Introduction

William Ashley Sunday, Sr., better known as Billy Sunday, was an baseball player turned Christian evangelist of early twentieth century Progressive Era America. Through his large scale evangelistic campaigns Sunday helped advance the prohibition movement, stirred support for military action against Central Powers in World War I, and won souls to Christianity through a fiery, charismatic preaching style. The aim of this annotated bibliography is to give descriptive entries of primary resource guides, published campaign pieces, collected sermons, biographies, and dissertations and theses of this picturesque evangelist.

Biography

Sunday was born November 19, 1862 near Ames, Iowa to William and Mary Jane (Corey) Sunday. His father, a Union Army soldier, died of disease while serving in the Civil War. His mother remarried in 1870, but was abandoned after the birth of two additional children. The situation forced Sunday and his older brother into an orphanage and eventually to their grandfather’s farm. At age 14, after a dispute with his Grandfather, Sunday moved to Nevada, Iowa, where he held odd jobs and attended high school.

After graduating high school and completing an apprenticeship, Sunday played on an amateur baseball team in Marshalltown, Iowa. In 1883 his athletic ability, mainly his speed, caught the eye of baseball scout Ada C. “Pop” Anson, who brought him to the Chicago White Stockings (now known as the Chicago Cubs). While not the most talented ball player, he did manage to play eight years. It was during his baseball career that he became a Christian in 1886 at the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago, and on September 5, 1888 married Helen “Ma” Amelia Thompson.

After his baseball career ended by personal choice in 1891, Sunday worked for the Chicago YMCA, and later as an assistant and ‘advance man’ for evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman. In 1896 Sunday held his first evangelistic campaign in Garner, Iowa, and for the next decade held meetings throughout small, rural towns in the Midwest. However by 1915 Sunday was holding large scale evangelistic campaigns in major American cities, including Philadelphia, Detroit, Boston, New York City, and Chicago.

Sunday’s campaigns were marked by their tabernacles, large barnlike wooden structures temporarily built in each city Sunday visited. Their floors were nothing more than the bare ground sprinkled with sawdust. Converts to the messages would walk down the “Sawdust Trail” to shake Sunday’s hand in announcing their personal commitment to Jesus Christ. The tabernacle built in New York City held 20,000, and was filled two times daily thought the ten week 1917 campaign. Throughout his lifetime Sunday spoke to an estimated 1,250,000, this in a time before mass media devices such as television and the internet.

Evangelistic campaigns continued through the twenties and early thirties, although Sunday’s prominence practically vanished over these years, as he spoke in mainly rural areas. His children frequently made tabloid headlines for perverse behaviors, his stand on prohibition became increasing unpopular, and his own sermons became darker and wrapped up in issues such as the end times. Sunday died in Chicago on November 6, 1935.
Influence

Although it may have appeared in 1935 that Billy Sunday’s causes were in vain, Sunday’s impact on twentieth century American cannot be understated. His evangelistic approaches and techniques have been reapplied numerous times and have been attributed to the evangelistic crusades of Billy Graham; large scale evangelistic conferences including Promise Keepers, Women of Faith, and Acquire the Fire; and the mega church movement.

Billy Graham was notably impacted by attending a Billy Sunday campaign as a child, and during Youth for Christ national conferences in the nineteen-fifties had close contact with Sunday’s widow Ma. Sunday’s footprint remains imprinted in twentieth century evangelicalism and the religious culture of the early twenty-first century America.

Scope and Intended Audience

This guide is intended for introducing researchers and students to the body of literature of secondary resources produced on Billy Sunday. Its scope is intended to provide an adequate range of materials for the researcher, but provide students with easily marked starting points. All works cited are located at Morgan Library of Grace College and Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana. This library collects a comprehensive level of materials on Sunday and houses his papers. The neighboring Billy Sunday Home & Visitor Center contains the personal items of Sunday left intact since the death of Ma Sunday in 1957.

As with all guides, this comes with several limitations. With focusing on secondary resources it does not list newspaper articles unless part of a compiled work. As an introduction to research, it does it list magazine or academic journal articles unless directly related to a specific campaign. Future revisions of this guide will include annotations of magazine and academic journal articles.

Methodology

This annotated bibliography began as an undergraduate project of the editor in January 2005 to create an exhaustive bibliography of Billy Sunday. The ongoing work, currently with over 600 entries, began with a complete survey of Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature, Christian Periodical Index, and the Morgan Library Catalog examining bibliographies of 300 titles with references to Billy Sunday. These titles included major biographies and theses which reflect fifty years of scholarly research beyond the current capacities of the editor.

Organization

This annotated bibliography is organized in five sections, covering the major categories of materials produced about Billy Sunday. These are primary resource guides, published campaign pieces, collected sermons, biographies, and dissertations and theses. Primary resource guides provide indexes and descriptions to the major repositories of original material connected to Sunday. Published campaign pieces list booklets, souvenirs, and pamphlets published for individual campaigns. Collected sermons list compiled and edited works of Sunday’s campaign sermons. Biographies include critical and popular writings on Sunday’s life and influence.
Dissertations and theses include all graduate research work which devotes a large percentage or all its content to Sunday.

Each work is cited by the ‘humanities style’ as laid out in The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition. It is the hope of the editor that this annotated work can provide a snapshot of the heart of the Sunday materials, and introduce and assist a new generation of discerning researchers into the rich and unique world of Billy Sunday.
**Annotated Bibliography**

**Primary Resource Guides**


Provides a material culture interpretation of Sunday through an examination of the surroundings, structure, and contents of his Winona Lake, Indiana home. The appendix provides photographs and descriptions of many of Sunday’s personal items.


A guide to the microfilm copy of the Sunday Papers. The guide lists where materials are held within the microfilm reels and also the original papers, which housed at Morgan Library of Grace College and Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana. Microfilm copies of the microfilm are currently located at Morgan Library and at the Billy Graham Center of Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. Includes biographical sketch.


This guide lists all the holdings at the Billy Graham Center, which includes one set of the Sunday Paper’s microfilm and collections of Billy and Ma Sunday, and also Homer Rodeheaver. Also list other archives and their major collections, several which include materials relative to Sunday.

**Published Campaign Pieces**

Spokane, Washington: December 25, 1908 – February 1909


A 42 page souvenir booklet of the 1909 Sopkane campaign, giving biographical sketches of the Evangelistic party (including pre-Rodeheaver song leader Fred Fischer), the campaign organization with a listing of local sponsoring churches, and a brief description of the actual campaign.

Springfield, Illinois: February 26 – April, 1909

A 60 page souvenir booklet of the 1909 Springfield campaign, giving biographical sketches of the evangelistic party, pieces of sermons and listings of “Sundayisms” (Sunday quotes). Includes pictures and statements of local religious leaders lending their support to the campaign.

**Kansas City: April 30 – June 18, 1916**


An 18 page booklet covering the events, organized by week, of the 1916 Kansas City campaign. Includes pictures of the Kansas City tabernacle.

**Boston: November 2, 1916 – January 21, 1917**


A 16 page souvenir booklet of the 1916-17 Boston campaign. Begins with an article titled “Prohibition and What It Can Accomplish,” followed by a brief sketch of Sunday, statistics of previous campaigns, pictures of the Boston tabernacle and of the Sunday party, and of sponsoring religious leaders of the Boston area.

*Billy Sunday Revival Hymns: Published by Special Permission in the Boston Post*. Boston, MA: Boston Post, 1917.

Printed as a supplement to the Boston Post, a collection of hymns (containing both lyrics and music) sung at the 1916-17 Boston campaign. The front cover contains a picture of Homer Rodeheaver leading song with his trombone.


A compilation of Boston newspaper clippings throughout the 1916-17 Boston campaign. Contains sermons, statistics of offerings and conversions, and cartoons of both Sunday and Rodeheaver.

**Chicago: March 10 – May 19, 1918**

Bridges, Horace J. *Mr. Sunday’s Doctrines and the Clergy of Chicago*. Chicago: The Ethical Society, 1918.

A 14 page booklet published at the time of the 1918 Chicago campaign criticizing Sunday’s theology and his approaches. Attacks Sunday on his lack of qualifications, his relationship with large business, and his highly advertised conversion statistics.
Collected Sermons


A collection of 15 Sunday sermons, and an appendix including “Sundayisms” (Sunday quotes), and three stories told by Sunday on his childhood, spiritual conversion, and wife. Includes a biographical sketch and introduction by evangelist Oral Roberts.


A collection of 1,000 epigrams or sentence sermons, separated by 27 subjects. Dust cover says content collected by Sunday’s wife “Ma” and campaign music assistant B.D. Ackley.


A 272 page compilation of the daily sermons spoken during the 1916 Detroit campaign: September 10 to November 5. Sermons are titled by time of day given. Notable quotes are in boxes on each page under headlines such as “Billy Briefs,” “Sunday Shafts,” “Sunday Samples,” and “Snappy Sundayisms.”


A collection of Sunday quotes with lively illustrations. Quotes are presented on the right side of the book fold while illustrations with subheadings are on the left.


Although the title may imply otherwise, a 366 page collection of Sunday’s sermons extracted from a Decatur, Illinois newspaper during the middle years of his evangelistic career. Each sermon begins with a quote from the Bible in italics. Some sermons are untitled, but most are titled by time of day given.


A word-for-word account of every sermon preached by Sunday at the 1917 New York campaign, as recorded and transcribed by public stenographers. Sermons are titled by time of day given, with other titles attributed to many.

A 206 page compilation of the daily sermons spoken during the 1915 Omaha campaign: September 6 to October 24. Each page is separated into three columns, with the top middle devoted to notable Sunday quotes, with headlines such as “Sunday Sayings,” “Hot Shot,” and “Sunday Shrapnel.”

Biographies


Written during the prime of Sunday’s evangelistic career, covers Sunday’s childhood, baseball career and conversion, his rise to a prominent evangelist, and characteristics of a Sunday meeting. Includes the sermons “The Three Groups,” “Under the Sun,” and “Wonderful,” as well as a collection of quotes and a large collection of pictures.


A critical treatment of Sunday’s life, examining the evangelist in the light of late twentieth century evangelicalism. The first two chapters cover Sunday’s childhood and baseball career, while the following ten chapters focus on the rise and peak of Sunday’s evangelist career, and the last chapter covers his decline and death.


A critical treatment of Sunday’s life, as part of the *Library of Religious Biography* series. Separates Sunday’s evangelistic career into four sections: beginnings, rise, prominence, and decline. One chapter is devoted exclusively to Sunday’s legacy. Includes the sermons “Heaven,” and “Get on the Water Wagon.”


Written by the authorization of Sunday at the prime of his evangelistic career, this 432 page work covers the life of Sunday with the majority of the text focusing on Sunday’s evangelistic messages, quoting large sections and complete texts of Sunday’s sermons. Sermons are not indexed or included as appendixes.


Covers Sunday’s life by weaving in pictures of Sunday’s life and pictures of significant items from his life located in the Sunday museum. Includes a list of revivals and appearances, conversions, evangelistic team members, and family genealogy.

A revised, extended, and brought up to date (1917) edition of Frankenberg’s earlier work The Spectacular Career of Rev. Billy Sunday: Famous Baseball Evangelist (see below). Additional chapters include details of his “metropolitan campaigns” from 1913 to 1917, and his stand for prohibition. Includes data of various minor campaigns, and the sermon “Booze.”


The first comprehensive biography of Sunday details his childhood, baseball career, and campaigns to original publication date. Provides campaign statistics, chapters on Sunday’s evangelistic philosophies, his assistants, and the “Gladden-Sunday Controversy.” Includes a forward by J. Wilbur Chapman and a chapter of quotations.


A critical treatment of Sunday’s baseball career, part of the American Sports History Series. Covers American and baseball culture of the late nineteenth century, Sunday’s baseball career, and key events of Sunday’s life during his career, including his conversion to Christianity and marriage to Helen Amelia Thompson.


A 64 page noncritical treatment of Sunday’s life, with over 100 photographs. While covering Sunday’s whole life, focuses on the rise of his evangelistic career, his major city campaigns, and his unique characteristics. Includes a collection of Sunday quotes, along with the sermon “Booze.”


A critical treatment of Sunday’s life, examining how the work of the evangelist was a reflection of the American culture shift from a rural agricultural existence to an urban industrial one. While covering Sunday’s life and baseball and evangelistic careers, two later chapters are devoted to masculine Christianity and Progressive Era religion.

The first critical biography of Sunday after his death. McLoughin’s work examines Sunday’s life through numerous interviews including “Ma” Sunday and Homer Rodeheaver, and is the first work to make extensive use of the Sunday Papers. Includes a prologue narrating the 1917 New York campaign, the peak of Sunday’s career.


Written shortly after Sunday’s death, the evangelistic career memoirs of his song leader Homer “Rhody” Rodeheaver, recounting Sunday’s personality and characteristics. Several chapters detail Rodheaver’s views on the musical aspects of mass evangelism through his experience with Sunday.


Sunday’s autobiobiography written toward the end of his life, originally published in six issues of *Ladies Home Journal* from September 1932 to April 1933. Sunday emphasizes his earlier days and provides less detail to his evangelistic career. Includes an 18 page forward by Sunday biographer Robert F. Martin.


The sequel to Thomas’ earlier work *The Billy Sunday Story* (see below). The front cover has shadows of Billy Sunday and Billy Graham in famous preaching positions, displaying “the first Billy” as the forerunner to the evangelistic crusades of Graham. Less critical work than Thomas’ first work covering the life and message of Sunday.


A non-critical biography of Sunday’s life written by and for an Evangelical audience. Each chapter title includes a Bible verse in parenthesis. Thomas interviewed “Ma” Sunday for this work shortly before her death. Includes a listing of Sunday quotes and several sermons.


A non-critical biography of Sunday’s life, focusing on his evangelistic career, particularly his characteristics and character. One chapter details song leader Homer Rodheaver. Includes a forward by Billy Graham’s song leader Cliff Barrows, and a collection of Sunday quotes.

**Dissertations and Theses**

Using the 121 sermon manuscripts (stenographer’s record) of the 1917 New York campaign, Anderson reconstructed Sunday’s gospel, and concludes that it is orthodox in its basic ingredients.


Examines sermons, newspapers, texts, and other sources to piece together the issues, arguments, and persuasive appeals employed by Sunday, and his relation to the overall Progressive Era and how one influenced the other.


Analyzes the elements of persuasion used by Billy Sunday in his Monmouth, Illinois campaign, including an exposition and appraisal of the background, setting and audience, Sunday himself, his preparation and presentation of the sermons involved, and an evaluation of the entire campaign.


A psychological analysis of the 1915 Paterson, New Jersey campaign, where the writer personally observed the revival over one week, listening to Sunday speak, interviewing trail-hitters, and comparing this event with similar social movements.


Analyzes Sunday’s preaching during the second decade of the Twentieth Century, defining Sunday’s basic propositions of what he sought people to believe or do, his theology and what it meant for his audience, his means of persuasion, and his effectiveness as a speaker.

Burgeson, Paul R. “Revivalism and Billy Sunday.” Term paper, Hamma School of Theology, 1964.

Sketches out revivalism and discusses the life, method, message, and various appraisals of Billy Sunday.

Burk, Roger W. “As a Man Believeth.” MDiv thesis, Huntington College Theological
An overview and evaluation of the lives and works of D.L. Moody and Sunday, determining the distinctive aspects of “the individual theologies of the work of evangelism” of both men, and how their theologies effected their method and results in their evangelistic careers.


The homiletical career of Sunday is described and discussed by investigating the content of his sermons, studying his style and delivery, and exploring his over-all effectiveness. The thesis argues that Sunday’s actual success was short-lived, and concludes that he was “the most successful failure the world has ever known.”


Analyzes Sunday’s sermons in the Detroit campaign of 1916, examining Sunday as a person, his preparation, and his procedures. Six sermons were examined, three followed by a ‘high response’ and three by a ‘low response,’ to view the audiences response by different appeals.


Examines the evangelistic career of Sunday and his use of commercial and entertainment techniques in his campaigns, gauging their effectiveness and/or limitations to his evangelistic success, and the nature of this success.


An evaluation of the Ohio campaigns of Sunday, examining him through his life, campaign preparations, his Ohio campaigns, and results, opinions, and evaluations of these campaigns. The first chapter provides a survey history of American revivalism up to Sunday.


Mainly focusing on the Boston campaign of 1916, looks into the methods Sunday used in conducting campaigns, notes the psychology of his procedure, and compares Sunday’s Christianity to the contemporary American view of the time (1917).

Firstenberger, William A. “Materials of an Anti-Materialist: An Interpretation of the Baseball Evangelist, Billy Sunday, through an Examination of Material Culture at His Home in

The curator of the Billy Sunday Historic Site provides a material culture interpretation of Sunday through an examination of the surroundings, structure, and contents of his Winona Lake, Indiana home. The appendix provides photographs and descriptions of many of Sunday’s personal items.


Describes the music used in Sunday’s campaigns lead by Homer Rodeheaver, documenting the influence and use of popular idioms in the music of the campaigns. Examines Sunday and Rodeheaver in depth, followed by an analysis of campaign music.


Through a critical examination of Sunday’s sermons, investigates arguments used by politically active Christian leaders to justify their involvement beyond spiritual or religious matters, specifically Sunday’s various appeals to engage his listeners to political activity.


Analyzes the rhetorical strategies Sunday applied in the Detroit campaign of 1916, and examines the distinctive elements to the Detroit campaign (such as the Michigan prohibition referendum) and how these elements impacted later campaigns.


Focuses on how the evangelists Charles Finney, D.L. Moody, J. Wilbur Chapman, and Sunday affected spiritual awakening, how they worked successful campaigns in urban society, and the principles of their work.


Investigates the methods of emotional appeal used by Sunday in the five sermons from the peak of his career: “Booze,” “The Moral Leper,” “Wonderful,” “The Three Groups,” and “Heaven.” Uses the Aristotelian principles concerning the use of emotion to show the nature and extent of Sunday’s use of emotional appeal.

Maxson, Richard A. “Billy Sunday's 1917 New York City Revival: A Case Study in Apocalyptic
Applying the theory of ‘apocalyptic rhetoric’ with the 1917 New York campaign, shows how the context, promotional materials, music, and sermons combined to form an eschatological worldview serving both religious and political ends.


Analyzes the organizational methodology that Sunday employed in conducting his evangelistic campaigns and assesses the effect that it had upon the success of his work in the cities in which he held campaigns. This thesis focuses on the Spokane, Wichita, Philadelphia, New York, Atlanta, and Fort Worth campaigns.


Focusing on Sunday’s campaigns preparation work from initial acceptance until the first sermon, identifies and critiques the revival methodology that Sunday incorporated in preparing for his evangelistic campaigns. Contains biographical sketches of the complete Sunday party.


Investigates how the New York campaigns of Sunday and Billy Graham used the logical mode of persuasion in convincing individuals to conversion to Christianity. Examines Sunday’s 1917 New York campaign and Billy Graham’s 1957 New York evangelistic crusade.


Assesses and evaluates the various temperance addresses of Sunday with using the Aristotelian principles of rhetoric. Includes as an appendix the sermons “A Few Remarks on Booze,” and “Hot Cakes off the Griddle.”


Examines the place of church history in mobilizing the people of God and in the life of a congregation through the production of a six part series on Sunday and Robert Schuller.
held at the Westminster Church in Berkeley Heights, New Jersey. Wiggins, while pastor of Westminster church, preformed as Sunday in a one-act play part as part of this series.


Isolates, identifies, and describes particular techniques used by Sunday and Foursquare Gospel evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson which relate to theatre.


Examines the rise of Sunday through his baseball career and rise to prominence as an evangelist and national speaker, and his role in the spread of evangelism in American society. Elaborates on his influence on later evangelists of the twentieth century.