

“WE WILL BE PREPARED”:  
SCOUTING AND CIVIL DEFENSE IN THE EARLY COLD WAR, 1949-1963

Jessica Herczeg-Konecny

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Philip V. Scarpino, Ph.D., Chair

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Robert G. Barrows, Ph.D.

Master's Thesis  
Committee

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Modupe Labode, Ph.D.

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## CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: Civil Defense during the Early Cold War .....	13
Chapter Two: Scouting and Civil Defense .....	36
Conclusion .....	79
Bibliography .....	83
Curriculum Vitae	

## Introduction

During the early Cold War, 1949 through 1963, the federal government, through such agencies as the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) (1950-1957), the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization (OCDM) (1958-1960), and the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) (1961-1963), regarded children and young adults as essential to American civil defense. Youth-oriented, voluntary organizations, including the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) and the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA), assisted the federal civil defense programs by promoting civil defense messages and agendas. In this thesis, I will explore how the GSUSA and BSA translated federal civil defense policies for their Scouts. What were the civil defense messages transmitted to Scouts during the early Cold War? How were those messages disseminated? Why? What was the social impact of BSA and GSUSA involvement with civil defense on America's evolving national ideals? The federal government viewed children as a way of investing the American public in do-it-yourself civil defense. The GSUSA and BSA incorporated this message into their publications and translated federal civil defense policies for Scouts, often by promoting conventional roles and values as well as traditional Scouting beliefs and practices in a new, Cold War context, while encouraging Scouts to "Be Prepared."

Immediately following World War II, many Americans experienced a short period of national optimism, despite (or perhaps because) of the U.S. military's deployment of atomic bombs on Hiroshima (6 August 1945) and Nagasaki (9 August 1945).<sup>1</sup> Despite general fear of nuclear power, there was hope that atomic power could be

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<sup>1</sup> On 6 August 1945 at 8:15 a.m., the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima, Japan. The *Enola Gay*, a B-29 piloted by Colonel Paul Tibbets, released a uranium gun-type weapon

a tool for peace.<sup>2</sup> Problems between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) escalated during the Soviet-backed coup in Czechoslovakia (1948), as well as the Berlin Blockade and Airlift (1948-1949).<sup>3</sup> In September 1949, Americans learned that the USSR had successfully tested an atomic bomb and feared a nuclear attack.<sup>4</sup> That same year on 1 October, communist leader Mao Tse-Tung established the People's Republic of China, heightening American fears of communism abroad and at home.<sup>5</sup> A new age began in 1949: the Cold War.

Tensions mounted between the United States and the Soviet Union over the extent of each country's influence in shaping Europe after World War II. Beginning with President Harry S. Truman's administration, the United States government espoused a foreign policy known as "containment" towards the Communist Soviet Union. The policy's initial form described a desire to curb Soviet expansion by containing it inside the Eastern European borders the Soviets had captured during World War II.

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known as "Little Boy" over Shima Hospital. This released the equivalent of 15,000 tons of TNT. The total population of Hiroshima was 280,000 civilians and 43,000 military personnel. 78,000 were killed outright by the blast and fire with 37,000 missing. By the end of 1945 the deaths totaled 140,000. By 1950 the deaths totaled 200,000 due to radiation. Jeff Hughes, *The Manhattan Project: Big Science and the Atom Bomb* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 93. On 9 August 1945, at 11:02 a.m. the United States dropped a second atomic bomb on the city of Nagasaki, Japan. The *Bock's Car*, a B-29 piloted by Major Charles Sweeney, released a plutonium implosion weapon known as "Fat Man" over the industrial port city. This released the equivalent of 22,000 tons of TNT. By the end of 1945 70,000 people had died. By 1950, 140,000 people had died due to radiation. *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>2</sup> For examples, see J. Robert Oppenheimer, "The Atom Bomb as a Great Force for Peace," *New York Times*, 9 June 1946, 80; and "Atom Bomb Called 'A Force For Peace,'" *New York Times*, 26 July 1949, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Kort, *Columbia Guide*, 28-30 and 184-185.

<sup>4</sup> On 19 September 1949, United States intelligence confirmed that the USSR had conducted its first atomic test on 29 August 1949. Guy Oakes, *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 18.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example: Henry R. Lieberman, "Gigantic Questions for Mao – And for Us, Too," *New York Times*, 1 January 1950, 92; "Growing Issue: As China and the Far East Emerge as the Great Issue in World Affairs. Our Role in Far East," *New York Times*, 15 January 1950, E1; "Red China Assails U.S. 'Aggression,'" *New York Times*, 30 June 1950; and "World War III? Mao Challenges U.N.," *New York Times*, 3 December 1950, E1.

Containment was based on what became known as the Truman Doctrine, a concept developed after Truman's speech on the subject to Congress on 12 March 1947.<sup>6</sup>

In that speech, Truman outlined why the United States should support the Greek government against a potential communist insurgency. He argued that in order for Greece to effectively resist, it needed economic and military aid from the United States, the only country that could act in the matter. Furthermore, Truman argued Turkey also required American economic and military aid. If the United States "lost" Greece to communism, its neighbors might also succumb which would affect all of the Middle East and Europe.<sup>7</sup> Truman explained that "totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States."<sup>8</sup> The president connected the circumstances of not just Greece and Turkey, but other American allies, with the fate of the United States.

Truman then outlined a subsidiary argument that poverty bred communism, therefore, the United States must fight poverty abroad. As Truman explained, "The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife... The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world—and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation."<sup>9</sup> This speech would affect American foreign policy for decades. Truman's initial containment policy, driven by the logic of the Truman Doctrine, soon expanded to contain communism

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<sup>6</sup> Harry S. Truman, "Address of the President to Congress, Recommending Assistance to Greece and Turkey," Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, accessed July 1, 2012. [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/doctrine/large/index.php](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/doctrine/large/index.php).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 2-4.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 5.

everywhere around the world and policymakers interpreted it to include foreign economic, political, and military aid.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, the periodicals produced by the BSA and GSUSA during the early Cold War reflected a concept known as “domestic containment.” In her seminal work *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (1988), historian Elaine Tyler May argues that while the United States pursued a policy of containment abroad, on the domestic front, Americans sought security by concentrating on the home. The federal government created policies to contain the Soviet Union and communism around the world, to contain nuclear energy and the atomic threat, and to contain domestic communism by containing subversive individuals. Similarly, according to May, “public policy, personal behavior, and even political values were focused on the home” in order to contain the fears of communism, the atomic threat, and sexuality viewed as dangerous (namely promiscuity and homosexuality). Middle-class Americans confronted the new Cold War context with traditional roles and familiar values.<sup>11</sup>

The GSUSA and BSA adhered to traditional roles and familiar values with regards to gender and race. *American Girl* did contain some articles regarding civil rights during this time period in the context of a world friendship agenda.<sup>12</sup> Most Girl and Boy Scouts were white and middle class. That *Boys Life* and *American Girl* were normative periodicals is not surprising given American culture during the early Cold War. At a time when many civil rights organizations such as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)

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<sup>10</sup> Michael Kort, *The Columbia Guide to the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 99. The Korean War (1950-1953) was a direct result of this policy of containment. Ibid., 32 and 144.

<sup>11</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988; anniversary edition, New York: Basic Books, 2008), 1, 17, 65, 91.

<sup>12</sup> See for example, Lloyd Weldon, “Crown Our Good with Brotherhood,” *American Girl*, February 1950, 50; “Dark Decision,” *American Girl*, June 1951, 7-9, 44.



and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) were being red-baited. Communism was linked with subversion and attacked not only through the federal loyalty programs but also other liberal groups. As historian Patricia Sullivan has explored, by 1948, groups supporting civil rights felt pressure to prove they were anti-communist. She stated that by 1950, “public disavowal of Communists... was part of the ritual of claiming legitimacy in the realm of Washington politics, if not essential for survival.”<sup>13</sup> Groups and individuals who challenged the status quo were labeled as communist and therefore subversive.

President Truman’s speech to the NAACP on June 29, 1947, according to Sullivan, began “the work of linking ‘civil rights’ to the imperatives of the Cold War and improving America’s image in the world.”<sup>14</sup> According to historian Raymond Arsenault, CORE used Freedom Rides beginning in 1961 to “expos[e] and dramatiz[e] the hypocrisy of promoting freedom abroad while maintaining Jim Crow” in the South.<sup>15</sup> The Freedom Ride organizers and riders forced the Kennedy administration “to address civil rights issues as a function of national security” because segregation undermined the image of the United States abroad.<sup>16</sup>

National security through a foreign containment policy created an arms race that involved both conventional and nuclear weaponry, and overshadowed the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup> This arms race relied on the concept of “deterrence,” designed by United States policymakers to contain the USSR’s nuclear threat. If the USSR threatened

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<sup>13</sup> Patricia Sullivan, *Lift Every Voice: The NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: New Press, 2009), 374.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 346.

<sup>15</sup> Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Kort, *Columbia Guide*, 52.

war in Western Europe, for example, the United States could theoretically maintain peace by threatening nuclear retaliation. Simply put, the U.S. had to convince the Soviets that if the USSR attacked its allies (namely Europe), America would bomb the USSR. If the U.S. could be persuasive enough, there would be peace between the two countries.<sup>18</sup>

Sociologist and historian Guy Oakes reasons that deterrence figures prominently in interpreting the federal government's programs during the early Cold War. In his work, *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture* (1994), Oakes investigates the American civil defense ethos during the 1940s and 1950s by analyzing the relationship of national security and civil ethics. Oakes' central argument is that policymakers in the Truman and Eisenhower administrations set up civil defense programs not to *physically* protect Americans from an atomic attack, but to ensure civilian buy-in of a foreign containment policy involving deterrence. Although the government knew that the public could not effectively be protected in the event of nuclear war, officials concealed that knowledge. The federal government promoted and used civil defense to persuade the public that deterrence would keep the Soviets from attacking in the first place.<sup>19</sup>

Having determined that national security required a civil defense program, federal policymakers turned to its practical development.<sup>20</sup> Civil defense was nothing new to Americans, who had practiced protection measures during World War I and World War II. However, the public conception of civil defense in the United States changed after

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<sup>18</sup> Oakes, *Imaginary War*, 6.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

<sup>20</sup> The term "civil defense" is defined as "the organization and training of civilians for the preservation of lives and property during and after air raids or other enemy action." *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edition, volume 3 (1989), s.v. "civil defence." Please note I have changed "civil defence" to the American spelling, "civil defense."

World War II, and yet further after 1949. For the first time, many Americans confronted the real possibility of a nuclear attack and its aftermath. Policymakers encouraged this concern. In 1952, FCDA Chief of Schools Branch Clyde W. Meredith wrote “[I]n any future large-scale conflict, the whole world would become a war front. Americans, for the first time, must realistically consider the possibility of their front yards being a part of the battlefield.”<sup>21</sup> In the event of such an attack targeting everyone, civilians could expect to face mass casualties and death on U.S. soil. The federal government determined that funding for civil defense could be reduced if it shifted the burden to its citizens. Therefore, the government, through their civil defense agency, promoted inexpensive, “do-it-yourself” civil defense.<sup>22</sup>

With this fear in mind, many Americans saw themselves as living in a new era: the “atomic age.”<sup>23</sup> An example of this language can be found in *Health Teaching in Schools* (1955). Ruth E. Grout, a professor in the School of Public Health and College of Education at the University of Minnesota, included a section on “Civil Defense and Disaster Relief” in her textbook:

We live in a *new age* – an age in which the threat of the atomic bomb creates new problems of self-preservation and of mutual safety and welfare... an awareness is growing that national preparedness is essential, not only now for civil defense, but also at any time for disaster relief... Well-directed citizen action in turn is dependent upon education of all the people, including the school-age child.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Clyde W. Meredith, “Civil Defense and the Schools,” *School Life: Official Journal of the U.S. Office of Education* 34, no. 7 (April 1952): 99.

<sup>22</sup> Laura McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 72.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 4.

<sup>24</sup> Ruth E. Grout, *Health Teaching in Schools: For Teachers in Elementary and Secondary Schools* (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company, 1955), 68 (emphasis mine). For more language on a “new atomic era demanding a new way of life” see also Meredith, “Civil Defense and the Schools,” 99-100.

In an effort to normalize the new threats that the era posed, educators and adults placed value on educating children about these threats. In addition, federal, state, and local governments created alliances with other agencies such as voluntary associations. Furthermore, the federal civil defense agencies linked civil defense with disaster preparedness of all kinds.<sup>25</sup>

Scouting organizations also openly promoted the concept of a new atomic age. In 1961, *Boys' Life* ran an excerpt from a speech given by President Eisenhower, which read in part:

The changes that have come about in our thinking and in our material world since the first atom bomb was exploded in 1945 to this minute are greater in their significance than all the changes that happened between the ancient pharaohs and the day before Hiroshima. We have for the first time come face to face with the possibility of our own destruction *en masse*. The kind of leadership that is going to prevent this catastrophe must be based on sound character, physical fitness, and an absolute determination to be prepared for the thought and action demanded by the times.<sup>26</sup>

Despite this general conception of the atomic age as *new*, the federal government's civil defense agencies, the GSUSA, and the BSA all responded to the new threats with traditional roles and values. This included espousing projects used in prior wars, a gendered division of civil defense work, and focusing on their historic motto "Be Prepared."

Through the early 1950s, the federal government sought to downplay the effects of nuclear war. However, by the late 1950s, many Americans had learned what could really happen in the event of nuclear attack and the Office of Civil Defense could no

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<sup>25</sup> See McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home*, 7; Oakes, *Imaginary War*; and Andrew Grossman, *Neither Dead Nor Red: Civilian Defense and American Political Development During the Early Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 15.

<sup>26</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Preparation for Leadership," *Boys' Life*, October 1961, 11.

longer sustain the myth of survival. Many Americans had learned what could really happen in the event of a nuclear attack and their view of the Cold War changed. The rhetoric shifted as people knew more about the environmental effects of nuclear war. In part this was due to groups such as the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE), which raised awareness of the dangers of nuclear war, as well as other groups that worried about continued nuclear testing. In 1958, Congress held hearings regarding the dangers of radiation and fallout from the continuing atomic bomb tests.<sup>27</sup> This brought an end to open-air, aboveground testing, resulting in the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963.<sup>28</sup> In addition, urgency waned as the Berlin Crisis of 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 passed.<sup>29</sup> The era of the early Cold War ended in 1963.

Scouting organizations developed during the early twentieth century at a time when the social roles were changing for children and adolescents. Parents and adults, particularly in the American middle class, were concerned about the effects of urbanization and endorsed recreation organizations such as the YMCA, YWCA, Public Schools Athletic Leagues, and Scouting. Usually, these groups also valued and promoted respect for adult authority. The concept of “adolescence” had developed at the end of the nineteenth century in response to labor and education reform; the word “teenager” first appeared in print at the end of World War II.<sup>30</sup> The new teenagers attempted an often-

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<sup>27</sup> Dee Garrison, “‘Our Skirts Gave Them Courage’: The Civil Defense Protest Movement in New York City, 1955-1961,” in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 209.

<sup>28</sup> Kort, *Columbia Guide*, 158 and 191.

<sup>29</sup> Rose, *One Nation Underground*, 212.

<sup>30</sup> Leerom Medovoi, *Rebels: Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005), 25. See also Stephen Lassoode, “Age and Authority: Adult-Child Relations During the Twentieth Century in the United States,” *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1, no. 1 (2008): 97-98. Information about the word “teenager” comes from the *Oxford English Dictionary*. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edition, s.v. “teenager.” 1989; online version June 2012.

uneasy balance as they searched for autonomy while remaining dependents. More importantly, adults sought to control, teach, and shape adolescent life.<sup>31</sup> The 1950s saw large growth in membership as well as peak membership numbers for both organizations due not just to the post-World War II “baby boom,” but also a focus on quality of life for children.

The BSA and GSUSA taught and shaped youths, in part, through their prescriptive literature. Through the publications *Boys' Life* and the *American Girl*, the BSA and GSUSA reinforced federal civil defense messages and programs. The target audiences for these magazines were primarily American children and young adults involved in the Scouting movement in the United States and around the world.<sup>32</sup>

The United States pursued a foreign policy known as “containment” to stop the spread of communism abroad. Similarly, policymakers pursued domestic containment at home. Containment referred to not only containing domestic communism, but also the nuclear threat and fear of that threat. The concept of deterrence necessitated civil defense programs, which provided little or no actual protection. Instead, civil defense was largely a marketing campaign to encourage do-it-yourself projects concentrated on the home and family. The federal government (presidential administrations, civil defense agencies, etc.) knew that nuclear war was not survivable. Whether or not (or when) the BSA or GSUSA administrators comprehended that is beyond the scope of this project. The fact remains

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<<http://www.oed.com.covers.chipublib.org/view/Entry/198559>>; accessed 01 September 2012. First published in *A Supplement to the OED IV*, 1986.

<sup>31</sup> Medovoi, *Rebels*, 26-29.

<sup>32</sup> Letters to the editor for both magazines show that youth overseas read these magazines. In fact, the magazines often targeted Scouts abroad. For example, *American Girl* published many articles about Troops on Foreign Soil (TOFS). See Eleanor L. Thomas, “Internationally Speaking,” *American Girl*, February 1953, 52-53; Ethel Harper, “Gateway to Adventure,” *American Girl*, September 1953, 14-15, 46; Eloise Centoz, “Friendship Teams,” *American Girl*, September 1953, 56-58; and Janet Tobitt, “Citizens Abroad,” *American Girl*, February 1956, 60, 65-66.

that Scouting agencies promoted civil defense and, furthermore, actively participated in normalizing and domesticating the bomb through their civil defense activities.

The body of evidence for this project comes from a careful analysis of the gender-based prescriptive literature offered by the GSUSA and BSA targeted to pre-teenage and teenage youth in the United States (but also abroad). One of the limitations to this approach is that it is a “top-down” view of what transpired during the early Cold War and therefore only one component of a larger story. It is a way to understand what adults taught to youth rather than what their Scouts actually learned. There are glimpses of the Scouts in action related to civil defense in both magazines. A strength of this approach is it parses the culture and ethos that the Scouts applied and contributed to. After all, the BSA and GSUSA were selling something to American youth and their families. The youth read what the GSUSA and BSA wanted them to read on a variety of subjects including civil defense.

The evidence shows that BSA and GSUSA authorities made a conscious effort to comply with federal civil defense programs as a way to adapt to political, technological, and environmental changes during the early Cold War. These voluntary organizations were normative and contributed to a Cold War ethos that rationalized and made the unthinkable thinkable. The BSA and GSUSA practiced domestic containment whether they realized it or not.

The first chapter of this thesis outlines youth involvement in civil defense culture during the early Cold War. The second chapter reviews the prescriptive literature produced by the BSA and GSUSA in their magazines *Boys' Life* and the *American Girl* as well as the messages adults prescribed to Scouts regarding civil defense. These

messages reflected and contributed to an early Cold War ethos in America. This thesis also explores why the GSUSA and BSA participated in civil defense and how the organizations encouraged participation.



## **Chapter One: Civil Defense during the Early Cold War**

### *The FCDA, OCDM, and OCD*

The federal government reorganized the World War II-era Office of Civilian Defense as the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) in 1950. It became known as the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization (OCDM) in 1958 until 1960, and the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) from 1961 until 1963.<sup>33</sup> Each agency (whether FCDA, OCDM, or OCD) was a division of the Department of Defense and actually provided little money for civil defense during the early Cold War. Instead, it determined that private citizens should be in charge of their own protection.<sup>34</sup> The federal government provided a standardization of rhetoric for this “do-it-yourself”-style civil defense and preparedness planning for states and municipalities. However, it left most of the actual work to organizations, individuals, and families.<sup>35</sup> Instead, the majority of defense money went into expanding what President Eisenhower would later call the “military-industrial complex.”<sup>36</sup> From the end of the Second World War and into the 1970s, the federal government spent billions of dollars on the military.<sup>37</sup>

Civil defense was a way to indoctrinate people and secure loyalty to the state. The FCDA/OCDM/OCD sponsored voluntary participation programs and distributed propaganda across print, television, radio, and film media. The agency intended these

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<sup>33</sup> A chronology of federal Civil Defense agencies is as follows:

1945-1949: Office of Civilian Defense

1950: Office of Emergency Management/Federal Civil Defense Administration (OEM/FCDA)

1951-1957: Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA)

1958-1960: Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization (OCDM)

1961-1963: Office of Civil Defense (OCD)

From Susan Stoudinger Northcutt, “Women and the Bomb: Domestication of the Atomic Bomb in the United States,” *International Social Science Review* 74, nos. 3-4 (1999): 138, fn. 11.

<sup>34</sup> McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home*, 72.

<sup>35</sup> Oakes, *Imaginary War*, 105; McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home*, 36.

<sup>36</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Farewell address,” 1961. Yale Law School Avalon Project, accessed September 1, 2012. [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/eisenhower001.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/eisenhower001.asp).

<sup>37</sup> Richard J. Altenbaugh, *The American People and Their Education* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education, Inc., 2003), 284.

materials to educate Americans on emergency preparedness as well as basic atomic science without going into detail regarding the potential aftermath of nuclear conflict and fallout. The government needed buy-in for its inexpensive, do-it-yourself civil defense practices in order to maintain support for its deterrence and containment policies. This meant the federal government's civil defense program needed to persuade people that if deterrence failed, Americans would be able to survive the aftermath of a nuclear attack.<sup>38</sup> For example, the OCD's *Fallout Protection* (1961) stated the purpose of the publication was "to help save lives if a nuclear attack should ever come to America. The foreign and defense policies of your Government make such an attack unlikely."<sup>39</sup>

Throughout the 1950s, American policymakers perpetuated the notion that the majority of citizens *could* survive nuclear fallout, but only if they were prepared. This concept is what historian Sarah Lichtman calls the "myth of survival."<sup>40</sup> The national civil defense program did not (and realistically could not) offer real protection while maintaining the deterrence policy. In order to convince the public that nuclear war could be survived, the policymakers at best ignored or at worst obfuscated the true ramifications of nuclear attacks. For example, in the federal booklet *Survival Under Atomic Attack* (1950), the authors stated, "Radiation sickness is not always fatal. In small amounts, radioactivity seldom is harmful."<sup>41</sup> Each statement was individually true, but the two ideas were connected in a way that implied that radioactivity was not as bad as one might fear. The authors of the booklet also explained that people did survive atomic

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<sup>38</sup> Oakes, *Imaginary War*, 6-7.

<sup>39</sup> Department of Defense, Office of Civil Defense, *Fallout Protection*, 5.

<sup>40</sup> Sarah Lichtman, "Do-It-Yourself Security: Safety, Gender, and the Home Fallout Shelter in Cold War America," *Journal of Design History* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 51.

<sup>41</sup> Executive Office of the President, National Security Resources Board, and Civil Defense Office, *Survival Under Atomic Attack* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1950), 4.

attacks and even referenced the bombing of Hiroshima. According to this 1950 booklet, half of the people who were a mile from the atomic explosion were still alive.<sup>42</sup> The author did *not* provide the percentages of those who survived within the mile blast or detail the long-term health of the local population or address the more powerful bombs of the 1950s.

When it came to children, matters were even less clear. The FCDA booklet *Civil Defense in Schools* (1952) contained only two mentions of radiation.<sup>43</sup> Generally, authors discussed the potential nuclear threat in very vague terms and provided no real sense of what to expect if deterrence failed and the Soviets bombed American cities. *American Girl* and *Boys' Life* offered information about atomic energy but not weaponry and their authors did not discuss radioactivity or fallout sickness.<sup>44</sup> One would not expect such magazines to contain graphic descriptions like those found in John Hersey's *Hiroshima* (1946) that was about the events after the bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.<sup>45</sup> However, it was editorially disingenuous to exclude the ramifications of nuclear war and unequivocally promote a myth of survival.

Both *American Girl* and *Boys' Life* stressed the important peaceful applications of nuclear power. When authors discussed dangerous atomic iterations they maintained that youths could protect themselves and their families through participation in civil

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 6. In another example, the FCDA-produced *Civil Defense in Schools* provided only two mentions of radiation and did not explain what actually happened when children are exposed to radiation. Federal Civil Defense Administration Technical Manual TM-16-1, *Civil Defense in Schools* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, April 1952). *Civil Defense in Schools* was prepared with assistance from the National Commission on Safety Education and the National Education Association.

<sup>43</sup> Federal Civil Defense Administration, *Civil Defense in Schools*, 17.

<sup>44</sup> This author reviewed each monthly issue from 1949 through 1963.

<sup>45</sup> The *New Yorker* devoted an entire issue to Hersey's work a year after the bombings. The book, *Hiroshima*, was a bestseller. Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light*, 203-05.

defense.<sup>46</sup> For example, in the November 1959 issue of *Boys' Life*, author James H. Winchester wrote that “the era of the peaceful atom is here... as new methods emerge to harness the atom for beneficial rather than destructive purposes.”<sup>47</sup> In a particularly callous moment, Winchester even stated that through medical advancements in the use of radioactive materials, “it is estimated that *more lives have been saved by the atom than were lost in the Hiroshima and Nagasaki explosions.*”<sup>48</sup> He did not mention civil defense or nuclear attack. The only “con” to his mind was the high cost of nuclear power, which he stated would go down.<sup>49</sup>

Civil defense propaganda made the existence of the nuclear threat clear, but did not educate the public on the nature and aftermath of such an attack until the early 1960s.<sup>50</sup> The only people who would actually be protected in the event of a nuclear war were government officials. President Eisenhower privately felt that trying to protect ordinary citizens was futile, but he and his successors nevertheless actively pursued civil defense policies.<sup>51</sup> By the late 1950s, the federal government could no longer sustain the myth of survival, as many Americans had learned what could really happen in the event of a nuclear attack. Reflecting this, from the 1960s, the OCD’s literature started to acknowledge the true chances of survival. For example, in the booklet *Schools and Civil Defense* (1964) the authors acknowledged that nuclear fallout would affect the entire

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<sup>46</sup> David E. Lilienthal, “Atomics for Teens,” *American Girl*, April 1949, 10-11, 47, 49; Dick Silver, “Teenagers Quiz the Atomic Experts,” *American Girl*, October 1962, 18-19, 43; fictional story, “Radioactive Island” serial, January through April 1951 issues of *Boys' Life*; “Albert Einstein, Man of Science,” *Boys' Life*, October 1956, 48.

<sup>47</sup> James H. Winchester, “The Peaceful Atom,” *Boys' Life*, November 1959, 26.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 64 (emphasis mine).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>50</sup> Oakes, *Imaginary War*, 51-77. In *One Nation Underground*, Kenneth Rose quoted Eisenhower’s chief civil defense administrator, Val Peterson: “The best way to be alive when an atomic bomb goes off in your neighborhood is not to be there.” [House subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, *New Civil Defense Legislation*, 85<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1st sess., 1957, 266]. Kenneth D. Rose, *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 3.

<sup>51</sup> Oakes, *Imaginary War*, 6.

country, and that if residents were not protected from radiation they would get sick and potentially die. The booklet also encouraged educators to teach their students about nuclear energy and the effects of nuclear weapons.<sup>52</sup> In *Fallout Protection*, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara wrote in his foreword: “In a major attack upon our country, millions of people would be killed.”<sup>53</sup> The booklet reviewed the effects of different bombs, and defined and described terms such as fallout and radiation.

### *Focus on Youth*

Soon after the end of World War II, the BSA and the GSUSA took up the cause of civil defense, creating an ethos for youth particular to the early Cold War. Some of the facets of this ethos reflected social values including (but not limited to): concentration on the home, democratic citizenship, heterosexuality, traditional gender roles, and a “do-it-yourself” culture.<sup>54</sup> In short, the GSUSA and BSA responded to the nuclear crisis by exploiting their traditional values and familiar roles. After all, both organizations had the motto “Be Prepared,” which they now set out to apply in the new, nuclear context of the Cold War.

Both Scouting organizations also employed civil defense rhetoric and methods that ran contrary to other groups such as the FCDA/OCDM/OCD and the educational system, albeit in limited ways.<sup>55</sup> Specifically, both groups continued to espouse a culture of “world friendship” in order to work towards international peace. Also called “world

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<sup>52</sup> Francis McGlade, *Schools and Civil Defense* (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1964), 9, 12, 20.

<sup>53</sup> OCD, *Fallout Protection*, 5.

<sup>54</sup> To be sure not all of these traits are indicative only of an early Cold War ethos and many also could be attributed to an ethos for adults as well.

<sup>55</sup> For more on the educational system regarding world mindedness, see Andrew Hartman, *Education and the Cold War: The Battle for the American School* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

mindedness,” “international friendship,” or “world brotherhood,” this concept placed value on youths seeing themselves as part of a global community as a way to achieve peace. In addition, this view also had the benefit of spreading the ideals and values of American-style democracy and capitalism.<sup>56</sup>

The concept of world friendship was oftentimes at odds with other events transpiring on the home front, including continued intolerance and injustice towards (and disenfranchisement of) many Americans. The 1950s were a time of civil rights agitation, particularly in the Jim Crow South and with challenges to school segregation after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). In addition, activists confronted new technologies of the Cold War, such as the hydrogen bomb (H-bomb) and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), through an admittedly limited peace and antiwar movement tied to environmental concerns. The emerging environmental movement during the late 1950s and 1960s focused on Strontium 90 and the effect on milk and, therefore, the effect on infants.<sup>57</sup>

World friendship and civil rights, antiwar movements, and environmental activism were limited because of virulent anticommunism domestically. As the Cold War escalated, the rise of a second “Red Scare” saw its zenith in McCarthyism. Senator Joseph McCarthy gave a speech in 1950, in which he declared that communists had infiltrated the State Department. McCarthy’s zealous search for communists continued

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<sup>56</sup> World friendship will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

<sup>57</sup> Regarding new technologies, see Kort, *Columbia Guide*, 158. Regarding the environmental movement in response to Strontium 90, see Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), 5-7. Carson cited the “Report on Environmental Health Problems,” *Hearings*, 86<sup>th</sup> Congress, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, March 1960, page 170. See also Amy Swerdlow, *Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). Women Strike for Peace members actively combated nuclear testing after the discovery of Strontium 90’s effect on milk and therefore the effect on infants. In addition, please see Steven M. Spencer, “Fallout: The Silent Killer,” *Saturday Evening Post*, August 29, 1959 and September 5, 1959.

until he accused the United States Army of infiltration in 1954. After that, he quickly fell out of favor, but the effects of his work (and the work of others like him) continued.<sup>58</sup> A major factor in curbing “inappropriate” activism was anticommunism, which affected all aspects of American life. The government regarded dissent as subversive and tied subversion to communism.<sup>59</sup>

Historian Elaine Tyler May argues that as the U.S. government pursued a foreign containment policy, Americans embraced an ideology of what she terms “domestic containment.” Cessation of hostilities after World War II and economic prosperity after the Great Depression brought hope, but people were also afraid of nuclear annihilation, of so-called dangerous sexuality (including promiscuity and homosexuality), and of communism. May argues that Americans responded by focusing on the “self-contained home”: “Family seemed to be the one place where people could control their destinies and perhaps even shape the future...the home represented a source of meaning and security in a world run amok.”<sup>60</sup> Americans faced a frightening new context armed with traditional roles and values.

Government leaders, policymakers, and creators of popular culture fostered an environment where women and men concentrated their energies toward their homes and families as bulwarks against communism, the nuclear threat, and sexuality labeled as “deviant” (e.g., promiscuity or homosexuality). Government leaders, policymakers, and creators of popular culture tied heteronormative domesticity directly to national

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<sup>58</sup> Kort, *Columbia Guide*, 34.

<sup>59</sup> Susan M. Hartmann, “Women’s Employment and the Domestic Ideal in the Early Cold War Years,” in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 85.

<sup>60</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 26.

security.<sup>61</sup> With regards to teenagers and American youth, the domestic containment metaphor aptly describes adult desire to contain fears of juvenile delinquency and sexual promiscuity.<sup>62</sup>

One way the government confirmed the status of heterosexuality was by linking communism with subversion and both with homosexuality. According to historian David K. Johnson in 1947 the State Department began purging so-called “security risks” including suspected communists and homosexuals. These purges continued and intensified through McCarthyism and “became institutionalized within the federal loyalty/security system, and continued to be standard government policy until the 1970s.”<sup>63</sup> Historian John D’Emilio has described that homosexuality was treated as “an epidemic infecting the nation, actively spread by communists to sap the strength of the next generation.”<sup>64</sup> The press surrounding the investigations had the effect of many Americans conflating homosexuals and communists.<sup>65</sup> The government labeled lesbians

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 16. May reflects on traditional gender roles *ibid.*, 23-24. See also Joanne Meyerowitz, “Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946-1958,” in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 234. See also Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 33; Jane Sherron De Hart, “Containment at Home: Gender, Sexuality, and National Identity in Cold War America,” in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, ed. Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 130. For more regarding the links between domesticity, homophobia, and anticommunism see De Hart, “Containment at Home,” 124 and 130. Regarding connections between domesticity and consumer culture see Whitney Strub, “The Clearly Obscene and the Queerly Obscene: Heteronormativity and Obscenity in Cold War Los Angeles,” *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (June 2008): 374. The term “heteronormative” has been defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “Of, designating, or based on a world view which regards gender roles as fixed to biological sex and heterosexuality as the normal and preferred sexual orientation.” “heteronormative, adj.” OED Online. December 2012. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.proxy2.ulib.iupui.edu/view/Entry/275594?redirectedFrom=heteronormative&> (accessed January 19, 2013).

<sup>62</sup> De Hart, “Containment at Home,” 125. See also May, *Homeward Bound*, 104.

<sup>63</sup> David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 4, 21.

<sup>64</sup> John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 44.

<sup>65</sup> Johnson, *The Lavender Scare*, 31. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover conflated communism with homosexuality. Hoover used the FBI to target homosexuals in government, law enforcement, and



and gay men “perverts,” and therefore a threat to national security, and systematically fired and barred them from government work.<sup>66</sup> Subsequently, this gave police forces license to harass people by targeting bars, cruising areas, and private homes.<sup>67</sup> The House Un-American Activities Committee pathologized and denounced queer people as immoral and therefore subversive.<sup>68</sup> The State Department dismissed approximately one thousand people on the grounds of alleged homosexuality during the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>69</sup>

Historians have used May’s provocative metaphor of domestic containment since *Homeward Bound* came out in 1988. However, there are others who have challenged the metaphor and complicated the story. As historians Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert point out, the rise in birth and marriage rates after World War II could be read not as a “hunkering down in the face of doom” but as a natural response coming out of the Depression and war which had prevented so many things.<sup>70</sup> Historian Laura McEnaney argues, “Perhaps the Cold War merely intensified a heterosexual family consumer culture that would have materialized anyway after such dislocation.”<sup>71</sup>

Historians Susan M. Hartmann and Joanne Meyerowitz are ones who expose the complexities of the story of “the Fifties” by arguing that not everyone conformed and not everyone fits within the domestic containment model. A focus on domesticity did not always preclude work outside of the home, even for women. In the 1950s, rising numbers

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education, including universities and colleges. Tim Weiner, *Enemies: A History of the FBI* (New York: Random House, 2012), 175-80.

<sup>66</sup> D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 41-42.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>68</sup> Johnson, *The Lavender Scare*, 36-38.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>70</sup> Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert, “U.S. Culture and the Cold War,” in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, ed. Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 5.

<sup>71</sup> Laura McEnaney, “Cold War Mobilization and Domestic Politics: The United States,” in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. 1, *Origins*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 436.

of women from most economic groups and marriage statuses (including married with children) found wage-earning employment outside of the home.<sup>72</sup> So despite the domestic ideal presented towards women during the 1950s, historical research has recovered other modes of living. Women did not stay confined to the private, domestic sphere and sought public roles at work, in labor unions, peace movements, and civil rights struggles, for example.<sup>73</sup>

Since this thesis project focuses on prescriptive literature, it is important to note that through the end of the 1950s, popular culture did not always highlight an ideal of domesticity for women. For example, in her study of mass-market monthly magazines, Meyerowitz documents models of women not only as housewives but also as wage earners, volunteers, and political activists. This prescriptive literature acknowledged women's involvement in the public sphere usually thought of as the purview of men. However, Meyerowitz notes that authors in these magazines did use "feminine stereotypes to reinforce traditional gender norms" in private and public spheres.<sup>74</sup> It should also be noted that for men, in some ways the domestic containment model actually did not prescribe a traditional role. The domestic ideal presented to men was new, particularly because of an emphasis on men to assist more with childrearing, which had previously been thought of as women's work.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Hartmann, "Women's Employment," 86.

<sup>73</sup> Joanne Meyerowitz, Introduction to *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 2-6. See also Joanne Meyerowitz, "Sex, Gender and the Cold War Language of Reform," in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, ed. Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 108-11.

<sup>74</sup> Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique," 231-33.

<sup>75</sup> Robert J. Corber, *Homosexuality in Cold War America: Resistance and the Crisis of Masculinity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997), 5-6. See also James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 21.

So which is it? Does domestic containment accurately describe the BSA and GSUSA civil defense programs? Maybe the best way to proceed is to acknowledge that there were other ways that people lived their lives in the 1950s. Historians have proven that the domestic containment metaphor cannot encapsulate the experience of all Americans, even those who were white and middle class. After all, even the GSUSA recognized in the *American Girl* that their readers might find wage-earning work outside the home one day. However, domestic containment is a suitable metaphor to apply to the prescriptive literature of the BSA and the GSUSA because these organizations did conform. Membership during the 1950s was overwhelmingly white and middle class. Their brand of do-it-yourself civil defense – even the fact it was prescribed at all – hewed closely to the federal government’s rhetoric and recommendations. Civil defense in Scouting sought to contain the nuclear threat and contain communism with an emphasis on home, family, and traditional gender roles. The Scouts promoted democratic citizenship and world friendship to promote an American way of life. American citizens, the federal civil defense agencies, and voluntary associations saw the “nuclear family” as defense against a variety of threats such as communism, nuclear war, homosexuality, juvenile delinquency, and urban blight.<sup>76</sup> This project looks at one way that the BSA and GSUSA embraced domestic containment: through participation in civil defense. The

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<sup>76</sup> For an example of an historian’s interpretation of housing projects as conservative domestic containment see Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), xi. An author in the radical lesbian periodical *Siren Newsletter* wrote: “Everyone just pretends [the world is] heterosexual so the nuclear family won’t fall apart. After all, the nuclear family is good for business.” From the “Dear Anarchodyke” advice column in *Siren Newsletter*, 1972. Arlene Meyers Papers, Box 3, Folder 1, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois. It should also be noted that the first instance of the term “nuclear family” has been traced back to 1924. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* “nuclear family” is “the basic family group consisting typically of father, mother, and their dependent children, regarded as a social unit.” *Oxford English Dictionary*, Third edition, December 2003; online version June 2012. <<http://www.oed.com.covers.chipublib.org/view/Entry/128926>>; accessed 12 August 2012. For more regarding fears of homosexuality and juvenile delinquency, see Gilbert, *Men in the Middle*, 74.

Scouting agencies saw participation as proof of patriotism and an example of what it meant to be an American. The GSUSA and BSA prescribed activities used during previous wars, focused on home life, advocated for traditional gender roles, and relied on their tradition to “Be Prepared.”

Civil defense programs can also be seen as domestic containment in another way. Civil defense domesticated the bomb and preparations for war by tying both in with preparing for natural disasters. Throughout the post-World War II period the national civil defense program incorporated emergency preparedness for natural disasters (earthquake, fire, flood, etc.) as well as for enemy attack in their programs and literature for adults and children alike. Nuclear preparedness became part-and-parcel with regular emergency planning.<sup>77</sup>

In *Civil Defense Education thru Elementary and Secondary Schools* [sic] (circa 1957) the FCDA defined civil defense as “prepared, collective action to meet any emergency whether arising from natural disaster or from wartime attack.”<sup>78</sup> In order to justify teaching civil defense in schools, the FCDA explained that in “concept and application, civil defense education is an essential part of learning to live safely. It is, therefore, the business of those responsible for the education of children and youth.”<sup>79</sup> This tenet normalized preparation for nuclear war and rationalized the inclusion of youth with this preparation.

After World War II, the FCDA determined that youth could be useful in disseminating civil defense information to their parents, partly because experts and

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<sup>77</sup> Northcutt, “Women and the Bomb,” 129-30.

<sup>78</sup> Clara G. Stratemeyer, *Civil Defense Education thru Elementary and Secondary Schools* [sic] (Washington, D.C.: Produced by the Commission on Safety Education and the National Education Association for the Federal Civil Defense Administration, c. 1957), 4.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

policymakers believed children could be used in the production of national ideals. If the FCDA could indoctrinate children, these children in turn could advise their parents to participate in civil defense. In 1950, Arthur L. Rautman, clinical psychologist and counselor at the University of New Mexico, presented an example of this concept in an essay titled “Children as Agents of Social Reform” wherein he discussed civil defense. In his essay he stated,

It can hardly be denied, of course, that the child is a most potent medium through which to influence the home, and it is unquestionably true that many of these school and service projects [regarding civil defense specifically] are invaluable as a means of training children in participation in community living and community responsibility... Because children are plastic, they are valuable instruments of social change.<sup>80</sup>

Rautman’s essay is one example of what many adults at the time were thinking: that children effected social change.

Children are integral to the story of domestic life in the early Cold War in part because of the postwar “baby boom” and the development of a child-centered ethos. Adults concentrated social anxieties, hopes, and fears on children and adolescents.<sup>81</sup> Families experiencing postwar affluence focused on their children as the “center of family life,” which as historians Charles Strickland and Andrew Ambrose point out, was highlighted by the popularity of Dr. Benjamin Spock’s *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* (1946).<sup>82</sup> By 1952, the book had sold more than four million copies. Parents used Spock’s book as a reference for health issues and as a source of advice on child

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<sup>80</sup> Arthur L. Rautman, “Children as Agents of Social Reform,” *Elementary School Journal* 50, no. 5 (January 1950): 277, 278, 282.

<sup>81</sup> This was common around the world, not just the United States. Curator Juliet Kinchin writes “Treatment of children rapidly became a crucial sphere of Cold War ideological contest... idealized child-centered images of community and family life intensified on both sides of the East-West divide.” Juliet Kinchin, *The Century of the Child: Growing by Design, 1900-2000* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2012), 151.

<sup>82</sup> Benjamin Spock, *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1946).

rearing. As Strickland and Ambrose note, Spock emphasized “the possibilities of creating a *democratic* person who was at peace with both self and society.”<sup>83</sup> An important facet of this child-centered ethos was the necessity of creating democratic citizens. For example, Spock wrote:

Democracy builds discipline. Another thing that a good school wants to teach is democracy, not just as a patriotic motto but [also] as a way of living and getting things done... This training... is what makes the best citizens, the most valuable workers, and even the finest soldiers.<sup>84</sup>

Spock’s widely shared view was that children were inestimably important to the future of the United States, and it was necessary to adequately prepare them for adult roles in a democracy.<sup>85</sup>

The March 1951 issue of *School Life: Official Organ of the United States Bureau of Education* included an article by U.S. Commissioner of Education, Earl James McGrath. This article, “Citizenship begins with Children,” stressed the importance of educating children in democratic citizenship as an antidote to communism. The article was immediately followed by an article by Spock, “Development of Healthy Personalities in Children,” which advocated for democratic leadership in classrooms to promote democratic citizens.<sup>86</sup> The desire to create democratic citizens is another example of

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<sup>83</sup> Charles E. Strickland and Andrew M. Ambrose, “The Baby Boom, Prosperity, and the Changing Worlds of Children, 1945-1963,” in *American Childhood: A Research Guide and Historical Handbook*, ed. Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985), 538-40, 544 (emphasis mine). The historians pointed out that groups other than middle-class Whites, such as working-class families and many African Americans, faced quite a different experience in postwar America. Strickland and Ambrose identified that Dr. Spock’s book continued to be a success throughout the following decades. By 1976 it had sold more than 28 million copies.

<sup>84</sup> Spock, *Common Sense*, 330.

<sup>85</sup> Dr. Spock did question American foreign policies. In 1962 Spock joined the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) and also was publically outspoken against the Vietnam War. Manon Perry, “Benjamin Spock: Pediatrician and Anti-War Activist,” *American Journal of Public Health* 101, no. 5 (May 2011): 802-03.

<sup>86</sup> Earl James McGrath, “Citizenship Begins with Children” *School Life: Official Organ of the United States Bureau of Education* 33, no. 6 (March 1951): 84-85. Dr. Benjamin Spock, “Development of Healthy

domestic containment. Democratic citizens would be able to contain “subversive” individuals and support a foreign containment policy.

Older children also mattered. In 1954, the United States Children’s Bureau published *The Adolescent in Your Family*. In it, author Marion L. Faegre wrote, “The future lies with youth... We can put great confidence in the remarkable ability of our children to endure, to bounce back from pressure, to meet adversity stoutly.”<sup>87</sup> Faegre considered why youth were so crucial to the future of the state. The government fostered preparing teenagers for adult roles incorporating them into national security efforts through civil defense.

Through the early Cold War, the FCDA developed the Civil Defense Education Project for public schools using slogans such as “education for national survival.” By the end of 1952, the FCDA calculated that 87.4 percent of elementary schools and 88.4 percent of secondary schools had participated in civil defense training. The Civil Defense Education Project also enjoyed support from youth organizations such as the BSA.<sup>88</sup> Historian JoAnne Brown argues that educators integrated civil defense into schools for a number of reasons. Due to the baby boom, student enrollments had increased dramatically and schools needed to secure federal funding by cooperating with federal programs.<sup>89</sup> In 1958, *Life* magazine ran a series of articles called the “Crisis in Education.” *Life* authors revealed that American schools faced overcrowding, poor

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Personalities in Children,” *School Life: Official Organ of the United States Bureau of Education* 33, no. 6 (March 1951): 85-86.

<sup>87</sup> Marion L. Faegre, *The Adolescent in Your Family*, United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Children’s Bureau Publication 347 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office: 1954), 105.

<sup>88</sup> Grossman, *Neither Dead Nor Red*, 81. Grossman cited the Papers of Harry S. Truman, Official File, *Civil Defense Guide for Council and District Planning: Boy Scouts of America*, File 1591. This document viewed the BSA as a good “model for everyday citizens.” *Ibid.*, 158, fn. 27.

<sup>89</sup> JoAnne Brown, “‘A is for Atom, B is for Bomb’: Civil Defense in American Public Education, 1948-1963,” *Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (1988): 70.

teacher-to-student ratios, and lacked financial resources.<sup>90</sup> Others – from policymakers to the media – worried that the United States was losing the “race” for superiority in technology and the military against the USSR and therefore American students needed better training, especially in science and math.<sup>91</sup> This was exacerbated by the USSR launch of Sputnik satellites in 1957.<sup>92</sup> These concerns displayed a fear of communism and buy-in of the containment doctrine.

Another factor in involving youth in civil defense was the anticommunist zeal sweeping the country. The American educational system faced attacks from the anticommunist crusade.<sup>93</sup> Brown argues, “Teachers, principals, educational planners, and education reformers used civil defense...as a political symbol to advance their more immediate professional concerns. In so doing, they fortified the symbolic and institutional links between education and national defense and bolstered the logic under which federal aid to education was finally granted in 1958” in the National Defense Education Act.<sup>94</sup> Educators proved their fidelity not only through loyalty oaths, but also by subscribing to programs such as civil defense.<sup>95</sup> Civil defense had become a weapon in the fight for domestic containment.

The federal government’s civil defense program had to gain the public’s acceptance of inexpensive, do-it-yourself civil defense. This involved securing buy-in for the concept of deterrence. To that end, the government programs had three specific

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<sup>90</sup> “Crisis in Education,” *Life* 44, no. 12 (24 March 1958): 25-37. Other issues that featured this series were issues 13, 14, 15, and 16 (March 31 through April 24, 1958).

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-37.

<sup>92</sup> Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*, 1.

<sup>93</sup> Brown, “A is for Atom,” 70.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>95</sup> The federal government started loyalty program for its own employees in 1947. Kort, *Columbia Guide*, 34. Educators at all levels across the country had to take loyalty oaths. See for example, Murray Illsons, “State’s Teachers Declare Loyalty,” *New York Times*, 26 November 1952, 25 [regarding state of New York]; and “Judge Upholds Loyalty Oaths for Teachers,” *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 4 March 1956, 3.



agendas: contain fear and therefore manage panic; build morale; and naturalize preparing for nuclear war by domesticating the preparedness and incorporating it into other familiar readiness activities while reinforcing domestic containment.

The government presented information in its civil defense pamphlets and propaganda designed to contain fear and manage panic for both adults and youth. The FCDA was preoccupied with preventing and containing panic, as seen in Val Peterson's *Collier's* article, "Panic the Ultimate Weapon?" (1953). Peterson, director of the FCDA from 1953 until 1957, promoted the myth of survival: "If there is an ultimate weapon, it may well be mass panic – not the A-bomb."<sup>96</sup> Peterson also included children as an important part of civil defense. Adults needed to be cognizant of the desire to manage fear and prevent panic in children. Peterson wrote, "Children are a special problem. They are apparently naturally panic-resistant, but are highly susceptible to the fears of parents, teachers or other adults to whom they look for guidance."<sup>97</sup> Peterson advocated drilling the children three times per week.<sup>98</sup> Policymakers strove to strike a balance: they advocated the use of drills but did not want to upset the children.<sup>99</sup> Containing fear and managing panic involved the national will of the American public. Federal policymakers believed that if Americans exhibited fear of the bomb or other atomic issues, it could undermine national security. If the Soviets perceived Americans to be afraid and lacking national will or strength, the nation would not be secure.<sup>100</sup>

We can see an emphasis on containing fear and managing panic in 1952, when the Columbia Broadcasting System, in conjunction with the Civil Defense Commission, New

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<sup>96</sup> Val Peterson, "Panic: The Ultimate Weapon?," *Collier's*, August 21, 1953, 100.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>99</sup> Brown, "A is for Atom," 24.

<sup>100</sup> Grossman, *Neither Dead Nor Red*, 128.

York State Office of Civil Defense, and the voluntary association the American Red Cross, created a booklet called the *Homemaker's Manual of Atomic Defense*. The booklet advised women on how they could (and needed to) manage their own fear. In part, this was so that children would model calm behavior.<sup>101</sup> The FCDA saw homemakers as in a unique position to directly influence their children. In addition, the booklet is a good example of civil defense as domestic containment. The FCDA assigned tasks to women as caregivers therefore reinforcing specific gender roles. The booklet provided information on how women should prepare their homes as protection in case of nuclear attack.

While some advice relied on adults' modeling proper, calm behavior, other advice sanctioned directly educating children about civil defense, and on giving children something to do in an emergency so they would not panic.<sup>102</sup> The FCDA also recognized the importance of teaching children to educate parents, in effect to reverse-model good behavior.<sup>103</sup> Armed with knowledge children, even as dependents, could lead and teach their parents. The FCDA's Civil Defense Education Project had two goals: to indoctrinate children who would in turn influence their parents.<sup>104</sup>

The federal civil defense agencies attempted to normalize preparation for nuclear war with an intense focus on home and family as a form of domestic containment. By largely ignoring the overall ramifications of nuclear attack and zeroing in on psychological life inside the fallout shelter, the government promoted the myth of

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<sup>101</sup> Margaret Arlen, *Homemaker's Manual of Atomic Defense* (New York: Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., 1951), [2].

<sup>102</sup> For examples, see *ibid.*, [6-7] and FCDA, *Civil Defense in Schools*, 25-28.

<sup>103</sup> L.J. Mauth, "Prevention of Panic in Elementary-School Children," *Journal of Education* (November 1954): 10-11. For another example see FCDA administrator, Clara McMahon's, article in the *Elementary School Journal*: one needs "to act *without panic* in an emergency." Clara P. McMahon, "Civil Defense and Educational Goals," *The Elementary School Journal* 53, no. 8 (1953): 442 (emphasis mine).

<sup>104</sup> Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*, 71.

survival. The FCDA/OCDM/OCD advocated keeping children occupied in an emergency situation, to contain their fear and prevent panic.<sup>105</sup>

The FCDA deemed the containment of fear as critical to national security, and fit it in with the production of national ideals and the future of the state. The FCDA suggested some language that school districts could use in speaking with parents of their students:

Your attitude will largely determine theirs. If you are calm, they will be calm. If you are sensible, they will be sensible...let us hope we shall never need to use the plans we have made, but we will continue to plan since the future welfare and safety of our children—and our Nation—may depend on it.<sup>106</sup>

Again, adults encouraged children to model their behavior on the parents and teachers around them.

From the perspective of the FCDA as well as the National Education Administration, deterrence was the only way to reach this future. Clara G. Stratemeyer was the Montgomery County Board of Education supervisor of elementary schools for Rockville, Maryland, as well as a member of the National Commission on Safety Education of the National Education Association. In *Civil Defense Education thru Elementary and Secondary Schools* [sic] (c. 1957), she supported the deterrence theory:

Today, the instruments of war are the newest and the most destructive of the man-made causes of disaster. We must learn to understand and live with them – or perish. We must accept as fact that there can be no complete security should such weapons be used. There can be only a partial saving of human life, but to this end we must learn the ways of maximum effectiveness. Blind fear in the face of danger can paralyze or panic; understanding can make possible protective measures in advance and effective behavior in times of peril.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> For example, see FCDA, *Civil Defense in Schools*, 5 and 10.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-28.

<sup>107</sup> Stratemeyer, *Civil Defense Education*, 9.

Deterrence went hand-in-hand with containment; the equation was designed to contain fear and manage panic. Stratemeyer never discussed how this threat could be prevented; she simply accepted that she must work within the parameters given.

Stratemeyer endorsed the idea that “civil defense materials and their presentation to children must be designed neither to arouse anxiety nor to minimize danger. There are ways both to prevent disaster and to survive in its presence... The school must guide [children] in developing the understandings and ways of behaving that are necessary to confident, constructive reaction in a time of emergency.”<sup>108</sup> In order to acquire acceptance for deterrence, the government needed to convince them that nuclear war was survivable. However, the federal government needed to provide people with enough information so that they realized the danger they were in so that they would participate in civil defense.

The GSUSA and BSA also promoted civil defense messages concerned with managing fear and fighting panic. An author for the *American Girl* wrote in an article “Be Prepared: Emergency Living Indoors”: “Does it sound fantastic? Couldn’t happen to *you* and *your* family? The truth is, such drastic emergencies happen nearly every week in some part of the country, and whether it is flood, fire, tornado, earthquake, or perhaps some act of war or sabotage, the family that is prepared is the family that will be able to meet any emergency, in peace or war.”<sup>109</sup> The magazine invoked the Girl Scout motto “Be Prepared” and worked to revamp it in a Cold War context.

Another priority of the federal government was to build morale through activity and action. For youth, one important activity was practicing “duck and cover” drills at

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>109</sup> Catherine T. Hammett, “Be Prepared: Emergency Living Indoors,” *American Girl*, January 1952, 16 (emphasis in original).

school. In the event of an attack, teachers instructed students to “duck” down under the “cover” of their desks.<sup>110</sup> The activity not only domesticated and normalized, but also rationalized, preparation for nuclear war, while obfuscating its true horrors.<sup>111</sup> Part of the marketing for this program involved “Bert the Turtle,” a cartoon turtle wearing a bow tie and civil defense helmet. Bert appeared in the FCDA’s movie *Duck and Cover* in 1951. Part animation, part live-action, the film featured children practicing ducking and covering at school, on the bus, on their bike, walking, and even at a picnic.<sup>112</sup> “Duck and cover” became a lasting touchstone in the collective memory of a generation of children born during the baby boom.<sup>113</sup>

The GSUSA and BSA used rhetoric regarding civil defense to help build morale. For example, William Hillcourt, a well-known BSA administrator known as “Green Bar Bill” wrote, “The whole country is astir – we are living in a time of fast-moving history. American men – many of them former Scouts – are fighting for freedom far away. Here at home we’re preparing for troubled days ahead by setting up Civil Defense. Are we, as Scouts, in on the great things that need to be done? You bet your life! To the hilt, 100

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<sup>110</sup> James M. Ridgway, “School Civil Defense Measures,” *Elementary School Journal* 54, no. 9 (1954): 501; FCDA, *Civil Defense in Schools*, 10.

<sup>111</sup> Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*, 72.

<sup>112</sup> *Duck and Cover*, 1951, Archer Productions, Inc. Produced by the FCDA and the Safety Commission of the National Education Association. Internet Archive, accessed August 12, 2012. [archive.org/details/DuckandC1951](http://archive.org/details/DuckandC1951).

<sup>113</sup> “Duck and cover” became a shorthand for the fear and anxiety experienced during the early Cold War. Numerous memoirs, autobiographies, and fiction describe these drills experienced by children. For example, see William Ayers, *Fugitive Days: Memoirs of an Antiwar Activist* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), 19; Lynne Cheney, *Blue Skies, No Fences: A Memoir of Childhood and Family* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009), 98; Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Wait Till Next Year* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008); T.H. Henning, *Memoirs of a Defense Contractor* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2005), 48; Brooke Newman, *Jenniema and James: A Memoir in Black and White* (New York: Harmony Books, 2010), 87; Laura Pedersen, *Buffalo Gal: A Memoir* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Books), 133; Margaret A. Salinger, *Dream Catcher: A Memoir* (New York: Washington Square Press, 2000), 144. An example of duck-and-cover in a novel is Leslie Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues* (Ithaca, New York: Firebrand Books, 1993; new edition New York: Alyson Books, 2003), 15. The term continues to have meaning in the twenty-first century. See, for example, Alex Williams, “Duck and Cover: It’s the New Survivalism,” *New York Times*, April 6, 2008. Last accessed from [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com) on April 12, 2012.

percent!”<sup>114</sup> With rhetoric such as this, the BSA equated Scouts with the military. The BSA recognized the Cold War as a “real” war and their Scouts as soldiers protecting the home front through utilizing and militarizing civil defense. Everyone was to “do their part” for the war effort, just as Boy Scouts had in both World Wars.

Another facet of the federal civil defense agenda was to normalize preparedness for nuclear war by incorporating it into preparing for emergencies such as natural disasters and the BSA and GSUSA did the same. For example, in 1951, the GSUSA produced a pamphlet, *How to Be Prepared: The Girl Scout Motto in Action* so that Scouts could “learn rules of safe-conduct during a fire, earthquake, flood, or bombing.”<sup>115</sup> This normalized preparation for war by placing it in the same context as unavoidable weather-related events. In 1951, the FCDA started the National Civil Defense Advisory Committee of Women. This committee worked with the Girl Scouts, 4-H, Future Homemakers, and Campfire Girls, as well as other voluntary associations for women to figure out how to mesh civil defense with disaster preparedness.<sup>116</sup> This agenda is an example of domestic containment at work. The FCDA/OCDM/OCD, BSA, and GSUSA insisted on containing the nuclear threat – as well as the fears surrounding it – by equating it with other survivable (and more familiar) emergencies.

The federal government during the early Cold War relied on a foreign policy of deterrence through containment. Policymakers sponsored do-it-yourself civil defense as a way to encourage buy-in for these policies. This civil defense perpetuated the myth of

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<sup>114</sup> William Hillcourt, “Green Bar Bill Says: Be Prepared for Emergencies!,” *Boys’ Life*, November 1950, 28.

<sup>115</sup> Girl Scouts of the United States of America, *How to Be Prepared: The Girl Scout Motto in Action* (New York: Girl Scouts of the United States of America, 1951), 4.

<sup>116</sup> Tracy C. Davis, *Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007), 40-41.

survival in order to enlist participation. Civil defense can be seen as a method of domestic containment as the federal government promoted containment of communism, the nuclear threat, and of sexuality.

Children factored significantly in national civil defense plans because of the perceived need to educate democratic citizens and to advocate for children to teach their parents in the ways of civil defense. The federal government's civil defense agencies, along with other voluntary associations such as the GSUSA and BSA, sought to contain fear and manage panic, build morale, and normalize and domesticate the bomb by focusing on the home and family and incorporating civil defense into other preparedness activities. The BSA and GSUSA incorporated these messages into their publications. The organizations translated many federal civil defense policies for their Scouts, often by promoting conventional roles and values as well as traditional Scouting beliefs and practices in a new, Cold War context, while encouraging Scouts to "Be Prepared."

## Chapter Two: Scouting and Civil Defense

Why look at Scouting? The sheer numbers of children involved with both groups in the United States is remarkable. Both organizations greatly expanded during the 1950s due in large part to the baby boom. The GSUSA surged from 1,108,000 in the United States in 1950, to 3,500,000 in 1962. The number of boys involved in the BSA grew from 2,795,222 in 1951, to 3,909,485 in 1963.<sup>117</sup> Scouting was also a global institution that enjoyed a close relationship with government. In addition, their prescriptive literature provides another way to gain insight into how the federal government's work was interpreted and disseminated.

The GSUSA and BSA promoted civil defense through their publications, including their handbooks, as well as their primary periodicals the *American Girl* and *Boys' Life*. Editors geared the magazines toward their Scouts and the Scout hierarchy, but a larger youth audience read the periodicals. Youth aged ten through eighteen read the magazines, both at home and abroad.<sup>118</sup> *American Girl* and *Boys' Life* in large part were general interest magazines. A typical issue of *Boys' Life* contained serialized fiction stories as well as articles. In the February 1959 issue there was a fictional story about George Washington and a work of non-fiction about Abraham Lincoln ("Super Athlete of the Sangamon"). Often these articles or stories involved action, adventure, and athleticism. Every issue contained the "Hitchin' Rack" (letters to the editor) as well as

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<sup>117</sup> "Girl Scouts Show Peak Membership," *New York Times*, April 20, 1950, 29; "Boy Scouts Report Peak Membership," *New York Times*, May 26, 1951, 15; "The Growing Girl Scouts," *New York Times*, March 11, 1962, SM39; "Boy Scout Membership Up," *New York Times*, February 8, 1963, 6. *Boys' Life* claimed a circulation of "over 2,000,000" by 1960. *Boys' Life*, January 1960.

<sup>118</sup> The editorial staff of both publications remained very consistent from 1949 until 1963. Each issue of the *American Girl* included letters to the editor ("Penny for Your Thoughts"). This column revealed that Girl Scouts, at home and abroad, read *American Girl*, and girls who wrote in ranged from ages 11 through 17, with most between ages 13 and 15. *Boys' Life* did not list the ages of their readers in the letters to the editor ("The Hitchin' Rack").



“Hobby Hour.” This feature included discussions about possible hobbies for boys to pursue. In February 1959 boys read about ham radio, pet fish, and conducting simple chemistry experiments. Each issue featured music and book reviews. The Chief Boy Scout frequently had an article (“From the Chief”) and the issues would also highlight different exercises for Scouts. There was a color section, which included comic strips and cartoons. In February 1959 these included stories about Abraham Lincoln and Moses as well as “Scouts in Action,” a true story about the derring-do of real-life Scouts.

The February 1959 issue of *American Girl* included serialized fiction stories as well as non-fiction features. These non-fiction articles were often about teenage girls in other countries (in February 1959 one was about girls in Spain) and work both outside and inside the home. February 1959 featured cooking recipes as well as an article, “Adventures in Television” about work in the television industry. The magazine was always filled with makeup and fashion advice. Some issues included sewing tips and patterns. Real-life Girl Scouts were showcased in “All Over the Map: Headline News in Girl Scouting” each month. The magazine also provided movie and book reviews, crosswords, and jokes pages. Letters to the editor were printed in “A Penny for Your Thoughts.”

The GSUSA and BSA based their civil defense training on basic Scouting principles and laws, such as their motto “Be Prepared.” The membership oaths of both organizations outlined those principles. In the case of the Boy Scouts, the oath was:

On my honor I will do my best  
To do my duty to God and my country  
And to obey the Scout Law;  
To help other people at all times;

To keep myself physically strong,  
Mentally awake, and morally straight.<sup>119</sup>

The Girl Scouts Promise was similar in tone, if abbreviated in content:

On My Honor I will Try  
To be true to God and my country.  
To help others at all times.  
To obey the Scout Laws.<sup>120</sup>

The organizations promoted democratic citizenship by stressing patriotism and loyalty to the state.<sup>121</sup> Both Scouting groups had ties with the federal government: from 1949 through 1963, the President of the United States and First Lady served as Honorary Presidents of the BSA and GSUSA, respectively.<sup>122</sup>

Both organizations also had a system wherein participants could earn merit badges based on activities they completed. From 1955 until 1961, the GSUSA grouped merit badges into themes such as “Arts and Crafts,” “Out-of-Doors,” “Sports and Games,” “Community Life: Citizen Here and Abroad,” and “International Friendship: Citizens Here and Abroad.” Many of these themes had a distinct focus on home such as “Community Life: You and Your Home,” “Health and Safety: You and Your Home,” and “Homemaking: You and Your Home.”<sup>123</sup> Boys could earn badges in “Citizenship” (including Home, Community, Nation, and World Brotherhood), “Conservation,”

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<sup>119</sup> Jay Mechling, *On My Honor: Boy Scouts and the Making of American Youth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), xix.

<sup>120</sup> Mary Degenhardt and Judith Kirsch, *Girl Scout Collector's Guide: A History of Uniforms, Insignia, Publications, and Memorabilia* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2005), 551.

<sup>121</sup> Ted S. Pettit, *Handbook for Boys* (New York: Boy Scouts of America, 1950), 19. See also William Hillcourt, *Handbook for Boys* (New York: Boy Scouts of America, 1963), 83; Girl Scouts of the United States of America, *Girl Scout Handbook: Intermediate Program* (New York: Girl Scouts of the United States of America, 1955), 9.

<sup>122</sup> Every issue of both magazines included the information regarding the Honorary Presidents.

<sup>123</sup> Degenhardt and Kirsch, *Collector's Guide*, 558-59.

“Agriculture,” “First Aid,” Hiking, “Sports,” “Art,” “Architecture,” “Camp,” and “Marksmanship.”<sup>124</sup>

The rhetoric of the federal government, schools, and voluntary associations such as the BSA and GSUSA discussed preparing children for their adult roles and emphasized youths’ part in producing shared national ideals. An evaluation of the prescriptive literature developed by these groups reveals a network incorporating schools, the state, and home. During the early Cold War, this network used civil defense to promote an ideal of democratic citizenship to children, which tied together patriotism, loyalty, capitalism, and civic engagement.<sup>125</sup> One (albeit self-serving) FCDA administrator even went as far to say, “Participation in the local civil-defense organization is a major factor in the preservation of our democratic heritage.”<sup>126</sup> Implicit in this statement was an argument that good American citizens participated in civil defense as a way to contain communism and preserve normality. When the GSUSA was officially integrated into the FCDA agenda in late 1950, the *New York Times* reported that “according to the plan of participation, Girl Scouting’s major role in the present situation is to help the nation’s girls lead as normal a life as possible in these times of tension.”<sup>127</sup>

Democratic citizenship was an important aspect of children’s education whether at school or at play. An editor for *My Weekly Reader*, a periodical used in schools across

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<sup>124</sup> List compiled from review of *Boys’ Life* July 1954 issue.

<sup>125</sup> McGrath, “Citizenship Begins With Children,” 84. See also McMahon, “Civil Defense and Educational Goals,” 441; Grout, *Health Teaching*, 251; Girl Scouts of the United States of America, *Senior Girl Scouting* (New York: Girl Scouts of the United States of America, 1952), 80; Joseph A. Brunton, Jr., “A Few Words from the Chief,” *Boys’ Life*, February 1961, 27. For examples of how the BSA stressed the importance of supporting a capitalist economy see “Men and Mathematics,” *Boys’ Life*, Sept. 1960, 20, 83; “More Ways to Earn Money,” *Boys’ Life*, November 1960, 40.

<sup>126</sup> McMahon, “Civil Defense and Educational Goals,” 441.

<sup>127</sup> “Girl Scouts to Join in Nation’s Defense,” *New York Times*, October 5, 1950, 35.

the country, boldly asserted: “Young Americans need to understand what America really is, its ideals. We need to sell the American way of life to our children so they will shun all substitutes. Too little education too late could be fatal.”<sup>128</sup> This sentiment went hand-in-hand with domestic containment as a force to contain communism. President Truman’s address in the March 8, 1949 issue of *School Life* was clear: “Education is our first line of defense...through education alone we can combat the tenets of communism.”<sup>129</sup> This language illuminates the view of many at the time: that children needed to be indoctrinated to support democracy and capitalism so that they could resist communism. Furthermore, the very identity of the country rested on education of youth. Recreation organizations such as the Girl Scouts also provided a source of citizenship education, as revealed by a quote from Honorary Vice President of the GSUSA, Eleanor Roosevelt in 1952: “I think the training the Girl Scouts get is excellent, and they are preparing themselves not only to help in case of need in a crisis but to be better American citizens.”<sup>130</sup>

Not surprisingly, both the BSA and GSUSA emphasized patriotism throughout the *American Girl* and *Boys’ Life*, particularly in their interpretations of American history. The BSA lionized American heroes such as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Nathan Hale, and confirmed the iconic status of national monuments such as the Statue of Liberty.<sup>131</sup> *Boys’ Life* based its Cold War message on the belief that America was under attack, either physically through potential nuclear war or

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<sup>128</sup> Editorial, *My Weekly Reader – I* (Teacher’s Edition) 29, no. 32 (May 5-9 1952).

<sup>129</sup> Harry S. Truman, “Education is our First Line of Defense,” address delivered at Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida, 8 March 1949. Text of speech found in *School Life: Official Journal of the U.S. Office of Education* 31, no. 7 (April 1949), 1.

<sup>130</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt, “Message from Eleanor Roosevelt,” *American Girl*, March 1952, 7.

<sup>131</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Letter to the Boy Scouts,” *Boys’ Life*, February 1950, 7. See also the comic strip “Lives of Great Men: Nathan Hale,” *Boys’ Life*, July 1956, and the cover of *Boys’ Life*, November 1957.

psychologically through communist propaganda, and in response, sought to rally its young readers to support and defend the organization's interpretation of the American way of life.

The GSUSA and BSA encouraged civic engagement to foster connections between Scouts, their families, their communities, the country, and the larger world. These connections were built on the foundation of the home, however, not troops or schools, and therefore this civic engagement became an expanded form of domestic containment. This was clearly communicated to children. In 1955, the *Girl Scout Handbook* offered the following:

Everything you do affects the life of the community whether it be home, school, troop, or the community in general. If you do thoughtful, little things that make your home a happier place, you are contributing to the welfare of your town or city, state, country, and the world. The greatness of any country and the *peace of the world* depend to a large extent on the strength of each family and the happiness of every home.<sup>132</sup>

The family and home were lines of defense in the atomic age. The Girl Scouts advocated for their girls to concentrate on the home in order to prevent war and promote peace. As a side effect of this, the Scouts also empowered girls with the knowledge that even their own smallest actions could help American national security and potentially change the world.

Government policymakers, educators, and leaders of voluntary associations enlisted American families to perform do-it-yourself civil defense, in part by encouraging American youth to teach their own families. However, a curious tension developed because this meant that youth simultaneously acted as dependents *and* guardians of their parents during a time when adults expressed fear but also encouragement of teenage

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<sup>132</sup> GSUSA, *Girl Scout Handbook: Intermediate Program*, 190 (emphasis mine).

autonomy.<sup>133</sup> Films such as *The Wild One* (1954) and *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) featured “bad boys,” young men who came out of the suburban sprawl but resisted domesticity. “Tough girls” like those found in the 1950 pulp novel *Tomboy* by Hal Ellson and the 1959 movie *Girls Town* also resisted the domestic ideal.<sup>134</sup>

Editors for the BSA and GSUSA championed their youth to set adult-approved examples for their communities. In the September 1956 issue of *Boys' Life*, Notre Dame football coach Terry Brennan encouraged Boy Scouts to participate in civil defense as individuals but also as team members. Brennan made a direct appeal to Scouts to join civil defense efforts and set an example for their neighbors and communities.<sup>135</sup> Similarly, the Girl Scouts explained that “a simple, sincere service project” could start a “chain reaction of service” around the world in the same way that “touching a switch in an atomic laboratory” would one day mean a force for good.<sup>136</sup> This is a good example of the rhetoric that sprang up during the 1950s regarding atomic energy. A chain reaction was normalized and domesticated enough to be used as a metaphor for good.

An overt connection between the FCDA/OCDM/OCD and both Scouting organizations lasted at least into the 1960s. For example, in 1961, Stuart L. Pittman, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civil Defense, sent a letter to Boy and Girl Scout leaders across the United States enclosing the booklet *Fallout Protection: What to Know and Do About Nuclear Attack*.<sup>137</sup> As instructed, Scouts brought these materials home so that they could discuss civil defense with their families. Agency leaders hoped children

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<sup>133</sup> Medovoi, *Rebels*, 26-29.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 42. See also David Baker, “Rock, Rebels, and Delinquents: The Emergence of the Rock Rebel in 1950s ‘Youth Problem’ Films,” *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 19, no. 1 (March 2005): 39-54.

<sup>135</sup> Terry Brennan, “Civil Defense and You,” *Boys' Life*, September 1956, 76.

<sup>136</sup> Martha Coe, “Chain Reaction,” *American Girl*, October 1957, 70.

<sup>137</sup> Davis, *Stages of Emergency*, 31.

would teach their parents about the civil defense practices they learned at school and through Scouting.<sup>138</sup> If civil defense were seen as so easy that a child could do it, then perhaps parents would be more likely to engage in emergency preparedness practices. Encouraging children's participation also normalized preparation for war by domesticating potentially frightening activities.

Part of the work of the BSA and GSUSA meant equating support of democracy and "being prepared" with military service. Both magazines favored military service in support of national defense efforts, although the topic appeared much more frequently in *Boys' Life*. The authors of these articles for *Boys' Life* were usually members of the military and they focused on the military applicability of the Boy Scout motto "Be Prepared." Major General Lewis B. Hershey, director of the Selective Service System, wrote that Scouts could serve the motto "Be Prepared" by serving their country in the military.<sup>139</sup> Private First Class Myles Callum wrote that being a Boy Scout helped prepare him for the Army.<sup>140</sup>

The *American Girl* presented military service differently. The GSUSA proposed enrollment as a WAC or WAVE to its members, though other approved roles were mostly confined to the home front.<sup>141</sup> The editors brought in a male serviceman to say that "Military service may open the door to adventure, self-fulfillment, and romance." This did undermine the domestic ideal, however, since the writer only championed for women to serve as military helpmates. He suggested the roles of stenographers, secretaries, clerical workers, communications specialists, and hospital workers, which

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<sup>138</sup> McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home*, 75.

<sup>139</sup> Lewis B. Hershey, "My Country," *Boys' Life*, July 1956, 20.

<sup>140</sup> Myles Callum, "A Soldier Speaks to Scouts," *Boys' Life*, August 1960, 21.

<sup>141</sup> Helen Gregutt, "Be Prepared: You Belong in This Picture," *American Girl*, April 1951, 14-15.

were some of the only roles available to women. Women could also be flight traffic specialists, which, the author assured his readers, were like the stereotypically feminine “stewardesses on commercial airlines.”<sup>142</sup>

In addition to service to the country, the Scouts attempted to link civil defense participation with what it meant to be an American citizen. The GSUSA rationalized including youth as necessary participants in emergency preparedness as part of its promotion of democratic citizenship because “when our country, or any part of it, is threatened with an emergency, it is the duty of every citizen, young or old, to prepare to meet the emergency.”<sup>143</sup> As such, the federal government and voluntary associations sought to prepare children for adult roles as citizens in a democracy. While the tenet of freedom of speech and expression underpins democracy, during the early Cold War tension developed between such civil liberties and a fear of communist subversion. The second Red Scare pervaded many facets of life for American youth, including at school, where loyalty oaths were demanded as a promotion of democracy.<sup>144</sup>

The GSUSA and BSA also responded to a fear of communism and communist subversion in their prescriptive literature. At a BSA conference in 1962, one speaker urged Boy Scouts to “Learn more about Communism so that you can bury it with the

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<sup>142</sup> G. Alain Vitray, “Uniform for You?,” *American Girl*, February 1958, 30 and 54.

<sup>143</sup> GSUSA, *How to Be Prepared* [1951 Handbook], 3. Both organizations connected civil defense with citizenship into the 1960s. For example, in early 1960, Boy and Girl Scouts in Oregon participated in a “Citizens Now” conference. Discussions included “teen-age driving, *civil defense*, and other things of special importance to young people.” “All Over the Map: Headline News in Girl Scouting,” *American Girl*, May 1960, 55 (emphasis mine).

<sup>144</sup> For loyalty oaths by teachers, see “Judge Upholds,” 3 and Illsons, “State’s Teachers,” 25. With regards to official civil defense organizations see, for example, “Civil Defense Set on Loyalty Oath,” *New York Times*, November 13, 1950, 8. With regards to the BSA involvement specifically in civil defense activities (in this case, assisting with mass-polio inoculation) see, for example, Wallace Turner, “Loyalty Oath Exacted of Coast Scouts,” *New York Times*, September 21, 1962, 31.



truth about freedom” while defending “Christianity and democracy.”<sup>145</sup> Another speaker, Douglas W. Douglas Jr. (president of Douglas Aircraft) “talked about American ideals and free enterprise... ‘Are we *for* capitalism – *for* free enterprise – as strongly and enthusiastically as we are against Communism?’ ”<sup>146</sup> The BSA believed that children could be used to ensure the status quo of a democratic state and support foreign and domestic containment in the name of national security.<sup>147</sup>

The government, schools, and Scouting also saw civil defense as part of a shared American heritage. For example, Clara Stratemeyer wrote in *Civil Defense Education thru Elementary and Secondary Schools* [sic]:

The concept of civil defense is not new to the American way of life. Only the term itself and its specific functioning are new and are changing with new conditions...the early colonists along the Atlantic seaboard, the frontier settlers west of the Alleghenies, the pioneers living on the prairies beyond the Mississippi or crossing the high Sierras – all were aware that the new life they sought held no assurance of safety. Alert to the dangers, whether from natural phenomena, predatory animals, or hostile attack, they schooled themselves in ways of protection and self-defense, and such ways became commonplace aspects of daily living...the competent individual as a contributing member of a cooperating group is a concept deeply rooted and continuing in the American tradition of independence and self-reliance.<sup>148</sup>

Stratemeyer outlined a long history of participation in civil defense, thus making it an American tradition that ought to be engaged in for patriotic reasons. This meant broadening the definition of “civil defense” to include a much greater range of threats and activities. Stratemeyer also sought to normalize civil defense by making it part of everyday life. Lastly, she reinforced an independent, self-reliant style of do-it-yourself

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<sup>145</sup> Walt Babson, “National Explorer Delegate Conference,” *Boys’ Life*, December 1962, 21.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 (emphasis in original).

<sup>147</sup> See for example, Arthur A. Schuck (Chief Scout Executive), “July 4, 1776,” *Boys’ Life*, July 1952, 16; Arthur A. Schuck, “Independence,” *Boys’ Life*, July 1955, 16; Arthur A. Schuck, “Onward for God and My Country,” *Boys’ Life*, January 1956, 11; Arthur A. Schuck, “Freedom and the Whole Boy,” *Boys’ Life*, May 1960, 11.

<sup>148</sup> Stratemeyer, *Civil Defense Education*, 8.

civil defense, which would rely on individuals and community efforts for security and not the government.

The BSA and GSUSA worked to develop a concept of what it meant to be an American as well as promote shared national ideals in order to educate youth about how to function as members of the state. Children needed to how learn to be good citizens in order to work to preserve the nation. The groups tailored their rhetoric so that their Scouts could find examples of themselves in the past by establishing a direct lineage from the early pioneers through to the early Cold War.<sup>149</sup> Girl and Boy Scouts had already participated in civil defense activities during World Wars I and II.<sup>150</sup> Scouting organizations maintained this involvement in civil defense by including a greater and more varied number of activities under the umbrella of “civil defense.” This expansion normalized as well as rationalized emergency preparedness.

### *Do-It-Yourself Civil Defense*

Domestic containment involved containing communism and fear of nuclear war. The federal government promoted nuclear armament as a necessary, foregone conclusion. Civil defense became one function the government used to gain support for the deterrence policy, and the civil defense agencies rationalized civil defense planning as

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<sup>149</sup>This included a heritage of courage, justice, equality, cooperation, mutual respect, democracy, “love of liberty,” and “teen-agers shared the hardships of those early times.” Laura Vitray, “Quest for Liberty,” *American Girl*, December 1955, 14-15, 43-44. Americans had a “frontier spirit” where “everybody helps everybody else.” Laura Vitray, “Frontiers of Freedom,” *American Girl*, January 1956, 23.

<sup>150</sup> During WWI, Boy Scouts helped the war effort by participating in Liberty Loan and War Savings Stamps drives and collecting materials needed for gas masks or searching for black walnut trees needed for airplane propellers. James E. West (Chief Scout Executive), “Official News,” *Boys’ Life*, November 1918, 28. Boy Scouts also participated in scrap paper and iron drives. Mechling, *On My Honor*, 127-28. In the 1950 edition of *Handbook for Boys* the editors wrote, “When the United States Government needs widespread help, as it so often did in World War II, the Boy Scouts of America are called upon. They are prepared.” Pettit, *Handbook for Boys*, 4. Girl Scouts participated in the war effort during World Wars I and II. Degenhardt and Kirsch, *Collector’s Guide*, 87-88 and 181.

crucial for achieving peace. This meant that the federal government wanted to cause alarm to prompt action but ultimately kept the threat vague so it could be perceived as something survivable. By attempting to show children that nuclear preparedness could be as simple and as normal as preparing for other disasters such as fire drills or street-crossing safety, the government normalized preparation for atomic war.<sup>151</sup>

The civil defense rhetoric promoted a myth of survival, without revealing the true nature of nuclear fallout.<sup>152</sup> The national agencies provoked fear, but in a context inducing a belief that in the event of attack there would be something that people *could* control: their own reactions. Security was an important factor. In the pages of the *American Girl*, one Girl Scout explained that she enjoyed the “feeling of security, the friendship, and the opportunity for service that the Laws and Promise” held.<sup>153</sup>

In *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties* (2000), historian Laura McEnaney argues that the federal government domesticated war by concentrating on the home and family.<sup>154</sup> The federal agencies planned for WWII with a bureaucracy of defense planners and policymakers as well as groups such as schools, media, and civic clubs. McEnaney argues that federal policymakers wanted to convince families to take over the duties of civil defense for at least one main reason: privatization would ensure that the government did not have to increase civil defense spending and would therefore be able to funnel more money in defense programs such as the manufacture of bombs. The domestication of the early Cold War facilitated privatization so that “Domestication so effectively foreclosed other kinds

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<sup>151</sup> FCDA, *Civil Defense in Schools*, 25-28.

<sup>152</sup> McMahon, “Civil Defense and Educational Goals,” 440. See also FCDA, *Civil Defense in Schools*, 1-2.

<sup>153</sup> Dorothy E. Lloyd, “A Growing Force for Freedom,” *American Girl*, January 1952. Lloyd was a Senior Girl Scout from Detroit, Michigan.

<sup>154</sup> McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home*, 7.

of discussions that it seemed preparedness inevitably belonged in the home as a private burden.”<sup>155</sup> McEnaney explains the paradoxical nature of the government’s do-it-yourself civil defense. On the one hand, government subsidies such as the G.I. Bill and Federal Housing Administration loans had enabled many Americans to obtain higher education and home ownership that was previously unthinkable. On the other hand, the federal government envisioned that these same families “that [were] bred, in large part, by the state’s patronage would have to survive nuclear attack without it.”<sup>156</sup> The inexpensive federal civil defense programs therefore relied on concepts of self-help and individualism.<sup>157</sup>

There were other cultural considerations. These nuclear families increasingly lived in the suburbs that sprouted up alongside the government-funded interstate highway system. Federal housing policies further powered the explosive growth of suburbs. Federal mortgage assistance through the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and Veterans Administration (VA) loaned money for new suburban construction that favored single-family homes for male-headed households. Buying oftentimes became less expensive than renting. Furthermore, during the 1950s and 1960s, FHA or VA financing helped in some way with almost half of all housing in the United States.<sup>158</sup> The federal government also provided subsidies for the construction of freeways through the Interstate Highway Acts of 1944 and 1956. The 1956 Act in particular provided that the

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 72. For more on domestication of the bomb, see Northcutt, “Women and the Bomb,” and Kristina Zarlengo, “Civilian Threat, the Suburban Citadel, and Atomic Age American Women,” *Signs: The Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24, no. 4 (Summer 1999), 925-58.

<sup>157</sup> McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home*, 74.

<sup>158</sup> Thomas W. Hanchett, “The Other ‘Subsidized Housing’: Federal Aid to Suburbanization, 1940s-1960s,” in *From Tenements to the Taylor Homes: In Search of an Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth-Century America*, ed. John F. Bauman, et al. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 163-79. See also Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 205 and 215.

federal government would pay 90 percent of the construction. In part President Eisenhower was keen to have the Federal Highway System in order to evacuate cities during an atomic attack. The federal government also subsidized suburban sewer construction and provided tax incentives for suburban homeowners and commercial development.<sup>159</sup> Postwar suburbanization coupled with economic prosperity had prompted an explosion in do-it-yourself (DIY) culture, especially among middle-class Americans.<sup>160</sup> The DIY phenomenon (which had first bloomed as an economic necessity during the Great Depression and World War II) blossomed as a sign of independence and self-reliance for the many postwar families who enjoyed more leisure time.<sup>161</sup> Do-it-yourself civil defense fit in nicely with the DIY trend.<sup>162</sup>

Domestic containment focused on traditional gender roles as a way to contain sexuality and fears of homosexuality and promiscuity in a new Cold War context. Historian Sarah Lichtman has shown how the DIY trend affected the postwar home through gendered “home improvement” projects, which frequently incorporated civil defense, and thus domesticated nuclear war.<sup>163</sup> Men were encouraged to work on construction and carpentry as “capable protectors and providers.” Women were told to perform “informed consumption and gender-normative domestic duties.”<sup>164</sup> Other gendered duties for women included stocking and maintaining the bomb shelter, tending children, and decorating. The prescriptive literature advised fathers to provide examples

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<sup>159</sup> Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 249. See also Hanchett, “The Other ‘Subsidized Housing,’” 163-79.

<sup>160</sup> Carolyn M. Goldstein, *Do-It-Yourself: Home Improvement in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century America* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 35.

<sup>161</sup> Lichtman, “Do-It-Yourself Security,” 42.

<sup>162</sup> See for example: Charles R. Broderick, *Your Passport to Survival: The Indianapolis and Marion County Civil Defense Evacuation Plan* (Indianapolis: Allied Printing, January 1959). Broderick wrote, “You must be prepared to help yourself should disaster strike.”

<sup>163</sup> Lichtman, “Do-It-Yourself Security,” 47.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

of masculinity to their sons through these activities.<sup>165</sup> Parents, experts, policymakers, and popular culture created (and reflected) fears of juvenile delinquency between both boys and girls of the middle class. Teenagers were still considered dependents but encouraged to assert their own independence as well. Adults believed that too much independence, though, could lead to delinquency.<sup>166</sup>

The federal agencies and Scouting organizations espoused do-it-yourself civil defense that exposed a tension between the individual and the collective. *Boys' Life* ran an open letter from President Eisenhower to American students that provides an example of the rhetoric of the state. Eisenhower wrote:

Never forget that *self-interest and patriotism go together*. You have to look out for yourself, and you have to look out for your country... It is dangerous to assume that our country's welfare belongs alone to that mysterious mechanism called 'the government'...the very core of what we mean by Americanism is individual liberty founded on individual responsibility.<sup>167</sup>

Eisenhower linked a "do-it-yourself" ethic with what it meant to be an American. The GSUSA and BSA aimed to provide emergency preparedness tools for individual action with the larger goal of supporting family and community. Despite this, it was clear that (as prescribed by the FCDA) Scouts and their families were not to rely on their organizations, any more than their government.<sup>168</sup> For example, in the *American Girl* article "Be Prepared: Emergency Living Indoors," the author stated "Families are being

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 47-48.

<sup>166</sup> Medovoi, *Rebels*, 26-29.

<sup>167</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "A Letter to America's Students," *Boys' Life*, September 1953, 26 (emphasis mine).

<sup>168</sup> Gregutt, "Be Prepared: You Belong in This Picture," 15.

urged by the authorities to be as...self-sufficient as they can.”<sup>169</sup> Independence was key to keeping the nation together.

Examination of the literature reveals that Scouting undermined the “every citizen for his/herself” approach. Actually, the BSA’s version of civil defense emphasized the motto “Be Prepared” and civic responsibilities, teamwork, and a need to support the community. Notre Dame head football coach, Terry Brennan, wrote an article for *Boys’ Life*’s September 1956 issue. In “Civil Defense and You,” Brennan wrote:

To me, civil defense is teamwork in action, just like the execution of a smooth football play or a Scout community project...In many ways, Scouting, football and civil defense have a lot in common...While our military men prepare to work as an offensive team, in case we are ever attacked, civil defense prepare[s] [us] to be the defense team, holding the line by protecting our people in any emergency. No matter how you look at the three – Scouting, football, Civil Defense – it all adds up to survival. ... Our people can’t survive a nuclear attack unless they know and understand civil defense and how it operates...Look at your merit badges and see how many of them represent some civil defense operation... After all, you fellows had the motto first, but it sure applies to football and civil defense, too. ‘Be Prepared.’<sup>170</sup>

Setting aside the notion that football “adds up to survival,” Brennan also employed the myth of survival by attempting to normalize preparation for nuclear war by comparing it to preparing for a football game. In this way, the BSA tried to make preparation seem less daunting. The BSA recognized teamwork as an important aspect of the myth of survival, even as DIY preparedness emphasized individual action. As further inducement, merit badges and activities that Scouts were already working toward could be counted as civil defense. The BSA wanted to make clear that Scouts were already practicing civil defense and the organization actively recast its motto “Be Prepared” to incorporate civil defense activities in which Scouts could emulate their patriotic heroes. The BSA believed boys

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<sup>169</sup> Hammett, “Be Prepared: Emergency Living Indoors,” 16.

<sup>170</sup> Brennan, “Civil Defense and You,” 18.

should model their behavior after their heroes such as football players and servicemen. This was a common trope in popular culture at the time. Besides war and sport, men and boys found models of masculinity in myth, film, and other forms of popular culture.<sup>171</sup>

### *Reading the American Girl and Boys' Life*

In April 1951, the *American Girl* introduced a new column called “Be Prepared,” and although it only lasted one year (April 1951 to March 1952) it regularly suggested ways for Girl Scouts to get involved with civil defense efforts and national security issues. Tackling these issues required teamwork and was a way to achieve world peace.<sup>172</sup> The May 1951 issue of *Boys' Life* also introduced a new column by David Dunbar, Training Director of the BSA New York Councils. Each month, Dunbar wrote a series of articles directly related to emergency planning and civil defense.

The editors of both magazines attempted to provoke action by promoting fear of the atomic threat. However, the Scouts provided activities that assumed that a nuclear war was potentially survivable. Authors wrote that the chances of a disaster (natural or otherwise) were slim, “but the atomic age [was] really unpredictable.”<sup>173</sup> The editors perpetrated the myth of survival; it was not revealed that, in the event of nuclear war, if Scouts did survive, their lives would not continue on as “normal,” regardless of the number of flashlights they gathered in advance.

To respond to the crisis, Scouting organizations drew on domestic containment. They espoused methods employed during prior wars and also asserted traditional gender

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<sup>171</sup> Gilbert, *Men in the Middle*, 3.

<sup>172</sup> Esther R. Bien, editorial, *American Girl*, April 1951, 14. Bien was editor of the magazine.

<sup>173</sup> Catherine C. Reiley, “Be Prepared: Ready for Roughing It,” *American Girl*, August 1951, 22. See also David Dunbar, “Family Survival,” *Boys' Life*, July 1951, 14.



roles. Mirroring FCDA gendered civil defense tasks as a form of domestic containment, authors advised teenagers to “prepar[e] to take over the job later,” by learning how to be citizens of a democracy.<sup>174</sup> Part of this good citizenship included participation in civil defense. The prescriptive literature contains numerous examples of the Boy and Girl Scouts preparing youths for adulthoods by extolling the virtues of doing “a man’s work” or “a woman-sized job,” while living up to the motto to “Be Prepared.”<sup>175</sup>

What did it mean for boys to do “a man’s work” and girls to do “a woman-sized job?” According to historian Jay Mechling, the Boy Scouts were founded in part in response to the “crisis of masculinity” at the end of the nineteenth century. Throughout its existence the BSA leaders have seen themselves not just as modeling boyhood but also of adult masculinity.<sup>176</sup> *Boys’ Life* had an intense focus on masculinity, one that could be seen as related to the fears of homosexuality and juvenile delinquency during this time period, which permeated American culture and linked with concepts of communist subversion. Men, fathers, and sons in America were under pressure to conform to strict standards of what it meant to be a “man,” and women, mothers, and daughters were also desired to conform to feminine gender norms. The *American Girl* asserted a particular view of gender-normativity with pages full of makeup, dating, and fashion tips. Girls were taught to prepare for their adult roles as “wife” and “mother.” The magazine did acknowledge women’s work outside of the home, although authors’ career advice was mostly (but not always) limited to women’s roles as assistants and helpmates, and

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<sup>174</sup> Rosa Kohler Eichelberger, “United Nations Youth,” *American Girl*, May 1951, 14.

<sup>175</sup> Bob Brooks and Bob Hood, “Don’t Call Us Heroes,” *Boys’ Life*, November 1955, 91; Betty Muessen, “Preparedness Paid Off,” *American Girl*, November 1951, 42.

<sup>176</sup> Mechling, *On My Honor*, xviii.

femininity was always emphasized.<sup>177</sup> This rhetoric fits in with the domestic containment metaphor. Scouting maintained and promoted traditional gender roles and conflated these with good democratic citizenship and what it meant to be an American.

### *Under the Umbrella of Civil Defense*

In order to rationalize and normalize civil defense programs, the FCDA/OCDM/OCD, schools, and voluntary associations placed a large number of activities under the term “civil defense.” For example, in Iowa, the civil defense program for schools specified a “broad interpretation” that included national disasters, epidemics, foreign attack, and “defense against internal subversive groups.”<sup>178</sup> Here the rhetoric directly addressed the issue of domestic containment by trying to undermine groups perceived as subversive which, at the time, would include labeling as communist or deviant. In this way civil defense tried to fit new things in a traditional framework. The language also reflected a push for children to live by traditional rules and values which civil defense groups viewed as an antidote to communism. Similarly, an FCDA administrator wrote, “Civil defense may be defined as the power of civilians to prevent forces from destroying their property, industry, morale, lives, or freedoms.”<sup>179</sup> Another FCDA official wrote, “It might be said that any endeavor which seeks to preserve and

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<sup>177</sup> See for example: Priscilla Jaquith, “Stepping Out in Business,” *American Girl*, January 1950, 16 and 50 (jobs as secretaries, stenographers, and receptionists only); *American Girl*, March 1961, an article provided advice on how to be a good secretary; E. Tolchin, “Apprentice Mothers,” *American Girl*, March 1958, 36-37 (“High School girls learn the skills they will need when they have homes and children of their own.”). *American Girl* highlighted physicist Stella Lawrence in the article “Slide-Rule Princesses.” The author still emphasized how Lawrence was able to maintain her femininity (“Doesn’t mean she must leave her femininity behind when she steps into her new role”) and added that her training in engineering helped her run her home and also in her marriage. “Slide-Rule Princesses,” *American Girl*, October 1958, 42.

<sup>178</sup> Dana B. Roblee, FCDA School Relations Officer, “What Schools Are Doing about Civil Defense,” *School Life: Official Journal of the U.S. Office of Education*, supplement to volume 35 (September 1953): 159.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

further our life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness can be considered a form of civil defense.”<sup>180</sup> With a broad stroke, a large number of things could be considered civil defense. The FCDA, schools, and Scouting hoped to convince their audience that if they were already practicing civil defense anyway, then, for example, building a fallout shelter in the backyard was normal and rational. While the actual numbers of Americans who built fallout shelters was small (fewer than 3 percent of the population), the government continued rhetoric emphasizing this policy.<sup>181</sup>

Scouts transformed rhetoric into action, through emergency training at their local Offices of Civil Defense. Girls and boys learned to serve by running messages, answering phones, and preparing for roles as first aid and food service workers.<sup>182</sup> In addition, Boy and Girl Scouts participated in *Operation Alert* activities. *Operation Alerts* (1954-1961) were mock civil defense drills in which city officials practiced evacuation plans in the event of nuclear attack.<sup>183</sup> In cities across the country, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts acted as victims, patients, or stretcher-bearers. Many ran messages and demonstrated first aid techniques.<sup>184</sup> In 1958, 150,000 Girl Scouts in Illinois distributed wallet cards explaining

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<sup>180</sup> W. Gayle Starnes (FCDA Director of Training and Education), “Schools and Civil Defense,” *School Board Journal* (August 1957): 21.

<sup>181</sup> Lichtman, “Do-It-Yourself Security,” 50.

<sup>182</sup> Muessen, “Preparedness Paid Off,” 43. In October 1959, Girl Scouts in Huntsville, Alabama, received their Civil Defense First Aider cards from the local chief of civil defense. At the same time they met the requirements for the First Aid merit badge. “All Over the Map: Headline News in Girl Scouting,” *American Girl*, October 1959, 50-51.

<sup>183</sup> McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home*, 50.

<sup>184</sup> Davis, *Stages of Emergency*, 26. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts participated in *Operation Alert* exercises in 1956. Oakes, *Imaginary War*, 94 and 98. On a smaller scale, the BSA also performed mock attacks and demonstrated what to do in response. “Scouts Stage Atom Drill,” *New York Times*, May 25, 1952, 72.

what to do in case of an atomic attack.<sup>185</sup> In 1958, almost three million Boy Scouts distributed the Office of Civil Defense's *Handbook for Emergencies*.<sup>186</sup>

Scouting leaders at the national level also hoped their Scouts would participate in the Ground Observers Corps. Established by the Air Force during WWII, the Ground Observers were civilian volunteers trained to be on alert for enemy planes.<sup>187</sup> Authors frequently lamented that none of the Corps in any state had fulfilled its quota of volunteers, a familiar complaint of Civil Defense administrators during this time period.<sup>188</sup>

The Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts emphasized that preparing for war was just like preparing for any other disaster, and rewarded such disaster preparation.<sup>189</sup> From 1949 through 1963, Scouting magazines frequently lauded the efforts of Scouts assisting their local offices of civil defense during natural disasters. Girl Scouts organized recreation activities for children including games, hikes, and craft classes, and assisted with living outdoors.<sup>190</sup> In 1951, Senior Girl Scouts in New York City volunteered as filing assistants at the civil defense headquarters.<sup>191</sup> In 1955, during a hurricane in the mid-Atlantic states, Boy Scouts worked to run "messages, load trucks, direct traffic, cook meals, pull all-

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<sup>185</sup> "Girl Scouts Aid Civil Defense," *New York Times*, December 7, 1958, 141.

<sup>186</sup> Davis, *Stages of Emergency*, 27. The *New York Times* reported that a Boy Scout delivered the first handbook to President Eisenhower. "President Gets Survival Booklet," *New York Times*, July 24, 1958, 14. The article featured a photograph of Eisenhower with the Scout.

<sup>187</sup> Douglas Andrews, "Ground Observers," *Boys' Life*, March 1953, 16.

<sup>188</sup> See, for example, "Civil Defense Lag Blamed on Apathy; Lack of U.S. Funds also Cited in Survey of Preparedness by Major Cities," *New York Times*, August 12, 1951, 33.

<sup>189</sup> See for example, David Dunbar, "Ready at Home," *Boys' Life*, September 1951, 28; Reiley, "Be Prepared: Ready for Roughing It," 22.

<sup>190</sup> Muessen, "Preparedness Paid Off," 42.

<sup>191</sup> "All Over the Map: Headline News in Girl Scouting," *American Girl*, June 1951, 42.

night guard duty, [and] use first aid [they'd] been practicing.” They also pitched tents, unloaded food and clothing, and assisted the Red Cross.<sup>192</sup>

The GSUSA and BSA considered a large number of activities under the umbrella of civil defense, including maintaining physical health. Again, this was a familiar idea, spun for a new, Cold War audience. Authors writing for *American Girl* advised girls to keep healthy and strong so that they could assist in a crisis and so that parents and doctors would be free to assist others.<sup>193</sup> Essentially, the message was for girls to help themselves by staying healthy, which helped their family, which in turn helped their community, and therefore helped the country as a whole. This made assisting with the national security effort seem relatively manageable. Editors of *Boys' Life* also told their Scouts in every issue to stay physically fit by engaging in exercise and sports as well as outdoor activities such as hiking and camping. The Scouts promoted national ideals that focused on individual health and the strength of the state, which relied on everyone at their best.

The GSUSA employed familiar responses and activities to respond to the new Cold War crisis. The association worked to continue an ethic fostered through the Depression and World War II home front by tying civil defense efforts to home economics. In the article “Be Prepared: You Belong in this Picture,” an author in the *American Girl* explained that as families experienced higher taxes due to the defense effort, girls could assist their family by taking care of their clothes and household goods, as well as conserving electricity, water, and gas.<sup>194</sup> The author insisted that girls should assist their mothers with cooking so the adults would have time to volunteer in the war

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<sup>192</sup> Brooks and Hood, “Don’t Call Us Heroes,” 22-23, 89-91.

<sup>193</sup> Gregutt, “Be Prepared: You Belong in This Picture,” 15. See also Helen Ciancimino, “Healthy You-Healthy U.S.A.,” *American Girl*, May 1951, 16-17 (she discussed “why is it so patriotic to be healthy?”).

<sup>194</sup> Gregutt, “Be Prepared: You Belong in This Picture,” 15.

effort.<sup>195</sup> In the article “Be Prepared: Sew-Save-Serve,” the *American Girl* advised girls that they could “serve best and save best” by maintaining their own wardrobes and sewing their own clothes.<sup>196</sup> Even if the technologies were new, large, and formidable, the traditional motto, “Be Prepared,” continued to give guidance in a new Cold War context.

The author of the article “Be Prepared: Be Wise–Budgetize” advocated that home economics for Girl Scouts meant learning how to budget time and money:

If you’re asked to step into a crucial job in your community, your training in speedy, efficient methods...will serve well. As for money matters, whether you wind up at a corporate vice-president’s desk or in a house-wife’s [sic] apron, your money-management experience will pay off handsomely. Meanwhile, your careful spending and saving contributes to the soundness of this country’s huge economic system – and, in turn, to the welfare of the world.<sup>197</sup>

With an emphasis on civic engagement, this passage stressed the connections among individuals, families, the country, and a global community. An overwhelming concept such as world peace was brought down to a level at which individual action could make an impact. In this example, a girl’s “spending and saving” assisted the larger American capitalist economy. In turn, a strong American economy helped the rest of the world with economic, military, and political aid. This aid ostensibly was employed to prevent the spread of communism and thus promoted peace from an American point-of-view. The GSUSA explored the relationship between individual actions and the general welfare. The domestic ideal was used as a model with a concentration on home, however, the passage does reveal an understanding of the changing roles for women. The passage

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>196</sup> Joan Porter, “Be Prepared: Sew-Save-Serve!,” *American Girl*, September 1951, 16.

<sup>197</sup> Ruth Baker Bowman, “Be Prepared: Be Wise – Budgetize,” *American Girl*, October 1951, 17.

acknowledged women's volunteer and wage-earning work outside of the home, albeit in a supporting role.

The Boy Scouts used traditional gender roles to prescribe an appropriate power dynamic within the home as a form of domestic containment. These roles came into play when linking preparedness for war with other emergency preparations. In one particularly illuminating example from 1951, *Boys' Life* proposed the following scenario: "Sis" had been overcome with gas fumes in the basement. "Dad" shuts off the gas and "Scout" called the doctor. Dad began artificial respiration and "Scout takes over while Dad tires... This is too much for Mom. She feels faint, passes out. Younger brother tends to Mom just like Scout showed him. Sis comes to. Dad and Scout use chair carry to take Mom to her bedroom."<sup>198</sup> The article provides an example of stereotypical gendered responses. The men were to work together to lead the family during an emergency. It also shows how the BSA encouraged Scouts to teach their family. And women cannot handle the pressure, become hysterical, and pass out. The FCDA also emphasized that there were differences with the ways men and women responded to emergencies. In 1953, according to FCDA Director Val Peterson, women rated lower in tests measuring rates labeled "panic-proof" and "panic-resistant" because "women face fewer everyday hazards and fear-provoking stimuli than men."<sup>199</sup>

Domestic containment describes the way Scouting organizations prescribed traditional roles to meet new challenges. In the article "Be Prepared: Big-Sister Role," Girl Scouting leaders expected their Scouts to perform childcare tasks from which the Boys Scouts were exempt. In 1960, Senior Girl Scouts in New Jersey organized Girl

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<sup>198</sup> David Dunbar, "Family First Aid," *Boys' Life*, June 1951, 22-23.

<sup>199</sup> Peterson, "Panic," 107.

Scout Emergency Child-Care Squads specifically for civil defense. The young women prepared first aid kits as well as emergency toy kits. From 1949 through 1963, the *American Girl* advised girls to prepare for group care babysitting as part of civil defense, suggesting groups of twenty small children. Additionally, the Girl Scouts advised teenage girls to babysit their younger siblings so that their mothers could be Civil Defense volunteers.<sup>200</sup> The Scouts attempted to teach girls about their future adult roles as childcare managers, nurturers and caregivers, not just for their own families, but for neighbors too. This form of do-it-yourself civil defense did not rely on the government but did rely on teamwork and community support.

Scouting prescribed activities youths could actually do by focusing on familiar tasks and roles. In articles such as “Be Prepared: Calling All Cooks!” the Girl Scouts endorsed preparing a home for an emergency. Many of the civil defense efforts prescribed by the GSUSA were similar to what the FCDA advocated for adult women, including stocking an emergency pantry, as well as emergency cooking techniques.<sup>201</sup> In the article “Is Your Family Ready?” the BSA enlisted boys to assist their fathers in preparing a basement shelter, or a room, which could be blacked out in the event of an air-raid drill.<sup>202</sup> Authors suggested Scouts prepare supplies and equipment and gather food in advance.<sup>203</sup> These activities normalized nuclear war preparation by making it part

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<sup>200</sup> Gregutt, “Be Prepared: You Belong in This Picture,” 15. See also “Be Prepared: Big-Sister Role,” *American Girl*, December 1951, 22; “All Over the Map: Headline News in Girl Scouting,” *American Girl*, January 1961, 44; GSUSA, *Senior Girl Scouting* (1952), 10-11. The editors of *Boys’ Life* did advocate their Scouts to participate in childcare in at least one instance during this time period but the discussion did not have anything to do with civil defense. The author wrote, “Baby-sitting is valuable job training for tomorrow. It teaches responsibility and decision-making.” James H. Winchester, “Baby-sitting,” *Boys’ Life*, November 1961, 16.

<sup>201</sup> Catherine C. Reiley, “Be Prepared: Calling All Cooks!,” *American Girl*, June 1951, 14-15.

<sup>202</sup> David Dunbar, “Is Your Family Ready?,” *Boys’ Life*, May 1951, 16. See also Dunbar, “Ready at Home,” 28.

<sup>203</sup> Reiley, “Be Prepared: Calling All Cooks!,” 15.



of everyday life along with other emergency preparedness. These efforts also effectively scaled-down national defense to a manageable level. Many of the activities prescribed by the *American Girl* and *Boys' Life* were not intrinsically bad ideas. However, the magazines and handbooks in no way acknowledged the true nature of nuclear fallout. They provided false hope by perpetuating the myth of survival.

The Scouting organizations also advocated for traditional practices translated to the new Cold War context. In “Be Prepared: Guide for Gardeners,” just as they had during World War II, the GSUSA suggested that Scouts start what was in essence (although not so termed) a Victory Garden.<sup>204</sup> In a way, the GSUSA was hedging their bets: girls could start a new hobby, an activity that would benefit themselves and their families. Also, taking up this hobby would help to normalize preparedness planning because it incorporated civil defense into everyday life.

Elements of domestic containment are illuminated in the traditional gender roles advocated by the BSA and GSUSA. Do-it-yourself civil defense drew upon and reinforced traditional gender roles. In so doing, those roles became identified with patriotism, citizenship, and anticommunism. Another example can be seen in how the Scouting organizations taught emergency food preparation. Who was instructed to do the work and why? The GSUSA taught their Scouts how to prepare food for large groups of people, not just their own families. This included girls' neighbors – up to ten to twelve people.<sup>205</sup> Some literature even suggested preparing emergency meals for groups up to fifty.<sup>206</sup> This was at odds with the government's notion of DIY civil defense. The GSUSA

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<sup>204</sup> Andrew S. Wing, “Be Prepared: Guide for Gardeners,” *American Girl*, March 1952, 25.

<sup>205</sup> Reiley, “Be Prepared: Calling All Cooks!,” 14-15.

<sup>206</sup> GSUSA, *Senior Girl Scouting* (1952), 10-11.

advised girls to learn skills such as cooking outdoors and without electricity.<sup>207</sup> One author stated, “In an emergency, time is important. Your outdoor meals must be quick and easy to prepare. Yet they must be well-balanced and satisfying.”<sup>208</sup> Perseverance, strength, and preparedness are not bad things, but what is the effect, in this particular instance, of emphasizing nutritious and “satisfying” meals? Survival during an emergency did not exempt girls from their roles as nurturers. Civil defense taught Scouts to be prepared for traditional adult roles as wife and mother. Editors of *Boys’ Life* also told their Scouts to learn cooking for an emergency, but with a much smaller focus. There was only one mention of emergency cooking for a Scout’s own family in the magazine during this time period, and no mention of having to cook for neighbors or larger groups.<sup>209</sup>

Also reflecting domestic containment, oftentimes the GSUSA and BSA concentrated on the home, reproducing methods advocated by the FCDA. For example, the FCDA produced short films such as *House in the Middle* (1954) and other literature in order to promote what they termed “fireproof housekeeping.” This included cleaning up trash and regularly checking electric wiring and appliances so that in the event of a nuclear blast, the risk of fire would be reduced.<sup>210</sup> The BSA took its cue from the FCDA and directed fireproof housekeeping tasks towards young men. Boy Scouts were to clear

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<sup>207</sup> Reiley, “Be Prepared: Calling All Cooks!,” 15.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 14. Reiley’s article received two letters to the editor in which girls responded to the article. In both instances the girls were favorable because they enjoyed cooking outdoors. “Penny for Your Thoughts,” *American Girl*, August 1951.

<sup>209</sup> Dunbar, “Family Survival,” 14.

<sup>210</sup> Federal Civil Defense Administration, *House in the Middle* (Washington, D.C.: Federal Civil Defense Administration, 1954), on videotape. Videotape produced by Video Images, Sandy Hook, Connecticut, 1996. For more on fireproof housekeeping see also Executive Office of the President, *Survival Under Atomic Attack*, 4; and Arlen, *Homemaker’s Manual*.

out the home, garage, and yard with help from their fathers.<sup>211</sup> In the article “Be Prepared for Anything: Fire!” *Boys’ Life* also advocated that Scouts clear out oily rags and trash, clean chimneys, and ask their fathers to show them how to use the fuse box and check electrical outlets.<sup>212</sup> These are indeed good home ownership practices; sensible ones that made crisis response seem more manageable. So, in effect, many things that were perfectly rational habits – that many people were already doing every day – could be termed as “civil defense” and helped preparedness for war. Again, these articles still ignored the true ramifications of nuclear attack.

BSA and GSUSA civil defense agendas included survival training such as preparing for living both indoors or outdoors during an emergency and learning first aid. In 1949, the BSA incorporated survival skills, home preparedness, wilderness skills, and civil defense training into their “Strengthen the Arm of Liberty” program.<sup>213</sup> Survival training in the Girl Scouts’ article “Be Prepared: Ready for Roughing It,” included learning how to make shelters and beds for living outdoors, making safe drinking water, and building and cooking over fires.<sup>214</sup> The GSUSA advised girls to prepare for living indoors as well by focusing on keeping warm, cooking, lighting, first aid, and recreation activities.<sup>215</sup>

Scouting tenets and civil defense agendas meshed particularly well with regards to first aid training, therefore reinforcing traditional practices in a new context. Scouts

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<sup>211</sup> Dunbar, “Is Your Family Ready,” 16. See also Dunbar, “Ready at Home,” 28.

<sup>212</sup> David Dunbar, “Be Prepared for Anything: Fire!,” *Boys’ Life*, October 1951, 30.

<sup>213</sup> Michael Scheibach, *Atomic Narratives and American Youth: Coming of Age with the Atom, 1945-1955* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Company, 2003), 45. See also Davis, *Stages of Emergency*, 26-27.

<sup>214</sup> Reiley, “Be Prepared: Ready for Roughing It,” 22. See also Dunbar, “Family Survival,” 14, regarding the BSA. For the GSUSA, see *Senior Girl Scouting* (1952), 10-11; and Reiley, “Be Prepared: Calling All Cooks!,” 14-15.

<sup>215</sup> Hammett, “Be Prepared: Emergency Living Indoors,” 16. Hammett did not mention fallout shelters.

had been trained in first aid before the Cold War but in the early 1950s both the GSUSA and BSA aimed training specifically to assist community civil defense efforts.<sup>216</sup> Part of this training echoed the federal government's plan to contain fear and manage panic. For example, an author in the *American Girl* explained, "When sudden sickness strikes or an emergency arises [the home nurse] is ready to do her duty calmly and with common sense" in the article "Be Prepared: A Part to Play: Home Nurse."<sup>217</sup> Boys Scouts learned to create portable first aid kits and received first aid training in artificial respiration, shock, fainting, and bleeding as evidenced by the article "Green Bar Bill Says: Be Prepared for Emergencies!"<sup>218</sup>

Badges were (and still are) an important part of Scouting. There were no specific badges for civil defense in neither the GSUSA nor the BSA programs. Girl Scouts could earn applicable civil defense activity badges in government, first aid, homemaker, radio, world knowledge, home safety, home health, community safety, and Junior Citizen.<sup>219</sup> In the March 1952 issue of *Boys' Life*, article "Be Prepared for Anything: Training for Trouble," author David Dunbar explained that civil defense activities would help Boy Scouts work toward the following merit badges: personal fitness, citizenship in the community, first aid, camping, cooking, firemanship, hiking, life saving, pioneering, public health, radio, rowing, safety, and signaling.<sup>220</sup>

Training for Scouts also included learning emergency leadership skills. Hiking was an activity that could serve several functions. Scouting executives also called for

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<sup>216</sup> Gregutt, "Be Prepared: You Belong in This Picture," 14-15.

<sup>217</sup> Beulah France, R.N., "Be Prepared: A Part to Play: Home Nurse," *American Girl*, November 1951, 22.

<sup>218</sup> Hillcourt, "Green Bar Bill Says: Be Prepared for Emergencies!," 28. See also Dunbar, "Is Your Family Ready?," 16.

<sup>219</sup> Degenhardt and Kirsch, *Girl Scout Collector's Guide*, 159-67.

<sup>220</sup> David Dunbar, "Be Prepared for Anything: Training for Trouble," *Boys' Life*, March 1952, 23.

Scouts to work on pathfinding exercises.<sup>221</sup> In the November 1951 issue of *Boys' Life*, an author advised Scouts to have a map of their town in their pocket and mark all of the fallout shelters, police, fire, doctors, hospitals, and civil defense headquarters.<sup>222</sup> In the December 1951 issue of *Boys' Life* the BSA told troops to prepare a "Know Your Community Hike." This hike would specifically highlight how to find public shelters and Civil Defense headquarters, and have the Scouts practice getting there so they would be ready and know where they were going in an emergency.<sup>223</sup>

With postwar prosperity there was an increase in leisure time. Both the GSUSA and BSA supported Scouts participation in civil defense through their hobbies. The hobby most often directly tied to civil defense in the pages of *Boys' Life* and the *American Girl* was ham radio. *Boys' Life* introduced ham radio as part of civil defense service in the September 1951 issue. Author Tom MacPherson wrote, "amateur radio today is far more than a hobby...hams have now been recognized as *vital to civil defense, and in the event of another war*, will remain on the short wave under the Amateur Radio Emergency Corps."<sup>224</sup> The argument behind this rhetoric was that Scouts could fulfill the call to serve their country through their hobbies, which domesticated nuclear war planning and normalized civil defense activities. The *American Girl* introduced ham radio as part of its "Be Prepared" column regarding civil defense in July 1951.<sup>225</sup> Benefits involved "wip[ing] out distance, time, and the age-old barriers of race and language.

When you're talking to a fellow ham over the air you never stop to question what color

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<sup>221</sup> See Gregutt, "Be Prepared: You Belong in This Picture," 14; Reiley, "Be Prepared: Reading for Roughing It," 23; David Dunbar, "Know Your Community," *Boys' Life*, November 1951, 20; and William Hillcourt, "Green Bar Bill Says: Be Ready for Anything!," *Boys' Life*, December 1951, 17.

<sup>222</sup> Dunbar, "Know Your Community," 20.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 20. See also Hillcourt, "Green Bar Bill Says: Be Ready for Anything!," 17.

<sup>224</sup> Tom MacPherson, "CQ...CQ: Call of the Inquisitive Ham," *Boys' Life*, September 1951, 9 (emphasis mine). See also Howard G. McEntee, "Radio to Be Prepared!," *Boys' Life*, January 1956, 43.

<sup>225</sup> Louise B. Sando, "Be Prepared: QRV? – Are You Ready?," *American Girl*, July 1951, 14.

his skin might be.”<sup>226</sup> This tied civil defense with the concept of world friendship, but also functioned as an oblique reference to civil rights issues in the United States. The magazine reported that Girls talked with people from all over the world, including the USSR.<sup>227</sup>

### *World Friendship for World Peace*

Following World War II, American education policymakers believed world friendship and world government through entities such as the United Nations could be used to promote peace and prevent war. In school youth studied atomic energy and considered the benefits of international control of nuclear weaponry. However, by 1947, rapidly deteriorating relations with the USSR (further exacerbated by the USSR’s atomic test in 1949) challenged these methods. Educators and policymakers such as the Education Policy Commission responded by reinforcing concepts of democracy over communism, patriotism, and loyalty to the state.<sup>228</sup>

Participation in civil defense efforts was a direct component of the new order as the Cold War set in. At the time the country, from the government to the education system, was under a cloud of anticommunist sentiment. Although at times the BSA and GSUSA reflected this insularism, both organizations continued their attention to world mindedness. During this time of red-baiting of civil rights organizations, world friendship could be seen as a subversive idea.

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>227</sup> Louisa B. Sando, “The ‘Hams’ Have It,” *American Girl*, June 1958, 20-21, 38-40.

<sup>228</sup> See Scheibach, *Atomic Narratives*, 72 and 75; Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light*, 327; and Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*, 137-139.

If Scouting's construction of civil defense was an umbrella of activities deemed necessary to national security and to protect the home front, then there was another facet that offered a more nuanced argument. Throughout the literature, the BSA and GSUSA stressed a U.S.-protecting, peace-promoting ideal of "world friendship" (also known as "international friendship," "world mindedness," or "world brotherhood"). If one way to protect the United States was to prepare for war another way was to promote peace through world friendship. The Girl Scouts defined world friendship as:

Friendship among people of many nations. It is based on understanding and love. It begins within your own heart and *in your own home*. It spreads from home to home, community to community, and country to country. As it spreads it grows stronger. *It brings peace* among all the people of one nation and all the peoples of the world. It is an exciting adventure in getting to know yourself and your neighbors, whether they live next door or thousands of miles away.<sup>229</sup>

One way to interpret this passage is to take it at face value. Scouting encouraged its youth to make a wide variety of friends in order to gain an understanding of other lifestyles, which in turn would spread tolerance and therefore peace. Scouting leaders hoped their youth would recognize the climate of injustice at home (especially the continued oppression of racial and ethnic minorities) and abroad, and want to do something positive to change matters as active members of a global community. This passage also reflects the domestic containment metaphor as it described the home as fundamental to world friendship. Scouting could reinforce patriotic values but still push an agenda of world mindedness.

Based on rhetoric used in its prescriptive literature the GSUSA attempted to address inequality and injustice at home. In embracing world friendship the GSUSA also focused attention on civil rights issues in the United States, including economic,

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<sup>229</sup> GSUSA, *Girl Scout Handbook: Intermediate Program* (1955), 207 (emphasis mine).

religious, and racial discrimination.<sup>230</sup> The Girl Scouts incorporated this awareness into civil defense by encouraging girls to reflect on and correct their individual attitudes, such as mocking of others' religious beliefs or using derogatory racial and ethnic slurs. World friendship in the name of "being prepared" and in the name of national defense also included examples such as an eight-year-old girl volunteering at an animal shelter or setting up nursery groups near polls on election days.<sup>231</sup> As one author stated, Girl Scouts "have to defend our country not only from the atomic bomb, but from the evil ignorance that sets person against person, family against family, creed against creed, and race against race."<sup>232</sup> In this way, the GSUSA made civic engagement a part of civil defense. This was also a strategy to make civil defense a part of everyday life.

For the GSUSA in particular, world friendship was a key component of their civil defense efforts.<sup>233</sup> Author Marie E. Gaudette wrote an article regarding civil defense in the February 1952 issue of the *American Girl* titled "Be Prepared: World-mindedness." In it she wrote,

National defense...is a job that needs the thinking and action of everyone in the nation – young and old. Now, ordinarily we think of national defense as a defense against physical forces. But in its broadest sense it is also a defense against unethical forces – the unkind word, the unsympathetic attitude, the thoughtless deed. Such forces divide groups of people whether these groups are made up of members of families, races, or creeds...doing our best to cement the brotherhood of mankind is one of the most important contributions we can make to our defense effort.<sup>234</sup>

In this passage Gaudette not only placed the burden of national defense on everyone – including American youth – but also directly extended the definition of "national

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<sup>230</sup> GSUSA, *How to Be Prepared: The Girl Scout Motto in Action* (1951), 8.

<sup>231</sup> Marie E. Gaudette, "Be Prepared: World-mindedness," *American Girl*, February 1952, 16-17.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>233</sup> GSUSA, *How to Be Prepared: The Girl Scout Motto in Action* (1951), 9.

<sup>234</sup> Gaudette, "Be Prepared: World-mindedness," 16.



defense” to include intangible or conceptual foes. In this way she made the Girl Scouts’ motto “Be Prepared” the responsibility of young people as a crucial part of national defense. Gaudette included promoting peace through international friendship under the umbrella of civil defense. The Girl Scouts encouraged their youth to fight discrimination, open themselves to a global community, and practice civil defense at the same time.

Despite this, and even though the *American Girl* proclaimed the GSUSA to be “an organization for girls of every race and creed,” the rhetoric did not necessarily reflect real life.<sup>235</sup> In 1955, the GSUSA contracted with the University of Michigan to study its membership. At that time, approximately 95 percent of girls in the GSUSA were white, from two-parent families, from urban areas (rather than rural), and middle or upper class for the most part. More often than not, the editors and authors assumed youth were sharing in postwar prosperity and that their Scouts lived in single-family units outside of the city and away from areas of political upheaval.<sup>236</sup> The prescriptive literature addressed civil rights issues in general but not necessarily in practice.

Early on the BSA allowed troops to set their own policies regarding racial integration. Struggles to including African Americans began during the 1930s but some troops, especially in the South, remained segregated until the 1960s.<sup>237</sup> The organization

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<sup>235</sup> *American Girl*, March 1952, 7, in an article regarding the organization’s fortieth anniversary.

<sup>236</sup> Tammy M. Proctor, *Scouting for Girls: A Century of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2009), 119.

<sup>237</sup> Timothy Parsons, *Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement in British Colonial Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004), 64. The Boy Scouts’ 1955 Annual Report to Congress did inform on activities conducted by the organization’s “Interracial Service” to American Indians, African Americans, Asians, and Latinos/Hispanics. Boy Scouts of America, *46<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Boy Scouts of America* [for 1955], H.doc.367 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1956), 45. By 1961, the “Interracial Service” had changed to “Urban Relationship Service.” According to the 1961 Annual Report, the Boy Scouts specifically worked with the Public Housing Administration to target government-assisted housing in cities to find African American Scouts. Boy Scouts of America, *Fifty-Second Annual Report of the Boy Scouts of America* [for 1961], H.doc.369 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1962), 84-85.

was overwhelmingly white and middle class by 1960.<sup>238</sup> Similarly, since its inception the GSUSA had a national policy to open Scouting to all girls, but left it up to the local Councils regarding racial segregation. By the 1960s the national organization did not allow segregated troops.<sup>239</sup> However, Girl Scout membership was also overwhelmingly white and middle class through the 1970s. By 1976, ninety-five percent of the GSUSA members were white.<sup>240</sup>

The Scouts believed collective good could come from individual action. Scouting broke civil defense into small, manageable tasks. Scouting emphasized teamwork but through a “do-it-yourself” form of civil defense. The DIY civil defense and world friendship also involved recreation activities (such as ham radio) and hobbies (such as stamp collecting), through which Scouting encouraged girls to make friends with collectors in other countries.<sup>241</sup> This was another way to domesticate and naturalize preparedness and make national security seem more manageable. At a time when the various levels of government (federal, state, and local) fostered individual effort to protect one’s own family as patriotic and good for the safety of the nation, the BSA and GSUSA broadened the scope to include not only their own community but also the world community.

The Indianapolis, Indiana Girl Scout Council created a song based on the pamphlet *How to Be Prepared* around 1951. It contained the following combination of “weapons” that the girls would need to confront the atomic age:

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<sup>238</sup> Mechling, *On My Honor*, 43.

<sup>239</sup> Proctor, *Scouting for Girls*, 64-66 and 120.

<sup>240</sup> Frances Hesselbein, *My Life in Leadership: The Journey and Lessons Learned Along the Way* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011) 77. In 1976, Hesselbein hired Dr. Robert Hill to research how the GSUSA could do better in attracting minorities to become members. Based on this research, the GSUSA developed new programs and created a new handbook. Hesselbein, *My Life in Leadership*, 77.

<sup>241</sup> Harper, “Gateway to Adventure,” 46. “So will your stamp serve the cause of international goodwill...people of many lands can talk to one another... [and form] true world understanding.”

There's a murmur in the distance with / threat of growing to a might[y]  
rumble / A rumble that may hurl us into War!!!! / And if war comes / We  
stand ready to Fight! / Not with atom bombs and evil weapons / No!!  
*These* are the arms with which we fight: / *preparedness, knowledge,*  
*kindness!!!!* / ...We know how [little things] grow and grow unto the  
strongest of defense / To be used in times of panic and necessity / We Will  
*Be Prepared!!!!* / ...Though we stand before you – each a small and  
separate / Individual, United we face a raging, flaming world. / United we  
will be prepared. / *For we are the Girl Scouts of the World!!!!*<sup>242</sup>

This passage acknowledged a threat of war and that girls needed to “Be Prepared” to meet this threat. Girls were to use qualities such as kindness and friendship in order to contain fear and manage panic. Scouts could participate in national defense if they made the scale more manageable and less daunting but also by emphasizing teamwork. The GSUSA in this instance used militarized language, which seems at odds with the world friendship rhetoric. It is a good example of the way language was militarized during the 1950s.<sup>243</sup>

One of the ways the GSUSA could effect change was to emphasize women's prescribed role as caregivers. By conforming to this particular gender norm, the Girl Scouts drew upon a history of women doing the same while advocating for world peace. Elaine Tyler May writes in *Homeward Bound*: “ever since the era of the American Revolution, the nation's political ideology has held a special place for women as the nurturers and educators of future citizens.”<sup>244</sup> Historian Dee Garrison looked at the ways women relied on an image of “protective motherhood” to protest *Operation Alert* activities. These women brought their children or childhood accoutrements (such as

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<sup>242</sup> Girl Scout Council of Indianapolis, Indiana, “How to Be Prepared,” ca. 1951. Archives of the Girl Scout Council of Indianapolis, Indiana (emphasis in original).

<sup>243</sup> McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home*.

<sup>244</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 98.

strollers and toys) to the protests.<sup>245</sup> Historian Amy Swerdlow has shown how the group Women Strike for Peace used traditional gender roles to challenge nuclear testing with the discovery of Strontium 90's effect on milk and therefore its effect on infants.<sup>246</sup> In an article in the September 1953 issue of the *American Girl*, author Eloise Centoz wrote that "A globe encircled by friendly hands grows smaller and smaller... Gather around, girls! We're going to talk about the friendship game. It's played with a shrinking ball – and both sides win! The ball is none other than our little round globe...you see, the harder you play, the more the ball shrinks. But then, in this game you don't *throw* the ball – you travel around it, getting good will and friendship across certain lines like national borders."<sup>247</sup>

Scouting organizations prescribed civil defense activities to defend the home front as a way to prevent war. The federal government believed that if Americans did not participate in civil defense or exhibited fear or panic regarding the nuclear threat, it would undermine national security. Civil defense participation would show the Soviets that Americans were ready, were prepared, and were not afraid.<sup>248</sup> On the other side of the coin, world friendship was one civil defense activity that was meant to promote peace as a way to prevent war. This had been true, particularly in the GSUSA, since its inception.<sup>249</sup>

Why would the associations continue to embrace a "one world" ideology at a time when other facets of society relevant to children such as the educational system did not? Because they were worldwide institutions? Because of GSUSA and BSA tradition? One

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<sup>245</sup> Garrison, "Our Skirts Gave Them Courage," 215.

<sup>246</sup> Swerdlow, *Women Strike for Peace*.

<sup>247</sup> Centoz, "Friendship Teams," 56 (emphasis in original).

<sup>248</sup> Grossman, *Neither Dead Nor Red*, 128.

<sup>249</sup> Proctor, *Scouting for Girls*, 126.

answer could be that the “one world” Scouts worked for was assumed to be in the image of the United States and to promote American interests. All of this talk of “world friendship” could also be interpreted for an ulterior motive: promoting world friendship would spread the “American way of life” and therefore contain communism.

Civil defense, even when it involved world mindedness, still hewed closely to the foreign containment doctrine popular in Washington. In March 1957, *Boys’ Life* ran a story about two Scouts who escaped communist Hungary. The preface by Chief Scout Executive Arthur A. Schuck included the following:

Today the Boy Scouts of America has a greater responsibility to freedom and democracy in the world than ever before. The ideals we cherish, those of being prepared to do our best for God and country, are under constant threat by the spread of communism. We must meet this threat *by increasing the bonds of world friendship* among Scouts everywhere. Understanding and unhampered exchange of ideas strengthens the free world and combats ignorance that breeds communism.<sup>250</sup>

Directly influenced by the Truman Doctrine, this passage makes clear that the BSA believed Scouts were valuable in preventing the spread of communism through world friendship. To “Be Prepared” meant to protect democracy and stop communism. World friendship was meant to do much more than just make friends and was, in fact, seen as a form of national defense in the name of national security.<sup>251</sup> Therefore, by advocating world friendship, the Scouts participated in domestic containment.

The Girl Scouts continued to espouse world peace through world friendship. However, there was a difference between the 1947 and subsequent editions of the Scouting handbooks. The Girl Scouts did not abandon world friendship entirely, but the concept was markedly downplayed. Nonetheless, the organization came under fire.

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<sup>250</sup> Arthur A. Schuck, foreword to “Escape to Freedom,” by Howard Kaplan, *Boys’ Life*, March 1957, 11 (emphasis mine).

<sup>251</sup> See for example Joseph A. Brunton, Jr. “A Few Words from the Chief,” *Boys’ Life*, October 1962, 43.

Robert LeFevre, executive director of the Congress of Freedom and the United States Day Committee (two conservative groups promoting U.S. withdrawal from the United Nations) published an article in *Human Events* in 1954 denouncing the GSUSA *Handbook*, and the organization itself, as “socialist” for promoting a “one world” agenda and continuing support of the United Nations. The controversy made headlines, especially after the Illinois American Legion censured the GSUSA’s literature and leaders as “un-American influences.” On 6 August 1954, at their state convention, the Legion denounced the 1953 *Handbook* for its “one world” language and promotion of the United Nations, and also charged that the *American Girl* promoted pro-communist writers.<sup>252</sup>

The GSUSA revised the *Handbook* for the 1955 edition.<sup>253</sup> *Atlantic* author Ben H. Bagdikian wrote in May 1955:

The answer lies not so much with the Girl Scouts as with the climate of the nation. When the 1947 *Handbook* came out it was still respectable to be enthusiastic about world friendship and to say so. But since then anti-intellectual and anti-foreign forces have become increasingly potent and vindictive... Have the Girl Scouts themselves changed? Have they altered their basic ideas about international friendship and the United Nations? Nothing of the sort. The Girl Scouts of America was and is a fine organization, which still encourages idealism, good citizenship, and international friendship. What happened in 1954 was that the Girl Scouts in the forty-second year of their existence decided it was no longer safe to say so too plainly.<sup>254</sup>

The Girl Scouts bowed to pressure – domestic containment – which permeated facets of American society.

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<sup>252</sup> See “Girl Scouts Scored by Legion in Illinois,” *New York Times*, August 7, 1954, 4; and “Girl Scouts Deny Charges by Legion,” *New York Times*, August 8, 1954, 39.

<sup>253</sup> “Girl Scouts Deny Any Shift on U.N.,” *New York Times*, January 7, 1955, 6.

<sup>254</sup> Ben H. Bagdikian, “What Happened to the Girl Scouts” *Atlantic* (May 1955), accessed September 8, 2012. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1955/05/what-happened-to-the-girl-scouts/306925/>.

Scouts may not have realized they were participants in containment through promoting an American “way of life,” any more than when they helped their fathers construct bomb shelters. This rhetoric assumed a dichotomy where “our” American way is better than “their” way and therefore drew sharp distinctions between democracy and communism.<sup>255</sup> The American way of life included democracy, which one Girl Scout defined as the “freedom to speak and think and vote. Freedom to work and worship... fairness, kindness, justice” and equality.<sup>256</sup>

Both organizations championed voting as part of responsible civic engagement. It was of particular importance to:

Put your mind and heart on keeping your country free through the ballot box... You hear a lot of talk these days about what the United States is doing to help other countries follow the free, democratic way of life, which depends, among other things, on free elections. This year the American people hope to set a shining example of good citizenship to the entire free world.<sup>257</sup>

This message was particularly disingenuous at a time when local governments in the United States actively worked to disenfranchise people such as African Americans through legal (and other) means. Scouting’s continued preoccupation with voter turnout also revealed a common concern regarding the country’s reputation around the world. Following the Truman Doctrine, the United States needed to be a leader and an example to other countries, so that people around the world would choose democracy over communism, especially during this period of postcolonialism.

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<sup>255</sup> See for example Gaudette, “Be Prepared: World-mindedness,” 17.

<sup>256</sup> JoAnne Warren, “What America Means to Me,” *American Girl*, September 1956, 50-52. Warren was a 15-year-old Girl Scout who had won an essay contest. See also Vitray, “Frontiers of Freedom,” 43-44; and Pettit, *Handbook for Boys* (1950), 120.

<sup>257</sup> Marie E. Gaudette, “Get Out the Vote,” *American Girl*, November 1952, 12.

The *American Girl* directly incorporated democratic citizenship into civil defense:

Now more than ever, it is vital for you to understand and practice good citizenship. That means that you observe laws...respect property, observe fire regulations. You'll investigate the true meaning of brotherhood. Simply put, the more people – of all kinds – you can understand and get along with, the closer you are to true democracy. And you will want to make a real effort to go beyond your own community with this understanding – to respect and appreciate people's attitudes and ways of living in this country and in other countries all around the world.<sup>258</sup>

Good citizenship meant aspiring for tolerance through world friendship. It also meant practicing democracy through voting. Both organizations encouraged Scouts to prepare for their adult roles by emphasizing the importance of voting and explicitly advocated for the youth to influence their parents to vote. In keeping with the idea of world friendship, the BSA and GSUSA during this time period were staunch supporters of the United Nations. This also reflected the patriotic nature of both organizations to uphold a tenet of U.S. foreign policy.<sup>259</sup>

The Girl Scout *Handbook* taught Scouts how to be an “Active Citizen,” which involved learning “to act...Our American way of life depends upon each one doing his share.”<sup>260</sup> The Boy Scouts employed equally strong rhetoric in 1961, proclaiming: “Today our flag is being shot at in many parts of the world, not by rifles but by enemy propaganda. Our American way of life is being challenged by foes in other lands. It is for you as young Americans to uphold the honor of America. It is for you to prove, in your

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<sup>258</sup> Gregutt, “Be Prepared: You Belong in This Picture,” 15.

<sup>259</sup> GSUSA, *Senior Girl Scouting* (1952), 84-85. See also GSUSA, *Girl Scout Handbook: Intermediate Program*, 227; “First Lady of the U.N.,” *American Girl*, February 1949, 49; Eichelberger, “United Nations Youth,” 14; Eloise Engle, “Teens Set up a Model U.N.,” *American Girl*, October 1963, 20; Proctor, *Scouting for Girls*, 142; “Strengthen the Arm of Liberty,” *Boys' Life*, February 1949, 3; and Arthur A. Schuck, “World Brotherhood,” *Boys' Life*, March 1959, 25.

<sup>260</sup> GSUSA, *Girl Scout Handbook: Intermediate Program* (1955), 190-91.



own life, that ‘the American way’ is best.”<sup>261</sup> This rhetoric was another example of containment at work.

Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts could participate in world friendship in many ways. The editors of *Boys’ Life* endorsed participation in associations such as the Red Cross, student exchanges, and the Peace Corps.<sup>262</sup> Members of the Peace Corps (established in 1961) went to other countries to help those in need. Initially, the Peace Corps operated in postcolonial countries, which were soon designated as “Third World.”<sup>263</sup> The organization can also be seen as a method of containment. The Truman Doctrine encouraged the United States to help those in poverty around the world so that they would choose democracy over communism. At this time the Kennedy administration was concerned with the moral standing of the United States worldwide, especially in the so-called Third World. The United States needed to address civil rights issues at home in order to maintain their position.<sup>264</sup> The GSUSA also wrote about student exchanges as world friendship and described teenage life in other countries.<sup>265</sup> The Girl Scouts actively advocated traveling overseas specifically so that girls could “make friends and influence people abroad.”<sup>266</sup>

Both Scouting organizations viewed world friendship as an element of civil defense because it promoted tolerance and understanding as a way to foster peace. It was also an element of the containment doctrine because spreading an American “way of life”

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<sup>261</sup> Joseph A. Brunton, Jr., “A Few Words from the Chief,” *Boys’ Life*, July 1961, 19.

<sup>262</sup> Joseph A. Brunton, Jr., “A Few Words from the Chief,” *Boys’ Life*, December 1962, 32.

<sup>263</sup> Kort, *Columbia Guide*, 171. The term continued through the Cold War when referring to poverty-stricken, underdeveloped countries.

<sup>264</sup> Arsenault, *Freedom Riders*, 5, 130.

<sup>265</sup> Every issue of the *American Girl* from 1949 through 1963 included articles about girls living in other countries.

<sup>266</sup> Alberta Eiseman, “Ambassador Abroad,” *American Girl*, February 1953, 35.

was seen to help curb and contain communism abroad. World friendship was also part of a large number of activities under the umbrella of civil defense.

## **Conclusion**

The early Cold War can be marked from 1949, when the United States learned that the USSR had developed the bomb, until President Kennedy signed the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1963. During the early Cold War, the FCDA/OCDM/OCD viewed children as a way of investing the American public in do-it-yourself civil defense. The GSUSA and BSA both incorporated this message into their publications. The organizations translated the government's policies for Scouts, often by promoting conventional roles and values as well as traditional Scouting beliefs and practices in a new, Cold War context, while encouraging Scouts to "Be Prepared." In order to maintain public acceptance of the deterrence theory, the federal government perpetuated the idea that a nuclear attack was survivable, but only if Americans prepared themselves, because no one (including their government) was going to do it for them. This preparation relied on a delicate balance of creating, and then containing, fear and managing panic. For children, comprehensive indoctrination at home, school, and in extracurricular activities such as Scouting assisted the state at multiple levels regarding domestic and foreign containment.

Why did the Girl Scouts of the United States of America and the Boy Scouts of America participate in federal civil defense programs? The cultural climate of "us" (USA/democracy) versus "them" (USSR/communism) included a fear of internal communist subversion. Scouting leaders felt that it was patriotic – and politic – to promote government programs such as civil defense. The GSUSA and BSA attempted to avoid the red-baiting suffered by other organizations during this time period.

Civil defense fit in well with existing Scout training, traditions, and practices such as first-aid training and emergency planning. It was a good way for Scouts to practice

“being prepared” as well as practice democratic citizenship. The motto “Be Prepared” was the foundation for everything and in the case of civil defense, tied in with the desire to produce shared national ideals. In addition, the GSUSA and BSA had already proven themselves up to the task of defending the home front during World Wars I and II. In many ways, Scouting organizations recognized the Cold War simply as a war like any other and employed what had by then become familiar responses to the call of duty.

It is perhaps easy to see Scouts in this context as mere tools of the government and complicit in perpetuating the myth of survival. Yet in a time of crisis and fear, Scouting empowered youth to do something productive and concrete while finding reassurance in the familiar. Civil defense became a way to boost morale and prepare youth for their adult roles in a capitalist democracy. Adults prescribing civil defense activities also attempted to make the new context somehow seem more understandable or even comfortable. The Scouting organizations also found a way to maintain another tradition in a comprehensive message of world mindedness and friendship; on that point they were at odds with the insular views and attitudes that prevailed during the early Cold War.

Scouting numbers rose during the early Cold War. Therefore, a not inconsequential number of children and young adults saw information regarding civil defense and general emergency preparation. The magazines do offer a few clues about how many children and teenagers participated in civil defense activities through direct reporting. The magazines provide minimal insight into the level of actual engagement with these civil defense activities. For Americans more broadly (i.e., not just Scouts),

“bomb consciousness” did not cause the grassroots emergency preparedness for which the government had hoped.<sup>267</sup>

As part of inexpensive, do-it-yourself civil defense, Scouts influenced youth to contribute to the war effort by focusing on activities they already did, including recreation. Civil defense rhetoric domesticated, normalized, and rationalized preparing for war by incorporating it into other emergency preparedness activities which was codified when all federal agencies related to emergency preparedness and response were consolidated into the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) during the Carter administration.<sup>268</sup> FEMA officially became absorbed into the Department of Homeland Security in 2003.<sup>269</sup>

The civil defense prescribed by the GSUSA and BSA was an example of domestic containment. Whether the authorities knew or understood this or not is beyond the scope of this project. This do-it-yourself emergency planning featured an insular movement toward home and family as shelter against perceived dangerous sexuality such as promiscuity and homosexuality, communism, and the nuclear threat. Yes, there is evidence of activism during the Fifties, especially with respect to civil rights and resistance to nuclear testing. As for the domestic ideal, men took a more active role in childrearing and women worked outside of the home in growing numbers. In many ways, “the Sixties” did not just come out of nowhere. However, the Sixties can also be seen as a response and a resistance to the domestic containment of the 1950s. There was an underlying anxiety and fear of exposing the true nature of life in America. The climate at

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<sup>267</sup> McEnaney, “Cold War Mobilization and Domestic Politics: United States,” 438.

<sup>268</sup> Northcutt, “Women and the Bomb,” 138, fn. 11.

<sup>269</sup> “Creation of the Department of Homeland Security,” U.S. Department of Homeland Security, accessed December 1, 2012. <http://dhs.gov/creation-department-homeland-security>.

home consisted of continued oppression of racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities, rampant gender inequality, poverty, war, and fear, which manifested in programs such as civil defense. The cracks in the façade of the Fifties became the chasms of the Sixties.

The GSUSA and BSA were selling a lifestyle and an ideal to American families and their children. Based on a close reading of the prescriptive literature, the evidence shows that Scouting authorities made an effort to maintain the status quo in the face of a new Cold War context after World War II. These normative groups adapted to fit in. They were not alone. One facet of this adaptation was compliance with the federal civil defense agenda.

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**Curriculum Vitae**  
**Jessica Herczeg-Konecny**

**Education**

B.A., English and American Culture Studies, Washington University in St. Louis, 2002

M.A., History, Indiana University earned at Indiana University-Purdue University,  
Indianapolis, 2013

Concentration: Public History

**Professional Experience**

Licensing and Reproductions Coordinator, Chicago History Museum, June 2011-present

Exhibitions Researcher, Indiana Historical Society, Spring 2012

Curatorial Assistant, Chicago History Museum, August 2009-May 2011

Collections Technician, Chicago History Museum, February 2011-May 2011

Exhibitions Intern, Indiana Historical Society, August 2008-July 2009

Indiana Landmarks, *Denman Memorial Internship for Public History*, Summer 2008

Collections Management Intern, Indiana State Museum, August 2007-May 2008

Project Archivist, History San José, November 2006-July 2007

Curatorial Assistant, History San José, August 2002-January 2003

Registration Assistant, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Summer  
2002

Digital Technician, St. Louis Circuit Court Historical Records Project, Spring 2002

Archival Assistant, Missouri History Museum, August 2001-January 2002

**Conferences**

Association of Midwest Museum annual meeting, panel participant: "Sex in the Museum:  
Centering Sexuality and Exploring Controversy at Three Chicago Museums," July  
2011.

**Publications**

Austin, Jill, Jennifer Brier, Jessica Herczeg-Konecny, and Anne Parsons. "When the  
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