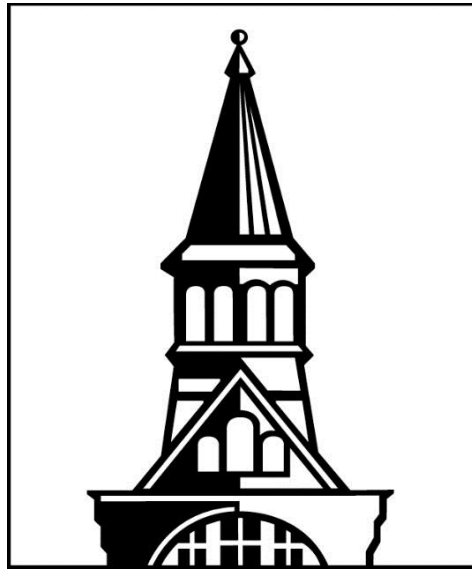


**THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
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The UVM History Review is a yearly publication of the University of Vermont History Department. It seeks to publish scholarly essays and book reviews of an historical nature from current and past UVM students.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

It is my pleasure to present to you the *2014-2015 University of Vermont History Review*, which collects the very best historical work composed by the UVM undergraduate and graduate student body. In the following pages you will find a host of interesting and well-researched articles that reflect the diverse talents of our students in their broad geographic, thematic and temporal range.

I would like to take a moment to thank the editors of the *Review*, whose dedication and appreciation for detail helped make this edition the very best it could be. Creating the *Review* is a year-long process, often taking attention away from comprehensive exams, thesis writing, and any number of other things that an editor could be doing rather than meeting in the library on a chilly Thursday night to discuss submissions. Their work lies behind the scenes throughout this volume, on every page and in every footnote, silently and thanklessly polishing and shining, helping to make every article the best version of itself.

I am also grateful for the patience of both Kathy Truax and Kathy Carolin, who have endured a year's worth of frantic emails and panicked questions. I am forever in your debt. Special thanks to Professor Frank Nicosia, the faculty liaison for this year's edition, for setting aside time to sit down and exchange ideas, and for steadily reassuring our efforts throughout the publication process. And finally, I would like to thank the authors; thank you for submitting your work for all of us to enjoy. It is my hope your contributions will inspire future authors to summon the courage, as you have, to send their most cherished work to the *History Review*.

David Solomon,
June 25, 2015

WITHOUT HOUSE AND HOME: THE RESPONSE OF JEWISH WELFARE TO THE DESOLATION AND DISPOSSESSION OF ELDERLY GERMAN JEWS

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KASSANDRA LEPRADE SEUTHE

Geographically removed from family abroad, and progressively isolated within communities, elderly German Jews who had been unable to emigrate were uniquely vulnerable to Nazi policies of isolation, impoverishment, and dispossession. As traditional forms of elder care were disrupted through emigration, increasing numbers of the aged sought placement in Jewish old age homes and nursing facilities.¹ The promise of shelter, physical care, and a sense of community offered by these institutions appealed to many Jews who expected to live out their days in Germany. As a result of systematic pauperization and the exclusion of Jews from public welfare services, however, thousands of impoverished German Jews became dependent on Jewish community assistance to ensure their basic means of survival.² In turn, a Jewish welfare apparatus that was founded in a tradition of philanthropy and charitable donation struggled to make due with ever diminishing resources and increasing need—a consequence of severe strictures imposed by the Nazi state. For their part, Jewish welfare and charitable associations responded to the growing need with dedication and self-sacrifice in order to accommodate the burgeoning numbers of the aged and destitute in order to allay their suffering.

In April 1938 the Berlin Jewish community dedicated a nursing home in the name of Heinrich Stahl, the organization's long time president. The ceremony coincided with Stahl's 70th birthday, and provided board members the opportunity to address the care of elderly Jews who remained in Germany, which was a matter of growing priority for their community and Germany Jewry as a whole,

In recent years, as families emigrated out into the world, many of those among us have become “homeless” in a deeply personal sense. Elderly people have been left behind alone; they have lost the shelter of the family. At an age when the individual is no longer able to maintain himself unassisted, numerous community members remain without house and home. To provide for them is [our] noble duty.³

Between 1933 and early 1938 some 140,000 Jews emigrated from Germany.⁴ Many of those who remained were older people who had little hope of passing rigorous immigration restrictions. Additional factors, such as becoming financially dependent on relatives or the stress of starting life anew in unfamiliar surroundings, resulted in elderly Jews being more likely to remain behind. At the same time, it became clear that as a population the elderly would not be in a position to tend to their own physical needs and to sustain themselves financially within

¹ S. Adler-Rudel, *Jüdische Selbsthilfe unter dem Naziregime 1933-1939: im Spiegel der Berichte der Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1974), 169.

² Wolf Gruner. “Poverty and Persecution: The Reichsvereinigung, the Jewish Population, and Anti-Jewish Policy in the Nazi State, 1939-1945” (Paper presented at conference on “Jews and Poverty” at the Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture, Leipzig, Germany, 2007), 34.

³ Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt Berlin, “Die Sitzung der Repräsentanten-Versammlung von 13. April” April 17th, 1938. Heinrich Stahl Collection. Leo Baeck Institute. DigiBaeck Digital Archive.

⁴ Francis R. Nicosia and David Scrase eds. *Jewish Life in Nazi Germany: Dilemmas and Responses*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 4.

Germany. More and more, Jewish welfare organizations would be called upon to provide the care that had traditionally been carried out within the family.

It would not only be older German Jews who would be expected to remain in Germany. While serving on the board of the *Reichsvertretung*, chairman Otto Hirsch is reported to have said that, “Not everyone will be able to leave, after all, someone must take care of the elderly.”⁵ While this comment was directed at the obligations of Jewish welfare bodies to continue to provide for vulnerable Jews in Germany, it reflected on a broader trend across German Jewish society. When children and younger relatives remained behind voluntarily, it was often to carry on the care of elderly parents and dependent loved ones.⁶ In accordance with gender expectations of the time, a greater number of those who stayed were women. An observer commented that, “Women can’t think of emigration because they don’t know who might care for their elderly mothers... in the same families, the sons went their way.”⁷ One of the reasons for this was that sons were expected to provide financially rather than care giving or other means of support. Certainly there were also Jewish men who chose to remain and care for aging loved ones, but they did so in fewer numbers than their female counterparts. It should also be noted that multiple gender specific socio-economic factors limited emigration prospects for women beyond a tradition of familial commitment. Among them, coincidentally, was the prominent position many Jewish women held within the welfare system and their sense of obligation to continue work in support of their community.⁸ This spirit of self-sacrifice and dedication of those women who worked in Jewish welfare is reflected in a letter dated May 1939 written by Hedwig Strauss-Eppstein to a former colleague in Palestine addressing the prospect of her own emigration, “Do you understand when I say that all, and I mean all, [the work] that we did until this point has been child’s play compared to what we presently face? And yet it is impossible to think of leaving now!”⁹

In order to appreciate the significance of a continued tradition of Jewish welfare work, one has to consider the origins of the Jewish welfare system in Germany. Independent institutions of Jewish charity and social welfare work emerged in the late nineteenth century following a greater push toward philanthropic and community assistance for those in need.¹⁰ While some historians suggest the separate Jewish welfare system resulted from antisemitic exclusion that prevented Jews from full integration into associational life of Wilhelmine Germany, others argue that this unique community focus was a consequence of the paradoxical process of assimilation.¹¹ The core infrastructure of modern Jewish welfare took shape in response to economic hardships of the Weimar years and coincided with immigration of large

⁵ Beate Meyer, *Tödliche Gratwanderung. Die Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland: zwischen Hoffnung, Zwang, Selbstbehauptung und Verstrickung, 1933-1945*, (Göttingen: Wahlstein Verlag, 2011), 106.

⁶ Sybille Quack, *Between Sorrow and Strength: Women Refugees of the Nazi Period*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 4.

⁷ Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 140.

⁸ Sybille Quack, “Emigration of German Jewish Women,” in *People in Transit: German Migrations in Comparative Perspective 1820-1930*, Dirk Hoerder and Jörg Nagler eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 387.

⁹ Letter from Hedwig Strauss-Eppstein to Mia and Eugen Neter. May 2nd, 1939. Hedwig Strauss-Eppstein Collection. DigiBaeck Archives. Hedwig Strauss-Eppstein and her husband Paul Eppstein, who both worked for the Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland, were both deported and perished in the Holocaust.

¹⁰ Christianne Eifert, “The Forgotten Members of the Arbeiterwohlfahrt: Jews in the Social Democratic Welfare Association,” in *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook, 1994*. Arnold Paucker et. al. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1994), 179

¹¹ Sabine Knappe. “The Role of Women’s Associations in the Jewish Community: The Example of the Israelitisch-humanitärer Frauenverein in Hamburg at the Turn of the Century,” In *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook, 1994*. Arnold Paucker et. al. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1994), 154.

numbers of Jews from Eastern Europe who were more likely to be in need of assistance.¹² The early twentieth century also saw the involvement of rising numbers of Jewish women in the field of social welfare. In this period middle class women were attracted to this work in such large numbers that by 1929 more than 25% of all German Jewish women over 30 belonged to the *Jüdischer Frauenbund*. When describing the attraction to religiously affiliated welfare work, Hannah Karminski explained that, “the JFB allowed women to work for, rather than against, the Jewish family, as many other emancipated women were doing.”¹³ By encouraging the emancipation of women and in supporting Jewish culture, leadership in the JFB hoped to “reinvigorate” Jewish life by returning women to traditions they may have grown alienated from due to assimilation.¹⁴ Continuity in a tradition of Jewish self-help and the existing social service frame-work would prove vital as the objective of the Jewish welfare system became the preservation of an increasingly impoverished and aging population of German Jews.¹⁵

In 1936 a recent German-Jewish immigrant to the United States observed that Jews who remained in Germany ran the risk of finding themselves residing in “a giant old age home,” which would be increasingly dependent on Jews of other nations to sustain its existence.¹⁶ This casual observation conforms to recorded population demographics of German Jewry at the time. In 1933, 40% of German Jews were over the age of 45, in contrast to a percentage of 28% of non-Jews.¹⁷ A greater number were also women. Contributing factors to age and gender disparities include rates of intermarriage that favored more Jewish men marrying out of the confession, high mortality rates of Jewish soldiers in the First World War, and most critically, a stark decline in the birthrate. In the fifty years leading up to 1933, the birthrate among German Jews had decreased so dramatically that total annual deaths outnumbered births at a rate of nearly two to one.¹⁸ Given that older people are more likely to require welfare assistance than younger workers, and as charitable organizations routinely depend on taxes and voluntary contributions from those with regular income, Jewish welfare institutions were already contending with the consequences of significant demographic imbalance. These disparities would grow more pronounced and increasingly difficult to counterbalance in the face of Nazi policies of social exclusion and financial persecution that precipitated the mass emigration of young German Jews.¹⁹

In 1933 the *Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Deutschen Juden*, which served as the coordinating body for Jewish welfare groups, was forced from the national council of German welfare organizations. This early move towards isolation of the Jewish welfare apparatus from the public system would portend the direction of persecutory state and municipal policies to follow. In response to this act, and in the face of the dissolution of other social welfare associations, German Jewish leadership joined in the founding of the *Zentralausschuss für Hilfe und Aufbau*. With its primary focus on financial assistance to dispossessed professionals and on the education and emigration of young people, the *Zentralausschuss* was absorbed into the *Reichsvertretung* in April 1935.²⁰ In the three years that followed, a greater portion of RV

¹² Rivka Elkin, *Aspects of Jewish Welfare in Nazi Germany* (Natan Shlomo Press: Jerusalem, 2006), 47.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 155.

¹⁴ Ellen M. Umansky and Dianne Ashton eds. *Four Centuries of Jewish Women's Spirituality: A Sourcebook*. (Lebanon NH: Brandeis University Press, 2009), 19.

¹⁵ Elkin, *Aspects of Jewish Welfare in Nazi Germany*, 47.

¹⁶ Adler-Rudel, *Jüdische Selbsthilfe unter dem Naziregime*, 169.

¹⁷ David Kramer. “Jewish Welfare Work under the Impact of Pauperization,” in *The Jews in Nazi Germany 1933-1943*. Schriftenreihe des Leo Baeck Instituts. Arnold Paucker et. al. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1986), 175.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹⁹ Kramer, “Jewish Welfare Work under the Impact of Pauperization,” 180.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

budgetary spending was devoted to emigration and economic relief than to institutional welfare work. Demand for social welfare services had not yet reached its critical impasse, although individual offices already struggled with acute financial difficulties. This cannot be attributed to a shortfall of funds from within the community alone. Interventions by state and local authorities, including the elimination of municipal subsidies for the care of patients in old age and nursing homes, further compromised operations of the Jewish welfare system.²¹

In early summer 1938 the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* directed the *Reichsvertretung* to generate a “memorandum on the maintenance of needy Jews.” Therein, “special attention” was to be afforded to the situation of the elderly.²² In addition to the general directive, the RSHA further specified that any new institutions intended for the aged were to be organized in such a way that they might be easily absorbed into the German welfare apparatus in the future.²³ Nazi authorities pushed the Jewish community to invest greater attention and resources in order to relieve the welfare and housing needs of elderly Jews at the very moment when many organizations were coming up against growing financial constraints. Circumstances were particularly dire for *Versorgungsanstalt für Israeliten* in Frankfurt am Main. Founded in 1845 with the purpose of serving those in the greatest need, the institution’s nursing home became the final haven for many destitute and elderly Jews in the region.²⁴ Claiming no financial contribution from their residents, the charitable organization was funded largely through private donations. As a consequence of persecutory measures of the state, the home grew financially strapped as longtime donors emigrated or were themselves impoverished. In early November 1938, the board issued an urgent appeal to Frankfurt’s Jewish community asking that they give generously to ensure the institution’s continued solvency and to assure that residents would be able to continue to live out their lives in a peaceful “Jewish surrounding.”²⁵

For those Jews who were alone and remained with little connection or support, feelings of abandonment, isolation, and profound loneliness could be pervasive. One alternative for elderly Jews who were without the comfort of loved ones was to seek housing with other Jewish families. Accommodation in a private Jewish house would have offered numerous appeals. For some, communal living provided the opportunity to socialize and build relationships in an environment that would have been familiar. One woman, who placed an advertisement in the housing wanted classifieds, indicated that she was not simply looking for room and board, but rather a “surrogate home.”²⁶ An additional benefit attributed to the rental structure was that these arrangements could be more economical for those of limited means. Certainly there were many who were not in the position to pay out large onetime buy-in fees, some as high as 6,500 RM, in order to secure placement in Jewish nursing homes.²⁷

For those older independent Jews who found themselves in need of housing, options were limited by the degree of care an individual required. Of twenty ads placed in the rooms wanted section of Frankfurt’s Jewish community newsletter in August 1938, half indicated that those

²¹ Wolf Gruner, “Poverty and Persecution: The Reichsvereinigung, the Jewish Population, and Anti-Jewish Policy in the Nazi State, 1939-1945,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 27 (1999): 3.

²² Wolf Gruner, *Öffentliche Wohlfahrt und Judenverfolgung: Wechselwirkungen lokaler und zentraler Politik im NS-Staat, 1933-1942*. (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2002), 154.

²³ *Ibid.*, 155.

²⁴ *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*. Vol. 9. February 1845. Compact Memory, Internearchiv jüdischer Periodika.

²⁵ *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*, Vol. 2. November 1938. Compact Memory, Internearchiv Jüdischer Periodika.

²⁶ *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main*. Vol. 11. August 1939. Compact Memory, Internearchiv jüdischer Periodika.

²⁷ Ulrich Seemüller, *Das jüdische Altersheim Herrlingen und die Schicksale seiner Bewohner* (Ulm: Rudi Rampf, 1997), 24.

seeking accommodation were older. Several advertisements alluded to the health of the individual in need. One elderly woman hoping to secure housing for herself and her nurse, felt it necessary to emphasize that she was “not sick.” Another sought room and board for a “sprightly 82-year-old,” while yet a third hoped to place a lady who was “somewhat care-dependent.”²⁸ For those unable to secure housing in a private home, institutions maintained by Jewish communities, charitable organizations, and private individuals proved an appealing alternative.

While a majority of nursing homes and long term care facilities were maintained by Jewish community organizations, smaller enterprises founded by individuals began to emerge in response to the growing need. In 1937 siblings Ernst and Jette Weinberg of Varel found themselves in dire economic straits after the Aryanization of their family’s wholesale store. Unable to secure other employment and facing the possible loss of their property, the Weinbergs set upon the conversion of their large family home into a private care facility for elderly and infirm Jews in the region. Neither sibling had professional nursing training, but like many adult daughters who remained with elderly parents, Jette Weinberg had been the primary caregiver of her invalid mother in the years prior to her death.²⁹ The Weinbergs lacked means to purchase necessities in advance and relied on funds and furniture supplied by prospective residents to outfit the home. While regional Jewish welfare authorities provided some financial assistance to cover the care of residents who were without means, the Weinbergs often lacked cash resources to purchase essentials and drew on contributions from relatives in order to continue basic operations. The location of the home within a small town coupled with the composition of the local Jewish community in this part of Lower Saxony which tended to be older, more isolated, and less affluent than Jews living in urban centers, meant that resources were further diminished.³⁰

In addition to tenuous financial circumstances resulting from state imposed policies of pauperization, Jewish welfare organizations also faced resistance and enmity from municipal authorities. Scholarship conducted in the 1980s by Christian Sachsse and Florian Tennstedt suggested that antisemitism, resulting in racialized policies of discrimination and deprivation, did not pervade the public welfare sector until after 1938. This misconception has been revised by historian Wolf Gruner who points to earlier localized studies which reveal that municipal leaders, many ideologically motivated, engaged in persecutory and exclusory measures to deprive Jews full access to social services and state assistance long before the decree barring Jews from public welfare went in to effect.³¹ In Hamburg, the limited capacity of state institutions failed to accommodate the housing needs of the elderly in the city. As a consequence, welfare authorities pursued selective interpretation of admission policies in order to refuse Jews access to public nursing and convalescent homes. Private institutions followed similar practices of segregation and exclusion. In the course of tax reform measures in 1936, state authorities threatened religious organizations that their charitable non-profit status would be revoked should they continue to service Jewish patients. While this was never written into law, many charities acted upon the opportunity to transfer the Jews in their care to state and Jewish welfare facilities.³² As their counterparts in public welfare worked towards “complete isolation of Jews from those of German

²⁸ Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main. Vol. 11. August 1939. P. 31. Compact Memory, Intemearchiv jüdischer Periodika.

²⁹ Holger Frerichs. *Spurensuche: Das jüdische Altenheim in Varel, 1937-1942 Die Familie Weinberg, die 40 Bewohner der Schüttingstraße 13 und die Deportationen 1941/42.* (Jever: Hermann Lüers, 2012), 32.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Gruner, “Public Welfare and German Jews under National Socialism,” 3.

³² Uwe Lohalm, “Local Administration and Nazi Anti-Jewish Policy,” in *Probing the Depths of German Antisemitism: German Society and The Jews.* David Bankier ed. (Berghahn Books: Jerusalem, 2000), 129.

blood,” Jewish social service providers worked to absorb those who were cast out.³³

The segregation of facilities raised complex concerns. Traditionally, Jews had not only benefited from state and private welfare institutions as patrons, but they had also served as longtime benefactors.³⁴ Occasionally employees of the local social service administration found themselves at a loss in the face of conflicting motives and without an official protocol to follow. In Hannover, for example, local welfare authorities sought direction from the state in the case of a man who had been housed in a non-Jewish old age home where policies had recently changed to bar Jews. While the present institution refused to continue his care, local Jewish welfare organizations protested that they were overburdened and not in the position to place him in one of their facilities.³⁵

Municipal policies of segregation and the retraction of public welfare on “racial grounds” often revealed a local atmosphere of animosity and the contempt of local authorities for impoverished Jews. When Hamburg officials advocated for the transfer of public support for the elderly to the Jewish welfare agency, they stipulated that move was intended to compel the Jews to “useful work,” which would require them to undertake physical labor and thereby “encourage them to emigrate.”³⁶ Resistance and discrimination against Jewish welfare institutions was also rife within smaller communities. In Herrlingen, the local town council appealed to the Gestapo in order to block conversion of a former Jewish boarding school into a nursing home. Though the town council’s request was ultimately denied, the members of the board still outlined several demands of the new institution; the nursing home would have to prioritize placement for veterans and their families; funerals for deceased residents would be prohibited locally; and, the town was to be paid an annual sum of no less than 1800 RM to cover administrative costs. The final condition stipulated by Herrlingen’s town council, which aimed to strictly prohibit movement of nursing home residents within the community in order to “prevent the spread of contagious diseases,” further articulates the tone of local discrimination.³⁷

The pogroms of November 1938 marked a moment of critical transition for German Jewry and the existing Jewish welfare apparatus. Ensuing punitive property taxes, a policy of forced Aryanization, and the total exclusion from economic life condemned large numbers of German Jews to unemployment and dependence on welfare not merely as supplementary aid, but now as a means of basic survival.³⁸ Simultaneously, with the *Verordnung über die öffentliche Fürsorge der Juden* (Decree on the Public Welfare of Jews) from November 19, 1938 the Nazi state moved to exclude Jews from social services offered by the public welfare system.³⁹ While the timing of new policies of persecution and dispossession portended dire long-term ramifications, Jewish welfare institutions worked to address the immediate crisis.

In addition to targeted destruction of community institutions, from soup kitchens to shelters, welfare organizations faced the seizure and destruction of material resources.⁴⁰ At the same time, routine operations were further endangered as personnel were arrested, institutions threatened with dissolution, and acts of physical violence perpetrated against vulnerable charges. A particularly egregious example of this violence during the pogrom and its far-reaching consequences transpired in Neustadt an der Weinstraße. In this small city in the Palatinate, 72 inhabitants of the *Israelitischen Altersheim* were driven from their beds and into the streets in the

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Meyer, *Tödliche Gratwanderung*, 114.

³⁵ Gruner. *Öffentliche Wohlfahrt und Judenverfolgung*, 197.

³⁶ Lohalm. “Local Administration and Nazi Anti-Jewish Policy,” 138.

³⁷ Seemüller. *Das jüdische Altersheim Herrlingen*, 21.

³⁸ Gruner. “Poverty and Persecution,” 5.

³⁹ Matthäus and Roseman, *Jewish Responses to Persecution*, 451.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 9.

early morning hours of November 10th. These elderly people, many only barely dressed, were harassed by local SS- and SA-men and made to watch as their home was set ablaze. In the unfolding terror, two 83-year-old women had been unable to escape the building; their remains were only discovered in the following weeks as rubble was cleared away.⁴¹ For the institution's administration, this act made clear that elderly charges could not be ensured of their physical safety, never mind peaceful retirement in Germany. While temporary shelters were secured in other Jewish facilities, community leadership pursued long-term placement in nursing homes in France and The Netherlands.⁴²

In the course of the November pogrom, local municipal and party leaders seized opportunities to intimidate and drive out Jewish inhabitants in order to claim “Jew-free” status for their communities. A similar scene unfolded following the Anschluss, when Austrian Jews living in villages were subject to spontaneous expulsion; a number of the dispossessed were deposited without notice at the doors of Jewish nursing homes in Vienna.⁴³ Urban Jewish welfare institutions now worked to mitigate need that was not only local to their communities, but that which had arrived at their doorsteps with the influx of those Jews who had been driven from the countryside. As reports of violence and terror during the pogrom spread, the question of emigration for elderly German Jews became increasingly critical for families and communities in Germany and abroad. A December article published in the *Palestine Post* reveals that in preceding weeks seven thousand applications for “parent certificates” were registered with the German and Austrian Settlers Association.⁴⁴

This localized challenge to existing immigration restrictions speaks to worries shared within the global community of German-Jewish émigrés. The Association voiced concern that without evidence of emigration prospects, those older Jews who had been detained would continue to linger in concentration camps. Furthermore, the community objected that in the face of additional economic measures, relatives abroad would be compelled to support the Nazi regime through the financial assistance of impoverished loved ones still in Germany.⁴⁵ Individual concerns reveal themselves more clearly in letters to the editor from this same period. One gentleman, whose mother helped finance his emigration with the sale of her home years before, was troubled that denial of a visa prevented him from fulfilling his “filial duty” to provide a home for an elderly parent who now found herself in distress.⁴⁶

While Jewish agencies within the Reich and abroad perceived a new urgency in helping older Jews leave Germany, a policy pressing for increased emigration of younger people was being pursued by the Nazi state. In the course of the failed Schacht-Rublee negotiations that unfolded in December 1938 the assertion that, “Hitler would ease his campaign against elderly German Jews if their children would emigrate” was widely circulated in the international press.⁴⁷ The proposed plan agreed upon by Hjalmar Schacht, president of the Reichsbank, and George Rublee of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees, would have seen the

⁴¹ Ben Barkow, Raphael Gross, and Michael Lenarz eds. *Novemberpogrom 1938: Die Augenzeugenberichte der Wiener Library*, London (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2002), 403.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 404.

⁴³ Jürgen Matthäus and Mark Roseman, *Jewish Responses to Persecution* (Plymouth, UK: AltaMira Press, 2010), 287.

⁴⁴ *Palestine Affairs* Vol. II, American Zionist Emergency Council, 64. This group of both young and older Zionists would go on to form the party Aliyah Hadashah in 1942.

⁴⁵ *Palestine Post*. “Palestine Settlers Ask for 12,000 Parent Certificates” December 29th, 1938. National Library of Israel. Digital Archive of Historical Jewish Press.

⁴⁶ *Palestine Post*. “In Germany I have a Mother” December 28th, 1938. National Library of Israel. Digital Archive of Historical Jewish Press.

⁴⁷ *The New York Times*. “Pell Says Hitler to Ease Drive on Elderly Jews” December 30th, 1938.

emigration of 150,000 young Jews from the greater Reich followed by 250,000 of their dependents. The estimated 200,000 Jews to remain were the elderly who would be expected to live out their lives in Germany “unmolested.”⁴⁸

In January 1939, the Jewish Community of Vienna faced a surge in housing need brought on both by the Aryanization of apartments and the push by the Central Office for Jewish Emigration to compel increasing numbers of Jews to leave the Reich. Two thousand applications had been newly registered at just one of the community’s four nursing homes alone. This facility was already overcrowded with 485 residents and unable to accommodate further interest. In order to address this crisis, the community recommended the planning of an old age home to accommodate three- to four thousand residents. This measure was proposed not only to alleviate the strain on community welfare institutions, but also to unburden emigrating family members from fear about “the uncertain fates of their geriatric parents.”⁴⁹ The acute housing crisis was further exacerbated with the imposition of anti-Jewish rental laws from April 30, 1939. In short order, untold numbers of Jews were summarily evicted from their apartments. Local communities were now called to address the need of the newly homeless by setting up temporary housing and through the expansion of old age homes.⁵⁰

While many elderly people were desirous of accommodation in these Jewish facilities, there were also those who resisted forcible placement in *Judenhäuser*. When 84-year-old Solms Heymann of Bad Kissingen was informed by the Jewish community that he would have to relinquish his home and move into a care facility in the city of Würzburg, he became so distraught that he wrote a non-Jewish friend imploring the man to intercede with the state authorities on his behalf. Hoping to stay a few more months in order to settle his last affairs, Heymann wrote that he and his wife were so upset at the prospect of being forced from their home of sixty years that they were considering suicide.⁵¹ Dispossession constituted more than removal from the comfort of familiar spaces for many German Jews who had spent their lives as integrated and integral parts of their community, and caused great despair for those who felt deep personal connection and belonging to the places they lived.

Following the decree revoking public welfare for Jews from November 19, 1938 many communities found themselves unprepared to address the totality of the welfare needs for which they were now solely responsible. Although a framework for Jewish welfare was in place, neither the structure nor the available funds were sufficient to provide for thousands of newly destitute Jews.⁵² The duress under which organizations now operated is clearly revealed in an example from Leipzig where the *Israelitischer Wohltätigkeitsverein* found its old age home woefully understaffed with just fourteen employees. To be at full force, and in order to adequately relieve “the extent of privation among the elderly and indigent,” the institution would need to expand personnel to a staff of thirty. However, before any attempt could be made to address this shortage, the group sought approval from the state police.⁵³ Without the oversight of the Reichsvertretung, which had been dissolved in November 1938, the period following the dissolution of the existing Jewish apparatus of self-help and self-governance had become a time of confusion for institutions.

The compulsory reorganization and consolidation of existing Jewish welfare bodies under

⁴⁸ Yehuda Bauer, *Jews for Sale?: Nazi-Jewish Negotiations, 1933-1945*, (New Haven: Yale University Press 1996), 34.

⁴⁹ Gruner. *Öffentliche Wohlfahrt und Judenverfolgung*, 229.

⁵⁰ Gruner. “Poverty and Persecution,” 19.

⁵¹ Comelia Binder and Michael Mence eds., *Letzte Spuren von Deutscher jüdischen Glaubens im Landkreis Bad Kissingen* (Melrichstadt: Richard Mack Druckerei, GmbH, 1994), 86.

⁵² Gruner. “Poverty and Persecution,” 10.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 23.

a single agency, the *Reichsvereinigung für die Betreuung jüdischer Auswanderer und fürsorgebedürftiger Juden* (Reich Association for the Care of Jewish Emigrants and Needy Jews), was initiated by Reinhard Heydrich following the pogrom in November 1938.⁵⁴ On February 2, 1939, the newly established Reichsvereinigung released its first report to all Jewish organizations in Germany. Details of the association's directive to absorb existing institutions under its umbrella were outlined therein. Establishment of a separate education and welfare system along with increased attention to emigration were to be the Reichsvereinigung's primary objectives. The welfare division in particular was organized to give special attention to the plight of the aged and the care-dependent.⁵⁵ To this end, the association moved to increase the number of placements available in care facilities and old age homes. Within one year the Reichsvereinigung established a further twenty-three facilities bringing the total number of institutions designated for the elderly and infirm to ninety. In Berlin alone the number of nursing homes rose from sixteen to twenty-three.⁵⁶ During this period a lack of suitable buildings and increased pressure from the RSHA to cancel existing leases and sell properties to raise funds further complicated the work of the Reichsvereinigung. The association found expansion of institutions and the ability to advance welfare aims routinely frustrated by constrictions of state interference.⁵⁷

Although existing Jewish welfare organizations were under pressure to provide for growing numbers of the destitute, they were spared neither from disruption of their work through monitoring and inspection by state authorities, nor from threats of dissolution. An institution could be disbanded at a moment's notice should its operation be in conflict with state interests. Such was the case in Frankfurt when in 1941 the *Versorgungsanstalt für Israeliten* was informed that they would have to relocate the affiliated nursing home as the building was to be secured for the immediate disposal of the Wehrmacht.⁵⁸ In smaller communities, threats were equally grave. Given that rural care facilities were often the only institution of their type, local Jewish communities were hardly in the position to absorb residents who were dispersed. The situation was further complicated by local efforts to force out Jews. In early 1940, in a greater effort to remove Jews from the region, the Gestapo in Wilhelmshaven targeted the home operated by the Weinberg siblings for closure. The aim was to expel the Jewish population of coastal East Friesland to destinations "left of the Rhine, excluding Hamburg."⁵⁹ Even though the Weinbergs faced imminent disruption of their work and expulsion from their home, the siblings resolved to carry on the care of their charges. Several advertisements placed in the Berlin Jewish community newsletter reveal that the Weinbergs hoped to find suitable accommodation for themselves as well as those they fostered.⁶⁰

Self-sacrifice and a commitment to others' wellbeing appear as a consistent thread running through the professional and personal lives of those who worked within Jewish self-help. The majority of the individuals who held administrative positions in the welfare hierarchy had a professional history in social work both in service of the state and the Jewish community.⁶¹

⁵⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁵ Otto Dov Kulka, *Deutsches Judentum unter dem Nationalsozialismus, Band 1* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1997), 447.

⁵⁶ Adler-Rudel, *Jüdische Selbsthilfe unter dem Naziregime*, 170.

⁵⁷ Meyer, *Tödliche Gratwanderung*, 110.

⁵⁸ Monica Kingreen, *Nach der Kristallnacht: Jüdisches Leben und antijüdische Politik in Frankfurt am Main 1938-1945*. Schriftenreihe des Fritz Bauers Instituts. Vol. 17. (Frankfurt: Campus, 1999), 147.

⁵⁹ Frerichs, *Spurensuche: Das jüdische Altenheim in Varel*, 54.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 55.

⁶¹ Gudrun Maierhof, *Selbstbehauptung im Chaos: Frauen in the jüdischen Selbsthilfe 1933-1943* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2002), 67.

Among them was former Berlin city councilor Martha Henschke. In 1933, Henschke was ousted after thirteen years representing the DDP and dismissed of her administrative role with the Hufeland Hospital. Having demonstrated a commitment to her community, and as a longtime advocate for the destitute in housing claims, Henschke was appointed in the early 1930s to director of the sixteen nursing homes administered by the Reichsvertretung in Berlin. She continued in this capacity until her deportation to Auschwitz with other leaders of the Reichsvereinigung's welfare division in November 1942.⁶²

While a great many of those who staffed care facilities were female, few had professional backgrounds in the field of nursing and personal care before receiving education and retraining for this work from the Jewish community.⁶³ Frequently, however, the work of caregivers extended beyond attention to basic physical needs. The opportunity to share concerns and to reminisce on their lives was one remaining comfort for patients. Fanny Tritt, a trained pharmacist who administered medication in a nursing home, recalls that she spent hours of her day "talking with [residents], holding their hands and remembering the happier times in their lives."⁶⁴

The emotional work of providing elder care for the desolate and dispossessed generated specific challenges. In recollections of her patients, many of whom were separated from immediate families through emigration, Tritt alludes to the psychological distress suffered as a consequence of prolonged absence from loved ones, "Many [residents] lost their senses, were violent, and it was impossible to soothe them.... This was very difficult work." Tritt describes responses to the anguish of the elderly in further detail, revealing that staff often administered sedatives to calm inconsolable patients and, for their own protection, confined those who became combative to straightjackets.⁶⁵ In turn the suffering of elderly Jews carried a heavy burden for their caregivers. One nurse who vowed to care for her charges as long as she was permitted and physically able to do so, still concluded that, "beyond their physical frailties, [the aged] are enveloped by such emotional distress that this field of work also becomes tragic for us."⁶⁶ The accounts of those involved in Jewish welfare work suggest the psychological toll of dispossession and isolation that reverberated throughout the community in a time of growing fear and uncertainty.

If the nature of Jewish welfare work was itself a challenge, difficulties were only further exacerbated by the desperate budgetary crisis that evolved out of the increasingly restrictive social and economic strictures imposed by the Nazi state. By 1941 operational costs for the Reichsvereinigung's social welfare apparatus grew to 1.5 million RM per month. In order to relieve some of the financial strain, existing fees for recipients of institutional care and their families was raised. In April the board agreed to introduce an admission fee of 2000 RM for new patrons of already overburdened nursing homes and long-term care facilities.⁶⁷ However, as few Jews were in the financial position to pay such high sums, hardly any funds were raised from this effort. Another measure befell administrators and staff who were directed to dilute the quality of their care and to ration already diminished resources in order to accommodate increasing numbers of the needy. Demand had become so great that many facilities converted all available space, including basements, laundry rooms and storage closets in order to increase their

⁶² Christine Hoss, *Vor die Tür gesetzt: im Nationalsozialismus verfolgte Berliner Stadtverordnete und Magistratsmitglieder 1933-1945*. (Berlin: Verein Aktives Museum, 2006), 96.

⁶³ Meyer, *Tödliche Gratwanderung*, 106.

⁶⁴ Fanny Tritt. Memoir, "Meine Lebensgeschichte. Das Wunder des Überlebens, 1918-1971." Leo Baeck Institute. Digibaek Digital Archive.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Kingreen, *Nach der Kristallnacht*, 147.

⁶⁷ Meyer, *Tödliche Gratwanderung*, 112.

capacity.⁶⁸ In some of the most crowded institutions cots lined hallways and patients slept two to a bed. Elsewhere, employees of nursing homes were tasked with raiding former apartments of incoming patrons for any items that could be put to use. One attendant recalled collecting coal with colleagues since the home where they worked was no longer in the position to purchase any.⁶⁹ For those residents who had spent their remaining savings, or who had sold last possessions to finance a placement, cold and overcrowded conditions paired with a decline in the quality of care could be difficult to accept.⁷⁰

The widespread deportations of Jews that began in fall 1941 generated a host of new social problems for Jewish welfare and the care of the aged. As expulsion of Jews over sixty-five was not prioritized until after the Wannsee Conference in January 1942, the immediate effect was the separation of remaining families. As younger forced laborers who had supported generations of loved ones on their limited incomes were deported, and the assets of deportees seized, new placements had to be found for elderly dependents.⁷¹ One woman who frequently visited her father recalled that farewell scenes in nursing homes between family members who were to be separated were so emotional that they defied all description.⁷² Another consequence played out in Varel where Siblings Ernst and Jette Weinberg were forcibly separated from the elderly residents in their care upon their deportation to Lodz in 1941.⁷³ Although their skills remained vital to the continued care of those who remained, at this time that workers who were engaged in Jewish welfare also became vulnerable.

Beginning in June 1942, poverty and reliance on welfare allotments were cited as sufficient grounds for deportation. In Berlin, the Gestapo informed community leaders that those Jews reliant on social assistance, including the aged, would be forced to emigrate “for budgetary reasons.”⁷⁴ Writing shortly after the state’s move to deport the destitute and dependent, Hannah Karminski, who worked within the Reichsvereinigung’s welfare division, reflected that,

This Job can no longer provide any satisfaction. It now has very little in common with what we used to understand as welfare work. And when it’s people that are involved, not property, liquidation is particularly rough. Yet just because we’re dealing with human beings, you have the occasional moments when there seems to be some real meaning in still being here.⁷⁵

Karminski’s observations suggest the challenges for many among the Jewish community leadership, and in the welfare apparatus, who had little choice but to comply with Nazi authorities as they attempted to continue the care of those in need. As nursing homes and care facilities came under direct threat, the terror of expulsion grew in immediacy for many elderly German Jews.

In spring 1942, during his final months at the old age home in the Iranische Strasse in Berlin, 78-year-old Friedrich Huth began to reflect on his experiences in Germany through letters and poems to his daughter. Huth, who had already experienced the deportation of members of

⁶⁸ J.A.S. Grenville. *The Jews and Germany of Hamburg: Destruction of a Civilization 1790-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 205.

⁶⁹ Tritt, “Meine Lebensgeschichte. Das Wunder des Überlebens,” 19.

⁷⁰ Erna Huth, Memoir, “... und half mir mit Gottes Hilfe selbst: ein Lebensbericht von Erna Huth, 1895-1945”. Leo Baeck Institute. Digibaeck Digital Archive.

⁷¹ Gruner, “Poverty and Persecution,” 29.

⁷² Huth, “... und half mir mit Gottes Hilfe selbst,” 38.

⁷³ Frerichs. *Spurensuche: Das jüdische Altenheim in Varel*, 85.

⁷⁴ Gruner, “Poverty and Persecution,” 31.

⁷⁵ Gruner, “Poverty and Persecution”, 1.

his immediate family, now faced the possibility of his own expulsion. The following lines excerpted from Huth's writings in this period speak to the anxiety he felt, and the fear associated with living under the threat of deportation. "Tap, tap - tap, tap, I am struck by each step; the footfall of a steel-weighted sole," Huth wrote, concluding with the foreboding question "Does he wait outside my door to take me, an old man, for forced labor in the East?"⁷⁶ Friedrich Huth was ultimately deported to Theresienstadt where he perished.

Fear for what awaited the elderly and infirm upon deportation was shared by those responsible for their care. The physician Lucie Adelsberger, who had given up on plans to emigrate in order to remain with her paralyzed and care-dependent mother, described her feelings at the profoundly troubling prospect of deportation and potential separation,

"When would they come and take us away, together or separately? Was I, who had spent my whole life struggling to save each and every human life, was I supposed to kill my mother, the most dear person to me in all the world? May a person who believes in a higher power ever take a life, be it her own or another? I couldn't do it. But I did get on my knees and beseech God to let my mother die before the thugs could drag her away with their murderous hands."⁷⁷

Adelsberger goes on to suggest that the desire to see the elderly spared from further abuse and indignity by way of a peaceful natural death was shared by many within the Jewish community at that time. For a number of those who worked in Jewish welfare, the desire to remain with loved ones or to continue the care of the needy often played a role in their own fates. Like Adelsberger, Fanny Tritt was among individuals caught between both of these commitments. When the nursing home in which Tritt worked was slated for dissolution in September 1942, she was torn between accompanying her patients and remaining with her elderly mother who had recently undergone surgery. Tritt, however, would not be called to make this impossible choice as the community was still in need of her medical knowledge. Instead, Tritt's mother and her nursing home patients were deported on the same transport to Theresienstadt.⁷⁸

Debate about the willingness of Jewish officials to cooperate with Nazi authorities, in light of state policies that escalated from discrimination and dispossession to the deportation of tens of thousands of German Jews, remains a point of critical contention among historians and within lay circles. Scholarship on the character of these interactions, which took place in an atmosphere of coercion and duress, has complicated earlier claims of collaboration by those who worked within those Jewish community organizations. This has been greatly influenced by a growing understanding of the desperate and increasingly inhumane conditions faced by German Jewry subject to harsh Nazi strictures.⁷⁹ At the same time, there are those who have claimed that institutionalized Jewish welfare "absolved Nazi authorities of having to deal with the welfare burden, and other problems that arose from deportation."⁸⁰ However, it is difficult to imagine that

⁷⁶ Huth, "... und half mir mit Gottes Hilfe selbst," 37. The accounts of elderly individuals, who were among those victims most likely to perish in the Holocaust, are rarely preserved. While their experiences and recollections might be found in letters in times when channels for communication remained undisrupted, state censorship and a desire to spare loved one's from worry may well have affected the tenor and transparency of their words.

⁷⁷ Harriet Pass-Friedenreich, *Female, Jewish, and Educated: The Lives of Central European University Women*. (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2002), 173.

⁷⁸ Tritt, "Meine Lebensgeschichte. Das Wunder des Überlebens," 31-33. Fanny Tritt was reunited with her mother in Theresienstadt, both women survived.

⁷⁹ Avram Barkai, "Jewish Self-Help in Nazi Germany, 1933-1939," in *Jewish Life in Nazi Germany: Dilemmas and Responses*. Nicosia, Francis R. and David Scrase eds. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 86.

⁸⁰ Elkin, *Aspects of Jewish Welfare*, 55.

individuals who were committed to social work would have been able to resist demands by the Nazi state, or would have otherwise turned away from assisting the dispossessed, the destitute, and the elderly so long as there remained a need for welfare services.

In less than five years the essential means of survival for tens thousands of Jews who remained in Nazi Germany fell on the shoulders of the Jewish welfare apparatus.⁸¹ While intervention and excessive demands by the Nazi state compromised the character of traditional Jewish welfare, dedicated individuals continued the care of an aging and increasingly destitute population.⁸² Rivka Elkin has suggested that social solidarity through continued community support of the destitute and infirm allowed for German Jewry to “preserve the moral foundations of Jewish society even at a time of atrocious hardship.”⁸³ This is evident when one looks to the Jewish welfare response to meeting the material and physical needs of the elderly, as well as in the care provided toward their psychological wellbeing. In spite of untenable social and economic hardships, dedicated individuals within the Jewish welfare apparatus were able to maneuver within an existing, yet ever compromised infrastructure, in order to preserve quality of life for the most vulnerable who were not in the position to help themselves.

⁸¹ Barkai, “Jewish Self-Help in Nazi Germany, 1933-1939,” 86.

⁸² Meyer, *Tödliche Gratwanderung*, 113.

⁸³ Elkin, *Aspects of Jewish Welfare*, 49-51.

RED HEROES: THE ORIGINS OF LEFT-WING JEWISH RESISTANCE IN NAZI GERMANY

--
G. SCOTT WATERMAN

The Nazi project to defame, disenfranchise, isolate, impoverish, and ultimately deport and murder the Jews of Germany was a complex and protracted one that required the concerted efforts of thousands of committed ideologues and functionaries. In addition, given their scale and scope, Nazi anti-Jewish policies and practices could not have been undertaken and prosecuted successfully without at least the tacit acquiescence of most members of the population who were not direct participants in the program. Nevertheless, some Germans actively opposed the Nazi regime in a variety of ways, and the courageous but ultimately doomed efforts of many of them have been widely recognized. The historiography of resistance by members of the largest target of Nazi racial persecution and violence – the Jews – has, however, been less straightforward. As historian Arnold Paucker, who escaped Nazi Germany in his youth, points out, “After the destruction of European Jewry, the image of the Jews as defenceless victims was widely accepted for many years.”¹ As a result of Paucker’s and a number of other scholars’ work, the record is well on its way to being corrected and the supposition that the Jews of Germany uniformly acquiesced or even participated in their own destruction has been convincingly refuted.

Among the thorny problems faced by historians of resistance is that the term itself defies narrow definition in a way that is universally applicable across political and social contexts. The circumstances in which German Jews found themselves in the years prior to their destruction were evolving and thus analyses of what constitutes ‘resistance’ cannot be expected to remain constant across that time span. Although rising anti-democratic sentiments were clearly evident during the years preceding the Nazi seizure of power, the Weimar Republic was formally a pluralistic polity with a lively civic culture. As Marjorie Lamberti indicates, “Unlike the vast majority of German citizens, many politically conscious Jews entered the Third Reich with a record of active opposition to National Socialism during the Weimar Republic,” pointing out that those who led and belonged to the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* (Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith, or CV) had been organized to fight anti-Semitism since 1893 and recognized the serious threat posed by the National Socialists from the late 1920s onward.² According to Paucker, the strategically camouflaged campaign of the CV in support of the parties of democracy during the early 1930s was under-recognized by historians as evidence that “in a still-free Germany,” the “middle-class Jewish community clearly saw... a total defence against Fascism” as their “only option.”³ While the liberal-assimilationist majority of German Jews supported the efforts of the CV, largely aimed at the non-Jewish population, to preserve their honor and their preferred political system, the Zionist minority directed its considerable energies in combating anti-Semitism toward education and spiritual renewal among

¹ Arnold Paucker, *Jewish Resistance in Germany: The Facts and the Problems* (Berlin: Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, 1991), 3.

² Marjorie Lamberti, “The Jewish Defence in Germany after the National-Socialist Seizure of Power,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 42 (January 1997): 136.

³ Arnold Paucker, *German Jews in the Resistance, 1933-1945: The Facts and the Problems* (Berlin: Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, 2005), 11–12.

Jews.⁴

With the collapse of the Republic and its rapid replacement by a vastly different political and social reality, the avenues available for self-defense, let alone opposition, narrowed dramatically. Some Jews, recognizing the direction in which their prospects in Germany were headed, chose to emigrate during the first years of the Nazi period. Most, however, continued to see the possibility of self-defense against Nazi persecution and looked to the *Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden* (Reich Representation of German Jews) to protect their interests.⁵ The *Reichsvertretung* had been formed in 1933 in order to provide unified representation for German Jews. Its main components, the Zionist Federation and the CV, had long been at odds with each other over fundamental strategies for dealing with anti-Semitism and the question (long before the Nazi period) of whether a German-Jewish symbiosis was possible or desirable. On one point, however, the two groups agreed: the long tradition of Jewish self-defense being prosecuted within the bounds of legality would continue, despite the dramatically changed circumstances.⁶ The overwhelmingly middle-class character of the relatively small Jewish community of Germany, and the deeply felt responsibility of its leaders to protect it from an aggressively anti-Semitic regime that possessed nearly complete control over German politics and society, meant that any systematic illegal resistance would not arise from official, organized Jewry.

That should not be understood, however, to imply that resistance to Nazi rule among mainstream Jews was nonexistent. As alluded to above, the extraordinary circumstances of the Nazi totalitarian police state demand an expanded definition of ‘resistance’ if it is to capture, as Konrad Kwiet suggests it should, “any action aimed at countering the ideology and policies of National Socialism.” Behaviors should be included in such a definition if, “even without that intention, [they] were none the less directed against National Socialism and are thus objectively seen as a threat and a danger to the Nazi power. These are actions which contradict the general pattern of behavior or role-playing ordained for the Jewish section of the population by the Nazi authorities.”⁷ Kwiet identifies three forms of such resistance that occurred with some frequency among German Jews: 1) open protest (e.g., letters to Nazi officials, speeches, refusal to wear the yellow star); 2) production and distribution of illegal publications; and 3) attempts to escape the fate determined by the Nazis, including by suicide.⁸ Referring to the German population (not specifically to Jews), Francis Nicosia notes that “there were very different levels of resistance to National Socialism during the Third Reich, reflecting in some measure the wide range of position, power and influence among the population as a whole. In that sense, individual acts of non-compliance among ordinary citizens usually reflected the extent to which many of them were realistically capable of resisting certain policies of the Nazi state – for that matter the state in general.”⁹ Considering the status of Jews as a small and reviled minority, dispossessed of

⁴ Francis R. Nicosia, “Resistance and Self-Defence: Zionism and Antisemitism in Inter-War Germany,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 42 (January 1997): 123.

⁵ Konrad Kwiet, “Resistance and Opposition: The Example of the German Jews,” in *Contending with Hitler: Varieties of German Resistance in the Third Reich*, ed. David Clay Large (Washington: German Historical Institute, 1991), 65. In the wake of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, the name of the organization was changed to *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland* (Reich Representation of the Jews in Germany).

⁶ Arnold Paucker and Konrad Kwiet, “Jewish Leadership and Jewish Resistance,” in *Probing the Depths of German Antisemitism: German Society and the Persecution of the Jews, 1933-1941*, ed. David Bankier (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000), 373.

⁷ Konrad Kwiet, “Problems of Jewish Resistance Historiography,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 24 (January 1979): 41.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 54–57.

⁹ Francis R. Nicosia, “Introduction: Resistance to National Socialism in the Work of Peter Hoffmann,” in *Germans Against Nazism: Nonconformity, Opposition and Resistance in the Third Reich*, ed. Francis R. Nicosia and Lawrence D. Stokes (New York/Oxford: Berg, 1990), 2.

whatever “position, power and influence” it may once have had, it is hardly surprising that, as Paucker avers, militant resistance was “out of the question for the official, organized Jewish community when National Socialism had become the state power.”¹⁰ What is remarkable is that militant resistance did occur among German Jews, and that its existence remained obscured for so long.

While the early historiography of the era for the most part ignored the topic of Jewish self-defense and resistance, that deficiency began to be redressed in the 1960s and 1970s, largely via studies initiated by the Leo Baeck Institute in London.¹¹ The focus of those investigations initially tended to center on the Jewish defense against anti-Semitism in the years preceding Hitler’s assumption of power.¹² Paucker and Kwiet note that misleading themes in the field, warranting correction through historical research that has belied them, included portrayals of Jewish community leaders as collaborators in their constituents’ destruction and of German Jews as having adopted a “ghetto mentality” that foreclosed their ability to resist.¹³

With the death of German democracy, and with it the possibility of successful self-defense on the CV model, and in light of the organized Jewish community’s futile if understandable commitment to remaining within the bounds of legality, organized Jewish resistance to Nazi rule became the covert province of a committed group of young anti-fascists, estimated by Paucker to have numbered at least 2,000.¹⁴ Previously absent from the historiography of the period, Bernhard Mark’s 1961 publication in Yiddish represented the first appearance of a history of the underground Communist-affiliated and mostly Jewish Herbert Baum Group.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Paucker notes that “until 1970, illegal anti-Fascist Jewish resistance was virtually ignored by German-Jewish historiography,” adding the trenchant observation that “there was resistance to resistance.”¹⁶ The first major treatment of the topic was the work of East German historian Helmut Eschwege, published in 1970.¹⁷ Among its vital contributions was its acknowledgment of the Jewish identities of many anti-fascist activists, in contradiction of the rigid Marxist dichotomy of fascism and anti-fascism, uncomplicated by other qualifiers. That ideological transgression likely explains why Eschwege was unable to publish his manuscript in the German Democratic Republic (GDR).¹⁸ East-West tensions were, in fact, inscribed on the topic of German and Jewish resistance from both sides of the divide. In West Germany, for a considerable period of time the favored exemplars of resistance were the nationalist, conservative, aristocratic (and, to a significant extent, conventionally anti-Semitic) participants in the July 20 plot. Opposition activities arising from the illegal underground workers’ movement were largely ignored, as was the possibility of active resistance by Jews. In the East it was taken as axiomatic that all true resistance was carried out by Communists, whose

¹⁰ Arnold Paucker, “Researching German-Jewish Responses and German-Jewish Resistance to National Socialism: Sources and Directions for the Future,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 51 (January 2006): 193.

¹¹ Arnold Paucker, “Resistance of German and Austrian Jews to the Nazi Regime, 1933-1945,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 40 (January 1995): 3.

¹² Kwiet, “Problems of Jewish Resistance Historiography,” 38.

¹³ Paucker and Kwiet, “Jewish Leadership and Jewish Resistance,” 371.

¹⁴ Arnold Paucker, “Jewish Self-Defence,” in *Die Juden Im Nationalsozialistischen Deutschland/The Jews in Nazi Germany, 1933-1943*, ed. Arnold Paucker (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1986), 62.

¹⁵ Kwiet, “Problems of Jewish Resistance Historiography,” 39; Ber Mark, “The Herbert Baum Group: Jewish Resistance in Germany in the Years 1937-1942,” in *They Fought Back: The Story of the Jewish Resistance in Nazi Europe*, ed. Yuri Suhl (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1967), 55–68.

¹⁶ Paucker, *Jewish Resistance in Germany*, 4.

¹⁷ Helmut Eschwege, “Resistance of German Jews against the Nazi Regime,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 15 (January 1970): 143–80.

¹⁸ Kwiet, “Problems of Jewish Resistance Historiography,” 40.

potential other identities as Jews were irrelevant.¹⁹

Understanding the origins and nature of anti-fascist resistance groups and activities among German Jews requires an examination of the movements and organizations from which they arose: 1) left-wing, working-class German political parties and factions and 2) Jewish youth groups of the Weimar and Nazi periods. As noted above, many Jews were politically active in the defense against anti-Semitism and in the support of Weimar democracy more broadly. Consistent with their status as a small and always-vulnerable minority, and with the sentiments of the majority of German Jews who saw themselves as integral members of German society, formation of a separate Jewish political party appeared neither advisable nor desirable. Perhaps more surprising, however, considering the largely middle-class socioeconomic status and mainstream political positions of the majority of Jews in Germany, were their voting patterns. Paucker suggests that “an antisemitic German Right drove the Jews to the Left” of where their ideological and class interests would otherwise have placed many of them. He estimates that, by the late Republic, as much as sixty percent of the Jewish vote went to the two working-class parties – the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (Social Democratic Party, or SPD) and the *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* (Communist Party, or KPD) – with the SPD accounting for the vast majority of it. Particularly with the collapse of the center-left in the form of the *Deutsche Demokratische Partei* (German Democratic Party, or DDP), whose independent existence ended in 1930, increasing support among bourgeois liberal Jews for the SPD is understandable. Nevertheless, more conservative elements of the CV expressed consternation over growing ties between young Jewish political activists and members of the Marxist working class.²⁰

The size of Germany’s industrial proletariat was reflected in the strength of its working-class political movements. The status of the SPD as the world’s largest socialist party long predated the Russian Revolution and it played a vital role in Weimar politics. In an early reflection of the factionalism that would contribute to the inability of the workers’ parties to save the Republic, the left wing of the SPD had broken away in 1917 and late the following year the KPD was established through a merger of the far-left factions, becoming by 1933 the largest Communist party outside the Soviet Union. Rancor between the establishment SPD and the radical KPD marked the relationship between the Marxist parties from the beginning, with the former committed to representative democracy as the means of achieving socialism and the latter eventually subordinating its program to that of the Communist International and its Soviet leadership. Under the sway of rigidly interpreted Marxist doctrine, the Communists routinely denounced the SPD as “social fascists,” refusing to collaborate with them in an effort to thwart Nazi ambitions. The realization of those ambitions entailed the rapid suppression of all political opposition, particularly the working-class parties and most conspicuously the Communists, seen by the Nazis as the greater threat.²¹

The rapid neutralization of the Marxist parties as organized anti-fascist forces did not mean that leftist resistance to Nazi power ceased, but rather that it went underground and, of necessity, operated in far smaller units. The splintering of the left-wing opposition resulted in a movement that in aggregate was far more ideologically heterodox than the KPD had become with the Stalinization of international Communism. It consisted largely of young radicals, many of

¹⁹ Paucker, “Resistance of German and Austrian Jews to the Nazi Regime, 1933-1945,” 4; John M. Cox, *Circles of Resistance: Jewish, Leftist, and Youth Dissidence in Nazi Germany*, Studies in Modern European History v. 62 (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 4-5; Paucker and Kwiet, “Jewish Leadership and Jewish Resistance,” 388-89.

²⁰ Paucker, “Jewish Self-Defence,” 58-60.

²¹ Cox, *Circles of Resistance*, 27-34; William Sheridan Allen, “Social Democratic Resistance Against Hitler and the European Tradition of Underground Movements,” in *Germans Against Nazism: Nonconformity, Opposition and Resistance in the Third Reich*, ed. Francis R. Nicosia and Lawrence D. Stokes (New York/Oxford: Berg, 1990), 193-94.

whom were Jews. Young Jews helped establish two of the resistance movement's early components in the late Weimar years: *Neu Beginnen* (New Beginning, also known as the Org) and the *Linke Opposition* (Left Opposition, or LO). The Org grew several-fold on the heels of Hitler's assumption of power, attracting trade unionists and leaders of the Communist Youth group to its ranks. Its leaders had possessed the foresight to begin preparations for clandestine work prior to the Nazi takeover and in the early years of the dictatorship it was able to produce and distribute an opposition newspaper, *Sozialistische Aktion*, and leaflets, despite its decimation by arrests. The LO was founded as a Trotskyist organization in opposition to the Stalinist KPD. It, like the Org, drew in radicals who were disillusioned by the impotence of the large working-class parties in the face of the Nazi onslaught, but was itself prone to internecine ideological strife. Several Polish-born radical Jews were active in the LO, whose covert activities during the early Nazi period included distribution of newspapers, attempts at agitation among factory workers, and even dangerously public "graffiti-actions." Young, mostly Jewish, LO members met in small groups in Berlin apartments for wide-ranging discussions of literature and ideas before arrests made such gatherings inadvisable. The disproportionate attraction these groups held for young left-wing Jews may be attributable to their intellectual emphases, though they were not focused specifically on anti-Semitism – not yet the central concern of most of these highly secularized anti-fascists.²²

In addition to the leftist political (not specifically Jewish) context within which underground anti-fascist resistance among German Jews was spawned, the network of Jewish youth organizations of the Weimar and Nazi periods also played a vital role by providing, in Paucker's words, "especially fertile soil for the development of an anti-fascist outlook and for active involvement in the resistance."²³ Youth groups specifically for Jews grew during and after the First World War, partly in response to anti-Semitic discrimination within the German youth movement but also in connection with the desire of some Jews for a stronger identification with their cultural heritage. Two of the important groups of the Weimar era, reflective of the dichotomy in the German Jewish community as a whole, were the non-Zionist *Kameraden* (Comrades) and the Zionist *Blau-Weiß* (Blue-White). By the late 1920s the *Kameraden* had split into a more assimilationist and a more self-consciously Jewish faction, eventually disbanding in 1932 into three successor groups. It and the *Blau-Weiß*, which lasted until 1929, as well as the left-wing Zionist *Haschomer Hazair*, included a number of young Jews who became part of the underground resistance movement. As with the Marxist organizations described above, intellectual engagement and discussion were core features of these groups and of their appeal to eventual anti-fascist Jewish activists.²⁴

Already major cultural forces in the Jewish community, youth group membership grew in the early years of the Nazi period to include over half of the eligible population. A number of the new groups that arose were smaller and more radical than their pre-1933 forebears. The *Schwarze Haufen*, for example, was anarchist in orientation, though the spirit of anti-fascist resistance facilitated fluidity among socialist, Communist, and anarchist ideologies in its members.²⁵ The *Werkleute* (Workmen), one of the components of what had been the *Kameraden*, originally favored a fusion of German and Jewish thinking but later converted to Zionism and eventually its members, along with those of the *Schwarzer Haufen*, concluded an alliance with the KPD.²⁶ Arising in late 1933 from the establishment circles associated with the CV, the *Bund Deutsch-*

²² Cox, *Circles of Resistance*, 33–49.

²³ Paucker, *German Jews in the Resistance, 1933-1945*, 23.

²⁴ Cox, *Circles of Resistance*, 15–19.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 19–20.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 18; Eschwege, "Resistance of German Jews against the Nazi Regime," 147.

Jüdischer Jugend (Association of German-Jewish Youth, or BDJJ), later the *Ring-Bund*, also nurtured the development of several later members of the Communist underground resistance, demonstrating the growing allegiance of significant numbers of young middle- and working-class Jews to Marxism, often via the intellectual and heterodox milieus of youth groups, as well as through movement of members of the youth organizations of the disbanded leftist parties to Jewish groups.²⁷

All political viewpoints, including German-nationalist and right-wing Zionist, were represented among the variety of Jewish youth organizations, though most had been founded on liberal or socialist-Zionist ideologies. Arnold Paucker, with personal experience in the socialist-Zionist youth movement, describes Jewish youth associations of the time as “an oasis in which free thinking could flower – in the midst of National Socialist Germany...,” providing a context in which “many thousands of young Jews received a political education that was not merely Jewish and Zionist in orientation but in part even socialist or indeed anti-fascist – and this under the very eyes of the Gestapo.” Although illegal anti-Nazi activities were not by any means the missions of Jewish youth groups, such organizations, whose members were on the whole sympathetic with the plight of the working-class movement, provided camouflage for the operation of left-wing resisters as well as venues for recruitment of anti-fascist activists. After the Nuremberg Laws were promulgated, the KPD took the precaution of separating Jewish members from their resistance cells and directing them to join Jewish associations. Many such organizations, including especially the *Ring-Bund* as well as some Zionist and athletic groups, were infiltrated by Communist activists. Approximately 500 young Jews, men and women, likely operated as clandestine anti-fascist operatives under the cover of Jewish youth organizations.²⁸

Having examined the political and social institutions and organizations from which anti-fascist resistance among Jews largely arose, attention will now turn to the context of the Nazi state within which active opposition formed and operated. Specific focus will be directed to those aspects of the social and political milieu that shaped the nature and scope of active Jewish resistance to Nazi power. As briefly introduced above, the long struggle against anti-Semitism, whose organized origins date to the nineteenth century and whose subsequent strategies to counter National Socialist ideology depended on the democratic and constitutional nature of the Weimar Republic, had been lost. Although in the new political environment the wide range of activities that legitimately should be considered ‘resistance’ extended from nonconformity to militant opposition, the impediments to large-scale, centralized resistance to the Nazi state and its policies by the Jewish community were overwhelming.²⁹

To begin with, the succession of anti-Jewish policies was on the whole not unpopular among the population at large, whose support for the small Jewish minority was almost nonexistent. As Kwiet indicates, “The abdication of liberalism and the rapid destruction of the organized labor movement meant that the two social forces that had once supported Jewish emancipation had disappeared.”³⁰ Although prior to the start of wholesale deportations in 1941 the plight of German Jews was hardly hidden, no large-scale objection to persecution and its consequences occurred. The successful February 1943 protest of non-Jewish women in Berlin to their Jewish husbands’ arrests is widely cited due to its status as an aberration – and perhaps also as an indication that opposition to harshly anti-Semitic policies might not necessarily have been as dangerous or futile as sometimes assumed. Nevertheless, no mass opposition movement developed within Nazi Germany. Moreover, the centers of resistance that did arise – within the

²⁷ Cox, *Circles of Resistance*, 20–23; Paucker, *German Jews in the Resistance, 1933-1945*, 25.

²⁸ Paucker, *German Jews in the Resistance, 1933-1945*, 23–30.

²⁹ Kwiet, “Problems of Jewish Resistance Historiography,” 42; Nicosia, “Resistance and Self-Defence,” 124–25.

³⁰ Kwiet, “Resistance and Opposition: The Example of the German Jews,” 66.

churches and among National Conservatives – did not present opportunities for Jewish participation. Jews were, of course, outsiders to both of those circles, whose members in any case never conceived of Nazi anti-Jewish policies as the central focus of their efforts.³¹ In fact, Paucker asserts that “with some notable exceptions...the National Conservative conspirators had no intention whatsoever of restoring the full civil rights of the Jews after their ‘liberation’ of Germany,” though the “Final Solution” would surely have been halted.³² Both with respect to popular sentiment and institutional structures, the Jews were on their own.

Not only were they on their own, they became progressively fewer in number and more advanced in age. In just the first several weeks following the Nazi takeover, approximately 30,000 Jews emigrated from Germany. Reflective of the early and concerted repression of political dissent pursued by the regime, most of those who fled at that point were active in politics and culture, including leaders of the working-class parties as well as journalists and artists. By January 1934 another 30,000 had left Germany. Among the roughly 60,000 Jews who fled during the first year of Nazi rule, with many more to follow, young people were overrepresented and thus the average age of Jews remaining in Germany climbed, further impeding the likelihood and feasibility of large-scale resistance activities. Moreover, the pervasiveness of the Nazi police state and the terror brought to bear on political and racial enemies itself served to discourage organized resistance among Jews, particularly in the years before their ultimate fate had been determined by the regime and thus before the full stakes could have been known.³³

As noted previously, the leadership of the Jewish community committed itself early on to operate within the limits of legality, as suffocating as those strictures quickly became. In addition, active illegal resistance among Jews to the Nazi state was discouraged by Jewish leaders. The *Reichsvertretung* officially ignored the underground activities developing among some anti-fascist Jewish youth before the war began, and its successor, the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* (Reich Association of the Jews in Germany), sought actively to contain it thereafter. The draft of a statement released by the organization on June 10, 1942, warns Jews against engagement in “irresponsible acts” that “would only put the entire Jewish community at risk.”³⁴ Paucker offers several reasons for that stance on the parts of the leaders of official German Jewry. As outlined above, the Jews as a group were isolated completely, and in a very real sense were collectively hostages of the regime, against which they were defenseless. The paternalistic impulse of the Jewish leadership to curb activities unlikely to effect change and realistically thought to endanger the entire community – particularly before its fate was determined and recognized – is easily grasped.³⁵ Nor was their concern without specific, concrete foundation: In the aftermath of protests by members of the *Reichsvereinigung* board over early deportations of Jews in 1940, two of its leaders were arrested, sent to camps, and murdered.³⁶ Certainly if peaceful objection to deportations could have lethal results, the expected responses to militant anti-fascist resistance would be fearsome.

An additional explanation for the Jewish leadership’s emphatic opposition to underground anti-fascist activities on the parts of its members is sociocultural. The predominant ideological

³¹ Kwiet, “Problems of Jewish Resistance Historiography,” 43–47; Eschwege, “Resistance of German Jews against the Nazi Regime,” 145; Kwiet, “Resistance and Opposition: The Example of the German Jews,” 68–69; Paucker and Kwiet, “Jewish Leadership and Jewish Resistance,” 383.

³² Paucker, “Resistance of German and Austrian Jews to the Nazi Regime, 1933-1945,” 8.

³³ Eschwege, “Resistance of German Jews against the Nazi Regime,” 145; Nicosia, “Resistance and Self-Defence,” 125.

³⁴ Paucker, *German Jews in the Resistance, 1933-1945*, 39.

³⁵ Paucker, *Jewish Resistance in Germany*, 7.

³⁶ Paucker and Kwiet, “Jewish Leadership and Jewish Resistance,” 380–81.

fissure in the German Jewish community – specifically the one separating the liberal-assimilationist majority from the Zionist minority – has already been described. And while the Zionist contingent included a considerable number of Jews who had, or whose families had, immigrated in recent decades to Germany from Eastern Europe, the socioeconomic class affinities of most Jews of either political stripe were solidly bourgeois. Furthermore, although the majority of liberal and Zionist Jews alike in Germany were highly secularized, Judaism remained a significant influence on the self-identities of many of them. These factors – bourgeois class and Jewish religious-cultural identities – presented major obstacles to an alliance between Jewish leaders and the Communist resistance which, given the barriers to collaboration with the conservative opposition described above, would have been the major remaining option for organized, active Jewish resistance.³⁷

The meager basis of an affinity between the mainstream Jewish community and the underground Communist resistance ran in both directions. In Marxist cosmology, the struggle between social classes is the paradigm within which all of history is framed and understood. Other distinctions among people – including that between Jews and non-Jews – were seen, at least in theory, as irrelevant at best and purposeful diversions contrived by the capitalist classes at worst. The identification of most of Germany's Jews with the social class antagonists of the proletariat was an obvious impediment to organized collaboration between these two major targets of Nazi persecution. Well before Hitler took power, the “solution” to the “Jewish Question” favored by the Communists was, in essence, the dissolution of Judaism as an entity. “Red Assimilation,” as the elimination of Jewish identity in favor of an anti-fascist one came to be called, was anathema to most Jews of both the liberal and Zionist persuasions. And although only a minority of Jews during the Weimar and Nazi eras were particularly religious, the avowedly atheist stance of Communism was not a selling point among members of a community whose point of commonality was, among other things, a religion. Combined with the Communist opposition both to Zionism and to democracy, all of these factors explain why, on the one hand, prior to 1933 ninety-five percent of Jews expressed non- or anti-Communist views and, on the other hand, those Jewish youth who became involved in underground anti-fascist activity were (at least initially) more motivated by their left-wing political sentiments than by their Jewish ethnicities.³⁸

The responses of the KPD to anti-Semitism were not as straightforward as they were once portrayed by East German scholars and ideologues intent on safeguarding the status of the GDR as the rightful inheritor of the mantle of anti-fascist resistance. Rhetoric from the Weimar era, associating Jews with capitalism much as the Nazis did with both capitalism and Bolshevism, is exemplified by a 1923 speech to a student gathering delivered by Jewish Communist Ruth Fischer. Exhorting her audience to join “together with the German nationalists” to “fight hand in hand with the organized masses of the KPD,” she suggested “those who combat Jewish capital are already fighting in the class struggle, even if they are unaware of it. Stamp out Jewish capitalists! String them from the lamp posts.”³⁹ Such instances, however, represented cynical opportunism much more than a consistent ideological line. More representative of the KPD approach to anti-Semitism during the Nazi era was its response to the April 1, 1933, economic

³⁷ Nicosia, “Resistance and Self-Defence,” 125; Paucker, *Jewish Resistance in Germany*, 7; Kwiet, “Resistance and Opposition: The Example of the German Jews,” 69; Paucker and Kwiet, “Jewish Leadership and Jewish Resistance,” 383.

³⁸ Paucker and Kwiet, “Jewish Leadership and Jewish Resistance,” 383–84; Paucker, *Jewish Resistance in Germany*, 7–8; Paucker, *German Jews in the Resistance, 1933-1945*, 38–41.

³⁹ David Bankier, “The German Communist Party and Nazi Antisemitism, 1933-1938,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 32 (January 1987): 325–27, quote on 326.

boycott, which relied on the standard Marxist interpretation of fascism as the inevitable expression of the crisis of capitalism. Viewed through that lens, neither anti-Semitism nor anything else distinguished Nazism in any fundamentally important way from the more generic construct of ‘fascism.’ In fact, the Communists claimed that Jewish capitalists were not affected by the boycott and were even protected by the regime. Their responses to subsequent anti-Jewish legislation and violence, at least until the November 1938 *Kristallnacht* pogrom, were on the whole consistent with their denial of the centrality of anti-Semitism to the Nazi program. The KPD doggedly maintained its insistence on the primacy of the class struggle paradigm wherein Nazism was most accurately described as “an open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary and imperialist elements of finance capital.”⁴⁰

If large-scale, organized, militant Jewish resistance was never viable, if collaboration with the National Conservative opposition was never feasible, and if broad-based alliance with the underground Communist resistance was never desirable, there were nevertheless young Jews who flouted the directives of the official Jewish leadership and engaged in resistance activities. And in those instances, such resisters generally joined the Communists, worked with them, or accepted their help. It was for the most part only under such auspices that the fight against National Socialism within Germany could be waged by Jews. As suggested above, however, it was not primarily as Jews but rather as Communists – or Social Democrats, Trotskyites, Marxists of other stripes, trade unionists, or anarcho-syndicalists – that most of these young people risked their lives. An important exception, or at least a partial one, relates to the Zionist movement, many of whose youth groups were politically oriented toward socialism and thus vociferously anti-fascist. The Marxist *Hashomer Hazair*, mentioned above, along with a few other such organizations, was a source of resistance activist recruitment. Only their Zionist commitments distinguished their political stances from those of the “red assimilationists.”⁴¹

Historical scholarship has established that Jews participated in the illegal activities of the banned workers’ movement in numbers disproportionately higher than their representation in the leftist parties had been during the Weimar era. Their numbers were highest in the Communist resistance, but all of the major left-wing groups had Jewish members or entire cells, and Jews were the organizers and chief strategists of the socialist *Neu Beginnen* (the Org), as introduced above. Many of these Jewish resisters had been politically active in leftist organizations that were banned when the Nazis assumed power. A number of them were arrested by the Gestapo and interned in concentration camps in the early weeks of the dictatorship but later released on the condition that they emigrate; some returned to Germany to operate clandestinely. Many other Jews in the anti-fascist resistance were too young to have been politically active during the Weimar era and were, as previously discussed, recruited to underground work through youth organizations.⁴²

Only since the late 1980s has historical and journalistic research provided detailed knowledge of German Jewish resistance activities. The picture that has emerged is of a broad array of small groups of young people, often connected by current or previous membership in Jewish youth organizations and by affiliation with left-wing political movements, operating in varying degrees of isolation in different parts of the country. Danger was a clear common denominator. For example, members of *Rotes Sprachrohr*, a primarily Jewish organization that arose from a KPD agitation and propaganda group, were arrested by the Gestapo in 1936. Its

⁴⁰ Ibid., 327–40, quote on 333.

⁴¹ Paucker, “Resistance of German and Austrian Jews to the Nazi Regime, 1933-1945,” 9; Kwiet, “Resistance and Opposition: The Example of the German Jews,” 69; Nicosia, “Resistance and Self-Defence,” 132; Paucker, “Researching German-Jewish Responses and German-Jewish Resistance to National Socialism,” 197.

⁴² Paucker, *German Jews in the Resistance, 1933-1945*, 18–20.

leader, a young man from a Berlin working-class Eastern European Jewish family, was among the instigators of the revolt in the camp at Sachsenhausen. The source of the illegal activities of the small socialist-Zionist *Borochov-Jugend*, however, was never discovered by the Gestapo. Members of that group published the *Anti-Stürmer*, an underground newspaper whose aim was to counter the vicious anti-Semitism being fed to the masses by Julius Streicher's vile propaganda sheet. A Breslau offshoot of the Communist branch of what had been the *Kameraden* pursued anti-fascist activities until its destruction by the Gestapo in 1937. One of its young members, Helga Beyer, was a teenage courier for the underground group before her arrest. She died in the Ravensbrück camp in 1942 and was but a single example of the contributions of girls and young women to the resistance, where they constituted a significant proportion of the membership. In fact, a group of anti-fascist Jewish girls, originally members of the *Ring-Bund*, produced anti-fascist and anti-war propaganda while working as forced laborers. They were arrested and, although their death sentences were commuted to deportation, only one member survived internment in concentration camps; she provided the account of this group's existence.⁴³

The position of the KPD on the recognition of the specifically anti-Jewish nature of Nazi ideology and practice changed palpably in the aftermath of the *Kristallnacht* pogrom of November 1938. In a special edition of the party newspaper, *Die Rote Fahne* (The Red Flag), which was clandestinely distributed to residents of the working-class districts of Berlin during the night, the Central Committee decried the anti-Jewish violence and exhorted party members – and all others in Germany – to assist the Jews in every way possible. Those workers under whose doors the paper was slid were greeted with the headline “Against the Disgrace of the Jewish Pogroms!”⁴⁴ By the following August, however, the Non-Aggression Pact concluded by the German and Soviet governments brought an overnight cessation of Communist invective against the Nazi government. Although KPD policy and rhetoric would again reverse itself in the wake of the June 1941 invasion of the USSR, the intervening period was disconcerting for Jews in the Communist-affiliated resistance movement. Nevertheless, Paucker asserts as “an incontrovertible fact that the reservations of active Jewish anti-Fascists were few” and that “they opted for the extreme Left and above all for the Communists, because they saw in them the most fanatical, adroit, determined and best organized opponents to the Nazi regime,” concluding, “and at the time they were quite right.”⁴⁵

The best known of the anti-fascist resistance organizations comprised and led largely by Jewish Communists is the Herbert Baum Group. It entered the historiography of the resistance with the work of Bernhard Mark, based on Gestapo files and other documents and initially published in Yiddish in 1961, and has most recently been described in a book-length treatment by Eric Brothers.⁴⁶ Herbert Baum was born in 1912 to a secular Jewish family that moved from Posen to Berlin after the end of World War I. He was trained as an electrician and, after 1940, did forced labor in a large Siemens plant in Berlin. His political and organizational histories, and those of his colleagues, are emblematic of those of leftist activists more generally. At age thirteen Baum joined the Red Falcons of the SPD youth movement, and subsequently belonged to the German-Jewish Youth Society. In 1931 he became a member of the German Communist Youth Organization and two years later joined the *Ring-Bund*. In all of those venues Baum's leadership

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 33–38.

⁴⁴ Eschwege, “Resistance of German Jews against the Nazi Regime,” 149; Paucker, *Jewish Resistance in Germany*, 8.

⁴⁵ Cox, *Circles of Resistance*, 61–62; Paucker, “Resistance of German and Austrian Jews to the Nazi Regime, 1933–1945,” 9.

⁴⁶ Eric Brothers, *Berlin Ghetto: Herbert Baum and the Anti-Fascist Resistance* (Stroud, UK: Spellmount, 2012); Mark, “The Herbert Baum Group: Jewish Resistance in Germany in the Years 1937–1942,” 55–68.

abilities were evident. During the first four years of the Nazi regime, he was active in both the legal *Ring-Bund* Jewish youth organization and the banned Communist underground, and his associates included members of those groups as well as the left-wing-Zionist *Haschomer Hazair*. Their activities during that interval included political discussions and production and distribution of leaflets encouraging Germans to question Nazi propaganda. After the *Ring-Bund* was suppressed in 1937 Baum's circle lost all cover for meeting openly at a time when Communist cells were being decimated by arrests and contact with the exiled leaders of the KPD was lost. He maintained connection primarily with two groups composed mostly but not entirely of Jews from the banned organizations of previous years and those with whom he worked in forced labor. With the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 the underground Communist resistance was reinvigorated and Baum began collaborating with and loosely supervising several groups of young anti-fascist – mostly but not entirely Communist – activists.⁴⁷

The most spectacular operation of the leftist resistance was carried out in 1942 by the Baum group. On April 9, 1942, the Nazi Party announced that Reich Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels had organized an exhibition at the Lustgarten in central Berlin, ironically titled “The Soviet Paradise.” Resistance groups in the city were determined to respond to the anti-Communist and anti-Semitic message of the exhibit. Having initially favored surreptitiously distributing leaflets at the exhibition site, Baum subsequently determined – likely without direction from KPD leaders – that it should be burned. The Jewish Communist activist Werner Steinbrink, a chemical technician at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, would prepare the firebombing materials and expertise. The exhibit opened on May 8, 1942, and nine days later Steinbrink and a colleague constructed the devices to be used in the operation. On the following evening eleven members of the groups involved went to the Lustgarten, singly or in pairs. All did not go as planned but the conspirators were able to burn a small portion of the exhibit – a minor but real triumph of a group of young, radical, mostly Jewish activists. The Nazi response was predictably ferocious. Four days after the firebombing the Gestapo arrested Baum and his wife, Marianne, along with several others at their place of work. Over the subsequent couple of months, all of those directly involved, and many related indirectly if at all to the operation, were arrested. Baum's death in custody in early June was reported as a suicide but was more likely a consequence of torture. Thirty-two members or affiliates of the Baum group were killed, most beheaded at Plötzensee prison after convictions before “special courts” for high treason. Sixteen of those courageous men and women were less than twenty-four years old. Their family members were arrested and deported to Auschwitz and other camps.⁴⁸ News of executions related to the Lustgarten action was published in the *New York Times* under the headline, “Opposition Seen within Germany: Reported Execution of ‘Reds’ Viewed as Evidence of Rise of Active Unrest.”⁴⁹ Despite its grim aftermath, the Baum Group's operation had engendered hope – or wishful fantasy – even thousands of miles away.

Evident in the historiography of opposition in Nazi Germany is a controversy that relates to the putative distinction between “Jewish resistance” and “resistance by Jews.” The two parameters at issue, which presumably are very closely linked to each other, are identity and motivation. As has already been noted, at least initially Jewish leftist activists – even those who did not subscribe fully to the orthodox Marxist social taxonomy by which class is the sole relevant variable – generally viewed themselves primarily as anti-fascists rather than as Jews. But

⁴⁷ Cox, *Circles of Resistance*, 83–91; Eschwege, “Resistance of German Jews Against the Nazi Regime,” 168; Eric Brothers, “On the Anti-Fascist Resistance of German Jews,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 32 (January 1987): 369–82.

⁴⁸ Cox, *Circles of Resistance*, 125–35; Eschwege, “Resistance of German Jews against the Nazi Regime,” 174–80.

⁴⁹ George Axelson, “Opposition Seen Within Germany,” *New York Times*, June 18, 1942.

as Brubaker and Cooper point out, reification of ‘identity’ as a construct risks, as well as instantiates, multiple misunderstandings. In its “hard” or essentialist form it implies immutability, while in its “soft” or constructivist form it loses analytical value.⁵⁰ There is no doubt that, regardless of the primary category within which Jewish anti-fascist activists conceived of their identities and motivations, they were doubly jeopardized by association with both the banned workers’ movement and the reviled and feared racial enemy. In the context of the Nazi racial state, the highly consequential official assignment of identity necessarily took on overriding significance. The Nuremberg Laws’ conflation of practicing Jews, converts to Christianity, and atheists of Jewish heritage engendered isolation and danger – and, even if only on that basis, commonality – among all who were identified as Jews. Not surprisingly, with growing persecution and subsequent deportations and mass murder, Jewish self-identification among secular leftist resistance activists grew. As a particularly poignant indication of the dual identities – and, by extension, likely dual motivations – of Jewish resisters, before their executions members of the Baum group sang both Jewish and working class songs, including the Zionist “Hatikva” and the “Internationale.” Ultimately, the distinction between “Jewish resistance” and “resistance by Jews” must be judged unimportant, if not meaningless.⁵¹

The resistance of Jews to the Nazi regime discussed in this essay was limited to that which occurred within the confines of the Third Reich. A full account of Jewish resistance would include the hundreds of Jews from Germany alone who fought fascism with the International Brigades in Spain, those who operated with the various partisan units throughout occupied Europe, and those Jews who helped to defeat Nazi Germany through service with the British, American, Soviet, and Free French armed forces.⁵² But even without considering those activities, it can be concluded definitively that Jews in Nazi Germany resisted their own destruction. As argued above, the extent and brutality of repression that characterized the Third Reich dictates that instances of nonconformity or noncompliance, common and largely free of risk in even marginally pluralistic societies, be assigned the status of ‘resistance’ in the Nazi context. But again, even under a more narrow and standard definition of resistance, members of the small and embattled minority of German Jews cannot be said to have gone to their deaths without a fight.

The necessity of correcting the record on Jewish resistance should not, however, lead to an overstatement of the extent to which such a fight was waged. Although the leadership of the German Jewish community has been criticized by some for abjuring active resistance, Paucker dismisses as “sheer lunacy” the proposition “that a Jewish middle-class community, sedate and law-abiding by nature, dwindling from 500,000 in 1933 to 200,000 at the outbreak of the war in 1939, isolated and scattered amongst a German population of seventy to eighty million, the majority of whom had embraced National Socialism, should or could have attempted to wage a militant struggle.”⁵³ That such a struggle was taken up only by young, committed leftist activists, many of whom, by virtue of their political ideologies, social class affiliations, and/or atheism were marginal members of the German Jewish community, is thus understandable. Equally understandable are the limitations on the outcomes such a force could hope to achieve. Writing on the topic of Zionism in inter-war Germany, Nicosia proposes that “the purpose of resistance is to save or preserve something that is under attack or threatened with destruction” and that “it is

⁵⁰ Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity,’” *Theory and Society* 29, no. 1 (February 2000): 1–47.

⁵¹ Kwiet, “Resistance and Opposition: The Example of the German Jews,” 70; Eschwege, “Resistance of German Jews Against the Nazi Regime,” 145; Kwiet, “Problems of Jewish Resistance Historiography,” 53; Paucker, *German Jews in the Resistance, 1933-1945*, 22–23; Paucker and Kwiet, “Jewish Leadership and Jewish Resistance,” 385–86; Paucker, “Resistance of German and Austrian Jews to the Nazi Regime, 1933-1945,” 5.

⁵² Paucker, “Researching German-Jewish Responses and German-Jewish Resistance to National Socialism,” 206.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 205.

undertaken primarily to ensure survival and a future.”⁵⁴ Very few of those who undertook the perilous task of resisting Nazi power survived, and only a small proportion of those in whose name they acted had a future. And while Kwiet convincingly asserts that “the limits of Jewish resistance and opposition, the ineffectiveness of Jewish protests and rescue efforts, should...be attributed less to those who initiated them than to those who ignored or sought to abort them,”⁵⁵ perhaps, as with the notion of ‘resistance’ itself, the definition of ‘effectiveness’ must be broadened in the context of these extraordinary circumstances. The hateful Nazi state outlived the six million Jews – and tens of millions of others – whose lives it claimed. But it did not outlive Jewry and it did not outlive the Enlightenment values against which it had so violently reacted. Such challenges to human decency will inevitably recur. If the young red heroes of the Nazi era in Germany serve as reminders that resistance to injustice – even injustice backed by overwhelming power – is always possible, we should celebrate not only their courage and character but also their success.

⁵⁴ Nicosia, “Resistance and Self-Defence,” 133.

⁵⁵ Kwiet, “Resistance and Opposition: The Example of the German Jews,” 74.

SOCIALIST HUMANISM AND E.P. THOMPSON'S WORKS

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OLIVER BURT

E. P. Thompson, the radical British historian and social provocateur, gained prominence amidst the turbulence of the Cold War. He wrote extensively through the lens of Socialist Humanism as his guiding ideological doctrine. Thompson figured most prominently in his career with the British New Left, from its creation in 1956 until the latter part of the 1960s. The manifestations of the doctrine of Socialist Humanism took hold in the diverse spheres of Thompson's work, whether in his historical examinations, political activism, theoretical debates on Marxist philosophy, or contemporary institutional analyses. With extensive appearances in Thompson's scholarly work, he sought to find social and political meaning in Socialist Humanism. Thompson established a substantive understanding of Socialist Humanism by virtue of a libertarian sense of socialism that focused centrally on individual agency and class-consciousness to shape the historical process. In Thompson's conception, men live their own history: history is not the product of class category, but, rather, is the product of individual agency revealed through human relationships. Thompson's ambition to redefine and in some broader sense reshape history through Socialist Humanism was in no small part marked by his disavowal of the historical perversions of Stalinism and its dogmatic authoritarianism, a disavowal through which he sought to refashion Marxian traditions and thought. Thus, Thompson gave social history meaning to the average English worker, by turning over dense Marxist theory and making it palpable to laymen. His influence is still heartily felt today, by means of enhancing contemporary leftist dialogue in the mainstream political sphere. His ideals of Socialist Humanism helped the left expand upon ideas of agency and experience of the everyday worker, bringing conscious awareness to the deep and increasing inequalities in contemporary society.

The birth of Socialist Humanism arose from an ideological crisis precipitated by the revelations in Khrushchev's secret speech at the Twentieth Party Congress of the CPU of Stalin's crimes against humanity, and by the ensuing Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956. Thus, "through the smoke of Budapest" and Stalinist perversions, there was a clear uncovering of the failures and the rigidity of Communism. Thompson internalized such base Communist abuse and was severely disillusioned. According to Hobson, one of Thompson's colleagues in the British Communist Party, the effect of the revelations of Khrushchev's speech on the party was "the political equivalent of a nervous breakdown."¹ With a newly found understanding of Soviet history, party members were at a disillusioned loss and questioned the viability of a Communist future. For these reasons, Thompson established an ideological rebellion, railing against the dogmatic Communist orthodoxy and aiming to define a new conception of Communism.

The Reasoner, edited by E.P. Thompson and John Saville, was the forum that embodied the British Communist Party's disillusionment and gave voice to the party's vigorous opposition to the old order of leadership. *The Reasoner* was forthright about the lack of British Communist Party debate and the spread of conformity.² The deficit of discourse manifested itself through lack of critical thinking within party ideology that simply looked to imitate the Bolshevik model. Accordingly, Thompson's goal was to disavow the authoritarian nature of Stalinism and its

¹ Dennis L. Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain: History, the New Left, and the Origins of Cultural Studies*. Post-Contemporary Interventions (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 46.

² Michael Kenny, *The First New Left: British Intellectuals after Stalin* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1995), 70.

dogmatic practices by searching for new ideas that extended beyond the confines of Stalinist orthodoxy. In consequence, he sought a new sense of Marxian thought, vocalizing ideas that engendered a revolt from Stalinist perversions through formulation of Socialist Humanism.

Prior to Thompson's rejection of Stalinist thought, much of his political ideology was inspired by leftist values, values which he developed through his career in the army where he came to believe in strong anti-Fascist and anti-Imperialist notions. In the army, Thompson was very sympathetic to the partisan movements, which his brother worked with until his death, and these movements helped shape Thompson's early Communist understanding as "simplistic pro soviet feelings." He undoubtedly carried his Leftist thought with him into his teaching career where he was appointed to a job at an adult education program at Leeds College. At the time, this was one of the few remaining positions left open for a Communist intellectual; he also was involved himself heavily in Leftist political organization. That being said, early on in Thompson's career he had disdain for the institutionalization of the British Communist Party, which he felt was controlling and manipulative and trying to domineer the smaller branches: "the Communist Party [was] trying to control these independent minded individuals from the outside."³ This disdain is an indication of how, despite Thompson's deep involvement with the Communist party, he still retained the ideas of individual agency when freedoms are attacked by institutional orthodoxy, thereby displaying early conceptions of Socialist Humanist thought.

Much of the development of Thompson's Socialist Humanism thought arose from political circumstance, that arose from the perceived immorality of Communism. In light of these perversions, Thompson sought to remold Marxism to embrace Social Humanism, which he believed to be a less blemished form of Marxism. This new formulation of Marxism, however, needed to be investigated outside party orthodoxy. Hence, the aim of the publication of the *Reasoner* was to have an open discussion about the future of party ideology, as well as to espouse the sentiments of dissatisfaction with the British Communist Party leadership. In setting the tone for party refinement, Thompson looked to a return to social realities and humanist principles by abandoning the dogmatism and arbitrary conclusions of Marxist orthodoxy. These notions are evident in Thompson's seminal piece, *Socialism and Humanism (1956)*, published in the *Reasoner*, wherein he writes of the necessity of revolt in the light of the inhumanity of Stalinism. Additionally, Thompson refused to accept the equation that Marxism's sole manifest was Soviet totalitarianism,⁴ indicating his desire to reshape Marxian thought toward a humanistic understanding.

The outspoken criticism espoused by Thompson, and the *New Reasoner*, was undoubtedly ill received by the Communist Party leadership. Thompson's political dissent within the party orthodoxy caused his membership to be threatened with expulsion if he continued to publish further issues of the *Reasoner*. However, Thompson had become so ideologically dislocated from the Communist Party when it supported the 1956 invasion of Hungary that Thompson soon resigned from the party along with 7,000 other members, equaling roughly a fifth of the British party membership.⁵

By abandoning the Communist Party, Thompson continued his exploration for fresh Marxian practices and a refashioned thought. These explorations are pronounced in Thompson's essay, "Winter Wheat in Omsk." Here, he maintains that the Communist Party had "ignored a vital tradition of the native moral criticism and activism, which had inspired many political

³ Michael D. Bess, "E. P. Thompson: The Historian as Activist," *The American Historical Review* 98, no. 1 (February 1993): 31.

⁴ *Ibid*, 26.

⁵ *Ibid*, 21.

struggles of the British people.”⁶ This tradition Thompson alluded to is the revolutionary spirit of British socialism that characterized the 19th century labor movement. That movement focused on developing a common urgency that represented the grounded experience of the working class, in contrast to the elite and bureaucratic Stalinist model. As such, Thompson sought to develop new distinctions of what should characterize Marxian traditions, thereby helping to establish Socialist Humanist thought.

Thompson’s criticism of Stalinism and its authoritarian dogmatism in the *Reasoner* was not intended to abandon Marxism holistically, let alone create a new social moment; rather, the publication sought to reform Marxism. The aim was to distance Marxist ideology from the authoritarian leadership that denied the realities of Stalinism. More specifically, Thompson’s aim was to call a revolt against orthodoxy and to energize revolutionary ideology. However, it soon became apparent that the British Communist Party was unwilling to stimulate a renewal of revolutionary ideals by making the logical implementation of Socialist Humanism. Thus, in leaving the party, Thompson hoped The New Left could offer a grass roots alternative to the extremes of both capitalism and Communism, through a diverse body composed of “ex-Communist, leftwing labor party, trade union members, nuclear disarmament activists.”⁷ This diverse body of the New Left was politically active most prominently on university campuses. In many ways, The New Left fashioned itself in a cultural Marxian tradition that is in homage to Thompson, by embracing his ideals of Socialist Humanism. Thus, The New Left espoused notions of individual agency to create a new more equal society, supporting, inter alia: nuclear disarmament, racial justice, non-intervention, and institutional economic remodeling.

The twin ideals of grass roots and the human experience for which Thompson advocated did not gain a wide acceptance among other leftist intellectuals steeped as they were in their own academic philosophies. For this reason, Thompson believed that these rigid Marxist scholars were fatally flawed. He had desires for the New Left to establish a school of thought that put centrality on human agency in the context of the development of culture. These ideals were in reaction to the strict Marxists, whom Thompson criticized as sitting in an ivory tower and detached from the reality of the workers and their everyday experience. Additionally, Thompson reasoned, the rigid Marxist intellectuals had a misguided sense of moral choice and ability to reason, insofar as they denied the value of the individual agent. As Thompson concluded, Stalinism was based on anti-intellectualism, “the belittling of conscious human agency in the making of history.”⁸ Therefore, Thompson formulated an ethical critique of the limitations of the rigidities of Communism to help shape a new clarity of Socialist Humanism.

Historically, the limitations of Stalinism manifested themselves in a lack of humanism. As the leftist historian, Palmer notes: Stalinism had “forgotten the continuity of human culture.”⁹ However, the emergence of Thompson’s principles of Socialist Humanism had the capacity to ground the Marxist intellectual and to restore workers to the prominence of the early 1930s socialist movement in Britain. Moreover, as Thompson stated:

The abstractions and anti-intellectualism has burdened the development of a honest history of real men and women, thus it [Socialist Humanism] is socialist because it re-affirms the revolutionary perspectives of Communism... [, re-affirms] faith in

⁶ Dworkin, “E. P. Thompson: The Historian as Activist,” 48.

⁷ Bess, “E. P. Thompson: The Historian as Activist,” 24.

⁸ E. P. Thompson, “Socialist Humanism An Epistle to the Philistines,” *The New Reasoner*, no. 1 (1957): 105–43.

⁹ Bryan D. Palmer, “Reasoning Rebellion: E.P. Thompson, British Marxist Historians, and the Making of Dissident Political Mobilization,” *Labour*, no. 50 (Fall 2002): 187–216.

the revolutionary potentialities not only of the Human Race or of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat but of real men and women.¹⁰

Accordingly, Thompson can be understood as revealing socialism through a human face, by way of critically celebrating human agency and by revolting against the Stalinist authoritarian and highly bureaucratic model.

Additionally, there was an almost complete unwillingness by Stalinist theorists to implement humanism because it was inconsistent with Stalinist roots in economism. This economic Marxian model entailed that the modes of production were accountable for shaping class-consciousness, and hence the model accepted the equation of a deterministic base superstructure with economic explanations and agency. Thompson advocated against these fallacies, maintaining that they were abstractions and reflected the ideological inconsistency of Stalinism. Moreover, economism obfuscated individual experiences, and, as a result, Thompson renounced this false institutionalism of Stalinism. Through Socialist Humanism, Thompson theorized that the implication of the economic and productive relations alone did not result in moral values; rather, moral values were the product of more complex and interactive human relationships.

For Thompson, the economic school of thought was overly simplified, and he believed that it was a bankrupt theory: “Economic changes impel changes in social relationships, in relations between real men and women; and these are apprehended, felt, reveal themselves in feelings of injustice, frustration, and aspirations for social change; all is fought out in the human consciousness, including the moral consciousness.”¹¹ Hence, Thompson affirmed the idea of the value of moral responsibility and human experience and argued that these ideals should not be marginalized by the deterministic economism. In Thompson’s expression of Socialist Humanism, the modes of production didn’t create a moral society in Stalinism because Stalinism denied basic liberal values of justice, tolerance, intellectual debate, and fraternity.

These failures of Stalinist ideology motivated Thompson’s refashioning of his understanding of Marxism. His objective was to revitalize Marxism to reflect the older tradition of English socialist thought. This past socialist spirit, according to Thompson, could be traced back to William Morris. Thompson acknowledged this historical framework for Socialist Humanism, in his publication of *William Morris: Romantic to Revolution* (1955). In this publication, he outlines the vital spirit that Morris captured through poetic revolutionary ideals, describing Morris as: “a profoundly cultured and humane revolutionary, but no less a revolutionary, for this reason.”¹² Hence, Thompson understood Morris’s concern with a moral transformation of society, through educating and creating a common contingency in adjusting society to the common interest of the people. This idea of a collective identity and desires combined with the application of revolutionary reform (and without regard to a dramatic overthrow of the bourgeois class) served as a guide for the development of Thompson’s refashioned Marxist thought through Socialist Humanism.

Through this older tradition of Marxism, it was Thompson’s intention to establish an authentic tradition in homage to the 19th century tradition and to pave the way for a purified contemporary ideology. In this sense, Thompson was forming a bridge between the older

¹⁰ E. P. Thompson, “Socialist Humanism: An Epistle to the Philistines,” *The New Reasoner*, no. 1 (1957): 105–43.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² E.P. Thompson, “A Lecture to the Williams Morris Society, 1959.” *Persons and Polemics, Historical Essays*, 1959, 66–67.

socialist traditions and a newer establishment of the power of cultural agency and its moral argument.¹³ In other words, Thompson was reconstructing the emancipatory aspects of the older socialist tradition that focused on moral terms that would give resilience to humanity, all of which became Socialist Humanist conceptions. These conceptions are rooted in Thompson's work, *The Making of the English Working Class*, which details the English Working Class's experience wherein the working class suffered a degradation of status and freedom but nonetheless was able to create its own agency. This concept of agency illustrates Thompson's belief that class is not structure and that, instead, social and political activism should be based on a conception of human relationships that are "always embodied in real people in a real context."¹⁴

Thompson's location for moral judgment was within the everyday experience of cultural examinations, which revealed itself through real men and women rather than through abstractions and orthodoxy. The essential role of everyday experience, as a result, had as its ambition to restore leftist theory through a tonic of Socialism and humanism. Central to this restoration, culture would resuscitate society through the renewal of socialism, meaning that the project would place human agency in a principal role in societal transformation.

Thompson's concern for human agency to transform society coupled with his idea of an active class process, by which he meant a determinism of interlocking events, created in the realm of human relationships. It is within this active process that desires can be formulated. Thompson believed that class could not be thought of as static and cavalier through reduction to a Stalinist understanding of economism. Rather, the lens had to be widened to an active social, political, and moral realm that Thompson concluded would make men whole.¹⁵ Importantly, this active process of class-consciousness could only be understood within the context of a particular time; as a result it is a process that just happens in human relationships and can't be assigned to an abstract or ideological category.¹⁶ Hence, Thompson maintained a Socialist Humanist thought that claimed that in any movement in history there are multitudes of relationships and experiences in humans lives that form their own moment of history and that these moments in history can't be reduced to a deterministic static model.

Thompson thus affirmed the notion of individual experience in history. Men make their own history: they are part agents, part victims. It is precisely the element of agency that distinguishes them from the beasts.¹⁷ In Thompson view, human agency is the crucial power in class outcomes owing to the collective desires that are confronted by oppression, whether those desires are expressed in the 19th century chartist movement or in the 1960s New Left student protest. Class is then intrinsically defined by the conscious experience, which in turn is something that is articulated based on a common identity of interest against other men who usually have different interests (See Swell 4).

Thompson's understanding of class and socialism within the refashioning of Marxism has strong parallels to his canonical historical work, *The Making of the English Class* in which he expressed the notion that "the working class were present at its own creation."¹⁸ This notion has profound political implications, for it suggests that class desires are an active process, and, accordingly, give rise to the idea that human beings can shape their own history -- an idea very

¹³ David Eastwood, "History, Politics and Reputation: E. P. Thompson Reconsidered," *History* 85, no. 280 (October 2000): 646.

¹⁴ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964), 9.

¹⁵ Bryan D. Palmer, "Reasoning Rebellion: E.P. Thompson, British Marxist Historians, and the Making of Dissident Political Mobilization," *Labour*, no. 50 (Fall 2002): 187–216

; Sewell, William H. Jr. "How Classes Are Made: Critical Reflections on E. P. Thompson's Theory of Working-Class Formation," July 1986, 4.

¹⁷ Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain*, 52.

¹⁸ Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 7.

much in tune with Thompson's ideological refashioning of the New Left. It was seemingly as though Thompson's explorations as a historian were implemented into his own contemporary political context. Ellen describes the connection between contemporary issues of the New Left and Thompson's historical examinations, noting that in Thompson "various writings of the first half of the 1960s... conceptually, underlay the argument of *The Making of the English Working Class*."¹⁹ (Ellen 1957). Thus, Ellen notes how Thompson was pivoting his political philosophies and activism based on Socialist Humanist principles of the power of human agency that Thompson first developed in his historical studies.

In *The Making*, Thompson also posed contemporary questions to the New Left, such as: How do people change the structure of the society they live in? And how is it possible for new class-consciousness to create such transformations? Thompson comes to his conclusions based upon the power of human agency and the role of cultural relationships in contemporary transformation. Thus, Thompson emphasized a strong Socialist Humanist element in a Marxist tradition that aimed to attack the extremes of capitalist and C thought, inasmuch as those polar ideologies had declining connections to everyday cultural experience and the agency of individuals.

Similarly, Thompson's historical foundations of Socialist Humanism are intertwined with his cultural analysis of contemporary revolutionary motivations. As such, Thompson highlights the revolutionary character of a moral community for socialism: This revolutionary spirit would manifest itself by realizing its own vision of an alternative humanist society. In Thompson's conception, the revolutionary humanist desire can be captured by politically minded individuals whose aim is to overcome oppressive institutions and Stalinist organizations that have suppressed realization of working class energies. Kenny highlights Thompson's idea of the immutable power of revolutionary humanism: "Humanist Socialism stood at the head of human history, when [an] emancipated individual would emerge from his present shackles."²⁰ Accordingly, the road to Humanist Socialism would be built through a collective human agency.

Thus, Thompson's highlighting of the human agency has transformative meaning for society. Bess describes Thompson's revolutionary humanism as: "A sense of precedent and tradition through which contemporary citizens might feel emboldened to make concrete moral and political choices in their own lives."²¹ Hence, Thompson assesses Marxist theory as an active process, not as a static theory, and, as such, this process would manifest itself through a spirit of a new class-consciousness emerging to negate the a-social contentions of capitalism. In other words, Socialist Humanism would not promote a cataclysmic confrontation through a traditional Marxist purge of the bourgeoisie by the working class. Instead, Thompson points to the optimism of a new developing culture based on the desires and the human agency of the working class, in which the working people shape their own culture and lives in the process of struggle.

His critics, however, questioned what this revolutionary spirit would look like in an affluent capitalist nation such as Great Britain. Thompson's response relied upon his historical understandings of the Chartist's organization in the 19th century, an organization that had given rise to a wide collective interest and social awareness. He then expanded such notions to apply them to contemporary issues and concluded that the popular organization that characterized the Chartist organization could have equal efficacy in the 20th century. In Thompson's essay *The Problem*, he vocalized such thoughts by arguing that, in order to create a society of humanist self-activity, power should not be seized but rather transferred within society through empowering individual agents. Thompson maintained that social change should be characterized

¹⁹ Ellen Wood, "The Politics of Theory and the Concept of Class: E.P. Thompson and His Critics."

²⁰ Michael Kenny, *The First New Left: British Intellectuals after Stalin* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1995).

²¹ Bess, "E. P. Thompson: The Historian as Activist," 33.

by: “municipal council probing new kinds of ownership that goes in opposition to the government, or a tenant association with a pioneering new dynamic based on patterns of social welfare.”²² Thus, self-activity, Thompson surmised, could transform society through reliance on conviction in human agency. Indeed, he held the belief that the common man could overcome a societal structure of oppression and make his own history. These notions had a significant impact in the shaping mean of Humanist Socialism’s political engagement and in promoting a libertarian ethos to educate and realize working class culture.

Thompson’s ambition to implement such Socialist Humanist ideals of self-activity in the 1960s – a society that exhibited the extreme and centralized political camps of capitalism and communism in which humanist principles were in constant retreat -- appeared to be insurmountable. The Cold War’s binary ideological camps had a common defect, which disregarded the agency of men as moral and freethinking individuals who make their own history. Thompson, as a Socialist Humanist, could never accept such concessions that both these one-side political camps produced. As a result, he believed that Socialist Humanism had a two-fold task: one, refusing to allow the debasement of Communism by way of Stalinism, and, two, denouncing capitalism and its complacency.

In the realm of capitalism and its complacency, Thompson rejected the timid nature of the labor party and its compromising character in which it sought to improve society by way of simply advocating for domestic reforms, such as opposing nuclear war, and resisting imperialism. Thompson believed that Socialist Humanists were much more than that and that they should not succumb to devaluation by one-sided politics. Thompson’s ideal was one of “dissenting democracy.”²³ This ideal was a way to counter the institutional complacency of democratic activism, a complacency that Thompson believed was endemic to a democracy that focused too much on political debates and not enough on political participation in political institutions. With this in mind, Thompson insisted that, for Socialist Humanism “to stand any chance of self-propagation . . . it must present its arguments systematically and continuously, in its own tone, according to its own strategy, selecting its own points of engagement.”²⁴

His frustration with the binary politics of the Cold War era, however, did not immobilize his conviction for human agency and developing grass roots movements. While Thompson was working as the head of the social history department in the newly opened Warwick University, he aligned himself with a student organization advocating for greater student input in the educational process. The students had uncovered provocative files of the administration in which it monitored political activity and where prospective students were screened according to their political views. In conjunction with this political monitoring, the University had sought the deportation of the socialist historian David Montgomery, who was visiting the United States. Thompson’s response was to photocopy the key documents and to distribute them to the University’s faculty -- a bold challenge to his employer. He also argued that the documents required a full-scale investigation, claiming that the University had made a mockery of rules of democracy and that it was merely masquerading as liberal institution.

Eventually, the University implemented modest reforms, yet the impact of the student protest had demonstrated the power of Thompson’s social activism against a centralized bureaucracy that lacked open discourse. Additionally, the broader issue had implications not only for the transgression of the administration, but also for the corporatization of higher education, meaning that the traditional independence of education was under threat from industrial

²² Ibid, 23

²³ Eastwood, David. “History, Politics and Reputation: E. P. Thompson Reconsidered.” *History* 85, no. 280 (October 2000),642.

²⁴ Ibid.

capitalism. In Thompson's mind, his success against the University was evidence of his belief that the grass root movement was the means that would bring about a transformation in society -- that political change could be brought about through human agency, through using everyday experience to capture a strong sense of Marxism. This Marxism, Thompson believed, could show a human face through which common men could impose their own solutions on the problems of their time.

The student protest also was reflective of how Thompson situated himself between the roles of historian and activist, a rarified position for most historians during the mid-20th century. Generally, historians saw themselves, in line with the Continental traditions of intellectual practices, as being removed from social activism only seeking to produce theoretical analysis.²⁵ Thompson's approach was radically different than that of his department colleagues, for he believed that intellectuals were located inside of the political struggle and that they had an obligation to give meaning to the common interest of the people. While Thompson believed that the working class had the ability to transform society, he also believed that the intellectual had an important role to precipitate this transformation by bringing to the working class "hope and a sense of strength and their own political life."²⁶ In this sense, Thompson viewed his moral choice and humanist obligation as of a higher value than academic intellectualism.

Thompson's insistence on social transformation and confrontation with institutional oppression was also evident in *The May Day Manifesto*, published in 1967, and edited by Thompson, along with Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams. The New Left's founding ideologues unified for a chance to publish a manifesto to reactivate the political engagement that had characterized the New Left movement in earlier years and which, in some regards, its leaders felt had diminished. Also, *The May Day Manifesto* aimed to critique the birthing of a new and nefarious form of capitalism, wherein large corporations had a dominant influence that severed the roles of government and society.²⁷ These large corporations had new imperious influence and exercised control over a larger globalized economy. Thompson and *The May Day Group* maintained they belittled grass root organizations and the humanist principles. The *Manifesto* was a call of duty for action against burgeoning corporatism, proposing to create an alternative democratic socialist and humanist society.

The May Day Group drew upon a common theme in criticizing the direction of globalized capitalism which fellow leftist ideologues seemed ambivalent to, in particular those who were associated with the labor party. In the eyes of Thompson and the New Left, the Labor Party failed to see global capitalism's antisocial and non-humanistic manifestations. With this in mind, they wanted to go beyond capitalism and not succumb to the inequities of the international system; noting the effects of the hegemonic powers of the neoliberal ideology, Thompson wanted to offer a socialist alternative driven by his previous experience of structural dissent in Britain. The *Manifesto* maintained that British political institutions were entering a period of profound strain in just such a time of transition.²⁸ In culmination, the May Day Group was trying to re-establish its original ideas of Humanist Socialism to generate new energies in opposition to a new direction of a globalized capitalist system.

In conclusion, the perversions of Stalinism, which lead to Thompson's eventual break from Communist orthodoxy, paved the way for his refashioning of thought from a Marxist tradition to that of Socialist Humanism. Through this theory, Thompson sought to celebrate

²⁵ Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain*, 114.

²⁶ Scott Hamilton, *The Crisis of Theory: E.P. Thompson, the New Left and Postwar British Politics* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2011), 61.

²⁷ Williams Raymond, ed., *May Day Manifesto 1967-68*. Soundings, 2013.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

agency, individual moral responsibility, and experience, and to revolt against the Stalinist debasement. The doctrine of Socialist Humanism represented a return to the values of the working man and was the common source for Thompson's scholarly work and his activism. While the philosophy paid homage to early socialists such as William Morris and his ideals of poetic and moral revolt, in truth, Thompson had a broader real-world hope for his fellow man and his agency to transform society.

PAWN AND SCAPEGOAT: DEPICTIONS OF JANE BOLEYN, VISCOUNTESS
ROCHFORD BY CONTEMPORARIES, HISTORIANS, FICTIONAL WRITERS
AND FILMMAKERS

--
ALANNA FREEDMAN MAHNKE

Boleyn. The infamous name captures the whispers of scandal and ever-present sense of uncertainty that encompassed the court of Henry VIII. It immediately draws to mind the king's second wife, Anne Boleyn. A woman whose flirtatious tendencies, headstrong behavior and Protestant leanings, enticed the young king and compelled him to split with the Catholic church in order to divorce his queen, Katherine of Aragon, on the grounds that she had consummated her marriage with Henry's elder brother, Arthur. Anne Boleyn has therefore become inextricably linked with a pivotal moment in the religious and social history of England. As Anne became increasingly affluent, members of the Boleyn family benefited from their familial ties and were able to increase their influence at court. Yet just as they accompanied Anne's societal advancement, so they felt the effects of her sudden and tragic downfall. The stories of those present throughout Anne's tumultuous period as Henry VIII's wife are often buried in obscurity and forgotten. The story and life of Jane Parker, a Boleyn by marriage rather than birth, has been largely forgotten. As a distant relative to the Henry VIII, lady-in-waiting to five of his six wives, wife to George Boleyn, Viscount Rochford, sister-in-law to Anne Boleyn and therefore aunt to a young princess who would emerge as one of England's foremost political female rulers, Jane's impressive resume has often gone unnoticed by contemporary historians. Julia Fox, author of the only biography on Jane, successfully encapsulates the historical role of Jane Boleyn as "someone who was always present but who was not the star."¹ It is truly a shame that the majority of surviving evidence on Jane is in regards to the trial of George and Anne Boleyn as well as the Catherine Howard affair. Her involvement in these events have been inflated and expounded on, while the rest of her life has become a blank slate to historians, writers and filmmakers. They have taken advantage of the malleability of her character to depict her according to their portrayals of Anne Boleyn, George Boleyn and Catherine Howard. She remains a secondary figure, pliable and easily molded to serve as a pawn or scapegoat, dependent on the characterization of her illustrious contemporaries.

The only notoriety Jane received has been as tool in the destruction and execution of her husband, George Boleyn, sister-in-law, Anne Boleyn and years later as an accomplice in the adulterous behaviors of Catherine Howard that led to the execution of both women. She held the position of lady in waiting, for all but one of Henry's six wives, a remarkable life span to be had at the Tudor court. Her presence among England's elite put Jane Boleyn at the epicenter of court gossip and indiscretions. It can be assumed that Jane Boleyn was a woman whose position at court brought her unbridled respect and benefits, and remaining documentation indicates that she was not maliciously viewed by her contemporaries as much as she has been by modern historians, fictional writers and filmmakers. Since her heyday at the court of England's most notoriously fickle ruler, Jane Boleyn has disappeared for centuries only to reemerge as 'the infamous lady Rochford,' a wicked woman whose testimony secured not only the death of two of England's queens, but also that of her husband.² Jane is an enigma to modern historians, as much as she may have been to the few contemporaries who wrote about her. Their rhetoric was most likely influenced by whom they were corresponding with, and may not have been intended for posterity. Their words become as ductile as Jane's character, and are twisted by historians' to support their assessment of Jane. She is frequently, if not always, mentioned in historians' analyses of Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard, but these references are fleeting, often critical, and provide little insight into her life. What remains is a largely ignored gap in contemporaries' descriptions and historians'

¹ Julia Fox, *Jane Boleyn: The Infamous Lady Rochford* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2007), 186.

² *Ibid.*, 303.

analysis of Jane. Fictional writers and filmmakers have relied on biographies of Anne Boleyn, Catherine Howard and Henry VIII to provide context for their works. Jane's vilification in fictional books, movies and TV series reflects insufficient analysis and an indifference towards accurately portraying a secondary character. In historical fiction, most notably the works of Philippa Gregory, and the film adaptation of her novel *The Other Boleyn Girl*, Jane is depicted as nothing more than a resentful wife, envious of her husband's relationship with his sisters. Media's reinterpretation of the court of Henry VIII in the HBO series, *The Tudors*, has highlighted Jane as a woman of significance, but once again her portrayal is undoubtedly negative. Lack of documentation specifically relating to Jane's personal life makes it difficult to gain a coherent image of her. Rather historians are left to uncover Jane as an individual, independent of her involvement and relationship with the Boleyn and Howard families. Julia Fox has written the first, and only, biography on Jane Boleyn that provides the most objectively comprehensive depiction of Jane's life. While Jane's connection with the Boleyn and Howard scandals are undoubtedly included in this biography, Fox breaks through preconceived notions of Jane to reveal a woman whose life did not ultimately revolve around the incidents she found herself inculpated in. Through a thorough examination of a wide range of sources, Fox's work rectifies the injustice Jane has faced and undeniably succeeds in creating a modernized reinterpretation of Jane as a character within history independent of her association with Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard.

A Young Bride-Jane's Involvement in the Execution of Anne and George Boleyn

The beginning of Jane Boleyn's life is largely undocumented, and only after her arrival at the court of Henry VIII does she appear in the historical material. Born Jane Parker in the first years of the 16th century, she was daughter of Henry Parker, 10th Baron Morley and Alice St. John, whose mother was a granddaughter of Margaret Beauchamp, maternal grandmother of Henry VIII. This made Jane a second half-cousin to the reigning king of England. She is first mentioned as 'Mistress Jane Parker' in a list of gentlewomen attending Queen Katherine of Aragon.³ In 1522, on Shrove Tuesday, Thomas Wolsey, political figure and Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, arranged a Burgundian pageant for visiting imperial ambassadors to witness the grandiosity of the English court.⁴ The entertainment of Chateau Vert included a performance by "a number of fair ladies" meant to embody the virtues of the perfect mistress of chivalric tradition.⁵ These women were selected for their "beauty, gesture and goodly proportion"; thereby serving to epitomize the Englishwomen.⁶ Jane Parker, now around the age of 17, was chosen to play the virtue of Constancy, and Anne Boleyn was selected to be Perseverance.⁷ There is a slight irony, that the virtues Parker and Boleyn personified for the evening's festivities would remain with them as they became involved in the trial of the century, one as the central person, the other as an ancillary figure. An unyielding presence at court for five consecutive queens, Jane Parker endured the tragedy and hardships that would come to envelop her life, and managed to remain constant and unchanged despite living in an unstable environment.

Jane's role at Chateau Vert secured her position as "an accepted gentlewoman of the court," and soon preparations and negotiations were made to secure her marriage to George Boleyn. The Boleyn family had begun their gradual ascent to supremacy during these early years, having largely benefited from the death of Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham.⁸ As a member of the king's privy chamber, George was present at court alongside Jane, and it is likely that the future couple were acquainted with one another. The wedding date varies among sources, but since their jointure was signed 4 October 1524

³ Ibid., 23.

⁴ Retha M. Warnicke, *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn: Family Politics at the Court of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 37.

⁵ Eric Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 37;

George Cavendish, *The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1905), 65.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Fox, *Jane Boleyn*, 25.

⁸ Ibid., 30.

it may be assumed that the ceremony took place in the following months.⁹ Jane's marriage to George Boleyn proved to be a pivotal turning point in her life, and a topic of immense controversy and criticism among modern historians, fictional writers and filmmakers. In the years after their deaths, a myth has emerged that the marriage between Jane and George was full of hatred and jealousy, largely due to Jane's depiction as "a spiteful and unhappy woman."¹⁰ There is no factual evidence to support these fictionalized claims, despite the wealth of literary and media sources that tell otherwise. Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, historians' perspectives has been largely informed by religious men like John Foxe and Gilbert Burnet, whose memorable phrase, "the bawd, the Lady Rochford," has provided writers the opportunity to create a scapegoat in their depictions of the Boleyn executions.¹¹

In the years following her marriage, Jane indulged in all the luxuries court life had to offer. George excelled in his role as gentleman of the privy chamber, played a "prominent part in the diplomatic and social activity at court,"¹² and was rewarded in 1529 with the title of Viscount Rochford.¹³ Now as Viscountess Rochford, Jane continued to "enjoy the entertainments and exhilaration of life at the apex of society," and there is no reason to believe that she and her husband were discontent with their present circumstances.¹⁴ The benefits bestowed upon the Boleyn family were largely a result of Henry VIII's growing infatuation with Jane's sister-in-law, Anne Boleyn. From a young age, Anne had developed strong Protestant leanings, after she encountered early evangelical reform while serving Archduchess Margaret at the French court.¹⁵ She advocated her religious views to Henry VIII and encouraged him to divorce his Catholic wife. Thomas and George Boleyn were "fascinated by theology," and the king's subsequent separation from the Catholic Church was a religious victory for the Boleyn family.¹⁶ It is unclear whether Jane shared her family's Protestant beliefs. She began her life at court as lady-in-waiting to Katherine of Aragon, and it is possible she remained loyal to the first queen she served.¹⁷ Queen Katherine may have acted as a motherly figure to the young girl whose own mother was largely absent from her life.¹⁸ According to Chapman, Jane supported Princess Mary as rightful heir to the throne, and it is possible that the two women had an amicable relationship while at court together.¹⁹ Whatever Jane's true religious sentiments may have been, they were undoubtedly suppressed now that she was a Boleyn, entangled in "the most significant love affair" of the century.²⁰

The ambiguity surrounding the relationship between Anne and Jane has provided fictional writers and filmmakers with the opportunity to fabricate a story involving the dynamics between these two women. Even historians, whose role is to separate the truth from the fictitious in their narratives of historical figures and events, have been influenced by the imagined scenario of a jealous wife, possessive of her husband's affectionate relationship with his sister. It is quite shocking that such an outlandish concept originated, and has managed to survive, despite factual evidence indicating otherwise. Without an accurate storyline for historians' to study, Jane's life has become insubstantial, dependent on historians' personal opinions and beliefs.

Jane was most likely aware of Henry and Anne's relationship from the start, and after Anne's coronation, she became her principal lady-in-waiting.²¹ At Anne's first public state appearance, Jane rode closely behind the newly anointed queen, before Anne's sister, Mary Carey, and in a position far above

⁹ Ibid., 34.

¹⁰ Hester W. Chapman, *Anne Boleyn* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1974), 76.

¹¹ Gilbert Burnet, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England, vol.1*. (New York: D. Appleton & Company), 502.

¹² Jasper Ridley, *Henry VIII* (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1985), 266.

¹³ Chapman, *Anne Boleyn*, 76.

¹⁴ Fox, *Jane Boleyn*, 48.

¹⁵ E. W. Ives, 'Anne (c.1500–1536)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/557>, accessed 9 Dec 2014]

¹⁶ Fox, *Jane Boleyn*, 61.

¹⁷ Ibid., 24.

¹⁸ Ibid., 8.

¹⁹ Chapman, *Anne Boleyn*, 183.

²⁰ Fox, *Jane Boleyn*, 56.

²¹ Ibid., 87.

her rank.²² Due to the claustrophobic nature of the Tudor court Jane and Anne led their lives in extremely close proximity to one another, and it is doubtful that they did not develop a close, affectionate bond. It is likely that Jane was Anne's confidante, and her actions during October 1534 serve to reflect the loyalty she had for her queen. As a Spanish diplomat who "consistently collected reports of dissatisfaction in England," Eustace Chapuys provides insight into Jane's involvement in court scandals.²³ In a letter from Chapuys to Charles V, the ambassador recounts the recent scandal of Lady Rochford who "has been banished the court because she has conspired with the Concubine to procure the withdrawal from Court of the young lady whom this king has been accustomed to serve."²⁴ Clearly biased towards Anne, referring to her as a 'concubine,' the rest of the letter appears objectively informative. Towards the end of the year, Henry VIII had directed his attention towards a young lady at court, it is not certain whether she was Jane Seymour, since she does not appear until January of the next year in a letter written by Chapuys.²⁵ Anne's impudent demand to have her removed from court was met with Henry VIII's hostile refusal. Still determined, and in need of assistance, Anne turned to Jane as a potential ally. It was agreed that Jane would pick a quarrel with the young lady, in the hopes that the king would find it simpler to dismiss her rather than deal with petty drama at his court.²⁶ Their plan backfired, and it was Lady Rochford who was sent away from court for several months.²⁷ Jane's exile coincided with another of Anne's lady-in-waiting, her own sister by blood, Mary Carey. Now Mary Stafford, she had remarried a man of a far lesser rank and was subsequently shunned by her family.²⁸ Jane's actions had shown her to be reliable and faithful, "a more dependable Boleyn than Anne's own flesh and blood."²⁹

Within a year, Jane's loyalty would be tested to the utmost degree, when Anne and George were charged with adultery and treason. By 1536 Anne had yet to produce a son, and after her latest miscarriage, Henry VIII turned his attention elsewhere, having grown "weary of Anne's importunity and vexatiousness."³⁰ What initially prompted Cromwell and Henry VIII's councilors to begin collecting evidence against Anne varies, but on the May Day tournament the success and power of the Boleyn family would soon collapse with a "bewildering speed and terrifying inevitability."³¹ During a jousting match between Viscount Rochford and Sir Henry Norris, the king was summoned by his councilors who subsequently informed him of the Queen's adulterous relationships and the men involved.³² The accused were Sir Henry Norris, Sir Francis Weston, Mark Smeaton, William Bereton, and George Boleyn.³³ With appalling rapidity, the men were taken to the Tower, and Cromwell began his scrupulous investigation by questioning those accused as well as the gentlewomen of Anne's bedchamber. The exact conversation between Cromwell and Jane is unknown but a crucial area of contention emerged over a comment Anne had made to Jane who in turn told George. The remark claimed that the king was "neither skilled nor virile," and under the 1534 Act of Attainder such a statement would be classified as treason, and punishable by death.³⁴ On Wednesday 17 May, Anne watched her brother's execution as prisoner in the Tower, and two days later faced the same fate.³⁵

As with most scandals, theories and assumptions are created in order to make sense of the events. Later

²² Ibid., 99.

²³ C. S. L. Davies, 'Chapuys, Eustache (1490x92?-1556)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/70785, accessed 9 Dec 2014]

²⁴ James Gairdner (editor), "Henry VIII: October 1534, 11-15," *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 7: 1534*, British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=79343

²⁵ Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 293.

²⁶ Fox, *Jane Boleyn*, 150.

²⁷ Warnicke, *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn*, 177.

²⁸ Julia Fox, *Jane Boleyn*, 151.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Marie Louise Bruce, *Anne Boleyn* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc., 1972), 254.

³¹ Fox, *Jane Boleyn*, 167.

³² Ridley, *Henry VIII*, 267.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ G.W. Bernard, *Anne Boleyn, Fatal Attractions* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 74.

³⁵ Fox, *Jane Boleyn*, 192.

generations sought to uncover the chain of events that led to the execution of a queen whom Henry VIII had taken such pains to bring to the throne. Jane Boleyn became the scapegoat for the death of Anne and George Boleyn. It is of the utmost significance to note that these misperceptions developed after her death, largely by biased theologians such as John Foxe and Gilbert Burnet, who have served as sources of information for historians in the 20th and 21st centuries. The accounts written by Jane's contemporaries do not depict her as the cruel, jealous witch that future generations would describe her as. A great deal of information pertaining to the trials of George and Anne Boleyn can be found in the numerous letters between Spanish ambassador, Eustace Chapuys and Charles V. Although historians have acknowledged that Chapuys tweaked diplomatic information, his account of Queen Anne's execution appears largely unbiased, and his references to Jane are meager. She is mentioned, albeit not as a guilty figure. In describing the charges brought against Lord Rochford, most notably incest with his sister, Chapuys refers to the court proceedings, "that his sister had told his wife that the king was impotent. This he was not openly charged with, but it was shown him in writing, with a warning not to repeat it."³⁶ George defiantly ignored this request, and read the note aloud, making a mockery of the king, and according to Marie Louise Bruce, this audacious act cost him his life.³⁷ These aspects of the trial are largely ignored in favor of the notion that Jane Boleyn informed the Crown of Anne's comments about the king's virility. First published in 1563, *Actes and Monuments*, otherwise known as *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* is one of the first works to openly implicate Jane as a conspirator in her husband's death. According to John Foxe, Jane "forged a false letter against her husband," effectively launching a series of investigations.³⁸ Likely influenced by Foxe's vilification of Jane, Gilbert Burnet declares, "she carried many stories to the king...to persuade that there was a familiarity between the Queen and her brother," in *The History of the Reformation of the Church*.³⁹ In order to provide a sense of justification towards these claims, Jane has developed into the "spiteful wife,"⁴⁰ "who was on bad terms with her husband,"⁴¹ and "Anne's enemy."⁴²

Jane's involvement in the affairs of Catherine Howard in the following years (1540-1541) would help to solidify the idea that she "accused her husband of improper familiarities with his sister."⁴³ There is a lack of contemporary sources discussing Jane's involvement in the scandal, but when mentioned she is not depicted as the guilty party. Interestingly, there exists a plethora of commentary on Jane's role by modern historians; she has been depicted as a young woman trapped in an inescapable situation or more commonly portrayed as the engineer of her family's fate. Few works explain Cromwell's interrogations but it may well have been "clandestinely, against a background of menace," as Marie Louise Bruce suggests.⁴⁴ Jane was questioned immediately after learning of her husband's arrest, leaving little, if any, time to understand what accusations were made. She therefore responded how many would if put in a similar situation; she answered the questions asked of her by King Henry VIII's foremost advisor and hoped that her own association with the Boleyn family would not implicate her.⁴⁵ A great deal of historical literature has not been as open-minded as Bruce's analysis of Anne Boleyn. Jane's role as an accessory in her husband's execution is fabricated, depicting her as an "injured and neglected wife," eager to provide evidence against her husband and Anne Boleyn.⁴⁶ A posthumous myth of Jane as the cruel, "estranged wife" has continued to manifest in recent years by authors who have found Jane to be a feasible villain due to her proximity to the deceased. Aided by Cromwell after the death of George, Jane's remarkably quick return to court has prompted Professor G.W. Bernard at the University of Southampton

³⁶ Eustace Chapuys, "1536, The Execution of Anne Boleyn," *English History*, 03 November 2014.

³⁷ Bruce, *Anne Boleyn*, 324

³⁸ John Foxe, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or TAMO* (1583 edition, book 8) (HI Online Publications, Sheffield, 2011), 1234. Available from: <http://www.johnfoxe.org> [accessed October 28, 2014].

³⁹ Burnet, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, 318.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Theodore Maynard, *Henry the Eighth*. (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1949), 263.

⁴² Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 194.

⁴³ 'Introduction, Section 5,' in *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 4, 1524-1530*, ed. J S Brewer (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1875), ccxxv-cclxxxv, accessed December 9, 2014.

⁴⁴ Bruce, *Anne Boleyn*, 293.

⁴⁵ Fox, *Jane Boleyn*, 181.

⁴⁶ Chapman, *Anne Boleyn*, 198.

to put forward the idea that she was a “malicious female accomplice,” in Cromwell’s plot to destroy the Boleyn family.⁴⁷ No evidence exists to suggest that such a partnership ever existed, and it seems more plausible that their correspondences were a result of years spent together. The most scathing assessment of Lady Rochford is found in Hester Chapman’s biography of Anne Boleyn. Jane has been characterized as the black sheep of the Boleyn family, jealous of her husband’s bond with Anne, “whom she longed to destroy.”⁴⁸ She is said to have been “on increasingly bad terms” with George “not only because he was unfaithful...but on account of his and Anne’s affection for one another.”⁴⁹ Chapman claims that Jane had spies to watch George, “in the hope of finding out how to best revenge herself on him.”⁵⁰ This detail appears a bit dubious since no primary source has been cited to support this assertion. The discovery of Anne’s adulterous relations provided Jane the opportunity to undermine the Boleyn siblings and secure their downfall while she escaped unscathed. A clear-cut motive, wrapped in a vivid story of jealousy and vengeance yet lacking a sufficient foundation of evidence encompasses many historical accounts of Jane Boleyn. Retha M. Warnicke, a historian who lets the sources speak for themselves rather than inserting her own narrative, insists that “the prevailing assumption that Lady Rochford informed against her husband to get even with him for his attention to other women needs to be reassessed.”⁵¹

In recent years, the negative connotation associated with Lady Rochford has only been strengthened by historical nonfiction, film and television series that have sought to bring the court of Henry VIII, although inaccurately, to the masses. Known for her riveting tales of scandal and intrigue, Philippa Gregory has emerged at the forefront of historical nonfiction, providing readers countless novels pertaining to the court of Henry VIII. *The Other Boleyn Girl* traces the lives of the three Boleyns—Anne, Mary and George, their rise to supremacy and historic downfall. Gregory has created a complicated, borderline incestuous, dynamic between the three siblings. Young Jane Parker, “favorite of the queen,” possessing “an excellent dowry,” and “good connections,” is depicted as a nuisance to her husband and his sisters.⁵² Gregory provides no insight into Jane’s own life, but through the opinions and words of the main characters she is characterized as “George’s poisonous wife,” who finds joy in uncovering the gossip and scandals at court.⁵³ On several occasions she witnesses interactions between George and his sisters that breaches the normal boundaries of sibling affection. She rebukes him saying, “you don’t really like to kiss women at all unless they are you’re sisters,” unaware that her husband is in love with Francis Weston.⁵⁴ The description of her role in the arrest of Anne and George is minimal, yet Gregory ends the novel by defaming Lady Rochford, insisting, “the strongest evidence against him [George] was a statement written by Jane Parker, the wife he always despised.”⁵⁵

In 2008, Gregory’s novel *The Other Boleyn Girl* was made into a film under the directorship of Justin Chadwick. The movie follows the book’s plot, and similarly Jane Parker is illustrated through the descriptions of other characters rather than in her cameo appearance, played by actress, Juno Temple.⁵⁶ The film begins prior to the marriage of Jane and George, and viewers are immediately made aware of George’s disdain for his future wife, as he pleads with his father not to marry the “vile girl.”⁵⁷ As a film, the storyline of events are rather condensed, but Jane’s debut role occurs when she witnesses Anne and George behaving intimately in bed. Anne’s frenzied concern over her inability to produce a male heir for Henry VIII has led her to request her brother’s assistance in impregnating her, a task that George eventually confesses he is unable to do, but not before Jane witnesses their initial attempts. This crucial element of the film is only briefly mentioned in the novel by Mary Carey who “guessed that Anne had

⁴⁷ Bernard, *Anne Boleyn: Fatal Attractions*, 100.

⁴⁸ Chapman, *Anne Boleyn*, 133.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁵¹ Warnicke, *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn*, 218.

⁵² Philippa Gregory, *The Other Boleyn Girl*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 40.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 644.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 585.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 654.

⁵⁶ “The Other Boleyn Girl,” *Internet Movie Database*, 15 November 2014.

⁵⁷ *The Other Boleyn Girl*, directed by Justin Chadwick, (2008, California: Columbia Pictures, 2008), DVD.

taken him as her companion on her journey to the gates of hell to conceive this child for England.”⁵⁸ Already a wife highly jealous of her husband’s attention towards Anne, Jane reports what she saw to the king and the two are subsequently beheaded. The film is primarily geared towards the competitive relationship between Anne and Mary, and Jane Parker’s role within this is not as prominent. Yet even as a minor character, Chadwick followed Gregory’s lead in depicting Jane as the key component in the death of her husband and sister-in-law. Those who viewed *The Other Boleyn Girl* were sure to leave theaters with an unfavorable impression of Jane Parker.⁵⁹

Filming of *The Other Boleyn Girl* coincided with the creation of a new HBO series, *The Tudors*. The TV series (2007-2010) traced the life of King Henry VIII, played by Jonathan Rhys Meyers, and his six wives.⁶⁰ Jane first appears in season 2, on the day of her wedding to George Boleyn. Young and timid, she is forced down the aisle by her father, and seems just as reluctant as George to wed. As their marriage progresses, George develops an affection for the court’s musician, Mark Smeaton, a point of contention for Jane who furiously accuses, “you have just come from another’s bed” when he enters their bedchamber at a late hour.⁶¹ Pacing about the room, Jane’s infuriation is a marked contrast from her meek behavior at the start of their marriage. Due to her position as lady-in-waiting to the former Queen Katherine, and as wife to George Boleyn, Jane serves as lady-in-waiting to Queen Anne. A sense of indifference surrounds their relationship; they rarely exhibit any outward hostility towards one another but do not appear to possess a sisterly bond. In the show, Anne’s adulterous behavior is revealed by Charles Brandon, Henry VIII’s dearest friend and advisor, and confirmed by her own lady-in-waiting Lady Mary Sheldon, who insists that she saw Anne and George kiss. Unlike her portrayal in *The Other Boleyn Girl*, Jane is not rendered the sole cause of Anne’s demise, but she does help to confirm charges during her own interview by saying “I believe these things to be true.”⁶²

Risen from the Ashes-Life as a Lady-in-Waiting and Accomplice of Catherine Howard

The death of George Boleyn left Jane a widow, and for the first time in her life she was without a male figure, free and independent to make her own decisions. Now in her early thirties, Jane had spent over two decades as a member of the royal household. Characterized as “a creature of the court,” the widow appealed to Cromwell for assistance.⁶³ According to Retha M. Warnicke, in other letters to Cromwell, Jane begs God to pardon her husband, an indication that she believed him to be guilty.⁶⁴ It is unknown whether Cromwell was directly responsible for Jane’s return, or if it was under the pretense that she would serve as his eyes and ears in the new queen’s chamber. In *A New Life of England’s Tragic Queen*, Joanna Denny upholds the writings of Antony Antony, overseer of the Ordnance Office, who insists that Jane’s testimony against her husband was to “secure her a position as lady of the privy chamber for the next queen.”⁶⁵ Considering how quickly Henry VIII remarried, Jane returned to court within a short period of time and resumed her position as lady-in-waiting to his new wife. Jane Seymour’s reign as queen was regrettably short, and she died soon after delivering Henry VIII’s sole male heir, Edward VI. At Jane Seymour’s funeral, Lady Rochford was the second woman to enter the church after Princess Mary, a clear indication that she had succeeded in regaining royal approval. By the late 1530s life was going quite well for Jane; she had managed to retain the title of Viscountess after George’s death, had her own servants, possessed a yearly income and with the death of Thomas Boleyn received several landholdings.⁶⁶ A “veteran of the royal bedchamber,” Jane greeted the king’s fourth queen, Anne of

⁵⁸ Gregory, *The Other Boleyn Girl*, 564.

⁵⁹ “The Other Boleyn Girl,” *Internet Movie Database*, 05 November 2014.

⁶⁰ “The Tudors,” *Internet Movie Database*, 05 November 2014.

⁶¹ Micheal Hirst, *The Tudors*, DVD, Peace Arch Entertainment Group, Season 2, Episode 8, 18 May 2008.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Season 2, Episode 9.

⁶³ Fox, *Jane Boleyn*, 208 & 243.

⁶⁴ Warnicke, *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn*, 217.

⁶⁵ Joanna Denny, *Anne Boleyn: A New Life of England’s Tragic Queen*. (Great Britain: De Capo Press, 2004), 289.

⁶⁶ Fox, *Jane Boleyn*, 218 & 241.

Cleves in the beginning of 1540.⁶⁷ Henry VIII's marriage to the German queen was not consummated and therefore short-lived. Within several months Henry VIII had annulled the marriage, and endowed Anne with substantial properties. They maintained an amicable relationship in the years after.

The second decisive moment in Jane's life would come with the accession of Catherine Howard as queen. Catherine was a relative of Jane; George Boleyn's mother, Lady Elizabeth Howard was sister to Catherine's father, Lord Edmund Howard. A bubbly girl, Catherine enchanted the king with her youth and flirtations, and within the same month of his annulment from Anne of Cleves, Henry VIII had remarried. It is unclear exactly when and how Jane Boleyn began her role as intermediary for the queen and Thomas Culpeper, but it has been suggested by Jane's biographer, Julia Fox, that it started when Catherine requested Jane to deliver a token of affection to Culpeper.⁶⁸ An advocate of Jane, who has strived to debunk the myth of "that bawd, the Lady Rochford," Fox insists that she felt obliged to obey the queen's requests rather than jeopardize her position at court.⁶⁹ She refutes claims made by historian, David Loades that "Jane Rochford should have gone immediately to the king and declared what she knew," by asserting that such a course of action would never have succeeded.⁷⁰ The wide range of sources Henry VIII would have dismissed such an outlandish claim, choosing to believe his wife over Jane, a woman whose association with the Boleyns was still fresh in his mind. Whether through loyalty or bribery, Jane continued to facilitate Catherine's clandestine meetings with Culpeper. A junior member of the king's privy chamber and an "unscrupulous womanizer," Culpeper possessed the youth, physique and charm that the king, now overweight and ill, had once possessed.⁷¹ During the royal progress in the summer of 1541 the couple's backstairs adventures continued under Jane's supervision.⁷²

The secret romance between Catherine and Culpeper reached its apex that summer, but soon came to a crashing halt when Mary Hall informed her brother, John Lascelles, a courtier and religious activist, of Catherine's immodest behavior during their time spent living with the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk.⁷³ On 1 November, John met with Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, and recounted stories of Catherine's fornications with Francis Dereham, Thomas Culpeper and Henry Manno. ⁷⁴ Just as Cromwell sought to destroy the Boleyn family, Cranmer held a similar attitude towards the Howards and this information provided him with ammunition to secure Catherine's downfall. The next day, Henry VIII was notified, as were other enemies of the Howards, including Lord Chancellor, Lord Thomas Audley and the Earl of Hertford.⁷⁵

Catherine, Culpeper, Dereham and Manno were immediately questioned. The guilty couple insisted that Jane had instigated the relationship through her persistence of "seductive notions of dalliance," yet a letter from Catherine to Culpeper indicates otherwise.⁷⁶ Catherine writes that she has "never longed so much for [a] thyng as I do to see you and to speke wyth you."⁷⁷ She continues urging Culpeper to visit her and "come when my lade Rocheforthe ys here."⁷⁸ Her letter not only condemned herself but Culpeper as her love and Lady Rochford as her accomplice. In what could only have felt like a state of déjà vu, Jane was interrogated and remained resolute in her innocence. Dereham and Culpeper admitted to having carnal knowledge of Catherine and under the 1534 Act of Attainder both men were found guilty of treason.⁷⁹ Imprisoned at Syon House with 4 ladies and 12 servants in attendance,

⁶⁷ Antonia Fraser, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*. (Great Britain: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd., 1992), 312.

⁶⁸ Fox, *Jane Boleyn*, 268.

⁶⁹ Fox, *Jane Boleyn*, 275.

⁷⁰ David Loades, *The Tudor Queens of England*. (London: Continuum Books, 2009), 150.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Loades, *The Tudor Queens of England*, 145.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Fox, *Jane Boleyn*, 283; Fraser, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 349.

⁷⁷ Catherine Howard, "Catherine Howard loses her head" [a letter from Catherine Howard to Thomas Culpeper] *National Archives*, 08 December 2014.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Loades, *The Tudor Queens of England*, 147.

Catherine struggled “painfully in the toils that she had created for herself.”⁸⁰ On 1 December at Guildhall in London, Francis Dereham and Thomas Culpeper were tried for treason, pleaded not guilty but were charged otherwise.⁸¹ Nine days later Dereham was cut, hanged and quartered and Culpeper, as a member of court, was beheaded.⁸² Unlike Anne or George, Catherine and Jane did not receive a trial. According to Chapuys, the “Queen and lady Rochford are...convicted and attainted of high treason, and shall suffer accordingly.”⁸³ They were executed on Tower Hill on 13 February 1542.⁸⁴

Several records have survived which recount the Howard affair, including a confession by Catherine’s lady-in-waiting, Margyt Morton, to Sir Anthony Brown. Her testimony implicates Jane and provides what can only be considered an extremely subjective account of the affair. At Hatfield, Morton saw the queen “look out of her chamber window on Mr. Culpeper after such sort that she thought there was love between them.”⁸⁵ She witnessed the exchange of “sealed letter[s]” between Lady Rochford and Catherine, among other suspicious activities and believed that “Lady Rochford provoked him [Culpeper] to much love the Queen,” and “contrived these interviews.”⁸⁶ Chapuys’ correspondence with Charles V provides insight into the final days of Lady Rochford, “who had shown symptoms of madness,” when she learned her fate.⁸⁷ The day of their execution, “neither she nor the Queen spoke much on the scaffold; they only confessed their guilt and prayed for the King’s welfare.”⁸⁸ British historian, David Loades offers a different depiction of Rochford’s final moments, a clear indication of her malleability as an historical character. According to Loades, upon reaching the scaffold “Jane became voluble to the point of incoherence” and her “confession and pious exhortation rambled on” exhausting officials and onlookers alike.⁸⁹ While the validity of Morton’s and Chapuys’ claims remains debatable, they act as building blocks for historians to create their own interpretations. A commentator on the Boleyn executions, Burnet reiterates his biases towards Jane in regards to the Howard and Culpeper affair saying, “by the Lady Rochford’s means, he [Culpeper] was brought into the Queen’s chamber.”⁹⁰ To contemporaries, Jane’s execution may have quieted any doubts about her guilt, and surely those who believed her to be innocent were unlikely to voice their opinion. At the Tudor court it would only have been a matter of time before the queen’s private relations with Culpeper were discovered, but at no point did Jane play a part in the disclosure of Catherine’s affair. The question at hand is not whether Jane was an accomplice in Catherine’s affair, there is little contemporary evidence to indicate otherwise, but why has she been depicted as a forceful agent in the affair rather than a source of support for a young woman trapped in a marriage with a man over twice her age.

Historical accounts of the 20th century contain an evident bias towards Jane Boleyn’s involvement in the execution of Catherine Howard, but there appears to be a noticeable shift in historians’ attitudes at the turn of the century. Early accounts of Catherine Howard were likely to have been influenced by the confession of Margyt Morton and posthumous accounts of Jane by John Foxe and Gilbert Burnet. According to Maynard’s 1949 account of Henry VIII, Jane was a “corrupt older women” who had done everything in her power to secure the guilt of Catherine Howard.⁹¹ Depicted as “a bird of ill-omen where English Queens were concerned,” Fraser appears to condemn Jane for not only the

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ David Starkey, *Six Wives: The Queens of Henry VIII*. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2003), 680; Ridley, *Henry VIII*, 360.

⁸² Loades, *The Tudor Queens of England*, 148.

⁸³ James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie (editors), "Henry VIII: January 1542, 11-20," Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 17: 1542, British History Online.

⁸⁴ Ridley, *Henry VIII*, 362.

⁸⁵ James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie (editors), "Henry VIII: November 1541, 11-20," Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 16: 1540-1541, British History Online.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie (editors), "Henry VIII: February 1542, 16-28," Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 17: 1542, British History Online.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Loades, *The Tudor Queens of England*. (London: Continuum Books, 2009), 150.

⁹⁰ Burnet, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, 501.

⁹¹ Maynard, *Henry the Eighth*, 376.

Howard affair, but also for the death of the Boleyn siblings.⁹² By the 21st century historians had curbed their accusatory remarks and instead questioned the motives behind her actions. The question has remained fairly unanswered; her motives are considered “obscure”⁹³ or “hard to understand.”⁹⁴ In Loades’ opinion, “Jane had not been guilty of anything except crass stupidity,” a rather comical but also extremely poignant remark.⁹⁵ Jane was not only a subject of the Queen, but a cousin, and it is likely to have been this familial bond that caused Jane to facilitate meetings between Catherine and Culpeper.

The concept of familial loyalty is not translated in *The Boleyn Inheritance*, Philippa Gregory’s sequel to *The Other Boleyn Girl*. Gregory’s story is centered on the lives of Anne of Cleves and Catherine Howard as wives to Henry VIII and Jane Boleyn’s involvement as their principal lady-in-waiting. The novel is told through the first person narratives of Anne of Cleves, Catherine Howard and Jane Boleyn, whose frequent and nostalgic reflections show her perspective on the executions of George and Anne, a part largely ignored in *The Other Boleyn Girl*. Although she acknowledges that she provided evidence at his trial, Jane believes that George would “be alive today if he had not gone down with his sister’s disgrace;” Anne was George’s undoing, but because of his love towards Anne he had allowed it to happen.⁹⁶ There exists a certain incongruity in Jane’s feelings towards her husband and Anne. She resents Anne and George who “never wanted me with them,” and never learned to value her as a wife and sister-in-law. Yet she exhibits a sort of wifely devotion and regret, saying, even “if we had been happily married, I could not be more filled with regret at the loss of him.”⁹⁷ It is difficult to ascertain Jane’s true feelings and opinions amid such contradictory commentary. By giving Jane an ambiguous personality, Gregory successfully prevents readers from feeling sympathy towards a character that she would further vilify.

Gregory makes several references suggesting that Jane’s testimony against George was under the instruction of men like Thomas Howard, 3rd Duke of Norfolk and Thomas Cromwell. Desirous to put his niece Catherine Howard on the throne and dispose of Anne of Cleves, Norfolk taunts Jane that she can once again offer evidence of a queen’s guilt.⁹⁸ Gregory makes several implications that Jane gave false evidence, and confirms it in Norfolk’s statement that “if the king wants evidence, of anything, then we Howards will give it to him...as we have always done.”⁹⁹ This refers to an historical argument made by David Loades that powerful factions at court used Jane as a pawn in destroying the Boleyn’s influence.¹⁰⁰ Gregory uses this theory to illustrate Jane’s role as “the confidante who will tell everything.”¹⁰¹ After Henry VIII’s annulment from Anne of Cleves and remarriage to Norfolk’s niece, Catherine Howard, the duke suggests that Jane fostered an affair between the new queen and Culpeper to ensure that she is impregnated.¹⁰² This is slightly reminiscent of Anne’s incestuous plan to secure an heir for the king in the novel and film, *The Other Boleyn Girl*. Jane rises to the challenge under the presumption that she will be remarried to a duke as a reward, and quickly convinces Catherine, who is depicted as lacking common sense, education and manners to have secret rendezvous with the courtier.¹⁰³ Allowing for some historical accuracy, Gregory continues her story with the demise of Catherine and Jane; they are found guilty of treason without a trial and are sent to the block. Despite depicting Jane Boleyn as a pawn of Thomas Howard, and her evident unwillingness to cede to her uncle’s demands lamenting, “I tried to save him; I tried to save her. It failed, but it should have succeeded. I thought that I would save him if I gave evidence,” Gregory manages to condemn Lady Rochford.¹⁰⁴ Gregory tarnishes the reputation of Jane

⁹² Fraser, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*. (Great Britain: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd., 1992), 349.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 252.

⁹⁴ Starkey, *Six Wives: The Queens of Henry VIII*, 673.

⁹⁵ Loades, *The Tudor Queens of England*, 150.

⁹⁶ Philippa Gregory, *The Boleyn Inheritance*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 70.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 177 & 179.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

¹⁰⁰ Loades, *The Tudor Queens of England*, 151.

¹⁰¹ Philippa Gregory, *The Boleyn Inheritance*, 299.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 359.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 345.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 434.

Boleyn as a woman “never wholly sane,” and ends her novel arguing, “few novelists would dare to invent such a horror as she seems to have been.”¹⁰⁵

Jane Boleyn’s reputation is further disparaged in the HBO series *The Tudors*. Instead of being depicted as an instrument in the ambitions of others, Jane is the sole mastermind behind the Catherine and Culpeper affair. She plays a minor role throughout season three; she has returned to court as the principal lady-in-waiting to Jane Seymour, remains through her death and the accession of Anne of Cleves and her subsequent annulment. In season 4 Catherine Howard is made queen and Jane becomes a more noticeable character in the series. Through gossip with Joan Bulmer, former inhabitant of the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk’s household with Catherine, and current lady-in-waiting, Jane learns of the queen’s scandalous past.¹⁰⁶ In the Duchess’ household Catherine and Joan had late night rendezvous with Francis Dereham and Edward Waldegrave and in a state of intoxication Jane tells these things to a member of the king’s privy chamber, Thomas Culpeper.¹⁰⁷ After an inebriated night of intimacy, Culpeper reveals his desire to do the same with Catherine, and to be “hanging by their bellies like two sparrows.”¹⁰⁸ The confession clearly upsets Jane, but she hides her disappointment and suggests that she could arrange for such a thing to occur. The affair is set in motion; Jane reveals to Catherine Culpeper’s desire to be with her, and as a “sweet little fool” with an increasingly ill and absent husband, Catherine readily agrees to meet.¹⁰⁹ Jane and Culpeper remain sexually involved, despite facilitating his clandestine meetings with Catherine, often exhibiting voyeuristic tendencies as she watches them make love.¹¹⁰

The events of Catherine’s downfall are abridged, and the role of John Lascelles in divulging the queen’s past is ignored. Joan Bulmer confesses her knowledge of Catherine’s pre-contract to Francis Dereham and her current involvement with Thomas Culpeper, who in turn places the blame on Lady Rochford who “provoked it and acted as a procuress, like some madam in a brothel.”¹¹¹ Jane insists that the two had carnal knowledge of one another but she had no involvement in the affair other than to guard the door, which she did against her will. True to history, Dereham, Culpeper, Catherine and Jane are all executed for treason. Jane maintains her innocence despite being the sole instigator and facilitator of the liaison between Howard and Culpeper.

The Tudors has brought a greater historical awareness, albeit with its inaccuracies, to the masses. The power of film is to produce a much more intimate connection with the characters, both visually and emotionally. Their mannerisms, conversations, behavior and toils make them relatable to the viewer. While a show like *The Tudors* has the power to give its audience a newfound interest in history, but it can also implant inaccurate portrayals of historical figures.

Jane Boleyn—a pawn or scapegoat? Historical literature has taken both possibilities into account, often opting for the latter. Her testimony during the trial of her husband and Anne Boleyn has frequently been dubbed the primary factor in their executions, and her involvement with Catherine Howard and subsequent execution has been praised a fitting retribution for her betrayal. There is a lack of logic in these arguments. To assume that one testimony during the trial of the century, headed by chief minister to the king of England, secured the death of Anne and George is laughable. The system of justice in 16th century England cannot be equated with our current judicial system. Henry VIII had already decided to marry Jane Seymour while Anne lived, and if a man whose future would only confirm his capricious behavior wanted to rid himself of Anne, then it would surely happen. Few historians have taken into account the emotional and psychological duress that Lady Rochford must have endured after her husband’s death. Their executions were not followed by a funeral or period of mourning; Jane did not receive sympathy and was unable to publically grieve.¹¹² Without male guidance she secured herself an income, retained her position and returned to a court that undoubtedly triggered painful memories.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 516.

¹⁰⁶ Micheal Hirst, *The Tudors*, DVD, Peace Arch Entertainment Group, Season 4, Episode 2, 18 April 2010.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., Season 4, Episode 3.

¹¹¹ Ibid., Season 4, Episode 5.

¹¹² Fox, *Jane Boleyn*, 198.

Whether or not she and George shared a happy marriage will remain largely unknown, but Jane Boleyn must be commended for her ability to endure such tragic events and through her own resolve return to a position of favor at court as a widow.

It cannot be doubted that Jane served as an accomplice to Catherine Howard; primary sources provide ample evidence to suggest that this was the case, but what must be questioned is Jane's motives in facilitating an affair. She was knowledgeable of court dynamics, she had lived to see Henry VIII divorce the beloved Katherine of Aragon in favor of the bewitching Anne Boleyn, whom he had beheaded in favor of the sweet Jane Seymour, whose death led him to a short marriage with the German Anne of Cleves until he became enamored by the flirtatious Catherine Howard. She had come to understand his volatile and unpredictable behaviors, and by aiding Catherine she knowingly put herself in jeopardy. Whether through loyalty or pity it cannot be discerned, but Jane helped Catherine find a temporary escape from the old, ill and overweight king. There is always the possibility that she was a "tool of a powerful aristocratic faction."¹¹³ Her connection with both the Boleyn and Howard families makes this theory plausible, but any scheming would have been determined and arranged by the men of the family; as a female in a patriarchal world she would have been forced to obey.

A prominent woman of her day, heiress in her own right and kin to powerful families, Viscountess Rochford flourished at the court of Henry VIII. She retained her position as lady-in-waiting at court for five consecutive queens and lived during a period of religious change, exploration, societal advancement and numerous scandals. The Tudor Period, and particularly Henry VIII's six wives, have captivated the minds of historians, writers and filmmakers. Jane Parker, a young woman who married the brother of the future Queen of England, and survived both their executions has been largely ignored in favor of her more popular contemporaries. She only emerges as a secondary character in the stories and tales of Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard. Lady-in-waiting and relation to both queens, Jane would become embroiled in the impropriety and scandal that preceded their executions. Her testimony would be critiqued and her actions questioned in the trial of her husband and Anne, as would her involvement as a facilitator in the affair of Catherine and Thomas Culpeper. It would be the latter that secured her own death, and allowed for a posthumous myth, most likely caused by John Foxe or Gilbert Burnet, to emerge surrounding her involvement in their deaths. Jane is frequently, if not always, mentioned in historians' analysis of Anne and Catherine. They have reached drastic conclusions about her character, behavior and life that cannot be supported by the scarcity of information her contemporaries have left. She has become the scapegoat, the jealous wife, and the conniving friend. References to her are fleeting, and she has been reduced to nothing more than a name, 'that bawd, the Lady Rochford.' Her life, accomplishments, and tribulations have been buried in obscurity, providing historians the opportunity to recreate her character as they see fit. It does not benefit Jane's posthumous reputation that the only surviving documentation on her is in regards to her alleged accusations against George Boleyn and as an intermediary for Catherine Howard. Writers and filmmakers have vilified her in their depictions of George Boleyn, Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard. After centuries of anonymity, she has appeared in fiction novels by Philippa Gregory, in the film adaptation of her book *The Other Boleyn Girl* and most notably in the popular HBO series, *The Tudors*. The ultimate goal of these productions, as well as fictional books, is to make historical events interesting and attractive to a population that might have been fairly uninterested otherwise. Writers and directors are limited in the amount of adjustments they can make to famous historical characters; obscure and under-researched figures like Jane provide them the opportunity to dramatize the past. They have helped to nurse Jane's posthumous myth and reinforce her malleability as a historical figure. Biographer Julia Fox has helped to bring attention and significance to Jane's life. She provides an in-depth analysis of her involvement in the Boleyn and Howard affairs but more importantly shares Jane's story, and her character detached from George, Anne and Catherine. In a patriarchal society, Jane embodies female independence and has "shown just how far a woman alone could progress, despite the handicaps she had faced."¹¹⁴ In her death Jane's reputation has faced its own obstacles; she has become stigmatized and type casted by historians, helping to foster writers and filmmakers' portrayal of her as a jealous and wicked

¹¹³ Loades, *The Tudor Queens of England*, 150.

¹¹⁴ Fox, *Jane Boleyn*, 313.

woman. A historical puzzle deemed unworthy to solve, Jane has been repeatedly altered and transformed by those seeking to understand her illustrious contemporaries. It is truly unfortunate that only through the defamation of her character has Jane Boleyn, Viscountess Rochford emerged from the shadows of her famed contemporaries as a powerful and influential historical figure in her own right.

 BRITISH WOMEN, DOMESTICITY, AND THE CREATION OF EMPIRE

 --
 ELIZABETH VAN HORN

British control over India always seemed rather tenuous. The British population of the colony was vastly outnumbered by the people they were seeking to rule, and the policies regarding the governing of the native Indian population changed often. In the early years of the colony the British East India Company thought it best to establish a policy of assimilation and encouraged marriages between their employees and Indian women. They hoped that this intermingling between the two races would improve relations with the wider population, but by the 1790s government officials like Governor-General Richard Wellesley disagreed with this premise and interracial marriages were banned in the colony.¹ Wellesley believed that the best way to strengthen British control was to separate the two communities, not to bring them together. To promote cultural division white men were instead encouraged to marry British women. It was thought that these women would bring a certain level of sophistication to the colony and would assist in the civilizing process. As women came to India in increasing numbers the understanding of what it meant to be British in the colony began to change.

In the early nineteenth century 1800s, the number of women in the colony was still extremely low, with an estimate of two hundred and fifty women living in the colony in 1810. By 1872, the population of women in the North Western Provinces alone had risen to five thousand. By 1901 there were forty-two thousand European women living in India.² Having no official duty, these women came to the colony with their husbands to settle homes and to act as living symbols of what it meant to be British in India. It was hoped that that they would be able to cement the divide between the British and the Indian populations and prevent unnecessary social interactions. In order to do this, however, women needed to know how to create a safe place for Britishness, which is what made domestic manuals so important. The women who were marrying British officials were typically young and had never been responsible for managing a household before. The authors of domestic manuals like *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook* were keenly aware of this, with the book's authors, Flora Annie Steel and Grace Gardiner, writing in the preface that, "A large proportion of English ladies in this country come to it newly married, to begin a new life, and take up new responsibilities under absolutely new conditions."³

It is these "new conditions" that make British domesticity in India so interesting, because domesticity itself was not new. What "domestic" meant, however, changed when applied to the Indian subcontinent. Diets were forced to change, higher numbers of servants were required, and the climate itself changed the way British women understood their homes. Domestic manuals were just as popular in India as they were in Britain, but starting around the time of the Indian Rebellion manuals that were exclusively intended for a British audience in India began to be published, suggesting that the way people perceived domesticity in India was entirely different than how it was seen in Britain.

¹ Alison Blunt, "Imperial Geographies of Home: British Domesticity in India, 1886-1925," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 24, no. 4 (December, 1999): 421-440.

² Blunt, 426.

³ Flora Annie Steel and Grace Gardiner, *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook* (1902, reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), ix.

For instance, Isabella Beeton's *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management*⁴ was published for a British audience in 1861 but is a cookbook more than anything else. Steel and Gardiner's guide, published in 1888, on the other hand, is essentially step-by-step guide with explanations on a wide range of topics.⁵ The two women discuss the roles of each servant, how to manage a stable, and what to expect when living on the plains and in the hills. Despite coming from environments that had servants and that required management, any knowledge that young British women brought with them to their new lives in India was not going to be helpful because of the cultural differences between India and Britain. Domesticity in both environments required the development of separate spheres, but it meant something entirely different in India. British women were not simply supporting class divisions in India, but rather an entirely separate imperial divide. Domesticity was different in each place because it meant something completely different. Domestic guides taught women not only how to create a home, but how to create an empire.

Much has been written on the relationship the British had with their servants, but very little has much to do with the manuals that helped women create such an environment. It seems that historians have avoided the question of how important domesticity was in a British household, while the importance of domesticity in India is almost always mentioned when historians write about European women in the colony. Out of this comes the question of how important domestic guides were to women in Britain. Christopher Klausen suggests that the classic British manual by Isabella Beeton was intended for an emerging middle class who needed help creating a home, but even then it is not anything like Steel and Gardiner's Indian equivalent. Domesticity in Britain was a much simpler project that required significantly less instruction, and the lack of material on this subject supports this supposition.

In an attempt to understand imperial domesticity, Elizabeth Buettner frames the issue within the role of family. Her book "explores the integral role of family practices in the reproduction of imperial rule"⁶ and how the idea of empire changed once British women and eventually entire families came to live in India. She also addresses the question of servants and their interaction with British children, who were seen to be the most susceptible to the dangerous influence of their native servants. Here, Buettner discusses how this had to be balanced, since bringing servants in from the metropole was often prohibitively expensive. Many domestic manuals emphasized the necessity of keeping servants' living quarters up to half a mile away from the home,⁷ emphasizing the tension between the distance that many felt was necessary to maintain an air of authority and the literal closeness to the family that was required for an Indian servant to actually perform their roles as required.

Alison Blunt's work on Anglo-Indians in both India and Britain, is similar to Buettner in that it frames domesticity around families, but her focus is on Anglo-Indian women who lived in between these two cultures.⁸ Anglo-Indian women, as she refers to them, were white women who were born in India, and therefore had likely never been to England at all. Blunt discusses Anglo-Indian families moving to England after India was granted independence in 1947. However, she is not so much interested in domesticity as she is in the idea of what "home" meant. The section on servants is brief, referring really only to women who had been able to

⁴ Isabella Beeton, *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management: a Guide to Cookery in All Branches*, (London: Ward, Lock, and Co. Limited, 1861, reprint 1907).

⁵ Colesworthy Grant, *Anglo-Indian Domestic Life: A Letter from an Artist in India to His Mother In England*, (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink, and Co., 1862).

⁶ Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁸ Alison Blunt, *Domicile and Diaspora: Anglo-Indian Women and the Spatial Politics of Home* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

afford to employ an entire household of Indian servants, but could not maintain a similar lifestyle in Britain. While they were of the highest social class in India, their positions in the metropole were vastly different. Anglo-Indian women were suddenly reduced to doing work that the lowest castes in India would have done. Domestic manuals simply did not apply to these women as they were no longer in a position that required their use. Indian domestic manuals would have been useful for the mothers or grandmothers of these women, however.

In Blunt's work "Imperial Geographies of Home" she discusses the integral role domestic manuals played in the development of British homes in India as well as in the development of empire.⁹ She argues that, "British homes in India were seen... to foster appropriate gender roles, national virtues, and imperial rule,"¹⁰ and emphasizes the intersection between domesticity and empire. Domestic guides brought Britain to India, and were integral for women who were moving to the colony and had no previous experience with servants. The authors of these guides believed that the creation of home was an entirely different affair in India, apparent by the painstaking descriptions of each servant, from the bearer all the way down to the sweeper. It could be argued that such an approach would have been necessary because of the differences between cultures. For example, a majority of the servants in India were men, while in England it was the reverse. This was based on the cultural norms of the Indian population, which would then suggest that the culture of domesticity in India was something the British adapted, rather than invented.

This was nothing new of course, but it is interesting to note that instruction manuals for domesticizing an empire borrowed heavily from those they were trying to civilize.

In *Married to the Empire*, Mary Procida frames the colonizing process specifically around women.¹¹ Following prior scholarship of authors Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel,¹² Procida argues that the role of women in India is much more important than historians have typically portrayed. She criticizes the idea of "different spheres," suggesting instead that women were much more integrated into society than previously thought. Housekeeping, she suggests, had "profound implications for Anglo-Indian women and their relationship to the empire."¹³ Procida argues that the British bungalow, and the women who ran them, were vital for the development of British imperialism.

Nupur Chaudhuri follows this theme with her article, "Memsahibs and Their Servants in Nineteenth-Century India."¹⁴ She discusses the popularity of publications like the *Englishwoman's Domestic Manual* and how they affected women's experience in coming to India. Having based much of their knowledge of domesticity on publications intended for a British audience in Britain, British women were shocked when India did not meet their expectations. Perhaps the greatest difference that they experienced was that they were expected to hire more servants than they would have in Britain. While middle class British households

⁹ Blunt, "Imperial Geographies." Judith Walsh provides an alternative to this narrative with *Domesticity in Colonial India: What Women Learned When Men Gave Them Advice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). She discusses the importance of domestic guides for Bengali women written in essentially the same period and how the idea of modernity provided in these texts affected their lives. For a more contemporary approach see Raka Ray and Seemin Qayum's *Cultures of Servitude: Modernity, Domesticity, and Class in India* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), which examines domestic servitude in modern Kolkata.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 422.

¹¹ Mary A. Procida, *Married to the Empire: Gender, Politics, and Imperialism in India, 1883-1947* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

¹² Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel eds., *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1992).

¹³ Procida, 21.

¹⁴ Nupur Chaudhuri, "Memsahibs and Their Servants in Nineteenth-Century India," *Women's History Review*, 3, no. 4 (1994): 549-562.

usually employed five to six servants, a home in India with a similar income might have fifteen servants, with some households having as many as twenty-five.¹⁵ Chaudhuri writes that because Indian servants were among the only native people British women encountered they shaped what India was to them. Servants stood as examples of what the memsahibs could expect from all native people, even though, of course, servants were paid to act servile. She offers a brief discussion of how the relationships between British women and their servants changed after the 1857 rebellion, though she suggests that the change was due to the rise of social Darwinism rather than what each group may have experienced in the year of fighting. In another of Chaudhuri's works¹⁶ she discusses how British women handled motherhood in a completely different environment than what they were accustomed to. Many women were new mothers, thrust into an environment that lacked the comfort of their own mothers or grandmothers who would have been able to calm nerves in more familiar circumstances. She argues that women have typically been ignored in the histories of imperial India, despite their role in promoting and preserving "imperialist attitudes."

In Lucy Lethbridge's survey of domestic servitude in Britain, she thoroughly discusses what it was like to be a servant, from those who were one amongst an enormous staff, to individuals who worked alone for middle class families.¹⁷ Lethbridge writes that servants were an essential part of British life, as they were important not simply for their skills in maintaining the home, but as symbols of the family's social standing. There is little reference to domestic guides in this study, as her goal with this work is not to talk about the women who ran the households, but rather the servants who made it all possible. Most of the work on the topic of Victorian domesticity revolves around what it was like to be a servant, rather than what it was like to run a household,¹⁸ but there are essays by scholars like Christopher Klausen¹⁹ that discuss the domesticity and its relation to the development of the middle class in Britain.

Klausen suggests that *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management*²⁰ was written for women who had not been raised in environments that had a large domestic staff and were therefore unfamiliar with the logistics of running larger households. The author, Isabella Beeton, details the hiring process of servants and the price of kitchen tools, but her work, though incredibly influential, is more of a cookbook than anything else. The 1907 edition dedicates fifty pages to information about running a household, with the majority of the remaining two thousand pages dedicated to recipes and table settings. This in itself is hugely different than Flora Annie Steel's *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook*,²¹ which provided detailed instructions on how to run an entire household, not just how to hold dinner parties. Susan

¹⁵ Chaudhuri, "Memsahibs and Their Servants," 550.

¹⁶ Nupur Chaudhuri, "Memsahibs and Motherhood in Nineteenth-Century India," *Victorian Studies*, 31, no. 4, (Summer 1988): 517-535. Swapna Banjeree's "Blurring Boundaries, Distant Companions: Non-Kin Female Caregivers for Children in Colonial India (Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries)," *Paedagogica Historica*. 46, no. 6 (December 2010): 775-788, covers similar material, arguing instead that the relationship between European children and their native caregivers created "ambiguous, multi-dimensional relationships."

¹⁷ Lucy Lethbridge, *Servants: a Downstairs History of Britain from the Nineteenth Century to Modern Times*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013).

¹⁸ Examples of these works include Pamela Sambrook's *Keeping Their Place: Domestic Service in the Country House*. (Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2005) and Pamela Horn's *Life Below Stairs: the Real Life of Servants, the Edwardian Era to 1939*. (Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2012).

¹⁹ Christopher Klausen, "How to Join the Middle Class: with the Help of Dr. Smiles and Mrs. Beeton," *The American Scholar*, 62, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 403-418.

²⁰ Isabella Beeton, *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management: a Guide to Cookery in All Branches*, (London: Ward, Lock, and Co. Limited, 1861, reprint 1907).

Zlotnick's essay "Domesticating Imperialism: Curry and Cookbooks in Victorian England"²² explores how the hybridization of Indian and British food affected the development of empire, but she does this through cookbooks, not domestic manuals. This is likely because domesticity meant something different in Britain than it did in colonial India. These were two entirely separate spheres, and while they both concentrated on cementing class divisions, their ultimate aims were completely different. For the British in India, domesticity not only meant creating and maintaining a home, but also establishing the very basis of what they considered to be civilized. The British worked tirelessly to separate themselves from the Indian people they ruled, and domestic guides were hugely important to further this mission.

In the early years of the colony, the British East India Company encouraged their employees to marry Indian women in order to encourage cultural and societal integration. It was thought that the Indian population would be easier to control if they had a vested stake in someone who was part of the power structure. However, starting in the 1790s this policy began to change. Much of it had to do with the social anxiety that biracial children caused, but there was also the fear of an uprising like the French had experienced in Haiti in 1791.²³ Women were brought into the colony to act as a civilizing force, but the hold on India had never been particularly strong. The greatest threat to British control would come with the Indian Rebellion of 1857. Alison Blunt discusses how the imagery associated with the Rebellion was most often in relation to attacks on British womanhood, who stood as the personification of British domesticity. Homes, the most archetypal symbol of domestication, were looted and burned, and servants ran away from their masters, leaving behind any pretention of British superiority and control.

The rebellion shook the British to their core. They had taken pride in their ability to rule such a massive colony without dissension, so when fighting broke out the British had difficulty comprehending why their subjects rebelled. The greatest concern was attached to women who were representative of what it meant to be pure and British. This is why the attack at Cawnpore, a British garrison, was so horrifying. The British assumed that after they had surrendered that the Indian forces would let them leave by boat. However, as they made their way to the water, the men were slaughtered leaving behind a number of children and women. After being held for fifteen days, these prisoners were also slaughtered and thrown down a well.²⁴ These dead became martyrs for the British cause in India, in part because of who they had been, but also because of what they represented. They were families, and they were entirely innocent in British eyes. To Europeans, the rebellion had been led by savages who had no understanding of what it meant to be cultured or civilized, and it was the job of the British to ensure that their subjects would never rise in such a way again. The dead at Cawnpore came to represent everything the Raj stood for, and in order to repair the damage the rebellion had done to British confidence, British authorities determined that it would be beneficial to allow more European women to come to the colony.

John Kaye, who had experienced the siege of Lucknow, where civilians and soldiers defended the city's main political offices for several months in the summer of 1857, wrote in the *Calcutta Review* that "our women were not dishonoured, save that they were made to feel their servitude,"²⁵ something that was obviously not harmful, but instead humiliating. Once the rebellion had been brought under control, the next step would be to reestablish British

²² Susan Zlotnick, "Domesticating Imperialism: Curry and Cookbooks in Victorian England," *Frontiers: a Journal of Women Studies*, 16, no. 2/3 (1996): 51-68.

²³ Blunt, "Imperial Geographies," 426.

²⁴ Procida, 113.

²⁵ Blunt, "Imperial Geographies," 427.

domesticity. It was during this period that women began to come to India in much higher numbers. This attributed to a report that said British life was improving hourly, due, in part, to the “improved character of English female society in India [and] the increase of matrimony.”²⁶ The number of women in the colony continued to rise in the years following 1857, particularly once travel became easier after the opening of the Suez Canal opened in 1869. It was the domesticating features of British womanhood that would help reestablish British control, but the brand of domesticity these women brought with them would be of no help in running a British household in India.

One of the major reasons why domesticity was so important to the British in India is because it created a safe space that reminded them of their homes back in Europe. India differed from what they had known, so establishing safe spaces was integral to curbing homesickness, at the least, and providing an imperial separateness of sorts. But because India was so inherently different, both hotter and wetter than Britain ever was, the British could not possibly directly replicate the homes they had back in England, which made proper Indian household management so important. It was a non-stop attempt to recreate everything they longed for while also adapting to a hostile environment.

Writing in the *Calcutta Review* in 1886, J.E. Dawson challenged those who claimed living and working in India was a life of luxury, writing,

Has it ever occurred to those who thus indulge in such cheap and cruel reflections on some of Her Majesty’s most conscientious and laborious subjects, at what an expense to them the work of the Great India Empire is carried on? It is said, and said truly, that the Englishman is pre-eminent among the nations of the earth for his love of *home!*²⁷

For many people like Dawson, British women were symbols of what it meant to be British. He discusses the importance of wives to British officials, and how a “bad” wife could negatively affect an official’s time in India. “Among them are hardworking, home-loving men,” he writes, “and their ideal of bliss is to consort with one... who will tend their houses and administer their homes with discretion. All are Englishmen, and they love in their wives what is essentially English.”²⁸

Despite how important women were considered to be, Mary Procida suggests the stereotype of the “lazy memsahib” was not terribly off base. Visitors from Britain often noticed how uninvolved these women were in the running of their households, leaving all the work to their servants. She writes that Anglo-Indian women adopted a “slap-dash way of housekeeping” which even they acknowledged as an “unusual life.”²⁹ The fact that the wives of British officials did not really have a role besides acting as a symbol was unnerving for governmental officials. Despite this, the job of a memsahib was not to work, Procida argues, but to be present “and through their presence radiate authority.”³⁰ The Anglo-Indian household as a microcosm of everything the British Empire was supposed to be. In their relationships with servants, the memsahibs were expected to act as bastions of British superiority and educate their servants in the habits of discipline that were the basis for British governance. This air of authority was not something that middle class women would have, or could have, been taught in Britain.

²⁶ Ibid., 427.

²⁷ J.E. Dawson, “Woman in India: Her Influence and Position,” *Calcutta Review*, 83 (October 1886): 349.

²⁸ Dawson, 369.

²⁹ Procida 81.

³⁰ Ibid., 83.

What Dawson considered to be “essentially English” did not easily apply to India, however. In *Anglo-Indian Domestic Life* Colesworthy Grant describes the differences between what was essentially English and what life in India was like in great detail. This work is a collection of letters that were ostensibly sent to the author’s mother, describing to her what it was like to live in India. Though he offers observations on a great deal of things, from the beauty of the clothing Indian men wore to popular meals, his descriptions of homes in India are key to understanding the necessity of domestic guides. Grant describes the enclosed features of the bungalows, as well as noting the importance of having Venetian blinds over the curtains that were typically used in Britain. Carpets were rarely used in India, as well. Fabric holds on to moisture and easily molds in India’s climate, so while these things were important in Britain, they were simply not practical in an Indian home. The rooms, he writes, were typically bare, as furniture “not only rob[s] us of space for circulation of air, but harbor dust, and afford shelter and encouragement to insects.”³¹ It was things like these that young brides had very little experience dealing with, which is why domestic manuals were so important for them. Despite Steel and Gardiner’s declaration that “Economy, prudence, efficiency are the same all over the world,”³² the detail they put into their guide suggests that this was not quite so simple. There would be no need for separate guides if economy, prudence, and efficiency was all a woman needed to run her home, and while the two spheres of domesticity may have been similar, they served different purposes.

One of the major divergences between homes in Britain and India was the number of servants that were needed to run a household. Because many of the women arriving in the colony had come from middle class families, they typically had just a few servants.³³ The huge number of servants required was often justified by religion and the caste system. Muslim servants often refused to touch pork, serve wine, remove dirty dishes from the table or wash them. Hindu servants refused to perform tasks that were deemed to be jobs for people of lower castes.³⁴ British mothers were often suspicious of Hindu ayahs, as they feared that they would pass on “superstitious” beliefs to their children, so they sought out Muslim or Catholic ayahs, who were descended from the Portuguese to care for their children. But, these women were also problematic, as many Europeans were not convinced of the Indian woman’s faith or her dedication to her conversion. The author of *The Englishwoman in India* wrote, “Converts are usually arrant humbugs; Catholics little better; indeed, the domestics who have robbed and cheated us during our sojourn in India, have with one exception been Christians,”³⁵ a feeling Chaudhuri suggests is attributed to feeling threatened, as it might put the servants on equal footing with their masters.³⁶

On top of having a larger household, British women were very likely unfamiliar with this clash of cultures. It often frustrated them that they were forced to hire more servants than they thought necessary to do jobs that in Britain would have taken fewer servants to do. “The number of servants required for only two people must strike those not well acquainted with Indian habits and customs as absurd,” one woman wrote. “Here caste asserts its power.”³⁷ Even the smallest things that were required of mistresses in Britain, like providing meals for their servants, was not

³¹ Colesworthy Grant, *Anglo-Indian Domestic Life: A Letter from an Artist in India to His Mother In England* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink, and Co., 1862), 13.

³² Steel and Gardiner, 5.

³³ Chaudhuri, “Memsahibs and their Servants,” 550.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 551.

³⁵ Lady Resident, *The Englishwoman in India*, (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1864), 55.

³⁶ Chaudhuri, 552.

³⁷ Chaudhuri, 551.

necessary in India because of dietary restrictions.³⁸ This is exactly why domestic guides were so important to British women new to India. Any knowledge on domesticity that the young memsahibs may have had only applied to people who were culturally very similar to themselves. Any foreknowledge the memsahibs may have brought with them to India was likely to be useless as soon as they stepped off the boat. It was not enough to be educated on British domesticity simply because it did not apply to the Empire, hence the popularity of domestic manuals.

Starting around 1857 the popularity of domestic manuals began to explode, a result of the rise in population of women. These manuals were popular in Britain as well, but what they taught was completely different. Isabella Beeton's guide *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management* was first published in 1861, though it had been published serially since 1859, was an incredibly popular book, with the latest edition being published in 2011. However, Beeton's guide was not so much of a way to learn about domesticity as it was a cookbook. This was likely to have been a useful source in any British household and it would have likely served an important purpose in the metropole, but it simply was not relevant for an audience in India. In her chapter on the mistress of the home, however, there is some similarity. Beeton wrote, "The functions of the mistress of a house resemble those of the general of an army or the manager of a great business concern. Her spirit will be seen in the whole establishment, and if she performs her duties well and intelligently, her domestic will usually follow in her path,"³⁹ a sentiment that was also encouraged in the Empire.

Beeton describes the appropriate pay for servants, as well as what a servants' character should be, informing the reader that interviews work best for finding the best employee. Each edition of the guide published updated charts on the acceptable pay rates of servants, which supports Klausen's suggestion that Beeton's work would have been most appropriate for someone newly coming into the position of a mistress. She spends a little time discussing many facets of what a mistress should be, describing how to answer RSVPs and how to write letters of introduction, but she fails to provide much information at all on servants. A chapter each is dedicated to the position of the housekeeper and the cook, but that is where it ends.

Beeton does describe what should be expected of the housekeeper, writing that being able to manage the accounts is a necessity. She writes of the housekeeper, that, "Like 'Caesar's wife,' she should be 'above suspicion,' and her honesty and sobriety unquestionable,"⁴⁰ which never would have been considered in India, as the honesty of British women was unquestionable. *Cassell's Household Guide*,⁴¹ published in the 1869, was similar to Isabella Beeton's, but it was literally written as an encyclopedia for household management. The index includes topics from how to properly clean a knife, to the recipe for "sauce for a calf's head," and how to make stools for children. While these were important facets of life in Britain, they simply could not carry over to an Indian household. The mistress of a British home would have no need for knowing how to make a stool as performing such an act would have been deemed far below the status held by the British. Jobs like mattress stuffing would have been done exclusively by servants, and British women never went into their kitchens, so recipes would have been useless, beyond telling their cook what they might like for dinner that night. Almost all of the advice provided by Beeton and Cassell would not have been useful for a woman living in India, which is what necessitated the publication of guides for an exclusively British audience in India.

Alison Blunt identifies the 1880s as the beginning of the rise in popularity of British

³⁸ Procida, 90.

³⁹ Beeton, 9.

⁴⁰ Beeton, 35.

⁴¹ *Cassell's Household Guide: Being a Complete Encyclopedia of Domestic and Social Economy and Forming a Guide to Every Department of Practical Life, Volume 1*, (London: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, 1869).

domestic guides, and Flora Annie Steel and Grace Gardiner's *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook* published in 1888 fits right into that niche. Similar to Beeton, the authors begin with the duties of the mistress. Steel and Gardiner write that "Housekeeping in India, when once the first strangeness has worn off, is a far easier task in many ways than it is in England, though it none the less requires time, and, in this present transitional period, an almost phenomenal patience,"⁴² which makes the reader aware that they are suddenly encountering a much different guide than they may have been accustomed to.

Where Beeton and Cassell do not focus considerable on what is expected from servants, there arise racial implications from the manuals written for India. In describing proper punishment of servants, Steel and Gardiner suggest giving servants castor oil, as physically punishing servants was not allowed. "To show what absolute children Indian servants are," they wrote, "the same author has for years adopted castor oil as an ultimatum in all obstinate cases, on the ground that there must be some physical cause for inability to learn or remember."⁴³ The rest of the guide has a similar tone. The authors write that servants should be given living quarters, but memsahibs should be sure to enforce rules and prevent themselves from being taken advantage of, emphasizing that housing servants would be no reason for them to allow third and fourth generation relatives to live there, as well. In this way, Steel and Gardiner were teaching young British women the proper way to think of their Indian servants.

Steel and Gardiner openly acknowledge their inexperienced audience and provide a detailed list of what should be in a pantry, as well as the Hindi translation for the word, and the weight conversion. Where Beeton's reference to the household accounts is brief, Steel and Gardiner dedicate a chapter to it, complete with charts, as well as a chapter on the "estimates of expenditure," providing separate ones for Bombay, Madras, Ceylon, Rangoon and Burma, among other places, depending on the location of their audience. Calculating expenditures and household spending would have likely been taught to young women by their mothers prior to getting married, but because they had moved thousands of miles away from the nearest maternal figure, these sorts of charts were a requirement as there was no other reference point for them.

The clearest difference between the domestic guides, however, is in the description of the household servants. The authors again delineate the role of servants based on the locations of the audience, providing different translations of what each servant might be called in what region. For instance, in Bengal the head servant was called a bearer, but in Bombay and Madras he was known as a butler, in Ceylon he was referred to as an "appu," and in Burma "boy, or butler."⁴⁴ They continue in explicit detail, and identify the duties of each of servant. "The bearer," they write, "should be ready to receive callers from twelve o'clock till two. Unless his mistress has told him to say 'durwaza bund,' (the Indian equivalent for not at home)."⁴⁵ The detail that is put into these guides is enough to show how important they might have been to a newly married woman in India. They provide recipes for the bearer, which include "Armenian Cement" and the concoction necessary to keep ants away. Though these things may seem to have been common knowledge, by including them Steel and Gardiner provide insight to who read these manuals and how uneducated they were in the ways of household management.

After their discussion of the bearer is completed, the authors describe the role of the sweeper:

In most houses the sweeper is engaged simply because he is the husband of the

⁴² Steel and Gardiner, 1.

⁴³ Steel and Gardiner, 3.

⁴⁴ Steel and Gardiner, 54.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 58.

ayah. This is an immense mistake as the whole cleanliness of the house depends upon him. ...He is, in fact, the under-housemaid, and should never be allowed to degenerate into the dirty, unkempt drudge, whose sole notion of work is to raise a dust-storm with a broom.⁴⁶

While there is little doubt that nineteenth century Europeans harbored a certain amount of prejudice for people of color, the fact that these ideas were perpetuated in domestic guides is important to note. Young women not only needed to learn how to run a household, but how to be an acting participant of the British Empire. This sort of language continues throughout the guide, and it is likely that this was part of its popularity. Steel and Gardiner did not talk down to their audience, and indeed were extremely frank with them.

While the language of *The English Bride in India* is considerably less casual, the author, Men Chota, essentially duplicates the model of Steel and Gardiner. The book begins with what an Englishwoman should expect out of their mornings, including what was typically eaten for breakfast as well as what time breakfast should be eaten. Chota's prose is very formal, but for just a moment, they break form,

Another thing do not worry over trifles, life is not long enough. You will find the native servants dirty in some things, and they do outrageous things... but if you try to treat them calmly and explain every little detail carefully you will find they will work well.⁴⁷

The author of this guide is clearly more tolerant of Indian servants than either Steel or Gardiner, but their guide serves the same purpose. Though ostensibly written with the same goal, domestic guides intended for Britain cannot be compared to those written for India. At the most base level, the guides were teaching their audiences something entirely different.

In the years leading up to the Indian Mutiny, domesticity in India was not of terrible concern. The British East India Company encouraged their employees to marry Indian women, and in the mid-eighteenth century, up to ninety percent of British men in India were married to an Indian woman, but by the mid-nineteenth century there were virtually no mixed marriages in the colony.⁴⁸ Only in the 1790s did people grow concerned about miscegenation and the weakening of the power structure that divided the two communities. In order to solidify this division, men were encouraged to marry British women, instead. It was hoped that these women would bring a certain level of sophistication to the colony, as well as a domesticating presence, both to the men they married and to those they hired.

However, domesticity in India was not the same as it was in Britain. As basic as household management seems to be from hiring and paying servants to assuring that the kitchen is clean, domesticity was not something that could easily be transferred across borders. Not only was everything different in India than it was in Britain, from the climate, to the food, to the cultural expectations of British women, but domesticity in India was a distinct entity, and it required women to learn an entirely new set of rules. A vast majority of the women who came to India in the years following the Indian Rebellion were often young women who had little to no experience managing a household, so they required very specific instructions. These guides did not account for homes employing more than just a few servants, and there was no need to describe the duties of sweepers, because that position simply did not exist in Britain. These

⁴⁶ Steel and Gardiner, 63.

⁴⁷ Men Chota, *The English Bride in India* (Madras: Higginbotham and Co., 1909), 8.

⁴⁸ Blunt, 426.

young memsahibs required step-by-step instruction because they had left anyone who could educate them on the ways of running a home back in England and were often isolated.

But domestic manuals published for a British audience in India also taught women how to perceive their surroundings and what to expect from the native servants they employed. When Steel and Gardiner referred to servants as children, those reading the manuals absorbed that opinion. Women needed to maintain cultural divisions, as well as to act as living symbols of what it meant to be British in British India. These women were not simply running homes, but were creating an entirely separate cultural sphere. British women needed to know how to treat their Indian servants in a different manner than they would have treated their British servants, and they needed to know how to maintain an imperial superiority. British domestic guides were not helpful because what they taught did not apply in India. Women needed to know how to enforce class divisions, and that was not something that could be taught by Isabella Beeton.

THE HEROIN EPIDEMIC AND THE VIETNAM WAR: HYSTERIA, RHETORIC,
AND MYTHOLOGY IN NIXON'S AMERICA.

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ASHLEE R. PAYNE

The Vietnam War holds a unique position in American memory. Since the war's later years, i.e. 1968 onward, Vietnam has been viewed as a complete embarrassment for the United States, where the capitalist superpower, with superior technology and manpower, was routed by an inferior guerilla force in a jungle halfway across the globe. Vietnam has been dubbed 'a bad war', a folly, a proxy war in the more grandeur conflict that was indicative of the American insecurity of the Cold War. American memory places Vietnam, not within the valorous conflicts of the two World Wars, but in a category all its own, where the cause was unjust and unnecessary, and the results were tragic—as over 50,000 men lost their lives for a cause that proved to be wildly unpopular and unsuccessful.

The War in Vietnam divided a fragile nation, sending shockwaves through society from California to New York with plenty of stops in between. College campuses around the country revolted in detest of an imperialist war that had no real bearing on National security, as the 'good' wars of the past. World War II had Hitler, Nazism, and an attack on American soil by a Japanese foe that deserved revenge. The moralistic implications of World War II, coupled with a style of fighting that was swift and territorially hinged, made the war visibly successful and seemingly as brief as possible. Vietnam was another animal entirely, with guerilla fighting and a unidentifiable enemy, the war dragged on for almost two decades, making it the longest fought in the nations history and most divisive since the Civil War.

The horrific events and evocative nature of the Vietnam War, has spurred a public memory that has been equally complex and convoluted. Even with the Reagan reinvention of Vietnam memory, where the conflict was reframed as a necessary struggle, while welcoming all Vietnam veterans into the fold of national heroes, Vietnam veterans have yet to move fully beyond the realm of criticism and suspicion.¹ Unlike the 'good' wars of the past, Vietnam's veterans have continuously been greeted with hostility and distrust. Certain stigmas, including, and most importantly in this discussion, the myth of the heroin addicted Vietnam veteran, have continued to torment the war's participants, decades removed from resolution of the conflict.

Vietnam's perceived heroin epidemic has haunted veterans in the forty some years since the conflict began to wind down. A new trope of the heroin addicted Vietnam soldier and veteran, have been continuously highlighted in the memory of the war. From the silver screens of Hollywood, to the soldier's memoirs, to the American consciousness, heroin and addiction have a complex narrative in the discussion of the memory of the Vietnam War. From the years 1969-1972, amongst fervent criticism of the war, a new peril began to unfold in the jungles of 'Nam, the threat of heroin addiction. There was a widely accepted belief in all factions of the United States, from individual persons, through all factions of the government and military personnel, and into the presidency, that drug use amongst soldiers was an immediate and immense threat to national security. Strangely, even as contradictory evidence surfaced in the years 1973-1975, the image of the Vietnam veteran shooting up has continued to bleed into the American consciousness unto the current times. In the American mind, it is largely accepted that

¹ Meredith H. Lair. *Armed with Abundance: Consumerism & Soldiering in the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), p. 13.

the ‘good wars’, such as World War II, made boys into men, while in Vietnam, it was believed, turned boys into addicts.

The remainder of this narrative will aim to characterize the myth of the heroin addicted soldier, by analyzing the hysteria that was incited during the years 1969-1972 over the narcotic use by soldiers stationed in Vietnam. This paper will elaborate on previous works that have already challenged the ‘myth of the addicted army,’ (the myth alleges drug use was so widespread it contributed to the breakdown in the military’s fighting capacities),² while offering a new lens for analysis. This paper will in no way claim that soldiers did not use heroin during the Vietnam war, but rather the usage was grossly over exaggerated and was mythologized in Nixon’s decision to declare a war on drugs. This paper will argue that the hysteria that evolved during the years in Vietnam, as related to drug use, was just one of many white panics of the time, and is more representative of the Cold War American psyche than previously acknowledged. Simply put, the American reaction on several levels, the media, the government, and the public, are reminiscent of the Red Scares of the early 1950s.

Furthermore, I will argue that like the monolithic entity of communism, the United States faced a new invisible foe, the drug addicted youth and the addicted soldier. This culture of paranoia eventually prompted Richard Nixon to declare yet another moral and financial crusade on the drug users and drug pushers, declaring the War on Drugs. The invisibility of addiction and fear that soldiers would come home and spread the disease to a generation of American youth was simply an extension of the Domino Theory rhetoric that was indicative of the Cold War American identity. The paper will also include a discussion of the governmental decision to attack the source of the drug traffic, rather than aid and understand the individual using the drugs. With this decision, I argue, the United States elaborated on the idea of Containment, providing rationalizations such as eradicating the supply before it could reach the United States and infect a generation of American Youth.³

This work hopes to make an addition to a growing historiographical trend and resituate the War in Vietnam into the larger Cold War narrative. Vietnam is usually displayed as a proxy war indirectly against Russia, but the addiction crisis and the subsequent paranoia that GI addicting was a product of psychotropic warfare initiated by communist China or Russia, calls for a re-imagination of Vietnam in the American mythology. The paranoia that surrounds drug use seems to be just one example in a greater dialogue of fear that ravaged the United States throughout the latter portion of the twentieth century.

Vietnam is perceived by many, as ushering in a thawing of the Cold War dissension policies of Containment and Domino Theory. However, this narrative will pose that Vietnam did not thaw the Cold War, but rather reimagined the global Cold War along the lines of a drug war. The anti-communist sentiment in tandem with the greater hysteria of the Cold War American society simply transformed, taking the shape of a new drug epidemic. This paper will situate the drug epidemic in a larger narrative of communist hysteria, displaying that in the years of the cold war, although a majority of this narrative will focus closely on the years 1969-1972, communism and drugs addiction were inextricably linked in the American psyche.

This narrative will begin by describing the ‘myth of the addicted army,’ drawing mainly upon Kuzmarov’s definition, as he is the only scholar to write specifically on this topic. I will

² Jeremy Kuzmarov, *The Myth of the Addicted Army: Vietnam and the Modern War on Drugs*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009). Kuzmoarov was the first to present the idea that the heroin addiction in Vietnam was a mythology. The Myth alleges drug use was so widespread it contributed to the breakdown in the military’s fighting capacities.

³ Alvin M. Shuster, “G.I. Heroin Addiction Epidemic in Vietnam,” *Special to the New York Times*, May 16, 1971, p. 1.

then move to contextualize the drug epidemic by discussing the heroin controversy during the Korean War. In this section, I will present the origination of a widely accepted belief that drug addiction was a moral and biological weapon used by Communist nations against the United States, in the hopes of spreading the disease to the home front upon soldiers' return.⁴ The third section of this paper will investigate the beginnings of the drug panic that began in 1969 and followed through until 1971. The fourth portion of this paper will delve into the governmental reaction to this panic. This portion will include a description and analysis of Senators Robert H. Steele and Morgan F. Murphy's Report on the World Heroin Problem, as well as Richard Nixon's decision to declare a war on drugs in his June 17, 1971 message to congress. The final portion of this paper will aim to analyze the media reaction to the heroin panic. This section is where the majority of the analysis of these events will lie. I will interpret the rhetoric used by the media in reporting on the drug epidemic, while posing possible rationales for how and why this media frenzy is reminiscent of the red scares of the 1950s.

Part I: The Myth of the Addicted Army

Jeremy Kuzmarov in his book *The Myth of the Addicted Army: Vietnam and the Modern War on Drugs*, elaborates on the Slotkin Paradigm (of his book entitled *Gunfighter Nation*) arguing that the mythology surrounding drugs in the Vietnam War helped to skew the public memory of the war by advancing the perception that young men in Vietnam had been corrupted by illegal drugs.⁵ These myths began in the months following the United States' involvement in one of the only well publicized atrocities from the war, My Lai. Once the public gained knowledge of the massacre, there was a quick push to rationalize the actions of this group of young men, in the terms of Drug use. Reports surfaced that part of the unit in question had been using Marijuana the day before the 'incident'.⁶ The myth began with Marijuana, but following a military crackdown on the substance from 1969-1970, the public's fears began to move toward Heroin. The belief was, that once Marijuana was unavailable, GIs turned to a cheap, colorless, odorless fix that could be snorted or smoked in tobacco with no one the wiser. Once the media began to report on the widespread availability of heroin in Vietnam, as well as the potency that was believed to be astronomically greater than any heroin found in the US, a moral panic began. Persons on the Right and Left began to use the drug epidemic as rational behind a necessity for a speedy end to the war.⁷ The myth of a dire issue of heroin amongst the soldiers in Vietnam, began in 1970 and has continued to grow until present day. In Kuzmarov's characterization of the myth, widespread heroin use amongst GIs is displayed as one, if not a leading reason the United States was failed to achieve victory in Vietnam.

Part II: The Korean Foundations of the Drug Hysteria.

Popular memory dictates that the heroin addiction and soldier's performance connection began in the Vietnam War. However, much like the war itself, the issue of heroin use in the Korean War, has been all but forgotten in the public perception of the war. The Korean War was vital in the proliferation of a drug panic nearly two decades later. Korea was the platform with

⁴ Kathleen J. Fydl, *The Drug Wars in America, 1940-1973* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 60.

⁵ Kuzmarov, *The Myth of the Addicted Army*, 6.

⁶ Robert M. Smith, "Senators Told G.I.'s in Songmy Unit Smoked Marijuana Night Before Incident," *New York Times*, March 25, 1970, p. 14.

⁷ Kuzmarov, *The Myth of the Addicted Army*, 40.

which many of the closely related Communism and heroin production links first received legitimation. In viewing the Cold War as a moral crusade, the Bureau of Narcotics, most specifically the career of Harry J. Anslinger, offers a lens through which to view the close relationship of communist hysteria and drug paranoia. Anslinger's impulse to sanctify political agendas and cloak them in moral trappings seems all the more likely and potent in the context of the developing world—where racial stereotypes and cultural ignorance render absolutist claims more plausible to the American mind.⁸

In the case of Korea, there was a widely accepted belief that the availability of heroin, was a Communist plot by Red China and North Korea to “smash the resistance of U.S. soldiers by making them narcotics addicts.”⁹ Anslinger, along with many of his colleagues at the Bureau of Narcotics, made increasingly fraudulent claims attempting to implicate Red China in the drug use of the US soldiers. In an article in the *Los Angeles Times* from April of 1952, Anslinger went as far as to say, “that in addition to strengthening their political hand, the Communists are using smuggled narcotics for buying explosives and other war material as well as for a careful campaign to make addicts out of United States and other troops.”¹⁰

By the next year, the heroin problem in Korea had become nationally accepted as a ploy by Red China to impede on the military and cultural superiority of the United States. The United States even went as far as to “accuse Red China of operating a vast ‘dope’ ring to sabotage U.S. troop morale.”¹¹ Anslinger's power and position allowed for the legitimation of such far fetched and unfounded accusations. Anslinger's propositions, are indicative of a Cold War conspiracy paranoia, yet translated into a further codification of both communist and drug hysteria. Detective Sergeant George L. Woolley was quoted in a *Los Angeles Times* article saying, “the general opinion is that the heroin being peddled in Korea is coming from Red China, although “We found fields of opium poppies growing right there in Korea.”¹² In addition to the comparisons that will be drawn between the Korean drug hysteria and Vietnam ‘epidemic’, in this same article, Woolley discusses how this trend of drug use was “one of the major problems particularly in the rear areas where soldiers have a lot of time on their hands and seek relaxation and recreation in civilian areas.” The rationalization of a drug habit due to boredom and inactivity, will surface again in the Vietnam paranoia. Even though there was no evidence in 1953 or 1971 to support the idea that idle minds turn to drugs, the American media, military personnel, and high ranking government officials generally accepted this fictitious claim.¹³

Anslinger's claims in 1952, during the heat of the Red Scare, will translate almost literally into Nixon's drug policy during the Vietnam era. Throughout the 1950s, Anslinger continuously ignores data questioning about the legitimacy of the Red China heroin conspiracy, making increasingly far - fetched assertions regarding the communist nation. However, a shifting cycle towards barbiturates in latter portion of the decade, minimizes Anslinger's crusade in the public.¹⁴

⁸ Kathleen J. Fydl, *The Drug Wars in America, 1940-1973* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 74.

⁹ Unknown, “Red Chinese Dope Drive to Entrap GIs Charged,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 27, 1952, p. 18.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ ¹¹ Unknown, “Narcotics Called Big Problem of Army in Korea,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 18, 1953, p. A19.

¹¹ Unknown, “Red China Accused of Running Vast Dope Ring: Intent is to Sabotage U.S. Troop Morale, Federal Commissioner Tells U.N. Group,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 16, 1953, p. 6.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid and William, Millinship, “One in 10 GIs in Vietnam on Heroin,” *The Observer* May 24, 1971, p. 5.

¹⁴ For a description of drug cycles in America see Ryan Grim, *This is your Country on Drugs: The Secret History of Getting High in America*, (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2009). For a discussion of Anslinger see Kathleen J. Fydl, *The Drug Wars in America*, 85.

With the election of John F. Kennedy to the presidency in 1960, the conservative and punitive drug policy of Anslinger's Bureau of Narcotics took a serious moral blow. Kennedy's official foreign drug policy shifted towards bilateral action geared towards a supply eradication.¹⁵ Although this policy is representative of the Cold War containment policy, the Kennedy officials did not force the connection of Red China in their attempt to eradicate drug traffic into the United States. Only when the rumblings of widespread availability of heroin in Vietnam reached the United States public, did narcotic agents craft a narrative according to the familiar Anslinger script, recasting only some of the characters: Illicit drug traffic in Vietnam was the result of Communist agents, whether it be the government of North Vietnam, "Viet Cong" in the South, or even the People's Republic of China.¹⁶

Part III: My Lai, Marijuana, and the Beginning of a Drug Panic

The first drug in Vietnam that peeked the suspicion of politicians and media outlets in Vietnam, was the use of marijuana. Throughout the 1960s, marijuana was widely used amongst American youths. The perceived indulgence in marijuana by the hippies and anti-war protesters fueled older and more conservative factions of the US government to fiercely oppose and demonize its use. In a pamphlet from the United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV), the military described the effects of marijuana: "habitual use of marijuana can cause criminal acts, violence, and insanity. Marijuana may cause sudden psychotic episodes or impulsive behavior in reaction to fear or panic."¹⁷ This gross over-exaggeration of the effects of marijuana was easily translated into a rationalization for the most grotesque and widely publicized atrocity from the war, the massacre at My Lai.

Although it was, and still is, the only publicly acknowledged reflection of the American savagery towards the Vietnamese during the war, My Lai's horrific details led to a push for an explanation in the United States. Amongst the many potential explanations, was the notion introduced by Senator Thomas J. Dodd, those who carried out the atrocities in My Lai) were under the influence of marijuana. Robert M. Smith wrote in the *New York Times*,

A former Army squad leader told a senate subcommittee today that five of the twelve members of his squad were smoking marijuana as late as 11 o'clock the night before the unite was involved in the alleged Songmy [My Lai] massacre. He continued on quoting Dr. Joel H. Kaplan, a psychiatrist from Woodmere: Contrary to many popular opinions held here in the states, the drug [marijuana] could cause people to become fearful, paranoid, extremely angry, and led, in a number of cases to acts of murder, rape, and aggravated assault. He goes as far to quote one soldier saying: A majority of those shooting were marijuana smokers, but not all the marijuana smokers were shooting.¹⁸

Smith's article is a wonderful representation of the drug problem in Vietnam on two separate fronts. First, the article displays the frenzied rhetoric, which surrounded drug use amongst GIs.

¹⁵ Kathleen J. Fydl, *The Drug Wars in America*, 115.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 391.

¹⁷ United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam "The Trip and You," Command Information, Pamphlet Number 8-69, From Texas Tech University the Vietnam Center and Archive, *Vietnam Women Veterans Association Collection*.

¹⁸ Robert M. Smith, "Senators Told G.I.'s in Songmy Unit Smoked Marijuana Night Before Incident," *New York Times*, March 25, 1970, p. 14.

Marijuana, arguably the least harmful of all illicit drugs, in no way led to the rape and murder of countless Vietnamese women and children. The demonization and paranoia surrounding marijuana is only the beginning of the hysterical and reactionary drug policies that would evolve out of the war. Secondly, the need to rationalize this American inflicted atrocity in a way that separated these men from the rest of the armed forces, demonstrates the inability of the US to fully recognize its own ineptitude in Vietnam. Instead of evaluating the overall military and cultural objectives in Vietnam, it was easier for the US to place the blame on marijuana and those soldiers who used it. These trends noted above, will continue to plague the US military and society as the drug panic begins to gain legitimacy.

Following the My Lai-marijuana connection, the US military waged a large-scale crackdown on marijuana. Once the widely used marijuana was perceived as eradicated, the heroin panic began to dominate public discourse. By late summer 1970, heroin was seen as cheap, readily available, and in fairly open use.¹⁹ Heroin represented the worst fears for the American public—it displayed their boys as easily manipulated, highlighted the chaos of the war, and threatened domestic security. There could be only one reason for this degeneration of their soldiers—a communist foe.

Throughout the next two sections, the United States drug paranoia will devolve into all out chaos, much like the Red Scare of the early 1950s. Once heroin is again the enemy, it merges with the communist enemy as a monolithic entity with the fear invisibility and an ability to infiltrate the armed forces as well as the United States domestic front. Heroin user estimates will reach upwards of fifteen percent of all military personnel stationed in Vietnam.²⁰ The Military will introduce an Amnesty Program.²¹ There will be an enormous financial investment to bolster the home-front's ability to absorb and handle a growing drug epidemic, and the United States will have a War on Drugs.²²

Part IV: *The World Heroin Problem Begins a War on Drugs*

By 1971, the heroin problem amongst soldiers in Vietnam was a recurring topic in the American media. Newspapers, magazines, and television specials, all attempted to understand and categorize the perceived growing problem amongst American soldiers stationed in Vietnam. Heroin was readily available, adding the relatively inexpensive nature, along with the gradual withdrawal of GIs from combat, led many at home to fear that GIs turned from smoking marijuana to “injecting the deadly heroin.”²³ There were a string of reports in various newspapers there was a growing number of soldiers dying from heroin overdoses. One article even went as far as saying, “The Soldier who goes to Vietnam today runs a far greater chance of being a heroin casualty than a Viet Cong tragedy.”²⁴ By May of 1971, the entire nation was completely

¹⁹ Norman E. Zinberg, “Heroin in Vietnam: The End of a Taboo,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 5, 1971, p. 2.

²⁰ Morgan F. Murphy and Robert H. Steele for the Committee on Foreign Affairs, *A report of special Study Mission: The World Heroin Problem*, Congressional Record Vol. 118, No. 142 Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1971, From Texas Tech University the Vietnam Center and Archive, *Social Movements Collection*, Box #: 03, Folder #: 22; D123.1A; Museum Objects.

²¹ Henry Kamms, “Drive Fails to Halt Drug Sale in Vietnam: Heroin Price Unchanged...,” *Special to the New York Times*, August 30, 1971, p. 1.

²² Wireless Bulletin, Personnel: Drugs and Discipline Division - Special Issue: President Nixon's June 17 Message to Congress on The Problem of Drug Abuse - Record of MACV Part 1, 18 June 1971, Folder 0016, Box 0016, Vietnam Archive Collection, The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University. Accessed 26 Apr. 2014

²³ Jack Anderson, “Heroin Endangers GIs Out of Combat” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, October 28, 1970, p. D35.

²⁴ Unknown, “Soaring Drug Use Called Reason to Speed GI Pullout,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 28, 1971, p. 1.

entranced by the threat of heroin in Vietnam. Weekly articles began to appear updating information on the dire heroin problem in the war. *The Washington Post* even ran a three piece series entitled “Army in Anguish” which outlined the drug problem in Vietnam and even proposed that the military was battling for its survival.²⁵ By June of 1971, the United States would be entering yet another financial and moral crusade, both in Vietnam and at home, as Richard Nixon would declare the war on drugs.

Along side of the media hysteria about the perceived drug use amongst soldiers in Vietnam, US government officials at the highest levels became increasingly enthralled with the eminent threat of Heroin. The national media’s frenzied reportage of the ‘drug epidemic’ only reinforced the United States government’s Cold War absolutist paranoia. In this section, I will detail the brand of rhetoric that was coming from three major persons in the drug panic—Robert H. Steele, a Republican Senator from Connecticut, Morgan F. Murphy, a Democratic Congressman from Illinois, and Richard Nixon, the President of the United States. Further research will be able to go to greater lengths to discover the institutional frameworks of the 1971 drug panic.

Throughout 1970-1971 Senator Robert H. Steele and Congressman Morgan F. Murphy became the largest and most vocal proponents for a military and domestic moral and financial crusade on drugs. Steel and Murphy were quoted in countless news mediums across the nation, visited Vietnam for the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and produced an immensely irrational report entitled *The World Heroin Problem*. Murphy and Steele’s *The World Heroin Problem* grossly over exaggerated the rate of drug use amongst GIs stationed in Southeast Asia and became one of the sole justifications for the media frenzied drug panic that would ensue throughout the course of 1971.²⁶

The World Heroin Problem was a special investigation that was conducted throughout twenty days in April of 1971, while the findings were published in a public report and were presented to Congress in late May. Murphy and Steele provided an extensive and all encompassing report that included a categorization of the heroin problem at home, the heroin situation in France and Italy, the role of Turkey in the production of opium poppies, the role of Iran and Japan, and the lengthiest section, “The [Heroin] Problem in Southeast Asia.” The report closed with a list of conclusions and fourteen recommendations. *The World Heroin Problem* also created and illustrated a pyramid that depicted the perceived structure of the illegal heroin market.²⁷ This pyramid scheme, although not devised by Murphy and Steele became the basis for the supply elimination theory. The widely accepted belief in 1971, was that “if the financiers and backers who finance the narcotics business can be uncovered and prosecuted, severe damage could be inflicted on the entire operation.”²⁸ Murphy and Steele’s delineation of the drug producers as the root of the problem, draws a striking resemblance to the containment theories of the communist Red Scares of the 1950s. The belief that the invisible enemy would eventually seep onto the shores and into American society, was held during the early 1950s in reference to

²⁵Haynes Johnson and George C. Wilson, “The U.S. Army: A Battle for Survival: Army in Anguish,” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, September 12, 1971, p. A1. And Peter A. Jay and Peter Osnos, “War Casualties: Leadership, Morale: Army in Anguish,” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, September 15, 1971, p. A1. And Haynes Johnson and George C. Wilson, “The Army: Its Problems are America’s,” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, September 20, 1971.

²⁶ John W. Finney, “Army Reports Few in War in 1970-’72 are Addicts Today,” *Special to the New York Times*, April 24, 1973, p. 1. And Stars & Stripes: Calls ‘H’ Use Figure Deceptive, 23 July 1971, Folder 06, Box 18, Douglas Pike Collection: Unit 02 - Military Operations, The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University.

²⁷ Morgan F. Murphy and Robert H. Steele for the Committee on Foreign Affairs, *A report of special Study Mission: The World Heroin Problem*, p. 22.

²⁸ Ibid.

communism, than resurfaces during yet another white panic, the heroin epidemic in Vietnam. Not once in the report did the two congressional officials even discuss the rationale for why individual soldiers and Americans may turn to drugs, rather there was an all out push to eradicate this problem before it reached the heart of America. Murphy and Steele even go as far as to demand that if the eradication of poppy cultivation and the heroin production could not be carried out, then “the only solution [was] to withdraw American servicemen from Southeast Asia.”²⁹

In tandem with the proliferation of the supply eradication theory, Murphy and Steele’s report was responsible for the severe over exaggeration of the amount of GIs participating in the use of heroin. Claiming that even as the report was being written, more and more soldiers were becoming addicted to heroin, Murphy and Steele suggested that upwards of fifteen percent of military personnel (draftees were said to have an addiction rate far above the fifteen percent statistic) stationed in Vietnam were addicted to heroin in one form or another.³⁰ This highly inflated statistic was widely reported and accepted throughout the national media outlets at the time.³¹ Murphy and Steele portrayed the soldiers and the narcotics addicts as not only a danger to themselves but to society as a whole.³² The report advised that the United States be willing to devote all possible resources, human and material, including the exercise of economic and political pressures, in order to “save generations of young Americans from the scourge of heroin.”³³ Murphy and Steele also pushed the importance of the high opium yielding regions in Southeast Asia, known as the Golden Triangle. It was believed that Laos, Burma, Thailand, and even the Yunnan province in China were responsible for producing and funneling the heroin that was being purchased and used by American GIs.³⁴ The report even goes as far as to appeal to the United States Allies at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Southeast Asia Treaty organization (SEATO) mutual security treaties, as both pledge action against a common foe. The report states, “Heroin addiction is an enemy of mankind and all the world’s resources should be mobilized against it.”³⁵ *The World Heroin Problem* used absolutist rhetoric, paranoid over exaggeration, and the invisible enemy rationalization to incite a drug panic amongst national media, military personnel, American citizens, and even the president, Richard Nixon.

In his June 17 message, President Richard Nixon called for an enormous escalation of the United States effort to eradicate drug addiction. Nixon, only weeks after the publication of Murphy and Steele’s report, portrayed the addiction epidemic as afflicting the both they body and soul of American Identity.³⁶ He called for a national attack on drug addiction, for he believed “if we do not destroy the drug menace in America, then it will surely in time destroy us.”³⁷ The president also was aggressively supportive of the supply eradication theory, arguing that steps to strike at the supply side of the drug equation—to halt the drug traffic by striking at the illegal producers, the growing of the opium poppy, and the trafficking of drugs beyond US borders—would eventually lead to an easing of the heroin epidemic.³⁸ Nixon’s support of this

²⁹ Ibid, 36.

³⁰ Ibid, 1.

³¹ William, Millinship, “One in 10 GIs in Vietnam on Heroin,” *The Observer* May 24, 1971, p. 5. And Tom Buckley, “It’s Always a Dead End on ‘Scag Alley’: U.S. and Heroin,” *New York Times*, June 6, 1971, p. E1.

³² Morgan F. Murphy and Robert H. Steele for the Committee on Foreign Affairs, *A report of special Study Mission: The World Heroin Problem*, 4.

³³ Ibid, 2.

³⁴ Ibid, 4-5,

³⁵ Ibid, 35.

³⁶ Wireless Bulletin, Personnel: Drugs and Discipline Division - Special Issue: *President Nixon's June 17 Message to Congress on The Problem of Drug Abuse* - Record of MACV Part 1, 18 June 1971, Folder 0016, Box 0016, Vietnam Archive Collection, The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University.

³⁷ Ibid, 2.

³⁸ Ibid.

rationalization as a solution of the drug epidemic, offers many insights into the similarities of the Cold War concept of containment. Nixon's rationale for complete eradication of the opium poppy, would suggest a connection to the fear of the invisible enemy. Nixon, along with many other drug sensationalist of the time, feared that this heroin problem would eventually reach the home. The following selection is Richard Nixon's exact phrasing concerning the threat of the addiction transmittance from soldiers to the greater American Public,

In our history we have faced great difficulties again and again, wars and depressions and divisions among our people have tested our will as a people—and we have prevailed...The threat of narcotics among our people is one which properly frightens many Americans. It comes quietly into homes and destroys children, it moves into neighborhoods and breaks the fiber of community which makes neighbors.³⁹

The nostalgic and fiercely emotional rhetoric that Richard Nixon uses in this address, is entirely reminiscent of the stereotypical Cold War anti-communist agenda. The broad sweeping arguments, American identity sentimentality, and the appeal that the invisible enemy will some day come into American homes and destroy families and generations of youth, all evoke the same intention as the George Keenan containment theories of the McCarthy era. This similarity begs the question are the heroin epidemic in Vietnam and subsequent War on Drugs, a reaction to a growing addiction problem in the United States, or more likely, is the heroin panic a product of a broader paranoia that was indicative of the absolutist Cold War identity?

Part V: From Red Scares to Poppy Panics: Heroin and the Communist Connection

Following the Morgan and Steele report and President Nixon's declaration of a War on Drugs, the summer and into the fall of 1971 saw the greatest and most emotional responses to the heroin panic. The widespread public perception that a large quantity of soldiers stationed in Vietnam were using heroin, led to a variety of rationales. In this section I will characterize the national concern of heroin addiction by discussing several of the common justifications of drug addiction of Vietnam soldiers entailed—including GI boredom, purity of Vietnamese heroin, and Communist nations attempting to subvert US power by implementing a ticking time-bomb of addiction.

The impression that boredom drove many American GIs to drug use was widely promoted and believed amongst American society and journalists alike. There is much evidence to suggest that a genuine belief existed amongst the American public that as the US military began to withdrawal from combat in Vietnam, the soldiers had great stretches of boredom with nothing to do. The fear was, that as soldiers became increasingly unoccupied, they turned to drugs.⁴⁰ Many Americans shared the conviction that as marijuana became increasingly sparse, as GIs had increasing leisure time, and as they interacted with street level peddlers in Saigon and other cities, the American GI addiction worsened. The genuine fear that the idle nature of the Vietnam War led soldiers to use heroin, displays a greater inability of the United States to recognize its own shortcomings. The American public, government, and media did not wish to evaluate the situation and their actions in it. There is evidence to suggest that the ignorance of legitimate reasoning for the drug panic by the greater American public displayed a greater

³⁹ Ibid, 10.

⁴⁰ William, Millinship, "One in 10 GIs in Vietnam on Heroin," p. 5.

reluctance to acknowledge the atrocities that were being propagated against the Vietnamese people, as well as the suspicious rationale for entering the war in the first place.

Alongside the fear of boredom amongst GIs, the American public was terrified by the potency of Vietnamese heroin. Heroin potency not only increased the potential for addiction, but increased the probability that a GI's addiction would translate into a possibly worse addiction at home. Due to the high potency of Vietnamese heroin, at a claimed ninety four to ninety eight percent pure, as apposed the meager four percent purity of American heroin, GIs stationed in Vietnam rarely injected heroin to retrieve the high.⁴¹ Most GIs would smoke OJs or opium laced joints or snort the heroin they received.⁴² However, the anxiety of the American public was that once GIs returned home, with addiction in tail, individuals would need to turn to injecting the less pure American heroin to retrieve the same sort of high. Alvin M. Shuster in his *Special to the New York Times* offers a unique lens into the paranoia about heroin. His article states,

The use of heroin by American troops has reached epidemic proportions. The Epidemic is seen by many here as the Army's last great tragedy in Vietnam. "Tens of thousands of Soldiers are going back [to the United States] as walking time-bombs," said a military officer in the drug field, "and the sad thing is that there is no real program underway despite what my superiors say to salvage these guys."⁴³

The purity theory is a vital portion of the heroin panic's similarities with the other white panics of the Cold War. The purity theory allowed for the source eradication theory to gain legitimacy, as well as provides for a growing anxiety of the GIs' return to the United States. The idea that if the US did not cut off both the addiction and source of traffic, that when GIs returned home, the country would devolve into a criminal and chaotic wasteland.

This irrational fear of the invisible monolithic entity of drugs, bears yet another similarity to the United States' communist hysteria during the Red Scares of the McCarthy era. In applying the containment theory to the drug panic, it is evident that it became the moral and financial crusade of the United States to contain the drug problem in Southeast Asia, before it was able to reach American soil. This rationale bears a striking resemblance to the enormous military, financial, and moral campaign against the spread of communism following the Second World War. These two panics were instigated by an invisible entity, and resulted in a media, governmental, and public hysteria. The public panic when consulted with the threat of undetectable enemy, represents a much larger characterization of the Cold War—an unsettling belief that the American identity and American democracy are not wholly secure.

The final and most disturbing rationale of the Vietnam drug addiction panic is the idea that heroin addiction amongst GIs was a psychotropic communist plot to destroy the integrity and resilience of Americans. Proponents from the conservative right, as well as the national media, believed that Communist elements were profiting from the criminal and corrupt propagation of heroin in Vietnam.⁴⁴ The Narcotics Bureau indicated in its study of world heroin traffic that much of the growing amount of heroin from Southeast Asia was being smuggled in the United States by "Chinese entrepreneurs operating out of Laos, Thailand, and Hong Kong."⁴⁵ Though

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Unknown, "What Toned Tom on? GIs and O.J.s," *The Pacific Stars and Stripes*, December 11, 1971, p. 14.

⁴³ Alvin M. Shuster, "G.I. Heroin Addiction Epidemic in Vietnam," *Special to the New York Times*, May 16, 1971, p. 1.

⁴⁴ *World Drug traffic and its Impact on Security*, 14 August 1972, Folder 12, Box 18, Douglas Pike Collection: Unit 02 - Military Operations, The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University.

⁴⁵ Seymour M. Hersh, "Asian Drug Inflow Found 'Greater than Realized,'" *Special to the New York Times*, July 28, 1972, p. 3.

further research will investigate the Laos and Thailand connections to communist fears, there is evidence to suggest that this paranoia of the Southeast Asian opium poppy production is closely related to (1) social anxieties tied to Communism and US inferiority, and (2) racialized perceptions of this area as maleficent and dangerous.

The communist connection to the heroin addiction of GIs in Vietnam was not a singular occurrence from one news medium in the height of the drug panic of 1971, but rather this view was shared amongst right-winged politicians repeatedly. H. L Hunt, a Texas oil tycoon and notorious conservative political activist, wrote a column entitled "Evil Heroin." In the article he describes the heroin epidemic as a communist plot:

Defenders of Red China keep trying to cloud the facts about Red China's heroin pushing in the U.S.. Poppies are a major crop in Red China and it is not a "private enterprise" crop. It is a government crop, just like all major activity in Red China. Red Chinese heroin has been seized in New York and Chicago in huge amounts but you don't hear much about it. Only a few enterprising newspapers emphasize these facts. Three Peking agents were nabbed in Chicago with heroin samples worth \$100,00 along with revolutionary propaganda intended for distribution on Midwest college campuses. In New York, \$2 million worth of Red Chinese Heroin was seized. Let's expose the truth about Red China and Heroin.⁴⁶

As the heroin panic wore on, the right increasingly focused on the hostility and potential threat of Southeast Asia. Although, eventually, much of this attention turned to Thailand and Laos, the perception that Communist China had a hand in the corruption and addiction of US troops was an alarmingly widely held belief. Articles in the *New York Times*, the *Boston Globe*, and *Stars and Stripes*, all implicated Chinese drug lords as the primary pushers of heroin and the chief destroyers of American GI effectiveness. An article by Miriam Ottenberg in the *Boston Globe* responds to the growing notion that Red China has been conducting a covert operation to destroy the American GIs saying, "The Chinese who dominate this traffic are the Chinese overlords who are motivated by profit rather than ideology, rejecting the notion that Chinese Communists are seeking world domination by making addicts of the youth of the west."⁴⁷ Although Ottenberg's article reflects a genuine disavowal of the Red Chinese heroin hysteria, there were a greater number of sources that believed the Chinese Mafia, along with high ranking government officials in Laos and Thailand, dominated the drug traffic and operated a complex family-style network out of over a dozen Asian cities.⁴⁸

The theory of Communist sabotage was a widely held rationalization as to why the American soldiers would be caught in the web of addiction. The general lack of guilt admission amongst any American institution or news media is quite alarming. The Communist sabotage theory only solidifies that the American Cold War identity could not withstand the idea of inferiority. Americans would leap to unfounded conclusions, such as Communist interventionism in order to rationalize, (1) why their soldiers were believed to be using drugs and (2) why were they losing this war. The American Cold War conscious is reflective on an

⁴⁶ Article by H. L. Hunt - Evil Heroin, 24 July 1972, Folder 65, Box 20, Social Movements Collection, The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University.

⁴⁷ Miriam Ottenberg, "Chinese Border Tribesmen Left Holding Heroin Bag as GIs Leave Vietnam," *Boston Globe*, June 27, 1972, pg. 52.

⁴⁸ Seymour M. Hersh, "Asian Drug Inflow Found 'Greater than Realized,'" p. 3. And Peter Arnett and Bernard Gavzer, "GI Drug Users Could Open Door to U.S. for Chinese 'Mafia,'" *The Pacific Stars and Stripes*, August 15, 1971, p. 11.

absolutist mind, which can bear no threat of inefficiency. Criticism or critique of the American identity was not allowed. The hardworking American could never fail, therefore any failures by American GIs, military personnel, or the government, must have some legitimate rationalization whether it be communist plots or Southeast Asian anarchism.

Part VI: Conclusions

The heroin panic of 1971 began to unravel by early 1973 as the American media began to turn to a new crisis, the Watergate Hotel break-in. Overwhelming evidence began to surface characterizing Murphy and Steele's terrifying statistics as grossly exaggerated.⁴⁹ The belief that upwards of fifteen percent of the military personnel stationed in Vietnam was completely shattered by a Washington University of St. Louis study that interviewed over thirteen thousand Army enlisted men who returned to the United States during the peak of the epidemic. The study found that only a little over one percent of the men who returned from Vietnam at that time had been addicted to drugs. More shockingly, the study proposed that the man most likely to have been a drug user in Vietnam was, "young, single, black, a low-ranking member of the regular Army with little education, who came from a broken home, and had an arrest history before enlisting and had used drugs before military service."⁵⁰ Yet, even with the resounding evidence to the contrary, the myth of the addicted army has endured in the public memory of Vietnam.

The heroin hysteria that evolved out of the War in Vietnam, must be examined through the lens of the Cold War in order to fully understand how this unfounded panic has been entrenched in the memory of the war. The American public, government, and national media's reaction to the perceived addiction crisis only solidified the panic's close relationship to the greater panic of the twentieth century—the fear of an inferior American identity. The 'poppy panic' of 1971 and the Red Scare of the 1950s are two examples of a more general paranoia that plagued the United States throughout the latter portion of the twentieth century. The memory of the Vietnam War must be recapitulated in a way that better serves the understanding of the importance of the drug panics that took place. Cold War America, renowned for its opulence and affluence, must be remembered for its numerous panics, widespread hysteria, and an inability to reckon with American imperfection on the world stage.

⁴⁹ John W. Finney, "Army Reports Few in War in 1970-'72 are Addicts Today," *New York Times*, April 24, 1973, p. 1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

SAINTS MORE THAN SOLDIERS: THE ENLISTMENT OF THE MORMON BATTALION

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NATALIE GUNN COFFMAN

It was late December, 1846, in the barren wilderness of what is now the southwestern United States. After marching through hundreds of miles of sand, rock, and desert, going near two days without water and weakened by dysentery, sixteen year-old Mormon volunteer soldier James Brown laid down by the side of the wagon road and accepted that these were his last moments on earth. He watched from the ground as the other soldiers dragged their withered bodies past, “looking like death, their mouths black, their eyes sunken till it was difficult to recognize them.”¹ These beleaguered soldiers were not even coherent enough to take notice of their fallen comrade. Long after the rear guard passed by, Brown’s eyes grew heavy as the sun sank behind the western horizon, and he felt his life slip away with the final rays of light. Just then, the very faint but distinct sound of a tinkling bell startled him awake. The sound was coming from a bell hooked to the neck of an oxen led by a thin figure. It was his uncle and fellow soldier Alexander Stephens, who had stayed behind to care for the fallen ox. Having wandered off the trail, Stephens came across a small bit of water which he used to revive himself and the ox, and by what seemed like divine providence, had stored just enough in his canteen to lift young John Brown from his deathly sleep. Arm in arm, the two men feebly walked the four miles towards camp, arriving in time for the next day’s march. John Brown later recalled that it was the most wretched time of his life, as it was for most of the men with whom he was traveling.²

John Brown and Alexander Stephens were just two out of five-hundred volunteer soldiers who participated in a war that history has largely forgotten, within which existed an even less known battalion of soldiers. Obscured by the outbreak of the Civil War, the Mexican War from 1846-1847 resulted in the geographical expansion of the United States, but at the cost of 13,768 American lives. Because the total number of enlisted men, both regular and volunteers was only 104,556, the death rate of the Mexican war is the highest of any other war in American history.³ It was within this context that the Mormon Battalion was formed, wherein 500 men, including John Brown and Alexander Stephens, left their families in Iowa in order to claim a small portion of the west by blazing a trail through Santa Fe and on towards San Diego. The Battalion itself is a remarkable aspect of American history, as it is the only group of soldiers recognized, defined, and united by a religious identity in American history. More fascinating still is the fact that such a large group of people were willing to serve under the very government that they felt had abandoned them, and were even trying to flee. The men and small number of women who participated in the Mormon Battalion helped establish California as an American territory, literally opened up the West by creating the wagon trail that thousands would travel upon, and were among the first to find gold at Sutter’s Mill. The Battalion’s contribution to American history is a large one, but the promulgation of their story within history books is miniscule, where it exists at all.

Although many members of the Mormon Battalion recorded their daily experiences on

¹ James S. Brown, *Life of a Pioneer: Being the Autobiography of James S. Brown* (Salt Lake City: Cannon and Sons Co., 1900), 49-50. Hathi Trust Digital Archives: <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007696674>

² *Ibid.*

³ John D. Eisenhower, *So Far From God: The U.S. War with Mexico, 1846-1848* (New York: Random House Co., 1989), xviii.

the trail to San Diego, it was not until thirty years after the war ended that an official history of the Battalion was published. *A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War* was compiled by Sgt. Daniel Tyler who served as a non-commissioned officer in C Company of the Battalion.⁴ A large portion of the book comprises a lengthy introduction to the history of the LDS church and its first President, Joseph Smith. The inclusion of this history, which focuses on the persecution of Mormons in Missouri and Illinois, and particularly the murder of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum, established a narrative of suffering around which the experience of the Mormon Battalion as portrayed in *A Concise History* revolved.

For decades, Tyler's work was the ultimate source of information regarding the Mormon Battalion. In 1928, the same year that a monument in honor of the Mormon Battalion was dedicated in Salt Lake City, Professor Frank Golder published *March of the Mormon Battalion from Council Bluffs to California; Taken from the Journal of Henry Standage*.⁵ Golder was not a Mormon, and when he came across the journal of Henry Standage, a captain in the Battalion, he became intrigued and pursued the matter further. He collected all the correspondence that was available to him, including government letters and executive orders. The second half of the book is the trail journal kept by Battalion soldier Henry Standage. Many of his citations, however, refer the reader back to Tyler's *Concise History*, thus perpetuating the narrative of righteous suffering.

Many people with ancestors who served in the Battalion have gathered the soldier's journals, where they exist, and have published them for the general public. The most inclusive collection of Mormon Battalion narratives was published in 1996 by Norma B. Ricketts. Her book, *The Mormon Battalion: U.S. Army of the West* is a combination of dozens of journals and autobiographies from Mormon Battalion soldiers.⁶

The first person to approach the Battalion as a military entity and not just a pioneer experience was Sherman Fleek. At the time of his books' publication, Fleek was serving in the United States Army with a Master's degree in history and was also a member of the Mormon Church. This trifecta made him particularly suited to write about the subject, and in 2005 he published *History May Be Searched in Vain: A Military History of the Mormon Battalion*.⁷

Complete scholarly works on the Mexican-American war are a rare find, but the field and subject matter is burgeoning as of the twenty-first century. Until recently, John D. Eisenhower's *So Far From God: The U.S. War with Mexico* published in the late 1980s, served as the authoritative source of information regarding the Mexican War.⁸ However, the content focuses on military strategy and lacks an analysis of social or cultural implications. Not surprisingly, the Mormon Battalion is only mentioned once in a brief sentence. In 2012, Amy Greenberg's field-altering book, *A Wicked War*, examined the cultural implications of the Mexican War upon American citizens. *A Wicked War* is centered on the idea that, for those who lived through the war against Mexico, the war served as a method of definition, forcing citizens to confront their opinions regarding issues like slavery and aggressive expansionism, which only emphasized the sectional differences between the north and south. Breaking from the prior historiography, Greenberg asserted that there was not a general consensus of support for the war against Mexico,

⁴ Sgt. Daniel Tyler, *A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War 1846-1848*. (Salt Lake City: 1881). Hathi Trust Digital Archives. <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000407280>

⁵ Frank A. Golder, ed., *The March of the Mormon Battalion from Council Bluffs to California; Taken from the Journal of Henry Standage* (New York; London: The Century Co., 1928).

⁶ Norma B. Ricketts, *The Mormon Battalion: U.S. Army of the West 1846-1848* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1996).

⁷ Sherman L. Fleek, *History May Be Searched in Vain: A Military History of the Mormon Battalion* (Spokane, WA: Arthur H. Clark Co., 2006).

⁸ Eisenhower, *So Far From God*.

and it was actually during this particular event that the nation's first anti-war movement developed.

The goal of this essay is to examine how the members of the Mormon Battalion saw themselves during their enlistment. Did they perceive their mission as a calling from the government, or from God? To what extent was their enlistment reflective of their religious convictions or their patriotism? Why would a group of people who were generally un-liked at the time be asked to form a very particular force within the military? Exploring these questions will help answer what is perhaps the most perplexing question of all: why would people who were literally being forced out of their homes choose to align themselves with the very forces who had refused them sanctuary for over a decade?

Background: Mormons and the federal government

In order to understand the significance of the cooperation between the Mormons and the Federal government, it is necessary to briefly examine the experiences of Church members and how their growing religious community interacted with those who surrounded it. Ever since the founding of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Church leaders and members have clashed both culturally, ideologically, and politically with non-members. Many found the claims of Joseph Smith Jr. to have found a set of golden plates buried in upstate New York to be fantastical, and the subsequent translation of those plates into the Book of Mormon, first published in 1830, to be outright blasphemous. Shortly after the publication of the Book of Mormon, Smith proclaimed that God had called him to be a “prophet, seer, and revelator” and formally established the Mormon religion, with himself as president.⁹ In 1831, Smith and other Church leaders declared Jackson County, Missouri, as Zion for the Saints and literal geographic location of the biblical Garden of Eden. Church members were encouraged to settle in the area in order to build up a “New Jerusalem.” The steady influx of Mormons, who were mostly northerners, upset the southern locals in Missouri. Tensions were dramatically manifested in the 1838 “Mormon Extermination Order” when Missouri governor L. Boggs declared that “The Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the state if necessary for the public peace—their outrages are beyond all description.”¹⁰ This order exacerbated hostile actions towards the Mormons, who were often victims of lethal mob violence. In response, the Saints fled westward, and began building a new society in Nauvoo, Illinois.

In order to protect himself and the entire Mormon community in Nauvoo, Smith raised an army of 1,000 men, named them the Nauvoo Legion, and appointed himself as their commander. Although Smith claimed to have received permission to assemble this force, In June 1844, he was accused of committing high treason, with the additional charge of destroying an anti-Mormon printing press in Nauvoo.¹¹ Governor Ford of Illinois summoned Smith and a few other Church leaders to stand trial in Carthage, Illinois. While they were being detained in the Carthage jail, mob violence reached a terrifying new level when Smith, along with his brother Hyrum,

⁹ For an autobiographical account of Joseph Smith's religious conversion and how he obtained the gold plates, see Joseph Smith –History, *Book of Mormon*. For a biographical account of Joseph Smith's life and the founding of the church, see Richard L. Bushman and Jed Woodworth, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Vintage books, 2007).

¹⁰ Lilburn Boggs to Gen. John B. Clark, 27 October 1838. The Missouri Mormon War Executive Orders, Records and Archives of the Missouri Secretary of State.

¹¹ This press, called The Nauvoo Expositor, was operated by a member of the Mormon Church who had gained knowledge about the practice of polygamy, and was opposed to it. He published an article exposing the practice of Polygamy by high-ranking members of the Church, including Smith.

were murdered by a group of civil-soldiers identified as the Carthage Greys. Some members of the Carthage Greys held high political positions within the Illinois state government, but none were brought to trial for the murder of Smith.¹²

The conflict between the Mormons and the rest of the state of Illinois grew so troublesome that Governor Ford was forced to address the issue. "I regret very much" he wrote, "that so much excitement and hatred against [the Mormons] should exist in the public mind. Nevertheless, it is due to truth to say that the public mind everywhere is so decidedly hostile to them that public opinion is not inclined to do them common justice."¹³ Furthermore, he argued that the state government could not afford to keep intervening on the Mormon's behalf every time that they were subject to persecution. Ford continued to say that while he had no power to force the Mormons to leave, he could implore them to migrate out of the state for their own sakes, as discontent was not likely to be reduced in the foreseeable future. He closed his letter to the Mormons with a recognition that "it is a great hardship on [the Mormons] to remove from their comfortable homes and the property which they have accumulated by years of toil; but is it not better that they should do so voluntarily than to lie in a state of continual war?" Violence persisted, and church leadership accepted the reality that staying in Nauvoo was no longer an option. A formal treaty was signed by leaders of both the Mormon Church and the state of Illinois, affirming that the Mormons would be evacuated by spring 1846.

After the death of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young assumed leadership of the Mormon Church as the new president and prophet. Unsatisfied with Ford's advice, Brigham Young wrote to the governor of Arkansas, asking for asylum. He was refused.¹⁴ With great reluctance, Young turned his eyes westward towards Oregon. The Mormons were encouraged to begin gathering their belongings and selling their properties in Nauvoo in order to raise money for what was surely going to be an expensive move out west. Some started out immediately, temporarily settling in Iowa, where the Oregon Trail began, and waiting until the pioneer movement could become more organized. Realizing that many of the settlers in Oregon "are [the Mormons] old enemies, the mobcrats of Missouri," Young was hesitant to formally declare Oregon as the intended future settlement of the Church, or to strike out westward into unknown territory without adequate protection or financial stability. Between 1844 and 1846, Brigham Young constantly looked for sanctuary in neighboring states or plead for help from government officials. In the December 1845 annual message to congress, president Polk had recommended that "For the protection of emigrants whilst on their way to Oregon against the attacks of the Indian tribes possessing that country" that "a suitable number of stockades and blockhouse forts be erected."¹⁵ Brigham Young immediately wrote to Polk, trying to persuade him that the Mormons were perfect to complete this task as they were seeking to move to Oregon anyway. The President did not respond.

The Formation of the Mormon Battalion

Meanwhile, war had formally been declared against Mexico, largely in response to the annexation of Texas. In 1836, Texas had declared itself independent from Mexico after a bloody revolutionary war. Although a treaty was signed between the citizens of Texas and Mexican

¹² Taken from an LDS account of all the charges levied against Joseph Smith, his trial, and murder. See: John Taylor, *The Martyrdom of Joseph Smith* in Tyler, *A Concise History*. 10-64.

¹³ Golder, *The March of the Mormon Battalion*. 25-26.

¹⁴ Thomas S. Drew to Brigham Young, Little Rock, AK, 27 May 1845 in Golder, *The March of the Mormon Battalion*. 46-48.

¹⁵ James K. Polk, Annual Message to Congress, 2 December 1845. A merican presidency project.

officials that brought the hostilities to an end, Mexico ultimately reneged and refused to recognize Texas as an independent nation. When the U.S. pursued the annexation of Texas in 1844, Mexico's foreign minister wrote to the U.S. government that "My country is resolved to declare war as soon as it receives information of such an act."¹⁶ When war was not immediately declared after Texas was admitted to the United States, Polk preemptively sent American troops under the command of General Zachary Taylor down to the Rio Grande, Texas' southern border, to apply pressure on Mexican officials to give up the territory without a fight. Far from being convinced to negotiate peace, the Mexican government was infuriated by Polk's actions and within weeks, the two nations found themselves in the throes of war. Polk officially declared war on May 3rd, 1846.

Aware of their questioned loyalties and still hopeful for federal assistance, Mormon leaders felt the need to identify themselves with the interests of the federal Government. In January 1846, when tensions with Mexico were high but war had not yet been declared, a council of Mormon leaders issued a circular to the members of the church promising their loyalty to the United States:

Our patriotism has not been overcome by fire, by sword, by daylight nor by midnight assassinations which we have endured; neither have they alienated us from the institutions of our country. Should hostilities arise between the Government of the United States and any other power, in relation to the right of possessing the territory or region, we are on hand to sustain the claim of the United States Government to that country...and if our services are required to prevent it, those services will be cheerfully rendered according to our ability. We feel the injuries that we have sustained, and are not insensitive of the wrongs we have suffered; still, we are American should our country be invaded, we hope to do, at least, as much as did the conscientious Quaker ...¹⁷

Any other Mormon leaders who were scattered throughout the country, particularly in the East, were encouraged to look for ways to obtain assistance. Jesse Little was one of these men, who had been sent as a missionary to the Eastern states. In spring 1846, Little was preaching in Philadelphia and caught the attention of General Thomas Kane, who decided to take up the plight of the Mormons for himself. He drafted multiple letters to prominent statesmen, vouching for the Mormons characteristics, good intentions, and need for support.¹⁸ Because of these efforts, Kane is popularly considered to be the Mormon's greatest ally in their efforts to move west.

Little also came into contact with Amos Kendall, former post-master general and influential member of Andrew Jackson's "kitchen" cabinet. Kendall's original plan was to pursue a real-estate contract with Brigham Young, whom Kendall thought could secure land in California. It was during a conversation between Kendall and Little on May 23, 1846, that the idea for Mormon military involvement as a means of moving westward first arose. In a matter of two days, Kendall brought the proposal to President Polk.

¹⁶ Fleek, *History May Be Searched in Vain*. 46.

¹⁷ High Council of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Circular to the Mormons, 20 Jan 1846. Journal history of the Church: 1840-1849; 1846 January-July. Church History Library, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. <https://eadview.lds.org/findingaid/CR%20100%20137> Journal History is a day by day history of the Church from 1830–present day taken mostly from newspapers, but also from some minutes and diary entries.

¹⁸ Among the recipients of Kane's letters was Vice President George M. Dallas. Kane's letter, as well as other letters of support from statesmen, can be found in Golder, *The March of the Mormon Battalion from Council Bluffs to California*. 74-79.

By June 1, Little still had no word back from either Kendall or the president, so he drafted his own plea to the White House. He began his letter by pointing out his professed loyalties to the United States as a citizen of New Hampshire, pointing out that “My father fought in the battles of the revolution for freedom and liberty, and the blood of my fathers courses through my veins and arouses the spirit of patriotism and hatred to oppression which characterizes my noble ancestors.”¹⁹ The point could not have been lost on President Polk. By associating himself with the most revered set of patriots the nation had to offer, and then alluding to the idea that patriotism invariably lead to a hatred of oppression, Little was challenging the president’s own patriotism as well. The Mormons had been oppressed, there could be no doubt about it. Yet for all they had been through, Little encouraged, they still had faith in their government, and if the government was truly a righteous, democratic, and therefore *American* one, then it could not allow the Mormon people to suffer these harsh conditions any longer. In a very strategic move, Little began to enumerate the membership of the Mormon Church both within the states and abroad. He claimed that twelve to fifteen-thousand had already left Nauvoo for California, and many more were on their way, if not already there. Another forty-thousand were said to be living in the British Isles, and were expected to arrive in the states in the coming months. Although they were British, Mormons were deemed to be “true hearted Americans, true to our country... We would disdain to receive assistance from a foreign power, although if should be proffered, unless our government shall turn us off in this great crisis and will not help us, but compel us to be foreigners.”²⁰ If anything, this aspect of Little’s letter had the most influence upon Polk’s sentiments. The United States was on the brink of another conflict with Great Britain over the Oregon territory, and although the estimation of forty-thousand Mormons living in Great Britain was inaccurate, it was effective.²¹ Either Polk could capitalize on a force that size, or risk them becoming supporters of the British cause in the United States, which would surely hinder its claim in the Pacific Northwest. Little made it very clear that while he was determined to seek aid for his people from his own nation, if he “[could not] get it in the land of my fathers, I will cross the trackless ocean where I trust I shall find some friends to help.”²²

Polk was persuaded. Two days later, he met with Kendall and Little to discuss the matter further. In the meeting, Polk was ambiguous about when the enlistment would begin and exactly how many men would participate, but estimated between 500 and 1,000. They were to serve under Col. Stephen Kearny, commander of the Western Army. In a letter to Brigham Young, Little explained that Polk had said “he had read my letter with interest... that he had confidence in our people as true American citizens.”²³

In private, Polk’s sentiments were not so forthright. By this time, he had already communicated with Secretary of War William Marcy that the Mormons would not be enlisted until they reached California. Marcy then wrote to Kearny that the number of Mormons enlisted could not exceed one-third of his entire force, and in his private journal, this number was reduced further when Polk wrote that “The Mormons, if taken into the service, will constitute not more than ¼ of all Col. Kearney’s command, and the main object of taking them into service would be to conciliate them, and prevent them from assuming a hostile attitude towards the U.S.”²⁴ This

¹⁹ Golder, *The March of the Mormon Battalion*, 81.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

²¹ It is probable that Jesse Little intentionally over-estimated the size of the Mormon membership in Great Britain, but Polk had no feasible way to check these numbers.

²² Golder, *The March of the Mormon Battalion*. 83.

²³ Jesse C. Little to Brigham Young, Washington, D.C., 6 July 1846, from Journal History. Images 296-307. Little’s letter in its entirety is also replicated in Golder, *The March of the Mormon Battalion*. 85.

²⁴ Quaipe, ed., *The Diary of James K. Polk during his Presidency, 1845-1848, Volume I* (Chicago: McClurg & Co., 1910). 444. Library of Congress. For Marcy’s letter to Kearny, see Fleek, *History May Be Searched in Vain*. 78.

record helps elucidate the motives behind Polk's decision to form the Mormon Battalion. Surely it was a not military maneuver, as he already had more than enough manpower to conduct the war. Missouri alone contributed approximately 6,739 volunteers, with Louisiana being the only other state who sent more men. The 3rd Missouri Mounted Volunteers who had already been mustered in at Fort Leavenworth were disbanded before ever seeing combat because their efforts were not needed.²⁵ All of this was to remain secret from Jesse Little, partly due to Polk's reservations about the Mormons but also evidence of the paranoia and secrecy that dominated his presidency. Polk continued in his diary, noting that "if the Mormons reached [California] I did not desire to have them the only U.S. forces in the country. I told Mr. Kendall that the citizens now settled in California at Sutter's settlement and elsewhere had learned that a large body of Mormons were emigrating to that country and were alarmed at it, and that this alarm would be increased if the first organized troops of the U.S. that entered the country were Mormons."²⁶ Another significant piece of information kept from Little was that the commanders for the Mormon Battalion were to be members of the regular Army, and not elected by the volunteer men, which was generally the custom. Polk wanted to make sure that the government controlled all aspects of the Battalion's move west.²⁷

Because Polk desired the Battalion to be commanded by a member of the regular army, Col. Kearny appointed Captain James Allen to assemble the desired number of men and bring them to Fort Leavenworth. Either President Polk or the Secretary of War must have decided not to wait for the Battalion to be officially enlisted into the service until they reached California, because Allen was instructed to commence with the enlistment once the Battalion reached the fort. This change of mind was likely to ensure the loyalties of the Mormons while marching to the west, which trumped placating the fears of the California settlers. Kearny instructed Allen to raise four to five companies, with seventy to a hundred men each. Enlistment in the Mormon Battalion would last for a period of twelve months, during which time each man would receive pay and rations, and at the end of his service, be allowed to retain his arms. Although Allen, a regular member of the army was to command them, each company within the Battalion would elect their own officers and lieutenants.²⁸

Allen's first destination was Mount Pisgah, Iowa, where many of the Mormons had temporarily settled after their eviction from Illinois. The main body of the Church, including Brigham Young, was a few miles away at Council Bluffs, Iowa, a small settlement along the Missouri River. Although Young and a handful of other leaders were aware of Polk's intention to create a Mormon Battalion, the majority of the members were left in the dark. Understandably, many of them panicked when men in army uniforms rode up to their small camp at Mount Pisgah. The camp leader, William Huntington, approached Allen and asked him his business. After some scrutiny, Allen was given permission to address the camp and relate his purpose among the Mormons. Allen had prepared a message that he read and circulated among those who gathered, explaining the desire of the government to form a Battalion of men from the Mormon Church. As means of convincing them of the benefits of such an endeavor, Allen proclaimed that "This is offered to the Mormon people now this year an opportunity of sending a portion of their young and intelligent men to the ultimate destination of their whole people, and entirely at the expenses of the United States and this advanced party can thus pave the way, and look out the

²⁵ Fleek, *History May Be Searched in Vain*. 76.

²⁶ Quaipe, *The Diary of James K. Polk*. 449-450.

²⁷ For information regarding the contemporary organization of the army during the Mexican War, see Fleek, *History May Be Searched in Vain*. Chapter Four, The Army for Mexico. 81-100.

²⁸ Col. Stephen F. Kearny to Cpt. James Allen, Headquarters, Army of the West, Fort Leavenworth, 19 June 1846 in Tyler, *A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion*. 113-114.

land for their brethren to come after them."²⁹ He detailed that he was looking for men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, and was willing to accept four laundresses for each of the five companies he hoped to muster.

The conclusion of Allen's circular was met with anything but enthusiasm. Camp leaders dispatched a rider to Brigham Young at Council Bluffs, and decided to put the whole matter into his hands. Not a single soul came forward that day at Mount Pisgah to enlist in Allen's Battalion. Allen took matters into his own hands and set out towards Council Bluffs, where Young and other prominent men of the church agreed to meet with him.

Brigham Young and the Mormon Battalion

Brigham Young's attitude towards the idea of a Mormon Battalion was a mixed one that varied throughout the remainder of his life. It was never the men who served within it that bothered him, but the motives that lay behind the organization of it. He realized that by complying with the offer, a large number of his people would be moved west and among the first to settle in California, all on the government's dollar. Furthermore, the wages earned by the soldiers would greatly benefit the move of the Saints. But by allowing five hundred of his best men to enlist in the Battalion, that left the rest of the church members largely defenseless and without the manpower that was necessary to move thousands of wagons across a continent. Whatever his personal feelings on that warm day in July 1846, Young conceded that "We want to conform to the requisition made upon us, and we will do nothing else till we have accomplished this thing. If we want the privilege of going where we can worship God according to the dictates of our own consciences, we must raise the Battalion."³⁰ Young also wrote letters of assurance to the other pockets of Mormons who remained in Nauvoo or other small settlements, articulating that "The United States wants our friendship, the President wants us to do good, and secure our confidence."³¹

These words heavily contrast with sentiments later espoused by Young, who internally harbored great resentment against Polk. Just a year later, immediately following the year-long enlistment of the Battalion, Young "damned President Polk... That when the Saints were driven from Illinois, Polk's tyranny in drafting out 500 men to form a Battalion, in order that the women & children might perish on the prairies." Young told his people that had he not accepted Polk's offer to form the Battalion, the president was prepared to send thousands of Missourians to "[sweep] the Saints out of existence."³² The following year, on October 1, 1848, Young had another about-face, and told the veterans that although President Polk was inclined to help the Mormons, that "those around him who felt vindictive towards us...thought themselves wise enough to lay plans to accomplish our destruction." Young laid the bulk of the blame upon Missouri Senator Thomas H. Benton. A decade later, Young was still furious at Senator Benton and again rallied against Polk. At a reunion celebration for the Battalion, Young gave an impassioned speech, declaring that "I was, and am fully persuaded that a senator from Missouri did actually apply for, and receive permission from President Polk, to call upon the militia of Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri...to wipe this people out of existence, provided that those men [of

²⁹ James Allen, Circular to the Mormons, Mount Pisgah, 26 June 1846 from Journal History, LDS Archives, Image 279. See also Tyler, *A Concise History*. 114. Golder, *The March of the Mormon Battalion*. 102-103.

³⁰ Tyler, *A Concise History*. 117.

³¹ Brigham Young to Samuel Bent and Council and the Saints at Garden Grove, Council Bluffs, 7 July 1846. Journal History. Image 309.

³² Will Bagley, ed. *The Pioneer Camp of the Saints: The 1846 and 1847 Mormon Trail Journals of Thomas Bullock* (Spokane, WA: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1997). 243.

the church] who had been driven from their homes should refuse to comply with the unjust demand upon us for troops.”³³ Not only was the call for a Mormon Battalion a plot to destroy the church, but it was a result of evil spirits surrounding the Senator from Missouri who influenced Polk to enact a “tyrannical requisition” in hopes of committing a large-scale Mormon massacre.³⁴

If Young harbored any suspicions during the Battalion’s call to arms, evidence of it is almost entirely absent from his sentiments given in the presence of Captain Allen. In fact, Young wanted to make sure the men distinguished between the “general government” and the actions of those in Missouri. It came down to the question: “Is it prudent for us to enlist to defend our country? This is the first offer we have ever had from the government to benefit us.”³⁵

The Enlistment

When the Mormons first learned that the United States Army was looking to recruit among them to form a Battalion, leave their families, and head out west, the idea was met largely with disgust. Between the time that Allen arrived in Mount Pisgah and finally made his way to Council Bluffs, the camps were alight with rumors of a plot to destroy the Mormons, and many exchanged views regarding their feelings of enlistment. Hosea Stout, whose son had died during a mob attack in Nauvoo, stated that he was “glad to hear of war against the United States” and expressed his hope that it would destroy the nation.³⁶ Abraham Day adamantly proclaimed that “Here is one man who will not go, dam’um.”³⁷ These attitudes were prevalent among the Saints, and Allen was unable to enlist a single man. Despite the sentiments that had been promulgated by the Mormon leaders in their patriotic circular six months prior, it appeared that the Mormons indeed felt alienated from the institutions of the country, and were unreservedly unwilling to be “on hand” to help uphold any claims made by the United States Government against Mexico.

It was not until Brigham Young came forth and gave an impassioned speech articulating the religious merits of participation that enlistment became a viable option. He pointed out that the west was the intended destination of the Saints anyway, and that the money earned by enlisted soldiers would help send their families and friends to a safe location where they could freely worship God. After elucidating the distinction between the intentions of President Polk and Capt. Allen from the Missouri mobs, Young predicted that no harm would come upon the Battalion, and that if they were ever caught in a battle, that the bullets would fly about their heads but never touch a single man.³⁸

Hearing from their beloved leader had an immediate effect on the hearts and minds of the Mormon men. After his speech, Young stood by the side of Allen and asked that all willing men come forth and enlist. A long line of volunteers was formed within minutes. Young spent the next few days travelling between Council Bluffs and Mount Pisgah recruiting soldiers, with outstanding results. This change of spirit is embodied perfectly within the experience of Daniel B. Rawson, who wrote in his journal that “I felt indignant toward the Government that had suffered me to be raided and driven from my home. I made the uncouth remark that ‘I would see them all damned and in Hell.’ I would not enlist.” However, as Rawson was making his way to Council Bluffs, he ran into Young and other church leaders who “said the salvation of Israel depended upon the raising of the army. When I heard this my mind changed. I felt that it was my

³³ Tyler, *A Concise History*. 352.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Brigham Young, Council Bluffs, 1 July 1846. Journal History, Image 287.

³⁶ Ricketts, *The Mormon Battalion*. 2.

³⁷ Fleek, *History May Be Searched in Vain*. 128.

³⁸ Tyler, *A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion*. 118.

duty go.”³⁹ Even Hosea Stout and Abraham Day, who earlier declared their intentions to never enlist and hopefully watch the nation fall apart, were moved by the words of Young and what they identified as the Holy Spirit telling them to enlist. Zadock K. Judd wrote that at first it was difficult to allow himself to fight for the United States government, but once “the word comes from the right source [it] seemed to bring a spirit of conviction of its truth.”⁴⁰ Alonzo Raymond desperately wanted to sign up, but was initially turned away because he suffered from an incurable illness. Dejected, Raymond sat by the side of the road, where Mormon Apostle Heber C. Kimball came upon him. After learning of Raymond’s situation, Kimball prophesied that if Raymond enlisted, he would be healed. Raymond was eventually mustered into the Battalion, and within a matter of days proclaimed that he was perfectly healthy, and served for the full twelve months.⁴¹

The willingness of the men to enlist after being directed by their spiritual leader to do so demonstrates the commitment and faith that Mormons placed on Young and his position within the church as God’s mouthpiece. For members of the LDS church, there was no distinction between the words of the prophet and God’s commandments. Although they enlisted with a heavy heart and expressed great sadness in leaving their families, the men knew that it was their divine duty to serve in the Battalion. They were to be servants of their government, but only because they were in the service of their God.

One variant from this pattern was twenty-two-year-old Jonathan Riser, who was eager to serve in the army from the get-go. Once he heard about Allen’s call to arms, Riser hurriedly made his way from Nauvoo, distraught that by the time he reached Council Bluffs that there would not be enough room left for him. “I had a great love for adventure and I had no doubt I inherited this military ardor from my forefathers who had seen much service in the wars of Germany.” He was placed in Company C and made the trek all the way to California. Upon completion of his enlistment, Riser wrote that “this enlistment commenced a series of hardships which I however cheerfully encountered and without complaint and became a true soldier.” Riser viewed this opportunity not as one to demonstrate his faith, but his strength as a man, soldier, and citizen of the United States.⁴²

James Brown, the young soldier who was rescued by his uncle while on the trail to California, originally enlisted in obeisance to the commands from Brigham Young and God. Brown was not yet a member of the Mormon Church, but he and his family sympathized with the plight of the Mormons and decided to follow them out west. When he first heard of the call for a Mormon Battalion, Brown was greatly surprised that the government army was brazen enough to send recruiters “as the Mormons had been denied protection against mob violence and forced beyond the borders of civilization.” He was outraged that the government demanded 500 Mormon men “to go to a foreign land to fight their [the government’s] countries battles.” However, once Young put forth his support for a Battalion and asked for compliance from the members of the church, Brown declared that “wonders never cease” and the spirit of patriotism “awoke within me.” He reflected on stories he had heard about the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Black Hawk Indian Wars and suddenly “had a desire to serve my country in any legitimate way.” By standing on a box to make himself look taller, Brown was able to lie about his age and enlist in the Battalion. The next day, he was baptized a member of the Mormon Church.⁴³

³⁹ From the diary of Daniel B. Rawson, Council Bluffs, 4 July 1846 in Ricketts, *The Mormon Battalion*. 13.

⁴⁰ Ricketts, *The Mormon Battalion*. 6.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴² Autobiography of John J. Riser in Ricketts, *The Mormon Battalion*. 14-15.

⁴³ Brown, *Life of a Pioneer*. 22-23.

After five companies had been formed, Allen told the men that they needed to elect officers and lieutenants from within their ranks. It was unanimously decided that Brigham Young should instead appoint the officers, with the majority being those who held high positions in the church. Though the Mormon Battalion was a government entity, Young influenced whatever aspects of the Battalion that he could. By placing high-ranking men in the leadership positions of the army, Young aimed to retain the organization of the Church and keep some semblance of spiritual hierarchy.

From Iowa to Santa Fe

The morning that the Battalion set out for Fort Leavenworth was full of tears and sorrow. Wives, mothers, and children were heartbroken to see their husbands, fathers and sons leave them for a year, unsure of what lay ahead. Not all men had to say goodbye, however. Some brought along their entire families, including their wife (or wives), children, or parents. When the Mormon Battalion left Council Bluffs, there were 496 men planning to enlist, 31 wives (some serving as laundresses) and 44 children. The inclusion of so many non-military individuals was quite unique to the Battalion. However, between Fort Leavenworth and Santa Fe when the trail became harsh and sickness and starvation began to dominate camp life, most of the women and children were ordered back. The “purging” of the Battalion was deemed necessary by the United States commanding officers in order to preserve the already-low food rations. After the sick, women, and children detachments, only 335 of the original 500 men reached California.

Once they arrived at Fort Leavenworth and were enlisted into the United States Army, all the men turned over their pay to a Church representative, who delivered the money to Brigham Young to use for the migration of the Saints. This occurred frequently while on the trail to San Diego and is testament of the men’s loyalty to their church. Instead of receiving a uniform, they were given a clothing allowance. This too was turned over the leadership of the church. An estimated \$2,447.32 was delivered to Brigham Young from the soldiers at Fort Leavenworth.⁴⁴

Just weeks into the Mormon Battalion’s march across the country, Captain James Allen died and left the Battalion without a commander. While on his death bed, Allen designated Lieutenant Andrew Jackson Smith of the United States 1st Dragoons to assume command.⁴⁵ This was approved by the commanding officer at Fort Leavenworth, who along with sending notification of the change to Kearny, also felt that Brigham Young should be aware of the situation. In consideration of this unprecedented move, historian Sherman Fleek wrote that “It is inconceivable that military authorities should have to consult a religious leader, or any private citizen, on military matters, especially on the question of a change in command of a combat unit during war.”⁴⁶ Smith also sent a letter to notify the Church leadership of the situation and preemptively assuage any doubts they may have had about his place in command. Young was livid. He truly saw himself as the supreme leader of the Mormon Battalion, both temporally and spiritually. As such, he felt he had given permission for Allen to guide the Battalion, which dissipated upon his death. Young felt that it was his prerogative to decide who would take Allen’s place.

Most of the men echoed Young’s sentiments. Allen’s death resulted in general distress and depression within the ranks of the Mormon Battalion, and William Coray remarked upon Allen’s passing that it “caused more lamentation from us than the loss of a gentile ever did

⁴⁴ Ricketts, *The Mormon Battalion*. 70.

⁴⁵ The Dragoons were the mounted soldiers within the army; later called the Cavalry.

⁴⁶ Fleek, *History May Be Searched in Vain*. 173.

before.”⁴⁷ Sgt. Daniel Tyler captured the feeling of the Battalion perfectly, recording that “When the command was given to Lieutenant Smith, the soldiers were not consulted. This caused an ill feeling between them and the officers that many hold to this day. The appointment of Smith, even before his character was known, caused a greater gloom throughout the command than the death of Col. Allen had.”⁴⁸ The men felt that the Mormon Battalion was a unique and separate unit, and therefore they had the right to choose who should succeed Allen in command. For them as well as Young, the Battalion was a mission for the church and not a military endeavor. Their only interest lay in migrating west, but as saints, not soldiers.

The government and leaders of the Army paid little regard to the complaints of Young and the members of the Battalion. Smith assumed command of the Battalion, with the understanding that once they reached Santa Fe, Col. Philip St. George Cooke would take over that position. The “feeling of ill-will” that Tyler described permeated the camp the entire journey towards Santa Fe, and was exacerbated by the terrible walking conditions, lack of food and water, and subsequent sickness that overwhelmed most of the Battalion. The reduction of rations was in many ways Smith’s fault, as he decided to take the Battalion along a route that prevented them from re-stocking their supplies. Some remarked that Smith had little to no regard for the men or their cause, was only concerned with his own fame and glory, and dubbed him His Excellency and a tyrant.⁴⁹

Despite the crippling sickness that afflicted the Battalion, they refused to seek help from the surgeon, Doctor Sanderson. The Saints had been commanded by Brigham Young that “If you are sick, live by faith, and let surgeon’s medicine alone if you want to live. If you give heed to this counsel, you will prosper; but if not, we cannot be responsible for the consequences. A hint to the wise is sufficient.”⁵⁰ Thus a great conflict was established between Dr. Sanderson and the entire Battalion. Most were convinced that Sanderson and Lt. Smith had concocted a lethal plot, where Smith would march the men all day in order to make them sick, so that Sanderson could then distribute his deadly dose of calomel.⁵¹ William Hyde remarked that Sanderson was trying to “send as many [Mormons] to hell as he could, and upon the death of one of their men, Henry Standage was fully convinced that it was the calomel that had killed him.”⁵²

To evade death by the evil hand of Dr. Sanderson, the men either refused to take the calomel or would spit it out after it having been administered by the doctor’s infamous rusty spoon. Many who were ill tried to ride along in the sick wagon, but once Smith found out that dozens who were in the wagon had refused treatment by the doctor, he ordered them to get out and march. Smith also became aware of one man among the Mormons who was administering his own medicine, and according to multiple diarists, Lt. Smith threatened that if any other man received aid from anyone other than Doctor Sanderson, he would have his throat slit or be left on the prairie.⁵³

Of course, there was no plot against the Battalion nor did Doctor Sanderson attempt to

⁴⁷ Ricketts, *The Mormon Battalion*. 47. “Gentile” refers to anyone who is not a member of the Mormon Church. This small word has great implications, especially in this context. Although Allen was beloved by the members of the Mormon Battalion, he will still separate from and perhaps even beneath them.

⁴⁸ Tyler, *A Concise History*. 144.

⁴⁹ Henry Standage, 17 September 1846 in Golder, *The March of the Mormon Battalion*. 165.

⁵⁰ Brigham Young to Capt. Jefferson Hunt, Camp of Israel, Omaha Nation, Cutler’s Park, 19 August 1846 in Tyler, *A Concise History*. 146.

⁵¹ Calomel is a Mercury(I) chloride compound, a yellowish-white solid that was commonly used as medicine in the nineteenth century.

⁵² Henry Standage 165 sept 16,

⁵³ A compilation of all the complaints and comments regarding Lt. Smith and Dr. Sanderson can be found in Ricketts, *The Mormon Battalion*. 50.

kill the men with his calomel. The men of the Mormon Battalion had been used to serving under Church leaders, who although were strict, did not administer their commands in a militaristic manner. Smith and Sanderson were not unlike any other army commander or doctor that existed in camps scattered across the country, but their men were unlike any who had served before or would serve again, and were not prepared for or accustomed to the realities of military life. Most of the Saints never forgave Smith or Doctor Sanderson, and remained convinced that they were lucky to have survived the march towards Santa Fe. It was only through obedience to Young's commandment to resist medicine and live by faith alone that they were delivered from the tyrannical rule of Smith and Sanderson.⁵⁴

Santa Fe to San Diego

On October 6, the Mormon Battalion arrived in Santa Fe. Their reception was accompanied by a salute of guns led by the commander of the post, General Alexander Doniphan. Doniphan had been a lawyer in Clay County, Missouri in 1838 and was present at the court martial of Joseph Smith in Far West. The court originally planned to execute Joseph Smith and his appointed leaders of the time, but Doniphan intervened on his behalf, condemning the plan as a "cold-blooded murder." The salute to the Mormon Battalion apparently "enraged" Colonel Sterling Price, who had arrived three days prior with his command but without the pomp and circumstance that was accorded the Mormons. Daniel Tyler surmised this was due to "[Doniphan's] memory of the wrong which they [the Mormons] had suffered from the Missouri mobocrats which prevented him from extending any courtesies to Col. Price and his disgraceful command on their arrival."⁵⁵

It was in Santa Fe that the Battalion was finally freed from the "tyrant" Lt. Smith. Colonel Philip St. George Cooke assumed command, but was disappointed in the condition of the Mormon soldiers. "It was enlisted too much by families, some were too old, some feeble, and some too young; it was embarrassed by women; it was undisciplined." To make matters worse, Cooke noticed that along with being worn out from foot travel, "their clothing was very scant; there was no money to pay them, or clothing to issue; their mules were utterly broken down."⁵⁶ The post quartermaster had run out of funds, and supplies were low in Santa Fe. Where the Battalion had hoped to find a reprieve or at least more food and a change of clothing, they found none. After observing the men, Cooke found that eighty-six of them were unfit to continue the journey to San Diego, and sent them, along with all remaining women and children (with the exception of four wives) back to Pueblo. Cooke was often frustrated by the un-military-like conduct exhibited by the men, and recorded that "though obedient, [they] have little discipline, they exhibit great heedlessness and ignorance, and some obstinacy."⁵⁷ Due to the urgent manner under which the Battalion was formed, none of the men had been able to practice military drills, and were generally unaware of proper military procedure.

⁵⁴ In 2007, Sherman Fleek authored an essay that examined the role of Dr. Sanderson in the Mormon Battalion. Fleek argues that Sanderson was not only more than qualified to administer to the sick battalion soldiers, but that he was genuinely concerned for their well-being. Although the administration of calomel was particularly abhorrent to the Mormon soldiers, it was a widely accepted medical practice for that time. Any feelings of a conspiracy harbored by the Mormons were purely of their own making. See: Sherman L. Fleek, "Dr. George B. Sanderson: Nemesis of the Mormon Battalion," *Journal of Mormon History* 33, no. 2(2007).

⁵⁵ Tyler, *A Concise History*. 164-165. This event is also recorded in multiple journals; see: Golder, *The March of the Mormon Battalion*. 171., Ricketts, *The Mormon Battalion*. 63.

⁵⁶ Philip St. George Cooke, *The Conquest of New Mexico and California; an Historical and Personal Narrative*. By P. St. Geo. Cooke (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1878). 91. Hathi Trust Digital Library.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 92.

The departure from Santa Fe did not start on the best of terms, and the situation slowly deteriorated as the Battalion, deprived of food and water and drained of energy, pushed their way over sandy hills and through an unforgiving desert. The men dug wells every night, praying they might strike upon a small pool of water. The weakest pack animals were slaughtered for food, although their meat provided little nourishment and had the consistency of glue or jelly. Due to the lack of firewood, the meat was cooked over buffalo chips, and even those were difficult to find. In his autobiography, James Brown recalled a night when one of the men in his group came upon a small piece of fat left on a bone, and instead of consuming for himself, the kind man shared with his comrades. Only a sliver of fat was available for each man, but it was the most sustenance, aside from watery flour, that some of them had received in days.⁵⁸ One afternoon, the Battalion came upon a small pond of water that was more part buffalo urine than anything else, and had a sickly green hue. They drank it anyway, but paid dearly for it later when sickness overcame them. Every single journal that remains from the Mormon Battalion echoes the misery and pain that nearly consumed the men during this time. After a particularly trying day, when multiple animals collapsed and even more men fell down beside them, Col. Cooke wrote that “all the vexations and troubles of any other three days of my life have not equaled those of the last twenty-five hours.”⁵⁹ Even the stalwart leader of the Battalion was frightened about their dire circumstances, and when he noticed the failing bodies and spirits of the men, felt that “[his] doubts seemed converted to the certainty of evil and disaster.”⁶⁰

During particularly difficult times en-route to California, the company officers, who were high-ranking members of the Church, would hold spiritual councils and ask for God’s help to complete the journey. One night, there was a particularly violent storm that blew whole wagons over and displaced almost the entire camp. Henry Standage “look[ed] upon this storm as a judgment from the almighty on the battalion for their imprudence”⁶¹ and made efforts to repent of his ungodly behaviors and urged his comrades to do likewise, calling out their drinking and swearing. Company officers repeated this advice when dealing with the sick, and told the men that they would be healed if they “put away those things were displeasing to our heavenly father.”⁶² Prayer was the preferred method of comfort when the men looked for reprieve from their troubles.

Instead of their faith being shaken by a traumatic experience like marching in the Mormon Battalion, some found that it was strengthened. Dozens of soldiers felt that the truthfulness of the Mormon Church was confirmed after they came across some Indian artifacts, dwellings, and hieroglyphs, which the men thought were remnants of the Nephites, a group of Native Americans told about in the Book of Mormon. During their brief respite in Tucson, the Battalion was amazed at the defenses the Spanish had erected in case of an attack by Mexico. Instead of attributing this situation to sound logistical thinking and preparation on the part of the Spanish or the military, Henry Standage wrote that it was divine providence. He wrote that God had intervened on the Battalion’s behalf while they were in Tucson so that they might be protected while they were there. “I am led to exclaim” he penned, “that the Lord God of Israel will save his people in as much as he knoweth the cause of our being here in the United States Service.”⁶³

⁵⁸ Brown, *Life of a Pioneer*. 68.

⁵⁹ Cooke, *The Conquest of New Mexico and California*. 100.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁶¹ Henry Standage, 19 and 20 August 1846 in Golder, *The March of the Mormon Battalion*. 148.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 17 December 1846. 196.

Arrival in California and the end of enlistment

On January 29, 1847, Col. Cooke and his Mormon Battalion arrived in San Diego. The sight of the sparkling Pacific Ocean a few days prior had enraptured the men, and the lush, fertile land and spring-like weather seemed to heal their broken bodies and spirits. Although it would be another year before the fighting in Mexico City ceased and the war officially ended, the conflict in California had passed and the American government had taken control of the territory. Cooke summed up the situation in the west coast better than anyone when he remarked that “We [referencing himself and the other military leaders in CA] were all supremely poor; the government having no money and no credit; and we hold the Territory because Mexico is poorest of all.”⁶⁴

The Mormon Battalion spent the next six months practicing military drills and procedure, and organized a debate club for entertainment. Some of the men spent their spare time proselytizing among the inhabitants of San Diego, and on April 18, a sailor who was only referred to as “Beckworth” became the first Mormon convert in the west. Two days later, one of the four women who had made the entire journey with the Battalion gave birth to a son, who was the first child of American parents to be born in California.⁶⁵ With no clear objective other than to remain and defend the territory, some of the Mormons grew restless and even started a petition asking for an early discharge because they felt the war was over and their services no longer needed. Other men found different ways to occupy their spare time, and multiple journals record the frequent meetings held by the company officers regarding the “evils” that were occurring in the camp, such as drunkenness, swearing, and intercourse with “squaws.”

At the end of June 1847, Col. Cooke called for volunteers to reenlist in the United States Army for an additional six months. To sweeten the pot, the Battalion was offered incentives like being able to elect their own Mormon lieutenant and receiving a full-years pay for half the time of enlistment. The general response to this request was negative; most of the men were eager to return to their families, some of whom had by this time settled near the Great Salt Lake, while others still remained in the east. However, there were a few men who were drawn to Cooke’s proposition. Captain Hunter of Company A said that he felt it was their duty to reenlist, for reasons relating to both God and Church. Not only had their enlistment brought praise and power to the Mormons, he believed, but re-enlistment presented the opportunity for a Mormon to be third in command of the whole territory of California. Another man, Lieutenant Canfield, said that by remaining in the army, they would be able to raise more money to aid in the migration of the Saints. He also called the men out for their “blind” faith, saying that “some talked as though they could go into the Mountains and live on faith but for his part he believed different, having spent the most of the past year in the Mountains and really believed that had it not been for the little food furnished by the U.S. we would have starved to death, with all our faith.”⁶⁶ The significance of Canfield’s comment here should not go unrecognized, as it espouses a sentiment that was rare among the Mormons. It contradicts the entire principle that Brigham Young had laid forth before their departure: to live by faith alone, be healed by faith alone, and saved by faith alone.

For all of the debate that surrounded re-enlistment, only a dozen men decided to remain in California. The rest of them could not have been more eager to return to their families, having only signed up for the Battalion in the first place on the encouragement of Brigham Young and not the United States government. It would not be an exaggeration to say that nothing short of

⁶⁴ Cooke, *The Conquest of New Mexico and California*. 283.

⁶⁵ Ricketts, *The Mormon Battalion*. 135

⁶⁶ Henry Standage, 29 June 847 in Golder, *The March of the Mormon Battalion*. 230-31.

another stern request by Young or even God himself could force the men to enlist for another six months. On July 4, 1847, the Battalion set off for Los Angeles, where they were to be mustered out of the service. Robert Bliss was full of anticipation, he said, for “soon we bid goodbye to Uncle Sam,” who was “the most exacting uncle we ever had.”⁶⁷

Through the decades, members of the Mormon Church would evoke the spirit and experiences of the Mormon Battalion as evidence of their long suffering under the hands of a tyrannical government, but also as proof of their patriotism. Eventually the voices of the original men of the Battalion were drowned by the nostalgia of the twentieth century Mormons who tried to make sense of an experience that most of them could not understand. However, the truth remains that the men who enlisted into the service of the United States Army in July 1846 were not doing so because they were compelled by a desire to aid their nation. Most of them were loath to assist a government which they blamed for the murder of the first Mormon president, Joseph Smith, and also for the continued persecution they endured in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. It was through encouragement and commandment by Brigham Young that the five hundred men of the Mormon Battalion were mustered into the service of the Army. It was to him that they looked for guidance, and to God that they turned for penance and deliverance from their troubles while on their journey. Though the men of the battalion bore the title of soldiers, they carried with them the mission and burden of saints.

⁶⁷ Ricketts, *The Mormon Battalion*. 138.

THOMAS JOHNSON & A COUNTRY MARKET: AMERICAN FRONTIER
ECONOMY IN 1794

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ANGELA GROVE

When Marlboro merchants set out for peddling
 Made lawful by custom let none be meddling
 Barter is legal when trading for grain...
 With notions and things both curious and common
 To please men and children and gratify women...
 Come buy our bread troughs, buy our sieves
 To sift your meal from bran and sheives
 Different sorts, both hide and hair.
 Half bushels and pecks all made by guess
 Two quart dippers a thousand or less
 Pokes, ox yokes, and hopples for horses
 Straw hats and bonnets for lads and for lasses
 As good as the best the gentry wear.

-*Marlboro Medley, 1787*

These lyrics describe some of the economic activity of Marlboro, VT in the years of the early republic. Like many other towns in late eighteenth-century America, Marlboro was on the frontier of civilization, but that did not mean that frontier residents were excluded from obtaining the finest of goods. Merchants in rural New England towns connected their neighbors to a larger world, full of merchandise “as good as the best the gentry wear.” One of these merchants was Thomas Johnson, of Newbury, VT. Johnson acted as a vital middle man in the economy of the early republic. He procured the needed goods and home comforts from the port cities for his community, and in turn collected for the ports the much wanted country goods manufactured by his neighbors. Johnson recorded every purchase as it was made in his account books, many of which have survived to today. The earliest surviving recorded year, May 1794 to May 1795, gives a snapshot of the economy in early Vermont: a glimpse of the consumer habits of Newbury residents, and the daily activities and many roles of a well-to-do merchant.

The records of Johnson’s eighteenth-century store not only speak to the lives of Thomas Johnson and his neighbors, but to a larger body of work on the rural economy of early America. The great debate about rural New England focuses around whether its residents were influenced more by market or community *mentalitiés*.² The leading historians of this debate are Winifred Rothenberg and Christopher Clark. Clark, a social historian, argues that early rural New England

¹ Margaret MacArthur, *Marlboro Merchants*, CD (Folkways Record, 1962). According to the CD booklet, this song was written by a "Mr. Greenleaf" in Brattleboro, VT in 1787.

² For a great overview of the historiography of this debate, see: Diane E. Wenger, *A Country Storekeeper in Pennsylvania: Creating Economic Networks in Early America, 1790-1807* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2012), 2–8.

functioned on a moral economy, one that met the needs of the family and community first, and gave only their surpluses for profit.³ Rothenberg, an economic historian, disagrees, and argues that rural farmers adopted behaviors in line with a market economy as early as 1750.⁴ Both Clark and Rothenberg's research focuses primarily on farmers. Diane Wenger's study of a rural Pennsylvanian storekeeper presents a more nuanced picture, a blending of the two economic strategies. Like Wenger's storekeep, Thomas Johnson made some of his choices based on family and community needs, and some choices based on a desire for profit.

Thomas was born the fourth son to John Johnson on April 2, 1742 in Haverhill, MA.⁵ When his father died in 1762, Thomas followed his three older brothers to northern Vermont, where unsettled land was cheap for the taking. Thomas's older brothers, Jesse, Caleb, and Haynes, were grantees of the newly formed Newbury, VT, while Thomas was a grantee of Haverhill, NH. The two towns were right across the Connecticut River from each other, and the early communities were like one and the same. Thomas even settled in Newbury himself, despite his grantee status in Haverhill.⁶

Life on the frontier has often been depicted as materially primitive. This was true in some ways for Newbury. The first homes of these settlers were mere wooden shacks, and, with only canvas flaps as doors, sometimes the pioneers woke up to wolves poking their noses in searching for food. But, it didn't take long for the settlers to introduce a variety of material goods and economic endeavors. They planted an apple orchard in 1763, one year after the town's founding, and in 1764 they voted to give "eighty acres of land to the man or men who should build a sawmill on Hall's brook." Jesse Johnson, one of Thomas's elder brothers, was one of three men who took up this task. In 1765, Newbury residents purchased nails that John Mann hauled in on a hand sled from Orford, NH, and by 1770, the community could purchase tanned hides and bricks made locally.⁷

The first general store opened in Newbury in 1773 by William Wallace.⁸ Prior to Wallace's store, Newbury residents purchased what goods they couldn't locally produce at distant markets, where they also took their "grain, livestock, wool, sugar, butter, cheese, pelts and hides, pots and pearl ashes" to sell.⁹ With a general store, they could now buy many of the goods they needed and sell many of the goods they produced more quickly and efficiently. The storekeeper, or merchant, would arrange for the transport between the two sets, urban and rural, of consumers and customers.

The year that Thomas Johnson opened his general store is unrecorded. It is known that he first kept store in a small structure that later, in the early twentieth century, was used as a corn crib. At some point he moved his store to a wing he added to his house for the business, which

³ Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).

⁴ Winifred Barr Rothenberg, *From Market-Places to a Market Economy: The Transformation of Rural Massachusetts, 1750-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

⁵ In his journal, he marks his birthday as April 2, but *The History of Newbury* says his birthday is March 22. Both accounts say the year was 1742 (by the modern Georgian calendar). Frederic Palmer Wells, *History of Newbury, Vermont: From the Discovery of the Coos Country to the Present Time* (St. Johnsbury, VT: The Caledonian Company, 1902), 587; Thomas Johnson, "First Journal of Captivity in Canada: March 5, 1781-June 22, 1781," March 5, 2014, Johnson Papers, Vermont Historical Society.

⁶ Wells, *History of Newbury, Vermont: From the Discovery of the Coos Country to the Present Time*, 26. Additionally, at least two of their younger siblings, Sally and Peter, either went with the older Johnson boys to Newbury, or arrived shortly after. Sally married Jacob Page, of Haverhill, in 1773, (p. 648), and Peter's son John was born in Haverhill in 1783. (p. 587).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 28, 46, 48, 58.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 66, 274.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

could have happened anytime after the home was finished in 1775.¹⁰ It is also known that Johnson ran an inn out of his home as early as its completion in 1775, and inns were often run in conjunction with stores.¹¹ The oldest surviving account book, which recorded the store's daily transactions, starts in 1794, but it is likely Johnson started his store before then, perhaps even as early as 1773, just after Wallace's store begun. Johnson was a man of financial means in the 1770s, the man who would be, a decade later, the richest in Newbury. Additionally, Newbury was the springboard for numerous other towns in northern Vermont, all of which turned to Newbury "as their base of supplies."¹² There may have been demand for another store in addition to Wallace's right away, and Thomas Johnson had the financial means to supply that demand.

Newbury may have been a small, rural, town, but its residents, most of whose ancestors came from Britain just two or three generations back, and who were still very British in culture despite the revolution, would have felt quite comfortable supporting numerous stores. In England, almost every small town had a retail store by 1700.¹³ In Wenger's study, she found that not only was her rural Pennsylvania town's first store opened the same year the town was founded, but the town successfully supported a second store that opened the next year.¹⁴ By the 1790s, one European visitor to the United States observed that "There is no point...however remote, even in the woods, in which one store, and frequently more, may not be found."¹⁵ Newbury residents supported Johnson's store with their patronage; in fact, it became quite profitable, and added to Johnson's wealth and prestige.

It is also unknown the way by which Johnson first entered the merchant trade. A traditional way was to serve an apprenticeship, often in one's youth. Apprenticeships under an already-established merchant would often last seven years, and would provide the apprentice with the practical education and experience needed to start one's own business. However, many merchants in eighteenth century Britain (for Vermont was likely still part of Britain when Johnson started his store) did not serve apprenticeships. For many, a basic education in writing and sums, coupled with start-up funds, or access to credit, and a desire to succeed, was enough. In David Hancock's study of London merchants, three out of the four merchants he examined closely did not serve an apprenticeship before entering the trade, and in Patricia Cleary's study of Boston merchant Elizabeth Murray, neither Elizabeth nor her brother James (who traded in North Carolina) served apprenticeships before beginning their careers in retail.¹⁶

Like the Murrays, Johnson probably never served an apprenticeship. From what is known of his early life, a seven year apprenticeship would not fit in the timeline. Johnson is known to have served under Joseph Blanchard sometime in the Seven Years War. Blanchard's last military service ended in 1755, and he died in 1758, so Johnson must have been in the military around or before 1755.¹⁷ In 1755, Johnson was only seventeen years old. In 1762, when Johnson moved to Newbury, he was only twenty years old. Apprenticeships often lasted until the age of twenty-one,

¹⁰ Ibid., 274.

¹¹ Wenger, *A Country Storekeeper in Pennsylvania*, 35; Wells, *History of Newbury. Vermont: From the Discovery of the Coos Country to the Present Time*, 66.

¹² Wells, *History of Newbury. Vermont: From the Discovery of the Coos Country to the Present Time*, 47.

¹³ Carole Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America*, 2nd edition (Los Angeles, CA: Figueroa Press, 2008), 248.

¹⁴ Wenger, *A Country Storekeeper in Pennsylvania*, 36.

¹⁵ Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, quoted in Ibid., 1.

¹⁶ David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 46–75; Patricia Cleary, *Elizabeth Murray: A Woman's Pursuit of Independence in Eighteenth-Century America* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 21–31, 43.

¹⁷ Wells, *History of Newbury. Vermont: From the Discovery of the Coos Country to the Present Time*, 18–26.

so Johnson likely did not complete one.

Johnson may not have trained as a storekeeper during his youth, but he did train his own children. In 1794, the year of the oldest surviving store record, Thomas Johnson had eight living children (ranging in ages from twenty-eight to two), two daughters in law, and three living grandchildren in Newbury. His brothers in and near Newbury provided him with an additional eight nephews and at least six nieces.¹⁸ Family labor was a key component to most New England communities, and Johnson's family was no exception, as is evidenced by the surviving account books.¹⁹ A store transaction, recorded on December 8, 1794, indicates that Newbury resident Jacob Bailey purchased items including half a dozen plates, three loafs of sugar, two quarts of wine, and two "chunk bottles" for a total of seventeen shillings and two pence. Under the list of items purchased, was written "Rec'd Payment" and signed "D.J."²⁰ Bailey must have been waited on in the store by Thomas's seventeen year old son, David, who initialed his collection of Bailey's cash. David later grew up to take over his father's business, and kept a store in Newbury until the mid nineteenth-century.²¹

Another youth who helped in the store was Thomas's nephew, Jacob Page, the thirteen year old son of Thomas's late sister Sally.²² In another account book, Johnson wrote on the margins, "June 7, 1799, 9-clock am, Jacob Page began work for sixty dollars a year, a pair of shoes and a hat, and to take a pair of Stearsin [sic] part pay."²³ Since Jacob Page's father moved to Ryegate, VT, ten miles south of Newbury, six years earlier, it is probable that Jacob not only worked at his uncle's store, but lived in his house and was under his care as well. Like many eighteenth-century merchants, Johnson used his store to teach his children and other young kin life lessons in industry, as well as provide them an opportunity to earn money and begin to establish themselves on their own.

Thomas, his son David, nephew Jacob, and other store employees sold a variety of goods to their customers, including food, cloth, paper, and other manufactured goods. The things they sold were most often things that the residents of Newbury could not make themselves. Most retail items were probably imported from the port cities of Hartford, CT, Portsmouth, NH, Boston, and New York City. No records of Johnson's transactions to procure store stock survived to today, but examining how early Newbury residents, and other Vermont merchants, supplied their goods can paint a likely picture.

The first layer of that picture is the route by which the goods travelled. Efforts to build a road to Newbury started as early as the founding of the town. In a town proprietors' meeting held June 13, 1763, they voted to audit founders Jacob Bayley and Moses Hazen in order to reimburse them for expenses they had fronted to start the town, including "making a road from Canterbury," a town about seventy miles south-east of Newbury, and a little over halfway on the route to the port town of Portsmouth, NH.²⁴ A few months later they voted to "make half the road through Haverhill toward Portsmouth, with the proprietors of Haverhill," and again in March of

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 586–96. Additionally, by 1794 Thomas Johnson had already buried two wives, six children, three grandchildren, both parents, and three siblings.

¹⁹ Christopher Clark, "Economics and Culture: Opening Up the Rural History of the Early American Northeast," *American Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (June 1, 1991): 287, doi:10.2307/2712928.

²⁰ Thomas Johnson, "Account Book, May 12, 1794-July 26, 1798" (Newbury, VT, August 1794), Johnson Papers, Vermont Historical Society Leahy Library.

²¹ Wells, *History of Newbury. Vermont: From the Discovery of the Coos Country to the Present Time*, 274, 589.

²² The identity of Jacob Page, and information about his parents, has been determined from the genealogical recordings of Newbury residents in *Ibid.*, 648.

²³ Thomas Johnson, "Account Book, 1798-1799" (Newbury, VT, September 1798), Johnson Papers, Vermont Historical Society Leahy Library.

²⁴ Wells, *History of Newbury. Vermont: From the Discovery of the Coos Country to the Present Time*, 24.

1764, they voted to “assist Haverhill in laying out a road to meet the road from Portsmouth.”²⁵ This road was to go through “Barrington, Barnstead, Gilmantown, to cross Winnepocket Pond at the Wares, through Salem Holderness, and Four Mile Township, and Romney to Haverhill,” all of which were neighborhoods that had also been newly settled at the end of the Seven Years War, and had young economies similar to Newbury’s.²⁶ The town of Portsmouth, however, had access to foreign wealth and commerce, and could provide the residents of Newbury with the items they couldn’t make themselves, as well as consumers for their wool, butter, pelts and hides, and pot and pearl ashes. According to one contemporary, by 1764 over a thousand pounds worth of goods had already been brought into Newbury from Portsmouth.²⁷ By the time Johnson opened his store, travelling by road to Portsmouth would have been one way he may have procured supplies.

Even once established and widened, however, roads were only easily traversed in winter, when sleds could run over the snow and ice.²⁸ The remaining seasons’ rough, muddy, and mountainous terrain impeded travel significantly. Luckily for Newbury, there was another option. Newbury was settled up against the Connecticut River, and boats made accessible towns further south, such as Windsor and Charlestown in Vermont, Northampton and Springfield in Massachusetts, and the port city of Hartford, Connecticut. The people of Newbury were already navigating the river in the town’s early years, for when Daniel Hall moved to Newbury in 1763 he did so via a boat from Northampton, MA and until an effective grist mill was built in Newbury, residents had to go to Charlestown to turn their grain to flour.²⁹ Iron was brought to Newbury from Massachusetts on river boats until sometime past the Revolutionary War, and in the 1790s, timber was regularly sent out of Newbury on flat bottom boats that returned with salt, rum, iron, and other heavy cargo.³⁰ In the last half of the eighteenth-century, and in the early nineteenth century, Newbury was the northernmost navigable section of the river, and so was the collecting point for boats and barges to load up and float down to Hartford, CT, the northernmost point of ocean navigation on the river. The goods were then traded for foreign and manufactured goods brought in by the sloops and schooners from Boston, New York, Europe and the West Indies.³¹

Trade on the Connecticut River was mature enough by the late eighteenth century that it supported many established partnerships. Worster, Tuttle & Co. of Hartford, CT was partnered with Allen Hayes & Co. of Windsor, VT for interests in the Connecticut River trade between Hartford and Vermont.³² From 1798-1807, the Lyman brothers also worked in partnership, with Gaius Lyman located in Hartford, CT, Elias Lyman in Hartford, VT, and Justin Lyman in New York City in order to direct the flow of trade between Vermont and the port cities.³³ Most interestingly, for the purposes of this paper, was the partnership held from 1800 to 1810 between David Porter and an unknown connection in Vermont. The Vermonter in that partnership ran a general store that sold the European merchandise Porter sent to him, and in turn collected country

²⁵ Ibid., 28.

²⁶ Ibid., 48.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 31, 44.

³⁰ Ibid., 46, 124.

³¹ Margaret E. Martin, *Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley: 1750-1820*, vol. XXIV, Nox. 1-4, Smith College Studies in History, Study V in the Council of Industrial Study Series (Northampton, MA: Department of History of Smith College, 1939), 7, 131.

³² Ibid., XXIV:106.

³³ Ibid., XXIV:109.

produce from his neighbors that he shipped back down to Porter.³⁴

Perhaps Johnson's store worked in conjunction with a merchant in Hartford, or one just further south than Newbury on the Connecticut River. Merchants often partnered with kin who lived in other towns, much like the Lyman brothers.³⁵ Johnson had a sister and brother-in-law in Charlestown, NH, about seventy miles south on the river, but it is unknown if they participated in Johnson's mercantile business, and other relations along the river are unknown.³⁶ Without kin networks, Johnson may have used the many independent boatmen who hired out their services to transport goods along the Connecticut River.³⁷ It is likely Johnson used both the Connecticut River and the roads to coastal New Hampshire to trade goods, as most Newbury residents did. For example, in 1762 Newbury settlers travelled down to Charlestown to get corn seed, but potato seed was "brought through the woods from Concord, [NH]", showing that residents used whatever means necessary to get what they needed.³⁸

One source that could shed light on how and from where Johnson got his store's supplies is newspaper advertisements. Johnson never placed any advertisements for his store, but many other Vermont store owners did. In February of 1795, Elmer Darbe & Co. advertised their store in Woodstock, VT claiming they "have lately received from New-York, a very handsome supply of West-India & European Goods."³⁹ It is most likely the goods travelled from overseas to New York City, then to Hartford, before being shipped up the Connecticut River and then transported ten miles overland to Woodstock, VT.⁴⁰ John Holbrook & Co.'s June 1794 advertisement for their store in Brattleboro, VT explained this system of trade more clearly: "As one of the company will constantly reside in Hartford, and one in New York, with the connections they have formed in Boston, will give them, at all times, the first and best chance of purchasing all kinds of goods, and of making the best sales of all kinds of country produce."⁴¹

Advertisements placed by individuals, instead of larger Connecticut River trading partnerships, often do not say so clearly how their goods arrived in Vermont. On the fourth page of the May 4, 1795 issue of *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, two advertisements sit one on top of the other placed by individuals, Richard Ransom of Woodstock, VT and Isaac Green of Windsor, VT.⁴² Both advertised English and West Indian goods, but neither described how the goods travelled across and up the Atlantic to northern New England. Like Ransom and Green, Johnson was not in an official partnership for his store, but all three likely partook in the river commerce described by the larger company's advertisements. As New York City began to replace Boston as the prominent northern port, starting around 1783, Johnson probably shifted from using the roads to using the river to collect supplies.⁴³

Like the merchants who advertised, Johnson sold a variety of goods from the West Indies

³⁴ Ibid., XXIV:110.

³⁵ Clark, "Economics and Culture," 290; Also, merchant Elizabeth Murray used kin networks for her business: Cleary, *Elizabeth Murray*; as did merchant Samuel Rex in rural Pennsylvania: Wenger, *A Country Storekeeper in Pennsylvania*.

³⁶ The existence of Johnson's sister, Ruth, her husband Mr. Hoag, and their location are from Wells, *History of Newbury. Vermont: From the Discovery of the Coos Country to the Present Time*, 586.

³⁷ Martin, *Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley*, XXIV:167.

³⁸ Wells, *History of Newbury. Vermont: From the Discovery of the Coos Country to the Present Time*, 19.

³⁹ Elmer Darbe & Co., "Advertisement for Elmer Darbe & Co. Store," *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, February 16, 1795, Vol. XII, Iss. 63 edition.

⁴⁰ See Martin, *Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley*.

⁴¹ John Holbrook & Co., "Advertisement for John Holbrook & Co.," *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, June 23, 1794, Vol. XI, Iss. 569 edition.

⁴² Isaac Green and Richard Ransom, "Advertisements for Green & Ransom," *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, May 4, 1795, Vol. XII, Iss. 614 edition.

⁴³ Martin, *Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley*, XXIV:135.

and England, as well as goods made locally. From May 1794-May 1795, Johnson sold over twice as much rum as any other item.⁴⁴ Johnson sold both “rum” and “N.E. rum.” The lack of an adjective in the first rum suggests it most likely came from the Caribbean, the largest producer of rum at that time. The imported rum was sold at twice the rate of domestic rum. On June 7, 1794 Moses Porter purchased one pint of rum for 1 shilling and 6 pence. Two days later, Porter purchased one quart of New England rum for the same price.⁴⁵ The first purchase was at the rate of 18 pence per pint, whereas the second purchase was sold at 9 pence per pint. Having both imported and domestically made products not only kept Johnson’s shelves full in between the arrival of shipments, but was a convenient way to turn around the domestic goods Johnson received as payment from his customers.

Different qualities of goods also made consumption more accessible to people of varying socio-economic levels. On March 24, 1795 William Evans visited Johnson’s store and left with “1 double bladed pen knife.” He paid two shillings for the knife. Five and a half months later, James Laeld also bought a “pen knife,” but this one without a double blade. He paid only eight pence for it. Perhaps without the cheaper option, Laeld would not have been able to afford a pen knife at all. Finer quality things also helped show off the genteel status of aspiring peoples. In his newspaper advertisement Isaac Green of Windsor, VT said he had both “Elegant & Ordinary Looking-Glasses.”⁴⁶ Similarly, Johnson sold both silk handkerchiefs and cotton handkerchiefs in 1794, for six shillings and two shillings, six pence, respectively.⁴⁷ For those who wished their handkerchiefs did more than just catch their runny nose, a silk handkerchief would have been the perfect status object. The smoothness of silk was an outward representation of a refined mind as well as one’s wealth.⁴⁸

Most purchases at Johnson’s store were small, commonly a single item, sometimes two or three items. Rarer was the shopping binge of Noah Carleton on June 5, 1795. Carleton purchased twelve items that day, including buttons, chocolate, china, a thimble, and coffee for a total of 1 pound, 8 shillings, and 2 pence. Carleton’s purchase was the largest recorded in the first year of Johnson’s account book, measured by numbers of different items, but it was not the most expensive. That honor went to William Evans, who, on April 25, 1794, purchased twelve dozen buttons, $\frac{3}{4}$ yard silk, one black silk handkerchief, a “stick twist,” and two other fabrics for a total of 3 pounds, 2 shillings, and 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ pence. Earlier that same day, Evans also bought “1 double bladed pen knife” for 2 shillings. Evans’ purchases were extraordinarily expensive considering only 5% of all purchases at Johnson’s store that year cost over a pound. This is not surprising since the average wage for farm labor at that time was only 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 4 shillings a day.⁴⁹ It would have cost a farmer about a week’s worth of wages to pay for a one-pound shopping trip. In contrast, the least expensive purchases from May 1794-May 1795 were to Sarah Vance on May 29, 1795, for two sheets “counting paper,” and to Phineas Right on January 21, 1795 for some tobacco. Each paid only two pence for their purchases.⁵⁰ Purchases like Right’s and Vance’s were more common at Johnson’s store than Carleton’s and Evan’s.

Large or small, expensive or frugal, most of the purchases at Johnson’s store were done by the men of Newbury. For the entire year of May 1794-May 1795, only eleven women show up on the account books, and they account for only 5% of all the purchases. This may be

⁴⁴ Johnson, “Account Book, May 12, 1794-July 26, 1798.”

⁴⁵ Ibid., June 7 & 9, 1794.

⁴⁶ Green and Ransom, “Advertisements for Green & Ransom.”

⁴⁷ Johnson, “Account Book, May 12, 1794-July 26, 1798,” May 20 & October 17, 1794.

⁴⁸ Richard L Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 71-2.

⁴⁹ Rothenberg, *From Market-Places to a Market Economy*, 154-5.

⁵⁰ Johnson, “Account Book, May 12, 1794-July 26, 1798.”

surprising at first given that many recent studies of the late eighteenth-century American economy have focused on the strong consumer power of women. Historian T. H. Breen has shown that “women regularly dealt with the shopkeepers and itinerant traders who merchandised imported British goods,” and that their economic involvement was crucial to the revolutionary boycotts of the 1760s & 1770s.⁵¹ However, other frontier stores in the early republic depict similar gender lines as Johnson’s store. Samuel Rex’s store in rural Pennsylvania from 1802-1835 also had significantly more male customers than female, as did stores in Corinth and Jericho, Vermont in the 1790s.⁵²

The women who did shop at Johnson’s store did not purchase the same variety of items as their male counterparts. Most of their purchases were for tea, paper, needles, and cloth of various sorts. No women ever purchased rum, the most common item sold at Johnson’s store, nor did they purchase traditionally male items, such as nails, brass locks, pen knives, or shovels. The male customers, however, often purchased traditionally feminine items. On May 30, 1794, Jonathan Fowler bought a hair ribbon for 8 pence, and on August 21, 1794, Isaac Duffs purchased “3 ½ yards linen” and “2 knots thread” for 11 shillings and 8 pence. Men also were the purchasers of kitchenware, including the 8 plates, 3 mugs, platter, and ½ dozen tea spoons sold during the month of December, 1794.⁵³

Studying women in early America is often difficult because *femme covert* laws absorbed almost all of a woman’s activity under her husband’s name in records. From May 1794-May 1795, eleven different women were recorded making purchases in Johnson’s store records, but there may have been more whose purchases were recorded under their husbands’ names. Six of these eleven female shoppers are listed with the prefix ‘Mrs.,” either indicating that they were married or widowed. If widowed, that would explain why they were recorded in the books on their own behalf. If married, however, then women were recorded separately from men, regardless of their legal subordination to their husbands. The recording of Mrs. Fowler’s visit on December 1, 1794 for chocolate, tea, pepper, and spice is a great example of this mystery. It appears she made her purchases right after Jack Fowler, perhaps her husband, son, or other relation, yet her purchases were recorded separate from his.

Four of Johnson’s female customers were named without any prefix, but by their given and surnames. Sometimes married men were listed similarly, presumably to identify between people with the same surname, so that may explain why a woman would be listed in this way.⁵⁴ The lack of the title may also indicate an unmarried woman. Unmarried women were under the legal control of their fathers, but that did not stop Lizbeth Crown from not only being recorded in Johnson’s account book on her own behalf on, but also having “Old Mr. Crown” written under her name. His items were added to hers, indicating she held ultimate responsibility for both of their bills.⁵⁵

The early years of the republic were a period of economic transition for women. It has traditionally been understood that as they moved from being colonial goodwives to republican mothers, and the cult of domesticity was created, women were pushed out of the public economy

⁵¹ T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 127–3, 280.

⁵² Wenger, *A Country Storekeeper in Pennsylvania*, 9; “Corinth Store Day Book, 1796-1797” (Corinth, VT, July 1796), Vermont Large Bound Manuscripts, University of Vermont Bailey-Howe Library’s Special Collections; “Jericho Store Account Book, 1789-1794” (Jericho, VT, 94 1789), Vermont Large Bound Manuscripts, University of Vermont Bailey-Howe Library’s Special Collections.

⁵³ Johnson, “Account Book, May 12, 1794-July 26, 1798.”

⁵⁴ For example, Thomas Johnson’s married sons, Moses and John are listed by first and last name instead of “Mr. Johnson.”

⁵⁵ Johnson, “Account Book, May 12, 1794-July 26, 1798,” May 1, 1795.

to work in their homes raising religious and moral families.⁵⁶ But, as historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's study of a frontier woman's diary during this time shows, frontier women still held many economic relationships with other women in their community.⁵⁷ Perhaps the lack of women in Johnson's account books can be explained by a separate, but public, women's sphere of barter and trade.

Men and women may have had different purchasing habits at Johnson's store, but they paid similarly. Approximately 93% of purchases from May 1794-May 1795 were purchased on credit.⁵⁸ This was not at all unusual. Since the original founding of the colonies, the American economy was built on debt and credit. The shortage of bullion in the Atlantic world at the time left little other choice for those who needed large amounts of money to front business endeavors, such as shipments of goods and people to the New World. By the mid eighteenth-century, contemporaries were already warning against the excess of credit and debt in America.⁵⁹ This system of debt extended down to country merchants who purchased goods for retail from city merchants, who extended, on average, four months deadlines for repayment.⁶⁰ The country merchants, in turn, extended credit to their customers in order for them to afford the goods they needed to farm and craft. Their country products would then be sold to the country merchant, who would sell it to the city merchants until everyone's debt was paid off.⁶¹ The circle of credit/payment extended even higher than the city merchants, as well, engulfing the entire young nation.

American customers in the 1790s had three options to pay for their goods and accumulating debt: cash, goods, and labor.⁶² 93% of the transactions recorded in Johnson's account book from May 1794-May 1795 do not record any method of payment. Presumably, the purchases were made on credit. Customers' ongoing credits were recorded in ledgers, separate from the day-to-day account books.⁶³ None of Johnson's ledgers have survived, but many other late eighteenth-century merchants' ledger books have, and Johnson's day-to-day account book records some cash, goods, and labor payments made.

In the first year of Johnson's account book, only 7% of items recorded included payments. Of the recorded payments, cash accounted for 70%, goods 20%, and labor 10%. Labor was the least likely method of payment for other merchants as well. Samuel Rex's rural Pennsylvanian daybooks recorded 6% of payments made in labor, and his ledger recorded the same percentage.⁶⁴ The ledger books of Josiah Dwight and Day Dwight, merchants further south on the Connecticut River than Johnson, recorded 10% and 4%, respectively, of payments made in labor.⁶⁵ Some of the labor Johnson accepted as payment included "keeping hors 2 Days," and "fetching packets."⁶⁶

For commodity payments that year, Johnson accepted tobacco, beeswax, leather, buttons, and cotton cloth.⁶⁷ All of these are also items sold in his store, so perhaps these payments turned

⁵⁶ See: Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*, 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

⁵⁷ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), Chapter 2.

⁵⁸ Johnson, "Account Book, May 12, 1794-July 26, 1798."

⁵⁹ Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution*, 36-42.

⁶⁰ Wenger, *A Country Storekeeper in Pennsylvania*, 137.

⁶¹ Martin, *Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley*, XXIV:157.

⁶² *Ibid.*, XXIV:144.

⁶³ Wenger, *A Country Storekeeper in Pennsylvania*, 104-5.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 105-6.

⁶⁵ Martin, *Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley*, XXIV:144.

⁶⁶ Johnson, "Account Book, May 12, 1794-July 26, 1798," July 16 & Sept 1, 1794.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, July 8-November 22, 1794.

around and became items for sale. If we had access to Johnson's ledger books, as well, we would presumably find that he also accepted country-made goods, like many other late eighteenth-century merchants. Merchants who advertised near Johnson were certainly seeking out country commodities. A 1794 ad for a store in Brattleboro, VT says the company would "pay money for most kinds of produce," and Isaac Green advertised his Windsor, VT store as accepting "Cash, and most kinds of Country produce."⁶⁸ Simeon Riley was more specific when he advertised he would take "CASH, Salts of Lye, Ashes, Butter, Cheese, Tallow, Pork and Beef" as payment in his Thetford, VT store.⁶⁹ According to historian Christopher Clark, storekeepers were forced unwillingly to accept crops as payment because their customers had no other means to pay, but the advertisements placed near Thomas Johnson's store suggest otherwise.⁷⁰

Three and a half times more often than goods, and seven times more often than labor, Johnson's account book recorded cash used for payments. Rural merchants Josiah & Day Dwight and Samuel Rex also received cash as their primary form of payment.⁷¹ Cash in the eighteenth-century, though, consisted of a multitude of options. A hatter in Northampton, MA, 140 miles south on the Connecticut River from Newbury, recorded the various currencies he accepted in 1767: "English Guineas, shillings & half crowns; Portuguese half Johannes, Moidorse, & doblons; Spanish doblons, pistols, dollars & pistareens; & French Guineas."⁷² Additionally, each colony, and then state, minted their own currency, and they were not all worth the same. In 1793, 177 Yorks were worth 100 Massachusetts.⁷³ In 1792, the United States Congress passed the Coinage Act, which established the dollar as the national standard of currency.⁷⁴

Johnson's account books, which start two years after the Coinage Act, show that despite the new national currency, old systems were still being used. All of his store transactions were recorded in English pounds, shillings, and pence. Additionally, other receipts from 1794-1795 show a variety of currencies used, even in the same transaction. A receipt signed by Johnson on September 19, 1794 says, "Borrowed and used of Josias L'arnord One hundred and twenty eight dollars which I promise to repay on demand with my hand." On the outside of the document is added, presumably at a later date, "Rec^d Thirty six pounds seventeen shillings and eleven pence in part of the within."⁷⁵ Similarly, a 1795 receipt has on the inside, "I promise to pay to Thomas Johnson, or Order, the Sum of Four pounds fifteen shillings & six pence Lawful silver Money, with Interest," and on the outside, "Received Ten Dollars of the within."⁷⁶

The late eighteenth-century is notoriously difficult for tracking the worth of various currencies. This is, in part, because most fluctuated in value rapidly. For example, in 1787, the Continental dollar was deemed to be worth half a Spanish dollar. A few months later it was worth

⁶⁸ John Holbrook & Co., "Advertisement for John Holbrook & Co.," Isaac Green, "Advertisement for Green's Store," *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, November 3, 1794, Vol. XII, Iss. 588 edition.

⁶⁹ Simeon Riley, "Advertisement for Riley's Store," *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, September 6, 1791, Vol. IX, Iss. 423 edition.

⁷⁰ Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism*, 164-7; Martin, *Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley*, XXIV:164. Martin disagrees, with Clark, arguing that merchants actively sought out country produce as payment in their stores so they could sell it to city merchants. See: Martin, *Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley*, XXIV:164.

⁷¹ Martin, *Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley*, XXIV:144.

⁷² *Ibid.*, XXIV:151.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, XXIV:152.

⁷⁴ *Money in Colonial Times* (Philadelphia, PA: Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, May 4, 2014), <http://www.philadelphiafed.org/education/teachers/resources/money-in-colonial-times/#02>.

⁷⁵ Thomas Johnson, "Receipt between Thomas Johnson and Josias L'Arnord," September 29, 1794, Johnson Papers, Vermont Historical Society Leahy Library.

⁷⁶ William L'Arnold, "Receipt Between William L'Arnold and Thomas Johnson" (Vermont, November 20, 1795), Johnson Papers, Vermont Historical Society Leahy Library.

only one third a Spanish dollar, and by 1780, one-twentieth. One man who purchased 4,000 Continental dollars worth of supplies for the government was later reimbursed only 60 Spanish dollars.⁷⁷ The Spanish silver dollar was virtually the only coin that did not depreciate in value, and it became the unofficial currency of the eighteenth-century.⁷⁸

For cash-strapped farmers in Newbury, though, wheat became the standard of measurement for pay. The minister's salary, local taxes, and laborers' wages were communicated in bushels of wheat, even if they received their payment in some other form.⁷⁹ On December 13, 1795, James Hates wrote a receipt to "let Capt. Thomas Johnson have thirteen bushels and one shilling worth of my winter wheat," combining wheat and cash to describe one amount.⁸⁰ Even though Johnson's account book recorded all transactions in pounds, shillings, and pence, if his store was anything like the other aspects of his life, he likely accepted all sorts of currency. For simplicity's sake, a conversion was probably calculated before being written in the books.

When Johnson was paid cash, it often covered only part of a customer's purchase. From May 1794-May 1795, only four out of twenty-one cash payments fully covered the purchases being made, and only one transaction was of a cash payment by itself.⁸¹ More common were transactions similar to that of Major May on December 1, 1794. May purchased two gallons of brandy and six ounces of sugar for a total of 1 pound, 14 shillings, and 9 pence. At that time, he paid only 6 shillings in cash. The remaining balance of 1 pound, 7 shillings, and 9 pence must have gone to May's store credit account.

It was the responsibility of the storekeeper to track down payments on store credit. Debts were handled on a case by case basis. Some customers were given mere months to pay up, while others accumulated debts over years.⁸² As depicted in Johnson's account books, customers often partnered debt accumulation with partial payments. Both cash and commodity payments often covered only a portion of the purchase they went with. In this system, customers' credit accounts would virtually never zero out. This is similar to other country stores, as well. Such a system worked until one wanted to balance the books for good. A rural Pennsylvania store that closed in 1790 took almost a decade to collect full payments from all of its customers.⁸³

For those who were sluggish to pay up, a merchant had a few options. First, if the merchant were like Samuel Rex in Pennsylvania, he might send the debtor a letter, like the one Rex sent to John Barr in 1801 that reminded him of his 8 pounds and 18 shillings balance that was five years overdue.⁸⁴ Additionally, merchants often charged interest for credits that lasted too long. For merchant Josiah Dwight that length of time was one year, after which he charged 6% interest.⁸⁵ If a merchant suspected beforehand that a customer might have trouble paying on time, he could have the customer sign a bond with the purchase. Bonds came with specific repayment deadlines, and specific penalties if the deadlines weren't met. For Rex, these penalties included repayments at double the original price.⁸⁶ As a last resort, merchants could file lawsuits

⁷⁷ Wells, *History of Newbury. Vermont: From the Discovery of the Coos Country to the Present Time*, 120-1.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 29; *Money in Colonial Times*.

⁷⁹ Wells, *History of Newbury. Vermont: From the Discovery of the Coos Country to the Present Time*, 122.

⁸⁰ James Hates, "Receipt Between James Hates & Thomas Johnson" (Vermont, December 13, 1795), Johnson Papers, Vermont Historical Society Leahy Library.

⁸¹ Johnson, "Account Book, May 12, 1794-July 26, 1798."

⁸² Wenger, *A Country Storekeeper in Pennsylvania*, 107.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁸⁵ Martin, *Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley*, XXIV:157. The average interest rate at this time was 4 ½ - 6%.

⁸⁶ Wenger, *A Country Storekeeper in Pennsylvania*, 108; Martin, See also: *Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley*, XXIV:158.

seeking payment. According to historian Margaret Martin, lawsuits were “frequently threatened, but probably infrequently instituted.”⁸⁷ However, historian Diane Wenger claimed that Samuel Rex “did not hesitate to initiate suits against customers of all occupations and ranks.”⁸⁸ Johnson’s account books do not give any hints of debt collection, but it does record the times when people simply borrowed cash from the store, without making a purchase. In the year May 1794-May 1795, this happened six different times, with the customers borrowing an average of 6 shillings each.

Many rural merchants not only lent money, but recorded money transactions between other members of the community, as well. For Springfield, MA merchant Josiah Dwight, records of other people’s money transactions amounted for almost 6% of all transactions in his ledger books.⁸⁹ For Johnson’s first recorded year, they amounted to less than 1%, but they were recorded. On August 4, 1794 it was documented that “Peter Johnson to pd Mr. Page....12/” and on March 13, 1795 Mr. Lanbord paid 6 shillings cash to Moses Chamberlain.⁹⁰ By documenting these transactions as a third party, Johnson, as well as many other rural merchants, performed as “bankers in a bankerless age.”⁹¹

Johnson’s account books served in other capacities as well. From 1785-1800 Thomas Johnson served as Newbury’s first Post Master, and his store account books recorded at least some of the work he did in that position.⁹² For example, written on October 30, 1794, was “Mr. Farrow to postage Letter..../5,” and on September 12, 1794, “Post Curtes Pd by Anne Hilles Letter..../3.”⁹³ Similarly, merchant Josiah Dwight’s account books covered his activities as a storekeeper, farmer, and owner of an iron forge.⁹⁴

Like Dwight, and other eighteenth-century merchants, Johnson wore many hats. He ran a store, and was a gentleman farmer, Post Master, Colonel of the militia, and member of the local Congregational church. He was an influential member of Newbury society, and was elected several times as a town representative to State Assemblies.⁹⁵ Additionally, newspaper ads from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries place Johnson as a Justice of the Peace and a Collector. In the latter position, Johnson called proprietors of nearby towns to meetings held in his own home. Even after passing the position on to others, meetings were still held “at the dwellinghouse of col. Thomas Johnson, in Newbury.”⁹⁶ Both Johnson’s 1775 house and 1800 houses still exist in Newbury today. His 1775 Georgian style home, with its steep-pitched hip roof, communicated Johnson’s wealth and position in society.⁹⁷ It was also in a wing of this house that Johnson’s kept his store.

Like Johnson himself, his store served many roles. It was a place where people could buy the goods they could not make, like pottery and cloth, as well as objects of social status, such as

⁸⁷ Martin, *Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley*, XXIV:158.

⁸⁸ Wenger, *A Country Storekeeper in Pennsylvania*, 108.

⁸⁹ Martin, *Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley*, XXIV:159.

⁹⁰ Johnson, “Account Book, May 12, 1794-July 26, 1798.”

⁹¹ Martin, *Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley*, XXIV:159.

⁹² Francis P. Keyes, “Story of Colonel Thomas Johnson,” *Harlan C. Pearson* LII (1920): 360.

⁹³ Johnson, “Account Book, May 12, 1794-July 26, 1798.”

⁹⁴ Martin, *Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley*, XXIV:163.

⁹⁵ Keyes, “Story of Colonel Thomas Johnson,” 160–2.

⁹⁶ Frye Bayley, “Advertisement,” *The Vermont Gazette*, November 14, 1791, vol. IX, iss. 25 edition, *America’s Historical Newspapers*; Frye Bayley’s advert is just one of many examples of other Collectors using Johnson’s home as a meeting spot to conduct official business. One of the many examples of adverts written by Thomas Johnson as a Collector is: Thomas Johnson, “Advertisement,” *Spooner’s Vermont Journal*, November 12, 1787, vol. V, iss. 224 edition, *America’s Historical Newspapers*.

⁹⁷ Margaret DeLaittre, “Oxbow Historic District” (Connecticut River Joint Commission Inc., July 28, 1983), <http://www.crjc.org/heritage/V16-4.htm>.

silk handkerchiefs and long satin gloves. It was also a place where they could sell their country products, like butter, cheese, corn, and salted hams, instead of taking them themselves to market. It was a place of employment and education for his son David and nephew Jacob, as well as the town's de fact post office and bank. And it was a place mostly for men, despite the importance of women in local economies. This mix of community and market *mentalitiés* makes Johnson's store representative of the transition in rural frontier economies during the early republic. This was a time when merchants were still farmers, kin networks still dominated business relations, and a separate economic sphere for women was just beginning. This snapshot of early America is a nostalgic example of America's roots in both community and capitalism.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LORD DUNMORE'S PROCLAMATION AND
THE JOHN LAURENS EMANCIPATION PLAN

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KIERAN O'KEEFE

By the War of Independence, slavery was deeply rooted in the American colonies. However, the Revolution provided African American slaves with several opportunities to obtain their freedom, including through military service in the British and American armed forces. From the war's outset, both American and British government officials as well as military officers contemplated how they could use African American slaves to further their war efforts. This paper uses a case study approach to explore two instances in the Revolutionary War of slaves gaining freedom in exchange military service. The two cases examined are Lord Dunmore's Ethiopian Regiment and John Laurens' proposal to emancipate slaves in the Deep South. Exploring these plans offers insight into how certain British and American leaders viewed slaves and slavery in the context of the Revolutionary War. Each plan was implemented at different times for different reasons. A chief reason in both cases was a shortage of manpower, but not the only reason. For example, Lord Dunmore needed manpower but also hoped to use armed ex-slaves to scare Virginians into submission. John Laurens, on the other hand, had serious moral reservations about slavery and was fueled not only by a shortage of manpower and the deteriorating military situation in the South, but also by his idealistic opposition to slavery.

The argument of this paper is threefold. First, I show the growing, but ultimately narrow scope of antislavery thought in the Revolutionary War. The two men who initiated these plans had very different feelings towards slavery. John Laurens is an exception to the narrow scope of antislavery thought, as he had a genuine interest in using the Revolutionary War to free slaves. On the other hand, Lord Dunmore had much more complex feelings. He believed that blacks were capable soldiers, a feeling not shared by everyone. He provided support to blacks at several points in his life as well, and his Proclamation offered freedom to slaves. However, he owned slaves and was primarily interested in frightening Virginians into submission rather than liberating slaves.

The second point of the paper is to show how these cases impacted the outcome of the war. By issuing a Proclamation freeing slaves of patriots, Dunmore turned potential allies in Virginia against him. However, he also set an example by utilizing slaves, an example that was followed by British commanders during later operations in the South. Dunmore's decision also encouraged George Washington to change his mind about banning blacks in the Continental Army. Looking at Laurens' proposal, we see a missed opportunity. South Carolinians, despite the desperate military situation they faced in 1779 and 1780, refused to use slaves to defend their state. This failure contributed to the fall of Charleston in 1780.

Lastly, I highlight the agency of African American slaves during the Revolutionary War. Despite being enslaved, and legally without any meaningful power, slaves shaped the course of the war. Slaves exchanged news and stayed informed on current events. When they learned of an opportunity to gain their freedom, slaves ran away, causing their masters to guard their homes rather than participate in the war. By joining the armed forces, their numbers shaped how campaigns were conducted. Slaves also had agency in how they influenced the decisions made by American and British leaders. Leaders of both sides recognized the crucial role of slaves, as a source for augmenting their armed forces and as a threat to the war effort through insurrection. Lord Dunmore's Proclamation

Tension between the thirteen American colonies and Great Britain had been increasing since 1763. While New England was the most rebellious region of the colonies, it did not have a monopoly on political unrest. By spring 1775, Virginia also faced an explosive situation. This unrest concerned John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, who was the Royal Governor of Virginia. Paralleling the actions of British leaders in other colonies, Dunmore seized munitions as a precautionary way of depriving patriot forces of weapons should fighting break out. On April 21, 1775, Dunmore ordered the gunpowder removed from the colonial magazine in Williamsburg to the Royal Navy where it would be inaccessible to the patriots. The next day, angry Virginians learned of the removal and demanded its return. A delegation met with Dunmore to negotiate the return of the gunpowder. The delegation was unsuccessful, and word quickly spread that Dunmore had threatened the delegation by suggesting he would free and arm slaves, a terrifying prospect to Virginians.¹ A few days later, on April 28, militia companies marched on Williamsburg, with the intention of recapturing the gunpowder. However, Dunmore blunted this advance by once again threatening to arm blacks to fight any armed men that moved within thirty miles of Williamsburg. The militia halted in the face of this threat.²

The impact of Dunmore openly threatening to use slaves to fight white Virginians had two major effects. First, it terrified white Virginians, causing them to think a slave rebellion was imminent. This fear led to precautionary action. In Williamsburg, the nightly slave patrol was doubled. Another local patriot committee ordered that slave patrollers be on duty at all times.³ Virginian fears were compounded by rumors of planned slave insurrections. One such instance was a rumor of an insurrection in Prince Edward County in mid-April. One slave was charged and, as a punishment, received fifteen lashes. Rumors of a second slave insurrection spread in Chesterfield County, and ended with two slaves sentenced to be executed. While these conspiracies were likely uncoordinated, white Virginians viewed them, in addition to other rumored conspiracies in the area, as an interconnected effort by slaves to revolt.⁴ Rumors of planned insurrections, real or imagined, did nothing but increase the mounting fears of a slave revolt, making Dunmore's threats evermore frightening.

The second major impact was the alienation of potential loyalists. Dunmore's threats to arm slaves created widespread anger and alarm, causing many undecided Virginians to support the patriots.⁵ A patriot committee in Mecklenburg County, angered by Dunmore and depicting the loss of trust felt by many, declared that Dunmore had "highly forfeited all title to the confidence of the good people of Virginia."⁶ Even before Dunmore officially moved to emancipate or arm slaves, Virginians attacked him, accusing him of raising a slave army. On June 1, the *Virginia Gazette* sarcastically reported that "a certain nominal itinerant governor, who for some time past has been suspected of acting the part of incendiary in this colony, is to take the field as generalissimo at the head of the Africans."⁷

By early June, the situation in Williamsburg was too hostile for Dunmore to remain. He fled to the HMS *Fowey* where he would be protected from any patriot reprisals.⁸ Here, Dunmore conducted his duties as governor from a floating city of boats off the coast of the colony.

¹ Woody Holton, "Rebel Against Rebel: Enslaved Virginians and the Coming of the American Revolution." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 105 no. 2(Spring 1997): 161.

² T. Stephen Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake: Black and White Resistance to Human Bondage, 1775-1865* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2006), 24.

³ Holton, "Rebel Against Rebel," 171.

⁴ Holton, "Rebel Against Rebel," 168.

⁵ Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake*, 25.

⁶ *Virginia Gazette*, (Dixon and Hunter), June 3, 1775.

⁷ *Virginia Gazette*, (Pinkney), June 1, 1775.

⁸ Kevin Phillips, *1775: A Good Year for Revolution* (New York: Viking, 2012), 483.

Dunmore initially rejected runaway slaves that fled to him, but changed his position following his abandonment of Williamsburg. He began conducting raids against patriots throughout the tidewater region, and welcomed slaves that fled to his forces. By mid-summer, three hundred slaves were in Dunmore's service.⁹ Dunmore spent much of the late summer and fall of 1775 raiding areas where patriots had stored munitions or artillery pieces, and also welcomed more and more runaway slaves as his forces moved around southeastern Virginia. In November, Dunmore defeated patriot militia at the Battle of Kemp's Landing, and reached the height of his military power.¹⁰ It was at this point that Dunmore issued a proclamation declaring "all indentured servants, Negros, or others (appertaining to rebels) free, that are able and willing to bear arms they joining His Majesty's Troops, as soon as may be."¹¹ Escaped slaves flocked to Dunmore and the Royal Ethiopian Regiment was formed. Soon, the regiment consisted of one thousand newly freed slaves.¹² The uniforms of the freed slaves in the regiment were rumored to be etched with the words "*Liberty to Slaves*."¹³

Dunmore's November Proclamation prompts an important question; why did Dunmore decide to emancipate slaves who served in the military? The answer is a combination of various reasons. First, Dunmore reasoned that the shortage of labor caused by runaway slaves would weaken the position of the patriots. Second, he believed that the fear of a slave revolt would diminish patriot forces, as potential soldiers would be forced to remain home and guard against uprisings. And third, Dunmore believed that the British army could use slaves as laborers and soldiers.¹⁴ Dunmore certainly was effective in depleting the labor force and tying down patriots on their plantations to watch their slaves. However, the most important reason was the shortage of men in the British army, explaining why Dunmore's Proclamation specifically appealed to able-bodied men. At this time, the British were in serious need of manpower, as they had only one regiment of regulars in the entire south.¹⁵ The shortage of manpower was seen at the Battle of Great Bridge, which took place on December 9, 1775, just south of Norfolk. The British had roughly seven hundred troops engaged during the battle, of which three hundred were ex-slaves, making up nearly half the force. Without ex-slaves at his disposal, Dunmore's forces were very limited.¹⁶

Dunmore miscalculated the support of white Virginians. He believed that by freeing the slaves of patriots, undecided slave-owners would move to support him, in order to retain their property.¹⁷ Yet, the fear of insurrection pushed slave owners away from Dunmore, instead of pulling them towards him as he had hoped. Neutrals, angered at Dunmore's actions, declared for the patriot cause.¹⁸ Richard Henry Lee believed that Dunmore unified all of Virginia, in opposition to him. Even in Dunmore's own executive council, two members switched sides, becoming patriots.¹⁹

It was with a mixture of fear and outrage that Virginians attempted to dissuade slaves

⁹ Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake*, 25.

¹⁰ Phillips, 1775, 484.

¹¹ Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake*, 25.

¹² *Ibid.*, 28.

¹³ Alan Gilbert, *Black Patriots and Loyalists: Fighting for Emancipation in the War for Independence* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012), 22.

¹⁴ Jim Picuch, *Three Peoples, One King: Loyalists, Indians and Slaves in the Revolutionary South, 1775-1782* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 81.

¹⁵ David K. Wilson, *The Southern Strategy: Britain's Conquest of South Carolina and Georgia, 1775-1780* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 2005), 14.

¹⁶ Phillips, 1775, 486.

¹⁷ H. J. Eckenrode, *The Revolution in Virginia* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1964), 72.

¹⁸ Holton, "Rebel Against Rebel," 185.

¹⁹ Phillips, 1775, 486.

from fleeing to Dunmore. George Washington explained the dire necessity of convincing slaves to reject Dunmore's proclamation, saying "his strength will increase as a snow ball by rolling; and faster, if some expedient cannot be hit upon to convince the slaves and servants of the impotency of his designs."²⁰ The *Virginia Gazette* warned the slaves that the proclamation only was directed to those who "be able to bear arms." It warned of what could happen to the families of escaped slaves. "The aged, the infirm, the women, and the children are still to remain the property of their masters, of masters who will be provoked to severity, should part of their slaves desert them."²¹ Virginia enacted legislation that forgave slaves who returned within ten days of running away, but warned that those who did not and were later captured would be executed or sent to slavery in the West Indies.²² The threat against family members who stayed behind was meant to scare slaves into remaining on the plantations. Whites thought that men would be unwilling to run away if they knew the safety of their wives and children was in jeopardy. The threat of being sent to the West Indies was meant to terrify slaves into submission, as it was largely a death sentence. The slave system in the West Indies was more brutal and life expectancy shorter.²³

It is unknown how many slaves were dissuaded from joining Dunmore in response to these threats. What is known is that word spread to slaves all over Virginia of Dunmore's proclamation. Runaways were reported as far away as Frederick, Maryland. A few unfortunate slaves who were caught fleeing to Dunmore were executed.²⁴ Those who made it to British lines were thrown into battle. On December 9, 1775, three hundred troops of the Royal Ethiopian Regiment along with some British regulars and a handful of loyalists confronted a patriot force south of Norfolk. The British and the Royal Ethiopian Regiment were routed at the Battle of Great Bridge, and Dunmore's influence in the region began to wane.²⁵ Dunmore was forced to stay on his flotilla, although slaves continued to flee to him. With the Royal Ethiopian Regiment decimated by smallpox, Dunmore was unable to take offensive action. Instead, Dunmore was forced to sit and wait for British reinforcements. These reinforcements never came, as the British high command decided to focus their military effort in the South in the Carolinas, not Virginia. In August, Dunmore resolved to leave the waters of Virginia. He and the Ethiopian Regiment went to New York. The Royal Ethiopian Regiment took part in the Battle of Long Island later in August, but shortly thereafter disappeared from record.²⁶

Dunmore's Proclamation would have been meaningless had there not been a slave population willing to undertake tremendous risks in fleeing to freedom. An early example of runaway slaves is seen in the *Virginia Gazette*, in an advertisement on December 10, 1775. John Waikins of Prince George County noted that some of his clothes and his canoe had been stolen by "runaway Negroes that came down the *James River*, and were going to the Governor."²⁷ These unnamed slaves were traveling down the James River, toward Dunmore, and a canoe would have made it easier to reach his flotilla. Another runaway example is seen in an advertisement placed by David Hoops on March 18, 1776. The runaway was named Jacob. Jacob was described as being thirty years old and approximately five foot five or five foot six. He was also noted to be of an especially dark complexion and spoke with a Scotts-Irish accent. Notably, he was an educated

²⁰ George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, vol 4. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1931), 186.

²¹ *Virginia Gazette* (Pinkney), November 23, 1775.

²² Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake*, 28.

²³ Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York: Viking, 2001), 335.

²⁴ Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake*, 29.

²⁵ Phillips, 1775, 489.

²⁶ Gilbert, *Black Patriots and Loyalists*, 32-37.

²⁷ *Virginia Gazette*, (Dixon and Hunter), February 17, 1776.

slave, with the ability to read and write. Hoops feared that he would be able to forge a pass to assist his escape. Slaves such as these ran away on a daily basis, intending to reach Dunmore and gain freedom.²⁸

Slave communication networks were vital in spreading information throughout slave communities. John Adams, speaking with southerners familiar with slave communication, was told that “The negroes have a wonderful art of communicating intelligence among themselves; it will run several hundreds of miles in a week or a fortnight.”²⁹ Slaves had sophisticated communication networks that their masters were unable to detect. Slaves gathered together at night for storytelling, and kept in close touch with friends and family members who lived nearby. On Sunday, they came together to sell the produce they grew in personal plots. Each time they interacted, slaves exchanged information, allowing news to spread.³⁰

Here we see the agency of slaves. Communication networks allowed for news such as Dunmore’s proclamation to spread rapidly, hence why Dunmore had a large body of slaves at his disposal soon after his proclamation. Despite slave holders’ attempts to keep the slave population uninformed, the communication networks were active, constantly circulating rumors and news. When Dunmore announced his proclamation, he obviously did not expect slave holders to inform their slaves. Instead he knew, just as all slave holders did, that the news would quickly spread throughout plantations in Virginia. The networks would carry the news, despite any efforts to keep slaves ignorant. Slaves furthered the process of gaining their freedom by playing an active role in spreading information. Without their effective communication networks, news of Dunmore’s Proclamation would not have spread as quickly or as widely.

Slaves faced many dangers when running away. Besides the fatal consequences of Virginia law, a slave could also face the wrath of an angered owner or be sent to what would likely be an even more oppressive slave life in the West Indies. In addition to these risks, escaping to Dunmore was especially difficult as he did not have a land base; his headquarters was on his flotilla off the coast. Pathways and the coastline were patrolled by whites looking for runaways.³¹ Given the risks involved, and Dunmore’s specific appeal to able bodied men, it would be logical to assume that it was mostly single men who ran away. Yet, this was not the case. One list notes eighty-seven runaways, of which twenty-one were women and twenty-three were girls younger than sixteen.³² Also, it was not uncommon for families to flee together. Dunmore, despite what was likely an unwanted presence of women and children who were extra mouths to feed, did not refuse them.

Many slave owners were surprised that slaves fled in groups. Slave owners, familiar with slaves fleeing individually or in very small groups, were taken aback by the large groups of slaves that absconded.³³ On January 6, 1776, slave owner Edmund Ruffin placed an advertisement for his runaway slaves. He described four men, having run away at the end of November, perhaps shortly after they had heard of Dunmore’s Proclamation. They had, according to Ruffin, run off with two other slaves. Two of the four slaves described by Ruffin were not simply field hands; they were skilled in different trades. One was a trained carpenter and a wheelwright, while the other built wagons and was a “very good blacksmith.” These skills would undoubtedly be useful to Dunmore. Ruffin offered a reward for their capture and said that

²⁸ *Virginia Gazette*, (Dixon and Hunter), March 30, 1776.

²⁹ Ellen Gibson Wilson, *The Loyal Blacks*, (New York: Capricorn Books, 1976), 26.

³⁰ Cassandra Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and Their Global Quest for Liberty*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 5.

³¹ Wilson, *The Loyal Blacks*, 26.

³² Gary Nash, *The Forgotten Fifth: African Americans in the Age of Revolution*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 27.

³³ *Ibid.*, 27.

“I conclude the other 4 are in Lord Dunmore’s service.”³⁴ Another runaway advertisement from November 2, 1775, noted that a slave named Charles ran away, intending “an Attempt to get at Lord *Dunmore*.” The owner, Robert Brent, recognized the difficulty in capturing Charles as he was literate, intelligent, and “daring and resolute.” Brent believed that he had run off with a “white servant” in an oyster boat, which would be useful in reaching Dunmore’s sea base, and that Charles’ decision to run away had nothing to do with maltreatment, rather he ran away “from a determined Resolution to get Liberty.”³⁵

For those who reached Dunmore, life in the Royal Ethiopian Regiment could be challenging, even by the standards of eighteenth-century soldiers. Every soldier was given one pound and one guinea upon joining.³⁶ The uniforms were in poor condition, when they had any, and Dunmore spent much of his time pestering army headquarters for better uniforms.³⁷ Upon joining, the ex-slaves would have participated in raids against patriot positions and in a couple of battles in the Norfolk area. Those who were lucky enough to survive combat were faced with an even deadlier enemy in January: smallpox. The regiment was decimated, and hundreds died. Word reached the patriots and the *Virginia Gazette* reported in March that “We have intelligence that the jail distemper [smallpox] rages with great violence on board Lord Dunmore’s fleet, particularly among the negro forces, upwards of 150 of whom, it is positively affirmed, have died.” The article goes on to add that bodies were thrown off the ships and left for the sharks.³⁸

Lord Dunmore’s Proclamation provides an example in the ways British leaders were willing to use slaves during the Revolutionary War. It also highlights how their plans could backfire, as it did in the case of Lord Dunmore. Early in the war, and trying to win over undecided Virginians, Dunmore’s Proclamation angered neutrals and pushed many into the patriot camp. Dunmore’s Proclamation also exhibits the tremendous risks slaves were willing to undertake in order to gain their freedom as well as the impact their flight had on the conduct of the war. Slaves were willing to flee sometimes hundreds of miles to serve in Dunmore’s regiment, risking possible death if caught. Their large scale flight caused Virginians to fear an insurrection, keeping patriot men at home to guard their property rather than serving as soldiers.

John Laurens’ Proposal

John Laurens’ proposal provides a different perspective when examining the role of African Americans in the Revolutionary War, as Laurens’ plan was never implemented. Whereas Dunmore’s plan had a widespread and direct impact on the lives of slaves, Laurens’ did not. Rather, Laurens’ plan highlights how slaves shaped the decision making of leaders in conducting the war. It also shows the stiff opposition of Southerners to any plan which gave slaves freedom in exchange for military service. In examining Laurens himself, we see a unique example of antislavery thought in the South. He was different from any other Southerner of the Revolutionary era, as he not only genuinely opposed the institution of slavery, but was willing to go to great lengths to put it on the path to extinction. Despite stiff opposition, Laurens tirelessly promoted his plan to free slaves through military service.

John Laurens was born on October 28, 1754, in Charleston, South Carolina. His father, Henry Laurens, was a slave trader and one of the wealthiest men in South Carolina. Henry had

³⁴ Woody Holton, *Black Americans in the Revolutionary Era: A Brief History with Documents*, (Boston: University of Richmond, 2009), 27.

³⁵ *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), November 25, 1775.

³⁶ Gilbert, *Black Patriots and Loyalists*, 22.

³⁷ Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom*, 11.

³⁸ *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), March 8, 1776.

inherited much of his wealth, but also had made a large profit through the slave trade. Despite this, Henry held private reservations about slavery. Henry and his son John were the only distinguished South Carolinians to regularly question the morality of slavery.³⁹ Henry wrote to John in 1776, saying “You know, my dear son, I abhor slavery... The day I hope is approaching when from principles of gratitude and justice every man will strive to be foremost in complying with the golden rule... I am devising means for manumitting many of them and for cutting off the entail of slavery.”⁴⁰ Despite his feelings towards slavery, Henry was very cautious in utilizing the Revolution to free slaves. This was likely because of two reasons. First, he wanted to protect his reputation. Openly supporting the emancipation of slaves through military service without good reason would have damaged his standing among his peers. It was not until the war situation in South Carolina deteriorated drastically that he moved to openly support slave emancipation. At this point, the situation was serious enough that openly supporting slave emancipation through military service was less radical. Second, Henry believed that most slaves were content in their current condition. Henry reasoned that his slaves would rather remain in bondage than serve on the battlefield. He argued this point to his idealistic son when attempting to dissuade John from going forth with his emancipation plan, and also at other points in his life. In 1768, Henry wrote to a business partner “my Servants are as happy as Slavery will admit of, none run away.”⁴¹ Toward the end of his life, he made a similar observation, noting that his slaves were “in more comfortable circumstances than any equal number of Peasantry in Europe.”⁴² Henry was only willing to look past these convictions and support his son when the military situation in South Carolina was crumbling.

Given the sentiments of his father, it is not surprising that the younger Laurens developed similar misgivings about slavery. Unlike his father, however, John was willing to act upon his reservations. He was willing to use the Revolution to free slaves, even if it meant risking his reputation, something his father was reluctant to do. John Laurens’ antislavery views developed at a very young age. While John was completing his studies in Europe, in 1776, he wrote a letter to a friend, showing his feelings:

I think we Americans at least in the Southern Colonies, cannot contend with a good Grace, for Liberty, until we shall have enfranchised our Slaves- how can we whose Jealousy has been alarm’d more at the name of oppression sometimes than at the Reality, reconcile to our spirited Assertions of the Rights of Mankind, the galling abject Slavery of our Negros?⁴³

Here Laurens, at only age twenty one, identifies the moral contradiction between fighting against the so-called tyrannical oppression of the British, while enslaving hundreds of thousands of blacks. Rather than attempting to justify or rationalize this, Laurens identifies a paradox, and suggests that the emancipation of blacks should be accomplished through the Revolution.

John Laurens eventually returned to the newly independent United States in 1777. In August of 1777, Laurens was selected by George Washington to serve on his staff, as an aide-de-

³⁹ Gregory D. Massey, “The Limits of Antislavery Thought in the Revolutionary Lower South: John Laurens and Henry Laurens,” *The Journal of Southern History*, 63 no. 3(August 1997): 496-497.

⁴⁰ David Duncan Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens: With a Sketch of the Life of Lieutenant-Colonel John Laurens* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1915), 446.

⁴¹ Massey, “The Limits of Antislavery Thought in the Revolutionary Lower South,” 497.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 527.

⁴³ Richard J. Hargrove, “Southern Patriot: John Laurens,” in *The Revolutionary War in the South: Power, Conflict, and Leadership*, ed. W. Robert Higgins (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979), 197.

camp.⁴⁴ It was not long before Laurens attempted to put his antislavery feelings into action. In January of 1778, Laurens learned of the First Rhode Island Regiment, a regiment that allowed slaves to enlist and in return receive their freedom. The slave-owners were compensated for their losses.⁴⁵ Laurens was inspired, and wrote to his father, expressing his “desire to augment the Continental forces from an untried source.” This “untried source” was the slave population of South Carolina. Laurens asked his father to give him his portion of his inheritance in slaves. As Laurens saw it, he would be able to accomplish two goals. First, he would be able to free those who were “unjustly deprived of the rights of mankind” while also using the troops in battle to aid the war effort.⁴⁶ Henry responded without endorsing or rejecting the proposal, rather, he pointed out what he saw as several flaws in his son’s suggestion. First he noted that it was likely no one would support the plan. Henry then said that since many of the three hundred slaves he owned were women and children, the regiment would contain no more than forty men. Henry also believed the slaves would not want to fight as they were content in their current lives and would be “taken from their Wives & Children” and instead would rather “flee into the woods” than risk their lives on the battlefield. Henry also inquired into what George Washington thought of the proposal.⁴⁷

John did not see the obstacles noted by his father as insurmountable. John “was aware of having that monstrous popular prejudice, open-mouthed against me” but believed that it was his duty to “assert the rights of humanity.” John rejected his father’s notion that slaves would rather remain in bondage than fight for freedom. He did not believe that blacks were content in their current condition nor that they were without the very human desires of freedom and ambition. Rather, he believed that “this trampled people have so much human in them, as to be capable of aspiring to the right of men...if some friend to mankind would point the road.” To John, slaves were only in their current state because they had been put there by whites. If given the opportunity, they could be rescued from their “humiliation.” John emphasized his longstanding dislike of slavery, saying, “I have long deplored the wretched state of these men” and called slaves “luxuries of merciless tyrants.” John believed that forty slaves of his own would be a good start for a regiment, but lamented that there was no larger plan to emancipate slaves through military service. John concluded his letter by saying Washington saw black slaves as a great resource, but feared the loss of property Southerners would experience.⁴⁸ In other words, Washington did not dissuade Laurens but did point out another problem in the plan that Laurens would have to overcome were it put into action.

In replying to John this time, Henry took a stronger stance against the plan. He wrote “the more I think of & the more I have consulted on the scheme, the less I approve of it.”⁴⁹ Henry still believed that slaves would not want to join the regiment as they would view it as another form of servitude “infinitely worse than Slavery.”⁵⁰ Henry tried to convince John that there was “not a Man in America of your opinion.”⁵¹ Henry warned that John would quickly lose his reputation by going forward with his plan. When John received his father’s letter this time, he was successfully dissuaded. John wrote back saying that he would renounce this “eccentric scheme” as it was

⁴⁴ Gregory D. Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2000.), 73

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁴⁶ John Laurens, *The Army Correspondence of Colonel John Laurens In the Years 1777-8*, 108.

⁴⁷ Henry Laurens, *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, ed. David R. Chestnutt, C. James Taylor, Peggy J. Clark and David Fischer, vol 12. (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), 368.

⁴⁸ John Laurens, *The Army Correspondence of Colonel John Laurens In the Years 1777-8*, 115-118.

⁴⁹ Henry Laurens, *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, 413.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 412.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 412.

something “which cannot be sanctified by your approbation.”⁵²

This early correspondence was only the beginning of John Laurens’ plan to emancipate slaves. Yet, it shows us something of John Laurens. He was willing to embark on what would seem to be an almost reckless scheme. John was willing to give up his reputation and fortune for the freedom of slaves. Although some of John’s motivation may have come from seeking glory by commanding a regiment in battle, it can clearly be seen from this correspondence that John genuinely sympathized with slaves, detested the institution of slavery, and was willing to go great lengths to free them.⁵³ His father certainly sympathized with him, but at this point he remained unconvinced of the merits of the plan. Henry was reluctant to risk his reputation and believed that slaves would rather work on the plantations than risk their lives in battle. John rejected the notion that slaves were happier on plantations, and believed he could facilitate the growth of humanity in them, which had been lost during generations of dehumanizing slavery.

In early 1778, when John Laurens first proposed the idea of a black regiment, the bulk of the fighting in the war was in the North, specifically in the New York and Philadelphia areas. Less than a year later, this changed drastically. In December of 1778, the British captured Savannah, Georgia, beginning their “Southern Strategy” in which the British focused their military action in the South. The seizure of Georgia spawned rumors that the British would agree to the independence of the eleven other colonies if South Carolina and Georgia would remain in the British Empire.⁵⁴

John Laurens saw this crisis as an opportunity to reintroduce his black regiment proposal. He wrote to his father that he believed the only way that Georgia could be saved was either through Spanish intervention or by “the adoption of my black project.”⁵⁵ Washington agreed to give Laurens a leave of absence from his staff to work on the plan. By March 10, 1779, Laurens had proposed his idea to Congress, and the legislature deliberated. As Congress deliberated, Laurens enlisted the support of his close friend, Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton wrote to John Jay, now President of the Continental Congress, saying “It appears to me, that an expedient of this kind, in the present state of affairs, is the most rational, that can be adopted.” Hamilton endorsed Laurens, telling Jay that Laurens would be a fine commander, and that he believed blacks would make excellent soldiers. Foreseeing opposition, Hamilton shared Laurens’ idealistic mindset, claiming that the contempt whites had been taught to have for blacks “is founded neither in reasons nor experience” and that the emancipation of these slaves “has no small weight in inducing me to wish the success of the project.”⁵⁶

Henry Laurens had a change of heart regarding the proposal, likely due to the imminent threat posed by the British in the South. Henry wrote to Washington, “had we arms for 3000. such black Men as I could select in Carolina I should have no doubt of success in driving the British out of Georgia & subduing East Florida.”⁵⁷ Washington had little enthusiasm for the proposal, believing the policy “of our arming Slaves, a moot point, unless the enemy set the example” and fearing that slavery would become “more irksome to those who remain in it; most of the good and evil things of this life are judged of by the comparison; and I fear a comparison

⁵² John Laurens, *The Army Correspondence of Colonel John Laurens In the Years 1777-8*, 124.

⁵³ Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, 96.

⁵⁴ Henry Wieneck, *An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slave and the Creation of America*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003.), 224.

⁵⁵ Henry Laurens, *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, ed. David R. Chestnutt, C. James Taylor, Peggy J. Clark, Laura L. Graham, Thomas M. Downey, and Richard I. Groening, vol 15. (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2000), 59-60.

⁵⁶ Alexander Hamilton, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, ed. Harold C. Syrett and Jacob E. Cooke, vol 2. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 17-18.

⁵⁷ Henry Laurens, *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, 66.

in this case will be productive of much discontent in those who are held in servitude”⁵⁸ Specifically, Washington feared mass slave escapes in the South if other slaves learned of the proposal. Washington’s letter is perplexing. Washington seemingly forgot about Lord Dunmore, who had begun the process of arming slaves in 1775. Also, if he was so set against the plan to begin with, why didn’t he squash the plan when John Laurens first proposed it in 1778? There is no clear answer to this question, but it is possible that his opposition was rooted in fear of losing his own personal slaves should they hear of the plan.⁵⁹ Another possibility for Washington’s reluctance to support the plan was that it would cause blacks to flee on such a large scale, that it would dismantle the entire institution of slavery.⁶⁰ It seems while Washington may not have completely rejected the idea, he had difficulty backing a plan that would undermine the institution slavery in such a drastic manner.

Despite Washington’s refusal to back the plan, the proposal was approved by Congress at the end of March. They recommended to South Carolina and Georgia to enlist three thousand slaves under the age of thirty five, who would, at the end of their service, “be emancipated and receive the sum of fifty dollars.”⁶¹ Each slave owner would be compensated for his loss. Henry Laurens, despite his reluctance to support the plan when John proposed it to him a year earlier, cast his support for the plan. Henry recognized that the grave situation in the South called for using slaves as soldiers. Also, South Carolina’s deteriorating position made his support less radical, therefore protecting his reputation. Surprisingly, John Laurens had other Southern allies who supported the proposal as well, including William Henry Drayton and Daniel Huger. Neither Drayton nor Huger had interest in the long term demise of slavery, but they were willing to use the measure for military purposes if it meant strengthening the precarious military position of South Carolina.⁶² John Laurens was one of few who supported the plan both for military purposes and for emancipating slaves. Notably, Congress had only recommended that South Carolina and Georgia adopt the proposal, therefore the final decision was up to the state governments.

John Laurens headed south, where the military situation was precarious. There were few Continental soldiers available, and the militia was reluctant to come out, as they feared their slaves would take advantage of their absence and revolt.⁶³ Slaves had fled to British lines in the hope of attaining their freedom. When Laurens submitted Congress’ recommendation to the South Carolina Legislature, it was poorly received. One representative noted that it was “received with horror by the planters, who figured themselves terrible consequences.”⁶⁴ Another politician said “it was received with great resentment, as a very dangerous and impolitic step.”⁶⁵ Another legislator went as far as to propose seceding from the war effort.⁶⁶ The plan was overwhelmingly defeated, receiving less than seventeen percent of the vote.⁶⁷ Henry Laurens tried to console his son over the defeat of the proposal, but did tell him that he had foreseen the plan’s defeat saying “I long since foresaw & foretold you the almost insurmountable difficulties which wou’d

⁵⁸ George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, vol 14. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1936), 267.

⁵⁹ Wieneck, *An Imperfect God*, 227.

⁶⁰ Edward G Lengel, *General George Washington: A Military Life*, (New York: Random House, 2005), 316.

⁶¹ Wieneck, *An Imperfect God*, 232.

⁶² Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, 142.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁶⁴ Piecuch, *Three Peoples, One King*, 164.

⁶⁵ Lengel, *General George Washington*, 316.

⁶⁶ Wieneck, *An Imperfect God*, 233.

⁶⁷ Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, 141.

obstruct the progress of your liberal Ideas.”⁶⁸

John Laurens refused to give up on the plan, however. He periodically reintroduced the idea to the South Carolina Legislature for the rest of the war. Laurens first reintroduced the plan in February, 1780. After a debate in the legislature, the proposal was rejected.⁶⁹ Late in 1780, Laurens again planned to reintroduce his proposal believing that since the military situation in the South had taken a turn for the worse, the legislature would be more open to the idea. Charleston had fallen in May, and with it five thousand American soldiers were captured. In August, an army under the command of Horatio Gates was crushed at the Battle of Camden, making a bad situation in South Carolina worse. Laurens, in anticipation of mustering the regiment, had gone as far as to purchase, with his own funds, clothing for the soldiers. However, Congress interrupted his plan before he could reintroduce it and instead sent him to France as envoy extraordinary.⁷⁰

By December of 1781, John Laurens had returned to South Carolina. He set about introducing his proposal, once again. This time, however, he had an important ally in Nathanael Greene. Serving as commander of the Southern Army, Greene saw slaves as a possible way of strengthening South Carolina’s position. Although this was after the Battle of Yorktown, the war would not officially conclude until 1783. The British still occupied Charleston, and there was uncertainty on the diplomatic front. It was not clear if there would be peace or if the war would continue. Greene was not as idealistic as Laurens, nor as passionate about the plan. However, Greene, the son of a Quaker, would likely not have opposed the abolition of slavery.⁷¹

Greene wrote to Governor John Rutledge that “The natural strength of this country in point of numbers, appears to me to consist much more in the blacks” and that “The number of whites in this State are too small, and the State of your finances too low, to attempt to raise a force in any other way.” Greene hinted to Rutledge that the failure to use slaves in the military had contributed to British success at Charleston and in other parts of South Carolina earlier in the war.⁷² Rutledge replied to Greene that the proposal should wait until the next legislature convened.⁷³ On January 21, Greene wrote to Rutledge again, this time more harshly. Greene blamed South Carolina’s failure to use slaves as a reason for it succumbing to the British, saying “Perhaps it was fortunate for you that the country fell so easy before the british army immediately after the reduction of Charles Town. A greater resistance at that period might have drawn their attention to this great resource that you had neglected to avail yourselves of.”⁷⁴ Greene also suggested that failure to act now could leave South Carolina and Georgia as part of the British Empire. Greene asked what South Carolina would do if “they prosecute this measure as a platform for negotiating [sic] a peace upon a principle of *Uti possidetis*?”⁷⁵ If blacks were recruited, it might be possible to seize Charleston and avoid a situation where Charleston would remain under British rule.

In the legislature Laurens attempted to make the proposal less threatening to South Carolinians, proposing that slaves be raised from confiscated loyalist estates.⁷⁶ Despite this, the proposal again failed. Laurens wrote to Washington that he had been defeated by “the howlings

⁶⁸ Henry Laurens, *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, 169.

⁶⁹ Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, 155.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁷¹ Gilbert, *Black Patriots and Loyalists*, 161.

⁷² Greene, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, ed. Dennis M. Conrad, Roger N. Parks and Martha J. King, vol 10. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 22.

⁷³ Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, 203.

⁷⁴ Nathanael Greene, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, 228-229.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 229. *Uti Possidetis* means that each side would retain the land it possessed at the end of the conflict.

⁷⁶ Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, 209.

of a triple-headed monster in which Prejudice Avarice & Pusillanimity were united.” Legislators feared that this would be the first step to further emancipation, and result in what southerners perceived to be the horror of amalgamation.⁷⁷ Laurens would never again reintroduce his proposal. Only a few months after this attempt, Laurens was killed in a skirmish with the British, at age 27.⁷⁸

The failure of Laurens’ proposal is due to several reasons. First, South Carolinians were only will go to so far in order to win the war. To them, it would be better to maintain slavery under British rule rather than disrupt South Carolina’s social order so drastically.⁷⁹ Indeed, many South Carolinians feared armed slaves more than the British. The military situation in South Carolina in 1779 and 1780 was chaotic. The fall of Charleston was arguably the worst defeat of the entire war. A defeat of the Continental Army at Camden in August quickly followed the surrender of Charleston. Despite these disastrous defeats, South Carolinians would not arm their slaves to help the war effort. Instead, they allowed South Carolina to be ravaged by British forces. Secondly, ownership of property was another reason the plan was largely opposed.⁸⁰ Slaves were considered property, and the loss of property was associated with the loss of liberty. The idea of giving up their “liberty” in order to fight the British, seemed to take away the meaning of the war. Thirdly, there was fear that the proposal would lead to general emancipation and amalgamation.⁸¹ No one wanted a free slave population and feared what blacks would do to white women. This fear was echoed by John Rutledge, who spoke to the South Carolina Assembly about the proposal in 1782, saying “Nor were their violences [blacks] restrained by the charms of influence of beauty and innocence; even the fair sex, whom it is the duty of all...to protect, they and their tender offspring were victims to the inveterate malice of an unrelenting foe.”⁸² This concern, above all, struck fear into the delegates. Most could not comprehend a world where large numbers of free blacks lived side by side with whites.

While Laurens’ plan was ultimately rejected, it highlights several key issues. First, it shows the narrow scope of antislavery thought in the South. Laurens, despite his best effort, could not convince other Southerners to give slaves freedom in exchange for military service. Most South Carolinians would not even consider the prospect of arming slaves, despite that the war was going disastrously in 1780. To them, it was better to return to British rule than undermine the institution of slavery. Secondly, Laurens’ plan exhibits how slaves impacted the decision making of American leaders, and how failing to use slaves weakened the American position in the South. Although rejected by South Carolina, Laurens’ proposal was approved by Congress. Laurens was not alone among American leaders who believed that slaves could be effectively used to strengthen the American military situation in the South, and the issue was considered several times. By rejecting the proposal, South Carolina failed to augment their forces, weakening its military position.

Comparative Analysis

The motivation for these two emancipation plans were very different. Lord Dunmore had complex feelings regarding slaves and slavery. Dunmore himself was a longtime slaveholder. It is likely he owned slaves while Royal Governor of New York, and he expanded the practice upon becoming Royal Governor of Virginia in 1771. On his plantation in Virginia, he had as many as 150 slaves. During his time as governor, there was a push for limitations upon the slave trade.

⁷⁷ Wieneck, *An Imperfect God*, 235.

⁷⁸ Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, 227.

⁷⁹ Massey, “The Limits of Antislavery Thought in the Revolutionary Lower South,” 518-519.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 519.

⁸¹ Wieneck, *An Imperfect God*, 235.

⁸² Gilbert, *Black Patriots and Loyalists*, 162.

Part of the reason for this was the inhumanity of the slave trade, but most support was based on preventing slave rebellions. The thought was that if there were more slaves, the chance of a successful revolt was greater. Dunmore supported a slave tax, which was seen as a means to limit the slave trade, however, his support was based on military pragmatism rather than moral opposition to slavery.⁸³

Dunmore's complex attitudes toward blacks would emerge a few years later. His primary motivation to free slaves in 1775 was not to improve their lives or abolish the institution of slavery. However he did issue the proclamation partly to expose the hypocrisy of patriots crying for liberty while they enslaved thousands of blacks.⁸⁴ It is also notable that Dunmore seemed to care for the uniforms that the black soldiers wore. It is unlikely that he would have pestered headquarters for new clothing had he not cared for the blacks at all.⁸⁵ Dunmore was proud of the black regiment as well, as he titled it after himself; Dunmore's Ethiopian Regiment. When female slaves fled to his floating city, he did not turn them away. Women drained his forces as they consumed food but were not laborers or soldiers. Dunmore also strongly believed in the capability of black soldiers.⁸⁶ Later in life, while serving as Governor of the Bahamas, he advocated black land ownership, and protected free blacks from being re-enslaved. All this time, he continued to own and purchase slaves, highlighting the complexity of the man.⁸⁷

John Laurens, on the other hand, was far less complex. While he was often accompanied by one of his father's slaves, Laurens had a deep-rooted hatred for the institution of slavery. He was set to inherit a fortune from his father, but asked to be left slaves instead. He wanted to raise a regiment with them, and in turn give them their freedom. Laurens' initial suggestion for a black regiment was prior to the British adoption of their "Southern Strategy" and therefore there was no immediate threat to the south. Unlike his father, John Laurens did not need the threat of a British army in South Carolina to create a black regiment. He wanted it not only for military defense, but also for the benefit of the enslaved people with whom he sympathized. Despite his father's warnings that he would ruin his public image, Laurens pursued his plan. Laurens was unique among southerners. Unlike his father and Washington, who regretted slavery privately but were hesitant to speak out against it publicly, Laurens attacked slavery head on. He was willing to go to great lengths in order to right what he saw as a great wrong. Laurens recognized that the revolutionary ideals of the American Revolution were irreconcilable with the institution of slavery.⁸⁸

What was truly revolutionary about Laurens' beliefs among Southerners was that he saw blacks as victims of their situation rather than being inherently inferior to whites. His father fell under the common slaveholder belief that his slaves were happy and comfortable. When initially trying to dissuade John from pursuing his black regiment plan, he wrote that his slaves would have no interest in fighting for freedom as they were in "a state of circumstances not only tolerable but comfortable from habit."⁸⁹ John believed that they were capable of much more, and in an inspiring reply to his father said:

I confess, indeed, that the minds of this unhappy species must be debased by a servitude, from which they can hope no relief but death, and that every motive to

⁸³ James Corbett David, *Dunmore's New World: The Extraordinary Life of a Royal Governor in Revolutionary America- with Jacobites, Counterfeiters, Land Schemes, Shipwrecks, Scalping, Indian Politics, Runaway Slaves, and Two Illegal Royal Weddings*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013), 44-45.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁸⁵ Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom*, 11.

⁸⁶ David, *Dunmore's New World*, 107-108.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁸⁸ Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, 239.

⁸⁹ Henry Laurens, *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, 368.

action but fear, must be nearly extinguished in them. But do you think they are so perfectly moulded to their state to be insensible that a better exists? Will the galling comparison between themselves and their masters leave them unenlightened in this respect? Can their self love be so totally annihilated as not frequently to induce ardent wishes for a change?⁹⁰

John's answer to each of these questions was no. Laurens believed he could point slaves in the right direction, rehabilitate their self-love, enlighten them, and restore humanity to slaves who were debased by their condition.

Each of these cases influenced the course and outcome of the war. In Dunmore's situation, he set in motion the use of slaves by Great Britain during the war. Throughout the rest of the war, slaves continued to flee to British forces, seeing the British flag as a sign of liberation. When William Howe sailed through the Chesapeake in 1777 to attack Philadelphia, there was an increase of runaways in the area.⁹¹ Slaves also flocked to Lord Cornwallis' army when he campaigned in the South during the latter years of the war.⁹²

Following Dunmore's example, General Henry Clinton issued the "Phillipsburg Proclamation" in 1779, which gave freedom to any slave whose master was a patriot, if they successfully reached British lines. It is strikingly similar to Dunmore's Proclamation. When British forces were in the South, they found thousands of slaves fleeing to their protection. In Georgia, five thousand slaves fled throughout the course of the war, which accounted for a third of the states' slave population in 1775. In South Carolina, it is possible that as many as 25,000 slaves escaped or died during the war. Clinton found so many slaves fleeing to British forces, that he tried to slow the flow by returning some slaves to their masters. Despite this, by the time Cornwallis retreated to Yorktown in 1781, he may have had as many as five thousand slaves attached to his army.⁹³ Dunmore, at the very beginning of the war, gave an example of how free slaves could be used as laborers for the British as well as soldiers. Dunmore had used them successfully in raiding coastal areas of Virginia, only to be stopped when smallpox hit his ranks. Cornwallis pondered following this example by creating an army of freed slaves, but eventually decided against it.⁹⁴ By enticing slaves to escape, Dunmore forced patriot militias to keep men at watch on plantations as opposed to using those forces against the British. By tempting slaves to flee, Dunmore also took away the patriot labor force. Later British commanders, such as Clinton and Cornwallis, recognized the advantages of this, and freed slaves were attached to the British forces until the end of the war.

Dunmore's Proclamation not only set the precedent for British use of slaves later in the war, but also influenced George Washington's views on allowing blacks into the Continental Army. When George Washington took command of the Continental Army in July of 1775, he found numerous blacks in the ranks. Within a few months, Washington changed this. In November of 1775, Washington forbid blacks, along with young boys and old men, from bearing arms in the Continental Army. Unbeknownst to Washington was that at almost exactly the same time, Dunmore issued his Proclamation. Shortly after learning of Dunmore's Proclamation, Washington partially reversed his order. He agreed to allow free blacks to join the army,

⁹⁰ John Laurens, *The Army Correspondence of Colonel John Laurens In the Years 1777-8*, 115.

⁹¹ Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 258.

⁹² Wilson, *The Loyal Blacks*, 26.

⁹³ David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 150.

⁹⁴ Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 465.

although he still opposed the use of slaves. In explaining his decision to reverse his order to John Hancock, Washington expressed his concern that failure to use free blacks willing to bear arms would only push them into the open arms of the British.⁹⁵ Washington had seen that Dunmore had little hesitation in using slaves, and Washington did not want to unnecessarily give the British more manpower.

The failure to adopt John Laurens' proposal in the South contributed to early military failures for the Americans in the Southern Campaign. Greene speculated that use of slaves by South Carolina would have prevented the fall of Charleston and ended the war in the South earlier.⁹⁶ Instead, South Carolinians decided to risk losing the campaign rather than utilizing black troops. As Greene wrote to Washington, the rejection of the plan was based "not because they objected to the expence (for they give a most enormous bounty for white men, and pay in Slaves) but from an apprehension of the consequences."⁹⁷ Upon the beginning of British movement in the South, most of the Continental Army was in the North. Militiamen in the south were reluctant to serve, as they worried about their slaves revolting should they leave their plantations. At the Siege of Charleston in 1780, British forces numbered about 10,000 troops, as opposed to only 5,500 Americans.⁹⁸ It is worth wondering what would have happened had there been an additional 3,000 black soldiers. It might have been enough to give the Americans the advantage, as Greene speculated.

These two cases offer insight into how certain British and American figures viewed slaves and the institution of slavery in the context of the American Revolution. This also allows us to consider how their perspectives on these issues influenced the outcome of the war. Lord Dunmore may not have been primarily interested in giving blacks freedom, but he believed they were decent soldiers and had no hesitation enlisting those willing to fight for him. His use of slaves early in the war showed other British commanders, as they had long suspected, that slaves would be willing to fight for their freedom and that they could prove very useful in prosecuting the war. Looking at Laurens, he genuinely disdained slavery, and had, for a southerner, uniquely progressive views of blacks in the sense of their similarities to whites. However, prejudices prevented his plan from going into action. Instead, Southerners were forced to prosecute the war without utilizing their slave population.

These cases also show the agency of African American slaves during the Revolutionary War. By absconding, slaves tied down local forces. Men were compelled to remain at home, or partake in slave patrols rather than serve as soldiers. This was exploited by Dunmore, who issued his proclamation partially because he realized runways would hamper local patriot forces. Slaves also augmented the armed forces. By joining Dunmore's army, slaves helped offset the lack of British manpower in Virginia and allowed Dunmore to conduct offensive operations throughout the region. When smallpox decimated the Ethiopian Regiment, Dunmore was unable to continue raiding. His blacks were so instrumental in his operations that their loss to smallpox changed the course of the campaign. In addition to this, both British and American leaders recognized slaves as a valuable source of manpower during the course of the war. Both sides debated on how slaves could be used to further the war effort. This is highlighted in Laurens' case, as American leaders debated periodically what to do with slaves in South Carolina. The failure to adopt Laurens' plan weakened the American position in the South, and was partially responsible for the disappointing 1779 and 1780 campaigns. Despite being enslaved and legally without any meaningful power, slaves shaped the politics, battles and campaigns of the American Revolution.

⁹⁵ Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, 201-204.

⁹⁶ Greene, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, 229.

⁹⁷ Greene, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, 472.

⁹⁸ John R. Alden, *A History of the American Revolution*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 413-414.

DEPARTMENT
NEWS

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THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT HISTORY DEPARTMENT FACULTY MAINTAINED ITS ACCUSTOMED
LEVEL OF PUBLICATION AND RESEARCH ACTIVITY. HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2014-2015 INCLUDE:

Andy Buchanan, during 2014/15 Professor Buchanan spoke at a series of meetings on the topic of his book, "America's Grand Strategy in the Mediterranean during World War II." These included seminars at Reading and Exeter universities and at the London School of Economics, together with a well-attended public lecture hosted by the New York Military Affairs Symposium. The New York lecture was recorded by C-SPAN and broadcast on national television. It can be viewed at:

<http://www.c-span.org/video/?322137-1/discussion-us-engagement-italy-world-war-ii>

Professor Buchanan also continued work on his new book project, tentatively entitled "Citizen Soldiers: Universal Military Service and State Formation from the Hussites to the Meiji Restoration." He is also working on an article examining the experience of soldier-tourism during the American occupation of Italy.

Erik Esselstrom, Associate Professor Erik Esselstrom was awarded a research grant from the Japan Foundation that will support six weeks of archival work in Tokyo during the summer of 2015.

Sean Field, Professor Sean Field had a number of works appear at the end of 2014. He is particularly proud of the collaborative volume *Isabelle de France, soeur de Saint Louis. Une princesse mineure* (Paris: Éditions franciscaines, 2014), published with with Jacques Dalarun, Jean-Baptiste Lebigue, and Anne-Françoise Leurquin-Labie; and of a co-authored historiographic survey with M. Cecilia Gaposchkin, "Questioning the Capetians, 1180-1328," *History Compass* 12 (2014): 567-585. Other articles and books chapters included "Paris to Rome and Back Again: The Nuns of Longchamp and Leo X's 1521 Bull *Piis omnium*," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 3rd Series, 11 (2014): 155-223; and "Being a Beguine in France ca. 1300," in Letha Böhringer, Jennifer Kolpakoff Deane, and Hildo van Engen, eds., *Labels and Libels: Naming Beguines in Northern Medieval Europe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014): 117-133.

Frank Nicosia saw the publication of his new book, *Nazi Germany and the Arab World* (Cambridge University Press), which appeared in the late fall of 2014. The Holocaust Educational Foundation at Northwestern University awarded him the "Distinguished Achievement Award in Holocaust Studies" at the 13th biennial Lessons & Legacies conference in Florida on 31 October 2014. He has continued his work on an edited volume of more than 200 annotated documents (in German) that will be published under the title *Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Zionismus 1933-1941*. The volume will appear in the Leo Baeck Institute's series "Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts," published by Mohr/Siebeck Verlag in Tübingen, Germany, in late 2016. He also presented the paper "Opposition and Indifference: Zionism and Arab Nationalism in Nazi Policy, 1937-1941" at the 13th Biennial Lessons and Legacies conference in Boca Raton, Florida, on 2 November

2014. He was invited to present a public lecture and seminar on 20 May 2015 at the *Centre d'études et de recherches internationales* (CERI) of *Sciences Po* in Paris. The title of the lecture/seminar is "Zionism in Nazi Germany." He was the co-organizer of the 7th Miller symposium at UVM, "Responses in the Middle East to National Socialism and the Holocaust," which took place on 18-19 April 2015. He also taught a TAP history course and the course on the "History of the Holocaust" in the fall semester 2014, and the course on the "History of Zionism to 1948" and the seminar "Antisemitism in Europe from the Enlightenment to the Final Solution" in the spring semester 2015.

Nicole Phelps, Roundtable reviews of her book, *U.S.-Habsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference: Sovereignty Transformed* (Cambridge, 2013), appeared on *H-Diplo* and in *Passport: The Review of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations*.

Professor Phelps continues to work on her second book project, currently titled *The United States in the World: US Consuls Abroad since 1789*. She received a Faculty Research Support Award from UVM's College of Arts & Sciences to support research in Washington DC, and is a member of a UVM Humanities Center faculty group on "Visualizing Data." In June 2015, she will be presenting a paper on her research to date at the annual conference of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations.

Susanna Schrafstetter in the fall of 2014 held a Visiting Professorship at the University of Augsburg which was underwritten by the guest scholar program of the Bavarian State Ministry of Research, Science and Art. She taught classes on the deportation of the Jews from Germany and on global reparations politics. She has published an article on "half-Jewish" youths in Munich under National Socialism "Geltungsjüdische Jugendliche in München, 1938-1945," *Münchner Beiträge zur Jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur* 8 (2014) and a book chapter on "Siegfried Zoglmann, His Circle of Writers, and the Naumann Affair: A Nazi Propaganda Operation in Postwar Germany", in: David Messenger and Katrin Paehler (eds), *A Nazi Past: Recasting German Identity in Postwar Europe*, Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2015. She spoke at a number of international conferences, among them her presentation "Hidden Jews as a Subgroup of German Holocaust Survivors," *Survivors: Politics and Semantics of a Concept*, Conference, Center for Jewish Studies Berlin-Brandenburg and Center for Research on Antisemitism, Berlin, November 2014, a paper on "Flight Underground: Jews in Hiding in Munich and Upper Bavaria," *The Holocaust after 70 Years: New Perspectives on Persecution, Resistance, and Survival*, Lessons and Legacies XIII, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, November 2014; and she presented "Jews on the Run: Ordinary Germans and Jewish Flights from Deportation," Conference: *The Holocaust and the European Societies. Social Process and Social Dynamics*, Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, October 2014. She is currently about to submit her book manuscript, titled *Flucht und Versteck. Untergetauchte Juden in München: Verfolgungserfahrung und Nachkriegsalltag* to the German publisher Wallstein. The book examines the experiences of Jews who tried to flee the deportations by going into hiding in Munich, and analyzes how conditions for surviving differed from other areas in Germany, most importantly Berlin. The book also examines the postwar lives of the survivors in hiding, detailing their struggle with German compensation legislation, and the ways in which their helpers have (or have not) been recognized. Susanna Schrafstetter is also looking forward to the publication of the anthology *The Germans and the Holocaust: Popular Responses to the Persecution and Murder of the Jews*, which she has coedited with Alan Steinweis, and which is currently in press with Berghahn Books.

Denise J. Youngblood published a book, *Bondarchuk's War and Peace: Literary Classic to Soviet Cinematic Epic* (University Press of Kansas, 2014), two articles: "The Swanson of Early Russian Cinema: Yakov Protazanov's Father Sergius (1918) in Lorna Fitzsimmons and Michael A. Denner, eds., *Tolstoy on Screen* (Northwestern University Press, 2015), and "Fade to Black: The Russian Commercial Film Industry during War and Revolution," in Murray Frame et al., eds., *Russian Culture in War and Revolution, 1914-1922, Book 1: Popular Culture, the Arts and Institutions* (Slavica, 2014). Professor Youngblood also presented a paper: "She Defends the Motherland—or Does She? The Heroine in Soviet Wartime War Films, 1941-1945," "La propaganda de guerre sovietique a l'ecran, 1939-1946," Toulouse, France, 2015, and will be, along with co-author Tony Shaw, keynote speaker at the conference "Spanning and Spinning the Globe: Sport during the Cold War," in Moscow in May 2015. The paper is on Soviet and American Cold War sport films.

Steven Zdatny spent the spring semester 2015 on sabbatical leave in Paris. Supported by a Fulbright Senior Scholar grant and a post as Visiting Research Scholar at the School for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences, Professor Zdatny continued working on his book--a study of the history of hygiene in France in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries--while presenting his scholarship to audiences in Paris, Toulouse, and Oslo.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS & EDITORS

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Mark Alexander completed his BA and MA at the University of Vermont and is now beginning to pursue his PhD at George Washington University in DC. He hopes to expand upon the work he had begun at UVM researching little known Belarusian Nazi collaborators who escaped justice for their crimes by offering their knowledge of the Soviet Union to American intelligence in the early Cold War. Ultimately Mark would like to pursue a career researching, writing, and teaching history.

Oliver Burt is a UVM senior studying history and political science. He is interested in politics and public policy. He has just completed an Internship at the Governors office. In the future he hopes to gain many new perspectives and have lots meaningful experiences.

Natalie Gunn Coffman is a History graduate student from Salt Lake City, Utah. Her thesis focuses on the Mormon Battalion and Manifest Destiny during the Mexican-American War. When she is not reading, Natalie likes to run, listen to classic rock music, and play with her dog.

Nate Gondelman is a part-time graduate student and full-time UVM staff member. His academic areas of focus include American slavery and the Civil War Era as well as the Second World War and the Holocaust. Nate spends his summers on the beaches of Lake Champlain, and his winters drinking tea and watching Pittsburgh Penguins hockey--with a book on one of the above subjects always in hand.

Angela Grove is a second year history graduate student. She focuses on early American history, and is currently working on a thesis on identity and loyalty during the American Revolution and in early Vermont. In her free time she enjoys hiking, cycling, playing soccer, baking, reading novels, visiting historical sites and museums, and cuddling with her puppy.

Ronald Colin MacNeil is a Masters degree candidate in the Department of History. He also has a Masters in Education and studied graduate Art History at Rutgers University. Ron is presently a social studies teacher at Burlington High School and a former news photographer for the United Press International, *Time* magazine and others. His academic interests are in 20th century European and American political, military and cultural history.

Patrick Maguire is a senior undergraduate history student with an interest in early American history, political theory, and chocolate chip cookies.

Alanna Freedman Mahnke is graduating from UVM with a degree in history. She will be attending the University of Oxford this fall to pursue her MA in British and European studies. She is primarily interested in early modern Britain and court politics. Her research plans involve examining the lives of aristocratic women who defied gender and societal expectations. She enjoys traveling, reading, photography and dance.

Kieran O'Keefe is a first year graduate student from Newburgh, New York. His current research examines loyalism in New York during the American Revolution. In his free time he enjoys reading, riding his bike, and watching sports.

Ashlee R. Payne is currently completing her MA in history at UVM. She is in her second year, and is spending the summer finishing her thesis, which uses the heroin addiction crisis during the Vietnam War as a framework to analyze a culture of panics in American history.

Adam Quinn is a graduate student in History at the University of Vermont. He earned a BA in History and Social Theory from Hampshire College, and has written about the history of anarchism and the history of police militarization.

Newton Rose, an undergraduate Junior in the Honor's College, is studying History and Statistics. This native Vermonter is a member of the Vermont Roots Migration Project research team and was recently awarded the George B. Bryan Award for excellence in a Vermont related project. He is currently preparing to spend the summer investigating the changes in Vermont during the 1970s as part of his senior honors thesis. Newton is also involved with the UVM Outing Club, World Club, and Volunteers in Action

Kassandra LePrade Seuthe, a second year graduate student, is focused on the complicity of ordinary Germans in the exploitation of Nazi forced labor. Her areas of academic interest include gender and sexuality under National Socialism, and the Holocaust in contested Polish-German borderlands. She looks forward to future world travel not only for further research, but also for relaxation.

David Solomon is a second year graduate from Tallahassee, Florida, whose academic interests focus on social change in the Early Republic and Jacksonian United States. When not at his desk there's a good chance he's reading or chasing his cat, or better still cooking with his brilliant wife Marissa.

Elizabeth Van Horn is a native of Detroit, Michigan and a second year graduate student. Her thesis work centers on the use of domesticity as a tool of empire in British India in the mid-nineteenth century. When not being stressed out about school, she spends her time watching terrible tv with her boyfriend, Max.

Julia Walsh is a native of the West Coast and a first year in the History MA program at UVM. She graduated cum laude from Pacific Lutheran University in 2014, having finished two undergraduate research fellowships and winning multiple essay awards in Holocaust Studies. She previously served as the Deputy Editor of the Undergraduate Journal of Jewish Studies, headquartered at the University of Indiana, Bloomington.

G. Scott Waterman graduated from Harvard University and the University of Michigan Medical School. He is currently a Graduate Student in History and Professor of Psychiatry Emeritus at the University of Vermont. His historical interests include modern European and American political ideologies and movements, the Holocaust, and the Cold War. He is completing a thesis on the American Communist press during the Spanish Civil War.

2015 INDUCTEES TO THE UVM CHAPTER OF PHI ALPHA THETA

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