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COVER ILLUSTRATION: Color cover of *The Garies and Their Friends* (London, 1857). Courtesy of The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Shelf mark 249 v. 258. In this issue, Mary Maillard examines the parallels between the lives of the characters in this African American novel and those of the members of author Frank J. Webb’s extended family in her article, “‘Faithfully Drawn from Real Life’: Autobiographical Elements in Frank J. Webb’s *The Garies and Their Friends*.”

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*We “Now Have Taken up the  
Hatchet against Them”:  
Braddock’s Defeat and the  
Martial Liberation of the Western  
Delawares*

**I**N 1755 WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA became the setting for a series of transforming events that resonated throughout the colonial world of North America. On July 9, on the banks of the Monongahela River—seven miles from the French stronghold of Fort Duquesne—two regiments of the British army, together with over five companies of colonial militia, suffered a historic mauling at the hands of a smaller force of French marines, Canadian militia, and Great Lakes Indians. With nearly one thousand casualties, the defeat of General Edward Braddock’s command signified the breakdown of British presence on the northern Appalachian frontier. This rout of British-American forces also had an immense effect on the future of Indians in the Ohio Country, particularly the peoples of western Pennsylvania referred to as the Delawares.

I would like to thank the anonymous readers and my teachers and trusted colleagues, Dr. Holly Mayer of Duquesne University and Dr. Mary Lou Lustig, emeritus West Virginia University, for their constructive criticisms and helpful suggestions as I worked through the revision process for this article.

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From late October 1755 through the spring of 1756, Delaware war parties departing from their principal western Pennsylvania town of Kittanning and from the east in the Susquehanna region converged on the American backcountry. There they inflicted tremendous loss of life and cataclysmic destruction of property on the settlements of Pennsylvania and Virginia. In November, Governor Robert Morris of Pennsylvania commented that the “unhappy defeat” of Braddock had “brought an Indian War upon this [Pennsylvania] and the neighbouring provinces.”<sup>1</sup> Morris added that to his “great Surprise,” the Delawares and Shawnees of the Ohio “have taken up the Hatchet against us, & with uncommon Rage and Fury carried on a most Barbarous & Cruel War, Burning & Destroying all before them.”<sup>2</sup>

In answer to questions as to why the Delawares, once the favored Indian people of William Penn and the subsequent proprietors, launched such destruction against Pennsylvania, three provincial officials, Robert Strettell, Joseph Turner, and Thomas Cadwalader, delivered a report to the governor. Their account offered a revealing explanation for the circumstances that led the Delawares to the warpath against a colony that had once sustained peaceful relations with its Indian population. According to the three:

They [the Delawares] attributed their Defection wholly to the Defeat of General Braddock, and the increase of Strength and reputation gained on that Victory by the French, & their intimidating those Indians and using all means by promises and Threats, to seduce and fix them in their Interest; and to the seeming weakness & want of Union in the English.<sup>3</sup>

Strettell, Turner, and Cadwalader not only attributed the “seeming weakness” of the British military and the failure of the American colonies to unite at Albany in the summer of 1754 as determining reasons for the recent violence, they concluded that the attacks were also due to the lack

<sup>1</sup> Governor Robert Hunter Morris to Sir William Johnson, Philadelphia, Nov. 15, 1755, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, ed. Samuel Hazard et al. (Philadelphia and Harrisburg, 1852–1935), 4th ser., 2:528.

<sup>2</sup> Governor Robert Hunter Morris to William Shirley, Philadelphia, Dec. 3, 1755, in *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, ed. James Sullivan et al., 14 vols. (Albany, NY, 1921–65), 2:368.

<sup>3</sup> Report of Robert Strettell, Joseph Turner, and Thomas Cadwalader to Governor Robert Morris, Philadelphia, Nov. 22, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, from the Organization to the Termination of the Proprietary Government*, in *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania*, ed. Samuel Hazard (Harrisburg, 1838–53), 6:724–28.

of British support for the Delawares' attempts to protect themselves. Amid the increasing French presence on the periphery of the Pennsylvania backcountry, British officials "had constantly refused to put the Hatchet into their [the Delawares'] hands"—to let them defend their homeland on the Ohio against the incursions of the French and their western Indian allies. The commissioners claimed that their report outlined the "true and sole Cause of [the Delawares'] Defection."<sup>4</sup>

The "put the Hatchet" reference is no doubt the most relevant and yet complex of the reasons given by the three commissioners. The phrase holds a deeper nuance than Delaware concern regarding British military ineffectiveness or American indifference to frontier defense, for it also suggests that the Delawares, not content with their restrictive role within their alliance with the Iroquois, wanted the Six Nations to release them from their designation as women noncombatants and allow them to pursue the masculine prerogative of war making. The perceived frailty of the British military and the Delaware belief (culled from past experiences) that the Six Nations would not or could not offer a defense of the Ohio, led the western Delawares to assert themselves as "men." As Frank Speck argued many years ago, the Delaware raids of 1755 demonstrated the "vehement masculinity of men rearmed"; they "cast aside the metaphorical petticoats and cornpounders" and set the American frontier on fire.<sup>5</sup>

The course taken by the Delawares served as a bloody testament that they were making a drastic cultural and political shift. As the French and British squared off for dominance on the western Pennsylvania frontier, the Delawares confirmed through their devastating attacks that they were not passive tributaries of the Great League of Iroquois but an independent people who could defend themselves and their homeland. The emerging political and military challenges of the Pennsylvania backcountry allowed the Delawares of the Ohio both to reevaluate their relationship with a weakened British military and to reject the military restraint placed upon them as women in the structures of the Iroquois League and Covenant Chain. Braddock's defeat had revealed chinks in the stability and power of the British-Iroquois alliance and thus became the determining catalyst that launched the Delawares of the Ohio on a trajectory

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 6:727. While the report listed several causes, the commissioners viewed this last one as the final straw and the most crucial reason for the Delawares' attacks on Pennsylvania settlements.

<sup>5</sup> Frank G. Speck, "The Delaware Indians as Women: Were the Original Pennsylvanians Politically Emasculated?" *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 70 (1946): 388.

as a new people with the liberated identity of “men.” For the Delawares of the West, “taking the hatchet” became the phrase of preference, for it proclaimed the attributes of strength, power, and independence. The hatchet metaphor empowered Delawares to pursue a new identity in the western reaches of the Ohio—one more conducive for survival on a frontier of unrest.

The history between the Delawares and Iroquois offers an insight into an eighteenth-century dichotomy found within the Indian world: a polarity between strength, as expressed through martial assertion, and weakness, as defined through passive compliance. Such a dichotomy also served as the framework for British and American colonials to understand—or, in many instances, misinterpret—the relationship between the Delawares and the Iroquois Confederacy. As it pertained to the Delawares of the Ohio, the events of 1755 turned the polarization of assertive strength and submissive restraint on its head.

In the early 1600s, the Delawares (Lenapes comprised of the Turtle and Turkey phratries, or large clans, and Munsees, who contained the Wolf phratry), then consisting of scattered, decentralized villages of independent, kin-based bands along the Delaware River watershed, including New Jersey and northeast to the Hudson River region, struck an association with the Iroquois.<sup>6</sup> Delawares joined the political configuration of the Iroquois Confederacy as props of the League Longhouse, a relationship structured around an accord of responsibilities and obligations between both parties. In exchange for the protection and security offered by the League of Iroquois, the Delawares were obligated to metaphorically fortify the rafters of the Longhouse by providing their support and loyalty. The Iroquois believed that the addition of props fulfilled the vision of the Peacemaker, Deganawidah, to spread the White Roots of Peace throughout the forests of North America by tactful persuasion as opposed to brutal conquest. Placed under the Iroquois Great Tree of Peace as a younger relative of the then Five Nations, the Iroquois consid-

<sup>6</sup> On location of early Delaware groups, see William A. Hunter, “Documented Subdivisions of the Delaware Indians,” *Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of New Jersey* 35 (1978): 20–39; Ives Goddard, “Delaware,” in *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15, *Northeast*, ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Washington, DC, 1978), 213–21; Melburn D. Thurman, “The Delaware Indians: A Study in Ethnohistory” (PhD diss., University of California at Santa Barbara, 1973), 106–16; and *An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs, of the Indian Nations, Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighboring States, by the Rev. John Heckewelder, with Introduction and Notes by the Rev. William C. Reichel*, new and revised ed., *Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania* 12 (1876): 50–51.



ered the Delaware entrance as a support to buttress the power of the Longhouse.<sup>7</sup>

In doing so, the Delawares relinquished their masculine privilege of war making unless such actions were sanctioned by the Iroquois. The eighteenth-century Moravian missionaries David Zeisberger and John Heckewelder, well versed in Lenape history, used the information they received from tribal elders and presented the Delawares in a favorable light regarding their role as noncombatants in the association. Heavily influenced by his Delaware informants, Zeisberger concluded that the Delawares willingly received the symbolic woman's role with the understanding that "No one should touch or hurt the woman." He noted that when the council of the Five Nations made the pact with the Delaware leaders, they "adorned them with ear-rings, such as the women were accustomed to wear." They also anointed them with oil and medicine, dressed them in the garments of women, and gave them a "corn-pestle and hoe," the symbols of a woman's rank. However Zeisberger was quick to point out that as women, or peacemakers, the Delawares held prestigious positions as councilors within the alliance. He also cautioned:

One must not however, think that they actually dressed them in women's garments and placed corn-pestle and hoe in their hands. . . . the women's garment signified that they should not engage in war, for the Delawares were great and brave warriors, feared by the other nations. . . . The calabash with oil was to be used [for the Delawares] to cleanse the ears of the other nations, that they might attend to good and not to evil counsel.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Susan Kalter, ed., *Benjamin Franklin, Pennsylvania, and the First Nations: The Treaties of 1736–62* (Urbana, IL, 2006), 7–8; Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1992), 274–75. On the philosophical construct of the White Roots of Peace, see Paul A. W. Wallace, *The White Roots of Peace: The Iroquois Book of Life* (1946; repr., Santa Fe, NM, 1994). According to Anthony F. C. Wallace, a contemporary (1946) Cayuga informant named Chief Alexander General (Deskaheh) told him that under Iroquois supervision Delaware leaders could give an opinion regarding League policy but could not participate in the decision making. Delaware representatives, placed under the direction of the Cayugas, asked permission to speak, and when they did so the topic had to be restricted to only those issues relative to Delaware concerns. We can only speculate on the reliability of this source since we have little colonial documentation to verify this assertion. See Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Women, Land, and Society: Three Aspects of Aboriginal Delaware Life," *Pennsylvania Archaeologist* 17 (1947): 21–22.

<sup>8</sup> "David Zeisberger's History of the Northern American Indians," ed. Archer Butler Hulbert and William Nathaniel Schwarze, *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications* 19 (1910): 35. Heckewelder received his information from the Reverend C. Pyrlaeus, who contended that the Dutch arranged for this alliance at Nordman's Kill. The Dutch wanted to disarm the Delawares,

“The woman shall not go to war, but endeavor to keep peace with all. The man shall hear and obey the woman.”<sup>9</sup>

A Lenape informant told Heckewelder that “As men [the Delawares] had been dreaded; as women they would be respected and honored, none would be so daring or so base as to attack or insult them.” Delawares declared that “women” was not a label of weakness or defeat. Only a people of strength, wisdom, and influence could attain the title among Algonquian speakers of the northeastern woodlands by pursuing the ideals of peace and restraining themselves from war.<sup>10</sup> The Delawares, with small villages and towns spread throughout eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and the southern part of New York, had a military potential comparable to that of the Six Nations. But as they were without a cohesive political structure such as that of the Iroquois Confederacy, the majority of Delaware bands moved toward a course of inactivity from war, thus solidifying their identity as “women.”

There has been much thought-provoking scholarship involving the meaning of the term “woman” among Indian peoples and how it was applied specifically to the Delawares. The Lenape scholar Jay Miller maintains that the adoption of this title was by Delaware consent. In the late 1670s, Delaware bands, having borne the “brunt of contact” with Europeans, desired to “minimize intercourse” in the future. The tribal status of woman became preferable to Delawares, who favored a neutral position in the escalating conflict between Europeans and Indians in the colonial backcountries. Warrior and diplomat designations appealed to the more isolated Iroquois. Miller believes that “Iroquois vanity, if not

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whom they saw as a serious military threat. Zeisberger believed that this agreement came at a later date, when Penn settled in his new colony. Nevertheless he maintained that the title of “woman” meant the Delawares were highly respected and the Iroquois “recognized the superior strength of the Delawares.” See Hulbert and Schwarze, “Zeisberger’s History,” 34. According to tradition, Delawares also recognized themselves as the prominent peacemakers and the Five Nations as the warriors in this alliance. See Daniel Brinton, *The Lenape and Their Legends; With the Complete Text and Symbols of the Walum Olum, a New Translation, and an Inquiry into Its Authenticity* (1884; repr., New York, 1969), 110, 114, 120. Richard C. Trexler contends that during this alliance ceremony of “gendered subordination,” Delawares were actually dressed in the garments of women, which he calls “factual transvestism.” See Trexler, *Sex and Conquest: Gendered Violence, Political Order, and the European Conquest of the Americas* (Ithaca, NY, 1995), 77. Gunlög Fur, drawing upon the research of C. A. Weslager and Daniel Brinton, concludes that the gender designation of an entire people such as the Delawares was indeed unique. See Fur, *A Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters among the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia, 2009), 192–94.

<sup>9</sup> Zeisberger’s comments from George H. Loskiel’s notes in Heckewelder, *Account of the Indian Nations*, 59n3.

<sup>10</sup> Heckewelder, *Account of the Indian Nations*, 58.

superiority, would have espoused the status of men.” In accepting identification as women, the Delawares embraced an ethos of “pacifist resistance,” but they believed that they had accepted this rank within League apparatus from the point of strength and honor.<sup>11</sup> There was no conquest.

Gunlög Fur, in *A Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters*, has isolated the application of the metaphor “woman” into three distinctive strands. First, the term accelerated throughout the 1720s and into the 1760s and was applied to the language of diplomacy. In this context, the trope could be used to explain (in this case as applied to the Delawares, a metaphorical) conquest by the Iroquois or used as a rhetorical instrument “to shame other men” and goad reluctant warriors into military action. Second, Fur believes that the term was used to denote an “uneasy subservience and acceptance” of the circumstance that made Delawares women to the Six Nations. Many Delaware leaders, such as Sassoonan, Tamaqua, and Teedyuscung, used the metaphor to describe their plight or position—whether as a people in need of protection or as a people of honor, bound by their obligations as allies of the Iroquois. And last, Fur maintains that the term belonged within the “complimentary gender universe” wherein women nurtured the transition of strangers—whether captives or allies—into kin, thus cultivating family extensions and tribal alliances. These three expressional forms explain the “ritual, political, and military roles a woman nation might fill.”<sup>12</sup>

Jane T. Merritt, who has studied the language of metaphor and its function in diplomacy between Indians and whites on the Pennsylvania frontier, cautions that in the Iroquois construct the word “woman,” as it corresponded to the Delawares, meant a “restricted public role.” While Iroquois women had a degree of “economic autonomy” within domestic spheres (they owned the longhouse and controlled the resources of agriculture) and could attend treaty talks, they had “limited power to speak in

<sup>11</sup> Jay Miller, “The Delaware as Women: A Symbolic Solution,” *American Ethnologist* 1 (1974): 511. For the “pacifist resistance” comment, see Regula Trenkwalder Schönenberger, *Lenape Women, Matriliney, and the Colonial Encounter: Resistance and Erosion of Power (c. 1600–1876)* (Bern, Ger., 1991), 242–43. According to the early twentieth-century anthropologist Frank Speck, the Delaware status changed from that of the respected and revered “grandfather” to that of “woman,” signifying female captives who were taken in war. The Delawares, as women, were forbidden to go to war or act as diplomats in treaty talks. “Their entire political organization,” through this gender designation, was “deprived of masculine prerogatives” such as war making and diplomacy. See Speck, “Delaware Indians as Women,” 377–89; and C. A. Weslager, “The Delaware Indians as Women,” *Journal of the Washington Academy of Science* 34 (1944): 381–88.

<sup>12</sup> Fur, *Nation of Women*, 175–83.

political forums.” In its application to the Delawares, the Iroquois used the term “woman” as a diplomatic tool of restraint.<sup>13</sup>

The metaphoric gender references found between the Iroquois and Delawares, as discussed by Miller, Fur, and Merritt fit well with the concept of a Delaware “woman nation” but fail to acknowledge the masculine dimension of such a nation. Missing from their analysis is recognition of the military constraint placed upon the Delawares—particularly those in the West, who by League design were prohibited from engaging in warfare unless so sanctioned by the Iroquois—and the increasing shame placed upon the term woman as a consequence of diplomatic intrigues between Pennsylvania and the Six Nations. The imposition placed on the Delawares may not have been the result of Iroquois conquest, but this reference of subservience to the Six Nations was ingrained throughout the colonial world of Indian-white diplomacy to take on a reality of its own. In addressing this limited role or the restraint from action placed upon the Delawares, one can better understand the cultural and political significance of taking the hatchet from the fall of 1755 through the early spring of 1756. Constraint became unbearable for Delawares on the western Pennsylvania frontier as they observed French encroachment into the Ohio, a defeated British military on the banks of the Monongahela, and an Iroquois leadership reluctant (or unable) to assert its authority as League protectors. These situations boiled over into the rage of a frontier war, making taking the hatchet an action of necessity for Delaware self-preservation in western Pennsylvania.

For the most part, the alliance between the Delaware tribes and Iroquois Confederacy was metaphoric and theoretical, with gender terms being used to communicate the cooperative relationship between the two. The relationship between the Delawares and Iroquois was based on the high ideals of respect and cooperation. However, the historical reality of King Phillip’s War put this relationship to the test and gradually transformed the rapport between the two. In 1675 the English colonies faced devastating Indian uprisings in New England during King Philip’s War and in Maryland and Virginia as the Susquehannock Indians raided on the frontier. In Albany in 1677, Governor Edmund Andros of New York,

<sup>13</sup> Jane T. Merritt, “Language and Power on the Pennsylvania Frontier,” in *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750–1830*, ed. Andrew R. L. Cayton and Fredrika J. Teute (Chapel Hill, NC, 1998), 79. See also Gunlög Fur, “Some Women Are Wiser than Some Men’: Gender and Native American History,” in *Clearing a Path: Theorizing the Past in Native American Studies*, ed. Nancy Shoemaker (New York, 2002), 75–103.

together with Daniel Garacontie, leader of the Onondagas, united his colony and his Iroquois allies with other English colonies to form the Covenant Chain of Peace. This was an alliance of New York, New England, Maryland, and Virginia with the Five Nations of Iroquois, refugee Algonquian groups from King Philip's War who now resided in Andros's colony, and all Indians who were acknowledged as tributaries of the Iroquois. Since many of the Delaware bands lived within the contemporary confines of New York colony, they became part of this alliance. Delawares, alarmed at the escalating racial violence between the Susquehannocks and colonial militias on the borders of Virginia and Maryland, benefitted from the protection offered by Andros and his covenant.<sup>14</sup>

As a symbolic support beam in the Longhouse and link in the Covenant Chain, the Delawares experienced a dual status. Although they assumed an obligatory role demanding both fidelity and submission, in the ideal the role of prop was esteemed, as it was essential for the perpetuation of League philosophy as well as Covenant Chain objectives. The League, as Timothy Shannon observes, recognized "horizontal links of reciprocity and amity, rather than vertical ones of authority and dependence." In its design, these mutual interactions made the Covenant Chain durable against forces of political stress and factionalism.<sup>15</sup> Delawares believed that both as a Longhouse support beam and as a member of the chain of alliances they enjoyed distinguished status, honor, and autonomy. A prime piece of evidence offers insight into how the Delawares saw themselves as honored props of the Iroquois Longhouse. In 1712,

<sup>14</sup> Lawrence H. Leder, ed., "The Livingston Indian Records," in "The Livingston Indian Records, 1666–1723," special issue, *Pennsylvania History* 23 (1956): 42–45; Francis Jennings, "The Delaware Indians in the Covenant Chain," in *The Lenape Indian: A Symposium*, ed. Herbert C. Kraft (South Orange, NJ, 1984), 90–91; Mary Lou Lustig, *The Imperial Executive in America: Sir Edmund Andros, 1637–1714* (Madison, NJ, 2002), 67–98; Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from Its Beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744* (New York, 1984), 160–61; Francis Jennings, "Glory, Death, and Transfiguration: The Susquehannock Indians in the Seventeenth Century," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 112 (1968): 44–45; Stephen Saunders Webb, *1676: The End of American Independence* (Syracuse, NY, 1984), 355–405. At the covenant treaty talks in Albany, Maryland colonial officials referred to the Delawares as "Mattawass Indians." See William Hand Browne, ed., *Archives of Maryland: Proceedings of the Council of Maryland, 1693–1697*, 69 vols. (Baltimore, 1887–1903), 5:269. For an in-depth look at the diplomatic mechanics of the Covenant Chain through the Iroquois perspective, see Timothy J. Shannon, *Iroquois Diplomacy on the Early American Frontier* (New York, 2008), 40–44.

<sup>15</sup> Timothy Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754* (Ithaca, NY, 2000), 22.

Delaware headmen Scollitichy and Sassoonan, both of the Turtle phratry, presented a stone-headed calumet with a wooden shaft ornamented with feathers and thirty-two wampum belts to Governor Charles Gookin of Pennsylvania. Scollitichy and Sassoonan offered the pipe and the belts to convey the history and the scope of their peoples' role in the Delaware-Iroquois alliance. The calumet had been originally presented by Delaware chiefs to the Six Nations and served as a historical record of their "submissions" and of their obligations as tributary "subjects of the five Nations." The belts signified the ideals and philosophy of the Delaware position in the alliance, as they saw it; they chronicled such principles as the "submission" of an "Infant or Orphan," adoption into the League and the obligations entailed, "clear & free passage" as equals within the Covenant, and "obedience" and reverence between the allies. The seventh through fifteenth wampum belts presented at the council hinted at how Delawares interpreted their function as women in the alliance. These belts demonstrated the high ideals of peace, security, and the "Liberty to pass & repass in all places," along with the Delaware belief that they, as women, enjoyed a degree of autonomy from the infringement of the Iroquois. The seventh belt, for example, was sent "by a woman who Desires to be Considered according to her sex . . . that she may eat & Drink in Quiet," the eighth by one who "desires that she may make & keep fires in quiet," and the ninth "that she may plant & reap in quiet."<sup>16</sup> Sassoonan recognized that the gender role placed on his people allowed for them to live in peace and enjoy a respected status, free from the intrusions of the League. He clearly understood that his people were constrained from the man's domain of war and diplomacy, however. In 1728 he told Pennsylvania governor Patrick Gordon that the Iroquois had always considered the Delawares to be "women only" and "desired them to plant Corn & mind their own Business." The Six Nations reassured the Delawares that they would "take Care of what related to Peace & War."<sup>17</sup>

The woman metaphor became politically distorted when Pennsylvania secretary James Logan, seeking to enhance the prestige of the colony and to protect Pennsylvania's borderlands, gave the Iroquois "an absolute Authority over all our Indians": a freedom to "command them as they

<sup>16</sup>Delawares in council with Governor Gookin, at the home of Edward Farmer, White Marsh, Pennsylvania, May 19, 1712, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 2:571-74.

<sup>17</sup>Sassoonan to Governor Gordon in Philadelphia, Oct. 10, 1728, in *ibid.*, 3:35; Sassoonan's additional quote in Jennings, "Delaware Indians in the Covenant Chain," 93-94.

please.”<sup>18</sup> Logan brought Pennsylvania into its own covenant with the Iroquois, an alliance referred to as the Chain of Friendship. This arrangement also appealed to the Six Nations, who needed a “strong diplomatic counterbalance” with their French neighbors to the north and English neighbors to the east; the agreement, furthermore, established an “alternative economic relationship” to offset strained relationships with New York.<sup>19</sup> As a result of the machinations of the Treaty of Friendship of 1736, the Iroquois leader Kanickhungo took the authority to speak not only for the Iroquois Confederacy but for “all the other Indians who [were] now in League & Friendship with the Six Nations.” In concert with Logan’s maneuvering, the proprietary government of Pennsylvania and the Great Council at Onondaga established a “perfect Friendship” and became “one People.” In this alliance, the Indians of Pennsylvania were placed under the jurisdiction and supervision of the Iroquois.<sup>20</sup> The fallacious perception that the Iroquois had conquered the Delawares deepened when Logan acknowledged that the “lands on [the] Susquehanna” belonged to the Six Nations by right of their “Conquest of the Indians of that River.”<sup>21</sup>

The union between Pennsylvania and the Six Nations sought to remove the Delawares from all areas of the Delaware and Susquehanna River Valleys to allow for white settlement. During the infamous “Walking Purchase” affair of 1737, Sassoonan and another Delaware leader known as Nutimus voiced their opposition to the mistreatment of their people. They were dismissed as an “unruly people” and as “lewd women” and firmly reminded by the Onondaga orator Canasatego that they were forbidden to meddle in the affairs of men.<sup>22</sup> The Six Nations

<sup>18</sup> Quote from James Logan in Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 243; for more on the Six Nations’ entrance into Pennsylvania politics, see William N. Fenton, *The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy* (Norman, OK, 1998), 398–415.

<sup>19</sup> Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 243.

<sup>20</sup> “A Treaty of Friendship,” Kanickhungo to Thomas Penn and James Logan, Great Meeting House in Philadelphia, Oct. 1736, in *Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin, 1736–1762*, ed. Julian P. Boyd and Carl Van Doren (Philadelphia, 1938), 6–7; Jennings, “Delaware Indians in the Covenant Chain,” 94–95.

<sup>21</sup> “Treaty of Friendship,” interpreter on behalf of Penn and Logan to Iroquois delegation, Great Meeting House in Philadelphia, Oct. 14, 1736, in Boyd and Van Doren, *Indian Treaties*, 13–14.

<sup>22</sup> See the various rhetorical exchanges in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 4:575–80; Document 10, “Treaty with Six Nations Indians at Philadelphia,” in *Pennsylvania Treaties, 1737–1756*, ed. Donald H. Kent, vol. 2 of *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607–1789*, gen. ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Frederick, MD, 1984), 2:28–49; Canasatego to Delaware chiefs, July 12, 1742, in Boyd and Van Doren, *Indian Treaties*, 21.

continually manipulated the image of the petticoat to signify weakness rather than discipline in refraining from war. When Canasatego maligned a group of Delawares in Philadelphia in 1742, he reminded them: “We [the Iroquois] conquer’d you, we made Women of you.” Though the Iroquois speaker knew that women had an influential voice in his community, he, in concert with the proprietors, “turned the concept” of womanhood to imply a shameful and weak standing. Well aware that Pennsylvania officials were watching, Canasatego sought to elevate Iroquois status by denigrating the Delawares.<sup>23</sup> The Iroquois eventually altered the woman metaphor to fit the European concept of gender in which women had no legal right to land and corrupted it as a way to “delineate Delawares’ subordinate position in terms that Euramericans would clearly understand.”<sup>24</sup>

The Delawares’ loss of status in proprietary Pennsylvania cost them possession of their eastern homelands in the Delaware, Brandywine, and Lehigh Valleys. The Pennsylvania-Iroquois union—which dishonored the Delawares’ position as noncombatants and portended the mistreatment of their respected headmen Sassoonan and Nutimus and the gradual theft of their traditional homeland—forced many Delawares westward across the Allegheny Mountains into the unsettled regions of the Ohio Country. As early as 1725, members of the Turtle and Turkey phratries led by Shannopin left the Susquehanna, moved west on the trail known as Frankstown Indian Path, and established communities on the banks of the Allegheny River called Kittanning (“at the Big River”); Shannopin’s Town, located on the Ohio twelve miles from the point where the Monongahela River met the Allegheny River to form the Ohio River; the more northerly settlements of Frankstown, Tioga, and Pymatuning (“dwelling place of the man with the crooked mouth”); and, eventually, a cluster of four towns in the Beaver Valley (one of which is now Newcastle, Pennsylvania) known as the Kuskuskies. Kittanning, which eventually

<sup>23</sup> Canasatego to the Delawares, July 12, 1742, in Boyd and Van Doren, *Indian Treaties*, 35–36; Nancy Shoemaker, “An Alliance between Men: Gender Metaphors in Eighteenth-Century American Indian Diplomacy East of the Mississippi,” *Ethnohistory* 46 (1999): 239–63. Discussion of “turn[ing] the concept” in Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700–1763* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003), 220–23.

<sup>24</sup> Quote in Merritt, “Language and Power,” 79; Gail D. MacLeitch, *Imperial Entanglements: Iroquois Change and Persistence on the Frontiers of Empire* (Philadelphia, 2011), 40–43.



grew to a population of three to four hundred Delawares, became their western capital. The town became the residence for the prominent group of brothers, Delaware leaders from the Turkey phratry: Tamaqua (King Beaver), Pisquetomen (He Who Keeps On, Though It Is Getting Dark), Shingas (Wet, Marshy Ground), and Nenatchehan (Delaware George). At the Allegheny town, Delawares and a small group of Shawnee guests discussed diplomatic matters and trade concerns in a thirty-foot long-house. The town later served as a rendezvous point of departure for Delaware and Shawnee warriors and as a holding depot for white captives taken during raids.<sup>25</sup> Kittanning became the heart, soul, and testament of a new Delaware spirit of rebirth in the West. With this migration and other future movement to the Pennsylvania backcountry, Delawares entered a homeland that provided new economic opportunities for hunting, trapping, and commercial trade with Europeans.

The Delaware Indian movement westward to the northern Appalachian frontier loosened the bonds that held these Indians within the Iroquois Confederacy. Though the Six Nations held the conviction that the White Roots of Peace could reach far beyond the diplomatic centers of Onondaga and Philadelphia, Delawares of the West only partly accepted this philosophy. The fact that Indians had migrated to the West in steady droves demonstrated that Iroquois control was slowly weakening among its props. To preserve a degree of authority and thus salvage

<sup>25</sup> The migration of Delawares and Shawnees accelerated rapidly during the late 1720s; by 1731, an estimated 400 to 500 Indians moved into the Allegheny and Ohio regions to increase the population to over 1,330 people. Other Delawares followed Shannopin across the Allegheny Mountains. In two separate land dealings arranged in 1731 and 1732, the Penns purchased the rest of the lands belonging to "Sassoonan . . . Sachem of the Schuylkil Indians." Delawares of the Turtle totem, without the consent of either Sassoonan or Pennsylvania officials, eventually relocated to western Pennsylvania. More Delawares moved over the Alleghenies after being displaced by the Walking Purchase. See C. Hale Sipe, *The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania* (1931; repr., Lewisburg, PA, 1995), 42–43; Michael N. McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724–1774* (Lincoln, NE, 1992), 22, 38–39; Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673–1800* (New York, 1997), 27–28; Hunter, "Documented Subdivisions of the Delaware Indians," 32; "Number of Indians, 1731," chart in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1st. ser., 1:300–302; John Heckewelder and Peter S. du Ponceau, "Names Which the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians, Who Once Inhabited This Country, Had Given to Rivers, Streams, Places, &c. . . .," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, new series, 4 (1834): 365; C. A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1972), 200–201; Goddard, "Delaware," 222; John Armstrong's Map of Kittanning, "Plan of Expedition to Kittanning" 1755, Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection, 1668–1983, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.

their self-image, the Six Nations dismissed the Ohio Indians as “mere hunters,” unimportant in the greater scope of Iroquois affairs.<sup>26</sup> But this metaphor resonated with the Ohio Indians, who saw themselves as “hunters and warriors and like our brethren the traders all wise men.”<sup>27</sup> At best, the Ohio Indians saw the Six Nations as agents of British Indian policy and believed that by acknowledging Iroquois authority, the western Delawares and other Ohio Indians would be assured of British trade goods and, if needed, British military protection. Western-migrating Delawares accepted Iroquois authority only on a pragmatic level, appreciating the necessity of staying on good diplomatic terms with the Six Nations and, more importantly, with the British and their traders.

Increasing French presence in the Ohio by the 1740s and a weakened provincial economy (given that fewer Indians could now trade fur pelts and buy English goods) altered the attitude of the proprietors and forced officials from Philadelphia to admit that they had erred in their treatment of the Delawares and Shawnees.<sup>28</sup> Pennsylvania made futile demands that the Iroquois recall their “tributaries” from the Ohio and resettle them on the western branch of the Susquehanna. Provincial officials contended, “the [Ohio] Indians cannot live without being supplied with our Goods: They must have Powder and Lead to hunt, and Cloaths to keep them warm; if our People do not carry them, others will, from Maryland, Virginia, Jersey, or other Places.”<sup>29</sup> The western Delawares did not budge, and this attitude of noncompliance may have tarnished the commanding image that the Pennsylvania proprietors embraced regarding the authoritative sway of the Six Nations. The Ohio Delawares had stationed themselves well beyond the reach of the Pennsylvania–Six Nations alliance.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Eric Hinderaker and Peter C. Mancall, *At the Edge of Empire: The Backcountry in British North America* (Baltimore, 2003), 86–87; an Iroquois leader’s reference to “mere hunters” in McConnell, *A Country Between*, 135. Jon Parmenter warns that one must not assume that the Iroquois lost control of the Ohio Indians, since they never attempted to assert power over the migrants. He asserts that the very nature of the League “relied on the persuasive authority of consensual decisions” and abhorred the use of pressure and coercion. I would argue that by the 1750s, British demands placed on the Six Nations to assert their authority altered this tolerant attitude toward the independence of the Ohio Indians. See Jon W. Parmenter, “The Iroquois and the Native American Struggle for the Ohio Valley, 1754–1794,” in *The Sixty Years’ War for the Great Lakes, 1754–1814*, ed. David Curtis Skaggs and Larry L. Nelson (East Lansing, MI, 2001), 108.

<sup>27</sup> Comments of an Iroquois half-king, June 11, 1752, in Lois Mulkearn, ed., *George Mercer Papers Relating to the Ohio Company of Virginia* (Pittsburgh, 1954), 62–63.

<sup>28</sup> Proprietary officials to the Six Nations in Philadelphia, Oct. 13, 1736, in Boyd and Van Doren, *Indian Treaties*, 10–11.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>30</sup> McConnell, *A Country Between*, 135; Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 275–77.

While the Delawares and other Ohio Indians were quite aware of “their strength,” they recognized their responsibilities to preserve the “Chain bright” and to maintain positive relations with the Six Nations.<sup>31</sup> But the Ohio Indians also became alarmed at the increasing strength of the French and their Indian allies. In November 1745, during the imperial contest known as King George’s War, a large party of French Canadians and their Algonquian allies sacked Saratoga. The destroying of this British settlement forced the Six Nations and many other Indian nations from their neutral position. Reluctantly the councilors of the Iroquois had to react to the French threat in their own backyard. The consequences of this destruction reverberated throughout the colonial backcountry. Conrad Weiser, the Pennsylvania ambassador to the Six Nations, sadly concluded that up until the sacking of Saratoga, “English governments had been content that the Indians should remain neutral, which was what the French also asked of the Indians, now however, the latter have broken it in a barbarous manner. So from now on there will be no end to the killing of farmers on both sides all along our borders.”<sup>32</sup> The Ohio Indians saw the Iroquois as representatives of British policy and grew disillusioned with the neutral stance of the leaders of the Six Nations at Onondaga, who harbored delusions that the English and French “would fight it out at Sea.” Not content to listen to the “old Men at Onondaga,” the “young Indians, the Warriors, and Captains” from the Ohio met with Pennsylvania officials at Philadelphia in November 1747 and appealed to the proprietors to furnish them with “better Weapons, such as will knock the French down.”<sup>33</sup> The Ohio Iroquois delegation led by Canachquasy assigned Scarouady, an Oneida half-king, to speak for the Ohio Shawnees and to “kindle a [council] fire” in the Ohio, where “all the Indians at a considerable distance” would come and unify as a body. To do so, the Ohio delegation agreed that, if needed, they would “take up the English Hatchet against the Will of their old People [Great Council at Onondaga], and to lay their old People aside, as of no Use but in Time

<sup>31</sup> Reference to “their strength” by Pennsylvania official Richard Peters in Nicholas B. Wainwright, *George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1959), 41; Unidentified Ohio Indian in council at Philadelphia, Nov. 15, 1747, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:146.

<sup>32</sup> Conrad Weiser to Count Zinzendorf, Philadelphia, Dec. 1, 1745, in *Conrad Weiser, 1696–1760: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk*, by Paul A. W. Wallace (1945; repr., Lewisburg, PA, 1996), 233.

<sup>33</sup> Unidentified Ohio Indian in council at Philadelphia, Nov. 15, 1747, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:147.

of Peace.”<sup>34</sup> At this time, the western Delawares permitted the Ohio Iroquois to speak on their behalf to the government of Pennsylvania. They believed that the half-kings (western Seneca, Oneida, and Cayuga leaders given partial authority by Iroquois leaders at Onondaga), much like themselves, were also becoming self-sufficient and that, as mediators, they would defend the interests of all Ohio Indians without compromising Delaware independence and territorial security.<sup>35</sup>

Delawares moved west to experience a political independence with only minimal Iroquois interference. Establishing such authority was not an easy task. In early 1750, Virginia officials within the administration of acting governor Thomas Lee, seeking a trading foothold in the Ohio, attempted to send gifts to the Ohio Indians, who Virginians believed “were one and the same with the Six United Nations” of Iroquois. To repudiate these assumptions, Iroquois leaders reminded the Virginia government that the Ohio Indians “were but Hunters and no Counsellors or Chief Men, and that they had no Right to receive Presents that was due to the Six Nations, although they might expect to have a Share” of those gifts upon the discretion of the Six Nations.<sup>36</sup> To preserve positive relations with the British, western Delawares still acknowledged both their responsibilities as props and their political limitations within the League and Covenant Chain.

Throughout this period, British-American attention turned toward the West. Richard Peters, the provincial secretary of Pennsylvania, noted in 1750 that “many Indians [Senecas and Cayugas] have left their towns among the Six Nations and gone and settled to the westward of the branches of the Ohio.” He warned proprietor Thomas Penn that the Delawares and other Ohio tribes made a “formidable body, not less than fifteen hundred,” that kept in “appearance a sort of dependency on the Council at Onondaga” but that were, for the most part, merely mollifying the Six Nations.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Ohio Indian delegation to Pennsylvania officials, Philadelphia, Nov. 15, 1747, in Boyd and Van Doren, *Indian Treaties*, 103–4; Document 4, “Provincial Council: Treaty with the Indians of Ohio,” Nov. 13–16, 1747, in Kent, *Pennsylvania Treaties, 1737–1756*, 162–67.

<sup>35</sup> Richard Aquila, *The Iroquois Restoration: Iroquois Diplomacy on the Colonial Frontier, 1701–1754* (1983; repr., Lincoln, NE, 1997), 196–97.

<sup>36</sup> “Conrad Weiser’s diary journal on a meeting in Philadelphia,” Oct. 11, 1750, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:478.

<sup>37</sup> Richard Peters in Wainwright, *George Croghan*, 40–41. For an insightful analysis of waning Iroquois influence among Ohio tribes, see Michael N. McConnell, “Peoples ‘In Between’: The Iroquois and the Ohio Indians, 1720–1768,” in *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600–1800*, ed. Daniel K. Richter and James H. Merrell (Syracuse, NY, 1987), 93–112.

This increasing strength was evident during the talks held at the Indian community of Logstown on the Ohio River in June and July of 1752. It was there that the Ohio Land Company of Virginia and Virginia commissioners sought to gain confirmation of the 1744 Lancaster Treaty in which the Six Nations had relinquished to Virginia territory that bordered the Ohio River on the southeast. They wanted permission from the Ohio tribes to build a fort at the forks of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers. The Six Nations leaders refused to attend and instead sent half-kings to protect Iroquois interests by supervising the affairs of the Ohio tribes.<sup>38</sup>

Virginia and Pennsylvania delegates cautioned the Delawares and Shawnees at Logstown to “beware of French Councils” and to “adhere to a strict friendship” with the English colonies and the Six Nations.<sup>39</sup> Tanacharison, the Seneca half-king, sensed that the Virginia commissioners recognized the growing autonomy and influence of the Ohio tribes. Grandstanding in front of the colonial officials and traders, he asserted the rights of the Iroquois to administer the affairs of the Ohio Indians and scolded both the Delawares and Shawnees for their unsanctioned war excursions into Cherokee country after the Iroquois had concluded peace talks with the Cherokees. In what could be viewed by the Delawares and Shawnees as an allegorical reprimand by the Six Nations towards western Indians, seen as the supposed tributaries of the Iroquois League, Tanacharison stated: “I take the Hatchet from you; you belong to me, & I think you are to be ruled by me, & I joining with your Brethren of Virginia, order you to go to war no more.”<sup>40</sup>

Tanacharison’s disdain for Delaware military activities and his assertion that Virginia also had the right to restrain Delawares from taking the warpath, much like the oratorical bullying of Canasatego a decade earlier, demonstrated that he was posturing to show an authority over the Ohio Indians in the presence of Virginia officials. On the other hand, the Delawares, who because of their status as tributaries were forbidden to go to war unless given permission, were not about to seek consent from both Pennsylvania and Virginia to defend themselves. Past experiences supported Delawares’ skepticism of the Six Nations’ likelihood of fulfilling

<sup>38</sup> “The Treaty of Logg’s Town, 1752,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 13 (1905–6): 143; Mulkearn, *George Mercer Papers*, xiii.

<sup>39</sup> Virginia commissioners to Delawares and Shawnees, June 1, 1752, in “Treaty of Logg’s Town,” 164.

<sup>40</sup> Tanacharison, June 4, 1752, in *ibid.*, 165; Mulkearn, *George Mercer Papers*, 61.

their obligations as warrior-defenders. Delaware sources claim that during the early eighteenth century, Shawnee war parties from the Ohio crossed the Allegheny Mountains and raided Delaware hunting camps situated in the Juniata River valley. The Delawares, as women in the alliance, could not retaliate, for the hatchet had been taken out of their hands. As “protector” of the Delawares, the Iroquois agreed to punish the Ohio Shawnees. The Delaware oral traditions cynically attest that the Iroquois “promised, as usual, that they would place themselves in the front of battle, so that the Delawares would have nothing to do but to look on and see how bravely their protectors would fight for them, and if they were not satisfied with that, they might take their revenge themselves.”<sup>41</sup>

The Iroquois failed to send a retaliatory war party, forcing the Delawares to take “exemplary revenge” on their own. As the Delawares arrived at the Shawnee towns, they discovered that the Shawnees had previously fled down the Ohio. In a “striking instance of treachery,” the Iroquois had warned the Shawnees of the incoming Delaware raid.<sup>42</sup>

It was becoming increasingly difficult for the Delaware leaders at Kittanning and the Kuskuskies to maintain a relationship with a Confederacy that lacked the resolve to assert an authoritative and protective presence in the region. Indian trader George Croghan noted that the Pennsylvania proprietary was naïve to believe that the Ohio Indians would do the bidding of the Onondaga council. He cautioned them, “I ashure [you] they will act for themselves att this time without Consulting ye Onondaga Council.”<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, the empires of Great Britain and France were preparing to contend for the Indian trade and the valuable resources of the Ohio region. In 1752 the new Canadian governor, the Marquis de la Jonquiere, reformed French policy in the West by restoring alliances with the Great Lakes tribes of Ottawas, Wyandots, Potawatomis, Miamis (known in most colonial records as Twightwees), and others in hopes that they would influence the Ohio Indians. To counter British economic presence, the French assaulted and ejected all British traders from the region. The French in 1753–54 began to establish a military presence as they constructed a series of forts—Presque Isle, Le Boeuf, Machault, and Duquesne—in the Ohio and Allegheny Valleys.

<sup>41</sup> A Lenape elder to John Heckewelder, in Heckewelder, *Account of the Indian Nations*, 70.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>43</sup> George Croghan to Governor James Hamilton, May 14, 1754, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1st ser., 2:144.

In mid-1754 the French and their Indian allies assaulted and gained control of Fort Necessity, George Washington's outpost at the Great Meadows in western Pennsylvania.<sup>44</sup> The defeat of Washington and the removal of a British presence in the Ohio Country threatened the security of the western Delawares. In the aftermath of Washington's surrender, warriors of the Wolf phratry of Delawares, residing in the upper Allegheny Valley, moved to Venango in support of the French.<sup>45</sup> The Turtle-Turkey groups, the core of the Delaware population base in the West, still aligned themselves with Great Britain.

There was, however, a building resentment among the leaders of the western Delawares toward the Pennsylvania government. This bitterness increased on July 9, 1754, during the Albany Conference, organized through the persistence of the British Board of Trade and colonial officials, between the Six Nations and representatives from various American colonies. The conference was intended to reinforce the Six Nations Confederacy and the Covenant Chain and foster discussion of the creation of a union of American colonies—objectives which would strengthen a British/American defensive position against French expansion into the West.<sup>46</sup> Six Nations leaders granted to the Pennsylvania proprietors Delaware lands and Iroquois claims “on both sides [of] the River Sasquehannah” as far east as the Delaware River and as far “Northward” as the Appalachian Mountains “as they cross the Country of Pennsylvania.”<sup>47</sup> The Iroquois also claimed that because of their historical covenant with the English, they had “Rights to the said Lands and

<sup>44</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York, 1991), 209–25; McConnell, *A Country Between*, 86–88; Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America* (New York, 1988), 66–67; Weslager, *Delaware Indians*, 214; J. Martin West, ed., *War for Empire in Western Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, PA, 1993), 22–23.

<sup>45</sup> The French, seeking Delaware support, had sent wampum belts to various leaders. Tanacharison ordered that the Delawares bring him all the wampum belts. Wolf attachment to the French was verified when Wolf Delaware leader Custaloga (Pakanke) held the belts received by the Delawares at Venango and refused to relinquish them. Shingas feared the French military at Venango and could not coax Custaloga to give up the Delaware belts. Wolf warriors remained with the French. See *The Journal of Major George Washington: An Account of His First Official Mission, Made as Emissary from the Governor of Virginia to the Commandant of the French Forces on the Ohio, October 1753–January 1754*, facsimile ed. (Williamsburg, VA, 1959), 12–13; Jennings, *Empire of Fortune*, 52–53, 60–61.

<sup>46</sup> Peter Wraxall, secretary of Indian affairs, June 15, 1754, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:62; Shannon, *Indians and Colonists*, 67–68.

<sup>47</sup> “Deed from the Six Nations to the Proprietors,” Albany, July 9, 1754, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:125.

Premises . . . solely in them and their Nations, and in no other Nation whatsoever.”<sup>48</sup>

The Albany land exchange, lamented politician and Quaker schoolmaster Charles Thomson, aggravated an already dangerous situation, for it forever altered the relationship between Pennsylvania and its Indian population. The Delawares were “violently driven from their Lands” and “reduced to leave their Country.” No doubt because of this loss of land, many Delawares eventually gave “Ear to the French, who declared that they did not come to deprive the Indians of their Land . . . but to hinder the English from settling westward” of the Allegheny Mountains. Because of the duplicity exhibited at Albany, Thomson concluded, the Delawares were thrown “entirely into the Hands of the French.”<sup>49</sup>

A month after Albany, over two hundred Ohio Indians met at Indian trader George Croghan’s home at Aughwick, in present-day Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. The half-kings Tanacharison and Scarouady complained to Conrad Weiser, a representative of Governor Morris, that the Onondaga council had relinquished too much western land to Pennsylvania.<sup>50</sup> The Delawares voiced their concerns through the Turkey leader Tamaqua, who addressed both Weiser and the Six Nations. With shrewd oratorical maneuvering and a respect for traditional protocol, he reminded them of their histories and obligations and pointed out that the Delawares had lived under Iroquois protection and looked to the Great Tree of Peace for shelter. He also noted that it was the Six Nations who had forbidden the Delawares to “meddle with Wars, but [as noncombatants] stay in the House and mind Council Affairs.” Tamaqua pleaded that because of a “high Wind” rising (the French presence in the Ohio), “we

<sup>48</sup> “Deed from the Six Nations to the Proprietors,” July 6, 1754, in *ibid.*, 6:121.

<sup>49</sup> Charles Thomson, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Alienation of the Delaware and Shawnee Indians from the British Interests* (1759; repr., Philadelphia, 1867), 77–78. Also see H. W. Brands, *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (New York, 2000), 228–51. A New York commissioner commented that the “Colonies being in a divided disunited State” made no attempt to challenge the encroachments of the French. The English colonies at that time were believed to be “unable and unwilling to maintain the Cause of the whole.” See the comments made at the Albany Congress on July 9, 1754, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:103.

<sup>50</sup> Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 368–69; Sipe, *Indian Wars of Pennsylvania*, 309–11; William M. Beauchamp, ed., *The Life of Conrad Weiser, as It Relates to His Services as Official Interpreter between New York and Pennsylvania, and as Envoy between Philadelphia and the Onondaga Councils* (Syracuse, NY, 1925), 101–2.



desire you therefore, Uncle, to have your Eyes open and be Watchful over Us, your Cousins, as you have always been heretofore.”<sup>51</sup>

The Ohio Indians recognized that the British-Iroquois nexus was the status quo that made trade goods possible for the Delaware people and, most importantly, offered them military protection from the French and Great Lakes Indians. When Delawares and Shawnees on the Ohio sent wampum belts to Onondaga in the spring of 1754, asking to be relieved of their status as nonwarrior tributaries, they were, in essence, also appealing to the British. In their rhetoric, Delaware leaders conjured an image of the French and their Indian allies overrunning the Ohio Country—an impression that brought great alarm to the British. Western Delawares exploited their image as helpless women to gain the sympathy of the council at Onondaga. They pleaded, “We expect to be killed by the French. . . . We desire, therefore, that You will take off our Petticoat that we may fight for ourselves, our Wives and Children; in the Condition We are in You know we can do nothing. . . . [L]et us die in Battle like Men and fear not the French.”<sup>52</sup>

From the Iroquois perspective, the growing independence of the Ohio Indians, as well as French aggression into the Ohio, had a deep impact on the power and authority of the Confederacy. Sir William Johnson, then the Indian agent for the Six Nations, saw the danger in the inability (or unwillingness) of the Six Nations to assert League authority in the West. He observed: “The eyes of all Western Tribes of Indians are upon the Six Nations, whose fame of power, may in some measures exceed the reality, while they only act a timid and neutral part. This I apprehend to be their modern state.” Johnson believed that the Iroquois hoped to keep the French out of their Ohio hunting grounds but would not assert their authority; instead, they wanted to force the British to intervene in military matters in the West. By laying low and acting the “timid and neutral” observer, they could force the British into action against further French

<sup>51</sup> Tamaqua to Six Nations delegation at George Croghan’s trading post (Aughwick), Sept. 4, 1754, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:156.

<sup>52</sup> A Delaware named Newmoch conveyed the speech to Weiser, who in turn, presented it to Governor Hamilton, May 7, 1754, in *ibid.*, 6:37. For an analysis regarding the verbal shifts of the woman-petticoat metaphor, see Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 222–23; Nancy Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness: Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth-Century North America* (New York, 2004), 109–10; Shoemaker, “Alliance between Men,” 242–43. Shoemaker considers the Delaware manipulation of the woman metaphor to be “verbal maneuvers.”

aggression in the Ohio.<sup>53</sup> This strategy put tremendous pressure on western Delawares and their push for a secure homeland in the Ohio Country. Moreover, it seems to have worked. Governor Morris revealed that the king had dispatched Major General Edward Braddock's "large Army" to America to "recover for the Six Nations what had been so unjustly taken from them by the French"—that is, to remove the French from the forks of the Ohio.<sup>54</sup>

On the eve of Braddock's march to where the three rivers of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio met, Scarouady reminded Morris that the Delawares considered themselves to be "under the Protection of the Six Nations" and that, despite the prevailing danger of the presence of the French on the Ohio, the council at Onondaga could only ask the Delawares to be "quite easy and still, nor be disturbed." Conrad Weiser, conscious of French expansion into the Ohio, urged Thomas Penn to persuade the Iroquois to release the Delawares from their tributary obligations, remove their status as women, "give them a Breech Cloath to wear," and put the hatchet in their hands.<sup>55</sup>

For the Delawares, the bestowal of the hatchet meant an affirmation of their independence and territorial rights. In June 1755 Shingas and a small party of his warriors met along the trail with Braddock and his command as they marched out of Fort Cumberland to assault the stronghold of Fort Duquesne. It was here that the Delawares stated a specific agenda by expressing their attachment to a new homeland and a strong sense of shared aims with the British. Shingas claimed that the Delawares desired to "Live and Trade Among the English and Have Hunting Ground sufficient to support themselves and [their] Familys." He offered his people's services to Braddock if the English general could assure the Ohio Delawares that their land would not be disturbed and their rights to the Ohio would be respected by the British. Shingas also added that if his people did not "have [the] Liberty to Live on the Land they would not Fight for it." In his much-quoted response, Braddock coldly refused the Delawares' help and asserted that only the "English Should Inhabit & Inherit the Land." Declining to acknowledge the Delawares' rights,

<sup>53</sup> Sir William Johnson, July 1754, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2nd ser., 6:215.

<sup>54</sup> Governor Robert Morris, in a speech to the Six Nations, Apr. 23, 1755, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 4th ser., 2:382.

<sup>55</sup> Scarouady to Governor Morris, Philadelphia, Mar. 31, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:342; Conrad Weiser to Thomas Penn, May 1755, in Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 271.

Braddock disregarded the sovereignty of a people he disdainfully referred to as “Savages.”<sup>56</sup>

These rejected Indians, a “smattering of Delawares,” Mingos, and Shawnees, joined the western tribes of Wyandots, Ottawas, Chippewas, and Pottawatomies to ally with the French. A combined force of 850 Indians and French left Fort Duquesne to confront Braddock eight miles from the fort, at current-day Turtle Creek. On July 9, 1755, Braddock’s army of 1,300 British regulars and colonial militia crossed the Monongahela and marched west through the deep wilderness to move against Fort Duquesne. There, in the backwoods of western Pennsylvania, the French-Canadian and Indian forces cut Braddock’s retreating army to pieces. Braddock was mortally wounded in this battle, and his army barely survived the catastrophic afternoon. Over 977 were killed or wounded.<sup>57</sup> On that day, Shingas and his warriors discarded the petticoat of restraint to take up the hatchet of combat.

In spite of Braddock’s rout, described by Indians as “what passed on the Monongahela,” and relentless pressure from the French, most western Delawares remained moderately committed to British interests. They were, however, also becoming increasingly desperate in their demands to be allowed to defend themselves. And, of course, the mauling of a powerful British army in the backcountry “greatly strengthened” French influence among the Indian nations of the Great Lakes and the Ohio.<sup>58</sup> The

<sup>56</sup> This is the testimony of Shingas of what happened at this meeting in Braddock’s tent. See *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York*, ed. E. B. O’Callaghan and B. Fernow, 15 vols. (Albany, NY, 1853–87), 7:270; and Beverly Bond Jr., “The Captivity of Charles Stuart, 1755–57,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 13 (1926): 63. George Croghan contended that Braddock agreed to Shingas’s proposal, but the Delawares reneged on the deal. The version of Shingas being rejected by Braddock has been accepted for the historical record. For an alternative view, see “Croghan’s Transactions with the Indians Previous to Hostilities on the Ohio,” in *Early Western Travels, 1748–1846*, ed. Reuben G. Thwaites, 32 vols. (Cleveland, 1904–7), 1:97–98. See Paul E. Kopperman, *Braddock on the Monongahela* (Pittsburgh, 1977), 100–102 for details on those Delawares who offered to aid Braddock and his army but were turned away. In regard to Braddock’s Indian allies, there is much discrepancy. C. Hale Sipe in *Indian Wars of Pennsylvania* maintains that Braddock refused the assistance of the Delawares and Shawnees and instead Lieutenant Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia promised Braddock the support of Cherokee and Creek auxiliaries, who failed to arrive.

<sup>57</sup> Charles Hamilton, ed., *Braddock’s Defeat: The Journal of Captain Robert Chomley’s Batman; The Journal of a British Officer; Halkett’s Orderly Book* (Norman, OK, 1959); Thomas E. Crocker, *Braddock’s March: How the Man Sent to Seize a Continent Changed American History* (Yardley, PA, 2011); Sipe, *Indian Wars of Pennsylvania*, 177–202.

<sup>58</sup> Sir William Johnson to the Board of Trade, Fort Johnson, May 28, 1756, in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York*, 2:724. Also see report of Robert Strettell, Joseph Turner, and Thomas Cadwalader, Philadelphia, Nov. 22, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:727.

Delawares, seeking reassurance that Pennsylvania would address their security concerns, dispatched a delegation to Philadelphia to “hold a Treaty” conference with officials. The delegates returned to their western towns without having received the “necessary Encouragement” from the Pennsylvania government.<sup>59</sup>

In another meeting with Pennsylvania officials, Scarouady, in council with Morris, maintained that what happened to Braddock “was a great blow” to all Indians attached to the British cause.<sup>60</sup> Scarouady made an appeal before the governor, council, and assembly to support the majority of western Delawares, who he believed were not willing to join the French. He, like Weiser, hoped that Pennsylvania would exert pressure on the Iroquois to remove the Delawares’ petticoat and restore their status as warriors. Additionally, he hoped the province would provide the Delawares with more guns and powder. Scarouady told Morris that the British were “unfit to fight in the Woods” and pleaded, “Let us go ourselves, we that came out of this Ground, We may be assured to conquer the French.” He then informed Morris that the Ohio Delawares were prepared to unite—to fight by the side of “all the English Governors”—and that “One word of Yours will bring the Delawares to join You.”<sup>61</sup> That word did not come as expected. Morris and his council deferred rearming the Delawares to the “Determination of the Six Nations.”<sup>62</sup> Instead, the Six Nations’ council sent word to Scarouady at Shamokin, a multitribal town located on the forks of the Susquehanna River (modern-day Sunbury, Pennsylvania), in August 1755, “order[ing] their Cousins the Delawares to lay aside their petticoats and clap on nothing but a Breech Clout.” The Iroquois expected the Susquehanna Delawares to assist the Oneidas, who expected to be overrun by the French and their Indian

<sup>59</sup> Bond, “Captivity of Charles Stuart,” 64.

<sup>60</sup> Document 1, Scarouady in “Message to the Governor from the Assembly,” Nov. 5, 1755, in Kent, *Pennsylvania Treaties, 1737–1756*, 431.

<sup>61</sup> Report by Scarouady to Governor Robert Morris in Philadelphia, Aug. 22, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:589–90. Also see Boyd and Van Doren, *Indian Treaties*, bix. Boyd contends that this report by Scarouady was his declaration of independence on behalf of all Iroquois tributaries. The comments regarding the place of Braddock’s defeat can be attributed to a Shawnee chief named Paxonosa to Weiser in the fall of 1755. See *ibid.*, 7:49. And yet Scarouady demonstrated the diplomatic/metaphorical maneuvering in the use of gender terms. See Scarouady to Governor Morris, Sept. 11, 1755, in *ibid.*, 6:615. Here Scarouady claimed that the Six Nations, fearing a French invasion into their country, needed military support from the Shamokin Delawares.

<sup>62</sup> Message of Governor Morris to Scarouady in Philadelphia, Aug. 28, 1755, in *ibid.*, 6:591.

allies.<sup>63</sup> The Iroquois ignored any mention of allowing the western Delawares to defend themselves in the Ohio backcountry. In response to this lack of concern, more Delaware bands, including those in the far regions of the western Susquehanna to the Juniata Rivers, trickled over the Alleghenies into the Ohio Country towns to show their solidarity and independence. In consideration of the British failure to assert themselves in the Ohio militarily and the lack of support from the Six Nations' council and Philadelphia regarding their security, many Delawares became impatient with the diversion of a diplomatic middle course. With Scarouady's pleas ignored, or at least put on hold, western Delawares became estranged from the Pennsylvania government.

As John Heckewelder later observed, throughout the eighteenth century Delawares "had to submit to such gross insults" as displacement from their eastern homeland and continual rhetoric demeaning their noncombatant status. The Delawares, he added, "were not ignorant of the manner in which they might take revenge" on their offenders.<sup>64</sup> Because of this treatment at the hands of the Six Nations and Pennsylvania alliance, Delawares, in the words of Charles Thomson, "took a severe Revenge on the Province, by laying Waste their Frontiers."<sup>65</sup> Western Delawares disregarded the authority of the Six Nations and ripped off the petticoat—the symbol of what they once believed to have been an admirable quality of self-control. Reluctant to lose their new Ohio homeland, unwilling to become a displaced people once again, and exasperated with failed diplomatic solutions to their security problems, Delawares of the West resorted to violence by taking the warriors' path.

The peace that had existed between the Delawares and Pennsylvanians since 1682, when William Penn purportedly negotiated the treaty at Shackamaxon, ended on October 16, 1755. Delawares at Kittanning, "encouraged by the Retreat of the [British] Forces," gravitated to the

<sup>63</sup> For the reference to petticoats and a "Breech Clout," see "A message from Scaroyady to Governor Morris," Sept. 11, 1755, in *ibid.*, 6:615–16; Daniel P. Barr, "This Land Is Ours and Not Yours': The Western Delawares and the Seven Years' War in the Upper Ohio Valley, 1755–1758," in *The Boundaries between Us: Natives and Newcomers along the Frontiers of the Old Northwest Territory, 1750–1850*, ed. Daniel P. Barr (Kent, OH, 2006), 30–31.

<sup>64</sup> Heckewelder, *Account of the Indian Nations*, xxxiii–xxxiv. Paul B. Moyer also contends that the territorial concessions at Albany in 1754 gave impetus for Delaware war parties to "even the score." See Moyer, *Wild Yankees: The Struggle for Independence along Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Frontier* (Ithaca, NY, 2007), 21.

<sup>65</sup> Thomson, *Enquiry into the Causes*, 47.

French, whom they saw as more powerful and a safer bet as an ally than the English.<sup>66</sup> The constant rumors of a large force of French and allied western Indian nations sweeping through the Ohio did much to spur Delawares into action. Scarouady warned Pennsylvania officials that over a thousand French, Ottawa, Miami, and Shawnee fighters were preparing to move east, as far as Carlisle, to kill all Delawares who remained loyal to the British. It was also rumored that these Indians “were to be followed by a large number of French and Indians from Fort Du Quesne, with a design of dividing themselves into parties to fall upon” the rest of Pennsylvania and the frontiers of Virginia.<sup>67</sup> In the council house at the Turtle-Turkey stronghold of Kittanning, Shingas, Pisquetomen, and the principal warriors Captain Jacobs (Tewea), a recent arrival to the Allegheny Country, and John and Thomas Hickman (Iecaseo), shouted down the moderate Tamaqua, who urged for continued restraint. They favored a preemptive strike against the Pennsylvania backcountry, which, they hoped, would discourage future British-American settlement beyond the Alleghenies. They also believed that the French could assure them security of their homeland. Shingas and Pisquetomen led a Delaware war party of fourteen, moved east into the Susquehanna River region, and entered the settlement of Penn’s Creek in modern-day Snyder County. Within three days, the Delawares devastated most of Penn’s Creek. They burned farmhouses and barns, slaughtered livestock, stole horses, and “carried off Prisoners” to Kittanning.<sup>68</sup> This principal Delaware town on the Allegheny River was now seen by Governor Morris as the domicile containing the “most numerous” and most warlike of western Delawares.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Governor Morris to the Pennsylvania Assembly in Philadelphia, July 28, 1755, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 4th ser., 2:438–39.

<sup>67</sup> Scarouady to council in Philadelphia, Nov. 8, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:683; Assembly of Pennsylvania to Governor Morris, Nov. 5, 1755, in *ibid.*, 6:677.

<sup>68</sup> Barbara Leininger in Randolph C. Downes, *Council Fires on the Upper Ohio: A Narrative of Indian Affairs in the Upper Ohio Valley until 1795* (1940; repr., Pittsburgh, 1969), 75–76; Edmund de Schweinitz, ed., “The Narrative of Marie LeRoy and Barbara Leininger, For Three Years Captives among the Indians,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 29 (1905): 407–20; “Examination of Barbara Liningaree & Mary Roy, 1759,” in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1st ser., 3:633. On Tamaqua’s political stance, see Carlisle Council with Governor Morris, Jan. 13, 1756, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:781–82.

<sup>69</sup> Governor Morris to Sir William Johnson, Apr. 24, 1756, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 7:99.

Bands of eastern Delawares from the north branch of the Susquehanna and the Chemung Valley also perceived British military ineptitude in the Ohio backcountry; they joined their western kin and amassed warrior strength of 150 men. The war captains Shingas, Captain Jacobs, Captain Will, and Captain John Peter—and their warriors from the west and east—rendezvoused at Ray's Town (current-day Bedford) and commenced further attacks on the Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland frontiers. Delaware war parties moved against the "Inhabitants on Mahanahy Creek," a tributary of the Susquehanna River, taking captives and torching the community. One month later, Delawares and Shawnees crossed the Susquehanna and "fell upon the County of Berks."<sup>70</sup> By these actions, western Delawares severed all friendly ties with English whites on the frontier.

As Fred Anderson reminds us, Braddock's defeat not only "shocked all of British America" but also exposed the vulnerability of settlers in the Pennsylvania backcountry. With inadequate defense, the British frontier "simply collapsed."<sup>71</sup> Governor Morris prophetically saw Braddock's defeat and the retreat of his army from western Pennsylvania as a disaster that would demonstrate British lack of resolve and encourage the Ohio Indians to "destroy all the back Settlements in [Pennsylvania] as well as Virginia & Maryland."<sup>72</sup> A Delaware chief in council with Morris reminded him that after Braddock's command met disaster, "Affairs took another Turn." Morris grieved that Braddock's drubbing had not only aggravated an Indian war of great magnitude; the "unhappy defeat" of the British military on the Monongahela had also represented a "great Blow" to the stability of Pennsylvania. As a result of these ferocious Indian raids, colonists fled in droves from the frontiers of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. Most of the settlements around the vicinity of Easton were "evacuated and ruined." Many people fled to New Jersey, taking with them salvaged corn, cattle, and their "best Household Goods." Others left

<sup>70</sup> Bond, "Captivity of Charles Stuart," 60–61; a brief narrative of the events of October–November 1755, presented to Governor Morris in Philadelphia, Dec. 29, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:766–67; Barr, "This Land Is Ours and Not Yours," 30–31. Jane Merritt contends that these raids served as political protests about "questionable tactics for land cessions and unauthorized white encroachment" into Delaware territory. See Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 181–83.

<sup>71</sup> Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766* (New York, 2000), 108.

<sup>72</sup> Governor Morris to Sir Thomas Robinson (secretary of the state), Philadelphia, July 30, 1755, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 4th ser., 2:441.

everything behind to fall into the hands of the raiding Indians.<sup>73</sup> By the spring of 1756, the warriors had killed or captured seven hundred settlers and destroyed five forts, inducing Virginia to finance the construction of twenty-seven forts from the Blue Ridge to the Allegheny Mountains. These raids forced Pennsylvania to rethink its Indian policy. In hindsight, many placed the blame for the uprising squarely on the Pennsylvania Quakers. As Dr. John Fothergill, an English Quaker and friend of Benjamin Franklin, summarized it, the emerging narrative was that “when the Delawares demanded the Hatchet” to defend themselves, the Quakers “refused and the Indians went over to the French.” As a consequence, Pennsylvania purged the pacifist Quaker assemblymen from the government for not properly funding frontier defense.<sup>74</sup>

The violent outbreaks on the Pennsylvania frontier confirmed the Delawares’ anger against the provincial government in Philadelphia and their dissatisfaction with the failure of both the Six Nations and the British to provide territorial security. This became a frontier war “shaped by past experiences and tailored specifically to meet Delaware demands” for protection of their new homeland.<sup>75</sup> These eruptions also allowed Delawares to liberate themselves from their past role as passive props of the League and destroyed what was left of the Indian “tributary system” in Pennsylvania’s Chain of Friendship. Two Ohio Delawares, serving as messengers for the victorious warriors of Kittanning, visited a Susquehanna River town and announced: “We, the Delawares of Ohio, do proclaim War against the English. We have been their Friends many years, but now have taken up the Hatchet against them, & we will never make it up with them whilst there is an English man alive.”<sup>76</sup> Performing

<sup>73</sup> Delaware chief to Governor Morris, Philadelphia, Feb. 24, 1756, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 7:49; Governor Morris to Sir William Johnson, Nov. 8, 1755, in *ibid.*, 6:671; Benjamin Franklin’s comments in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Jan. 1, 1756.

<sup>74</sup> Comments of Fothergill to Israel Pemberton, Sept. 25, 1758, in William S. Hanna, *Benjamin Franklin and Pennsylvania Politics* (Stanford, CA, 1964), 125–26; On the purging of the Quakers from the Pennsylvania assembly see Theodore Thayer, “The Quaker Party of Pennsylvania, 1755–1765,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 71 (1947): 19–43.

<sup>75</sup> Daniel P. Barr, “A Road for Warriors’: The Western Delawares and the Seven Years’ War,” *Pennsylvania History* 73 (2006): 3.

<sup>76</sup> For “tributary system” quote, see Francis Jennings, “Iroquois Alliances in American History,” in *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their League*, ed. Francis Jennings et. al. (Syracuse, NY, 1985), 44–45; for “We, the Delawares of Ohio” quote, see “Report by Scarouady” to Governor Morris in Philadelphia, Nov. 8, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:683.



a celebratory war dance, they boasted: “When Washington [at Fort Necessity] was defeated We, the Delawares were blamed as the Cause of it. We will now kill. We will not be blamed without a Cause.”<sup>77</sup>

The Delaware actions against the backcountry alarmed Major General William Shirley, commander in chief of his majesty’s forces in North America during the early years of the conflict. Shirley, whose own son William had fallen with Braddock on the Monongahela, bewailed that these Indians had “for a long time past lived in Friendship with the People” of Pennsylvania and bordering colonies.<sup>78</sup> Shirley tried desperately to reestablish the former subservient role of Delawares to Iroquois authority—a relationship he believed strengthened both imperial Indian relations and Pennsylvania border security. He complained to Six Nations leaders that they needed to get their house in order. The Delawares, he reminded them, had “always lived under your Direction. They looked upon you as their masters, and you looked upon them as Women who wore Petticoats. They never dared to do anything of Importance without your leave.” He cautioned the Iroquois that they needed to punish those Delawares who raided on the Pennsylvania frontiers. If the Iroquois refused to assert their dominant status within the Covenant Chain, Shirley warned, the Delawares would “think themselves as good Men as you, and you will lose the name of being their Masters.”<sup>79</sup> Shirley’s concerns may have been too late.

This was not a total break from the Six Nations, as the Wolf phratry of Delawares aligned themselves with the pro-French faction of western Senecas. This bloc, not in step with the council at Onondaga, held political positions more akin to those of the other western Indians. There were also Delawares who saw the danger in their emancipation from military constraint. One Delaware chief believed that in order to destroy the Delawares, the Six Nations Confederacy had purposely not asserted its authority in the West—thus forcing the Delawares into a war with Pennsylvania that they could not win. This chief warned Six Nations leaders using vivid sexual imagery: “Why do you wish to rob the woman of her dress. I tell you that if you do, you will find creatures in it that are ready to bite you.”<sup>80</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Scarouady to Governor Morris, Nov. 8, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:683.

<sup>78</sup> Major General Shirley to Council of War, Dec. 12, 1755, in *ibid.*, 7:21–22.

<sup>79</sup> Major General Shirley to the Six Nations, Dec. 12, 1755, in *ibid.*, 7:22.

<sup>80</sup> Unidentified Delaware leader in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of*

The frontier raids of 1755 and 1756 shed light on a transition taking place in western Pennsylvania. Delawares became attuned to a new identity, for by this time they equated the image of a noncombatant with negative undertones of passivity and vulnerability—abstractions no longer acceptable for them as they strove to establish autonomy in the West. In the aftermath of these raids, Delaware warriors used gender-specific terms about masculine rebirth and demonstrated their contempt for their previous position that had restricted them from warfare. Delaware war parties moved about the backcountry and flung sexual insults at the Iroquois they encountered. Delawares defended against accusations that they had been treacherous by reminding the Iroquois: “We are looked upon as Women, and therefore When the French come among us, is it to be wondered that they were able to seduce us.” In their rhetoric, Delawares claimed that they had “been too Long treated by the Six Nations . . . as Women but [would] now show them that they are Men.” Representatives of the Six Nations met with Delaware speakers at the Susquehanna Indian town of Otsiningo in February 1756 and scolded the Delawares “to get sober,” condemning their raids as the “Actions of Drunken Men.” The Delawares boldly responded: “We are Men, and are determined not to be ruled any longer by you as Women.” They then told the delegates to drop the matter “lest we cut off your private Parts and make Women of you as you have done of us.”<sup>81</sup>

Sir William Johnson, much to the chagrin of the Six Nations, concluded a series of talks at Onondaga by making peace with the eastern Delawares and “taking off the Petticoat or that invidious name of woman from the Delaware Nation [which had] been imposed on them by the 6 Nations from the time they conquered them.”<sup>82</sup> Johnson hoped that the

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*New-York*, 7:157; Sullivan, *Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 2:369; Louis Antoine de Bougainville to Marquis de Rigaud, Lieutenant Governor of New France in Montreal, Jan. 30, 1757, in *Adventures in the Wilderness: The American Journals of Louis Antoine De Bougainville, 1756–1760*, ed. Edward P. Hamilton (Norman, OK, 1964), 104–5; Hulbert and Schwarze, “Zeisberger’s History,” 36.

<sup>81</sup> Report of Mohawk sachem Little Abraham to Lieutenant Governor William Denny of Pennsylvania at Lancaster, May 13, 1757, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 7:521–22; words of Delaware warriors in Beauchamp, *Life of Conrad Weiser*, 111. For an analysis on body parts and metaphor, see James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York, 1999), 213–14.

<sup>82</sup> Sir William Johnson to Lords of Trade, July 17, 1756, in *The Documentary History of the State of New York*, ed. Edmund B. O’Callaghan, 4 vols. (Albany, NY, 1849–51), 2:730; Sir William Johnson to Lords of Trade, July 17, 1756, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2nd ser., 6:480–81. Also see *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York*, 7:119; Jennings, *Empire of Fortune*, 266.

Iroquois would follow his example and also remove the petticoat. So doing, Johnson believed, would prompt the western Delawares to leave the Ohio, return east, and solidify the Chain. Deputies of the Six Nations told Johnson that they were not “properly authorized” by their council to release the Delawares from their tributary status, but they “would make their reports & press it upon them [Onondaga Council].”<sup>83</sup>

The inadequate mediation of Johnson with regard to the rift between the Delawares and Pennsylvania did not stop the intensity of the raids. In April 1756, Governor Morris complained to Johnson that Delawares living at Kittanning and farther to the west on the Ohio River were “most mischievous” and continued to “murder and destroy our Inhabitants, treating them with the most barbarous Inhumanity that can be conceived.”<sup>84</sup> Eastern and western Delaware war parties continued in their assaults on the frontiers of central Pennsylvania. Over seven hundred Delaware warriors came from the Ohio, while a few hundred approached white settlements from their villages on the Susquehanna.<sup>85</sup> Morris condemned the “cruel Ravages of these bloody Invaders” and threatened that those Indians responsible would suffer the “most fatal Consequences.”<sup>86</sup> Believing that the Delawares had thrown off their “Subjection and Dependency upon the Six Nations” to ally with the French, Morris ran out of options. On April 14, 1756, he declared war on the Delawares and placed scalp bounties on all Delawares, including Shingas and Captain Jacobs, who had waged war or aided the warriors.<sup>87</sup> The governor condemned the actions of the Ohio Delawares, who, he lamented, were looked upon by the proprietors as “our own Children,” and who had in a “most cruel manner fallen upon & murdered our Inhabitants, People whose Houses were always open to them.” He added that certain Delawares, unprovoked, had greatly damaged the “Chain of Friendship” that had historically bound them with Pennsylvania and the Six Nations. He invited peaceful Delawares to settle closer to the Pennsylvania settle-

<sup>83</sup> Sir William Johnson’s comments, Albany, July 17, 1756, in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York*, 7:119.

<sup>84</sup> Governor Morris to Sir William Johnson Apr. 24, 1756, in *ibid.*, 7:98–99.

<sup>85</sup> Weslager, *Delaware Indians*, 231.

<sup>86</sup> A message from Governor Morris to the Pennsylvania assembly, Philadelphia, Nov. 5, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:677.

<sup>87</sup> On “Subjection” comment, see Governor Morris to Scarouady, Apr. 8, 1756, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 4th ser., 2:590–91; Michael N. McConnell, “The Search for Security: Indian-English Relations in the Trans-Appalachian Region” (PhD diss., College of William and Mary, 1983), 149.

ments in the East for their own protection against less discriminating bounty hunters.<sup>88</sup>

By mid-1756, the alienation of western Delawares from the Covenant Chain was complete. Many were now “under the protection of the French” and would no longer honor their previous relationships with Pennsylvania or the British. Morris complained that Delawares refused to “submit to the Six Nations, to whom they owe obedience.”<sup>89</sup> The spirit of autonomy also spread back across the Allegheny Mountains. Delaware chiefs living near the Iroquois in the Wyoming Valley announced in the fall that “five hundred of their people would move away from the English and settle ten leagues to the west,” near the Ohio River. Western Delawares, confident in their ability to throw the frontier into chaos, challenged the Iroquois to take the hatchet against the English. In council with the Shawnees and Iroquois, the Delawares “reproached the Iroquois bitterly for their failure” to declare war against the British for their incursions into the Ohio Country. They told the Iroquois that they would no longer wear the petticoat and warned that “perhaps they would become crazy . . . [and] even raise the hatchet against their uncles, the Iroquois.”<sup>90</sup>

Concluding that the alliance between Pennsylvania and the Six Nations “had been organized for their destruction,” Heckewelder wrote, Delawares believed that their “very existence was at stake” and abandoned their pacifist role “into which they had been insidiously drawn.”<sup>91</sup> The defeat of Braddock revealed that the British needed to have another look at their military commitment to the western Pennsylvania region—a reassessment for which the Delawares did not have the inclination or time to wait. Instead, at the onset of the Seven Years’ War, the Ohio Delawares threw off the bastardized label of women and its preconditions for military restraint and, as Charles Thomson concluded, “forced [the Six

<sup>88</sup> Governor Morris to Scarouady and Andrew Montour, Philadelphia, Nov. 14, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:698–99; Morris to Sir William Johnson, Philadelphia, Nov. 15, 1755, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 4th ser., 2:528–29.

<sup>89</sup> Governor Morris, Apr. 15, 1756, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 7:92; Morris to Sir William Johnson, Philadelphia, Nov. 15, 1755, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 4th ser., 2:528–29.

<sup>90</sup> The Marquis de Vaudreuil to the Minister in Montreal, Aug. 8, 1756, in *Wilderness Chronicles of Northwestern Pennsylvania*, ed. Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent (Harrisburg, PA, 1941), 95. For the “reproached” comment, see Louis Antoine de Bougainville to Marquis de Rigaud, lieutenant governor of New France in Montreal, Jan. 30, 1757, in Hamilton, *Adventures in the Wilderness*, 104–5.

<sup>91</sup> Heckewelder, *Account of the Indian Nations*, xxxiv.

Nations and Pennsylvania] to acknowledge they were Men . . . a free independent Nation.”<sup>92</sup> From the moment they picked up the hatchet and went to war against Pennsylvania, “the Delawares were turned, and became another People.”<sup>93</sup>

*Pittsburgh, PA*

RICHARD S. GRIMES

<sup>92</sup> Thomson, *Enquiry into the Causes*, 47.

<sup>93</sup> Words of the Shawnee chief named Paxonosa, as interpreted by Conrad Weiser and conveyed to a council at Philadelphia, Feb. 24, 1756, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 7:49.

## “Faithfully Drawn from Real Life”: Autobiographical Elements in Frank J. Webb’s *The Garies and Their Friends*

A RESURGENCE OF INTEREST in Frank J. Webb’s *The Garies and Their Friends*—the second novel by an African American and the first to portray northern racism—underscores the need for consideration of recently discovered biographical information about this enigmatic author. Previously unknown details about the lives of Frank J. Webb (1828–94) and his family and friends parallel some of his literary portrayals, subtly inform other scenes and characters, and generally help to illuminate the unique combination of biography, social history, and creative imagination that constitute Webb’s complex literary achievement.

*The Garies and Their Friends* is constructed around two major narrative lines: the stories of the Garie family and the Ellis family. In Georgia, Clarence Garie, a white slave owner, is living openly with his mulatto slave mistress, Emily Winston; he treats her with as much affection and respect as if she were his wife and wishes to marry her, but interracial marriage is illegal in the state. They have two children, named after their parents, Clarence and Emily. The Garies entertain Emily’s cousin, George Winston, who, although born and raised in slavery, was educated and freed by a kind master. Now, with all the appearances of a refined gentleman, he is passing as white—much to the approbation and amusement of Mr. Garie.

In Philadelphia, the Ellises are a “highly respectable and industrious coloured family.”<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ellis, a carpenter, and his wife, Ellen, have three

The author wishes to thank Elizabeth Hayes of Silver Spring, Maryland, for her valuable research and advice; Dr. Raymond L. Hayes and Dr. C. H. Thomas for their generous sharing of family records; the anonymous readers at the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* who provided thoughtful critiques and suggestions; and Phil Lapsansky and Jim Green of the Library Company for their encouragement of Philadelphia for their encouragement.

<sup>1</sup> Frank J. Webb, *The Garies and Their Friends* (1857; Baltimore, 1997), 16.

children. Esther (Ess) is the sensible eldest; sewing is her primary occupation. Caroline (Caddy), a fanatical housecleaner, is short-tempered and shrewish. Charlie, the youngest, is a high-spirited boy determined to find a life's work suitable to his intelligence and ambition and to avoid the domestic service that is expected of him in the rigidly racist culture of mid-nineteenth-century Philadelphia. Kinch de Young, a wild and unruly boy, is Charlie's best friend. When Charlie breaks his arm, the family doctor suggests that a stay in the country would restore his health. A white lady, Mrs. Bird, who was impressed with Charlie's performance at school, takes him to her country home.

In Georgia, Emily Winston discovers that she is pregnant with her third child. Mr. Garie decides to move north so that he can marry her and his children will be free. At George Winston's suggestion, Mr. Garie writes to a wealthy real estate dealer, Mr. Walters, requesting that he find a suitable house for the Garies in Philadelphia. Mr. Walters, a proud, powerful man of "jet black complexion," is wealthy and successful, but he is continually constrained by racism.<sup>2</sup> The Ellises clean and decorate the house Mr. Walters has chosen for the Garies and, when they arrive in Philadelphia, welcome them into colored society. Mrs. Ellis had known Emily Winston in Georgia, and Mr. Ellis had known George Winston when he was a boy. Mr. Garie finds a clergyman who will conduct an interracial marriage. He and Emily are married so she can become what he has always thought her—Mrs. Garie.

Living directly next door to the Garies is a disreputable lawyer, George Stevens—"Slippery George"—with his wife and two children.<sup>3</sup> Before she knows that Mrs. Garie is a woman of color, Mrs. Stevens reveals her racism to the Garies and is shown the door. Stevens is deeply offended. Mrs. Stevens succeeds in having the Garie children expelled from school because of their color, while her husband conspires with other white businessmen to agitate against the colored community. They wish to provoke mob violence that will drive out home owners so they can buy up their property at low prices. Stevens is instrumental in saving an Irish ruffian, McCloskey, from suffering the death penalty and employs him to make nightly attacks on homes and property in the colored community. He also orders him to kill Mr. Garie when the time is right.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

Wishing to disguise himself so he can mingle with the lower classes, Mr. Stevens buys a suit of old clothes at a store owned by Kinch's father and accidentally drops a note listing all of the houses to be targeted in the upcoming mob violence. Alerted by the dropped note, Mr. Walters warns the mayor, who refuses to provide protection for houses that are outside his jurisdiction. Mr. Walters decides to take matters into his own hands. The Ellises join him, and they barricade his house and ready it for defense. When they realize that no one has warned the Garies, Mr. Ellis sneaks out to do so.

Mr. Walters and his companions repel the mob. Mr. Ellis, however, is overtaken and chased onto a rooftop. They try to throw him over, but he clings to the edge. One of them strikes his hands with a hatchet, and he falls to the street below. Because they have not been warned, the Garies are unprepared for the violence. Mr. Garie is shot through the head and killed. Mrs. Garie and the children hide in the woodshed. The baby she is carrying is stillborn, and she dies of shock. Little Clarence and Emily are now orphans.

The survivors of this terrible violence must try to rebuild their lives. Impressed with her bravery during the defense of his house, Mr. Walters has fallen in love with Esther Ellis and marries her. Mr. Ellis survives, but his mind is never right again. Charlie returns from the country and, after much difficulty because of his color, is apprenticed to a sympathetic white engraver. Mr. Garie's estate now will go to his next of kin, and it turns out that George Stevens is Mr. Garie's first cousin. In order to avoid suspicion in the death of Mr. Garie, Stevens agrees to provide for his children. Although Mr. Walters argues persuasively against it, Clarence is sent to a white boarding school and told to pass as white. Emily is adopted by the Ellises.

Some years pass, and the children have grown up. Clarence Garie is engaged to be married to a white girl, but his racial identity is revealed by George Stevens's son, and the girl's family breaks it off. Heartbroken, Clarence goes into a decline and dies of consumption. McCloskey, fearing divine judgment, makes a deathbed confession in which it is revealed that George Stevens was the one who killed Mr. Garie. Before a detective can arrest him for murder, Stevens leaps from his balcony, committing suicide. What is left of the Garie estate now goes to Emily Garie.

The remaining characters gather together for the celebration of the marriage of Charles Ellis to Emily Garie. Kinch is to wed Caddy Ellis shortly thereafter. George Winston returns from South America for the grand occasion. At the end of the novel, we are told that Charles and



Emily “were unremitting in their attention to father and mother Ellis, who lived to good old age, surrounded by their children and grandchildren.”<sup>4</sup>

*The Garies and Their Friends* was published in London in the fall of 1857 by George Routledge, the main promoter of American authors to the British public, but the book was not published in the United States until 1969. Although there are no known American reviews, the *New Era* in 1870 described Webb as “author of the somewhat famous book entitled ‘The Garies,’” which had been “extensively read in England and this country.” *Athenaeum* described the book as “interesting, and well written,” and an October review by the *London Daily News* was republished on the front page of *Frederick Douglass’ Paper* in December 1857. London’s *Sunday Times* devoted all but one paragraph of its review to an excerpt from the climactic riot scene in the novel.<sup>5</sup>

In her introduction to the novel, Harriet Beecher Stowe tells us that the book is a “truthfully-told story,” peopled with characters “faithfully drawn from real life”; that the events recounted are “mostly true ones, woven together by a slight web of fiction”; and that the central scenes of mob violence—which occurred in Philadelphia, “years ago, when the first agitation of the slavery question developed an intense form of opposition to the free colored people”—are based in “fact.” Frank J. Webb had stayed with Harriet Beecher Stowe at her home in Andover in August 1855 while she wrote and he edited *The Christian Slave* for his wife, Mary, to perform. Stowe’s insistence on the truthfulness of Webb’s story may have been based upon her personal conversations with him during this visit. There are two prefaces to *The Garies and Their Friends*. After learning that Stowe’s nineteen-year-old son, Henry, had drowned at Dartmouth on July 19, 1857, Lord Henry Brougham also wrote a foreword on Stowe’s behalf. In spite of her grief, Stowe promised to “do what I can with the preface. I would not do as much unless I thought the book of worth *in itself*.” She deemed Webb’s novel important enough that she penned her introduction just four weeks after her son’s death.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 392.

<sup>5</sup> Rosemary Faye Crockett, “*The Garies and Their Friends: A Study of Frank J. Webb and His Novel*” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1998), 207.

<sup>6</sup> Webb, *Garies*, xx, xxi, xvix; Susan Belasco, *Stowe in Her Own Time: A Biographical Chronicle of Her Life, Drawn from Recollections, Interviews, and Memoirs by Family, Friends, and Associates* (Iowa City, 2009), 249; Werner Sollors, ed., *Frank J. Webb: Fiction, Essays, Poetry* (New Milford, CT, 2004), 25–28. Webb’s choice of the fictional name “Ellis” may have been a tip of the hat to Harriet’s husband, Rev. Calvin Ellis Stowe; his minor character, Miss Ellstowe, might also be a conflation of Rev. Stowe’s name.

*James Cathcart Johnston and Edith Wood*

Frank J. Webb privileges the Garies in the title of his novel and opens his story with Clarence Garie and Emily Winston. To see what family might have served as a model for the Garies, we need look no further than Webb’s sister-in-law. Annie Wood Webb (1831–79) has eluded scholars for years, yet her story sheds a brighter light on *The Garies and Their Friends*.<sup>7</sup> Annie came from Hertford, North Carolina, to Philadelphia as a toddler in late 1833 with her mother, Edith Wood (1795–1846), and two older sisters, Caroline and Louisa. The Woods were settled in Philadelphia by Annie’s wealthy, southern planter father, James Cathcart Johnston of Edenton, North Carolina.<sup>8</sup> He had purchased his light-skinned mistress, “Edy,” in the late 1820s and emancipated her and their children in 1832, about the same time that a home was constructed for Edy in Hertford.<sup>9</sup> The eldest sister, Mary Virginia Wood (1815–40), had already been sent to Philadelphia for her education and was comfortably established as a proper young lady within the elite colored society of the

<sup>7</sup> “Pennsylvania, Philadelphia City Death Certificates, 1803–1915,” index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/J6S2-TNR>; accessed May 23, 2013), Annie E. Webb, 1879; C. Peter Ripley, ed., *The Black Abolitionist Papers*, vol. 4 (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991), 183. [Note: the editors have correctly noted Annie Wood’s relationship to Frank J. Webb but this biographical note contains many errors about Annie Wood: the spelling of her last name, middle initial, husband’s death date, residence and dates in Philadelphia, number of children, remarriage, and that she was a teacher until the 1880s.]

<sup>8</sup> James Cathcart Johnston (1782–1865) lived at Hayes Plantation in Chowan County, NC, and had extensive landholdings in Pasquotank, Halifax, and Northampton Counties. He donated anonymously to the American Colonization Society (ACS) in 1841. One of his closest friends, Henry Clay, was not only an ACS founder and secretary of state from 1825 to 1829; he also led the campaign to persuade Congress to appropriate funds for emigration to Liberia. Clay was president of the ACS from 1836 to 1852; his grandson, John Cathcart Johnston Clay, was named after James Cathcart Johnston. William S. Powell, ed., *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 3 (Chapel Hill, NC, 1988), 303–4; The Wood Webb family Bible, which had belonged to Annie Wood Webb, lists her husband, John G. Webb, her mother, sisters, children, sister Mary Wood Forten, niece Charlotte Forten, and nephew Gerritt Smith Forten, Annie Wood Webb Papers, Dr. C. Thomas, private collection; Annie E. Webb to Edward Wood, Dec. 31, 1866, in the Hayes Collection #324, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC; John G. Zehmer Jr., *Hayes: The Plantation, Its People, and Their Papers* (Raleigh, NC, 2007), 55; Eric Brooks, *Ashland: The Henry Clay Estate* (Charleston, SC, 2007), 42.

<sup>9</sup> Will of James Wood, Aug. 8, 1819, proven Feb. 1822, Perquimans County, State of North Carolina, in *Wood Family Records*, comp. Benjamin Granade Koonce Jr. (n.p., n.d); emancipation paper for Eady Wood, Jan. 2, 1832, Annie Wood Webb Papers; John G. Webb to the executors of the James Cathcart Johnston estate, July 22, 1867, Hayes Collection; Dru Gatewood Haley and Raymond A. Winslow Jr., *The Historic Architecture of Perquimans County, North Carolina* (Hertford, NC, 1982), 174.



*Left:* James Cathcart Johnston (1782–1865), ca. 1850, of Edenton, NC, was Annie E. Wood’s father. Courtesy of the State Archives of North Carolina.

*Right:* Annie E. Wood (1831–79), Frank J. Webb’s sister-in-law, in mourning after her mother’s, Edith Wood’s, 1846 death. Courtesy of Dr. C. Thomas.

Fortens, Purvises, Hintons, Casseys, Willsons, Burrs, Douglasses, and others. In December 1833, Mary Virginia Wood signed the charter of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>10</sup> Her friend Frederick A. Hinton, a well-to-do barber and antislavery activist (and former slave from Raleigh, North Carolina), received the rent monies for her mother’s home at 170 Pine Street on behalf of the property’s owner, Sarah Allen, the widow of Bishop Richard Allen of Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church.<sup>11</sup>

In early 1836, the middle Wood sisters died at the ages of eight and nine; later that year, Mary Virginia Wood married Robert B. Forten, the son of wealthy sail maker James Forten.<sup>12</sup> In 1840, Mary Wood Forten

<sup>10</sup> Julie Winch, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten* (New York, 2002), 279–80; Janice Sumler-Lewis, “The Forten-Purvis Women of Philadelphia and the American Anti-Slavery Crusade,” *Journal of Negro History* 66 (1981–82): 283; Julie Winch, “‘You Have Talents—Only Cultivate Them’: Philadelphia’s Black Female Literary Societies and the Abolitionist Crusade,” in *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women’s Political Culture in Antebellum America*, ed. John C. Van Horne and Jean Fagan Yellin (Ithaca, NY, 1994), 116.

<sup>11</sup> Rent receipts for Mrs. E. Wood, 1833–35, Annie Wood Webb Papers.

<sup>12</sup> Wood Webb family Bible, Annie Wood Webb Papers; Winch, *Gentleman of Color*, 280.

died of tuberculosis, leaving behind her only child, three-year-old Charlotte Forten. Charlotte and her young aunt, Annie Wood, were only six years apart and raised together like sisters—first by Edy Wood, until her death in 1846, and then by the Forten/Purvis clan.<sup>13</sup> Annie E. Wood, although well supported by her North Carolina father, did not live with him; she was adopted by Amy Matilda Cassey.<sup>14</sup>

The Johnston family bears more than a passing resemblance to the fictional Garie family. Like Clarence Garie, James Cathcart Johnston had grown uncomfortable as a slaveholder and had moved his mistress and children to Philadelphia in the early 1830s. James C. Johnston descended from North Carolina colonial governors; his closest relative in 1856 (at the time Frank J. Webb probably wrote his book) was a single first cousin. Introducing the Garies, Webb writes that they were “one of the oldest families in Georgia. . . . There now remain of the family but two persons.”<sup>15</sup> Johnston, the son of Governor Samuel Johnston of North Carolina, was the last of his Johnston line. The fictional Clarence, son of old Colonel Garie, is told by his uncle, “When I am gone, you will be the last of our name.” Like Garie, Johnston possessed a vast estate; he was described at his death in 1865 as “one of the wealthiest men in the South.” His property, spanning four counties, was valued at several million dollars and “his immense possessions on the Roanoke river comprise[d] the richest lands in the country.”<sup>16</sup>

Like Clarence Garie, James C. Johnston was advised by a rich, older friend in New York City. Johnston’s New York correspondent, Robert Lenox, was one of the five wealthiest men in the state of New York and had first been a close friend and business associate of Johnston’s father.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> “Pennsylvania, Philadelphia City Death Certificates, 1803–1915,” index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/JDBS-FY4>; accessed May 23, 2013), Edith Wood, 1846; *The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, ed. Brenda Stevenson (New York, 1988), 210; rent receipts, 1836–43 (Robert B. Forten collected board or rent money from Edith Wood beginning the day he married her daughter), Annie Wood Webb Papers; Wood Webb family Bible, Annie Wood Webb Papers; McElroy’s Philadelphia Directory for 1843 (Philadelphia, 1843), 308; *ibid.*, (1844), 52, 104; *ibid.*, (1846), 395.

<sup>14</sup> David Paul Brown to the executors of the James Cathcart Johnston estate, May 30, 1865, and John G. Webb to the executors of the James Cathcart Johnston estate, July 22, 1867, Hayes Collection; Annie Wood’s room and board receipts from Amy Matilda Cassey 1847–50, Annie Wood Webb Papers.

<sup>15</sup> Johnston’s remaining cousin was Margaret Blair Sawyer; Webb, *Garies*, 167.

<sup>16</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 101; “Death of a Wealthy Loyal Citizen,” *Supplement to the [Connecticut] Courant*, June 3, 1864, 87.

<sup>17</sup> Walter Charlton Hartridge, *The Letters of Robert McKay to His Wife: Written from Ports in America and England, 1795–1816* (Athens, GA, 1949), 313; Zehmer, *Hayes*, 2.

Clarence Garie complains that his friend Mr. Priestly—“much immersed in business”—“presumes on his former great intimacy with my father.”<sup>18</sup> The real-life Robert Lenox’s only unmarried daughter, Henrietta A. Lenox, lived in the old Lenox homestead on Fifth Avenue; Mr. Priestly’s fictional daughter, Miss Clara, is “a Fifth Avenue belle” who needs to be married off.<sup>19</sup> The fictional Mr. Priestly is “connected with a society for the deportation of free colored people and thinks they ought to be all sent to Africa, unless they are willing to become the property of some good master.” Lenox, although he cautioned against Liberia and was more sympathetic to Johnston’s desire to emancipate his slaves in 1832, also advised him that “the greatest good you could do is secure them kind masters.” The fictional Clarence Garie, we are told, “had a series of quarrels” with Priestly about slavery and is especially irritated by Priestly’s “mis-statements respecting the free colored people.” Garie argues that they are “much better situated than he [Priestly] describes them to be in New York.” Similarly, James Cathcart Johnston wrote to Robert Lenox in 1828: “We have no apprehension in this country with regard to our slave & colored population. If left to themselves they are contented and, however little it may be believed in the North, I will say happy, and far better off than the poor creatures that are starved to death at looms, or poisoned in the dye kettle, or whose brains are spun out to a simple thread.”<sup>20</sup>

Like Clarence Garie, James C. Johnston considered selling all of his southern property and moving north but, in the end, sold neither his plantations nor slaves. Garie has his doubts about living in Philadelphia:

He had consented to it as an act of justice due to her and the children; there was no pleasure to himself growing out of the intended change, beyond that of gratifying Emily, and securing freedom to her and the children. He knew enough of the North to feel convinced that he could not live there openly with Emily, without being exposed to ill-natured comments, and closing upon himself the doors of many friends who had formerly received him with open arms. The virtuous dignity of the Northerner would be shocked, not so much at his having children by a woman of color, but by his living with her in the midst of them, and acknowledging her as his wife. In the community where he now resided,

<sup>18</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 3.

<sup>19</sup> “Miss Lenox’s Heirs,” *New York Times*, Sept. 14, 1886; Webb, *Garies*, 3.

<sup>20</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 4, 5; Zehmer, *Hayes*, 76, 77.

such things were more common; the only point in which he differed from many other southern gentlemen in this matter was in his constancy to Emily and the children, and the more than ordinary kindness and affection with which he treated them. Mr. Garie had for many years lived a retired life, receiving an occasional gentleman visitor; but this retirement had been entirely voluntary, therefore by no means disagreeable; but in the new home he had accepted he felt that he might be shunned, and the reflection was anything but agreeable. Moreover, he was about to leave a place endeared to him by a thousand associations.<sup>21</sup>

Like his fictional counterpart, James Cathcart Johnston also preferred a private life; he expressed the wish to "live as quiet and retired as I can without getting entangled in its cares & perplexities & strifes." According to his doctor, Johnston was "singularly retiring in his disposition." He enjoyed "the society of a few chosen friends" and lived "almost the life of a recluse."<sup>22</sup> Yet, with three young daughters and a mistress, he did make serious inquiries about moving north. In July 1832, he received the following letter from Robert Lenox:

I wish from my soul you would seriously put in force and without loss of time, the idea you have suggested of parting with your Carolina property of every kind. I could not say there is a moral evil in such properties. As yours are treated their situation cannot be altered for the better, but there is a Spirit abroad in the world which at no distant day will make the property not only insecure but dangerous, and the greatest good you can do them is to secure them kind masters while you have the ability so to do. Were you to set them free tomorrow you could not do them a greater evil and could they be in Liberia tomorrow many of them would perish and starve. I would just add that it will not be long before a sale will probably be impracticable.

As to your removal, I would say, if you can get those of your family whose comfort I know is dear to you to agree to the measure, it will prolong your days and theirs, and if you dislike a City residence, you can be just as retired as you please in the villages in Jersey or Connecticut but no where can a man be more restored than in a large city.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 97.

<sup>22</sup> Zehmer, *Hayes*, 61; Edward Warren, *A Doctor's Experiences in Three Continents* (Baltimore, 1885), 208.

<sup>23</sup> Zehmer, *Hayes*, 77.

Less than two months before slavery would be abolished in the British Empire, James Cathcart Johnston wrote to Robert Lenox: “I have strong thoughts of disposing of all my lands and Slaves in this country if I could vest the proceeds safely and profitably in northern funds which would give me less trouble & anxiety. Indeed from present appearances in England & the feeling in this country, I think the time will soon arrive when slave property will be of little or no value.”<sup>24</sup> Johnston did not sell his Carolina property, but just five months later, Edy Wood and her children were living in Philadelphia.

When James C. Johnston was making the decision to relocate his family to Philadelphia, Edy Wood was pregnant. So is the fictional Emily Winston in *The Garies* when her husband opts to move his family north. These two women—the real and the fictional—were similar in other ways as well. It is possible that even their names were pronounced similarly. Charlotte Forten referred to Edy’s granddaughter, Edith Webb, as “Eddie.”<sup>25</sup> Edy Wood was described at age twenty as having a “very light complexion, modest pretty countenance, red cheeks.” In her emancipation paper, she was said to have a “bright copper complexion” compared to her fair-skinned children.<sup>26</sup> The fictional Emily Winston is described as having a “light brown complexion [through which] the faintest tinge of carmine was visible.”<sup>27</sup>

Emily Winston’s daughter, the fictional Emily Garie, also resembles Edy Wood’s young daughter, Annie Wood. In 1834, shortly after the Woods arrived in Philadelphia, Annie was three years old, and her sisters were seven and eight. When the Garies arrive in Philadelphia, little Em is “small for school” and Clarence is “over nine.” Like the fictional Emily, Annie suffered poor health.<sup>28</sup> Photos of Annie Wood at different stages of her life reveal her resemblance to James Cathcart Johnston, a slight crimp in her hair, and, in one later photograph, strikingly pale eyes. Young

<sup>24</sup> James Cathcart Johnston to Robert Lenox, June 22, 1833, Hayes Collection.

<sup>25</sup> Edith Wood’s name was spelled “Edah,” “Edeah,” “Eady” on various documents. James Wood, Deed of Gift, 1816, and Will of James Wood, Aug. 18, 1819, proven Feb. 1822, Perquimans County, North Carolina, in Koonce, *Wood Family Records; Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, 325.

<sup>26</sup> *North Carolina Minerva and Raleigh Register*, Sept. 9, 1814, in Koonce, *Wood Family Records*; emancipation of Edy Wood, Annie Wood, and Caroline Wood dated Jan. 2, 1832, email from Dr. C. Thomas.

<sup>27</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 275.

<sup>28</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 392; *Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, 381, 443, 503; Dorothy Porter Wesley and Constance Porter Uzelac, *William Cooper Nell: Nineteenth-Century African American Abolitionist, Historian, Integrationist; Selected Writings, 1832–1874* (Baltimore, 2002), 341, 333; Annie E. Webb to Edward Wood, Dec. 31, 1866, Hayes Collection.

Emily Garie, Webb writes, “had the chestnut hair and blue eyes of her father”; as a young woman, her “hair has a slight kink, is a little more wavy than is customary in persons of entire white blood; but in no other way is her extraction perceptible.” By the time the fictional Emily Garie marries, she is a wealthy orphan. Similarly, Annie’s physical and social separation from her father relegated her to near-orphan status, and although she was not wealthy in her own right, she “received very considerable remittances from him.” James Cathcart Johnston had promised Annie Wood “an independence after carefully educating her,” and she had letters to prove that he intended to leave her something in his will.<sup>29</sup> How much Frank J. Webb might have known about Annie’s expected inheritance while he was writing the classic plot device—the missing will and packet of letters—will remain a mystery, but Mr. Balch, the sympathetic fictional white lawyer who handles the Garies’ estate matters, bears some resemblance to Quaker lawyer and abolitionist David Paul Brown, who represented Annie in her claim on the estate of James Cathcart Johnston after his death in 1865.<sup>30</sup>

Other characters in *The Garies* seem to be suggested by real-life counterparts, and it is probably not coincidental that the author (consciously or unconsciously) chose fictional names that sounded like those of his real models. The fictional former slave, George Winston, resembles real former slave Frederick A. Hinton in name, wealth, and gentility as well as in his role as the agent who makes living arrangements in Philadelphia for the Garies. George Winston also mirrors author Joseph Willson, whose mother boarded Edy Wood and her children from the fall of 1835 until October 1836.<sup>31</sup>

### *The Webbs*

In November 1826, Frank J. Webb’s father, Francis, mother, Louisa, brother, John, and sisters, Elizabeth, Ann, and Mary, sailed on the schooner *Cyrus* from Port au Platt, Haiti, to Philadelphia. Baby Mary

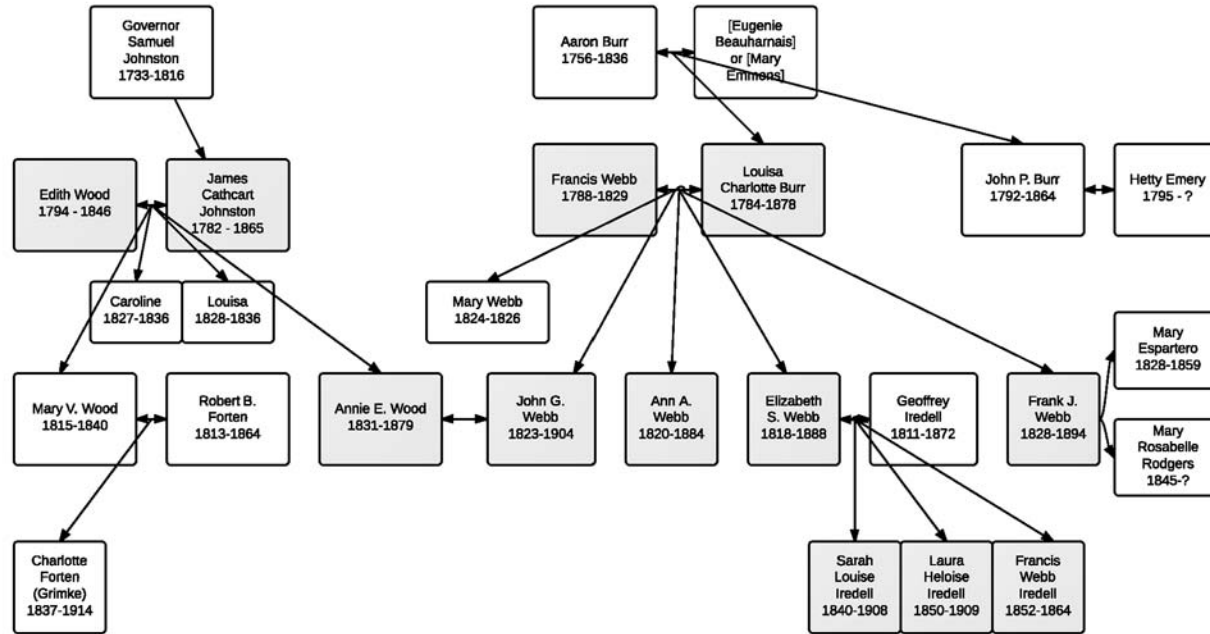
<sup>29</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 2; David Paul Brown to the executors of the James Cathcart Johnston estate, May 30, 1865, John G. Webb to the executors of the James Cathcart Johnston estate, July 22, 1867, and Annie E. Webb to Edward Wood, Dec. 31, 1866, Hayes Collection.

<sup>30</sup> Wood Webb family Bible, Annie Wood Webb Papers; Webb, *Garies*, 228; Zehmer, *Hayes*, 103–15.

<sup>31</sup> Rent receipts, 1835–36, Annie Wood Webb Papers. Joseph Willson published *Sketches of the Higher Classes of Colored Society in Philadelphia* as “A Southerner” in 1841.



### Frank J. Webb Family Chart



Webb Family Chart, compiled by Mary Maillard. Courtesy of Mary Maillard.  
 Shaded boxes indicate people who have fictional counterparts in the novel.

died of “worms” the same day the ship docked.<sup>32</sup> The Webb family numbered among thousands who had returned to the United States in “reverse migration” after the failed two-year colonization enterprise in Haiti. While in Port au Platt, Francis Webb had served as secretary on the Board of Instruction of a joint Episcopal-Presbyterian church school.<sup>33</sup> This role followed naturally from his previous service as an elder in the First African Presbyterian Church, a parishioner at the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, a founding member of the Pennsylvania Augustine Education Society, formed in 1818, and secretary of the Haytien Emigration Society, organized in 1824. Upon his return to Philadelphia, he worked as the Philadelphia distribution agent for *Freedom’s Journal* from 1827 to 1829.<sup>34</sup> His youngest child, Frank, was born sixteen months after the family returned from Haiti. A year later, in July 1829, Francis Webb died of unknown causes; his brother-in-law John Burr paid for his interment.<sup>35</sup>

No marriage record has been found for Frank J. Webb’s parents. His mother was Louisa Burr (1785–1878), the illegitimate daughter of former US vice president Aaron Burr and sister of John Pierre Burr, a prominent activist in Philadelphia’s black community. The papers of Louisa Burr Webb’s granddaughter—held in the Christian Fleetwood Papers at the Library of Congress—include photographs identifying John Pierre Burr’s daughter and granddaughters as maternal cousins and giving Louisa’s maiden name as Burr. Correspondence from other members of the John Pierre Burr family and the inclusion of a biographical sketch of Aaron Burr among these family papers further confirm the bond between Louisa and John Pierre Burr.<sup>36</sup> Louisa Burr Webb worked most of her life for

<sup>32</sup> “Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Passenger Lists, 1800–1882,” index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.1.1/K8C9-J4D>; accessed May 23, 2013), Mary Webb, 1826; “Pennsylvania Philadelphia City Death Certificates, 1803–1915,” index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.1.1/JFRR-XX4>; accessed May 23, 2013), Mary Webb, 1826.

<sup>33</sup> “To the Corresponding Secretary, Port au Platt, January 25, January 29, 1825,” *American Sunday School Magazine* 2 (1825): 94; Leslie M. Alexander and Walter C. Rucker, eds., *Encyclopedia of African American History*, vol. 1 (Santa Barbara, CA, 2010), 376; Sarah Connors Fanning, *Haiti and the U.S.: African American Emigration and the Recognition Debate* (Austin, TX, 2008), 172; Beverly C. Tomek, *Colonization and Its Discontents: Emancipation, Emigration, and Antislavery in Antebellum Pennsylvania* (New York, 2011), 150–53.

<sup>34</sup> Eric Ledell Smith and Joe William Trotter Jr., *African Americans in Pennsylvania: Shifting Historical Perspectives* (University Park, PA, 1997), 118.

<sup>35</sup> Vestry minutes, 1821–31, African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, Philadelphia, PA, 213.

<sup>36</sup> Photographs of Ellen Burr (Burrell), Helen Burrell, and Evelyn Durham (Shaw); David E. Gordon to Edith Fleetwood, Oct. 5, 1914, reel 1; both in Christian A. Fleetwood Papers, Manuscript

Mrs. Elizabeth Powel Francis Fisher, a prominent Philadelphia society matron closely connected to the oldest Philadelphia families: Francis, Willing, Shippen, Coxe, and Burd. As a girl, Louisa worked for Mrs. Fisher's sister, Sophia Francis Harrison, and when Rickett's Circus caught fire in 1799, the fifteen year old and her mistress saved the Harrison mansion with soaked blankets and carpets.<sup>37</sup> Louisa was nurse to Mrs. Fisher's only child, Joshua Francis Fisher (1807–73), who bonded with Louisa and did not, at a young age, show any "partiality" for his own mother.<sup>38</sup> After Fisher's marriage in 1839, Louisa helped to raise his young family. She relinquished her position as the children's nurse in 1848 to Mrs. Sarah Putnam but remained a valued part of the Fisher household for most of her life while maintaining her own family household.<sup>39</sup> Louisa Burr Webb had, by this time, married John Darius following Francis Webb's death; she used the name Darius interchangeably with "Derry." Her grandchildren were very much part of her life; Edith and Eugenie Webb visited often while attending school in Philadelphia in the early 1870s.<sup>40</sup> When Mrs. Fisher died in 1855, she bequeathed Louisa \$100 and half her wardrobe. Joshua Francis Fisher continued to maintain Louisa with allowances and monetary gifts (and, on one occasion, jewelry) for the rest of his life, and his will directed his heirs to pay her an annuity of \$150 and to give her a "respectable" funeral.<sup>41</sup> Before leaving

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Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Sarah Iredell Fleetwood's scrapbook includes clippings of Frank J. Webb's poems "Waiting" and "None Spoke a Single Word" (published in 1870 in the *New Era*), an 1875 article entitled "Aaron Burr's True Character," Robert Douglass Jr.'s 1844 "Monody on the Death of Francis Johnson" (reprinted in 1875), and a photograph of Frank Webb's brother, John G. Webb.

<sup>37</sup> *Recollections of Joshua Francis Fisher, Written in 1864*, arr. Sophia Cadwalader (Boston, 1929), 191–92.

<sup>38</sup> [Mrs. Francis] to Sophia Harrison, Oct. 18, 1808, box 1, folder 7, Dr. and Mrs. Henry Drinker Collection (Coll. 3125), Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>39</sup> Joshua Francis Fisher diary, Sept. 26, 1848, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; 1850 US Census, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, reel M432\_812, 109B; 1860 US Census, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, reel M653\_1158, 131; 1870 US Census, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Ward 8 Dist. 22 (2nd Enum.), reel M593\_1421, 191A.

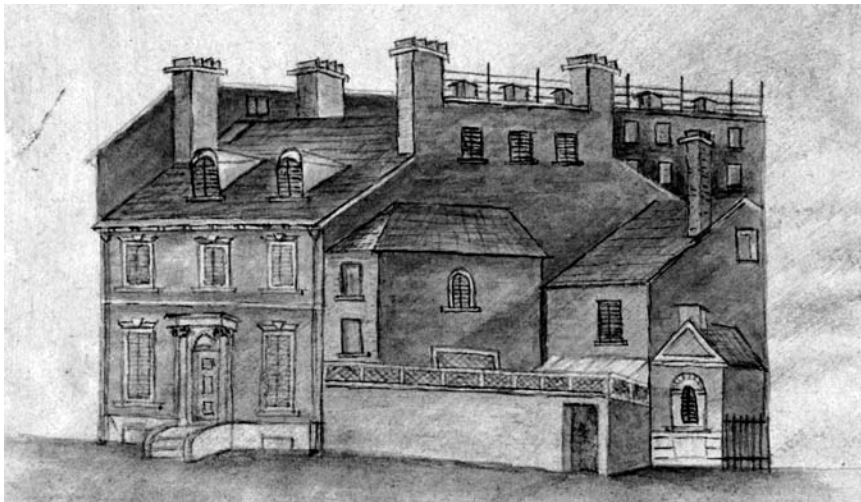
<sup>40</sup> Annie Wood Webb to Genie Webb, [Oct. 1873], and Edith Webb to Genie Webb, Oct. 1, 1873, Annie Wood Webb Papers.

<sup>41</sup> Eliza Cope Harrison, ed., *Best Companions: Letters of Eliza Middleton Fisher and Her Mother, Mary Hering Middleton, from Charleston, Philadelphia, and Newport, 1839–1846* (Columbia, SC, 2001), 254; J. Warner Erwin to Joshua Francis Fisher, Nov. 3, 1856, Mar. 23, 1857, Jan. 19, 1858, Feb. 2, 1858, and "Sundry payments to be made during my absence," Joshua Francis Fisher to manager, undated, 1856–58, box 2, folder 8, Dr. and Mrs. Henry Drinker Collection; Joshua Francis Fisher will, n.d., series 9, box 552, folder 4, Cadwalader Family Papers (Coll. 1454), Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



Joshua Francis Fisher (1807–73) supported Frank J. Webb’s mother, Louisa Burr, throughout her long life. Historical Society Portrait Collection.

Frank J. Webb’s mother, Louisa Burr, first worked as a girl in the George Harrison (below) home at 156 Chestnut Street. Joshua Francis Fisher wrote, “My Uncle’s house, my dear old home, the Paradise of my childhood, as old Louisa, my nurse, called it, was when he purchased it, the most western private residence on Chestnut Street, or any other.” Joshua Francis Fisher, *Recollections*, 191. Image courtesy of The Library Company of Philadelphia.



on an extended European tour in 1856, Fisher instructed his business manager:

please keep a watchful eye on her & see her constantly—If she is sick she must have the best physician and Nurses. . . . She must have good nurses Send for Delia Dickerson who was with her last summer. She is very intelligent & trustworthy—& a friend of Louisa. . . . If Louisa should die—she must have all her funeral expenses paid—and have it conducted from my house without foolish extravagance and in such a way as is suited to her state or a little above it.<sup>42</sup>

Louisa died at the age of ninety-four—attended by the Fishers' doctor and kinsman, Dr. Wharton Sinkler—and was buried as a “Lady.”<sup>43</sup> The Fisher family's benevolence continued into the third generation when in 1897 Joshua Francis Fisher's son and daughters advanced money to Eugenie Webb to help her establish a small business selling jams and preserves.<sup>44</sup>

When Joshua Francis Fisher worried about Louisa becoming ill, he wrote, “I would not rely on Louisas children. Her son John is, I think, trustworthy but he is generally away.” All of Louisa's children were “away” in one way or another. Ann Webb was sickly, and when she died, a family friend commented: “there can be no sorrow that her life has ended since she suffered much and neither gave or accepted comfort and happiness.”<sup>45</sup> Frank was about to embark for Europe, and the eldest, Elizabeth, had recently returned to Philadelphia after living in Missouri for fifteen years. Elizabeth Susan Webb (1818–88) had trained as a dressmaker, operated her own shop in Currant Alley in 1838, and appears to have been well educated.<sup>46</sup> She contributed a page and a half of rhyming couplets—signed E. S. Webb—to the friendship album of Mary Anne Dickerson, a

<sup>42</sup> Joshua Francis Fisher to [John] Cadwalader, [1856], box 1, folder 5, Dr. and Mrs. Henry Drinker Collection.

<sup>43</sup> Date of death of Louisa Burr Darius, Aug. 16, 1878, [written on verso of photograph of Elizabeth Iredell], Christian A. Fleetwood Papers; “Pennsylvania, Philadelphia City Death Certificates, 1803–1915,” index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/J61W-TXN>; accessed May 23, 2013), Louisa Derry, 1878.

<sup>44</sup> George Harrison Fisher to Eugenie Webb, June 30, 1897, Annie Wood Webb Papers.

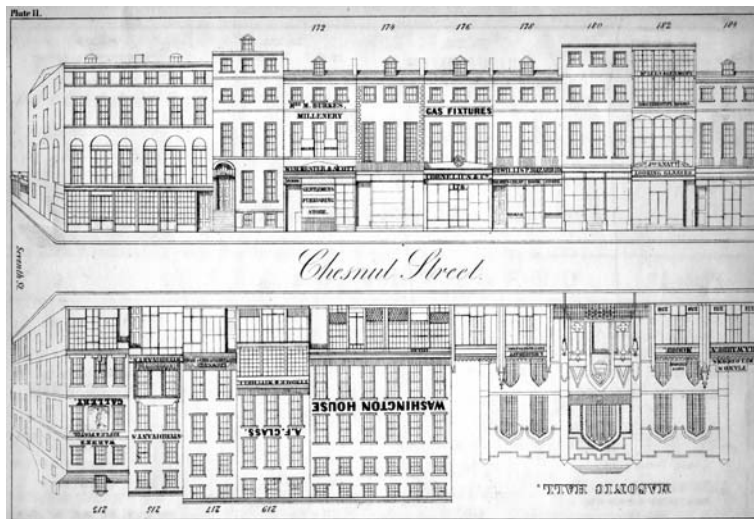
<sup>45</sup> Lulu to Eugenie Webb, Sept. 7, 1884, Annie Wood Webb Papers.

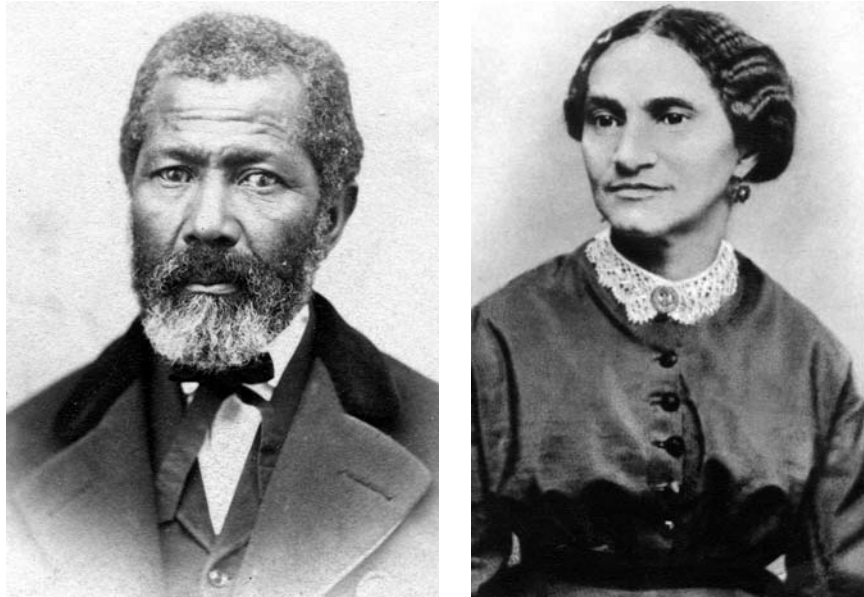
<sup>46</sup> “District of Columbia Deaths and Burials, 1840–1964,” index, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/F7RC-YLN>; accessed May 23, 2013), Elizabeth Susan Iredell, July 22, 1888. Elizabeth was known as “Bess” to her relatives; *Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, 352.



(Above, left) Mrs. Elizabeth “Betsy” Powel Francis Fisher (1777–1855) employed Frank J. Webb’s mother, Louisa Burr (1784–1878), as nurse to her only child, Joshua Francis Fisher, who, in turn, employed Louisa to care for his children. Painted by George Lethbridge Saunders, 1840. Courtesy of Nancy Aub Gleason.

Louisa Burr Webb worked for decades in Mrs. Fisher’s 170 Chestnut Street home (below) and, after her death, in the 919 Walnut Street city home (above, right) of her son, Joshua Francis Fisher. Both images courtesy of The Library Company of Philadelphia.





*Left:* Geoffrey G. Iredell (1811–72) married Elizabeth Webb in late 1838, and shortly afterward they moved to St. Louis, Missouri.

*Right:* Elizabeth Webb Iredell (1818–88), Frank J. Webb’s older sister.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Christian A. Fleetwood Papers.

student at Sarah M. Douglass’s school in Philadelphia. Her “Lines Addressed to a Wreath of Flowers, Designed as A Present for Mary Ann,” reflect her careful education and may have been part of a school farewell or debut. By 1839, she had married hairdresser Geoffrey George Iredell of Edenton, North Carolina, and moved to St. Louis, Missouri. There Geoffrey operated a barber shop, and, later, an elegant gentlemen’s shop and steam bath business.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup> The poem was inscribed between 1834, when the album was begun, and November 8, 1838, when Elizabeth Webb married Geoffrey Iredell and moved to Missouri. Mary Anne Dickerson album, Library Company of Philadelphia; Edward C. Wilkinson, “Report of the Trial of William Darnes, *Trial of Judge Wilkinson, Dr. Wilkinson, and Mr. Murdaugh, on Indictment for the Murder of John Rothwell and Alexander H. Meeks* . . . (St. Louis, MO, 1839), 25, 67; copy of Blair Iredell family Bible record, which originally belonged to Geoffrey G. Iredell Sr. and lists his wife, children, and some grandchildren, Dr. Raymond L. Hayes, private collection; age and date of death recorded on photograph of Geoffrey G. Iredell, Christian A. Fleetwood Papers; Julie Winch, *The Clamorgans: One Family’s History of Race in America* (New York, 2011), 140–42, 154, 360; *The Present State and Condition of the Free People of Color, of the City of Philadelphia and Adjoining Districts* . . . (Philadelphia, 1838); Archives, African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, Philadelphia.

How Elizabeth Webb met Geoffrey Iredell in Philadelphia and why he left North Carolina are not known, but we have several clues. His father had died in Edenton on January 30, 1837, perhaps allowing Geoffrey the means to set up his own barbering business in Philadelphia across the street from the shop and home of retired wigmaker, hairdresser, and perfumer Joseph Cassey.<sup>48</sup> Geoffrey Iredell had almost certainly known Edy Wood during his childhood in Edenton, since she had worked just twelve miles away at Captain Wood’s Eagle Inn and Tavern and was “well known by many gentlemen both in the Northern and Southern States.”<sup>49</sup> Likewise, Geoffrey Iredell could not have lived in Edenton without also knowing James Cathcart Johnston well; both Geoffrey’s father and grandfather had continued to work for Johnston’s family after their emancipation.<sup>50</sup> It is entirely possible, then, that James Iredell Jr., James Cathcart Johnston, or Edy Wood had encouraged Geoffrey to move to Philadelphia. Geoffrey was on friendly enough terms with another wealthy Edenton planter—Josiah Collins III—that in 1859 he sent money via Collins from New Orleans to be given to his sister.<sup>51</sup>

Elizabeth Webb and Geoffrey Iredell had three children in St. Louis: a daughter, Sarah, in 1841; another daughter, Laura, about 1850; and a son, Francis Webb Iredell—named after his uncle and grandfather—in 1852. After little Frank’s birth, the Iredell family relocated to Philadelphia and shared a house for over a decade with brother John G.

<sup>48</sup> Joseph Cassey appears to have retired in 1836 when his shop at 36 South Fourth was taken over by the Chew brothers. In 1837 Geoffrey Iredell’s barber shop, Bonner & Iredell, was located at 33 South Fourth Street. *McElroy’s Philadelphia Directory* (1837), 20.

<sup>49</sup> *North Carolina Minerva and Raleigh Register*, Sept. 9, 1814, in Koonce, *Wood Family Records*.

<sup>50</sup> Johnston’s first cousin, Governor James Iredell Jr., emancipated Geoffrey G. Iredell Sr. (formerly Geoffrey G. Blair) in 1812. Johnston’s uncle, Chief Justice James Iredell, emancipated Peter (father of Geoffrey G. Iredell Sr.), who was living in Philadelphia by 1794. William L. Byrd III, *In Full Force and Virtue: North Carolina Emancipation Records, 1713–1860* (Westminster, MD, 2007), 20–21; “Edenton’s Iredell Family and the War of 1812,” North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/iredell/war1812.pdf>, accessed Aug. 31, 2012; “North Carolina, Estate Files, 1663–1979,” index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/VX9F-KCT>; accessed June 18, 2013), Jeffrey G. Iredell, 1837; Griffith J. McRee, *Life and Correspondence of James Iredell: One of the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States*, vol. 2, (New York, 1858), 426; John C. Sykes, “Iredell Research Report” (research report, NC Dept. of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, Historic Sites Division, June 1992), 37–39.

<sup>51</sup> John C. Sykes, “The Lake Chapel at Somerset Place” (research report, NC Dept. of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, Historic Sites Division, Apr. 1999).



Webb's family and their unmarried sister, Ann.<sup>52</sup> That busy household could well have been the scene of many family gatherings at which Frank heard the prototypes of the stories he used in his fiction. The fictional George Winston knew his cousin Emily Winston and Mr. Ellis in Georgia; the factual Geoffrey G. Iredell knew James Cathcart Johnston and Edy Wood in North Carolina. As Frank Webb's brother-in-law, no one was in a better position than Geoffrey Iredell to give the city-born author authentic details about southern plantation life.

Frank Webb would also have been exposed to southerners and their way of life through his mother's employer, Mrs. Fisher. It is likely that the author used his intimate knowledge of the Fishers to write his comic and affectionate portrait of Ellen Ellis's employer, Mrs. Thomas. Like Mrs. Thomas, Mrs. Fisher not only lived on fashionable Chestnut Street but had an only child who had inherited wealth from a grandfather and married into a wealthy (or once-wealthy) South Carolina family with ties to English nobility.<sup>53</sup> Typical of Frank J. Webb's naming practices, the real and the fictional South Carolina family names have a similar ring: Middleton and Morton. Like the fictional Mrs. Thomas, Mrs. Fisher retained firm control of the household after her child's marriage; her daughter-in-law, Eliza Middleton Fisher, tactfully agreed that it was "more comfortable with Mother at the head of the establishment." Mrs. Thomas, obsessive and domineering, is described prowling around her house, duster in hand, "to see that everything was being properly conducted, and that no mal-practices were perpetrated."<sup>54</sup>

Mrs. Fisher, like her fictional counterpart, was high-strung and nervous and required constant mollifying. She did not have broad interests or more than a standard education. In fact, Webb pokes fun at Mrs. Thomas when he describes her smiling, uncomprehending, at the "villanous French" spoken at her table. Like Mrs. Thomas, the real-life Mrs. Fisher gave excessive dinner parties from which it took days to recover. Eliza Middleton Fisher wrote of "dreading the effects of so much dissipation"

<sup>52</sup> Christian A. Fleetwood Papers; US Census, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Ward 2, reel M653-1152, 296; *McElroy's Philadelphia Directory*, 1856, 1858, 1859, 1860; "Pennsylvania, Philadelphia City Death Certificates, 1803-1915," index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/JDKC-698>; accessed May 24, 2013), Francis Webb Tredell, 1864; 1870 US Census, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Ward 2, Dist. 7, reel M593\_1388, 345A.

<sup>53</sup> Harrison, *Best Companions*, xl-xlii; Webb, *Garies*, 24.

<sup>54</sup> Harrison, *Best Companions*, 20; Webb, *Garies*, 74.

night after night. The fictional Mrs. Thomas continues with party after party, “although the late hours and fatigue consequent thereon would place her on the sick-list for several days afterwards.”<sup>55</sup>

In the Fisher house, as in the fictional Thomas’s, after the children arrived in quick succession, more than one nurse was required. Mrs. Thomas wails about the cost of “so many nurses—and then we have to keep four horses—and its company, company from Monday morning until Saturday night.” Eliza Middleton Fisher disliked having four horses too, but for different reasons. One day, while Frank Webb’s mother held a sleeping Lily Fisher in her arms, the lead horses bolted. From that point on, Eliza decided against “taking the children again when the four horses are in the carriage.” Just as Caddy and Mrs. Ellis take their sewing “home” to Mrs. Thomas in *The Garies*, so Ann Webb worked with her mother in the Fisher household. Like the ill-tempered Caddy, who angrily wishes “there were no white folks,” Ann had a difficult “manner and temper,” according to Eliza Middleton Fisher, until she had “companions of her own colour.” How much time Frank Webb might have spent in the Fisher home is not known, but he may be the same Frank who had an occasional “romp” in the nursery with the Fisher children.<sup>56</sup>

The fictional Mrs. Thomas, like the real-life Mrs. Fisher, receives financial help from her sister. Mrs. Fisher’s sister, Sophie, and her husband, the wealthy wine merchant George Harrison, had no children of their own and provided generously for the Fishers, including buying them their Chestnut Street home and bequeathing their fortune to Joshua Francis Fisher. The fictional Mrs. Thomas, we are told, “whined and groaned as if she had not at that moment an income of clear fifteen thousand dollars a year, and a sister who might die any day and leave her half as much more.”<sup>57</sup>

One of the more comic scenes in the *Garies* revolves around Mrs. Thomas’s decree that she will only receive visitors one day a week:

Amongst the other fashions she had adopted, was that of setting apart one morning of the week for the reception of visitors; and she had mortally offended several of her oldest friends by obstinately refusing to admit

<sup>55</sup> Harrison, *Best Companions*, 82; Webb, *Garies*, 73.

<sup>56</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 24; Harrison, *Best Companions*, 262, 146, 316.

<sup>57</sup> Harrison, *Best Companions*, viii, 14, 19–20, 44, 82, 287–88, 466, 234, 26, 261–62; Anne, 146, 165, 189, 240, 244, 247, 248, 401; Frank, 316; Louisa, 253–55, 261, 466, 502; Webb, *Garies*, 23–24, 74, 73, 300.

them at any other time. Two or three difficulties had occurred with Robberts, in consequence of this new arrangement, as he could not be brought to see the propriety of saying to visitors that Mrs. Thomas was “not at home” when he knew she was at that very moment upstairs peeping over the bannisters.<sup>58</sup>

Mrs. Thomas then tries to train Charlie “so as to fit him for the important office of uttering the fashionable and truthless ‘not at home’ with unhesitating gravity and decorum.” The real-life Mrs. Fisher also reserved a day to receive friends: “Mrs Fisher’s Sunday,” it was called. She was strict about enforcing “at home” hours, and her daughter-in-law, Eliza, complained bitterly about the rules when one good friend was refused on a Wednesday morning because Eliza was supposedly not “at home” until the evening. Eliza Middleton Fisher gratefully accepted those visits from the “privileged few who are not turned away, when I am really at home.”<sup>59</sup>

While Eliza Middleton and Joshua Francis Fisher were starting their family and employing Louisa Webb as their senior nurse of several, Frank Webb was twelve to fourteen years old—the same age as Charlie Ellis in the novel. He was not only old enough to observe the goings-on in the Fisher household, but he was also school-aged. Nothing is known about Frank J. Webb’s education other than what can be deduced by his later creative output. In the novel, Mrs. Bird, who is interested in the education of children and visits schools as an examiner, offers to take Charlie to her country house in Weymouth while he recuperates from his broken arm. While there, she attempts to have Charlie enrolled in the boys’ academy, and she introduces him to her artist friend who discovers Charlie’s sketching talent. In a touching scene, Charlie asks Mrs. Bird “Did you ever have any little boys of your own?” Webb writes, “A change immediately came over the countenance of Mrs. Bird, as she replied: ‘Oh, yes, Charlie; a sweet, good boy about your own age.’” She then tells Charlie that he died years before on a voyage to England.<sup>60</sup> A real-life counterpart to Mrs. Bird can be found in Mrs. Fisher’s neighbor, the wife of her first cousin, Edward Shippen Burd. This Mrs. Burd was not only interested in education and a benefactor of children (she founded the Burd Orphans’ Asylum for Girls) but was a well-known folk artist of

<sup>58</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 74.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 74; Harrison, *Best Companions*, 43, 45, 48, 166.

<sup>60</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 262, 147.

watercolor scenes during the 1840s and a patron of artist Rembrandt Peale. Her only son died in Paris in 1837 when he was fifteen years old.<sup>61</sup>

The Fishers were known in aristocratic circles from Philadelphia to Boston to Newport to Charleston. If contemporary readers recognized old Mrs. Fisher in the character of Mrs. Thomas (she had just died in 1855), they would also have noticed that Joshua Francis Fisher, like Mr. Morton, speculated in real estate, had the power to influence politics, and held typically northern racist views. Harriet Beecher Stowe had asked in the preface to *The Garies*: “Are the race at present held as slaves capable of freedom, self-government, and progress?” Joshua Francis Fisher inadvertently responded in a pamphlet just three years later: “We are here with an inferior race, not fit to share in the management of our institutions—whom we will protect in their place—but that place is not one of equality with us either socially or politically.” Fisher believed that nine out of ten of his fellow countrymen would agree with him, and he added that he was “glad to find these are the sentiments of our President elect [Lincoln], pronounced with the bold and honest frankness which characterizes all his declarations.”<sup>62</sup> His cousin, Sidney George Fisher, wrote:

These are the opinions of the great majority of the people, to whatever party they may belong. It is impossible for them to have any other opinions.

There are in the North some abolitionists, carried away by the enthusiasm of a dominating idea, who dream of emancipation; and there are also some slavery propagandists, who have not yet escaped the influence of party passion and discipline, but every indication of popular feeling, shows that the great masses of the North will obey the instincts of their race, maintain its supremacy and dominion over the negro, and keep liberty and

<sup>61</sup> Finding aid, Edward Shippen Burd Papers, Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA, [http://archives.dickinson.edu/sites/all/files/files\\_collection/mc1999.10.pdf](http://archives.dickinson.edu/sites/all/files/files_collection/mc1999.10.pdf); Portrait of Edward Shippen Burd of Philadelphia, ca. 1806–8, by Rembrandt Peale, Smithsonian American Art Museum, <http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=19318>; Henry Graham Ashmead, *History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1884), 537; Birth record Woodrop Sims Burd, Church of the Transfiguration, Philadelphia, “Baptisms, Communion, Families, Marriages and Burials, 1803–1919,” microfilm, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, also in Ancestry.com, *Pennsylvania, Church and Town Records* [database online] (Provo, UT, 2011); Death record Woodrop Sims Burd, “England and Wales, Non-Conformist Record Indexes (RG4-8), index, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.1.1/F3TT-R93>: accessed May 24, 2013), Woodrop Sims Burd, May 13, 1837; Reburial of Woodrop Sims Burd, “Pennsylvania, Philadelphia City Death Certificates, 1803–1915,” index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.1.1/J6F8-D4H>: accessed May 24, 2013, Woodruff Sims Burd, 1851.

<sup>62</sup> Webb, *Garies*, xix; Joshua Francis Fisher, *Concessions and Compromises* (Philadelphia, 1860), 5.

land, and wealth and power for themselves, exclusively, whether in the North or the South.<sup>63</sup>

Fisher's succinct statement of white supremacy explains what drives all of the events in Frank J. Webb's novel. The question of why *The Garies and Their Friends* was not published or reviewed in the United States might be attributed to the fact that, for most American publishers and readers, a literary work written by an African American was, by definition, impossible. It simply could not exist.

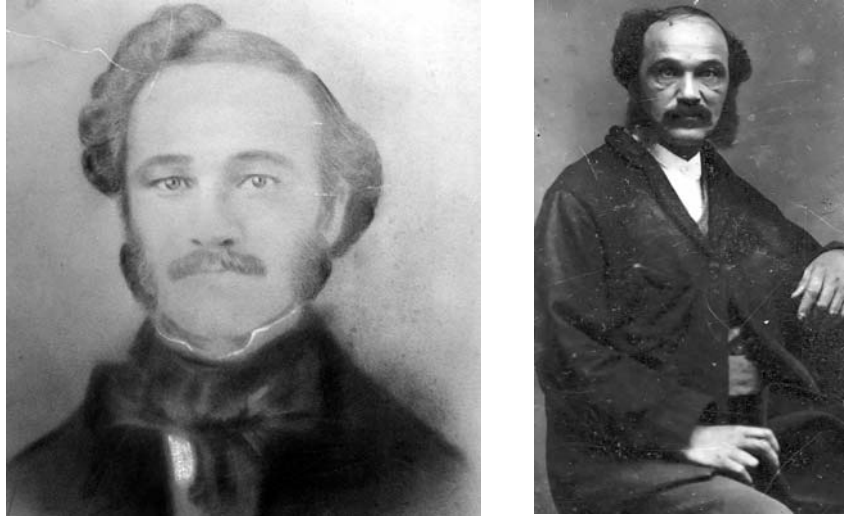
Just as the Ellises in *The Garies* knew Mr. Walters well, so the Webbs were longtime friends of the entrepreneurial Cassey family. Joseph Cassey—financier, landlord, educator, and activist as well as barber, wig-maker, and perfumer—served with Francis Webb in the Augustine Society and the Haytien Emigration Society. Like Walters, he was a Philadelphia agent for an antislavery newspaper.<sup>64</sup> After Francis Webb's death, his children continued their close family ties with the Casseys. Frank Webb's second sister, Ann (1820–84), did not marry and, at the age of thirty, lived with Joseph's widow, Amy Matilda Cassey.<sup>65</sup> In 1852, Frank's brother, John Gloucester Webb (1823–1904), worked as a barber in San Francisco alongside Joseph C. Smith, the son-in-law of Amy Matilda Cassey and husband of her only daughter, Sarah Cassey.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Sidney George Fisher, *The Laws of Race, as Connected with Slavery* (Philadelphia, 1860), 24.

<sup>64</sup> Dorothy Porter, *Early Negro Writing 1760–1837* (Baltimore, 1995), 95; *The Elite of Our People: Joseph Willson's Sketches of Black Upper-Class Life in Antebellum Philadelphia*, ed. Julie Winch (University Park, PA, 2000), 162–63; Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *A Fragile Freedom: African American Women and Emancipation in the Antebellum City* (New Haven, CT, 2008), 145–46.

<sup>65</sup> “New Jersey Deaths and Burials, 1720–1988,” index, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/FZ6J-9V8>; accessed May 24, 2013), Ann A. Webb, 1820, citing reference vol. 16, p. 117, FHL microfilm 589837; 1880 US Census, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, reel 1170, 123B. Ann Webb lists her age as twenty-six in the 1850 census, but other records confirm that she was born in 1820. 1850 US Census, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, New Market Ward, reel M432\_817, 400B.

<sup>66</sup> “Pennsylvania, Philadelphia City Death Certificates, 1803–1915,” index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/J63T-B7S>; accessed May 24, 2013), John Webb, 1904; Wood Webb family Bible, Annie Wood Webb Papers; 1870 US Census, Erie, Pennsylvania, Corry Ward I, reel M5931339, 169B; 1870 US Census, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Ward 26, Precinct 9 (2nd Enum.), reel M5931442, 325A; 1900 US Census, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Ward 30, reel 1472, 3B. John G. Webb alternated residence between Philadelphia and his properties in New Jersey and Corry, Pennsylvania. He was probably named after John Gloucester, the founder of the First African Presbyterian Church, where his father served on the vestry. Gloucester died several months before John G. Webb was born. 1852 California State Census, San Francisco, California, 352A; Wesley and Uzelac, *William Cooper Nell*, 341. Joseph Cassey's son, Peter Williams Cassey (1831–1917), also worked as a barber in San Francisco in 1852–53. Eric Gardner, *Jennie Carter: A Black Journalist of the Early West* (Jackson, MS, 2007), 40n3.



*Left:* John G. Webb (1823–1904), Frank J. Webb’s older brother, married Annie E. Wood in 1854.

*Right:* John G. Webb worked during the 1860s as a barber in Philadelphia and operated a farm in New Jersey.

Courtesy of Dr. C. Thomas.

The Webbs’ connection to the Casseys adds another dimension to our understanding of the relationship between the Ellises and Mr. Walters in *The Garies*. Frank’s brother, John G. Webb, returned from California in February 1854 and went directly to the Charles Lenox Remond home in Salem, Massachusetts, to court his childhood sweetheart, Annie E. Wood—the adopted daughter of Amy Matilda Cassey. Amy Matilda had married Remond in September 1850 and moved to Salem with the younger three of the six Cassey children. One of the older Cassey children, Alfred, was hopelessly in love with Annie Wood and had proposed to her in 1851.<sup>67</sup> Abolitionist William Cooper Nell also had a crush on Annie Wood, but after realizing that “Mr Webb just from California and herself have fanned the embers of an early affection into a blaze,” he told himself, “If you have tears prepare to shed them now.”<sup>68</sup> Nell, also a friend

<sup>67</sup> Alfred S. Cassey to Annie E. Wood, Aug. 2, 1851, Annie Wood Webb Papers.

<sup>68</sup> Wesley and Uzelac, *William Cooper Nell*, 378. On August 22, 1852, William Cooper Nell visited Charles Lenox Remond “and his excellent Lady Amy Matilda = her Daughters Mrs. Smith and Miss Annie E. Wood.” *Ibid.*, 307, 341, 374, 378, 380; Pennsylvania Supreme Court, *Pennsylvania State Reports*, vol. 38 (Philadelphia, 1861), 227; “Massachusetts, Marriages, 1841–1915,” index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/N4MP-G8L>; accessed May 24, 2013), John G. Webb and Annie E. Webb, 1854.

of Frank J. Webb's, witnessed the marriage on April 19, 1854, officiated by Rev. Octavius B. Frothingham in the Remond home. He remembered a "happy time at the Wedding."<sup>69</sup>

Much has been written about the Ellis wedding supper, described in lush detail in *The Garies*, but it is worthwhile savoring it again here, keeping in mind that the Remond family—who most certainly catered the Webb affair—were renowned throughout New England for their restaurant, bakery, and confectionary enterprises.<sup>70</sup> Charles Lenox Remond's parents and his brother ran successful restaurant businesses in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Charles is listed as a restaurateur in the 1855 Massachusetts census; his father was a retailer of fine wines; his mother, Nancy, and sister Susan were fancy pastry cooks and candymakers; and his sister Nancy was married to an oyster dealer.<sup>71</sup> Compare the scene in *The Garies*:

Then there were the oysters in every variety—silver dishes containing them stewed, their fragrant macey odour wafting itself upward, and causing watery sensations about the mouth. Waiters were constantly rushing into the room, bringing dishes of them fried so richly brown, so smoking hot, that no man with a heart in his bosom could possibly refuse them. Then there were glasses of them pickled, with little black spots of allspice floating on the pearly liquid that contained them. And lastly, oysters broiled, whose delicious flavour exceeds my powers of description—these, with ham and tongue, were the solid comforts. There were other things, however, to which one could turn when the appetite grew more dainty; there were jellies, blancmange, chocolate cream, biscuit glace, peach ice, vanilla ice, orange-water ice, brandy peaches, preserved strawberries and

<sup>69</sup> Amber D. Moulton, ed., "'Times Change': Frank J. Webb Addresses Robert Morris on the Promise of Reconstruction," *New England Quarterly* 85 (2012): 140–41; Wesley and Uzelac, *William Cooper Nell*, 403.

<sup>70</sup> Samuel Otter, *Philadelphia Stories: America's Literature of Race and Freedom* (New York, 2010), 252–65; Robert S. Levine, "Disturbing Boundaries: Temperance, Black Elevation, and Violence in Frank J. Webb's *The Garies and Their Friends*," *Prospects* 19 (1994): 366–67.

<sup>71</sup> "Massachusetts, State Census, 1855," index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/MQHM-697>; accessed May 24, 2013), Charles Remond, 1855; Juliet E. K. Walker, *The History of Black Business in America: Capitalism, Race, Entrepreneurship*, vol. 1, *To 1865* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2009), 175; *Black Entrepreneurs of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century*, exhibition, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and Museum of African American History Boston and Nantucket, Massachusetts, 2009–10, <http://www.economicadventure.org/exhibits/black-entrepreneurs/brochure.pdf> (accessed Apr. 2, 2012).

pinces; not to say a word of towers of candy, bonbons, kisses, champagne, Rhine wine, sparkling Catawba, liquors, and a man on the corner making sherry cobblers of wondrous flavour.

The guests enjoy the Ellis wedding party—"What a happy time they had!"—as William Cooper Nell had enjoyed the Webbs'.<sup>72</sup>

In the weeks before the wedding, however, neither John Webb nor Annie Wood was happy. Webb's "family discord," particularly between John and his mother, left him "dull and melancholy." John did not want to give up his "restless" and "wandering" ways, despite Annie's request that he "try to be settled and not float about the world as you have done." He wanted to return to the California goldfields or go to Australia. Annie responded, "I would rather go to Australia with you than remain with your sister [in-law] Mary or any body else. Tell your Brother Frank I am truly grateful for his offer but decline accepting it unless you earnestly wish me to do so." In the end, Annie persuaded John to stay and thanked him for the sacrifice: "I love you more than ever for this as it proves to me that your dear mind is not entirely set upon gain and gold."<sup>73</sup> The newlyweds returned to Philadelphia, and Annie's niece, Charlotte Forten, replaced her in the Remond's Salem home as a surrogate daughter of Amy Matilda and "sister" of Sarah Cassey Smith and Henry Cassey.<sup>74</sup>

While Annie and John Webb adjusted to married life and looked forward to the arrival of their first baby, Frank J. Webb's business as a commercial artist and designer failed.<sup>75</sup> Frank occupied much of his time in 1854 with writing, pursuing intellectual interests, and promoting black causes, including emigration schemes. He presented "The Martial Capacity of Blacks" to members of the Banneker Institute, and in March 1854, he attempted to defend his "course . . . as published in a Colonization paper" at an anticolonization meeting. We do not know if, or to what extent, Frank Webb might have been active in the colonization movement, but if he was the merchant Francis Webb who arrived in Baltimore on the last day of 1849 from a fact-finding mission in Liberia

<sup>72</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 376–77.

<sup>73</sup> Annie E. Wood to John G. Webb, Mar. 9, Apr. 11, 1854, and undated [Apr. 1854], Annie Wood Webb Papers.

<sup>74</sup> *Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, 382, 212, 236, 302.

<sup>75</sup> Phillip S. Lapsansky, "Afro-Americana: Frank J. Webb and His Friends," *Annual Report of the Library Company of Philadelphia for the Year 1990* (Philadelphia, 1990), 35; Sollors, *Frank J. Webb*, 426.





Mary E. Webb (1828–59), Frank J. Webb’s first wife, reading *The Christian Slave* at Stafford House, London. *London Illustrated News*, Aug, 2, 1856.

with longtime secretary and founder of the American Colonization Society Rev. R. R. Gurley, then he had long entertained thoughts of leaving the United States.<sup>76</sup> By 1854 he may have concluded—as does the character George Winston early on in *The Garies*—that he would go to “some country where, if he must struggle for success in life, he might do it without the additional embarrassments that would be thrown in his way in his native land, solely because he belonged to an oppressed race.” Like George Winston, who embarks for South America, Frank attempted first to go to Rio de Janeiro in 1855 but was turned away by the ship’s captain because of his color. He persisted with plans to go abroad and succeeded the following year (after again being denied passage), when he sailed with his wife, Mary, to England on a packet ship.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> “Francis Webb,” Ancestry.com, *Baltimore, Passenger and Immigration Lists, 1820–1872* [database online] (Provo, UT, 2004), original data: Baltimore, Maryland. *Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Baltimore, 1820–1891*, National Archives and Records Administration, micropublication M255, reel 7.

<sup>77</sup> Wesley and Uzelac, *William Cooper Nell*, 453.

46 Beacon Street  
Portland Place.  
Woolwich -

Dear Sir

Mrs Webb has gone to Liverpool  
on a visit to Mrs Edmund Cropper.  
Whilst there it has been proposed  
that she should give one or two  
readings. It has also been sug-  
-gested to her, that if you would  
be kind enough to favor her with  
an introductory note to the Rabbins  
it would assist greatly in promoting  
her success, as their great influence  
enables them to do much towards  
securing it. Trusting I have not  
taken too great a liberty in thus  
asking of you, for her, a line to  
them.

I remain truly Yours.

Yrs.  
Frank J Webb

Hon Chas Sumner

The bearer will wait for an answer

Frank J. Webb letter to Charles Sumner, July 1857. Ms Am1 (6680), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Mary E. Webb, reputed by Longfellow to be the daughter of Spanish general Baldomero Espartero (1793–1879) and confirmed by her husband to be the daughter of a wealthy Spanish gentleman and a slave “of full African blood,” had performed the poet’s *The Song of Hiawatha* during her 1855–56 American reading tour.<sup>78</sup> Longfellow’s knowledge of Mary’s paternity is credible; he had received the information from Harriet Beecher Stowe, and he knew Mary well enough to write her a letter of introduction for her British travels. The Webbs lived in London for about eighteen months from 1856 through 1857 while Mary toured the country giving dramatic readings, the headliner being Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *The Christian Slave*. By the summer of 1857, Frank Webb had completed his novel. He not only managed Mary’s career and organized her tours but also participated in at least one of her British performances, “The Linford Studio,” on June 18, 1857.<sup>79</sup> A few weeks later he wrote Charles Sumner, who was also staying in London, to request a letter of introduction for Mary to abolitionist Richard Rathbone of Liverpool.<sup>80</sup> The Webbs moved easily in the royal circles of Lady Byron, Lord Hetherington, Lord Shaftesbury, Lord Clarendon, and the Marquis of Lansdown. They spent several months in the winter of 1857–58 in Cannes for the benefit of Mary’s declining health.<sup>81</sup> Returning from Europe in March 1858—on their way to Kingston, Jamaica, where Frank had been appointed to the post office—the Webbs visited with Frank’s Philadelphia family for several weeks. John and Annie Webb had considered going with the Webbs to Jamaica, but those plans changed. The Webbs sailed for Jamaica at the end of March, but Mary’s health did not improve in the warmer climate. She died the following year.

Frank lived in Jamaica for eleven years. He worked for the post office, became a planter, married Mary Rosabelle Rodgers—the daughter of a Jamaican merchant—and raised a young family.<sup>82</sup> With the exception of

<sup>78</sup> Henry Wadsworth Longfellow journal, Dec. 6, 1855, in *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: With Extracts from His Journals and Correspondence*, ed. Samuel Longfellow, vol. 2 (Boston, 1886), 269; Sollors, *Frank J. Webb*, 425.

<sup>79</sup> Ellen Joy Letostak, “Surrogation and the [Re]creation of Racial Vocalization: Mary E. Webb Performs *The Christian Slave*” (MA thesis, University of Georgia, 2004), 39.

<sup>80</sup> Frank J. Webb to Charles Sumner, July 1857, Charles Sumner Correspondence (MS Am 1), Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Thanks to Beverly Wilson Palmer.

<sup>81</sup> Crockett, “*Garies and Their Friends*,” 25.

<sup>82</sup> Frank J. Webb’s children by Mary Rodgers (b. 1845) were: Frank (1865–1901), Evangeline (1866–1945), Ruth (1867–1930), Clarice (1869–1962), Ethelynd (1874–1969), and Thomas R. (1877–1964). Frank Jr. worked for the Treasury Department in Washington, DC, in 1893, graduated



*Left:* Photograph of Frank Webb’s unidentified daughter taken in Columbus, Texas.

*Right:* Ethelind Webb (1874–1969), Frank J. Webb’s youngest daughter. Verso reads “Ethelind Constance Annie Webb Born Decr 24th 1874, With love for ‘Uncle John” 15/6/81.

Courtesy of Dr. C. Thomas.



Mary Rosabelle Rodgers of Kingston, Jamaica, was Frank J. Webb’s second wife. Verso reads “To Mrs. John Webb with Mary R. Rodgers’ love.”  
 Courtesy of Dr. C. Thomas.

a year spent in Washington, DC—living with his recently married niece, teacher Sarah Iredell Fleetwood, clerking in the Freedmen’s Bureau, and contributing to Frederick Douglass’s *New Era*—he spent the last twenty-three years of his life in Texas, working first as a newspaper editor, then as a postal clerk, and finally for thirteen years as principal of the Barnes Institute, a school for colored children.<sup>83</sup> It is no wonder, then, that scholars have had difficulty linking Frank J. Webb with his Philadelphia family.

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from Howard Medical College (class of ’95), and died unmarried at thirty-six. Evangeline taught at Central Public School in the 1880s in Galveston, Texas, trained as a nurse at Freedmen’s Hospital School of Nursing in Washington (class of ’97), and nursed through the early 1900s in Georgia, Florida, and Washington. Ruth Glover settled in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and her sisters, Ethelynd Trower and Evangeline Webb, inherited her house when she died in 1930. Clarice McCracken Riddle, a teacher at the Anderson School in Denison, Texas, had one daughter and a stepdaughter, who married jazz musician Lionel Hampton. The youngest, Thomas R. Webb, and his wife, Alice Dickerson, adopted a daughter, Queenabelle (1901–44), who worked as an actress in Hollywood. “Jamaica Church of England Parish Register Transcripts, 1664–1880,” index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/VH68-Z3N>), Frank Rodgers Webb, 1865; (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/VH68-ZC8>), Evangeline Maria Louisa Webb, 1867; (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/VH68-P2L>), Ruth Mary Rosabelle Webbe, 1869; (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/VH68-P25>), Clarice Madeline Webbe, 1869, all accessed May 24, 2013; “Frank J. Webb,” 1880 US Census, Columbus, Colorado County, Texas, reel 1297; Frank J. Webb Jr. to cousins, Sept. 1, 1893, Jan. 18, 1894, Annie Wood Webb Papers; Daniel S. Lamb, *Howard University Medical Department, Washington, D.C.: A Historical, Biographical, and Statistical Souvenir* (Washington, DC, 1900), 227; *Directory of Deceased American Physicians, 1804–1929* [database online] (Provo, UT, 2004), 36:1723, original data: Arthur Wayne Hafner, ed., *Directory of Deceased American Physicians, 1804–1929* (Chicago, 1993); Crockett, “Garies and Their Friends,” 35; “Texas, Marriages, 1837–1973,” index, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/FX9K-F48>; accessed May 24, 2013), Nelson G. Glover and Ruth M. R. Webb, June 15, 1892; “Ruth W. Glover,” 1900 US Census, Hot Springs Ward 5, Garland, Arkansas, reel 59, 8A; 1910 US Census, Hot Springs Ward 5, Garland, Arkansas, reel T62450, 7a; 1920 US Census, Hot Springs Ward 5, Garland, Arkansas, reel T62563, 5A; *Polk’s Hot Springs (Arkansas) City Directory* (Kansas City, MO, and Detroit, MI, 1930), 167; “Texas, Deaths (New Index, New Images), 1890–1976,” index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/KSB8-9RC>; accessed May 24, 2013), Clarice Riddle, 1962; Clora Bryant, interview by Steven L. Isoardi, UCLA Oral History Program, Mar. 29, 1990, <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=hb6489p54g&query=&brand=oac4>; “United States Social Security Death Index,” index, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/J1J8-LNL>; accessed May 24, 2013), Ethelynd Trower, July 1969; “California, Death Index, 1940–1997,” index, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/VPF6-X8C>), Evangeline MI Webb, 1945; (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/VPJD-K2N>), Quennabelle Pearl Webb, 1944; (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/VGRK-VPK>), Thomas R. Webb, 1964, all accessed May 24, 2013; “District of Columbia Deaths and Burials, 1840–1964,” index, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/F7YM-X9J>; accessed May 24, 2013), Frank J. Webb, May 14, 1901.

<sup>83</sup> Wedding record of Sarah Iredell and Christian Fleetwood, Christian A. Fleetwood Papers; William Loren Katz, ed., *History of Schools for the Colored Population* (New York, 1969), 257; “Frank J. Webb,” Ancestry.com, Nov. 10, 1869, *New York Passenger Lists, 1820–1957* [database online] (Provo, UT, 2010), reel M237\_321; 1870 US Census, Washington, DC, Ward 1, reel M593\_123, 15B.

### *The Riot*

Scholars have suggested that the mob scene in *The Garies* is a composite of the Philadelphia race riots of 1838, 1842, and 1849.<sup>84</sup> While it is true that Webb, in his imaginative reconstruction of real events, may have incorporated broad elements of these riots—such as the targeting of African American achievement and the defense of African American property—many significant details of these riots are missing from Webb’s story: the burning of Pennsylvania Hall and disfranchisement in 1838; a temperance parade like the one that precipitated the 1842 riot; and an election-eve attack on a black-owned tavern like that of 1849. Rosemary Crockett notes in her dissertation that Webb’s omission of specific African American political events from 1838 to 1855 was conscious.<sup>85</sup> My research indicates that Webb may have incorporated more details of an earlier race riot—that of 1834—than scholars have previously recognized.

The parallels between the Webbs and the Ellises in *The Garies and Their Friends* are startling. The fictional Ellises live in the same neighborhood of Philadelphia as the Webbs did.<sup>86</sup> In 1834, Esther “Ess” Ellis, the fictional counterpart of Elizabeth “Bess” Webb, would be about sixteen years old, the same age as Bess. Like her, Ess is the eldest of her siblings and an accomplished seamstress who marries in the late 1830s and has three children: two daughters and the youngest child a son named after his uncle. The fictional Caroline “Caddy” Ellis is, like second daughter Ann “Annie” Webb, about fourteen years old in 1834 and a prolific seamstress. Like Ann, who was ill-tempered and never married, Caddy is plain and shrewish. The fictional Charlie Ellis, like the real-life John Webb, is about eleven years old in 1834. Like John, Charlie is well educated and, as an adult, marries a girl he has known since childhood—a mixed-race, white-looking daughter of a southern planter.

Webb presents scenarios in *The Garies* that are consistent with Philadelphia in the early 1830s. His anecdote about the black hotel waiters who dupe rich southerners by pretending to be homesick for their former slave life on the “ole plantation” probably came straight from the source.

<sup>84</sup> Otter, *Philadelphia Stories*, 237, 244, 248–49, 252; Levine, “Disturbing Boundaries,” 355, 357–63; Noel Ignatieff, *How the Irish Became White* (New York, 1995), 155–56, 125–30; Lapsansky, “Frank J. Webb and His Friends,” 34.

<sup>85</sup> Crockett, “*Garies and Their Friends*,” 193.

<sup>86</sup> Lapsansky, “Frank J. Webb and His Friends,” 35.

His uncle, John Pierre Burr, one of the twelve founding members of the Vigilance Committee, had provided information to John Greenleaf Whittier about the workings of the Underground Railroad. Early in the novel, the library company is wrapping up its winter lecture series, and the Ellis girls are off to attend the final course.<sup>87</sup> Mr. Ellis proudly explains African American achievements to George Winston: “Why, my dear sir, we not only support our own poor, but assist the whites to support theirs. . . . Only the other day the Colonization Society had the assurance to present a petition to the legislature of this State, asking for an appropriation to assist them in sending us all to Africa, that we might no longer remain a burthen upon the State—and they came very near getting it, too.” Mr. Ellis goes on to say that even though the vote was postponed, it was proven that black property owners “paid, in the shape of taxes upon our real estate, more than our proportion for the support of paupers, insane, convicts, &c.” Mr. Ellis’s statements accurately reflect political activity from December 1831 through 1833, when white Philadelphians had gathered to petition the state legislature to prohibit black immigration into Pennsylvania and to endorse colonization, while black leaders drew up memorials to prove that their citizens paid taxes, owned property, had made great strides in education, and did not make up a large proportion of the city’s poor.<sup>88</sup>

Echoing Stowe’s words in the preface, *The Garies* cites newspaper articles which “denounced negroes in the strongest terms. It was averred that their insolence, since the commencement of the abolition agitation, had become unbearable.”<sup>89</sup> The term “abolition agitation” had specific meaning for Stowe and Webb. It referred to a movement that began in 1831–32 with William Lloyd Garrison’s activism, the near passing of an abolition bill in Virginia, Nat Turner’s rebellion, and the springing up of antislavery newspapers, magazines, and tracts.<sup>90</sup> Abolitionism—and opposition to it—gained tremendous momentum in 1834 after the for-

<sup>87</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 5, 48, 40. The Vigilance Committee had just been organized in 1834 and the Library Company of Colored Persons in 1833. Samuel Thomas Pickard, *Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA, 1894), 224; Thomas Augst and Kenneth E. Carpenter, *Institutions of Reading: The Social Life of Libraries in the United States* (Boston, 2007), 104.

<sup>88</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 49–50; Julie Winch, *Philadelphia’s Black Elite: Activism, Accommodation, and the Struggle for Autonomy, 1787–1848* (Philadelphia, 1988), 46, 132–34.

<sup>89</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 175–76.

<sup>90</sup> John Dunmore Lang, *Religion and Education in America: With Notices of the State and Prospects of American Unitarianism, Popery, and African Colonization* (London, 1840), 423–24.

mation of the American Anti-Slavery Society and the abolition of slavery in the British Empire. During the long, hot late summer of 1834, racial tensions in Philadelphia simmered, then exploded into violence.

The riot scenes in *The Garies* are graphic, and even by today’s standards Frank J. Webb’s narrative has the power to disturb. The mob cry in *The Garies*, “Down with the Abolitionist—down with the Amalgamationist!”<sup>91</sup> echoes the inflammatory rhetoric of newspaper editorials that incited an eerily similar race riot in New York just one month before, in July 1834. These editorials repeatedly equated abolition with interracial marriage and, coupled with rumors that Rev. Peter Williams Jr. of St. Philips’ African Episcopal Church had performed an interracial marriage ceremony, fueled a ferocious ten-day riot that ended with the targeted destruction of black churches, houses, and businesses.<sup>92</sup> Williams’s church and home were singled out and burned. It is no surprise then that Frank J. Webb chose the mansion of Mr. Walters—his character drawn partly upon Joseph Cassey—to be the target of attack in his riot scene. Cassey’s wife, Amy Matilda, was Williams’s only daughter.<sup>93</sup>

The trouble began on August 8, 1834, when a black gang stole fire-fighting equipment from the white Fairmont Engine Company. The following night, in retaliation, a white gang of fifty or sixty youths attacked James Forten’s young son as he returned home on an errand. A white neighbor overheard the gang planning to meet again in a few days, and these plans were reported to the mayor. A few days later, “a deputation of the most respectable of their number [of black leaders] . . . waited on the mayor, requesting protection of their unoffending brethren.” The mayor promised that James Forten’s house would be protected by a horse patrol, but he did not have jurisdiction in the poorer areas lying outside the city

<sup>91</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 168.

<sup>92</sup> Craig D. Townsend, “Episcopalians and Race in New York City’s Anti-Abolitionist Riots of 1834: The Case of Peter Williams and Benjamin Onderdonk,” *Anglican and Episcopal History* 72, no. 4 (2003): 201–3; David Brion Davis, *Antebellum American Culture: An Interpretive Anthology* (University Park, PA, 1997), 295; Joanne Reitano, *The Restless City: A Short History of New York from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York, 2006), 45–49.

<sup>93</sup> Other prosperous black citizens—such as James Forten and William Whipper—are probably part of the composite of Walters. Forten’s home was targeted during the 1834 riot and his portrait bears some likeness to the physical description of Walters. At age sixty-eight, however, he does not quite fit the novel’s description of a vigorous man in the prime of life. Winch, *Elite of Our People*, 167.



limits. Many frightened residents, at the first hint of disturbance, packed up what they could carry, fled the city, and crossed the river into New Jersey.<sup>94</sup>

Frank J. Webb's narrative follows a similar course. In revenge for a gang attack the week before, a youth gang brutally beats George Stevens because he unwittingly wears the distinctive coat of a rival firefighter gang. Stevens himself had been fomenting organized violence against African Americans in the city and had lost his handwritten list of the names and addresses of targeted black residents. Mr. Walters, discovering the hit list and learning of attack plans on his own home (overheard by Kinch), promptly warns the mayor: "There is an organized gang of villains, who are combined for the sole purpose of mobbing us coloured citizens; and, as we are unoffensive, we certainly deserve protection." The mayor offers Mr. Walters two or three police for protection of his own home but claims that all the other addresses are out of his jurisdiction. Walters sends messengers throughout the city to warn residents of the impending attack, and the "majority fled from their homes, leaving what effects they could not carry away at the mercy of the mob, and sought an asylum in the houses of whites who would give them shelter."<sup>95</sup>

After sending out warnings, Walters offers asylum to the Ellis family, whose home is endangered and will soon be razed: "Mr. Walters had converted his house into a temporary fortress: the shutters of the upper windows had been loopholed, double bars had been placed across the doors and windows on the ground floor, carpets had been taken up, superfluous furniture removed." There is no shortage of ammunition in Walters's house: "Guns were stacked in the corner, a number of pistols lay upon the mantelpiece, pistols, and a pile of cartridges was heaped up beside a small keg of powder." Blinding light is used on the mob before "a shower of heavy stones came crashing down upon their upturned faces."<sup>96</sup> The final ingeniously improvised weapon—volumes of scalding water laced with cayenne—drives the rioters away for good.

W. E. B. Du Bois, more than three decades later, described the last night of the 1834 rioting, when "the Negroes began to gather for self-defense, and about one hundred of them barricaded themselves in a building on Seventh street, below Lombard, where a howling mob of

<sup>94</sup> Winch, *Philadelphia's Black Elite*, 144–46.

<sup>95</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 186, 198–99, 201–3.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 203–4, 212.

whites soon collected.” A confrontation with armed blacks was narrowly averted.<sup>97</sup> The fortification of Walters’s house also rings familiar with an 1835 description of a garrisoned three-story brick house in St. Mary Street. “[A] body of coloured men . . . armed with knives, bludgeons and pistols, had sought refuge in the house . . . They had taken the sashes of the upper windows out—had provided themselves with a large pile of stones, and were prepared to resist to the death any attempt to dislodge them.”<sup>98</sup>

The 1834 riot lasted four days. Thirty-seven houses were destroyed, many more plundered and gutted, two black churches were attacked, and Stephen James, “an honest, industrious colored man,” was killed. Hundreds of rioters marched through the streets of Moyamensing, swinging their clubs, smashing windows, doors, and furniture, and attacking any blacks in their way. *The Garies’* depiction of the mob matches that of the newspaper accounts: “There was something awful in the appearance of the motley crowd that, like a torrent, foamed and surged through the streets. Some were bearing large pine torches . . . Most of them were armed with clubs, and a few with guns and pistols.”<sup>99</sup> The attack on Walters’s house occurs late in the evening, just as the attack on the second night of the historical riot was delayed until about eleven o’clock. By the time the mob reaches the Garies’ house and ransacks it from two to four o’clock in the morning, Mr. Garie has been murdered and his dead wife and stillborn child lie in an outbuilding.<sup>100</sup> In the historical account, a corpse was turned out of its coffin in one house while a dead baby was thrown to the floor in another.<sup>101</sup>

Newspapers reported, “the inhabitants who were not fortunate enough to fly at the first approach of the rioters, were treated with brutal cruelty; and we learned that an old inoffensive negro was lying dead from the effects of the treatment he received, in the wreck of his house. Others who were carried to the hospital, it is said cannot survive.” An old man thrown from a window onto the street below cried out for help. “The rioters

<sup>97</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, “The Negro in Philadelphia, 1820–1896,” in *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899; repr. Philadelphia, 1996), 25–45; Edward R. Turner, *The Negro in Pennsylvania: Slavery, Servitude, Freedom, 1639–1861* (Baltimore, 1912), 161.

<sup>98</sup> Winch, *Gentleman of Color*, 291.

<sup>99</sup> Du Bois, “The Negro in Philadelphia,” 27–28; Webb, *Garies*, 211.

<sup>100</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 220; John Runcie, “Hunting the Nigs’ in Philadelphia: The Race Riot of August 1834,” *Pennsylvania History* 39 (1972): 209.

<sup>101</sup> Turner, *Negro in Pennsylvania*, 160.

in despite of his piteous entreaties for mercy, seized the poor fellow and hurled him out of the window." Several people "were inhumanely beaten and dreadfully lacerated." Rioters described their rampage as "hunting the nigs," and one eyewitness reported that "the mob exhibited more than fiendish brutality, beating and mutilating some of the old, confiding and unoffending blacks, with a savageness surpassing anything we could have believed men capable of."<sup>102</sup> Those were the published accounts. Here is Frank Webb's description of Mr. Ellis's fate:

"Here's a nigger! Here's a nigger!" shouted two or three of them, almost simultaneously, making at the same time a rush at Mr. Ellis, who turned and ran, followed by the whole gang. . . . [He] found himself on the roof of a house that was entirely isolated. The whole extent of the danger flashed upon him at once. Here he was completely hemmed in, without the smallest chance for escape. He approached the edge and looked over, but could discover nothing near enough to reach by a leap. . . .

"Throw him over! Throw him over!" exclaimed some of the fiercest of the crowd. One or two of the more merciful endeavoured to interfere against killing him outright; but the frenzy of the majority triumphed, and they determined to cast him into the street below.

Mr. Ellis clung to the chimney, shrieking,—“Save me! save me!—Help! help! Will no one save me!” . . . Despite his cries and resistance, they forced him to the edge of the roof; he clinging to them the while, and shrieking in agonized terror. Forcing off his hold, they thrust him forward and got him partially over the edge, where he clung calling frantically for aid. One of the villains, to make him loose his hold, struck on his fingers with the handle of a hatchet found on the roof; not succeeding in breaking his hold by these means, with an oath he struck with the blade, severing two of the fingers from one hand and deeply mangling the other.

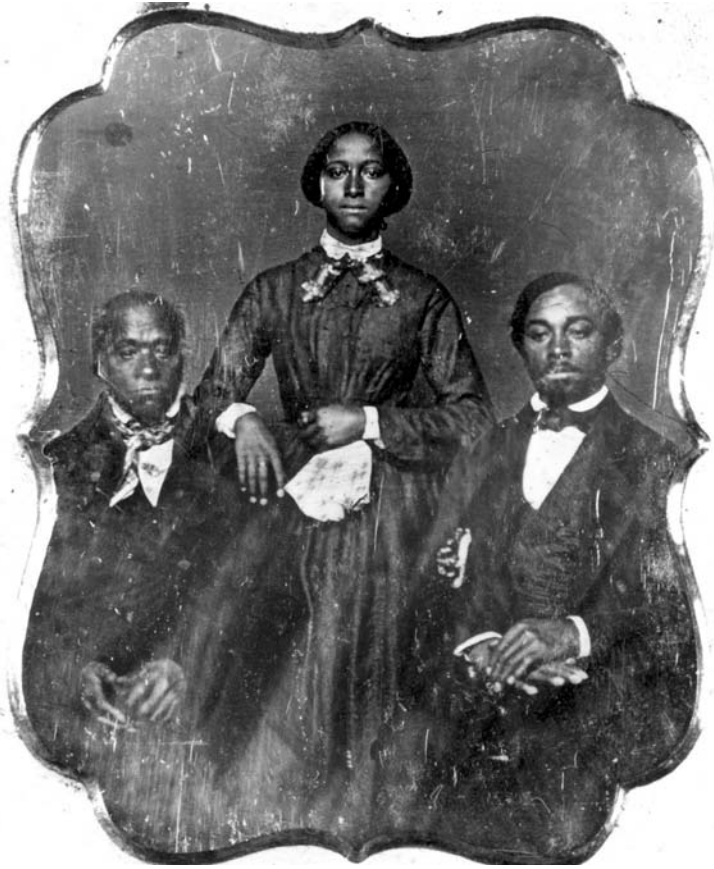
With a yell of agony, Mr. Ellis let go of his hold, and fell upon a pile of rubbish below, whilst a cry of malignity went up from the crowd on the roof.<sup>103</sup>

Mr. Ellis's legs and ribs are broken, his head smashed in, his fingers turned into "stumps." Once in the hospital, he is given "small chance of life." He suffers permanent brain damage and lives the remainder of his life in fear: "they're coming, thousands of them; they've guns, and swords, and clubs. Hush! There they come—there they come!"<sup>104</sup>

<sup>102</sup> *Niles's Weekly Register*, Aug. 23, 1834, 435–36; Runcie, "Hunting the Nigs," 187–218.

<sup>103</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 218–19.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 269, 235.



This ca. 1850 daguerreotype of the Webb family invites closer scrutiny. The unidentified older man's hands are wasted and—with two fingers missing on one hand and finger tips gone on the other—consistent with Webb's description of Mr. Ellis's injuries. A closer look at the man's face reveals a broad scar across his forehead, exactly as described in the novel (*Garies*, 235, 240, 267–68). The man on the right is thought to be Frank J. Webb. Courtesy of the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, Hartford, CT.

With the Ellis home destroyed, Mr. Walters not only offers up his home to the Ellises and Emily Garie—"for ever, if you like"—he gives them positions in his household: Mrs. Ellis as chief housekeeper, Esther as nurse to her father and teacher to orphaned Emily and Clarence, Caddy as boss of the servants. Years later, Emily Garie says of Charles Ellis, "We have grown up together . . . and now that he claims the reward of long years of tender regard. . . . I shall marry Charles Ellis."<sup>105</sup>

Real-life Annie Wood and John G. Webb had "fanned the embers of an early affection into a blaze." Annie Wood had been adopted by the Casseys and lived with them at the same time as Frank Webb's sister, Ann.<sup>106</sup> John G. Webb roomed with a Cassey in-law and remained close to the eldest son, Joseph W. Cassey, throughout his life.<sup>107</sup> These scraps of information point to the probability that the Webbs lived for a while under the same roof as the Casseys.

The many parallels between the novel's characters and the author's family and friends suggest that the Webbs, like the Ellises, were traumatized by the riot. Their lives were defined by it. We can only imagine that "many years after,"<sup>108</sup> when John G. Webb married Annie E. Wood in 1854, family members regrouped, reminisced about their shared experience, laughed over the good times, grieved their losses, celebrated their achievements, and moved into their future with hope and optimism. And Frank J. Webb—fresh from the gathering—wrote their story.

*Vancouver, BC*

MARY MAILLARD

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 335.

<sup>106</sup> Rent receipts 1847–1850, Annie Wood Webb Papers; 1850 US Census, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, New Market Ward, reel M432\_817, 400B.

<sup>107</sup> John G. Webb to Genie Webb, undated [1870s], Annie Wood Webb Papers.

<sup>108</sup> Webb, *Garies*, 309.

## *Outside In and Inside Out: Civic Activism, Helen Oakes, and the Philadelphia Public Schools, 1960–1989*

**I**N JANUARY 1952 THE *SCHOOL EXECUTIVE*, a professional journal for school administrators, published a special issue on citizens and schools that called attention to a flurry of citizen involvement with public education in the United States since the end of World War II. Of course, citizen participation in public education was, by then, nothing new. In the nineteenth century, citizens had often concerned themselves with schools, forming school societies, organizing advocacy groups, and joining school boards. Such volunteers were usually educated men of means, but women became involved too. The Civic Club of Philadelphia, for example, brought together many prominent white women who aimed to promote “by education and active cooperation a higher public spirit and better public order.” The club’s agenda included the election of women to school boards and the beautification of public schools.<sup>1</sup> But even as these men and women were reaching out, the professionalization of teaching and the centralization of policy making were gradually changing the relationship between citizens and schools, erecting barriers, both formal and informal, to citizens’ influence.

A series of economic, social, and political crises after 1930 drove many Americans to engage with the public schools. The onset of the Great Depression convinced some businessmen and taxpayers to participate in deliberations about the financial support of public schools. In New York and Chicago, citizens’ committees formed that called for massive budget

The author wishes to thank Herbert Ershkowitz and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions.

<sup>1</sup>Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women’s Associations in American History* (Urbana, IL, 1991), 120–21, 127; Julie Johnson, “The Civic Club of Philadelphia,” in *Invisible Philadelphia: Community through Voluntary Organizations*, ed. Jean Barth Toll and Mildred Gillam (Philadelphia, 1995), 352–53.

cuts. A Citizens' Conference on the Crisis in Education, assembled by President Herbert Hoover in January 1933, did just the opposite; it recommended sacrifice in the private sector to maintain existing levels of funding for public schools. Once the United States entered World War II, citizen support for national defense spilled into the public schools, prompting the federal government to appropriate money for some school districts to change the way they prepared their students. The threat posed by totalitarianism abroad persuaded the president of Harvard University, James B. Conant, to call for the organization of a national citizens' group on public education in 1942, but it would be five years before a cluster of leaders in public relations and journalism—headed by Roy E. Larsen, the president of Time Incorporated—would form the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools (NCCPS). Dismayed by what it perceived to be shameful, even dangerous, neglect, the commission called upon all Americans to form local advocacy groups.<sup>2</sup> By the time the *School Executive* published its special issue in 1952, there were more than 1,500 citizens' committees in the United States, working both with and for educators to revitalize the public schools. Writing for this special issue, Eleanor Cole, the assistant director of the NCCPS, called such groups "workshops of democracy." Foster Brown, dean of the State University Teachers College in Cortland, New York, echoed the sentiment that all Americans were responsible for their public schools. Only by exercising "their rights and duties as citizens" could they ensure the quality of their children's education.<sup>3</sup>

But what did it mean to exercise such rights and duties? According to the political scientist Michael Schudson, the model citizen is not just involved; he or she is also informed. The tension between broad-based participation in government and the expertise required to understand its complex issues—a dynamic explored with care by Walter Lippmann and John Dewey in the 1920s—was becoming ever more acute. Television coverage of the presidential nominating conventions in 1952 and 1956 turned millions of ordinary Americans into political voyeurs drawn in by a story line fashioned by well-trained journalists. In 1960, CBS News

<sup>2</sup> "Educational News and Editorial Comment," *School Review* 41 (1933): 161–74; Benjamin Fine, "Commission Set Up to Study Schools," *New York Times*, May 16, 1949, 23; Charles Dorn, *American Education, Democracy, and the Second World War* (New York, 2007), 76–79, 86–91; David B. Dreiman, *How to Get Better Schools: A Tested Program* (New York, 1956), 68.

<sup>3</sup> Eleanor Cole, "Results Citizens Committees Have Secured," *School Executive* 71 (Jan. 1952): 62; Foster S. Brown, "Local Citizens Committees: Roots of the Vine," *ibid.*, 53.

executive Don Hewitt shaped the future of presidential politics when he produced and directed the first of four televised debates between Richard M. Nixon and John F. Kennedy. Even as television made Americans more informed, however, many were choosing to become less involved. According to Theda Skocpol, citizen participation in American social and political life transformed in the 1950s as civic organizations run by volunteers started giving way to professional advocacy groups.<sup>4</sup>

It was at the inception of this transformation that one citizen, Helen Oakes, decided to become both informed and involved, choosing as the object of her attention the Philadelphia public schools. A member of what Robert Putnam has called the “long civic generation,” Oakes belonged to that cohort of men and women born between the two world wars whose commitment to civic engagement outdistanced that of both the preceding and succeeding generation.<sup>5</sup> Her long career as a civic activist demonstrates both the limits and the possibilities of citizen engagement with public schools. It began when she joined several local civic organizations. The middle-class men and women who belonged to these groups believed they could influence the policies and practices of the Philadelphia public schools by building a network of communication and understanding among people like themselves. These fruitful connections, referred to as social capital by social scientists such as Pierre Bourdieu, might help them make a difference in the schools.<sup>6</sup> But public

<sup>4</sup> Michael Schudson, *The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life* (Cambridge, MA, 1998), 211–15, 233–39; Theda Skocpol, “Voice and Inequality: The Transformation of American Civic Democracy,” *Perspectives on Politics* 2 (2004): 3–20.

<sup>5</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York, 2000), 132, 254.

<sup>6</sup> The theory of social capital is closely associated with French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who studied the social networks acquired in school, and American sociologists Robert D. Putnam and James S. Coleman. It is central to the argument in Putnam’s best-selling book, *Bowling Alone*, in which he tried to explain what he perceived to be the collapse of civic engagement in the United States in the last third of the twentieth century. Coleman used it to study changing patterns of school attendance and variable levels of student achievement. See, for example, his “Families and Schools,” *Educational Researcher* 16 (Aug.–Sept. 1987): 32–38. Some historians of education have used this theory to analyze the expansion of schooling and the education of immigrants, while others have explored its role in the history of educational politics. For examples of the first two lines of argument see: Claudia Goldin and Lawrence F. Katz, “Human Capital and Social Capital: The Rise of Secondary Schooling in America, 1910–1940,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 29 (1999): 683–723; John L. Rury, “Social Capital and Secondary Schooling: Interurban Differences in American Teenage Enrollment Rates in 1950,” *American Journal of Education* 110 (2004): 293–320; and Reed Ueda, “Second Generation Civic America: Education, Citizenship, and the Children of Immigrants,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 29 (1999): 661–81. For two examples of the third



officials do not always respond favorably to civic activists, especially if they are unable to augment the social capital amassed among friends and neighbors by building bridges between themselves and other social and political groups. When her organizations' efforts to improve West Philadelphia's public schools failed to gain traction with local government, Helen Oakes asserted herself. By writing and publishing her own newsletter on the Philadelphia public schools, she challenged long-standing assumptions by demonstrating that a stay-at-home mother could play a leadership role. Her work helped pave the way for Dr. Constance Clayton to become the city's first female superintendent of schools, but it did not prepare her for the resistance she would encounter first as a citizen activist and then as a member of the Philadelphia school board. The social capital she developed among outsiders like herself did not guarantee her access to power, and it eroded once she became a public official; as an insider, she could no longer participate freely in the network of communication and understanding upon which her rise to a position of power was built. The expertise she developed proved to be no special asset on the board either. No matter what she knew or how well she knew it, her knowledge alone was not enough to change the schools. Oakes's work was not wasted, however, for both as an outsider and an insider, she helped shape the conversation in Philadelphia about public schools.

### *Becoming a Citizen Activist*

Born in 1924, Helen Baum Oakes received an elite, private education. After graduating from the Harley School in Rochester, New York, she attended Smith College (BA 1944) where she majored in physics. Among her peers at Smith was Betty Friedan (née Bettye Naomi Goldstein), whose famous book, *The Feminine Mystique* (1962), published many years later, voiced the frustrations shared by many educated, middle-class women confined to the home. By the late 1950s, Oakes was a member of this demographic group. She and her husband, Earle, settled in Overbrook, a suburban enclave in upper West Philadelphia, where they enrolled their four children in public schools. Neither Oakes nor her husband could have known then that she would become well known as an

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approach, see Nancy Beadie, *Education and the Creation of Capital in the Early Republic* (New York, 2010), esp. 320–23; and Christine Woyshner, *The National PTA, Race, and Civic Engagement, 1897–1970* (Columbus, OH, 2009).

expert on public education and serve on the Philadelphia school board. But it did not take her long to become involved. She joined the Overbrook Elementary Home and School Association, a logical move, and then the West Philadelphia Schools Committee, an informal group of community leaders concerned about segregation in their neighborhood schools. In 1965 Oakes began a five-year stint as chair of the Education Committee of the League of Women Voters, a membership organization known for its commitment to reasoned debate and the nonpartisan exploration of public issues.<sup>7</sup> This position helped her become informed as well as involved and won her the respect of those whose help she would need when she eventually struck out on her own.

In 1964 Oakes learned a valuable lesson about the politics of public schools. By then the Philadelphia Home and School Council had been in existence for twenty-nine years. It recognized parents by giving them a sanctioned role, but, unlike its predecessor, the Philadelphia Home and School League, it never rocked the boat. The council's officers came from a small pool and were chosen by consensus, but in 1964 a group of parents proposed that the process by which these officers were selected be reformed. Assembling their own list of candidates, these parents argued that voters should have a choice. Helen Oakes was on their slate as a candidate for vice president. "We think the Council should be independent of the school administration," she explained to a newspaper reporter. "Now it's a puppet."<sup>8</sup> The council's nominating committee was unmoved, but Helen Oakes was not deterred. Instead, she became better informed and even more involved, attending a Philadelphia school board meeting for the first time that fall—one of many to follow.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Horowitz, "Rethinking Betty Friedan and *The Feminine Mystique*: Labor Union Radicalism and Feminism in Cold War America," *American Quarterly* 48 (1996): 8, 23–25; Maralyn Lois Polak, "Helen Oakes: She talked out of school," ca. 1990, and "Biographical Data, June 9, 1986," in series 13, box 46 (Confidential Correspondence 1982–1986), folder O, Helen Oakes Papers: Board of Education (Acc. 707), Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, PA. Hereafter cited as Oakes Papers: Board of Education (SCRC 17).

<sup>8</sup> Peter Binzen, "Home and School Rebels Fight to Get Slate on Ballot," *Philadelphia Bulletin*, Mar. 31, 1964, and "Home and School Council Blocks Slating for Office of 7 Independents," *ibid.*, Apr. 8, 1964, in Helen Oakes: Home and School Council envelope, George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Newsclippings Collection, Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries. Hereafter cited as Bulletin Clippings Collection.

*The West Philadelphia Schools Committee*

Since the origins of urban public education in the early nineteenth century, citizens have vied with school officials for control. Local decision making competed on an equal footing with centralized governance in most urban school districts at first, but, beginning in the 1850s, reformers gradually altered the status quo by arguing successfully for apolitical policy making and the professional management of public schools. Never at the cutting edge of such reform, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) did not have a superintendent until 1883—long after Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, and St. Louis. Another twenty-two years would pass before its central school board would have the power enjoyed by its counterparts elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> But even though the distance between those making public school policy and those affected by it grew slowly in Philadelphia, some private citizens resisted, hoping to retain influence if not achieve control. Educators dealt with this resistance by welcoming parents as long as they did not interfere with the work of the professionals. Between 1910 and 1940, home and school associations became commonplace at the elementary level, helping to make the neighborhood school a symbol of citizen involvement in Philadelphia. But neighborhood schools also served as the point of no return for both whites and blacks during the heyday of the civil rights movement because desegregated schools implied at least the possibility of integrated neighborhoods.<sup>10</sup>

By 1965 there were many local and even some citywide citizens' groups working to improve Philadelphia's public schools. The challenge they faced was monumental: decrepit buildings, underpaid teachers, and overcrowded classrooms were not the exception but the rule. Because of such conditions, a well-organized and militant teachers' union had been certified and was now asserting itself. Changes in the student population presented yet another challenge; thousands of African American children

<sup>9</sup> David Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, MA, 1974); William H. Issel, "Modernization in Philadelphia School Reform," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 94 (1970): 358–83.

<sup>10</sup> William W. Cutler III, *Parents and Schools: The 150-Year Struggle for Control in American Education* (Chicago, 2000), 74–84; Jon S. Birger, "Race, Reaction, and Reform: The Three Rs of Philadelphia School Politics, 1965–1971," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 120 (1996): 163–216; Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 2006), 244–57. See also Silvie Murray, *The Progressive Housewife: Community Activism in Suburban Queens, 1945–1965* (Philadelphia, 2003), 126–28, 166–67; and Amanda I. Seligman, *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago's West Side* (Chicago, 2005), 214–15.

whose parents had come to Philadelphia looking for work during and after World War II were now enrolled in the city's public schools. "Stimulated and guided" by the NCCPS, the Citizens Committee for Public Education in Philadelphia (CCPEP) came together in 1953, bringing to fruition organizing efforts dating back to 1947. Claiming to be "neither an arm of the Board of Education nor a finger pointed at it," the CCPEP described itself as an organization committed to nothing less than educational excellence. It participated in a successful reform campaign that reduced the size of the school board from fifteen to nine and gave the city council the power to set school tax limits. The Ogontz Area Neighbors Association (OANA) made public education one of its priorities. Formed with the help of the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations in 1959, it wanted to "stabilize" a residential neighborhood in the northwest quadrant of the city that was by then rapidly evolving. Led by Florence Cohen, whose husband, David, was a local attorney and an aspiring politician, it tried to slow "white flight" by discouraging realtors from block busting, a strategy that only worked for a while. In a move that may have been counterproductive, OANA persuaded the Board of Education to transfer one hundred pupils from a predominantly black to a predominantly white elementary school. But no matter how well or poorly they did, organizations like OANA soldiered on. By 1963 they had become so visible that they banded together to form the Philadelphia Federation of Community Councils.<sup>11</sup> Its members hoped they could turn the social capital they built among their friends and neighbors into citywide political influence.

Most neighborhood associations in Philadelphia dealt with a wide range of issues, but the West Philadelphia Schools Committee (WPSC) focused on just one—public education. Anchored on its eastern end by the Drexel Institute of Technology and the University of Pennsylvania, West Philadelphia was being transformed. The Penn and Drexel campuses were expanding, displacing many longtime residents. African

<sup>11</sup> "7 Rallies to Back School Needs," Apr. 11, 1947, CCPEP: 1962 and before, Bulletin Clippings Collection Microfiche; CCPEP flier, Oct. 1956, CCPEP: Large Clippings, Bulletin Clippings Collection; Marilyn Gittell and T. Edward Hollander, "The Process of Change: Case Study of Philadelphia," in *The Politics of Urban Education*, ed. Marilyn Gittell and Alan G. Hevesi (New York, 1969), 230–32. Florence Cohen to Sam Gabor, June 3, 1960, in box 1, folder 18, Correspondence Florence Cohen, 1959–1960 and "Neighborhood Groups Cooperate and Get Results," *Sunday Bulletin*, Feb. 3, 1963, box 5, folder 12, Scrapbooks and Clippings, 1962–1969, Ogontz Area Neighbors Association (Philadelphia, Pa.) Records (Acc. 879), Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries. Hereafter OANA Records.

Americans of modest means now lived there, clustered around the street-car lines that fed the city's downtown. As their numbers grew, they became increasingly isolated in their neighborhoods. Ten of the public elementary schools to which they sent their children were now totally segregated. The black enrollment of West Philadelphia High School climbed from 85 to 97 percent between 1959 and 1961.<sup>12</sup> Responding to these conditions, representatives from a dozen home and school councils and community groups banded together in 1960 to form the WPSC. They drew from a reservoir of young, middle-class residents brought to the area by its proximity to the downtown, its relatively inexpensive but still upscale housing stock, and its institutions of higher education. The founders of the WPSC believed that the city's future depended on good public schools and that efforts to improve them all could not be successful if the ones in West Philadelphia became completely segregated. "The purpose of the West Philadelphia Schools Committee," its bylaws said, "is to obtain and secure for every child an equal opportunity to achieve his maximum potential in an integrated public school offering quality education."<sup>13</sup>

Helen Oakes became the chair of the WPSC in 1966. She had worked her way up, serving on the organization's executive committee and for one year as its co-chair. By then, the WPSC had earned a reputation for thoughtful, pointed commentary on the public schools. A detailed critique of a three-year building program released by the SDP in 1962 had been an important step. Testifying at a public hearing several months later, the WPSC called the plan a blueprint for failure and accused the leaders of the SDP of disingenuousness. Even as the SDP told the white and black communities in West Philadelphia what they each wanted to hear, their plan discriminated against some neighborhoods, the WPSC said, especially those that were poor, black, and mute. The WPSC dis-

<sup>12</sup> Office of Research and Evaluation, School District of Philadelphia, *1959-1968 Negro Enrollment in the Philadelphia Public Schools* (Philadelphia, 1969), 1-3. In the SDP as a whole, black students achieved majority status for the first time in 1962.

<sup>13</sup> Sandra Featherman, "Public Education Reform in the Twentieth Century," in Toll and Gillam, *Invisible Philadelphia*, 698; Sherman Dorn, *Creating the Dropout: An Institutional and Social History of School Failure* (Westport, CT, 1996), 114; Recruitment letter, West Philadelphia Schools Committee, May 30, 1962, box 1, folder Meeting Minutes 1962, and Constitution and Bylaws of the West Philadelphia School Committee, June 1962, box 1, folder Constitution and Bylaws, both in West Philadelphia Schools Committee Records (Acc. 306), Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries. Hereafter cited as WPSC Papers. See also Helen Oakes Interview, May 15, 2012, box 1, folder 5, William W. Cutler Oral Histories (SCRC 9), Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries. Hereafter cited as the Oakes interview. The CCPEP and an elite group known as the Greater Philadelphia Movement led the citywide reform effort.

missed the SDP's claim that black families recently arrived from the South were responsible for their children's low achievement. It blamed the district's inexperienced teachers, overcrowded classrooms, and segregated schools instead.<sup>14</sup>

The leaders of the WPSC believed that the SDP would have to take drastic steps to overcome the impact of residential segregation on the public schools. A school buildings survey prepared in the mid-1960s for the district failed to satisfy Oakes and her colleagues; they thought its approach to new construction would simply reinforce existing demographic patterns. To make a real difference, the SDP would have to fulfill its stated commitment to comprehensive planning. Like City Planning Commission director Edmund Bacon, who wanted to revitalize Philadelphia by building self-contained business and shopping districts, especially in or near the downtown, the leaders of the WPSC opposed scattered-site school construction, favoring instead a series of educational parks, each of which would be built to educate children at all grade levels. They were not the only ones interested in this idea; school reformers in Pittsburgh, Syracuse, and even New York City considered it too. The Philadelphia Urban League proposed it, as did many civil rights and community groups. But no one embraced this idea more enthusiastically than Helen Oakes. In 1966 the Philadelphia Committee for Educational Parks, whose seven-member board included her husband, Earle, put forward a plan for twenty educational parks to be built in Philadelphia over the next fourteen years. Representing the WPSC, Oakes testified in favor of this proposal before the Board of Education in February 1967. Only a "system" of educational parks, she said, could stem white flight and provide the kind of diversified education needed by all students.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Membership development letter, spring 1965, in box 1, folder Membership 1965; Statement of the WPSC to the District One Subcommittee appointed to review the Non-Discrimination Policy of the School District of Philadelphia, May 16, 1963, box 1, folder 1963 Statements of the WPSC; Statement to the Board of Public Education Regarding the Proposed Building Program by the WPSC, Sept. 20, 1962, box 2, folder Proposed Building Program, all in WPSC Papers.

<sup>15</sup> Public Testimony on the 1964 List of Schools, Feb. 27, 1964, box 2, folder Public Testimony—Junior High Schools 1964; A Short History of the Junior High School at 46th and Market Streets, Feb. 16, 1965, box 2, folder Comprehensive School Building Plan, 1965; Statement on the Educational Park Study Presented to the Board of Public Education by the WPSC, Feb. 20, 1967, box 2, folder Public Statements & News Releases, 1967, WPSC Papers. Emphasis is in the original. See also Michael Clapper, "School Design, Site Selection, and the Political Geography of Race in Postwar Philadelphia," *Journal of Planning History* 5 (2006): 253–54; Countryman, *Up South*, 245; Alfred P. Fernandez, "The Educational Park: A Second Look," *Journal of Secondary Education* 45 (May 1970): 223–29.

Oakes's testimony to the board was informed by an exchange of letters with James S. Coleman, the person most responsible for *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, a national report on student achievement that had caused a sensation among educators and policy makers when it was published the year before. The Coleman report raised questions about the efficacy of public schools and was cited by the CORDE Corporation, which had been hired by the SDP to conduct a feasibility study of educational parks. The CORDE Corporation urged caution, claiming that black achievement improved significantly only when black children attended predominantly white, middle-class schools. Unconvinced, Oakes tracked Coleman down in England, where he was on leave from his faculty position at Johns Hopkins University, and then used to her advantage his guarded response in which he admitted that his findings on student achievement in segregated schools were inconclusive and that educational parks were such a novel idea that no one really knew whether they could make a difference.<sup>16</sup> The SDP never built any educational parks, but that did not discourage Oakes. She remained committed to gathering reliable information and then using her findings to make what she hoped would be convincing arguments for reform in the Philadelphia public schools.

### *More than a Citizen Activist*

The WPSC folded in 1971, its members frustrated by what they perceived to be the arrogance of Philadelphia school officials. As the WPSC saw it, these officials did not take their ideas seriously—they merely listened politely before proceeding with their original plans. Perhaps this was because the committee was never able to build what some social scientists refer to as “civic capacity”—a combination of influence and authority that derives from broad-based support by both community

<sup>16</sup> Helen Oakes to Dr. James S. Coleman, Feb. 7, 1967, and James S. Coleman to Helen Oakes, Feb. 13, 1967, both in box 1, folder Correspondence 7/1/66–3/6/67, in WPSC Papers. See also An Analysis by the WPSC of the CORDE Corporation's Feasibility Study of Educational Parks, Feb. 13, 1967, box 2, folder Public Statements and News Releases, 1967, WPCS Papers. CORDE was an acronym for Community Resources and Development, Inc. Soon after receiving the CORDE Report, the SDP issued a school building plan that favored scattered site construction, not educational parks. Anne E. Phillips, “A History of the Struggle for School Desegregation in Philadelphia, 1955–1967,” *Pennsylvania History* 72 (2005): 65–66.

leaders and public officials.<sup>17</sup> Although its membership was multiracial, the majority of WPSC officers came from one demographic group: middle-class whites. None held appointive or elective office in Philadelphia. Helen Oakes, however, took advantage of the knowledge she had gained and the network of contacts she had acquired as the organization's chair. Acting on her own, she wrote and self-published a lengthy paper titled "The School District of Philadelphia: A Critical Analysis." Its purpose, she said, was to call attention to the fact that, despite recent reforms, the SDP still fell far short of what the citizens of Philadelphia had a right to expect. "This paper," she wrote, "is written to stress the fact that existing conditions demand that the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Superintendent's staff must focus their full attention and the School District's resources on devising and implementing plans which will lead to immediate improvement in the quality of teaching and the amount of learning taking place in hundreds of classrooms at the same time."<sup>18</sup>

Oakes first turned her attention to the Board of Education. Reorganized in 1965, its nine members were no longer appointed by the judges of the Court of Common Pleas—who had shouldered this responsibility for nearly a century—but by the mayor from a slate of candidates put together by a nominating panel whose members he had selected. Presided over by former mayor Richardson Dilworth, the new board had made many improvements to the district's facilities, faculty, and programs. But, according to Oakes, it had not addressed such fundamental problems as high dropout rates and low achievement levels. "Too many teachers and administrators," she complained, believed that "the children themselves, their parents, their backgrounds and their environment" were to blame.<sup>19</sup> The fault really lay with the district itself, which needed to engage in some soul searching. Anticipating what investigative journalist Charles E. Silberman would soon assert in his acclaimed book *Crisis in the Classroom*, Oakes argued that the Dilworth Board of Education had made change for the sake of change and did not really know where it

<sup>17</sup> Jeffrey R. Henig and Clarence Stone, "Civic Capacity and Education Reform: The Case for School-Community Realignment," in *City Schools: How Districts and Communities Can Create Smart Education Systems*, ed. Robert Rothman (Cambridge, MA, 2007), 125–26, 129.

<sup>18</sup> Helen Oakes, "The School District of Philadelphia: A Critical Analysis," 2, box 22, folder 8, Helen Oakes Papers: Personal (Acc. 995), Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries. Emphasis is in the original. Hereafter cited as Oakes Papers: Personal.

<sup>19</sup> Gittell and Hollander, "Process of Change," 218, 222; Oakes, "Critical Analysis," 25, 27–28.



wanted to take the district. Silberman called this kind of leadership “mindless.” Oakes was more cynical, labeling it a “smoke screen.” Simply “modernizing buildings and equipment, and implementing new programs,” she said, “does not change the deplorable truth that black children and poor children (black and white) are still being neglected and short-changed . . . in the city’s schools.”<sup>20</sup>

Would Helen Oakes have written this paper had there never been organizations like the WPSC? Perhaps—by the late 1960s the federal government was actively promoting citizen involvement in public schools—but without it she never would have had the social capital necessary for her words to have an impact. Because of her work with the WPSC and the League of Women Voters, she knew there was an audience for her ideas, a network of people like herself who would read and react to what she wrote. She would build on this foundation two years later when she began to write and publish the *Oakes Newsletter*. The idea for this publication actually came from her husband, but she did most of the work herself. Assisted by her sister-in-law, who edited what she wrote, Oakes published ten times a year at first. Leading educators such as Jack Niemeyer, the president of the Bank Street College of Education in New York, were the source of many insights, but she relied mainly on local fieldwork, ecumenical reading, and the careful analysis of SDP reports and records.<sup>21</sup> No longer just informed, Helen Oakes now represented herself as an expert on educational policy and practice. It was a bold move, especially for a woman with no formal training in a field populated if not dominated by people with advanced degrees and prestigious titles. But believing in the power of what she knew, Oakes made the newsletter viable, persuading two foundations and a few hundred loyal subscribers to pay its bills.

Over the course of its run (1970–89), the *Oakes Newsletter* became very well known. Its circulation never exceeded 2,400, but its visibility was great because Oakes sent it to local leaders in government, business, and education, who then passed it around. She reached out to them—but not to the SDP’s teachers or their union leaders—because she wanted to influence the making of public school policy. The *Oakes Newsletter* was,

<sup>20</sup> Charles E. Silberman, *Crisis in the Classroom: The Remaking of American Education* (New York, 1970), 10–11; Oakes, “Critical Analysis,” 39.

<sup>21</sup> Oakes interview, 12–14. On social capital formation in Philadelphia, see Richardson Dilworth, ed., *Social Capital in the City: Community and Civic Life in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 2006), 5.

in effect, her attempt to build a different kind of social—and, ultimately, political—capital, the kind intended to connect her with the city's corporate leaders and public officials. They might be persuaded by the careful research that went into each issue, if not by her progressive point of view. But because the newsletter often criticized the educational status quo, it made enemies as well as friends among Philadelphia's most powerful people. Mayors, superintendents, and school board members read it because they might have to defend themselves. The newsletter covered a wide range of topics, among the most common being the teaching of reading, school finance, and desegregation. Social justice was a theme, especially when it came to the schooling received by at-risk students. Incompetent management was always fair game, and for those whose leadership she condemned, its criticism must have stung. "The Newsletter's goal," Oakes explained more than once, "is to contribute to restoring the Philadelphia public school system to financial health and changing the system so that it will better serve the educational aspirations and needs of the students."<sup>22</sup>

Oakes stressed the idea that public education depends on public participation. "The public and school staff members must hammer the budget out together," she wrote in the inaugural issue (April 1970), when the SDP was facing the first of what would turn out to be many fiscal crises.<sup>23</sup> In the absence of such collaboration, the community could not rest assured that its priorities would be known, much less honored. Achieving this was no easy task, especially in an institution that was so big and bureaucratic. But for meaningful participation to occur, more than just interest was needed; civic activists had to do their homework. As if to prove that such people existed, Oakes held up the work of Floyd Logan and Annette Temin for celebration and emulation. As the leader of the Educational Equality League, a civil rights group that he founded, Logan "used statistics, logic, documented facts, analysis of School District reports, and a methodological approach to achieve breakthroughs and improvements." Oakes and Temin were well acquainted, having sat together on the board of the CCPEP in the early 1970s. Even as its president, Temin eschewed the limelight, Oakes told her readers in 1974, preferring collective achievement to individual recognition. Her work habits

<sup>22</sup> "Biographical Data, June 9, 1986"; Oakes interview, 31.

<sup>23</sup> *Oakes Newsletter*, Apr. 1970, 1. All issues of the *Oakes Newsletter* are in box 1, Oakes Papers: Personal. They are distributed as follows: folder 1, Apr. 1970–June 1975; folders 4 and 5, Sept. 1975–May/June 1982; folders 6 and 7, Sept. 1982–May/June, 1989.

were as important as her integrity. "She keeps abreast of new or experimental programs," Oakes wrote, and when she finds one that is worthwhile, she arranges a trip or a meeting to learn more about it. "In this way, she has introduced new ideas and concepts and stimulated others to try them."<sup>24</sup> With these words, Helen Oakes might just as well have been describing herself. They reflect what she did for many years as the writer and publisher of her newsletter.

### *Holding Insiders Accountable*

The *Oakes Newsletter* had been in publication for more than twelve years when Dr. Constance Clayton became Philadelphia's school superintendent. For all that time Oakes had commented on the performance of the SDP's professional staff and administrative leaders. Put another way, she held them accountable. In 1974 she called attention to the district's convenient but dysfunctional habit of compiling the final grades for high school students two or three weeks before the school year ended. Once grades were in, she pointed out, student effort fell off and attendance diminished. School officials blamed the problem on the district's computers, but Oakes was not satisfied. "Teachers of all elementary and secondary school students have a responsibility to give students high quality instruction as long as school is officially in session," she wrote. "Administrators have a responsibility to see that this happens."<sup>25</sup>

The process by which Philadelphia teachers were hired and supervised gave Oakes another reason to focus on the gap between what the community had a right to expect and what the SDP actually delivered. She complained loudly about teacher absenteeism, a pervasive and persistent problem tolerated by principals at a cost of millions. Such common practices as the provisional appointment of teachers and the transfer rather than dismissal of weak or inept ones belied the district's public statements about educational excellence. "If you strip the excuses away," Oakes observed, "what remains as the primary obstacle to dismissing teachers is a spineless, defeatist, immoral attitude toward the problem on the part of the decision makers or their advisers." The result, in her estimation, was a "crime against children."<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Oakes Newsletter*, Jan. 1975, 4, Oct. 1974, 1, 4.

<sup>25</sup> *Oakes Newsletter*, Mar. 1974, 2-4.

<sup>26</sup> *Oakes Newsletter*, Feb. 1974, 7, Feb. 1976, 2-4.

Oakes took a special interest in the leadership provided by the SDP's quintessential insiders, its superintendents. Appointed in 1972, Matthew Costanzo received mixed reviews in the *Oakes Newsletter*. He won Oakes's respect for insisting that instruction continue "as long as school is officially in session"; he drew criticism for failing to do the research that was needed to cut chronic teacher absenteeism. But Costanzo shined in comparison to the school board that hired and eventually fired him. That board, she wrote, "decreased his effectiveness by interfering with personnel appointments, reversing his decisions and publicly displaying by their manner a lack of respect for him."<sup>27</sup> Led by public transit official Arthur Thomas, most of its members owed their seats to Frank L. Rizzo, a man who often spoke for the city's blue-collar, white residents. As Philadelphia's police commissioner in the 1960s, Rizzo had caught their attention by routing a crowd of black students demonstrating at the headquarters of the Board of Education in November 1967. Four years later he campaigned successfully for the city's highest political office on a law-and-order platform that included a promise to fire Mark Shedd, Costanzo's Harvard-educated predecessor. In 1975, Mayor Rizzo persuaded the school board to replace Costanzo with another Italian American, Michael P. Marcase. A Philadelphia native and SDP lifer, Marcase had taught industrial arts at three city high schools before being invited "downtown" in the mid-1960s.<sup>28</sup> If ever there was an SDP insider, it was Marcase.

By the end of Rizzo's first term, the SDP was in serious trouble. Plagued by budget deficits, it cut programs and furloughed teachers. "What happens in the classroom," Oakes wrote in 1977, "is inextricably joined with the budget and the way that the Board and the Superintendent accept their responsibility to balance and fund it." The SDP needed much more money, but its leaders were not about to risk their status as insiders by challenging an overbearing mayor who adamantly opposed any tax increases. Oakes was disgusted. "The superintendent and the Board have abandoned their responsibilities and are serv-

<sup>27</sup> *Oakes Newsletter*, Mar. 1974, 4, Feb. 1974, 4, Sept. 1975, 4. In September 1975, the *Oakes Newsletter* expressed "thanks" to Costanzo two months after the board abruptly dismissed him. *Oakes Newsletter*, Sept. 1975, 4.

<sup>28</sup> Countryman, *Up South*, 225–28; Lynne Litterine, "Michael Marcase: Unapologetic Conservative," Dec. 28, 1978, in Michael Marcase—Schools Superintendent, Bulletin Clippings Collection.

ing instead as city hall puppets.”<sup>29</sup> Their behavior discredited some of her most prized ideals: professional competence and respect for students.

Between 1977 and 1982 Oakes joined many others in criticizing Marcuse, whose credentials and conduct left so much to be desired that eventually only the two men who mattered most—the president of the school board and the mayor—thought he still deserved to be the superintendent. In 1978 the board approved a new collective bargaining agreement with the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT), a move that prompted Oakes to call for Marcuse’s removal. “He has demonstrated his incompetence,” she said, “and should be replaced at once.” Never before had she taken such a bold step, but the new agreement specified that “seniority alone” would determine staffing levels and assignments. This placed the students’ education at the mercy of the most objective but least professional measure of insider status: length of employment. The superintendent, she wrote, “should have foreseen the devastating consequences this policy would have as it ruined programs and wrecked departments.”<sup>30</sup> The PFT favored it, of course, and Marcuse was more than amenable. After all, it relieved him of having to make difficult personnel decisions, but wasn’t that, Oakes asserted, the real job of the superintendent? If the good citizen had a responsibility to become well informed, then surely the board and the superintendent had an even greater obligation to insist upon professional competence.

Helen Oakes did not get what she wanted in 1978. In fact, it would take the election of a new mayor to dislodge the superintendent. But Oakes did not back away, and eventually most of the city’s business and political leaders came to share her views. She did not bring Michael Marcuse down, but he was unable to withstand the pressure she helped bring to bear on him. By 1981 the city’s press was saying that confidence in the district would be impossible to restore as long as he remained the superintendent.<sup>31</sup> When Rizzo left office, Marcuse’s days were numbered.

<sup>29</sup> *Oakes Newsletter*, Nov. 1977, 4, Sept. 1978, 4.

<sup>30</sup> *Oakes Newsletter*, Oct. 1978, 3–4.

<sup>31</sup> *Oakes Newsletter*, Sept./Oct. 1980, 1, Mar. 1982, 1; “Why the Mayor Wants Marcuse Out,” Aug. 9, 1980, and “End the Marcuse Contract,” Aug. 18, 1980, both in Marcuse Editorials; Mary Bishop, Thomas Ferrick Jr., and Donald Kimmelman, “Michael Marcuse,” Aug. 31, 1981, School Superintendents: Features, all in Bulletin Clippings Collection.

*Helen Oakes and Constance Clayton*

On a humid day in October 1982, Constance Clayton replaced Michael Marcase as Philadelphia's school superintendent. A lifelong Philadelphian, Clayton was also an SDP insider; she had attended the city's public schools in the 1940s and had been employed by them almost continuously since 1955, when she graduated from college. With a master's degree from Temple University and a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania, she possessed the credentials as well as the experience to justify her selection. But she was also a single woman, and chief school officers were rarely unmarried and even more rarely women. A well-established feature of employment in American education for more than a century, gender discrimination became even more pronounced after World War II. According to a study published by the American Association of School Administrators in 1981, the proportion of women superintendents in the United States had dropped from 9 to less than 1 percent in a single generation. Marital status presented a special dilemma for women who aspired to be superintendents. If they were married, they could be seen as insufficiently committed; if they were not, they could be stigmatized as unfeminine. For black women the challenge was even greater because so few of them ever became superintendents; in the early 1980s there were just eleven. Only two ran big city school systems: Floretta D. McKenzie in Washington, DC, and Ruth B. Love in Chicago. Throughout the search for Marcase's replacement, most of those mentioned as potential candidates had been men. Among the five finalists, Clayton was the only woman but not the only African American.<sup>32</sup>

It would be wrong to say that Constance Clayton owed her selection to the editor and author of the *Oakes Newsletter*. As soon as it had become clear that Marcase's term would end, Oakes weighed in. Hoping for a reformer like Mark Shedd, she argued that the board should look for someone from outside the SDP. He or she could operate independently, making decisions free from the political and personal baggage that comes

<sup>32</sup> Jackie M. Blount, *Destined to Rule the Schools: Women and the Superintendency, 1873–1995* (Albany, NY, 1998), 128–31, 148–49, 176; Nancy L. Arnez, "Selected Black Female Superintendents of Public School Systems," *Journal of Negro Education* 51 (1982): 309–10; Deborah Wilkinson, "New Superintendent Holds Key to School's Future?" *Philadelphia Tribune*, Aug. 24, 1982, 3. See also Pamela Smith, "Dr. Constance Clayton," *Philadelphia Tribune*, Oct. 12, 1982, 6; and Deborah Wilkinson, "17 Blacks Can Fill Marcase's Position," *Philadelphia Tribune*, Feb. 6, 1982.

with advancement inside any school system. He or she might even be able to disregard the “ethnic alliances” that had formed among the blacks, Italians, and Jews who worked for the SDP. Oakes did not lobby for any candidate, but her own career as a researcher and writer clearly demonstrated that competence and professionalism were not gendered. After Clayton was chosen, Oakes publicly supported the school board’s decision. Although the new superintendent was hardly the outsider Oakes had wanted, Clayton had a lot to recommend her. “She offers the promise of new leadership in new directions,” Oakes wrote. She “puts the children first. Her goal is excellence.” That the new superintendent was a well-qualified woman may have factored into Oakes’s thinking, but it is surely not coincidental that by the time she wrote these words Oakes was a Philadelphia school board member.<sup>33</sup>

Over the course of her eleven years as the SDP’s superintendent, Constance Clayton gradually developed a reputation for being a domineering leader. Her strength and vision were assets when dealing with the press or the teachers’ union, but they could also make her “seem rigid and inflexible in other situations.” The standardized curriculum that she implemented placed the children first, but it limited the freedom of teachers, principals, and other administrators. Working relationships with the officers of the board and even some of her staff sometimes broke down over policy or procedural differences. When this happened, those who disagreed with her often left the system. Among big city superintendents, her long tenure was impressive. In Philadelphia it was exceptional, and Helen Oakes experienced most of it from inside the school system.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Oakes Newsletter*, Mar. 1982, 3, Oct. 1982, 1, 4. Mayor Bill Green appointed Oakes to the Philadelphia school board on April 12, 1982. “Biographical Data, June 9, 1986.” During the search process for Marcuse’s replacement, Oakes went south to evaluate other candidates. One of them was Wilmer S. Cody, the superintendent of schools in Birmingham, Alabama. According to the *Philadelphia Tribune*, she preferred him to Clayton. Jim Davis, “Green Light Did Not Come Easy for Clayton,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, Oct. 5, 1982, 25. Helen Oakes to Debra Weiner, Aug. 3, 1983, series 13, box 46 (Confidential Correspondence, 1982–1986), folder W, and Oakes memo to Ernestine Rouse, Jan. 13, 1984, series 13, box 46, folder R #1, Oakes Papers: Board of Education (SCRC 17); Oakes interview, 20.

<sup>34</sup> Superintendent’s Evaluation, Draft #4, June 23, 1984, series 12, box 44, folder marked superintendent’s evaluation #2, Oakes Papers: Board of Education (SCRC 17); Dale Mezzacappa, “Clayton Announces Retirement but May Stay through November,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 17, 1993, A1; Mezzacappa, “The Tenor of a Tenure,” *ibid.*, Aug. 29, 1993, E1. See also Larry Cuban and Michael Usdan, *Powerful Reforms with Shallow Roots: Improving America’s Urban Schools* (New York, 2003), 102.

The social capital Oakes had amassed among other citizen activists and the recognition her newsletter had gained for her among the city's economic and political leaders made her a reasonable choice for the Board of Education. She accepted her appointment when it eventually came, believing she would be better able to make a difference as an insider. She also promised her readers that she would continue the newsletter. Some of her new colleagues objected, arguing that by doing so she put herself ahead of them; she responded by inviting them to publish newsletters of their own. Once she became a board member, however, her credibility as an independent critic gradually diminished because she no longer had the same freedom of association and expression.<sup>35</sup> As an insider, she had to exercise discretion in all that she said and did.

#### *From Outsider to Insider*

When Mayor Bill Green offered Helen Oakes a seat on the Philadelphia Board of Education, he compensated for a political decision made by his predecessor. Given the chance to appoint Oakes when she was nominated for the first time in 1979, Frank Rizzo chose Joseph Previty, a retired businessman from South Philadelphia, instead—an action that must have come as no surprise to anyone familiar with him. The board Oakes joined three years later included three women, only one of whom, Dolores Oberholtzer, was a veteran member. Since the mid-1950s there had occasionally been as many as three women on the city's Board of Education. Among the most prominent and enduring were Tobyann Boonin, a longtime member of the Home and School Council, and Elizabeth Hallstrom Greenfield, the wife of a wealthy businessman and political power broker.<sup>36</sup> Initially completing an unexpired term,

<sup>35</sup> Oakes interview, 9, 18; *Oakes Newsletter*, May/June 1982, 1. Board member Samuel Katz said that Oakes should reserve her criticism of the SDP to public meetings of the board. Samuel Rubin and Dolores Oberholtzer claimed that continuing to publish a subscription newsletter created a conflict of interest for Oakes. Dan Rottenberg, "More Newsletters Needed," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Mar. 26, 1983, 11A; Oakes interview, 19–20.

<sup>36</sup> "Retired Exec's on School Board," July 3, 1979, Arthur Thomas: School Board, 1978, Bulletin Clippings Collection. Oakes was no doubt aware that George Hutt resigned as chair of the WPSC executive committee in 1965 to join the Philadelphia Board of Education, on which he served until his death thirteen years later. His appointment may have been due to his association with the WPSC but was more likely attributable to the fact that he had once been the director of the Education Council of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce. Box 1, folder Membership 1965, WPSC Papers. Data on Philadelphia school board membership come from the *Philadelphia Bulletin Almanac* (Philadelphia, 1956–81). For more on Greenfield's impact on the board, see Gittel and Hollander, "The Process of Change," 228–29.



Oakes received her own appointment from Mayor Green in July 1983, six months ahead of schedule. The mayor also named Rodney Johnson, the city's managing director, and Christine Torres-Matrullo, a psychologist of Puerto Rican heritage. Having made it clear that he was not running for reelection, the mayor appeared to some to be stocking the school board with his future in mind. Perhaps, like former mayor Richardson Dilworth, he wanted to be appointed to the board with an eye to becoming its president.<sup>37</sup>

The timing of these appointments did not sit well with some black politicians and civic leaders. Augustus Baxter, who left the board in 1983 after serving for twelve years, called Green's actions a "charade." The mayor's heir apparent, Wilson Goode, publicly complained that, as a lame duck, Green should have waited to consult with him after the election. Goode did not openly question the qualifications of Green's appointees, but when Oakes's full term on the board ended six years later, he replaced her with Floyd Alston, a black banker from Mt. Airy, one of the city's few integrated neighborhoods. Oakes was not ready to step down, and some attributed her departure to Constance Clayton. But the politics of race almost certainly had as much to do with Goode's decision as her relationship with Clayton. Because of the city's increasingly well-organized black electorate, black power was now much more than a slogan in Philadelphia. In the SDP, black students far outnumbered those from any other racial or ethnic group. All of these factors justified the selection of a black man over a white woman, regardless of their respective qualifications.<sup>38</sup>

The reservations Oakes had harbored about Clayton when she was an inside candidate for superintendent carried over into the beginning of her administration. Oakes asked pointed questions from time to time and complained to others when she could not contain her frustration. She agreed with those who perceived a lack of leadership in the SDP—not enough people who took responsibility for the quality of life in the schools, were dedicated to their renewal, and cared about the students. When Clayton agreed to hold regular meetings with the board at the

<sup>37</sup> Jim Davis, "Green Must Have Personal Interest in School Board," *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 15, 1983.

<sup>38</sup> Oscar Berryman, "School Selection Is a 'Charade,'" and "Goode: New Mayor Should Have Made Selection," both in *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 12, 1983; "Goode Picks Black for School Board," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Mar. 9, 1989, B3; Dale Mezzacappa, "Helen Oakes Leaves School Board after 7½ Years," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 2, 1989.

beginning of her second year, Oakes reported being “very pleased,” but opined that something more was needed. The superintendent, she insisted, should declare “what she hopes to accomplish this year, next year and further down the road.” Gradually, Oakes became more approving—praising Clayton’s “philosophy, mission and goals for the system.” They came together on the subject of desegregation, but there continued to be some disagreements, especially about her leadership style, creating tension between them.<sup>39</sup> As a well-informed citizen, Oakes had sometimes weighed ethics against expedience before voicing a criticism or making a recommendation. As a board member, she had to cooperate with others and be guarded in her public statements. The decision to publish the *Oakes Newsletter* on a quarterly basis in 1987 was made not just because of declines in foundation support and subscription revenue. Oakes had begun to feel the burden of putting it together on a regular basis. It had also become a distraction—a holdover from her time as a citizen activist. Oakes pulled the plug entirely in January 1989, explaining with regret that it was time for her “to undertake something new.”<sup>40</sup> With its last issue, it is not an exaggeration to say, an era in the history of the SDP had ended.

While Clayton was its superintendent, the SDP took a new approach to desegregation. As reported in the *Oakes Newsletter*, the Philadelphia Board of Education and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission signed a memorandum of understanding on October 24, 1983, temporarily suspending the litigation over school segregation that had put the two at loggerheads for seventeen years. The basis for this agreement was a “modified desegregation plan” that the superintendent hoped would be true to its title: “To Educate All Our Children.” Conceding that desegregation could not be mandated, it targeted thirty elementary and middle schools for “voluntary transfers” and called for an increase in the district’s efforts to achieve “a racially balanced instructional staff.” To mitigate the effects of embedded racial isolation, it also proposed a social studies curriculum that would “focus on intercultural and interpersonal understanding.” In the past, Oakes reminded her readers,

<sup>39</sup> *Oakes Newsletter*, May/June 1983, 3, Feb. 1984, 4, May/June 1984, 2. Reflecting on her relationship with the superintendent, Oakes had this to say in 2012: “I think that we had a working relationship in the beginning that deteriorated, because she came to see me as an enemy. And so then it was—once that happened, you couldn’t work with her.” Oakes interview, 23.

<sup>40</sup> Oakes interview, 25–26; *Oakes Newsletter*, Feb. 1987, 4, Jan. 1989, 4.

she had not favored any such plan. Everything she had learned as a resident of the city and an observer of the SDP had taught her to believe in compulsion, not persuasion. In the mid-1970s, she had even been amenable to forced busing. But now, she said, “demographics, geography, the climate of the times, and the overwhelming necessity for tranquility dictate that desegregation decisions be left to individual parents and students.”<sup>41</sup>

There is no way to know whether Helen Oakes would have taken this pragmatic position had she not become a member of the Board of Education. But when it came to fiscal matters, she was less willing to pare her lofty expectations. The budget had always been one of her chief concerns, perhaps because it never seemed to be balanced. In the *Oakes Newsletter's* inaugural issue, published in April 1970, she argued that the SDP and the city could not resolve the district's budget “crisis” on their own. “Local and state governments do not have adequate tax resources to support the day-to-day operations of public education,” she wrote. “All three levels of government must contribute tax funds if the public schools are to be saved.” She often revisited these ideas in subsequent years, both before and after her status changed from outsider to insider.<sup>42</sup>

In the last issue of the *Oakes Newsletter* to appear before Oakes became a member of the Board of Education, she complained that the board lacked the resolve to make the necessary budget cuts while maintaining essential programs. “Only a minority,” she wrote, “are committed to placing the highest priority on serving the interests of the students and utilizing facts, reason, and logic in a search for solutions to the problem.” To counteract the effects of many years of declining enrollments, she called for the development of a “long range plan for school closings,” the elimination of waste, and a teachers' contract that “gradually reduces the strains on our resources.” Such comments may have been justified, but they were no way to build on the social capital that helped her get her position.<sup>43</sup> Instead she told her readers what she believed they deserved to hear regardless of the political consequences. She did this again in future years, for example, when she warned in 1985 that the board's behavior

<sup>41</sup> “To Educate All Our Children: Proposed Modifications to the Desegregation Plan of the School District of Philadelphia,” Oct. 3, 1983, 32, 36, 50–51 (in author's possession); *Oakes Newsletter*, Nov./Dec. 1983, 1–4, Jan. 31, 1974, 4, Sept. 16, 1975, 3–4.

<sup>42</sup> *Oakes Newsletter*, Apr. 1970, 2. See also May 1977, 3, Feb. 1978, 4, and Mar. 1978, 1, 4.

<sup>43</sup> *Oakes Newsletter*, May/June 1982, 3–4.

created uncertainty for parents and students by unnecessarily prolonging teachers' contract negotiations.<sup>44</sup>

The balanced budget Oakes voted for at the end of her first year on the board assumed that an extra \$20 million would come from the state—money that was promised but not guaranteed at the time of its adoption. Oakes believed that the SDP had a legitimate claim because three-quarters of the district's shortfall was attributable to the state's underfunding of special education.<sup>45</sup> But not everyone would agree with such reasoning. Pennsylvania's share of the money spent on public education in Philadelphia had risen dramatically since the mid-1960s, and it would not be long before many in Harrisburg would begin to ask repeatedly what the commonwealth was getting for its money. The publication in 1983 of the national report known as *A Nation at Risk*, which maintained that public education in America was failing, increased pressure on school boards everywhere. Oakes cited the report in her newsletter, endorsing its conclusion that the nation's "survival and security" depends upon "our ability to reform our system of education and make a national commitment to the attainment of excellence in our schools." Oakes expressed confidence in Clayton's commitment to excellence, but in order to keep state dollars increasing, she and her colleagues on the board would have to do more than help the superintendent raise standards and reform curriculum. They would have to make alliances with people outside their established circles of communication and association, a challenge that would eventually prove to be more than daunting for all of Philadelphia's political leaders, including the members of its Board of Education.<sup>46</sup>

### *Outside In and Inside Out*

Citizen participation in public education is nothing new, especially for white, middle-class Americans. It has taken many forms over the years, its recruits numbering in the hundreds of thousands. Its value in a democracy has seldom been questioned, but there is an irony about it that is revealed by the career of Helen Oakes. There may not be that much of a

<sup>44</sup> In 1985 Oakes told her readers that after protracted negotiations, the SDP came out looking like a "loser" because it miscalculated the union's response to a "package of educational reforms which the teachers viewed as unreasonable." *Oakes Newsletter*, Oct. 1985, 3–4.

<sup>45</sup> *Oakes Newsletter*, May/June 1983, 4.

<sup>46</sup> *Oakes Newsletter*, May/June, 1983, 3, Feb. 1984, 4.

difference between what outsiders and insiders can accomplish in reforming a large urban public school system. The social capital Oakes acquired as a civic activist gave her leverage. Her newsletter gave her recognition, facilitating her appointment to the Board of Education. She joined the board hoping to make a significant difference, but once she became a public official she could not sustain the social capital she had amassed among her friends and neighbors, much less extend it to include those outside her original sphere of influence. Her advocacy sometimes alienated those whose help she needed to change the system. Nor could she make full use of her vast knowledge of public education. If she spoke out, she ran the risk of being dismissed as an apologist for the establishment or ostracized by those who wanted only “team players” inside the system.

Since the inception of public education in the mid-nineteenth century, Americans have often attributed its success to civic activism. For more than a few, this belief became an article of faith in the 1960s. But many of the civic groups of that era have disappeared, replaced in the discourse on educational reform by paid lobbyists and professional educators. Many parents have come to see public schools as part of the problem, not part of the solution, in urban education. Those who think this way often send their children to private schools or charter schools; some opt out altogether, homeschooling their children. Civic activism may never again be as important as it was in the 1960s, but the career of Helen Oakes still has something important to teach us. There may be no guarantees when it comes to citizen involvement in urban public education, but meaningful and lasting change does not happen by accident, even if it seems to take forever. Meanwhile, the civic activist can always take satisfaction from saying what needs to be said. Helen Oakes certainly did.

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WILLIAM W. CUTLER III

## BOOK REVIEWS

*New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty.* By EVAN HAEFELI. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. 384 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.)

Evan Haefeli's *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty* is a thorough account of religion in the Dutch North American colony during its roughly half-century existence. Yet the work is also much broader; Haefeli ranges from the Union of Utrecht in 1579 to the final defeat of the Dutch in North America in 1672, exploring religion in Dutch colonies from Batavia to Brazil along the way.

Haefeli also addresses the meaning of religious tolerance. Drawing on recent scholarship, he defines tolerance in terms of process, not content, social negotiation, not legal standard. "Dutch tolerance in New Netherland was not what the colonial government did or failed to do," he writes, but "was the whole process of negotiating" among "a variety of groups and their conflicts with one another" (15).

Because negotiation varies by time and place, the meaning of religious tolerance varies. The Dutch practiced "connivance," allowing quiet dissent from the Dutch Reformed Church. "The lack of visibility, of public presence, was a key aspect of connivance," Haefeli explains. It required inconspicuousness of dissenters whose presence was never formally acknowledged by Dutch authorities. "Connivance in Amsterdam was frequently mistaken as religious freedom by foreigners," but Lutheran and Jewish worship was relegated to the city's "side streets, attics, and warehouses," and the liberality of Amsterdam "was a great exception in the Dutch world" (54–55, 60).

Connivance was less liberal in most other Dutch cities and provinces, including New Netherland. Colonial Dutch authorities forbade the marginal presence of Quaker, Lutheran, and Jewish worship while permitting nonmembership in the Dutch Church. They did "not arrest someone for being of a different faith, only for holding illicit gatherings" (225). The colony's Amsterdam directors disliked persecution but never compelled the colony's director general Peter Stuyvesant "to permit the practice of any religion besides that of the Dutch Reformed Church" (232). Struggles for dissenting worship did occur in New Netherland, but they took place in English villages on Long Island, at a distance from New Amsterdam's authority (96–97, 282–83).

Haefeli thus corrects overblown versions of New Netherland's contribution to American pluralism (279). The English, not the Dutch, were responsible for "the

religious pluralism that was the hallmark of the middle colonies and, later, the United States” (284). This fact, rightly emphasized (19, 91, 210, 282, 286), makes the book’s title misleading; it suggests that the word “Dutch” should have been removed.

The larger issue, though, is Haefeli’s insistence that “there is no universal standard of tolerance,” only a “multiplicity of its manifestations” (8–9). Religious tolerance certainly manifests in multiple ways, though it is unclear whether for Haefeli this multiplicity precludes merely one universal standard of tolerance or the use of moral standards in examining the subject. Prohibiting corporal punishment for religious nonconformity in favor of modest fines is certainly more tolerant than inflicting it. Allowing inconspicuous dissenting worship without fines is more tolerant still, as is equally allowing the penalty-free public worship of all religious groups. Degrees and discriminatory applications of punishment, inconspicuousness, and equality abound in the past and present, rendering a one-dimensional scoring or grading system for religious tolerance problematic. The difficulty of such a singular standard is at least part of Haefeli’s point in maintaining that “tolerance is not a universal norm or category of analysis that can be applied equally to all cases” (281). Yet something more seems intended. What about standards of moral judgment in reasoning about tolerance? If it is true that the English are more responsible than the Dutch for American religious liberty, it is decidedly not “for better *or* worse [that] the English way ultimately proved the more decisive for American history” (19; emphasis mine).

*Bronx Community College of the  
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CHRISTOPHER S. GREENDA

*A Harmony of the Spirits: Translation and the Language of Community in Early Pennsylvania.* By PATRICK M. ERBEN. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. 352 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$45.)

Scholars of early Pennsylvania frequently associate the colony’s founding with William Penn’s attempt to establish a “holy experiment” where religious toleration would foster a utopian society of people living together in peace. In most narratives, however, Penn’s ideal proved difficult to create as immigrants from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds sought to establish their place. In *A Harmony of the Spirits: Translation and the Language of Community in Early Pennsylvania*, Patrick Erben seeks to dispel the “cultural and political myth that language diversity poses a fundamental threat to communal coherence” (14). Instead, he invites readers to “retrain their vision and read . . . like the many radical visionaries” who settled the colony, “with an eye for the unseen links tying

together a multiplicity of human languages and expressions” (15). Erben argues that the texts of early Pennsylvanians provide ample evidence of ways in which they sought to build a common spiritual language by creating translingual and multilingual communities, thus reversing the effects of the Tower of Babel. By reading closely English Quaker writings as well as the texts of German-speaking radical Protestants who immigrated to the colony, Erben makes a compelling case for the ways Pennsylvanians used translation as a tool to overcome the factionalism and partisanship of the colony’s “mixed multitude.”

To understand the dream of a common spiritual language immigrants brought with them, Erben begins in seventeenth-century Europe with the multiple meanings of Babel. He traces how ideas about a universal spiritual language that preceded the linguistic confusion resulting from the Old Testament’s Tower of Babel shaped religious writers’ notions about translation and a “Philadelphian” ideal. Throughout the remaining chapters, Erben looks at the ways “religious and linguistic reform movements in Europe affected early Pennsylvanian attitudes toward the spiritual and communal life of the province indirectly and directly” (55). He presents detailed analyses of Pennsylvania’s promotional literature; the debates generated by the Keithian schism; Francis Daniel Pastorius’s translingual community of letters; the music of the mystics of the Wissahickon, the Ephrata community, and the Moravians; the response of the peace churches to wars beginning in the 1740s; and Moravian missionaries’ grammars and lexicons of North American Indian languages. In each case, Erben makes compelling arguments about how Euro-Americans and Native Americans implemented translation and multilingual communication to create common spiritual ground across diverse faiths and cultures.

The strengths of *A Harmony of the Spirits* lie in Erben’s focus on the German language literature of Pennsylvania and his Atlantic perspective. Much of the literature on early Pennsylvania has been dominated, not surprisingly, by writing about William Penn and the Quakers. Erben’s own facility with languages allows him to translate nicely the nuances of early writers. By looking closely at the German language literature—both manuscript and print—and by studying translation and the interconnections between German and English writers and immigrants, Erben decenters the Anglo-American narrative of the colony’s early history. Instead, he weaves the story of the German radical Protestants and their vision for a common spiritual community into a larger history that shows how they actively engaged the world around them. In addition, Erben places the use of translation and translingual communication tools in the context of religious conversations taking place across multiple cultural communities in Europe. In doing so, he clearly connects attempts to translate religious and intellectual ideals “across differences in language, denomination, gender, and class” in Pennsylvania to larger movements (156; emphasis in the original). By



providing an excellent opportunity for readers to “retrain their vision,” Erben successfully broadens our view of early Pennsylvanians and their efforts to create a harmony of the spirits.

*University of Central Florida*

ROSALIND J. BEILER

*Knowing Nature: Art and Science in Philadelphia, 1740–1840.* Edited by AMY R. W. MEYERS with LISA L. FORD. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012. 432 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$65.)

The fourteen essays in this volume use Philadelphia as a vantage point to address the relationships between art and science during the colonial and early national periods. Essayists describe the international exchange of correspondence; the purchase, trade, and keeping of live (and dried or stuffed) plants and animals on different continents; and the use of flora and fauna in a wide variety of media. Many of the contributors address the intersections of the worlds of naturalists and their publishers, amateur followers, and patrons. Although we have long assumed that science informs art, essayist and editor Amy Meyers contends that “artistic and visual culture informed scientific interpretation of the natural world” (4).

The project, intended as an exhibition and catalog, resulted instead in two conferences, this volume, and a forthcoming book. The essays refined after a 2004 conference in Philadelphia range from the broad, deep sweeps (Therese O’Malley on gardens) to thick descriptions (Amy Meyers on turtles and Alexander Nemerov on snakes). O’Malley discusses the relationships among Philadelphia’s intellectual communities and the concentration of significant gardens in the city. In addition to enumerating specific gardens and their visitors, she has the reader consider the importance of a movement through a garden while in conversation with intellectual peers. Mark Laird looks at the use of American and Asian flora and fauna in English gardens, particularly those at Goodwood, Selborne, and Kew. He places as much emphasis on animals as he does on plants, and his study of birds is particularly enlightening.

Several essays are models for the careful reading of objects. Margaret Pritchard summarizes North American cartography and provides profitable, close readings of maps in the context of their creation. Methods for coloring prints—manually and mechanically—are explored by James N. Green. He describes the techniques and variations among editions of books in ways that will encourage readers to look more closely at these images. The high-quality, abundant illustrations in the volume are put to particularly effective use in these two essays.

Several essayists tie naturalists' work to the decorative arts. Meyers notes William Bartram's use of decorative arts terminology to describe the turtle. Janice L. Neri employs Chinese and Chinese-inspired objects to examine relationships among the decorative arts, natural history, and consumption. These authors' significant conclusions would have been strengthened by choosing more artifacts for which the owner is known. Alicia Weisberg-Roberts examines the production and consumption of textiles, allying business and natural history with the decorative arts. Her work is enhanced by employing predominantly objects with known provenances.

The quibbles are minor ones. Text tying the essays together, short captions amplifying key illustrations, and more variety in techniques of analysis of individual objects would have strengthened the volume. An essay addressing shells more explicitly would have been a useful addition. But, like all important texts, the book implies questions other scholars might explore, such as how the city's scientific communities contributed to the perception of the importance of the region's Quakers well after the colonial period. This fine volume would be a welcome addition to the library of anyone interested in the intersections of art and science or the history of Philadelphia.

*Penn State University, Harrisburg*

ANNE VERPLANCK

*The Pennsylvania Associators, 1747–1777.* By JOSEPH SEYMOUR. (Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2012. 304 pp. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.)

The Pennsylvania Association was one of the most unique and interesting military organizations in colonial America. Because Pennsylvania lacked a militia, concerned citizens took it upon themselves to organize a voluntary, extralegal corps to defend the province. Often cited but rarely explored in detail, the Associators are the topic of Joseph Seymour's book.

Seymour begins with the founding of Pennsylvania, explaining how William Penn and his pacifist Quaker coreligionists avoided establishing a colonial militia by making treaties with Native Americans. By the 1740s, however, many colonists questioned this approach, especially once French attacks on the frontier and on the Delaware River seemed imminent. In 1747 Benjamin Franklin appealed to Pennsylvanians to associate for defense, and thousands heeded the call. Seymour traces associations from around Pennsylvania but focuses largely on the Philadelphia Artillery, a group for whom considerable evidence survives. The Philadelphia Artillery—and the Associators generally—provided training to colonists during the Seven Years' War and defended the capital during the Paxton

Boys' revolt. When taxation without representation drove Pennsylvanians to declare independence, the Associators led the charge. The creation of a state militia in 1777 made the group superfluous, but not before its artillery and infantry provided the expertise for the American victories at Trenton and Princeton.

"Who were the Associators?" Seymour asks, offering answers through the stories of the men who filled their ranks (xxii). Particularly illuminating is the tale of Benjamin Loxley, who commanded the Philadelphia Artillery for thirty years and trained thousands of Associators. Seymour argues that men like Loxley joined the Associators to defend their families, homes, and liberty, a somewhat obvious conclusion. Readers looking for a more nuanced account of what inspired men to fight should seek out Steven Rosswurm's *Arms, Country, and Class*.

Overall, Seymour offers an intriguing and, at times, engrossing account of late colonial military practices. Readers will certainly enjoy the scenes of the Philadelphia Artillery shaking the city with cannon fire during official celebrations and the details of several battles. At the same time, Seymour misses several opportunities to explore the inner workings of the institution. For example, the Articles of Association declared the group "a temporary expedient in the absence of a proper defense," but when the French threat abated, the ranks of the Associators continued to grow (45). Seymour avoids asking why this might have been, concluding instead that it was "for no apparent reason" (64). Similarly, Seymour indicates that the Paxton Boys' revolt marked a moment of division between Philadelphia Associators and those in the west; the former were prepared to fire on the latter. It is unclear how this breach was repaired. Did an esprit de corps among Associators unite Pennsylvanians—or did the incident provide an opportunity for Philadelphia to demonstrate its hegemony over the province?

*The Pennsylvania Associators* will appeal to military historians and general readers alike. It is a good read, full of colorful stories, that provides a useful narrative for a fascinating chapter of Pennsylvania's history.

*Eastern Michigan University*

JOHN G. MCCURDY

*Dear Friend: Letters and Essays of Elias Hicks*. Edited by PAUL BUCKLEY. (San Francisco: Inner Light Books, 2011. 316 pp. Illustrations, appendices, index. Cloth, \$45; paper, \$25.)

Elias Hicks is one of the best-known names in American Quaker history, largely because of his influence within the eponymous "Hicksite" faction in the schism of 1827–28. Most historians of nineteenth-century America are familiar with the Hicksites' influence on abolitionist and women's rights activism in the antebellum period. Non-Quakers typically associate Quakerism as a whole with

the “unprogrammed” meetings of Friends General Conference, the branch of Quakerism most closely related to the Hicksite heritage. Yet Elias Hicks himself has scarcely been studied by historians. The only scholarly biography on Hicks was published by Bliss Forbush in 1956, and the present volume is only the second critical edition of Hicks’s writings. It follows *The Journal of Elias Hicks* (2009), also edited by Paul Buckley and published by Inner Light Books, a small Quaker press.

Several factors may account for the scholarly neglect of Hicks. His death in 1830 effectively prevented him from leading the movement he had inspired, and he surely would not have endorsed everything that “Hicksite” came to mean. Moreover, his own theology, as Buckley observes, was hard to “pigeonhole.” Hicks saw himself as preserving the original Quaker emphasis on the Inner Light at a time when other Quakers were falling under the influence of evangelical Protestantism, with its tendency (according to Hicks) to idolize both the Bible and the clergy. His “Orthodox” opponents saw him as captive to the countervailing influences of Unitarianism and Deism.

This volume is a collection of seventy-three letters and four brief, unpublished “essays.” Fourteen of the letters are addressed to Hicks’s wife, Jemima Hicks, and twenty-two to his close friend and collaborator William Poole. Buckley stresses that this collection is a representative sample of a much larger body of correspondence. The annotations are light but effective; they include explanations of biblical references, identifications of persons mentioned, and clarifications of nineteenth-century Quaker jargon.

Buckley strives both to refute Forbush’s simplistic characterization of Hicks as a “Quaker liberal” and to persuade readers that Elias Hicks was a creative religious thinker—one worthy of more extensive study. He is largely successful on both counts. These letters are full of seemingly liberal attacks on predestination, original sin, Trinitarianism, and traditional understandings of biblical authority, but all of these are embedded within a complex theological system in which Jesus was simultaneously the “outward” Messiah promised to the Jews and an exemplar of the capacity of every person to submit inwardly to the “Divine Spirit.” Hicks had little in common with those liberals who saw theological disputation as a threat to Christian unity; he had an absolute confidence in the truths he received from the Inner Light, and he defended them with zeal. Nor did he sympathize with the liberal desire to engage with society as a whole; he vigorously policed the sectarian boundaries of Quakerism, portrayed even William Penn as a misguided compromiser, and blasted public schools as “unjust and unrighteous” (85).

Though Buckley persuaded me that Hicks *had* a complex and interesting theology, he did not persuade me that Hicks ever fully *expressed* that theology in writing. Hicks’s letters provide us with intriguing snippets of theology and repetitive responses to his opponents; they do not offer a holistic vision of Christianity. But, mixed in with the theology, the letters illuminate the work that occupied

much of Hicks's life: crisscrossing the nation on behalf of his faith and standing up boldly for his interpretation of that faith when it came under attack. We find Hicks engaging in spontaneous debates with the heterogeneous folks who take shelter together during a snowstorm, we find him bemoaning the incivility of the Orthodox during the time of schism, and, throughout, we find him longing for the companionship of his wife and children. Elias Hicks emerges from this volume as a full person, not merely a label for a movement.

*Harvard Divinity School*

DAN MCKANAN

*A Democracy of Facts: Natural History in the Early Republic.* By ANDREW J. LEWIS. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. 208 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$39.95.)

American naturalists, Andrew J. Lewis argues, occupied a position in the decades following the Revolution that was both uniquely promising and extremely uncomfortable. Under British rule, they had participated in a cosmopolitan scientific world, supplying European theorizers with specimens and information, which in turn bought them entry into the world of polite learning. As these networks decayed, new possibilities emerged. Many naturalists had resented cosmopolitan hierarchies that cast them as permanent clients in a system of patronage. They now saw the possibilities of a new model: democratic rather than aristocratic and nationalist rather than cosmopolitan, organized not around personal networks but around an open market. Knowledge in this new model was to be established in new ways. Stung by elaborate continental theories of American inferiority, American naturalists swore off theorizing and “system building” and devoted themselves instead to the Baconian gathering of facts (15).

Even as they dismantled the old system, Lewis shows us, naturalists now had a new challenge: how were they to establish their own legitimacy and authority in a society where systems of legitimacy and authority were being questioned? In particular, how were they to do so when a curious American public demanded speculations about causes that naturalists now saw as illegitimate—especially when observations from members of that same public were the crucial material of natural history? Not all their answers to these questions were successful. The popularity of the idea that swallows hibernated in the bottoms of ponds, for example, shows how difficult it was to discipline democratically acquired observations, particularly once they had been rendered respectable by wide publication in an expanding and uncontrolled print culture. A chapter on botanical and geological forays into the market demonstrates how difficult it was to maintain a stance of authority once the status of valuable herbs or ores was in question. A chapter on Mound Builders shows us how antiquarianism ultimately spun off

from natural science, creating an alternative sphere of authority in which theories of Vikings or lost Jewish tribes could proliferate. Ultimately, Lewis argues, naturalists found more reliable sources of authority in the rhetorical strategies of natural theology—a field in which the search for God’s underlying design rendered theorizing more respectable—and, institutionally, in the state surveys of the 1830s and 1840s. With this new status, however, came loss. As geologists and botanists professionalized in the service of the state, the old generalist “natural history” came to be seen as a hobby. The practices of knowledge making that achieved legitimacy in the 1840s were not the same as those that had sought it in the 1790s.

With this book, Andrew Lewis gives historians curious about the wealth of natural historical texts produced during the early republic a clear lens through which to understand them. At the same time, he contributes valuably to broader conversations in the history of popular knowledge making and the construction of credibility that specialists will find stimulating and newcomers welcoming.

*Dickinson College*

EMILY PAWLEY

*Mrs. Goodfellow: The Story of America’s First Cooking School.* By BECKY DIAMOND. (Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2012. 288 pp. Illustrations, recipes, notes, bibliography, index. \$26.)

Eliza Goodfellow is a specter haunting students of early American culinary history. She leaves traces of her professional endeavors in arid advertisements for her Philadelphia cooking school and pastry shop; otherwise, we know of her only through the admiring writings of others, especially her students. No higher praise could be lavished on a young housekeeper in the mid-nineteenth century than to be told that her pastries were worthy of that great lady, yet we have not a single recipe directly penned by this near-mythic figure. All that remains of Goodfellow’s craft are competing, contradictory versions of “Goodfellow” recipes that have been gleaned from various manuscripts and collected in Becky Diamond’s deeply researched biography (see “Spanish Buns,” 214–16).

Diamond tries valiantly to bring Goodfellow to life, although with scant hard evidence uncovered despite her unflagging research, she has little choice but to spend much of the book pursuing tangents, such as the Philadelphia tavern, boardinghouse, and restaurant scene or abbreviated culinary histories of exotic curries, catsups, and gumbos—recipes for which appeared in American cookery books of the 1820s–50s. When dealing with her purported subject, Diamond approaches Goodfellow and her cooking school from four perspectives, awkwardly weaving together (1) a fictionalized “day-in-the-life” account of the pastry shop and cooking classes; (2) a historian’s ponderously cautious speculations

of how Goodfellow founded and ran her successful business; (3) a biography and analysis of the work of her famous student, the best-selling cookery and domestic advice writer Eliza Leslie; and (4) a summary of American cooking schools post-Goodfellow. I came away wishing that Diamond had simply written a historical novel, which would have freed her from the historian's strictures and relieved the prose of its cumbersome "perhapses," "possibilities," and "we'll never knows." With the evocative tidbits Diamond uncovered with an archaeologist's zeal, such as the description of the pastry shop's "marble mosaic-patterned floor set in stone and a Venetian door" (174), she could have narrated a colorfully textured story of an independent nineteenth-century woman, widowed three times, in the intelligent manner of Hilary Mantel.

Instead, Diamond attempts history, which ill fits her material; hence, the book is laden with unsatisfying guesses and provides no indication of what Diamond, as a historian, thinks actually happened. About the crucial matter of how Goodfellow learned her pastry craft, we are told: "From circumstantial evidence it appears that her first husband had been a pastry chef. It is also possible that her father, a brother, or an uncle was a pastry chef or baker. . . . [or p]erhaps Goodfellow learned to cook through one or more of the Quaker women in her life when she was a girl in Maryland" (28–29). The only avenue Diamond eliminates is learning through an apprenticeship due to gender, an unremarkable statement.

Diamond's strongest chapter is "Directions for Cookery," a biography of Leslie that supremely fills a gap. Brief biographies of this important writer have appeared in various collections, but Diamond admirably plumbs archives and other unpublished sources to present the most thorough and intimate portrait thus far of Leslie's life and influence. It would be fairer to the reader to have titled this book *Eliza Leslie, the Foremost Student of Mrs. Goodfellow*. The volume would also have benefited from an active editor, who could have eliminated much of the superfluous information and superficial observations. Sadly, *Mrs. Goodfellow* reads like a student struggling to reach a minimum word count for a book report.

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CATHY K. KAUFMAN

*America's First Great Depression: Economic Crisis and Political Disorder after the Panic of 1837.* By ALASDAIR ROBERTS. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012. 264 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$26.)

In 1837 Orestes Brownson offered a sermon, entitled *Babylon is Falling*, in which he tried to make sense of the economic meltdown that had ripped through the United States that fateful year. Brownson denounced the "Spirit of Gain" for

“the direction it has given the men’s minds and hearts, the evil propensities it has fostered, the wicked passions it has strengthened, and the worldliness and sensuality in which it has buried kings, governments and people.” Subsequent generations of observers attributed the Panic of 1837 and the years of economic depression that followed in its wake to a number of more definable political and economic variables, including President Andrew Jackson’s war on the Bank of the United States, international capital flows, an influx of silver from Mexico, and land speculation. Rather than join the debate over which of these factors is most responsible for triggering the crisis, Alasdair Roberts instead seeks to remake this historical event into an instructive lesson for modern-day policymakers. By recasting the Panic of 1837 as the start of the “First Great Depression,” this book offers a clear attempt at creating a “usable past” that can help modern citizens understand how our current unsettling economic landscape is not the first one Americans have been forced to navigate.

*America’s First Great Depression* begins with a present-minded discussion of the relative fall of the American economy since the 2000s, then offers a broad recounting of American history during the late 1830s and 1840s—a narrative in which the economic malaise following the financial collapse of 1837 pervades every aspect of American society. The inclusion of episodes such as Thomas Dorr’s failed rebellion in Rhode Island and the antirent movement in New York—usually presented as an examples of the ascendancy of white male suffrage and the egalitarian rhetoric of the time—are recast with an eye toward how the loss of faith in the American economy reconfigured social relations. This connection is more implied than demonstrated, as Roberts consciously avoids historiographical debates on the subject. As a result, he is able to cram fairly complicated historical events into a single, free-flowing narrative synthesis of the period following the Panic of 1837, with a focus on how the downturn affected the course of political economy at both the state and federal levels. At times, the linkages can be a bit breezy. He integrates the war with Mexico, for example, as such: “Panic caused the depression, which caused default, which caused a war of words across the Atlantic, which caused a dissipation of good feeling, which now affected American policy on Texas” (175–76).

Specialists in the early American republic will find little new here in terms of research or analysis, but these are not the main goals of *America’s First Great Depression*. The author asks instead whether “it is possible to anticipate something about the nature of American politics in the years ahead by learning more about American politics in the long years before the country became an economic hegemon” (6). In providing an affirmative answer to that question with a compact, somewhat narrow, narrative account of the years between the Panic of 1837 and the Mexican War, Alasdair Roberts demonstrates both the potential and limitations of the “usable past” approach, sacrificing much of the broader historical context of the events of this time in order to extract lessons from them. The



book is a kind of secular sermon, not unlike *Babylon is Falling* in spirit, offering warnings drawn from the past that can help policymakers avoid problems in the future.

*University of Florida*

SEAN PATRICK ADAMS

*James Buchanan and the Coming of the Civil War*. Edited by JOHN W. QUIST and MICHAEL J. BIRKNER. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013. 300 pp. Illustrations, index. \$69.95.)

A symposium at James Buchanan's Lancaster home, Wheatland, held in September 2008, has provided the impetus for the second installment of essays about the nation's fifteenth president in as many decades (see Birkner, ed., *James Buchanan and the Political Crisis of the 1850s* [Susquehanna University Press, 1996]). This book's two editors and ten contributing authors collectively reconsider one of America's "least respected chief executives" (x). The title of the volume argues for genuine political agency in a figure who has often been viewed as ineffectual as much as it positions the ensuing chapters in the historiography of the causes of the Civil War.

Indeed, the accumulated wisdom of a past generation still informs studies of Buchanan and the Civil War era. An earlier conversation among historians Kenneth Stampp, Don Fehrenbacher, Robert Johannsen, and Elbert Smith is continued in a compelling dialogue between William Freehling and Michael Holt. Both Holt and Freehling want to keep asking the "big questions" of the generation now gone from the scene: David Potter, Richard Current, and Roy Nichols—the last of whom, the editors note, still stands as the finest interpreter of the Buchanan administration.

The present edited volume brings this scholarly tradition into the 2010s. In one essay, Paul Finkelman plumbs the depths of Buchanan's "disingenuous" involvement in the Supreme Court's 1857 *Dred Scott* decision (40). In another, Michael Morrison believes Buchanan severely miscalculated when he expected an "ebullient nationalism" to effect continual Union (136). Likewise, two chapters address Buchanan's performance during the secession crisis of 1860 to 1861. Jean Baker, whose recent biography of the president is repeatedly cited as sharply critical, thinks Buchanan "failed to interpret" the divided nation (181), while William Shade compares Buchanan favorably to Lincoln, whose mighty shadow nevertheless casts a perpetual pale upon his predecessor.

Since the publication of *James Buchanan and the Political Crisis of the 1850s*, historians have attended to events typically neglected as part of the buildup to the Civil War. William MacKinnon connects the 1857 Utah War to decisions made during the later secession crisis to illuminate Buchanan's "too

clever by half” style of leadership (78). In a refreshing change of pace, John Belohlavek defends Buchanan’s largely successful “doughface diplomacy,” an arena in which the president’s decisions accorded with the future direction of the country’s imperial ambitions (111).

Several authors compare Buchanan to other political figures of the day. Nichole Etcheson invokes the specter of Andrew Jackson in her examination of the vexed relationship of Buchanan to Stephen Douglas over the Kansas territory’s organization. Daniel Crofts deploys the Kentucky Unionist Joseph Holt—a politico accorded much respect in the Lincoln administration and beyond—to read Buchanan’s policy toward secession. Birkner concludes by shedding a favorable light on Buchanan’s wartime reticence, judging him less outspoken (and less critical of the war) than his predecessor Franklin Pierce.

Quist and Birkner have faithfully assembled the disparate strands of Buchanan scholarship into a useful compendium. The breadth of topics and the variability of analytical approaches, moreover, broaden an understanding of the many channels by which the Civil War came about. This is a fine complement to earlier work and a timely contribution during the sesquicentennial of the Civil War.

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*The Fishing Creek Confederacy: A Story of Civil War Draft Resistance.* By RICHARD A. SAUERS and PETER TOMASAK. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2012. 240 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$35.)

On July 31, 1864, a fugitive deserter in Columbia County shot and mortally wounded a Union army officer during a late-night pursuit in the backwoods of Pennsylvania. Rumors began to swirl throughout the state that hundreds of deserters were hiding out in a fort in the woods, armed with a cannon, ready to defend themselves against anyone who might come after them. Federal officials sent a force of Union soldiers into the area to quell the resistance, but they were unable to locate the deserters or the fort. Instead, the soldiers arrested about one hundred local men (mostly, if not all, Democrats) who were suspected of conspiring to oppose the draft. After a brief interrogation at a local church, the military sent more than forty of these men to Philadelphia’s Fort Mifflin for indefinite detention. One man died from the poor conditions at the fort; another went insane. About a dozen were sent to Harrisburg, where they were tried before a military tribunal for acts of disloyalty against the United States government. Several were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment and fines. But as the war wound down in 1865, they all were eventually released.

A thorough account of this alleged organized draft resistance in Columbia County—the so-called Fishing Creek Confederacy—is long overdue. Coauthors

Richard A. Sauers and Peter Tomasak have done an impressive amount of digging at the National Archives in Washington, DC, as well as in a number of other repositories in Pennsylvania. They seek to provide a balanced narrative of the events that transpired, criticizing Republicans for spreading “wild stories” while challenging the standard Democratic narrative that this was a “military occupation” intended to suppress Democratic voters (180, 183).

While *The Fishing Creek Confederacy* is rich in primary source materials, it is lacking in secondary research. For example, the authors rely in part on an undergraduate student paper for their description of Judge George W. Woodward, the Democratic nominee for governor of Pennsylvania in 1863. (Incidentally, they confuse Judge Woodward with his son, George A. Woodward, in the text.) And the chapter entitled “Historiography” discusses many local newspaper articles but does not cite Mark E. Neely Jr.’s Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Fate of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties* (1991), which argues that the Fishing Creek Confederacy was a “wartime myth” propagated by “nervous and gullible Union authorities” (174).

The omission of Neely’s important book points to a larger issue: The authors have done a nice job of detailing this fascinating moment in Pennsylvania history, but they could have better contextualized their story, both historically and historiographically. For example, they seek to refute the Democratic claim that the military presence in Columbia County was an attempt to silence Democratic voters, yet they never acknowledge the Republicans’ well-documented use of the military to suppress Democratic voters in other states during the war. Nor do they discuss military incursions like this one into other rural regions of the North, such as the Battle of Fort Fizzle in Ohio or the Charleston Riot in Illinois. The events in Pennsylvania were, in fact, part of a much larger story of how the military interacted with civilians on the home front during the Civil War.

These reservations aside, *The Fishing Creek Confederacy* is a welcome addition to the growing literature on the Pennsylvania home front during the Civil War, joining other books and articles by Robert M. Sandow, J. Matthew Gallman, William Blair, Timothy J. Orr, Margaret Creighton, Judith Giesberg, and others. College professors in Pennsylvania may find this a useful text for courses on the Civil War and Reconstruction or on Pennsylvania history, as it will give students a unique and little-known perspective on their state’s Civil War experience.

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