

Chapter 4

COLD WAR, WESTERNS AND HOPE: CIVIL WAR FILMS 1946-55

*All races and religions, that's America to me.*¹

The success of *Gone with the Wind* (GWTW) and its popularity throughout World War II would have suggested to Hollywood that similar films would be equally successful in the post-war period. America, however, rejected the aristocratic planter films. It had become a more cohesive society as the requirements of total war broke down race, class and gender barriers. The spirit of the New Deal and its liberal agenda continued to influence government departments and government supported organisations.

The experience of African Americans too had given them encouragement and confidence to think that racial discrimination could be ended. However the peace did not produce the breakthroughs in race relations that the war had promised. Truman appeared sympathetic but other, stronger forces were at work. The Republicans made gains and the Democratic Party split over the election platform of 1948. Overshadowing all was the Cold War spiral of hysteria that brought progressive measures to a halt. Any criticism of America became an attack on American values and way of life.

Hollywood, under investigation by the House Un-American Committee (HUAC),² embraced anti-communism and stopped producing liberal 'message' pictures or any that might be construed as un-American. Hollywood moved the Civil War to the west – a location that Hollywood, from its earliest films, had envisaged as being white. Without plantations there was no need for servants, without African Americans the post-Civil War quarrels were personal and became a quarrel between white Americans, who would come together in the face of a common enemy.

African American progress towards inclusion and civil rights, which had flourished during the war, rapidly declined - especially in the South.³ Nevertheless the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) continued to challenge educational segregation and inequality in the courts. This finally resulted in the *Brown* judgment of

1954, which opened up the issues of race relations and civil rights across America and gave African Americans renewed hope.

World War II: the watershed

American historians see World War II as a watershed in their history.⁴ During those years America re-dedicated itself to democracy as it fought a racist, totalitarian regime in Europe and an imperial regime in Asia. It was a turning point in race relations, providing a momentum for change; a time when national and African American goals intersected. While African Americans prospered in the economic upsurge of the war, as many moved from the south to work in the war industries, their leaders pressed hard for equality. The threatened March on Washington produced the Fair Employment Practices Committee (1941). There were appointments to senior administrative posts in the government, recognition in the armed services through the training of officers and pilots and the production of *The Negro Soldier* (1944) which was eventually shown to all recruits.⁵ The NAACP continued to win discrimination battles in the courts and increased its membership tenfold by 1945, while the 'Double V' campaign – victory over racism abroad and inequality at home - summarised African Americans' hopes for the future.

As in World War I, Hollywood was keen to support the war effort. This was not just an altruistic show of patriotism but a defensive tactic against mounting federal anti-trust suits and congressional hearings.⁶ However, these were put into abeyance on condition that Hollywood co-operated with government control of wartime propaganda through the Office of Wartime Information (OWI).⁷ The OWI's main concern was whether a film would assist the war effort. Its outlook was 'mild social democratic and liberal' and this clashed with Hollywood's own Production Code, which was designed to exclude specific material.⁸ The NAACP also put pressure on Hollywood not only to produce more integrated movies but also to 'amend their portrayals of blacks in movies.' This began to happen in the multi-ethnic 'platoon' movies, although only one African American was generally included.⁹ With an increasing audience, more people were experiencing 'integrated' movies on a regular basis and this was seen as a possible harbinger of improved race relations.¹⁰

Hollywood almost abandoned Civil War movies during World War II as they showed a divided country and a demeaning representation of the African Americans upon whom the government relied to assist the war effort. Only three films were produced but each had a theme relating to the war. *The Ox Bow Incident* (1943) was a 'dark and sombre study of mob violence and social injustice' in which a former Confederate officer, in full uniform, despite it being 1880, forces a posse to lynch three innocent men.¹¹ The film was based on an anti-Nazi book by Walter Van Tilburg Clark of 1938 and was a warning against fascism, although the uniform, the lynching and the mob rule pointed a finger at the South. What was significant, however, was that the voice of humanity and reason was expressed through an African American preacher. *Tennessee Johnson* (1943) created considerable opposition during its production as it attempted to whitewash Johnson's Reconstruction record and to smear the character of the Radical Republican Thaddeus Stevens. Although the final script was softened the 'acceptable' compromise 'to promote national unity' meant the exclusion of African Americans.¹² The film was also a warning about the threat of too much executive power. The third film, *Raiders of Ghost City* (1944), was a spy serial with a Prussian gang masquerading as Confederates.

As the war came to its close there were mixed messages for America. In Hollywood, the Motion Picture Alliance¹³ continually attacked the NAACP as being linked to 'reds' and *Variety* warned scriptwriters against infiltrating pink and red propaganda.¹⁴ The armed forces continued to be segregated and restrictions and discrimination resulted in inter-racial conflict and resentment. Racial tension increased in the north as the migrating African Americans competed for jobs and housing, which resulted in riots, while whites organised their neighbourhoods against integration. Domestic political considerations forced Roosevelt into a more cautious approach to improve race relations as Republican gains made him increasingly reliant on southern Democrats. Any agitation for equality was considered a distraction from the war effort. He did nothing to prevent southern states from ignoring the Fair Employment Practices Committee and dropped the liberal Henry Wallace as vice-presidential candidate for the 1944 election.¹⁵

Nevertheless the war had produced social change. There were more women and African Americans employed in industry and around one third of African Americans now lived outside the South. African American experience, protest and successes had given them renewed confidence in pushing for equality and civil rights. The New Deal had survived

the assault of the Republicans and liberal New Dealers were still in Washington. Popular culture, in the shape of Hollywood, was taking a more integrated and less racist line. The question remained, how would white America respond when the over-riding need for national unity was no longer a restraining influence. And, more specifically would Hollywood resume the Civil War genre, and, if so would it follow on from the success of *GWTW*?

Hollywood had ended its 1930s cycle of Civil War films with an assault on fanaticism in *The Santa Fe Trail* (1940) and *Dark Command* (1940), with the patriotism of *They Died with their Boots On* (1941) and with the gritty determination of Scarlett O'Hara to rise above adversity - and America achieved all three by 1945. When Hollywood returned to the Civil War it was in many respects a different Civil War although the main themes – reconciliation, national identity and romance – continued. America, too, had changed. The war had transformed the economy and America had emerged as the dominant power in the world. It also had a new enemy – its former ally the Soviet Union - which stood for everything America disliked : collectivism in its social and economic arrangements, centralised power, atheism and an absence of free speech and civil liberties. It also challenged America's power and influence world-wide, offering to the anti-colonial nationalist movements and to Western Europe an alternative to capitalism.¹⁶

Hollywood and the Cold War

The Cold War had a fundamental influence on America. Anti-communism had been an issue since the Russian revolution of 1917. It now took on the mantle of an internal witch-hunt with fears that the federal administration and many other organisations harboured communists and fellow travellers.¹⁷ Business leaders feared that unions would be taken over by communists and all strikes were portrayed as being communist inspired. Many Republicans fought the 1946 elections on the basis that the Democrats were soft on communism and their success triggered further anti-communist measures.¹⁸ The fear of communist subversion was stoked up by allegations of spy rings, Russia's explosion of the atomic bomb, the Berlin Blockade, the trial of Alger Hiss, the 'loss' of China, the trial of the Rosenbergs and the invasion of South Korea. By the time that Senator Joseph McCarthy produced his 'list' of 205 names in 1950, anti-communism had a stranglehold on America.¹⁹ Communists were purged from all organisations. Civil rights activists were

charged with disloyalty and silenced. Any sign of dissent was considered to be un-American and was labelled 'communist.' To those on the Right, anti-communism was far more important than civil rights, so to alter the status quo would be to capitulate to the Communists. Any proposed civil rights legislation would therefore not succeed.²⁰

Amidst the growing hysteria Hollywood became the subject of the first investigation by the HUAC in 1947. Hollywood quickly capitulated and in November 1947 the Motion Picture Producers Association issued its Waldorf-Astoria statement pledging not to employ communists or anyone advocating the overthrow of the government. It then sought to re-establish its patriotic credentials by establishing a blacklist, firing hundreds of employees and producing dozens of anti-communist movies – most of which made a loss.²¹

Yet even before HUAC investigated Hollywood, it had already begun to establish its Cold War credentials. In *The Fabulous Texan* (1947), Jim McWade, a former Confederate officer, returns home to find his state over-ridden by carpetbaggers and a despotic state police, who are abusing the fundamental freedoms of the press and of assembly. To make the allusion to the Soviet Union even clearer McWade is told that, '(t)he land of your birth is becoming a Siberia.' The film was dedicated to the 'war weary and liberty loving people of Texas' who had fought for freedom against a corrupt government - similar to that threatening America.²² The implication was clear to the ex-servicemen who were returning home: peace had brought a different kind of fear – one that was close to home, perhaps living next door. The values of the western, American values, had to be defended. The fact that Texas had fought for the South and for the continual enslavement of four million African Americans was overlooked in promoting the Cold War message.

Apart from the HUAC investigations, Hollywood, in the late 1940s, was under increasing pressure from various directions. The federal government had re-opened the anti-trust 'Paramount' suit, which ended in the 'divorcement' judgement of 1948;²³ audiences were declining; income from overseas markets was reducing; there were more independent companies, directors and film stars; and labour costs were increasing.²⁴ At this point Hollywood returned to the Civil War genre. It was not, however, a return to the plantation. That setting had lost its appeal. In 1946 Disney released *Song of the South*, which, while set in the post-Civil War period, was full of Old South nostalgia and attracted much criticism.²⁵ The OWI had been abolished in 1945 but its legacy of change lived on.

Hollywood could no longer show the 'happy darkey' of the Old South but neither could it show the opposite. In the context of the Cold War, films set on a plantation demonstrated to the world that America still celebrated its aristocratic and racist past whilst the world was looking forward towards a free and classless society.

The plantation represented a static, class-led society, therefore, by removing the plantation, America demonstrated that it had democratised the Civil War. Now the focus was on towns-people and farmers: all the characters were of the same social standing. Consensus was America's response to the Cold War. America was a classless society of freedom, opportunity and enterprise as opposed to the authoritarian, collectivist classless society of the Soviet Union. The west therefore was not only the Garden of Eden it was the future where democracy and free enterprise went hand in hand in building a new future after a terrible war – just as America was doing after World War II. The free enterprise system, as exemplified by Tom Dunson in *Red River* (1948), reflected America's imperialism of the past and its present day power. Dunson claimed that the Mexican owner of the land he had appropriated, lived a long way away and had effectively stolen the land from the Native Americans – so he had as much right to it as anyone. This was how America was built through strong men claiming and defending what they had won, regardless of the civil and legal rights of others, as the Native Americans and the African Americans had experienced.

There was a further reason to abandon the plantation - the legacy of *GWTW* hung over the genre. It would take a strong story to interest Hollywood. Such a book was *Raintree County* whose film rights were bought by Loews Incorporated in 1947 even before its publication in 1948.²⁶ However it would be another ten years before it would come to the screen. But there was another book which made it to the screen in 1948 – *Tap Roots* by James Street. Published in 1942, and based on a true incident, it tells the story of the Dabney family and their neighbours who lived in a Mississippi valley and tried to stay neutral during the Civil War. The book examined in some detail the pros and cons of slavery and secession, the passions on both sides as war approached and then the final fight to retain independence with the 'legally free people of colour [who] don't like to be called Negroes' fighting alongside them.²⁷ The novel can be considered an answer to the pro-South, pro-slavery view of *GWTW* and also to the fascist views of racial superiority being fought against in Europe.²⁸ When the film was released Hollywood was attempting to

recover from the HUAC investigations and the Dabneys' fight against the Confederacy could be read as Hollywood's fight against HUAC. Hollywood took its usual approach and the Dabney's prevailed.²⁹ The film, however, lost much of what it might have contributed to the civil rights debate as the romantic element dominated in the manner of *GWTW*.

The brief period, 1945-49, between the end of World War II and the rabid anti-communism of the Cold War saw a continuation of the liberal agenda. Hollywood produced a number of short anti-racist films such as *The American Creed* (1947). Frank Sinatra sang 'All races and religions, that's America to me' in *The House I Live In* (1946). Liberal directors, who had trained in the politically charged 1930s, such as Carl Foreman and Stanley Kramer, moved into mainstream production whilst the decade ended with a number of 'message' films on the themes of anti-Semitism - *Crossfire* (1947) and *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947) and racism - *Home of the Brave*, *Lost Boundaries* and *Pinky* (all 1949) and *No Way Out* (1950).

There were other indications of a more inclusive and tolerant society - especially in popular culture. Professional sport, show business and the theatre became more integrated. Plays and novels too examined racism whilst academics undermined the cornerstones of racial superiority. There was hope too on the political front. Truman promised to continue the election pledges of 1944 to provide better housing, education and health care and an 'economic bill of rights.' In 1946 he appointed a Committee on Civil Rights and supported its wide-sweeping civil rights conclusions. His election programme of 1948 - the 'Fair Deal' - was a promise to extend the New Deal and civil rights legislation. In June, he ordered the desegregation of the army by Executive Order 9981 and in the November election defeated the 'Dixiecrat' challenge.³⁰ The Justice Department began assisting civil rights suits through the courts in *amicus curiae* briefs from 1948, while in California the Supreme Court overturned the state's anti-miscegenation statute.³¹

This liberal attitude found expression in Civil War films. *The Romance of Rosy Ridge* (1947)³² addressed racial equality with a plea for tolerance and civil rights.³³ Just after the Civil War Henry Carson wanders into a divided rural Missouri community. He had 'signed up for the Union army....till we won and there was peace, and there was a good free place for everyone to live in. We fought because we believed it didn't make any difference what colour a man's skin was....that's what I signed up for and that's what I'm still fighting

for.’ There was one problem with this plea for racial tolerance – there was no African American in the film, as *The New Yorker* scathingly pointed out.³⁴ Other reviewers picked up the theme of tolerance and understanding although the *Los Angeles Times* pointed to ‘a conscious evasion of bigger issues.’ The *Hollywood Independent*³⁵ praised it as a ‘sensitive, warm and uplifting story of America’s growth during a period of internal chaos’ – a comment that had a large degree of resemblance to the America of 1947 with strikes, fears of communist subversion, inter-racial violence and demands for racial equality. However, at least the words were said. At the end, Henry unmasks the night riders, who are all Southern sympathisers. They used the same tactics as the Ku Klux Klan in burning the barns and houses of their fellow Southerner sympathisers to force them to leave in order that they could buy their land. Hollywood had hardened up the book’s image by adding in Henry’s speech for tolerance and excluding Northern sympathisers from the night riders. The book had included one reference to a ‘nigger’ but that was 1937 when reconciliation and Southern sympathies were the norm.³⁶ The world had moved on.

Another film, *Stars in My Crown* (1949),³⁷ also carried a plea for tolerance and understanding in the face of ‘racial bigotry.’ Again greedy townspeople, using the ‘cloak of the Ku Klux Klan,’ attempted to drive out an elderly, free, African American from his land, which he refuses to sell to the local mine owner.³⁸ He is saved from being lynched by a former Confederate Christian minister who then goes on to prove the value of faith to a young, atheist doctor. Hollywood changed the period of the film from the original 1900s of the book to just after the Civil War making the analogy with the present day more forceful. This film carries the most obvious Cold War message. If there are Americans who have racist tendencies they can be shamed into abandoning them. American values, American beliefs will prevail and those beliefs and values are articulated through Christianity and firmly located in the family. What more could Hollywood do to set out an alternative to the godless, collectivist Soviet Union? The film was very well received and given awards by the Freedom Foundation and religious organisations.³⁹

In the Cold War, the ideological battle was just as, if not more, important than images of conflict and violence. America had to demonstrate the superiority of its values - freedom, democracy, individualism, law and order, free enterprise, the family and religion – to the world and Hollywood was its most important medium. *Little Women* (1949), for example, is a family centred story in which the mother does good works rather than going out to earn

a living. The daughters grow up to marry with only Jo leaving home to earn her living as a governess. The accent on the family could be contrasted to the Soviet Union where communal facilities for child-care allowed women to continue to work. In America the cultural assumptions were that women should be at home bringing up the children and being good housekeepers and companions to the male breadwinner.⁴⁰ The mother therefore is central to the family. She is like Lincoln caring for the nation in time of great stress and looking after those less fortunate.

Mrs March, in *Little Women*, is the wife of a preacher and Christianity has a high profile in Civil War films again demonstrating the contrast with the godlessness of communism. It can be seen in *Count Three and Pray* (1955) where a former hell-raiser turned parson, who fought for the North, returns to his southern town and eventually wins over the townspeople to reconciliation through his determination and Christianity. In *The Red Badge of Courage* (1951) Henry is guided back to his regiment and away from his cowardice by a jolly Christian soldier.⁴¹ In *Tap Roots* the local minister fully supports the Dabney's and their anti-slavery attitude.⁴² At the end of *Stars in My Crown* those people who had previously rejected religion join the congregation and sing the title song while at the end of *The Sun Shines Bright* (1953) a service for a dead woman becomes the catalyst for reconciliation.

The theme of reconciliation had been part of Civil War films from the beginning. With the advent of the Cold War it took on additional significance: the strength of the country to resist and protect itself relied upon the unity of the people. The reconciliation and unity achieved following the Civil War was the foundation for the future. The audience looking at the Civil War in the 1950s knew that the country - or rather the larger white part of the country - was united against the forces of subversion and revolution at home and abroad. The minority 'black' part of the country, which had been demanding change in the racial arrangements, were part of that subversion as their organisations were tainted with communism and were therefore considered to be un-American. Their non-existence in Civil War films, in the great and defining moment of American history, was therefore part of American history.

Reconciliation is closely allied to that of patriotism. Patriotism had grown in the 1890s but become racialised as white supremacy was accepted as the natural order.⁴³ Civil War films

are, at heart, patriotic – but patriotism has to be seen in context. When America was at war patriotism became propaganda and needed to be demonstrated throughout the film. Patriotism in Civil War films came at the end through reconciliation and unity preceded by a narrative of conflict and disunity. When America was not at war conflict leading to unity was acceptable, as the audience knew the outcome. Most Civil War films showed a softened version of the past, which promoted patriotism regardless of the scenes of conflict, as all the participants were Americans.⁴⁴ Very few films are centred on the war and the years of Reconstruction in the Old South. The dead and wounded are rarely talked about or appear. Instead Hollywood provided small episodes of conflict, either at the end of the war or between veterans in the post-Civil War period generally located in the West. One film however stands out in its approach to the war and in its representation of patriotism – John Houston's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1951).

The Red Badge of Courage is about Henry, a new young recruit, who runs away from his first skirmish but returns after a series of encounters with other soldiers, fired up with guilt that he has deserted his comrades in their hour of need. He realises that there are more important things than saving his own life – his comrades and his country. In the battle the following day Henry shows reckless courage. When the Union flag-bearer falls, Henry picks up the flag and leads the charge. The flag becomes the symbol of Henry's redemption, his courage and his patriotism. The Confederates surrender and Henry captures their flag. After the engagement the Union and Confederate troops talk together finding out where they have come from, finding out about America - just as the GIs did in World War II. 'I never spoke to nobody from Ohio before,' says a Rebel soldier, 'I never spoke to nobody from Tennessee' replies a Union soldier. 'The story,' says one reviewer, 'is about a GI with the clock rolled back a hundred years.' The book is a definition of an American, says another. However Vic Hentschy wondered why 'in these troubled times Houston would film a pic [sic] that shows cowardice, fear, raw emotion and terrors of war – even if it is the Civil War.....It is not easy to sit and watch a young American boy as a coward: then as a savage killer of his own countrymen.'⁴⁵ The 'troubled times' referred to the threat of communism at home and abroad and the mounting American casualties in the Korean War. Nevertheless, the ending of the film is reconciliatory and patriotic. Henry and his friend Tom march off with the regiment carrying the Union and Confederate flags side by side echoing the two flags side by side at the semi-centennial celebrations at

Gettysburg. 'You know,' says Henry, 'it's a mighty pretty country round here.'

Reconciliation and patriotism hand in hand.

America's racial arrangements proved a fertile propaganda target for the Soviet Union, in its Cold War battle with America. It continually raised inter-racial incidents at the United Nations as examples of America's hypocrisy. These incidents also came under intense scrutiny by the world's press.⁴⁶ The NAACP and African American leaders tried to exploit this situation both by encouraging external criticism and using international organisations to express their disapproval and by emphasising their own patriotic and anti-communist credentials. As A. Philip Randolph, the African American civil rights' leader, told a congressional committee in 1948, 'racial segregation is the greatest single propaganda and political weapon in the hands of Russia and international communism today.'⁴⁷

Whilst the State Department was well aware of America's racialised image abroad the gathering strength of anti-communism at home and Republican control of Congress prevented any civil rights legislation. Returning African American veterans soon learned that the South had not changed. Attempts at voter registration campaigns, although initially successful, were met with intimidation and murder. Segregationists used the anti-communist hysteria to argue that any attempt to change Jim Crow would not only undermine the fabric of American society but was a communist plot.⁴⁸ The attempt by the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which had a good record in supporting civil rights, to unionise the workforce in the South met with the same reaction - as it found out when it launched 'Operation Dixie.'⁴⁹ Truman trod a pragmatic path, promising much but unable to deliver, except by Executive Order.

Truman led the anti-communist crusade despite vetoing the Taft-Hartley and McCarran Acts.⁵⁰ He introduced the federal employee loyalty oath, prosecuted and jailed the leaders of the Communist Party, used tough rhetoric to scare the American people and gave financial help to pro-US governments facing communist subversion – the Truman Doctrine.⁵¹ This was posed in ideological and moral terms – a 'free' society versus a tyrannical one. Alongside the anti-communist legislation and the various high profile congressional inquiries, all citizens were encouraged to report anyone whom they felt was a communist or showed, or had shown, pro-communist sympathies. In 1949 fifteen states passed anti-subversion laws.⁵² By the early 1950s the 'Red Scare' had stifled dissent and

led to a purge of all the radical elements in the unions and civil rights organisations. Conditions in America resembled not so much the 'free' society as the tyrannical one that Truman had castigated. It was with this background that Hollywood's production of Civil War films, and especially Civil War westerns, increased.

The Civil War western

The western had featured in Civil War films since 1937. However the 'west' of the western was a Hollywood creation with myths and traditions of its own. It was based on the frontier theory of Frederick Jackson Turner who saw the frontier as 'free land' and the 'foundation of America's democratic institutions.'⁵³ The independent westerner became the true American with courage, skill, authority and an understanding of the country, a superior individual able to survive and overcome the savage wilderness.⁵⁴ In the words of Colonel Dodge in *Dodge City* (1938), 'What the west stands for is honesty, courage, morality, culture.' In the west there are no shades of grey: it is good against evil, the wilderness against civilisation, the small man against big business. The western unrolled America's Manifest Destiny.⁵⁵ The white man had a natural right to the west and its resources but that right had to be gained through hard work. This was America's way to greatness. Progress was good and irreversible. The west created a national identity and the westerns demonstrated America's cherished core values in their purest form – democracy, equality, individualism and progress.⁵⁶

The revival of the western – it too had declined during the war – fitted the age.⁵⁷ America had to defend and promote its free enterprise values. With Hollywood dominant across the world, outside the Communist bloc, the movie industry was in a central position to do this and Washington worked closely with Hollywood to promote America's ideology overseas. This also helped Hollywood's financial position.⁵⁸ It therefore combined a number of qualities that were attractive to Hollywood. The western was a popular genre with comparatively low production costs. The modest profit of westerns could keep the studios running. Their plots were easily understood, with the 'good versus evil' theme and a Hollywood romance. There was no difficulty in inserting a Cold War message into the story, which would please Washington and possibly help to soften its anti-trust stance and head off further attacks. Giving the western a Civil War setting had the advantage of

combining two great myths, which could feed off each other and give the films a much wider dramatic scope.

Hollywood's return to the Civil War film had initially been tentative – one film only, the comedy *Uncivil Warbirds*, in 1946, and two in 1947. Hollywood needed to take stock after the response to *Song of the South* and the start of the Cold War and was probably uncertain how to approach a doubly – sectionally and especially racially – divisive subject following the more liberal line taken during World War II. However, by moving the Civil War to the West, Hollywood resolved its dilemmas. Hollywood's western tradition did not feature African Americans so there was no need to write them in. This resolved another potential area of concern – that of miscegenation – as it was banned by the Production Code,⁵⁹ while relocating it in time (post-Civil War), and in location (west of the Mississippi), removed the need to consider the causes of the war with only the odd remark about slavery and states' rights. The location of the audience was also changing with the decline of the theatres and the upsurge in drive-ins – mainly in the south.⁶⁰ As *Variety* said of *Five Guns West* (1954), it is a 'fair bill filler for the outdoor market.'⁶¹

The west was born out of the Civil War. It was, like *The Birth of a Nation*, a rebirth of America. The western left the trauma of the eastern battlefields behind for a very different landscape and very different challenges. Here the struggle was against untamed nature and the Native Americans who fought the forces of civilisation. It allowed the embittered contestants to carry on their fight as they developed the future America. At the same time, under threat of attack by the alien force – the hostile 'Indians' - the films reasserted the primacy of white American unity and reconciliation as former enemies united against a common enemy in films such as *Rocky Mountain* (1950), *Two Flags West* (1950), *The Outriders* (1950), *Winchester 73* (1950), *The Last Outpost* (1951), *Escape from Fort Bravo* (1953), *The Siege at Red River* (1954) and *Apache Ambush* (1955). Here the two myths combined to defend American values and civilisation by demonising the Native Americans. They replaced the African American as the defining 'other' in a variation of Hollywood's white supremacy.⁶²

As anti-communism took a grip on Hollywood so Hollywood's historical vision of the South changed. The southerner not only as villain but also as the threat to a future united America emerged. A film that combined these changes, *Kansas Raiders* (1950), looked at

the insidious nature of communism. The main character is William Clarke Quantrill who led a guerrilla band on the Kansas/Missouri border.⁶³ The introduction to the film speaks of his band as 'the most savage and merciless' of all the 'tribes whose organised violence terrorised the country.' His standard is a black flag⁶⁴ and he wears a black hat with his Confederate uniform. Quantrill, in his mixture of evil and idealism, is the Hollywood clone of a Stalin or a Hitler. He keeps no prisoners. Those that are taken are given a summary 'show' trial and then shot – including women and babies. Union troops, even those that surrender, are killed. All his new recruits have to swear an oath 'never to betray a *comrade* (emphasis added)... or ever to reveal a single secret of this organisation or a single word of this oath.' The oath makes him distinctly un-American, as Americans have to swear an oath of allegiance to their country. The oath is taken at night, by firelight, giving similarities to the Nazi rallies, Ku Klux Klan meetings with burning crosses and the secrecy of a communist cell. But like most dictators he has charm and a vision of the future and his charisma is able to sweep away any doubts, to corrupt the young and innocent, as he does with Jesse James, with his dreams of victory.

There is a similar character to Quantrill in *Horizons West* (1952), Dan Hammond, who is just as corrupt but not quite as evil. Hammond, a Southerner from Texas, who had fought throughout the war, feels that all the 'dirt, mud, blood' of the war has been for nothing. He sees northern money pouring into the local economy and wants to benefit from it. He prospers and gains power through corrupting officials, judges and lawyers. He forces people from their land through intimidation, legal trickery, burning, rustling and finally murder. His aim is to 'build a western empire' outside of state, federal or democratic control. Eventually he goes too far. His adopted brother and father set out to kill him - echoing those early silent films where any act that could bring disgrace on a southern family had to be hidden or expunged. But it is the forces of law and order that finally hunt him down. Hammond's failed attempt to carve out a western empire from American territory, as well as his death, symbolically undermines the Lost Cause argument for secession. It also underlined America's democratic values. America would remain united and democratic and would fight to preserve those ideals. There was no going back.

The Cold War anti-dictator theme occurs regularly in the late 1940s/ early 1950s films. It is found in *The Fabulous Texan* where a quasi-dictator is gathering up land and power, as in *Horizons West*, although under the legal umbrella of a carpetbagger. In *Red River*

(1948), Tom Dunson's style of autocratic leadership is contrasted and successfully contested by Matthew Garth with his democratic and inclusive approach. Similarly in *The Man from Colorado* (1948), the former Union colonel, Owen Deveraux, becomes increasingly dictatorial, after being appointed the local judge and law enforcer, as he slips into a psychotic state. Adding a touch of madness to these figures places them alongside recent examples of dictatorships and reinforces the need to defend the democratic way of life.

While these characters were openly subverting the values and processes of a democratic society there were others who were doing so in a covert and treacherous way. In *Springfield Rifle* (1952) a highly placed Union officer is a Confederate agent and is undermining the Union cause. Civil War films about spies had been made from the earliest days but these were generally about overhearing information or finding written documents or messages and getting them to the appropriate army or general – the last of this type being the comedy spy film *A Southern Yankee* (1948). *Springfield Rifle* is different and the analogy with the trial of Alger Hiss and the accusations of Senator Joseph McCarthy about the government being full of Communists in high places would not have been lost on the audience. The film deals with America recognising that there has to be a counter intelligence organisation, which can use undercover spies to infiltrate the enemy's network – 'the only answer to their espionage is an espionage system of our own,' says Colonel Sharpe. The cabinet has to be convinced, agrees General Halleck, that this is a necessary modus operandi because 'they think spying is beneath the dignity and honour of the American army man.' A comment suggesting that America operates to such high standards that it is only forced into these 'underhand' practices by the activities of others - meaning the Soviet Union. At the end of the film the army major who successfully carried out the undercover operation is promoted to head a newly formed Department of Military Intelligence, acknowledging, no doubt, the recent establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency.⁶⁵

There is a similar narrative in *Rebel City* (1953) in which senior Union officers are smuggling arms to Copperheads⁶⁶ who are terrorising northern Kansas. The hero, who has gone to Junction City to find his father's killer, infiltrates the organisation and they are arrested. Another film, with a more 'classic' Cold War spy scenario, is *Five Guns West* (1955). Here, the head of the Southern Intelligence Bureau in California had 'gone over to

the enemy' with all his information and gold and a special group of Confederates is organised to recapture him in an undercover operation. However, this group of long-term prisoners has little interest in the task or the South, and are only out to get what they can. In this case the gold and their freedom.

America's alleged vulnerability to attack was addressed in *The Raid* (1954). The film was based on a true event in which a group of Confederates, composed mainly of prisoners who had escaped to Canada, raided the town of St. Albans in Vermont in 1864. The town was so far from the war that it had no defences and only a handful of soldiers were stationed there, recruiting for the army. The raiders infiltrate the town, burn it and escape across the border.⁶⁷ The Korean War had only just ended and, whilst Canada could not be said to represent North Korea, the film demonstrated that sudden attacks could occur at any time and anywhere and America had to be prepared. This was at the time when American fears of a nuclear attack by the Soviet Union were rising as both super powers were developing ever more powerful weapons of destruction in order to gain a strategic advantage.

A film that picked up the race between America and the Soviet Union to develop a 'super-weapon' was *The Siege at Red River* (1954). In this film the super-weapon is the Gatling Gun which, transferred to 1950s America, stands for a nuclear warhead. Undercover Confederates steal the gun from Union soldiers and make their escape in a red mail van. To make the Cold War connection even clearer the Confederate leader wears a red cravat. As it is being taken south one of the Confederates steals the gun and sells it to Native Americans. However, when they attack a Union cavalry fort, the rest of the Confederate force joins in the defence and recaptures the gun. The Civil War is between white Americans, the intervention of an alien force with superior weaponry cannot be tolerated. In times of crisis America had to unite to survive.

These Civil War westerns contained the same messages as the dozens of anti-communist films Hollywood produced during the early 1950s⁶⁸ but they were more indirect and therefore far less frightening.

Hollywood and civil rights

Patriotism became a white attribute only as the African Americans were marginalised into the background - despite their attempts to show their belief in the values and traditions of America. African Americans volunteered for all the major wars with hope that this would prove their loyalty and commitment to their country and in return they would be acknowledged as full and equal citizens.⁶⁹ However, most of white America could not accept that their racial theories and prejudices were wrong and it was left to the liberals and the communists to take up the political battle on their behalf. While comparatively few African Americans became communists, all those who were associated with civil rights organisations became tainted with the label. The anti-communist crusaders represented any demand for racial equality as being communist inspired. There was nothing that African American leaders like A. Philip Randolph and Walter White could say that appeared to have any influence, despite their well-known anti-communist beliefs.⁷⁰

By 1950 the anti-communist crusade, together with a falling audience, had squeezed Hollywood into a conservative corner. Although Civil War films appeared divisive, disputes between whites could be resolved, as they were portrayed, in their new location and post-Civil War period, as disputes were over land rights, illegal actions, the bitter memories of the war, etc., and not between ideologies. In one film, *Red River* (1948), which covers the years 1851-65, the war is almost forgotten despite the fact that one of the main characters returns after four years of fighting and Tom Dunson makes a stirring speech about the iniquities of Reconstruction. The scope for African Americans had been severely limited when the plantation film had been abandoned due to an unreceptive home audience and pressure from abroad. The Civil War films with a message of tolerance had been white-led and were located east of the Mississippi. To introduce African Americans into the western would have gone against Hollywood's traditional portrayal of the west. From 1950, therefore, African Americans were rarely seen except in background shots, as in *Horizons West*, or as servants in *Drums in the Deep South* (1951) or *The Raid*. There was one film, however, that went against this trend although its nostalgia harped back to an earlier age.

The Sun Shines Bright (1953)⁷¹ was scathingly reviewed by the *New York Times* as 'laborious, saccharine entertainment...a trumpeting tribute to the 'Lost Cause.' *Variety* saw

it as 'schmaltzy good triumphing over evil.' However the *Motion Picture Herald* considered that it would appeal to 'the less sophisticated territories, especially the South....Metropolitan newspaper writers are almost certain to disapprove, which sometimes means the plain folks will approve.'⁷² These comments represented the broad spread of attitudes to Hollywood's view of the past at that time. Although the film is set in 1905 in a sleepy west Kentucky town it is imbued with Civil War nostalgia. The central character, the former Confederate bugle boy, Judge Priest, dispenses justice in an easy-going and humane manner campaigning against bigotry and small-mindedness. The film picks up the late 1940s egalitarian agenda and looks forward to the 'equal provision' judgement in the *Brown* decision of the following year. The irony, as in many of the post-Civil War films, is that an ex-Confederate becomes the upholder of law and order. Judge Priest defends American values even at the risk of death when he faces down a white mob wanting to lynch a young African American whom they allege had attempted to rape a white woman. In the end it turns out that the attempted rape was by a white man. But although this is near the conclusion of the film there is no underlining comment.

Unlike *Stars in My Crown*, neither the date nor the story was altered to make its message bite home. It would not have fitted the overall 'historical' view had it been located closer to the Civil War and to bring it forward would have been too close to actual experience. Leaving it in 1905 allowed the message to get through but also perpetuated the view that race relations could still be solved through white paternalism. This is shown early in the film when the young African American, later accused of rape, 'named U S Grant Woodford...[after] the Yankee general that beat Robert E. Lee,' is brought to the court by his father as he cannot get him to do anything but play the banjo. Judge Priest recognises the father. 'Are you the *boy* (emphasis added) that brought Bainbridge Corwen's body back from Chickamauga?' he asks. Uncle Pleasant Woodford replies, 'in these two arms – don't you remember....what a time that was.' Here is the Lost Cause mythology of a happy shared past between white and black, deference and paternalism. When Judge Priest is re-elected, a victory parade is held with white and black townspeople and Union and Confederate veterans all marching together while an African American choir sings 'My Old Kentucky Home.' As in *Stars in My Crown* the civil rights implications are clear: as long as the law is obeyed and interpreted fairly there is no need to change the status quo.

In the absence of African Americans from most of these films, it is the civil rights of white Americans, northerners and southerners, which were vulnerable and had to be defended.⁷³

Prisoners are harshly treated in *Escape from Fort Bravo* (1953); miners are unable to carry out their business in *The Man from Colorado* and *Copper Canyon* (1950); farmers are subjected to intimidation and violence in *The Fabulous Texan, Dallas* (1950) and *Horizons West*; cattle drivers, farmers and soldiers threatened with summary justice in *Red River*, *The Woman They Almost Lynched* (1952), and *Hangman's Knot* (1953) or having it carried out in *Kansas Raiders*. The films indicated that ultimately the only way to obtain justice and civil rights is by the use of force. This contrasted sharply with the Civil Rights Movement, which had long believed and practised that civil rights should be obtained through peaceful means. The NAACP had been pursuing this path by chipping away at discrimination through the courts and continued to do so at the same time as anti-communism was forcing back the agenda for change through the political system.⁷⁴ The federal Justice Department began to support the NAACP's cases by filing *amicus curiae* briefs and using the Cold War to support its case. In the 1948 case of *Shelley v. Kraemer* the State Department's view that 'the United States has been embarrassed in the conduct of foreign relations by acts of discrimination taking place in this country' was quoted.⁷⁵ With the Justice Department's backing, the NAACP launched a series of cases in the early 1950s,⁷⁶ which ended with the historic *Brown* judgement of May 1954. That overturned the 'separate but equal' judgement in *Plessey v. Ferguson* (1896) which became the legal cornerstone of the Jim Crow laws.

The Changing South

From the mid-1940s, pushed by the twin forces of anti-communism and civil rights, the South was changing - and so were its myths and images.⁷⁷ The Southern economy was being transformed from an agricultural to a partially industrial one. As a consequence many more African Americans moved north or into the southern towns. Here they were safer living in their communities and could vote - one million were registered in 1952 - and white candidates had to consider the importance of the black electorate. President Eisenhower carried out his election promise and desegregated Washington.⁷⁸ In popular culture the Old South was being demythologised through the novels of William Faulkner and the plays of Tennessee Williams, which, transferred to the screen, treated filmgoers 'to the new spectacle of southern decay.' These Southerners are full of 'sexual torment': the

women being mere creatures, neurotic or vicious, and the men pusillanimous and doomed.⁷⁹

Hollywood's representation of the southerner was also changing. The Hollywood tradition of the Southerner had been, until *Stagecoach*, of a man of honour, a gentleman who kept his word, superior in war to the Union soldier and would not do anything underhand. He was courteous and protective to women, loyal to his friends, and to the South. They were opposed by Northerners who looted and burned, had few manners, lacked the Southern respect for codes of honour and were out to make as much money as they could from the defeated South. Some of the traditional southern attributes continued: superior gunnery (*Drums in the Deep South*), the incorruptible idealist who argues that to live without ideals is no life at all (*Border River*), the officer who will not shoot an unarmed man (*Five Guns West*), the sentry warning Henry not to stand in the moonlight (*The Red Badge of Courage*), the chivalrous charge of a Confederate troop to save Union soldiers from being overwhelmed by Native Americans (*The Last Outpost*, 1951) and the Confederate who renounces his fiancée when he realises that she is in love with a northern captain (*Escape from Fort Bravo*).

However, a darker, more realistic, character was emerging. There were Confederate guerrillas who were in the war for personal gain rather than for a cause (*Kansas Raiders* and *The Outriders*, 1950) or acted out of pure revenge (*The Raid*); night riders or Ku Klux Klan followers in (*The Romance of Rosy Ridge* and *Stars in My Eyes*); unscrupulous businessmen (*Another Part of the Forest* and *A Southern Yankee*, (1948)); southern lynch mobs (*The Sun Shines Bright* and *The Woman They Almost Lynched*, (1952)); kidnappers (*Gun Fury*, 1953); southerners who wished to undermine America's development (*Santa Fe* (1951), *The Bushwhackers* (1952) and *Kansas Pacific* (1953)); untrustworthy killers (*Five Guns West*); and men who gained power through corrupt and illegal means (*Horizons West* and *The Vanquished* 1953). In her book, *Framing the South*, Allison Graham identifies the 'cracker' as the figure on which the South was able to redeem itself by exposing the Redneck as the perpetrator of bigotry and racism - especially in civil rights films '(a)fter the *Brown* decision.' He is the 'signifier of racial ambiguity....with his class-bound vulgarity....[an] uneducated rural white man.' Yet a number of these unsavoury Civil War characters are former plantation owners (*Santa Fe*, *The Raid*), ranchers

(*Horizons West*) and businessmen (*Another Part of the Forest*, *A Southern Yankee*) who are far from uneducated or white trash.⁸⁰

As usual Hollywood hedged its bets and developed a new southern myth - the Southerner who returns from the war and becomes the upholder of law and order or avenges the wrongs perpetrated by carpetbaggers and scalawags. These men, usually former officers, abide by the same Old South codes of honour as the aristocratic plantation owners. By their actions they supplanted them as the leaders of society. Without the racial dimension they can pose as the champions of democracy and American values. This is how Hollywood sees the process of reconciliation and unity. These men redeem themselves by accepting that the past is over. Those who do not become outlaws - as in *Santa Fe*, where the three younger brothers cannot accept defeat whilst the eldest brother joins in America's future by helping to build a railroad. As Hollywood avoids discussing the causes of the war these new men can forget that they had committed the gravest illegal act - to fight against their own country - and to keep other men in slavery. They now support law and order and fight against injustice. They become in fact Cold War warriors. The first post-war film to show this was *The Fabulous Texan* (1947) in which the southern hero decides that it is better to co-operate with the federal government to root out corruption and becomes a Federal Marshal.⁸¹ There is a similar situation in *Dallas* (1950) where the Southern hero swaps identities with the 'dude' northern marshal to fight unlawful, vicious carpetbaggers. This character reappears in *Copper Canyon* (1950), *Santa Fe* and *The Vanquished* (1953), while in *Thunder Over the Plains* (1953) the southern hero is a captain in the Union army who is forced to uphold the law despite the predations of the carpetbaggers. This representation of the Southerner who fights for law and justice ironically stands in sharp contrast to the real Southern law officers who begin to lumber onto national television screens from the mid-1950s as civil rights abuses and scandals become national news - as in the Emmett Till case of 1955.⁸²

Hollywood made a similar readjustment in its representation of northerners. While there were films that showed them as rapacious carpetbaggers and businessmen (*Horizons West*, *Copper Canyon*, and *The Black Dakotas*, (1954)), mistreating southern prisoners (*Hellgate*, (1952), and *Escape from Fort Bravo*), exhibiting open hatred against the South (*Two Flags West*), and engineering fights against southerners (*Santa Fe*) they increasingly depicted them as more positive and sympathetic characters. There is the Marshall in *The Man from*

Colorado (1948) who has to fight his former Union friend and commanding officer in order to defend the civil rights of the towns-people. Henry Bohun in *The Romance of Rosy Ridge* brings reconciliation to the community and marries the daughter of the 'fiery rebel' Gill McBean.⁸³ Union soldiers are portrayed sympathetically (*Kansas Raiders* and *Copper Canyon*) while the federal government is featured positively in *The Fabulous Texan* and in *The Man from Colorado*, and the Union army is central to the spy film *Springfield Rifle*.

The turning point

Just like the Civil War eighty years earlier, World War II started a process of change in race relations: but this time the world was different. The war in Europe had been fought by a multi-ethnic army against a racist ideology. Hollywood assisted with films that gave African Americans comparatively prominent roles. The liberal agenda spawned by the New Deal continued after the war and was only halted by the anti-communist hysteria of the Cold War. Ironically the highlighting of racial incidents in America by the Soviet Union and others helped to keep the issue of race on the agenda as it became a tool in the Cold War. The stranglehold of anti-communism on Hollywood was finally relaxed when, in 1954, Senator Joseph McCarthy's attack on the army finally brought discredit on himself, and the subsequent condemnation by the Senate ended his political career. With McCarthy's demise anti-communism lost a high profile driving force and the emotional temperature was reduced. However, the pressure of anti-communism was to be replaced by the pressure from the Civil Rights Movement.

The Civil Rights Movement continued to press for equality and full citizenship rights at every opportunity and in all forums – from local protests to the United Nations – but was squeezed, as were all other organisations, by the anti-communist witch hunts. However the turning point came in 1954 when the Supreme Court gave its judgement in the *Brown* case. 'In the field of public education,' read the judgement, 'the doctrine of separate but equal has no place.'⁸⁴ The importance of this to America's Cold War strategy can be seen in the fact that the judgement was broadcast within an hour by the Voice of America to Eastern Europe as an 'issue settled by law under democratic processes rather than by mob rule or dictatorial fiat.'⁸⁵ However the white backlash of the ultra-segregationists calling for 'massive resistance' took off within weeks with the establishment of White Citizens Councils. The Supreme Court gave no deadline even when it issued its second judgement a

year later, and there was no lead from the White House. Eisenhower expressed neither ‘approbation nor disapproval’ of the judgement.⁸⁶ The lines in the South were being drawn again.

By the mid-1950s Hollywood was also changing. Joseph Breen, the conservative Roman Catholic who headed the Production Code Administration, retired in 1954. Backed by the Roman Catholic Legion of Decency, he had sought to maintain the strict Christian morality that had imbued the Production Code. He was replaced by the more flexible Geoffrey Shurlock. Breen’s departure came as Hollywood was reassessing its position with declining audiences, the challenge of television and the loss of its control over exhibition.⁸⁷ It had succeeded in amending clauses in the Production Code on suicide (1951), miscegenation, liquor and profanity (1954) and in 1952 films were granted the protection of the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech.⁸⁸ In 1955 it began its rapprochement with television when it started to make programmes for the medium and sold the first batch of films to a television company.⁸⁹

America in the mid-1950s was ready to explode. The *Brown* judgement had threatened the South’s racial arrangements. Civil rights leaders were pressing for more change but, apart from the cautious NAACP, did not have effective political leadership to co-ordinate action. Southern racists, who killed the young African American, Emmett Till, were cleared of his murder and the University of Alabama expelled Autherine Lucey, the first African American to be enrolled there. Hollywood now returned to the delicate issue of slavery with the release of *Seven Angry Men* (1955), which retold John Brown’s attempt to free the slaves in the late 1850s. While this again depicted him, as in *The Santa Fe Trail*, as a fanatical revolutionary, this time the opposition was shown to be equally violent in their support of slavery. With only six years to go before the centennial of the Civil War a new civil war seemed just over the horizon. In December 1955 Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, and the Civil Rights Movement, unknowingly at the time, had found a cause and a leader in Martin Luther King, Jr.

¹ Lewis Allan and Earl Robinson, *The House I Live In* (1942).

² The HUAC was created in 1938 by the House of Representatives, to hold hearings on Fascist, Nazi, Communist, or other 'un-American' organisations. It became a standing committee in January 1945. It was not part of Senator McCarthy's inquisitions. During the 1960s it became discredited and was renamed the Internal Security Committee but was abolished in 1975.

³ Mainly NAACP, whose membership grew from about 50,000 to 500,000 during the war.

⁴ William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), x.

⁵ This film, made under the auspices of the Office of War Information, was meant to counter Japanese portrayal of the war as 'a white man's war,' to mount an 'educational campaign' showing African Americans 'a real, legal and permanent chance for improvement under democracy' and to counter racist attitudes within the army. It was even directed by an African American, Carlton Moss. It was also used by teachers, social workers and liberal activists for 'inter-cultural education' and 'living together.' Thomas Cripps, *Making Movies Black: The Hollywood Message Movie from World War II to the Civil rights Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 102-25.

⁶ The anti-trust suit filed against the five major and three minor companies in July 1938 – the 'Paramount' case and the investigations by HUAC in 1940-1.

⁷ Thomas Schatz, *Boom and Bust: American Cinema in the 1940s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 2.

⁸ Philip L. Gianos, *Politics and Politicians in American Film* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1999), 116; Schatz, *Boom and Bust*, 141.

⁹ For example: *Sahara* (1943), *Bataan* (1943), *Crash Dive* (1943), *Lifeboat* (1944).

¹⁰ Thomas Cripps, *Hollywood's High Noon: Moviemaking and Society before Television* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 147; Robert Sklar, *Movie-made America: A Cultural History of American Movies, Revised and Updated* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994, first published 1975), 250.

¹¹ Schatz, *Boom and Bust*, 226.

¹² Cripps, *Making Movies Black*, 69-72.

¹³ Its full name is the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Values.

¹⁴ Cripps, *Making Movies Black*, 63.

¹⁵ Adam Fairclough, *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 188, 194; Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 199, 203, 214-5.

¹⁶ Thomas Borstleman, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001), 46-7.

¹⁷ Anti-Communism had never gone away. In 1940 the Smith Act outlawed any teaching or advocating the violent overthrow of the US government. HUAC made further investigations into Hollywood in 1940 and so did the Truman Committee in 1943. Following the Survey on Racial Conditions in the US in 1943 the FBI concluded that the Communist Party was the most subversive force in the country by stirring up agitation and unrest in the riots of that year.

¹⁸ Such as the Federal Employee Loyalty Program (1947), the Taft-Hartley Act (1947) and the McCarran Act (1950).

¹⁹ At his speech at Wheeling, West Virginia in 1950.

²⁰ Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War, Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 11-13, 88-9.

²¹ John Belton, 'American Cinema/American Culture' in Steven J. Ross, (ed.), *Movies and American Society* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 198; Cripps, *Making Movies Black*, 182; Sklar, *Movie-Made America*, 260-66; Ernest Giglio, *Here's Looking at You: Hollywood, Film, and Politics* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000) 90.

²² John H. Lenihan, *Showdown: Confronting Modern America in the Western Film* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 33.

²³ The major film companies had to sell off their theatres, which reduced their control over exhibition.

²⁴ Schatz, *Boom and Bust*, 285.

²⁵ E. D. C. Campbell, *The Celluloid South* (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee, 1981), 152-3; Cripps, *Making Movies Black*, 190.

²⁶ Ross Lockridge, Jr., wrote the book between 1941 and 1946. It was revised and partly serialised in *Life* magazine in 1947 before winning the MGM prize followed by a movie contract with Loews Incorporated. It was published in January 1948 with lavish reviews and became an instant best seller. Ross Lockridge, Jr., however committed suicide two months later, which may have contributed to the delay in bringing it to the screen.

²⁷ James Street, *Tap Roots* (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1952), 8.

²⁸ The book does not completely accept total racial equality, as Quintus, the main African American male character, is only allowed to use a knife in the final battle and he is buried separately from all the whites – 'our menfolks [the Irish] and your menfolks and the secesh dead. They are all together. Cep'n the nigger. They buried him up the trench a piece.' Street, *Tap Roots*, 483.

²⁹ In the book the Dabney's are overwhelmed and the few survivors have just enough left to restart their life.

³⁰ Southern Democrats walked out of the Democratic Convention of 1948 when the Party had adopted a pro-civil rights platform. Strom Thurmond was then nominated by his fellow 'Dixiecrats' as a presidential candidate and stood on an avowedly segregationist platform. One of his campaign documents said that electing Harry Truman would mean 'anti-lynching and anti-segregation proposals will become the law of the land and our way of life in the South will be gone forever.'

³¹ Dudziak, *Cold War, Civil Rights*, 32, 79-107; Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey* 80-105; Fairclough, *Better Day Coming*, 208-9; Manning Marable: *The Second Reconstruction in Black America 1945-90* (New York: MacMillan, 1991).

³² Based on the 1937 novel *The Romance of Rosy Ridge* by MacKinlay Kantor.

³³ *Variety*, 1 July, 1947; *Film Daily*, 2 July, 1947; *Los Angeles Times*, 23 August, 1947; *Independent*, 5 July 1947.

³⁴ 'Noticed one thing. Communists supposed to be exploiting plight of Negroes in South nowadays. Well this is about Civil War issues and not a single in it, not even one in the background strummin' ol' banjo.' *New Yorker*, November, 1947.

³⁵ *Hollywood Independent*, 5 July 1947.

³⁶ MacKinlay Kantor, *The Romance of Rosy Ridge* (New York: The Readers' League of America, 1937), 56.

³⁷ From the book of the same name by Joe David Brown, published in 1946. The author adapted the story but is not credited with the script.

³⁸ *Motion Picture Daily*, 1 March, 1950; *New York Times*, 22 December, 1950. In 1944, near the town of Liberty, Mississippi, the Reverend Issac Simmons was lynched because he refused to sell his land, on which oil had been discovered, to a local white man.

³⁹ Freedom Foundation award for 'outstanding contribution to a better understanding of freedom' (*Hollywood Reporter*, 22 February, 1951); Christian Herald plaque for Best Picture of the Year (*Los Angeles Times*, 15 January, 1951); official citation of merit by the National Conference of Christians and Jews for 'outstanding service in using motion picture medium for the furtherance of better human relations' (*Variety*, 21 August, 1951).

⁴⁰ During World War II child-care centres were established to allow mothers to work to help the war effort. They were opposed by the Children's Bureau who saw that 'A mother's primary duty was to her home and children....no matter what the emergency.' Places were available for only about ten percent of eligible children. After the war the centres closed and pressure was put on women to return to being wives and mothers. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey*, 15-6, 29.

⁴¹ In the book the soldier just has a 'cheery voice' and there is no obvious indication of Christianity except that he seemed 'to possess a magic wand' guiding Henry through 'the mazes of the tangled forest with a strange fortune' until he finds Henry's regiment. Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage* (Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 1995), 65-6.

⁴² However the Production Code Administrator, Joseph Breen, suggested in a letter to William Gordon, 11 April, 1947, that the minister's portrayal was too warlike and should be reviewed. (Production Code file on *Tap Roots*, Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles).

⁴³ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), 352.

⁴⁴ John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 209.

⁴⁵ *Hollywood Citizen News*, 18 August, 1950; *Daily News*, 18 September, 1950; *Hollywood Reporter*, 15 August, 1951 (PCA file at Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles).

⁴⁶ This has been well documented by Mary L. Dudziak in *Cold War, Civil Rights*.

⁴⁷ Marable: *The Second Reconstruction*, 21.

⁴⁸ Dudziak *Cold War, Civil Rights*, 18- 28; Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey*, 86.

⁴⁹ Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey* 106.

⁵⁰ Truman's vetoes were over-ruled by Congress.

⁵¹ Fairclough, *Better Day Coming*, 211.

⁵² Kevern Verney, *Black Civil Rights in America* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 40.

⁵³ Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, Published 1988), 88. Turner advanced his frontier theory in 1893 when the US Census of 1890 reported that it could no longer draw a frontier line on the map.

⁵⁴ Jenni Calder, *There Must Be a Lone Ranger: The Myth and the Reality of the American Wild West* (London: Sphere Books, 1976), 1-3.

⁵⁵ This is the Anglo-American belief that the US had a special mission to establish its political values and support its growing population by expanding its jurisdiction over the unsettled area west of the Mississippi. The term was first used about the annexation of Texas in 1845.

- ⁵⁶ Richard White, 'Western History' in Eric Foner, (ed.), *The New American History – Revised and Expanded Edition*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 203.
- ⁵⁷ Michael Coyne, *The Crowded Prairie: American National Identity in the Hollywood Western* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1997), 3.
- ⁵⁸ Between 1946 and 1950 box office grosses fell 18%, studio profits 75% and exhibition profits by 70%. Schatz, *Boom and Bust*, 289 – 303.
- ⁵⁹ 'Any relationship between the white and black races' was forbidden. *The Motion Picture Production Code*, 1934, Section II.6, in Harold J Leff and Jerold L. Simmons, *Dame in the Kimono: Hollywood, Censorship and the Production Code* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 288.
- ⁶⁰ The number of indoor theatres declined between 1946 and 1950 from 18,719 to 16,904 whilst the drive-ins, mainly in the south, increased from 300 to 2202 and continued to increase until the 1960s when there were over 6,000. Schatz, *Boom and Bust*, 293.
- ⁶¹ Variety, 20 April, 1955.
- ⁶² Hollywood was beginning to portray Native Americans in a more sympathetic way – as in *Broken Arrow* (1950) – but this was the exception.
- ⁶³ William Clarke Quantrill (1837-65) joined the border ruffians who plagued 'bleeding' Kansas before the Civil War. During the war he formed a Confederate guerrilla band which included future outlaws such as Jesse James. He was commissioned a captain after capturing Independence, Missouri, in 1862 and later called himself a colonel. In 1863 he sacked the town of Lawrence, Kansas, killing 150 men and boys, most of whom were civilians, and then ambushed 100 Union troops killing 65 - mostly after they were captured – and mutilating their bodies. In May 1865, he was mortally wounded by Kentucky militia. It is not known for certain why he was there. Some claim that he was on his way to try to assassinate Lincoln. Thomas L. Purvis, *A Dictionary of American History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 332.
- ⁶⁴ There is a 1921 film *Jesse James, Under the Black Flag*.
- ⁶⁵ Established under the National Security Act (1947) the CIA was the successor to the Central Intelligence Group (1945) and the Office of Strategic Services (1942).
- ⁶⁶ They were residents of free-soil states who were in favour of the Confederacy leaving the Union. Their name comes from their use of copper pennies as a secret recognition symbol.
- ⁶⁷ In the actual raid, three banks were robbed but the town was not burned due to the resistance of the citizens. Only eleven of the raiders managed to return to Canada.
- ⁶⁸ Films such as *The Iron Curtain* (1948), *I Married a Communist* (1949), *I was a Communist for the FBI* (1951), *My Son John* (1952), *Pickup on South Street* (1953).
- ⁶⁹ There was some empathy for the Japanese among some African Americans during World War II as they wanted to see the whites suffer as due compensation for the treatment they themselves had received - although they did not want the Japanese to win. Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 190.
- ⁷⁰ Gerstle, *American Crucible*), 263-4.
- ⁷¹ This film was a remake by John Ford of his own film – *Judge Priest* (1933) – based on stories by Irvin S. Cobb in *Old Judge Priest* and *Back Home* published 1911-16.
- ⁷² *New York Times*, 17 March, 1954; *Variety*, 6 May, 1953; *Motion Picture Herald*, 9 May, 1953.
- ⁷³ Coyne, *The Crowded Prairie*, 4-5.
- ⁷⁴ *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* (1938) ruled that segregation was not enforceable in a state unless educational facilities are equal; *Smith v. Allwright* (1944) ruled that private white primaries were

unconstitutional; *Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948) ruled that private covenants were legal but state courts could not enforce them.

⁷⁵ Dudziak, *Cold War, Civil Rights*, 91-2.

⁷⁶ *Sweatt v. Painter*; *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*; *Henderson v. United States*; *Bolling v. Sharpe*; and *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*.

⁷⁷ Bruce Chadwick claims that there was no 'radical departure from the deeply entrenched myths concerning the American nineteenth century' until 'the 1977 television miniseries *Roots*. Bruce Chadwick, *The Reel Civil War: Mythmaking in American Film* (New York: Alfred A. Knopff, 2001), 6-7.

⁷⁸ Fairclough, *Better Day Coming*, 204-5, 218.

⁷⁹ Allison Graham, *Framing the South: Hollywood, Television, and Race During the Civil Rights Struggle* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 20; John T. Kirby, *Media-Made Dixie* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, revised 1986, first published 1978), 96.

⁸⁰ Graham, *Framing the South*, 13-14.

⁸¹ *Variety*, 12 November, 1947.

⁸² Graham, *Framing the South*, 154.

⁸³ *Variety*, 2 July, 1947.

⁸⁴ Fairclough, *Better Day Coming*, 220.

⁸⁵ Dudziak *Cold War, Civil Rights*, 107.

⁸⁶ Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey*, 154.

⁸⁷ The 'Paramount' case of 1948 forced the major studios to sell off their theatres.

⁸⁸ In the case of the *Mutual Film Corporation v. Industrial Commission of Ohio* the Supreme Court ruled that motion pictures were a business for profit and were not part of the press therefore the first amendment did not apply. This was overturned in *Burstyn v. Wilson* in 1952.

⁸⁹ Tino Balio, (ed.), *Hollywood in the Age of Television* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 30-1.