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MAGNA

History

**Residential Segregation:
A Tale of Two Houses**

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Abstract

This tale begins in Minneapolis, where the history of racism continues to impact homeownership in the largely segregated city and its suburbs. Starting in 1910, Minneapolis developers and realtors used a systemic form of racial exclusion to profitably sell homes, exploiting and furthering the underlying racial bias in the community. As the use of these legal mechanisms spread, racially restrictive covenants were further cemented into the Minneapolis and national markets by financial, legal, and government systems. In Minneapolis, racially restrictive covenants exist in over 24,000 homes in Hennepin County, which includes Minneapolis. This paper examines the effects racially restrictive covenants had on two communities: one with a racially restrictive covenant and the other without. Even though the self-perpetuating structures became illegal under the 1968 Fair Housing Act, the impact of these once-legal systems continues to be felt. These historical systems contribute to the inequality between white and Black homeownership in Minneapolis, resulting in the biggest disparity in the US today when compared to the 100 cities with the largest Black populations. This story about the forces impacting Black homeownership in two Minneapolis communities is a small microcosm of what occurred across the United States in the 1900s.

Introduction

More than a few houses conceal a history of racial exclusion. If their walls could talk, they would reveal systemic discrimination. Buried deep in the small print of housing deeds, clauses barred people of color from owning or occupying the property, making entire neighborhoods off-limits for non-whites. These legal mechanisms, called racially restrictive covenants, were first used in California and Massachusetts at the end of the 19th century and spread across the country until 1968 when the Fair Housing Act mandated equal access to housing.¹ But the deeds and their racist language remain an unseen scar. It is time to tell one of the stories behind this hidden inequity. In Minneapolis, the history of racial inequality lingers: racially restrictive covenants exist in over 24,000 homes in Hennepin County, which includes Minneapolis.² This past exclusion contributes to the inequality apparent in Minneapolis today, as evidenced by the fact that the gap between white and Black homeownership is 50 percent, placing Minneapolis's disparity 100th in the US among the 100 cities with the largest black populations.³ White developers and realtors used systemic racial exclusion to profitably sell new homes, exploiting and furthering the underlying racism in the community.

Two Adjacent Communities Become Divergent

This story begins as a tale of two houses built in Minneapolis in the 1920s, one in a development called Shenandoah Terrace, the other in a neighborhood formerly called Southside. They were similar in many ways, including lot size and proximity to the center of Minneapolis. Adjacent to each other, the neighborhoods had similar patterns of local business owners and thriving neighborhood communities.

When built, these houses and the communities they stood in were comparable; now, they are opposites. The Shenandoah Terrace house, like the others in its neighborhood, included a racially restricted covenant when it was constructed, creating an all-white neighborhood. This precipitated a chain of events through generations – its value appreciated

¹ R. Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, New York, Liveright, 2017, p. 78.

² K. Ehrman-Solberg et al., 'Racial Covenants in Hennepin County', retrieved from the Data Repository for the University of Minnesota, published 25 November 2020, <https://doi.org/10.13020/a88t-yb14>, (accessed 12 October 2021).

³ A. McCargo and S. Stochak, 'Mapping the Black Homeownership Gap', *Urban Institute*, March 5, 2018, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/mapping-black-homeownership-gap>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

over the years as more houses were added, along with a nearby park. Owning such an asset allowed a family to create generational wealth.

The story of the Southside house ends differently. Swedish and Norwegian immigrants first populated its neighborhood and gradually attracted more Black residents. By the 1930s, the change in demographics from white to Black led the Southside neighborhood to be redlined, making it difficult for potential property buyers to find financing. Predictably, since Southside was viewed as undesirable by real estate agents, lending institutions, and the government, it withered until it was partially demolished in the late 1950s to make room for an interstate highway that cut it in two.

Today, that Southside neighborhood is 33 percent white with a median household income of \$58k.⁴ Meanwhile, the adjacent neighborhood which includes the Shenandoah Terrace house is 90 percent white, with a median household income of \$94k.⁵ The tale of these houses is rooted in racially restrictive covenants, key influences in the persistent racial inequity in US urban housing.

Racial Diversity in Minneapolis

From its introduction into statehood in 1858, Minnesota had a sizeable non-native-born population. Totalling 172,000, 98 percent were white, 33 percent were foreign-born, 51 percent were under the age of 20, and 91 percent were rural.⁶ With a third of the population being immigrants, Minnesota was an immigrant state from its inception.

⁴ 'Household Income in Block Group 011703-1, Hennepin County, Minnesota (Block Group)', *The Demographic Statistic Atlas of the United States – Statistical Atlas*, <https://statisticalatlas.com/block-group/Minnesota/Hennepin-County/011703-5/Household-Income>, (accessed 10 September 2022); 'Race and Ethnicity in Block Group 011703-5, Hennepin County, Minnesota (Block Group)', *The Demographic Statistic Atlas of the United States – Statistical Atlas*, <https://statisticalatlas.com/block-group/Minnesota/Hennepin-County/011703-5/Race-and-Ethnicity>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

⁵ 'Household Income in Tract 110000, Hennepin County, Minnesota (Tract)', *The Demographic Statistic Atlas of the United States – Statistical Atlas*, <https://statisticalatlas.com/tract/Minnesota/Hennepin-County/110000/Household-Income>, (accessed 10 September 2022); 'Race and Ethnicity in Tract 110000, Hennepin County, Minnesota (Tract)', *The Demographic Statistic Atlas of the United States – Statistical Atlas*, <https://statisticalatlas.com/tract/Minnesota/Hennepin-County/110000/Race-and-Ethnicity>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

⁶ US Department of Commerce and Labor, 'Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910: Statistics for Minnesota', *Bureau of the Census*, 1913, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1910/abstract/supplement-mn.pdf>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

Following the Civil War and emancipation, more Black people arrived in Minneapolis and were integrated into the urban community. In the 1880s-1900s, Minnesota and Minneapolis actively took steps towards creating a racially equitable society; both state and city introduced laws against discrimination. For example, in 1885, Minnesota passed the Equal Accommodations Act guaranteeing Black people equal access to all public places and hotels, and in 1897, it passed a civil rights law.⁷ Frank Wheaton, a Black lawyer, won election in 1898 to the Minnesota legislature, where he authored two pieces of legislation that dealt with civil rights and public accommodations.⁸ In Minnesota, Black rights were codified in law and enforced in the courts.⁹

Nonetheless, racial inequity began to surface. In the 1910 census, less than 1 percent of the state's population was Black.¹⁰ Although Minnesota's population grew by over 1,000 percent in the first fifty years of statehood, there were only 7,084 Black people in the state in 1910, most (81 percent) living in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The Black population grew to 8,800 by 1920 but was still only 0.4 percent of the state's population.¹¹ Similarities emerge when looking at demographics in Minneapolis itself where the Black population grew far more slowly than the white. According to the 1910 census, Blacks represented 0.9 percent of the city's population and were distributed across the city, representing no more than 15 percent of the total population in any one community. The near-north and northeast areas of Minneapolis were emerging integrated communities.¹²

⁷ Secretary of State, *General Laws of Minnesota: Passed and Approved at the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Legislature*, Minnesota, 1885, ch. 224, p. 296; Secretary of State, *General Law of the State of Minnesota: Passed During the Thirtieth Session of the State Legislature*, Minnesota, 23 April 1897, ch. 349, p. 616.

⁸ 'An Ebony Legislator', *The St. Paul Globe*, 12 February 1899, https://newspapers.mnhs.org/jsp/PsImageViewer.jsp?doc_id=749ae28b-361d-49b0-aedc-a79155e2ac30%2Fmnhi0031%2F1HMADF59%2F99021201, (accessed 10 September 2022); Leg.state.mn.us. 2021, *Wheaton, John Francis 'Frank, J. Frank' - Legislator Record - Minnesota Legislators Past & Present*, <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/legdb/fulldetail.aspx?ID=12076>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

⁹ 'Minneapolis: Doings In and About the Great 'Flour City'', *The Appeal: A National Afro-American Newspaper*, 26 March 26 1898, p. 4, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83016810/1898-03-26/ed-1/seq-4/>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

¹⁰ US Department of Commerce and Labor, 'Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910: Statistics for Minnesota', *Bureau of the Census*.

¹¹ US Department of Commerce and Labor, 'Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910: Statistics for Minnesota', *Bureau of the Census*.

¹² M. Mills and Mapping Prejudice Project, 'Minneapolis Black Population 1910', *University of Minnesota Digital Conservancy*, 2020, <https://hdl.handle.net/11299/217473>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

A decade later, between 1910 and 1920, the number of Blacks in Minneapolis grew by 51.5 percent (from 2,592 to 3,927) but was still around 1 percent of the city's population.¹³ Fifty percent growth in the Black population over a decade seems significant, yet it was small compared to the growth of other Midwest cities, and the Black population as a percentage of Minneapolis's total population did not change. For context, between 1910 and 1920, Chicago's Black population grew 148 percent, from 44,103 (3.9 percent of the population) to 109,458 (4.1 percent of the population).¹⁴ St. Louis's Black population grew 59 percent, from 43,960 (6.4 percent of the population) to 69,854 (9 percent of the population).¹⁵ Lastly, Detroit's Black population grew 611 percent, from 5,741 (1.2 percent of the population) to 40,838 (4.1 percent of the population).¹⁶ In this broader context, Minneapolis's Black population was not increasing at the same rate as similar cities in the Midwest during the 1910s.

While both state and city were experiencing explosive growth and economic expansion, the Black population remained small with relatively slow growth. One plausible explanation behind this relatively flat growth could be the economic discrimination facing Blacks in Minneapolis. In 1926, an Urban League study found that 76 percent of the 192 employers surveyed would not hire Black people. Furthermore, the average annual earning of a married Black man in Minneapolis was \$1,172 – more than \$1,000 below the federal poverty level of 1919.¹⁷ Minneapolis was not an economically progressive city for Black people.

Another possible factor was the underlying racist sentiment in the expanding and predominately white community. This explanation is

¹³ Mills, 'Minneapolis Black Population 1910'.

¹⁴ US Department of Commerce and Labor, 'Fourteenth Census of the United States: State Compendium for Illinois', *Bureau of the Census*, 1924, <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/06229686v8-13ch5.pdf>, (accessed 10 September 2022); US Department of Commerce and Labor, 'Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910: Statistics for Illinois', *Bureau of the Census*, 1913, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1910/abstract/supplement-il-p1.pdf>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

¹⁵ US Department of Commerce and Labor, 'Fourteenth Census of the United States: State Compendium for Missouri', *Bureau of the Census*, 1920, <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/06229686v20-25ch4.pdf>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

¹⁶ US Department of Commerce and Labor, 'Fourteenth Census of the United States: State Compendium for Michigan', *Bureau of the Census*, 1920, <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/06229686v20-25ch1.pdf>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

¹⁷ T. Thurber, *The Politics of Equality*, New York, Columbia, 1999, p. 26.

supported by the numerous documented high-profile cases of white residents in Minneapolis publicly and actively preventing Blacks from moving into their neighborhoods during the early 1900s. It should be noted that the wealthy areas of Minneapolis were all white in the 1900s; minority groups naturally lacked the economic means to move into these communities. The racial tension occurred primarily in those developing neighborhoods where the growing middle-class and working-class whites vied for the same finite set of new homes as the city expanded, like the homes in the Shenandoah Terrace and Southside neighborhoods.

One example of this growing racial bias in 1909 was when “a party of 125 residents of [Prospect Park], among them many leading business and professional men of Minneapolis, called at the home of a negro family last night and read its members a prepared paper which told in plain language that none of the colored race was wanted in that neighborhood.”¹⁸ That quote, from the *Minneapolis Tribune*, describes how publicly the community sought to segregate Black people. This racial tension continued to gain steam. In December of 1909, Marie Canfield tried to sell her house in southwest Minneapolis to a Black preacher, the Reverend William S. Malone. It allegedly caused a “race war” that was covered for several weeks in the newspaper.¹⁹ Her Black neighbor, Mary Myrick, owned a small house two blocks away and became the subsequent controversy. She had purchased the lot many years previously on which she built her house, but she now refused to sell it to her white neighbors. The neighbors tried to “oust” both the preacher and the “home of the negress” which the reporter pejoratively refers to as a “small shack”.²⁰ The paper described the situation as “race conflicts over negroes trying to make their homes in exclusive neighborhoods.”²¹ Two neighborhood committees, the Prospect Park Improvement Association, and the Lake Harriet District, eventually

¹⁸ ‘Race War Started in Prospect Park’, *The Minneapolis Tribune*, 22 October 1909, p. 1, https://newspapers.mnhs.org/jsp/PsImageViewer.jsp?doc_id=4a0c6900-28ec-40e6-bafa-8705a70f68f8%2Fmnh0005%2F1DFC5F5A%2F09102201, (accessed 10 September 2022).

¹⁹ ‘Race War at Harriet Involves More Blacks’, *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, 2 January 1910, p. 1, https://newspapers.mnhs.org/jsp/PsImageViewer.jsp?doc_id=addabf07-f848-43e3-a488-2782562f220d%2Fmnh0005%2F1DFC5G5B%2F10010201, (accessed 10 September 2022).

²⁰ ‘Race War at Harriet Involves More Blacks’, *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*.

²¹ ‘End of Both Race Wars is Believed Near at Hand’, *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 7 January 1910, p. 8, https://newspapers.mnhs.org/jsp/PsImageViewer.jsp?doc_id=addabf07-f848-43e3-a488-2782562f220d%2Fmnh0005%2F1DFC5G5B%2F10010701, (accessed 10 September 2022).

brokered a deal that used the money raised from each community member to buy out the two Black homeowners in early 1910.²²

Active community intent to create segregated housing had arrived in Minneapolis, and with support in both the Black and White communities, it spread. In response to Blacks purchasing residential property in white neighborhoods, a Black minister's sermon titled "Where Shall a Black Man Live?" was featured on the *Minneapolis Morning Tribune's* front page in January 1910. The Reverend T. W. Stout stated, "Black people should avoid going into a community where their presence is Irritating." The newspaper then editorialized this sermon by adding that the "African preacher" was "wise in his statement." The article openly suggested that Blacks not live among whites. Racial segregation in Minneapolis had a public written voice.²³

This voice emboldened its supporters. In 1931, Arthur Lee, a Black man, purchased a home in a non-covenanted, predominately white neighborhood two blocks north of the previously mentioned Shenandoah Terrace house. Lee, a World War I vet who worked for the Post Office, was met with violence when thousands of whites surrounded and vandalized his home. The incident made the front page of the *Minneapolis Tribune* with a story entitled "Home Stoned in Race Row."²⁴ The Lee family moved out in 1934. While not all Minneapolis residents supported residential segregation, those who did often prevailed. In Minneapolis, despite their relatively small numbers, Blacks faced increased racial bias.

Racial violence was a blunt instrument. What was needed was a set of systems to prevent Blacks from buying homes in specific areas. While systemic discrimination was not unique to Minneapolis (indeed, it was endemic throughout the country), its combination of economic disadvantages and social impediments is a textbook for the examination of racial discrimination.

²² 'End of Both Race Wars is Believed Near at Hand', *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*.

²³ 'Fairness to Negro Urged by Minister', *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 10 January 1910, p. 1, https://newspapers.mnhs.org/jsp/PsImageViewer.jsp?doc_id=addabf07-f848-43e3-a488-2782562f220d%2Fmnh0005%2F1DFC5G5B%2F10011001, (accessed 10 September 2022).

²⁴ 'Home Stoned in Race Row', *The Minneapolis Tribune*, 15 July 1931, p. 1, <https://startribune.newspapers.com/clip/88996869/home-stoned-in-race-row-tribune/>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

Restrictive Covenants Codify Housing Segregation

In the early part of the 20th century, Minneapolis saw a majority white population experiencing explosive growth driven by economic prosperity and immigrants. This fueled the city's encouragement of segregated housing, precipitating the creation of legal systems that made it possible to create the all-white Shenandoah Terrace development and forcing Black people into neighborhoods like the Southside slated for stagnation.

The primary instrument behind this turn was a legal device known as a racially restrictive covenant. When buying a property, the purchaser traditionally receives the documentation, called a deed, tracing every time the property has changed hands. A deed is “a written instrument, which has been signed and delivered, by which one individual, the grantor, conveys the title to real property to another individual, the grantee.”²⁵ A warranty deed, the most common way of transferring title, contains promises, called covenants, that the grantor makes to the grantee. Homebuyers want these types of promises, and lenders often require a warranty deed to qualify for financing. These covenants may include simple assurances like the grantor owns the land described in the deed; that the grantor has the right to transfer title to the land; or that there are no undeclared encumbrances on the land. The grantor may also make certain future covenants in the deed. These restrictions track with the deed indefinitely.²⁶ If a covenant is breached, the owner loses the house, and the property reverts to the initial granting party (the person who first attached the covenant).

But a legal mechanism cannot spread racism without the people who use such tools. The first perpetrators responsible for introducing this legal form of racial bias into Minneapolis were Henry and Leonora Scott. Since racially restrictive covenants did not originate in Minnesota, it is not surprising to learn that the Scotts were non-residents. In 1910 they inserted language into the warranty deed that contained the following restriction: “...the premises shall not at any time be conveyed, mortgaged or leased to any person or persons of Chinese, Japanese, Moorish, Turkish, Negro, Mongolian or African blood or descent.”²⁷

²⁵ West's Encyclopedia of American Law, 'Definition of a Deed', *Encyclopedia.com*, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/law/law/deed>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

²⁶ A. Hayes, 'What Is a Warranty Deed?', Investopedia, 17 August 2022, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/w/warranty-deed.asp>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

²⁷ 'Henry Scott and Leonora Scott to Nels Anderson', Transaction on 26 May 1910, *Hennepin County Deeds Book 759*, p. 538, Document 712111, recorded 23 April 1914.

Scott's success in imposing racially-biased terms of sale emboldened other individuals and companies to do the same.

Within eight years, 1,158 properties in Hennepin County were similarly covenanted, most of them in Minneapolis proper.²⁸ An investigation into the grantors of these first thousand restrictive covenants reveals there were three key companies responsible for leading the expansion of racially restrictive covenants in Minneapolis: The Seven Oaks Corporation, Thorpe Brothers, and the Estates Improvement Company.²⁹

Although these three companies were independently managed, the men leading these companies were linked through their involvement on the Minneapolis Real Estate Board (Minneapolis Board).³⁰ When the National Association of Real Estate Exchange (National Association) was created on May 12, 1908, in Chicago,³¹ the 19 founding boards included Baltimore; Kansas City, MO; the California State of Realty Federation (now the California Association of REALTORS); and the Minneapolis Real Estate Board.³² The leader of Thorpe Brothers served

²⁸ K. Ehrman-Solberg, 'Racial Covenants in Hennepin County.'

²⁹ K. Ehrman-Solberg, 'Racial Covenants in Hennepin County.'

³⁰ Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State, Seven Oaks Corporation File Number 22633-AA, Original Filing – Business Corporation, *State Archives*, St. Paul, Minnesota: Filed 16 November 1914; Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State, Thorpe Brothers File 207-AA, Original Filing – Business Corporation, *State Archives*, St. Paul, Minnesota: Filed 22 December 1898; Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State, Estates Improvement Company File Number 10113-AA, Original Filing - Business Corporation, *State Archives*, St. Paul, Minnesota: Filed 10 December 1912; 'Tingdale Brothers, Inc. Advertisement', *The Minneapolis Tribune*, 17 June 1919, p. 30, https://newspapers.mnhs.org/jsp/PsImageViewer.jsp?doc_id=addabf07-f848-43e3-a488-2782562f220d%2Fmnh0005%2F1DFC5G5B%2F19061701, (accessed 10 September 2022); 'Realty Men Prepared for National Convention', *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 14 June 1910, p. 7, https://newspapers.mnhs.org/jsp/PsImageViewer.jsp?doc_id=addabf07-f848-43e3-a488-2782562f220d%2Fmnh0005%2F1DFC5G5B%2F10061401, (accessed 10 September 2022); 'Spotless Town' Lots to Go Under Hammer to Minneapolis Homeseekers for Realty Dealers Fund to Entertain Boosters at the Convention', *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 25 April 1910, p. 2, https://newspapers.mnhs.org/jsp/PsImageViewer.jsp?doc_id=addabf07-f848-43e3-a488-2782562f220d%2Fmnh0005%2F1DFC5G5B%2F10042501, (accessed 10 September 2022).

³¹ 'Minneapolis Board Joins National Body: Real Estate Men Take Action Following Meet at Chicago', *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 28 May 1908, p. 8, https://newspapers.mnhs.org/jsp/PsImageViewer.jsp?doc_id=4a0c6900-28ec-40e6-bafa-8705a70f68f8%2Fmnh0005%2F1DFC5F5A%2F08052801, (accessed 10 September 2022).

³² 'About NAR: History', *National Association of Realtors*, 2022, <https://www.nar.realtor/about-nar/history>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

as the President of the National Association in 1911.³³ Today, the organization is called The National Association of Realtors.

The Minneapolis Board and the National Association were critical venues for real estate industry members to share ideas about implementing racially restrictive covenants. Several members of the National Association used deeds for restrictive purposes before their appearance in Minneapolis. One of the Kansas City, MO members, CJ Nichols, used deeds for restrictions beginning in 1908 when developing the Country Club area in Kansas City. In addition, other communities with members of the National Association, such as Baltimore and Oakland/Berkley, California, were also using racially restrictive covenants in the early 1900s.

As these concepts spread through the Minneapolis Board, various exclusionary phrases appeared in these restrictive deeds. One example was: “The said premises shall not at any time be sold, conveyed, leased, or sublet, or occupied by any person or persons who are not full blood of the so-called Caucasian or White race” (*Minneapolis Deed*).³⁴ By 1919, restrictive covenants moved from a mere phrase in a legal document to a feature of advertisements for real estate. An ad in the *Minneapolis Morning Tribune* for the Walton Hills development contained the following language: “The party of the second part hereby agrees that the premises hereby conveyed shall not at any time be conveyed, mortgaged or leased to any person or persons of Chinese, Japanese, Moorish, Turkish, Negro, Mongolian, Semitic or African blood or descent. Said restrictions and covenants shall run with the land and any breach of any or either thereof shall work a forfeiture of title, which may be enforced by re-entry.”³⁵ Racially restrictive covenants had become a marketing strategy.

The escalation of housing segregation continued from 1910 to the 1950s as real estate developers built “planned communities” in undeveloped regions of Minneapolis and its bordering western and southern communities, creating over five thousand racially restrictive covenant properties.³⁶ At the same time, neighboring communities to the

³³ ‘Realty Dealers Honor Thorpe’, *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 19 November 1911, https://newspapers.mnhs.org/jsp/PsImageViewer.jsp?doc_id=addabf07-f848-43e3-a488-2782562f220d%2Fmnhhi0005%2F1DFC5G5B%2F11111901, (accessed 10 September 2022).

³⁴ K. Ehrman-Solberg, ‘Racial Covenants in Hennepin County.’

³⁵ ‘Real Estate Mart Advertisement’, *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 12 January 1919, p. 10, https://newspapers.mnhs.org/jsp/PsImageViewer.jsp?doc_id=addabf07-f848-43e3-a488-2782562f220d%2Fmnhhi0005%2F1DFC5G5B%2F19011201, (accessed 10 September 2022).

³⁶ K. Ehrman-Solberg, ‘Racial Covenants in Hennepin County.’

south and west of Minneapolis (Golden Valley, St. Louis Park, Edina, and Richfield) were developed extensively, leveraging racially restrictive covenants to keep out Black residents. This effectively created a ring around the city where Blacks could not buy property. By the 1950s, over twenty-four thousand restrictive covenants were in place. The Shenandoah Terrace house was outside that ring, and the Southside house was inside the ring. The lines had been drawn, and the figurative walls between the two houses were erected.³⁷

This period of dramatic expansion in the use of racially restrictive covenants resulted in fewer housing options for Black people in the growing Minneapolis area, restricting the increase in the area's Black population. Between 1920 and 1940, Minneapolis's Black population only added 719 people. In the same period, Minnesota's total population grew by 400,000 people, from 2.4M in 1920 to 2.8M by 1940, but the Black population only grew by 2,844 people state-wide. By 1940, Minnesota was home to only 9,928 Black residents, of which 4,646 lived in Minneapolis. The Black population was not significantly increasing anywhere in the state.³⁸

Although the 1940 census shows the number of Blacks remained relatively constant (an increase of .5 percent), the concentration of where Black people lived in Minneapolis shifted dramatically. Once dispersed throughout the city, the 1940 census data showed there no longer was any census district in northeast Minneapolis containing multiple Black residents. Instead, for the first time in the city's history, majority-minority neighborhoods were created. Census data shows that an influx of new minority families did not create these neighborhoods. Instead, they were engineered through the relocation of existing minority families and concentrated into small pockets. One such area was Southside.³⁹

Additional Barriers Preventing Equitable Access to Housing

The division between the two houses was continually reinforced by a system filled with self-perpetuating structures. Besides the barriers erected by real estate developers, other institutions were also involved. For instance, the National Association of Realtors, the Federal Housing

³⁷ K. Ehrman-Solberg, 'Racial Covenants in Hennepin County.'

³⁸ US Department of Commerce and Labor, '1940 Census of Population: Volume 2, Characteristics of the Population, Minnesota', *Bureau of the Census*, 1940, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1940/population-volume-2/33973538v2p4ch2.pdf>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

³⁹ US Department of Commerce and Labor, '1940 Census of Population: Volume 2, Characteristics of the Population, Minnesota', *Bureau of the Census*, 1940.

Administration, the Home Owners Loan Corporation, and a Supreme Court case all supported racially restrictive covenants.

In 1916, the National Association devised the term “REALTOR” to identify a real estate professional who is a member of the National Association and subscribes to its strict Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics was the vehicle used to formalize the agents’ use of racial barriers. In 1924, the National Association modified its “Code of Ethics” in Article 34 that required “A Realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood a character of property or occupancy, members of any race or nationality, or any individuals whose presence will be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood.”⁴⁰ It was not until 1950 that Article 34’s phrase “members of any race or nationality, or any individuals whose presence...” was removed.⁴¹ The National Association further supported the use of racial covenants when, in 1927, they issued a standard restrictive covenant for members to use in communities across the country.

Such actions of the real estate industry, and the covenants themselves, were authorized by the national and regional legal system. The US Supreme Court first validated the use of covenants in the 1926 *Corrigan v. Buckley* case. Thirty white residents from Washington DC neighborhood sought to uphold a racially restrictive covenant. The property in question had a covenant, making it illegal for it to be used, occupied, sold, or leased to any one of the negro race or blood. The covenant was connected to the land and bound the respective heirs for twenty-one years. The court’s decision in favor of the white residents’ claim supported the constitutionality of covenants.⁴²

Federal lending institutions further validated the use of covenants. In 1933 President Franklin D. Roosevelt formed the Home Owners Loan Corporation to create government-insured mortgages with fixed interest rates, having the goal of giving all middle-class people the

⁴⁰ National Association of Real Estate Boards, ‘1924 Code of Ethics, Adopted by the National Association of Real Estate Boards at its Seventeenth Annual Convention, 6 June 1924’, *National Association of Realtors*, 2022, <https://www.nar.realtor/about-nar/governing-documents/code-of-ethics/previous-editions-of-the-code-of-ethics>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

⁴¹ National Association of Real Estate Boards, ‘Code of Ethics, adopted in November 1950’, *National Association of Realtors*, 2022, <https://www.nar.realtor/about-nar/governing-documents/code-of-ethics/previous-editions-of-the-code-of-ethics>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

⁴² *Corrigan v Buckley* (1926) 271 US 323, <https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=11135903580197116691&q=corrigan+v.+buckley&hl=en&as_sdt=6,24&as_vis=1>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

opportunity to purchase a home. To appraise homes, the federal agency established designations to classify neighborhoods based on the occupants of those neighborhoods. This practice laid the groundwork for making it harder for Blacks to purchase any home, no matter the neighborhood.

When, in 1934, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) became law, the federal agency built upon the practice of ranking neighborhoods based on their occupants. For each large city in the United States, the FHA created color-coded maps to show the value of each section in the city. Red = hazardous, Yellow = declining, Blue = still desirable, and Green = the best. The term “redlining” was officially created and institutionalized as a practice where banks refused to extend housing loans in certain geographic areas, often inner-city neighborhoods.

Such financial lending laws led to the eventual deterioration of many Black neighborhoods. The city of Minneapolis participated in the practice of redlining, and as a result, the neighborhood around the Southside house received a “Red” designation because “of a gradual infiltration of Negroes.” Conversely, a Green-lined designation was often not given unless restrictive covenants were already in place. Thus, the Shenandoah Terrace neighborhood received a “Green” rating. This is an important distinction because it shows that a thriving Black community, like Southside, could be redlined based exclusively on its racial demographics, not other race-neutral factors. As a result of the “redlining” practice, less than 2 percent of all mortgages in the US between 1934 and 1962 were granted to non-whites.⁴³

In 1936, the FHA extended the practice of labeling areas to include new development loan applications. This practice appeared in the FHA’s 1936 Underwriting Manual (Manual) which clearly stated appraisers were not allowed to recommend a federal bank guarantee to a suburban subdivision that would include Blacks in a white development. The Manual also informed appraisers that deed restrictions should include a “prohibition of the occupancy of properties except by the race for which they are intended,” and that “inharmonious racial groups” and “incompatible racial elements” would cause the devaluation of a neighborhood. Furthermore, appraisers could not recommend a federal

⁴³ A. Gordon, ‘The Creation of Homeownership: How New Deal Changes in Banking Regulation Simultaneously Made Homeownership Accessible to Whites and Out of Reach for Blacks’, *The Yale Law Journal*, vol. 115:186, 2005, p. 209, <https://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=4977&context=yjlj>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

bank guarantee for an all-white project that was near a Black neighborhood because it would “run the risk of infiltration by inharmonious racial groups.” The Manual also recommended highways be used to separate white neighborhoods from Black neighborhoods. This is exactly what happened to the neighborhood of the story’s Southside house. In 1957, a highway was built right through the middle of the neighborhood, splitting it into two. The community never recovered. The rules established by the federal agency created two additional barriers: neighborhood labeling and uncrossable roads.⁴⁴

Existing racial covenants made it illegal for Black people to purchase homes in certain areas. In areas that didn’t initially have racial covenants, “redlining” institutionalized and spread their use. The federal government created racist policies requiring restrictive covenants to qualify to receive the highest ratings and most favorable loan terms for development projects. Furthermore, the FHA’s practices denied the predominately Black homeowners in the redlined communities access to affordable mortgages. This also made it hard for people in these redlined neighborhoods to sell their homes, leading to declines in home valuations. By contrast, the white families who received the FHA loans benefited from the equity appreciation of their homes. In addition to driving further residential segregation in cities across the country, these practices contributed to the challenges Blacks faced in accumulating wealth over time from homeownership, creating economic disparity.

Conclusion

To bring change, major social shifts were needed in the very systems which prevented equal access to housing. The first major legal victory against restrictive covenants occurred at the US Supreme Court in 1948 in *Shelley v. Kramer*. This case banned courts from evicting Black people who purchased homes with deeds containing racially restrictive covenants. The result of this decision prohibited judicial enforcement, but it did not prevent private parties from writing and voluntarily abiding by them.⁴⁵ The legality of racially restrictive covenants ended with the US Congress passing the Fair Housing Act in 1968, more than fifty years after the first covenant was introduced in Minneapolis. During those

⁴⁴ Federal Housing Administration, ‘1938 Underwriting Manual, Underwriting and Valuation Procedure Under Title II of the National Housing Act’, *HUD User Home Page*, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Federal-Housing-Administration-Underwriting-Manual.pdf>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

⁴⁵ *Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948) 334 US 1, <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/334/1/>, (accessed 10 September 2022).

years, racially restrictive covenants were placed in over 24,000 homes across Hennepin County, an area that includes Minneapolis.

The introduction of racially restrictive covenants in Minnesota began slowly. The men behind them were colleagues, real estate leaders, and connected to organizations coordinating national real estate activities. Leveraging this interconnection, they tapped into an underlying base of racism in a largely homogenous state to pursue economic gain. As the use of these legal mechanisms spread, covenants were further cemented into the Minneapolis and national markets by financial, legal, and government systems, seeking to pursue economic gain and prevent Black people from purchasing homes in white neighborhoods. The Shenandoah Terrace and the Southside house never stood a chance at parity: racial hurdles were too steep to overcome. Even though changes have reduced the barriers, the impact of these once-legal systems continues to be felt. Although no longer legally enforceable, there is no way to remove the impact of exclusionary language from the deeds today. Minnesota has the highest racial housing gap in the country. In 2013, 78 percent of white families owned the homes they occupied in Minnesota, but only 25 percent of Black families owned the homes they occupied.⁴⁶ Understanding the past, and reading this story, is one step towards a more inclusive future. By doing so, we can start to close the door to a chapter of history that has systematically created “walls” within the community.

⁴⁶ K. Skobba, ‘Understanding Homeownership Disparities Among Racial and Ethnic Groups, Report of Minnesota Homeownership Center’, *University of Georgia*, 2013, <https://hdl.handle.net/10724/33286>,(accessed 10 September 2022).

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Kissing the Revolution: The Riot Grrrl Movement under Third-wave Feminism and Its Failure

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Abstract

This article examines Riot Grrrl, a feminist movement in the early 1990s US punk rock music industry. Since the movement is being perceived as the precursor of third-wave feminism, this research examines the extent to which the Grrrls successfully embodied the third-wave value and what factors contributed to its failure. The purpose of this study is to reflect on the subcultural movement within its cultural and sociopolitical context and provide a theoretical backbone for similar-minded campaigners advocating for women's rights elsewhere in the current world. By closely analyzing the lyrics of the grrrl's music, performance styles, zines (self-publications), and interviews of the grrrls, this article illustrates how they rebelled against the misogynistic punk rock music industry and the capitalist patriarchal society as a whole by breaking the gender barriers, adopting punk's Do-It-Yourself (DIY) ethos, and acknowledging the intersection of class and race with gender. However, the analysis also reveals its failure. Though Riot Grrrl manifested the spirit of third-wave feminism of defending gender equality in the private sphere, forming individuality, and upholding pluralism, the movement was unsuccessful largely as a result of the institutional constraints exercised through power asymmetries in class, race, and gender in the early 1990s US society.

When she talks, I hear the revolution
In her hips, there's a revolution
When she walks, the revolution's coming
In her kiss, I taste the revolution
– Bikini Kill, “Rebel Girl,” Verse 1.

Introduction

The grrrls were on a riot. They wildly screamed, sang, and played the Riot Grrrl Anthem – “Rebel Girl” – in the US punk rock music industry that condemned their involvement. Punk rock came to the US from Britain in the 1970s, carrying its Do-It-Yourself (DIY) ethos, anti-status quo spirits, and, more importantly, the male-dominated nature of rock music. While rebellious American men began to perform in the punk rock scene, women’s roles were restrained to girlfriends of the rockers, and they experienced gender discrimination, sexual assaults, and rapes. In the meantime, second-wave feminists that fought for women’s rights in the workplace began to decline in the 80s. As a result, “angry at a society that [told them] Girl=Dumb, Girl=Bad, Girl=Weak,” several girls interested in punk rock music in Olympia, Washington, decided to take the lead and rebel against the current misogynistic, male-dominated punk scene in the 1990s.¹ Naming themselves Riot Grrrl, they started a new *wave*. These grrrls formed all-female punk bands and established a Riot Grrrl community that embraced every girl, aiming to increase female representation and navigate their belonging and identity under the current patriarchal society. They exemplified the philosophy of third-wave feminism by dismantling traditional cultural taboos on women, advocating for individuality, and upholding a pluralistic mission. However, due to institutional constraints, this new *wave* faded away because the Grrrls failed to overpower the capitalist patriarchal mainstream press and preexisting racism, nor did they take physical actions to diversify their community.

The “Anti-Women” Punk²

In the 1990s, although women’s rights had improved significantly compared to the beginning of the 18th century, gender discrimination was still prevailing in US society. In the 19th century, first-wave

¹ Kathleen Hanna, “Riot Grrrl Is...,” 1991, in *Riot Grrrl 1990*, comp. Howard-Tilton Library, accessed April 26, 2022, <https://exhibits.tulane.edu/exhibit/copies-creativity-and-contagion/influential-art-from-second-and-third-wave-feminism-movements/>.

² Kevin Dunn and May Summer Farnsworth, “We ARE the Revolution?: Riot Grrrl Press, Girl Empowerment, and DIY Self-Publishing,” *Women’s Studies* 41, no. 2 (March 2012): 138, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00497878.2012.636334>.

feminists advocated for women's suffrage and succeeded with the 19th Amendment. Second-wave feminism, beginning in the 1960s, focused on eliminating gender discrimination in the legislature, specifically regarding the workplace, but waned in the next decade because of its intensifying internal division. Since the second wave, women's participation in the workplace has started to increase. Sandra Day O'Connor, for example, was appointed to be the first female associate justice on the Supreme Court.³ However, such progress did not apply to marginalized subcultural or private environments.

Women's participation was limited in many subcultures because of the traditional gender norm and men's exclusion. The second-wave feminists did not discuss gender inequality in unconventional communities like the punk rock music industry, and, due to the patriarchal society's suppression of the development of young females, girls in the countercultural rock music were perceived as "passive and consumerist," whereas "boys were [perceived as] 'active, productive, and performative.'"⁴ Women were expected to perform domestic work and had more societal limitations in participating in the subversive punk rock subculture. Their involvement, therefore, was limited to being girlfriends, groupies, and visually appealing lead singers that bolstered men's performances. Moreover, though women were not prohibited from attending concerts, the audiences and the bands posed a threat to many women. Punk rock concerts, according to Jennifer Miro from the band The Nuns:

[had] a lot of women in the beginning. It was women doing things. Then it became this whole macho, anti-women thing. Then women didn't go to see punk bands anymore because they were afraid of getting killed. I didn't even go because it was so violent and so macho that it was repulsive. Women just got squeezed out.⁵

In a typical punk rock concert scene, the audience would form mosh pits with violent actions – including but not limited to wall of death and crowd surfing – that physically marginalized women to the edge.

³ "Timeline of Legal History of Women in the United States," National Women's History Alliance, accessed April 24, 2022, <https://nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org/resources/womens-rights-movement/detailed-timeline/>.

⁴ Joanne Gottlieb and Gayle Wald, "Smells Like Teen Spirit: Riot Grrrls, Revolution, and Women in Independent Rock," *Critical Matrix* 7, no. 2 (1993): 21, <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/smells-like-teen-spirit-riot-grrrls-revolution/docview/1307822238/se-2?accountid=5771>.

⁵ Dunn and Farnsworth, "We ARE the Revolution," 138.

Observing these destructive scenes, those on stage not only did not stop the audience but also reinforced this intimidation.

Through lyrics, the performers manifested violence, hatred, sexualization, and objectification of women. FEAR, an all-male punk rock band from California, screamed, “I wanna fuck you to death / I wanna smell your breath / Piss on your warm embrace / I just wanna come in your face / I don’t care if you’re dead / And I don’t care if you’re erect” in “Flesh Flesh” (1982); Big Black from Illinois shouted, “Holding my hand while I piss in her face / She’ll do it with love, sitting in a cage / She loves it more if you treat like a race / I keep fucking up, so it’s you I disgrace” in “The Power of Independent Trucking” (1987).^{6/7} These male performers sexualized and objectified women into sex toys for their uses and explicitly exposed their misogynistic mindsets through lyrics. However, women did not submit to these oppressions; led by Allison Wolfe, Tobi Vail, Kathleen Hanna, and many others, the Riot Grrrl sprang up in 1990 to revolutionize the punk rock music scene.

Smashing Gender Barriers

The Grrrls de-objectified themselves and expanded the definition of femininity beyond the patriarchal structure as their participation shifted from consumers to producers of the music. Utilizing the advantage of punk’s amateurism, these grrrls, who had little access to music education, gained a chance to be actively involved in the scene and avoid criticism of being unprofessional. Kathleen Hanna formed the all-female band Bikini Kill, and Allison Wolfe started her Bratmobile in 1990. With many other newly formed Riot Grrrl bands, their presence reconstructed the decades-long history of the male-dominated punk rock industry. Moreover, they managed to embody their anger throughout their band activities further. First and foremost, they redefined “girl” to “grrrl,” which incorporated their anger by imitating growling (“grrr”) and romanticization of their infant age before the intrusion of patriarchal control.⁸ Such resistance could be found in their lyrics as well. Hanna, wearing a mini skirt and velvet tank top in a concert, would sing “Candy”: “I swallowed my pride / [...] / I swallowed your cum / It’s just my part in it” to demonstrate sexism and male domination sarcastically.⁹ Similarly, 7 Year Bitch’s “Dead Men Don’t Rape”

⁶ FEAR, “Flesh Flesh,” on *The Record*, Slash Record, 1982, compact disc.

⁷ Big Black, “The Power of Independent Trucking,” on *Songs About Fucking*, 1987, compact disc.

⁸ Emily White, “Revolution Girl-Style Now!”, Chicago Reader, last modified September 24, 1992, <https://chicagoreader.com/news-politics/revolution-girl-style-now/>.

⁹ Bikini Kill, “Candy,” on *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991, audiocassette.

suggested their condemnation towards rapists: “For those who get joy from a woman’s fear / I’d rather get a gun and just blow you away / Then you’ll learn first-hand / Dead men don’t rape.”¹⁰ By using these words, they objected to the patriarchal fantasy that “good” girls should not use vulgar language nor talk about sex, as these behaviors would “tarnish” their purity and turn them into a “whore.”

Along with the literal implication of lyrics, the Grrrls also evinced their anger when they performed. Instead of singing lyrically in a gentle way, Riot Grrrl screamed. As Gayle Wald and Joanne Gottlieb interpreted, screaming is an intricate articulation that implies orgasm, rape, childbirth, anger, and primal self-assertion all at once.¹¹ This form of expression allowed the grrrls to express the threats they faced daily and the jubilation they felt from the tabooed sexual desire and empower themselves and their female audiences. Their visibility in the scene offered a valuable opportunity for the Grrrls to express their anger toward sexism by breaking the traditional taboo and creating bonds with like-minded peers. The increased number of female performers also encouraged more girls to attend concerts since the presence of female bands provided them with a sense of security, thus allowing them to share their difficult past as a woman. For instance, Kristen Schilt observed that “at Bikini Kill shows, microphones were often passed around so that the audience could share stories of sexual abuse.”¹² These incidents, once thought of as “shameful” and “private” stories that would besmirch women to “whore,” were now brought into public discussions. The grrrls revealed their personal stories by not complying with the “good” girl standard. They transformed the narratives like body shaming and sexual assault into sociopolitical problems that needed to be addressed. In sum, the Grrrls formed a tight, mutually-supported community that challenged the traditional gender norms by attending punk rock concerts, discussing tabooed objects, and rewriting their definition of femininity. However, under careful examination, their reclaiming of femininity and opposition to patriarchy exhibited the dilemma that the Grrrls initially meant to overcome: how to participate in a male-dominated scene without becoming one of the guys.

Though the Grrrls challenged the traditional gender stereotypes, they were unsuccessful in defining womanhood within the sexist punk

¹⁰ 7 Year Bitch, “Dead Men Don’t Rape,” on *Sick ‘Em*, 1992, compact disc.

¹¹ Gottlieb and Wald, “Smells Like Teen Spirit,” 29-30.

¹² Kristen Schilt, “A Little Too Ironic’: The Appropriation and Packaging of Riot Grrrl Politics by Mainstream Female Musicians,” *Popular Music and Society* 26, no. 1 (January 2003): 8-9, accessed April 24, 2022, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0300776032000076351>.

rock music scene. They indeed intended to increase female representation, attest to women's capability of performing off-limits activities, and cherish their girlhood, but they also accommodated masculinity into their performances. For example, the Grrrls' uses of historically masculine profanity and violent action merged their femininity with the machismo they aimed to resist. They also represented themselves in a traditional feminine fashion as they often wore "girly" clothing and makeup on stage. The Grrrls failed to consider the paradox of defining punk rock for girls. This specific situation mirrored the predicament of third-wave feminism, where women struggled to "balance equality and desire."¹³ Whether their rebellious actions were because these were the only possibility to resist sexism within their capability or because they were motivated by their desires to perform like men or become an "erotic object-to-be-looked-at" – as Gottlieb and Wald coined – remains unknown. As illustrated, the Riot Grrrl movement did not clarify the ambiguity of femininity and gender equality in a patriarchal society. Accordingly, Gottlieb and Wald posed the question of whether the structure of rock music was meant to include women or whether its establishment in the mid-20th century by a group of non-compliant men in a patriarchal society predestined that its construct is misogynistic.¹⁴ However, even though they failed to establish a distinct definition of femininity in the punk music scene, the grrrls' physical expansion of female participation in the punk rock scene and breaking of taboos set a foundation for future feminists to incorporate their ideology in a more holistic and practical approach to deliberate on more fundamental causes of gender inequality. Such considerations could also be traced to the Grrrls' criticism of capitalism that exploited women's rights.

Grrrls' Individuality under Capitalist Patriarchy

"BECAUSE we hate capitalism in all its forms and see our main goal as sharing information and staying alive, instead of making profits or being cool according to traditional standards," declared Kathleen Hanna in the so-called *Riot Grrrl Manifesto* (hereinafter *Manifesto*).¹⁵ With punk's DIY ethos, Riot Grrrl resisted the capitalist and thus sexist mainstream culture from the beginning of the movement. Similar to socialist feminists, the Grrrls attributed gender oppressions to "capitalist patriarchy," the structure of the US society that has a "mutually reinforcing dialectical relationship between capitalist class structure and hierarchical sexual structuring," as described by political theorist Zillah

¹³ Snyder, "Third-Wave Feminism," 259.

¹⁴ Gottlieb and Wald, "Smells Like Teen Spirit," 26-27.

¹⁵ Hanna, "Riot Grrrl," in *Riot Grrrl Is...*

Eisenstein.¹⁶ To avoid exploitations of women’s production – cheap labor in the workplace and free labor in domesticity – and reproduction – reproducing labor (i.e., children) – the Grrrls were determined to apply punk’s DIY ethos to create their own identity instead of conforming to the mainstream capitalist patriarchy that would command them “women’s etiquette” and suppress their revolution. Their bands, for example, did not aim to sign contracts with big labels like many successful rock bands did (e.g., Nirvana with Universal Music Group and Sex Pistols with EMI). In contrast, they were either completely independent or cooperated with independent record labels.

Instead of being constricted by major capitalist music labels that prioritize profit, indie music labels offered Riot Grrrl bands the freedom to pursue their interests in the industry. In Olympia, Washington, the two most active indie labels during the beginning of the ‘90s were Kill Rock Stars and K Records. As Bratmobile’s drummer Molly Neuman explained, Kill Rock Stars “[gave] very intentional voice to things that are not aspiring to be mainstream.”¹⁷ K Records shared a similar mission. Collaborating with bands from Kill Rock Stars, K Records organized a week-long International Pop Underground Convention in 1991; it opened with *Love Rock Revolution Girl Style Now* as the theme for the first day, featuring groups of Riot Grrrl bands.¹⁸ Aside from music activity, the Grrrls also published zines, a type of self-published fanzine in subcultural communities. Through zines, they “subverted standard patriarchal mainstream media by critiquing society and the media without being censored.”¹⁹ The grrrls were free to express their ideas and not be concerned with favoring the consumers for publicity. The *Manifesto* in *Bikini Kill Zine no.2*, for instance, documented the philosophy of the movement and was spread around through mail service. The Grrrls created works that discussed “taboo subjects, such as rape, incest, and eating disorders,” which were otherwise deemed trivial and ignored by the prominent newspaper.²⁰ Thereby, the grrrls became less dependent on the capitalist patriarchy and began to develop individual

¹⁶ Zillah R. Eisenstein, *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), 5.

¹⁷ Jerad Walker, “Kill Rock Stars at 30: ‘A Garbage Heap that Grows Nothing but Flowers,’” Oregon Public Broadcasting, last modified January 22, 2022, <https://www.opb.org/article/2022/01/22/kill-rock-stars-record-label-30-years-anniversary-indie-music/>.

¹⁸ Sara Marcus, *Girls to the Front: The True Story of the Riot Grrrl Revolution* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial, [20]11), 89, Kindle edition.

¹⁹ Jessica Rosenberg and Gitana Garofalo, “Riot Grrrl: Revolutions from within,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 23, no. 3 (April 1998): 811, accessed March 25, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1086/495289>.

²⁰ Schilt, “A Little Too Ironic,” 6.

identities that strived to expel the impact of the sexist culture from themselves. They broke free from the women's reproduction role and male dominance within a household by denying the traditional gender role; they formed a utopia under the capitalist patriarchal society as they began to establish self-autonomy with their DIY ethos. Nevertheless, like many other small independent associations, the mainstream media penetrated the grrrls' utopian bubble.

As the Riot Grrrl movement gained increasing visibility, major newspapers shifted their attention to the grrrls. Within the community, the Grrrls also faced a predicament of utilizing the mainstream media to increase their publicity, influencing more girls or remaining underground and resisting the social norm. A few chose the former and caused distressing consequences. As the grrrls feared, the media eluded the most essential intent of the movement and condescendingly depicted the movement. On July 8, 1993, *Rolling Stone* published *Grrrls at War* by Kim France. The article began with:

Like she-devils out of Rush Limbaugh's worst nightmare, a battery of young women with guitars, drums, and a generous dose of rage stampeded into popular consciousness earlier this year. They do things like scrawl SLUT and RAPE across their torsos before gigs, produce fanzines with names like Girl Germs, and hate the media's guts. They're called riot grrrls, and they've come for your daughters.²¹

France was writing about a concert by Bikini Kill where Hanna wrote "SLUT" on her stomach. According to a personal interview that sociologist Kristen Schilt conducted with the founders of the Riot Grrrl movement, the grrrls "[maintained] that writing 'SLUT' and 'RAPE' on arms and stomachs was intended to draw attention to constraints placed on women's sexuality and to publicize issues such as sexual abuse and rape that were largely ignored by the media."²² Whereas, France portrayed them as a real "slut." The Grrrls' activist movement was then misrepresented to the entire nation. Their self-made community was further threatened by newspapers' libels.

On January 3, 1993, *The Washington Post* – without any interview – claimed that Hanna's father raped her.²³ As Hanna described in an

²¹ Kim France, "Grrrls at War," *Rolling Stone*, 1993, <https://www.proquest.com/magazines/grrrls-at-war/docview/220149457/se-2?accountid=5771>.

²² Schilt, "A Little too Ironic," 8.

²³ Lauren Spencer, "Grrrls Only," *The Washington Post*, last modified January 3, 1993, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1993/01/03/grrrls-only/1ee1d5b7-587a-4c89-8477-ccd9b704582c/>.

interview with Andrea Juno, she believed that it was merely “because [she’d] written a song about incest (*Daddy’s Little Girl*).” The article caused her a severe crisis as many of her relatives lived in Washington D.C., where the *Post* was based; with immense embarrassment, she “had to deal with feeling that [she] wasn’t sure if [she] could ever talk to [her relatives] again.”²⁴ The grrrls’ morale faced a devastating backlash. A few determined grrrls formed the *Riot Grrrl Press*, but they discontinued in 1996 due to economic difficulties.²⁵ Many other Riot Grrrl bands disbanded in response to media misrepresentations.²⁶ The decline of their movement indicated their inadequacy to disregard the mainstream capitalist society and therefore the patriarchy within the capitalist structure. Despite their failure, the Riot Grrrl movement still passed a legacy of forming a heterogeneous account through zine publication.

Constructing a Polyvocal Community

The Riot Grrrl upheld pluralism and inclusivity to welcome people with different personal histories and deny a single definition of the movement. These two notions emerged in the 1980s as second-wave feminists divided internally in the sex wars. Sex wars were a series of disagreements on sexuality between anti-porn feminists, who regarded pornography as harmful to women, and pro-choice feminists who believed women have the freedom to make their own decisions.²⁷ Third-wave feminism adopted the side of pro-choice feminists, aiming to “[embrace] a more diverse and polyvocal feminism.”²⁸ In addition, they were against the hegemonic second-wave feminists that ignored racism, classism, and LGBTQ+ issues.²⁹ Riot Grrrl represented this belief and recognized the importance of self-reflection. Other than sexism and classism, they also fought against racism, homophobia, and transphobia. Such opposition could be found in numerous zines. Corin Tucker, the lead singer and guitarist of Riot Grrrl band Heaven to Betsy from

²⁴ Andrea Juno, *Angry Women in Rock* (New York: Juno Books, 1996), 84-85, PDF e-book.

²⁵ Dunn and Farnsworth, “We ARE the Revolution,” 153-54.

²⁶ “Feminism: The Third Wave’ Guest Curator-Led Virtual Tour,” lecture, National Women’s History Museum, last modified October 14, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAUFCSe8gdw>.

²⁷ R. Claire Snyder, “Third-Wave Feminism and the Defense of ‘Choice,’” *Perspectives on Politics* 8, no. 1 (2010): 258, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25698533>.

²⁸ Susan Archer Mann and Douglas J. Huffman, “The Decentering of Second Wave Feminism and the Rise of the Third Wave,” *Science and Society* 69, no. 1 (2005): 87, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40404229>.

²⁹ Kathleen P. Iannello, “Third-Wave Feminism and Individualism: Promoting Equality or Reinforcing the Status Quo?,” in *Women in Politics: Outsiders or Insiders? : a Collection of Readings*, 4th ed., by Lois Duke Whitaker (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006), 316, PDF e-book.

Eugene, Oregon, wrote in her newsletter in 1993 that “I do think we should try and continue to [...] question the bullshit, the racism, the sexism, the corporations around us and especially inside us.”³⁰ Similarly, Hanna accounted in the *Manifesto*:

BECAUSE I see the connectedness of all forms of oppression and I believe we need to fight them with this awareness...

[...]BECAUSE I am still fucked up, I am still dealing with internalized racism, sexism, classism homophobia, etc., and I don’t want to do it alone.³¹

The Grrrls were aware of “the interlocking nature of identity – that gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and class never function in isolation but always work as interconnected categories of oppression and privilege.”³²

By recognizing intersectionality, the grrrls were more reflective of the approach to diversifying the community. Hanna incorporated this understanding in the *Manifesto*, stating that “BECAUSE we are being divided by our labels and philosophies, and we need to accept and support each other as girls; acknowledging our different approaches to life and accepting all of them as valid.”³³ Coming from different backgrounds, the Grrrls had their interpretation of life, and Riot Grrrl embraced all of them. They valued the importance of pluralism and avoided one voice dominating the community. The accessibility of zine publications also fostered this belief. As the grrrls created zines to find their voice under the hegemonic, mainstream narratives, other minorities also adopted this media to express themselves. *Zines Chop Suey Spex (Do you think I need these?)* and *FaT GiRL* were respectively sarcastic zines that criticized the racist Asian disguise glasses “chop suey specs” by lesbian Asian-American Lala and her friends and a “zine for fat dykes and the women who want them,” that featured a black girl.^{34/35} In addition, zine functioned as a medium to connect the Riot Grrrl community. It “[provided] an outlet for [grrrls] to get their feelings and lives out there and share them with others.”³⁶ The Riot Grrrl thus established a diverse,

³⁰ Corin Tucker, “Newsletter,” in *The Riot Grrrl Collection*, comp. Lisa Darms, 4th ed. (New York, NY: Feminist, 2016), 147, previously published in *Heavens to Betsy*, 1993, digital file.

³¹ Hanna, “Riot Grrrl,” in *Riot Grrrl Is...*

³² Iannello, “Third-Wave Feminism,” 316.

³³ Hanna, “Riot Grrrl,” in *Riot Grrrl Is...*

³⁴ Lala and Felix Endara, “[Frontpage],” in *The Riot Grrrl Collection*, comp. Lisa Darms, 4th ed. (New York, NY: Feminist, 2016), 314, excerpt from *Chop Suey Spex*, 1993, digital file.

³⁵ *FaT GiRL no. 3*, 1995, <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/fat-girl-no-3-1995-fat-girl/AAEqonuJSukqJw?hl=en>.

³⁶ Rosenberg and Garofalo, “Riot Grrrl,” 811.

inclusive community that valued every voice. Nonetheless, examples like *Chop Suey Spex* and *FaT GiRL* were exceptionally rare. Though the Grrrls aimed to embrace everyone, the larger societal restraints on other marginalized people hampered their inclusion, especially race and ethnicity minorities.

Their idealistic mission was not achieved in reality because of the institutional discrimination in society, particularly for people of color (hereinafter POC) who faced discrimination and microaggression on a daily basis solely because of their physical characteristics. According to the 1990 Census of Population in Washington State, 88.5 percent of the population was white.³⁷ Due to this geographical constraint, the grrrls in Olympia, first, could hardly include POC. Second, the gender norms that the Grrrls resisted were never the standards for POC. LaRonda Davis recounted in an interview with Gabby Bess from *VICE*, “[b]lack women were never allowed in the box [standard of womanhood].”³⁸ They did not echo the oppression that the grrrls faced. On top of this exclusion, POC had to bear double discriminations of sexism and racism, which discouraged them from rebelling like the white grrrls. Ramdasha Bikceem narrated in her zine *Gunk*:

I’ll go out somewhere with my friends who all look equally as weird as me, but say we get hassled by the cops for skating or something. That cop is going to remember my face [a lot clearer] than say one of my white girlfriends. I can just hear him now...“Yeah, there was this black girl w/pink hair and two other girls.”³⁹

The preexisting racism in society determined that the Grrrls could not be fully inclusive and truly understand intersectionality since they had never experienced the life of other minorities. But it is essential to note that, compared to the majority of second-wave feminists, the white grrrls attempted to diversify their scene and noticed its importance.

³⁷ United States Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population General Population Characteristics Washington, 31,

<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1990/cp-1/cp-1-49.pdf>.

³⁸ Gabby Bess, “Alternatives to Alternatives: The Black Grrrls Riot Ignored,” *VICE*, last modified August 3, 2015, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/9k99a7/alternatives-to-alternatives-the-black-grrrls-riot-ignored>.

³⁹ Ramdasha Bikceem, “I’m Laughing so Hard It Doesn’t Look like I’m Laughing Anymore...,” in *The Riot Grrrl Collection*, comp. Lisa Darms, 4th ed. (New York, NY: Feminist, 2016), 153, excerpt from *Gunk no. 4*, ca.1993, digital file.

Conclusion

As the pioneer of third-wave feminism, the Riot Grrrl movement settled and exemplified the essence of the third-wave by fighting for gender equality in the private sphere, forming individuality, and endorsing pluralism. Differing from the first and second waves that had clear missions for their revolutions, the Riot Grrrl movement did not have a clear definition because the grrrls and third-wave feminists “[preferred] disunity over homogeneity, choosing instead to embrace all their complexities.”⁴⁰ Through punk rock performances and independent zine publications and music labels, the Grrrls reclaimed their girlhood and formed a community that “[shared] a collective consciousness by *rejecting* a collective consciousness.”⁴¹ This community consisted of independent grrrls who reduced their reliance on the authoritative mainstream institutions and gained the freedom to address gender inequality, particularly in situations like subcultural scenes that their precursor – the first and second wave – ignored. Yet, the Riot Grrrl movement was restricted within the capitalist, patriarchal society; their ambiguous interpretation of femininity overlapped with the machismo that they detested, and mainstream media distorted the Grrrls’ motivation and thus misrepresented and impaired the movement as a whole. Numerous types of discrimination hindered the actual approach to intersectionality and pluralism. Perhaps, the rise of the internet and global communication could offset the formidable institutional discrimination based on class, race, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, and more.

In modern days, through increasing globalization, the influences of the Riot Grrrl movement remains and has expanded from white girls in the US and Europe to other races, ethnicity, and nationalities such as the band Ratas Rabiosas (2013-present) in Brazil, the organization Girls to the Front (2020-present) in China, and Pussy Riot (2011-present) in Russia as they gained access to learn the movement. By understanding the mediums that the Grrrls utilized to fight for women’s rights within the institution, those like-minded activists may learn from the Grrrls’ success yet also adjust their strategies from the Grrrls’ failures, “BECAUSE”, as Hanna envisioned in the *Manifesto*, “a safe space needs to be created for girls where we can open our eyes and reach out to each

⁴⁰ Stephanie Gilmore, “Looking Back, Thinking Ahead: Third Wave Feminism in the United States,” *Journal of Women’s History* 12, no. 4 (2001): 218, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jowh.2001.0009>.

⁴¹ Iannello, “Third-Wave Feminism,” 315.

other without being threatened by this sexist society and our day-to-day bullshit.”⁴²

⁴² Hanna, “Riot Grrrl,” in *Riot Grrrl Is...*

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The Iwakura Mission of 1871: A Diplomatic Odyssey How the United States Influenced Japan's Modernization

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Abstract

While the Iwakura Mission visited numerous Western nations in 1871-1872, this paper takes a close look at the United States' particular influence on the Mission. The paper describes the conditions in Japan that prompted the monumental diplomatic mission, reveals how the US received the diplomats, discusses what the Embassy witnessed in the US through direct accounts and speeches of the diplomats and the Japanese historian who accompanied them, and analyzes what facets of American culture were eventually incorporated into Japan's modernization. To undertake a diplomatic odyssey of this magnitude took immense courage. The fact that the United States so generously welcomed the Mission, reveals a uniquely unabashed view of the US with all of its flaws and hopes, less than a decade after the end of the Civil War. Seeing the US through the eyes of the Mission sheds light not just on Japan's emergence from isolation but also offers valuable perspectives on the United States' shortcomings and successes as a fledgling nation. The Iwakura Mission was a successful diplomatic strategy that not only corrected the mistakes of the Tokugawa Shogunate but sparked modernization. The Mission is worth revisiting not just because of its incredible story, but because it represents the ongoing need for nations to humble themselves and embrace the best ideas from around the world to meet global challenges.

Introduction

Throughout history, civilizations have sought to create an ideal society and have often dispatched diplomats to find it. One such diplomatic odyssey was undertaken by the Iwakura Mission in 1871-1872. A Japanese embassy undertook a voyage to the United States and Europe to gather information regarding Western society. The ambitious diplomatic world tour was meticulously transcribed in the diary of historian Kume Kunitake, the secretary to Prince Iwakura, who provided detailed and insightful observations of Western society. This paper will introduce the Iwakura Mission and explain the lasting impact it had on the development of modern Japan. It will describe the conditions in Japan that prompted the monumental diplomatic mission, examine how the United States received the Japanese diplomats, discuss what the Japanese embassy witnessed in the US (including what elements of American society impressed them and what they found unsettling or incongruous with their diplomatic goals), and finally, analyze how the mission was successful and what facets of American culture and government were incorporated into Japan's modernization.

Conditions in Japan Leading to the Iwakura Mission

For centuries, Japan was closed to all trade with the West.¹ The Tokugawa Shogunate, the feudal military government that ruled from 1603 to 1868, was extremely isolationist.² This would all change in 1853 when four American ships sailed into Edo Bay with a letter from President Millard Fillmore to the Shogun, calling for Japan to relax their seclusion laws to promote trade.³ Japan waited a year to respond.⁴ Finally, in 1854, they replied with an emphatic “no”.⁵ The United States responded by returning to Edo Bay with even more ships and intimidated Japan into signing a treaty that opened up their ports.⁶

At the same time, Europe was also pressuring Japan to open ports.⁷ Japan had seen the impact British presence had in China during the Opium Wars. To avoid the same fate, they reluctantly signed five

¹ W.G. Beasley, *Japan Encounters the Barbarian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 17; Kosaka Masataka, *The Remarkable History of Japan-US Relations* (Tokyo: JPIC, 2019), 8.

² Nagai Michio, *Meiji Ishin: Restoration and Revolution* (Tokyo: United Nations University, 1985), 5.

³ Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 37.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 37.

⁶ Ibid., 37 (“Nagasaki, Hakodate, and Shimoda.”)

⁷ Ibid., 39 (“Dutch, French, and British.”)

unequal treaties with various foreign powers in 1858.⁸ These treaties, signed under “gun-barrel” diplomacy, were grossly unfavorable to the Japanese.⁹ This rapid opening of trade in Japan shocked its economy, causing the balance of supply and demand to be wildly off-kilter.¹⁰ The Japanese people were ashamed of the Tokugawa Shogunate because they signed unequal treaties and acted weakly in the face of a foreign threat.¹¹

The Tokugawa Shogunate ended in 1868, thus restoring imperial power and installing Emperor Mutsuhito.¹² This period, known as the Meiji Restoration, would usher in reform and revitalization in Japan.¹³ However, the new Meiji government had its work cut out. Social and economic institutions necessary for the success of a nation were glaringly absent in Japan. To begin modernization, they phased out the feudal system.¹⁴ Preoccupied with unifying feudal clans into a single nation, the Meiji government didn’t initially do much to stimulate economic growth in Japan’s floundering private sector.¹⁵ Japanese companies wouldn’t invest in modernization projects like harbors and railroads because they wouldn’t receive short-term returns.¹⁶ Some officials at the time called for Japan to reintroduce isolationism, but the Emperor took a more nuanced approach.¹⁷ He delivered a speech called *The Charter Oath* on April 7th, 1868, proclaiming, “Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world to invigorate the foundations of Imperial rule.”¹⁸ This marked the beginning of a new style of foreign policy in Japan. The Meiji government painfully understood that the treaties needed to be renegotiated by engaging with the West, but their modernization depended on their willingness to explore and adopt Western ideas and practices. The former stance that Western “barbarians” must be resisted at all costs was no longer feasible.¹⁹ If Japan wanted to ascend to the

⁸ Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 41; Kume Kunitake, *Japan Rising: The Iwakura Embassy to the USA and Europe 1871-1873* ed. Chushichi Tsuzuki and R. Jules Young (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), xiii; Ian Patrick Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan, 1869-1885 Diplomacy, Strategic Thought and the Economic Context of US Japan Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 17.

⁹ Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan*, 17 (“Under the US-Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce, the US could enforce tariffs of up to 50 percent while Japan could only make tariffs of up to five percent.”), and 30.

¹⁰ Kosaka, *The Remarkable History*, 35.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹² Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan*, 22; Kume, *Japan Rising*, xiv.

¹³ Kume, *Japan Rising*, xiv; Kosaka, *The Remarkable History*, 27-28.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, xiv.

¹⁵ Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan*, 2-3, 23; Kume, *Japan Rising*, 23.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁷ Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 42; Kosaka, *The Remarkable History*, 27-28.

¹⁸ Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan*, 22.

¹⁹ Kosaka, *The Remarkable History*, 27-28.

status of a world power, it needed a new foreign policy. The stage was now set for the Iwakura Mission.

Iwakura Mission Journeys West

According to the US-Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce, the treaty would be able to be renegotiated in 1872.²⁰ It was 1871, and Japan decided to send some of its highest-ranking officials to the West. The Chief Ambassador of the mission was Iwakura Tomomi, the Emperor's second in command.²¹ He brought four vice ambassadors with him who were high-ranking officials in the emperor's cabinet.²² These men were very young, all still in their thirties except for Iwakura.²³ The Emperor likely sent them because they would become Japan's next policymakers and leaders. This is evidenced by the Emperor's edict that "My country is now undergoing a complete change from the old to the new idea, and I desire, therefore, to call upon the wise and strong-minded to appear and become good guides to the government...It is positively necessary to view foreign countries to become enlightened in the ideas of the world, and boys as well as girls, who will themselves soon become men and women, should be allowed to go abroad, and my country will profit from their knowledge so acquired."²⁴ Kume Kunitake, a Japanese historian, was brought along as Iwakura's secretary to compose a narrative of the observations made of Western society.²⁵ The mission consisted of 48 diplomatic members, along with 53 Japanese male and female students studying abroad in the US.²⁶

In the Chicago Tribune on March 5th, 1872, Iwakura delivered an address "full of excellent feeling" explaining the objective of his visit to the United States.²⁷ Iwakura stated to the audience, which included President Ulysses S. Grant, "We hope...to gain from this visit a fresh impulse in paths of progress, drawing good from every form of civilization."²⁸ In response, President Grant replied by reminding the

²⁰ Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan*, 17.

²¹ Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 157.

²² *Ibid.*, 157.

²³ Kume, *Japan Rising*, xv.

²⁴ *Chicago tribune. [volume]* (Chicago, Ill.), 16 Jan. 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014064/1872-01-16/ed-1/seq-1/>

²⁵ Kume, *Japan Rising*, xi.

²⁶ Beasley, *Japan Encounters the Barbarian*, 162.

²⁷ *Chicago tribune. [volume]* (Chicago, Ill.), 05 March 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014064/1872-03-05/ed-1/seq-1/>

²⁸ Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 162.

ambassadors of “some of the peculiar merits of [the United States], which he hoped would appear to them worthy of imitation.”²⁹ The mission had three central objectives: 1) gain international recognition for the new Meiji government; 2) begin discussions to revise the unequal treaties; and 3) assess Western nations and adopt the valuable aspects of their societies for use in Japan.³⁰ The Iwakura Embassy planned an eleven-month mission to the United States and 11 European nations.³¹ The diplomats set out to learn about Western laws and constitutions, financial institutions, educational systems, military, religion, diplomatic services, trade, industries, railways, telegraph and postal systems³², and hospitals.³³

The United States had its objectives with the Iwakura mission and was eager to establish commercial relations with Japan. It was reported that Iwakura, when introduced to President Grant, told the President that, “The Emperor of Japan was anxious to establish permanent relations with the outside world and start his country on a career of modern progress. The object of the mission was to promote ‘wide commercial’ relations and the President said he was gratified at the whole thing.”³⁴ Mayor Joseph Medill of Chicago, in welcoming the Iwakura Embassy, gave a long speech about the objectives of the mission from his perspective, stating:

“The people of this country entertain sentiments of respect and the kindest feelings for your countrymen and wish to foster and encourage trade and commerce. Japan will always find a sympathizing friend in America. Your country is the nearest to ours of the Asiatic nations. Steam navigation has reduced the distance and made them neighbors. Before long they will be connected by telegraph and thus be brought into hourly communication. We watch with the deepest interest the rapid progress your countrymen are seeking in modern ideas, arts, and culture, and with admiration the spirit of

²⁹ Ibid., 162.

³⁰ Ibid., 157.

³¹ Ibid., 162. (England, Germany, France, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Netherlands, Belgium, Russia)

³² *Alexandria gazette*. [volume] (Alexandria, D.C.), 01 May 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85025007/1872-05-01/ed-1/seq-2/>

³³ Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 159.

³⁴ *Memphis daily appeal*. [volume] (Memphis, Tenn.), 06 March 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045160/1872-03-06/ed-1/seq-1/>

tolerance and liberty, under the encouragement of your government which is supplanting the old habits of non-intercourse and seclusion.”³⁵

Interestingly, commercial relations were at the forefront of the minds of the President and mayors of major US cities but was only one of many of the Iwakura Embassy’s objectives for the mission.

The mission left Yokohama on December 23, 1871, and arrived in San Francisco on January 15, 1872.³⁶ They planned to spend 20 days in the US, but due to unforeseen circumstances, they stayed seven months, making the US more of a significant stop on their itinerary than initially planned.³⁷

The United States Reception of the Iwakura Embassy

Every city visited by the Iwakura Embassy received them with grand festivities. The Embassy was met by governors, generals, US President Grant, and other high-ranking politicians. The Americans thoroughly enjoyed throwing banquets, dances, and concerts for the ambassadors.³⁸ By contrast, the Japanese diplomats were overwhelmed by the Americans’ exuberant celebrations.³⁹ American reporters were under the impression that the Japanese ambassadors thoroughly enjoyed the parties and festivities, but that was not the case.⁴⁰ In his diary, Kume wrote “Customs and character in the East and West are very different...Westerners enjoy social activities and public events; Eastern peoples tend to avoid them.”⁴¹ American newspapers reported heavily on the Iwakura Mission. American news reports about the Embassy seemed largely superficial, more concerned with frivolous party details than the sincere and urgent nature of the diplomatic mission.⁴² The ambassadors were entertained at the highest levels of government in the Blue Parlor of the White House where American journalists believed they would be enamored by the “charm of female society from White

³⁵ *The Avant Courier*. (Bozeman, Mont.), 29 Feb. 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86075114/1872-02-29/ed-1/seq-2/>

³⁶ Beasley, *Japan Encounters the Barbarian*, 159, 162-3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 164 (“Four-month delay”); Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan*, 26.

³⁸ Kosaka, *The Remarkable History*, 50.

³⁹ Kume, *Japan Rising*, 16.

⁴⁰ *Evening star*. [volume] (Washington, D.C.), 06 March 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1872-03-06/ed-1/seq-1/>

⁴¹ Kume, *Japan Rising*, 16.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 16-17; *Evening star*. [volume] (Washington, D.C.), 04 March 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1872-03-04/ed-1/seq-1/>

House circles” more completely than the institutions of America.⁴³ Many articles focused on the Japanese diplomats’ appearance.⁴⁴ One newspaper described Iwakura “as tall, with a substantial head scantily covered with hair. His features are marked. He gives a hearty shake of the hand in true American style. He wears two swords, a robe of dark blue silk, and a headdress of black wool, glazed and ornamented with beads, shaped somewhat like a flat portmanteau.”⁴⁵ A different newspaper describing the appearance of Iwakura reported him as possessing “a feminine cast of features” and being of “medium height,” marching with “a slow, measured tread,” and owning “great natural dignity.”⁴⁶ Another commented on the Embassy’s dietary habits: “They call for oysters in every conceivable form at the same meal... and then go through the bill of fare, picking out the most novel and indigestible fancy dishes. They order hard-boiled eggs by the dozen, with ice cream at midnight, and drink several bottles of wine on top of that.”⁴⁷ The same paper wrote: “The larder of the hotel is kept upon a tension and a continual state of collapse by the extraordinary demands of the appetites of the little Japs.”⁴⁸ Newspapers extensively covered the fashion and beauty of five female Japanese students who accompanied the Embassy, grossly exoticizing and sexualizing them.⁴⁹ Reporters commented that the women were “possessing remarkable beauty and intelligence, and one reporter has been rendered so ecstatic that he maintains that their loveliness is unrivaled...the belle of the beautiful bevy has dark and languishing eyes, which, we are startled to learn, have within them all the light and depth which one may see in an autumnal sunset...ravishing

⁴³ *Chicago tribune*. [volume] (Chicago, Ill.), 05 March 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014064/1872-03-05/ed-1/seq-1/>

⁴⁴ Samuel Mossman, *New Japan: The Land of the Rising Sun* (London, John Murray, 1873), 433. (“At state ceremonies they dressed in a mixed European court costume. While in public they appeared in broad cloth coats and trousers... wearing chimney-pot hats and boots with elastics[which] did not improve their appearance in dignity or elegance.”)

⁴⁵ *Memphis daily appeal*. [volume] (Memphis, Tenn.), 21 Feb. 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045160/1872-02-21/ed-1/seq-2/>

⁴⁶ *Evening Star*. [volume] (Washington, D.C.), 04 March 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1872-03-04/ed-1/seq-1/>

⁴⁷ *Chicago Tribune*. [volume] (Chicago, Ill.), 04 April 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014064/1872-04-04/ed-1/seq-4/>

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *The Charleston daily news*. [volume] (Charleston, S.C.), 10 Feb. 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026994/1872-02-10/ed-1/seq-2/>

smiles dwell perennially on their lips, their complexions are faultless, while their minds seem to be as superfine as their persons, and their intelligence is covertly estimated as far excelling that of the average *belle Americaine*.”⁵⁰ While Kume’s account of the mission was a penetrating analysis of trade, industry, and culture, the American newspaper accounts were somewhat shallow, and often racist and misogynistic in their impressions of the Embassy.

Treaty Negotiations Fall Through

After San Francisco, the Embassy headed to Washington D.C. via the transcontinental railroad, but snow on the tracks forced a two-week delay in Utah.⁵¹ The Embassy finally arrived in Washington D.C. on February 29, 1872.⁵² There, they entered into discussions to revise the US-Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce with US Secretary of State Hamilton Fish.⁵³ Negotiations got off to a shaky start when the Embassy realized they needed authorization from Tokyo in the form of letters of representation to begin renegotiating the treaty.⁵⁴ Two vice ambassadors returned to Japan and acquired the letters, but it proved futile.⁵⁵ Once discussions had begun, Japan expressed that they wanted to revise the tariffs and draft a completely new, reciprocal treaty. In response, the US asked for more Japanese ports to be opened. Then, Japan called for a conference to be held in Europe with all the powers involved in the unequal treaties of 1858, but the US would not agree to send a representative. Negotiations resulted in a deadlock. The Iwakura Embassy gave up on renegotiating the treaties and did not try again in Europe.⁵⁶ After completing their arduous journey, treaty negotiations promptly fell apart.⁵⁷ Since Japan had been isolated for so long, they didn’t have enough knowledge of Western diplomacy to effectively revise the treaties.⁵⁸ The Embassy then shifted its strategy. If revitalizing their failing economy could not be achieved through fairer treaties, they

⁵⁰ *The Charleston daily news*. [volume] (Charleston, S.C.), 10 Feb. 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026994/1872-02-10/ed-1/seq-2/>

⁵¹ Kume, *Japan Rising*, 41.

⁵² Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 163.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁵⁴ Kosaka, *The Remarkable History*, 57-58.

⁵⁵ Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan*, 18.

⁵⁶ Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 164.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁵⁸ Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan*, 18.

would instead focus on their third objective: learning about Western policies and institutions to modernize Japan.⁵⁹

Iwakura Embassy's Impressions of the United States

The Embassy visited America at a time when titans of industry like Rockefeller and Carnegie were gaining prominence.⁶⁰ They saw an America in which private enterprise was incentivized and rapid infrastructure improvements were taking place.⁶¹ In every city the Embassy visited, they toured factories.⁶² They were impressed by the vast network of railroads. The Japanese ambassadors noticed how American railroad companies used the cheap labor of Chinese immigrants to boost profits.⁶³ Kume observed that American laborers were well supervised and worked exceptionally hard, in stark contrast to the many uneducated and unskilled workers back in Japan.⁶⁴ They toured the Patent Office to learn about how new machines and other inventions were made.⁶⁵ They visited the Western Union Telegraph office in San Francisco and were introduced to the wonders of the telegraph where they received and sent telegrams with government officials from D.C. and, interestingly, the inventor Professor Morse, who welcomed Iwakura to “the sphere of telegraphic intercourse.”⁶⁶ The Embassy visited the Government Printing Office where they were shown “the various operations in the composing, press, and stereotyping rooms.”⁶⁷ In Chicago, the ambassadors were shown early versions of the fire extinguisher, which was developed soon after the 1871 Chicago Fire.⁶⁸ Since Japanese buildings were usually made solely of wood, fires were a major threat to Japanese cities. Fire extinguishers could greatly lessen their impact. The Iwakura mission wasn't only interested in the economy but scrutinized US education as well.

⁵⁹ Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 164 (“four-month delay occasioned by the diplomatic negotiations left more time for the study of America than had originally been planned.”).

⁶⁰ Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan*, 40.

⁶¹ Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan*, 41 (E.g., construction of the Brooklyn Bridge.).

⁶² Kume, *Japan Rising*, 16-24; Beasley, *Japan Encounters the Barbarian*, 164-5.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁶⁵ Kume, *Japan Rising*, 64; Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 164.

⁶⁶ *The Charleston daily news*. [volume] (Charleston, S.C.), 26 Jan. 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026994/1872-01-26/ed-1/seq-1/>

⁶⁷ *Evening Star*. [volume] (Washington, D.C.), 03 April 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1872-04-03/ed-1/seq-1/>

⁶⁸ Kume, *Japan Rising*, 50-51.

The Iwakura Embassy visited American schools of all levels.⁶⁹ In San Francisco, they were shocked that eight of 11 children in the city attended school.⁷⁰ They liked how America put tremendous effort into basic education.⁷¹ They observed a practical curriculum and held positive opinions on the emphasis on patriotism in American education.⁷² In Japan, education was reserved for the samurai class and upwards, so the Embassy was interested in the idea of universal and compulsory education.⁷³ While they were generally impressed with the US education system, the segregation of black and white students disturbed them.⁷⁴ Along with public education, the Embassy was eager to learn more about the US government.

In Washington DC, the Japanese ambassadors were told of the federal system and the differences between local, state, and federal governments.⁷⁵ They learned about Congress and the three branches of government.⁷⁶ Japan wanted to create a political system that guaranteed unity and strength; one that the West would view positively.⁷⁷ However, Japan never held any intention of adopting a democratic government.⁷⁸ The ambassadors noted that, under democracy, the best officials and policies weren't always selected.⁷⁹ They recognized that in American democracy inferior policies can be chosen over superior ones because majority rules.⁸⁰ While the Embassy wasn't impressed by Congress, they held positive views of the Constitution.⁸¹ Kume expressed that a country's stability depends on its constitution and the unity it creates.⁸² The Iwakura Embassy also held negative views of partisan politics in America.⁸³ The US changes in presidential leadership made Japan view the US as unstable.⁸⁴ Immersing themselves in the US government

⁶⁹ Beasley, *Japan Encounters* 164-5; Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan*, 41.

⁷⁰ Kume, *Japan Rising*, 20.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁷² Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 205.

⁷³ Kosaka, *The Remarkable History*, 79.

⁷⁴ Kume, *Japan Rising*, 63.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁷⁷ Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 203-4.

⁷⁸ Kosaka, *The Remarkable History*, 53.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁸⁰ Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan*, 36.

⁸¹ Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 164, 204. (Kume and one of the interpreters translated the Constitution into Japanese.)

⁸² *Ibid.*, 204.

⁸³ Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan*, 197. (Were confused by the Republican Party's decision to endorse James Garfield instead of Ulysses S. Grant in the 1880 election. The Iwakura Embassy had met Grant during the mission and were impressed with his leadership.)

⁸⁴ Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan*, 197.

proved to illuminate, giving the ambassadors much to consider when modernizing their government.

Japan was interested in creating a unified national army because its previous military force consisted of a patchwork of independent feudal armies.⁸⁵ They wanted soldiers to fight for a unified Japan instead of a feudal lord.⁸⁶ For inspiration, the Embassy visited both the United States Naval Academy and West Point.⁸⁷ They observed that American soldiers followed regulations emphasizing discipline and obedience, while Japanese samurai followed a moral code similar to the code of chivalry.⁸⁸ The Japanese military needed more highly trained officers and wanted to create military academies similar to West Point.⁸⁹

Another aspect of American society that the Iwakura Embassy observed was religion. Upon arrival, the ambassadors were immediately struck by the religious fervor in the United States. Kume thought that excerpts from the Bible sounded like “the ramblings of a lunatic” and was disturbed by pictures of Jesus on the cross in people’s homes.⁹⁰ Describing the common sight of Jesus Christ on the cross, Kume queried: “Every city in the West has images of this dead man being taken down from a cross, with streaks of blood running down his body... Is this not a strange custom?”⁹¹ During the Mission, Christian missionaries repeatedly begged the Embassy to tell the Emperor to end the prohibition of Christianity. The missionaries made their plight abundantly clear to the US Secretary of State Hamilton Fish, urging him to drop the polite manners with the Japanese ambassadors and challenge them on their treatment of Christians in Japan.⁹² They opposed the Emperor’s extension of the death penalty “to the convert’s grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, cousins, children, and grandchildren.”⁹³ These missionaries heard from missionaries in Japan that Christians were being taken away, never to be seen again.⁹⁴ They suggested that Iwakura, being high-ranking in the Japanese government, was somewhat responsible for these laws and that Secretary Fish should

⁸⁵ Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 202.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 202.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 164-5, 173.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 202.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁹⁰ Kume, *Japan Rising*, 98.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *The Middlebury Register*. [volume] (Middlebury, Vt.), 16 April 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83025667/1872-04-16/ed-1/seq-1/>

⁹³ *The Middlebury Register*. [volume] (Middlebury, Vt.), 16 April 1872.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

discuss the subject with Iwakura.⁹⁵ The Japanese saw Christianity as a threat to domestic order because it challenged the Confucian ideology that Japanese society heavily relied on. Feudal lords felt threatened by Christianity because obedience to God instead of rulers would “subvert and usurp” the country.⁹⁶ Overall, the Iwakura Embassy’s view of Christianity was unfavorable, seeing it as sincere yet disturbing and lacking in intelligence.⁹⁷

Kume Kunitake made many insightful observations of the American people, both positive and negative. To close the section of his diary devoted to America, Kume wrote that Americans “drew much of [their] vigor from European immigrants, who had shown themselves by their decision to seek a new life in a foreign land to be those strongest in the spirit of self-reliance and independence.”⁹⁸ The diplomats were intrigued by the fact that Americans of all demographics read newspapers and stay informed about the country.⁹⁹ Yet they also witnessed adversity faced by newly freed black Americans, Chinese laborers, and Native Americans. Kume remarked that even though slaves were emancipated, they were still treated as second-class citizens.¹⁰⁰ The Embassy also saw how the transcontinental railroad and western expansion exploited Chinese immigrant laborers and pushed Native Americans off ancestral lands.¹⁰¹

Impact of Iwakura Mission on Modernizing Japan

After leaving the United States, the Embassy visited Europe.¹⁰² They returned to Japan on September 13, 1873, and began using what they learned of Western society to modernize Japan.¹⁰³ They adopted the best of Western methods and joined them with the best of their own. Immediately upon return to Japan, Kido, one of the vice-ambassadors and ministers to the Emperor, called for a memorandum to be held in October to create a constitutional government with a separation of powers between the branches of the government.¹⁰⁴ Japan did not adopt Western culture and customs wholesale. Rather, it pragmatically borrowed only those aspects of Western society that would benefit Japan

⁹⁵ *The Middlebury Register*. [volume] (Middlebury, Vt.), 16 April 1872.

⁹⁶ Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 20.

⁹⁷ Kume, *Japan Rising*, 99.

⁹⁸ Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 165.

⁹⁹ Kume, *Japan Rising*, 99.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁰¹ Kosaka, *The Remarkable History*, 52.

¹⁰² Kume, *Japan Rising*, 107.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, xxv.

¹⁰⁴ Kume, *Japan Rising*, xxv; Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 210.

without compromising its traditions. Illustrating this, on the day the Japanese Constitution was announced, a prominent Japanese newspaper clarified:

We have affection for some Western customs. Above all, we esteem Western science, economics, and industry. These, however, ought not to be adopted simply because they are Western; they ought to be adopted only if they contribute to Japan's welfare.¹⁰⁵

Japan decided against American democracy because in the years after the Iwakura Mission, President James Garfield was assassinated and election instability ran rampant in the US.¹⁰⁶ Meiji Japan-based their government off of Otto von Bismarck's Germany instead.¹⁰⁷

After studying the American education system, Japan built many new schools and modeled classrooms after a school they visited in Boston.¹⁰⁸ The textbooks used in Japanese elementary schools were translations of American textbooks.¹⁰⁹ Before the Iwakura Mission, education was reserved for nobility and the samurai, but after seeing universal education in the United States, Japanese schools were made compulsory and universal.¹¹⁰

The pleas of missionaries they encountered on the United States visit were answered when the Emperor removed the ban on Christianity and freed three thousand Catholics imprisoned for their faith.¹¹¹ However, Christianity never took hold in Japan as the government acted to "prevent religious disturbances."¹¹²

When it came to industrialization, Japan followed Carnegie's steel production as a model.¹¹³ They found his methods efficient and modern.¹¹⁴ Carnegie's industrial model became institutionalized within the Japanese economy.¹¹⁵ However, this was the only American contribution to Japanese industrialization. Japan looked more to Britain,

¹⁰⁵ Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 223.

¹⁰⁶ Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant, and Meiji Japan*, 197.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Kosaka, *The Remarkable History*, 76.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 79.

¹¹¹ Kume, *Japan Rising*, xxv.

¹¹² Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 210.

¹¹³ Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan*, 44.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, as a model for an industrialized nation.¹¹⁶

To modernize their military, the Meiji government passed a new conscription law that made samurai and commoners equal under the laws of the empire and in their duty to serve in the military.¹¹⁷ Military academies similar to West Point were established to train more officers.¹¹⁸ With more officers, the Japanese army added an artillery division and a medical corps.¹¹⁹ The moral code of the samurai was replaced by discipline, regulation, and obedience.¹²⁰ The military traded their traditional garments for Western military attire as well.¹²¹

Although the Western policies Japan adopted as a result of the Iwakura Mission were beneficial to Japanese people, some were detrimental to people of other East Asian and Pacific nations. After observing numerous imperialist nations, Japan developed a taste for imperialism.¹²² Adopting an imperial mindset, the Japanese believed they were superior to other Asian ethnic groups.¹²³ They began creating a Pacific empire through conquest.¹²⁴ After seeing race-based public policies at work in the US, Japan replicated this and treated conquered peoples horribly.¹²⁵ While the US had many positive things to offer, it also exposed Japan to large-scale subjugation of marginalized groups through slave labor and mass displacement.

Conclusion

The Iwakura Mission had immediate and lasting effects on Japan in areas such as industry, armed forces, education, government, and imperialism. The mission succeeded in its goal to take the most advantageous policies and institutions from the West and apply them in Japan. However, the Iwakura Embassy failed to renegotiate the five unequal treaties from 1858. This failure was overshadowed by the modernization in Meiji Japan fulfilled by vice-ambassadors of the

¹¹⁶ Kume, *Japan Rising*, 16-24.

¹¹⁷ Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 202.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 202.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹²² Austin, *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan*, 198.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

Iwakura Mission: Ito, Kido, and Okubo.¹²⁶ Students who were brought along on the mission became heads of six of the ten governmental cabinets after 1900.¹²⁷ The Meiji government and the Iwakura Embassy showed humility in realizing the shortcomings of their isolated nation and seeking Western guidance. To undertake a diplomatic odyssey of this magnitude, traveling around the globe in 1872, exhibited the immense courage and determination of the Iwakura Embassy. The Iwakura Mission was a successful diplomatic strategy that not only corrected the numerous mistakes of the Tokugawa Shogunate but sparked Japan's modernization.

Diplomacy at its core is being humble enough to look outside one's nation to learn from other countries and to empathize with other countries who come seeking knowledge and security. The United States, by welcoming the Iwakura Embassy, not only shared knowledge that would aid Japan in modernization but laid the foundation for a commercial relationship between the two nations. It is necessary for all nations, even superpowers like the United States, to humble themselves by looking outward to other countries for guidance and development in areas where they may fall short. Iwakura, when addressing the United States House of Representatives, poetically reflected on his diplomatic journey:

Governments are strong when built upon the hearts of an enlightened people. We come for enlightenment, and we gladly find it here. Journeying eastward from the Empire of the Sunrise toward the sunrising, we daily behold a new sunrise beyond the one we before enjoyed. New knowledge rises daily before us, and when a completed journey shall have passed in review an encircled globe, we shall gather our treasure of knowledge, remembering that however we have advanced toward the sources of light, each onward move has revealed to us a further step beyond.¹²⁸

As Iwakura opines, sometimes enlightenment arises from the knowledge of the outsider. Iwakura, prescient and insightful in describing his hope for international unification, further stated:

¹²⁶ Kume, *Japan Rising*, xxvi (They headed seven of the ten cabinets formed between 1885 and 1900.); Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 193-4.

¹²⁷ Beasley, *Japan Encounters*, 194.

¹²⁸ *The Portland daily press*. [volume] (Portland, Me.), 07 March 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83016025/1872-03-07/ed-1/seq-3/>

In the future extended commerce will unite our national interests in a thousand forms, as drops of water will comingle, flowing from several rivers to that common ocean that divides our countries. Let us express the hope that our national friendship may be as difficult to sunder or estrange as to divide the once splendid drops composing our common Pacific Ocean.¹²⁹

Iwakura correctly understands the need for nations to share knowledge because we are tethered to a common ocean, a common planet, and sometimes a common foe such as a pandemic or the effects of climate change that we face today.

¹²⁹ *The Portland daily press*. [volume] (Portland, Me.), 07 March 1872. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (website), accessed May 26, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83016025/1872-03-07/ed-1/seq-3/>

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Japan Rising: The Iwakura Embassy to the USA and Europe is Kume Kunitake's diary detailing the Iwakura Mission. Kume was the young Confucian scholar and historian whom Prince Iwakura chose as his secretary for the Mission. He was born on the island of Kyushu near Nagasaki, one of the few ports open to foreign traders, so he was somewhat familiar with foreign cultures. Kume's observations were analytical and shrewd. He discussed the contrasting elements of Western and Eastern societies. In his daily entries, Kume wrote about excursions made by each member of the Embassy and what information they gathered. Kume's diary was the most important primary source used in this paper as it provided information regarding the events of the journey, the reception of the Embassy by the US from the perspective of the Japanese diplomats, the Embassy's impressions of the US, and an account of the treaty negotiations.

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Collective Annotation for American Newspaper Articles:

American newspapers across the country reported on the Iwakura Mission. Compared to Kume’s inquisitive account of American culture and society, the newspapers focused on the reception of the Iwakura Embassy in different cities and the ensuing festivities. The articles heavily discussed the appearances of the ambassadors and gawked at their traditional garb. I gathered these primary sources using the Library of Congress Chronicling America database. The newspapers contained some fascinating quotes that I used in the paragraph discussing America’s reception of the Iwakura Embassy. These primary sources were also helpful in creating a timeline of the Embassy’s movements in America.

Secondary Sources

Austin, Ian Patrick. *Ulysses S. Grant and Meiji Japan, 1869-1885: Diplomacy, Strategic Thought and the Economic Context of US-Japan Relations*. London, Routledge, Taylor, and Francis Group, 2019.

This book discusses the history of diplomatic relations between Japan and the US during the Tokugawa period and the Meiji Era. I cited this source in parts of my paper discussing the unequal treaties of 1858 and Japan’s early contact with Western powers. It also had information about the Meiji Restoration. This book contained Emperor Mutsuhito’s *Charter Oath* speech in which he expressed Japan’s new foreign policy that emphasized learning about the West by saying “Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world...” This quote encapsulates the central idea of the Iwakura Mission, so I included this quote in the title.

Beasley, William Gerald. *Japan Encounters the Barbarian: Japanese Travellers in America and Europe*. New Haven, Yale UP, 1995.

This book was my most useful secondary source. It has extensive information about Japanese interactions with the West during the

Tokugawa period and the Meiji Era. A significant section of the book is dedicated to the Iwakura Mission. It quotes Kume Kunitake's diary numerous times, so I was able to find Kume's most important insights in this book as well as his diary. Beasley wrote about the conditions in Japan during the Tokugawa Shogunate and the Meiji government that brought the need for the Iwakura Mission. It provided information regarding the individual diplomats who made up the Iwakura Embassy. This book talked about the Embassy's visits to schools, factories, and government buildings in Washington DC. It also discussed the Japanese ambassador's observations of America's treatment of black people and Native Americans. Overall, *Japan Encounters the Barbarian: Japanese Travellers in America and Europe* was an exceptionally useful secondary source.

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This journal article is a secondary source that provided some background information on the Iwakura Mission and the Meiji government. It discusses the reasons for the Iwakura Mission and its members. It also talks about how the West influenced Japan to become an expansionist, imperial nation in later years as a result of the Iwakura Mission. Kōsaka, Masataka, and Terry Gallagher.

The Remarkable History of Japan-US Relations =: Fushigi No Nichi-Bei Kankeishi. Tokyo, Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture, 2019.

This secondary source is a history of diplomatic relations between the US and Japan. It included a comprehensive timeline of events in Japanese-US relations. The book discussed the failures of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the problems the Meiji government had to deal with as a result of them. Chapter five, *The Remarkable History of Japan-US Relations* focuses on the Iwakura Mission. Then, it discusses the treaty negotiations and why they failed. Additionally, it had a whole chapter about how the American education system influenced the Japanese education system. I used this source to explain the rise of the Meiji government and how they moved away from Japan's isolationism.

Nagai, Michio, and Miguel Urrutia. *Meiji Ishin: Restoration and Revolution*. Tokyo, United Nations University, 1985.

This secondary source provided crucial information regarding the Meiji Restoration and the Tokugawa Shogunate. It discusses how the feudal system in Japan was gradually phased out in favor of capitalism as a result of the Meiji Restoration and the Iwakura Mission. This book details how the Meiji Restoration changed the nation's perspective of foreign nations and Japan's role in the global community. It explained how Japan began absorbing Western technology, political systems, and educational systems into society after the Meiji Restoration. It talked about how the isolationist policy of the Tokugawa Shogunate was replaced by the Meiji government's policy of taking the best of Western policies and melding them with the best of Japanese ones.

