

**“WISE AS SERPENTS AND HARMLESS  
AS DOVES”: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF  
THE FEMALE PRISON ASSOCIATION OF  
FRIENDS IN PHILADELPHIA, 1823–1870**

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**Abstract:** In 1823 a group of Orthodox Quaker women in Philadelphia formed the Female Prison Association of Friends in Philadelphia, a female auxiliary of the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons (later known as the Pennsylvania Prison Society). For approximately the next fifty years they engaged in organized prison visiting in Philadelphia at Arch Street and Moyamensing prisons and the Eastern State Penitentiary. As visitors they became subtle, understated allies in the operation of the Pennsylvania System of separate confinement with labor. Their work was reformist in nature, in that they pressed for practical measures they deemed significant to improve the condition of female inmates: the institution of matrons and the founding of the Howard Institution, a sort of halfway house for released prisoners. Their main goal, however, was spiritual, and the salvation they sought was their own as well as that of the imprisoned women they aided. As a Quaker women's group that worked quietly in the background during a period usually associated with the more public work of activist Hicksite Quaker women, they were barely officially recognized by the male society in their own day and are almost entirely unknown today. Their story suggests that the spiritual motivation of some nineteenth-century women may be a significant but little-noted force behind their contributions to the history of social reform.

Both British and American Quakers figured centrally in a transatlantic burst of prison reform at the close of the eighteenth century. In Philadelphia, an international center of thought and experimentation in penology, the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons (PSAMPP) organized in 1787 to improve egregious conditions, including overcrowding and indiscriminate mixing of inmates without regard to age, sex, or crime. PSAMPP members, all of them male and a third of them Quaker, monitored prison conditions and actively engaged in reforming individual inmates through prison visiting.<sup>1</sup> In London, prison reform commanded increasing public attention after wealthy Quaker Elizabeth Fry (1780–1845) boldly entered the forbidding walls of notorious Newgate Prison in 1813 and read to the illiterate, disorganized rabble of women incarcerated there.<sup>2</sup> Ten years later, in a scene replicating Fry's iconic entry into Newgate, Philadelphia Quaker Mary Waln Wistar (1765–1844) and her husband, wealthy PSAMPP leader Thomas Wistar, entered Arch Street Prison, the city's bridewell or jail, on May 5, 1823, with two female Friends and began ministering to imprisoned women. That same year Mary Waln Wistar formed the Female Prison Association of Friends in Philadelphia (FPAFP), which was modeled upon Fry's British Ladies' Society and affiliated with the PSAMPP.

Historians of American prison reform have presented detailed accounts of Philadelphia's role in the development of prison architecture and penology.<sup>3</sup> In 1790 the Walnut Street Jail was renovated in an attempt to separate categories of prisoners and provide solitary confinement with labor for the worst offenders. The Walnut Street Jail became a state facility where overcrowded conditions led to its closure and the opening of Eastern State Penitentiary in 1829. There the PSAMPP embarked upon a great experiment applying its penal philosophy of separate confinement with labor, which endeavored to reform rather than simply punish and to prevent inmates' associating in future criminal activity by confining them in separate cells throughout their sentences. This Pennsylvania System became the subject of international debate, centered mostly on the effects of "solitary confinement." New York's Auburn or Silent System offered a competing method, housing inmates separately at night but allowing them to congregate in harshly enforced silent work by day. Defenders of the Pennsylvania System stressed that inmates were not truly "solitary," as explained in the Quaker journal *The Friend*: "the prisoner, though totally separated from his fellow-convicts, should be permitted to see as many respectable persons as would not interfere with the discipline of the institution."<sup>4</sup>

In the context of the PSAMPP's tenacity in publicly advocating for the separate system, the FPAFP successfully negotiated an undercurrent of reforms more tailored to women's needs, even those opposing the PSAMPP's philosophy. Despite its success in effecting major reforms such as the installation of matrons for women in Philadelphia's prisons and the creation of a "halfway house" in Philadelphia for released female inmates, the FPAFP received little credit in its own era and is virtually forgotten today. Through their rhetoric and savvy in negotiating within the Quaker value system, they effected changes they sought. The Orthodox Quaker women who comprised this organization, unlike members of other female voluntary organizations at that time, were motivated only secondarily by humanitarian impulses or the desire to form religious organizations, although they certainly were active in doing just that.<sup>5</sup> Instead, their engagement in prison reform must be viewed in the context of the Quaker principle of submitting to an inward spiritual call rather than primarily acting on a social goal. This distinction lies at the heart of their identity as an association and as individual members, and suggests why they neither sought nor received credit, whether as individuals or as an association. The story of how they effected significant social reforms in the process of pursuing primarily spiritual goals may enrich our understanding of the complex and varied history of women's leadership and of Quaker influence upon prison reform in America.

To assume that the women of the FPAFP were motivated primarily by benevolent impulses to help the disadvantaged poor, feminist concern for their vulnerable sisters, or desire to mitigate the miseries of a criminal justice system that was fundamentally racist—that is, to identify these women with members of either female benevolent or reform societies—would be to misread their priorities.<sup>6</sup> Many of those motivations played a role in their activities, but their primary commitment was to the spiritual condition of the women they aided as well as of themselves. The central importance of a Quaker's "concern" must be acknowledged in order to understand what motivated these women and, ultimately, generated the respect paid to their prison work by the men of the PSAMPP. A concern, or "quicken[ing] sense of the need to do something or to demonstrate sympathetic interest in an individual or group, as a result of what is felt to be a direct intimation of God's will," might give rise to a "leading" or "sense of being drawn or called by God in a particular direction or toward a particular course of action."<sup>7</sup>

Following their leadings and biblical teachings, these evangelical Orthodox Friends perceived a call to ministry that led them to action, in this case on behalf of imprisoned women.

As Leigh Ann Wheeler and Jean Quataert state in their editorial note to the "Politics, Activism, Race" issue of the *Journal of Women's History*, "attention to the history of women's activism reveals as many new insights today as it did when women's history entered the academy decades ago." Since the 1970s, an extensive historiography of the development of women's benevolent organizations and leadership experience in collective activism has illuminated the contributions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century associations, with the emphasis upon accounts of affluent white Protestant women's organizations. Lori D. Ginzberg has shown how the "ideology of benevolence" powerfully influenced white antebellum women's social activism by conflating ideas of morality and femininity. Members of these privileged societies, Anne Fior Scott has explained, "nearly always made a distinction between the 'worthy' and the 'unworthy' poor," including the habitually poor, foreigners, beggars, and drunkards. Stories of forgotten or underrepresented women, Anne B. Boylan has demonstrated, are needed in order to "convey the unity and multiplicity, focus and diffusion, clarity and shadows, centrality and marginality that characterized the history of women's organizing." Daniel S. Wright's analysis of the Female Moral Reform Movement in the Northeast in the 1830s and 1840s, for example, has demonstrated the efforts of rural women to organize for social change.<sup>8</sup>

More recently, historians have turned a lens on women's religiosity, another facet of the history of women's collective action. Kathryn Kish Sklar, for example, has observed that religion both positively and negatively motivated Angelina Grimke's work for women's rights. Although Sklar's description of Grimke's "subjective spiritual quest" shows it to be very different from that of the Quaker FPAFP members, her discussion highlights how consideration of a religious dimension may enrich historical interpretation.<sup>9</sup>

In her study of eighteenth-century Quakerism, Phyllis Mack argues powerfully for historians

to consider the experience of religious women in relation to theories of women's agency. . . . For secular scholars trying to understand the relationship between religion and agency, the otherness of religion

we need to confront is not dogmatism but a conception of agency in which autonomy is less important than self-transcendence and in which the energy to act in the world is generated and sustained by a prior act of personal surrender.<sup>10</sup>

Mack encourages historians to consider viewing women's religious experience apart from "narratives of social oppression, personal ambition, or the search for self-expression (e.g., viewing religious meetings as a training ground for women's public speaking)." For some women, religion is far from being "marginal to the main story," and "a secular liberal model of agency is of only limited use in tracking the public activities of religious women or the religious origins of feminism."<sup>11</sup> Similarly, I would argue that the anonymity of the Orthodox Quaker members of the FPAFP may be explained at least partly by the primacy they gave to their religious purpose and focus, placing it before their own self-fulfillment or even the causes they espoused.

Rebecca Larson's account of the visibility and transatlantic popularity of eighteenth-century Quaker women preachers notes that, in the post-Revolutionary period,

Quaker women preachers, as well as Friends generally, continued to influence the larger society with their principled idealism, but in private philanthropies and social reform movements such as abolitionism. Quakers' reassertion of boundaries between their religious society and worldly culture strengthened their commitment to Quaker values, but reduced the visibility of Quaker women as public figures in their preaching role, resulting in a closer confinement of the female ministry to the cloistered meetings of a "peculiar people."<sup>12</sup>

While this interpretation helps to explain the reticence of the FPAFP, a more nuanced consideration of the distinction between the approach taken by Orthodox and Hicksite women to philanthropies and social reform is needed. Larson's account notes, quite appropriately, the remarkable leadership of Quakers in the women's rights movement, but these women were mostly Hicksites and their approach was far more secular than was that of the FPAFP.<sup>13</sup> In 1827 Philadelphia area Quakers underwent a wrenching schism into Hicksite and Orthodox branches, dividing meetings and even some families until a reunification in the mid-twentieth century. The Orthodox tended to be wealthier, urban Quakers, who identified with London Yearly Meeting

and placed an evangelical emphasis upon scripture and faith in the sacrifice and divinity of Jesus. Hicksites, on the other hand, tended to be rural farmers, following the ministry of Elias Hicks, a New York Quaker preacher who urged a return to “primitive” Quakerism and its reliance upon the “Inward Light, a divine spark within each person,” and individual revelation. Both groups saw themselves as preservers of traditional founding principles of Quakerism, and the schism caused Friends on both sides to leave meetings they felt to be in conflict with their values and join or build separate meetings.<sup>14</sup>

The names and achievements of Lucretia Mott and Abby Hopper Gibbons are lauded; conversely, as Quaker historian Margaret Hope Bacon has noted, Mary Waln Wistar was “the pioneer of women’s prison reform in America, although her story has remained buried.”<sup>15</sup> Why should this be the case? Historical accounts linking Quaker tolerance of women’s leadership in monthly meetings with training for leadership in feminist and social causes tend to focus on celebrated leaders, such as Mott and Gibbons, who were affiliated with the Hicksite branch or who, in the case of Gibbons, eventually broke ties with Quakerism altogether. Mott left her Orthodox meeting to join with the Hicksites, but came to feel uncomfortable even there, although she remained a Friend until her death. While Quaker background may help to explain the motivation and confidence of these female leaders to address social issues, reforms attributed to their Quaker heritage are generally secular. The significance of this Hicksite-Orthodox distinction, while seemingly merely technical unless Quaker history itself is being discussed, has quite marked implications for this study, for it helps to explain how cultural differences within what is identified generally as “Quakerism” may account, at least partly, for the anonymity and apparent reticence of the almost entirely Orthodox FPAFP in their social activities.

In 1845, twenty-two years after their first organized prison visits, the Philadelphia women wrote a history of their society for publication in the journal of the PSAMPP, the *Journal of Prison Discipline and Philanthropy*. A long description of the life of Elizabeth Fry, their recently deceased mentor in prison visiting, written by the PSAMPP, precedes the ladies’ history, clearly indicating the relationship that all felt existed between the “humble and unpretending” efforts of these Quaker women on both sides of the Atlantic. The ladies’ history, written by themselves, identifies only two women by name, Mary Waln Wistar and Anna Potts, who were by that time deceased, and explains that other “names we withhold, as they are still living.” The account by the FPAFP of their entry into prison work echoes Fry’s

sentiments: "The engagement was entered upon with feelings of weakness and fear, under a sense of the importance of keeping in view our blessed Redeemer's declaration, 'Without me, ye can do nothing.'" Although only a few of the FPAFP actually served as ministers in the Society of Friends, their approach to their work with female prisoners had a distinctly religious character, suggesting that spiritual goals rather than political power, social reform, or worldly recognition, were their underlying motivation. Aiding female prisoners advanced their own spiritual journey, for, like Fry, they saw themselves first as ministers of God and second as reformers.<sup>16</sup>

### Elizabeth Fry's Example

The accomplishments of the Philadelphia women are best understood in the context of the example that had been set by Elizabeth Fry, "that Queen of all women."<sup>17</sup> Fry, a female Quaker celebrity almost from the beginning of her prison work, traveled throughout Europe, seeking the support of royalty and the powerful. Examining the work of Fry's protégées in the Philadelphia prisons sheds light on their own motivation as well as Fry's, because their actions may be viewed uncomplicated by the Victorian-style media circus surrounding this famous woman's activities.

Long before her death, Fry had become the target of attack from both within and outside the Society of Friends. A female Quaker celebrity was certainly an anomaly in Victorian London, and Fry's leadings were subjected to intense scrutiny by the public as well as by her own religious society. Many of her contemporaries as well as later biographers believed that power and fame motivated her, at least partly, although her 1827 manual for female prison visiting associations contains the caveat,

Far be it from me to attempt to persuade women to forsake their right province. My only desire is, that they should *fill that province well*; and, although their calling, in many respects, materially differs from that of the other sex, and may not perhaps be so exalted an one—yet a minute observation will prove that, if adequately fulfilled, it has nearly, if not quite, an equal influence on society at large.<sup>18</sup>

Her talents in Orthodox Quaker ministry led to fame that was not always comfortable to her, as she remarked to a friend during the illness that preceded her death: "I have been tried with the applause of the world, and

none know how great a trial *that* has been, and the deep *humiliations* of it; and yet I fully believe that it is not near so *dangerous* as being made much of in religious society. There is a snare even in religious unity, if we are not on the watch."<sup>19</sup> Religious unity notwithstanding, the glamour that attended Fry's activities came to undermine her credibility among many Quakers; this obstacle proved more difficult than the domestic issue that Fry, the mother of eleven children, was so thoroughly engaged in outside activities, since traditionally both male and female "Public Friends" left their families to travel in the ministry. The unsavory nature of Fry's activities—actually entering prisons and transport ships—certainly departed from the safer projects undertaken by most charitable ladies societies, but such activities were considered acceptable for female members of the Religious Society of Friends.

The deepest criticism concerned Fry's expensive lifestyle and perceived courting of worldly fame and position.<sup>20</sup> The Philadelphia Orthodox journal *The Friend* cautioned readers to choose "ancient Quakerism" and reject "Elizabeth Fry's constant round of engagements of all sorts, the whirl of philanthropic business which absorbed and oppressed her, inducing premature old age." Her influence was "seductive, because brilliant," but marred by its "inconsistency with doctrines and testimonies most dear to us as a people." Her error, they concluded, was her "false position" as one engaged so deeply in worldly matters while "a minister and leader in the Society of Friends." Her departure from the testimony of simplicity suggested that she was not a "consistent" Friend; that is, she did not consistently observe the tenets of Quakerism.<sup>21</sup> Opposing this view, the "testimony," or memorial issued by Fry's Monthly Meeting of Ratcliff and Barking following her death, offers a revealing defense against these criticisms. She was "a *consistent friend*" (their emphasis). "Her philanthropic exertions were no hindrance to the exercise of her gospel ministry, but were remarkably blended with it, and often opened her way for it to her own humbling admiration," and "in the prison or the palace her demeanour was the same."<sup>22</sup>

Fry also drew criticism from outside the Society of Friends, from those who opposed her approach to prison reform or questioned its claims of success. In an article in the *Edinburgh Review* responding to a British Society for the Improvement of Prison Discipline 1821 report, Anglican cleric Sydney Smith disputed the accuracy of statistics citing a 40 percent reduction in female recidivism achieved by the affiliated Ladies Committees at Newgate, although Smith noted that the Society rather than the ladies themselves made this claim. The power of statistics to support or undercut an argument



was beginning to be felt in penology, and claims of such extravagant success needed the support of hard data, citing “dates, names, and certificates,” according to Smith, who advocated “the diminution of offences by the terror of the punishment” and rejected “heart-rending narratives” of individual success stories as “very detrimental” to a report’s argument.<sup>23</sup> Similarly dismissive of Fry’s effectiveness was the Reverend John Clay’s assessment in *The Prison Chaplain; A Memoir*, written posthumously by his son in 1861. With an element of sarcasm, Clay described Fry’s Newgate operation, acknowledging her sincerity and the effectiveness of her charisma in drawing public attention to the need for prison reform, but qualifying her effectiveness:

There was soon hardly a large prison in England without a ladies’ committee, patronizing, lecturing, teaching and philanthropically drilling the female prisoners. The majority of these committees had only an ephemeral existence, though a few continued in operation for many years. After making large deductions for exaggeration and credulity in the records of their achievements there is still a considerable residuum of work well and successfully done.<sup>24</sup>

What her critics recognized but largely undervalued was Fry’s success in organizing women volunteers locally and inspiring women internationally to express their religious impulses through prison visiting. Fry’s work at Newgate offered an international model of the power of collective action by women volunteers on behalf of women prisoners. Through correspondence and visits to prisons throughout Europe, she succeeded in advancing interest in reforms for female prisoners by mentoring like-minded women who served in their own locations. Lucia Zedner, however, describes the “mixed record of Elizabeth Fry’s prison visiting campaign” in England, where “Lady Visitors” were at times considered meddlers by prison administration. “Unpaid and apparently unwanted, many Lady Visitors simply gave up.”<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, working within male power structures, both religious and political, Fry effected important changes for imprisoned women. Arguably the most significant of the reforms she promoted was the use of female staff to deal with imprisoned women. Contemporaries who praised Fry’s work cited this reform; explaining the deep significance of this change, the journal *Prisoner’s Friend* commented:

But very little will be accomplished in reforming woman till she is committed fairly to the care of her own sex. This principle was one of

the earliest thoughts in the mind of Elizabeth Fry, who labored twenty years to establish this one idea. Most persons think that one idea is hardly worth cherishing; but it is really the one-idea men and women who, I verily believe, accomplish the most in this world. It is the one idea that shakes thrones and kingdoms to their very centre; and one great reason for Mrs. Fry's wonderful success was, that she began with one great thought, and, amidst every obstacle, carried it out.<sup>26</sup>

## The Philadelphia Female Association

### *Motivation, Methods, and Organization*

Fry's motivation for her prison reform work is relevant to a discussion of the FPAFP, because her activities served as a model for their own more subtle and unrecognized activities. Fry's own explanation, in journals and correspondence, of her decisions and actions has not prevented misinterpretation and distortion of her motives. Biographers correctly observe that she was not a generic, benevolent “lady,” and that she put her work before domestic and family duties. However, some say that she contributed nothing to penal theory, although that was never her intention, or that she was an early feminist, seeking power over men, a criticism that assumes goals Fry never expressed. The “testimony of the Monthly Meeting of Ratcliff and Barking,” upon Fry's death, verified her priorities and her essential characteristics: “Our late beloved friend was extensively known in this and other countries, by her christian exertions for the benefit of the poor, the afflicted, and the outcast; but it is more especially laid upon *us* to record her services as a minister of the Gospel, and her bright example in private life.”<sup>27</sup>

The story of the Philadelphia women follows only partly the pattern of their contemporaries who founded and developed other female voluntary societies in America. The essence of the motivation shared by Fry and the women of the FPAFP is conveyed in a single word: watchfulness. During the winter of her first visits to Newgate, for example, Fry recorded in her journal her mixed “thankfulness” and “fear” regarding the unity with which Friends had responded to her concern to pay ministerial visits to other Monthly Meetings in her region. She expressed her caution of “taking anything like my rest in this sweet feeling that has attended me, and so becoming unwatchful, not devoted and circumspect enough.” Again, in 1814, six months pregnant with

her ninth child and feeling ill, Fry prayed “that increased humility, watchfulness, patience and forbearance, may be my portion; that I may not only be saved myself, but that I may not stand in the way of others’ salvation, more particularly in that of my own household and family; that I may, if consistent with the Divine will, be made instrumental in saving others.”<sup>28</sup>

“Watchfulness” is similarly a recurring term in Friends’ publications and in the diaries and religious writings of members of the FPAFP. A reference to biblical passages such as Jesus’ admonition to his disciples, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41), it had particular resonance with evangelicals. *The Friend* explains: “What does he who watches? He takes heed to the monitions of the Holy Spirit in his heart, and thus keeps himself in order; quells the mutinies of his own spirit; nourishes and gives strength to whatever is pure, or lovely, or of good report; with unceasing struggle he brings under the wrong, and leads forth the right.”<sup>29</sup> An example appears in Wistar’s brief diary written for the benefit of her children six years before her first visit to Arch Street Prison:

I have sometimes been favored to consider it a great blessing that our blessed Redeemer commanded to ‘watch and pray’ for the mind being thus employed is kept humble, sweet and dependent, there is no place for arrogancy.<sup>30</sup>

Similarly, the 1858 journal of Sarah F. Smiley, a much younger member who served as an officer of the FPAFP, also quotes Jesus’ admonition to his disciples to “Watch and pray.” Smiley felt that her call to ministry was not based upon a secure personal spiritual fulfillment. On the contrary, she presents the call itself as part of the process of her search for personal salvation. Her ability to serve God through serving others was inherently tied to her own path to freedom. She had knelt beside a sobbing woman sentenced to seven years for manslaughter, and her journal account notes the blessing to both women: “these solitary visits to these poor wanderers lead me often into much exercise into deep feeling of my own inability—yet I doubt if in any service I have been more helpful and strengthened than in some of these.”<sup>31</sup>

Humility as opposed to “arrogancy” dominates the accounts of both Fry and the Philadelphia women as they describe their venture into prison visiting. This cultural context, which emphasizes spirituality expressed by the concept of watchfulness, supports a religious interpretation of the value place upon humility, and distinguishes the terminology and the women

who used it from values promoted by affluent members of other benevolent organizations, whose concerns centered more upon fulfillment of gender expectations of submissiveness. Following her first visit to Newgate, Fry’s journal records her fear, not of the prison’s notorious horrors, but of being “exalted” by Friends’ approval of her ministry or by the worldly success of “laudable pursuits”: “Oh, how deeply, how very deeply, I fear the temptation of ever being exalted or self-conceited.”<sup>32</sup> Her manual for prison visitors describes the proper “deportment” for a woman engaged in this service:

She must not say in her heart, *I am more holy than thou*; but must rather keep in perpetual remembrance, that ‘*all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God’—that, therefore, great pity is due from us even to the greatest transgressors among our fellow-creatures—and that, in meekness and love, we ought to labor for their restoration.<sup>33</sup>

An 1823 report from the London Society for the Improvement of Prison Discipline stresses the model of humility shown by Fry’s Ladies Committee: “There is, in the conduct of their plans, so much of quiet feeling and unobtrusive goodness, so much that shuns publicity and avoids praise, that but few are fully acquainted with the efficacy of their labours and the extent of their benevolence.”<sup>34</sup>

Although Fry never traveled to the United States, her manual for visitors to women’s prisons and her personal example became the prototype for Mary Waln Wistar, whose husband, Thomas, was a charter PSAMPP member. A direct link between Fry and the FPAFP came soon after Wistar’s first visit to Arch Street Prison in 1823. The Philadelphia women had apparently prevailed upon Wistar’s son-in-law and PSAMPP corresponding secretary Roberts Vaux, who was also an honorary member of the London Society for the Improvement of Prison Discipline, to open formal communication with Fry, because her response to Vaux, dated June 6, 1824, expressed delight that an association was forming in America, suggested “a regular annual correspondence as by that means we might mutually aid each other from our different experience and observations,” and offered advice to the fledgling group.<sup>35</sup> The FPAFP was not a branch of the London group, but it followed the example of its celebrated British model, with similar effects upon the prison system, insisting upon the use of matrons to oversee women, improving physical conditions in the women’s quarters, proposing a separate juvenile facility, and founding the Howard Institution, a sort of halfway house for women, employing congregate housing, with rules differing markedly

from those governing inmates housed under separate confinement within Philadelphia's prisons.<sup>36</sup>

The existence of close personal bonds between Quaker women engaged in the cause of prisoners on both sides of the Atlantic is supported by correspondence of FPAFP members and news articles in Quaker journals. Boylan has shown how leaders of early female benevolent societies enjoyed a transatlantic correspondence and exchange of publications, and certainly the FPAFP shared this practice.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the practice of looking to London Yearly Meeting for guidance would have made it natural for these Orthodox women to seek spiritual support and encouragement from transatlantic Friends. Women's prison reform in America, however, was not a one-way implementation of Fry's precepts by the Philadelphia women. On the contrary, evidence suggests a genuine exchange of information among these "precious & worthy friends."<sup>38</sup> Existing records of the FPAFP reveal that its members greatly respected their British sisters, with whom they shared the practical goal of applying humanitarian principles to improve the condition of imprisoned women, and their correspondence demonstrates that some of the American women traveled throughout Britain and personally knew Fry and her coworkers.<sup>39</sup>

Ginzberg has shown that antebellum female benevolent associations performed business functions similar to men's within their charitable organizations and gained practical training, professional competence, and authority in the distribution of services.<sup>40</sup> Although the minutes and records of the FPAFP have been lost, the few existing documents indicate that its structure resembled that of other contemporary women's benevolent organizations in many ways, but the Quaker nature of the FPAFP distinguished it from other female groups in some respects. The FPAFP's 1845 history states that members

held stated meetings every month . . . for the purpose of receiving reports from those of their number who had been appointed to visit the prison, making arrangements for future visits, and conferring together upon the means best calculated to promote the improvement of the degraded objects of their interest.<sup>41</sup>

After 1836 they divided into two branches and began visiting at two Philadelphia locations—Eastern State Penitentiary and the recently opened Moyamensing County Prison. Each branch sent annual reports to the PSAMPP, which assisted in practical matters such as providing transportation

for the ladies to Moyamensing Prison, located in the southeastern outskirts of the city. Organized on the model of the Society of Friends' Monthly and Quarterly meetings, the two branches held Quarterly meetings, “at which reports are produced from each body of visitors, giving an account of their labours during the preceding three months.”<sup>42</sup> Like Fry's London society, they worked within the male power structure, although the Philadelphia women typically did not deal directly with the prison administration. Instead, they used the all-male PSAMPP, whose members included husbands of several of the women, as their voice when petitioning prison authority. Their practice of sending annual reports to the male Society should be viewed in the context of Quaker practice, as stipulated in the 1806 Philadelphia *Rules of Discipline*, that actions of the women's meeting were to be reported to the men's meeting. Although they differed on some important issues, discussed below, the FPAFP appears to have maintained a cordial alliance with the PSAMPP.<sup>43</sup>

### *Priorities, Goals, and Challenges*

The conviction that even imprisoned women were capable of redemption was a basic tenet shared by the PSAMPP and the FPAFP. A contrasting view is presented by Francis Lieber's introduction to his 1833 translation of Beaumont and de Toqueville's report *On the Penitentiary System in the United States*, dedicated to Roberts Vaux of the PSAMPP. After establishing the vital role females play in the domestic “wife's sphere” of moral influence, Lieber expounds upon the deplorable consequences when women stray from that sphere:

There is, almost without an exception, some unprincipled or abandoned woman, who plays a prominent part in the life of every convict, be it a worthless mother, who poisons by her corrupt example the soul of her children, or a slothful and intemperate wife, who disgusts her husband with his home, a prostitute, whose wants must be satisfied by theft, or a receiver of plunder and spy of opportunities for robberies . . . a woman, when she commits a crime, acts more in contradiction to her whole moral organization, i.e. must be more depraved, must have sunk already deeper than a man.<sup>44</sup>

This grim profile of the female criminal is consistent with an increasing movement in Britain away from the rehabilitation model and toward

deterrence through punishment.<sup>45</sup> The Pennsylvania System, on the other hand, sought reform through repentance, not punishment. The PSAMPP and the FPAFP agreed on a foundational philosophy of human nature. In 1867, almost forty years after the opening of Eastern State Penitentiary, the report of the Acting Committee of the PSAMPP acknowledged the reality of the social stigma, while continuing to assert that female convicts were by nature redeemable, however bleak their prospects might be:

Of course, not so much hope can be entertained of improvement in females as in males. The former, when they fall, seem to fall below their own hopes. They know how low are rated the erring of their own sex, and they need double assistance to lift them into resolves for good. Yet they are reclaimable, and have been reclaimed—even when sunk to a depth, where modesty shrinks from their contemplation.<sup>46</sup>

The problem, as they saw it, was not the innate corruption of these women, but the almost insurmountable obstacle that society's prejudice posed for a female once she had erred, especially in the case of sexual transgressions. The general approach toward management of women prisoners by the PSAMPP and every mention of them by the FPAFP, from the 1820s throughout the 1860s, agrees with this view of the female criminal, contrary to points made by Nicole Rafter and Estelle Freedman, who argue that the idea of the redeemable "fallen woman" began in the 1840s in New York and with the reformatory movement in the 1870s.<sup>47</sup> While their accounts describe the transition to a view of criminal "fallen women," the FPAFP from the start had employed a different approach. "Pure women," explains Freedman,

had to surmount an ideological barrier before they reached out to female prisoners. The line that separated the pure woman from the fallen demarcated privilege on one side and degradation on the other. . . . Eventually some women would find the concept of a common womanhood stronger than the boundary of moral purity. A few would cross the line and cautiously enter the "gloomy abode" of women prisoners.<sup>48</sup>

Although historians have noted that desire to exert social control over lower classes may have played a part in motivating Quaker prison reform

efforts, interpretations that consider only class and gender as possible motivators for women's action ignore the religious motivation that drove the quiet achievements of the FPAFP and doubtless contributed to the invisibility of these women in historical accounts. The members of the FPAFP pursued their agenda with purpose but not naiveté, aware that the objects of their aid might disappoint their hopes. However, when their work succeeded, the lady visitors employed the inmates' stories in published religious testimonies. A vivid example is the tract purportedly written by Julia Moore (alias Julia Wilt), who, having participated “in a cruel robbery,” converted and died, probably of syphilis, within Eastern State Penitentiary. In a private letter to FPAFP leader Rebecca Collins, while she was visiting Quaker friends in London, Collins's niece and FPAFP member Mary Anna Longstreth describes the very personal and intense interest of the FPAFP women in Julia's “case”:

On the 10th of this month, poor Julia (at the Eastern Penitentiary) was released from her complicated sufferings. I saw her on the 8th, (in paying my accustomed visits,) and found her extremely ill with Erysipelas in the head, entirely blind, and her face swollen to such a degree that I should not have recognized her. On being informed that I was in the cell, she expressed pleasure and I addressed a few sentences to her, but she was too ill for conversation, and after that time, was insensible. We have, however, good ground for believing that she is among that innumerable company whose robes have been washed & made white in the blood of the Lamb, whose sins have been blotted out, and the New Song put into their mouths. I shall have more to tell thee about her in my next letter.<sup>49</sup>

The FPAFP subsequently published a tract celebrating Julia's conversion and satisfactory death.<sup>50</sup>

The treatment of African American inmates at Eastern State Penitentiary and Moyamensing Prison suggests a fascinating direction for future research to expand upon contributions of several historians. Examining the crime data in Pennsylvania from 1682–1800, Jack D. Marietta and G. S. Rowe conclude that crime by women and by blacks was largely property crime centered in Philadelphia, and that African Americans were the group least able to move out of poverty. Leslie Patrick-Stamp, in her detailed research of records from Philadelphia's Walnut St. Prison, 1790–1835, agrees with this assessment, concluding “that African Americans, especially African-American women,



received a disproportionate share of sentences to the first penitentiary” and that property crimes, stemming from poor employment prospects, rather than crimes of violence predominated.<sup>51</sup> Several historians note evidence of racism in the antebellum North, focused upon fear of disorder and increased crime among blacks. Donna McDaniel and Vanessa Juley’s *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship*, a far-reaching exploration of Quaker responses to racial justice in America, notes that, historically, even benevolence and advocacy were mixed with paternalism and desire to control.<sup>52</sup>

Adding another dimension to this scholarship, Paul Kahan examined Eastern State’s discharge registers of the 1830s and 1840s for data on literacy of female inmates at admittance and release and concluded that the penitentiary afforded equal access to education regardless of gender or race. While acknowledging disparities in sentence length, numbers of pardons granted, and rates of illiteracy for male and female black prisoners compared with white prisoners, Kahan found that “there is no evidence to demonstrate that blacks and whites were housed separately until 1904.”<sup>53</sup>

The few FPAFP records that exist suggest that the FPAFP assisted women without regard to the inmate’s race, and the research cited above would seem to confirm that a high percentage of the female inmates visited by FPAFP members would have been African American. The FPAFP 1845 history notes that, of the inmates they placed following release,

Several of these are coloured, and, from some of them, we have received testimonials of their being comfortably provided for, and we are encouraged to believe that they have been strengthened to adhere to the good resolutions formed while they were in prison. One of these individuals has been several years in a public institution in the neighbourhood of this city, where she continues to conduct in a becoming manner.<sup>54</sup>

A rather lengthy “case” is included at the end of the history of the FPAFP as a specific example of the personal approach taken by the visitors and the spiritual rewards available to visitor and inmate alike when the visiting system works optimally. The case happens to describe a dying African American woman imprisoned for theft, but it is presented in the standard manner of the case genre, in which the subject was often white:

Among the circumstances which have afforded us encouragement, is the following, an account of which has been furnished by one of

the visitors of the County Prison. It is the case of a coloured woman, to whom, we believe, divine mercy was extended as at the eleventh hour.<sup>55</sup>

No particular point is made about any unusual treatment or circumstances in the way this case of an African American inmate was regarded.

Beyond their primary focus upon the spiritual condition of imprisoned women they visited, the Philadelphia women seriously considered their practical needs. Their 1845 history describes the importance they placed upon helping inmates become literate so they could “read the Bible for themselves,” but also to deter crime, “Ignorance being a promoter of idleness, and idleness often the parent of crime.”<sup>56</sup> Humane supervision by their own sex; sanitary, disease-free conditions; job training in a facility for released women—on all issues the Philadelphia women often acted more practically than did the men of the PSAMPP, while observing the Society’s core mission to aid prisoners. Although they obeyed their own “female” standards of principled conduct and, above all, religious codes, they did not allow restrictions imposed by theoretical arguments about prison reform and management to restrict their actions on behalf of women. Those actions, however, were at times impeded by the inertia or conservatism of the Society, which did not always share the women’s view of priorities or procedures. In an early and relatively minor but revealing example of these conflicting values, Roberts Vaux responded for the PSAMPP to Mary Waln Wistar’s request for funds to buy clothing for the female inmates. While noting the PSAMPP’s decision to “relax” its “general rule to avoid furnishing articles of clothing excepting in extreme cases during the winter season,” he informed his mother-in-law that they would grant “less than half the *smallest number* of the articles first mentioned in thy note . . .” and “*very few* of the gowns, will meet the actual demand; the latter I presume will be what are called short-gowns.”<sup>57</sup> Lest she think him cheap, he went on, rather condescendingly, to explain the principle involved to the well-meaning but naïve women: “The unhappy females whom you visited yesterday, form a circulating medium of poverty, & vice, alternately to be found in the walls of the Alms House, & the walls of the Prison . . . If many of them were ‘*arrayed in purple & fine linnen*’ by an unbounded charity, & set at liberty through the agency of a generous sympathy,” these “habitual offenders” would doubtless sell their garments, indulge in vice, and return to the prison once again. The result would be an unintended inducement to vice and discouragement of “honest industry.”<sup>58</sup>

As with Fry in her prison work, the desire to advocate for female offenders at times brought the FPAFP into conflict with authority. In Fry's case, that authority was the prison system itself, and her poised and informed testimonies before Parliamentary committees increased her celebrity and public respect for her, although she did not always achieve her goals. For the Philadelphia women, conflict was subtle and typically arose with the male prison society, when the women proposed measures that conflicted with the PSAMPP's deeply held principles about appropriate methods of prison management. Fry's advice in her manual that a visiting committee should "be careful to adhere precisely to the rules of the prison" and "strictly" avoid "interference with these gentlemen" may be applied, by extension, to the Philadelphia ladies' approach to transactions with the PSAMPP. Fry's advice is telling: "that the visitors may be at once *wise as serpents, and harmless as doves*" (Fry's emphasis).<sup>59</sup> In the case of the wealthy white women who visited British prisons as well as the wealthy white Philadelphia Quakers, these words do not caution visitors against the poor and, in Philadelphia, mostly black women they aided. Rather, Fry boldly suggests how women might survive personal risks and negotiate their own agendas in the contested international fields where men debated penal theory. Couched in her characteristic biblical references, Fry's advice urges female prison visitors against the naïve or retiring affect condoned by gender expectations. Examination of the actions and accomplishments of the FPAFP, often in the face of inertia or understated but significant opposition from the male society, reveals the effectiveness of their subtly persistent methods to achieve goals that aligned with the controversial agenda of Fry and her followers across the Atlantic.

The Philadelphia women's persistent and eventually successful petition for the use of matrons to supervise female inmates is one of their most significant contributions to prison reform in Philadelphia as well as one of the most remarkable examples of their subtle approach to effecting change. Their persistence and patience are characteristic of the Quaker process of identifying or "discerning" a concern or leading that should be acted upon. Quaker scholar Hugh Barbour explains that "elders warned Friends to sit with their leadings for a while in patience. Self-will is impatient of tests. [Quaker founder George] Fox wrote, 'Be patient and still in the power and still in the light that doth convince you, keep your minds unto God.'"<sup>60</sup>

Historians have described the horrible conditions of women imprisoned in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century America. Facilities for the few female prisoners did not consider women's needs, but some states began

efforts to hire matrons, and Philadelphia made a brief attempt in 1793 at the Walnut Street Prison.<sup>61</sup> Introduced by Fry at Newgate as early as 1817, matrons were required by law in British prisons under the Gaol Act of 1823 and they were clearly indicated in Fry’s 1827 prison visiting manual as necessary to create a humane and smoothly functioning prison environment for women: “It is absolutely essential to the proper order and regulation of every prison, that the female prisoners should be placed under the superintendence of officers of their own sex.”<sup>62</sup> Hiring a matron, Fry insisted, was more practical because a female was more effective than male turnkeys in maintaining order among women. A matron’s credentials were important:

She ought to be a person of respectable, orderly, and active, habits, —plain in her dress, —gentle, yet firm, in her demeanor, — of sufficient education to enable her to superintend the instruction of the prisoners, — and although not *greatly* elevated above her charge, yet in a station of life so far superior to their own, as to command their respect and obedience.<sup>63</sup>

The necessity of installing matrons in facilities with female inmates was a staple of Fry’s advice to the associations she mentored through visits and correspondence. In her letter to Vaux advising the Philadelphia women, Fry writes that the British Society has several “principal objects,” including that prisoners “should be under the care of *female* officers.”<sup>64</sup> The first recorded attempt by the Philadelphia women to introduce a matron responded to an outbreak of “infectious disease” at Arch Street Prison in the spring of 1824. In a letter to the prison’s Board of Inspectors, they requested “construction of a bath-house,” which was granted, and they used this opportunity to urge “the propriety of employing a conscientious matron to preside over the female prisoners, as it would be within her sphere to enforce cleanliness and industry, and to contribute essentially to the right conducting of the whole department on the women’s side of the prison.” The request for a matron was rejected by the Board of Inspectors of Arch Street Prison, which refused the PSAMPP as well when Thomas Wistar proposed to hire Sarah Mayland as a matron three years later.<sup>65</sup> Over a period of ten years, the women reintroduced their petition, endeavoring to keep the urgency of this issue before those authorized to effect change, mostly presenting their proposals first to the PSAMPP.<sup>66</sup> Their persistence eventually was rewarded by 1836, with matrons installed in both the newly constructed county prison at Moyamensing and at Eastern State Penitentiary. On the surface, this appears to be a straightforward success story

for the women, working through the male society. However, records suggest a subtext of intrigue, politics, and scandal explaining why the “way opened” at last for the women’s proposal, and how the women might have aided reciprocally the men’s society as a subtle but critical public relations support in the ongoing debate over separate confinement.<sup>67</sup>

Eastern State Penitentiary had been operating only five years when it became involved in a scandal alleging sexual and financial misconduct by prison administration. Charges included accusations that Warden Samuel R. Wood had profited from prison contracts with businesses in which he had personal financial interest and that he had associated inappropriately within the prison with Mrs. Blunden, the wife of his deputy. Further, it was alleged that Wood had violated the rules of separate confinement, allowing the four female inmates at that time, all African American, out of their cells to work in the prison’s kitchen and at parties in the prison, where they served food and engaged in dancing and worse. Because members of the all-male PSAMPP sat on the prison Board of Inspectors and had recommended the hiring of Wood, who was Quaker, the Society must have felt threatened by the scandal’s negative publicity and feared the potential impact upon their embattled separate system, which was at the heart of the prison’s management. Minutes of the PSAMPP are silent about this trouble, though it prompted Judge Charles Coxe, president of the prison’s Board of Inspectors, to resign in protest and led the House and Senate in Harrisburg to conduct a major investigation. In fact, the Society had every interest to keep this embarrassing controversy quiet, since William Crawford from London was visiting Eastern State at that time and preparing a major report to Parliament with his recommendations about the efficacy of the separate system and the competing congregate Auburn System at New York.<sup>68</sup>

Not a word about the investigation is recorded by the PSAMPP, but the essence of the controversy touched the deepest Quaker values of personal and business integrity. The sexual allegations certainly underscored the validity of the FPAFP’s ongoing campaign to hire matrons. In the midst of this challenge to the Pennsylvania System, these Quaker women of the FPAFP must have appeared to be useful allies in validating its respectability in practice as well as in theory. The point of no return had been reached, and the prison administration as well as the PSAMPP had to end the delay. It would have been hypocritical to put the investigation behind them, without reforming the system so as to prevent future abuses in that area. The time was ripe for the women to achieve their most fundamental goal.

In March of 1835 Crawford published his *Report on the Penitentiaries of the United States* in London, praising the Pennsylvania System, recommending it to Parliament and acknowledging with special thanks the assistance of Warden Samuel R. Wood.<sup>69</sup> Also in March of 1835, two reports on the investigation of Eastern State Penitentiary were published in Harrisburg. The majority report whitewashed the controversy, condemning Mrs. Blunden but exonerating Warden Wood.<sup>70</sup> Significantly, however, it included requirements for specific changes to check administrative abuses. A minority report, by legislator Thomas B. McElwee, almost blocked from publication, included the full and often shocking testimony in the case.<sup>71</sup> A series of events relating to the employment of matrons then began to happen. Also in March, and doubtless not by coincidence, the women pressed their advantage on a different front. Having learned that the PSAMPP was meeting with legislators in Harrisburg on plans for the new Philadelphia County prison in Moyamensing, the women renewed their request for a matron there, explaining “that the experience of twelve years had confirmed them more and more in the belief, that little expectation could be entertained of raising the female convicts above their deplorable situation, until they should be placed under the superintendence of officers of their own sex.”<sup>72</sup> The phrase “the experience of twelve years” must have been highly charged for all who read it at that time. By fall a matron was approved at Moyamensing.<sup>73</sup> In October the PSAMPP itself petitioned Inspectors at Eastern State for a matron, who was appointed there the next year. Concurrently, the prison inspectors at Eastern State demonstrated their respect for the FPAFP by inviting the women to extend their visits from the county prison to include female inmates at Eastern State. The women recorded their satisfaction tactfully, but pointedly noted the matron they saw there and paid tribute to the male society’s agenda by generously acknowledging the benefit of the separate system as they observed it implemented for female inmates:

It was not long before they perceived, with pleasure, the benefit the prisoners were deriving from their entire separation from each other, and the softening influence of the other officers of the establishment. . . . The system of separate confinement afforded increased facilities to the members of the Association in their labours for the religious instruction of the convicts, and they began to teach them regularly to spell and read. The solitary situation of the prisoners

prevented them from endeavouring to destroy in each other's minds the little good seed which might have been sown, and led them almost unavoidably to reflect on what had been read and said to them during the visits.<sup>74</sup>

In its steadfast insistence upon a system of solitude with labor, the PSAMPP emphasized rehabilitation, although British penologists saw the application of the separate system at Eastern State Penitentiary as a means to deter crime through terror. Fry herself testified to a Parliamentary committee against the separate system, cautioning that, if applied to female prisoners, it must be closely monitored and used with great discretion.<sup>75</sup> For their part, the FPAFP did not engage in theoretical arguments or public advocacy, but directed their spiritual and practical energies toward working within the existing system, even occasionally acknowledging its success with the women they visited. In 1852, for example, a British publication about the work of Ladies Associations around the world printed a letter from Collins and FPAFP leader Susan H. Lloyd, in which they praised the separate system and linked it directly to the view that female criminals are redeemable: "There, apart from worldly intercourse, shut out from scenes of depravity, and subjected to the softening influences of retirement, left to feel the burden of sin and the just punishment awarded to the transgressor, some of these poor creatures have been led to loathe their vileness."<sup>76</sup> The sincerity of public statements by the FPAFP supporting the separate system is confirmed by a private letter from Longstreth to Collins, in which Longstreth argues against Charles Dickens's famous indictment of the separate system's threat to inmates' sanity, which had caused concern for the PSAMPP:

Surely when Dickens visited our penitentiary, he must have had glasses, black, blue, or of some dismal colour, over his eyes, to see the gloomy pictures he described in his "notes on America." The female convicts are certainly contented & most of them happy, by their oft repeated acknowledgment—and with the frequent visits of the Matron & her assistant, the Moral Instructor, the Ladies' Committee, the ministers who go out to read & preach to them, they are not too lonely.<sup>77</sup>

The FPAFP therefore appears to have existed in partnership with the PSAMPP, despite some differences in their priorities. Changes advocated by

the FPAFP, such as the institution of matrons, generally did not threaten the prevailing penal philosophy. It was the action of the FPAFP on behalf of *released* female inmates that conflicted with established PSAMPP policy and ultimately caused them to break out, in their understated way, to begin a project of their own.

The 1845 history of the FPAFP records members' recognition that a rehabilitative penal philosophy necessitated some provision to guide a prisoner after her release. Having the opportunity to observe the characters of those they visited, the ladies arranged “situations in private families for several . . . ,” a point that is confirmed by release records of the Eastern State Penitentiary.<sup>78</sup> The separate system prevented imprisoned criminals from forming associations with other prisoners that could undermine their attempts to avoid temptation or could potentially identify them and lead to public humiliation after release. But the FPAFP, observing that women had no means of supporting themselves following release, took a bold step toward treating freed inmates as individuals by opening a home designed to meet women's needs as they saw them, even though the home's residents would necessarily congregate. That home, the Howard Institution, was founded in 1853. It fulfilled the FPAFP's vision of a facility for released female prisoners that had been proposed as early as 1826. The need for such a facility had long been recognized by Elizabeth Fry but was not realized in England until after her death. In New York City Abigail Hopper Gibbons led a women's affiliate of the New York Prison Association in founding the successful Isaac Hopper Home for discharged women prisoners in 1845.<sup>79</sup> The FPAFP cited this facility in their argument for a home in Philadelphia. Perhaps they hoped, unsuccessfully, that reference to this innovative facility in New York would subtly goad the PSAMPP, which had been involved for years in debates and discussion comparing the merits of the Pennsylvania and New York systems of prison management. Under the leadership of Lloyd, the FPAFP sought the blessing of the PSAMPP for their project, but it was rejected on principle because plans for the congregate facility violated the PSAMPP's sacrosanct tenet of convict (even released convict) separation.<sup>80</sup>

Not to be deterred by their intransigence, the women notified the PSAMPP that they would open the Howard on their own, with minimal, conditional support from the PSAMPP, which pledged a yearly contribution of \$100, provided it would be used for clothing and not for facility operations.<sup>81</sup> The women affiliated with the New York Prison Association also broke with their male society in 1854 to form the Women's Prison Association



and Home (WPA), which continues its work to this day. Differences in the circumstances of these breaks, however, are revealing. Objecting to the men's attempts to manage their group, the WPA went on to lobby legislators in New York for the facility they desired, making theirs much more visibly an independent action by women. The FPAFP, on the other hand, objected not to its subordinate status as a women's affiliate, but rather to the application outside prison of the separate system mandated by the PSAMPP's penal philosophy.<sup>82</sup> They insisted upon a system that would fulfill female prisoners' practical needs for life and skills training. The women of the FPAFP quietly but definitively secured the congregate system required for the type of facility they envisioned at the Howard.

Records of the Howard until it closed in 1917 reveal a leadership structure similar to that of institutions founded by other benevolent groups, as described in Boylan's study of women's organizations. The lessons learned in management, public relations, and fundraising by FPAFP members who served as managers at the Howard were later applied in other executive contexts, for several went on to demonstrate professional competence in their work in other leadership positions.<sup>83</sup> Sarah F. Smiley, for example, served as Secretary of the Howard and later used her administrative experience to organize schools for freedmen following the Civil War. Directress Rebecca Collins later led in several areas, including work with sailors, and the WCTU.

### The Significance of the Philadelphia Female Association

The quiet achievements of the Philadelphia Female Association affected the prison system and impacted the lives of individual female prisoners as well as lady visitors. Their subtle advocacy for women imprisoned at Eastern State Penitentiary and Moyamensing Prison resulted in the institution of matrons, and their understated yet audacious break from the standards of the male leadership of the PSAMPP in founding the Howard Institution, based on a principle of female community rather than the separate system, were their major contributions to the penal system. Their principal method was, to follow their mentor Elizabeth Fry's dictum, "To avail ourselves of the openings," an opening being "a divinely inspired recognition of some truth."<sup>84</sup>

Public references to the FPAFP or to the Howard in the media named individuals only in order to inform potential donors to whom they might

direct their contributions. The good work done by these women received some public recognition, mostly in publications of the Society of Friends. *The Friend*, for example, praised the practical as well as spiritual work of “An Association of Women Friends,” teaching inmates to read, finding employment after their release, “and endeavouring to instruct them in a knowledge of the great truths of the gospel.”<sup>85</sup> Joseph John Gurney, a leading British Quaker and brother of Elizabeth Fry, wrote of his travels in North America, where he visited Philadelphia meetings, Quaker homes, and institutions, including Eastern State Penitentiary. He noted his qualified approval of the separate system, whose success, he felt, depended rather precariously upon the continued responsibility and humanity of the administration and the “Christian visitor.” In this context, he singled out for special regard the work of the FPAFP, but refrained from naming either the Association or its individual members:

The females in this prison occupy a distinct gallery, and are under the kind notice of a committee of ladies. Heartily do I hope that these pious visitors will persevere in their praise-worthy, voluntary exertions; for if these should be withdrawn, the objects of their care will be left in a condition of painful destitution, as it regards an effective moral and religious influence.<sup>86</sup>

Dorothea Dix, famed advocate for the mentally ill, recorded her observations from visits to Eastern State Penitentiary in *Remarks on Prisons and Prison Discipline in the United States*. A brief appendix is devoted to “Women Convicts,” where Dix reports that she found twenty well-treated female inmates and a “vigilant” matron, and she alludes to the women’s sewing tasks and lessons provided “by the ladies who visit the prison to give instruction.”<sup>87</sup>

PSAMPP minutes occasionally refer, sometimes even in laudatory terms, to the FPAFP’s activities (“On motion the Secretary was directed to address a note to the Association, expressing the satisfaction of the Society with their labors during the past year”), note the receipt of their reports, cite the number of their annual prison visits, or report their requests: “A communication was received from the committee of ladies who visit the county jail, which was read and laid on the table. On motion, resolved, that the thanks of this committee be tendered to the Ladies Committee for their laborious and useful services and that an order for the sum of Seventy-five dollars be drawn on

the Treasurer in favor of Deborah Howell, towards the expenses of the Ladies Committee.”<sup>88</sup>

Generally, however, the documents of the PSAMPP ignored or understated the contributions made by the women. It appears that the FPAFP was regarded by the PSAMPP, and doubtless by themselves, as a group of religious visitors, not as policy setters. In 1859 the PSAMPP published a thirty-two-page history of their society—*Sketch of the Principal Transactions of the “Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons,” from Its Origin to the Present Time*. Although all the male founders of the PSAMPP are listed by name, not a single mention is made of the FPAFP or their thirty-six-year record of regular prison visits; nor is any particular woman visitor named. The history includes a lengthy account of the PSAMPP and its initiatives, but devotes scant lines to the topic of matrons, which the FPAFP had promoted for so long. The brief reference to matrons does not discuss the origins of this important addition to the Philadelphia prisons. Published six years after the founding of the Howard Institution, this history offers only the following on the subject of discharged convicts:

The mode of caring for discharged convicts, with safety to the interests of the public and due regard to the moral and social welfare of the prisoner, is a problem yet to be solved. It has ever been among the chief concerns of our Society, and will continue to receive their earnest consideration.<sup>89</sup>

Similarly, the *Sketch* of the PSAMPP describes the creation in 1829 of the House of Refuge for juveniles without noting that, as early as 1824, the FPAFP had called for this institution.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, Roberts Vaux’s 1826 published review of the work of the PSAMPP and of prison reform in Pennsylvania to that point completely ignores the women’s advocacy for this institution in his statement: “During the last four years, several interesting subjects have claimed the attention of the society; among which may be enumerated, the practicability of establishing a house of refuge for juvenile offenders.”<sup>91</sup> Therefore, neither before nor after the creation of the House of Refuge was the FPAFP’s call for this institution acknowledged. Small wonder, then, that this incomplete view of the history of the House of Refuge, with its disparaging interpretation of women’s involvement, has carried down to the present, with a 1982 collection of biographical vignettes of members of the Prison Society giving full credit to Roberts Vaux: “While working on the construction of

the Eastern State Penitentiary Vaux promoted the construction of the House of Refuge to house juvenile offenders. It was his understanding of the magnitude of the problem that led it [to] its becoming a state institution and not a charity of a women's group of the Society of Friends.”<sup>92</sup>

The women's own account, stated within their 1845 history, sheds light upon their reluctance to own the fruits of their work and their subtle acknowledgment of association with the male society. In 1824, they explain, they wrote to the PSAMPP, advocating a House of Refuge to accommodate the young girls whom they were encountering inappropriately housed within the general, unclassified population of adult women in the Arch Street Prison. Their concern for these girls, they modestly explain, “induced them to exert their feeble endeavours in promoting so desirable an object.” Indeed, the minutes of the PSAMPP do refer to this letter and to the interest of the women, but they do not credit the FPAFP with inspiring the opening of this Philadelphia institution in 1829. The women, however, subtly refer to their involvement: “Whether their limited efforts were of any avail or not, they had the great satisfaction of seeing the important object gained.”<sup>93</sup> It may be significant that the ladies were writing their history for publication within the PSAMPP's journal. In addition, in several places within that history, they allude to the generosity of the PSAMPP in donating supplies, clothing, and funds for the work of the FPAFP, and they praise the effectiveness of the separate system as applied to women prisoners. It may be inferred that the FPAFP considered reticence as the most expedient way to present itself. Nevertheless, the FPAFP recognized its own success in achieving the goal of improving conditions for young girls through the attention they brought to the issue and subtle advocacy, which, from their point of view, would have been the main objective.

In the pages of the *Journal of Prison Discipline and Philanthropy* (JPDP), the FPAFP and the Howard received somewhat more recognition than in the minutes of the PSAMPP, although in some cases that recognition is anonymous and peripheral. For example, the January 1864 issue compares the useful contribution of “The experienced visitor,” who “learns to fix a just estimate upon the tears and promises” of corrupt female inmates, to the naiveté and inevitable “disappointment” of “the good female visitors who occasionally seek to bring ‘glad tidings’ to the miserable offenders of their own sex” (i.e., “outside” female visitors, not members of the FPAFP). The PSAMPP then proceeds to promote its perennial theme, that use of the separate system must underlie any success story, and that it is this separation (not,

it is implied, any human endeavor) that empowers “the gentle invitation of the faithful visitor to resolve on good.”<sup>94</sup> Thus, the article pays subtle tribute to the work of the FPAFP within the context of an iteration of the ideology of the PSAMPP. The following paragraph from the seventy-seventh annual report, printed in the *JDPDP*, calls more specific attention to the affiliation of the PSAMPP and the FPAFP by naming them:

The Prison “Association of Women Friends” (which is recognized by us as an auxiliary in the good work), have continued to be diligent visitors to the females confined in both prisons [Eastern State Penitentiary and Moyamensing], and have entered on the service under a full sense of its serious importance, and with desires that their labors might be promotive of the temporal and eternal good of the visited. In the course of the year they paid 987 visits to the prisoners in the two institutions.<sup>95</sup>

In 1866 the *JDPDP* published a description of “Philanthropic Institutions of Philadelphia,” which suggests that the PSAMPP recognized that volunteer women’s work with female prisoners was necessarily undergoing a transition. The article presents “a survey of the means of preventing vice and crime” offered by Philadelphia social institutions, including the Howard Home, along with the Magdalen and the Rosine, but makes no special mention of the Howard. Following these brief descriptions is a rather general statement of affiliation:

“The Society for Alleviating the Misery of Public Prisons” may not appear to have any direct connection with such institutions as those to which we have referred, and yet they are all co-workers with our Society, as means by which our Society effects a portion of its good.<sup>96</sup>

In the same issue, within a section describing Eastern State Penitentiary, the PSAMPP published a call for female volunteer visitors to that prison, although this had not been their customary procedure:

The Society seeks the co-operation of females, in their labors in the prisons, especially among the female convicts; and they do not doubt that much of their hope of being useful to that class of prisoners,

has been realized by the faithful labors of women, when and where woman's peculiar adaptability to the work could be most successful.<sup>97</sup>

The article then acknowledges the PSAMPP's gratitude to the FPAFP, though it refrains from naming the Association specifically:

It is gratifying to state that additional means of usefulness have been secured in this department of the Penitentiary, by the renewal of labors by some of the female co-workers with the Visiting Committee [a subcommittee of the PSAMPP], and additional labor from the visitors of the same religious order that attend, at stated periods, the female convicts in the County Prison.<sup>98</sup>

The PSAMPP apparently had begun, in the 1860s, to solicit female volunteers from the community, outside the FPAFP or even the Society of Friends, to visit Eastern State Penitentiary and Moyamensing Prison. In the absence of records of the number of women involved in the FPAFP at that or any other time, it is not possible to determine whether their numbers had diminished and that had prompted the PSAMPP to call for volunteers. However, this is likely the case, since many of the founding members of the FPAFP and of the Howard Institution had died, moved, or made the transition to work in education, Civil War Reconstruction, or other causes by that time, and the PSAMPP does not mention the FPAFP in their minutes after the 1860s.

When Mary Waln Wistar died in 1843, a published memorial celebrated her pious example as a Quaker elder but did not mention her prison work, only praising her commitment “to promote the cause of Truth.”<sup>99</sup> Two years later, Elizabeth Fry died in England, and her monthly meeting's testimony likewise praised her piety, but only secondarily her prison work. Fry's international fame, of course, had taken on a life of its own by that time. But the virtual anonymity of Wistar and others in the Female Prison Association of Friends in Philadelphia belies their actual contribution to the cause of imprisoned women. Records kept by the prisons and by the Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons give minimal credit to the FPAFP, individually or collectively, although reforms they promoted are among the most significant aids to female inmates to this day. Consequently, the members of the Female Prison Association of Friends in Philadelphia and its achievements have gone unrecorded, but their reforms and presence as female visitors among female

prisoners witness to the concern of these Philadelphia women to “watch and pray.” Their history suggests that rich stories might be uncovered with a shift of perspective that foregrounds women’s spiritual experience.

## NOTES

I would like to thank Ann Upton of the Quaker Collection, Haverford College Library; Nancy Halli of Bryn Mawr College Library; and Andrea Reidell of the National Archives at Philadelphia for their insightful and generous assistance on this project.

1. See Negley K. Teeters, *They Were in Prison: A History of the Pennsylvania Prison Society, 1787–1937* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1937), for a detailed history of the PSAMPP, and Michael Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue: Punishment, Revolution, and Authority in Philadelphia, 1760–1835* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). Sources disagree on the extent to which the Society was Quaker in membership, but generally agree that its philosophy was heavily influenced by Quaker thought.
2. Elizabeth (Gurney) Fry was born into a wealthy Quaker family involved in banking and became a minister in the Society of Friends, but her fame stemmed from her work in prison reform. In America, journal articles praised Fry and presented a detailed account of her work, such as “Mrs. Elizabeth Fry,” reprinted from the *Ladies Monthly Museum* of June 1818, in *The Philadelphia Register and National Recorder*, January 23, 1819, 66–70.
3. See Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue*; Teeters, *They Were in Prison*; W. David Lewis, *From Newgate to Dannemora* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965); Caleb Smith, *The Prison and the American Imagination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); Norman Johnston, “Evolving Function: Early Use of Imprisonment as Punishment,” *Prison Journal* 89, no. 1 (March 2009): 10S–34S.
4. “The Pennsylvania Penitentiary System,” *The Friend*, September 7, 1844.
5. The only generally accessible source for the documents of the FPAFP is “The Role of Women in the Activities of the Prison Society,” chapter 9 in Teeters, *They Were in Prison*, 248–75. Teeters includes the letters of the FPAFP taken from the minutes of the PSAMPP, which had copied the women’s letters they had received. The manuscript minutes of the PSAMPP are included within the Pennsylvania Prison Society collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Any other contemporary correspondence, reports, and minutes of the FPAFP have not been preserved in any collection to my knowledge. Matilda Wrench, ed., “America,” *Visits to Female Prisoners at Home and Abroad*, edited at the Request of the Committee of the British Ladies’ Society for Promoting the Reformation of Female Prisoners (London: Wertheim and Macintosh, 1852), includes a letter report from the FPAFP. “Female Convicts and the Efforts of Females for Their Relief and Reformation,” *Journal of Prison Discipline and Philanthropy* 1 (April 1845), includes a history of the FPAFP written by the members. Leslie C. Patrick-Stamp discusses the FPAFP and their work in her chapter, “Women in Eastern State Penitentiary,” in Marianna Thomas Architects, *Eastern State Penitentiary: Historic Structures Report*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Eastern State Penitentiary Task Force of the Preservation Coalition of Philadelphia, 1995), 126–33. Brief mention of the

FPAFP is made by Estelle B. Freedman, *Their Sisters' Keepers: Women's Prison Reform in America, 1830–1930* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984), 28. Nicole Rafter, *Partial Justice: Women, Prisons, and Social Control*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1990), 15–16, cites work of the FPAFP but states that lady visitors and early use of matrons did not fundamentally reform early women's prisons because “women were held in institutions designed for men.” The necessity of female guards for female inmates has been a continuing basic tenet of reformers. The research of Anne M. Butler, *Gendered Justice in the American West* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), on women in western men's penitentiaries, 1865–1915, discusses the lack of matrons as one of the hardships (228–29). See Mary E. Odem, *Delinquent Daughters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 4, on female reformers' demand, into the twentieth century, for matrons to guard incarcerated youth.

Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977), 144–45, argues that New England evangelical women's tendency to join multiple societies “suggests that associating under the ideological aegis of evangelical Christianity mattered more to them than the specific goals of any one group.” Anne M. Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 14–52, presents an excellent discussion of evangelical women's pattern before 1840 of joining multiple benevolent organizations characterized by “shared female experience” and religiosity. Diaries and letters of the Orthodox Quaker members of the FPAFP, most of whom were members of Twelfth St. Monthly Meeting in Philadelphia, however, suggest that personal religious “concerns” figured foremost as motivating factors. Kathleen D. McCarthy presents her concept of “parallel power structures,” women's voluntary associations that provided “mechanisms for achieving peaceful, gradualist, and often fundamental political change” outside traditional male organizations, in *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy, and Power* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 23. The idea of “parallel power structures” applies to the story of the FPAFP in many respects. However, the FPAFP was subtly, not overtly, one of the “crucibles in which women have shaped public policies and popular attitudes about gender, class, domesticity, and race.” To the extent that it wielded this influence, it did so as a byproduct of a spiritually driven mission rather than as a recognized goal in itself.

6. See Anne M. Boylan, “Women in Groups: An Analysis of Women's Benevolent Organizations in New York and Boston, 1797–1840,” *Journal of American History* 71 (December 1984): 497–523, for the argument that women's benevolent groups from the 1830s did not lead to feminist organizations and did not act out of a desire to reform ideas about women's sphere. The FPAFP differs in that the women of the FPAFP shared with reform groups a willingness to work directly with criminal and fallen women. Freedman provides a helpful analysis of female benevolent reformers between 1820 and 1860, including Quakers and major figures like Abby Hopper Gibbons (Freedman, *Their Sisters' Keepers*, 22–35). While she recognizes that women were religiously motivated by the Second Great Awakening of the 1820s and 1830s and believed in the power of redemption and reform, her emphasis is upon the women as reformers who sought to save the fallen. The women of the FPAFP, on the other hand, saw their work as Christian ministry that served preacher and sinner alike.
7. *Faith and Practice: A Book of Christian Discipline* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1997), 65.
8. Leigh Ann Wheeler and Jean Quataert, “Editorial Note,” “Politics, Activism, Race” issue of *Journal of Women's History* 23 (Summer 2011): 13; Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence*



- (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 1–9; Anne Fior Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 14–15; Anne B. Boylan, *Origins of Women's Activism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 4; Daniel S. Wright, *"The First of Causes to Our Sex": The Female Moral Reform Movement in the Antebellum Northeast, 1834–1848* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
9. Kathryn Kish Sklar, "'The Throne of My Heart': Religion, Oratory, and Transatlantic Community in Angelina Grimke's Launching of Women's Rights, 1828–1838," in *Women's Rights and Transatlantic Antislavery in the Era of Emancipation*, ed. Sklar and James Brewer Stewart (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 225–33.
  10. Phyllis Mack, "Religion, Feminism, and the Problem of Agency: Reflections on Eighteenth-Century Quakerism," *Signs* 29 (2003): 155–56.
  11. *Ibid.*, 159, 161, 174.
  12. Rebecca Larson, *Daughters of Light: Quaker Women Preaching and Prophesying in the Colonies and Abroad, 1700–1775* (New York: Knopf, 1999), 294–95.
  13. *Ibid.*, 380 n. 13. Margaret Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America* (Philadelphia: Friends General Conference, 1986), 93–94, explains that notable Quaker women involved in reform movements were mostly Hicksite, and that wealthy Orthodox Quaker men were more inclined than were rural Hicksites to encourage Orthodox women to observe unequal gender distinctions.
  14. For a definition of the "inward light," see Jack Eckert, comp., *Guide to the Record of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting* (Philadelphia: Records Committee of PYM, 1989), 270. For the Hicksite-Orthodox schism see Robert W. Doherty, *The Hicksite Separation* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1967); Thomas D. Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988); H. Larry Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986).
  15. Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism*, 139.
  16. "Female Convicts," 106, 111. The FPAFP history quotes the Bible, John 15:5.
  17. Rebecca Collins, letter to Mary Anna Longstreth, May 15, 1842, Rebecca Collins Papers, Collection 1196, Quaker Collection, Haverford College. Collins, a member of the FPAFP, wrote from London, where she was visiting Friends, including Fry, to Longstreth, her niece and a member of the FPAFP, who was in Philadelphia.
  18. Elizabeth Fry, *Observations on the Visiting, Superintendence, and Government, of Female Prisoners* (London: Hatchard and Son, 1827), 2. Fry had no desire to contest gender expectations of domesticity. In this way, her ladies prison associations were similar to the organizations of benevolent ladies Boylan describes in *Origins of Women's Activism*, 54–55.
  19. Susanna Corder, ed., *Life of Elizabeth Fry, compiled from her journal* (Philadelphia: Henry Longstreth, 1855), 631.
  20. Gil Skidmore, in *Strength in Weakness: Writings of Eighteenth-Century Quaker Women* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003), 8–9, comments upon the issue of fame for eighteenth-century British women ministers: "Friends were ambivalent about the idea of 'popularity.' In particular there were worries about some ministers becoming personally popular as this, it was thought, would lay the way open to the danger of spiritual pride and of ministering 'in their own strength' instead of relying on a divine call to minister on every occasion." For a colorful example of the criticisms

made of Fry, see Sarah Strangman Greer, *Quakerism, or, The story of my life, by a lady who for forty years was a member of the Society of Friends* (Philadelphia: J. W. Moore, 1852), 145–65. Defending Fry against Greer’s criticisms is an article, “Mrs. Fry and Her Slanderer,” *National Magazine* (NY) 1 (August 1852): 164–67, reprinted without attribution from the *Eclectic Review* (London).

Writing to British Friend Mary S. Lloyd, Elizabeth Fry described a scene that epitomizes the conflict and the tensions she felt: Fry had drawn the attention of the press by attending a dinner given by the Lord Mayor to Prince Albert at the Mansion House in London; she had overcome her misgivings about attending in order to seize the opportunity to talk with Prince Albert about her cause. She explained to Lloyd, however, that she had indicated her disapproval of toasts by refraining from standing, even to toast the queen’s health, and so had remained true to her Quaker principles. Elizabeth Fry, letter to Mary S. Lloyd, February 5, 1842, E. Fry Papers, British Library. Fry’s daughter Katherine, writing to another of Fry’s daughters, Rachel E. Cresswell, described the “courtly scene”: “My impression was and is that we have seen more curiosity about our Mother, but never more attention or respect or so much acknowledged position.” Typed copy of letter from Katherine Fry to Rachel E. Cresswell, January 18, 1842, E. Fry Papers, British Library. An article stating Friends’ concerns about such issues is S.S., “Mixed Associations,” in *The Friend*, July 20, 1833, reprinted in *Quaker Writings: An Anthology, 1650–1920*, ed. Thomas Hamm (New York: Penguin, 2010), 264. It warns against associating with non-Quakers and expending energy on benevolent projects.

21. “Elizabeth Fry,” May 27, 1848, 414. The tension between Gurneyites and Wilburites was being felt among Orthodox Quakers at this time, and *The Friend* was a Wilburite publication. Possibly this conflict influenced their perspective about Fry, the sister of Joseph John Gurney. Hamm, in *Quaker Writings*, 201–26, includes selections by Elias Hicks, Joseph John Gurney, and John Wilbur, which present an excellent overview distinguishing the core beliefs of Hicksites, Orthodox/Gurneyites, and Orthodox/Wilburites.
22. London Yearly Meeting, “A testimony of the Monthly Meeting of Ratcliff and Barking, concerning Elizabeth Fry, of Upton, who died the 13th day of the tenth month, 1845, in the sixty-sixth year of her age, a Minister about thirty-six years,” *Testimonies concerning deceased ministers: presented to the Yearly Meeting of Friends, held in London, 1846* (London: E. Marsh, 1846), 16–28.
23. Sydney Smith, “Art. III,” *Edinburgh Review* 72 (February 1822): 353–56.
24. Walter Lowe Clay, *The Prison Chaplain: A Memoir of the Rev. John Clay, B.D.* (1861; reprint, Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith, 1969), 81–85.
25. Lucia Zedner, “Wayward Sisters: The Prison for Women,” in *The Oxford History of the Prison*, ed. Norval Morris and David J. Rothman (New York: Oxford, 1998), 300–301.
26. “Notes by the Way: Interview with the British Ladies’ Society,” *Prisoner’s Friend* 4 (February 1, 1852): 275. Walter Lowe Clay in *The Prison Chaplain* did acknowledge three points of Fry’s “direct contributions to the development of penal discipline”: the use of women to superintend female prisoners, the introduction of Christianity “as the essential basis of reformatory discipline,” and the improvement of conditions for women aboard transport ships. (86). Fry’s innovative use of matrons is discussed by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *English Prisons under Local Government* (1922; reprint, Hamden, CT: Archon, 1963), 74. The significance for women of this reform is not always acknowledged, even today. See Robert Alan Cooper, “Jeremy Bentham, Elizabeth Fry, and English Prison Reform,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 42 (October–December 1981): 685: “Mrs. Fry was

an activist rather than a theoretician; her views on prison reform were remarkably derivative. . . . Only one original idea in the area of prison reform can be credited to Mrs. Fry: the employment of matrons to administer the female prisoners."

27. For a discussion of the theory that Fry contributed nothing to prison reform, see Cooper, "Jeremy Bentham, Elizabeth Fry, and English Prison Reform." For a discussion of the theory that Fry sought power over men, see John Kent, who attributes Fry's prison "concern" to "the impulse . . . to challenge the prejudices of a masculine superiority." Kent does, however, convincingly note that a religious concern was significant for a Quaker woman and would have provided a justification to pursue her religious work and travels that male Friends could not oppose. Kent, *Elizabeth Fry* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1962), 32–33. Kent's debatable interpretation of Fry's life has been perpetuated through its citation in works such as Freedman's *Their Sisters' Keepers*, 22–24, which appears to accept it as fact. In his "The Rise and Decline of the Separate System of Prison Discipline," *Past and Present*, no. 54 (February 1972): 90, U. R. Q. Henriques is closer to the mark in stating that Fry, like John Howard, was one of a "few great reformers" and that they were characterized by being religious and having "a vocation."

A useful comparison could be made to Florence Nightingale, although her primary motivation for social reform work differed from that of Fry. Her biographer, Gillian Gill, explains in *Nightingales* (New York: Random House, 2005), 177, that "by the early 1840s, power was already a key concept for Florence Nightingale. She saw that, for all their many excellencies, the women she knew had no desire for power. It did not occur to them to want it. But she did want it and this made her different." Nightingale's ambition to achieve some socially worthy goal differed from Fry's primarily religious impetus toward ministry, although they both employed strategic associations with those in power in to effect social reforms.

London Yearly Meeting, "A testimony of the Monthly Meeting of Ratcliff and Barking," 16.

28. February 11, 1813, and March 20, 1814, in Corder, *Life of Elizabeth Fry*, 197 and 208 respectively.
29. "Watch," January 22, 1859, 159.
30. April 1817, Wistar Collection, Society Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Wistar also quotes Matthew 26:41.
31. Journal of Sarah F. Smiley, February 7, 1858, and June 7, 1858, Quaker Collection, Haverford College.
32. February 15, 1813, *Memoir of the Life of Elizabeth Fry with Extracts from Her Journal and Letters*, ed. by her daughters Katherine Fry and Rachel Elizabeth Cresswell, 2nd ed. (1848; Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith, 1974), 200.
33. Fry, *Observations on the Visiting, Superintendence, and Government, of Female Prisoners*, 20–21. Fry quotes the Bible, Romans 3:23.
34. Quoted in "Female Convicts," 109.
35. Elizabeth Fry, letter to Roberts Vaux, June 14, 1824, Vaux Family Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
36. See the account of the FPAFP in Wrench, "America," 301: "If the British ladies may not claim the Associations on the other side of the Atlantic as offsets of the English stem, they can refer with pleasure to the correspondence of friends in America engaged in the same work, and carrying it on in dependance on the same Spirit."

**“WISE AS SERPENTS AND HARMLESS AS DOVES”**

37. Boylan, *Origins of Women's Activism*, 19.
38. Mary Anna Longstreth to Rebecca Collins, November 21, 1842, Letters to Isaac Collins and Rebecca Collins, Collection 1196, Quaker Collection, Haverford College. Longstreth wrote from Philadelphia to her aunt, who was visiting among Friends “both in social and religious fellowship” in London.
39. Sarah F. Smiley, Rebecca Collins, and Mary Anna Longstreth traveled separately to England, Scotland, and Ireland, and Collins corresponded with British Friends and traveled with British Friend Mary Fox.
40. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence*, 36–66.
41. “Female Convicts,” 113.
42. “Female Convicts,” 115. See Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, “Women’s Meetings,” *Rules of Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia* ([Philadelphia: Kimber, Conrad and Co., 1806], available at <http://www.qhpress.org/texts/obod/womensmm.html> (accessed August 9, 2013).
43. PSAMPP minutes include some references to receipt of reports from the “Ladies Committee.” Pennsylvania Prison Society Records, Meeting of the Acting Committee, vol. 7 (December 8, 1848); vol. 7 (November 28, 1845). References are also made to financial grants and “an annual appropriation” to the “Ladies Committee” vol. 7 (February 14, 1840), vol. 3 (January 23, 1862).
44. Francis Lieber, “Preface and Introduction,” *On the Penitentiary System in the United States*, Gustav de Beaumont and Alexis de Tocqueville, trans. Lieber (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Blanchard, 1833), xiv–xvi. Lieber recommends separate female penitentiaries with matrons, xviii.
45. See Mark E. Kann, *Punishment, Prisons, and Patriarchy: Liberty and Power in the Early American Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 192–97, 266–67, for discussion of reformers’ reluctance to accept the possibility of rehabilitating women.
46. *Journal of Prison Discipline and Philanthropy* no. 6, n.s. (January 1867): 17.
47. See Rafter, *Partial Justice*, 49–50, and Freedman, *Their Sisters’ Keepers*, 15–21. Freedman cites the sexual sphere theory and the criticism of male reformers like Lieber in explaining why women were judged so harshly. Leslie Patrick, in “Ann Hinson: A Little-Known Woman in the Country’s Premier Prison, Eastern State Penitentiary, 1831,” *Pennsylvania History* 67 (2000): 362–63, also argues that Rafter does not adequately address the subject of the treatment of women in Philadelphia prisons in the 1830s. Mary E. Odem, in discussing evolving attitudes toward delinquent teenage girls in *Delinquent Daughters*, 3–5, explains that the white purity activists in the mid-1880s continued to see a “fallen woman” as a “victim of male lust and exploitation,” while reformers in the Progressive era perceived such women as delinquents responsible for their sexual behavior.
48. Freedman, *Their Sisters’ Keepers*, 20–21.
49. Longstreth to Collins, May 28, 1843, Rebecca Collins Papers, Quaker Collection, Haverford College.
50. Female Prison Association of Friends in Philadelphia, *An Account of Julia Moore, a Penitent Female, Who Died in the Eastern Penitentiary of Pennsylvania, in the Year 1843* (Philadelphia: Joseph and William Kite, 1844).
51. Jack D. Marietta and G. S. Rowe, *Troubled Experiment: Crime and Justice in Pennsylvania, 1682–1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 237–73. Leslie Patrick-Stamp, “Numbers

- That Are Not New: African Americans in the Country's First Prison, 1790–1835," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 119 (January–April, 1995): 100, 123–24.
52. Donna McDaniel and Vanessa Julye, *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship: Quakers, African Americans, and the Myth of Racial Justice* (Philadelphia: Quaker Press, 2009), 135–38. For a discussion of racism in the antebellum North, see Patrick-Stamp, "Numbers"; Elizabeth M. Geffen, "Industrial Development and Social Crisis 1841–1854," in Barra Foundation, *Philadelphia A 300-Year History* (New York: Norton, 1982), 352–55; Marietta and Rowe, *Troubled Experiment*, 244–47; Kali N. Gross, *Colored Amazons: Crime, Violence, and Black Women in the City of Brotherly Love, 1880–1910* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 33–35.
  53. Paul Kahan, *Seminary of Virtue: The Ideology and Practice of Inmate Reform at Eastern State Penitentiary, 1829–1971* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 49–51.
  54. "Female Convicts," 117. Similarly, the history of the FPAFP, written by the members themselves, notes their concern that the House of Refuge for juveniles (opened in 1828) did not accommodate African American children. These scant references concerning tolerance, however, must be viewed in the context of evidence that racist attitudes were the norm among the benevolent white leaders of the city's institutions. Cecile P. Frey's extensive account of the founding of the House of Refuge for Colored Children in Philadelphia in 1850, for example, explains the concern to provide separately for African American children. A committee report from 1841 had advised the necessity of this institution, citing the "law establishing the House of Refuge contemplates no differences of colour as distinguishing the classes which shall be admitted." On the other hand, the committee (which included Orthodox Quaker Isaac Collins, husband of FPAFP leader and Howard Home Director Rebecca Collins) had lamented that they had "no suitable accommodations for them," implying that the mixture of white and black children was not an option. Within the entrenched racism of this culture, then, it is difficult to imagine that black inmates released to the Howard Home, discussed below, were treated the same as whites. See Frey, *Journal of Negro History* 66 (Spring 1981): 10–25; "Report on the practicability and necessity of a House of Refuge for Coloured Juvenile Delinquents in Philadelphia," *The Friend* 14 [March 13, 1841].
  55. "Female Convicts," 117.
  56. *Ibid.*, 116.
  57. Roberts Vaux, letter to Mary Wistar, n.d., Vaux Family Papers, Collection 684, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The letter must have been written after 1813, when Vaux married Margaret Wistar. Vaux quotes the Bible, Luke 16:19. Short gowns were garments worn with petticoats by working women in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America, and were made of "calico, chintz, striped linen, and linsey-woolsey." Linda Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America: The Colonial Williamsburg Collection* (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2002), 118; Claudia Kidwell, "Short Gowns," *Dress* 4 (1978): 30. Kidwell notes that they were "intended to be given long and hard use" (44).

Wealthy Quaker Sally Wister, corresponding with her friend Debby Norris during the Revolutionary War, notes her chagrin to have been caught in a short gown when Continental soldiers came to call. Kate Haulman, *The Politics of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 168–70.

58. Vaux, letter to Wistar, n.d., We may infer from Vaux's words, then, that the PSAMPP was being quite restrictive and severe in dictating the quality as well as quantity of clothing funded for female prisoners, and that they certainly intended to maintain control over how their funds were used by the FPAFP. This approach to clothing distribution appears to have been a long-standing PSAMPP policy, referred to in the Visiting Committee Report of 1809 (see Teeters, *They Were in Prison*, 68–69), and also by Vaux, *Notices of the Original, and Successive Efforts, to Improve the Discipline of the Prison at Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Kimber and Sharpless, 1826), which states that, in 1788, the PSAMPP noted the particular need for clothing by pre-trial prisoners, who traded clothing for liquor. “No provision being made by law for relieving these distressed objects, or for preventing the abuses of charitable donations, it is at present an evil without a remedy, though it is conceived that a kind of prison dress might be adopted by law.”
59. *Observations*, 23–25. Fry quotes Jesus' directions to his disciples in the Bible, Matt. 10:16: “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”
60. “Five Tests for Discerning a True Leading,” Tract Assoc. of Friends, <http://www.tractassociation.org/tracts/tests-discerning-true-leading/> (accessed August 7, 2013).
61. See Lewis, *From Newgate to Dannemora*, 161–65; Kann, *Punishment, Prisons, and Patriarchy*, 197–200; Freedman, *Their Sisters' Keepers*, 58–59; Rafter, *Partial Justice*, 13–15. Margaret Fuller had written emphatically about the need for matrons in New York in 1845: *Margaret Fuller's New York Journalism*, ed. Catherine C. Mitchell (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 88–93.

Zedner, “Wayward Sisters,” 298, 301. Philadelphia prisons were not the first in America to install matrons. The Baltimore penitentiary hired a matron in 1822. By 1845 Dorothy Dix reported matrons in Massachusetts, Maryland, Eastern State and Sing Sing. Freedman, *Their Sisters' Keepers*, 58.
62. *Observations*, 26.
63. *Observations*, 28–29.
64. Fry, letter to Vaux, June 14, 1824, Vaux Family Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Wrench, “America,” 304–5, gives a brief overview of the evolution of women's prison reform in Philadelphia until that time, stressing that at the time that the FPAFP was formed in 1823, there were no matrons and male keepers used corporal punishment to control female prisoners. She contrasts the situation at the time of her writing, in 1852: “Pious and well-qualified matrons now have charge of them, and prisoners who, under the stern discipline of men seemed hardened against even temporary improvement, have under their kind and mild, but steady and uniform rule, become quiet and orderly, and some of these hardened hearts have been opened to the influences of Divine grace.”
65. “Female Convicts,” 112–13. Pennsylvania Prison Society Records, Acting Committee Minutes, “Meeting of the Acting Committee,” March 13, 1827, 2:143–144; “Meeting of the Acting Committee,” May 29, 1827, 2:144–45, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Journalist Anne Newport Royall visited “the prison of Philadelphia” (Walnut St.) and admired the effectiveness of the “amiable” male guard: “He appeared to possess that soft and undisguised charity, that meek-eyed philanthropy, so requisite to one in his place: he spoke to those females, not with the authority of a callous, unfeeling task-master, but with the mildness of a brother.” Royall, *Sketches of history, life, and manners, in the United States* (New Haven, CT: Printed for the author, 1826), 218–19.

66. Women were first admitted into Eastern State Penitentiary in April 1831. In 1831 the Board of Inspectors “expressed their anxiety about the prospect of women in the prison, declaring that it would be advisable to employ a matron to oversee them. On December 3 of that year, the Board approved hiring a matron, but perhaps because there was already a female in residence who was not an inmate, Mrs. Blundin, an underkeeper’s wife, they did nothing immediately about making the appointment.” Patrick, “Ann Hinson,” 363. Patrick cites Board of Inspectors Monthly Minutes, December 3, 1831.

The women also attempted to secure a matron at Arch Street in 1833: “A communication was received from Mrs. Jane Johnson in relation to the employment of a matron at the Arch Street Jail.” Acting Committee Minutes, March 11, 1833, quoted in Teeters, *They Were in Prison*, 250.

*The Friend*, in a long defense of the solitary system in the issues of February 1 and February 8, 1834, commented upon the appropriate management of female prisoners: “the females should be intrusted wholly to the custody of suitable individuals of their own sex, whose services can, of course, be secured for less compensation than those of men.” Vol. 7, nos. 17 and 18.

67. See *Faith and Practice*, glossary, 219: “Proceed As Way Opens: To undertake a service or course of action without prior clarity about all the details but with confidence that divine guidance will make these apparent and assure an appropriate outcome.”
68. See Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue*, 305–28, for a detailed discussion of the investigation. Meranze argues that misogynist criticisms were directed at Blunden, while the male administrators of the prison were exonerated. Patrick examines in detail the case of Eastern State Penitentiary inmate Ann Hinson in “Ann Hinson,” 361–75.
69. William Crawford, *Report on the Penitentiaries of the United States* (1835; reprint, Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith, 1969). The British Parliament, in accepting Crawford’s recommendation, sided with the separate system over Fry’s statements against it. For her part, however, Fry did not appear to consider Crawford a rival. In her letter to Augusta Mackenzie, she refers to “Our government Prison inspectors my friends William Crawford and Frederick Hill.” Of Crawford, she writes, “I think him a very valuable & I trust a religious man.” Fry, letter to Mackenzie, October 17, 1835, Fry Manuscripts, Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College.
70. Mr. Penrose, *Report of the Joint Commission of the Legislature of Pennsylvania, Relative to the Eastern State Penitentiary at Philadelphia* (Harrisburg: Welsh and Patterson, 1835).
71. *A Concise History of the Eastern Penitentiary of Pennsylvania, together with a Detailed Statement of the Proceedings of the Committee, Appointed by the Legislature, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1834, for the Purpose of Examining into the Economy and Management of that Institution, Embracing the Testimony Taken on that Occasion, and Legislative Proceedings Connected Therewith*. By a Member of the Legislature. 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Neall and Massey, 1835). An interesting insight into possible attitudes within the PSAMPP on the case is suggested by a letter from McElwee to Roberts Vaux, in which he states that his minority report is being printed in English and German, but was denied being read in the Senate and House. “Much exertion has been made use of to prevent me from making an adverse Report. I conceived however that I owed a solemn duty to the Comtee as well as to myself & humanity, to report my opinions on this matter. I will send you a copy of each as soon as printed. I write in haste.” March 27, 1835, Vaux Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. His letter, familiarly chiding Vaux (“You owe me two letters”) and signed “Your Friend,” implies that he considers Vaux to be friendly to his side of the investigation. At this time, Vaux was no longer corresponding secretary of the

PSAMPP, having filled this post until 1832, when he was elected a vice-president. “The Minutes do not record his name after 1832 although his death did not occur until 1836. It is possible he retired from public life in 1832, as his name is not connected with any other organization after that date” (Teeters, *They Were in Prison*, 155). In the absence of recorded statements, the attitude of Vaux and of the PSAMPP regarding the investigation is intriguing but unknown.

72. “Female Convicts,” 114.
73. Minutes of County Prison Board of Inspectors, November 11, 1835, vol. P632—9/1835-12/1843, Philadelphia Archives; Teeters, *They Were in Prison*, 193.
74. “Female Convicts,” 114-15.

In 1869, the PSAMPP proudly pointed to the existence of matrons in the Moyamensing County Prison, though not without considerable condescension: “We cannot doubt that the continued health of the female prisoners in the County Jail is greatly due to free circulation of air and the full benefit of sunshine in the building. Perhaps the superior neatness, purity, and sanitary order of this portion of the Prison is partly due to the fact that two matrons preside over that part of its administration, and all their assistants are females. Almost any man can keep a clean floor, but it takes women to ensure clean corners—and in the corners and out-of-the-way places are concealed the means and elements of disease.” *Journal of Prison Discipline and Philanthropy* 8, n.s. (January 1869): 23.

75. Minutes from May 22, 1835, *British Parliamentary Papers: First and Second Reports from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Present State of the Several Gaols and Houses of Correction in England and Wales with Minutes of Evidence and Appendices: Crime and Punishment*, 3 (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1968-71), 338-40. Lucia Zedner, in *Women, Crime, and Custody in Victorian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 113-14, explains that, in the English debate over solitude’s effects on women, some argued that women were more adaptable to solitude than were men because they were considered “more sedentary and passive in their habits, and therefore better able to withstand this restriction of their mobility.” In 1848, however, John Armstrong argued in “Female Penitentiaries” (*Quarterly Review* [London] 83 [September 1848]: 374) that “it might be questioned whether the female mind would be able to bear so much of solitude after so restless a course of life spent in crowds and revels. But still we conceive a certain share of solitude is requisite for the furtherance of the great work.”
76. Wrench, “America,” 305-6.
77. Longstreth, letter to Collins, January 22, 1843, Rebecca Collins Papers, Quaker Collection, Haverford College.
78. “Female Convicts,” 116. Eastern State Penitentiary inmate records at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia indicate their release and disposition. Several cases note that the women had been released to female Friends, taken into service by female Friends, or recommended to the Howard Home.
79. For discussion of the Isaac Hopper Home, see Lewis, *From Newgate to Dannemora*, 220-29; Freedman, *Their Sisters’ Keepers*, 29-35.
80. Teeters, 252-53 quotes Susan H. Loyd, letter to Executive Board of PSAMPP, October 11, 1852.
81. The Howard managers handled the expenditure of the PSAMPP’s \$100 annual contribution by spending the money on clothing for the women. Teeters, *They Were in Prison*, 259-61. On Gibbons and the New York female society, see Margaret Bacon, *Abby Hopper Gibbons* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 60-61; Freedman, *Their Sisters’ Keepers*, 33-34.



82. Margaret Hope Bacon, *Abby Hopper Gibbons: Prison Reformer and Social Activist* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 60–61; Teeters, 253–62.
83. See Boylan, *Origins of Women's Activism*, 56–60. For discussion of women's professional experience, see Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence*, 119–20.
84. Fry's daughters comment in her memoir that this was an "expression to be frequently heard from her lips." *Memoir of the Life of Elizabeth Fry*, ed. Fry and Cresswell, 22. "Opening" defined in Earlham School of Religion website, <http://quakerinfo.org> (accessed August 8, 2013).
85. *The Friend* 18 (December 14, 1844): 93.
86. Joseph John Gurney, *A Journey in North America, described in familiar letters to Amelia Opie* (Norwich: J. Fletcher, 1841), 100. At the time, American Orthodox Quakers were moving toward a split, in which Gurney's evangelical teachings figured centrally.
87. Dorothea Dix, *Remarks on Prisons and Prison Discipline in the United States* (Boston: Munroe and Francis, 1845), 105–6.
88. Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons Minutes, vol. 3, 1852–80, April 24, 1861, and Minutes of the Acting Committee of the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons, vol. 7, February 14, 1840, Pennsylvania Prison Society Records, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
89. *Sketch of the Principal Transactions of the "Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons," from Its Origin to the Present Time* (Philadelphia: Merrihew and Thompson, 1859), 29.
90. *The Act Incorporating the House of Refuge, and Laws Relative Thereto, together with the Rules and Regulations for Its Government and List of Officers, Managers, Etc.* (Philadelphia: Harding, 1829) does indicate considerable involvement for women in the plan for the institution. A "Committee of twelve judicious females" was to be appointed "to assist in the management of the House of Refuge, by imparting advice to the youth confined therein, and by bestowing their attentions and care upon the domestic economy of the establishment" (3).
91. Vaux, *Notices*, 46.
92. Peter P. Jonitis and Elizabeth W. Jonitis, *Members of the Prison Society: Biographical Vignettes, 1776–1830: of the Managers of the Philadelphia Society for Assisting Distressed Prisoners and the Members of the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons 1787–1830*, Haverford Special Collections Manuscripts, Haverford College, 1982.
93. "Female Convicts," 113. The FPAFP history notes that the achievement is limited, because it accommodates only "white children."
94. *Journal of Prison Discipline and Philanthropy*, n.s., no. 3 (January 1864): 35–43.
95. *Journal of Prison Discipline and Philanthropy*, n.s., no. 2 (January 1863): 32. Through the medium of the annual reports of the PSAMPP, the public may have become aware of the work of the FPAFP, since these reports were generally available. Notice of the 1865 annual report is included in the "New Books" column of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (March 19, 1866, 2) and the brief review includes reference to the "ladies," disproportionately longer than the notice given in the reports themselves: "The ladies connected with the association have the care of the female prisoners, and their efforts to reform the erring and unfortunate of their sex have been crowned with success."
96. *Journal of Prison Discipline and Philanthropy*, n.s., no. 5 (January 1866): 253. "The Rosine Society was founded in the spring of 1847 and had for its purpose the care of 'degraded females.'" This was a society with female members. In 1800 the Magdalen Society was begun in Philadelphia by men "to act in restoring to the paths of virtue, to be instrumental in recovering to honest rank in life,

those unhappy females, who, in an unguarded hour have been robbed of their innocence” (Teeters, *They Were in Prison*, 264–67).

97. *Journal of Prison Discipline and Philanthropy*, n.s., no. 5 (January 1866): 30. Ibid. The article devotes considerable space to a discussion of the benefits of prison visitors’ representing diverse religious backgrounds, in order to accommodate the diversity of prisoners’ religious (apparently, Christian) backgrounds. The FPAFP members were not the only women visiting Philadelphia prisons in the 1860s. The annual report of the PSAMPP, in describing the visiting at Moyamensing, notes representation by diverse religions among the visitors: “It is pleasant to say that while ladies of various denominations come to do the good work in the prison and find there some prisoners of their special creed, they have labored in love *with* each other as well as for the prisoner, and added to the benefit of their mission the beautiful example of Christian charity to all. They have not changed, not even modified their creeds, but they have manifested a most beautiful rivalry in attempts to illustrate their particular faith by the benefit of their works on others.” *Journal of Prison Discipline and Philanthropy*, n.s., no. 6 (January 1867): 18.

However, at the risk of drawing invidious comparisons between “outside” volunteers and FPAFP visitors, the *JPD* in 1867 presented a rather lengthy description of the “peculiar discipline of mind” and “gifts that few can boast” necessary to visit prisoners successfully. The PSAMPP was clearly concerned that the delicacy of novice female visitors would prevent them from gaining the trust of prisoners. They advised speaking one-to-one, directly with the prisoner, rather than through the wicket, maintaining a faithful schedule, and avoiding a “Pharisaical parade of superior sanctity.” They frankly state their anticipation of a naïve attitude of “personal repugnance” and racism in lady visitors (who do not approach prison work with the constructive and realistic attitudes of FPAFP members). By printing the dialogue of what they present as a typical scenario, they describe the problems awaiting a new lady visitor, whose good intentions are stymied by the reality of ministering, in her assumed words, in “the cell with a dissolute black thief.” *Journal of Prison Discipline and Philanthropy*, n.s., no. 6 (January 1867): 51–56

98. *Journal of Prison Discipline and Philanthropy*, n.s., no. 5 (January 1866): 30.
99. “A Memorial of the Monthly Meeting of Friends of Philadelphia, for the Western District, concerning Mary Wistar,” *Friends’ Review* 4 (October 5, 1850): 33.