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Dale E. Soden

Whitworth University, dsoden@whitworth.edu

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Billy Sunday in Spokane

Revivalism and Social Control

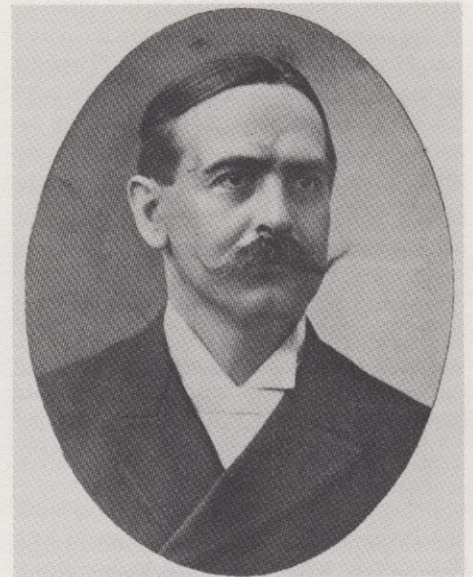
Dale E. Soden

The Pacific Northwest has frequently been categorized as the least churched and least religious section of the country. And in general, most historians have accepted the notion that religion played a comparatively minor role in the development of urban life in the region. Nevertheless, during the winter of 1908-1909, as many as 35,000 people a day gathered in downtown Spokane to hear Billy Sunday preach the gospel. For six weeks the itinerant evangelist and former baseball player electrified crowds with his acrobatic antics and invective against everyone from the wealthy socialite to the tavern goer.

At first glance this event suggests simply that Billy Sunday could draw a crowd even in the relatively irreligious Pacific Northwest. But a closer look reveals much more; underlying the revival hoopla were subtle but significant tensions between Spokane's emerging middle class and the city's blue-collar population. Most surprising is the role that Billy Sunday played in the attempt of the middle class to exert social control over the working class. Perhaps one would anticipate that the "respectable" clergy distanced itself from this Iowa boy who preached the plain gospel in an entertaining way to the "common folk." Yet such was not the case; in fact, Sunday came to Spokane at the invitation of the educated middle-class religious establishment. Mainstream pastors wanted him to revive Christianity and to convert the working class. Acceptance of Christianity, they hoped, would lead to acceptance of middle-class values, and thus Sunday might directly influence the lifestyle of the blue-collar population. It is this use of Billy Sunday that gives his revival significance for Spokane's religious and social history.

Sunday's Spokane revival provides insight into not only the issue of social control, but also the general spirit of reform politics that permeated urban life in the early 20th century. His antisaloon, antiliquor preaching was notable, but clearly some clergymen had more ambitious hopes for the evangelist: they thought he could help pave the way for Prohibition legislation and other measures associated with the progressive movement.

From the outset one must remember that Billy Sunday did not find Spokane—Spokane found Billy Sunday. Sometime during the early part of 1907, Dr. H. I. Rasmus, pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal Church, suggested that Billy Sunday be brought to town. At a May ministerial association meeting, Dr. E. L. House, pastor of Westminster Congregational Church, was selected to secure Sunday's services. After numer-



Westminster Congregational's pastor, E. L. House, believed that Billy Sunday could help Spokane through its moral crisis. (Sunday Program)

ous letters and a personal visit from Rasmus, the evangelist agreed to come in December 1908. Notwithstanding the city's interest in him, Sunday considered Spokane an attractive prospect: it would be the largest city in which he had held a revival, as well as his first major venue outside the Midwest.¹

Although the Spokane ministerial association embraced the denominational and social spectrum, the impetus for Sunday's visit came from middle- and upper-middle-class congregations. Rasmus was a Philadelphian who settled in Spokane in 1902 after receiving his doctorate of divinity. House was a graduate of Harvard and the Boston University School of Theology.²

These two clergymen pressed for Sunday's visit in part because it would draw national attention to Spokane. More important, however, they and their colleagues hoped to use the evangelist to shape the moral ethos of the city. By 1908 the progressive movement was well established in the region. The notion that cities could be reformed by legislating against vice and improving institutions was a part of the progressive consciousness that Spokane's ministers shared. But the key to explaining their motivation and hopes for the Sunday revival can be found in the increasing tension between the growing middle class and the laboring class.

Spokane had developed rapidly in the two previous decades. In 1890 the population was just under 20,000. By 1900 the figure had reached 37,000, and by 1910 the population would be 104,000. The city was quickly changing from a relatively quiet western town into an urban center. Built on the riches of the mining operations in the Coeur d'Alene Mountains, it had a strong blue-collar identity. Miners, loggers, and railroad hands resided there, particularly during the winter when work was scarce. People like Dutch Jake Goetz made handsome profits from enterprises, such as the Coeur d'Alene Theatre, that appealed to itinerant workers. The strength and activism of the Spokane work force were reflected in the presence of the Industrial Workers of the World. By August 1908, local membership had reached nearly 3,000, and in late 1909 the IWW organized its first major effort in the city, a mass protest against a ban on free speech.³

It was during the first decade of the 20th century that the progressive movement helped identify clearly the differences between white-collar and blue-collar society. The two groups had generally different views on alcohol, different sexual mores, and different work habits. Their attitudes and expectations about the city were also dissimilar. Concern about the nature of urban life—strong primarily within the middle class—found expression in reform. Middle-class reformers had urged and won passage of ordinances that closed saloons on the Sabbath and prohibited liquor, gambling on

horse racing, and pool selling at the interstate fair held in Spokane each year. One week before Billy Sunday's revival began, local ministers extensively debated what should be done about the city's red-light district.⁴

Until recently, scholars have not connected urban revivals to this tension between the middle class and working class. However, Paul Johnson, in his



The Reverend H. I. Rasmus of the First Methodist Episcopal Church gathered 360 new sheep into his fold at the end of the Sunday revival. (Sunday Program)

Shopkeeper's Millennium, made historians more aware of the role that revivalism played in class conflict. Johnson found that in Rochester, New York, in the 1830s Charles Grandison Finney, the most widely known evangelist of his day, helped convert hundreds of blue-collar workers to evangelical Christianity. Johnson concluded that the middle class was able to achieve social control of the blue-collar class by inculcating workers with a religion that proscribed drinking and premarital sex and emphasized the importance of rigorous work habits.⁵

It is clear that in Spokane, middle-class ministers looked for Billy Sunday to do

for their city what Finney had done for Rochester. They hoped he would set the stage for more progressive reforms and help control the mores of the young males who dominated the working class. "Spokane is at a crisis in its life's history," said the Reverend House in an interview just prior to Sunday's arrival. "It is confronted by an opportunity such as is given to few cities to purify itself. . . . It is predicted that Mr. Sunday will convert 5000 young men in Spokane." Another minister, C. Ross Baker of Emmanuel Baptist Church, announced, "We shall hope to see a mighty moral upheaval, polluted fountains of social life purified, dishonest business methods corrected, the public conscience uplifted, and the partial, if not complete overthrow, of that monster whose head is the gambling den, its heart the saloon, and its viscera the brothel." Baker went on to underscore the particularly middle-class agenda for Sunday's revival.

All of these results can not obtain without reflecting a beneficial change upon all of our environments: Men and women made better, families happier and life sweeter; the drunkard made a sober man; men and women whose lives may have been covered with shame and disgrace, become upright in character; the dishonest gambler transformed into a saint of God; the selfish and miserly become unselfish, generous and benevolent; the jeal-

1. Trevor Orton, *Souvenir: "Billy" Sunday Spokane Campaign* (Spokane, 1909). Many details concerning the planning of the revival and its general organization can be found in this "Official 'Billy' Sunday Spokane Campaign Program" published shortly after the revival. Authorized by the Spokane Ministerial Association, the program is in the ephemera collection at the Eastern Washington Historical Society in Spokane, Washington. Hereafter, the document will be referred to as *Sunday Program*.

2. *Sunday Program*.

3. Gregory R. Woirol, ed., "Two Letters on the Spokane Free Speech Fight: A Document Note," *PNQ*, Vol. 77 (1986), 68-71; Robert L. Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods: The I.W.W. in the Pacific Northwest* (Eugene, Oreg., 1967), 33-40.

4. *Spokane Spokesman-Review*, Dec. 20, 1908.

5. Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York, 1978).

People from all walks of life attended the revival; indeed, women stormed the tabernacle for a session closed to men. (Spokane Spokesman-Review, Jan. 24, 1909)

ous and envious become patient and loving; the revengeful and unforgiving become tender-hearted and forgiving.⁶

The question remains: Why did these ministers think Billy Sunday was the right person to accomplish this conversion to middle-class values? His background was irregular and anything but middle class. Born in 1862, Sunday lost his father in the Civil War and spent time in an orphanage in Glenwood, Iowa. He worked at a number of odd jobs until 1883, when he began playing professional baseball and attending preparatory school at Northwestern University. In 1891 he had a religious experience and shortly thereafter quit baseball and started work for the Y.M.C.A. For three years he traveled with J. Wilbur Chapman, one of the foremost evangelists in the Presbyterian church, but by 1896 he had begun to conduct his own campaigns.⁷

Designed to seat 8,000 people for revival meetings, the Spokane tabernacle also slept up to 800 indigents during subzero nights. (Sunday Program)



Sunday quickly established a national reputation and a distinctive preaching style that emphasized nonstop physical activity. A typical sermon included acrobatic stunts performed atop a chair and earthy criticisms of almost everything and everyone. His biographer, William McLoughlin, stressed Sunday's simple theology as one of the important keys to his success as a revivalist. The evangelist once proudly exclaimed, "I don't know any more about theology than a jack-rabbit knows about ping-pong, but I'm on

my way to glory." Not a strict Calvinist, he preached a basic message of repentance and forgiveness while emphasizing the importance of a formal commitment to Jesus Christ.⁸

Sunday must have seemed the perfect solution to the problem faced by reformers like House and Rasmus. They knew that they, with their academic pedigrees and their refined speech, had little appeal for the common man; but Sunday had enormous drawing power among blue-collar workers. Spokane ministers might find some of his theology, or lack thereof, disagreeable, but they recognized that Sunday attacked what they attacked—the saloon, the brothel, the gambling den—and that he advocated many of their own principles—respect for authority, the importance of the family, and the necessity of moral order.



6. Spokesman-Review, Dec. 27, 1908.

7. William G. McLoughlin, Jr., *Billy Sunday Was His Real Name* (Chicago, 1955); *idem*, *Modern Revivalism* (New York, 1959); George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York, 1980); and the two earlier biographies of Sunday are Elijah P. Brown's *The Real Billy Sunday* (New York, 1914) and William T. Ellis, *Billy Sunday: The Man and His Message* (Philadelphia, 1914).

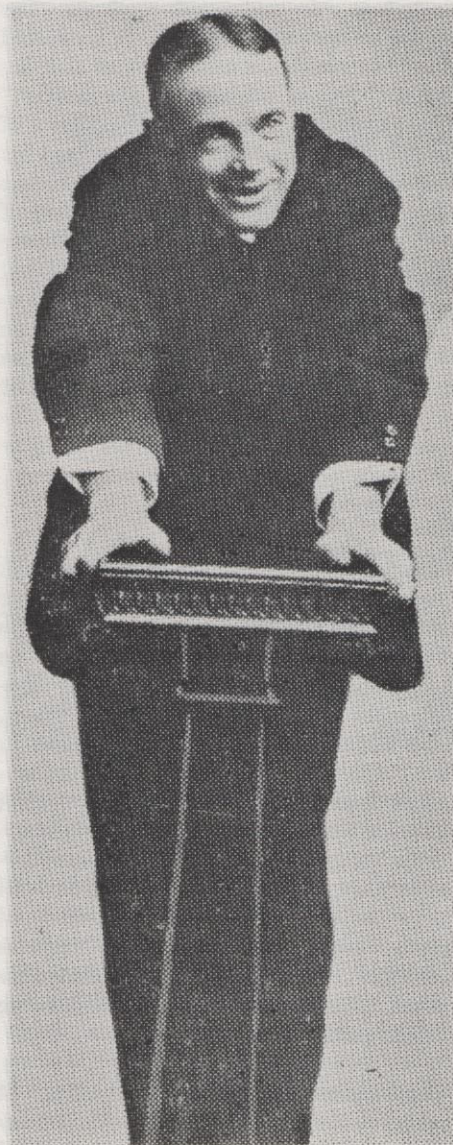
8. Quoted in McLoughlin, *Billy Sunday*, 123.

The intent of Spokane's ministers was clearly indicated in the advertising campaign they mounted for the revival. They planned to place placards announcing the event in the windows of all the downtown saloons six weeks before Sunday's arrival. Aside from the 5,000 window cards, the publicity committee printed 10,000 prayer cards and 12,000 convert cards; 400 streetcar signs urged everyone to attend. On November 30, with Sunday's first appearance still a month away, J. W. Allen, pastor of the Dean Avenue Christian Church, proclaimed in a sermon excerpted in the newspaper that Sunday would purify the city. In fact, he argued that all good citizens would see the merit of the revival, particularly if they believed in middle-class values.

*Drunkards will be reformed, hearts will be reclaimed, the whole atmosphere will be purified and Spokane will be in every way a cleaner, better city in which to live. Every good citizen, whether he be a Christian or not, ought to fall in line and help to boost for Billy Sunday and his revival.*⁹

The site of the revival was a wooden structure on Second and McClellan within walking distance of the Northern Pacific depot. As early as 1901, Sunday had required that his revivals be held in specially built wooden tabernacles. Extremely functional in design, the tabernacles, according to McLoughlin, had walls made of half-inch-thick pine boards fastened by only two nails. The relatively flimsy construction assured escape in case of fire—people could push the boards off the support posts. The floor was covered with sawdust to absorb noise. Spokane's ministers worked closely with organizers of what was billed as the first National Apple Show, hoping to build a structure to Sunday's specifications that could house both events. The cost, about \$4,200, was split between the ministerial association and the apple show promoters, whose exhibition ran December 7-12 and attracted 100,000 visitors. Located across the street from the new state armory, the tabernacle was ready for a different crowd when Sunday made his first appearance on Christmas night, 1908.¹⁰

Approximately 8,000 folk gathered for the opening of the revival, and they were met with introductions from the minis-



Billy Sunday, evangelist-showman, mixed preaching with vaudeville, interspersing advice and exhortation with acrobatics and cheerleading. (Sunday Program)

terial association and a choir that sang the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," "Blest Be the Tie That Binds," and "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name." Across the street in the armory, an information bureau had been established, visitors could be directed to lodgings, and a nursery was provided for the benefit of mothers. The feature that received the most attention was the kitchen and restaurant in the basement of the armory. Organized by the women of Calvary Baptist, a black Baptist church, and super-

vised by the Reverend J. Gordon McPherson, the restaurant—its patronage by "no means confined to the colored people"—was open to all who attended the revival, according to the *Spokesman-Review*.¹¹

But it was Sunday himself that people had come to see and hear; as he walked onto the platform for that first service, the packed house stood and began to wave handkerchiefs and hymn books. "Off his mark like a sprinter, at full speed from the start, Billy Sunday told the people how he loved God and hated the devil," reported the *Spokesman-Review*. "His collar [is] wilted and limp, his voice hoarse and his hair matted to his brow with sweat. . . . He hits the pulpit tremendous blows with his fist and performs feats of balance on that piece of furniture that would lay the ordinary preacher by the heels with general breakdown." It was the age of vaudeville, and Sunday certainly understood the medium; he impersonated the "worldly deacon and the college 'rah rah' boy . . . with equal fidelity." He never paused from beginning to end; between exhorting his listeners to commitment and pleading with them to change their ways, he performed college yells that brought his audience to its feet screaming and shouting.¹²

From the outset, Sunday worked diligently to legitimize himself with the blue-collar element in the crowd by attacking the barons who owned the factories and ran the mines. In his first sermon, he explained why Spokane needed a revival: "This is a busy age. Men are feeding their muscles and bone and sinew into the commercial mill that grinds out dividends, and the men who get the dividends sit by and watch it—the big, fat, hog-jowled, weasel-eyed, pussy lobsters." Sunday repeatedly made clear his sympathies for the plight of the working class.

9. *Spokesman-Review*, Nov. 14, 30 (qtn.), 1908; *Sunday Program*.

10. McLoughlin, *Billy Sunday*, 19; *Spokesman-Review*, Nov. 8, Dec. 12, 1908; *Sunday Program*.

11. *Spokesman-Review*, Dec. 25, 1908.

12. *Ibid.*, Dec. 26, 1908.

*I have always been a friend of the laboring man, for no one knows better than I what it means to earn bread by the sweat of the brow. . . . Wherever I have gone I have put myself on record as the friend of organized labor. The man with the dinner pail is my friend, for I have been there myself.*¹³

But clearly Sunday's intent was to change the basic life-style of the unchurched working class. In one sermon on the 10 commandments, he spoke of the importance of family while rebuking those who had wandered from the straight and narrow. "Say! If your mother had thought more of herself and less of you," Sunday chided his audience, "she might wear better clothes now than she does and you would not be ashamed to have her come around when some of your little fool dancing, card-playing, wine-drinking gang comes to see you."¹⁴

Topics from laziness to swearing gave Sunday opportunity to preach of industry and piety, qualities he intended to instill in his audience. "I tell you, man, no good man ever swears, no man who respects himself swears, no gentleman swears," asserted the evangelist. "Why does a man cuss? Does it add to his integrity or character?" On another occasion he tried to emphasize statistically how Americans had strayed from God's ways. (His figures were hyperbolic but his point was clear.) "Last year we spent \$2,000,000,000 for strong drink alone!; \$900,000,000 each year is what we spend for tobacco. Last year we spent \$700,000,000 for amusements. Our theaters are full and our churches are empty."¹⁵

Like many progressive reformers, Sunday combined this attempt to shape working-class mores with a view of civic righteousness. He believed that a direct connection existed between salvation and a healthier urban environment.

*San Francisco, first. No wonder God shook that old town with an earthquake and swept their cussedness with fire. There wasn't a rot-tener city on the American continent than San Francisco. Then comes Chicago with her perfect pandemonium of iniquity and vice, theaters open and grog shops open, until they go with a petition and beg the legislature to pass a law making Chicago immune from any necessity of closing the saloons on Sunday.*¹⁶

Although the vast majority of Protestant ministers supported Sunday, some ob-

jected to his style and methods. The Episcopalian minister W. L. Bull decried the "blasphemous utterances of that acrobatic, jocose minister of the gospel." The Reverend George W. Fuller, pastor of the First Unitarian Church, chastised his fellow clergymen for supporting Sunday: "I wonder at the spiritual condition of the parsons who are amused by these things [referring to Sunday's use of slang] but are unwilling to attend good performances at the theater." In fact, one woman telephoned the police during the second day of the revival and asked that the evangelist be arrested for using language to which she did not want her children exposed, "the kind of language . . . heard in the lowest saloons."¹⁷

Sunday occasionally ran afoul of rabbis, spiritualists, and Christian Scientists for things he said, but through it all, the ministers who brought him to town came to his defense and argued that his middle-class credentials were fully intact. The Reverend House wrote at length in the *Spokesman-Review*: "We investigated Sunday's record carefully. . . . [He] came to Spokane as the result of enthusiastic letters from bankers, lawyers, business men, college men, city builders all over the east, who testified that [his] good work was permanent, that he effected tremendous movem[en]ts for civic righteousness and for transforming communities."¹⁸

The *Spokesman-Review*, a bastion of middle-class thinking, received Sunday very warmly. An editorial emphasized the newspaper's endorsement of his agenda.

Everywhere Mr. Sunday goes he brings under the spell of his zealous preaching thousands of people who could not be reached by the standard methods of mission work. . . . When all has been said that can be said upon the subject the fact will remain that Mr. Sunday wages splendid warfare upon vice and evil, and at the same time is exalting righteousness in the home, in business and in public service.

It was Sunday's affirmation of middle-class institutions and values, and the commitment he could inspire from the hitherto uncommitted, that House and the other orthodox ministers sought.¹⁹

One of the ways in which Sunday strengthened his connections with the

middle class was organizing cottage meetings with socially respectable women in the community. With the aid of his wife, called simply Ma Sunday, and Mrs. Rae Muirhead, a member of his party, he lectured to small groups of women throughout Spokane beginning in January. Cottage meetings became an element of his future revivals. At the tabernacle, too, Sunday called upon Muirhead, who told female audiences about her husband abandoning her and the death of her 16-month-old baby; about her years as a detective in Chicago and in New York, where she served on the police commission under Theodore Roosevelt; and about her conversion in 1902 and subsequent Bible work. Apparently, this attention to the female gender was effective; Spokane women stormed the doors of the tabernacle to hear Sunday speak, in a session closed to men, on marriage, divorce, child raising, and the important role of women in reforming wayward men.²⁰

Unseasonable weather abetted the local clergy's desire that Sunday reach as many indigent and working-class people as possible. The tabernacle and armory became the winter shelter for as many as 1,200 men during January 1909. Spokane was beset by a particularly brutal winter. The temperature dipped well below zero on a number of evenings and reached only two to three degrees above zero for a number of days. When the cold wave hit on January 5, four large stoves were placed in the corners of the tabernacle; Sunday soon invited men to remain all night if they had nowhere to go. On January 8, 400 stayed there, and by the next

13. *Spokesman-Review*, Dec. 26, 1908 (1st qtn.), Jan. 10, 1909.

14. *Ibid.*, Jan. 14, 1909.

15. *Spokesman-Review*, Jan. 11, 1909 (1st qtn.), Dec. 30, 1908.

16. *Ibid.*, Jan. 14, 1909.

17. *Spokesman-Review*, Dec. 30 (Bull, Fuller qtns.), 27 (last qtn.), 1908.

18. *Ibid.*, Dec. 31, 1908.

19. *Spokesman-Review*, Jan. 19, 1909.

20. *Ibid.*, Jan. 26, 29, 1909; *Sunday Program*.

Advocates of local option legislation harnessed their bills to Billy Sunday's temperance work. (Spokesman-Review, Feb. 2, 1909)

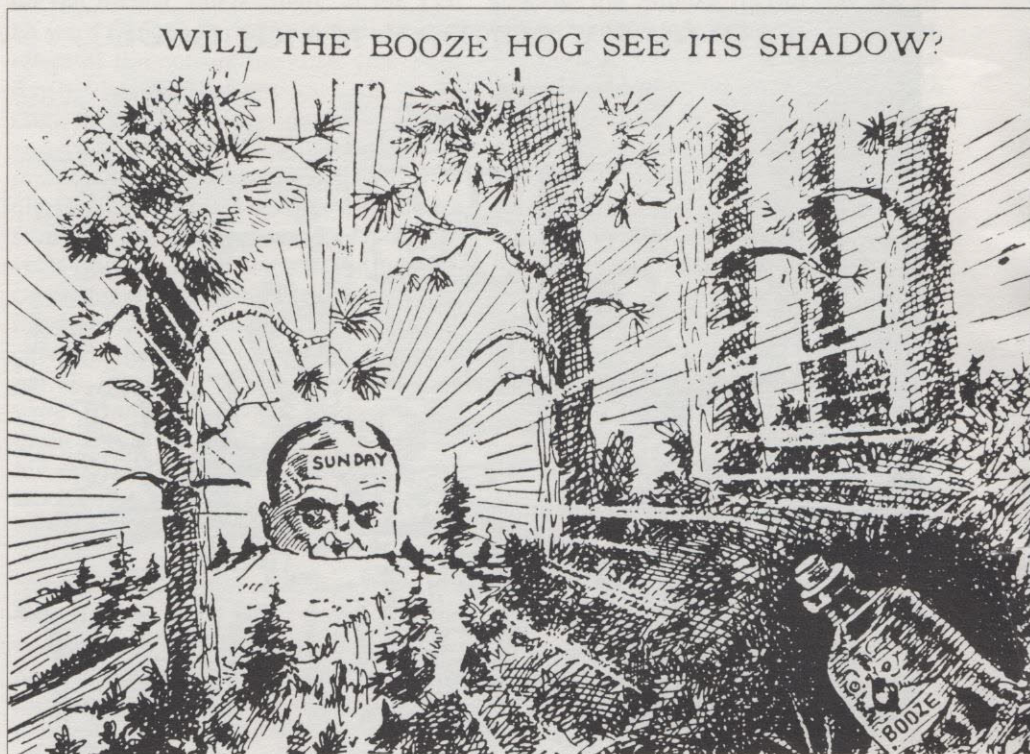
day, the figure had reached nearly 600. On that evening sandwiches were brought in, along with baked beans and a tub of coffee. The tabernacle restaurant did a brisk business. By January 13, some 1,200 people were being fed. Not until the 18th, when warmer temperatures reduced the risk of freezing, did the number of homeless sheltering in the tabernacle decrease. There is no evidence that Sunday exploited the plight of the poor by trying to convince them that their circumstances would improve if they joined a church; nevertheless, he took the opportunity to hammer away at the traditional vices and emphasize middle-class values.²¹

Ren Rice, the Spokane chief of police, described the situation in some detail. He recalled his conversations with Sunday at the city jail and how the evangelist suggested that the scores of transients sleeping in the jail corridors and vacant cells be allowed to sleep on the warm sawdust floor of the tabernacle. But Rice recounted a few of the problems.

All went well until one night when the wife of a Spokane councilman who had attended the services found her person infested with tiny insects. She phoned the wife of the city clerk who had been her evening companion and told her of the discovery. The other woman responded that she also had found her person infested.

The newspapers agreed not to say anything for fear of undermining the revival, but the sponsoring ministers came to Rice and asked that the men no longer be sent to the tabernacle. Rice refused, saying that Sunday had given the invitation and Sunday would have to rescind it directly. And according to the police chief, the ministers never did tell Sunday. "Finally the preachers reluctantly left my office[.] Then as the revivals went on we continued to send the homeless men to the tabernacle where the audiences continued to itch and scratch while the degenerate outsiders snickered."²²

While many in Spokane may have indeed snickered, the plight of the working



class was serious. On January 18, two policemen and a private contractor were attacked by laborers desperate for work. That evening, three blocks from the tabernacle, an angry mob estimated at between 2,000 and 3,000 jobless men gathered in frustration over promised employment that was denied. James Walsh, an IWW leader, managed to disperse the crowd with the admonishment that this was not the time or place for rioting. Billy Sunday did not become involved, but this incident surely underscored the anxiety of Spokane's religious community. The city seethed with tension between the middle and working classes.²³

Sunday continued to attract enormous crowds throughout the month; on January 17, 35,000 people came to the various services at the tabernacle. He maintained the themes that he established in the first two weeks as he railed against dancing, alcohol, and the theater. On a lighter note he gave the *Spokesman-Review* his selections for the all-time greatest baseball team, which the paper featured prominently. On January 24 a virtual riot occurred as people pushed at the tabernacle door in order to hear him, and 5,000 people were turned away.²⁴

The revival climaxed with an attempt to pass legislation controlling alcohol. On January 19, the *Spokesman-Review* published a list of legislators from Spokane and their probable votes on a bill allowing communities to prohibit alcohol. On January 28, the paper reported that the state senator W. H. Paulhamus had wired Sunday urging him to send a "monster petition" to Olympia in support of the legislation. In response, someone, perhaps Sunday himself, suggested that the evangelist head a delegation of Spokane civic leaders to lobby at the state capital for the local option legislation. Here again the particularly middle-class nature of Sunday's efforts is evident. On January 31, 112 businessmen and pastors left the Northern Pacific depot for Olympia. Included were H. C. Blair, principal of Blair Business College; Zachariah Stewart, Spokane county treasurer; Judge

21. *Spokesman-Review*, Jan. 6-20, 1909.

22. Ren H. Rice, "When Hoboes Stayed Warm," MsSC4, Folder 2-10, Ren H. Rice Papers, Eastern Washington Historical Society.

23. *Spokesman-Review*, Jan. 19, 1909.

24. *Ibid.*, Jan. 24, 25, 1909.



The middle-class Spokesman-Review gave the Sunday revival full reportage, along with cartoons and editorials. (Feb. 9, 1909)

very least, the evangelist had helped to crystallize the debate between those who advocated an open town and those who wanted a closed town. Two of the most vocal dissenters, the tavern owners Jimmy Durkin and Dutch Jake Goetz, fought against banning alcohol, and Goetz chastised the city leadership for its support of the revival.

If the mayor, city council and chamber of commerce would pay as much attention to the freight rates to this city as they did to Billy Sunday's revival meetings and running excursions to Olympia, it would be more beneficial to the city and they could soon have the freight rates.²⁸

Wherever Sunday went, the issue of his expenses received a significant amount of press coverage. In Spokane, as elsewhere, local organizers made a special effort to raise an appropriate amount for him on the final day of the revival. Several ministers served as tellers, and ushers began asking for \$100 pledges, gradually reducing the amount requested until everybody had an opportunity to give. On that final day, the Spokane audience gratefully donated \$10,871 for Sunday and his party. Another \$15,000 had been raised previously in order to cover the cost of the tabernacle and other revival expenses.²⁹

Whether Billy Sunday succeeded in converting the working class to middle-class values is not entirely clear. By the end of his Spokane stay, an estimated 5,666 people had professed conversion or recommitment to Christianity. On Febru-

W. H. Ludden; M. M. Higley, president of the Northwestern Business College; Dr. Charles O. Linder, physician; E. W. Conrad, mineowner; and James Paine, secretary-treasurer for the Spokane Dry Goods Company, among others.²⁵

Once in Olympia, Sunday preached to women in the afternoon, and in the evening he delivered what was known as his booze sermon at the opera house to senators, representatives, and the general public. That two-hour exhortation against liquor elicited enthusiastic applause from the listeners, who repeatedly rose, cheered, "waved their hands and shouted at the unique climaxes and expressions made by the noted speaker." Marion Hay, the acting governor, hosted a banquet for the Sunday party. The Spokane group met with its state representatives and presented a petition with more than 8,000 signatures urging passage of the local option bill. The United States senator Miles Poindexter, along with select members of the Sunday party, spoke in favor of the measure.²⁶

A large crowd met the party on its return to Spokane and escorted it from the train station to the tabernacle for another sermon. The immediate result of the lobbying effort was failure, for opponents amended the local option bill to death; a compromise bill finally passed both houses later that year. Sunday had rallied Spokane's middle class to the great symbol of moral reform in the progressive era. It is likely that the Olympia experience not only increased his own interest in antisaloon activities but also encouraged leaders in other Washington cities to see him as an instrument for legislative reform. Everett leaders booked him for a week-long tent revival prior to their local option election in 1910. Specifically, they asked him to counter the speeches of Clarence Darrow, who advocated personal liberty.²⁷

Shortly before the end of the Spokane revival, approximately 250 businessmen and professional men held a luncheon honoring Sunday for his efforts to improve the character of the city. At the

25. Sunday Program; *Spokesman-Review*, Jan. 31, 1909.

26. *Spokesman-Review*, Feb. 2, 1909; *Olympia Daily Recorder*, Feb. 2, 1909 (qtn.).

27. *Spokesman-Review*, Feb. 18, 1909; Norman Clark, *The Dry Years: Prohibition and Social Change in Washington* (Seattle, 1965), 89-90, 96.

28. *Spokesman-Review*, Feb. 14, 1909.

29. McLoughlin, *Billy Sunday*, 110; *Spokesman-Review*, Feb. 8, 1909.

ary 11, four days after the end of the revival, the *Spokesman-Review* ran the headline, "BEER SALES FALL; BIBLES IN DEMAND." Although half of the converts reportedly gravitated toward Baptist and Methodist churches, a substantial number sought membership at Westminster Congregational and the Central Christian Church. In late January, E. L. House said, "There were more than 10 times as many at our church as have ever attended a prayer meeting in my experience." On February 14, many churches received new members as a result of the revival: H. I. Rasmus's church welcomed approximately 360 new members on that Sunday; Vincent Methodist Episcopal Church baptized 50; Westminster Congregational admitted 30. At First Baptist, 42 were accepted and 40 more had applied for membership.³⁰

Sunday's actual impact on the working class is less certain. McLoughlin concluded, largely on the basis of revivals other than Spokane's, that the conversion of the working class was minimal. The best remaining records in Spokane, at St. Paul's United Methodist Church, provide a glimpse of some of the people affected by the revival. During the month of February 1909, at least 133 individuals joined the church. Most committed themselves on the first Sunday af-

ter the revival. Interestingly, of the 133, 88 were women. Perhaps this reflects the effect of the cottage meetings that Sunday held primarily for women. Of the 45 men, 22 can be clearly identified by occupation. Four were conductors or wiremen for streetcar companies; four were clerks; three were salesmen; two were students; and the remaining male converts included an electrician, painter, carpenter, bookkeeper, teacher, printer, foreman, laborer, and druggist. It is conceivable that some of those who could not be identified in the city directories were strictly blue-collar workers. But these records suggest that Sunday had his greatest success among women and among people who prior to the revival had strong middle-class aspirations.³¹

Nevertheless, while Sunday may not have had the exact effect desired by the middle-class establishment, he seems to have impressed that establishment with the importance of civic reform and the necessity of espousing middle-class values to a blue-collar population. The editor of the *Spokesman-Review* said:

*"Billy" Sunday bears from Spokane the respect and admiration of thousands, and in this host are hundreds of the able, upright business men of the city, who feel deeply that Spokane is better for his coming and has higher standards of life and duty in the home, the counting room and the public office.*³²

Clearly, the Sunday revival did not resolve the tension between the city's middle class and its laboring class; that autumn would bring the IWW's free speech demonstration. Yet the middle-class's effort to use religion as a means of socially controlling the working class was an important part of Spokane's early social history and a phenomenon that occurred elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest. Billy Sunday's activities in Spokane and in Everett the next year remind one how religious impulses were intertwined with various reform efforts associated with progressivism. □

Dale Soden, who earned his Ph.D. in American intellectual history from the University of Washington in 1980, is coordinator of American studies and director of continuing education at Whitworth College. He has published in several journals and is presently researching the influence of Presbyterianism on urbanization in the 20th century.

30. *Spokesman-Review*, Jan. 20, Feb. 15, 1909.

31. McLoughlin, *Billy Sunday*, 210-15. Church records at St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Spokane, Washington; Spokane city directories, 1909, 1910.

32. *Spokesman-Review*, Feb. 7, 1909.