

Sunday

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Sunday

Marker of time, setting for memory

Alexis McCrossen

ABSTRACT. This historical essay seeks to frame Sunday as a marker of time and a setting for memory. Although the article's examples come from nineteenth-century United States, its larger argument – that spaces of time function as settings for memory – can be applied to other geographic regions and chronological eras. The article opens and closes with Sunday at sea; the body addresses Sunday as a site for religious, domestic, and national memories.

KEY WORDS • gender • labor • memory • religion • Sunday

Introduction

It is well known that incorrectly reckoning the hour costs thousands of lives at sea – without accurate time, it was almost impossible for the navigator to determine the location of his vessel, of his destination, and of the obstacles between the two. Science writer Dava Sobel (1995) details the difficulty of determining longitude in a clear and exciting narrative that takes as its object Englishman John Harrison's construction of a time-piece that would keep accurate time, even on the rough seas. The fascination with navigation, mechanical time-pieces, and such has obscured the importance to travelers at sea of other measures of time, measures that provided navigational signposts, but for a world far different from the one made of land and water. Until the twentieth century, inter- and cross-continental travel could take months, and within those months were weeks, days, anniversaries both personal and communal, and above all, Sundays. Indeed, Sunday was the most salient marker of time for nearly all nineteenth-century Americans and Europeans, largely due to its primary use as a setting for memory.

At least through the end of the nineteenth century Sunday was a *milieu de mémoire* – a ‘setting in which’, in the translated words of French historian Pierre Nora (1993/1996) ‘memory is a real part of everyday experience’. ‘Remember the Sabbath day’ begins the fourth commandment: not ‘keep’ or ‘observe’ or ‘heed’ but remember. Remembering the Sabbath in the Judeo-Christian world has a long and complicated history: nowhere has it been more complicated than in the United States. Sunday, long considered the Sabbath by Catholics and Protestants, is an example of a *milieu de mémoire* characteristic of medieval and early modern Europe as well as colonial America. Even with the disestablishment of the church in the Constitution of the United States, the new nation’s laws enshrined the Sunday-Sabbath (Solberg, 1977). The emphasis on the Sabbath day as a marker of time and as the marker of the week was part of nineteenth-century America’s Puritan inheritance. In addition to setting aside a day for rest, the fourth commandment also established that the week was to be devoted to work, not idleness or recreation. It affected the lives of all Americans because it was integral to the legal code, providing the basis for most Sunday laws and for many admonitions; take for instance children’s books with chapter titles such as ‘We Were Not Made to Be Idle, But to Work’ (Sunday-School Union, 1854: 13) Six days of work, one day of rest – this was the shape of the week in America, a shape that religion, culture, and the law reinforced (McCrossen, 2000). When Americans remembered the Sabbath, they constructed, enacted, and shared substantive memories of Christ’s passion, of domestic relations, and of local, ethnic, and national identities.

This article seeks to present a sustained analysis of how recurring spaces of time – like Sundays – have functioned as powerful settings of memory. None of the numerous works considering memory that characterize recent humanistic scholarship have considered how time itself functions as a setting for memory. This article will use Sunday in the United States of the nineteenth century as an example of an environment in which Americans fashioned and recalled religious, domestic, and national memories. By looking closely at the Sundays of one woman on board a ship that took seven months to pass from Boston to San Francisco, the essay concludes with the effort to provide a counterpoint to longitude, clocks, and mechanical time. In arguing that Sunday has been a salient marker of time and a significant setting for memory, this article seeks to present an example of how the recent humanist attention to memory can enhance our understanding of social time and temporal rhythms.

Religious Memory: the Sabbath

Whenever religious controversy arose over the observance of Sunday, which it began to do with predictable frequency after the Protestant Reformation, dissenters inevitably raised the objection that Sunday was not the biblical Sabbath, but a man-made addition to the liturgical calendar. The fourth commandment, which reads 'six days thou shalt work and on the seventh rest' provided support for this position. In strict biblical terms, Sunday, as the first day of the week instead of the seventh, was not the Sabbath. But for centuries Catholic and Protestant theologians explained that when Christ rose from the dead on a Sunday, the Sabbath was transferred from Saturday to Sunday; in effect the commitment to the Lord's Day trumped the seventh day. Additionally, Catholic and Protestant practices had focused on the sanctification of Sunday, a tradition that Puritans, Anglicans, and Catholics brought to the American colonies (Solberg, 1977). The Catholic Church focused on a different set of issues relating to the Sunday-Sabbath than did mainstream Protestants. It agreed that Sunday was the Christian Sabbath, but disagreed over the rules concerning observance. Bishops and priests encouraged attending mass and taking communion, but had little objection to drinking, dancing, and sporting in the afternoon. The Puritans, whose influence over the American Sabbath was unparalleled, cast Sabbath observance as a sign of the health of the covenant between God and his people: remembering the Sabbath involved attending church, ceasing *all* work, remaining quiet, and keeping one's heart and mind focused on the spiritual. It also included conjugal relations, for what better time than Sunday to fulfill the command 'to be fruitful and multiply' (Solberg, 1977)?

Anti-clerical reformers, seventh-day believers (Seventh-Day Adventists, Seventh-Day Baptists, and Jews), and atheists and agnostics separately challenged mainstream Protestant applications of both Old and New Testament laws to Sunday and to Sabbath observance. ('Mainstream Protestants' is shorthand to indicate Congregational, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist, and Baptist denominations, as well as smaller denominations such as Lutherans, that hewed closely to orthodox Protestant beliefs.) Anti-clerical reformers like abolitionists Theodore Parker and Lucretia Mott argued that all days were holy, not just the Sunday-Sabbath. Seventh-day believers maintained that Saturday was the Sabbath. Along with atheists and agnostics, seventh-day believers through the 1960s protested Sunday laws as violations of the separation of Church and State. Taken together, these anti-sabbatarians argued that religious and civic laws delineating what could and could not be done on Sunday were sectarian: the Sunday-Sabbath was a man-made day, not one ordained by God (McCrosen, 2000).

Nevertheless, state and church authorities defended the separation of Sunday from the rest of the week. The courts defended the commitment to the Sunday-

Sabbath by arguing that a common day of rest was beneficial to the health of the community (*McGowan v Maryland*, 1961). Mainstream Protestants pointed out that it was on the first day of the week that God began his work of creation. More importantly, it was on Sunday that Christ rose from the dead, explaining why many called it ‘the Lord’s day.’ Out of reverence for each miracle, Christians should gather each Sunday to commemorate creation and resurrection (Beecher, 1829a; 1829b). Regard for the story of creation, for the Decalogue, and the desire to keep the memory of Christ’s sacrifice alive coalesced in widespread agreement in favor of setting aside – memorializing – the Sunday-Sabbath.

In addition to defending the Sunday-Sabbath as the symbol of creation and the resurrection, mainstream Protestant theologians stressed that the Sunday-Sabbath was a ‘type of heaven’. They characterized heaven as ‘the eternal Sabbath’, a place of everlasting commemoration. As such, Sunday was a preview of the ecstasy that would be found in heaven and the afterlife (Sangster, 1898: 186). For instance, a tract written for children stressed that the ‘Sabbath is both a memorial and a type. As a memorial, it brings to mind the great work of creation, and the greater work of redemption. As a type, it points us forward to the “rest that remaineth for the people of God”. There are many things about the Sabbath that make it like heaven’ (Sunday-School Union, 1854: 74–6). The distinction between memorial and type is one worth pondering. The Sabbath as memorial looked back to creation and resurrection – the gift of life and then of eternal life. The Sabbath as type, however, points toward heaven, to the eternal Sabbath, to the afterlife. In religious terms a type is a kind of memory that is accessed through faith. In social terms, however, the Sabbath as type – as a foreshadowing of heaven – had been made manifest during church services since the earliest Christians had secretly gathered on Sundays. In these ways, the meetings, church services, and prayers characteristic of the Sunday-Sabbath memorialized central aspects of Christianity, making Sunday a setting for religious memory.

Domestic Memory: a Mother’s Duty

Just as a range of Protestants stressed that observance of the Sabbath enacted faith in, and gave thanks for, the gifts of creation, resurrection, and redemption, toward the end of the nineteenth century remembering the Sabbath came to be a ritual dedicated to the home and the family. By the turn of the century the home Sunday – with mother as the responsible party – was widely conceived of as traditional, while only five or six decades earlier women struggled (often with the help of men) to pull Sunday out of the grasp of the church. By the twentieth century a Sabbath-day of Puritan cast was no longer possible; mothers could only revive the day with bigger and better dinners, more hospitality, and harder

work, all of which presumably would cement the family in the memory of children and parents alike.

Christians frequently represented the home and the Sabbath as institutions that God had made for Adam and Eve. As Wilbur Crafts (1885), one of the nineteenth century's most fearsome and committed reformers committed to protecting the sanctity of the Sunday-Sabbath (known as Sabbatarian), intoned in the mid-1880s: 'it is not accidental that in Eden, as soon as God had established marriage, he fortified it by the institution of the Sabbath. These two earliest and most fundamental institutions of human society, that come to us from the days of man's lost innocence, are to-day the two greatest helps for its restoration, and are still inseparably interlocked in destiny' (pp. 228-9). Immigrants, factories, wars, and expansion, to name only a few disruptions, destabilized the United States during the nineteenth century. Americans worried that racial and ethnic impurity, industrial disputes, the inordinate power of capitalists, and the corruption of politicians would all undermine the nation's 'great experiment with democracy' as well as its covenant with God. Among the solutions to these problems, the home and the Sabbath each emerged as sites for the restoration of 'lost innocence'.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, parents shaped and guided the entire family's Sabbath observance with a heavy hand. For instance, one of the nation's first factory girls, Lucy Larcom (1889/1973) described how it was impressed upon her 'that good children were never restless in meeting, and never laughed or smiled'. Her family remembered the Sabbath in a variety of ways: Sunday's victuals were prepared on Saturday, neither Larcom nor her siblings were allowed to walk anywhere (including the front yard), nor could they make any noise (p. 53). In the 1840s the renowned author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe (1843/1967) observed: 'if it [Sunday] had any failing, it was in the want of adaptation to children' (p. 274). This 'want of adaptation' endangered the Sabbath: it was feared that too many Americans had memories of their childhood Sabbaths that made them loathe the day and cease to observe it when grown. Indeed, countless memoirs dwell on the darkness, loneliness, and absurdity of childhood Sundays, although to be sure some, like Larcom, relished the strictness and sense of purpose that animated the day.

After the Civil War, mothers began to allow their children to play on Sunday, but they made this play 'religious' by providing 'special Sunday playthings' and activities built around Bible study. Mother's manuals were replete with long lists of children's games, activities, and toys (such as Noah's Ark blocks) that would entertain, cultivate religious affections, and make the Sabbath 'a delight' (Gardner, 1898: 673-5). In addition to chaperoning children to church, inventing games with religious purpose, and purchasing Sabbath-day books and toys, mothers were required to choreograph their children's interaction with their fathers. A variety of popular essayists paraphrased the following observation:

'too many busy men might be described by their children as a boy is said to have described his father, as "the man who spends Sunday here"' (Burrell, 1907/1909: 181) The ideal of Sunday as 'daddy's day with baby' took root and flourished in the second half of the nineteenth century (McCrosen, 2000).

Even though Sunday was 'the father's opportunity', it remained the mother's responsibility. Mothers were warned that their children would remember childhood Sundays their entire lives; indeed, it was posited that these memories would constitute the central memories of home, mother, and father. When mothers complained that they worked harder on Sunday than on any other day of the week, they heard consolations similar to the following one found in a 'how-to' guide for the Sabbath: 'but does someone say "All this takes so much time and strength and preparation?" Yes, the Sabbath is the hardest day for mothers generally, but in a few short years, where are your children?' (Blake, 1883: 178–81). Mothers who coordinated beautiful, peaceful, and entertaining Sabbath-days were assured a lasting place in their children's memories.

Many Americans situated formal and informal occasions for memorializing domestic relations and ties on Sunday. For instance, most weddings took place on Sundays, as did the courtships that led to these unions. (Brides often would convert their wedding dresses into Sabbath-day dresses; a practice that makes visible the connection between the Sabbath and the family.) Around the turn of the twentieth century, Protestant churches, advertisers, confectioners, card companies, and flower interests worked to create Mother's Day and Father's Day. Both were moments to celebrate the family, and both were firmly situated on Sundays (Schmidt, 1996). Shortly after the turn of the century, Joseph Lee (1910), the President of the National Recreation Association of America, described Sunday 'as a family day. It is the day on which the father is at home, the day for playing a new piece on the piano, for singing hymns and songs, seeing the baby's new tooth' (p. 7). Diaries, letters, and newspapers all testify to the regular occurrence of family gatherings on Sundays.

The ideological and theological linkages between home and Sunday suggests why reactions against worldly activities, such as concerts, amusement parks, baseball games, on Sundays were so explosive – they violated both the Church's as well as the family's claim to a day set apart from the material, industrial, and commercial world. As we have seen, women, who theoretically stood outside realms of the market and industry, were given the duty of protecting the Sunday-Sabbath from the worldly. Women at home and in pews on Sundays symbolized a tradition that was thought to be ancient and God-given: as older codes for Sunday observance were discarded, the clergy and lay reformers both blamed women and gave them more responsibility for enforcing what they considered proper Sabbath observance. As Sundays became more worldly, women were frequently portrayed as an ineffectual barrier between the home and the worlds of work and commerce (McCrosen, 2000).

The formation of several women's Sabbatarian groups in the 1880s and 1890s manifested the cultural consensus that women were responsible for ensuring that the Sabbath was remembered. Women were expected to set good examples of pious Sabbath observance. These examples, however, were slow in coming. The flourishing of the family Sabbath – large meals, lively excursions, and (as their husbands frequently complained) fashion parades – also testified to the importance of another kind of Sunday, as well as the central role that women played in this kind of Sabbath. Dissension and confusion reigned over the shape of the domestic Sabbath. An essayist and mother answered the question: 'what is the matter with Sunday?' in 1912 by concluding:

if our children and young people find something the matter with Sunday, it is 'up to us' who are mothers to change conditions. Make the Sunday in your home a delight. Talk with your children; give yourself to them; encourage them to give themselves to you; welcome their friends to the Sunday dinner or supper; show them how to make Sunday a day of service and joy to others as well as a help in their own growth. Start them right and the next generation will hear less about anything unlovely and dull and deadly being 'the matter with Sunday'. (Harland, 1912: 876)

The essayist's answer – that what was the matter with Sunday was mothers' refusal to talk to their children, to allow their children's friends to come over, and to serve others – sutures over other problems with Sunday, such as seven-day work weeks, open amusement venues, and anemic church services.

Sabbatarians, scientists, and social scientists fervently sought to reinforce the image of the home as a site of rest, despite how obviously women's paid and unpaid labor permeated the home. Scientists and social scientists (both of the nineteenth-century vintage) sought to shore up the perceived naturalness and necessity of one day of rest in seven through a variety of 'experiments', but mostly through reference to observed phenomenon and the Bible (McCrosen, 2000). If as sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel (1985) notes, 'we usually surround the seven-day week by an aura of inevitability', then nineteenth-century Americans surrounded its rhythms with an aura of sanctity, determined to show that one day of rest and six of work were biblically enjoined to preserve spiritual and bodily health (p. 139). As industrial rhythms of work heightened during the last half of that century, the Sabbath increased in importance: rest became more and more essential as men (and women) were required to work as many as 16 hours a day, six, and sometimes even seven, days a week. Despite extensive disagreement about how to rest, all agreed that a day of rest was necessary for individual and domestic health, and nearly all agreed that the day of rest should be Sunday (McCrosen, 2000). In addition to restoring individual health, Sabbath rest would purify the family, which had been corrupted after spending the week in the world of the market: 'Sunday is the rest-day, the breathing-spell of the family, when it is lifted up from dusty contact with material things' (King, 1880: 71).

National Memory: 'Holy Day of Freedom'

When immigrants arrived in America, they did not discard their religious and cultural habits in the same way that they eagerly rid themselves of old-world clothing, hats, and shoes. If anything some engaged more enthusiastically in old-world customs as a way to remember their homes and origins. German-Americans are a particularly good example, in that their method of memorializing Sunday was at dramatic odds with native-born Protestants' observances. German beer-gardens dotted most cities, especially those in the midwest, Germans hosted fairs and singing contests on Sundays in parks and in concert halls, and they took group excursions to woods and beaches (McCrossen, 2000). Concern with German Sabbath observance drove prominent Sabbatarian Justin Edwards (1845; 1853; 1860a; 1860b) to translate his popular *Sabbath Manual* into German and later into French, and to write an additional Sabbath guide in German. The Germans weren't the only ones importing Sabbath-breaking habits: so were the Irish, French, Italians, and Jews. None of these groups rejected a day of rest, when given one, but they did try to pursue rest in manners antithetical to native-born customs and statute law.

Journalists, Sabbatarians, and politicians continually expressed suspicion of European styles of remembering Sunday. It was widely argued that the liberty to rest was vital to the health of democracy. For example, Sabbatarian and purity reformer Wilbur F. Crafts (1890) contrasted the Sabbaths of France and America: 'who can doubt [that] the difference between the "Frenchy" Sunday and the American Sabbath has a causative relation to the corresponding difference between the transient French Republic and the rock-firm American Republic?' In Crafts's view rest was vital in the process of character and nation formation, possibly more important than work: 'any people who spend their Sabbaths partly in toil and the remainder in dissipation or childish play can never develop enough manhood to safely govern themselves.' He argued that the state ought to prohibit Sunday amusements as a defense measure: Sunday amusements 'destroy the Rest Day itself and so the body politic also' (pp. 47–9). That these were widespread sentiments and fears is eerily demonstrated in the title of one tract, *The Sabbath in Europe: the Holy Day of Freedom – the Holiday of Despotism* (Cook, 1858).

Not only did immigrants bring potentially destabilizing Sabbath observances to the new world, when Americans visited Europe they were likely to come home with new ideas and habits. For instance, when Gilded Age novelist Edith Wharton's disgraced heroine Elena Olenska agrees to play cards on Sunday, her scandalized relatives note that she must have been partially ruined by her exposure to 'the French Sunday'. Members of the Atlantic coast's upper classes often returned from European tours with novel ideas for improving the American Sunday: a patron of both Baltimore's and New York City's art

museums expressed a great deal of support for opening museums on Sunday after seeing how deeply European working people drank at the wells of culture each Sunday. After spending some time in Europe W. T. Walters, a Baltimore philanthropist, became convinced of the goodness of Sunday opening. On being told that the only thing preventing New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art from opening on Sundays was the expense, Walters offered \$10,000 for the purpose of underwriting three years' worth of Sunday hours. The Met's President refused Walters's gift, and did not publicize the generous offer. In 1889, after particularly heavy agitation in favor of Sunday opening, again offering to defer the expenses of opening, Walters was rebuffed. He later founded an art museum in Baltimore that was open on Sundays (*New York Times*, 24–5 February 1889 and 2–5 March 1889)¹.

Fears about 'Continental Sabbath' practices imported by immigrants and travelers illustrate the perceived exceptionalism of the American Sabbath (and of the American nation). In the face of diversifying manners of observing Sunday, Sabbatarians and other reformers took to contrasting the 'American Sabbath' with the 'Continental Sabbath,' the 'Puritan Sabbath' with the 'Catholic Sabbath,' the 'Home Sabbath' with the 'Saloon Sabbath' (Earle, 1891; Doyle, 1895; Iglehart, 1895; Howard, 1901). These juxtapositions rhetorically tied Christ, home, and nation into a mutually reinforcing pact based on the right observance of Sunday. In highlighting the sense that there was a right and a wrong way to 'remember the Sabbath', the contrast between the 'holy day of freedom' and the 'holiday of despotism' gave energy in the 1890s to the passage of a new spate of Sunday laws meant to protect individuals, families, and the nation itself (McCrossen, 2000).

Consensus was widespread that the nation's health and prosperity should be credited to the American Sabbath. For example, shortly after the Spanish-American War, Wesley P. Carroll (1899), a resident of Wyoming, published *The Sabbath as an American War Day*. Carroll claimed that since his boyhood he knew that Sunday was America's 'most eventful war day' and proposed his 'theory regarding that fact'. 'The Carroll Theory' speculated that God showed his favor, in fact signaled that the United States was 'the chosen nation', by ensuring a disproportionate number of American victories in Sunday battles in every war since the Revolution. (During the Civil War, God was on the side of the Union.) Using calendars and almanacs dating back to the colonial period, Carroll tabulated how many battle-field victories Americans garnered on Sundays. He did not consider the morality of fighting on the Lord's Day; instead, he speculated that those who observe the Sabbath correctly deserve God's favor. Such was one man's faith in the American Sabbath and in the nation.

Although expressed in oddball terms, appealing to somewhat arcane evidence, Carroll's faith was widespread. The nationwide controversy over the

opening of the Columbian Exposition and Sunday brings together many of the themes related to Sabbatarianism and nationalism. In 1893 the First United Presbyterian Church in Boston telegraphed President Cleveland an appeal 'to guard the gates next Sabbath with troops if necessary' (*New York Times*, 20 May 1893) When the members of this Boston church sent their missive they joined millions of other Americans, many but not all evangelical Christians, in efforts ranging from boycott, to petition, to testimony, to keep the 1893 Chicago World's Fair closed on Sunday. The massive protest against opening the Fair on Sunday was the culmination of decades of tensions over what was known as 'the Sunday opening movement', meant to open institutions of culture – libraries, museums, and parks – on the one day when the majority of the population might visit them. The Sunday opening movement began in Boston in the 1860s when some residents demanded that the public library's reading rooms open Sunday afternoons. Throughout the 1870s it simmered in cities across the nation as demands for the opening of public libraries and museums increased. Erupting with some force in the mid-1880s, the movement called forth an array of concerned citizens in New York City, who, as we have seen, saw in the Sunday opening of the Metropolitan Museum of Art either grave danger or great good (McCrosen, 2000).

Predictably, Sabbatarians depicted a closed Fair as a symbol of the integrity of the Christian republic; an open Fair threatened the nation's moral and physical health. Congressional advocates of a closed-Sunday cited the command: 'remember the Sabbath to keep it holy.' They predicted an open Fair would do the same damage to the nation as would epidemics, floods, or war. On the other hand, supporters of Sunday opening believed that 'the exposition would be a great religious school and would teach those who attend it to say in the language of the ancient devotee "What hath God wrought"' (*New York Times*, 27 May 1892). They claimed that the exposition itself was a healthy alternative to the depraved entertainment available in Chicago, 'a city in which the Sunday sentiment is not strict' (*New York Times*, 14 July 1892).

When the Fair did finally open on Sunday, many gathered in the central concourse as John Philip Sousa's band played the hymn 'Nearer My God to Thee'. The *Chicago Tribune* explicitly constructed this as a seminal moment: 'it was at the Fair grounds that these people, with look and act, paid homage to the Creator. . . The evening prayer, involuntary, unexpected, had been said' (*Chicago Tribune*, 29 May 1893). So even at the World's Fair – a site devoted to celebrating commercial, artistic, and technological progress – Americans remembered the Sabbath and in doing so, celebrated the nation.

Conclusion

Personal papers, diaries, newspapers, and memoirs attest to the living reality of Sunday observance as a memorializing practice. Entries from diaries kept by those crossing the continent on the Overland Trail reveal that the commitment to keeping the Sabbath was one of the last vestiges of civilization that migrants would shed on their long and arduous journeys (Solberg, 1990). Those on sea voyages were not compelled to abandon the Sabbath; diaries and records indicate that Sabbath observance became more intense on long voyages – perhaps it was one of the many efforts made to maintain a sense of the week’s rhythms. Sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel (1985) identified the cross-cultural tendency to fashion ‘temporal maps’ along the axis of the week in which ‘peak days’ – typically the day of religious observance and the first day of the work week – are the basis of individual and community rhythms. He explains that ‘through imposing a rhythmic “beat” on a vast array of major activities (including work, consumption, and socializing), the week promotes the structuredness and orderliness of human life’ (pp. 2–4). In this way, memories too are restructured – given a temporal rhythm and framework – so that they can be ritualistically recalled again and again. A temporal unit such as a calendrical date, a stated hour, or a day of the week reinforced memory; and memory reinforces the boundaries and meanings of the space of time. Examples of the lived reality of Sunday-Sabbath observance could be endlessly recited; suffice to say that it was a widespread practice rooted in memorializing efforts.

The strains of Sunday as a setting for religious, domestic, and national memories come together in the diary of an American woman sailing from Boston to San Francisco near the middle of the nineteenth century. ‘I had always imagined’ wrote Anne Booth (1849) ‘that but little different was observed on the Sabbath days at sea’ (12 August). Sunday was a time out of time, and made so by law, social custom, and individual practice. Offices, shops and factories closed, owners exempted slaves from working in the fields, and farmers fed their livestock, milked their cows, and did none other but necessary chores. To be sure, some Americans worked on Sunday, but unlike other days of the week where work established value and social position, Sunday work was furtive, shameful, the resort of the most desperate. Chains stretched across some intersections to prevent vehicles from passing, constables tried to forestall the sale and consumption of beer, all toys and books, except the Bible, were put away, young and old dressed in Sunday clothes and shoes (if they had any), and churches large and small held services, once, twice, three times a Sunday (McCrosen, 2000). Statute law, which mandated that Americans set Sunday aside from labor, commerce, and worldly pleasures, reinforced custom. A great deal of difference from weekdays characterized Sundays ashore. Sea-faring, associated as it was with men on the margins of society, on voyages without

fixed routes and on seas that could easily turn deadly, did not seem a vocation for a Sabbath-keeper. It was plausible to imagine, as did Anne Booth, that Sabbath days at sea would little differ from other days of the week. However, during her seven-month long voyage, Booth 'found quite the contrary' (12 April).

Booth's journal, and many other records from American sea voyages during the nineteenth century, describe the signal properties of Sunday ashore – passengers and crew put on their Sunday best, most work ceased, the kitchen prepared a Sunday dinner that rivaled all other meals during the week, religious services were held morning and evening, hymns sung throughout the day, liquor consumed with great thirst, fights fought with vigor, visitors from other ships and ports of call received, and disputes over the meaning of Sunday pursued (Booth, 1849). The texture of experience differed from ship to ship and person to person, but there was a Sabbath at sea and it provided an important marker of time for oceanic travel. The Sunday-Sabbath, then, provided a measure of time that located passengers and crew alike within the boundaries of civilization and Christianity.

Sunday at sea provided three measures of time for passengers, crew and officers. One was as a measure of the distance between the temporal and the eternal: long voyages gave way to musings about eternity and death. Sunday, as the widely acknowledged divider of the temporary from the eternal, served to reinforce the traveler's sense of being out of time altogether while at sea. Second, by distinguishing between work and rest, Sunday reinforced the reigning division of time ashore. Conflicts over work and rest occupied pages and pages of diaries, journals, and log books and thus provide abundant evidence concerning a salient aspect of Sunday as a measure of time. As Booth noted one Sunday: 'today all signs of their [the sailors'] work are put away' (3 June). Finally it was as a setting of memory, underlining personal, historical, and liturgical time, that Sunday at sea was most resonant. As one ship passenger noted in his diary at mid-century: 'another Sunday away from loved ones' (Abrams, 1849). 'I love Sunday at sea because it is a day of quietness and rest to all – when thoughts of home and friends come thronging in upon our minds with a pleasing sadness' observed the traveling Booth (1849), who illustratively added: 'how I love to steal away during its blessed hours and enjoy an imaginary commune with those dear ones far away' (26 August).

Paradoxically, Sunday as a time out of time was a marker of time itself. Ordering time along a Christian chronology and marking it in ways considered civilized served to keep ships, their crews, and passengers connected to law, custom, and practice. It thus served to provide all with a map upon which they could find an arrow pointing to a spot, the arrow labeled 'you are here'. When the ship's community knew it was Sunday, they knew they were still on earth. They had not lost all bearings, even in the land of water and sky. It was the inter-

twined uses and meanings for Sunday – as a setting for memories and a marker of time – that made it such a dependable tether.

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Note

1. All possible details about the articles from the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* are within the citations.

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