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## Letter from the Editor

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Welcome to the edited and revised second issue of the American Public University System (APUS) *Saber and Scroll Journal*. As noted in the revised inaugural issue, authors of articles published in the early issues of the *Saber and Scroll* have expressed interest in purchasing a print-on-demand (POD) version of their work. In response to that request, a small team has tackled editing and revising the first four issues of the journal to improve the content quality and publish each as a print offering.

Sincere thanks are due to APUS faculty member Jennifer Thompson, who, together with the *Saber and Scroll* Editor in Chief, have edited and revised each article and book review published in the second *Saber and Scroll* issue. Thanks are also due to Susanne Schenk Watts, who has carefully proofread the issues created for print-on-demand format. Where appropriate, the team has added public domain artwork to feature articles to enhance the aesthetics of each issue.

Thanks are due to the second issue authors: Kay O’Pry Reynolds, Allison Archer, Emily Herff, Anne Midgley, Christopher Cox, Allyson Perry, Linda Shay, Alice Alvarado, Ben Sorensen, Jim Dick, Mike Gottert, DeAnna Stevens, and Lew Taylor for their donations to the *Saber and Scroll Journal*.

The team wishes to express a special thanks to the second *Saber and Scroll* Editor in Chief, Bruce Evans, for his contributions to the second issue of the journal. Bruce’s original Letter from the Editor is reproduced below:

As historians, we learn that change comes and reveals itself in many forms. This has certainly been the case here at the *Saber & Scroll*. After the publication of the inaugural edition of the journal, our Editor in Chief, Candace McGovern, stepped down from her position. Her efforts on our behalf were important to the launching of this journal and I would like to express our appreciation and best wishes for her future success. I have stepped into the vacancy as the interim Editor in Chief, and I have had the support of an outstanding group of people to help make this second edition possible. I hope you will indulge me if I mention them all here.

First, I would like to thank Carrie Ann Saigeon-Crunk, the vice-president and current acting president for the *Saber & Scroll*, for her leadership and constant support. Second, I must include Katie Reitmayer who has gone beyond her duties as secretary to format this edition of the

journal into its new layout. I also depended heavily on the skills of my three intrepid journal editors, Michele Jacobsen, Anne Midgley, and Leigh-Anne Yacovelli. The Saber & Scroll is very fortunate to have the support of the American Public University System and I would like to thank Amanda Wilson and Stephanie Matro for their liaison work. Finally, let me extend a very special thank you to Dr. Richard Hines who is the academic advisor for the group.

This edition, the second in our first volume, was assigned a theme prior to submissions and the authors were selected for both their article quality as well as their adherence to the theme. Our group of talented writers covered women, children, and society in many different ways and I think you will not be disappointed with the article selections. I would like to take this opportunity to invite any history writers to submit their work for our upcoming publications. It is the goal of the Editor in Chief and the editing staff to consider all, but to publish the best, right here in the Saber & Scroll.

Respectfully,  
Bruce Evans

The team also expresses thanks to Dr. Richard K. Hines, the faculty advisor who provided the following message to journal readers:

I joined American Public University System (APUS) as the Program Director for History and Military History this past January. Like so many of us that take this vocation, I became a history professor because I wanted to make a difference. I accepted this position because it afforded me a greater opportunity to be useful. It is also my honor to work with an amazing group of dedicated faculty. Over the last few years, institutions of higher learning have suffered serious budget cuts, faculty lay-offs, ballooning class size, and rising tuition. Prior to coming to APUS, I instructed 1,600-2,000 students an academic year. In that learning environment, student to faculty interaction became increasingly difficult. In response, I witnessed a developing sense of apathy from students and faculty alike.

I am proud to say that I see none of that here. APUS faculty work diligently to insure that each student receives the best they have to offer. The hours spent by individual faculty far exceeds what you would find somewhere else. Their enthusiasm and dedication never wavers. Each day, I watch as they look for new and better ways to educate, and provide their students with a stimulating learning environment.

Of course, this enthusiasm is rooted in a student body that takes their education seriously. Students make a university what it is. The desire to learn serves as the catalyst for all that we do. We recognize the challenges all of you face. As distance learners, many of you have jobs and families.

Many of you serve in our nation's military, and are deployed all over the globe. In the face of those obstacles, what you achieve is truly remarkable. It is you who give us an opportunity to make a difference. That is, after all, why we are here.

Beginning in June, I will be taking part in the American Historical Association's Tuning Project. This two year project will bring together academics from sixty universities and colleges from around the country. It is with great pride that APUS is the only distance learning online university invited to participate. Over the next two years, the goal is not to establish a common curriculum as much as it is to build a common set of learning goals. With those goals as a foundation, the committee, with the assistance of tuning advisors, will then construct a curriculum and assessment tools particular to the needs of each institution's faculty, and students. Throughout this entire process, I will work closely with the administration and history faculty to institute a base of explicit statements that make clear exactly what students are expected to learn and that articulate what their degrees mean in terms of knowledge and skills, as well as career paths opened to them. In simple terms, this process is about students gaining a greater understanding of what it is they are learning, and the importance of that learning in terms of their discipline.

It is envisioned that this project will drive significant curriculum changes over the next two years. Among other things, this project is also designed to facilitate the process of transferring credits across universities. As the only distance learning online university invited to participate in the project, it is believed that this will give our graduate students greater access to PhD programs around the country.

The publication of the *Saber and Scroll* is a prime example of what our students are capable of. It is, without question, a remarkable accomplishment. Join my colleagues and I, and our students, as we strive to make APUS the leading online university in the nation.

Respectfully,  
Richard K. Hines, PhD  
Director, History and Military History Programs  
American Public University System

It is with great pleasure then that the edited and revised version of the second *Saber and Scroll* issue is hereby presented in print-on-demand format.

Anne Midgley, Editor in Chief

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## Social and Political Roles of Women in Athens and Sparta

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Kay O’Pry

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Women in the ancient world had few rights. Those they had differed from country to country, or in the case of the women of Athens and Sparta, from city-state to city-state. There were profound differences in the roles that the women of Athens and Sparta experienced in their family, civic, and political lives. With respect to levels of power and the rights of women, Sparta was a leader in its time. At the same time, Spartan and Athenian women’s rights as citizens were similar. Their thoughts, deeds, and opinions were rarely recorded, or if they were, it was the male historians or philosophers of the time who recorded them. What were the roles of women in ancient Athens and Sparta? Were they citizens, did they have personal freedoms? Or, were they, at the time of democracy’s birth, less than a second-class citizen? The misogyny and patriarchal societies of the ancient and classical periods were only beginning to change in the Hellenistic era.

### **Women in Antiquity**

Women in antiquity did not have an easy lot in life. They had few if any rights. Surviving early records of the civilizations of antiquity from ancient Greece, Egypt, China, and Rome suggest that women’s roles differed little from region to region. There were a few exceptions: notably concerning women of nobility and those of the city-state of Sparta. Excluding the rare instances mentioned above, most women of the period were generally limited in education, mobility, and in all things thought to interfere with domestic or childbearing responsibilities. The limited social roles of women in antiquity suggest the common perceived position for women was in the home. Occupied with running the household, weaving and child rearing, the woman of antiquity had little time to involve herself in the political goings on in her area.

A woman’s father controlled her before her marriage, and afterwards, the responsibility fell to her husband. Most women in ancient and classical times were married in their early teens to a much older husband. Marriages were arranged and often the bride did not meet her husband until the betrothal details had been worked

out. Virginity was an important requirement for women in antiquity, as was fidelity. It was imperative that a man be the father of his children, especially since citizenship in Athens hinged on the birthplace of both parents. “The very definition of an Athenian involved not only being born of an Athenian father, but also of an Athenian mother properly given in marriage by her kin.”<sup>1</sup>

Ancient women had very few legal rights. In most ancient societies, a woman could obtain a divorce with the permission and assistance of a male member of her family. She could not own land or dispose of property as she chose. Women were unable to participate in politics or buy and sell goods or services.

### **Athenian Women**

Athens was the cradle of philosophy, where a person could become a great scholar, poet, politician or artist, unless that person was a woman. Being a woman in Athens, to say the least, was not a lot of fun nor was it in anyway an equal society. Women lived in a society completely dominated by men. Historian Don Nardo states, “throughout antiquity most Greek women had few or no civil rights and many enjoyed little freedom of choice or mobility.”<sup>2</sup> There is almost no first hand material to assist the modern scholar to determine how the women of Athens felt about their conditions. “Aside from poetry, women’s writing survives only in private letters written on papyrus preserved by accident of nature, only from Hellenistic and Roman Egypt.”<sup>3</sup> Almost everything that scholars know about the lives of the women of Athens comes from the male historians of the period.

Only freeborn men could exercise political rights in Athens. Aristotle wrote in his work “On a Good Wife” that a woman should give “no heed to public affairs.”<sup>4</sup> Only citizens could participate in civic affairs and the only citizens were men. The royal women of the Hellenistic period and some freeborn women did involve themselves in “the political activities of men.”<sup>5</sup> Aristotle thought that women brought disorder, evil, and were “utterly useless and caused more confusion than the enemy.”<sup>6</sup> Men thought women were incapable of the understanding required for making decisions in politics. “The difference in gender was what prevented free women from being part of the polis.”<sup>7</sup> Responsibilities were based on sex; men had the right to vote and women did not. Voting took place in a public area and men kept women in isolation in their homes.

Athenians believed in keeping women separate from the rest of society.



Women lived in a *gynaikonitis* or *gynaeceum*: women's quarters where they could oversee the running of the home and have very little contact with the male world.<sup>8</sup> The idea that women should be kept isolated from men was one of protecting the lineage of the children. Much depended on the legitimacy of a child born to an Athenian woman. "It was important to ensure the women gave birth to legitimate heirs."<sup>9</sup> A citizen of Athens had to be male and born of parents who were both born in Athens. No women, foreigners, or slaves were considered citizens. A woman's main role in society in Athens was a reproductive and child-rearing role.

As a result, women became more and more isolated, only rarely seen by women and men other than their own families. If the family could afford one, slaves did any duty outside the home, such as fetching water or shopping at the markets. A chaperone or a male member of her family always accompanied an upper-class women.

Some women had freedom of movement in the male society; these were the concubines, prostitutes, and mistresses, especially the *hetaera* or a citizen's permanent mistress.<sup>10</sup> The *hetaera* were often better educated than the rest of Athenian women; they were taught poetry and music. They could take part in conversations on things such as politics.

Athenian women received little education. They did not receive a formal education in schools as the young boys did, but their mothers or tutors educated them mostly in the home.<sup>11</sup> Since women oversaw the household and its finances, they had some basic education beyond the skills required to spin, weave, sew, and cook; "these were seen to be the most important skills for a women to have, along with the ability to raise children."<sup>12</sup> Many contemporary scholars and philosophers thought that women had weaker, inferior minds and were not capable of learning the things that men did. They deprived them of the participation in sports so widely encouraged in young boys and men.

Athenian women, like the women of most Greek city-states, had few legal rights. "Increasing anxiety about women and their roles in the community led to the laws that segregated them and closely regulated their lives" writes Nardo; he continues, there was even a law that regulated how many women could attend a funeral.<sup>13</sup> Women could not appear in court or sue but they could "avail themselves of Athenian justice in indirect ways."<sup>14</sup> The male members of a woman's family could represent her and her interests in court. Athenian women could not own land in their name, or buy and sell property. They could get a divorce, but a male

relative of the wife had to initiate it.<sup>15</sup> Women who divorced lost custody of their children and had to return their dowries to the family to be used for the support of the woman if she did not remarry.<sup>16</sup> This was typical of most of Greece in the ancient and classical age.

### Spartan Women

The women of Sparta enjoyed more freedom than women from other Greek city-states. Ancient Women’s historian Sarah Pomeroy writes in her book *Spartan Women*, “we know little about Spartan women, but it is not so readily conceded that we do not actually know much about Spartan men either.”<sup>17</sup> What scholars do know comes primarily from Athenian writers, men from a place that disapproved of Spartans. Spartan women have been the subject of much debate both positive and negative “from antiquity to the present.”<sup>18</sup> The forward behavior of the Spartan women shocked the Greeks.

The greater freedoms of Spartan women began at birth; families treated females just as well as male babies. “It was the only Greek city in which woman was treated almost on equality with man.”<sup>19</sup> Spartans educated them much in the same way as the boys attending school and encouraged them to participate in sports. Nardo states that according to Xenophon, strong, healthy, physically active girls and women bred healthy children for the state.<sup>20</sup> Spartan women had to be almost as educated as men because they were expected to take care of their interests and



Figure 1 *A Spartan Woman Giving a Shield to her Son*. Oil on panel by Jean Jacques François Lebarbier, 1805. Held by the Portland Art Museum in European Art Collection.

those of their husbands when the men were away at war, a regular occurrence in Spartan life.

Young girls were not married off as soon as they reached puberty; they

were allowed to physically mature, with most not marrying until the age of eighteen. Sparta's concern was not for the number of children that a woman could bear but for the production of healthy male children for the Spartan military and healthy female children for reproduction. Women's role was one of maternity while the role of a Spartan man was to serve in the army, but both served the polis.<sup>21</sup> For all their freedoms, a Spartan woman was still a means for producing children for the state.

A Spartan woman's role in politics was much like that of all other women in Greece. They could not take active part in it. Men forbade them to speak in public assemblies and for the most part segregated them from the men; they were able to influence the community and make their opinions known through their men. Aristotle writes, "among Spartans in the days of their greatness; many things were managed by their women."<sup>22</sup> Aristotle felt that the influence of Spartan women was mischievous.

Women in Sparta could own property; they could dispose of it how they willed, they could inherit equal shares from their father's estates. Aristotle states that women owned two-fifths of the land in the Spartan region; he thought that this "avarice naturally suggests a criticism on the inequality of property."<sup>23</sup> He also felt that their laws dealing with property and women were the ruin of Sparta.<sup>24</sup> Spartan women did have more legal rights dealing with their properties and inheritances; in all other cases, their rights were the same as those of Athenian and other Greek women.

### **Athens vs. Sparta: The women**

The main difference between the condition of Athenian and Spartan women was based on their value to the state as breeding stock. Children of both sexes were very important to Spartans. Male children were more important in Athenian society even though Athenian citizenship came through the birthplace of both parents. Unless they were born deformed, Spartans were less likely to expose female children and leave them to die at birth than Athenians, who sometimes exposed female children because there were too many children in the family.<sup>25</sup> Athenian women could never inherit, but Spartan women could become wealthy heiresses in their own right. This caused Aristotle to state that it was leading to wealth being "too highly valued."<sup>26</sup> Athenians considered it improper for women

to conduct business affairs, but Spartans encouraged and educated women to handle business transactions. For all their differences, both groups of women were still isolated and had little civil and legal rights until the Hellenistic period.

It would seem that little is known about the roles of women in general in the ancient Greek world and what scholarship there is has been based on the writings of men. For the most part, women are included as an afterthought or in the context of the actions and events of men. Few women wrote poetry. Some served as priestess at the Oracle at Delphi. Women were living in societies controlled by men. At best, they were marginal citizens; their only importance was tied to their ability to breed more male citizens for military and political purposes. Yet, scholars can assume that they had thoughts, opinions, and intellect as sharp as any ancient man but men never gave them the chance to voice these in public. Their only way of expressing themselves and their ideas was through the men of their families. Their worth in both city-states was reproductive; they were not valued for their intellect and artistic abilities but for their wombs. Yet these women were still important to the continuation of their respective societies and Greek civilization as a whole.

## Notes

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2. Don Nardo, *Women of Ancient Greece* (San Diego: Lucent Books, 2000), 8.

3. Mary F. Lefkowitz and Maureen Fant, *Women in Greece & Rome* (Toronto: Samuel-Stevens, 1977), 3.

4. Aristotle, "On a good Wife, from Oikonomikos, c.330 BCE," *Ancient History Sourcebook*, [www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/greek-wives.asp](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/greek-wives.asp) (accessed March 10, 2012).

5. Sarah Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (1975; repr., New York: Schocken Books, 1995), Kindle edition.

6. Aristotle, "On the Lacedaemonian Constitution, c. 340 BCE," *Ancient History Sourcebook*, [www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient.aristotle-sparta.asp](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient.aristotle-sparta.asp) (accessed February 27, 2012).

7. Eva Cantarella, *Pandora's Daughters* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987), 39.

8. Sarah Pomeroy, *Goddess, Whores, Wives and Slaves* (1975; repr., New York: Pantheon, 1995), 80.

9. Jargen C. Meyer, "Women in Classical Athens in the Shadow of North-West Europe or in the Light from Istanbul," *Women's Life in Classical Athens*, [www.hist.uib.no/antikkk/antres/Womenslife.htm](http://www.hist.uib.no/antikkk/antres/Womenslife.htm) (accessed March 10, 2012).

10. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves*.

11. Nardo, *Women of Ancient Greece*, 47.

12. Mason, "Ancient Athenian Women."

13. Nardo, *Women of Ancient Greece*, 28-29.

14. *Ibid.*, 30.

15. *Ibid.*, 38.

16. Mason, "Ancient Athenian Women."

17. Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Spartan Women* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), Kindle edition.

18. Fantam et al., *Women in the Classical World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 57.

19. *Ibid.*, 57.

20. Nardo, *Women of Ancient Greece*, 49.

21. Fantam et al., *Women in the Classical World*, 57.

22. Aristotle, "Spartan Women," *Ancient History Sourcebook*, 1, [www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/aristotle-spartanwomen.asp](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/aristotle-spartanwomen.asp) (accessed March 8, 2012).

23. *Ibid.*, 1.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Cantarella, *Pandora's Daughters*, 135-136.

26. Aristotle, *Spartan Women*, 1.

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## Finding Truth in the Myth of Lady Godiva: Femininity, Sex, and Power in Twelfth Century England

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Allison Archer

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Traditional history, all about politics, wars, and revolutions, has devoted few pages to women because few women were prominent in those male-dominated activities. The handful who were received patronizing credit for behaving like men—a woman led an army with “a man’s courage,” an able queen ruled “as if she were a man.”

—Frances & Joseph Gies, *Women in the Middle Ages: The Lives of Real Women in a Vibrant Age of Transition*

As modern chocolatiers decided upon a name for their sumptuous treats to cater to the palettes of women, they named their temptations for Lady Godiva, whose mythical, naked ride poses more questions than answers about the perception of women in twelfth century England. Legends professed Lady Godiva (also called Godgifu) performed this naked stunt as a challenge to her husband Leofric’s relentless taxation. In fact, as legend tells it, he baited her into it with a challenge such as this, “Mount your horse and ride naked, before all the people, through the market of this town from one end to the other, and on your return you shall have your request.”<sup>1</sup> Parading through town completely naked, except for her long tresses, she demanded that the townsfolk stay indoors thus releasing the burden of taxation from her husband’s subjects. As with all good myths, only one could not resist the urge to view her. Legend tells that during her infamous ride, her horse momentarily stopped. Lady Godiva turned to discover a tailor “whose curiosity exceeded his gratitude”<sup>2</sup> peeping at her through a window. Peeping Tom was born of this myth. Although it is now widely accepted that Lady Godiva never mounted her horse “bareback,” the infamous Domesday Book documented she was indeed a landowner in Coventry.<sup>3</sup> In isolation, this tale is a pleasurable story of risk-taking. However, when viewed beneath the broader lens of gender roles and sexual mores of the Middle Ages, it leads to questions regarding English women of the twelfth century. Although fantastical, this myth hints at undercurrents of power, femininity, and sexual boundaries that defined the lives of women in this time and place. Additionally, the expectations of women were quite duplicitous with images of the chaste virgin at church and folktales such as this in the homes of both the wealthy and the peasantry. The myth of Lady Godiva provides insight into the perceptions

of femininity, sex, and power in twelfth century England from a variety of perspectives.

### **Femininity**

What is it to be a woman? This is a question that women grapple with even today as roles change over time with the celebrated sweet virgin as opposed to the confident career woman. Although the Middle Ages much more rigidly defined these roles, the myth of Lady Godiva hints at changing perceptions of femininity during this period. Godiva presented an image of a powerful woman who worked from within the system for positive, philanthropic gains. While still tied to her husband, this legend suggests that the roles of women were turning towards more enlightened thinking. This was the story of a woman who could choose and use gender to her advantage, instead of as a vestige to a powerful man.

One of the most rigid views of femininity came from the church. With images of the virgin queen, mother of the Savior clearly prevalent and celebrated, this no doubt left a persuasive impression on its female attendees. This was the ideal woman; the woman who embraced her own femininity and saw escalation to a position of enormous power for her sacrifices. Of course, her prime value existed in her chastity and then in her motherhood which was characterized by enormous suffering and the untimely loss of her perfect son. Perfection is an important part of this message. Christ was a sinner; yet, his mother remained sinless throughout her life. This message of unattainable perfection defined womanhood during this period.

Even in the midst of this perfection message, the Middle Ages represented something of an intricacy surrounding sin itself, and by extension, femininity. In his research of femininity during the Middle Ages, Thomas Cahill noted that this time characterized “an age of unabashed public confession, not of shamed defensiveness”<sup>4</sup> because it preceded the Calvinism that would follow centuries later. The writings of Hildegard von Bingen provide sincerity and insight into the female as expressed by the church during this period. Despite such a horrendous childhood experience, she was able to use her femininity within the church to grow to a position of enormous power. When chastised for adorning her virgin nuns in jewelry and thin, white veils, she proclaimed that married women should not vainly adorn themselves, yet virgins were exempt from such regulations.<sup>5</sup> She wrote, “the virgin stands in the unsullied purity of paradise, lovely and unwithering, and she always remains the full vitality of the budding rod.”<sup>6</sup>

With such narrow and juxtaposed positions regarding femininity, it is a



small wonder that women embraced their femininity at all. To embrace the sacred feminine required virginity, yet this same virginity would prevent the continuation of the species at a time when women rarely lived past thirty and needed to birth at least five children to be valuable on earth.<sup>7</sup> The fruits of their womb were far more important than virginity, yet an alternate message came from their churches. Cahill referred to this as the “medieval cult of virginity.”<sup>8</sup> Additionally, even the church was quick to note the inherent differences between women of privilege and those less fortunate. “The chief barrier in admission to a nunnery was money rather than class.”<sup>9</sup>

Wealthy women, no doubt, lived the best of lives during this period, although the same is true of women today. Wealth gave women choices and opportunities unavailable to the peasantry. These were the women of Eve: the women who actually brandished the apple . . . because they could. Nobility gave them a taste of freedom unknown to most other women. Femininity within this sphere was a sense of enormous power.

The wealthy woman could celebrate her femininity to a far greater degree than the peasantry. In short, she had the time on her hands to devote to the pleasures of life that peasants did not even have time to dream. Thus, they were far more likely to be well read and to have an appreciation for art, architecture, and even their own bodies, which were truly their personal vessels. One excellent and well-documented example of such women was Eleanor of Aquitaine. Born in the early twelfth century, she had a deep appreciation for the finer things including literature and music. An heiress at eight, Eleanor’s appreciation of music that “encouraged the delightfully novel practice of mixed dancing”<sup>10</sup> was nearly scandalous. Cahill referred to this changed practice as having similar effects as Elvis Presley-style dance moves in the twentieth century. Eleanor, like other wealthy women, also enjoyed an acute sense of fashion that included “lined silk, the flowing sleeves, the bright colors, the fur, the bracelets, the earrings, the headdress”<sup>11</sup> There were those who both loved and hated Eleanor for her meddling and bucking of tradition. However, it is impossible to judge her by today’s ethical standards. This woman lived far before her time.

Of course, the nobility only represented a tiny sliver of Europe’s population in the twelfth century. The peasantry represented an overwhelming majority, and thus a more realistic image of women during this period. Although Eleanor and Lady Godiva were clearly the ideal women and lusted after by peasant women and men

alike, their lives merely cast long shadows on the daily lives of their peasantry. These women were virtual baby factories whose lives were often excruciatingly short and painful. Lacking the privilege of wealthy aesthetic pleasures, they frequently became ill and died for no apparent reason and regularly died during childbirth. The pressures on these women to procreate were enormous and dangerous.

In addition to their role as mothers, some peasant women functioned as near partners to their husbands, although without the equality governing most partnerships. Although the domestic sphere closely related their lives, they often toiled alongside their husbands in the fields.<sup>12</sup> A peasant woman's "wardrobe was limited, the garments bequeathed from one generation to the next. Her everyday garb was a long dress of coarse wool—russet or burel—perhaps with a linen undergarment; in cold weather she wore a woolen mantle."<sup>13</sup> Femininity was nearly non-existent.

The myth of Lady Godiva confirms this scholarship and historiography of women in the High Middle Ages. Unlike her peasant counterparts, Lady Godiva was able to embrace her femininity, her long tresses, and even a degree of freedom outside the domestic sphere. This was not a woman hardened by the toils of agricultural life, as Collier so eloquently illustrated in his infamous painting. Additionally, the myth supports the church's profession of the sacred feminine. Although not a virgin, her demand that the townsfolk all turn their heads away as she passed is an interesting depiction of both Eve, the temptress, and Mary, the noble virgin.

## **Sexuality**

The twelfth century signified a turning point in sexual relationships. Cahill remarked that "romance as a sexual attitude was, in fact, almost unknown before the age of Hildegard."<sup>14</sup> This "flowering" of romanticism is yet more evidence of the enlightened thinking that slowly and pervasively began to dominate society throughout the Middle Ages. Unfortunately, scientific achievements were slow to follow and until "the nineteenth century, childbirth was a mortal hazard. Rich or poor, women suffered and were injured in labor; often they died."<sup>15</sup> It is important to consider women both as sexual and mothering beings during this period to develop a greater understanding of the challenges they faced. Marriage or, at the

very least, betrothal were undoubtedly viewed as pre-requisites to childbirth. Yet, these marriages arose most frequently from arrangements of the father for all women regardless of wealth. “The modern system of courtship based on free choice and personal attraction could hardly develop in an age when the social institutions and customs that provide environment for such courtship did not yet exist.”<sup>16</sup> Any modern ideas of dating were as of yet non-existent. Although, at the very least, romance in sexual relationships began during this time—at least for some.

The church was abundantly clear on this issue and “the chastity of women was eternally suspect in the eyes of the canonists, who perceived them as ever eager for sexual gratification.”<sup>17</sup> In this area, women clearly represented the temptress, Eve, who brandished sex like the apple. To counter this image, they presented the image of the perfect virgin mother—impossibility for all women. The ideal, religious woman was either a virgin or a mother. There was no middle ground, regardless of class. Marriage vows included the expectation that both husband and wife would “be sexually available to their partners.”<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the act of sex, as the church defined it, reinforced women’s inferiority to men and the goal of procreation as its intended result.

Although, the church knew then, as it does now, that it could only reach so far into the bedrooms of believers. “Officially the Church maintained that marital intercourse was permissible only for the purpose of procreation. The sin involved in sex for pleasure was not, however, a large one, as long as procreation was not prevented.”<sup>19</sup> Those that strayed from a righteous sexual path through enjoyment, positions other than missionary or worse . . . faced the consequences meted out at confession.

As today, the church condemned contraception and viewed it as “homicide, sometimes as interference with nature, sometimes as a denial of the purpose of marital intercourse.”<sup>20</sup> What is perhaps most notable about this period is that the church accepted that beyond their inherent physical and moral inferiorities, women “were personalities, separate from their husbands . . . with their own souls, their own rights, and obligations.”<sup>21</sup> This was a significant departure from women as property. Although not liberal by today’s standards, this allowed women the right to grace, and divinity previously not enjoyed without the power of a man. Women in dire circumstances, out of necessity, became prostitutes, although not respected, and, to some degree, received protection from the church which “disapproved of prostitution in principle (yet) tolerated it in practice. (The church even protected) the

prostitute's right to collect her fee.... heavier penalties were imposed on customers, pimps, and brothel keepers."<sup>22</sup>

The church also viewed divorce and infidelity far more leniently due to the difficulty of life, communication, and travel during this period. Marriages often experienced increased levels of anxiety due to long absences as the husband travelled. These concerns "often centered on conjugal faithfulness. A beautiful, younger wife was perceived as being particularly vulnerable. During a prolonged separation, however, a wife might not wait for her husband to return before remarrying."<sup>23</sup> Although the church did not condone such activities, they no doubt supported abandoned women by annulling their previous marriages and allowing for a new one.

Wealth often afforded women far more privileges over their own bodies. Although they spent more of their lives in a state of pregnancy, noblewomen enjoyed a far healthier, protein-filled diet. Thus, they lived longer than peasant women did. Beyond the obvious enhanced diet of more than potatoes and bread, noblewomen could often exercise choice over their extramarital suitors, often leaving their arranged husband either unaware or furious. These women wielded sex as a weapon in male-dominated nobility circles.

As married women, they often had access to "obscure chambers at her personal disposal and guarded at evening only by her female confidantes (and could manage an adulterous pregnancy rather nicely."<sup>24</sup> Knights were a frequent target and Cahill asserted that, "It seems most likely that women set the rules of this new game."<sup>25</sup> Common images of the knight pursuing the noble woman are romantic but certainly impossible for this time. The knight supplied the poems and gifts; however, "it was the lady, smarter and more strategic than he... who secretly controls the pace of the chase."<sup>26</sup>

This pre-Calvinist time saw nobility engaging in near sexual debauchery as can be seen in the verses of the troubadour Countess of Dia who wrote such lurid lyrics as,

*I should like to hold my knight  
Naked in my arms at eve,  
That he might be in ecstasy  
As I cushioned his head against my breast,  
For I am happier far with him  
Than Floris with Blancheflor (her husband)*<sup>27</sup>

An interesting curiosity in this period is how differently the wealthy and

the peasantry viewed adultery. Secularized literature “romanticized adultery by aristocratic ladies (yet) mocked the sexual appetites of peasant or middle-class wives and girls.”<sup>28</sup> Although with significantly less fanfare, “ordinary people doubtless committed many sexual sins, both venial and mortal.”<sup>29</sup> Common peasantry likely had a far more limited sexual life because of harsh living conditions and shortened life spans. This pleasure of the flesh was far less pleasurable after a physically demanding workday and in such dire conditions with poor nutrition. However, that is not to say that they also did not face their priests in confessional booths for their sexual sins. Additionally, unmarried peasant women could even use sex as a means of income. Prostitution flourished during this period. “By the high Middle Ages it was widely regulated by law, especially in the cities and at markets and fairs, which offered serving girls, tradeswomen, and peasants’ daughters an opportunity to earn extra cash.”<sup>30</sup>

The myth of Lady Godiva provides insight into how women used their sensuality to attain desired results. Van Noort’s painting of the sixteenth century



Figure 1 *Lady Godiva*. Oil on canvas by Adam Van Noort, St. Mary’s Guildhall.

offers insight into this undercurrent of feminine sexuality. The tempting, beautiful, sexualized woman was an important image of a time that many have deemed “dark.” How could this be when considering the strides made by women as individuals and even sexual beings? This was no small achievement of this time, which saw a tremendous papal influence. The church viewed women as subservient and merely instruments of childbirth. As the myth of Lady Godiva suggests, there were contrary views within societal undercurrents, and especially in the wealthiest circles.

## Power

Women during the High Middle Ages experienced varying degrees of power. Regardless of wealth, a woman under feudalism spent most of her life under the guardianship of a man—of her father until she married, of her father's lord if her father died, and of her husband until she was widowed.<sup>31</sup> “Women nearly always, if not always, stayed ‘inside,’ and men went ‘outside.’”<sup>32</sup> The domestic sphere was their realm. There are some notable exceptions, however. Joan of Arc is perhaps the most famous of these. “Joan of Arc is no prototype, and whatever her male comrades-in-arms and male enemies thought of her, her image remained unique.”<sup>33</sup> Although there were these notable exceptions, “all women shared certain public disabilities; excluded from politics, they were treated legally as second-rank constituents of their courts, disadvantaged economically as both landholders and workers, and less active socially than men.”<sup>34</sup>

The church, which held power as central to chastity and grace, certainly feared women like Joan who asserted their power so aggressively and against all notions of grace. In a time that still commonly accepted far more monks than nuns, the church worked hard to keep women within their realm as mothers and subservient wives. “Wife-beating was common in the Middle Ages”<sup>35</sup> and although not professed, the church certainly tolerated it. In short, the church did not believe that women should occupy positions of authority—anywhere. Hildegard von Bingen is a notable example of this resistance by the church. Although her male superiors constantly hounded her decisions, she became exceptionally powerful.

Wealthy women, by virtue of land ownership and titles, had a great deal of power in the Middle Ages. In fact, many “women derived power from families intent on deploying all their human resources . . . for the immediate acquisition of wealth and status.”<sup>36</sup> The law permitted women to own property, even after marriage. It was not beyond men of this period “who married an heiress (to take) her family's name, so that it remained attached to the holding.”<sup>37</sup> This clearly presented the importance that people of this period placed on bloodlines over marital ties. Of course, it was the wealthiest women who fared the best in arrangements like this. They were far more likely to own land and rely on family bloodlines as a source of power. The real Lady Godiva is an excellent example of this. During her husband's lifetime and after, “she moved in the highest social and

political circles of the kingdom”<sup>38</sup> and ended up owning all of his property upon his death.

Peasant women experienced similar rights regarding marriage and property. Unlike their noble counterparts who often married in adolescence, peasant women traditionally married in their twenties, if they married at all. Unlike wealthy women, they were also far more likely to know their suitor.<sup>39</sup> Marriages and inheritances became virtually synonymous. Thus, daughters who stood to inherit property “became a matrimonial prize.” Law dictated that women could not claim their own inheritance without a male guardian. A woman could face a fine or forced marriage if she refused to marry.

Those that did not marry, usually due to a shortage of available men, often went to work, although at a lower wage than men. “They did much the same work as the men: haymaking, weeding, thatching, mowing, reaping, and binding. Sometimes they lived in the village, in cottages, or as lodgers in other people’s houses. Sometimes they formed part of the floating population that roamed the country at harvest time.”<sup>40</sup> Life was exceptionally harsh for unmarried women who did not own property.

The legend of Lady Godiva is an excellent example of this gendered power imbalance in the Middle Ages. Unable to convince her husband of the errors of his ways through discourse, she claims power from within the feminine sphere of influence – her own sexuality. This naked, grand display of feminine power and achievement lends itself well to the prevailing ideals of powerful women that characterized this period. The myth suggests that women did what was necessary to achieve power. When considering the work of peasant women and the intricate relations of noble women seeking husbands, it is no doubt, accurate.

## **Conclusion**

Although mythical, the tale of Lady Godiva presents an interesting and accurate portrayal of the struggles of women in the twelfth century as they navigated issues of femininity, sexuality, and power. Three distinct perspectives emerge from within this framework, which include the church, the nobility, and the peasantry. Femininity was far less rigidly defined than modern perceptions would suggest and this period saw an increased tolerance of women as individuals, even within the church. Society defined sexuality less rigidly than the church, just as

today. Yet the dangers of childbirth were a risk to all women of this period, regardless of their wealth or poverty. Unsurprisingly, women of this period who owned property were in far better circumstances than those that did not. However, what is interesting is that society afforded women property rights at all considering this occurred long before the Renaissance or even the Enlightenment. Although often termed the “Dark Ages,” these surprises yield an entirely new image of the Middle Ages, especially for women. It was a time which actually offered some autonomy and hope for women, albeit far less than today. However, to view the rights and privileges of a people nearly a millennium ago beneath the same moral compass as today’s society is unfair and irrelevant. It is also a disservice to the gains made by women during this time. Perhaps, modern scholarship should focus on the integration of female history into the “traditional accounts” of the Middle Ages to offer a more complete truth of the lives of both women and men. Women were more than counterparts to male leaders and workers.

## Notes

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## Enlightened Women: A Discussion on Education, Marriage and the Domestic Sphere in Eighteenth Century Society

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Emily Herff, MSc

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Women's roles and expectations in traditional society consisted of finding a suitable marriage arrangement, raising children, and managing a household. Before the eighteenth century, these tasks did not require a formal education or training; mothers provided what instruction their daughters needed. With the dawning of the Enlightenment and its emphasis on education, humanism, science, and scholarly discussion, the expectations of women's learning changed and with it, their roles within the household. Within

British society, women now had to run the household, manage the accounts, educate their children, entertain their husband's guests, carry on conversations and correspondence, and show accomplishment in the arts, sewing, music, and dance.

This rise in expectations accompanied increased discussion over the nature and capabilities of women. Not only were there new ideas, but increased trade, the Union of the Crowns in



Figure 1 *Young Girl Holding a Letter*. Oil on canvas by Caspar Netscher, c. 1665. Private collection.

Britain, and a growing middle class created new opportunities for social advancement, interaction between the classes, and a desire to connect with a wider

world. In Edinburgh, and in the whole of Britain, the changing role of women and domesticity in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries found its way into popular discourse in the form of conduct literature and philosophical debate. Often this debate included arguments over the physical capabilities of women to learn and which subjects allowed women acceptance into greater society.

A popular topic for literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth century was the conduct and education of young women. These works discussed how to run a household, how to be a good wife and mother, acceptable topics for discussion and reading, and how to present oneself in society to further a husband's career, or to attract a mate. The publication of conduct literature such as this spanned the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with one of the earlier examples written in 1739 by Dr. Alexander Monro in Edinburgh, and continuing on with writings by other British authors such as Catherine Macaulay, Mary Wollstonecraft, Laetitia Matilda Hawkins, and Priscilla Wakefield. Though these works addressed many areas of a young woman's life, one thing they all had in common was a discussion on the state how education defined their place in society.

Alexander Monro, a leading physician at the University of Edinburgh in the mid-eighteenth century, wrote a letter to his daughter Margaret sometime around 1735 with the goal of instructing her on how to act in public.<sup>1</sup> According to his letter, he felt that his daughter was capable of more than the conventional education provided.<sup>2</sup> He was not alone. Several advertisements in the newspapers of Edinburgh, Scotland show that educational opportunities for young women increased through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There was concern, however, as to how polite society would accept that uncommon education.

The growth of the middle class and the desire for family fortunes to be secured through marriage alliances, created new expectations and interactions between several classes in society. Many in society felt that young women, who were too educated, potentially harmed their chances of receiving a proposal of marriage, and therefore, they put their families' well-being at risk.

Several authors of conduct literature addressed the pitfalls of women learning beyond the traditional skills. Catherine Macaulay, author of the 1790 text *Letters on Education*, argued that the social setting brought to light the differences between men and women with women afraid to show their true learning for fear of rejection by society.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Monro told his daughter that if he caught her showing off her advanced education, he would forbid her from further study for fear of her

jeopardizing her place in society.<sup>4</sup> He worried that by showing the public she was capable of speaking Greek, or complex scientific thought, Margaret would not be able to find a husband, which society saw as her ultimate goal. This phenomenon had never really occurred before. Women now had access to education, to training, and to a wider scope of possibilities than they ever had in the past. The discussion on the potential of humanity that arose with the Enlightenment, also started to address the potential of women.

The idea that women had a limited capacity for learning, especially in regards to scientific and mathematical studies, permeated scientific and philosophical thought during these centuries. The Enlightenment introduced ideas of natural abilities and the limits of humanity.<sup>5</sup> Lynn Abrams stated, in her monograph *The Making of the Modern Woman in Europe*, that the way women fit into European society dictated the language used to describe their bodies and minds.<sup>6</sup> According to Abrams, the Enlightenment redefined the role of the modern woman.<sup>7</sup> Humanism and the idea that men had an unlimited potential led to a new way of looking at the differences between gender roles. Philosophers and other writers did not completely abandon old ideas, but the role of wife and mother took on higher status and the contributions a woman made to the domestic sphere required greater access to education.<sup>8</sup>

Physical limitations as defined in the preceding centuries shaped the discussion over women's intelligence.<sup>9</sup> Physical ability shaped morality and intelligence. Prior to the eighteenth century, the belief that women were a mirror image of men, but weaker and imperfect, shaped the social roles of women.<sup>10</sup> Jean Jacques Rousseau used his character Sophy, in his book *Emile* to describe the nature of female. According to Rousseau, "But for her sex, a woman is a man; she has the same organs, the same needs, the same faculties. The machine is the same in its construction; its parts, its working, and its appearances are similar. Regard it as you will the difference is only in degree."<sup>11</sup> Through the course of scientific observation and examination, the idea that women were simply inferior men changed. The understanding that women had their own characteristics and natures moved to the forefront of discussion, though the debate remained over what that separate identity meant in regards to learning.<sup>12</sup>

This new understanding of women's physical differences led to new discussions over their natural role in society. The new ideas about women's anatomy did not change the notion that marriage and children were the ultimate

goal. Many saw women as being sensitive because their nervous systems were delicate and more attuned to stimuli. Because women's bodies were small in comparison to a man's, many scientists and philosophers considered women closer in ability to children, particularly in their intelligence. There also existed the idea that reproduction and menstruation made women susceptible to mental illness and mental exhaustion and therefore women were not physically able to learn in the same way.<sup>13</sup> Women who stepped outside of the norm and attempted to pursue higher learning often earned a diagnosis of hysteria and the cure prescribed consisted of marriage and children as well as the abstention of intellectual pursuits.<sup>14</sup> The feminine ideal was a woman dedicated to her husband and children, who contributed to the beautification of her home

To attract a husband and appear acceptable in the eyes of society, beauty was important. Several writers expressed the concern that too much study caused the deterioration of facial features including a serious demeanor and a wrinkled brow. Women, though they could learn deeper and more advanced subjects, should instead pursue more frivolous and acceptable types of education.<sup>15</sup> Even so, many families still provided a sound education for their daughters and were well educated themselves.

With the growing debate over women's roles and intelligence, questions about the proper type of education often entered into public discourse. In a letter to *The Caledonian Mercury*, a popular newspaper in eighteenth century Edinburgh, an author named S. Whyte discussed the need to increase the available education for women. The author felt that the underlying fear of women gaining an advantage over men in society led to their forced ignorance.

This dread of a learned Lady, be it real or affected, is, in truth, a symptom of weakness, it proceeds from low, contracted prejudices, and the consequential reasoning upon assumed and partial principles, is neither just nor rational. By learning and learned, these high advocates for scientific [sic] monopoly always tacitly understand, and confine themselves to the knowledge of languages, and thence on founding the means with the end, illogically conclude that women should not be in any respect taught, nor permitted to reason, or judge for themselves.<sup>16</sup>

This underlying fear contributed to the idea that women only needed to learn



domestic skills to fulfill their role in society.

Authors of conduct literature, several of them women, railed against the idea that women could not learn due to their weak character. Jean Jacques Rousseau in *Emile* claimed that social dictates and physical limitations should determine the learning a woman could access. Rousseau argued that the goal of a young woman from her infancy was to learn to please men, to take care of her family, and to learn to be agreeable.<sup>17</sup> Many women argued differently. Catherine Macaulay pointed out that young women grew up at a disadvantage when they were encouraged to put greater emphasis on their outward appearance than their natural intelligence. This countered in many ways the new expectations of the eighteenth century wife.

Women ran the household, educated their children, entertained their husband's guests through lively conversation, dancing and music, and created art to decorate their homes. All of this was to help their husbands advance through society and in their careers. Mothers provided the first education and instruction to their children. One of the earliest lessons many children received was the morality accepted by society. To provide a virtuous example, wives received instruction to resist engaging in any vices that would detract from their fulfilling their proper role or to bring shame on their families.<sup>18</sup> Though raising children was their primary occupation, a good wife also had to be accomplished in many areas including conversation in several languages, and particularly artistic pursuits such as dancing, music, and art.

The need to speak more than one language increased as international travel and business arrangements brought people from all over Europe together. A good wife was able to make her husband's foreign business contacts comfortable by conversing in their native tongue. An increase in language tutor's advertisements in several local newspapers reflected the growing demand for multilingualism. Instructors in many Romance languages such as French, Italian, Spanish, or even Latin offered their services. Many in society considered these languages safe for young women because they did not require detailed study and learning often took place through speech only and not the difficult study of grammar.<sup>19</sup> If examined alongside the conduct literature for the period, the newspaper advertisements show that foreign language education was an important part of a young woman's schooling, there were, however, limitations on what was acceptable for young women. One woman, who contributed to a collection of

essays compiled by Vicesimus Knox, told of how society shunned her when her peers discovered her unorthodox education. She spoke several languages including French, Italian, and Latin, all of which were acceptable for women to know. She also had a knowledge of Greek which many felt was masculine and for women to study it took away from her femininity<sup>20</sup>

Like many parents, Dr. Monro, instructed his daughter Margaret to guard her intelligence and command of languages closely.

I don't propose to make you so learned that you can have any pretensions to be a critic in languages, that might give you too much a taste for books and make you neglect the necessary female offices; and I flatter myself that you will have good sense enough to know that you are not to display any of this sort of knowledge, or to make use of any uncommon words without resolving to be envied, criticized and laughed at. If I observe you exposing yourself to censure by making an ill use of any sort of knowledge which I may give you the opportunity of acquiring, I shall soon stop short and let you remain as ignorant as I can of everything beyond what relates to the plainest domestic life.<sup>21</sup>

Parents, though they often wanted to educate their daughters as much as possible, also worried that public displays of that education would put off potential suitors and bring shame on the family for not raising a proper, feminine, young woman.

Oral communication was not the only area of instruction for young women. Correspondence consisted of writing letters and so penmanship, grammar, and composition instruction was encouraged at an early age.<sup>22</sup> Society expected that women could write intelligent letters and to be able to spell correctly. To do otherwise would have indicated poor breeding and would have potentially damaged their family reputation.

Entertaining guests did not only mean conversing with guests, it also meant dancing and music. Dancing was a common occurrence either as formal social entertainment or as an after dinner activity at people's homes. Many houses of the period had drawing rooms suitable for dancing or playing music. Dr. Monro wanted his daughter to learn dancing because it encouraged a healthy body and mind. He also wanted her to have dancing instruction because it was a necessary skill for fitting into high society. Many commentators also felt that dancing increased feminine characteristics such as grace in movement and confidence, which indicated a well-bred lady.<sup>23</sup> A particularly telling commentary in the *The*

*Caledonian Mercury* discussed the importance of outward grace as a means to attract a husband.

Dancing is a particular I should have touched on, as the very principle of all; a genteel carriage has charms which approach even beauty itself: let a man walk behind a lady who is well made, and has a genteel carriage, though her face be hid from him, he cannot choose but to fancy her handsome too whether nature has been favourable to her or not: and that is an effort that the reading of forty thousand mathematical or metaphysical Latin or Greek books, would not have produced.<sup>24</sup>

Though there was increasing pressure to educate women in non-domestic skills, old standards prevailed. Society accepted the outward appearance of a woman more often than her intelligence.

A young woman should not only be able to dance, but also to sing and play music for her guests. Dr. Monro wanted his daughter to not only be a discerning observer of musical performances, but to play an instrument and to sing. Common instruments of the day were the harpsichord, violin, guitar, and flute. Young women often performed for family or guests, after dinner or during gatherings. It was a way to show off the skills and talents of daughters and to display the proper conduct of the family.<sup>25</sup> These were also skills considered engaging in a wife and mother.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to language, music, and dancing, artistic skills increased a woman's value in society. Pursuits such as art and needlework were virtuous activities for young women. They occupied one's time and provided a way to decorate the home. These were traditional female accomplishments. Advice such as that by Dr. John Gregory to his daughters expressed the value of learning these feminine skills:

The intention of your being taught needle-work, knitting, and such like, is not on account of the intrinsic value of all you can do with your hands, which is trifling, but to enable you judge more perfectly of that kind of work, and to direct the execution of it in others. Another principal end to enable you up, in a tolerably agreeable way, some of the many solitary hours you must necessarily pass at home.<sup>27</sup>

Traditional women's work included spinning, needlework, sewing, and skills such as painting. It was important for every woman to be proficient in these skills so she could do her part to help her family, in all stations of life. Many authors of the period felt that learning different skills and artistic styles not only helped by beautifying the home, but it also taught the value of price and quality of goods. By understanding the materials, time, and skill required for making an object, wives could make wise purchase and instruct servants in the best and most efficient ways of doing things.<sup>28</sup>

Many of these skills required specialized teaching. As the middle and upper classes grew in wealth, there was an increase in tutors, governesses and even boarding schools that offered to instruct young women in the proper skills. Advertisements for girls' boarding schools and educational opportunities appear in the British newspapers in the mid-to late-eighteenth century. Girls learned to read, to write, to do arithmetic, geography, to speak foreign languages, play, and read music, draw and paint, and manage a busy household. The advertisements also showed the types of teachers that were acceptable to teach young women, the role women played in the field of education, the skills that were valued for women to learn and the availability of educational opportunities for young women during the eighteenth century.<sup>29</sup>

Though the Enlightenment brought new ways of looking at the roles of men and women, the traditional gender roles remained intact during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Women found themselves caught between an availability of resources and educational opportunities and the traditional role of wife and mother. The increase in wealth and social mobility that occurred during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries also placed greater emphasis on acceptance by wider society. There was a fine balance created between acceptable and unacceptable knowledge as tutors, boarding schools, and other means of education grew in availability. The increase in education also influenced the role of women in the domestic sphere. They now had to run the household, manage the accounts, educate their children, entertain their husband's guests, carry on conversations and correspondence, and show accomplishment in the arts, sewing, music, and dance. In popular sentiment, the learned woman was still somewhat of an oddity. At times, people saw her as someone to be tolerated, but not right to marry. Privately, however, evidence points to women who were well educated and well read.

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25. Monro, *The Professor's Daughter*, 12.
26. Monro, *The Professor's Daughter*, 12.
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28. Monro, *The Professor's Daughter*, 12-13.
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## Call to Arms: Military Musicians in Colonial and Revolutionary America

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Anne Midgley

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In the morning, before relief came, [I] had the pleasure of seeing a drummer mount the enemy's parapet, and beat a parley, and immediately an officer holding up a white handkerchief, made his appearance outside their works; the drummer accompanied him, beating . . . I thought I never heard a drum equal to it—the most delightful music to us all.

—Ebenezer Denny

In an iconic image of the Revolutionary War, two drummers and a fifer stand resolute, determined, and, in a sense, calling the shots. The drummer boy to the left of center, looks to the elderly drum major for leadership, inspiration, and likely, to confirm his tune. Aptly named the *Spirit of '76*, A. M. Willard's painting portrays much more than three military musicians; it depicts the chaos of the battle flowing about them and their role in directing the course of the action.<sup>1</sup> As this paper illustrates, military musicians played a larger than life role in the American Revolution, especially given their often very young age and consequently small stature.

Revolutionary War military musicians have not been the sole focus of a great deal of historical research and as such, historians tend to reference the work of several experts to describe the role that these soldiers played in the American Revolution. Historians of the Revolutionary War often quote the research and writings of Raoul F.



Figure 1 *Spirit of '76*. Oil on canvas by Archibald Willard, 1875. The original hangs in Abbot Hall, Marblehead, MA.

Camus, professor of music at Queensborough Community College of the City University of New York, particularly his work *Military Music of the American Revolution*. Baron Friedrich von Steuben's *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States* is also frequently cited, as he provided specific directions for the actions and duties of all military personnel, including the musicians. American and British military leaders' letters, as well as the memoirs and pension applications of the officers and soldiers who fought in the Revolutionary War, frequently illuminate the past with small, telling details, some of which describe the actions of steadfast drummers, fifers, trumpeters, and buglers.<sup>2</sup> Through these and other records, pictures of the past unfold to help interested historians reconstruct the contributions of early American military musicians.

Music was important in the daily life of the American colonies. Among others, historians Benson Bobrick and Benjamin H. Irvin each portrayed music's role in their respective work, and mentioned trumpets and drums as accompaniments to activities ranging from peaceful barn-raising to not-so-peaceful tar and featherings.<sup>3</sup> Describing the emotionally charged incidents leading up to armed conflict, Bobrick illustrates the arrival of British troops in Boston during September 1768 as they "marched with insolent Parade, Drums beating, Fifes playing, up King Street."<sup>4</sup> Later, as tensions escalated, he recounts incidents of "rebels parading through the streets 'with drums beating and colours (sic) flying.'"<sup>5</sup> It is clear in the episodes that the military music not only accompanied the marching men, but that it also spoke to the participants and bystanders on a variety of levels. The British meant their parade to offend some of the spectators, to incite others to join the cause heralded by the parade, and, of course, to inspire the marchers with martial ardor and provide them with encouragement for their mission.

A number of accounts clearly show military music's capacity to pack an auditory punch. In addition to conveying signals and directing troop movements, the British occasionally used music to insult the Americans in battle; during the Battle of Harlem Heights, a British bugler mockingly played a fox hunting call to humiliate the defeated Continental troops. Significantly, this slur backfired, as General George Washington used the memory of its sting to drive his troops forward during the Battle of Princeton with "It's a fine fox hunt, boys!"<sup>6</sup> Both the British forces and the American rebels used a widely known martial melody,

“Yankee Doodle” to make a musical statement—the British used it to express “contempt for [the Americans’] provincial rusticity.” For the rebels, it became “The Lexington March,” a symbol of their courage and newly found confidence after gaining small victories over the renowned, professional British troops.<sup>7</sup>

Historian Robert Middlekauff spiced up his portrayal of an incident that occurred during the Stamp Act crisis with a bit of humor. He related that when Governor Francis Bernard “ordered the colonel of the militia ‘to beat an alarm,’” the officer said, “if a drummer could be found who was not in the mob, he would be knocked down as soon as he made a sound.”<sup>8</sup> This passage implied several insights into the scene and its corresponding social setting. It inferred that military drum commands would be recognized over the sound of the mob tearing apart Bernard’s home; that drummers were common enough that one might be found on relatively short notice, and third, that drummers themselves were just as likely as others to be caught up in the mob activities so common during the period.

Camus, the frequently cited professor of music, traced the origin of the drum as an instrument of war. Like many other Islamic innovations that found their way north following the Crusades, returning Christian knights adopted the drum from their Saracen adversaries and brought it back to Europe. As early as the sixteenth century, references appear to the drum’s beat setting the cadence for English marching troops. The drum, later joined by the fife, trumpet, and bugle, became critical to European military maneuvers and tactics as a “conveyor of signals and orders.” The British Army used the drum and fife to convey commands in the infantry and artillery—they used the trumpet and, later, the bugle primarily to relay signals to mounted troops.<sup>9</sup>

The ranks of American Revolutionary War military musicians, particularly drummers, were an assorted mixture of boys and men. Historian Lois Horton estimated that as many as five thousand African Americans, both slave and free, served the patriot cause.<sup>10</sup> African American soldiers were more likely to have been cooks, servants, or drummers than to carry weapons, as many states, particularly those in the South, were alarmed about “arming black soldiers to fight for the freedom of slaveholders.”<sup>11</sup> Two widely reported incidents from the Battle of Cowpens in January 1781 illustrate the relative youth and racial diversity of military musicians. As the British mounted troops fled the field, the American cavalry hero, Lieutenant Colonel William Washington gave chase, and soon outdistanced his own men. Engaging the infamous leader of the famed British

“Green Dragoons,” Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton, in a sword fight, Washington suddenly found himself in deadly danger. An African-American bugler, described as a fourteen-year-old Virginian by historian Burke Davis, raced to the scene, and shot a British officer who had joined Tarleton in the counterattack on Washington. There is very little information known about Washington’s small savior. Davis described



Figure 2 *Battle of Cowpens*. Oil on canvas by William Tylee Ranney, 1845. Located at the South Carolina State Senate.

him as Washington’s servant or as a bugler-boy. The Washington-Tarleton sword fight, together with the bugler-boy’s brave actions, are immortalized in *Battle of Cowpens*, an 1845 oil painting by William Ranney, which clearly shows the young man’s bugle, strapped to his shoulder, as he fires his pistol at Washington’s assailant. Likewise, battle accounts mention a youthful Cowpens drummer—following the victory, Brigadier General Daniel Morgan “was so elated he hoisted a nine-year-old drummer and kissed him.”<sup>12</sup> Studying the records of New Jersey and Pennsylvania Continental Army musicians, historian John Rees found drummers and fifers as young as ten years old. The median age of Pennsylvania’s drummers upon entering the service was eighteen, while that of fifers was seventeen. New Jersey’s drummers ranged from fourteen to thirty-five years of age, while the fifers were a bit younger, and ranged from ten years to twenty-eight years of age.<sup>13</sup>

Military music served a variety of purposes, the most important to convey orders to the troops. Baron Friedrich von Steuben’s *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States* listed the various drum beats and drum signals to be used, beginning with “*The General* . . . to be beat only when the

whole are to march, and is the signal to strike the tents, and prepare for the march” as well as “*The Assembly . . . The March . . . The Reveille*,” and others—each with its own specific purpose.<sup>14</sup> The “*Tattoo*” for instance, “is for the soldiers to repair to their tents, where they must remain till *reveille* beating the next morning.”<sup>15</sup> These are followed by “*The Signals*” which include “Adjutant’s call . . . First Sergeant’s call . . . All non-commissioned officers call . . . To go for wood; water; provisions . . . Front to halt . . . For a fatigue party . . . For the church call,” and many more. Unlike the descriptions for the various drum beats, which depicted the specific purpose of each beat, the description for the signals provided the drummer’s required drum-strokes, such as the signal “to go for water” which is described simply as “two strokes and a flam.”<sup>16</sup> Von Steuben’s manual provided instructions for each member of the military, including for the “private soldier” who is instructed, among many other things, to “acquaint himself with the usual beats and signals of the drum, and instantly obey them.”<sup>17</sup>

The Continental Army suffered terrible deprivations and tremendous turnover during its life, and Commander in Chief George Washington made many efforts to not only support and supply it better but also to transform it into a more professional fighting force. A set of Congressional Resolves passed in May 1778 made changes to the structure of infantry regiments. Unfortunately, while reducing the cost of the regiment as compared to that of 1776, Congress created a regiment that “was only seventy percent as strong.”<sup>18</sup> The May 1778 Resolves created the infantry regiment which included headquarters, composed of one colonel, one lieutenant colonel, and one major. The staff positions included one drum major and one fife major; the company officers performed other largely administrative positions, including adjutant, quartermaster, and paymaster. The new infantry regiment also included a Light Infantry Company, composed of one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign, three sergeants, three corporals, one drummer, one fifer, and fifty-three privates. Field Officer and Line Company configurations varied; “in regiments with three field officers, [there were] five line companies; in those with only two field officers, [there were] six line companies.”<sup>19</sup> Field Officer and Line companies included one drummer and one fifer.<sup>20</sup> As in the British military tradition during the Revolutionary War period, the Continental Army frequently used drummers and fifers in recruiting efforts. This assigned task reduced the total complement of the regiment, as the “staff drummer, fifer, and one lieutenant were normally on recruiting duty in the regiment’s home state.”<sup>21</sup> The musicians’

contributions were effective; stirring military music became a siren call for potential enlistees. Camus recounts that the “act of enlisting (or reenlisting) was called ‘following the drum.’”<sup>22</sup>

Both the British and the Continental Army used drummers to inflict some forms of military discipline. It fell to the drummer to administer lash punishments, a task few desired, and a task that at least one drummer refused to perform, resulting in his own arrest and court-martial.<sup>23</sup> The Americans adopted many British traditions of military discipline, including the practice of “drumming out” serious offenders. Capping his physical punishment, a soldier “drummed out of the Army” received a very public humiliation before his regiment cast him out. The practice—even in its severe form—applied to both combatants and camp followers alike; the women who accompanied the soldiers and provided cooking, nursing, and washing chores. A certain Mary Johnson, “for plotting to desert to the enemy, received one hundred lashes and was ‘drum’d out of the Army by all the Drums and Fifes in the Division.’”<sup>24</sup> References to the practice mention instances where as many as fifty-five drummers and sixty fifers participated in the ceremony, which included playing the tune *Rogues March*, as they paraded the guilty party in front of the entire regiment. At the end of the ceremony, the thoroughly shamed miscreant received one final bit of humiliation: a “kick from the youngest drummer” sent him on his way with “instructions never to return.”<sup>25</sup>

Drummers were often vulnerable in battle, as similar to their unit’s officers; they were instrumental to the effectiveness of the troops to whom they signaled commands. They therefore became targets for the enemy.<sup>26</sup> Drummers dressed differently than the typical rank and file soldier to be readily visible to their captain in the heat of battle, which, of course, also made them conspicuous to the enemy. While Continental regiments often had distinctive regional dress, the drummers and fifers wore the “reverse color of the regimental uniforms.”<sup>27</sup> Not all performed nobly, as seen at the Battle of Brandywine, when the “2nd Maryland Brigade, from the colonels to the drummer boys, turned on their heels and ran.”<sup>28</sup> Many more, however, were steadfast in duty and served admirably, as evidenced by their pension records, which attest to the service they performed and the wounds they suffered in the line of duty. A First New Jersey drummer, Daniel Applegate, risked his life to save his colonel’s horse from a bog, while the enemy fired at him. Another First New Jersey drummer, Martin Chandler, wounded during the Battle of Elizabeth Town, continued in service through the siege of Yorktown. Swain Parsel,

a fifer for the Third New Jersey, was wounded twice, while John Piatt, a fifer for the First New Jersey, who enlisted at the age of ten, served through Ticonderoga, Trenton, Princeton, and Elizabeth Town. The pension records of these men record heroism and misery; some contain lengthy recitations of battles fought and won or lost; others merely list enough information to substantiate the musician's service.<sup>29</sup>

From the early days of colonial America's rebellion against Britain, through the long years of war, military musicians were part of the fabric of the American Revolution; adding their music to the sounds of life, death, and battle. Musicians played a special role throughout the period and historians often remembered them for the dramatic flourish they added. It is only fitting that memories of the British surrender at Yorktown include one young drummer, who alone "mounted the enemy's hornwork and began to beat a parley. . . As for being heard . . . he might have played till doomsday, but he could readily be seen and the cannonading stopped."<sup>30</sup>

Drummers, fifers, trumpeters, and buglers played their respective parts in the Continental Army and with its passing in 1784, marched into history with their comrades, having secured liberty for America.<sup>31</sup>

## Notes

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4. Bobrick, *Angel*, 83.

5. *Ibid.*, 119.

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7. Bobrick, *Angel*, 148.

8. Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789* Rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 42.

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## Belle Boyd: Confederate Patriot or Pseudo-celebrity?

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Christopher Cox

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Belle Boyd remains one of the most colorful and enigmatic characters to have been active for the Confederacy during the Civil War. She was one of many Southern women to transcend the bounds of station normally assigned to her gender and lend valuable service to her country. In her case, it was not only as a nurse, but also as a courier and a spy. Boyd's actions in the latter capacity put her in a position to achieve fame; though it was her character and determination that achieved that goal. Known in some circles as the “Cleopatra of the Secesh,” her fiery spirit, headstrong determination, and unwillingness to let societal limitations hamper her likened her to the famous namesake.

Unfortunately, these qualities also provided ammunition for her detractors, largely the Northern media, who painted her as a camp follower or prostitute.<sup>1</sup> No evidence exists to support those charges and the fact that Boyd was a successful Confederate spy mitigates them in posterity, considering the source. Such disparagement, however, when combined with Boyd's own tendency to sensationalize and self-aggrandize in her memoirs has cast her reputation and accomplishments in doubt to



Figure 1 *Belle Boyd*. Created between 1855 and 1865. Negative, glass, wet collodion. Located at the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

many historians and other interested parties. Her legacy is torn between her love of the Confederacy and her fanciful accounts of her own adventures. The question remains, was Boyd an ardent Southern patriot, bravely doing everything she could for the cause? Or was she an attention seeker enamored with her own fame, a forerunner to the modern pseudo-celebrity who is famous mostly for being famous? The answer is that Belle Boyd was a complex blend of both.

In her early life, she grew up as a part of Southern society and grew to appreciate the values and culture of the Old Dominion. When secession occurred, forming the Confederacy, Boyd embraced her new country like many of her neighbors and resolved to do what she could to advance the cause. Her activities brought her not only notoriety but detention and incarceration as well, putting her in a position to test both her resolve and her love of the South. In her adult life, she used her talents and fell back on her own history as a way to support herself and her family, while still maintaining relevancy and her sense of pride. This first came in the form of her memoirs, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison*, and then later as an actress and purveyor of her own legacy. From a young age, the qualities that would make Boyd the woman she became were evident, and developed much of her character during her childhood.

Maria Isabella “Belle” Boyd was born in Martinsburg, Virginia on May 9, 1844.<sup>2</sup> Her upbringing was fairly well to do, as her father Benjamin and mother Mary, operated a general store first in the smaller town of Bunker Hill and then in Martinsburg in conjunction with a prosperous farm.<sup>3</sup> Berkeley County, Virginia sat at the bottom of the Shenandoah Valley, and so picturesque beauty and a slightly far-flung version of Virginia gentility surrounded Belle’s early life. Being not quite part of the Tidewater or Piedmont elite, the Boyds were wealthy but not extravagantly so, and there were fewer expectations placed on Boyd as a child. She loved her home very much, comparing Martinsburg’s residences favorably to those she saw in England, and lamenting the idyllic nature of her surroundings before the coming of a ruthless enemy.<sup>4</sup>

As a child, Boyd first showed signs of the fiery spirit and fierce determination that would characterize her as an adult. At the age of eleven, after her parents denied her a place at a dinner they were holding for some distinguished guests because she was too young, Boyd rode her horse into the dining room and stated, “Well, my horse is old enough, isn’t he?”<sup>5</sup> For being so independent and something of a tomboy, at the age of twelve, her parents sent her for formal schooling at the Mount Washington Academy, where she remained for the next

four years. This time removed the slightly rough nature Boyd had displayed as a child, but did nothing to quell her determination and independence. Boyd entered society at the age of sixteen in Washington and spent much of the winter of 1860-61 there, taking part in all manner of social events. This time honed not only her taste for company and attention, but her social skills as well.

Boyd had a very romantic view of this time in the nation's capital, and the pages of her memoir that discuss this part of her life are particularly poetic. She was also able to see the practical side of the political reality of the time, and likened Washington to Paris shortly before the French Revolution as a place innocent or willfully blind to the coming storm.<sup>6</sup> The notion of disunion would have set a person like Belle Boyd on a path to involvement because of her love of her home and her direct nature. She, like many Americans that identified as Southern, felt the cultural pressure and resented the Northern intrusions into the traditions of her home and her very way of life. Boyd was also astute enough to observe that emancipation was the goal of only a select subset of the Northern populace, and that limiting the power of the South was the primary reason for sectional hostility. Once the Civil War erupted, Boyd's life would change forever and she would step forward to do everything in her power for the nascent Confederacy.

Boyd was in Martinsburg at the outbreak of conflict, and her father was among the first to enlist, becoming part of the 2nd Virginia infantry regiment that would go on to become a part of the Stonewall Brigade. She was very proud of not only her father but also of the rest of her countrymen and was clearly enamored by the romantic notion of fighting Yankee oppression. Of the Stonewall Brigade she wrote, "the very name now bears with it traditions of surpassing glory," and likened it favorably to Wellington's Light Division.<sup>7</sup> By all accounts, Boyd had become an attractive, charming, headstrong, and impulsive woman by this point in her life. The first opportunity she found to aid the cause was in gathering equipment and supplies for the local men who were going to war, though this would be far from her last contribution.

The Civil War came early to Martinsburg, as a Federal Army under Maj. Gen. Robert Patterson took possession of the town on July 3, 1861, after overcoming a determined Confederate delaying action at Falling Waters nearby.<sup>8</sup> Boyd writes of these early days of Union occupation as essentially an extended session of looting and destruction by drunk, rude, and offensive Federal soldiers. She showed her determination and spirit, however, by chastising Yankee officers



for their boorish behavior and taking care of wounded Confederates that the army had left behind as they abandoned the town. Boyd's most famous incident during this period, and the one that likely got her started in the espionage game, came on July 7, 1861. On this day, a party of supposedly drunk Union soldiers was going through town hunting Confederate flags and replacing them with that of the United States. At Boyd's house, her mother refused to allow them to fly the Union flag over the house and when a Yankee soldier insulted her, Boyd flew into a rage and shot the man.<sup>9</sup> The man is believed to be Pvt. Frederick Martin of the 7th Pennsylvania who was buried in Martinsburg on that day, though some doubt remains.<sup>10</sup>

Hereafter, Boyd's home was under constant guard, and Union officers stopped by daily to check on the family's welfare. She was able to fraternize with these officers and use her charm to wheedle sensitive military information from them, passing it on to the hands of nearby Confederate commanders, usually through the aid of a slave.<sup>11</sup> Much of her words about this time are grandiose and full of self-flattery, but to risk death or imprisonment for espionage and killing a Union soldier speaks highly of Boyd's resolve and dedication to serve her country. Her love of attention is evident in the way that she writes, as her flair for the dramatic enlivens the tale of her deeds to a great degree, though it does not diminish the significance of what she was able to accomplish or why. Her most famous and successful endeavor would come at Front Royal, Virginia late in the evening of May 22, 1862.

Boyd had traveled to Front Royal to visit an aunt and uncle during a period when the town was under occupation by Union forces under Brigadier General James Shields. She gained much information from Shields and his staff, particularly a young captain. Boyd showed no remorse in using him for information, demonstrating her willingness to do what was necessary to aid the Confederacy.<sup>12</sup> On the evening of May 22, Shields called a meeting of his officers at the local hotel, and Boyd was able to listen in from the closet of a bedroom directly above the meeting room. Through a hole in the floor, Boyd was able to hear that Shields would be heading away from Front Royal in pursuit of Stonewall Jackson leaving the town lightly defended. She documented her information, and using forged papers, was able to run the Union lines and deliver the news to Jackson's cavalry commander, Colonel Turner Ashby.<sup>13</sup> During the interim of this heroic endeavor and Jackson's attack on Front Royal, Boyd would

again display her ability utterly overcoming the will of young Union officers.

After Confederates approached her to deliver sensitive materials and correspondence to them, Boyd enlisted the aid of a young lieutenant to get her safely out of town in light of the constant scrutiny she was under due to her reputation. When Federals caught her with the documents, she was able to shift much of the blame to the young officer and avoided detection of the most sensitive material by offering it directly to the questioning Federal who was far too incensed by the actions of his subordinate to notice it.<sup>14</sup> Once Shields had departed, Boyd heard news of the approaching Confederates under Jackson and braved musket and artillery fire to reach Jackson and confirm that Federals lightly held Front Royal. The town fell to the Southerners and this series of events became the center of Belle Boyd's legend and the foundation, which built her reputation as a spy. She writes that no desire for recognition or fame motivated her to do what she did, and certainly the evidence that she risked her life to deliver intelligence, supports that claim. Ultimately, Belle Boyd would pay the price for her activities not only in constant surveillance in every Union town she went, but with several detentions and imprisonments as well.

Federals detained Boyd in her home or lodgings on several occasions, and the frequency of this practice increased as her legend grew. Confining the charming Confederate spy was a matter of security and expedience for several Union commanders. When she was under guard at her residence, she was at least pinned down to one location and easier to watch, though this was not always entirely successful, depending on the officers assigned to watch her. This was often done purely on her reputation alone, and not as a response to anything she may have done at that particular location, which only served to increase her notoriety as a dangerous Rebel operative. In many ways, this confinement was counterproductive, as Boyd still found ways to gather information wherever she was due to her tremendous determination and skill at manipulating the opposite sex. Simple home confinements would not be the end of Federal infringement on Boyd's liberty, however, as she would spend multiple stints in actual prisons before being banished entirely.

While still in Front Royal, Boyd continued her spying, but she finally made a serious mistake after so many exploits that led to her incarceration. By foolishly trusting a Federal operative posing as a paroled Confederate soldier, Belle allowed a letter full of captured information to make its way to Major General

Franz Sigel instead of its intended recipient Stonewall Jackson.<sup>15</sup> Sigel forwarded the information to the War Department where Edwin Stanton ordered Belle's immediate arrest and transport to the Old Capital Prison in Washington. An escort of 450 cavalry troopers delivered Boyd to prevent an expected attempt by the Confederates to rescue one of their most effective and well-loved spies.<sup>16</sup> While there, Boyd did her best to continue gathering information, which considering the seriousness of her situation, demonstrates a true dedication to the Southern cause. Most remarkably, she steadfastly refused to take the Oath of Allegiance in exchange for her release, which made her an instant and tremendous source of inspiration for her fellow inmates.<sup>17</sup>

Federals arrested Boyd again in 1863, this time more for her reputation than for any overt act. This time they sent her to Carroll Prison, which adjoined the Old Capital Prison, and this imprisonment proved more difficult for her due to illness and worry for her family.<sup>18</sup> While at Carroll, she was responsible for facilitating an escape by the inmates in the adjoining cell providing a valuable service to the Confederacy even in the worst of times.<sup>19</sup> In late 1863, they sent Boyd to Fortress Monroe to be exchanged, which was a sign of her status not only to the Union, but to the Confederacy as well. While making a second visit to Richmond, and after learning of her father's death, Jefferson Davis suggested that she visit England for her health while surreptitiously carrying Confederate diplomatic dispatches to London.<sup>20</sup> Boyd was more than happy to comply with the request, considering that it came from the Confederate President, and set out for London on the *Greyhound*.

The U. S. S. *Connecticut* stopped the *Greyhound*, and Federals found Boyd carrying incriminating documents and arrested her again on May 9, 1864. Her captor was Navy Lieutenant Samuel Hardinge, who instantly became smitten with Boyd to the point of neglecting his duty to a sufficient degree to allow the captain of the *Greyhound*, George H. Bier, to escape captivity. This incident cost Hardinge his commission and caused the exile of Boyd to Canada because there was no other way to ensure that she would not continue to damage the Federal war effort with her espionage. From Montreal, Boyd would make her way to her original destination of London, albeit without the dispatches she had when she originally left Richmond. Her visit to London would culminate with two events that would mark the end of her time as a Confederate spy and the beginning of her life as an author and actress.

Though she felt guilty for the capture of Lieutenant Hardinge, Boyd

would be surprised to find that her beau was already in Europe; after a brief confinement, the Navy released and dishonorably discharged him.<sup>21</sup> Boyd had developed feelings for Hardinge during their trip together aboard the *Greyhound*, and when they met again in London, they set their wedding date, as they had agreed during a stop in New York before her exile to Canada. Their wedding, while flashy and showy, was to be short-lived, as Hardinge left shortly thereafter to return to the United States, and Boyd never saw him again. Some speculate that he carried Confederate dispatches back to the United States, but rather than making directly for the South, he spent time in the North to visit his family and then in Martinsburg to visit hers, before heading to Baltimore, where the Federals arrested him.<sup>22</sup> His disappearance left Belle in a tight financial situation, but she would not accept the continued charity of her English friends, so she arranged to write and sell her memoirs, *Belle Boyd in Camp in Prison*.<sup>23</sup>

Boyd brought her memoirs to London writer and journalist George Sala, and as she sought his aid to get her work published, she uttered the famous phrase, "Will you take my life?"<sup>24</sup> Boyd needed a way to support herself, and she felt telling the story of her exploits in written form was the best means available to her. This was the first step that she took to capitalize on her own fame, but it was an important one, and brought her to a career as an actress and a celebrity in Europe and the United States. Boyd married two more times, to John Swainston Hammond and Nathaniel Rue High, and she would also have three more children by her second husband.<sup>25</sup> High himself was an actor and inspired Boyd to resume touring and speaking about her life which brought her legend to new generations and allowed her to remember and relive the glories of her past. She passed away in Wisconsin in 1900. This second part of Boyd's life, her time as an actress and author, is what raises the question of her true motivation.

Boyd's dual legacy is that of ardent Southerner and lying attention-seeker and the events of her life make both of these aspects understandable to a certain degree. Two aspects really indicate that both are true and that they are not mutually exclusive, as the historians that have studied her seem to have settled upon. The first is the personal risks that she took in the line of duty and the high price she paid for her espionage, all in the name of the Confederacy. From running through a hail of fire at Front Royal to spending significant time behind bars to facing potential capital sentences for spying for the South, the cost to Boyd for her dedication to the South was high. Secondly, too much supporting evidence from outside sources

exists that corroborates her stories for them to be lies, despite the sensational and self-centered nature of many of them. Walter Clark recounts the care he received at Boyd's hands, and Harry Gilmor writes about her willingness to accept dangerous tasks when she requested to ride on a scouting mission with him.<sup>26</sup> While her Northern husbands have cast doubt on her dedication to the Confederacy in some circles, the rest of her accomplishments and her recognition for them say otherwise.

Her love of attention, however, is difficult to deny based on her behavior, the writing in her memoirs, and her dedication to capitalizing on her own legend later in life. While this, on occasion, obscures her accomplishments as a Confederate spy, it should instead compliment them and be an integral part of this complex and fascinating historical figure. Boyd was a flawed figure, vain, headstrong, and self-centered, but her character defects were not of sufficient magnitude to detract from the rest of her life. She spent her youth developing the social skills that she would need later in life, and used them and her natural charm to become a spy who was successful in ways that a male could not have been. She never compromised her principles for gaining recognition, and that fact should preserve her historical legacy as much as anything. Later in life, she capitalized on her own fame and became, in many ways, the forerunner of the modern celebrity that plies fame as a career to itself. This was as much out of necessity as it was out of choice, so there should be some mitigation when examining this aspect of her life. Ultimately, Belle Boyd is a diverse character, and while she loved attention, she also loved the South, and so was not only an attention-seeking celebrity, but also a devoted agent for the Southern cause.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> John Bakeless, *Spies of the Confederacy* (Mineola: Dover Publications, Inc., 1997), 142.

<sup>2</sup> Ruth Scarborough, *Belle Boyd: Siren of the South* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997), 2; Boyd's name is often given as Isabelle Marie, but Scarborough references the Boyd family Bible, which clearly states Maria as her given name.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Belle Boyd, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison*, Volumes I & II (London: Saunders, Otley, & Co., 1865), 22-23.

<sup>5</sup> Louis A. Sigaud, *Belle Boyd: Confederate Spy* (Richmond: Dietz Press, Inc., 1944), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Boyd, 24.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 28-29.

<sup>8</sup> Scarborough, 15.

<sup>9</sup> Boyd, 36.

<sup>10</sup> Bakeless, 145.

<sup>11</sup> Boyd, 38.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 52-53.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 57-59; Boyd claims to have gained the idea of innocently offering the evidence from a Cooper novel called, "The Spy."

<sup>15</sup> Sigaud, 62-63.

<sup>16</sup> Boyd, 83.

<sup>17</sup> Scarborough, 74.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>19</sup> Boyd, 134-135.

<sup>20</sup> Sigaud, 147.

<sup>21</sup> Scarborough, 157.

<sup>22</sup> Sigaud, 179.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>24</sup> Scarborough, 178.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 180-181.

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“Let Us Never Stop Trying To Learn”:  
Gender Roles of Antebellum Slave Education

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Allyson Perry

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When the United States Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment, it set four million blacks free from legal bondage. Yet many had nowhere to go, few skills to rely on, and no formal education. In 1870, about seventy percent of blacks in the South were illiterate.<sup>1</sup> Despite the major setbacks, African Americans strived to develop their own autonomy in a hegemonic society that endowed whites with political, economic, and social power. Blacks developed their independence in a major way: learning how to read and write. Even while enslaved, African Americans yearned for an education, as seen in several slave narratives, but slave owners shuddered at the idea of teaching blacks to read and write. White masters feared that slaves, upon learning to read and write, would become aware of their condition, then organize, and rebel against the slave system. White oppression of blacks did not end with the restriction of education, however. Rather, the intersections of race, education, and gender display slaves' desire for and endeavors in education. Women and men shared in the effects of oppression and desire for education to fulfill their self-ownership, but each gender went about resisting slavery, learning to read and write, and passing that education along in highly different ways.

While enslaved men and women during the antebellum era equally desired an education for their own self-worth, the various regions lent differing capabilities for the enslaved population. In the Chesapeake region of the United States from 1840 to 1860, whites lived in fear of slaves and remained vigilant for any slave insurrection. Conversely, African Americans lived either in communities of free blacks, or on plantations—all the while looking for a route to freedom. According to T. Stephen Whitman in *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake*, slavery in the most northern parts of the region was on the decline, and many free blacks lived in this section. In northern Delaware, western and northern Maryland, and west of the Blue Ridge in Virginia, slavery was static or declining as well. Only in the most southerly areas, such as in Maryland's tobacco growing counties and Virginia's Tidewater and Piedmont counties did slavery define both state and society. Even though politicians from Maryland and



Delaware rarely contested the heated issue of slavery, Virginian officials and their constituents remained vehemently proslavery because the system was their way of life.<sup>2</sup> Despite the fact that the region's social and political systems varied by geographical aberrations, the region still remained terrified in the 1840s by the threat of rebellion. White people living in the Chesapeake had just recently fought off Gabriel's conspiracy and Turner's rebellion and consequently distrusted organized, and especially educated, African Americans.<sup>3</sup>

Despite this fear, blacks particularly in this region formed groups in order to create institutions that fought their oppression. In larger cities, free blacks established their own African Methodist Episcopalian churches and attached a Sunday school for children. This tie linked together spiritual ideals and republican ideals of freedom to inculcate children.<sup>4</sup> Some abolitionists, though, erected schools without a religious affiliation. For example, in 1851, Myrtilla Miner opened a school for free blacks in Washington, D.C. She advocated for black education because it "was the key to emancipating African Americans from slavery and racial oppression."<sup>5</sup> By fighting in the public sphere for their own religious denomination and their own education, free blacks in the Chesapeake began to carve away at white hegemony, but what of the majority of blacks still enslaved in this time and region?<sup>6</sup>

Antebellum slave narratives reveal various aspects of slave life in the Chesapeake. One common subject of intense interest was education because white masters consistently withheld this freedom from slaves for fear of rebellion. Their inability to learn how to read and write only fueled slaves' desire to resist their masters' laws. In particular, slaves in the Chesapeake region often wrote of the love and need for an education because the ideology of liberty and independence permeated slave culture as it did white culture. Yet, democratic thinking spread dramatically as slavery declined and large communities of free blacks established institutions. Male and female African Americans shared the desire for education, used similar forms of resistance, and sought autonomy in comparable ways. However, men and women spoke differently of the themes of ingenuity and educating children. The slave experience was unique for each individual, but his or her experiences of education were even more distinctive and particularly gendered.

Male and female slave narratives were about individual slaves' experiences, written to instill empathy in their audience. Although of the same literary genre, they vary greatly by gender. This gender variance displayed by the

narratives may have derived directly from the gender roles present during the antebellum era. According to Elizabeth Fox-Genovese in *Within the Plantation Household*, slaveholders, non-slaveholding whites, and slaves themselves “shared an ideal of the universal division between women and men.”<sup>7</sup> The separate spheres—a world for modest, fragile women in the home and a world for undaunted and physically strong men in the workforce—defined a universal division between women and men during the era. This social system was as necessary for whites as it was for the free and enslaved populations of blacks.<sup>8</sup> Thus, men wrote narratives displaying particular masculinities, which the men hoped to achieve. Most often, the themes of desire, resistance, ingenuity, and autonomy reappeared in male slave narratives. The uncommon theme in male slave narratives was the interest in passing on education to black children; only one man writes of this need despite all authors’ acknowledgement of not denying blacks an education.

Frederick Douglass, arguably the most notable antebellum slave because of his widely read *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, was born in Maryland, taught himself how to read and write, and eventually made his way to the North. Because he wanted to know how to read and write, Douglass “was compelled to resort to various stratagems.” First, he convinced his mistress to teach him.<sup>9</sup> He quickly and diligently learned characters and a few words, but she

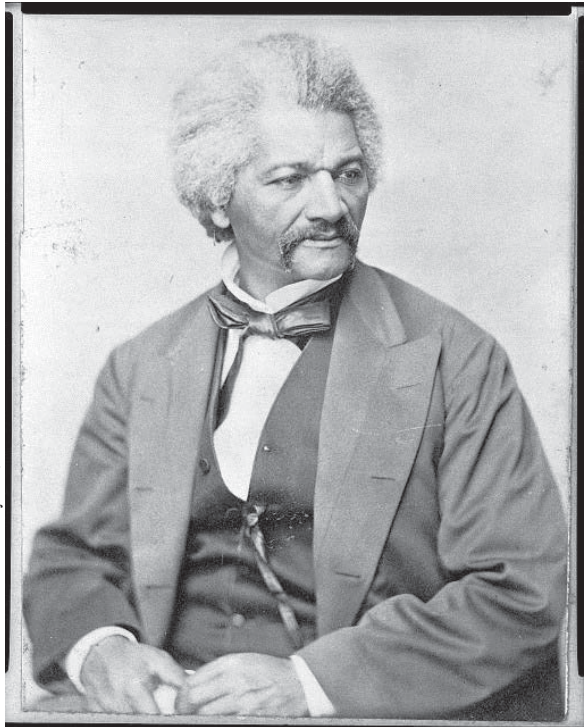


Figure 1 Frederick Douglass, head-and-shoulders portrait, facing right. C 1850-1860. Photographic print, albumen. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

soon stopped teaching him after she realized the danger. Later, Douglass persuaded poor white children in the neighborhood to teach him by bartering bread. He again actively sought this education, but when Douglass stopped having lessons, he became despondent. His desire to learn, and to learn about abolition in particular, made him regret his “own existence.”<sup>10</sup>

The three themes of resistance, autonomy, and ingenuity were also apparent in the narratives, and each related closely to the other. Because Douglass desired to learn how to read, he also wanted to resist the slave system and create his own independence. Likewise, he had to invent an ingenious method to receive that education. When his master sent Douglass on errands, he always found a way to sneak in a lesson. He ran his errand quickly and carried bread with him, so when he came across poor, hungry children, he traded the bread for a lesson. Similarly, once he learned to read, he longed “to hear any one speak of slavery.”<sup>11</sup> His desire to hear of abolition fueled his ambitions for freedom. By learning to read and write, Douglass immediately resisted anti-literacy laws, but he was also resisting the institution of slavery itself, as he refused to allow white owners to oppress his natural right to learn. North Carolina started these anti-literacy laws, and in 1830, passed an act that “constituted part of a larger scheme of surveillance and control over African Americans, enslaved and free.”<sup>12</sup> This legislation quickly spread to other states in the South. By learning, Douglass broke this law but also broke the scheme of surveillance and gave himself autonomy.

Like Douglass, John Quincy Adams, born in Frederick County, Virginia, talked of his great desire to learn, his forms of resistance, his effort to create his own independence, and others’ ingenuity. However, he also mentioned passing on education to children, particularly to young boys. For one, Adams was forward about his hope for an education. He aspired to learn how to read and write so he worked all day and studied every night to, as he said, “accomplish my desire.”<sup>13</sup> He “saw others going to school, and wanted to go too.”<sup>14</sup> Adams achieved this goal by learning to read from his father, who was literate. In passing education to his children, Adams’ father carried on the masculine ideal to learn to read and write, as men needed education in southern culture for employment in leadership roles.<sup>15</sup> However, educating children was also seen as a feminine act because teaching is another form of nurturing, a female characteristic. Even so, Adams included his brother’s tale of learning to read and write and presented the theme of ingenuity. Adams’ brother Robert exchanged apples for the opportunity to have

children listen to him say his lesson, and after trading the apples for lessons, Robert soon learned to read.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to his obvious aspirations, Adams learned to read and write to resist the institution of slavery and to critique the slave society. He argued, “the man who would deprive another of learning to read and write, and learn wisdom does not fear God. They took my labor to educate their children, and then laughed at me for being ignorant and poor, and had not sense enough to know that they were the cause of it.”<sup>17</sup> His analysis of the intersections of race, education, and class in the antebellum South was later eclipsed by his hatred of racism and how it affected his life, for he had “a better education than some of [his] white friends in the South who were not slaves, and when they worked were paid for their labor.”<sup>18</sup> Adams wrote candidly of the slave system, not only to criticize slavery but also to shine a light on the entire way of life. According to him, few white slaveholders profited from the system while leaving poor white men and black slaves to function within its society. Yet, he knew poor white men and blacks were illiterate because of extremely different reasons. White men still had the opportunity to be free, while Adams knew that “there was something more than learning to read and write that they did not want the negro to know,” and that notion was freedom.<sup>19</sup>

Like Douglass and Adams, Leonard Black highlighted his desire to read, but otherwise Black only mentioned the theme of resistance. Born in Maryland, Black entered the ministry just prior to running away. From a young age he thirsted “for that knowledge which was denied me,” and he “was anxious to learn to read” after seeing his master send his two sons to school.<sup>20</sup> However, Black noted that his master did not send his four unmarried daughters to school. For Black, this intense yearning for education derived from a severe beating he received by his master when he found Black carrying a book. In the confrontation, “the old man saw it in [his] bosom, and made inquiry as to what it was. He said, ‘You son of a b—h, if I ever know you to have a book again, I will whip you half to death.’ He took the book from [him], and burnt it!”<sup>21</sup> Despite the beating that followed, Black bought another book, this time an even larger one, but his “master found it out; and he then made [Black] sicker of books by beating [him] like a dog.”<sup>22</sup> While Black’s master made him balk at the idea of reading a book, he did not quell Black’s desire for an education. Black knew that when he was free he could educate himself, but until that time, he lived with the idea “that slave-holders [were] worse than the devil, for it is written in St. James, ‘Resist the devil, and he will flee from you,’ but if you

undertake to resist the slave-holder, he will hold you the tighter.”<sup>23</sup>

The last slave narrative, by Louis Hughes, exemplified the themes of slaves’ desire for education, their extreme cleverness in learning to read and escape, and the autonomy they hoped to achieve. Hughes acknowledged that he “was eager to learn to read and write,” but did not have many opportunities to do so, especially compared with his friend Tom.<sup>24</sup> Hughes revealed much of his view of education through the story of Tom’s learning and eventual journey to freedom. Every night Tom slipped out of his quarters, not attached to the house, but Hughes, who stayed in the same house as the masters, could not leave. Hughes desperately wanted to learn, so one night Tom took him to the side of the barn and wrote several characters on the planks with chalk. Hughes practiced, but when the men left, they forgot to rub out the lesson. The next day, their Old Master Jack found the “rude characters” and surmised the two men had practiced, but he had no proof. Several months later, Master Jack found letters Tom had written to his mother, and Master Jack called in the culprit to be whipped. After the incident, Tom only stayed a few weeks until “he wrote himself a pass, which was of the usual kind, stating his name, to whom he belonged, and that he was privileged to hire himself out wherever he could coming and going.”<sup>25</sup> This pass allowed Tom to leave his master, find work in nearby cities, and eventually to work his way to New Orleans, whereupon he boarded a ship for Canada. Tom was able to use his ingenuity, based on his ability to read and write, to resist plantation slavery and find his own way to freedom. Likewise, his opposition allowed him to subvert his oppressed state into one of “privilege,” giving him autonomy because as “Tom always said: ‘Lou, I am going to be a free man yet, then we will need some education; no, let us never stop trying to learn.’”<sup>26</sup>

Male slave narratives provided direct motifs of desire, resistance, autonomy, and ingenuity, but female slave narratives displayed a variation upon these same themes. Unfortunately, the majority of the history of African American enslavement has focused on slave life, not on education, and historians have noticeably gendered that little history dealing with education. According to Ronald E. Butchart in “‘Outthinking and Outflanking the Owners of the World’: Historiography of African American Education,” “the history of black female education is even more neglected,” and almost no historian has employed a gender analysis of black education.<sup>27</sup> Most gendered history of African Americans concerns feminist history of black women that uses a lens of race and gender. An

early feminist analysis of antebellum black women was Deborah Gray White's *Ar'n't I a Woman*.<sup>28</sup> She categorized the inaccurate interpretations of female roles into the "Mammy," "Jezebel," and "Sapphire" typecasts. Yet free black women writing their narratives rarely fit into the conformed category of the dominant, caring Mammy, the sexy, aggressive Jezebel, or the indomitable, argumentative Sapphire. Historians cannot typecast these real women into one-dimensional characters but must see them for their prerogatives, in the time in which they lived, and as a product of social constructs.<sup>29</sup>

Since this feminist analysis, other historians have used gender and race to view African American women living during the antebellum era. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese in *Within the Plantation Household* discussed the gender spheres, which separated men and women into the public and private sector, respectively.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, feminist historians have moved a step farther from the domesticity analysis to view women in the public sphere as they attempted to change the hierarchy of privilege and oppression. For Martha Jones, race and gender intersect in experiences of oppression, but "African American activism occurred not within a distinct female sphere but in those spaces that men and women shared."<sup>31</sup> Consequently, African American women's education also had to fit within the public and private spheres all the while it questioned gender roles and race constraints.

Women experienced slavery in unique ways as compared to their male counterparts, and female slave narratives revealed disparate opinions of education. While men and women shared a desire to learn and to resist slavery, more women described transferring education from parents to children. More women fought for their children's education over their own. Harriet Jacobs' narrative, despite her not being from the Chesapeake region, is a quintessential slave narrative of maternal selflessness. People read her story throughout the country and influenced male white abolitionists and non-abolitionists to empathize with the plight of the female slave. Jacobs did not talk much of her own desire for education because her mistress taught her to read and write at a young age. Even though Jacobs' story is authentic, it is still extraordinary and does not reflect the reality that most women were illiterate. Likewise, many women did not work in the home. Only about ten percent of female slaves were servants. Those women who were servants and passed their apprenticeship to full status "might have spent their formative years in closer contact with the white family than with the black."<sup>32</sup> Jacobs was one of

these slaves, and because of her accessibility, she fell into the gaze of her master Dr. Flint. She wished to have autonomy over her body, so she took Mr. Sands as her lover. Her proximity to the family and other white owners allowed her to traverse this more public sphere.<sup>33</sup>

Her affair does not align her with the stereotypical “Jezebel,” though. Jacobs did become pregnant, and hoped Mr. Sands would buy his children and her and set them free. Ultimately, he did not give Jacobs freedom, but to see her children’s safety through, Jacobs hid in the attic for seven years. Jacobs discussed her discomfort little but instead described in detail longing for her children and hoping for a better life for them. Her nurturing ways directly related to the womanly ideals prescribed during the antebellum era. Yet her tendencies beg the question, “were her actions nature or nurture?” Did her actions derive from the historical time period’s focus on female domesticity, or was her need to nurture an example of a black woman proving her true womanhood, in a strictly biological sense?

Jacobs’ acts of resistance were not for her sake, but for her children. Her nurturing disposition may have stemmed from the historical period because slaveholders “demanded that the ‘servant’ women adopt their ideals of personal conduct, morality, marriage, and family.”<sup>34</sup> Southern white women may have wanted black women to adhere to these ideals, and black women themselves may have wanted to express their femininity in prescriptive ways; however, black women were seen as less than women. People often described them as “wenches,” and characterized them as Jezebels.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, black women still wanted others to see them as “good women,” especially when Jacobs stated, “the slave girl is reared in an atmosphere of licentiousness and fear. The lash and the foul talk of her master and his sons are her teachers. When she is fourteen or fifteen, her owner, or his sons, or the overseer, or perhaps all of them, begin to bribe her with presents. If these fail to accomplish their purpose, she is whipped or starved into submission to their will.”<sup>36</sup> She vehemently argued that her affair was not her fault, and in reality, she had no control over her sexuality. Without control over her sexuality, she could not feel like a whole woman because she had no authority over parts of her body making her uniquely feminine. To fill this void of feeling less than a woman, Jacobs may have employed matronly nature to prove to herself and others that while she could not control having children she could at least control how they were raised.

Jacobs’ intense motherly feelings exemplified a desire not for her education but for her children’s. When Mr. Sands suggested Ellen should be sent to Brooklyn, “it was promised that she should be well taken care of, and sent to school.”<sup>37</sup> Jacobs

consented to the move, and the promise of education most likely weighed on her decision. After she found freedom, she worked “diligently for [her] own support, and the education of [her] children.”<sup>38</sup> In most thoughts and actions, Jacobs put herself second and her children first, especially when it came to their education. Her nurturing disposition even extended beyond her own children. An old black man, who “had a most earnest desire to learn to read” begged Jacobs to teach him and offered to pay her in fruit.<sup>39</sup> Before consenting to teach him, she explained the anti-literacy laws and upon this news, the old man began to cry out of his desperation to read. He acknowledged that he willingly wanted to break the law—and consequently resist white hegemony—to learn to read. The old man’s desire for an education also exemplified other ex-slaves’ esteem of literate blacks.<sup>40</sup>

Like Jacobs, Old Elizabeth described educating children, but Elizabeth did so while spreading the Word of God. At a young age, she converted to Christianity and years later in her thirties became a Presbyterian minister. However, Elizabeth exemplified the more submissive tendencies of women who lived during the antebellum era. According with most female narratives, Elizabeth did not acknowledge her own desire for education. In fact, her father read the Bible aloud to his children every Sunday morning. Elizabeth learned to read, but when it came time for her to speak or read aloud, she “shrank from it—so great was the cross to [her] nature.”<sup>41</sup> In refusing to perform the more masculine duty of speaking aloud, Elizabeth took upon the more docile nature meant for white women. Jacobs knew that she could not “enjoy the full status of [her] gender,” but Jacobs and Elizabeth likewise attempted to internalize the social constructs of gender.<sup>42</sup> Even though white and black women were racially separated, their gender “excluded [each race] from a host of male prerogatives.”<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth further noted the vast differences in gender when she acknowledged, “it was hard for men to travel, and what could women do? These things greatly discouraged [her], and shut up [her] way, and caused [her] to resist the Spirit.”<sup>44</sup> To Elizabeth, being a woman closed her off to her own choice of spirituality and her autonomy to speak the word of God.

Once Elizabeth overcame this fear, she wanted to spread the Word of God and teach children. She “established a school for coloured orphans, having always felt the great importance of the religious and moral agriculture of children, and the great need of it, especially amongst the coloured people. Having white teachers, [she] met with much encouragement.”<sup>45</sup> In addition to her feminine identity, Elizabeth displayed her nurturing character because as a woman in the nineteenth



century, people saw female teachers as the best teachers for children. All the same, her desire to spread the Word of God and teach related directly to African Americans' universal desire to become self-autonomous, and two ways in which they accomplished these goals were through setting up their own churches and creating schools.<sup>46</sup>

The narrative of Amanda Smith exemplified this desire to gain an education once emancipated. Smith was born in 1837, and her father bought himself and his family while she was still young. They moved to Pennsylvania, where Smith received less than three months of schooling. To attend this school designed mainly for white children, Smith and her brother "walked five and a half miles each day, in going and returning, and the attention [they] received while there was only such as the teacher could give after the requirements of the more favored pupils had been met."<sup>47</sup> She put so much effort into attending school that she even went on a bitterly cold morning with several feet of snow on the ground. Smith was an exemplar of the other free African Americans who wanted to feel wholly human and a part of a greater national community in which they could actively participate.

Jacobs, Elizabeth, and Smith all portrayed feminine qualities and viewed education not as important to them as it was to teaching children. Elizabeth Keckley's narrative also fell within this ideology. Keckley was born a slave in Virginia, but eventually moved to St. Louis. While enslaved, she learned to read and write as well as acquired the skills of a seamstress. This type of employment, extremely restricted to only women, and her ability to sew says more than just the education she received. She ultimately had to acquire feminine skills as a woman, but as a black woman, she could only serve others. After she bought her freedom, however, she could employ herself instead of merely serving. In fact, Keckley had the fortitude and ingenuity to set up her own dressmaking shop in Washington, D.C., where many of her clients were wives of influential politicians, including Mary Todd Lincoln. Keckley's story reveals her absolute autonomy, even for being a black woman. As Jones suggests, once African American women reached the public sphere, they could vie for their independence and citizenship.<sup>48</sup>

Keckley's story was an extraordinary one, and unfortunately, she did not speak much of her own education. Rather, she gave a great account of black schools in Washington, D.C. According to Stanley Harrold's *Subversives: Antislavery Community in Washington, D.C., 1828-1865*, slavery in Washington,

D.C. was weak and vicious because slaves constantly had the threat of masters selling them South. Once emancipated, they no longer had this threat and were able to take part in a school system designed to encourage their independence. According to Keckley, “the schools [were] objects of much interest. Good teachers, white and colored, [were] employed, and whole brigades of bright-eyed dusky children [were] there taught the common branches of education. These children [were] studious, and the teachers inform[ed her] that their advancement [was] rapid.”<sup>50</sup> Why did the young African American children achieve so much? Did they astound teachers because they could learn at all? From slave narratives, historians know that blacks could learn equally if not faster than whites, and surely, these teachers had great faith in their pupils. Perhaps these children became so studious and learned so quickly because they knew, whether from their parents describing the oppression of slavery or from their own experiences of oppression, that learning gave them independence and thus privileged them.

These children’s desire to learn epitomized the other blacks’ desire to gain an education to establish their own sense of self. Similarly, the various slave narratives show slaves’ inherent longing to resist slavery and give themselves autonomy and privilege. In 1870, seventy percent of African Americans in the South were illiterate, but in forty years, that illiteracy rate dropped to thirty percent. Coincidentally, “black females showed more striking advances than males in the four decades from 1870 to 1910.”<sup>51</sup> During Reconstruction, an educational revolution occurred in the South with the help of white and black teachers alike. According to Anderson in *The Education of Blacks in the South*, “The ex-slaves’ educational movement became a test of their capacity to restructure their lives, to establish their freedom. Although they appreciated northern support, they resisted infringements that threatened to undermine their own initiative and self-reliance.”<sup>52</sup>

While emancipation could not happen without the efforts of abolitionists, black education, while aided by white Northerners, had to be a result of African American determination. The themes present in the narratives help to explain blacks’ desire for education and the ways in which they found it, but the theme of desire and autonomy had to be extensions of the black community itself in the Reconstruction years. African Americans used education to give themselves privileges denied to them for centuries.

## Notes

1. David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, *Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Schools* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 53.
2. T. Stephen Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake: Black and White Resistance to Human Bondage, 1775-1865* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2007), xii and xiv.
3. *Ibid.*, 167.
4. *Ibid.*, 148.
5. Stanley Harrold, *Subversives: Antislavery Community in Washington, D.C., 1828-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 174.
6. Martha S. Jones, *All Bound Up Together: The Woman Question in African American Public Culture, 1830-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 3-8.
7. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 195.
8. For information on black women in the nineteenth century see also Shirley Carlson, "Black Ideals of Womanhood in the Victorian Era," *Journal of Negro History* 77.2 (Spring 1992): 61-73; Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).
9. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, and American Slave. Written By Himself* (Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845), 36.
10. *Ibid.*, 41.
11. *Ibid.*, 41.
12. Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 15.
13. John Quincy Adams, *Narrative of the Life of John Quincy Adams, When in Slavery, and Now as a Freeman* (Harrisburg: Sieg, 1872), 13.
14. Adams, *Narrative of the Life of John Quincy Adams*, 13.
15. Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1800* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 13-16.
16. Adams, *Narrative of the Life of John Quincy Adams*, 10.
17. *Ibid.*, 12.
18. *Ibid.*, 12.
19. *Ibid.*, 6.
20. Leonard Black, *The Life and Sufferings of Leonard Black, a Fugitive from Slavery. Written by Himself* (New Bedford: Benjamin Lindsey, 1847), 18-19.

21. Ibid., 18.
22. Ibid., 19.
23. Ibid., 19-20.
24. Louis Hughes, *Thirty Years a Slave: From Bondage to Freedom: The Institution of Slavery as Seen on the Plantation and in the Home of the Planter* (Milwaukee: South Side Printing Company, 1897), 100.
25. Ibid., 103.
26. Ibid., 101 and 100-105; Williams, *Self-Taught*, 22.
27. Ronald E. Butchart, "'Outthinking and Outflanking the Owners of the World': Historiography of African American Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 28.3 (Autumn 1988): 361.
28. Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1985).
29. Ibid., 14-27.
30. Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*, 195.
31. Jones, *All Bound Up Together*, 3.
32. Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*, 153.
33. Harriet Ann Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Written by Herself*, ed. by Lydia Maria Francis Child (Boston: Published for the Author, 1861).
34. Brenda E. Stevenson, "Gender Convention, Ideals, and Identity Among Antebellum Virginia Slave Women," in *More than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*, ed. by David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 173.
35. Kathleen M. Brown *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonia Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 100-105.
36. Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 79.
37. Ibid., 209.
38. Ibid., 5.
39. Ibid., 111.
40. James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 5; Robert C. Morris, *Reading, 'Righting, and Reconstruction: The Education of Freedmen in the South, 1861-1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
41. Elizabeth, *Memoir of Old Elizabeth, a Coloured Woman* (Philadelphia: Collins, 1863), 9.
42. Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*, 194.

43. Ibid., 194.

44. Elizabeth, *Memoir of Old Elizabeth*, 9.

45. Ibid., 19.

46. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic*, 148; Jones, *All Bound Up Together*, 130-131.

47. Amanda Smith, *An Autobiography: The Story of the Lord's Dealing with Mrs. Amanda Smith, the Colored Evangelist: Containing an Account of Her Life Work of Faith, and Her Travels in America, England, Ireland, Scotland, India, and Africa as an Independent Missionary* (Chicago: Meyer & Brother Publishers, 1893), iv.

48. Jones, *All Bound Up Together*, 87-97.

49. Harrold, *Subversives*, 11.

50. Elizabeth Keckley *Behind the Scenes, or, Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House* (New York: G.W. Carleton & Co., 1868), 143; For more information about black teachers see Adam Fairclough, "'Being in the Field of Education and Also Being a Negro... Seems... Tragic': Black Teachers in the Jim Crow South," *Journal of American History* 87 (June 2000): 65-91.

51. Tyack, *Learning Together*, 53.

52. Anderson, 12; Williams, 30; For more information on Reconstruction and gender see: Elsa Barkley Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom," *Public Culture* 7(1994): 107-146; Laura F. Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988); Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Heather Cox Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001); Hannah Rosen, *Terror in the Heart of Freedom: Citizenship, Sexual Violence, and the Meaning of Race in the Postemancipation South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 2009).

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## A Nazi Childhood: Hitler's Germany, 1939-1945

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Linda Shay

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Perception is a difficult process to dissect and understand. In an instant, the human mind will draw a conclusion of an experience by filtering that experience through a developed worldview and an interpretation of the sensory environment.<sup>1</sup> This process, which takes place at the speed of thought, facilitates a seamless construction of experience and belief that in turn creates reality. Critical to this point is the fact that this constructed reality is unique to the individual, the moment in time, and the surrounding circumstances. What people understand to be true is in fact true for them and unfortunately includes the many flawed perceptions they maintain. Unlike seeing or touching a physical object, perception is invisible, often goes undetected, and can be profoundly difficult to discern.<sup>2</sup> While it resides within illogical behavior, perception also maintains residence in rational acts, making each moment of human interpretation both exceptional and problematic. People face this dilemma when trying to understand what life was like in Germany under the Third Reich. In a word, it was different for everyone. Change was profound on all levels as people amended assumptions about what was reasonable and increasingly discarded discretion about what was intolerable.<sup>3</sup> Children lived in a different world from soldiers, who lived in a different world from civilian adults, who lived in a different world from the Jews. For each of these groups and for every other, life in Germany under the Third Reich was unique. This analysis will focus on the children, that generation whose formative years their *Führer* so deeply influenced and the war he brought to their backyards.

There can be little dispute that World War II was and continues to be a significant part of history. Dramatic in its scope, profound in its impact, it is a moment in history endlessly evaluated, researched, questioned, and analyzed. The resulting literature base is unfathomable and yet comprehension of this event eludes historians. The journalistic query of “who, what, why, when, where, and how” will not produce a single answer but rather an endless litany of theories. History and memory are not synonymous and while neither holds exclusive rights to accuracy; they remain inextricably connected, residing in and around each other simultaneously. The historiography of German life during World War II silently

repeats this mantra.

They were the future of the German Reich, the chosen ones. Swaddled in the belief they would one day rule the world, they were the children of Nazi Germany. When interviewed years later, Katrin Thiele would remember her early childhood with astonishing clarity. She recalled the twelve years her father served within the Nazi Regime as filled with happy memories surrounded by people who loved her.<sup>4</sup> After the war, she could not fathom that the horrifying stories of Nazi brutality had any relation to her life or the Nazis she knew that taught her the ideals she so believed in. Strangely enough, her perception is not uncommon, as Nicholas Stargardt illustrates in his book, *Witnesses of War: Children's Lives Under the Nazis*. The book contains dozens of such accounts: children who found their lives literally formed by Nazi ideology and as such had difficulty adjusting to post-war life. Their parents could recall a time before Hitler but their children, the Hitler youth, could not. While this type of literature speaks to a very specific memory, it does provide an invaluable insight into experiences most people cannot comprehend. Stargardt reminds readers that for the children of this generation most deeply marked by the Third Reich; the Nazi values and slogans were literally engrained amongst lessons of cleanliness, respect, and responsibility.<sup>5</sup> Indoctrinated to believe in the value of service and self-sacrifice, many of these children grew into serving adults, unable to shed that Nazi characteristic. Though this kind of behavior is difficult to understand, the actual recounting by the children, who grew up during the Nazi Regime, can help clarify it. This is not work interpreted by a historian after the fact but rather an adult's recollection of childhood, and as such, fraught with potential inaccuracies; in the end that is its true benefit. Stargardt's work reminds historians this is simply human experience and while their recounting may have flaws, its existence is now part of the historic story. His approach redefines the understanding of victimhood and forces readers to see the subject, which is specifically Nazi Germany during the war, from a different perspective. Its value is in offering that option.

*Witnesses to War* and literature of its type illustrate how these children did not possess a moral system that would allow them to compare life under Hitler with life after his fall. Rather than abandon their own identity, they simply avoided argument with the past. *My Father's Keeper: Children of Nazi Leaders* reveals a wholly different side. These children, for the most part, did not consciously attempt to avoid their past but rather simply moved beyond it and on with their lives. The

author's father, a journalist himself, interviewed the children of very prominent Nazi officials: Frank, von Schirach, Baldur, Hess, Bormann, Göring, and Himmler.<sup>6</sup> The work was lost for decades until discovered by his son who expanded on it by re-interviewing many of the same children. Contrasting their lives in 1959 when first interviewed with their lives in 2000, the book tries to uncover the challenges of being a child of an infamous Nazi perpetrator.

Himmler's name has become synonymous with evil, with her father considered the architect of the Holocaust. When interviewed in 1959, she made clear she believed she would one day write a book that would rehabilitate her father's image. When re-interviewed in 2000, she remained true to that belief, working in a managerial position at *Stille Hilfe*, a non-profit organization that assists former leading National Socialists. She and several of the other children originally interviewed did not carry the burden their father's victims did, who relived the torture and loss day after day. Instead, when the war ended and society brought to justice many of the perpetrators, these children moved on.<sup>7</sup> This type of literature is disturbing but is not alone; there are dozens of accounts from Nazi children who neither abandoned their ideology nor apologized for it later in life. The Germany they grew up in was good and their memory of it remains intact. While these children clearly lived a life of privilege, others lived a nightmare. *Between Dignity and Despair; Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* chronicles the horrific experience Jews, specifically women and children, endured under the Nazi Regime.

It was slow and at first, almost indiscernible. While no one could pinpoint an exact date, it was clear that something had begun to change once Hitler came to power as Chancellor. In the days, weeks, and months that followed, Jews would see their world shrink as they retreated to a place somewhere in the shadows. This is a well-researched and documented subject; all know the atrocities that befell the Jews at the hands of Hitler and his Nazi Regime through countless memoirs from survivors, scores of academic research into the political, economic, and social structure of the Nazis, and innumerable probes into the Nazi leaders themselves. Though each of these approaches yields profound insight into a time that produced incalculable anguish, *Between Dignity and Despair* takes a completely different road through this horror.

Marion Kaplan is herself the child of Jewish immigrants from Nazi Germany. Her parents were "lucky" as she put it, meeting in America in 1939. The German-Jewish Diaspora either killed or scattered across the globe her future

extended family, the aunts, uncles, and cousins she would never meet.<sup>8</sup> While her own story is not unique, her approach to this subject is. Rather than re-tell the horrors of the Holocaust or dissect the minds of the madmen who orchestrated it, she looked at daily life in Nazi Germany from the perspective of the average Jewish person in general, and its women and children in particular. This is not a looking back approach but rather a looking through, over the course of daily life and through the eyes of those who lived it. Kaplan re-creates the shrinking world German Jews experienced during World War II. One of the hallmarks of the book, and there are many, is the detail given to the mundane. Despite the heinous conditions, life must go on; families must buy food, must serve dinner, must wash clothes, and children must go to school in a world where they were no longer welcome.<sup>9</sup>

Theirs was not a world of privilege or ease. Fear and terror were constant as they struggled with the daily challenge of survival. They had unknowingly become the enemy of their own country and its citizens and government would make clear that fact. This type of literature shows the reader a different perspective of his own life. The horrors of the Holocaust are incomprehensible, but surely most people, when reaching for a cold beverage from a well-stocked refrigerator, can better appreciate the difficulties the Jews faced at the Nazi's hands. *Between Dignity and Despair* and literature like it bring the immensity of this event to a personally digestible portion and it is without doubt distasteful.

Historians have well documented the facts of German life during the war. Unemployment had reached nearly six million workers by the time Hitler became Chancellor.<sup>10</sup> By the time when Germany invaded Poland, that number had dropped to a few hundred thousand. Of course, propaganda and records manipulation, which would become the Nazi trademark, helped reduce those numbers. Regardless, with reduced unemployment, lifestyle conditions improved. Morale and national pride also received a much needed boost with the *Kraft durch Freude* (KdF), a program insuring that Germans enjoyed leisure time, a habit still very much a part of German culture today.<sup>11</sup> The documentation is rich with examples that illustrate a good life in Germany during the war. Sadly, there is even more illustrating how very difficult it was. These verifiable facts paint a picture of German life during World War II, but it is black and white.

While historians will painstakingly validate sources, in the end, the historic record as a body of work is the interpretation of the historian. If the event occurred

within the historian's lifetime, his or her own collective memory becomes infused into the interpretation as well. While memory is an unreliable source to validate facts, it does speak directly to the belief system of a group or culture determining what is important enough to remember. Of course, few would argue that World War II remains a black moment in human history. The enormous literature base that resulted has tried to reconcile the event from a political, social, and economic perspective and many good historic works have resulted. None however can ever be the single authority on the subject. While historians attempt to eschew drama and emotion from this subject, the schism it creates is often where memory resides. Where German life during the war is concerned, that memory is unique to each person who experienced it. Wise council will direct historians to the verifiable works, the confirmed facts and figures. Good scholarship will encourage them to look further. In the end, historians discover that life in Germany during World War II truly resided somewhere between "dignity and despair."

## Notes

1. Thomas F. Shipley and Jeffrey M. Zacks, *Understanding Events: From Perception to Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 392.

2. *Ibid.*, 317.

3. Mark Roseman, *The Wannsee Conference and the Final Solution* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002), 49.

4. Nicholas Stargardt, *Witnesses of War; Children's Lives Under the Nazis* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 4.

5. *Ibid.*, 5.

6. Norbert Lebert and Stephen Lebert, *My Father's Keeper: Children of Nazi Leaders* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Company, 2001), 39.

7. *Ibid.*, 113.

8. Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair; Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 12.

9. *Ibid.*, 159.

10. John Plowright, *The Causes, Course and Outcomes of World War Two* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 34.

11. *Ibid.*, 72.

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## Left Out: Women's Role in Historiography and the Contribution of Mary Ritter Beard

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Alice Alvarado

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It is time for a version of historiography that acknowledges gender—a version that will allow us to refurbish our mirror on the past.

—Bonnie G. Smith

Women have been a “force in history” since the dawn of civilization.<sup>1</sup> Their achievements in writing history have been intellectually comparable to men, but have not received the glory from their male peers due these accomplished and important authors. This poses some questions. Why have women been virtually left out of history? Who was Mary Ritter Beard and why was her work so influential yet forgotten? Which female authors triumphed in the field of history and what can be done to update the methodology for future generations of historians? There is much truth to the argument that women's history has come a long way since the first bricks of historiography were laid; however, there is still much work to be done in order for the discipline to arrive at “a more inclusive telling of history.”<sup>2</sup>

The goal of this essay is to examine a very small portion of women's contributions not only to history, but historiography as well. It would easily take volumes to cover women's vast contributions to history, so a select portion will be surveyed. It will offer a background on the achievements of Mary R. Beard, her thoughts on women not only in her time, but in “long history,” and attempt to explain why many contemporary historians continue to write in the tradition of Beard.<sup>3</sup> It will also offer suggestions by both male and female historians on the methods that can be employed to improve the writing, teaching, and way of thinking about the sub-discipline of women's history.

When attempting to understand women's position in history, it is important to



Figure 1 Mary Ritter Beard. Image from the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC.

realize that throughout the myriad of years, history has not always been written solely by and about men.<sup>4</sup> Plutarch and Boccaccio wrote short histories of females they deemed “women worthies” and felt that education was important for women.<sup>5</sup> Nuns and courtiers wrote popular biographies of individuals such as queens and religious figures.<sup>6</sup> In the eighteenth century, women worked as amateur historians, but many considered most of their histories “superficial” due to the fact they wrote about social issues while men were writing about politics, economics and war.<sup>7</sup> Women’s writing was so popular at one time, that many of these authors relied on their wage for writing as their only source of income. Some could not keep the money they earned, and publishers took advantage of many and then profited from their work. It was said that someone sold a popular Anna Jameson work for a guitar.<sup>8</sup>

Bonnie G. Smith questions if the amateur writings of women were actually the more “authentic and natural” since they pre-dated professionalization and scientific history writing.<sup>9</sup> Some considered women’s histories un-scientific and sub-standard which was the impetus for the likes of von Ranke and Monod to professionalize the discipline.<sup>10</sup> They considered women “emotional” writers, (especially those such as Germaine de Staël during the French Revolution) but it was a sign of the times and a consequence of their environment, which should not only be labeled to women, since many men and women suffered traumatic experiences and wrote from emotion during times of persecution.<sup>11</sup>

“Emotional” and “superficial” works were not the only reasons that women were left out of history. According to Joan Wallach Scott, historians had categorized all people under the “idea of man” which meant that all human beings were lumped together in one history; in the meantime, they denied women and people of different ethnic backgrounds the opportunity to share history in their own voices and from their own experiences.<sup>12</sup>

Of the vast array of women’s contributions in writing in the United States, there are four major categories of works: histories of organizations, biographies, histories of social ideas, and social histories.<sup>13</sup> The first category, histories of organizations, includes the history of the suffrage campaign from the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention up to the 1920 ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. These histories dedicated much time and effort to why women wanted equality and their goal of achieving “the vote.” The second category’s most popular writing consists of biographies of



individual females. Only the more extraordinary women left behind letters, journals, and genealogical records to assist with the writing of their histories. This was a testament to their education and circumstance.<sup>14</sup> Some of the more popular subjects were the Grimké sisters, Anne Hutchinson, and Margaret Sanger.<sup>15</sup> Etiquette books, cookbooks, child-rearing books, manuals, how-to guides, and books on marriage served the histories of social institutions. This gave a glimpse into the lives and social issues of women of their day.<sup>16</sup> The fourth category are social histories, which historians considered important because they bestowed hope for the future of women's history. They also demonstrated issues that affected the lives of everyday women and how they evolved and conformed to issues such as motherhood, birth control, and social classes.<sup>17</sup>

As the discipline of history began to be professionalized, the amateur writing of women was out and the new scientific based writing of elite, university going, white males was in. According to Bonnie G. Smith, "gender influenced what men would include in their histories. If, because of gender, men left women out of history, they would certainly omit them from historiography."<sup>18</sup> Mary Beard also noticed that historians had paid so much attention to the suffrage struggle, that it seemed women did absolutely nothing until the nineteenth century feminist movement.<sup>19</sup> Why would male historians purposely erase women from history? After all, most men married, had children, and lived the same domestic life as the rest of the world. They understood the social issues of the day, and those issues were fine to write about, but the "meat and potatoes" of history (i.e., war, politics, leaders) was more exciting.<sup>20</sup> They did not perceive their domestic lives as central to their work, therefore they were able to step back and write from a differing viewpoint—their lives were separated from history. Aside from that, gender and domestic issues have made an important contribution to historiography because it distinguished the "important from the unimportant, the brilliant and the derivative."<sup>21</sup>

### **Mary Ritter Beard**

Any person with an elementary education is familiar with important women such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Mary Ritter Beard ranks in importance with these women, yet is a virtual unknown. How could a woman who made such an impact on history be erased from it? Historians considered Mary Beard a progressive, modern writer of "New History" who was devoted to writing history, living history, and re-incorporating women into the

history in which they were wrongly abandoned. In order to understand Mary Beard's moral and intellectual convictions, one must reflect on her background and what paths led her to become the remarkable woman for which she must be remembered.

Mary Ritter was born August 5, 1876, in Indianapolis. She was born to a Republican, Methodist, middle class family who were not well off, but possessed the necessary essentials.<sup>22</sup> Her father fought in the Civil War, and eventually went to college and graduated with a degree in law. Her mother assisted her father in studying for and passing the bar, after which he practiced law and was a reformer for the Temperance movement. Mary's siblings were successful in college and she eventually joined them at DePauw University in 1893.<sup>23</sup> While at DePauw, certain "discussion clubs" banned women, and they retaliated by forming clubs of their own. This had an effect on Mary and she would write about her early personal experiences later on in her life. At DePauw, she met her future husband Charles Beard, the man who would become one of the most influential historians of the twentieth century.<sup>24</sup> Mary received her undergraduate degree in 1897, and remained in the college community for another year to wait for Charles to graduate in 1898. He went off to England that year while she taught at a local school, and he returned to marry her in 1900. Charles and Mary enrolled in graduate school at Columbia University, but by 1902, Mary was rearing their one year old child, Miriam, so she decided to drop out of school.<sup>25</sup> Charles went on to earn advanced degrees and taught at renowned universities while Mary participated as his collaborator, but received no public credit up to that point. Knowing that she was his intellectual equal, yet did not possess the credentials necessary for the recognition, Mary became self-critical which would be evidenced throughout her later work.<sup>26</sup>

Although Mary was a force in her own right, one cannot discuss her without including her lifelong collaborator, her husband, with whom she was married for nearly fifty years.<sup>27</sup> The Beard's family was expanding as she gave birth to a son, William, and their family life was far from typical. The Beards kept homes in Connecticut, Washington D.C., Manhattan, and North Carolina where they associated with people from all walks of life from university faculty members, to lawyers and political activists.<sup>28</sup> Some of the Beards' friends did not always get along. The sewer engineers and lawyers sometimes clashed with historians, but it would not be the first time the Beards would be in the midst of conflict—they

simply worked around it in order to keep a constant flow of new ideas in their presence.<sup>29</sup>

Charles and Mary Beard traveled the world together, visiting various countries such as England, China, and Japan. It was during these visits that Mary's own views of the world had begun to change and influence her life.<sup>30</sup> When the Beards lived in England, Mary received her first glimpse of the lifestyle and conditions of the working class poor in the industrial centers. It was something to which she was not accustomed, and the experience pained her, yet interested her in analyzing the history of labor. She and Charles "continued to share in optimistic belief that the study and writing of history could change the path of history."<sup>31</sup>

Mary Beard was a forward thinking, original woman who others considered a radical feminist of her day. What was so remarkable was that she did not fit the stereotypical mold of the radical, militant feminist. For her time, she was atypical, avant-garde, and in a class by herself. Although she would advocate for women's causes, she was quick to offer the opinion that women were not victims of subjection. This line of thinking caused her to become celebrated in some circles, and a pariah in others. Mary possessed an unpopular opinion about women's education that would be a source of irritation to her throughout her life. Mary felt institutions of higher education would restrict women's minds and that women should free themselves from following a curriculum originally designed for men.<sup>32</sup> Mary Smith Crocco wrote that Beard "regularly denounced the idea that a good education for women ought to be merely a facsimile of what was offered by men's colleges, a view with widespread currency in the women's colleges."<sup>33</sup> Needless to say, the faculty and students of women's colleges did not receive her book *On Understanding Women* well.<sup>34</sup>

Mary Beard did not begin her singular literary career until her children were grown. Mary Beard succeeded in supporting her husband's endeavors the way her own mother assisted her father in becoming an attorney. It was now her time to shine all alone. Although she collaborated on several books in a partnership with her husband, she was thirty-nine years old when she published her first book *Women's Work in Municipalities*.<sup>35</sup> Margaret Smith Crocco summed up Beard's efforts in this context:

While raising a family and supporting her husband's work, Mary Beard viewed her intellectual and familiar partnership as more radical than that of the feminist career woman of her day. This perspective hints at the central paradox of her life: advocacy for women's place in history and

women's rights yet rejection of feminism, its emphasis on professionalism, and preference for middle class women's needs.<sup>36</sup>

In Mary Beard's personal masterpiece, *Woman As Force In History* published in 1946, she took a stand and encapsulated into one work the ideas which defined her life's work. She described "man-women relationships" during WWII when men were going off to war and women were going off to work. Men needed women's assistance in order to make their endeavors in the war successful, therefore, a partnership.<sup>37</sup> Beard was obstinate and unswerving in her vision of altering the way of thinking about women and women's history. She was unpopular with the women of the militant feminist background because although she craved rights for women, she felt that women were not strictly being oppressed by men, but were oppressing themselves by letting thoughts of oppression take hold of their minds—if they were oppressing themselves, they had the power to free themselves.<sup>38</sup> Another central theme of Beard's work was the idea that men and women "launched civilization" together. In order to understand civilization, she felt it meant going back into history to study women's roles in everything from war to politics to economics. It also piqued her interest in anthropology because anthropologists were the ones to declare that women had a part in launching civilization. If anthropologists had the knowledge, then so should the rest of the world.<sup>39</sup>

Beard felt men purposely left women out of history in order to focus on the areas in which they controlled, such as politics. This gave Mary Beard a backseat to her husband, her collaborator, and those who critiqued their work gave him sole credit for effort that was made between the two. She worked her entire life devoting herself to reconstruct history to include women, and merely received credit for being Charles Beard's wife.<sup>40</sup> Not only was Mary frustrated by the lack of appreciation among her peers, Charles viewed it as a slap in the face to him as well. On more than one occasion, he would write letters instructing "Macmillan Publishers to avoid quoting reviewers who did not acknowledge the shared authorship of these works."<sup>41</sup> In John Higham's *History*, his bibliography cited a collaborative work between the Beards, yet only gave Charles credit for the work. The book only noted one woman, Mary Beard, and only in the footnotes.<sup>42</sup> Charles admitted that it was Mary who "widened the frames" of the scope of history which made him successful in including issues other than politics.<sup>43</sup> Just like the "man-woman relationships" Mary compared in her book, her husband's success was based on the inclusion of

her skills.

Charles and Mary Beard led an extremely private personal life. Their professional lives were very public, yet they kept a very intensely guarded private side that only their closest friends and family had any idea about. The Beards destroyed any and all correspondence for fear of private letters being published. They also made their friends promise never to publish any personal letters written to them. Charles had been scrutinized in the press for being outspoken against President Roosevelt, and in an ironic twist, perhaps that fear led the Beards to decide to destroy their own history.<sup>44</sup>

Little is known about the Beards' professional relationship. They kept no notes and rarely gave interviews to the press. They had no radio or telephone in their homes and spoke of their working relationship only in general terms. "Some files of correspondence exist in small depositories, but generally they succeeded, as trained historians could, in erasing their personal histories."<sup>45</sup>

Mary Beard lived an extraordinary life as a political activist, feminist and scholar who spent countless hours collecting, archiving and preserving women's histories. Unfortunately, her own biography will never be all inclusive. Thankfully, posterity is able to cherish her work and catch a glimpse of her mind through her words. Her main goal for history was not merely to fill in the blanks, but to incorporate women into an inclusive history.

### **Incorporating Women into History**

It is no secret that historians had disregarded women's history in the past, possibly even more so than any other group mentioned in history.<sup>46</sup> The number of women mentioned in textbooks is a rather small number, but in the twentieth century, strides had been made to construct a methodology to incorporate women into history and into the curriculum in the classroom.

The first group to attempt to re-incorporate women was not historians, but rather, feminists in the 1960s. Their goal was to fix "the problem of women's role in American life and history."<sup>47</sup> The feminists, however, were not without their partiality to certain women in their histories. They considered some women too radical, some, not enough. Another problem the feminist writers had, according to Gerda Lerner, was their tunnel vision view that writing women into history was only important to prove that women were an "oppressed group" battling the grips of

their tormentors.<sup>48</sup> That point of view automatically turned certain women into heroines and left behind the masses. Lerner's view is very reminiscent of Beard's, and her impact is evident in Lerner's work.

Initially, historians wrote "compensatory" histories (works written in order to compensate for the lack of women in history) in order to appease those who called for a woman's history.<sup>49</sup> For many, writing a few histories of notable women was not enough.<sup>50</sup> Women are the majority of the population in the world, so why is it so difficult to infuse them into history? The answer to the question would seem obvious to merely "integrate" them back into the telling of history, but Joan R. Gundersen points out that the idea was easier said than done. "While scholars have called for a new synthesis, what we have produced resembles a cookbook of possible questions, approaches or themes rather than a unifying philosophy."<sup>51</sup>

There are several challenges historians run into when trying to integrate women into history. The first challenge is attempting to fit women into an active conceptual framework. When this is done, they place women into general categories without thought to their particular needs or specific circumstance.<sup>52</sup> The second challenge historians face is the new "feminist theory" that demands the inclusion of not only women but addresses "the wrongs of racial, class, and sexual bias."<sup>53</sup> This can be a difficult decision for an instructor of history who attempts to include as much as she or he possibly can into a semester, but has to pick and choose what is important enough to fit into a small amount of class time. The third challenge is focusing on a balanced history. This challenge may be the most difficult because trying to represent all women's history in a specified amount of time can be nearly impossible. Taking into consideration that women come from all different social classes, ethnic groups and economic statuses can pose a challenge for the historian compiling a history or a professor completing a syllabus for a term.<sup>54</sup>

The feminist author Gerda Lerner has completed extensive research on gender and women's issues and suggests that history writing is in need of a completely new framework from which to build. There is a need to scrutinize the change in women's roles in their lifetimes in all generations.<sup>55</sup> It is also important to look beyond the women's rights movements which have had much attention paid to them, but observe the periods before and after. It "is an important aspect of women's history, but it cannot and should not be its central concern."<sup>56</sup> The history of the mass of women is just as important as individual stand-outs because "women of different classes have different historical experiences."<sup>57</sup> Historians should not place women into a category of an "oppressed group" since they held power in the

nineteenth century, and notable women such as Queen Elizabeth I and Cleopatra, to name two, held considerable power at one point in their lifetimes. It should be remembered that the roles of men and women are different and should be treated as equal in importance, even while roles are evolving.<sup>58</sup> Lerner's advice to women is that they should play a central role in historiography and compiling their own histories, always keeping the conceptual framework wide.<sup>59</sup>

Other authors have offered suggestions on how to approach the subject of integrating women into history. Joan Kelly-Gadol states that women should be defined as women since they are the social opposite of the sex of men. Adding sex to the categories of class and race are, she feels, central to analyzing women's history. A major concern is that "periodization" must change when analyzing male and female contribution to history. Female history cannot be compared to, for example, political history.<sup>60</sup>

What field work have contemporary historians accomplished to integrate women into history? In the 1970s, during the height of popularity for women's history, Peter Filene proposed suggestions for a women's history course at the University of North Carolina. He admitted that in the beginning, he was approaching the subject as compensatory history and comparing women's contributions to "a male past."<sup>61</sup> As he furthered his research, he realized that women's contributions to home life and raising children were just as important as men's to the economy and must be duly noted. In his first course on women's history, he suggested an outline that included socio-economic situations of women (including outside employment and housework, marriage, sex), politics, social movements, and family history (photographs, genealogies). He included biographies of notables such as Jane Addams, and works by female authors such as Kate Chopin and Nancy Milford.<sup>62</sup> His course was an early, yet important, step in integrating women back into history. The early pioneers of women's history courses can be proud that today on nearly every campus of higher education, students can find at least one course in women's studies.

This essay has attempted to serve as a short introduction to the reasons why women have been virtually left out of history and historiography. It has provided a short biography on the life and work of the extraordinary Mary Ritter Beard, who although popular in her time, has been nearly eclipsed by the work of her famous husband. Her work has influenced feminists both positively and negatively, and nearly every feminist work during the second wave of feminism have quoted her

words.<sup>63</sup> Each feminist author mentioned in this work either continues to write in the tradition of the Beardian philosophy, or is in some way influenced by it. Whether one agrees or disagrees with her point of view, she had a voice and it was loud and clear.

Contemporary historians have made suggestions concerning how to incorporate women into history. Although there is no set methodology or general philosophy in place as of yet, progress is being made every day in order to give women's studies its very own unique conceptual framework. It should be noted that a new generation of young, ethnic women are entering the discipline of history who are writing from a fresh, new perspective.<sup>64</sup> In time, all women who came before, and those who come after, will receive the respect they so rightfully deserve.

## Notes

1. Mary Ritter Beard, *Woman As Force In History* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1946), vi.
2. Joan R. Gundersen, "Re-Visioning the Past: Toward a More Inclusive Telling of History," *The History Teacher* 20, no. 1 (Nov 1986): 51.
3. "Long History" is a signature term that is used by Mary R. Beard throughout her work *Woman As Force In History* meaning throughout history. The term is also used by contemporary historians when writing about Beard.
4. Bonnie Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Boston: Harvard University Press), 6.
5. Natalie Zemon Davis, "'Women's History' In Transition: The European Case," *Feminist Studies* 3, no. ¾ (Spring-Summer 1976): 83.
6. Ibid.
7. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice*, 7.
8. Ibid., 43.
9. Ibid., 7.
10. Ibid., 37.
11. Ibid., 8.
12. Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 183.
13. Ann D. Gordon, Mari Jo Buhle, and Nancy Schrom Dye, "The Problem of Women's History," as found in Berenice A. Carroll, ed., *Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 76-81.



14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., 80.
16. Ibid., 81.
17. Ibid., 82.
18. Bonnie G. Smith, "Seeing Mary Beard," *Feminist Studies* 10, no.3 (Autumn 1984): 408.
19. Beard, *Woman As Force In History*, 59.
20. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice*, 71.
21. Ibid.
22. Ann J. Lane, ed., *Making Women's History: The Essential Mary Ritter Beard* (New York: Feminist Press, 2000), 13.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., 18.
25. Ibid., 22.
26. Nancy F. Cott, ed., *A Woman Making History: Mary Ritter Beard Through Her Letters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 18.
27. Lane, *Making Women's History: The Essential Mary Ritter Beard*, 3.
28. Ibid., 4-5.
29. Ibid.
30. Cott, *A Woman Making History: Mary Ritter Beard Through Her Letters*, 31.
31. Ibid., 8.
32. Ibid., 38.
33. Margaret Smith Crocco, "Forceful Yet Forgotten: Mary Ritter Beard and the Writing of History," *The History Teacher* 31, no. 1 (Nov 1997): 19.
34. Cott, *Woman Making History: Mary Ritter Beard Through Her Letters*, 38.
35. Lane, *Making Women's History: The Essential Mary Ritter Beard*, 8.
36. Crocco, "Forceful Yet Forgotten: Mary Ritter Beard and the Writing of History," 11.
37. Beard, *Woman As Force In History*, 16.
38. Lane, *Making Women's History: The Essential Mary Ritter Beard*, 1.
39. Cott, *Woman Making History: Mary Ritter Beard Through Her Letters*, 32.

40. Lane, *Making Women's History: The Essential Mary Ritter Beard*, 2.
41. Crocco, "Forceful Yet Forgotten: Mary Ritter Beard and the Writing of History," 10.
42. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, 189.
43. Crocco, "Forceful Yet Forgotten: Mary Ritter Beard and the Writing of History," 15.
44. Cott, *A Woman Making History: Mary Ritter Beard Through Her Letters*, ix-xi.
45. Lane, *Making Women's History: The Essential Mary Ritter Beard*, 6.
46. Gerda Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women In History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 3.
47. Ibid., 4.
48. Ibid.
49. Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval and Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 367.
50. Joan Kelly-Gadol, "The Social Relation of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women's History" *Signs* 1, no.4 (Summer 1976): 809.
51. Gundersen, "Re-visioning the Past: Toward a More Inclusive Telling of History," 51.
52. Ibid., 52.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., 53.
55. Lerner, "The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History," 10.
56. Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women In History: Definitions and Challenges," *Feminist Studies*, 2, no. ½ (Autumn 1975): 6.
57. Ibid., 5.
58. Lerner, "The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History," 10-14.
59. Ibid.
60. Kelly-Gadol, "The Social Relation of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women's History," 810.
61. Peter G. Filene, "Integrating Women's History and Regular History," *The History Teacher* 13, no.4 (Aug 1980): 485.
62. Ibid., 486-487.
63. Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women In History*, 14.

64. Crystal Feimster, "A New Generation of Women Historians" as found in Eileen Boris and Nupur Chaudhuri, eds., *Voices of Women Historians: The Personal, The Political, The Professional* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 281.

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Boston: Harvard University Press, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Seeing Mary Beard." *Feminist Studies* 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1984): 399-416.

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Hagerman, Edward. *The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern Warfare: Ideas, Organization, and Field Command*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

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Ben Sorensen

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Edward Hagerman, an Associate Professor of History at York University and an expert in the vagaries of tactics and strategy as well as the general workings of supply and entrenchment, wrote many works on military strategy. However, in *The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern Warfare: Ideas, Organization, and Field Command*, Hagerman took his expertise to extraordinary levels in his assessment of Civil War generalship. In this book, he made daring assessments and findings, and gave credit where many other historians often avoid giving praise.

The premise of his book was to survey and analyze the tactics, organization, and strategies of the armies of both the North and the South, and discern the origins of each. One could argue that the first twenty-seven pages of the book contain the most important segment, because in this section he points out the French origins of modern American military practice. Hagerman looked to Napoleon Bonaparte, Antoine-Henri Jomini, and Alfred Thayer Mahan for the foundations of American military strategies. He claimed, and then reinforced, that the American military practice (by virtue of American military writers) “that began to emerge in the 1830’s modified the French influence in response to peculiarly American circumstances, technological change, and the lessons of a number of indecisive wars.”<sup>1</sup>

Some reviewers found this book to be unfocused, because the author did not recall his original intent. In his attempt to prove the French origin of American military tactics and document its modification to American necessity, they thought he made the book disjointed in its flow.<sup>2</sup> Although Hagerman required the reader to keep the principle of the book in mind, it closely follows the original premise, and he drew each argument towards his final point. The book certainly could benefit from tying his arguments more actively with his premise throughout his survey, but his points are no less valid.

When dealing with General George B. McClellan, historians normally lionize the general as a strategist and organizer, but often excoriate his tactics in

accordance with previous assessments from even the Lincoln Administration. Hagerman daringly broke from the standard historiography to show that McClellan had more than just organizational talent; he was the first modern general. Regarding military logistics, Hagerman not only stated, “McClellan’s modification of this system indicated that he sensed the problem,”<sup>3</sup> but he also proved that McClellan did not adopt a Prussian system that may have been more effective in solving the difficulties that McClellan faced.<sup>4</sup> Hagerman cited McClellan’s deep modifications in the artillery<sup>5</sup> and his innovative use of the telegraph<sup>6</sup> and semaphore signals to prove that McClellan was a more of a visionary general than contemporary Civil War historians readily admit.

Hagerman was fair in his assessment of McClellan’s personality and about his removal from command, but he still maintained that McClellan’s “military actions are consistent with the arguments he presented in his conscientious official correspondence and reports.”<sup>7</sup> Here, in dealing with McClellan, Hagerman took his most daring historiographical stand that other historians typically have not readily accepted. He presented McClellan as a visionary in spite of McClellan’s personality flaws of arrogance and timidity. Hagerman focused on McClellan’s faithfulness to the ideas of entrenchment and turning maneuvers rather than the method of frontal attack preferred by other Civil War generals, ideas that would end up winning the war for the North.

Hagerman assessed the other generals of the Civil War by showing that subsequent generals were the beneficiaries of the tactics and organization that McClellan began.<sup>8</sup> He showed how turning movements and entrenchment, as well as the innovative use of artillery, clearly gave the Union Army an advantage over the Confederate Army. He assessed Lee as a Southern warrior, who based his tactics on élan rather than strategy,<sup>9</sup> and espoused his views on how the Confederacy forced its army to use antiquated tactics against the more forward thinking army of the North.

In an effort to tie in his premise of the Civil War as the first modern war, he asserted near the end of this book that “the German armies of World War II . . . except for the panzer and other elite motorized units, moved with horse-drawn transportation, were the descendants of Sherman’s army marching through Georgia and the Carolinas.”<sup>10</sup> Hagerman did not elaborate on this topic to prove this point and aided the reader in understanding and drawing a similar conclusion. He also, on the same page, asserted that Sherman influenced the works of B. H. Liddell Hart on strategy and maneuver, again without much elaboration.<sup>11</sup> He left the reader feeling

as though he wanted to end the book at all costs.

Taken as a whole, Civil War historians could find the information presented in this book as well as Hagerman's new arguments indispensable. He explored new ideas in Civil War historiography that students of the war can only hope other historians will refine over time. His research was impeccable, but his execution was slightly wanting. Overall, however, this book should be in the library of every military historian.

## Notes

1. Edward Hagerman, *The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern Warfare: Ideas, Organization, and Field Command* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 3.

2. Martin Van Creveld, review of *The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern Warfare: Ideas, Organization, and Field Command* by Edward Hagerman, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 507 (January 1990): 161-162; Robert Mayberry, review of *The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern Warfare: Ideas, Organization, and Field Command* by Edward Hagerman, *The International History Review* 11, no. 4 (November 1989): 737-740.

3. Hagerman, 34.

4. *Ibid.*, 38.

5. *Ibid.*, 39.

6. *Ibid.*, 40.

7. *Ibid.*, 65.

8. *Ibid.*, 70.

9. *Ibid.*, 108.

10. *Ibid.*, 293.

11. *Ibid.*



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Charles B. Dew. *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001.

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Jim Dick

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Historians have debated the cause of the American Civil War since before the guns fell silent at the end of that conflict. They proposed and examined multiple theories and hypotheses, but regardless of the theory, historians cannot ignore the issue of slavery. Advances in historiography in that era's history have emphasized examinations of the primary sources from that period. Charles Dew, a Southerner who described his background as one that embraced the notion of state's rights as the primary cause of the Civil War, explained how his research involving primary documents in Confederate records brought up sources that challenged what he had been told about the war and its cause. This inspired him to look at the subject to determine the answer for himself.

The result of his analysis was a study into the letters and speeches of the secession commissioners from the first states that seceded to the remaining slave-owning states and their attempt to form a new nation. Dew's analysis of these documents revealed what the leading figures of the South and the secession commissioners said were the reasons for secession in the speeches they gave at every secession convention. The study served as the reason he wrote *Apostles of Disunion*, wherein he presents both the primary documents he examined and his conclusions. The result is a concise assessment of the secession commissioners and their beliefs; what they wrote and said concerning the issue of secession both privately and publically; the reactions to their words by their audiences; and the conclusions Dew drew from his research.

Instead of trying to speak for the commissioners, Dew chose to let their words and actions speak for themselves. He detailed the personal history of each commissioner as well as the context of the situation in the various states the commissioners spoke. This gave the words of these commissioners a setting in which they could be understood for what they were instead of just words on paper. Dew drew attention to the rhetoric of slavery and race that the commissioners prominently mentioned multiple times in each address to the secession conventions. This was a sharp contrast to the views long held by some historians

and interested others that the war was not about slavery or race, but instead about states' rights, economic differences, or constitutional arguments. Dew pointed out that when the commissioners brought up these political and economic points, they did so fleetingly while they spoke at length about slavery and race.

He also described the reactions to the commissioners' addresses from both individuals and newspapers, all of which focused on the issues of race and slavery, and not on any other issue. The major drawback to Dew's book was that he did not explore the conventions or the makeup of the delegates beyond that of a cursory examination. In many cases, the commissioners' speeches were merely exhortations to openly receptive audiences—while others failed to sway their audiences into outright secession. Dew noted that the speeches given in the Lower South brought on wild cheering while speakers in the Upper South encountered muted applause on most occasions. Even when people acknowledged a speech with great applause in the Upper South, like John Smith Preston's address in Virginia, it failed to move the majority of the delegates into voting for secession. This revealed a significant difference in the makeup of the conventions and their delegates, a difference Dew failed to analyze in this book.

The result is a slim tome in which Dew showed that the fear of slavery's elimination and acceptance of racial equality was the primary cause of the war, because that was what the commissioners focused on in their speeches. Dew filled in a gap in the historiography of the months prior to the war by limiting the book's scope to that of the secession commissioners and an analysis of their own words, which speak for themselves to explain why many in the South desired secession. He includes two speeches in the appendix to serve as examples of what the commissioners said, but it is obvious that he should have included more. The endnote section makes it easy to see where he looked for his sources, and it provides many resources for other historians to follow up his work and examine what the people of that era said as the nation found itself divided. It is clear that *Apostles of Disunion* is merely the tip of the iceberg for historians to examine what commissioners said at the secession conventions—especially the way in which it reveals how the secessionists used the racial rhetoric of the era in their speeches in order to influence the delegates to vote for secession.

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Desjardin, Thomas A. *Through A Howling Wilderness: Benedict Arnold's March to Quebec, 1775*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006.

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Lew Taylor

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After having read Thomas A. Desjardin's *Stand Firm Ye Boys From Maine*, a book about the 20th Maine Infantry under Colonel Joshua Chamberlain and the Battle of Gettysburg during the American Civil War, this reviewer was excited to find that Desjardin had also written a book about Benedict Arnold's expedition into Canada in 1775. *Through A Howling Wilderness: Benedict Arnold's March to Quebec, 1775* is a rather small book, and it proves to be an easy read.

Desjardin held a position as a Historic Site Specialist for the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, and he showed his expertise with his descriptions of not only the personalities involved in the expedition and battle, but also his knowledge of the terrain that they encountered. As he did with *Stand Firm*, Desjardin put together a very well researched book. Some could consider it a collection of research and less an interpretation of history as it is only 216 pages long, but contains 371 notes and over 60 references in the bibliography.

The eleven-chapter volume begins with a description of the experiences of Simon Fobes, a young soldier from Bridgewater, Massachusetts, and his homecoming, which set the mood of the book with an account told by a soldier who withstood the hardships of the expedition. "Simon Fobes was home from the war and had a tale to tell of one of the greatest military expeditions in American history" (p. 2). Desjardin then provided a brief history of the city of Quebec and the possibility of Quebec becoming the "fourteenth colony," since its status was, like the other thirteen, a North American colony under British rule (p. 5).

The next four chapters address the American expedition to Quebec, while the last three discuss the battle itself and the return trip. Desjardins extensively quoted Kenneth Roberts' 1938 book, *March to Quebec: Journals of the Members of Arnold's Expedition*, which, as its title stated, used the surviving journals of the members of the expedition. The journals contained in Roberts' book covered most of the existing knowledge of the march to and from the battle for Quebec. Desjardin's book wove those same journals into a narrative—complete with the inaccuracies and exaggerations one would expect in the personal journal of a soldier—many of whom expanded upon their wartime "notes" before publishing

after their return home.

While Desjardin's description of the battle is excellent, his portrayal of the expedition to and from Quebec can be a bit tedious to read. This was especially true for the reviewer who really was not interested in how an army traveled to a battle and then back home from it, but whose interest rested in the details of the battle. However, in this particular case, the reader found the expedition especially informative since Desjardin based that portion of his book on the information gleaned from the journals.

For the reviewer, the high point of this book was the epilogue, titled "America's Hannibal." In it, Desjardin stated that the failure to capture Quebec actually helped the Americans win the Revolutionary War. If Benedict Arnold had not been such a menace to Quebec during the first year of the war, the forces that England diverted in response to his threat might have gone, instead, to Boston or New York, and, thus made it much harder for General George Washington to succeed (p. 197). Arnold's attempt to capture Quebec helped lead the British forces under General John Burgoyne into a trap at Saratoga almost two years later. Following the Battle of Saratoga, Burgoyne praised Arnold as "instrumental in the colonial victory," and Dr. James Warren, in a letter to Samuel Adams, stated, "Arnold has made a march that may be compared to Hannibal's or Xenophon's" (p. 198).

The final part of the epilogue dealt briefly with Arnold's anger with those he felt tried to damage his reputation. Because of this anger, Arnold plotted with Major John Andre to turn over West Point to the British. Arnold narrowly escaped arrest by Washington for the conspiracy, and fled to the security of the British lines. The British rewarded Arnold's act of treason with a commission into the British army and a payment of 10,000 pounds sterling. Arnold moved to London, and later returned to Virginia to lead British troops against his former comrades, there and in his home state of Connecticut. After a four-year stay in New Brunswick, Canada, Arnold returned to England, where he died in 1801 (p. 199).

If Desjardin's objective was to write a short, concise account of Arnold's 1775 Quebec Campaign, he succeeded admirably. *Through a Howling Wilderness* is an adventure narrative that tells of the hardships and the heroism of the men who took part in the campaign and their fight against not only the enemy, but also illness and the forces of nature. This book would be a welcome addition to the library of anyone who was familiar with the campaign, or the library of a student just beginning his/her studies of the American Revolutionary period.

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Linklater, Andro. *An Artist in Treason: The Extraordinary Life of General James Wilkinson*. New York: Walker & Company, 2009.

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Mike Gottert

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If a reader has never heard of James Wilkinson, which is likely, this reviewer recommends *An Artist in Treason: The Extraordinary Life of General James Wilkinson* by Andro Linklater. Wilkinson is probably the most interesting—and least recognized—figure from the American Early Republic era. Wilkinson’s divided loyalty, as told by Linklater, offers a unique perspective on the early period of the American Republic. It reminds the reader that the struggle to create the United States was an uncertain proposition.

James Wilkinson served in the Continental Army during the early part of the Revolutionary War before he resigned. In 1783, he moved to Kentucky where he advocated Kentucky’s separation from Virginia and established trade relationships with the Spanish in New Orleans. In 1791, he returned to federal military service, was promoted to brigadier general, and fought in the Battle of Fallen Timbers. Linklater provided sixteen pages of black and white illustrations and two maps of the areas discussed in the book to aid the reader in understanding Wilkinson’s military actions and travels.

Wilkinson became the senior officer of the United States Army in 1796 until 1798 when George Washington replaced him. In 1800, he again became the senior officer in the Army, a position he maintained until 1812. During his time in the army he faced three court-martials and four congressional investigations; it was said that, “He had never won a battle but never lost an inquiry” (p. 312).

Throughout his career, political opponents, including General Anthony Wayne, accused Wilkinson of being in the pay of the Spanish and working against the interests of the United States. At the time, many people also believed he was involved in the Burr Conspiracy to seize the western portion of the country and parts of Mexico, but he betrayed Burr by revealing his plot to Jefferson and denying all involvement in the conspiracy.

At the time of his death in 1825, the American public considered him a distinguished soldier. History would have remembered him as a minor member of the founding generation, or at least that is how history might have remembered him. However, in 1888, the Spanish government sent two hundred thousand

documents pertaining to the Spanish-American Empire from Havana to Madrid. In the early part of the twentieth century, historians proceeded to sort through them.

Among the papers sent to Madrid, historians found confirmation of some of the old allegations regarding Wilkinson's relationship with Spain. Wilkinson, or as he was known to the Spanish, Agent 13, was on the Spanish payroll. These documents included hundreds of letters, reports, and assessments exchanged between Wilkinson and his handlers in New Orleans, their supervisors in Havana, and Imperial officials in Madrid. Linklater included two appendixes to his book, the first of which gives the reader an opportunity to study one of the condemning documents. It is a transcribed copy of the payments made to Wilkinson by the Spanish government. The second appendix is a brief analysis of the code Wilkinson used to transmit messages.

General Wilkinson not only passed on his country's strategic secrets, he sought to detach Kentucky from the Union and ally it with Spain. He also wrote detailed plans that advised the Spanish authorities on the best way to prevent American expansion beyond the Mississippi River. He alerted Spanish authorities to the expedition mounted by Lewis and Clark to explore the American West. In response to his information, the Spanish dispatched cavalry patrols to intercept the expedition but were unable to locate it. Presumably, the Spanish believed that if they could stop exploration of the territory, they could also stop expansion into the territory.

Wilkinson's life was quite a story and Linklater's treatment reads like a novel, but a novel with footnotes. This is the first modern biography of Wilkinson, and it is a compelling book that is not only accessible to the general reader, but also well footnoted. Linklater made good use of the many available sources. This is fortunate for the English-only scholar because, until *An Artist in Treason*, much of the available source material was written in Spanish. Linklater's book comes with a high recommendation to anyone with an interest in early American history or the early U.S. Army.

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Hill, Frances. *A Delusion of Satan: The Full Story of the Salem Witch Trials*.  
Cambridge: DaCapo Press, 1995.

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DeAnna Stevens

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Frances Hill wrote *A Delusion of Satan: The Full Story of the Salem Witch Trials* in response to her disappointing search in 1992 for a factual account of the Salem witch trials. Unsatisfied with the available books on this topic, which usually delve into speculation or pure fiction, Hill had doubts about her ability to write an accurate and thoroughly researched book. As she read the existing sources, Hill realized that as an English woman, she could relate to the Puritans' decidedly English class and gender distinctions that were present in Salem in 1692. Growing up in post-World War II England gave Hill the understanding of the social, cultural, and religious views of a colony that was extremely strict, fearful of evil, and struggling to survive. With *A Delusion of Satan*, Hill probed deep into the mindset of the accused and the accusers. Her work provides the reader insight into the reasons why the Salem witch-hunt and the trials occurred and then dissolved so rapidly.

Hill began the book with a background of Salem Village and a brief mention of Salem Town. Describing daily life in Salem Village, Hill portrayed a life of constant work and religious upbringing. From the time they were five or six, villagers expected their children to help in the houses and on the farms. The people derived pleasure from following the strict religious view, which espoused that anything done just to bring joy was sinful. All of the civic meetings, religious visitations, and recreational play centered on carrying out a duty rather than personal enjoyment. Hill described the Puritans as rigid in their beliefs but flexible enough that they could find sin in any action. They designed punishments to humiliate as well as physically hurt those they found guilty of a transgression.

Hill began her book by documenting the actions and views that led up to the witch-hunt and subsequent trials. She described the family of Samuel Parris, the pastor of the Puritan church in Salem Village. He and his wife lived with their daughter, a son, a niece, and two Caribbean Indian slaves. The couple constantly left their daughter, Elizabeth, and their niece, Abigail Williams, in the care of a slave woman, Tituba. The girls, possibly with a few others, became involved in "fortune telling," which consisted of breaking an egg white into a glass of water and

watching the patterns that the egg white formed. Hill explained that even though accepted contemporary historical belief blames Tituba for the girls' involvement with so-called fortune telling and witchery, the girls actually used paraphernalia commonly used in English witchcraft and sorcery. Tituba would not have had knowledge of these tools because she was born and raised in the Caribbean before she became a slave. The girls played this type of fortune-telling game until they became fearful of what they were "seeing" and began to act hysterical.

At this point, the witch-hunt began and the girls accused people of witchcraft. Hill's prose walked the reader through the girls' accusations of witchcraft against Tituba, and other villagers, including Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne. Hill presented multiple reasons why villagers accused the alleged witches and why the accusers felt the way they did, by providing background information on the people charged with witchcraft and their relationship with their accusers. The speed and cruelty with which the village leaders detained, questioned, and then sentenced the alleged witches was unheard of in previous or subsequent witch-hunts that occurred throughout the world. Hill provided detailed accounts of accusations and testimonies for the reader. Hill's attention to detail and narrative was exquisite and kept the reader involved in an intricate and disturbing factual account.

Hill continued recounting the events of the accusations, trials, and executions until the end of the witch-hunt. However, Hill did not stop at the end of the executions. Rather, she continued to explore the story through the years that followed. She concerned herself with thoroughly retelling the story to the best of her ability. The people who she wrote about become as real as the person who read her book, while she drew the reader into the lives of those affected by the witch-hunt. The reader felt each accusation, each trial, and every execution. At the end of the book, Hill provided a listing of every important person involved in the Salem witch trials and a brief biography for each individual. She also provided the reader with a chronological listing of every major event that happened from the arrival of Samuel Parris in 1689 to the apology of Ann Putnam in 1706.

Hill's inclusion of copies of the original documents and photographs is a welcome addition to a history book. At the very end of the book, Hill included her notes for each chapter and her bibliography. The notes are full of additional information on events, places, and people. Her bibliography is another great resource for additional research into the subject matter. Overall, it is apparent that



Hill strongly believes that those involved were a product of the social structure and religious rigidity of Puritanism.

Frances Hill's *A Delusion of Satan: The Full Story of the Salem Witch Trials* takes its place as an informative and historically accurate retelling. Although Hill strayed into some speculation when she retold rumors documented by other historians, she provided the reader with her insight into the Puritan psyche and allowed the reader to experience the Salem witch trials. Her audience cannot help but care for the people involved.