THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN (STEINBECK)

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By
John Michael Coburn, B.A.

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John Michael Coburn, B.A.
Mentor: John C. Hirsh, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

John Steinbeck’s epic novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, leads readers on a journey of American dust bowl refugees. This thesis will examine the journeys of Steinbeck and those who influenced him in telling the story. In particular, the author will scrutinize the influence of Tom Collins, the first manager of migrant camps established by the Farm Security Administration and the “Tom” to whom the novel is dedicated.

Tom Collins’s journey in early life left an imprint upon him that served him, migrants, and John Steinbeck. His journey is sometimes complicated by contradictions and other times is completely harmonious as it intersects with Catholicism. This thesis will examine the American landscape as religious institutions search and flower in their response to the plight of the poor coming out of the industrial revolution, economic disaster, and the dust bowl.

Both the Protestant Social Gospel movement and Catholic social doctrine are examined for their place of influence upon Steinbeck and Collins. Original research in the archives of the State of Maryland; Catholic Charities; Maryland State Tuberculosis Sanatorium; Frederick County Maryland Board of Education; and various schools in Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania support the conclusions of this thesis.
Tom Collins influenced John Steinbeck beyond his experiences as manager of Arvin Migratory Labor Camp in the Central Valley of California. Collins’s work as manager drew from the first two decades of his life steeped in the tenets of Catholic social doctrine, and his example influenced John Steinbeck in the development of the characters in *The Grapes of Wrath.*
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I am profoundly grateful for the guidance and education provided me by the staff and faculty of Georgetown University. Their generous spirit of collegiality to the students is a hallmark of the Liberal Studies program as it creates a fertile environment for the sometimes hibernating minds of students with some distance from formal classroom learning.

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I am thankful for the help of archivists and librarians everywhere from the Eastern Shore of Maryland to Annapolis, to Emmitsburg and Thurmont, to Pennsylvania, to Virginia and back to the District of Columbia and from the University of California/Berkeley for the help in acquiring the Arvin Migratory Labor Camp reports prepared by Tom Collins and studied by John Steinbeck while writing The Grapes of Wrath. They were all critical to my research and success.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my son, Joseph Michael Coburn.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There is a special quality in the characters of John Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath* that gives them depth and, contrary to the oft-cited criticism of sentimentality, authenticity. This thesis identifies the nature and source of that quality.

The editors of Steinbeck’s high school senior yearbook wrote:

> The church of a far off city
> Came towering into view,
> Where John was preaching in solemn tones
> To many a well-filled pew.¹

It is difficult not to identify the migratory labor camps as that city and the millions who have read *The Grapes of Wrath* as those of the well-filled pew in this prescient observation of Steinbeck’s classmates. This thesis reviews the impact of the industrial revolution on Americans in the nineteenth century and the impact of those who sought to ameliorate the plight of Americans. The Christian churches were a great influence on the American public in addressing the ills of society. As part of the Second Great Awakening, a period of spiritual renewal, the Protestant Social Gospel movement took the lead in ministering to the disadvantaged of the era. The Catholic Church in America, while struggling to establish itself as independent of the constraints of being a mission church, concentrated on its response to the issuance of *Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of Workers) in 1891.

These Christian communities had a direct influence on John Steinbeck in the writing of one of America’s greatest novels. The crux of this thesis is to identify how Christian social action influenced the author. It did so in both an active and a passive way and the Christian social action was in the person of Tom Collins. Collins, with his deeply ingrained Catholic upbringing and education, responded actively to the migrants needs. Through his observations of Collins, Steinbeck passively absorbed Collins’s commitment to the dispossessed migrants and endowed his characters in The Grapes of Wrath with these traits. These traits were an integral part of Tom Collins’s life journey, of the journey of the Joad family in *The Grapes of Wrath*, and of the author’s journey in writing the novel.
CHAPTER 2

WHO WAS TOM COLLINS?

_The Grapes of Wrath_ is dedicated “To CAROL who willed it. To TOM who lived it.”¹ Carol was Steinbeck’s first wife. Tom was not, as some might assume, the protagonist Tom Joad, but Tom Collins, the first manager of the Arvin Migratory Labor Camp under the Farm Security Administration in 1935.² It was Collins’s detailed reports and correspondence with Steinbeck and a week-long visit at the camp by Steinbeck that served as the basis for Steinbeck’s migratory labor camp, Weedpatch. Tom Collins was a dedicated teacher, and school administrator, and compassionate social worker who had a complicated relationship with the Catholic Church. Jackson J. Benson, who wrote a biography of Steinbeck, characterizes Tom Collins’ early life. “The melodrama of his difficulties at the orphanage is reminiscent of something out of Charles Dickens.”³ It is an accurate characterization. Benson reports that Collins was born in the vicinity of Baltimore, Maryland, in 1895 or 1897 and was immediately placed in a Catholic orphanage in Baltimore by his unwed mother. According to Collins’s death certificate, he was born on September 6, 1895. Because of the discrepancies in the reported dates of birth, an examination of the Maryland State Archives for male children born to a Collins in Baltimore on September 4 through 8 for the years 1893 to 1897 resolves the


³Ibid., 196.
discrepancies. Only one report of a Collins birth was recorded for those dates. A male child was born at No. 12, North High Street, to George Collins, a stable boss, and Annie Hopkins Collins on September 6, 1895, on the exact date reported by Tom Collins to the officials at Sacramento County Hospital, where he died. Other information on the birth record may have been the source of Collins’s reticence to be forthcoming about his early personal history. The record indicates that George Collins and the male child were “colored.” Records from a city directory published in 1895, which placed an asterisk next to the names of colored people, indicate that there were five women named Annie Hopkins and none named Annie Collins living in Baltimore at the time and that all were white. Two of the women were Mrs. Annie Hopkins and a third had a middle initial of “M.” The other two were a domestic and a dressmaker. The name Annie Hopkins “Collins” on the birth records were a nod to the courtesy and decorum of the time. No records are extant to determine whether George Collins, originally of Dorchester County, Maryland, might have been of mixed racial background, but it is clear that for all of his life Tom Collins lived as a white man. It may be that Collins did not know his own racial makeup. Photographs of him reveal no physical features that would indicate anything other than his Caucasian lineage. It is easy to understand why an unwed mother of a mixed-race child in 1895 would place that child in an orphanage.

However, there are simply no records extant showing the placement of an infant Tom Collins in a Catholic orphanage in Baltimore between 1895 and 1897. Catholic

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Charities is the custodian of the records for St. Vincent’s Infant Asylum, Dolan Children’s Aid Society, St. Vincent’s Male Orphan Asylum, St. Mary’s Industrial School, and St. Patrick’s Asylum. A search of the records of these institutions found two children named Tom Collins, who were born in 1892 and 1893. Each was discharged to his mother at later dates. All of the above-mentioned orphanages were for white children. At the time, there were three orphanages for African-American boys: St. Anthony’s Orphan Asylum, St. Elizabeth’s Home for Colored Infants and Children, and St. Francis’s Orphanage for Colored Children. Catholic Charities could find no record of a Tom Collins at these institutions. The information available does not provide conclusive evidence as to whether Tom Collins was actually in a Catholic orphanage as a youth.\(^5\) Collins’s dedication to the corporal service of his fellow man, which will be discussed later, would indicate a strong influence from religious institutions.

Jackson Benson reports the following:

He went from the orphanage to a boarding school, Mount Saint Joseph College, in Baltimore, and from there to Saint Charles Seminary in Maryland to be trained in the priesthood. After two years or so, however, he gave up the priesthood to go to college and become a teacher. All we know about his college education is that he possessed a doctoral diploma from Teachers College in Washington, D.C.\(^6\)

The Xaverian Brothers, the founders of Mt. Saint Joseph College, are a religious community founded in Bruges, Belgium, in 1839. The community’s mission was to teach in schools they would establish in America. The college was opened in 1875. As with the

\(^5\)This information was gathered from correspondence from Helen Graham, Director of Records and Archivist for Catholic Charities, March 13, 1997, and from a subsequent phone conversation on May 14, 2009.

incomplete records of the various Catholic orphanages, the records at Mt. Saint Joseph College do not reflect Tom Collins’s matriculation there. In the early 1970s, with the renovation of an older building and the construction of a new building, a Xaverian Brother threw out most of the early records of the school. Tom Collins’s photo does not appear in the group photos displayed at the school of the graduating classes for this time period. When Collins was employed by the Frederick County, Maryland, school system, he used the middle initial “A”; however, it is his death certificate on which I choose to rely, and it shows no middle initial or name.

There is evidence of Tom Collins’s attendance at Saint Charles’ College, a preparatory seminary, which at the time was located a short distance from Baltimore along the Patapsco River near Ellicott City, Maryland. He matriculated for the scholastic years 1909-10 and 1910-11. The college was founded by the famous Maryland patriot and signer of the Declaration of Independence, Charles Carroll of Carrollton. Carroll, one of the richest signers, donated $5,349 and 253 acres to the college, which did not open until 1848, sixteen years after the death of the last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence. The first class constituted four students. By the time Tom Collins enrolled, there were 214 students. He was fourteen years old. Collins’s course of study in his first year consisted of Latin, English, French, algebra, geography, reading

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7On September 1, 1908, a Thomas A. Collins was registered. His mother is shown as Mrs. Ellen Collins, and an attorney from Bar Harbor, Maine, was the contact for the school. These sparse records indicate that the full tuition of $200 was paid. This was not John Steinbeck’s Tom Collins.

8Catalogue of St. Charles’ College (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins Company, 1910), 20. All additional historic information about St. Charles’ College, the curriculum, and Tom Collins’s record have been gathered from this catalogue and the subsequent one published by the same company in 1911.
and elocution, Bible history, and Christian doctrine. Church history was substituted for Bible history the second year. St. Charles’ College offered a six-year classical education. A new student whose competence was beyond the entry level in a subject matter could test into a higher level than his grade. Even by today’s standards, these tests could be deemed difficult. The following is a description of the first year of Latin.\(^9\)

Latin.—Bennett’s Latin Grammar, Latin Lessons, and Foundation of Latin; Latin Recitations and Conversations; Historiae Sacrae Epitome; Oral and Written Translations into Latin.

Students who expect on entering the College to be placed in a class higher than the Sixth, that is the lowest, must show by examination that they have passed creditably through a course equivalent to the one indicated in our program of studies. In Latin, besides having read in the original some extracts from the authors listed, or their equivalent, they will be required to translate English into Latin. The following are specimens of the examination given:

FOR THE SECOND YEAR (Fifth Class)
A good man will be loved by all.—He has lived in Rome many years.—My son, you are overcome with grief.—My friend, give me the pen.—My father lead me into the garden.—You will not be able to.—I will go.\(^{10}\)

On March 16, 1911, St. Charles’ College was destroyed by fire, and the detailed records of students were lost. However, two things are evident from the minimal records that survived the fire. Tom Collins was a well prepared and advanced student upon entering St. Charles’ College, and his awards in both Christian doctrine and Bible study show a foundation in Catholic doctrine at the time. He distinguished himself with an

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\(^9\)This conclusion is informed by a conversation with Frances Higgins, Chair of Latin at Good Counsel High School, on August 30, 2009. Mrs. Higgins reviewed the advanced placement translation requirements and indicated that they were appropriately rigorous.

\(^{10}\)Catalogue of St. Charles’ 16.
honorable mention at his grade level in Christian doctrine. His first year he tested into
the fourth year of Bible study and took an academic second prize for the course.
Similarly, he was placed into the fifth year of geography and received honorable mention.
The available records do not reflect advanced placement in other courses. One could
validly assume the rigorous advanced placement tests for Bible study and geography
were equal to those for Latin. Collins received these honors during his first year, and
there is no mention in the catalogue of his having excelled in his second year. This
extremely advanced student in geography must have had a close relationship with his
teacher, and may have been the reason that Collins left the college after his second year.

Benson, relying upon family history from three different families, reports the
Collins biography as follows:

. . . gave up the priesthood to go to college and become a teacher. All we know
about his college education is that he possessed a doctoral diploma from Teachers
College in Washington, D.C. Since Teachers College is no longer in existence, it
has been impossible to find out how valid this degree was. Nevertheless, Collins
used this degree repeatedly to obtain various jobs throughout his lifetime.11

Tom Collins turned sixteen years old on September 6, 1911. The chronology
above simply does not fit. It is appropriate that Benson questions the validity of Collins’s
academic credentials. The white teachers’ college in 1911 was Wilson Teachers College
in Washington, D.C. The repository for the college’s records is the University of the
District of Columbia, and a list in the records of students at Wilson Teachers College for
the period of 1911 through 1915 shows no evidence that Tom Collins ever attended.

11Benson, Weedpatch, 196-97.
So where did Tom Collins go after the school year 1910-11? If there is no record of Collins attending Teachers College, as Benson reports, is one able to ignore that portion of the Collins history? The answer is yes. St. Charles’ College was founded by members of the Society of St. Sulpice, a French order of priests whose mission was to prepare young men for the priesthood. Tuberculosis was rampant in the United States. "The total number of deaths reported as due to consumption [tuberculosis] in the United States during census year 1900 was 109,750 . . . and the ratio of deaths from this disease to 1,000 deaths from all known causes was 109.9."\(^{12}\) The good fathers were not unaffected by the ailment. Three of Tom Collins’s teachers appeared to have suffered from tuberculosis including Rev. J.M. Haug, who taught two of the courses in which Collins was enrolled. According to the *American Necrology [sic.] of the Society of St. Sulpice*, “However, Father Haug’s health was fragile. From 1907 on, the weakness of his lungs had forced him to take some ease. From 1910 to 1916 his physical state remained precarious enough.”\(^{13}\)

The Rev. G.C. Harig taught Latin, Greek, and English while Tom Collins was a student.

All the while, and with several relapses, dear Father Harig had much to suffer in mind and body. His suffering came to him, at least in part, from his great sensitiveness and his conviction in regard to the grandeur of the priesthood.

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\(^{12}\)Committee On The District of Columbia, *Registration of Cases of Tuberculosis in District of Columbia, Etc.*, 60\(^{th}\) Congress, 1\(^{st}\) Session, Senate Report No. 35, January 13, 1908, 1.

\(^{13}\)Vincent M. Eaton, Rev., *American Necrology of the Society of St. Sulpice* (Baltimore: Order of St. Sulpice, 1991), 228. [Father Haug did not die until March 6, 1928, evidently having recovered in part from his lung disorder.]
Frequently our confrere had to leave the seminary to be cared for outside. He accepted this testing with great simplicity and blamed himself for his condition. Sometimes he even took the initiative and spontaneously asked to retire to an institution where he was assured the care that would restore his health.

This description of “relapses,” of being “cared for outside,” and of retiring “to an institution . . . that would restore his health” is code for tuberculosis, a term of stigma.

Finally, the Rev. C.C. Berkeley taught geography and it was the course at which Tom Collins excelled. He jumped five years ahead of his class to take it and even at that received honors in the form of an honorable mention.”

Six years ago [sometime in 1909] his [Berkeley’s] health forced him to spend several months in the hospital, then an entire year in a more moderate climate. Afterwards, he returned to St. Charles in good health, so we thought, to take up again his work as a teacher. But last summer an attack of typhoid fever so threatened his constitution that lung trouble reasserted itself. The doctor who was looking after him advised him to spend another season at Colorado Springs where he recovered his strength after his first attack.

Colorado Springs was a major center for the treatment of tuberculosis and, at the time, had at least fourteen tuberculosis sanatoria. One in particular, Montcalme Sanatorium, was established in 1900 and was run by the Sisters of Mercy. It would have been a likely setting for the recuperation of Father Berkeley.

Tom Collins contracted tuberculosis at St. Charles’ College. His next move was to the Maryland Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Sabillasville, Maryland. Because he was an especially successful student his first year and received no honors during his second year,

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15 Eaton, Necrology, 176.

one might logically conclude that the cause of Collins’s decline in academic success was caused by the progression of his disease during his second year at school. There is another possibility. As noted earlier, St. Charles’ College burned to the ground on March 16, 1911, and substantially all of its records were lost. The *Catalogue of St. Charles’ College for the Scholastic Year 1910-1911* shows Thomas A. Collins as a second-year student.\(^{17}\) This is the first time that Collins used the middle initial. With the destruction of the college’s records, it is possible that the names listed were hastily put together within the ninety days between the fire and the commencement on June 11, 1911. It is also possible that Collins did not start school in September of 1910. To support this line of thinking, the *Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland Tuberculosis Sanatorium, January 1, 1911*, reports the admission of Patient 501 in 1910, a fifteen-year-old male in a moderately advanced stage of tuberculosis in both lungs. The patient stayed for five months and, during his treatment, gained sixteen and a half pounds. If this is a record of Tom Collins, either the assertion that Collins contracted tuberculosis at St. Charles’ College is questionable or the diagnosis is in error, because the record of patient 501 reports that the duration of the disease was eleven and a half years.\(^{18}\) It is just as plausible that the disease would have progressed substantially more in eleven and a half years and that the diagnosis and/or the report were wrong. Sometime

\(^{17}\) *Catalogue of St. Charles’,* 18.

in 1911, Tom Collins was admitted as a patient at the Maryland Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Sabillasville, Maryland.

The Maryland Tuberculosis Sanatorium was created by Chapter 308 of the Acts of the Maryland General Assembly in 1906.\textsuperscript{19} Maryland health officials and legislators selected a 198-acre site in the Catoctin Mountains in Frederick County, Maryland.\textsuperscript{20} The all-white facility opened in August 1908 and was available only to incipient cases. Advanced and terminal patients were not admitted. When the facility opened, it had a capacity of 180, but during the first year of operation 307 patients were treated. The period of treatment ran from two months to over a year.

The policy of treatment in the early days of the institution was, on admission, absolute rest for observation by the medical staff, and as the patient’s condition improved, graduated exercise and work. All of the light work of the institution and farm was done by the patients for it was the aim of the medical staff that with every curable case of tuberculosis to have the patient in condition to work from four to six hours daily before returning home.\textsuperscript{21}

This was part of the philosophy of Dr. Victor F. Cullen, the sanatorium’s second superintendent, who took charge on January 1, 1909. Dr. Cullen, a recovered consumptive and a graduate of Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, was a legend.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Laws of Maryland, “Chapter 308,”} 1906.

\textsuperscript{20} Much of this and the following information has been gathered from a seven-page memo entitled “History of Victor Cullen State Hospital” from an unknown author and courtesy of a Frederick County historian and local librarian, Erin Dingle, whose father was both a TB patient and later an employee of the Sanatorium. Ms. Dingle grew up within the sanatorium compound during her father’s employment there.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 2.
A man—none too well dressed, no Chesterfield, but unmistakably a man, and a real one—drove his panting horse, lathered white with sweat, within a few inches, alarmingly few, of us. He tied his horse—too windblown to move willingly away—to a sapling, petting the miry beast as if it had been a pretty baby, and then, without first purging his hands of horse, shook hands with a hearty pull. In plain, direct words this round-headed, big-boned, slightly stooped young man explained himself and his mission. He was a patient in a neighboring private sanatorium, just across the Pennsylvania line and wanted a medical job with us, without salary. He was engaged. Thus by time and chance this most extraordinary man, Dr. Victor F. Cullen, was secured, a boon and blessing to our State beyond compare.22

Cullen’s career was punctuated with demonstrative acts of charity and dedication. He took train and horse to the state capital to reverse a legislative bill to increase his salary because he thought such an increase was inappropriate and unnecessary. This charismatic individual was yet another Catholic influence on Tom Collins. Cullen was the recipient of the Order of St. Gregory, awarded by Pope Pius XI in 1924.

Doctor Cullen’s honors were bestowed upon him in recognition of the veritable consecration of his life to the care of tubercular patients. In his devotion to the sick he has sacrificed financial gains and many other emoluments. He has won many back to health from the grasp of the White Plague and assuaged the sufferings of countless others in their declining days.23

In addition to his commitment to the welfare of his patients, Dr. Cullen’s sense of organization and management of the sanatorium may very well have been Collins’s model for the school system he organized in Guam and, more particularly, for Arvin Camp, the first migrant camp in California under the Farm Security Administration and, subsequently, Steinbeck’s model for Weedpatch in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Based upon the


23“George Jenkins and Dr. Cullen are Knighted,” *The Baltimore Catholic Review*, March 22, 1924.
January 1, 1911, records of the fifteen-year-old male patient, Collins was a patient for five months.  

It was common practice for the sanatorium to hire former patients to work in a variety of jobs. The continued involvement of former patients at the hospital even extended to training women and men to become nurses. “So after he cured them, he employed them.” Tom Collins was the beneficiary of Victor Cullen’s management policy. “When his condition was arrested, he remained at the sanatorium to work in the combined post office/pharmacy.” Employment records at the Maryland Tuberculosis Sanatorium no longer exist, so it is uncertain how long Collins worked there. However, if one continues the assumption that Collins was patient 501, he would have been fifteen years old when he was discharged from the sanatorium in 1910. “Collins met his first wife, Edith M. Bentzel, while he was a patient at the Victor Cullen Tuberculosis Sanitarium in Sabillasville, Maryland. . . . He married Edith in early 1915.”

It is logical to conclude that he spent the intervening years in the employment of and under the tutelage of Dr. Cullen. The impact on Tom Collins of Dr. Cullen’s compassion and dedication to the tuberculosis patients cannot be underestimated.

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24 Fifty-three years after Collins completed treatment, Tim Coburn, my brother, was diagnosed with tuberculosis at age fifteen, the same age as Collins when he was admitted to the sanatorium. At admission, my brother was evaluated as having the same level of disease, moderately advanced, as described for patient 501, Tom Collins. Tim Coburn spent six months at the Madison County Sanatorium in Edwardsville, Illinois.

25 Maria T. Sagardia, former Director of Nurses, Maryland Tuberculosis Sanatorium, interviewed by Erin Dingle and Mark R. Lannon, 1999.

26 Benson, Weedpatch, 197.

27 Ibid., 197.
Benson reports that Collins gave up the seminary to go to college to become a teacher, yet Benson expresses doubt about the legitimacy of degrees Collins claimed to have earned. The fact is that there just was not enough time to complete the academic requirements for the degrees and to reconcile those accomplishments with what is known for certain about Collins’s chronology. Collins was born in 1895, admitted to the sanatorium in 1910 at the age of fifteen, married in 1915, continued work at the sanatorium, taught school at Wolfsville Elementary School, and abandoned his family in 1919. There is simply not enough time as shown on the diagram below.

![Diagram of Collins's Timeline]

During the period Collins could have attended college, 1913 to 1920, the teachers’ colleges were segregated. Minors Teachers College was for blacks, and Wilson Teachers College was for whites. The archivist for the University of the District of Columbia could not find evidence that Tom Collins ever attended either school as an
undergraduate.\textsuperscript{28} Graduate degrees were not granted until 1957, when the first master’s degree was awarded to Marie D. Perry.\textsuperscript{29} This fact alone is conclusive. Tom Collins did not have a doctoral degree in education from D.C. Teachers College as he maintained.

Benson reports that Collins taught at Wolfsville Elementary School in Frederick County, Maryland. A storage room in the offices of the Frederick County Board of Education is filled with oversized leather- and cloth-bound financial ledgers. In one dated 1916-17, multiple entries indicate that Thomas A. Collins was paid sixty dollars per month as a teacher. There are no entries for any other years from 1915 to 1920. This information seems to correct Benson’s assertion that Collins taught two years in Wolfsville Elementary School instead of one year.

Benson further reports that Tom Collins then taught at Winchester Military Academy, in Winchester, Virginia, which was founded in the early nineteenth century and closed at the beginning of the Civil War.\textsuperscript{30}

The school [Winchester Academy] was closed in 1861 because of the Civil War. The Northern Army camped on the grounds of the Academy at one time when they were in Winchester and completely destroyed the building using the wood for campfires. The building was never rebuilt and the Academy occupied new quarters after the close of the War between the States and was known as the Shenandoah Valley Academy. . . .The enrollment was around 100 from 1915 to 1932 with a peak in 1927 with 127 boys.\textsuperscript{31}


\textsuperscript{29}“Teachers College awards its first M.A. to woman,” \textit{Afro-American}, June 22, 1957.

\textsuperscript{30}Benson, \textit{Weedpatch}, 197.

The academy published catalogue in 1918 shows the following notation.

THOMAS ALVAH COLLINS, A.B.: A.B., Mt. Joseph College, 1913; Alumnus Columbia University; Principal, Crapo, (Md.), High School, 1916-18. Assistant Principal and instructor Modern Languages, Waynesboro, (Pa.), High School, 1918. Instructor in Latin, Shenandoah Valley Academy, 1918-19.\footnote{The Shenandoah Valley Academy, Winchester, VA: Shenandoah Valley Academy, 1918, 8.}

Initially, I was convinced that this Collins was a different individual from the Tom Collins who is the subject of this thesis. Thomas Alvah Collins taught at Waynesboro High School. Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, is only eight miles by train from the Maryland Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Sabillasville, Maryland. The two Collinses might have crossed paths with the subject of this research assuming the academic identity of Thomas Alvah Collins. I am now convinced that Tom Collins had some connection with the Waynesboro school system. The Western Maryland Railroad provided direct transportation between those towns. In spite of the fact that I have been unable to confirm Collins’s employment as Assistant Principal and instructor of modern languages at Waynesboro High School, I am prepared to accept that Collins had some connection with the Waynesboro school system. The geography and chronology fall into place. Collins taught at Wolfsville Elementary School in 1916-17; he taught at Waynesboro High School in 1917-18; he taught at Shenandoah Valley Academy in 1918-19. One must allow for the possibility that this portion of Tom Collins’ story was made out of whole cloth, along with his connection with Crapo High School, the A.B. from Mt. Joseph College, and the doctoral degree from Washington Teachers College.
There is no record of any school named Mt. Joseph College referenced in the Shenandoah Valley Academy Catalogue. It seems like a deliberate obfuscation to be made to look like Mt. Saint Joseph College, Collins’s reported Baltimore high school, or St. Joseph College. In 1913, in Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia, there existed only two St. Joseph Colleges. St. Joseph College in Standish, Maine, was founded in 1912 for girls only and did not offer a degree until 1917. It did not become coed until 1970. What is now St. Joseph University in Philadelphia was founded in 1851. Adrienne Accardi of that institution’s Office of Development and Alumni Relations “could not find a record of Thomas Collins attending St. Joseph’s University.”

Five months after the birth on February 24, 1919 of his second daughter, Anna, Tom Collins abandoned his family. It has been difficult to independently confirm Benson’s narrative of this portion of Collins’ life. According to Anna Collins Shindledecker; “My mother asked him to go to the store and get me some milk and he never came back. Seventy years later, I’m still waiting for that milk.” The story, according to Benson, is that, in abandoning his wife and daughters, Collins ran away with Nancy Duvall Means.

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33 Email to author, April 21, 2010.

34 Benson, Weedpatch, 197.

35 “Steinbeck’s novel dedicated to local woman’s father,” The Record Herald, Waynesboro, PA, April 15, 1989.
He abandoned his family shortly after the birth of his second daughter and eloped with Nancy Duvall Means, sixteen, the daughter of a prominent Social Register family in Maryland. The story is that they met in a railroad station, Collins running from his family and Miss Means running from a chaperone who was escorting her home on vacation from an exclusive girls school. They ran off together to San Juan, Puerto Rico, where they were married by the Bishop of San Juan. The couple was being chased by private detectives hired by the bride’s father, and so they fled from Puerto Rico to Caracas, Venezuela, where they hid in a slum while Collins worked in a nearby oil field.36

Unlike Professor Benson, I have not had the benefit of personal contact with this branch of the Collins family or with Collins’s third family. My correspondence with Benson offered me little help in locating them: “It has been many years since I was involved in the Collins story and the Steinbeck biography. I have done research for and published several biographies since then, and so the Collins story seems very remote to me now.”37

For several decades starting in 1910, the Western Maryland Railroad traveled from Sabillasville to Baltimore on a daily basis. In 1924, a round-trip Sunday excursion ticket cost one dollar and fifty cents.38 There were several private secondary schools along the way to Baltimore where Nancy Duvall Means could have been a student. The number is narrowed by the description given by Benson as “an exclusive girls’ school.” Inasmuch as the story related by Benson says that Collins and Means were later married by the Bishop of San Juan, one can assume that the exclusive girls’ school was a Catholic institution. Two schools fit all of the criteria: Visitation Academy of the Sacred Heart in the city of Frederick and St. Joseph’s Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Visitation

36 Benson, Weedpatch, 197.
37 Jackson Benson, email to author, May 26, 2009.
38 Advertisement, Catoctin Clarion, September 11, 1919.
Academy has no record of a Nancy Duvall Means and was located along a different railroad line. St. Joseph’s Academy, with several hundred girls from wealthy families, was located only two or three miles from the sanatorium in Sabillasville. St. Joseph’s was founded by St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and her Daughters of Charity in 1809. It was later chartered by the state of Maryland as a liberal arts college and operated until 1973, when it was closed and partially merged with its companion men’s college in Emmitsburg, Mt. St. Mary’s. It too was served by rail service but on a separate spur.

The first stop toward Baltimore from both the sanatorium and St. Joseph’s Academy was Emmitsburg Junction. If the story of the meeting of Collins and Means at a railroad station is accurate, it would have been at Emmitsburg Junction. According to Sister Betty Ann McNeil, D.C., provincial archivist for the Daughters of Charity in Emmitsburg, the permanent records of the girls who attended St. Joseph’s Academy (high school) rest with the Maryland State Board of Education. The Board of Education will release information only to individuals seeking their own records or their descendants. The records of Nancy Duvall Means would have shown the names and addresses of her parents and possibly other family information. That she was the daughter of a prominent “Social Register family” in Maryland, as Benson relates, cannot be confirmed. The Social Register is published by city and not by state, and the only city in Maryland for which a book was published at that time was Baltimore. The *Social Register, Baltimore*, for the years 1912 through 1918 has no listing for someone with the name of “Means.”

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39 Telephone conversation with the author, March 2009.
There is no “Means” in the *Baltimore Directory* during those years, and the *Baltimore Directory* did not reveal any “Duvall,” presumably a family name. So I rely upon Benson’s account that Collins and Means ran off together.

With no documented material but, presumably, with information from interviews of the various Collins families, Benson wove his story of Collins and Means’ marriage by the Bishop of San Juan, Puerto Rico; his work in the oil fields of Caracas, Venezuela; the couple’s travel through the Amazon rain forest and return to the southwest United States and to California. Collins went to Nome, Alaska, and then to Guam working for the U.S. Navy school systems, where he held the post of Superintendent of Public Instruction for less than two years. Professor Robert A. Underwood, President of the University of Guam, reported the following:

The changes which Collins brought about were in four critical areas. He developed a system of record-keeping for students so that “grading” of students could occur on a more consistent basis. Collins charged that prior to 1923, “it can hardly be understood how pupils knew whether they were promoted” [Collins’s Letter to Gov. Althouse, 1923]. Under his direction, the schools were also “properly graded” so that the work in each grade would be equivalent to that offered in schools in the U.S. and Philippines, the other American colony in the Pacific. With respect to the teachers, he instituted a system of supervision and required the preparation of daily lesson plans, measures which created some “resentment.” Lastly, Collins developed a course of study which was based on a compilation of models from the Philippines, California, New Mexico, [the state of Washington and Washington D.C.](42)

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41 Memorandum of Adelbert Althouse, Governor of Guam, to Secretary of the Navy, April 24, 1923.

These are significant structural changes, but they are more organizational than educational, except what he adapted from other school programs. Up to this time, Collins had been influenced by the structured program of the preparatory seminary, the organization of the tuberculosis sanatorium, Wolfsville Elementary School, Waynesboro High School, and Winchester Academy, all of which he could adapt to the school system in Guam. With this type of reorganization, Collins would not draw undue attention to himself, whereas any misstep in the area of a professional educator might cause inquiry into his background and credentials. It is therefore understandable why Collins assumed the credentials of someone with a doctorate in pedagogy rather than a doctorate in education. And, indeed, Guam’s Superintendent of Public Instruction signed his name “Thomas Collins, A.B.M.A.D.Ped.” 43

Just as Tom Collins had done, someone else decades later found his way into academic institutions without the required credentials for teaching college. After having falsified his credentials numerous times and informed himself about the dynamics of organizations, Ferdinand Demara, known as the Great Imposter, was determined to succeed at St. Martin’s Abby and College in Olympia, Washington. He had finally developed an axiom by which to succeed. “I call it ‘expanding into the power vacuum.” 44 Like Tom Collins, Demara was technically self-trained to accomplish the tasks before him. Tom Collins, in focusing on pedagogy rather than on education, was

43 Letter from Thomas Collins to the Governor of Guam, March 25, 1923.

expanding into the power vacuum. Something else the two men shared was the pressure of living under an assumed identity. By the time Collins left Guam in 1924, he had already been married two times without the benefit of a divorce; taught in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and perhaps in California; traveled from Maryland to South America; to Nome, Alaska; and to Guam; and served as the top official in two school systems. All of this happened in a period of nine years. The prospect of his academic fraud being discovered or being found out by private detectives hired by Nancy Duvall Means Collins’ father must have been a constant worry for Collins. Having dealt with the pedagogical aspects of the schools in Guam and the need to perfect the teaching program without the real training to do so could very well have nudged Collins to keep moving.

An article in the *Journal of Modern Literature* and the subsequently published retold story in *Chasing Steinbeck’s Ghost* are the only published works about Tom Collins. It has been my impetus for seeking more information about the man whom John Steinbeck so revered that he dedicated *The Grapes of Wrath* “To Tom Who Lived It.” But Benson’s information continues to be suspect because his only sources, Collins’s children, have related stories subject to the memories of romantic stories either that Tin Collins told them or that their mothers told them. Nancy Means Collins had two children during the twenty months she and Tom lived in Guam. The Collinses could not have “spent a good deal of time traveling, going to Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, and

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45 Throughout this study, I have necessarily relied heavily upon the journal article, “To Tom, Who Lived It” by Jackson Benson.
the Philippines” with two young children, as Benson reports. Nor did the Collins family return to the United States in 1929 as described by Benson. They returned six years earlier in 1923, when the petition by the people of Guam failed to convince Collins to continue on in his position.

Every attempt to reconcile Tom Collins’s personal history offers more rocks to turn over. There is a ten-year gap from the time he returned to the United States and when he started work at what was later called the Farm Security Administration, where he worked from 1935 to 1941. According to Benson, when Collins returned to the United States, he opened The Oaks School of Boys in Spring Valley, California. He took too much to the bottle, went bankrupt, and abandoned Nancy Collins and his daughter Patricia. He headed a soup kitchen in Los Angeles under the Federal Transient Service Facility. “In 1939 Collins met a public health nurse, Lena Ann Pimentel, and they were married January 10, 1940, in Yuma, Arizona, in a Catholic ceremony.”

As reported by both Jackson Benson and Jay Parini in their comprehensive biographies of Steinbeck, Tom Collins had a week-long visit from John Steinbeck which Collins reported in “Arvin Migratory Labor Camp: Report for the week ending August 23, 1936; and Report for the week ending August 29, 1936.” This visit led to a long-term relationship and several years of correspondence. As a measure of his regard for

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47 Ibid., 198.

48 Reel 1 of 1, Simon J. Lubin Society records ca. 1927-40, University of California, Berekely. The official government name for the camp was Arvin Migratory Labor Camp; however, some of Collins’ reports identified the camp as Kern Migratory Labor Camp, presumably because the camp was in Kern County, California.
Collins, Steinbeck insisted that Collins be hired as a technical consultant in the making of the movie *The Grapes of Wrath*, for which he was paid $15,000. Collins wrote and attempted to publish but was unsuccessful. Benson reports that “in July of 1946 he was divorced from his third wife and spent the following ten years managing hotels throughout California.”⁴⁹ Tom Collins died at 9:50 a.m. on September 14, 1961, of cancer of the larynx. Jackson Benson underestimates Collins in summing up Collins’ life.

He was a dreamer, a talker, and a drinker. He had a genius for getting along with and helping people who were down and out, but was a failure, for the most part, in managing the relations of his own personal life. He was part educator, part artist, and part confidence man.⁵₀

Tom Collins was more than Benson’s characterization. Collins’s perspective of the disadvantaged fellow citizen was informed by the Christian social doctrine as described in Matthew 26:35-40 and as espoused by nuns and priests in the years of his Catholic education and by the monumental example of Dr. Victor Cullen. John Steinbeck undoubtedly observed this character trait in the man he befriended and visited.

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⁵₀ Ibid., 199.
CHAPTER 3

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL AND CATHOLIC SOCIAL DOCTRINE

Influences on Steinbeck in writing *The Grapes of Wrath* are rooted in the history of American social thought and action, specifically in the Christian churches. Fifty years before the births of John Steinbeck (1902) and Tom Collins (1895), religious communities in America were working to create an effective response to the consequences of the modernizing world and the industrial revolution. In fact, the entire Western world was dealing with the impact of the industrial revolution and positing new governmental systems in response to the inequities it engendered.

Even before John Adolph Grossteinbeck rode on horseback from Germany to Jerusalem as a Lutheran missionary in the early 1850s, the American Protestant churches were growing out of the Second Great Awakening to address the social issues of the day. The American Catholic Church’s response to the events of the second half of the nineteenth century was to address the consequences of the industrial revolution. The period was bookended in the United States by the ascendancy of Father Isaac Thomas Hecker and the writings of Monsignor John A. Ryan, with Leo XII’s *Rerum Novarum* as the center point. The period was filled with the experiences of the immigrant German and Irish churches and the political wrangling of these communities to gain primacy of the American mission. The American Church also had to deal with the impact of the Holy See’s letter against Americanism titled *Testem Benevolentiae*. The nineteenth century was not a golden era but an era of struggle that responded to the needs of...
Americans and built significantly upon Catholic social doctrine just as the Protestants, especially the Baptists and the Methodists, were building upon the Social Gospel.

Isaac Thomas Hecker was not so much a builder of social doctrine but a cultivator of the seed of the American Catholic Church. He was born on December 18, 1819, in New York City. Like Steinbeck’s grandparents, Hecker’s parents were German immigrants and Protestant. His first religious affiliation was as a Methodist. “Very early his concern for the plight of working men had led him to be active in the antimonopoly faction of the Locofoco Democrats.”¹ The Locofoco Democrats were an anti-Tammany Hall group that also opposed the Whigs and supported Presidents Martin Van Buren and Andrew Jackson. But it was the influence of Orestes Brownson, Hecker’s friend and intellectual companion, and Hecker’s own pursuit of spiritual clarity that led him to explore Mormonism, Transcendentalism, and Unitarianism before becoming a Catholic. He was ordained as a priest in 1849. “Hecker had chosen to enter the austere and ascetic Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer [Congregatio SS. Redemptoris], founded in 1732 by St. Alphonsus Liguori ‘to preach the gospel to the poor.’”² In spite of having come from a German family and setting aside the German immigrant custom of living with fellow Germans, Hecker and a small group of priests, all of whom were converts, wished to establish a distinctly American house, where English would be used,


²Ibid., 552.
with the mission of evangelizing to American Protestants. Hecker’s emphasis on evangelism was the same as that of his Protestant brothers, because it was through evangelism and revivalism that the Protestant denominations preached on the solutions to the social ills of society. Protestant evangelism predated *Rerum Novarum* by decades.

The rapid growth of concern with purely social issues such as poverty, workingmen’s rights, the liquor traffic, slum housing, and racial bitterness is the chief feature distinguishing American religion after 1865 from that of the first half of the nineteenth century. Such matters in some cases supplanted entirely the earlier pre-occupation with salvation from personal sin and life hereafter. Seminaries reorganized their programs to stress sociology. Institutional churches and social settlement work became prominent in the cities. Crusades for the rights of oppressed groups of all sorts absorbed the energies of hundreds of clergymen. David J. O’Brien in an essay opines “it would not be too much to say that Hecker blended American evangelical social Christianity into the ecclesiastical social Christianity of Catholicism.”

While the Protestants were working across denominational lines in organized response, the Catholic Church was immersed in dealing with the new polity of the American Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church held a position so different in America from its position in European countries that it was a struggle for the Vatican to balance. In Europe, it had a place at the table of government and wanted to keep it. Its influence was strong and rooted in the history of monarchies. In America, church and

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3 Ibid., 553


state were separate and not equal in government. And the “church” both Catholic and Protestant, in America was written with a lowercase “c.” The separation of church and state in America diluted the influence of the Catholic Church on national government, which was further diminished by the influence of the Protestant churches. This unfamiliar position of playing a much less influential role in government and Hecker’s style of evangelism would be examined by Leo XIII’s *Testem Benevolentiae*, a warning to the American church not to push too far from Rome and an admonition for unity and fealty. The question at hand was the political and ecclesial independence of the American Catholic Church. Both Rome and the American hierarchy used the term *Americanism* at times to misdirect the debate. Rome disavowed any concern for secular Americanism while remaining concerned that the Catholic Church did not have the European style of influence in government. Historian Thomas McAvoy quotes from a letter to the Holy Father from Cardinal Archbishop Gibbons, the ranking prelate in the United States in the late nineteenth century, regarding the dispute.

What is meant when one speaks of Americanism in connection with our bishops and our clergy? Surely, we love our country and are ready to sacrifice our lives for it; we love its institutions because they leave us the liberty to do good and allow us to spread religion and the influence of the Church more and more.\(^6\)

The patriotism expressed above is the seed of Americanism so feared by the European Catholics in Rome. It was a form of government that had demonstrated stability from its inception even during the Civil War. It was as if a new catechism of civics had been

created that was compatible with the Baltimore Catechism. The Europeans were faced with national political chaos.

The year 1871, like the year 1815, was a landmark in European history. Both years saw the end of a major war, and both initiated a long period of peace among the major European powers. But this is about as far as the parallel goes. Relations among states in 1815 and after had still been conducted according to certain generally accepted rules. But the cynical diplomacy of Cavour, Napoleon III, and Bismark had done away with all standards of international behavior. From now on, suspicion rather than trust characterized international dealings, and, though there was to be no major war for forty-three years, the threat of war was almost always present.7

The purity of Hecker’s nationalism and that of other major figures in the American Catholic Church must have been alien to the Europeans and a source of distrust.

One cannot address the Church’s call to social action without examining the immigration patterns in the United States during the nineteenth century and the country’s industrial growth. Because of the dominance of the Irish in the American Catholic hierarchy and the potato famine of 1845-51 in Ireland, one might conjecture that the Irish were the single largest group of immigrants to the United States in the nineteenth century. The facts are that during the period 1820-1910, 5,351,746 immigrants came from the German Empire, 4,212,169 from Ireland, and 3,086,356 from Italy, including Sicily and Sardinia.8

One million more Germans than Irish landed on the shores of Catholic mission America. They were European Catholics who spoke a different language. The Germans


were farmers, and craftsmen and, for the most part, sought to settle in a new
“Germantown” or New Germany. In Germany, newspapers advertised for those who
wished to settle in America among fellow Germans. One purchased one hundred fifty
acres and also received a lot in town on which to build a home. The community would
build a school where German was taught and a church where a German priest could serve
as a pastor. German immigrants wanted to maintain their culture in an agriculturally rich
environment without the war they experienced in Europe and the monarchical
government.

The Irish, by contrast, were substantially uneducated and without craft. They
came to America to survive death from starvation as a result of the potato famine. Rather
than settle in the countryside, the Irish worked and lived in the cities and experienced
firsthand the workers’ plight as a result of rapid industrialization. Unlike the Germans,
who were both Catholic and Protestant, the Irish were mostly Catholic. The Germans
were culturally structured and disciplined, while the Irish had no structure except the
Church. Despite what might appear to be the Germans’ greater advantage as settlers in
America, the Irish had the distinct advantage in that they spoke English. This advantage
was evident in the secular world of politics but also in the spiritual and political world of
the Catholic Church. Hughes, Gibbons, Kean, Corrigan, O’Connell, and Ireland in the
leadership of the American Catholic Church offset the secular Irish Tammany in New
York and later James Michael Curley in Boston at the close of the eighteenth century.
It would be unfair to characterize any ethnic group as a monolith and the Irish prelates
did not always agree.
Led by Archbishop Michael Corrigan of New York and Bishop Bernard McQuaid of Rochester, late nineteenth-century Irish bishops in the East shared with Midwest German prelates a distrust of American values. They suspected economic and social reform efforts and the labor movement of being Protestant, secularist, or socialist in spirit.¹

Three events occurring during the final twenty years of the eighteenth century are pivotal to the development of the American Catholic Church: the Third Plenary Council in 1884, the issuance of *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, and the issuance of *Testem Benevolentiae* in 1899. Historically, the American bishops convoked the Plenary Councils to respond to both administrative and doctrinal directives from Rome but the Third Plenary Council was summoned by Rome through insistence of the Congregation of Propaganda, which oversaw the mission church. In prior councils, the Archbishop of Baltimore presided as the apostolic delegate but, in yet another effort to demonstrate control of the American church, the Congregation of Propaganda succeeded in getting Pope Leo XIII to appoint Bishop Luigi Sepiacci as his representative and to preside at the council. The bishops endorsed a push to build Catholic schools and to establish the Catholic University of America and provided for the first Baltimore Catechism.

Hardly had the Third Plenary Council gained Roman approval than the first sign of tension appeared. In response to a query from Propaganda, the bishops of dioceses with sizable German populations had agreed that the German parishes could have irremoval rectors, that is, that there could be more than one parish within a given territory to provide for the pastoral care of those who did not speak English, before Propaganda could issue instructions on this, however, Father Peter Abbelin of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee arrived in Rome late in 1886 with a petition in behalf of German-American Catholics for a series of changes in the American Church. Claiming the Irish hierarchy discriminated against German-speakers, the petition asked that national parishes be established for German and

other language groups—the point already agreed upon by the American hierarchy—that children of German parentage be bound to these parishes even after reaching adulthood, and that German vicars general be appointed in dioceses where there was a German-speaking population.\(^\text{10}\)

The Congregation of Propaganda and the German-American population seem to have been trying to maintain perpetuate control over the American church by having it remain a mission church. The Congregation would lose control over the American Catholic Church in 1908 with the adoption of *Sapienti Consolio*, Pope Pius X’s reorganization constitution.

The industrial revolution was in full bloom and the American Catholic Church, trailing behind the Protestants, who were uninhibited by supervision of a European hierarchy, was dealing with appropriate responses to the plight of the worker. Hopkins and White report, without specific attribution, the following:

> As late as 1880 a Freewill Baptist minister predicted confidently that the faith which had “swept slavery from the earth, elevated women from a state of bondage,” and “weakened the grasp of despots” would ultimately triumph over every ill. War will eventually cease,” he cried. “The strong will foster the weak, capital befriend labor . . . and the spirit of mutual helpfulness pervade all the ranks of society.”\(^\text{11}\)

The American Catholic hierarchy, at the same time, was fighting for the workingman on two fronts. It supported The Knights of Labor, a labor union, which Rome condemned as a secret socialist organization based in Canada. The American Catholic Church was successful in overcoming the condemnation, and Catholics were again permitted to join

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with specific instructions regarding the oath. The Knights supported the eight-hour workday, abolition of child labor, and equality for women in the workplace. It was involved in strikes, most notably the railroad strike in Chicago, which resulted in the Haymarket Riot. The union was “A movement which shot across the horizon like a meteor and fell quickly into insignificance had attracted more than a half-million workers, appealed to working people across the divisions of sex, race and ethnicity legitimated opposition to great industrialists . . .”¹² This type of thinking came too close to class conflict and socialism and, undoubtedly, part of the antagonism that prompted Testem Benevolentiae.

Henry George, as mayor of New York, seemed to many, especially Archbishop Michael A. Corrigan, a socialist. This contention between the right and the left of the Irish hierarchy of the Church was in furtherance of the dilemma of the correct social response to the plight of the worker. “Rather than a condemnation of a socialist thinker, Gibbons recommended an encyclical on the rights of labor and thus set in motion the process that would culminate in Leo XIII’s Rerum Noverum.”¹³

By every account, Rerum Novarum is the rubric for Catholic social doctrine, and its publication was the fulcrum of this most exciting period of the Catholic Church in America.


Catholic social doctrine as such did not exist before the end of the nineteenth century, which is not to say that the Catholic Church expressed no official interest in, or concern for, the world outside the sanctuary until Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, “On the Condition of the Working Man,” in 1891. But not until Leo XIII did the Catholic Church begin to articulate in a consciously systematic manner a theology of *social justice* and all that it implies.\(^\text{14}\)

The document attempts to expose and examine the concerns of prelates and politicians alike regarding the rights and responsibilities of the nineteenth-century worker. The most immanent fear expressed in *Rerum Novarum* is socialism, but the most immanent concern is the well-being of the workingman. After defining the problems of the day, the document immediately addresses the idea of the right of private property ownership.

To remedy these wrongs the socialists, working on the poor man’s envy of the rich, are striving to do away with private property and contend that individual possessions should become the common property of all, to be administered by the State or by municipal bodies. They hold that by thus transferring property from private individuals to the community, the present mischievous state of things will be set to rights, inasmuch as each citizen will then get his fair share of whatever there is to enjoy. But their contentions are so clearly powerless to end the controversy that were they carried into effect the working man himself would be among the first to suffer. They are, moreover, emphatically unjust, for they would rob the lawful possessor, distort the functions of the State, and create utter confusion in the community.

And later in *Rerum Novarum*:

Hence, it is clear that the main tenet of socialism, community of goods, must be utterly rejected, since it only injures those whom it would seem meant to benefit, is directly contrary to the natural rights of mankind, and would introduce confusion and disorder into the commonweal. The first and most fundamental principle, therefore, if one would undertake to alleviate the condition of the masses, must be with the inviolability of private property. This being established, we proceed to show where the remedy sought for must be found.\(^\text{15}\)

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It was necessary for Leo to dispatch the socialists on the basis of philosophical illegitimacy and not on that of a theistic disagreement only. The socialists, or those accused of socialism, such as the Knights of Labor, after all, were already proposing solutions to the problems experienced by the working classes. Having laid out a cogent argument against socialism, Leo delineated the wrongs of the exploitation of children’s and women’s labor, the appropriate remuneration for labor, proper sanitation in the workplace, the right to strike as an absolute last recourse to injustices in the workplace, and the obligation of the state to provide, without superseding the rights of the family, for the welfare of the poor when necessary, by enacting laws to protect the working class. In this amazing document, he admonishes against violence in strikes and class hatred and reinforces the right of private ownership. The author was concerned with political instability, in Europe especially, and the conflict of emerging governments’ transitions from monarchies to republics and their inability to deal with the fallout of the industrial revolution. And, more important, Leo XIII was concerned about the workingman. He offered balance to preserve peace while addressing the issues of the day. To those who were responsible for safeguarding the public welfare, Leo offered this salutation:

Moved by your authority, venerable brethren, and quickened by your example, they should never cease to urge upon men of every class, upon the high-placed as well as the lowly, the Gospel doctrines of Christian life; by every means in their power they must strive to secure the good of the people; and above all must earnestly cherish in themselves, and try to arouse in others, charity, the mistress and the queen of virtues.  

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For the most part, the American Catholic Church was not afraid that socialism would erode its resolve to minister to the poor and working classes disadvantaged by the industrial revolution. Its unbridled faith in the American system of government was not shaken by *Rerum Novarum*, and Leo’s call to social action was welcomed by prelates and priests alike.

Monsignor John A. Ryan recalls in his autobiography *Social Doctrine in Action* that Archbishop Ireland “preached a sermon on ‘The Church and the Age’” on October 18, 1893.¹⁷

The great theologians of the Church lay the foundation of political democracy which today attains its perfect form. They prove that all political power comes from God through the people, that kings and princes are the people’s delegates and that when rulers become tyrants the inalienable right of revolution belongs to the people. The Church is at home under all forms of government. The one condition of the legitimacy of a form of government, in the eyes of the Church, is that it be accepted by the people. The Church has never said that she prefers one form of government over another. But, so far as I may from my own thoughts interpret the principles of the Church, I say that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people is, more than any other, the polity under which the Catholic Church, the church of the people, breathes air most congenial to mind and heart.

It is an age of battlings for social justice to all men, for the right of all men to live in the frugal comfort becoming rational creatures. Very well! Is it not Catholic doctrine that birth into the world is man’s title to a sufficiency of the things of the world? Is it not the plea for social justice and social well-being the loud outburst of the cry which has ever been going up from the bosom of the Church since the words were spoken by her Founder: “Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice and all these things shall be added unto you”? It is not sufficiently understood that the principles which underlie the social movement of the times in its legitimate demands are constantly taught in schools of Catholic theology; as, for instance, the principle which, to the surprise of his fellow-countrymen,

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Cardinal Manning proclaimed: that in case of extreme necessity, one may use, as far as it is needed to save life, the property of others. We have, of late, been so accustomed to lock up our teachings in seminary and sanctuary that when they appear in active evolution in the broad arena of life they are not recognized by Catholics: nay, are even feared and disowned by them.\textsuperscript{18}

It was two years after the publishing of \textit{Rerum Novarum} and five years after Hecker’s death that Archbishop Ireland delivered the sermon excerpted above. It was the continuation of the evolution of American Catholic thought on social responsibilities within the American system of government espoused in Paulist publications authored by Hecker, his fellow priests, and Orestes Brownson. Hecker, it must be noted, was also accused of bypassing Rome in his willingness to build upon the commonality of Catholicism and Protestantism rather than comply with a harsher demand to bring the Protestants into compliance with the orthodoxy of the Catholic Church.

Dedicated to the task of converting American Protestants and of bringing before the American public the claims of the Church in the most congenial manner consistent with orthodoxy, these men [the Paulists] were uniquely fitted for their task. Not only were they converts themselves and expert missionaries, all except Hecker of old American lineage, they also shared the conviction that in America the Church had a unique opportunity both to reach the mass of people and to prove beyond cavil the compatibility of Catholicism and democracy.\textsuperscript{19}

And it was this mindset, characterized as “Americanism” or in some instances “Heckerism,” that provoked a reply from the Catholic Church in Europe. It was the zeal and independence of the American Catholic Church in its acceptance of the separation of

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{18}Ibid.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{19}James Edmund Roohan, \textit{American Catholics and the Social Question: 1865-1900} (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 120.
\end{quote}
church and state and Hecker’s style of evangelism that threatened the Europeans. In 1895, Leo XIII addressed the American Catholic Church in the apostolic letter *Longinqua Oceani*.

While praising the progress of the Church under the protection of “equity of the laws,” the pontiff warned that “it would be very erroneous to draw the conclusion that in America is to be sought the type of the most desirable status of the Church, or that it would be universally lawful or expedient for State and Church to be, as is in America, dismembered and divorced.” While the pope stopped short of stating that there should be a union of church and state, he did say that the Church “would bring forth more abundant fruits if, in addition to liberty, she enjoyed the favor of the laws and patronage of public authority.”

There is no uncertainty in this language that a comeuppance was on its way. Finally, four years after *Longinqua Oceani*, the conclusion that the evangelism of American democracy was the most suited for Catholicism was too much for the European constituency of the Catholic Church. The great Hecker controversy came about through an erroneous and abbreviated French translation of the preface of a Hecker biography written by Hecker’s friend Father Walter Elliott. “Up to this time, the faith in American democracy aside, Father Hecker was known internationally as a mystic and a missionary with the zeal of St. Francis Xavier. It was said of Pope Pius IX that he might one day canonize one of these Yankees [Hecker and his early Paulist campanions]. . . .”

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20 It is interesting to note that de Tocqueville, a French Catholic, observes that “America is the most democratic country in the world, and it is at the same time (according to reports worthy of belief) the country in which the Roman Catholic religion makes most progress.”


Ultimately, as a result of the deletions and misinterpretations of the preface of Elliott’s book, Hecker was accused of the

... dilution of Catholic doctrine in order to attract converts; a desire to wrest control of the church from the “Latins” and give it to the Americans; a preference for the “natural” over the “supernatural” virtues; the superiority of the “active” over the “passive” virtues and of a life of “perfection in the world” over the monastic vocation.\(^{23}\)

It all resulted in Leo XIII’s issuance of *Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae* on January 22, 1899. In firmer language than *Longinqua Oceani*, the pope lets his American prelates know that while Rome and America are continents apart, the long arm of the Church must be recognized. There was no absolute demand to censure, but it was an implicit next step if the American Catholic Church continued as it was.

But if this is to be so understood that the doctrines which have been adverted to above are not only indicated, but exalted, there can be no manner of doubt that our venerable brethren, the bishops of America, would be the first to repudiate and condemn it as being most injurious to themselves and to their country. For it would give rise to the suspicion that there are among you some who conceive and would have the Church in America to be different from what it is in the rest of the world.\(^{24}\)

The Catholic Church in America at the end of the nineteenth century, informed by *Rerum Novarum* and enabled by democracy, was actively addressing the social issues of the country. It thrived in the incubator of the Catholic University of America, where John A. Ryan and others studied, taught, and advanced the cause of Catholic social doctrine.

\(^{23}\)Ibid., 98.

\(^{24}\)Pecci, *Testem Benevolentiae*. (accessed October 2, 2010).
The great Christian call to action for relief from the plight of a changing world was woven into the fabric of American culture when John Steinbeck conceived his novel. There are, then, two potential sources for this influence on him when he created characters who respond to others in a manner consistent with the social teachings of Christians. They are Steinbeck’s familial Protestant background and its Social Gospel and Tom Collins, who was reared in an exclusively Catholic environment and imbued with Catholic social doctrine.
CHAPTER 4

THE SOURCE OF THE GOSPEL

Critics have analyzed John Steinbeck’s works, especially *The Grapes of Wrath*, from so many directions that it would seem that scholars have not come close to reaching consensus on the origin of his moral philosophy and, by extension, his characters. One critic, John J. Han, covers the spectrum:

Frederick I. Carpenter and Arnold L. Goldsmith, for example, see him [Steinbeck] as a Transcendentalist philosopher. Martin Shockley contends that Steinbeck’s philosophy is fundamentally Christian although his religious vision is more in line with Unitarianism and the transcendentalist philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman than with orthodox Christianity. Chester E. Eisinger finds Jeffersonian agrarianism in Steinbeck’s fiction. Freeman Champney, among others, considers Steinbeck a pro-communist based on a sociological reading of the works *In Dubious Battle*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*. Charles C. Walcutt and Alfred Kazin view Steinbeck as a naturalist whose ideology is informed by evolutionary theory. According to Joseph Fontenrose, however, Steinbeck is a romanticist, “an heir of the Romantic movement.”

John Timmerman’s “John Steinbeck: An Ethics of Fiction” calls Steinbeck a deontological moralist whose work manifests “an acute sense of right and wrong behavior.” Others have labeled him a humanist, primitivist, crypto-Nazi, mystic, or pragmatist. ¹

Han rejects the philosophical descriptors above and ascribes utilitarian ethics to Steinbeck and his characters. I am more inclined to follow the path laid out by Professor Martin Shockley in an essay included in *Steinbeck and His Critics*, ² but the question that


begs to be explored is how John Steinbeck came to assume the Christian philosophy for his characters in *The Grapes of Wrath*.

The Steinbeck genealogical tree reveals that John was the descendent of Irish and German immigrants of the mid-nineteenth century. One of his biographers describes John’s maternal grandfather, Samuel Hamilton, as having come from “the town of Ballykelly in northern Ireland, a man of solid Orange stock,” who married an Irishwoman by the name of Elizabeth Fagen in New York City in 1849.\(^3\) It was on the Hamiltons’ ranch some sixty miles from Salinas, California, that John spent time as a child.

The Steinbeck side of the family had a much different journey to California. John Adolph Grossteinbeck, John Steinbeck’s paternal grandfather, pursued a missionary path from Germany to Jerusalem in 1852 with his brother, sister, and brother-in-law. The Grossteinbecks were devout Lutherans who rode on horseback to the Holy Land to convert Jews. It was not a singularly German Protestant ideal. The Dickson family of Leominster, Massachusetts, into which John Adolf married, preceded the Grossteinbecks to Palestine. John Steinbeck’s maternal great-grandfather had a plan.

Great-grandfather Dickson’s plan to convert the Jews was simple, but based more on religious zeal than on a practical knowledge of either the Jews or the Holy Land. He would acquire some land, and through the application of scientific farming methods, make the desert bloom. This example would teach the Jews how to raise their standard of living, and in the euphoria of the new-found wealth, they would be converted to an appreciation of the New Testament.\(^4\)

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John Adolph married Almira Dickson, the niece of the patriarch of the Dickson missionary family, at the Mount of Olives. Everything went downhill from there. John Adolf’s brother was murdered, great-grandmother Dickson was raped, and the ill-conceived agricultural conversion plan failed. The Dicksons and the Steinbecks (John Adolph had simplified his name) sailed to the United States and settled in Massachusetts. It is no wonder that John Steinbeck became a storyteller. His grandfather’s life story, his journey, was more than someone could make up. Restless in Massachusetts, John Adolph moved his family to Florida just before the Civil War, where John Ernst Steinbeck, John Steinbeck’s father, was born in Florida. John Adolph was conscripted into the Confederate Army; he deserted and escaped across Confederate lines and returned to Massachusetts. He and the Dicksons successfully petitioned permission for Almira and her children to travel to the North. Sometime after the war, John Adolph and Almira and their children migrated to California. John Ernst grew up in Salinas and became a manager of a flour mill, his own feed and grain store, and, finally a sugar refinery. While employed at the flour mill, John Ernst married Olive Hamilton, the daughter of one of the signers of the charter for the City of Salinas.5

The importance of recounting this family history is to glean from it what aspects of John Steinbeck’s upbringing contributed to the development of his Christian philosophy as espoused in The Grapes of Wrath. The influence of Olive, John’s mother, is inconclusive. “One of the great problems for young Steinbeck was that his father had

5This abbreviated family history has been drawn from accounts from both Parini and Benson.
put a wall up between himself and his children. ‘He was a distant sort of man,’ his daughter says. ‘I think Mother was more important for John and the rest of us. Though she was strict, you could feel close to her.” Benson concludes that “unlike her mother, Olive was a creature of society rather than religion.” Yet in describing Steinbeck’s mother, Parini quotes a woman who knew Olive that “she was always interested in cases of poverty or injustice, and she took these things personally. She thought of herself, and was, one of those old-fashioned moral people.” Benson asserts the following:

There was a curious split in the foundations of his [Steinbeck’s] imagination produced by his early experiences with literature: on the one hand, there was a deep attachment to Romance, to the fantastic, magical and adventurous; on the other, there was a deeply ingrained feeling for the harsh judgments of fundamentalist religion. The imagery and implications of Pilgrim’s Progress were very real to him, and the image of a stern grandfather (a memory he could not have possibly had) reading solemnly and with all finality from the Bible came back periodically to haunt him. . . . This split was reflected in Steinbeck’s perception of his mother’s theology, which he declared was “a curious mixture of Irish fairies and Old Testament Jehovah.”

Neither biographer gives readers an account of John’s religious training. There is a photograph in a book by Jackson Benson published four years after his definitive biography that shows Steinbeck at the age of about nine years old, dressed in a cassock and surplus and walking with others behind a crucifer and in front of girls dressed similarly. There is no text describing young Steinbeck; he is identified only as an “altar

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6Parini, A Biography, 11.

7Benson, True Adventures, 17.

8Parini, A Biography, 12.

9Benson, True Adventures, 20.
There is evidence that the photo was taken at the Protestant Episcopal Church in Salinas. There is a signed and dated hymnal “John Steinbeck Feb:27_1916” at the John Steinbeck Library, Salinas, California. Steinbeck’s father was a Mason and his mother was a member of the Order of the Eastern Star an offshoot of the Masons for women. The nature of both of those organizations leans toward fraternity and civic projects rather than the religious tenets on which they are based.

Both Parini and Benson recount a story of a young college student attending Christmas services at the Methodist church of a friend.

One of the chief anecdotes he [Robert Bennett] recounts has to do with Steinbeck’s visit to a Methodist church on Christmas Day under the aegis of Bennett’s parents, who were extremely pious. The preacher, a garrulous man, went on and on about the “spiritual hunger” that was felt throughout the land. Steinbeck muttered under his breath that this was all a “lot of crap.” Unable to contain himself at last, he rose to his feet and shouted: “Yes, you all look satisfied here, while outside the world begs for a crust of bread or a chance to earn it! Feed the body and the soul will take care of itself!”

Late in Steinbeck’s life he recommended the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius to both Adlai Stevenson with whom he corresponded regularly and to Jacqueline Kennedy who had asked Steinbeck to write John F. Kennedy’s biography.

I had from my father a tiny volume of Marcus Aurelius, the sovereign Meditations. It was pocket size and had been so pocketed that the title was worn

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13 Ibid., 29.
off and the edges of the covers soft as sponge. In the insanity of divorce, my wife who was not insane kept all my books. I got to brooding about that one. A new copy would not do, and one day, visiting my boys, I stole it from the shelf and stuffed it in my pocket. I guess it is the only thing I remember to have stolen since apples long ago. And I feel little guilt. In the fly leaf in my father’s hand is written—“John, when you are troubled, open this anywhere.”

It is reflective of Steinbeck’s compassion that he fervently wished to console the President’s widow in February 1964.

As we all do—I have need, and consider the New Testament many times. And it has seemed to me that Jesus lived a singularly undramatic life—a straight line life without deviation or doubt. And then we come to that heart-breaking moment on the cross when He cried “Lama Sabachthani,” In that moment of doubt we are all related to Him. And when you said you had questions to ask, please remember that terrible question Jesus asked: “My lord, wherefor hast thou forsaken me?” In that moment he was everyone—Everyone!

I have looked for a Marcus Aurelius and the ones I have found are big and pretentious. I want one for you, small as a breviary like my father’s which he gave to me—small enough to put in your purse.

John Steinbeck, as part of a checkup with his new doctor in 1964 prepared what then was called a medical passport; it was an inventory and history of his life. He wrote a remarkably candid, if not maudlin, letter to his physician Dr. Denton Sayer Cox. In it, Steinbeck reflects more closely a belief system that is demonstrably different from the one he related to Mrs. Kennedy only five days earlier. “Now finally, I am not religious so that I have no apprehension of a hereafter, either a hope of reward or fear of punishment. It is not a matter of belief. It is what I feel to be true from my experience, observation

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and simple tissue feeling.”\textsuperscript{16} In spite of his disavowal of religious convictions, on the event of his death on December 20, 1968, arrangements were made for his funeral at St. James Episcopal Church in Manhattan and in accordance with his wishes. Benson reports that Steinbeck told Elaine, his wife: “I want a Church of England funeral service—I want the ‘I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord.’ I don’t want a bunch of people getting together for a memorial telling yarns about me.”\textsuperscript{17}

Robert J. DeMott has compiled a catalog of books in Steinbeck’s library. The publication dates of the books allow a reader to determine which books could not have been on his book shelf at the time he was writing \textit{The Grapes of Wrath}. They were the books whose publication dates preceded 1938. There were three Bibles, \textit{The Upanishads}, \textit{The Confessions of St. Augustine}, \textit{The Vedic Hymns}, \textit{The Bhagavad-gita}, \textit{Tao Teh Ching}, \textit{Essays on Zen Buddhism}, and his father’s copy of \textit{Pilgrim’s Progress}.\textsuperscript{18} There were works by both Emerson and Thoreau that would have informed Steinbeck of the concept of the “oversoul” as previously alluded to by Han. He had nothing on his shelves about Christian social doctrine.\textsuperscript{19} Nor did he have any books by Walter Rauschenbusch, who

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., 801.
\item\textsuperscript{17}Benson, \textit{True Adventures}, 1037.
\item\textsuperscript{18}DeMott, \textit{Steinbeck’s Reading}, 9, 13, 14, 19, 67, 108, 114.
\item\textsuperscript{19}In search of an early and different thesis, I investigated the possibility of writing about the concept that history does not repeat itself but replicates itself. A now deceased undergraduate professor of mine at Southern Illinois University, Nicholas Joost, who did his undergraduate work at Georgetown University, significantly influenced my choice of topic. Another friend suggested that I read Mircea Eliade’s \textit{The Myth of the Eternal Return}. When I pulled the book off the shelf of Launginer Library, I was astounded to find Professor Joost’s signature on the frontispiece. Mrs. Joost donated the professor’s library and papers to Georgetown. So I was likewise astounded to see that very book on John Steinbeck’s bookshelf.
\end{itemize}
became the recognized leader of the Protestant Social Gospel movement after the publication of *Christianity and the Social Crisis* in 1912. Nor was there a copy of *Rerum Novarum*.

One resource that did not appear on Steinbeck’s book shelf was Tom Collins, who was raised by nuns and educated by priests who not only taught him but were of the very order under which Isaac Hecker studied before being ordained. Steinbeck’s dedication, ‘To Tom Who Lived It’ reached beyond the firsthand interaction of the Okies. Tom lived the life of the Catholic social doctrine of the time. On February 22, 1936, Collins wrote in the weekly Kern County Migratory Camp report that the prospect of employment for one hundred residents of the camp was nonexistent. The pay rate for pruning, ditch cleaning, irrigating, tree spraying, and brush burning was twenty-five cents an hour or ten dollars a week. One could earn the same from cutting wood or pick olives for three dollars for six days of work.

In all it has been a very discouraging week for the campers. Men accustomed to hard work, willing to work have been thrown out of employment. They all agree that work will not be available until the later part of April or the first week of May. Those eligible for relief have refused to make application so long as there are beans and sow belly in their food larder. The very thought of relief bows down the head of the biggest and the strongest. Evenings, as they gather around for counsel with the camp management they discuss this problem. On their way to bed they are determined to go to town and make relief application. The morning finds them again undecided and they burn the now precious gasoline supply and roam the country in search of work at any price. In the evening they again go through the same ordeal only to start out again in search of work the following morning.20

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Yet with the burden of being the single government representative in the camp and having to give solace and advice to the migrants, Collins also found time for the children. “Evenings, finds the camp manager within a circle of small children while he tells bedtime stories; sometimes supervising the children in folk plays, hop step and jump games, etc., etc.”

Collins had a keen eye for the mood of the campers. In his report, he quoted on of his residents in a section titled “Bits of Migratory Wisdom”: “Kaint see how cum folks kinda hate us migrants. The Good Book says as how Jesus went from place to place when he wus on erf. Aint it so Jesus wus a migrant!” Finally, Collins wrote his conclusion for the week ending February 22, 1936. “So we see that as the unemployment situation grows acute, the minds of migrants turn to religion and fear of hunger. To them religion is their only source for emotional outlet. Without it they would be a miserable lot. It is their duty in time of work and plenty. It is their joy in times of distress and want.”

These reports do not measurably improve through the year, 1936, except that the number of residents increased fourfold, to more than four hundred fifty. And there are some of the same reports Steinbeck took with him as resource material after his visit to the camp in August 1936. A greater insight to Tom Collins might be gained by reading some of his writing other than these reports. While gathering research for his biography on Steinbeck, Benson discovered the existence of an unpublished autobiographical novel

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21 Kern, 5.

22 Ibid., 8.

23 Ibid.
by Collins. It was written with the support and encouragement of Steinbeck, who wrote the forward to it. The novel was first called *Maverick University*, changed to *Oklatopia*, then to *They Die to Live*, and finally, *Bringing in the Sheaves*.\(^{24}\) To the best of Benson’s knowledge and despite his attempts to convince Collins’ daughter Mary Alice to donate the novel to a library or university, the work appears to be lost.\(^{25}\) Panini quotes George Sterns as saying, “There was always about Tom something of the missionary.”\(^{26}\) In *Bringing in the Sheaves*, as reported by Benson, Collins captured that missionary in himself in an unpretentious report of a trip that he and Steinbeck had made.

When we reached the flooded areas we found John’s old pie truck useless, so we set out on foot. We walked most of the first night and we were very tired. . . . For forty-eight hours, and without food or sleep, we worked among the sick and the half-starved people, dragging some from under trees to a different sort of shelter, dragging others from torn and ragged tents, floored with inches of water, stagnant water, to the questionable shelter of a higher piece of ground. We couldn’t speak to one another because we were too tired, yet we worked together as cogs in an intricate piece of machinery. [At two o’clock in the morning they both just collapsed in the muddy fields and slept.]

. . . I found John lying on his back. He was a mass of mud and slime. His face was a mucky mask punctuated with eyes, a nose and a mouth. He was close beside me, so I knew it was John. How long we had slept in that mire we knew not. . . . [It began to rain again. Ahead of them, some yards away, they spied another tent.] We frightened the little children we found in the tent, the two little children. . . . We must have looked like men from some far-away planet to those two children, for we frightened them. And the bulging eyes of those two children, the sunken cheeks—the huge lump on the bed—they frightened John and me. Inside the tent was dry because it was on high land, but it was an island in a sea of mud and water all around it. Everything under that bit of canvas was dry—everything—the make-shift stove was without heat; all shapes of cans were

\(^{24}\) Benson, *Weedpatch*, 207.

\(^{25}\) Email from Jackson Benson to author, October 15, 2009.

\(^{26}\) Panini, *A Biography*, 179.
empty; pans, pots and kettles—all were dry. Everything, for there was not a morsel of food—not a crumb of bread.

“Mommy has been like that a long time. She won’t get up. Mommy won’t listen to us. She won’t get up.” Such was the greeting cried to us by the two little children.

Mommy couldn’t get up. She was the lump on the old bed. Mommy was ill and she hadn’t eaten for some time. She had skimped and skimped so that the children would have a bite. . .

“How far is it to the nearest store? Is there an old car near here? Is the store East or West?” But the children only stared as John threw the questions to them. Well did he know that the big food trucks could never get off the roads and travel two miles or more over the muddy, drowned fields to that tent! So John faded into the early morning. . . .

[Sometime later John returned.] John and I sat on the dirt floor. We sat there and the five of us ate the food which John had obtained from the little store some muddy distance away. We sat there and ate a bite—a bite that was a banquet. . . .

The names and ages of our new-found friends for delivery to the government agency which would succor the isolated family, we were off again to find other mothers and children out there in that vast wilderness of mud and deep water.27

“The interest of the Collins manuscript rests almost entirely on its contribution to the history of an important novel and its glimpses of an important writer. . . .But while the narrative helps us to understand better the novelist and his novel, it does not contribute very much, I’m afraid, to our appreciation of Collins.”28 Collins went on ministering to the unfortunate, and Steinbeck went home to write and recover from the trip. He did return for another short trip, though. Steinbeck started Working Days: The Journals of The Grapes of Wrath on February 7, 1938, and did not make another entry until May 31.

27 Benson, Weedpatch, 221-23. One is grateful for Benson’s preservation of a portion of the unpublished autobiographical novel by Thomas A. Collins, Bringing in the Sheaves.

28 Ibid., 209.
He mentions the need to go to the flooded area of California in the first entry: "there are the starving people of Visalia and Nipomo. I really don’t care about the moving picture [Of Mice and Men]. Really don’t—but those people who are starving—what can be done?"\textsuperscript{29} However, Steinbeck did not reflect the experience of the trips to Visalia in his \textit{Journal} again. Likewise, there is no mention after the trips in \textit{A Life in Letters}. The conclusion of some critics is that his final chapter of the novel describes the events in Visalia\textsuperscript{30} The reports from Arvin Migrant Camp for this period are not extant, so one is unable to read what Tom Collins did next, except that he went back to his work as the manager of Weedpatch and that was the mindset and personality of the man. “Only by being totally sincere in his belief that each human being had worth could he have lived with the migrants day in and day out, giving them such support.”\textsuperscript{31}

The first Farm Security Administration migrant labor camps were identified by the agency as “demonstration” camps.\textsuperscript{32} Collins, the first manager, was overwhelmingly successful and was asked to train new managers for other camps. Benson suggests that Collins’ foundational motivation was a faith in Jacksonian democracy. “Collins had a great faith in a kind of basic, Jacksonian democracy which he felt was not only the


\textsuperscript{30}Benson, \textit{Weedpatch}, 209.

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Ibid.}, 169.

\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Ibid.}, 171.
natural preference of the migrants, but, indeed, the natural condition toward which all
men aspired or should aspire."

Jacksonian Democracy also covered new developments in education, prison
reform, labor relations and early humanitarian efforts, using common reason as
the best judge. Jackson opposed debtors’ prisons and fought the power of large
banks, while supporting slaveholders. Some people saw him as a spokesman for
populism and the development of democracy.

But Jackson’s democracy could not have been further from Collins’ democratically run
migrant camps.

The world is governed too much, one Jacksonian allegedly said. Opponents of
artificial distinctions and advocates of greater popular participation in politics, the
Jackson men identified themselves with the movement toward more equality. Yet
they believed in equality only for white men; they were far less charitable toward
the Indian and the Negro than their ‘aristocratic’ foes. Jacksonian Democracy
was not ‘leveling’ in the European sense, having no desire to pull down men of
wealth to a common plane; but it wanted a fair chance for every man to level up.
In the states, Jackson Democrats sometimes, but not invariably, favored free
public education and a somewhat cautious humanitarianism, but dissociated
themselves from most of the ‘isms’ of the period, such as abolitionism and
feminism. In general, they shared that contempt for intellect which is one of the
unlovely traits of democracy everywhere.

“Jackson was no champion of the poor, or even the common man.” Tom Collins’
humanitarianism was unfettered, and robust, and he was the exemplar of the champion of
the poor. Collins did support a democratic model for the migrant camps, but the model

33 Ibid., 191.

They’re Saying and What It Really Means* (Los Angeles: General Publishing Group, 1994), 149.

35 Samuel Eliot Morison, Henry Steele Commager, and William E. Leuchtenburg, *The Growth of

36 Ibid., 421.
came from something closer to him than Jackson; it came some twenty-five years earlier from the tutelage of Dr. Victor Cullen in the administration and organization of the tuberculosis sanatorium where Collins spent nine years as patient, employee, and resident. The same medical superintendent of the Maryland Tuberculosis Sanatorium, nominated by the Cardinal Archbishop of Baltimore for the Order of Saint Gregory and knighted by Pope Pius XI, organized a community where the patients contributed significantly to the everyday management of the facility. Collins, as mentioned earlier, worked as a clerk in the pharmacy and the post office. Others worked in the gardens and various shops at the facility. Recovered patients were trained as nurses. Even the weekly reports that Collins wrote for the Farm Security Administration about the Arvin Migrant Camp and for which he is so highly praised by Benson, Parini, and even by Steinbeck, have similarities to the detailed reports of Dr. Cullen. Both Dr. Cullen’s reports and Collins’s reports identify the geographic origins of the patients/residents, their occupations, and their age, and gender. Both show the movements of patients/residents in and out of the facilities over a period of time. (See Appendix 3 and Appendix 6).

The suggestion that Collins’s faith in Jacksonian Democracy motivated him to succeed in the camps ignores the life of the man.\textsuperscript{37} Collins was inculcated from infancy with the evolutionary development of a Catholic social doctrine primed by \textit{Rerum Novarum}. Even a year before Collins’ birth, a young seminarian was impressed with the

\textsuperscript{37}Jackson Benson was in no position to consider, in detail, the earlier life of Tom Collins in concluding that Collins had “a great faith in a kind of basic, Jacksonian democracy,” because he did not have the details reported in this thesis.
import of the encyclical and the role of government in dispensing social justice.

Monsignor John A. Ryan’s assessment of *Rerum Novarum* anticipates an obligation of government to respond in just the way the Farm Security Administration and Tom Collins did at the Arvin Migrant Camp. Ryan recalls:

> I recollect very clearly the portion of the encyclical to which my own essay devoted most time and emphasis. . . .For example, the Holy Father declared:

> “Whenever the general interest or any particular class suffers, or is threatened with evils, which can in no other way be met, the public authority must step in to meet them. . . .The richer population have [sic] many ways of protecting themselves, and stand less in need of help from the state; those who are badly off have no resources of their own to fall back upon, and must chiefly rely upon the assistance of the state.”  

Anyone who seeks to really know Tom Collins is disadvantaged by being unable to read more of what Collins wrote, especially his fiction. Subject to the review of undiscovered writings and information on Collins, one must credit Benson’s assessments.

While Steinbeck’s idealism was usually moderated by a rather skeptical view of individual human nature, Collins’ idealism often lapsed into an uncritical sentimentality. Collins’ camp reports reveal a vision of the migrants as a sort of displaced American yeomanry, blessed with old-time American virtues, but misunderstood and abused for a rural simplicity which clashed with the sophistication of their new surroundings. There was no doubt more truth in this view than in the contrary position which held that the migrants were little better than animals and need not be treated any better. Nevertheless, Collins’ position in reaction to the abuse of the migrants which he resented so deeply was in its own way extreme . . .

Benson was correct in attributing Collins’ commitment to the migrants as a matter of faith, a faith gleaned from the obligations learned in the Christian doctrine class at St.

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38 Ryan, *Social Doctrine*, 44.

Charles’ College Seminary and a faith put into practice by Dr. Victor Cullen at the Maryland Tuberculosis Sanatorium. What Benson saw in Collins’ writing was idealism collapsed into sentimentality translated in real life to compassion. It was not compassion for the workers moved by a sense of socialist doctrine. Collins’ camp reports show no leaning in that direction, nor is there a socialist mindset in the brief excerpt of Collins’ unpublished novel.

For Collins, the camps were indeed a “demonstration.” They gave flesh to Collins’ vision of man’s possible social perfection, wherein all men were ‘good neighbors,” responsive to each other’s needs, and responsible citizens in a democratic society which was responsive to the general welfare. Some of these ideas held by Collins no doubt rubbed off on Steinbeck, for good or for ill, although there is no way of telling how much, and there is little in Collins’ vision that was original to Collins except in its application to the migrants. What we are dealing with here is not so much influence—Steinbeck was his own man and had his own ideas and perceptions—as the transmission and reinforcement of feelings and attitudes by the man who Steinbeck felt was closest to the Dust Bowl migrants. In this sense, the most important contribution by Collins to The Grapes of Wrath may well have been to the spirit at the heart of the novel, rather than to the details and color of its surface.40

Martin Staples Shockley makes an irrefutable argument for the Christian motif in his Christian Symbolism in The Grapes of Wrath. And Jim Casey makes much of the Holy Spirit in his thoughtful formulation of God and religious belief. But aside from the Christian imagery, which is Steinbeck’s very own creation, “. . . the most important contribution by Collins to The Grapes of Wrath may well have been to the spirit at the

40 Ibid., 191.
heart of the novel, rather than to the details and color of its surface.\textsuperscript{41} That spirit was Collins’s following of Catholic social doctrine

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid.
CHAPTER 5

REVELATIONS

Where did Steinbeck derive the Christian moral base, the spirit of the Social Gospel or Catholic social doctrine for the book and his characters in *The Grapes of Wrath*? How did Steinbeck’s characters come to respond to the temporal plight of others in a manner consistent with the characters’ views of Jesus’s response to the same situations? That the Social Gospel and *Rerum Novarum* were principally, but not exclusively, directed toward urban, disadvantaged workers and families does not obviate the application of the tenets of those teachings to the refugees from Oklahoma. The distinction that the Protestant Social Gospel is a strictly scripturally based movement as opposed to the doctrinally based Catholic social doctrine is important only in searching for the source of the development of Steinbeck’s characters. For the purposes of this discussion, the Protestant and the Catholic movements might be characterized as a unified response to societal needs; the movements are Christian social action. The nineteenth century advent of both movements was a result of the deplorable conditions of laborers stemming from the industrial revolution. Leo XIII’s concern for the workers was put forth in the well balanced encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. In instructing Catholics, Leo had another overriding concern that some might turn to socialism to address the problems of the times. It is interesting that the prominent American advocates of Christian social action had no fear of socialism.

[Walter] Rauschenbusch’s critique of capitalism, especially in *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (1907), which brought him national prominence, and *Christianizing the Social Order* (1912) identified him as one of the Social Gospel’s most radical thinkers. He believed that socialism was spiritually and
morally congruent with Christianity. Although he never joined the Socialist party, he spoke and wrote under its auspices (and voted for its candidates).¹

And on the Catholic side, Ronald C. White, Jr. quotes Egal Feldman, from “The Social Gospel and the Jews,” American Jewish Historical Quarterly, 58, no. 3: March, 1969:

John A. Ryan, in 1906 a young teacher fresh from his doctoral studies at Catholic University of America, who was destined to become the outstanding Social Gospeler of American Catholicism, published A Living Wage: Its Ethical and Economic Aspects. The book became, as one commentator put it, Uncle Tom’s Cabin (or he might better have put it, the In His Steps) of the movement for minimum wage laws. . . . Untroubled by socialism, Ryan argued convincingly that “the average family of that day . . . could not live decently on less than six hundred dollars a year and that at least sixty percent of adult male wage earners received less than this sum.”²

Egal Feldman’s linkage of the Social Gospel movement and Catholic social doctrine through his observation and comparison of Ryan’s work to In His Steps is most apt. In His Steps: “What Would Jesus Do? was published in 1897 and is still in print. “Sheldon was an important figure in the social gospel movement, especially for his role in bringing contemporary social concerns to the person in the pew.”³

There is a distinction between merely a Christian motif in the story and the heart of it all. Professor Carpenter identifies the motif in describing Casy as the Christ figure. There is linear imagery to support this motif. The reader is introduced to Casy and the preacher tells of his metaphoric wandering in the desert. “I went off alone, an’ I sat and

¹The Oxford Companion to United States History, 1st ed., s.v. “Rauschenbusch.”

²White, The Social Gospel, 220.

figured. The spirit’s strong in me, on’y it ain’t the same.”

Casy’s message is a new covenant and is the same message Jesus gave in the second great commandant, love thy neighbor. “I says, ‘What’s this call, this spirit?’ an’ I says, It’s love. I love people so much I’m fit to bust, sometimes.”

Carpenter reminds us that Casy voluntarily gives himself up to the police for the transgressions of others and that Casy’s last words were “You don’ know what you’re a-doin’”

The heart of it all is Catholic social doctrine. If Catholic social doctrine has ever been reduced to a mantra, it is an echo of the 1884 Third Plenary Council in Baltimore through the catechism that came out of the meeting. It is what became known as the Baltimore Catechism. In the nineteenth lesson of an edition published in 1886, the question is asked:

“Q. What are the chief corporal works of mercy? A. The chief corporal works of mercy are seven: To feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to ransom the captive, to harbor the harborless, to visit the sick, and to bury the dead.”

Tom Collins knew these corporal works of mercy. He learned them in every Catholic institution he attended from grade school to high school to seminary. Then Collins saw them put into action through the compassionate work of Dr. Victor Cullen. Collins

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4 Steinbeck, Grapes, 28.

5 Ibid., 32.

6 Ibid., 527.

clearly lived his life, to the extent that we are able to know, under the requirements of the corporal works of mercy. Ma Joad, likewise, put the works into action.

It is Ma who is principally touched by the chief corporal works of mercy in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Those who criticize Steinbeck’s sentimentality fail to see the reality of people moved by conviction and faith in Christian social action. The Joads stop along the road on the first night of the journey and ask if they can camp next to the Wilsons from Kansas.

Tom hesitated. “Well, ya ‘spose we could camp down ‘longside?” The lean man looked puzzled. “We don’t own it,” he said. “We on’y stopped here ’cause this goddamn ol’ trap wouldn’ go no further.” Tom insisted. “Anyways you’re here an’ we ain’t. You got a right to say if you wan’ neighbors or not.” The appeal to hospitality had an instant effect. The lean face broke into a smile. “Why, sure, come on off the road. Proud to have ya.” And he called, “Sairy, there’s some folks goin’ ta stay with us. Com on out an’ say how d’ya do.”

The Wilsons “harbored the harborless.” Minutes later, Sairy Wilson told Grampa Joad to go into their tent. “You kin lay down on our mattress.” As Sairy tended to Grampa, she “visited the sick.” As a newly formed community, the Joads and the Wilsons “buried the dead” in the Wilsons’ quilt. “We’re thankful to you folks.” “We’re proud to help,” said Wilson. “We’re beholden to you,” said Pa. There’s no beholden in a time of dying,” said Wilson, and Sairy echoed him, “Never no beholden.” Adhering to Christian social action is a responsibility, an obligation, so the receipt of the benefits of Christian social action has only the obligation of reciprocation.

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On the occasion of the Joads arriving at Hooverville, Ma is not too preoccupied to notice the hollow-faced children silently petitioning her for something to eat.

Ma said helplessly, “I dunno what to do. I got to feed the fambly. What’m I gonna do with these here?” The children stood stiffly and looked at her. Their faces were blank, figid, and their eyes went mechanically from the pot to the tin plate she held. . . . Tom turned on the children. “You git,” he said. “Go on now, git. You ain’t doin’ no good. There ain’t enough for you.”

Ma ladled stew into the tin plates, very little stew, and she laid the plates on the ground. “I can’t send ‘em away,” she said. “I’ll let ‘em have what’s lef’. Here, take a plate in to Rosasharn.” She smiled up at the children. “Look,” she said, “you little fellas go an’ get you each a flat stick an’ I’ll put what’s lef’.

Ma beckoned the children and did what she thought Jesus would do. And finally, when the Joads were at the end of their road, when there seemed to be no hope for anyone, Ma encouraged her daughter to feed the hungry.

The boy was at her side again explaining, “I didn’ know. He said he et, or he wasn’ hungry. Las’ night I went an’ budst a winda an’ stole some bread. Made ‘im chew ‘er down. But he puked it all up, ana’ then he was weaker. Got to have soup or milk. You folks got money to git milk?”

Ma said, “Hush. Don’ worry. We’ll figger somepin out.”

Suddenly the boy cried, “He’s dyin’, I tell you! He’s starvin’ to death, I tell you.”

“Hush,” said Ma. She looked at Pa and Uncle John standing helplessly gazing at the sick man. She looked at Rose of Sharon huddled in the comfort. Ma’s eyes passed Rose of Sharon’s eyes, and then came back to them. And the two women looked deep into each other. The girl’s breath came short and gasping.

She said “Yes.”

Ma smiled. “I knowed you would. I knowed!” She looked down at her hands, tight-locked in her lap.

Rose of Sharon whispered, “Will—will you all—go out?” The rain whisked lightly on the roof.

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9 Ibid., 350-351.
Ma leaned forward and with her palm she brushed the tousled hair back from her daughter’s forehead, and she kissed her on the forehead. Ma got up quickly. “Come on, you fellas,” she called. “You come out in the tool shed.”

Ruthie opened her mouth to speak. “Hush,” Ma said. “Hush and git.” She herded them through the door, drew the boy with her; and she closed the squeaking door.

For a minute Rose of Sharon sat still in the whispering barn. Then she hoisted her tired body up and drew the comfort about her. She moved slowly to the corner and stood looking down at the wasted face, into the wide, frightened eyes. Then slowly she lay down beside him. He shook his head slowly from side to side. Rose of Sharon loosened one side of the blanket and bared her breast. “You got to,” she said. She squirmed closer and pulled his head close. “There!” she said. “There.” Her hand moved behind his head and supported it. Her fingers moved gently in his hair. She looked up and across the barn, and her lips came together and smiled mysteriously.¹⁰

What would Jesus do, indeed?

The answer to the foundation of Steinbeck’s characters’ response to the plight of their fellow travelers lies in the examination of three sources: Steinbeck’s religious training of his youth, his development of a personal ethical system that included his assumption of the Emersonian oversoul philosophy, and the influence of Tom Collins.

There is no evidence that Steinbeck grew up in a home structured by the evangelical Protestant teachings that guided Steinbeck’s grandparents to seek to convert Jews in Palestine. The family belonged to St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Salinas. According to the archivist at the John Steinbeck Library in Salinas, Steinbeck regaled others with the story that while he served as the crucifier, the cross on top of the staff fell

¹⁰Ibid., 618-19.
off and hit his fellow altar boy on the head. According to Steinbeck, he was immediately demoted. By his own confession to his physician, Dr. Cox, Steinbeck was not a religious man.

There is an influence of Catholic social doctrine upon John Steinbeck is evident in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Even one of his most strident critics, John S. Kennedy, who admits the illogic of accusations of both Communism and Nazism at the same time in Steinbeck, finds Catholic social doctrine in *The Grapes of Wrath*. While excoriating Steinbeck in his 1951 essay for Steinbeck’s failure to understand the most basic tenets of Christianity and more particularly Catholicism, Kennedy still finds a comparison that prompts one to inquire what resources Steinbeck had at hand.

The allegations first of Communist, then Nazi, sympathies would appear to cancel each other out. But then again, they could lead one to believe that there might be a certain paradoxical justification for such seemingly contradictory charges. Communism and nazism [sic] have in common a commitment to collectivism, differing though they do as to the auspices under which it should be conducted. Was Steinbeck in favor of some sort of collectivism? It is plain from his books that he does not favor the familiar forms of economic or political collectivism, be they controlled by foreign dictators or native capitalists. . . . In *The Grapes of Wrath* he has a tenant farmer say something in which it not preposterous to find the faint echo of Leo XIII’s teaching on property in his encyclical letter *On the Condition of the Working Classes*:

“If a man owns a little property, that property is him, it’s part of him, and it’s like him. If he owns property only so he can walk on it and handle it and be sad when it isn’t doing well, and feel fine when the rain falls on it, that property is him, and some ways he’s bigger because he owns it . . . But let a man get property he doesn’t see or can’t take time to get his fingers in, or can’t be there to walk on it—why, then property is the man . . . stronger than he is. And he is small, not big. Only his possessions are big.”

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11 Telephone conversation with Herbert Behrens on November 2, 2010.
Is it fantastic to see some similarity between this and the words of Pope Leo:

“When man spends the industry of his mind and the strength of his body in procuring the fruits of nature, by that act he makes his own that portion of nature’s field which he cultivates—that portion on which he leaves, as it were, the impress of his own personality; and it cannot but be just that he should possess that portion as his own, and should have a right to keep it without molestation?”

John Steinbeck did not have a copy of *Rerum Novarum* in his library. There is no indication anywhere that he studied Catholicism. If one is to believe Kennedy in his essay [“John Steinbeck: Life Affirmed and Dissolved,”] Steinbeck’s writings represented everything that was anti-Catholic. Yet Steinbeck was educated in the Bible. There are many allusions to biblical texts within the novel. As earlier noted, Steinbeck’s library included a couple of Bibles as well as other sacred texts of Eastern religions; an indication of self education in other religions. Being educated in the Bible is different from being imbued with Catholic social doctrine. Ed Ricketts, Steinbeck’s best friend, did not lead him to Catholic social doctrine nor did Carol his wife, nor his historically Protestant family, nor his friends in the publishing world. Steinbeck was led to Catholic social doctrine by a process of emersion. It was, in fact, a baptism of fire. His intensive stays at the migrant camp and his consumption of the reports written by Tom Collins of the details of those families led Steinbeck. The week-long trip he took with Tom Collins to the Visalia Valley during the flood in 1938 also led him. By his very example, Tom Collins led Steinbeck. “Beyond such connections which existed or may have existed between material gained from Collins and *The Grapes of Wrath*, I think there were

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deeper influences flowing from Collins to Steinbeck, influences of spirit, emotion, and attitude which are difficult to measure or locate precisely.”¹³ Jackson J. Benson was right. And John Steinbeck got it right, too. Tom Collins (who lived it) was living the life of the migrant, but he was also living the life of Christian social action.

¹³Benson, Weedpatch, 190.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

John Steinbeck found in Tom Collins a creditable source for a large portion of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Whatever informed Collins about life and the ministering to migrants served the migrants and Steinbeck well. Tom Collins was a wildly intriguing individual. He lived his whole life concealing his early life. Beyond his formal education of one year in a preparatory seminary, he was a demonstratively intelligent individual. It would have been fairly easy, after being released from the tuberculosis sanatorium, to get by as the schoolteacher at Wolfsville Elementary School. He was well qualified for that position. But, to create a persona of the college-educated teacher at Shenandoah Valley Academy and again at Waynesboro High School took skill and imagination. How he chose Shenandoah Valley Academy in Winchester, Virginia is unknown. The school was many miles by rail from Sabillasville, and Winchester was still further from Waynesboro, Pennsylvania. He established a pattern of not staying in one place for too long. He taught one school year at each school. The concern that he might be discovered could have prompted him to move on after one year. It also could have prompted him to leave his family in 1919, with the serendipitous encounter of Nancy Duvall Means at the first railroad stop on his escape. What stories could he have told his new bride after they were married in San Juan? His desire to be married in the Catholic Church there may have given him the opportunity to return to its comfort and shelter and to the source of a life-long dedication to helping others following of the requirements of the Corporal Works of Mercy. The years of travel and growth in life
experiences gave Collins the opportunity to continue to rely on his upbringing in the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church led its adherents to address the issues of the working class. The Roman Catholic Church in Rome, as well as its mission church in America, was intentionally moving in the direction of Christian social action in response to the needs of the workers as a result of the industrial revolution. The Roman Church needed to staunch a geopolitical trend in exploring socialism. It also was concerned with Americanism and the particularly American ideal that democracy and the separation of church and state were not only a good thing but that it was the best environment for the Church in America. The response to these needs of the working man was *Rerum Novarum*, Leo XIII’s encyclical “On the Condition of Workers.” The Third Plenary Council in Baltimore was convened to determine the administration of the Catholic Church in America. Catholic orphanages, schools, and seminaries addressed the care of the disadvantaged. And lay Catholics, like Dr. Victor Cullen, took to heart the obligations taught by the Church. Tom Collins was impressed with his Catholic education and exposure to those who modeled their lives after the teachings of the Church espoused in the Corporal Works of Mercy. In conducting his life during his employment with the Farm Security Administration, Collins’s influence on John Steinbeck was more than the weekly reports Collins wrote.

Steinbeck created characters in *The Grapes of Wrath* whose essences were bonded to the obligations of Christian social action. It is not as if the author did not already want them to be so imbued. Only John Steinbeck can take credit for creating the
characters. But, to credit Professor Benson’s feelings, there was something else that passed from Tom Collins to Steinbeck. All great writers are good observers. All Steinbeck needed to do was observe Tom Collins in his reports, his daily work, and the trips they took together. And John Steinbeck observed.
APPENDIX 1
TOM COLLINS’ S BIRTH CERTIFICATE

This document, along with succeeding appendices, have been electronically enhanced for maximum resolution and they are integral to the thesis.
APPENDIX 2
TOM COLLINS’S DEATH CERTIFICATE
APPENDIX 3
MARYLAND TUBERCULOSIS SANATORIUM REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT IN DETAIL

1. MOVEMENT OF POPULATION

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<th>Patients</th>
<th>Males</th>
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<tr>
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<td>90</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number admitted within the year*</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number treated during the year</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number discharged during the year</td>
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<td>172</td>
<td>371</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number remaining December 31, 1910</td>
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<td>94</td>
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2. MONTHLY ADMISSIONS, DISCHARGES AND AVERAGES

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</tr>
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<td>December</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
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<td>Total daily average</td>
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3. RESIDENCE BY COUNTIES OF DISCHARGED PATIENTS

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*Four patients admitted and discharged, who remained in Sanatorium less than one week and not considered.
### Maryland Tuberculosis Sanatorium

#### Years

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#### Ages

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#### Civil Condition

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#### Religion

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<tr>
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#### Occupations

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### Maryland Tuberculosis Sanatorium

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</tr>
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<td>...</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
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<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Traveling salesmen</td>
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**Totals:**
- Males: 199
- Females: 172
- Totals: 371

### Physical Condition on Admission

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<td>Incipient</td>
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<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately advanced</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>152</td>
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<tr>
<td>Far advanced</td>
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**Totals:**
- Males: 199
- Females: 172
- Totals: 371

### Physical Condition on Discharge

<table>
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<th>Per Cent.</th>
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<td>Apparently cured</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrested</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>38.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>41.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unimproved</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
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**Totals:**
- Males: 199
- Females: 172
- Totals: 371
- Per Cent: 100.0
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<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>+</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70-99</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>70-99</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td>70-99</td>
<td>85.8</td>
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<td>99.9</td>
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<td>85.8</td>
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<td>Un碌</td>
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<td>85.8</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<td>D.S.</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9 mos. 8 days.</td>
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<td>Un碌</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td>70-99</td>
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**TABLE OF INDIVIDUAL CASES (Continued)**

- **NO.**: Case number
- **SEX**: Male (M) or Female (F)
- **AGE**: Age in years
- **B.A.**: Birthplace
- **S.A.**: State of Affair
- **R.A.**: Race
- **T.B.**: Tuberculosis
- **COMA**: Coma
- **HOSP.**: Hospitalization period
- **PERIOD OF HOSPITALIZATION**: Length of hospitalization
- **EXTENT OF DISEASE**: Extent of disease
- **PROGRESS**: Progress of disease
- **COMPLICATIONS**: Complications
- **TUBERCULIN VASTOT**: Tuberculin reaction
- **T.O.**, **D.I.**, **D.C.**: Dates of observations
- **W.**: Weight
- **T.H.**: Temperature
- **AVERAGE TEMPERATURE**: Average temperature
- **MAX. TEMPERATURE**: Maximum temperature
- **DATES ON ADMIT**, **DATES ON DISCHARGE**, **D.O.**: Dates of admission, discharge, and observation
- **N. OF D.O.**: Number of observations

**APPENDIX 4**

**REPORT ON PATIENT 501**
APPENDIX 5
HISTORY OF VICTOR CULLEN STATE HOSPITAL

1.

History of Victor Cullen State Hospital

It has been said that an institution is cold and impersonal but there are many exceptions to this statement, and one such is Victor Cullen State Hospital at Cullen, Maryland, formerly the Maryland State Sanatorium.

Here the staff worked and lived as a family, and the patients were considered as individuals with all the problems of the age in which they lived, and not just a case or a number. There was a relaxed atmosphere with the staff in their attitude toward the patient, with always the impression that he or she had time to serve to their physical comfort and to listen to their many problems.

The Board of Managers of the Maryland Tuberculosis Sanatorium, created by Chapter 308 of the Acts of 1906, met for organization on September 20th, 1906, at which time sub-committees were appointed for the purpose of studying geographical and climatological conditions of the State of Maryland for the purpose of choosing a site and for constructing a sanatorium for the treatment of tuberculosis.

In conjunction with the former tuberculosis commission the following recommendations were adopted:

1. Secure a section of land the state with an altitude sufficient to insure a pure, dry atmosphere, free from dampness and rapid temperature changes.

2. Choose a location with a southern or south-eastern exposure, and one protected by woodland from the north and west.

3. Select a tract of land of at least 200 acres, with a dry porous soil, and with an unlimited supply of pure water.

4. Secure a site close to a railroad where supplies could be economically brought to the institution.

5. Place as close to the chief centers of population of the state as the above conditions would permit.

After extensive touring of the state the members of the board chose a site in Frederick County near the village of Sabillasville. This site with an elevation of 1450 feet, met all of the above requirements. The cost of the 190 acre tract was $10,290.00.

After the purchase of the property, the board had a contour map made of the land for the purpose of securing data for the laying out of the buildings, water reservoir, drainage and sewage disposal fields. The part of the tract selected for the location of the sanatorium buildings was a cleared plateau near the summit of the mountain, with an elevation of 1320 feet.

After an intensive study of existing sanatoria in this country and abroad, it was decided to build detached pavilions, each to have a capacity of sixteen patients. It was also decided to build a centrally located administration building, in the rear of which was the dining room. On the second floor of this building was an infirmary for the very sick patients. In the basement was the kitchen, storerooms, bakery and trunkroom.

The General Assembly of 1906 appropriated for construction and equipment of the Maryland State Sanatorium the sum of $100,000.00. The amount spent or contracted for up to January 1, 1908, was $98,911.96. This did not include the patients pavilions, power house, sewerage disposal, or auditorium and chapel.
The Sanatorium opened in August of 1908 and by December 31, eight pavilions and the power house had been completed, and there was a patient capacity of 180, twenty of whom were in the infirmary. The hospital was open to all white citizens of Maryland who had been residents of the state for at least one year preceding the date of application, and whose physical condition indicated that there were prospects of recovery. The so-called "hopeless" cases were not admitted due to the fact that it was felt by the board that no single institution could care for the lesser affected ones along with the "hopeless" ones.

Since the appropriation made by the Maryland Legislature was not sufficient to defray the expenses of the institution, each patient was expected to pay a minimum charge of $3.50 per week. Those who could afford to pay more were expected to do so. In view of the fact that there were those who could not afford to make any payment, twenty free beds were established to care for the "strictly indigent cases". Twelve beds were maintained for such residents of Baltimore City. Patients whose condition upon admission was such as to necessitate their remaining in bed were required to pay fifty cents a day extra for the time they remained in bed due to the extra nursing time required.

The Maryland Tuberculosis Sanatorium was formally opened and the dedicatory exercises held at the institution on May 15, 1909. By December 31, 1909, the hospital group of buildings had been increased by one pavilion and a cottage for the convalescents, bringing the patient capacity to 210. It was decided that no patient would be kept longer than six months if the bed was needed for a new patient.

The total cost of maintenance, food, housing, nursing care, etc., for the year 1909 was $46,754.35, with a per diem cost per patient of ninety-five cents. The Board was very proud of this figure for they felt that the Sanatorium was the most economically administered institution of its kind in this country. During the last six months of 1909 the Sanatorium was filled to capacity and there was a waiting list of from ten to twenty-five patients.

When the Sanatorium was first organized it was the policy to admit only mild cases of white residents of Maryland, but it was soon discovered that applicants in such a category was comparatively small and the appeal for the ten thousand "consumptives" in the state was so urgent that it soon became necessary to admit the moderately advanced cases. The proportion of these cases to the incipient ones soon in the majority. It was for this reason that an appeal was made to the Legislature for funds for a special hospital for advanced cases.

According to the most conservative estimates there were about 10,000 consumptives in the State of Maryland in 1909.

From the early beginning of the history of the institution it took pride in the amount of education given the patients education in self care. Aside from the number who were discharged in an apparently arrested condition, a larger number were discharged with the knowledge of how to care for themselves and how to prevent the spread of the disease. This was manifested in later years by the fact that many of those who had been "on the cure" in the early days of the institution were well and working at full-time employment.

The policy of treatment in the early days of the institution was, on admission, absolute rest for observation by the medical staff, and as the patient's condition improved, graduated exercise and work. All of the work of the institution and farm was done by the patients for it was the aim of the medical staff that with every curable case of tuberculosis to have the patient in condition to work from four to six hours
1. daily before returning home.

By the end of 1909 the Quarter Club had started a small workshop, in which the patients made baskets and various trinkets. It was hoped that this work be extended in order to give employment to various trades.

In 1909 a training school for nurses was organized under the supervision of Miss M.B. Lasson, with an enrollment of six pupils who had previously had tuberculosis and who were considered arrested. It was felt that young women who had previously had tuberculosis had a better understanding and sympathy for the patient than those who had not had the disease. It was also felt that nurses trained in tuberculosis do more satisfactory work than those who were not specially trained.

During the year of 1909, 307 patients were admitted; and in 1910, 412 were admitted and 352 discharged. By the end of 1911, there were fifteen children in the institution and they were housed in one of the pavilions. A school, under the supervision and instruction of a teacher, had been opened. The training school increased to sixteen by the end of 1910.

In 1910 money was appropriated by the General Assembly for construction of a building for patients who required more bedside treatment than those previously admitted. In view of the fact that over 500 residents of the state had annually been refused admission, this was much needed.

The building was designed with room for 200 patients, and with kitchen, dining rooms, operating room and nurses quarters in one large building. This opened in 1912.

By 1911 the problem of caring for the children became more acute due to the fact that they had to be kept with the adult patients, and were an annoyance, and were affected adversely by the morals and manners of the adults. It was recommended that a separate building be constructed for the exclusive use of the children, with quarters for the attendant nurses.

By the end of 1912, more than half of the patients were free cases. On January 1, 1912, there were 202 patients, and the number treated during the year was 794.

Handicraft work, burnt wood and water coloring was taught the children, along with their regular school classes. Twice a year a fair was held, the proceeds of which were used for amusement or clothing for the children.

Almost all employees, with the exception of those in the power house, the farm and the kitchen, had been Murine patients. At intervals throughout the year lectures had been given to patients on the practical side of tuberculosis, (care of self).

By 1912 there was a demand to readmit patients who had improved during their stay at the hospital but who now had a recurrence. Due to the fact that there were many on the waiting list, very few of the former patients were admitted.

The first class of nurses graduated in June of 1912, and all except one remained to take charge of wards in the hospital. At this time there were 19 nurses in training, all having been selected from arrested cases of tuberculosis.

On April 1, 1912, Miss Lasser resigned as superintendent of nurses, and her place was taken by Miss Johnson, a graduate of Johns Hopkins Nurses Training School.

In 1913 the cost per patient per day was $1.05. During the year a kitchen was built back of the new hospital with second floor space for nurses. A children's hospital was built in 1913 and opened on December 30. It had accommodations for 40 patients and for the teacher and nurses.
There was a playroom and classroom on the second floor.

By January 1, 1913, there were 320 patients in the sanatorium-866 admissions, doubled from the previous year. There were now 435 beds.

An outstanding factor of the year was that no one who was eligible for admission was turned away, the greatest time that only one has waited was one month. There were a few vacancies in the private rooms, as usual, but none in the wards. However, the waiting list was so large that few of the former patients were readmitted.

In 1914 a total of 222 cases were admitted during the year, 413 of which were far advanced. The death rate was more than twice the whole number of deaths in the four years prior to the opening of the hospital.

In 1913 artificial pneumothorax was tried, but due to adhesions and unsatisfactory readings of the monometer, the treatments were discontinued for the time being. During this year, ten patients were treated with mixed vaccines, but with no apparent improvement.

Under the supervision of Miss Johnson, the nurses training school increased, both in numbers and efficiency. At this time, there were 28 students, all of which were quiescent cases of sanatoria.

The old infirmary, with the building added to it, served as nurses home with rooms and sleeping porches. A rest room was given the nurses by enclosing the bridget between the administration building and the nurses home. At that time there were 36 nurses.

In 1914 the amusement hall was completed, and was used for religious and secular purposes. A laboratory building was also completed.

The recreation hall was so planned that at one end was a stage, and at the other, a dias which served as pulpit for visiting ministers. Over the chapel was a motion picture booth for the projection of pictures. In the basement there was a pool and smoking room, and a laundry for patients to wash out articles they did not want to send to the regular laundry.

In 1914 there was only one diagnosed case of malignancy of the lung, the first reference to such that was made in any report of the board of managers. The greatest number of far advanced cases was admitted this year. When patients were able to work five hours daily, they were discharged and sent back to their original occupation, provided it was not too strenuous.

Another building was erected in 1914, in which was located the post office, barber shop, shoe shop, dental office and co-operative store. The store was originated by three people interested in the sanatorium who loaned money to stock it. Articles that the patients and employees needed, were sold at a small profit, and the proceeds were used to furnish amusement for the patients in the recreation hall. In this way motion pictures were shown to them once each week without expense to the state.

A laboratory with a gas plant and animal room was built in the rear of the west wing of the hospital. At this time it was felt that quarters for the staff was greatly needed, designed especially for employees who were ex-patients and who needed to sleep out of doors. This was completed in 1916.

An outbreak of typhoid fever occurred at the sanatorium in May, 1915, and the probable source of the trouble was milk from a dairy far distant from which some of the supply for the sanatorium was gotten. The cost of the epidemic was great, and an apparatus (pasteurizing plant) for pasteurizing all milk, and a liquid chlorine plant for sterilizing all water, was installed in order to prevent all further outbreaks.
5. A legacy of $1,000 was left to the sanatorium in 1915, and it was de-
cided by the board of managers to install a pipe organ in the recreation hall.

Pneumothorax was resumed in 1915 with cases favorable to treatment.

The first record of age of patients was in 1910 when the range from seven to seventy-two was noted. The first increase in the age span was noted in 1915 when it rose to seventy-four.

The largest class of nurses since the opening of the training school graduated in May, 1915, and consisted of 16 nurses. Gertrude Wadland became assistant superintendent of nurses. She was a graduate of Johns Hopkins School of Nursing.

Thirteen nurses graduated in 1915 making a total of 57 since opening, and 20 pupil nurses were admitted. As an indication of the necessity for especially trained nurses for the handling of tuberculosis, the school had frequent requests from various sanatoria throughout the country for graduate nurses. By 1915 graduates from the training school were working in 14 different sanatoria.

The constantly increasing number of advanced cases admitted to the sanatorium afforded excellent opportunities for the more advanced training of the nurses, due to the various complications frequently incidental to such cases.

By 1915 it was felt that since X-ray was a valuable aid in the diagnosis of tuberculosis, the hospital should be equipped with a machine. This was installed on January 20.

During World War I great difficulties in administration were encountered but the problems were due largely to the ability and energy of those in charge of the various staffs. But in spite of conditions changed by the war, the sanatorium maintained its record for having the lowest per capita cost of operation of any similar institution in the U.S. This cost was not made at the expense of the comfort or the welfare of the patients.

The number of far advanced cases had been increasing each year. Practically all occupations had been represented, and there were residents from every county in the state. The ages ranged from six to 75. In suitable cases tuberculin and artificial pneumothorax had been used. It was hard to judge the immediate results of tuberculin, but in some cases it seemed beneficial. It was felt that its use in suitable cases should be continued.

The results with artificial pneumothorax had been splendid, and there were constantly twelve to fifteen cases under treatment.

Since the opening of the school, there were 80 graduates, all tuberculous. The demand for nurses especially trained in the handling of tuberculosis was constantly increasing. The large number of requests received for the graduates from various sanatoria throughout the country was due to the fact, perhaps, that this was the largest training school devoted exclusively to tuberculosis work in the United States. They were able to fill only a small proportion of the demand. Although in accepting applicants for admission to the training school preference was given to those who were tubercular, it sometimes developed that the physical condition of some of the nurses at graduation justified them in pursuing further work in the study of nursing in order to enable them to take the State Board Examination for registered nurses.

In order to meet this situation the school accepted a proposition made to it by the University of Virginia Hospital Training School for Nurses under which they agreed to admit its graduates and credit them with the full two years work done, so that after one year's work done,
in general nursing, they completed the required three years work, enabling them to take the Virginia State Board examinations.

In 1921 the nursing staff consisted of a superintendent of nurses, three assistant superintendents, four head nurses and twenty-five pupil nurses. In 1920 (February), X-ray and fluoroscope machines were installed and each patient was X-rayed on admission and as often as need arose. Each Sunday morning conference was held and the doctors were amazed that they had gone so long without the machine.

Some special cases were treated with heliotherapy, tuberculin, sodium cacodylate and glycerophosphate.

A building was erected in 1922, the lower floor of which was used as a machine shop, and the second as an arts and crafts shop for the ambulatory patients. This was well received by them.

In a report by the superintendent of nurses in 1923, it was noted that of the 118 graduates since the opening of the school, only three had not had t.b.

In 1926 rates were increased from $3.50 a week to $5.00 weekly in the wards, and from 37.00 to $10.00 weekly in the private rooms. In spite of this increase and of the rigid economies that were practiced, there was still a shortage of operating money and the sanatorium was faced with the prospect of having a number of hospital beds idle until the General Assembly could provide full maintenance. For the first time since the Sanatorium Board was created in 1906, the sanatorium had exceeded its income.

On April 19, 1925, Senator John Walter Smith, president of the Board of Managers, died, and the sanatorium lost a devoted and capable friend. Sen. Smith was a pioneer in the fight against t.b., and he was responsible for the first successful movement to commit the state to its policy concerning t.b. He was the first and only president of the Board from its organization in September 1906, and rarely missed a meeting until his death.

The first mention of thoracoplasty was made in 1926 report, three having been done at Johns Hopkins Hospital. One of the three benefited. At Hopkins there was also a case of phrenecotomy. Cauterization of the larynx was done at the Sanatorium and had done more good than any treatment previously used.

In 1925 two apartments were constructed over the garage to take care of the married physicians, and a duplex cottage was constructed on the road leading to Sabillesville for two other married employees.

From the profits of the co-operative store two moving picture machines were installed in 1926, and three pictures were shown each week.

In 1932 a brick and concrete nurses home with a capacity for 50 residents was completed. In addition to a bedroom for each nurse with adjoining porch, the home was equipped with a centrally located living room, diet kitchen and laundry. The space formerly occupied by the nurses afforded room for 27 ambulatory patients.

A stone chapel was built during the same year. In order to effect a saving in labor, food and equipment costs, a brick kitchen and dining room addition was made to the reception hospital. Also a 75,000 gallon tank and automatic sprinkler system was installed in the hospital.

In 1933 two fireproof brick buildings with single rooms, were added to the reception hospital to take care of an additional 26 patients. A sprinkler system was installed in the children's hospital at this time.

In 1933 the patient age range was from six to 79. At this time Dr.
William Reinhoff, Jr., was doing scalenotomy, pneumonolysis, oleothorax and lobectomies with good results.

In 1935 Miss Emma Johnson, superintendent of nurses for twenty-five years, died very suddenly.

The ages of patients in 1935 ranged from six to eighty. The number of far advanced cases was still extremely high, and there was difficulty in filling the pavilions with the type of cases suitable to go there. The children all attended school daily from 9 A.M. to 12, and nearly all of them were able to work in the arts and crafts shop.

In 1939 the legislature appropriated money for a three story hospital to be built so that additions could be added. This building which was started in 1941, was to take the place of the eight pavilions which were to be torn down. It was felt that due to the war (World War II), there would be an increase in t.b. and the pavilion would be used to take care of the increase. The number of advanced cases applying for admission was still very high, and the number of cases with pneumothorax andlung surgery was so high that pavilion type construction could not be used. This new hospital would open up 60 beds. This would not increase the bed capacity since the plan was to tear down the existing pavilions. Already a large number of draftees rejected by the Army had applied for admission.

Movies were shown four nights weekly by 1941, and were financed by commissions from the post office and store.

The budget was so drastically cut in the past two years that the Board felt they had the choice of not admitting patients or creating a deficit.

The number of advanced cases applying for admission by 1943, was so high, and the need for beds for bedfast patients so very urgent, that they were compelled to close the children's hospital and to transfer the nurses and employees to the new hospital in order to open it. In 1943 the Board recommended the construction of an additional wing of 107 beds to the brick hospital.

About this time (1944) the need for a children's hospital was not felt, since the type previously admitted could be taken care of at home.

The new hospital was completed in the Spring of 1944 with a capacity of 81. It was designed to take care of semi-ambulatory cases and was connected to the John Henry Smith building by a covered runway. This made it possible to wheel patients from one building to another without exposing them to the elements. Also this runway allowed them to transport food to the patients from the kitchen in electrically heated conveyors.

Through the cooperation of the Parole Commission and director of the Maryland Penal Farm, a number of the paroled prisoners worked at the hospital daily. This reduced substantially the running expenses of the hospital.

No nurses' commencement was held in 1944 due to the fact that there was only one graduate.

By June 30, 1946, the Maryland State Sanatorium had a bed capacity of 573. The patient's age range was from 16 to 80. The children's hospital had been converted into apartments for married nurses and employees.

The expected increase in t.b. in Maryland did not materialize, due partly to the health work done by the state.

Six nurses graduated in the 33rd Commencement, and two in 1946.
# APPENDIX 6
## ARVIN CAMP REPORTS

**Arvin Migratory Labor Camp**  
Report for week ending June 13, 1936

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number groups at camp</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th>Checked out during the week:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>8 groups 85 individuals first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>registration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>287</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>411</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>11 groups 85 individuals who</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>reregistered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>277</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number cases communicable diseases-----2 measles

Number cases illness---------three-----1 fever non contag  
1 tonsillitis            
1 dysentery

Referred to other agencies----1 county hospital fever non contag  
1 county clinic tonsillitis  
1 county clinic dysentery

Number group heads employed--------86

Number group heads unemployed-------none

Number treated at first aid station---14 cuts, burns, sprains, etc.

Dismissed from camp and reasons-----none

Refused registration and reasons-----none

Declined to register and reasons-----none-----no shade over tent space

Number children at camp==155==Boys 89 girls 70  
to 4 years of age 45  
to 6 years of age 19  
7 to 12 years 49  
13 to 16 years 25  
17 & 18 years 21

Number of men at camp==129 all employed
Number of women at camp==69 number employed 74 part time
Number of children employed part time 27.
Arvin Migratory Labor Camp
Report for week ending June 15, 1936

Camp Children By School Grades

Schools closed for the summer season, June 8th 1936.

Classification of campers by occupations:

Farm Owners——-5
Farm Renters——-10
Farm Laborers——-45
Electrician———-1
Carpenters———-1
Auto Mechanics——-1
Drug Clerk———-1
Miner———-1
Fork Finisher——-1
Cafe Owner———-1
Common Laborer——-1
Total 66 groups

Classification of campers by states:

Oklahoma———-33
Texas———-10
California———-7
Arkansas———-5
Arizona———-3
Michigan———-2
New Mexico———-1
Oregon———-1
Utah———-1
Indiana———-1
Kansas———-1
Ohio———-1
Tennessee———-1
Total 66 groups

Page 2 of 9 pages

Thomas Collins
Arvin Migratory Labor Camp
Report for week ending June 15, 1936

Labor Report

Farm work, such as plowing, irrigating, weeding. Wage rates 25c per hour. Average weekly earnings $12.00.

Fruit picking. Wage rates 25c per hour. Average weekly earnings $12.00.

Fruit packing. Wage rates 5c per box. Average weekly earnings $14.00.

Cotton harvesting. Wage rates 25c per hour. Average weekly earnings $10.00.

Cotton picking. $1.00 per acre. Average weekly earnings $11.50.

Cotton picking is part-time. Daily earnings 30c to 50c.

Hoeing weeds by women. Average daily earnings $1.75.

Fruit picking reached its peak during the week forecasting a general layoff until the grape harvest about the middle of July.

There will be a general exodus for Merced, Modesto and other points. Some will go as far as San Jose for the apricots.

Most of those to check out plan to return to camp for the grape harvest.

All families leaving us are well stocked with groceries sufficient to last them for a week or ten days after their arrival at new destinations.

The physical condition of those departing is good. Constant checking by the camp nurse and ourselves has made health conditions excellent.

Demand for labor in this section has reached its lowest point since April.
All departments of the camp program went along very nicely during the week. The various projects for the women and children, the Wednesday community sing, the Saturday night community dances and the Sunday baseball games all were most successful.

We are now well prepared for the quilting and sewing classes and these will get under full speed this week.

Children under 12 have been busy making toys and getting their first lessons in sewing and doll clothing.

We have been stressing this week the care of women, i.e., prenatal care. We believe prenatal care saves postnatal despair. Too, our work for the children is most important for it is from our work with them that we can best interest the mothers and fathers.

At the date of this report we have 37 pregnant women in camp. All new babies are due just about the time the food landlady are at the lowest and when work will be scarce. The demand for our available literature on prenatal care exhausted the supply. We have since gotten a new supply. This encouraged us greatly because we have been making every effort since the opening of the camp to keep the mothers interested in this important part of the camp program. Most of the expectant mothers plan to be "home", i.e., in Oklahoma or elsewhere, by the time the children are expected.

Too, we have so many very young children. This has kept the management quite busy in the tents so much so that it was found advisable to obtain the services of a nurse for full time. She will be out this week or the first of next week. We have arranged to have her headquarters in the nursery. She will also administer first aid and carry on the instructions in first aid, which to date have been carried by the management. We will be under no expense for the nurse, having interested the W.P.A. in establishing a project.
Health & Children

Continued

We have had two cases of measles during the week. We isolated the families in their own tents. Both families have been with us for some time so we experienced no difficulties keeping them isolated. The condition has since cleared up although we look for other measles cases next week.

Fruit Canning

It has been possible this week to obtain free of charge a large quantity of peeled fruit from the packing sheds. Women in camp have been busy, despite the intense heat, canning this fruit. The peak this week was:

- 542 quarts peaches
- 619 quarts plums
- 278 glasses plum jelly
- 185 glasses peach jelly
- 212 quarts plum and peach jelly (mixed).

We had to be ever vigilant to see that all jars and glasses were thoroughly sterilized. In one case we encouraged a family to destroy 48 quarts plums as the family failed to use proper precautions to sterilize the jars. When the grapes are in season we hope to interest the women in grape jelly making and canning. You will recall from our previous reports we have had much success encouraging the women to barter canned fruit for vegetables, milk and eggs and bread. When the community kitchens are installed we shall be in a position to further assist the women to prepare, in time of plenty, for the hard days of unemployment.

Fresh vegetables are now available from the small subsistence gardens in the camp. We regret we did not go ahead with the 20 acres some months back. We were asked to withhold that project as it was decided to enlarge the camp facilities by erecting buildings on the 20 acres. Wherever ground is available at these camps we should use it for growing vegetables that can be dehydrated. We can thus encourage the families to store up food for times of unemployment and keep them off relief. Dehydrated vegetables enable them to save space and weight when moving from crop to crop.
Arvin Migrant Labor Camp
Report for week ending June 15, 1936

Visitors' Log
Some of our visitors this week—
Mr. Harold McGrath, RA Berkeley
Mr. Ross, National Emergency Council
Mrs. Rogers, State TB Survey
Dr. Gifford, Kern Hospital
Miss Lowe, W.P.A.

A Birth
Last February we reported the birth of the first Arvin Camp baby. The family is now well established near Lindsay and from all reports is doing very well. We expected another birth this week but the family checked out four days before the child was due. The new arrival was born in Fresno.

A Marriage
We have always seen Cupid pictured as a plump little thing. Little did we believe, when we assigned a young man to a lot that we were to play the part of Cupid. A romance developed and from that we have had our first record of a camp marriage. The ceremony was held in Bakersfield after which the family returned to camp. There was no moving to another home. All the young men had to do was to go to the bride’s parents, next door, for his meals, and move the girl to his own tent. Reversing the usual migrant system whereby the man is the master of the house, the bride rules the roost. She can be heard every evening after the boy’s return from work, laying down the law. On one occasion we saw her sitting down giving him orders on proper dish washing and later, instructions regarding sweeping out the tent and doing the family wash. He grunted a lot but went about the tasks as "ordered". Maybe a new day has dawned for the migrant woman, eh?

A Romance
The most exciting incident of the week concerned a woman and her two neighbors, both young men. One morning this week, shortly after the husband went to work, the woman packed her earthly belongings and eloped with the two boys. The "ole man's" tent sharer had purchased $2.00 of groceries the evening before. The elopers took the "grub" with them.

When the husband returned that night he was greatly upset. His tent mate was more so. Said he "It ain't the ole woman I cares 'bout. It's at air grub I dun paid eight bucks fer. The henry cases. If I gits my han on 'em I'll fix 'em."
A Romance, continued

The women in that district were much upset over the incident. They assured us they were not the same "kind of a thing as at air woman and we aint gonna do sish a thing as at. Dont think we all be lik her. She dun 'graced the unit, she did. The lawd aint gonna see her git away wi' it, no how".

Then and there they prayed while we "listened in". Instead of praying for the woman's forgiveness they asked for punishment for her and salvation for the woman's 6 year old child.

After the praying there was some discussion as to whether the husband should be permitted to stay in camp. "We maybe thinks he a mite be the same kind of a fella as she be woman, and maybe he be thinkin' bout takin' of us woman at nite when our ole man is sleep".

We overcame that objection.

The following day the rumor was spread through the unit the child of the couple was illegitimate. That put more terror into the women in that district.

Two days later a deputy sheriff came to the camp. He had a warrant for the arrest of the husband. The warrant read: "for deserting wife and six year old child on the streets of Los Angeles, Sunday night."

We assured the sheriff the charge was wrong. Later the husband went to jail with the sheriff and on the strength of our assurance the woman had deserted the husband, the husband was set free.

He came to us later (the husband) stating he wanted the woman back on account of the child. He said he had no funds to furnish her transportation. The sheriff insisted the woman and child be brought back. We sent the man to the camp committeeman in his district. There was a council of the good neighbors and the men of the district. They failed to see why anything should be done for the woman and concluded a stay in jail would give her time to make peace with God. A prayer and hymn session followed that council. We were called to the council meeting after that.
"Mr. Collins, it says in the Bible that Eve sinned on purpose. As it says the Law a-visitin' is a punishment on all bad women, and it ain't no ways they kain stop it. As women be sinnin', she kaint be saved. If we'd help git her bak by givin' money, we be a part of the punishment the Law a-visitin' on her. An' she dun 'agree us in your presence and dun gif you a bad idea of all us women in this unit. Let or stay where she be. If he wants her bak it proves he be just as bad as she be. Her kid aint his kid. So her kid will be sinful lik' she be. No use ter haf her bak and haf another kid a-born and be sinful too."

We used much patience in explaing that Eve was tempted by only ONE man whereas this poor devil was tempted by two men, that our woman had twice as much to contend with, that the family was living without a tent and that probably the heat affected her to say nothing of the discomforts of sleeping on the ground. We said nothing about their contributing money for her transportation back to camp.

There was another session of praying and shouting. However after we left the camp committesman for that district came to us with $5.10 collected for bus fare for the woman from Los Angeles to Bakerafields. We took the money to town and purchased a ticket and sent it care of the sheriff at Los Angeles, as the woman was held in jail there. The husband signed an order on his employer to hold $5.10 from his wages to reimburse the good neighbors of his district for their generosity.

The husband went to town last night to meet the bus and sat there until the second bus of the night had arrived from Los Angeles. It the time of this report the woman has not shown up. We wonder if she jumped the bus enroute????

Anyhow the husband seems quite happy to know the wife is to return. "This be her 2nd offense, but I luf's the kid, I does."

The woman was old enough to be the mother of the two boys with whom she eloped. They dropped her at Los Angeles and went off with the "3 buks of grub". Maybe the popular song is right---"Something came and got them in the Spring".
A Death

As a result of an automobile accident, 1/2 mile from the camp, one of our boys, aged 5, was instantly killed. The father was seriously injured. Last reports from the county hospital state the father is not expected to live. A wife and 3 months old daughter are at camp. There are two grown men in the family, brothers of the lad's father. They are working and supporting the family at this time.

The good neighbors have been keeping house for the grief stricken mother. When some visitors arrived yesterday morning they were quite surprised to find some of the neighbors washing and ironing the clothing for the family. This impressed our visitors very very much.

This is the second accident to occur within a week at the same corner. Last week one of our members of the camp council was involved. No one was seriously injured at the time. The committee was forced to surrender his driver's license for 30 days. He said this was cheaper than paying the damage to the other car and better than spending 15 days in jail. It was impossible for the country magistrate to fix the blame for the accident as there was much conflicting testimony for both sides.

The camp morale is very high. Visitors are much impressed with the smooth running of the camp and the responses to the camp projects.

We have enjoyed an intensely interesting and a very busy week.

Several of the campers have turned in their old auto wrecks and obtained better cars. It seems they must keep in debt and have something about which to worry. Yet, without a car, they are helpless.
APPENDIX 7
PETITION TO RETAIN COLLINS AS SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

The Honorable Secretary of the Navy,
Washington, D. C.

We, the undersigned people of Guam, beg your most sincere consideration of and attention upon the important subject of this petition which we desire to present in this letter.

We feel that we have been sorely neglected by our generous and benevolent Government in the matter of Public Education which, after more than twenty years of occupation by the American Government, is still in the cradle infancy and far behind the standards of improvement and progress, and, in our opinion, very little has been accomplished towards its advancement.

It is our most earnest endeavor not to place the blame for this neglect on any one particular person or persons, but we feel rather that we ourselves are responsible on account of our partial and one-sided attitude toward our government and our failure to take this matter up and discuss it with those who have been placed in authority over us, and in not giving them our ideas and suggestions in regard to such a vital and intimate question, and thus leaving the officers designated by the several governors to work out their own plans and carry out their own ideas.

We believe that each of these officers, in his turn, has endeavored to do his best, according to his knowledge of conducting a public school. But we do believe that the duties for which these officers have been fitted and upon which they ordinarily are called upon to perform are far out of line with the knowledge and experience required for organizing and conducting public schools. In addition to this, these officers have their particular official duties to perform, and the work assigned as Head of the Department of Education is in the line of an extra duty assigned to him by the Governor of Guam. His term of duty on the Island is usually a short one, limited to

Endorse
from eighteen months to two years at the longest, and we believe that this length of time is not sufficient for one to become acquainted with the conditions of a particular place. On the other hand, the public, the government, and the people expect, and are entitled to, in the case of an Island, a man who is willing to commit himself to his charge for such a short time. For these reasons the schools have usually been allowed to run along in the same way, assisted by teachers, while undoubtedly the best education under the circumstances, many of whom have no deep or practical knowledge of the English language, such as is most necessarily required of those who are to teach it successfully.

In the meantime we have set back silently, hoping that some new head of the department would make the needed improvements; and in many cases our hopes have been realized in part, only to be shattered later by some one with different ideas and objects in view. The Governor, who also is on duty here for the same short period mentioned above, cannot attend personally to all the numerous duties and cares which he finds thrust upon him when he takes over the administration of this Island. He has not the time to go minutely into every detail concerning the Island in such a short time. The duties which he finds himself called upon to perform are entirely new to strange to him and are not along the lines of those which he has been performing as a naval officer, and he must apply himself most vigorously to the study of these matters if he hopes to become acquainted with the conditions and needs of the Island in such a short time. Then, by the time that he has acquired the knowledge of conditions and needs and has become acquainted with the people, he receives his orders of appointment, and all his good intentions of progress seem reached an end, and his relief may or may not take up the work where he had left off. This is true, too, of the officers who are appointed by the Governor as heads of the Department of Education. Careful thought upon this aspect of the question has convinced us that a great part of our lack of progress and advancement has been due to this reason.

At present we have an American Superintendent of Schools, who was sent here to organize the public schools, and he has been earnestly endeavoring to attain this
object. We feel, however, that we have been greatly
neglected in the lack of competent teachers, es-
pecially trained teachers from this island. We
have been in the habit of hiring American
teachers, but we believe that the current salar-
your people cannot be paid at present. The people of
Samar are being taxed heavily now, and a further increase
would be ill-advised.

We are therefore, to petition you for assist-
ance in obtaining from the State Department of the
Philippines an appropriation for the hire of American teach-
ers for our schools. As we are entirely uniformed as
to how we should proceed in this matter, we rely on
you for advice and assistance in securing for the present
the following:

1. That the retention of the Island of the
present American superintendent of schools
until such time as our schools shall have
been completely reorganized as nearly as
possible on the basis of the public schools
of the United States, and that this
work be left entirely to his judgement and
experience.

2. That an appropriation be granted for
the employment of at least three regular
certified graduates of the United
States to prepare and train for the work of
they are now employed
in our schools who have never had a course
of training for this work, and also to teach
the most advanced classes in our schools.

3. That a Board of Directors named by
the people of Samal from residents who have
children attending the public schools be
appointed to confer with and assist the
Superintendent in all matters affecting the
Public Schools of Samal.
Having heard you will be able to help us in this matter, or that at least you will be able to suggest to us how we may obtain assistance, we beg to subscribe ourselves.

Most sincerely and faithfully yours,

[Signatures]

Guillermo D. Sablan
J. E. Garcia
J. E. Garcia
Jose Garcia
A. German
R. G. Santos
A. M. Sablan
J. M. Torres
A. B. Calvo
A. M. Baza
M. M. Sablan
M. H. Garcia
M. H. Garcia
V. M. Torres
F. E. Garcia
F. B. Baez
F. B. Banglinos
BIBLIOGRAPHY


