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Local Color's Finest Hour: Kentucky Literature at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

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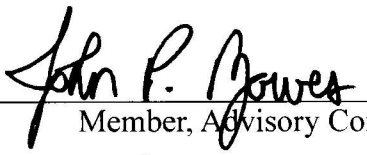

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ABSTRACT

This thesis takes into consideration literature created by various authors during the period 1890 to 1910, the turn of the twentieth century. This thesis looks specifically at the works produced during that time period by authors from Kentucky, living in Kentucky, or with strong ties to the state. The texts themselves illustrated these ties, as they all focused on or related to Kentucky at the time.

The data that was gathered for this thesis came directly from the writings themselves. In order to research the appropriate authors and the works they produced, the author read all of the materials discussed in this thesis, taking great care to compile many notes in the process. The compiled notes were then analyzed to produce this thesis.

The author found that there were several prevailing themes present in Kentucky-based literature written from 1890 to 1910. The five major themes that revealed themselves during the research for this thesis were nature, poverty, race, romance, and war/peace. These themes are discussed in this thesis as a means to explain why Kentucky-based literature was so popular during the aforementioned time period.

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I. Introduction

The United States at the turn of the twentieth century was a rapidly changing place. From 1890 to 1910, politics, science, international conflicts, and inventions were all reaching new heights. In this span of twenty years the Massacre at Wounded Knee took place, the sport of basketball was invented, Cuba achieved independence from Spain, the construction of the Panama Canal began, Albert Einstein developed his theory of relativity, and Henry Ford invented the Model T. With all these changes and more taking place over such a short period of time, one might expect the field of literature to be booming as well. As has often been the case throughout time, rapid changes in major fields draw both criticism and praise, often in literary form. What with such good writing material providing influence all around the world, this would be a reasonable expectation. However, what one might not expect is that a considerable amount of the writing in this period originated from authors with strong connections to Kentucky. In fact, according to *Publisher's Weekly* magazine, nine different Kentucky authors appeared on its bestseller lists from 1895 to 1910. These authors were James Lane Allen, Irvin S. Cobb, John Fox Jr., Frances Little, John Uri Lloyd, George Horace Lorimer, Annie Fellows Johnston, Alice Hegan Rice, and Hallie Erminie Rives. These nine authors together wrote nearly twenty-five of these best sellers,[1] many of which are still in print and considered classic works of literature to this day.

This surprising fact begs the question: What is it that made these authors so popular with Kentuckians and, indeed, readers around the country? For one, the fact that Americans had become so enamored with local color literature made Kentucky a breeding ground for popular literature in this era. According to literary historian William S. Ward, local color writing was popular because it "very likely reflected the unconscious desire of the South to recapture some of

1 Alice Payne Hackett, *70 Years of Best Sellers, 1895-1965* (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1967), 91-106.

the glamour and distinction it had enjoyed preceding the Civil War and Reconstruction." Local color writers focused on a number of aspects in their writing, including distinctive characteristics of their region such as "customs, manners, dress, dialect, habits of thought, patterns of speech, and any other characteristics that may have escaped or withstood the leveling forces of change and national standardization."[2] The characteristics desired for local color writing were abundant in Kentucky, from the Bluegrass Region to the mountains of eastern Kentucky, and from northern Kentucky to the flatlands of the Jackson Purchase.

Not only did the local color movement promote Kentucky authors and their works, but, as historian James C. Klotter has noted, the desire of Americans from the Northeast to help impoverished groups played a significant role as well. While many wealthy northerners were initially focused on reconstructing the South, this meant providing aid to the large number of black citizens living in that region, an undertaking of which many of these wealthy northerners grew weary. When the opportunity arose to help the white Appalachian poor of Kentucky and surrounding areas, many Americans found in these people individuals not unlike themselves and were more than eager to help. The vaunted "Anglo-Saxon purity" of the Kentucky mountaineer was often stressed, which led Americans to believe that these men and women were "virtually picked out of the sixteenth century," were "uncontaminated with slavery," and were truly "Americans of the Americas."[3]

The following pages will examine some of the novels by a selection of these authors, paying special attention to the prevailing themes that can be found throughout the works while also considering exactly why these men and women chose to portray Kentucky in the ways they did. The thesis will show how race, poverty, nature, romance, and war/peace played into the local

2 William S. Ward, *A Literary History of Kentucky* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988), 49.
3 James C. Klotter, "The Black South and White Appalachia," *Journal of American History* 66, no. 4 (March 1980): 846, 845.

color theme and drew those in Kentucky, as well as those around the United States, into the worlds of the Bluegrass, the eastern Kentucky mountaineer, and the everyday citizens of western and northern Kentucky.

If the world as a whole was changing rapidly, what about the small corner of the world from which best-selling authors drew their influence? What about Kentucky? In order to understand the authors and their works, one must appreciate the environment in which they lived.

II. The Setting

Kentuckians of the late nineteenth century continued to struggle with the legacies of the sectional conflict of half a century earlier. The state wished to remain neutral when the Civil War broke out in 1861, but its best efforts were not enough and it quickly became involved in the conflict. The commonwealth sent between 25,000 and 40,000 men to the Confederacy and between 90,000 and 100,000 to the Union. As the conflict wore on, a large number of the Union soldiers were black, despite protests from many white Kentuckians, including the governor, Thomas E. Bramlette.[4]

Historian Kent Masterson Brown has said of the state during the Civil War, "Kentucky is a land of contrasts." He noted that Kentucky was occupied by "different peoples sustained by widely varying regional economies" during the war years. It was this land of contrast that, Brown stated, produced both Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, who, "as presidents of the contending sections during the Civil War, vied for Kentucky's loyalty." Brown wrote, "Many families in the state were bitterly divided. Brother fought against brother." Even first lady Mary Todd Lincoln lost family members from Kentucky to the war.[5] As you can see, this was no small matter, as Kentucky proved to be a major player over the next four years, and the fighting there touched many lives in the process.

The first significant action of the Civil War in the commonwealth occurred in 1861, when Washington, Kentucky, native General Albert Sidney Johnston began to move his troops into Kentucky to secure the areas of Cumberland Gap, Bowling Green, and Columbus. However, it

4 Lowell H. Harrison and James C. Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 195.

5 Kent Masterson Brown, "Introduction," *The Civil War in Kentucky: Battle for the Bluegrass State*, ed. Kent Masterson Brown (Mason City, Iowa: Savas Publishing Company, 2000), i.

was not until October 21, 1861 that Kentuckians saw a real battle, when Confederate General Felix Zollicoffer tried to enter Kentucky and the battle at Rockcastle Hills ensued.[6]

While there were several small battles and skirmishes during the opening years of the war, Kentucky is perhaps best remembered for the Confederate Orphan Brigade, who spent most of it's time fighting outside of Kentucky and suffered heavy casualties at the battle of Stones River. Another Confederate legend in Kentucky is that of John Hunt Morgan and his cavalry, who consistently raided the state and caused much grief for Union troops. The most well known of the state's Union fighters were Colonel Frank L. Wolford's "Wild Riders." The Wild Riders and Morgan's men often crossed paths in Kentucky and were involved in numerous altercations over the course of the war.[7]

According to historian James A. Ramage, John Hunt Morgan, "reluctant to fight, joined the Confederate Rebellion five months into the war, only after the Kentucky General Assembly decided for the Union." Morgan's path to the war was an interesting one, as he was driven from his home, Lexington, by Union troops, lost his factory and his wife, and was without any children shortly after the War broke out. Ramage noted that Morgan was "propertyless, houseless, wifeless, with little to live, love, fight or die for, but the new republic." According to Ramage, General Morgan became the "primary model for the Partisan Ranger Act that authorized guerrilla bands to raid behind enemy lines." Thus, Morgan became famous for his "hit-and-run tactics of guerrilla warfare" and became known as the "Marion of the War" to his Southern supporters.[8]

6 Harrison and Klotter, *A New History*, 196.
7 Ibid., 195.
8 James A. Ramage, "General John Hunt Morgan and His Great Raids Into Kentucky," *The Civil War in Kentucky: Battle for the Bluegrass State*, ed. Brown, 243.

The Civil War was a period of great change for Kentucky, as it was for the rest of the United States. The war not only ended slavery, but its years of hard fighting across Kentucky soil contributed to the mass exodus of people from the Bluegrass and only served to highlight several issues, economic, racial, and otherwise, that would plague Kentucky over the next several years.

Although the Civil War left a lasting impact on the minds of Kentuckians, the two decades from 1890 to 1910 were certainly eventful as well. The 1890s started quickly when the Constitutional Convention, not without great difficulty, met to revise Kentucky's Constitution. Cassius M. Clay, Jr. was elected President of the Convention, which met from September 8, 1890 to April 11, 1891. After months of debate, the one hundred delegates eventually settled on "a rather agrarian instrument" that would not threaten "a continuing agricultural supremacy."[9]

Kentuckians also elected a new governor in 1891, as they half-heartedly welcomed John Young Brown to the state capitol, while wishing the previous governor, "Old Bolivar" Buckner, a fond farewell. As Hambleton Tapp and James C. Klotter have noted, Bolivar was felt to be "one of the best governors that ever 'steered the Ship of state," and he received more attention in 1891 than did Brown. One of the distinguishing features of Brown's governorship was the bill that passed during the 1891-92 legislative session that required separate railway coaches for whites and blacks. Although many Kentuckians opposed the bill, only twenty-five nay votes were cast as the bill passed.[10]

In the 1890s, Louisville was under the control of a corrupt former Confederate scout by the name of "Boss" John Whallen. The state had fallen on economic hard times as the elections of 1894 rolled around, and Whallen was doing all that he could to keep the Democrats in power. However, thanks to rousing newspaper writing in the city, the citizens were emboldened to vote a

9 Hambleton Tapp and James C. Klotter, *Kentucky: Decades of Discord 1865-1900* (Frankfort: Kentucky Historical Society, 1977), 259, 263.
10 Ibid., 324, 328.

straight Republican ticket and force the Democrats out of power and the corruption out of Louisville. The headline on the next morning's paper read: "REDEEMED FROM GANG RULE, LOUISVILLE AND JEFFERSON COUNTY SWEPT BY AN UPRISING OF DECENT CITIZENS."[11]

The next year, 1895, saw the election of the state's first Republican governor, William O. Bradley. Bradley's victory ignited a bitter feud between Republicans and Democrats, and set in motion a series of events that eventually culminated in tragedy. On the national level Kentuckians fought over the presidential election of 1896, which saw a Republican candidate, William McKinley, carry Kentucky – a rarity. After this perceived great loss, many Democrats turned to William Goebel as party leader. Although otherwise utterly colorless, Goebel had become known throughout the state for killing Confederate veteran John Sanford in a duel on the steps of a Covington bank several years earlier. He was not indicted.[12]

In 1898, Goebel was able to pass a bill that created a three-person committee to oversee election returns. This was in reaction to Democratic claims of ballot confusion and vote fraud in the 1896 election. It was this bill, in fact, that awarded Goebel the governorship over William S. Taylor in the race of 1899. After what appeared to be a narrow, but clear, victory by Taylor, the three-person committee met behind the scenes and awarded the election to Senator Goebel. This matter was far from over, however, and as Goebel approached the Capitol steps on January 30, 1900, a sniper shot him. He was rushed to a nearby hotel, where he was administered the oath of office before he died four days later.[13]

The assassination of Governor Goebel ushered in the 20th century in Kentucky, bringing with it continued political and economic strife. Lieutenant governor John Crepps Wickliffe

11 Ibid., 342, 340.
12 Thomas D. Clark, A *History of Kentucky* (Lexington: John Bradford Press, 1954), 427-29.
13 Ibid., 432, 434.

Beckham took office after Goebel's death. Upon assuming his new position, he had this to say about the current situation in Kentucky, “The civil discord, and I might say, anarchy, the intense bitterness and strife among our people, a bankrupt treasury, a heavy state debt, our finances demoralized, our public institutions in great disorder, and confusion and trouble on every hand.”[14]

Beckham got to work immediately. He made peace with the L&N railroad company, which paid 40 percent of railroad taxes in the state. He also removed the “Goebel Election Law of 1898” from the books, thereby restoring bipartisanship. After winning the special 1900 election to remain in office, Beckham began his first legislative session in 1902 and immediately faced criticism due to his connections with feuding in the eastern Kentucky mountains. According to James C. Klotter, “Already his inaction regarding violence in Breathitt County and his ties to the Hargis faction there was bringing criticism, and that would increase as the Black Patch War flared.”[15]

Beckham was reelected in 1904, and the “highlights” of his second legislative session were the appropriation of funds to build a new capitol and a memorial to Goebel and the denunciation of “irresponsible romances that portrayed Kentucky as such a dangerous state” and of “irresponsible demagogues who were stirring up racial hatred by appeals to blacks.” There was also the passage of the Day Law, which segregated all Kentucky schools. In the 1906 session, Beckham saw several Civil War debts paid, which freed up the budget for the state, thus allowing the creation of teacher colleges like Eastern Kentucky University. In this same session,

14 James C. Klotter, *Kentucky: Portrait in Paradox 1900-1950* (Frankfort: Kentucky Historical Society, 1996), 203.
15 Ibid., 204-5.

Beckham also worked to amend child labor laws, limiting work to sixty hours per week and only to those over fourteen years of age.[16]

Beckham's administration was only marginally successful and witnessed more inaction than action. In 1907, the newly elected governor, Republican Augustus E. Willson started his term off with a bit of action. He called out the state militia to dispose of the Night Riders, a violent group formed during the Black Patch Wars, in the tobacco-growing areas of Western Kentucky. He removed democratic images from state documents in favor of Republican ones, and he pardoned two men allegedly involved in the Goebel assassination. Unlike Beckham's, Willson's first legislative session was noted for its bipartisanship and most notably for the Educational Reform Law, which established high schools in every Kentucky county.[17]

For a half-century between 1860 and 1910, political, racial, and economic tensions plagued the citizens of Kentucky. The Civil War brought pain and suffering to the people of the Bluegrass State, racism ran rampant as evidenced by the passage of the Day Law, and violence plagued the area, not only in feuding counties, but also in the Black Patch Wars. This tension could be seen in everyday life. Not surprisingly, the authors we are about to discuss drew upon this tension as inspiration for several great novels that painted pictures of the state during these trying years.

16 Ibid., 206, 207, 209.
17 Ibid., 213-15.

III. The Authors

Now that we know a bit of Kentucky state history, let us move on to a discussion of the authors that were so greatly influenced by this period of growth in the Bluegrass State, authors that used this period of influence to produce the works that would influence their generation and generations to come. Not unlike the state history we just discussed, it is necessary to look into the past of these great authors so that we might see how their upbringing and early life experiences influenced their view of the decades' events. In most cases we will discuss their childhoods, where they were raised, and any other defining characteristics that may have shaped them as writers.

James Lane Allen published ten novels during this period, and was most famous for his works *The Bluegrass Region of Kentucky (*1892), *A Kentucky Cardinal* (1894), and *The Choir Invisible* (1897). Born December 21, 1849 near Lexington, Allen was quite fond of his mother, who raised him in an "idealistic, romantic world filled with stories of honor and chivalry, where gallant and noble gentlemen courted women of spotless virtue."[18] Aside from his love for all things chivalrous, he had a deep respect for nature. As Carl Holliday noted, "Here we see a noble love for Nature, – a genuine love, not a sentimental fad of the day."[19]

Allen was educated in local schools near Lexington and later attended what is now Transylvania University, where he received bachelor's and master's degrees.[20] He also taught Latin for a brief time at Bethany College in West Virginia and briefly worked outside of

18 Kleber, John E., ed. *The Kentucky Encyclopedia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992), s.v., "Allen, James Lane."
19 Carl Holliday, *A History of Southern Literature* (New York: Neal Publishing Company, 1906), 389.
20 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, "Allen, James Lane."

Kentucky in Missouri and Ohio as a teacher.[21]Although he eventually moved to New York City, fourteen of his nineteen books were set in Kentucky.[22]

Once Allen reached adulthood, he "saw around him a new industrial America where, it seemed to him, ethics were replaced by greed, honor by corruption, purity by vulgarity."[23] This displeased Allen, who was never well off as a child and who often described his "social elite" as having "neither vast wealth nor personal distinction, but solid comfort in material conditions."[24] He passed away on February 18, 1925 and was buried in Lexington Cemetery.[25] In his will, Allen directed that his royalties and his estate go to the city of Lexington, "to be used for the young."[26] Despite his lengthy residence outside Kentucky, he devoted his literary works to his home state, whether he was writing about the romanticism of the time or the troubles that plagued modern America.

Irvin S. Cobb wrote three novels during this period and was most famous for his work *The Escape of Mr. Trimm* (1910). Born on June 23, 1876 in Paducah, McCracken County. He was a "writer, humorist, local colorist, reporter, autobiographer, actor, and a master of ceremonies." His favorite title, though, was simply "Duke of Paducah."[27]

Cobb left school at the age of sixteen to support his family as a newspaper reporter. He worked for the *Paducah Evening News* and eventually became the editor there in 1896. He also spent time reporting for the *Louisville Evening Post*, where he gained a reputation as a trial

21 Holliday, *Southern Literature*, 386.
22 Tapp and Klotter, *Kentucky*, 95.
23 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, "Allen, James Lane."
24 Tapp and Klotter, *Kentucky*, 95.
25 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, "Allen, James Lane."
26 Ibid.
27 Florence Huffman, ed. *Clark's Kentucky Almanac and Book of Facts: Second Edition* (Lexington: Clark Group, 2006), s.v., "McCracken County: Paducah."

reporter during the William Goebel assassination trial. In 1904, Cobb left Kentucky and eventually wrote for the *Evening Post* and later, the *Evening Herald* in New York.[28]

In 1914, Cobb and four other reporters travelled to Europe to report on World War I for the *Saturday Evening Post* magazine. While reporting on Germany's great strength, Cobb and his companions slipped behind enemy lines and were captured, but were later released unscathed. In 1917, Cobb returned to the front lines to report on the American soldier, and upon his return to the States, took up the cause of racial tolerance. Irvin even spoke at Carnegie Hall with Teddy Roosevelt and participated in anti-Ku Klux Klan activities in the 1920s.[29]

Cobb was described by Kentucky historian Thomas D. Clark as the "most productive of all Kentucky writers" and "an entertaining raconteur."[30] As James Klotter noted, his "warmth and light style provided a needed balance to the feud-filled accounts emanating from other authors"[31] at the time. Irvin Shrewsbury Cobb died on March 10, 1944. He was buried in Paducah's Oak Grove Cemetery under a large boulder that reads simply, "Back Home."[32]

John Fox Jr. published nine novels during this period, and was most famous for his works *Hell-fer-Sartain and Other Stories* (1897), *Blue-grass and Rhododendron: Outdoors in Old Kentucky* (1901), *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come* (1903), and *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine* (1908). He was born December 16, 1862, in Stony Point, Kentucky, a town in Bourbon County. He was well educated and studied at Transylvania University (one of his professors was James Lane Allen) and Harvard University. He spent a brief period training to be a lawyer,[33] and working for the *New York Times* before returning to Kentucky in 1885.[34]

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28 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, "Cobb, Irvin S."
29 Ibid.
30 Clark, *History*, 271-72.
31 Klotter, *Kentucky*, 173.
32 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, "Cobb, Irvin S."
33 Clark, *History*, 270.
34 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, s.v., "Fox, John Jr."

Three years later, Fox moved with his family to Big Stone Gap, Virginia to take part in a mining venture,[35] and was exposed to the mountain lifestyle that afterwards he so frequently wrote about. Once he arrived in Big Stone Gap, Fox joined a local vigilante group that restored order to a lawless area and began offering walking tours of the Kentucky/Virginia border. He was especially fond of the people and traditions of the Kentucky counties of Harlan, Leslie, Letcher, and Perry.[36]

As Thomas Clark noted, the mountain people found in Fox "an understanding chronicler who recorded in his novels their loves, hatreds, and philosophies."[37] This mountain life influenced *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come*, written in 1902, which was possibly the first novel to sell a million copies in the United States. After Fox achieved literary success with this novel and several others, he made fast friends with many notable figures of the day, including President Theodore Roosevelt who "on several occasions invited him to the White House to give readings and sing mountain songs."[38] Unfortunately, Fox developed pneumonia on a fishing trip, and passed away in his home on July 8, 1919. He was buried in Paris, Kentucky.[39]

Eliza Caroline Obenchain, who wrote under the name Eliza Calvert Hall, published two novels during this period and was most well known for her work *Aunt Jane of Kentucky* (1907). Born in Bowling Green, Kentucky, on February 11, 1856, she was educated in private schools around Bowling Green before she attended Western College, Cincinnati for one year. Upon returning home, she became a teacher and was married in 1885.[40]

35 Tapp and Klotter, *Kentucky*, 272.
36 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, "Fox, John Jr."
37 Clark, *History*, 271.
38 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, "Fox, John Jr."
39 Ibid.
40 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, s.v., "Obenchain, Eliza Caroline (Calvert)."

Over the course of her career, Obenchain was published in *Scribner's*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and the women's pages of the *New York Times*.[41] She was an ardent suffragist who fought for women's rights to property and to divorce.[42] The Kentucky Woman Suffrage Association was established in 1881, and along with Josephine K. Henry and Cassius Clay's daughters Anne, Sally, Mary, and Laura, she led the fight for women's rights in the Commonwealth.[43] After her husband passed away in 1916, she moved to Dallas, Texas.[44] She left her native Kentucky so that she might care for her ailing daughter, who had been diagnosed with tuberculosis.[45] Eliza Caroline Obenchain died in Texas on December 20, 1935.[46]

Annie Fellows Johnston published the *Little Colonel* series during this period, but her most famous work was the original novel, *The Little Colonel* (1895). Johnston was born May 15, 1863, in Evansville, Indiana. Unlike the other authors above, she did not spend the majority of her life in Kentucky. After attending the University of Iowa for one year, she returned to Indiana. She married her second cousin, William L. Johnston, and spent most of her life teaching and writing children's novels in Indiana.

It was not until 1894, as a young widow, that she visited Kentucky, taking a trip through Pewee Valley in Oldham County. It was this trip that influenced her most famous series of books, *The Little Colonel*, the first of which was published in 1895.[47] *The Little Colonel* series was so popular, that it was portrayed on the big screen numerous times, influenced a line of clothing,[48]and was translated into several foreign languages.[49]

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41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
43 Tapp and Klotter, *Kentucky*, 88.
44 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, s.v., "Obenchain, Eliza Caroline (Calvert)."
45 Lynn Niedermeier, *Eliza Calvert Hall: Kentucky Author and Suffragist* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 188.
46 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, "Obenchain, Eliza Caroline (Calvert)."
47 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, s.v., "Johnston, Annie (Fellows)."
48 Harrison and Klotter, *A New History*, 323.

Johnston was part of the "Louisville Group" of female writers that, as Thomas Clark noted, "used Kentucky as a source, contributing greatly to the enrichment of the state's literary heritage."[50] Johnston was described as "a witty woman with a kind of spiritual aristocracy about her," and her novels often focused on "Victorian, nineteenth-century values."[51] Johnston and her three stepchildren eventually moved to Pewee Valley in 1898. The family stayed in Oldham County until 1901, when they moved west to Arizona. After the passing of one of her children, Annie returned to Kentucky and lived there until her death on October 5, 1931.[52]

Like Annie Fellows Johnston, John Uri Lloyd was actually born outside of Kentucky. Lloyd wrote five novels during this period, the most famous of which was *Stringtown on the Pike: A Tale of Northernmost Kentucky* (1900). John entered the world on April 19, 1849, in West Bloomfield Township, New York. When he was four years old, his family moved to Petersburg, Kentucky, in Boone County.[53] According to historian Michael Flannery, Lloyd was "an 'asthmatic' country boy who often could not join in the rough house antics of his peers. Flannery continued, "Johnny lived as a quiet youngster whose main childhood associates would be his younger brother. But loneliness did not consume the lad, for he evinced an early interest in science and concocted his own homegrown experiments."[54]

It was in Florence, Kentucky, that Lloyd received his education. At the age of fourteen he traveled to nearby Cincinnati to begin his apprenticeship as a pharmacist, and at the age of sixteen he received his first full time job in the field. In 1871, he became manager of the H. M. Merrell and Company laboratory, which he and his brothers later took over and renamed Lloyd

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49 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, "Johnston, Annie (Fellows)."
50 Clark, *History*, 271.
51 Harrison and Klotter, *A New History*, 323.
52 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, "Johnston, Annie (Fellows)."
53 Ibid., s.v., "Lloyd, John Uri."
54 Michael A. Flannery, "The Life and Times of John Uri Lloyd: A View From the Archives of the Lloyd Library," *Pharmacy in History* 38, no. 3 (1996): 107-8.

Brothers and Pharmacists, Inc. Lloyd was quite the chemist and often promoted the use of plant extract as a means of treatment.[55] He was so renowned as a chemist that he is often referred to as the "father of colloidal chemistry."[56]

While Lloyd the chemist certainly received high praise, Lloyd the author did as well. His novels, which were set in northern Kentucky, provided a pleasant change from the "Bluegrass and mountain regions" that "dominated as local color settings."[57] He wrote four novels during the two decades discussed in this paper, all of them distinctive from the novels being produced in the other regions of the state. As with any writer, Lloyd wrote about what interested him, particularly "folklore, superstitions, and dialect of northern Kentucky.[58] He later produced several scientific books alongside his other fictional texts, which failed to live up to the popularity of his work in the early 1900s. John Uri Lloyd died on April 9, 1936, in California, and was later buried back home in Florence.[59]

Alice Caldwell Hegan Rice wrote three novels during this period, most famously, *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* (1902). Rice was born in Shelbyville, Kentucky on January 11, 1870. She was responsible for organizing an "authors' club" in Louisville after attending Miss Hampton's College there. She lived on Fourth Street in Louisville and often hosted meetings of her authors' club in her home.[60] Rice volunteered much of her time to help the inner-city poor of Louisville and was especially fond of working in an area known as the Cabbage Patch, which later inspired her hit novel *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*.[61] The novel sold over 650,000

55 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, "Lloyd, John Uri."
56 Huffman, *Almanac*, "Health and Science: Scientists and Related Programs."
57 Klotter, *Kentucky*, 172.
58 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, "Lloyd, John Uri."
59 Ibid.
60 Klotter, *Kentucky*, 6.
61 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, s.v., "Rice, Alice Caldwell (Hegan)."

copies in 100 printings,[62] and was such a success that it spawned films and plays, and was translated into numerous languages.[63]

Working in the Cabbage Patch inspired Alice to do more than write, however, as she was actually able to promote some positive change in the neighborhood. Rice recalled the "abundant saloons" in the area as well as "boys and girls" that "ran wild through the muddy streets and dark alleys." It was there that Hegan Rice opened a settlement house, a second-hand clothing store, a wholesale grocery, a cooking and sewing school, and an employment agency to assist the local people.[64]

Hegan married the poet Cale Young Rice in 1902,[65] and they often wrote together. Rather than writing under her full maiden name, Alice dropped her middle name, Caldwell, and wrote under the name Alice Hegan Rice, a combination of her maiden and married names.[66] During the 1930s Alice and Cale fell upon hard times and wrote only out of financial necessity. Alice died on February 10, 1942, and was buried in Louisville.[67] Cale claimed to be "a lost soul" after the death of his wife and was so devastated that he committed suicide one year later.[68]

62 Harrison and Klotter, *A New History*, 324.
63 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, "Rice, Alice Caldwell (Hegan)."
64 Klotter, *Kentucky*, 12.
65 Harrison and Klotter, *A New History*, 324.
66 Tapp and Klotter, *Kentucky*, 272.
67 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, "Rice, Alice Caldwell (Hegan)."
68 Harrison and Klotter, *A New History*, 324.

IV. The Literature

Now that the history of Kentucky has been discussed and the background of the selected authors introduced, let us begin our look inside the works of these brilliant men and women. This is the best way to approach these novels because examining the overarching themes gives us a look inside the various causes of joy and strife during this period of Kentucky history. The themes of nature, poverty, race, romance, and war/peace throughout the different novels will be examined. We will take a look at the themes individually, discussing each of the aforementioned authors' contributions as we proceed.

A. Nature

Our first theme is nature. The first contributions to this area came from James Lane Allen. We will pay special attention to the following novels: *A Kentucky Cardinal* (1894), *The Bluegrass Region of Kentucky and Other Kentucky Articles* (1892), and *The Choir Invisible* (1897).

Of all the themes present in these books, it is perhaps nature that was best described throughout. Allen's depictions of nature were constant in these works. Take, for example, *A Kentucky Cardinal*, narrated by Adam Moss. Adam had a great love for the birds of the area and watched them frequently from his home. He lamented that almost as soon as Fall arrived and the leaves began to drop from the trees, the birds vanished with them, and those that remained "wear the hues of the season." Except for the cardinal, which he described as "proud, solitary stranger in our unfriendly land – the fiery grosbeak. Nature in Kentucky has no wintry harmonies for him." Yet, he marveled, "With almost everything earthly that he touches this high herald of the

trees is in contrast. Among his kind he is without peer. Even when the whole company of summer voyagers have sailed back to Kentucky."[69]

It was not just birds that Allen painted spectacular pictures of—it was the landscape itself. In *The Bluegrass Region of Kentucky*, he wrote, "note that blue-grass is the characteristic element of the Kentucky turf—the first element of beauty in the Kentucky landscape." Of this stunning characteristic he said, "it spreads a verdure so soft in fold and fine in texture, so entrancing by its freshness and fertility, that it looks like a deep-lying, thick-matted emerald moss. One thinks of it, not as some heavy, velvet-like carpet spread over the earth, but as some light, seamless veil that has fallen delicately around it, and that might be blown away by a passing breeze."[70]

The next contribution to the theme of nature came from Irvin S. Cobb. The following was drawn from his novel, *The Escape of Mr. Trimm: His Plight and Other Plights*, written in 1910. Cobb's concept of nature was a bit different than what James Lane Allen portrayed for us, as this work was a set of short stories, some of which were set outside of Kentucky in larger cities like New York. While Cobb painted pictures of nature in certain stories, he also gave vivid descriptions of the big-city landscapes in others.

One such example came from the short story "The Belled Buzzard" in which Cobb described a swamp called Little Niggerwool, which formed an integral part of the story. Of it he wrote, "It was traversable only by those that knew it well – an oblong stretch of tawny mud and tawny water . . . it was full of cypress and stunted swamp oak, with edgings of canebrake and rank weeds . . . it was snaggled like an old jaw with dead tree trunks, rising close-ranked and thick as teeth." In another story, "An Occurrence up a Side Street," Cobb gave us this same type

69 James Lane Allen, *A Kentucky Cardinal* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1898), 17-18.
70 Allen, *The Blue-Grass Region of Kentucky and Other Kentucky Articles* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1892), 4.

of vivid depiction, but of a city street. He described the New York City street on "a wet, hot, humid night of the late summer" as "two unbroken lines of high-shouldered, narrow-chested brick-and-stone houses, rising in abrupt, straight cliffs" with "manholes and conduit covers dotting its channel intermittently like scattered stepping stones."[71]

John Fox, Jr., one should recall, was a pupil of James Lane Allen during his time at Transylvania University. In his writings on nature, we can truly see the teacher's influence on his onetime student. In *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come*, Fox's 1903 work, he described a scene shared by the main character, Chad, and his dog, Jack, after they had been camping in the mountains for a few days. He painted the picture of a thunderstorm at sunrise as he described the "artillery of the thunder" that "crashed in earnest through the shaking heavens" and the mists like "smoke belched from a gigantic cannon." Then, as "the sun answered with upleaping swords of fire," the moment passed. Having witnessed this great moment in nature, Chad compared it to God's creation of earth. In that moment Chad knew that what he had seen was "the dawn of a new consciousness to him—the birth of a new spirit within him."[72]

In fact, Fox was so descriptive when it came to the natural beauty of Kentucky that an entire chapter, "The Bluegrass," was dedicated to it in *Little Shepherd of Kingdom* Come. Fox wrote of the Bluegrass, "God's Country! No humor in that phrase to the Bluegrass Kentuckian!" In other words, Fox was saying that, to a Kentuckian, the area was truly the best, most natural, gorgeous area in the world, and it was made by "the Great Mother herself . . . just as she made for Adam and Eve." Nature was such an integral part of life for the Kentuckian that Mother Earth was his master. As Fox wrote, "Nature holds the Kentuckians close—suckling at her breasts and

71 Irvin S. Cobb, *The Escape of Mr. Trimm: His Plight and Other Plights* (Rockville, Md.: Wildside Press, 2009), 41, 59.

72 John Fox, Jr., *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap Publishers, 1931), 13-14.

living after her simple laws."[73] The Kentuckian was provided everything he needed through his natural master, everything from timber in the mountains, fish in the streams, and fertile fields in which to grow his crops.

Eliza Calvert Hall also embraced the theme of nature in the story titled "Aunt Jane's Album," from her work, *Aunt Jane of Kentucky*. Hall set the landscape marvelously as she wrote: "They were a bizarre mass of color on the sweet spring landscape, those patchwork quilts, swaying in a long line under the elms and maples. The old orchard made a blossoming background for them, and farther off on the horizon rose the beauty of fresh verdure and purple mist on those low hills, or 'knobs,' that are to the heart of the Kentuckian as the Alps to the Swiss or the sea to the sailor."[74]

Again, Hall described Kentucky's great beauty, this time through the narrator of the story "Sweet Day of Rest," who said, "It was the middle of June, and Nature lay a vision of beauty in her vesture of flowers, leaves, and blossoming grasses. The sandy road was a pleasant walking-place; and if one tired of that, the short, thick grass on either side held a fairy path of fragrant with pennyroyal, that most virtuous of herbs. A tall hedge of Osage orange bordered each side of the road, shading the traveler from the heat of the sun, and furnishing a nesting-place for numberless small birds that twittered and chirped their joy in life and love and June."[75]

Summertime in Kentucky was always a remarkable time for anyone lucky enough to experience it. Eliza managed to capture the month of June in a single sentence yet again in the story "Sally Ann's Experience." The narrator of the story said, "Aunt Jane . . . hitched her own chair a little to one side, in order to give me the full benefit of the wind that was blowing softly though the white-curtained window, and carrying into the room the heavenliest odors from a

73 Ibid., 106, 108.
74 Eliza Calvert Hall, *Aunt Jane of Kentucky* (San Bernardino, Calif., 2014), 41.
75 Ibid., 59.

field of clover that lay in full bloom just across the road. For it was June in Kentucky, and clover and blue-grass were running sweet riot over the face of the earth."[76]

Yet another female author of the time, Annie Fellows Johnston, afforded us with beautiful descriptions of springtime in Kentucky in her novel, *The Little Colonel*. Johnston described Locust, the Colonel's estate, saying, "At last the spring came again. The pewees stand in the cedars. The dandelions sprinkled the roadsides like stars. The locust-trees tossed up the white spray of their fragrant blossoms with every wave of their green boughs."[77]

The locust trees in this story not only provided the namesake for the Colonel's estate, but they were a symbol of endurance, as they had survived everything the Colonel had been through. Johnston wrote: "Years ago they had showered their fragrant blossoms in this same path to make a sweet white way for Amanthis's little feet to tread when the Colonel brought home his bride. They had dropped their tribute on the coffin-lid when Tom was carried home under their drooping branches. Night and day they had guarded this old home like silent sentinels that loved it well."[78] The trees had seen the good and the bad at Locust, and once the family had eventually reunited, everything was right again. Things had come and gone, but the trees remained and were a sign of happy times to come.

The theme of nature was also present in John Uri Lloyd's *Stringtown on the Pike: A Tale of Northernmost Kentucky.* Given that a famed chemist wrote the novel, it is far from surprising that nature was a highly prevalent theme in this 1901 work. Our first example came from the Minister, a character in the novel, and his description of a hurricane that passed through Kentucky. The minister was "Sensible neither to the cutting hail, the shrieking blast, nor the

76 Ibid., 11.
77 Annie Fellows Johnston, *The Little Colonel* (Boston: L.C. Page & Company, Inc., 1904), 142.
78 Ibid., 144.

intense cold, he ignored that king of storms."[79] It is interesting simply to read of a hurricane in Kentucky at all, much less one that seemed to be centered on the little community of Stringtown.

Despite the fact that Lloyd was a trained scientist, we see a bit of his superstitious side when, through the character of Sammy, he described "the dark and bloody ground" of Bloody Hollow. He wrote: "Although the soil was rich, bushes of sassafras and persimmons – God's emissaries for worn-out grounds too poor for other plant existence – refused to grow on or near the spot." It was in this spot, this infamously haunted ground that Sammy saw "A long shadow upon the hill behind which he was disappearing, stretching toward me, took the form of a gigantic cross." Upon seeing such a mysterious sight, he noted, "I raised my eyes to seek the object that broke the ray of sunshine, and, child that I was, marveled then at the miracle; for smooth, as if planed by hand, the top of the hill stretched across my field of vision; there was no intervening object between the sun and me. The face of the day king, unmarked by tree or shrub, shone clear and untarnished over a horizontal ridge-summit that was fenceless, objectless, as straight as a ruler."[80]

With descriptions of beautiful scenery and beautiful animals to populate it, it is no wonder that nature was an ever-present element in the Kentucky novel. There are other elements, however, which we must discuss. There can be no beauty without a touch of sadness and despair, which is exactly what the element of poverty provides us. It is also worth noting that poverty was simply the reality of the time. It was a major affliction of the region as a whole, and likely affected not only the people that these authors wrote about, by the authors themselves. This direct connection to poverty is yet another aspect that allowed these men and women to depict it so accurately.

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79 John Uri Lloyd, *Stringtown on the Pike: A Tale of Northernmost Kentucky* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1901), 81-82.

80 Ibid., 7, 5, 6.

B. Poverty

The Choir Invisible by Allen was an excellent depiction of poverty in the state. Right away, Allen wrote of the "poor little backwoods" children who had "tired backs with nothing to lean against," "bare feet that could never reach the floor," and "droop-headed figures."[81] He provided yet another example of poverty in *The Blue-Grass Region of Kentucky*. Not unlike today, the eastern half of the state was quite poor. He wrote of a time when he hoped the "eastern portions of the State" would "verge upon an era of long-delayed activity."[82]

Allen even went so far as to describe Kentucky as having a sort of caste system that led to its great poverty. He described this system by saying, "Closely studied, the elements of population by the close of this period somewhat resembled a landed gentry, a robust yeomanry, a white tenantry, and a black peasantry." Allen devoted an entire chapter to this "black peasantry," taking great pains to describe their living conditions. He noted that there was a great divide even between the white tenantry and the black peasantry, and not simply because the blacks lived on the outskirts of town. He wrote: "You step easily from the verge of the white population to the confines of the black. But it is a great distance—like the crossing of a vast continent between the habitats of alien races. The air seems all at once to tan the cheek. The unpaved sidewalks and the roadway between are but undistinguishable parts of a common thoroughfare."[83]

Irvin Shrewsbury Cobb offered his take on poverty in "The Escape of Mr. Trimm," the short story that lent its title to the name of the book itself. In the story, Cobb wrote of a wealthy, but corrupt banker, who found himself, in handcuffs, face to face with a man on the opposite end of the poverty spectrum from himself. This man, whom Trimm referred to as a "tramp," was a homeless man living the best he could out in the forest near a railroad. Before approaching the

81 James Lane Allen, *The Choir Invisible* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap Publishers, 1906), 7.
82 Allen, *Blue-Grass Region*, 205.
83 Ibid., 216, 48.

man, Trimm described his appearance as that of "some featherless, unpleasant sort of fowl." He wore nothing but a dingy old overcoat, the best he could find. Trimm recalled that he felt "the old sick shame at the prospect of exposing himself to this knavish-looking vagabond," but realized he was his only hope.[84]

As the story progressed, it was revealed that the man knew who Trimm was and knew what he was guilty of. Trimm intended to bribe the man to remove his handcuffs, but the poor stranger did not believe he would pay up. As he said to Trimm, "You're the way-up, high an'-mighty kind of crook. An' from wot I've read an' heard about you, you never toted fair with nobody yet."[85] The homeless man even recalled a poor cashier who had worked for Trimm, a man Trimm let take the fall for some of his illegal actions. None of this sat well with the "vagabond" so, he revealed to Trimm that he would turn him in to the proper authorities for the reward money.

Cobb's story depicted great poverty, not just in Kentucky, but in the entire country at the time, and the great lengths that people would go to earn money for themselves. This example also displayed the attitude of many men and women that if you were a good person and dealt squarely with those around you, then you would be treated in kind. However, if you were a liar and cheat like Trimm, you would be dealt with in a most unpleasant manner.

Although John Fox had much to say on nature in *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come*, the novel that brought him onto the scene in 1897, *Hell-Fer-Sartain and Other Stories*, was filled with examples of poverty throughout the state. In "Grayson's Baby," Fox described a family that the main character, Grayson, met upon entering Kentucky from Virginia. He wrote that, "in a 'shack' of one room and a low loft a man was dead, a woman was sick to death, and four children

84 Cobb, *Mr. Trimm*, 31-32.
85 Ibid., 34.

were barely alive; and nobody even knew. For they were hill people, who sicken, suffer, and sometimes die, like animals, and make no noise."[86]

Kentucky people were a proud people in Fox's day and remain as such today. The woman mentioned above, who was "sick to death," eventually recovered and began to work again, even it was for very meager funds. Even then, it was suggested that her family be sent to the poor house. When the people in town tried to offer sympathy and some small amount of charity in the form of food, she refused. She stated frankly that she "didn't want no second-hand victuals from nobody's table."[87] Her attitude further illustrated that although she suffered from great poverty, she also suffered from great pride that would not allow her to accept any help that was offered her.

While Eliza Calvert Hall's descriptions of the beautiful Kentucky countryside were certainly memorable, her depictions of the poverty of small-town life in the state were also quite gripping and accurate. Eliza's take on the poverty at the time was an interesting one, as she tended to describe those pinching every penny to get by as living a simple and plain lifestyle, a lifestyle that many today would see impoverished. For instance, Aunt Jane was described in the very first story as coming from an "era of plain living." As the narrator noted, "Aunt Jane and her room together always carried me back to a dead and gone generation. There was a rag carpet on the floor, of the 'hit-or-miss' pattern; the chairs were ancient Shaker rockers, some with homely 'shuck' bottoms." Whether it was due to her old age, or an inability to care for them, Jane had absolutely no teeth, which the narrator noted, caused "a little lisp."[88]

Although this portrayal of Aunt Jane and her lifestyle was made to sound more homely and warm than it likely was in reality, this was the way of life for many in the Bluegrass at the

86 John Fox Jr., *Hell-Fer-Sartain and Other Stories* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), 109.
87 Ibid., 112.
88 Hall, *Aunt Jane*, 11-12.

time. It should be noted, however, that there were many others living in much greater poverty than this. Untold numbers of Kentuckians living in and around metropolitan areas like Louisville and Lexington, along with some poor, starving mountaineers, would gladly have taken even Jane's meager lifestyle over their own struggling way of life.

Unlike some authors who managed to portray only the poverty they saw in others, Annie Fellows Johnston incorporated some of that poverty into the life of her main character in *The Little Colonel*, the cute and irrepressible Lloyd Sherman. In the story, her father, Jack, had been out West trying, without success, to make a fortune for his family in the mining business. However, when he returned to Kentucky, he was quite ill and the family soon ran out of money. Jack's condition worsened and his doctor informed Elizabeth, his wife, that they must travel to a warmer climate as soon as he was able. "We can't afford it, doctor," she responded, "Jack has been too sick from the very first to talk about business. He always said a woman should not be worried with such matters, anyway. I don't know what arrangements he has made out West. For all I know, the little I have in my purse now may be all that stands between us and the poorhouse."[89]

To the Little Colonel, and to any wealthy person at that time, the poorhouse was one of the most dreadful places anyone could imagine. Johnston wrote of Lloyd, "She had seen the little roll of bills in her mother's pocketbook. She had seen how much smaller it grew every time it was taken out to pay for the expensive wines and medicines that had to be bought so often. She had heard her mother tell the doctor that was all that stood between them and the poorhouse. There was no word known to the Little Colonel that brought such thoughts of horror as the word poorhouse."[90]

89 Johnston, *Colonel*, 64-65, 74-75.
90 Ibid., 80.

Although Lloyd feared the poorhouse so, and her clothes and shoes eventually became just as shabby and dirty as any poverty-stricken child in the street, she soldiered on. She was eventually saved from life in the poorhouse that she dreaded so by her grandfather, who found out about the family's financial troubles and made sure that the Little Colonel was taken care of from then on out.[91] Despite her grandfather's eventual saving grace, Lloyd and the rest of her family did experience the poverty that plagued Kentucky at the time, and even showed that the wealthiest of families could easily fall on hard times.

Alice Hegan Rice touched on poverty in the state's biggest city, Louisville. When it came to the depictions of a poverty-stricken life in Kentucky, Rice's novel *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* was at the forefront. Written in 1901, *Mrs. Wiggs* was grounded in Rice's real-life experiences. She volunteered frequently with the urban poor in Louisville and based this book on a woman named Mary Bass, who lived between Oak Street and Sixth Street, an area known as the Cabbage Patch.[92] In the novel, Mrs. Wiggs was the mother to five children. After the deaths of her husband and eldest son, she and the remaining children were left to fend for themselves, doing everything they could to keep up their meager home in the Cabbage Patch. The Wiggses were so poor, in fact, not only could they not celebrate Christmas in the traditional fashion, they were not even aware it was Christmas day.[93]

The Wiggses may have been poor and destitute, but there were people out there that were willing to help. Lucy, a worker for the church, became a fixture in the Cabbage Patch (much like Rice) and took a special interest in the family. Lucy's "passionless purity" became a true godsend for Mrs. Wiggs and her children. Though the family could never escape the clutches of poverty, with the help of Lucy and others like her, it always seemed like everything would be okay. As

91 Ibid., 88.
92 Kleber, *Encyclopedia*, s.v., "Rice, Alice Caldwell (Hegan)."
93 Alice Hegan Rice, *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 19.

Mrs. Wiggs said at the close of the book, "Looks like ever'thing in the world comes right, if we jes' wait long enough!"[94]

C. Race

While nature provided Kentucky with beauty and poverty tinted it with a touch of despair, race relations, were simply an ugly mark on the state for many, many years. James Lane Allen did a fine job of capturing the prevailing attitudes toward race at the turn of the twentieth century. Whether Allen was racist himself, is not to say here; we shall simply assume that he was merely conveying the racial prejudices of the time.

In *A Kentucky Cardinal*, Adam Moss was taking a walk through the country when he quipped, "I roam solitary, but never alone, over this rich pastoral land, crossing farm after farm, and keeping as best I can out of sight of the laboring or loitering negroes. For the sight of them ruins every landscape, and I shall never feel myself free until they are gone."[95] In this passage, we see that Moss was so prejudiced toward blacks that he felt they even ruined the sight of his beautiful country landscape.

Not all racism, however, was directed toward the black population. Several instances of prejudice were directed toward the Native Americans. In *The Choir Invisible*, John Gray marveled at how quickly the Native population had been removed after the settlement of Kentucky, saying, "The Indians were gone. Two years had passed since they had for the last time flecked the tender green with tender blood. And the deadly wild creatures – the native people of earth and tree – they likewise had fled from the slaughter and starvation of their kind."[96] Two things of note here are that John assumed Indians were deadly and wild creatures, rather than the

94 Ibid., 39, 154.
95 Allen, *Cardinal*, 74-75.
96 Allen, *Choir*, 19-20.

highly civilized people they were, and also that their slaughter by the white man was impending, and thus they fled.

As noted earlier, Irvin Cobb staunchly opposed racism, which he proved by fighting the Klan and frequently publishing articles condemning racism. Yet even he displayed lapses. His story "Guilty as Charged," an intensely accurate portrait of race relations at the time, began with the narrator's comment, "The Jew, I take it, is essentially temperamental, whereas the Irishman is by nature sentimental, so that in the long run both of them may reach the same results by varying mental routes."[97] Although this may not be as shockingly racist as one might expect, it is still quite offensive.

The story centered on Deputy Commissioner Donohue and the prosecutions of his fellow police officers, specifically a lieutenant by the name of Isidore Weil. When Weil's name was called as the last man to stand trial, a reporter in the courtroom, La Farge, loudly asked, "Gee! Have they landed that slick kike at last?" The narrator described La Farge as "having his deep-seated prejudices." This prejudice, however, amounted to "a constitutional infirmity." Donohue himself was described as having "race antagonism," which often got the best of him during trials. Even when he was on the stand giving testimony, Weil referred to an Italian woman as a "Ginney."[98] Although there is not sufficient time or space to explain the rest of the story, it was filled with several racist descriptions and epithets for varying peoples. This was just one example of how many, many people held deep-seated racist beliefs and allowed them to influence their daily lives.

In *Blue-Grass and Rhododendron,* John Fox provided us with an example of the racial climate of the time. He wrote of the "primitive barbarism" of the "savage" American Indian and,

97 Cobb, *Trimm*, 188.
98 Ibid., 191-92, 195.

in a dialogue between the narrator of the book and an old mountaineer, the mountaineer expressed his "pussonal opinion that niggahs was the cause o' the war." It is interesting to note that while blacks seemed to be a commonly accepted part of society at the time – as they were even allowed to participate in sporting events like rabbit hunting – they were still referred to by such condescending terms as "ragged darkies." This was quite telling simply because it exemplified the fact that although the Civil War had ended legal slavery, it had not ended racism. Perhaps the most telling line from *Blue-Grass and Rhododendron* regarding the issue of race in Kentucky, and likely throughout the rest of the country, came from the narrator's observation at a raccoon hunt when he noticed three men standing together. He said, "And there the three stood, the pillars of the old social structure that the war brought down—the slave, the poor white, the master of one and the lord of both."[99]

No one, save for the white man, was immune from racial discrimination at the time. All other races were subject to the prejudices that ran rampant through the state. Even if you were not a direct target of discrimination, you were simply brushed aside and paid no mind to, like the "half-breed Melungeon"[100] that Fox referred to throughout *Hell-Fer-Sartain.*[101]

Just as there were minimal descriptions of poverty in *Aunt Jane of Kentucky*, there was very little description of the racial climate of the time. The best example from Hall's writing appeared in the story "Sweet Day of Rest." Eliza Hall, speaking through Aunt Jane, told the story of "a new preacher from down in Tennessee" who came to the local congregation and immediately began to reform some of its practices. The new preacher began to chastise the members for not keeping the Sabbath Day sacred. He cited specifically the act of chopping wood

99 John Fox Jr., *Blue-Grass and Rhododendron* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994), 4, 57, 9, 81, 189.
100 Fox, *Hell-Fer-Sartain*, 102.
101 Melungeon was a term for a tri-racial group of people that populated Appalachia. They were reportedly of mixed European, African, and Native American descent. Roberta J. Estes, Jack H. Goins, Penny Ferguson, and Janet Lewis Crain, "Melungeons, A Multiethnic Population," *Journal of Genetic Genealogy* (April 2012): 1.

on Sundays. One of the church members, Judge Morgan, "swore he'd have his wood chopped on any day that suited him." Thus, "he had a load o' wood carried down into the cellar, and the nigger man chopped all day long down in the cellar."[102] While seemingly one small example, there are several things that we can garner from it. The first comes from the use of the term "nigger man" as an acceptable reference to a black worker. Terms like this were incredibly common at the time and were simply glossed over in story telling or in everyday life as though it were nothing. The second thing we can learn from this comes from the Judge's decision to let a black man chop his wood on Sunday. The Judge may have sworn that he would have his wood chopped any day he pleased, but he may also have been worried about the fate of his soul if he were to chop the wood himself. If this were the case, it is quite telling that he would employee a local black man to chop his wood on Sundays, likely giving no thought to the fate of that man's soul. Whether the Judge felt that blacks were already condemned to Hell for one reason or another was unclear; it was clear, however, that the Judge cared for his own fate and his alone.

Annie Fellows Johnston also provided readers with a female-driven point of view, much like Eliza Calvert Hall. However, unlike Hall, Johnston did not shy away from the tougher themes of poverty and race. Johnston's writing was yet another example of how Kentuckians allowed the black citizens of the state into their lives after slavery was abolished, but continued to treat them as inferiors. In *The Little Colonel*, for instance, Lloyd had been raised her entire life by a nanny named Mom Beck, whom she adored. She also greatly enjoyed playing with the black children on her grandfather's estate, children who were on the property because several of the Colonel's slaves and their families chose to stay and work for him after the Civil War ended.[103]

102 Hall, *Aunt Jane*, 68.
103 Johnston, *Colonel*, 12, 106.

Despite Lloyd's childlike innocence and her friendly demeanor around her black neighbors, the adults in the story were not nearly as tolerant. For instance, when the Colonel first saw Lloyd playing with the black children, he referred to them as "three little darkies." On another occasion, the Colonel noticed Lloyd playing barefoot outside with the black children. This threw him into a fit of rage after which he asked Lloyd, "What does your mother mean by letting you run barefooted around the country just like poor white trash? An' what are you playing with low-flung niggers for? Haven't you ever been taught any better? I suppose it's some of your father's miserable Yankee notions."[104] The fact that the Colonel felt Lloyd should have been taught to avoid the behavior of black children is quite telling. That, unfortunately, was the widely held belief at the time, and it was inevitably picked up by children. It is also interesting to note that the Colonel blamed Lloyd's northern upbringing and ideas for her willingness to associate with the little black children. This related back to the Civil War and differences between northerners and southerners. The Colonel was clearly pro-South, and since Lloyd's behavior was disagreeable to him, he naturally blamed it on her father's northern influence.

Thunderous storms were not the only frightening element John Uri Lloyd captured in his work. He also depicted the horror that was racism in Kentucky, both before and after the Civil War. One of the main characters of *Stringtown on the Pike* was a slave named Cupe. While it is well known that local color literature, including the depiction of local dialects, was quite popular at the time, it still seems that Cupe's dialect was a bit colloquial and quite racist. Whether this was embellished to give the readers what they wanted, or if it came from Lloyd's own personal prejudices, we cannot know. To illustrate this point, let us look at an interaction between Corn Bug, Cupe's owner, and Cupe. Corn Bug called to Cupe, saying, "Cupe, yo' lazy nigger, git up, the boy't yo' told me about es here." To which Cupe replied, "I done tole yo' so, Ma'se. I knowed

104 Ibid., 31, 33.

he wah com'n; de signs nebbah lie, Ma'se; de figgah in de fiah, de hoodoo (it is worth noting here that hoodoo/voodoo/witchcraft was also an incredibly popular aspect of local color literature at the time, although it is not discussed in this thesis) tracks in de ashes, de tings dis nigger saw an' hea'd when de chicken crowed las' night fo' midnight."[105] Cupe's dialect was so thick and stereotypical that it was almost hard to read. In fact, it suggested that blacks were simple, unintelligent people.

There were several other instances, small off-hand comments, in Lloyd's writing that set the racist tone of the time. For instance, when describing Court Day in Stringtown, he wrote that "the negro servants moved as if they actually enjoyed motion," implying that black people were naturally lazy. Another instance occurred when Dinah, Cupe's wife, was allowed to testify in court, to which even Cupe exclaimed, "Fo' de Lawd, an' yo' doan 'tend t' let dat nigger swoah!" This position was also shared by the opposing counsel, yet, as Lloyd wrote, "no white person was likely to be injured or defamed by the unusual proceeding."[106]

Though frequent discussion of Kentucky's poverty appeared in *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*, there was a surprising lack of the racial tensions that plagued this time period. Perhaps it was because both Rice and Mrs. Wiggs tried to shine a more positive light on conditions. Yet, Rice allowed some of the racism of the time to creep into her work. For instance, Rice wrote of Aunt Chloe, the black servant of one Lucy Olcott. One Christmas morning in the Cabbage Patch, Aunt Chloe arrived with a Christmas present for Lucy. As Rice wrote, "The old darky grinned as she put the basket on the floor.' You might 'a' knowed it wuz fum dem Wiggses,' she said."[107] Once again, we have an example of a black man or woman being referred to as a "darky" and another over-exaggeration of their dialect.

105 Lloyd, *Stringtown*, 13-14.
106 Ibid., 101, 122.
107 Rice, *Wiggs*, 98-99.

Another instance of racism occurred when Mrs. Wiggs was describing her late husband. “Mr. Wiggs had Injun blood in his veins; his grandpa was a squaw – a full-blood Injun squaw.” She continued, “He was a blunette, real dark complected. I remember when he fus' came a-courtin' me folks thought he was a Dago.”[108] It is interesting to note that people thought Mr. Wiggs was Native American, and that this offended them.

The final example reflected the common theme amongst the racial prejudices exhibited in these works. In this novel, too, we saw yet another black character named Uncle Tom, who was “the old negro who usually fiddled at the dances.”[109] Unfortunately, it seems that it was commonplace to name a black male character Uncle Tom when writing at the turn of the twentieth century.

D. Romance

Not unlike the theme of nature, James Lane Allen took great pride in writing about the beauty and pain of romance. In all of Allen's novels, it seemed that his main character had a terrible time winning over his love interest. However, those characters, in the end, managed to make one final, triumphant plea for true love.

Allen's writing in *A Kentucky Cardinal* reflected his childhood filled with stories of honor, chivalry, and noble gentlemen. Adam Moss, the narrator, found himself striving to form a relationship with his new neighbor, Georgiana Cobb. Throughout the work Adam contended with forces within himself that drove him to love and hate Georgiana at the same time. Adam followed her life with much interest, even through her engagement to a cousin in New York City, the breaking of that engagement, and his numerous spurned marriage proposals. When his proposal was rejected, Adam wrote in his diary, “Man that is born of woman is of few days and

108 Ibid., 106.
109 Ibid., 145.

full of trouble. I am not the least sick, but I am not feeling well at all. So, have made a will, and left everything to Mrs. Walters," his elderly neighbor. However, this pain was nothing compared to his joy when he finally won Georgiana's heart. He commented on this saying, "Henceforth we are like poor little foolish children, so sick and lonesome in the night without one another. Happy, happy night to come when one short candle will do for us both!"[110]

Let us turn again to "An Occurrence up a Side Street," which was Irvin Cobb's portrayal of a sordid kind of romance and a crime of passion. In the story, Ella Gilmorris and Dr. Harris Devine, also known as Vandenburg, were hiding out in New York City. The two were responsible for a crime of passion, the killing of Cassius Gilmorris, who was likely Ella's late husband.[111] As the story unfolded, the pair was trapped by police in the home where they had committed the murder. They remained "watchful, silent, their eyes red-rimmed for lack of sleep, their nerves raw and tingling as though rasped with files." As the night drew on, both realized that there was no escape and began to blame one another, began to hate one another, and began to consider ways to kill one another. As Cobb wrote, "How she hated him, feared him too!" These feelings finally came to a head as Devine managed to poison a glass of champagne before Ella fell upon him, thrusting a hat pin she had found through his eye and into his brain, killing him instantly. She then took a long drink from the glass of champagne, only to realize within moments what had become of her as she "gently slipped down into the chair facing him."[112]

Much like his teacher, John Fox Jr. provided readers with romantic stories of love won and love lost, of pain and suffering, and of joy and happiness. His novel *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine* remains the perfect example of such writing. The story focuses on Jack Hale, a coal speculator who came into the Eastern Kentucky mountains with hopes of buying "Devil"

110 Allen, *Cardinal*, 100.
111 Cobb, *Trimm*, 59, 62.
112 Ibid., 62, 67, 70.

Judd Tolliver's land for its rich coal deposits. While Jack was there, he met Judd's daughter June, who was a beautiful young girl. Jack thought nothing of it at the time and returned to Cumberland Gap with a sample of Judd's coal to analyze.[113]

When Jack returned to the mountains sometime later, everyone suspected that he had returned for Jane, who revealed that she cared for him already. When Jack decided it was time to return to the Gap, he persuaded Judd to let him take Jane with him, so she might receive an education. While June was away at school, she and Jack finally shared a kiss as "she was clinging to him and looking up into his eyes and he bent his head slowly. Their lips met and the man was startled. He knew it was not child that answered him."[114]

As the story progressed, we saw the pain in romance in which James Lane Allen was so well versed, and must have passed along to Fox, his student. Fox told of June becoming a strong, civilized, elegant lady and debating over whether or not she truly wanted to be with Jack. Finally, after Jack had given up hope, June came back to him and confessed her love once and for all. As the story ended, Jack and June returned to her childhood cabin to live out the rest of their days.[115]

Given that Eliza Calvert Hall rarely mentioned the more uncomfortable topics of poverty and race in her stories, she obviously chose to focus on happier ideas. That is why romance was highly prevalent in *Aunt Jane of Kentucky*. It is also of note that Hall focused her romantic tales from the female perspective, giving us a pleasant change of pace from the male-driven romances of authors like James Lane Allen.

Aunt Jane told the story of Mary and Harvey Andrews, in another tale of romance gone wrong. Jane remembered, "Nobody had a misgivin' about it. Mary was as happy as a lark, and Harvey looked like he couldn't wait for the weddin' day, and everybody said they was made for

113 John Fox Jr., *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap Publishers, 1908), 21, 8, 29.
114 Ibid., 74, 88, 180.
115 Ibid., 400, 408.

each other."[116] As the story progressed, we found out that Harvey and Mary did not get along so well after all. Jane recalled numerous examples of Harvey being very cold and unfeeling towards Mary. It seemed he only cared about what she could do for him, rather than just caring for her. It came to pass one day that Harvey had his cousin, Samuel, over for dinner. Harvey expected this dinner to be a grand, wonderful experience. When Mary decided she had had enough of Harvey and his ways, she simply served cornbread and greens to Harvey and their guest, which was fine with the visitor, but really set Harvey off. The couple exchanged words, and Harvey abruptly left the dinner. Mary was pleased that she was finally able to take a stand against her husband. However, it was later discovered that Harvey had wandered down to his barn and dropped dead of a stroke.[117] It was assumed that Harvey simply did not know how to react to Mary after she stood up to him, and it was just too much to handle, so he dropped dead. Although Mary grieved feeling that she may have caused his death, all was right in the end. Mary met another man, one who treated her right, and they were married.

This theme of romance was discussed a bit differently in Annie Fellows Johnston's *The Little Colonel*. In the story, Elizabeth, the Colonel's daughter, married Jack Sherman. The Colonel, a staunch supporter of the Confederacy, lost his arm and his son during the war. Jack was a northerner and likely an abolitionist. Even thirty years after the Civil War ended, the marriage did not sit well with the Colonel, who disowned his daughter after the wedding.[118] However, it was this romance that the Colonel refused to support that produced the child, Lloyd, that the Colonel grew to love – the child that would eventually reunite the family.

John Uri Lloyd certainly set the tone for *Stringtown on the Pike* with his racist stereotypes and his superstitious depictions of nature. Both themes were consistent throughout the work, but

116 Hall, *Aunt Jane*, 123.
117 Ibid., 128, 131, 135.
118 Johnston, *Colonel*, 8, 16-18.

his superstitious side cropped up again later in the story, playing a major role in the romantic elements of the novel. Lloyd's story was a love triangle of sorts between Sammy, Susie (Corn Bug's adopted daughter), and Red-head, the young boy who wandered into Stringtown from the Eastern Kentucky mountains. Both Red-head and Sammy were in love with Susie, who loved them in return, though at different points throughout the novel. The slave Cupe, whose superstitions led him to believe various things about the three young lovers, often narrated these romantic relationships. For instance, early on in the story, Cupe warned Sammy to be wary of a redheaded boy that would cause him trouble.[119]

After Corn Bug's death, Cupe took care of Susie. One evening he decided that Susie would runaway to Canada with him and his wife Dinah. Before they were able to leave, Red-head came to confess his love for Susie. Just as Cupe had predicted, trouble with Red-head and Sammy ensued when Red-head showed up at Sammy's school and the two fought because of their perceived hatred for each other and their love for Susie. Once again, Cupe meddled in the lives of the three and showed Sammy his fate with Susie using a magic mirror, after which Susie asked Sammy never to visit her again.[120]

As the story progressed, both Red-head and Sammy told Susie of their love for her, and she confessed to loving them both. However, after a series of unfortunate events that led to Sammy testifying against Red-Head and Red-head's eventual death at the hands of another man, Susie took the vows of a nun.[121] All of the trials and tribulations that befell the trio were predicted by Cupe, who often forewarned them of their impending fate. Yet all refused to listen to the slave and instead to the love they had for one another.

119 Lloyd, *Stringtown*, 7, 90.
120 Ibid., 173, 175, 252, 279, 318.
121 Ibid., 371, 409.

In a return to the more pleasant side of twentieth-century Kentucky that she characteristically liked to look upon, Alice Hegan Rice wrote often of romance in her novels. As was the case with many of the novels we have looked at so far, the romantic element in *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* was a tale of love gained and love lost.

Rice wrote about Lucy Olcott (whom the Wiggses referred to as the "Christmas Lady") and Bob Redding, who were engaged to be married. In the story, Lucy demanded that Bob end his friendship with the local drunk, Dick Harris. Bob balked at this demand and tried to convince Lucy that Dick had no influence over him. That, he maintained in fact, Dick needed Bob because Bob was the only one who would stick up for him. Lucy would have none of it though, and she broke off her engagement to Bob.[122]

As the story progressed, Lucy and Bob remained estranged while Bob conducted his business and Lucy went about her charitable work in the Cabbage Patch, spending a good deal of her time with the Wiggses. Bob came to know the Wiggs family and, seeing what a poor state they were in, decided that he would help them. His first act of kindness was to buy the entire family dinner at a nice café, where he marveled at the way they ate their food. "The Wiggses ate as he had never seen people eat before," and Redding commented to himself, "For speed and durability they break the record." It was almost as if the family feared someone would take their food from them if they did not finish it quickly. Redding's next act was to give Billy Wiggs a job in his newspaper office and to find a job for Asia Wiggs at his tile factory.[123]

One day Mrs. Wiggs told Lucy stories about the wonderful man who had been helping her family so much. Lucy grasped that the man she was referring to was her ex-fiancé. When Lucy realized that all these stories were true, she began to miss Bob and feel sorry that she had

122 Rice, *Wiggs*, 37, 40.
123 Ibid., 90, 93, 116.

broken off her engagement with such a kind man. One evening, Lucy and Bob both happened upon the Wiggses' home at the same time. It was then they shared a special moment and understood they had made a mistake in ending their relationship. Of this moment, Rice wrote, "For a moment neither spoke, but her eyes made the silence eloquent; they told the secret that her lips dared not utter. Redding threw discretion to the winds, and, regardless of Wiggses and consequences, took the 'Christmas Lady' in his arms, and kissed away the year of grief and separation."[124]

E. War/Peace

Although James Lane Allen clearly did not enjoy writing about this next theme as much as he did nature and romance, he still managed to include some thoughts on war and peace in his works. In *A Kentucky Cardinal*, which took place before the outbreak of the Civil War, Adam Moss, speaking about one of Mrs. Cobb's sons, predicted that he might very well die "in a war that may break out in this country about the negroes."[125] Another of Allen's works, *The Choir Invisible*, also spoke of the war before it actually came. In this work, John Gray often recalled seeing "copies of the *Kentucky Gazette* containing essays by the political leaders of the day on the separation of Kentucky from the Union," even some that he had written himself under the pseudonym "Cato the Younger."[126]

Yet another example from *The Choir Invisible* came when John decided to tell his schoolchildren of the Battle of Blue Licks, which had been fought just forty miles away. John noted that the battle was the last time an Indian army ever invaded Kentucky and blamed an Officer McGary for the white settlers' terrible defeat there. He told his young students the story because, as he said, "there is a lesson in it for you to learn while you are children" and that "it

124 Ibid., 125, 138-39.
125 Allen, *Cardinal*, 13.
126 Allen, *Choir*, 52.

may be worth your own lives, it may save the lives of your soldiers." Just as John hoped his students would take that lesson to heart, it is possible that Allen, in his discussion of various wars, hoped the same thing, hoped to preserve the past, so that his readers might learn from it.[127]

Although Irvin Cobb's stories in *The Escape of Mr. Trimm* lacked the beauty in romance that certain other authors provided, his stories certainly conveyed the pain that often came with such relationships. Though, as discussed previously, "An Occurrence up a Side Street" did not provide us with a happy ending, it did bear on the theme of war and peace. Of course, war was not always about two countries or two states fighting one another. In Kentucky war was often about two families and a long-standing feud. In "The Exit of Anse Dugmore," Irvin Cobb describes this all-too-common occurrence in the Commonwealth.

Cobb's fictional tale of the Dugmore vs. Trantham feud portrays the mountaineer lifestyle that claimed dozens of lives during this time period. In the story, Anse Dugmore killed Peg Leg Trantham after Peg Leg killed Anse's brothers and father. As was often the case in mountain feuds, the prevailing theme then was "an eye for an eye," as one killing always precipitated another one. It was also customary in these feuds to turn oneself in to the proper authorities and simply wait to be released a few days later. However, in Cobb's story, Wyatt Trantham meddled in Anse's legal proceedings, which landed Anse in prison for several years.[128]

Anse was eventually pardoned, but while he was doing his stint in prison his wife and children left him and joined the Trantham family, most of his kin died or moved away to avoid the feud, and he had become weak and sickly. Despite all this, in true Kentucky feud fashion, Anse decided he had one last thing to do: kill Wyatt Trantham. Anse lay in wait in the wilderness for Wyatt to pass by, which he eventually did. Anse could have shot the man before he ever heard

127 Ibid., 64, 66, 69.
128 Cobb, *Trimm*, 131, 133-35.

a thing, but decided against it. It was at this point in Cobb's story that he broke from the true mold of the Kentucky feud. Anse saw that Wyatt had Christmas presents for his children and decided to let him live.[129] Feuds were commonplace, and had Cobb's story stayed true to form, Anse likely would have shot and killed Wyatt simply because his last name was different than his.

Perhaps no other novelist depicted the Civil War in Kentucky better than John Fox Jr. in his 1903 offering, *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom* Come. The novel followed Chad from childhood to maturity as the impending war grew closer and closer. While visiting Lexington, Chad befriended a man called Major Buford, who was close, personal friends with John Hunt Morgan and an obvious Confederate supporter. As the war dawned and most everyone was forced to choose a side, Chad struggled with his decision, but eventually chose to fight for the Union, which alienated some friends and loved ones while earning the respect of others. Chad realized that he had only love for his country, not the North or the South, and therefore he had to fight to keep the country whole. While speaking to a slave named Uncle Tom, Chad told him of his decision to fight for the North, which upset Uncle Tom, who felt Chad should fight for the South and for Tom's master, who had taken such good care of him all these years.[130]

As the story progressed, we saw Chad fight many long, hard battles for the Union. He met General Ulysses S. Grant, fought against General Felix Zollicoffer at Cumberland Gap, and received a promotion after the Battle of Shiloh. While this was all very interesting to read, it was not exactly the real point of the story. Chad symbolized Kentucky and its desire to remain neutral when the war broke out. Despite Chad's strong desire to please everyone, he eventually cast his lot with the North, much as Kentucky finally decided to enter the conflict on behalf of the Union.

129 Ibid., 135, 140-41, 144-45.
130 Fox, *Shepherd*, 80, 188, 195.

After the war, Chad was forced to mend relationships with friends on both sides of the fight, which in turn was a metaphor for reconstruction. Although Fox's story was a highly entertaining one, packed with action and tales of battle, it is important to read between the lines to see the metaphor at work.

Annie Fellows Johnston offered not only a refreshing female perspective, she also had plenty to say about the theme of war. In fact, her best known work, *The Little Colonel*, was almost entirely focused on war. Johnston painted a picture of a family that had been torn apart by the Civil War and through the love of a little girl had been brought back together, a simple but effective metaphor for reconstruction.

As noted previously, in the *The Little Colonel* Lloyd was the daughter of Jack, a once-wealthy northern abolitionist. Her grandfather fought hard for the South during the Civil War, losing an arm and a son. After his daughter, Elizabeth (Lloyd's mother), married Jack, the Colonel disowned her family and refused to speak to them because of their differences.[131] Lloyd's father had been out West trying to recoup the family fortune, and when he finally returned home he was quite ill. In the meantime Lloyd had taken a liking to her grandfather, the Colonel, and he to her. He felt so fondly about the little girl, in fact, that he started to reminisce about the time when his family was complete. He started to long for his daughter Elizabeth to be reunited with him again. He was finally presented with such an opportunity when it appeared that Jack was dying. Lloyd convinced the Colonel to come to her home and do what he could to save her father, which he begrudgingly agreed to do only out of love for her and a desire to make peace with his daughter. The Colonel, however, was informed that Jack was not going to die; he was just suffering a momentary relapse from a previous long illness. He and Jack decided, however, that they should not spend the rest of their lives fighting, at which point they shook

131 Johnston, *Colonel*, 8.

hands and made up.[132] The Colonel (the Old South) was then reunited with his daughter and her family (the North) thanks to Lloyd (Reconstruction). After the two men made amends, the family spent nearly every waking moment together, living in the Colonel's stately manor, Locust.

While *The Little Colonel* focused heavily on the Civil War and Reconstruction, John Uri Lloyd presented another depiction of feuding in the Eastern Kentucky mountains. Lloyd may have had a somewhat peculiar way of writing about nature, race, and romance, managing to infuse his potential prejudices and his love for chemistry and superstition into those themes; but when it came to war, he told an excellent story of feuding in the Kentucky mountains that proved to be one of the most exciting and adventurous of its time.

Lloyd provided an insightful description of the feuding among families that occurred so often in Eastern Kentucky. As his novel, *Stringtown on the Pike*, progressed we slowly learned about the life of Red-Head Nordman, a young man from the mountains whose family was involved in a bitter feud with the Holcomb family until only two men were left, Red-Head Nordman and Old Holcomb. Eventually, Red-Head found himself bound to hang for a crime he may or may not have committed. In the interest of the feud, Red-Head sent word to Holcomb to come and save him from hanging so that they might duel it out and end the feud once and for all. Holcomb obliged and travelled to Stringtown. Upon Red-Head's conviction, Holcomb and Red-Head, who had managed to steal a gun from the prison guard, shot and killed each other in the courtroom, thus ending the feud.[133]

From action-packed stories of battle and mountain feuding, we move to the most comical reference to a war one could ever find, provided us by Alice Hegan Rice in *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*. In the novel, Billy Wiggs took a dying horse from a local man with the hopes

132 Ibid., 64-66, 104-5, 139.
133 Lloyd, *Stringtown*, 265-73, 341-50, 371-81.

that Mrs. Wiggs could cure him; Billy intended to find a way to use the horse and make some money.

Billy was not let down, as Mrs. Wiggs and her son spent all night tending to the ailing animal. The next morning, the animal emerged shaky, but alive. The comparison to war comes from the name bestowed upon the horse, Cuba, or "Cuby"[134] as Mrs. Wiggs called it.

Rice wrote about Cuba's miraculous recovery, when she said, "And thus Cuba, like his geographical namesake, emerged from the violent ordeal of reconstruction with a mangled constitution, internal dissension, a decided preponderance of foreign element, but a firm and abiding trust in the new power with which his fortunes had been irrevocably cast."[135] This comparison, despite its strange nature, is an excellent allegory for not only the results of Cuba's War of Independence, but also the American Civil War.

134 Rice, *Wiggs*, 52.
135 Ibid., 53.

V. Conclusion

The men and women who authored these great stories all had strong ties to Kentucky, and it was certainly reflected in their work, as we have learned by examining some of the themes they developed. Finally, we need to examine exactly what it was that made Kentucky authors and their local color narrative rise up the best-seller charts as quickly as they did from 1890 to 1910.

Was it the beautiful descriptions of the Kentucky landscape? Or maybe the tales of romance, love gained, and love lost? It is very likely that both of these aspects drew readers in, but tales of romance set in a picturesque background could be found in literature outside of Kentucky as well. What about the element of war in the Kentucky novel? Certainly, most readers enjoyed a good fight scene, much like they enjoyed a steamy romance. The mountain feud provided all this and more. It is logical to conclude that people were simply intrigued by the prospect of families constantly at war in small mountain towns across Kentucky.

The two remaining themes, however, really sold the novels about Kentucky to readers around the country. Let us look first at race. For thirty years after the Civil War, when most of these books were written, many people in the Northern United States were still deeply involved in attempts to reconstruct the South. However, they could not help the poor white citizens of the South without also helping the poor blacks as well, and this was something that many of them simply had grown tired of doing. Enter the Kentucky-based novel. In these novels we read tales of poor white mountain folk who were doing the best they could but were in dire need of help. Not only were these folks poor and destitute, they were often described as having pure stock, good, strong Scotch-Irish heritage. To the people of the North this was a convenient opportunity to help out their white brethren closer to home, while avoiding the issue of assisting African Americans. As historian James C. Klotter has noted, some readers were even led to believe that

"Appalachian natives spoke a purer English than the rest of America, that they preserved the dialects and phrases of the England of Shakespeare, and that they sang the songs of an older age."[136]

Readers of the Kentucky novel saw in the state an opportunity to help reputable, white, Anglo-Saxon men and women. Not only were these men and women the "right" color, they were also quite poor and truly in need of assistance. This is where the themes of poverty and race intersected to drive Kentucky literature. Women from the northern part of the country, and even wealthier, more educated women from some of Kentucky's bigger cities, flocked to the mountains to help out the poor Appalachian. As Lucy Furman observed in her novel, *The Quare Women: A Story of the Kentucky Mountains*, the "furriners" were "the ladyest women you ever seed,"[137] and they descended on the mountains of Kentucky very quickly. These women felt they needed to teach the mountaineers the "proper" way to live. They established settlement schools that taught everything from sewing, to cleaning, to child care, to cooking, as well as general education and vocational training.

Kentucky authors at the turn of the 20th century struck gold with their descriptive novels of their old Kentucky homes. With waning interest in revitalizing the southern part of America, readers across the country could turn their attention to the poor whites of Appalachia. It is no wonder so many books were published around this time. Readers both inside and outside the Commonwealth could not get enough of the tantalizing stories from the mountains and cities of the Bluegrass State.

136 Klotter, "The Black South and White Appalachia," 839.
137 Lucy Furman, *The Quare Women: A Story of the Kentucky Mountains* (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1923), 2.

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