The Confluence

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# Lucy Wortham James and the Gospel of Wealth: A Case Study of Female Philanthropy in Rural Missouri During the Progressive Era

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## Introduction and Historiography

*The Gospel of Wealth*, industrialist steel mogul Andrew Carnegie's 1889 apologetic for philanthropic attitudes of the new self-made American aristocracy, ascribed responsibilities for public welfare to the prosperous elite, whom he believed could administer funds to superior public benefit than government programs or charitable institutions.[1] In response to the growing wealth inequality subsequent to the capitalist industrialism that consecrated Carnegie as the premier paradigm of American affluence, he advocated that the monetary gains of prosperous Americans were beneficial to society, as they could apportion aid amongst the common masses with limitations to promote individual advancement towards substance, instead of fostering continual reliance on alms, an effective rebuttal against calls for increased taxation and forced monopolistic breakups. These programs aimed to produce permanent gifts instead of consumable handouts, advocating social evolution over individual advancement. Accordingly, the Gospel of Wealth ideology became increasingly popular among many of America's economic elite, igniting debates over attitudes regarding individual wealth during the period.

Though no single philanthropist could touch Carnegie's monetary, social, and philanthropic influence, conversations arose around the nation, identifying notable contributors to and advocates of the *Gospel of Wealth* nationwide. One of these assertions was a 1901 article published in *Success* magazine by Iowa Republican Senator Jonathan Prentiss Dolliver, entitled *Phoebe Apperson Hearst and the New Gospel of Wealth.* In this writing, Dolliver argued that Hearst, a rural-born Missouri woman, now wife (widow) of successful businessman and California Democrat Senator George Hearst, was a "new type of millionaire," exemplified by her benevolent giving to aid public schools and address problems of widespread poverty and addiction in urban areas.[2] Though her work was on a considerably smaller scale, thus easier to overlook, Dolliver argued that Hearst was a noteworthy and identifiable participant in American philanthropy during the Progressive Era.

Despite Dolliver's profound conclusion, his status as a Senator, not an academic, led his work to be insufficiently analyzed by the historical field for nearly a century until Alexandra M. Nickliss, a professor at the City College of San Francisco, published an article in the November 2002 edition of the Pacific Historical Review entitled *Phoebe Apperson Hearst's "Gospel of Wealth," 1883-1901.* In this article, Nickliss reignites the discussion of female philanthropists during the era, claiming that Hearst reimagined *Gospel of Wealth* concepts in her image to support the distribution of financial aid by wealthy American women to support Progressive causes and marginalized communities. Thus, insofar as Hearst's wealth and influence did not equal that of Carnegie, this was more of a reflection on social norms and economic limitations placed on women during the period instead of a reflection on her inability or unwillingness to donate more abundantly. Accordingly, her ability to fund various causes and institutions she supported despite these limitations classifies her as a "complementary equal" to Carnegie.[3]

[1] Andrew Carnegie, "The Gospel of Wealth," *The North American Review* 183, no. 599 (1906): 526–37, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25105641.

[2] Alexandra M. Nickliss, "Phoebe Apperson Hearst's 'Gospel of Wealth,' 1883–1901," *Pacific Historical Review* 71, no. 4 (2002): 575–605, https://doi.org/10.1525/phr.2002.71.4.575, 575.

[3] Alexandra M. Nickliss, "Phoebe Apperson Hearst's 'Gospel of Wealth,' 1883–1901," *Pacific Historical Review* 71, no. 4 (2002): 575–605, https://doi.org/10.1525/phr.2002.71.4.575, 576.

Nickliss's publication revolutionized the future of Progressive Era historical scholarship by providing a lens to view the influence and unique contributions of female philanthropists to the Gospel of Wealth ideology. However, since this scholarship is still in its primitive stages, there remains a plethora of unexplored individuals and contributions. This paper will build on the existing scholarship by highlighting the historical and continual impact of Missouri native Lucy Wortham James's philanthropy on her rural hometown of St. James, Missouri. In doing so, it will show how the legacy of her philanthropic endeavors reflects her unique understanding and application of the Gospel of Wealth, solidifying her legacy as a complementary equal to Phoebe Apperson Hearst and, thus, Andrew Carnegie.

This work engages with the broader scholarship of female philanthropist advocates of the Gospel of Wealth through two works written by Alexandra M. Nickliss on Phoebe Apperson Hearst, a rural-born Missouri native female philanthropist during the era who had a personal relationship with Lucy Wortham James. Regarding the existing scholarship on James, most existing secondary works are biographical, covering aspects of her life for educational, not analytical, purposes. With help from the James Foundation, Nancy Genet published *Lucy Wortham James, 1880 1938, Founder of the Lucy Wortham James Memorial in the New York Community Trust* in 1971, the pinnacle work of existing scholarly work on James. James D. Norris is another important cultivator of the James historical narrative, though his works focus more on the Ironworks than James herself. Finally, Ken Vogel and his brief 1969 work *Maramec Iron Works, 1825-1876, Chronological Listing, Explanation of Listings, and Supplements* offers unique insights into the history of the James family before Lucy's birth and in her adolescence. This work does not challenge this existing scholarship. Instead, it connects observations within to broader historical contexts by examining similar philanthropic advocates and activities in the United States at the turn of the 20th century.

For the purposes of this paper, the term Meramec is spelled Maramec. Maramec was the original spelling used for both the creek and the ironworks. However, due to widespread misspelling of the term by members of the St. James community, the incorrect terminology rose to prominence and was later used by the state government for official spelling. Throughout her life, Lucy wished to preserve the original spelling, as evident in a May 8, 1934, telegram in which she states, "Maramec is the original & correct spelling, & that Meramec is a local corruption taken up by the Gov't...."[4] Since the purpose of the work is to bring to light the life and legacy of Lucy, it is only fair to refer to things on her terms. Accordingly, unless in a direct quotation or source citation, her preferred spelling of Maramec is implemented throughout.

## The James Family and Lucy's Childhood

The story of Lucy Wortham James begins with her grandparents, William, and Lucy (Dun) James. William, an iron industrialist from Chillicothe, Ohio, assumed control of the Maramec Ironworks (located on the outskirts of modern St. James, Missouri) in 1844 following a schism between William's father, Thomas, and Samuel Massey, which encouraged Massey to sell his stake in the company they founded together in 1826 due to philosophical differences.[5] Attempting to populate the local area, William founded Scioto, Missouri, in 1859, part of the newly dedicated Phelps County. In 1860, the town received a post office and a railroad and was renamed St. James in honor of the family's local contributions.[6] The James family quickly rose

[4] "Maramec vs Meramec," Maramec Spring Park, Accessed February 15, 2024, https://maramecspringpark.com/about/maramec-vs-meramec/.

[5] Ken Vogel, *Maramec Iron Works, 1825-1876, Chronological Listing, Explanation of Listings, and Supplements.* St James, Missouri: The James Foundation, August 1, 1969, 11-12.

[6] Vogel, 12.

to monetary success as the Ironworks produced cannonballs and metal siding for the newly created "ironclad" warships on the Mississippi River used in the American Civil War. The influx of money encouraged the James family to move from Maramec to St. James, resulting in the construction of the Dunmoor estate, the staple of James's affluence.[7]

Despite the ironwork's initial success, transportation issues and a lull in business debilitated the once-booming industry. In February 1878, William James declared bankruptcy, effectively ending the Maramec Ironworks, causing the family to vacate the pristine Dunmoor estate.[8] Despite the downfall of Maramec, thanks to monetary influence from the James family, the St. James community transformed from a pioneer town to an incorporated community through the funding of multiple institutions, such as the St. James Chapel, currently the St. James United Methodist Church, and the use of the grounds of the former Dunmoor Estate in creating a retirement home for Missouri veterans. Despite William's financial difficulties, "the respect held for him by the citizens of St. James was still high," encouraging the family to remain in the region.[9]

In 1880, William's son Thomas and his wife Octavia Bowles gave birth to their daughter, Lucy Wortham James.[10] Baptized in the local Trinity Episcopal church, James began the first of many journeys, spending her infancy with the Sioux tribe in the Dakotas. However, her ailing mother returned to St. James, where Lucy would spend her childhood.[11] Her childhood was far from the aristocratic grandeur of the Dunmoor days, albeit an enjoyable experience, until her family moved to Kansas City, Missouri, following her father's employment under her great-uncle Robert G. Dun at a primitive Dun and Bradstreet Incorporation.[12] This employment opportunity drastically changed the James's family fortune, allowing them to retain portions of the Maramec property and provide a life of affluence Lucy had never previously experienced.

James's status as a contemporary to Carnegie may face unbridled opposition, but her status alongside Phoebe Apperson Hearst is nothing short of historical fact. In the 1971 comprehensive biography *Lucy Wortham James, 1880 1938, Founder of the Lucy Wortham James Memorial in the New York Community Trust,* Nancy Genet describes the personal relationship between the two women. Placing his family's education at the utmost importance, William James, Lucy's grandfather, hired Phoebe Apperson as a private tutor.[13] Furthermore, Nickliss notes that the James family became "in essence... Phoebe's surrogate parents," learning from them a domestic skill set and aristocratic social customs, propelling Phoebe into the high society of 19th-century mid-Missouri. According to Nickliss, during her time with the James family, Phoebe "became aware of and gained an appreciation for the relationship and interplay between religion, money, and class" and that she "could see how wealthy, elite Protestants operated," both essential components of Carnegie's Gospel.[14] Her time with the James family gave Phoebe Apperson the physical and social knowledge necessary to be an impactful woman of wealth at the turn of the 20th century, a lifestyle which introduced her to her husband, future

[7] Vogel, 14.
[8] Vogel, 18.
[9] Vogel, 17.
[10] Vogel, 19.
[11] Nancy Genet, *Lucy Wortham James, 1880 1938, Founder of the Lucy Wortham James Memorial in the New York Community Trust,* Edited by Klaus Gemming and Hermann Zapf, St James, Missouri: The James Foundation, 1971, 28.
[12] Genet, 31-32.
[13] Genet, 22.
[14] Alexandra M. Nickliss, *Phoebe Apperson Hearst: A Life of Power and Politics,* Lincoln, NB: Bison Books, 2018, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=e000xna&AN=1737412&site=ehost-live, 22.

California Senator George Hearst of Sullivan, Missouri. Though scholars have long noted the impact of the James family on Phoebe's intellectual development, both Dolliver and Nickliss overlook the primitive benevolence concepts of affluent American Protestants at the turn of the century, specifically the endowment of local institutions, taught to Phoebe during her stay with the family. Accordingly, her unique contributions to American philanthropy are due, in large part, to her time spent in St. James, not in California.

## Lucy's Philanthropic Activities in St. James

### *Lucy Wortham James Estate*

Throughout her life, Lucy Wortham James donated to various causes and institutions that supported her worldview. Though many donations in her lifetime occurred on the East Coast, she directed the noticeable sum toward her hometown of St. James. Following her death in 1938, James's estate established a $2,000,000 trust fund ($44,000,000 in 2024) to support the St. James community. This fund, entitled the James Foundation, is allocated through the New York Community Trust, a grant-making foundation supporting non-profit organizations.[15] Throughout the subsequent decades, the James Foundation funded various projects in and around the St. James area, promoting the well-being of the community. This paper uses these donations, done at the direction of and through the financial means of the Lucy Wortham James estate, to demonstrate their enduring effects on the local populace, cementing James's legacy as an efficacious female philanthropist of the early 20th century, demonstrating the similarities between her benevolence and those of Phoebe Apperson Hearst, and highlighting fundamental principles shared with Carnegies Gospel of Wealth ideology.

### *Trinity Episcopal Church and the James Chapel*

Like her father, Lucy Wortham James placed a heavy emphasis on accessibility to the Protestant religion in the St. James community. As previously noted, upon the creation of St. James, the James family founded James Chapel for united Protestant religious services, a building still in operation today as the St. James United Methodist Church. While the James family and Lucy herself attended another congregation (mentioned below), the James Foundation was still involved in the renovation and upkeep of the building via her endowment. A letter from Ford Hughes, director of the James Foundation, to Herbert B. West, president of the New York Community Trust, in February 1970 highlights the allocation of requested funds in the St. James community. The letter notes that the Foundation donated $18,000 ($140,500 in 2024) to the St. James United Methodist Church, of which $11,000 financed a new addition with a fellowship hall and classrooms, $1,500 purchased a new roof, while the remainder supported general building renovations.[16] Though this donation is comparatively modest to those made to other local institutions, it nonetheless highlights the importance placed by Lucy and her estate on maintaining access to Mainline Protestantism in St. James.

Despite financing the James Chapel in the primitive community, the James family subsequently helped build Trinity Episcopal Church, similarly located in St. James, where they were congregants. Lucy held this congregation of greater importance than the Methodist meetinghouse, as she was a lifelong Episcopal parishioner, baptized in the church as an infant.[17] Accordingly, the congregation was a beneficiary of her benevolence multiple times. During her life, in memory of her uncle Robert Graham Dun, who saved the James family from destitution, Lucy hired the Whitefriars Guild to make a stained-glass window depicting the Tree of Life located at the north end of the building.[18] In 1923, Lucy financed a stone shell around the

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[15] Mrs. Robert Doub, *The James Foundation Story #392 I'm Proud of my Town,* James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), *F104.*

[16] Ford Hughes, *Churches in St James to Herbert B. West,* February 17, 1970. James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), F.59.

[17] Nancy Genet, *Lucy Wortham James, 1880 1938, Founder of the Lucy Wortham James Memorial in the New York Community Trust,* Edited by Klaus Gemming and Hermann Zapf, St James, Missouri: The James Foundation, 1971.

[18] Genet, 32.

original church frame from 1893.[19] The most drastic overhaul, however, came in December 1928, when blueprints from the James Foundation Collection indicate that Lucy financed new carved wooden doors for the front entrance to the building, a new stone bell tower, and a stone cross for the church's facade.[20]

The support of Trinity Episcopal did not end with her death, however, as a June 1941 telegram emphasizing the initial works of the James Foundation notes, "... a contribution has been made toward the salary of the minister at Trinity Church."[21] Furthermore, an undated excerpt from the St. James Leader Journal highlights a total sum of $220,000 of donations from the James Foundation to the community over the previous calendar year. Among these were an undisclosed amount given to the parish house (rectory) of Trinity Episcopal and $500 to each church in town to support ground improvements as part of the city beautification effort.[22] The aesthetic contributions from her lifetime transformed Trinity Episcopal from a humble house of prayer in a forgotten Midwestern hamlet to a source of pride in the local community. The congregation remains active (as of 2024), and its exterior has become a popular spot for local students to take photographs for school dances and graduation. However, the donations from her estate prove that James's benevolence went beyond aesthetic contribution by ensuring the longevity of Anglican Christianity in her hometown.

While Carnegie remained religiously unaffiliated throughout his life, religion nonetheless played an essential role in the development of Carnegie's philanthropic ideology. The Gospel of Wealth strongly opposed the Social Gospel, an alternate form of benevolence, which viewed the affluent as oppressors instead of liberators and sought to replace secular philanthropic streams with religious ones, which would inadvertently spread Protestant Christianity. Concerning the relationship between his ideology and Christianity, Carnegie states,

> The highest life is probably to be reached, not by such imitation of the life of Christ... but, while animated by Christ's spirit, by recognizing the changed conditions of this age, and adopting modes of expressing this spirit suitable to the changed conditions under which we live; still laboring for the good of our fellows, which was the essence of his life and teaching, but laboring in a different manner.[23]

Thus, while not a religious endeavor, Carnegie argues that the newfound American elite of the industrial age ensured the peace and prosperity of their fellow men, just as Christ Jesus. Hearst followed similar trends, as Nickliss observes her wish to act as God's agent to the poor to diminish her economic and social reliance on men.[24] In contrast, James was unequivocally devout and self-sufficient, allowing her philanthropy to reflect personal

[19] "Our History," Trinity Episcopal Church, St. James, MO, Accessed February 15, 2024, https://www.trinityepiscopalstjames.org/about-1.

[20] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), Frederick R. King Trinity Episcopal blueprints, December 1928.

[21] Ralph Hayes, *Telegram to Ina F. Chambers,* June 9, 1941, James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), F17.

[22] The James Foundation Story, *#351 James Foundation pays $220,000 last year,* James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316). St James Leader Journal, F104.

[23] Carnegie, 534.

[24] Nickliss, 580.

attributes, such as the Trinity Church Dun window, without the need to invoke a higher cause for reasoning.

*Maramec Springs Park*

The most influential endowment from Lucy Wortham James to her hometown was the donation of former family land to spur local economic opportunities. Following her death, the James Foundation took control of various properties within her estate in and around the St. James area. The largest of these was the Maramec Springs and former iron works. Over time, the vast 1,600-acre property, with heavy investment from the foundation, became the current Maramec Springs Park, independently owned and operated by the James Foundation.

The property, formerly the Maramec Iron Works, served as the source of James's family wealth. Founded by her father as a capitalist enterprise, technological advancements and logistical difficulties resulted in bankruptcy and the closure of the Ironwork in 1871. James bought the plot years later to ensure its upkeep and provide public access. During her lifetime, the land served primarily as farmland, providing hay to local farmers. Thus, achieving the aim of preservation from industrial or residential development.

Posthumously, the James Foundation played an essential role in transforming the plot into the current park. An August 1946 map indicates nine standing structures on the property (left over from the Maramec township) and roughly 130 acres of farmland harvested for hay.[25] A decade later, in 1953, a map of the Maramec Spring Basin highlights extensive renovations to the property, including the removal of the Muller Cabin, Dolly Cabin, Fort Cabin, Shop, log barn, and implement shed. The map also indicates the creation of a garage, employee residences, bridges, maintenance roads, shelters, parking spaces, multiple picnic units, a relocated poultry plant house, and a large playground.[26] An August 1969 map illustrates further development, including a carwash, lumber shed, athletic area (tennis courts), greenhouse, pump house, rearing pool, holding pool, and increased access to the river for cars and camper trailers.[27] Finally, a map from December 1971 indicates a new observation tower, a Missouri Conservation Commission tag shack at the park entrance, entrance bars, gravel walkways, and large group shelters, clearly dividing the park into recreational areas and buffer zones following the Maramec River and State Highway 8.[28]

Infrastructure was not the only donation given by the Foundation to the Springs property, however, newspaper articles indicate the creation and promotion of events in the park. An October 18, 1979, article in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* details the first annual "Old Ironworks Days," a celebration of local culture and historic preservation of the Ironworks. Available activities include blacksmithing, chair-caning, tie hacking, weaving, quilting, furniture carving, fiddling, cross-cutting, and buck sawing, available to the public for a $1 per day parking fee.

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[25] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), Map of the Maramec Spring Property of the Estate of Lucy W. James near St. James Missouri, August 1946.

[26] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), Map of Maramec Spring Basin, November 1, 1953.

[27] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), Map of Maramec Springs Park, August 1, 1969.

[28] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), Map of Maramec Springs Park, December 1971.

This festival is held annually to this day and is a staple of the local culture.[29] To further preserve the park's history year-round, the James Foundation opened a new museum in the park in 1979, accredited by the American Association of Museums, available to the public for 25 cents, with free admission for children six and under. Activities in the museum included detailed scale models of the old blast furnace, casting house, forges, tub and cylinder blowers, waterwheels, and pounding hammers, as well as various dioramas and displays on early transportation, trails, local Indigenous culture, the Trail of Tears, and geology.[30] These donations indicate an intentional preservation of local history by the Foundation through historic and contemporary structures available through the Maramec Springs property.

These donations signify a differentiation from Carnegie due to James's social opportunities in the mid-20th century. Carnegie, a white male Protestant, given the social norms of the times, was uniquely apt to produce the philanthropy he became famous for. While many groups within American society faced social and economic limitations, Carnegie's demographic composition allowed him to avoid these entirely. This observation does not and cannot limit his philanthropic impact. Rather, it accentuates the importance of philanthropists who gave despite limitations and acknowledges their role in the Gospel of Wealth ideology. Though James was also a white Protestant, she was notably a woman. Despite her relative social and economic independence from patriarchic influence, exemplified by her perpetual affluence and willing divorce from her husband, famed diplomat, and former Assistant Secretary of State Huntington Wilson, James nonetheless faced the social limitations of 20th-century America. Though American women had gained the right to property by 1938, they still faced a gender financial bias and disproportionate ownership rates. James's family possessions empowered her to break this narrative by giving her vast amounts of land, which she donated to the local community in line with her philanthropic ethos. James's position as a landowner equipped her with unique opportunities for philanthropic benevolence not available to most female philanthropists engaging in the Gospel of Wealth during this era. Accordingly, her donations in this regard signify her notable and unique contributions to the ideology.

Nickliss notes that property ownership was an essential element to Phoebe Apperson Hearst's Gospel in her 2002 work, *Phoebe Apperson Hearst's "Gospel of Wealth" 1883-1901.* For both Hearst and James, philanthropy gave them opportunities to solidify themselves within society that they were denied elsewhere, a noteworthy component of female philanthropic attitudes and endeavors during this period. They also notably differentiated their ethos from Carnegie, as Nickliss states, "Unlike Carnegie, Hearst provided the property and the financial means to buy books and pay staff salaries. In 1894, she donated her first free public library as a Christmas gift to Lead, South Dakota, where large numbers of Homestake miners, their families, and immigrants lived."[31] Like James, Hearst's donation of land, supplies, and salaries made education accessible to communities that could not otherwise afford it. Hence, noting that both

[29] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), *St Louis Post-Dispatch,* 19c, f.43, October 18, 1979.

[30] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), Museum to Open Feb. 24, *St James Leader Journal*, F35, February 7, 1979.

[31] Nickliss, 586.

women used their donations to promote self-sufficiency within benefited communities, a stark contrast to Carnegie, who supported intrinsic communal dependence to expand his sphere of influence.

James's donations also sought to protect the environment by enshrining the springs in a nature park, ensuring large industrialist corporations could not acquire and destroy the land. Historian James D. Norris notes the importance James placed on the Maramec Springs property in his 1996 work *The James Foundation in Missouri 1941-1991*, authored with Timothy K. Malone. In the fifth article of her Last Will and Testament, from October 16, 1936, James articulates the importance of and her wishes for the Maramec property when stating,

> It is a spot of great natural beauty, which has been in the possession of my family for generations, and through our permission, the Spring basin has been and now is used by the public as a pleasure ground under such regulation and supervision as to insure that the public shall be seemly and shall not mar its natural beauty. I wish to continue such permissive use by the public and to keep the natural beauty unmarred.[32]

James highlights how her love for natural beauty initiated her purchase and endowment of the Maramec plot into the current park, actively preserving native environmental structures and wildlife from development. This ideological component of James's philanthropic ethos staunchly opposes that of Carnegie, whose industrialist endeavors famously inflicted an egregious volume of environmental damage in the urban American Northeast. In his 1908 work *The Inner Life of the United States,* Monsignor Peter Vey de Vaya recalls the hellish scene of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, resulting from Carnegie's industrialism. Regarding the environmental desecration, he states

> Words fail adequately to describe Pittsburg, this city of dreadful night... Everything and everybody are black and gloomy; black is the place, and black is the air; the sky itself is black. Day and night these fourteen thousand chimneys pour forth their noisome vomit of smoke, steam, soot, embers, and sparks, killing everything that grows and blooms, vegetation grass, flowers, and shrubs, in a territory of a day's journey in extent.[33]

In contrast to the pristine environmental beauty actively preserved by James through Maramec Springs Park, Carnegie's defilement of natural beauty highlights a salient area in which his gospel failed to adhere to the societal amelioration it claimed to promote. In contrast, by saving cherished environmental and historical structures from development,

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[32] James D. Norris and Timothy K. Malone, *The James Foundation in Missouri, 1941-1991,* New York, New York, New York Community Trust, 1996.

[33] Peter Vay De Vaya, *The Inner Life of the United States,* New York, New York, E. P. Dutton and Company, 1908, https://books.googleusercontent.com/books/content?req=AKW5QacbqVJbg563InuvujPDyw8CeGcoV-jpbzsBsdamkK0V9e-iC3ltvuOWGB-eHhitOMujUYH1QUGhk3DoAT5bYJ_5sMcIbSWQSQJdUbKuLKIOIZoAmHIqCy6Fk_NRADRecu0FocXJ1WKxGqU90qe5Kjsrnw7hD8y-rgaIqBqP-I6fJDJBX4EhEgCL7owNyfqzP9rnxEbW3poT210_-XpUUKmnWeH3wjpKoR8KR-ObIfZBhiOLdQdRXzQ1AGt9LBS9tkeDy4jWwJVuS6ettLIY_CX5xP7stA, 377.

James demonstrates a more genuine approach to affluent protection of the lower social classes.

*Landownership/Education/Park*

James's focus on landownership continued to impact her philanthropy outside of Maramec Springs. An undated article in the *James Foundation Story* notes how a $30,000 donation from the James Foundation to purchase a Dillon family property promoted local education by providing space for a new elementary school named in her honor. The article also notes that the Foundation's support continued beyond land purchase, stating, "Over a period of several years, the James Foundation has made several contributions to the St. James Schools - teacher scholarships, shop machinery, physical education equipment, playground equipment for the elementary schools, Blue Cross assistance to teachers, and library books."[34] Thus, noting the continual support of local educational institutions by the James Foundation.

Upon her death, James left a 54-acre estate near the edge of town by the Masonic Cemetery. In the 1940s, the James Foundation proposed the creation of a city park on the land for community recreational purposes. A map from 1946 details the proposed arrangement, including a library, maintenance buildings, parking lots, croquet, badminton, basketball courts, a fieldhouse, volleyball courts, horseshoes, a softball diamond with bleachers and backstop, a nature trail, an outdoor theatre, and multiple grilling stations and picnic shelters.[35] A later map from 1969 indicates the creation of a library, parking spots, a bathhouse, a public swimming pool, a diving pool, playground areas, a softball field, maintenance sheds, individual and group picnic shelters, comfort areas, a nature trail, and a field and cabin for the local Boy Scouts troop.[36] Despite these substantial renovations, the Foundation believed much more could be done to increase the recreational opportunities available at the park, prompting the creation of Lake Scioto, titled in homage to the original town name. A resolution from the St. James City Council in November 1969 commends the project as a "valuable contribution to the recreational facilities for the people of St. James."[37] Like Maramec Springs, the James Foundation used James family property to provide recreational spaces for the community. Though not stipulated as part of her will, such as the Maramec plot, the creation of the St. James City Park and the continual extensive renovation thereof highlight the communal focus of James's benevolence.

One of the often-forgotten donations from the James Foundation to the St. James community is the creation of the town flag, presented to the community by Ralph Hayes, acting as the Foundation's representative. The article notes that to promote usage of the flag throughout the community, the Foundation financed city and U.S. flags with display holders from the I-44 overpass to the Lucy Wortham James Elementary across town.[38] Though not comparable to land donations or institutional endowments, the creation and

[34] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), The James Foundation Story #307 Board of Education Names New School Building St James Leader Journal F.104.

[35] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), Map of St James City Park, 1946.

[36] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), Map of St James City Park, 1969.

[37] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), St James City Council resolution #303, Lake Scioto Construction, F.60, November 5, 1969.

[38] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), The James Foundation Story #368 St James to have city-wide flag display. St James Leader-Journal, F.104, 1962.

promotion of the town flag indicates the primary focus behind James's philanthropy, the sustainment, advancement, and preservation of the St. James community.

This aspect of James's philosophy differs from Carnegie's, who usurped local communities into an institutional conglomerate. In a publication for the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, Aayush Singh describes the creation and purpose of Gary, West Virginia, a famous company town tied directly to Carnegie. Singh notes,

> Its creation was no accident: U.S. Steel, the brainchild of J.P. Morgan and Andrew Carnegie, needed the coal in the area to supply its blast furnaces. The gargantuan corporation owned and operated the city... and it was the typical company town. The company owned the factory, the houses, the schools, and the government.[39]

Singh demonstrates that the purpose of Carnegie's financial endeavors in Gary was only to promote his own company, expand his influence, and increase his wealth. Contrarily, James's donations highlight her willingness to work alongside local officials, not over them, to implement plausible, reasonable, and impactful aid in the community.

*City Beautification*

The endowment and preservation of land, institutions, and local historical structures, defined the St. James community from an academic standpoint, providing establishments not accessible to other rural Missouri communities. However, the most distinguishable impact on the community for commoner citizens and transient passerby visitors is the preeminence placed by the foundation on city beautification. Local citizens understood the charming elegance of their community was not by happenstance but by the intentional and predetermined efforts of Lucy Wortham James. These sympathies are highlighted in a 1967 telegram from St. James Mayor Ira Wilson to Ralph Hayes, the chairman of the James Foundation, in which Wilson attributes the advancement of the local community to James herself. According to Wilson, "As one drives around the city of St. James, he is becoming increasingly aware of the changes and improvements made in recent years. Most noteworthy is the fact that the majority of these improvements are the direct result of the foresight and generosity of Lucy Wortham James."[40] Accordingly, Wilson does not attribute the donations to the Foundation itself but rather to the generosity and foresight of Ms. James, highlighting that those participating in and receiving the foundation's philanthropic aid gave all credit to James herself, not the institution.

Primary documents indicate multiple projects supported by the James Foundation to promote beautification. Firstly, a compressive urban planning grant, compiled by Hartland Bartholomew and Associates from St. Louis, Missouri, highlights plans to pave

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[39] Aayush Singh, "The Rise and Fall of Company Towns," Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, 2023, https://www.richmondfed.org/-/media/RichmondFedOrg/publications/research/econ_focus/2023/q3/economic_history.pdf, 10.

[40] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), F.55, Mayor Ira Wilson and the St. James Board of Aldermen to Ralph Hayes and the James Foundation, March 20, 1967.

all major streets within city limits and install curbs and gutters.[41] Though not seemingly as impactful as other endowments, this donation differentiates the St. James experience from other rural Missouri communities, which often struggle to allocate funds for infrastructure projects. Conversely, the James Foundation's benevolence provided the community with advanced amenities that, while not promoting self-help, aligned with James's wishes for town beautification.

A May 1969 article published in the St. James Leader Journal details the tremendous expanse of the project. According to the article, the James Foundation financed 19 new flower beds ranging from 15' by 20' to 35' by 60' by the train station downtown. Furthermore, the document highlights a nearly incomprehensible flowering effort, in which 400 roses, 17,500 tulip and daffodil bulbs, 1,200 irises, 250 peonies, 100 clump daylilies, 75 clump Shasta daisies, 500 mums, and 5,000 summer blooming flowers (including, petunias, periwinkle, salvia, geraniums, zinnias, marigolds, asters, and snapdragons), financed by the Foundation, were planted across town. The article also details the city reforestation effort, in which 8,000 dead trees within city limits were replaced with 3,700 new ones from the James Foundation tree bank at Maramec Springs.[42]

The massive extent of this project details the immense importance of the James Foundation to the aesthetic beauty of the local community. The *James Foundation Story* notes the national success of the program, as, in 1962, St. James was selected as the winner of Flower and Garden magazine's Community Achievement Award. A commemorative plaque was presented to the Forrest City committee from the managing editor and chairman of the Flower and Garden Foundation to commemorate the occasion.[43] Another issue of the same publication recounts St. James as one of four communities across the United States to win the Plant America Award from the American Association of Nurserymen, "In recognition of achievement in landscaping and beautification contributing to greater pride in our American Heritage."[44] Both awards demonstrate how the beautification program differentiated St. James from other rural communities and provided opportunities not possible without affluent investment and promotion.

A limited contrast can be noted between James's beautification to Carnegie's industrialized development, but her allegiance to St. James remains a more essential component of her philanthropic ideology. Unlike Carnegie, whose philanthropic endeavors varied across multiple areas to increase his influence, James's posthumous benevolence hyper-focused on St. James, not with the intent of monetary or social gain, but to improve and maintain the community entirely at her own expense. Without children or a husband to inherit her immense wealth, James supported local institutions, allowing them to remain open despite the economic hardships of rural communities. Furthermore, James specifically allocated funds toward city

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[41] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), F.53, The Future of St James Missouri, the Comprehensive Plan, Hartland Bartholomew and Associates (St Louis, Missouri) Urban Planning Grant Project number Missouri P-39, June 1967.

[42] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), F47, St James' Beautification Story is Unique in State, St James Leader Journal, May 15, 1969.

[43] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), F.104, The James Foundation Story #368 St James to Have City-Wide Flag Display, St James Leader-Journal, 1962.

[44] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), The James Foundation Story #354 Tree-Town Project Wins Local Forest city Project National A.A.N. Award Wins National Award F.104.

beautification, a monetary endeavor too large for a small community to ever hope to achieve on its own.

*Libraries and Self-Help Ideology*

The most identifiable aspect of Carnegie's Gospel of Wealth was his endowment of libraries across the United States to promote his self-help ideology via the accessibility of academic resources to common citizens. Regarding these contributions, Nickliss notes that Carnegie had financed 204 libraries across the United States by 1903. However, she states, "Towns with a population over 1,000 received his library gifts, but they needed to provide the property for the structure and the financial backing for building maintenance, buying books, and staff salaries."[45] Nickliss demonstrates how Carnegie used his philanthropic endeavors to cement his ideology into the communities he donated to by attaching strings to his donations. Regardless, his donations had an unsurpassed impact on American education for the common masses.

Following his influence, Carnegie's contemporaries placed a similar importance on library endowments. Inspired by Carnegie, Phoebe Apperson Hearst also financed free public libraries, such as the public library of Lead, South Dakota. Regarding this donation, Nickliss notes that while it is considerably smaller than those of Carnegie, the money came with fewer strings attached, including property provided by Hearst and extra financing to support salaries and purchase books.[46] This contribution had the longest-lasting impact of any other era-specific philanthropic giving in the area. Nickliss notes, "Hearst's Free Library gave Lead's miners and other immigrants access to broader education while helping them retain their racial and ethnic identities and values" and "introduced immigrant miners and their families to American middle-class values and way of life."[47] Thus, highlighting Hearst's unique application of Carnegie's Gospel of Wealth, argued by Nickliss to be the foundation for her status as a complementary equal to him, even though her philosophy departed from his teachings regarding individual rights and decentralized structure.

Lucy Wortham James's endowment of the St. James community library likewise reflects a unique approach to the philosophy that did not simply mirror Carnegie but reflected the values of the individual by providing perpetual access to the institution to members of the local community. Upon her death in 1938, James allocated $700 per year (roughly $15,000 in 2024) to ensure local citizens did not have to pay a library tax, providing free public access to local literary facilities.[48] In 1941, in line with the wishes of her will, the New York Community Trust via the James Foundation proposed a city park for the town of St. James on a 54-acre plot of James family property near the edge of town, adjoining the Masonic cemetery. Among other things, such as a softball field and nature trail, the plan included a new town library.[49] Furthermore, the James Foundation continued to support improvements within the library across the subsequent decades. A shelving plan from January 1970 indicates that the foundation donated new wooden book shelving below windows, new end panels on existing steel interior double-

[45] Alexandra M. Nickliss, "Phoebe Apperson Hearst's 'Gospel of Wealth,' 1883–1901," *Pacific Historical Review* 71, no. 4 (2002): 575–605, https://doi.org/10.1525/phr.2002.71.4.575, 585.
[46] Nickliss, 585.
[47] Nickliss, 586-87.
[48] "About the Library," James Memorial Public Library, Accessed February 16, 2024, https://www.jmpl.net/about-the-library.
[49] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), F 37, Maps, blueprints and plans for James Foundation properties.

faced bookshelves, new phonograph record display cases, new "resilient tile flooring," air conditioning and electrical revisions, duct/piping insulation, and a wall-mounted thermostat to the building.[50]

Over time, the $700 yearly donation became the primary source of funding for the local library. A new building was built in 1953, renamed the Lucy Wortham James Memorial Library in honor of her contributions, located in St. James Park on the land donated by the James Foundation.[51] Furthermore, blueprints from January 1970 indicate interior renovations, including new wooden shelving below windows, new end panels on existing steel interior double-faced bookshelves, new phonograph record display cases, new "resilient tile flooring," air conditioning and electrical revisions, duct/piping insulation, and a wall-mounted thermostat by Schmidt Elam Architects, financed by the James Foundation.[52] In line with Lucy's philanthropic spirit, the James Foundation gifted the library to the city of St. James on May 1, 2013, with a stipend for first-year expenses. As of 2024, the library remains in the city's care, supported by a city property tax, under the city's direction with guidance from a board of directors. It has since been renamed the James Memorial Public Library.[53]

James's support of local literacy institutions is the most direct link between Carnegie and Hearst's Gospel of Wealth ideology and her own. While all three philanthropists donated to causes and institutions that sparked their personal interests or met the needs of those communities receiving donations, the focus on libraries remained constant, as these fell directly in line with the self-help ideology promoted by affluent American benevolence during the period. Underlying this concept, Carnegie argues,

> In bestowing charity, the main consideration should be to help those who will help themselves; to provide part of the means by which those who desire to improve may do so... Neither the individual nor the race is improved by alms-giving. Those worthy of assistance, except in rare cases, seldom require assistance.[54]

His proposition to provide common citizens with methods to improve their lives is met most effectively by libraries, which would be embraced by the academic community while ignored by those uninterested in literature, whom Carnegie was unwilling to support. In a 1969 letter to the New York Trust, Nancy Genet notes how James "felt worthy children and young people should be helped – with emphasis on that adjective."[55] As the premier historian of Lucy Wortham James, Genet underlies how James's philanthropic ideology mirrors Carnegie's, albeit without concluding so herself.

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[50] James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), *New Shelving Plan,* Schmidt Elam Architects, January 20, 1970.

[51] "About the Library," James Memorial Public Library.

[52] Schmidt Elam Architects, *Library Blueprints*, January 1970, James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316).

[53] "About the Library," James Memorial Public Library.

[54] Carnegie, 536.

[55] Nancy Genet, *Letter to Mr. Herbert West New York Community Trust,* March 14, 1969, James Foundation papers, State Historical Society of Missouri (R1316), F23.

## Conclusion

Through her works in the St. James community in her life and posthumously through the endowed James Foundation, Lucy Wortham James exemplifies her own unique application of affluent self-help philanthropic attitudes and endeavors in a rural Missouri community, dispelling the notion that classifies the movement as a coastal urban phenomenon instead of a national movement applicable to rural communities. Moreover, her unique adoption of these ideals departed radically from the despotic and self-serving aspects embedded in Andrew Carnegie's Gospel, which scholars argue served to justify his prosperity and further increase his influence under the guise of societal advancement. Notably, while this work provides an in-depth analysis of James through the lens of Carnegie, there remain multiple unexplored areas of her philanthropic attitudes, specifically relating to her views on race relations and her promotion of eugenics. Accordingly, this work does not deny these complexities. Instead, it seeks to leave the scholarship open for later, more comprehensive works to give these topics the attention they deserve in the James historical narrative. Furthermore, this work acknowledges the work of various James Foundation employees, across multiple decades, acting in place of Ms. James to best implement her wishes in the community. While their mention in this work is mitigated due to the intended focus, it is essential to note their actions in continually acting as the living voices of Lucy Wortham James, cementing her philanthropic legacy and impact far beyond her lifetime.

Though this work is only the beginning of the scholarly historical analysis regarding James's philanthropic endeavors, it highlights her place among her argued contemporaries. While her philanthropy occurred on a smaller scale, in a different region, guided by differing principles, seeking to achieve different aims, Lucy Wortham James's donations to the city of St. James through maintaining historic Protestant churches, endowing Maramec Springs Park, creating the St. James City Park, financing city beautification, promoting education, and safeguarding the local library exemplifies her application of the Gospel of Wealth and demonstrates how she reimagined these concepts and made them applicable to her rural hometown of St. James, Missouri.

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