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Outrageous Pamphleteers: A History Of The Communication Company, 1966-1967

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A HISTORY OF THE COMMUNICATION COMPANY, 1966-1967

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examined the history of the Communication Company, a grassroots radical street press utilizing mimeograph technology and operating for and within the psychedelic hippie counterculture of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury District from 1967-1968. The symbiotic relationship between the Communication Company and the Diggers, a street theater and anarchist collective that became a group of de facto social workers of the Haight, is discussed, demonstrating how the Communication Company fulfilled a critical role as the Diggers' outreach and information ministry. The products of the Com/co press were also examined within the context of the American radical pamphlet tradition. By exploring the cycle and activities of Com/co, the study sought to shed new light on the radical pamphlet tradition and the role it played in the 1960s counterculture.

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morphing into half-human half-computer cyborg to accomplish this project. Thank you special people in my life.

And to my parents: Guerin, back east, and Marcena, above – thank you both, with love.

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Introduction

"Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one."
- A. J. Liebling

Were you strolling through the Polo Field section of Golden Gate Park on that bright, clear Saturday morning, January 14, 1967, after a winter of rains, likely you would have been startled to find thousands of hippies gathering on the public grounds, dressed in their array of freaky finery and preparing for a day of celebration. Many of those in attendance were probably just as startled to discover their affinity in such great numbers. Many were adorned with flowers and bells in response to the notices that had been posted on neighborhood bulletin boards around the Haight-Ashbury community and printed in pages of local underground newspapers; the idea was, if you were in sympathy with this new society, wear a flower or bells and bring a musical instrument to the day's event (Perry, 1970).

The Human Be-In was a de facto affirmation, a visual acknowledgment and the largest gathering to date of an emerging society and scene, of a hippie Aquarian psychedelic utopian freak countercultural community that had been growing in number and visibility throughout the preceding year (Hoskyns, 1997). The estimated 20,000 attending the event grooved to sounds from popular rock bands such as the Jefferson Airplane and Country Joe and the Fish (a nod to "Country Joe" Stalin--some members of the band had been among the red diaper babies of their generation whose parents were socialists), shared food and drugs, and absorbed antiwar speeches and poetry from Allen Ginsberg, Timothy Leary, and other luminaries of the new society (Hamilton, 1997).

Turkey sandwiches and doses of LSD were handed out to the crowd by the theatrical troupe and radical street collective called the "Diggers" (Perry, 2005, p. 121). The food and drugs were supplied by Owsley Stanley III, master chemist and ersatz Medici to the burgeoning psychedelic community (Perry, 2005, p. 121). In this communal atmosphere, even members of the notorious biker gang, the Hells Angels, kept an eye out for hippies' wayward, sometimes nude, children in the teeming crowd. "The Hell's Angels have a little girl here behind the platform and she has curly hair. She says her name is Mary. She wants to see her mother," echoed one announcement from the PA system across the crowd that January day (Perry, 1970, p. 87). To its organizers, the Be-In represented an opportunity for a rapprochement between the "tribes"--the largely apolitical acidheads of the Haight-- and the more political Berkeley radicals. Indeed, large numbers of students and younger faculty did make the trip across the Bay Bridge, many of them, though, to scoff. One criticism of the seekers in the Haight was their non-political stance in a political world. Given this stance, how could any meaningful reform possibly be accomplished? As if in response to such a perceived void, the gathering included the arrival of a new grassroots street press that would both serve the Haight community and help politicize it. The new press was announced not on the stage by the guest speakers that day, but peripatetically and by hand, via flyers handed out among the crowd. Those orchestrating this called themselves the Communication Company, or "Com/co."

The thin sheaf of mimeographed sheets printed on their newly acquired stencil-duplicator press was distributed by the Communication Company's Chester Anderson, Claude Hayward, and H'lane Resnikoff. The flyers were typical of the format Com/co

would come to produce in the ensuing months: single-page mimeographed sheets, referred to by archival institutions and historians as flyers, handbills, and broadsides. The Communication Company most often used the term broadsides to describe its works. The flyers they handed out at the Be-In included a page of poetry, a sheet recommending area locations particularly favorable as "tripping places," and a third sheet, of particular historical interest, announcing the launch of this new street press, its goals, press capabilities, and open access extended to the community.

As the sun set, Allen Ginsberg led the crowd in an act of collective "kitchen yoga," picking the grounds free of sandwich wrappings, wine bottles, and other debris. The following day, authorities marveled at the cleanliness of the park; no group of people of that size had ever left an area so clean, cleaner perhaps than before the massive rally had taken place (Perry, 1970, p. 88). As Perry (1970) noted, "In some ways this was more disturbing than a ton of refuse would have been" (p. 88). The Communication Company's sheets were undoubtedly among the discarded historic debris, mingling with the personal leavings of the crowd. That could have been the end of it, except there were hundreds of sheets to come from the Communication Company.

It is worth pausing here to examine the Communication Company's inaugural announcement, in particular its policy statement--"Love is communication"--and its catalog of aspirations:

> To provide quick & inexpensive printing service for the hip community / to print anything the Diggers want printed / to do lots of community service printing / to supplement The Oracle with a more or less daily paper whenever Haight news justifies one, thereby maybe adding perspective to The Chronicle's fantasies / to be outrageous pamphleteers / to function as a

> Haight/Ashbury propaganda ministry, free lance if needs be /
> to publish literature originating within this new minority.
> (Digger Archives, http://diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=1, 2012)

Within days the new press was swamped with work.

Over the next six months, the Communication Company would more than fulfill its first goal of meeting the printing needs of the Diggers, generating hundreds of broadsides in support of the Digger agenda ("Communication Company," Digger Archives, www.diggers.org). In fact, where Com/co appears historically (albeit sporadically) in the existing literature, it is almost always in subordinate affiliation with the more historically prominent Diggers, typically as the Diggers' print arm (Abbott, 1989, p. 37; Martin, 2004, p. 118; Staller, 2006, p. 76). While being overshadowed in this way, it seems unlikely that without the Digger connection Com/co would be known today. Certainly the relationship was ideal for both the Diggers and Com/co: the Communication Company was hungry to be at the epicenter of the unfolding hip community, and the already established and respected Diggers gave them instant credibility. For the Diggers, they had a willing press at their instant disposal dedicated to carrying out their pamphleteering and leafleting needs on command. It was a successful and productive relationship until frictions began to develop, a rift that eventually resulted in Anderson's ouster from the company. Hayward and Resnikoff threw in with the Diggers, continuing the Communication Company in altered form. Thereafter, the press would phase entirely under Digger control, operating under a new name selected by the Diggers, leaving the brief but busy existence of the Communication Company at a little over six months, from December 1966 to June 1967.

During its brief tenure, the Communication Company would produce hundreds of unique editions, its funky, familiar mimeographed broadsheets a central part of the print culture of the community. Its flyers, in turn, were distributed throughout the Haight, not only by the Com/co founders, but often by an eager corps of foot soldiers attracted to the high-profile Diggers. It was an appealing McLuhanesque paradigm with built-in buy-in: literature created and distributed by people who looked and acted just like the target audience; the messenger was the medium (Hayward, 2003, http://www.brautigan.net/who.html#hayward1).

The goal of this thesis was to write the history of the Communication Company, a history absent in the existing literature. In writing this history, the American radical pamphlet tradition was explored, with Com/co and its works located within this larger historical tradition. Little-known today, Com/co operated at a time in American print history where a lively underground print culture flourished, with many small presses operating in various quarters of the country as part of a group known as the Underground Press Syndicate (Leamer, 1972, p. 45-46; Peck, 1985, pp. xiv-xv). Exploring the cycle and activities of Com/co, the study sought to shed new light on the radical pamphlet tradition and the role it played in the 1960s counterculture.

Literature Review

Of all the decades of the latter 20th century, the 1960s elicits the most powerful and dynamic reactions. The era's legacy continues to be debated, and hotly. With its alternative-lifestyle counterculture, the 60s are also an appealing and compelling era, perhaps because of the period's fertile possibility, its lessons and meanings continue to be

available for contemporary interpretation and use by those who seek to satisfy a range of needs.

In the political arena, the 1960s occasionally is invoked in Democratic/ Republican and conservative/liberal feuding. In the mid-1990s, for example, there was a conservative campaign among Republicans and the religious Right pillorying the 1960s and, by extension, the Democrats who were identified with the era's liberation movements. Attacks by Republican leaders such as Newt Gingrich attributed America's social decay to "a long pattern of counterculture belief . . . deep in the Democratic Party [that had] undervalued the family [and] consistently favored alternative life styles" (Rich, 1995, p. 15). Gingrich's language parroted a contemporaneous fund-raising letter from Pat Robertson's and Ralph Reed's Christian Coalition. Demonizing the radical Left, the letter urged,

> We need a second Contract with America -- one that focuses on reversing the ruinous moral decay and social breakdown caused by a 30-year war the radical Left has waged against the traditional family and America's religious heritage. (as quoted in Rich, 1995, p, 15)

The conservatives' attempts to make counterculture a pejorative term precipitated a flurry of scholarly and popular studies in defense of the movement. One of the most important of these works was *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s*, edited by Braunstein and Doyle (2002). Comprised of 13 wide-ranging essays by eminent scholars, this collection covers a diverse range of topics including drugs, feminist consciousness-raising, regional New Left ties to the counter-culture, Indians, gay liberation, youth culture, sex, communes, and alternative technology.

Taken together, these essays highlighted the complexity and diversity of the

counterculture. Braunstein and Doyle (2002) sought to correct the conservative critique, arguing that the term counterculture "falsely reifies what should never properly be construed as a social movement" (p. 10). Instead, the editors describe counterculture as "an inherently unstable collection of attitudes, tendencies, postures, gestures, lifestyles, visions, hedonistic pleasures, moralisms, negations, and affirmations" (Braunstein & Doyle, 2002, p. 10).

Despite this intense interest in the 1960s as an historical topic, few works mention the Communication Company. A good example is the aforementioned *Imagine Nation* (Braunstein & Doyle, 2002), which includes an essay by co-editor Michael Doyle exploring the cultural and political radicalism of the San Francisco Mime Troupe (SFMT), its founder R. G. Davis, and the SFMT-offshoot, the Diggers. Well-qualified to present this history (Doyle's Cornell doctoral dissertation had focused on the Diggers and the Haight community), his chapter "Staging the Revolution: Guerilla Theater as a Counterculture Practice," traces the lineage and legacies from the SFMT to the Diggers, finding that while the latter borrowed the aggressive improvisational style of SFMT, the Diggers pushed the guerilla theater setting further, moving from the public park into the street. However, Doyle (2002) does not mention the Communication Company save for a single disparaging footnote regarding a provocative 1967 Com/co pamphlet that he found "arrogantly coercive" (p. 95).

Perry's (2005) *The Haight-Ashbury: A History* is, perhaps, the most authoritative volume on West Coast sixties counterculture that also mentions the Communication Company. As a former staff writer for *Rolling Stone* who had lived in the Haight during

the 1960s, Perry's journalistic skills serve him well in constructing his chronicle of the neighborhood during this era. Perry's work offers perhaps the fullest account, relatively speaking, of the Communication Company among published works; the Com/co story is one of many stories in Perry's evenly rendered reportage. He discusses the origins and a few highlights of the Com/co press, as well as provides some brief biographical material about Hayward and Anderson. Somewhat problematic is the absence of source or reference attribution. Additionally, the narrative consists of a piling on of event after event, with only occasional editorial comment. But beyond this, little or no critical analysis is offered, which would have benefited the work, especially since the author participated in these events. Overall, however, Perry's is an entertaining and informative chronicle of the Haight-Ashbury, which includes a functional overview of the Communication Company.

Staller's (2006) *Runaways: How the Sixties Counterculture Shaped Today's Practices and Policies* is another work that includes the activities of the Communication Company. Building on her doctoral dissertation at Columbia on runaway youth, ca. 1960-1978, Staller's text examines the programs and policies that took shape during the era, when runaways became a source of national concern. In her chapter "Digger Free: Power in Autonomy, Independence in a Free City Network (1966-1968)," Staller introduces the Diggers and Com/co (subordinate, again, as "the free press arm of the Digger collective") and explores the Diggers' use of the Com/co press to amplify and promote their community outreach efforts. A number of Com/co pamphlets discussed by Staller address the runaway problem, such as "Uncle Tim'$ Children," a scathing work

written by Com/co's Anderson about the harrowing risks and vulnerability of an underage runaway population attempting to survive on the streets. She also notes more neutral Com/co flyers, like announcements of the Diggers' daily free food program in Golden Gate Park. While Com/co plays a marginal supporting role to Staller's focus on the Diggers and the innovative, ad hoc community services they provided, her analysis of Com/co challenges some previous interpretations. For example, she disagrees with Doyle's "arrogantly coercive" characterization of Anderson, finding him a sympathetic and astute observer of the scene, an ally and self-proclaimed Digger.

Cavallo's (1999) *A Fiction of the Past: The Sixties in American History* is another ambitious and relevant work that examines the 1960s countercultural movement and makes passing references to the Communication Company. Cavallo explores the reasons behind millions of youth transcending the conformist culture of the 1950s to embrace the radical politics now associated with the 1960s. A professor of history at Adelphi University, Cavallo views the social movements of the 1960s not as an aberration but as a flowering of American values and ideals.

Cavallo (1999) devotes a long chapter to the exploration of Haight counterculture and, in particular, the Diggers. Titled, "It's Free Because it's Yours: The Diggers and the San Francisco Scene, 1964-1968," Cavallo argues that the Diggers' true significance is not in their impact on counterculture or criticisms of American society, but in their choice of method of protest against American limitations on personal freedom through the medium of theater, particularly their public works in the communal spaces of the park and the streets of the Haight. While Cavallo mentions Com/co texts in discussing the

Diggers – including items authored by Anderson – the Communication Company is never directly discussed nor acknowledged. This neglect is typical of the literature on the 1960s countercultural movement. Nevertheless, Cavallo's book makes meaningful contributions to the scholarship on the Diggers and the Haight community and, when read in conjunction with Staller's (2006) study, provides a useful framework for further understanding how the Communication Company fulfilled its pivotal support role with regard to the Digger agenda and aspirations.

A somewhat esoteric title which discusses the Communication Company from a categorically different perspective is Jones's (2006) *Against Technology: From the Luddites to Neo-Luddism*. In his chapter "Counterculture and Countercomputer in the 1960s," Jones explores a number of historical perspectives around the rise of the machine, starting with the views of philosopher William Godwin in 1798 and ending with the Haight-Ashbury counterculture of 1967. Included in Jones's wide-ranging survey is an analysis of Richard Brautigan's well-known poem, "All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace." Originally printed and distributed by the Communication Company, the poem envisioned a utopian future of cybernetic ecology. As part of his discussion, Jones provides a brief gloss about the Communication Company in a section titled "Mimeograph Machines of Loving Grace." Here Jones examines Hayward and Anderson's affiliation with the Diggers, Anderson's interest in the theories of Marshall McLuhan, and its Gestetner mimeograph equipment which jibes with his thesis regarding Luddism and low technology. Unfortunately, there is no new information about Com/co, for Jones (Professor of English at Loyola University in Chicago) repeats material already

covered in Perry's (2005) *Haight-Ashbury*. Ultimately, the merit of Jones's work regarding the Communication Company lies not in its original research, but in his interest in the low-tech nature of the Com/co mimeographic press. Moreover, Jones is one of the few authors to explore Com/co independently of the Diggers, a rarity in the literature.

Another work mentioning the Communication Company is Martin's (2004) *The Theater is in the Street: Politics and Performance in Sixties America*, which built upon his Boston University doctoral dissertation. Martin's study, which includes the Diggers, explores a connection between creative performance and activism. Martin examines several core Digger concepts, such as "assuming freedom" (one assumes freedom, begins living accordingly, as opposed to asking or winning it) and "creating the condition you describe" (pp. 106, 104). Martin's intriguing dissertation follows a cultural-social-historical exploration of an activist interrelationship between the arts and politics, which, according to Martin, was a naturally occurring phenomenon during this era.

Of particular interest is Martin's (2004) discussion of a unique Communication Company/Digger pamphlet not appearing in other studies. Titled "Free Bread," the pamphlet introduces "Digger Bread" which was a staple of the daily free food program in Golden Gate Park. Martin's work explores this activity as representative of an innovative solution to the pressing need of serving a hungry, indigent population in the Haight community. The bread was baked in coffee cans, which the pamphlet details, listing as well various area wholesalers who sold the one-hundred-pound sacks of flour cheaply. Martin concurs with food historian Warren Belasco (2007) who credits the Diggers' civic

efforts with inaugurating the contemporary food co-op movements and inspiring activism.

An important last work is Peck's (1985) *Uncovering the Sixties: The Life and Times of the Underground Press* Peck, who himself was involved in the print culture of the era, interviewed important movers and shakers of the underground press to create his detailed and fascinating firsthand account of the topic. Peck provides a meticulous survey of a once-sprawling, national, vibrant, unstable and fleeting scene; some 500 underground newspapers proliferated during the 1960s, few of which are extant today. Scholars continue to draw from this important work, utilizing its insight into the once-thriving print underground (today found largely on the digital fringe) as well as its exhaustive information relating to this topic.

Regarding the Communication Company, *Uncovering the Sixties* is rare in that it examines the Com/co independently of the Diggers, although given Peck's (1985) orientation, this should not be altogether surprising. While few actual pages are dedicated to the Communication Company, what is of salient interest is Peck's coverage of the Underground Press Syndicate (UPS), of which Com/co was an affiliate. Having served on UPS' steering committee, Peck presents an insider's view of its origins, growth, membership, and operational structures, as well as the politics and tensions among its members.

As the foregoing literature review suggests, although works about the 1960s are extravagantly numerous, only a few studies note the Communication Company's place in San Francisco's counterculture movement. As for works dedicated to presenting the

history of the Communication Company as a main subject, there is not a single title. In sum, this void is what the present thesis seeks to fulfill.

Methodology

In researching this thesis, a number of record types were utilized. Primary source material researched range from archival and manuscript documents to facsimile representations of the Communication Company's pamphlets. Oral histories were consulted, as well as memoirs, tracts, and essays written during the 1960s. This section provides a brief review of the sources used.

Primary Source Manuscript Collections / Archives. The Com/co broadsides housed at the University of California, Berkeley's Bancroft Library were of central importance for this thesis. These materials, many printed on flimsy and unconventional paper stocks, suggest the immediacy of the press and its meager funds.

The Digger Archives, a private collection maintained by archivist Eric Noble, contains another rich trove of Com/co broadsides. Some of these have been digitized and uploaded to the archives' website. Others are represented by bibliographic records which note the broadside's content and physical characteristics. Noble began collecting Communication Company "sheets, as we called them," in 1971 (Digger Archives, 2012). Noble recalled that Com/co co-founder Chester Anderson once told him he estimated some 900 unique sheets were produced in all, though Noble has been successful in collecting approximately 350 of them, the majority listed in bibliographical format with no image available.

Approximately 100 Com/co broadsides were retained by Cisco Harland, one of the foot distributors of Com/co sheets in the Haight-Ashbury at the time. Harland (1992) published this collection via a small regional press under the title: *The Hippie Papers -- a History of the Communication Company*. As Harland notes in his introduction:

> From about March of 1966 to June of 1968, I lived in the Haight-Ashbury. During the later part of my stay there, I would go down to the corner near the drugstore and pick up the day's flyers from a pretty strange guy called Chet. . . . I remember picking up the day's flyers and I'd go over a few blocks in the Haight and hand them out to passerby guys and chicks that looked cool. I didn't give any out to straight people, maybe they were narcs or feds – I just wanted to do my job and head over to the Digger office later in the day and get something to eat. … Thank God the Communication Company had that mimeo machine. No one would believe what was going on back then after all of us old hippies are dead and buried. . . . (p. I)

Harland provides minimal bibliographic information; the value is in the collection of photocopied broadsides, many of which do not appear elsewhere among the sources.

Alexander Street Press' database of 1960s primary source print materials was also useful. *The Sixties: Primary Documents and Personal Narratives 1960–1974* features diaries, letters, autobiographies, memoirs, written and oral histories, manifestos, government documents, memorabilia, and scholarly commentary. Although the Communication Company is absent from this collection, the database's value to this thesis lies in certain facsimile materials from the underground press, such as *Ramparts*, parent of *Sunday Ramparts*, the publication which had employed Com/co co-founder Hayward initially, and later Anderson, prior to their establishment of the Communication Company.

Of secondary interest are the collected facsimile editions of the *Berkeley Barb*, one of the pioneering underground newspapers that preceded both the San Francisco *Oracle* and the work of Com/co.

Memoirs. Four published memoirs proved quite valuable to the research. Emmett Grogan and Peter Coyote were core Diggers, if such a judgment can be applied to an anarchist collective that eschewed leaders. Their memoirs, vastly different in style and the time period in which they were written, offer a fascinating glimpse into the Diggers, the Communication Company and its founders, the community of the Haight-Ashbury, as well as the period in America both preceding and during the era of 1960s counterculture. While occasionally criticized for its third-person style, in which the character of Grogan is present as an externalized player along with the other historical figures that appear in the narrative, Grogan's (1972) memoir, *Ringolevio; A Life Played for Keeps*, has unique value because of his insider account of his and Billy Murcott's extremely influential early pamphleteering activity in the Haight. Were it not for these anonymous mimeographed sheets, it is uncertain whether there would have been a Communication Company. Coyote's (1998) memoir, *Sleeping Where I Fall: A Chronicle*, written at a remove of some 30 years from the time of the events he describes, offers another insider's account of the community and the Diggers. He is able to reflect with hindsight benefited by the ensuing decades, whereas Grogan's memoir, published in the early seventies, has all of the urgency and fresh recall of the events just concluded. Together these memoirs offer a compelling and nuanced accounting. Their personal reflections of co-founders Hayward and Anderson are of unique value.

Hayward's chapter in Richard Brautigan's festschrift, *Richard Brautigan: Essays on the Writings and Life,* is also of central value to the thesis (Barber, 2007). He shares a unique autobiographical account of his early days in the Haight with his pregnant partner H'lane, his meeting and teaming with Anderson, and a fascinating detailed description of Com/co's press operation and headquarters.

Finally, Keith Abbott's (1989) personal memoir of his friendship with Brautigan, *Downstream from Trout Fishing in America: A Memoir of Richard Brautigan*, provides valuable information about Brautigan's teaming with Com/co on the night of the infamous Invisible Circus event at Glide Memorial Church. Additionally, Abbott shares his own firsthand, not altogether positive, insights into the Diggers (whom he distrusted) and the Communication Company.

Newspapers. Two underground Bay Area newspapers from the time, the *Berkeley Barb* and the San Francisco *Oracle*, supported the research. Both were examples of alternative journalistic and print culture presence within their communities, reporting on events and offering editorial comment and criticism. The papers also featured interestingly alternative versions of the kinds of familiar services and notices that would appear in mainstream newspapers: hippie or campus community events and listings, countercultural ads and personals, and other newspaper staples.

The *Barb* ran from 1965 to 1980, the *Oracle* from 1966 to 1968, and together they provide a street-level glimpse of the evolving radical and countercultural communities of the Bay Area. They were more journalistic than Com/co's broadsides, though Anderson, the writer, would pen at least one article for the *Oracle*. The less frequent publication

schedules of these papers – weekly for the *Barb*, monthly for the *Oracle* – was something that the Communication Company hoped to exploit by offering a more frequent publication of community news and events as they unfolded.

Oral History. Several published oral history collections were consulted, adding ethnographic texture and nuance to the thesis' depiction of the Haight and its personalities. Of particular interest were interviews with residents of San Francisco and the Haight, both longtime residents as well as recent arrivals to the community. Narrators ranged from prominent Diggers Peter Berg and Peter Coyote, Psychedelic Shop owner (and *Oracle* benefactor and co-planner of the Human Be-In) Ron Thelin, as well as other hip youth of the community in published interviews. This material captures the outlook, mood, values, thought processes, and something of the zeitgeist of the era and its alternative citizens.

Pictorial Works. Historic photographic collections were useful in presenting the Haight's hip and youthful American counterculture in an immediate and subjective way. A number of pictorial works about the 1960s have been published over the past several decades. These visual studies catalogue the unique community, portraying period congregations of personalities, lifestyles, body language and dress, as well as the surrounding physical environment. Photographs capture Digger activities as well as instances of print culture in shop windows and other surfaces throughout the Haight. Events for which Com/co produced supporting sheets – the daily Free Food in the park, or the Human Be-In, for instance – are viewable in some of the surviving photographs from this community during this era.

Thesis Organization

The study is presented in four chapters. Chapter 1 explores the historical setting from which the Communication Company and 1960s counterculture emerged. The period preceding this era is explored from socio-economic perspectives, including the crisis of World War II, its conclusion, and a new set of anxieties that arose amid the conformity of the 1950s and the Cold War.

Chapter 2 visits the Haight-Ashbury community of the middle 1960s, examines the emergence of the alternative lifestyle and rejection of mainstream values and society that would become such a compelling option for many 1960s youth. It also traces the establishment and impact of the Communication Company within this community.

Chapter 3 establishes the Communication Company within the American radical pamphlet tradition. This chapter explores the history of the pamphlet, its uses and value, and some of the prominent pamphleteers. The chapter also considers the social and historical issues and movements in which pamphlets have played a decisive role. In tracing the Communication Company within its topical community, as well as within the broader context of these historical traditions, the street press is found to have fulfilled very much the same function and role for its community as the classic American amateur printers and pamphleteers have as part of this long tradition.

Chapter 4 locates the Communication Company within a continuum of alternative American print culture, preceded by the "mimeograph revolution" of the arts and letters community during the 1950s, and followed the photocopied zine culture of the 1970s, particularly among the countercultural punk rock community. This chapter concludes

with a look at the role the radical pamphlet played in creating and sustaining San Francisco's counterculture in the 1960s, and radical pamphlets as a print genre.

Conclusion

The fund of documents left behind by the Communication Company's unceasing press, created in moments of topical urgencies and certainly with no archival pretensions, provides a unique glimpse into life within its ephemeral psychedelic city-state. The sheets reveal the daily, almost hourly, activities and concerns of the Haight-Ashbury settlement, at a time before, and during, its eventual deterioration and dissolution. Fluid, evolving, radical, marginal, the history of this countercultural community contained within the hundreds of pamphlets present a unique history – street-level history – not fully represented anywhere else. As notary and an agent provocateur of its community, and continuing an American radical pamphlet tradition, the Communication Company is a historic press long overdue for a dedicated work of scholarly examination.

While the Communication Company was always to be a part of this thesis, the topic as initially envisioned was somewhat broader. West Coast 1960s alternative print culture was the target in the beginning, where, in addition to exploring the history and work of the Communication Company, an examination of the rise of the underground comix movement was planned, as well as the community of artists and concert promoters that produced the vibrant body of San Francisco dance hall posters. In exploring the topic in its nascent form, it soon became apparent that the Communication Company was a fascinating subject on its own. And whereas several histories of both the underground comix community as well as the San Francisco dance hall poster have been written, there

has never been a dedicated study of Com/co. Moreover, despite its relative historical anonymity, the Communication Company was significant for a number of reasons. First, it played an important role in establishing and promoting 1960s counterculture. Second, it represents an important chapter in American print history as a prime mover in the "mimeograph revolution." Finally, these printers continued the American radical pamphlet tradition.

Chapter One

"The Time has Come to be Free":

The Origins of the 1960s Counterculture

Too often the historical imagination is influenced and fixed by those iconic images of an era which come to be endlessly repeated, and, in time, become exemplars of a particular time period. In the case of the 1960s, many of the enduring images, including scenes of great strife and tragedy, also happen to be colorful and vibrant: the rich orange of napalm flames against the blue skies and green jungles of Vietnam; the pink pillbox hat against summer-bland green grass behind the President's motorcade; and various shots of campus life which usually involved students bearing protest signs, strumming guitars, or sharing a marijuana cigarette. No one went to classes, it seems. In all of these places the increasingly mobile lens of the 1960s was "there," as the decade rolled on, both capturing and having a hand in framing that which occurred, or was recorded, leaving behind cooled traces of the hot imagery of the era.

To fully appreciate another era, the historian must enter into the mindset and zeitgeist of that particular time. The better one is able to grasp, intellectually as well as emotionally, the nuances and realities of society at a given time, the more meaningful and accurate its analysis and portrayal. To do so, one must explore not only the major trends and events of an era, but also sift the minutiae of its popular culture, rejecting nothing if it sheds insight. This is the aim of the present chapter.

To many, the tumultuous 1960s is associated with the generation of youth: rebellious youth, highly visible, fostering a decade of seemingly continuous change

manifested in a daily and often colorful swirl of events. More predictable societal trajectories of earlier decades are disrupted, events beginning to occur in a dizzying array that often defied anticipation, rather like the semi-controlled spontaneity of the tie-dye motif associated with this era. Political, corporate, personal, social, and cultural trajectories often collided, bleeding together to fashion the boldly imprinted cloth of a new era. Motifs and meanings would eventually emerge, though not without contention or disagreement, a number of jarring modes gradually absorbed into mainstream culture. Sexual and personal freedoms, organized opposition to military action, new forms and freedoms in the arts, not to mention new language and attitudes, were all part of the 1960s kaleidoscope.

The 1960s will continue to attract scholarly and journalistic attention as people try to make sense of its meaning and impact. With its manifestations of freedom and liberation, the era seems to resonate widely with many Americans, particularly the young who assess the options available to their own generation, often gazing backward to an electric time of perceived possibilities. As Echols (2002) writes, "Opportunistic politicians and finger-wagging political pundits aren't the only ones obsessed with the sixties. Each year has brought a new crop of documentaries and memoirs that attempt to unravel the mysteries of that decade" (p. 51) To some, the period represents a high-water mark, to others, a low ebb. It is the ultimate expression and fulfillment of what a community and society could be, or a cautionary tale of decline and an abdication of morality and responsibility. Perhaps the one commonality of living in America during the 1960s was that it was impossible to remain neutral.

Half a century later, much of what occurred in the sixties continues to be assessed and debated, not least of which the actions and radical lifestyles of the era's highly visible youth. For to fully comprehend the 1960s is to comprehend its youth, at the time the largest generation of Americans in history. Born between 1946 and 1964, the first wave of so-called baby boomers would mature into early adulthood in great number in the mid-1960s, a percentage of them finding their place in what became coined by sociologist Theodore Roszak (1969) as "the counterculture."

But as each generation passes its own hopes, dreams, and anxieties to the next (if only to be rejected), the baby boomers' parents' generation had come of age during some of the nation's most horrific times. Born in the late 1920s and early 1930s and growing up in the traumatizing national devastation of the Great Depression, this generation matured into young adulthood amid the troubling specter and growing anxieties of a world war. Is it any wonder that when this generation became parents themselves, they would want to protect (not to say insulate) their children and lavish them with every comfort, mostly material, that they themselves had been deprived? Indeed, in her book, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, May (1999) describes a *LIFE* magazine feature from the summer of 1959 about a young married couple who spent their honeymoon underground in a bomb shelter. May finds that this event offers "a powerful image of the nuclear family in the nuclear age: isolated, sexually charged, cushioned by abundance and protected against impending doom by the wonders of modern technology" (p. ix).

Digger Peter Coyote has noted that by insulating their offspring in this manner, boomer parents "deprived [them] . . . of adequate tests of their own worth" (Law, 2000, p. 83). It is interesting to consider that eight short years later, America would find many young marrieds having relocated to a new "underground," stridently protesting nuclear arms, burning draft cards, using birth control and exploring free love. The 1960s generation would replace the cushions of abundance with the unpredictable effects of LSD to liberate the mind and escape the strictures of mainstream cultural training.

The boomers' fathers, on the other hand, had fought in World War II, while many of boomers' mothers had a taste of the meaningful engagement and national service of factory work and other employment while the males were away. For the nation it was an exhausting and fearful period, culminating with the United States becoming the first nation to deploy weapons of mass destruction when it dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the span of three days (Kallen, 1999). Demobilized military personnel returned in number to reassume or begin new roles in the American workforce. Women went back to traditional family life, relinquishing their jobs to the returning vets. Making up for lost time, this generation married in great numbers and settled down to pursue lives of material and marital pleasures. Cocooned in the comforts and conformity of suburban neighborhoods, they began families, producing the largest generation of children to date.

The 1950s media celebrated "the good life," which Peters (1998) defined as "a house in suburbia, a new car, and synthetic products . . . [where] the economics of planned obsolescence fanned the flames of market growth" (p. 202). The housing boom

was underway, with jobs and homes available for many of the new postwar families. "Faceless suburbs arose on [former farmland] surrounding cities," Peters continues, and millions of people bought their first car (Johnston, 2005, p. xxiv).

Of course, not all of the returning veterans enjoyed these opportunities. There was familiar injustice. African American veterans, who had fought equally for their country, found themselves deprived of many of the material and social benefits that Caucasian veterans enjoyed. Historians have noted, however, that these continuing racial and class divisions were "concealed beneath an aura of unity" following the war (May, 1999, p. xvii).

While this inequity would continue to simmer, African Americans were not the only ones suffering from a sense of marginalization. Women, too, experienced frustration when, with the return of the male workforce, they found themselves displaced from non-domestic meaningful work and relegated back into the home. As Johnston (1997) has noted, "'Rosie the Riveter' returned to the kitchen with the with the aid of a new Mixmaster and Betty Crocker mixes . . . [and] started her 'Leave it to Beaver' family" (p. 11), These women who had worked in war industries now "went to the new suburbs to be housewives, childbearers, and the principal victims of restored sexual Puritanism" (Peters, 1998, p. 202). One point to consider with regard to the 1960s youth's widespread rejection of traditional structures and the popularity of liberation movements among them, is the likelihood that some of the frustrations and discontent, as well as regret, found their way from the mother to the child, in ways even submerged and nonverbal. Indeed, it has been noted by one historian that the program of the

counterculture was in part a fulfillment of unrealized promise of previous generations (Cavallo, 1999).

Moreover, amid the hope and relief of the American return to stability and postwar prosperity, another threat was looming. An entirely new type of war emerged, one of senseless futility and gripping anxiety. During this time, Americans lived in fear of a communist world takeover. In 1949, China had fallen to Mao Zedong's communist forces, thus one-quarter of the world's people--approximately 500 million Chinese and 220 million Soviets--were now under communist regimes (Kallen, 1999, p. 15). Also in 1949, the Soviets successfully exploded an atomic bomb of their own. Gone was the U.S. monopoly on this particular weapon, ushering in a new era of relentless arms buildup, militarism, and the global terror. The United States superceded the atomic bomb by successfully detonating the hydrogen bomb in 1952, with its hundred-times more destructive power (p. 14). The following year, the Soviets announced that they, too, had the H-bomb, and thereafter the two nations vied for world domination, stockpiling nuclear weapons at an unprecedented rate.

It was a haunting and hopeless world for many and a particularly unnerving backdrop for the most vulnerable of all: the children. Many boomers who grew up during this time would later report their sleep being visited regularly by "nuclear nightmares." Schools across the country exacerbated these terrors by showing government-produced films on how to survive an atomic attack and engaging in the now-infamous "duck and cover" drills. Other government programs shown to students focused on "social guidance," where the chief message was to fit in. These instructional videos disparaged

streaks of independence, bohemianism, or looking and acting different in any way. Teens unable, or unwilling, to fit in, were portrayed in these films as "frankly deviant and deeply troubled" (Peele, 2000, pp. 245-250).

It is not a stretch to imagine how the impulse to explore an alternative society model would appeal to many in the boomer generation. Coming of age within such an often alarming and materialistic culture that was preoccupied with conformity and obsessed with material goods, the desire to pull away and fashion a new society was a perfectly rational thing to have. Presumably, then, a good number of such "deviant" youth found their way to the counterculture in the coming decade. As Bo Jacobs of the Hiroshima Peace Institute observes:

> The hyper-vigilance demanded by these survival instructions communicated that nuclear war was not only inevitable—it was imminent. The idea of imminent nuclear war portrayed an adult world that was spinning out of control. These texts suggested to children that they would not be able to rely on their adult guardians to either prevent nuclear war, or even to be present to protect and guide them through the experience. In attempting to help enlist the children of America as vigilant Cold Warriors, these texts, in actuality, conveyed the message that their own Cold War government was unreliable. The children concluded that, ultimately, if their world was to be saved, they would have to act to save it. (Jacobs, 2010, pp. 25-44)

As the children of the atomic age grew into teenagers, they developed new entertainments and tastes, in which they were able to indulge thanks to their new-found (and some might stress unearned) affluence. The $10.55 per-week average income of the 1950s teenager would have represented the weekly disposable income of an entire family in 1940 (Kallen, 1999, p. 61). Much of this discretionary income was spent on music. Savoring the rock and roll that became the teenage style of choice, boomers purchased affordable 45 rpm records that were being produced in mass quantities. Inexpensive transistor

radios, also a must-have in the boomer universe, gave them access to their music seemingly everywhere. Rock and roll was also an early form of rebellion, particularly the less vanilla "race music" performed by Elvis Presley. Presley embodied and engendered a new attitude: cool, tough, sexy, with a bit of sneer and swagger, hip (Kleinfelder, 1993, p. 191).

The rebellious, hormonal stirrings so prevalent in rock and roll also turned up in the movie theaters. In 1954, *The Wild One* starring Marlon Brando was released. The movie was about a motorcycle gang that brutally rampages through a small American (read: mainstream) town. *Rebel Without a Cause*, starring James Dean, came out the next year and featured a conflicted teen with troubled parents. Dean's character finds himself the new student in the grip of a hostile school environment and faced with a dangerous gang element. Both movies were extremely popular, and the latter has become a mainstay among alienated teens (if that is not a redundancy).

In *Psychedelic Trip*, Bisbort and Puterbaugh (2000) make an interesting observation about social rebels depicted in the fifties' popular culture; these rebels, they find, were often portrayed in the mainstream media as antisocial outcasts -- borderline criminals, perhaps carrying a switchblade, capable of random acts of violence (p. 12). Booze was their drug of choice, and their means of escape included loud rock and roll and perhaps a stolen car recklessly driven (Bisbort & Puterbaugh, 2000, p. 12). And while the public was obsessed with the "juvenile delinquent problem" during the 1950s, it would, in fact, be the somewhat less outwardly violent gentler trope of the 1960s rebel that in fact posed the more serious threat to mainstream values and society.

While rebellious boomers (at least in the movies) were indulging in loud music, fast cars, and alcohol, their parents coped with feelings of emptiness, anger, anxiety, and depression through other chemical means. As America's industries were producing goods at a vast rate, which were consumed with an equal robustness, sales of tranquilizers during this period skyrocketed. For a sense of their growing use, in 1955 2.2 million dollars were spent on these drugs; two years later sales figures reached $150 million (Stevens, 1987, p. 137). Stevens (1987) surmises that these sales figures, juxtaposed alongside the breakneck production of consumer goods, reveals that this was a time where twin themes of "outward prosperity and inward dread come together" (p. 137). For teens during this pre-counterculture era, drugs were neither little used nor even available to them, in contrast to the coming decade.

By the early 1960s, the first boomers were reaching their late teenaged years and considering their next steps after high school. Now old enough and confident enough to consider new lifestyle choices and reevaluate the dominant structures of their times, some rebelled against the social engineering they had experienced in the home and in the classroom. Many found their way to San Francisco with its abiding culture of dissent. Indeed, as Peters (1998) has written, San Francisco had long "been a breeding ground for bohemian countercultures; its cosmopolitan population, its tolerance for eccentricity, and its provincialism and distance from the centers of national culture and political power have long made it an ideal place for nonconformist writers, artists, and utopian dreamers" (p. 199). After WWII, Peters continues, the city was open to many outside cultural influences, offering "a receptive environment for radicals, anarchists, communists,

populists, Wobblies, abstract expressionist painters, assemblage artists, and experimental theater troupes" (Peters, 1998, p. 202).

And thus it was to San Francisco that the 1950s nonconformists relocated. Most prominent would be the so-called Beat writers, who would later become avatars and sirens to the youth of 1960s counterculture. The Beats settled in the predominantly Italian San Francisco neighborhood of North Beach. Among them were principal Beat poets and writers Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, and Jack Kerouac. Once in San Francisco, they joined Gary Snyder, Philip Lamantia, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, among others already established there. As poet Michael McClure describes the scene, "This was a time of cold, gray silence. But inside the coffee houses of North Beach, poets and friends sensed the atmosphere of liberation. . . . We were restoring the body, with the voice as the extension of the body" (Hoskyns, 1997, p. 23).

The Beats, and San Francisco, attracted national attention with the controversies surrounding Allan Ginsberg's Blakean poem *Howl.* The 28-year-old Ginsberg read the long incantatory work that describes the destruction of the human spirit by America's military-industrial machine at the Six Gallery in 1955. In the audience was Lawrence Ferlinghetti, who had founded the City Lights Bookstore in 1953 as a literary meeting place. Recognizing the piece "as the defining poem of the era," Ferlinghetti published *Howl and Other Poems* in 1956, and made the book commercially available at his City Lights bookstore (Peters, 1998, p. 206). The following May, San Francisco police arrested Ferlinghetti and the bookstore's manager, Shigyoshi Murao, on charges of distributing obscenity. A long trial lasted throughout the summer, with many poets,

editors, and critics rallying behind City Lights and *Howl* in support. In the end, Municipal Judge Clayton Horn determined that *Howl* was not obscene because it was "not without socially redeeming importance" (Peters, 1998, p. 207). *Howl* would go on to become one of the best-selling poetry collections of all time (Peters, 1998, p. 207).

The tremendous publicity surrounding the *Howl* trial served to bring the San Francisco scene to national attention and alerted proto-Beats and hipster youth of the boomer generation to its alternative lifestyle. As a result, North Beach became overrun with curiosity seekers and "weekend beatniks," as well as with disaffected youth from other parts of the country. As Peters (1998) describes these weekenders, "They dressed as hipsters and tried to be beats; they were followed by tourists who came to see the beatniks; and, finally, commodities were created to sell to both beatniks and tourists" (p. 210). With the increase in tourism, North Beach's cheap rooms and literary hangouts virtually disappeared as rents increased. Cultural poetry and jazz events gave way to topless shows, and by 1959, *Playboy* magazine was featuring a "Miss Beatnik" photo spread in its July issue (Sinclair, 2010, pp. 189-91). Exploited and lampooned, this newfound attention ultimately destroyed the North Beach beatnik community. This same scenario, almost to the letter, would be repeated in the following decade in the hippie enclave, the Haight-Ashbury.

Those hipster youth who journeyed to North Beach in the early sixties looking to live a Beat life were disappointed, for many of the Beats had already moved out. As one young seeker explained, North Beach had become "a very depressing scene," where "all that was left were speed freaks" (Echols, 1999, p. 71). Instead of the Beats, the area was

filling up with "the scruffy children of the Beats," junior hipsters who emulated them and aspired to the Beat life (Echols, 1999, p. 71). Echols (1999) observes that in the early 1960s North Beach had become "an edgy destination for dropouts who made a point of confounding all kinds of socially enforced borders" (p. 72). While such currents would not surface in mainstream media and thus public attention for several years, it was during this early period that the first seeds of the eventual sixties counterculture were germinating.

However, it would be in a neighborhood located more centrally in the city of San Francisco where these hipsters and other young seekers to the Bay Area would come to settle: the Haight-Ashbury. One of the chief appeals of the Haight was its affordability. The neighborhood's Victorian houses and mansions were by then unfashionable and cheap, and two floors could be rented for $175 a month and shared (Perry, 2005, p. 6). The Haight was said to be the best neighborhood in the city for its architectural flourishes of Edwardian-Victorian motif, which appealed to the hippies whose tastes were eclectic and "old-timey," as one popular expression went. In fact, many of the youthful residents could be seen parading about the neighborhood in Victorian garb, readily available and cheaply purchased from local thrift stores.

Meanwhile, another epochal event focused national attention on the San Francisco area and drew even more disaffected boomers to the region: the 1964 student uprisings on the University of California, Berkeley campus. But while Berkeley attracted the more radical and militant among of the youth demographic, the Haight-Ashbury appealed to the more hedonistic, artistic, laissez faire dreamers who would become the era's poster

children. As a result, life in the Haight was less politicized and relatively unstructured, much of its culture spontaneously occurring on the street. As San Francisco *Oracle* publisher Allen Cohen (2005) describes in his memoir about the community:

> It wasn't difficult to work occasionally, sell marijuana or LSD intermittently, and thereby earn a living for oneself and friends. One could devote most of one's time to art, writing or music, experience the enhanced and ecstatic states of mind accessible through the rise of marijuana and LSD, interact with other artists, get high and talk until the sun's rays erased the night. In these years, and in these ways the particular styles of music, art, and the way of life identified with the Haight, the 60s and the hippies developed. (pp. xxiii–xxiv)

This chapter has attempted to show how the horrors and privations experienced by the boomers' parents gave way to a new era of anxiety and abundance in the 1950s. As the boomer youth navigated this confusing childhood, many sought to escape the "loony bins called the suburbs," to quote Digger Peter Coyote (Law, 2000, p. 83). Often these disaffected youth found their way to Haight-Ashbury and began colonizing a new psychedelic society. The halcyon era of the Haight would be relatively short-lived, however, as the forty-block area was deluged by young, often vulnerable and needy migrants who devastated the neighborhood's fragile ecosystem. But during the Haight's heyday, it was home to many creative and alternative enterprises, most notably the Diggers and the Communication Company, which will be the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter Two

"The News Before It Happens":

The Role of the Communication Company in the Haight-Ashbury Community

This chapter traces the community roots of the Community Company's founders, Claude Hayward and Chester Anderson, and establishes their unfolding partnership and the realities of Com/co's print enterprise. The chapter also explores the press' role within the community and its impact on the Haight's print culture. Finally, the chapter provides a glimpse into the continuing tradition of the American amateur printer.

Emblematic of the Haight community was the San Francisco Mime Troupe (SFMT). Founded as a street theater by R. G. Davis ("Ronnie") in 1959, the SFMT birthed a repertoire of political and social critiques wrapped in the traditional dramatic artform of *commedia dell'arte.* The troupe performed to appreciative audiences in local parks who donated money when a cup was passed around. As the SFMT's former manager and later concert impresario Bill Graham has said abut the troupe

> What was most obvious and what lured me to these people was that they were involved with an attempt at making change in society. They weren't just actors. . . . They were expressing their problems with society through theater by taking *commedia dell'arte* and updating the dialogue to relate to the strife of the day, be it the Vietnam War or civil rights. (Graham & Greenfield, 1992, p. 119)

But while SFMT was political by design, some of its members wanted to take their activism a step further. They broke off from SFMT to form a group that called themselves the Diggers. With their name taken from a seventeenth-century British agrarian collective that decried private land ownership and sought to share the land, this 1960s anarchistic cadre of actors and activists sought to liberate residents of the Haight

community and lead them toward a more enlightened and authentic form of living. At the heart of the Digger enterprise was helping others to achieve "radical personal freedom," whereby one simply (and subtly radically) "assumes freedom" or "enacts freedom" going forward within their life (Martin, 2004, p. 88). This meant aligning one's mode of living in accordance with each individual's personal notion of lived freedom, as opposed to asking permission to live such freedoms. As Coyote explained, the Diggers sought

> to create the culture that they wanted to live in. And they did it by assuming the authority to do it. That's what made it happen, and that assumption of authority is what made the Diggers so different from traditional Leftist groups. (Law, 2000, p. 82)

Martin (2004) finds this philosophy epitomized in the Digger phrase "Do your thing" (p. 88). The Digger's also coined the now-overly-familiar but provocative and fresh at the time: "Today is the first day of the rest of your life."

Coyote has noted that, "if the Diggers had a genius, it was, to use [Digger and former SFMT member] Peter Berg's phrase, 'To create the condition they described.' … [Where] you didn't have to propagandize, you just performed the acts, and they invoked the change itself" (Law, 2000, p. 80).

One of the Diggers' tactics was to stage spontaneous public performances, without the traditional setting of a stage or props, to shock their audience into a state of sudden satori. For example, on a national holiday, the street troupe would stage alternative events to celebrate planetary events, such as the vernal equinox or summer solstice, in lieu of honoring a famous person. By eliminating the recognizable, comforting apparatus of stage, witnesses of the event were confronted with the raw

experience of the moment and impelled to analyze for themselves what was happening. Any meaning, enlightenment, or personal liberation the observer must personally provide. In reflecting on the Haight during this time, Peter Coyote recalled people in the community clad in everyday garb of their chosen identity or fantasy coming together "to act out their fantasies and create acts of public theater" (Law, 2000, p. 82).

In addition to orchestrating public performances in the park and on the streets, the Diggers also established several important social services for the neighborhood. Most important were their daily soup or stew event serving free food in Golden Gate Park, and their "Free Store," where people could walk in and simply take whatever clothing or other items they needed, no questions asked. These acts supported the burgeoning Haight-Ashbury community, while furthering the Digger ambition to "circumvent" the money system, as Martin put it, which "caused American society's most pernicious evils" (Martin, 2004, p. 87). As the Communication Company-produced broadsides explained, the food and of abundant "stuff," and it was money that "was a way of creating scarcity artificially" (Martin, 2004, p. 87; Law, 2000, p. 81).

As the Diggers became a sort of ad-hoc social support-net organization for the Haight, they were increasingly vexed by the for-profit media's exploitation of the Haight and the opportunism of the local businesses (popularly know as the Haight Independent Proprietors, or: HIP), which were profiting from mass arrival of youth. While the municipal social welfare agencies were stymied as how best to serve this unstable and unconventional population, the Diggers took it upon themselves to enact successful solutions born of necessity and invention. In addition to the Free Food and Free Store

programs, the Diggers also conducted street survival classes for itinerant young newcomers, sponsored clothing drives, and gave homeless youth a place to flop and an address to provide authorities. In all of these endeavors, the Diggers were supported in print communication and outreach by the Communication Company.

In the fall of 1966, members of the nascent Diggers became engaged in an absorbing series of informal discussions, exploring the burgeoning counterculture of the Haight and determining its ultimate meaning and importance. As a result of these discussions, and rejecting the "passive [Timothy] Learyite tone of the *Oracle*," a number of anonymous handbills were created and distributed around the Haight (Perry, 2005, p. 87). Often written in provocative, even mocking tone, an "aggressive sarcasm" (Perry, ibid.) directed at the psychedelic complacency of neighborhood residents, as well as the politics of compromise with police of community figureheads, many of them members of the 'HIP Merchants' (Haight Independent Proprietors), in particular the active nd highly visible Thelin brothers Ron and Jay, proprietors of the Psychedelic Shop. The broadsides offered sharp attacks on this group, and viewed compromise with the police as a capitulation and compromise-return to mainstream society.

In the historical balance, regardless of the recrimination leveled in these early Digger broadsides, The Psychedelic Shop did cater and support the new community. The establishment served as central meeting point and iconic hub of the neighborhood, hostyed a popular community bulletin board, and stocked the kind of alternative literature in accord with the tastes of hip area residents and seekers. Founded in January 1966 by the Thelins, the same year as the later autumn anonymous broadsides, the venue served as

a local "head" shop, which sold paraphernalia related to the use and culture of drugs, and community reading room and library of sorts, where visitors would install themselves to peruse by the hour the various works of spiritual and countercultural literature selected by the brothers to sell in their store. Titles included books on Eastern religion, metaphysics, Western occult material, and other non-mainstream literature.

In October, when the provocative Digger sheets were distributed in the community, many residents actively pondered the identity of the author or authors of these broadsides. Perry (2005), himself a resident of the community, notes that the earliest broadsides were "signed" by "George Metevsky," a reference to the famous Mad Bomber of the fifties George Metesky who had terrorized New York (p. 87). The actual authors were in fact Emmett (né Eugene) Grogan, whom Coyote has called "the archetypal Digger" and Grogan's "reclusive" New York childhood pal, Billy Murcott (Law, 2000, p. 93, and Coyote, 1998, p. 69). Grogan provides some background on the leaflets in his memoir, *Ringolevio*:

> Emmett and Billy decided to get things real by challenging the street people with the conclusions arrived at during these informal Digger sessions. They mimeographed their thoughts, using a different color paper for each set of leaflets, which soon became known as the 'Digger Papers.' (Grogan, 1972, p. 298)

It may have been Murcott who suggested the eventual Digger name after reading about the seventeenth-century group in a history book. The name seemed apt, as the new Diggers felt that the current imperatives and their ideas of freedom resembled those of the originals (Grogan, 1972, p. 298). The historical Diggers also relied on pamphlets and

direct appeal to spread their message. Grogan also noted somewhat strongly in his 1972 memoir that The Digger Papers were also a reaction against the "pansyness" of the S.F. *Oracle* underground newspaper, and the way it catered to the new, hip, moneyed class by refusing to reveal overall grime of Haight-Ashbury reality (p. 299). Essentially, however, the Papers were an attempt to antagonize the street people into an awareness of the absolute bullshit implicit in the psychedelic transcendentalism promoted by the self-proclaimed, media-fabricated shamans who espoused the tune-in, turn-on, drop-out, jerk-off ideology of Leary and Alpert. (Grogan, 1972, p. 299)

To create their handbills, Grogan and Murcott snuck into the Student Democratic Society (SDS) offices adjacent to the SFMT studio after dark and used their Gestetner mimeo duplication equipment, then, as Grogan described, in the "late afternoon the following day, Emmett would walk on one side of Haight Street, and Billy down the others, giving them out" (Grogan, 1972, p. 299).

Not long after the period of the sheets appearing and being distributed, the Diggers circulated a new leaflet:

> FREE FOOD GOOD HOT STEW
> RIPE TOMATOES FRESH FRUIT
> BRING A BOWL AND SPOON TO
> THE PANHANDLE AT ASHBURY STREET
> 4 PM 4 PM 4 PM 4 PM
> FREE FOOD *EVERYDAY* FREE FOOD
> IT'S FREE BECAUSE IT'S YOURS!
> the diggers.
> (Perry, 2005, p. 94)

As Perry (2005) frames this event, "There it was, a new step" (p. 94). After all the rhetoric contained in their previous leaflets, the Diggers had shifted, were now "setting an

example: free food, not as a charity but because 'it's yours.' And they continued it daily" (Perry, 2005, p. 94).

Among those intrigued by the Diggers' pamphleteering was the maverick publisher of New Left magazine *Ramparts,* Warren Hinckle, III. Hinckle employed a stable of radical and countercultural figures to pen stories for his magazine, among them twenty-one-year-old Claude Hayward. Hayward received the assignment from Hinckle to "go over the hill" to the Haight and find out more about these provocative handbills, and who these Diggers were. This proved to be a life-changing event for Hayward: he became enthralled by the Diggers, Grogan, the pamphlets, eventually taking their production over with Com/co partner Chester Anderson.

Before the destinies of the Communication Company founders intersected near the end of 1966 in San Francisco, each had been exposed to the print culture of their day. Hayward recounts having lived in Greenwich Village as a child, reading the Beat poets and novelists, ending up in Venice, California where he found "the tattered remnants of the Beats still there" after "police pogroms" had driven them from San Francisco's North Beach (Barber, 2007, p. 113). Chester Anderson had been active in a number of literary endeavors—as novelist, poet, and journalist. He had also lived in Greenwich Village, as an adult, where he was a member of the bohemian fringe and a Beat follower. The two men united in common purpose within the happening psychedelic enclave of the Haight-Ashbury. Together they sought to create an "instant newspaper" as a means of communicating and conveying the quicksilver flow of events within this unfolding grassroots community.

Claude Hayward, born 1945, describes himself as "just a typical American boy: immigrant mother, broken home, bad relationship with a step-father, alienated teenager" (Barber, 2007, p. 113). After a stint as a newsroom volunteer at Southern California's Pacifica Radio Station, KPFK, which Hayward proudly noted was founded by World War II conscientious objectors, he moved on to the now- historic underground paper, the *LA Free Press*. During his 2-year stint with the paper, Hayward rose to the position of "advertising manager."

Then, in the fall of 1966, the 21-year-old Hayward moved from Los Angeles to San Francisco with his partner, H'lane Resnikoff, who was pregnant with the couple's first child. They managed to find a flea-infested flat near Third and Mission, and Hayward secured a job at Warren Hinkle's *Ramparts.* Begun in 1964, *Ramparts* initially had been "a little liberal Catholic journal" with a circulation of 4,000. When Hayward joined the staff in 1966, it was on its way toward evolving into the large-scale political journal that would eventually boast of 250,000 subscribers (Ridgeway, 1969).

On the strength of his previous experience at the *LA Free Press,* Hayward was engaged as advertising manager at *Sunday Ramparts*, a spin-off newspaper Hinckle started in October1966. Hayward has noted that *Sunday Ramparts* "occupied a heady place in the journalistic world" during his time there, "a slick magazine blowing the lid off of one scandal after another and helping to push opposition to the Vietnam War into the mainstream of American consciousness" (Barber, 2007, p. 113). Looking back on these years, Hayward characterized publisher Hinkle as having assembled a stable of "counter-culture types" as his staff. Hayward's colleagues included Eldridge Cleaver, the

"house Black radical," and *Rolling Stone Magazine* founder, Jann Wenner, as the magazine's rock music critic with whom Hayward shared an office. Also on staff was Robert Scheer as the "house student radical," and David Horowitz as the "house left intellectual" before becoming, as Hayward explained, "a darling of the Right" (Hayward, 2007, p. 113). As for Hayward, Hinkle hired him as the "house hippie." It was in this capacity that Hinkle asked Hayward to "lead the search for the elusive and enigmatic Diggers" and write an exposé of their activities in the community (Hayward, 2007, 113). This is likely the initial point of contact between Hayward and the Diggers.

As Hayward has recalled, "Somewhere, in the midst of all that, I encountered Chester Anderson, newly arrived on the scene with a minor literary reputation and some money he had been paid for a paperback novel" (Hayward, 2007, p. 113). In personal correspondence to a friend in February 1967, Anderson noted the date he had moved to San Francisco: January 7, 1967 (http://www.diggers.org/comco/mss_banc.htm#). In his middle-40s, Anderson was considerably older than Hayward, twice the younger man's age. A published author and amateur historian, Anderson was a veteran of the underground and literary avant garde and associated briefly with the Beat movement. Initially attracted to San Francisco's Beat literary scene, Anderson became drawn to the emerging psychedelic counterculture of the Haight. Among the works that Anderson had authored, Digger Emmett Grogan noted, "several … cheap paper pulps about the drug-oriented bohemian way of life to appeal to the insatiably prurient appetites of middle-class suburbia" (Grogan, 1972, p. 389). Little wonder Anderson became interested in the

dynamic psychedelic culture of Haight-Ashbury as compared to the moribund state of the Beat North Beach community.

Hayward had been working at *Ramparts* throughout the autumn of 1966, and it was around Christmas time that he and his partner H'lane moved from their apartment to a rented second floor flat at 406 Duboce Street. The new location was at the south end of Fillmore, ten blocks southeast of the Haight-Ashbury epicenter (Hayward, 2007, p. 113). Shortly thereafter, Anderson moved in with Hayward and Resnikoff at the Duboce Street flat. Inspired by "the hard-hitting broadsides being handed out in the Haight by the Diggers," Anderson proposed that the three new flatmates pool their resources to "acquire some advanced mimeograph equipment and start a street press to serve the community" (Hayward, 2007, p. 113). A noted fan of rhetorician and communication theorist Marshall McLuhan, Anderson decided that their newspaper "should be instantaneous, current, and immediately disposable" (Barber, 2012, http://www.brautigan.net/who.html). With the flexibility of a mimeograph press they would be able to be more responsive to the community's news and communication needs than the monthly *Oracle.*

The two men made a trip to the Gestetner company showrooms to shop for a press. As Hayward describes:

> [Anderson] led me down to the showrooms of the Gestetner Corporation, a German based firm that was at the leading edge of refined mimeographic copying technology. The heart of the system was the Gestefax, a stencil cutting machine that would reproduce a layout as a stencil for the mimeograph machine. Its pre-digital technology involved a beam of light reading the original as it spun on a revolving drum while burning through the thin rubber paper-backed stencil, rotating simultaneously next to the

> original, with a spark modulated by the scanning light. It was advanced for its time, and it allowed us to reproduce anything from text to halftones faithfully and rapidly. We were sold. Chester had a few hundred bucks for the down payment, and I had the steady, verifiable job to sign the payment agreement. The Communication Company, ComCo, was born. (Hayward, 2007, p. 116)

With their Gestetner 366 silk-screen stencil duplicator and the Gestefax mimeograph machine installed in the shared Duboce Avenue apartment, Hayward and Anderson began producing stencils which could be run easily through the press to make any desired number of copies. With this new technology at their disposal, "art, photographs, and other graphics could be easily and cheaply reproduced making it possible to produce stunning documents" (Anderson, 1967, http://www.brautigan.net/who.html#c). Supplied with paper (occasionally acquired through illicit Digger means), colored inks, and an IBM typewriter "borrowed" from the *Ramparts* offices, they were off and running.

H'lane Resnikoff very likely helped out with Com/co operations from time to time as she was on the premises, but pregnant with the couple's first child, daughter Clane, who would be born that March 1967, H'lane was dealing with that, and women found they were often reduced to domestic chores, even in the counterculture, in the pre-women's lib sixties. Resnikoff's role in the Communication Company hasn't been documented (even in daughter Clane's memoir, The Hypocrisy of Disco, which deals with the post-Haight years, living with H'lane in Northern California) and could be a good topic for a future study.

Com/co's initial flyer announced the inauguration of the new community press and, in Hayward's words, its "noble" objectives: to "provide printing, function as the communication arm of the Diggers, be a more immediate and responsive medium than

the hip weeklies, to raise hell and, last and least, to make our payments on the machinery" (Hayward, 2007, p. 116). This last a note of practicality that could not be ignored, even in the scruffy underground of the Haight that ran on an amorphous timetable of "hippie time." Indeed, occasionally Hayward and Anderson would be obliged to print sheets soliciting the community for donations.

Com/co's first broadsheet also outlined what the press was able to produce and in what quantities. Inviting community participation, the flyer posted no prices, or even an address; it simply listed the men's first names, with a local phone number, under which was pecked out on their IBM typewriter the statement "we deliver." The spare essence of the sheet's design, with its unembellished typewriter text and handwritten headline, was indicative in format and look of the much of the Com/co press's literature to come. Concerned primarily, if not exclusively, with communication over style, the press' products were immediate, practical and unadorned, in stark visual contrast to the lavish, full-color covers and occasional spreads of the psychedelic-romantic *Oracle.* Yet Com/co's broadsheets had a certain proletarian flair, their minimal typescript appearance a visual brand in itself within the community.

Grogan gave the Com/co enterprise his seal of approval, writing in his memoir published in 1972,

> Their names were Claude and Chester and, turned on by the style of the Digger Papers, they effectively replaced the need for them by printing single-sheet newspapers which were handed out along Haight Street several times a day. The Communication Company was one of the best newspapers any community ever had. (Grogan, 1972, p. 328)

To appreciate the chemistry between the founders of this new street press, it is worth considering the descriptive information available about Hayward and Anderson. Grogan (1972) has written that the two men were an "odd couple," who nevertheless "appeared made for each other, working well together" (p. 389). He describes the former Angelino Hayward as a "Topanga Canyon beat" who "seemed to be trying to wear out his black Mennonite clothing and extra-wide-brimmed, flat, high-crowned, western-style hat – the kind worn by morticians in the Old West" (p. 389). In addition to what Grogan depicted as Anderson's "graveyard look," he also "sported thick, black-lensed glasses to partially correct his near blindness, and at the same time, prevent anyone from seeing his eyes" (Grogan, 1972, p. 389). Fellow Digger Coyote (1998) also commented on Anderson's penchant for vivid black clothing; but where Grogan finds the "Mennonite," Coyote recalls Hayward dressed "in an Italian anarchist black coat," "ferret-faced" with an "easy laugh and a furtive manner" (pp. 85, 86).

Both Grogan and Coyote depict Anderson as somewhat of a "slick hustler," to quote Grogan. Or as Coyote (1998) put it, Anderson was "an anarchist by temperament as well as a skilled thief ... [who] had somehow come into the possession of Gestetner machines." Hayward, according to Grogan, was also "a talented mechanic"; it was Hayward who kept the machines in good repair and generally oversaw the print shop, whereas Anderson, by contrast, "didn't have any mechanical ability and was too obvious to be a good hustler" (Grogan, 1972, p. 389). Thus, the roles in the company seemed to have fallen naturally, with Hayward operating the stencil maker and press, while Anderson "would scour the Haight-Ashbury… looking for 'hot' news items which he

jotted down in one of the many composition notebooks he carried around in a weathered canvas bag… " (Grogan, 1972, p. 389).

At the outset of the Com/co enterprise, Hayward (2007) maintained his job at *Sunday Ramparts* and it was Anderson and Resnikoff who ran the press machinery during the day, aided, according to Hayward, by "successive young men that wandered in and out" (p. 116). Hayward set up a workroom for the press in the small space over the stairwell of the Duboce flat a location which was handily placed to intercept incoming traffic off the street. Reassuring everyone that the machinery "was straightforward and fairly foolproof," he trained everyone involved with the press in the basics of its use and operation; Hayward elaborated:

> The actual process using the Gestefax involved positioning the camera-ready copy or the original side by side with a fresh stencil on a cylindrical drum and clamping them into place. The drum was set to spinning and the simultaneous scan and burn took from six to eighteen minutes, depending on the sensitivity selected. What emerged was a thin film of rubber on a paper backing, perforated by the spark that, when peeled from the paper and installed on the silk-screen drum of the mimeo, placed ink in a duplication of the original. The actual printing took less time than the preparation and 500 copies could be out the door in less than half an hour. (Hayward, 2007, p. 116)

Once printed, Com/co broadsides were distributed throughout the Haight by a growing corps of Digger volunteer foot soldiers. These sheets became a familiar sight on bulletin boards as well as store windows, laundromats, coffee shops, and other area gathering spots. Local print culture was hugely important to a countercultural community such as the Haight, for many of its hip undergrounders rejected or distrusted the news and messages coming from the mainstream media. Freely available to anyone

in the community, the indigenous Com/co flyers were in perfect alignment with the spirit of the day. Com/co's role in the Haight was also similar to what Darnton observed about the press during the French Revolution, more than simply capture a record of what happened the press "helped shape the events it recorded" (Darnton & Roche, 1989, p. xiii).

The Communication Company, through its association with the street-trusted Diggers, gained instant credibility. Anderson and Hayward were in the enviable position of having their materials widely disseminated and read, and the Diggers were their biggest "clients." The Diggers also supported Com/co in less direct ways, such as acquiring materials for the press by whatever means necessary. For their part, the Diggers enjoyed having a dedicated press and responsive printers at their disposal, pledged to carrying out their pamphleteering and communication needs. Thus each fulfilled the needs of the other, and it was a successful partnership until friction began to develop between Anderson and the Diggers, each with their own ideas for the direction and activity of the press.

Initially Com/co's mimeograph machines were kept busy as Anderson and Hayward produced a battery of outreach materials for the Diggers, which included broadsides such as those multiple sheets protesting the death penalty of African American Daniel Roberts imposed by Governor Ronald Reagan. One bore the heading, "The Wail presented by Daniel Roberts Memorial Band," another provided the logistics for a sunrise gathering at San Quentin prison. Entitled "Kill for peace," a Digger poem began, "12 minutes of agony gas death burning central nervous system KILL" then repeating the

refrain, “they're going to kill murder burn abrother [sic],” ending “RONALD REAGAN IS KILLING daniel roberts | so what” and urging readers to “do your thing | come | dance | be. | WAIL” (The Communication Company, 1967, http://www.diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=14).

Other Digger-generated sheets were invitations to community events. “Prepare now for the potlatch | Summer Solstice potlatch,” for example, was a hand-lettered sheet with a hand-drawn geometric figure labeled ‘COMMUNICATION COMPANY’ nestled into its design (The Communication Company, 1967, http://www.diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=8).

The printers also helped solicited for Digger projects and needs. For instance, the broadsheet bearing the title “ZXQ_9837466 Lino Block Flyermmmmmm(500)” in typewriter font, made appealed:

> “XXXXXXXXXDIGGERS NEEDNEEDNEED. . . . . | 1. Oil base ink for linoleum block printing. 2. Linoleum cutters. 3. Battleship linoleum. 4. Linoleum blocks ad lib. 5. Brayers. | Request urgent. . . . . | To be used for | Linoleum fabric and block prints (LFBP) | To be taken to Trip woithout [sic] a Ticket, 901 Cole St SF CALIF | EARTH XXX.”
> (The Communication Company, 1967, http://www.diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=15)

Other broadsides called for volunteer labor toward a utopian community center, such as the sheet “Brothers | The Diggers Have A Hotel | Three Floors” (The Communication Company, 1967, http://www.diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=64). The flyer appeals, "..TO HOUSE OUR PEOPLE THE BUILDING MUST BE BROUGHT UP TO CODE. LOTS OF WORK. CLEANING SUPPLIES, ETC. WE HAVE TAKEN CARE OF A LOT.

BIGGEST NEED NOW IS MANPOWER. PLEASE HELP" (The Communication Company, 1967, http://www.diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=64). Listing the address, noting a two-year lease, the sheet shares idyllic plans:

> to have all night center, sack out places for singles & couples,
> free movies, theater, acid rescue, dream life for street orphans,
> everything we have is yours. Make your thing come true.
> Show up, help us. All will be free.
> (The Communication Company, 1967,
> http://www.diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=64)

Other broadsides served as social critiques. Two sheets, one titled “Been worried lately? Been paranooiid?” [sic] and a variant with a misspelling ”Been worried lately? Been uptight? Been paaaraanoid?" [sic] are diatribes against the charge of "three and a half bucks a head" for an event at the concert venue Winterland. "Whose trip are you paying for? How long will you tolerate people (straight or hip) transforming your trip into cash? Suckers buy what lovers get for free." The broadside closes with “signed, The Diggers” (The Communication Company, 1967, http://www.diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=155).

Another sheet protests a Hollywood movie about hippies called *The Love-Ins.* The sheet reprints the ad for the movie, along with the Diggers’ denunciation, “Your | Scene | Is | Being | Sold!!! | Back To You!” (The Communication Company, 1967, http://www.diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=65).

Aside from its voluminous printing for the Diggers, as well as the many Anderson-penned broadsheets, the Communication Company also produced publications commissioned by various hip figures of local and national repute. One of these, who would become nationally known as the hippie laureate of the Haight, was poet and writer

Richard Brautigan. The nascent Com/co printed several collections of Brautigan's poems, albeit in minimalist street editions, while the writer was in the beginning stages of his literary career. The first project the press printed for Brautigan was an edition of his poetry, titled *All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace*. The book occupies an historical niche in Brautigan's oeuvre, for the thirty-six-page chapbook has been "said to mark the transition of Brautigan from 'the last of the Beats' (as he has been called) to the first of the hippie writers" (Moore, 2007, p. 196). The book was produced within a few days of Brautigan's bringing the project to Anderson and Hayward.

As the text was already in typed form, it facilitated the process of transferring the manuscript to stencils for printing.

According to Hayward, getting the cover photo just right "took a few hours' tinkering to get the right degree of graininess against the bright yellow [paper stock]" (Hayward, 2007, p. 119). The book itself was laid out in a format of four pages to a single legal-size sheet, essentially a quarto, echoes of the historical tradition of printing the pamphlet even on this office-use mimeograph equipment. The printing was done overnight in a massive collaborative effort, with pages then folded and stapled in a day-long marathon. Hayward noted that Brautigan helped with "the tedious dance of walk-around-the-table-collating technology" (Hayward, 2007, p. 119).

Approximately 500 copies of *All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace* were produced in the initial print run, which Brautigan departed with, distributed in short order, and returned for more. Another run was produced, with a different background (Hayward, 2007, p. 118). Characterized as "definitely a hippie production," the Com/co-

printed editions featured “copies [that] were misbound, resulting in duplicate poems, missing poems, and upside-down pages, but the pamphlet did introduce Brautigan to a new audience” (Moore, 2007, p. 197). Hayward (2007) notes that this edition, originally given away free, and shortly thereafter he began seeing the familiar yellow book at bookstores everywhere he went, still priced free, whereas nowadays mint copies of this small Com/co-produced book fetch upwards of $500 from collectors (p. 119.).

In addition to Brautigan literary collaborations, the Communication Company also printed a novel by Kirby Doyle, entirely mimeographed. Entitled *Happiness Bastard*, the novel, like Brautigan’s works, was handed out free of charge around the Haight.. Com/co also printed the Doyle poem “Ode To John Garfield” which was signed “Kirby Doyle for the Diggers” (Doyle, 1967, http://www.diggers.org/bibscans/cc042_m.gif). Other works printed by Com/co include Beat poet Michael McClure’s poem “War Is Decor In My Cavern Cave,” written in hand, (possibly McClure’s). At the broadsheet’s bottom left-hand edge was typed, “Communication Company,” and on the right-hand edge, “Michael McClure” (McClure, 1967, http://www.diggers.org/bibscans/cc023_m.gif).

Com/co printed poet Lew Welch’s essay-poem to protest the dreaded “Summer of Love” influx; titled “A Moving Target Is Hard To Hit,” the piece asserts, "When 200,000 folks ... suddenly descend, as they will, on the haight-ashbury [sic], the scene will be burnt down” (Welch, 1967, http://www.diggers.org/bibscans/cc026_m.gif). Urging Haight residents to leave town, the flyer ends with the statement, “The haight-ashbury [sic] is not where it's at--it's in your head and hands. Take it anywhere" (Welch, 1967,

http://www.diggers.org/bibscans/cc026_m.gif). The printer's mark is a typewritten statement 'Gestetnered by The Communication Company(UPS) 3/27/67.'

Hayward (2007) has reflected that Com/co's free, topical publications, like those produced for Brautigan and Doyle, "amounted to almost a blog of the scene," featuring stream-of-consciousness spontaneity and open access (p. 119). Hayward believed that Com/co "gained massive street credibility" by being so "unrefined and unfiltered and unstructured," in stark contrast to the conventional for-profit commercial press (p. 119).

Hayward (2007) also observed that in those pre-fax, pre-digital days, that print jobs simply "walked in the door," for Com/co did not advertise: "So if a disheveled young man walked in with a poem he had written, inspired by a free meal in the Panhandle, I printed it and he published it by walking out the door with one hundred free copies and handed them out" (p. 119).

The Communication Company were members of the Underground Press Syndicate (UPS), an affiliation noted on many of its broadsides. Enrollment in UPS consisted of simply sending a letter to its New York headquarters requesting membership. Described as an organization that helped independent newspapers share stories and defend themselves against an increasing number of legal assaults, the UPS allowed members to freely reuse articles printed in other papers (Peck, 1985, pp. xvi, 71).

The underground press that the UPS represented fostered the growth of the counterculture, especially among the legions of radicalized students so numerous at this time that they seemed to constitute a completely new social class. This brimming

counterculture, in turn, supported and helped bolster a thriving, radical underground press (Peck, 1985, p. 20).

These audiences sought a print culture relevant to their lifestyles and concerns. By the end of the 60s, more than 500 underground newspapers were being published, on varying schedules, their combined circulations falling somewhere between 2 million and 4 ½ million readers (Bailey, 2002, p. 307). Like many in the underground news culture, the Communication Company favored an "honest subjectivity" in lieu of a rigorous objectivity that ultimately "ignored its own underlying political and cultural assumptions" (Peck, 1985, p. xv). Unlike underground press entities which yet continued to emulate conventional papers, Com/co's strengths were as "outrageous pamphleteers," printing instant editions offering news, communication, and community-minded propaganda, exercising fully its role and license as amateur printers within an alternative community.

From its public launch in January 1967, to the summer of that year, Com/co's partnership with the Diggers moved from one of mutual benefit and respect to something more strained, especially where Chester Anderson was concerned. Nothing much exists in the available record about what may have been the catalyst for the eventual power struggle between Anderson and the Diggers, or what the dynamic was like during this period between Anderson and his partner Hayward.

What is known is that in May 1967, the Communication Company abruptly moved its base of operations from 406 Duboce Avenue to 742 Arguello Street in the Richmond District. This move was not immediately made public, and it put the press' base of operations outside the accustomed street precinct of the Haight. It has been

recorded that after the move business dropped by half, and that already by May Anderson had grown less enchanted with both the Diggers and the psychedelic scene (Barber, 2012, http://www.brautigan.net/who.html). Core Diggers demanded that the Communication Company place its Gestetner machines exclusively at their services, an edict with which Anderson disagreed, while Hayward acquiesced. Apparently at this point Anderson attempted to seize the machines, He was repelled, and his unsuccessful coup resulted in his ouster from the Communication Company by June. The Gestetner machines were relocated to a Digger stronghold, the basement of the Digger Free Store known as Trip Without A Ticket. Thereafter, the press was dedicated to the exclusive printing of Digger materials, with Hayward continuing his role as printer and shop foreman. At this point Anderson left San Francisco, traveling to New York and Florida looking for other opportunities.

Anderson announced the final split between himself and the Diggers on August 15, 1967 in a 6-page bulletin titled, "Hippie Siamese Twins Split" (Barber, 2012, http://www.brautigan.net/who.html). In this piece, Anderson outlined plans for his own Communications Company in the Haight, which he expected to operate out of the outreach center Happening House building upon his return to the Haight, although this never came to pass (Perry, 2005, p. 221). While Anderson never succeeded in starting another Com/co, he next applied his literary abilities to editing Paul William's pioneering rock magazine *Crawdaddy* for some months (Barber, 2012, http://www.brautigan.net/who.html). Perry (2005) noted that when *Crawdaddy* folded in 1968, Anderson “retired to the woods of Mendocino and Sonoma counties, where he

occasionally supported himself as a typographer" (p. 284). Anderson published a couple of additional works, including one under his pseudonym John Valentine, and while in Mendocino he collaborated with local artist Charles Marchant Stevenson on the book, *Fox and Hare: The Story of a Friday Evening*. Anderson died in April 1991 in Homer, Georgia, where he lived with relatives (Barber, 2012, http://www.brautigan.net/who.html).

Hayward would continue to work as a printer with the Diggers, as in the summer of 1967 "the Diggers gave away their last, final, possession — their name," calling themselves The Free City Collective (Digger Archives, http://diggers.org/free_city.htm). Hayward would eventually become a construction contractor in New Mexico, and from time to time add comments on websites and blogs about those times in the Haight community, or be consulted about Com/co's involvement with Richard Brautigan.

Thus while Anderson's active tenure in the Communication Company was relatively brief, certainly more so than Hayward's, the older man was instrumental in all matters regarding Com/co: its inception and launch, editorial content, and much of the edginess and radical tone in its more "outrageous" publications.

And so the Communication Company ceaselessly printed and distributed its radical literature, hundreds of unique editions, its funky, familiar mimeographed sheets a central part of the print culture of the community. These broadsides would be distributed throughout the Haight by Com/co themselves as well as by a corps of eager volunteers attracted to the high-profile Diggers. It was that winning McLuhanesque paradigm of

built-in buy-in and materials both created and distributed by people who "looked" and belonged to the same community as target audience—the messenger being the medium.

Despite differences as noted, there was something in the alchemy and abilities of Hayward and Anderson that made them such an ideal pair. They papered the Haight often several times daily, serving as a trusted voice within the community and an historical model of important amateur print culture. The next chapter will examine the products of the Communication Company press against a historical continuum of the radical pamphlet tradition.

Chapter Three

"Love Is Communication":

The Communication Company and the Radical Pamphlet Tradition

This chapter explores the history of the radical pamphlet, finding some defining characteristics and locating the Community Company within the radical pamphlet tradition. The chapter also considers the historical position of the Community Company as part of the mimeograph revolution of the 1950s and 1960s, as well as its role as a forerunner to the zine culture of the 1970s and beyond.

Defining the Radical Pamphlet

In attempting to establish a definition of the "radical pamphlet," it is less straightforward than it first might appear. Is it a matter of content? If so, notions of what then constitutes "radical" are complicated by issues of subjectivity and historical context. Is it to do with a measure of danger associated with the printing of potentially extremist, heretical, libelous, dissident, treasonous, or alternatively ethical viewpoints? Or is it the act of dissemination where the radical nature comes most fully into play? Must the sense of outlaw be invoked?

Perhaps it is better to begin with establishing the definition of "pamphlet" before tackling its radical forms. Within the archives community, the Society of American Archivists (SAA) defines a pamphlet as: "A short, nonserial, bound work of more than one sheet, usually with a soft cover; a booklet" (Pearce-Moses, 2012, http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/p/pamphlet). With respect to such definitions, the sheets produced by the Communication Company physically conform closest to what

SAA describes as a "broadside" (synonymous with broadsheet): "A single sheet with information printed on one side that is intended to be posted, publicly distributed, or sold" (Pearce-Moses, 2012, http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/b/broadside).

Defining "radical" on the other hand, can be a somewhat slippery proposition – especially as conceptions of what constitutes radical tend to shift and change with time. Margaret Sanger's *Family Limitation*, an instructional pamphlet on various contraceptive methods was considered illicit and sensational at the time of its appearance. The 1914 publication resulted in a thirty-day jail sentence for Sanger's estranged husband, William, for distributing a copy to an undercover postal agent (Chesler, 1992, p. 126). The pamphlet was in direct violation of the 1873 federal Comstock law prohibiting the dissemination of contraceptive information; here radical affiliated with both content and dissemination. Today the ideas Sanger promoted enjoy widespread dissemination, displayed openly and promoted in health, obstetric, gynecological, even governmental offices. Moreover, the entirety of Sanger's pamphlet is freely available in digital form on the World Wide Web. Thus, this one-time radical publication has become mainstream, its ideas openly promoted and content publicly accessible (despite ongoing political and religious debates around this issue of birth control and reproductive rights, which do continue to render the subject matter contentious and something of socio-political flashpoint).

In exploring pamphleteering impulses even further, the imperative to engage in this activity often stems from strong ideals and/or a resentment of a dominant power structure that controls the popular media. Writing of modern-day pamphleteers Greg

Ruggiero and Stuart Sahulka, for example, Howard Zinn finds that "They were compelled to action during the first Gulf War in 1991, and the 'sickening incest' between the media and the state that supported and the war" (Zinn, 1993, p. ix). Within communities of dissent, it was felt that little authentic information was disseminated by the media during the war, rather, what was broadcast amounted to pro-war propaganda and "dubious poll results" (Zinn, 1993, p. ix).

While radical pamphleteering is often presumed to represent a left-wing point of view, it should be remembered that there are right-wing radical pamphlets and pamphleteers as well. For instance, many pamphlets were generated by the right-wing/libertarian John Birch Society. Similarly, the infamous and destructive House on Un-American Activities endorsed the *Red Channels* pamphlet in the 1950s. At the same time, radical continues to be considered a pejorative appellation implying a left-wing ideology or movement. For instance, when the term radical is used in conjunction with the feminist movement, it evokes a left-wing image, as suggested in this definition of radical feminism from the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "Advocacy of radical left-wing measures designed to counter the traditional dominance of men over women" (Morrow & Dickerson, 1994, p. 52; Stoltenberg, 1993).

Libraries and archives, which often preserve historical pamphlets, also grapple with the meaning of the term radical, and their classifications provide additional insight into the topics, movements, and ideologies that have inspired pamphleteering. Pamphlet collections in the libraries at Brandeis University, University of California, Davis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, New York University, the Library of

Congress American Memory Project, and Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada, cover such diverse topics as abolitionism, abortion, anarchism (and anarcho-syndicalism), anti-communism, anti-lynching, antiwar activism, birth control (and reproductive rights) activism, civil libertarian activities, communism (and communists of various stripes), feminism, LGBTQ activism [Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender-Queer], labor movement, liberal reform, reproductive freedom, socialism, suffrage and education for women, and trade unionism.

Finally, scholars of the American radical pamphlet tradition have offered their own definitions. Button (1995), in *The Radicalism Handbook,* explains his working definition of radical as "going to the roots of an issue, examining it thoroughly, questioning everything, and leaving no stone unturned in the quest for respect and justice" (p. xiii). This idea is echoed by Foner (2003) in his foreword to *The Radical Reader:* "Throughout American history, radical movements have challenged Americans to live up to their professed ideals and have developed penetrating critiques of social and economic inequality" (p. xi). Many such critiques can be seen in the broadsides produced by the Communication Company.

A final note on the term radical. As McCarthy and McMillan (2003) assert in the *Radical Reader*, the term has always been an "elusive adjective" and "painfully subjective," a "contested and fluid concept that owes no allegiance to any particular movement, ideology, or period" (p. 3). McCarthy and McMillan further argue that "radicalism must always be understood . . . within [its] specific historical contexts" (p. 3). Exploring examples of pamphlets created and disseminated throughout different periods

in American history may be instructive at this point toward establishing an understanding of the radical literature genre. It will also help locate the work of the Communication Company as part of the radical pamphlet tradition.

The Radical Pamphlet in American History

There have been many types of radical pamphlets throughout American history. These pamphlets have promoted different political movements, social causes, and radical ideologies. In tracing the rise and influence of the radical press prior to the American Revolution, one must look to seventeenth-century Britain. Prior to that time, printed texts played only a marginal role in efforts of public influence and propaganda. However, by the end of the seventeenth century, not only were the persuasive powers of the British press recognized as critical to generating public support for political initiative or party, the most effective means of doing so was via the pamphlet. Perhaps contributing to the radical notion of the pamphlet was the fact that although pamphlets often enjoyed broad readership during this early era, they were held in low esteem. Remarks by Thomas Bodley concerning the library he founded at Oxford are instructive. Claiming pamphlets were "not worth the custody in suche a Librarie," he sought to prevent them from being part of the institution's holdings. Indeed, Bodley believed that to "stuffe" the library "full of baggage books" would undermine the library's authority and bring "shame and scandal" to the pioneering institution (Halasz, 1997, p. 1). As Halasz explains, in this context "baggage'" was a term of derision meaning "trashy" or "valueless" (p. 1). Nevertheless, the pamphlet was popular among readers, for gossip as well as news.

Not widely used in colonial America in the 17th century, the radical pamphlet became more prevalent after 1740 when politicians discovered the need to reach wider audiences. Other advantages of the pamphlet included their being cheap and easy to produce. For instance, Benjamin Franklin was able to quickly write, print, and distribute an anonymous pamphlet around the then-controversial issue of the printing of paper money. Additionally, the pamphlet was easy to carry and easy to conceal. One of the most extreme instances of pamphlet's portability was the pamphlet biography of Mark Twain, just three inches square, which was distributed in packets of Duke's Cigarettes (Cook, 2002, p. 233).

As the press and the pamphlet became a fixed part of American political culture, this new print media played a central role in the shift of politics from the private to the public. For instance, it has been noted that Thomas Paine's pamphlets helped to "democratize the Revolution" (Martin, 2002, p. 104). Prior to Paine's efforts, pamphlet authors wrote for the educated elite and often included "untranslated phrases or whole sentences in foreign languages," most often Latin, and employed pseudonyms that implied classical learning (Martin, 2002, p. 104). Aimed at a wider audience, Paine's *Common Sense* was written in a clear and direct style and, with its homespun allusions, the pamphlet proved wildly compelling.. In fact, Paine's co-revolutionary Isaiah Thomas commented that Paine's "common language had been necessary to influence the general populace and its "clear and impressive manner" was indeed able to unite the American people in common cause (Martin, 2002, p. 104).

Given the rise of the press and pamphlet in 18th century American political life, it was inevitable that the professional pamphleteer would emerge as a central political figure. In contrast to earlier political discourse where restraint and reason tended to be exercised, a new level of vitriol and argumentation surfaced among the printers, with opposing sides hurling insults to strip from their opponent all credibility and integrity. Libel and deprecation substituted for the earlier genteel qualities of discourse. These pamphleteers of the Revolutionary Era became truly "outrageous pamphleteers," dishing distortion and propaganda, qualities not absent in today's charged and contentious political arena of partisan sound-bytes.

The pamphlet has been employed by different movements throughout American history, promoting a broad spectrum of causes and beliefs. These include pamphlets in support of political movements, social causes, rebels and outlaws, as well as various ideologies. The next section explores some of these uses.

The Radical Pamphlet in Political Movements

As American colonists moved to establish a sovereign nation independent from Britain, the radical pamphlet played a significant part. Of the approximately 2,000 pamphlets published during the Revolutionary period, none was more influential than Thomas Paine's aforementioned *Common Sense.* Perhaps the "ultimate pamphlet" in America's history, *Common Sense* proved vital to refocusing the flagging American revolutionary spirit during the winter of 1776. The document not only fired colonists' imaginations, selling 500,000 copies within the year, but helped articulate and unify the objectives for which the militarized colonists were fighting. Prior to the publication of

Paine's pamphlet, there had been no consensus. Some colonists sought separation, others reconciliation. Among the 1775 congressional members, only one third leaned toward independence. Paine's pamphlet was able to galvanize and inspire consensus.

Having arrived in Philadelphia, the print capital of the colonies, in 1774, it was relatively easy for Paine to produce the pamphlet, and its portability made it the ideal medium for galvanizing around a political cause. In addition to its influence in focusing revolutionary sentiment, Paine, according to historians, also "forged a new political language," rooting his arguments in common experience and addressing his audience directly (Trodd, 2006, p. 5). Here is Paine, in this representative fragment, underscoring the justness of their cause and the urgency of the task before them:

> A government of our own is our natural right: And when a man seriously reflects on the precariousness of human affairs, he will become convinced, that it is infinitely wiser and safer, to form a constitution on our own in a cool deliberate manner, while we have it in our power, than to trust such an interesting event to time and chance. (Paine, 2006, p. 8)

The Radical Pamphlet and Social Causes

Throughout American history the radical pamphlet has been used to promote social causes. Many of the aspects of the pamphlet already cited make it an ideal medium of outreach in bringing a cause to a wider audience. Its inexpensiveness and ease of production, as well as the relative brevity of its content, made it more likely that people would read it as opposed to a hefty tract. Moreover its small size gave people the ability to hastily conceal what might be considered a volatile document. Civil rights pamphlets serve as a prime example of their use in promoting a social cause.

Many African American writers during the periods of slavery and lynching were avid pamphleteers, developing distinctive modes of expression and a level of craft in sharp contrast to the low status and intelligence traditionally accorded to them. Within this historical milieu, some black pamphleteers chose to strategically dampen or conceal their erudition. In one tack, feigned literary inadequacy would pacify white readers' anxieties of the black writer; having engaged and lured such readers into the argument, the pamphleteer would then gradually build to an unexpectedly authoritative conclusion regarding racial justice (Newman, Rael, & Lapsansky, 2001, p. 19). Toward this gambit, the pamphlet was ideally suited.

Of the many pamphlets produced in the struggle against slavery, one of the most enduring and influential was African American writer David Walker's 1829 *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens (*aka *Appeal*). A free black born in North Carolina and later settling in Boston, Walker's pamphlet was a call to arms, an incendiary indictment of white hypocrisy. Here is Walker from Article II of his *Appeal*,

> The whites want slaves, and want us for their slaves, but some of them will curse the day they ever saw us. As true as the sun ever shone in its meridian splendor, my colour will root some of them out of the very face of the earth. They shall have enough of making slaves of, and butchering, and murdering us in the manner in which they have. No doubt some may say I write with a bad or a good spirit, I say if these things do not occur in their proper time, it is because the world in which we live does not exist, and we are deceived with regard to its existence.--It is immaterial however to me, who believes, or who refuse—though I should like to see whites repent peradventure God may have mercy on them, some however, have gone so far that their cup must be filled . . . (Walker, 2006, p. 80)

The popularity and influence of Walker's *Appeal* can also be seen in the instances of runaway slaves apprehended with a copy of the pamphlet in their possession. This

underscores another of the radical pamphlet's virtues, as previously noted. For in addition to serving as a ready means of communication, its portability and small size allowed for hasty concealment.

Historians have noted that Walker's construction of his pamphlet and his skilled use of language served as "itself a form of protest" against the prevailing low estimation of the black writer and his intellect. Indeed, Walker himself comments in the Preamble of his pamphlet: "I am fully aware, in making this appeal to my much afflicted and suffering bretheren," he wrote, that he would be "assailed by those whose greatest earthly desires are, to keep us in abject ignorance and wretchedness [and are] of the firm conviction that Heaven has designed us and our children to be slaves and beasts of burden to them and their children" (Walker, 2006, p. 80).

The radical pamphlet in civil rights movements persisted throughout the nineteenth century, used by both supporters and opponents of black rights. For example, when three of her friends were killed in March 1892, African American journalist Ida B. Wells began to investigate some 728 lynchings that had taken place in the previous decade. From her research, Wells penned an editorial, which appeared in Memphis newspaper *Free Speech*, advising blacks to go west. Subsequently some two thousand blacks left Memphis.

In challenging the lie that blacks assaulted white women, Wells's editorial made her the first anti-lynching activist to address consensual interracial sex. Outraged Memphis whites attacked the *Free Speech* office. In response Wells penned a pamphlet entitled *Southern Horrors*, using the pen name "Exiled." A mix of journalism,

sermonizing, and sociology, the pamphlet was a call to action for whites as well as blacks to speak out against racial violence:

> It is with no pleasure I have dipped my hands in the corruption here Exposed. Somebody must show that the Afro-American race is more Sinned against than sinning, it seems to have fallen upon me to do so. The awful death-roll that Judge Lynch is calling every week is appalling, not only because of the lives it takes, the rank cruelty and outrage to the victims, but because of the prejudice it fosters and the stain is places against the good name of a weak race. (Wells, 2006, p. 248)

Wells goes on to note:

> They [whites] do not see that by their tacit encouragement, their silent acquiescence, the black shadow of lawlessness in the form of lynch law is spreading its wings over the whole country. (Wells, 2006, p. 249)
> The tradition of anti-lynching pamphleteering continued into the 20th century.

Among the most influential was the *Bill for Negro Rights and the Suppression of Lynching.* Authored by the League of Struggle for Negro Rights (LSNR) in 1934, the intent of the pamphlet is stated in its subtitle: "To Abolish the Practice of Lynching of Negroes, and to Secure Full Equality and Civil Rights, throughout the United States of America." The pamphlet then argues:

> The rights of the Negro people, although guaranteed by the Constitution of the Unites States of America, 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, have been and are systematically violated, as shown by: the denial of the rights of citizenship, the denial in many sections of the country of their right to vote, to serve on juries and to enjoy equal rights in courts of law, the system of peonage and slavery and chain gang widely practiced in the South, the wholesale frame-ups against innocent Negroes and other such oppressive practices, the fact that during the past fifty years more than 5,000 lynchings have taken place in the United States and with very little effort on the part of the Police or Judicial Authorities to apprehend or punish the guilty parties; therefore it becomes necessary to adopt special measures to suppress the practice of lynching and to secure to the Negro people the full and free exercise of complete equal rights with every other section of the population. (LSNR, 2006, p. 277)

Section 2 of the pamphlet continues in even stronger terms: “Every person participating in a lynching is declared to be guilty of murder in the first degree, and upon conviction shall be punished by death” (LSNR, 2006, p. 277).

Pamphlets promoting social causes are often linked to a sense of outrage and a strong conviction that readers must be jolted out of their complacency. This is often achieved through provocative and often jarring rhetoric. At the same time, pamphlets printed and distributed promoting integrationist politics were bound to be controversial in the South, even where content was written in a tone of neutrality and tolerance. The June 1958 pamphlet *A First Step Toward School Integration*, written by Anna Holden in cooperation with the Nashville Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), would likely have represented unwanted radical intent to a hostile southern community. It profiles how a CORE group was able to help Nashville parents and children desegregate public schools in that city in the fall of 1957, despite violent segregationist mobs, thus serving as a primer for like-minded others. The cover photo shows the torsos of several adults making their way forward. Also pictured is an armed police officer escorting a woman in a dress holding the hand of young African American girl. The child’s troubled expression is the only face one can see in this cropped photo.

The following year saw the publication of a segregationist pamphlet titled, *Are You Aware of the Planned Negro Invasion?* Issued by States' Rights Action in Memphis, Tennessee, the pamphlet protested integration, asserting connections between the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and communism. Its garish yellow and black cover features a caricature of two African

Americans walking casually down the block chatting, while in the foreground, a conservatively-dressed middle-aged Caucasian male hooks a thumb in the direction of the African Americans, a pronounced sneer on his face. A speech balloon depicts him as proclaiming, "Just as soon as you turn this page … you won't see this two-some anymore! And I know you'll be happy!" Underneath the drawing, the lower headline copy reads: "NAACP Plans 50 Years Ago | Are you aware that a planned negro | invasion has happened to an | ALL-WHITE Memphis Community?" (States' Rights Action in Memphis, Tennessee, 1959). The capitalized ALL WHITE underscores a sense of outrage and, perhaps, urgency.

The Radical Pamphlet and the Outlaw

The radical pamphlet tradition has also been used for countercultural purposes to glorify the rebel, an individual living outside, and sometimes flaunting, social norms. One example of this tendency can be found in pamphlets produced by printers and pamphleteers infatuated with American Western "bad men" such as Billy the Kid, Joaquin Murieta, Jesse James, and others. There has been a tendency among these pamphleteers to glorify the exploits of these outlaws. In his book *Six-Guns and Saddle Leather: A Bibliography of Books and Pamphlets on Western Outlaws and Gunmen*, compiler Ramon F. Adams examines a number of spurious pamphlets, including that of Wild Bill Hickok's fight with the McCanles faction. Adams exposes the myth that western outlaws followed a kind of code of honor, which, in reality, was more an expression of their fear of an enraged citizenry (Davidson & Adams, 1954, p. 291-292). Nonetheless, it was appealing for certain authors penning biographical pamphlets to

imbue these outlaws with certain romantic notions of an outlaw code.

The Radical Pamphlet and Ideology

Where Paine's *Common Sense* ranks among the more celebrated pamphlets in American political history, a small chapbook published in 1950 is representative of another genre of pamphlet used to promote a specific ideology. Known as *Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television*, the pamphlet found its way into the administrative and corporate elite silos of the radio, film and television industries. Published by American Business Consultants and, as prominently displayed on the cover, Counterattack: The Newsletter of Facts To Combat Communism, the pamphlet contained profiles of purported communists, including their professional memberships, friendships and alliances, excerpts from speeches and public comments, as well as artistic works deemed objectionable. For example, composer Aaron Copland merited three pages in the booklet, and is cited for a range of activities and memberships, for instance being a sponsor and speaker at the Scientific and Cultural Conference for World Peace. The Copland entry also includes this objectionable statement from a *The New York Times* article, "The effects of the cold war on the artist in the United States were decried by Aaron Copland, American composer, who predicted that, 'the present policies of the American Government will lead inevitably into a third world war'" (Red Channels, 1950, p. 39). Similarly, Langston Hughes's poem "Goodbye Christ" was denounced in *Red Channels* as "a typical example of vicious and blasphemous propaganda Communists use against religion" (Red Channels, 1950, p. 81). Others appearing in the pamphlet include Ruth Gordon, actress and screenwriter; Dashiell

Hammett, writer; Burl Ives, folk singer and actor; Gypsy Rose Lee, strip teaser; Alan Lomax, folklorist and musicologist; Dorothy Parker, writer; Burgess Meredith, actor; Artie Shaw, jazz musician; and numerous others.

Red Channels arrived quietly, stealthily, and later many radio and television executives would never admit having seen a copy. Yet the ravaging effects of this publication on the lives and careers of countless individuals was devastating and swift; even those not directly savaged would find themselves demoralized and anxious amid such an epidemic of fear (McDonough, 2010). It was from the yoke of the 1950s and its lingering climate of toxic and stifling ideology that boomer youths attempted to create a new society in the next decade.

A final note about radical and protest literature. At its best, radical/protest writings provide not only critiques but also solutions. And whereas popular literature often transforms individuals, it is protest literature that unites them, giving voice and vision to a collective consciousness (Stauffer, 2006, p. xii). The Communication Company fulfilled these roles, of catalyst and mirror, as it offered pointed critiques and tendered solutions, most often Digger solutions. Although many of Com/co's mimeographed materials have not survived into the present day, at the time they were a familiar presence within the Haight-Ashbury. Utilizing a grassroots mode of print culture relevant to anti-mainstream sensibilities, the broadsides helped promote a sense of community within this fluid neighborhood of itinerant individuals.

The Communication Company and the Radical Pamphlet. The Communication Company left a rich body of printed materials, and surviving broadsides

– of which there are still a good number, thanks to the preservation efforts of a few motivated individuals, as well as two important collections at University of California Berkeley's Bancroft Library – offer a unique look into the daily life of Haight-Ashbury's fluid street community. With the press in operation almost daily, generating material of relevance to the community, these pamphlets are micro installments of the history of a fluid scene whose success was based on its radical appeal.

As noted previously, pamphleteering blossoms in the places where events are happening. Rapidly and cheaply printed and disseminated, radical pamphlets facilitate a larger conversation and, in many cases, impact that conversation. This is why there is special value to this historical form of print culture generally, and of the contributions of Com/co specifically. The mimeographed oeuvre of the busy Com/co press includes many of the same categorical types and topics introduced in the foregoing discussion of the American radical pamphlet tradition. The remainder of this chapter will explore these categorical areas, adding some others. A handful of Communication Company broadsides will be examined to exemplify how they functioned as political discourse, ideological editorializing, and spiritual celebration. Other pamphlets will be considered as to how they addressed social causes, as well as fulfilled the expected functions of a local street press: sharing announcements and providing community outreach. As Paine's famous pamphlet was written for the immediacy of the historical moment, and in the plain speech of Paine's known audience, the writers of Com/co broadsides also spoke in the vernacular of its time.

Com/co and Politics. The types of politics that the Communication Company wrote about tended toward rebellious refutation of official authorities. Often these pamphlets voiced opposition to local policy and federal law. A particular Com/co concern was the draft and the Vietnam War, as the broadsheet bearing the heading, *Draft draft draft draft draft conscription* illustrates. Indeed, this pamphlet literally shouts its message:

> hell no! we won't go!
> don't get caught…resist the Selective Slavery System.
>
> but that's not easy. a lot of guys in the haight get hassled
> by the draft, go to their physicals stoned, and end up destroying
> their minds and murdering people in vietnam.
>
> ((in unity there is strength; united we stand divided we fall,
> & all that shit)) trouble is, there's a lot of truth in
> those sayings. thus i would like to make a typical
> Masked Marauder absurd proposal: that all us hassled hippies
> get together & help each other, by whatever means necessary,
> to keep out of the draft.
> (The Communication Company, 1967,
> http://diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=3)

Clearly affiliated with, if not authored by, the Diggers, the broadside goes on to offer:

> anybody who needs help or information on the draft, becoming
> a CO [Conscientious Objector], nonco-operation, immigration
> to canada, disruption, or"other" ways of staying out will find
> him [the "Masked Marauder"?] hanging around the [Digger]
> Free Story at cole & carl just about any time.

In a dash of irreverence intended for a community scornful of authority, the pamphlet concludes:

> the masked marauder is totally illiterate. this was written by his
> private secretary, Bernie the trained chimpanzee
> (Local 666, International Brotherhood of Furry Friends).

Com/co and Ideology. Needless to say, Com/co promoted an antiestablishment, partisan, community-based, pro-drug and liberal/radical ideology. A good example is the sardonic, satirical voice of the 1967 Com/co pamphlet *When You Come to San Francisco Wear a Flower in Your Hai*r. Taking aim the perceived hypocrisy of community leaders, the flyer is a twist on the lyrics of the hit song "San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)." The handwritten broadside begins:

> WHEN YOU COME TO SAN FRANCISCO
> WEAR A FLOWER IN YOUR HAIR
>
> WEAR A SMILE ON YOUR FACE
> FOR THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE
>
> RIOTING IN THE GHETTOS
> WON'T EFFECT YOU IF YOU WEAR
> A FLOWER IN YOUR HAIR.
> (The Communication Company, 1967,
> http://www.diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=9)

The take-off lyric continues:

> A SUMMER LOVE-IN
> LED BY OUR ARTISTS
> JOHN PHILIPS, SINGING
> THERE'LL BE GENTLE PEOPLE THERE
> IN THE FLOWERED HAIR
> RAGING IN THE STREETS

The broadside concludes:

> IF SAN FRANCISCO DOESN'T WORK OUT
> WE CAN ALWAYS DO IT IN LONDON
> SINGS JOHN PHILIPS.

Although Scott McKenzie had recorded the popular version, the Diggers (for whom Com/co was publishing) were targeting the song's composer John Phillips for his opportunism and use of the Haight movement for personal financial gain. Phillips, along

with the Haight's HIP merchants, was also being excoriated for irresponsibly urging youth to flock to the already vulnerable community, taxing its resources even further.

This pamphlet conflates several popular commercial expressions of youth counterculture (including John Phillips, whom many felt was something of a huckster in psychedelic garb), which the Diggers and Com/co accused of exploiting for and popularizing for commercial gain. It is a mocking piece, where satire thinly glazes the simmering moral outrage underneath.

Com/co and Community Mobilization. Mobilization-themed sheets printed by Com/co also tended to be Digger inspired efforts. These community goads were often appeals of a consciousness-raising sort, such as Anderson's *Two Page Racial Rap*, in which he shares some personal history and denounces the Haight as being "the first segregated bohemia [he's] ever seen" (The Communication Company, 1967, 1992, p. 20).

The pamphlet *Kill for Peace* (1967) was another Digger-style poem written and printed in response to the execution of Daniel Roberts (Noble, u.d., http://www.diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=14). Watched outside of California as well as locally, the forty-three-year-old African American Roberts was scheduled for execution at San Quentin prison on April 18, 1967 (*The Dispatch*, 1967, p. 1). The Com/co broadside announced to the community:

> 12 minutes of agony gas death burning central nervous system KILL
>
> they're going to kill murder burn abrother
>
> they're going to kill murder burn abrother

they're going to kill murder burn abrother

they're going to kill murder burn abrother

again
they're going to kill murder burn abrother

they're going to kill murder burn abrother

again
they're going to kill murder burn abrother

they're going to kill murder burn daniel roberts

kill daniel roberts

KILLKILLKILLKILLKILL KILL DANIEL ROBERTS

RONALD REAGAN IS KILLING daniel roberts

s
o

w
h
a
t

do your thing

come dance be. WAI L

FRUITS FLOWERS raw meat costumes eyes taste be

flags brooms make-up golf bags bones whatever (The Communication Company, 1967, http://www.diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=14).

The refrain "again / they're going to kill murder burn abrother [sic]" refers to the execution six days earlier of Aaron Mitchell, the first execution in California in four years and the first in the U.S. in 1967. The broadside is in the Digger voice, with its tacit invitation to observe, mourn, stand witness, protest, mobilize (*The Dispatch*, 1967, p. 1). It is characteristically non-explicit and non-prescriptive, save "do your thing / come dance be. / WAIL."

Com/co and Spirituality. Broadsides of the street press could also be unapologetically ingenuous, in some instances devotional. A good example is Com/co's pamphlet *Lord, Make me an Instrument of thy Peace* which presents in lyrical hand-lettering the Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi. Invoked perhaps in opposition to the Vietnam War, which continued to escalate and preoccupy millions during this time, the prayer circulated widely and gained a worldwide popularity among people of all faiths (Renoux, u.d., http://www.franciscan-archive.org/franciscana/peace.html). An artist contributed a line drawing depicting Jesus and a swanto for the pamphlet, while the prayer itself was presented in script. No editorial comment or embellishment was added to the piece, very likely because the meaning was already understood and embraced by the Haight's pacifist psychedelic community.

The poem begins:

LORD, make me an instrument of thy peace:

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where these is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;

> Where there is sadness, joy.
> (The Communication Company, 1967,
> http://www.diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=24)

Com/co and Social Causes. Many of the sheets produced by Com/co focused on the problems, needs, and social issues facing the community. Here, Anderson and Hayward addressed physical and mental health, street safety, hunger and homelessness, aggressive police scrutiny, among other concerns. What came to increasingly preoccupy the Com/co proprietors, particularly Anderson (who tended to pen its non-Digger broadsides), and the Diggers themselves were the worsening conditions within the Haight, the instability due to overcrowding and the presence of many underage runaways seeking refuge and freedoms in this countercultural Mecca. Shortages of food and housing, unsanitary conditions, and unsafe practices among those living on the streets put the community on the verge of collapse. Anderson and the Diggers were relentless in vocalizing their fears, as in the April 1967 broadside, *Gurus | Wizards | Teachers.* This hand-lettered pamphlet proclaims:

> The kids are coming. The kids are here. MAKE YOURSELVES AVAILABLE TO THE KIDS. Seek them out. Talk to them. Go where they are and teach/love. Now - these thousands of kids - is your chance to create the world as you know it should be.
> (The Communication Company, 1967,
> http://diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=34)

The sheet warns: "If you wait to get organized, they'll be gone . . . The future is now. Do it now." (The Communication Company, 1967,

http://diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=34)

One of Com/co's most passionate pamphlets had appeared the day before. Written by Anderson and titled *Uncle Tim'$ Children* (the "Tim" being Timothy Leary), it is probably the hardest hitting of Com/co's broadsides and the most quoted in the scholarly literature. The four-page pamphlet takes a cynical, pessimistic look at the state of the Haight-Ashbury. It excoriates the HIP merchants, as well as Leary and the San Francisco *Oracle*, for selling life in the Haight to the outside world in the manner of seductive psychedelic hucksters. Anderson's biting text includes the following:

> Pretty little 16-year-old middle-class chick comes to the Haight to see what it's all about & gets picked up by a 17-year-old street dealer who spends all day shooting her full of speed again & again, then feeds her 3000 mikes & raffles off her temporarily unemployed body for the biggest Haight Street gang bang since the night before last.
>
> The politics & ethics of ecstasy,
> Rape is as common as bullshit on Haight Street,
> The Love Generation never sleeps.
>
> The Oracle continues to recruit for this summer's Human Shit-In, but the psychedelic plastic flower & god's eye merchants, shocked by the discovery that increased population doesn't necessarily guarantee profits at all, have invented the Council for a Summer of Love to keep us all from interfering with commerce. (The Communication Company, 1967, http://diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=33)

The editorial includes the printers' byline as usual, but in this instance notes, "printed possibly too late by the communication company" (The Communication Company, 1967, http://diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=33).

The radical language and purple prose evince the personal politics and the pamphleteer's investment in the issue, as well as exemplifies the subjective nature of the alternative press. Anderson's impassioned diatribe and contentious and jarring prose

would have been unacceptable on the pages of mainstream publications but was made possible by the countercultural press.

As the looming summer emergency approached, Com/co broadsides continued to entreat the Haight's seemingly impassive acidheads and hippies to take action. In *Survival School | How to Stay Alive on Haight Street,* Com/co announced "a series of three classes designed to save you from becoming a psychedelic casualty -- six months' worth of knowledge in a mere three days" (The Communication Company, 1967, http://www.diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=4).

Another sheet, *About Time We Started Doin' Our Own Livin' And Dyin*', printed April 20, 1967, documents the emergence of the Digger's community food programs. It opens,

> And so, six months ago you watched two guys bring a milk can full of turkey stew into the panhandle and start the diggers. two weeks later free food in the panhandle at four o'clock was advertised in the berkeley barb and it never missed a day. somebody asked: Why free food? and anyone answered: free clothes.
>
> the first free store opened in a six car garage on page street and it was small and the crowd knew each other and someone had written winstanley on the door and then the rains came and the roof fell in the landlord was harassed by the police and said please... and someone said it was nice while it lasted.
> and the diggers grew. (The Communication Company, 1967, http://diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=35)

After chronicling the Diggers' struggle to remain active and their social platform viable, the narrative concludes:

> well love is a slop-bucket and we are the children of awareness but our courage has yet to manifest itself within our floating community... we put down the merchants, the bullshitters, the hustlers and we sit

> around and it's all the same and there's nothing new under the sun and free food seems a long time gone because we're playing the game of the 1930's we're the new cry babies and james dean's tears have finally taken root in a shallow weak kneed series of cabals which expect someone to take care of their livin'. some revolution. (The Communication Company, 1967, http://diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext.asp?BIBLIO+ID=35)

Conclusion

As bearers of the American radical pamphlet tradition, and notaries of its fleeting historical community, the Communication Company produced a body of literature in reality not meant to last the day. Ironically, because the press was positioned at the center of an imploding community and armed with an instant press, its materials, which have been preserved, document for future generations a microcosm of this fluid, constantly evolving experimental community. Its materials helped mobilize the community, share news and vital communications, and content that would never be found in the mainstream press. Its materials were produced quickly, unencumbered, in authentic voice, created for and distributed by members of the very community that the Com/co press sought to reach. In all of these aspects, the Communication Company reflected and continued the radical pamphlet tradition.

Chapter Four

"If You Really Believe it, Do it":

Conclusion

A visible agent of the sixties print culture, the Communication Company had direct impact on the Haight-Ashbury community. The printers were also known outside of the Haight, although its reputation was limited to the realm of the print counterculture. As the 1960s Haight-Ashbury scene slowly disappeared during the following decades, Com/co's legacy settled into the invisibility of historical record. It became part of the tradition of upstart, maverick American printers – radical pamphleteers who made just enough of an imprint as to be occasionally cited in the scholarly and popular literature.

Despite its relative historical anonymity, the Communication Company is significant for three reasons. First, it played an important role in establishing and promoting the 1960s counterculture. Second, Com/co represented an important stage in American print history as a prime mover in the "mimeograph revolution." Finally, the printers continued the American radical pamphlet tradition.

While the Beats were godfathers of sorts to the hippies and psychedelic seekers of the 1960s, the Communication Company represented a multigenerational blend of the older, Beat-connected writer Chester Anderson and the younger, hippie-boomer Claude Hayward (Echols. 1999, p. 70; Grogan, 1972, p. 389). Together they fed the vibrant Haight community with their papers, cranked out on a mimeograph press, and delivered free by the Diggers' volunteer corps of distribution foot soldiers (Harland, 1992). Com/co's sheets kept the community informed of local events and issues, in contrast to

the less frequent publishing schedule of other community presses such as the *Oracle* and *Berkeley Barb* (Hayward, 2007, p. 116). In its few short months of existence, the press prodded the residents' civic conscience, rallied for peace, challenged authorities, and railed against hypocrisies and misinformation in the mainstream press. Com/co's broadsheets were able to be more topical and responsive to the community's needs as well as putting the power of the press in the hands of the people with its open door policy (Hayward, 2007, p. 119).

In addition to printing its own opinionated editorials and pushing the Diggers' radical agenda, Com/co also published the literary work of others, such as Beat Michael McClure, and hippie laureate Richard Brautigan. By operating an accessible street press in the heart of its countercultural community, Com/co helped dissolve the boundaries between creation and consumption, gave voice to others through its press, and played a vital role in the communication needs and print culture of its community.

Some of Com/co's sheets found their way to the national stage. Even at the time, its broadsides were reprinted or excerpted in books rushed into print by major publishing houses hoping to capitalize on the reading public's interest in the Haight and its residents. These volumes not only appealed to the curious among the mainstream, but also to kindred psychedelic or hippie souls living in areas distant from countercultural activity. Some of these 1960s publications were pulp mass-market paperbacks found on drugstore, newsstand, or airport spinners and advertised in the back pages of other paperbacks produced at the time. With covers depicting mainstream notions of hippie iconography,

or the semi-provocative young model styled as an alluring "hippie chick," these popular books would occasionally reprint Com/co's text to represent the hippie sensibility.

With its use of modern-day duplication equipment capable of creating press runs almost instantly, the Communication Company was part of a movement known as the "mimeograph revolution," taking place among literati and amateur devotees of print. One such example of small magazine produced as part of the "mimeograph revolution" was Ed Sanders' *Fuck You: A Magazine of the Arts*, the journal featuring poetry and political advocacy. Established in 1962, Sanders "with a nod to Allen Ginsberg" aspired to publish work by the "best minds" of his generation. Evoking an ease in setting up shop that is reminiscent of the Communication Company's own experience four years later, Sanders recalled,

> I announced I was going to publish a poetry journal called *Fuck You, a magazine of the arts* . . . the next day I began typing stencils, and had an issue out within a week. I bought a small mimeograph machine, and installed it in my pad on East 11th, hand cranking and collating 500 copies, which I gave away free wherever I wandered . . . . (Sanders, 1998, p. 167)

Mimeograph had been used in the 1930s by amateur American printers in the science fiction fan community, utilizing mimeograph technology to produce their little magazines, and the amateur / small press movement continued through the avant garde dada art magazines and journals of the 1940s, and small literary presses publishing the Beat poets and writers in the 1950s. Easy-to-use and available mimeograph technology empowered poets and authors with a desire to self-publish, undeterred by the product's lack of slick professional appearance. Readily creating little magazines and journals, these passionate amateur printers were continuing an American tradition of "hobby

printers," such as those in the latter nineteenth century who engaged in producing "amateur newspapers" (Garvey, 2002, p. 367).

As amateur printers and members a de facto historical guild of alternative and radical printers, Com/co fit squarely into this lineage of the hobby press and served as a transitional stage in the mimeograph revolution. Following Com/co's legacy, as well as the work of other 1960s countercultural presses, came the emergence of punk rock and its "DIY" (celebrating a Do-It-Yourself amateur aesthetic) photocopied fanzines, or zines in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1990s, there would be a zine explosion, propelled by the personal computer's desktop publishing tools. Current developments in the hobby press tradition are being driving by personal publishing via social media technologies, including blogs, wikis, and online zines.

One final point emerges from this brief examination of the mimeograph revolution among hobby printers. Candi Strecker (1990), a librarian influential in 70s-era zines, created her *Sidney Suppey's Quarterly and Confused Pet Monthly* using available photocopier technology. Like Com/co's innovative use of the mimeograph press to produce its pamphlets, Strecker was using the photocopier in an unaccustomed way. She had been inspired to print by a feature that appeared in the *CoEvolution Quarterly*, a magazine spin-off of Stewart Brand's 60s-era *The Whole Earth Catalog*. In the early days, when Strecker began printing her zine, she noted the difficulty in getting the issues copied double-sided. As she tells it,

> The copy machines could do it, but the copyshop employees got all bent out of shape by the request, because it was something no one ever asked for. People thought of photocopying as a way of making copies of existing things, not as a way of publishing

new stuff. (Strecker, 1997, p. 18)

Strecker's quote perfectly captures the alternative and radical press endeavor: using available technology in innovative, sometimes unorthodox, ways. The creator feels strongly enough about his or her personal expression to endure embarrassment or hardship in its production, using any means necessary.

In the story of Com/co, Chester Anderson and Claude Hayward felt strongly about providing a voice for and within the Haight counterculture, resulting in the establishment of the Communication Company. Like Steckler, they were using conventional print technology in new and provocative ways. The outrageous pamphleteers had no way of knowing that, although largely anonymous today, their cheap, quickly produced mimeographed broadsides would be archived and available in institutions of higher education for future study. Yet generated within the crucible of the unfolding moment, the Communication Company's pamphlets provide unique insight into the 1960s counterculture and serve as provocative examples of the radical pamphlet tradition.

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