MEMORANDUM FOR

HONORABLE ALDEN W. BARKLEY
HONORABLE SAM RAYBURN
HONORABLE SCOTT LUCAS
HONORABLE JOHN W. MCCORMACK

Here is the "Study of 'Witch Hunting' and Hysteria in the United States" which has just been prepared. It is as interesting as it can be, and I think you should have a copy.

(Sgd) HARRY S. TRUMAN
A STUDY OF
"WITCH HUNTING" AND HYSTERIA
IN THE UNITED STATES

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PREFACE

History is filled with examples of temporary mob excitement, stirred by false or exaggerated charges, resulting in injury to innocent people. On various occasions down through the years, mass hysteria has gripped the populace for temporary periods, resulting in a "witch-hunt." There is a common pattern in the development of this hysteria. Usually, it takes root in an atmosphere of war, severe economic crisis, or a threat of either insecurity in a fruitful breeding ground for such a movement. In such an atmosphere, demons or other uncircumspect individuals can more easily stir up emotional and irrational fear. Charges are hurled indiscriminately to an extent that they are directed at relatively innocent individuals. Frequently, some of the precious civil rights for which men have fought centuries to establish are thrown to the winds in the wild effort to make some of the charges stick. The demons of a nation upon ignorance and superstition in an attempt to inflame mob excitement. In the name of a false type of "patriotism," individuals or ideas are attacked as "foreign." Racial, religious, and class animosities are stirred up in an effort to add fuel to the flames. Frequently, smear attacks are directed against individuals who are the staunchest advocates of liberal and progressive principles; in this way, the opponents of such principles endeavor to undermine public support of liberalism.

It is the purpose of this study to investigate and report on several examples of mass hysteria and "witch hunting" in American history, and to analyze the causes and symptoms of each outbreak. This may furnish some clues to ways and means of identifying such movements in the future, as well as helping to treat these problems dispassionately and in keeping with the spirit of our free institutions.

Such a study is vital at the present time, when the free peoples of the world have come to look to the United States as the champion of freedom and liberalism. Obviously, we must reject any move to foist totalitarianism upon us at home while we fight it abroad. If we wish to retain the confidence of free peoples, we must continue to set an example in our daily lives by deed as well as by word. We must be on guard against those who would have us carry on a degenerate "witch hunt," particularly in those critical times.
I. WITCHCRAFT IN SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS, 1692.

A. Background.

The famous Salem witchcraft "delusion" was a startling demonstration of the way in which mob hysteria can deprive the individual of common sense and also have serious consequences for innocent people. The number of actual executions -- twenty -- was small in comparison with the mass murder of Jews by the Nazis. Nevertheless, there were some of the same elements of primitive violence involved on a localized scale.

The early settlers had a deep-seated fear of having their villages attacked by the Indians.

There were several other unsettling factors which made the community of Salem more susceptible to the type of hysteria which followed. The colony had recently lost its original charter. Land titles had been issued under the charter, and these titles had been invalidated by the revocation of the charter.

Communication with Boston was very bad. Lawlessness along the coast, in the form of hostile privateering, was increasing. The new governor of Massachusetts, Sir William Phips, was generally regarded as incompetent, and did little to suppress privateering. Taxation in this period was unusually burdensome.

There were few large estates or wealthy people to carry the load, so that it fell with crushing weight on the stricken, small settlers.

At that time, a certain credence was placed in witches, demons and other variations of Satan's evil devices. The threat of the devil was a powerful theme for use against wavering members of communities.

B. The Immediate Causes of the Hysteria.

Rev. Samuel Parris, the minister of Salem Village, had two slaves in his household, John Lyden and his wife Tituba, whom Reverend Parris had brought with him from the Barbadoes. The younger PRTis of the community, including Reverend Parris' daughter Betty, soon discovered that Tituba had a fascinating grasp of the art of fortune-telling, the secrets of which she was willing to pass on to eager young listeners.

Of course the elders of the village would have frowned on these secret sessions with Tituba, had they known about them, so the youngsters were in mortal fear of being discovered doing something they felt was wrong. But at the same time, they developed an intense craving for more information about the unknown.

This conflict was bound to have an effect on those who were unstable emotionally. Gradually, the young girls began to exhibit disturbing symptoms, such as weeping, day-dreaming, incoherent speech, and, in more serious cases, convulsions.

Dr. William Griswold was called in to examine the malady and he tried to diagnose it. Unable to discover what was wrong, he finally concluded that those girls were influenced by an evil spirit.
C. The Hysteria grips Salem.

Induced to name their "tormentors," the girls soon implicated Tituba and several others. Court was set up at the corner of North and Essex Streets, Salem, to hear charges.

Charges, counter-charges, and widespread name-calling followed as the excitement mounted to a fever pitch. The number of "bewitched" girls and the number of accused "witches" both increased rapidly as time went on. In some cases, individuals were accused because of petty feuds or jealousies. Many were accused on the basis of "spectral evidence" — i.e., the afflicted person claimed that the "shape" of the accused had cast its spell. Needless to say, such evidence was difficult to refute. At each denial by the accused in the courtroom, the "afflicted" girls would scream or fall into convulsions — convincing most people present that this was indeed proof of witchcraft.

The plague of hysteria swept through Salem, and no individual seemed entirely safe from accusation. It was impossible to tell where the finger of suspicion would fall next, for some of the most respected citizens of the community were accused and hurried off to prison on the flimsiest evidence. The overwrought populace even reached the point of drawing blood and bows. Reverend Burroughs, who ten years before had been Salem's pastor and whose "spectral shape" was accused of witchcraft. All in all, nineteen persons from Salem — mostly women — were hanged on Gallows Hill and one was "crusied to death" — all in response to the demands of the accusers and the vigilance of Reverend Parris in trying to drive out the devil.

D. Conclusions.

In the fall of 1692, the hysteria passed its peak and started to decline. When the accusations touched more and more people close to the very prosecutors and ministers themselves, the populace was shocked into a realization that the community was slowly committing suicide.

In subsequent years, many of the accusers and prosecutors publicly confessed their error for the part they had played in the witchcraft hysteria. Property was restored to the heirs of those who had been murdered by hysteria, and their names were publicly cleared. The witch hunt was forgotten, but the same type of hysteria cropped up in later years in emotional name-calling and accusations which injured innocent people.
II. ALIEN AND SEDITION ACTS, 1798-1800

A. Background.

The Alien and Sedition Acts were launched during a period when this country was gripped by war hysteria. There had been a great deal of diplomatic friction with France, which originally stemmed from French irritation at the Jay Treaty between the United States and Great Britain. There followed a period of French confiscation of American vessels engaged in trade with England, and attacks by French privateers on American commerce in the West Indies. When an American diplomatic mission was sent to France, the American representatives were insulted, and it was even suggested that they might be the French intruders in order to work out the difficulties between France and the United States. This incident was known as the "XYZ Affair," because President Adams in his public report on the mission referred to the French individuals as "X, Y, and Z." The news of this brazen treatment naturally incensed American opinion against France and preparations for war were commenced. An undeclared naval war was actually carried out against France.

These events unfolded only a few years after the French Revolution. The ideals of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" enunciated during the French Revolution appealed to the Democratic-minded Jeffersonians, while the aristocratic-minded Federalists looked on the French Revolution as an example of mob madness.

Riding on the crest of a wave of anti-French feeling in 1798, the Federalists decided to take additional steps to crush the Jeffersonian opposition in advance of the mid-term congressional elections. French and Irish immigrants had a habit of lining up overwhelmingly against the Federalists in elections, so steps were taken to curb alien influence; additional measures were taken to choke off other domestic political opposition to the Federalists.


1. The Naturalization Act — This Act extended the minimum period which must be spent in the United States before citizenship could be conferred from five to fourteen years. It also provided for the registration both of aliens already in the United States and of those who might subsequently arrive. The term of the times can be judged from the fact that amendments were offered, although not adopted, to provide that birth in this country alone should entitle persons to citizenship and to bar aliens who had not yet acquired citizenship from holding any United States office. This Act was repealed in 1802.

2. The Alien Act — This Act authorized the President to order the departure of all aliens whom he judged dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States. Aliens convicted of disobeying such orders were to be imprisoned for not to exceed three years and thereafter barred from acquiring citizenship. The only recourse of an alien ordered out of the country was to attempt to prove to the President’s satisfaction that no injury or damage to the United States would result from his continued residence here. If convinced, the President might then grant him a license to remain, and as a condition prerequisite to such license might require him to give bond for good behavior. The Act, by its terms, was limited to two years duration and was not renewed when it expired in 1800.
3. The Enemy Alien Act — This Act provided that when the President issued a proclamation of the existence of war with any foreign nation, all the male subjects of that nation over fourteen years of age who were in the United States and had not been naturalized should be liable to arrest and imprisonment, or deportation, as enemy aliens. The President was authorized to issue rules and regulations governing the disposition of such aliens. This act was generally regarded as less drastic than the others. It contained no time limitation for expiration and was not repealed. It remains in effect today, amended to cover females as well as males, and constitutes the basis for regulations concerning enemy aliens which were issued during World Wars I and II.

h. The Sedition Act — This was the most drastic of the four statutes.

The Sedition Act was directed against persons who uttered or published "false, scandalous and malicious writings against the government of the United States, or either House of Congress... or the President, with intent to defame the said government... or to bring them into contempt or disgrace; or to excite against them... the hatred of the good people of the United States, or to stir up sedition in the United States, or to excite any unlawful combination therein for opposing or restraining any law..."

The penalty was a fine of up to $5,000 and imprisonment up to two years.

The Act also penalized conspiracies to oppose any government measures directed by proper authority or to impede the operation of any United States law, or to prevent any Federal official from performing his duty. The penalty for these offenses was a fine up to $5,000 and imprisonment for not less than six months nor more than five years. A person accused under the Act was allowed as a defense to prove the truth of writings allowed to be seditions and the jury was made judge of both the law and the facts. The Act provided for its own expiration in 1801, and it was not extended.

Even more drastic provisions were contained in the original bill which became the Sedition Act, but these were eliminated during its passage through Congress. One such provision declared that every Frenchman was an enemy to the United States and to give aid or comfort was treason punishable by death. Another provided that any person who justified France or defamed the Government of the United States should suffer punishment by imprisonment or fine. These provisions, however, were too drastic for the more far-sighted Federalist leaders, including Alexander Hamilton, who feared that some of them might result in civil war.

C. Prosecutions under the Alien and Sedition Acts.

President Adams never actually invoked the Alien Act to deport individuals by executive decree, but proceedings were instituted against several aliens of Irish and French birth, and later dropped when the accused persons left this country voluntarily or pledged to leave. In addition, two shiploads of Frenchmen left the United States in anticipation of being forced out in an unfriendly fashion.
The prosecutions made under the Sedition Act were against Jeffersonian Republican newspapermen, against prominent individuals who accused that political cases, and against a few individuals of smaller importance whose activities offended the Federalists. It was more than coincidence that all the prosecutions were against those who were unfriendly toward President Adams and the Federalist Party, and there was no attempt to proceed against any newspaper or individual who criticized Vice President Jefferson with an equal or greater degree of calumny.

One of the main targets for the attacks was the "Aurora," a Philadelphia Republican newspaper which was one of the most influential supporters of Jefferson. Benjamin Franklin Bache, the editor of the "Aurora," was actually arrested three weeks before the Sedition Act became law. Bache died before he could be brought to trial. Three other newspapers were attacked through their correspondents, editors, or chief writers: the "Examiner" (Richmond), the "Aurora" (New York), and the "Independent Chronicle" (Boston).

Perhaps the most interesting case was that of Matthew Lyon, a member of Congress who published "The Source of Aristocracy," a paper which criticized the Federalists. Lyon referred to President Adams's "continual crusade for power," and his "ubiquitous thirst for ridiculous power, foolish ambition and selfish avarice." Congressman Lyon was tried in Rutland, Vermont, and was sentenced to four months in jail and fined one thousand dollars. The Federalist judge who sentenced him stated in court: "Matthew Lyon, as a member of the Federal Legislature you must be well acquainted with the mischief's which flow from the unbridled abuse of Government."

Although there was a fairly respectable jail at Rutland, where the trial had been held, Lyon was forced at pistol point to ride through the wilderness forty miles to Vergennes, Vt., where he was thrust into a filthy little cell without stove or adequate sanitation. His imprisonment stirred the country, and he was re-elected to Congress by 1,776 to 2,414, for his nearest competitor. Although Lyon was allowed to take his seat, reprimands were taken against his supporters and sympathizers.

Rev. John C. Cates was arrested and thrown into jail in Litchfield, Conn., ostensibly for "debt," although significantly he had carried a petition for Lyon's release to the capital. This, however, was not a prosecution which came directly under the Sedition Act, as was the case with Anthony Haswell. Haswell, the editor of the "Vermont Gazette," had published an appeal for funds to pay Lyon's fine, had referred to the Vermont jail as a "lazaretto prison," and had closed his article by assuring the Administration of "mtiitei" to office. Haswell had served in Washington's army and narrowly escaped death in the Battle of Yorktown. For his "seditionist" statement, he was tried and sentenced to two months in jail.

Dr. Thomas Cooper, a physician and scientist and later President of South Carolina College, paid a fine of $150 and spent six months in prison for publishing a "seditionist" article which criticized the Adams administration. Dr. Cooper was so bold as to state that when President Adams took office he "was hardly in the infancy of political mistakes; even those who doubted his capacity thought well of his intentions... nor had he yet interfered, as President of the United States, to influence the decision of a court of justice."
This article also charged Adams with having established a permanent Navy and borrowing money at eight per cent interest. Judge Samuel Chase, in one of his typically partisan charges to the jury, pointed out that there were only two ways of destroying the republic — through the introduction of luxury, and through the licentiousness of the press. Judge Chase noted that "the latter is more slow but more sure." He added, "I cannot suppress my feeling at this gross attack on the President," and virtually directed a guilty verdict.

Still another case brought to trial under the Sedition Act concerned James Thomas Callender, who had published numerous criticisms of the Adams administration in his pamphlet "The Prospect Before Us." Callender attacked Adams in connection with the French war hysteria and the Navy. Judge Chase also presided at Callender's trial, held in Richmond, Va., and again openly displayed his Federalist prejudices. Judge Chase forced Callender's counsel to withdraw from the courtroom, and the judge's charge to the jury was a model of partisan pleading. Needless to say, Callender was convicted and given a jail sentence.

In the early spring of 1800, a petition for the repeal of the Sedition Law was prepared and circulated. It was a powerful and vituperative petition. In Otsego County, New York, signatures for the petition were solicited by Jedekiah Peck, a kindly, eccentric itinerant, whose main occupation was preaching the gospel and surveying. But even Peck could not escape the wrath of the Federalists, and the Sedition Act itself was invoked against him. A grand jury was empaneled in New York and a bench warrant sworn out for his arrest. Dragged from his bed at midnight, and manacled like a dangerous criminal, Peck was started on the 200 mile journey down to New York. The case was tried for the Federalists, however, for the roads were bad and the journey so slow that the news of his arrest spread ahead of him, and sympathetic crowds cheered him at many villages along the way. By illustrating the Federalist conception of liberty, Peck actually turned popular opinion against the repressive measures of the Federalists.

D. Conclusions.

As with the Salem witchcraft proceedings, those sentenced under the Sedition Act (or in most cases their survivors) received monetary restitution in later years.

The ill-fated attempt of the Federalists to snuff out opposition by crushing the liberty of the people resulted in an overwhelming defeat for the Federalists in the election of 1800. Never again did the Federalists regain power. Unfortunately, however, the type of hysteria and witch-hunting which the Federalists encouraged did not die with the election of 1800.
III. ANTI-MASONRY, 1826-1860.

A. Background.

The anti-masonic movement was directed against the Masonic Order, on the grounds that there were evils inherent in the secrecy and rituals of masonry. As with other witch-hunts, it is difficult to reduce the rationale of the movement to cold logic; it was a form of anti-religious hysteria, similar in nature to the many anti-Catholic movements in the years which followed.

Fascinating enough, anti-masonry was launched during a period of liberalism in politics, when Jacksonian Democracy was in full bloom. More and more classes of people were being extended the right to vote, the rights of labor were being gradually recognized, and social and humanitarian reforms were receiving support. These stirrings of liberalism bred reactions from propertyed interests, feared by the spread of economic and political democracy. The political strength of the anti-masonic movement was absorbed and cultivated by the opponents of Andrew Jackson, who tried in vain to ride to political victory on the hysteria and prejudice of this intolerant movement.

Political leaders in rural areas in the north—particularly in New York and Pennsylvania—whipped up the emotional fervor of anti-masonry in an attempt to get enough votes to offset the Jacksonian Democrat. Behind the scenes, financial encouragement to the anti-masons was given by those who felt that Andrew Jackson and his party represented a threat to the interests of the wealthy.

B. The Movement is Launched.

The anti-masonic movement was touched off in 1826 by the disappearance of a bricklayer named William Morgan, a Mason of Batavia, N. Y., who had fallen into disrepute with his lodge. Morgan had threatened to publish a book revealing the innermost secrets of the Masonic Order, and his sudden disappearance raised suspicion that the Masons had murdered him in order to protect their secrets. The incident touched off a wave of anti-masonic hysteria. In the press, from the pulpit, and on the political hustings, emotional attacks on the Masons were delivered.

Among the newspapers concentrating on anti-masonry were 65 weeklies and one daily in New York state, and 55 weekly papers in Pennsylvania. It was not long before the Masons were being accused of an infinite variety of crimes, ranging from sacrilege and profaning the Holy Scripture to sexual excesses, organized murder, and plotting against the liberties of the people. Suspected Masons were boycotted, insulted, and maltreated. Shopkeepers, doctors, lawyers, and others lost patronage unless they could prove that they were opposed to all secret societies.

C. Anti-Masonry in Politics.

The Anti-Masonic Party was organized in 1827, with its greatest strength centered in Rochester, N. Y. A number of prominent New York and Pennsylvania politicians—such as William H. Seward, Thurlow Weed, and Thaddeus Stevens—capitalized on the feeling and joined the party.
During the presidential campaign of 1828, the opponents of Andrew Jackson tried to take advantage of the fact that Jackson was known to be a Mason. President John Quincy Adams ridiculed Masonry's "childish necessity and the mock solemnity of its proceedings." He categorically stated in a letter, quoted for publication, "...I am not, never was, and never shall be a Freemason." In later years, after he left the presidency, John Quincy Adams suggested that "good wholesome penalties of fine and imprisonment" should be imposed on persons refusing to disown the Masonic Order. Daniel Webster also denounced the Masonic Order and demanded that its secret oaths be prohibited by law.

In 1832, the Anti-Masonic Party ran its own presidential candidate, William Hirt, of Maryland, who won seven electoral votes in Vermont, and received wide support in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and a few other states. Pennsylvania and Vermont elected Anti-Masonic governors.

D. Conclusions.

It was natural that this movement caused heavy decreases in the strength of the Masonic Order. One account reports that "lodges by scores and hundreds went down before the torrent and were swept away. In the State of New York alone upward of 500 lodges, or two-thirds of the craft, became extinct."

More serious, of course, was the spirit of intolerance and persecution engendered by the Anti-Masonic Movement. Politicians stirred up the hysteria in an effort to get votes, using anti-masonry as an issue because they did not have any genuine issues to espouse. When the Anti-Masonic movement started to die down, the politicians who had supported it for purposes of expediency soon went over to the Whig Party.

By 1834, organized anti-masonry was dead. The hate and intolerance which it had encouraged, however, were not. They were merely channeled in another direction, and the fanatics soon found a new cause of intolerance in the Know-Nothing Movement.
IV. KNOW-NOTHING MOVEMENT, 1850-1856

A. Background.

The so-called Know-Nothing Movement was primarily directed against Catholics and immigrants in the period prior to the Civil War. It was a native American phenomenon, characterized by a supranationalistic feeling, hatred of certain minority groups, and secrecy of code and operation. The name derived from the fact that members who were questioned about the organization usually replied "I know nothing." In later years, the political supporters of the movement succeeded in getting on the ballot in many states as the "American Party."

Although the American Indian is probably the only native American, some individuals have always imagined that immigration is a menace to American institutions. The country was warned that "in welcoming what seems to be the oppressed of other lands we may really be taking an adder into our bosom." In 1830, there were about 500,000 foreign-born in this country, out of a total population of 13,000,000. But during the period between 1830 and 1850, there were 2,500,000 immigrants -- who made up one-quarter of our increase in population during that period. Between 1847 and 1855, covering the years of the Irish potato famine and the revolution in Germany, over 3,000,000 immigrants arrived in this country, or over twice the number arriving in the previous seventy years.

The immigrants settled in huge numbers in large urban areas, where many of them joined city political machines. The Know-Nothing Movement started as a protest against the influence of these immigrants. It was directed against the Germans in Cincinnati and St. Louis, the Scandinavians in Wisconsin and Minnesota, and the Irish in the east. Primarily, however, it was directed against the Catholics. All who joined were pledged to vote only for natives, to vote for the enactment of a 21-year probationary period preceding naturalization, and to combat the Catholic Church.

The prejudice against the Catholics was stirred up by books and pamphlets, speeches and sermons, and the same pattern developed as in the Anti-Masonic Movement. The background was laid by declarations that the Pope was solemnly to set up a Catholic State in America. Samuel B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph, condemned "superstition" and urged that immigration restrictions be imposed so that no foreigner "who comes into this country after the law is passed shall ever be entitled to the right of suffrage." Wild rumors spread about what went on behind the walls of Catholic missions and convents. Mob hysteria broke out into overt attacks on Catholics--such as the burning and pillaging of the Ursuline Convent at Charleston, Mass.; riots in Boston; the tarring and feathering of Catholic priests; the wrecking of a Catholic church in Manchester, N. H.; and riots against Catholic workers on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. All of these mob actions were a prelude to the more widely organized political activities of the anti-Catholics.

B. The Know-Nothing Movement Enters Politics.

At first, the Know-Nothing movement was localized in its scope and influence. It demanded for its support a dozen or more pro-Catholic or pro-Catholic agencies formed ostensibly to keep the country safe for Protestant Americanism,
the more notable of them being the Order of United Americans, the United American Mechanics, the United Sons of America, and the Order of the Star Spangled Banner. The Native American Party unsuccessfully ran Samuel F. B. Morse for Mayor of New York in 1836, but the American Republican Party elected James Harper, the book publisher, as Mayor of New York in 1841.

In 1855, the Native American Party held its first national convention in Philadelphia, and delegates from fourteen states were sent to the convention. In the years following, the Party gained in political strength and in 1855 the Know-Nothings captured control of the Massachusetts legislature and came close to winning the state elections in New York.

C. Evil Effects of the Know-Nothing Movement.

As the Know-Nothing Movement developed, there were many evidences of its evil effects. In Massachusetts, the Know-Nothing legislature appointed a travelling committee to seek out in the Catholic convents and seminaries some examples of "high living" or "papist plotting." The investigation was gloomily from start to finish, and produced nothing.

In other sectors, there were more serious manifestations of the anti-Catholic hysteria. There were cases reported in both Maine and Massachusetts of Catholic children being flogged or expelled from school for refusing to study the Protestant Bible. In the Kensington and Southmark riots in the Philadelphia area in 1854, at least thirteen persons were killed and many others injured in clashes between Native Americans and Irish Catholics. Philadelphia was also torn by rioting in 1851 over Native American insistence that the Protestant version of the Bible be used exclusively in the public schools. Bloodshed and destruction of property resulted from these riots, and it was necessary to call out the militia three times to stop the lawlessness.

D. The Decline of Know-Nothingism.

In the summer of 1856, a national convention of the American Party was held; the southern members secured control of the convention and passed pro-slavery resolutions. This naturally caused a decline in northern support for the Know-Nothing movement, and the American Party entered the 1856 campaign hopelessly split over the slavery issue.

On February 18, 1856, the "Grand Council of the Know-Nothing Order" met in Philadelphia and nominated former President Millard Fillmore, who was also nominated by the nearly defunct Whig Party as its candidate for President. By this time, most anti-Democratic northerners had come over to support the new Republican Party. Fillmore carried only one state, Maryland, in the 1856 campaign.

E. Conclusions.

Despite the political decline of the Know-Nothing Movement, the spirit of intolerance was not completely erased. Know-Nothings foreshadowed later political and social movements which displayed the same unfortunate religious or racial bigotry, hysteria, and witch-hunting.
V. RECONSTRUCTION AND THE KU-KLUX KLAN, 1865-1877.

A. Background.

In the pre-Civil War days, the defenders of slavery in the South frequently went to extreme lengths to protect the status quo. There was very little academic freedom when it came to the issue of slavery, and few teachers were allowed to discuss slavery except in terms of praise. Several southern state legislatures passed laws suppressing the freedom of the press. The circulation of anti-slavery publications was penalized.

The bitterness engendered by the slavery controversy, and the military and economic struggle of the Civil War, laid the basis for a new hysteria during the days of "reconstruction" following the Civil War. The war left devastation in its wake, and the economic and social organization of the South was taxed further by the sudden freeing of four million former slaves, many of whom found themselves without homes or means of livelihood. Recovery of the South's shattered economy was delayed by lawless marauders who plundered the countryside. The state legislatures in the south began to take drastic steps to guard against anarchy. They enacted "black codes" to guard against vagrancy, and passed forced labor statutes which in many cases reduced the Negro to conditions close to slavery itself.

B. The Beginnings of Reconstruction.

With characteristic foresight, President Lincoln began to plan for the reconstruction of the south while the war was still in progress. He wisely planned to make the re-entry of the southern states to the union as painless as possible, and tried to lay the basis for the economic recovery of the south. The so-called Radicals in Congress fought Lincoln's reconstruction plans from the start, and after Lincoln's assassination the Radicals imposed punitive measures of vengeance on the secession south. Led by the vindictive Thaddeus Stevens, the Radicals carved up the south into military districts, ruled by military commanders, supplanting civil government by military courts. Uniforms were restored, and the state legislatures and maintained an army of occupation. Carpenters moved in from the north and exploited the defeated people of the south.

When President Andrew Johnson tried to carry out the milder reconstruction policies originally started by Lincoln, the House of Representatives voted in 1868 to impeach Johnson and his conviction failed by only one vote in the Senate.

As reconstruction proceeded, it became more corrupt and degenerate in nature. In such a situation, the south was stirred to take strong measures of retaliation and repression, primarily designed to prevent Negro voting and influence. These southern measures were in most cases extra-local in character and inspired by the hysteria which often accompanies the persecution of minority groups.

C. The Ku Klux Klan.

The Ku Klux Klan, organized in 1865, derived its name from the Greek "Kuklos," meaning a band or circle. It was originally a social organization, whose members wore sheets and pillow cases for their initiation.
It was soon discovered that this carb struck terror among Negroes, and the Ku Klux Klan rapidly advanced from a purely social group to an organization with a political purpose. In 1867, the various units of the Klan were organized into the "Invisible Empire of the South," and carried on a virtual reign of terror against Negroes and carpetbaggers. Aided by other secret societies, like the "Knights of the White Camelia," the Klan broke up hostile gatherings of Negroes, terrorized Negroes so they did not dare to exercise their right to vote, ran out of town objectionable reconstruction officials, and took the law in its own hands in many instances — all in the name of "white supremacy."

D. Conclusions.

Officially, the Ku Klux Klan "disbanded" in 1869. But the reign of vigilantes continued unabated in the south for some years, using lawless means to "keep the Negro in his place," and in particular to prevent him from exercising his lawful right to vote.

After some years, the reign of terror was ended in the south. But deep scars remained. Furthermore, the Ku Klux Klan did not die, but experienced a revival in the 1920's when its hooded terror was used against Catholics and Jews as well as Negroes.
VII. POST-WORLD WAR I HISTRIA, 1919-1929.

A. Background.

The nationalistic fervor stirred by war has often been used as a cloak by those whose real interest is the suppression of minority rights. War necessitates unity of action, and a form of regimented control of the economy, in order to defeat a common enemy; under those circumstances, various false patriots also use war as an excuse to crush civil liberties and impose a dictatorship over men's minds. These false patriots have in many instances been successful because many people, for reasons of patriotism, are less vigilant in the protection of our historic liberties while a war is being fought.

During World War I, the hatred of German-Americans and symbols of Germany was widespread -- in fact, far more bitter than during World War II. German music and evidences of German culture in this country were banned, teaching of the German language was in many cases suspended in the schools, sauerkraut was renamed "liberty cabbage," and there were other more serious discriminations against German-American individuals. Academic freedom was curtailed in the name of "aggressive Americanism." The Governor of Iowa directed that nothing but the English language be used in church services, and ruled "... Let those who cannot speak or understand the English language conduct their religious worship in their homes."

Wild rumors were spread about pro-German "plots" to poison water supply, sabotage the flow of munitions, and disrupt the life of communities.

In the post-war period, some of the same hysteria which prevailed during the war was carried over into the next decade. There was a full-fledged "red scare" and a witch-hunt directed against "radicals" and suspected radicals. The hysteria extended to the persecution of minority groups by the revived Ku Klux Klan.

A brief, sharp depression followed the end of the war; jobs were scarce and returning veterans became disillusioned. A wave of strikes broke out, climax-ed by a general strike in the steel industry. Several years before, the Bolsheviks had seized power in Russia, and much of the blame for labor disorders was laid at the door of Communists in this country. Unquestionably, some of the strikes and violence connected with labor unrest had its origin in the revolutionary I.W.W. and other radical organizations more concerned with overthrowing capitalism than improving the immediate lot of the worker. This fact was used by many people as the excuse for a general and indiscriminate condemnation of organized labor and those who supported liberal views on other public questions.

B. The "Red Scare."

In 1919 and 1920, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer sanctioned a series of raids on "radical meetings," and arrested over 6,000 persons. Many individuals were placed under arrest without warrant, hauled off to jail, and in many instances held incommunicado or without bail, and subjected to the "third degree." A number of the aliens seized in these raids were torn away from their families and summarily deported.
The war against "reds" was extended to cover Socialists. Congress twice denied Victor Berger his seat in the House of Representatives, to which he had been lawfully elected by the people of Milwaukee. Five Socialists elected to the New York State Assembly were denied their seats by the Assembly. A number of state legislative committees, like the Lusk Committee in New York, instigated witch-hunts against "radical" teachers, demanded loyalty oaths, and formed committees of inquiry to investigate the opinions of teachers. In Massachusetts, the teachers in one community were threatened with dismissal for expressing sympathy with a union organizer who had been driven out of town by a mob.

C. The Resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan.

In the atmosphere of 200-per cent Americanism which followed the war, intolerance crept up in ugly ways. The Ku Klux Klan, which had been active in the south during Reconstruction days, experienced a great revival in the 1920's. In the earlier period, the Klan had directed its base prejudice against Negroes; in the 1920's, this prejudice was directed also at Jews and Catholics.

The Klan carried out its violent and extra-legal campaign to keep the Negro "in his place," and to terrorize other minority groups. The secret rituals of the Klan, its fancy titles and gaudy robes somehow appealed to the instincts of certain types of people, and the membership rolls boomed. The movement spread into the Middle West, Pennsylvania, eastern Massachusetts, and soon began to throw its weight around in state and national politics. By 1924, the Klan boasted four million members, and a few years afterward reached a peak of six million. The Klan elected a number of public officials in Ohio, Indiana, California, and Oregon. The Klan played an instrumental part in supporting the passage of the restrictive Immigration Act of 1924.

Far more serious, however, were the violent and extra-legal activities in which the Klan engaged to keep the Negro "in his place" and to terrorize other minority groups. Boycotts were quietly instituted against Jews, and discrimination was carried out through exclusion from hotels and resorts, coaches at institutions of higher learning, etc. The Catholics were attacked through two vicious publications, "The Wenance," and "The American Standard," which printed vile stories of misconduct in Catholic convents, and contained charges that it was really the Catholics who had assassinated Lincoln, Garfield, and McKinley. The more active program of the Klan consisted of night rides, burning crosses to threaten individuals or groups, and beatings or destruction of property in more extreme cases.

D. Conclusions.

The tactics of the Klan in the twenties furnished the closest approach this country has ever had to a fascist movement. Fortunately, the common sense of the American people seem to have dimmed the alarm sounded by these self-constituted defenders of "White Protestantism." With the coming of the Great Depression in 1929, the people had more serious things to think about and the membership of the Klan dwindled rapidly. In some sections of the south, attempts were made to revive the Klan after World War II, but only in isolated local instances did the Klan build up even a fraction of its former strength.
VII. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

There have been periods in our history when witch-hunts and hysteria have violated fundamental liberties which mankind has struggled for centuries to secure. At times the government itself has fallen victim to this hysteria and has taken repressive measures which have interfered with time-honored rights like freedom of the press and freedom of speech. At other times, dominant groups in various communities have encouraged bigotry and ridden roughshod over the rights of minority groups.

Fortunately, these periods of hysteria have been temporary in nature, and in the long run reason has prevailed. The American system has been strengthened in various ways so that it has been able to withstand the clamoring of prejudices and preserve freedom. Foremost among these elements of strength is the Bill of Rights. Not only does the Bill of Rights protect against Federal infringement of freedom of worship, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and other basic rights, but it shines as a beacon of inspiration in the struggle to preserve civil liberties.

The exercise of the freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights serves to counteract the effects of hysteria. Has there been good communication in the days of the Salem Witchcraft episode, the hysteria might have been dispelled earlier. The immortal English poet, John Milton, in his plea to Parliament in favor of the liberty of unlicensed printing, concluded as follows: "Above all liberties, give me the liberty to know, to utter, to argue freely according to conscience." Milton urged that Truth and Falsehood be allowed to crumble without restraint, for "who ever knew truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?"

Still another bulwark against hysteria is the system of American education, which has not produced indoctrinated automatons, but individuals who will think for themselves, independently. In order to preserve the spirit of free inquiry which American education encourages, academic freedom must be protected. The teachers' loyalty oath demanded in some localities does not seem on the surface to be dangerous. But a loyalty oath serves no useful purpose; teachers bent on disloyalty would not hesitate at perjury in order to accomplish their end. Furthermore, there are positive reasons why it is undesirable to drive teachers toward conformity. As expressed by Professor Henry Steele Commager, conformity "creates an atmosphere in which teachers find safety not in orthodox ideas -- for they will never know surely just which ideas are orthodox -- but in no ideas. In the end we will get a generation of children taught by teachers who are afraid of ideas."

The suspicion which some sources direct against teachers or students who may take an unusual interest in Soviet Russia or communism presents an acute problem when colleges are attempting to encourage independent thought and original investigation. Dean Wilbur J. Bender of Harvard University has stated this problem in a brilliant fashion:

"The world is full of dangerous ideas, and we are both naive and stupid if we believe that the way to prepare intelligent young men to face the world is to try to protect them from such ideas while they are in college. Four years in an insulated nursery will produce gullible innocents, not tough-minded realists who know what they believe because they have faced the enemies of their beliefs."
One of the reasons for the great strength of democracy is that it encourages free discussion. The free interchange of ideas has resulted in the development of domestic policies which have fostered an American economy which is the strongest in the world. During World War II, the free interchange of ideas, as contrasted with the strait-jacket conformity in the Nazi system, helped us win the victory on the battlefield. In peace or in war, the freedom of a democracy produces strength; conformity stultifies and inevitably provides the seeds for disintegration.

Free discussion is likewise one of the safeguards against hysteria. Witch-hunts will arise despite free discussion, but in a free country it is scarcely possible to descend to the depth of degradation of the Nazi concentration camps and the communist slave labor camps. Furthermore, the freedom in a democracy helps to bring the period of hysteria to a close as reason triumphs.

New ideas, new inventions, and new concepts of how to develop our national economy have spurred American progress since colonial days. The whole pattern of colonization was that the progressives and "dissenters" came over here, leaving behind in the Old World the conservatives and conformists. There were sharp contrasts in temperament and outlook between the colonies and the mother country, out of which the Declaration of Independence was forged. This critical spirit has been part of the very fabric of the American tradition, and has served to make this Nation the greatest in the world. By demanding that the critical spirit be suppressed, hysteria is one of the greatest enemies of American progress.

The Bill of Rights established a tradition of non-conformity. Subsequent generations of Americans have cherished and nurtured this tradition. Yet there are still many who adhere to the principle expressed in this splendid:

"Come, well, come we, my status is quo."

The staunch defenders of the status quo are those who would clamor for drastic governmental restrictions on free discussion and the free interchange of ideas.

During periods when the Nation is threatened, it becomes necessary to strengthen internal security in order to meet new developments. This became necessary in the early 1920's in order to resist the rise of Nazism. It is necessary now in order to protect against the threat of communism, which is abroad at overthrowing democratic governments everywhere. By using armed aggression and intimidation, the communist movement has attempted to subjugate free nations. It has also attempted to work internally, within nations, through communist political parties, and infiltration of private organizations, with an aim to weakening democratic governments. Of course, by far the greater of these dangers comes from the use of armed forces. Nevertheless, all free nations must be vigilant to protect against espionage, sabotage and other subversive activities by communist groups.

In order to prevent the internal success of communism, democracies have discovered that the most powerful antidote to communism is a virile government which can fulfill the needs of all classes of people. In this country, communism has had few internal successes, and has always polled an infinitesimal percentage of the secular vote in elections. In addition, the communist attempts to capture private organizations through infiltration have been beaten back.
This has been notably true in the case of labor unions, which the communists have made a particularly strong drive to capture. By the use of democratic processes, labor union leaders have been able to defeat these underhanded tactics of the communists, or else to drive communists into isolated organizations where they can be clearly identified.

How may we reach and render harmless all communists or other groups which advocate the violent overthrow of our government? In so doing, we must avoid threatening liberal minorities, or violating those liberties whose preservation is fundamental to the American system. Where necessary, laws against espionage, sabotage and treason must be tightened, particularly in view of the world-wide threat of armed aggression which the communist movement presents. These laws must be designed and enforced in accordance with the time-honored principles of due process of law, and not by other names which are alien to the American tradition.

To overstep the boundaries of reason in the enactment and enforcement of such legislation is to destroy the very security we are trying to protect. Violations of the Bill of Rights in prosecuting communists are the first step in touching off the hysteria of a witch-hunt.

The study of witch-hunts of the past demonstrates that the instigators of such movements frequently use prejudice and hysteria in the name of patriotism. Wrapping themselves in the American flag, they then proceed to violate the most sacred traditions for which the flag stands. This recalls to mind George Washington's warning in his Farewell Address "to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism."

History also demonstrates that witch-hunts frequently arise during times of national stress - during economic depression, war or the threat of war, and the period immediately following a war. During such periods, it is even more essential that we recall the maxim that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

The cause of freedom both at home and abroad is damaged when a great country yields to hysteria. The way for us to spread democracy is to practice it ourselves.