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Taming Wild Girls: The Midnight Mission and the Campaign to Reform Philadelphia's Moral Fabric, 1915–1918

On the morning of the 23rd of September I saw this girl coming up the street with two young fellows about 2.20 in the morning. Before they got opposite to me, one of them came across the street with the girl and one stayed on the other side. Afterwards one of them came down to me and told me this girl wanted a room. I went after them and placed the girl under arrest and she admitted to me about three men having her in this house. . . . Afterwards I found out this was the house we had so many complaints about. I saw her once before at the Carnival with two men but when I went after her she ran behind the tents.

Officer Easterday¹

OFFICER WILLIAM H. EASTERDAY'S matter-of-fact recitation of the actions he observed Rose O. undertaking on a cool September night in 1915 reflects how many middle-class Progressives viewed the public conduct of working-class adolescent

¹ Case Summary of Rose O'_____, Midnight Mission Case File 388a, Midnight Mission Case Files 1911–1924, Episcopal Community Services, Urban Archives (Restricted Materials), Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia.

girls.² Fearful of what they believed to be rampant working-class sexuality, which they associated with prostitution, and convinced that the root of sexual vice lay not with those men who pursued and purchased the services of prostitutes but rather with the prostitutes themselves, Progressive reformers launched a campaign to rid the streets of those who they believed peddled disease and immorality. Police raided suspected brothels, closely monitored dance halls, and questioned unescorted (and occasionally escorted) women in public spaces all in an effort to protect the decent, moral public from those willing to offer their very bodies for money.

This perspective was relatively new. Prior to the Gilded Age, antiprostitution reformers placed the blame primarily on predatory males, convinced that women engaged in the “world’s oldest profession” would voluntarily leave its service if only given the opportunity to do so. They established networks of private, informal “reformatories” to aid those women who, “disgusted with their life of shame,” wished to redeem themselves in the eyes of the public and of God himself.³ The Midnight Mission of Philadelphia was one of these facilities. Founded in 1868 as part of a nationwide Episcopalian network of private civilian reform institutions, this ten-bed facility was created to provide those wishing to leave a life of prostitution a safe, secure, and above all moral environment in which they could work to redeem themselves without the fear of stigmatization or the risk of further corruption believed possible in state-sanctioned facilities such as the House of Detention, a formal institution created to incarcerate underage offenders guilty of minor crimes such as truancy.⁴

² By the time of his encounter with Rose, Officer William H. Easterday had been a member of the Philadelphia Police Department for at least seven years, as his actions occasionally made the local newspaper. Curiously, eighteen months before his arrest of Rose, Easterday was tried on the charge of wife beating, but apparently this accusation had no effect on his career as he was still on duty as late as 1920. “Policeman Wears Blinders, Says Court,” “Policemen to Be Tried,” and “Coat and Vest Lead to Arrest for Arson,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Feb. 13, 1909, Feb. 7, 1914, and May 3, 1920.

³ *The Third Annual Report of the Midnight Mission for the Year Ending January 25th, 1870* (New York, 1870), 13. Most records of the Mission’s activities during the late nineteenth century no longer survive except in the form of admission books, which provide little information beyond the name, age, and basic biographic data of the women who passed through its doors.

⁴ This belief was expressed by W. A. Muhlenberg in *The Woman and Her Accusers: A Plea for The Midnight Mission* (New York, 1871), 26: “The Mission asks for the means of providing homes for those whom they would rescue, and whom they can rescue only by placing in circumstances favorable to their reformation. Not the ordinary Magdalen Asylum. They wont go there to be stamped as they think, with an additional stigma of infamy; and I profess that this is hardly the most promising method of moral elevation, which makes herds of the debased, and expect them not to debase one another. Penitentiaries, so called, are often but colleges of corruption, where tyros in sin go through the classes and graduate in iniquity.”

At the turn of the century the program and purpose of the Midnight Mission shifted in response to changing beliefs concerning the nature of public vice and the role that social structures played in ensuring the social purity of the public body, especially within the burgeoning urban environment. In the first two decades of the twentieth century reformers no longer believed it effective merely to attempt the redemption of a woman *after* she had slid into a life of moral turpitude; rather, social scientists, moral reformers, and public servants felt that the way to combat the spread of public vice was to attack the environments that led adolescent girls into prostitution and to identify and intervene in the lives of those girls inclined towards the immoral life.⁵ Dangerous environments were easily identified and monitored—they were those places such as dance halls, amusement parks, and darkened movie theaters where individuals of both genders mingled anonymously and indiscriminately. But controlling the adolescents who frequented such establishments was far more difficult for reformers. Generally from ethnic, working-class backgrounds, these young people often displayed public behaviors almost diametrically opposed to those that Progressive Era moralists considered wholesome. Staying out all night, stealing, lying, and (worst of all) mingling with members of the opposite sex in unsupervised settings were, in the eyes of Progressives, sure signs that a teenager was on a slippery slope towards an immoral, degenerate adulthood.

This social and intellectual environment shaped Officer Easterday's suspicions of Rose in 1915. Not only did he observe an adolescent girl of Irish ethnicity on the streets of the city long after midnight, she was in the company of two young men and entered a house long suspected to be a site of immoral activity. When confronted, Rose confirmed his suspicions—she was rude and insubordinate and admitted to sexual activity with numerous men. To stop her downward descent (and, perhaps more existentially, to protect Philadelphia society), the juvenile court sentenced Rose to the Midnight Mission to be inculcated with socially acceptable behaviors. When Rose was released two years later, it appeared that the Mission's program had been successful. Rose's behavior showed a marked improvement, she had excelled in stenography and typing classes, and she had enrolled in the Bell Telephone School on Market Street with the goal

⁵ See Mary E. Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885–1920* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1995), 98–108, for an in-depth examination of Progressives' understandings of female sexuality, environment, and redemption.

of becoming an operator. Perhaps more importantly, she had accepted the moral teachings of her keepers and had been confirmed by an Episcopalian bishop in 1916.⁶

The Mission's success seems to support the Progressive belief that moral inculcation, coupled with social and practical education, could curb behaviors deemed immoral and therefore unacceptable. Progressive Era intellectuals, moralists, and social scientists believed that reform could be achieved, as in the case of Rose, on an individual, case-by-case basis. To support this strategy, according to historian David Rothman, they linked different facilities and organizations into a massive "reform web" in an effort to end institutional rigidity.⁷ Yet when we examine numerous cases from a single facility in the web and analyze them as a whole, the success of the Progressive reform ideal comes into question. Though the case of Rose was a success, numerous girls who passed through the Mission's doors did not submit to moral or social inculcation willingly, or internalized such instruction only long enough to convince a facility matron that they deserved release. This failure can best be attributed to the shifting relationship between social norms and individual values during the Progressive Era. Progressive reformers believed that entire segments of society could be uplifted through the application of scientific knowledge, moral inculcation, and social control, yet individual reformers frequently found that the subjects of their ministrations either did not fit their preconceptions and/or fundamentally rejected their values and instruction.⁸ When we compare the intended program of Philadelphia's Midnight Mission with the actions of its inmates during incarceration and after release, the tensions between Progressive Era beliefs in the primacy of morality as a vital component of modern society and the realities of class-based social uplift come into sharp relief. These tensions rendered the program of the Mission only partially effective and highlight the difficulty of applying the norms of society to individuals.

⁶ Summary of the Case of Rose O'_____, Midnight Mission Case File 388a.

⁷ David J. Rothman, *Conscience and Convenience: The Asylum and Its Alternatives in Progressive America* (Boston, 1980), 3–12.

⁸ In his study of liberalizing influences in American society during the 1940s and 1950s, Alan Petigny notes a frequent disconnect between American norms and individual values on a wide variety of subjects, most notably race, gender, and religion. Frequently the actions of an individual contradicted the professed social mores expressed by the group. His argument can be extended back to the Progressive Era. See Alan Petigny, *The Permissive Society: America, 1941–1965* (New York, 2009), 249–82.

TAMING WILD GIRLS

A Snapshot in Time

The concerns that prompted Philadelphia's Progressive reformers to focus on wild girls in Philadelphia stemmed from two paradigmatic shifts in American cultural and intellectual thought. Most basic of these was the creation of the concept of the adolescent. Before the turn of the nineteenth century there were two age categories in American society: childhood (infancy to around puberty) and adulthood. Though the concept of a physical stage of human development between childhood and adulthood had been acknowledged by physicians and biologists for many years, it was only in the first decade of the twentieth century that adolescence was recognized as a stage during which both social and cultural development occurred. Progressive Era intellectuals viewed adolescence as a key period of development that heavily influenced the moral development of the protoadult. Some modern historians see the concept of adolescence as, in the words of Kent Baxter, "a cultural invention" reflecting social tensions sparked by industrialization, urbanization, and the perceived disruptions of traditional family and social controls.⁹ Yet Baxter himself notes that adolescence was more than a mere reflection of social tensions, but a sociocultural creation containing its own definitions of "right" and "wrong" and specifically designed to ensure the development of proper, moral adults. By defining a proper, moral, ideal adolescent (largely a fiction), authority figures could identify those who did not fit into this mold and who represented "a kind of cultural anxiety of the physical and sexual threat the adolescent can become if left to his or her own devices."¹⁰ Using this template, social workers, law-enforcement officials, and moral reformers could identify those adolescents deemed at risk and take appropriate action to curb their antisocial behaviors while protecting society from their influence.¹¹

⁹ Kent Baxter, *The Modern Age: Turn-of-the-Century American Culture and the Invention of Adolescence* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 2008), 8.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹¹ A more existential version of this argument can be found in Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction* (New York, 1978), 81–91, where he argues that sexuality is defined within a power relationship to the state. Initially it is bifurcated into "licit" and "illicit" actions; these actions are to be defined by the mechanisms of power; and the "power" is the ultimate authority of the legitimacy of the act. To enforce its will, "power" utilizes a series of prohibitions of increasingly oppressive sanctions that finally culminate in incarceration. Though he perhaps places too much emphasis on "mechanisms of power," in Progressive Philadelphia there definitely existed an inchoate interpretation of what actions were licit and illicit based upon a set of ever-changing, subjective interpretations of individuals.

At the same time, moral reformers in the first two decades of the twentieth century came to believe that deviant tendencies in adolescents could be eliminated through an institutional structure. By the mid-nineteenth century, physicians, pundits, and sociologists had come to believe in the primacy of social hereditarianism: that a child's physical and emotional characteristics were inherited from his or her parents. Progressive Era attempts to curb the apparent spread of sexual immorality were the natural evolution of this belief. American intellectuals had come to the conclusion that social and economic progress were inextricably linked, and that both could be promoted through such institutions as public schools, civic organizations, and religious systems. By the turn of the twentieth century, Progressive theorists had added morality to the mix, thus adding the reform institution to the list as the perfect vehicle to inculcate the desired moral mindset into those who authority figures deemed susceptible to immoral activity. This Progressive conviction in the efficacy of the institution as a means of controlling and eliminating negative social impulses within adolescents (exemplified by the rise of the juvenile court and the state-run reformatory system) was behind both the existence and the program of the Midnight Mission.¹²

Few historians have studied the role of the reformatory in the promotion of Progressive Era sexual propriety, which is surprising considering the conviction among reformers that uncontrolled sexuality posed a threat to American society. The few studies in existence note the shift away from a focus on women as victims to women as the target of moral reformers and rightly note that reformers were seriously concerned with adolescent sexuality and propriety.¹³ In a way this shift of focus is understandable; during the first two decades of the twentieth century cultural interpretations of gender roles and female sexuality in the United States were in a state of flux, caught between the reticent, proper Victorian woman of the 1890s and the self-actualized, independent woman of the 1920s.¹⁴

¹² Charles E. Rosenberg, *No Other Gods: On Science and American Social Thought* (Baltimore, 1976), 25–26, 135–41.

¹³ Numerous studies have examined Progressive reformers' obsession with controlling unrestrained sexuality. See, for example, Brian Donovan, *White Slave Crusades: Race, Gender, and Anti-vice Activism, 1887–1917* (Urbana, IL, 2006); Alison M. Parker, *Purifying America: Women, Cultural Reform, and Pro-Censorship Activism, 1873–1933* (Urbana, IL, 1997); and John C. Burnham, *Bad Habits: Drinking, Smoking, Taking Drugs, Gambling, Sexual Misbehavior, and Swearing in American History* (New York, 1993). These studies, however, do not look specifically at the reformatory.

¹⁴ Linda R. Hirshman and Jane E. Larson, *Hard Bargains: The Politics of Sex* (New York, 1998), 156–79.

Indeed, the case files of the Midnight Mission seem to bear out the conclusion that the rise of female reformatories in the period 1905–1925 reflected an attempt to regulate adolescent girls who were feared to be on the very cusp of entering a life of prostitution, if they had not already done so. Yet the few in-depth scholarly studies of the various (mostly public) institutions dedicated to the reform of such adolescents in the Progressive Era all seem to provide similar narratives of transgression, education, and redemption. Sharing a common set of beliefs about adolescent sexuality and how to control it, most institutions presented similar narrative arcs regarding their inmates' violations, incarcerations, and attempts at reformation. As a result, the particulars of individual institutions get lost in these narratives and in the historiography.¹⁵

Yet the individual *inmates* of these institutions were not homogenous. Some scholars have acknowledged this fact by including examples of individuals within their larger narrative in order to provide anecdotal support to their conclusions about the institution.¹⁶ But a few examples selected out of an institutional body of over one hundred inmates cannot prove the rule, or even the exception. Furthermore, scholars inquiring into the control and reform of adolescent female sexuality during the Progressive Era face evidentiary hurdles, namely survivability of records, access to those records that do survive, and restrictions upon their use.¹⁷

¹⁵ For examples of such studies, see Odem, *Delinquent Daughters*, and Ruth M. Alexander, *The "Girl Problem": Female Sexual Delinquency in New York, 1900–1930* (Ithaca, NY, 1995). For more generalized examples that move beyond female adolescents and examine nonsexual Progressive reform organizations, see Sherri Broder, *Tramps, Unfit Mothers, and Neglected Children: Negotiating the Family in Late Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 2002). For an example of studies that do not limit themselves to traditional narratives but instead emphasize the contextual nature of "immorality" and reform, see Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence: Boston 1880–1960* (New York, 1988), and Elizabeth Alice Clement, *Love for Sale: Courting, Treating, and Prostitution in New York City, 1900–1945* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2006). However, these last three works focus less on reformatories and more upon the entirety of the system attempting to understand and control "deviant" behavior and therefore only touch on institutional practices.

¹⁶ Perhaps the best example of this methodology can be found in Alexander, "Girl Problem."

¹⁷ In response to an information inquiry in 1945, the executive secretary of Philadelphia's Episcopal Community Services stated that "so many of the old, small, charitable agencies were run by well intentioned, but untrained people who had little conception of the value of statistics or records." Executive Secretary, Episcopal Community Services, to Lillian Garner. Response Letter, Jan. 20, 1945, Midnight Mission Case File 443a. Ironically, this letter is the only document in this particular case file, as no other information regarding the specific inmate could be located in regards to this inquiry. This problem is not limited to private institutions. In her study of the development of the Cook County, Illinois, juvenile court system, Anne Knapfer gives voice to the problems faced by scholars; the case files of the period 1899 through 1936 were highly fragmentary, for some years completely unavailable, and "only one historian, David Tanenhaus, has been granted permission to look at what case files

Given the paucity of verifiable case studies, scholars of adolescent delinquency are frequently forced to examine their subjects from the vantage point of the reformers, a methodology that emphasizes institutional homogeneity, with only a few select individual examples included to reinforce the narrative.

The records of the Midnight Mission of Philadelphia give scholars a rare opportunity to examine adolescent inmates within a purportedly homogenous reformatory system. The institution was a small, private reformatory operated by the Philadelphia Episcopal Church. Located on Arch Street, this ten-bed facility took in approximately 120 white, Protestant, adolescent women, ages fifteen to nineteen, between the turn of the twentieth century and the shuttering of the institution's doors in the 1920s. An examination of the case files from 1915 to 1918 reveals the individuality of the inmates sentenced to a two-year term of incarceration behind its walls and demonstrates that the Mission's reforming program was too inflexible to be universally successful in curbing antisocial behaviors. By examining the specific reasons for inmates' imprisonment, as well as individuals' behavior within the facility and fate upon their reintroduction into society, we gain a greater understanding of the nature of female adolescent delinquency (and of the individual values of the inmates) during the Progressive Era and the tempered success of Progressive reformers in enforcing their social norms upon the inmates.

Committed to the Mission

Most scholars of moral reform during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era agree that reform was designed to curb perceived sexual deviance among young women of the lower classes. The records of the Midnight Mission inmates bear this belief out to a degree; if an adolescent girl was sentenced to the facility, chances were that she was working class and had already been "immoral" or had given the appearance of "immoral tendencies," as defined by those who had sentenced her to the facility.¹⁸ Yet not only sexually promiscuous adolescent girls were sentenced to the Mission;

exist." Furthermore, the probation records and parole officers' reports for the Chicago Home for Girls, the House of the Good Shepherd, and the State Industrial School for Girls "were not only unavailable but destroyed." Anne Meis Knupfer, *Reform and Resistance: Gender, Delinquency, and America's First Juvenile Court* (New York, 2001), 181–82.

¹⁸ My conclusion is based upon a general survey of surviving background reports of over fifty inmates of the Midnight Mission, 1909–1925.

individual case files reveal that transgressive actions demanding incarceration could vary widely from inmate to inmate. Certainly, there were girls who were well along the perceived path towards moral degeneracy, but others appeared to be victims of sexual abuse within the home and were incarcerated for their own safety, while still others displayed a tendency to defy authority and pursue an independent life. This wide range is illustrated by examining the details of three specific cases. Their stories call for a basic shift in our understanding of adolescent sexuality and the Progressive drive for its control and show that the inmates of the Mission were not generic working-class adolescent females but vibrant, independent young women searching for their way in the rapidly changing urban landscape of the modern world.

Records indicate that, in certain cases, reformers promoting reformatory structures as a necessary part of modern social control were successful and that girls who had already been lost to an immoral lifestyle could be redeemed, if given the proper training and incentive. Rose was one such girl. Born in 1901, Rose came from a large Irish family in which her father's "very small salary" harmed all its members.¹⁹ Rose discovered the financial earning power of her sexuality at an early age, trading unidentified sexual favors for undisclosed sums at the precocious age of eleven. This activity brought her to the attention of the judicial system. As noted previously, on September 23, 1915, Officer Easterday reported seeing Rose in the company of two unidentified males who took her to a house on Stoughton Street well known to the neighborhood as a site of prostitution. After observing no less than five different men entering and leaving the building, the officer entered the house and arrested Rose, who admitted to intercourse with no less than three different men that evening.²⁰ The

¹⁹ It was a commonly held belief that there was a direct relationship between poverty and immorality and that insufficient economic resources led to rapid moral degeneration within the family. A 1913 report on vice noted that "large groups of men in Philadelphia earn annually a wage about \$200 below the amount estimated as a 'living' wage in this city for a family. . . . Such a family status as to income insures deterioration physically and socially for the individual and for the family as a unit social group. Exceptions to this truth are negligible." Vice Commission of Philadelphia, *A Report on Existing Conditions with Recommendations to the Honorable Rudolph Blankenburg, Mayor of Philadelphia*, 26, reproduced in *The Prostitute and the Reformer: Commercial Vice in the Progressive Era*, ed. Charles Rosenberg and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg (New York, 1974), 26. Given that the background report on Rose states that the family consisted of her parents and eight children, it is quite possible that Rose entered prostitution in order to meet an economic need; at the same time, her family's economic plight could have brought it to the attention of Philadelphia's social reformers, who would have recognized the danger into which the family's financial situation placed its members.

²⁰ Summary of the Case of Rose O'_____, Midnight Mission Case File 388a.

Philadelphia Juvenile Court, however, saw the potential for rehabilitation within the fourteen-year-old girl, and after a short stay in the House of Detention while her case was adjudicated, the court sentenced her to one year in the Midnight Mission on October 11, 1915.²¹

The secure and stable environment of the Mission was evidently what Rose needed, and over the next two years she caused no troubles and excelled in the program. The matrons noted that even though she had a violent temper and was at times “very hard to manage,” she could display a “very sweet” temperament when not upset and worked hard to “overcome faults.” In 1917 Rose pursued stenography and typing lessons, independent of the Mission program (her training was financed through the juvenile court system, specifically the House of Detention), and did “remarkably well.” On October 15, 1917, Rose was returned to her parents and was entered “as student in Bell Telephone School.”²² Rose’s rather brief and noncontroversial record within the facility suggested, in the opinion of the matrons, that Rose did not especially desire a life of prostitution but was instead forced by economic pressures to pursue such a course. Furthermore, when given the opportunity to obtain the skills and training that would allow her to earn a living through socially acceptable means she was able to become a respectable member of society. In Rose’s case, the Mission’s program worked exactly as the patrons of the Mission hoped.

Incarceration in the Mission was not just for those actively engaged in the vice trade but was used to remove vulnerable girls from bad home situations. Such was the case with Anna, a fourteen-year-old girl who did not fit the mold of the sexually precocious adolescent. According to the deaconess’s comments, there was little wrong with Anna, she was “simply an untrained girl” whose mother had “left father when girl was a few months old.” Anna seemed fully attuned to the Mission’s program as it was offered; the matrons proudly noted that she was “a nice girl of many good qualities” who was “always truthful,” even if she often got “herself and other girls into trouble” through carelessness. Indeed, the matrons noted that she was a “very promising case.” Unlike many of the Mission’s inmates, it appears that Anna gave the matrons no trouble in the least and made “steady progress for the better” until she completed the two-year

²¹ Commitment and Discharge Records, Midnight Mission Case File 388a. It is interesting to note that in Rose’s case, the court was willing to defer to the opinions of the matrons of the Mission, who kept Rose in the program for the full two years even though the court only required a single year.

²² Ibid.

program and was placed in the care of a Mrs. H. of Hulmeville, Pennsylvania, who had “known Anna all her life.”²³

So why was it necessary for Anna to be sentenced to the Mission and placed among girls considered at risk for sexual deviation by the court? And why would her father not only consent to this incarceration, but go so far as to pay five dollars per month as support?²⁴ The answer lies in a combination of small-town social networks and Progressive Era theories regarding eugenics and sexual deviance and illustrates the lengths that influential members of a small community would go to in order to protect girls they felt were in an unhealthy environment and in danger of degeneracy.

In the second decade of the twentieth century, some Progressive reformers were influenced by the science of eugenics. Historian Wendy Kline notes that many eugenicists believed “inadequate motherhood resulted in defective children” who would invariably degenerate into sexual immorality and subsequently cause the genetic degradation of the American people. As a result, adolescents who showed tendencies to go astray “were scientifically scrutinized in light of their family environment.”²⁵ Since her mother had the reputation of being “a very bad woman” before abandoning the family, Anna would have given reformers cause for concern. The inhabitants of the small town of Hulmeville would also undoubtedly have been aware of the “stories about her father and others in the town.”²⁶ While the details of Anna’s home life can never be fully known and records of the rumors about her father do not survive, Anna’s neighbors and family decided that, to protect her from an inevitable slide into depravity stemming from her genetic heritage, Anna would benefit from the Mission’s program.

These factors placed Anna in a separate category from those sentenced to the Mission by the juvenile court. By removing her from her unwholesome family environment, placing her in a facility located some distance away from the negative influences of her biological parents, and providing her access to the education and light industrial training offered by the

²³ Matron’s Comments for Anna S_____, Midnight Mission Case File 384a.

²⁴ Admission Record, Midnight Mission Case File 384a.

²⁵ Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (Berkeley, CA, 2005), 28.

²⁶ Matron’s Comments, Midnight Mission Case File 384a. The population of Hulmeville Borough was only 468 in 1910 and 491 in 1920. *Fourteenth Census of the United States: State Compendium, Pennsylvania* (Washington, DC, 1924), 15.

Mission, members of Hulmeville's Progressive elite were able to ensure that at least one young woman in their borough would not fall into a life of immorality. To ensure that there was no chance of her relapse, upon her discharge from the Mission Anna was placed in the care of the wife of the same influential member of the Hulmeville community who had convinced her father to send her to the Mission in the first place.²⁷ In contrast to Rose, whose incarceration into the Mission's program stemmed from her activities driven by economic need, Anna entered the program to escape a degenerative home environment that was causing her emotional damage and could lead to future physical and social harm.

Finally, there were those girls who were sentenced to the Midnight Mission not because of current sexual transgressions or dangers, but because the juvenile court feared they might become sexually promiscuous if allowed their freedom. Helen R. was one such girl. Born March 1, 1900, Helen seemed to be an unproblematic girl, content with life in her parents' home in Bridgeport, Pennsylvania. A radical change in the family dynamic occurred, however, when Helen's mother was committed to an asylum for the insane. Without seeking a divorce, Helen's father then chose to cohabit with another woman, whom he publicly referred to as his wife. Helen did not react well to this change and at age twelve began acting out, defying parental authority by "stealing pennies" and staying out all night. Helen was eventually placed under the care of the juvenile justice system, ostensibly because "the girl cannot be with her father because of his way of living." In an effort to remove her from the familiar yet potentially dangerous environment, the court placed her in a series of different homes in Tarentum, Allegheny County.²⁸

These placements seemed to be beneficial to Helen, although she still chafed under the restrictions placed upon her by the court. While many in the court system were pleased with her progress and felt that she had "improved a great deal since she came under the care of the court," Helen still insisted upon slipping out of the private homes in which she had been placed and roaming the streets of Pittsburgh at

²⁷ No less than three notations within Anna's Mission file contain references to Dr. and Mrs. H____; the former witnessed her father's agreement to admit Anna to the Mission, whereas the latter gained custody of the girl upon her release. Finally, both allowed Anna to live in their home for five months upon her return to Hulmeville. Matron's Comments and Admission Record, Midnight Mission Case File 384a.

²⁸ Philadelphia Juvenile Court, Probation Officer's Report for Institutions on Helen R____, Jan. 18, 1916, Midnight Mission Case File 382a.

night. Because of her continued defiance, the court felt that although she was not necessarily immoral, there was an excellent chance that she would “get into serious trouble” unless placed in an environment with stricter discipline. In January 1916 a judge remanded Helen to the Midnight Mission on the charge of delinquency, despite of the fact that her probation officer felt that “she had not been with men when she ran away” and showed no immoral tendencies beyond challenging authority and taking risks.²⁹

From the start it was apparent to the deaconess that Helen might not be like other girls placed under her care. Described as a “bright girl and quite attractive, rather pert and ‘smart’ in manner,” the only negatives that the staff could report were a tendency to become “very stubborn when aroused” and a distinct streak of laziness. Helen was “unusual, in that she never tells vile stories, and seems to have fewer evil tendencies than any girl in the home.” Still, Helen managed to maintain something of an individual streak while incarcerated; over the vast majority of her sentence in the facility she was deemed to have “an excessive opinion of herself,” was deceitful, and showed a marked dislike of housework. Indeed, it was only during the last two months of her stay in the Mission that Helen displayed any improvement, although the deaconess noted that she still seemed “very strange at times,” but put the cause down to heredity (i.e., her biological mother’s insanity). However, there seemed little justification to retain her as she appeared more than capable of resisting the temptations of the streets, and in January 1918 she was returned to Pittsburgh.³⁰

Unlike Rose, Helen did not display the immorality believed endemic among working-class girls of the Progressive Era, but instead acted in ways that reformers believed showed the *potential* for immorality. Furthermore, her case indicates that Progressive Era reformers were willing to take preemptive action to combat what they perceived as public immorality. Neither the degenerate home of her father nor her odd behaviors, which were generally attributed to her heredity, individually would have indicated that Helen was especially at risk for moral degeneracy. But the combination of the reasons for concern evident in her life and actions painted her as someone seriously at risk to the threats posed

²⁹ Probation Officer Sarah G. Barbour, County of Allegheny, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Juvenile Court, to Deaconess Morris, Midnight Mission, information update letter, Feb. 11, 1916, Midnight Mission Case File 382a.

³⁰ Matron’s Comments, Midnight Mission Case File 382a.

by white slavers and the entire public vice industry. For this reason, the court believed she should be placed in the Mission.³¹

Taken as a whole, the cases of Rose, Anna, and Helen suggest that Progressive Era social reformers did not possess a singular set of criteria with which to evaluate girls at risk. Indeed, when it came to identifying and restraining those on the path toward sexual degeneracy, the judicial system and social reform networks used loose definitions to cast a very wide net that seemingly identified every action undertaken by the three as transgressive. The three cases reveal that adolescent girls caught up in these systems fell within a series of spectrums of “moral degeneracy,” economic need, home environment, education, and mental maturity and possessed an individuality overshadowed by the apparently homogenous institutions. Rose, Anna, and Helen negotiated individual troubles that went far beyond mere immorality, indicating that adolescent sexuality was a convenient stand-in for more generalized concerns about changing gender roles and perceived threats to ideals of feminine propriety.

A Serious Effect on Her Character

The girls sentenced to the Midnight Mission reacted to the program in different ways. Some, like Rose, embraced the Mission's program. Others resisted their incarceration, or sought to escape from it. Still others navigated the system using a combination of charm and blatant dishonesty. These varying responses represent differing relationships between matrons and inmates of the Mission. The former, convinced of the validity of sociomoral reform, felt that the inmates could be redeemed and reshaped into productive members of society, whereas many of the young women determined to resist this reshaping using any means at their disposal. Though there is no surviving evidence that indicates the thoughts of the Mission inmates, several studies delving into the relationship between reformer and subject during the Progressive Era indicate that working-class recipients of agency attention developed ways to manipulate

³¹ In the Progressive Era, there was a belief that a “global network of pimps” worked tirelessly to replenish brothels with fresh prostitutes through kidnappings, drugs, and other predatory practices. Though this network was largely dismissed as fiction by the legal community, the prosecutions of pimps who used coercive practices against their prostitutes gave the theory an air of legitimacy, ultimately leading to the enactment of the Mann Act in 1910. Donovan, *White Slave Crusades*, 1–4; James Adams, “Alien Animals and American Angels: The Commodification and Commercialization of the Progressive-Era White Slave,” *Concept: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Graduate Studies* (2005), <http://concept.journals.villanova.edu/article/view/252>, accessed Mar. 12, 2009.

the system to their advantage.³² Some girls sentenced to a term of incarceration in the Midnight Mission also resisted what they may have seen as unwarranted interference in their lives. Examining the cases of individual inmates, it becomes apparent that just as the reasons for entry into the Mission were diverse so too were the means of resistance.

Born May 8, 1900, Bertha was typical of the individual who refused to submit to sociomoral reshaping through her sheer physical resistance. Her father deserted the family when Bertha was only six, leaving her, her mother, and her younger brother to fend for themselves. Bertha first came to the attention of the judicial system when the supervisor of Compulsory District No. 5, a city education division governing operation of the public schools, reported that Bertha was neither attending school nor working. Two days later, the owner of the boardinghouse in which the family resided called the House of Detention to complain, stating that the “girl was entirely beyond control, used terrible language, stole, was out late at nights and some times all night.” When Bertha failed to respond to a delinquency petition, a warrant was issued for her arrest. An examination revealed that she had been sexually active in the past (four years previously, at age twelve), but not any time recently. Nonetheless in April 1916 Judge MacNeille of the juvenile court sentenced Bertha to a two-year term in the Midnight Mission.³³

Bertha was determined to resist the program at all costs, however. The only entry in her Mission record for the entire year of 1916 notes that she was atrocious and that her “language and manner” were violent. In 1917 the matrons discovered to their horror that Bertha was “given to habits of self abuse,” a sure sign of moral degeneracy and a significant signpost on the road to prostitution.³⁴ Moreover, she was “so violent at times . . .

³² Broder, *Tramps*, 53–88, contains numerous examples of individuals in working-class neighborhoods conspiring to resist, misdirect, and avoid agents from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (SPCC) when they visited to investigate particular households. Likewise, Gordon, *Heroes*, 82–115, devotes an entire chapter to single mothers during the Progressive Era and provides examples illustrating that working-class recipients of agency attention were not merely passive victims, but rather utilized a variety of methods to passively and actively resist interference in their lives.

³³ Thomas G. Parris, chief probation officer, Municipal Court of Philadelphia Juvenile Division, Background Report on Bertha A_____, Apr. 10, 1916, Midnight Mission Case File 1a.

³⁴ There was a school of thought within nineteenth-century jurisprudence and medicine that linked self-abuse (masturbation), insanity, and moral decay, with masturbation leading to ever greater forms of immorality. See Ronald Hamowy, “Medicine and the Crimination of Sin: ‘Self-Abuse’ in 19th Century America,” *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 1 (1977): 229–70, for an in-depth study of the link between masturbation, criminalization, and public vice.

breaking windows, clock, & various other things in her anger” that the matrons felt that she was becoming a danger to the other inmates under their care.³⁵

While the records of the Mission provide only tantalizing clues, it appears that Bertha’s behavior in the facility continued to deteriorate, and the matrons felt that there was no hope for her redemption. Exactly one year after her admission, Bertha was returned to the House of Detention after a “scene of particular violence.” However, it appears that her consistent resistance to reshaping gave Bertha exactly what she desired. The final entry in her Mission records notes that she had been granted “permission to go home to mother” by the court and was placed at “Good Shepherd” contingent upon her mother finding a new residence for her family.³⁶ There may have been an unidentified dynamic at work involving Bertha, her family, and the juvenile court system that allowed her to resume her independence without completing a formal reformatory program and despite the opinion of an examining psychologist that she had “acquired rapid cheap habits” and was in desperate need of discipline.³⁷

In many ways Bertha’s narrative is not representative of adolescent working-class girls sentenced to this type of facility. The primary method of dealing with a recalcitrant inmate at the Mission was expulsion and transfer to a different facility, an act undertaken for many girls who resisted the program. Such girls were returned to the House of Detention, for a more stern and restrictive treatment, or sent to a rural facility known as Sleighton Farm for a more bucolic, but still restrictive, reeducation.³⁸ The

³⁵ Matron’s Comments, Midnight Mission Case File 1a.

³⁶ Ibid. It is possible that the facility cited in the matron’s comments refers to the Good Shepherd Homes, a Catholic-run variation of the Episcopalian Midnight Mission that appears to have shared the same institutional structure as most private reformatories of this era. See Sharon E. Wood, *The Freedom of the Streets: Work, Citizenship, and Sexuality in a Gilded Age City* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2005), 186–212.

³⁷ Dr. Walter S. Cornell, University of Pennsylvania Psychological Laboratory and Clinic, Background Report on Bertha A____, Apr. 10, 1916, Midnight Mission Case File 1a.

³⁸ The formal name for this facility was the Sleighton Farm Training School, the Girls’ Department of the Glen Mills Schools. An “outgrowth of the Philadelphia House of Refuge chartered in 1826” and located in Darlington, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, by 1910 the facility housed approximately 350 “fallen girls.” The stated goal of the farm was, in the words of its founder and first superintendent, Martha P. Falconer, “to provide a home where the children of poverty and ignorance would be sheltered from temptation and led into ways of usefulness and virtue.” Most of the farm’s inmates were “sex delinquents” sentenced by the courts, which perceived the redemptive program of the facility to be invaluable to the “recovery” of fallen adolescent girls and in inculcating them with middle-class moral values and job skills. Mabel Agnes Elliott, *Correctional Education and the Delinquent Girl* (Bryn Mawr, PA, 1926), 7–15; Amy Hewes, “A Study of Delinquent Girls at Sleighton Farm,” *Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology* 15 (Feb. 1925): 598.

causes of Bertha's atypical treatment can be found in the reasons for her initial incarceration. Records indicate it was not the court or moral reformers who regarded Bertha as a threat to her own personal virtue or public morality, but her mother, a single parent forced to work long hours in a laundry and who was "home only in the evenings" and incapable of dealing with a daughter possessing a personal force of will much greater than her own.³⁹

While Bertha appears to have resisted her confinement alone, other inmates chose to resist the Mission's program by working together. Examination of multiple individual records in concert reveals that a group dynamic took shape within the Mission during 1916 and 1917, one in which a small group of inmates (sometimes individually described as "hopelessly depraved," "constitutionally inferior," or "a typical child of the slums") conspired in small groups of two or three to flee incarceration.⁴⁰ The interplay among five particular inmates who, between August and November 1917, sought to escape is typical of the relationships that formed among these girls of different personalities and circumstances who were enduring the same conditions. The actions of members of this heterogeneous group are telling, for they indicate that these inmates adjusted to their situation by actively resisting the Mission's moral reform program. These inmates became members of a community, but not the particular community that social reformers and the Mission matrons had in mind.

In November 1915, Gladys, age fourteen, was sentenced to a two-year term in the Mission. Described by the assistant chief probation officer of the juvenile court as a girl "who has drifted but she is a neglected child . . . a very nice child with a very mild disposition" who "would respond to kind treatment and training," Gladys was apparently sentenced to the Mission for spending three days in the room of an unidentified man. While Gladys's record does not state that she was unchaste while in the company of this man, merely that "she met a woman in the neighborhood who gave her a note and sent her to a man's room in the neighborhood

³⁹ Background Report, Midnight Mission Case File 1a. Broder, *Tramps*, and Gordon, *Heroes*, also note that working-class families frequently used institutional facilities to control what they considered to be "wayward" children.

⁴⁰ Matron's Comments for Margaret M_____, Midnight Mission Case File 389a; Dr. Walter S. Cornell, University of Pennsylvania Psychological Laboratory and Clinic, Psychological Report of Gladys Viola S_____, Nov. 18, 1916, Midnight Mission Case File 387a; Matron's Comments for Helen L_____, Midnight Mission Case File 433a.

where she was kept for about three days," Gladys admitted to engaging in sexual activity at other times, claiming relations with "the man in whose homes she was staying" in Woodbury, New Jersey, before she "repeated the offense with another man in Phila." The authorities believed that she had already descended into a life of moral degeneracy and public vice. Coupled with an apparent "feeble-mindedness" that made her "easily influenced by others," in the eyes of the court this behavior necessitated her incarceration to prevent yet another innocent's slide into depravity.⁴¹ Given Gladys's development and temperament, the decision to place her in the Mission with wayward girls of considerably more degraded character might be questioned.

For the first eleven months of her incarceration Gladys seems to have struggled with her domestic training, religious education, and schoolwork alongside the other residents of the Mission, making no real impression one way or the other upon the matrons. As late as 1916, the matrons reported that Gladys displayed "little improvement, probably none at all." It was thought that no permanent improvement was possible due to Gladys's "enfeebled intellect."⁴²

Helen S. seemed to be the type of girl for whom the Mission's program was created. Seventeen-year-old Helen had been in and out of Progressive Era reformatories, industrial schools, and even Sleighton Farm since she was twelve.⁴³ The background report on Helen describes a gradual descent into immorality. Remanded to the Children's Aid Society (CAS) in 1911 because she was "constantly running away from home and taking pennies," she was placed in another home, ran away, and was retrieved by her father from a Philadelphia hospital (by some trick, it was noted) where she was being treated for tuberculosis. She was

⁴¹ Jean D. Modell, psychologist, University of Pennsylvania Psychological Laboratory and Clinic, Psychological Report of Gladys Viola S____, Nov. 18, 1916; Assistant Chief Probation Officer Margaret H. Reynolds, Municipal Court of Philadelphia Juvenile Division, to Deaconess Morris, Midnight Mission, Inquiry Letter, Nov. 24, 1915; and Francis N. Maxfield, University of Pennsylvania Psychological Laboratory and Clinic, to Isabella V. Smith, probation officer, Philadelphia House of Detention, Evaluation Report of Gladys Viola S____, Nov. 16, 1915, all Midnight Mission Case File 387a.

⁴² Jean D. Modell, Psychological Report of Gladys Viola S____, Nov. 18, 1916, Midnight Mission Case File 387a.

⁴³ It should be noted that Helen's case file contains peculiar discrepancies, most notably regarding her age at time of commitment. Surviving records indicate that she was born August 30, 1898, making her eighteen upon remand to the Mission on October 3, 1916. This is noted on Helen's psychological evaluation from the University of Pennsylvania Psychological Laboratory and Clinic; however, the matron's records give her age as seventeen. Midnight Mission Case File 385a.

later turned back over to the CAS, committed to Sleighton Farm, and discharged into her father's custody almost two years later. It was discovered that Helen had been sexually involved with one Frank S. in the two months between her retrieval from the hospital and her incarceration. After her release, she seems to have taken up where she had left off, admitting to her probation officer during a delinquency petition investigation that she had once more been "immoral with the young man Frank S____. . . . She was also immoral with two other men." On September 27, Helen was examined by a psychologist, who noted that it was "impossible to make a prognosis, for her past record and conduct since her recent discharge . . . leave one in doubt as to her desire or sincerity for future reform," and that she was infatuated with and hoped to marry Frank.⁴⁴ Based on her continuing troubling behavior, Helen was sentenced to another term in Sleighton Farm. Upon reconsideration, Judge MacNeille decided to remand her instead to the Midnight Mission in October 1916.⁴⁵

Unlike Helen S., who evidenced a continuing pattern of transgressive behavior, sixteen-year-old Helen L. appears to have been sentenced to the mission for a solitary offence. Described by a matron as "uncouth, noisy & very rough. Typical child of the slums," Helen was sentenced to the Mission by the Philadelphia Juvenile Court in December 1916. The previous December, after the desertion of her father and the designation of her mother as an unfit parent, the juvenile court placed Helen with her sister. But in December 1916, Helen left her sister's Philadelphia home for an undisclosed reason and rented a room on Vine Street with another girl. After an unsuccessful attempt to "take two young men to the room," Helen and her roommate went to the movies where they met Bill and William, and the four retired to the latter's home. From December 6 through the morning of December 8 Helen stayed in the company of William, although she claimed that she slept in a separate room. However, this transgression of propriety was enough to land Helen in the mission for a two-year sentence.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Jean D. Modell, psychologist, University of Pennsylvania Psychological Laboratory and Clinic, Psychological Report of Helen S____, Sept. 27, 1916, Midnight Mission Case File 385a.

⁴⁵ Thomas G. Parris, chief probation officer, Municipal Court of Philadelphia Juvenile Division, Background Report on Helen S____, Oct. 5, 1916, Midnight Mission Case File 385a.

⁴⁶ Matron's Comments for Helen L____, Midnight Mission Case File 433a. The mission records indicate that Helen L. was sixteen at the time of her incarceration, but court records place her age at only fifteen.

These three girls were sentenced to the Midnight Mission for reasons ranging from consistent antisocial tendencies to mental enfeeblement, but there is no evidence that any of the three were actively seeking to enter a life of prostitution and vice. Margaret H., however, hailing from what was considered a “degenerate family,” not only sought out a life of prostitution but was actively engaged in the trade when she came to the attention of the Philadelphia juvenile court system. On April 13, 1917, officers of the Eighteenth District arrested fourteen-year-old Margaret and charged her with being an inmate of a disorderly home.⁴⁷ In Margaret’s case, the fear of moral degeneracy seemed well founded; the chief probation officer noted that “the girl had been away from home and the mother felt she was living at Mrs. M.’s house. . . . Nine men, Mrs. M., Margaret and Ethel were arrested. A keg of beer and a number of beer glasses were on the table.” Like Gladys, Margaret was considered somewhat feeble-minded, but in her case the psychologists examining her noted that the apparent cause of her delinquency was a “mixture of degrading and improper home influences and degenerate heredity.” There appeared to be a sense among the court officers that a change in living conditions could reverse this degeneracy, a feeling seconded by the examining psychologist. As a result, she was sentenced to the facility in May 1917.⁴⁸

Margaret’s arrival at the Mission was the spark that inspired other girls to resist conformity and to escape their confines. Margaret managed to conform to the Mission’s program for the first few months of her incarceration; no reports survive that indicate she gave the matrons any trouble or made any particular impression upon the staff. However, it appears that the lure of her life outside of the Mission was too much for her to bear.

On August 12, 1917, Margaret escaped from confinement, taking Gladys with her. Details are sketchy in the case records regarding their method of escape, but it appears that Margaret and Gladys immediately fled to Margaret’s mother’s home on North Second Street, where the two

⁴⁷ Matron’s Comments for Margaret H_____, Midnight Mission Case File 392a. It should be noted that this description of the family was a strictly informal diagnosis on the part of the matron, based on a comment scrawled in the margin of Margaret’s Mission case record.

⁴⁸ J. D. Rippin, chief probation officer, Municipal Court of Philadelphia Juvenile Division, Background Report on Margaret H_____, May 9, 1917; and Walter S. Cornell, M.D., University of Pennsylvania Psychological Laboratory and Clinic, Psychological Diagnosis of Margaret H_____, Apr. 16, 1917, Midnight Mission Case File 392a. Cornell reported, “Should be removed from her home, which is not fit for any of the children, some of whom are bad and some feeble-minded, and some both.”

girls hid from police and social workers. Gladys's motivations for fleeing are not noted, and it may simply be that she was following the lead of the more confident and self-possessed Margaret. Margaret's motivations are somewhat easier to determine; it appears that she resented the attempts to reform her character and was determined to pursue a course of her own choosing. Circumstantial evidence suggests that she engaged in illicit sexual activity during the pair's escape. However, this initial attempt at escape was poorly planned and on August 18 the two girls were recaptured and returned to the Mission from the police station at Fourth and York.⁴⁹

Margaret was not deterred. Fifteen days later, on Sunday, September 2, the matrons uncovered a plan involving Margaret, Gladys, and Helen L. to "run away" from the facility. Margaret and Gladys were "prevented" from escaping, but Helen succeeded. After fleeing the facility, Helen "spent the night at her sister's home in Philadelphia," but was recaptured in Camden, New Jersey, the following day and returned to the Mission. After this incident the matrons decided that Margaret was an intensely negative influence upon the girls in the facility but were at something of loss of how to proceed against the three transgressors. On September 11, Margaret was officially discharged from the program and sent to the House of Detention. Helen and Gladys were given the standard gynecological exams and allowed to remain.⁵⁰

For the next twenty-six days everything seemed calm at the facility, but it is apparent that escape was never far from the minds of those chafing under their incarceration. On the evening of Sunday, October 7, Helen L. and Helen S. made a successful escape from the Mission "by means of a fence in bad condition" and managed to evade recapture until the next morning. In escaping, Helen L. suffered from a "sprained foot, caused by jumping over high fence." The matron reported that Helen S. "had a bad experience" during the few hours that she was away "according to a telephone story given by a strange woman who said she lived in Olney, but did not care to give us her name." Both girls were recovered by the police at two o'clock the next morning and returned to the Mission, where they underwent the standard examination.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Upon recapture, both girls were forced to undergo gynecological exams. The matron's notes regarding Gladys merely indicate examination; however, in Margaret's case the doctor added the additional recommendation of douches. Matron's Comments, Midnight Mission Case Files 387a and 392a.

⁵⁰ Matron's Comments, Midnight Mission Case Files 387a, 392a, 403a, and 433a.

⁵¹ Matron's Comments, Midnight Mission Case Files 433a and 385a.

The sudden and ongoing spate of escape attempts by the same group likely alerted the matrons of the Mission that an unusual bond had developed among certain girls under their care, and they paid closer attention for the remainder of 1917 in anticipation of continuing trouble. In November, a new girl, Margaret M., hatched a plan to escape the Mission in the company of Helen L. and Gladys, but the plot was foiled before it even began.⁵² For her role, Gladys was initially sent to the House of Detention, but as her two-year sentence at the Mission was nearly completed she was instead discharged and placed on probation “with a family at Oak Lane, Philadelphia.” Records indicate that she attempted to visit the Mission almost a year later but was denied access to any of the inmates.⁵³ Helen’s part in the plot was evidently not considered important enough to warrant comment in her records, possibly because during the same period the court ordered her discharge from the program and placed her in the custody of her sister. Margaret M. received a strict lecture and was allowed to remain within the Mission.⁵⁴

The numerous escape attempts during the summer and fall 1917 illustrate several important points about both the program at the Mission and the characters of the inmates. The fact that so many girls displaying radically different behavioral patterns attempted escape from the facility in such a short period of time indicates some disparity between the inmates’ characters (or desires) and the natures that the matrons believed existed within them. Not all inmates welcomed the opportunities provided by the Mission. That girls from disparate backgrounds and possessing such distinct temperaments could overcome these differences to unite in a common cause points towards a growing sense of community among individuals existing under restrictive conditions. But more than that, the fact that those girls who did manage to escape pursued individual goals outside of the facility indicates that they did not exist within the system as a homogenous mass, but rather only appeared similar in the eyes of those responsible for their “reform.” Within the social structures entrusted with their welfare and redemption they were viewed as a mass of wayward

⁵² Matron’s Comments, Midnight Mission Case File 389a.

⁵³ Matron’s Comments, Midnight Mission Case File 387a. This decision may be based more upon the matrons’ opinions of Gladys than on her specific actions, as the formal decision to bar access to the Mission was noted on January 15, 1919. Additionally, a notation in the matron’s comments for Margaret M. states that the Mission staff considered Gladys “hopelessly depraved,” an opinion that is not repeated in Gladys’s own file. See Matron’s Comments, Midnight Mission Case File 389a.

⁵⁴ Matron’s Comments, Midnight Mission Case Files 433a and 392a.

girls who could be redeemed with the same methods, whereas each individual inmate understood herself as an individual, as a girl who may, or may not, have been wayward and chafed at her restrictions.

Discharged from the Mission

Perhaps the most telling factors emphasizing the heterogeneous individuality of adolescent girls caught up in the juvenile court system are their final dispositions upon release from the program. Beliefs about the nature of vice, immorality, heredity, mentality, and propriety would have predicted similar life courses for these girls. In fact, once released from the Mission, they pursued widely disparate paths that, in many cases, had little relationship to their perceived natures either before or during their incarceration.

Given the increased mobility of Americans during the 1920s, it is not surprising that many of the girls sentenced to the Mission vanished from the matron's notes after leaving the facility. Margaret H.'s record ends abruptly after her discharge from the Mission and her return to the House of Detention; Gladys drifted from family to family until February 5, 1919, when it was reported that she was "three days away from home," after which there is no record. After a single entry made six months after her release stated that she was "not doing well," all references to Helen L. vanish, and Bertha's record ends immediately after her ejection from the facility. After a seemingly unending cycle of transgression, apology, and readmission to the facility, Margaret M. eventually was sent to the House of Detention, after which the matrons recorded no more reports regarding her. Even the perceived successes largely vanish from the evidentiary record after their dealings with the facility were over. Rose and Helen R. simply moved on with their lives upon discharge, and no records for either of the two exist.⁵⁵

The lives of some girls, however, did remain in view, and the deaconess was dutiful enough to record rumors, direct contacts, and official notifications regarding her one-time charges in their case files. It was apparent from these girls' final dispositions that not all of them took the lessons imparted by the matrons of the Mission to heart. After serving her two-year term in the Mission, Helen S. was released back to her father in November 1918. The matrons felt that she may have been incorrigible; as

⁵⁵ Matron's Comments, Midnight Mission Case Files 392a, 387a, 433a, 1a, 389a, 388a, and 382a.

the head matron noted, Helen “has had the protection” of the facility “for more than 2 years, and that is about all that one can say. The truth is not in her, and she is false through and through.” Over the next two months the matrons received word from her father, who complained that his daughter was “behaving badly and causing him great concern.” Helen disappeared from home and was traced to Kensington, where “she was living a shameful life, and proved beyond doubt that she [was] a sexual pervert.” In January 1919 a warrant was issued for Helen’s arrest, but the request for her incarceration in Sleighton Farm would go unfulfilled; on February 23 the Mission received word of Helen’s death from pneumonia.⁵⁶

But there were also success stories. Anna can be counted among these successes, though in her case the success was likely the result of removing her from a dangerous environment rather than from reforming her character. After her release from the facility, Anna returned to the Mission frequently on social calls, often staying overnight. In October 1918 Anna returned to the home of her father to “keep house,” but as there are no reports of any untoward activity it appears that the community of Hulmeville in general and Dr. H. in particular worked to ensure the private reform of her father, and there is no further indication of incest. Over the next two years Anna wrote and visited the matrons frequently, even going so far as to locate and reconcile with her long-lost mother (who appears to have reformed herself), was married in Elkton, Maryland, on August 16, 1920, and moved with her husband to Porters, Delaware, where she found employment as a housekeeper.⁵⁷

The records of the inmates of the Midnight Mission indicate that working-class adolescent girls of the Progressive Era were not a homogeneous mass acting with like purpose in their pursuit of immorality and degeneracy. While reformers attempting to inculcate “proper” morality within their charges were constrained by a framework that emphasized a homogeneous institutional curriculum, their success was highly dependent upon their individual subjects. The Midnight Mission reformers believed that moral degeneracy in an individual could be caused by a variety of negative influences (genetic predisposition, material want, home environment, etc.). However, their actions were constrained by their belief in the primacy of Progressive uplift (that human failings could be solved through the application of scientific analysis, moral instruction, and social

⁵⁶ Matron’s Comments, Midnight Mission Case File 385a.

⁵⁷ Matron’s Comments, Midnight Mission Case File 384a.

control). When individual difference and institutional constraint came into conflict within the walls of the Mission, the result was a volatile environment that led some inmates to flee, others to resist (both actively and passively), and still others to adjust their own individual values in order to conform to the social norm.

While studies of Progressive institutional structures can reveal what reformers of the era believed, they only tell half the story. When we look beyond these structures and at the subjects of their ministrations, the inmates cease to be a faceless mass of adolescent female transgressors and become individuals who illustrate the tension between Progressive notions of morality and propriety and new gender and class values during a period of social change at the dawn of the twentieth century.

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NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson's "The Deserted Wife"

ELIZABETH GRAEME FERGUSSON (1737–1801) was one of the most prolific and notable poets in eighteenth-century Philadelphia. From her youthful romance with William Franklin; to her account of her trip to Great Britain, which was circulated among elite Philadelphians; to her friendships with John Dickinson, Jacob Duché, Francis Hopkinson, Milcah Martha Moore, Benjamin Rush, William Smith, and Annis Boudinot Stockton, Fergusson's life was filled with wit, sociability, serious reflection, and nearly constant literary production. Most of her poetry remains in manuscript, although many letters to and from Fergusson were edited by Simon Gratz and published in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* in 1915 and 1917. The Library Company of Philadelphia, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and the William Smith Papers at the University of Pennsylvania Archives and Record Center contain the bulk of her writings. Among this work are letters, petitions, psalm paraphrases, an epic versification of the story of Telemachus, odes to the seasons, devotional poems, a versification of John Dickinson's *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, comments on Benjamin Rush's medical inquiries, and neoclassical poetry on all manner of topics.¹

"The Deserted Wife" is unusual among Fergusson's oeuvre; indeed, it

¹ Most recent historiography and criticism on eighteenth-century Anglo-American literary cultures see Fergusson as central. See especially David S. Shields, *Civil Tongues & Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1997); Anne M. Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America: A Life of Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson* (University Park, PA, 2003); Susan M. Stabile, *Memory's Daughters: The Material Culture of Remembrance in Eighteenth-Century America* (Ithaca, NY, 2004); Nicole Eustace, *Passion Is the Gale: Emotion, Power, and the Coming of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2008); *Only for the Eye of a Friend: The Poems of Annis Boudinot Stockton*, ed. Carla Mulford (Charlottesville, VA, 1995); and *Milcah Martha Moore's Book: A Commonplace Book from Revolutionary America*, ed. Catherine La Courreye Blecki and Karin A. Wulf (University Park, PA, 1997).

is unusual among eighteenth-century women's poetry in general.² The content of the 788-line poem refers to the problems that arose in Fergusson's marriage as a result of the American Revolution and her husband Henry's actions during and after the war. Henry was a Scot eleven years younger than Elizabeth. They were introduced by Benjamin Rush at one of Elizabeth's weekly salons and were married in 1772 after a short courtship. Although Elizabeth had lived much of her life in the city, her father's death shortly after her marriage meant that she and Henry could live on the family estate in Horsham, Graeme Park.³

Henry turned out to be a somewhat erratic domestic partner for Elizabeth, however, sometimes disappearing into the city for a week and, during the crucial years 1774–1777, traveling to Britain to tend to family business. When the war impeded his attempts to return to Pennsylvania, Henry took the opportunity to travel with General Howe's army through Maryland, into the Brandywine Valley, and eventually into Philadelphia as an occupation army in September 1777. He was appointed commissary of prisoners and met with some criticism, not the least from his U.S. counterpart, Elias Boudinot, the brother of Elizabeth's longtime friend Annis Boudinot Stockton. During the occupation, Henry lodged with Loyalist friends of Elizabeth's, Charles and Ann Stedman. Although he and Elizabeth saw one another a few times, they did not live together; she stayed at Graeme Park.

When the British left the city in 1778, Henry left, too, travelling to New York. After Henry's departure, one of the Stedman's servants, Jane (also called Jenny), was discovered to be pregnant, and she named Henry Hugh Fergusson as the father. The Stedmans believed her. Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson found herself married to a Loyalist, her family estate attainted as his property, and her husband's fidelity to their marriage in question. Over the next few years, she wrote letter after letter to England, often carried by her Loyalist friends who expatriated to London. Henry's initial assertions of innocence were not convincing to Elizabeth; she persisted in asking for more and more details, more and more proof, more and more declarations of fidelity. Eventually he, and many of her friends, simply refused to discuss the matter or to correspond with her any more.

² Fergusson's poem can be founded in the Rush Manuscripts, vol. 40, owned by the Library Company of Philadelphia, but in the care of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

³ The facts here and in the next few paragraphs can be found in Ousterhout's biography of Fergusson, *Most Learned Woman in America*, especially chapters 5–7.

In 1780, Elizabeth began working on the following poem, "The Deserted Wife," and continued to work on it through 1783. Although it seems that she may have begun to work on it with the idea of sending it to Henry, perhaps as an argument or a way of stating her case, the extant copy in the Historical Society's care was made for Annis Boudinot Stockton in 1793. Fergusson and Stockton had been friends since childhood, and the advocacy of Stockton's brother, Elias, and her husband, Richard, had been key to Fergusson maintaining ownership of Graeme Park until a few years before her death.⁴ The manuscript indicates that Stockton requested that Fergusson transcribe this poem for her, and thus it seems that Stockton solicited Fergusson's rehearsal of the story (at least in verse) at a time when many of her other friends refused to hear anything more about it.⁵ It is clear from the marginal notes that Fergusson's wounds, then fifteen years old, were still fresh; indeed, her biographer, the late Anne Ousterhout, asserts that Fergusson suffered from Henry's actions for the rest of her life.

Fergusson's subtitle for "The Deserted Wife," "Il Penseroso," forms another link to Stockton as well as to a larger circle of Delaware Valley poets. The most obvious literary precursor for the subtitle is John Milton's "Il Penseroso" (published with its companion piece, "L'Allegro," in his 1645 *Poems*), which is an ode to the melancholy life of the scholar. But many more local poems stand between Milton and Fergusson. William Smith, professor of rhetoric and belles lettres and provost of the College of Philadelphia, seems to have suggested or insisted that many of his students (the "Schuylkill Swains") compose imitations of, or variations on, Milton's theme. Smith, who married Fergusson's childhood friend, Rebecca Moore, would remain one of Fergusson's confidantes until her death. Smith's student Francis Hopkinson also became a lifelong friend of Fergusson's. In 1757, Hopkinson published a pair of Miltonic poems—titled "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso"—in the periodical that Smith edited, the *American Magazine and Monthly Chronicle of the British Colonies*.⁶

⁴ Mulford, *Only for the Eye of a Friend*, 7; Ousterhout, *Most Learned Woman in America*, 173–74, 281–83, 290, 304–5, 309.

⁵ For example, another childhood friend, Rebecca Moore Smith, stopped communicating with Fergusson on the topic in the 1790s. Ousterhout, *Most Learned Woman in America*, 273–74.

⁶ [Francis Hopkinson], "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," *American Magazine and Monthly Chronicle for the British Colonies* 1 (1757): 84–88. On the *American Magazine* as an extracurricular project that Smith and his students worked on, see Rodney Mader, "Politics and Pedagogy in the *American Magazine*, 1757–58," *American Periodicals* 16 (2006): 3–22.

Hopkinson's "Il Penseroso" is dedicated to Smith and alludes to the first installment of Smith's own prose series for the *American Magazine*, "The Hermit," which thematizes the ideas of pensiveness, solitude, and melancholy found in Milton's poem; indeed Milton's scholar retires to a hermitage at the end of his poem. Finally, Fergusson may have known Annis Stockton's own "Ill Penserosa," which Carla Mulford suggests was written during or shortly after the Revolution.⁷ These poems on melancholia and pensiveness should be seen in the light of the British canonical tradition, of course, alluding not only to Milton but to the many eighteenth-century poems about hermits, the night, and solitude that we find in the works of well-known poets like Edward Young, James Thomson, Thomas Parnell, and Oliver Goldsmith. But the provincial context is important, too. By connecting "The Deserted Wife" to the tradition of the melancholy scholar as well as to these local literary circles, Fergusson is reminding her reader of both macro and micro contexts for the seriousness of her work.⁸

Most of Fergusson's friends' penserosos were shorter poems, like Milton's, which is under two hundred lines. This difference of quantity matches a difference of quality in the case of "The Deserted Wife," which is rambling, recursive, and difficult to follow. I have said it may have been an argument, but as such it would have certainly failed. During the course of the poem, the reader is treated to an alternative vision of the story of Abraham and Isaac; personifications of Hope, Doubt, Solitude, and Adversity; extended versifications of Henry Fergusson's epistolary denials of infidelity; and descriptions of the seasons whose cyclical pattern mirrors the ever-recurring throes of jealousy and distrust in the poet's mind. In the notes appended between sections of the poem, Fergusson includes excerpts from Henry's letters (the passages she versifies in the poem proper) as well as comments on such things as a novel by Henry Mackenzie and the assassination of King Louis XVI.

"The Deserted Wife" is extraordinary in many ways. Any poem by this gifted and learned poet would be notable. But this is also a document that spans the period of the Revolution up to the first notes of the Terror arriv-

⁷ Mulford, *Only for the Eye of a Friend*, 262n12.

⁸ Eric Slauter has explored the currency of hermits and solitude in the early republic in "Being Alone in the Age of the Social Contract," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 62 (2005): 31–66. See also David S. Shields, "Mental Nocturnes: Night Thoughts on Man and Nature in the Poetry of Eighteenth-Century America," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 110 (1986): 237–58.

ing from France. Perhaps most importantly, it is a rare instance of strong personal emotions being versified at length. The form chosen for the work—nearly eight hundred lines of heroic couplets—betrays the content, for the depth of feeling here is almost antithetical to the reserved Augustanism of the verse. Certainly, Fergusson and other poets created other poems that explored the heart, romance, and melancholy; however, these are almost always removed from becoming personalized statements. Through abstraction or fictionalization, via such conventions as the use of pastoral settings and characters, these poems are meant to speak to universals, not particulars. Literary critics have apologetically noted this aspect of eighteenth-century women's poetry: Susan Stabile, in the "Introduction" to Ousterhout's biography of Fergusson, notes how the poet's habitual neoclassicism does not correspond to "our contemporary relish for confessional lyrics."⁹ Carla Mulford, introducing Stockton's work, asserts: "What emerged in the eighteenth century, then, was a highly public and social poetry, a poetry that appealed to and personified abstract qualities and expressed the general, the typical, the ideal."¹⁰ What we find in "The Deserted Wife," then, is an anomaly in the tradition of eighteenth-century poetry, and one penned by one of the foremost Philadelphia writers of the time. "The Deserted Wife" is a rare instance of Augustan erudition enveloping a most painful and *particular* true story; one of damaged reputations, confiscated homes, broken hearts, and adultery, all amid the chaos of revolution.

A Note on the Text

Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson's handwriting was difficult for her contemporaries to read. Her recent biographer tells us that Fergusson's last great work, her versification of François Fénelon's *Telemachus*, never saw the press because the printer would not work with the manuscript Fergusson submitted, requesting that she provide a fair copy.¹¹ The challenges presented by the poet's hand may be even worse at the distance of two centuries. In cases where I simply cannot decipher a word but have a strong hunch, I have included my guess in brackets. Also, I have not cor-

⁹ Ousterhout, *Most Learned Woman in America*, 23–25.

¹⁰ Mulford, *Only for the Eye of a Friend*, 131.

¹¹ Ousterhout, *Most Learned Woman in America*, 327, 329.

rected spelling “errors,” some of which may merely be sloppy handwriting. If Fergusson’s spelling of a word threatens to impede sense (which most do not), I have included a note.

The manuscript is written on laid paper that is roughly nine inches long and seven and a half inches wide, made from a fifteen-inch sheet folded in half. It is unclear whether these pages were bound together originally. The copy of this poem in the Rush papers has been bound into a much larger book. During this process, the compiler entered four pages out of order, probably through turning one of the larger sheets “inside out.” The content of the poem makes the original order fairly clear, however, and I have reordered them silently.

The bound copy of “The Deserted Wife” is accompanied by a copy of the *General Advertiser* for Wednesday, March 27, 1793, in which the manuscript seems to have been wrapped. In the middle of the newspaper, written upside down, is the following:

Il Penserosa
a Poem
written at different times
in 1781, 82, 83
to Mrs Stocton

At the bottom of the same page is the following:

Mrs Stocton is desir’d to show this only to such of her
Friends as have heard
the Cause of my Separation with Mr Fn and have
Delicacy, Sensibility and Candor to make allowances
April 21, 1793

While one might be tempted to think that Fergusson chose this newspaper at random, the opposite side of the sheet bears a very particular reference to one paratext of the work. In a note at the end of part 2, Fergusson displays her interest in the French Revolution, especially her horror at the assassination of the king. The *General Advertiser* in which Fergusson enclosed the manuscript includes a number of features covering the last days of Louis XVI, including “The Last Requests of Louis!” “Execution of Louis XVI. Paris, Jan. 22,” and “Further Particulars of the King’s Condemnation. Saturday, Jan. 19—at Night.”

Additional notes on the transcription:

- Fergusson included line numbers at various places in the text. I say "various" places because, according to my count, her numbers do not correspond to the actual number of lines of text. The numbering error that is easiest to see is in the beginning of part 2: Fergusson marks the ninth line "10." I have numbered every fifth line, restarting at each of the new "parts" or sections, for ease of reference.
- Fergusson includes a few footnotes to "The Deserted Wife." I have marked these with "EGF's note." All other footnotes are mine.
- Fergusson frequently made use of a ligature to indicate "-ed," for instance, "desired" would be written "desird" but with an elongation of the stem of the "d" to indicate an apostrophe. I have rendered all of these with the apostrophe, e.g., "desir'd."
- In a number of places, Fergusson writes one of the key words of that section of the poem larger, so that "Hope" is larger in the first and thirtieth lines of part 1, and "Lone Solitude" is larger in line 1 of part 3. She does not do this consistently, however, so I have chosen not to highlight each instance in the text.
- Fergusson includes a "leader" word at the bottom of a page, which I have not included. Superscripted or subscripted text is usually accompanied by a caret; I have silently corrected these. Fergusson also periodically writes a word twice, which I have silently corrected.

The Deserted-Wife

Il Penseroso: or the Deserted-Wife.¹²

A Poem in Four Parts.

Hope. Doubt. Solitude. Adversity.

Written at different periods of Time

In the years 1780, 1781, 1782.

Hope. Part the First.

Hope soft aswager¹³ of all Ills below!
 Thou gentle Soother of each poignant Woe!
 Attend, and mitigate this keen Distress,
 Which this dark season doth my soul oppress:
 Glance o'er my Spirits like a Winter Sun, 5
 Which Hints a Spring in Nature is begun:
 That Sure, tho Silent, works behind the Scene
 Soon to be mantled with reviving Green:
 Disspell my Horrors with a Ray Divine!
 A Ray Refulgent from th'Eternal Shrine! 10
 Where thou [Burning] dost ever ready wait!
 To smooth, and soften the harsh dreary Fate
 Of Mortals struggling through Life's pensive Vale,
 Where Foes on Foes our short repose assail!
 Thou soft Conveyor of ethereal good! 15
 Thou kind Dispenser of celestial Food!
 Raise, raise my views beyond this Clay Bound Spot,
 Where Sin and Sorrow all our Comforts Blot!
 Chequer each Pleasure, mar each young Delight,
 As nipping Frosts Springs early Blossoms blight. 20
 And sap the Foliage of the blooming Tree,
 Where blushing Beauties we were wont to see

¹² The title is written in the manuscript. with a double hyphen or equal sign (=) rather than a single hyphen. I have changed every instance of this in the poem in the interest of clarity. Also, note the ambiguity in the status of the title and subtitle. In colonial and revolutionary Pennsylvania, "deserted wife" was a semilegal category: deserted wives could apply for aid from the Overseers of the Poor. See Clare A. Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender & Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730–1830* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2006), 19.

¹³ "assuager"

as fragrant Pledges that the fruit begun;
 Would glow concocted in the Summers Sun.
 The little Embrios would expand and grow! 25
 And lively Juices in their Channels flow:
 Where Sight, Taste, Smell, should all regaled Be
 In the Rich product of the loaden'd Tree.
 Hope deign to enter my benighted Breast!
 Dispel Despair that sullen gloomy Guest! 30
 Drive her to Darkness plung'd in Ebon Night
 Far from the Regions of Pelucid Light.
 Where deep envelop'd in Egyptian Folds
 In gloomy State her solemn Court she holds.
 Her blue sulphureous gloom she does display 35
 Where dusky shadows Dubious Forms convey!
 O rest sweet Phantom in my humble bell¹⁴
 With me Inhabit while below I dwell
 So shalt thy Presence tinge each object here
 Brighten Misfortune and e'en Pain endear! 40
 Strew Roses where the prickly Bramble grew
 And breath like Incense thy refreshing Dew!
 Thy Vistas transient gleam like Dying Fires
 Which Start and tremble eer¹⁵ the Light expires
 When the Spent oyl a vacant Lamp betrays 45
 A weak, unstable, momentary, Blaze.
 Thus when the Patriarch by divine Command
 His child to slay rear'd his trembling Hand!¹⁶
 With Grief appal'd in act to Strike the Blow,
 His Hearts strings rending with paternal Woe 50
 No Stay on Earth, no Prop beneath the Skies;
 With one fond look he cast to heaven his Eyes!
 When Lo! a voice pervades his listening Ear
 A voice which scathes every recent Fear!

¹⁴ According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter *OED*), "A bubble formed in a liquid. (The ordinary word for 'bubble' in modern Scotch, whence occasional in English literature.)," at "bell, n.3," *OED*, <http://www.oed.com/>.

¹⁵ "ere"

¹⁶ The patriarch and his child are Abraham and Isaac.

"Thy Hand with hold! the sound Ecstatic Cry'd 55
 Prov'd is thy Faith, thy Resignation try'd
 Thy yielded Will before the Will Divine
 Seals Thee Eternally forever mine
 That Resignation an Oblation Pure!
 Which could so great, so keen a test endure! 60
 A meaner victim will I deign to take,
 Nor thine for ages in thy seed Forsake.
 Their very Errors will I tender see
 When I remember they are Sprung from thee
 When stand I on the Brink of Sad Despair! 65
 Remote all Comfort every Succor far,¹⁷
 Far, far remov'd! yet the same hand can save
 Which snate[h]'d young Isaac from the opening Grave.
 But grant This Victim had all blooming bled
 His guiltless Spirit would have spotless fled, 70
 A guiltless Martyr to the Realms of Love!
 And bath'd in Sunshine of Jehovah's Love!
 This thought had chac'd the troubled parents fear
 And sooth'd the mourner; and Dry'd up the tear!
 But what alas for wretched me remains; 75
 But Cutting anguish and corroding pains
 Slow pining Melancholy wasting Woe!
 And Shame deep Blushing in my Path below!
 Distrust, and darkness, and a Spirit vext,¹⁸
 With Wavering thoughts and Clashing views perplex'd 80
 These Sad associates for my Future Life!
 Bewildering Guides for a Deserted-Wife.

End of the first part¹⁹

¹⁷ Probably "fair," based on rhyme and context.

¹⁸ "vexed"

¹⁹ Partially obliterated here is "Extract of a Letter from Mr F to Mrs F London." Such a letter appears after part 3.

Note by E Fn [March²⁰] 1793

My Dear Mrs Stocton.

This little narrative of Domestic Distress was written at the Interval of near two years: and as some parts of it appear Contradictory to others, This seeming contradiction arises from Circumstances arising in the Course of my Investigation of painful Facts; for and against the Character who is the subject of my affection.

When it falls in your hand (as you desir'd a Copy of it And I then resum'd it) I would wish the perusal of it could be limited to Such few of your Friends; as have feeling delicate Hearts and consider it as a proof of a warm Heart, than the production of a Cool Head. When I had my Pen in my Hand to finish Hope I was summoned to town 1780 to close the Eyes of Anna Smith my Dear Neice who I brought up.²¹

Part the Second II Penseroso

Doubt written 1782.

O Gracious God supream Grand Source of all!
 Thou Cause of Causes 'tis to Thee I call!
 Tis Thou alone their Energy bestow
 Bright Hope pale Fear Warm Faith from Thee all Flow
 Tis Thou alone points all their piercing Darts 5
 When aim'd unerring at their Votarys Hearts!
 Else all were Chaos like unfashion'd Earth
 Before thy Word spake Beauty into Birth!
 If Thou withdrawst thy Face Lifeless they Burn!
 Thou art the Flame and they the tallow [warm]! 10
 By Thee [Commissioned] with mans Race to Dwell
 Strong to attract or vigirously repell!

²⁰ In all honesty, this looks more like "April" than "March" to my eye, but given that part 2 is dated March 29, 1793, I have chosen to interpret the more logical date. It is a mark of Fergusson's inscrutable hand that the choice between the words "March" and "April" could feel like a toss-up.

²¹ Anna Young Smith was raised largely by Fergusson and began to establish a reputation as a poet herself before her death at twenty-four on April 3, 1780. See Pattie Cowell, *Women Poets in Pre-Revolutionary America, 1650-1775: An Anthology* (Troy, NY, 1981), 169-78; and Ousterhout, *Most Learned Woman in America*, 264.

To lure to Virtue, and from vice to draw
 To mark thy Precepts And observe thy Law
 Mans walk to gild and radiate in Gloom 15
 From the soft Cradle to the Silent Tomb!
 Then if the Sparrows fall to Thee be known
 And things most trivial can ascend thy Throne;
 Oh deign to cast one pitying Look toward me
 The Suffering of an Injur'd woman see! 20
 Restore my Henry to a spotless name,
 And teach me how to clear his slander'd Fame.
 If he is guiltless may he guiltless shine
 Or if prov'd faulty teach me to resign
 This nearest Tye and take my Cross below; 25
 That I here after future Joys may know
 Where no frail passion no entangled Knot
 Can find admission in that holy spot²²
 Bless'd as the Seraphs in the Courts above;
 All love Concenter'd into heavenly Love 30
 In this grand Fount all lesser Streams are lost
 Tho' while below with dreadful Conflicts tost
 For while we travel in this Earth Bound Sphere
 We lean and fasten on some Dear;
 Which rends the Heart Strings when it Flies or Fades 35
 Its Loss the Comfort of our Life o'ershades!
 This is the Foot, the Dear Eye, the Dear Right Hand!
 Which must be yielded in this Pilgrim Land.
 The tender Ewe Lamb which we nightly fed
 That laid her Fleece within our Downy Bed! 40
 Drank of our Cup and as a Child was near
 And by its fondness did each act endear
 Must be resign'd tho' it shall pierce the Heart,
 Life's Lesson is from all we love to part.
 These we must yield at Heavens triumphant [Gate] 45

²² "these as they change almighty Father these/Are but the vary'd God"—(Tomson Hymn to the Seasons) (EGF's note). In James Thomson's "A Hymn on the Seasons" (1730), the initial word "these" refers to the seasons. It is unclear in the manuscript what Fergusson refers to in the absence of any direct or indirect reference to the seasons. I have keyed it to this line, the last line on the manuscript page, because the note appears at the bottom of the page. James Thomson, *The Seasons and the Castle of Indolence*, ed. James Sambrook (Oxford, 1972), 159.

Ere we are Crown'd with Joys that Martyrs wait
 Heaven makes its Terms Obedience is its Due!
 We must the Thorny path as pleas'd pursue
 As tho the [Balmy] Rose along was Strew'd;
 And the smooth Road with fragrant Showers bedew'd 50
 Squint Eyed Suspence be gone, with Janus look
 Thou double monster by [white] Peace forsook:
 Thou bitter Dasher of serene Repose;
 From thy dark veins a venom'd passion flows:
 Then Proteus²³ like assumst swift varying Forms 55
 Alternate Freezing and Altirnate warms;
 Thou worrying, trying, dark tormenting Guest,
 Thou foe to Comfort and a tranquil Rest
 Fly I conjure thee with thy Partner Fear!
 And Join thy Offspring Palid sad Despair 60
 In one dark Groupe Collect in [Joyous] night;
 And guilty Consciences with [Terror] fright
 But let the virtous from thy Pangs be free
 Nor harmless Bosoms thy dark visage see.
 And O forgive me where so e'er thou art, 65
 Thou once fond partner of my guiltless Heart!
 Forgive Suspicion and a mean Distrust,
 Forgive, forgive if I have been unjust!
 Forgive the Conflicts of a Suffering Wife
 Whose minds too feeble to Support the Strife 70
 Of vile attack some dark mysterious Plan
 By Woman plotted and in Hell began,
 Low at thy []²⁴ I will a Suppliant Bend,
 And pray in Pity thou wilt Condescend
 To Speak my Pardon and to Seal my Doom 75
 Before I enter the dark Dreary Tomb
 For Heaven wont pardon while you distant fly
 And wrath hangs vengful in your louting Eye.
 My Shatter'd fortunes I with calmness Bore

²³ Janus is the two-faced god of the Romans; Proteus a god who could change shape. *Bloomsbury Dictionary of Myth* (London, 1996), s.vv. "Janus," "Proteus," <http://www.credoreference.com/entry/bloommyth/proteus> (accessed July 30, 2010).

²⁴ This is simply a missing word.

A Loss in Common but with thousands more 80
 A Public Evil dire Effects of War
 Yet on my Mind left an Indented Scar
 No Sting was hurt by Hands that should have sooth'd
 No path was brambled where I thought it smooth'd!
 No tear for this fell down my faded Cheek 85
 Patient I bore it with demeanor meek
 Theives might break through or [Cankering Pest] Destroy
 Or Flames consume the transitory toy
 But here my Henry charg'd with Crimes so Base
 It wounds me deep to hint this dire disgrace. 90
 a year [revolv'd] since one kind Letter came!
 Silent from anger or ignoble Shame!
 A wretched woman Crys aloud her wrongs
 And swears her Ruine to your act belongs.
 A Feeble Infant is produced to view; 95
 And Ills on Ills my tangled Steps pursue,
 My Freind afronted, and your honour Soil'd
 Beneath this Roof This Servant mean beguil'd
 A favor'd Hand maid to her Mistress Dear
 A Shameful narrative obtrudes my ear 100
 Twas I oh Henry brought you to these Walls!²⁵
 Couldst thou then []²⁶ Deaf to Hospitable Calls!
 Oer look each tye both Decent and Divine;
 Couldst thou thine Honour so complete Resign
 Thus to forget thy Friend, thy Self, thy Wife! 105
 And mark with anguish my remaining Life:
 An Honest man with unsuspecting heart;
 Did all the Comforts of his House impart
 Nor Chirlish gave but [unreserv'd] and Free;
 And kindly treated cause allied to me 110
 Though thy own Manners might demand Esteem
 Thy various merits once my darling Theme!

²⁵ During the occupation of Philadelphia, Henry Hugh Fergusson stayed in the home of Charles Stedman, the uncle of Elizabeth's friend and housemate for most of her life, Betsy Stedman. It was through his connection to Elizabeth that Henry found lodging under Stedman's roof and, consequently, met Jenny, one of the Stedman's servants. Ousterhout, *Most Learned Woman in America*, 259–60.

²⁶ Another missing word.

Couldst thou for this return a Deed so mean,
 Here draw a veil draw an [impervious] Screen
 This Stamps with Shame (if true) thy Blasted Fame 115
 And raises Blushes when I hear thy Name
 Brings the Salt tears on each sad annual Day,
 I gave my Heart and plighted vows away,
 Thou art traduc'd, thou sure art Slander'd Still;
 And I impos'd on by superior Skill: 120
 This Scheme of Cunning has been Deeply laid
 And dark Deception does my peace invade.
 She Syren like has sung her Specious tale;
 And shall her Fictions oer thy Word prevail
 Tis forg'd tis fabricated tis all art; 125
 Tis hatch'd to torture my afflicted Heart
 To gain provision for her spurious Brood!
 Which claims no Drop of Henrys honest Blood!
 When Men of Fashion Here will sneering smile
 That I once thought thee so devoid of guile 130
 That thou holdst Truth as sacred on thy Part,
 From the same moment that thou pledgst thy heart
 As thou expected Faithfulness from me
 One Omnipresent did each promise See!
 In Heavens pure Eye no vain Distinctions made 135
 Of Man or Woman if his Faith betray'd
 Had all Circassia's Beauties stood reveal'd!
 And no thin Robes their polish'd Limbs conceal'd,
 Such as in Montagues smooth lines we read²⁷
 When Turkish Bangnios Sensual Gazes feed; 140
 I could in Confidence have heard you tell
 In what the fairest did the fair Excell:
 But neer have fear'd they would your [Souls] inspire
 With warm emotions of impure Desire!
 Thy glowing Subjects of a painters art, 145
 Who to the Canvass might their Charms impart

²⁷ This alludes to Lady Montagues account of the Turkish women, and their Baths where their [] (EGF's note). Elizabeth and Henry were both familiar with Mary Wortley Montagu's Persian Letters, as is clear from Henry Fergusson's appended letter, below. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters* (London, 1994).

Models for Venus or the Parian Stone²⁸
 Their living Beauties to the marble flown
 The art admir'd abstracted from the Wish
 of Fancied Pleasure or luxurious Bliss 150
 When first my Pen reluctant did relate,
 To you this story of thy ruin'd state!
 Such were the Lines you in the Page return'd
 While at the Charge you all Indignant Burn'd:
 The verse dont Highten what the prose Exprest, 155
 It rather weakens what was written Best.²⁹
 "By every Tye that Binds the Human Race,
 My Conscience Clears me of this foul Disgrace
 By all the Powers where Influences unite
 To grace Society with pure Delight; 160
 By pure Conubial Love I Solemn swear,
 And void of guile I can with truth Declare
 By me that woman never was betray'd;
 Nor through my means a blushing mother made.
 By me that Woman never was beguil'd, 165
 I never yet have Virgin honour Soil'd.
 Tho from my tongue no rigid morals flow
 Nor Saint like piety my Manners show
 Yet I can say with genuine Honour Here,
 For me no Woman ever Shed a tear, 170
 a guilty mother I no female made
 No Simple Girl with specious arts betray'd;
 And since I took the sacred marriage vow
 I no loose Pleasures to my self allow!
 Shorn to the quick your Sorrows touch my heart 175
 I feel them all with agonizing smart,
 But Chief superior o'er the sable train

²⁸ Parian Marble the finest for Statues in Greece and whitest (EGF's note). In this note, the word "Italy" is obliterated where "Greece" appears.

²⁹ The lines that follow are a versification of the letter appended to the end of this part. Fergusson includes a set of quotation marks beside each line on the left side of the page, as was sometimes done in printed works. The end quotation, after "roll," is also included, as given here. However, it seems that Fergusson drew the quotation marks first, without counting the number of lines needed, because there are a few too many; that is, a few lines still contain left-hand quotation marks after the right-hand end quotation mark after "roll" and the break in the verse paragraph.

This last³⁰ attacks me with acutest pain
 Because I know supreme o'er all the Rest
 This deepest wrankles in your wounded Breast 180
 What wounds my Fame I know too wounds your soul
 And makes keen anguish in your Bosom roll."
 I read exulting in an Honest Pride!
 And the low malice of her art Defy'd
 My tottering Fortune was at once forgot 185
 And Hope Illumin'd all my future Lot
 A virtous man tho' poor and lost to show,
 To me was treasure in my Walk below;
 My spirits Cheer'd I thus delighted Cryd,
 My God I know will Food and Cloths provide 190
 Who feeds the Ravens and the Sparrow feeds,
 With Eye Paternal all Creation Heeds:
 From Natures Lap he will a little pour;
 That I may gather from the Reservoir!
 I have no Infants to Incite to hoard; 195
 And mourn them craving round my scanty Board
 In brighter Days I did my morsel Share,
 And of my little did that little Spare.
 I lov'd the Circle of the Social Hour;
 My Soul expanded to soft Friendships power, 200
 Yet the small circle I can make still less
 And hope Content the tender Groupe may Bless
 First to my Stella³¹ who my sorrows knew
 With ardent Haste and fluttering Heart I flew
 Warm'd with Emotion trembling then I Cry'd 205
 (With heaving Bosom and with virtous Pride)
 "My Henrys Clear His Honour shines to view,³²
 In this one act all generous fair and true:

³⁰ Here the manuscript contains a palimpsestic "Chief," an indication that Fergusson was copying from a manuscript and lost her place.

³¹ "Stella" is Betsy Stedman's cognomen, or the name by which she would have been known to Fergusson's literary circle. See David S. Shields, "British-American Belles Lettres," in *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, vol. 1, 1590–1820, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch and Cyrus R. K. Patell (Cambridge, 1994), 314.

³² As with the earlier "quotation," Fergusson includes quotation marks down the left side of the column to the end of the verse paragraph, but she does not include an end quotation mark.

Your Uncles House he never made the Scene
 of Brutal vices scandalous and mean; 210
 With me Rejoice with me too long you mourn'd
 Too long with Sympathetic Sorrow turn'd
 Your friendly heart will now be pleas'd that Shame
 Is metamorphos'd to a Spotless name!
 That all the Story was a specious tale 215
 To blast my Henry and my Peace assail,
 But Heaven be prais'd such arts can ne'r prevail!
 Next to my servants eagerly I flew,
 For all My Household the mean story knew!
 Eager and earnest I delighted went; 220
 My Soul with anguish and with trouble pent
 Eager expanded to give joy full vent³³
 I hail'd all objects in this Circle near,
 For recent Sorrow did Each Face endear,
 Each Rank seem'd level'd which in prosperous Days 225
 From Prides false glass the Eye too vain surveys!
 With Sorrow humbled and with Grief opprest,
 I Sought the Sympathy of every Breast.
 Ardent I long'd my Henry to meet;
 And with sweet peace his wounded Spirit greet, 230
 My calmer Friends Still urg'd a cool Delay;³⁴
 For Doubts and Dangers Strew'd the Briary way!
 Love like a pioneer yet clear'd the road;
 And nought of Danger in the passage show'd
 All Doubts and Dangers, I bid far be gone 235
 Chac'd by th' Influence of affections Sun!
 Deaf to cold Prudence, and to Interest voice,
 I in this proof of Fondness did rejoice
 a train of Ills I combated to prove:
 How High I held his unabated Love 240
 A Heart warm glowing in my Countrys side,
 And Clashing views did Various Cares divide:

³³ Fergusson draws a bracket in the left-hand margin of the preceding three lines, a conventional indication that the triplet (three rhymed lines as opposed to two) is intentional.

³⁴ Fergusson may be thinking of the Stedmans here, who believed Jenny from the beginning. See Ousterhout, *Most Learned Woman in America*, 259–60.

Yet all was yielded to a Husbands call:
 He Seem'd the Poll Star that attracted all.
 I went, I saw, I [all] the weakness Show'd 245
 Which is in Womans poor frail Sex bestow'd!
 In that Sad hour as from my arms he flew,
 Just as he gave a fond and Soft adieu;
 Such were his Words with genuine air convey'd,
 Which no Confession at the Time betray'd. 250
 "See this vile woman my dear Betsy see
 And hear These words perhaps the last from me,
 Demand from me How she as parent name
 To this poor Infant which proclaims her Shame!
 As much the mother of that Child thou art 255
 As I with Truth can claim a Fathers part
 Believe your Husband in this point believe!
 Who scorns His Betsy meanly to Decive
 Your Friends Domestic I with Distance view'd:
 Nor did in Decency's nice Line intrude! 260
 Sure some Infernal Plot is deep design'd,
 Our fatal union fatal to unbind:
 To paint me odious, mean, and all unjust!
 Stranger to Honour and a Slave to Lust."
 Peace breath'd meliflous in each Balmy Sound 265
 And drew the poison from the festering wound,
 Shed a soft requiem o'er my bleeding Heart,
 Which long had struggled with Suspicious Dart;
 My Sole Resentment to my self was turn'd
 To think my Bosom had Indignant Burnd 270
 With Jealousys Ignoble yellow Flame;
 Which Made me thus My honest Henry Blame;
 Then why this change? Then why this mean Distrust?
 Beware! Beware! be not again unjust!
 Least you as Suppliant plead and Plead in vain, 275
 And never more Conubial Peace regain
 Love and Resentment each is feeling Strong,
 The Passions diferent from one Source belong,
 Loves Flame inverted glows with anger keen,
 No Soft Emotions in its Fires are seen; 280

Then dread the moment which your Henry Lost,
 And your Peace Shipwreck'd on Suspicious Coast,
 If Guilty worthless, Innocent so pain'd
 No future Confidence can be maintain'd!
 Loves Lamp Extinguish'd never can revive 285
 Reasons too cold to keep the Flame alive
Prudence may preach, and Interest may plead,
 But Love such Monitors disdains to Heed.
 They from the Head; the Heart [he] still directs,
 And Calmer Councils vigorously Rejects. 290
 Love acts from Feelings Passions guide the Helm
 O'er all the Vessels in this Boisterous Realm,³⁵
 Lifeless and Dull Philosophy appears,
 The Slow associate of declining years!
 I drop the Curtain here I draw the veil! 295
 Nor further enter on the Dubious Tale
 Time Soon must deepen, or Expell the gloom
 And Change Suspence to a determin'd Doom!
 Yet some what whispers we're ordain'd to part
 Tho' the last pang should penetrate my Heart. 300
 [Less] every Ill than daily for to prove,
 The varied agonies of Slighted Love!
 Oh Shield me, keep me from this Tale protect,
 From Careless apathy and Cold neglect!
 Can I love Honour, and that man obey 305
 Who could premeditate my Peace betray?
 Who nine long months³⁶ appear'd with Brow Serene
 With Smiles of Innocence and artless Mien
 Saw all my anguish all my Troubles knew,
 Heard Sighs unfeign'd, and tears from sorrow true; 310

³⁵ On love and passion, see Eustace, *Passion Is the Gale*. In her construction of the place of passion in the companionate marriage, Fergusson fits squarely into Eustace's overall narrative, in which her writings figure prominently, albeit before her marriage and the Revolution.

³⁶ Nine months seems to indicate the period during which Henry was in Philadelphia: coming and going with the British, he stayed from September 1777 to June 1778. During this time, Henry wanted Fergusson to stay with him in the city, but she was reluctant, only visiting periodically. She evidently thought it was too dangerous for him to stay at Graeme Park. As she explains in a note to Stockton in 1787, during this time she only spent "about a fortnight with him." See Martha C. Slotten, "Elizabeth Graeme Ferguson: A Poet in 'The Athens of North America,'" *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 108 (1984): 259–88, quotation at 281n52.

Tears for my Country Sighs for my own Fate
 And Ills unnumber'd in this Bleeding State
 The Sword and Fire was Ravaging around,
 And dearest Friends felt then the general wound!
 Yet low Intrigue 'tis Sd your thoughts engage 315
 Patience her Self kindles into Rage!
 No, let me lead a dull inglorious Life,
 But free from Conflicts of internal Strife
 Let Stupid Apathy to grief Succeed
 And lonely Sorrow Contemplation Feed! 320
 My Breast can only its own Sadness tell
 And what Sensations in my Bosom dwell
 If to my Self I then am only known
 All Recollection must be ever flown
 Ere I my Henry could as Father see! 325
 To any Babe that was not Sprung from me!
 Then no reproaches from my tongue shall hear
 No harsh recitings shall invade your Ear
 No louring Brow shalt thou resentful Spy
 No tear Indignant starting from my Eye 330
 Too deep my Sorrow too acute my Grief,
 From Common Sources to extract relief!
 Sad Silence only shall my sufferings veil
 As I glide cheerless through Lifes gloomy Dale
 Least of the least an unconnected Thing! 335
 Who droop'd deep wounded by afflictions Sting
 The Reed she lean'd on provd a pointed Spear³⁷
 To peirce her Soul with agency severe
 The Elm shrunk back to which adhered the Vine
 No Prop it met, its Foliage to entwine, 340
 No fostering shelter for its Branches found

³⁷ The primary source for the image of the broken reed is Isaiah 36:6, where it warns of the perils of trusting the Pharaoh. Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*, one of Fergusson's favorite texts, also features the following lines:

"Lorenzo? At thy Friends' Expence be wise;
 Lean not on Earth; 'twill pierce thee to the Heart;
 A broken Reed, at best; but, oft a Spear;
 On its sharp Point Peace bleeds, and Hope expires."

See Edward Young, *Night Thoughts*, ed. Stephen Cornford (Cambridge, 1989).

[It] Died it wither'd trampled to the ground!
 Fair might it flourish'd by a Gentle Hand
 Had fondly rear'd it with a soft command!
 And would a tribute gratefully have paid 345
 To the asylum that had lent it aid
 But Fate ordain'd it soon to fade below
 Perhaps in Paradise more fair to Blow
 Then all the sorrows it felt here on Earth!
 Are preparations of a Second Birth. 350
 The Soil manur'd for ever lasting Grain,
 To Live and flourish on a Deathless Plain
 This Renovation shall forever last
 Nor feel the Chills of Sorrows lowring Blast!
 All There tranquil, Delightful, and serene, 355
 No Cold night to damp the Placid Scene,
 No Sensual Mixture of an earthly Love
 Shall dare to Sully the pure flame above
 Love, pride, and Virtue, Him shall know no Strife
 [Each] Tye Disolv'd of the Deserted-Wife. 360

The End of the Second part Doubt.

The line all Doubts and Dangers I bid far be gone”

Refers to my going in the middle of January 1778 to Elizabethton by desire of Mr Ferguson to take leave of Him he going to England. He was allow'd to come over from New York to Mr Boudinots House.³⁸

³⁸ Elias Boudinot was the brother of Annis Boudinot Stockton, of course. George Washington gave Elizabeth permission to meet Henry at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, close to British-occupied New York. Henry had removed from Philadelphia with the British when the occupation ended, traveling with them to New York (Ousterhout, *Most Learned Woman in America*, 121–22, 229, 364n14). As with some of the versified excerpts from Henry's letters, Elizabeth indicates quotation by including quotation marks to the left of each line.

Extract of Mr F letter to Mrs Fn on his first Being told in a Letter by his Wife of the acusation

Long Island November 12 1778

— — To put your mind out of Suspence, I can with [the] clearest Conscience assure you, in the most Solemn appeal to every power that has Influence on Society and by the Strongest Ties that Contribute to the happiness of the Human Race that I never [had] Conexion with that woman of a nature to render her pregnant And that she must be the most abominable of her Sex to make and persevere in Such assertions. If you will give yourself time to reflect, that if debauch'd enough to act so very unworthy, I must be very regardless of your peace of mind and my own Character that to make some arrangement to conceal so disgracefull a Circumstance and this consideration ought in a great measure to Invalidate her scandalous tale.----³⁹

I never treated her with more familiarity than I would the favorite Domestic in a Friends House (for such I always look'd on her rather than as a Servant of my own.

I recollect perfectly her once telling me that She was going to leave Mr Stedman and I asked her for what reason? And she sd she was going to be married but beg'd me not to mention it to her Mistress I asked her to whom or whether it was to a tradesman after some Hesitation sd no, that it was to the servant of a General Officer, who had been five years in the army and had made money in his Masters Service, And that they meant to keep a Shop I then diswaded her from it and told her that he would probably leave her, and that such people in the army Seldom made steady good Husbands and I heard no more of the affair.

I cannot keep again expressing my astonishment at the extream Impudence of this Woman where She must be conscious in her Soul that I am not the Father of Her child, But this again I must Solemly declare is not the Case. If it was I believe I should not deny it!⁴⁰

³⁹ It would undoubtedly be an error to view these transcriptions as absolutely faithful to Henry's original letters, which are probably no longer extant. The dashes at the beginning and end of this paragraph, which are longer than Elizabeth's usual dashes, may indicate that she has omitted part of the letter.

⁴⁰ Whether or not Henry would not have denied fathering a bastard, Clare Lyons has established that many other men in Philadelphia in the revolutionary period and early republic freely admitted their paternity of such children. While the interpersonal relation between Fergusson and Henry may have dictated a denial in this case, the social context did not. Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble*, 68, 189–90.

A report so injurious to my Reputation, and so mortifying to you, added to your other accumulated Distresses is too much, and when I think of your Sensibility and Situation all together I am astonish'd that you are not quite [eveset]⁴¹ you seem really shorn to the quick my poor Betsy!

I feel most acutely this unmerited Slander But it is a Species of Detraction peculiar to your Sex, and against which there is no precaution if they will be so infamous to use it, she will not certainly have the assurance to swear her cant Bantling⁴² to me and add Perjury to her other Crimes When she has no prospect of reaping any advantage from it, I do not Set up for any particular Rigidity or austerity of morals, But I can safely say that I have ever behaved with proper fidelity in the Conjugal State and that no woman has ever had reason to Shed a tear on my account for any Injury Done to her Virtue or Honor

H Fn

Note to Mrs S by E Fn

Note to Mrs Stogton in the Farm [at]

I think my dear madam the Life I have led Since This was originally written, has fully verify'd what I there have expected a dull Inglorious Life; But I Solemly declare that narrow as my Fortune is Since I have Settld my affairs, and paid my Debts, I feel a peace and tranquility I have long been a Stranger to: I owe not any one:⁴³ I live like a Hermit with no maid in this great House, I have not Seen my Dear Miss Stedman for three months as She Spent the depth of the Winter in Chester County, She did not go to Stay so long But tho the weather was mild, she found the Roads unpassable, and hoping to come every Day she did not write and I was some time in a Sad State of Suspence, But I find I am only easy now in proportion as I hear nothing of Mr Fn She is return'd well thank God

⁴¹ *OED*'s last instance of the verb "evese" is 1394, and yet the meaning is "To cut, clip (a person's hair, the coat of an animal, a tree, etc.); to cut short the hair of (a person)," which certainly works in this context. Perhaps it was retained in rural Scottish usage.

⁴² *OED* gives "Bold, brisk, courageous, hearty, lusty, lively, hale" for "cant" as an adjective, especially in the Scottish dialect. For "bantling": "A young or small child, a brat. (Often used depreciatively, and formerly as a synonym of *bastard*)."

⁴³ Indeed, reports of Fergusson during the 1790s indicate that she lived very modestly but was able to extend charity to her neighbors when necessary (Ousterhout, *Most Learned Woman in America*, 334).

Note on French affairs⁴⁴

The Tragedy of France has deeply occupy'd my Mind, I know not the
taste of the times on this point, But I have a decided Idea that poor Lewis
XVIth did nothing that merited such a fate And I believe that was King
Alfred to rise from the Dead with a Crown among the people! They to
pull it off would take the Head along with it; These may be unfashion-
able Sentiments for the times But they are the Dictates of my Mind
If Lewis last will was His own, he is a truly pious man and in a State to
be envied now rather than pitied He prefers his own Religion [illeg] with
"A Death Beds a Detector of the Heart!
"Here tir'd Disimulation drops her Mask
"Here real and apparent are the Same!

Young⁴⁵

at the Hour the Kings Sentence of Death was read to him the Lesson
in our Episcopal Church for the Sunday was the 53d of Isaiah and the
Psalm for the Day the Psalm CII
this wrote March 29th 1793 E Fn

Il Penseroso

Part the third of the Deserted Wife

Solitude Il Penseroso. written 1782

"Lone Solitude⁴⁶ Calm silent pensive maid!
I woo thy Haunts! I woo thy solemn Shade
Time hath inur'd me to thy Solemn Scenes
Thy nodding Umbrage and thy darkened Greens!

⁴⁴ This "note" appears on one page of the manuscript and may have been opportunistically filled in as an effort to use paper efficiently. This may also indicate that Fergusson preferred to begin a new section of the poem on the recto or right-hand page.

⁴⁵ Young, *Night Thoughts*. Night Two includes the following lines: "A Death-bed's a detector of the Heart./Here tir'd Dissimulation drops her Masque,/Thro' Life's Grimace, that Mistress of the Scene!/Here real, and Apparent, are the Same." It is unclear whether Fergusson forgot the third line, or merely edited it out as unimportant to her point. She includes the words "P.M. Lesson" in the left margin.

⁴⁶ (Dr Zimmerman on Solitude is a very elegant Book (EGF's note). As with note 22 above, this note is not keyed to any particular line but appears at the bottom of the page. In this case, however, it is fairly clear that she is annotating her apostrophe to Solitude. The book she refers to was published in London in 1791, a testament to the currency of Fergusson's reading (Johann Georg Zimmermann, *Solitude Considered with Respect to Its Influence upon the Mind and the Heart* [London: 1791].) Fergusson includes quotation marks down the left side of the column through line 14, but she does not include an end quotation mark.

With thou and Stella I will calmly go 5
 Through Lifes Deep vale, with Steady Step and Slow
 Strive to forget the visionary Plan!
 Which Fancy gilded for this little Span
 I Schem'd to tread on while below I rang'd
 And all the maze of giddy folly chang'd 10
 Thou airy Phantom of Shakesperian Mold
 Brighter than Sun Beams or pure Ophir's⁴⁷ Gold!
 Youths bland Dilusions form'd of Health and Spring
 Gay as the Sky-lark on her mounting Wing
 Tinges of Blossoms Down of fragrant Flowers! 15
 The gentle Violet and the Woodbine Bowers

Stella the mild companion of my Days!
 Who glides unotic'd as in Desart Ways;
 The Rose Blows lonely in its Silent glooms
 No sense delighted by its Rich perfumes.⁴⁸ 20
 Returns to Nature all the Gifts they bear
 A grateful tribute to the Sun, and air,
 But I from Her receive no pleasure give
 In the sequestered lonely state we Live
 Serenely cheerful Innocently gay; 25
 She helps to pass the lingering hours away
 We read, we moralize, we chat, we walk,
 And on a thousand various subjects talk.
 My Country Neighbors for my troubles feel,
 And wonder at me as I turn my Wheel⁴⁹ 30

⁴⁷ "Ophir" is a biblical town renowned for wealth. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, s.v. "Ophir," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*: <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9057198> (accessed Aug. 3, 2010).

⁴⁸ "Full many a Gem of purest ray serene
 "The Deep unfathom'd Caves of ocean Bear
 "Full many a flower is Blown to blush unseen
 "And waste its Sweetness in the Desart air

Gray

(EGF's note). Fergusson changes some words in this quotation from Thomas Gray's 1751 "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard": in the second line, his "dark" becomes her "deep"; in the third line, his "born" becomes her "blown"; in the last line, she puts "on" where he has "in." In this appropriation, Betsy Stedman takes the place of Gray's rose, although Fergusson points out that Stedman does give her pleasure (which is not reciprocated).

⁴⁹ Susan Stabile, in her "Introduction" to Ousterhout's *Most Learned Woman in America*, notes the prominence of spinning as a theme in Fergusson's later commonplace books (p. 23).

This Rustic Exercise produces Health
 A greater Blessing than []⁵⁰ Wealth;
 Sweet Letters too from kindest Friends impart
 A transient Blessing to my aking Heart!
 Fain like the Bee I would the Sweets exhale 35
 Nor let lone Sorrow oer each Sense prevail:
 Yet like the Spider more I drink the Juice
 Which does a Canker'd [delicacy] produce;
 Through Diferent Mediums diferent People view
 As seen thro' glasses tinged with green or Blue 40
 When Sad the soul no object rises gay
 And Bleak December seems to [lour] Thro' May!
 Day Steals on Day and year Succeeds to year
 While each Fresh Seasons mark'd with Grief severe
 The Spring Soft [daring] from her Southern Halls 45
 Summons the Zephirs with refreshing Calls
 The melting months breath[e] young delight around,
 But no fine feelings in my Breast are found;
 The glowing Summer pants in every Tree
 Their Fruits mature but brings no Joy to me! 50
 The waving Harvest swells with yellow grain
 And Fresh Pomona strews the Perfect Plain
 With ruddy apples Streak'd with Burnish'd Gold
 Whose Shining Coats a luscious Juice unfold⁵¹
 Tho Fairy Tribes Send oer this field of Snow 55
 And Frost like green land Icy mountains show
 Yet still one Theme pursues my leaden Hours;
 As Aarons Rod all lesser Rods Devours!⁵²
Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, all unite,
 To Robb my Bosom of serene Delight! 60
 And shade the Sombre Pencil strong with Night⁵³

⁵⁰ This is most probably a proper noun, but is impossible to decipher.

⁵¹ James Thomson's *The Seasons* is alluded to many times throughout "The Deserted Wife," nowhere more strongly than in this passage. Fergusson's depiction of the seasons differs from Thomson's in that his poem is generally laudatory of seasonality. Even winter has its merits: "The frost-concocted glebe/Draws in abundant vegetable soul,/And gathers vigor for the coming year." For Fergusson, the cycle of seasons only heightens her melancholia. Fergusson follows Thomson's use of "Pomona" as a god of fruit trees. See Thomson, *Seasons*, 55n663.

⁵² Exodus 7:12.

⁵³ The preceding three lines are marked by a bracket in indication of an intentional triplet.

Revolving round with lengthen'd Chain and Slow
 And as a wounded Snake they long and lingering go⁵⁴
 O ye white moments of a Virgin life!
 Late I resign'd you for the name of Wife! 65
 Of Halcyon Days and tranquil Hours profest,
 Blest in my Kindred in my Friendship Blest:
 But Death quick tore those kindred ties away
 And mixd my Parents with their native Clay
 Loos'd every tie, Relax'd each tender Cord! 70
 Which swell'd the Circle of my social Board!
 Alone of ten and last my mother Bore
 I Brethren, Sisters, and her loss deplore;
 Full four Score years my honor'd Father knew
 On Life's last verge with weary Steps he drew:⁵⁵ 75
 My youthful pleasures by their Deaths Destroy'd,
 I look'd around; all seem'd a dreary void;
 Self Love then whisper'd on some Prop to lean
 To Seek some partner in Lifes Shifting Scene,
 No Shining Baits of glittering gaudy Gold 80
 Did varnish'd pleasure to my ⁵⁶ Eyes unfold
 Nor sought I love on a romantic Plan;
 Yet hop'd I merited an honest man;
 Such if I Boast I yet may Comfort find,
 And taste the Balsam of a placid mind. 85
 Who tho' no Saint is no adept in Vice,
 Steady in Temper and in morals nice.
 Who nobly scorns to tell a mean untruth
 Tho warm not artful, in the path of youth
 Transient might Err But Steady not Deceive 90
 Then Try oh try your Henry to believe!
 With genuine passion I that Henry Lov'd
 Yet from that Source what anguish have I prov'd

⁵⁴ This part was writ in a [the] Cold Winter 1781, 82— (EGF's note).

⁵⁵ Dr. Thomas Graeme died on September 4, 1772; Ann Diggs Graeme (Fergusson's mother) on May 29, 1765; sisters Ann Graeme Stedman and Jane Graeme Young in 1759 and 1766, respectively; numerous other brothers and sisters had died at various points in Fergusson's younger years as well. She was the Graemes' last child, which must have exacerbated her sense of loneliness. See Ousterhout, *Most Learned Woman in America*, 35, 97, 143–44, and 351.

⁵⁶ There is a word obliterated here.

What Sad anxiety corroding pain!
 What Sighs unnumber'd What a direful Train 95
 Of mixd emmotions blended in the Soul
 What Strange Sensations in my Bosom Roll.
 Sure different Sexes can to each impart
 The Strongest movements of the human heart
 By Heaven intended in Lifes System Sure 100
 To love the warmest where we most endure.
 And has my Henry too from Grief been Spar'd
 No Henry no, thou has my Evils shar'd
 A wandering Exile the repose thou Seekst
 Banish'd from Home and all Domestic Sweets 105
 Perhaps traduc'd, vile Slander'd, with disgrace,
 By arts ignoble Scandalous and Base!
 Love like a Lamb first frolicks, frisks, and plays,
 Then Lion like a savage mien betrays!
 Oft proud and angry fiery, fierce, and Bold, 110
 It makes us tremble ere it quits its hold.
 Sullen Capricious Sensible alive!
 It seems to Die and oft from Death revive.
 Through out the lone and melancholy night
 I mark the Tapers solitary Light. 115
 Pour on my Page my strangely chequer'd Fate
 And paint the Sadness of my widow'd⁵⁷ State
 Or read the conflicts of some hapless maid;
 Whose Soul Loves Fervor did too deep pervade,
 Soft Eloise laments in plaintive Strains 120
 And Sweet Clarissa every sense Retains
 Great Clementina with majestic Grief
 And pious wandrings prays for Heavens relief
 Immortal Richardson in every Page;
 Draws forth our Pity or provokes our Rage; 125
 Pity for Woman Rage for those vile arts
 That man Relentless plans for guileless Hearts.
 Some Hallow'd Tomb I would to thee erect
 While the Soft Sex thy ashes should protect

⁵⁷ Fergusson here uses "widow'd" in its extended sense, meaning that she has been deserted, rather than in the more literal sense that would indicate her husband's death. See *OED*, s.v. "widow, n."

By Female Hearts thy Eulogy compos'd⁵⁸ 130
 By Female Hands thy Spotless marble closd
 By Female Brows the Cypress Garland worn
 By Matrons Honour'd, and by Virgins mourn'd!
 The lost Calista mourns her blasted youth⁵⁹
 A Shakespears Juliet weeps with artless Truth! 135
 All these from Love and thousands more undone
 All from Loves Influence brought their Ruine on:
 This Subtle passion worse to Souls refin'd
 This Scorching Æther to the feeling mind
 Its suffering Subjects form'd of Spirits pure 140
 Ordain'd its tortures keenest to endure!
 It Saps all Fortitude, it steals the Rest
 And where it enters leaves the Frame oprest!
 Reason, Religion, every Virtue Fades,
 Weak in the Balance when the mind it Shades: 145
 Seen through false mediums every Object Shines
 As partial Fancy to the youth inclines;
 As the Chamelion takes its tint from where
 The Colourd ground is to the Creature near
 Remove it distant From the favor'd hue 150
 And soon it changes to Black, grey or Blue
 These tales of sorrow but unhinge The Frame;
 And serve to cherish a destructive Flame;
 Tis flinging oyl on a lambent Fire
 Which kindles up each latent fond Desire 155
 The warnings given in a tale so sweet
 The soul is vancquish'd eer it can retreat.
 Next Stern Philosophy I call to mind,
 And puff These Love tales to the Sporting Wind.
 In pious authors I attempt to pour; 160

⁵⁸ These four Lines are with a small alteration taken from Mr Popes Elegy on an unfortunate Lady (EGF's note). Fergusson refers to Alexander Pope's "Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady."

⁵⁹ These Characters are too well known to need explaining (EGF's note). The list of tragic heroines in this verse paragraph would be a good basis for a course on melancholic women in early English literature. Clarissa and Clementina come from Samuel Richardson's novels, *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison*, respectively. Eloise is one of the title characters of Pope's poem, "Eloise to Abelard"; Juliet comes from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and Calista from Nicholas Rowe's 1703 drama *The Fair Penitent*.

And turn the leaves of holy Fathers oer
 Then fly oer woods, and Fields, and tufted meads
 And natures Beautys in the Wilds I read
 This ample Page becalms each Sceptic Doubt
 And puts the Torch of glimmering Folly out. 165
 Plain hints the Spring that after palid Death
 Has Seal'd [its] office with my last last Breath!
 I Shall awake to everlasting Bliss;
 in full fruition of each boundless wish
 The glowing Summer rich in gorgeous pride, 170
 And autumn Stores which Fruit and grain provide
 Point out some parent, some kind hand unseen
 Who Shifts harmonious the grand changing Screen,
 Who Sure tho Silent all around pervades,
 Basks in the Sun and Shelters in the Shade. 175
 This from Analogy we clear may trace
 From the wrapt Seraph to the meaner Race
 of Plants and animals who Join the Chain
 On Earth, in Air, and in the liquid main:
 Tho mortal ken cannot the Scale ascend 180
 To Mark their Rise their Progress and their End.
 Like Israels Ladder with its Foot below!
 Its top ascending where the angels go.⁶⁰
 Each Object here my melancholy aids
 And Sprightly Pleasure as a Phantom fades 185
 Here tottering walls a ruin'd air convey,
 And point some vestige mouldring to Decay
 Green mossy Turf upon the Roofs is seen;
 And the dark Ivy peeping out between!
 Rank Weeds and Sedges fill the gardens ground 190
 And Rampant Brambles in each Terrass found
 While Desolation stalks all gloomy round⁶¹
 The Dodder'd oaks⁶² with solemn ruin Stand

⁶⁰ Genesis 28:10.

⁶¹ The preceding three lines are marked by a bracket in indication of an intentional triplet.

⁶² The *OED* offers the following explanation of "doddered": "A word conventionally used (? after Dryden) as an attribute of old oaks (rarely other trees); app. originally meaning: Having lost the top or branches, esp. through age and decay; hence, remaining as a decayed stump."

Patrician Trees first natives to this Land!⁶³
 Long e'er the Indians to the British Sold 195
 Their untrod Forests for bewitching gold
 For Shining Baubles that beguil'd their Hearts,
 For Shells for Wampums, Arrows, Bows, and Darts.
 Yet Still I love this Lone Sequester'd Spot
 Endear'd by scenes that ne'er can be forgot. 200
 I Cling around it as to some old Tomb
 Within whose bounded melancholy Room
 Are laid the ashes and the dear remains
 of sweet associates on these earthly plains
 A kind of Relic which the Heart retains⁶⁴ 205
 A pensive languor all my Senses Seals;
 And latent Springs of former Woe reveals;
 This local weakness chains me to these Bowers
 I live in Fancy o'er the long lost Hours:
 Recall each Stage retread each vernal Scene 210
 Chequer'd with Storms and placid Skies serene;
 Think on the precepts which my Parents gave,
 And each fond Sister in the mouldring Grave
 A fonder mother and a Father kind,
 While I alone am mournful left behind. 215
 Mark each ascent that fills the Scale of Life,
 From the weak Babe to the Deserted Wife.

The End of the Third Part
 Solitude wrote 1781 and 82

I think an old Family seat going to Decay is really a pensive Sight I think
 the Second Letter in a Sentimental Novel call'd Julia Roubigne has a most
 Excelent Discription of that kind in it The aranger of that sweet pensive
 novel says in His Preface what I feel almost every Day I take a Pen in
 Hand, and of late years that is every Day of my Life. EF March 30 1793

"Unknown and unpatronized, I had little pretention to favor; writing
 and arranging the writings of others was to me a favorite amusement for

⁶³ I suppose now in France if one called a fine tree a Patrician Tree it would be fell'd down in an instant (EGF's note).

⁶⁴ The preceding three lines are marked by a bracket in indication of an intentional triplet.

which one easily finds both time and apology

"One advantage I drew from it which the Humane may hear with satisfaction, I often wander'd from my own woe, in tracing the tale of another's affliction, and at this moment every sentence that I writ I am but Escaping a little farther from the pressure of Sorrow"

Preface to *Julia Roubigne* by the Author of the man of feeling and the man of the World. He was a young Scotch Lawyer all his works are strongly mark'd with extreme Sensibility⁶⁵

E Fn

Extracts from Mr Fn Letters to Mrs Fn

Extract of a Letter from Mr F to Mrs Fn

London Nov 3d 1780

The Slander propagated by that Creature Jenny, Still continues to give me the utmost uneasiness, who Instigated first by Interest and next by malice is lead so Scandalously to traduce my Character

London February 27 1781 (Mr F to Mrs F)

In answer to yours by Mr Duchee (that Letter I never saw) I mentioned the Serious Sorrow it gave me⁶⁶

I Shall now forbear saying anything more on the abhorr'd Subject until a better opportunity offers by the ReEstablishment of Peace and my Return to refute the Base accusation which I shall ever reprobate as repugnant to Truth and possibility, However, our Circumstances might be confin'd yet any State would be more agreeable than living in Sufering and separation.

Man Wants But little here Below

Nor wants that Little Long⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Henry Mackenzie's epistolary novel *Julia de Roubigné* was published in 1773, following the success of his *The Man of Feeling* in 1771. Fergusson's transcription of the passage is fairly faithful, although she probably did it from memory. She did change Mackenzie's "amusement for which a man easily finds" (p. xi) into "amusement for which one easily finds" (my emphasis). Henry Mackenzie, *Julia De Roubigné*, ed. Susan Manning (East Linton, UK, 1999).

⁶⁶ Fergusson enlisted the aid of a whole circle of London-based expatriates in her quest to communicate with Henry. The "Mr Duchee" referred to here is Jacob Duché, the Anglican minister who became infamous for sending George Washington a letter asking him to surrender the Revolutionary War effort. Elizabeth carried this letter to Washington, although it is not known whether she was aware of, or agreed with, the contents. Duché left Philadelphia for London after the letter became public knowledge. Ousterhout, *Most Learned Woman in America*, 268–69.

⁶⁷ These lines appear in Young's *Night Thoughts*.

Your sequester'd way of Life and the delicacy of your Frame, and the Sensibility of your Mind, will I much dread make you fall a Victim to your Misfortunes.

With a mind unspotted you profess a Cultivated understanding. Employ it therefore to overcome the nicety of your feelings, you are not to be told that the observation of Religious Duties And the Study of Philosophy avail nothing when they do not learn us to bear with patience and an Equal mind the Ills to which we are Subjected. Ovid tells us that the Nightingale and the Swallow having sufer'd great Injuries, the first gave way to melancholy and Died pensive and lonely in the Wood But the other mix'd in the world Chatter'd and forgot her troubles. But you will like the Nightingale Die in the Wood.⁶⁸

H Fn.

Il Penseroso or the Deserted-Wife
a Poem in Four parts.
Part The Fourth and Last.
Adversity.

Hail Stern adversity Thy Steps I Greet!	
Thy Bitters Obvious deep conceal'd thy Sweet!	
Keen probes thy Lance tho in the End most Sure	
To those who can thy painful touch endure!	
Thy Face is rugged, awful is thy Brow!	5
No soft indulgence do thy Rules allow	
Rank is thy aspect, Surly is thy Mien.	
No loves, no Graces, in thy train are seen.	
From thee estrang'd I neer myself had known	
But been like thousands by vain joys undone	10
Folly for me a tinsel Net had wove,	
If Blest with Fortune and propitious Love!	
Which thou hast tore, and only thou couldst't tear,	
Disolv'd each vision with thy wand Severe	
Else had I been by flimsy Bait betray'd	15

⁶⁸ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*. The translation best known in the eighteenth century would have been that compiled by Sir Samuel Garth. The tale of Philomela in book 6 was translated by Samuel Croxall. Samuel Garth, *Ovid's Metamorphoses: Translated into English Verse* (London, 1717).

And deem'd my merits had been only paid
 Sail'd in False triumph down soft Pleasures Stream
 And danc'd and flutter'd in fair Follies Beam:
 Like the [Suns] Insects which just rise and Die
 The transient produce of a Summers Sky; 20
 One turgid Blast of Boreas bears them Far
 And Scatters armies in the frigid air:
 Weak and unable to resist small Storms
 One moment freezes and one moment warms
 Scatter'd in Myriad all their feeble Swarms⁶⁹ 25
 Hail thy true Friend I cry all Hail once more
 Thou safe Conductor to that peaceful Shore
 Where Sin and Sorrow Sink, and lasting rest
 Compose the Sabbath of the Eternal Blest
 Ardent Ill Strive to thee to bend my mind, 30
 And bear thy arrows with a Soul resign'd,
 Thy Sober Sadness and thy decent Pride,
 Shall all my little Levities Deride!
 Then guard the Narrow Path where all must go
 Ere they can holy heavenly mansions know⁷⁰ 35
 In thy Right Hand a Cross is full display'd
 A Crown of Triumph does thy Temples Shade!
 Harsh Links and Ladders do unite the train
 Compos'd of Poverty, of Grief, and Pain!
 These Steep ascents by which we sharp ascend 40
 And toil through Life till Death the Conflict End
 Nature turns from Thee with an Eye askance!
 While Grave Religion throws a cheering glance
 And woos her Votarys to the paths you tread
 Draws them Reluctant from th' Enamel'd Meade 45
 Where Honour, Pleasure, and Ambition Smile
 And Catch their Millions in their Specious Toile
 A Constant Warfare dost thou hold below,
 To all the Baits these trifling Females know

⁶⁹ These three lines are bracketed to indicate an intentional triplet. "Boreas" is the Greek name for the north wind (*OED*, s.v. "Boreas").

⁷⁰ Rev Through much tribulation thou shalt enter into the Kingdom of heaven (EGF's note). The chapter and verse are Acts 14:22. As with note 46 above, this note is not keyed to any particular line and appears at the bottom of the page, but it seems to refer to this idea.

Your theme is Life eternal Life above! 50
Faith, Hope and Charity and boundless Love.
 You term this World an Evanescent Spot
 Where all thats present shall be soon forgot
 A transient Sorrow and a Short liv'd tear
 Which shall the future but the more endear. 55
 Grief right applied is Heaven on Earth begun
 An April Cloud disperst by Virtues Sun!
 A Stage a Pilgrims path a troubled Main!
 A Shifting Scene serene delight to gain
 you take each Metaphor and tale to prove 60
 Here dwells short anguish, and long peace above
 This Saints declare, Poets and Prophets preach!
 And tortur'd Martyrs by their Sufferings teach.
 Not so ambition Honour Pleasure tell
 No Self Denials in their precepts Dwell 65
 Their Themes are Rapture to each present Sense
 To snatch each moment e'er they go from hence;
 Such is their Language such their fair Deceits
 They varnish poison with Dilusive Sweets.
 Thus they entice and Syren like they Sing! 70
 While Time is ever fluttering on the wing.
 So Sang the Preacher when he paints their Scheme
 The Atheists vain Creed: and the Sensuals Dream
 Such are the Chords which short liv'd Folly Strung
 From the Wise Solomon to pious Young!⁷¹ 75
 "Crown us with Rose Buds, Let us bath in Wine!
 Let Clustering Grapes around our temples twine
 Let Joy prevent the dawning Sanguine Wish
 While frigid Hermits fancy future Bliss:
 Short is our Day then let us keen pursue 80
 These Raptures bounded by Earths narrow view

⁷¹ The Second Chapter of the Wisdom of Solomon is particularly aim'd to introduce in the following From line 70–120. In this I have no particular Character in my Eye: tho alas among the Men devoted to unbounded Libertinism that possess Wealth and power too many may Sit for this Picture But I do not mean Mr Fn He is compassionate tho not to me E Fn (EGF's note). An anonymous devotional work called *The Wisdom of Solomon* was published in Edinburgh in 1755. In the line that follow, through line 101, Fergusson includes quotation marks down the left side of the column.

In the Cold Grave no Pleasures can we know
 All transports vanish'd when from hence we go
 Let Hoards of Gold Delight our Mammons here,
 Tho every Ingotts Sullied by a tear 85
 of Some lone Widow or defrauded Child;
 Let Wealth surround as tho the World be spoil'd
 Their Ravish'd Fortunes shall our Brows adorn
 Oppress'd by Plenty from our Neighbors Shorn!
 Let Slaughter'd thousands our vast power Display 90
 And Strew with Crimson the deep sanguine way
 Let us the blooming helpless Virgin Seize
 And when full Sated like a loath'd disease
 Cast her swift from us Till another Fair!
 Rise to delight us and like Fortune share 95
 Let her Grey Parents totter to the Grave,
 To See their Darling Lusts rejected Slave!
 All this and further from our Deed be found
 So we with Rapture some gay Nights are Crown'd
 Our Hearts superior to such Scenes of Woe 100
 Shall no abatements of our transports know!"⁷²
 Let Vulgar Minds this Hackney'd Doctrines teach
 And evermore this Christian maxim preach
 To do to others what we wish that They
 Should do to us through Lifes embarass'd way 105
 This their first precept, this their golden Rule
 The Grand Criterion of a Christians School
 Simple alike it binds in every Case
 To Such as do this fettering Law Embrace!
 This would each dawning of enjoyment Blast 110
 A damp to Spirits of a lighter Cast
 Your Chesterfieldians your Lorenzos prove⁷³

⁷² Fergusson ventriloquizes libertine Philadelphians here in what is a conventional carpe diem song, the most famous example of which is Robert Herrick's "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time." More closely, it echoes lines from *The Wisdom of Solomon*: "Let us fill ourselves with costly wine, and ointments: and let no flower of the spring pass by us. Let us crown ourselves with rose-buds before they be withered" (pp. 6–7).

⁷³ Chesterfield was the author of a famous series of letters on manners to his son. Additional documents by Fergusson in the Rush Manuscripts, volume 40, are critical of Chesterfield, accusing him of libertinism. "Lorenzo" is a character from Young's *Night Thoughts*: as the addressee of some of the poem's passages, he is little more than a generic sinner who allows the speaker of *Night Thoughts* to

They by superior Wiser Maxims move
 Your Chesterfieldians your Lorenzos gay!
 Jocund and Sportive in soft pleasures day, 115
 Spurn at this narrow, rigid Clogging Law,
 Which saints and sages for their pupils draw
 Let "Saints and Sages whine in Sorrow here"⁷⁴
 They taste no Joys in the Celestial Sphere
 While Chesterfieldians and Lorenzos Smile 120
 To See Religion Man of Joys beguile!
 Laugh at the Bugbear of a local Hell
 And sneer at tales that Priests and Prophets tell
 Deem Woman made alone for mans Control,
 Like Mahomets fair ones void of noble Soul. 125
 As Birds or Insects for a Boy to please
 They tortur'd Subjects made their Lords to teize
 'Tis such as Callous to the Ills of Life!
 Sneer at the woes of a Deserted-Wife.⁷⁵

The End.

Copy of Mr Fn Letter to Mrs Fn

Mr Fergussons Last Letter to Mrs F where he mentions the Cause of
 their Separation Copy'd for Mrs Sn

Dear Betsy London July 1783

My last letter was adress'd to Dr R h⁷⁶ and sent under cover to you tho
 no letter was wrote with it to you a method you forc'd me to adopt and
 upon which I Shall make no Comment. This Sd Letter was forwarded By

address a second person, thus implicating the reader in a catalogue of sins. See Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, *Letters Written by the Late Right Honourable Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, to His Son . . .* (London, 1774); Young, *Night Thoughts*.

⁷⁴ Fergusson does not include an end quotation mark for this quote, though the obvious place would be after "Sphere" in the following line.

⁷⁵ It is my strong suspicion that Fergusson has in mind as her "Chesterfieldians and Lorenzos" the men who sought to take away Graeme Park from her. Chief among these would be Joseph Reed, president of Pennsylvania at the time Fergusson initially composed the poem. See Ousterhout, *Most Learned Woman in America*, 235–36.

⁷⁶ Presumably, Benjamin Rush.

Dr Denormandie⁷⁷ who promis'd to give it in person: Therefore without retrospect the Subject that it treated of, And the injustice I have suffer'd on that account, I write the present to inform you what my situation and prospects are to this and that I may know fully and finally whether or not you propose to continue in a Seperate State from me, for the remainder of your Days, or in conformality to the affection and Cordiality which ought Subsist between man and wife you mean to Join me in Europe. The Subject of returning to America I have often coolly and seriously revolv'd in my mind, and every time I think of it, I feel growing antipathies and fresh reasons for never returning, and I can from the Bottom of my soul affirm that were all Legal restraints at this moment remov'd, yet I Should never go back to Pennsylvania. If you think the Story of that infamous woman is the cause of such a resolution, you are mistaken. For was the Fact alledg'd against me true, and I again most Solemly declare that it is equally true (that you are the mother of the Child as I am her Father) you must be very ignorant of the ways of mankind to imagine that it should deter me from going to any place where my Interest or Inclinations call me.

So much being Sd it is necessary to know what you intend to do, as to me my wish and desire are explicitly that you come to England you have my whole and entire affection, and I declare from the Bottom of my soul, that I prefer living with you to any woman upon Earth. I insist therefor on your Compliance with my Request. I would say command if not an expression I never thought I should have reason to use towards you and which is also to my self disagreeable— — — If you should refuse coming to England, I shall look upon it as a total Renunciation of your husband and upon every other proposal you may make but as a mockery and Insult to one against whom you have no just cause of complaint but that of having follow'd the line of His Duty And the Dictates of His Conscience— I have only to observe that should you refuse to Join me it, it will be acting in positive Contradiction to every Law human and Divine,⁷⁸ And

⁷⁷ Dr. John DeNormandie. Gratz includes a letter to Fergusson from Sally DeNormandie Barton, and Ousterhout mentions Sally DeNormandie as a friend and correspondent of Fergusson. Simon Gratz, "Some Material for a Biography of Mrs. Elizabeth Fergusson, née Græme," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 39 (1915): 257–321; Ousterhout, *Most Learned Woman in America*, 54–55.

⁷⁸ This may be an index of Henry's anglicization. Scottish law allowed divorce in the eighteenth century, while English law did not. Henry's "every law human" refers to an *English* legality. See Leah Leneman, *Alienated Affections: The Scottish Experience of Divorce and Separation, 1684–1830* (Edinburgh, 1998), 2.

what ever Pretext you may chuse to make use of, there Exists none to
 Exculpate such a Breach of Duty I Shall expect to hear from you as soon
 as possible after the present and remain your
 much injur'd tho' affectionate Husband
~~E-Fn~~ H Fergusson

I have now my dear Mrs Stogton to oblige you gone through a most
 painful Task, and rous'd all my feelings afresh: I have not a doubt but
 every Husband that should read this in the 13 States will hold me a
condem'd as well as a Deserted-Wife[.] My Character is gone in that
 Line: But I wish not to retrieve it at the Expence of my Conscience while
 I retain my Senses my meeting with Mr Fn Shall not Be in Britain Here
 and here only can it be productive of Truth and Peace. E Fn.

G Park April 21 The Day 21 Years I was married E Fn⁷⁹

West Chester University

RODNEY MADER

⁷⁹ This line is written vertically in the left margin.

EXHIBIT REVIEW

Our House? The President's House at Independence National Historical Park

The President's House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation. Independence National Historical Park, Market and Sixth streets. Kelly/Maiello Architects and Planners, exhibit design. Opened: December 2010. Admission: free.

CONCEIVED IN CONTENTIOUSNESS and born into some downright hostility, "The President's House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation," stands as a triumph of persistence. When it opened at the corner of Sixth and Market streets in December 2010, it was a triumph with which no one was really entirely happy.

If you're reading this review, I suspect you have some familiarity with the site's fraught history, but let me review it quickly. After some years of fitful planning, lobbying, and negotiating, the National Park Service, along with city and state officials and local civic leaders in Philadelphia, began a major transformation of Independence National Historical Park (INHP). That transformation included the construction of a new visitor center, the creation of the National Constitution Center, and most recently the opening of the National Museum of American Jewish History.

And it included moving the Liberty Bell out of its small modernist box, designed by the Philadelphia firm Mitchell/Giurgola for the Bicentennial, into a new, much larger (and red-brick) home. Mitchell/Giurgola's small structure put the Liberty Bell in the center of the mall space, directly north of Independence Hall. The new building would run along Sixth Street, putting the Bell off center, but framing better views of Independence Hall, or so the rationale went.

Two events disrupted these plans.

First came the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. Then in January 2002 this journal published Philadelphia historian Edward Lawler Jr.'s "The President's House in Philadelphia: The Rediscovery of a Lost Landmark."

Lawler's article gave us the most thorough scholarly reconstruction of just where the nation's first "White House" sat and what it might have looked like. Most dramatically, he drew a "conjectural floorplan" identifying the "slave quarters" he believed had been occupied by the enslaved people of African descent George Washington brought with him to Philadelphia from Mount Vernon when he served as president. And if you laid Lawler's plan over the ones for the new Liberty Bell Center, those slave quarters lay virtually underneath the Bell's new front door. The History Channel couldn't have scripted the irony any better.

By 2002, tensions between those in the city who lived with and around INHP and those who ran it were already heading to a boil. In the general hysteria about security after 9/11, the Interior Department, run in the Bush administration by Gayle Norton, overreacted and attempted to turn the Independence Hall/Liberty Bell area into a fortress. It demanded that the street vendors be cleared out, wanted Chestnut Street in front of Independence Hall closed entirely, and at one point floated the idea of linking the Liberty Bell Center with Independence Hall by an underground tunnel.

Philadelphia mayor John Street and others successfully fended off the worst of this nonsense, but by the middle of the last decade the security around Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell had become heavy and onerous. At one point, the security cordons were arranged to exclude the new restroom facilities, which created scenes of desperate parents, having finally made it through the security checks with their small kids, throwing them back over the fences to run to the bathroom. It would have been comic were it not all so absurd. Things have certainly improved at INHP recently, but for several years this international shrine to the principles of liberty and freedom resembled nothing so much as a minimum-security prison.

It was in this context of mutual suspicion, defensiveness, and bad feeling that city leaders, historians, and community activists, pointing to Lawler's research, demanded that the reconfiguration of the Mall include some commemoration of the President's House and a frank reckoning with the issue of slavery.

At first, the National Park Service and the Interior Department balked. At its worst moment, the Interior Department followed the Bush administration pattern of attacking the messenger while denying the message. Its plans were too far along, it didn't have the money, and, it offered, the interpretive material in the new Liberty Bell Center would discuss abolition and slavery at least a little bit. No need for anything more.

Those arguments were probably disingenuous; one way or the other, they missed the point. In his own Bicentennial offering, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, historian Edmund Morgan challenged us to recognize that slavery and freedom were inextricably linked in the founding of the nation. If there were ever one single piece of real estate where that fundamental paradox and contradiction could be illustrated for us all, it is the corner of Sixth and Market streets. And after an eight-year journey, the result of that acknowledgement is "The President's House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation."

The critics weighed in quickly, and they were not kind. *Philadelphia Inquirer* architecture critic Inga Saffron called the design, by the firm of Kelly/Maiello at a cost of nearly twelve million dollars, "the latest pile of bricks to land on Independence Mall," and complained that the architecture of the exhibit does little work to help visitors figure out exactly what the exhibit is all about (Changing Skyline, Dec. 17, 2010). Writing in the *New York Times*, Edward Rothstein mercilessly complained that the exhibit lacks both "intellectual coherence and emotional power." The "great opportunity" that existed to explore the primal tensions of the nation, in his view, had largely been "squandered" ("Reopening a House That's Still Divided," Dec. 14, 2010). Rothstein wasn't finished. Two weeks later he attacked the exhibit again, pairing it with the traveling exhibit "1001 Inventions," a show about Muslim contributions to science. He denounced both as historically dishonest manifestations of identity politics. Of the President's House exhibit, Rothstein wrote in this second review, "It is not really a reinterpretation of history; it overturns the idea of history, making it subservient to the claims of contemporary identity politics" ("To Each His Own Museum, as Identity Goes on Display," Dec. 28, 2010).

Those comments, harsh as they may be, aren't wrong, but they don't fully acknowledge the unusual genesis of the exhibit and the charged environment that helped to shape it.

Let's step back, or rather step through to evaluate these criticisms and this exhibit. The "pile of bricks" Saffron referred to is designed to suggest an abstracted outline of the house itself, which was demolished in the 1830s. Three oversized window frames and a door frame face out onto the Market Street side of the house. Once inside the house, visitors move from room to room, each denoted by low masonry "walls." There are four "chimney" stacks on which hang four large flat-screen monitors. Rather than evoke one of the grandest houses in eighteenth-century Philadelphia, these make the place feel, at least to me, more like a twenty-first-century McMansion.

While there are three sets of static wall text hanging throughout the house, the monitors are the focal points of what visitors experience. All of them show reenactors playing vignettes (scripts written by Philadelphia novelist Lorene Cary) rather than documentary-style talking heads. One of the monitors features Oney Judge, one of Washington's enslaved servants, telling her story as an old woman. Having been brought to Philadelphia, Judge escaped to New Hampshire, probably with the help of some of Philadelphia's free black community. Another focuses on Washington's favorite chef, Hercules, who also escaped. A third monitor presents us with Richard Allen, Philadelphia's most influential African American during the revolutionary period, and the fourth shows us Washington signing the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 and Haitian refugees arriving in Philadelphia.

At the far side of the house is a large glass box where visitors can look down at the only piece of the original house—the only original anything, really—on display, part of the foundation of the original house. Next to this, and closest to the entrance to the Liberty Bell Center, is another box, this one closed off to view but with two entrances. As you walk in, you find yourself inside a memorial to the enslaved, and motion sensors trigger a small child's voice. On the walls around you are inscribed the names of West African groups from whom individuals were brought to the New World in bondage.

In fact, my brief description here makes the exhibit sound physically bigger than it really is. Even the largest houses in eighteenth-century Philadelphia were pretty modest by today's standards. The distance between the Market Street entrance to the exhibit and the front door of the Liberty Bell Center is probably about thirty yards.

Part of the problem, then, with the President's House exhibit is one of

ambition. It isn't that there is too much material crammed into too small a space, though that is probably true. More than that, the material itself is enormous: slavery in the midst of freedom; the creation of a new nation and the patterns of governance that would distinguish presidents from kings; to say nothing of the history of the city itself at the end of the eighteenth century, the extraordinary stories of these individuals, and more besides. As an exhibition site, the President's House is too rich with possibilities for its own good.

In this sense, the construction of the exhibit strikes me as shaped not so much by the contemporary identity politics bemoaned by Rothstein, but by the much more quotidian problems that come from work done by committee. Rather than come to a consensus about what the exhibit would, and just as importantly would NOT cover, the oversight committee seems to have simply said "yes." When the call for proposals went out, the committee listed five "cultural values" that needed to be represented: identity, memory, agency, dignity, and truth. Those might be perfectly good therapeutic goals, but they make for a pretty vaporous intellectual rationale. The President's House thus joins a number of other recent historical exhibits and institutions that blur the line between the educational and the therapeutic, between museum and memorial.

The oversight committee asked this small space to do too much. Certainly the memorial box to enslaved Africans seems a particularly clumsy piece of design, tucked as it is almost underneath the roofline of the Liberty Bell Center (which, it should be noted, is no one's idea of great architecture). On the other hand, given the initial intransigence and obstructionism of the Interior Department, we would have no exhibit on this site at all if not for the hard work and mobilization represented by the members of that oversight committee. They forced the issue, they fought the good fight, and they got to exercise a great deal of influence, therefore, on the final result.

The process by which this exhibit came finally to life and the contentiousness that surrounded it take us back to September 11. Beyond any of the details of security or the logistics of life in an age of terrorism lays the fundamental question of who owns this real estate. Technically, of course, the answer is the federal government, and at the end of the day, the feds pay the bills. But from the very founding of INHP after World War II there has been a tension over how this park could coexist in the middle of a busy, bustling urban center. Roughly one million tourists

come to see the Liberty Bell every year; roughly one and a half million Philadelphians live with it every day. Balancing the demands of both is no easy task.

The President's House took that tension to a new level to ask, "who owns the history associated with what is called, and with no exaggeration, 'the most historic square mile' in the United States?" The National Park Service has done an admirable job of preserving, presenting, and interpreting that past over the years. It has made use of its own historians and archival holdings and consulted regularly with professional historians as well. With the President's House, however, we were all reminded that there is a much larger public that cares deeply about the past, feels connected to it, and in this case made its voice matter.

That strikes me as altogether exciting and—given the subject material of this exhibit—thoroughly part of a rich Philadelphia tradition. After all, Philadelphians (okay, Germantowners) were the first Europeans to issue a formal "protest" against slavery in 1688; in the eighteenth century, Philadelphians organized the first antislavery society in the western world; in the nineteenth century Philadelphian William Still compiled the first history of the Underground Railroad; and now a coalition of historians, politicians, civic leaders, and community activists has forced an important acknowledgement of slavery on a federal site.

Perhaps the most surprising part of the resurrection of the President's House came in the summer of 2007 when the site was excavated. While people worried that this dig would be disruptive to the tourist season, the dig itself proved a hit with visitors. Roughly three hundred thousand of them stood on the temporary platform to look down at the archaeologists and to ask questions. Americans, or some of them at any rate, seem eager to talk about slavery. Given the public response in 2007, perhaps "The President's House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation" will find an appreciative audience, despite its design flaws and its somewhat haphazard display. If nothing else, the exhibit asserts that George Washington held people of African descent in bondage, and he brought nine of them to Philadelphia to serve him even as he grew into his role as the Father of His Country. I visited the exhibit for the first time shortly after some of the good citizens of Charleston, South Carolina, donned their plantation best and held a formal ball to "celebrate" the 150th anniversary of South Carolina secession. The exhibit at Sixth and Market became inadvertently timely and utterly necessary.

In fairness, there is a great deal to be learned at the exhibit, though Rothstein is right that as a whole the President's House feels like someone's cluttered attic. The exhibit is best seen with one of the guide books available across the street at the Visitor Center; let's hope that when tourist season starts they will be available on site too. And perhaps there is a concession to contemporary audiences in the layout of this exhibit. In our digital age, linear narrative has been replaced by the somewhat kaleidoscopic experience of pointing and clicking. Rather than following a story line from beginning to end, this exhibit allows you to surf, for better or worse. Given that it sits directly between the Visitor Center and the entrance to the Liberty Bell Center, most visitors may simply pass through the house, stopping at only one of the monitors or reading just one piece of wall text, rather than settle down for a more leisurely stay.

That said, it may be that the most successful part of the exhibit is the big glass vitrine that frames a piece of the remaining building foundation and enables you to look down onto the past. The glass allows you to look from four sides and see architectural fragments that recede artfully underneath your field of view, suggesting something more, something mysterious, and conveying the sense that this history is literally under your feet. Even on a cold December day, people lingered here, though they only glanced at the wall text or paused briefly in front of the monitors. George Washington really did sleep here. And so did Hercules, Paris, Oney Judge, "Postillion" Joe, Austin, Christopher, Richmond, Moll, and Giles. All under one roof together, a microcosm of the promise of the new nation and the stain of its original sin.

Ohio State University

STEVEN CONN

BOOK REVIEWS

Friends and Strangers: The Making of Creole Culture in Colonial Pennsylvania.

By JOHN SMOLENSKI. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010. 392 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$45.)

“Quaker Pennsylvania” was made, not born, argues John Smolenski. From the time of its settlement in the 1680s until the 1720s, the colony’s Quaker pioneers, a contentious charter generation, struggled mightily to establish who among them would rule and which Quaker principles would guide the colony. Smolenski characterizes this tense process of cultural adaptation and change as “creolization”; it is the central theme of his book.

Smolenski opens with an examination of the Quakers’ origins in the turbulent era of the English Civil War. As dissenters whose emphasis on individual salvation challenged rather than confirmed the standing order, the Quakers were neither part of Britain’s political or social mainstream nor fully united. Rather, they grappled with how to balance the individual within the group in order to build a community and achieve some measure of consensus and were held together by often tenuous threads.

Quakers thus faced serious challenges as members of the fledgling movement began to govern Pennsylvania. Smolenski follows their efforts to “creolize” themselves and their colony by tracing how their struggles to adapt often resulted in bitter factional battles over colonial law, speech, print culture, and diplomacy. William Penn was central to this process. His unique legal and political visions were lightning rods for controversy. Creolization was thus no easy process. It produced such political dysfunction that even William Penn was ready to give up his colony. So what quelled Quaker factionalism? According to Smolenski, leading Friends made conscious efforts to put disputes behind them and define themselves as a stable ruling elite. Using the colony’s expanding print culture, Quakers formulated a mythic past and cast themselves as its makers and arbiters. In this way, they remade Pennsylvania into a uniquely Quaker place.

Smolenski’s book adds important dimensions to the growing body of literature challenging long-standing portrayals of colonial Pennsylvania as a utopian peaceable kingdom. His detailed depiction of the colony’s early Quaker leadership class as a divided lot, though indebted to such works of the 1960s as those by Frederick Tolles and Gary B. Nash, reminds readers in fresh ways that from its start Pennsylvania was a colony where harmony was often elusive, goals failed, and dreams were thwarted. Yet his use of creolization as the interpretive lens through which to view cultural adaptation is the work’s chief strength and weakness. As a new way of elucidating the dynamic process of transplanting European

cultural ideals to America, creolization works. Still, for readers familiar with Ira Berlin's "Atlantic creoles"—the Africans and their descendents, some of them mixed race, who operated in the multiple cultural worlds of Africa, Europe, and America during the era of the Atlantic slave trade—Smolenski's interpretive use of creole may be less than satisfying. To what extent can the experiences of a privileged group of white Quakers who moved from the British Isles to America and held political hegemony in Pennsylvania really be seen as creolization?

Muhlenberg College

JUDITH RIDNER

A Town In-Between: Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and the Early Mid-Atlantic Interior. By JUDITH RIDNER. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010. 320 pp. Maps and illustrations, notes, index. \$49.95.)

The literature on Pennsylvania during the colonial and early national periods has become increasingly abundant in recent years, but it has concentrated on southeastern Pennsylvania, particularly Philadelphia. Because it focuses on a town in the backcountry, Judith Ridner's *A Town In-Between: Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and the Early Mid-Atlantic Interior* is a welcome addition to the historiography of Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century. According to Ridner, Carlisle's geographic location along the frontier—both east/west within Pennsylvania and north/south in the mid-Atlantic—led to it becoming a place where residents faced the typical challenges of life in the backcountry along with the opportunities available to settlers who ventured into the hinterland.

Carlisle was a place that experienced a considerable degree of turmoil and change in the eighteenth century. Early European settlers formed profitable trading relationships with the Shawnee and Delaware of the region before the town's establishment in the 1750s. In fact, Thomas Penn founded the town to advance the proprietors' economic interests at a time when the landscape was changing, both literally and figuratively. During Carlisle's early years, the relationship between the European settlers (mostly Scots-Irish with a few Germans) and the Native Americans shifted dramatically when war came to the Quaker province, as Cumberland County residents flooded to the town to escape the attacks on their property.

The Revolutionary War brought new challenges to the community, as many residents enthusiastically supported independence. Carlisle provided troops (most notably Thompson's Rifle Battalion), and the town served as a prisoner of war camp for British troops and Loyalists. Armaments manufactured at Carlisle contributed immensely to the successful prosecution of the war, and the town served as an important supply depot. However, economic factors discouraged service in the militia, leading to concerns about whether the townspeople fully

supported the patriot cause.

Carlisle did not experience the same kind of economic distress as other communities following the war, as local cloth and grain production made the town a central site of exchange in the region. All was not quiet in the community, however; ethnic and religious tensions divided the town, as did political unrest over the Constitution (which led to riots between Federalists and Antifederalists). The area's response to the whiskey tax further symbolized the hostility toward the establishment that had been manifested against the proprietary government in the 1750s.

Ridner's study of Carlisle is quite masterful in its use of primary and secondary sources to tell the story of the first fifty years of Carlisle's history. She has effectively mined manuscript collections, county, provincial, and state records, and college archives to tell the story of a town undergoing a transformation during the second half of the eighteenth century from a backwoods settlement to a community at the crossroads of the early American frontier. Contemporary illustrations and photographs of period structures enhance the text, a highly readable study of one of the most significant interior towns in early America.

Mansfield University

KAREN GUENTHER

The Ordeal of Thomas Barton: Anglican Missionary in the Pennsylvania Backcountry, 1755–1780. By JAMES P. MYERS JR. (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2010. 278 pp. Illustrations, appendices, notes, selected bibliography, index. \$52.50.)

James P. Myers Jr. has written an engrossing account integrating biography and exegesis in *The Ordeal of Thomas Barton*. That said, Myers flirts with hagiography as he argues for a reform of Barton's image from that of a possibly unprincipled young man, naive plagiarist, and propagandist to that of a well-respected minister and ultimately victim—a martyr, as Myers puts it, to the Revolution. Another key component of Myers's argument is Barton's significance as an agent of church and empire on the frontier. Barton was essentially “a proprietary placeman” (37), and the crises of the 1750s to 1770s put such middlemen in extremely uncomfortable, even ethically untenable, positions. As such an establishment agent, Barton appears at times to have been simply a tool. Myers concludes, for instance, that Barton, despite his sympathetic portrayals of Native Americans and stated desire for missionary work among them, may have written a pro-Paxton Boys screed because pushed to do so by proprietary and Church of England interests. Barton compromised his principals at that time, but according to Myers he redeemed himself in his own eyes—and those of his chronicler—by refusing to compromise his principles during the Revolution (115).

The chapter on whether or not Barton wrote the 1764 tract *The Conduct of the Paxton-Men* particularly illuminates the strengths and weaknesses of Myers's analysis. As Myers takes the reader through the process by which he determined authorship, he provides an engaging exposition and spirited defense of the literary critic as historical detective. But when he moves from the evidence of authorship to explanations of why Barton may have written what he did, Myers overdoes the psychological analysis, though his points about possible political coercion and material concerns are valid. Myers confirms the latter concerns in the next chapter when he shows Barton's desire for Sir William Johnson's patronage by deconstructing their mutual correspondence.

Barton served and directed spiritual and secular plans in the westernmost counties for over twenty years after 1755, executing the policies of the church, Crown, and Penn proprietorship. He was also a chronicler of the frontier as he tried to stabilize it. However, Barton—a person who had labored for conformity in church and state—was deemed a dangerous nonconformist by the revolutionaries. Although like many Church of England missionaries, he tried to disengage from the escalating crisis, he faced only increasing isolation and hostility and in the end exile and death in New York. Myers honors Barton and the other rural Pennsylvania clergy who “did not capitulate before appeals to expediency” as did their Philadelphia brethren such as William Smith (137). In doing so he rescues these Loyalists from obscurity.

Myers also offers eight appendices, running sixty-six pages, which include transcriptions of Barton's journal when he accompanied the Forbes Expedition in 1758, reports to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and two petitions to Pennsylvania's revolutionary government. The inclusion of these documents and Myers's highly readable text make *The Ordeal of Thomas Barton* a valuable work both for the insight that it provides on a middling official caught in challenging events and for the documents valuable to students and scholars.

Duquesne University

HOLLY A. MAYER

David Franks: Colonial Merchant. By MARK ABBOTT STERN. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010. 263 pp. Appendices, notes, bibliography. \$60.)

David Franks (1720–1793) was one of Philadelphia's earliest Jewish residents and among the region's premier merchants. From the time of the French and Indian War until his death, much of his business activity coincided with political events. Despite Franks's central role in commerce in Pennsylvania, his membership in Philadelphia's elite circles, and his family's prominence in trans-Atlantic trade, no full-length treatment of his life had previously been published. The rea-

son for this omission is likely the absence of any large archival collection dedicated to Franks, making it difficult to compile a coherent record. Mark Abbott Stern, a retired engineer, has located scattered sources and reconstructed the details of Franks's life.

Born into a successful New York merchant family with ties to England, Franks moved to Philadelphia as a young man. He engaged in international and Indian trade, ship building and ownership, manufacturing, and land speculation. The French and Indian War provided Franks with lucrative opportunities, including supplying British troops with food and necessities. He continued to contract to the British army into the revolutionary period, when the Continental Congress also appointed him to supply their troops in Pennsylvania. The opportunities that these conflicts afforded him did not always result in gains for Franks. He sustained enormous losses from damaged goods and contracts that went unpaid. Much of his wealth was tied up in companies that claimed vast swaths of western land, and efforts to gain government support for these companies' land rights remained unresolved during Franks's lifetime. Worse still, authorities intercepted a 1778 letter to Franks's wife's cousin, a captain in a Loyalist brigade, with an enclosure addressed to Franks's brother in London seeking supplies. Franks was accused of treason and, after a series of trials, banished from Pennsylvania.

Stern claims that Franks felt a deep connection to his home and was a victim of Pennsylvania radicals. But the evidence suggests that Franks was ambivalent about where his allegiance lay. His friends and family included Tories (a fact that his accusers did not ignore), and he received a Loyalist's pension. Stern emphasizes that "the question of who was a loyalist and who a patriot" was complicated (2), but he misses an opportunity to analyze the nuances of Franks's and his contemporaries' interests and alliances or the often blurred boundary between loyalism and patriotism during the Revolution.

Franks's religious identity is another important theme. Stern concludes that Franks remained true to his faith, but his evidence reveals the clash Franks and other family members experienced between their desire to engage with the broader Christian society and the demands of Jewish observance. Franks married a Christian woman, they raised their children as Christians, and he frequently accompanied his wife to Christ Church. He also maintained his membership at Congregation Shearit Israel, New York's first synagogue, where his parents were prominent members. These ambiguities and many other details beg for a more nuanced discussion of what it meant to be Jewish in the fluid environment of the eighteenth-century Atlantic world. Nevertheless, Stern's superbly researched book provides valuable information about Franks's integral role in commerce in Pennsylvania.

University of Delaware

TONI PITOCK

John Barry: An American Hero in the Age of Sail. By TIM MCGRATH. (Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, 2010. xvi, 662 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.)

Tim McGrath makes a strong argument that John Barry is a true, but forgotten, hero of this nation. Barry's list of accomplishments is impressively long: a contender for the title "Father of the American Navy"; the commander who fought both the first and last successful engagements of the Continental navy; the skipper who logged the greatest distance in a twenty-four-hour period during the eighteenth century; George Washington's favorite sailor, who served with the Continental army at the battle of Princeton; the individual who extralegally brought about Pennsylvania's ratification of the Constitution; a merchant captain who helped establish American trade with China; and commander of one of two U.S. Navy squadrons who "won" the 1798 Quasi-War with France.

Despite this impressive resume, Barry is barely remembered today and John Paul Jones is the American naval officer most associated with valor and accomplishment during the Revolutionary War. McGrath explains Barry's obscurity by the fact that he was humble, laconic, and, in marked contrast to Jones, unwilling to promote himself or his achievements.

To remedy the paucity of materials by and—at least for his early years—about Barry, McGrath writes a life-and-times biography. While Barry is very much at the center of the book and McGrath has done exhaustive research in Barry's papers, he goes beyond the subject of his biography to explore topics only indirectly related. For example, in his coverage of the opening of the Revolution, McGrath discusses Lord Dunmore and his activities in Virginia, the first Continental navy expedition to the Bahamas, and British naval activities in the Chesapeake and Delaware bays. Barry was an actor in none of these. McGrath's treatment is akin to a sprawling Hollywood epic in which the main character disappears from the scene while the director gives you a feast of sights and sounds depicting the times. The result provides the reader with a vivid portrait of revolutionary-era Philadelphia, a guide to eighteenth-century sailing, and a primer on the naval history of the American Revolution.

McGrath is a compelling and lucid writer. He brings Barry to life, makes battles understandable, and provides the clearest description of Barry's 1778 capture of the British transport ships *Mermaid* and *Kitty* that this reviewer has seen.

The problem with his approach is that McGrath often relies on older, more popular sources for background and presents issues and trends in a simplistic, black-and-white fashion. His explanations of Irish-English relations or American-English pre-Revolution interaction, for example, lack nuance and ignore important modern scholarship. McGrath is also guilty of minor errors, for example, misspelling the names of Nathanael Greene, Hoysted Hacker, and John Peck Rathbun and asserting that Florida was a Spanish territory in 1778.

This is an entertaining and informative biography that will acquaint readers with John Barry and the world in which he lived, worked, and fought. While specialists may have problems with parts of his work, McGrath should be commended for compellingly reintroducing a hero of the early United States who has undeservedly fallen into obscurity.

Naval History and Heritage Command

DENNIS M. CONRAD

William Bartram, The Search for Nature's Design: Selected Art, Letters, and Unpublished Writings. Edited by THOMAS HALLOCK and NANCY E. HOFFMAN. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010. 520 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendices, works cited, index. \$49.95.)

This is a beautiful book, lovingly produced for readers who adore William Bartram (1739–1823) as an artist, Romantic, naturalist, and gardener and painstakingly assembled by scholars who approach him from a variety of perspectives. It provides clear capsule introductions to primary texts otherwise unavailable to most readers. Calling it “the first full selection of Bartram’s manuscripts” (1) is a fair description of a book that both selects and abridges. It includes the range of unpublished sources—letters, manuscripts, and illustrations—whereas other collections have focused more and/or included less. It does not include the published *Travels* (1791), Bartram’s only book; the long “Report” that he wrote for his patron, Dr. John Fothergill; or his “Observations” on the Creek and Cherokee Indians. These are appropriate omissions, since all three are available in a number of editions, including Francis Harper’s annotated versions.

The contributors are well chosen for their range of expertise—on Indians, natural history, garden design, archaeology, art history, literature, and philosophy. Rarely, their introductions overstretch to make an academic point or to claim interpretive novelty. For example, biographers have not, as one contributor suggests, “generally portrayed him as a shy and reclusive figure who lived in relative isolation” (xv), and it is unclear how letters could provide evidence either for or against Bartram’s shyness. It is well known that Bartram ran something of a salon later in his life and received countless pilgrims who sought out his wisdom, asked gardening advice, or simply wanted to meet the Romantic naturalist and artist.

The collection of letters is probably the key contribution of the book, as many of Bartram’s illustrations have been published already, most notably by Joseph Ewan in an ill-fated American Philosophical Society edition, most copies of which were destroyed in a basement flood. Scholars will still have to return to the originals for textual analysis that looks back from published versions to manuscript drafts since, as the editors explain, “not every text merits full publication here, and in cases where documents require technical knowledge, the critical

introductions may serve readers more than the texts themselves" (2). The book provides such specialists leads and locations, though, in clarifying introductions to the texts. The correspondence "includes all but a handful of letters" (1), which means the volume is sufficient for almost all readers.

Electronic searches have enabled the editors to remedy the "scattered state of the archive" (2), for which admirers of Bartram will be grateful. Indeed, the editors' ambition to "balance the needs of academic and general readers" is largely successful. Often such attempts to create hybrids produce books that are neither fish nor fowl, but this one has nary a fin where a beak belongs and would make the shy Bartram blush.

University of Rochester

THOMAS P. SLAUGHTER

Benjamin Franklin and the Invention of Microfinance. By BRUCE H. YENAWINE. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2010. 240 pp. Appendices, notes, works cited, index. \$99.)

Academic writing on Benjamin Franklin has recently burgeoned into what some have called "Franklin studies," with two volumes of scholarly essays (one published, another on the way) and monographs focusing on his contributions to science, philosophy, and letters, among other subjects. Because of a strange twist of fate, Bruce Yenawine's useful and interesting contribution both predates and comes at the crest of this rising wave. Just published in Pickering & Chatto's Financial History series, it is an edited but not significantly updated version of his 1995 dissertation, completed two years before his death.

Yenawine analyzed the origins and legacy of a unique codicil in Franklin's will that granted two thousand pounds each to Boston and to Philadelphia, to be loaned out in small sums to artisans to establish them in business. After a century, part of the funds was to be spent for civic improvements. After two centuries, all remaining money—which Franklin characteristically calculated to the last pound—was to be split between the governments of the two cities and of their states. The book places Franklin's bequest in the context of his readings in finance and correspondence with late-Enlightenment financial innovators, combined with his continued affinity for what he and his contemporaries called "mechanics," that is, skilled workers. As Yenawine ably details, within a few decades the funds' managing committees in both cities subverted Franklin's intent, in Boston by investing the principal in an insurance company and in Philadelphia by investing the principal to pay down municipal debt. Yenawine convincingly attributes this failure to the class bias of the funds' elitist managers rather than a lack of potential candidates in cities that grew by leaps and bounds over the course of the nineteenth century. That said, he also notes organized labor's resistance to money

that would draw members from its ranks. Yenawine chronicled how the funds in both cities went through nearly two decades of legal wrangling after hitting the century mark, with Boston eventually investing much of its fund in what became the Franklin Institute of Technology (FIT) and Philadelphia's morphing into a mortgage bank for low-income residents. Both cities wrapped up their funds in the 1990s in accordance with Franklin's codicil, with Boston's going to FIT and Philadelphia's being distributed to the Franklin Institute and to foundations administered by Philadelphia and Pennsylvania. In Yenawine's estimation, the funds at least partly achieved Franklin's first goal in promoting savings and frugality, but the administrators failed Franklin in their reluctance to seek out deserving borrowers.

Given the scholarly fascination with debt when Yenawine was writing, he focused on each bequests' function as a "sinking fund," a pot of money set aside to increase through investment. Since Yenawine's death, the facet of Franklin's life or, more accurately his financial afterlife, that the book addresses has also become an area of heightened global activity as well as scholarly and public interest. "Microfinance" is the granting of small loans at low interest rates to individual entrepreneurs who otherwise would have little or no access to credit; the returned principal and interest is then loaned out to others. As editor Michele Costello points out, Yenawine's book offers both inspiration for future benefactors and a cautionary tale for trust administrators. As such, it serves as edifying reading to Franklin scholars and to those interested in financial history.

Bowling Green State University

ANDREW M. SCHOCKET

So Great a Proffit: How the East Indies Trade Transformed Anglo-American Capitalism. By JAMES R. FICHTER. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010. 384 pp. Illustrations, archival sources, notes, index. \$35.)

So Great a Proffit is an ambitious book that brings together a tremendous amount of meticulously researched economic data to demonstrate the global scope of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century trade in the East Indies and its impact on American and British business methods. Essentially, James Fichter argues that as competition for the East India trade heightened at the turn of the nineteenth century, both America and Great Britain had to readjust their commercial policies and business models to remain competitive. Although less experienced and initially ill-financed, American merchants remained flexible to changing business conditions on the ground thanks to the presence of individual supercargo agents.

Between 1783 and the end of the Napoleonic Wars, America maintained a competitive edge in a world marketplace, forcing Great Britain to turn away from

traditional monopolies, such as the East India Company, to allow freer trade. Conversely, Americans learned new ways to accumulate and invest capital, enabling them to create a new business class that, at least briefly, surpassed imperial-sponsored merchants in Europe. In essence, America and Great Britain learned from each other; "British merchants gained free trade, becoming more like their American counterparts, and American merchants gained capital and became more like their opposite numbers in Britain" (4). New means of financing trade, rather than the development of new industries, helped British and Anglo-American merchants shift the center of global commerce from Asia to the North Atlantic by the mid-nineteenth century, taking advantage of what Kenneth Pomeranz has called the "great divergence."

While other historians, such as James Gibson, Jacques Downs, and Jonathan Goldstein, have traced the rise of American global commercial might during this period through the China trade, Fichter broadens our understanding of the "East Indies" to include American shipping through a number of global port towns and their participation in the India trade. Indeed, some of the strongest chapters deal with the subcontinent, outlining the precarious nature of British tolerance for American merchants in South Asia, even as Great Britain continued to pressure American commercial enterprise elsewhere in the world. Examining the purchase and sale of pepper, tea, India cloth, and chinaware at the turn of the nineteenth century, the author demonstrates America's growing competitiveness with Great Britain and other European nations in both domestic commercial sales and re-export of goods. Taking advantage of their claims to neutrality in the early nineteenth century, Americans gained access to a number of lucrative European ports and their consumers. In this sense, Fichter contributes to a growing body of literature that ties the Atlantic World to broader oceanic networks of trade. However, the author would do well to engage more directly with the vast historiography on Atlantic and global trade and culture, which has opened up new ways of reading the evolution of postrevolutionary American economies, merchant culture, and capitalism.

Old Dominion University

JANE T. MERRITT

Dangerous to Know: Women, Crime, and Notoriety in the Early Republic. By SUSAN BRANSON. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008. 200 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$39.95.)

In *Dangerous to Know*, Susan Branson presents the fascinating story of Ann Carson and the author who documented her extraordinary tale, Mary Clark. Born of middle-class parents, Carson experienced the challenges associated with maintaining that identity in the tumultuous economy of the early republic. When

her father fell ill and could no longer work, the family was subject to eviction. Carson struck out on her own, opening a china shop while clinging to her middling status. She married John Carson, a sea captain, drunk, and abusive spouse. One can only imagine Carson's sigh of relief when John went missing for two years and was presumed dead. Carson, vulnerable as a single, working mother, decided to move on with her life and married Richard Smith. But John Carson wasn't actually dead.

John Carson returned from his absence and was shot and killed by Smith. Smith and Carson stood trial, Smith for murder and Carson for acting as an accessory. Carson was acquitted but Smith was scheduled to hang for his crime. In desperation, Carson hatched a plan to kidnap the governor of Pennsylvania to negotiate Smith's release. The plot failed and Smith was executed.

Carson was accustomed to scrambling to keep afloat in a society that witnessed violent economic upheavals. Alone and with a family to support, Carson pursued author and playwright Mary Clark, who agreed to ghostwrite her story. Clark was a single mother who also clung to her class status even as she saw it slipping from her grasp. Their unlikely relationship resulted in *The History of the Celebrated Mrs. Ann Carson* (1822). The narrative was a huge sensation with a wide reading audience, which included the president, vice president, and governor of Pennsylvania, as well as an early republic public that feasted on sensational crime literature.

By joining Clark's and Carson's stories, Branson allows the reader to fully appreciate the complexity of class in the postrevolutionary period. In Carson and Clark's *History*, Carson explains throughout her narrative that she only resorted to a life of crime to maintain her status in society. Certain they would find a sympathetic audience, Clark and Carson indeed became popular figures of the period, even if they are unfamiliar to us today.

Similar to Patricia Cline Cohen's *Murder of Helen Jewett*, Branson's retelling of Carson's tale is complicated. In Carson and Clark's narrative, characters come and go, the plot twists, and the complexities of nineteenth-century jurisprudence play out. The danger in working with such material is that readers become too bogged down in the details and lose track of larger themes. While Branson works hard to keep the themes of gender and class visible and weaves them into the details of her story, at times her narrative is slowed down by minutia.

Branson's real strength is showing the dynamics of class and gender through an incredibly captivating story. If one can move past the detailed retelling of Carson's complicated life, the themes of class, gender, and identity raise provocative questions regarding the fluidity of boundaries in postrevolutionary society. No doubt undergraduates will be intrigued by the tale while also appreciating a different take on class and gender relationships in the early republic.

Northerners at War: Reflections on the Civil War Home Front. By J. MATTHEW GALLMAN. (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2010. xx, 266 pp. Illustration, notes, index. \$39.95.)

J. Matthew Gallman's new collection of essays, *Northerners at War*, is as much a work of academic autobiography as it is of historical scholarship. Gallman has brought together a collection of eleven previously published essays that, over the years, have not only contributed to our understanding of the Northern home front during the Civil War, but also map out the academic journey and various intellectual pursuits of one of the leading scholars of Pennsylvania's Civil War experience.

While the subtitle suggests that the book contains "reflections on the Civil War home front," the volume also contains reflections on the author's career. It opens with an account of how a graduate school seminar held in the living room of historian Morton Keller helped push Gallman away from the study of colonial America and into the Civil War era. Gallman prefaces each chapter with a short description of how that particular essay came into being.

Three essays (the earliest was published in 1988) reflect Gallman's doctoral research on the social history of Philadelphia during the Civil War (Cambridge University Press published his dissertation as *Mastering Wartime* in 1990). Four examine the wartime and postwar experiences of Philadelphia abolitionist Anna Elizabeth Dickinson (Oxford University Press published *America's Joan of Arc*, his biography of Dickinson, in 2006). Several chapters focus on broader questions of economic history; one is a review of seven monographs on the urban history of the Civil War; another focuses on the Battle of Gettysburg's effects on the local citizenry (this essay was written during Gallman's tenure at Gettysburg College).

The most recent essay, published in 2009, focuses on the 1864 Battle of Olustee, Florida—a research topic picked up by Gallman since taking a position at the University of Florida. In this essay, Gallman examines the factors that motivated African Americans to enlist in three different black regiments—the famous Fifty-fourth Massachusetts, the First North Carolina, and the Eighth U.S. Colored Troops. Ironically—perhaps fortuitously—Gallman's study of this battle in Florida brought him back to the question of wartime mobilization in Philadelphia. Gallman pays particular attention to the Eighth U.S. Colored Troops, which was raised in eastern Pennsylvania and trained at Camp William Penn, just outside Philadelphia in Cheltenham, Pennsylvania. These soldiers responded to a "combination of patriotic editorials, enthusiastic broadsides, and passionate rhetoric" (246) that called on black men to enlist and fight as "men" for freedom and the rights of citizenship. Lacking prior combat experience the unfortunate men of the Eighth did not fight well at Olustee, but their harsh baptism of fire led them to distinguish themselves in later battles.

Gallman might have updated several out-of-date aspects of his essays for this

new publication. For example, his footnotes in several chapters refer to his “forthcoming” biography or “unpublished” work on Dickinson (166, 187, 209, 229), and the tables in chapter 6 bear the chapter number of their previous publication (Table 10.1, 10.2, etc.). But these are minor details. While many readers of this journal will have a few of these essays on their bookshelves already (this reviewer had four), few are likely to own copies of all of them. Scholars of Pennsylvania history and of the Civil War era will thus find this collection a useful addition to their libraries.

Christopher Newport University

JONATHAN W. WHITE

Thomas Eakins and the Uses of History. By AKELA REASON. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010. 232 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$55.)

Thomas Eakins created images of the past throughout his career. Akela Reason contends that Eakins valued these historical works as much or more than the paintings commonly regarded as his masterpieces (works such as *The Champion Single Sculls* [1871] and *The Gross Clinic* [1875]), and that through his historical works Eakins sought to showcase his professional beliefs, to link his work to the great art of the past, and to establish his artistic legacy.

The book is a series of five case studies arranged in chronological order. The first chapter, on *William Rush Carving His Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill River* (1876–77), argues that the portrayal of the sculptor and his model affirms the professional and moral integrity of Eakins’s vocation. The second chapter, which deals with a series of colonial revival paintings and sculptures that Eakins produced between 1876 and 1883, claims that these works were not simply inspired by the widespread nostalgia surrounding the Centennial Exhibition, but served as a way for Eakins to work through his ambivalence about professional education for women in light of contemporary notions of neurasthenia, the mental and physical breakdowns of several women close to him, and the large number of women among his students at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. The third chapter considers Eakins’s classicizing sculptures, paintings, and photographic studies of the mid-1880s, especially the 1885 painting *Swimming*. Here Reason makes an extended comparison between Eakins’s artistic practices and the theories of the French art teacher Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran, who held that through memory-training exercises and outdoor study of nude models in motion contemporary artists could replicate classical Greek artistic methods. The fourth chapter makes a case that *Crucifixion* (1880) was an attempt by Eakins to insert his work into a tradition of great art, but also an expression of his religious convictions. Reason discusses this painting earlier in her book than its date of execution would warrant on the grounds

that its most important exhibition history occurred later. She argues that following his dismissal from the Pennsylvania Academy in 1886 Eakins drew parallels between the life of Jesus and his own unorthodox teachings, betrayal by his students, and professional persecution. The final chapter examines Eakins's less-well-known sculptural collaborations in the early 1890s on the *Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch* in Brooklyn and the *Trenton Battle Monument*. Reason asserts that rather than trying to meet the aesthetic and professional expectations of his patrons and partners, Eakins prioritized placing himself within a tradition of great artists, exemplified for him by Phidias and Ghiberti, and thus sabotaged his prospects for more public sculpture commissions.

Among the significant contributions of Reason's book are sustained attention to the underappreciated importance of sculpture in Eakins's artistic endeavor and a better understanding of his overall aspirations for his work. The phrase "uses of history" in the title thus refers not just to the various ways in which Eakins interpreted historical subject matter as a means of stating his artistic principles, but also to his ongoing commitment to measuring his work against the great art of the past, from the Parthenon friezes to Renaissance relief sculpture to Baroque altarpieces to early American masters, even if this meant disregarding contemporary standards and thereby failing to achieve the degree of critical and professional success that he could have.

Though she cites Elizabeth Johns's classic 1983 study of Eakins as a model, Reason's book is based in biography more than in social history. Contemporary debates about, for instance, nervous illness or religious doctrine periodically play an important role in her account, but the basic questions she asks have to do with Eakins's motivations and intentions, and she construes her findings largely in personal rather than social terms. She concentrates more on an artist than on his art or the larger culture. As we continue to ponder the aesthetic and historical significance of what Eakins did it is worth paying attention, like Reason, to what he was trying to do.

Franklin & Marshall College

MICHAEL CLAPPER

Raymond Pace Alexander: A New Negro Lawyer Fights for Civil Rights in Philadelphia. By DAVID A. CANTON. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010. 272 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$50.)

Canton's engaging narrative tells the story of Raymond Pace Alexander (1897–1974), a prominent Philadelphia African American attorney who has been overlooked and perhaps forgotten compared to his fellow "New Negro" lawyers such as Charles Hamilton Houston, William Hastie, and Thurgood Marshall. It is a valuable contribution to the fields of legal history, civil rights his-

tory, the history of African American lawyers, and community studies of African Americans in the twentieth century.

A graduate of Wharton and Harvard Law School, Alexander went into private practice because, like other African American lawyers—no matter how stellar their education—no corporate firm would hire him. The book describes his successful law practice, including a number of high profile criminal and civil rights cases, as he cooperated with the NAACP legal staff headed by Marshall. Alexander became well-known in Philadelphia but national acclaim eluded him.

Canton focuses on Alexander's responses to the changing social environment throughout his career. He was a radical lawyer in the 1920s and 1930s, litigating cases and participating in mass protests to gain rights for black Americans. During the Depression he joined with leftist organizations in demonstrations. After World War II he shifted tactics, as the left became demonized by the anticommunist crusade. He de-emphasized protest and relied on litigation and politics.

He was a Republican until Harry Truman appointed his wife, Sadie Tanner Alexander, to the President's Committee on Civil Rights. The committee's report, *To Secure These Rights*, laid the groundwork for desegregation of the armed forces and other civil rights reforms. As the first African American woman in the United States to attain a doctoral degree (a PhD from Wharton in economics) and the first black woman graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Law School, Alexander's wife overshadowed him nationally. He failed in his attempts to gain a federal judgeship in the circuit which included Pennsylvania, but later obtained an appointment as Philadelphia Common Pleas judge in 1958. He made a strong reputation by creating programs for first time offenders and community legal services.

Alexander and attorney Cecil Moore, who was president of the Philadelphia chapter of the NAACP from 1963 to 1967, agreed on the need to force equal opportunity for blacks but disagreed about Moore's use of demonstrations. Although Moore's leadership forced construction contractors to hire black workers and gained traction on other issues, Alexander believed demonstrations would just create white backlash. Alexander decried Black Power rhetoric, but believed in black political empowerment and studied black history. He argued for economic justice through the use of affirmative action and a "Marshall Plan" advocated by the Urban League. When Alexander first started practicing in 1923, he and other New Negro lawyers were critical of the old guard for being too timid. By the 1960s, when he supported direct action in the South but not in the North, he was denounced by younger protestors as an "Uncle Tom."

Canton's book impressively illuminates the career of a major participant in the struggle for equal opportunity in Philadelphia whose civil rights achievements have been mostly ignored.

University of Pennsylvania

MARY FRANCES BERRY

Crucible of Freedom: Workers' Democracy in the Industrial Heartland, 1914–1960. By ERIC LEIF DAVIN. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010. ix, 454 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$90.)

Crucible of Freedom is unlike any scholarly history book I have ever read. Throughout the work, Eric Davin interjects himself into the narrative. He frequently recounts anecdotes from individuals who describe what their grandparents told them about labor organizing in the 1930s and 1940s. Davin's approach reminded me of William H. Whyte's *Street Corner Society*. Much like Whyte, Davin is the participant-observer interpreting an oppositional culture that was—and remains—remote from Main Street America. There are also echoes of David Brooks's sociological rendering of contemporary professionals in *Bobos in Paradise*.

If viewed as a Hunkie steelworker counterpart to Whyte's ethnic Italians or Brooks's "bourgeois bohemians," *Crucible of Freedom* has merit. There once were vibrant, working-class mill towns in America's industrial heartland. Most inhabitants traced their origins to southern and eastern Europe. They filled the taverns on Saturday nights and nursed hangovers on Roman Catholic pews on Sunday mornings. This is the world that Davin seeks to reconstruct, a world so remote now that Hollywood decades ago stopped making films like *The Deer Hunter* and *All the Right Moves*.

As a work of history, however, *Crucible of Freedom* falls short. Historians should not insert themselves into the narrative. Moreover, historians should not call upon second- and third-hand anecdotes. Oral history is a tool best used carefully. Each point raised in an oral interview should be documented by other, separate sources to avoid unverifiable stories filtered through two or three generations.

Beyond the issue of second-hand anecdotes and personal interjection, is the matter of writing. Tighter editing would have helped the author. Too many passages are in a dissertation-style format. There are numerous bullet points and sequential paragraph leads, as well as chapters that could have been boiled down into a more succinct format. Bullet points disrupt the narrative flow while too much background obscures the focus of the work.

Most fundamentally, Davin does not come to terms with how unionization helped undermine the preeminent position of manufacturing in post-World War II America. Factories relocated overseas and automation replaced unskilled, well-paid American workers. The reasons for these changes ranged from too much compensation relative to value produced and the shoddy quality of union-made goods, to onerous union work rules and the difficulty in firing incompetent, union-protected workers. Ultimately, the "crucible of freedom" became the incubus of the Rustbelt.

Angelo State University

KENNETH J. HEINEMAN

Guard Wars: The 28th Infantry Division in World War II. By MICHAEL E. WEAVER. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010. 384 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.)

Military historians occasionally invoke the age-old adage that “generals prepare to fight the last war.” In the case of the U.S. Army between the world wars, however, generals did not adequately prepare to fight *any* war—especially not one that would extend to the farthest reaches of the globe, tax American manpower and industrial production capabilities to their limits, and usher in the age of nuclear warfare. Michael E. Weaver, a military historian at the U.S. Air Force Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, uses the Pennsylvania National Guard (Twenty-Eighth Infantry Division) as a lens through which to examine U.S. Army mobilization, training, and combat before and during World War II. His primary focus is on the unit’s activities from 1939 until it came ashore in Normandy near Bricqueville on July 27, 1944.

Guard Wars is a work of both “old” and “new military history.” Weaver focuses on troop movements and explains the course of various engagements in discussing the unit’s advance across France and into Belgium and Germany, but he also evaluates the impact of social and cultural factors on the division. He finds that the majority of enlistees were young members of the urban working class motivated by patriotism and a desire to serve their state’s unit. Most were native born, and there were few whites from the lowest economic strata, almost no upper-class whites, very few farmers and men from rural areas, and no African Americans in the division’s ranks. Federalization of the National Guard in 1940 and 1941 reduced the “local flavor” of these units. By mid-1943, the guard, renamed the Twenty-Eighth Infantry Division, had lost much of its Pennsylvania identity as it became fully assimilated into the regular army.

Weaver discusses the division’s 1939 to 1943 training maneuvers in great depth. Division commanders (who included Major General Edward Martin, later governor of Pennsylvania) had their work cut out for them. The War Department lacked sufficient supplies for training its divisions, men used steel pipes and rubber bands to launch flour sacks (as there was a shortage of mortars), cigar boxes and blocks of wood substituted for mines, metal tubes and logs represented cannon, and sawhorses were used as machine guns. Light observation aircraft mimicked dive bombers, while training directors painted “Tank” on the sides of trucks during simulated combat exercises. These exercises revealed that the army as a whole—and National Guard units in particular—was not ready for combat. Weaver observes that “The National Guard’s failure to achieve competency in small-unit tactics and even individual skills was a severe indictment of the assumptions as to what a couple of hours of training a week could accomplish” (68).

Weaver’s work follows in the footsteps of such military historians as Michael

Doubler, Peter Mansoor, and Robert Rush, as he argues that “the American Army was an institution with a steep learning curve during combat and that it fought skillfully” (7). Divisions learned from their early mistakes, American soldiers and commanders were flexible, and the army became a rather effective fighting force as it gained combat experience. Like Mansoor and Doubler, Weaver shows that the United States did not win solely because of a massive application of firepower; rather, Americans were skilled fighters, particularly during the Battle of the Bulge.

Weaver has written an excellent account of the Pennsylvania National Guard’s role in the European campaign. He has also demonstrated that there is still much important work to be done on the U.S. Army’s participation in the “good war.”

Temple University

ERIC KLINEK

America’s Longest Run: A History of the Walnut Street Theatre. By ANDREW DAVIS. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010. 424 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$44.95.)

In this lavishly produced, beautifully illustrated, extensive study of Philadelphia’s famous Walnut Street Theatre, Andrew Davis offers scholars of American theater history, architecture, and drama a detailed account of more than two hundred years of survival and transformation in the nation’s oldest standing playhouse. The sixteen chapters trace the Walnut’s complex history. Among other things, the space has been a circus (before it was the Walnut Street Theatre), the acme of middle-class respectability in the mid-nineteenth century, a Yiddish theater in the 1930s, and the host to such stars as Edwin Forrest, Fanny Kemble, Edwin Booth, Lillie Langtry, Katherine Hepburn, Marlon Brando, and Sidney Poitier. *America’s Longest Run* brings the history of the Walnut Street Theatre from the eighteenth century up to the present day, closing with the theater’s bicentennial on February 2, 2009.

It is beyond the scope of such a sweeping study to provide detailed historical context for each transformation, so Davis anchors his work in an exploration of the personalities that shaped the playhouse’s history, from star performers to artistic directors. The result is a narrative history that infuses personality and interest into what might otherwise be a simple chronicle of events. For example, the first third of the book (chapters 1 through 5) focuses on the theater’s rise to legitimacy, following various managers whose dreams of financial triumph ended in disaster as the nation was overtaken by a series of economic and political crises. Chapters 6 through 8 examine the theater’s changing audiences. By the 1840s, managers turned their attention to capturing an audience with “the disposable

income necessary to support the playhouse" (99)—the rising middle class. Chapters 9 through 13 document another century of growth, during which the shifting structure of theatrical touring circuits and managerial monopolies repositioned the playhouse as a more national venue (even while it retained a strong local character). In chapters 14 through 16, Davis turns his attention to the Walnut's struggle for survival in the latter part of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Intriguingly, central to the theater's vision of its future was its understanding of its past. The restoration of the Walnut Street Theatre, launched in 1970, initially promised to reconfigure the space as a site for community engagement. Within a decade, however, that mission was imperiled. As Davis recounts, consultants analyzing the theater's challenges determined that it suffered from "the lack of a defined purpose and programming" as well as a lack of leadership in key artistic positions (305). In 1982, the arrival of a new artistic director dedicated to building a strong subscriber base kept the theater afloat. While debates over art versus commerce would remain, the increased financial stability allowed the theater to extend its educational mission into the community (310–11).

Throughout the study Davis considers the changes made to the theater's architecture. While this aspect of the study may be of greatest use to scholars of playhouse and American architecture, it is important to understand how the theater kept pace (or at times failed to keep pace) with the trends of the day. It is also impressive to contemplate just how many changes the structure has weathered over the centuries. As Davis notes, "Older theatres . . . have a way of looking dowdy a few years after they were built . . . [as] ideas about what is stylish and chic change" (4). Davis adds that, despite rich décor, theaters have been "treated more like factories," seen as "utilitarian" spaces for the manufacture of entertainment (4).

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the Walnut Street Theatre's history is its mission. Davis claims at the outset that the Walnut Street has always been a "populist" theater (2), and he closes with the sentiment and the hope that the playhouse will continue to express the *vox populi* (363). Yet, as his history makes clear, the Walnut Street has followed trends as often as it has led them. Perhaps as Davis suggests, it is this very adaptability that accounts for the theater's longevity.

University of Maryland

HEATHER S. NATHANS

Global Philadelphia: Immigrant Communities Old and New. Edited by AYUMI TAKENAKA and MARY JOHNSON OSIRIM. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010. 320 pp. Tables, maps, figures, illustrations, index. \$29.95.)

Philadelphia has rarely figured centrally in histories of U.S. immigration; nevertheless the city has been a destination for immigrants for three centuries, and immigrants have played a central role in the region's development. *Global Philadelphia* explores how Philadelphia has affected immigrants' lives, and how they have in turn shaped Philadelphia. This collection of case studies, gleaned from two Bryn Mawr College conferences in 2005 and 2006, taps into several trends in recent immigration studies: a focus on the transnational, relationships within and between ethnic groups, and a comparative connection between contemporary and historical contexts.

One highlight of the volume is the new and nuanced look at populations long associated with Philadelphia: Germans, Irish, Jews, Italians, Latinos, and Chinese. Joan Saverino's essay on Italians looks beyond the South Philadelphia enclave to Chestnut Hill to examine Italians' hybrid contributions to the built environment and illuminate differences between northern and southern regional identities. Victor Vazquez-Hernandez expands ideas of Latino Philadelphia beyond Puerto Ricans, stretching the time line to the late nineteenth/early twentieth century, revealing the presence of a strategic pan-Latino identity long before such politics were current and underscoring the important place Philadelphia had in larger political and economic Atlantic networks. Likewise, Lena Sze heightens awareness of the nonessential nature of the ethnic enclave by emphasizing the strategic nature of community institutions and the contemporary diversity of the Chinatown community. Other authors continue the stories of Germans (Birte Fleger) and Irish (Noel Farley and Philip Kilbride) beyond the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, showing how ethnic institutions changed over time.

Perhaps the most important contribution of *Global Philadelphia* is to map more recent—and still largely unstudied—immigrant flows to greater Philadelphia from Mexico, the Caribbean, Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. The presence and experiences of these global diasporas reconfigure the dynamics of race in a historically black/white city. Philadelphia is often a second or third destination for new immigrants, who tend to disperse through the greater region (with a concomitant decline of urban enclaves). One such dispersed community is Cambodian, the fourth largest in the United States according to Ellen Skilton-Sylvester and Keo Chea-Young. This "Other Asian" presence is often effaced in the larger city landscape, inhibiting incorporation. African immigrants portrayed in Mary Johnson Osirim's piece, on the other hand, play a visible role in the local economy as entrepreneurs, revitalizing declining neighborhoods and organizing for political influence.

Less explored are some of the interethnic relations and neighborhood successions specific to Philadelphia: Mexicans and Southeast Asians in historically Italian South Philadelphia; the relationship among Koreans, Haitians, and Latinos in Olney; or Africans and African Americans in West Philadelphia—all of which are mentioned only in passing. The volume's specific group-by-group frame perhaps limits such analysis.

Although necessarily impressionistic, *Global Philadelphia* opens new avenues to view Philadelphia as an enduring city of immigrants and, it is hoped, paves the way for further and more in-depth explorations of the immigrant experience in greater Philadelphia.

Georgia State University

KATHRYN E. WILSON

The 2011 Paul A. Stellhorn New Jersey History Award

The Stellhorn Award recognizes excellence in undergraduate writing about New Jersey history. It commemorates the career of an outstanding and much-loved historian of New Jersey, the late Paul A. Stellhorn.

In 2011, there will be up to three awards, including first and second runners-up. Each will consist of a framed certificate and a cash award. The sponsors will present the awards at the New Jersey Historical Commission's annual history conference in November 2011.

Note that this year undergraduate papers from colleges and universities in Delaware, New York, and Pennsylvania are also eligible for the award.

Submission Criteria

Papers may be about any subject in New Jersey's history.

Papers must be nominated by the professors for whose courses students wrote them. Students may not nominate their own papers.

Papers must have been written by undergraduate students attending colleges or universities in New Jersey, Delaware, New York, or Pennsylvania during calendar 2009, 2010, or 2011.

Papers by graduate students are not eligible unless a student submitted an undergraduate paper about New Jersey history during 2009, 2010, or 2011.

Email nominating letters and papers by June 30, 2011, to acrelus@optonline.net, or surface-mail nominating letters and four (4) copies of each paper to Richard Waldron, 150 Flock Road, Hamilton, NJ 08619; 609.468.3824.

Evaluation Criteria

A paper submitted for the Stellhorn Award will be evaluated on the basis of its narrative strength, the thoroughness of its author's research (mastery of sources and the standard forms of historical citation), and analysis of the paper's subject, including its historical context. A nominated paper should, therefore, tell a good story, explain how its subject changed over time, and utilize a broad array of relevant primary and secondary sources. Evaluators are historians the sponsors have chosen for the breadth and depth of their knowledge of New Jersey and American history.

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