class, but their relatively affordable cost as an investment in education did not prohibit working class people from owning them. Considering the tremendous publication numbers of various texts, including *A Popular History of the United States*, a market for these texts clearly existed and was effectively exploited by publishers who promoted their consumption.

The marketing of popular histories by publishing companies relied on the notion that continued development of the nation was predicated on a need for an understanding of history, and that subscription volumes such as Ridpath's could make it possible for common people to obtain the necessary citizenship lessons to preserve the democracy. In an advertisement for the 1887 reprint of Ridpath's *A Popular History of the United States*, the pamphlet claimed "knowledge of the past is well-nigh indispensable to the proper discharge of those duties which are imposed by our republican form of government. To be ignorant of our career as a people is to be disqualified for the high responsibilities which every American must bear. To be thoroughly

---

<sup>68</sup> Pfitzer, *Popular History and the Literary Marketplace, 1840-1920*, 6.



informed respecting the development of our national life is of itself a complete education in the duties of citizenship.”<sup>69</sup> The emphasis of advertisements on the character of popular histories as a means of civic education indicates this purpose was at the forefront of publishers’ minds as a reason for producing these works. “No American home,” it continued, “however obscure and humble, can afford to be without some readable, authentic and patriotic narrative of the struggles and triumphs of that land whose name has become, in all the world, the synonym of liberty.”<sup>70</sup> Purchasing and reading popular histories became a means of affirming one’s commitment to American ideals and values. This strategy was clearly successful and the same pamphlet noted that in the span of a decade *A Popular History of the United States* had sold more than 260,000 copies.<sup>71</sup> This tactic was used well into the twentieth century following Ridpath’s death with a plea from one publisher that suggested,

There is need today for intelligent, thoughtful consideration of the great questions that crowd upon us for attention and solution...Ridpath should be in your home. It is a work you will value as long as you live and read over and over again. It will increase your fund of knowledge, improve your power of conversation, enable you to intelligently discuss the questions of the day; it will improve your mentality and ennoble your character.”<sup>72</sup>

These advertisements demonstrate that as popular historians wrote for the purpose of providing the citizenry with a civics lesson, the works were marketed to potential readers by publishers as a means of achieving personal goals such as intelligence and improved character. The fact that works such as Ridpath’s served a dual purpose and were used both in the classroom as a textbook and in the home as a socializing medium indicates the influence of these books. The success of marketing and sales tactics in turn led to the tremendous sales numbers of multi-volume histories and simultaneously fed the desire for historians to produce them.

---

<sup>69</sup> “Advertisement for Ridpath’s History of the United States,” Ridpath Collection.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

Popular historians such as John Clark Ridpath often avoided challenging academic questions in their work. Ridpath wrote originally as a professor in a style based on classroom lectures, but did not fully embrace many of the currents that brought about the rise of professional, empirical history. However, Ridpath remained motivated throughout his career to write “objective” narratives and worked to reconcile his desire to write for the common man with his intention to maintain academic standards. To do so, Ridpath simplified his work so that it could be understood by ordinary people. In the Preface of *A Popular History of the United States*, Ridpath described the history as “presented in the form of an abridged narrative,” that indicated he made specific editorial choices throughout the book to provide readers with only the necessary history. Ridpath also described his responsibility, “to popularize the subject without losing sight of the dignity and importance of the historian’s office.”<sup>73</sup> There is an obvious inference made by Ridpath and other public intellectuals of the time that “the people” needed an intermediary to help condense and package history so that it could be applicable for readers. Though Ridpath may have failed to meet today’s contemporary academic standards for the discipline, his desire to write for readers in the most objective manner possible is palpable in his work.

Although he was once critical of popular history, Ridpath embraced its principles in a speech at DePauw University for Arbor Day on May 2, 1890. In his remarks, Ridpath declared Americans should be more concerned about the preservation of local history and asserted that ‘there has never been in the world a civilized people so utterly indifferent to its reputation with posterity as are we of the United States.’<sup>74</sup> Ridpath was critical of what he perceived as negligence towards the preservation of history on the part of common people in communities

---

<sup>73</sup> Ridpath, *Cyclopedia of Universal History*, Vol. I, 6.

<sup>74</sup> “Arbor Day at DePauw,” *The Greencastle Daily Sun*, May 2, 1890, p. 1.

such as Greencastle, and it is likely that considering his popularity as a historian at the time, Ridpath viewed his work as filling this void. Ridpath urged that history be preserved through statues of great men, inscriptions for posterity of all records, as well as commemorative pillars and arches in addition to the planting of memorial trees.<sup>75</sup> For Ridpath, this argument suggested that the people needed a greater appreciation of civics and as a result ought to celebrate its elites. Although he is promoting local preservation of history within a specific community, Ridpath argued “local annals are the lowest order of historical writings. The moment we begin to look at events from a higher plane and under a broader generalization, the more we perceive the event to dwindle.”<sup>76</sup> Local history is important to preserve, but for Ridpath local history was far less significant than the larger narrative, the general history of a nation as a whole, which he wrote as an historian. Popular histories contributed to a growing sense of standardization of national American culture in which printing became more of a national rather than a local enterprise which “eroded the position of country editors as mediators between small towns and the wider world. It turned once-proud printers with dreams of owning their own presses into a permanent industrial working class. It converted the civic organs of the early republic into sales bureaus for consumer culture.”<sup>77</sup> Therefore, the nature of popular histories and their affect on publishing in the nineteenth century was similar to the way in which Ridpath understood the national historical narrative as privileged over local narratives.

Ridpath’s address emphasized the importance of writing histories and the preservation of the past by individuals. In his remarks, Ridpath reaffirmed the proposition that history itself was inherently valuable for individuals, communities, and the nation. Consequentially, Ridpath’s

---

<sup>75</sup> “Arbor Day at DePauw,” *The Greencastle Daily Sun*, May 2, 1890, p. 1.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Gross, “Building a National Literature: The United States 1800-1890,” 326-327.

work must be viewed as a means of providing education and interpretations of relevant historical events for readers. Although Ridpath worked to write objectively and at the same time to provide history suitable for civic education, these desires were complementary rather than in competition. As Ridpath's histories demonstrate, he struggled to reconcile his origins as an early academic in the field of history with his role as a popularizer of the nation's history and as a public intellectual.

### Chapter 3: Ridpath the Historian

John Clark Ridpath's historical writing included textbooks and popular histories, multi-volume historical works, biographies, and philosophical pieces about the discipline of history. These writings established Ridpath as a complex thinker, deeply engaged in academic questions, yet simultaneously consumed by the desire to write usable historical narratives for popular audiences. To bridge the gap between scholarly and popular history, Ridpath adapted conventions of academic historical writing for the purpose of educating popular audiences. Ridpath believed in the necessity of empiricism, subscribed to the ideology Social Darwinism, and considered the historical agency of individuals and societies in his attempts to produce quality histories for the reading public. Although Ridpath was influenced by academic principles, his deviation from them indicates he was motivated primarily to be a public intellectual who informed Americans about their history as opposed to an academic producing original scholarly work. As a writer of histories, Ridpath epitomized the transformation of the historical discipline in the late nineteenth century and exemplified challenges many popular writers faced as they attempted to legitimize their work within new academic principles.

Ridpath considered the importance of envisioning history as an empirical science and pursuit of objective truth as an end. Throughout his life, Ridpath discussed aspects of the historical discipline. As a student in 1863, Ridpath gave his valedictorian address on the topic of "The Philosophy of History," as a member of the Western Association of Writers he delivered philosophical orations and essays, and published similar pieces in *The Arena*. In an analysis of the discipline written in 1897, Ridpath argued that for a discipline to be a science it must have facts along with the possibility for these facts to be interpreted objectively. Practitioners of

history should seek to make predictions and prophesize about the future in relation to these facts and their interpretations. Using these criteria, Ridpath pointed out that chemistry, geology and astronomy were scientific, although because of its unpredictable nature meteorology was not.<sup>1</sup>

Ridpath analyzed the nature of history against these scientific parameters in an attempt to come to an understanding of the discipline and its possibilities. Mediating between an academic approach and a desire to appeal to the common man, Ridpath defined history as “the movement of the human race interpreted...the facts and events of human life arranged on the lines of the causes that produce them. It is a record of the thoughts and deeds and works of the human race considered as a rational product under the reign of law.”<sup>2</sup> Ridpath argued for the necessity of the “scientific spirit of the nineteenth century which has demanded, at the hands of the historian, an additional guaranty for the accuracy of his work.”<sup>3</sup> To make his histories applicable for common people, Ridpath believed his work had to be grounded in facts his readers could use and understand.

In the article, “Is History a Science?” Ridpath argued that in many ways, history reflected the qualities of a science and since “history is more richly supplied with fact than is any other field of human knowledge,” these facts constituted the basis for history as a science.<sup>4</sup> While literal “facts” about history are not the same as scientific facts about mathematics or geology, for Ridpath this was the most convincing aspect of the discipline that affirmed it as a science. Ridpath conceded, however, that historians encountered significant difficulty in the interpretation and classification of these facts, and history, like many other disciplines, is not constant and,

---

<sup>1</sup> John Clark Ridpath, “Is History a Science?” *The Arena* (November 1897): 688-690, 693.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 694.

<sup>3</sup> Ridpath, *Cyclopedia of Universal History*, Vol. I, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Ridpath, “Is History a Science?,” 695.

therefore, impossible to predict.<sup>5</sup> With this understanding, Ridpath concluded that “though history may not yet be truly called a science, still the tendency is favorable and the outlook auspicious for the establishment of such a science, and for its wide cultivation among the civilized peoples.”<sup>6</sup> Ridpath believed history could become scientific, and, consequentially, he subscribed to notions of scholarly objectivity in his work, although this search for objectivity necessitated natural laws to interpret the movement of the human race through the ages.

Ridpath’s ideas reflected an important transformation in the discipline of history. Practicing “historians” had no formal training in any “discipline” for centuries and were considered storytellers and mythmakers instead of objective authorities on historical subjects. Influenced by Enlightenment principles of empiricism, historians increasingly brought greater scientific credibility to the discipline. Ridpath’s writings were influenced by the emergence of a new emphasis on objectivity and utilized “natural laws” about man and society to write compelling meta-narratives that connected history to his audiences.

The notion that history could be grounded in absolute truth emerged from ideas about science articulated by philosophers in the eighteenth century. Immanuel Kant, among others, expressed the notion that “the goal in every area of inquiry became the objective search for general principles; all knowledge could be systematized.”<sup>7</sup> Consequentially, the organization of facts and subsequent application of universal historical principles became a goal for compilers and writers of history during this era. Through such principles it was hoped more significant generalizations about humanity could be made and applied to contemporary circumstances. Philosopher David Hume observed that “mankind are so much the same, in all times and places,

---

<sup>5</sup> Ridpath, “Is History a Science?,” 696-697.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 703.

<sup>7</sup> Immanuel Kant, quoted in Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, 36.

that history informs of nothing new or strange in this particular.”<sup>8</sup> Kant and Hume believed historical knowledge became more useful as it was applied to universal situations of the human condition. As Enlightenment thought, the relationship between history and empiricism also divorced knowledge from religious influence reflecting a more secular society.<sup>9</sup> Despite his Methodist background and education, Ridpath’s commitment to secular education placed him in the company of those who argued passionately for an Enlightenment vision of historical knowledge.

Leopold von Ranke, a German historian, was instrumental in the process of transforming the historical discipline and establishing guidelines for historical inquiry that remain influential two centuries later. Ranke believed it was necessary to experiment with data before a discipline could be considered empirical. He developed techniques for dissecting of historical documents and utilizing primary sources as evidence, creating a document laboratory for historians. To emphasize discussion and collaboration of historians in their work, he utilized the German seminar system as a means for creating academic discourse.<sup>10</sup> Ranke believed historians should reject fictional representations of history by producing “scientific” and “objective” accounts based in documentary research and objective analysis, presented and critiqued by fellow historians.<sup>11</sup> Ranke was “determined to see every epoch in its own terms (as opposed to the terms dictated by his [i.e. the historian’s] epoch)” and viewed history as a series of objective occurrences while refraining from passing moral judgment.<sup>12</sup> Academics envisioned possibilities of writing histories based only on empirical “facts” and refraining from moral judgments or

---

<sup>8</sup> David Hume, quoted in John H. Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 51.

<sup>9</sup> Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, 41.

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

<sup>11</sup> Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*, 53.

<sup>12</sup> Judy Jones and William Wilson, *An Incomplete Education*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 2006), 574.



showing favor to specific persons or views. It became possible to conceive of history as freed from biases and opinion and provide an honest and accurate accounting of events.

This proved problematic, however, and even Ranke's work fell short of these new idealized academic expectations.<sup>13</sup> Ranke "promoted a historiography grounded on the fundamental principle that the course of history revealed God's work," and often failed to separate the secular from the sacred.<sup>14</sup> Considering Ranke's own personal challenges with questions of history and empiricism, it is unsurprising historians such as Ridpath also struggled with this. Regardless, a commitment to the possibility of achieving objective truth as an historian and writer became a foundational view for Ridpath as the discipline moved towards professionalization and evidence based narratives in the late nineteenth century.

To understand how Ridpath responded to calls for greater scientific foundations of history, it is necessary to establish the principles that made up the foundation of understanding history as a science during the end of the nineteenth century. The core tenets of scientific, empirical history at the turn of the century were understood to be "the rigorous examination and knowledge of historical evidence, verified by references; impartial research, devoid of *a priori* beliefs and prejudices; and an inductive method of reasoning, from the particular to the general."<sup>15</sup> Historians were expected to recognize the past existed independently of an individual's mind and to "represent the past objectively and accurately."<sup>16</sup> In order to ensure such objectivity, it was essential to follow the scientific method of the nineteenth century which suggested "science must be rigidly factual and empirical, shunning hypothesis; the scientific venture was scrupulously neutral on larger questions of end and meaning; and, if systematically

---

<sup>13</sup> Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, 74.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream*, (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 27.

<sup>15</sup> Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, *The Houses of History*, (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

pursued, it might ultimately produce a comprehensive, “definitive” history.<sup>17</sup> The notion that the pursuit of objective history could lead to the assembling of a complete understanding of human knowledge was an especially powerful motivator for historians, and created a sufficient foundation for a civics lesson they intended to share with the American people. The idea of empiricism was not universally understood, however. Nineteenth century historians were faced with the challenge of interpreting the language of science and applying it in different ways to their work. To some, empiricism and science meant avoiding partisanship; for others it meant concentrating on answering questions about events rather than relying on narrative; while some believed it meant a greater focus on quantitative work.<sup>18</sup> Although the idea that history should be practiced similarly to the sciences became a widely accepted, writers of history were far from unanimous on specific principles.

Ridpath’s scholarship reflected his desire to produce objective and empirical history, but in many ways his efforts fell short of this ideal, as manifest in the 1878 edition of *A Popular History of the United States* and the 1897 edition of *Ridpath’s History of the United States*. Because *A Popular History of the United States* was a textbook, it is a lengthy study of the nation’s history and is presented in a strictly chronological fashion. Topics, events and individuals are presented as a list of occurrences without analysis. Ridpath’s presentation in this particular text suggests the facts speak for themselves. This form of presentation lends itself to Ranke’s idea of an emphasis on chronology. Throughout the book, Ridpath utilized chronological pull-out charts which detailed events and important individuals, placing them in the context of world history. The chart below appeared in Ridpath’s discussion of the Civil War-

---

<sup>17</sup> Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 37.

<sup>18</sup> Hofstadter, *The Progressive Historians*, 37.

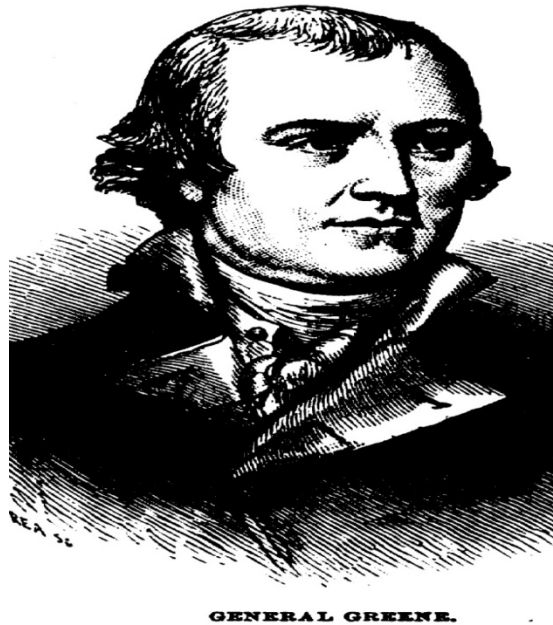
era. These charts demonstrate Ridpath's commitment to facts over interpretation, although charts do not appear in *Ridpath's History of the United States*.

1857	61	65	69	73	77	1880
<p><b>Frederick William IV.</b></p> <p>60. Treaty of Peace between China and England.</p>	<p>67. War between Prussia and Austria.</p> <p>67. Hanover absorbed by Prussia.</p> <p>68. Formation of a North German Confederation.</p>	<p>72. King William proclaimed Emperor.</p> <p>71. Beginning of the Franco-Prussian War.</p>	<p>73. The Irish University Bill defeated.</p> <p>71. Overthrow of the Gladstone ministry.</p> <p>74. Disraeli, Prime Minister.</p>	<p>75. The Credit Mobilier investigation.</p> <p>75. General George G. Meade died, aged 57.</p> <p>75. Great fire in Boston.</p> <p>75. Great financial crisis.</p>	<p>76. Charles Sumner died, aged 63.</p> <p>76. Colorado admitted into the Union.</p> <p>76. Centennial Celebration at Buffalo.</p>	<p><b>CHART VI.</b></p> <p><b>NATIONAL PERIOD — THIRD SECTION.</b></p> <p><b>A. D. 1857 — 1877.</b></p>
<p><b>Napoleon III.</b></p> <p>61. William I.</p> <p>62. Death of Prince Albert, the Consort.</p> <p>68. Mutiny in the East India army.</p>	<p>63. Fenian troubles in Ireland.</p> <p>66. The Atlantic Cable laid.</p> <p>68. Passage of the Reform Bill.</p> <p>71. Disestablishment of the Irish Church.</p> <p>71. Bill for the repeal of the Corn Laws.</p> <p>72. Population of the United Kingdom, 31,483,480.</p>	<p><b>ABRAHAM LINCOLN</b>, President.</p> <p><b>Hannibal Hamlin</b>, Vice-President.</p> <p>61. The "Star of the West" wrecked upon the rocks of Fort Sumner.</p> <p>61. The President calls for 75,000 volunteers.</p> <p>61. The Confederate Congress at Montgomery.</p> <p>61. The "Star of the West" wrecked upon the rocks of Fort Sumner.</p> <p>62. <b>Mill Spring</b>.</p> <p>62. Mason and Sibley captured.</p> <p>62. <b>Fort Donelson</b> captured.</p> <p>62. <b>Fort Mifflin</b> captured.</p> <p>62. <b>Fort Fisher</b> captured.</p> <p>62. <b>Seven Days' battles</b>.</p> <p>62. <b>Antietam</b>.</p> <p>62. Walker's filibustering missions defeated.</p> <p>62. The great campaign of General Sherman and Senator Douglas.</p> <p>62. Troubles with Paraguay.</p> <p>62. Washington Irving died, aged 76.</p> <p>62. The Japanese Commission in the United States.</p> <p>62. Disruption of the Democratic Party at Charleston.</p> <p>62. Population, 31,483,221.</p> <p>62. Defeat of the Democratic Party.</p> <p>62. South Carolina secedes.</p>	<p><b>ULYSSES S. GRANT</b>, President.</p> <p><b>Schuyler Colfax</b>, Vice-President.</p> <p>69. Edwin S. Stanton died, aged 53.</p> <p>70. The Filibuster Amendment adopted.</p> <p>70. Admiral Farragut died, aged 60.</p> <p>70. Virginia, Mississippi, and Texas re-admitted into the Union.</p> <p>70. Population, 38,000,771.</p> <p>70. Tennessee re-admitted into the Union.</p> <p>67. Purchase of Alaska.</p> <p>68. Impeachment of President Johnson.</p> <p>68. The Fifteenth Amendment adopted.</p> <p>68. Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina re-admitted into the Union.</p> <p>71. Burning of Chicago.</p> <p>71. Great monetary panic in New York City.</p> <p>72. <b>The Alabama Claims</b> settled.</p> <p>72. William H. Seward died, aged 71.</p> <p>72. <b>GRAND</b> re-elected.</p> <p><b>Henry Wilson</b>, Vice-President.</p> <p>Died November 22, 1875.</p> <p>73. Horace Greaser died, aged 41.</p> <p>73. General George G. Meade died, aged 57.</p> <p>73. Great fire in Boston.</p> <p>73. Boundary dispute between the United States and Great Britain settled.</p> <p><b>Medoc War.</b></p> <p>73. The Credit Mobilier investigation.</p> <p>73. General George G. Meade died, aged 57.</p> <p>73. Great financial crisis.</p> <p>73. Charles Sumner died, aged 63.</p> <p>73. Colorado admitted into the Union.</p> <p>73. Centennial Celebration at Buffalo.</p>	<p><b>RUTHERFORD B. HAYES</b>, President.</p> <p><b>William A. Wheeler</b>, Vice-President.</p> <p>76. <b>The Sioux War.</b></p> <p>76. The Carter Massacre.</p> <p>77. The disputed Presidency is settled by a Joint High Commission.</p>	<p>62. French invasion of Mexico.</p> <p>64. <b>Maximilian</b> elected Emperor.</p> <p>67. The French army withdrawn.</p> <p>67. <b>Maximilian</b> executed at Querétaro.</p>	

A pull-out chronology chart from Ridpath's *A Popular History of the United States* (1878)<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Ridpath, *A Popular History of the United States of America From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day*.

Ridpath used images in both books, but the presentation is different. In the 1878 text, images played a supplemental role and were relatively small in size. For instance, in the image below, Ridpath presents a portrait style image of General Nathanael Greene in *A Popular History of the United States*.



General Nathanael Greene as depicted in *A Popular History of the United States* (1878)<sup>20</sup>

In Ridpath's 1897 book, however, images often dominate entire pages and play a role in the presentation of facts. These images become part of Ridpath's narrative. Consider how Ridpath depicted Greene's efforts during the Revolutionary War below in *Ridpath's History of the United States*.

---

<sup>20</sup> Ridpath, *A Popular History of the United States of America From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day*, 351.



CHARGE OF THE AMERICANS UNDER GREENE.

Greene's battlefield heroics as depicted in *Ridpath's History of the United States* (1897)<sup>21</sup>

Ridpath does not identify the image or address it in the text, but it tells a story rather than showing a portrait of Greene himself. The image is dramatic and presents the horror of the battlefield and the glory of the American cause. Ridpath understood images in popular histories were important ways of communicating history to the people and making it easily understood and relatable for audiences in a way not intended to tell stories as in *A Popular History of the United States*.

Ridpath made connections between popular and academic history, and, in particular, *The Great Races of Mankind* (1894) demonstrates how Ridpath utilized natural laws as an organizing

<sup>21</sup> John Clark Ridpath, *Ridpath's History of the United States*, (Philadelphia, PA: Historical Publishing Company, 1897), 246.

scheme to make history comprehensible. The series assessed the characteristics of the world's races, their development, and their contributions to the history of the world. R.W. Thompson of Terre Haute praised the "stupendous magnitude" of such a work, "requiring so much research and labor."<sup>22</sup> For Ridpath, the large multiple volume history was one of considerable toil, written over the course of a decade. *The Great Races of Mankind* presented an ethnic history and described the character of each race in hierarchical terms. Scientific theories such as Darwin's theory of evolution lent scientific credibility to his efforts to make distinctions between races. In the preface to the final volume of the work he noted, "The work in this case seems to spring, not from the collocation of visible materials put into form and fashion by the hand, but out of the intellectual and spiritual vision of the mind. The product, if it be true, rises from one's inner self, and partakes of the nature within more intimately and profoundly than does any other result of human activity."<sup>23</sup> Ridpath argued that the work was the product of his own intellect and innate sense, rather than a product of scholarly research or empirical facts. However, this refuted the notion that it reflected Ranke's ideas about empiricism and objectivity. Instead, Ridpath was motivated to make "scientific history" accessible for his popular audience. Ridpath concluded that his work was written with "a clear recognition of what I will call *the objective nature* of the great fact which goes by the name of history," but the division between Ridpath and the practice of academic history remained apparent.<sup>24</sup>

Determining causation in history was important for Ridpath to reach popular audiences. In 1892, Ridpath concluded "the time came when the study of mere facts and events, disconnected and regarded singly and without respect to the laws of their sequence and

---

<sup>22</sup>"Letter to Ridpath from R.W. Thompson, July 5, 1894," Ridpath Collection.

<sup>23</sup> John Clark Ridpath, *Great Races of Mankind, Vol. IV* (Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers Publishing Company, 1893), v.

<sup>24</sup> Ridpath, *Great Races of Mankind, Vol. I.*, v.

evolution, no more could satisfy the demands of reason.”<sup>25</sup> For history to be applicable for the common man it must illuminate patterns between events by drawing connections of causation. Causation bridged the gap between the academy and popular audiences by creating the foundation for what Ridpath described as a new type of history,

The bottom concept of it is that everything is caused and nothing causeless; that every fact of our human drama, whether material or immaterial, simple or complex, ephemeral or eternal, is linked to some antecedent fact or facts as its cause and to ensuing facts as its results.<sup>26</sup>

Although identifying and assessing cause and effect is nearly impossible for historians working with empirical, documentary evidence, the law of universal causation provided a foundation for popular historians such as Ridpath to write usable histories for non-academics. For academic historians the application of science was a means to aid in the writing of objective works, but popular historians’ interest in science was to their desire to write compelling narratives that could be understood and utilized by their audiences.

Ridpath applied causation generously to his historical narratives. In the *Cyclopedia of Universal History* (1885), Ridpath argued it was necessary to consider the causes of events and their relationships to one another as a priority of the historian.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, in the *People’s History of the United States* (1895), Ridpath sought to demonstrate how natural laws were at work in the nation’s history and that history was controlled by cosmic laws.<sup>28</sup> In the book’s preface Ridpath noted his purpose was to develop the story of America, and illustrate “the

---

<sup>25</sup> Ridpath, “The Man in History: An Oration for the Columbian Year,” *Indiana Historical Society Publications* 2, no. 7 (1893): 280.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>27</sup> Ridpath, *Cyclopedia of Universal History*, Vol. II, 5.

<sup>28</sup> Pfitzer, *Popular History and the Literary Marketplace, 1840-1920*, 161-162.

dependency of our larger development upon the Colonial planting.”<sup>29</sup> Ridpath took a teleological approach to the nation’s history and concluded the colonial era was important for the inevitable rise of an independent United States. Although Ridpath acknowledged that “the question of any cause in history is beset with the greatest difficulty,” determining the causation of historical events became a primary concern in the production of his historical volumes in order to write comprehensive and interconnected narratives.<sup>30</sup> Ridpath’s interpretation of events in his histories allowed him to make these causal arguments.

The table of contents, subject headings, and chapters of *A Popular History of the United States* (1878) and *Ridpath’s History of the United States* (1897) are similar, but in some instances the character of the histories differs entirely. One startling example is the story of the vanished colony of Roanoke, which is portrayed differently in both books. In *A Popular History of the United States* Ridpath wrote that for the colonists of Roanoke, “their fate has never been ascertained,” although he doubted the settlers joined the Indians. In this version of the story Ridpath did not place blame on either party and faults Governor John White, who returned to England to secure additional supplies for the colony rather than help settlers to build houses and plant.<sup>31</sup> *Ridpath’s History of the United States* was more critical of Native Americans. He acknowledged the cupidity and injustice on the part of whites to open hostilities with Native Americans, but described the English as having been “massacred” by the Indians. Ridpath’s historical writing did not stop with that unfounded accusation and the text itself includes a graphic image of the Indians committing a massacre of the colony’s settlers.<sup>32</sup> These images were repurposed illustrations, sketches, engravings and portraits selected by the publisher, but

---

<sup>29</sup> John Clark Ridpath, *People’s History of the United States* (Philadelphia, PA: Historical Publishing Company, 1895), 20.

<sup>30</sup> Ridpath, “Is History a Science?,” 700.

<sup>31</sup> Ridpath, *A Popular History of the United States of America From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day*, 83.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-78.



they have a profound impact on the meaning of the text.<sup>33</sup> It is startling how different Ridpath's two histories portrayed this event. In *A Popular History of the United States* Ridpath erred on the side of caution by acknowledging tension in the relationship between settlers and Native Americans, but he did not pass judgment against either side. In the 1897 text, Ridpath identified the Indians as perpetrators in spite of no documentary evidence. This is an example of how the texts differ significantly in both their presentation and Ridpath's interpretation of events.

Another example of an interpretive difference in Ridpath's histories appeared in the author's discussion of Reconstruction following the Civil War. In 1878 Ridpath described the difficulties of affairs during Andrew Johnson's Presidency by explaining the divisiveness over policy issues.<sup>34</sup> By contrast, in 1897 Ridpath took Johnson to task directly and wrote, "it began to appear that Johnson had gone over to the Confederate party" and "Congress abandoned him and with him the milder principles of reconciliation which Lincoln had professed."<sup>35</sup> The difference between these two versions of Reconstruction history is striking. First in *Ridpath's History of the United States*, the author took a strong partisan tone that faulted Johnson for post-war policy failures. At the same time, Ridpath speculated on unknown reconciliation views of Lincoln and posited Johnson violated Lincoln's superior principles. Modifications Ridpath made to his histories between 1878 and 1897 communicated a specific narrative for his readers and focused on interpretation, rather than leaving it up to readers to make judgments. This shift also bucked emerging historiography on Reconstruction, which viewed Johnson more favorably. Ridpath's position indicates he was not afraid to oppose the academy, and his writing also indicates he believed the general reading public was less capable of comprehending historic

---

<sup>33</sup> Ridpath, *A Popular History of the United States of America From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day* 17.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 549-550.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-78.

material than academic audiences he had written for earlier in his career. When reading the 1897 popular history, Ridpath's readers received an understanding of history through cause and effect designed to influence readers to hold specific beliefs.

In his reflections on historiography in *The Landscape of History*, John Lewis Gaddis addressed historians' attempts to rationalize and simplify causes of historical events and circumstances. Gaddis noted that while oversimplification of causes is necessary for social scientists, "it isn't to historians, for whom multiple causation is the only feasible basis for explanation, which is in turn (most of the time at least) the only thing they think it feasible to try to do."<sup>36</sup> Attempts by historians such as Ridpath to explain historical occurrences simply was short sighted and more closely aligned with practices of social scientists. As Gaddis noted, "How, if everything depends upon everything else, can we ever know the cause of anything?"<sup>37</sup> For Gaddis, using natural laws to explain events by scientific means is a complicated enterprise that historians are ill suited to perform. As a result, Gaddis would conclude that Ridpath's efforts were misguided. Contemporary academic historians, such as Frederick Jackson Turner, engaged in similar pursuits by arguing the exceptional nature of Americans could explain historical events. Regardless, if Ridpath is evaluated as an historian, his efforts to rely extensively on causation are questionable at best. However, as a public intellectual who worked to make the nation's history applicable for ordinary readers, the application of causation served his purposes.

George Bancroft, Frederick Jackson Turner, and Woodrow Wilson, who have been viewed more favorably than Ridpath for their efforts, also faced the transformation of the discipline. George Bancroft emphasized the importance of divinely ordained laws and the

---

<sup>36</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 105.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

nation's institutions as durable entities.<sup>38</sup> Bancroft was a partisan historian unafraid of passing moral judgment whose work was respected and widely read. Bancroft also directly influenced Ridpath's work. Despite failure to adhere to academic principles in much of his work, Bancroft concerned himself with historical facts and sought to distinguish between fact and fiction.<sup>39</sup> In 1878 Bancroft corresponded with Ridpath while Ridpath was engaged in producing a history of the Eastern or Turko-Russian War. Bancroft urged Ridpath to focus on assembling facts and remain objective in his writing and to utilize only accurate primary sources. "Gather all the facts you can with reference to the War," Bancroft wrote, "before you begin to put them in the order in which they will remain," to emphasize establishing the appropriate chronology of the war. Bancroft encouraged Ridpath to make narrative choices that would engage the reader, "Enliven your work at time by interesting anecdotes. For the mind of the reader must be rested sometimes by deviation from the regular channel of flowing facts or general events, into the interesting way of specific or individual events." He also cautioned and encouraged him to wait until the end of the war to publish his work, stressed the utilization of academic sources and encouraged him to "not depend too much on newspapers, for you know the truthfulness of their statements is not always to be relied upon."<sup>40</sup> Both historians considered contemporary issues facing the profession in their writing, and while Bancroft was far from prodigious in his use of evidence, this guidance makes clear that both he and Ridpath were committed to fact based, objective histories.

Frederick Jackson Turner, one of the discipline's emerging stars at the end of the nineteenth century, engaged in similar struggles. Turner's "The Significance of the Frontier in

---

<sup>38</sup> Lilian Handlin, "Bancroft, George." *American National Biography Online*, <http://www.anb.org/articles/14/14-00034.html>.

<sup>39</sup> Hoffer, *Past Imperfect*, 22.

<sup>40</sup> "George Bancroft Letter to Ridpath, March 10, 1878," Ridpath Collection.

American History” (1893) suggested westward expansion had driven American history, and argued there was something exceptional about Americans whose character had been shaped by continuous access to the frontier. Turner attempted to connect the nation’s history to its ordinary people and one historian noted that he “anthropomorphized the whole nation by converting it into a single individual- not even an individual really, but a type- standing in for the country as a whole.”<sup>41</sup> In his writings Turner was more concerned with the idea of social and economic history than the nature of the discipline as empirical or scientific, and, like Ridpath and other historians and public intellectuals, and found himself navigating between academic principles and popular histories. Turner believed it was necessary to study the institutions that had made the nation in order to understand its history, not unlike a modern sociologist.<sup>42</sup> Turner mediated the emerging desire for scientific, objective history by seeking a new American narrative that focused on social, economic, and political institutions. Turner’s critics alleged his work extended historical inquiry beyond its accepted limits, but his popularity suggests he managed to make academic aspects of history accessible for ordinary readers.

Woodrow Wilson, President of Princeton University before he became President of the United States, addressed the issue of history as a scientific discipline and its dependence on facts. Wilson argued that while the necessity for historians to focus on facts seemed an “eminently reasonable requirement,” “the truth of history is a very complex and very occult matter.”<sup>43</sup> Wilson dismissed the notion that facts could be entirely straightforward and suggested that facts are full of visible and invisible factors and that history itself could not be reduced to statistics,

---

<sup>41</sup> Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, 117.

<sup>42</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, “Problems in American History” (1892), *The Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1938), 73.

<sup>43</sup> Woodrow Wilson, “On the Writing of History,” 1895 draft manuscript, in Arthur S. Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), 293.

newspaper items, or officially recorded statements.<sup>44</sup> Wilson argued “the writing of history must be based upon original research and authentic record, but it can no more be directly constructed by the piecing together of bits of original research than by the mere reprinting together of state documents.”<sup>45</sup> Instead, “the historian needs an imagination quite as much as candor and common honesty.”<sup>46</sup> Wilson’s argument is more nuanced than Ridpath’s in that he suggested analysis and interpretation was necessary in order to make sense of facts. Wilson, like Turner, Bancroft and Ridpath, struggled with how to reconcile empirical values with the narrative, artistic aspects of history.

Ridpath was in good company among contemporary historians as he struggled with the emerging empirical and scientific nature of history during the late nineteenth century. Although it appears bluntly misguided to modern historians, Ridpath’s use of causation to explain history to readers is similar to efforts made by other intellectuals to simplify emerging principles of academic history in order to reach the populace effectively. If Ridpath is interpreted strictly as an historian, his academic efforts appear to be limited. By examining Ridpath’s career and writings more broadly as products of a public intellectual seeking to serve an audience of ordinary people, however, his practices appear much less flawed since his objective was not to be viewed as an academic writer unlike Turner and Wilson.

---

<sup>44</sup> Wilson, “On the Writing of History,” 293.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 305.



Ridpath, his flowing red beard turned gray, following his retirement from DePauw University<sup>47</sup>

Charles Darwin's writings on evolution also influenced Ridpath's work and helped him mediate between academic and his popular audiences. Ridpath explored the nature of racial differences and impact of these differences on historical events. With publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859, theories concerning the elimination of lower races by higher ones were "given new impetus and greater respectability."<sup>48</sup> Darwin himself applied evolutionary principles to issues of race and claimed in *The Descent of Man* (1871) that "the civilized races of

---

<sup>47</sup> Ridpath Collection.

<sup>48</sup> George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind* (New York: Harper, 1971), 230.

man will almost certainly exterminate and replace the savage races throughout the world.”<sup>49</sup>

Because of the popularity of Darwin’s theories, it would be surprising if Ridpath had not incorporated aspects of them in his major works. Ridpath’s engagement with Darwin’s ideas indicates that he was influenced by intellectual currents of the nineteenth century and worked to adapt them to the narratives he wrote for popular audiences.

As evolution became an acceptable science, historians utilized it to justify their own racial prejudices and ideology. During the nineteenth century the belief in universal human laws and racial hierarchies were legitimized by scientific authority.<sup>50</sup> Herbert Spencer popularized Darwin’s theory of evolution for understanding racial hierarchies, “the dominant races overrun the inferior races mainly in virtue of the greater quantity of energy in which this greater mental mass shows itself.”<sup>51</sup> Fittingly, Spencer viewed “particular mixtures of race, being perhaps at the root,” to blame for failures and successes of nations. Spencer’s philosophy, Social Darwinism, provided fertile ground for historians to integrate their own views on race into their histories. Richard Hofstadter argued the condition of society during the nineteenth century predisposed Americans to embrace Spencer’s explanation of Darwinism, “It had a reassuring theory of progress based on biology and physics. It was large enough to be all things to all men, broad enough to satisfy agnostics and theists...It offered a comprehensive world-view, uniting under one generalization everything in nature from protozoa to politics.”<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 230.

<sup>50</sup> I.A. Newby, *Jim Crow’s Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900-1930* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), 19.

<sup>51</sup> Herbert Spencer, quoted in Thomas E. Gossett, *Race: The History of an American Idea*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), 150.

<sup>52</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought, 1860-1915* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944), 18.

Frustration and malaise that plagued the nation during the second half of the nineteenth century as a result of the nation's experience in the Civil War and economic transformations were tempered Spencer's philosophies of Darwinism. According to Hofstadter, "with its rapid expansion, its exploitative methods, its desperate competition, and its peremptory rejection of failure, post-bellum America was like a vast human caricature of the Darwinian struggle for existence and survival of the fittest."<sup>53</sup> Predisposed towards acceptance of a philosophy that could scientifically articulate this competition also advanced racist ideas as objective philosophy. The corollary of these racial inequity theories led to the conclusion that Anglo races were superior to all others.<sup>54</sup> Historians seized on these findings to reach conclusions about the superior achievements of white races in history and provided support for the argument that white races were destined for greater achievement than their Negro or non-white counterparts.

Ridpath believed history had unfolded along Darwinian principles, and was not sentimental about these changes. Ridpath argued "history is blind, cruel, remorseless" in its transformations of the world's populations, and believed these changes were based in natural laws of progress.<sup>55</sup> History "occurs in obedience to general laws, which sovereigns are important to annul and almost equally impotent to promote," and he connected these views to Darwin's theory of evolution.<sup>56</sup> In spite of Ridpath's "unwavering belief in the law of evolution as applicable to the growth and development of mankind," he identified two fundamental criticisms of this theory.<sup>57</sup> Darwin's ideas, he wrote, could not "account for, the ultimate origin of life" and believed a "higher form of life is developed from a lower form different from itself in kind."<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought, 1860-1915*, 18.

<sup>54</sup> Newby, *Jim Crow's Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900-1930*, 49.

<sup>55</sup> Mason, *The Romance and Tragedy of Pioneer Life*, 11-12.

<sup>56</sup> Ridpath, *Great Races of Mankind, Vol. II*, 762.

<sup>57</sup> Taylor, "John Clark Ridpath: A Brief Biography, 1894," "John Clark Ridpath Papers."

<sup>58</sup> John Clark Ridpath, "The True Evolution," *The Arena* (1897): 1099, 1101.



Ridpath utilized evolution to legitimate the notion of history as a science and also to foster a uniform linear narrative for history. True evolution, Ridpath wrote, consisted of the growth of the world, growth of the plants, animals and men, as well as the growth of institutions.<sup>59</sup> Evolution's claim to demonstrate the presence of natural laws that dictated the progress of the world, appealed to Ridpath in his narrative writing and aided in his efforts to address causation. This linear progress allowed historians to "know in their proper order the antecedents of the fact or institution which he is considering, back and back along the right lines of development to the time when the thing in question existed germinally."<sup>60</sup> Evolution was a way for Ridpath to connect disparate events and helped to "unite such fragments into a coherent whole, to see relations which the major bear to the minor parts within a wide horizon."<sup>61</sup> By applying the principles of evolution in his writing, Ridpath legitimized the notion that coherent, scientific historical writings could be produced that were grounded in fundamental, empirical truth about race and humankind.

Historians employed ideas of scientific racism to bolster their writing and simultaneously perpetuate racist and nativist sentiments which made them popular among readers as authorities on racial policies and history.<sup>62</sup> Although he believed empirical methods were important, Bancroft wrote in the 1884 version of his *History of the United States* that "the Negro race, from its introduction [into the colonies], was regarded with distrust," but wrote with surprise that "human bondage would become strongly riveted" in some places.<sup>63</sup> He also described Native Americans as "a few scattered tribes of feeble barbarians, destitute of commerce and of political

---

<sup>59</sup> Ridpath, "The True Evolution," 1107-1111.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 1112.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 1113.

<sup>62</sup> Newby, *Jim Crow's Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900-1930*, 54.

<sup>63</sup> Hoffer, *Past Imperfect*, 25.

connection.”<sup>64</sup> Popular historian Francis Parkman had similar views about non-Anglo races and described Indian religion as “a chaos of degrading, ridiculous and incoherent superstitions,” a logic that was supported and given scientific credibility by theories of evolution.<sup>65</sup> These writers did not view themselves as prejudiced. Because Darwinism was accepted scientific discovery, historians believed they were telling truth grounded in empirical study. Pervasive racism throughout all levels of society absolved historians of individual responsibility to charges of racism or prejudice. Within the context of post-Reconstruction racial transformations and tensions, Ridpath published a significant amount of his work and did not avoid making judgments on the hierarchy of the world’s races.

One way Ridpath articulated his racial philosophy was through his description of the character of Native Americans. In a *Popular History of the United States* Ridpath described Native Americans as a “rude civilization” that “waited for the coming of the pale-faced races,” and described the hierarchy of race as a “long ascent from the degradation of savage life to the heights of national renown.”<sup>66</sup> He explained that “among the propensities of the Red men was the passion for war,” and that they “communed only with himself and the genius of solitude.”<sup>67</sup> Ridpath viewed the inherent inferiority of Native Americans as objective fact and his support of Darwin’s views as legitimate science contributed to his embrace of racial hierarchies. *Ridpath’s History of the United States* described Native Americans during the French and Indian War as “barbarous foes...whose tactics were stealth, treachery, surprise, assassination and merciless slaughter.” The English, Ridpath wrote, were victims of Indian attacks who disregarded the value

---

<sup>64</sup> Hoffer, *Past Imperfect*, 25.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>66</sup> Ridpath, *A Popular History of the United States of America From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day*, xxxvii, 673.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-45.

of human life.<sup>68</sup> A consistent narrative that emerged from both texts was superiority of the Anglo races, and Ridpath used the scientific foundation of Darwinism in his discussions of Native Americans, in part, to merge scientific discovery and popular history writing. Focusing on natural laws and racial distinctions contributed to the narrative of history Ridpath wrote.

Ridpath viewed history as a story of race, and advanced this thesis in his series, *Great Races of Mankind*. In the general introduction he noted, “the story of the human race- the true story- has not to do with the results of human activity on the earth, but rather the race itself.”<sup>69</sup> To tell the story of history as a grand narrative, Ridpath sought to consider the manner, time, place and origins of mankind, primitive condition of mankind, migrations and distributions of races and the classification of races.<sup>70</sup>

In the second volume, Ridpath asserted that “in everything relating to progress and civilization the Aryan, or Indo-European, races have far surpassed the other divisions of mankind.”<sup>71</sup> To his credit, Ridpath acknowledged that this view could be in part a result of prejudice on the part of the author and the reader, “to a certain extent respecting the rank and accomplishment of the family of the Ruddy races to which we belong.” In spite of this qualification Ridpath consistently noted the inferiority of other races.<sup>72</sup> In reference to the Chinese, Ridpath suggested they represent “a tremendous inert mass, fixed in institutions and manners, immovable, satisfied, and devoted to the perpetuation of the past.”<sup>73</sup> In contrast to progressive Anglo races, Ridpath argued the tremendous Chinese population contributed little to the development of the world’s history. In texts on American history, Ridpath avoided discussion

---

<sup>68</sup> Ridpath, *Ridpath’s History of the United States*, 128.

<sup>69</sup> Ridpath, *Great Races of Mankind*, Vol. I, xxxviii.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, xl-xli.

<sup>71</sup> Ridpath, *Great Races of Mankind*, Vol. II, iii.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Ridpath, *Great Races of Mankind*, Vol. IV, iii.

of African Americans. Although he described the political crises over slavery, African Americans were largely omitted and marginalized in these histories and in *Great Races of Mankind*, Ridpath described Africans as “the lowest gradations of the human person” and suggested that there was an indication they were an “oncoming rather than an offgoing race,” capable of evolving in the future.<sup>74</sup> In Ridpath’s view, these “barbarous peoples of the Dark Continent” were less mentally capable than other races.<sup>75</sup> Because Ridpath viewed these ideas as scientifically grounded, he did not struggle to justify these arguments.

When Ridpath referred to “objectivity” in a discussion of *Great Races of Mankind*, he believed it was empirically based. Ridpath’s racial appeals were well received among his readers who saw their own racial prejudices of the nineteenth century legitimated through his scientific accounts. Writing for a general, popular audience, Ridpath might have considered popular sentiment regarding these questions before presenting a work that directly challenged common, accepted ideas of the time and could undercut future sales. Upon Ridpath’s death in 1900, the *New York Times* praised this particular series with showing “sound logic, vigor of thought, and deep research,” an indication of his mainstream views about race.<sup>76</sup> Because the scholarly foundation of Ridpath’s work was deemed acceptable by his peers, it legitimized objective and empirical history in popular narratives.

Despite the fact that he embraced theories of racial hierarchy, Ridpath was described as a man who personally abhorred slavery, and “would sooner see a revolution in his country than to witness the reintroduction of slavery in any of its forms or disguises.”<sup>77</sup> Ridpath did not write about biases towards race beyond scientific articulation of racial prejudices in his histories.

---

<sup>74</sup> Ridpath, *Great Races of Mankind*, Vol. IV, 612.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, v.

<sup>76</sup> “Ridpath, The Historian” *New York Times*, August 4, 1900.

<sup>77</sup> Taylor, “John Clark Ridpath: A Brief Biography, 1894,” “John Clark Ridpath Papers.”

Ridpath's incorporation of evolution into his work indicates engagement in ideas prevalent among historians during the late nineteenth century and his efforts to write usable narratives for general American audiences.

In addition to considering issues regarding science, objectivity, causation, and race, Ridpath contemplated the role of individuals in determining the course of history. Ridpath became a Populist commentator and political candidate at the end of the nineteenth century, yet he also emphasized the subordinate role of man in history to larger societal structures in his historical writings. Historians in the early nineteenth century described their nation as a unique model for the world, in which "democracy and prosperity were linked together, but constructed as the natural entitlement of independent men."<sup>78</sup> Ridpath, however, viewed the role of Americans as subordinate to larger forces dictating the nation's events. In discussing historical methodology Ridpath consistently placed responsibility for historical events not on exceptional individuals, but on the conditions of society which made man's contributions possible. Ridpath's perspective on this issue is demonstrative of the fact that Ridpath worked to navigate between writing history that utilized academic principles and narratives that general audiences could utilize.

Ridpath's views on the subject of man in history were first expressed in an oration delivered to the Indiana Historical Society in 1892. He acknowledged, "history is man's affair, and he is the principal affair of history," and "to doubt his agency, his origination, his creation of the event seems absurdly to question the evidence of all the senses and perceptions of the mind."<sup>79</sup> Ridpath argued that since man cannot "devise himself...it must be agreed that man does

---

<sup>78</sup> Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, 36.

<sup>79</sup> Ridpath, "The Man in History: An Oration for the Columbian Year," 277, 298.

not determine his place in history.”<sup>80</sup> Although man played a significant role in history, “The man operates in it and is of it, but does not direct its course or final result.”<sup>81</sup> This minimized individual agency while acknowledging that individuals did contribute to the course of history. Individuals played a supporting role in history, but populations had a greater impact on the course of history than individuals.

Ridpath’s views regarding the role of man and history were most fully developed in “The Man in History,” in *The Arena* in 1897. Ridpath argued that because individual actors are unable to determine their own origins, they are subject to the whims of more powerful forces. Ridpath suggested that exceptional circumstances, not exceptional men made history, yet he did not specifically identify what forces did direct it. Ridpath questioned, “Has any man in any age or country to any degree whatever influenced, not to say determined, the antecedent conditions of his own life and activities? If he have not done so, then how can he be said to be the maker of history?”<sup>82</sup> For Ridpath man’s place in the course of history was subordinate to other forces and individuals lacked significant control. Ridpath noted that an individual actor,

Works at the event, labors upon it, imagines even that he shapes it with his hand; but he does not really determine its character or its place in the general movement of the world. He is conscious of his own endeavor, knows his plan and purpose, perceives the changes that are going on around him in which he participates, takes this place or that place in the drama according to his will and the will of his fellows; but for the rest, the act goes on independently of his powers and plans, and the event comes out at length by its own laws of development, and is above and beyond the designs and understandings of men.<sup>83</sup>

Ridpath acknowledged that the individual has an understanding of events taking place and participates in them, but individuals are ultimately powerless to direct history and determine the course of these historical events. Ridpath wrote that man “Is weak and transient...the individual

---

<sup>80</sup> Ridpath, “The Man in History: An Oration for the Columbian Year,” 299.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 305.

<sup>82</sup> John Clark Ridpath, “The Man in History,” *The Arena* (1897): 817.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 821.

are only the molecules of the organic whole.”<sup>84</sup> Through natural laws, Ridpath downplayed individual agency.

Ridpath utilized this framework as the foundation of his methodology in the *Great Races of Mankind*. Ridpath noted that he devoted attention to the “results and products of the agency and purposes of men in their associated life” in the writing of the volumes, as well as “the importance of the actors in the human drama, as distinguished from the acts.”<sup>85</sup> Making this distinction helped Ridpath provide an academic twist on what might otherwise appear to be a popular subject. By showing individuals did not direct the course of history by themselves Ridpath avoided the trap of giving individuals agency for actions beyond their control. Ridpath acknowledged that even great historical actors, such as George Washington, “the serene father of his country, was himself the son of a larger country- the country of human liberty.” Heroic figures, Ridpath argued, “are made by historical forces, are borne aloft for the brief day of their activity on the billows of the eternal seas.”<sup>86</sup>

Arguing for individuals’ supporting rather than leading role in history allowed Ridpath to assert the populace as a whole was made up of numerous individuals who could influence the society, which was not entirely dominated by elites. Presenting great men, such as Washington and Cromwell, merely as individuals shaped by historical circumstances, not extraordinary figures who had shaped history, allowed Ridpath to reduce elites to the level of the common man. Because Ridpath was motivated to bring education to the people to provide civic education, the idea that individuals should be ready to rise to the occasion of an historical moment was powerful. Individual origins were irrelevant within American democracy and anyone might be

---

<sup>84</sup> Ridpath, “The Man in History,” *The Arena*, 824.

<sup>85</sup> Ridpath, *Great Races of Mankind*, Vol. I, vi.

<sup>86</sup> Ridpath, “The Man in History: An Oration for the Columbian Year,” 315.

called by historical circumstances to become a major actor as celebrated and revered as Washington. Had Ridpath argued that individuals were the center of history, it would have meant celebrating the accomplishments of great men rather than ordinary ones, or as in the *Great Races of Mankind*, inherent racial traits. By minimizing individual roles in history, Ridpath elevated the contributions of the common man in relation to the “great men” of history and demonstrated how they contributed to the nation’s history.

Although his writings minimized the influence of society’s elites in history, Ridpath still produced biographies of political figures. Chronicling the lives of Alexander Hamilton, President James Garfield, William Gladstone, and James Blaine, most of these books were written during the 1880s while Ridpath was still working at Indiana Asbury. Ridpath noted that some of his biographical subjects came largely from his youthful enthusiasm and hero worship. This explains books on Garfield and Hamilton, who held political positions Ridpath later campaigned against. These biographies derived from his lectures, and his decision to write about prominent individuals did not mean that Ridpath perceived them as playing larger roles in history as a result of their own efforts. He acknowledged the impulse to recognize great figures such as Garfield and argued in light of Garfield’s assassination, “The tendency to the deification of men is strongest when a sudden eclipse falls athwart the disk of a great life at noontide.”<sup>87</sup>

Ridpath understood that there was tendency for “great men” to be canonized by the populace, but his works presented their lives to show how these men acted as agents in a given historical time. His 1880 biography of Alexander Hamilton contextualized the founder’s contributions within the history of the nation. Ridpath wrote that “general causes, extending back

---

<sup>87</sup> John Clark Ridpath, *The Life and Work of James A. Garfield*, (Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers and Company, 1881), iii.



through the centuries, springing from diverse races to indifferent quarters of the globe, and drifting hitherward from ages past, join at last with personal agency and cooperate with the individual wills of men in producing the critical epochs of history.” Ridpath used Hamilton as a way of describing virtues of the Revolutionary era as “one of the most heroic events in the history of mankind.”<sup>88</sup> In these biographies Ridpath praised his subjects. He described Hamilton as a man of “sincere devotion, lofty patriotism, and unspotted soundness of character.”<sup>89</sup> Although Ridpath did not suggest there were great individual actors who should be worshipped as the authors of history, as a public intellectual Ridpath chose to chronicle lives of men (not women) whose contributions could teach the same civic lessons that emerged from his histories. When Ridpath wrote the biography of Hamilton he praised nationalists and criticized Jefferson’s localism, “as between the nation and the state, I say, down with the state and up with the nation!”<sup>90</sup> Following his experience as a political candidate in 1896, Ridpath ardently defended Jefferson while denouncing Hamilton as an “undemocratic monarchist and plutocrat.”<sup>91</sup> While undergoing a dramatic political transformation over his lifetime, Ridpath separated his life as a citizen from his position of authority as a public intellectual. Regardless of his own personal views, Ridpath believed Hamilton’s life could provide a portrait of an individual, which could simultaneously explain the nation’s history.

Although Ridpath ardently supported Hamilton in his biography of the nation’s first Secretary of the Treasury, his biography on James Garfield shortly after his death in 1881 was much more objective. The biography relied on long quotes from Garfield’s speeches and included far less analysis and judgment of his actions. He praised the way Garfield handled his

---

<sup>88</sup> John Clark Ridpath, *Alexander Hamilton: A Study of the Revolution and the Union*, (Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers and Company, 1880), 2, 4.

<sup>89</sup> Ridpath, *Alexander Hamilton: A Study of the Revolution and the Union*, 21.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>91</sup> Woodburn, *History of Indiana University, Volume I, 1820-1902*, 462.

critics and his character as a leader and as an honest man, “You cannot know the story of his life, and think of him ever guilty of a dishonest act.” Ridpath asserted, “His character is as clear as crystal; the sunlight of truth illumined his soul always, and there the shadows of insincerity never fell.”<sup>92</sup> Even though Ridpath differed ideologically with Garfield, his biography focused on recounting historical events while acknowledging the late President for his strength of character as a public servant.

The power of biography as history was a theme Ridpath returned to throughout his career. Writing about former English Prime Minister William Gladstone, Ridpath noted that “the life of the great man is not a biography, but a history. His purposes and actions tend constantly to the impersonal.”<sup>93</sup> Ridpath utilized biographies of significant historical actors as a way of analyzing the times itself and demonstrated to his readers that while these men were uniquely positioned to make contributions, they were not predestined to do so. In the case of Gladstone, as with other figures, “to write his life has been involved to a considerable extent a recital of the history of the times.”<sup>94</sup> Ridpath did not praise the nation’s elites but emphasized their context within the nation and the world. In a discussion of James Blaine, Ridpath observed that “History is able to care for herself. She produces according to her exigencies. If the exigencies be great, then history is a great mother. If the exigency be small, then the mother is correspondingly parsimonious in her offspring.”<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> John Clark Ridpath, *The Life and Work of James A. Garfield*, (Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers and Company, 1881), 254.

<sup>93</sup> John Clark Ridpath, *The Life and Times of William E. Gladstone*, (New York: Peter Fenelon Collier, Publisher, 1898), 7.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> John Clark Ridpath, *The Life and Work of James G. Blaine* (Philadelphia, PA: Historical Publishing Company, 1893), iv.

Ridpath used political biographies to illustrate that history created great men and not vice versa. Instead of being predestined for success, “it cannot be known in advance that a given boy, in a republican democracy like our own, will rise to distinction. The rule is, indeed, that our great men proceed from obscurity...In America men emerge. They come not of old family stocks- not out of baronial manors and feudal castles- but out of the undiscovered fountains of the humble homes of the people.”<sup>96</sup> Biography could reveal larger themes about American history, and the common man, therefore, has the possibility to make historical contributions equal to those by great men such as Garfield, Gladstone and Blaine. Ridpath tempered his views of great men with skepticism and reasoning that could be appreciated by academics, while providing an opening for common people to see themselves as potentially thrust into history-making roles.

Ridpath’s writing about the role of men in history did not occur in a vacuum. In Frederick Jackson Turner’s seminal 1893 essay, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” delivered to the American Historical Association at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, argued “the frontier is productive of individualism” and “frontier individualism has from the beginning promoted democracy.”<sup>97</sup> Like Ridpath, Turner believed individual played a supporting role in the development of the American frontier as well as the expansion of American democracy. It was historical circumstances-- the availability of frontier land that allowed pioneers to make significant, palpable impacts on the development of the nation at the whole. Turner argued, “So long as free land exists, the opportunity for a competency exists, and economic power secures political power. But the democracy born of free land, strong in selfishness and individualism, intolerant of administrative experience and education, and pressing individual liberty beyond its proper bounds, has its dangers as well as its

---

<sup>96</sup> Ridpath, *The Life and Work of James G. Blaine*, iv.

<sup>97</sup> Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” 220.

benefits.”<sup>98</sup> Although it was possible for the individual to make both positive and negative contributions to society, Turner believed it was historical forces, the empty land of North America, that was the driving force in American history. Because Ridpath was engaged in these ideas in 1897 and that Turner’s essay appeared in 1893, Ridpath likely responded to Turner’s considerations. Being deliberately engaged in similar philosophical issues as academics shows how Ridpath maintained academic credibility in his histories, but tempered this with a desire to write for popular audiences, who were inspired by the notion that their own contributions to history as a collective people could exceed those of elites. As a public intellectual, Ridpath used biographical subjects to advance an argument similar to the one Turner proposed about the nature of American history.

As a public intellectual and writer of histories, John Clark Ridpath was influenced tremendously by issues facing historians at the dawn of professionalization. Considerations of empiricism, objectivity, and the scientific nature of history, Social Darwinism, and the agency of great men in history are all questions Ridpath addressed in his historical writing. Ridpath engaged in the same historiography questions as his peers and other intellectuals of the nineteenth century, but when strictly evaluated in accordance with new professional standards and practices, his work was judged insufficiently academic for its lack of empirical foundations. When Ridpath is evaluated as a public intellectual, who intended to educate Americans through history, however, his work is much more acceptable. As he was motivated to mediate between academic and popular history, his work should not be evaluated strictly against academic criteria. Because Ridpath engaged in practices similar to pre-professional historians, such as Bancroft and early academics, such as Turner, Ridpath represents a transformative moment in the development

---

<sup>98</sup> Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” 220.

of the discipline of history. While it can be debated whether or not he made scholarly contributions to historical writing, John Clark Ridpath's engagement in academic questions while educating popular audiences makes him worthy of study as a public intellectual and historian.



## **Chapter 4:**

### **Politician and Reformer**

As a writer of popular histories and political biographies, John Clark Ridpath worked to educate the American people and provide them with knowledge necessary to maintain the nation's democracy. When Ridpath provided these civic lessons through his histories, he avoided historical judgments and partisan positions. In the mid-1890s, however, Ridpath held ardent political views and attempted to influence the nation's discourse about politics through writing as well as becoming a political candidate for U.S. Congress in 1896 as a Populist-Democrat. Ridpath's involvement in political ideas and pursuit of political office made him more than a detached scholar and, instead, he worked for a larger objective. As a writer and commentator, Ridpath belonged to a class of men who were respected for their efforts to advance the interests of the nation, and the same impulses that encouraged Ridpath's efforts as an historian are evident in his work as a Populist. Just as Ridpath wrote histories for common nineteenth-century readers, his political participation was motivated by desire to be a voice for the common man and work for policies that protected his interests. The vehicle for Ridpath's work shifted, but he maintained a continuity of purpose. Politics enlarged Ridpath's sphere as a public intellectual.

In the early 1890s many citizens of rural Indiana, especially workers inspired by Eugene V. Debs and farmers, became attracted by policy positions of both the Democratic Party and Populists. In 1890 Democrats supported a ban on alien land ownership, popular election of senators, the coinage of silver, and abandoning the gold standard. These policies were popular among ordinary people and farmers because they favored the nation's workers over its elites.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Bureau & Indiana Historical Society, 1968), 32-33.

Agrarian unrest and opposition to the Republican platform in 1890 led to the election of the Democratic Party state ticket, but for some Democrats did not go far enough, and they aligned themselves with the “People’s Party” (the Populists) in the state.<sup>2</sup> By 1892, Indiana populists comprised one of the largest delegations at the People’s Party National Convention in Omaha, Nebraska. Led by Eugene V. Debs of Terre Haute, they opposed both major parties in the 1892 Presidential Election. The Populists were unable to block Democrat Grover Cleveland’s return to the Presidency in 1892, but the Panic of 1893, falling farm prices, and industrial labor issues kept workers’ discontent on the forefront of political discussions.<sup>3</sup> In 1892 the People’s Party demanded public ownership of the nation’s railroads, allowing individual states to decide women’s suffrage, and “denounced the two major parties for their insensitivity to the sufferings of the American people and unequivocally called for a new national party to implement a reform program.”<sup>4</sup> Partially because of the Populists, the Republican Party ascended to power in both the state and the nation.

Within this tumultuous political climate of the 1890s John Clark Ridpath became a political commentator by articulating policy positions that aligned with Populist and Democratic platforms. He continued to write popular histories but also addressed the plight of America’s people with essays in *The Arena* and other periodicals. Politically, Ridpath primarily concerned himself with the nation’s poverty levels as well as the gold standard as the basis for the nation’s currency. An 1896 essay, “The Bond and the Dollar,” became the foundation for his populist political ideology. Ridpath was most concerned about the fact that the nation’s currency was transformed from being based in gold and silver to just gold in 1873. Populists described this

---

<sup>2</sup> Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920*, 34-35.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 37-39.

<sup>4</sup> Robert C. McMath, Jr., *American Populism: A Social History, 1877-1898* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 160-161.



transformation as the “Crime of ‘73” that had inflated the value of money, left too little currency for a growing economy and led to a deflation of prices.<sup>5</sup> Such an arrangement was good for creditors but bad for debtors, and, consequentially, favored the rich. Populists like Ridpath, believed the adoption of the gold standard was a symbolic issue and indicated government favored the interests of the rich. Those who believed the nation’s money should be coined in both gold and silver were known as bimetallists, and they believed this modification would alter the fortunes of the nation’s workers. For these supporters, the silver issue became “a panacea for increasing the money supply and (they believed) for reversing America’s long deflationary slide.”<sup>6</sup> In this spirit, Ridpath defended ordinary Americans by siding firmly with bimetallists.

Although there had been considerable sacrifices by the American people during the Civil War, in the years since, Ridpath wrote, “The debt expanded and settled over the landscape like a cloud from Vesuvius, darkening from shore to shore.” Rather than require national sacrifice to pay for the war Ridpath asserted that the government had overstepped its bounds by taking on debts to finance the conflict and the burden was still being bore born by the American people through higher taxes, thirty years after the war ended.<sup>7</sup> Ridpath was critical of the management of this debt and subsequently argued that the war bonds had been manipulated, ultimately robbing the people of the United States of their resources. Ridpath was particularly angry that these bonds had been issued on the basis of paper currency but since the nation converted to a gold standard in 1873, bonds were being paid back at twice their value. Ridpath wrote, “They had been purchased on the basis of one currency. That currency was worth only about half as much, unit for unit, as the mythical metallic currency which had now become only a

---

<sup>5</sup> McMath, *American Populism: A Social History, 1877-1898*, 186.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>7</sup> John Clark Ridpath, “The Bond and the Dollar,” *The Arena* (January 1896): 266-267.

reminiscence.”<sup>8</sup> The interests of the American people had come second to society’s elites, and “on one side of the table sat the representatives of the bond; on the other side sat the American people; and the bond had won!”<sup>9</sup> Ridpath used the issue of war bonds as illustrative of conflicts between the common people he desired to serve and the moneyed elites who controlled the nation’s interests.

The economic injustice of the bonds issued to fund the Civil War provided Ridpath with a context to argue passionately against the gold standard. He contended that the suffering of the American people was caused by the adoption of gold as the basis for American currency, and believed coinage of silver would aid in solving the nation’s problems. The nation’s millionaires profited from the sacrifices of the people, “By the terms of that league the millionaire who had given a hundred thousand dollars for a bond of the same denomination should receive back, true enough, a hundred thousand dollars, but should receive it in units of another kind worth about two for one.”<sup>10</sup> For Ridpath bimetallism was a democratic principle and he argued vehemently in favor of returning this standard to the American people. Like other 1890s Populists, Ridpath believed instating the gold standard was a crime.

It was an act which though subsequently defended, eve to the present day, but all the purchased ability of the world, is nevertheless condemned by the conscience and common sense of mankind as the most cold-blooded, unjust, uncalled-for, unmitigated and damnable outrage ever done in this century to the rights and interests of a great people!<sup>11</sup>

In his historical writings, Ridpath’s depicted the “Crime of ‘73” and bimetallism differently depending on if it was for a popular or academic audience. In *A Popular History of the United States*, the issue was not thoroughly addressed. Ridpath described “one of the most disastrous

---

<sup>8</sup> Ridpath, “The Bond and the Dollar,” *The Arena* (January 1896): 277.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> John Clark Ridpath, “The Bond and the Dollar,” *The Arena* (February 1896): 439.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 443.

financial panics known in the history of the United States” and argued, “The primary cause of the panic was the fluctuation in the volume and value of the national currency.”<sup>12</sup> Ridpath maintained a non-partisan tone in his work when assessing the issue, which indicates he was able to divorce history from partisan analysis, or his thoughts on the currency question changed between 1878 and 1896. Writing about this question in 1878 Ridpath maintained a great deal of academic distance, but in *Ridpath’s History of the United States* (1897) he spent more than a full page describing “The Silver Question.” Ridpath described the merits of the free coinage of silver, and suggested that “This valuable option the people of the United States have enjoyed, greatly to their advantage and prosperity.”<sup>13</sup> Those who opposed bimetallism were “the credit-holding classes of the United States, to whom the payment of all debts according to the highest standard of value, that is in gold only, was a fundamental principle.”<sup>14</sup> Although Ridpath avoided directly addressing his partisan views on the currency question, *Ridpath’s History of the United States* established a dichotomy between the interests of the American people and the interests of society’s elites. This indicates that Ridpath used his historical writing as a tool to educate his audiences and influence them, yet at the same time avoided engaging in blatant partisanship and consciously attempted to divorce his scholarly and his political pursuits. As a public intellectual and political commentator, Ridpath’s views on the issue of currency and bimetallism speak to his desire to educate the public and enact reform. Ridpath felt compelled to use his pulpit as a popular writer to transform the relationship between ordinary citizens and the elites.

With the election of 1896 looming, the currency question remained a contentious political question for the People’s Party. Democrats made this a central campaign topic and, like Ridpath,

---

<sup>12</sup> Ridpath, *A Popular History of the United States of America From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day*, 560.

<sup>13</sup> Ridpath, *Ridpath’s History of the United States*, 511.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 512.

claimed that the nation's economic condition was directly related to the adoption of the gold standard. On the other side, Republicans articulated a philosophy that supported maintaining the gold standard.<sup>15</sup> The Populists, however, had a decision to make, "There seemed only two options, both with serious drawbacks" Robert McMath notes, "either fuse with one of the major parties, in hopes of achieving a majority, or go it alone, in hopes that worsening conditions and the intransigence of the major parties would produce a Populist majority." Facing the prospect that running a full slate of candidates would undermine their electoral interests, the Populists fused with the Democrats, "agreeing on a platform of the lowest common denominator, and that was free silver."<sup>16</sup> As a result the People's Party endorsed Democratic candidate for President, William Jennings Bryan, and other populist candidates pursued election on the Democratic ticket. In Indiana, the People's Party also created a combined political ticket for state elections.<sup>17</sup> Although John Clark Ridpath had not previously expressed an interest in electoral politics his contributions to the political discourse as a writer for *The Arena*, his name recognition and reputation as a man of the people made him a logical candidate to represent Indiana in Congress.

On August 14, 1896, the People's Party of Putnam County convened to slate candidates for the upcoming general election. Because of Ridpath's focus on the currency question, he was a natural fit for populists who were making it the largest campaign issue. Ridpath, "our distinguished fellow citizen" was unanimously nominated to represent the party as the candidate for Congress from the Fifth District in Indiana, which included eight central Indiana counties.<sup>18</sup> The district did not include Terre Haute, the home of Eugene V. Debs, but it did include

---

<sup>15</sup> Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920*, 40.

<sup>16</sup> McMath, *American Populism: A Social History, 1877-1898*, 199.

<sup>17</sup> Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920*, 43-44.

<sup>18</sup> "Populists Convene," *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, August 14, 1896.

Bloomington, Indiana and Indiana University.<sup>19</sup> As a Congressional candidate, Ridpath dedicated himself to the wellbeing of America's middle and working class people. In an interview shortly before his official nomination, Ridpath said, "According to my way of thinking, our government has been steadily drifting away from the people and getting into the power of special interests...it appears to be the height of absurdity to call it any longer 'a government of the people, for the people, by the people.'"<sup>20</sup> Because the currency question was a symbolic issue for the government's abandonment of ordinary people in favor of elites, for Ridpath, the first step towards returning the democracy to the people was restoration of the currency. Ridpath wrote, "We want our currency system put back precisely where it was under the statute and constitution for the first eighty-one years of our existence as a nation."<sup>21</sup> Ridpath's campaign rhetoric aligned with the platform of the People's Party, which suggested "those who vote for the Republican Party this fall will vote to continue the policy of falling prices and increase of debts until the great middle class of our country are homeless and take their places among the submerged."<sup>22</sup> Ridpath maintained his Populist message until the election when he appeared on the Democratic Party ticket.

As a political orator during the campaign, Ridpath's speeches focused on portraying himself as a man of the people. "The People's Cause," delivered on October 9, 1896, to an audience in Terre Haute, outlined Ridpath's platform. In all his work, he argued, he had been consistently loyal to the workingman and he connected his historical writings to the campaign.

---

<sup>19</sup> Stanley B. Parsons, Michael J. Dubin and Karen Toombs Parsons, *United States Congressional Districts, 1883-1913* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 194.

The Fifth District included eight central Indiana counties: Putnam, Owen, Hendricks, Morgan, Monroe, Brown, Johnson and Bartholomew.

<sup>20</sup> "John Clark Ridpath," *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, August 8, 1896.

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

<sup>22</sup> "Populists Convene," *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, August 14, 1896.

This last paragraph from my first book may serve to show that my sympathy with the cause of labor, my advocacy of the rights and interests of the workingman, is not a wet-weather spring which has burst out just before the Presidential election! On the contrary it is a spring which has flowed, an unending fountain, for twenty years and will continue to flow until heart and flesh shall fall.<sup>23</sup>

By connecting his political ideology to his previous work, Ridpath reinforced the notion that he wanted to be understood as a public intellectual who served the people rather than strictly an academic scholar. The paragraph Ridpath cited in the speech appeared in *A Popular History of the United States*.

Essential to the welfare and stability of the Republic, is the nobility of labor. It is the mission of the United States to ennoble toil and honor the toiler. In other lands to labor has been considered the lot of serfs and peasants; to gather the fruits and consume them in luxury and war, the business of the great... Let the odious distinction perish: the true lord is the laborer and the true laborer the lord. It is the genius of American institutions, in the fullness of time, to wipe the last opprobrious stain from the brow of toil and to crown the toiler with the dignity, luster, and honor of a full and perfect manhood.<sup>24</sup>

For Ridpath, it was important to connect political rhetoric with his histories to show how his views had always privileged the working man throughout his life and career, and also show he was not disingenuously seizing on the cause of working people to achieve election. The cause of equality, rather than personal glory, was Ridpath's objective.

On the campaign trail, Ridpath used his credibility as an author of histories and biographies to tell the story of America's currency. Ridpath's platform emphasized that the question of the nation's currency was the most important question of the 1896 election and that the gold standard was a radical departure from democratic principles. Although Alexander Hamilton had personally favored a gold standard, in 1792 he had advocated for bimetallism that ultimately became the basis of the nation's currency. In this campaign address, Ridpath argued that this was a democratic measure and called for restoration of the nation's currency to the

---

<sup>23</sup> "The People's Cause," *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, October 9, 1896.

<sup>24</sup> Ridpath, *A Popular History of the United States of America From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day*, 640.

system which had served “for the first eighty-one years of existence as a nation.”<sup>25</sup> To restore the nation’s currency to this system was to restore the government to the people. Ridpath claimed the need to pay back debts incurred during the Civil War had promoted the change of the basis of currency to gold, but “to abolish that unit [silver], to strike it down, to cancel it, and to substitute another therefore was a crime. It has been rightly so branded by the American people and will be so written in history.”<sup>26</sup> The “Crime of 1873,” Ridpath wrote, was motivated by “the ulterior purpose, the covert design, of destroying one half of the primary money of the world.” In doing so, a conspiracy had been undertaken to “divide by two the resources and strength of every workingman.”<sup>27</sup>

Throughout the campaign, Ridpath placed blame for the condition of the nation’s working people with the demonetization of silver in 1873,

Many of those here present remember distinctly every turn in our affairs since that epoch twenty-three years ago. What has it been but a history of ever-deepening depression and disaster? What has it been but a history of ever-accumulating wrongs? ...What has it been but the story of the transformation of American society from a condition of freedom and happiness and plenty to a condition of slavishness, of misery and approaching pauperism?<sup>28</sup>

According to Ridpath, the nation had experienced an economic decline as a direct result of the transformation of the basis of currency to gold.

While Ridpath was not a single issue candidate and held political stances on other issues, he continuously saw the conspiracy of the currency’s transformation related to other policy questions, especially low prices of agricultural products and commodities. Ridpath argued, “the prices of all products of human industry and enterprise have shriveled and shrunk away until the

---

<sup>25</sup> “The People’s Cause,” *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, October 9, 1896.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

American people have found the near approach of pauperism.”<sup>29</sup> Behind these falling prices Ridpath faulted those who favored the gold standard. Ridpath viewed passage of the federal income tax as, “one thing in the cause of truth and right,” as he saw those who desired America’s currency to be based in gold as responsible for a widening gulf between the rich and poor. “Evasion of taxation by the money lords is perhaps the most shameless manifestation of greed ever witnessed among men,” he claimed, and this evasion had placed the burden for the nation’s taxation “upon the bent and breaking shoulders of the poor.”<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Ridpath blamed proponents of the gold standard for creating delusions of international war and creating the myth that an imminent discovery of a significant amount of gold would soon occur. As a campaigner, Ridpath focused on tenets of the Democratic-Populist platform, but he also challenged fundamental principles of Republican ideology. Bimetallism was a symbolic answer for marginalization of the nation’s democratic principles.

Ridpath explained that the Republican position on the currency question was based on actions of European nations. According to Republicans financial policy should conform to “the great commercial nations,” such as Great Britain. Ridpath criticized this view and suggested that Republicans were more inclined to align the United States with the interests of foreign nations and with millionaires than the nation’s workers. Republicans, he contended, generally identified with the wealthy rather than the people.<sup>31</sup> In addition to the Republicans’ willingness to side with millionaires over working people, Ridpath’s biggest contention with the party was its enthusiasm for adopting a European gold currency standard instead of allowing Americans to set international policy. Ridpath believed that if Republicans won office over Populists and

---

<sup>29</sup> “The People’s Cause,” *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, October 9, 1896.

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

<sup>31</sup> “The People’s Cause,” *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, October 9, 1896.



Democrats, a series of disastrous results would plague the American people as a result of the nation's monetary policy.<sup>32</sup>

Philosophically, Ridpath believed the election of 1896 was a transformative moment in American history and politics and “an uprising of the producers against those powers that have for thirty years planned to take and consume the products of labor without just or adequate compensation.”<sup>33</sup> America's producers had made the nation, and Ridpath argued the country could re-claim its glory by returning men of “the people” to power. Doing so would return glory to the agricultural lifestyle of America, while simultaneously restoring and maintaining the commercial parity ensured by bimetallism. As much as Ridpath's campaign was based on appealing to average Americans through a discussion of political issues, he also called for restoration of American patriotism. Ridpath argued that in 1896 being a patriot meant “to be an independent man, afraid of nothing...to love mankind and to try to serve the human race...to love our country and to honor our country more than all in the world.”<sup>34</sup> Nothing, however, was more patriotic than opposing the forces within society that favored interests of elites and marginalized working people.

Ridpath's views on the political issues at the end of the nineteenth century were consistent with those of the national Democratic party. William Jennings Bryan's speech at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago on July 9, 1896, established a benchmark for the party's platform, and Ridpath's speeches and writings were closely aligned to them. Like Ridpath, Bryan declared the currency question central to issues faced by ordinary Americans, “When we have restored the money of the Constitution, all other necessary reforms will be

---

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

possible, and that until that is done there is no reform that can be accomplished.”<sup>35</sup> Bryan praised the rural lifestyle and agrarianism of American life, “Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic. But destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country.”<sup>36</sup> For both Bryan and Ridpath, the nation’s producers were the source of the country’s wealth. The gold standard, however, had undermined common people in the United States and they were now forced to bear the burden of carrying the nation financially. Bryan’s famous cry, “You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold” succinctly summarized the Populist-Democratic political stance towards the currency question.<sup>37</sup> Bryan and Ridpath knew one another and Bryan acknowledged his appreciation for Ridpath as a campaigner, and described him as “so distinguished a scholar that his words carry great weight.” He also acknowledged that as a candidate for Congress, Ridpath had “written some very severe criticism of the gold standard.”<sup>38</sup> Such praise by Bryan for Ridpath indicates that within the Democratic party he was a mainstream political candidate and that his stature as a public intellectual contributed to his selection to represent Indiana’s Fifth District in Congress.

As the November election approached, Ridpath unsurprisingly picked up the endorsement of the *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, which described Ridpath as “a scholar, a gentleman, and has a heart overflowing with sympathy for the common people.”<sup>39</sup> The *Greencastle Evening Democrat* also advised the voting public that “every public interest will be safe in his hands, and that as our representative he would reflect great credit upon our city and

---

<sup>35</sup> William Jennings Bryan, “Cross of Gold Speech,” *History Matters*, George Mason University, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5354>.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> William Jennings Bryan, *The First Battle: A Story of the Campaign of 1896* (Chicago, IL: W.B. Conkey Co., 1896), 569.

<sup>39</sup> “A Grand Galaxy,” *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, October 31, 1896.

his Alma Mater.”<sup>40</sup> In the final week of the campaign events were held throughout the county, including Cloverdale, where Ridpath was praised and hailed as a candidate and in Greencastle where Ridpath was escorted from his residence on East Washington Street to the opera house on the town square where he delivered one of his final speeches of the campaign. Ridpath “launched into one of the most eloquent and masterful arguments for bimetallism heard here during the campaign,” and the people of Greencastle and Putnam County were optimistic about Ridpath’s chances for election.<sup>41</sup> The local paper suggested that the enthusiasm in the days leading up to the election “foreshadows a great victory Tuesday” for Ridpath, Bryan and their allies.<sup>42</sup>

Their enthusiasm was misplaced. Bryan was unable to secure the Presidency, and Ridpath was defeated in his home district by George W. Faris, the Republican candidate for Congress and 1877 graduate of Indiana Asbury University.<sup>43</sup> Faris defeated Ridpath by just 92 votes in the district, but the Democrats won a wide margin in the county. Ridpath had “proven himself a patriotic citizen, and a friend of the people, by accepting a race that was believed to be hopeless, at the behest of his fellow citizens.”<sup>44</sup> Ridpath’s force as a campaigner and public servant had “reduced a Republican goldbug majority of thousands down to one covered by two figures,” but even that effort had been insufficient to secure victory.<sup>45</sup> The results of the election indicated the state had swung decidedly Republican in 1896 as a result of expanding industrialism. Hoosiers were identifying more with the industrial East than the agricultural West, and this changing character led to McKinley defeating Bryan by more than eighteen-thousand votes across the

---

<sup>40</sup> “Dr. Ridpath,” *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, November 2, 1896.

<sup>41</sup> “A Grand Outporing,” *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, October 31, 1896.

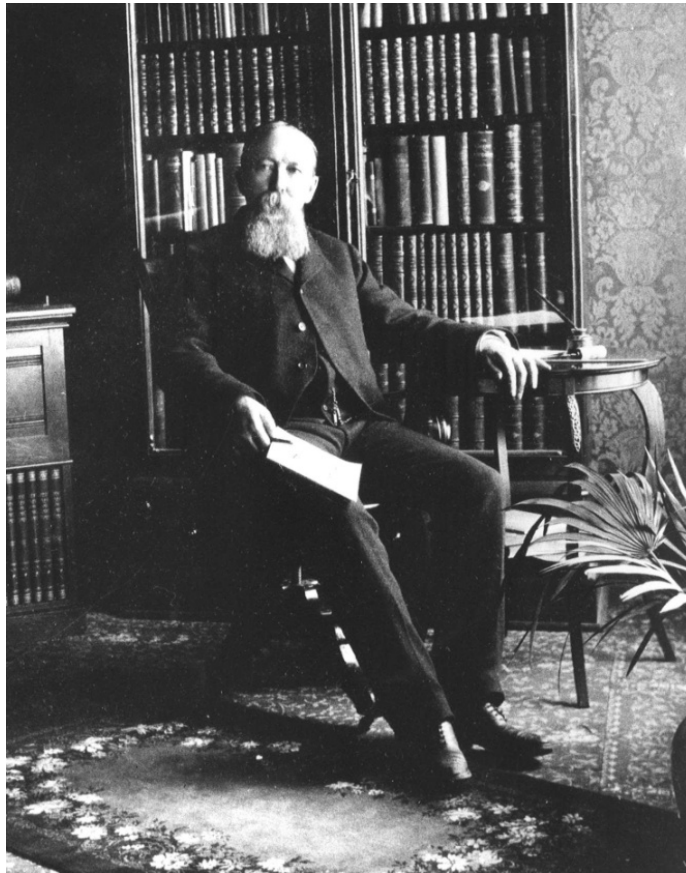
<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> “Faris, George Washington, (1854-1914)” *Biographical Dictionary of the United States Congress, 1774-Present*, United States Congress, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=F000016>.

<sup>44</sup> “For Congress,” *Greencastle Star Press*, November 7, 1896.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

state.<sup>46</sup> Ridpath's electoral defeat did not discourage him from working for common Americans, however, but emboldened his political convictions.<sup>47</sup> In part because of Ridpath's efforts as a candidate and previous success as a writer, he became editor of *The Arena*, a political reform publication in Boston, beginning in 1897.



Ridpath, photographed in his Greencastle home<sup>48</sup>

In *The Arena*, Ridpath continued to fight for populist principles. The most pressing concern Ridpath addressed was the widening gulf between rich and poor. Ridpath argued that the nation's millionaires had waged a campaign to keep the American people from establishing power in society.

---

<sup>46</sup> Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920*, 45-46.

<sup>47</sup> Woodburn, *History of Indiana University, Volume I, 1820-1902*, 462.

<sup>48</sup> Ridpath Collection.

We meet you, say the millionaires, on this ground. We believe in none of the things which you advocate. We will accept none of them. We intend that the masses shall remain the masses. We intend that they shall not rise to freedom and spontaneity. We intend to keep them as they are- the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. We intend that they shall live under such conditions of ignorance and dirtiness and depravity as shall make their emergence impossible. We intend to hold them back, and to hold you back. For this purpose we have fixed the powers of society and arrayed them against you and your agitation.<sup>49</sup>

Ridpath responded to a sharpened class division by siding with average individuals rather than wealthy elites. Class conflict between workers and the small number of corporate magnates, who controlled much of the country's economy made Ridpath skeptical of big business and focused on the workers' central roles in making economic growth possible. Ridpath claimed that while "the onfall of general poverty in the United States was not to have been anticipated," poverty had slowly overtaken the masses following the Civil War.<sup>50</sup> Ridpath's writing responded to the perceived inequality created by American elites who were controlling more and more of the nation's wealth. Ridpath argued that "a large group of men...got hold of the industrial, economic and financial forces of this reviving nation and deliberately turned them from the course of nature and justice to the course of injustice and iniquity."<sup>51</sup> The masses suffered because of economic inequality that had been brought about and individuals were "slipping back into lower and still lower industrial, economic and political conditions."<sup>52</sup> Ridpath wrote in part to draw attention to the economic inequality of the nation, but also in hopes his writing could lead to corrective actions.

While Ridpath focused on social inequities, he connected them to the currency question. Ridpath argued that prosperity had fallen for Americans, but this was no fault of the average workers. "The farmers, the mechanics, the miners, the laboring classes in general, the merchants,

---

<sup>49</sup> John Clark Ridpath, "The Cry of the Poor," *The Arena* (September 1897): 414-415.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 408.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 410.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 411.

and all the rank and file of industry, were perfectly blameless as it respects to the destruction of prosperity.”<sup>53</sup> Ridpath claimed ordinary people were victims of elites’ behavior as he re-hashed issues of the 1896 election and claimed the Republican Party opposed prosperity for all Americans. Bimetallism, Ridpath argued, made it a republican and democratic principle because it appealed to the gold man, the silver man and the hybrid voter.<sup>54</sup> The coinage act of 1873 had created “for nearly a quarter of a century a condition of economic and industrial congestion” that could only be reinvigorated through a return to the currency standard of bimetallism.<sup>55</sup> Although Ridpath and Bryan had suffered electoral defeats when they focused on the currency issue in 1896, these losses did not calm Ridpath’s fervor on the issue. Real prosperity, he argued, “will come again when the equilibrium shall be restored in the economic body of this nation...it will come when the metallic basis of currency shall be broadened and confirmed in both metals, silver and gold, on terms of absolute equality.”<sup>56</sup> Although this question had seemingly been settled with the Republicans’ victory in 1896, Ridpath continued to place blame for the nation’s present condition on monetary policy. As a political commentator, Ridpath’s emphasis on this issue demonstrates a commitment to the Populist cause as well as to a general belief that the nation’s people needed to be informed about the policies that influenced their livelihoods.

Discussions of currency and economics dominated Ridpath’s political writings, but he also addressed other issues as well. An 1897 essay, “Democracy- Its Origins and Prospects,” expressed concerns about the path American democracy was taking. Government had ceased serving the needs of the people and democratic principles must reemerge to assure equality for all men,

---

<sup>53</sup> John Clark Ridpath, “Prosperity: The Sham and the Reality,” *The Arena* (1897): 487.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 491.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 498-499.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 503-504.

The Democratic Republic which was instituted by our fathers- by declaration, by battle, by sacrifice and patriotic consecration- is rapidly becoming, or has already become, an Imperial Republic, not without its striking analogy to that Imperial Republic of Rome which preceded the Empire.<sup>57</sup>

For Ridpath, the nation had become unequal rather than remain a nation of equality, “the principle of human freedom has become the principle of servitude; where and when the common hopes and purposes of men have given place to antagonism and bloody strife...where and when the equality of men has become inequality, degenerating ever towards a profound and loathsome slavery?”<sup>58</sup>

Ridpath believed that America was on the path to becoming an empire similar to Rome, and as a result had become “ill fitted to be the receptacle of moral institutions and religious faith.”<sup>59</sup> The consequences of remaining on the nation’s current path put its people at risk of succumbing to a fate in which individual liberty was sacrificed for the power of the state and favored the interests of the rich over the common man. Ridpath believed society would ultimately return to its natural state of freedom. “Men are destined to be free. The elements of tyranny and enslavement shall be extinguished. The future shall bring a condition of human society throughout the world in which freedom shall be yoked with order, and the equality of all men be recognized as the fundamental fact in the life of nations.”<sup>60</sup> Although he expressed concern for the future of the nation, Ridpath believed that by returning to the founding principles and placing individuals at the center of society, the United States could return to prominence as a nation that valued individual liberty.

---

<sup>57</sup> John Clark Ridpath, “Democracy- Its Origins and Prospects,” *The Arena* (March 1897): 690.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 683.

<sup>60</sup> Ridpath, “Democracy- Its Origins and Prospects,” 692.

As the century closed, Ridpath believed the United States was perilously close to succumbing to imperial desires. In “The Republic and the Empire,” published in September of 1898, Ridpath argued against imperialism. America was “a continental, not an insular, power” and the prospect of imperialism went against the best interests of average Americans.<sup>61</sup>

Imperialism was desired by the plutocracy for three purposes.

The first of these is territorial acquisition- for the empire must conquer to expand. The second fact is that inflamed political lust of power which seeks to create a government apart from the people, over them, without their consent, and pressing them down against their protest. The third fact is the institution of plutocracy, which demands the other two for its maintenance and promotion. Concentrated wealth seeks to secure itself and to perpetuate its reign by means of a political system which maintains itself, not by free will, but by arsenals and armies and navies, in the manner of the European powers.<sup>62</sup>

According to Ridpath, imperialism was desired by society’s elites not ordinary citizens.

Consequentially, benefits of imperialism would be felt by the wealthy while average Americans paid the cost. Ridpath framed his argument in relation to history, noting, “The fathers of the United States were not anxious for great territorial expansion.” The Louisiana Purchase, the first major territorial acquisition in the young country’s history, was only undertaken after considerable deliberation by Thomas Jefferson and was intended merely to expand the size of the nation’s continental holdings.<sup>63</sup> The pursuit of insular property disregarded the past and America’s heritage.

Will the American nation in very truth discard its past? Have we no more pride? Is patriotism dead? ...Is America the only country known to history base enough to discard its heroic fathers and to set in their place a retinue of nabobs wearing the regalia of Imperialism?<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> John Clark Ridpath, “The Republic and the Empire,” *The Arena* (September 1898): 346.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 362.

<sup>63</sup> Ridpath, “The Republic and the Empire,” 347.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 358-359.



Ridpath drew on his experience as a writer of popular histories to make sense of imperialism. The fact that he used these two mediums interchangeably shows how late in his career, Ridpath viewed his historical writing as a means to enact political change.

Ridpath believed the American people faced serious consequences as a result of imperialism and nearly two years after his failed bid for Congress he continued to blame for this development on the defeat of Bryan and the Democrats. He connected the rise of imperialism and the subsequent failure of democracy with the adoption of the gold standard. Ridpath argued, “Under the reign of gold democracy is impossible. The reign of gold is an essential part of Imperialism...the Empire requires the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few; for the Empire consists of a few, and not the many.”<sup>65</sup> Elite oppression of the masses was a theme of Ridpath’s political writing, and in opposing imperialism Ridpath reinforced support for ordinary Americans he had served throughout his career. By connecting late nineteenth century political crises of imperialism with the currency question, Ridpath maintained a constant political narrative as a commentator and candidate for Congress, but also harbored bitterness in defeat and fought old political battles rather than confront new political issues.

As a public intellectual, John Clark Ridpath’s involvement in politics was a natural extension of his historical writing. As an historian who had focused on academic issues, Ridpath wrote narrative histories his readers could understand and utilize. As a political figure, Ridpath advocated policy positions that advanced the interests of the same ordinary Americans. Ridpath’s partisan political involvement and campaign for Congress were inconsistent for someone who only wanted to be a scholar, but these efforts make clear his motivation to advance the interests

---

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 361.

of common people in terms of national policy. Ridpath's commitment to ordinary Americans demonstrates he understood his responsibility to the public more broadly.

## Conclusion:

### Ridpath's Legacy

Ridpath passed away in 1900 after a brief illness in New York. Ridpath had established a reputation as a prominent public intellectual, and his omnipresence in the nation's bookshelves was significant. Ridpath published more than one hundred total volumes and more than fifty articles and poems. By 1920 sales of more than two million copies of his work made him one of the most active writers of his era.<sup>1</sup> Ridpath's books continued to sell more than two decades after his death and his work continued to reach popular audiences. Despite his academic origins and deep involvement in the practice of history, Ridpath was never considered a professional historian. As a teacher, author, advocate for Midwestern writers, political commentator, and Congressional candidate, Ridpath fulfilled an even greater role as a public intellectual. Among the American people Ridpath was viewed as an authority on the nation's history and respected as an advocate for the country's workers.

Ridpath never desired to be understood as an historian alone. His youthful ambitions were to be a writer and gain fame with influential works. For historians and intellectuals such as Ridpath, "there was no tension between disinterested scholarship on the one hand, and patriotic duty or moral engagement on the other: the former, through the self-evident ethical and political truths it revealed, satisfied the latter."<sup>2</sup> Ridpath argued that history and partisanship were interrelated and claimed "the historian must either lay down his pen or cease to be a partisan," a view he embodied throughout his career as a writer.<sup>3</sup> Consequentially, Ridpath's work was not viewed favorably by later historians with professional training. Although Woodrow Wilson, like

---

<sup>1</sup> Smith, "A Plea for a New Appreciation of Popular History: John Clark Ridpath, a Case Study," 210.

<sup>2</sup> Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 85.

<sup>3</sup> Ridpath, *Cyclopedia of Universal History*, Vol. II, 5.

Ridpath, addressed similar issues and attempted to appeal to popular audiences and maintain academic standards, Wilson claimed Ridpath was no scholar.

There is, I believe, practically only one single volume, popular history of the United States on the market, that of Ridpath, which because carried everywhere agents, has sold up into the hundreds of thousands, in spite of its manifest crudeness and inadequacy. There is no reason, I should suppose, why a scholarly history, written in an attractive style and really handsomely illustrated, should not be given an almost equally constant and universal sale.<sup>4</sup>

Wilson distrusted Ridpath's scholarship but recognized his influence as a writer and public intellectual. Through his contributions to the national discourse on history and politics, Ridpath earned notoriety as an influential voice of the American people. Ridpath displayed academic principles in writing his popular histories, yet never belonged to the American Historical Association (AHA), the field's preeminent professional organization, founded in 1884. However, even the AHA recognized his contributions to the field of history by publishing a short obituary in the *American Historical Review*, citing Ridpath as an author of "many popular histories and textbooks" who was "for a time professor of history at Asbury (now DePauw) University."<sup>5</sup> This recognition indicates that Ridpath was well known for his historical writing and for his impact on the discipline during the end of the nineteenth century.

Contemporary scholarship has mostly forgotten Ridpath because he did not transform the discipline or gain the political fame of others as much as some of his contemporaries. Frederick Jackson Turner's historical writing was more sociological than today's academic writing, but his Ph.D. brought professional recognition. George Bancroft was a well respected statesman who served his country in various political occupations before he became a well known writer.

Woodrow Wilson is remembered more as President of Princeton University and President of the

---

<sup>4</sup> "Letter to Henry Mills Alden from Woodrow Wilson, January 22, 1900," in Arthur S. Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), 378.

<sup>5</sup> "American History." *The American Historical Review* 6, no. 1 (Oct. 1900): 183.

United States than as a historian. One should evaluate Ridpath for what he accomplished as a public intellectual, a talented author of historical narratives, and an excellent orator and social commentator. All too often, Ridpath is judged against the accomplishments of his peers and his reputation has suffered because he lacked a distinctive contribution to historical writing. Ridpath was not celebrated as a professional historian, but he never set out to become one. Instead, he was an advocate for the common American. Shortly after Ridpath's death, Dr. Albert Shaw described him as a "popular historian...but also a profound thinker, a man of deep convictions, and a political and social reformer of absolute courage."<sup>6</sup> The *New York Times* noted that Ridpath was "an earnest, well-informed, prodigiously industrious writer, and his historical textbooks, if not profound, were clear and logical and easily understood."<sup>7</sup> These reflections indicate that Ridpath should be remembered for his contributions to the nineteenth century people he had worked so intentionally to reach and influence. One member of the Indiana Asbury class of 1874 recognized Ridpath's genius,

The most popular of American historians was probably the most brilliant of American essayists. Moreover he possessed poetic genius in an eminent degree. So versatile were his powers and so happily demonstrated was his mastery of the pen in various departments of letters, that when he was called from the world leaving behind him a life work, already well rounded, he seemed just ready to enter upon a larger career.<sup>8</sup>

His reputation as a writer was indeed profound, but more important was the contribution he made to the education of the American populace. More than three decades after his death, this view of Ridpath was maintained and the historian was described as "a man of great vitality and capable of long periods of sustained intellectual labor" yet "the enormous quality and scope of his work, however, precluded that scrupulous regard for fact and reliance on authority that characterizes

---

<sup>6</sup> Phillips, "John Clark Ridpath, DePauw Teacher and Historian," 1.

<sup>7</sup> "Ridpath, The Historian" *New York Times*, August 4, 1900.

<sup>8</sup> "John Clark Ridpath" *DePauw Palladium*, January 28, 1901, 1.

the more scholarly historian.”<sup>9</sup> He attempted throughout his career to mediate between popular and academic history, but Ridpath’s legacy as a historical writer was that of a popularizer, which ultimately relegated his scholarship to the dustbin of history to be ignored by later scholars.



Ridpath’s burial site at Forest Hill Cemetery in Greencastle, Indiana<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Nettles, “John Clark Ridpath, 1840-1900” biographical sketch from *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vo. 15, 1935. Ridpath Collection.

<sup>10</sup> Photos courtesy of the author.

Because Ridpath began his career in academia, embraced the importance of education for common people, and later advocated for the people as a Populist, as a public intellectual he bridged the roles of popular and academic historian that the profession sharply divided after 1900. An understanding of Ridpath as an historian reveals the struggles to mediate between writing for general audiences rather than for academics while maintaining scholarly integrity. An understanding of Ridpath demonstrates that historians come in shades of gray, rather than fall into the black and white categories of academic or popular historians. Although professionalization was emerging during the end of the nineteenth century, contributions by public intellectuals such as Ridpath, who were later regarded as out of touch with the academy, were just as significant to the understanding of the development of the nation and its people during an era of dramatic transformation. His attempts to mediate between popular and academic history alienated Ridpath from the academy, and he has been forgotten as a consequence.

Ridpath's historical works only partially reveal his nature as a prolific public intellectual who overcame a humble upbringing to become a respected authority on the nation's history, who sought to draw attention to literature being produced in Indiana and the Midwest, who desired to mediate between academic and popular history in his writings for average American readers, and who attempted to enact social change as a Populist Democrat political candidate and editorial writer. Ridpath's historical work is unquestionably important to understanding his life and career, but by focusing on this aspect of his life alone overlooks the entirety of his efforts to influence nineteenth century Americans. Ridpath represents the emblematic struggle between popular and academic history, and also reminds us the professionalization of history was not immediate, but a gradual process, which relegated some of the period's most prominent literary historians to obscurity. Ridpath's work raises questions of how past writers of history are

understood in contemporary contexts, only to be later disregarded, and how these writers are often much more complicated than the simple label of popular or academic historian. By conceptualizing Ridpath's contributions more broadly as a public intellectual during the end of the nineteenth century, a better understanding of his contributions to American society and the intricacies and challenges of history can be acquired, along with a greater appreciation for the unique contexts nineteenth century intellectuals faced and how these contexts in turn shaped their work.



### **Appendix I: Bibliographic Essay**

John Clark Ridpath wrote a significant number of historical volumes, but to understand him just as an historian is too narrow of an interpretation for someone who had as many career experiences. The following sources allowed me to argue that Ridpath ought to be viewed more broadly as a public intellectual instead of strictly an historian. These sources also helped me to engage with conclusions other historians have reached about Ridpath, the discipline of history, and nineteenth century intellectuals while respecting the particular challenges and contexts writers of historical narratives faced at the end of the nineteenth century.

One of the most difficult challenges I faced writing an intellectual biography of a writer as prolific as John Clark Ridpath was the incredible amount of published primary source material available. Because of the nature of this essay as an undergraduate research project and the time constraints of doing such significant research in a single academic year, it was necessary to be selective in the work I chose to incorporate into my analysis of Ridpath as a writer and public intellectual. There are countless volumes and reprints of Ridpath's major works (a comprehensive list appears in Appendix III), making it nearly impossible to even briefly study all of his writing. As a result, I found representative works within broad categories of Ridpath's publications helpful as a starting point for my analysis.

The first category of Ridpath's work I analyzed were general histories of the United States and the world, including, *A Popular History of the United States of America: From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day* (1878), *Cyclopedia of Universal History* (1885), *People's History of the United States* (1895), *Ridpath's History of the United States* (1897) and *Great Races of Mankind* (1893). These texts provided insights into how Ridpath addressed paritular

historical questions at various points in his career and also provided examples of how his work reflected empiricism and professionalization that were beginning to emerge in the discipline of history during the late nineteenth century. To understand Ridpath the historian it was necessary to grapple with these texts to see how he applied his views on the discipline rather than rely just on his philosophical writings about history. Although these were relatively few volumes in relation to the total number of popular histories Ridpath wrote during his career, they represented his time at Indiana Asbury to the end of his career. These texts also dealt with a breadth of subjects from American history to the character of the world's races, which made them good objects of study against the context of the discipline.

The second category of Ridpath's work I analyzed was political biographies. Ridpath wrote many biographies during his career, but I selected a small sample to demonstrate how Ridpath dealt with individual agency as an historian and also how his political views and historical writing often diverged from each other. I selected *Alexander Hamilton: A Study of the Revolution and the Union* (1880) and *The Life and Work of James A. Garfield* (1881) as my primary texts for analysis, but included some material from *Life and Times of William E. Gladstone* (1898) and *Life and Work of James G. Blaine* (1893) to provide more context for how he viewed biography as important for understanding society. These books were of particular value for showing that Ridpath's variety of genres and that he was not limited to writing historical chronologies. Ridpath's ability to use a single individual to build a picture of the nation's history and society was a critical element for illustrating that he wrote as a public intellectual with a broader purpose than historical inquiry.

Finally, I analyzed the theoretical, partisan and social pieces Ridpath wrote as a category for investigation. Ridpath was an active writer and commentator on issues of historical, social

and political importance, especially as editor of *The Arena*. “Is History a Science?” (1897), “The Man in History” (1893 & 1897), and “The True Evolution” (1897) showed how Ridpath grappled with issues facing writers of history and dealt with scholarly debates. Ridpath’s writing about the discipline of history demonstrated that he was engaged in intellectual questions and had a foundation in the academy. Essays such as “Our Best Literature- Is it Read?” (undated), “The Mixed Populations of Chicago” (1891) and “The Relation of Wealth to Knowledge” (undated), illustrated Ridpath’s concerns with interests of ordinary people, literacy, and education, all issues he sought to address through his popular histories and political activities. Besides providing an idea of Ridpath’s views on these topics, they were particularly helpful for showing that his primary concern as a public intellectual was for the welfare of the nation’s people.

Lastly, in order to develop Ridpath’s identity as a political candidate and commentator, I relied on partisan articles from *The Arena* to describe his views. Newspaper accounts and speeches Ridpath delivered were useful for demonstrating how he engaged voters as a candidate, but several articles including “The Bond and the Dollar” (1896), “The Cry of the Poor” (1897), “Democracy- its Origins and Prospects” (1897), “Prosperity: The Sham and the Reality” (1897) and “The Republic and the Empire” (1898) provided evidence for Ridpath’s political positions after his unsuccessful election. These writings illuminate Ridpath as a staunch Populist-Democrat by the end of his life, concerned about the nature of America’s currency, the horrors of imperialism, and the role of government in affairs of the state. This selection of work also showed how Ridpath’s views mirrored those of other Populist Democrats during the closing years of the nineteenth century.

Beyond Ridpath's published works, a student diary from 1861 and limited personal correspondence were extremely useful for understanding his private ideas about various issues. The diary in particular revealed Ridpath's views of politics, history, and religion as a student at Indiana Asbury, and ultimately created a starting point for analyzing his personal transformation regarding these questions. Because Ridpath kept very little of his own correspondence, there was a limited amount for investigation. This presented a major hurdle and sometimes required careful speculation to make sense of Ridpath as a writer. Letters exchanged between Ridpath and Hoosier poet James Whitcomb Riley gave insight into Ridpath's thoughts about his own literary career and his desire to promote writers of the Midwest. These private documents provided supporting evidence for the immense amount of published books and essays I drew on for the bulk of my analysis.

John Clark Ridpath's own writings were the central focus of my research and analysis, but a number of other sources provided context for interpreting Ridpath as a public intellectual. There is very little secondary scholarship written about Ridpath, but the work that did exist provided insights and established interpretations that I could either challenge or expand upon in my own work. One helpful source, Gregory Pfitzer, *Popular History and the Literary Marketplace, 1840-1920* (2008) argued that because Ridpath wrote grand abstractions in multivolume works which were being replaced by professional monographs, he has consequentially been ignored by academic historians. Pfitzer's work considered Ridpath as one of many nineteenth century popular history writers, and the background information about this genre was especially helpful. Although we looked at similar sources, Pfitzer focused his analysis on Ridpath's activities as a historian, while my argument focused on interpreting Ridpath more

broadly. I analyzed Ridpath as a public intellectual who also wrote historical volumes as a part of his efforts to educate and inform the masses.

Louis Christian's Smith's Ph.D. dissertation, "John Clark Ridpath- U.S. Popular Historian: A Social and Intellectual Biography and an Examination of a Genre of Literature" (1972) and his subsequent article, "A Plea for a New Appreciation of Popular History: John Clark Ridpath, a Case Study" (1981), interpreted Ridpath strictly as a popular historian during the modernization and professionalization of history. Smith also addressed Ridpath's political involvement, and it was from his writing that I first learned of his campaign as a Populist-Democrat. This was important evidence that Ridpath was more than just an historian and instead had a multitude experiences that must be considered in a thorough analysis of his career. The dissertation also led me to discover a number of useful sources, mainly the James Whitcomb Riley collection at the Lilly Library at Indiana University and newspaper accounts of Ridpath's political campaign in 1896. More broadly, Richard Hofstadter's *The Progressive Historians* (1968) provided a framework for considering how Ridpath could be interpreted as a public intellectual, engaged in similar issues as his peers.

In order to secure the background information necessary to broadly understand Ridpath's life and career, I began my research by reviewing obituaries of Ridpath that appeared in *The New York Times*, along with George Manhart's *DePauw Through the Years* (1962). Other sources, namely Clifton Phillips' writing about DePauw's History Department, *History at DePauw University* (1985) and a biographical sketch of Ridpath entitled "John Clark Ridpath, DePauw Teacher and Historian" (1957) helped me to ascertain the trajectory of Ridpath's career and also the contexts Ridpath faced as both a student and faculty member at Indiana Asbury/DePauw. To this end, the John Clark Ridpath Papers at the DePauw University Archives were also revelatory,

as they were the source of a number of biographical sketches and articles related to the historian along with many of his personal writings, including his student diary. The Archives was also helpful in providing the minutes of the Philological Literary Society, an organization Ridpath was extensively involved in as a student, and university course catalogs that offered evidence for the character of education Ridpath received and courses he taught as a faculty member. Building an immediate context for Ridpath's early life and career was necessary in order to demonstrate that his motivation to educate and inform the populace were a consistent strand throughout his lifetime.

Ridpath's efforts to promote the literary reputation of Indiana and the Midwest as a member of the Western Association of Writers provided some of the more compelling evidence that Ridpath's concerns stretched beyond writing histories and that he should be viewed more comprehensively as a public intellectual. The Western Association of Writers Papers and the Smith Collection from the Indiana State Library in Indianapolis provided a number of programs, meeting minutes and other documents that described the character of the society, and an article by Ray Boomhower, "The Western Association of Writers" (2003) helped to fill in some of the background and contextualize the organization as a literary institution in Indiana. Personal relationships Ridpath developed as a member of this association indicate that his peers were more literary types than historians, and the variety of work Ridpath produced including orations and poems suggest he also viewed himself more as a writer than a historian. Ridpath's relationship with James Whitcomb Riley, revealed through Riley's papers at the Lilly Library, provided evidence for Ridpath's esteemed reputation as a writer and the significant importance of this network of writers in Ridpath's life. Although Ridpath was engaged in writing and an active member of the Western Association of Writers, his absence in Arthur Shumaker's *A*

*History of Indiana Literature* (1962) indicated he has been too narrowly interpreted as an historian and that Shumaker (whose analysis focused on writers of fiction) considered Ridpath an historian rather than a public intellectual and writer committed to advancing the region's literary reputation.

To facilitate an analysis the tenor of Ridpath's historical work in light of the emerging empirical, professional trends in the discipline of history and in relation to his contemporaries, it was necessary to create an image of how scholarly issues influenced Ridpath's writing. A number of sources were helpful in describing the character of history and its transformation during the end of the nineteenth century. Among those were Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob's *Telling the Truth About History* (1994), John Arnold's *History: A Very Short Introduction* (2000), Anna Green and Kathleen Troup's *The Houses of History* (1999) and Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream* (1988). All of these sources contributed to my understanding of history as becoming more embedded in empirical foundations and the impact of professionalization on the discipline. Another text, Peter Charles Hoffer's *Past Imperfect* (2007) helped me to discern the character of popular historical writing and also assess Ridpath's work in light of other popular, non-academic writers of history, such as George Bancroft. To sufficiently address Ridpath's views on race and Social Darwinism in his historical writing, I relied on George Fredrickson's *The Black Image in the White Mind* (1971), Thomas Gossett's *Race: The History of an American Idea* (1963) and I.A. Newby's *Jim Crow's Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900-1930* (1965) in order to describe how Ridpath's views were similar to those of contemporary historians writing at the end of the century. By playing Ridpath's historical writing against the conventions of academic writers, I demonstrated that Ridpath's writing had intellectual foundations, and as a writer he mediated between a desire to write academic work

and a commitment to popular audiences. A collection of Frederick Jackson Turner's writings, *The Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner* (1938) and Arthur Link's edited volumes of *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (1971) also allowed me to show that these efforts were in line with other mainstream, respected intellectuals rather than an aberration. Because so much of Ridpath's career was dedicated to historical writing, developing this context was critical for advancing the argument that as a writer of histories, Ridpath was not unlike his contemporaries.

As a public intellectual, Ridpath's political engagement during the 1890s was another way he sought to reach and influence popular audiences. Newspaper accounts of Ridpath's 1896 Congressional campaign, stump speeches, and Ridpath's writings for *The Arena* revealed his Populist political views, but it was necessary to contextualize these views to demonstrate that Ridpath's partisan views were similar to other Populist Democrats and that he was influenced by nineteenth century economic changes. I used Jesse Weik's *History of Putnam County Indiana* (1910) to describe the character of late nineteenth century Putnam County and Clifton Phillips' *Indiana in Transition, 1880-1920* (1968) to assess the political situation in Indiana at the end of the century. Robert C. McMath Jr.'s, *American Populism, A Social History, 1877-1898* (1993) provided context on Populists and Democrats. William Jennings Bryan's "Cross of Gold Speech" was used to show that Ridpath and Bryan harbored similar positions during the 1896 campaign and that Ridpath's positions were representative of other individuals pursuing political office on the Populist Democrat platform. By adding this context I illustrated that not only did Ridpath's populism not occur within a vacuum, his progressive views were similar to those expressed by other politically minded individuals and candidates and that these opinions were formed as a direct result of Ridpath's contexts and his efforts to influence the lives of ordinary Americans.



This brief essay highlights a number of sources that proved extremely valuable in constructing an analysis of John Clark Ridpath and his writing. As a writer of histories, a public intellectual and a politician, Ridpath was a tremendously complex figure. Although Ridpath produced a significant amount of writing and historical scholarship, the scarcity of personal correspondence he left behind made this task difficult. This limitation combined with the various contexts faced by intellectuals at the end of the nineteenth century required that I make sense of Ridpath's life and work through a wide diversity of sources to better understand his motivations and views in relation to his peers. Broadly interpreting Ridpath as a writer and public intellectual, deeply involved in academic issues, demonstrates his importance as an intellectual figure at a transformational moment for history writing and society at the end of the nineteenth century. Such a reevaluation also shows that labels matter and that by reconsidering how individuals' careers are understood, the work and achievements of men forgotten such as John Clark Ridpath can be more effectively analyzed and appreciated.



## Appendix II: Bibliography and Works Cited

### Works of John Clark Ridpath:

Ridpath, John Clark. *Alexander Hamilton: A Study of the Revolution and the Union*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Jones Brothers Publishing Company, 1880.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Bond and the Dollar." *The Arena* 15 (1896): 266-278, 439-447.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Cry of the Poor." *The Arena* 18 (1897): 407-418.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Cyclopedia of Universal History*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Jones Brothers Publishing Company, 1885.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Democracy- Its Origins and Prospects." *The Arena* (March 1897): 677-695.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Great Races of Mankind*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Jones Brothers Publishing Company, 1893.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Is History a Science?" *The Arena* (November 1897): 687-706.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Life and Times of William E. Gladstone*. New York: Peter Fenelon Collier Publisher, 1898.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Life and Work of James A. Garfield*. Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers and Publishing, 1881.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Life and Work of James G. Blaine*. Philadelphia, PA: Historical Publishing Company, 1893.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Man in History." *The Arena* (1897): 815-830.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Man in History: An Oration for the Columbian Year." *Indiana Historical Society Publications* 2, no. 7 (1893): 269-316.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Mixed Populations of Chicago." *The Chautauquan* 12, no. 4 (1891): 483-493.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Our Best Literature—Is it Read?" *Not Published, Undated*.

\_\_\_\_\_. *People's History of the United States*. Philadelphia, PA: Historical Publishing Co., 1895.

\_\_\_\_\_. *A Popular History of the United States of America: From The Aboriginal Times to the Present Day*. New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1878.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Prosperity: The Sham and the Reality." *The Arena* 18 (1897): 486-504.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Relation of Wealth to Knowledge" *Not Published, Undated Manuscript*.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Republic and the Empire." *The Arena* 20 (1898): 344-363.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Ridpath's History of the United States*. Philadelphia: Historical Publishing Company, 1897.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The True Evolution." *The Arena* (1897): 1097-1114.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Washington Charles DePauw, Founder of DePauw University." *The Methodist Review* 6 (1890): 383-398.

Cover Image Courtesy of Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Ind.

Other Works:

*American Association of University Professors 1915 Declaration of Principles.*

<http://www.campus-watch.org/article/id/566>.

“American History.” *The American Historical Review* 6, no. 1 (Oct. 1900):183.

“Annual Catalogue of Indiana Asbury University, 1860.” Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, DePauw University, Greencastle Ind.

“Annual Catalogue of Indiana Asbury University, 1869.” Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, DePauw University, Greencastle Ind.

“Annual Catalogue of Indiana Asbury University, 1871.” Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, DePauw University, Greencastle Ind.

“Annual Catalogue of Indiana Asbury University, 1874.” Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, DePauw University, Greencastle Ind.

Appleby, Joyce, Hunt, Lynn and Jacob, Margaret. *Telling the Truth About History*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1994.

“Arbor Day at DePauw.” *The Greencastle Daily Sun*, May 2, 1890, 1.

Arnold, John H. *History: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Boomhower, Ray E. “The Western Association of Writers.” *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* 15, no. 2 (2003): 41-47.

Bryan, William Jennings. “Cross of Gold Speech.” *History Matters*. George Mason University. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5354>.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The First Battle*. Chicago, IL: W.B. Conkey Co., 1896.

“Dr. Ridpath” *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, November 2, 1896.

“Death of John C. Ridpath.” *New York Times*, August 1, 1900, 7.

Ehrmann, Bertha K. “Reminiscences of Max Ehrmann.” *Indiana Magazine of History* 46, no. 3 (Sept. 1950): 249-258.

Elson, Ruth Miller. *Guardians of Tradition*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1964.

“Faris, George Washington, (1854-1914).” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*. United States Congress.

<http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=F000016>

- “For Congress.” *Greencastle Star Press*, November 7, 1896.
- Fredrickson, George M. *The Black Image in the White Mind*. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
- Gaddis, John Lewis. *The Landscape of History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Gossett, Thomas E. *Race: The History of an American Idea*. New York: Schocken Books, 1963.
- “A Grand Galaxy.” *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, October 31, 1896.
- “A Grand Outpouring.” *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, October 31, 1896.
- Green, Anna, and Kathleen Troup. *The Houses of History*. New York: New York University Press, 1999.
- Gross, Robert A. “Building a National Literature: The United States 1800-1890,” in *A Companion to the History of the Book*, edited by Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose, 315-328. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Guthrie, Wayne. “Ringside in Hoosierland,” *Indianapolis News*, April 30, 1965.
- Gutman, Herbert G, ed. *Who Built America? Vol. I*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1989.
- Handlin, Lilian. “Bancroft, George.” *American National Biography Online*.  
<http://www.anb.org/articles/14/14-00034.html>.
- Hoffer, Peter Charles. *Past Imperfect*. New York: Public Affairs, 2007.
- Hofstadter, Richard. *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Progressive Historians*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Social Darwinism in American Thought*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944.
- “James Whitcomb Riley Papers.” The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind.
- “John Clark Ridpath.” *DePauw Palladium*, January 28, 1901, p. 1.
- “John Clark Ridpath.” *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, August 8, 1896.
- “John Clark Ridpath Papers.” Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Ind.
- Jones, Judy, and William Wilson. *An Incomplete Education*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2006.
- LaFeber, Walter. *The New Empire*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963.

- Link, Arthur S. ed. *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971.
- Madison, James H. *The Indiana Way: A State History*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986.
- Manhart, George M. *The Department of History at DePauw University*. Greencastle, IN: DePauw University, 1969.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *DePauw Through the Years, Vol. 1*. Greencastle, Indiana: DePauw University, 1962.
- “Marker Dedication is Set for Oct. 17, Ridpath, Weik to be Honored.” *The Daily Banner*, October 12, 1965.
- Mason, Augustus Lynch. *The Romance and Tragedy of Pioneer Life*. Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers and Company, 1884.
- McMath, Robert C., Jr. *American Populism, A Social History, 1877-1898*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1993.
- Newby, I.A. *Jim Crow’s Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900-1930*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1965.
- Nordyke, Clinton D. “Descendants of John Ridpath.” Putnam County Public Library Local History Section.
- “The People’s Cause.” *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, October 9, 1896.
- Novick, Peter. *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Parsons, Stanley B., Michael J. Dubin and Karen Toombs Parsons, *United States Congressional Districts, 1883-1913*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1990.
- Pfitzer, Gregory M. *Popular History and the Literary Marketplace, 1840-1920*. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008.
- Phillips, Clifton J. “John Clark Ridpath, DePauw Teacher and Historian.” *DePauw Alumnus*, December 1957, 2-3.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *History at DePauw University*. Greencastle, IN: DePauw University, 1985.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Bureau & Indiana Historical Society, 1968.

- “Philological Literary Society Minutes, 1854-1874.” Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Ind.
- Pierce, George William. “Industrial History of Greencastle.” March 1, 1929. “History Seminar Papers, Greencastle 1929.” Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Ind.
- “Populists Convene.” *Greencastle Evening Democrat*, August 14, 1896.
- Putnam County Sesquicentennial Committee. *Putnam County History, Indiana Sesquicentennial 1966*. 1966.
- “Ridpath, The Historian.” *New York Times*, August 4, 1900, BR8.
- Rudolph, Frederick. *The American College and University*. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1962.
- Shaw, Albert. “James Clark Ridpath: A Typical Man of the Ohio Valley and the Old Northwest.” *The Review of Reviews* 11 (January-June 1895).
- Shumaker, Arthur W. *A History of Indiana Literature*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1962.
- Sloane, William M. “History and Democracy.” *The American Historical Review* 1, no. 1 (1895): 1-23.
- “Smith Collection.” Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Ind.
- Smith, Chris. “A Plea for a New Appreciation of Popular History: John Clark Ridpath, a Case Study.” *Indiana Magazine of History* 77, no. 3 (1981): 205-230.
- Smith, Louis Christian. “John Clark Ridpath- U.S. Popular Historian: A Social and Intellectual Biography and an Examination of a Genre of Literature.” Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois-Champaign Urbana, 1972.
- “Tucker W. Taylor Collection” Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Ind.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1938.
- Weik, Jesse W. *History of Putnam County Indiana*. Indianapolis, IN: B.F. Bowen & Co., 1910.
- “Western Association of Writers Papers.” Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Ind.
- Woodburn, James Albert. *History of Indiana University, Vol. I. 1820-1902*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1940.



### Appendix III: The Writings and Publications of John Clark Ridpath

This bibliography of the works of John Clark Ridpath has been adapted and revised from an earlier work, *John Clark Ridpath- U.S. Popular Historian: A Social and Intellectual Biography and an Examination of a Genre of Literature*, a Ph.D. dissertation written by Louis Christian Smith at the University of Illinois-Champaign Urbana, 1972.

#### **Books:**

*Arranged according to dates of publication, some titles abbreviated for subsequent editions*

Ridpath, John Clark. *History of the United States Prepared Especially for Schools*. Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers & Co., 1874.

\_\_\_\_\_. *History of the United States Prepared Especially for Schools*. Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers & Co., 1875.

\_\_\_\_\_. *A Popular History of the United States of America, From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day: Embracing an Account of the Aboriginies; the Norsemen in the New World; the Discoveries by the Spaniards, English and French; the Planting of Settlements; the Growth of the Colonies; the Struggle for Liberty in the Revolution; the Establishment of the Union, the Development of the Nation; the Civil War; and the Centennial of Independence*. Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers & Co., 1876.

\_\_\_\_\_. *A Popular History of the United States of America*. New York, NY: Nelson & Phillips, 1877.

\_\_\_\_\_. *A Popular History of the United States From the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day*. New York, NY: Nelson and Philips, 1878.

\_\_\_\_\_. *An Inductive Grammar of the English Language For the Use of Common and Graded Schools*. Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers and Co., 1878.

\_\_\_\_\_. *History of the United States Prepared Especially for Schools*. Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers and Co., 1878.

\_\_\_\_\_. *History of the United States Prepared Especially for Schools*. Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers and Co., 1880.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Life of James A. Garfield, Embracing an Account of the Scenes and Incidents of His Boyhood; His Valor as a Soldier; His Career as a Statesman; His Election to the Presidency; and the Tragic Story of His Death*. Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers and Co., 1881.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Life of James A. Garfield*. New York, NY: Phillips and Hunt, 1881.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Life and Trial of Guiteau the Assassin: Embracing a Sketch of His Early Career; His Dastardly Attack Upon the President; The Conduct of the Murderer in Prison; His Autobiography; the Strange Drama in the Court Room; The Testimony of Experts and Celebrated Witnesses; The Progress of Judicial Proceeding; Striking Scenes and the*

- Trial and the Verdict and THE SENTENCE OF DEATH.* Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers & Co., 1881.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Alexander Hamilton: A Study of the Revolution and the Union.* Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers & Co., 1881.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Life and Work of James A. Garfield.* Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers and Co., 1882.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Life and Trial of Guiteau the Assassin.* Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers & Co., 1882.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Alexander Hamilton: A Study of the Revolution and the Union.* Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers & Co., 1883.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Popular History of the United States of America.* New York, NY: Phillips and Hunt, 1883.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Lives of the Presidents.* Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers & Co., 1884.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Cyclopedia of Universal History; Being an Account of the Principal Events in the Career of the Human Race, From the Beginning of Civilization to the Present Time.* 4 vols. Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers & Co., 1885.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Cyclopedia of Universal History.* 2 vols. in 3. Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers & Co., 1885.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Cyclopedia of Universal History.* 4 vols. Toledo, OH: W.W. Squire, 1885.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *History of the United States Prepared Especially for Schools on a New and Comprehensive Plan Embracing the Features of Lyman's Historical Chart.* New York, NY: American Book Co., 1885.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *DePauw University: Semi-Centennial Reminiscences and Historical Addresses, 1837-1887.* Greencastle, IN: DePauw University, 1887.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Beyond the Sierras: A Tour of Sixty Days through the Valleys of California.* Indianapolis, IN: American Horticulture Society, 1888.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Popular History of the United States of America...The Whole Brought Down to the Year 1889.* Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers Publishing Co., 1889.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *History of the United States Prepared Especially for Schools.* New York, NY: American Book Co., 1889.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Cyclopedia of Universal History.* 9 vols. Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers Publishing Co., 1890.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *History of the United States: the Story of our Country in Brief Chapters for Pupils of the Public Schools.* Indianapolis, IN: Indiana School Book Co., 1891.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Citizen Soldier, His Part in War and Peace.* Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers & Co., 1892.

- Ridpath, John Clark, James G. Blaine, J.W. Buel and Benjamin Butterworth. *Columbus and Columbia*. Seattle, WA: Dominion Publishing, 1892.
- Ridpath, John Clark. *The Man in History*. Indianapolis, IN: The Bowen-Merrill Co., 1893.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Columbian Edition: A Popular History of the United States*. New York, NY: The United States History Co., 1893.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Great Races of Mankind: An Account of the Ethnic Origin, Primitive Estate; Early Migrations, Social Evolution and Present Conditions and Promises of the Principal Families of Men, together with a Preliminary Inquiry on the Time, Place and Manner of the Beginning*. 4 vols. Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers & Co., 1893.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *United States: A History: The Most Complete and Most Popular History of the United States of America from the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day*. Boston, MA: The United States History Co., 1893.
- Ridpath, John Clark and General Seldon Connors and other eminent friends of Mr. Blaine, *Life and Work of James G. Blaine*. Philadelphia, PA: Historical Publishing Co., 1893.
- Ridpath, John Clark. *Ridpath's Universal History*. 8 vols. New York, NY: Merrill and Baker, 1894.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Pictorial History of the United States*. Philadelphia, PA: Historical Publishing Co., 1894.
- Ridpath, John Clark and George T. Bryan, eds. *Famous Paintings of the World*. New York, NY: Fine Art Publishing Co., 1895.
- Ridpath, John Clark et. al. *French Art and Scenery: Nearly Two Hundred Photographic Reproductions of Great French Paintings, One Hundred Beautiful Views of the Scenery, Palaces, Parks, Monuments and Historical Buildings of France*. New York, NY: Bryan, Taylor & Co., 1895.
- Taylor William. *Story of My Life: An Account of What I Have Thought and Said and Done in my Ministry of More than 53 Years in Christian Lands and Among the Heathen*. Edited by John Clark Ridpath. New York, NY: No Publisher Given, 1895.
- Ridpath, John Clark, compiler and editor. *Notable Events of the Nineteenth Century: Great Deeds of Men and Nations and the Progress of the World, in a Series of Short Studies*. New York, NY: The Christian Herald, 1896.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Editor. *The New National Encyclopedia of Arts, Sciences, History, Biography, Geography, Statistics and General Knowledge With Thousands of Engravings, Colored Maps and Charts*. 4 vols. New York, NY: National Encyclopedia Company, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Bond and the Dollar*. Boston, MA: The Arena Publishing Co., 1896.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Democracy: Its Origins and Prospects*. Boston, MA: The Arena Publishing Co., 1897.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Cry of the Poor: Exposition of the Causes of the Onfall of Poverty on the American People*. Boston, MA: The Arena Publishing Co., 1897.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Prosperity: The Sham and the Reality*. Boston, MA: The Arena Publishing Co., 1897.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Spurious Bimetallism*. Boston, MA: The Arena Publishing Co., 1897.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The True Inwardness of Wall Street: A Historical Expose of the Money Power*. Boston, MA: The Arena Publishing Co., 1897.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ridpath's History of the United States*. Philadelphia: Historical Publishing Company, 1897.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ridpath's History of the World*. 8 vols. New York, NY: Merrill and Baker, 1897.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Family History of the United States*. Chicago, IL: Monarch Book Co., 1897.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Life and Times of William Gladstone: An Account of His Ancestry and Boyhood, His Career at Eton and Oxford; His Entrance into Public Life; His Rise to Leadership and Fame; His Genius as Statesman and Author, and His Influence on the Progress of the Nineteenth Century*. Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers Publishing Co., 1898.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *James Otis: The Pre-Revolutionist. A Brief Interpretation of the Life and Work of a Patriot*. Chicago, IL: The University Association, 1898.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Editor. *The Ridpath Library of Universal Literature: A Biographical and Bibliographical Summary of the World's Most Eminent Authors, Including the Choicest Extracts and Masterpieces from their Writings, Comprising the Best Features of Many Celebrated Compilations, notably the Guernsey Collection, the DePuy Collection, the Ridpath Collection, all Carefully Rev. and Arranged by a Corps of the Most Capable Scholars*. 25 vols. New York, NY: The Globe Publishing Co., 1898.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Editor. *The Ridpath Library of Universal Literature*. 25 vols. New York, NY: The Globe Publishing Co., 1900.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Twentieth Century Edition: People's History of the United States*. Philadelphia, PA: The National Publishing Co., 1899.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ridpath's History of the World*. 5 vols. Cincinnati, OH: Jones Brothers Publishing Co., 1899.
- Ridpath, John Clark and Edward S. Ellis. *The Story of South Africa*. Philadelphia, PA: Elliot Publishing Co., 1899.
- Ridpath, John Clark, James W. Buel, J. Franklin Jameson, and Marcus J. Wright. *Library of American History*. 6 vols. Washington: The Historical Publishing Co., 1900.
- Ridpath, John Clark with additions by Rev. Franklin Noble. *Imperial Edition: History of the United States From Aboriginal Times to the Present Day*. 5 vols. New York, NY: D.A. McKinley Co., 1902.

- Ridpath, John Clark. *Art and Artists of All Nations, Over Four Hundred Photographic Reproductions of Great Paintings Including About One Hundred of the Greatest Paintings Exhibited in the Department of Fine Arts at the World's Columbian Exposition*. Knight & Brown, 1902.
- Ridpath, John Clark and Edward S. Ellis. *The Story of South Africa*. World Publishing Co., 1902.
- Ridpath, John Clark and James W. Buel. *Chronology of Events*. 2 vols. Washington: National University Society, 1904.
- Ridpath, John Clark. *The New Complete History of the United States of America*. 15 vols. Washington: The Ridpath History Co., 1904.
- Ridpath, John Clark and Marcus Joseph Wrights, Editors. *Official Portfolio of War and Nation: A Graphic and Pictorial History Prepared Directly from the Government Records in the Departments of War and Statistics*. Washington: War Department, 1907.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Battles and Commanders of the Civil War: A Graphic and Pictorial History Prepared Directly from the Government Records in the Departments of War and Statistics*. Washington: War Department, 1908.
- Ridpath, John Clark and Albert Talmon Morgan. *The Bank of the Beast: Containing The Bond and the Dollar, by John Clark Ridpath and The Bank of the Beast by Col. Albert Talmon Morgan*. Denver, CO: Ware & Co., 1910.
- Ridpath, John Clark. *Ridpath's History of the World*. 9 vols. Cincinnati, OH: The Jones Brothers Publishing Co., 1910.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *History of the United States from Aboriginal Times to Taft's Administration*. 4 vols. New York, NY: Review of Reviews Co., 1911.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *With the World's People*. 8 vols. Cincinnati, OH: The Jones Brothers Co., 1911.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The New Complete History of the United States of America*. Chicago, IL: Elliott-Madison Co., 1914.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *With the World's People*. Washington: The Jones Brothers Co., 1916.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The New Complete History of the United States of America*. 12 vols. Chicago: T.E. Kelly, 1916.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The New Complete History of the United States of America*. Ridpath History Company, 1918.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The New Complete History of the United States of America*. Chicago: T.E. Kelly, 1920.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ridpath's History of the World*. Cincinnati, OH: The Jones Brothers Co., 1923.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ridpath's History of the World*. 9 vols. Edited by Henri Klein, Winfred Root and Harry Elmer Barnes. Cincinnati, OH: The Ridpath Historical Society, 1936-1941.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Memorable Addresses by American Patriots*. Chicago, IL: Elliott- Madison Co., n.d.

*\*\*This list does not include non-English language editions of Ridpath's works\*\**

### Articles:

*Arranged chronologically according to dates of publication*

\_\_\_\_\_. "Our Best Literature—Is it Read?" *Not Published, Undated*.

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Note on the Louisiana Purchase." *National Journal of Education* 12 (1880): 218-219.

\_\_\_\_\_. "On Local History." *The Greencastle Daily Sun*. May 2, 1890: 1-3.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Persistency of Ethnic Traits." In *Western Association of Writers: A Souvenir of the Fourth Annual Convention*, edited by Mary E. Cardwill and L. May Wheeler, pp. 47-62. Richmond, Indiana, 1890.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Washington C. DePauw, Founder of DePauw University." *The Methodist Review* 72 (1890): 390-398.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Mixed Populations of Chicago." *The Chautauquan* 12 (1891): 484-493.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Battle of Bunker Hill." *The Chautauquan* 14 (1891): 1-10.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Battle of Long Island." *The Chautauquan* 14 (1891): 131-135.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Christopher Columbus." *Western Christian Advocate*. October 19, 1892: 667-669.

\_\_\_\_\_. "James Whitcomb Riley." *The Book News* 114 (1892): 278-281.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Perry's Victory on Lake Erie." *The Chautauquan* 15 (1892): 135-142.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Significance of the Discovery of America." *The Illustrated World's Fair* 1 (1893): 164-168.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Epoch and a Book." *The Arena* 13 (1895): 74-87.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Bond and the Dollar." *The Arena* 15 (1896): 266-278, 439-447, 555-662.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Limitation as a Remedy." *The Arena* 15 (1896): 741-754.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Editor's Evening." *The Arena*. April, 1897- September, 1898.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Democracy—Its Origins and Prospects." *The Arena* 17 (1897): 677-693.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Man in History." *The Arena* 17 (1897): 815-830.

\_\_\_\_\_. "True Evolution." *The Arena* 17 (1897): 1097-1114.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Citadel of the Money Power: True Inwardness of Wall Street." *The Arena* 18 (1897): 9-23.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Battle of the Money Metals: Bimetallism Extinguished." *The Arena* 18 (1897): 180-191.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Our Totem: The American Eagle." *The Arena* 18 (1897): 278-283.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "An Open Letter to President Andrews on his Resignation from the Presidency of Brown University." *The Arena* 18 (1897): 399-402.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Cry of the Poor." *The Arena* 18 (1897): 407-418.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Prosperity: The Sham and the Reality." *The Arena* 18 (1897): 486-504.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Is History a Science." *The Arena* 18 (1897) 687-706.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Man in Bronze: William Lloyd Garrison." *The Arena* 18 (1897): 714-716.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Aryan at Christmas." *The Arena* 18 (1897): 727-729.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Shall the United States be Europeanized?" *The Arena* 18 (1897): 827-833.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Finances and Our Party Leaders." *The Arena* 19 (1898): 157-186.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Studies of the Money Question: Notes on the Reform of the Currency." *The Arena* 19 (1898): 543-563.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Three Epochs of Democracy and Three Men." *The Arena* 19 (1898): 543-563.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "President McKinley and the Waldorf-Astoria Revel." *The Arena* 19 (1898): 686-707.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Invisible Empire." *The Arena* 19 (1898) 828-840.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Reconquest of the House of Representatives." *The Arena* 20 (1898): 118-132.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The United States and the Concert of Europe." *The Arena* 20 (1898): 145-167.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Republic and the Empire." *The Arena* 20 (1898): 344-363.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Extinction of Royal Houses." *The Arena* 20 (1898): 378-387.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Our War Veterans: The Men Who Fought the Battle." *The Arena* 20 (1898): 412-416.

**Poetry:**

*Arranged chronologically according to dates of publication*

- Ridpath, John Clark. "Dante." *The Arena* 17 (1897): 1120.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "La Sieole." *The Arena* 18 (1897): 283.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Abraham Lincoln—Our Man of Destiny." *The Arena* 18 (1897): 425.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Physician's Last Call." *The Arena* 18 (1897): 571.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Franklin." *The Arena* 18 (1897): 716.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Journey and Sleep." *The Arena* 18 (1897): 859.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Orion: On the Old Bay I Saw Arise Last Night." *The Arena* 19 (1898): 140.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Priscilla." *The Arena* 19 (1898): 285.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Ecce Homo." *The Arena* 19 (1898): 428.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Flight and Failing." *The Arena* 19 (1898): 720.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Hobson of Alabama." *The Arena* 20 (1898): 110-111.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "William Shakespeare: Sublime through the Ages." *The Arena* 20 (1897): 981.