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**From the Pulpit To Senate Floor:
Catholics, Fundamentalists,
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in 1920's Louisiana**

By

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1999 Senior Honors Thesis

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Introduction

Only about half the members had taken their seats as the Senate of the state of Louisiana convened for its morning session on June 23, 1926. The clerk began calling the numbers of House bills to be referred to committees. When number 279 was read out, few of the senators realized it was the Shattuck bill, “the most momentous in the present session, prohibiting the teaching of evolution in state schools an colleges.” Attracting no attention to himself, a senator from Assumption Parish quietly said, “I move as a substitute that this bill be indefinitely postponed.” A group of churchmen sponsoring the bill rushed from the corridors where many were still buzzing over the Shattuck bill’s passage through the house one day earlier. When the roll was called, some of the senators answered from the aisles and the corridors as they rushed to sit down in the chamber. Tied at 15 to 15, the final two votes sealed the fate of the bill; it was killed 17 to 15. “Even the members of the upper house could hardly realize what had happened—that what had promised to be the bitterest fight of the session was ended without a word in debate in five minutes after the fall of the day’s opening gavel.”¹

The Shattuck anti-evolution bill and the Holloman Bill, which prohibited the teaching of

¹ *Alexandria Daily Town Talk*, June 23, 1926.

anything subversive to the faith or creed of any pupil and was voted down a day later in the exact same manner, became the closest that Louisiana ever came in the 1920's to passing a measure that forbid the teaching of evolution in public schools. Instead, the anti-evolution movement settled for administrative action taken by the State Board of Education which pushed local boards to prohibit the teaching of evolution. The legendary Scopes Monkey Trial had occurred less than one year before the debate in the Louisiana legislature. The indefatigable William Jennings Bryan and his World's Christian Fundamentalist Association faced the American Civil Liberties Union and Clarence Darrow. They placed the small, mostly Methodist town of Dayton, Tennessee, in the history books as the site where the intellectual "conflict" between science and religion became manifest. Louisiana's debate over the instruction of evolution in public schools did not carry quite the same drama or attract the attention of the world. In fact, the legislature settled the issue in a matter of minutes in what some termed a "shrewd parliamentary trick," and word of it did not reach very far outside of the state of Louisiana. Despite the relatively anti-climactic end in the state to a struggle which was and still is being debated in other state legislatures, Louisiana's 1926 struggle over evolution provides interesting insights into the motivations surrounding such movements.

The movement's background in the rise of Christian Fundamentalism in the late teens and early twenties reflects the theory of evolution's threat to certain religious beliefs. "For it was a cardinal fundamentalist dogma that the Bible must be accepted literally or not at all. If man had evolved by any means from a lower order of life, he obviously was not created by special act as stated in Genesis." Schools became the prime targets of concern, for they were particularly

vulnerable to the “Darwinian contagion.”² Though originally confined to the plant and animal kingdom, Darwinism “gradually became involved in the whole philosophical discussion of the general evolutionary theories of development of the cosmos, the solar system, the earth, and even of cultures, societies, and institutions.”³ The theory of biological evolution developed, for many scientists and intellectuals, into a philosophical doctrine which placed man and society on a purely naturalistic level, governing man’s actions by the laws of nature, and exalting the theory of natural selection as the guiding force of social interaction. Fundamentalists refused to accept the notion of man as devoid of any divine quality and attacked the theory of evolution as a whole, because if mankind had been created by any other means than direct creation, then the Biblical teaching was false and the Christian religion false as well. For Fundamentalists, the anti-evolution movement became a crusade to preserve the Christian religion in the face of impending crisis.

Although some religious leaders managed to reconcile biological evolution’s teachings to Christian doctrines, events around the turn of the century and into the 1920's caused many to recognize the threat that teaching evolution to school children would have on a religious society. By the end of the 1920's, Oklahoma, Florida, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas had passed anti-evolution legislation which, in various forms, banned in public schools teaching that man developed through the evolutionary process of natural selection. Anti-evolution activists in Louisiana, too, tried to ban the teaching of evolution in schools. However, the question remains

²Kenneth K. Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism In the Twentieth Century*. (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1968): 74, provides a brief discussion on the nature of the anti-evolution movement in the south.

³ John Rickards Betts. “Darwinism, Evolution, and American Catholic Thought.” *Catholic Historical Review* XLV (July, 1959): 161-185.

why Louisiana never passed such a law when states of comparable size around Louisiana did do so.⁴

The Louisiana anti-evolution movement was spearheaded mainly by the Baptist denomination. As early as 1923, Louisiana Baptists began organizing to invoke the state legislature and board of education to take action regarding the instruction of the evolutionary origin of man in public schools. In 1925, the Scopes Trial and the passage of an anti-evolution law in Mississippi gave the Louisiana anti-evolutionists the momentum they needed to push their measures to the state legislature. By the end of 1926, Baptists had managed to influence the State Board of Education to look into removing the mention of the evolutionary origin of man from high schools textbooks. However, they failed to win the symbolic victory in the legislature. The Louisiana Senate essentially swept the anti-evolution measures under the rug, allowing them no consideration by its education committee. Some anti-evolutionists were shocked, but to many, the action was no surprise. Many individuals, including LSU President Thomas Boyd, had mounted tremendous opposition to the measures during their consideration in the House of Representatives. Even the New Orleans *Times Picayune* came out in opposition to the measures.

Much of this study deals with the fight between the opposing sides of the question. The issues each side raised ranged from the constitutionality of the proposed legislation to whether evolution actually threatened religious belief. The fate of the anti-evolution bills in the legislature was due in large part to individuals on both sides of the debate. But this study will also look into some larger issues involved, the influences of culture, modernization, and the rural-urban setting.

⁴Edward Larson, *Trial and Error: The American Controversy Over Evolution and Creation*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

Many historians have examined the events of the 1920's, like the Scopes Trial, as a manifestation of the growing conflict between rural and urban societies. In the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, members of the rural population began to look upon the cities with a growing sense of anxiety. Urban areas represented a threat to their view of a traditional American society so prevalent in nineteenth century America. Many historians align the ideals of rural America with the nineteenth century Victorian culture, characterized by its traditions of family, religion, and an emphasis on hard work as the keys to a virtuous life. For some scholars, the Fundamentalist movement was part of a larger reaction by the old Victorian culture to the emergence a modern, industrial, and diverse society which began to flourish in the Gilded Age of the late nineteenth century.⁵ Movements like the Ku Klux Klan, religious Fundamentalism, and nativism formed to attack the wave of modernism, intellectualism, Catholicism, Bolshevism, Darwinism, and any other "ism" that Americans of old pioneer stock regarded as un-American and offensive to the social status quo of a country which they prided as being a Protestant Christian nation. Rural America became the hotbed of anti-evolution sentiment. Though by the twentieth century the Darwinian controversy seemed to have subsided in many Protestant circles, according to William Leuchtenburg, author of *The Perils of Prosperity*, "in farmlands and small towns, particularly in the mountain country of the South, many Protestant ministers had never subscribed to Darwinism."⁶ Events of the 1920's were to project the campaign against Darwinism back into the national spotlight.

⁵Charles W. Eagles. "Urban-Rural Conflict in the 1920's: A Historiographical Assessment. *The Historian* XLIX (November, 1986), pp. 26-49.

⁶William E. Leuchtenburg. *The Perils of Prosperity: 1914-32*. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1958, 1993), p. 218.

This study will show that, in the case of Louisiana, however, the urban-rural conflict was not as effective as other causes. Despite the wave of interest on the part of the rural Victorian culture throughout the South, the rural population in Louisiana had a rather insignificant relationship to the pattern of anti-evolution sentiment throughout the state. The majority of parishes in South Louisiana whose population density was just as low as some in North Louisiana did not indicate support for the bills. Instead, other causes must be examined.

Another possible cause was the degree of modernization throughout the state. Very much a part of the urban-rural conflict, the compelling theory in this case is that the higher degree of modernization an area had, the less likely it would have been to wish to prohibit the education of modern scientific theories. This study tested various measures of modernization in Louisiana parishes to see what effect each had on the pattern of anti-evolution sentiment. In each case, some statistical relationship was indicated, but some of the results were the opposite of what one might assume to be true about modernization and its effect on anti-evolution sentiment. Ultimately, the relationship between factors of modernization and the amount of anti-evolution sentiment lends support the theory that denominational ties had the most significant influence.

In examining the question of why anti-evolutionists failed to gain the legislative victory they desired, the best possible explanation to consider, other than the influence of the individuals involved, is the influence of religious denominations in the state. Louisiana perhaps lacked the amount of Christian Fundamentalist support for anti-evolution legislation that other states possessed. The state had a smaller percentage of conservative Protestant denominations because of the uniquely high percentage of Catholics in the state, particularly in the southern parishes. In his study on Louisiana education, James G. Dauphine comments on this cultural demography:

From the early nineteenth century, Louisiana was culturally divided between northern and southern regions. North Louisiana, whose white population descended from Anglo Protestants, became culturally separate from the French Triangle parishes of South Louisiana-composed primarily of Catholics who are culturally indebted to the French, Spanish, and French Canadian heritages of the region.⁷

Though the transformation to modern times of the late twentieth century may have diluted this dichotomy somewhat, the cultural difference is still apparent today, and certainly was in the mid-1920's. "Although social change occurred after 1880 and became more rapid after World War I, a number of well-developed social customs in North and South Louisiana survived up to and beyond World War II."⁸ Indeed, Louisiana had a significantly higher percentage of Catholics than most other states, a fact that may have had a significant impact on the fate of the anti-evolution legislation in that state. Catholics themselves had no unified involvement in either the anti-evolution movement or the Scopes Trial, but for the most part, during the major anti-evolution push, many Catholics in the United States did not support the movement for various doctrinal and constitutional reasons. The Catholic attitude will be more fully examined in Chapter 2.

Beyond the mere analysis of Catholic thought on the anti-evolution movement, a quantitative examination of the effect Catholic presence versus Protestant presence had on the anti-evolution movement becomes important. Was denominational affiliation, statistically, a key factor in the amount of anti-evolution sentiment throughout the state? If so, and the support for anti-evolution measures was limited to the conservative *Protestant* denominations most closely associated with the Fundamentalist movement, then a cultural situation in which members of such

⁷ Dauphine, James G. *A Question of Inheritance: Religion, Education, and Louisiana's Cultural Boundary, 1880-1940*. p. vii

⁸ Dauphine, p. viii

denominations were in the minority would limit any effort to pass anti-evolution laws. This study will attempt to demonstrate that such a situation existed in Louisiana, and that the denominational distribution in Louisiana (Baptists toward the north and Catholics toward the south) matches, to a significant extent, the voting pattern on anti-evolution measures from parish to parish. Outside of individuals who played a significant role in the debate, the influence of denominational affiliation in the unique cultural demography of Louisiana had the largest influence on the amount of support for anti-evolution legislation in the state.

Because either a statistical approach or a narrative approach alone prove insufficient to capture the full nature of the anti-evolution debate, this study employs both. First, it is necessary to provide background information on the Fundamentalist movement and what caused it to begin a crusade against evolution. Second, some information on the reaction of Catholics to the anti-evolution crusade, particularly to the Scopes Trial, is also helpful in analyzing the debate in Louisiana. Third, the debate in the Louisiana Legislature will be discussed as a crusade on the part of Louisiana Baptists to prohibit the teaching of evolution. This discussion will explain the role of various individuals and institutions like LSU on the debate in the legislature. Finally a quantitative approach will explain the impact that cultural, rural, and economic situations had on the fate of the legislation in what was actually one of the more interesting anti-evolution crusades in the South.

Chapter 1: Fundamentalism and The Anti-Evolution Movement

“Evolution overestimates the influence of the mind
on life and underestimates the influence of the heart.”¹

-William Jennings Bryan

The anti-evolution movement of the 1920's was rooted in American Fundamentalism which established itself in its true form shortly after World War I. It took decades after the initial publication of Darwin's *Origin of the Species* and *Descent of Man* to ignite such a controversy as the Scopes Monkey Trial. Not that Darwin's theories did not meet with criticism, but the evangelicals of the mid-nineteenth century, in many cases, reconciled its theories to religious belief. When controversy did arise before the 1920's, it was usually confined to the Protestant denominations, embodied by Fundamentalist attacks on modernism in the church. It took the dramatic social changes occurring around the turn of the century and events leading up to the 1920's to capture the attention of many American evangelicals and cause them to turn Fundamentalist principles into an active social force. By the mid-1920's, the stage was set for a showdown in what many perceived to be the conflict between science and religion.

From the late eighteenth century until around 1870, the prevailing philosophy among American Protestants was that of Common Sense Realism. The historian George M. Marsden, in

¹“Bryan Doesn't Claim ‘To Know Everything’; He Replies to Foes,” *Commercial Appeal* (Memphis), 23 July, 1925, p.1. Quoted in Edward Larson's *Summer for the Gods*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 198.

his book, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, explains the appeal of Common Sense philosophy. Drawing from the seventeenth century philosopher, Frances Bacon, Common Sense rested upon two fundamental premises: “that God’s truth was a single unified order and that all persons of common sense were capable of knowing that truth.”² Marsden argues that, because Common Sense Realism allowed for a firm foundation of a scientific approach to reality, it was unquestionably *the* American philosophy until the 1870's.

Evangelical Christians and liberal Enlightenment figures alike assumed that the universe was governed by a rational system of laws guaranteed by an all-wise and benevolent creator. The function of science was to discover such laws.³

The first American scientist to support the theory of evolution in a textbook was an orthodox Christian, Asa Gray. A botanist, Gray wrote in his revised textbook, *The Elements of Botany*, that resemblances between species merely “show that they are all part of one system, realizations in nature, as we may affirm, of the conception of One Mind.”⁴ God remains behind nature, “but the secondary cause of evolution replaced His creative hand as the immediate instrument of speciation.” Gray pursued efforts with geologist George Frederick Wright to popularize an orthodox-Christian interpretation of Darwinism.⁵ Another scientist, Joseph Le Conte soon followed in Gray’s footsteps in attempting to reconcile evolution with religion by promoting a liberal Christian interpretation of evolution in his geology textbook.

²George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 14.

³ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. p. 15.

⁴ Edward Larson, *Trial and Error: The American Controversy Over Evolution and Creation*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 10.

⁵ Larson, *Trial and Error*. p. 10.

Certainly men like Gray and Le Conte did not fit within the group of scientists attacked by twentieth century Fundamentalism as anti-religious. Quite the contrary, according to historian James R. Moore, “among the men of science Christian commitment was not the exception but the rule.” In *The Post-Darwinian Controversies*, Moore cites a survey taken by Francis Galton, Darwin’s step-cousin, which examined the religious commitments of Victorian scientists, including Gray and Le Conte. Seventy percent indicated affiliation with the Church of England and an overwhelming majority said that the religion taught to them in their youth had no deterrent effect upon the freedom of their researches. Even further, many members of England’s Royal College of Chemistry, in 1864, drew up a statement asserting that it is “impossible for the Word of God as written in the book of Nature, and God’s Word written in Holy Scripture to contradict one another, however much they may appear to differ.”⁶

The tradition of Victorian scientists who found no conflict between the realms of science and religion coincided in the nineteenth century with the era of Common Sense Realism. Both exemplified a sense of toleration: science for religion from the standpoint of the Victorian scientists, and religion for science on the part of Common Sense theologians. Based on the interrelationship of faith, science, the Bible, morality, and civilization, American Protestantism lay in a careful balance in the nineteenth century. However, this balance would not last into the twentieth century.

By 1870, Common Sense Realism faced a major crisis against a wave of biblical criticism coming from Europe, particularly Germany, where many asserted that the Bible simply could not

⁶James R. Moore, *The Post-Darwinian Controversies: A Study of the Protestant Struggle To Come To Terms With Darwin in Great Britain and America- 1870-1900*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 82-84.

stand up to scientific standards, thus calling into question an essential element of Common Sense Realism, Biblical authority. In the late nineteenth century, critical views of scripture advanced in Europe. Much of it involved criticism of the historicity of the Bible and the accounts of miracles. “The truth is staring the Christian World in the face,” observed Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., “that the stories of the old Hebrew books cannot be taken as literal statements of fact.”⁷ To these critics, modern scientific theories like Darwinism dethroned Biblical authority. The reaction to Higher Criticism caused a split among protestant evangelicals. Some attempted to immediately reconcile Darwinism with Christianity, while others remained steadfast in their belief in Biblical inerrancy, proclaiming it utterly futile to seek reconciliation between science and religion. From the former, spurred by German Higher Criticism, came a tradition of modernism, from the latter, fundamentalism.

On the science side of the perceived conflict between science and religion, the tradition of Victorian scientists failed to settle the rising aggravation. Much of this is attributed to the passing of the early “evangelical evolutionists” such as Asa Gray and Joseph Le Conte. They had attempted to promote both an orthodox and a liberal Christian interpretation of evolution, respectively. According to Edward Larson, “the Christianity of Gray and Le Conte could certainly have helped to defuse religious opposition to the evolutionary content of their texts. Their passing, followed by George Frederick Wright’s death in 1919, could have upset the balance working toward the reconciliation of the evolutionary and Christian world views.”⁸ With the passing of these Christian scientists, the stage was set for a rising conflict between modernists and

⁷Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. p. 17.

⁸Larson, *Trial and Error*. p. 27.

fundamentalists on the question of evolution which finally culminated in an all-out science versus religion debate in the Scopes Trial.

The foundation of the liberal modernist tradition may be found in the New American Theology as advocated by the minister Henry Ward Beecher. In 1885, Beecher published *Evolution and Religion*, said to be the first complete adoption of evolution among the early theologians. Beecher believed that progress in science and morality was a sign of the coming of the kingdom of God. Evangelicals, he said, must be willing to see God's coming "when He is at work in natural laws, when He is living in philosophical atmospheres, when He is shining in great scientific disclosures, when He is teaching the human consciousness all around"⁹ Beecher advanced the notion that the progress of the Kingdom of God is equated with the progress of civilization, particularly in the areas of scientific and moral advancement. In addition, the supernatural aspects of theological views were no longer to be separated from the natural, but rather, the supernatural was to be seen as manifesting itself only in the natural.¹⁰ Beecher's view elevated science to a role of authority, moving way beyond science's role in Common Sense Realism as merely part of a delicate balance between religion, science, and society.

For many evangelicals, Beecher's views strayed too far away from the Christian faith. Men like Asa Gray and Henry Ward Beecher were simply conceding too much to science. Among these critics of the modernist view was Dwight L. Moody. "Moody was a progenitor of fundamentalism-it could even be argued that he was its principal progenitor."¹¹ Moody advanced

⁹Marsden, *Fundamentalism*. p. 24. quoting Beecher.

¹⁰Marsden, *Fundamentalism*. p. 24.

¹¹Marsden, *Fundamentalism*. p. 33.

the causes of Biblical infallibility and premillennialism, or the notion that the world was in a steady state of moral decline into hell, and that it would end with a 1,000-year personal reign of Christ on earth. This was quite a departure from Beecher's optimistic view of God's redemptive work being manifested in the spiritual and moral progress of society. "I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel," said Moody, "God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, 'Moody, save all you can.'" ¹² The movement that Moody had begun characteristically detached itself from society.

It was not until the twentieth century that the group of religious conservatives would unite under the banner of Fundamentalism. Social involvement became an obligation on the part of Protestant evangelicals. Twentieth century society began to see a reaction on the part of a Protestant culture, Victorianism, a culture that found itself disappearing over the turn of the century. Victorians of the nineteenth century, according to the historian Stanley Coben, were typically characterized as hard-working, self controlled, orderly, pious toward God, believers in the truth of the Bible, and strongly oriented toward home and family. ¹³ These ideals were most commonly associated with rural agrarian societies in America. In the twentieth century, it was rural America which became the hotbed of Fundamentalism and other forms of anti-modernism. Victorians also characteristically opposed most non-Anglo-Saxon ethnic groups. "Blacks and American Indians...were among those regarded and treated as 'foreign.' So were almost all Asians, Jews, and Catholics-especially those Catholics of Irish, Italian, or Mexican descent." ¹⁴

¹²Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, p. 38. Quoting Moody.

¹³Stanley Coben, *Rebellion Against Victorianism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 4.

¹⁴Coben, *Rebellion Against Victorianism*, p. 4.

Over the turn of the century, intellectual and cultural movements sent Victorian America reeling. Immigration, urbanization, the development of an American intelligentsia, and Black America coming into its own through jazz, blues, and the Harlem Renaissance, all threatened Victorianism's hold on the social status quo. This cultural crisis, as seen on the part of Victorians, was more than coincidental with the religious crisis taking place.

As a result, the Victorian culture felt compelled to mount an all out attack on the forces of modernism. While attacks on other forces of modernization such as immigration and the emergence of Black America commonly came from the Ku Klux Klan, the attack on modern religion came from Christian Fundamentalists. "Fundamentalism appealed to some well-to-do, and some poor, but also and especially to the 'respectable' Protestant and northern European working class, whose aspirations and ideals were essentially middle-class Victorian."¹⁵ Fundamentalism appealed to the Victorian sense that America needed to remain *American*. They viewed modernism as a sign of the effect of European ways of thought, particularly German, on the American culture.

Fundamentalists also saw modernism as a step toward agnosticism and atheism. For many, it served as a compromise between Christianity and social doctrines arising from German lines of thought. "German 'Kultur,' where the doctrine of evolution had bred the twin evils of modernism and militarism, showed the inevitable result of such doctrines."¹⁶ German philosophers like Nietzsche had taken Darwin's "survival of the fittest" principle and applied it to society, creating a philosophy of atheistic materialism. Evangelicals feared that modernism's presence would

¹⁵Marsden, *Fundamentalism*. p. 202.

¹⁶Marsden, *Fundamentalism*. p. 152.

develop into the advancement of these atheistic lines of thought among the youth being educated in the modernist era. Such a development would be disastrous for evangelical Americans.

For Protestant evangelicals, the events of the late teens more than adequately served as a fulfillment of the expected moral crisis. The eruption of World War I and its brutish violence exemplified the type of society that German philosophy had propagated. Not only did evangelicals view German thought as a threat to Americans, but also the spread of Bolshevism. Christian evangelicals were able to build upon popular anger against both, brought on by the war and the Red Scare. In 1919, William B. Riley rose to the leadership of the fundamentalist movement against the backdrop of World War I. He became the chief organizer of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association. By 1920, the term "fundamentalist" was coined. Fundamentalists moved into an active campaign against the forces of modernism. They felt they could no longer merely fulfill D. L. Moody's vision of conservative Christianity as a lifeboat, saving as much as they could from the shipwrecked vessel of society. Fundamentalism had finally become the definitive movement that many designate the term to today, "militant anti-modernist Protestant evangelicalism."¹⁷

Fundamentalism drew its name from a series of twelve paperback volumes published between 1910 and 1915, known as *The Fundamentals*. According to Marsden, they did not have any immediate impact on the evangelical world.

The Fundamentals, however, had a long-term effect of greater importance than its immediate impact or the lack thereof. It became a symbolic point of reference for identifying a "fundamentalist" movement. When in 1920 the term "fundamentalist" was coined, it called to mind the broad united front of the kind of

¹⁷Marsden, *Fundamentalism*. p. 4.

opposition to modernism that characterized these widely known, if little studied, volumes.¹⁸

Drawing its platform from *The Fundamentals*, the Fundamentalist movement rallied around a series of fundamental truths or “essential” doctrines which must be kept intact in the face of modernism: (1) the inerrancy of Scripture, (2) the Virgin Birth of Christ, (3) his substitutionary atonement, (4) his bodily resurrection, and (5) the authenticity of the miracles. In the 1920's these became the “famous five points” said to serve as the rallying point before the ultimate collapse of the conservative branch of Protestantism.¹⁹

The initial target of the Fundamentalist movement was not the teaching of evolution in public schools. It first attacked the modernist movement and higher criticism within the Protestant churches.²⁰ However, in the aftermath of the social crises taking place in Europe, exemplified by German brutality in World War I, and the rise of Bolshevism and its atheistic principles, the Fundamentalist movement took an active social role. It took the charismatic politician, William Jennings Bryan, to lead the Fundamentalist movement to seek out and pursue what it perceived to be the cause of society's moral decline, evolutionary theory. The account of creation in Genesis, *had* to be the true account. If not, the entire notion of original sin and man's need to be saved by the grace of God was unnecessary. In the early twenties, Bryan began speaking about the dangers of teaching the hypothesis of Darwinism to America's youth, stressing the fact that it not only led to disbelief among America's youth with respect to God and immortality, but that it also was

¹⁸Marsden, p. 119

¹⁹Marsden, p. 117

²⁰Edward Larson, *Summer For the Gods*. p. 37.

responsible for German militarism in the First World War.

Throughout the South, Bryan began the push for the anti-evolution movement. By the end of the 1920's, all southern states had attempted to pass an anti-evolution measure in some form. In five states-Oklahoma, Florida, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas- anti-evolution measures passed. Oklahoma and Florida were the first two states to pass legislation. However, neither bill was actually effective. The Oklahoma bill only applied to textbooks prior to the eighth grade level, and it expired two years later.²¹ It took the Tennessee legislation to turn the heads of the nation's scientists, religious leaders, and politicians, including the American Civil Liberties Union.

Tennessee passed a law making it a misdemeanor, punishable by a \$500 fine, for a public school teacher "to teach any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man had descended from a lower order of animal."²² Immediately many began to fear the impact of legislation which would restrict the freedom of teachers. The ACLU decided to test the law in practice. It designated John Thomas Scopes, a science teacher in a Dayton, Tennessee, high school, the point-man in testing the new Tennessee law. After teaching the evolutionary origin of man to his pupils, Scopes was prosecuted. Many have considered the Scopes Monkey Trial the trial of the century. Perceived by many as the ultimate showdown (and showcase) between science and religion, it has occupied a significant role in the intellectual and cultural developments of the twentieth century. Yet it did little to solve any debate. The Tennessee law remained intact in what was essentially a technical victory for the prosecution.

²¹Kenneth K. Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism in the Twentieth Century*. (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith. 1968), p. 80-81.

²²Larson, *Summer for the Gods*, quoting the Tennessee law. p. 50.

Ultimately, when Scopes' attorney, Clarence Darrow, put Bryan on the stand, the real defendant became the Fundamentalist movement itself. Darrow made Biblical inerrancy the target of criticism, as Bryan became the victim. Bryan died shortly after the trial, a martyr to the cause of the Fundamentalist faith.

With Bryan as their martyr, the anti-evolution crusade continued throughout the 1920's. Arkansas and Mississippi both passed anti-evolution bills after the trial. Many Louisiana anti-evolutionists saw the passage of laws in Arkansas and Mississippi as a sign of the failure of modernists to accomplish anything by the Scopes Trial. Drawing on the momentum from Mississippi, and the revelation that Louisiana textbooks taught the evolutionary origin of man, Louisiana anti-evolutionists soon turned to the state legislature to push for anti-evolution legislation. In May and June of 1926, four anti-evolution measures appeared in the House. But these evolution measures would not go through without a fight.

Chapter 2: American Catholic Thought and the 1920's Debate over Evolution

“We rest secure in the conviction
that the fact of Creation cannot be
destroyed by the manner of it.”
-Central Catholic Verein¹

American Catholics maintained a position of neutrality between Fundamentalists and modernists throughout the Scopes trial. As a consequence historians have often omitted Catholic opinion from their works. However, in Louisiana a majority of citizens belonged to the Catholic Church. Therefore, a study of Catholic opinion during the anti-evolution movements in the 1920's becomes particularly relevant to an analysis of the evolution struggle there. Overall, Catholics maintained a variety of opinions on the question of evolution. During much of the period between the mid-nineteenth century and the 1920's, Catholics argued over the place of the theory of evolution in the Church's beliefs. By the 1920's, the debate had subsided, and it appears that a majority of Catholics were willing to accept theories of biological evolution without there being a split between modernists and conservatives as had occurred within Protestant denominations. By the time of the Scopes trial, Catholics took a neutral position, though they did provide a great deal of comment and criticism for both sides. Comments on the proceedings reveal a wide range of issues dealing with aspects of doctrine as well as social and constitutional issues. An analysis of

¹“Object to Anti-Evolution Bills.” *UNO-Morning Star*. March 26, 1927.

these issues aids in the understanding of the general feelings Louisiana Catholics might have had toward the Fundamentalist's anti-evolution crusade in their own state.

One of the earliest reconcilers of religion and evolution was George Mivart, a Catholic convert.² His *Genesis of the Species*, published in 1871, met with a mixed reception from both sides of the science-religion debate. Another Catholic scientist, a priest by the name of Canon Dorlodot, went so far as to imply that St. Augustine hinted at theories of evolution in his writings. His theory also encountered criticism from Catholics.³ In fact, to say that Catholics always advocated freedom for science and always drew a distinction between matters of faith and matters of science clearly and without dissension would be a serious misstatement. From the time of *Origin of the Species* until the 1920's, Catholics like Mivart frequently fought not only amongst themselves but against scientists like Darwin and Huxley over matters of evolution. Many intellectuals considered Pope Pius X an enemy of scientific thought and progress.⁴ In 1906, he issued a papal encyclical, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, that prohibited Catholic priests from the study of evolutionary theories and any historical-critical study of Scripture.⁵ An article by the historian John Rickards Betts in the *Catholic Historical Review*, which deals with Darwinism and American Catholic thought through 1900, suggests that despite some fierce turmoil within the

²For the best study of St. George Mivart and his reception by the Catholic church as well as other famous converts, read Patrick Allitt's *Catholic Converts: British and American Intellectuals Turn To Rome*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

³William L. Hornsby. "Evolution in Catholic Tradition," *America*, XXXIII (July 11, 1925), 327.

⁴John Rickards Betts. "Darwinism, Evolution, and American Catholic Thought," *Catholic Historical Review* XLV (July, 1959), 183.

⁵Allitt. *Catholic Converts*, p. 107.

Church and outside of it, most of the conflict had been settled by the turn of the century. By the 1920's, Catholics seemed to pride themselves on the steadfastness of their beliefs under the wise guidance of the Church, in contrast to the turmoil that the theory of evolution brought to Protestantism. Many articles in *America* and *Commonweal*, the leading Catholic publications at the time, suggest a sense of freedom to accept Darwin's theories as long as it was limited to the biological theory of evolution, not the philosophical theory, which the Church saw as dangerous.

Viewing the Scopes Trial as the result of the split between Modernists and Fundamentalists within Protestant denominations, many Catholic commentators urged Catholics to stay out of the debate. However, they criticized both Modernism and Fundamentalism in varying degrees. For example, many criticized fundamentalist Biblical literalism on the one hand, and modernist attempts to ridicule Biblical authority on the other. Writers in *America* and *Commonweal* focused on many issues on which to comment during the debate. Among them were doctrinal issues like Biblical authority, Church authority, and the use of evolution to further rationalistic and materialistic philosophies. There were also constitutional issues involving the First Amendment, like the authority of states to enact anti-evolution legislation and academic freedom. Comments on the debate can basically be separated into these two areas, matters of doctrine and matters of constitutional authority. With all of these issues in mind, Catholics who found themselves at odds with the Modernist/Fundamentalist debate insisted time and again that there is no conflict between science and religion.

In June of 1925, the *Catholic Educational Review* published an article which had actually been delivered as a lecture before the Chemical Seminar of the Catholic University of America by James H. Ryan entitled, "The Proper Attitude of the Catholic Scientist Toward Evolution." In the

beginning of the article Ryan addressed the common accusation that the Church is opposed to scientific pursuits, dictating that scientists must always adhere to ecclesiastical authority. Ryan argued that such misconceptions were faulty, “when attention is called to the fact that there is a very clear distinction between the doctrine of evolution as a scientific hypothesis and the same doctrine as a philosophical theory of life.” With regard to the former, he said, the Church is not directly concerned, and the Catholic scientist, “is as free and untrammelled as any other seeder after truth.” With regard to the latter, however, the philosophical theory of evolution, Ryan asserted that “we are dealing with a question that transcends the scope of natural science and can be solved only in the light of metaphysical investigation.” In such an investigation, he argued, the Church has a vital interest, “for here we touch upon matters that are intimately related to faith and morality and as such fall legitimately within the domain of the Church as the divinely constituted teacher of mankind.”⁶ Ryan’s speech introduced two important issues on the matter of doctrine, the separation of biological evolution from philosophical evolution and the authority of the Church as source of religious education.

With regard to Church authority as a teacher and guide, commentators addressed the issues of the place of the Bible in religion and the balance between faith and reason in scientific investigation. On August 1, 1926, an article appeared in *America*, a Jesuit publication, regarding the chaos surrounding the Scopes trial. The article examined the balance between faith and reason and the need for both. It further asserted that the Catholic Church, having found both, stands “certain that no directly revealed truth of God’s can ever deny a truth (equally God’s) revealed by

⁶James H. Ryan. “The Proper Attitude of the Catholic Scientist Toward Evolution,” *Catholic Educational Review*, XXIII (August 1, 1925), 395-400.

nature; for God cannot contradict Himself.” Protestantism, the author argued, has a principle which is destroying it and is the sole reason for the Dayton trial, “that principle is the denial of the Church as an authoritative teacher, the assertion that the Bible is the only rule of faith, and that every man must interpret the Bible for himself.”⁷ The author expressed the common Catholic view on the role of the Bible.

“The main purpose of the Bible,” the Jesuit Edwin D. Sanders wrote, “is to tell the history of God’s revelation to man, and, whatever may be said of Science, the Bible at least never wanders afield We read the Bible not to become scientists but to become saints.” His article, entitled “Science and the Bible,” argued that the Bible is neither scientific nor unscientific because biblical teachings simply do not focus on the scientific aspects of the events that they describe. In addition, one should not exclude the possibility of metaphor and hyperbole in the Biblical text, which certainly does not detract from the underlying meaning of the text. Sanders insisted that the Bible is infallible in its original meaning, but not so in its present English translation. In criticism of the modernist position, he referred to the absurdity of holding the Bible up to derision for scientific inaccuracies when the Bible was not even intended to be scientific. Equally critical of Fundamentalists, Sanders wrote:

Mr. Bryan insists much on the literal meaning of the Word of God. And rightly, provided he is thinking of the meaning intended by the sacred author, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but it is all too evident that he is thinking of that literal meaning which he and his Protestant friends find in the Bible. And such a literal meaning has no more authority than he and his Protestant friends can give it. He forgets that the Bible is not essential to Christianity. Christianity was complete and functioned perfectly and spread widely and rapidly long before the last word of the Bible was written. He forgets that Christ did not commission His Apostles to write books but to

⁷William C. Archer. “From Dayton to Chaos,” *America* XXXIII (August 1, 1925): 370-71.

“teach all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”⁸

If the Bible has any religious bearing on one's life, then it is only through the authority of the Church appointed by Christ himself. Mr. Bryan, Sanders asserted, is no authority on the Bible, nor are his modernist opponents. He referred to the authority of the Church as a teacher and guide in the interpretation of scripture.

Catholic writers in the 1920's also mentioned the relationship of faith to reason, another aspect of Church authority, and one which, for them, formed a bond between science and religion. It is a common characterization of Catholicism that it is a religion of the both/and, rather than the either/or: both faith and works; both free will and predestination; both faith and reason. Many articles affirmed that the Church, as an authoritative teacher, unified many of these seeming contradictions to form a singular doctrine bound by truth, whether it be through scientific investigation, metaphysical analysis, or pure faith. “Catholics are for Religion, for Science and for Freedom all at once. If anyone thinks he can defend those three causes by allying himself with either of the two sides in the Scopes case, let him try it.”⁹ Affirming a link between the exercise of the reason and of faith, another commentator wrote that faith was substantial and evidential. “But reason corroborates faith and all the more as the very heights and depths of the intellect are plumbed.”¹⁰ Thus, by the peaceful coexistence of the spiritual element with the rational element in a common pursuit of the Truth that is God, religion and science likewise coexist.

⁸Edwin D. Sanders, S.J. “Science and the Bible,” *America* XXXIII (August 1, 1925), 372-73.

⁹“The Middle Road to Dayton,” *America*, XXXIII (July 25, 1925), 352.

¹⁰William C. Archer. “From Dayton to Chaos,” *America*, XXXIII (August 1, 1925), 370-71.

Therefore, on the link between science and religion, Catholics found cause to reject both sides of the modernist-fundamentalist debate. Both sides, one Jesuit wrote, see religion and science as living in totally different fields, not linked by a common pursuit of truth. The Modernist saw faith as not concerned with knowing at all, whereas science was. "In this sense, of course, they are in different fields with a vengeance." In the search for a reconciliation between evolution and religion, the Modernist had drifted completely into the realm of the skeptical scientist and admitted that there was no way of knowing except through science. The author rebuked the attitude that religion was not the least bit concerned with intellectual perception. As for the Fundamentalist, he wrote, the same separation between religion and science has been made. Only in this case, it was religion to the contempt of science. Because of this separation between religion and science, a critical and unnecessary conflict, the Scopes Trial, had occurred. The author argued that the reaction of modern thinkers against Christianity "cannot be said to be against Christianity at all, however much they may think it is." Instead, observers should view modernistic and rationalistic criticism as a rejection of the Protestant or Calvinistic conception of God "as an arbitrary, even capricious Being, ruling the world through His will." The notion of an arbitrary God, the author argued, was detrimental to the pursuit of scientific knowledge of the facts of nature. In reaction to such a conception of God, the Jesuit asserted that modern thinkers have gone too far by denying the plan of a Creator altogether. Fundamentalism on the political scene, through its adamant rejection of science, had only aggravated the conflict.¹¹

Church authority, many Catholics believed, reconciled science and biblical instruction

¹¹Wilfrid Parsons, S.J. "Religion and Science." *America*, XXXIII (Aug. 15, 1925), 415-16.

under the guidance of its teaching. Rather than the fundamentalist notion of an infallible Bible, Catholics recognized an infallible Church interpreting scripture that, though it might have an appearance of contradicting scientific fact, could really never do so if interpreted correctly by a singular Church body. Furthermore, under Church guidance, religion and science peacefully coexisted by the dictates of a careful balance between faith and reason.

Another point that Ryan referred to in his message on the attitude of Catholic scientists toward evolution, besides Church teaching, was the separation of the biological theory of evolution from the philosophical theory, or, Social Darwinism. In June of 1925, a letter to the editor appeared in another Catholic publication, *Commonweal*, dealing with this distinction. Organic evolution, the author wrote, may be seen as God's ways of doing things. Philosophical evolution, on the other hand, "presumes to replace religion and is to be combated with arguments from philosophy and religion. The two have really nothing in common."¹² This distinction, made in several articles, aids in analyzing the Catholic position. While the Catholic Church's position allotted freedom to the scientist in the research of evolutionary theory in biology, it was also wary of the implications of Darwinism with respect to a social philosophy in which the theory of natural selection was projected onto the social setting, denying man's moral and divine qualities such as the existence of the soul. The separation of the two provided not only for criticism against both sides for failing to make such a distinction in the trial, but also ground for support of the Fundamentalist movement in its effort to maintain faith and morality in society.

Filled with this sympathy for the Fundamentalist cause, some articles appeared that indicated that not all Catholics were hospitable to the biological theory. As a consequence, with

¹²U.A. Hauber. "In the Matter of Evolution," *Commonweal*, II (June 17, 1925), 163.

respect to church doctrine, it remains difficult to discover any completely unified opinion on the question of evolution. While many viewed organic evolution, as separate from its philosophical implications, free for examination, several articles warned against the assertion that biological evolution was fact rather than hypothesis. "Scientific questions are not settled by authority, but exclusively by means of irresistible evidence, which is certainly absent in the present case."¹³

Another article berated modernist attempts to bring to Dayton scientists who would willingly testify to the fact of evolution "when in their own scientific conscience they know that it is no more than a theory, and has a long way to go before it is demonstrated as the truth."¹⁴ In addition, wrote another critic, many evolutionists would too easily treat it as fact, seeing evolution "as the best stick yet found with which to beat religion."¹⁵ Even if no conflict between science and religion existed, as many Catholic thinkers maintained, several warned against the treatment of evolution as proven fact. Catholics accused Modernists of holding evolution to be proven fact while, at the same time, assuring Fundamentalists that there is no conflict between science and religion. Such teaching might prove detrimental if instruction of the theory of biological evolution as fact were to lead to implications of its social philosophy.

Several priests warned against the teaching of evolution if it implied the social philosophy which denied the divine origin of man and destroys the basis for a moral life and the need of God. James H. Ryan's speech, printed in the *Catholic Educational Review*, affirmed that the Church had a vital interest in dealing with the philosophical aspect of Darwinism. In this regard, some

¹³"Concerning Evolution," *The Commonwealth*, II (June 10, 1925), 119-20.

¹⁴"Post-Mortems on Dayton," *America*, XXXIII (August 1, 1925), 376.

¹⁵"The Trial at Dayton," *America*, XXXIII (July 18, 1925), 328.

Catholics even found themselves justified in supporting the cause of William Jennings Bryan and the Fundamentalists who advanced the same type of argument about the danger of evolution to society. "Catholics have a decided right," wrote the *Commonweal*, "to oppose the efforts of those, who through an act of the most profoundly false faith accept the evolutionary hypothesis as an already proven fact, and proceed to teach and preach philosophies and methods of thought and action which are socially dangerous and subversive to religion. Such opposition on the part of Catholics is not an opposition to science, but a defense of science-as well as a defense of society and the Church."¹⁶ One article in *America* examined the loss of religion in education. It criticized a system of public schools based on the principle that religion must be divorced from education. "As for our colleges and universities, there is probably not one in which the student is not exposed to the influence of a philosophy which would destroy God and His Christ and reduce morality to a code of convention or convenience."¹⁷ Another article, entitled "Science and the Obvious," challenged the instruction of the evolutionary hypothesis in public schools, asserting that, although there may be no conflict between evolution and the revealed account of Creation, the teaching of evolution lends itself to being made a vehicle for communicating an anti-religious bias. "The fact is," said the author, "that as an unproved hypothesis and improbable theory, evolution should be excluded from the public schools whose function it is to impart knowledge rather than advance theories which neither the children nor their teachers understand . . ."¹⁸

When it came to the matter faith and belief in the face of anti-religion and immorality,

¹⁶"Concerning the Scopes Case," *Commonweal*, II (June 3, 1925), 85-87.

¹⁷"Mr. Bryan on Substitutes," *America*, XXXIII (May 30, 1925), 162-63.

¹⁸"Science and the Obvious," *America*, XXXIII (August 8, 1925), 392-393.

some Catholics admired the cause of Bryan and his constituents. After his untimely death, *Commonweal's* Dayton correspondent wrote,

Mr. Bryan was a predestined leader of the multitude-even if he only led them into deserts and never into the promised land of peace and plenty-and never was he more the leader than when his own soul was stirred both by love for the deepest things of all-God and country-and by fear that he and the people he loved were menaced...His death places the seal of that spiritual presence that hovered over Dayton upon the case that was tried there in the courthouse. Tragedy has purged it. The farcical elements will remain now as little ore than the jests of the clowns in a Shakespearean play, because William Jennings Bryan died nobly amid the last cracklings of the laughter of the groundlings, believing and knowing that he fought for God. May he rest in peace.¹⁹

The historian may view Catholic opinion of Fundamentalism at the time of the anti-evolution crusade as one that expressed sympathy toward Fundamentalism's religious motivations but still rejected the doctrines the Fundamentalist movement advanced.

With respect to the constitutional issues, many of the same doctrinal issues surfaced. In constitutional matters, Catholics criticized the anti-evolution movement as the wrong way to approach the need for advancing religion among the youth, since the First Amendment prohibited the government from involving itself in advancing religious beliefs. During the anti-evolution crusade, William Jennings Bryan argued that "the hand which writes the paychecks should rule the schools . . . the teachers are the employees of the taxpayers, and should no more be allowed to teach what they personally wish than a clerk should be allowed to dictate the policy of a bank."²⁰

In response to his argument, the *Commonweal* wrote,

The implication of this doctrine is clearly as follows, namely - that if a majority of the people of a state desire the teachings which they derive from their own conception of what the Bible means to be taught in the public schools, they have the right and the duty to impose their views by law. Other

¹⁹"William Jennings Bryan," *Commonweal*, II (August 5, 1925), 303.

²⁰"Concerning the Scopes Case," *Commonweal*, II (June 3, 1925), 85-86.

Protestants, Jews, agnostics, and Catholics would have no rights which that majority would be compelled to respect...If America is to maintain its traditional policy of the full separation of church and state, such encroachments upon that policy as the Tennessee law, deserve and demand the most complete exposure and discussion.²¹

Commonweal explained the major constitutional issues involved in the Scopes case, both the ability of a particular denomination to impose its views by law, and the freedom of teachers (or lack thereof) to teach what they wished. As evidenced by earlier articles, many Catholics supported the Fundamentalists' attempts to preserve faith among the youth. A few even supported regulating teaching of evolution by law, but a majority had a problem with such efforts. Throughout both *Commonweal* and *America*, as well as the local Catholic voice in New Orleans, the *Morning Star*, Catholics frequently discussed the constitutional implications of the anti-evolution crusade in state legislatures.

"One cannot help feeling a certain sympathy with Mr. Bryan in his efforts to prevent the teaching of atheism to children in the grammar in high schools, under the guise of 'science,'" wrote *America*, "at the same time, it must be admitted the Mr. Bryan is leading the fight along lines that can only strengthen the position of his antagonists."²² Bryan's statement that a majority of the people have the undisputed right to determine what shall be taught in public schools was one particular aspect of his approach to the anti-evolution crusade that came under severe scrutiny by Catholics. Critics equated Bryan's view with saying that the minority have no rights at all except to respect the will of the majority. On the notion of respecting the will of the majority, Bryan was sure to receive criticism from Catholics. Catholics had been a minority of the

²¹"Concerning the Scopes Case," *Commonweal*, II (June 3, 1925), 85-86.

²²"Minority Rights in Tennessee," *America* XXXIII (June 6, 1925), 162.

population throughout the history of the United States, a country in which many of its citizens took pride in it being not just a Christian nation, but a Protestant one, primarily. Catholics knew that a minority must have a voice. This was the very foundation of a constitution which cannot establish, by law, the beliefs of any particular religious belief, even if it is the view of the majority. In response to Bryan's aims, *Commonweal* wrote that while attempts to bring religion back into the forefront of attention was certainly good for the moral well being of society, "the attempt that seems actually to be under way to bring about once more something very close to union between state and church-or, rather a bundle of sectarian churches-must certainly cause foreboding dread."²³

In addition, *Commonweal* added, one cannot expect public schools to conform with any private viewpoint, for public school education means elimination of individual standards, and particularly of individual religious convictions. "The very fact that there are many creeds, means that the public school must have none." The author called this situation a "necessary limitation," for while it is not good to separate religion from education, as we have seen earlier articles in support of Bryan asserted, public schools cannot, under the First Amendment, legally advocate one particular religious view. Instead, the author suggested, parents should assume a responsibility to provide for their children a form of education that was morally good. "Whatever one's attitude may be towards evolution, or Mr. Bryan, or the paleolithic age, there is no doubt that an ethical outlook cannot be dictatorially imposed by legislature."²⁴

On the subject of freedom of the teacher, Catholics called for caution on the part of

²³ Michael Williams. "At Dayton, Tennessee," *Commonweal*, II (July 22, 1925), 262-65.

²⁴"The Scopes Dilemma," *Commonweal*, II (July 15, 1925), 241.

teachers. One *America* editorial demanded that teachers show restraint in their treatment of the subject of evolution and not treat it as fact.²⁵ *Commonweal* wrote that teachers should still be allowed to mention it, provided statements such as “by the great majority of scientists” were included. The *Commonweal* criticized Bryan’s notion of teachers as the employees of the taxpayers. “Here we have to remark that if that is really the position, it is a little difficult to understand why teachers should be hired at all, and why a phonograph with approved records might not be employed at much less cost and with equal advantage.” The publication condemned Bryan’s position and concluded that all theories should be given to students for consideration. “Tennessee is not an isolated enclosure, and the Tennessee graduates must in time emerge from their cotton-wool. When they do, what are they to think of the education, enforced by their state, which has prevented them from ever hearing of one of the most discussed questions of the day?”²⁶

In 1925, in response to the Scopes Trial, the Central Catholic Verein of America adopted a resolution concerning the trial. It denounced the prohibition of the teaching of evolution as an attempt on the part of the state to “interpret Revelation,” which, once tolerated would set a precedent for further interpretation of religious doctrines. On the resolution, the *Morning Star*, the official publication of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, published a 1927 article in response to several anti-evolution movements springing up throughout the country. It praised the reasoning of the resolution, and affirmed that Catholics need have no fear of the findings of science. “For, as the Central Verein reminds us, Religion and Science are not antagonistic to each other.” In closing, the *Morning Star* quoted the resolution: “we rest secure in the conviction that the fact of

²⁵“That Tennessee Law,” *America*, XXXIII (June 13, 1925), 209-210.

²⁶“On the Freedom of the Teacher,” *Commonweal*, II (June 24, 1925), 169-170.

Creation cannot be destroyed by the manner of it.”²⁷

The doctrinal and constitutional criticisms offered by Catholic intellectuals during the anti-evolution movement lay behind the general conviction on the part of Catholics that, since no conflict existed between science and religion, the culmination of the modernist-fundamentalist debate in the Scopes trial was of little use to settle anything. Catholics were for the pursuit and strengthening of a solid faith in God within society. That conviction led to some sympathy for William Jennings Bryan’s cause and criticism for Modernists and in materialistic philosophies that served to undermine such faith. However, Catholics remained equally critical of the doctrines of Fundamentalism. Most Catholic observers found they simply could not see past the constitutional implications of publicly mandating Fundamentalism. Seeing the Church as the only authoritative definer of Christian principles, Catholics felt that the Church needed to react to efforts to destroy or minimize Christian doctrine- in its own way. “But it has not and cannot ally itself with such fanatical movements as that led by Mr. Bryan.”²⁸

²⁷“Object to Anti-Evolution Bills,” *UNO-Morning Star* (March 26, 1927).

²⁸Michael Williams. “At Dayton, Tennessee,” *Commonweal*, II (July 22, 1925), 262.

Chapter 3: Louisiana and the “Monkey Bills”

“You cannot keep young people
with inquiring minds from an
investigation of these subjects.”
-Colonel Thomas D. Boyd

It becomes clear, given the high percentage of Catholics in the state, that the Roman Catholic Church had a significant influence on the debate over evolution in the Louisiana Legislature. Although Catholics formed no unified effort on either side of the debate in Louisiana, their position in national publications suggests that they did, for the most part, oppose anti-evolution measures. Several Episcopalians in the state likewise opposed the measures. On the other hand, some Presbyterians and Methodists offered their support to the cause of the anti-evolutionists. Louisiana Baptists became, by far, the most active in the 1920's anti-evolution campaign. All of the major leaders in the campaign in Louisiana came out of Baptist organizations. Whatever the extent of involvement other denominations had in the debate over evolution, the story of the anti-evolution campaign in Louisiana begins and ends within the walls of the Louisiana State Baptist Convention.

The Louisiana Legislature's struggle over four anti-evolution bills occurred in 1926, but anti-evolutionists had condemned evolution years earlier from pulpits and in religious meetings throughout the state. As early as 1922, Louisiana Baptists began targeting Darwin's teachings as

a special concern regarding the well being of schoolchildren. They proclaimed that Christian education must become the most important aspect of the lives of young pupils. "Here emphasis must be placed on men rather than money, upon character rather than culture, upon salvation rather than society and upon the deity of Christ rather than upon the teaching of Darwin." The 1922 Louisiana Baptist Convention stated that it could not demand that "the State provide Christian education, but we do expect that the State shall not provide anti-Christian education."¹ The Baptist Convention made the distinction between a state mandating that its schools teach a particular religion and a state forbidding its schools from advancing the antithesis of that religion's beliefs. The latter was, in their minds, constitutionally sound. With this justification in mind, Louisiana anti-evolutionists began to seek legislation against the teaching of evolution on the grounds that tax-supported schools should not teach children anything that might undermine their faith in God or contribute to the moral breakdown of society.

In 1922, the Louisiana Baptist Convention created a special committee to examine the use of textbooks in Louisiana schools. The *Baptist Message*, the official voice of Louisiana Baptists, wrote in March of that year that it was confident that Louisiana Baptists had no problem with their own schools, public and Baptist schools alike. If any teacher was advocating evolution, "we would show him the back door just as soon as we found him out."² Baptists soon found themselves less confident when in 1923 the committee gave its report to the Convention. It reported that several schools were, in fact, using textbooks that taught evolution. "It is a matter of common knowledge that a goodly number of the scientific books used in our schools and

¹*Annual of the Louisiana Baptist Convention* (1922) p. 26.

²*Baptist Message*. March 16, 1922.

colleges embody the teaching of Darwinian Evolution.” The convention condemned the use of these textbooks as destructive of faith in God and in the entire Christian tradition. “It is an established principle of American institutions that no form of religion can be taught in our public schools. It ought to be equally true that no form of irreligious or anti-Christian teaching shall be allowed, whether contained in text book or in class room lecture.”³ The committee declared that it would go “more fully into the work” in order to bring a more accurate report to the convention. It would not report again until 1925.

In 1924, the Louisiana *Baptist Message* printed few statements on the subject of evolution in public schools. Across the nation, however, individual movements against evolution coalesced with the establishment of the “Anti-Evolution League of America.” Once having confined itself to battling Modernists within the Protestant denominations, the Fundamentalist movement was finally moving into a more socially active role in post-World War I America. Evangelist T.T. Martin, secretary of the anti-evolution league, became one of the chief spokesmen for anti-evolutionists. In August of 1924, the Louisiana *Baptist Message* reported that he had organized the “Bible-Christ-and-Constitution Campaign Against Evolution in Tax Supported Public Schools” with the support of respected scientists and ministers from the United States and Canada. “Their goal is to carry the fight against evolution in tax supported schools to local boards of trustees and to legislatures, on the ground that it is a violation of the Constitution of the United States that guarantees religious liberty, to force a man to send his child to tax supported schools, force him to pay his taxes and then with this money pay teachers to destroy the faith of his child in

³*Annual of the Louisiana Baptist Convention* (1923) Dec. 4-7.

the Bible as God's word and in Jesus Christ as the Savior."⁴ The League influenced a number of legislatures in the South to adopt anti-evolution measures. The politician William Jennings Bryan soon became involved in the national anti-evolution campaign. With Bryan as their leader, Fundamentalists emerged as key figures in the social-political scene of the 1920's.

The Tennessee law led to the most dramatic of consequence of any of these measures when, in 1925, the ACLU recruited John Thomas Scopes to test the law. This action sparked the world-famous Scopes Monkey Trial. Leading the prosecution, William Jennings Bryan defended the anti-evolution measures as "the will of the majority." Clarence Darrow, the lead defense counsel, put Bryan on the defensive by ridiculing biblical authority and calling the Tennessee law unconstitutional. In the end, the law was upheld, but Bryan's embarrassment at the hands of Darrow led many to question the kind of influence the trial itself would have on the rest of the nation, particularly other states which were trying to pass anti-evolution measures. There would soon come an answer to this question.

In Louisiana, activists once again flourished as a result of the trial and its publicity. Reverend M.E. Dodd of Shreveport, the editor of the *Baptist Message*, was one of the principal figures in the movement in Louisiana. In 1925 he published an article concerning the dangers of evolution. One of his major objections to evolution was "that the influence of such teaching results in a brutal, beastly, and devilish view of life and of living." Dodd exclaimed, "no human being has ever been found so low but what he had some sort of instinct and capacity for God. Man thrills at the sublime. Man senses the divine. Man yearns for immortality." Dodd railed against the materialistic notion of "survival of the fittest" and the catastrophic events which many

⁴*Baptist Message*. July 10, 1924.

claimed it led to in Europe. "We all know that the schools of Germany had been honeycombed for a half century with this materialistic view of life and with the evolutionary doctrine of survival of the fittest." His argument exemplified the criticisms of the national leaders, men such as William Jennings Bryan and William B. Riley. Like Bryan, Dodd exalted the Bible as the source of truth. The Bible accounts for the creation of man in "a position of dignity and dominion, and points out for him the possibility of a destiny of eternal glory." Dodd, as editor of the *Baptist Message*, became the major voice of the Baptist position throughout the 1920's.⁵

Shortly after the publication of Dodd's July 1925 article, Louisiana Baptists made the startling discovery that Louisiana College, their own flagship institution of higher education, assigned textbooks that taught evolution. The revelation dispelled any confidence that Louisiana Baptists previously shared that their schools were safe from the dangers of evolutionary theories. They found themselves in the same position as anti-evolutionists in Tennessee and other southern states who were scrambling to enact anti-evolution measures. In August of 1925, the New Hope Church of Independence, Louisiana, reacted to the finding by passing a resolution concerning evolution. "We call on all churches, associations and other religious assemblies throughout the state of Louisiana to pass resolutions memorializing the state legislature at its 1926 session to enact laws prohibiting the teaching of evolution in any of the public institutions of the state of Louisiana for the reason such teaching will cause unbelief and infidelity among generations of unborn."⁶

The resolution set the tone for the Louisiana Baptist Convention in November of 1925.

⁵*Baptist Message*. July 9, 1925.

⁶*Baptist Message*. August 13, 1925.

After failing to make a report at the 1924 conference, the Committee on Textbooks, which the convention had formed in 1922, made a report in 1925. It acknowledged that Louisiana College was using textbooks teaching evolution but expressed relief that no teacher at Louisiana College favored evolution. It further acknowledged that the school would soon adopt textbooks that omitted the theory. The Louisiana Baptist Convention commended the efforts of Louisiana teachers to discourage the acceptance of evolution by any of their pupils. Having endorsed such efforts, the Convention ultimately committed itself to following the course that Texas and Mississippi had undertaken in refusing “to give contracts for text books to be used in the state schools unless Evolution was eliminated.” Baptists accordingly memorialized the State Board of Education to follow the same procedure.⁷ These actions taken by the 1925 Convention set the stage for government action against the teaching of evolution in tax-supported schools.

By 1926 it became apparent that Louisiana would have a struggle over evolution within its legislature. In March of that year the Mississippi legislature passed an anti-evolution law. The *Louisiana Baptist Message* applauded it. Mississippi had answered the question of the effect of the Scopes Trial on anti-evolutionist movements in other states. The effect was a positive one. To Louisiana supporters of anti-evolution legislation, the Mississippi law signified the failure of the ACLU and the other opponents of the Tennessee law to gain anything by the Scopes Trial. “The motive of the enemies of the bill, of course, was to make the law so utterly ridiculous that no other legislature would dare to follow the example of Tennessee. In this, however, they failed miserably.”⁸ Louisiana would have its own attempt at legislation by the beginning of the legislative

⁷*Annual of Louisiana Baptist Convention* (1925).

⁸*Baptist Message*. March 11, 1925.

session, but opposition to the measures would come almost as quickly as the measures themselves.

As early as March of 1926, signs of opposition to the anti-evolution movement appeared. This early opposition came from the campus of Louisiana State University and its president, Colonel Thomas D. Boyd. In March, twenty LSU students petitioned the biology department and the LSU administration to offer a course in evolution in the Spring semester. The head of the biology department, William H. Gates, presented the petition to Boyd. Boyd denied the request. The university had approved a course in evolution for the Fall session, but advanced students wished to be offered an additional course in the Spring. The timing of the course became the issue. In an interview with the Baton Rouge *Morning Advocate*, Gates implied that the course was being withheld by the administration as a matter of policy because the impending session of the legislature was framing an anti-evolution bill modeled on the Tennessee law. According to Gates, the university thought it would be unwise to offer the course because it would make already strong feelings stronger among both the advocates and the opponents of the anti-evolution bill. Boyd denied to the *Morning Advocate* that the course was being withheld as a matter of policy. "I understand the professors in the biology department have plenty [of] work to do at present," Boyd reportedly told Gates, "and I see no reason why we should offer it at this time." Obviously trying to keep the tension of the upcoming debate to a minimum on the campus of LSU, Boyd excluded his own view on the teaching of evolution in his statement. In June, however, he would become the major spokesman against the "monkey bills" when the debate over them came before the Louisiana legislature.⁹

⁹*Morning Advocate*. March 25, 1926.

The incident over the evolution course at LSU was only a precursor to the hostility many would have against the anti-evolution measures, much of which came from LSU-- students, faculty, and administration alike. Even campus ministry joined in the effort. A week before the opening of the 1926 legislative session, the St. James Club, an Episcopalian student organization at LSU, passed a resolution in anticipation of the upcoming legislation. The resolution protested the measures as contrary to the principles of democracy. According to the students, anti-evolutionists in Louisiana were "succeeding in creating a false conception of the bearing of certain scientific theories on some Christian doctrine," specifically, "legislation based on a false antithesis between science and religion may be enacted in this state." The St. James Club added that scientists and religious leaders both advanced the belief that God may reveal Himself "through countless ages in the development of the earth as an abode for man and in the age-long in-breathing of life into its constituent matter, culminating in man with his spiritual nature and all his God-like powers." The students resolved that no conflict existed between science and religion. In their view, the former dealt with the impartial interpretation of the processes of nature while the latter concerned man in his faith, conscience, and spiritual aspirations. They added that the evidence of the theory of evolution is indisputable and any legislation restricting the teaching of it would set a bad precedent in a democracy which holds freedom of instruction as one of its most precious virtues through the First Amendment. The St. James Club garnered considerable support from the LSU community in its efforts.¹⁰ When the first of the anti-evolution measures appeared in the House on the second day of the 1926 session, resistance from the LSU student body intensified.

¹⁰*Daily Reveille*. May 5, 1926. *Morning Advocate*. May 4, 1926.

On May 11, Representative C.H. Hudson of Union Parish, a parish whose population had an overwhelming majority of Baptists, introduced his bill to the House of Representatives. A very broad measure, it read: "An act to prohibit the teaching of evolution in all the universities, normal and other public schools and State institutions in the State of Louisiana, etc." The House referred the bill to the Committee on Public Education, but not before a legislator made an attempt to indefinitely postpone it, a parliamentary maneuver which would have gotten rid of the measure before the Committee had a chance to consider it. The motion was denied and the bill went to the Committee, but such an early attempt to kill it foreshadowed the amount of opposition it was to receive.¹¹ Upon its referral to the Committee, the bill drew immediate criticism. "Such bills are popular in all legislatures these days," one critic wrote in the Baton Rouge *Morning Advocate*, saying that it was just as well the bill make an early appearance "in order that it can be killed off, and gotten out of the way for measures of constructive merit."¹² By the time the Committee convened, however, it would have three more evolution measures to consider, along with their proponents and belligerents. Both sides had significant support from their respective constituencies.

With the Hudson bill already in the House, along with a rumor of an anti-fraternity bill in the legislature, the 1926 legislative session virtually assured itself of a great deal of hostility from the LSU student body. Campus leaders declared that they would have an opportunity to appear before the House Education Committee when the "ape law" came up for review. One student leader argued that many of those who would support the bill had little knowledge of the true

¹¹Louisiana, House of Representatives, *Official Journal* (1926), p. ?

¹²*Baton Rouge Morning Advocate*. May 12, 1926.

meaning of the theory of evolution. Taking action, the LSU student body, in its Student Government elections, printed the Hudson bill on the ballot so that if student protestors went before the House Education Committee, they would have the support of actual statistics attesting to the general derision of the Hudson bill on the part of many LSU students.¹³

Despite the fervor against the “ape-law,” religious activists remained persistent in their cause. The *Baptist Message* criticized actions taken by students against the measures, suggesting they were being led to do so by their teachers. “We understand there are a number of enthusiastic advocates, including faculty members, in certain student bodies that are putting forth a strenuous effort to align all students in the state against such a proposed bill.” The *Message* went on to criticize the teachers leading the youth “unwittingly” to oppose the measures.¹⁴ When the St. James Club decided to present its resolution to the City Union, an interdenominational organization for religious youth, the resolution was immediately withdrawn in a storm of protest from members of the Baptist and Presbyterian denominations.¹⁵ This was the extent of Presbyterian involvement in the anti-evolution campaign.¹⁶ The next night Reverend W.H. Knight of the First Baptist Church of Baton Rouge preached a sermon to his Congregation on the legislation and the criticism it was receiving. “It is not monkey business,” Knight spoke, “that is only an insult which makes the friends of religion more determined to wage warfare to a

¹³*Lafayette Daily Advertiser*. May 15, 1926.

¹⁴*Baptist Message*. April 22, 1926.

¹⁵*Daily Reveille*. May 20, 1926.

¹⁶In an analysis of Minutes from the Red River, Louisiana, and New Orleans Presbyteries in Louisiana, I found no mention of any legislative action taken by Louisiana Presbyterians in the 1920's.

successful finish.” Knight reiterated the arguments of the Baptist Convention of 1923. “I believe the public school system has a great mission to perform, but that mission is not in the field of religion nor irreligion. But if it is right to prohibit the teaching of the Bible in our state schools, in the name of high heaven, is it not right to prohibit teaching against the Bible?” Along with M.E. Dodd, Knight became another major proponent of the anti-evolution measures.¹⁷

On May 24, 1926, the Louisiana Baptist Convention finally presented its Memorial to the Louisiana State Board of Education in New Orleans. The Memorial asserted that the suppression of teaching the theory of evolution was not an abridgement of academic freedom. “It is only a just protest against the effort to foist upon the immature minds of the children and youth of our State the evolutionary theory of the origin of man, *as a fact*, when the most that can be said for such a theory is, that *it is an unproven hypothesis or guess*.” The teaching of evolution to youth would only destroy “their growing ambitions[,], a worthy ideal[,], or inspiring hope of future greatness or of ultimate felicity beyond this life.” The Memorial recommended that the State Board of Education decline contracts for books teaching the evolutionary origin of man, delete from current textbooks any reference to the theory, and forbid teachers to expound the it in tax-supported schools.¹⁸ The Memorial would have definite influence on the proceedings in the legislature and the Board of Education.

Shortly after the Memorial, more anti-evolution measures appeared in the House Education Committee. Presented by Colonel Sambola Jones of East Baton Rouge Parish, the Jones bill made it unlawful for an atheist or infidel to teach in the public or tax-supported schools

¹⁷*Baptist Message*. May 27, 1926.

¹⁸Louisiana, State Board of Education, *Official Proceedings*, May 24, 1926, p. 4.

of Louisiana. The bill became quite unpopular among the legislators. Representative C.H. Hudson, author of the first anti-evolution bill, attacked the Jones bill. "I do not believe that it would do as a substitute for the anti-evolution bill," Hudson declared. "I can imagine an atheist who would be a good teacher." Hudson contended that he did not believe in robbing a man from making a livelihood by teaching. "That is not the purpose of my bill. I am trying to safeguard the young- to see that their spiritual beliefs are not shaken before they are sufficiently old to judge these questions for themselves."¹⁹ Many critics also pointed out that the Jones bill would be practically impossible to enforce given that it did not define an atheist or an infidel.²⁰

With Hudson's own bill already under fire from the LSU community, many knew that neither bill would survive an Education Committee hearing. In addition to the Jones bill being impossible to enforce and certain to be declared unconstitutional, the Hudson bill was way too broad. It prohibited the teaching of evolution entirely, even as it applied to plants and animals. In addition, it only targeted teachers, not administrators who selected which textbooks to use. But supporters of anti-evolution measures soon found a remedy to the weaknesses of both the Hudson and Jones bills. "There has been much talk of laughing the Hudson bill on this subject out of court, but they'll be forced to sing a different tune about the Shattuck measure," declared Representative R.L. Williams. S.O. Shattuck was a Baptist lay minister from Calcasieu Parish.²¹ On May 28, Representative Shattuck brought to the House,

¹⁹*Times Picayune*. May 26, 1926.

²⁰*Alexandria Daily Town Talk*. May 29, 1926.

²¹Wallace Hebert. "Louisiana Baptists and the Scopes Trial." *Louisiana Studies* VII (1968): 392-46.

“an act to prohibit the teaching that mankind either descended or ascended from a lower order of animals and that the adoption or use of textbooks which teach that mankind either descended or ascended from a lower order of animals in all the schools, colleges, normals, institutes, and universities supported in whole or in part by the public education funds of the State of Louisiana, to declare violations of this act to be a misdemeanor and to provide penalties for the violations of the provision thereof.”²²

Many legislators felt that there were certain objectionable features of the Hudson measure that the Shattuck bill mended. For example, the Shattuck measure would not do away with the teaching of evolution in botany. It only dealt with the teaching of evolution as it related to man. The measure was specific to suit the needs of anti-evolutionists while maximizing the freedom of the teacher. It also extended liability beyond just the teachers to include the textbook committees. Several members of the House admitted that there was nothing in the Shattuck bill that could be objected to by members of any religious denomination “in that the question of religion was carefully avoided in the act, which is considered much more likely to find favor with the legislators than either the Hudson or Jones bill.”²³ M.E. Dodd offered strong support for the Shattuck bill, urging people throughout the state to ask their representatives for support of the measure. “The reasonableness of such a bill will be immediately apparent to all fair minded people.”²⁴

The new Shattuck bill did not appease the LSU community. In anticipation of the upcoming discussion by the House Committee on Public Education, the Biology Club of LSU presented its own resolution to the secretary of the committee. In it the club asserted that the study of evolution did not destroy their religious beliefs. Rather, “the study of evolution has

²²Louisiana, House of Representatives. *Official Proceedings*. P. 167.

²³*Town Talk*. May 29, 1926.

²⁴*Baptist Message*. June 3, 1926.

helped us by opening larger fields of study in the various sciences, enabling us to see more clearly and more broadmindedly the majestic plan of our God.” The club added that legislation prohibiting the teaching of evolution “shows that our educational system is retrogressing instead of progressing.”²⁵ The Biology Club was not alone among the student body. In a survey of LSU students conducted by Professor Gates, a large majority of LSU students felt that evolution had neither strengthened nor weakened their religious beliefs. Of those who felt otherwise, six times as many indicated that the study of evolution had strengthened their religious beliefs as said it had weakened them.²⁶

Finally, on June 16, the Committee on Public Education was ready to consider the three anti-evolution measures. Thomas Boyd appeared on behalf of LSU and the rest of the opposition. On the opposing side were Shattuck, Jones, Hudson, Rev. W.K. Knight, and L.G. Morony, national executive secretary of the Bible Crusaders of America who had traveled from Florida to attend the hearing. Having withheld his opinion on the matter when it came up in March, Boyd spoke “calmly but with force,” attacking the proposed legislation. “You cannot keep people with inquiring minds from an investigation of these subjects,” he warned. Boyd compared the suppression of the theory of evolution to the suppression of the theory that the world is round centuries before. He also warned that if students could not learn about evolution from their teachers, they would be driven to other sources, potentially creating the very situation religious proponents of the bills wished to avoid. By this, he meant that if any religious or state body were to denounce evolutionary theory as opposed to religion and the conception of God, it would be

²⁵*Morning Advocate*. June 3, 1926.

²⁶*Times Picayune*. June 8, 1926.

likened to telling a student that if he or she believed in the theory of evolution, he could not, at the same time, believe in God. The prohibition would only serve to create further disbelief. "And, remember, please," he concluded, "that we owe our present civilization in large measure to science."²⁷

"This bill merely implies that man is the direct creation of God," Shattuck insisted in defense of his bill, "any attempt to teach anything else is an attack upon religion." If it is right to keep religion out of the schools, Shattuck and Jones both contended, "we should not be allowed to teach anything which strikes at religion." Representative Hudson recognized that his bill would not hold up against criticism. In deference to the Shattuck bill which almost all anti-evolutionists saw as an improvement upon his measure, Hudson ordered his bill to be reported without action. The next day the House unanimously withdrew the bill. As was expected by many, the Jones bill was given an unfavorable report by the Committee. Boyd had attacked it as well, saying that no school board would employ an atheist so why pass a measure which implied a condition that did not exist. The Jones bill was likewise withdrawn from the House. However, in a near unanimous decision, the Committee approved the Shattuck measure 11 to 1 and sent it to the House of Representatives. Despite the urging of LSU's president, Louisiana was one step closer to having an anti-evolution law.²⁸ Two days later, the committee approved yet another measure by T.W. Holloman of Rapides Parish. Like Shattuck, Holloman had denominational ties as Conference Lay

²⁷*Morning Advocate*. June 16, 1926. *Times Picayune*. June 16, 1926.

²⁸*Morning Advocate*. June 16, 1926. *Times Picayune*. June 16, 1926.

Leader to the Louisiana Methodist Conference.²⁹ His measure provided that nothing subversive to any creed or faith could be taught in state supported schools. The legislature would find it debatable whether it was actually an anti-evolution measure, but, like the Shattuck bill, many felt confident that the Holloman bill, omitting any mention of evolution or any specific belief, would have success in both houses of the legislature.

Critics hoped to stop the measures dead in their tracks, despite their apparent momentum. As the House neared discussion of the Shattuck bill, the *Lafayette Daily Advertiser* reported that the general feeling among the legislature was that the numerous opponents of the measure allowed it to pass through without interference to the final reading out of courtesy for the bill's author. "They, with other members of the house, have the highest respect for Mr. Shattuck and they felt that it would be discourteous to attempt to kill the measure before it was up for debate on the floor." But, said the *Advertiser*, the bill's opponents would be ready to wage war on its passage, viewing it as setting a bad precedent for education in Louisiana. One representative compared the measure to one in another legislature which wanted to change the mathematical symbol "pi" from 3.1416 to 3 in order "to make problems easier for school children." The representative declared that there is no more cause for the legislature meddling in one form of education than another.³⁰

On the eve of the House of Representatives vote on the Shattuck bill, House Bill No. 279,

²⁹Based on analysis of Minutes from the Louisiana Methodist Conference. Area Office-United Methodist Church. Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The Louisiana Methodists organized no major involvement in the anti-evolution campaign. T.W. Holloman, apparently, was their only connection to the movement.

³⁰*Lafayette Daily Advertiser*. June 19, 1926.

the House found itself so evenly divided that the absence of only a few members might swing the vote either way. The House read a resolution signed by 143 members of the LSU faculty expressing “the firm conviction that the type of legislation mentioned above is a menace to the best interests of all, and should not become a law of this state.” Thomas Boyd included a final plea to the House that expressed his earnest hope that the legislature would not pass any act limiting the authority of the board of supervisors to prescribe the subjects which may be taught to its university students. “These people are not children. They are fully competent to interpret the Master’s promise ‘Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.’”³¹ In giving its official stance on the anti-evolution bills, the New Orleans *Times Picayune* denounced the measures as an “unwise and futile undertaking.”³²

A few blocks from the legislature in downtown Baton Rouge, a small bookstore attempted to capitalize on the excitement by placing a copy of the controversial textbook, Hunter’s *A Civic Biology*, in his storefront window. Next to the book was a sign saying: “Educate yourself! Do your own thinking. Do not let these religious fanatics control you. They have ruled your body for seven years, and now they want your soul.”³³ Taking advantage of the debate as a way to sell books, and at the same time criticize prohibition, the store’s display was meager in comparison to the “festive atmosphere of downtown Dayton,” as Larson describes the site of the Scopes Trial in *Summer for the Gods*. But the frenzy inside the Louisiana House of Representatives was undeniable. The day of the vote in the House, spectators from both the university and local

³¹*Morning Advocate*. June 22, 1926.

³²*Times Picayune*. June 23, 1926.

³³*Daily Reveille*. June 23, 1926.

churches filled the chamber. An atmosphere of excitement surrounded the debate..

Proponents of the bill held the floor for more than an hour. No one spoke against the bill. One representative, having grown tired of the debate tried to force a vote without further discussion. "We've had enough of this monkey business, Mr. Speaker," he shouted, "lets have a vote." But, the House decided to hear Shattuck first.

"I have a granddaughter," Shattuck began with a tremor in his voice, "whom I love more than life itself. When she comes to me with her text books teaching that she is descended from lower animals, and laying them before me, in her impressionable way asks 'now grandpa, what are you going to say to this? It's true because it's printed right here in the book' then gentleman I know that the teaching of this science must stop." Shattuck summarized the reasons why his bill ought to pass, pointing out that it would not ban teaching evolution as a theory but merely the presentation of it as an established fact. The *Morning Advocate* reported a visible effect upon the House when he read from high school text book passages stating undeniably that man is descended from lower animals. "Evolution strikes at the very heart of the Jew, the Catholic, and the Protestant." As the vote was being taken, a local minister could be heard as he led a group of churchmen with bowed heads in prayer at one end of the House chamber.³⁴ The Shattuck bill was finally passed 52 to 43.³⁵ The churchmen congratulated each other on the bill's passage. The next day the bill went to the Senate.

In contrast to the frenzy and the hour-long debate in the House, the Senate debate on House bill 279 on June 23rd would be short and relatively anti-climactic; but it sent shockwaves

³⁴*Morning Advocate*. June 23, 1926.

³⁵Louisiana. House of Representatives. *Official Journal* (1926) p. 762.

through the throng of churchmen gathered to support the bill. Within five minutes of the day's opening gavel, the bill was announced. A senator made a motion to refer the bill to the committee on education. Shortly thereafter, Senator P.H. Gilbert of Assumption Parish, an overwhelmingly Catholic Parish, moved instead that the bill be indefinitely postponed. Immediately there came a murmur of "monkey bill" from the chamber; senators and churchmen in the hall poured into the chamber room when they realized what was about to take place. As the secretary called the roll, several members answered from the doorway and the lobby. In the final count, the Shattuck bill was killed 17 to 15.³⁶ Immediately several senators left their seats to shake the hand of Senator Gilbert, whom they made the hero in the effort to kill anti-evolution legislation. Having come from Catholic Assumption Parish, Gilbert's maneuver shows how the issues brought by national Catholics into the Scopes debate may have surfaced in Louisiana to affect the anti-evolution movement in that state. University students gathered around the rotunda to congratulate each other on the fate of the bill. Churchmen rushed to the floor to hear confirmation of the fact that the bill was "finally dead beyond resurrection." Not long afterward, the halls were empty of the religious activists fighting so hard to push the anti-evolution measure. L.G. Morony, the national officer of the Biblical society who had traveled 1,000 miles to take charge of the movement announced that he was leaving that very morning. "I had expected to be here longer," he said as he left the State House, "but I shall go to take up my work against the enemies of faith somewhere else. Ours is a cause that can only be temporarily frustrated. It cannot be beaten."³⁷

That very day, Holloman's measure, House bill 314, which prohibited the teaching of

³⁶*Morning Advocate*. June 24, 1926.

³⁷*Town Talk*. June 23, 1926.

anything subversive to the faith or creed of any pupil, passed the House of Representatives by a wide margin, 65 to 7.³⁸ The next day, June 24th, the Senate considered the bill. Immediately a move was made for indefinite postponement. Unlike the Shattuck bill, House bill 314 sparked a lengthy debate in the Senate chamber. Many thought the wide margin in the House would mean an easy passage through the Senate, but there were apprehensions about a measure many thought was merely an anti-evolution bill in disguise.

“This bill is nothing but a measure to prevent the teaching of the theory of evolution in public schools,” exclaimed Senator Lindsey of Webster Parish. “And worse still, it is so vague as to require a supreme court decision for its enforcement.” Another senator immediately leapt to his feet and demanded that since the bill passed the House of Representatives, it should at least be heard by the committee on education. Senator Holcombe of East Baton Rouge Parish accused the bill of being a more dangerous one than the Shattuck bill, the killing of which the day before he called the most commendable thing the Senate had done. “For that one act,” he said, “this body is due more gratitude from the public than for anything else it has done thus far.”

Senator E.J. Sandoz of St. Landry Parish made a plea that the bill be given a fair chance in the committee. “How do the senators know it is a monkey bill?” Sandoz implored, “because they take the word of one or two members for it.” Holcombe again spoke, “If it’s not a monkey bill,” he snapped, “will the senator from St. Landry please tell what its purpose is?” Sandoz said he did not wish to begin an argument that might last all day. Senator Gilbert, the man who moved to kill the Shattuck bill the previous day, said that he would be willing to send it to committee to be given fair consideration. “Senatorial courtesy” demanded it, he felt. The presence of the Shattuck

³⁸Louisiana. House of Representatives. *Official Journal* (1926) p. 833.

bill a day earlier weighed too heavily on the minds of the senators, however. House bill 314 would not be given that chance. "Would the senator bow to a question?" Holcombe interrupted Gilbert. "Where was your senatorial courtesy yesterday?" When the roll was called, the last of the anti-evolution measures was killed, 20 to 18.³⁹

The *Baptist Message* said that it was not surprised to see the Senate kill the Shattuck bill. It called indefinite postponement a "shrewd parliamentary trick." The *Message* accused Thomas Boyd of using his influence "for all that it was worth" to defeat the measure. Baptists knew that the fight against evolution was far from over.⁴⁰ W.H. Knight and many other preachers insisted that the issue of evolution would be a major factor in the upcoming elections. Knight warned that there would be many new faces in the next Legislature.⁴¹ Despite Knight's warning, Baptists ceased pursuing legislative action to fight evolution.⁴² Minutes of the Louisiana Baptist Convention in the years following 1926 say nothing of the effort to ban evolution.

However, administrative action taken by the state partly compensated for the failure of the Baptist cause in the legislature. The Baptist Convention's Memorial on Textbooks, the centerpiece of the Baptist crusade, had a tremendous effect on the State Board of Education. Members of the 1926 Louisiana Baptist Convention read a letter from the president of the State

³⁹*Town Talk*. June 24, 1926.

⁴⁰*Baptist Message*. July 1, 1926.

⁴¹*Times Picayune*. June 28, 1926.

⁴²Minutes from 1927 to 1930, kept at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, say nothing of evolution in textbooks or action taken against it. It seems clear that after 1926, the movement died. Wallace Hebert's article entitled "Louisiana Baptists and the Scopes Trial" in *Louisiana Studies* 7 (1968): 329-46 deals with the movement for Baptists specifically. In it, he also holds that the legislative movement was basically over after 1926.

Board congratulating them on the Memorial, saying that it played a significant role in the passage of the Shattuck bill through the House of Representatives. In addition, the Memorial had a tremendous effect on the State Superintendent of Education, T.H. Harris. The convention read a letter sent from Harris in which he expressed his gratitude and said that he was in the process of urging all state superintendents to ban the teaching of evolution in schools. He assured the convention that he was in the process of removing pages 191-196 of Hunter's *A Civic Biology*, the part of the textbook which discussed the evolutionary origin of man from a lower order of life.⁴³ Harris's actions placed the decision to prohibit the teaching of evolution in the hands of the local school boards. For the most part, this action was effective given that no attempt at further state action was taken after 1926. After that year, much of the Baptists' emphasis shifted to their own parochial schools. Shortly after the legislative debate, for example, Baptists established a female college in Shreveport with the aid of the M.E. Dodd foundation. The school became known as Dodd College.⁴⁴

The success of Louisiana Baptists in the anti-evolution campaign is a matter of debate. Some, like Edward Larson in *Trial and Error*, hold that the anti-evolution campaign in Louisiana was a success in that the State Board of Education did order the removal of any account of the evolutionary origin of man from textbooks. In that regard, undoubtedly, the anti-evolutionists were victorious. However, the failure of Louisiana Baptists in the state legislature is significant given that legislatures in Mississippi, Tennessee, and Arkansas were successful in their efforts to

⁴³Annual of the Louisiana Baptist Convention. November 23, 24, 25, 1926.

⁴⁴Minutes of the New Orleans Baptist Association. Oct. 13th and 14th, 1925. *Baptist Message*. November 10, 1927.

pass legislation while the Louisiana Senate, in contrast, treated the measures as a casual annoyance, sweeping them under the rug with little or no debate. The anti-evolutionists failed to gain the symbolic victory that other states had won.

Louisiana Baptists and their anti-evolutionist constituency could at least boast a partial victory in the anti-evolution movement. T.H. Harris assured them of that. But their warning that the movement would affect the legislative elections in subsequent years proved to be of little consequence. Emphasis on the anti-evolution movement quickly died. Satisfaction with the administrative action taken by the board of education probably kept the issue from resurfacing in the legislature. In addition, the Flood of 1927, the election of Huey P. Long in 1928, and the Great Depression shifted the preoccupations of all Louisianians to other concerns. While Louisiana Baptists were victorious on the administrative side of Louisiana education, the failure of anti-evolution legislation in Louisiana distinguishes the state from other southern states who passed such measures. Part of this difference is caused by the lower percentage of Fundamentalists in Louisiana, which is due to the great number of Catholics, particularly in the southern portion of the state. Catholics were certain to have some effect on the fate of the evolution measure in Louisiana. The next chapter will deal with the strength of this influence as well as the strength of other causes. The evolution question did not become a major issue again until the 1980's when the Louisiana Legislature resurrected it by enacting the Balanced Treatment Act which called for equal-time to be given to the instruction of creation science in Louisiana schools. The debate sparked the Supreme Court case, *Edwards v. Aguillard*. The Supreme Court overturned the Act, stating that it was a violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

Chapter 4: Religion, Progress and Anti-Evolution Sentiment

Shortly after the failure of the Shattuck bill in the Senate, the editors of the *Baptist Message* wrote that they were not surprised to see the bill killed so quickly. Such a statement indicates an awareness of certain obstacles that the anti-evolution movement could not overcome. For this reason, an analysis of the debate itself can only partially answer the question of why Louisiana never passed an anti-evolution law when some similar southern states were so successful at it. Though many individuals and institutions had considerable influence on the course of the anti-evolution measures, such as Thomas Boyd, LSU, S.O. Shattuck, and W.H. Knight, causes larger than the personalities of the major figures came into play in the evolution debate. Such causes helped determine the degree of anti-evolution sentiment held by different sections of the state. Among these, the cultural demography of Louisiana, with a majority of the state Roman Catholic as opposed to a conservative Protestant majority in other states, is one larger factor which might have influenced the evolution debate. Also, the urban-rural conflict was another possible cause. Many historians attribute the Fundamentalist movement to the rural populations reacting to the modernism of the urban setting. Finally, progress was another possible factor. Though it has much to do with the urban-rural conflict in that cities obviously show a much higher degree of progress, the issue of progress itself, both urban and rural, becomes a factor when looking at how more modern technology and increased education might have influenced the

willingness that members of a population had towards the instruction of modern scientific theories. Included in the measures of progress were elements like literacy rates, the value of farm machinery and implements per farm, and the number of automobiles in a given parish. A quantitative analysis of the denominational, rural, and economic influences lends evidence to the theory that, aside from the personal influences of the major figures in the debate, the cultural demography of Louisiana had a significant effect on the fate of the anti-evolution measure.

In order to quantitatively examine the influence of such factors on anti-evolution sentiment in Louisiana, anti-evolution sentiment had to be given a value. The Shattuck bill had the least number of absences in the House of Representatives, and it was the most definitive anti-evolution bill. Therefore, its vote in the House is the most useful. Each parish had at least one representative in the legislature. The degree of anti-evolution sentiment for each parish was measured using the parish representatives' vote. A measure of 1 was assigned to a vote of "yea" while a measure of -1 was given to a vote of "nay." The values were added to produce a degree of anti-evolution sentiment for each parish. For example, DeSoto Parish had only one member. He gave a vote of "yea," thus creating a degree of 1 for DeSoto Parish. In contrast, Orleans Parish had twenty members, fourteen voting "nay" and six voting "yea." The resulting degree of anti-evolution sentiment was a -8. The map on page 69 shows the pattern of anti-evolution sentiment throughout Louisiana. The dark areas indicate positive values. In these parishes, the representative(s) voted in favor of the anti-evolution measure. The lighter areas indicate negative numbers and denote opposition on the part of the representative(s). The white areas indicate an absentee. In the quantitative analysis, the degree of anti-evolution sentiment became the dependent variable. Testing the effect of the cultural demography, the percentage of Catholics and

the percentage of Baptists were used. Representing measures of progress were rate of illiteracy, value of machinery per farm, and the number of automobiles per 100 persons in a parish. Finally, population density was used to test the urban-rural conflict. The study applied both the Spearman Rank Order Correlation and simple regression statistical analysis techniques in order to determine the overall effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

The anti-evolution movement in the country as a whole was tied to the Christian Fundamentalist movement. Consequently, the major leaders of the anti-evolution movement in Louisiana were members of the Baptist church. Though Baptists may have won a victory for the anti-evolution movement on the local level, through the state board of education, they failed to gain any symbolic victory in the state legislature. One overlying cause of this defeat was the lack of significant Fundamentalist support in Louisiana. When Tennessee enacted an anti-evolution law, William Jennings Bryan defended the measure as the "will of the majority." In contrast to Tennessee's religious population, the majority of the state of Louisiana in 1926 was Roman Catholic, most of them concentrated in the southern part of the state. Because of the high percentage of Catholics in Louisiana, the Fundamentalist movement discussed in Chapter 1 did not have the same influence in Louisiana as it had in other portions of the country. As seen in Chapter 2, quite a few national Catholic leaders acknowledged that, though the religious motivations behind the Fundamentalist anti-evolution movement were honorable, the movement itself originated from a false doctrine, the conflict between science and religion. Also, such a movement was a misguided, unconstitutional way to deal with the problem of disbelief in the country. It becomes possible that much of this same sentiment was reflected on the state level among Catholics. The objection to anti-evolution bills by a 1927 *UNO-Morning Star* article

supports this claim. However, simply applying the opinions of national Catholic leaders to the anti-evolution setting in Louisiana can only go so far in determining causation.

Catholics and Baptists were the two major denominations in Louisiana in 1926. A quantitative analysis of anti-evolution sentiment as a dependent variable and both the percentage of Baptists and the percentage of Catholics as independent variables revealed a significant relationship. The percentage of Baptists in parishes throughout the state and the degree of anti-evolution sentiment had a strong positive relationship: the higher the percentage of Baptists, the higher was the support for the anti-evolution bill.¹ Additionally, a strong inverse relationship existed between the percentage of Catholics and a negative degree of anti-evolution sentiment, indicating that the higher the percentage of Catholics, the higher the *opposition* to the Shattuck bill. The strong relationship between both independent variables and the dependent variable indicates the significant influence of denominational ties by Baptists and Catholics on the degree of anti-evolution sentiment.

Relating the cultural pattern of Louisiana to the evolution debate, in the southern part of the state, the smaller percentage of Baptists and the higher percentage of Catholics resulted in more *resistance* to the Shattuck bill. Conversely, in the northern part of the state, the higher percentage of Baptists and the lower percentage of Catholics increased the amount of *support* for the legislation. The maps on the ensuing pages illustrate the similarities between the cultural

¹Both Baptist and Catholic percentage and their relationship to the dependent variable are based on a Spearman Rank Correlation. For Baptist percentage, ($R_s=.460$) the Rho value indicates a strong relationship, and the P-value of .0018 indicates that 18 in 10,000 cases could be attributed to random chance. The same was true for Catholic percentage, ($R_s=-.242$), in which the negative value indicates an strong relationship with opposition to the anti-evolution measure; the higher the Catholic percentage the lower the degree of anti-evolution sentiment (P-value=.0310). Religious percentages are taken from the *U.S. Census of Religious Bodies: 1926*.

pattern and anti-evolution sentiment. Together they lend support to the argument that denominational affiliation had a significant impact on the voting in the Shattuck anti-evolution measure. Had stronger Fundamentalist ties existed in the southern portion of the state, the Shattuck anti-evolution measure may have passed into law.

When talking about the rise of the Fundamentalist movement in the early twentieth century, many historians examine the urban-rural conflict. Many historians claim that the Fundamentalist movement, along with other movements like nativism and the KKK, grew out of reactionary rural and small-town America. "In their view," says the historian Charles Eagles, "the strongholds of the Klan- prohibitionism, fundamentalism, and immigration restriction -lay in the nation's countryside and not in its urban areas. The cities, in contrast, represented tolerance, progress, and what many historians found attractive in American life."² The decade of the 1920's became a significant period in the nation's development. The 1920 census was the first to reveal that a majority of citizens lived in urban areas. For the first time, the United States could identify itself as an urban nation. In reaction, rural America began to look on the booming cities of the twenties with increasing anxiety. To them, America was losing its identity. The Victorian ideal of a Protestant, industrious, virtuous, and essentially homogeneous society was being threatened by immigrants, particularly from southern and eastern Europe. The 1920's saw a reaction on the part of the "original American stock" of rural America against the entrance into American cities of "foreign blood" and influence. In *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, H. Richard Niebuhr applied the urban-rural conflict to the war between Modernism and Fundamentalism in the 1920's.

²Charles W. Eagles. "Urban-Rural Conflict i the 1920's: A Historiographical Assessment." *The Historian* XLIX, (November, 1986): 26-48.

For Fundamentalists, Modernism, which they viewed as a step towards atheism and the survival-of-the-fittest barbarism of World War I, was a result of the foreign influence plaguing American cities. In the anti-evolution campaign and the Scopes Trial, William Jennings Bryan championed the rural religion of the Fundamentalists who saw foreign influence of Modernism as one of the “evils” of the cities in the 1920's. For many historians, the Scopes Monkey Trial became a manifestation of the urban-rural conflict in the America of the 1920's.³

When looking at the urban-rural conflict and the anti-evolution campaign, a link exists between the two. Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas all passed anti-evolution legislation, and all three were considered primarily rural states in the 1920's. But, did the urban-rural conflict have any bearing on the fate of the anti-evolution bills in Louisiana? If it did, then the more urban areas, parishes with a higher population density, would have most likely voted against the measures while the rural areas with a lower population density would have voted for them. However, with the degree of anti-evolution sentiment as a dependent variable and population density as an independent variable, the statistical analysis finds that no significant relationship existed between population density and the degree of anti-evolution sentiment.⁴ Indeed, many areas with a high population density had representatives who voted for the Shattuck bill, while some rural areas voted against the anti-evolution measures, particularly in the southern part of the state. In effect,

³Charles W. Eagles. “Urban-Rural Conflict i the 1920's: A Historiographical Assessment.” *The Historian* XLIX, No. 1 (November, 1986): 26-48.

⁴Population density was calculated using population figures from the *U.S. Population Census*, 1920 and 1930. The relationship between degree of anti-evolution sentiment and population density was calculated using the Spearman Rank Correlation. For the 1920 census, $R_s=.091$, with a p-value of .8878, indicating an 88% chance that the dependent variable was random. For the 1930, $R_s=.003$ (p-value=.5662).

one must look at other influences on the course of the anti-evolution measures.

Progress is another factor to examine. The compelling theory behind measures of progress as an influence on the degree of anti-evolution sentiment is that the more influence that modern technology and education had on a region, the more hospitable the region would have been toward the teaching of a modern scientific theory such as evolution. Literacy rates, the value of farm machinery, and the number of automobiles in Louisiana parishes are the three measures of progress used. The first measure, literacy rates (illiteracy was used), did have an influence on the voting pattern for the Shattuck bill. In this case, the independent variable was the percentage of illiteracy for whites over the age of 21. However, the results were the opposite of what one might expect about the link between literacy and attitudes towards evolution. They indicate that the higher the percentage of illiteracy, the more resistance to the anti-evolution measure.⁵ The map on page 72 illustrates the pattern of illiteracy. The pattern is an unusual finding, given that much of the illiteracy is concentrated in the south-central part of the state, much of where the Catholic population was centered. Indeed, a strong relationship exists between the rate of illiteracy and the percentage of Catholics throughout the parishes.⁶ The only explanation is the fact that many Catholics in south Louisiana spoke French as a primary language. Since literacy tests were in English, much of the French-Catholic population became listed as illiterate in the 1920 census. The illiteracy rate actually serves more to demonstrate the influence of the French culture on the people of Louisiana than to explain the fate of evolution bills. Therefore, the rate of illiteracy had

⁵Illiteracy rates are based on the 1920 U.S. Population Census. Rs=

⁶Based on a simple regression statistical analysis. R-squared is .576 with a p-value of .7475. This is a very high correlation between the population of Catholics and the rate of illiteracy.

no bearing on the course of the anti-evolution measure. Since illiteracy and Catholic population were so invariably linked, and since the illiteracy rate did have a strong relationship to resistance to the anti-evolution measures, the finding even further verifies the influence of the Catholic population on anti-evolution sentiment.

The value of machinery is another independent variable which serves as a measure of progress and modernization. Like the percentage of Catholic population, the value of farm machinery per farm proved to be significant in that it corresponded with resistance to the anti-evolution measure.⁷ (See map on page 73) The higher the value of machinery in each parish, the more resistance to the Shattuck bill existed. It is questionable whether the value of farm machinery had any direct impact on anti-evolution. Like the higher percentage of illiteracy, the higher value of farm machinery coincided with a high Catholic percentage in south Louisiana.⁸ In this case, the large number of sugar growers in south Louisiana contributed to this figure because sugar required more complex machinery in the 1920's than did cotton, which was more prevalent in north Louisiana. Conversely, with a higher Baptist population in north Louisiana, the value of machinery per farm had a significant *inverse* relationship with the percentage of Baptists,⁹ much of which was due to the prevalence of cotton crops. The relationship between Catholic percentage with value of farm machinery, and the relationship between each of those independent variables with the resistance to anti-evolution sentiment, further strengthens the argument that anti-

⁷Value of farm implements and machinery per farm is calculated using the 1930 U.S. Census of Agriculture. Rho is significant at $R_s = -.258$, with a p-value of .0067.

⁸Based on a simple regression quantitative analysis. R-squared is significant at .234 with a p-value of .0002.

⁹Simple Regression. R-squared = .139; p-value = .0065.

evolution sentiment was tied to religious denomination more than any other factor.

The last measure of modernization was the number of automobiles.¹⁰ The relationship between the number of automobiles and the degree of anti-evolution sentiment was significant. However, the measure shows that the higher the number of automobiles per one hundred persons, the more support for the anti-evolution legislation.¹¹ This was the opposite of what the theory of modernization would suggest. Again supporting the influence of denomination, a significant relationship between the number of automobiles and the percentage of Baptists was found.¹² The cause of this relationship is uncertain, but it may indicate a slightly higher income among that portion of the population. Of the measures of modernization, literacy, value of machinery, and number of automobiles, only one, the value of machinery, actually fulfilled the expected outcome. All three were significant measures, however. All three were related, in a rather interesting way, to either the percentage of Baptists or the percentage of Catholics. Through analysis of the measures of modernization, one may find that denomination was the real driving force behind the path of the anti-evolution legislation.

Unfortunately, there are weaknesses to the statistical test. For example, the vote on the Shattuck bill was not a popular vote involving all citizens of the state. Only legislators voted on

¹⁰The number of automobiles was from Louisiana Tax Commission, *Board of State Affairs Report* (1926). I am grateful to Professor Paul Paskoff for this reference.

¹¹This analysis was calculated based on the 1926 Louisiana Tax Commission report along with population figures from both the 1920 population census and the 1930 census. Excluding New Orleans because of the excessively high number of automobiles, the Rho value using the Spearman Rank Order was $R_s = .436$ for 1920 ($p\text{-value} = .0031$) for 1920 and $R_s = .357$ ($p\text{-value} = .0204$) for 1930.

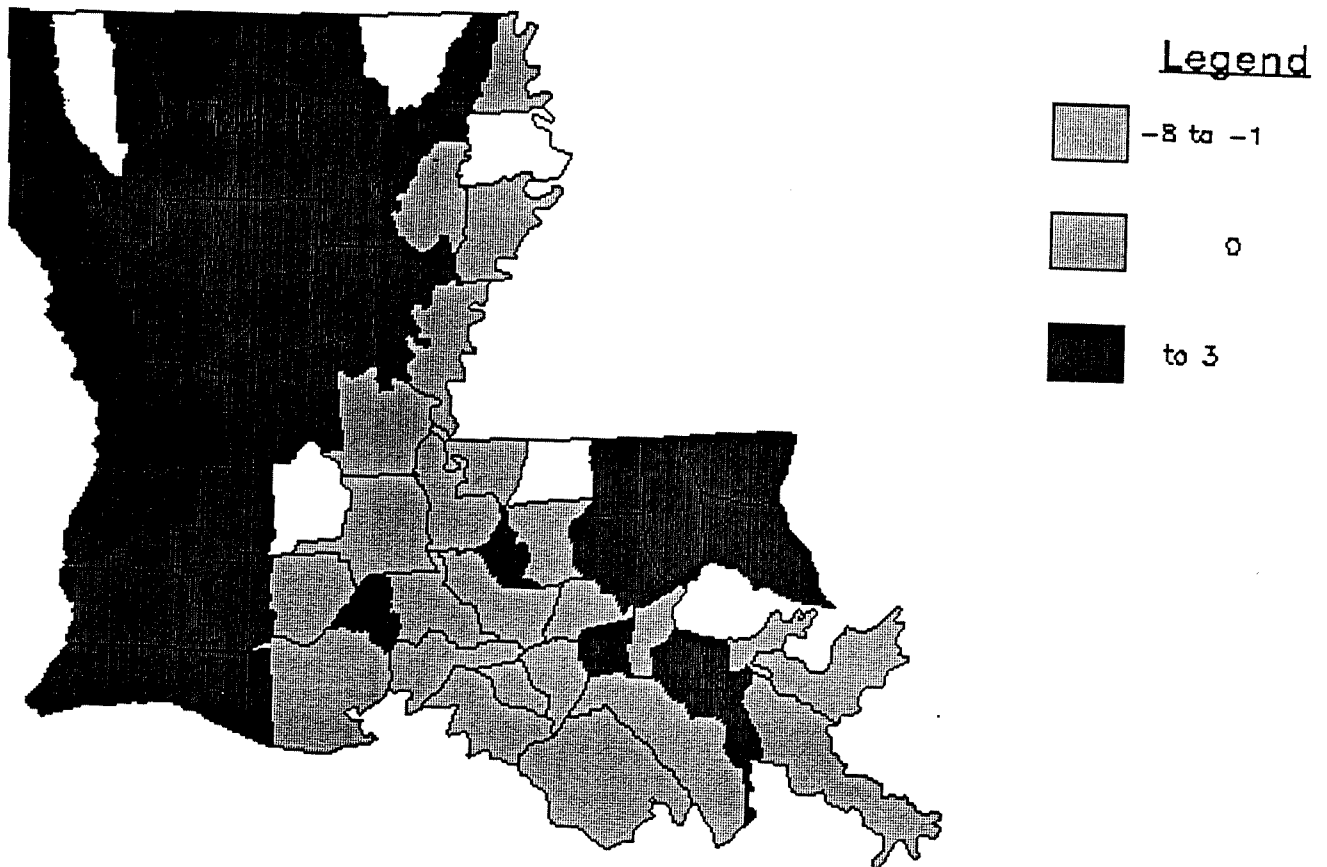
¹²Based on a simple regression. $R\text{-squared} = .085$. ($p\text{-value} = .0360$).

the measure, making it susceptible to the influence of an individual's personal feelings. A legislator from a majority Catholic parish may very well have voted for the Shattuck bill. As was seen in Chapter 3, many individuals had strong personal feelings on the matter. One article even suggests that many opponents of the bill voted for the measure because of the high regard they had for Shattuck himself. The maps on page 70 and 71 may help illustrate certain anomalies in the quantitative analysis. As an example, the two south-westernmost parishes in Louisiana, Cameron and Calcasieu, both had a high percentage of Catholics. Their representatives voted in favor of the measures. However, Shattuck himself represented Calcasieu, and personal ties to him probably affected the voting by other representatives from the region. Another anomaly in the voting pattern is the opposition to the bill of the river parishes, Tensas, Concordia, and West Feliciana, none of which were particularly strong in Catholic percentage. When the percentage of Negro Baptists is taken out of consideration, since most African Americans did not vote in the 1920's and were not likely to be considered by their representative, the religious percentages in these parishes were more evenly split among several denominations. This diversity diminished the strength of the conservative Protestant denominations. Personal ties to individuals as well as other anomalies, as a result, may have in some way skewed the relationships measured by the statistical analysis.

However, the results of the analysis indicate that the relationships were significant enough beyond mere chance. The statistical analysis proves the theory that denominational ties were the main force behind the movement. With much criticism coming from the Catholics toward the movement, the anti-evolution movement was almost exclusively a movement on the part of the conservative Protestant Christians with ties to the Fundamentalist movement. The cultural

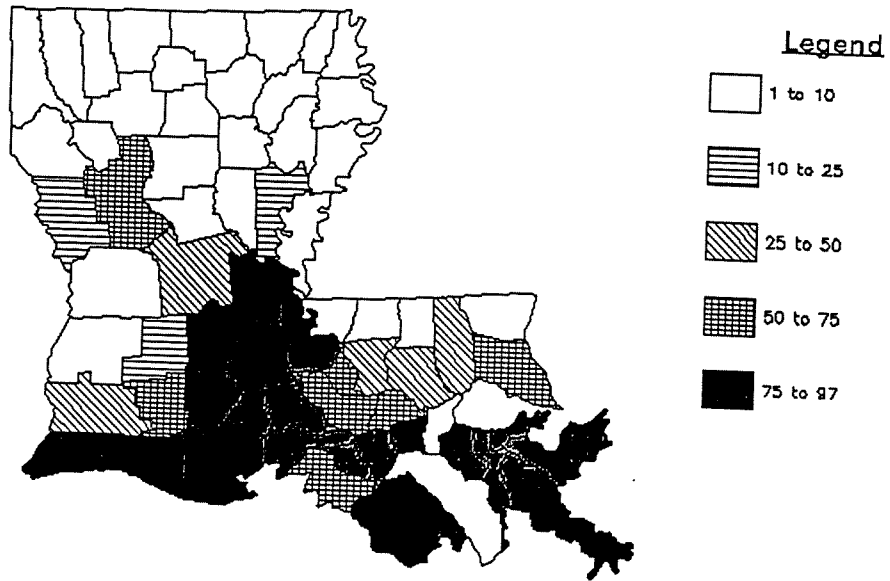
demography of Louisiana, with more Baptists in the north and more Catholics in the south, helped to polarize the state between support and resistance to the Shattuck bill. In a way, the failure of the anti-evolution campaign in the state legislature can be viewed as an example of the influence that the unique culture of Louisiana had. The presence of Catholics served to reduce the amount of Christian Fundamentalist support for the anti-evolution campaign. With support for the bill so invariably and exclusively linked to the percentage of Baptists, it becomes easy to explain why resistance to the bill arose and why the measure was ultimately killed in the Senate. Indeed, the cultural setting, along with the influence of certain individuals, had much to do with the fate of the anti-evolution movement in Louisiana.

Degree of Anti-Evolution Sentiment

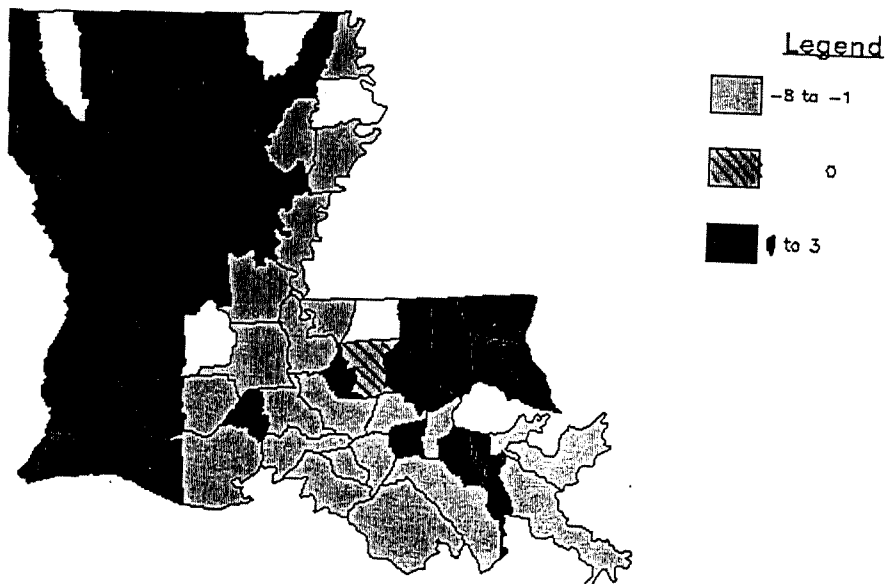


The dark areas indicate support for the Shattuck bill. Lighter areas indicate resistance.

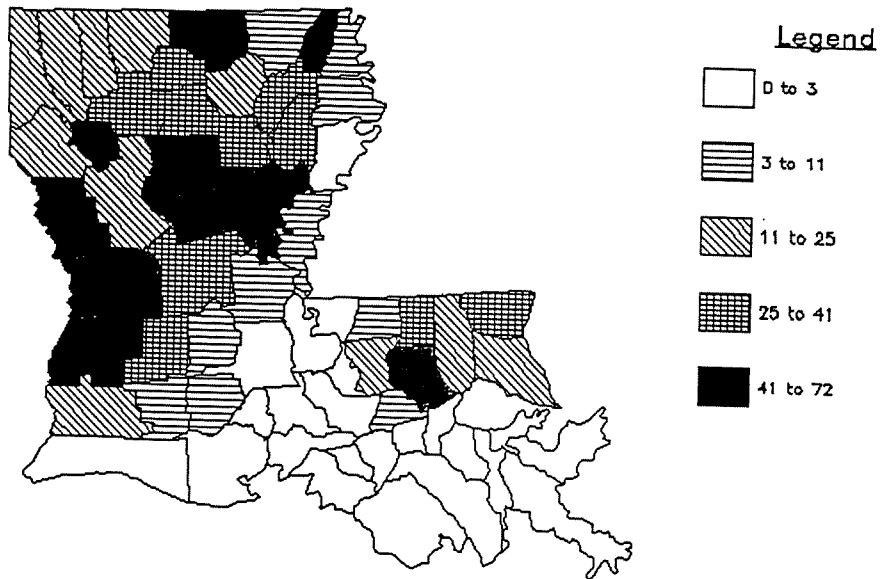
Percentage of Catholics in Louisiana



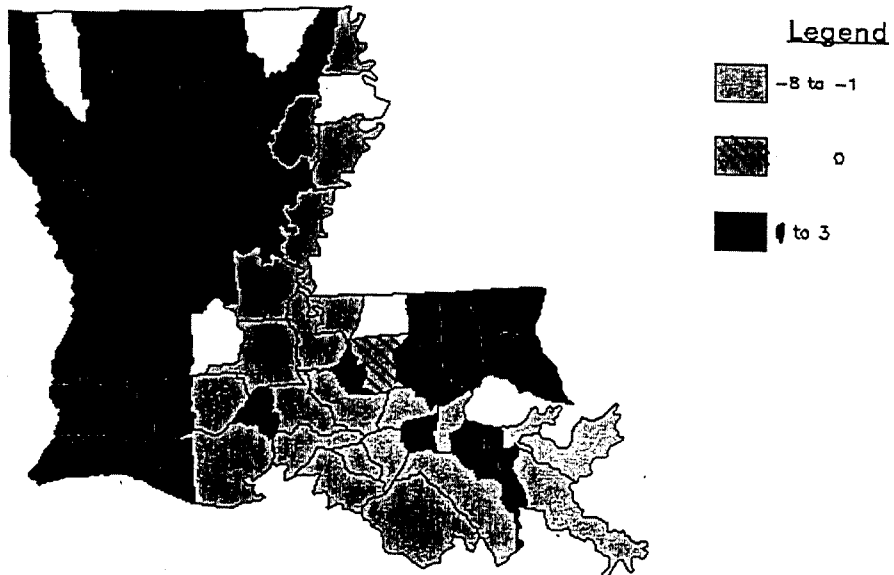
Degree of Anti-Evolution Sentiment



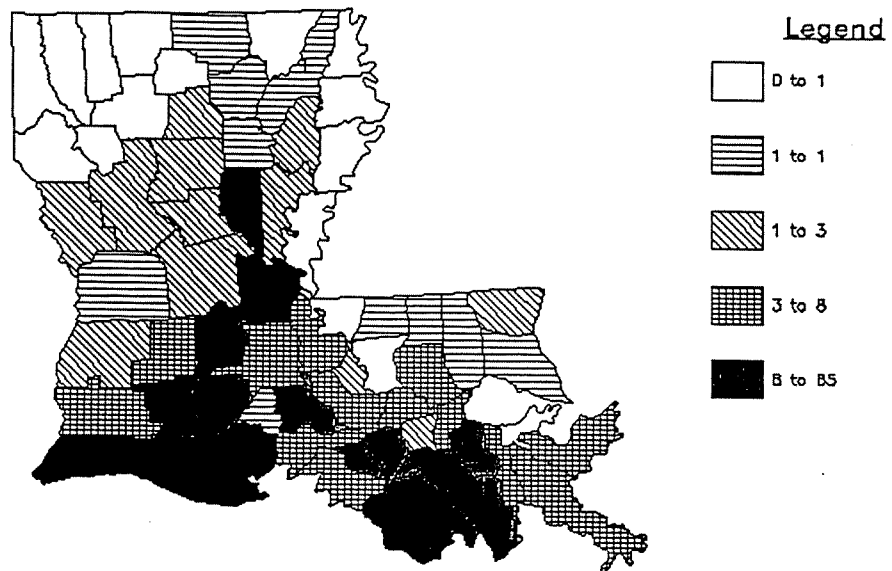
Percentage of Baptists in Louisiana



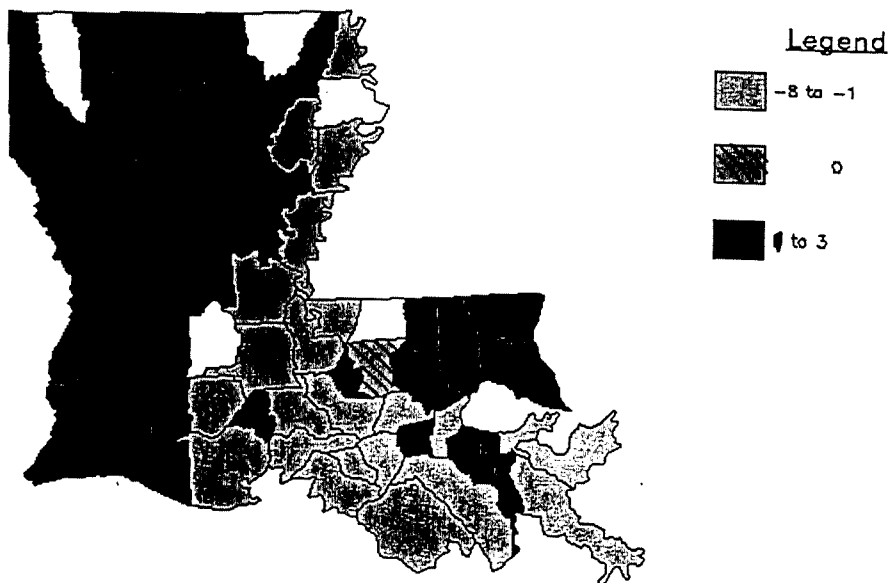
Degree of Anti-Evolution Sentiment



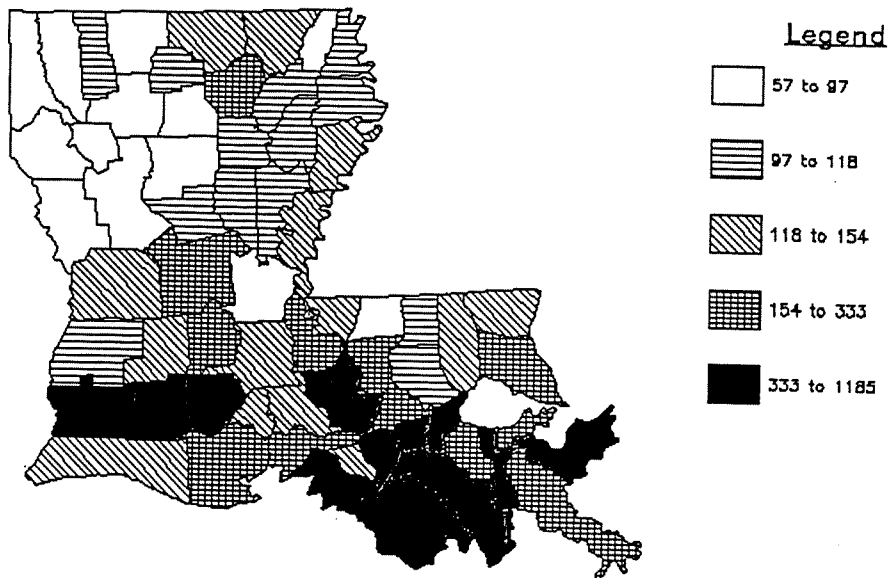
Percentage of White Illiteracy 21 Years and Over



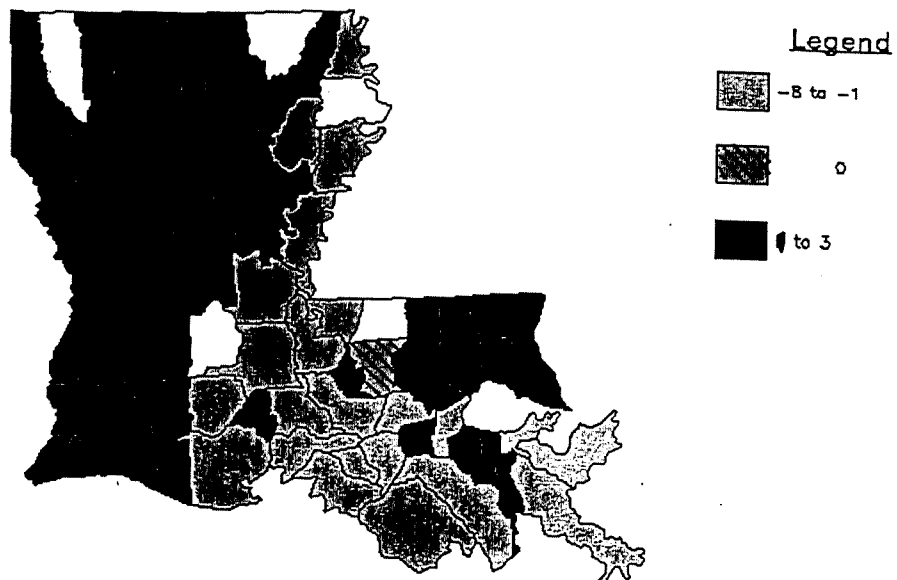
Degree of Anti-Evolution Sentiment



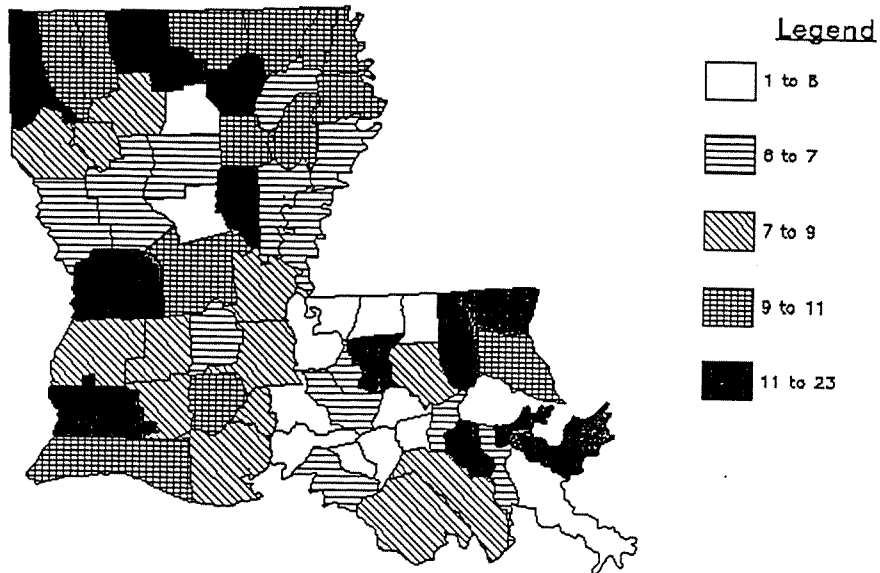
Value of Farm Implements and Machinery Per Farm



Degree of Anti-Evolution Sentiment



Number of Automobiles Per 100 Persons (1920 Census)



Degree of Anti-Evolution Sentiment

