

History 1433 Instructional Moves/ Class 15

Monkey Business in Dayton

Revising Scopes

Billy Sunday and Sister Aimee: Evangelicalism in Modern America

Review:

Nativism in Law: Immigration Restriction

30 M immigrants 1880-1914 cut off by war

Much anti immigrant action before

- 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act
- Dillingham Commission Report (1911) Old Stock v. New—threat to democracy and cultural stability
- Attempts at language requirement vetoed by Wilson
- 1921 3% of immigrants at 1910 census
- 1924 Johnson-Reed Immigration Act (National Origins Act) 150K immigrants w/ 1890 census—immigration policy based upon racist social science. Madison Grant *Passing of the Great Race* argued that Nordic race was superior “rulers [and] and organizers”—use of culturally specific standardized tests confirmed.

Can see this as attempt use state to enforce nativist vision of democracy and equally importantly to define who people are (essentially to define who should be included in democratic community), not so much to exclude by define who rightly in the people. Arguably, there’s an aspect of that to Jeffersonianism and producerism.

Monkey Business in Dayton

1925 John Scopes arrested for teaching (from text book) on natural selection in violation of TN Butler Law that “prohibit[ed] the teaching of volution in the public schools in Tennessee.” Situation hardly simple:

- Gov. Austin Peay didn’t intend to be enforced
- Scopes interested in test case and disliked law. New org ACLU looking for test case
- Dayton it was “scheme” (Moran) to bring publicity to town

Scheme turned to circus/ farce as both sides descended and made it about far more than Scopes, Dayton, or evolution. Defense represented by Darrow (radical and atheist), prosecution aided by Bryan (picture). Darrow put God on defense, Bryan stood in and defended God, Bible, and people of TN. Trial 8 days brought thousands of people, massive national attention, and ultimately decision unsatisfactory to all:

- Scopes convicted (jury out 9 minutes), judge fined \$100
- Scopes appeal rejected (law constitutional) but fine vacated b/c technicality (over \$50 fine should have been issued by jury)
- Dayton but of jokes, backwards. Mencken called “ yokels” “hillbillies”, “morons.”

- Bryan most of all lost, humiliated on stand. Baited into testifying, Darrow questioned on bible more than evolution. Proved Bryan ignorant or much of science and theology and when pushed
 - Bryan: I do not think about things I don't think about
 - Darrow: Do you think about the things you think about?
 - Bryan: Well sometimes

Revising Scopes

With Bryan's death just days later, Scopes trial had its narrative definition—pathetic, last, stand, backward defense of ignorant and intellectually backward. Last gasp of dominant fundamentalism to be replaced by more tolerant liberalism. But didn't work. Since 1980s see resurgence of anti-evolutionary thought and questions of who can/should determine what local people should know, believe, and teach. Issue this time has been ID and attempt of Dover, PA school to require teaching ID w/ natural selection. *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District* (2005) found unconstitutional, but as historian point is a) issue isn't dead; b) it never was. B suggests we reassess and look deeper into Scopes for more meaning and find in X ways

- 1) Attacks on religion created as much as reflected divide—Mencken's scathing attacks suggested that local/ traditional communities under attack, not just question of bible and religion, but of sophisticated and common—elites v. masses. Rev. John Roach Straton **“invasion of the sovereign state of Tennessee by a group of outside agnostics, atheists, Unitarian preachers, skeptical scientists, and political revolutionists.”**
- 2) In turn question also of liberalism. Liberalism based around tolerance (esp. of difference) but also around individual rights. Famous Darrow speech: Ignorance and fanaticism I sever busy and always need feeding....Today it is the public school teachers, tomorrow the private.” Suggested spoke for tolerance and openness against backward restriction. But liberalism, as represented by Darrow also spoke to rights of individual over will of people itself. Liberalism is the dominant political idea of 20th C. in America and in Dayton, arguable at odds w/ will of people.
- 3) For supporters about much more than just teaching of evolution or modern belief: Question of bible not just question of individual belief in bible but question of role politics in salvation. Bryan put it, “The one beauty about the word of god is it does not take an expert to understand it.” But evolution and natural selection undermined, and did so openly (Bryan believed) and thus keeping people from blocking that was tantamount to forcing them to open themselves up to danger (to souls)
- 4) Question of majoritarianism/democracy: Attorney General Tom Stewart, **“The People of Tennessee have a right to interpret the Bible as they understand it.”** Bryan, **“An expert, can not be permitted to come in her and try to defeat the enforcement of a law by testifying that it is a bad law.”** In essence, it was the question of Bryan's entire life—the question of the democracy and majority.
- 5) If majority couldn't determine what it believed and how it believed, the state itself was a potential danger to the individual, democracy, and salvation. According to historian Paul Boyer, "Beneath Mencken's ridicule of the ignorant hayseeds of America was a very profound suspicion of Democracy itself. Mencken really believed that there was a small elite of educated and

cultivated and intelligent human beings, and then there were the masses who were really ignorant and capable of nothing but being led and bamboozled."

Sister Aimee and Billy Sunday

19th C. America strong evangelical tradition, but prohibition and 1920s (along w/ urban setting) transformed into mass popular movement.

- 1) Billy Sunday
- 2) Sister Aimee Semple McPherson

BS former baseball player attracted attention w/ emotionalism. **“I don’t know any more about theology than a jack-rabbit knows about Ping Pong, but I’m on my way to glory.”** Read 2 ways—dolt, or salvation available and knowledge and theology not the key (any more than ping pong useful to bunnies). Most powerful against alcohol “Get on the Water Wagon” Go to Youtube and excerpt <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ykn8YcIbmfo>

Sunday had tabernacle in Indiana (picture) but largely traveling revivals, most famous evangelist of 1920s housed in new urban area (LA) in what we’d come to know as mega-church. Go to picture. ASM, widowed Pentecostal missionary had been itinerant and settled in LA 1918. Today LA Hollywood, then LA made largely Midwesterners and very conservative.

ASM beautiful, flamboyant (dressed in white gown, came down w/ dozens of roses, rode down aisle on motorcycle), crossed fame w/piety. Built massive church Angelus Temple (picture). Seated 5000 and cost \$1.5 M. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftqumRF9Sh4>

Precursor or Crystal Cathedral, Saddleback Church. Connected beyond 5000K at time (including my father) w/ radio broadcasts.

Both ASM and BS saw alcohol as part of slide away from traditional values, and choice society made to let happen. That was bad enough, but what about bible? Key to salvation for ASM, Billy Sunday, and others is bible—access to bible and belief in bible. One evangelical preacher explained why didn’t need other books: **“If it is more than the bible, it is too much; if it is less than the Bible, it is not enough; if it is the same as the Bible, we don’t need it.”** But what if not ministers, but gospel, bible, itself attacked? That’s issue in Scopes Trial (trial of Dayton, TN high school teacher John Scopes for teaching natural selection in violation of TN anti evolution statute).

Billy Sunday, "The Booze Sermon"

The saloon is the sum of all villainies. It is worse than war or pestilence. It is the crime of crimes. It is the parent of crimes and the mother of sins. It is the appalling source of misery and crime in the land. And to license such an incarnate fiend of hell is the dirtiest, low-down, damnable business on top of this old earth. There is nothing to be compared to it.

The legislature of Illinois appropriated \$6,000,000 in 1908 to take care of the insane people in the state, and the whisky business produces seventy-five per cent of the insane. That is what you go down in your pockets for to help support. Do away with the saloons and you will close these institutions. The saloons make them necessary, and they make the poverty and fill the jails and the penitentiaries. Who has to pay the bills?

The landlord who doesn't get the rent because the money goes for whisky; the butcher and the grocer and the charitable person who takes pity on the children of drunkards, and the taxpayer who supports the insane asylums and other institutions, " at the whisky business keeps full of human wrecks.

Do away with the cursed business and you will not have to put up to support them. Who gets the money? The saloonkeepers and the brewers, and the distillers, while the whisky fills the land with misery, and poverty, and wretchedness, and disease, and death, and damnation, and it is being authorized by the will of the sovereign people.

You say that "people will drink anyway." Not by my vote. You say, "Men will murder their wives anyway." Not by my vote. "They will steal anyway." Not by my vote. You are the sovereign people, and what are you going to do about it?

Let me assemble before your minds the bodies of the drunken dead, who crawl away "into the jaws of death, into the mouth of hell," and then out of the valley of the shadow of the drink let me call the appertaining motherhood, and wifhood, and childhood, and let their tears rain down upon their purple faces. Do you think that would stop the curse of the liquor traffic? No! No!

In these days when the question of saloon or no saloon is at the fore in almost every community, one hears a good deal about what is called "personal liberty." These are fine, large, mouth-filling words, and they certainly do sound first rate; but when you get right down and analyze them in the light of common old horse-sense, you will discover that in their application to the present controversy they mean just about this: " Personal liberty" is for the man who, if he has the inclination and the price, can stand up at a bar and fill his hide so full of red liquor that he is transformed for the time being into an irresponsible, dangerous, evil-smelling brute. But "personal liberty" is not for his patient, long-suffering wife, who has to endure with what fortitude she may his blows and curses; nor is it for his children, who, if they escape his insane rage, are yet robbed of every known joy and privilege of childhood, and too often grow up neglected, uncared for and vicious as the result of their surroundings and the example before them. "Personal liberty" is not for the sober, industrious citizen who from the proceeds of honest toil and orderly living, has to pay, willingly or not, the tax bills which pile up as a direct result of drunkenness, disorder and poverty, the items of which are written in the records of every police court and poorhouse in the land; nor is " personal liberty " for the good woman who goes abroad in the town only at the risk of being shot down by some drink-crazed creature. This rant about "personal liberty" as an argument has no leg to stand upon.

HL Mencken
Darrow's Eloquent Appeal

The Baltimore Evening Sun, July 14, 1925

The net effect of Clarence Darrow's great speech yesterday seems to be precisely the same as if he had bawled it up a rainspout in the interior of Afghanistan. That is, locally, upon the process against the infidel Scopes, upon the so-called minds of these fundamentalists of upland Tennessee. You have but a dim notion of it who have only read it. It was not designed for reading, but for hearing. The clanging of it was as important as the logic. It rose like a wind and ended like a flourish of bugles. The very judge on the bench, toward the end of it, began to look uneasy. But the morons in the audience, when it was over, simply hissed it.

During the whole time of its delivery the old mountebank, Bryan, sat tight-lipped and unmoved. There is, of course, no reason why it should have shaken him. He has those hill billies locked up in his pen and he knows it. His brand is on them. He is at home among them. Since his earliest days, indeed, his chief strength has been among the folk of remote hills and forlorn and lonely farms. Now with his political aspirations all gone to pot, he turns to them for religious consolations. They understand his peculiar imbecilities. His nonsense is their ideal of sense. When he deluges them with his theological bilge they rejoice like pilgrims disporting in the river Jordan.

The town whisper is that the local attorney-general, Stewart, is not a fundamentalist, and hence has no stomach for his job. It seems not improbable. He is a man of evident education, and his argument yesterday was confined very strictly to the constitutional points -- the argument of a competent and conscientious lawyer, and to me, at least very persuasive.

But Stewart, after all, is a foreigner here, almost as much so as Darrow or Hays or Malone. He is doing his job and that is all. The real animus of the prosecution centers in Bryan. He is the plaintiff and prosecutor. The local lawyers are simply bottle-holders for him. He will win the case, not by academic appeals to law and precedent, but by direct and powerful appeals to the immemorial fears and superstitions of man. It is no wonder that he is hot against Scopes. Five years of Scopes and even these mountaineers would begin to laugh at Bryan. Ten years and they would ride him out of town on a rail, with one Baptist parson in front of him and another behind.

But there will be no ten years of Scopes, nor five years, nor even one year.

Such brash young fellows, debauched by the enlightenment, must be disposed of before they become dangerous, and Bryan is here, with his tight lips and hard eyes, to see that this one is disposed of. The talk of the lawyers, even the magnificent talk of Darrow, is so much idle wind music. The case will not be decided by logic, nor even by eloquence. It will be decided by counting noses -- and for every nose in these hills that has ever thrust itself into any book save the Bible there are a hundred adorned with the brass ring of Bryan. These are his people. They understand

him when he speaks in tongues. The same dark face that is in his own eyes is in theirs, too. They feel with him, and they relish him.

I sincerely hope that the nobility and gentry of the lowlands will not make the colossal mistake of viewing this trial of Scopes as a trivial farce. Full of rustic japes and in bad taste, it is, to be sure, somewhat comic on the surface. One laughs to see lawyers sweat. The jury, marched down Broadway, would set New York by the ears. But all of that is only skin deep.

Deeper down there are the beginnings of a struggle that may go on to melodrama of the first caliber, and when the curtain falls at least all the laughter may be coming from the yokels. You probably laughed at the prohibitionists, say, back in 1914. Well, don't make the same error twice.

As I have said, Bryan understands these peasants, and they understand him. He is a bit mangy and flea-bitten, but no means ready for his harp. He may last five years, ten years or even longer. What he may accomplish in that time, seen here at close range, looms up immensely larger than it appears to a city man five hundred miles away. The fellow is full of such bitter, implacable hatreds that they radiate from him like heat from a stove. He hates the learning that he cannot grasp. He hates those who sneer at him. He hates, in general, all who stand apart from his own pathetic commonness. And the yokels hate with him, some of them almost as bitterly as he does himself. They are willing and eager to follow him -- and he has already given them a taste of blood.

Darrow's peroration yesterday was interrupted by Judge Raulston, but the force of it got into the air nevertheless. This year it is a misdemeanor for a country school teacher to flout the archaic nonsense of Genesis. Next year it will be a felony. The year after the net will be spread wider. Pedagogues, after all, are small game; there are larger birds to snare -- larger and juicier. Bryan has his fishy eye on them. He will fetch them if his mind lasts, and the lamp holds out to burn. No man with a mouth like that ever lets go. Nor ever lacks followers.

Tennessee is bearing the brunt of the first attack simply because the civilized minority, down here, is extraordinarily pusillanimous.

I have met no educated man who is not ashamed of the ridicule that has fallen upon the State, and I have met none, save only judge Neal, who had the courage to speak out while it was yet time. No Tennessee counsel of any importance came into the case until yesterday and then they came in stepping very softly as if taking a brief for sense were a dangerous matter. When Bryan did his first rampaging here all these men were silent.

They had known for years what was going on in the hills. They knew what the country preachers were preaching -- what degraded nonsense was being rammed and hammered into yokel skulls. But they were afraid to go out against the imposture while it was in the making, and when any outsider denounced it they fell upon him violently as an enemy of Tennessee.

Now Tennessee is paying for that poltroonery. The State is smiling and beautiful, and of late it has begun to be rich. I know of no American city that is set in more lovely scenery than Chattanooga, or that has more charming homes. The civilized minority is as large here, I believe, as anywhere else.

It has made a city of splendid material comforts and kept it in order. But it has neglected in the past the unpleasant business of following what was going on in the cross roads Little Bethels.

The Baptist preachers ranted unchallenged.

Their buffooneries were mistaken for humor. Now the clowns turn out to be armed, and have begun to shoot.

In his argument yesterday judge Neal had to admit pathetically that it was hopeless to fight for a repeal of the anti-evolution law. The Legislature of Tennessee, like the Legislature of every other American state, is made up of cheap job-seekers and ignoramuses.

The Governor of the State is a politician ten times cheaper and trashier. It is vain to look for relief from such men. If the State is to be saved at all, it must be saved by the courts. For one, I have little hope of relief in that direction, despite Hays' logic and Darrow's eloquence. Constitutions, in America, no longer mean what they say. To mention the Bill of Rights is to be damned as a Red.

The rabble is in the saddle, and down here it makes its first campaign under a general beside whom Wat Tylor seems like a wart beside the Matterhorn.