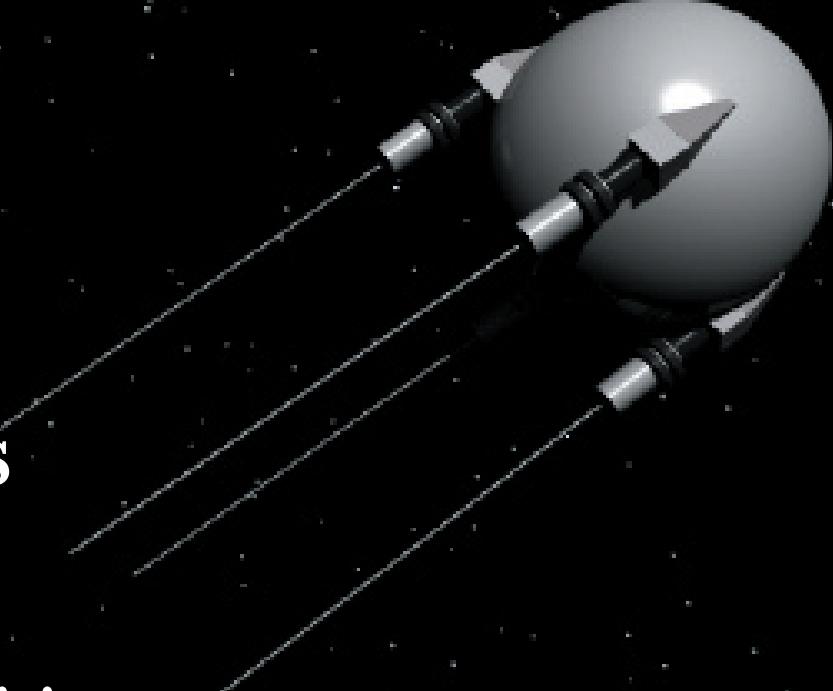


# AUM HISTORICAL REVIEW

Issue #1 Winter 2012



**THE SPACE  
RACE BEGINS**

**Being an  
Anti-Castro Activist**

**Brown v. Board  
of Education**

**Review: Freedom Riders  
How Worthwhile?**

## **AUM Historical Review**

# 1, Winter 2012

### **Editor**

Graydon Rust

### **Associate Editors**

Allison Hamilton

Tracy Wilson

### **Graphic Designers**

Sam Blakely

Melissa Holston (cover)

### **Advisor**

Steven Gish

### **Photographs**

Alabama Department of Archives and History

Rob Atkins (Space Race, contents page)

Frank Williams, Auburn University at Montgomery

Joseph Postiglione / Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (Freedom Riders, contents page)

Cameron Whitman (Brown v. Board, contents page)

### **Printing**

Wells Printing, Montgomery, AL

© 2012, AUM Historical Journal

Published by the Chi Psi Chapter of the Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society

Auburn University at Montgomery, P.O. Box 244023, Montgomery, AL 36124-4023

The ideas expressed in these essays are the sole responsibility of their respective authors and contributors and do not necessarily represent the official statements, opinions, or policies of Auburn University at Montgomery or the Department of History at AUM. Neither Auburn University at Montgomery nor the Department of History at AUM accept any liability for the content of this journal.





Space Race



Freedom Riders



Brown v. Board

## Contents

Introduction <i>Graydon Rust</i>	4
The Space Race Begins <i>Allison Hamilton</i>	5
Freedom Riders: Soldiers in a Non-Violent Army <i>Tracy Wilson</i>	17
A Pirate's Life for Me: Craig T. Sheldon and Anti-Communism <i>Landon Ledbetter</i>	21
A Conversation with Dr. Wyatt Wells <i>Jennifer Kellum</i>	37
Brown v. Board: Alabama's Initial Reaction <i>Elizabeth Elder</i>	41
Contributors	52
Call for papers	52

# Introduction

In late January 2011, Dr. Steven Gish proposed his idea for the creation of a student-edited history journal and immediately the suggestion garnered tremendous support. Since then, time has zoomed by and I cannot believe that we are now beginning another calendar year. With that said, I am thrilled to introduce to you the inaugural issue of the AUM Historical Review. Each year, the History Department recognizes quality student scholarship with the presentation of two awards—the Dodd and Morse paper prizes—to the authors of that year's preeminent essays, and the Review serves to further that acknowledgment. With the creation of this journal, we hope to provide a forum of appreciation for not only the top two papers of the year, but to all exemplary historical work produced by students at Auburn University at Montgomery. Furthermore, we hope that we can instill both a sense of camaraderie among history majors and a greater interest in history throughout the entire AUM community while also providing students with experience in all aspects of the editing world.

In our first issue, we have unintentionally acquired a theme centered on Alabama history.

While we agreed that the criteria should be open to allow for works from all areas, I suppose it is only natural for the best works to come from the matter most familiar and readily accessible for research. This year's award-winning papers include Allison Hamilton's "The Space Race Begins" and Landon Ledbetter's "A Pirate's Life for Me: Craig T. Sheldon and Anti-Communism," winning the Dodd and Morse prizes respectively. In addition to these, this issue also includes an essay titled "Brown v. Board—Alabama's Initial Reaction" by Elizabeth Elder, a review of the 2011 PBS documentary Freedom Riders and an interview with AUM's own Dr. Wyatt Wells, conducted by Jennifer Kellum.

There are a number of individuals whom I would like to thank for their support and efforts in producing the AUM Historical Review. Without them, none of this would have been possible. I would first like to express gratitude to the Associate Editors, Tracy Wilson and Allison Hamilton, for their constant hard work and dedication, and to Dr. Gish for not only providing us with this opportunity but also for his continuous guidance and energy throughout the process. Thanks also go to Breuna Baine and her Typogra-

phy 2 students in the Department of Fine Arts for the numerous designs that they produced and to Sam Blakely and Melissa Holston for contributing the chosen designs and the hours that they put in to implement them. I am obliged to the staff at the Alabama Department of Archives and History for their encouragement, for providing us with the photographs included throughout the Review, and for allowing us to distribute copies at the Archives itself. Specifically, I would like to thank Dr. Norwood Kerr for answering the numerous editing questions that I came across and for handling all the duties of my job on the many occasions that I was preoccupied with the journal, and also Steve Murray for the advice and opportunities he provided. I am also grateful to Dr. Lee Farrow for assisting in the development of a number of our papers as the authors progressed through her Historical Methods course. Most importantly of all, I would like to thank all of the individuals who contributed pieces to the Review for the research, writing, and revisions that they put forth, as well as for the patience that they displayed as I bombarded them with an incessant chain of emails.

Graydon Rust, Editor

## The Space Race Begins

Allison Hamilton



*Dr. Wernher von Braun, the leading missile expert in the world and head of the team that developed the Jupiter C rocket at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama.*  
(Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama)

The Cold War was much more than a series of battles for psychological gains; it expanded beyond the reaches of the atmosphere and penetrated the great unknown—outer space. When the United States and the Soviet Union first began scrambling to stake their claim on the experienced German

scientists who developed the V-2 rockets, its aims were weapons, not space exploration. However, after countless experiments and tests using these missiles it was clear that

there was greater potential for them outside of mass destruction. Through fierce competition the arms race evolved into a space race between the Soviet Union and the U.S. that spanned from 1945 to 1969. In competing to

put men and satellites in space, the two nations constantly pushed one another forward, and eventually past what humans once thought possible.

On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union successfully launched *Sputnik*, the world's first satellite. It shook the free world as it flashed across the night sky—its mystery and wonder beautiful, yet terrifying. Much of the world marveled in disbelief. The French exclaimed, "We had expected the Americans to do it; it was the Russians who succeeded."<sup>1</sup> The United States understood the implications of such an immense scientific gain and over the next few months it scrambled to put its own satellite into orbit. The journey was long and, at times, embarrassing. Officials in Washington failed to make crucial decisions. Early attempts crashed and burned on the launch pad. At times it seemed that the U.S. would never reach outer space—that is, until the government shifted its eyes to the Redstone Arsenal research facility in Huntsville, Alabama. Within only a few short months, the scientists

there were able to assemble and successfully fire a rocket which would eventually carry the U.S. into space. As the Jupiter C rocket soared into the air it took the morale of the American people with it. Not only did it secure jobs for the people of Huntsville, Alabama, it showed the nation that the space race was far from over.

After World War II the alliance of convenience between the United States and the Soviet Union had fallen apart. The nations were on opposite ends of the modern political spectrum—one the beacon for capitalism and free trade, the other the father of communism. When Nazi Germany was defeated in 1945, the two nations raced to attain any resources that could help them promote their own agendas on the world stage. Perhaps the most vital resources lay in the minds of the hundreds of scientists who had catapulted Germany ahead of the international scientific community with their work on the V-2 rocket—a weapon that had been successfully fired some 25,000 times and had inflicted over 30,000 casualties in England alone.<sup>2</sup> The nation that reached these scientists first would hold the key to not

only nuclear weapons, but the advancement of modern technology as a whole. The stage was set and the space race, not to mention the Cold War, had begun.

On May 27, 1945, Major Robert Staver of the U.S. Army received an order from Colonel Holger Toftoy to sweep into the region of Thuringia, some 4,540 square miles of German territory soon to be under Soviet control, and “evacuate all German missile technicians and their families... and take them to the American zone.”<sup>3</sup> With only twenty-one days until the Soviets would occupy the region, Staver began his scramble to convince some 500 men to join the side of the United States. In the first few days of the mission it seemed that all was hopeless. With no promise of permanent employment or security for their families, many of the scientists and technicians turned the Americans down. It was not until Wernher von Braun, the leading missile expert in the world, flew to Nordhausen to help the Americans persuade the scientists that they began signing up in droves. However, their compliance was not the only problem.<sup>4</sup>

As Staver sought to persuade the Germans, Washington was striving to determine whether the German scientists would even be welcome in the U.S. Debates raged in the “War, Justice, Commerce, and State Departments.” The officials were not only fearful of possibly disgracing American scientists who had been working on missile projects of their own, but also a potential Nazi uprising on American soil. Howard P. Robertson of the Field Information Agency, Technical, claimed, “In allowing the Peenemunde boys to continue their developments, we are perpetuating the activities of a group which, if ever allowed to return to Germany or to communicate with Germany, can in fact contribute to Germany’s ability to make war.” However, advisors in closer connection with President Truman convinced him that, in light of a more powerful Soviet Union, refusing the scientists would be a foolish and maybe even fatal decision. After weighing the pros and cons, President Truman concluded that it was in the best interest of the nation to put pride aside and utilize the more-than-willing

# The Space Race Begins

---

German scientists in the advancement of American rocketry through Operation Overcast, “a secret plan to bring a limited number of German scientists to the United States.”<sup>5</sup> However, merely deciding what to do was not enough. The Americans and the Soviets were not the only ones interested in snatching up the scientists—France and Britain were wooing the Germans as well. While the Americans had told the scientists they could not bring their families with them, the British and French were more than happy to accommodate them. This proved to be the sticking point for American negotiations until the U.S. government decided to make concessions for the care of the men’s families in what was unofficially deemed “Camp Overcast,” an abandoned German cavalry barracks near Munich. The Third Army commandeered furniture from homes in the region and fixed the toilets and sinks to make the place livable, all the while working out the logistics to provide medical care and protection for some 1,000 people. Although the

conditions were not ideal, and there were still numerous kinks to be worked out, the Germans jumped at the opportunity to work for the United States and in September 1945, the first group of the selected 127 scientists and technicians reached American soil.<sup>6</sup> When the scientists first arrived in the U.S., army officers treated them more like POWs than vital assets to the country. The U.S. government transported them to Fort Bliss, Texas where they would work on building V-2 rockets for testing at the White Sands Proving Ground in New Mexico. The shift in surroundings, both climate and country, was tremendous. The men went from a country with a comfortable climate where they spoke the language to a foreign desert where temperatures would be as high as 120 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and drop below freezing at night. While there, army officers kept them under close surveillance to assure that no one harassed them and that they were not sharing any classified information with the outside world. Despite these challenges, the Germans

refused to let their surroundings bring down their work ethic. In 1948 and 1949, using their V-2 rockets, they not only photographed the earth for the first time, but successfully launched a missile carrying the first living organisms into space—including a colony of fruit flies and, in June 1948, a monkey.<sup>7</sup> By 1950, in order to test more powerful long-range rockets, the scientists needed to expand their testing ground beyond the 120 miles available at White Sands, and to this end, the government decided on Cape Canaveral in Florida, providing them with some 5,000 miles of Atlantic Missile Range. When the question of research facilities arose, officials decided on a rather unexpected location—Redstone Arsenal in the small town of Huntsville, Alabama. During World War II, the city of Huntsville had been host to numerous chemical weapons plants and facilities, industries that brought not only a greater population to the area, but boosted the local economy as well. When the war ended in 1945, however, the plants were no longer useful to the military, and by the end

of the decade, the government put them on standby, shut them down, or put them up for sale. It was a scary time for the citizens of Huntsville who had learned to rely on the plants for their job security. During the last few weeks of the existence of the Huntsville Arsenal, some 1,200 employees were narrowed down to only 270. However, when the federal government decided to revive the separate facilities and combine them into the Redstone Arsenal for missile development, the community breathed a sigh of relief. While chemical weapons required a fair amount of government investment, it paled in comparison to the hundreds of millions of dollars which would soon be flowing into Redstone.

<sup>8</sup>When the German scientists first arrived in Huntsville in April of 1950, feelings on both sides were mixed. Many citizens regarded the newcomers as mere short-term visitors and some of the Germans held to that view as well. A few of the scientists considered developing a separate German community and remain detached from the people of Madison County, but the majority of the scientists, as well as some of the citizens of Huntsville, recognized

the need to integrate. Some of Huntsville's citizens saw the benefit of this also. In an editorial written on April 16, 1950, one citizen expressed that it would be a mistake to "hold them off at arm's length, neglect them, or regard them as strangers who will be here only a short time," adding, "it's our business to make them feel at home, a direct part of the community, and as very desirable citizens."<sup>9</sup> In the next few months, the Germans would indeed prove to be desirable members of the society. Many of the scientists went on to make valuable contributions to the community of Huntsville. Hannes Leuhrsen, a city planner back in Germany and head of the Marshall Center planning branch, designed a belt highway system around the city in order to decongest traffic. Walter Wiseman became president of the Huntsville Junior Chamber of Commerce, general chairman of the Huntsville Community Association, and vice president of the Huntsville Civic Council. Perhaps two of the most influential scientists, Wernher von Braun and Ernst Stuhlinger, went on to found the Rocket City Astronomical

Association.<sup>10</sup> However, it would not be until April 14, 1955, that the Germans would solidify their commitment to the country and the community by officially becoming citizens of the United States. On that momentous day, some 1,000 people gathered in the Huntsville High School auditorium to watch their friends and neighbors swear a binding oath to the nation. Federal Judge Seybourn Lynne said to the 109 future citizens, "The presence here of so many people from this old city evidences the warmth of welcome with which you are being received." When he addressed the audience, he reminded them "never to forget that our culture is distilled from the culture of many lands. Immigrants to this country brought their music and their art... They brought strong hearts and a willingness for labor." The scientists and their families then swore an oath to renounce any allegiance to a foreign country and to protect the Constitution of the United States. After the ceremony, one reporter asked Von Braun about his fateful decision to join the American side at the end of World War II. He replied, "It was about 10 years ago today

# The Space Race Begins

---

that we were faced with the decision—we had to make up our minds to go East or West. We moved to the West, and I have never regretted it. We felt that if we surrendered the weapon (the V-2) to a people guided by the Bible, peace would be secured.” He went on to say that becoming a citizen was “one of the proudest and most significant days of my life.” Von Braun was not the only one moved by the day’s events. The citizens of Huntsville now welcomed their friends as fellow patriots. In an editorial written on April 14, 1955, one citizen remarked, “they have been citizens in fact. Today’s oath of allegiance merely formalizes what has been taking place in their lives for several years.”<sup>11</sup> By the 1950s, the space race was really heating up both between the Soviets and the Americans, as well as between branches of the U.S. military. Instead of assigning to one branch of the military the daunting task of missile development, the Department of Defense gave each branch authorization for experimentation. While this solved the problem of

inter-service rivalry for the time being, it eventually led to an extremely heated debate between the Army and the Navy. In 1955, President Eisenhower was ready to expand the developments of American rocketry through a proposed satellite mission to be completed as part of the U.S. contribution to the International Geophysical Year (IGY)—an 18 month period dedicated to worldwide scientific research and exploration.<sup>12</sup> In July, the Navy, Army, and Air Force all presented their ideas for satellite development to the Department of Defense’s Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Special Capabilities.<sup>13</sup> While all three had convincing arguments, it was clear that the Navy and Army were ahead. Two of the seven members of the committee supported the Army’s Redstone rocket for obvious reasons. The Redstone rocket was already in the testing phase at Redstone Arsenal as an active weapon—with only a few changes to boosters and trajectory, the rocket would clearly be able to carry a satellite into space.

The relative simplicity of these changes would allow Redstone to test launch its satellite in as little as four months, not only saving the government money in funding new research and facilities, but also giving the U.S. a better chance to officially launch the satellite within the parameters of the International Geophysical Year.<sup>14</sup> As convincing as their arguments were, however, two voices were not enough for a majority. Despite the stability of the Redstone rocket and the promise of an earlier launch date, the committee decided to launch a satellite mission from scratch with the Navy’s yet-to-be-developed Viking rocket. A majority of 5 members handed the Naval Research Laboratory the task and, after reviewing the reports, President Eisenhower agreed. The Vanguard Project had officially begun. At first it seemed that all was running smoothly. On August 22, 1955, the Naval Research Laboratory presented an optimistic schedule for the Vanguard project, claiming that the first attempt to fire a satellite into orbit would be made in May of 1957. By November 1955,

its calculations had slowed but remained hopeful, claiming a launch date sometime in October of 1957.<sup>15</sup> However, Wernher von Braun and the Army Ballistic Missile Agency at the Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville persisted that they could launch a satellite well before Vanguard with their Jupiter C rocket, part of the Redstone rocket program. When this claim reached the ears of President Eisenhower's assistant, Colonel Andrew J. Goodpaster, in 1956, he was eager to turn the mission over to the ABMA. He appealed to the Department of Defense, and after reviewing its findings, E.V. Murphee, Special Assistant for Guided Missiles, wrote: "I have looked further into the matter of the use of the JUPITER re-entry test vehicle as a possible satellite vehicle... *I find that there is no question but that one attempt with a relatively small effort could be made in January 1957.* Also, an earlier attempt in September of this year is theoretically possible." However, Murphee went on to argue that modifications to the Jupiter rocket would distract from its original purpose as a propulsion test rocket and that an earlier launch was not specifically required by

Eisenhower. Thus, the U.S. would continue with the Vanguard project. Goodpaster believed that there were other reasons that the ABMA was being looked over. In a memorandum on June 7, 1956, he wrote: "At minimal expense (\$2-5 million) they could have a satellite ready for firing by the end of 1956 or January 1957. The Redstone project is one essentially of German scientists, and it is American envy of them that has led to a duplicate project."<sup>16</sup> However, Von Braun and his associates could not be ignored for long. Vanguard was lagging behind its promised launch date of May 1957 and by October of the same year the U.S. was officially lagging behind the Soviets. On October 4, 1957, the originally scheduled launch month of Vanguard, the Soviet Union fired *Sputnik*, the world's first satellite, into outer space. The free world stood in shock. The implications were endless: not only had the Soviet Union officially beaten the U.S. into space, they now obviously possessed the technology for long-range missiles. Alabamians reacted with wonder, terror, and utter fear to the Soviets' new capability. Some citizens were able to look past the

overwhelming consequences of the Soviet launch and appreciate the mere scientific gains. One citizen marveled, "its initial launching by the Russians signifies that man has burst his earth-bound barriers, and has taken the first step toward space travel, with the moon as the first stop."<sup>17</sup> Others, like Irene Willhite, a former employee of Redstone Arsenal, had mixed feelings. She recalls, "I was amazed at the progress they made—another thought was—now they may have a rocket that could launch a bomb to our shores."<sup>18</sup>

The overwhelming feeling, however, was sheer terror. On October 14, 1957, the citizens of Huntsville expressed their concerns about the capabilities of the rocket that successfully launched *Sputnik*: "The Russians have demonstrated a clear lead on the United States in the long-range missile business. That is the ominous significance of the artificial satellite...while we are designing a propulsion system for a laboratory device, the Russians have designed one capable of handling a military weapon." Many space and missile experts agreed. Arthur C. Clarke, former chairman

# The Space Race Begins

of the British Interplanetary Society, claimed that any nation capable of launching a satellite with a predetermined orbit into space also had the capability of firing a missile to any predetermined target in the world. Others feared that the satellite was orbiting the earth snapping photos of the Pentagon and other high-security areas in the U.S. The launch of one metal object led the entire nation to question its once airtight security.<sup>19</sup>

The reaction in Washington, however, proved to be starkly different from that of the public. Eisenhower released a statement saying that there was no reason for concern over the launching of *Sputnik* and even admitted to the fact that the U.S. could have beaten the Russians by merging the satellite and missile programs under Redstone, but that it would have been “to the detriment of scientific goals and military progress.”<sup>20</sup> The Pentagon went on to say, “This was not a race;” but the people were not buying Washington’s excuses. William McGaffin of the *Chicago Daily News Service* wondered if U.S.

officials had failed to realize “the prestige the Russians would gain if they got their satellite up first,” certain that Russia’s backwardness would guarantee U.S. superiority in space. McGaffin concluded, “Considering the propaganda value the Russians are getting out of their spectacular achievement, it would seem that if the U.S. did not regard this as a race, but simply as one of the events of the International Geophysical Year, it goofed badly.”<sup>21</sup> Washington would not admit that it had made a mistake in choosing Vanguard over Redstone at the Ad Hoc meetings. Perhaps Mr. McGaffin was right—maybe they did not see the immense psychological effects the launch of the first earth satellite would have. But one thing is certain: the people of Huntsville did.

The fear of potential Soviet attack only fueled Huntsville’s outrage when news about the Advisory Group on Special Capabilities’ decision surfaced in the press. On October 6, 1957, just two days after the launch of *Sputnik*, Dr. I. M. Levitt, a noted member of the scientific

community and an authority on outer space, said that “the Defense Department was deep in the development of the Vanguard rocket for launching a satellite in the International Geophysical Year and decided to concentrate on this rocket when the Jupiter C was already capable of accomplishing the task... it certainly let the Russians score an astounding propaganda victory over the United States.”<sup>22</sup> *The Huntsville Times* began publishing articles from across the country concerning this “astonishing piece of stupidity.” Apparently the entire nation was appalled at the fact that the government had chosen to go with a yet undeveloped rocket instead of Redstone’s practically guaranteed success. Their outrage was justified when they learned that Von Braun himself believed that the blow to American morale could have been avoided had the Advisory Group on Special Capabilities entrusted the ABMA with the launch of the first American satellite.<sup>23</sup> Needless to say, the people of Huntsville were eager for a change in command in the Department

of Defense. It seemed that their wish would come true when soon-to-be Secretary of Defense Neil McElroy paid them a visit the weekend after *Sputnik* was launched. He visited Redstone Arsenal as a part of the Pentagon's tour of defense installations and was rather impressed by the accomplishments already achieved by the German team. It seemed that the government might finally give Redstone the credit it deserved. In an editorial published in *The Huntsville Times* on October 7, 1957, one citizen claimed, "There will be almost certainly much more activity in development of missiles, and in this Redstone as a whole is destined to play an increasing part."<sup>24</sup> It was clear that McElroy's visit had reassured the people that Redstone and Huntsville would be on the Pentagon's radar in the future. Despite the hope generated by McElroy's visit, the government continued to deny Wernher von Braun and the Army Ballistic Missile Agency the opportunity to work on the satellite project. On October 9, 1957, a mere five days after the Soviet satellite was launched, President Eisenhower and his advisors refused to give up on

the slow-moving Vanguard project. Donald A. Quarles, Secretary of Defense for Research and Development, told the President that "Redstone, had it been used, could have orbited a satellite a year or more ago" and, if given the orders, they could develop a working satellite and launch vehicle in a matter of four months, a full month earlier than the promised Vanguard launch. However, "the President thought that to make a sudden shift in our approach now would be to belie the attitude we have had all along."<sup>25</sup> Even after the United States had suffered a severe blow to morale, the government continued to place pride above practicality.<sup>26</sup> Shortly after Eisenhower's decision to stay on track with Vanguard, however, he began to give some leeway to the scientists in Huntsville. By October 14, 1957, the government gave Von Braun and the Army Ballistic Missile Agency official authorization to restudy their findings on propulsion systems capable of firing satellites into space. Although the Jupiter re-entry vehicle would only be used as a backup in case of a Vanguard failure, the community was elated with the

prospect of better jobs and a bigger income. Government investment into the Redstone Arsenal increased by some \$75,000,000 to fund extensive research and development of Jupiter C, benefitting not only Huntsville but the outlying communities as well. Little did they know how vital this investment would prove to be.<sup>27</sup> After years of preparation, Vanguard finally reached its launch date on December 6, 1957 at Cape Canaveral in Florida. After waiting for the weather to clear, the countdown began and the engines fired up. After managing to make it a few feet off of the ground, "the Vanguard... toppled into the water just before it exploded, an inglorious end to a magnificent endeavor. An orange ball of flame and billowing smoke engulfed the gleaming silver Vanguard Navy missile at the moment it was fired, 8:45 a.m."<sup>28</sup> The nation was devastated—not only had the Russians beaten them into space, it now appeared that the U.S. did not even possess the capabilities to get a rocket into the air. However, the Vanguard failure had very different implications for Madison County, Alabama. After the Navy had failed with

# The Space Race Begins

its attempt at launching a satellite, Eisenhower officially handed the mission over to the Army Ballistic Missile Agency at Redstone. Although the government tried to keep its actions private, the public's curiosity level remained high. By December 8, 1957, just two days after the Vanguard fiasco, *The Huntsville Times* was riddled with articles on potential dates for the Army's attempt at launching a satellite. In an article entitled "Target Time Now is Definitely Set," the author claimed, "Revelation that there is a launching date is an obvious indication that the Army received additional orders since it was instructed on Nov. 8 to only 'prepare to launch' an earth satellite... The carefully-guarded date could be anywhere from now until March 1, according to statements by high-ranking Army officials."<sup>29</sup> With all of this guesswork, it was clear that Huntsville was ready to show its capabilities to the world. As the New Year approached, fears still lingered concerning the Soviet's astounding space advances in the past year. On January 1, 1958, one citizen

described the overall feeling as "a gnawing anxiety." The people of Huntsville had not forgotten the launch of *Sputnik* and they were clearly taking the task at hand very seriously. Von Braun and his rocket team—Dr. Ernst Stuhlinger, W. A. Mrazek, Dr. E. D. Geisler, H. H. Koelle, and H. H. Maus—were hard at work modifying the Redstone ballistic missile into the Jupiter C missile system. They had to adapt the missile to a different fuel, develop and assemble different guidance and control systems, and fabricate the rotational launcher for the upper stages of the missile system. Needless to say, they had their hands full. In early January 1958, members of the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee paid the arsenal a visit. When the men returned to Washington, Senator Frank Barrett of Wyoming praised the advanced capabilities of the Army's Jupiter rocket as well as the Army's methods of concentrated research and development. By the end of January, with Washington's full support, Von Braun and his team were ready to put their missiles to the test.<sup>30</sup> After the

Vanguard failure, President Eisenhower began keeping closer tabs on U.S. satellite development. Although the government had allowed press releases about Vanguard, after its crash they decided to keep any further satellite programs under wraps. In keeping with this secrecy, it was logical that the attempted launch would take place at night. On January 31, 1958, the entire launch team was in a state of controlled frenzy. Robert Moser, test coordinator, paced around the blockhouse at the test launch center, checking gages and giving orders to prepare for the launch, while Albert Zeiler and Karl Sendler, two assistants at the launch, smoked nervously. Zeiler went on to say, "No matter how many firings you do, it's a nerve-wracking business."<sup>31</sup> After hours of running extended tests and monitoring minute changes, Moser began the countdown around 10:45 p.m.

As the time for the launch of Jupiter C approached, Eisenhower remained in close connection with the sequence of events. Although

he was in Augusta, Georgia, he was constantly informed as to the progress of the launch at Cape Canaveral. Colonel Goodpaster, longtime supporter of the ABMA and Redstone, held close telephone communications with Eisenhower's press secretary James C. Hagerty. At each key step Goodpaster called Hagerty, who was in Augusta with Eisenhower, so that he could in turn relay vital information to the president. After waiting for such a long time for Redstone to try its hand at the satellite, Goodpaster could hardly contain his excitement when the engines began firing:

*The main stage lifted off at 10:48:16.*

*The program is starting O.K.  
They are putting it in the right  
attitude.*

*It is still going, they say.*

*It is still going at 55 seconds.*

*It is still going and looks good at 90  
seconds.*

*Jupiter is on the way.<sup>32</sup>*

Eisenhower and Hagerty held their breath as they waited to hear if the satellite, *Explorer I*, was successfully in orbit. At 11:37 p.m., Goodpaster informed them that the satellite had passed over the first checkpoint of Antigua and at 12:42 a.m. it was confirmed

that *Explorer I* was officially the first working U.S. satellite in space.<sup>33</sup> It made a complete orbit of the globe every 114 minutes, travelling at a speed of 18,000 miles per hour and following a course that ranged as high as 1,700 miles in altitude.

The whole nation was extremely proud of the ABMA and its team of German scientists. Lieutenant General E. L. Cummings, chief of Army Ordnance, sent the following message to Major General H. N. Toftoy, Redstone Arsenal Commander: "You and the members of your command at Redstone Arsenal should take great pride in the vital contributions which you made to the success of the launching of the satellite Explorer... Congratulations." Newspapers across the country praised the success of the launch and highlighted its implications. The front page of the *Syracuse Herald-Journal* exclaimed, "We Did It—By Jupiter!" The *El Paso Herald-Post* said, "It had been an agonizing wait for a nation which so long has thought of itself as first in science and technology, and it was a thrilling and fantastic thing to see the 76-foot rocket soar aloft with all of the hopes

it carried."<sup>34</sup>

The city of Huntsville erupted into elated celebration. Police cruisers and fire trucks circled the town hall in celebration. Irene Willhite recalls the midnight celebration: "I remember thinking, 'We have jobs!' There was a gathering downtown at the courthouse—pure old fashion celebration!!! The feeling was—'We knew we could do it.'" Elation continued as the realization that their jobs and community were secure sank in: "Their success also will be a big factor, we feel confident, in expanding the role of Redstone Arsenal in rocket and missile research in the nation...The Defense Department is certain to avail itself of them to the limit, and increase its investment... For every advance or growth at Redstone will be reflected in greater population and in expansion of Huntsville." The government had finally realized Huntsville's capability and the "gnawing anxiety" waned in light of such promising potential.<sup>35</sup>

After a long road of being denied again and again the opportunity to launch a satellite, the German scientists had finally succeeded not only

# The Space Race Begins

in being given a chance, but in putting the U.S. into space. Many Americans may have doubted their commitment to the nation when they first arrived, but after dealing such an important blow to the Soviets, it was undeniable that these German scientists were now true Americans. Although *Sputnik* and the subsequent failure of Vanguard had dealt a heavy blow to the nation, the launch of *Explorer I* gave the American people the boost they needed to continue the Cold War with confidence.

The significance of the launch of *Explorer I* did not stop there. In 1958, because of the success of Redstone Arsenal, officials in Washington ordered it to begin work on a propulsion system capable of a lunar landing under the Saturn Booster Project. By 1959, the Army Ballistic Missile Agency at Redstone successfully launched three monkeys into outer space. Although the first monkey, Gordo, could not be recovered after his flight due to nose cone float mechanism failure, the May 1959 flight of monkeys Able and Baker

“marked the first successful recovery of living beings after their return to earth from outer space.” Their recovery was one of the most vital steps toward putting man into outer space. In 1960, the government transferred all space projects to NASA. Although the Army could no longer actively participate in space exploration, the Von Braun team continued testing the Saturn booster at the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville and eventually launched the Apollo missions that put man on the moon.<sup>36</sup>

The Cold War opened up far more than just a world race to win over countries to either communism or capitalism—it spurred on the great space age. Through the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, technology advanced well beyond what mankind once thought possible. After the highly influential years of 1957 and 1958, it was clear that the space race had officially begun. The contenders were well matched and ready for wherever their experiments would take them. The road may have been difficult for the

American people at first, but Wernher von Braun and his legendary rocket team refused to let their new country down. Through their diligent work at Redstone Arsenal, they not only tied the Soviets for the time being, they eventually accomplished what was once just a flippant thought—putting a man on the moon. Their determination and realized potential secured jobs for the people of Huntsville and fueled their economy for years to come. Alabama was no longer a state full of cow pastures and red barns, it was the modern scientific hub of space exploration. The race was on and the United States was not slowing down any time soon. ■

## Notes

- 1 The Huntsville Times, October 6, 1957.
- 2 Frederick I. Ordway III and Mitchell R. Sharpe, *The Rocket Team* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Publishers, 1979), 239.
- 3 William B. Breuer, *Race to the Moon: America's Duel with the Soviets* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1993), 94.
- 4 Ibid., 95.
- 5 Ibid., 99-101.
- 6 Ibid., 100, 108.
- 7 Ibid., 114-115, 130.
- 8 Helen Brents Joiner, *The Redstone Arsenal complex in the pre-missile era: a History of Huntsville Arsenal, Gulf Chemical Warfare Depot, and Redstone Arsenal, 1941-1949* (Redstone Arsenal, Ala. : Historical Division, Army Missile Command, 1966), 84, 85; The Huntsville Times, July 3, 1949; "Redstone Arsenal Complex Chronology: The Redstone Arsenal Era, 1950-1955," <http://www.redstone.army.mil/history/cron2a/cron2a.html> (accessed November 1, 2010).
- 9 Editorial, The Huntsville Times, April 16, 1950.
- 10 Erik Bergaust, *Rocket City U.S.A.* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1963), 78, 79.
- 11 The Huntsville Times, April 14, 1955; Editorial, The Huntsville Times, April 14, 1955.
- 12 D.C. Martin, "The International Geophysical Year," *The Geographical Journal* 124, no. 1 (1958): 18-20.

- 13 John M. Logsdon, ed., *Exploring the Unknown: Selected Documents in the History of the U.S. Civil Space Program Volume IV: Accessing Space*. (Washington, D.C.: NASA History Division, 1999), 38.
- 14 Ibid., 42.
- 15 Ibid., 48.
- 16 Ibid., 50.
- 17 Editorials, The Huntsville Times, October 11, 1957.
- 18 Irene Willhite, October 7, 2010, e-mail interview; Editorials, The Huntsville Times, February 2, 1958.
- 19 Editorial, The Huntsville Times, October 14, 1957; The Huntsville Times, October 8, 1957; Editorials, The Huntsville Times, October 11, 1957.
- 20 The Huntsville Times, October 9, 1957.
- 21 Ibid., October 8, 1957.
- 22 Ibid., October 6, 1957.
- 23 Editorials, The Huntsville Times, October 8, 1957.
- 24 Ibid., October 7, 1957.
- 25 Logsdon, 52, 53.
- 26 Editorials, The Huntsville Times, October 6, 1957.
- 27 Logsdon, 54; Editorials, The Huntsville Times, October 13, 1957.
- 28 San Mateo Times, December 6, 1957.
- 29 The Huntsville Times, December 8, 1957.
- 30 Editorials, The Huntsville Times, January 1, 1958; The Redstone Rocket, February 5, 1958; The Huntsville Times, January 5, 1958.
- 31 The Huntsville Times, February 3, 1958.
- 32 Logsdon, 59.
- 33 Ibid., 61, 62.
- 34 The Redstone Rocket, February 5, 1958; Syracuse Herald-Journal, February 1, 1958; El Paso Hearld-Post, February 1, 1958.
- 35 Irene Willhite, October 7, 2010, e-mail message interview; Editorials, The Huntsville Times, February 2, 1958.
- 36 "Pioneering Efforts in Space," <http://www.redstone.army.mil/history/pioneer/welcome.html> (accessed December 9, 2010).

# Freedom Riders Soldiers in a Non-Violent Army

**Tracy Wilson**

In the landmark *Morgan v. Virginia* decision of 1946, the Supreme Court struck down state laws requiring segregation in interstate transportation. The following year activists from the Chicago-based Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) rode interstate buses throughout the upper South to test the enforcement of

as waiting and dining facilities) in *Boynton v. Virginia*. Like the *Morgan* decision, southern states continued to ignore the *Boynton* ruling, just as the federal government failed to demand its enforcement. Hence, the Freedom Rides of 1961, which were also organized by CORE, were born out of a desire to test the Justice Department's

willingness to protect the rights of African Americans to use bus terminal facilities on a desegregated basis.

In the 2011 PBS documentary *Freedom Riders*, Emmy award-winning filmmaker Stanley Nelson takes viewers on a two-hour journey through America's shameful past.

Based on Raymond

Arsenault's book *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice* and told by the riders themselves, along with civil rights leaders, politicians, and historians, the film retraces the dangerous, yet courageous journey embarked upon by an interracial group of Americans, many of them college students, throughout



Both African Americans and whites protesting together against Governor John Patterson, who refused to provide protection for the freedom riders.

(Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama)

the Supreme Court's ruling. Known as the Journey of Reconciliation, the rides proved to be anything but conciliatory, with activists being arrested and assaulted upon arrival in the upper South. In 1960, the Supreme Court further extended the *Morgan* ruling to include the desegregation of bus terminals (restrooms as well

the Deep South. The freedom riders hoped to draw national attention to the injustices being suffered by African Americans while traveling on the nation's commercial buses by deliberately violating the South's Jim Crow laws. The trip began on May 4, 1961, as twelve passengers (six black, six white) boarded two buses in Washington, DC, and headed South with the intention of arriving in New Orleans two weeks later to commemorate the seventh anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision.

Once in Alabama, however, the activists were greeted with repeated acts of mob violence that made escape from the state nearly impossible. In Anniston, after slashing the tires of the first bus, the blood-thirsty crowd then firebombed it and brutally beat escaping riders with baseball bats. Likewise, at the behest of Birmingham's notorious police chief Eugene "Bull" Connor, the Ku Klux Klan was given "15 minutes to burn, bomb, kill, and maim" passengers aboard the second bus while Birmingham police looked away. With no police protection, no willing driver, and CORE's abandonment, the freedom riders appeared

to have been defeated. That is until a fearless eighteen-year-old Fisk university student named Diane Nash got wind of the rides' demise. Under Nash's direction, a second wave of riders was sent to Birmingham from Nashville, Tennessee. "It was clear to me that if we allowed the freedom ride to stop, just after so much violence had been inflicted," explains Nash, "the message would have been sent that all you have to do to stop a non-violent campaign is inflict massive violence. It was critical that the freedom ride did not stop and that it continue immediately." Nash's refusal to back down amid impending danger attracted the attention of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, who demanded that the rides be ended before someone was killed. In one of the film's most poignant scenes, John Seigenthaler, an aide to Robert Kennedy, describes the phone call that he made to Nash warning her of the danger awaiting the freedom riders if they continued the rides. Instead of being intimidated, Seigenthaler says that Nash calmly informed him that the activists had "all signed their last wills and testaments" prior to leaving Nashville. They

were prepared to die for the cause of equality.

As in Anniston and Birmingham, riders were met with mob violence upon arrival in Montgomery. Freedom rider Catherine Burks-Brooks remembers seeing women and children among the vigilante crowd in Montgomery yelling, "kill them niggers." Alabama's then Governor John Patterson refused to provide protection for the riders prior to President Kennedy's threat to call in federal marshals and troops. Once in Mississippi, however, the riders were not greeted with violence, but rather with paddy wagons and police escorts. They were taken to Parchman Penitentiary, the South's most dreaded prison, where they served time alongside hardened criminals. At Parchman, male activists were forced to work on chain gangs while females were subjected to dreadful and humiliating vaginal exams upon arrival. By summer's end over 430 activists had participated in the freedom rides, 300 of whom ended up at Parchman. Instead of quelling the movement as President Kennedy had hoped, allowing the riders to spend time in prison intensified it. "It became a continuation of the freedom

## Freedom Riders

rides,” asserts historian Derek Catsam; “Parchman becomes every much a location in the freedom rides as the bus depots themselves.” As a result of the relentless determination of a diverse group of Americans, on September 22, 1961, the Interstate Commerce Commission was forced to issue an order demanding an end to segregation on buses and inside terminals.

*Freedom Riders* also exposes the Kennedy Administration’s lack of support for the rides as well as the riders. According to civil rights leader Julian Bond, the Kennedy brothers made a secret agreement with segregationist Mississippi Senator James O. Eastland to allow for the violation of the riders’ civil rights by having them peacefully arrested “under laws which [had] twice been invalidated by the Supreme Court” in exchange for their safety upon arrival in Mississippi. Attorney General Robert Kennedy is shown questioning the effectiveness of the rides as well as the wisdom of the riders. Ironically, Kennedy expresses concern for the safety of the “innocent”

passengers aboard the non-chartered buses “who don’t have anything to do with this,” while failing to honor his duty as the nation’s highest ranking law enforcement official to protect the “innocent” riders who were being brutally assaulted for obeying federal law.

Former Alabama Governor John Patterson is one of the film’s most intriguing characters. Patterson, who referred to the riders at the time as “agitators,” “fools,” and “rabble rousers,” today appears strangely indifferent as he recounts his involvement in the freedom rides. Signs of remorse remain indiscernible as he confesses his avoidance of the president and admits reluctance to provide protection for the riders.

A major asset of the film is its inclusion of actual film footage revealing such riveting images as the burning Greyhound bus from which passengers barely escaped in Anniston, and footage of a mass meeting being held at a local Montgomery church in which over 1500 activists and supporters remained trapped

while outside a menacing mob of over 3,000 burned and overturned cars and threatened to burn down the church. Nelson skillfully and effectively employs photos, news clips, interviews and film footage from the time to illustrate the extremely hostile environment into which the riders willingly placed themselves in their pursuit of justice.

Still, hearing the story told by those individuals who wittingly subjected themselves to the now inconceivable racial violence remains the film’s greatest strength. Georgia Congressman John Lewis, who was a participant in the rides from start to finish and also served time at Parchman, recalls feeling “good” upon their departure from Washington. “I was like a soldier in a nonviolent army,” declares Lewis. “I was ready.” Similarly, Pauline Knight-Ofoso remembers telling her family one morning in May, “I won’t be back today because I’m a freedom rider.” In their audacity to defy the nation’s power structure and challenge it to live up to its creed of liberty and justice for all, the

freedom riders demonstrated true heroism. The fact that today's audience might find their undaunted commitment to equality astounding proves that not only did these American heroes accomplish their goal, but so did Stanley Nelson in conveying it. The PBS documentary *Freedom Riders* serves as a fitting tribute to a group of America's unsung heroes, while offering a lesson in courage and resilience that will undoubtedly uplift as well as enlighten. In a society that would rather forget its painful past than honor those who endured it, the lesson is invaluable. ■

# A Pirate's Life for Me

## *Craig T. Sheldon and Anti-Communism*

Landon Ledbetter



Craig T. Sheldon's identification card for the International Anti-Communist Brigade.  
(Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama)

on the other hand, promised proactive political reforms for Cuba; the nature of those reforms, however, was unknown to the Castrista revolutionaries at the time. Though the

On New Year's Eve, 1958, Fulgencio Batista, dictator of Cuba, fled his nation before the charge of Fidel Castro and his rebel army. The overthrown Batista regime, which reigned over Cuba since 1940, was a staple of corruption that repressed the impoverished in favor of the status quo. The revolutionary Castro regime,

fledgling government proved uncertain of what steps to take, Castro and his regime enjoyed unprecedented support from the Cuban people.<sup>1</sup> In the spirit of nationalism, Castro began disassociating Cuba from the U.S. for the first time since the Spanish-American War and, on April 16, 1961, officially proclaimed the socialist nature of the Cuban Revolution; the next day, the United States, under the Kennedy Administration, launched the infamously botched Bay of Pigs mission in an attempt to oust the young dictator. According to author Piero Gleijeses, the failure of this assault caused Kennedy to obsess over the Castro problem for the remainder of his life.<sup>2</sup>

Kennedy, however, was not the only American who became obsessed; Craig Turner Sheldon was aghast that his nation could allow an enemy at the doorstep without taking direct military action. After all, Cuba was located only ninety miles from the coast of Florida and not much further from Sheldon's home in Fairhope, Alabama.<sup>3</sup> For Sheldon, the fact that Castro's

Cuba was in alliance with and funded by the Soviet Union implied that the Cuban nation was bedeviled; consequently, he made the decision, in August 1962, to “go all out” in the war on Castro.<sup>4</sup> His subsequent experiences with anti-Castro organizations were extraordinary, though often as a result of Sheldon’s hyperactive interest in “liberating” the Cuban nation. Although Sheldon died on December 12, 1997, he left an abundant, miscellaneous collection of documents accumulated through correspondence with anti-Castro organizations. This collection shows that, though the lives of Sheldon and his compatriots were intriguing, they lacked tangible accomplishment from their endeavors because they refused to realistically and inclusively analyze the facts of the Cuban situation.

Sheldon first began his anti-Castro career by seeking to join an organization which understood the import, as he did, of stymying communism’s spread in the West. Finding the right organization, however, promised to be a daunting task, as approximately sixty such organizations existed in the fight against Castro.<sup>5</sup>

In his search, he stumbled upon an active anti-Castro organization known as Alpha 66, headquartered in Hato Rey, Puerto Rico. Alpha 66, according to Sheldon, was the anti-Castro organization that stood out the most in U.S. news and politics: “It was the one that one heard of.”<sup>6</sup> In fact, Alpha 66 had received a large amount of publicity in October 1962, in news surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis. This was a time when the U.S. government was showing particular favoritism to anti-Castro Cuban emigrant organizations such as Alpha 66, perhaps as a coercive show of force against Castro and his Soviet backers. If this was the case, it worked. Without conferring with Castro, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev removed the problematic missile stockpile from Cuba, infuriating the Cuban dictator, and with that, one historian notes, “the honeymoon was over.”<sup>7</sup> Castro no longer took Soviet advice willingly and criticized the Soviet Union openly for its lack of concern in Latin America. Still, the U.S. media lambasted Castro as a Soviet puppet.<sup>8</sup> This, rather than the truth, was what reached Sheldon’s ears and

influenced his hatred of the Castro regime.

Still eager to join in the anti-Castro fight and convinced that Alpha 66 was the most viable organization of its kind, Sheldon petitioned the group for admission. He seems to have done little research, relying on the assumption that the most publicized group was likely to be the most effective. This assumption would be proven false. The reply to Sheldon’s application came from Antonio Veciana, the organization’s leader and co-founder. He authorized Sheldon to act on behalf of Alpha 66 as treasurer and representative for Alabama. Eager to see firsthand the organization which he had joined, Sheldon decided to catch a plane to Hato Rey.<sup>9</sup> Initially, he had decided not to inform his wife of his involvement with Alpha 66 because he did not want her becoming legally involved; however, unable to find transportation to the airport, Sheldon asked her for a ride. Sheldon later recalled, “The questions, naturally, flew right and left. Among them was this one - - ‘Who is she?’”<sup>10</sup> Explaining the situation to her, he said, “[I’m] going to the Caribbean to join a group of

# A Pirate's Life for Me

Cuban raiders and probably get my fool head shot off," after which his wife became pensive, but then exclaimed, "OH DARLING, HOW WONDERFUL!"<sup>11</sup>

The group of Cuban raiders with whom Sheldon was prepared to die, Alpha 66, began most likely in either late 1961 or early 1962, under the leadership of Antonio Veciana and Tony Cuesta. Prior to the group's inception, Veciana was a Certified Public Accountant in Havana.<sup>12</sup> Nathaniel Weyl, author of *Red Star over Cuba* and a social commentator on Castro and anti-Castro activities, would later explain to Sheldon that the group began "as a strictly non-political united action organization," meaning it was intended to depose Castro militarily but not to get involved politically.<sup>13</sup> The implication of this statement was that Alpha 66 ought not to have aspirations for power, financial wealth, etc. However, despite these promising beginnings, the unity of the organization did not last. The recent merger of Alpha 66 with Segundo Frente del Escambray (Second

Front of the Escambray) split the group in half. According to Sheldon, Segundo Frente was a similar organization to Alpha 66, composed of fifteen hundred men at the time of his visit. Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo, a former confidant to Castro whose reputation was somewhat blemished among those who knew of his past, headed the organization. As a result of his tarnished reputation, some Alpha 66 members who were wary of an alliance with Menoyo left to form another group under the sole leadership of Cuesta. This group came to be known as Commandos L.<sup>14</sup>

Whether Menoyo deserved such suspicion is disputable. He was born of communist parents who fought in the Spanish Civil War. As a young boy, he was brought to Cuba, where his elder brother eventually joined the Cuban Communist Party. Both brothers fought with Castro against Batista; in fact, Menoyo rose to prominence in Castro's army, eventually heading his secret police, but remaining aloof from the communist movement. In 1959, Menoyo and William

Alexander Morgan, another Castroite and a Major in Segundo Frente, joined with the pro-Batista forces of General Pedraza, which were amassing to counterattack Castro's forces. However, Menoyo and Morgan betrayed Pedraza to Castro after having convinced him to capture the city of Trinidad in the Las Villas Province and to funnel troops and expenses into that area. With the help of Menoyo and Morgan, the city and the troops were easily recaptured by Castro. Although Sheldon believed this was planned with Castro's consent, Weyl contended that Menoyo was a communist sympathizer and that he and Morgan had betrayed Pedraza only to save themselves from being branded as traitors.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, Morgan also had a checkered past. Weyl declared that Morgan, though portrayed by the U.S. media as an American hero, was a "superannuated juvenile delinquent, addicted to crimes of violence and to betrayal."<sup>16</sup> While serving in the U.S. Army, he had been placed in confinement in Kyoto, whereupon he overpowered his guard and

escaped. He was later caught, tried, and sentenced to five years penance at Chillicothe Federal Reformatory.<sup>17</sup> If these characterizations of Menoyo and Morgan were correct, there was no assurance that their involvement in Segundo Frente and Alpha 66 was anything more than selfish opportunism.

Sheldon's lack of inquiry into the character of Segundo Frente's leadership and the reason for Tony Cuesta's departure caused him to waste almost a year funneling money into the dying organization. He became swept up in the positive fervor of the remaining members and naïvely believed that the partnership between Alpha 66 and Segundo Frente was "a great deal."<sup>18</sup> In fact, Sheldon wrote glowingly of Menoyo during this period. He called Menoyo both "the one great name feared by Fidel Castro" and "the 'Face to Face with the enemy' hero of our organization."<sup>19</sup> In this state of ignorance, he served Alpha 66 from December 1962 until September 1963.<sup>20</sup>

Upon arriving in Hato Rey in December 1962, Sheldon discovered that Alpha 66 was not only being advertised in the U.S. but in the Bahamas as well. He wrote

of his surprise upon seeing large flyers advertising the group in the streets. Despite appearances, however, the group did maintain a degree of secrecy. Having been driven from their previous headquarters in Santurc only a month earlier, the members decided to be more covert with their operations in Hato Rey. Consequently, a vending machine business, Bush International, acted as a cover for the organization, protecting and publicly legitimizing its activities. Despite its recent relocation, the group was quite well established, as well as advertised, in Hato Rey. According to Sheldon, when he went to pay his bill upon leaving the hotel at which he was staying, he was told that Alpha 66 owned the place.<sup>21</sup>

In applying for membership, Sheldon hoped to make use of the radio operating experience he gained serving in the Marine Corps during World War II to assist in Alpha 66 raiding operations; according to Sheldon, "after two minutes of listening to [his] Spanish, they looked at each other and politely shook their heads."<sup>22</sup> The group instead upheld Veciana's orders that Sheldon ought to work at fundraising

and distributing propaganda as well as educating Alpha 66 officials on the finer points of North American idiosyncrasies.<sup>23</sup> Sheldon did not favor these orders, desiring instead to be an active part of the military operations. To this effect, Sheldon wrote, "While my 46-year-old, ex-Marine metabolism cried for a place in the boats, I had a feeling that they would hand me the job I have now."<sup>24</sup> He took pride in his position nonetheless, writing on the importance of the faculty in which he was employed: "We [civil units] are the ones who enable (or hope to enable) the Military to continue at their efforts against Castro 24 hours a day without having to work at jobs to support themselves and their families."<sup>25</sup>

Believing this job to be of the utmost importance, Sheldon took extra responsibility upon himself to keep aware of goings on within the anti-communist movement.

One area of interest to Sheldon, almost out of necessity, was the workings of the Kennedy Administration. Kennedy publicly took a stance of careful, peaceable compliance with the communist sphere of influence—a stance with which Sheldon heartily

# A Pirate's Life for Me

disagreed.<sup>26</sup> Sheldon satirized Kennedy's methods by stating, "JFK joined forces with a troika to form the KHRUSHCHEV-KENNEDY-KASTRO FRONT against Freedom," almost certainly a pun in reference to the infamous and oppressive KKK.<sup>27</sup> On April 1, 1963, Kennedy dug his heels in by threatening all active members and supporters of vigilante groups, such as Alpha 66, with a three-year term of imprisonment and a \$25,000 fine for violating the Neutrality Acts.<sup>28</sup> According to Sheldon, this decree struck the raiders "quite sober."<sup>29</sup> In the previous month, March 1963, Alpha 66 had carried out a raid on Isabela de Sagua under the direct influence of the CIA, attacking two freighters, sinking one, and wounding twelve Russians.<sup>30</sup> Now, President Kennedy was forbidding the same men from participating in such activities as the CIA had explicitly condoned less than a month before. Sheldon's personal opinion was made plain when he described this crackdown as "what amounts to direct orders from Moscow and Havana."<sup>31</sup>

He further expressed his disgruntlement with Kennedy's pronouncement in a statement which he jotted along the edge of a memorandum: "President Kennedy had said, with subtlety, Cuban freedom must come through the Cuban people and by the means of subversion. – This was it!"<sup>32</sup> Although Kennedy claimed to hope for Castro's demise and offer support to Latin American nations seeking aid against communist encroachment, Sheldon felt that all Kennedy was accomplishing was "defending the enemy and doing battle with those who are fighting for human freedom and dignity."<sup>33</sup>

However, Sheldon also felt that Kennedy was not intentionally subversive. He upheld that the president's advisors had "brainwashed" him with misinformation on the subject of Soviet relations early on in his tenure and that his decisions and rhetoric thereafter were merely offshoots of his miseducation. "He must rely on his family of advisors," Sheldon wrote, "and a more questionable family of advisors have never saddled

themselves upon a nation in times of stress than these weird, if not treasonable, creatures we employ at the moment."<sup>34</sup> Nonetheless, Sheldon often implicated Kennedy when discussing the unfavorable state of the nation, rather than pointing more particularly to his cabinet and subordinates. Whether he truly blamed Kennedy, or simply pegged him as a convenient scapegoat, is unclear.

Although Sheldon derived all his judgments on Kennedy from the image which the president presented to the public, this image seems to have been contrary to Kennedy's true character. He did treat Soviet-American relations with caution; however, his record also shows that he took a hardline approach to the Castro problem. For instance, on November 4, 1962, a White House meeting gave birth to a new "covert action program aimed at overthrowing the [present] Cuban government," named Operation MONGOOSE.<sup>35</sup> Kennedy formally established the new program by a signed memorandum on November

30, with counterinsurgency specialist General Edward Lansdale at the head.

According to James G. Blight and Peter Kornbluh, authors of *Politics of Illusion*, the program involved thirty-two separate tasks designed to motivate insurrection within Cuba and culminate in direct U.S. military assistance if necessary.<sup>36</sup> Still, President Kennedy felt that the plan was not ambitious enough, later expressing “general dissatisfaction” with the progress of the program.<sup>37</sup> If Sheldon had known, or allowed himself to understand, the truth of Kennedy’s position, he would no doubt have respected the man for his policy and principles.

As much as Sheldon despised Kennedy and his advisors, however, he despised the CIA more. In his own words, “With those fellows, there’s never anyone in charge.”<sup>38</sup> As he was with Kennedy, Sheldon was discontented with the CIA’s meddling in anti-Castro affairs. In a letter to J. Edgar Hoover, Sheldon related information which he had received from fellow Alpha 66 members: “On October 8<sup>th</sup>, ’62, we raided Isabella de Sagua in the Las Villas Province and

took much in the way of arms. Perhaps foolishly they were taken to Puerto Rico where the men wanted to use them in a fundraising rally. The following day . . . the CIA came and seized them all.”<sup>39</sup> (*We*, in this case, is not entirely accurate as Sheldon had not joined with Alpha 66 until December 1962.) The failure of the Bay of Pigs infiltration exacerbated Sheldon’s dislike of the CIA, though he placed much of the blame on Kennedy. In this incident, about 1,300 Cuban exiles, trained by the CIA, landed at Playa Girón in Cuba with the intention of infiltrating the public and causing an uprising against the Castro regime. Three days later, the exiles surrendered en masse to Castro.<sup>40</sup> Despite the CIA’s involvement in this incident, Sheldon noted that it was “in the managing hands of the President . . . [and] no organization can possibly be better than the man at the head of it.”<sup>41</sup>

Although Sheldon wholly disliked the Kennedy Administration, he seems to have been fond of Hoover and his policies overall. In March 1963, Sheldon wrote to him, “Your books and your record over the years

has established you squarely on the side of justice.”<sup>42</sup> Hoover was “the single most important figure in the history of anticommunism,” so not surprisingly, Sheldon had an enduring faith in the FBI under Hoover: “[It] has to do with an innate desire to see justice triumph in the realm of humanity’s tortured passage on this earth.”<sup>43</sup> However, this faith was not impervious to strain. Around March 1963, when Sheldon wanted to send first aid kits to Alpha 66 and Segundo Frente, the doctor who assisted Sheldon in putting together the kits insisted that he first secure the authorization of the FBI. The local FBI office, however, told Sheldon that such decisions were out of their hands and that he would need to contact the CIA for authorization. The CIA declined his request, so he returned to the FBI, writing Hoover and his subordinates for support in circumventing CIA authority.<sup>44</sup> In an attached report, he argued, “The gallant men of Alpha 66 are dying for lack of adequate medical supplies, while Castro’s men are being treated with American-donated drugs.”<sup>45</sup>

The FBI replied that there was nothing which could be done,

# A Pirate's Life for Me

that the CIA was the final authority in the matter.<sup>46</sup> This set a precedent for Sheldon's further interaction, or lack thereof, with the FBI. Later, while investigating Menoyo's origins, Sheldon wrote ruefully, "So long as the FBI is under the thumb of Robert Kennedy, I think it will be useless to take the information to them if we do find that Menoyo is a red-hearted Commie. While Hoover may want to do something, I know the very answer we shall get. . . .

‘Our hands are tied.’"<sup>47</sup> To Sheldon, the two organizations were autonomous units, rather than part of a centralized government. He seems to have believed that, if Hoover did not concur with the CIA's decisions, he ought to undermine those decisions, rather than comply.

Meanwhile, Sheldon worked feverishly as a propagandist and fundraiser for Alpha 66. He wrote riveting, vivid tales of heroism in raids on Castro, despite having taken no active part in the attacks which they depicted. These tales evoke romantic notions of glory and virtue and, as such, were not intended for the

politically-minded. They were for those who Sheldon targeted with flyers reading, "When you are mad enough... support 'Alpha 66'."<sup>48</sup> They were for people who, like Sheldon, were personally excitable regarding the subject of anti-communism. He wrote that sometimes he would become uncontrollably enthused about plans for direct assault on Castro and that "it was always [Alpha 66] who simmered me down with calm explanations of why my idea would injure the cause."<sup>49</sup>

Sheldon's time with Alpha 66, for whom he had so much enthusiasm, however, was quickly coming to a close. He later lamented, "Along about July [1963], the philosophy of Alpha 66 began to become rather fuzzy."<sup>50</sup> Menoyo posted a bulletin to Segundo Frente and Alpha 66, stating that all the planned raids for the next three to six months would be called off. The reason given was that the organization needed to focus instead on gathering supplies and further training the raiders. When Sheldon read this, he was confused and infuriated. "I had a lot of equipment that

they had not called for," he later wrote, "and I knew from former letters that there were trained men throughout the Caribbean just jumping for action."<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, Sheldon expressed worry that he had finally managed to send his first aid kits to Dr. Armando Flietes, "the titular head of the Second Front," but had not received any word back.<sup>52</sup> Sheldon was beginning to have other doubts as well. He recalled when a boat owned by Alpha 66 and Segundo Frente was captured with Menoyo onboard while travelling in the Gulf of Mexico. The British Royal Navy intercepted the ship and took all the passengers to Nassau for trial—all except Menoyo.<sup>53</sup> Although Sheldon contacted his correspondent in Alpha 66, Carlos Astencio Martinez, in this matter, he did not answer Sheldon's inquiry as to why Menoyo had not been tried as well. Sheldon claimed he had boiled this down at the time to a "bureaucratic foul-up."<sup>54</sup>

Sheldon also claimed that he had read articles when he first visited Hato Rey that stated Alpha 66 "was under

infiltration attack by the CIA and Castristas.”<sup>55</sup> One such article, Sheldon recalled, told how two CIA agents, Walt Rostow and Richard Goodwin, travelled with then Vice President Lyndon Johnson on his trip to tour Puerto Rico and how Alpha 66 welcomed them and gave them tours of the boats and their bases in the Bahamas.<sup>56</sup> Confronting the leadership of Alpha 66, Sheldon “explained that Rostow and Goodwin were highly questionable people and that they could expect a stab in the back at the first opportunity presented,” but the leadership assured Sheldon that nothing had come of the meeting.<sup>57</sup> In light of the recent events and despite this exchange, however, Sheldon concluded that “with the advent of the Second Front, Rostow, and Goodwin, things began to come unglued, and the morality of the group became eroded.”<sup>58</sup>

In tandem with aforementioned author Nathaniel Weyl, Sheldon began investigating Alpha 66 for sinister elements. He reported that he, Weyl, and Weyl’s web of informants found that Alpha 66 had “become so filled with Commies and CIA that it had ground to a halt and become

just a fund gathering gimmick for the leadership.”<sup>59</sup> Although it began as an apolitical movement for the liberation of Cuba, it had become, according to Weyl’s informants, increasingly “leftwing,” a label which reeked of maleficence to Sheldon.<sup>60</sup> It was in this atmosphere that the question of Menoyo’s allegiance surfaced and Sheldon consequently discovered the reason for Cuesta’s abandoning the organization. Furthermore, Weyl discovered that Alpha 66 supposedly took credit for some raids performed by L-66, Tony Cuesta’s offshoot group which consequently changed its name to Commandos L to avoid further incident.<sup>61</sup> Sheldon admitted, around this time, that he felt the Commandos L raid on Isabella de Sagua, about a week after the Alpha 66 raid on the same location, was a “far better job.”<sup>62</sup> Having researched and conveyed his findings to Sheldon, Weyl recommended that Sheldon transfer his support from Alpha 66 to Commandos L, which remained under the certain leadership of Cuesta.<sup>63</sup>

The outcome of their unofficial investigation eviscerated Sheldon’s meticulously constructed

mailing list. Sheldon had carefully nurtured a web of correspondents throughout his tenure with Alpha 66. He maintained, for instance, contact with those who wrote him regarding his published articles. Other correspondents included those requesting more information on Alpha 66, sending money orders and offering support, and even some wishing to become active in the military front of the war on Castro. Through this mailing list, Sheldon solicited donations when the need was great and disseminated propaganda. Sheldon wrote that Alpha 66, in particular, was interested in the fundraising faculty of his employment. However, when Sheldon found, in July 1963, that Alpha 66 was no longer as virtuous as he had thought, a great portion of his mailing list was useless because his constituents lost faith in the cause and Sheldon’s judgment. For his part, Sheldon was sympathetic to these complaints.<sup>64</sup> He lamented this turn of events in a letter in which he wrote, “I must repay (somehow) all of the contributors that have made the effort through my hands. Then, I must destroy this organization.”<sup>65</sup>

# A Pirate's Life for Me

Sheldon, however, did not destroy Alpha 66, nor did he join with Commandos L, as Weyl had recommended. Instead, Weyl put Sheldon in contact with Jim Buchanan, a journalist for the Miami *Sun-Sentinel* and Secretary of the International Anti-Communist Brigade (IAB). Since 1959, the IAB had been an active element in anti-communist and anti-Castro efforts but had been deactivated to an auxiliary role under Kennedy's threats concerning the Neutrality Acts. In fact, according to Sheldon, the Brigade's head, Frank Fiorini, had been one of six Americans who received a personally-issued Executive Order to cease and desist in actions against Castro.

Although the Brigade stepped down actively, they continued to support other anti-communist groups, fund speakers, and otherwise promote their cause in any way they could without becoming active in the fight.<sup>66</sup> For instance, Sheldon wrote after his admission into the IAB, "We secure boats and planes [and] supply flyers, arms, gasoline and the other necessities of war."<sup>67</sup> The

Brigade served very much the same function Sheldon had in his service with Alpha 66.

Like Sheldon, Frank Fiorini, the IAB's president, was an ex-Marine who served during World War II. He fought in Castro's revolution and later served as third-in-command of Castro's Air Force until he and Pedro Diaz Lanz, the first-in-command, discovered evidence of the dictator's communist leanings. They subsequently left Cuba and began waging a campaign against Castro as Menoyo had done. Sheldon wrote that, in exile, Fiorini and Diaz Lanz threw in their support for Evillio Duque, who was responsible for constructing the original Army of the Escambray in Central Cuba, an army of about 1,200 which operated in the mountains. Fiorini and Diaz Lanz supplied the army from the U.S. and flew bombing missions until Castro invaded the Escambray and easily wiped out the Army of the Escambray. This was the beginning of the IAB. While Fiorini continued to support the cause, Diaz Lanz eventually drifted away from the struggle

for Cuba, so his support was no longer evident when Sheldon joined.<sup>68</sup>

The other two chairmen of the IAB were the vice president, Geraldine Shamma, and the secretary-treasurer, Jim Buchanan, aforementioned journalist for the *Sun-Sentinel*. They were both U.S.-born, like Fiorini and Sheldon. Shamma, though, had previously been a prisoner in Castro's Cuba, where she was a statistical anomaly as a North American woman.<sup>69</sup> Shamma had been involved with the Revolutionary Student Directorate (DRE) in Cuba during the Revolution. The DRE was an organization which had aimed to overthrow Batista and had been somewhat cooperative with Castro's rebel army; however, when Castro ascended to dictatorship, he ordered that all non-members of his rebel army relinquish their armaments. Some members of the DRE, including Shamma, would not; Castro's police consequently arrested her and her compatriots on charges of "possessing an arsenal." Thereafter, Shamma was sentenced to thirty years in

Guanajay Prison.<sup>70</sup> Sheldon insisted that Buchanan was instrumental in her release because he had written several stories on Shamma's case, bringing public attention to "American Women in Castro Prisons."<sup>71</sup>

On Weyl's recommendation, in September 1963, Sheldon contacted Buchanan and discussed joining the IAB. The board—Fiorini, Shamma, and Buchanan—conferred and concluded that Sheldon would be offered a position as Southeastern U.S. chairman. Sheldon readily accepted the offer.<sup>72</sup> "During the month of September," he wrote, "I eased myself out of the Alpha 66 group and into the IAB."<sup>73</sup> Sheldon was content to have joined an organization of people just like him – U. S. born supporters of the revolution against Castro. For this and other reasons, Sheldon found a new sense of equality and camaraderie in his interactions with the IAB, especially with his economic background. Unpaid in his services to Alpha 66, Sheldon worked during the day as a carpenter for an hourly wage. His zealous commitment to the Cuban cause did not change the fact that he had a family

and financial obligations. An artist in his spare time, Sheldon had begun to sell his artwork for minimal returns and was forced by his obligations to Alpha 66 to borrow heavily.<sup>74</sup> His work was, Sheldon boasted, "one of those things of which unsung martyrs are made."<sup>75</sup> To Sheldon's delight, several of the members of the IAB's constituent body were under the same constant test of willpower, financial ingenuity, and patience. In fact, in a letter to Sheldon, Buchanan mentioned, as if in passing, "I just walked outside and found that the bank had just repossessed my car."<sup>76</sup> This was something to which Sheldon could certainly relate.

Apart from valuing his position in the IAB, it seems the group also valued him. Sheldon brought knowledge that he had acquired from his work with Alpha 66 to the IAB and attempted to apply this knowledge in order to better the group and make it more viable in the fight against Castro and communism. To this end, he suggested a change of slogan and the adoption of a symbol only a couple months after having become a part of the group. The slogan, he claimed, "seems a trifle

too involved to put on a flag, a placard, or to write on a wall."<sup>77</sup> He also recommended that a "quasi-factual" novel be written about the Brigade, to get the group's name out and inspire interest. "The book may not completely pay its way," he jested, "but the film rights at the moment would."<sup>78</sup> Alpha 66, he clarified, had used all of these tactics to great effect and speculated that the IAB might benefit similarly. In the same letter, Sheldon warned Buchanan of the apathy of Americans to matters of anti-communism, insisting that most supporters would be unwilling to put photos on the new identification cards that the IAB was developing.<sup>79</sup> Besides, he later mentioned, "I'm so handsome I'm sure death on fine cameras, y'know."<sup>80</sup>

Together, Sheldon and the IAB attempted to further the cause of anti-communism in whatever way they could. Around June 1964, for instance, the group claimed to have located radar gaps in South Florida and to have petitioned the Department of Defense to allow the IAB to demonstrate the alleged gaps so that they might be fixed. The department, according to the Brigade, refused to investigate

# A Pirate's Life for Me

these allegations; in fact, there seems to be no other record of such gaps ever being reported. On the subject, however, the IAB printed in their bulletin the poignant question, “Remember Pearl Harbor?”<sup>81</sup> Also in 1964, the Brigade funded an art exhibit for Guillermo Miguel Diaz Lanz. According to the IAB, the Castro regime had Guillermo imprisoned in Modello Prison on Pine Island. While incarcerated, Guillermo made numerous sketches, illustrating what IAB advertisements called the “decline of the human spirit and the degeneration of the mind under prolonged imprisonment by the Communist regime in Cuba.”<sup>82</sup> Guillermo’s family smuggled forty-three of his sketches from Modello Prison and gave them to the IAB. The IAB, in turn, smuggled them out of Cuba and into the U.S., where they were shown in a fundraising and national awareness exhibit in support of the anti-Castro movement. The advertisement for the exhibit claimed, “A recently liberated cellmate reports from Miami that Guillermo is now completely

insane and has withdrawn from the world.”<sup>83</sup>

It appears that by 1968 the IAB was on the way to becoming an active fighting force again. An incomplete letter from a man named Francisco Quesada, presumably sent to Sheldon, suggests that the group was attempting to raise a mercenary army.<sup>84</sup> Also, Sheldon’s possession of a “Secret Army Organization Contract” and an equipment list of guns, uniforms, food, and medicine further advances this suggestion.<sup>85</sup> Both Cubans and North Americans seem to have constituted, or been intended to constitute, this army. Fiorini suggests this in a letter to Sheldon in which he states, “Any American who goes, regardless of experience, will become an officer.”<sup>86</sup> This statement also seems to imply that Fiorini, and perhaps the rest of the IAB, did not trust Cubans at this point—at least not enough to put them in official positions. Beyond this, however, little inference can be made about the state of affairs in the IAB from that time on.

From the beginning, Sheldon seems to have founded

his decision to become a part of the anti-Castro movement upon his belief, which he lamented frequently in his correspondence, that those who valued freedom ought to resist the spread of communism. One of the root causes for this belief was that he equated communism to slavery. He believed, moreover, that the fight against communism was not one that ought to be fought modestly, but virulently. To this effect, he wrote in an advertisement, “It is the *duty* of every citizen to bear arms if necessary to defend his freedom [emphasis added].”<sup>87</sup> This stands in sharp contrast to what most people would call, and believe to be, a *right* to bear arms against a foreign enemy, yet it is characteristic of Sheldon’s zeal in regarding the communist problem.

Sheldon expected his fellow Americans to express the same zeal, and he was surprised and disappointed when he found that “the American was not as interested in Freedom Fighters as I had thought [he] would be.”<sup>88</sup> To this effect, he countered the famous Kennedy quote by writing in

a memorandum released in 1963, “Now is not the time to ‘ask what you can do for your country’ but for everyman to do what he thinks he can.”<sup>89</sup> He feared that, while the American sat on his hands, the communist was making swift progress and would soon be too entrenched in the Western world to be removed.<sup>90</sup> He expressed this fear in a letter to supporters which threatened, “The time will shortly come when all of us will wish we had given all that we own, plus all that we could borrow, to stop the thing that has come upon us.”<sup>91</sup> Yet Americans had other fears, which Sheldon could not or would not appreciate. One of these was the fear of encouraging a nuclear war with the Soviet Union—a fear which Sheldon countered by arguing that the same danger presented itself in the war in Vietnam.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, he argued that the U.S. stance of avoiding escalation was a one-way street that the Soviet Union was not going to travel. He placed the blame for this squarely on Khrushchev in emphatically writing, “KHRUSHCHEV DOESN’T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT ESCALATION.”<sup>93</sup> Sheldon feared that the result of these dueling behaviors was

the demise of the free world. “In the end,” he wrote, “we are going to wind up in the middle of our great country, huddled about our missiles, whimpering, ‘It might start a war!’”<sup>94</sup>

Although Sheldon’s involvement with Alpha 66 and the IAB was a source of great pride to him, the tangible accomplishments of both groups were minimal. Neither group is given any serious attention in the historical accounts of the Cuban Revolution or its aftermath. Castro, in fact, is still alive, and his brother is now dictator of Cuba. The causes of these two group’s failures are various, but a central root of all the causes is the unwillingness of these “freedom fighters” to study and treat the facts of the Cuban situation diplomatically rather than militarily. They created a fantasy world in which direct, *gung ho* attacks by a small force upon Castro could win the day without regard for political tact. Oftentimes, they merely succeeded in undermining the more judicious workings of the U.S. and allied governments. With clearer vision and open-mindedness, one or either of the two groups may have made a difference in the outcome of the Cuban Revolution, but

unfortunately for Sheldon, he and his compatriots tactlessly disposed of their chances, never to have another. ■

# A Pirate's Life for Me

## Notes

- 1 Marifeli Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course, and Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1993), 6-61.
- 2 Piero Gleijeses, *The Cuban Drumbeat: Castro's Worldview: Cuban Foreign Policy in a Hostile World* (London: Seagull Books, 2009), 6-7; Hugh S. Thomas, Georges A. Fauriol, and Juan Carlos Weiss, *The Cuban Revolution: 25 Years Later* (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1984), 1; Pérez-Stable, 3, 57; James G. Blight and Peter Kornbluh, eds., *Politics of Illusion: The Bay of Pigs Invasion Reexamined* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1998), xiii-xviii, 53.
- 3 "Communism Is Our Mutual Enemy: Help Us to Fight It" by Alpha 66, Folder 1, Container 3, Craig T. Sheldon Anti-Castro Collection, 1955-1993, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.
- 4 "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1.
- 5 Hans Tanner, *Counter-Revolutionary Agent: Diary of the Events Which Occurred in Cuba Between January and July, 1961* (London: G.T. Foulis & Co. Ltd., 1962), xii.
- 6 "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1.
- 7 Robert Smith Thompson, *The Missiles of October: The Declassified Story of John F. Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York:

- Simon & Schuster, 1992), 170, 290; Gleijeses, 10.
- 8 Gleijeses, 12-13.
- 9 "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1; Antonio Veciana to Sheldon, December 10, 1962, Folder 2, Container 1, Sheldon Collection; "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1.
- 10 Sheldon to The Reader's Digest, November 24, 1963, Folder 13, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Nathaniel Weyl to Sheldon, August 28, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 2; "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1.
- 13 Weyl to Sheldon, August 28, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 2.
- 14 Alpha 66 Article by Sheldon, April 6, 1963, Folder 6, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1; "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 2; Weyl to Sheldon, August 28, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1-3.
- 15 Alpha 66 Article by Sheldon, April 6, 1963, Folder 6, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1; Weyl to Sheldon, August 28, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1-2; "Cuban Exile Leader Menoyo: An Enigma in Dark Glasses" Clipping from The Miami Herald, September 15, 1963, Folder 3, Container 2, Sheldon Collection; Sheldon to Weyl, August 24, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1.
- 16 Nathaniel Weyl, *Red Star over Cuba: The Russian Assault on the Western Hemisphere* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1960), 173.
- 17 Ibid., 172-173.
- 18 "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 2.
- 19 Alpha 66 Article by Sheldon, April 6, 1963, Folder 6, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1; Sheldon to The Atlanta Constitution, April 6, 1963, Folder 6, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 20 "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 5.
- 21 Ibid., 1-3.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Veciana to Sheldon, December 10, 1962, Folder 2, Container 1, Sheldon Collection; "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1.
- 24 Sheldon to D.G.M. Coxe, August 24, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1.
- 25 "Alpha 66": Freedom Fighters for the Americas Memo by Sheldon, January 1963, Folder 3, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1.
- 26 Sheldon to J. Edgar Hoover, March 2, 1963, Folder 5, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 2.
- 27 "How Close We Came" Article

- by Sheldon in American Concept, July 1963, Folder 4, Container 3, Sheldon Collection, 6.
- 28 "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 3-7.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Thompson, 348.
- 31 "Exile Leader Laments US Policy" Clipping in New Hampshire Sunday News, April 15, 1963, Folder 3, Container 2, Sheldon Collection.
- 32 "How Close We Came" Article by Sheldon, April 1963, Folder 5, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 33 "Kennedy Pledges Support in Cuban Overthrow of Castro," 1963-1964, Folder 3, Container 2, Sheldon Collection; Sheldon to Hoover, March 2, 1963, Folder 5, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 2.
- 34 Sheldon to Hoover, March 2, 1963, Folder 5, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 2.
- 35 Blight and Kornbluh, eds., 170.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid., 170-171.
- 38 Sheldon to Hoover, March 2, 1963, Folder 5, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 4; "Lee Harvey Oswald Visits Spring Hill" Article in Mobile Bay Monthly, Vol. VIII, 8 (Sept. 1993), Folder 5, Container 2, Sheldon Collection, 24.
- 39 Sheldon to Hoover, March 2, 1963, Folder 5, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 4.
- 40 Veciana to Sheldon, December 10, 1962, Folder 2, Container 1, Sheldon Collection; Gleijeses, 7-8.
- 41 "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 2-3.
- 42 Sheldon to Hoover, March 2, 1963, Folder 5, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 6.
- 43 Joel Kovel, Red Hunting in the Promised Land: Anticommunism and the Making of America (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 87; Sheldon to Hoover, March 2, 1963, Folder 5, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1.
- 44 Ibid., 5.
- 45 Alpha 66 Report by Sheldon attached to Hoover Letter, March 16, 1963, Folder 5, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 46 Sheldon to John McCone, March 16, 1963, Folder 5, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 47 Sheldon to Coxe, August 24, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 5.
- 48 "How Close We Came" Article by Sheldon, April 1963, Folder 5, Container 1, Sheldon Collection. This is only one example. Sheldon typed much of his correspondence on this flyer paper, during his tenure with Alpha 66.
- 49 "How Close We Came" Article by Sheldon, April 1963, Folder 5, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 50 "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 4.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Sheldon to Alpha 66 Contributors, April 13, 1963, Folder 6, Container 1, Sheldon Collection; Sheldon to Coxe, August 24, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 2.
- 54 Sheldon to Coxe, August 24, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 2.
- 55 Sheldon to Coxe, August 24, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1.
- 56 Ibid., 3.
- 57 Sheldon to Coxe, August 24, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 3.
- 58 "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 5.
- 59 "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 4; Weyl to Sheldon, August 28, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 60 Weyl to Sheldon, August 28, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 3.
- 61 Weyl to Sheldon, August 28, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 3.
- 62 Sheldon to Coxe, August 24, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 3.
- 63 Weyl to Sheldon, August 28, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 4.
- 64 "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 3.
- 65 Sheldon to Coxe, August 24, 1963, Folder 10, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 66 Weyl to Sheldon, August 19, 1963, Folder 7, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 1; "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 5-7; Jim Buchanan to Sheldon, October 16, 1963, Folder 11, Container 1; "The Story Behind the International Anti-Communist Brigade," Folder 9, Container 2, Sheldon Collection.
- 67 "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 7.

# A Pirate's Life for Me

- 68 "Alexander Rorke, Jr." Article, Folder 11, Container 2, Sheldon Collection; Julia E. Sweig, *Inside the Cuban Revolution: Fidel Castro and the Urban Underground* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 103; Weyl, 150; Edwin Tetlow, *Eye on Cuba* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966), 74-78; "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 5-7; Buchanan to Sheldon, September 12, 1963, Folder 11, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 2.
- 69 "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 5.
- 70 Pérez-Stable, 56-58, 78; Buchanan to Sheldon, October 16, 1963, Folder 11, Container 1, Sheldon Collection; Ian Michael James, *Ninety Miles: Cuban Journeys in the Age of Castro* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 9.
- 71 "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 5.
- 72 Buchanan to Sheldon, October 23, 1963, Folder 11, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 73 "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 5.
- 74 Sheldon to Hoover, March 2, 1963, Folder 5, Container 1, Sheldon Collection; Speech by Sheldon, Folder 13, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 4.
- 75 Sheldon to D.E. Greer, November 27, 1963, Folder 13, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 2.
- 76 Buchanan to Sheldon, April 1, 1964, Folder 14, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 77 Sheldon to Buchanan, November 10, 1963, Folder 13, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 2.
- 78 Ibid., 3.
- 79 Sheldon to Buchanan, November 10, 1963, Folder 13, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 2.
- 80 Sheldon to Buchanan, October 29, 1963, Folder 11, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 81 The International Anti-Communist Brigade Bulletin, no. 7, June 8, 1964, Folder 10, Container 2, Sheldon Collection.
- 82 "Art of a Prisoner" Ad, 1964, Folder 15, Container 2, Sheldon Collection.
- 83 "Art of a Prisoner" Ad, 1964, Folder 15, Container 2, Sheldon Collection.
- 84 Letter from Francisco Quesada, Folder 18, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 2.
- 85 Secret Army Organization Contract, Folder 18, Container 1, Sheldon Collection; Equipment List, Folder 18, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 86 Frank Fiorini to Sheldon, 1968, Folder 18, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 87 "Greetings from Alpha 66" Ad by Sheldon, April 1963, Folder 7, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 88 "A Report on Cuba" by Sheldon, July 23, 1964, Folder 1, Container 1, Sheldon Collection, 3.
- 89 "Alpha 66": Freedom Fighters for the Americas Memo by Sheldon, January 1963, Folder 3, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 90 "Exile Leader Laments US Policy" Clipping from New Hampshire Sunday News, April 15, 1963, Folder 3, Container 2, Sheldon Collection.
- 91 Sheldon to Alpha 66 Contributors, April 15, 1963, Folder 6, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 92 "How Close We Came" Article by Sheldon, April 1963, Folder 5, Container 1, Sheldon Collection.
- 93 "Is Escalation a Hoax?" by Sheldon, Folder 15, Container 2, Sheldon Collection, 3.
- 94 "Exile Leader Laments US Policy" Clipping from New Hampshire Sunday News, April 15, 1963, Folder 3, Container 2, Sheldon Collection.



## A Conversation with Dr. Wyatt Wells

**Jennifer Kellum**

History professor Dr. Wyatt Wells joined the AUM faculty in 1997. Born and raised in Nashville, Tennessee, Dr. Wells was a history enthusiast from the start. He received his B.A. from Vanderbilt University in



*Dr. Wyatt Wells, Professor of History at AUM*  
(Frank Williams, University Relations, AUM)

1986 and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1988 and 1992, respectively. He has authored several articles and books on economic history, including *Economist in an Uncertain World: Arthur F. Burns and the Federal Reserve*, and also served as the assistant editor of the *Andrew Jackson Papers* at the University of Tennessee.

***What was your high school like?***

It was an all-boys prep school called Montgomery Bell Academy. The more distance I've gotten from it, the better I've thought of it. There was a terrific emphasis on self-discipline and accomplishment, and a good deal of pressure. When you're under that pressure you don't necessarily like it. Particularly since I was a student in the 70s and the very early 80s, which was very much a do-your-own-thing as a matter of principle, not just do-your-own-thing because it's a do-your-own-thing era. There was always some feeling of rebellion.

***Do you think you found a good balance between the pressure of walking a straight line and that rebellion?***

Yeah. I'm not an actual rebel (laughs).

***How did your family and friends react to your choice of major?***

They've always been okay with it. My father was a doctor,

but he was also an academic—he taught at a medical school and was a full-time faculty member—so he understood.

There's always a concern about whether you can find a job doing this. There's never any problem with history as an undergraduate major because you can decide to go into law school or go into business. Going to graduate school in history however the question is: "What can you do? Can you get a job doing this?"

### ***Did you know what you wanted to do?***

I think I did. I think I wanted to teach in life, to be a historian and a writer. I was always interested in this.

### ***What's a tough assignment you remember from your college career?***

I wrote a big senior thesis on the politics of Richard Nixon and the South. I had no idea what I was getting into and I had never done anything remotely like it before, so there was a lot of making it up as I went along. I was fortunate to have a very good and very tolerant advisor. I can remember getting things that clearly were not right, and he very gently

sort of pushed me onto something that was entirely different.

### ***What is it about economics that interested you?***

It's intellectually challenging trying to sort it all out but there is this wonderful irony; it's an area where people think they know exactly what they're doing and exactly what will happen and as often as not, they're just dead wrong.

### ***What do you think has been your most significant professional accomplishment?***

We'd all like to say our books, but we're never quite sure how many people read them. I think when you add it up over time, it's the students. Over ten years you could easily teach a thousand students. Even if they're not historians and you're not the chief influence in their life, there's still a part of their mind you shaped and had a hand in.

### ***What are you working on now?***

I have a smaller project and a larger project. The smaller project is about ethnic minorities in the New Deal. I think one of the greatly overlooked accomplishments of

Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal was that it at least began the process of fully integrating Jews and Catholics into American society. We focus with good reason on race, but the truth is that there was a lot of ethnic and religious discrimination then too. The bigger project is a history of the 1890s and the great populist revolt and political upheaval of the 1890s -- the very complicated financial operations. What they're arguing about is finance: "What should be the basis of the currency?

How should we stabilize the government's finances?" I think we need a history that puts all of this financial stuff front and center.

### ***Why do you think someone should major in history?***

Almost all our knowledge in the beginning is history, that's where it all begins. Sociologists or economists, they start off with all of this historical data and then they come up with theories. You could almost say that there are two sorts of knowledge, historical knowledge and literary knowledge, and so history is sort of the beginning of figuring out what we know. It's not the end of it, but it's where you start.

## ***What's a significant historical or political event you've experienced in your lifetime?***

Part of the problem, and this is one of the fun things about being a historian, is that a lot of what seems traumatic at the time, we all forget. However, the things that you don't pay attention to, in the long run, take on substantial significance. A lot of the economic reforms of the Reagan administration, particularly the regulatory stuff like breaking up AT&T, were significant. We have multiple phone companies, even though they're narrowing down now, but lots of companies came along and offered cell phones. Whether that would have happened with AT&T, with one big company, I don't know. It made a huge difference in our daily lives.

## ***Have you ever had any broken bones?***

In second grade, I broke my right arm, and in sixth grade, my left arm. In the second grade, I was playing; they were building somewhere and I fell off a pile of dirt. The left

arm, in the sixth grade, I was playing football, and that was the end of my football career, which was fine by me. I never was made for football, either psychologically or physically, but I did get to go to the emergency room wearing football pads.

## ***Any phobias?***

I don't like high places, but "phobia" may be too strong of a word. If I'm in a high open place—I'm uneasy. And strangely enough if I'm playing a video game where you have to jump over something high, I can feel this tension. It's not like I can't play the game or I'm in a cold sweat, but it is fascinating.

## ***What's your gaming platform? What kind of games do you play?***

I play on the PS3. I like games that mix action with thinking. Right now I'm playing the new Deus Ex game where you alternate between figuring out things, how to get out of a situation and the occasional fire-fight where you just blow things up and get rid of your frustrations.

## ***Do you have a specialty dish you like to cook?***

I haven't made it in a while, but I used to make a really good cheese pudding. It looks sort of like a soufflé, but it's very cheesy.

## ***Do you watch TV?***

A little, but more out of the corner of my eye. The thing my wife and I follow right now is Castle. It's in many ways a tongue-in-cheek cop show and it's very entertaining. And we're slowly making our way through The Sopranos.

## ***If you could possess one superhuman power, what would it be?***

You're talking to someone who reads comic books a lot! I like the power of Cyclops of the X-Men where you get to zap stuff. I'm not quite sure what I would zap, but I think if people knew you could zap them, they would be a lot easier to deal with. ■



**Elizabeth Elder**

## Brown v. Board Alabama's Initial Reaction

The United States established its policy of separate but equal institutions with the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. In that ruling, the Supreme Court stated that the law, or the application of it, could not correct the



*Albert Boutwell (center) served as Chairman of the Alabama Interim Legislative Committee on Segregation in the Public Schools and was later elected Lieutenant Governor, as seen in this photograph at the inauguration of Governor John Patterson (left).*

*(Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama)*

engrained social inferiority of African-American citizens.<sup>1</sup> The continued legal segregation of society damaged America's international image, a fact recognized by

the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and countries around the world.<sup>2</sup> This negative image motivated the United States to take an active role in desegregation.<sup>3</sup> In 1954, the Court, under Judge Earl Warren, reversed the legal acceptance of separate but equal educational institutions with the decision made in the collection of cases known as *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. The Court found that the segregation of American schools was unconstitutional.<sup>4</sup> However, in the first year after *Brown v. Board*, the southern portion of the country made no recognizable improvements on the issue.<sup>5</sup> The Court recognized that the South would experience a more difficult time adhering to the decision and, in fact, many southern states experienced harmful regression.<sup>6</sup> In 1955, the Court revisited *Brown v. Board* and ordered that "all provisions of federal, state, or local law requiring or permitting such discrimination must yield to this principle."<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately,

the 1955 opinion still made no requirements as to how or when desegregation must occur, which gave Alabama the opportunity to study desegregation before deciding upon a course of action.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, politicians and educational leaders capitalized on fear and engrained social attitudes in order to persuade citizens to disregard their right to public education.

Before the Court announced the *Brown v. Board* decision, the Alabama legislature initiated an investigation into the effects desegregation could have on Alabama schools and the citizenry as a whole. During the 1953 legislative session, the Alabama Legislature created the Alabama Interim Legislative Committee on Segregation in the Public Schools (AILCSPS) to study the possible consequences of forced desegregation in Alabama.<sup>9</sup> The committee, chaired by State Senator Albert Boutwell, who would later be referred to as “ultra liberal” by violent segregationists in Birmingham, met shortly after the announcement of the Court’s ruling.<sup>10</sup> The other members of the committee were fellow

State Senators J. Miller Bonner and Herbert Byars as well as State Representatives Robert G. Kendall, Jr., Ira D. Pruitt, and Jack C. Gallalee.<sup>11</sup>

Although the committee formed in 1953, it had not formally met before the announcement of the Court’s decision in *Brown v. Board*. Immediately after the declaration, stories concerned with desegregation flooded the *Montgomery Advertiser’s* front page. Most of the stories cited the lack of established timelines and initiation plans in the Court’s final opinion, and noted that it would only apply to the states specifically involved in the original cases.<sup>12</sup> In addition, suggestions of different possible ways to fight desegregation inundated the *Montgomery Advertiser*. Among the suggestions were multiple private school plans, specialized zoning restrictions, powerful local school boards, and the complete equalization of separate school facilities.<sup>13</sup> The articles also acknowledged the amount of pressure and dependency placed on the committee. Attorney General Si Garrett and Senator John J. Sparkman both stated that any legal or political action

rested on the final findings of the committee and the recommendations of Governor Gordon Persons.<sup>14</sup>

The AILCSPS formally met in July 1954, and created eight possible constitutional amendments.<sup>15</sup> Released to explain its findings, the committee’s October 1954 report suggested that violent protests and disruptions would occur along with desegregation and repeatedly stated that “compulsory integration” would cause schools to operate in two conflicting functions, as educational institutions and “correctional programs.”<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the new functions of the schools would hinder teacher recruitment. The committee feared that Caucasian teachers, who were already in short supply, would be unwilling to join a desegregated school system.<sup>17</sup> Not addressed by the committee were the threats to African-American teachers. However, African-American teachers who relocated to predominately-Caucasian schools anticipated unjust dismissal because of their race.<sup>18</sup>

While the possibility of scaring away new teachers

## Brown v. Board

---

was serious, the committee focused more on the immediate threats to the already fragile relationship between citizens of different races. The committee outlined a series of possible societal conflicts that might follow a forced integration of the public schools, insisting that there was a “basic harmony” between the races and that no “dormant attitude of hostility” existed.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, the committee predicted that a forced integration of the schools would cause a rise in incidents of employment, housing, and business discrimination between parents of different races. Caucasian employers could refuse to hire an African-American parent if that meant the parent would then be able to send their child to a predominately-Caucasian school. Similarly, Caucasian realtors and homeowners would be less likely to accept an African-American family into a neighborhood attached to a desegregated school system. Regarding business discrimination, the committee’s explanation was vague, stating that various business

arrangements could fall through.<sup>20</sup>

In the case of the children, there was a clear consensus that desegregation would initially hurt young African-American students.<sup>21</sup> There would be, at minimum, a “sharp disclosure” of the differences in scholastic aptitude between the races.<sup>22</sup> The committee failed to realize that the threat of significant differences in students’ aptitudes damaged its claim that segregated schools were already equal. If the schools were truly equal, there would be no dramatic difference in students’ intelligence. The disparity would surely cause psychological damage to the African-American children’s already fragile minds. However, the physical separation of the races also produced profound psychological damage in young African-American students. Psychologists and sociologists found that segregation caused the development of feelings of inferiority, stating that some African-American students even idolized their Caucasian counterparts.<sup>23</sup>

Regarding resistance, the

committee embraced the belief that members of both races had the capacity to become belligerent and violent in the wake of desegregation and proposed that even those sworn to uphold the laws would become victims of the overwhelming forces of hatred. These forces could cause “peace officers” and other elected persons to deny and, in some cases, become unable to perform the duties entrusted to them by their offices.<sup>24</sup> Noncompliant parents also concerned the committee, and it cited proposals from the state of Delaware in which nonconforming parents would be subject to prosecution for disobeying the tenets of desegregation.<sup>25</sup> These proposals illustrated the extremes of desegregation policies and served to remind the legislature that southern and northern states held different historical standings on race relations. Reforms, like those suggested in Delaware, were “intolerable and impossible” for Alabama’s citizens and could not be regarded as plausible in any

plan for Alabama.<sup>26</sup>

After considering these issues—teacher recruitment, the effect on children, and discrimination—the committee chose to amend eight sections of the state constitution that concerned education. Five of the amendments dealt with various means of funding public education, while the other three gave the legislature more abilities to fight desegregation. The modifications in all of the sections dealt with a few particular words. For example, the original language of Sections 258, 259, 260, 269, and 270 allocated funds from various sources to the “maintenance,” “support,” or “benefit” of “public schools.”<sup>27</sup> The new draft directed the funding for the blanketed “furtherance of education.”<sup>28</sup> This subtle rewording nullified the state’s requirement to maintain and fund a healthy public school system. The changes to Section 260 especially noted the objective of all of the amendments:

all proceeds of income or other taxes levied by the state, and of all special ad valorem or other taxes levied by the counties and other municipalities, or school

districts, pursuant to the constitution as heretofore amended, for public school purposes, shall be applied to the support and furtherance of education.<sup>29</sup>

This passage indicated a stark difference in connotation between the terms “public schools” and “education.” The changes also revealed the committee’s true intent to allow the abandonment of the public school system in Alabama.

Two other sections to which the committee proposed alterations were Articles 5 and 6 of the constitution, dealing with the executive and judicial departments respectively. In Section 137, the committee added language that required the Attorney General to defend cases pertaining to education. Specifically the changes called on the Attorney General to

[d]efend any or all suits brought against the state, or any subdivision thereof, or against any state school board or state board of education, or against any county or city school board or board of education, or against like boards or commissions by whatever name designated, or against any members, officers or employees of any such boards, or against

any school official or employee throughout Alabama.<sup>30</sup>

With this addition, the committee ensured that all legally responsible parties would have adequate representation if prosecuted for either enforcing segregation or not enforcing desegregation. In Section 139, the committee suggested modifications to give those same legally responsible parties new power as judicial officers. The committee believed that the state should “provide that all action taken by them...requiring the exercise of discretion or judgment in connection with school matters be judicial action.”<sup>31</sup> This alteration would give unprecedented legal power to those who had previously wielded only a small amount while also decreasing accountability for school officials.

The last amended section would comply with the *Brown v. Board* decision and formally abolish the right to public education in Alabama. Section 256 originally required the state to maintain an educational institution for all children between the ages of seven and twenty-one provided there was no mixing of the races within

## Brown v. Board

the schools.<sup>32</sup> Considering that this particular portion was now federally unconstitutional, the committee suggested that the new version declare the state's responsibility to "foster and promote the education of its citizens," adding that "nothing in this Constitution shall be construed as creating or recognizing any right to education or training at public expense."<sup>33</sup> These words, above all others, struck the requirement for segregated schools, completely nullified any right to education, and allowed for the possibility of a total elimination of a public school structure of any kind in Alabama.

Although the committee described its proposed amendments as "essential" to acquire the legislative flexibility needed to control desegregation, it misrepresented the consequences of the amendments by specifically rejecting the idea that the recommendations "call[ed] for [the] abolition or abandonment of the public school system."<sup>34</sup> However, a comprehensive study on southern states'

progress one year after *Brown v. Board* claimed that the amendments had done just that and "pave[d] the way for abolition of public education in the state."<sup>35</sup> Moreover, the committee's report suggested abolition as a "final resort" to nullify the Supreme Court's decision. This facet of the report was important because many believed that southern states would discard the public school system altogether. Former Chief Justice Fred Vinson struggled with this fear during the original presentation of *Brown v. Board*.<sup>36</sup> Vinson's worries never fully materialized in the state of Alabama, even though Sam Englehardt (committee member J. Miller Bonner's son-in-law) pushed for the privatization of education prior to the ruling, and revisions of the private school plan were already in process in order to apply it in Alabama. The private school plans aimed to disband all public schools and allocate "public funds to finance private institutions of learning."<sup>37</sup> Finally, the committee discussed contingency plans for teachers'

retirements in case the schools closed.<sup>38</sup>

Even though the committee prepared for repercussions to its suggestions, the state government did not fear the 1954 ruling because the inconsistencies between the ruling and its application allowed the state to delay all official actions. While the surrounding states immediately asked legislative bodies to find a proper course to avoid the ruling, Alabama waited until the "final decree" came down in 1955.<sup>39</sup> Other southern states quickly implemented constitutional changes, but Alabama lawmakers only seriously considered the matter after the announcement of the second *Brown v. Board* ruling, delaying voting on any constitutional amendments until the federal government issued its last word on the subject. Ultimately, the state depended on the committee's suggestions.

While the committee presented the possible consequences of the *Brown v. Board* decision, the politics of Alabama's educational

system slowly shifted. The National Congress of Parents and Teachers issued its newly adopted policy dealing with *Brown v. Board* at its directors' meeting in Atlantic City on May 22, 1954. Its policy "urge[d] parent-teacher leaders, in cooperation with schools and other governmental authorities in each community, to study and pursue effective means in working toward integrated education for all children."<sup>40</sup> The Alabama Congress of Parents and Teachers, a subsidiary of the national organization, requested clarification on the policy in March 1956.<sup>41</sup> After receiving the policy from Mrs. Rollin Brown, then president of the National Congress, the directors of the Alabama Congress convened to adopt its own policy on segregation and a firm position on the *Brown v. Board* decision.

On September 13, 1956, the directors of the Alabama Congress met in Birmingham and decided on a resolution to the conflict that was now developing between the National Congress and the Alabama branch.<sup>42</sup> The Alabama Congress requested modifications to

the section of the national policy urging members to support integration. The modified policy would declare that states should "study and pursue effective means of constructively solving the problems resulting from the Supreme Court's decision."<sup>43</sup> This change in wording would release the Alabama branch from the earlier recommendation by the National Congress to support integration in its schools.

Additionally, the Alabama Congress speculated that advocating integration violated the National Congress's own policies. The Alabama branch stated that the National Congress had long been an opponent of federal control of the public school system and that the insistence to comply with *Brown v. Board* conflicted entirely with this view.<sup>44</sup> It also cited the National Congress's own bylaws, which declared, "[I]ts local units and its branches shall not seek to direct the administrative activities of the schools or to control their policies."<sup>45</sup> The Alabama Congress felt that by adhering to the National Congress's policy on desegregation, it would be breaking that

particular bylaw. This schism between the National Congress and the Alabama branch signified a greater division between national and state politics. The northern portion of the country was beginning to oppose segregation and racial inequality, while the southern portion entrenched itself even further.<sup>46</sup>

A micro example of the division between national and state views presented itself in Montgomery County. The Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) of Catoma and Cloverdale both operated in Montgomery, less than fifteen miles away from each other, and both organizations joined the National Congress and the Montgomery County Council of Parents and Teachers. Despite the obvious similarities, in August 1956 the Cloverdale PTA unanimously decided to continue its affiliation with the National Congress, while the Catoma PTA unanimously recommended that its members break away from the national chapter to form another group.<sup>47</sup>

Another prominent organization, the Alabama Education Association (AEA), a large advocacy group for

## Brown v. Board

teachers, issued its opinion on the desegregation of Alabama public schools in March 1956. It described *Brown v. Board* as a means for “Federal Control of public education by court order without Federal Aid,” which starkly contrasted with its earlier desire for the opposite.<sup>48</sup> The AEA also mocked the Supreme Court, saying that the justices did not even fully understand the Tenth Amendment of the United States Constitution that dealt with states’ rights.<sup>49</sup> In support of segregation, the AEA argued that the state of Alabama was developing equal educational institutions and, beyond that, the state had facilitated the ability for many African-American students to seek higher education outside of Alabama through various scholarships. The AEA further blamed the Supreme Court for helping disband the “friendliest race relationships in the world.”<sup>50</sup>

Although the AEA expressed opposition to the Supreme Court as a whole, it especially disapproved of desegregating Alabama schools. In order to “improve education

for each race” and effectively void the Court’s decision, the AEA suggested that every voter carefully consider the amendments proposed by the AILCSPS.<sup>51</sup> The AEA presented the amendments in a way that allowed its constituents to view the exact changes to the constitution, pending approval later that year in August. The AEA also recognized that the amendment to Section 256 would abolish the right to a state-funded education for citizens, but did not attempt to persuade its members to accept or deny this provision.<sup>52</sup> Overall, it seemed that the AEA did not fully support the committee’s recommendations, but was willing to do anything in its power to impede desegregation in Alabama.

Other groups also developed strong opinions about the amendments. For example, opponents to integration staged a demonstration in Court Square in August 1956 where they hung renderings representing an African-American NAACP member and a Caucasian integration supporter. The

*Montgomery Advertiser* quoted many members of the local police who claimed that while there were many shoppers in the area, the scene did not receive a great amount of attention. The group behind the demonstration claimed to have the support of the Committee on the Preservation of Segregation (COPS). Among those involved were Jack D. Brock, publisher of the *Alabama Labor News*, and Eugene S. Hall, director of the Montgomery White Citizens Council. Both men were printers for the *Montgomery Advertiser*. Brock stated that COPS asked him to help with the demonstration and he printed an open invitation to the event on the front page of the *Alabama Labor News*. Hall claimed that while members of the Montgomery White Citizens Council were involved, it did not initiate the event.<sup>53</sup>

The proposed amendments received a lot of support in Alabama, but also elicited some resistance. One notable instance of opposition was the wavering position of State School Superintendent Dr.

Austin R. Meadows, who vowed in his campaign to “find a legal way to maintain segregated schools.”<sup>54</sup> The *Montgomery Advertiser* quoted Meadows frequently as an opponent to the amendments. Unfortunately, the quotes were not from any interview with Meadows, but instead the claims about his opposition surfaced from letters he wrote to city and county school officials. The *Montgomery Advertiser* described Meadows’ opposition as extremely vigorous towards the section that would abandon the state’s requirement to maintain a public school system.<sup>55</sup>

However, Meadows repeatedly denied that he ever disapproved of the plan.<sup>56</sup> In addition to Meadows, Ace Carter, leader of the North Alabama Citizens Council, and many Protestant ministers publicly condemned the amendments. The ministers had a particularly difficult problem with the plan, as they believed it would interfere with the separation of church and state by forcing integration on religious institutions.<sup>57</sup> Regardless of the limited opposition, citizens supported the recommendations and

the few voices of opposition were not enough to stop the committee’s plan from reaching the ballot.

After consolidation, the recommended amendments became the “Freedom of Choice” bill. The State Legislature presented the amendment to Alabama voters on the August 28, 1956 ballot.<sup>58</sup> Even though the amendment had far-reaching consequences, expectations for participation remained low and many counties reported low voter turnout. Montgomery County served as a great example of low voter turnout as only one-third of those registered voted.<sup>59</sup> The “Freedom of Choice” bill, however, passed with an incredibly high margin despite the low participation rate.<sup>60</sup> All of the counties in the southern and central portions of the state, except Macon County, which received a large amount of African-American voters, strongly approved the bill. North Alabama, however, was not as clear on the issue and only two counties—Madison and Marshall—approved the amendment.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, the ratio of approving votes was too high to stop the bill.<sup>62</sup>

Even though the bill passed

and the state believed it had nullified the Court’s decision, the amendments ultimately failed to stop desegregation, which prompted research into race relations.<sup>63</sup> Between 1963 and 1982, sociological researchers at the University of Alabama polled ten percent of the Caucasian population about their relationships and feelings towards African-American students and workers. The report concluded that over time race relations in Alabama progressively improved in most aspects. Caucasian students reported feeling more comfortable in social situations with African Americans, but personal and romantic relationships still lacked acceptance. This study exhibited how attitudes adapted over time and illustrated that the integration of society would have taken much longer without the *Brown v. Board* decision.<sup>64</sup>

Before *Brown v. Board*, the federal government desegregated its workers; however, it did not provide an adequate model of success for states to follow. The lack of an appropriate model combined with inherited ideas about race relations, severely damaged

# Brown v. Board

the possibility for immediate desegregation in Alabama.<sup>65</sup> Beyond that, the state deferred to the AILSCPS on the issue and its plan reshaped the constitution. Consequently, citizens in Alabama forfeited their right to public education and created the opportunity for the state to discontinue funding for public schools. Collectively, the divisions within Alabama, engrained social attitudes concerning segregation, and the ability of organizations to manipulate the public created problematic constitutional changes for future generations. If nothing else compels the state to revise its constitution, the threat that citizens may never recover the right to public education should. ■

## Notes

- 1 Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 (1896).
- 2 Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 18-46, 12-13. Dudziak cites numerous international articles that contained information about provocative examples of racial discrimination in the United States against citizens and diplomatic visitors. The countries listed include China, Japan, India, Greece, Jamaica, and the United Kingdom, among others; *Ibid.*, 36-37. Dudziak specifically refers to internal race relations as America's "Achilles Heel," quoting an article in a conservative Greek newspaper; Mary L. Dudziak, "Brown as a Cold War Case," *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 1 (2004): 36.
- 3 Azza Salama Layton, *International Politics and Civil Rights Policies in the United States, 1941-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 107-139. Layton points out that the State Department began providing legal help in cases that involved racial issues. She also clarifies the United Nation's position that the US had essentially violated the tenants of Articles 55 and 56 of the United Nations Charter with its racially discriminatory practices. These two points exemplify the international pressure for policy change and America's response to that pressure; Michal R. Belknap, *The Supreme Court Under Earl Warren, 1953-1969* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 2, 25, 46. Belknap cites numerous occasion when the Justice Department involved itself in cases dealing with segregation and civil rights by filing amicus curiae briefs on behalf of the defendants. These briefs were prepared using the latest psychological and sociological studies.
- 4 Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954); Belknap, 35, 49. The "separate but equal" doctrine was only reversed in schools.
- 5 Lewis W. Jones, "Desegregation of Public Education in Alabama," *Journal of Negro Education* 24, no. 3 (1955): 165. Jones outlined the series of events that had taken place not long after the decision. In the outline he compared incidents occurring in Alabama to those in the surrounding states.
- 6 Belknap, 29, 39-40. Belknap specifically referred to the notion that desegregation would demand "a radical transformation of southern school systems."
- 7 Brown v. Board of Education, 349 U.S. 294 (1955).
- 8 Belknap, 41, 48; Keith M. Finley, *Delaying the Dream: Southern Senators and the Fight against Civil Rights, 1938-1965* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 138; Gerry Lee, "School Decree No Burden On U.S. Judges In Alabama," *Montgomery Advertiser*, June 1, 1955.
- 9 Geoffrey Birt, "Governor Plans No

Special Call of Legislature," Montgomery Advertiser, May 18, 1954; "Report of Alabama Interim Legislative Committee on Segregation in the Public Schools," 1, Auburn University Montgomery Archives & Special Collections, Otis James Goodwyn Papers, Box 3, Education General #162.

10 "Birmingham Bulletin," Auburn University Montgomery Archives & Special Collections, ACPTA (Alabama Congress of Parent and Teacher Association) Papers, Box 14, Integration, 1963-64 #6.

11 "Report of Alabama Interim Legislative Committee on Segregation in the Public Schools," 9; Birt, "Governor Plans No Special Call of Legislature."

12 Birt, "Governor Plans No Special Call of Legislature"; "Alabama Delaying Any Legal Steps On School Ruling," Montgomery Advertiser, May 19, 1954; Rex Thomas, "State Has Time To Revise Segregated School System," Montgomery Advertiser, May 23, 1954.

13 Trudy Cargile, "Sparks Asserts Supreme Court Crucified Dixie," Montgomery Advertiser, May 20, 1954; Thomas, "State Has Time To Revise Segregated School System"; "Culp Opposed To End Of Ban On Segregation," Montgomery Advertiser, May 19, 1954.

14 Birt, "Governor Plans No Special Call of Legislature"; "Alabama Delaying Any Legal Steps On School Ruling."

15 "Report of Alabama Interim Legislative Committee on Segregation in the Public Schools," 1.

16 Ibid., 5. The phrase "compulsory integration" is quoted to emphasize

the conclusions of the committee. The phrase "correctional programs" is quoted because an acceptable synonym could not be found. The terms "prison" and "detention facility" seemed too strong to accurately convey the committee's meaning.

17 Ibid., 4.

18 Willard E. Gandy, "Implications of Integration for the Southern Teacher," *Journal of Negro Education* 31, no. 2 (1962): 195.

19 "Report of Alabama Interim Legislative Committee on Segregation in the Public Schools," 2.

20 Ibid., 3.

21 Belknap, 27, 35.

22 "Report of Alabama Interim Legislative Committee on Segregation in the Public Schools," 3. The phrase "sharp disclosure" is quoted to emphasize the conclusions of the committee.

23 Belknap, 27, 35. In the case arguments, many psychological and sociological studies are cited that state segregation had already had a profound impact on African American students.

24 "Report of Alabama Interim Legislative Committee on Segregation in the Public Schools," 4.

25 Ibid., 3-4.

26 Ibid., 4.

27 Alabama Constitution, art. 14, sec. 258, 259, 260, 269, and 270.

28 "Report of Alabama Interim Legislative Committee on Segregation in the Public Schools," 10-12.

29 Ibid., 12.

30 Ibid., 10.

31 Ibid.

32 Alabama Constitution, art. 14, sec. 256.

33 "Report of Alabama Interim Leg-

islative Committee on Segregation in the Public Schools," 11.

34 Ibid., 2, 6, 7.

35 Jones, 167.

36 Belknap, 26.

37 Jones, 167; Thomas, "State Has Time To Revise Segregated School System"; Birt, "Governor Plans No Special Call of Legislature."

38 "Report of Alabama Interim Legislative Committee on Segregation in the Public Schools," 9. "The protection of rights of tenure and of the retirement system for teachers who might be affected by discontinuance of schools or otherwise, and like problems, can be solved without material difficulty."

39 Jones, 169. Jones cites constitutional changes in South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, and Louisiana; Birt, "Governor Plans No Special Call of Legislature."

40 Letter from Mrs. Rollin Brown to Mrs. Clyde C. Sellers, March 27, 1956, Auburn University Montgomery Archives & Special Collections, ACPTA, Box 14, Subject Files #6.

41 Letter from Mrs. Rollin Brown to Mrs. Clyde C. Sellers, March 27, 1956.

42 Letter from Board of Managers of the Alabama Congress of Parents and Teachers to the Executive Committee of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, September 14, 1956, Auburn University Montgomery Archives & Special Collections, ACPTA, Box 14, Subject Files #6.

"Unrest and grave concern have been growing throughout the State of Alabama since the Board of Managers of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers issued the statement re: Supreme Court

# Brown v. Board

---

decision in 1954. Within the past few weeks, several local units have rejected membership in the National Congress.”

43 Letter from Board of Managers of the Alabama Congress of Parents and Teachers to the Executive Committee of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, September 14, 1956.

44 “Statement of Position in Answer to Issue of Segregation,” April 25, 1956, Auburn University Montgomery Archives & Special Collections, ACPA, Box 14, Subject Files #6. “It has been a long established policy of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers to insist upon state and local control of education and to oppose any encroachment by the Federal Government upon the administration, supervision or control of schools.” A printed copy of this statement was given to all the delegates present at the April 26, 1956 Alabama convention and members of the press before being sent to the National Congress.

45 “Statement of Position in Answer to Issue of Segregation,” April 25, 1956.

46 Belknap, 25. Belknap states, “Outside the South the climate of opinion was increasingly inhospitable to segregation,” and that “America’s version of apartheid” was “oppressive and incompatible with democracy.”

47 “Catoma P-TA Urges Members To Form Independent Group,” Montgomery Advertiser, August 30, 1956; Jim Hall, “Cloverdale P-TA

Group Votes To Stay With National Group,” Montgomery Advertiser, August 28, 1956.

48 “Where Are We in Public Education in Alabama,” Address to Alabama Education Association, March 22, 1956, 2, Auburn University Montgomery Archives & Special Collections, Otis James Goodwyn Papers, Box 3, Education-General #162, “Up until a few years ago many of us were urging Federal Aid to public schools without Federal Control.”

49 Ibid. The address states, “educators are supposed to have taught the nine judges that the Tenth Amendment makes education in America a State function....The U.S. Constitution nowhere provides for the Federal Government to operate public schools. We educators thought that we could read and we still think so.”

50 Ibid. “The nine U.S. Supreme Judges are leading us to dissolution in this State where we have for several years enjoyed the friendliest race relationships in the world.”

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

53 “Integration Opponents Hang 2 Effigies In Court Square,” Montgomery Advertiser, August 5, 1956.

54 Jones, 166.

55 Bob Ingram, “2-1 Margin Blocks Move To Hike Tax,” Montgomery Advertiser, August 29, 1956.

56 Bob Ingram, “Poll Discloses ‘Choice’ Bill Likely To Pass,” Montgomery Advertiser, August 8, 1956.

57 Ingram, “2-1 Margin Blocks

Move To Hike Tax.”

58 Bob Ingram, “Amendment Among Six On Ballot,” Montgomery Advertiser, August 28 1956.

59 Steve Lesher, “Light County Vote Okays Segregation Amendments,” Montgomery Advertiser, August 29, 1956.

60 Ingram, “Poll Discloses ‘Choice’ Bill Likely To Pass”; Lesher, “Light County Vote Okays Segregation Amendments”; Ingram, “2-1 Margin Blocks Move To Hike Tax.”

61 Ingram, “2-1 Margin Blocks Move To Hike Tax.”

62 Ingram, “Poll Discloses ‘Choice’ Bill Likely To Pass”; Alabama Constitution, amend. 111.

63 Ingram, “Amendment Among Six On Ballot.” Ingram quoted supporters from the Alabama Bar Association. They almost unanimously agreed that the “choice” bill was the best plan that had been devised at that time.

64 Donal E. Muir and C. Donald Mc Glamery, “Trends in Integration Attitudes on a Deep-South Campus During the First Two Decades of Desegregation,” Social Forces 62, no. 4 (1984): 965.

65 “Report of Alabama Interim Legislative Committee on Segregation in the Public Schools,” 4.

# Contributors

**GRAYDON RUST** is currently a junior in the History Department at AUM. Although he has always been interested in history, it was not until taking Dr. Fitzsimmons' history class his first year that he decided to pursue his Bachelor's in the subject. During his time here, Graydon has received several scholarships and awards, including the Academic Excellence Scholarship for 2008-2012 and the Fair-Robinson Scholarship for 2011. Along with his academic pursuits, he is also extremely involved on campus, being a member of the School of Liberal Arts Representatives (SchOLARS), Phi Alpha Theta, College Bowl, as well as President of the University Honors Assembly. Outside of school, Graydon also works part-time at the Department of Archives and History as a student clerk inside the Research Room. After he graduates, Graydon plans to go on to graduate school and pursue a Ph.D. in history, so one day he can become a history professor and inspire others the way his professors have inspired him.

**ALLISON HAMILTON** is a senior history major from Montgomery, Alabama and a founding editor of the AUM Historical Review. During her time at AUM, she has won the Academic Excellence Scholarship for 2008-2012, the Patricia J. Bradley Memorial Scholarship in the spring of 2010, and the Dodd Southern History Paper Prize in the spring of 2011. After she graduates, Allison plans to get a taste for the cultures of the world by traveling to and working in as many countries as she possibly can.

**TRACY WILSON** is a senior history major from Titus, Alabama and one of the founding editors of the AUM Historical Review. His interest in history was sparked by a desire to learn more about the contributions that African Americans made in the development of the United States and he has worked hard to achieve this

goal. During his time at AUM, he has won several awards including the Fair-Robinson Scholarship in 2008-2009 and the Dodd Southern History Paper Prize in 2009-2010. After graduation, Tracy plans to pursue an M.A. and possibly a Ph.D. in history so that he can one day share his passion for history with others.

**LANDON LEDBETTER** of Montgomery, Alabama is a 2011 graduate of AUM's History Department. While completing his degree, he not only obtained a minor in philosophy, but also participated in Theater AUM and the Way Off Broadway Theater in Prattville. Even with his busy schedule, he was able to win several awards, including the Durr Lecture Series Essay Competition and the Dr. Richard Evans Morse Memorial History Prize, both in 2011. Now that he has graduated, Landon is currently pursuing a career in video game design, with the intention of attaining a doctorate later in life.

Originally from San Diego, California, **JENNIFER KELLUM** moved to the South in 2003 and is currently

in her second year as a history major at AUM. She has managed to do very well for herself, winning both the Vanity Tags merit scholarship for 2011-2012 and the History Department's Patricia J. Bradley Memorial scholarship in the spring of 2011. If she could live anywhere in the world, Jennifer says she would like to live in Portland, Oregon because "it's one of those few cities that seems to strike a balance between the diversity of a big city and the feel of a small town."

**ELIZABETH ELDER** is a senior at AUM majoring in secondary education with a subject concentration in history. Not only has she done well academically and achieved a books scholarship from AUM, she also participates in the Charitable Fundraising Program, which provides hundreds of thousands of dollars to schools and organizations across the Southeast every year. After she graduates, Elizabeth plans to return to AUM as a graduate student in order to prepare herself for a full-time teaching position, ideally at an institution that encourages its faculty to continue learning.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

We are looking for history-oriented papers for future publication in the *AUM Historical Review*, a student-run journal sponsored by the Department of History at Auburn University at Montgomery.

### *Submissions may include:*

Papers on World History, United States History, or Alabama History – Movie and Documentary Reviews – Book Reviews – Articles on Historic Sites – Oral Histories – Interviews – and more.

We are interested in publishing the work of students at AUM, regardless of major or classification.

*To contribute a work, or for more information, please contact  
[historicalreview@aum.edu](mailto:historicalreview@aum.edu).*

