

In September 1913, a quiet, unassuming businessman arrived in Greenwich, uprooting his family from their life in the St. Louis, Missouri, area, to start a new career. At 48 Samuel (“Sam”) Frazier Pryor (1865-1934) did not need to move east. He was a self-made man who had worked his way after high school up through the railroad supply business to become president of Southern Wheel Company.<sup>1</sup> Sam could expect great opportunities and demands from the new job, but little could he have imagined what else lay ahead.

Sam’s new employer, the family of William Rockefeller (1841-1922), was already established in Greenwich and famous world-wide for its wealth.<sup>2</sup> Sam would report to two bosses: William’s second son, Percy A. Rockefeller (1878-1934), the young head of the family business,<sup>3</sup> and William’s son-in-law, Marcellus (“Marcy”) Hartley Dodge (1888-1963), who had married Percy’s youngest sister, Geraldine. Marcy needed a manager for his family business of which he had become sole owner in 1912--- the famed rifle maker, Remington Arms , based in Ilion, New York, and its rifle ammunition affiliate, Union Metallic Cartridge Company, based in Bridgeport, Connecticut.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Sam officially joined Remington Arms-UMC (“Remington”) as general manager and Vice President in April, 1914,<sup>5</sup> and hired the architectural firm of Cross & Cross to design his new home, “The Pryory,” on Field Point Circle, looking forward to a quiet and comfortable move in 1915.<sup>6</sup> But on June 28, 1914, the assassination of Archduke Franz Joseph of Austria ignited The Great War (“WWI”). Sam’s newly settled life was upended, as it was for many Greenwich residents.

The war hit Sam’s employer immediately. On July 31 the New York Stock Exchange closed its doors for the first time since 1873.<sup>7</sup> Marcy and Geraldine Dodge were caught in Germany while traveling, and the family anxiously awaited news of their whereabouts for two weeks.<sup>8</sup> William’s business partner and the father of William’s two daughters-in-law, James Stillman, happened to be visiting his daughter, Elsie Rockefeller, at her Lake Avenue home as the German army marched through Belgium towards Paris. The semi-retired chairman of National City Bank had adopted Paris as his new home after 1910, and his worried talks with his son-in-law, Percy, through midnight cast gloom over Elsie’s home.<sup>9</sup> Neither could then know that Count Johann Von Bernstorff, the German Ambassador to America who summered in Rye, New York, had just left Berlin for America, carrying an initial \$15,000,000 in cash with instructions from the German secret service to take all measures to prevent American supplies, especially “munitions”, from reaching the Allies (at that time, Britain, France and Russia).<sup>10</sup> Germany’s underground war against America had begun.

Fall of 1914 brought orders from the Allies for millions of rifles and rounds of ammunition to Remington.<sup>11</sup> Sam’s business acumen and energy, in tandem with the support of and at the behest of, Marcy and Percy, drove the expansion of the Remington factories in 1915 from an old-line company of well-crafted sporting guns to a modern manufacturer of military arms, with over five plants in five states.<sup>12</sup> Drawing on his wide experience with railroad supplies, particularly the chilled iron wheels of railcars, which exposed him to the same components of unions and raw materials as were involved in manufacturing ammunition,<sup>13</sup> Sam was also able to take advantage of the recession and an over supply of labor in 1914. The scope of this increase in capacity—in size of plants and in speed with which they

were built and staffed ---understandably was viewed by the press as “Aladdin’s Palace,” the luxurious Bridgeport plant which rose out of thin air, and “Pryor’s Master Stroke.”<sup>14</sup>

But how could such skills and business background prepare him for wartime challenges of international diplomacy and intrigue? Sam’s adversary, Count von Bernstorff, was a suave and sophisticated diplomat, adept at manipulating the American newspaper reporters and his large social and political network along the East Coast.<sup>15</sup> Further, during a time when millionaires attracted the same attention as billionaires today, Sam’s employer would have been anxious to avoid the public limelight, particularly after the terrible publicity received by the John D. side of the family on account of the long and bloody strike during 1914 at coal mines in Ludlow, Colorado, in which that family had an interest.<sup>16</sup>

Based in New York City, the home of America’s largest German emigrant community and the port from which many ships carrying Remington products sailed to the Allies, the Count’s activities also posed great physical danger to Sam and his employer and to the Remington plants. Regular reports of unexplained explosions on ships bearing ammunition to Europe increasingly alarmed the many Greenwich readers of NYC newspapers.<sup>17</sup> Remington soon assembled a private security force for its plants, but could not expect public support from the government<sup>18</sup> during this period of undeclared war.<sup>19</sup>

In June 1915, the attempted assassination of J. P. Morgan, Jr., head of the largest American banking firm, at his home along the North Shore of Long Island, New York, just minutes across the Sound from Greenwich, demonstrated that no individual associated with the “munitions” business was safe and that prudence required a low profile.<sup>20</sup> Such action was impossible for Sam, by then a public face of Remington. We may never know Sam’s personal thoughts about his adversary and all the dangers he posed,<sup>21</sup> but reports in the NY Times reveal that their battle was fought on at least three fronts.

In the battle for the heart of America and public opinion, Bernstorff and his agents frequently employed public slander to garner American support by attacking American manufacturers of munitions. When Bernstorff charged that Remington was supplying “dum-dum” bullets to the English (which would have been in contravention of international law),<sup>22</sup> Sam responded by letter to the Count, published in the NY Times on Dec. 15, 1914. American’s international reputation was at stake as Sam vigorously denied von Bernstorff’s allegation and demanded that he retract the allegation or come to Remington headquarters to see the proof for himself.<sup>23</sup>

The battle was also fought with pure cash. In June 1915, Sam was called upon to deny a possible sale of Remington to the Germans, based on an offer from a Bernstorff agent to buy the company for \$15,000,000.<sup>24</sup> Sam’s most famous published statement, to be repeated in his obituary, assured the American public that the American arms business, was not to be bought out by foreign parties: *“No sum that might be offered would tempt his company to sell out and repudiate existing contracts.”*<sup>25</sup>

A third battle was fought for the loyalty of Remington’s workers, as Bernstorff’s agents fomented strikes in various factories along the East Coast by bribing local union members.<sup>26</sup> Sam’s management of Remington was tested most greatly by a strike threatened at the Bridgeport plant under suspicious circumstances in July 1915. Had this strike spread to the other New England munitions plants, it would

have dealt a most serious blow to the Allies.<sup>27</sup> Here Sam's straight forward approach and use of the low-key title, general manager, probably facilitated his speedy dealings with the strikers.<sup>28</sup> The statement issued from the offices of Remington on July 15, 1915, has all the earmarks of Sam's approach---clear and factual, but also forthright and firm.<sup>29</sup>

The year 1916 brought new challenges to Remington. Explosions at American munitions plants and depots continued, topped by one on July 30, at the Black Tom Island munitions facility (the largest in the country, jutting out into the Jersey City harbor just behind the Statue of Liberty), breaking windows as far north as the Wall Street of Remington's offices.<sup>30</sup> As labor shortages increased, many women joined the work force, and Remington was chosen for studying the conditions of female workers.<sup>31</sup> Most challenging, the Allied buyers kept changing their order specifications for rifles, causing backups and overruns and financial losses.<sup>32</sup> At the end of 1916, control of Remington was reorganized, taking it away from the owner, Marcy, and putting it with the lenders, controlled by Percy. Sam was made Chairman of the Executive Committee of Remington, a position he held until 1931.<sup>33</sup>

In January 1917, revolution caused the Russian government to renege on its order of rifles from Remington, which loss would only be remedied when the U.S. formally entered the war and bought those rifles for itself.<sup>34</sup> All other Remington contracts were switched to the U.S., and Congressional Committees investigated why rifles of the right specifications could not reach American soldiers more quickly.<sup>35</sup>

But the underground war with Bernstorff, who was sent packing back to Germany by President Woodrow Wilson in February, 1917, had been won, and the Pryor family could now go about supporting the U. S. war effort like many other Greenwich residents. Sam served as Treasurer of the Greenwich Home Gardens Association, the Town's major undertaking in promoting food production,<sup>36</sup> while his wife, Ruby, and daughter, Permelia, participated in local fundraising events for war support. Despite Sam's concerns and those of his employer, young Sam, Jr. and two grandsons of William followed the sirens of honor and glory that attracted so many college men of the time<sup>37</sup> and enlisted in branches of the services which would send them into danger abroad.<sup>38</sup>

By the end of the war, Remington Arms had produced over 50% of all American rifles used by U. S. troops in the war; its affiliate, Union Metallic Cartridge Co., had produced over 50% of all small arms ammunition used by the US or the Allies during the war.<sup>39</sup> Ironically, despite America's huge increase in rifle manufacturing capacity, the rifle would be replaced by the end of the war by "indirect fire" or heavy artillery (75mm. and 155mm. howitzers/cannons) manufactured by the French and used by the American troops as a key military weapon in winning the war.<sup>40</sup>

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> After finishing high school in 1882, Sam followed his brother as a clerk in the auditor's department for the Wabash Railroad and then worked his way up through the ranks of the railcar supply business, with jobs as salesman for Handlan Buck Co. (1898-1901), manager of the railway supply department for the Simmons Hardware Company of St. Louis (1901-1905), general purchasing agent for the Gould railroads west of the Mississippi (1906-11), and negotiator for acquisitions and mergers involving the St. Louis Car Wheel Co., the American Brake Shoe & Foundry Co., and the Southern Wheel Co. (1910-1913), eventually becoming a director of Simmons and president of Southern Wheel Company and attracting the attention of such railroad giants as E. H. Harriman and William Rockefeller through their extensive railroad directorship networks.

See Junior League of Greenwich, *The Great Estates, Greenwich, Connecticut, 1880-1930* (New Hampshire: Phoenix Publishing, 1986), 51; Winfield Scott Downs, Ed., *Encyclopedia of American Biography*, New Series, Volume 7 (New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1937), 284; [www.familytreemaker.genealogy.com](http://www.familytreemaker.genealogy.com) —“Notes for Samuel Frazier Pryor;” Samuel F. Pryor III, *Make It Happen* (privately printed by Sam Pryor III, 2008--- particularly, Chapter 1, Family Trees, Postscript and Acknowledgments ), 1-8; *Poor's Manual of Industrials: Manufacturing, Mining and Miscellaneous Companies* (1913), 2104. See also Saunders Norvell, *Forty Years of Hardware* (1924), (Norvell was a sales associate of Sam and later also president of Remington); and Maury Klein, *The Life & Legend of E. H. Harriman* (North Carolina, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> William Rockefeller had made Greenwich his home from 1876 to 1890, while he helped his older brother, John D. Rockefeller, establish the Standard Oil business on the East Coast and pursued his love of railroads. Although he then built a new home next to his brother's, in Pocantico Hills, New York, his two sons, William G. (1872-1922) and Percy A. (1878-1934), returned to Greenwich after their years at Yale to settle near each other on Lake Avenue. By 1906 John D. was known as the wealthiest man in America. William wasn't far behind. Junior League of Greenwich, 8; Christ Church Greenwich, Greenwich, Connecticut, parish records, 1876-1890; Ron Chernow, *Titan, The Life of John D. Rockefeller* (New York, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> As William Rockefeller grew older, the family business reins passed to young Percy, since William G.'s recurrent ill health precluded him from taking an active role. Diaries of Elsie Rockefeller, 1912-1916 (William Rockefeller Papers, Record Group 50, Rockefeller Archives Center, Pocantico Hills, NY).

<sup>4</sup> Alden Hatch, *Remington Arms, An American History* (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1956); Roy Marcot, *Remington, America's Oldest Gunmaker: The Official Authorized History of Remington Arms Company* (Remington Arms, Inc., 1998); Barbara J. Mitnick, *Geraldine Rockefeller Dodge* (New Jersey, 2004); Pryor, 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> Later in 1914 Sam became general manager and Vice President of the Remington Arms & Ammunition Co. of Ilion, New York, and by the end of 1914, President of all 3. (See sources in foot note #1 above.) However, he often still used the title of (and was referred to in the press as) “general manager and Vice

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President” of Remington-UMC, possibly in deference to the feelings of his much younger boss, Marcy Dodge.

<sup>6</sup> Junior League of Greenwich, 51. Pryor’s choice of architect may have been facilitated by Percy, who was a Yale cohort of John Cross. Peter Pennoyer and Anne Walker, *New York Transformed, the Architecture of Cross & Cross* (The Monacelli Press, 2014), 110.

<sup>7</sup> The NY Stock Exchange would not open fully again until April, 1915. Mark Sullivan, *Our Times, Vol. V, Over Here, 1914-1918* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1933), 589; Elsie Rockefeller, diary entry for July 31, 1914. Such closing symbolized the catastrophe ahead seen by world businessmen and affected many Greenwich residents, although not all as lethally as copper magnate and Greenwich resident, Jacob Langeloth, who suffered a heart attack from angst over the war and died on August 14. McDonald, *Pennsylvania Record*, September 4, 1914.

<sup>8</sup> Elsie Rockefeller, diary entry for August 6, 1914; Charles Willis Thompson, “Our Greatest Arms Plant,” *The New York Times*, Jan. 16, 1916. The Dodge experience was shared by many other Greenwich residents of all economic and social strata who happened to be in Europe when the war erupted, for business, family, educational, cultural or pleasure reasons. Elsie’s diaries record some; other accounts were published in *The Greenwich Press*, during early August, 1914; still others may be found in *Our Town*, a weekly magazine published by Norman Talcott from fall, 1915 to fall, 1918, in various vignettes of Greenwich residents. No American traveler in Europe at such time would ever forget their experience as “nation after nation sprang to arms, borders were sealed, passenger ships were taken off the transatlantic run, [and] banks and hotels refused to accept American currency....” Edward Robb Ellis, *Echoes of Distant Thunder, Life in the United States, 1914-1918* (New York: Kodansha International, 1975: with new “Preface to the 1996 Edition”), 154.

<sup>9</sup> Elsie Rockefeller, diary entries for August and September, 1914, beginning August 11 . James Stillman sailed back to Paris on September 16, and remained there to give support to France throughout the war. See John K. Winkler, *The First Billion, The Stillmans and the National City Bank* (New York, 1934), and Anna Robeson Burr, *The Portrait of a Banker, James Stillman, 1850-1918* (1927). Stillman’s allegiance to his adopted country probably influenced Elsie towards her faithful participation in the Greenwich chapter of Alliance Francaise, an active local organization whose meetings first appear in her diaries in 1913 and were later reported in “Our Town” during the war.

<sup>10</sup> Count von Bernstorff’s activities in America on behalf of the German secret service have now been well chronicled in several sources, though not all jibe perfectly with each other. See “Says German Spies Reveal Our Secrets,” *The New York Times*, August 17, 1915; Sullivan, esp. Chapters 2, 5 and 8; Captain Henry Landau, *The Enemy Within* (New York, 1937); Ellis, chapter 13--“Lies, Spies and Saboteurs”; Steven H. Jaffee, *New York At War, Four Centuries of Combat, Fear, and Intrigue in Gotham* (New York: Basic Books, 2012), 182; and Howard Blum, *Dark Invasion, 1915: Germany’s Secret War and the Hunt for the First Terrorist Cell in America* (New York: Harper Collins, 2014).

Note that “munitions” included many other components of WWI military weaponry, also, besides rifles and rifle ammunition, such as heavy artillery (cannons) and artillery shells, pistols and bullets, explosives and grenades, tanks and aircraft, and was further expanded by von Bernstorff and his agents

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to include any other American-manufactured material useful for military use, such as steel rope, or any other machinery necessary for munitions plants, such as lathes and milling machines. Ellis, 171-173.

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<sup>11</sup> See Hatch, 213-17; Pryor, 8, and Marcot, 166-170.

<sup>12</sup> These involved the enlargement of Remington-UMC's plants in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and Ilion, New York, for the manufacture of rifles and ammunition, the enlargement and retrofitting of the Eddystone plant near Chester, Pennsylvania, in partnership with Baldwin Locomotive Works and S. M. Vauclain for the manufacture of rifles, the building of a new plant for the manufacture of bullets and cartridge shells in Hoboken, New Jersey, and the acquisition of Robin Hood Ammunition Co., on the shores of Lake Champlain in Swanton, Vermont. Not all of the plants were involved in all stages of rifle or ammunition manufacture. See Corrine M. Barker, *Connecticut's Share in Furnishing Munitions for the World War*, Unpub. M. A. thesis (Col. Univ. 1925), 61-65; Hatch, 214-15; Marcot, chapter 6; and Pryor, 8.

Hatch describes Marcy's conversion to this vast transformation of Remington thus:

*"Marcy Dodge, in common with many Americans, watched incredulously as the great conscript armies of Germany surged forward and flowed over Belgium in repudiation of the solemn treaty signed by Germany. The black smoke billowing up from the ancient library at Louvain turned his incredulity to horror.....The Allied commissions offered Remington enormous contracts, far beyond the capacities of its factories. To fulfill them meant a vast expansion, which would cost many millions of dollars. Pryor's imagination rocketed over all obstacles. Marcy Dodge took a more conservative view. He realized that this would be a tremendous gamble, and normally would have opposed it. However, like Pryor and many of his fellow countrymen, he had been appalled by the ruthlessness of the German military machine. It seemed to him that, if France fell and England were defeated, America would be in danger. Despite President Woodrow Wilson's injunction to be neutral in thought and act, Marcy could not be impartial in such a contest. He felt a moral obligation to give what he could, whatever the risk. Thus he came to be of like mind as Pryor..."* Hatch, 214.

For more information on the complicated dealings between Remington and Baldwin Locomotive Works, see Roy Marcot and Joe Poyer, "The Story of Eddystone," Remington Society of America, March, 2012, [www.remingtonsociety.com](http://www.remingtonsociety.com) ; Hatch, 215; and *History of The Baldwin Locomotive Works, 1831-1920*, (Baldwin Locomotive Works, circa 1920), 101-131. Elsie Rockefeller's diary entry for October, 1915, includes a newspaper clipping titled "Greenwichites Members of Rockefeller-Corey [probably William E. Corey, formerly of U. S. Steel] Combine", describing the Midvale Steel and Ordnance Company as "the new Rockefeller-Corey combine", lessor of "the Eddystone plants of the Baldwin Locomobile Works, built for turning out rifles and other ammunition.....Percy Rockefeller and several other very wealthy men residing in Greenwich are among the members of the Rockefeller-Corey combine." See also, "Midvale Steel Co. Heads Big Merger," *The New York Times*, Oct. 7, 1915.

<sup>13</sup> Initially, one might wonder what an expert in the railcar supply business might have in common with the sporting gun business, and perhaps Sam did, too. He may well have anticipated more work for the Rockefeller family in their railroad businesses than his work turned out to be. However, when one

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compares descriptions of the manufacture of chilled iron locomotive and car wheels and iron castings, as produced by the Southern Wheel Company, with manufacture of metal cartridges, as produced by Remington, the similarities are striking. Both are “heavy manufacturing,” industrial processes involving the raw material of iron, melted down and molded at a foundry over an open fire and then finished into the final product. (American Brake Shoe [for railcars] and Foundry Company (of which Sam was a director) illustrated a successful company which incorporated many steps of the manufacturing process, from iron mines to shipped goods, all in the same spot.) Both businesses hired several types of union workers with similar duties, needs and complaints.

These similarities help to understand the very rapid shift during the war from locomotives to rifle manufacture at Baldwin Locomotive Works in Chester, Pennsylvania, or from brake shoes to 155 mm. howitzers at American Brake Shoe and Foundry Company in Erie, Pennsylvania. Benedict Crowell, and Robert Forrest Wilson, *How America Went to War: The Armies of Industry, 1921*, Vol. 4, 33. To what degree Sam’s expertise facilitated all these transitions could merit a separate essay. Certainly, he seemed to be intimately familiar with the manufacturing processes of his plants. See the report of his engineer, A. W. Matice, “Report of Remington Bridgeport Works Survey to S. F. Pryor, President,” June 9, 1916, collection of Roy Marcot, official Remington historian.

However, such industrial similarities and managerial expertise could reduce only so far the great risks in transforming old plants and creating new plants to meet the war’s needs for munitions, especially for a family and a manager who had never been in such business before and would cease such business after the war. (The Remington situation was repeated during WWI all over America, which had no regular or longstanding manufacturers of military weapons. Compare with the famous German arms manufacturer, headed by the Krupp family, a 300 year old dynasty in 1914 which produced steel and manufactured railroad tyres and cannons, ammunition and armaments .) Even in the swash-buckling realm of railroads, one doubts that serious business men would have undertaken such risks without an over-riding commitment to supporting the Allies (as described above under footnote #12)—again, an area that warrants further research in the context of other American producers of war materials at the time.

(Note that, contrary to German press claims that American “munitions makers” were all East Coast Anglophiles, Pryor was of Scotch-Irish background and the Rockefeller family of German background; both had come to Greenwich from the mid-west. James Stillman’s heart was in France and he had arrived in NYC from Texas. Pryor, 2; Grace Goulder, *John D. Rockefeller, The Cleveland Years* (Cleveland: 1972); and Burr, *ibid.*)

<sup>14</sup> Thompson, *ibid*; Albert W. Atwood, “Americans Made Rich and Powerful by the War”, in *The American Magazine*, Vol. 81, Feb., 1916, 17-20, 77-80. These period articles contain many important facts not found elsewhere but also must be read through the lens of their writers. Their descriptions of who among Marcy, Percy and Sam were responsible for various aspects of Remington’s prodigious expansion during 1914-15 are sometimes contradicted by descriptions in later histories of Remington by Hatch and Marcot—possibly because such histories were written after Percy and Sam had died, in 1934, but when Marcy was still very much alive.

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<sup>15</sup>Kevin O’Keefe, *A Thousand Deadlines: The New York Press and American Neutrality, 1914-17* (The Hague, 1972) 193-195. See also, Ellis, 164-5; and Blum, 32.

<sup>16</sup>Chernow, chapter 29; Ellis, chapter 6.

<sup>17</sup>For a description of the German community in New York during WWI, see Jaffee, chapter 7—“Huns Within Our Gates”. See O’Keefe, 1-12, for description of most active and credible New York City papers during the war. That Greenwich residents were regular readers of New York papers, particularly *The New York Times* and *The World*, is shown by the many references to Greenwich residents in their society and business pages. New York City papers would arrive once or twice a day by rail. (Oral History of Jennie Marks Levine, Greenwich Oral History Project, Greenwich Library, Greenwich, CT.) The diaries of both Elsie Rockefeller and Annie Louise Brush (1917-18, Greenwich Historical Society Archives), a 14 year old in Cos Cob, are filled with clippings from *The New York Times*. Also, Greenwich resident, Don Carlos Seitz, was Business Editor for *The Evening World*. Susan Larkin, *The Cos Cob Art Colony, Impressionists on the Connecticut Shore* (New York: National Academy of Design, 2001), 220.

<sup>18</sup>Hatch, 221. Privately, Sam was sometimes part of secret negotiations with the government relating to development of new arms. From March, 1915 through 1918, he was the conduit between John D. Pederson, an independent firearms designer and developer of the Pederson Device (an automatic bolt which changed the Springfield M1903 from bolt-action to autoloading), and the U.S. government, in secret negotiations. Marcot, *Remington, America’s Oldest Gun Company*, 174.

<sup>19</sup>Publicly, President Woodrow Wilson was aware of a large German-American population, joined by some Irish Americans, who were committed to neutrality and thus most reluctant to recognize or criticize belligerent German actions. See, e.g., David W. Detjen, *The Germans in St. Louis, 1900-1918, Prohibition, Neutrality and Assimilation* (Columbia, Missouri, 1985).

Thus, while he was aware of many of the espionage and sabotage activities of Bernstorff and his agents, Wilson did not condemn them to the American public until a speech on Dec. 7, 1915 (Blum, 390). Nor did he send the Count home until February, 1917. America had no spy network or secret service agency of its own, so was dependent on British agents and the NYC police department for knowledge and apprehension of the German agents (Landau, 300; Blum, 108-114.)

<sup>20</sup>Ron Chernow, *The House of Morgan, An American Banking Dynasty and the Rise of Modern Finance* (New York: Grove Press, 1990), 192-195; Ellis 181-183; Blum 294-331. The attempted assassination of J. P. Morgan, Jr. illustrates the German secret service’s broad aims. Any object, person or animal that might materially help the Allies was at risk. (For example, for a description of their biological warfare on horses, so necessary during WWI for transportation, see Robert Koenig, *The Fourth Horseman, One Man’s Mission to Wage the Great War in America* (New York: Public Affairs, 2006).) How much Sam was aware of all these activities may never be known, but his secret communications with the U. S. Government regarding new weapons (see footnote #18 above) indicates he may was in the loop of more information that that printed in the papers. The story remembered by his daughter, Permelia, that Sam



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would not allow any discussion of politics at the dinner table and if it occurred, would threaten to leave the room, may have had its derivation in the need to keep certain matters absolutely secret during the war. Pryor, 1.

<sup>21</sup> Aside from an excellent, brief biography of Sam in his grandson's book, *Make it Happen*, biographical material about Sam is very scant. Certainly, his responsibilities during WWI required him to be most discrete, and he was, by nature, quiet and unassuming (Pryor, 13; Downs, 284.) However, at least some of this dearth in information, particularly about his duties with Remington and the William Rockefeller family, may be attributable to the simultaneous deaths of so many members of that family, as well as his own death, all between 1934 and 1935, after which the houses of both William G. and Percy were soon sold and torn down during the Depression (Junior League of Greenwich, 89).

William Rockefeller had died in 1922; his eldest son, William G. Rockefeller, had died later in 1922. Percy Rockefeller's oldest sister, Emma R. McAlpin, died in August, 1934; followed by Percy in September, 1934, followed by Sam Pryor in November, 1934. William G.'s wife, Elsie, died in May, 1935, followed by her sister and Percy's wife, Isabel, in August, 1935. Mitnick, 5; [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com). The only child of William Rockefeller remaining after 1935, Geraldine R. Dodge, who resided in New Jersey, died in 1973. Mitnick, 114.

By the time Sam died, he was a trusted friend, partner, business manager, and family executor for the William Rockefeller family (Pryor, 10-13). The loss of all their family papers could have included great loss of his papers as well. However, we can infer from other facts that he was familiar with the German propaganda machine. As a long time resident of St. Louis, Missouri, before he moved to Greenwich, he would have had at least some knowledge of the strong pro-German and neutral content of newspapers of the German population in that city, one of the largest in the country (Detjen, 6.) Also, in his library at the Pryory was preserved a December, 1917 edition of *Everybody's Magazine*, a magazine of national readership, which edition included a long article, "Invaded America" (9 ff.), by muckraker journalist, Samuel Hopkins Adams, describing recent pro-German newspaper articles in the U.S. (Pryor Family Collection, Greenwich Historical Society Archives.)

<sup>22</sup> Bernstorff's allegation that Remington was manufacturing "dum-dum" bullets for their British clients repeated, in a different venue, the allegation made by 93 of the top scientists, intellectuals and writers of Germany in September, 1914 (the "Manifesto of 93" or "An Appeal to the Civilized World"), that "dum-dum" bullets had been used against German troops during their assault on Belgium. Since such bullets, which caused unusually vicious injury when they exploded, had been outlawed by international agreement several years before, alleged use by them by the Allies was used by the Germans as a defense for their brutal "retaliation" in Belgium (notwithstanding the fact that the Germans initiated the assaults). Sullivan, 67-8 ; John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914—A History of Denial* (Yale University Press, 2001), 280-285. (The full "Manifesto of 93" may also be found online.)

Bernstorff also funded German-American newspapers in NYC which regularly played on Pacifist, neutral and pro-German leanings by criticizing the American companies who made "arms that kill German

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soldiers” (conveniently ignoring Germany’s own, centuries old “munitions makers”). Sullivan, 138, 144, 184-5, 188, 473; Ellis, 167-8, 183; O’Keefe, 66, 116. See, especially, Carl Wittke, *German-Americans and the World War: With Special Emphasis on Ohio’s German-Language Press* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1936), 9, 25-6, 117, 137, 173; and Phyllis Keller, *States of Belonging, German-American Intellectuals and the First World War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), Part Two—“George Sylvester Viereck”.

When the passenger ocean liner, the Lusitania, was sunk by German torpedoes on May 6, 1915, the German government pounced on reports of “munitions” carried by the Lusitania to justify the German actions, despite the indignant protestations of NYC custom inspectors that such rifle cartridges and empty shrapnel shells made by Remington had been inspected and approved by them as either only serving traditional small firearms not in contravention of neutrality or not containing explosives, and despite the lack of any proof that the Germans knew of any such cargo in deciding to sink the Lusitania. “Lusitania was Unarmed; Collector Malone Says She Was Examined Before Sailing,” *The New York Times*, May 10, 1915, 1,3; “Says German Spies Reveal Our Secrets”, *The New York Times*, August, 17, 1915, 2. Incredibly, the German charges (now thoroughly debunked) that the Lusitania sank so fast due to the fact that she was “carrying gunpowder and munitions of war, which were ignited by the German torpedoes” have been repeated by reputable American historians as recently as 1985. See Page Smith, *America Enters the World, A People’s History of the Progressive Era and World War I, Vol. 7* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985), 467. Accounts of the Lusitania’s second explosion continue to diverge (see Keith Allen, *Lusitania Controversy* (1999), on [www.gwpda.org/naval/lusika00.htm](http://www.gwpda.org/naval/lusika00.htm)); but see, also, Diana Preston, *Lusitania, An Epic Tragedy* (Berkeley Books, New York, 2002), 448-453, for a particularly lucid analysis of the various theories, which clearly refutes the German claims. For Sam, however, the ubiquity of Remington products must have created a publicity nightmare.

<sup>23</sup> “.....All of these statements [about the Remington sporting cartridge] can be substantiated, and we are ready to give you the evidence that you may require on this point. The charge made by you is so serious and your own position as Ambassador is of such conspicuous importance at the present time that we feel it devolves upon you either to retract the charge as publicly as you are said to have made it, or to avail yourself of the right to ascertain the facts for yourself....” “Challenges Bernstorff; Remington Arms Company Replies to his Dum Dum Bullet Charge”, *The New York Times*, Dec., 15, 1914, 12.

<sup>24</sup> “Germans Can’t Buy Remington Plants”, *The New York Times*, June 18, 1915; Blum, 345.

<sup>25</sup> “Denies Remington Deal”, *The New York Times*, August, 17, 1915; “Samuel F. Pryor, Financier, is Dead”, *The New York Times*, November 18, 1934.

<sup>26</sup> Ellis, 174-5; Blum, 219-23.

<sup>27</sup> Mary Dewhurst, “Bridgeport and The Eight-Hour Day,” in “*New Outlook*”, Volume 113 (1917?), edited by Alfred Emanuel Smith and Francis Walton.

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<sup>28</sup> One factor which might have facilitated Sam's negotiations with the strikers was his status as a "self made man." While Sam was never a laborer or workman---all of his positions seem to have been on the business, administrative side of his employers, in keeping with the apparent middle class background of his parents,--- neither was he born to great wealth, like his bosses, Marcy Dodge and Percy Rockefeller. Initially, Marcy and the plant manager, Major Penfield, had repeated John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s mistake (at Ludlow Mines, Colorado) in refusing to meet with the strikers . "Threaten to Extend Remington Strike", *The New York Times*, July 18, 1914. However, later newspaper articles reveal that Sam's arrival on the scene brought a speedy resolution to the strike. "Men Get 8 Hours; Arms Strike Over", *The New York Times*, July 23, 1915.

<sup>29</sup> *"The statements appearing in the newspapers yesterday and today covering the labor troubles at the plant of the Remington Arms and Ammunition Company take a much more serious view of the situation than is warranted by the facts. The New York Times intimated this morning a probability that the manufacture of ammunition at Bridgeport would be brought to a standstill, and that most serious consequences would result. This is the impression which the labor people are anxious to convey. But the whole affair so far is like a tempest in a teapot.*

*No sane reason can be given for this strike of the ironworkers or for any contemplated strike where men are engaged under union rules, paid union wages, and given continuous work, and when they admit they have no grievance against their employers. The affair does not admit the probability of any serious disruption, unless there have been hidden influences at work, which may only be conjectured."*

Statement issued from the Remington offices on July 15, 1915, printed under "Laborers Riot as Remington Arms Strike Spreads," *The New York Times*, July 15, 1915, 1, 3.

Such statements were not the broad statements of an American diplomat or public official, but rather the factual statements of a businessman. By dealing head-on with German rumors and allegations factually, firmly and without excess emotion, Sam's words could help provide business leadership against the multiple German threats to Americans prior to America's official entry into the war, while at the same time help defuse public hysteria.

<sup>30</sup>Sullivan, 622; Landau, 3-128 ; Ellis, 191-2; Blum, 231-2; 411-12.

<sup>31</sup> Manufacturers of products for the war attracted many female workers when the men left for other work or eventually the war. Ironically, unions and supporters of better conditions for women factory workers could be at odds with Suffragettes, such as Greenwich's Louisine Havemeyer, Caroline Ruutz-Rees and Grace Gallatin Seton, who supported women's efforts in many arenas to prove they could do a man's job, in order to garner support for the women's vote. See Amy Hewes, *Women as Munition Makers* (New York, 1917) for a comparison of women's attitudes in 3 different countries; and Barker, 17-27.

<sup>32</sup> Hatch, 214, 216, 220.

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<sup>33</sup> “Bankers Now Run the Remington Company; Kimball Succeeds Dodge as Head of \$50,000,000 Munitions Concern. Committee at the Helm”, *The New York Times*, December 7, 1916, 6; *Information Annual 1916* (published New York, 1917 by R. R. Bowker Co.), 493; *The manual of statistics: stock exchange hand-book, Vol. 39*, 761; Pryor, 9.

*Information Quarterly*, January, 1917, reported:

“[Marcy Dodge] had been practically relieved of the management of the \$60,000,000 Remington Arms-Union Metallic Cartridge Company, it was learned, Dec. 6 [1916]....A committee of bankers through whom Mr. Dodge borrowed approximately \$25,000,000 for the company, had been organized to take the management, leaving him with a nominal position in the company which he formed in 1915 to participate in a huge rifle contract for the British Government,... Mr. Dodge retained nearly all the stock in the new company....Mr. Dodge was understood to have been selected as Chairman of the Board of Directors, a position said to be purely nominal in character.... [Remington had gotten part of the British Government’s contract for over 3,400,000 rifles, but did not get any more contracts and found that a good bit of capital was tied up....Many rifles were rejected....] the company, along with Midvale Steel and Ordnance Company [the joint venture with Baldwin Locomotive Works] and the Winchester Repeating Rifle Company, requested a modification of the contract from the British Government to cover their loss, which was granted in November, 1916.” (Information Quarterly, 644.)

The new executive committee was comprised of Chairman, Samuel F. Pryor, Major Grayson M. P. Murphy, James H. Perkins and W. E. S. Griswold. While the latter two were residents of Greenwich, CT, also, the foursome contributed important expertise individually---Sam on the manufacturing and managerial side; Murphy, as a West Point graduate, on the military side; Perkins on the straight banking side; and Griswold, a lawyer, on the legal side.

<sup>34</sup> Hatch, 222-224; Marcot, 170; Pryor, 9.

<sup>35</sup> “Investigation of the War Department, December 19, 1917, United States Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, Washington, DC, “ relating to U. S. Government contracts for Remington modified Enfield rifles. Transcript of Congressional Committee proceedings from collection of Roy Marcot, Remington official historian.

<sup>36</sup> *Our Town*, April 14, 1917, 3.

<sup>37</sup> Best illustrated in the WWI poem by Harvard student, Alan Seeger----“I Have a Rendezvous With Death”.

<sup>38</sup> Sam’s son, Sam, Jr., enlisted in the Navy and managed to get transferred to a destroyer, based in Queenstown (now “Cobh”), Ireland, which served in the same Irish Sea in which the Lusitania had been brought down. Pryor, 25-26; Connecticut Adjutant General’s 1941 WWI War Records for Greenwich--War Record for Samuel F. Pryor, Jr. The older age of Sam’s eldest son, Jacques Frazier Pryor ( who enlisted in the Navy at age 30 in 1917, though his official war record gives his age as 21 years, 3 months), probably made him more useful for training recruits in the U. S., where he was stationed at Pelham Bay

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Park, N.Y., than serving abroad. Ct. Adj. Gen'l., War Record for Jacques Frazier Pryor. Born in 1900, Sam's youngest son, Frederick, would have been too young to serve in 1917 or part of 1918.

Percy's only son, Avery Rockefeller, was only 11 years old when the war broke out, but William G.'s two eldest sons were eligible to serve. In 1916, William A. Rockefeller, Jr., joined some Yale classmates in "The Millionaires' Unit", a flying unit attached to the Navy. A full 50% of men who served as aviators during the war died, due to the danger of both flying and practicing. WAR, Jr.'s Yale classmate, Trubee Davison, was permanently paralyzed in 1916 from a fall during flying demonstrations over Long Island. Marc Wortman, *The Millionaires' Unit* (Public Affairs, New York, 2006); Ct. Adj. Gen'l, War Record for William A. Rockefeller, Jr.

William's next youngest brother, Godfrey, begged his mother to allow him to enlist in the Ct. National Guard and field artillery for 3 years, which she did, though when signing the permission, "I felt like I had signed his death warrant" (Elsie Rockefeller, op. cit., diary entry for Nov. 8, 1915). Godfrey trained in Kentucky and was awaiting orders to go to Russia when the armistice was signed. Godfrey Rockefeller's letters to his parents, 1918 (private collection); Ct. Adj. Gen'l., War Record for Godfrey Rockefeller.

<sup>39</sup> Pryor, 9. While large, general estimates can be hard to substantiate, Corinne M. Barker's meticulous research in government records for her 1925 unpublished research, "Connecticut's Share in Furnishing Munitions for the World War", provides solid proof of what Remington manufactured in Connecticut. When these figures are added to those stated in the Baldwin Locomotive Works history concerning rifles manufactured at those plants, and those in Roy Marcot's history of Remington for rifles made in Ilion, NY, and ammunition manufactured at the smaller plants in New Jersey and Vermont, Remington's foremost role in WWI munitions production of rifles and ammunition is quite clear. Baldwin Locomotive Works, 101-131; Marcot, 167-177.

<sup>40</sup> For a description of the U. S. government's decisions to rely on French artillery for U. S. soldiers, see Crowell and Wilson, 30-31.

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