

Censorship on the Comics Page: Walt Kelly's *Pogo* and American Political Culture in the Cold War Era

During the 1950s Walt Kelly's comic strip *Pogo* was the most popular daily newspaper strip in the nation. It had risen to this status in a relatively short period of time, having first appeared in the *New York Star* in 1948. When that paper failed, Kelly joined the staff of the *New York Post* and he took *Pogo* with him. The strip was first syndicated in the *Post* in 1949 and in just over a year it had been picked up by 126 newspapers across the United States. By 1952 it was appearing in 226 papers in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Japan, and a number of other countries. It had an estimated readership of thirty-seven million world wide. During the mid-1950s it became a fixture in the comic pages of over 450 newspapers and surveys indicated that it was the most followed comic feature in the United States. As a manifestation of that, Kelly received the Cartoonist of the Year Award from the National Cartoonist Society in 1952 and, in 1954, he was elected president of the Society. He also became the first cartoonist to be invited to contribute his art to the newly created Collection of American Cartoonists at the Library of Congress. The *Pogo* strip continued to be drawn, with a somewhat diminished readership, throughout the