

A SON'S DREAM: COLONEL WEBB COOK HAYES AND THE FOUNDING OF THE  
NATION'S FIRST PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

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## ABSTRACT

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Today presidential libraries are expected from every former president. Presidents begin to plan their libraries before exiting office. It was not always so. Over time, the American public and their government altered their views of presidential documents. For years, presidential documents had been considered personal property, so former presidents did as they wished with them. During his presidency Franklin D. Roosevelt created the National Archives to preserve presidential papers. His presidential library was the first in the federal presidential library system and therefore receives much recognition for being the first presidential library. However, twenty years before Roosevelt's library existed there was the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum. Now known as the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums, Roosevelt used it as a model for his presidential library. Therefore, it influenced the federal system of presidential libraries. This project argues the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum exists due to the determination and resourcefulness of its founder Colonel Webb Cook Hayes. It further states that by creating the first presidential library, Webb influenced the federal presidential library system.

This project analyzes the creation of the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum, following its journey from conception to fruition. This thesis first outlines the life of founder Colonel Webb Cook Hayes, revealing what led him to create the memorial: influences that shaped his interests, sources of his power, and passions that drove him. Then the text examines the difficulties surrounding the creation of the Hayes Memorial. It was managed and owned by the Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society. Because no presidential library existed before it, the Hayes Memorial had to become the model for others to follow. This project follows the

complications that arose due to the innovative concept of a presidential library and how Webb assisted in managing them. The sources for this project include Hayes family papers, local collections and historical newspapers. It also includes various texts on the history of presidential libraries, place, local history, and memory. Gathering these sources and examining them together sheds new light on the creation of the presidential library concept.

To Chuck & Mary Wonderly, the best parents and supporters a girl could ask for.

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## INTRODUCTION

It is generally assumed that any president of the United States, having served one or two terms, will have a museum and library dedicated to his or her life. No matter the president, no matter the content of the term(s), a presidential library and museum are expected by Americans. In fact scholars note, “Now every president has the right to a shrine, a homestead and/or library, no matter how illustrious or forgettable his tenure.”<sup>1</sup> This is because American culture has changed over time. Initially it was considered important to preserve the homes of presidents rather than their papers, and even then not all homes were deemed worthy of preservation. Since the preservation of presidential estates and homes was not always a high priority, the presidential manuscripts were also neglected. This is due in part to the discretion allowed to presidents. Until the Presidential Records Act of 1978 presidents could do what they pleased with their papers, as they were personal property. Some presidents burned their papers, some sold them, some lost them. Per William G. Clotworthy, Americans have “come to realize the importance not only of preserving Presidential homes but also of preserving Presidential history by building Presidential libraries...it was not always so.”<sup>2</sup>

Presidential libraries have evolved in their hundred years’ existence. In his book *Presidential Volumes and Collections* Fritz Veit claims that the care of presidential manuscripts can be separated into four distinct eras. During the first era presidential papers were private property and, as such, exclusively a president’s concern. In the second era, it was recognized that there was a public interest exists in the papers. Franklin Roosevelt ushered in the third era when he convinced the nation’s lawmakers that it would be in United States’ interest to establish a

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<sup>1</sup> Diane L. Barthel, *Historic Preservation: Collective Memory and Historic Identity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 122.

<sup>2</sup> William G. Clotworthy, *Homes and Libraries of the Presidents: An Interpretive Guide* (Blacksburg, VA: The McDonald & Woodward Publishing Company, 1995), 6.



federally supported archival depository. This period included the passage of the Presidential Libraries Act of 1955 and the Presidential Records Act of 1978. The final congressional act pertaining to presidential libraries was passed in the fourth era. The Presidential Libraries Act of 1986 imposed mandatory endowments, a radical departure from hitherto voluntary contributions on the part of the president and the financial supporters of a presidential library.<sup>3</sup> The presidential library legislation was created to organize and standardize the presidential libraries in existence as well as those created in the future.

Americans hold tightly to the ideals of their nation, its culture and its future. One such important and clearly American concept is the presidency. The seat of the presidency is a much sought after and fought over place in United States' politics. Those who campaign for the presidency begin their pilgrimage to the great oval office years before it is vacated. As the candidates prepare for their campaigns, the current president of the United States looks towards preserving his or her legacy. The anticipated outcome is a presidential library and museum dedicated to that individual's life achievements. An iconic American institution, the presidential library and museum is something expected from each president after he/she steps down from office.

Though continually growing in number, presidential libraries and museums are unique institutions. Historian Steven C. Dubin states: "Museums have always featured *displays of power*: great men, great wealth, or great deeds," and this is certainly true of presidential ones.<sup>4</sup> Presidents are surely among the greatest men in American history. All achieved the "great deed" of becoming president and many of them came from great wealth. Nevertheless, their museums

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<sup>3</sup> Fritz Veit, *Presidential Libraries and Collections* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), xvii-xvi.

<sup>4</sup> Steven C. Dubin, *Displays of Power: Controversy in the American Museum from the Enola Gay to Sensation* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 3.

and libraries tell not only the story of one man but of an entire nation. Consequently those who invest in them and are impacted by them are on a monumental scale. Presidential libraries and museums, as custodians of national history, must “be accessible to anyone with time and interest to invest.”<sup>5</sup> Their unique blend “of duty, propriety, old-fashioned heroism, and individualism spiked by compassion and plain-speaking” makes these institutions houses of national *and* local history that appeal to all citizens of the United States.<sup>6</sup>

At the moment there is a presidential library and museum in the nascent stage—the Obama Presidential Center. Two years into Barack Obama’s second term, the initial groundwork began on his presidential library and museum. The Barack Obama Foundation was founded in 2014 to raise funds for the development and creation of the Obama Presidential Center. After the foundation was created and the search for funding initiated, debates brewed over the question of location. The setting of a presidential library and museum is of paramount importance. This is due in part to the relationship between people and place. “Places become sacred to humans when the humans imbue the places with stories,” and presidential libraries and museums certainly provide stories.<sup>7</sup> The former president, when choosing a location for the institution, takes into consideration his own connection to place. “Many men have a keen sense of place, such that the place defines the man, as the man defines the place. So it is with the presidents,” and that is why the former president takes such care in choosing the site for his library and museum.<sup>8</sup> For Barack Obama, the city of Chicago was an obvious choice because it was his home before taking office.

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<sup>5</sup> Carol Kammen, *On Doing Local History: Reflections on What Local Historians Do, Why, and What It Means* (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1986), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Curt Smith, *Windows on the White House: The Story of Presidential Libraries* (South Bend, IN: Diamond Communications, Inc., 1997), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Archibald, *The New Town Square: Museums and Communities in Transition* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004), 20.

<sup>8</sup> Nancy D. Myers Benbow & Christopher H. Benbow, *Cabins, Cottages & Mansions: Homes of the Presidents of the United States*, (Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 1998), vii.

However, choosing the neighborhood within the city was difficult. Presidential libraries and museums provide economic stability and cultural enrichment to the communities they inhabit, leading to fierce competitions between contenders.

Such a competition engaged two South Side Chicago parks, Washington and Jackson. With the presidential library would come honor and distinction, as well as jobs and tourism. It also would improve the reputation of the location. After two years of indecision and discussion, Jackson Park was chosen as the site of the Obama Presidential Center. Jackson Park had many attractive attributes that had gained its lead over Washington Park. Jackson Park was surrounded by other museums and is adjacent to one end of the campus of the renowned University of Chicago. The Museum of Science and Industry stands only blocks away. The place also had historic stories of its own to pair with the former president's. It was home to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Obama's choice was not a singular one: "Memorials often are staged on the sites of historic events and thereby provide a sense of material connection with the past."<sup>9</sup> The attention of the Barack Obama Foundation can now turn to building the Obama Presidential Center.

During its journey, the Barack Obama Foundation has the opportunity to look at those who came before it. There was not always a model to follow, so where did the idea start? What was the first presidential library? These questions are not as easy to answer as one might think. Comprehensive texts on presidential libraries vary in their response. In general there are two schools of thought. The first identifies Franklin Roosevelt as "the father of the presidential library."<sup>10</sup> This is because "[FDR] had a vision that led to the establishment of the first

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<sup>9</sup> Bradford Vivian, *Public Forgetting: the Rhetoric and Politics and Beginning Again* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 65.

<sup>10</sup> Pat Hyland, *Presidential Libraries and Museums: An Illustrated Guide* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1995), 4.

presidential library to be administered by the National Archives.”<sup>11</sup> As his first term as president reached its end, Roosevelt realized he had amassed a copious amount of material and documents. He proposed that a library and museum be created to house his papers. His motives have been a matter of debate over the years. Some historians cite his beneficent nature, while others refer to more selfish reasons: “Roosevelt, ever cognizant of his place in history, arranged to perpetuate it.”<sup>12</sup> Whatever his motivation, Roosevelt gave the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) managerial powers over his library. Thus began the modern presidential library system. This standard was held by presidents whose tenure fell after Roosevelt’s, as many followed his example, erecting “Presidential libraries and museums with private funds, then transferring them to the American people.”<sup>13</sup>

While Roosevelt’s may have been the first of the nationally directed “Presidential Libraries,” it was not the first presidential library in existence.<sup>14</sup> When Roosevelt created his library there were already “two prototype libraries” in the United States.<sup>15</sup> He studied “these two models and developed the concept of a privately built, publicly maintained presidential library” that we recognize today.<sup>16</sup> One of the prototype libraries was the brainchild of Roosevelt’s presidential predecessor. In 1919 Herbert Hoover donated \$50,000 to Stanford University to create the Hoover Institute on War, Revolution, and Peace. Created before Hoover’s presidency, its focus was “documenting war, revolution, and peace.”<sup>17</sup> Forty-three years after the Hoover

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<sup>11</sup> Pat Hyland, *Presidential Libraries and Museums: An Illustrated Guide* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1995), 4.

<sup>12</sup> William G. Clotworthy, *Homes and Libraries of the Presidents: An Interpretive Guide*, (Blacksburg, VA: The McDonald & Woodward Publishing Company, 1995), 226.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>14</sup> David Kruh and Louis Kruh, *Presidential Landmarks* (New York, NY: Hippocrene Books, Inc., 1992), 332.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, *The Presidential Libraries Act and the Establishment of Presidential Libraries*, by Wendy R. Ginsberg, Erika K. Lunder, and Daniel J. Richardson, R41513 (2015) 6.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>17</sup> “Library and Archives History,” accessed March 3, 2017, <http://www.hoover.org/library-archives/about/history>.

Institute's creation and twenty-nine years after his presidency, Hoover followed in Roosevelt's footsteps and dedicated his own presidential library. Run by the NARA, his presidential library houses his military, political, and personal manuscripts.

Before Hoover's endeavors, there existed the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum. Scholars of presidential libraries generally recognize it as coming before Roosevelt's, but do not put the two on a par with each other. Benbow argues that it was "the first free-standing presidential library."<sup>18</sup> Curt Smith declines to even call it a library, instead stating that Hayes was "the first presidential archives and museum."<sup>19</sup> Historians David and Louis Kruh label the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum as "the first presidential library."<sup>20</sup> By using lowercase letters instead of the uppercase as they did with Roosevelt's places a distinction between the two. In *Records of the Presidency: Presidential Papers and Libraries from Washington to Reagan* the Hayes Memorial Library is described "as a memorial library [created] by close family members and associates to honor Hayes and to keep his papers, memorabilia, and books available for those who wanted to study his part in and contribution to American History."<sup>21</sup>

Opened in 1916, the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum was the first of the presidential libraries. It was, as Curt Smith described it, "a pioneer anomaly—an unlikely pioneer."<sup>22</sup> Who would have thought that the first presidential library would be made in honor of a president with one relatively calm term? Because of the collection and preservation effort of Rutherford B. Hayes and his family, his memorial could be a "building with a dual function" and

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<sup>18</sup> Nancy D. Myers Benbow and Christopher H. Benbow, *Cabins, Cottages, and Mansions: Homes of the Presidents of the United States*, 92.

<sup>19</sup> Curt Smith, *Windows on the White House: The Story of Presidential Libraries*, 20.

<sup>20</sup> David Kruh and Louis Kruh, *Presidential Landmarks*, 219.

<sup>21</sup> Frank Leopold Schick, Renee Schick, and Mark S. Carroll, *The Records of the Presidency: Presidential Papers and Libraries from Washington to Reagan* (Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1989), 6.

<sup>22</sup> Curt Smith, *Windows on the White House: The Story of Presidential Libraries*, 2.

serve both as a museum and a library.<sup>23</sup> As there was no prior model for the Hayes family to follow while creating their institution, they could shape it into whatever they wished. Because of this, the Hayes Presidential Memorial Library and Museums’ “influence on the preservation of presidential papers is significant.”<sup>24</sup>

The creation of the Rutherford B. Hayes Memorial Library and Museum fell on the shoulders of the Hayes children, but on one son in particular. This thesis will explore the trials and tribulations that Colonel Webb Cook Hayes encountered during its creation. Colonel Webb Cook Hayes, a man of veritable influence and power thanks to personal and familial ties, was the man who successfully saw to the creation of the nation’s first presidential library. Only a person with Webb’s tenacious personality, as well as his status and connections, could form the model that would inspire presidential libraries of the future. Without Webb’s dedication to an almost impossible cause, the presidential library would not be the same.

To summarize, presidential libraries are an integral part of the United States’ history. They not only preserve the story of the nation’s leaders but also of the nation itself. As such, they have been the topic of much research and writing. There is a plethora of writing on the national presidential library system and its founder Franklin Roosevelt. In contrast, there has been no scholarship focusing on the creation of the nation’s first presidential library. This thesis will investigate the creation of the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum. Therefore, the research shared in this thesis is significant to the study of presidential libraries as it adds new depth to their origins. The thesis will discuss founder Colonel Webb Cook Hayes’s life and influences, including his family. It will then explore his dreams for the Hayes memorial and follow them

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<sup>23</sup> Pat Hyland, *Presidential Libraries and Museums: An Illustrated Guide*, 14.

<sup>24</sup> Frank Leopold Schick, Renee Schick, and Mark S. Carroll, *The Records of the Presidency: Presidential Papers and Libraries from Washington to Reagan*, 142.

from conception to construction. Both the highs and lows of the process will be covered, including problems encountered while building the memorial. Then the early years of the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum will be discussed. Colonel Webb Cook Hayes' dedication shaped the future of presidential libraries by designing the model upon which the national system would be based.

## CHAPTER I. THE DREAMER

Before exploring the opening of the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums, it is necessary to analyze the inspiration and direction that guided President Rutherford B. Hayes's son Colonel Webb Cook Hayes towards public history and memorialization. These passions led him to play the crucial role in the creation of the institution. All his life, Webb's immersion in and exposure to influence and power made him aware of how those who wielded these tools benefitted from them. His experiences shaped him into the man that would be the driving force behind the creation of the first presidential library, the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums. Webb's direct application of this knowledge towards his goals and passions led to the opening of the nation's first presidential library.

There is little doubt that Webb's character, with his tenacity and determination, allowed him to tackle the challenges that came with establishing the model for the American presidential library system. Several aspects of his character directly influenced and shaped him into that sort of person. From his family he gained education, business savvy, political acumen, and military experience. From his father in particular Webb garnered a respect for history and a need to remember the past, while honoring home and countrymen.<sup>25</sup>

Like many presidential children, Webb Cook Hayes was enveloped by the shadow of his father from a young age. He was the second in a family of eight children. Three sons were lost to illnesses, leaving Rutherford and Lucy with four sons and one daughter. The surviving children were Birchard, Webb, Rutherford, Fanny, and Scott. While serving as an officer in the 23rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War, Rutherford B. Hayes was stationed in what is

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<sup>25</sup> Rutherford B. Hayes [RBH] to Webb Cook Hayes [WCH] and Birchard Austin Hayes [BAH], 30 April 1868, Rutherford B. Hayes Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.



today West Virginia. During the course of the war, with his mother and siblings, Webb Hayes spent weeks at a time in his father's camps.<sup>26</sup> Marching and drilling with the soldiers of the 23rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry had a profound impact on the seven-year-old. Duty, patriotism and courage in battle merged with manliness, shaping the young boy's vision of warfare. His experiences created an image of glory and valor in which soldiers, personified by his father, performed heroic deeds and courageous acts. After learning of the 23rd's battle successes despite heavy casualties, Lucy told Rutherford: "little Webb cannot think of the loss – the suffering and sorrow – but the glory the victory you have gained."<sup>27</sup> General George Crook, Rutherford's commander, also earned Webb's respect. These early memories deeply influenced Webb Hayes throughout his life. His admiration for his father as a warrior, relationships developed with military officers, and efforts to make veterans' courageous sacrifices meaningful remained driving forces in his life.

After the Civil War Rutherford was elected to Congress and served two terms. He then went on to serve as governor of Ohio. During portions of his father's early political service Webb and his elder brother Birchard lived in Fremont, Ohio with his great-uncle Sardis Birchard, an enterprising and wealthy businessman.<sup>28</sup> A major property owner, general store owner, and banker, Sardis was a highly influential man in Fremont. Through Sardis Webb learned business skills and forged bonds with local leaders.

An extremely wealthy man, Sardis had paid for Rutherford's education and then went on to pay for Rutherford's children to attend college. Webb was sent to Cornell University like his

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<sup>26</sup> Emily Apt Geer, *First Lady: The Life of Lucy Webb Hayes* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1984), 62.

<sup>27</sup> Lucy Webb Hayes [LWH] to RBH, 26 May 1864, Rutherford B. Hayes Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>28</sup> Sardis Birchard was Rutherford B. Hayes's mother's younger brother. He became the legal guardian of RBH and his sister Fanny Arabella after Sophia Birchard Hayes's husband died.

elder brother Birchard. A letter from professor Reverend W.D. Wilson stated, “the Faculty have been indulgent in his case & suspended the rule which otherwise, would have thrown him out of the University in consequence of these failure.”<sup>29</sup> The tone implies that it was Webb’s status and relations that spared earlier expulsion from the school. If he had not been the son of an influential politician, he would not have received such special treatment. Having a father who was governor of Ohio, Webb was placed in a situation that proved extremely advantageous. Because of his familial and political connections, Webb remained in one of the most renowned universities in the nation.

Two years later the Republican party tapped Rutherford B. Hayes to run for an unprecedented third term as governor of the state.<sup>30</sup> Webb wrote his father and shared his political ideals for his father:

We had all been looking forward to beautifying and rendering Spiegel Grove comfortable and pleasant to live in...All this must be given up to a great extent if you are elected. Yes, if. And yet I hardly think I’d like to see you defeated. Pride.<sup>31</sup>

In the fall of 1875, Webb did not return to Cornell, but remained at Spiegel Grove, planting and building fences, trellises, and a chicken yard while his father campaigned. Although Rutherford B. Hayes won by the slimmest of margins, he managed to unite all factions of the Republican Party. The race attracted national attention and almost immediately there was talk of the presidency.<sup>32</sup>

While his parents lived in rented quarters in Columbus as the campaign progressed, Webb managed affairs at Spiegel Grove. It was during this time that Webb’s true love and

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<sup>29</sup> W.D. Wilson to RBH, 27 March 1873, Rutherford B. Hayes Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>30</sup> Ari Hoogenboom, *Rutherford B. Hayes: Warrior & President* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1995), 256.

<sup>31</sup> Webb Cook Hayes [WCH] to RBH, 7 June 1875, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>32</sup> Ari Hoogenboom, *Rutherford B. Hayes: Warrior & President*, 259.

passion for the property flourished. Webb's position at his childhood home altered as he aged, shifting from being influenced by the environment to exercising influence on the place. He accomplished much, however his youthful energy and "take charge" personality at times overwhelmed family members. During this time period Webb's preference for power ended up causing strain between he and his mother. Lucy wrote to her son Birchard and stated that Webb was "inclined to assume a little too much."<sup>33</sup> This letter shows that while his parents permitted him some responsibility they did not appreciate his tendency to become overzealous in his use and pursuit of power.

This was partially due to his new position within the family. During the governorship Webb spent time in Columbus, acting as his father's courier, correspondent, and confidential secretary. Always surrounded by and fascinated with politics, Webb now found himself in the midst of influential state and national leaders. That spring Webb headed to Cincinnati for the National Republican Convention.<sup>34</sup> Although not a delegate, Webb helped promote his father's interests. He saw firsthand how decisions were made and deals negotiated. Webb sent his parents, waiting with apparent calm in Columbus, optimistic dispatches.<sup>35</sup> And finally, on the seventh ballot, Webb proved correct. Governor Rutherford B. Hayes became the Republican nominee for the presidency of the United States.

Weeks of tension followed for the Hayeses as one of the most controversial presidential elections in American history unfolded. Rutherford B. Hayes lost the popular vote of 1876. However, on March 2, 1877, an electoral commission settled the matter, deciding in his favor. With emotions running high, Webb believed it necessary to carry a pistol to protect his father.

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<sup>33</sup> LWH to Birchard Austin Hayes [BAH], 7 November 1875, RBH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>34</sup> Ari Hoogenboom, *Rutherford B. Hayes: Warrior & President*, 262.

<sup>35</sup> Emily Apt Geer, *First Lady: The Life of Lucy Webb Hayes*, 122.

The potential for violence remained a concern. As a result, Rutherford's inauguration was held quietly in the privacy of the Red Room of the White House on Sunday March 4th.

Two weeks later Webb Hayes celebrated his twenty-first birthday. He was the only one of the three older sons to live at the White House. While not as scholarly as his elder brother, he was perhaps more practical and a significant help to his father as his unofficial secretary and adviser.<sup>36</sup> Capable, intelligent, and multi-talented, Webb became his father's right hand man.<sup>37</sup> Sometimes with the president and sometimes on his behalf, he called on Congressmen, cabinet members, and foreign legations. Webb traveled with his parents, attending celebrations, West Point graduations, and commemorative events. He often escorted single ladies to White House dinners. Although boisterous and fun-loving, Webb Hayes understood the need for discretion in handling sensitive issues for his father.

Despite four years in Washington, Webb maintained his ties to Fremont, where he oversaw the construction of an addition to the home at Spiegel Grove, assisted with plans for the Birchard Public Library, and handled the family's personal finances.<sup>38</sup> As time progressed Webb's managerial pursuits extended past his father's life and into his mother's, even at times stretching into his siblings' lives. He was unable to turn off his professional advisory capacities that he had obtained in the White House in his personal life. It was during this time that Webb began to take on a more active role in his family's financial activities. He helped manage their taxes, assets, and real estate. Webb entwined his responsibilities of son and adviser. This position of power caused a shift in the familial hierarchy, which led to friction between siblings during the creation of the Hayes Memorial.

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<sup>36</sup> Emily Apt Geer, *First Lady: The Life of Lucy Webb Hayes*, 141.

<sup>37</sup> Ari Hoogenboom, *Rutherford B. Hayes: Warrior & President*, 303.

<sup>38</sup> Emily Apt Geer, *First Lady: The Life of Lucy Webb Hayes*, 191.

Russell Hastings had recommended that someone with business integrity take the helm on the Hayes Memorial project. Webb certainly had business experience. After leaving Washington D.C., he joined the Whipple Lock Manufacturing Company in Cleveland. Linus Austin, a family friend and cousin, served as president while Webb was secretary and treasurer. Webb's connections with Ohio's prominent political and business leaders led to a position in the Thomson-Houston Electric Company. By 1886, he and former Ohio governor Myron T. Herrick, James Parmelee, and W. H. Lawrence organized the National Carbon Company, which they later merged with Thomson-Houston Electric. With Webb as vice president, one of the company's plants was established in Fremont, where production reached more than 15,000 carbon rods per day. Through continued mergers, the company is today known Union Carbide.

Despite his business successes, the next several years tested Webb Hayes' resolve and resilience. Devastating fires wiped out Whipple Manufacturing, and later, the National Carbon Company's Fremont plant. After the loss of the Whipple Manufacturing, Rutherford B. Hayes wrote Webb's sister:

Webb is still busy gathering up the insurance money on the burnt factory of which he is Treasurer & Secretary – the salvage & remains generally. It will be a loss to us – for I look upon it as my affair – of \$10,000 to \$12,000. Rather embarrassing in times when my real estate is unproductive and unsalable. But he is brave and cheerful. Is looking around for what next...<sup>39</sup>

This letter emphasized Rutherford's own losses in connection to the fire while highlighting his son's resilience. Webb used these hindrances as learning experiences, stretching his taste for adventures into other industries.

As a leader in two major companies, Webb had begun to step outside of his father's shadow and evolve into an important man in his own right. Working in these companies not

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<sup>39</sup> RBH to Fanny Hayes, 15 March 1886, RBH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

only provided Webb opportunities for networking with important and wealthy businessmen, but also taught him valuable lessons in patience and determination. The exposure to delays and difficulties in his early business ventures would prove useful in his future endeavors into local history. These qualities were those that Hastings encouraged the Hayes children to look for in their leader.

Less than a year after his mother's death, Webb's close personal friend General George Crook died suddenly in Chicago. Webb escorted Crook's body to his home in Oakland, Maryland. He implored his illustrious father to use his influence to garner support for a memorial, honoring Crook's service in the Civil War and Indian Wars that followed. Webb explained to his father that:

I am very anxious in this matter on two a/cs [accounts] for the General's benefit & 2nd for my own piece of mind. The General hasn't many friends and but few influential ones and recently has become imbued with the idea that they have all forgotten him. I want to have a clear conscience and know that the family...did all that they could.<sup>40</sup>

It was to be the first of his involvement in establishing many military memorials in the United States and throughout the world.

Then January of 1893, the former president, after taking the train from a board meeting at Ohio State University, stopped in Cleveland at the Austin home where he enjoyed Webb's company. Just as Rutherford B. Hayes was boarding the train for home, he developed chest pains. Webb encouraged him to remain at the Austin home, but President Hayes told his son that he "would rather die in Spiegel Grove than live anywhere else."<sup>41</sup> Webb telegraphed ahead. When they arrived in Fremont, Dr. Frederick Hilbish met them. Surrounded by family, President Rutherford B. Hayes died peacefully at 11 P.M. on the night of the seventeenth of January.

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<sup>40</sup> WCH to RBH, 17 March 1888, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>41</sup> Ari Hoogenboom, *Rutherford B. Hayes: Warrior & President*, 532.

Within weeks of his father's death, Webb Hayes' long-held dream and desire to create a museum and library at Spiegel Grove as a memorial to his parents resurfaced. However, his plans had to wait as other responsibilities took over his time.

His love and admiration for the military had never ceased. A veteran member of the First Cleveland Troop, later known as Troop A of the Ohio National Guard, Webb served as a personal escort to all United States presidents from his father to Taft, and at the funeral ceremonies of three Ohio presidents (Hayes, Garfield, and McKinley).<sup>42</sup> The bonds between the Hayes and McKinley families began in the Civil War when Presidents Hayes and McKinley served together in the 23rd Ohio. They grew ever closer over the years. William and Ida McKinley were the most frequent guests at the White House during the Hayes administration. After William McKinley's election to the presidency, he sought out Webb Hayes to serve as an unofficial advisor.

Never driven by ideology but always by action and adventure, Webb received a commission as major in the First Ohio Cavalry. President McKinley personally authorized Webb to accompany Major General W. R. Shafter to Havana. Webb Hayes then left with the Fifth Army Corps for Santiago, Cuba. He served through the campaigns of Santiago de Cuba and the invasion of Puerto Rico. Despite wounds received during the crossing of the San Juan River, Webb took part in the assault on San Juan Hill. At the outset of the insurrection in the Philippines, the always adventurous Webb was commissioned lieutenant colonel of the 31st U.S. Infantry. After a harrowing thirty-three day voyage aboard the *Manauense*, Webb arrived in Manila in late November 1899. Within hours of landing, he led a rescue party to free American soldiers garrisoned at Vigan Island. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for this act of

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<sup>42</sup> *Col. Webb C. Hayes*, circa 1913.

heroism.<sup>43</sup> Webb also participated in the Boxer Rebellion, the China Relief Expedition, and the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>44</sup> As he fought and traveled throughout the world, Webb, like his father, developed a passion for collecting that influenced the collections of the Hayes Memorial.

It was in 1897 that the children of Rutherford B. Hayes approached the state of Ohio about creating a memorial in honor of their parents. The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society (OSAHS), a state-funded organization for the preservation of Ohio's past, seemed a suitable home for their father's legacy. There was an established connection between the Hayes family and that organization. Rutherford B. Hayes had been the president of the society upon his death and had served a long tenure with the society. The children sent a written request to General Roeliff Brinkerhoff, the president of the OSAHS proposing that if the OSAHS would raise "a fund of at least twenty-five thousand dollars to be set aside and managed in such a way that the principal shall not be encroached upon, but the income from it devoted to preserving and caring for the Spiegel Grove property," the "twenty-five acres, together with the personal relics, curios, paintings, and property now in the home place..." would belong to the OSAHS. If they managed to erect a fire-proof building to house the president's "Library Americana" and hopefully "the curios and relics now loaned to Birchard Library and such other historical relics as we might secure from time to time." Once the artifacts and manuscripts were housed in the building, the public would have access to them for research and other academic purposes. The children also asked for the right to reside at the homestead with their families at such time as they saw fit.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *Col. Webb C. Hayes*, circa 1913.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas J. Brady, "Webb C. Hayes: Gilded Age Ideologue or Adventurer?," *Northwest Ohio Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (1994):130.

<sup>45</sup> Hayes Children to General Roeliff Brinkerhoff [RB], 2 April 1898, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.



Brinkerhoff replied that their proposal was “quite liberal” and that he hoped that the organization would be able to raise the funds in a timely manner.<sup>46</sup> He assured Webb that the Executive Committee of the OSAHS would take the Spiegel Grove project and make it a “historical monument for the state, + under state control.”<sup>47</sup> To share the Spiegel Grove campaign with members of OSAHS, Brinkerhoff and the OSAHS secretary E.O. Randall created a circular that presented the proposal. The circular had three parts; the first was the appeal made by the Hayes family, the second, Brinkerhoff’s description of the project, and then endorsements by two Ohio political leaders, John Sherman and William McKinley. Sherman had been Rutherford B. Hayes’s Secretary of the Treasury and was currently the Secretary of State under President McKinley. The circular was created in hopes of garnering financial backers.<sup>48</sup> In general, those who received the brochure were interested in the project but unwilling to commit to a specific gift amount. One such man was “The Asphalt King” Amzi L. Barber, who had grown up in Ohio and attended Oberlin College with members of the OSAHS board. In his reply to the circular, he stated:

You are quite right in supposing that I am interested in this project. I think that the offer made by the heirs of General Hayes is generous and that there ought to be no difficulty about securing the fund of \$25,000.00. I shall be pleased to contribute toward the fund, but will not at this moment name the amount. I would be glad if you could inform me later on how the subscriptions come in and what balance, if any, may be required.<sup>49</sup>

His views were echoed by others. This indecisiveness was mirrored by members of the OSAHS. Birchard felt that Brinkerhoff was reluctant to act in pushing for funding.<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately, this averseness was not new to the head of the OSAHS. Less than a month after receiving the offer,

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<sup>46</sup> RB to WCH, 5 April 1898, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>47</sup> RB to WCH, 9 April 1898, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>48</sup> RB and E.O. Randall [EOR] for the OSAHS, *Confidential Circular*, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>49</sup> Amzi Lorenzo Barber to Myron T. Herrick, 26 April 1899, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>50</sup> BAH to WCH, 12 January 1899, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

members of the OSAHS felt that their president was not aggressive enough. Ohio State Librarian C.B. Galbreath informed Webb that he felt that Brinkerhoff was “not as deeply interested as he should be,” much to his own chagrin.<sup>51</sup>

At about this time, the Hayes children by this time has assigned control of the Spiegel Grove property and its assets entirely to Webb. However, in the meantime the US had declared war on Spain, and Webb had joined the army and was fighting in Cuba as a part of the Spanish American War. His distance made it difficult to communicate with the OSAHS, causing some delays in the Spiegel Grove matter.<sup>52</sup> The OSAHS asked for the deadline for raising the funds to be pushed from July 1, 1898 to January 1, 1899. E.O. Randall explained “This is in the hopes that Spain will be licked and that you will return covered with glory long before that time and be able to assist us in carrying out this project” as the need for delay.<sup>53</sup> Much to Webb’s chagrin, the OSAHS refused to continue to distribute the circulars because they felt that the appeal was futile without Webb’s partnership and full attention.<sup>54</sup> While some would argue this added to Webb’s ego and notion that he alone could see the project to completion, at this time Webb saw their reliance on him as a nuisance. Their dependence on him caused him to hesitate in following his own personal interests. Desiring to return to war but anxious about the Spiegel Grove Matter, Webb wrote General Russell Hastings that one of his only deterrents from returning to the battlefield was the wanting to see “the Spiegel Grove Memorial endowed.”<sup>55</sup>

It was truly Webb’s cooperation that they needed, as his siblings’ interest and involvement had lessened. Rutherford Platt Hayes did not approve of the delay, though he

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<sup>51</sup> C.B. Galbreath to WCH, 31 March 1899, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>52</sup> The years following found Webb involved in continued warfare, including the Philippine Insurrection, the Boxer Rebellion, and the Russo Japanese War.

<sup>53</sup> EOR to WCH, 1 June 1898, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>54</sup> EOR to WCH, 28 June 1898, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>55</sup> WCH to General Russell Hastings [RH], 30 January 1899, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

grudgingly signed off on it. Displeased and concerned himself, Webb wrote to General Russell Hastings to “share the worry and the burden” in which he found himself.<sup>56</sup> Though Hastings offered his knowledge of the situation, he wrote, “I will be very plain and open with you and state that rumors have come to me that possibly you children could not give a sound title until all other debts of the estate are satisfied. Is there any truth in this rumor.”<sup>57</sup> Unfortunately Webb’s response is lost, but there was some truth to rumors Hastings mentioned. During this time the Hayes children had been attempting to pay off debts linked to the various properties under their ownership. Webb in particular was using his funds from his businesses to pay off these debts. Eldest Hayes sibling Birchard wrote to his sister Fanny about the matter, stating:

Since his financial good fortune Webb is getting somewhat reckless in money matters and has in the past few weeks been paying off debts of the Hayes estate; up to this time he has advanced \$45000 and as security desires that we deed to him the estate property in Fremont and Toledo.<sup>58</sup>

While the siblings may have been a bit hesitant or judgmental in regards to Webb’s actions, they did indeed deed the estate properties in Fremont over to him.

Hastings wrote again to share one last bit of advice, “it is your duty first to hurry up the settlement of the estate with all expedition possible. It will take, or should take, to realize the best results several years to close up the estate. Some one with force and business integrity should be especially placed in charge”<sup>59</sup> This last statement fit Webb especially well, as will be explained in the following chapter. From his birth Webb Cook Hayes was cultivated for a life of business, entrepreneurship, and the study of history. With supportive parents Webb rose to wealth and respect. His wealth and power permitted him to explore and expand his own interests, which

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<sup>56</sup> RH to WCH, 22 January 1899, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> BAH to Fanny Hayes, 5 April 1899, Fanny Hayes Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>59</sup> RH to WCH, 1 February 1899, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

included collecting, protecting, and preserving. After the death of his prominent parents, he lent his energies to preserving their memory at the family home of Spiegel Grove.

## CHAPTER II. DIFFICULT LABOR AND BIRTH

While Webb was the man with the proper skills for the task of opening the Hayes Memorial, his priorities were such they did not allow him to pursue the goal immediately. Therefore, his dream had to wait ten years to come to fruition. In the year 1908, Webb had returned from war and was now ready to pursue the dream again. Webb had learned from his first experience with the OSAHS. Instead of approaching them with the entire property and belongings of Rutherford B. Hayes, he offered to give parts of the property over as a state park. This began in 1908 when a ten-acre strip of the property was given to the state to be used as a state park. The land was positioned between Buckland Avenue and the historic Harrison Military Trail of the War of 1812. In his proposition of this idea, Webb reminded the OSAHS of their initial plans and his hopes to see them to reality. However, he asked that the OSAHS keep the concept of the memorial private<sup>60</sup>. Webb shared his intentions with Birchard, stating that this gift of ten acres was a show of “good faith” between himself and the OSAHS.<sup>61</sup> Even though the OSAHS had failed to complete the project a decade prior, Webb wanted to believe that they could accomplish it the second time around.

During 1909-1910 Webb slowly donated more of the Spiegel Grove property to the state of Ohio, totaling twenty acres. Webb was actively involved in planning this park, down to ordering the signage for the property, and banning dogs and motorcycles. The second deed transferred more of his father’s land to the state. Both deeds emphasized that the land was to “be maintained and used as a state park.” Once the OSAHS proved themselves competent caregivers and managers of the Harrison Trail park, Webb felt that the topic of the memorial could be brought up again. The second deed asked for the erection of a fireproof building on the property.

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<sup>60</sup> WCH to EOR, 7 October 1908, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>61</sup> WCH to BAH, 16 December 1908, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

Webb suggested the museum's location be near the Jefferson Street entrance to the park.<sup>62</sup> The building was to "be in the form of a reference library and museum...for the purpose of preservation and forever keeping in Spiegel Grove all papers, books, and manuscripts left by the late Rutherford B. Hayes," and was to be open to the public for use and enjoyment.<sup>63</sup> The 1898 proposal to the OSAHS lacked this clarity. The years had given Webb the opportunity to fine-tune his ideas for a memorial. He was prepared to make this dream a reality.

Webb further insured that the land would be used per his request by writing up another land deed on March 12, 1910. This deed stipulated that the OSAHS had three years to build a fireproof building, hearkening back to the requests he and his siblings had made years earlier. The building was to "be in the form of a branch reference library and museum of the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, and the construction and decoration...shall be in the nature of a memorial...and forever remain open to the public," ensuring its place in local and state history.<sup>64</sup> The description of the Hayes Memorial changed in the short time between the deeds. Since the project was such a personal one did not require the approval of the national government, changes were quickly made by Webb. Not only had he decided what the building should look like, but he had altered the nature of the library. It was now to become a branch within the OSAHS system. He also added that the library was to remain free to the public forever. While these changes are relatively minor, it was a sign of the inconsistency in plans that would plague the project in the future.

In order to forge a proactive relationship between the OSAHS and his Hayes Memorial project, Webb implored the OSAHS to create "a permanent committee of the life members of the

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<sup>62</sup> Charles Richard Williams, ed., *Diary and Letters of Rutherford Birchard Hayes Volume V 1891-1893* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1926), 280.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

Society, of, say nine, to act as trustees of Spiegle [sic] Grove, although officially known simply as a committee of the Society.”<sup>65</sup> Ideally, this board would spread the liability and responsibility in the matter between the OSAHS and Webb. The OSAHS formed a Spiegel Grove Committee to supervise the creation of the Memorial, and this committee steered the project with Webb at the helm. The first task before them was to strategize the planning for the Memorial.

Anticipating state support, the Spiegel Grove Committee met with two very important partners, the Improvement Committee of the Fremont City Council and architect James R. Merriam of the Columbus, Ohio firm Howard & Merriam on August 4, 1911. Of the \$50,000 the state had reserved for the project, \$40,000 was to be used for the erection and outfitting of the memorial while the other \$10,000 was earmarked for “the improvement of drives, roads and the State’s proportion of the cost of improvement by paving of the streets,” limiting the scale of the memorial library and museum.<sup>66</sup> The Spiegel Grove Committee (consisting of Webb Hayes, his close friend and president of the OSAHS G. Frederick Wright, George F. Bareis, Daniel J. Ryan, E. O. Randall, Edwin F. Wood, W. C. Mills, L.P. Schaus, J. W. Harper, H. E. Buck, and B. F. Prince) had permitted Merriam to draw up a plan that would cost the amount provided, but Webb pushed for grander designs. These differences he proposed varied from the size and style of the heating systems to decorative flourishes in ceilings, and much more.

The committee and the architect found themselves in a conundrum. They did not want to insult the Hayes descendant and benefactor of the project, but his stubbornness hindered progress that could easily be made. Committee member William C. Mills’ wrote, “Don’t you believe that it would be wise for the architects to proceed under the plans laid out by the Committee...a word

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<sup>65</sup> WCH to EOR, 7 October 1908, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>66</sup> EOR to P.J. Rock, 2 August 1911, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Libraries & Museums.

from you will cause the architects to go forward with their work.”<sup>67</sup> -Mills’ beseeching tone implies that the committee sought Webb’s approval before taking any action. This mirrored the concerns voiced by E.O. Randall in 1898. The Spiegel Grove Committee, which Webb had believed would be able to supervise the project, did not want full responsibility for it. While the state of Ohio and the OSAHS were the primary owners and funders of the project, it was Webb who had born the idea of a presidential library and museum. The project was his brainchild and without his perseverance the project could not come to fruition.

However, it is possible that the OSAHS committee members were attempting to pacify Webb to maintain his health. In late 1911 Webb was diagnosed with “an aneurysm of the aorta,” or as he phrased it, “being of Sound Mind, but having an alleged Aneurism of the Aorta, (i.e. “a blown up inner tube”).<sup>68</sup> For all his nonchalance, Webb prepared for the worst. He filled a composition notebook with detailed plans for his Memorial, down to the position of shrubbery and boulders on the grounds. In the event of his death, his elder brother Birchard would take responsibility for the project. Amidst letters detailing the plans for the Memorial, Webb’s colleagues sent him well wishes and newspaper clippings containing recommendations for health procedures. With the project’s leader in such a precarious state of health, the OSAHS aimed to keep him as relaxed as possible in order to relieve the stressors in his life.

For an active man such as Webb, this health condition was quite debilitating and depressing. The Memorial became a beacon of hope for the man: “If he [Myron] and dear old Doctor Wright can pull that through to a completion, so that the structure can go up early next

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<sup>67</sup> William C. Mills [WCM] to WCH, 21 December 1911, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>68</sup> “Spiegel Grove Fremont Ohio Home and Grounds,” December 1911, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.



spring I'll try to **be good**."<sup>69</sup> As he saw it, the Memorial was the only thing that following the doctor's orders worth it: "If it wasn't for my great desire to see the Memorial Library finished I wouldn't care much."<sup>70</sup> Knowing the link between Webb's health and the Memorial, the OSAHS acted to appease the ill man. They needed him healthy and able to carry the project.

Before construction could truly begin, the OSAHS needed to increase funding for the memorial library and museum. As with the initial asks, wealthy individuals were asked first. Instead of asking an affluent person who had local connections like Amzi Lorenzo Barber, the first major donor Webb and the OSAHS hoped to secure was millionaire Andrew Carnegie. The wealthy industrialist seemed a viable donor for the project due to his passion for funding libraries across the nation. Carnegie personified the American dream, having gone from rags to riches with his expansion of the steel industry. Members of the OSAHS and the Spiegel Grove Committee journeyed to New York in January 1911 to gain the support of Carnegie. After hearing them out, Carnegie agreed to support the project if the people of Fremont were taxed to maintain it.<sup>71</sup>

Dealings with Carnegie soon went sour. Carnegie's personal secretary James Bertram fought the project from the beginning. Bertram found the letter containing the plan for the memorial library confusing and complicated. He did not mask his displeasure, replying that, "The Library matter is badly explained. It would be better to rewrite your letter and make it clear. Distinguish between a Library of, meaning books, and a Library meaning a bilding [sic],

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<sup>69</sup> WCH to G. Frederick Wright [GFW], 12 December 1911, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>70</sup> WCH to GFW, 24 December 1911, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>71</sup> Myron T. Herrick [MTH] to Andrew Carnegie, 6 April 1911, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

etc.” No matter what changes or clarifications Wright made to the plan, Bertram did not budge.<sup>72</sup>

Though Webb and the OSAHS saw Bertram as belligerent and purposefully difficult, with modern foresight, his actions are understandable and rational. At the time, no presidential library existed. The project was a gamble. Why should such a large amount of funding be put forth into an enterprise that was not guaranteed to succeed? Without a model, the mission of the memorial lacked clarity. To convince Carnegie, Webb developed a mission for his project. He explained that even though the library was a memorial that housed his father’s collections, the library would be open and supported by the public:

The plan...outlined...would unite the work of a public library for the county of Sandusky with the preservation of this valuable historical collection for the benefit of students of American history generally, and the gift which would thus be secured would enable the Society to retain Spiegel Grove, with its historical associations.

In fact, the Hayes Memorial library would become the main library in Sandusky County, with the already existing Birchard Library becoming a branch in its system. Birchard Library had also been funded by the Hayes family. Though Webb’s description of the project was the clearest it had ever been up until this point, it altered once again. The description likely changed from the verbal explanation at the winter visit and between Wright’s letter and Webb’s. To Bertram, it seemed that Webb and the OSAHS were unsure of the scope and content of the project and therefore it was not a safe investment. Myron T. Herrick explained that Bertram was “persistent in sticking to the library idea, claiming that they never could establish a precedent by departing from it.”<sup>73</sup> Under Bertram’s guidance Carnegie began to withdraw from the project.

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<sup>72</sup> James P. Bertram to WCH, 9 May 1911, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>73</sup> MTH to WCH, 20 January 1912, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

Never one to back down from a challenge, Webb continued his attempt to engage the millionaire. The OSAHS did not understand Webb's determination. E.O. Randall wrote, "I was very much surprised at your statement that you are going to continue your assaults on him [Carnegie]." <sup>74</sup> Randall's use of the words *assaults* insinuates that Webb's method of persuasion was rather brutish and forceful. The OSAHS had preferred to take a distant approach and avoid confrontation, especially with those with powerful connections. Webb assumed that he would get his way through sheer force of will. His determination had worked in the past. Webb believed that Carnegie had verbally given his assent, emphasizing that: "Mr. Carnegie had practically agreed to furnish \$60,000 on certain conditions for maintenance" and therefore was bound to the agreement. <sup>75</sup>

Following Webb's wishes, Herrick continued to pursue Carnegie for funding. By early 1912 relations between the two parties grew even more complicated. Herrick wrote to Randall that in 1911 it seemed that he had secured \$60,000 from Carnegie, but the current situation was less clear. By January 1912 the committee discerned Carnegie's final decision; the industrial mogul was firmly unwilling to change his mind and about donating to the cause. Herrick stated that Bertram's continued displeasure with the plans prevented the industrialist from being agreeable to the subject, to the extent that Carnegie denied having made the agreement in the first place until Herrick produced written proof. <sup>76</sup> While this was quite a blow to the project, Webb did not dwell on it long. He confessed to Herrick, "Personally I am a bit relieved as the Memorial will now be a purely personal one from myself and a few personal friends of my father and mother and from his native state." <sup>77</sup> Losing Carnegie's support provided Webb with the

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<sup>74</sup> EOR to WCH, 25 October 1911, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>75</sup> WCH to MTH, 30 November 1911, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>76</sup> MTH to WCH, 20 January 1912, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>77</sup> WCH to MTH, 27 January 1912, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

opportunity to reevaluate the situation and remember his mission of his as a very personal one. The influence of close friends and family on the Hayes Memorial set it apart from the later established federally funded libraries. Rather than the nation and its government creating a presidential library for American posterity, the Hayes Memorial was created to celebrate the life of a man who was not only a president but also a father and friend.

Within a month plans finally began to move along. The patience of the OSAHS and its committees dwindled as they grew tired of Webb's absenteeism. Therefore, the committee insisted that Webb's Memorial plans take precedence over his personal life and other passions. One of the largest distractions in Webb's life was his soon-to-be-wife Mary. After being a bachelor for over fifty years, preparing for married life was proving difficult. Unaccustomed to balancing his copious interests with those of another, Webb had to reprioritize his life. While Webb was visiting his sister Fanny in Annapolis, Maryland, Mills wrote to him and asked "I do hope that you will be here; make every effort to get here as I am quite desirous for you to see the plans before they are accepted by the committee."<sup>78</sup> Mills imploration grew from plea to demand. Webb did make the meeting, leaving behind his fiancée Mary Miller Brinkerhoff. He wrote to her "I am greatly pleased with it [the plans] but to hurry it along have agreed to return...for a meeting next Monday to formally adopt the plans."<sup>79</sup> Being away from his wife-to-be was difficult for Webb:

I return to Columbus tomorrow afternoon and will attend the meeting to pass on the plans of the memorial Building Monday afternoon and perhaps be able to get home in time to see you...this is the first time that I have failed to see you morning noon and night for over two months and I do so long for you.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> WCM to WCH, 9 April 1912, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>79</sup> WCH to Mary Miller Hayes [MMH], 18 April 1912, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

During this time Webb was also meeting with Charles Richard Williams, who was writing a biography of Rutherford B. Hayes. Webb was reading over the manuscript.

<sup>80</sup> WCH to MMH, 20 April 1912, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

During this meeting, the committee accepted the building plans. On April 24, 1912, the *Fremont Daily News* related the news to the public, stating that bids for the building would be approved in May and building beginning a month later. By May 2 the newspaper optimistically predicted that the memorial would be completed by the end of the summer. The prediction, like the Society and Webb, was incorrect because the project would take four more years to come to fruition.

Aside from the complications arising from the building itself, Webb and the OSAHS encountered further problems when attempting to improve the streets around Spiegel Grove. The Spiegel Grove Committee negotiated with city of Fremont and the county commissioners for the paving and installation of sewer and water mains on Hayes, Cleveland, and Buckland Avenues since the second half of 1911. To pay for this project, the committee planned to use \$10,000 of the original \$50,000 given to them by the state. These funds would pay for twelve feet of brick pavement on each side of the park. The city would use private contracts to pave Hayes Avenue and the commissioners would grade and drain Cleveland Avenue. Property owners would be asked by the city to pay for an additional twelve feet of pavement as well as paying for the engineering, intersections, etc.<sup>81</sup> City officials were so agreeable to the plan that they extended it to parts of Birchard Avenue and Jefferson Street. The city used private contracts to pave Hayes Avenue. County commissioners graded and drained Cleveland Avenue. Property owners were asked by the city to pay for an additional twelve feet of pavement and for the engineering of intersections.

With plans so complicated, it was not surprising that the street project was delayed. The city, county, and township bickered over who would pay for the different improvements on each

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<sup>81</sup> EOR to P.J. Rock, 2 August 1911, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

street. It was also unclear whether the remaining funds from the pavement of Hayes Avenue could be used to improve the other streets. After involving the Ohio Attorney General and debating the matter for months, the OSAHS decided to give the city the funds to improve Buckland Avenue. Property owners were thankful for the assistance, as the cost of Buckland Avenue outweighed the cost of Hayes Avenue. Cleveland Avenue's improvements were covered under a separate plan. The state of Ohio would pay for half, the county one fourth and property owners one fourth.

Instead of moving forward once the road issues were resolved, progress was once again delayed. In a troublesome oversight, Webb and the committee failed to provide the state Auditor with the abstract title to Spiegel Grove, leading to a drawn out legal battle that pushed back the plans for laying of the cornerstone on August 2.<sup>82</sup> State inspectors further hindered the architects by delaying the approval of the final plans for the memorial. The postponement put a wrench in the elaborate plans that Webb had already had orchestrated for the opening. In May Webb confirmed President William Howard Taft's presence for the laying of the cornerstone. Webb's excitement and optimism for the ceremony outpaced his knowledge regarding matters involving governmental bureaucracy. The committee members attempted to rein in Webb, reminding him:

Aren't you a little previous about that arrangement? As matters are going now, it will be very much later than that before the cornerstone can be laid. It will be almost six weeks from now before work can be commenced even for the excavation, and it will be probably a month after the excavation is commenced before the foundation can be commenced, certainly before the cornerstone would be placed, and that will be at least September 1<sup>st</sup>.<sup>83</sup>

Randall reminded Webb of how long the progress would actually take based on the complications that had arisen thus far. Webb had not taken into consideration the actual length

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<sup>82</sup> WCM to WCH, 23 March and 11 May 1912, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>83</sup> EOR to WCH, 24 May 1912, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

of time each step of the process would take, which in turn would extend the actual ceremony date well past the one he had imagined. Nor had he learned from the numerous delays and obstacles the project had already encountered. In all of his years working with governmental bureaucracy and the public, Webb had yet to fully grasp the realities of the “red tape” required to turn vision into a reality.

The time had finally come for the committee to send word out asking for bids for the construction of the project. On July 12, 1912 Mills placed an advertisement stating that the committee would be taking bids for one month. The August 16, 1912 edition of the *Norwalk Evening Herald* listed Fremont contractor Carl F. Steinle with the winning bid of \$35,000. The contract was approved by the Attorney General and Auditor by the end of the month [August], allowing the contractor to begin when he was able. Groundbreaking on the Hayes Memorial began a month later, with the first shovel full of dirt removed by Ohio Senator Dean. A story in the September 14, 1912 edition of the *Van Wert Daily Bulletin* listed Dean as “instrumental in securing the appropriation for the building.” Webb involved those who had petitioned for his project in the physical aspects of the building, both to give them recognition and to promote the project using the men’s notability as a tool for legitimization.

Webb was not the only member of the Spiegel Grove Committee desiring to promote the project with the assistance of celebrities. Mills conspired to reschedule the cornerstone laying ceremonies and to invite local “notables.”<sup>84</sup> Webb went a step further, extending invitations to dignitaries across the nation. President Taft once again was invited, along with New Jersey Governor and presidential candidate Woodrow Wilson. First Lady Nellie Taft was the daughter of Rutherford B. Hayes’s former law partner. Wilson happened to be friends with Charles

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<sup>84</sup> WCM to WCH, 24 August 1912, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

Richard Williams, Rutherford B. Hayes's biographer. Ohio's two gubernatorial candidates were also invited.

Keeping with the pattern from the previous year, the committee's plans encountered a road block that delayed the scheduled October 4<sup>th</sup> ceremonies. Webb and the contractor had reached a standstill. The two of them argued over the removal of trees to make way for the museum building. Webb went so far as to order Steinle to change the location of the building in order to save one oak in particular. Having lost patience with Webb, Steinle contacted Mills about Webb's intrusions. Mills wrote to Webb, stressing the importance of the placement of the museum. He emphasized that the plans had been created with the specific location for the building in mind, meaning that changing the plans could severely set back the memorial's progress. He stressed that neither the building committee nor the contractor agreed with Webb, and they argued, "the Building is to be permanently located, that it will last many years after the tree is gone."<sup>85</sup>

Ten days later postponement of the cornerstone laying ceremonies were announced in the local newspapers. Webb blamed the delay on the "general indifference displayed in connection with getting the Hayes Memorial under way." It is unclear who exactly fell under Webb's "general" label, but it can be assumed that his disagreement focused on the committee and the contractor. While Webb's disgruntled comments may seem out of hand when regarding a tree, these thoughts were not new to the project. These sentiments were like the ones his brother Rutherford Platt had voiced during the 1898 application to the OSAHS.

Both Webb and the OSAHS were extremely displeased after springtime visits to the site. When Lewis Schaus visited he observed that the work had not progressed much during the

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<sup>85</sup> WCM to WCH, 11 September 1912, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.



winter, except for the stone cutting.<sup>86</sup> Webb had been in the Caribbean during the first three months of 1912 and was unable to survey the work himself. Upon his arrival back in the United States, he immediately took control of the project. The walls had begun to rise on the southeast and west side of the building, but that did not appease him. There were multiple issues with the building progress that worried Webb, including what he considered very careless work in the beautiful stone facings of the memorial building.

There were also rumors that the people involved with the project contrived the delay because they disagreed with some of the distinguished guests' politics. Regardless of the cause, the "general indifference" Webb referred to lasted for over a month. By November 4<sup>th</sup> Webb's patience had reached its end as he wrote to Mills, "There was nothing done at all on the memorial building during the six beautiful days of last week. Howard has not been here, and now sends word that he will be here Wednesday. Please stir him up and get some action."<sup>87</sup> By mid-November some work was finally accomplished on the building, as the foundation was under way. This progress did not pacify Webb however. Against the contractor's wishes, he refused to relinquish supervision of the building process.

Along with working on the exterior and structure of the memorial, Webb was involved in planning the interior of the building. Lewis P. Schaus, chairman of the committee, advised Webb to reinstate some of the interior details that had been cut due to financial strain.<sup>88</sup> Interior details that were under discussion for reinstatement included: marble wainscoting, steps, floors, and columns in the rotunda; bronze doors for the rotunda and for the front of the memorial; plaster cartouches for the ceiling of the dome. Convinced of the importance of those items,

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<sup>86</sup> Lewis P. Schaus [LPS] to WCH, 2 April 1912, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>87</sup> WCH to WCM, 4 November 1912, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>88</sup> LPS to WCH, 5 November 1912, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

Webb agreed to supply \$6200 of his own money to “get within the appropriation for the building of the Hayes Memorial.”<sup>89</sup> This was not the last time Webb supplemented the Hayes Memorial with his own finances.

The budget was due to the state auditor by December 1, so the committee hurried to finalize their plans for the library. Staffing choices, pay rates, and more were up for discussion. The OSAHS asked for \$1000 a year from Ohio to maintain Spiegel Grove. Extra money was also requested from the state to cover the expenses of moving the collections into the newly constructed building and for the librarian’s salary. Mills asked Webb who he recommended for a librarian--a representative from the OSAHS or a local person. Webb asked the OSAHS whether Miss Lucy E. Keeler could be hired to work as the assistant librarian at the rate of \$500 per year. Keeler was a close friend and relative of the Hayes family who happened to be an accomplished writer and local historian. Webb was disappointed when Keeler declined the position. She did act as a substitute librarian when instances arose, however. As for the organization of the library, Webb decided upon the Robert Clarke Card Catalogue system to be consistent with the Congressional Library Classification system. He sought to make the Hayes Memorial library compatible with the national library system.

During this time Webb’s relationship with contractor Carl Steinle grew more strained. Webb thought the contractor was bullheaded and unwilling to listen to his requests. Steinle of course, thought the same thing of Webb. The colonel demanded that the foreman send any inspectors that came to the worksite directly to him. His fears were justified as inspectors began to find issues with the building construction. During his February 1914 visit to the site, state inspector Paul R. Murray documented the same concerns Webb had voiced. Murray stated that

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<sup>89</sup> WCH to LPS, 28 December 1912, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

he found improper building materials and that the contractor had not properly protected the unfinished building from the elements. The subsequent damage and poor work led Murray to report improper supervision as the root of the problem: “Exposure to the action of the elements, by reason of the lack of such protection, has resulted in damage to various parts of the work.”<sup>90</sup> The bad news continued as Murray stated that parts of the building would have to be taken down and restarted completely before any further work was done on the memorial. The lack of progress concerned the state auditor. Donahey wrote to Steinle Construction, remarking on the little amount of work done since the February inspection, stating, “I earnestly urge that work be started on this building...the fact that the building was supposed to be completed July 1, 1913, should urge your company to make every possible effort to complete this contract.”<sup>91</sup>

The involvement of state officials, the Hayes family, and local workers attracted the attention of the media. Following the state auditor’s report a series of controversies arose in the local newspapers. During this period, the *Fremont Daily News* released conflicting stories. On February 27, 1914 an article referenced shoddy construction techniques while the next reported there were only minor flaws. Unable to bear his work being scrutinized, contractor Steinle submitted his own piece on March 4, 1914 arguing, “no building will show a finer class of material of workmanship.” He even offered to hire an engineer of the OSAHS’s choice to examine his work. Despite Steinle’s claims of excellent construction, the project continued to flounder.

Amid these struggles between the state and the contractor, the architects and Webb found themselves at odds with each other. Multiple times during the construction Webb ordered

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<sup>90</sup> Paul R. Murray, “Report of Examination of *The Hayes Memorial Library and Museum Building* at Fremont,” 4 February 1914, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>91</sup> A.V. Donahey to the Steinle Construction Company, 4 June 1914, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

changes, causing delay in the contractor's construction and problems for the architects and their designs. One such disagreement between the parties was focused on the heating system for the building. Webb wanted it redesigned in order to make more space for artifacts and museum use. After nine long months of delays architect Oscar Howard wrote to W.C. Mills, asking Mills and other committee members to intercede. Mary Miller Hayes, Webb's wife, wrote of her husband's frustration in her diary:

The rumours of a general war in Europe have made us uneasy and the very slow progress on the Memorial Building with the neglect of proper inspection by the architect and the lack of plans for the interior work for the sub-contractors have greatly exasperated Col. Hayes so that we have planned to make an automobile trip tomorrow to visit the Memorial Hospital at Elyria and then go on to Cleveland to spend the night.<sup>92</sup>

Webb asked his cousin Lucy Keeler to keep an eye on the project while he was away.

Unfortunately, things continued to falter. Voicing disappointment and weariness Keeler wrote to Birchard Hayes, "...at last there is a feeble tap or two on the memorial building. I should think that putting it all together a week's work has been done since Webb left."<sup>93</sup> His concerns were justified, as he had made a vast investment of not only his time but his money in the project. The *Fremont Daily Messenger* article estimated that by the finalization of the project it would have taken \$25,000 of Webb's money. In today's dollars, that would be over half a million dollars.

Several weeks later Wright, Schaus, and Mills visited the site with Mary and Webb, "insisting quicker work" would be done on the Memorial Building.<sup>94</sup> While the Spiegel Grove Committee and OSAHS attempted to move things along with the memorial, Webb became embroiled in another debacle. The city of Fremont decided to rename certain streets around Spiegel Grove. Webb aimed to use the streets to secure local heroes and history in public

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<sup>92</sup> MMH Diary, 1 August 1914, MMH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>93</sup> Lucy Elliot Keeler [LEK] to BAH, 10 April 1914, BAH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>94</sup> MMH Diary, 27 April 1914, MMH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

memory, using Spiegel Grove as a focal point. Streets surrounding the Grove were named after presidents and politicians, including Grover Cleveland, William Howard Taft, Theodore Roosevelt, and William McKinley. Cleveland Avenue in particular proved to be troublesome, as the street's name changed as it progressed through Fremont. The section of the street that ran along the west side of Spiegel Grove was named in honor of President Grover Cleveland. Another portion of the same street was called Dickinson Street after a prominent pioneer family.

However, the city of Fremont thought this was too confusing and decided to change the name to Wilson Avenue for the street's entirety. City officials had dropped the names Dickinson and Cleveland on February 3, 1914. This insulted Webb. He had donated the portion of land and chosen the name Cleveland for it. He believed changing the names of the street dishonored those for whom they had been named. Webb sent a formal complaint to Sandusky County commissioners, reminding them of his generosity and their former approval of the names. Along with his complaint Webb also sent a petition signed by local land owners vouching to keep the names Dickinson and Cleveland. He ended his complaint with this ultimatum:

Should Charles G. Wilson of Toledo succeed in having your Board adopt a resolution changing the name of Cleveland Avenue, so named in honor of the former distinguished President and succeed in foisting his own name of Wilson, in place of it, you are hereby notified that the necessary legal steps will be taken to have the property dedicated as a road, revert to the former owner, and become a private driveway at his option.<sup>95</sup>

The former owner he referred to was himself. Webb threatened to rescind his donation of land if his wishes were not followed. With this simple act, he reminded the city of his generosity and his power to retract it. The fight reached city council, where a councilman revealed that the Wilson family had done the exact same thing. The November 25, 1914 edition of *The Fremont Daily News*, explained that the Wilson family had in fact donated the strip of land “upon the

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<sup>95</sup> WCH to Board of Commissioners Sandusky County, 23 November 1914, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

agreement that this street should be called Wilson avenue” and if that name ever changed that the Wilson family would get their land back. The city of Fremont retracted its plans for Wilson Avenue, leaving the names of Dickinson and Cleveland. With that the struggle for the streets ended.

The promises the Spiegel Grove Committee and OSAHS made in 1914 did not come to fruition. The problems the state auditors had found with the project reappeared in May of 1915. Webb wrote to Mills in a tirade, stating that Steinle and his men “appeared for the first time since receiving the instructions of April 28<sup>th</sup> last from...architects to complete certain work.”<sup>96</sup> From the list of instructions provided by the Howard and Merriam, Webb found that Steinle and his men either did not complete the tasks or finished them poorly. He also admitted that an emissary of the state auditor had visited during a rain storm and witnessed the drainage system’s failure.<sup>97</sup> It seemed that whatever could go wrong with the project did go wrong. Some of these issues stemmed from the uniqueness of the project, others from pugnacious personalities forced into agreeable partnerships.

As it became apparent that the project would go into its sixth year, the Spiegel Grove Committee’s irritation with their benefactor reached a head. Mills wrote to committee member Francis W. Treadway and remarked “Col. Hayes has no more jurisdiction over this property than you or I; he is only a member and I feel that all matters involving a change in the building, etc. should be subjected to the Board of Trustees for their action...”<sup>98</sup> Webb had fallen from his position of unquestioned authority over the course of several years. His judgment and actions

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<sup>96</sup> WCH to WCM, 26 May 1916, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Francis W. Treadway [FWT] to Daniel J. Ryan, 12 November 1915, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

were no longer supported or accepted by the Spiegel Grove Committee. Time and disillusion had led the men to reject Webb's power over them.

In the midst of this discord Webb was also occupied with transporting his parents' bodies. Webb sought to "conceal and make more private the Monument and Base in which the bodies" were to be placed, so that visitors to the tomb would be able to visit the gravesite in relative solitude to pay their respects.<sup>99</sup> By relocating his parents' bodies to Spiegel Grove, Webb was bringing his Memorial full circle. Visitors would not only be able to pay homage to Rutherford and Lucy's lives through their belongings and life's work, they would also be able to visit their final resting place. Spiegel Grove was to be a site of pilgrimage for those devoted to and interested in Rutherford B. Hayes. While his father's Memorial was breaking new ground as the first presidential library, Webb desired that it follow the model set by America's first presidents—to have the president buried at his estate much like Jefferson at Monticello or Washington at Mount Vernon.

This was far from a sudden decision on Webb's part. His earliest plans for the memorial included preparations for Lucy and Rutherford's removal from Oakwood and reinternment at Spiegel Grove. Rutherford Platt Hayes voiced strong dissent to the reburial in 1911. He argued that it went against his father's wishes, writing, "Father selected the place and arranged everything himself and I know that it was his thought and wish that he and mother should remain there permanently."<sup>100</sup> Presuming that the other Hayes siblings felt as he did, he sent his attorney to Fremont to prevent Webb from moving the bodies of their parents until all of the children were in agreement.<sup>101</sup> We have few details; however, it must have taken the siblings four years to

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<sup>99</sup> WCH to L.C. Austin, 1914, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>100</sup> Rutherford Platt Hayes [RPH] to L.C. Austin, 22 July 1911, RPH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>101</sup> RPH to L.C. Austin, 5 July 1911, RPH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

resolve their issues regarding the reburial, because discussions of the removal did not resume until 1915. Before moving forward with the task Webb secured further family approval. Some felt the same as Rutherford. His cousin Laura Platt Mitchell, who was Rutherford's favorite niece, strongly opposed the plan. Close friend and cousin, Mrs. L.C. Austin, had agreed since 1911. Webb reached out to her once more for possible financial assistance. The relocation of the bodies, including the beautification of the knoll and the new monument, was estimated to cost \$1,500.

While updates on the story of the Memorial project were occasionally shared in newspapers across Ohio, this particular aspect of the project appealed to the public. Like modern times, the macabre and the dramatic attracted the media more than anything else. When the bodies of the former president and first lady were moved from their original burial site to Spiegel Grove the nation paid attention. The notion of a son digging up his deceased parents and moving their bodies struck a chord of intrigue within the nation. The fact that the bodies moved had were a former first lady and president added to the sensational coverage of this story. By January 1915 word had spread that moving the bodies was being considered. It took several months to finalize plans for the removal of the bodies, but when the event took place, newspapers across the country covered this story, including the *Boston Evening Globe*, the *Waunakee Index* of Wisconsin, the *Hamburg Reporter* of Iowa, and the *Waco Morning News*.

Webb had planned to move his parents in late spring of 1915, but discovered on March 31<sup>st</sup> that he would be unable to disinter the remains between April 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> to prevent further decomposition. With this knowledge, Webb sprang to action. On that very day the former president and first lady were disinterred and placed in a vault of the Hayes Memorial



building until the completion of their granite mausoleum. Lucy Keeler recorded Webb's retelling of the event in her diary:

Webb & the workmen had been early to Oakwood & the caskets stood side by side in the crypt of the Memorial Building—covered with flags. However Webb soon decided to move them to the adjoining vault, & that was done—the flag draped & 2 handsome wreaths. Then the vaults doors were closed & we went to the house for dinner. Present; Webb & his wife; Birchard & his wife; Dr. & Mrs. Wright; myself; Miss Crocker the housekeeper, & the workman. All done quietly, quickly & in Webb's masterly manner [sic]. He came to tell me—at the first opportunity—that he found the original casket almost intact & in excellent condition (though he had prepared two new lead caskets in case of need.) The old coffin (Mrs. Hayes--1889) sagged open at one end & out rolled—in his hands—his mother's wedding ring! He showed it to me—engraved with her name from RBH. It seemed to me like a last message from Aunt Lucy to this devoted son of hers! After dinner, I went over to the Memorial Bldg again. Soon Birchard came running, asking me to bring my Kodak & go up Hayes Avenue & take a picture of the great stone Webb has brought from Barre Vt. Quarries (weighs 25 tons) 15 x 12 feet to cover the new grave on the knoll of Spiegel & serve as base to the monument now at Spiegel. I took several views of it & the people.<sup>102</sup>

Whether or not the former first lady's wedding ring actually fell out of the coffin and into her son's hand is debatable. He did not rebury the wedding ring with his mother. Instead, Webb kept his mother's wedding ring and it is currently on display in the museum.

Moving the bodies when they did meant that their reburial had to wait until the monument portion of the tomb was finalized. In a beautiful and impressive ceremony the bodies were removed from the Memorial building and reinterred at the knoll on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, where they remain to this day. The new resting place was approved of by the Hayes family, even those who had once opposed the project. In September 1915 Lucy Keeler commented on Laura Platt Mitchell's change of opinion on the matter, stating, "Laura is so pleased with the Knoll & Monument, though she had all along opposed Webb's plan of moving his parent's remains."<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> LEK Diary, 31 March 1915, LEK Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>103</sup> LEK Diary, 9 September 1915, LEK Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

Rutherford also underwent a small change of heart. His wife Lucy Platt Hayes wrote to Mary Miller Hayes: “We are all glad to have the final move accomplished so simply and quietly.”<sup>104</sup>

While this decision to move the bodies of his parents may seem unusual or grotesque, it was not altogether uncommon at the time. Webb had prior experiences with body moving, on his own and with his father. Upon Lucy’s death in 1889 Rutherford moved the body of their youngest child, who had passed away in 1874, so that he would be buried with Lucy. In 1906 Webb worked in cooperation with the Western Reserve Historical Society, in which he was a Trustee, to secure Colonel George Croghan’s body. Croghan was a local war hero, having defended Fort Stephenson during the War of 1812 in Fremont, Ohio. Webb gained permission from Croghan’s family to move his body from Kentucky to Fremont. Once Croghan’s move was finished acquaintances offered congratulatory words to Webb on his accomplishment. One man said, “Accept my congratulations on your successful search for the “bones” of Col. Croghan.”<sup>105</sup> Another stated that he received confirmation that Webb had “found and swiped George” with his congratulations.

With the bodies of the former president and first lady safely resting at the knoll in Spiegel Grove, attentions turned back to the memorial. Webb, the contractor, the architects, and the committee managed to put their differences behind them and focused their energies on the opening ceremony dedication. It was to be a grand affair that included dignified guests from across the nation, including military and state officials. Surviving members of Rutherford B. Hayes’s regiment, cabinet, as well as other political partners were invited to attend the ceremonies. Governor Frank Willis officiated the event. Local officials attended, such as the

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<sup>104</sup> Lucy Platt Hayes to MMH, 30 April 1915, RPH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>105</sup> R.M. Kelley to WCH, 8 June 1906, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

mayor of Fremont. All of Rutherford B. Hayes's children except for Rutherford Platt Hayes were in attendance. Rutherford's son William Platt Hayes represented this branch of the family.

The planned festivities were to celebrate the opening of the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum, as well as the transition of the Spiegel Grove, including the home, to the custody of the OSAHS. Knowing it was a momentous occasion for the nation, the OSAHS and Webb hoped to have President Woodrow Wilson attend the dedication. Webb told Wilson's secretary Honorable J.P. Tumulty that they would alter the opening date in order to secure Wilson's attendance. They could postpone the opening ceremonies from October 4, 1915 to a date later in the month that would better work with the President's "manifold duties." Webb smoothly ended his telegraph with the strong statement: "It will surely hearten him in his great work to meet his people in Ohio even for a day."<sup>106</sup> His phrasing emphasized that this invitation was extended by not only Webb but the entire state of Ohio. The Hayes Memorial deserved recognition on a local, state, and national level. Unfortunately, the May 11, 1916 edition of the *Sandusky Star Journal* stated that Wilson was ultimately unable to attend the festivities due to the unrest in Europe and Mexico. He sent his regrets in a letter to Webb:

It is with genuine disappointment and regret that I find it will be impossible for me to be away from Washington on the thirtieth of May, the day you have appropriately chosen for the dedicatory exercises of the Hayes Memorial Library, but I find that disappointments of this sort are coming thick and fast now, because it is so absolutely necessary for me to stick close to my duties here in these times of uncertainty.

I know that you will understand and honor the scruple which makes this decision necessary. May I not express my hope for the very best sort of success for the interesting exercises to which you are looking forward?<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> WCH to Honorable J.P. Tumulty, 14 September 1915, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>107</sup> Woodrow Wilson to WCH, 10 May 1916, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

Wilson recognized Webb's military and political experience in the penultimate sentence. This was no doubt to placate Webb's disappointment.

Aside from uncooperative weather and absence of Wilson, the day's celebrations went extremely well. The Associated Press reported that thousands attended the festivities. School children were admitted first, followed by the veterans of the Ohio 23<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, Rutherford B. Hayes's unit during the Civil War. The rest of the morning consisted of music and the dedication of two memorial windows in the museum. About 100 guests attended the luncheon hosted by Webb and Mary Miller Hayes. The afternoon program featured speeches and comments from a multitude of individuals. Letters were read from those unable to attend, such as Senator Warren G. Harding. Representatives from organizations with which Rutherford B. Hayes was involved also spoke, including the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, the Sandusky County Bar Association, and the fraternal organization the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

Meade G. Thraves, Esq., representative of the Odd Fellows, heralded Webb's role in the memorial's creation. He stated, "It will suffice to say that Col. Webb C. Hayes is ever alert for the best interests of our community and never permits an opportunity to pass to put Fremont and the State of Ohio on the map."<sup>108</sup> Thraves continued, "It is a well known fact that he is personally acquainted with more public men, and men that do things in our nation than any other citizen of the state." These remarks perfectly capture Webb. He had numerous powerful connections and was influential himself. While he had no qualms in asking for favors, throwing his weight around, or pulling strings, he did it in order to better his community. Furthermore, by creating the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum—the first presidential library in the nation—Webb strengthened the reputation of his family and cemented their place in Ohio history.

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<sup>108</sup> Lucy Elliot Keeler, ed., *The Dedication of the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum* (Columbus, OH: Press of the F.J. Heer Printing Co., 1916), 25.

Fremont Mayor George Kinney echoed similar sentiments in his speech. He recognized Webb's legacy by stating:

We are not unmindful of the jewels placed in our keeping this day. By erecting this memorial building of the everlasting rock, and placing such priceless treasures therein of books and parchments, you have made this a city of refuge for future ages, for which we are indeed deeply grateful.<sup>109</sup>

As Fremont recognized the value of the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum, it transferred into the hands of the OSAHS. The transition was not an easy one. The nation's first presidential library had survived birth, but it was still young. There were many hurdles to cross in the coming years.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 40.

### CHAPTER III. GROWING PAINS

Less than a year after its opening the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum experienced some growing pains. By November of 1916 the collections began to outgrow the memorial building. There were several reasons for this growth. During the planning stages of the Hayes Memorial, the building was downsized. The architects lowered the height of the second floor storage rooms, which decreased the shelving space for collection storage. The dimensions of the main rooms were also changed. Instead of being 30' x 45' they were 20' x 32'. This considerably shrunk the available exhibit space. However, this did not stop the institution from continuing to grow their collection of books and artifacts. Thus arose a need for an annex to the memorial. The OSAHS was in the midst of adding on to their own building, which had been erected a year before the Hayes Memorial. There was also no extra state funding available to finance an addition to the Fremont building. Aware that the likelihood of an annex to the Hayes Memorial was slim if he did not back the project, Webb offered to pay \$50,000 to construct and furnish it. This was five times as much what he estimated the cost to be in late 1916.<sup>110</sup> Eager to be relieved of fundraising, the OSAHS agreed to his plan.

Webb's decision to fund the Hayes Annex proved to be the turning point in his relationship with the OSAHS. By taking on fiscal responsibility for the project, Webb inserted himself in the property's maintenance and upkeep. When he deeded the property over to the state, the OSAHS was supposed to maintain the property. The deed for Spiegel Grove stated: "in the event said premises cease to be used and cared for as a state park, or in the event the above conditions or any of them are not observed or performed, then the premises hereby conveyed

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<sup>110</sup> WCH to the OSAHS, 27 November 1916, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

shall revert to and vest in the grantor, his heirs or assigns.”<sup>111</sup> This was supposed to be motivation for the OSAHS to take care of the property. However, by intervening Webb created a precedent that was hard to break. If and when the state was unable to assist at Spiegel Grove, Webb would come to the rescue. The pattern established at this time led to rancor between Webb and the OSAHS. Even so, he continued his support of the memorial. If it had not been for Webb’s involvement and assistance, the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum would likely not have grown into the success story that it is today. This chapter will outline the significant challenges that arose in building the annex to the Hayes site. It will also show that Webb and the OSAHS, often in conflict with one another, shared unrealistic understandings of the complexity and expense of building and maintaining the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum.

Before the project could gain speed, national matters intervened. The United States was entering World War I, and that took precedent over the Hayes Memorial. Webb could not idly stand by when the United States joined the Great War. In his early sixties, Webb was not seen as a prime candidate for service. He refused to let that deter him. Webb traveled to Paris to pursue military involvement. After much petitioning, he was appointed “Commissioner of Military Labor, American Expeditionary Force” with his first mission in Morocco.<sup>112</sup> He spent much of 1918 in the line of duty. While out of the front lines, Webb used his diplomatic, strategic, and military expertise in a supervisory capacity. His commanding nature was at home once again in the field of military service. It would be the last time Webb served his country.

After the war ended, Webb returned home. His attentions reverted to his pre-war project. The addition to the Hayes Memorial would be an enormous task. It would double the size of the

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<sup>111</sup> Charles Richard Williams, ed., *Diary and Letters of Rutherford Birchard Hayes Volume V 1891-1893* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1926), 277.

<sup>112</sup> WCH to MMH, 17 July 1918, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

building, increasing the storage capacity to house more than 250,000 volumes.<sup>113</sup> The annex would add to the south side of the museum, extending the building towards the Hayes home. Webb desired that it “be made of the same material, and in archetrical (sic) harmony with the main building so far as outward appearance goes.”<sup>114</sup> There were more similarities between the two than in outward appearance. Much like the original project before it, the Hayes Annex project took years to complete.

Aside from delays due to Webb’s military service, the planning and construction of the annex took years. Webb sought to begin work in the spring of 1920, to have a cornerstone laying ceremony on May 30<sup>th</sup>.<sup>115</sup> No contractor was willing to work the job, citing their lack of proper equipment, manpower, or expertise to take on such a task. The presidential library and museum seemed daunting. Working with Webb was also a likely deterrent. His strict, demanding personality was well known. Regardless of his prior difficulties with Webb, Carl Steinle took the job, and understandably Webb was not enthused about this situation. His concerns were justified as Steinle’s previous experience with Webb and the OSAHS did not motivate him to work more speedily or efficiently. The work was slow to start, not beginning until May 4.<sup>116</sup> From this rocky start the project slowly trudged along.

Webb knew from past and current experience that the project would never run on time. So regardless of the progress towards completion, he set a concrete opening ceremony for the Hayes Annex. Webb scheduled the event for October 4, 1922. It was a multifaceted celebration, coinciding with the dedication of the Soldiers’ Memorial Parkway just west of Spiegel Grove,

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<sup>113</sup> WCH to Mrs. Dreyfus, 3 May 1921, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>114</sup> WCH to WCM, 4 January 1920, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>115</sup> WCH to Irvin T. Fangboner, 4 January 1920, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>116</sup> WCH to Mrs. Dreyfus, 3 May 1921, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.



which had been another creation of Webb's. On the grounds of Spiegel Grove there would be a celebration of the partially completed Hayes Annex. The date also would mark Rutherford B. Hayes's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. The events were combined into a centenary celebration. Formal invitations were sent by the OSAHS to political dignitaries and representatives of historical and scientific societies. Webb sent personal requests to President Warren G. Harding and members of his cabinet, including Herbert Hoover and Charles E. Hughes. As the invitations were mailed and reservations returned, Webb sensed that interest was lower than in 1916. He wrote his brother Scott: "In spite of an almost total lack of interest taken here locally, we are going to have a grand time."<sup>117</sup> And a good time was had. In typical Webb fashion, he did not allow the others' lack of interest keep him from pursuing his goals. They celebrated on October 4, even though the annex was incomplete.

The celebration occurred on the former president's birthday as planned, with local factories, businesses and schools closed for the day. The exercises took place on a specially constructed speakers' portico on the south side of the annex facing the Hayes Home. The day included a grand parade that began at Fremont's Fort Stephenson Park and finished at Spiegel Grove, featuring local dignitaries and floats by local organizations depicting scenes from history. These scenes from history included some that the OSAHS had banned from inclusion in the original memorial, including the Battle of Fallen Timbers and the Battle of Fort Stephenson. The parade ended at Webb's Soldiers' Memorial Parkway. After the Soldiers' Memorial Parkway was dedicated, ceremonies were held for the entrances to Spiegel Grove. Each of the six gateways (two for pedestrians only) had a historic or memorial tablet placed on it that explained

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<sup>117</sup> WCH to Scott Russell Hayes, 24 September 1922, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

for whom they were named. Webb had grand visions for those entryways to the Grove. He spent most of the 1920s negotiating with the national government to receive five White House gates.<sup>118</sup>

The town festivities lasted until noon with the annex's dedication beginning at 1:30 P.M. It ran similarly to the 1916 dedication ceremony. Letters were read from past and present presidents and speeches delivered by military heroes and politicians. The event embraced technological advancements, as more than 1200 feet of film was taken of ceremonies. It was shown in a local theater the following week for those who were unable to attend. The U.S. Postal Service also released a Hayes Centenary Stamp in honor of the day. As much as Webb had cited a lack of interest, there seemed to be no shortage of it on October 4<sup>th</sup>. But perhaps it was these unique marketing techniques that succeeded in garnering attention.

Governor James E. Campbell, president of OSAHS, gave Webb his due in his speech, declaring, "In all the years since Colonel Hayes executed his first deed to this property, the public has been left in ignorance of the magnitude of his contribution; of his self-sacrifice; and of his generous patriotism." The public is finally learning more about Webb's actions in this regard.<sup>119</sup> Campbell was aware of the extent of Webb's involvement. In his speech, he went on to describe how the president's son had financially supported the project:

I am within a conservative estimate when I state that Colonel Hayes has disposed, for the benefit of posterity, in the form of the beautiful and attractive property which you see before you, at least \$500,000: \$250,000 in cash and securities for endowment funds, and \$250,000 in real estate and personal property, including the library Americana and collections.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> The story about the White House gates will not be explored here as it is too extensive for this thesis.

<sup>119</sup> Until the recent publication of *A Son's Dream: Colonel Webb Cook Hayes and the Founding of the Nation's First Presidential Library* by Meghan Wonderly there was no scholarship on his involvement in the founding of presidential libraries.

<sup>120</sup> Lucy Elliot Keeler, ed., *Illustrated Catalogue: The Spiegel Grove State Park, The Hayes Memorial Library and Museum, and the Hayes Homestead—Fremont Ohio* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1926), 103.

Throughout the rest of his life and even after his death, Webb would continue to pour wealth into the memorial. While the sum was staggering, Campbell stressed that there was more to Webb's actions than money:

Greater and more far-reaching than the vast funds which he has so consecrated to others and to the memory of those loved by him, is his magnificent spirit of unselfishness, of tender devotion to the memory of his father and mother, and of his desire to leave to future generations historic evidence of the past.<sup>121</sup>

After this revelation, the crowd called for Webb to speak. He declined, simply bowing in recognition of their appreciation. Webb's refusal may surprise those unfamiliar with him, but it was not out of character to those closest to him. Yes, he was a proud man. Yes, he was proud of the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum. To him the memorial deserved all recognition and affection, rather than himself.

After the centenary celebration attention to the building resumed once more. There were several major areas to focus on including construction, funding, staffing, and operations. The first problems arose regarding the designer of the memorial. Joseph S. Bradford was the architect on the project. During the process, he proved uncooperative. Bradford refused to furnish the Spiegel Grove Committee with copies of the blueprints even when offered payment for them.<sup>122</sup> In fact, he ceased to reply to missives sent to him. He only reached out when demanding payment. Arguments ensued between the Spiegel Grove Committee and Bradford. There were multiple flaws with the building, including a 32 inch drop between the original building and the annex that was not supposed to be there. This drop led to further issues with the heating apparatus in the museum. Bradford brazenly asked that Webb pay for these features, to which

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<sup>121</sup> Lucy Elliot Keeler, ed., *Illustrated Catalogue: The Spiegel Grove State Park, The Hayes Memorial Library and Museum, and the Hayes Homestead—Fremont Ohio*, 103.

<sup>122</sup> W.J. Sherman [WJS] to WCH, 12 February 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

Webb declined. He felt that he should not be charged for the fault and incompetence of others. His frustrations grew so that he even lost his patience with the OSAHS because they were adding additional features to their own building. He argued that if the OSAHS could pay the \$2000 demanded for extras for their building, then they could afford to pay for extras towards Spiegel Grove.<sup>123</sup> The construction of the annex had used \$49,750 of the \$50,000 that Webb had supplied. This friction continued to build between the OSAHS and Webb.

Construction on the building stretched on for years due to more problems with the contractor. Steinle proved difficult to work with. As the project dragged on into February 1923, Webb shared his lack of confidence in Steinle with the OSAHS, fuming, "I note further that Steinle told you that he could finish in nine or ten days... With all due respects to Mr. Steinle, the writer is inclined to think it will be April first before he is entirely through."<sup>124</sup> For some reason the OSAHS did not have the memory that Webb did regarding Steinle. Perhaps it was the turnover at the OSAHS due to rotating terms for board members. It also may have been hard to keep track of the Spiegel Grove building projects as well as their own. Whatever the case, Webb was more than accurate in his skepticism. As 1923 stretched on Steinle was missing in action. He abandoned his work for stretches at a time.<sup>125</sup> After near lawsuits and heavy pursuit by the OSAHS, Webb, and the Spiegel Grove Committee, work resumed. By end of May 1923 the Hayes Annex reached 98% completion.<sup>126</sup> As the complications with construction dwindled, the funding problem once again reared its head.

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<sup>123</sup> WCH to WJS, 1, December 1922, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>124</sup> WCH to WCM, 24 February 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>125</sup> WJS to Joseph N. Bradford, 7 May 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>126</sup> WJS to The American Guarnty Co., 24 May 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

The issues with the heating system expanded beyond the drop in the floor between the original building and the annex. The heating system, comprised of three furnaces fitted for hard coal and one for natural gas, originated in the Hayes home and was supposed to heat the museum as well as the home.<sup>127</sup> An extremely chill winter caused the caretakers of the building to exhaust their regular supply of hard coal earlier than expected. Trying to save money, Spiegel Grove used soft coal in the furnaces, but unfortunately, this caused the furnace to overheat. The furnace had not been properly barricaded from its surroundings. The wood beams of the Hayes home around it almost caught on fire. Unable to afford the proper coal for the furnace and afraid to use the fire hazard of a furnace, both the Hayes home and memorial were left without heat. Webb wrote members of the OSAHS, stating, “The valuable paintings, books, MMS, Curios, etc. etc. were covered with moisture in large drops from the Sweating” because of the lack of heat.<sup>128</sup>

Webb wrote to Spiegel Grove Committee Chairman W. J. Sherman:

Alfred Gowing, the caretaker, informs me there is no more coal for heating the Memorial and that he has no instructions about changing the furnaces in the homestead over to burn gas. He says he advised you that there was only coal enough to last until April 15<sup>th</sup>, but he made it last until April 17<sup>th</sup>, since which time there has been no heat in the Memorial, except from the two small open grates.<sup>129</sup>

By April 19 Alfred ran out of coal. Assistant librarian Dorothy Wright wrote of the memorial’s plight to the OSAHS, lamenting, “I regret to say that the last two days it has been too cold for comfort or health, so that I must ask permission to close the Library on Monday until such time as addition furnace heat is furnished.”<sup>130</sup> These forced closures lasted quite a long time, as Webb explained to A.C. Johnson: “from October, 1923, to April, 1924, and again from October, 1924,

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<sup>127</sup> WJS to E.F. Wood, 12 April 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>128</sup> WCH to Honorable A.E. Culbert [AEC], 29 January 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>129</sup> WCH to WJS, 19 April 1924, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

to March, 1925.”<sup>131</sup> The cold conditions caused damage throughout the building, sweating walls and moisture collecting on the books and curios. It did not prevent large numbers of visitors from entering the building at their own risk, acting “against the advice of resident physicians, on account of the dampness due to lack of fuel oil for heat, during the exceedingly cold months of April, May, and June.”<sup>132</sup> The cold and lack of fuel forced Webb to set up a makeshift office in the Oriental room of the Hayes home for book cataloging. Fortunately, the damp cold did no permanent damage to any artifacts, as the heating system was not fixed until 1926.

Unfortunately, this was not the only maintenance issue that plagued the memorial during this time. The roof of the memorial proved to be faulty as well. Irvin T. Fangboner, a Spiegel Grove Committee member, visited the memorial to check its condition. He was horrified with what he saw:

I went to the Grove yesterday and found that Alfred was talking about the leaks down on to the library floor, that is, the floor of the original Memorial Building. I never saw a worse sight in my life in a building than when he took me to the top floor of the old Memorial Building and opened the door. The room was filled with a perfect fog, the drops of moisture were on the walls and ceiling as thickly as these drops could adhere, and the floor was as wet as if a hose had been used in sprinkling it. The rugs were saturated, and Alfred had spent the greater part of the afternoon in moping the excess water to keep it from going through and ruining the floors below. The basement, with all of the Colonel’s curios, had already started to get just as bad.<sup>133</sup>

Mother Nature had beaten the memorial once again. The precious artifacts and documents were further damaged from this second assault from the elements. Preservation and conservation of the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum and its contents were low in the priorities of the OSAHS. There were buildings in Columbus full of their own artifacts and fossils to manage.

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<sup>131</sup> WCH to Honorable A.C. Johnson [ACJ], 13 August, 1925, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>132</sup> WCH to Honorable C.B. Galbreath, 6 July 1926, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>133</sup> Irvin T. Fangboner to WJS, 10 January 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

Infuriated and exasperated, Webb decided to confront the OSAHS. It was neglecting its duties and putting his family's legacy at risk. His plan for attack had two complaints:

We can take the matter of an appropriation for a roof up with the Legislature when calling their attention to the failure so far to comply with the simple terms of the deed of gift of Spiegel Grove, namely, to improve the Harrison Trail and mark the trees, which long since ought to have been done, now some 15 years since the deed was made.<sup>134</sup>

Not only had the OSAHS failed to perform proper upkeep on the buildings at Spiegel Grove, they had also failed to do the promised work to the grounds. In the deed making Spiegel Grove a State Park, the OSAHS had agreed to label the trees with their scientific names for educational purposes. They had also agreed to improve the historic Harrison Trail that ran through the property. Irritated, Webb went straight to the department of transportation for the funds to improve the trail. Their response was disappointing: "There is no fund from which this Department can finance such maintenance, but we are in thorough sympathy with the movement."<sup>135</sup> It seemed that funding was the root of many problems regarding the Hayes Memorial.

Funding of the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum was the responsibility of the state of Ohio. However, because of their financial stress and the prioritizing of other pet projects the state had withdrawn much of its support. Therefore, Webb was compelled to use his wealth to support the memorial. Aside from the \$50,000 given to finance the annex's construction, Webb established three trust funds for the memorial: one to buy books for the library, another for the care and maintenance of the Hayes home, and the third for the care and maintenance of the grounds of Spiegel Grove. The book endowment would ensure that it was stocked with a variety

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<sup>134</sup> WCH to Herbert B. Briggs, 22 October 1924, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>135</sup> L.C. Herrick to L.H. Wisman, 31 May 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

of volumes, including, “books of an historical nature, and particularly relating to the Northwest and the military history of our country, thus keeping up the lines for which [Rutherford B. Hayes’s] library was noted.”<sup>136</sup> In 1922 Webb predicted that by the time the project was completed, he would have advanced \$3 for every \$1 paid by the OSAHS.<sup>137</sup> Unfortunately, his estimate proved to be a conservative one. As the project stretched on and encountered more difficulties Webb’s financial investment in the project only continued to grow.

In 1923 the OSAHS had to present the state of Ohio with a proposed biennial budget that would last until 1925. Their first proposed budget asked for \$15,540. This amount would allow them to hire more staff, increase current wages, and make much-needed repairs. The Hayes Memorial needed over \$10,000 to properly staff and complete the building.<sup>138</sup> W. J. Sherman shared his concerns about their proposal with Webb, stating, “I am very much inclined to believe there will be considerable slashing, but let us hope for the best.”<sup>139</sup> Alas Sherman’s fears came true and he reported, “it looks very much as though our Democratic Governor had used his blue pencil at our expense” and cut the appropriations for Spiegel Grove considerably.<sup>140</sup> So much in fact, that the 1923/1924 budget was presented and approved without increasing the appropriation. The Hayes Memorial Library and Museum was expected to function on its former budget even though it had doubled in size.<sup>141</sup>

This was a heavy blow. How was the institution supposed to survive on a budget for a building half its size? It was infeasible. The memorial was already understaffed and unable to function as intended. Its parent had no assistance to send its way. The OSAHS suffered heavy

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<sup>136</sup> WCH to Honorable Warren G. Harding, 17 December 1921, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>137</sup> WCH to A.E. Slessman, 5 January 1922, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>138</sup> WJS to OSAHS, 26 June 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>139</sup> WJS to WCH, 28 March 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>140</sup> WJS to WCH, 9 May 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>141</sup> WCH to AEC, 14 February 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.



losses for its own budget and did not want to send its meager funding away from Columbus. W. J. Sherman wrote of this to Webb: “I do not think we can hope to get one single penny from Mr. Wood in addition to that already paid out.”<sup>142</sup> Therefore they expected Webb to finance any needs that arose, as he had done in the past. This plan did not appeal to Webb. He disapproved of how the OSAHS was directing its funds. To him, Fremont was receiving unequal treatment:

Of the \$76,000 appropriated for the society last year, the Fremont [sic] branch received but \$4000, and in the Arbitrary Division by Treasurer Wood, under the items of repairs for which \$1000 was appropriated, Fremont received but on fifth, or \$200, whereas there are three buildings—two brick and one stone at Fremont, and only one stone building, though larger, at Columbus.

He argued that Spiegel Grove should receive at least \$2,000 annually due to its worth of \$350,000 of property.<sup>143</sup> No matter how he argued, the OSAHS would not budge. Due to the OSAHS’s lack of financial support, he was forced to use money from the book fund on the maintenance of the Grove. He did little to hide his bitterness in his letter to W.J. Sherman:

My tender to the society of \$50,000 was towards the erection and equipping of a library and museum annex to the Hayes Memorial, with the distinct understanding that, as the society through its regular committee made the contract, and undertook to supervise the construction, that the society would provide the remaining funds, if any, required to complete and equip the addition for a library and museum. Their failure to do so and practical repudiation of their agreement makes it necessary for me to take funds which I had expected to use in the purchase of books. In fact, all the funds which Mrs. Hayes and I arranged to give was for the Historical Library to be maintained in Spiegel Grove, and confined exclusively to the purchase of books. However, it is my own fault for being caught, as I knew full well that ours was an eleemosniary (sic) society.<sup>144</sup>

Webb finally realized that his charity in assisting the OSAHS in the initial Hayes Memorial project had created a dependent relationship.

The OSAHS assumed Webb would take the financial burden because he had the most invested in the project. After all, it was his father’s memory, his family’s home, and his personal

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<sup>142</sup> WJS to WCH, 2 April 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>143</sup> WCH to WJS, 23 November 1922, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

belongings and money. Webb saw that the OSAHS's financial priorities were in Columbus, claiming, "The society is bending its efforts towards securing a large building fund for the Columbus addition and neglecting the Spiegel Grove properties which have been presented to the State with provision for a Library endowment fund."<sup>145</sup> With its own endowment, the Hayes Memorial was seen by the OSAHS as more financially independent. The behaviors established during the construction of the Hayes Memorial could not be broken. Like those behaviors, there were also choices made that came back to haunt both Webb and Spiegel Grove for years to come.

While focusing on the physical aspects of the Hayes Memorial, critical points were ignored. The OSAHS, the Spiegel Grove Committee, and Webb failed to prepare for maintenance and staffing of the institution. Their lack of planning led to many problems. The budgeted amounts for staffing the memorial was extremely slim. To attract more job candidates, unique benefits had to be added to certain positions. The caretaker of Spiegel Grove not only received a \$100 monthly salary but also a five-room apartment over the carriage house. He also received a state employee's standard two weeks' vacation as long as he attended and protected the property on Sunday and holidays.<sup>146</sup>

While the caretaker received certain bonuses, it was not so for all. No fully credentialed individual would take the job of head librarian as the pay was too insignificant. At the same time, the job itself was likely overwhelming. Aside from library duties the head librarian would be the acting leader of the institution, similar to an executive director. They would answer to the Spiegel Grove Committee. After months with no contenders, the Spiegel Grove Committee gave

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<sup>145</sup> WCH to AEC, 29 January 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>146</sup> WCH to Alfred V. Gowing, 1 May 1922, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

“the building and its contents” over to library attendant Dorothy Wright.<sup>147</sup> An assistant with only a limited library education, Dorothy was not equipped to handle the workload.

The operating procedures of the Memorial were complicated. Billing was especially so. Dorothy explained the process to Dr. W.O. Thompson, a member of the Spiegel Grove Committee: “We have never heretofore, under Chairman Sherman, kept any records here, but immediately forwarded to him all bills and charges for his approval, which was the last that we ever heard of the bills, and had no information whether or not the bills were paid, or the prices.”<sup>148</sup> This system understandably led to confusion and delays in payment. Sometimes the delays were increased because of confusion in mailing the bills. Some came to the Hayes home while Webb was away and were therefore forgotten. Wright found herself paying for simple necessities such as stamps and soap out of her own pocket because the response time from the OSAHS was so slow. It was indeed a messy, inefficient system. Valiantly Dorothy attempted to maintain control over it without assistance but was unsuccessful.

Aware of her plight, Webb petitioned the OSAHS for more support. They proved to be uncooperative. In fact, some OSAHS members were back to what Webb labeled, “old tricks of not answering letters.”<sup>149</sup> So once again Webb found himself at odds with the OSAHS. In the original plans for the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum, there were provisions for only one person to act as both cataloguer and librarian in the original building. With the construction of the Hayes Annex Webb expected that staff would increase as well. However, the 1923/1924 budget did not proportionally increase funding for that or the needed increase in salary amounts

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<sup>147</sup> WJS to Dorothy E. Wright [DEW], 13 August 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>148</sup> DEW to W.O. Thompson, 16 September 1925, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums

<sup>149</sup> WCH to WCM, 4 January 1920, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

for the existing staff. Unsuccessful but determined, Webb proposed a change in management. He suggested that instead of a Librarian and Assistant Librarian, a Curator, Cataloguer, and Librarian be hired. Unfortunately, there was not enough money to pay the \$2000 required for those positions.<sup>150</sup> Webb persisted and stressed the importance more assistance for the library. He managed to convince the OSAHS of the necessity. Columbus agreed to increase the head librarian's salary to and allow the memorial two assistants for three months. It was a small victory, but a victory nonetheless. Sadly, this minor triumph did not resolve the issues in the library. The longevity of librarians remained a major problem. One of the first library assistants hired also acted as a stenographer and typist. She resigned because she could not live on \$50 per month and pay \$25 per month for her board.<sup>151</sup> After some convincing, the OSAHS agreed to increase pay for those library assistants to \$75 a month and the woman returned to her position at the Hayes Memorial.

Staffing turnover and financial stress plagued the memorial. It was particularly troublesome because of the poor decisions made by the OSAHS board in the prior decade. During the construction of the original building, the OSAHS board declined Webb's petition to catalogue the library books before the research library opened to the public. This foolhardy choice left the library and its limited staff scrambling to run the library while cataloguing books. More books arrived every day. By 1923, there were over 8000 books that needed to be catalogued.<sup>152</sup> Staff at the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum had to seek help from outside sources. Those at the memorial were ill-equipped to handle the cataloging because they did not

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<sup>150</sup> WJS to WCH, 2 April 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>151</sup> WCH to ACJ, 20 September 1925, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>152</sup> Report of the Spiegel Grove Committee by WJS, 18 September 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

have the education for it. This displayed the lack of foresight of Webb and the OSAHS. Staff had been hired that were unable to attend to the task at hand.

Those who stayed at the memorial with little pay were passionate about their work and knew its importance. They wanted to see it succeed. Library assistant Dorothy Wright offered to help pay the cataloguer by sharing half of her small salary. That \$25 a month would be paired with the existing pay made available by the OSAHS.<sup>153</sup> Dorothy was given permission to search for assistance. She wrote missives to potential coworkers, “We would be able to accomplish much in a short time as this is a reference library, strictly and, as not much publicity has ever been given the Library, most of the visitors are interested in the Museum and do not take up one’s time.”<sup>154</sup> The view of the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum that Dorothy shared revealed much about the organization. While the reference library was busy gaining its footing, the museum was attracting visitors. Carnegie and his assistant Bertram’s misgivings came true. The library was being overshadowed by the museum. The concept of a presidential library had yet to catch on with the public. It was not a lending library and it was not a school library. What exactly was it? The public needed to be educated on the opportunities available in a presidential library. Until then, the library would remain a somewhat troublesome mystery.

The museum was not unfamiliar to the public. Its attraction and wonders drew interested travelers wanting to learn more about Rutherford B. Hayes. The valuable curios and collections also drew the attention of thieves. Worried for the safety of his family’s treasures, Webb petitioned for museum security in 1926. He believed that the memorial should have a night watchman, just as the Columbus facilities did. On this the OSAHS and Webb agreed. The state

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<sup>153</sup> DEW to Herbert S. Hirshberg, 8 August 1924, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>154</sup> DEW to Marjorie Borne, 19 August 1924, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

had to protect its assets from thieves. Unfortunately, the first two night watchmen were not competent. In a letter to the OSAHS, A.E. Culbert explained: “[the first was] dismissed for nearly causing the destruction of the Hayes Homestead by monkeying with the fuel oil supply to the furnace.” During the second night watchman’s service someone broke into the museum. Annoyed by the night watchmen’s incompetence, members of the Spiegel Grove Committee were spurred to action. A. E. Culbert wrote to the Emergency Board of the OSAHS describing the incident:

We regret to be obliged to announce that burglars took advantage of one of the three insecure doors leading into the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum, and, by cutting out a pane of glass in the door, succeeded in unlocking the door and in unbolting the bolt, which, since the completion of the building, had been placed on the door for additional security, and entered the Memorial Library and Museum, which gave them access to the remarkably fine collection of valuable books and curios stored therein. It is surmised that they were frightened out of the building by the snoring of the inefficient Night Watchman, installed on April 1<sup>st</sup>, the only man we could secure at the \$83.33 per month appropriated for the Night Watchman.<sup>155</sup>

Thankfully no artifacts were stolen during this break in. The Spiegel Grove Committee believed an increase in salary would lead to more proficient watchmen. They asked the OSAHS for a salary increase to \$100 a month.

Whenever salaries or funding for staff was discussed, tensions arose between the OSAHS and the Hayes’s. It was apparent that the OSAHS’s reliance on Webb and his wife Mary Miller Hayes to cover the costs of additional staff continued to grow. This assumption irritated Webb. He wrote the president of the OSAHS Dr. W. O. Thompson:

We had an allowance of \$500 for labor, all of which will be absolutely needed during the winter, so that the sly intimation of Treasurer Wood that Miss Grosh [librarian] can be paid out of this labor for Spiegel Grove instead of out of the general Society’s labor is quite cute, and on par with his scheme of having a cable sent to Mrs. Hayes, while she and I were serving in France, that she advance, through her secretary, the \$700 coal bill

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<sup>155</sup> AEC & DEW to C.B. Galbreath, 6 July 1926, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

because the Society had no funds... We have lived in hopes that Mr. Johnson and yourself could protect our employees here.<sup>156</sup>

Webb's comments reflected his disappointment and irritation with the OSAHS. The OSAHS treasurer had tried to refuse requests for funding, arguing that Spiegel Grove had its own funding to rely upon. At another time when the Hayes Memorial needed assistance, Wood had ignored their plight. This forced Mary Miller Hayes to deal with it from Europe during war. Webb viewed this behavior as a deliberate act of avoiding responsibility. It appears that the Hayes family's wealth became a crutch on which the OSAHS repeatedly leaned. With Hayes family funds supporting the memorial, there was little incentive for the OSAHS to act.

Aside from providing financial assistance, Webb and Mary also worked in the memorial when there was not enough money to pay for staff. In July of 1926 the Chairman of the Spiegel Grove Committee, A. E. Culbert, wrote to C. B. Galbreath, the secretary of the OSAHS:

Acting Chairman Designate A.E. Culbert, Webb C. Hayes and Miss Lucy E. Keeler, who, with Mrs. Hayes and the local members of the D.A.R., have kept open the Memorial on Sunday afternoons and legal holidays on account of the reduction, through resignation for lack of compensation, of all the employees, except the Librarian and the recently appointed Caretaker...<sup>157</sup>

The OSAHS's inattention towards Spiegel Grove forced Webb, Mary, and others to volunteer their time to ensure the memorial remained open and fully functioning. If not for the availability and willingness of those people, the memorial would have faced forced closures due to lack of manpower instead of lack of heat like in the past.

The Spiegel Grove Committee grew tired of these staffing problems, and the OSAHS inability to deal adequately with them. They saw some truth in Webb's accusation of favoritism by the OSAHS. Committee members attempted to diplomatically tell the OSAHS that they were

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<sup>156</sup> WCH to ACJ, 20 September 1925, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>157</sup> AEC & DEW to C.B. Galbreath, 6 July 1926, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

aware of this behavior. Attempting to make the OSAHS change its ways, W.J. Sherman sent them a report:

We desire to bring definitely before the Society a request that hereafter all appropriations for such items as register, assistant librarian, cataloguer, index clerk, janitors, binders, cabinet-maker, watchman, office, stationery, water, light, heat, power, express, drayage, traveling expenses, communications, contingencies, printing, etc. be made available where they will do the most good and serve the best interest of the Society as a whole regardless of whether the call comes from Columbus, Fremont, or elsewhere.<sup>158</sup>

The Spiegel Grove Committee's appeal was simple. Any need or request was to be weighed equally. All jobs were important, all needs necessary. They sought to assert the importance of Spiegel Grove in the mind of the OSAHS.

While the Spiegel Grove Committee fought to protect the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum, it was in turmoil itself. Once there were multiple committees that had different focuses including book buying and building. They had each provided extra support and governance over the memorial. The OSAHS discontinued the separate committees concerning Spiegel Grove, condensing them all into one committee, simply called the Spiegel Grove Committee. By lowering the number of men involved in the memorial's welfare, the OSAHS lowered the interest in it. This, perhaps more than anything was the beginning of the OSAHS withdrawal from the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum.

Webb was the first chairman of the Spiegel Grove Committee. He had been appointed by OSAHS because of his leadership on the memorial. After several years of acting as chairman, he stepped down. He wanted to relax more in his old age. He also thought it was time for the OSAHS to step up and secure what he described as "capable representative from the State" to act as guardian of the Memorial and estate.<sup>159</sup> The OSAHS was not pleased with this move.

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<sup>158</sup> Report of the Spiegel Grove Committee by WJS, 18 September 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>159</sup> WCH to AEC, 14 February 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.



Governor and OSAHS leader James E. Campbell insisted Webb take back the chairman position, writing, “both because I think it is inconsistent with your dignity that some other man should appear to be at the head of the committee which controls property you have given to the state; and also because I do not intend to have any man occupy two chairmanships.”<sup>160</sup> Campbell tried to appeal to Webb’s vanity and make him believe that only he could and should direct the memorial. Webb did not think that. He proposed that the OSAHS seek members that were from adjacent counties or northern Ohio to run the Spiegel Grove Committee.<sup>161</sup> They did not listen to his terms. His assistance aided them in their own possibly short-staffed state.

Because of the OSAHS’s overall disregard of Spiegel Grove, the deterioration of Webb’s relationship with the OSAHS was at its lowest during this time. Some members of the Spiegel Grove Committee tried to smooth things over between Webb and the OSAHS. W.J. Sherman felt for Webb. They were friends and loosely related—Sherman shared blood with Birchard Hayes’s wife Mary. During times of drama at the memorial, Sherman wrote to a traveling Webb:

I have sometimes wondered whether you wished me to conceal the unpleasant developments from you during your pleasure trip and health trip into tropical climes, and have concluded that it would be better for you to get a piece meal in this manner than all at once upon your return.<sup>162</sup>

His health yet unsteady, Webb and Mary often traveled to see doctors and to vacation. Sherman determined the amount of errors and issues related to the memorial were too many to be sprung upon Webb at once. The stress of it all boiled to a breaking point. Frustrated, Webb wrote to the OSAHS:

Perhaps my hurriedly penned card could be considered an insinuation, but kindly remember that, now in my seventieth year, after devoting all of my life earnings and

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<sup>160</sup> James E. Campbell to WCH, 25 September 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>161</sup> WCH to WJS, 9 September 1924, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>162</sup> WJS to WCH, 29 January 1923, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

almost fifty years to my life ambition to erect a suitable memorial to my parents, my impatience may be justified.<sup>163</sup>

Growing old and even more short-tempered, he had no time to mince words. He reminded them of his sacrifice and generosity. He also made sure to mention their responsibility—the Hayes Memorial—as they seemed to have forgotten it.

Part of the problem was due to the fluctuation in members of the OSAHS. As new members joined the organization, their connection to Spiegel Grove waned. An unfortunate result from this was the tightening of funds: “no claims on the Society’s funds could be made outside of what is really only the Columbus branch of the Society.”<sup>164</sup> It further strained the ties between Webb and the OSAHS as he felt that the Columbus leaders showed “verily, verily discrimination” once more as the 1925/1926 budget was revealed.<sup>165</sup> His took no lengths to hide his bitterness in a letter to member of the OSAHS A.C. Johnson: “...in the seventeen years which have elapsed since this property was deeded to the State for the Society, I have rarely known them to live up to their obligations, and grew quite accustomed to paying State and Society bills.”<sup>166</sup>

The OSAHS’s inattentiveness led him to ponder a complete separation of the two entities, parent from child. Even though he had the support of others on the Spiegel Grove Committee, Webb found, “there was no way of severing the relations of the Hayes Memorial properties and the society.”<sup>167</sup> This forced him to reevaluate his plans for the memorial and the OSAHS. If they could not be separate entities, they could at least have different missions. The OSAHS was heavily invested in fossils and archaeology at this time, neither of which held much interest for

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<sup>163</sup> WCH to ACJ, 24 October 1925, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>164</sup> WCH to ACJ, 1 June 1924, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>165</sup> WCH to ACJ, 9 June, 1925, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>166</sup> WCH to ACJ, 1 July 1925, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>167</sup> WCH to WJS, 23 November 1922, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

Webb. Wishing to gain greater independence, Webb was motivated to ponder creating a separate Ohio historical society located at Spiegel Grove. Webb explained his plan to W.J. Sherman:

I have given considerable thought to the future relations of the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum to the society. So have others...My thoughts have been running in this way--in particular, Messrs. Mills, Woods and Galbreath in particular, seek to concentrate everything at Columbus, in connection with their large bone yard and museum. Now I have no interest in the bone yard, but have a very deep interest in the establishment of an Ohio Historical Society and Historical Library at Spiegel Grove...Why not use our present society organization known as the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society as a holding corporation composed of the Ohio Archaeological Society and museums of Columbus, Ohio, and the Ohio Historical Society, and Historical Library and Publications of Freemont, Ohio, with one half of our trustees members of each of the two boards. Think of it.<sup>168</sup>

This mutiny was rather daring. He wanted to split the society, moving away from Columbus and to Fremont. Of course, both the state and the OSAHS did not approve of this idea. They did not want to move the historical society to northern Ohio.

While Webb's idea of a split society did not come to fruition, changes were made to the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum. The OSAHS slowly relinquished certain responsibilities. The memorial took over the some of the OSAHS's managerial duties. It was a gradual process. Webb's first attempt to separate Spiegel Grove from the OSAHS resulted in the OSAHS's Spiegel Grove Committee's evolution into the Hayes Historical Society. The Hayes Historical Society was incorporated in 1926 and acted as the memorial's first board of directors independent of the OSAHS. Webb was a member. Webb's influence on the maintenance and direction shaped the mission and vision of the institution. Through his continued support, the memorial survived the trials of its early years and allowed it to set an example for other presidential libraries to follow.

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<sup>168</sup> WCH to WJS, 23 November 1922, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

Under the Hayes Historical Society's governance, the memorial gradually began to operate under its own management. As a separate line item under the OSAHS's budget, the memorial's board created their own budget. While the state and the OSAHS would provide some funding Spiegel Grove had to rely on its trusts and its own fundraising efforts. This turning point shifted the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum in a direction that led it to the management and funding models it follows today. With their own board and budget established, they started hiring their own staff. However, the disentangling of the memorial from the state was such a slow process that certain staff members remained state employees up until the 1990s.

As the 1930s approached, the Hayes Memorial Library and Museums reached its maturity. Given the freedom to govern itself, the institution finally found its footing. It was fully staffed and open to the public. Visitors made their pilgrimage to Spiegel Grove to see the tomb, estate, museum, and library honoring Rutherford B. Hayes. The site maintained attention from local, state, and national parties. Thanks to Webb's tireless efforts and two acts of Congress, five sets of White House gates were added to the entrances of Spiegel Grove. They were the final jewel on the crown of Spiegel Grove.

## CONCLUSION

Securing the White House gates was the last act that Webb performed for his beloved memorial. Age and health finally overtook him. As the 1930s began Webb was institutionalized due to declining health. Stuck in Marion, Ohio, he was unable to keep a close eye on Spiegel Grove. He was left discouraged by his illness and inability to enjoy his finished work. To combat these feelings, the Hayes family, friends, and neighbors sent letters to him in the hospital. Hayes Memorial librarian Frances E. Schwartz wrote Webb in July of 1930. She shared with the colonel visitors' impressions of the site:

There are many visitors at the Hayes Memorial building this summer who appreciate and mention the love of a son for his parents shown in such a substantial manner as that of Colonel Hayes. They say it must have taken many years of loving planning and care to establish a memorial so splendid that will be an inspiration for all times. With the lovely grounds, the view of the knoll, the wonderful tress marked as they are, everything so complete, that they marvel at it.<sup>169</sup>

Seeing the grove and its treasures truly moved those who visited. The Hayes Memorial had blossomed into an institution that demanded respect. It was the first of its kind, a presidential library, free and open to the public. It was new and awe-inspiring.

The Hayes Memorial Library and Museum at Spiegel Grove was also impressive to those who were closer to its content. Webb's family, who had approved and aided him in his task but had not spearheaded it, voiced their pleasure with the finished project. After visiting Spiegel Grove for the first time in many years, Fanny Hayes wrote of her admiration to Webb:

I was impressed so deeply by the natural beauties of the place, and more particularly by the wonderful things you have done to add to that beauty. To become a bit slangy—your middle name must be Vision. I'm sure no one else saw the possibilities as you did—or, having perhaps seen them, could have carried them out. Everything about the Grove shows the most loving care on your part...Of course it is horrid to be sick—but when you are quite well again the illness will have been almost worth while for the renewed joy you will have in the spot you have made so beautiful—and which will stand forever and a day

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<sup>169</sup> Frances E. Schwartz to WCH, 23 July 1930, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

as a wonderful creation from a devoted son to his parents. Anyone might well envy you!<sup>170</sup>

As Fanny stated, Webb's vision and perseverance had made the memorial possible. Without his financial assistance and powerful connections there likely would not have reached the success it did. His dream, the product of his life's efforts, had become a site of pilgrimage and learning to all who entered its grounds.

Sadly, Webb was unable to fully appreciate its glory. His health continued to decline, forcing him to remain hospitalized. Colonel Webb Cook Hayes died July 26, 1934, at the age of seventy-eight. Upon his death, his nephew Admiral Webb Cook Hayes II took over the Hayes home residence and the duties so involved. It was he who received the missive from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1938. Roosevelt decided to create his own presidential library and shared his views on the Hayes Memorial Library and museum:

The work of many historians and other experts who specialize in particular periods of our history has, in times past, been greatly handicapped by lack of proper library facilities and access to original source materials.

It seems to me that the extraordinary resources of the Hayes Memorial Library at Spiegel Grove State Park ought to make comparatively easy the task of scholars looking for material covering the Administration of President Hayes and the post-Civil War period. I think it is particularly fitting that this comprehensive collection should include; beside President Hayes' own library, his correspondence and other papers associated with his public life—a veritable gold mine for historical scholars.<sup>171</sup>

The president recognized the treasure that was in Fremont, Ohio. By researching the history of the Hayes Memorial, Roosevelt learned what to avoid and what imitate when creating his own library. Roosevelt went on to found the national system of presidential libraries. But before the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum there was the Hayes Memorial Library

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<sup>170</sup> Fanny Hayes to WCH, 29 May 1930, WCH Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

<sup>171</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt to Admiral Webb Cook Hayes II, 21 October 1937, Presidents' Collection, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

and Museum. The Hayes Memorial paved the way for Roosevelt and other presidents to create their own libraries. It was the model for those who came after, and therefore shaped presidential history and that of America.

As the first presidential library, it had to set the rules and create the mold that others would use in the years to come. Its road to completion was difficult as it had never been traveled. The early years of Hayes Memorial Library and Museum were hard ones. Weathering financial strain, staff turnover, and structural upheaval the memorial paved the way for the future. It has withstood the test of time, surviving depressions and wars while remaining true to its original mission. None of this would have been possible without the pillar of strength behind it. The backbone of the museum was its founder, Colonel Webb Cook Hayes. Seeing his dream become reality motivated him like nothing else. His family's legacy needed to be honored and remembered and he found a way to do it.

Many men who faced the obstacles that Webb did might have abandoned the cause. As Lucy Elliot Keeler summed up in an editorial to the *Fremont Daily News* on February 20, 1930:

It was a herculean task...There was not enough money to do everything himself. He would do a big party and get the state or county or city to help a little; and that point settled, pass on to something else. Nobody was more distressed or indignant than he at the waste and blunders and delays caused by officials and their henchmen who were only incapable politicians. Again and again and again he paid for bad work that had to be done over.

A man with Webb's character, power, and background was required to push past those impediments and forge a path forward. Because of his leadership, the concept of the United States presidential library took shape as an institution that made presidential manuscripts and materials available to the public.

When opening his own presidential library in Hyde Park, New York in 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt stated:

The dedication of a library is in itself an act of faith. To bring together the records of the past and to house them in buildings where they will be preserved for the use of men and women in the future, a Nation must believe in three things. It must believe in the past. It must believe in the future. It must, above all, believe in the capacity of its own people so to learn from the past that they can gain in judgment in creating their own future.<sup>172</sup>

His words reflected the struggle of his predecessor Colonel Webb Cook Hayes. What was more of an act of faith, truly, a *leap* of faith than beginning a presidential library? He had the foresight to create an institution for future generations that would preserve the history of his family and the nation. His groundbreaking project gained him the respect of friends and the disapproval of enemies. Defending his actions, Lucy Keeler ended her February editorial with:

To be sure he did things in his own way. Can a leopard change his spots? A different character would have given up the whole thing long ago, could never have carried things through. But he himself would have loved more help and less recrimination a larger way of looking at his struggles and accomplishments. And Fremont has this beautiful park in perpetuity. Suppose it had been cut up into buildings?<sup>173</sup>

Her words admitted Webb's eccentricities but stated they were necessary to finish the project. Without help from others, Webb had to be the driving force behind the memorial. Without him, it likely never would have existed.

Because of his domineering personality, it has not been uncommon for negative representations of Webb to take hold. Those at the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums joked about him. They considered him the president's bossy, spoiled son. No credit was given to him. He was only seen as the demanding founder of the institution. As I explored his collection, his different layers surfaced. His existing reputation was a simplification of his faceted personality. The characteristics cited were true. He certainly was demanding and bossy. He had grand expectations and did not hide his disappointment or disregard. He did exploit his power and position to his best interests. It was necessary to do so to create the memorial. The

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<sup>172</sup> "FDR Created the First Presidential Library," accessed April 4, 2017, <https://fdrlibrary.org/dedication>.



Hayes Memorial Library and Museum was like a child to Webb, his life's work. It promoted his family, his hometown, his state, his nation, and his own passions. While the memorial promoted his father's legacy, the institution was truly Webb's legacy.

In 2016, the institution celebrated its centennial. Now the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums, it has survived two name changes, seven executive directors, and two additions to the original structure. The nation's first presidential library continues to pave the way for others in its mold, setting a new bar for them to follow. Webb's role in the Hayes Presidential Library & Museums was reasserted as our founder and visionary. Through Spiegel Grove and other presidential libraries his contribution to American history continues to this day.

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