

Binghamton Journal of History

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Roan Fleischer

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Mesopotamia: The Invention of the City

Babylon: Legend, History and the Ancient

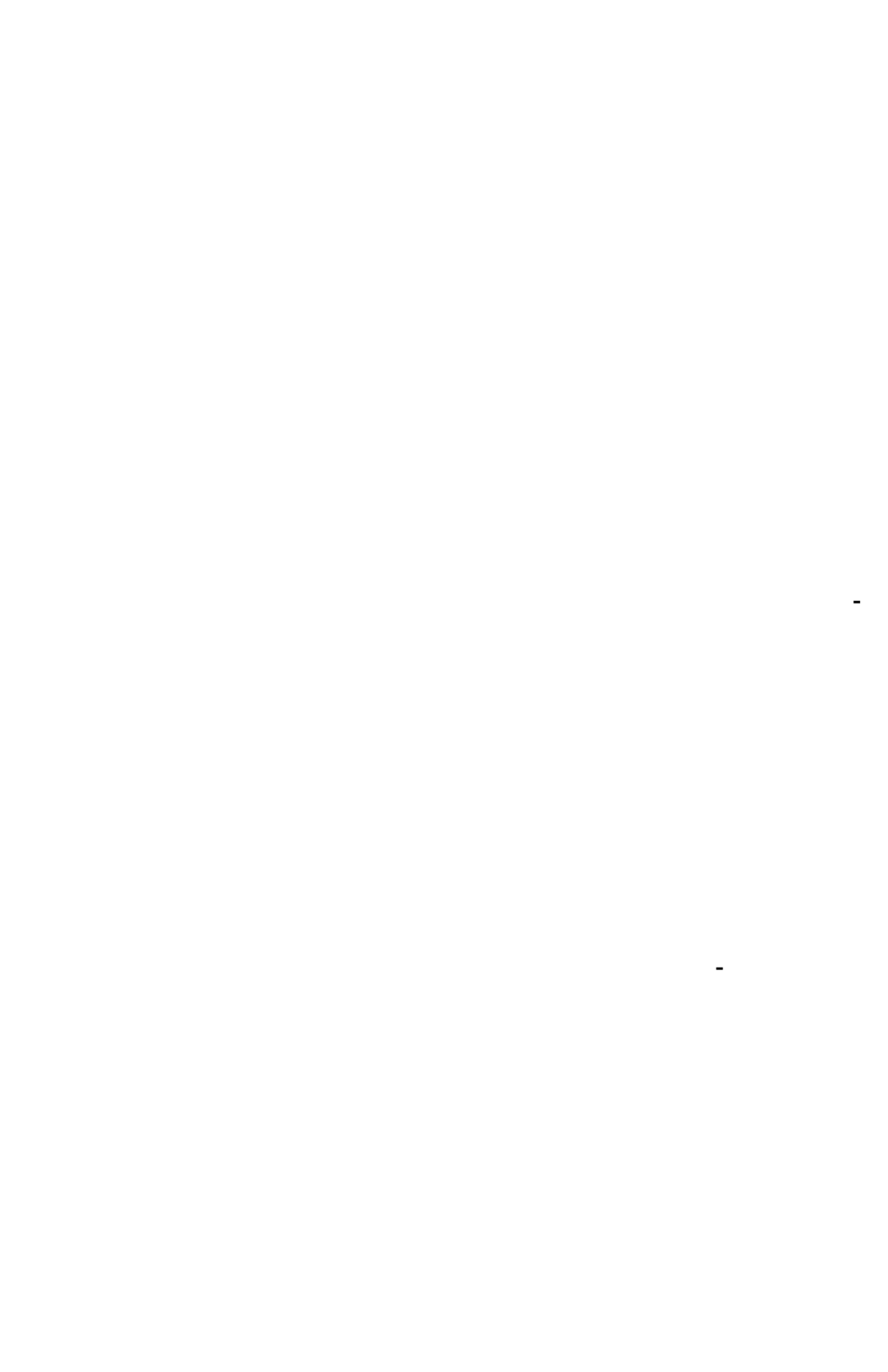
City

*Babylon
Nebuchadrezzar
The Age of Empires,
Nebuchadrezzar*

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Tiffany G. Camusci

Food and Drink



American Cookery

*American Cookery,
Food and Drink*

Appetite City,

*American Cookery,
African American Foodways,
Plantation Household,*

Benjamin Patis

Times

The

Daniel J. Kersten

On December 23, 1971, a crowd gathered in the State Dining Room of the White House to watch Republican President Richard Nixon sign the National Cancer Act of 1971. Addressing an assembly of journalists, congressmen, scientists, and activists, a seemingly years ahead that we may look back on this day and this action being the most significant action taken during this

of the Congress, with the cooperation of many of the people in this room, we have set up a procedure for the purpose of making proceedings was quite informal, even comedic at times. Just before signing the bill, President joked that the pens he was

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Kennedy (D-MA), the Director of the National Cancer Institute Dr. Carl Baker, and bassman and philanthropist Benno Schmidt posed and smiled for a photograph.

This occasion might give the impression that the legislative process behind the National Cancer Act of 1971 was

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News &

easy, an almost pleasant experience. However, there is much more to the story of the 1971 National Cancer Act. In the first section of this paper, I shall discuss the early stages of the bill.

Furthermore, cancer received more coverage than any other chronic health issue, even ~~more~~ heart disease, which was (and still is) the leading cause of death in the ~~United States~~ ~~Y~~ ~~et~~ ~~al~~ ~~o~~ ~~r~~ ~~s~~

as President Nixon suggested while signing the bill into law.

The initiative to increase cancer research funding reached Congressional attention not from a massive national outcry, but rather from a group of committed philanthropists and scientists. At the center of the push was a wealthy widower from Manhattan, Mary Lasker. Lasker, whose ~~husband~~ ~~husband~~, Albert, was a widely known advertising executive, had been an influential figure in cancer policies in the United States. She served as an honorary member of the American Cancer Society board and her nonprofit organization, the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation, actively promoted the work of biomedical research. ~~Lasker~~ ~~was~~ ~~not~~ ~~alone~~ ~~in~~ ~~her~~ ~~efforts~~ ~~having~~ ~~a~~ ~~large~~ ~~following~~ ~~consisting~~ ~~of~~ ~~other~~ ~~philanthropists~~ ~~and~~ ~~cancer~~ ~~researchers~~, including Benno Schmiedel and Dr. Carl Baker. This group had a variety of nicknames:

to name a few. Officially they were known as the Citizens Committee for the Conquest of Cancer, established in 1969. Lasker and her team accrued support for ~~the~~ ~~initiative~~ in two

attention towards cancer research. Second, they were able to directly influence higher level government officials and politicians, especially in the Senate. Lasker ~~was~~ ~~in~~ ~~particular~~ quite savvy in networking, a point to which I will return.

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76.

⁵ Rettig, *Cancer Crusade*, 20.

⁶ Rettig, 18.

⁷ Rettig, 79.

The Citizens Committee for the Conquest of Cancer embraced advertising as a key method for bringing their cause to

successes

from the mind of Luke Quinn, a former colonel in the United States Air Force, health and medical research lobbyist, and the

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The advertising strategy was simple: be highly visible, relevant, and have a clear message that people could easily support.

On December 9, 1969, the organization released a full page advertisement in both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. The same ad also ran in the *New York Times* eight days later.

day on military matters than each [Cancer] is a war in which we lost 21 times more lives last year

perspective, a better way to allocate our money to save hundreds of thousands of lives each year. America

a coupon, which readers could cut out and mail to the White House for cancer research needs more funds. Please provide them in your 1971 budget. Please.⁹

The Citizens Committee, too, did not solely rely on advertising to encourage greater support of the public. The Citizens Committee and its allies used the news media to their demands in the public eye often via news coverage in which journalists and researchers alike decried the lack of funding. One

⁸ Rettig, 789.

⁹

New York Times, December 9, 1969, 61.

received large media exposure. By getting the attention of the media, whether by advertising, public events, or other forms of print, the Committee was successful in keeping its fight in the -beatin 14

The Citizens Committee also used direct connections to politicians in Washington, D.C. to push their agenda. Mary Lasker had very close friendships with former Presidents Harry Truman and Lyndon Johnson. Johnson even issued Lasker the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1969 for her devotion to supporting medical research, making her one of the first female recipients of this respected prize. Lasker and her associates including Florence Mahoney, Dr. Sidney Farber, and Benno Schmidt, had connections both in the White House and in Congress, which Lasker called upon personally to aid her cause. Lasker had connections with two key members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, Senators Ted Kennedy and Ralph Yarborough, a Texas Democrat and the chairman of the Senate Committee. It was Yarborough who assembled the Panel of Consultants, a group of cancer scientists and activists which advised the Senate on how to proceed in drafting S. 34 (The Conquest of Cancer Act) and, ultimately, the 1971 National Cancer Act. Yarborough personally invited Lasker to the Panel and then sent Lasker a note commending the activist for her

¹⁶Lasker also had the support of other Senators such as S. 34 Cosponsor and senior Republican on the Senate Committee Jacob J. Avants (R-retiring Lister Hill (AL)), former chairman of the Senate Committee. Hill and Lasker had a friendship that spanned the front of Florence Nightingale, Clara Barton, Madame Curie, and Helen Tussig in [her] wonderful contributions to the health

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Lasker also had correspondence with Melvin Laird, an important connection which Lasker could use to push her ideas into the White House. Or

approval of this conquering cancer a part of his signing
¹⁸ Eight days later, in his State of the Union address, President Nixon declared he would boost cancer research spending by \$100 million and would seek more funding

the same kind of concentrated effort that split the atom and too

¹⁶Letter from Senator Ralph Yarborough to Mary Lasker, June 2, 1970, Box 112. TLBBJZ, Mary Lasker Papers. Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, NY, <https://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/ps/access/TLBBJZ.pdf>, assessed May 5, 2016.

¹⁷Letter from Senator Lister Hill to Mary Lasker, June, 16, 1970, Box 249, TLBBFH, Mary Lasker Papers, <https://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/ps/access/TLBBFH.pdf>, assessed May 5, 2016.

¹⁸Letter from Mary Lasker to Secretary Melvin Laird, January 14, 1971, Box 111, TLBBKL, Mary Lasker Papers, <https://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/ps/access/TLBBKL.pdf>, assessed May 5, 2016.

man to the moon should be turned toward conquering this dread

this committee was the one with which Lasker and her colleagues had the most connections. The former chair of the committee

as close to Lasker as well. Senator Yarborough, who replaced Hill as the committee chair in 1969, was initially skeptical of Lasker as she and Mike Gorman, a Washington, D.C. lobbyist for the American Cancer Society and a close friend of Lasker initially for

However, Yarborough would soon develop a deep respect for

Public Welfare Committee towards greater state funding of medical services and emphasizing the need for more-preventative based care, Javits was quite proud of his efforts towards medical research.²⁶

Kennedy had a history of addressing issues of healthcare as well. His oldest sister, Rosemary, was mentally disabled and he witnessed the harrowing effects of her lobotomy in his youth, frequently citing it as the reason for his dedication to addressing issues of health. However he, much like Javits, focused mostly on providing greater access to care, especially preventative care. When Yarborough lost reelection in 1970, Kennedy, along with Javits, was pressured by the cosponsor Senator to champion the cause of defeating cancer. Kennedy, initially skeptical about the importance of the initiative, asked Benno Schmidt if the country could afford such expenditures. Schmidt answered

²⁹ After that, Kennedy was out on the front line alongside Lasker, Schmidt, and the others.

Representative Rogers, too, had experience with health related legislation. He had been, for many years, the second ranking member of the subcommittee of public health of the House Committee on Interstate and Commerce. Rogers was known in the healthcare legislative field for his investigation of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) in 1966 for its organization of health activities. However, in terms of cancer research, Rogers was not well known. In fact, the proponents of the cancer bill underestimated how important Rogers would be in the passing of

²⁶ Javits, 292.

²⁷ Clymer, *Edward M. Kennedy*, 10.

²⁸ Clymer, 173.

²⁹ Clymer, 173.

the bill. When Rogers finally became the chairman of the subcommittee in 1971, he emerged as their major³⁹ adversary.

Due to his experience with the HEW investigation,
S. 1828

Kennedy-Javits Bill but another, more moderate bill heavily influenced by President Nixon. For Rogers, he believed that the current framework, keeping the NCI inside of the NIH, was adequate enough to achieve the goal of curing cancer. Additionally, Rogers did not want to be controlled by a health lobby and refused to be identified

astonishingly close to one million voters quickly and publicly sided with the Laskerites, after which Ann Landers boldly

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Yet, President Nixon had another reason to join Lasker and her compatriots in their fight. Nixon and his administration existed, essentially, in a state of constant paranoia. As Robert
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enemies, real and imagined: Democrats, Congress, the

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Senator Kennedy and not the Administration who receives credit

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Senator Peter Dominick (R), guided by President

the NIH. What was critical was not the intricate details of the bill

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after the submission of this new bill, attention all but entirely shifted to Nixon, applauding him for his action, and left Kennedy

cancer bill. When S. 1828 passed in the Senate the headline read

Senator Kennedy was mentioned only twice in the article and the

the Nixon bill move forward instead of the bill. ⁴⁵ *New*

York Times report of the signing of the bill, released December 24, 1971, did not mention Kennedy at all except in a photograph

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rtually all credit

singular impact of this one bill on the political careers of each of the aforementioned politicians is essentially impossible. There are too many confounding factors which may influence public opinion of politicians. For instance, during this time President Nixon was removing troops from the incredibly unpopular Vietnam War. According to polling results compiled by the Roper Center for

the Conquest of Cancer, managed to bring cancer to the national

done via the press, advertising, public events, and other press coverage and the manipulation of personal contacts in the federal government. Secondly, the 1971 National Cancer Act demonstrates the power of the personal and career motives in the making of policy decisions. Finally, the National Cancer Act of 1971 gave nearly \$1.6 billion to search for a cure to cancer. Furthermore, the bill brought greater public attention to the

hoped that cancer would be cured. Although there have been major advances in the treatment of cancer in the decades since the

National Cancer Act of 1971 is a striking example of how money, publicity, and politics intersect at the national level to produce legislation.

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Figure 1 Mary Lasker at the National Press Club Gorman Testimonial Dinner with Mike Gorman (left), and Senator Lister Hill (middle) in 1972.

Photograph. (Bethesda, M.D.: U.S. National Library of Medicine, January 25, 1972),

<https://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/ps/retrieve/ResourceMetadata/C6B5F>
S.

Figure 2 The full page advertisement that the Citizens Committee ran in the December 9, 1969 *New York Times* from the U.S. Library of *New York Times*,
December 9, 1969, U.S. Library of Medicine,
<https://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/ps/retrieve/ResourceMetadata/TLBBBY>.

Ching Long Leon Lam

Hard Choices
Power and Principle

Hard Choices
Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980

Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980

Keeping Faith

Power and Principle
Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980

Keeping Faith
Foreign Relations of the United States



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