

**FOR THE LOVE OF ONE'S COUNTRY: THE CONSTRUCTION OF A  
GENDERED MEMORY IN PHILADELPHIA AND MONTGOMERY COUNTY,  
PENNSYLVANIA,  
1860-1914**

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By  
Smadar Shtuhl  
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Examining Committee Members:

Susan E. Klepp, Advisory Chair, History  
Wilbert L. Jenkins, History  
Jonathan Daniel Wells, History  
Rebecca T. Alpert, External Member, Temple University

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## ABSTRACT

The acquisition of the home of George Washington by the Mount Vernon Ladies Association in 1858 was probably the first preservation project led by women in the United States. During the following decades, elite Philadelphia and Montgomery County women continued the construction of historical memory through the organization and popularization of exhibitions, fundraising galas, preservation of historical sites, publication of historical writings, and the erection of patriotic monuments.

Drawing from a wide variety of sources, including annual organizations' reports, minutes of committees and of a DAR chapter, correspondence, reminiscences, newspapers, circulars, and ephemera, the dissertation argues that privileged women constructed a classed and gendered historical memory, which aimed to write women into the national historical narrative and present themselves as custodians of history. They constructed a subversive historical account that placed women on equal footing with male historical figures and argued that women played a significant role in shaping the nation's history.

During the first three decades, privileged women advanced an idealized memory of Martha and George Washington with an intention to reconcile the sectional rift caused by the Civil War. From the early 1890s, with the formation of the Daughters of the American Revolution, elite women of colonial and revolutionary war ancestry constructed a more inclusive memory of revolutionary

soldiers that aimed to inculcate the public, particularly recent immigrants, in patriotic and civic values.

An introductory chapter demonstrates the social, political, and economic vulnerability of the elites and the institutions and historical memory they forged to shore up their privileged status from the colonial period to the Civil War. Through the organization of the Great Central Fair held in Philadelphia in 1864, the fundraising campaign on behalf of the Centennial Exposition, the preservation of George Washington's Headquarters at Valley Forge, the formation of the Historical Society of Montgomery County, and the activities of the Valley Forge Chapter DAR the dissertation demonstrates that women employed their experience to expand their activities beyond regional boundaries while also tending to local history.

The dissertation contributes to the discussion regarding the construction of memory by adding gender and class as categories of analysis. It also adds to the historical debate regarding the professionalization of history by exploring women's historical writings during the period of institutionalization of history.

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## INTRODUCTION

On the evening of March 30, 1875, a large group of enthusiastic privileged women and men congregated at the residence of Mrs. J. G. Thorp in Madison, Wisconsin. They intended to form a Woman's Centennial Club that would lead the fundraising campaign for the Centennial Exposition in the state. The first speaker, General Atwood of the National Centennial Commission, who was grateful for the assistance the women offered the enterprise, asserted:

Nothing of vital importance has transpired in the land, unless it received, in some way, the aid of women. . . . During the revolutionary war women took a prominent part. If they did not go into the field of battle, they encouraged their fathers, brothers, sweethearts, and friends to do so; and *they* molded bullets from pewter ware, for them to use in battle for freedom. . . . It is reasonable to presume that, but for the hearty cooperation of women, we should never have had in the first place a *free republic* here.<sup>1</sup>

Atwood's acknowledgement of the contribution of women to the formation of the country was uttered at the wake of the centennial year, when elite Northern Americans emphasized their link to their revolutionary ancestors and established themselves as custodians of the national historical narrative. While both men and

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<sup>1</sup> Anna B. Butler, Emma C. Bascom, and Katherine F. Kerr, eds., *Centennial Records of the Women of Wisconsin* (Madison, Wisconsin: Atwood and Culver, 1876), 87.

women can be made into public figures by the prominence of their actions, men – who traditionally occupied civil, political, and military positions – served as prominent subjects of historical accounts. The social convention that placed women in the domestic sphere generally omitted them from those chronicles. During the last four decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century privileged women attempted to include colonial women, who made proper marriages and appropriate social connections, in the nation’s history. While engaging in this process they ensured their own inclusion in the narrative. By forging their own classed and gendered memory centered on female participation in the national polity, these activists legitimized their social status and gave themselves public exposure. They also created organizations that transcended regional boundaries and established an efficient network that supported their campaigns.

Over the past two decades, scholars have explored the relationships of history and the political aims and impact of the construction of collective memory. These studies link individuals to group identities and primarily examine the process of the construction of memory within its chronological context. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger emphasize state rituals as a means of constructing collective memory. In their volume *The Invention of Tradition* they argue that traditions invent historic continuity, legitimize institutions and authority, and inculcate value systems.<sup>2</sup> They also enhance patriotism and ritual and may assist in social cohesion while obscuring fragments of the past that contest

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<sup>2</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *the Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 7-9.

their historical version. History, on the other hand, is an ideological social construct that is often popularized by the state or a movement. The scholars assert that traditions are employed to provide the community with a shared identity at a time of social or political instability. Hobsbawm argues that the DAR created a tradition of a superior class of native Protestants based on genealogy to distinguish themselves from the masses of immigrants. The scholars offer a framework for interaction between memory and history. However, they do not distinguish between the use of material culture – customs, rituals, and monuments – and the use of historical figures in the process of construction of traditions.

While Hobsbawm and Ranger perceive the construction of history and traditions as separate processes, David Lowenthal argues that they are interconnected. Memory, he argues, provides the awareness of the past, history offers the knowledge of it, and relics assist in believing in the past's existence.<sup>3</sup> The past is not fixed but is in a state of constant change according to the emerging needs of the present; the depiction of history, memory, and relics in addition to disregarded material may transform to fit changing agendas. In their search for the past, Lowenthal asserts, people do not seek the truth but individual and collective identity. He draws his evidence from a large historical and geographical area – the Renaissance, Victorian England, and the Founding Fathers – which inevitably leads to some generalities. By contextualizing the American Revolution within the metaphor of a mother – child relationship he sheds light on its cultural aspects but ignores economic, political, and military considerations.

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<sup>3</sup> David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

With close attention to French history, Pierre Nora argues that history and memory are different entities: the former is an incomplete representation of the past based on analysis and criticism, while the latter is ever changing, occurring in space, images, and objects, and constructs and deconstructs its meanings. *Lieux de memoire*, places of memory, Nora argues, are attempts to preserve memory such as archives, museums, memorials, and anniversaries.<sup>4</sup> Nora locates memory in public places and considers its creation within a national context. He ignores the existence of contesting versions of memory by groups whose representation had been eliminated.

Michael Kammen pays close attention to the emergence of contesting memories in his comprehensive study *Mystic Chords of Memory*. He argues that there is a tendency in America to depoliticize traditions and seek reconciliation. In constructing the memory of the Civil War, Northern and Southern whites, who intended to reconcile their differences, excluded African Americans. For their part, African Americans created the Juneteenth celebrations. Between 1870 and 1915, white elites created traditions by collecting colonial furniture and memorializing their ancestry in order to halt change brought by increasing industrialization and urbanization. They wanted their ideal version of the past to mitigate social and political unrest and promote stability.<sup>5</sup> Memory, Kammen argues, replaced faith and history inspired with knowledge of the past.

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<sup>4</sup> Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire," *Representations*, Special Issue: Memory and Counter Memory, 26 (Spring 1989): 7-24.

<sup>5</sup> Michael G. Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 59.

Historians who have explored the construction of memory, history, and traditions have paid attention to the collective process of identity formation and emphasized institutional and group involvement. But because the ‘collective’ spells the ‘official’, many have ignored gender altogether because most women did not formally participate in political, military, and public campaigns. W. Fitzhugh Brundage, one of the few scholars who explore the relations between gender and memory, demonstrates that elite women assumed dominance over the representation of history in the post-bellum South and disseminated their version through textbooks and essay contests. They also exerted their influence over the rhetoric of the academic staff of Southern universities.<sup>6</sup> He argues that by portraying an ideal picture of the antebellum South with its dignified plantation owner, refined mistress, contented mammies, and satisfied slaves, elite Southern women were able to re-imagine the old social hierarchy and ignore the violence of slavery. In the process they emerged as custodians of history, the authors as well as active participants in the narrative of Southern history. In an additional article Brundage admits that whites had the upper hand in a contestation over public representations of slavery because African Americans did not have the means to erect impressive statues.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Brundage tells the story of a young history professor, Enoch M. Banks, in the University of Florida who in 1911 concluded that the South was wrong to secede, and consequently resigned his post under the pressure of women’s organizations. See: W. Fitzhugh Brundage, “White Women and the Politics of Historical Memory in the New South, 1880-1920,” in *Jumpin’ Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights*, ed. Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 127.

<sup>7</sup> W. Fitzhugh Brundage, “Woman’s Hand and Heart and Deathless Love,” *White Women and the Commemorative Impulse in the New South*, in *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and Landscapes of Southern Memory*, ed. Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson, eds. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003), 70-71.

Brundage demonstrates that class and race were prime factors in motivating the women to act but asserts that gender was significant to a lesser degree because men had their own historically-oriented groups.<sup>8</sup> Brundage assumes that because men and women worked for the cause gender was not a crucial factor in their activism. He attributes women's activism to the Victorian gender role that ascribed mourning to women and argues that the men did not realize the potential impact of the construction of history in affecting how generations of Southerners would perceive their past. He does not emphasize the quality of the work executed and the means by which it had been achieved as an issue of managerial and political ability. However, his work demonstrates that women crafted a political approach that exceeded that of male clubs' members and succeeded in gaining authority over the construction of the past.

Brundage's article suggests that women constructed memory that often differed from that of men.<sup>9</sup> Privileged Philadelphia and Montgomery County women, who were often ignored by historical accounts, created memory that inserted their ancestors into history. Their memory represented class and pedigree that intended to create class hierarchy and establish them as birthright aristocracy.<sup>10</sup> Between 1860 and 1890, they concentrated their effort on regional reconciliation with Martha and George Washington

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 71.

<sup>9</sup> Susan Stabile demonstrates that women were able to create their own domesticated memory in the eighteenth century. By writing the history of their homes and recreating early republican gardens they were able to create local space for memories. See: Susan Stabile, *Memory's Daughters: The Material Culture of Remembrance in Eighteenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 12, 234.

<sup>10</sup> E. Digby Baltzell, *Philadelphia Gentlemen: The Making of a National Upper Class* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1958), 225-227. See also: Ralph E. Pyle, *Persistence and Change in the Protestant Establishment* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1996), 4-5, 36, 45-47.



as representatives of revolutionary unity. Increasing immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe and anxiety over the changing social and political landscape of the city and, to a lesser degree, of Montgomery County, prompted privileged women to intensify their effort to inculcate the newcomers. Elizabeth Robins Pennell possibly uttered the feelings of many privileged Philadelphians when she wrote:

It is the Russian Jew who, with an army of aliens at his back – thousands upon thousands of Italians, Slavs, Lithuanians, a fresh emigration of negroes from the South, and statistics alone can say how many other varieties - is pushing and pushing Philadelphians out the town... until who can say where there will be any room for them at all? <sup>11</sup>

The women aimed to instill loyalty and patriotism through the work of historical preservation, erection of monuments to revolutionary ancestors, and authorship of local history.

This study argues that history and memory are similar in that they are generated as a result of a political standpoint. Both are also selective, emphasize certain elements and obscure others. Their difference lies in their objective. Professional history seeks an analysis of new sources and exploration of old ones from new perspectives. As other scholars have pointed out, it is written for knowledge but is also subjected to revisions. In agreement with Nora, the study assumes that memory is generated by a group or the state, and its products – monuments, commemorations, rituals, historical exhibits or other artifacts – offer the public ultimate, irrefutable conclusions. The creation of memory, as

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<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Robins Pennell, *Our Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Company, 1914), 486.

Brundage demonstrates, depends on access to political and financial resources. The women in this study possessed both due to their husbands' wealth, status, and ancestry.

This study explores the paradoxical gendered and classed perception of the separate sphere ideology. The women who are the subject of this study had seemingly supported the ideology, but their actions contradicted its premises. Eager to address regional reconciliation during and after the Civil War and inculcate the increasing numbers of immigrants, they employed their skills in the public sphere but were sure to command respect as proper women who value conventional gender roles. I use the word "proper" as it is employed by Cleveland Amory to describe elite Bostonian men from "First Families" who exerted great influence on the city and the nation and represented traditional conduct that commanded respect to the family and its achievements.<sup>12</sup>

Nathaniel Burt argues that the use of this term does not apply to the relaxed and friendly city society that did not care for title or money but for birth and the family.<sup>13</sup> Burt is in fact in agreement with Amory since birth and family are more exclusive than money and title; the former is inherent and cannot be acquired by any means while the latter might be difficult to attain but may be accessible to selected few. Furthermore, in his study he demonstrates that birth and family translated to economic and political power, and friendliness was reserved to those included in elite social circles.

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<sup>12</sup> Cleveland Amory, *Proper Bostonians* (New York, E. P. Dutton, 1947).

<sup>13</sup> Nathaniel Burt, *The Perennial Philadelphians: The Anatomy of an American Aristocracy* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1963), 15-16, 40.

The Philadelphia area was chosen for its association with the nation's history. A considerable number of nineteenth-century members of local families could trace their ancestry to colonial America and the Revolution. Swedes were the first to arrive to the area in 1638, encouraged by King Gustavus Adolphus, who authorized the Swedish West India Company for the purpose of missionary activity and trade.<sup>14</sup> In 1682 Charles II granted William Penn 50,000 acres known as the Welsh Tract, which is considered central to the Philadelphia's suburbs' aristocracy. Some of the first settlers in the Philadelphia area were Dutch, Finnish, Swedish, and English.<sup>15</sup> William Penn traveled to Holland and Germany to publicize his colony and created great interest particularly among those suffering from religious persecution such as the Mennonites. In August 1683, Germans, led by Francis Daniel Pastonius, were given a township northwest of the city, later to become Germantown. Many of Philadelphia's elite families originate from the settlers who came to the city in this period.<sup>16</sup> The existence of a prosperous privileged society in Philadelphia and Montgomery County, as vulnerable as it was to economic, political, and social changes, provides an opportunity to explore how women of

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<sup>14</sup> Dutch and Swedes preceded Penn in the Delaware by more than fifty years. The Swedes settled in Christiana (Wilmington), Tinicum, and Wicaco; the Dutch resided near the bay. See: Ellis Paxsen Oberholtzen, *Philadelphia: A History of the City and its People*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1911), 20.

<sup>15</sup> Penn wrote in 1685 a description of the province once he returned to England, pointing to French, Dutch, Germans, Swedes, Danes, Finns, Scot, Irish, and English settlers. See: Lippincott, *Philadelphia*, 16. See also: Gary B. Nash, *First City: Philadelphia and the Forging of Historical Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 15, 26. Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: Perennial, 2002), 66-79, 87, 103.

<sup>16</sup> Including among them are: Cadwalader, Biddle, Morris, Roberts, Pugh, and Evans. Burt, *The Perennial Philadelphians*, 54, 59. For Quaker names who bought part of Penn's land in 1662 see: Horace Mather Lippincott, *Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Macrae Smith Company Publishers, 1926), 13. Some families of German origin include Pepper, who anglicized their name from Pfeffer, Wistar-Wister, Lewis, Rittenhouse, and Pennypecker. *Ibid.*, 63. See also: Russell A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 22.

established families attempted to magnify the reputation of their male and female ancestors.

Philadelphia, the second-largest city in the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century, became a center of manufacturing that attracted immigrants of European descent. The need for armaments, uniform, and the transportation of goods and wounded soldiers during the Civil War stimulated industrialization and building of railway lines. In the post-Civil War decades Philadelphia witnessed growing numbers of factories due to the expansion of commerce precipitated by the convenient railway transportation.<sup>17</sup> By the mid-1870s the city's economy was based firmly on dozens of major enterprises in the textile, metal products, machine goods, printing and chemical industries. Most laborers lived in the neighborhoods in which they worked while skilled workers moved to the western and northwestern parts of city.<sup>18</sup> In the 1880s Eastern European Jews and Italians were also among the newcomers.<sup>19</sup> In the last decades of the nineteenth century one's social standing in Philadelphia was determined by ethnicity as well as economic status and professional skills.

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<sup>17</sup> In the 1850s Philadelphia was the nation's second largest city, surpassed only by New York in population, commerce, and manufacturing. Elite capital in the city was drawn to build transport networks. See: Philip Scranton, *Proprietary Capitalism: The Textile Manufacture at Philadelphia, 1800-1885* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 133. By 1880 the city had less than 2 percent of the nation's population but produced nearly 5 percent of its products. See: Bruce Laurie and Mark Schmitz, "Manufacture and Productivity: The Making of an Industrial Base, Philadelphia 1850-1880," in *Philadelphia: Work, Space, Family, and Group Experience in Nineteenth Century*, ed. Theodore Hershberg (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 45.

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion on the Irish immigration into the area see: Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>19</sup> By 1900 the Germans, Irish, and British still made up well over two-thirds of Philadelphia's foreign-born but close to 30,000 Russian Jews and 20,000 Italians already lived in the city. Ibid.

The creation of railroad lines was a major developer of rural areas outside of Philadelphia. Between 1838 and 1856 a railroad from Philadelphia to Harrisburg was constructed. The accessible transportation led to the expansion of Montgomery County industries. Immigrants were attracted to its iron and steel factories, textile mills, and stone quarries that provided economic opportunities and potential social mobility.<sup>20</sup> Decades before the Civil War the county was home to Germans, Irish, and African Americans. Italians, Austro-Hungarians, and Russians (as well as Poles, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Croats, Slovenes Serbs, Czechs and Hungarians) who immigrated during the last three decades of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century precipitated social tension between themselves and established Americans over cultural and religious practices.

The region resembles other urban centers in the northeast United States.<sup>21</sup> Raymond A. Mohl finds that there were similar patterns of development in major American urban areas in the nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup> Heavy immigration in the 1830s, which coupled with internal migration from rural to urban areas, weakened the social, ethnic,

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<sup>20</sup> By 1880 Montgomery County employed 11,000 manufacturing workers in iron, steel, textile, and apparel industries. Toll and Schwager, *Montgomery County the Second Hundred Years*, 1039.

<sup>21</sup> A study of fifty American cities with populations exceeding 10,000 and 20,000 by 1860 found that they all had similar economic structure. Cities manufacturing employment between the years 1860 and 1870 is attributed to increase of city size and industrialization. see: Jeffrey G. Williamson, "Antebellum Urbanization in American Northeast," *The Journal of Economic History* 25 (Dec. 1965), 603. Roger F. Riefler who examined a system of cities in the Northeast was able to identify causes of urbanization patterns in the nineteenth century. He demonstrates that the cities had similar characteristics of development. See: Roger F. Riefler, "Nineteenth-Century Urbanization Patterns in the United States," *The Journal of Economic History* 39 (Dec. 1979): 961-974.

<sup>22</sup> Major urban centers in America shared similar circumstances; most urbanites came from rural America and from peasant villages in Europe, the development of transportation led to structural and spatial change, and physical growth of the city promoted social fragmentation, community life segregated by class, ethnicity, and race. See: Raymond A. Mohl, ed., *The Making of Urban America*, 2d ed., (Wilmington, Delaware: A Scholarly Resources Inc., 1997), 94-96.

and religious homogeneity of northeastern and Midwestern cities. In the period between 1860 and 1920 urban regions split between the center, constituted of low income housing with commercial and business establishments, and suburbs where the wealthy and the middle class lived.<sup>23</sup> Large urban centers developed similar economies, highly diversified, that provided regional financial and marketing services. With comparable spatial, social, economic, and transportation development, the case of Philadelphia can provide a reflection of other American cities in the period studied.

The study explores the period between 1860 and 1914, a time of increased opportunities in public activism for women. The first chapter explores the factors that led to the vulnerability of elite Philadelphia and Montgomery County and the social and political institutions they forged to shore up their elite status. It demonstrates that the boundaries between the privileged classes and the lower ranks were unstable and largely dependent on unpredictable political and economic forces. It also shows that the elites often faced contestation to their social and political dominance. The chapter discusses the effort that privileged Philadelphians invested in attempting to instill a memory of revolutionary consensus and present themselves as custodians of historical accounts.

The Civil War was a watershed for women's public activity as urgent demand for assistance justified their involvement in public affairs. The second chapter demonstrates that the effort to promote a memory of revolutionary consensus continued during the war. Embroiled in a serious long-lasting crisis with a vast amount of casualties, privileged men and women constructed an ideal past of simplicity, domesticity and unaffected by

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 96.

political and military conflicts. It intended to provide a respite from their daily violent reality.

Following the war, privileged women employed their newly acquired organizational skills in additional, more encompassing projects. The third chapter explores the preceding fundraising campaign organized by women in support of the Centennial Exposition held in Fairmount Park in 1876. The popular events raised large sums of money for the enterprise and argued that elite women assumed a significant role in the nation's history. By offering women of other localities a historical framework, which they could adopt to their own political and social views, Centennial women were able to expand their local operation into a successful national campaign.

The fourth chapter focuses on the preservation of George Washington's Headquarters at Valley Forge and the formation of the Historical Society of Montgomery County. It explores the activities of privileged rural women whose role in the preservation movement and the construction of memory has largely been ignored. Believing in the historical significance of the site, they worked tirelessly to raise money that would enable them to own the Headquarters and purchase additional land to create a memorial park. The women had also continued to construct local historical narrative amid the process of professionalization of history. Influenced by early scientific historians, they wrote historical accounts that focused on local women's contributions to history, their ancestral accounts, and their patriotic service. They intended to include women in the local history, assume elite status, and instill social hierarchy.

With increased immigration primarily from Eastern and Southern Europe in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the founding of hereditary societies proliferated. The fifth chapter explores the historical work of the Daughters of the American Revolution. It closely follows the work of the Valley Forge Chapter, which had been founded by Anna Morris Holstein who headed the campaign for the purchase of the Headquarters at Valley Forge. The erection of monuments, marking of revolutionary graves, and writing local history were among the tasks the women undertook as patriotic projects. They advanced rhetoric of revolutionary heroism in order to inculcate immigrants to the American culture and promote loyalty to official institutions. Their message differed from the Progressive historians who criticized revolutionary figures for acting on behalf of personal gain. In their construction of historical memory, the DAR inserted their ancestors and themselves into the local historical narrative and the narrative of the history of preservation.

The memory women created was designed to portray their contribution to the foundation of the nation. It blurred the boundaries between the domestic and the public spheres and demonstrated that political and heroic deeds can be located at both.



## CHAPTER 1

### FORGING ELITES: CLASS AND GENDER FROM THE COLONIAL ERA TO THE CIVIL WAR

From the 1790s onward, urban elites faced threats to their social and political status from the lower classes who perceived the end of the revolution as an opportunity for a new order. “Elite,” for the purpose of this study, represents multiple privileged groups from urban and rural Pennsylvania, characterized by wealthy families who often produced business, professional, political, and religious leaders. These families fashioned social and cultural institutions intended to mitigate economic and political instability by the display of wealth, the forging of family networks, and the cultivation of a culture of genteel comportment.<sup>1</sup> The chief distinction between high-ranking urban residents and their rural counterparts is in the extent in political and benevolent involvement and habits of sumptuous display. Philadelphians tended to be more active in national (during the colonial and the early republic eras) and city affairs and support education, charity, and the arts. For practical purpose, the lower sorts are defined as the laboring classes, which included skilled and unskilled workers, artisans, shopkeepers, servants, and individuals of other occupations.<sup>2</sup> The wealthy sought to construct a memory of revolutionary

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth M. Geffen, “Industrial Development and Social Crisis 1841-1854,” in *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, ed. Russell F. Weigley (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982), 330; Daniel Kilbride, *An American Aristocracy: Southern Planters in Antebellum Philadelphia* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 18.

<sup>2</sup> Billy Gordon Smith, *The “Lower Sort”: Philadelphia’s Laboring People, 1750-1800* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), 4.

consensus that would emphasize broad support of the revolution's fundamental values and political goals. In promoting their own historical view, the elites attempted to eliminate the radical aspects of the revolution, and promote law and order with wealthy, educated, and virtuous individuals like themselves in positions of political and economic power.

Women, typically wives, who moved in elite social circles, did not confine themselves to the domestic sphere. They closely followed political events, shared their opinions with like-minded individuals, and diligently advanced their husbands' interests through personal contacts and social events. Married women, who derived their social status from their husbands, could venture into the public sphere as long as their husbands approved their activities. Single women had to tread judiciously to avoid tainting their reputation. Daniel Kilbride appropriately terms them the leisure class, for they possessed ample time which they could dedicate to friendly calls and ceremonial social events or volunteer on behalf of worthy causes.<sup>3</sup>

In the nineteenth century, these women became increasingly more interested in their families' and local histories. They focused on the domestic arena, where they initially charted their family genealogies or preserved papers of noted family members. In the middle of the nineteenth century they expanded their activities and joined a national campaign to save Mount Vernon, George Washington's home, from ruin.

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<sup>3</sup> The "leisure class" is Daniel Kilbride's term to the upper classes during the early republic period. See: Kilbride, *An American Aristocracy*, 3.

Men and women of high social status possessed a combination of family name, wealth, travel experience, education, and a manner of conduct. Elites included old families, whose members arrived to the country during the colonial era as well as those who accumulated their wealth during the early republic and the antebellum periods. Great merchants, land speculators, and major industrial manufacturers attempted to influence public policies through professional and political organizations in order to manipulate outcomes that would favor their business interests. Power and wealth often translated into political divisions among elites who withstood to lose greatly by shifts in major national and international policies.

Rural elites, represented by prominent residents of Montgomery County, typically focused on local affairs and appealed to the state in attempt to shape policies that directly affected them. They measured their wealth by their sizeable land holdings and, like their city counterparts, valued pedigree and education but refrained from extravagant social conduct. They mostly lived in disperse farms, relied upon mutual assistance, and shared common heritage with their communities.<sup>4</sup>

In provincial Philadelphia of 1770, considerable demand for imported commodities enabled shrewd merchants to accumulate substantial wealth. Skillful management certainly contributed to success, but even the most talented of businessmen was powerless when the effects of international conflicts and economic slumps hit their

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<sup>4</sup> James T. Lemon's study focuses on Chester and Lancaster counties due to the availability of documentation. It is fairly safe to assume that Montgomery County residents acted similarly for their communities included European immigrants of different backgrounds and the county's proximity to the ones researched. See: James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1972).

colonial niche. The accumulation of wealth was matched by the difficulty of keeping it. The lack of proper credit and insurance, the dependence on shifts in weather patterns, and changes in the political landscape in Europe all stood to affect Philadelphia merchants and the industries that served their extended shipping fleet.

Philadelphia's wealthy elites, however, were not exclusively merchants. The definition of elite - an elusive social construction - is complicated in the case of the colonial city and its surrounding rural areas, where social groups that represented wealth, land, manufacturing, religion, and political affiliation often overlapped. In addition, ubiquitous political and economic instability permitted the rise of wealthy social climbers and the fall down the social ladder of those whose wealth was reduced.

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It was known that "dukes don't emigrate," but common people considered settling in the Americas in their search for economic opportunity and social mobility.<sup>5</sup> Swedes, the earliest settlers, arrived in the Delaware Valley in 1638 by encouragement of King Gustavus Adolphus, who recognized the potential of trade and missionary activity in the New World and incorporated the Swedish West India Company for this purpose.<sup>6</sup> In 1682 William Penn organized an English colony and Philadelphia under an official charter.

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<sup>5</sup> The saying meant that Scot-Americans consisted of common people. See: Ferenc Morton Szasz, Abraham Lincoln and Robert Burns: Connected Lives and Legends (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 88.

<sup>6</sup> Dutch and Swedes preceded Penn in the Delaware by more than fifty years. The Swedes settled in Christiana (Wilmington), Tinicum, and Wicaco. The Dutch resided near the bay. See: Ellis Paxson Oberholtzen, *Philadelphia: A History of the City and its People*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1911), 20. Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn, eds. *The World of William Penn* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986).

Germans led by Francis Daniel Pastorius settled northwest of the city in August 1683, in a town they appropriately called Germantown.<sup>7</sup> The Germans received part of the Welsh Tract granted to William Penn in the previous year by Charles II. Prospects of success contributed to the emigration of diverse talented immigrants of Welsh, Scot, English, German, Swedish, French, Danish, Jewish, and Irish Catholic origins.<sup>8</sup> Penn envisioned a community of prosperous landlords who would frequent the city to settle their business dealings. He granted ten acres in either Northern or Western Liberties for every five hundred acres of rural land purchased.<sup>9</sup> Wealthy individuals who acquired land tracts provided their descendents with valuable assets that would serve as a foundation for a family fortune. Many of Philadelphia's enduring elites came from settlers in this period, such as the Roberts, Pugh, Price, Evans, Lloyd, Biddle, Cadwalader, Morris, Ingersoll, and Chew families. Eighteenth-century leaders of the city served as a major force in finance, politics, business, military affairs, law, and medicine.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> By 1760 the "German Crescent" included the counties Northampton, Berks, Lancaster, and York. See: Russell A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 20.

<sup>8</sup> Horace Mather Lippincott, *Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Macrae Smith Company Publishers, 1926), 16. See also: Gary B. Nash, *First City: Philadelphia and the Forging of Historical Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 15, 26. Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: Perennial, 2002), 66-79, 87, 103.

<sup>9</sup> Oberholtzen, Philadelphia, 29-30. Nathaniel Burt, *The Perennial Philadelphians: The Anatomy of an American Aristocracy* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1963), 71.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 54,59. For Quaker names who bought part of Penn's land in 1682 see: Lippincott, *Philadelphia*, 13. Some families of German origin include Pepper, who anglicized their name from Pfeffer, Wistar-Wister, Lewis, Rittenhouse, and Pennypecker. *Ibid.*, 63. See also: Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock*, 22. For additional names of early settlers see: Amy Oakley, *Our Pennsylvania: Keys to the Keystone State* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc. Publishers, 1950), 79. For a list of names of Philadelphia elite members from the end of the seventeenth century to 1940 see: E. Digby Baltzell, *Philadelphia Gentlemen: The Making of a National Upper Class* (Illinois: The Free Press, 1958), 71-77.

During its first decades, Philadelphia was governed by the Quakers who built it and transformed it into a busy trading post. They expanded the commerce with the West Indies during the eighteenth century to include Great Britain and southern European countries. Quaker merchants linked wealth with virtue and public service, and several of them assumed public positions, such as Samuel Carpenter, the deputy governor, assemblyman and provincial treasurer, James Logan, Secretary of the Province and Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, and David Lloyd, the Attorney General of Pennsylvania.

Quakers controlled the legislature until the revolution despite the presence of a majority of Germans and Scots in the city from the mid-eighteenth century. The Society of Friends, their religious institution, sought public order and discipline and opposed theater, gambling, drinking, smoking in public, and engaging in competitive games.<sup>11</sup> It emphasized the inner spirit and simplicity rather than extravagant appearance. Plainness permeated all aspects of Quaker life and included speech, dress, and architecture. Wealthy individuals often found it difficult to reconcile these demands with their desire to exhibit their affluence in luxurious consumption and extravagant conduct. The Keithian controversy, which turned into a question over the extent of political authority, stemmed from the desire of conservative Friends to draw more defined boundaries for members of the community. In 1691, George Keith, a Scot Quaker, introduced a more hierarchical and committed form of practice. It included a confession of faith from those who wanted to join the Society of Friends and silencing of new members or those unsure

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 31, 45.

of their beliefs.<sup>12</sup> His measures provoked a long debate over Quaker secular and religious practices. Keith's opponents, led by Thomas Lloyd, accused him of heresy, and he returned to England where he was disowned by the Quakers in 1694. Gary B. Nash argues that those who followed Keith intended to challenge the individuals in positions of power.<sup>13</sup>

The Quaker ethic of tolerance did not extend to groups that threatened their political dominance. The restrictions of Quaker doctrine compelled a number of Friends to abandon their faith and join the more lenient Church of England. When Episcopalians decided to build a church, Quaker magistrates attempted unsuccessfully to halt it by appealing to the King William III in 1695. Christ Church was built by a few mostly wealthy individuals, among them Robert Quarry, a representative of a group of English merchants who competed with Quaker merchants. They included Jasper Yeats, a wealthy merchant from Wilmington, and William Trent, the founder of Trenton, New Jersey. From the outset, the church established a direct link with British authorities. Sir William Keith, lieutenant-governor of Pennsylvania, frequented the church, and William of Orange supported its clergy. Episcopalians demonstrated their increasing power and wealth when they erected a new building, which according to an observer was "the handsomest structure of the kind that I ever saw in any part of the world."<sup>14</sup> Built in stark

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>13</sup> Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: the Northern Seaports and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986), 30-31.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Deborah Mathias Gough, *Christ Church, Philadelphia: the Nation's Church in a Changing City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 49.

contrast to its surroundings, the ornate Georgian-style edifice featured bricks imported from England. With a large Palladian window, urns adorning its railing, and a brick tower topped by wooden spire, it rejected Quaker simplicity. A crown adorned the top of the tall steeple that dominated the city's skyline. The church's opulent interior fit its impressive exterior. Elaborate paintings, velvet drapery, and a twenty-four-branch imported chandelier decorated the vast space. Several pews were upholstered with silk lace and velvet and the state pew of the governor was decorated with a wood carving of the royal arms of William and Mary. While the church attracted prominent and wealthy members such as Benjamin Franklin and Benjamin Rush, the signers of the Declaration of Independence, John Penn, the grandson of Pennsylvania founder William Penn, Payton Randolph, a prominent Virginia planter, and James Biddle, a commodore in the American navy and the brother of the banker Nicholas Biddle, it also served a large number of people of lesser means. It reinforced specific social hierarchy through conduct and outer display.

Until 1701, Quaker merchants and farmers composed nearly all of the members of the city's elected Assembly. Penn's Pennsylvania Charter of Privileges (1701) acknowledged proprietors' privileges but instituted an appointed governor and elected assembly for the colony. In 1703, the Quakers split between David Lloyd, who was supported by provincial farmers, and James Logan, the backer of the urban merchants'



interests. The constant conflict between the two factions demonstrates the split among the interests of wealthy proprietors and their opponents.<sup>15</sup>

The French and Indian War presented a greater challenge. When Governor Robert Hunter Morris encouraged the formation of independent militia companies led by his proprietary friends in 1756, Quaker membership in the Philadelphia Assembly declined. Twenty four members withdrew on a pacifist principle. Assembly leadership remained in the hands of war supporters like Isaac Norris II and Benjamin Franklin.<sup>16</sup>

Elite Philadelphia also included several Jewish merchant families who kept business and social ties with Quakers, Anglicans, and Presbyterians. David Frank, a New York merchant, and Solomon Henry Gratz, who emigrated from Karkow via Austria, were among the most prominent merchants. When the Dancing Assembly was formed in 1748, David Frank and Samson Levy were among its original subscribers. Jews did not practice in public and several were absorbed into Christian community. Rebecca Frank, David Frank's daughter was baptized at Christ Church. However, there was no outward evidence of anti-Semitism in colonial Philadelphia. When the Jewish community needed funds to complete Mikveh Israel, its first synagogue, in 1788, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas McKean, Charles Biddle, and David Rittenhouse came to their aid help.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> For a detailed description of the political conflicts of colonial Quakers in Philadelphia see: Edward Digby Baltzell, *Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia: Two Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Class Authority and Leadership* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 150-155.

<sup>16</sup> Ralph L. Ketcham, "Conscience, War, and Politics in Pennsylvania, 1755-1757," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 20 (July 1963): 436-437.

<sup>17</sup> William Pencak, "Jews and Anti-Semitism in Early Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 126 (July 2002): 372.

Montgomery County, the rural backcountry of the city, was part of Philadelphia County until 1784. Early settlers were of English, Welsh, and German origin, among them the Roberts and Hughes of Wales. In 1712, a group of Swedes settled in Upper Merion. Peter Rambo, Gunner Rambo, Matthias Holstein, and Peter Yocum purchased an estimated thousand acres each at the bank of the Schuylkill, where the land was fertile, and pursued farming. However removed from Philadelphia, Upper Merion inhabitants stayed active in township affairs. In 1711, the Pennsylvania Assembly appointed tax collectors at the county level to replace the justices of the peace who presided at the Courts of Quarter Session. These commissioners were elected, unlike the justices, who were appointed officeholders. Joan de Lourdes Leonard persuasively argues that the commissioners, who scrutinized the activities of the executive officials, were de-facto representatives of local colonists and acted on behalf of the voters' interests. She also stresses that when the Proprietary faction controlled the Assembly, the number of justices increased.<sup>18</sup> In 1726, Edward Roberts of Upper Merion was commissioned one of the justices of Philadelphia County, and kept his appointment until 1741.<sup>19</sup> It correlates to Leonard's findings that justices who were selected from the city's surroundings tended to be large farmers of higher social status than commissioners. Justices continued to fill their position as long as they served the government loyally. Wealthy farmers tended to support the Proprietors in the Assembly and were less likely to be elected as local commissioners than small farmers and artisans.

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<sup>18</sup> Joan de Lourdes Leonard, "Elections in Colonial Pennsylvania," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 11 (July 1954).

<sup>19</sup> William J. Buck, *History of Montgomery County within the Schuylkill Valley* (Norristown, Pennsylvania: E.L. Acker, 1859), 41.

Large farmers assumed leadership and acted decisively when they perceived a threat to their rural settlements. When tension arose due to the threat of the French and the Indians on the frontier, Upper Merion prominent residents organized a volunteer company in 1747 with John Hughes as captain, Matthias Holstein as lieutenant, and Frederick Holstein as ensign.<sup>20</sup>

Religious practice was generally institutionalized with the building of a house of worship. In 1760, Swedes built Christ Church in Bridgeport, known as Swedes' Church, on Morris Rambo's property. It was built of stone in the form of a cross with a tall spire. Upon petitioning to Governor John Penn, the Swedes' churches in Bridgeport, Wicaco, and Kingsessing in Philadelphia were incorporated in 1765 as the Swedish Lutheran Churches.

Prosperous Philadelphia elites adopted cultural and conspicuous conduct that separated them from their lesser sorts.<sup>21</sup> Stephanie Grauman Wolf and Richard Bushman argue that the elites depended on fortune, birth, occupation, manners, education, and lifestyle to establish their status.<sup>22</sup> While wealth ranked highly, gentility was an essential

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>21</sup> Louise Kantrow, "Philadelphia Gentry: Fertility and Family Limitations Among an American Aristocracy," *Population Studies*, 34 (March 1980): 22; Louise Kantrow, "Life Expectancy of the Gentry in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 133, *Symposium on the Demographic History of the Philadelphia Region, 1600-1860* (Jun., 1989): 312-313.

<sup>22</sup> Daniel Kilbride asserts likewise about the early republic period, See: Kilbride, *American Aristocracy*, 18. In 1676 only 4,300 out of population of 2.5 million were wealthy gentry. The top two percent of the population controlled quarter of the wealth and top one percent controlled about fifteen percent. See: Stephanie Grauman Wolf, "Rarer than Riches: Gentility in Eighteenth-Century America," in *The Portrait in Eighteenth-Century America*, ed. Ellen G. Miles (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993), 92, 95. Stephanie Grauman Wolf, *As Various as Their Land: The Everyday Lives of Eighteenth-Century Americans*

mode of conduct, which included cultivated taste, refinement, and good breeding. Conventional decorum called for an upright posture, disciplined manner, sensibility, and a keen interest in polite conversation.<sup>23</sup> Social gatherings were the sites of the creation of social hierarchy, where inclusion and exclusion determined rank and status. Balls, assemblies, tea parties, and formal dinners were important to the hosts and attendees alike. “Calling,” a mere social visit, held such significance that individuals shared their excitement about visits in their diaries and often saved their cards as a token of recognition and popularity.<sup>24</sup> With the lack of formal professional or political interaction to mark prestigious hierarchy, women employed social circles to generate rank order. They signaled social standing through intricate connections that were directly linked to family, marriage, and wealth, but had been further enhanced by admittance into highly selected groups. Polly Shippen’s numerous calling cards reveal that she “was a favorite in society” who had been accepted into exclusive social circles.<sup>25</sup>

Houses were noticeable emblems of wealth and refinement. City elites boasted their status with grand houses furnished with valuable articles and surrounded by lush gardens. International commerce that flourished after the depression of the 1720s and

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(New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), 268. Wealthy Philadelphians modeled themselves after the English upper class. See: Kantrow, “Philadelphia Gentry,” 22.

<sup>23</sup> For a description of genteel life in eighteenth-century America see: Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 31-99.

<sup>24</sup> Calling carried strict gendered and deference rules. For nineteenth-century calling etiquette see: Kenneth L. Ames, *Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 40-41.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Willing Balch, *The Philadelphia Assemblies* (Philadelphia: Allen, Lane and Scott, 1916), 93. Polly (Mary) Shippen was the daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Shippen, a member of a prominent Philadelphia family, who participated in the Battle of Fort Duquesne during the French and Indian War.

increased wealth brought sophisticated tastes and a desire for European comfort and luxury.

Yet even with their splendor, city mansions could not match the status of owning a country estate. The Schuylkill River area attracted prosperous individuals who wished to own a secluded residence removed from the city's occasional epidemics, to display their accumulated wealth, and to savor the view of the waterway. Prosperous owners enjoyed entertaining their peers and have them marvel at their houses' architectural designs, comfort, and extravagance. North of Philadelphia, Germantown had also emerged as a fashionable location for its proximity to the city and its country atmosphere.<sup>26</sup>

Montgomery County residents did not abide by the city decorum. They often met at church services and conducted informal visits. The original settlers built modest stone houses, which were enlarged throughout the years to meet the needs of their growing families. Wealth was marked by the size of land holding rather than of the residence. The only entertainment venue available, a tavern named Swedes Ford, opened in 1760 in Bridgeport in a log cabin.<sup>27</sup> Most social interactions occurred during Christian holidays and around community activities anchored in seasonal chores. Log rolling, wood

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<sup>26</sup> Sidney George Fisher notes in his diary in 1839 that many villas were erected particularly on lanes leading from Germantown to Ridge Road. See: Nicolas B. Wainwright, ed., *A Philadelphia Perspective: A Diary of Sidney George Fisher Covering the Years 1834-1871* (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1967), 74.

<sup>27</sup> The tavern was turned into a stone structure in 1777. The Holstein family owned it throughout most of the eighteenth century. See: ; E. George Alderfer, *The Montgomery County Story* (Norristown, Pennsylvania: The Commissioners of Montgomery County, 1951), 48.

chopping, apple cutting, and quilting provided opportunities for hospitality in addition to completing necessary tasks.

Urban elites tended to socialize amongst themselves. They encouraged establishment of close ties at an early age through school and church attendance. Since the colonial government did not exert power over education, churches dominated it in Pennsylvania until the formation of a public education system.<sup>28</sup> Colonial education reinforced socio-economic distinction and gender inequalities. Elite boys attended grammar schools and colleges while women were educated in primary schools in domestic and religious instructions. Elite American boys, who were expected to excel in their professions, travelled to Britain for education in medicine and law and continued their apprenticeships in London. The oldest private school for boys in Philadelphia, William Penn Charter School, chartered by Penn in 1689, was the only grammar school for boys in the first half of the eighteenth century. In 1754, it began offering education for girls. The Quakers indoctrinated their charges with the history and beliefs of the Society of Friends. They diligently guarded against the introduction of any foreign ideas and promoted discipline and obedience.<sup>29</sup> Additional sectarian schools were established by Lutherans and Baptists during the mid-eighteenth century.

Benjamin Franklin was the first to lay the foundation for a secular liberal arts curriculum, differentiated from sectarian institutions such as Harvard, Yale, and William

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<sup>28</sup> Philip S. Klein and Ari Hoogenboom, *A History of Pennsylvania* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980), 238.

<sup>29</sup> Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 305.

and Mary.<sup>30</sup> The Academy and Charity School opened 1751 as the first nonsectarian college in America with the support of prominent Anglican Richard Peters and Presbyterians William Allen and the Shippen family. Most Quakers opposed it for fear of loss of power over education to the Anglican-dominated board of trustees. The Germantown Academy followed with non-sectarian education in 1760. These institutions largely served paid male students who often pursued further education and work experience in London. Medicine, law, and merchants' apprenticeships constituted a foundation for a successful career in the growing colony.<sup>31</sup>

In the absence of a central education system, residents of rural Pennsylvania often organized and hired a teacher who held classes in a farmer's home during the winter. This individual served as hired worker in the farm during the rest of the year. Some churches built a modest school house to instruct children in reading. They attempted to dispense education at the church in the absence of a separate structure in order to enable students to read the scriptures.

Great attention was given to the education of boys who needed to obtain a profession. Girls were offered the ornamental curriculum of embroidery, dancing, and painting. By the middle of the eighteenth century, some Philadelphia elite women adopted the British education model that called for learning the sciences, natural

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<sup>30</sup> In his essay "Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania," published in 1749, Benjamin Franklin proposed English instruction of history, logic and philosophy. See: Benjamin Franklin, "Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania," (Philadelphia, 1749).

<sup>31</sup> The sons of Pennsylvania's Chief Justice William Allen studied in Middle Temple in London. See: Julie M. Flavell, "The 'School for Modesty and Humility': Colonial American Youth in London and Their Parents, 1755-1775," *The Historical Journal*, 42 (June 1999): 379.

philosophy, astronomy, botany, and biology. The acquisition of such knowledge, prescriptive authors suggests, would demonstrate the qualities of well-bred girls and would distinguish them from their social inferiors.<sup>32</sup> More importantly, it would produce informed republican mothers who would educate their sons and influence their husbands.<sup>33</sup>

The separate education men received and their commercial and political positions resulted in exclusive social networks. Philadelphia elites founded institutions that extended their economic ties into leisure activities. One of the most restricted institutions, the club, constituted a male social space where members could connect in a cordial atmosphere. Its significance lay in the implicit authority of its members and in their exclusivity.<sup>34</sup> The “Society of Ancient Britons” was possibly the first Philadelphia club, formed in 1729 by a Welshman who wished to observe St. David’s Day, the celebration of the patron saint of Wales.<sup>35</sup> This gathering was an attempt at preserving the members’ cultural heritage and origins.

The prestigious Dancing Assemblies, dominated by male managers, reinforced women’s secondary status. The Philadelphia Assembly, perhaps the oldest of its kind in America, served as social gathering for the city’s leading families. Formed in 1748, with

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<sup>32</sup> Sarah E. Fotherly, “‘The Sweet Recourse of Reason’: Elite Women’s Education in Colonial Philadelphia,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 128 (July 2004): 229-256.

<sup>33</sup> Linda Kerber, “The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment – An American Perspective,” *American Quarterly*, 28 (summer 1976), 187-205.

<sup>34</sup> Membership in the lucrative clubs was limited and sons and grandsons joined to keep the privileged family’s position. See: Shackleton, *The Book of Philadelphia*, 201.

<sup>35</sup> Edwin B. Bronner, “Village into Town, 1701-1746,” in Weigley, *Philadelphia*, 55.



subscribers such as the Shippens, Willings, Swifts, and Hopkinsons, the Assembly employed the stricter rules of Bath for a model rather than those of the more lenient London Assembly. A few years later, Quaker families who left their religion including the Rawles, Norrises, Logans, and Whartons joined the lucrative institution. In keeping with gender traditional roles, managers issued subscriptions for male participants as representatives of their family members.

Women drew their position from the men who controlled their lives, their fathers or their husbands, a fact clearly apparent in the assembly's unwritten rules. If a man married outside of the inner circle his wife was asked to the Assembly regardless of her origin, but a woman rarely brought a husband of a lesser status into the exclusive circle. Divorce and remarriage warranted a prompt exclusion since the value of the traditional family was the only acceptable arrangement among the genteel.<sup>36</sup> Tradition also prevailed in the selection of married men to managerial positions and by the admittance of men at age 21 and women at 18 years of age, signaling that the male should be older than his female partner. It also hinted that women were ready for marriage earlier than men, who required time to complete their higher education.<sup>37</sup>

The assemblies provided an elite woman with opportunity to secure an advantageous matrimonial match, which would permit her to remain within the social

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<sup>36</sup> Baltzell, *Philadelphia Gentlemen*, 164. Divorce also meant social exclusion in general "whatever the provocation." Wecter, *The Saga of American Society*, 175.

<sup>37</sup> John F. Watson. *Watson's Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania: A Collection of Memoirs, Anecdotes, and Incidents, of the City and Its Inhabitants and of the Earliest Settlements of the Inland Part of Pennsylvania from the Days of the Founders* (1857), Chapter 26.

circle into which she was born. Chevalier de Chastellux, an officer during the Seven Years' War, remarked: "Dancing is said to be at once the emblem of gaiety and love: here it seems to be the emblem of legislation and marriage."<sup>38</sup>

By wearing fashionable clothes and quality jewels, and presenting superb dancing skills, women could distinguish themselves and capture the attention of young suitors. Once married, the assemblies provided women with a social opportunity to demonstrate their status acquired by their new family. Because wealth translated into status an affluent woman could command deference. It was said that Mrs. Morris was honored "as she is the richest woman in the city, and all ranks here being equal, men follow their natural bent, by giving the preference to riches."<sup>39</sup> Susan E. Marshall argues that etiquette increased woman's role in status maintenance and rewarded those who conformed to agreed set of rituals.<sup>40</sup> It also reinforced women's gender role and emphasized the husband's position as the head of the patriarchal family.

Philadelphia elites did not limit their social interactions to the Assemblies. Upper rank women often held private balls, formal dinners, and tea parties for great numbers of guests, demonstrating their impeccable taste and endless budget. As the most fashionable city in the colonies prior the revolution, social gatherings often served as an amicable space for informal political dealings. Women exploited these domestic, social gatherings

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<sup>38</sup> Balch, *The Philadelphia Assemblies*, 85. In 1839 a Bachelor's Ball was given in the Franklin Institute. It was given probably every year until the Civil War. Ibid. 118-121, 137.

<sup>39</sup> Balch, *The Philadelphia Assemblies*, 86.

<sup>40</sup> Susan E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Campaign against Woman Suffrage* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 37.

for political ends. They sought to advance their husbands' political agenda through their social contacts and charm. They closely followed colonial politics and eagerly discussed political issues with guests. Sarah Fatherly argues that elite women's experience in managing private property and country estates helped them gain insight into the effects of government measures. Their experience helped them in assessing the implications of the Stamp Act and the Townshend duties inflicted by the British. In the 1760s, wives of Philadelphia merchants refused to buy imported goods and several joined the non-importation association.<sup>41</sup>

Apart from social engagements, privileged women were expected to limit their activities to the private sphere. Mothers encouraged their girls to embroider, practice their musical instruments, and read. Leisure was the reward of good management as well as a mark of idleness. Balancing the household budget offered women a challenge, particularly to those whose husbands limited their spending either by inadequate earnings or by will. Deborah Read Franklin, the wife of Benjamin Franklin, administered her household during Franklin's long stay in London, a task that grew more demanding as she aged and suffered a stroke. Franklin did not offer her any sympathy but was quick to reprimand her when she ran over her budget in 1771: "You were not very attentive to Money-matters in your best Days... and I apprehend that your Memory is too much

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<sup>41</sup> Sarah Fatherly, *Gentlewomen and Learned Ladies: Women and Elite Formation in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Bethlehem, Pennsylvania: Lehigh University Press, 2008), 134.

impair'd for the Management of unlimited Sums, without injuring the future Fortune of your Daughter and Grandson.”<sup>42</sup>

Although colonial settlement in America dated back to the seventeenth century, the idea of chronicling its history did not emerge until the middle of the eighteenth century. Early initiatives were closely associated with the heightened conflict between the proprietary faction of Penn's family and the executive branch and Franklin and Quakers in the elected Assembly. Joseph E. Illick argues that Pennsylvania colonial history writings reflected contestation of burgeoning political positions of leading groups over colonial rule.<sup>43</sup> The first work, William Smith's *A Brief State of the Province of Pennsylvania*, was published in London in 1755. Smith, who established the Pennsylvania Academy with Benjamin Franklin, criticized the provincial Assembly, mainly composed of non-violent Quakers, and argued that it had become too powerful in the generations that followed Penn. Franklin, who opposed Proprietors' power and supported the elected representatives in the Assembly, wanted to have a contested view published. He approached the British author Richard Jackson, who authored *An Historical Review of the Constitution and Government of Pennsylvania* in 1759, a partisan depiction of William Penn and the proprietary element. This political history of the colony emphasized the years of Franklin's public work. It sets a contested paradigm of despotic proprietors versus the people's representatives.

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<sup>42</sup> Gordon S. Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 132. Benjamin Franklin Papers “Deborah Franklin's Expenses,” 1.

<sup>43</sup> Joseph E. Illick, “The Writing of Colonial Pennsylvania History,” *Pennsylvania History of History and Biography*, 94 (Jan. 1970): 3-25.

Samuel Smith and Robert Proud, the two other eighteenth-century Pennsylvania historians, mirror Quaker dissatisfaction with the colony's politics. Smith, a Quaker merchant, received a large collection of significant Quaker documents on which he based his manuscript. Despite his attempt to keep his work impartial his laudatory view of Penn and the avoidance of portraying conflicts fault his work. The *History of the Province of Pennsylvania*, which was published in 1776 after his death, was authorized by the Friends Yearly Meeting. Proud, a Quaker who arrived Philadelphia in 1759, was not pleased with the radical political changes that overtook the country. He faulted immigrants from other countries and their descendants who joined the Assembly in the province's political woes. He praised William Penn for his restraint and leadership.<sup>44</sup>

While men sought to recognize their political contributions, women's earliest constructed memories were an outgrowth of their immediate domestic setting. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich shows that in the beginning of the eighteenth century elite New Englanders constructed a memory that accommodated domesticity at a time when the household served as a foundation of a couple's economy. She demonstrates that women used their heirloom artifacts to establish female lineage over generations of kin.<sup>45</sup> For example, in Philadelphia Mary Hopkinson, the wife of the prominent lawyer and merchant Thomas Hopkinson, created the genealogy of her family.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Robert Proud, *The History of Pennsylvania in North America* (Philadelphia: Zachariah Poulson, Junior, 1797).

<sup>45</sup> Women derived their identity by belonging to different membership groups. Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun*, 108-141.

<sup>46</sup> Fatherly, "The Sweet Recourse of Reason," 250.

At the conclusion of the Seven Years' War, Britain imposed the Stamp Act on the American colonies in order to offset the costs of maintaining its army in the territories it gained. Some of Philadelphia's political elites opposed agitation and replacement of the provincial government that enabled them to manage their internal affairs. They were compelled to join the boycott of British goods at the behest of less prosperous city merchants who organized the protest. City Council and elite merchants, who almost unanimously ignored the Townshend Acts, were moved by threats of mob violence and by the local press to join the non-importation agreement in 1769. In June of 1776, supporters of independence withdrew from the Assembly and rendered it ineffective.

During the revolution, influential elites had to tread judiciously to avoid anger by the winning side. When a formal poll was taken in the Assembly on June 2, 1776, over the question of whether to support the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Franklin and John Morton backed it, Thomas Willing opposed it, and John Dickinson and Robert Morris abstained. Notable members of the Continental Congress and signers of the Declaration were Benjamin Rush, Thomas McKean, Robert Morris, James Smith, and Benjamin Franklin. Willing stayed in Philadelphia during its occupation by the British and conducted his business despite his refusal to take an oath of allegiance to the king. His assistance to the Continental Army earned him a position of president of the Bank of North America in 1782.

The Quakers did not possess influence. Their Meeting urged them to avoid participation in rebellion against the Crown. Their stance raised suspicion of British support, and a number of Quakers including three Pembertons, two Fishers, Henry

Drinker, and Thomas Wharton were arrested and exiled to Virginia for eight months without trial.

Philadelphia's social and political elites lost their power to the radical Whigs, the Constitutionals, between the years 1775 and 1777. They stood behind the state's new constitution with its single-house legislature and a sweeping franchise of almost every male tax-payer over the age of twenty-one. By November 1772 John Dickinson was elected president of the Executive Council of Pennsylvania. When the Constitutional Convention was held in the city in 1787, Robert Morris, Thomas Fitzsimons, Jared Ingersoll, Thomas Mifflin, George Clymer, and John Dickinson attended it and signed the federal Constitution. In 1790, with a conservative majority in the State Assembly, a new state constitution that provided for a second legislative house and a strong executive was adopted.

While some of Philadelphia's prominent leaders and merchants did not welcome the revolution, others fully supported it. Upon anticipating a shift in political circumstances, a group of twenty-eight gentlemen met on November 17, 1774, when the Continental Congress convened, and founded one of the city's most esteemed organizations, the First City Troop Philadelphia City Calvary. Troopers participated in the Battles of Trenton, Princeton, and Brandywine. Distinguished from troops organized in subsequent years, they paraded before the Continental Congress and General Washington in 1775. Further assistance came from troop members in contributions for the organization of the Pennsylvania Bank in 1780 in order to provide funds for the

Continental Army and save the national credit. Twenty-eight members provided a fourth of the bank's total capital.

The alliance with the French during the American Revolution brought new fashion and dancing to the city. The dramatic appearance adopted by both men and women in the 1770s consisted of ample of luxurious fabrics and elaborate hair-styles. Men's wigs were effortless compared to women's hair styles. Their high rolls called for the addition of cow tail and horse hair, and often weighed more than a pound. Following laborious hours of construction, women had to carry their heads gracefully, as though oblivious to the discomfort. The long combs they carried provided some relief to their irritated skin but the city's humid weather posed a considerable challenge as it "itch & ach & burn like anything".<sup>47</sup> Observing the habits of his daughters, Charles Shippen commented in 1778, "the style of life my fashionable daughters have introduced into my family, and their dress, will, I fear, before long, oblige me to change the scene."<sup>48</sup> Maintaining extravagant appearance functioned not only as an expression of high status but also as a political posture. With the advent of the French Revolution, women visibly articulated their support through their attire wearing the turbans, cockades, and sashes in balls and ceremonies.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Kate Hauman, "Fashion and the Culture Wars of Revolutionary Philadelphia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 62 (Oct. 2005): pt.16. <http://shelob.ocis.temple.edu:2321/journals/wm/62.4/haulman.html> accessed on: 6 April, 2007.

<sup>48</sup> Lynn Matluck Brooks, "Emblem of Gaiety, Love, and Legislature: Dance in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 115 (Jan. 1991): 77.

<sup>49</sup> Susan Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames Women and Political Culture in Early National Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 75.



In the last two decades of the eighteenth century, elite Philadelphian women expressed their views in public spaces through their clothes, plays, and salons. Susan Branson points that “family position and wealth provided women with connections to the centers of national political, social, and cultural power that were taking shape in the capital city... they took full advantage of the opportunity.”<sup>50</sup> The first woman to hold a social gathering in the new republic was Martha Washington, who invited noted women of every state and “numerous attended by all that was fashionable, elegant, and refined” a mere two days after her arrival in Philadelphia.<sup>51</sup> Impressed by the event, Sally McKean wrote:

it was brilliant beyond anything you can imagine, and though there was a great deal of extravagance, there was so much of Philadelphia taste in everything that it must have been confessed the most delightful occasion of the kind ever known in this country.<sup>52</sup>

Known as the Republican Court, Martha Washington’s weekly formal receptions included elite Philadelphians, politicians, and foreign dignitaries.

While Mrs. Washington set the tone for social gatherings, other society women opened their homes for dignitaries and elite society. The organization of a salon provided a challenge. A talented salonnière possessed the ability to provide not only an appropriately amiable atmosphere and delectable food but also bring together an agreeable group of people. As a hostess she could facilitate meaningful political

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<sup>50</sup> Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Wecter, *The Saga of American Society*, 303.

<sup>52</sup> Lillian Ione Rhoades, *The Story of Philadelphia* (New York: American Books Co. 1900), 333.

discussions and express ideas to key political figures. The most accomplished hostess of the early republic, Ann Willing Bingham, the wife of Federalist senator William Bingham, drew to her Mansion House scores of dignitaries, including Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton. She married at age sixteen and spent five years with her husband among the top European society, including an introduction to King Louis XVI. She cultivated aristocratic manners and taste maintained by the immense wealth at her command. When Mrs. Adams introduced her to London society in 1786 she captivated the guests.

‘There she goes,’ cried one; ‘what an elegant woman!’ Some gentlemen told mamma she had presented the finest woman they had ever seen... The intelligence of her countenance, or rather, I ought to say, its animation, the elegance of her form, and the affability of her manners, convert you into admiration.<sup>53</sup>

Her entertainments in Lansdowne, the Bingham’s summer country estate, and their spacious city house gained reputation for their refinement and selection of guests. Another socialite, Mrs. James Rush, the daughter-in-law of Benjamin Rush, established the European custom of entertaining on “Saturday morning at eleven.” Her exclusive salons attendees enjoyed guests such as Joseph Bonaparte, Charles Dickens, Harriet Martineau, and Longfellow. She was also “independent enough to carry [her ideas about democracy] into her drawing-room.”<sup>54</sup> Mrs. George Logan’s salon at Stenton and Mrs. Elizabeth Graeme’s salon attracted scientists, writers, and members of the Assembly.

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<sup>53</sup> Ellet, *The Queens of American Society*, 138.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 368.

Women, Branson argues, fulfilled a much-needed service in a new republic. Unlike the European salons, which were strictly limited to intellectual discussions, the American salons of the late eighteenth century accommodated the politicians with an appropriate social setting for negotiations and lobbying.

Once the Revolution ended, an interest in constructing a conservative historical narrative of its events emerged.<sup>55</sup> Charles Wilson Peale, a painter and naturalist, initially hung pictures of George Washington and the comte de Rochambeau, the commander of the French force, in his windows signaling full support of the revolution. In 1786 he opened a museum in Independence Hall. Charlene Mires argues that the exhibitions conveyed “order and harmony” in contrast to political events that surrounded the state house. Portraits of revolutionary leaders were in display as part of the natural museum, memorializing accomplished human species.<sup>56</sup>

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Many pre-revolutionary colonists supported classical republicanism, adopted by English country gentlemen who mistrusted the merchants and political patronage in London.<sup>57</sup> This form of republicanism relied on elected virtuous elite defined by property

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<sup>55</sup> Conservatism in this study means support of the status quo and attitudes to change. See: David Y. Allen, “Modern Conservatism: The Problem of Definition,” *The Review of Politics*, 43 (Oct. 1981): 600-601.

<sup>56</sup> Charlene Mires, *Independence Hall in American Memory*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 42-43.

<sup>57</sup> Linda K. Kerber, “The Republican Ideology of the Revolutionary Generation,” *American Quarterly*, 37 (Autumn, 1985): 479.

and gentility, and by the recognition of deference.<sup>58</sup> The Revolution challenged the legitimacy of the American elite and weakened their grip on the ruling institutions. The modern form of republicanism, held by the emerging commercial middle class, advanced an ideal based on individualism and merit “in which social mobility was possible and rightful reward for ingenious people of talent and hard work” and supported democratic policies.<sup>59</sup>

A major crisis undermined the elites’ rule in Philadelphia and enabled anti-Federalists to unite the lower sorts and gain control of city politics. A severe economic crisis in 1791 left many in jeopardy. Those who suffered held Federalist policies responsible for their misfortune. Hamilton’s proposed excise on whiskey was unpopular among many of the city’s residents who perceived it as similar to the hated British taxes. Anti-Federalists led by Dr. James Hutchinson, a fellow of the College of Physicians, John Swanwick, a merchant, and Alexander Dallas, a rising lawyer, disputed elite rule. During the French Revolution they organized “democratic societies” in support of the French and American revolutions. Swanwick bested merchant Thomas FitzSimons in the Congressional elections of 1794. Federalists’ grip over city politics had increasingly been

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<sup>58</sup> Marshall Smelser argues that the Federalists did not accept equalitarian principles and held aristocratic attitudes. He approves of the Republicans’ use of Edmond Burke’s description of the French aristocracy’s contempt of the masses in connection with the Federalists. Marshall Smelser, “The Federalist Period as an Age of Passion,” *American Quarterly*, 10 (Winter, 1958): 391-392.

<sup>59</sup> Isaac Kramnick, *Republicanism and Bourgeois Radicalism: Political Ideology in Late Eighteenth-Century England and America* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), 4. Kristen A. Foster argues that Philadelphia middling sort constructed their own class identity around a hybrid republican culture. See: Kristen A. Foster, *Moral Visions and Material Ambitions: Philadelphia Struggles to Define the Republic, 1776-1836* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2004), 190-143. Drew McCoy argues that this form of modern republicanism was rooted in commerce, the key for providing opportunities for farmers and entrepreneurs. Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

weakened in the last years of the eighteenth century and the elections of 1800 and 1801 ended their control. In 1801 Republicans controlled the Common Council for the first time in Philadelphia.

The political revolution of 1800 was an outright rejection of the ruling merchants and large landowners by the small farmers and the city's lower sorts and their allies.<sup>60</sup> The mayors were still prominent elite figures, such as merchant Robert Wharton, who served several terms between 1798 and 1824, but the downturn signaled the Federalists' gradual decline.<sup>61</sup>

Although Benjamin Rush commented in 1801, early into Jefferson's first presidential term, that the revolution "will certainly fail. It has already disappointed the expectations of its most sanguine and ardent friends," the idea of social mobility gained popularity during the first decades of the century.<sup>62</sup> Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*, which highlighted the notions of industry and education as a means of acquisition of wealth and social status, became attractive to entrepreneurs of all sorts and was published in twenty-two editions between 1794 and 1828.<sup>63</sup> Hundreds of successful northern entrepreneurs followed with the publication of their own memoirs emphasizing their

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<sup>60</sup> Edgar P. Richardson, "The Athens of America 1800-1825," in *Philadelphia*, 222.

<sup>61</sup> Daniel Kilbride, "Cultivation, Conservatism, and Early National Gentry: The Manigault Family and Their Circle," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 19 (summer 1999): 255 and *An American Aristocracy*, 6. Digby Baltzell argues that Victorian elite withdrew from public service. See: Baltzell, *Philadelphia Gentlemen*, 188.

<sup>62</sup> Gordon S. Wood, "The Significance of the Early Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 8 (Spring 1988): 19.

<sup>63</sup> Gordon S. Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 237.

humble origins, talent, and diligence. Thomas Mellon placed Franklin's statue in front of his newly founded bank to acknowledge the inspiration he derived from his deeds, while Patrick Lyon, a successful Philadelphia manufacturer, had his own portrait painted, not in the traditional image of a well-dressed gentleman but as a blacksmith.

During early 1800s several talented industrialists gained wealth and social and political influence. Philadelphia County's population expanded as new residents found employment in the steel, cotton, and wool industries. Matthias William Baldwin built his first steam engine in 1832 and became one of the largest producers of engines in the country. Textile mills were also financed by individual entrepreneurs who operated outside of the inner circle of society.

Faced with rapid industrialization, urbanization, and rise of new wealth, Philadelphia elites, descendants of colonial families who comprised the local aristocracy in the 1820s and 1830s, cultivated their social connections and maintained their intellectual control through exclusive organizations and clubs.<sup>64</sup> Members of families such as Chew, Rush, Cadwalader, Biddle, Morris, Pemberton, Norris, Drinker, McKean, Ingersoll, and Willing comprised the exclusive group who institutionalized their status. Members of the early Junto, Benjamin Franklin's organization which evolved into the American Philosophical Society (APS) in 1743, promoted discourse among American intellectuals. With self-selected membership of amateur scholars in science, literature, linguistic, medicine, law, and philosophy, it encouraged a sense of elitism and American

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<sup>64</sup> Nicholas B. Wainwright, "The Age of Nicholas Biddle 1825-1841," in *Philadelphia*, 258.

identity.<sup>65</sup> The main objectives of the society, “sociability and promotion of learning,” were implemented by the weekly meeting at the house of its president Dr. Caspar Wistar. Distinguished invitees included Dr. Benjamin Rush, Dr. Adam Kuhn, Nicolas Biddle, and both William Shippens, the father and the son. After Wistar’s death in 1818, his friends continued to convene at homes of various society members. Exclusivity was assured by the requirements of membership in the Philosophical Society and a unanimous vote of the membership. Guests received an invitation “beautifully engraved and styled “Wistar Party,” in the centre of which was a portrait of the doctor, and a pretty good likeness.”<sup>66</sup> Members included Benjamin Franklin Bache, Franklin’s grandson, René La Roche, a physician and epidemiologist, and George B. Wood, a prominent professor of chemistry. The parties’ reputation was so great that noted European scholars who visited Philadelphia made sure to attend them. One British guest, Captain Basil Hall of the Royal Navy, commented: “Certainly nothing can be imagined more advantageous than these parties for all travelers properly introduced to the agreeable society of Philadelphia.”<sup>67</sup>

Intellectual activities notwithstanding, elites sought to socialize in an amicable space that demonstrated a lack of concern with others outside of their own circle. Perhaps the most prestigious institution formed for this purpose was the “Philadelphia Club,”

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<sup>65</sup> Kilbride, *An American Aristocracy*, 106-107.

<sup>66</sup> H. E. Scudder, ed., *Recollections of Samuel Breck: with Passages from His Notebooks (1771-1812)* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1877), 288.

<sup>67</sup> He also noted that he met Mr. Du Ponceau, one of the “most learned philologists alive” at one of the parties. See: Basil Hall, *Travels in North America in the Years 1827 and 1828* (Edinburgh: Cadell and Co. 1829), vol. II, 339, 368-9. The naturalist Baron von Humboldt and the botanist Bonplaud were some of the notables who visited the Parties. See: Lippincott, *Philadelphia*, 143.

founded in 1833 by individuals from the oldest and most prominent families in the city, including James Markoe, Joseph Parker Norris, Joseph R. Ingersoll, George Cadwalader, and Commodore James Biddle.<sup>68</sup> Its elders perpetuated membership by enlisting young men, relatives of current members, when they reached their twenties and thirties. An exceptional outsider could enter the exclusive circle if he proved highly successful in business and his close friendship with members resulted in a membership recommendation. This prestigious confirmation meant acceptance into a restricted clique not only for the individual but also for his sons, who would become members in due time.

Philadelphia elites believed in providing civic leadership. The Quakers who opposed slavery were the first in the country to form an abolitionist organization, the Pennsylvania Abolitionist Society, in 1775. In the nineteenth century its supporters included the Pemberton brothers, descendants of a wealthy merchant family, the prominent lawyer William Rawle, Caspar Wistar, a physician and a political figure, Roberts Vaux, a philanthropist, legislator William B. Reed, Samuel McKean, and Jonathan Roberts (a Senator from Upper Merion who traced his line to colonial Welsh ancestry). They applied their professional experience to fight in the courts and the legislature.<sup>69</sup> A welcome addition to the cause was the respected Unitarian minister,

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<sup>68</sup> Among its prominent members were thirty five Biddles, seventeen Morrises, sixteen Coxes, fourteen Peppers, thirteen Cadwaladers, twelve Whartons, eleven Ingersolls, ten Bories, ten Willings, seven Rushes, and six Drexels. See: E. Digby Baltzell, ed., *The Protestant Establishment Revisited* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1991), 104.

<sup>69</sup> Richard S. Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting in the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 28, 29.



William Henry Furness, who became a passionate and outspoken advocate of abolition in 1839.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, schools remained sectarian and exclusive, particularly after Pennsylvania provided for a public education system in 1834. Elite boys who reached the age of ten customarily attended a sequence of institutions: local academy, boarding school, and a military appointment.<sup>70</sup> Women were educated in separate institutions. Advocates of women's education, like the physician Benjamin Rush, argued in his *Thoughts upon Female Education* (1787) for educated republican mothers who would raise proper republican citizens.<sup>71</sup> Other supporters argued that women would acquire household management skills and would serve as stimulating conversation mates for their husbands. Parents enrolled girls in reputed private institutions, where they could socialize with mates of their social rank such as the Young Ladies' Academy of Philadelphia, the first chartered school for higher education of women in the United States.<sup>72</sup> Mme. Rivardi's Boarding School, an additional elite academy, offered not only the traditional disciplines of dance, music, drawing, and needlework, but also reading, writing, mathematics, geography, French, history, and science.

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<sup>70</sup> Betty-Bright P. Low; Margaret Manigault; and Josephine du Pont, "The Youth of 1812: More Excerpts from the Letters of Josephine du Pont and Margaret Manigault," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 11 (1976): 177.

<sup>71</sup> Kerber, "Women of the Republic," 11. See also: Benjamin Rush, *Thoughts upon Female Education, Accommodated to the Present State of Society, Manners, and Government, in the United States of America. Addressed to the Visitors of the Young Ladies' Academy in Philadelphia, 28 July, 1787, at the Close of the Quarterly Examination* (Boston: Samuel Hall, 1787), 6-7.

<sup>72</sup> It was chartered five years after its founding in 1792. Nearly four decades had past before a second girls' school had been granted a charter in 1829. Marion B. Savin and Harold J. Abrahams, "Young Ladies' Academy of Philadelphia," *History of Education Journal*, 8 (Winter 1957): 59.

Parents showed great concern for their daughters' education. Thomas Jefferson wanted his daughter Martha, who studied in a boarding school in Philadelphia, to make the most of her studies. He offered her a daily regimen from the early morning until bedtime and urged her to inform him of her readings and send him copies of all her lessons. He also warned: "Take care that you never spell a word wrong... It produces great praise to a lady to spell well."<sup>73</sup> When Elizabeth Ridgely expressed her desire to leave her Philadelphia boarding school her mother admonished her: "You will have to devote much of your time to study when you return home to improve your mind." She added that Elizabeth would be able to learn from her brother who "is so intelligent and very correct in his conduct."<sup>74</sup>

Formal education was not the sole opportunity for gaining knowledge. Wealthy women could study with male relatives and attend local lectures and lyceums given by men if accompanied by friends or family members.<sup>75</sup> Reading offered exposure to different cultures, particularly for women who mastered a foreign language. Fluency in French enabled Margaret Izard Manigault and Josephine de la Fite de Pelleport du Pont to read a variety works of female French writers, including the infamous Madame de Staël. They also read the journals *Edinburgh Review*, *Port Folio*, *American Review*, and

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<sup>73</sup> Wecter, *The Saga of American Society*, 300. See also: "To Martha Jefferson, Annapolis, Nov. 28, 1783," <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/jefflett/let20.htm> Jefferson held that good education would enable people to appreciate their rights and prevent tyranny. See: Susan Douglas Franzosa, "Schooling Women in Citizenship," *Theory into Practice*, 27 (Autumn, 1988): 276.

<sup>74</sup> Mrs. Henry M. Ridgely, Dover, to Elizabeth Ridgely, Dover, Jan. 13, 1828, folder 218; quoted in Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, 218.

<sup>75</sup> Lyceums traditionally excluded controversial religious and political issues. They primarily offered lectures in the sciences. See: Vern Wagenr, "The Lecture Lyceum and the Problem of Controversy," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 15 (Jan, 1954): 122.

*Atlantic Magazine*.<sup>76</sup> Women could also take advantage of over three hundred private libraries that existed in the city by the end of the eighteenth century. Subscription requirements of an annual fee and purchase of shares precluded all but prosperous Philadelphians from their services.<sup>77</sup>

Country houses provided ample grounds for exploration, allowing women with an interest in science to focus on gardening, botany, mineralogy, and wildlife. Margaretta Hare Morris, a descendent of a wealthy colonial Welsh family, received her rudimentary education in Germantown schools and often attended Charles John Wister's lectures on geology and mineralogy. She published a few articles that described her findings under the abbreviated M. H. Morris to conceal her gender.<sup>78</sup>

Montgomery County residents relied on private schools until public education was enacted.<sup>79</sup> Norristown's Academy, chartered in 1804, educated the acclaimed John James Audubon. The Common School Law of April 1, 1834 did not take effect in Upper

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<sup>76</sup> Low, "The Youth of 1812," 177, 199.

<sup>77</sup> Three hundred seventy six libraries were established between 1731 and 1800; two hundred sixty six of them opened in the 1790s. See: Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 22-23.

<sup>78</sup> Kohlstedt, "In from the Periphery," 85. The article was published in the society's journal. See: M. H. Morris, "On the *Cecidomyia Destructor*, or Hessian Fly," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 8 (1843): 49-51. A decade later she presented her findings on locust before the American Association for the Advancement of Science and later published an additional article. See: M. H. Morris, "The potato *Curculio*," *American Agriculturist*, 9 (Apr 1850): 113-114.

<sup>79</sup> Land Ordinance of 1785 organized territories into "congressional townships" of six square miles. Later Congress provided that a sixteenth of each township's revenue will be given to the state for maintenance of schools within that township. Following the ratification of the U.S. Constitution and its lack of mentioning education the responsibility of the schools shifted to the states. Donald Hugh Parkerson and Jo Ann Parkerson, *The Emergence of the Common School in the United States Countryside* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 6-7.

Merion until 1836.<sup>80</sup> Patrons who built local schoolhouses typically selected trustees to manage the institutions and their property. These establishments provided grade-school education and employed teachers who often doubled as laborers, tavern keepers, or craftsmen to supplement their low wages.<sup>81</sup>

While education helped in maintaining class status, political decisions carried great implications for the future of Philadelphia elites. One of the major setbacks for the city's elites was the fall of the Second Bank of the United States. The row over the bank entered national politics when President Andrew Jackson vetoed Congress's renewed charter. Convinced that it concentrated power in the hands of unelected and unregulated Northeastern bankers who operated without checks and balances, he was determined to bring its downfall. The bank's president Nicholas Biddle, son of the successful merchant and Federalist Charles Biddle, was supported by Philadelphia elite's politicians George

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<sup>80</sup> Norris, "New Ways to Foster Education Found for Old Upper Merion Legacy," *Montgomery County Scrapbook*, Vol. B-8: 36, The Montgomery County Historical Society, Norristown, Pennsylvania. See also: Sarah H. Tyson, "An Upper Merion Reminiscences," *Historical Sketches of Montgomery County*, vol. iv, (1910): 147. In 1836 there were seven schools with 285 students in Upper Merion. See: "Tax Records of Upper Merion Township," *Bluebook 2*, Local History Files, Upper Merion Township Library, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. On legislation that affected education see: Jean Barth Toll and Michael J. Schwager, eds., *Montgomery County: The Second Hundred Years* (Norristown, Pa.: Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies, 1983) Vol. 2: 1032, 1038. For Thomas Jefferson's attempts at establishing a public school system see: Daniel Walker Howe, "Church, State, and Education in the Young American Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 22 (Spring 2002): 1-5.

<sup>81</sup> Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 20-21, 26-27. A case in point is the biography of John Roberts Morris whose father held managerial position in Swedes' Furnace at Swedeland and later operated kilns near King of Prussia. He was born in 1856 and his early years were spent in the school of Mrs. Allen at Swedeland, Mrs. Craig at Norristown, and Professor George Baker at Germantown. See: Ellwood Roberts, ed., *Biographical Annals of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania: Containing Genealogical Records of Representative Families, Including Many of the Early Settlers and Biographical Sketches of Prominent Citizens* (New York: T. S. Benham & company and The Lewis publishing company, 1904), Vol. 3, 139. Morris's parents were able to provide him with adequate elementary education and he later attended Oak Street public school in Norristown and after working as a bookkeeper he entered a partnership in manufacturing and dealing with lime in Charles E. Morris & Sons.

Mifflin Dallas, Charles J. Ingersoll, and Richard Rush. Jackson won a landslide victory in the election of 1832 on a platform that attacked Biddle. Subsequently, he withdrew government deposits from the bank and led Whigs to disassociate themselves from Biddle and the financial institution. The bank's demise was near. Nathaniel Burt argues that the destruction of the bank brought an end to the rule of Old Philadelphia.<sup>82</sup>

During the first years of the nineteenth century, Philadelphia elites continued their attempt to construct their own version of memory that conveyed consensus with former revolutionary Federalist leaders. Members of the American Philosophical Society, the Library Company, and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania collected sources that deemphasized conflict and contention.<sup>83</sup> Samuel Breck, a prominent merchant, commissioned Peale to paint a portrait of George Washington, the figure that increasingly came to symbolize revolutionary consensus in subsequent decades. An attempt to memorialize the history of early Philadelphia was made by Benjamin Rush who collected funds to commission the artist Benjamin West to execute a series of paintings on the revolution.

Penn's treaty with the Indians had long intrigued Roberts Vaux, a Quaker, who wanted to commemorate the state's early history and its link to the Quaker forefather. When a large elm tree, held by popular belief as the very tree under which Penn signed his treaty, was felled by a storm in 1810, Vaux had small boxes crafted from it and presented them to his friends. Taking advantage of the enthusiasm over Lafayette's visit

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<sup>82</sup> Burt, *The Perennial Philadelphians*, 52.

<sup>83</sup> Nash, *First City*, 25-28, 133. Kilbride, *American Aristocracy*, 120.

that raised new interest in local history, Vaux and fellow American Philosophical Society member and antiquarian John Fanning Watson formed the Society for the Commemoration of the Landing of William Penn, better known as the Penn Society. It aimed to commemorate Penn's landing in 1682 as well as his legacy and virtues. Its twenty-two members included President John Quincy Adams, Peter S. du Ponceau, J. Francis Fisher, J. Parker Norris, and Charles Jared Ingersoll. Vaux and Watson corresponded on having Penn's landing painted in Philadelphia rather than in its actual location in New Castle.<sup>84</sup> The men who were determined to raise Philadelphia into prominence in the state's and the nation's history were willing to overlook a few facts in order to create a perfect historical image. The society erected a monument to commemorate Penn's treaty in Kensington, in 1827.

In addition to the construction of Quaker memory, city professionals published articles and books that commemorated famous Philadelphians and fostered tradition of professionalization and leadership. William Rawle, the first president of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, contributed articles to its publication *Memoirs*, Joseph R. Ingersoll, its fifth president, wrote an essay on the society, and Horace Binney authored *The Leaders of the Old Bar of Philadelphia* (1859). Private collectors such as John McAllister, a retired wealthy businessman, started to gather materials related to the history of the city in 1835 and amassed an impressive collection of documents and ephemera.

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<sup>84</sup> Doris Devine Fanelli and Karie Diethorn, *History of the Portrait Collection, Independence National Historical Park* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001), 25-27.

Women were often interested in their family history. The first female historian in Pennsylvania, Deborah Norris Logan, the daughter of Charles Norris and Mary Parker and the wife of Dr. George Logan, himself the grandson of the Secretary and Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, started her work when she found a bundle of papers at Stenton, her country estate, in 1814. It “had been much neglected, and treated as useless waste-paper, and were pile away in the garrets as worthless rubbish.”<sup>85</sup> Recognizing its historical value, she meticulously arranged, transcribed, and annotated thousands of the worn pages that consisted of James Logan’s correspondence with William Penn. Her work was published by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in the early 1870s. She also attempted to document her reminiscence of the signers of the Declaration of Independence but concluded that her memories were too faded to produce a valuable monograph.

The city’s rapid growth continued in the two decades before the Civil War. The population of the city and its surrounding area increased 58 percent in the decade of the 1840s and additional 38.3 percent in the 1850s. In 1850 the city population topped 121,000 and its surrounding regions 287,000. By 1860 the city numbered over half a million inhabitants. Much of the increase was by immigrants, mainly from Ireland but also from Germany and England.<sup>86</sup> The arrival of a large number of Catholics caused religious tension in the city where Protestants had long held the upper hand in defining civic rules. In addition, nearly 20,000 African Americans found their homes in

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<sup>85</sup> Sarah Butler Wister and Agnes Irwin, eds., *Worthy Women of Our First Century* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1877), 319.

<sup>86</sup> Elizabeth M. Geffen, “Industrial Development and Social Crisis 1841-1854,” in *Philadelphia*, 309.

Philadelphia in 1840. By 1860 they numbered over 22,000. The unprecedented expansion brought social and racial agitation that challenged political leaders.

Several of Philadelphia elites who could trace their line to colonial families held key positions in national and local politics. The Whigs experienced difficulty in finding a politician to replace U.S. Representative John Sergeant who resigned in 1841. At length, Joseph Reed Ingersoll joined his brother, Charles Jared Ingersoll in Congress. The Democratic party attracted more members of local elites. Richard Rush, son of Benjamin Rush, served as U.S. Attorney General, as minister to both Great Britain and France, and as Secretary of the Treasury. A descendant of the colonial merchant family, John Cadwalader, started his civic service as a solicitor for the Bank of the United States and continued as a Congressman and a federal judge on the U.S. District Court for Eastern District of Pennsylvania. The Democratic mayor of Philadelphia (1856–1858), Richard Vaux, the son of the Quaker jurist Roberts Vaux, served as a representative of Pennsylvania between 1890 and 1891. And perhaps the most distinguished, George Mifflin Dallas, of Scottish ancestry, served in various positions in his long civic career, among them mayor of Philadelphia, senator, vice president of the United States under President James K. Polk, and minister to Britain and Russia.

Anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant sentiments permeated local politics. In 1837 a Nativist society formed in Germantown, and two years later the American Republican Party was established with a platform of curtailing immigration and appointment of American-born citizens to office. Nativists drew support from workers and artisans who feared that immigrants threatened the security of their jobs. In July 1844 the city saw one



of its most violent anti-Catholic riots, resulting in twenty dead and the burning of a few churches and private homes of Irish residents. Philadelphia elites valued temperance and Protestantism but civic order occupied higher degree of concern.<sup>87</sup> They wanted to eliminate social unrest, particularly of those associated with labor, for fear of impacting business and commerce. As the party's influence waned in the second part of the 1840s, anti-immigration and anti-Catholic sentiments were rekindled with an increase of immigration in 1848 and 1849 due to political instability in Europe. It led to the formation of secret societies, which turned into the Know-Nothing party in the early 1850s. In 1856, the societies formed the American Party and selected Millard Fillmore for the presidency. He carried only Maryland in the election, bringing an end to the party.

The riots of 1844 demonstrated the inadequacy of the city's police force in maintaining public order. Eli Kirk Price, a State Senator, and Matthias Baldwin and William C. Patterson, State Congressmen fought for the consolidation of all the counties and boroughs of Philadelphia County under the city's government. The act that was approved in 1854, conferred executive power to the mayor and considerable control over the police department and civic administration. It also placed the districts dominated by Democrats under the city's Whig control.

Industry, real estate speculation, and mercantile ventures created a number of wealthy individuals by the 1840s. Among them were merchant Richard Ashhurst, druggist George W. Carpenter, physician James Rush, banker Francis M. Drexel, and

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<sup>87</sup> Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

Joseph Harrison, Jr., a mechanical engineer. Wealth, however, did not assure embrace by the city's elites. Family lineage proved more valuable than wealth.

Engulfed in unprecedented social transformation, an accelerated industrialization and urbanization, and a rise of new wealth, Philadelphia elites were compelled to increase the membership of their exclusive institutions and form new ones to answer the growing needs of their strata. By the 1850s the Dancing Assemblies customarily drew crowds of a few hundred guests, mostly from Philadelphia but occasionally from other major cities such as Boston, New York, and Baltimore.<sup>88</sup> However, the list of managers from the late 1840s and early 1850s reads like those of the colonial elites: Cadwalader, Willing, Ingersoll, Waln, Biddle, Swift, Rawle, Vaux, and Shippen. Old Wealth gave in to expansion of membership but did not relinquish power and status. In Philadelphia, breed and ancestry led the hierarchy of status.

It was known that wealthy Philadelphians evaluated their peers by their "social status, their business, their trustworthiness, [and] their clubbability."<sup>89</sup> New clubs accommodated the elite's social and recreational needs when they retired to their country estates. William Wister was among the few who attempted to teach his friends cricket on his estate in Germantown. Wealthy Philadelphians initially snubbed the game, which was introduced by English mill workers in the eighteenth century, but it gained popularity when affluent English merchants founded the Union Cricket Club in 1842. The formation

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<sup>88</sup> The Bachelor Assembly of 1839 had between four to five hundred attendees.

<sup>89</sup> Cornelius Weygandt, *Philadelphia Folks: Ways and Institutions in and About the Quaker City* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1970), x.

of the Junior Cricket Club at the University of Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia Cricket Club, and the Germantown Cricket Club followed. However, the clubs' popularity declined as rapidly as it rose probably because it could not maintain an exclusive appeal.<sup>90</sup> The Germantown Cricket Club took an unprecedented measure when it welcomed both gentlemen and sons of English weavers to its facilities. The lack of costly equipment made it affordable for them to join.<sup>91</sup>

When cricket failed as a leisure pastime, rowing emerged as an acceptable alternative. Glossy boats, fancy uniforms, and extravagant regattas accommodated the need for display and exclusivity. In 1854 the University Barge Club was founded complete with its own restored farm house above West River Drive. Membership had to be approved unanimously and was most exclusive. Upon entering a boat everyone was required to wear uniform that “would bring a smile to the face of any one of you had you seen it in all its grotesqueness and absurdity.”<sup>92</sup> It included white sailor's shirt and pants, white broad leather belt with large metal letters “U.B.C.”, straw hat with long ribbon ends carrying the same letters, and a jacket with brass buttons. The outfit might have been a class indicator, but by no means accommodated the sport the wearers were to perform.

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<sup>90</sup> Only the Philadelphia and the Germantown clubs survived beyond the 1850s. By the 1880s, the major cricket clubs in Philadelphia adopted tennis as a primary sport.

<sup>91</sup> The social class of fourteen charter members of the Philadelphia Cricket Club included ten upper-class members but it also comprised of three middle-class members and one of lower class origin. See: J. Thomas Jable, “Social Class and the Sport of Cricket in Philadelphia, 1850-1880,” *Journal of Sport History*, 18 (Summer, 1991): 215.

<sup>92</sup> John B. Thayer, “The Early Years of the University Barge Club of Philadelphia,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 29(1905): 287.

Elites tended to settle among peers of similar religious background. George E. Thomas argues that the pattern of settlement and the concentration of denominational churches in certain demographical areas correlated class with religious affiliation. He shows that in a span of two decades prior to the Civil War, thirty new Episcopal congregations were formed within five blocks of Rittenhouse Square, a noted elite area. North of Market Street, typically avoided by city elite society, they were outnumbered six to one, while Methodist and Baptist churches mainly appeared near factory districts.<sup>93</sup> Most of antebellum Philadelphia's elite population was affiliated with the American version of the Church of England, keeping allegiance to their ancestry's origin.<sup>94</sup> They resided within certain city blocks, south of Market Street between Chestnut and Pine Streets. The wealthy sorts who lived north along Arch Street did not belong to the city's elites. Harriet Martineau who observed the emergence of caste in the city pointed out that girls in different sections never met each other because "the fathers of the Arch Street ladies having made their fortunes, while the Chestnut Street ladies owed theirs to their grandfathers."<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> George E. Thomas, "Architectural Patronage and Social Stratification in Philadelphia between 1840 and 1920," in *The Divided Metropolis: Social and Spatial Dimensions of Philadelphia, 1800-1975*, eds. William W. Cutler III and Howard Gillette, Jr. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), 97. The most affluent belonged to the Quaker and Anglican religions. See: Theodore Thayer, "Town into City," in *Philadelphia*, 100.

<sup>94</sup> Miller asserts it for New York but it can be extended to the major cities in the northeast. Douglas T. Miller, *Jacksonian Aristocracy: Class and Democracy in New York, 1830-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 8.

<sup>95</sup> Harriet Martineau, *Society in America*, Vol. III, Part III, Chapter I, Section I, "Caste" <http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~lridener/DSS/Martineau/v3p3c1s1.html> accessed on: March 20, 2007.

As the number of wealthy individuals steadily increased, a leisure industry emerged that intended to provide relief from the sweltering city summers. Cape May, located in a comfortable distance of nine hours by a steamer or three hours by locomotive (in 1863), became a popular location in the 1840s and 1850s. Nine large modern hotels gained popularity for their splendor and location.<sup>96</sup> Another attractive destination, Atlantic City, boasted a two-mile promenade where ladies could showcase their elegant dresses on an afternoon walk. Bristol, a quaint Delaware town, lured visitors with cool breezes and the placid waters of its nearby river.<sup>97</sup> Obligatory locations for the fashionable elites in mid-century were the hot springs. Philadelphians frequented Saratoga Springs in New York, Newport in Rhode Island, and nearby Yellow Springs in Chester County, Pennsylvania.<sup>98</sup> Affluent vacationers brought extravagant parties and wealthy display. At a Saratoga Springs party in August 1849, “some of the costumes could not be surpassed for costliness of material and exquisite designs... Mrs. Rush of Philadelphia, wore a scarf of rich lace worth its weight in – gold will not answer here – its weight in diamonds. The jet and jewels upon her bosom seemed absolutely sparkling

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<sup>96</sup> For a description of Cape May in the middle of the nineteenth century see: Edward Strahan, ed. *A Century After, Picturesque Glimpses of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania including Fairmount, the Wissahickon, and Other Romantic Localities, with the Cities and Landscapes of the State: a Pictorial Representation of Scenery, Architecture, Life, Manners, and Character* (Philadelphia: Allen, Lane & Scott and J. W. Lauderbach, 1875), 73-78.

<sup>97</sup> Mrs. Manigault in her letter to Mrs. du Pont wrote in the summer of 1813 that the “Brilliant Ladies of Philadelphia” are in Bristol. See: Low, “The Youth of 1812,” 196.

<sup>98</sup> Miller points that Saratoga Springs was at its highest popularity in the 1840s when elites from the North and South frequented its hotels. Newport surpassed it by the late 1850s as the center of fashion. See: Miller, *Jacksonian Aristocracy*, 174-175. Carol Shiels Roark, “Historic Yellow Springs, the Restoration of an American Spa,” *Pennsylvania Folklife*, 34 (Autumn 1974): 28-38.

through a wreath of mist.”<sup>99</sup> Thomas A. Chambers argues that the springs supported a “national aristocracy” that attempted to create a culture based on economic success and moral and cultural superiority. Their class experience articulated status in a contested space between old and new money.<sup>100</sup>

However, the springs and the ocean resorts may have also been an extension of a culture shaped by regional settings. The resorts’ public spaces may have been used as a stage to assert predominance in front of an eager, large audience whose sole purpose was to follow their betters in curiosity. The pompous arrival of the wealthy in their elegant carriages, rich attire, fine jewelry, and selective company sufficed to attract plenty of attention. The resorts provided an opportunity for elites of North and South to mingle, network, and exchange the latest news from distant regions about individuals’ fortune or misfortune. The idea of a creation of a “national aristocracy” prior to the Civil War may be questioned on the grounds of nascent political differences. A Southern gentleman, Mr. Jones from Savannah, Georgia, who spent his summers in Newport, Rhode Island, declared “that there was no such thing as good society in New York or other Northern cities; that New Yorkers and Northern people were simply a lot of tradespeople, having no antecedents, springing up like the mushroom.”<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Ellet, *The Queens of American Society*, 369-370.

<sup>100</sup> Thomas A. Chambers, *Drinking the Waters: Creating an American Leisure Class at Nineteenth-Century Mineral Springs* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), xviii-xx.

<sup>101</sup> Ward McAllister, *Society as I have found It* (New York: Cassell Pub. Co., 1890), 95-96, 98-99.

City entertainment flourished particularly in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The theater, circus, public lectures, Vaux Hall Garden's gatherings, tours of Apollonian Gallery, or a visit to Peale's Museum provided leisure venues. The opening of the Musical Fund Hall in 1824 served as center of culture, but the American Academy of Music, which opened in 1857 with large and elegant interiors for spacious audience of 3,000, superseded all other city venues for opera, concert, and ball events. Those who attended the opera at the Academy of Music demonstrated their cultivation for the arts and exhibited their exquisite fashions and jewelry. Beyond the city limits activities such as riding, walking, and bathing were favorite pastimes in mild weather, while sleighing and skating could be enjoyed during the winter months.<sup>102</sup>

The entertainment of rural Pennsylvanians often centered on their agricultural occupations. Agricultural fairs were held in various counties, where locals competed for the best crops in various categories as well as in baked goods, preserves, and crafts.<sup>103</sup>

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the influence of the separate-sphere ideology had emerged as a result of a division of physical location of work that heightened gender difference.<sup>104</sup> It located women within the domestic environment as

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<sup>102</sup> Low, "The Youth of 1812," 186.

<sup>103</sup> In 1855 William H. Holstein won the prizes for the best tomatoes and quinces while his wife received an award for the best peach butter. See: "Montgomery County Agricultural Society," *The Norristown Herald and Free Press*, 9 October 1855, 2.

<sup>104</sup> Barbara Welter was the first to analyze domesticity and link it to women's appropriate sphere. Welter and historians who followed her footsteps in the 1980s analyzed white middle-class women. See: Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly*, 18 (Summer, 1966): 151-174 and reprinted in Barbara Welter, *Dimity Convictions: the American Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976) and Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1989). Emphasizing the separate sphere

moral and educational influence and the proper caretakers of the household. Alexis de Tocqueville observed in 1835 that the Americans applied the “principles of political economy... by carefully dividing the duties of man from those of woman, in order the great work of society may be the better carried on.” He also pointed that “whilst they have allowed the social inferiority of woman to subsist, they have done all they could to raise her morally and intellectually to the level of man.”<sup>105</sup> And although Barbara Bodichon, an English supporter of women’s rights, noted in 1859 that “there is in America, a large class of ladies who do absolutely nothing,” a different picture is revealed on a closer inspection.<sup>106</sup> The responsibility for the upkeep of a household required managerial skills to oversee the work of servants, plan budgets, and produce elegant parties for tens, sometimes hundreds of guests. Daily interactions between masters and servants often produced discontent for all involved. Most employers perceived their servants as intellectually inferior and loathed the tiresome task of training them. Many complied with mediocre service for fear of hiring an even inferior replacement. Sidney George Fisher refused his servant’s request for a raise and confided in his diary that he “would not keep him at all only that I fear to get a worse... [The servants’] stupidity, insubordination, impudence, & incompetency are unbearable. Poor Bet is harassed by them to such an extent that she is almost tempted to give up

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ideology: Carroll Smith Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Signs* 1 (1975):1-29, argued that the domestic sphere was a nurturing environment for women.

<sup>105</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Richard D. Heffner, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: The New American Library, 1961), 244, 246.

<sup>106</sup> Douglas T. Miller, *Jacksonian Aristocracy: Class and Democracy in New York, 1830-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 177.



housekeeping & go to a hotel, much as she values home.”<sup>107</sup> Entertaining demanded not only great attention to detail but also social skills. A successful party required a splendid meal, an amiable atmosphere, and respected company. A rewarding evening reflected on the husband, and a wife would invest great effort into pleasing her visitors and leave an impression of an effortless undertaking.

The mistresses of large estates carried heavier burdens than those of modest households. Henry C. Fisher’s mansion, Brookwood, included a stable with ten to twelve horses, a greenhouse, conservatory, grapery, and gate lodges. Daily dinners, served by two waiters, consisted of three to four courses in addition to elaborate desserts prepared by a French cook. Maintenance of his farm cost between forty and fifty thousand dollars annually. His uncle privately pondered:

It is impossible to have such an establishment in this country without a vast deal of trouble, without devoting to its management a great deal of thought that might be better employed. Sarah Ann does all this. She has much energy & seems to like it, but I think she would be better pleased if she had less to do.<sup>108</sup>

Those with lesser responsibility grew frustrated with their chores. Elizabeth Morris, the daughter of an old colonial family, sounded her frustration to her male friend in the mid-1840s:

All out of doors looks wintry and dreary, and in the house *woman’s work* must continue for some time to engross every faculty so completely, that it

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<sup>107</sup> Wainwright, *A Philadelphia Perspective*, 524.

<sup>108</sup> Wainwright, *Philadelphia Perspective*, 268.

will be more by good luck than good arrangement if I lose not the little brains I have, and degenerate into a complete household drudge.<sup>109</sup>

Historians have shown that while women seemingly accepted their gender role, they did not comply with its constraints, and found means to act publicly in ways that neither compromised their own nor their husbands' social status.<sup>110</sup> Publicly, elite women assumed leadership positions in benevolent work that fitted their status, wealth, and connections. They commanded several of the city's private institutions in the aid of destitute women and children, extending their nurturing role into the public sphere. Their seemingly independent managerial role had been typically limited by a male board of trustees who controlled the funds of these establishments.

One of the socially prominent women, Elizabeth E. Hutter, was among the founding members of the Northern Home for Friendless Children in 1854 and an accomplished president of its Board of Managers for over a quarter of a century. Decades later she would return and serve as the president of the unsuccessful Newboys' Aid

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<sup>109</sup> Elizabeth Morris to William Darlington, November 3, 1845, William Darlington manuscripts, New York Historical Society Library; quoted in Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 85.

<sup>110</sup> Both Mary Ryan and Rosalind Rosenberg demonstrate that women did not accept the notion that their home was the boundary of their world: Mary Ryan, *The Cradle of the Middle Class: the Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981). Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond the Separate Spheres: Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). Historians have proved that women extended the boundaries of their sphere and acted publicly in the eighteenth century. Some of the works include: Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *American Historical Review*, 89 (June 1984): 620-647. Joan R. Gundersen, *To Be Useful to the World: Women in Revolutionary America, 1740-1790* (New York: Prentice Hall International, 1996). Tina Stewart Brakebill, *"Circumstances are Destiny": an Antebellum Woman's Struggle to Define Sphere* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2006). Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

Association. Women also gravitated to charities that involved religious affiliation. Julia Rush served as the second director of The Orphans' Society for ladies associated with the Presbyterian Church. Privileged Jews such as Mrs. Henry Cohen, Mrs. E. Simpson, Mrs. E. J. Etting, and Rebecca and Louisa Gratz served on the Board of Managers in the Jewish Foster Home. Occasionally, family members raised interest in a particular project among their relatives. Mr. James Lawrence Claghorn, a leading businessman and banker, was a trustee of the Home for the Friendless Children along with C. Eugene Claghorn. Louise E. Claghorn and Mrs. J. R. Claghorn were both members of its Board of Managers.

Charity provided a moral cause, but women were also enthusiastic about saving buildings that significantly related to the nation's past. Mount Vernon, one of the first preservation projects in the United States, marked women's initial involvement in shaping public memory. The project was the brainchild of a South Carolinian socialite Louise Dalton Bird Cunningham, who urged her daughter Ann Pamela Cunningham in late 1853 after seeing the deteriorating building: "The thought passed through my mind: Why was it the women of his country did not try to keep it in repair, if the men could not do it?"<sup>111</sup> Cunningham's intention to provide a goal for her daughter, bedridden for twenty-one years after a riding accident, paved the way for a national undertaking. The work of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association had expanded to include Northern women on behest of Northern newspapers. Under the direction of the Pennsylvania Vice Regent,

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<sup>111</sup> "Ann Pamela Cunningham, Phoebe Apperson Hearst, and Frances Payne Bolton," <http://www.smithsonianmag.si.edu/smithsonian/issues03/feb03/mall.html> accessed January 9, 2008.

Ms. Lily Macalester, women organized in clubs and set collection boxes in public places, including Independence Hall, where George Washington had been appointed commander in chief of the Continental Army in 1775. Leading men in the city censured the activity “because it was a women’s effort, and they disapproved of women mixing in public affairs.”<sup>112</sup> Their hostility ended when the women raised ten thousand dollars for the association.

The women hoped that a memory of unity, when colonists banded against a common foe under George Washington, would convince the increasingly estranged sections to overcome their differences. In April 1860, when a group of Congress members and civic and military officials visited Mount Vernon with their wives, Cunningham doubted that her project could inspire a political compromise. She wrote to one of her vice regents: “All seemed to enjoy the excursion, I trust the good effect of it will be confined to Washington city. Time will tell whether my hopes (which induced all this daring on my part) are delusive.”<sup>113</sup>

Privileged Philadelphians developed genteel culture to convey exclusivity and status. They provided their boys with outstanding education and the connections and opportunities that would enable them to remain within the social circle in which they were brought up. Women, whose future depended on their marriage, did not lead life of

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<sup>112</sup> Karal Ann Marling, *George Washington Slept Here: Colonial Revivals and American Culture, 1876-1986* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988), 78.

<sup>113</sup> *Historical Sketch of Ann Pamela Cunningham “The Southern Matron” Founder of “The Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association”* (New York: Printed for the Association, 1911), 25.

ignorance. They followed current affairs closely, read literary and philosophical manuscripts, and managed their husband's vast estates.

Precarious economic and political circumstances often caused the loss or gain of wealth and fortune. Philadelphia elites emphasized their families' names as an indicator of status and stability at a time when their civic and political dominance was threatened by social unrest due to increased urbanization, industrialization, and immigration. They attempted to create a memory that would emphasize consensus with the revolution and downplay radical figures such as Thomas Paine and Patrick Henry. Such memory would emphasize hierarchical society, in which the masses follow educated and virtuous leaders like themselves. Women interested in memory started with the preservation of papers and genealogies of their prominent ancestors, typically of the families they married into, not their birth families, as required by social conventions. With their involvement in the Mount Vernon project they hoped to avert the impending regional conflict by uniting the nation behind its revolutionary past. Unsuccessful, many joined the war effort eager to stand behind the Union cause.

## CHAPTER 2

### CIVIL WAR: LOCAL MEMORY ON DISPLAY

Early in the morning of April 12, 1863, the first shots fired at Fort Sumter indicated that political compromises had given way to a full-fledged military conflict. Union supporters enthusiastically lent political, military, and material support to the government in order to secure victory. Serious political differences not only plagued the warring sides but also caused internal conflicts, particularly in Philadelphia, where many members of the privileged classes identified with the Democratic Party.<sup>1</sup> During the war, when fierce battles resulted in heavy casualties and endless suffering, the memory of consensus had gained popularity as a representation of an ideal period. Northerners evoked the memory of the American Revolution as a time of cooperation that transcended economic, cultural, and geographic boundaries for the creation of a democratic nation. The revolutionary memory was central to the work of affluent Republican men and women who volunteered to make the lives of soldiers more bearable. Anna Morris Holstein, who nursed soldiers in the field hospitals of the Army of

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<sup>1</sup> Philadelphia's lawyers, merchants, and manufacturers, among them Charles J. Biddle, Edward Ingersoll, Richard Vaux, and J. Francis Fisher supported the Democratic platform. See: Gary B. Nash, *First City: Philadelphia and the Forging of Historical Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 231. Russell Weigley argues that the Democratic campaign of 1856, when James Buchanan won 53 percent of the city's vote, was a rebuke of the antislavery party and its antislavery stance. He concludes that Republicans did not advance their cause in the 1850s in the city. See: Russell F. Weigley, Nicholas B. Wainwright, and Edwin Wolf, eds., *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1982), 385, 392.

the Potomac, had an acute sense of a unified history during the war and in her later published memoir.

Philadelphia elite women who assisted the war effort through the city's offices of the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC) also constructed memory of consensus whereby prominent women led by Martha Washington occupied central stage. One of the major fund-raising events held in Philadelphia, the Great Central Fair, was a locus for the construction of colonial, revolutionary, and Civil War memories. Historians have argued that the Civil War was a watershed for women's public work.<sup>2</sup> Women also found opportunities to fashion a national past that placed revolutionary women and domesticity on equal footing with major revolutionary leaders. By so doing they empowered themselves as the authority in construction of the national historical narrative.

In the few years that preceded the Civil War the city of Philadelphia had vastly grown. The Act of Consolidation of February 2, 1854 incorporated the large populations of adjacent townships and boroughs under the city's jurisdiction. In the 1850s Philadelphia was the nation's second largest city, surpassed only by New York in

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<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Leonard and Jane E. Schultz argue that women expanded their sphere through nursing. The opportunity to practice medicine had helped to alter attitudes toward the nursing profession. Elizabeth D. Leonard, *Yankee Women: Gender Battles in the Civil War* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994); Jane E. Schultz, *Women at the Front: Hospital Workers in Civil War America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004). Jeanie Attie argues that it was the first American war where women expected their work to affect their political rights. See: Jeannie Attie, *Patriotic Toil: Northern Women and the American Civil War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998), 52, 89. Judith Giesberg perceives women's work for the United States Sanitary Commission as a link between antebellum voluntarism and temperance and suffrage movements. Judith Giesberg, *Civil War Sisterhood: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women's Politics in Transition* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000).

population, commerce, finance, and manufacturing.<sup>3</sup> Entrepreneurs such as Samuel Merrick, Matthias Baldwin, and Alfred Jenks pioneered production of metal and metal products in their foundries in the 1820s and 1830s. Their use of steam in production expanded their enterprises and attracted more capital than older industry.<sup>4</sup> Elite city capital was drawn to build transport networks that linked the Philadelphia with Chicago via Pittsburgh by a railroad system by 1858. New transportation encouraged commerce and opened distant areas to development and expansion. By 1860, eighteen street railways operated in the city, reaching the most heavily populated areas.<sup>5</sup>

Politically, great numbers of the city's wealthiest families supported the South and opposed abolitionism due to commercial ties and social connections. Baldwin locomotives and Philadelphia carriages and wagons were in use in many parts of the South. Southerners engaged in business in the city trading their cotton where it was much in demand for the textile industry.<sup>6</sup> The support proved so solid that in the 1850s the Republicans did not gain additional followers in the city. Two years later Republicans managed to replace the Democratic Mayor Richard Vaux with Alexander Henry and

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<sup>3</sup> Philip Scranton, *Proprietary Capitalism: The Textile Manufacture at Philadelphia, 1800-1885* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 133.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas C. Cochran, "Philadelphia: The American Industrial Center, 1750-1850," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 106 (July 1982): 329.

<sup>5</sup> Weigley, *Philadelphia*, 368-369, 379. Urban growth in America between 1820 and 1860 depended on manufacturing, not commerce. By 1860 all cities had manufacturing with diverse production methods. See: Zane L. Miller, *The Urbanization of Modern America: A Brief History* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 26.

<sup>6</sup> Frank H. Taylor, *Philadelphia in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (Philadelphia: The City, 1913), 11-13.



defeat four of the city's Democratic congressmen.<sup>7</sup> In the federal election, however, Democrats had the upper hand. Democratic elected representative of Philadelphia Charles John Biddle, son of Nicholas Biddle, president of the Second Bank of the United States, and nephew of Congressman Richard Biddle, served as Congressman from 1861 to 1863. While acting as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, he opposed the overturning of the Fugitive Slave Act and the Second Confiscation Act that freed slaves from their owners.

Once war broke out and massive military mobilization mounted, a spontaneous desire to contribute engulfed the Republican public. Anna Morris Holstein, a thirty-seven-year old resident of Upper Merion, Pennsylvania, shared this “irresistible impulse *to do, to act*. Anything but idleness.”<sup>8</sup> The excitement caused people in the nearby town of Norristown to crowd the streets following the news of the U.S. Army Major Robert Anderson's surrender at Fort Sumter. They immediately organized a public meeting where an effigy of a traitor, possibly Jefferson Finis Davis, was hanged from the gallows to the sound of the town's Brass Band march in support of the Union.<sup>9</sup> It was the departure of the Fourth Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers that stirred the local

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<sup>7</sup> Democrats of old families included Charles Ingersoll, William B. Reed (prominent former Whig), George M. Wharton, and Benjamin H. Brewster. For a political map of Philadelphia in the decade that preceded the Civil War See: Weigley, *Philadelphia*, 369-372, 383-385, 388-394.

<sup>8</sup> Mrs. H. *Three Years in Field Hospitals of the Army of the Potomac* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1867): 1; Anna Morris Holstein, “Women of Montgomery County in War Time,” *Historical Sketches of the Montgomery County Historical Society*, vol. 1 (Norristown, Pennsylvania: Published by the Society, 1895), 219-231; Linus Pierpont Brockett and Mary C. Vaughan, *Woman's Work in the Civil War: A Record of Heroism, Patriotism and Patience* (Philadelphia: Zeigler, McCurdy, 1867), 252.

<sup>9</sup> “The War Excitement in Norristown – Public Meeting,” *National Defender*, 23 April, 1861, p.3. Public meetings in support of the Union were organized in nearby towns as well. See: “Meeting in Norritonville,” *National Defender*, 21 May, 1861, p. 3.

women into action. Although the Swedeland Aid Society had been organized through her church, Holstein chose to join the society that was formed in her own village.

Aid societies proliferated on both sides during the war; historians estimate that ten thousand were created in the first year alone.<sup>10</sup> The overwhelming eagerness to help in war relief often left women disorganized and bewildered as Katherine Prescott Wormeley, a war nurse from New York, observed - “women mustered in churches, school-houses, and parlors, working before they well knew at what to work, and calling everywhere for instructions. What were they to make? Where were they to send?”<sup>11</sup>

Holstein and her neighbors organized with the objective of non-consumption and patriotic display without delay. On April 19, 1861, she assumed a position of vice president of the Upper Merion Aid Society.<sup>12</sup> The society’s members took an immediate action. On their first meeting they resolved to

...devote their utmost energies to aid and encourage the brave men who have gone to meet a treacherous and rebellious foe; that no new bonnets should be procured or dresses purchased while the war continued, excepting calico; while the money these articles would cost should be used in our Army Aid Society.” “Resolved, That our Union colors, emblematic of our national flag, should be worn by us until peace was re-established.” A tiny silk flag was placed upon the left shoulder, or arranged among loops of ribbon in front of hat or bonnet.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Schultz, *Women at the Front*, 14.

<sup>11</sup> Katherine Prescott Wormeley, *The Other Side of War: With the Army of the Potomac; Letters from the Headquarters of the United States Sanitary Commission During the Peninsular Campaign in Virginia in 1862*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1898), 5.

<sup>12</sup> Alice Lees Eastwick, *History of Christ Church (Old Swedes) Upper Merion, 1760-1960* (Upper Merion, Pennsylvania, 1960), 37.

<sup>13</sup> Holstein, “Women of Montgomery County in War Time,” 220.

In order to establish a continuous source of funds, they resorted to a measure inspired by patriotic colonial women – they resolved to avoid purchasing any apparel except inexpensive calico until the end of the war. The funds saved would be donated for the war effort. Colonial women had joined non-importation agreements as a protest against the Stamp Act in 1765 and the Townshend duties in 1767. By boycotting British goods and producing their own homespun attire leading society women politicized their mundane domestic duties and consumerism.<sup>14</sup> The calico, an imported British fabric during the colonial period, linked Upper Merion aid society women’s decision to the colonists. The Upper Merion women had probably mistaken it for homespun cotton due to its wide use in the colonial and early republic periods and because of its original unfinished quality.<sup>15</sup> The aid society women demonstrated their Union support with thrift and domesticity. They curtailed their spending and symbolically agreed to obtain articles that recalled a homespun look.

Upper Merion women did not need to limit their consumption in order to raise funds for their organization. The members could have easily provided for its solvency by

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<sup>14</sup> Karin Wulf, *Not All Wives: Women of Colonial Philadelphia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 183.

<sup>15</sup> Colonists did not produce it readily, but rather purchased or exchanged their own homespun wool for the more desirable printed calico. When Britain amended its Sugar Act of 1733 with the American Revenue Act of 1764, calico was among the products included in the levy. Admittedly, a Revolutionary soldier, John Hewson, established a calico printing workshop in Philadelphia, in 1788, but neither its size nor its productivity could be considered a major American industrial enterprise at the time. Evidence of fabric exchange can be found in: Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an America Myth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001), 232. For the development of the production of printed fabrics in Philadelphia during the Revolution and the early republic period see: Thomas J. Scharf, and Thompson Westcott. *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884*. Vol. II (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & co., 1884), 2316-17.

personal donations or through fundraising activities. On their first meeting they contributed a large sum and on the following day two members singlehandedly collected five hundred and thirty five dollars – estimated at over ten thousand dollars in 2011 – from Upper Merion residents.<sup>16</sup> Their anti-consumption act had been a political demonstration of Union support, which they had linked to astute revolutionary women. In wearing calico throughout the war, they sought to uphold the values of their predecessors – domesticity, simplicity, self-sacrifice and patriotism – at time of a national crisis. They also deemed the preservation of the Union essential to the protection of the Revolution’s legacy.

Overwhelmingly, historians have shown that Northern women teamed up in local and state organizations to help the war but have not noticed that women related their actions to revolutionary historical discourse.<sup>17</sup> Through the symbolic non-purchase act the Upper Merion women intended to establish continuity between themselves and their colonial predecessors and attribute historical significance to their local organization.

Equally important was the women’s decision to wear a silk American flag throughout the war. It resembled the act of Philadelphia women in the 1790s who wore sashes, cockades, and turbans at public affairs to show their support of the French revolutionaries. Men and women have long expressed their political identity through their

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<sup>16</sup> Holstein, “Women of Montgomery County in War Time,” 220.

<sup>17</sup> Some of the studies are: Attie, *Patriotic Toil*, Ginsberg, *Civil War Sisterhood*, Elizabeth D. Leonard, *Yankee Women: Gender Battles in the Civil War* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994), Matthew J. Gallman, *Mastering Wartime: A Social History of Philadelphia During the Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

clothes.<sup>18</sup> The union flag selected by the Upper Merion women was a visible statement of Republican support. Holstein's testimony in 1895 that – “The [flag] which I wore continuously throughout the war is still preserved among war relics in our home. As far as I know among those with whom I was most intimately associated the members of Upper Merion Army Aid continued true to their pledge” demonstrates that the women faithfully demonstrated their Republican support even after the Emancipation Proclamation.<sup>19</sup>

The officers of the aid society - Eliza H. Roberts, president, Anna Morris Holstein, vice president, and Sarah H. Tyson, secretary – were all locally prominent women due to their husbands' occupations. Roberts' late husband, Jonathan Roberts, had served in both houses of the state legislature and acted as a U.S. Senator from 1814 to 1821. Tyson was her daughter. Holstein, wife of a farmer from a prominent local family, had gained considerable recognition and valuable experience in raising funds when she joined the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association in 1855. As the Lady Manager for Montgomery County she participated in a successful effort to acquire George Washington's estate for preservation. Holstein's first public role marked her interest in the commemoration of structures of revolutionary significance. She might have been instrumental in the aid society's decision to adopt the symbolic non-purchase rule and the wearing of the Union flag.

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<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of Philadelphia women and their display of support of the French Revolution see: Susan Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames Women and Political Culture in Early National Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 68, 71, 75-76.

<sup>19</sup> Holstein, “Women of Montgomery County in War Time,” 220.

During the first months of the Civil War Holstein stayed with her husband, William Hyman Holstein, on their Upper Merion farm and collected items for soldiers' benefit through the aid society. Her experience, she emphasized, was "blended as it is, (and should be) so intimately with [the experience] of my husband".<sup>20</sup> With her parenthesized remark Holstein disclosed her traditional view of woman's gendered role, acknowledged man's leading role within the family and affirmed ascribed gender differences. The Holsteins were dedicated members of the Christ (Swedes) Church in Bridgeport, Pennsylvania – an Episcopalian institution formed with the help of William Holstein's ancestors.<sup>21</sup>

In the summer of 1862, Lincoln called for three hundred thousand volunteers when the Peninsula Campaign of General John Pope near Washington D.C. failed and Confederate forces advanced into Maryland. The forty-six-year-old William Hyman Holstein joined the Seventeenth Regiment of the Pennsylvania Militia organized at the call of Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin on September 17<sup>th</sup>. On the same day thousands of wounded soldiers who required vital medical care were scattered on the fields of Sharpsburg following the bloodiest single-day battle in the nation's history, the Battle of Antietam. An urgent appeal for nurses and supplies quickly followed. Holstein did not accompany her husband and the six Montgomery County women who volunteered to

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<sup>20</sup> Brockett, *Woman's Work in the Civil War*, 251.

<sup>21</sup> William Holstein bequeathed money in his will to the church's fund and ordered that \$1,000 will be added annually to the rector of the church in perpetuity. See: William H. Holstein, *Will*, Registered Wills file no. 19143. The Montgomery County Court, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

nurse the wounded even though half of them were married and intended to travel without their husbands.<sup>22</sup>

Nursing presented medical, physical, and moral difficulties. Opponents of female nurses – particularly male doctors – insisted that women would not have the strength to lift patients, would volunteer with intention of finding mates, and would inevitably be exposed to the naked male body. They also believed that women were naturally frivolous and would not keep their composure at the sight of blood; instead, they would react with hysterics or fainting since their delicate nature would not be resilient enough to sustain their composure.<sup>23</sup> These were serious considerations because they targeted the core of femininity and threatened women’s morality. Holstein’s mother, who repeatedly commented on her daughter’s volunteerism with “I hope, my child, it will not be in the hospitals”, alluded to her own disapproval of such work.<sup>24</sup> In the context of the battlefield, nursing was unfit for a respectable woman. It put women in a position of power, treating helpless men in a masculine environment. Holstein acquiesced to the prevailing gender ideology that described women as frail creatures, who themselves required protection, when she initially rejected nursing. Her recollection - “the idea of seeing and waiting upon wounded men, was one from which I shrank instinctively”

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<sup>22</sup> The married women were Rachel P. Evans, Anna Carver, and Alice Hallowell Holstein, Holstein’s sister in law. Theodore W. Bean, ed. *History of Montgomery County Pennsylvania, Illustrated, 1884* (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1884), 295.

<sup>23</sup> E. Clark, “Hospital Memories,” *Atlantic Monthly* 20 (August 1867): 144-156. George Worthington Adams, *Doctors in Blue: the Medical History of the Union Army in the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1980), 177. See also: Leonard, *Yankee Women*, xxii. Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 113.

<sup>24</sup> Brockett, *Woman’s Work in the Civil War*, 251.

promptly demonstrated her version of femininity.<sup>25</sup> Nina Silber argues that Northern women upheld traditional ideas of womanhood and gender hierarchy but felt compelled to help the war effort.<sup>26</sup> Holstein eventually relented:

But when my husband returned from the battle-field of Antietam, whither the six women had gone, with the sad story that men were dying for food, home comforts and home care, lying by the road-side, in barns, sheds and out-houses, I hesitated no longer.<sup>27</sup>

She consented to undertake the challenge only upon learning of the urgent need for nurses and, perhaps more importantly, her husband's plea. However, she expressed the soldiers' need for female domestic tasks of "home comfort" and "home care". Holstein rationalized her work in the battlefield by asserting these as an extension of her domestic tasks. The pressing need for work only women could perform was precisely the reason for her public involvement.

Holstein embarked on her nursing duties in September 1862 with prudent foresight. She sought an interview with the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC) to establish her official placement. It was an essential step for any respectable woman who chose to assist the military. Katherine Prescott Wormeley held firm opinions about

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<sup>25</sup> H., *Three Years in Field Hospitals*, 10.

<sup>26</sup> Silber, *Daughters of the Union*, 11-12.

<sup>27</sup> Bean, ed., *History of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, 296. For a close versions of this see: H. *Three Years in Field Hospitals*, 11; Brockett, *Woman's Work in the Civil War*, 252. The significance of a relative's judgment is also evident in Marry Gardner Holland's account, an unmarried Civil War nurse who emphasizes her mother's approval: "Well, my daughter, if you can go under government protection, your mother is willing." See: Mary A. Gardner Holland, *Our Army Nurses: Interesting Sketches, Addresses, and Photographs of Nearly One Hundred of the Noble Women Who Served in Hospitals and on Battlefields during Our Civil War* (Boston: B. Wilkins & Co. Publishers, 1895), 18.



the issue: “No lady should attempt to come here unless accepted or appointed by the government or the Commission. Ardent women with a mission should not come in any other way, if they value their own respectability.”<sup>28</sup> Women who independently offered their help came under attack for their doubtful character and questionable motives.

Dorothea Dix, the Superintendent for Army Nurses, devised strict guidelines for the hiring of nurses: “No woman under thirty years need apply to serve in the government hospitals. All nurses are required to be very plain-looking women. Their dresses must be brown or black, with no bows, no curls, or jewelry, and no hoop skirts.”<sup>29</sup> Dix’s demands created dignified space for women in military hospitals and legitimized volunteering for privileged women. Holstein was interviewed and appointed in Washington D.C. before she arrived at Antietam in the beginning of October 1862.

Holstein proved adept to the arduous work of caring for a large group of patients with limited supplies and minimal means to alleviate pain. She never ceased to link the war to the Revolution, justifying the suffering and the large number of casualties as a means to protect the union fiercely fought for during the Revolutionary War. While serving as a matron of Camp Letterman, Gettysburg, in charge of feeding three thousand soldiers, several local residents recommended hanging a flag on Round Top to honor the soldiers who “fought and won this great battle for our liberties.” Holstein must have communicated the idea to the Norristown aid society who routinely furnished her with

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<sup>28</sup> Anna Morris Holstein, to Mrs. Harry, Army Aid Society, Minute Books, Letters, Ect., Letters to Army Aid Society Mrs, C. P. Harry Secretary, Montgomery County Historical Society, Norristown, Pennsylvania( MCHS). Wormeley, *The Other Side of the War*, 127.

<sup>29</sup> Dix’s rule: See: Margaret Muckenhaupt, *Dorothea Dix: Advocate for Mental Health Care* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 102.

provisions for her patients. Shortly thereafter her sister-in-law, Alice H. Holstein, arrived at the hospital along with Mrs. Harry, the secretary of the Aid Society of Norristown with an impressive flag that measured twenty four feet long and thirteen feet wide.<sup>30</sup> Soldiers from Camp Letterman prepared and erected a fitting flagstaff for an impressive ceremony. On the morning of October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1863, the flag was carried with great fanfare throughout the hospital area and up the hill where addresses were delivered. David Wills, a noted local attorney; John F. Seymour, the brother of the Governor of New York; and Henry C. May, a surgeon from the 145<sup>th</sup> New York State Volunteers addressed the crowd.<sup>31</sup> Holstein took great pride in the flag and emphasized that donating it was an act expected of “a circle of patriotic ladies of a township of Montgomery County, - the immediate vicinity of ‘Valley Forge,’ of precious revolutionary memory, - that they would contribute a flag for this purpose.”<sup>32</sup> She believed that knowledge of historic events of a site might shape people’s understanding of their past and affect their conduct. Pierre Nora argues that memory is not fixed but is being manipulated for the changing needs of the present. Its presentation is selective and absolute.<sup>33</sup> Holstein’s memory and

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<sup>30</sup> Holstein, “Women of Montgomery County in War Time,” 223; Anna M. Holstein, “The Flag on Round Top, Gettysburg,” *Historical Sketches: Collection of Papers Prepared for the Historical Society of Montgomery County Pennsylvania* 2 (1900): 359-361.

<sup>31</sup> Holstein does not mention the date of the dedication. For a date see: Frank L. Klement, “Ohio and the Dedication of the Soldiers' Cemetery at Gettysburg,” *Ohio History* 79: 81 at: <http://publications.ohiohistory.org/ohstemplate.cfm?action=detail&Page=007981.html&StartPage=76&EndPage=100&volume=79&newtitle=Volume%2079%20Page%2076> accessed on August 19, 2007.

<sup>32</sup> H. *Three Years in Field Hospitals of the Army of the Potomac*, 53. The women of Montgomery County include only those of Upper Merion, Bridgeport, and Norristown. See: Holstein, “Women of Montgomery County in War Time,” 223.

<sup>33</sup> Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire,” *Representations*, Special Issue: Memory and Counter Memory, 26 (Spring 1989): 9-10.

inspiration were politically charged and significantly selective. She perceived the events that occurred at the site as significant episodes in the annals of the American Revolution and in the creation of the nation. The Civil War intended to preserve the result of the revolutionaries' sacrifice, which induced the creation of a democratic country, and no state held the right to question the integrity of the Union. She upheld George Washington as the symbol of unification, a virtuous leader who "could not tell a lie," an ardent supporter of democracy, and a patriotic commander who remained with his troops throughout the entire revolutionary campaign.<sup>34</sup>

While in Fredericksburg, Virginia in March 1864, Holstein dedicated time to visit the Mary Washington's grave. She was dismayed to find it "in unfinished state in the outskirts of town." She proceeded to Washington's house, where she raised her son George, and found it "stands in primitive state" yet unscathed by shelling. She could scarcely hide her awe and bewilderment when she stepped into the historical structure:

...a small monument marks the spot where stood the noted cherry-tree cut down by the young Washington, the history of which is familiar to every school-boy. I plucked a bough from a tree planted by his own hand, and for a brief moment set in the room where he nightly knelt in prayer by the side of his sainted mother. What a crowd of thoughts come rushing through the brain as one stands upon a spot so consecrated!<sup>35</sup>

Holstein articulated her feelings in a sentimental and religious manner. She probably read the account written by Elizabeth Fries Ellet that attested that Mary Washington's household was "a sanctuary of domestic virtue" where she taught her son duty,

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<sup>34</sup> Mason Locke Weems, *The Life of George Washington with Curious Anecdotes* (Philadelphia: Joseph Allen, 1840), 16.

<sup>35</sup> H. "Letter from Fredericksburg," *Norristown Herald and Free Press*, 31 March 1864, 3.

obedience, and religious reverence.<sup>36</sup> Washington's image shaped, by the story of the cherry tree and at prayer at Valley Forge, was considered historical facts by the 1860s. They were first published in a biography authored by supposed clergyman Mason L. Weems in 1800. Although he claimed to embellish some of the stories in *A History of the Life and Death, Virtues and Exploits of General George Washington* no one seemed to question the images of the moral and pious leader.<sup>37</sup> The monograph was highly popular and was published in more than forty editions. Weems, however, did not emphasize Mary Washington. Holstein constructed a Christian imagery of a sainted mother, Mary, who raised her moral son in a charitable manner. Washington became a leader sent by God to lead the American people into freedom and democracy. In the midst of the turmoil of war, he did not neglect his duty and prayed in solitude among the trees of Valley Forge, hoping for divine assistance in achieving his goal.

The deteriorated condition of Mary Washington's grave and home was a metaphor for the painful disunion of the country. Holstein shared her anguish on the pages of a local newspaper about the debilitated houses in Fredericksburg "so full of historical interest and incidents connected with the memory of the past", which now stood in ruin from bullets and shelling. Sharing her thoughts on the pages of a local Norristown newspaper, she reminded readers of Mary Washington's significance to the nation's history and alerted them of the danger of losing noteworthy historical buildings. In her mind, the preservation of sites related to notable revolutionary men was equally

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<sup>36</sup> Elizabeth Fries Ellet, *Women of the Revolution*, Vol. I (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1819), 27.

<sup>37</sup> For the stories of Washington and the cherry tree and the prayer at Valley Forge see: Mason Locke Weems, *A history of the life and death, virtues and exploits of General George Washington* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1918), 22-23, 232-235.

important to those relating to women and could potentially contribute to overcome the differences of the current conflict. A memory of consensus portraying colonial unity could evoke a past of shared cultural and political experiences and reinforce public sentiments.

The war brought Holstein in contact with African Americans. Antebellum society was a racist society and free African Americans in the North were consistently discriminated against in education, hotels, public accommodations, and transportation. The Emancipation Proclamation did not change whites' racial attitudes. Wilbert L. Jenkins argues that African Americans, who were eager to fight in Union ranks at the beginning of the war, experienced inequality once they were recruited. Despite the deplorable treatment, they fought bravely to contribute to their earned freedom.<sup>38</sup> At Port Royal, Virginia, in 1864, Holstein saw many former slaves, who took the opportunity of the advancing Union forces, leave their masters. Holstein did not share the freedmen's happiness. She reported that they were observed -

“...all along the river banks, rushing down from every plantation and village, with cheers, waving hats, and other demonstrations of pleasure, manifesting their joy at sight of the old flag, which *now* meant *freedom* to them.”<sup>39</sup>

She termed the event a “strangely exciting scene” – unable to appreciate the meaning of freedom for people who had never known it.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Wilbert L. Jenkins, *Climbing Up to Glory: A Short History of African Americans during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Wilmington, Delaware: SR Books, 2002), 29-31.

<sup>39</sup> Three Years in Field Hospitals of the Army of the Potomac, 63-64.

<sup>40</sup> For an insightful description of the plight of African Americans see: Jenkins, *Climbing Up to Glory*, 79-106.

The African American soldiers comprised ten percent of the Union army but their losses were high - close to a third of all enlisted men. Holstein witnessed it in City Point. “...*four* out of every five” – she commented – “were either killed or wounded; yet the men behaved bravely.”<sup>41</sup> More revealing is her reaction to the capture of a large number of Confederate soldiers by one African American regiment:

Eight hundred captured rebels brought in, guarded by a negro regiment – the most humiliating thing to *them* that could have occurred; the sight was so novel that we all left our tents to look at them, one of our men, recognizing his former owner, ran up with a pleased look to speak to Massa Charles, but he refused to recognize him, and moved on with the crowd.<sup>42</sup>

Holstein and her colleagues did not praise the heroic deed of the African American troops who fought courageously without supervision but rather sympathized with the Southerners, whom the African Americans guarded.

In addition, Holstein’s criticism of slavery was not based on the mistreatment of slaves or their lifelong bondage. She believed that Southerners’ treatment of their slaves had made them indifferent to human pain and, thus, capable of starving their Union prisoners. With great anger she wrote: “...distant lands might learn what refinements of cruelty SLAVERY had educated a people!”<sup>43</sup> Her perception of the immorality of

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 109.

slavery solely upon the treatment of Northern whites may suggest that she believed in the inferiority of African Americans.<sup>44</sup>

Holstein's attitude toward African Americans was no different than that of many Northern whites. She was sympathetic to whites, enemy soldiers as they were. However, while appreciating the courage and great sacrifice of African American soldiers, she could not consider them superior to whites, let alone to Southerners. Her racial sympathy crossed regional boundaries at the expense of racial heterogeneity. When Northerners needed additional troops, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation set a political climate that tolerated African Americans' service but did nothing toward their social acceptance. Military necessity enabled African Americans to demonstrate their character and skills, but those did not suffice to alter whites' deep-seated racial assumptions.

The Holsteins served in army hospitals until July 3, 1865, when the end of the war brought "for the first time in all those long, eventful years, to overtaken mind and wearied body, the perfect *rest of home!*"<sup>45</sup> Upon their return, Holstein gathered all the notes she meticulously wrote during the long nights by candle light and compiled them into a memoir of the war. To remove any suspicion of seeking publicity, an unfit act for a

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<sup>44</sup> This remark was uttered within the context of the arrival of three hundred starved prisoners from Andersonville. Evidence of Holstein's direct view of slavery could not be found.

<sup>45</sup> For duration of Holstein's service see: "Report No. 1045," *Senate Committee on Pensions*, Serial 2915, Congress 52-1 (1891-1892) vol. 5; H. *Three Years in Field Hospitals*, 131.

proper wife, she assured the readers that the notes as well as the book were “slight memento... for friends at home” and signed it as “Mrs. H.”<sup>46</sup>

An ardent Republican, she viewed Lincoln’s administration as the “best government the world has ever yet beheld,” and believed that “devotion to the country and the flag” warranted the greatest of sacrifices – “life was at stake, homes deserted, property destroyed, and friends of early, happier years, *all* given up.”<sup>47</sup> Lyde Cullen Sizer asserts that women’s nursing memoirs emphasized self-sacrifice and pain rather than authority and strength. However, by publishing their work the nurses challenged the separate sphere ideology and received work opportunities.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, Holstein’s nursing work and published articles and book enabled her to demonstrate her reverence for revolutionary figures, male and female, to call attention to historical preservation, and to showcase her political loyalty and organizational skills.

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While Holstein devoted her time to working in the fields of war, a score of privileged Philadelphia elite women worked incessantly to ensure that a steady stream of supplies reached Union hospitals. They witnessed the greatest crisis in the history of the nation and could not remain on the sidelines. As Wormeley attests - “As men sprang to

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<sup>46</sup> The prevailing gender ideology located women at the domestic sphere. Seeking public role could potentially injure a woman’s reputation. For the premise of the ideology see: Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860” *American Quarterly*, 18 (Summer, 1966), 151-174

<sup>47</sup> H. *Three Years in Field Hospitals*, 9-10, 24.

<sup>48</sup> Lyde Cullen Sizer, *The Political Work of Northern Women Writers and the Civil War, 1850-1872* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 2000), 196.



arms, the women rose to find what they should do; nor had they far to seek ... it is their right and their place to render to suffering.”<sup>49</sup> The women collectively turned to the Philadelphia Agency of the United States Sanitary Commission offices and “volunteered to undertake the work, if the gentlemen of the Commission thought proper to place it in their hands.”<sup>50</sup> On March 26, 1863, the Committee on Supplies transferred their own department to the Women’s Pennsylvania Branch (WPB) and gave the women a new storage facility. Like Holstein, they sought public work while acknowledging men’s leadership as befitted their appropriate gender role. The Executive Committee of the WPB included leading society women such as the vice president Mrs. Robert M. Lewis, whose husband raised over million and a half dollars for the USSC; Mrs. William H. Furness, the spouse of a prominent abolitionist; Mrs. Charles Janeway Stillé, whose attorney spouse would be a recognized author by the end of the war; and Elizabeth Duane Gillespie, the great granddaughter of Benjamin Franklin. They delivered steady shipments of supplies to regiments by coordinating a large number of Associated Managers and nearly 400 local organizations.<sup>51</sup>

As the war prolonged and the need for additional funds persisted, the Pennsylvania women could not ignore the sanitary fairs successfully held in Chicago and

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<sup>49</sup> Katherine Prescott Wormeley, *The United States Sanitary Commission: A Sketch of Its Purpose and Its Work* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1863), 1-2.

<sup>50</sup> *Report of the General Superintendent of the Philadelphia Branch of the United States Sanitary Commission February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1864* (Philadelphia: King and Baird, 1864), 7.

<sup>51</sup> In 1864 their network boasted thirty-nine associate managers in major Pennsylvania towns, six in New Jersey, three in Delaware, and even one in San Francisco. *List of Officers and Associates of the United States Sanitary Commission in Philadelphia and the Officers and Aids of the Women’s Pennsylvania Branch of the United States Sanitary Commission, January 1, 1864* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1864), 14-15.

Boston at the end of 1863. Jeanie Attie points out that the fairs initiated by northern women were common antebellum fundraising events for benevolent organizations and a variety of reform movements. They typically featured entertainment, restaurants, and ample donated items for sale. The Chicago Sanitary Fair served as a model for the multiple fairs that followed in other urban centers across the Northern states. The Executive Committee of the WPB invited Jane C. Hoge, who along with Mary Livermore, managed the Great Northern Fair in Chicago. In a meeting held on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1864 in Philadelphia, Hoge shared her experience and encouraged them to hold their own fair. Convinced they had acquired sufficient information about staging the event, the Executive Committee of the WPB urged the male Executive Committee of the Philadelphia Branch of the USSC to organize a fair. The men initially refused, but the women exerted their influence through the Union League of Philadelphia. The League's members' promise to secure contributions forced the reluctant Sanitary Commission to hold the event.<sup>52</sup> In the beginning of 1864 the Commission announced their plan to hold the Great Central Fair in June due to "outside pressure in this matter which they did not feel at liberty to resist."<sup>53</sup> The organization of the Great Central Fair commenced with the appointment of an Executive Committee of twenty leading merchants and manufacturers, presided over by John Welsh, one of the principle founders of the Union League. They appointed nearly one hundred committees from most fields of industry by drawing upon the contributors to the popular annual exhibitions of manufactured goods sponsored by

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<sup>52</sup> Charles J. Stillé, *Memorial of the Great Central Fair for the U. S. Sanitary Commission, Held at Philadelphia, June 1864* (Philadelphia: U. S. Sanitary Commission, 1864), 14-15.

<sup>53</sup> "The Great Fair in Philadelphia," *Our Daily Fare*, June 20, 1864, 81-82.

the Franklin Institute.<sup>54</sup> Directorship in boards that often organized exhibitions such as the Franklin Institute, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society provided managerial experience and social ties.

The Executive Committee attempted to form corresponding committees of women but found it a “difficult and delicate task.” Instead, they selected ten prominent women, designated them as the Committee on Organization, and left the matter in their hands.<sup>55</sup> The committee included Mrs. J. C. Stillé, Mrs. Aubrey H. Smith, the wife of a prominent attorney, Mrs. Henry P. M. Birkenbine, whose husband was Chief Engineer for the Philadelphia Water Department, and Mrs. Henry Cohen, an acknowledged benevolence activist for Jewish causes. Though the organizers’ goal was to secure funds for the Sanitary Commission, an undercurrent of competition was apparent when they summed up their objective as attracting visitors “at least equal to that which has attended similar undertakings in other cities.”<sup>56</sup> Department committees were required to collect a large number of appealing articles that would attract visitors to their displays and could be easily sold.

The Sanitary Fairs differed from traditional exhibits of trades and commerce by featuring exhibits related to local and national history. The displays promoted a new kind of memory, an idealized version of the past that appealed to Northerners living through

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<sup>54</sup> Matthew Gallman argues that they relied on antebellum organizational patterns and associational networks. See: Gallman, *Mastering Wartime*, 162-163.

<sup>55</sup> Stillé, *Memorial of the Great Central Fair*, 19-20.

<sup>56</sup> John Welsh et al. USSC Philadelphia Agency, 1 March 1864, McAllister Collection, Box 1, The Library Company of Philadelphia (LCP).

the daily consequences of a serious military conflict. The success of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair's New England Kitchen confirmed that a portrayal of tranquil domesticity appealed to fairgoers.

The Philadelphia Restaurant Committee may have surmised that guests would enjoy a colonial meal served by women adorned with colonial costumes. Guests could sit by the hearth and visualize better times when the daily tasks amounted to spinning wool and baking bread. They organized the Pennsylvania Kitchen in order to commemorate the life of German settlers, reminding local visitors of the state's early colonists. The scene was meticulously choreographed with artifacts that celebrated a "happy age before tallow candles had succumbed to gas at three dollars per thousand feet, and government tax added."<sup>57</sup> A sizeable fireplace figured prominently in the dining room with pots and kettles by the hearth and an old German Bible, signaling the Protestant faith, by the mantelpiece. Next to it stood a cupboard filled with century-old china and a dresser topped with Pennsylvania Dutch plates. Benjamin Franklin's old desk and chair, placed in a prominent position opposite to the fire place, drew attention to the domestic life of the famous Philadelphian, while spinning wheels, flax hacking tools and cards, and balls of raw material indicated household production. Women dressed in colonial costumes would spin wool, peel apples, and knit stockings in front of the curious crowd. On the walls "Grandmother's Picture," as well as pictures of the "Happy Family," "Cook at Work," "German Reformed Dutch Church at Reading, Built in 1761," a map of Philadelphia from 1750, and a portrait of George Washington, linked the domestic ideal

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<sup>57</sup> "Pennsylvania Kitchen," *Our Daily Fair*, 14 June 1864, 45.

with local and national history. The two muskets hung by the mantle and the copper kettle used by revolutionary soldiers, hinted on consensus in the battle for independence. A commentator concluded that the kitchen “provokes that hearty good feeling... a feeling of home.”<sup>58</sup>

The chairwoman of the Pennsylvania Kitchen sub-committee, Mrs. Henry P. M. Birkinbine, and her team of over twenty members, did not neglect any aspect of the dining experience. From the bare pine tables and a lack of napkins and table cloths to noodle soup, summer wurst, and a variety of baked German goods – all awaited eager diners. The kitchen brings “enjoyableness which more elegant apartments sometimes fail to excite,” commented a visitor who neglected to notice that the space was constructed for display and not for food preparation.<sup>59</sup> The actual cooking took place in a back kitchen equipped with technologically advanced amenities while Americans of German descent supplied specialty food throughout the opening period.

An additional exhibit staged by the Restaurant Committee featured the parlor of William Penn. It originated in the correspondence between the antiquarian John A. McAllister and the American historian Benson J. Lossing.<sup>60</sup> Similar to the Kitchen, Penn’s Parlor enabled the audience to enter a private space, but in contrast to the customary feminine domain this period room was intended to impress the audience with a domestic masculine space of the state’s founder. In reality, it was a demure room

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<sup>58</sup> “The Pennsylvania Kitchen,” *The Press*, 8 June 1864.

<sup>59</sup> Colonian, “The Great Central Fair,” *New York Times*, 19 June 1864, 3.

<sup>60</sup> Jno A. McAllister, Philadelphia to Mr. Lossing, 19 March 1864, Benson J. Lossing Papers, Box 1, HSP.

decorated with artifacts gathered by the subcommittees' chairs, Philadelphia attorney Eli Kirk Price and Ellen M. Price, who did not attempt to recreate Penn's original dwelling. An observer described the exhibit as "True to Quaker modest conduct no room [was] allowed for fancy display. All furnishing of the apartment [was] quiet and subdued."<sup>61</sup> Their circular called for heirlooms of "historic interest connected with them from association with any of the prominent Men or families of the early settlers of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware."<sup>62</sup> It was possibly the only circular printed with colonial lettering, for added old-fashioned charm, and perhaps the only one to post Penn's portrait as its letterhead instead of the fair's emblem. Realizing the sentimental value of the artifacts solicited, the organizers assured prospective donors that the articles could be returned if owners did not want to part with them.

The committee claimed that it intended the exhibit to represent all settlers of the Province since individuals of all origins helped the soldiers. Yet, Price publicly emphasized that:

Individually many of us are descendants of the early settlers, and have sincere respect and veneration for the character of William Penn and his associates, who instituted the government of the infant province... The principles of these governments, State and National, owe their origin to William Penn more than to any one who preceded their formation.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> "Principle Feature in the Memory of Great Fair," newspaper clipping, McAllister Collection, Box 4, LCP.

<sup>62</sup> *Memorial of the William Penn Parlor in the Great Central Fair, Held in Logan Square, June 1864, for the Benefit of the United States Sanitary Commission* (Philadelphia: Published for the Benefit of the Fair), 4.

<sup>63</sup> Eli K. Price, "William Penn Parlor," *Our Daily Fare*, 23; "An Epistle to Friends," *Our Daily Fare*, 23.



GREAT CENTRAL FAIR IN AID OF THE U. S. SANITARY COMMISSION.

To be held in Philadelphia, June, 1864.

CIRCULAR OF THE WILLIAM PENN PARLOR COMMITTEE.

This Committee is organized for the purpose of furnishing a Room as nearly as possible after the style of the days of William Penn, for exhibition at the GREAT FAIR.

The Committee solicit the contribution of all articles of furniture and household use, of the fashion of the period above mentioned, especially such as have any historic interest connected with them from association with any of the prominent men or families of the early settlers of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

It is believed that there is a sufficient number of such articles in this city and vicinity, to fit up and furnish a Room in a manner that will be at once interesting and attractive, and render it a prominent feature of the Great Exhibition. And it is confidently expected that those who hold possession and control of them, will rejoice at the opportunity afforded, of using them in an effective way for the comfort and relief of our suffering soldiers.

It is proposed to keep two large tables in this Room spread with articles for sale.

All articles sent for exhibition ONLY, will be receipted for, carefully preserved and returned to the owners. They should be named or described, and IF FOR SALE, that fact stated, with some price or value attached. Send to WILLIAM PENN PARLOR COMMITTEE, GREAT CENTRAL FAIR, Care of A. R. McHENRY, Chairman Receiving Committee.

ELI K. PRICE, CHAIRMAN,

811 Arch St., Philadelphia.

H. R. WARRINER, SECRETARY, 1123 Callowhill Street, Philadelphia.

WILLIAM GARRETT, TREASURER, 39th and Locust Sts., Philadelphia.

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Figure 1. Circular of the William Penn Parlor Committee

THE LIBRARY COMPANY OF PHILADELPHIA

Price emphasized Pennsylvania's first settlers as the individuals who set the foundation for American governing institutions. By linking fair organizers to the settlers, he established a distinct social hierarchy based on ancestral origins. The exhibit portrayed a peaceful understanding between early Pennsylvania settlers and the Native American inhabitants. Two of Penn's letters to the Indians prior to his arrival demonstrated his "desire to win [their] Love and friendship by just and Peaceable Life" while the Wampum belt given to him when he made the treaty with the Native Americans, and a cup presented to him during the event served as additional attested that Penn was true to his words. Benjamin West's painting, *Penn's Treaty with the Indians*, further reinforced this image. Philadelphia's charter, portraits of Penn family members and those of the city's first two mayors pointed to the origins of the urban center. Reminiscence of the city's central role in the birth of the country was represented in a mantelpiece from Carpenter's Hall, where the First Continental Congress was held in 1774, and chairs from the noteworthy gathering.

The exhibitors further emphasized their colonial origin with the display of the Great Dish of William Penn. The plate, owned by the State In Schuylkill, was the "most ancient and highly respectable social society existing in the United States."<sup>64</sup> The catalogue presented a lengthy history of the club and urged visitors to:

Think of a single white perch carried in state on this great dish by our worthy ancestors, and delivered to the Baron with grave decorum and

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<sup>64</sup> *Memorial of the William Penn Parlor in the Great Central Fair*, 11. For more details on the prestigious club see Chapter 1, pp.17-18.



graceful eloquence! The Patriots of the Revolution were funny fellows, after all!<sup>65</sup>

It concluded that the club's "active successors" – hinting at the fair's organizers – should hold a similar prominence to that of their ancestors.

In the spirit of historic significance, the organizers of the fair used the exhibit as a stage to advocate historic preservation. In 1857 local newspapers had raised concern that the Slate-Roof House, the city residence of Penn during his second visit to the city (1699-1701), was in danger of demolition. Members of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania contemplated moving the structure to Fairmount Park and restoring it as a "unique monument to the memory of the Founder of the State."<sup>66</sup> The committee placed a model of the house in the Penn Parlor to raise public awareness of the project and help its future funding.<sup>67</sup>

The Penn Parlor exhibit was among the three exhibits that were allowed to feature items intended exclusively for display.<sup>68</sup> All the articles displayed by other exhibits were to be offered for sale and their donors would have willingly donated them. The relics collected for the parlor could be on loan, demonstrating that the fair organizers sought to

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<sup>65</sup> *Memorial of the Penn Parlor*, 13.

<sup>66</sup> News clipping in Juno A. McAllister, Philadelphia, to Mr. Lossing, 10 April 1864, Benson J. Lossing Papers, Box 1, HSP.

<sup>67</sup> The required sum was never collected and the house was demolished in 1867.

<sup>68</sup> The other exhibits were organized by the Committee of the Relics, Curiosities, and Autographs and the Art Department.

disseminate an agenda beyond patriotic consumerism.<sup>69</sup> The men and women who meticulously selected and arranged the artifacts constructed a commemorative space that portrayed the founding of Pennsylvania from their own perspective, out of peaceful consent, by a wise proprietor. Subtly, in two different publications, they reminded fairgoers of their link to the colonial past. The message was sanctioned by an observer who speculated that Penn's Parlor "will prove one of the great attractions, and having visited most of the other great fairs, I can safely say it has not been surpassed by anything of the kind." An additional visitor confirmed that it is "a tribute to [Penn's] memory which all who visit this department will delight to recognize."<sup>70</sup>

The Fine Arts Committee, like the creators of the Penn Parlor, did not aim to portray the development of local or international artistic trends but called for paintings of certain type. A circular signed by Joseph Harrison, the chairman of the committee, declared that –

It is particularly desirable, to obtain for exhibition as many portraits of distinguished Philadelphians and Pennsylvanians as possible, illustrating the history of our City and State, from the earliest Colonial times to more recent periods, as well as portraits of eminent persons of our sister States of New Jersey and Delaware.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Elizabeth Milroy, "Avenue of Dreams: Patriotism and the Spectator at Philadelphia's Great Central Sanitary Fair," in *Making and Remaking Pennsylvania's Civil War*, eds. William Blair and William Pencak, (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 23.

<sup>70</sup> Colonian, "The Great Central Fair," 3; "Principle Feature in the Memory of Great Fair," newspaper clipping, McAllister Collection, Box 4, LCP. Gary Nash points that the Penn's Parlor was the first attempt by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to utilize artifacts in a didactic exhibit to foster public unity. See: Gary B. Nash, *First City: Philadelphia and the Forging of Historical Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 248.

<sup>71</sup> "Fine Arts Committee of Great Central Fair," McAllister Collection, Box 1, LCP.

The committee aimed to fashion a historical interpretation that would emphasize patrician ancestors and foster state and local pride.<sup>72</sup>

The organizers paid tribute to the Native Americans as part of portraying historical figures. Although they relegated the Indian Department to the Children's Department, their intention was educational.<sup>73</sup> Under philanthropist Clement B. Barclay's supervision, a group of Native American dancers, who had excited audiences with their war dance at the Metropolitan Fair in New York City, was brought to Philadelphia. The large crowd of children they attracted proved that "even the representation of savage life was made to help forward the great cause which all had at heart."<sup>74</sup>

While the Native Americans' contribution to the cause was acknowledged, albeit as "savage," African Americans' effort was ignored. African Americans did not hold any leadership role in the fair except for a single member of the Labor Income and Revenue Committee.<sup>75</sup> Restaurant Committee members, however, found them suitable as waiters in their upscale main establishment, groomed and neatly dressed in white jackets and aprons, black pants, and tri-color rosettes. They were relegated to service rather than managerial tasks.

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<sup>72</sup> For a full description of the work of the art committee see: Milroy, "Avenue of Dreams: Patriotism and the Spectator at Philadelphia's Great Central Sanitary Fair," pp. 37-49.

<sup>73</sup> "Plan of Great Central Fair," Sanitary Fair – Committees, McAllister Collection, LCP.

<sup>74</sup> Stillé, *Memorial of the Great Central Fair*, 58.

<sup>75</sup> Organizers listed Josiah Miller on the Committee roll as "colored", see: Stillé, *Memorial of the Great Central Fair*, 175.

Women shared responsibilities with their male counterparts but the extent of their work is often difficult to assess. The effort of the Ladies' Committee of the Relics, Curiosities, and Autographs Department emphasizes that influential women initiated projects independently and contributed greatly to the content of exhibits. In a joint circular of the men's and women's committees the chairman, Franklin Peale, solicited "Memorials of the present Rebellion, and of the former wars of this country, or any memento of our conquests by Land or Water." For his display of American prowess he called for a wide variety of artifacts, from coins to documents to china and manuscripts. He defined relics as "all objects connected with the public or private life of distinguished individuals, of ancient and modern times: and with noted places, periods, and events, in the history of nations and of the world."<sup>76</sup> The chair of the Ladies' Committee, Isabella James, an accomplished botanist, offered a more focused approach when she announced that "It is believed that many articles, valuable for their historic associations, (particularly with the times of the Revolution,) are in the hands of individuals in the City."<sup>77</sup> She also advised her potential donors that they might loan their cherished heirlooms if they did not wish to have them sold. Eli K. Price, the chairman of the William Penn Parlor Committee, stressed quantity in his appeal – not historical context.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Franklin Peale, "Circular of the Committee on Relics, Curiosities, and Autographs;" McAllister Collection, Box 2, LCP.

<sup>77</sup> Mrs. Thomas P. James, "Circular of the Committee on Relics, Curiosities, and Autographs;" McAllister Collection, Box 2, LCP. An obituary of Mrs. James states that both she and her husband were botanists. See: "Mrs. Thomas P. James," *Meehan's Monthly*, XI (1901): 159.

<sup>78</sup> Price's appeal included: "It is believed that there is a sufficient number of such articles in this city and vicinity, to fit up and furnish a Room in a manner that will be at once interesting and attractive, and render it prominent feature of the Great Exhibition" see: "Circular of the William Penn Parlor Committee," McAllister Collection, Box 2, LCP.

Privately, James corresponded with influential acquaintances requesting particular artifacts she knew they had in their possession. J. Lacy Darlington, the son of William Darlington, a recognized botanist and physician and a member of Congress, consented to donate two (unspecified) portraits in addition to forty letters from twenty five soldiers and civilians of the revolutionary period. When Darlington donated George Washington's letter he expressed his enthusiastic support of the fair: "I would not part with it under any consideration, except for the noble purpose to which I now most cheerfully devote it." Eliza Susan Quincy, the daughter of Josiah Quincy, a Massachusetts judge who served as the mayor of Boston and president of Harvard College, could not offer her ailing father's signature but contributed his photograph with a copy of his autograph.<sup>79</sup>

The significance James placed on George Washington is evident in light of her decision to create a Washington Album that would feature mementos related to the revolutionary hero. In order to meet her goal she requested the historian Benson J. Lossing donate the engravings of his *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution*. Perhaps she hoped that her candid confession would convince him to assent:

I make a request as if I did not anticipate a refusal, for everyone to whom I apply have so far acceded at once to my wishes, and I begin to take it as a matter of course that all the world are interested in the fairs for the benefit of the Sanitary Commission.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> J. Lacey Darlington, West Chester, to Mrs. Thomas P. James, 10 April 1864; Eliza Susan Quincy, Boston, to Mrs. James, 5 April 1864, United States Great Central Fair, Box 1, HSP.

<sup>80</sup> Isabella James, Philadelphia, to Mr. Lossing, 10 April 1864. Benson J. Lossing Papers, HSP.

Lossing promptly refused but her final product was nevertheless impressive. The album contained portraits of Washington, an autographed letter by him, a lock of his hair, original manuscript pages from Jared Sparks' *The Life of George Washington*, fifteen original watercolor paintings of places associated with him, and photographs of interest connected with his name. The album was bound in Washington's colors of crimson and white and decorated with his shield at its center.<sup>81</sup> The presentation of the album was equally imposing – a draped platform held the first president's portrait and underneath an American eagle with its wings spread looked over the precious volume. At length, Edward Everett, a Whig politician from Massachusetts and an orator in Gettysburg, won the volume.

The album was not the only display of Washington by the women of the Relics, Curiosities, and Autographs Department. They celebrated him in a special exhibition under the supervision of Mrs. John Fallon. A lock of his hair, his portraits, busts and sketches decorated the department alongside several domestic articles from Mount Vernon including his china, sofa and bureau. One of the most impressive items was the Revolutionary War quilt pieced by a group of women who lived in Martha Washington's house while their husbands volunteered to fight. They used scraps of Washington's shirts and chintz from his mother's and wife's dresses. Camaraderie, frugality, and the extraordinary circumstances under which the quilt had been produced reinforced that women and not only men were greatly affected by hostilities. The quilt emphasized domesticity in the service of the war and drew attention to female revolutionary actors.

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<sup>81</sup> "Our Own Great Fair," *Our Daily Fare*, 23, 94.

James's committee effort brought to public display "more Washington relics than were ever gathered together north of the Potomac."<sup>82</sup> But theirs was not the only display of past notable figures. To remind visitors of Philadelphia's prominence in the nation's history, the department chose to display the chair and table on which Thomas Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence and the chair used by Benjamin Franklin in the American Philosophical Society (and by every society president thereafter). Franklin was the delegate to the Second Continental Congress chosen by the Pennsylvania Assembly and later was one of the members who assisted in drafting the Constitution. The presence of his articles linked Philadelphia to the nation's foundation and to the single most significant legal document that guides its political system. A vase of Marie Antoinette's, the property of Mrs. George Worley, suggested a link between privileged Americans and French nobility. A shell-work monument erected to the memory of General Edward Dickinson Baker who fell in Ball's Bluff concluded the history of celebratory individuals with a contemporary representation.

An effective aspect of contemporary memory was the initiative of the Committee of Women of the Newspaper Editorial Corps. They prepared a Book of Honor, where for one dollar, a soldier who had served in the war, or anyone otherwise active in favor of the Union cause, was eligible for inscription. A brief account of his service would illustrate the individual's deeds. The book was intended to be placed in the Philadelphia Library for utmost public visibility and for posterity.<sup>83</sup> Though a fund-raising initiative, the

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<sup>82</sup> "The Department of Relics and Curiosities," *Ibid.*, 93-94. "Curiosities, Relics, and Autographs," *The Press*, 8 June 1864, McAllister Collection, Box 4, LCP.

<sup>83</sup> "Book of Honor," McAllister Collection, Box 1, LCP.

women's understanding of commemoration as a process of emphasizing individualism and gaining public recognition was unusual. Enabling ordinary people to memorialize their loved ones at a time when only past military and political leaders received recognition was a form of patriotic consumption – the popularization of memory to fund a patriotic cause.

A large number of organizers were profoundly aware that their deeds ought to be documented for future generations. Isabella James, who also served on the Committee of Women of the Newspaper Editorial Corps and was responsible for the publication of the fair's newspaper, wanted to ensure "that the journal shall preserve in as complete a form as possible everything relating to this great event."<sup>84</sup> The first edition of *Our Daily Fare*, published from the eighth to the twenty-eighth of June, proudly announced that it would be "a lasting memorial of the Great Fair," and would enable future historians to learn about the event and the origins and means of operation of the Sanitary Commission.<sup>85</sup> To encourage individual entries an appeal by the newspaper committee urged readers to write "short and spirited articles" about the benefits of the USSC "which may never be known to the public, unless our friends will kindly record them for us."<sup>86</sup> The Newspaper Committee documented "The Fair Movement in the Loyal States" in a series that featured

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<sup>84</sup> April 26, Great Sanitary Fair, USSC Newspaper Commission Minutes, HSP.

<sup>85</sup> "A Word for "Our Daily Fare," *Our Daily Fare*, 8 June 1864, 4.

<sup>86</sup> "Great Central Fair, to Be Held in Philadelphia, June 1864," McAllister Collection, Box 2, LCP.



detailed descriptions collected by Mrs. Clapp, Mrs. Randolph and Mr. A. I. Fish, members of the Newspaper Editorial Corps.<sup>87</sup>

In a less publicized measure, the Penn Parlor Committee resolved to present the catalogue of their exhibit to the Pennsylvania Historical Society, the donor of most of their displayed articles and a leading archival institution, “for the purpose of preserving historical memoirs of the Sanitary Fairs.”<sup>88</sup> At the same time, the Executive Committee desired to preserve a recorded history of the fair in a printed pamphlet for general distribution among fairgoers.<sup>89</sup> Ultimately, they planned to have the affair comprehensively documented in a bound publication. Charles Janeway Stillé was reputed for the “The Fair Movement in the Loyal States” series, which he may have only edited. As mentioned above, three members of the Newspaper Committee collected descriptions of fairs held in different Northern American cities. The accounts were occasionally published in the Fair’s newspaper under the authorship of Stillé. The series gained recognition and earned him the task of writing the history of the fair. He admitted that his *Memorial of the Great Central Fair for the U. S. Sanitary Commission* was “not merely [...] a recognition of the faithful services of those to whom its success was due, but also

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<sup>87</sup> 4 May, Great Sanitary Fair, USSC Newspaper Committee Minutes, HSP.

<sup>88</sup> Samuel L. Smedley, Philadelphia, to the Executive Committee of the Great Central Fair, 7 July 1864, McAllister Collection, Box 1, LCP.

<sup>89</sup> “Meeting Executive Committee,” June 25, 1864, Box 1, McAllister Collection, LCP.

an example to those who should come after us.”<sup>90</sup> Like Holstein, he insisted that the history of a place shapes the character of its inhabitants:

The occasion proved the great fact that here, where American Independence and the true principles of our republican life had their birth... the spirit which gave that freedom birth and organization, still survives in freshness and vigor. There seemed to be a peculiar fitness, that on a spot sacred to such historical recollections, there should take place an imposing demonstration of popular sympathy towards those who were defending with their lives that nation which also assumed here later, the garb and force of true empire.<sup>91</sup>

The organizers of the fair wholly supported the Republican cause and labored enthusiastically to raise funds for the USSC. The devastation of three years of combat with thousands of wounded soldiers and a great loss of life compelled them to provide assistance to the military on its “second War of Independence.”<sup>92</sup> Whether watching the hundreds of battle-experienced soldiers who took respite at the refreshment saloons, oversaw volunteers in one of the city hospitals, or assisted impoverished widows, the consequences of combat produced profound emotional feelings and led prominent city inhabitants make significant contributions to the war effort. Organizing the fair with its countless articles, departments, and events required great effort from a large group of people. Its successful outcome – the most ever earned proceeds from any Sanitary Fair up to that date – over one million dollars was an evidence of the complex organization, performance, and diligence of everyone involved in the project.

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<sup>90</sup> Stillé, *Memorial of the Great Central Fair for the U. S. Sanitary Commission*, 5.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>92</sup> The term was probably coined by Henry W. Bellows in a letter signed by him and several other men to the Secretary of War with a proposal for establishment of the Sanitary Commission on May 18, 1861. See: Wormeley, *The United States Sanitary Commission*, 9.

The organizers employed the fair as a stage to construct a revolutionary memory of consensus, to offer a unified idealized past in the face of a country torn by military conflict. It ignored political and racial differences and proposed an era of collective action toward a mutual goal of creating a union led by the successors of early Protestant settlers. By defining their Protestant identity in opposition to Catholicism they articulated influence, status, and leadership to Catholic immigrants. They fitted the exhibits to local audiences by featuring artifacts related to the history of Pennsylvania stressing its founder. They also included Philadelphia in the national historical narrative by emphasizing its significance in the creation of the nation. The absence of war was filled by the presence of George Washington, who prevailed after the revolution as a civilian leader. Equally important was their attempt to convey themselves, men and women, as a body of civic authority – the true heirs of past colonial and revolutionary leaders.

Their historical memory held significant consequences for women. The narrative inserted women into history, emphasizing domesticity and household production as an essential role in the colonial and revolutionary narrative. On the other hand, it reinforced traditional gender roles by placing women in their supposedly appropriate sphere performing characteristically female tasks.

One might wonder why women of privilege, who occupied highly skilled public positions as heads of committees, coordinators of thousands of donations, and editors of a daily newspaper, would construct a conservative narrative where women were relegated to traditional household tasks. During the Civil War Americans upheld a separate spheres ideology and adhered to rigid assumptions about gender roles. Women's domestic

exhibits fitted these conventions but also empowered them with patriotic significance. By locating the Pennsylvania Kitchen and Penn's Parlor across from each other along the main artery of the structure, appropriately named Union Avenue, they demonstrated these exhibits as equally meaningful. And by placing Franklin's desk in the Kitchen and a quilt and dresses in Penn's Parlor, they domesticated leading historical male figures and emphasized the role of women in the nation's history. By blurring the boundary between the public and the private, female fair organizers asserted that domestic female work occupied a ratified place in the nation's historical narrative and articulated a polity of shared gendered responsibility for the creation of the nation.

Organizers exerted great effort in publicizing the fair. Generating a large number of visitors was important not only for the fair's coffers but also to the dissemination of its historical message. Admission tickets, priced at fifty cents, with additional charges for special exhibits such as the Art Gallery and the Horticultural Department, excluded many working class families.<sup>93</sup> Aware of this aspect, fair organizers made provisions that allowed public school children to attend. Stillé notes that due to "a very small admission price" public school students from different sections of the city frequented the fair. Organizers had also extended free admission tickets – possibly to low-income schools they thought would otherwise forgo the opportunity to attend the event.<sup>94</sup> Teaching working class children to unconditionally revere elite historical figures and accept the

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<sup>93</sup> An admission price of \$6.50 per person in today's value in addition to admission tickets to many exhibits, refreshments, and transportation fees was an expensive proposition for families of modest means.

<sup>94</sup> Stillé, *Memorial of the Great Central Fair for the U. S. Sanitary Commission*, 107; In a folder of Tickets at the collection of the Library Company of Philadelphia one can find a Free Admission ticket for public school students for one day. see: Box 1, MacAllister Collection, LCP.

memory exhibited was at the heart of the school publicity effort undertaken by fair organizers. Children might bring the message home, but more importantly, may internalize it and recognize privileged Americans as guides to the past and as leaders of the future.

If collecting funds to help the soldiers was the primary goal of the fair's immense undertaking, showcasing an authoritative memory was by no means a subordinate one. Fair organizers sought local audiences in order to increase the financial capability of the Philadelphia branch of the USSC, mobilize state citizenry behind the Sanitary Commission's cause, exhibit their own historical perspective, and demonstrate their organizational skills to privileged Americans of other Northern cities. Surpassing the accomplishments of previously held fairs in other urban centers, particularly those of New York City, was on the minds of many of the managers and is plainly evident in their circulars and communications with the press.<sup>95</sup> Fair organizers could have devised a less grandiose and far less challenging operation if fundraising was their only goal. It was privileged Philadelphia women who first thought to hold the event, where they wanted to demonstrate their competence to elite women from other cities and advance their historical perspective, albeit with men's leadership and assistance. Indeed, they could not have launched their plan without the endorsement of Union League members. The fair

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<sup>95</sup> A sense of urgency to reach every possible individual who might spare even a scant donation is evident in an early Circular which details the amount of money that had been raised in Chicago, Boston, and Cincinnati and urges an appeal to the "great industrial classes" for donations. "Circular," March 1, 1864, Box 1; "The Great Central Fair," *City Bulletin*, Box 4; Another observer pointed: "we have determined that this Philadelphia exhibit shall surpass that of New York, not only in extent and beauty, but also in profit," "The Great Central Fair," *Evening Bulletin*, June 3, 1864, Box 4; L. Montgomery Bond, Chairman of the Labor, Income, and Revenue Committee, proudly announced in his Farewell Speech on September 1864: "Philadelphia Fair will produce more than a million dollars the same of that of New York" see: L. Montgomery Bond, "Farewell Speech," Box 2; McAllister Collection, LCP.

rewarded them with the opportunity to initiate historical projects and incorporate women and the domestic sphere into the national historical narrative.

Politically, fair organizers supported the Republican Party. A large number of them belonged to the Union League, which was formed in November 1862 to support Lincoln's policies and his party. However, in order to garner utmost support for their project they claimed to appeal "in the interest of no party, Radical or Conservative, Republican or Democratic, Administration or Anti-Administration," but merely to provide relief for the soldiers as a "work of intelligent patriotism."<sup>96</sup> Matthew J. Gallman agrees with this statement, but a closer inspection reveals that it was a Republican enterprise.<sup>97</sup> Democrats would have argued that the war could have been avoided if the government was willing to negotiate with Southern politicians and offer them proper concessions. The Book of Honor, with its descriptions of individuals' contribution to the Union Army, praised volunteers who probably supported Lincoln's political and military policies. The proceeds from the fair were intended to help the USSC and – in essence – the soldiers who fought for the Union. Charles Janeway Stillé possibly uttered the thoughts of many of his colleagues when he dedicated his monograph on the fair "to those who still rally round that flag, and to the memory of those who have fallen while shielding it from dishonor."<sup>98</sup> He clearly devoted it to Republicans who still supported the Union at the time of publication, in November 1864.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>97</sup> Gallman, *Mastering Wartime*, 163.

<sup>98</sup> Stillé, *Memorial of the Great Central Fair for the U. S. Sanitary Commission*, 3.

Scholars have demonstrated that had women actively created memories from colonial times throughout the antebellum period but historians have paid little attention to the construction of memory during the Civil War. Anna Holstein's concern for historical structures and several of the exhibits of the Great Central Fair demonstrates that the military crisis did not halt the need for preservation, but rather rendered it more urgent and poignant. Privileged Philadelphia men and women constructed an ideal revolutionary memory that placed domesticity and household production at the center of historical discourse. It evoked a scene of ideal social and economic relations, unaffected by political and military conflicts and, more importantly, it argued for the centrality of women in the chronicles of the nation.

Affluent men attempted to legitimize their civic authority as successors of Philadelphia's colonial and revolutionary leaders. Privileged women, whose task was to make historical women visible, argued for shared gendered contribution to the historical narrative. This image would gain greater popularity during the celebration of the nation's centennial year.

### CHAPTER 3

#### **BOSTON TEA PARTY REVISITED: WOMEN'S CAMPAIGN FOR THE CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION**

The occasional rain did not deter the hundreds who had arrived at the gates of the Centennial Exposition in Fairmount Park in Philadelphia, hours before the opening-day ceremony on May 10, 1876. After an artillery salute of one hundred guns, the assembled crowd dispersed in various directions, some eager to examine the exhibits and others to get a closer glimpse at the assembled dignitaries. Years of planning and organization had produced a grand international exhibition intended to demonstrate that a century of democracy wrought progress and achievements that were equal to, or may have even surpassed, Old World civilizations. The organizers had also hoped that cooperation among the states would aid sectional healing “so that the utmost harmony throughout the nation shall prevail in regard to this, the greatest event of the century.”<sup>1</sup> By February 1873, the organizers’ enthusiastic approach failed to raise adequate funds to make the project feasible. Matters greatly improved after the recruitment of a selected group of Philadelphia society women. All had proved their managerial expertise as officers for the Great Central Fair, held in the city in June 1864. They organized a successful campaign to raise funds by increasing interest in the nation’s centennial celebration and improve sales of the Centennial Stock. Encouraged by the accomplishments of their local effort, they broadened the geographical scope of their operations to the states and territories.

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<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the United States Centennial Commission at Philadelphia, 1872.*



The women organized lavish colonial- and revolutionary-themed events, which appealed to the historical sensibilities of potential subscribers by constructing a glorified past of revolutionary unity. The women took the opportunity to further develop the historical presentation they had exhibited in the Great Central Fair, claiming a space for respectable women in the national historical narrative.

Historians who have studied the Exhibition have emphasized its educational objectives within the national and international frameworks and stressed the issues of race, consumerism, and politics. Elitist and racial attitudes found their way into the exhibits from nations from all over the world. The displays of new products and inventions encouraged consumption. One of the key scholars of America's fairs, Robert Rydell, convincingly argues that the Centennial Fair emphasized American progress through the vision of wealthy and powerful elites. The organizers promoted patriotism through exhibits that featured American ingenuity in industrialism, commercialism, agriculture, and technology. They believed that the growth of business and commerce depended on social and political stability. In his synthesis *Fair America*, Rydell reiterates his findings about the intention of organizers to advance economic expansion and adds that they also sought to win the support of white America. Racial attitudes of white superiority, promoted by some exhibits, targeted white sensibilities at the expense of other races. The organizers demonstrated that white Protestants would guide progress by placing Anglo-Saxon nations in central locations of buildings.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *The Death of Cleopatra*, by the female African American artist Edmonia Lewis was the only African-American work represented in the fair. Racial bias of fair organizers prevented African American artists'

Methodology and ideological dissemination are at the crux of more recent studies. Bruno Gilberti asserts that the elaborate system of classification of the artifacts used by the organizers was influenced by the Enlightenment's perception of world order. They created a taxonomy of goods by dividing the exhibit into four major groups and listing the order of exhibits under each section. They also adopted dual systems of classification, by country and by type, that established a grid in the exposition's space. Gilberti utilizes Tony Bennett's idea of the "exhibition complex," the juxtaposition of an object within a contextual public display to disseminate a message of power. Early museums, Bennett argues, demonstrated knowledge that emphasized institutional power and aimed at self-regulation of racial groups. The Centennial introduced Africans and groups from other parts of the world as subordinate people to the Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon races.<sup>3</sup>

Bridging sectional animosity is the subject of Gary Nash's analysis. He stresses the role of the construction of a unified past to a nation still divided over social and political issues in the wake of the Civil War. A nostalgic past with a depoliticized Washington and women dressed in colonial attire fit the image of patriotic simplicity and consensus.<sup>4</sup> In her recent dissertation, Susanna Gold disputes this view. She argues that past was constructed with a vision of progress, not sentimentality. The organizers

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representation. Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Bruno Gilberti, *Designing the Centennial: A History of the 1876 International Exhibition in Philadelphia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002); Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> Nash, *First City*, 261-277.

intended to project a strong nation with a bright future.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the organizers, who were influenced by world fairs of Paris (1867) and Vienna (1873), wanted to place America as an accomplished contender among advanced nations of the world. However, as Nash argues, they also aimed at domestic reconciliation with a unifying memory of the Revolution.

The role of women at the fair is the subject of Mary Cordato's study, which analyzes the exhibition of Women's Building and follows the events and obstacles that led to its construction. She finds that the separate space allowed women to interpret progress in their own terms without the limits set by the classification system that restricted all other participants. Since the women did not receive any monetary assistance in funding their building and exhibits, they were free to shape their exhibits to suit their needs. She argues that the women's display challenged patriarchal domination by offering women new avenues of employment. She also emphasizes that the organizers were careful to avoid the issue of suffrage. Celebrating womanhood, however, came with a price; the exhibit overlooked class, race, and ethnic differences and did not address the economic hardship of waged workers.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Susanna W. Gold, "Imagining Memory: Re-presentations of the Civil War at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> Mary Cordato, "Representing the Expansion of Woman's Sphere: Women's Work and Culture at the World's Fairs of 1876, 1893, 1904" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1989).

In recent years scholars have increasingly related Centennial exhibits to colonial revival, a building style that employed elements from colonial buildings into the design of contemporary houses. Their analysis overwhelmingly focuses on architecture.<sup>7</sup>

Remarkably, scholars almost completely ignored the events that preceded the Centennial Exposition. Organizing a major exhibition required a large sum of money which neither the public nor the federal government were prepared to grant. Added to the difficulty was the economic crisis that started in 1873 and brought a long depression, which hit commerce and industries. When a fundraising effort by Philadelphia elites proved unsatisfactory, the organizers recruited several of Philadelphia's privileged women and trusted them with publicizing and raising money for the exposition. The women extended their vision of the past and produced sophisticated fund-raising galas that emphasized the significance of women in America's past. They inserted women into the national historical narrative while, at the same time, ensuring their own place in history.

In the decade between 1860 and 1870 the population of Pennsylvania increased by nearly twenty percent. Immigrants amounted to 15.5% of state's population in 1870, a

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<sup>7</sup> Several scholars point to the firm of McKim, Mead & White as the one responsible in introducing the colonial revival to America in the 1880s. Mardges Bacon, "Toward a National Style of Architecture: The Beaux-Arts Interpretation of the Colonial Revival," *The Colonial Revival in America*, Alan Axelrod, ed. (Winterthur, Delaware: W. W. Norton & Company, 1985), 91. Edward Teitelman and Betsy Fahlman, "Wilson Eyre and the Colonial Revival in Philadelphia," Axelrod, *The Colonial Revival in America*, 72. William B. Rhodas shows that appreciation for colonial-style buildings had existed the 1840s, but points to the restorer of Independence Hall, Frank M. Etting, as the catalyst for the increased interest in old architecture. See: William B. Rhodas, "The Colonial Revival and American Nationalism," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 35 (Dec. 1976): 239.

slight rise from 14.8 % a decade earlier.<sup>8</sup> In 1860 two-thirds of Philadelphia's population was native born, 16.7% were Irish immigrants, 7.5% German, and less than 4% African Americans.<sup>9</sup> By 1880 the city contained more than a third of the state's foreign born.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, Montgomery County had not seen a change as a result of the war, and remained a rural, sparsely populated, area. In 1876 the county had a total of eight stores, three coal yards, and three dealers in flour and feed.<sup>11</sup>

Philadelphia emerged from the Civil War as a manufacturing center. The need for armaments, uniforms, and the transportation of goods and soldiers stimulated rapid industrialization and the building of railway lines. In the post Civil War decades the city witnessed growing numbers of factories due to the expansion of commerce precipitated by improved transportation.<sup>12</sup> Capital released from war investments along with the arrival of immigrants and invention of new machinery enabled industrial growth. Banking institutions, maritime commerce, shipbuilding, and large companies as the Baldwin Locomotive Works and the Philadelphia Transportation Company provided

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<sup>8</sup> Frank B. Evans, *Pennsylvania Politics, 1872-1877: A Study in Political Leadership* (Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1966), 2.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew J. Gallman, *J. Mastering Wartime: A Social History of Philadelphia during the Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1.

<sup>10</sup> Frank B. Evans, *Pennsylvania Politics, 1872-1877: A Study in Political Leadership* (Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1966): 2. By the 1870s the city's population was nearly 675,000 inhabitants. Russell F. Weigley, Nicholas B. Wainwright, and Edwin Wolf, eds., *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982), 427-428.

<sup>11</sup> Blue book # 2, Tax Records, Local History, Upper Merion Library, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania.

<sup>12</sup> In the 1850s Philadelphia was the nation's second largest city, surpassed only by New York in population, commerce, and manufacturing. Elite capital in the city was drawn to build transportation networks. See: Philip Scranton, *Proprietary Capitalism: The Textile Manufacture at Philadelphia, 1800-1885* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 133.

work to thousands of skilled and semi-skilled employees. In 1870, the city had over eight thousand business enterprises with total annual product valued at more than three hundred and twenty million dollars.<sup>13</sup> In the mid 1870s its economy was firmly based on dozens of major enterprises in the textile, metal products, machine goods, printing and chemical industries.

European immigrants constituted a pool of cheap labor that contributed their skills and sweat to industrial growth.<sup>14</sup> German immigrants, refugees of the Franco-Prussian War, often possessed formal skilled trades, unlike many of the Irish, who were primarily employed as farm laborers or domestic servants. Theodore Hershberg divides Philadelphia's workforce into two distinct groups. By 1880, highly skilled workers moved to better housing in the suburbs while the greater number of workers resided close to their workplace.<sup>15</sup> For those who could acquire social and residential mobility the city offered new neighborhoods, across the Schuylkill River, with street railways for easy access to the center.

Agents of industrial and commercial growth associated in the Philadelphia Board of Trade, the largest one in the country, where they found a forum for their interests. At their annual meeting in June 1869, they formed the National Board of Trade with Frederick Fraley, president of the Schuylkill Navigation Company and a principle

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>14</sup> Philadelphia businessmen relied on immigrants for cheap labor. As late as 1876 representatives of the National Board of Trade from Philadelphia and other major cities opposed a federal proposal of an immigration law. See: Morrell Heald, "Business Attitudes Toward European Immigration, 1880-1900" *The Journal of Economic History*, 13 (Summer, 1953): 294.

<sup>15</sup> Theodore Hershberg, *Philadelphia: Work, Space, Family, and Group Experience in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 152, 165-166.

founder of the Philadelphia Board of Trade in 1833. Fraley, who was also a founding member of the Union League, served in the Executive Committee of the Great Central Fair. John Welsh, a prominent merchant and the chairman of the Central Fair, had also served as president of the national board.

In a city where power and prestige had been largely represented by commerce and manufacturing, a war of great length and proportions had produced wealth in new hands and diminished the capital of others. Social climbers, shoddy aristocracy as they were contemptuously called by privileged Northerners, could afford the luxuries their counterparts had acquired but lacked education, refinement, and decorum according to the old elites. The description of the Philadelphian Republican journalist, Alexander K. McClure, leaves no doubt about the disdainful spectacle social ascendants had created in the eyes of established society:

Wealth came suddenly, and in large measure, to a class of our industrial people who had never dreamed of gaining more than a generous competence in their business. Many of them possessed little or no culture themselves, and they and their children, with rare exceptions, plunged into the most extravagant display in effort not merely to imitate, but to surpass the hospitality and social distinction of the cultured families of the city.<sup>16</sup>

In contrast to those who found their fortunes during the war stood those who lost it.

Sidney George Fisher commented on Mrs. Jno. Butler, who despite of having a father and several brothers in the South and owning half of the Butlers' estate, including its slaves, was loyal to the Union and approved of emancipation. However, her income had

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<sup>16</sup> Alexander K. McClure, *Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania*, vol. II (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, 1905), 245.

probably been reduced and she “will not be able to live at her place, a great misfortune to her as she likes it very much. She never expects to get anything more from her property in Georgia.”<sup>17</sup>

The war changed the social orientations of Philadelphia’s leadership. Peace Democrats could watch in dismay as the city’s leadership turned to Republican hands. In the years that followed the Civil War, the leaders of the old families of Philadelphia had almost disappeared from the city’s civic and political life.<sup>18</sup> Many did not approve the new city governance and its political machine and sought reform through the state legislature. Henry Charles Lea, a scholar and a publisher, founded the Citizen’s Municipal Reform Association in 1870, and two years later, the Reform Club, a subsidiary organization with prominent members as Joshua B. Lippincott, and George W. Childs, Joseph Harrison, and John Welsh, all former officers of the Great Central Fair. Lea advanced a new state constitution that would rid City Hall of corruption. Scores of Quakers and the Reform Club supported the initiative and the effort produced a new constitution and election law in 1874.

The idea to mark the nation’s centennial with an international exhibition was conceived over a decade before the intended celebration. Professor J. L. Campbell of Wabash College in Indiana wrote the mayor of Philadelphia with the suggestion in December 1866 and reiterated his call for action two years later. The endorsement of the Select Council of Philadelphia, the state legislature, and Franklin Institute hastened an

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<sup>17</sup> Sidney George Fisher, Jonathan W. White, *A Philadelphia Perspective: the Civil War Diary of Sidney George Fisher* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 201.

<sup>18</sup> Weigley, *Philadelphia*, 437.



introduction of a bill in Congress. After the passage of the bill into law on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1871, commissioners from the states and territories were selected. Joseph Roswell Hawley, former governor of Connecticut and a Republican congressman, was appointed president of the Centennial Commission and Alfred T. Goshorn was elected director general due to his extensive experience in organizing the Cincinnati industrial expositions.

The Commission estimated that they would require raising a sum of \$10 million from the public in order to make the project a reality. The commissioners established a quota for the states and territories in respect to their populations to facilitate a fair share of the burden. Supporters could purchase a subscription to the Centennial Stock valued at \$10, paid in \$2 installments. In June 1, 1872, Congress created the Centennial Board of Finance (CBOF) to manage the subscriptions and selected John Welsh to preside it. His success in overseeing the Great Central Fair, held in Philadelphia during the Civil War and as a prominent merchant, demonstrated that he was deeply involved in the city's civic life. Likewise, several of the members of the Board of Directors were prominent city merchants, including John Wanamaker, Clement M. Biddle, Henry Winsor, and Amos R. Little.

Working with an extremely tight schedule, the CBOF faced a difficult task; it needed to secure funds sufficient to erect the buildings at the earliest date to allow adequate time for foreign countries to prepare their exhibits. The Act of Congress of March 3, 1871 stipulated that the president of the United States would officially invite the nations to participate in the exhibition only after the Governor of Pennsylvania had

notified him that the money for the exhibition buildings had been secured.<sup>19</sup> The effort to collect subscriptions in Philadelphia commenced without delay. A Subcommittee of Twenty- Five was responsible for mapping a plan to popularize the exhibition.<sup>20</sup> The members followed a similar strategy employed in the Great Central Fair. Several of them had worked to publicize it. In their attempt to reach the greatest numbers of people, they classified professional men under their trades, occupations, and social interests. The Centennial Stock's value made it prohibitive for workers. The task of organizing the one hundred and seventy - eight sub-committees fell in the hands of the Citizens' Centennial Finance Committee of Three Hundred.<sup>21</sup> In the meantime, Pennsylvania Commissioners divided the states into county, ward, division, and township committees for efficient canvassing.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to finance, the event and its purpose had to be nationally publicized. The Centennial Executive Commission (CEC) was responsible for issuing an appeal to deliver throughout the country. Astutely, the Commission chose to direct its first address to the agricultural and mechanical associations in October, approximately a month before

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<sup>19</sup> United States Centennial Commission, *Appendix to the Reports of the United States Centennial Commission and Centennial Board of Finance* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1879), 102.

<sup>20</sup> *The Executive Documents Printed by the Order of the Senate of the United States for the Third Session of the Forty-Fifth Congress, 1878-'79* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1879), 123.

<sup>21</sup> Appropriately, J. Edgar Thompson, the President of the Pennsylvania Railroad, served as the head of the Rail Road and Canal Companies Committee while the physician and charity activist, Dr. Henry T. Childs, headed the Arbitrations and Indian Affairs Committee. Robert M. Huston, ed., *The Medical Examiner and Record of Medical Science*, vol. III – New Series (Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston, 1874), 86; "News," *The Medical and Surgical Reporter*, LXII (Jan. –June 1890): 762; *List of Members of Various Committees on Trades, Occupations, Professions, & c. Appointed under the Resolution of the Citizens' Centennial Finance Committee of Three Hundred, November 18, 1872* (Philadelphia: King Baird, Printers, 1873).

<sup>22</sup> United States Centennial Board of Finance Board of Corporators for Pennsylvania, *Minutes for the proceedings of the Corporation for Pennsylvania of the Centennial Board of Finance*. (Philadelphia, 1872), 3.

the beginning of the stock sale. These associations included salaried professionals, skilled workers, and farmers, the majority of the nation's workforce. In November the Commission addressed "the people of the United States" from the pages of local newspapers. The CBOF had officially opened the books of subscriptions of the Centennial Stocks for one hundred days on November 21, 1872. At the end of the period, a board of trustees was to be elected by the stockholders. If the committee had hoped for an overwhelming response from the public, it would have certainly been gravely disappointed. The prospects of the monumental event neither attracted an adequate amount of speculators nor did it appeal to men's patriotic sentiments.

The commissioners, however, believed that with an efficient campaign they could accrue the considerable amount of funds required. On the Commission's annual meeting, on March 1872, its president-elect, Joseph R. Hawley, stated confidently:

That there will be a formal National Celebration of the Centennial Anniversary there is no doubt. That, as a part or accompaniment thereof, there will be a grand International Exhibition, is equally certain. . . I can use no language too serious and vigorous in assuring the public that this is to be, in every true and satisfactory sense of the word, a great National and International Exhibition.<sup>23</sup>

Upon invitation the commissioners visited two of Philadelphia's significant historical sites, Independence Hall and Carpenters' Hall. Following their excursion Orestes

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<sup>23</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the United States Centennial Commission. At Philadelphia, 1872* (Philadelphia: E. C. Markley & Sons, Printers, 1872), 42.

Cleveland, the Commission's first vice president, passionately expressed his delight at the exceptional tour:

I was impressed with the grand and glorious memories clustering round about Philadelphia, all pointing with solemn significance to the occasion we are preparing to celebrate. May we all have light and strength to appreciate that occasion, as it approaches! No such family gathering has ever been known in the world's history, and we shall have passed away and been forgotten when the next one recurs.<sup>24</sup>

It was regrettable that the commissioners did not convey their enthusiasm over the nation's past in their first two, and perhaps most important, appeals. In his appeal to agricultural and mechanical associations, William Phipps Blake emphasized the opportunity to participate in an international exhibit with a flat statement: "Patriotism, as well as an appreciation of the industrial, educational, and moral influences of well-organized exhibitions, should impel all citizens to lend a helping hand."<sup>25</sup> In contrast, president Joseph R. Hawley in his public message via local newspapers attempted to entice people's imagination with descriptions of artifacts from exotic countries and foster national pride among the "harmonious" union of "one united body politic."<sup>26</sup>

In presenting their enterprise to the nation the commissioners chose to promote the idea of an American world's fair rather than the reason for the celebration, the

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>25</sup> United States Centennial Commission, *International Exhibition, 1876: Reports of the President, Secretary, and Executive Commission Together with the Journal of the Final Session of the Commission*, Vol. II, Appendix B (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880), 21.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 23. The message was to appear at all local newspapers on November 13, 1872. See: *Report of the Centennial Commission to Congress*, 15-16, United States Centennial Commission, Correspondence & Papers – Reports to U. S. Congress, Record Group 23—1.2, City Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (CA thereafter).

country's centennial year. The commissioners were frank about their goal: a demonstration of America as a source of industrial and scientific advances in a grand show that would equal that of European exhibitions. In this vision the past existed as an elementary foundation worthy only as a comparison with the improvements that followed. The commissioners presented patriotism as an abstract obligation, not as an expression of national pride. Their assumptions might have also generated adverse reactions from residents of Southern states and territories who might not have perceived themselves as complacent members of the union.

Several of the circulars that followed contained short historical references. In their 130,000 copies of the appeal to "the people of the United States" the CEC referred to the "self-sacrificing ancestors" in its last paragraph. On February 1873, when the Commissioners realized they had failed to raise public interest and were desperate for a solution, Blake appealed to all the clergy and the religious associations in the country for assistance. In the longest of all addresses, which rings like a fine sermon, he describes the centennial as a "momentous import in universal history" for its establishment of freedom of religion. Out of all the officers, the Pennsylvania agents for CBOF were the only ones to seriously attempt to tailor their appeal to their constituency by mentioning Philadelphia's sites and their meaning. Daniel M. Fox linked the exhibition to European world fairs and emphasized the significance of its historical location:

The eyes of the world are upon this, the chosen State, which, above all, should be true to its heritage of that holy temple of freedom, Independence Hall, the sacred spot from which emanated that sublime Declaration, the

corner-stone of our nationality and progress, the palladium of our liberties and our rights.<sup>27</sup>

Enamored of the Vienna International Exhibition of 1873, which had been visited and thoroughly studied, the members of the CEC intended to produce an event that would rank America among the advanced nations of Western Europe.<sup>28</sup> Their foresightedness was difficult to interpret to a people who, for the most part, lived several days' travel from Philadelphia and were interested primarily in local affairs. The commissioners scarcely capitalized on the significance of the centennial as an American historical milestone and thus failed to highlight an event more familiar to the public than a world's fair: the founding of the nation.

In a confidential report to Congress, the Centennial Commission recognized two factors in the failure to raise interest in the exhibition: the lack of paid advertising and the inability of volunteers to reach great numbers of people.<sup>29</sup> The reliance on volunteers who could canvass only after other avocations, they suggested, prevented them from completing their assignments. By February 1873 the city of Philadelphia, its residents, and its local railroad companies had contributed \$1.75 million, nearly double the quota of the state, but outside Pennsylvania the effort of 1,714 agents proved ineffective.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>28</sup> J. E. Mitchell and Charles H. T. Collis, *Vienna Exposition: Report of the Commission to Vienna* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, Printers, 1873).

<sup>29</sup> *Report of the Centennial Commission to Congress*, 24.

<sup>30</sup> "The Nation's Centennial," *Public Ledger*, 24 February 1873, 2. "Report of the Secretary," *Journal of the Proceedings of the United States Centennial Commission. At Philadelphia, 1872*, 37.

In the middle of that month the CBOF decided to procure further assistance to promote the exhibition and increase the sales of its stock. It summoned thirteen leading Philadelphia society women – thirteen to symbolize the colonies – who had all earned respect for their work during the Great Central Fair. The nine women who responded met CBOF president John Welsh, Secretary Meyer Asch, and Mr. Ziegler. Welsh admitted to the women that the Centennial Commission and the CBOF failed to raise adequate interest in the enterprise and asked for their help. At the behest of Mr. Ziegler, Welsh added: “Ladies, you will see that Mrs. Gillespie’s name is at the head of each list on your invitation.” Welsh hinted the ladies that the Centennial Executive Committee wanted Elizabeth Duane Gillespie to lead the women’s operation. With such endorsement he ensured that no other woman would challenge her leadership. The women were promised space in the main building devoted to their own exhibit as a reward for their assistance.

Gillespie attested that she “went home depressed and with much of the astrakhan fur trimming on my coat picked off, leaving the skin as bare of fur as was my poor brain of ideas.” Her despair did not last long. Shortly thereafter she disclosed that she had “a plan [she] had formed several years before, hoping that some turn in the wheel of fortune might give me the contract for cleaning the streets of Philadelphia. I had even gone so far in this ambitious dream that my arrangements were made for the fulfillment of it.”<sup>31</sup> Gillespie, who had worked for the USSC and the Great Central Fair during the Civil War and had to support her daughter and niece had probably designed a municipal project that could provide her with a paid position fitted for her managerial skills.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 271.

Gillespie revealed her strategy to the organizational body the women had formed, promptly named the Women's Centennial Executive Committee (WCEC). The officers, all experienced managers from the Sanitary Fair, included the treasurer, Mrs. J. Edgar Thomson; the secretary Mrs. Aubrey H. Smith; Mrs. Henry Cohen; Mrs. John W. Forney; and Mrs. John J. Stillé.<sup>32</sup> A reputable officer would head each of the city's wards and would form a committee of women of her choice. Ward committees would be limited to thirty six members, equal the number of states in the Union. The aides would canvass their respective areas in an attempt to reach working women at factories and assist them in teaming up for purchasing stock subscriptions. The plan, implemented after prominent citizens and businessmen had already given their share, succeeded in raising over \$42,000 in the first three months of its operation.<sup>33</sup>

Gillespie's plan differed from that of the CBOF in its target population. While the CBOF approached professional men they reached through their business networks, the ward aides offered a larger constituency, previously ignored by the men, an affordable opportunity to contribute for the cause. By emphasizing that the campaign was a women's effort the organizers could gain support of those who wanted to demonstrate women's ability and competence. An initial mass meeting to launch the campaign was scheduled for February 22, at the Academy of Music, a reputable hall for scores of respectable society's events. Gillespie, who headed the post office women's committee in the Great Central Fair and was a member of the fine arts committee, was well aware of

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<sup>32</sup> Other members included the Vice President, Mrs. John Sanders, Mrs. Matthew Simpson, wife of the prominent Methodist Episcopal Bishop, and Mrs. Richard P. White. *Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>33</sup> The Women's Branch United States Centennial Commission, *Final Report of the Women Centennial Executive Committee, March 22, 1877* (Philadelphia: Press of Henry B. Ashmead, 1877), 6.



the popularity of the fair's historical presentations. She must have been convinced that promoting an ideal past would appeal to society women once more. The meeting was held on Washington's Birthday.

In her first public appearance, Gillespie briefly recounted the events that led to the gathering and introduced the goals of the committee and the chairmen's tasks. The reward for their effort, she emphasized, would be the opportunity to exhibit the work of American women and gain world-wide respect. She also announced her plan to turn the local effort into a national operation and shrewdly juxtaposed it in a significant historical framework:

Just as the Declaration of Independence brought freedom to all the States, so will this Exposition bring high consideration for each State of the Union. Each signer of that precious old document did not insist upon trotting to his own State, there to give his signature. It was given here for the welfare of all; and here for the honor of all shall these commemorative ceremonies be held; and here we shall presently ask the women from our sister States to come up to help us.<sup>34</sup>

Gillespie reinforced the historical character of the Centennial by empowering women with a stately national role. In linking women's enterprise with that of the signers of the Declaration she conferred women with authority to impress history similar to the actions taken by the Founding Fathers. Focusing on the notion of a revolutionary union allowed her to disregard the recent sectional strife and offer Southern states an implicit reprieve and public acceptance. It was a minor gesture for Southerners, who experienced the results of a debilitated economy and the legislation of the Radical Republicans. Gillespie,

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 276.

however, did not expect reconciliation but hoped that the opportunity to participate in a national campaign would convince Southern women to join the enterprise. At length, she asserted the leadership of Philadelphia women and her own by declaring that “any organization which might grow from this proposition must originate with us.”<sup>35</sup>

The intersection of women and history would be a repeated theme in meetings and balls organized by Centennial women all over the country. Linking women’s Centennial effort to the contribution made by colonial women to the Revolution celebrated their current project as a selfless patriotic act done for a country in need.

Centennial officials praised the deeds of colonial women in publicized fundraising meetings. They were careful, however, to emphasize their femininity in order to demonstrate that bold acts did not transform their identity. In his speech on the WCEC’s first mass meeting at the Academy of Music on April 1873, Henry Armitt Brown, a renowned orator, illustrated women’s assistance to the revolution by singling out a mother who had sacrificed her three sons, Rebecca Matt for sacrificing her home, and Lydia Darrah, who saved Washington’s “little army.” And though one woman was praised for checking the advancement of the British Army by taking her dead husband’s “place beside the gun,” the orator insisted that a spirited woman “has to stamp her little

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<sup>35</sup> Women’s Executive Committee, “Address of the Women’s Executive Committee to the Chairmen of the Several Committees of Women in Philadelphia,” HSP.

foot” and men would do as she desires.<sup>36</sup> Brown did not neglect to mention the connection between the Centennial women and their colonial female ancestors:

In season and out of season, in joy and sorrow, in peace and war, you have proved yourselves worthy descendents of the women of our earlier days. It is right that the daughters of those whose patriotism and fortitude contributed so much to the foundation of the Republic should share its maturer glories... It is blessing of America that her women have not yet fallen bellow the standard of her simpler days.”<sup>37</sup>

The WCEC’s subsequent event proved pivotal to the success of their national campaign. In response to the historical association of the Centennial, Reverend Reeves of Gloucester, New Jersey, proposed that Gillespie commemorate the approaching centennial of the Boston Tea Party in each city ward.<sup>38</sup> Gillespie sensed the occasion would be a fitting theme for a grand fund-raising gala, and the WCEC promptly organized a joint-ward affair at the Academy of Music. Gillespie generated great publicity by limiting the amount of tickets each patron could acquire. When demand for tickets exceeded expectations, the Executive Committee sought to utilize the adjacent Horticultural Hall for additional space. No detail escaped the women, as concern over winter chill prompted them to engage in a building project. They approached city officials and pulled a shelved plan to build a bridge between the Academy of Music and the Horticultural Hall. Overcoming all obstacles, they helped fund the erection of an iron

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<sup>36</sup> “Patriotic Women at Work. Women’s Centennial Mass Meeting,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 21 April 1873, 2.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>38</sup> *First Annual Report of the Women’s Centennial Executive Committee* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1874), 4. Gillespie, *Book of Remembrance*, 283.

bridge that would allow the guests a safe crossing between the buildings. Befitting a grand social event, Gillespie invited governors, Centennial commissioners, senators, government representatives, and other prominent men from all parts of the country.

On December 17, 1873, the celebration commenced with a program for children including choruses by public school students and a performance of waltz “Centennial Tea Party,” composed and dedicated to the WCEC by Simon Hassler, a local composer. It also featured an address by a prominent Philadelphia woman who impersonated a witness to the events that unfolded in Boston Harbor in 1773.<sup>39</sup> The performance followed with a reading of an essay written by a public school student entitled “Why is the Centennial to be held in Philadelphia?” describing the impact of the city on national history and, as expected, concluding that the city is the most suitable site for such a momentous event. This portion promptly closed with “The American Hymn.”

In the evening, a magnificent spectacle awaited hundreds of guests who arrived at the Horticultural Hall. Flags of all nations and coats of arms of the states and territories decorated the walls, indicating of the national and international character of the Centennial. Elegantly decorated tea tables with abundance of evergreens, banners, flowers, fruits, lights, and objects of interest filled the gallery. The tables, arranged by different city wards, represented the states and territories. On the balcony, a model of the Dartmouth, a merchant British vessel, complete with boxes of tea dangling over its deck and a youth dressed in an Indian costume, indicated the theme of the celebration.

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<sup>39</sup> “The Tea Party,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 17 December 1873, 2.

Near the entrance, the Massachusetts table, presided by Mrs. A. Rand of the Fifteenth Ward, exhibited a two-foot long candy miniature of the Dartmouth, a representation of Bunker Hill made of flowers, an array of flags obtained from Boston including one dated from the colonial period, silver tea pieces, and confections. The women of the ward selected Massachusetts, an ally state of Pennsylvania, but were careful to ignore “her degenerate son, John Quincy Adams.”<sup>40</sup> They criticized President Adams for losing his re-election as president to the Democrat Andrew Jackson. He was the first president since his father, John Adams, to serve one term.

The Twenty-Second Ward featured Rhode Island. They emphasized the significance of colonial household production with a spinning wheel at the center of their display “suggestive of the industry of the state.”<sup>41</sup> At other tables visitors could enjoy a display of a portrait of Washington painted by Charles Wilson Peale, spoons that had belonged to George Washington engraved with his initials, a huge cake with an image of Goddess of Liberty supported by the figures of Washington and Franklin, an election cake, and a number of other artifacts. Show pieces were attractively arranged among the sellable merchandise to entice patrons. The ward chairwomen and their aides served tea dressed in Martha Washington costumes including caps, kerchiefs or in Dolly Varden calico dresses.<sup>42</sup> They filled tea cups imprinted with John Hancock’s signature served on

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<sup>40</sup> The Women’s Branch United States Centennial Commission, *Report of the Fifteenth Ward Special Committee* (Philadelphia: A. T. Zeising, 1877), 7.

<sup>41</sup> The Women’s Branch United States Centennial Commission, *Report of the Twenty Second Ward Special Committee* (Philadelphia: E. M. Gans, Printers, 1877), 5.

<sup>42</sup> Dolly Varden was a character from the novel *Barnaby Rudge: A Tale of the Riots of ‘Eighty*, written by Charles Dickens, who wore colorful clothes with calico pattern.

saucers marked with the event's date. Copies of a poem "The Cup of Tea", written particularly for the occasion by Eli Kirk Price, were offered for sale. It directly linked Centennial women to colonists' revolutionary deeds – "That *men*, down east, *poured out* the tea... But *women* now *help out* the tea" – and concluded with the theme of the event "For sacred now's this cup of tea, / Memorial of our Liberty!"<sup>43</sup>

On the stage, the tables of the Board of Managers of the National Museum and the WCEC drew much attention. The National Museum was the brainchild of Frank M. Etting, a descendant of a colonial Jewish family, who served as chairman of the Committee on Restoration of Independence Hall. He sought to transform the building into a major repository of historical artifacts that would represent the nation's history from the colonial period through War of 1812.<sup>44</sup> The women's Board of Managers consisted of prominent society women including Mrs. Frank Etting, Mrs. Albert Biddle, Mrs. Owen Wister, Mrs. Samuel Chew, and Miss Agnes Irwin. Their table displayed revolutionary artifacts, portraits of Robert Morris and Martha Washington, a candlestick that once belonged to Benjamin Franklin, and the tables of James Logan and William Penn. The former was decorated with evergreens and a floral representation of the Liberty Bell and the year 1776. The WCEC's table, presided by Gillespie, featured the

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<sup>43</sup> "The Tea Party. Repetition of the Entertainment," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 Dec. 1873, 2.

<sup>44</sup> For a detailed account of the National Museum see: Mires, *Independence Hall in American Memory*, 121-34.

dining table of William Penn. A portrait of Sarah Franklin Bache, the daughter of Benjamin Franklin and grandmother of Gillespie, hung conspicuously above it.<sup>45</sup>

The ceremonial march from the Horticultural Hall of several hundred women, all dressed in Martha Washington-like costume, marked the beginning of the main program. Nearly five hundred ward committee aides occupied their reserved spaces on the parquet at the Academy of Music. Impressed by the sight, John Welsh excitedly remarked “I have never seen so lovely a flower garden.”<sup>46</sup> The stage was filled with members of the WCEC and heads of ward committees, the Restoration Committee of Independence Hall, male members of the Centennial Executive Committee and the CBOF, and prominent citizens including Rev. Bishop Simpson. Former mayor Daniel Fox. William Hepburn Armstrong, a former Republican Congressman from Pennsylvania, spoke about the Centennial and its educational merit, and Mayor William S. Stokley surprised Gillespie with a gavel made of the original wood upon which the Liberty Bell hung when it proclaimed “Liberty throughout the land.”<sup>47</sup> Perhaps even more welcoming was the approval for the WCEC to nationalize their enterprise and pursue the assistance of the states and territories.

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<sup>45</sup> “The Centennial Tea Party at the Academy of Music and Horticultural Hall,” *Public Ledger*, 18 Dec. 1873, 1.

<sup>46</sup> Gillespie, *Book of Remembrance*, 285.

<sup>47</sup> “‘The Cup That Cheers’ The Philadelphia Tea Party,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 Dec. 1873, 2.



Figure 2. Mrs. Lardner Brown in a Martha Washington costume

LIBRARY COMPANY OF PHILADELPHIA



The event that “might have carried [guests], mentally, back to the times of one hundred years ago” proved exceptionally successful. The party was extended for a second day when an estimated additional three thousand children and caretakers participated in the early program and five thousand adults attended the evening ball.<sup>48</sup>

The tea party proved highly successful. Adults and children relished the event, and the Centennial project received a boost of publicity. The women earned over \$10,000.<sup>49</sup> The tea cups had to be repeatedly ordered and brought additional profit.<sup>50</sup> The money was used to purchase Centennial Stock in the name of the Mount Vernon National Association, the first women’s organization dedicated to preservation, that of George Washington’s home.

The sum of money the women raised was significant considering the state of the nation’s economy. On September 18, 1873, the Philadelphia banking firm Jay Cooke went bankrupt. This event along with the meltdown of the Vienna Stock Exchange in Austria in May of the same year led to an economic depression that lasted several years.<sup>51</sup>

Selecting a revolutionary incident as a theme for a highly publicized fundraising gala was undoubtedly the key to its success. The WCEC capitalized on the interest in colonial artifacts they had seen in the Great Central Fair and prominently displayed them

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<sup>48</sup> “The Tea Party,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 Dec. 1873, 2.

<sup>49</sup> *First Annual Report of the Women’s Centennial Executive Committee, February 16, 1874* (Philadelphia: press of J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1874), 5.

<sup>50</sup> Gillespie attests that ten thousands cups were sold. See: Gillespie, *Book of Remembrance*, 284.

<sup>51</sup> For a better understanding of the panics in the latter part of the nineteenth century see: Elmus Wicker, *Banking Panics of the Gilded Age* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

with decorations of familiar icons such as the Liberty Bell to emphasize unity in battling the British. Defining Martha Washington as a prime historical actor provided a stark reminder of the participation of women in the revolutionary past to those who increasingly considered George Washington as a representative symbol of the era. The reign of women and domesticity presented a refreshing change from the stern image of revolutionary political leaders typically exhibited in the National Museum. Similar to the Great Central Fair, the WCEC domesticated local revolutionary leaders by presenting their portraits, characteristically hung in parlors, along with their home furnishings and household items. Martha Washington costumes and the spinning wheel portrayed ideal past but also hinted at the importance of women's work.

Hierarchy and pedigree had also been conspicuously expressed in the costumes and exhibits. Attendance in colonial costume was the sole privilege of officers of the Executive Committee, ward chairs, and aides. Gillespie, who was the only one to prominently exhibit her ancestor, left no doubt about her high position in the organization. Her bold choice of displaying her ancestor Sarah Franklin Bache, and not Benjamin Franklin, had symbolically created a lineage of women, asserting that women were as significant as men. Elizabeth Robins Pennell, who was not asked to participate in the enterprise due to her father's loss of the family fortune, commented: "I could not help knowing that she was [Benjamin Franklin's] descendant, for no one could mention her

without dragging in his name.”<sup>52</sup> Gillespie presented an additional name, that of her grandmother instead.

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich argues that eighteenth-century New England women used their heirloom pieces to construct female lineages of their families. They often gave their homespun articles, which they claimed as their own (not their husbands’), to female relatives for safekeeping. These objects linked women over time and enabled their owners to perpetuate family relations.<sup>53</sup> Since married women did not own property and could not bequeath to their daughters and female relatives valuable estates, they left their property – their own handiwork and those of their female ancestors. Ulrich asserts that through their bequests, New England women established a female ancestral line. Gillespie’s link to her grandmother was not based on domestic production but on patriotic public activity. Bache’s deeds on behalf of the revolutionary soldiers matched Gillespie’s work on behalf of the Centennial.

There was little reason to include public school children in a social event of proper Philadelphia, unless the WCEC saw an opportunity for educating the masses. As with the Sanitary Fair, the women made use of the opportunity to inculcate young minds in the history of the nation and the significance of the city to the creation of the nation. As Hon. W. H. Armstrong, one of the dignitaries to address the crowd in the Academy, said, “The commemoration of leading events in national history tends to perpetuate the love of liberty and impress on our children virtuous emulation of the heroic examples of

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<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth Robins Pennell, *Our Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Company, 1914), 215.

<sup>53</sup> Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun*, 135-141.

patriotic devotion.”<sup>54</sup> Exposing young students of humble means, particularly at a time when many families suffered from the recent economic depression, to the frills and wealth of the Horticultural Hall would possibly have left them with a lasting impression. They would have been aware of the distinct sense of entitlement that the guests imparted through their opulent attire, their attitude, and above all, their conduct.<sup>55</sup> The women would probably have liked to believe that the children would have perceived them and their male counterparts as authority and leadership figures.

The WCEC did not ignore leading men despite celebrating the deeds of female ancestors. They decided to mark George Washington’s birthday, February 22, with an additional fund-raising event, the Washington Assembly, scheduled due to the beginning of Lent for January 26 in 1874. Unlike their tea party, this celebration was limited to Centennial Stock holders and the number of Centennial managers was limited to thirteen, to symbolize of the number of colonies. However, exclusivity did not bring substantial profit, and ten days prior to the event the prerequisite of stock ownership was dropped and the required eighteenth-century costumes were made optional.<sup>56</sup> Curiously, major city newspapers and the WCEC’s reports remained silent about the event and Gillespie sole comment that “the entertainment was not a failure” did not reveal additional

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<sup>54</sup> Frank M. Etting, “The Tea Party,” newspaper clipping, *The Philadelphia Tea Party of 1773 – A Chapter of the Old State House*. LC.

<sup>55</sup> For a detailed description of gentility see: Chapter 1, 11-12.

<sup>56</sup> “The Washington Assembly,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 17 January 1874, 3.

information.<sup>57</sup> It is possible that the combination of the selective list of guests and the persistence of the national crisis, which had greatly affected professionals and corporate profits, contributed to the celebration's meager success.

As women in Northern states joined the effort, the WCEC, the ward chairs, and their aides continuously labored to raise additional funds. On their second celebration of Washington's Birthday, February, 1875, the WCEC celebrated the global aspect of the Centennial with the International Assembly Tea Party. Each city ward selected a country, collected representative articles for sale and display, and had the officers dressed in national costumes. The women's selection of countries was overwhelmingly influenced by a view of the centrality of Western nations in world affairs. France, Britain, Holland, Sweden, Ireland, Austria, Russia, Italy, and Germany were several of the chosen representatives from the western world, while Egypt, India, and China, were chosen because they were all under British influence. North and South America were represented by Mexico in addition to the U.S.<sup>58</sup>

America's colonial past occupied center stage in the Executive Table under the chairmanship of Gillespie, and represented both France and the United States. In recognition of the assistance France gave the colonies during the Revolution, thirteen arches made of evergreens and flowers, decorated with shields and the French and

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<sup>57</sup> *Second Annual Report of the Women's Centennial Executive Committee* (Philadelphia: Thomas S. Dando, 1875), 5; "First Annual Meeting. Anniversary of the Women's Centennial Executive Committee," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 17 February 1874, 2.

<sup>58</sup> Tunis and Liberia might not have been enticing spots to represent Africa, but Peru, Brazil, Argentine Confederation, Cuba, Chili, and Venezuela exhibited in the Centennial but were not chosen by the women.

American flags, rose from the table. Gas jets spelled “France and the United States – Sister Republics” above the stage, in a recognition of the newly created French Third Republic. The British table similarly presented the British and American flags as a signal of mutual political and cultural interests. The women’s contemporary worldview, more than a historical one, could be observed in the North American table, where a lady dressed as Goddess of Liberty, and other ladies appeared in Native American costumes without any apparent conflict.<sup>59</sup> The women did not perceive any conflict between Liberty and the confiscation of the Native American lands. By the end of the 1860s and the early 1870s Americans considered reservations the most suitable place for the Native Americans to live.<sup>60</sup> Philadelphia elite women, like other Americans, did not consider the Native Americans as people who possessed rights to own their lands and did not see any wrong in their expulsion from it.

Refusing to acknowledge German eminence in Europe, the women dedicated three tables to the united German nation: Prussia, North Germany and South Germany. For almost eighty years, prior to the Franco-Prussian War (July 1870- May 1871), France led Europe in military matters. Prussia, on the other hand, was one of the weakest European military forces in 1860. Otto Eduard Leopold von Bismarck, the Prime Minister of Prussia, managed to industrialize his country, build a greater Prussia following the war with Denmark in 1864, and create the German Confederacy after a war

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<sup>59</sup> The Centennial International Entertainment Brilliant Gathering at the Academy of Music,” *Public Ledger*, 23 February 1875, 1.

<sup>60</sup> Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 4.

with Austria in 1866. Within a month into the Franco-Prussian War, he established the imminent unification of Germany under Prussian leadership and demonstrated military superiority in Europe.<sup>61</sup> Although a unified Germany was in existence for two and a half years, the women chose to present the country as divided and as insignificant as it had been before its remarkable military campaign. By doing so, they demonstrated their support of France, the American ally during the revolution and the former military power in the Continent.

The women understood that a lavish affair would not only promote the Centennial but would also reach deeper pockets. On the opening evening they announced on the pages of a city newspaper:

The ladies have taken unwearied pains to make this spectacle one of the most beautiful ever seen in Philadelphia. If the guests appear in their street costumes the beauty of the house will be destroyed. The ladies do not desire to exclude those who by reason of age desire to wear their bonnets, but they earnestly entreat the younger members of society to wear “demi-toilettes,” short dress and without bonnets.<sup>62</sup>

Indeed, the guests attended in full evening dress and in large numbers. The program opened with a concert in the Academy of Music. Invited dignitaries sat on the stage, among them members of the Centennial Executive Committee and the CBOF, the Austrian Minister to the U.S. and the Consul of the Argentine Republic at Philadelphia,

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<sup>61</sup> Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War* (London: Rupert Hart Davis, 1961; reprint, New York: Routledge, 2004), 1, 21 (page references are to reprint edition).

<sup>62</sup> “Centennial International Assembly,” *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, 22 February 1875, 8.

Military officers, and officers of the Navy stationed at the Navy Yard. Ward aides sat in the parquet in front of the stage. Following the concert, the women, nearly a thousand in number and wearing costumes of different nationalities formed a procession on the stage and proceeded to the Horticultural Hall for refreshments at their respective tables. The evening commenced with dances that lasted until one in the morning. One impressed guest commented that “the gathering was exceptionally striking and brilliant.” The International Assembly was the “largest entertainments ever held in the city” and netted a considerable \$14,000, half of which the women donated to the Centennial Building Fund.<sup>63</sup>

With momentum high, media applause, and large sums in their coffers despite the ever-increasing economic difficulty, the women eagerly planned an event of a different sort, a Loan Exhibition for April, 1875. With the help of the managers of the National Museum, they solicited articles of historical interest through their ward managers and arranged them at the residence of George G. Franciscus in Rittenhouse Square, an upscale city neighborhood.<sup>64</sup> The effort produced an exhibition of paintings from galleries and individual owners as well as the Sommerville Collection of antique gems. The items on display included historical portraits, antique furniture, old books and manuscripts, and historical artifacts.

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<sup>63</sup> *Second Annual Report of the Women’s Centennial Executive Committee*, 12, 13.

<sup>64</sup> Neither the catalogue of the exhibition nor the women’s reports divulge the identity of the owner of the residence where the exhibition was held at 218 West Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia. For the owner see: Charles J. Cohen, *Rittenhouse Square Past and Present* (Printed Privately, 1922), 154.



As visitors stepped in, the first collections encountered were the portraits associated with national, state, and city history executed by some of the country's most illustrious artists. They could observe George Washington and Henry Clay painted by Charles W. Peale, Dr. Benjamin Rush painted by Benjamin West, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison painted by Gilbert Stuart, George Washington painted by Thomas Sully. They could also view three leading women: Cleopatra, the queen of Ancient Egypt, Ariadne, a Greek mythological queen, and a bas-relief of Gillespie, the president Centennial Committee. The bas-relief was made in Rome for the WCEC and was presented to her by her Centennial female friends as a token of their appreciation.<sup>65</sup>

On the second floor, audiences could stroll leisurely among the private collections of several of the city's wealthy individuals and respect their appreciation for art.<sup>66</sup> Additional rooms displayed portraits of notable women including Mrs. Arnold, the daughter of Chief Justice Shippen sketched by Major John André, Mrs. Fanny Kemble, a famous British actress who married Pierce Butler, heir of one of the large plantation in Georgia, Sarah Franklin Bache, daughter of Benjamin Franklin, and Mrs. Thomas Fitzgerald all painted by Sully; Miss Elizabeth Bordley, wife of James Gibson, a respected city lawyer, by Stuart; and the European Duchess of Sutherland and Mme de Sévigné, a French aristocrat. The American ladies had all earned respect for their social standing and several for their support of the revolution. Alarmed by the prospect that Esther de Berdt's war effort would pass unnoticed due to her maiden name, the catalogue

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<sup>65</sup> "The Centennial Loan Exhibition," *Public Ledger*, 17 April 1875, 1; *Catalogue of the Centennial Loan Exhibition 218 Rittenhouse Square* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1875), 3-4.

<sup>66</sup> The collections exhibited belonged to James Lawrence Claghorn, a businessman and banker and a recognized art collector, John Welsh, the President of the CBOF, and the gallery of M. W. Baldwin.

pointed out that she was the wife of General Joseph Reed and the president of the Women's Association for alleviating the suffering of Revolutionary War Soldiers.<sup>67</sup>

Visitors could also explore miscellaneous articles such as a portrayal of the reception given to Lafayette at the Chew house in Germantown and some personal articles that belonged to Benjamin Franklin, William Penn, Thomas Jefferson, and General Washington. Viewing Mount Vernon furnishings – a cup, two glasses, a chair and a few pieces of Martha Washington's dress – visitors could imagine her domestic domain, while the pictures of the signers of the Declaration of Independence with their autographs and the original manuscript of the Oath of Allegiance would remind them of the founding of the nation.<sup>68</sup>

Gillespie's goal in creating the exhibition was to gather -

the portraits of those who ninety-nine years ago were struggling for our freedom. Animated by the example of the men and women of the Revolution, we must hope for a better inheritance for our native land than now belongs to it. Let us devote our lives to restoring the purity and simplicity of 1776.<sup>69</sup>

She aimed at an instructive exhibit where portraits of both men and women would inspire the audience with the mythic unity and legacy of the revolution. If Gillespie sought to inspire viewers with great historical leaders, she did not shy from her inclusion among them. Her image was situated between two queens and among some of the greatest

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<sup>67</sup> *Catalogue of the Centennial Loan Exhibition*, 14.

<sup>68</sup> "Centennial Loan Exhibition," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 12 April 1875, 2.

<sup>69</sup> *Second Annual Report of the Women's Centennial Executive Committee*, 13-14.

figures of the nation's history. This leaves no doubt that the WCEC highly valued her leadership and probably perceived her achievements comparable to those of the esteemed male leaders. The presentation of privileged colonial women shaped a narrative of female heroines with an air of aristocracy hinted by the European portraits. Elite Philadelphia women created the exhibit in demonstration of their class and status. They considered themselves the American aristocracy of their period.

The exhibition marked a transitional stage between that of the private collection and the institutional phase, the museum, termed by Tony Bennett the "exhibition complex." He argues that in the nineteenth century, institutions of exhibitions arranged artifacts, previously displayed in private for a restricted audience, in a manner that would serve the elite's interests, such as the innovation of Centennial in its display of racial groups where oriental, black, and aboriginal populations of conquered territories were subordinate to displays of imperial powers.<sup>70</sup> Unlike the museum, where space was abundant and staff - professional, the Loan Exhibition was limited to one city mansion and was privately organized and displayed. But similar to a nineteenth-century art institution, it was an instrument in the hands of the privileged to disseminate their particular agenda to the general public. Authority rested in the hands of organizers and collectors who selected particular works and methodologically arranged them to construct their own national historical narrative. Limited space contributed to higher selective process and possibly a honed message that focused on fewer but more significant

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<sup>70</sup> Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 60-61, 82.

artifacts. Judging by the impression of the women of the Third Ward, the exhibit raised general interest and was “an instructive and pleasant place of resort.”<sup>71</sup>

The Loan Exhibit catalogue served as a site where class, memory, and authority intersected. It linked owners, people of extraordinary wealth and privilege, to most exhibited articles, remnants of the revolutionary era. Thus, one might learn of Mrs. Edward Shippen’s and Mrs. McClure’s connection to the colonists for the former owned a bottle that came over on the Mayflower and the latter possessed a few artifacts from Mount Vernon. The link of Mr. W. J. Phillips to George Washington was evident by his holdings of the General’s autographed letter, a piece of his sofa cover, and a lock of his hair. Gillespie’s ancestry was demonstrated in several of Benjamin Franklin’s items she loaned for display. The Exhibition Committee, sensitive to the importance of crediting owners for their items, placed an announcement of regret about articles that did not accompany names of owners at the end of the catalogue.<sup>72</sup> The catalogue linked wealth and pedigree with privilege and authority. It established the current generation of colonial descendents not only as custodians of American history but also as agents of social transformation, the creators of “better inheritance for our native land”.<sup>73</sup>

With the rising popularity of Martha Washington, the WCEC initiated a production of a commemorative medal struck by the U.S. Mint with the head of Martha

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<sup>71</sup> Women’s Branch United States Centennial Commission, *Report of the Third Ward Special Committee* (Philadelphia: A. T. Zeising, 1877), 15.

<sup>72</sup> *Catalogue of the Centennial Loan Exhibition, 218 West Rittenhouse Square* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1875), 39.

<sup>73</sup> See quote: p. 132.

Washington on one side and “In Honor of the Women of the Revolution” written on the other. Patrons could purchase it in either silver or gilt.<sup>74</sup> The official medals feminized American Independence and American Liberty by depicting them as Greek mythological goddesses: one, ready to fight, and the second, a woman welcoming the arts and sciences.<sup>75</sup> The former holds a sword in one hand and raises the other toward 13 stars that represent the colonies. On its circumference appears the caption: “These United Colonies Are, and Of Right Ought to Be, Free and Independent States,” while 1776 marks the creation of America. The Liberty in the second medal represents the present. No longer in need of a sword, Liberty has it tied to her girdle and the shield of Stars and Stripes is causally leaning by her side. She extends her hands to welcome the figures of Arts and Sciences who came to present themselves in the Centennial. The year 1876 appears under the scene. Liberty has been associated with American freedom from the time of the Revolution during the 1760s. America often appeared with the Goddess of Liberty and more importantly, the Goddess was occasionally Americanized.<sup>76</sup> The official medals expressed a unified humble beginning of the nation’s history that led to the essence of progress in all areas of learning. While a memory of consensus, CBOF members ignored the role of women whose assistance to the Revolution did not depend on the use of weapons. The WCEC’s medal singled out Martha Washington to personalize the

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<sup>74</sup> Gillespie, *Book of Remembrance*, 306; *Minutes of the Women’s Centennial Committee of Philadelphia, 1875-1877*, Feb. 1, 1876, HSP.

<sup>75</sup> For details of the medal and illustrations of both sides of the medal see: “Current Memoranda,” *Potter’s American Monthly*, V (Nov. 1875): 871.

<sup>76</sup> Ray Broadus Browne, ed. *Frontiers of American Cultures* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Studies, 1968), 12.



Figure 3. Martha Washington Medal

STACK'S BOWERS GALLERIES, STACK'S – BOWERS AND PONTERIO

revolutionary effort of all women.<sup>77</sup> It aimed at inserting women into the national revolutionary history.

In June 1875, a serious setback prompted Gillespie to take extreme measures. Mr. Goshorn, the Director General of the Exhibition and Mr. Cochran, the chairman of the Committees on Grounds, Plans, and Buildings of the CBOF separately wrote Gillespie that due to overwhelming response from foreign countries there would be no space for the women's display in the Main Building. They suggested that the women could collect the sum of \$30,000 to erect their own building. They were apologetic that CBOF could not assist her financially for its funds were tied in contracts beyond the amount they possessed. Gillespie was flabbergasted. Years later she reminisced:

I was alone when I read those letters, and it was fortunate that I was, for I have lived many years since and have never forgotten the utter misery of those first moments, for the women of the whole country were working not only for patriotic motives, but with the hope that through this Exhibition their own abilities would be recognized and their work carried beyond the needle and thread. I felt disposed to rebel, for my co-workers had the promise through our Philadelphia organization that space in the Main Building was to be ours.<sup>78</sup>

After considering the situation Gillespie, the WCEC, and the chairmen of the ward committees agreed to raise money for a separate building. It was a difficult task. The Exhibition was scheduled to open in less than a year and the funds they needed were

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<sup>77</sup> The women earned a total of \$6000 from their sale. *Final Report of the Women's Centennial Executive Committee*, 9.

<sup>78</sup> Gillespie, *Book of Remembrance*, 313.

three fourths the amount they had collected since they had formed their organization over a year before.

With the approach of the holiday season, the WCEC set to organize a spectacular event to raise the needed amount. They decided to hold a Martha Washington Tea Party, a commemoration of her first official reception after George Washington became president of the United States.<sup>79</sup> The WCEC was resolved to keep a strictly professional program and refused requests for performances submitted by residents of various wards.<sup>80</sup> They hired an orchestra under the direction of Mark Hassler, a known Philadelphia musician of German Jewish origin who had performed in their previous galas.<sup>81</sup> A local newspaper commented that “The affair created quite a stir in fashionable circles, and as had been anticipated, the spacious Academy was crowded with ladies and gentlemen in costume and otherwise magnificently attired... The scene was such a one as had not been witnessed in this city during the present century.”<sup>82</sup>

A drawing room scene and a single painting of George Washington painted by Charles Wilson Peale adorned the stage. Following some introductory music, the eminent Martha Washington, represented by Mrs. John Sanders, entered the stage wearing black silk dress adorned with lace ruffles and cap. Once she took her place on the platform,

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<sup>79</sup> The Women’s Branch United States Centennial Commission, *Report of the Twenty Second Ward Special Committee* (Philadelphia: E. M. Gans, Printers, 1877), 7.

<sup>80</sup> *Minutes of the Women’s Centennial Committee of Philadelphia, 1875-1877*, HSP.

<sup>81</sup> Henry Samuel Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia Their History from Earliest Settlements to the Present Time* (Philadelphia: The Levytype Company, 1894), 386-7.

<sup>82</sup> “Martha Washington Her Reception Last Night at the Academy. Dancing the Minuet in Costume A Beautiful Scene,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 15 December 1875, 3.



several hundred costumed men and women paid their respect to their hostess. Following the reception, a group of men and women in Continental costumes danced the minuet, originated at the court of Louis XIV in 1653 at Versailles.<sup>83</sup> The evening concluded with dances while tea and refreshments were offered by colonial costumed women in the foyer.

The WCEC placed Martha Washington on a symbolic pedestal perhaps as a reaction to their disappointment by the Centennial Executive Committee for going back on their promise for exhibition space, or by the influence of the tea party celebrated in New Haven, Connecticut, a few months earlier, where Martha Washington was the queen of the evening, or it might have been a conflation of both.<sup>84</sup> But situating Washington high on a platform with men and women treating her like a monarch, her husband a mere backdrop for the scene, clearly declared that women held influential positions, separate from those of their husbands. If only as a hostess, a characteristic feminine role expected of a politician's wife, Centennial women elevated it to a form of art; graceful, refined, and respectable. Appropriately dressed, she received hundreds of guests with patience and elegance. The WCEC sought to represent the "Court of the Republic."<sup>85</sup> In the local media they claimed that the event should be "instructive" and intended the "costumes worn in the minuet [to] give an accurate idea of what society was a century ago."<sup>86</sup> Their historical construction spelled an elitist view, one led by selected educated and wealthy

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> For Connecticut's celebration, see ahead.

<sup>85</sup> *Minutes of the Women's Centennial Committee of Philadelphia, 1875-1877*, HSP.

<sup>86</sup> "The Martha Washington Reception," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 14 December 1875, 2.

individuals, much in contrast to the idea of a popular revolution. The Sons of Liberty, the patriot colonists who organized to protect the rights of the colonists, originated from the professional and elite classes. They sought the support of the lower classes in order to demonstrate a forceful opposition to the British. Patrick Henry and Thomas Paine attempted to approach the masses and incite them into a revolution. Their radical approach was one which elite Philadelphians attempted to dismiss. In their version, the revolution was led by educated and experienced men and women who would lead the country for the betterment of all. Washington signaled that women possessed power and influence that could markedly shape historical circumstances. The women blurred the boundaries between the private and the public by presenting Washington's parlor as a site of social and political exchange.

An affair of cosmopolitan flavor, the Carnival of Authors, was the Executive Committee's theme for Washington's Birthday in February 1876. Ward committees chose authors as themes for their tables and appeared in costumes that resembled characters of fiction, poetry, and history. William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Sir Walter Scott, Alfred Tennyson, Molière, George Coleman, and Arabian Nights, represented world literature with overwhelming western European representation and a stereotypical image of the Levant. The American representatives typically had written about the colonial period and the encounter with Native Americans. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the popular poet, was featured by the Fifteenth Ward. They presented a wigwam and thatched cottage for his poems "Hiawatha's wooing!" and "Evangeline", and the hardworking Priscilla sitting by her spinning wheel with John Alden by her side

to recall “The Courtship of Miles Standish,” “Courtship” narrates a love story in the Plymouth Colony. Because it was established by the Mayflower pilgrims, most of the aides wore Puritan costumes while several consented, somewhat reluctantly, to represent the Native Americans.<sup>87</sup> Native Americans constituted an impediment to American westward expansion. After the Mexican-American War (1846-1848) the lands of the Plain Indians were gradually confiscated by the government and its inhabitants were, removed to reservations, often forcefully. With little respect to the Native Americans by officials and the public, it is not surprising that the women preferred to wear the costumes of the esteemed pilgrims rather than the “savage’ Indians”. Colonial life continued in the table of the 27<sup>th</sup> Ward with James Fennimore Cooper, a prolific novelist of the frontier. They also constructed a wigwam equipped with tomahawk, bow and arrow, camp fire, and moccasins. The Indian friend of the English from *The Last of the Mohicans* and women with aboriginal costume completed the scene.<sup>88</sup> Nathaniel Hawthorne, who wrote about New England and the Puritans was the subject of the 18<sup>th</sup> Ward.

Transforming popular American poetry and literature into an imagined world of pilgrims, colonists, and peace-making Native Americans constructed an ideal past. It promoted simplicity, tranquility, and domestic harmony. The carnival, which ended with over a thousand colorful costumed characters marching on the stage, perpetuated this myth.

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<sup>87</sup> The Women’s Branch USCC, *Report of the 15<sup>th</sup> Ward Special Commission, Third Report* (Philadelphia: A. T. Zeising, 1877), 16.

<sup>88</sup> The Women’s Branch USCC, *Report of the 27<sup>th</sup> Ward Special Commission* (Philadelphia: Press of Henry B. Ashmead, 1877), 9-10.

The impressive events organized by the WCEC raised interest in the Centennial all over the country attracted large attendance, and raised the total of \$30,000 required for the Women's Building. The success was partially due to continued city wards fundraising events and canvassing that took place in Philadelphia, Boston, and Minersville, Pennsylvania. The plans for the building were finalized in September 1875 and at the end of February of the following year the completed construction was ceremoniously given to the WCEC by Thomas Cochran, one of the directors of the CBOF.

The idea of a Martha Washington tea party grew in popularity. Women in other parts of the state and the country organized local parties on behalf of the Centennial. They fashioned their events on the original Philadelphia tea party but constructed their own version of history, often with a local perspective, and portrayed their own historical and political views. Such was the party held in February 1874 by the WCEC of Norristown, Pennsylvania, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Cadwalader Evans. The two-day event featured tables themed after major revolutionary leaders and battles including Valley Forge, Brandywine, Bunker Hill, and Chadds Ford in addition to George Washington. The Yorktown table featured flags decorating pictures of Gen. Washington but also of the county-born Union general Winfield Scott Hancock and John Frederick Hartranft, the newly elected governor of Pennsylvania. The Gen. Wayne table, managed by Mrs. Dr. Lees and Anna Morris Holstein, a volunteer nurse in the Civil War and an associate manager for Norristown for the Women's Pennsylvania Branch of the United States Sanitary Commission, attracted attention to pistols used by Gen. Anthony

Wayne during the Revolution and loaned by Holstein's husband.<sup>89</sup> The stage, illuminated with gas jets, exhibited portraits in hierarchical importance. A gilt eagle suspended from George Washington's portrait topped the arrangement. Underneath her husband's picture was the portrait of Martha Washington, and below was a picture of General Philip Henry Sheridan, a Civil War officer whose cavalry was instrumental in forcing Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox.

The women of Montgomery County held a more gender-conservative approach to the nation's history than their Philadelphia counterparts, and refrained from placing Martha Washington on the same footing with her husband. They perceived the recent war as a battle to uphold revolutionary values. Their belief in the union prevented them from realizing that a tribute to a Civil War hero was an affront toward Southern sensibilities.

Although the women held traditional gender roles, they did not ignore revolutionary women altogether. They acknowledged their contribution in the John Adams table with a cup and a saucer that belonged to Mrs. Haddon "who gave information to the American forces of the approach of the British at Germantown." The table represented the domestic space of the revolutionary statesman, while the china that adorned it belonged to a woman who helped the Continental Army. By blurring the boundary between the public and the private, Montgomery County women demonstrated that men and women are capable to perform in both spheres without altering their character. The officers who wore a Martha Washington costume paid further tribute to

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<sup>89</sup> *Annual Report of the Women's Pennsylvania Branch, USSC* (Philadelphia: Henry B. Ashmead, 1864), 18. "The Tea Party," *Norristown Herald and Free Press*, 24 Feb. 1874, 1.

revolutionary women. Several proudly displayed their ancestry as they wore original period dresses and jewels.<sup>90</sup> Gillespie and Mrs. Col. John W. Forney of the Centennial Executive Committee visited the celebration along with additional local dignitaries. As the leading manager of the WCEC, the presence of Gillespie commanded respect and provided legitimacy to the event, while local officials demonstrated their support of the cause.

Like the officers in Montgomery County, the women of Trenton, New Jersey, highlighted local history in addition to women's deeds. Trenton women recalled the event of Washington's passing through the city in April 1789 on his way to his inauguration in New York. Leading society women erected a triumphal arch on the bridge he crossed decorated with the inscription "The Defender of the Mothers Will Be the Protector of the Daughters."<sup>91</sup> The women and their daughters, all dressed in white, strewed flowers in his path as they sang an ode composed especially for the event as he passed through the arch. The Centennial women promptly erected an arch on the stage, decorated it with flowers, and staged a group of young girls outfitted with white dresses to strew flowers. But instead of respecting Washington alone, they threw their flowers in front of both George and Martha and sang the poem, written for the inauguration of the first president, for both of them. They changed the original inscription into "The Heroes who defended the Mothers will Protect the Daughters," emphasizing the willingness of young men to protect their families if the need arose when they are older. Perhaps they thought of the

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>91</sup> For a full description of the event see: David W. Belisle, *History of Independence Hall From Earliest Period to the Present Time* (Philadelphia: James Challen & Son, 1859), 365-369.

Civil War and wanted to convey that the men would always be ready to fight for the women's safety. Additional artifacts included a life-size figure of Abigail Smith, the future wife of John Adams, dressed in her original dress, an array of revolutionary artifacts, and a cake that represented the temple of liberty.<sup>92</sup> In his speech, Governor Joel Parker announced enthusiastically:

“In those initial steps of the Revolution, the heroic ladies of America took the lead. The ladies – God bless them! – are always in advance of us men in every good patriotic work.”<sup>93</sup>

Trenton's privileged women constructed a narrative that highlighted colonial women. The juxtaposition of Martha Washington into a scene of a hero's welcome and the presentation of Abigail Adams prior to her marriage marked women's significance not as wives but as historical figures in their own right.

Unlike Trenton, the women of New Haven, Connecticut, chose to exhibit their European heritage. The event, held in June 1875, was cast in a courtly manner of the old regime with curtsying and “ladies being led in by the tips of their fingers.” A group of over fifty men and women who elegantly impersonated figures of America's revolutionary elite entered the stage. They were all dressed in revolutionary costumes, several with authentic attire that confirmed their colonial roots. All the pomp and stately

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<sup>92</sup> “Centennial Tea Party Taylor Opera House Packed in Every Part the Display Grand and Be fitting,” *Trenton State Gazette*, 26 February 1874, 3; Benson J. Lossing, *The Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1852), Vol. 2, 245-6.

<sup>93</sup> *New Jersey Centennial Tea Party Held at Taylor Opera House, Trenton (February 25-26, 1874)* (Trenton, New Jersey: Naar., Day & Naar, 1874), 13.

ritual reached its pinnacle with the appearance of the honorable guest, Martha Washington:

..the queen of the evening, led by the gentleman who represented President Washington, advanced and took her place upon the dais followed by the members of her suite. She was elegantly attired in a robe of her white satin, with a train of lavender brocade, her hair surmounted by a tasteful cap. The President withdrew to a respectful distance, leaving to her the honors of the evening.<sup>94</sup>

Significantly, it was the first incident where George Washington disappeared into the background, leaving his wife in the spotlight. The receding president signaled that a woman could occupy the center stage both literally and figuratively. With her regal attire and courtly etiquette, Martha's status resembled that of a European monarch. Her association with the nobility implied similar association for other colonial families.

A gala of particular interest was celebrated by the women at Mt. Auburn, in Cincinnati in May 1875. Historians have long considered the city the center of Copperheadism for its population's sympathy with the South and its economy. Most of the settlers of the city arrived from the South and had similar customs, traditions, and prejudices as their ancestors. The city had long traded with the Southern states through the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and, in the mid-nineteenth century, via railway to New Orleans.<sup>95</sup> The women planned an International Bazaar, where they divided the United

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<sup>94</sup> George D. Curtis, *Souvenir of the Centennial Exhibition or Connecticut's Representation at Philadelphia, 1876* (Hartford, Connecticut: Geo. D. Curtis, 1877), 58-60.

<sup>95</sup> Eugene H. Roseboom, "Southern Ohio and the Union in 1863," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 39 (June 1952): 1.



States into three main sections: the New England and the Northern States, the Southern States, and California and the Pacific Slope. The center of the hall “on a high pedestal... stands the Goddess of Liberty in wax, while at her side, but lower down, stands George Washington also in wax, with his face turned toward the wall in disgrace. He has plainly been dissipating, and appears to be anxious to slink behind some protecting mountain.”<sup>96</sup> The privileged women identified with the South as it had been long believed that trade with the South would increase significantly after secession. By positioning Washington away from Liberty, the women demonstrated their disapproval of the war via the first president who had fought for the nation’s independence. Similar to Northerners, who argued that the Union was the original principle of the Founding Fathers, Mt. Auburn women employed Washington to claim that state’s right to secede was a tenet on which the country had been established.

The table of New England and the Northern states was presided over by four Northern women, a woman each from Massachusetts and New Hampshire, E. D. Gillespie, and Susan Hale, a niece of Edward Everett, a Whig Party politician from Massachusetts and a former U.S. secretary of state. Most articles on the table were of New England manufacture. The Southern States included a painting of George Washington and the California and the Pacific exhibited gold and silver from local mines, fruits, and trees. The ladies who tended the tables of the three United States sections wore

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<sup>96</sup> “Centennial Glory. Bewildering Beauty in Exposition Hall. Thousands of Spectators Astonished by the Wonderful Scene,” *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, 21 May 1875, 4.

Martha Washington costumes, acknowledging the revolutionary consensus.<sup>97</sup> An additional department of Relics carried an autographed letter of Washington, his tent flag, Masonic emblem, sash, and sleeve buttons. They also displayed a writing desk that belonged to Martha Washington and a tea kettle brought over on the Mayflower.<sup>98</sup>

In contrast to other tea parties, gender was not the focus of the Cincinnati tea party. The women demonstrated indisputable support for the construction of a consensus and a revolutionary narrative by placing a picture of George Washington on the Southern table and with their Martha Washington costumes. They indicated their support for sectional healing with their invitation of Northern women to preside over their regional table. But their most conspicuous comment, at the center of their display, was George Washington, who remained speechless and dismayed because of the last war and could not face Liberty. The women believed that the war, which forced them to stay in a Union against their will, did not resonate with freedom and democracy. They placed Washington, who could not justify Northern actions to liberty, with his face toward the wall in an attempt to avoid her. This reproach had reminded the influential Northern guests that disgruntled feelings over the conflict were strongly held by great many supporters of the Southern cause.

Back in Philadelphia, the WCEC labored enthusiastically to furnish the Woman's Building with exhibits devoted to woman's labor. Their goal was to offer women ways

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<sup>97</sup> "The May Tea Party. What the Ladies Propose for the General Entertainment," *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, 3 March 1875, 3.

<sup>98</sup> "Centennial Glory" *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, 4-5.

“to earn their livelihood in branches of business yet unknown to them.”<sup>99</sup> Thus, among an array of needlework and lace one could find wood carvings, an exhibit of the School of Design of Massachusetts, and a pharmaceutical exhibit of the Woman’s Medical College of Philadelphia. However, in the pages of their daily newspaper, *The New Century for Women*, the ideal past infrequently appeared. In their first issue, an unknown writer heaped derision on current men and trumpeted colonial women’s character:

If men are what their mothers are surely something must have been wrong with some mothers of boys thirty and forty years ago, - some moral defect, some lack of honest fibre, some confusion of ideas on the subject of integrity ... The women of a hundred years ago had purpose, endurance, and power, they were part of the nation’s life.<sup>100</sup>

The journalists were all Northern women who actively assisted in the long fundraising campaign on behalf of the board of managers for a promise of space to exhibit in the main building in return. When their hope had been rebuffed and they were left to raise additional sum to erect a building without any assistance from the executive directors, they turned their dismay, anger, and disappointment toward additional appeals and events. The Centennial Executive Committee would not even extend complimentary entrance tickets to the women, who were required to purchase them each time they arrived to maintain their exhibits.<sup>101</sup> Perhaps the author wanted to point to her anger over the lack of honesty and integrity of the men who so blatantly recanted on their promise

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<sup>99</sup> *Third Annual Report of the Women’s Centennial Executive Committee, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1876* (Philadelphia: Press of Henry & Ashmead), 5.

<sup>100</sup> “The New Century for Woman,” *The New Century for Woman*, 13 May 1876, 4.

<sup>101</sup> In the beginning of September, four months into the exhibit, Gillespie requested that ward chairmen and aides would receive reduced-rate tickets for the remainder of the exhibition and was flatly refused. See: September 4, September 11, *Minutes of the Women’s Centennial Committee of Philadelphia, 1875-1877*.

due to the women's fundraising success. Unable to criticize nationally respected and well-connected men, the author blamed their mothers, on the premise that they must be blamed for their upbringing.<sup>102</sup> The author also used the opportunity to contrast the inept mothers with an idealized image of the women of the revolution.

An additional article about Martha Washington reinforced domesticity and simplicity when it discussed her residency in Mount Vernon. The author commended on her frugality and resourcefulness during the war and praised her sixteen spinning wheels and home-made dress. She also pointed to George Washington's home-spun suit, worn while the president was in New York, in order to demonstrate Martha's skillful frugality. The author mentioned that Washington had servants, but ignored their contribution when character of Martha is concerned. In addition, the author firmly maintained that Washington and his wife each had a "public career."<sup>103</sup>

The concluding event of the women's work for the Centennial was a Calico Party, celebrated in Philadelphia on February 22, 1877 with the intention that women outfitted with calico dresses would dance the minuet. An observer commented that participants who "were garbed in the court dress worn one hundred years ago in this country" paid respects to the receiving party before they danced.

The ladies wore the long, flowing, gown-like dresses of rich material in style in the Martha Washington period, with the high powdered coiffures

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<sup>102</sup> Although John Welsh, who headed the CBOF, was 71 years old, the President of the Centennial, Joseph R. Hawley, celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, and Alfred Traber Goshorn, the Director General was 43 years old.

<sup>103</sup> E. E. G., "A Night at Mount Vernon," *The New Century for Woman*, 24 June 1876, 51-52.

of the same day, and the gentlemen appeared in full Continental costume – silk, satin and velvet coats profusely laced, knee breeches, silk stockings, buckled shoes, &c., all surmounted with powdered wig and ribboned queue... In the extent to which calico was worn the party was not a success.<sup>104</sup>

Despite the attempt to produce a celebration with inexpensive costumes in memory of the simple colonial attire, many guests ignored the decision and attended in luxurious evening gowns and Continental costumes. Most Philadelphia elites did not feel comfortable to attend a formal society event with attire made of inexpensive material. Luxurious clothes articulated their class identity and social status. The wards shared the proceeds to help their needy population with winter heating and additional essentials.

Befitting leading society women, racial attitudes and class distinction were rarely discussed, but they were not issues to be ignored. Initially, the WCEC appointed Rebecca J. Cole, who graduated from the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania and became the second African American to receive a medical degree in United States, to lead an African American woman's committee. Cole started to organize branches of women who were "ready to canvas the city."<sup>105</sup> Unbeknown to her recruited women, she agreed that the Colored Women's Centennial Commission would be limited to fundraise solely within the African American community. Once the African American activists learned about her plans, they refused to abide her terms claiming that "our womanhood would be compromised, our citizenship ignored or our rights questioned." The African American

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<sup>104</sup> "Washington's Birthday," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 23 February 1877, 3.

<sup>105</sup> "Another Branch. Organization of Colored Women's Centennial Commission," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5 April 1873, 2.

recruits were deeply offended by the segregation placed upon them. They linked their womanhood to their citizenship and felt that preventing them equal participation in fundraising activities compromised both. The women attempted to explain their position by holding a meeting and protesting to Gillespie but received no reply. At length, they disclosed on the pages of a local newspaper that they were deceived by Cole and Delia Chew, who agreed on terms that were “unauthorized, and in no way binding or representing us.”<sup>106</sup> Gillespie acted swiftly. She allowed the African American women to canvass “among our colored population and with any others whom the committee might be able to influence through friendship” while promptly discharging Cole from her duties.

The resistance of elite African American women to accept racial boundaries forced them to abandon the enterprise altogether. The Centennial women refused to admit their support of racial segregation. When questioned about the incident, Miss McHenry stated that when the organization formed and the most suitable women for each ward were selected “they all happened to be white persons, and had colored women presented themselves they would... just as readily been appointed.”<sup>107</sup> That the issue was settled without further deliberation demonstrates the existence of racism among white elites. The prominent men of the Centennial Executive Committee, the national body that could influence the women, never got involved. And since the Centennial was an official

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<sup>106</sup> Open Doors to Correspondents. The Centennial,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 23 May 1873, 3.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

enterprise, partially funded, at the time, by the local and state governments, the exclusion of African Americans from its ranks was essentially sanctioned by these bodies.

Officers of the WCEC, heads of wards, and their aides were all white, privileged society women, who carefully guarded their ranks. Elizabeth Robins Pennell could trace her ancestors to colonial families in Virginia and Maryland and was the niece of the folklorist Charles Godfrey Leland. Her father, a Philadelphia stock broker lost his fortune when Jay Cooke's Bank bankrupted in September 1873, a mere six months after the formation of the WCEC. She was promptly removed from the lists of elite society, including that of Centennial activists. Pennell realized her misfortune when she was barred from the Dancing Assembly. Sitting on the sideline she commented:

...my gay friends, who were well on the inside, busy going to Centennial balls at the Academy of Music in Colonial dress... while I stayed at home and, seeing what lovely creatures powder and patches and panniers made of Philadelphia girls with no more pretence to good looks than I.<sup>108</sup>

She later recalled that canvassers came to her door with "voluminous furs," clear evidence of their affluence.

Centennial women contributed over \$95,000 to the treasury of the CBOF and raised a total of \$126,000.<sup>109</sup> Their meticulous organization and diligent canvassing resulted in remarkable success where male canvassers experienced low participation. But it was their magnificent tea parties with Martha Washington costumes that generated the

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<sup>108</sup> Pennell, *Our Philadelphia*, 206.

<sup>109</sup> J. S. Ingram, *The Centennial Exposition Described and Illustrated Being a Concise and Graphic Description of This Grand Enterprise Commemorative of the First Centenary of American Independence* (Philadelphia: Hubbard Bros., 1876), 745.

excitement and publicity the Centennial enterprise lacked. They were the leading factors in the sales of its stock. The cult of Martha Washington represented integrity and simplicity but its celebration was anything but plain. Elaborate costumes were produced for the affairs while the women assured the audience of their high value.<sup>110</sup> The reverence of Martha was fairly similar to that of Mary Washington. When Mary died a neighbor wrote in her memory, “There is no fame in the world more pure than that of the Mother of Washington, and no woman since the mother of Christ has left a better claim to the affectionate reverence of mankind.”<sup>111</sup> By comparing Washington to the Biblical figure she evoked a memory of the sacrifice of a son for a higher cause. While Jesus died for his people, Washington gave his life to the American people in battle and in executive leadership. On May 7, 1833 in a ceremony with distinguished guests and between ten and fifteen thousand people, a cornerstone was laid on Washington’s grave. Mr. Bassett, a relative of Washington and the chairman of the Monument Committee spoke about a memory of “her fortitude, her piety, her every grace of life” and “her sure hope of a blessed immortality.”<sup>112</sup> In March 1899, *The Post* Advocated for a fitting memorial to Mary Washington after a firm placed an advertisement announcing that the property containing Mary Washington’s grave would be sold in an auction.<sup>113</sup> The following year, after the Fredericksburg Mary Washington Association was formed, an appeal for aid for

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<sup>110</sup> In New Haven “Miss Hadley wore a dress embroidered by Miss Nabby Wadsworth before the Revolutionary War – coarse cotton cloth (then very expensive).” Curtis, *Souvenir of the Centennial Exhibition or Connecticut’s Representation*, 59.

<sup>111</sup> Marion Harland, *The Story of Mary Washington* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1893), 145.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>113</sup> “The Mary Washington Monument,” in *The Post Almanac Weather Forecasts and Book of Facts of the Office, Home, and Farm, 1899* (Washington, D. C.: The Post Company, 1899), 21.



the women of the country circulated. The significance of the project was as “the first monument ever erected by woman to a woman.”<sup>114</sup> The Daughters of the American Revolution designated the monument as their first national project and helped raise the required funds that enabled to complete it. It was dedicated by President Grover Cleveland on May 10, 1894.

While Mary and Martha Washington both projected unity and simplicity, the latter also projected opulence and extravagance. These qualities enabled Martha to appeal to privileged classes in Northern and Border States. Affluent women marveled at the opportunity to organize luxurious galas for a patriotic cause, particularly ones that emphasized their ancestors and complimented their virtues. The cult of Martha Washington had been forged when George Washington had increasingly come to symbolize the unified past revolutionary past. People flocked to view his portraits at the Sanitary Fair and the National Museum in Philadelphia, and his refurbished home, Mount Vernon, attracted growing number of visitors. Like the practice of leading men, Centennial women constructed their own heroines, white, Protestant, and largely active in the public arena, to represent colonial womanhood.

Many privileged women agreed that Martha Washington was regal and resourceful, but other localities did not necessarily follow the lead of Philadelphia women when it came to gender hierarchy and regional harmony. Women of urban centers tended to convey an image of an assertive Martha Washington, while rural women could not

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<sup>114</sup> Margaret Hetzel, “Mary Washington,” *American Woman Magazine*, II (March 1893): 263.

fathom placing a woman on equal status with her husband. When W. H. Armstrong announced at the first tea party, in February 1873, that “the North and the South are fast forgetting that they ever were estranged” followed by Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia, who echoed his predecessor with “the nation, North and South, will drop the curtain upon all that is bitter in the past, and will rise to new interests, new friendships, new hopes, and new affections,” their words seemed more hopeful than factual.<sup>115</sup> The Cincinnati tea party proved that animosity held strong, and neither Martha nor George could evince a meaningful change. The women of Mt. Auburn, Cincinnati, consented to participate in the campaign to raise money for the Centennial, but their blatant exhibit of Washington articulated a message of strong disagreement with the Civil War. With such a harsh display from a border city and without meaningful help from Southern states, it was clear that a mere decade left Southerners bitter and un-reconciled over the long military conflict.

As the Exposition neared the end, the WCEC contemplated future goals for a national organization. In a meeting held in mid-October, the Philadelphia officers decided to continue the Centennial’s goal of “uniting of the people of our country” under the name Women’s Centennial National League.<sup>116</sup> Mrs. Rand suggested teaming with the women of Massachusetts to preserve the Old South church in Boston which is “a legacy

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<sup>115</sup> “The Tea Party,” newspaper clipping, Etting, *The Philadelphia Tea Party of 1773*, LC.

<sup>116</sup> October 13, *Minutes of the Women’s Centennial Committee of Philadelphia, 1875-1877*, HSP; the media called the organization Women’s National Centennial League. “Report of the Adjourned Meeting of the Women’s Centennial Committee,” *The New Century for Woman*, 4 November 1876, 199.

to our country as Independence Hall”.<sup>117</sup> In a later meeting, which included the WCEC and delegated from the states, the issue was raised again by Rand. Opponents argued that the first project of an organization founded on “no creed” should not be the restoration of a church. Proponents contended that the Old South is not a church but a historical relic.<sup>118</sup> This remark was of utmost importance. Possibly for the first time in the history of the preservation movement the idea of religious affiliation was linked to historical site. Religious affiliation could present a controversial issue for a historical preservation project executed by a national organization that aimed at pleasing members from all over the country. Though elite women were typically Protestant, they may have belonged to several different denominations. Further, the women might have used religion as a pretext to oppose a project in the northeast of the country. The debate underpinned a more poignant issue – the politics of memory: the choice of preservation project, its interpretation, and the public support it can garner were all inextricably enmeshed and could directly affect a preservation effort’s outcome. The plan to assist in the restoration of the Old South was not accepted; the women were not ready to face such complex issues when the future of their organization had not been firmly established.

In a following general meeting with representative of states and officers of Philadelphia wards, Gillespie indicated that the men would leave Memorial Hall as a monument for their work in the Exposition and “women should leave such a memorial as

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<sup>117</sup> October 30, *Minutes of the Women’s Centennial Committee of Philadelphia, 1875-1877*, HSP.

<sup>118</sup> The names of the women who voiced their opinions are absent. See: “Report of Adjourned Meeting of the Women’s Centennial Committees,” *The New Century for Women*, 4 November 1876, 199.

would testify a hundred years hence to what the women of to-day had done.”<sup>119</sup> To some of the participants’ surprise, she announced that a national organization had been organized. It would consist of thirteen representatives of each state, and that of Pennsylvania would be selected by the chairwomen of the wards. Following some tension over the elections, most of Philadelphia officers were elected with Gillespie as president.

Despite of the women’s lofty aspirations, their organization fizzled rather quickly. In their final report, the WCEC established a Memorial Fund for “erection of this city of some *useful* Memorial of the work accomplished by the women of America for the proper celebration of the Centennial Anniversary of the establishment of our Government.”<sup>120</sup> New York and Connecticut withdrew, possibly in defiance of Philadelphia’s leadership. Requesting funds from women of the states for a commemorative project that would benefit the people of Philadelphia did not spark great interest, even on the grounds of meeting the challenge of the men’s imposing Centennial building.

Despite the demise of the new organization, Centennial women had achieved several impressive goals. They increased national interest in the Exposition and raised a considerable sum to defray its expenses. They also erected a Woman’s Building and arranged its American and international exhibits. They employed the organizational experience they had obtained during their work for the Great Central Fair in appealing to greater and diverse population and in overcoming unpredicted setbacks. The work on

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<sup>119</sup> “Centennial Women,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 16 November 1876, 3.

<sup>120</sup> *Final Report of the Women’s Centennial Executive Committee, March 22, 1877* (Philadelphia: Press of Henry B. Ashmead, 1877), 16.

behalf of the Centennial enabled them to increase their managerial skills, produce a feminine historical version that crossed state boundaries, and demonstrated that they could bring a failed project to a successful conclusion.

Centennial women organizers constructed a subversive memory by arguing that women played a significant role in the national historical narrative. Their account transformed into a national campaign, which enabled elite women in other towns and states to alter its presentation to suit their local history and social and political leanings. Elite professional and public activist men did not object to the campaign because the representation of the historic women remained within their gendered roles. Revolutionary women appeared largely in social scenes or as the makers of homespun articles. However, Centennial women inserted themselves and their talented and formidable leader, Elizabeth Duane Gillespie, into the historical narrative. They asserted that elite women have been influencing national history from the colonial era to their contemporary time.

The Centennial raised greater interest in revolutionary sites and brought attention to their neglect. Near the hills of Valley Forge, where George Washington encamped during the harsh winter of 1777 and 1778, a group of men and women would employ the memory of the military leader as a means to preserve his former headquarters.

**CHAPTER 4**  
**HISTORICAL PRESERVATION IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY,  
PENNSYLVANIA**

“Our People Had Not Begun to Remember” - this concise and profound observation, published in the preface to *Worthy Women of Our First Century*, comes from editors who lamented the loss of invaluable historical evidence and deeply felt the urgency to preserve salvageable records before the past would be erased forever and the annals of significant individuals could never be told.<sup>1</sup> The Centennial Exposition, held in Philadelphia in 1876, portrayed colonial life in architecture, artifacts, and food and inspired a nostalgic interest in returning to the idealized simplicity of the past. Termed the Colonial Revival, this movement was manifest in the arts, architecture, and history, and was visible in enthusiastic attempts to preserve colonial and revolutionary period buildings, objects, and family papers. A strong popular interest in genealogy also developed during this period.

Prompted by shifting social and economic conditions, privileged white Americans attempted to expose the immigrant working classes to this idealized version of the

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah Butler Wister and Agnes Irwin, eds., *Worthy Women of Our First Century* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1877), 6. The book was a project initiated by the Women’s Department of the Centennial Commission “to offer to [their] young country women honorable models and examples.” The editors conducted a lengthy correspondence campaign before they finalized the women to be included in the monograph, a fact that undoubtedly delayed its publication to the following year. *Ibid.*, 3.

nation's early past as a means of inculcating patriotism, self-sacrifice, and hard work.<sup>2</sup>

The educated and powerful believed that exposure to evidence of the supposed virtues of the colonial and revolutionary period would impress upon youth and immigrants the need to appreciate their country and lead a civic-minded life. Enthusiasts in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, started the restoration of George Washington's headquarters in Valley Forge and formed the Montgomery County Historical Society. Public-spirited influential white women, when approached by their fellow male organizers, applied the organizational skills they had acquired in previous projects and diligently worked to raise public interest and gain the needed funds for the acquisition and preservation of George Washington's headquarters. As members of the historical society, women contributed articles on different subjects than their male counterparts, favoring social, cultural and familial histories over political and military history. These experiences taught women that despite the growing interest in the nation's past it was difficult to transform public enthusiasm into a continuous flow of donations. Involvement in local historical organizations offered public exposure of their knowledge, research, and experience at a critical time when the professionalization of the historical field was taking place.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Harvey Green, "Looking Backward to the Future: The Colonial Revival and American Culture," in *Creating a Dignified Past: Museums and the Colonial Revival*, ed. Geoffrey L. Rossano (Savage, Maryland: Fowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1991), 1-16.

<sup>3</sup> The most prominent historical writers of the nineteenth century are George Bancroft, the author of the ten-volume *History of the United States from the Discovery of the American Continent* (1834-1875), Francis Parkman who authored the nine-volume *France and England in North America* 1865-1892), and Henry Adams the author of the nine-volume *History of the United States during the administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison* (1889-1891). David W. Noble argues that they related to the world view of the Puritans in New England who believed that they had a covenant with God to lead pure and simple life. See: David W. Noble, *Historians against History: The Frontier Thesis and the National Covenant in American Historical Writing Since 1830* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1965), 3. See also in

The Centennial Exposition's main goal was to commemorate "the birthday of our nation, after a century of such prosperity, expansion, and progress, and after such a development of the material resources of this mighty continent."<sup>4</sup> Organizers sought to demonstrate that in merely a century a resourceful people living under a democratic system had reached, and perhaps surpassed, the cultural, economic, technological, and educational achievements of the competent and well-established Old World. In articulating America's progress, some exhibits portrayed the past as an initial point of comparison with a century of accomplishments. The audience, however, was fascinated by the colonial and revolutionary era scenes and artifacts. The exhibitions aroused general public interest in American history and genealogy, particularly among white men and women of the leisured classes who possessed the time and the means to invest in them. Elizabeth Pennell Robins observed that due to the Centennial "[Philadelphians] devoted every hour of leisure to the study of genealogy, they besieged the Historical Society in search of inconsiderate ancestors who had neglected to make conspicuous figures of themselves and so had to be hunted up, they left no stone unturned to prove their Colonial descent."<sup>5</sup> Evidence of lineage that reached revolutionary or colonial eras

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his work: *The End of American History: Democracy, Capitalism, and the Metaphor of Two Worlds in Anglo-American Historical Writing, 1880-1980* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 18. For an analysis of the three historians' works see: Richard C. Vitzthum, *The American Compromise: Theme and Method in the Histories of Bancroft, Parkman, and Adams* (Norman, Alabama: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974). For late nineteenth-century historians see: Ellen Fitzpatrick, *History's Memory: Writing America's Past, 1880-1980* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> United States Centennial Commission, *Appendix to the Reports of the United States Centennial Commission and Centennial Board of Finance* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1879), 34.

<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Robins Pennell, *Our Philadelphia*. Philadelphia (J. B. Lippincott & Company, 1914), 216.



became an additional requisite to social elite memberships. Prominent citizens, ignorant of their family history, saved no effort into finding ancestors who would enhance their social status.

Prior to the exhibition, only a small number of groups and individuals acted to preserve of historical buildings and battle sites, but the Centennial's colonial state houses, the historical exhibition in the main building, and the New England Kitchen exhibit raised awareness of an ideal simplicity and domestic harmony. Opinions of scholars who argued against the existence of an original colonial architecture did not resonate with activists who rallied behind historical projects.<sup>6</sup> Historians agree that during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, a new style of architecture and art resulted from longing for an ideal past. Old structures or newly designed colonial-styled houses, furnishings, and domestic articles were sought for their ability to project the values of that image. The growing of industrialization and the immigrant population of American cities ended the "Protestant consensus" that controlled urban centers and the nation since its formation.<sup>7</sup> Scholars agree that Anglo-Protestants embedded objects and physical surrounding with the power to influence immigrants' belief system, culture, and character.

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<sup>6</sup> Richard Morris Hunt, a prominent American architect who designed the façade of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, and the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty, argued that the Massachusetts building in the Centennial was a combination of a Gothic villa and Italian tower while the building that represented Connecticut was in a romantic revival style. Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman discarded the idea of colonial style for the Georgian style, prominent in the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century in England. See: Wayne Andrews, "Reflection on the Colonial Revival," *Archives of American Art Journal*, 4 (Apr. 1964): 1-4.

<sup>7</sup> Nathaniel Burt and Wallace E. Davis, "The Iron Age, 1876-1905," in *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, eds. Russell F. Weigley, Nicholas B. Wainwright, and Edwin Wolf (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982), 494.

One prominent study about the Colonial Revival, an edited volume by Alan Axelrod, demonstrates the influence of the movement on American culture and artistic practices. As one of the first to tackle the subject, it includes a variety of case studies that suggest the movement, which had been initially popular in the original colonies in the 1870s, spread to include mid-Western states via the Chicago Exposition of 1893. The collected essays demonstrate that architecture and artifacts were used to project the attitudes of Anglo-Saxon Protestants who feared the disappearance of their culture and resorted to using them as a means to escape the growing cities and Americanize immigrants. Drawing from architecture, paintings, sculpture, and furniture, scholars detail how architects, installers of exhibitions, and collectors sought to inspire the foreign-born with colonial virtues of morality and democracy.<sup>8</sup> The essays conclusively show that the past had been idealized and different versions of it often evolved as a result of the regional messages proponents wished to convey.<sup>9</sup>

A later collection of essays, *Creating a Dignified Past*, arrives at similar conclusions to Axelrod's while exploring museums and renovated museum houses that idealized the colonial period or reflected the ideas of the occupants of houses rather than those who first lived in them. Harvey Green argues that urgency in preserving the republic was at the heart of the movement. With an accelerating rate of immigration, urbanization, and industrialization, growing numbers of Anglo-Saxon Americans

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<sup>8</sup> See: Alan Axelrod, *Colonial Revival in America* (New York: Norton, 1985), 20.

<sup>9</sup> For example, as settlement houses received "picturesque" façade and great fireplaces, intended to inspire with simplicity and hospitality, the Philadelphian architect Wilson Eyre incorporated gothic motives in designs that sought to instill past values of the city's inhabitants of comfort and prosperity. *Ibid.*, 349, 74.

believed that the survival of the country was in danger if a decidedly action of instilling values of loyalty and support in peaceful democratic process among the foreigners had not taken place. The sedentary lifestyle of the upper and middle classes in the industrial age made America susceptible to less developed yet physically stronger nations.<sup>10</sup> Additional essays about colonial houses and museums argue that preservationists manipulated the past to answer the needs of the present.

The evidence of the two essay collections suggests that by the 1870s native-born Protestant Americans, alarmed by the changing physical and social landscape of the cities, went into action in ways that permeated public and private living spaces. Their attempts aimed to affect immigrants on rational and emotional levels in order to regain their political dominance. Invariably, an amorphous movement, its manifestations appeared wherever a need arose although it tended to concentrate in the Northern parts of the country. The studies focus mainly on male projects, creating the impression that women's contribution was less significant.

Charlene Mires, who examines the changes to Independence Hall over an extended period of time, asserts that ancestry and Protestant hegemony prompted the buildings' preservation efforts in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. During the celebration of the Constitution's centennial Supreme Court Justice Samuel F. Miller linked the historical document to Protestant rule and tradition, an observation that had

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<sup>10</sup> Harvey Green, "Looking Backward to the Future," in *Creating A Dignified Past*, 15, 6.

been further reinforced in the occupation of Independence Hall by hereditary societies in the 1890s. The building, she concludes, symbolized order and consensus.<sup>11</sup>

Seth Bruggeman demonstrates that powerful elite women could shape historical memory and construct a mythic past in the face of contradictory evidence. Bruggeman shows that the colonial house erected at the birthplace of George Washington in Wakefield, Virginia was constructed in the wrong spot and in a colonial style that did not resemble architectural findings of the original house. The lack of documents led George Washington Curtis to place a birthplace marker at Popes Creek, several hundred feet away from the house's original place. In the early twentieth century, local elite women raised the funds to build the house, which they donated to the National Park Service in 1932. The NPS continued the women's historical vision by portraying the house as an ideal plantation that evoked the memory of Washington, who had lived in Wakefield until age three. They neglected to emphasize slavery due to the effect of racial segregation, preferring to ignore the issue rather than face negative criticism.<sup>12</sup>

The preservation of Valley Forge reflected similar goals. Lorette Treese follows the attempts at the park's preservation from its outset, in the 1870s, to the late twentieth century. She asserts that the preservation of Valley Forge was motivated by the idea of constructing an image of selfless suffering soldiers led by an inspirational leader, George

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<sup>11</sup> Charlene Mires, *Independence Hall in American Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania press, 2002), 138, 145.

<sup>12</sup> Seth C. Bruggeman, *Here, George Washington Was Born: Memory, Material Culture, and the Public History of a National Monument* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2008).

Washington, in order to inculcate the masses – particularly the foreign born – with civic loyalty and patriotism. Treese reveals that the park was a contested terrain where several organizations and individuals, eager to capitalize on the success of the first celebration of Evacuation Day of the Colonial Army from Valley Forge, invested a great effort in promoting their view and gaining support of wealthy individuals and state and federal politicians. Her detailed and thorough study, however, does not delve into the actions taken by women involved in the national preservation attempt.<sup>13</sup>

With greater attention to gender issues, Karal Marling argues that the colonial revival of the 1870s and 1880s shifted the view of the American Revolution from the battlefield to domesticity. In her discussion about the creation of the memory of George Washington in the last decades of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries she demonstrates that class distinction was a significant aspect of the history that women had constructed. Similar to the Centennial tea parties, where women recreated the “Republican Court,” the Lady Managers of the Chicago Exposition of 1893 wore old ball gowns to emphasize the ruling elite and discourage immigrants’ social mobility.<sup>14</sup> Marling’s focus on the role of women in the movement is one of the study’s greatest strengths. By emphasizing domesticity, women offered the orderly home as a refuge from progress and shifted the view of the revolution from military campaigns

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<sup>13</sup> Lorette Treese, *Valley Forge: Making and Remaking a National Symbol* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> Karal Ann Marling, *George Washington Slept Here: Colonial Revivals and American Culture, 1876-1986* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 87-88, 97. The argument that immigrants threatened the cultural hegemony of Protestant elites is cited by: Jacqueline Calder, “Evolution of a Colonial Revival Home, 1882-1995,” in *Creating a Dignified Past*, 30.

toward domesticity and social balls.<sup>15</sup> She also argues that between the years 1853 and 1890 women domesticated history through their preservation of Mount Vernon, Washington's Headquarters at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, Newburgh, New York, and the Old South Meeting House in Boston, Massachusetts. Marling's thorough study mainly focuses on urban women while the work of rural women remains largely obscured.

In general, historians who study the preservation movement with gender as a category of analysis find a significant difference between men's and women's projects. Barbara J. Howe concludes that middle and upper middle class women typically acted alone or as auxiliaries to male organizations, mainly because men formed exclusive associations that barred women's membership. The preservation projects that men selected focused on political power and economy, apparent in the restoration of the George Marshall House and Colonial Williamsburg. Women centered on issues that appealed to their lives, the family and religion, as they chose to focus on Mary Washington's house and Anglican churches. Howe agrees with other scholars when she finds that white female preservationists often excluded those who came to America after the Revolution and ignored Native Americans and African Americans.<sup>16</sup>

The popular New England Kitchen exhibit in the Centennial Exposition is often mistakenly cited as the main source that inaugurated the colonial revival. The exhibit

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<sup>15</sup> Marling, *George Washington Slept Here*, 52, 97.

<sup>16</sup> Barbara J. Howe, "Women in the Nineteenth-Century Preservation Movement," in *Restoring Women's History through Historic Preservation* eds. Gail Lee Dubrow and Jennifer B. Goodman (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2003), 27, 35-36.

originated over a decade earlier in New York. The Kitchen had been the brainchild of Mrs. Ray Potter, the president of the Sanitary Aid Society in Brooklyn, whose Sanitary Fair in February 1864 featured the exhibit. The enthusiastic committee that orchestrated the project promised that “The grand old fire-place shall glow again – the spinning wheel shall whirl as of old – the walls shall be garnished with products of the forest and the field... We shall try to reproduce the manners, customs, dress, and if possible, the idiom of the time.”<sup>17</sup> Though she had not realized it, Potter introduced a construction of the past that would resonate with American audiences for decades thereafter. When visitors who viewed the exhibit agreed that “the old is better,” they uttered a sentimental feeling shared by many who endorsed the Colonial Revival – preservationists, architects, artists, authors, and general audiences.<sup>18</sup>

Versions of the Northern Kitchen appeared in subsequent Sanitary Fairs and over a decade later in the Centennial Exposition. In her Centennial application for a “New England Home of one hundred years ago” Emma D. Southwick of Boston, Massachusetts suggested having a house fitted and furnished “as nearly as possible to the style in 1776.”<sup>19</sup> The exhibit included a supposedly typical colonial setting in addition to an array of artifacts including English china, quilts, and furnishings mostly owned by political and military leaders. Similar to the Brooklyn Fair, women in colonial costumes spun, weaved,

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<sup>17</sup> *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair, February 22, 1864* (Brooklyn: “The Union” Steam Presses, 1864), 73.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>19</sup> “Exhibitor’s Application for Space # 3425,” U. S. Centennial Commission, Record Group 230, City Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

quilted, cooked, and baked by the hearth. A keen observer commented: “it would have been a sacrifice of more than half the good things that delight the visitors, to have kept the log house, only a New England log house.”<sup>20</sup> His remark demonstrates that proponents of the movement did not seek an accurate representation of the past but rather an idealized domestic space created by the warmth of the hearth, the plain clothes, domestic production, and walls lined with period artifacts. It provided a stark contrast to the economic hardship that followed the Civil War.

The celebration of America’s centennial inaugurated scores of celebrations linked to events that occurred during and following the American Revolution. At the same time, Valley Forge, the encampment site of the Continental Army during the winter of 1777-1778, became the subject of a preservation attempt by a local group of historical-minded men. The site had received recognition when Henry Woodman published a series of letters in 1850 describing the encampment area through the eyes of a child who hunted revolutionary relics and as a mid-century quaint village. Local residents, people from other parts of the country, and legislators took notice. Valley Forge received further acknowledgement by the popular historian Benson J. Lossing’s biography of George Washington who emphasized the soldiers’ self-sacrifice and heroism. The site became a popular destination for picnic groups who could easily reach it via a train operated by the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> “New England Log House (Concluded),” *The New Century for Woman*, 15 July 1876, 75.

<sup>21</sup> Treese, *Valley Forge*, 7-9.



The first to advocate its preservation was Isaac A. Pennypacker, a physician from Phoenixville, who wrote to the local historian John Fanning Watson in 1844 about the possibility of protecting the area.<sup>22</sup> The advent of the Civil War prompted local residents to congregate on the camp's grounds. Within days after the fall of Fort Sumter, they held a grand parade with musical fanfare and a thirty-four guns' salute, "and pledge[d] themselves to stand by the stars and stripes as those before them had done in 1777." In the meeting that ensued at the Valley Forge Mansion, known as George Washington's Headquarters, local dignitaries pledged to "remember unparalleled suffering of our revolutionary forefathers at Valley Forge and elsewhere" and support the Union.<sup>23</sup> Once sectional differences broke into full-fledged war, Republicans inextricably linked their political stance to that of the revolutionary colonists to rationalize their prowess and their resolve to support military conflict. Valley Forge represented the connection to their forefathers and their determination to protect their achievements.

The grounds became the subject of increased attention when the Centennial Exposition had closed its doors. In December 1877, several prominent men, among them Theodore Bean, a lawyer and solicitor for the Montgomery County treasurer, Daniel Webster, an Agent of the Railroad Company stationed at Valley Forge, Isaac W. Smith, Dr. Nathan A. Pennypacker, and Major R. R. Corson, met and formed the Valley Forge

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>23</sup> "Patriotism at Valley Forge," *The National Defender*, 23 April 1861, 2.

Centennial Association with the goal of commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of evacuation day by Washington's troops in an impressive civic, religious, and military celebration.

In a subsequent meeting a seemingly insignificant controversy arose over the phrasing of the invitation for the affair, but its resolution affected the construction of the memory that generations of Americans would internalize for decades thereafter. The invitation had originally named the event the Centennial celebration of the occupation and evacuation of Valley Forge. Upon a call to strike out the word "evacuation" one board member opposed by claiming that the soldiers were happy to leave the camp. Others argued that the planned event should commemorate the occupation of the grounds rather than mark its end. Celebrating the evacuation would have inevitably shifted the attention from the soldiers' self-sacrifice to subsequent – and perhaps more impressive – achievements such as the Battle of Monmouth in New Jersey. It would have presented the encampment as a prelude to future events rather than as a significant site for what had transpired on its grounds during the encampment. At length, a compromise had been reached and the final version, proposed by J. P. Hale Jenkins, emphasized the winter camp and mentioned the evacuation day as the date of celebration.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The invitation called to attend the "Centennial celebration of the occupation of Valley Forge by the Continental army under Washington, June 19, 1878, the date of the evacuation." See: "Valley Forge. Meeting of the Centennial Association," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 23 February 1878, 2.



Figure 4. George Washington's Headquarters, Valley Forge National Park

PICTURE TAKEN BY AUTHOR

The following item on the agenda of the Committee on Memorial Design and Erection was finding the right monument for the park grounds – a small Georgian stone house that once belonged to Isaac Potts. It served as Washington’s headquarters during his winter stay at the camp. The members were aware that Hannah Ogden, the property’s owner, requested a higher price than its value due to the interest of several potential buyers. The committee laid out a detailed plan for a national fundraiser headed by women because “Ample evidence has been shown in the past that where patriotism inspires their labors success will crown their efforts.”<sup>25</sup> It followed the structure of the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association (MVLA) whose members successfully purchased the first president’s house with public donations in 1858. A lady regent would supervise managers for the city in Philadelphia, Montgomery, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, Berks, Bucks, Lehigh, Northampton, and Schuylkill counties, including the cities within them. Local managers would recruit canvassers who would approach their respective districts. The regent would recruit vice regents in other states to supervise the campaign in their territories.

The success of the MVLA inspired other organizations that sought public support of preservation projects. Ann Pamela Cunningham founded the association in 1853 with a call to the Southern women to rescue the grave of the “Father of his country” and a declaration that “It is a woman’s office to be a vestal, and even the “fire of liberty” may need the care of her devotion and the purity of her guardianship.”<sup>26</sup> Morality and

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<sup>25</sup> Mrs. William H. Holstein, “Valley Forge Centennial Preparations,” *Daily Local News*, 30 April 1878.

<sup>26</sup> *An Appeal for the Future Preservation of the Home and Grave of Washington* (Philadelphia: T. K. and P. G. Collins, Printers, 1855), 9.

domestic care caught the attention of Northern newspapers and the campaign turned into a national undertaking. By 1855, the first Pennsylvania Vice Regent, Lily Lytle Macalester (later Berghman) encouraged women to organize clubs to oversee the state's counties.<sup>27</sup> Anna Morris Holstein, a farmer's wife in her early thirties, was appointed Lady Manager of Montgomery County.<sup>28</sup> She enthusiastically devoted her time to the cause despite a loud opposition of prominent Philadelphia men who "disapproved of women mixing in public affairs."<sup>29</sup> Valley Forge Centennial members hoped that Holstein, with her past experience and connections she had developed, would successfully orchestrate a national operation and appointed her regent of their organization on the following month.<sup>30</sup>

In some ways, the members on the Committee on Memorial and Design's high expectations of Holstein were not realistic. Only three months short of the centennial celebration of the encampment, the establishment of a national network of talented and well-connected vice regents who would be willing to orchestrate extensive campaigns in their states was utterly impossible. In addition, Holstein had to establish the campaign in

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<sup>27</sup> Ms. Macalester collected \$10,000 for the cause. In 1873, when Cunningham resigned, she was elected Regent of the Association by the Grand Council. See: Thomas J Scharf, and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884*(Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & co., 1884), Vol. II, 1701.

<sup>28</sup> H. J. Stager, *History of the Centennial and Memorial Association of Valley Forge: From Its Origin In 1878, and Reorganization In 1886 Particularly to the Date of Voluntary Dissolution in 1910. Preceded by Album and Biography of Directors* (Pennsylvania: 1911), 18.

<sup>29</sup> Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union, *Historical Sketch of Ann Pamela Cunningham "the Southern Matron,"* (Printed for the Association, 1911), 8.

<sup>30</sup> "Valley Forge," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 March 1878, 2. Stager, *History of the Centennial and Memorial Association of Valley Forge*, 82.

Pennsylvania, organize the fundraising operations for the Centennial events, negotiate the acquisition of the Headquarters, and recruit civic organizations to join the effort. Even with the most dedicated staff and ample time it would have been a challenge to accomplish all the required tasks. Under the constraints of time acute shortage of funds and with only several dedicated women by her side, Holstein had to prioritize, delegate, and act swiftly to accomplish as much as possible before the celebration.

Without delay, she recruited her husband and Rebecca McInnes and entered negotiations to purchase the Headquarters. They resolved to pay the exorbitant price of \$6,000 and an agreement of sale was signed in less than two weeks following her appointment.<sup>31</sup> With a major obstacle removed, Holstein set out to raise the funds for the purchase. She sought the help of nearby relatives and friends, some of whom had assisted her when she nursed soldiers during the Civil War. They included Rachel Evans, Abby (Mrs. George) W. Holstein, Alice Hallowell (Mrs. Isaac) Holstein, Helen Cushman Hooven, Rebecca McInnes, and Mrs. Mercer. The women met regularly in order to coordinate the effort of collecting provisions for sale on the day of the Centennial celebration.

In the meantime, Holstein attempted to recruit men's organizations in order to capitalize on their national networks and reach a greater number of influential people of

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<sup>31</sup> The final agreement stipulated that the first payment of \$500 will be made on May 1, 1878, the second payment of \$1,000 on August 1, the third payment of \$1,500 on October 1, and the VFCMA will mortgage the remaining \$3,000. *Local Daily News*, 18 March 1878, Valley Forge, County Clippings, Revolutionary Wars Collection, West Chester Historical Society (CCHS), West Chester, Pennsylvania. William Hayman Holstein received the deed for the property from Hannah Ogden and passed it to the CMAVF on May 1, 1879. See: *Ibid.*, 16.

means. She approached the Freemasons (of which Washington had been a member), the Society of the Cincinnati, the Order of Odd Fellows, and other secret societies, but none extended a helping hand. When the state's Superintendent of Education agreed to back her effort, Holstein encouraged schools to organize fundraising events citing his auspices. She enthusiastically promised that once the headquarters was purchased it would become "an attractive point in the historic region" since it would "restore, in measure, the appearance it wore when Washington was resident beneath its roof."<sup>32</sup>

Signs that the task the association had undertaken would not be easily achieved appeared rather quickly. In April, a Norristown newspaper reported that, except for J. N. Smith of Valley Forge and Joseph E. Thropp, who owned property in the neighborhood,

...none of the people in the vicinity take any interest in the matter... Men who boast of holding their lands by deeds long ant[e]-dating the revolution feel no patriotic pride, and evince no respect to the memory of the men by whose courage and endurance on that very ground enables them now to hold their tenures securely.<sup>33</sup>

Philadelphians did not exhibit great interest either. In the following month, the Society of the Cincinnati accepted the invitation to attend the Centennial but was "more occupied with other affairs" and did not extend further assistance. At the same time, a Philadelphia

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<sup>32</sup> Holstein, "Valley Forge Centennial Preparations."

<sup>33</sup> "Meeting of Centennial Committees at Valley Forge," *Norristown Register*, 16 April 1878, 3.

newspaper reported that subscriptions to purchase the headquarters “do not come in very brisk.”<sup>34</sup>

However, Holstein was not discouraged. She decided to capitalize on her ties to the MVLA. She obtained a copy of the organization’s constitution, charter, and by-laws and handed them to lawyers to use as a guide for the Valley Forge Association. In May, she contacted Margaret J. M. Sweat, the Vice Regent of Maine and requested the names and addresses of women from across the country that were instrumental in furnishing the rooms at Mount Vernon. She hoped they would assist furnishing the Headquarters. In her letter she reminded Sweat that she had served as regent of her county in the initial Mount Vernon fundraising campaign and that she has “continued to feel the deepest interest in all pertaining to it.”<sup>35</sup> When Sweat decidedly replied that all the contributions they receive would remain in Mount Vernon and neglected to disclose names of any women, Holstein inquired the names of women from the thirteen colonies who would be suitable to serve as vice regents for her organization. Holstein’s focus on the original colonies would ultimately become the organization’s strategy.

At the same time she recruited additional acquaintances to persuade potential candidates from various states to head campaigns in their regions. Thus, Sweat received a

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<sup>34</sup> “The Triennial Session of the Society of the Cincinnati,” *North American*, 23 May 1878, 1; “State and Vicinity,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 13 May 1878, 4. Following the centennial celebration at Valley Forge, an observer determined that “Philadelphia and Norristown took little interest in the movement.” See: “Valley Forge 1778-1878,” *Norristown Register*, 23 June 1878, 2.

<sup>35</sup> A letter from Mrs. Holstein to Mrs. Lorenzo Sweat from May 20, 1878, quoted in: Charles B. Hosmer, *The Presence of the Past: The History of the Preservation Movement in the United States before Williamsburg* (New York: Putnam, 1965), 58.



letter from David G. Haskins of Boston in which he expressed his hope that she would serve as a Vice Regent for Maine. He also sent her CMAVF's shares of stock that he was selling.<sup>36</sup> Despite her difficulty in recruiting managers, Holstein was able to fill several positions before the centennial celebration on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1878. Three vice regents for Massachusetts, Maryland, and Ohio joined the campaign and representatives from West Chester, Philadelphia, and Reading volunteered in Pennsylvania.<sup>37</sup>

The women who joined Holstein were connected to public figures and deeply involved in civic and historical issues. Isabella James, the Vice Regent of Massachusetts, was a descendant of Isaac Potts, the original owner of Washington's Headquarters, and the author of her family's history.<sup>38</sup> Harriet Lane Johnson of Baltimore, who joined as Vice Regent of Maryland, was the niece of President James Buchanan. Known for her beauty and decorum, she served as a hostess in the White House during his presidency and had been a close friend of Lily Berghman, who served as the Regent of the MVLA from 1874 until her death in 1891.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> "Woman's Work at Valley Forge," *Daily Local News*, 24 June 1878.

<sup>38</sup> The historical volume of nearly 400 pages includes an illustration of the Headquarters at Valley Forge. See: Mrs. Thomas Potts James, *Memorial of the Thomas Potts, Junior, Who Settled in Pennsylvania* (Cambridge: Privately Printed, 1874), 216.

<sup>39</sup> "Capricious Washington," *Table Talk* IX (April 1894): 142. Lily Macalester, the daughter of Charles Macalester, the government director of the Second Bank of the United States in Philadelphia, was later known as Mrs. Berghman and, after the death of her first husband, as Mrs. Laughton. See: Milton Stern, *Harriet Lane, America's First Lady* (2005), 57. Harriet Lane was one of the bridesmaids in Macalester's wedding to Berghman. See: "Notable Marriage," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 29 Dec. 1860, 1.

Locally, Mary Rose Smith, daughter of Justice Robert C. Grier of the U.S. Supreme Court and formerly a member of the Executive Committees of the Great Central Fair and the Centennial Exposition, volunteered to occupy the Vice Regency of Philadelphia. Committed to women's work, she edited the volume of the history of world charities that were founded and managed by women, which was later published for the Centennial in 1876.<sup>40</sup> Adelaide Ermentrout, wife of Democratic State Senator Daniel Ermentrout, filled the position of the Vice Regent of Reading. Her husband, who served as a member of the Pennsylvania Statuary Commission, worked closely with four commissioners interested in commemorating distinguished historical figures.<sup>41</sup> A vice regent with a strong interest in education, Sarah W. Starkweather of West Chester, was the superintendent of the county's public schools.<sup>42</sup>

At the end of May, the Valley Forge Centennial Association issued an invitation calling for a "general holiday" to unite "all people" to celebrate on the encampment grounds.<sup>43</sup> Despite their declaration for a national celebration, the association's focus had been much narrower. Their advanced invitation list included the National Guard, local

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<sup>40</sup> See: *Catalogue of Charities Conducted by Women, as Reported to the Women's Centennial Executive Committee of the United States, International Exhibition, 1876* (Philadelphia: Collins, printer, 1876).

<sup>41</sup> The additional commissioners included Simon Cameron, former Secretary of War for Abraham Lincoln, George De B. Keim, a leading Philadelphia lawyer who had ties to the coal and railroad industries, J. R. Hager of Lancaster, Dr. William McKenna of Washington County, and Col. Francis A. Osbourne of Philadelphia. See: "Statues of Distinguished Pennsylvanians," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 8 August 1878, 2.

<sup>42</sup> S. W. Streeter, "West Chester Public Schools, From 1860-1866," in *West Chester, Past and Present: Centennial Souvenir with Celebration Proceedings* (West Chester: Local Daily News, 1899), 34.

<sup>43</sup> "Valley Forge – Invitation of the Centennial Association," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 23 May 1878, 4; "Local Summary," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 24 May 1878, 3.

public schools, the American diplomatic corps, and Governors and cabinets of the thirteen original states in additions to militias in full regalia.<sup>44</sup> CMAVF members approached these states because they were where individuals of colonial ancestry were most likely to reside. There was a greater chance that these individuals would be interested in undertaking the preservation project because it implied hierarchy of status and rank.

With the special day quickly approaching, the association struck a commemorative medal to be sold at the Headquarters. Its center had a raised bust of Washington, surrounded by a border with the words “George Washington Commander – in-Chief” with two stars between the name and the title. On the reverse, the center was engraved with “In commemoration of the departure of the Continental Army, June 19”. It was surrounded by olive branches and laurel wreath. A raised border carried the words “Valley Forge Centennial, 1778-1878.”<sup>45</sup>

Similarly to the Centennial Exposition medals, such memorabilia struck a chord with an audience captivated by a momentous experience. Interestingly, the medal did not mention the encampment but its end, commemorating the survival of the Continental Army. Intended to be sold on Evacuation Day, it memorialized the day on which it would have been purchased. Americans had idealized George Washington since he became president and continued to do so throughout the nineteenth century. The Washington

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<sup>44</sup> “The Valley Forge Centennial,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 24 Jan. 1878, 2.

<sup>45</sup> “Valley Forge. The Centennial Today, Medals Stuck at the Mint,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 June 1878, 2.

image constructed by religious and civic leaders corresponded to their political and cultural needs. Since the new republic period, the image of a self-sacrificing, self-controlled, and religious leader had emerged to preclude the idea of a general who sought political power. Over time, as conflicts between Northerners and Southerners persisted, he also came to represent political consensus in order to bridge sectional differences and political disagreements.<sup>46</sup> By the 1850s he was the most popular historical figure in the country. The Executive Committee of the Valley Forge Association selected him to decorate their medal trusting that he would better inspire visitors rather than the image of the Headquarters.

Despite the mounting tasks that awaited their attention, association leaders managed to incorporate their organization on the eve of the celebration on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1878. They changed its name to the Centennial and Memorial Association of Valley Forge (CMAVF) denoting their intention to continue their effort of memory following the centennial celebration. Their objective, as stated in the Act of Incorporation, was “to purchase, improve and preserve the lands and improvements thereon, occupied by General Washington, at Valley Forge, and maintain them as a memorial park for all time to come.” Clearly, the organizers sought to manage the memorial park they envisioned for perpetuity.

On the morning of June 19<sup>th</sup>, a loud salute of thirteen guns signaled the commencement of the celebration. An impressive march of thousands of troops and

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<sup>46</sup> Barry Schwartz, *George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 24, 27, 190.

members of civic societies passed for review by Governor John F. Hartranft and General Winfield Scott. In full uniform and regalia the marchers presented an impressive procession of military and civic-minded men that they felt was sure to impress the thirty thousand visitors who were arriving at the site. Susan G. Davis, who studies nineteenth-century parades in Philadelphia, recognizes the impression created by volunteer militia who interpreted patriotism and tied themselves to the historical narrative of the American Revolution. She argues that they conveyed discipline and order through their impressive uniform and ceremonial parades.<sup>47</sup> In contrast to the apparent military prowess, women tended to the memorial aspect by decorating local graves and scattering flowers on the ground, symbolically sanctifying the site.

In the afternoon, Henry Armitt Brown, a prominent orator, addressed the large crowd. He opened with a detailed description of the hungry and cold soldiers, praising their courage, virtue, and suffering. In an attempt to find common grounds for all religious denominations, he suggested that site was as sacred as that of Moses' Burning Bush:

if freedom be any longer precious and faith in humanity be not banished from among you, if love of country still find a refuge among the hearts of men, "take your shoes from off your feet for the place of which you stand is holy ground."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Susan Davis, *Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 67-70.

<sup>48</sup> "One Hundred Years Ago At Valley Forge," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 June 1878, 2.

Discussing more recent times, he included the memory of Valley Forge with that of Lexington, Bunker Hill, and Saratoga, where significant attempts of commemoration had taken place.<sup>49</sup> It placed Valley Forge, where no battle had ever transpired, on the same level as pivotal battlefields of the Revolutionary War. He concluded with a message about future generations “to them the Union will seem as dear and Liberty as sweet and progress as glorious as they were to our fathers.” By linking the notions of liberty and union Brown connected the Revolutionary War with the recent Civil War and reiterated the anti-secessionist position. Holstein, who had worked in the Headquarters preparing the reception, later commented – “That was indeed a grand oration of Armitt Brown, it thrills one to read it; what must it have been to have heard it, amid such surroundings.”<sup>50</sup>

During the entire day the women of CMAVF operated the open Headquarters for hundreds of visitors who paid ten cents to view the structure and an exhibition of revolutionary period artifacts arranged in its first floor. Holstein sold stereoscopic images and medals of bronze and silver while others served dinner in a large tent nearby. Their

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<sup>49</sup> The imposing Bunker Hill monument had been completed in 1843. Lexington had erected the first memorial to the war on July 4, 1799, and at its centennial celebration it unveiled the statues of John Adams and John Hancock. See: “What a Glorious Morning. This is For America! The Centennial Everybody Goes,” *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 20 April 1875, 1. In Saratoga, New York, a cornerstone for a foundation of a memorial that “will be visible for miles around” was laid at its centennial celebration. See: “An interesting Centennial Celebration,” *New York Herald*, 16 Oct. 1877, 6.

<sup>50</sup> Anna M. Holstien, Bridgeport, PA, to Francis M. Brooke, June 26, 1878, Francis M. Brooke Collection, Box 1, Valley Forge National Historical Park (VFNHP).

effort netted \$710, a sum that covered the \$500 payment Isaac W. Smith had advanced for the purchase of the Headquarters.<sup>51</sup>

With the main event behind them and a pending mortgage of \$3,000, CMAVF members had to organize impressive events that would attract donors.<sup>52</sup> Following the MVLA's footsteps, they might have hoped that Armitt's oration would move people to support their effort similarly to the manner in which Edward Everett's oration of Mount Vernon benefited its cause. Everett's speech tour and article series published in the *New York Ledger* raised nearly \$70,000.<sup>53</sup> However, Brown's death a mere two months after the celebration terminated all plans if any had been considered.

In November, Mary Rose Smith, the Vice Regent of Philadelphia, organized a meeting at the Historical Society of Philadelphia (HSP) in the memory of Brown in order to raise awareness of the association's efforts in the city. A large gathering assembled to hear Brown's Valley Forge address delivered by Daniel D. Dougherty. Theodore Bean, one of the principal founders of the CMAVF, presented the audience with the association's goals and the stock offered for purchase.<sup>54</sup> Several days later, Smith opened

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<sup>51</sup> "Celebration at Valley Forge," *Norristown Herald and Free Press*, 25 June 1878, 1; The Headquarters collected \$410 and the dinner \$300. "Receipts at the Ladies' Tent and at Headquarters," *Norristown Herald and Free Press*, 25 June 1878, 3.

<sup>52</sup> According to their agreement, the CMAVF was to pay Ogden a total of \$3,000 by October 1878 and obtain a mortgage on the remaining sum of \$3,000. See: Treese, *Valley Forge*, 20-21.

<sup>53</sup> Kenneth R. Bowling and Donald R. Kennon, eds., *Establishing Congress: the Removal to Washington, D.C., and the Election of 1800* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 178.

<sup>54</sup> "Washington at Valley Forge," *North American*, 9 Nov. 1878, 1; "Memorial Association of Valley Forge," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 9 Nov. 1878, 2.

her residence for an exclusive meeting. She wanted the fundraising effort managed by privileged and experienced women. The invitees included former participants of Centennial Exposition committees and current members of the New Century Club, where she had been a member of the Board of Directors.<sup>55</sup> The women who answered the invitation were called to plead with state officials for appropriation for the project at a special dinner in Wilkes-Barre. On the morning of November 22, their special train left Philadelphia. On its way, it collected additional activists in Norristown, Phoenixville, Pottstown, and Reading. In the interim, it stopped at Valley Forge where the travelers visited Washington's Headquarters.<sup>56</sup> The meeting did not bring material results despite the presence of the influential city women.

Philadelphia women organized into committees under the direction of Smith and Louisa Claghorn, the former chairwoman of the Ninth Ward for the Centennial Exposition, who served as treasurer. By the winter, sixteen city wards had been actively canvassed for contributions. The HSP assisted by offering stocks for purchase on their premises.<sup>57</sup>

While the women of Philadelphia labored to raise funds in the city, Holstein turned to rural Pennsylvania, a population generally kept at the fringe of major urban campaigns. With the help of Mrs. Ermentrout, wife of a state senator, a lavish evening

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<sup>55</sup> "The Valley Forge Project," *North American*, 11 Nov. 1878, 1.

<sup>56</sup> "Washington's Headquarters," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 23 Nov. 1878, 2.

<sup>57</sup> "Washington's Headquarters at Valley Forge," *North American*, 15 Feb. 1879, 1; "Washington's Headquarters at Valley Forge," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 15 Feb. 1879, 2.



ball was organized in Reading that had excited women far and wide across the countryside. In covering the preparations for the event, its main cause - historical preservation - was not mentioned. Instead, *The Daily Eagle* dedicated two lengthy articles with detailed descriptions of dresses, hair-style, and jewels, emphasizing young women's care for display. It portrayed the ball as an elite society's social event where extravagant fashionable appearance would dominate the scene. Ironically, it equated freedom with the privilege of attending such occasion – “Go for you are like Washington ‘holding the proud rank of independent, free American women and men.’”<sup>58</sup>

It seemed that the preservation of Washington's Headquarters occupied the minds of the ball's organizers, but not those of their guests. The prosperous families of rural Pennsylvania were given a rare opportunity to mingle and they took full advantage of it. On the appropriate April evening, a large crowd gathered on the sidewalk by Maennerchor Hall, to view the guests who arrived at the ball. Hundreds loudly commented in excitement on the silk, satin, and velvet gowns, amazed at the lacey trains, and dazzled by the array of diamonds, pearls, corals, and opals. Upon entering the hall, the visitors were reminded of the fundraiser's purpose by a program engraved with Washington's Headquarters on its front page and a picture of a continental soldier on its last.<sup>59</sup> Additional colonial and revolutionary mementos were scarce. The flags and a bugle that decorated the walls belonged to Civil War generals, and although one sword dated back to the revolutionary period, the second originated in the Napoleonic Wars.

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<sup>58</sup> “The Grand Ball. All the Excitement,” *The Daily Eagle*, 22 April 1879, 4.

<sup>59</sup> “The Patriotic and Vigorous,” *The Daily Eagle*, 23 April 1879, 1.

The most obvious link with Valley Forge was the portraits of George and Martha Washington, each hung at the center of a wall, across from each other and equally important. They were garlanded with evergreens and two American flags crossed above them. The ball was a rare event. CMAVF members realized that “There may not be another ball like this in Reading for many, many, years” and perhaps preferred to keep the invitees excited about the opportunity in anticipation of obtaining large amount of funds.<sup>60</sup>

The hall was filled with dignitaries who arrived from Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York, and included cabinet, Senate, House, and army and navy officials. Pennsylvania was represented by a large number of guests; two hundred visitors arrived from Norristown in addition to Lancaster, Harrisburg, Pottsville, Lebanon, Columbia, Allentown, and Philadelphia, all “fair women and brave men, representing the *elite* of society.”<sup>61</sup> The “Grand March” of those who presided over the ball, among them Governor Hoyt, former Governor Hartranft, Holstein, and local women activists, was a faint remainder of the ball’s objective.

Noticeably missing from the party were privileged Philadelphians, the very women Smith recruited for the project. They probably attended the Carnival of Authors orchestrated on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), which took place at the Horticultural Hall on the same evening. Louisa E. Claghorn, the

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<sup>60</sup> “What To Wear,” *The Reading Daily Eagle*, 21 April 1879, 4.

<sup>61</sup> “Valley Forge – Reading Last Night’s Memorial Fete,” *Reading Times and Dispatch*, 23 April 1879; “Gala Night To-morrow,” *Reading Time and Dispatch*, 21 April 1879, 1.

Philadelphia CMAVF branch's treasurer, directed the gala along with other members of the General Committee of Arrangements. Remarkably similar to the carnival organized by the Women's Centennial Executive Committee on February 1876, it featured costumed characters such as Pickwick and Macbeth, enacted or portrayed Longfellow and Whittier, and exhibited a model of the departure of the Mayflower.<sup>62</sup> Literary and historical memory had no direct link to the SPCA's agenda but Revolution-themed events popularized by the Women's Centennial Executive Committee became attractive fundraisers.<sup>63</sup> One can only imagine Holstein's frustration when she learned that Philadelphia's wealthiest and exclusive elite easily shed thousands of dollars to help stray dogs and abandoned cats, while remaining unmoved by her organization's patriotic cause. Ironically, the sum spent on the event's decorations alone, over \$3,000, could have satisfied the amount owed on the mortgage CMAVF struggled to raise.

The absence of the city's wealthy and powerful elites deprived the project of a legitimacy that only an endorsement of the socially prominent could have bestowed. It also shaped its production. Unlike the tea parties carried out on behalf of the Centennial, the organizers of the ball lacked the funds and connections that could have enabled them to produce an opulent historically-centered affair. Whereas the Centennial committees had flowers, foods, and decorations brought from afar, occasionally from out of the state, Reading women depended on local suppliers and a limited budget. The abundance of

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<sup>62</sup> "Author's Carnival. The Opening of Horticultural Hall This Evening. Scenes Inside," *North American*, 22 April 1879, 1; "Carnival of Authors. Brilliant Opening Scenes at the Horticultural Hall," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 23 April 1879, 3.

<sup>63</sup> See: Chapter 3.

valuable revolutionary articles in the hands of old Philadelphia families, and the access the privileged city women had to prominent people in other parts of the state and the country enabled them to obtain the most appealing of artifacts for their displays.

These circumstances, however, did not prevent CMAVF women from presenting the Headquarters and its planned memorial park in a more forceful manner. They could have organized a display of colonial and revolutionary artifacts and dedicated a table for articles found in Valley Forge. Holstein's husband held in his possession two cannon balls, a piece of shell, and a small hatchet found at the camp grounds in addition to Anthony Wayne's pistols and many additional artifacts could be obtained from area inhabitants.<sup>64</sup> The women could have loaned a great number of articles from their friends and acquaintances, similar to those loaned for the Montgomery County centennial celebration a few years later.<sup>65</sup>

In addition, communication with the media could have been handled more judiciously. Holstein and Ermentrout could have informed the press about their organization's goals and described the preparations for the event in order to promote their enterprise. They could have also employed the opportunity to appeal for public support.

The expression of excitement over the ball that culminated in a fashionable display could

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<sup>64</sup> William H. Holstein loaned the cannon balls, the shell, and the hatchet to the exhibit arranged for the Montgomery County Centennial celebration in September 1884. Bean, *History of Montgomery County, PA*, Appendix 2, xxi; His pistols appear at his will, where he left them to George Meade Holstein. See: William Hayman Holstein, "Will."

<sup>65</sup> Centennial of Montgomery County organizers displayed 1240 exhibitors. For the list of artifacts see: Freeland Gotwalts Hobson, William Joseph Buck, and Henry Sassaman Dotterer, eds., *Centennial Celebration of Montgomery County at Norristown, Pennsylvania*, (Norristown, PA: Published by the Centennial Association of Montgomery County, 1884), 112-420.

have been channeled toward a historically meaningful exhibition similar to the one undertaken by the Centennial Women's committees. Requirement for colonial costumes for women and Continental Army uniform, or any old-style attire, for men could have helped construct a memory not only in visitors' minds but also in the hundreds of spectators who came to observe them. It was clear that an opportunity went amiss when a local newspaper dedicated more space to lengthy lists of persons who attended the ball rather than to the account of the event itself. Following the ball, the women could have also encouraged the media to discuss the total funds raised and to communicate that the ball had been part of a long, continuous effort. They could have called for additional support and spark public anticipation of future communal events on behalf of the cause.<sup>66</sup> The silence that followed did not help to publicize the subsequent local event the women organized.

In June, an outdoor event suffered from similar detachment from historical context and disconnect from the media. Planned as a country festival, Fête champêtre, near the mountains of Pottsville, Pennsylvania, it featured archery, races, and dancing. The only link to the preservation effort was the publication of three editions of Edwin Kirkman Hart's *The Sleeping Sentinel of Valley Forge: A Romance of the Revolution* on the festival's grounds.<sup>67</sup> The event took place a mere six days after the dedication of the Headquarters on the one hundred and first anniversary of the evacuation of Valley

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<sup>66</sup> Each couple paid \$3 for attending the ball. A CMAVF stock valued at \$1. The event must have been lucrative and raised a substantial sum. See: "Grand Ball in Aid of Centennial Memorial Association of Valley Forge," Revolutionary War Collection, Valley Forge, Box 5, CCHS.

<sup>67</sup> The short story was publically published in 1897.

Forge.<sup>68</sup> It was a well-publicized ceremony that included a relay of a lost cornerstone with a granite replacement by master masons. The dedication could have served as an opportunity to disclose information about the upcoming event and encourage the public to attend. Curiously, a leading Philadelphia newspaper learned about it nearly a month later. The disclosure ended as a short notice under its “miscellaneous” items after the editors had confirmed the information with Holstein.<sup>69</sup> It seems that no activist from the Valley Forge Association communicated with the media during the festival either. Left without comments from CMAVF women, a local journalist concluded his report with a historically-irrelevant comment on “*How many pretty ladies Pottsville has.*”<sup>70</sup>

In the meantime, continuous grass-roots activities raised additional funds and hope for success had not diminished. Dedicated individuals organized events in their rural communities, which served in lieu of city canvassers in areas where great distances between residences made canvassing inefficient. Lectures, readings, and recitals presented by locals raised rural audiences’ curiosity in America’s past and educated attendees in history constructed by, typically, affluent white Protestants. Indeed, the effort of county superintendent of education in Berks County demonstrated the merit of such initiatives. He ordered certificates of membership for public and other schools under his jurisdiction and brought the project to the attention of his teachers. In addition, he

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<sup>68</sup> “Valley Forge Dedication,” *Norristown Herald and Free Press*, 24 June 1879, 3.

<sup>69</sup> “Miscellaneous,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 24 July 1879, 3.

<sup>70</sup> “\$2000 for Valley Forge,” *The Reading Daily Eagle*, 26 June 1879, 1. The amount mentioned refers to the sum raised by the women of Philadelphia. See also: “The Centennial Memorial Association of Valley Forge,” *Lowell Daily Citizen and News*, 11 June 1879, 1.

delivered two lectures, “Valley Forge in History,” in a local grammar school and for a library society. The funds collected at these events purchased additional CMAVF stock.<sup>71</sup> Another fundraiser was the reading of poetry on an undisclosed subject by Ms. M. Fannie Boice at the residence of Rebecca McInnes in conjunction with the twenty third annual meeting of the Teachers’ Institute of Montgomery County. The proceeds of the evening were dedicated to the CMAVF.<sup>72</sup>

Despite these efforts, the economic difficulties of the early 1880s gravely affected the association. The members had leased the Headquarters and property, but the sluggish stream of funds was not sufficient to cover the mortgage payments and there was fear that it could be foreclosed.<sup>73</sup> At length, when all venues had been exhausted, Holstein and her women associates considered approaching the Patriotic Order of the Sons of America (POSA) of which Theodore W. Bean, a principal founder of the CMAVF, had been an active member. Established in Philadelphia in 1847, the POSA fraternal organization advocated anti-Catholic and anti-foreign sentiments. Its goals included inculcation of American principles of patriotism and government, and opposing foreign interference in U.S. policies.<sup>74</sup> The remaining male directors of the CMAVF had no reason to oppose the appeal since they had also been active members of the POSA. In a meeting held at the

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<sup>71</sup> “Valley Forge Memorial Association,” *The Reading Time and Dispatch*, 21 April 1879, 1.

<sup>72</sup> “Miss Boice’s Reading,” *Norristown Herald and Free Press*, 4 Nov. 1879, 3; Stager, *History of the Centennial and Memorial Association of Valley Forge*, 85.

<sup>73</sup> Harland D. Unrau, *Administrative History Valley Forge National Historical Park, Pennsylvania* (U. S. Department of the Interior: National Park Service, Northeast Team), 38.

<sup>74</sup> Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, Vol. 3, 2075; Kate M. Scott, *History of Jefferson County, PA* (Syracus, NY: D. Mason & Co. Publishers, 1888), 318.

Headquarters in January 1886 between Holstein, Bean, and the State Executive Commission of the POSA, the CMAVF received a promise for full monetary support.<sup>75</sup> The president of the Pennsylvania POSA, Henry John Stager, whose ancestors settled near Valley Forge, recognized an opportunity for maintaining a site of civic significance which “will give to [POSA] honor as enduring as the Republic.”<sup>76</sup> He issued three appeals before the organization’s 181 camps (chapters) collected the required sum.<sup>77</sup> During the campaign, *Camp News*, the organization’s newspaper, published a series of articles authored by Bean about Washington at Valley Forge titled “Footprints of the Revolution” in attempt to spark further interest in the project.<sup>78</sup> In return for rescuing the CMAVF the POSA entered joint ownership of the Headquarters and formed a thirteen-member trustee committee whose members were also part of the directorship of the association. It gave the POSA full control over the organization’s decisions, accepted by a board of eighteen, and later, twenty-one officers and directors.

The association between the CMAVF and the powerful and well-connected POSA was a great relief to Holstein. She cheerfully expressed it upon the pages of the *Camp*

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<sup>75</sup> A detailed description of events can be found in: James H. Wolfe, *In the Matter of the Audit of the Account of the CMAVF Appeal by Henry J. Stager and Henry J. Stager, Trustee from the Court of Common Pleas of Montgomery County, as of June Term, 1910, No. 32,* Box 20, Valley Forge National Park (VFNP), Pennsylvania.

<sup>76</sup> The description is cited from Holstein’s letter. See: Anna M. Holstein, Bridgeport, PA, to H. J. Stager, 5 April 1886. *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>77</sup> The camps collected \$3,370.98 with no help from the organization’s State Treasury. See: *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>78</sup> The book had been originally published during the Centennial year in anticipation of peak interest in the subject. See: Theodore W. Bean, *Washington at Valley Forge One Hundred Years Ago or The Foot-Prints of the Revolution* (Norristown, PA: Charles P. Shreiner, 1876).



*New*, comparing the celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee to that of the transformation of "the apathy and indifference, which rested like a weight upon the work" with "the earnest enthusiasm of those who are now taking part in the movement."<sup>79</sup> The involvement of the POSA brought not only an end to the CMAVF's monetary troubles but also additional benefits through the new members' political connections. In 1887, McInnes with the Committee of State Appropriation secured \$5,000 from state legislature for restoration work on the Headquarters. Within a few years, CMAVF were able to purchase additional property and create a park around the Headquarters.

There was no reason for Holstein to worry when the state formed the Valley Forge Commission of ten members in 1893 with the initial goal of mapping the military camp and, in later years, increasing the acquisition of the camp's lands. The commission's first president, Francis Brooke, was Holstein's cousin, and more importantly, the land owned by the CMAVF had been excluded from the commission's jurisdiction. Holstein did not live to see the Pennsylvania Legislature's condemnation and acquisition of the CMAVF grounds and Headquarters in 1905.<sup>80</sup> At the time, J. P. Hale Jenkins, one of the principal members of the CMAVF, served as a commissioner for the park. In 1905, an act of the state legislature condemned the Headquarters for the use of the Park Commission and awarded damages to the CMAVF.<sup>81</sup> The remaining funds of the association were awarded to the Park Commission by Montgomery County Courts in

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<sup>79</sup> Anna M. Holstein, "The Headquarters at Valley Forge," *The Camp News*, 1 July 1887, 155.

<sup>80</sup> She died on Dec. 31, 1900.

<sup>81</sup> Stager, *Centennial and Memorial Association of Valley Forge*, 160-165.

June of 1911. Henry Stager, the former president of the POSA, handled the appeal on behalf of the CMAVF to the state Supreme Court. It was settled on February 1912 with the dissolution of the organization and the transfer of its funds to the Valley Forge Park Commission.<sup>82</sup>

Holstein and her associates sought to link George Washington with the Headquarters because he resided there during most of the winter of 1777 and 1778 and because they could present him as a symbol of virtue, a man who sacrificed himself to defend freedom. Holstein perceived Martha Washington as a traditional wife caring for the domestic sphere although she had slave laborers with her to do much of the work – “by her presence imparted something of a home appearance to her husband’s lonely dwelling among the forests. At her suggestion, an addition of logs was placed on the north side, and used as a dining room.”<sup>83</sup> Holstein, who had read Benson John Lossing’s new monograph *Mary and Martha* and found it “charming,” knew that the wives of other officers stayed at the encampment throughout the winter to raise the morale of their husbands and the troops.<sup>84</sup> However, she never attempted to mention them or any of the other officers. The popularity of Washington must have been at the heart of her decision; she hoped his name would attract public attention and funds.

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<sup>82</sup> Unrau, *Administrative History Valley Forge National Historical Park*, 51.

<sup>83</sup> Holstein, “The Headquarters at Valley Forge,” 155.

<sup>84</sup> Holstein mentions the book in her letter to Mrs. James: Anna M. Holstein, Bridgeport, Pennsylvania, to Mrs. James, 12 July 1887, Society Collection, HSP; Benson John Lossing, *Mary and Martha, The Mother and the Wife of George Washington* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1886), 172.

Immortalizing Washington as the sole hero of the encampment was not accepted by all women. Mary Thropp Cone, whose ancestors settled in the area before the revolution, attempted to expand Valley Forge memory. In her opinion, advanced by the editor of the *Phoenixville Messenger*, John O. K. Robarts, the headquarters did not truly represent “the names of the Generals, regiments, the States represented there.”<sup>85</sup> In a letter published in major local newspapers she argued for a fitting memory “in the honor of these grand men, unspeakably brave and true” in the shape of a granite shaft that would tell the story and names of “the prominent actors in that scene of the war drama enacted upon those bleak hills.” Cone wanted to recognize the officers of the eleven states whose regiments camped at Valley Forge. Such a memorial would have demonstrated a memory of “consensus” of a united North and South behind the cause of independence.<sup>86</sup> Like Holstein, she also intended the memorial to educate foreign-born to trust governing institutions:

It promotes the elevation of the human race, it educates the immigrants from all nations in honesty and virtue; it inculcates industry and expels foreign prejudices by the force of advancing intelligence. It provides for the visiting generations of Europe and America a shelter and a home under ‘a government of the people and by the people.’<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> *The Phoenixville Messenger*, 22 July 1882.

<sup>86</sup> It would have excluded South Carolina and Georgia whose regiments did not participate in the encampment. For complete list of regiments who camped at Valley Forge see: Frank Hamilton Taylor, *Valley Forge, A Chronicle of American Heroism* (Philadelphia: James W. Nagle, 1905), 101-102.

<sup>87</sup> “Valley Forge,” *The Phoenixville Messenger*, 15 July 1882; “Open Doors to Correspondents. The Neglected Monument of Valley Forge,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 24 July 1882, 7; Edward Payson Cone, *Workizier, Thropp & Cone Families: Biographical Notes* (New York: Privately Printed, 1905), 31.

Cone formed the Valley Forge Monument Association and with the help of prominent civic leader among them John F. Hartranft, a former state governor, George W. Childs, the editor of the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, and CMAVF members Theodore W. Bean, Isaac W. Smith, Anna M. Holstein, Mrs. Hugh McInnes, and Mary Rose Smith.

In 1882, when Cone commenced her efforts to raise funds for a monument, the nation experienced an economic downturn and CMAVF struggled to keep the Headquarters. She might have thought that by rallying Childs and Hartranft and including Southern states she could recruit a larger group of people. Holstein joined the association despite of a personal attack by Robarts who claimed that “the Lady Regency fashioned after that of Mount Vernon, while pretty in outline, in substance and practice does not come up to expectation.”<sup>88</sup> Pragmatically, she wanted to leave her mark on any campaign linked to the site.

If the CMAVF faced financial difficulty, the Valley Forge Monument Association met similar fate. Both organizations vied for attention from the same historically-minded constituents for nearly identical goals. As public funds declined, the organizations resolved to cooperate in requesting appropriation from Congress. On December 1882, the one hundred and fifth anniversary of General Washington’s entrance to the encampment, locals gathered for a town hall meeting at Valley Forge. They decided to request Congress to include the encampment among the revolutionary battlefield sites it

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<sup>88</sup> *The Phoenixville Messenger*, 22 July 1882.

considered to help commemorate.<sup>89</sup> Four days later, a meeting of the Council of the HSP resulted with an official request to Congress.<sup>90</sup> Following an inquiry, government officials concluded that an appropriation would be awarded to CMAVF, which would satisfy their mortgage. Upon receiving the funds from the proposed bill, they would forward funds to the Monument Association. Both organizations were satisfied with the arrangement. However, the bill did not pass, and the Monument Association attempted to obtain state appropriation. Their effort resulted in the state act of 1893, which established the Valley Forge Park Commission.<sup>91</sup> The episode demonstrates that Valley Forge was the grounds for contestation over the construction of memory among elite rural women. As different as their approaches had been, the women selected to memorize officers, emphasizing leadership and class distinction. They wanted their example to instill social hierarchy, discipline, and deference.

Holstein intended to furnish the headquarters with period articles to inspire visitors, similar to the rooms at Mount Vernon. She had hoped that the MVLA would assist in this task, but when her attempt to acquire assistance from the organization had been rebuffed by Mrs. Sweat, she tirelessly corresponded to achieve her goal. Reminding

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<sup>89</sup> No names of attendees are mentioned. "Valley Forge," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 22 December 1882, 2.

<sup>90</sup> Congress, House, Monuments for Battle-Fields of the Revolution; Also for Valley Forge and Washington, Headquarters at Morristown, 48th Cong., 1st sess., no. 2123, (2 July 1884), 3.

<sup>91</sup> William Herbert Burk, *Historical and Topographical Guide to Valley Forge* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1912), 159. Francis M. Brooke, Holstein's cousin and a descendant of General Wayne, lobbied in 1892 for a state park. Governor Robert E. Pattison created the Commission and appropriated \$25,000 for acquisition of land. See: Lyman P. Powell, "The Renaissance of the Historical Pilgrimage," *Review of Reviews*, VIII (October 1893): 413.

Mrs. James of her Potts ancestry, Holstein wrote, “Your influence, may possibly procure some things for the Headquarters from the Potts family.”<sup>92</sup> Her efforts succeeded in the acquisition of documents and pictures from the librarian and officer of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, Frederick D. Stone.<sup>93</sup> At length, local Daughters of the American Revolution chapters received permission to decorate the rooms.<sup>94</sup>

While decorating fitted women’s traditional role, it gave the press a hook for the publicity of the women’s campaign. When the *Reading Daily Eagle* reported that the “patriotic women” would preserve the Headquarters, it added that once they obtain the title for the property “it will be signal for the housekeepers of the whole country-side round about to look through their stores of time-honored furniture, so as not to be outdone in generosity by the Bay State.”<sup>95</sup> The rural press chose to emphasize women’s domestic task rather than the traditionally male roles of fundraising, public relations, and meetings with key political figures.

Holstein took great pride in her preservation of Valley Forge and in her conviction that it belonged to the whole nation was unwavering. She passionately wrote

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<sup>92</sup>Holstein to Mrs. James, 12 July 1887, HSP.

<sup>93</sup> She also urged him to donate a clock. See: Anna M. Holstein, Bridgeport, to Mr. F. D. Stone, 21 June 1892, and 25 June, 1892.

<sup>94</sup> See Chapter 5.

<sup>95</sup> “The Great Ball,” *The Reading Daily Eagle*, 17 April 1879, 4.

on the pages of the *Camp News*, the organ of the Pennsylvania branch of POSA:

No State can have sole title to the old headquarters and hills of Valley Forge. They belong to the nation as much as does the name and fame of Washington. 'No North, no South, no East, no West,' can claim them.<sup>96</sup>

Her words suggest that she considered the site an ideal representation of the revolution, when colonies from North and South joined in battle for independence. With such a firm stand, it appears striking that she allowed Civil War articles to decorate the walls of the Reading ball. On the one hundred and ninth celebration of Evacuation Day, in June 1887, upon receiving an American flag on behalf of the CMAVF, she mentioned the soldiers of Valley Forge who fought for a just government but gave longer description of Civil War heroes who "risked life and limb in [the flag's] defense, when the last conscious word and loving look has been give to its care." She continued with descriptions of the hospitals and "the starved Andersonville men" who returned from the Southern prison.<sup>97</sup> Holstein could have used the Headquarters and Washington as an ideal consensus behind the Revolutionary War to foster reconciliation between North and South, but, curiously, she did not suppress her feelings about the Civil War. The public honor given to Civil War generals at the celebration did not suggest the existence of any sentiments of compromise or intention of unity on the part of the organizers or their guests. Elizabeth

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<sup>96</sup> Anna M. Holstein, "The Headquarters at Valley Forge," *Camp News, Valley Forge Special Edition*, 18 June 1887, 3. She would reiterate this statement in almost the exact words in the DAR magazine eight years later. See: Anna Morris Holstein, "Reminiscences of Valley Forge and General Washington's Headquarters," *The American Monthly Magazine*, 6 (May 1895): 550.

<sup>97</sup> "Valley Forge. Many Thousands Massed Upon the Famous Hills," *Norristown Herald and Free Press*, 20 June 1887, 3.

Varon's findings that for many Northern Americans, disunion was associated with "fears of extreme political factionalism, tyranny, regionalism, economic decline, foreign intervention, class conflict, gender disorder, racial strife, widespread violence, and civil war, all of which could be interpreted as God's retribution for America's moral failings," may hold the answer. Holstein could not have accepted secession as a viable solution to the regional political crisis. To her, it meant a rejection of the very idea for which the revolutionaries had fought. She probably blamed the South for the war that generated great numbers of casualties, who she had witnessed suffering and, often, dying. Valley Forge, where no battle had been fought, was significant for the spirit of self-sacrifice for a greater cause. Edwin Kirkman Hart expressed what a large number of Valley Forge preservationists wanted to memorialize in his introduction to his story of the *The Sleeping Sentinel of Valley Forge*: "the scene of trials and dangers of the little army which clung together, despite every hardship and discouragement and which was actuated by the love of country, love of home and love of mankind."<sup>98</sup>

The act of self-sacrifice had been largely associated with female gender role. Wives and mothers were often expected to serve the needs of their husbands and children before tending to their own necessities. The title of Frank Moore's renowned monograph on the work of women in the Civil War, *Women of the War: their heroism and Self-Sacrifice*, rationalized women's participation in acts of male aggression by conveying socially accepted female attributes. Men's self-sacrifice in war typically carried the

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<sup>98</sup> Hart, *The Sleeping Sentinel of Valley Forge*, 5.



burden of the battlefield and possible disfigurement or death. Valley Forge preservationists altered the definition of self sacrifice without changing its function. Male self-sacrifice had no longer been directly linked to combat but had been articulated as any risky deed taken on behalf of the war effort. It blurred the boundary between men's and women's contribution to the war effort; if soldiers were ceremoniously commended for self-sacrifice without fighting, there were plenty of women whose contributions were no less significant and equally instructive.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the public had become increasingly aware of preservation of the American past and culture as immigrants appeared in greater numbers in city streets and towns. Most immigrants who arrived to Pennsylvania after the Civil War settled in Philadelphia where they could easily find work and affordable housing, but enough individuals of Irish, Italian, Slovak, and Ukrainian descent chose to settle in rural areas such as Montgomery County that antagonism arose.<sup>99</sup> With the bondage of slavery removed, a few African Americans migrated northward and settled in Norristown, the county seat of Montgomery County, where sawmills, textile plants, furnace building, flour mills, and expanding retail business offered economic opportunity.<sup>100</sup> Propagating the fear of immigrants' political power, Rev. John P. Newman observed in his speech during George Washington's day of 1888, celebrated by

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<sup>99</sup> The Borough of Bridgeport increased its population by more than twofold from 1860 to 1890. De Tweiler, Jr., *Borough of Bridgeport*, Box 8, Bridgeport H MO-UM, Montgomery County Historical Society, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

<sup>100</sup> Jean B. Toll and Michael J. Schwager, eds., *Montgomery County: The Second Hundred Years* (Norristown, PA: Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies, 1983), vol. 1, 455.

the POSA, that there would be forty-three million foreigners in a population of sixty-seven million in twelve years. “Who are these foreigners?” he asked only to describe unskilled and uneducated laborers. He reached the inevitable conclusion that “Women and Chinese are not allowed to vote... but the rum-drinking foreigner is allowed to vote. This should be remedied.”<sup>101</sup> Newman did not offer viable solution, but in a sermon he preached on Thanksgiving of 1886 he suggested to extend the naturalization term, which had originally lasted five years, to ten or fifteen years in order for immigrants “to become indoctrinated in our free institutions... and then be prepared to love America for America’s sake.”<sup>102</sup>

If the newly arrived had to be inculcated in the political tradition of freedom, it had to be by established inhabitants connected to the values of the founders, mainly Protestants of the wealthy leisure classes. They could command large sums when they found a worthy goal. Valley Forge, though an ideal site for patriotic education, lacked historical drama and suffered from a geographical disadvantage. It served only as a winter camp. As Charles Hosmer argues, it did not witness a monumental battle as Bunker Hill, nor did it claim to be a home for the first president, as Mount Vernon. And when empathetic descriptions of soldiers’ suffering in heavy winter months are the sole account for heroism it might have seemed to some history-minded preservationists that the attempt to portray the site as a pivotal point in the annals of the revolution was

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<sup>101</sup> “Washington’s Memory. How It Was Celebrated at the Academy of Music,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 23 Feb. 1888, 8.

<sup>102</sup> John P. Newman, *America for Americans! The Typical American. Thanksgiving Sermon* (Washington D.C.: Rufus H. Darby, Printer, 1886), 20.

exaggerated and, perhaps, unjustified. Armies have long been known to suffer during winter time when roads froze and delayed the arrival of provisions and the turning point for Washington had actually occurred upon crossing the Delaware River with the victory in Trenton.

If the uneventful encampment months could have posed a question on the legitimacy of site's historical value, its geographical position could have discouraged Philadelphia visitors from frequent excursion due to its inaccessibility.<sup>103</sup> When Philadelphia's elite had sponsored patriotic causes, such as the Sanitary Fair and the Centennial Exposition, they chose projects that had been located in the city. It enabled the city's public school children to visit them and internalize the messages the exhibits presented. An excursion to Valley Forge would have been financially prohibitive for the public schools' budgets.<sup>104</sup> Philadelphia's leading social and financial elites preferred to support local causes that would instruct the city's immigrant population and prevent new conflicts, such as the riots of the mid-1840s, from erupting. Valley Forge was not an attractive investment from the standpoint of distance and perhaps education. In addition, it is possible that the link between the Civil War and the encampment by Brown along with the focus on George Washington did not encourage privileged city women to join the cause. The women, who participated in the Centennial campaign, expressed a

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<sup>103</sup> When Philadelphia HSP members wanted to visit Valley Forge they had to schedule a special trip with train officials beforehand. Many had not visited the site since 1878, when it became the property of the CMAVF. "Historic Valley Forge," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 June 1892, 2.

<sup>104</sup> The Centennial Committee who wanted to ensure that children of Philadelphia's public schools attend the exhibits issued greatly discounted tickets for them.

consensus historical memory centered on Martha Washington in order to reconcile with Southern elite women. Teaming with the CMAVF could have lead to mistrust and a possible rift between themselves and their Southern counterparts, and jeopardized the relationships they had worked so diligently to establish. In addition, the relegation of Mary Washington to an almost obscure position in the historical memory of the site might have irritated Philadelphia women who believed that women's influence on history was as significant as that of men.

During the years that the CMAVF struggled to establish fiscal existence, Holstein and some of the members of the association immersed themselves in establishing a local historical society. The advent of the County's centennial on September 1884 prompted a meeting to create a body that would organize a fitting celebration and would oversee the collection of historical evidence.<sup>105</sup> On George Washington's birthday, February 22, 1881, several prominent county men among them Theodore W. Bean, William H. Holstein, Hiram Corson, Isaac Chism, Isaac Roberts, and Samuel M. Corson decided to form the Historical Society of Montgomery County for the purpose of "the preservation of the civil, political and religious history of the County, as well as the promotion of the study of History, local, national and universal."<sup>106</sup> Bean, who presided at the first meeting, spoke about the obligation and urgency in rescuing evidence before it was lost.

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<sup>105</sup> The county was originally organized by William Penn as Philadelphia in 1682 and continued as such until September 10, 1784, when it was organized as Montgomery County. See: Samuel T. Wiley, ed., *Biographical and Portrait Cyclopedia of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Biographical Publishing Company, 1895), 5.

<sup>106</sup> "Constitution of the Historical Society of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania," *Minute Book – Historical Society of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, 1881-1907*, MCHS.

The attendees resolved to admit women as members, but restricted the acceptance of new members and recognition of permanent ones. Candidates required the support of two-thirds of the vote of members present at any meeting; honorary members required three-quarters of the votes, and life membership required paying \$25 in addition to two-thirds of members' vote in a meeting.<sup>107</sup> Although the officers of the society were all male and included Bean, William H. Holstein, Reuben Kanibel and R. F. Hoffecker, the constitution was signed by eighty-four members, among them thirty women. The centennial celebration of the county was successful and netted the organizers \$1,200. It enabled the members to purchase Historical Hall in Norristown for use as a repository of documents and historical artifacts.<sup>108</sup>

In 1895, the society launched the publication of *Historical Sketches*, a collection of articles on local history, prepared by members, and often previously read during society meetings. It served to document local historical research. The subjects of its articles varied, but men typically focused on military and political history such as officers and the events that occurred at Valley Forge, while women emphasized women's history and their own ancestors. One of the first speakers, Margaret D. Rex, narrated the deeds of Lydia Darrah that she possibly gleaned from previous publications. Her conclusion, an admonition of historical neglect, was directed at the public at large: "Shame on the

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<sup>107</sup> Historical Society of Montgomery County, *Minute Book 1881-1907*, p.53, Montgomery County Historical Society History, MCHS; *Charter and By-Laws of the Historical Society of Montgomery County of Pennsylvania*, (Norristown, PA, 1900).

<sup>108</sup> Joseph Fornance, ed., "Introductory," *Historical Sketches: A Collection of Papers Prepared for the Historical Society of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, IV (1910), ix.

American people that this brave woman should have gone to her grave without a mark of reward for this unselfish act of devotion to her country, while Captain Mollie, in the battle of Monmouth, was rewarded for an act of bravery done impulsively to avenge her husband's death."<sup>109</sup> In Rex's eyes, Darrah's act of risking her life in order to warn the Continental Army commanded more respect than Mollie, who was recognized for operating her husband's post after his death out of revenge, not a result of a calculated act.

Rex's article on Lydia Darrah was intended to include her in history as a selfless woman whose decisive judgment surpassed that of her husband's. It was her fearless actions that saved Washington and his troops. The author demonstrated that Darrah's femininity did not affect her determination and courage: "She was a small delicate woman, but the cold December morning with the snow on the ground several inches deep did not deter her from her noble purpose."<sup>110</sup> Rex's historical account demonstrated that women could not only keep their composure under adverse conditions but could also act decisively and fearlessly in service of the common good.

Substance of a different sort was Margaret B. Harvey's work on the history of Lower Merion. Drawing from an old map, several interviews of older residents, and even local vegetation, she wrote a romantic history of her area, exonerating early settlers from blame for altering the environment, and prominently interweaving her own family history

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<sup>109</sup> Margaret D. Rex, "The Story of Lydia Darrah," *Historical Sketches: A Collection of Papers Prepared for the Historical Society of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, I (1895), 93.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

and luxurious home into the tale. While outlining a detailed description of Margaret Boyle, her grandmother, and lamenting that “her beauty and accomplishments are alike forgotten,” she interrupted her glorified account to add a claim to aristocratic descent:

And, now, do you ask, am I describing my ancestress simply because she was noted for her beauty? Oh, no! But because it may be a matter of historic interest to the people of Lower Merion to know that such was the appearance of a descendant of the great Earl of Cork, who lived in Lower Merion.<sup>111</sup>

Parochial as her approach may seem, she haphazardly notes bits of local Quaker history, the development of local infrastructure, and the history of architecture, higher education, and botany.

Harvey’s goal was to insert her affluent family into the narrative of local history. “My dear old home,” she writes “...represents better than any other example of which I know the very ideal of a Pennsylvania mansion of time past – of a time extending from the days of Penn himself to the last decade.”<sup>112</sup> Her argument that “Lower Merion but repeats the history of the world at large; my grandfather’s farm, Lilac Grove, repeats the history of Lower Merion” demonstrates her generalization and ambiguity of the historical process.<sup>113</sup> She argues that history repeats itself in the expansion of new patterns of settlement, in regional development, and in the resentment of newcomers by established

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<sup>111</sup> Margaret B. Harvey, “Something About Lower Merion,” *Ibid* 157. For Harvey’s family history see: Dora Harvey Develin, *Margaret B. Harvey, A. M.: A Sketch of Her Life and Work* (West Park, Philadelphia: 1913), 8.

<sup>112</sup> Harvey, “Something About Lower Merion,” 150-151.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

inhabitants. She also laments the gradual disappearance of “gray stone mansions of ample proportions, built only for comfort and hospitality.” Politely, she chooses to discuss the architecture as a comment on the new residents’ ostentatious character. Her criticism is also evident in her idealization of her ancestor:

My grandfather’s house, once considered elegant, has given place to a modern palace, a triumph of art and wealth; the trees and shrubs tended by his hand as a labor of love, are replaced by the marvelous leaf and color creations of the landscape gardener.<sup>114</sup>

Facing rapid development due to settlement of wealthy neighbors who abandoned Philadelphia and moved to the suburbs of the Main Line, she wants to distinguish herself through her family’s pedigree and luxurious estate.<sup>115</sup> Harvey realizes that acculturation would eventually occur and predicts that the new form of architecture would replace the old, hinting that the new way of life would prevail.

While Rex and Harvey attempted to insert a revolutionary woman and family ancestors into history, Holstein wanted herself memorialized through her activities in the Civil War in addition to documenting local history. In her presentation in the Montgomery County Historical Society on February 22, 1892, she disclosed names of prominent women who joined local aid societies or volunteered as nurses and reports about women’s contribution of an enormous flag for Round Top at Gettysburg and about mothers’ sacrifice of their fighting sons. Upon conveying her nursing account, she

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Philadelphia elites moved also to Chestnut Hill. See: Baltzell, *Philadelphia Gentlemen*, 204-205.



reiterated her reservations to join the war effort for “the idea of seeing and nursing wounded men...from which I shrank instinctively.”<sup>116</sup> With over three decades of public work experience, Holstein remained precisely as she had always been: a model of an appropriate female role who acted in the public sphere out of a need to benefit her country. At length, she laments the “meager accounts” of Revolutionary War women’s work and urges those who live in “every township and county,” members in other historical societies, to collect the evidence of the last conflict “without delay, now while many who took part in the work can recall all that was done.”<sup>117</sup> Holstein considers women’s work the “wonderful narrative of self-sacrifice and devotion” as significant as that of the soldiers who fought the war and wants it documented for posterity.

If urgency prompted Holstein to describe women’s Civil War activities, it was her husband’s colonial ancestry that motivated her to write her second monograph *Swedish Holsteins in America, from 1644 to 1892*. She modeled her work after the *Lives of the Lindsays*, a genealogy written by Alexander Crawford Lindsay who traced his English lineage back to the tenth century. It was privately published in four volumes in Britain in 1840 and publicly in three volumes, in 1849 and 1858. Like Lindsay, Holstein adds to her

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<sup>116</sup> Holstein, “Women of Montgomery County in War Time,” 226.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

dedication a quote from Proverbs “The glory of children are their fathers,” and includes in her introduction some of his introductory thoughts, though without citation:

We do not love our kindred for their glory or their genius, but for those domestic affections and private virtues that unobserved by the world expand in confidence toward ourselves... Why should we not derive benefit from studying the virtues of our forefathers?<sup>118</sup>

Conceding Lindsay’s view that family history was a “most powerful but much neglected instrument of education,” and that the fathers, not mothers, should be memorialized, she commenced the work of collecting stories from families across the Northeast, conducting oral histories, and searching wills, Bible records, inventories, and local libraries, including the American Philosophical Society and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. But unlike Lindsay, who cited his material with extensive footnotes, Holstein did not cite her evidence, but added an appendix that included some of her sources.

Holstein divided her book by families and subdivided it by generations, an organization that resulted in a fragmented historical account. She expanded on the life and work of John Hughes, the Stamp Officer of Pennsylvania, and included several letters he received that demonstrated his high regard among the wealthy and highly connected individuals of his day. Holstein based his association with General George Washington on a family tradition “whose authenticity has never been questioned,” rather

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<sup>118</sup> Anna Morris Holstein, *Swedish Holsteins in America, from 1644 to 1892* (Norristown, Pennsylvania: 1892), 6; Alexander Crawford Lindsay, *Lives of the Lindsays or Memoire of the Houses of Crawford and Balcarres* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1849), vol. I, xi.

than on written documents. Washington, while encamped at Valley Forge, often frequented the residence of John Hughes' son, Isaac Hughes at his Upper Merion farm. Colonial pedigree notwithstanding, Holstein followed the family ancestry back to Europe and provided links with nobility through a legend that claimed the family originated from an aristocratic line, and more substantial evidence that King Charles XI of Sweden sent one of the Holsteins to America.<sup>119</sup>

She did not neglect to include her own story, pointing out that she and her husband settled on a farm that was part of the original Holstein tract of one thousand acres dated to 1709. In great detail she described her nursing work, the camps where she and her husband had served, and their march with the troops when the Confederate Army headed toward Pennsylvania. She emphasized the fact that at Gettysburg she sat within a few feet of President Lincoln when he delivered his renowned address. But perhaps the most revealing is her disclosure that her husband, who worked for the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC), traveled to Philadelphia to bring supplies while she nursed the soldiers.<sup>120</sup> In her previous war accounts, she mentioned him as her partner, and created the impression that they worked in tandem in the camps and returned home when he fell sick and required rest. She never admitted to staying among the soldiers without his presence. Nearly three decades after her nursing service, with much more experience in public roles, when scores of graduates of women's colleges had changed the face of

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<sup>119</sup> Holstein, *Swedish Holsteins in America*, 9-10.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 113, 115.

education, and with increasing agitation for women's suffrage, Holstein might have allowed herself to be more candid about her unconventional nursing assignment.

Holstein's genealogical monograph demonstrates her adherence to Victorian ideals of feminine deference. She chose to write about her husband's ancestry, acknowledging male authority in the family, and believed that children were judged by their fathers, not their mothers. Writing about her husband's family was a significant decision, considering the distinction of her own Quaker ancestors. The head of her father's family, Thomas Ellis, arrived in Pennsylvania from Merionethshire, Wales. He befriended William Penn and was appointed Registrar General of the province in 1687.<sup>121</sup> Thomas's grandson, William Ellis, settled in the frontier, near Fort Muncy, Pennsylvania. When he learned of an impending Indian raid he rode through the night to the Jersey shore and back to warn settlers about the danger. He consented to stay at the fort upon the settlers' request only to find his house and orchards destroyed by the invaders.<sup>122</sup> Her father, William Cox Ellis, the first lawyer in Muncy, had been elected to the Seventeenth Congress as a representative of the Whig Party in 1820, but gave up his seat when his opponents questioned the election results. He failed to regain the seat when the election was repeated.<sup>123</sup> Subsequently, he was elected to the Eighteenth Congress in 1823 and

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<sup>121</sup> Stager, *History of the Centennial and Memorial Association of Valley Forge*, 18. See also: Anna Schall Fisher and Mrs. John Rex, "Anna Morris Holstein," in Gertrude Bosler Biddle and Sarah Dickinson Lowrie, eds., *Notable Women of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania press, 1942), 166.

<sup>122</sup> Junior League of Williamsport, *Homes and Heritage of the West Branch Valley* (Williamsport, PA: Junior League of Williamsport, 1968), 22.

<sup>123</sup> George G. Wood, "A Partial List of Muncy's Founders," *Then and Now*, VII (Oct. 1944): 256.

served until 1825. Outside of politics, Holstein's cousin, William Ellis Tucker, was the first manufacturer of china in America. Of her mother's family, Holstein was a direct descendant of Captain Samuel Morris of the First City Troop of Philadelphia, who fought with Washington at the battles of Princeton and Trenton, and served as Washington's bodyguard during the Revolution.<sup>124</sup> Samuel Wells Morris, her uncle, was a district judge and a Congressman from 1837 to 1841.

Once she married, Holstein became part of her husband's family. Like many women of her period, she internalized how society viewed women, and pursued her interests within acceptable paradigms. She worked on her genealogical manuscript for a long period, researching, writing, and editing. At the time of its publication, in the early 1890s, genealogy became a popular interest and various works written by both men and women had already been published. Holstein, however, apologetically recalls in her introduction that once her work was completed it "was put aside, thinking it would never be published. But at the solicitation of some of the descendants it was again taken in hand."<sup>125</sup> Such a claim from a respectable woman in her late sixties, who had been involved in public affairs for most of her life and had published a book and scores of articles, might seem pretentious and disingenuous. But Holstein was a product of the Victorian Age, and she was raised and lived in a rural setting, where deviating from gender role boundaries could seriously tarnish one's reputation. Her public work had been cautiously calculated to create the impression that she undertook new projects

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<sup>124</sup> James Grant Wilson and John Fiske, eds., *Appletons' Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, Vol. IV (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1888), 409.

<sup>125</sup> Holstein, *Swedish Holsteins in America*, 6.

seemingly at the behest of others, not out of her own ambition. This enabled her to step outside the domestic sphere, while keeping her proper image intact.

Rex, Harvey, and Holstein belong to a long tradition of women's historical writing. American women have written histories since the earliest years of the republic, and women's political, abolitionist, and literary writings proliferated during the nineteenth century. Historians have long acknowledged that women received more recognition for their historical writings before the professionalization of the field in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Nina Baym finds that the difference between women authors of the early republic and those of the first half of the nineteenth century stems from the influence of gender ideology. Early writers were believed to be mentally equal to men due to teachings of the Enlightenment. Primarily of Anglo-Protestant faiths and of middle or upper class origin, early writers penned novels, short stories and reflections on social, religious, and political topics. With the rise of the separate sphere ideology and ascribed gender roles, women perceived themselves as spiritual, but different from men in their analytical faculties. In the act of publishing, they undertook a progressive step that enabled them to participate in the public historical discourse and insert themselves into history as record keepers. In the nineteenth century, women writers continued to explore the work of women who acted publicly and without contesting the limits set upon them by conventional gender roles. Baym argues that Elizabeth Fries Ellet's history of the women of the American Revolution was designed to oppose women's rights. It demonstrates that women contributed to the body politic without

possessing the privileges of full citizenship.<sup>126</sup> Ellet emphasized aristocratic, pioneer, and revolutionary women and excluded working women and African Americans. Baym expands the writings of history to include fiction, plays, poetry, travel narratives, and religious histories.

Bonnie Smith adds gender to the discourse on historical writings. She argues that in the nineteenth century, male historians employed gender roles to claim professional status through the practice of scientific history and the exclusion of women from seminars and archives. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, historical works by women were increasingly considered amateur and trivial. Amateur historians differed from male professional historians in their tendency to write on worthy women in a descriptive manner. Like Baym, Smith argues that amateur historians were conservative, particularly in their compliance with class and gender hierarchies. They also explored a wider range of topics than did their professional counterparts, including everyday life, material culture, the life of working class women, and women's activism.<sup>127</sup>

While Baym investigates the works of women from the republican period to 1860, Smith extends the time period to the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Julie Des Jardins studies the period between 1880 and 1945. In focusing on the last two decades of the nineteenth century, she argues that with the

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<sup>126</sup> Nina Baym, *American Women Writers and the Work of History, 1790-1860* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 217.

<sup>127</sup> Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), 177, 183.

increase of immigration and the fear of the loss of American culture women sought historical authority in order to teach the public civic values. Women writing in the 1890s on colonial history shifted the focus from the Founding Fathers and military history to women whose deeds proved extraordinary.<sup>128</sup> In the twentieth century, women writers developed social and cultural perspectives and new methodologies using sources from everyday life, diaries, and oral histories. Ultimately, these women shaped the profession, when decades after their work had been published, professional historians began to adopt their new approaches.

The popularity and recognition that authors such as Lydia Maria Child, Alice Morse Earle, Sarah Josepha Hale, Elizabeth Ellet, and Martha Lamb attained did not resemble the respect and authority that George Bancroft, Francis Parkman, Henry Adams and other prominent historians received. Female American historians of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century primarily examined the lives of women who, like themselves, were excluded from institutions of government and the armed forces and, for the most part, did not have direct impact on the outcomes of the nation's major political and military events. Male scholars studied influential leaders who fully participated in the national executive, legislative, and military branches and who created a democratic nation and governed its institutions. The privileged backgrounds of Bancroft, Parkman, and Adams reinforced their similarities. Having been sons of wealthy and politically connected families and Harvard graduates, and having been invested with personal experience with European

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<sup>128</sup> Julie Des Jardins, *Women and the Historical Enterprise in America: Gender, Race, and the Politics of Memory, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 2003), 17.



social and political institutions, they acquired the tastes of the educated ruling elite. Their belief in increased progress through civilization of the wilderness by educated elite leaders shaped their historical writings. These historians, asserts Richard C. Vitzthum, favored political actors who were dedicated to the common good, demonstrated self-discipline, and opposed the British. They perceived the American past as a conflict between anarchic forces on one extreme and tyranny on the other, and argued that America chose the middle course – centralization without subordination.<sup>129</sup>

The most influential among them, George Bancroft, believed that the American people escaped the Old World, governed by historical traditions of political and military conflicts, into a simple world governed by the natural frontier. The natural world in America shaped spiritual progress for white man. He identified George Washington, Daniel Boone, and Thomas Jefferson as products of the frontier and agents of liberty. He also recognized the influence of God in history. Bancroft interpreted the American Revolution as a spontaneous rise of the American people against the encroachment of the British in order to establish Protestant freedom. God led the American people to military and political progress and to the establishment of a free nation.<sup>130</sup> He adopted a romantic style through the influence of his studies in Germany and wrote to instruct his readers.

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<sup>129</sup> Richard C. Vitzthum, *The American Compromise: Theme and Method in the Histories of Bancroft, Parkman, and Adams* (University of Oklahoma: Norman Press, 1974), 6-7.

<sup>130</sup> David W. Noble, *Historians against History: The Frontier Thesis and the National Covenant in American Historical Writing Since 1830* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1965), 23, 32; Russle B. Nye, "The Religion of George Bancroft," *The Journal of Religion*, 19 (July 1939), 232; Vitzthum, *The American Compromise*, 211.

Self-sacrifice for a better future was one of his major themes. In his speech before the New York Historical Society in November 1854, he professed that:

Since progress of the race appears to be the great purpose of Providence, it becomes us all to venerate the future. We must be ready to sacrifice ourselves for our successors, as they in their turn must live for their posterity.<sup>131</sup>

Bancroft conducted meticulous research in multiple archives and studied private papers but did not reference them in footnotes or bibliographies. He focused on political and military history and excluded Native Americans and women from his narrative.

While the works of male historians gained respectability, women's histories generated their own devoted readership but were increasingly considered amateurish. At the end of the nineteenth century, the professionalization of history in the United States was institutionalized with the formation of the American Historical Association in 1889. Professional historians, largely influenced by the German historian Leopold von Ranke, called for scientific examination of economic and political documents. They insisted on training in methods and a body of knowledge to produce objective narratives. The acquisition of an advanced degree of Doctor of Philosophy provided professionals with authority, privilege, and access to exclusive associations and archival materials.

Although most women could not receive professional training and were barred from conferences and historical discourse, their marginalization provided them with

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<sup>131</sup> George Bancroft, *Oration Delivered before the New York Historical Society November 20, 1854* (New York: Printed for the Society, 1854), 36.

freedom to pursue their subjects without restrictions. As avid historians, women writers must have read at least several volumes of George Bancroft's *History of the United States from the Discovery of the American Continent*, the definitive monograph of colonial and revolutionary history. The women of the Montgomery County Historical Society employed several of his methods in their historical writings. Rex shares Bancroft's belief in the guidance of God in historical circumstances. She points out that Darrah decided to listen to the conversation of the British by "a higher impulse than that of curiosity." More important, she emphasizes the theme of self sacrifice – "noble service she had rendered her countrymen," a deed, she insists, that should be recognized.<sup>132</sup> Like Bancroft, Rex's article is clearly written and lacks footnotes and includes personal admonition to those who forgot the brave woman.

Harvey's work is more aligned with Bancroft's style and beliefs. She describes a romantic ideal past where "towering trees," "old-fashioned roses," and "long, rambling stone mansion" decorated the landscape of Lower Merion.<sup>133</sup> She fully believes in God's direction of history and supports the newcomers, despite her subtle reservations. Her declaration echoes Bancroft's 1854 speech:

It is not without effort that I say it, but I, who represent the remaining few in Lower Merion, standing as it were between the past and the future, looking lovingly, even tearfully backward, and yet lovingly, trustfully, forward – I can say that God may have a use for a red-and-yellow palace, just as he had for a gray farm house. If, by removing the latter to make way for the former, He saw fit to indicate one of the means by which

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<sup>132</sup> Rex, "The Story of Lydia Darrah," 91, 92.

<sup>133</sup> Harvey, "Something about Lower Merion," 149.

humanity might go forward from a beautiful but still an imperfect past to a far more beautiful, a glorious future – still will I say, God’s will be done!<sup>134</sup>

Holstein’s early monograph on her Civil War activity is written in a romantic style with a strong religious leaning. She often describes soldiers’ fates as God’s will, as in the case of a soldier who died at White House who commended “his soul to God, and committing wife and children to the same loving care.” Reiterating Bancroft’s link between religion and history, she found her field nursing effort to be a manifestation of a divine will. Upon her arrival at Antietam to nurse the wounded, Holstein reached the conclusion that “*this* is the work God has *me* to do in this war.”<sup>135</sup>

Holstein’s later work did not resemble Bancroft’s style. Her genealogical manuscript, though opened with a biblical quote, is grounded in documents and family histories. Holstein cites dates and great number of her sources in the body of the text, referring to archives where appropriate. The details collected from family members in a manner of oral traditions are carefully cited as such.<sup>136</sup> Only seldom does she revert to first person, as in her introduction to the DeHaven family – “as I have been able to obtain it.”<sup>137</sup> Her article about women’s work

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>135</sup> Holstein, *Three Years in Field Hospitals of the Army of the Potomac*, 70, 11.

<sup>136</sup> ‘Family legend,’ ‘family history states,’ or ‘it is said that’ are some of Holstein’s descriptions of the undocumented sources. See: Holstein, *Swedish Holsteins in America*, 9, 18, 25.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 30.

during the Civil War demonstrates an additional attempt at detailed documentation. She had collected reports from several county aid societies in its preparation and had noted that Lower Merion's activity is absent for the lack of their report. The theme of self-sacrifice is the only element reminiscent of Bancroft's historical moral. She lists the women who lost family members in the war as their contribution to the collective effort.

Montgomery County women's historical accounts fit the histories of women of their time. They acted radically in publishing their manuscripts and in establishing themselves as custodians of historical records. However, they remained conservative in the history they authored, portraying women within conventional gender roles and sanctioning men's leadership in public and within the family.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, women's public visibility had significantly increased. Women attended colleges in increasing numbers, although by the end of the nineteenth century very few of them entered graduate schools and joined college faculties. The founding of Bryn Mawr College in 1885, in Montgomery County, drew local attention to the advancement of women. It was the first institution to offer graduate degrees to women and quality education to "girls from wealthy and aristocratic homes of the country."<sup>138</sup> These decades also saw, the movement for woman suffrage increased its public influence. The Pennsylvania Woman Suffrage Association was

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<sup>138</sup> "Women Students Aim for Rostrum. Public Speaking Chief Ambition of 83 Industrial Workers at Bryn Mawr," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 16 June 1921, 6.

organized in 1869 under Mary Grew. In 1885 Matilda Hinderman and eleven association members appeared before the Joint Committee of the State Senate and House to urge legislature to strike the word “male” from the suffrage clause of the state’s constitution. The bill passed the House but lost in the Senate.

In 1888 the Montgomery County Woman Suffrage Association was organized with Holstein and her husband among its nine charter members.<sup>139</sup> The organization’s effort gained influence, and by 1895 out of twenty county newspaper editors only three declined to publish articles in favor of woman suffrage.<sup>140</sup> Perhaps this public move, more than any other, reveals Holstein’s true feeling about the impeccable image a woman of her class had to keep. Suffrage would have meant license for women’s public involvement, for it would sanction their participation in electoral politics. Such a law would undermine gender assumptions and serve to eliminate the artificial boundaries between the public and the private. It would enable women activists to expand their involvement in public affairs without fear of social disapproval. Although a radical step, Holstein joined the association with her husband, continuing to appear in tandem with him and not striking out on an unconventional path on her own.

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The historical work of Montgomery County women during the last decades of the nineteenth century demonstrates that the manner in which women envisioned their role in

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<sup>139</sup> “First D.A.R. Regent Active in Many Patriotic Causes,” Scrapbook B8, A-10, p.209, MCHS.

<sup>140</sup> “Woman Suffrage,” *Norristown Weekly Herald*, 20 May 1895, 2.

society shaped the memory they had constructed. Holstein and her female associates, whose lives were passed in rural Pennsylvania, tended to follow the expectations of contemporary gender roles more closely than did affluent Philadelphia women. Women of the Centennial committees, who felt entitled to recognition for their engagement in cultural, benevolent, and educational work, sought to create a historical memory that focused on both Martha and George Washington. They perceived Martha as a significant player in the history of the revolution and its aftermath and placed her on equal footing with her illustrious husband. Montgomery County women who took part in the preservation of Valley Forge, the formation of the local historical society, and the publication of local histories held a more traditional view of women's role in society. Their construction of the history of Valley Forge reflected this social view. They cared for the preservation and the interior appearance of the Headquarters and for the education of the public, an expansion of women's role as housekeepers and instructors of children. They trusted George Washington, the commander of the Continental Army, to occupy center stage as an accomplished leader who inspired the suffering forces and guided them through the difficult and crucial period of the revolution. Martha Washington was linked to the Headquarters in a secondary role, domestic and lacking the emblem that came to symbolize colonial productivity and revolutionary political posture – the spinning wheel. Holstein ignored her presence in the organization's events and Evacuation Day celebrations.

With the Centennial Tea Parties as a model, it is difficult to comprehend the absence of a historical ball among the attempts to draw attention and contributions to the Valley Forge cause. Perhaps, the recognition of Martha Washington did not resonate with Montgomery County women's perception of appropriate gender roles. They could not resolve to shift the focus from Washington and the suffering soldiers to the dutiful wife, as dedicated as they might have been able to present her. Initially, they had staged her in a subordinate status to her husband in their own Centennial tea party. They possibly found it inappropriate to have her equally important as her husband in a site dedicated to a military episode.

The contestation over Valley Forge the memory between the Valley Forge Monument Association and CMAVF further validates rural women's conservative attitude. The memory of war officers, not the soldiers' wives or the women who had sacrificed their loved ones during the winter encampment, was the center of disagreement. They also completely ignored the presence of the wives of common soldiers and those of the laundresses and prostitutes. Holstein did not even pay tribute to women in, what appears to be her only public speech, the acceptance of the American flag at the one hundred and ninth celebration of the Valley Forge Evacuation Day. Mary Thropp Cone, the founder of the Valley Forge Monument Association, focused solely on the morals of the historical episode and its value in inculcating immigrants with loyalty and self-sacrifice. The memory of the Valley Forge demonstrates a shift in the representation of revolutionary history from consensus to Northern Unionist. The new



position linked the restoration of the Union in the Civil War to the preservation of the values upheld by the founders in their fight against the British.

The campaign of the CMAVF demonstrates that during the last decades of the nineteenth century the politics of preservation required the unequivocal support of urban elites in order for women-led campaigns to succeed. Wealthy Pennsylvanians, owners of iron, railroad, and textile enterprises, who lent support, sought to mitigate the effects of labor agitation and trade unionism. Their efforts were motivated as well by their intended moral inculcation of the European immigrants who comprised part of their work force. Further, they possessed the political influence and financial means to support the campaigns. Since socially prominent urban women played a significant role in charitable institutions and their husbands had long-held social and political ties with leading men of public and private enterprises, they could have easily commanded their talents and institutional access to benefit a project and increase its visibility and prospects of success. Several Philadelphia women, among them the respected Mary Rose Smith, joined the campaign but failed to gather sufficient enthusiasm and funds. Their preference for the SPCA event over the CMAVF Reading ball demonstrates that they favored the company of their social peers rather than that of rural Pennsylvania elites. Although their absence from such a monumental event was out of the ordinary, their involvement in terms of fund raising was impressive, considering they raised \$2,000 by the summer of 1879 compared to a mere \$1,000 raised by Holstein, Pennsylvania, and out-of-state members

over a period spanning from 1879 to 1885.<sup>141</sup> CMAVF vice regents from other states, undoubtedly experienced in fundraising activities and familiar with key community and political officials, encountered difficulty in raising support from urban prominent citizens in their states. Boston women, for instance, valued the cause but preferred to donate furnishings rather than funds. Their generosity was intended to display their colonial lineage through period artifacts and forgo the work of fundraising altogether.<sup>142</sup>

Rural women's public work experience and their access to men and women of highest social rank did not resemble that of privileged Philadelphia activists. Holstein, whose experience as a vice regent for the MVMA had been limited to a sparsely populated area, did not move in the same social circles as the city's privileged elite who could boast the "Old Philadelphian character...where nearly everyone was slightly related or connected to everyone else and they all [had] grown up together."<sup>143</sup> Yet, she managed to obtain the support of distinguished politicians and generals and produced a memorable ball and outdoor country event. But the funds raised at the parochial events were limited and amounted to a fraction of what similar celebrations would have netted in Philadelphia.

The members of the CMAVF worked at the dawn of the preservation movement. They brought the Valley Forge site to public consciousness and constructed a male-

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<sup>141</sup> "The Centennial Memorial Association of Valley Forge," *Lowell Daily Citizen and News*, 1.

<sup>142</sup> The women collected such a great number of artifacts that they even considered to apply furnish a second room. *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> Nathaniel Burt and Wallace E. Davis, "The Iron Age 1876-1905," in *Philadelphia*, 522.

dominated memory of a military encampment that incorporated the Republican Civil War position, but they failed to gain federal government support. In the 1890s the building remained women's domain. As at Mount Vernon, women would furnish its rooms and construct – what they perceived – as a colonial domestic home. Pennsylvania gradually acquired the lands of the encampment and developed an accessible memorial park on the site.

The members of the CMAVF were the first to popularize the site as a valuable historical space and were the ones responsible for the annual increase of visitors through the first two decades of its existence. The diligence of Holstein and her associates helped define early historical preservation as the rescue of a structure or a site linked to the Revolutionary War, but not necessarily focused on a battle. Their memory also presented a shift from the idealized revolutionary consensus, oriented at avoiding conflict with Southern whites, toward an ideology that emphasized the role of the North in the preservation of the union in the Civil War.

The formation of the historical society, which played a leading role in orchestrating the Centennial celebration of Montgomery County, proved a more manageable project since it could commence with modest means and expand with the availability of funds. The need for an adequate repository for documents and artifacts valued by local prominent citizens arose from sentiments similar to those that drove the Valley Forge preservation - the inculcation of immigrants with the shared values of white Protestant Americans with colonial and revolutionary ancestry. Local history authored by

the female members of the society aimed to foster social distinction and include women in the historical narrative. They conducted their historical research at a time when professional historians had been increasingly defining history as the domain of academically trained, privileged professional men. The historical work of the Montgomery County women shifted professionals' focus from political history to accounts of women's contributions and personal experiences. Their history, however, remained conservative, portraying women within their gender roles.

Although conservative in her historical writings, Holstein joined the suffrage movement, asserting women's right for full citizenship. In doing so, she demonstrated that privileged women who were concerned with the nation's past were assuming important leadership roles that would shape the status of women in the present.

With the increase of immigration and anxiety over the possible loss of the American identity, women would expand their efforts to educate the masses in civic values and patriotism. The organization of the Daughters of the American Revolution would enable greater and more focused efforts to influence the foreign born and their children.

## CHAPTER 5

### PATRIOTIC HONOR: THE VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, 1894-1914

On a cold and windy November day in 1891, a special train arrived at Norristown, Pennsylvania. Its passengers, who boarded an exclusive car in Washington D.C., were eager to meet Anna Morris Holstein, the regent of the Centennial Memorial Association of Valley Forge. As members of the newly formed Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), they were excited about touring local historic places and particularly the Continental Army generals' headquarters at Valley Forge. Following a tour that included the houses occupied by general Henry Knox, Marquis Lafayette, and General Anthony Wayne they arrived at their final destination, General Washington's headquarters. The guests were served lunch, courtesy of Holstein and Mrs. Hugh McInnes, a trustee and the secretary of the association. They "examined the interior of the headquarters with the deepest interest" and at the end of their tour were "enthusiastic in their determination to have some action taken which will lead to beneficial results as far as the historic sites of Valley Forge are concerned."<sup>1</sup>

The centennial of the country, celebrated in a monumental exhibition in Philadelphia, evoked the creation of a great number of hereditary societies in the last

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<sup>1</sup> "Patriots Visit Valley Forge: a Distinguished Party Inspects Historic Spots," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 November 1891, 6.

quarter of the nineteenth century. As descendants of individuals who contributed to the formation of the nation, members of these groups cherished an identity of birth and implicitly suggested themselves to be at an advantageous position in a hierarchical society. The DAR, an organization created when the Sons of the American Revolution refused women membership, proved to be one of the largest and most influential of the hereditary organizations. Comprised of over 80,000 members just two decades after its formation, it consistently followed its main goals of recounting the memory of revolutionary ancestors, marking and preserving the graves of soldiers, and educating the public about the revolutionary past. True to these objectives, the Valley Forge Chapter in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, set priorities and acted with enthusiasm on behalf of projects that appealed to their sense of historical significance. They marked meaningful revolutionary spots, preserved a room in George Washington's headquarters in Valley Forge, and researched local history.

The history the DAR promoted – one of altruistic military brigades fighting for a greater cause – did not resonate with the socio-economic status of countless Americans who observed the increased power of monopolies and great corporations in contrast to their own limited economic advancement and shrinking options of social mobility. The message of patriotism and government loyalty did not offer concrete solutions to the disproportionate political influence of the wealthy on governing institutions, the ongoing labor disputes, and the bursts of racial conflicts. The DAR's vision likewise contrasted with that of the New Historians, the Progressives, whose work had been affected by the circumstances that surrounded them. Interpreting American history through an economic

perspective and through conflicts of interest rather than admiring virtuous historical figures, they reflected on the urgent need for reform rather than complacency.

The historiography of the DAR is marked by the history of female authors and professional male historians. While the former focuses solely on the Daughters and typically includes interviews but lacks society's files and footnotes, the latter explores several hereditary societies and draws on organizational publications. Wallace Evan Davies authored the first comprehensive study of hereditary societies, which explores their patriotic ideas within their social, economic, and cultural context. He asserts that their effort to inculcate patriotism was “sort of secular religion to unite the American republic” in order to bring together a population diverse in national origin, religion, and cultural background.<sup>2</sup> They believed that substance would follow the acts of singing patriotic songs and saluting the American flag. Davies attributes the proliferation of hereditary societies in the 1890s to the great numbers of immigrants, the emergence of nationalism, and the culmination of the woman's club movement. In contrast to public perception, he argues that most members joined for the social attraction and prestige, but also recognizes the societies' contribution of preservation of revolutionary landmarks. The book's great value is enhanced by its abundance of sources: a collection of reports of hereditary societies, societies' magazines, and manuscripts.

While Davies' monograph was a valuable milestone, its scope ended in 1900. Female authors, whose focus solely on the DAR and its attitudes toward education,

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<sup>2</sup> Wallace Evan Davies, *Patriotism on Parade: the Study of Veterans' and Hereditary Organizations in America, 1783-1900* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1955), 216.

immigration, race, and political issues, extended the organization's history. Martha Strayer, a reporter for the Washington Daily News, did not receive any assistance from the society. She drew her information from two decades of reporting on the society to produce a history from 1890 to the end of the 1950s. She asserts that the popularity of the organization was due to its publicity and objectives. The founders recruited the First Lady, Caroline Harrison, as their president general and benefited from two receptions at the White House.<sup>3</sup> Following her, every president general was the wife of a politician or a diplomat until 1905. The historical projects the members selected were likewise of prestigious women. The first grave they marked was that of Abigail Adams in Quincy, in Massachusetts, noting her management of the family farm when President John Adams worked in Congress. Strayer argues that the DAR upheld the notion of consensus during the Revolution as an effort to unite the divided sections, still in conflict over the political and economic issues that stemmed from the war and Reconstruction. Strayer's journalism background is evident when she traces the society's origins in great detail but emphasizes the 1920s in the greater portion of the book because of she spent most of her career with the DAR during that period. Consequently, the society's attitudes toward foreign born Americans commence with the Immigration Act of 1924 and its involvement with the Spanish American War is absent.

Margaret Gibbs also asserts that national exposure influenced the DAR's recognition but points to the presidents' receptions, a tradition that commenced with

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<sup>3</sup> They were held in October 1891 and February 1892. These gave the organization national exposure. See: Martha Strayer, *The D.A.R. An Informal History* (Washington D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1958), 20.



Benjamin Harrison and ended only when Eleanor Roosevelt left the society. She argues that education was the main goal of the Daughters and hereditary societies. Borrowing Wallace's argument, she maintains that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century patriotism became "a secular religion".<sup>4</sup> The lack of citations in this monograph is partially compensated with a bibliography. Gibbs did not consult organizational files save a number of DAR pamphlets. Most of her study is drawn from secondary sources and periodicals. With no major findings, the book's merit is the added decade of the society's history.

Peggy Anderson, another journalist, attempts to understand the activities of the DAR within their social and cultural context. Writing in the early 1970s, she focuses on the history of the past four decades, demonstrating that despite their racist image a number of members volunteer in African American communities.<sup>5</sup> She also indicates that the Daughters built and have supported two schools in Appalachia for destitute children. Like Gibbs, Anderson employs mainly periodicals and newspaper articles. Her attempt to distance the Daughters from past controversies by emphasizing their quality educational work is not entirely convincing. The schools the Daughters had built supported white children, and additional schools they have approved for charitable purposes included institutions for immigrant children or descendants of foreign-born parents. The few women who helped African Americans seem an exceptional minority rather than an extensive change of society's core dogmas.

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<sup>4</sup> Margaret Gibbs, *The DAR* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), 33.

<sup>5</sup> Peggy Anderson, *The Daughters: An Unconventional Look at America's Fan Club – the DAR* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), 156-169.

The increasing interest of social historians in the processes of the construction of memory in the 1990s has generated studies on traditions, nostalgia, and patriotism.<sup>6</sup> They have explored the creation of ideologies, national identities and monuments and their employment by selected groups in shaping the past to advance their preferred views. Two studies have investigated the function of hereditary societies in this context. Stuart McConnell does not accept the explanation that native-born anxiety over increasing immigration combined with class antagonism resulted in the burst of patriotic sentiments in the 1890s. In his essay “Reading the Flag: A Reconsideration of the Patriotic Cults of the 1890s” he claims that patriotic societies started to organize in the 1880s, well before the great wave of immigration reached urban America. He also points out that Republican industrialists did not support a curb on the arrival of cheap workers even at the peak of immigration. McConnell argues that a new definition of “Americanism,” which appeared in the 1890s, manifested in different and interconnected ways.<sup>7</sup> Initially, a shift in the view of the flag from a symbol of family and a place of historical incident to a representation of national pride, gradually emerged. No longer an emblem of domestic heirloom and a regimental link of individuals to local history, the flag represented Anglo-American whites who sought to establish a hierarchical social order. Hereditary societies, the DAR included, came to represent the nation as an extended family that excluded

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<sup>6</sup> The body of literature about memory is extensive. Several important works include: , eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Michael G. Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: the Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> Stuart McConnell, “Reading the Flag: A Reconsideration of the Patriotic Cults of the 1890s,” in *Bonds of Affection: Americans Define Their Patriotism*, ed. John Bodnar (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 104.

African Americans. Patriotism also meant military obligation and support of the national government. Privileged groups, defined by their ancestry and social status, employed youths' military drills to instill patriotism and civic values. McConnell's does not identify why the emergence of patriotic sentiments occurred in the 1890s and not in the preceding decade, when labor unrest seen in events such as the Haymarket Riot of 1886 was prevalent, or the following decade, when a wave of Russian pogroms signaled by the massacre of Kishinev on Easter of 1903 prompted scores of Jewish immigrants to reach American shores. However, the value of his study is in the analysis of the flag as an emblem of collective identity and shifting social attitudes.

Woden Teachout answers this question in his recent dissertation. He points to the Depression of 1893 as a major shifting point in hereditary societies' social and political activism. Examining the Sons of the Revolution, the Sons of the American Revolution, the Daughters of the Revolution, and the Daughters of the American Revolution between 1876 and 1898, Teachout argues for three overlapping phases in their focus on an ideal revolutionary past. The societies aimed to reconcile sectional division caused by the Civil War and distance Americans from the materialism of the Gilded Age. At first, they memorialized the Revolution by finding and preserving period relics. In agreement with Davies, Gibbs, and McConnell, Teachout finds that with the accumulation of historical artifacts members wanted to create a national civil religion. Originally not anti-immigrants, members believed they could ameliorate cultural diversity through the promotion of the flag, patriotic songs, and by placing George Washington's portrait in schools. However, the Depression and its resultant social and labor unrest led members of

hereditary societies to perceive immigrants and labor unionists as a threat to the nation. They aligned themselves with the Republican Party whose platform included limited immigration and prevention of flag desecration.<sup>8</sup> Teachout's significant study draws heavily from family papers of key national officers, organizational magazines, and newspapers.

Teachout explores the DAR primarily from the national perspective. His meticulous evidence from particular chapters is mostly collected from the organization's magazine. Individual chapters, although subordinate to the policies of the national office, selected and funded their own projects. They included members of different generations who often held dissimilar views on various political issues. This chapter will explore the historical work of one chapter from its inception to the beginning of World War I. It will demonstrate that only a small number of members invested their energy in the painstaking work of historical research, attempting to reveal the stories of past men and women. It will also show that impressive projects such as erecting large monuments drew membership in large numbers.

According to the official publication of the DAR, the society was organized in August 1890 in Washington D.C. by Eugina Washington, Mary Desha, and Helen H. Walworth.<sup>9</sup> Their meeting was prompted by William O. McDowell, the great grandson of

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<sup>8</sup> Woden Sorrow Teachout, "Forging Memory: Hereditary Societies, Patriotism, and the American Past, 1876-1898," (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2003).

<sup>9</sup> *Early History: Daughters of the American Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: DAR): 4. Flora Adams Darling, who had contacted Eugina Washington about forming a national Revolutionary Relic Society, also claimed to have founded the DAR as an expansion of her original idea. She eventually resigned her Vice Presidency at the society in June of 1891. See: Flora Adams Darling, *Founding and Organization of the American*

Hannah Arnett, a revolutionary wife who threatened to leave her husband had he quit fighting for Independence. Arnett's story was published in the Washington Post by Mary S. Lockwood in reaction to the exclusion of women from the Sons of the American Revolution in April 1890. Writing in the *Post*, McDowell urged every woman "who has the blood of the heroes of the Revolution in her veins" to contact him. Five eligible women returned his call, among them Mary Desha who passionately declared: "it has made my blood boil whenever I have seen the 'buttin' worn by the 'Sons,' and felt I was left out because I happened to be a woman."<sup>10</sup> The women met officially on October 11<sup>th</sup> – on the anniversary of the discovery of America – adopted a constitution, and elected a board of management. They articulated their mission in acquisition and preservation of historical places and erection of monuments, conducting and publishing of historical research, preservation of revolutionary documents and artifacts, education of youth for citizenship, and fostering of "patriotism and love of country." Its first president general, Caroline Lavinia Scott Harrison, the wife of the U.S. President Benjamin Harrison, considered the acquisition of Valley Forge one of the society's patriotic efforts.<sup>11</sup>

The activities of the Centennial and Memorial Association of Valley Forge (CMAVF) and the Valley Forge Monument Association undoubtedly brought the encampment to public attention, which resulted in the increase of its popularity. On November 1891, seventeen interested members arrived at the site from Washington D.C.

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*Revolution and Daughters of the Revolution* (Philadelphia: Independence Publishing Company, 1901): 13-35.

<sup>10</sup> *Early History*, 4.

<sup>11</sup> "Valley Forge Must Be Sold," *The Historical Record*, 4 (1893): 127.

At the conclusion of their visit the women were “very enthusiastic in their interest in the acquisition of the historic premises of Valley Forge.”<sup>12</sup> The DAR wanted to purchase the first site of Washington headquarters, which included the spot where he prayed for the survival of his troops, the old forge, and the sites of two additional camps. But they were not the only public body to have shown interest in the property. The Postmaster General, John Wanamaker, promoted the site’s acquisition to the Philadelphia Board of Trade, while a New York brewery company and a hotel keeper had also showed interest in the property.<sup>13</sup>

While various patriotic and commercial organizations vied for a share at Valley Forge, Anna Morris Holstein and members of the DAR found mutual interest in creating a national memorial at the encampment. Holstein set to form a DAR chapter under her own leadership. At first, she acquired the title of Regent for Montgomery County from the National Society. In the course of 1893, under instruction of the National Society, she organized a few meetings in attempt to recruit the additional twelve members required for a formation of a DAR chapter.<sup>14</sup> In May, they elected a secretary, Katherine Corson, and adopted the name Valley Forge. Predictably, it was Holstein who suggested the name as

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<sup>12</sup> Randolph Keim, “They Want to Buy Valley Forge: Plans of the Daughters of the American Revolution,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11 October 1891, 8.

<sup>13</sup> “Valley Forge Must Be Sold,”; “Valley Forge’s Peril: The Historic Spot in Grave Danger of Desecration,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 9 February 1890, 12; “Valley Forge Must Be Sold: The Historic Spot at the Option of Patriotic Bodies,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3 November 1891, 7.

<sup>14</sup> A chapter could be formed with thirteen members, similar to the number of colonies. The minutes mention that four members were absent, and the list of charter members includes 13 members. See: Mary T. McInnes, “History of Valley Forge Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution from 1894 – 1919,” DAR Papers, MCHS.

“the one most suitable”.<sup>15</sup> By the end of 1894 Holstein was ready to launch the chapter. In December 1894 she met with eight local women and Emma L. Spear of the Philadelphia Chapter in the house of Julia A. Hayman, the great grand-niece of General Anthony Wayne, in Norristown and formed the new chapter. They elected Holstein as their regent, Margaret Schall Hunsicker as Vice Regent, Ellen Knox Fornance as treasurer, Katherine Corson as secretary, and Rebecca McInnes as historian.<sup>16</sup> True to the national society’s historical objective, Holstein, who missed the second meeting due to illness, read her essay “Interesting Notes on the Early History of Valley Forge” during the subsequent meeting in February. The reading intended to spark historical interest among the members in the site for which their chapter had been named. The following week, the women held a public meeting in the Fornance Building in Norristown to encourage eligible women to join. They chose one of their most prominent members, Annie Wittenmyer, the first president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the president of the Woman’s Relief Corps and an auxiliary of the Grand Army of the Republic, to speak at the event. She spoke of her service in the Civil War as a member of the Iowa Sanitary Commission.<sup>17</sup> The women chose to present recent history at their public meeting hoping to draw attention to their new chapter by an illustrious speaker.

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<sup>15</sup> Valley Forge Chapter DAR, *Exhibition of American Wars* (1908): 3.

<sup>16</sup> “Minute Book Valley Forge Chapter D.A.R., Dec. 17, 1894 - Oct. 2, 1899, No. 1” Valley Forge Chapter DAR, Norristown, Pennsylvania. (Min.1 thereafter).

<sup>17</sup> Wittenmyer requested to transfer from Washington Chapter. She was voted an official member on the October meeting. See: 21 October 1895, Min.1.

In the meantime, the national DAR abandoned their design on Valley Forge. Initially, the Daughters did not publicize their trip and their plan about the encampment because they waited for the results of a pending bill in the Pennsylvania legislature.<sup>18</sup> In May 1893, when the state formed the Valley Forge Park Commission with the intention of acquiring the grounds and creating a historic park, the DAR retreated. By the time the Valley Forge Chapter was organized the society's national leadership had diverted their focus to aid the National Mary Washington Memorial Association in erecting a fitted memorial in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

The Valley Forge Chapter members' attachment to the encampment at Valley Forge shaped the identity of the chapter in its first few years. The Daughters conferred symbolic meaning on tangible artifacts made from materials taken from the military camp that enabled them to foster the chapter's identity and promulgate their values publicly. The women used the wood gathered in the encampment to evoke a message of reverence of the sacrifice of the Continental Army and particularly of its commander. When they received their charter, in June 1895, one of the members, Sarah Byrnes E. Groverman, gave the chapter a silver bound gavel. Its head was made from "the historic oak at Valley Forge, under which Washington so often received his suffering Army" and its handle of "wood from the floor of his private room at the Headquarters where he passed anxious days, planning and consulting with his brother officers."<sup>19</sup> An additional member, Rebecca McInnes, presented the chapter with a frame made from a chestnut tree standing

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<sup>18</sup> "Editors Note Book," *American Monthly Magazine*, XVIII (August 1900): 180.

<sup>19</sup> McInnes, "History of Valley Forge Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution from 1894 – 1919"; Katherine C. Corson, "Valley Forge Chapter," *American Monthly Magazine*, VIII (Jan. 1896): 75-76.



on the grounds of the historical site. It was prepared for the chapter's Charter and hung for thirteen years at the chapter's meeting place in Norristown.<sup>20</sup> Both articles were intended for the members' private use, linking the chapter with Valley Forge and, by extension, with its history.

The women shared the representation of the shrubbery of Valley Forge beyond their private quarters. They arranged for a large wreath made of laurels from the encampment to be placed on the Washington Monument in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, during its unveiling. The ceremony drew hundreds of thousands to the city to observe an impressive military parade, catch a glimpse of state and national dignitaries, and hear President McKinley address the crowds. The wreath, decorated with the official blue and white ribbon of the DAR, was the only embellishment allowed on the monument that day.<sup>21</sup>

The national DAR formed with the goals of preservation, education, and fostering patriotism.<sup>22</sup> Their preservation aimed at sources from white American families who supported the revolution. Teachout points out that the requirements for membership in addition to proof of ancestry included "personal acceptability." This translated into social

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<sup>20</sup> 3 April 1899, Min. 1; McInnes, "History of Valley Forge Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution from 1894 – 1919".

<sup>21</sup> McInnes, "History of Valley Forge Chapter Daughters of the Revolution from 1894 – 1919"; "Magnificent Tribute to the Memory of Washington: With Due Ceremony, and in Presence of Many Thousands," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 16 May 1897, 1.

<sup>22</sup> "Constitution," *Report of the Daughters of the American Revolution 1890-1897* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899), 19-20.

standing, and in Valley Forge Chapter it required the affirmation of two members.<sup>23</sup> It ensured class and racial exclusivity of the members. They intended to construct a narrative that would glorify revolutionary soldiers as a means to instruct the host of immigrants who arrived from Southern and Eastern Europe. Teachout argues that after 1894, due to the economic depression and social unrest primarily in urban centers, the Daughters came to perceive immigrants as a threat and politicized their message to equate Americanism with the Constitution and self-control rather than personal liberty.<sup>24</sup> But evidence suggests that the Daughters recognized the immigrants as a serious problem prior to the onset of the depression. On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1893, during the Second Continental Congress, Mary S. Lockwood, the Historian General, warned the members in her annual report:

there is danger ahead! Our country is being denationalized by Hungarians, Poles, and Italians, who have never read their first letter of the spirit of Americanism. What is this spirit? It is the responsibility of every individual toward this Government.

She confidently added: "Now, who can better do this work than the Daughters of the American Revolution?"<sup>25</sup>

The following day, the Pennsylvania Reading Railroad collapsed, causing the panic that led to the four-year worst economic depression of the nation's history. On the

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<sup>23</sup> Teachout, "Forging Memory," 122-124.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 292, 327-329.

<sup>25</sup> S. M. Lockwood, "Report of Historian General," *American Monthly Magazine*, II (April 1893): 450.

same day, Mrs. John M. Chrelien of the Sequoia Chapter in San Francisco ardently argued that a sound historical education would forge a love of country that “will guard it faithfully from political corruption within, and the assault of ignorant, vicious, and diseased immigration that threaten it from without”.<sup>26</sup>

The Daughters were not the only ones who predicted disastrous consequences prior to the depression. In 1891 Congress created the Immigration Bureau and stipulated that it would monitor the country’s borders and screen immigrants. The first years of the 1890s witnessed elevated immigration numbers; while in 1890 over 455,000 entered the country, the number increased to over 560,000 in 1891 and to almost 580,000 in 1892.<sup>27</sup> The addition of over 1.5 million immigrants who mainly headed to the crowded city neighborhoods alarmed government officials and social commentators. In December 1892, during the 21<sup>st</sup> annual congress of the National Prison Association Judge Francis Wayland, the chairman of the Committee on Criminal Law Reform raised his concern about the increasing immigration from Hungary, Russia, Poland, and Italy. He clearly indicated his support for limited immigration when he declared:

We are, and for years have been, receiving the very dregs of European society, the scum of European cities – the destitute, the ignorant, the nihilist, the anarchist – by scores of thousands annually.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> “An Unsealed Book,” *American Monthly Magazine*, III (September 1893): 267.

<sup>27</sup> *Reports of the Immigration Commission*, 4

<sup>28</sup> Arthur MacDonald, *Abnormal Man Being Essays on Education and Crime and Related Subjects* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1893), 191.

Arthur Cassot, a social commentator, echoed Lockwood's dissatisfaction in a contemporary political journal several months later:

The most embarrassing of all this immigration comes from Southern Italy, Poland, Russia, Hungary, and Ireland, in which countries the people are more illiterate and on a lower social level than most civilized nations, and certainly below ourselves... The whole country is at the mercy of this foreign degradation.<sup>29</sup>

The sharp increase in immigration served as a pretext of alarm for officials and the Daughters who observed the sheer numbers of newcomers and their impact on cities like New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago. The depression, however, exacerbated the immigrants' precarious situation as unemployment soared and harsh winters added greater difficulty. Teachout meticulously demonstrates the shift in DAR rhetoric from shared history to ethnic based nationalism of the native-born but points that individual chapters did not necessarily follow suit.

In 1907, the Pennsylvania State Historian of the DAR urged chapters to send in for preservation their historical presentations and ancestral papers since "the true history of Pennsylvania is not yet written and these papers will be valuable material for whoever will be that historian."<sup>30</sup> While insisting on the inclusion of their ancestors in the historical narrative, the DAR held a scientific view of historical practice whereby a

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<sup>29</sup> Arthur Cassot, "Should We Restrict Immigration?" *The American Journal of Politics*, III (Sept. 1893): 250.

<sup>30</sup> *First Annual Report of State Historian DAR* (1907), 4.

historian “must read the lesson of the past in order to teach the present how to shape the Future.”<sup>31</sup> With a large body of immigrants present in American cities, Historian General Mary Cooley Bassett advised the members to view the country’s history through eugenics which she termed “the winnowing of the Almighty.” She also sought to promulgate a plan for the study of history through the Magazine. “We are a hereditary patriotic order and should merit the first rank as an authoritative reference on all matters of genealogy and historical data, accuracy, completeness of records and authenticity of all facts,” concluded Bassett.<sup>32</sup> Like scientific historians, DAR members believed that history should be employed as an inspiration with themes of morality, patriotism, and providence. Their attempt to educate the immigrants in conjunction with the divine sanction of eugenics placed them at odds with the Progressive Historians who emphasized the self-interest of respected revolutionary leaders and demonstrated that the concerns and demands of large groups of people remained overlooked.

Aligning with the society’s objective, Holstein considered historical research one of the most prominent goals of the chapter. The Daughters often encouraged their members to write histories and publish it in their magazine. In May 1893, Ellen Hardin Walworth, the vice president General of the DAR, spoke before the members about the women’s contribution: “It has come to tell our country men that we, the Daughters of the

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<sup>31</sup> Mary Cooley Bassett, “Report of the Historian General, 1912-13,” (Baltimore): 3, DAR Scrapbook.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, 7.

founders of the Nation assert our rights – our right to a recognition of the work our mothers did for this country.”<sup>33</sup> She continued pointing to women’s valuable faculty:

The women of America have been long and unconsciously the sentinels on guard for our liberties, while the men have fought the battles of politics and legislation. These men have talked with their wives and daughters, mothers and sisters, and these women have listened to the legislators, read the newspapers, watched the effect of new laws, and over all, they have had time to ponder . . .to think about issues. . . While the men have been gathering money the women garnered wisdom.<sup>34</sup>

In concluding her address she outlined the task of the Daughters: “Your work . . . is to bring forward the history of families, localities, counties and states; thus, each one will offer a tribute to the general history of the nation” in order to “educate the children of the nation to a love of country.”<sup>35</sup> Walworth carefully demonstrated women’s gender qualities, placing men in the public arena and women as moral protectors who initially consulted their husbands’ opinions and then turned to outside information. At the same time, she insisted that the Daughters’ historical ancestry, the missing element from the national historical narrative, should be documented for the sake of a civic purpose that would foster national unity.

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<sup>33</sup> Ellen Hardin Walworth, “The Magazine,” *American Monthly Magazine*, II (June 1893): 608

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 612.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 613.

The following month, Lucia E. Blount reiterated Walworth when she reminded the Daughters that:

The work of women never has been rated at its real value, and it never will be until women themselves come forward and put their own estimate upon it...Just think what a flood of light would be thrown upon the early history of our country were the stories of the pathetic struggles and sacrifices of the heroic women of the Revolution brought out from the hidden corners of the earth and made a part of history.<sup>36</sup>

Blount argued for moving colonial and revolutionary women irrevocably out of obscurity. Implicit in her words was an understanding that the annals of white women, possibly of Western European origin, were of interest, not those of African Americans or any other ethnic groups.

It is not surprising, however, that the Daughters did not publish numerous articles on their female ancestors. Male ancestors typically received recognition by mid-nineteenth century scientific historians as heads of families who arrived in America or through their public role. They ignored the work of women, who generally lived and acted within the domestic arena. The Daughters, who accepted the practice of these historians, faced a conundrum – if they followed the footsteps of the historians they would have had to disregard a significant body of knowledge. Ignoring them was too radical an act. The women decided to work on the memory of all actors, but tended to focus on men whose profession, public prominence, or patriotic activities were deemed appropriate to emphasize.

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<sup>36</sup> Lucia E. Blount, "The Eligibility Amendment," *American Monthly Magazine*, II (June 1893): 692.

Most members of the Valley Forge Chapter, however, were reluctant to undertake the painstaking work that historical research entailed and Holstein had to persistently encourage them to contribute papers for their monthly meetings. Holstein attributed the initial reluctance to a period of adaptation and familiarity with the society's demands. She reported optimistically on the pages of the DAR magazine that "some few papers have been read and more will be presented as our members better understand what is expected of them." However, her repeated requests demonstrate that only a small number of women were genuinely devoted to the task.<sup>37</sup> In November 1895 she attempted to entice the Daughters to conduct local historical research "particularly of the events of the Revolution in connection with Valley Forge from which the name of our chapter is taken and which should therefore be of peculiar interest to us." Two members answered her call and in the following year Ellen Knox Fornance presented papers on the topics of finding graves of revolutionary soldiers and the origin of Egypt Road or Main Street, and Rebecca McInnes spoke of General Green after whom Green Street was named.

The Daughters' disinterest in historical topics persisted and on the meeting of January 1897, during Holstein's absence, Mrs. Strassburger requested that the chapter present literary and other readings besides historical papers.<sup>38</sup> The women did not act on this suggestion, but the contention over the subject might have caused undercurrent of discontent as members refused to confront Holstein out of respect to the chapter's organizer. Holstein grew impatient. Perhaps her advanced age of seventy three and her

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<sup>37</sup> Anna Morris Holstein, "Valley Forge Chapter," *American Monthly Magazine*, VII (July-Dec. 1895): 554.

<sup>38</sup> 4 January 1897, *Ibid.*



frail health made her wish to see the historical issue settled satisfactorily. Her frustration must have reached new heights when even her suggestion of writing about the women's own ancestors had been met with a disappointing response of two members.<sup>39</sup>

By 1898, Holstein's failing health forced her to resign from the regent position. Knowing she would miss the January meeting, she wrote the Daughters a forceful letter. As her frustration with the chapter members – some of whom shared years of activity with her on Board of Directors of the CMAVF – grew more profound, she called “the attention of the chapter to the fact that it was a Historical organization, not a social one and that the work of the chapter should be in a Historical line.”<sup>40</sup> Holstein saw the DAR as a vehicle for women's involvement in memorializing the fading narrative of local revolutionary history. The women refused to comprehend the significance of the task they had to fulfill. They had to research, write, and present their findings in order to leave a record not only for the purpose of educating the young but also for future generations. Throughout her life Holstein had been passionate about the preservation of the past, its historical sites, its material culture, and her husband's genealogical heritage. She could not comprehend the women's reluctance and lack of interest, particularly those of the older generation whose exemplary action should have provided an inspiration for the younger chapter members. The women who attended the meeting pondered Holstein's remarks and upon a suggestion of Mrs. Eisenberg decided to avoid engaging in historical work.

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<sup>39</sup> Katherine Cady Corson and Fornance conducted genealogical research. 5 April 1897, Min. 1.

<sup>40</sup> 3 January 1898, Ibid.

Holstein, as expected, did not concede even when attendance in meetings decreased. The meetings generally drew fourteen and often even fewer members. The continuous decline of interest presented a serious problem to the future survival of the chapter. It reached its lowest point on September 1899 when the Daughters canceled a meeting due to the appearance of only five members. If Holstein had realized that the demand for historical work presented a heavy burden on the women she did not let any sign of it show. She continued with a request for full chapter representation at the annual celebration of the Valley Forge encampment on June 19<sup>th</sup> and “urged a more earnest study of the history of Valley Forge by our chapter on account of its name.” On May, she read an essay on Valley Forge and in June she laid her concluding goal for the chapter - to be more prominent in the national society and “to make it the most active chapter in the State”.<sup>41</sup> Holstein was an energetic woman who invested great effort into bringing her ambitious projects to life and demanded likewise from others. She devoted her time, talent, diligence, and political acumen and worked tirelessly to see her goals met. Her vision for the Valley Forge Chapter was similar. The Daughters should delve into research, publish their findings in the society’s *American Monthly Magazine* and serve as an example for other chapters with their enthusiasm and achievements. Holstein’s active days were behind her. She needed capable chapter members to lead the group – probably Mrs. McInnes, who had been among the principal founder of the CMAVF and Mary Kraus Preston who had also been among its members.

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<sup>41</sup> 5 March 1898; 6 June 1898, Ibid.

Holstein's efforts were not met with complete passive disengagement. Members occasionally presented papers in meetings. Mrs. Eisenberg and Mary P. Beaver presented "Colonial Philadelphia" and "Colonial Times" respectively, and Beaver read unidentified historical letters in another meeting. In December 1899, the Daughters resolved to commit to scheduled presentations. They raised an impressive line of subjects - Pennsylvania as A Colony, Pennsylvania Churches of the Revolution, Washington at Valley Forge, Lafayette at Barren Hill, revolutionary Landmarks in Pennsylvania, History of the Flag, Whitemarsh during the Revolution, Independence Hall, and the Pennsylvania signers of the Declaration of Independence.<sup>42</sup> Clearly, the subjects focused on local revolutionary history with an emphasis on male leaders and material culture. They did not attempt to unveil the story of local revolutionary women, but possibly intended to draw on published materials for their presentations. As determined as the women seemed, their decision lasted two meetings in which the first two subjects were presented. In the following year, in January 1901 - a week after Holstein's passing - regent Hunsicker requested that historical papers be read at every meeting. However, with only eight members present in the February meeting, she stressed that the women should have a social hour which "would increase interest in work of the order and create greater sociability among the members."<sup>43</sup> Hunsicker had to strike a fine balance between serious historical lectures and social mingling. The alarmingly low attendance at meetings threatened the chapter's existence and insistence on educational agenda could

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<sup>42</sup> 4 December 1899, Minute Book Valley Forge Chapter D.A.R., Dec. 17, 1894 - Oct. 2, 1899, No. 2," Valley Forge Chapter DAR, Norristown, Pennsylvania. (Min.2 thereafter).

<sup>43</sup> 8 February 1901, Ibid.

have potentially led to the chapter's demise. The members decided to hold a social hour following their business meeting, but the number of women in attendance increased only seven years later when new interested members gradually joined.

Holstein's sense of history corresponded Pierre Nora's argument in his landmark essay collection *Realms of Memory*, where he includes under *lieux de memoire*, memory sites, a large variety of iconographic representations such as monuments, street names, photographs, maps and signs.<sup>44</sup> In the spring of 1895, she recognized that historical memory was embedded in public spaces when she spoke of Montgomery County "as being one of the most Historic [Counties]" and urged the members to find the origin of its name and those of its streets and write their historical accounts.<sup>45</sup> If Holstein's approach seems contemporary, her articles remained rooted in nineteenth century historical methods.

The history promoted by the Valley Forge Chapter Daughters was increasingly falling out of favor by professional historians. As they faced social unrest created by industrialization, urbanization, and the growing impact of large corporations on political and economic practices they wanted their work to contribute to social change. Allan Trachtenberg indicates that the incorporation of America developed through contestation in cultural assumptions, often expressed by farmers, laborers and radicals.<sup>46</sup> The

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<sup>44</sup> Pierre Nora, ed., *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 3 vols.

<sup>45</sup> 4 November 1895; 6 April 1896, Min. 1.

<sup>46</sup> Allan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 5-8.

Progressive historians, as they were called, took a stand against big corporations and political corruption. The historians believed people needed a change that would consider their interest, not stories about liberty and heroism. They criticized the past in hoping to induce a transformation of the present.<sup>47</sup> Progressive historians also insisted that progress guides human history and offers a paradigm for analysis.<sup>48</sup> In contrast to Rankean practices, Charles A. Beard argued that historians should write an interpretation and not a recreation of the past. He claimed that historians could not write objective works since they hold private opinions and beliefs that bear on their interpretations. Criticizing Ranke's method in great detail, he calls for history that would venture beyond politics into economic, racial, sexual, and cultural fields.<sup>49</sup> His volume – *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* – he asserted, presented one model of inquiry.

Beard argued that the Constitution was the product of wealthy merchants and landowners who wanted a government that would serve their interest against the common people. Vernon L. Parrington generalized American history as a political contestation between Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian practices. It was represented by a debate between Federalists and Republicans, Whigs and Jacksonians, and Progressives and Conservatives. Looking at the environmental circumstances, Frederick Jackson Turner claimed that they affected inhabitants and shaped a national history through sectional

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<sup>47</sup> Francis C. Couvares and others, eds., *Interpretations of American History: Patterns & Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 2000), 9.

<sup>48</sup> Ernest A. Breisach, *American Progressive History: An Experiment in Modernization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 49.

<sup>49</sup> Charles A. Beard, "That Noble Dream," *American Historical Review*, 41 (October 1935): 87.

differences. Dealing with the Rankean premise of the objectivity of history, Carl A. Becker asserted that historical facts receive their meaning from historians' interpretation. The narrative lacks objectivity but is influenced by the contemporary political, social, and cultural milieu.

The new approaches to historical writing did not resonate with the DAR's attempt to chronicle American history. Theirs remained conservative in their political history that glorified great leaders. Mary Elizabeth Springer, who published an article that surveyed the history of America in the society's magazine, asserted that the Revolutionary War "leveled social distinctions" and claimed that the people's Constitution was made "for the people by the people."<sup>50</sup> Over a decade later, Mary Cooley Bassett, the society's Historian General, spoke highly of the revolutionary ancestors, whose "noble lives" should be made public by the Daughters – "the history of their time, full and perfect reference authority, their virtue, their standing reference authority."<sup>51</sup> Her words echoed American orators of the 1880s and 1890s who glorified revolutionary soldiers on battle days or on the Evacuation Day at Valley Forge.

Holstein's writings fit this pattern. In her article "Reminiscences of Valley Forge and General Washington's Headquarters," which she published in the DAR's *American Monthly Magazine*, she added the memory of the common soldiers to that of George

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<sup>50</sup> Mary Elizabeth Springer, "Glimpses of the History of the United States," *American Monthly Magazine*, XVI (January 1900): 14-15.

<sup>51</sup> Mary Cooley Bassett, "National Board Magazine," *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine*, XLIII (Nov. 1913): 691.

Washington and General Lafayette. She employed the idea of self-sacrifice as an overarching theme and a moral for readers.

No martial music led them in triumph; no city full of good cheer and warm and comfortable homes awaited their coming; no sound kept time to their weary steps save the icy wind rattling the leafless branches and the dull tread of their tired feet on the frozen ground.<sup>52</sup>

Holstein indicates that the soldiers suffered for the sake of a higher cause without receiving any recognition for their deeds. However, she also recognizes “The leaders of the men whose heroism can sanctify a place” who “were striving to establish and found a nation and a government.”<sup>53</sup> In the spirit of the DAR, Holstein paid tribute to revolutionary soldiers but revealed her utmost respect for authority and leadership.

Several years later, Emma L. Newitt, whose article mistakenly appeared in the DAR’s magazine under the authorship of the Regent Eisenberg, demonstrates historical skill in the variety of sources she consulted to describe the “Life at Valley Forge.”<sup>54</sup> She draws on diaries, correspondence, orderly book, and George Washington’s papers to produce an impressive article that attempted to convey the soldiers’ experience. Like historians of the nineteenth century, she mentions God when she claims that the hardship at the encampment would have discouraged most people but it caused “in Washington’s

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<sup>52</sup> Anna Morris Holstein, “Reminiscences of Valley Forge and General Washington’s Headquarters,” *American Monthly Magazine*, VI (Jan. - June, 1895):549.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 550.

<sup>54</sup> Harriet D. Eisenberg, “Life at Valley Forge,” *American Monthly Magazine*, XXXI (Oct.1907): 597-604. A correction of the author’s name: *American Monthly Magazine*, XXI (Dec. 1907): 585.

case to make him put firmer trust in an Almighty Power and in the justice of his cause.”<sup>55</sup> However, she criticized Peggy Shippen and Sally Chew for they “danced the night away with the scarlet-coated officers of the British army, while fathers and brothers were suffering on the hills above the Schuylkill.” In contrast, she commended Mrs. Washington who “busied herself all day long, with errands of grace.” She also did not fail to include the story of her resourceful ancestor, demonstrating her distinguished lineage, a Continental Valley Forge officer Captain Piercy. A manufacturer of pottery, he wanted to produce bowls for his peers and built a kiln at his leisure in the encampment. The soldiers never enjoyed his workmanship; other soldiers tore it down and took the few items he had produced.

Through her extensive research she reveals, without citing any sources or great detail, intriguing information about the daily life in the encampment. She discloses that soldiers who carried money could buy food and clothing to help them during the harsh season and that they disobeyed orders, liked to play card games and dice, and lived in an inevitable state of filth. She reveals that one soldier was held in court martial for stealing and an officer was found guilty of robbery. However, she protects the integrity of Anthony Wayne by simply indicating that he was acquitted of “conduct unbecoming an officer.”<sup>56</sup> She also suggests that the soldiers did not live in complete isolation since Friday was “Flagg day” when mail exchange took place in Philadelphia. The disclosure of dishonorable conduct of soldiers and the fact that relief was available for those with

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<sup>55</sup> Eisenberg, “Life at Valley Forge,” 604.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 603.



means conflicted with the long-held image of cold, hungry, and isolated military troops. The option of relief for wealthier soldiers contradicts the democratic ideal of equality and the existence of military discipline. The letters soldiers received from loved ones must have helped to uplift their morale and endure the ordeal. These disclosures paint the soldiers in a more realistic manner than the images created by the CMAVF members and Evacuation Day orations two decades earlier. After years of ideal glorification of the soldiers at the encampment, a new generation of women pursued the documented of a more accurate portrayal.

The Daughters accepted the revisionist article since it was based on sources of military officers, all respected leaders of the Continental Army at the encampment. Newitt employs methods borrowed from scientific historians in her reliance on primary sources, stating that “No historian can picture the life of any period so vividly as it may be described by those who were participants in that life.”<sup>57</sup> She fills her article with several quotes, some are paragraph long. Her perspective, however, is influenced by leaders of high command, and the experience of common soldiers is viewed through the perspective of George Washington and other officers. Newitt also protects General Wayne’s image by concealing the offense for which he faced court martial. On the other hand, she does not impose any moral lesson and refrains from lengthy depictions of suffering or the harsh weather.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 597.

Newitt's historical writing practices fit professional standards better than Holstein's. As a daughter of a younger generation, she is less concerned with an impeccable notion of self-sacrifice of the Continental Army and more focused on portraying an accurate depiction of life on the encampment. It is doubtful that Holstein would have authored such a piece. Holstein's image of the troops had been shaped by her reverence of authority, her Civil War experience, and nineteenth-century historians' writings. Even in her late article, published after her death in Stager's history of the CMAVF, she sought to create a version of reality that promoted the virtue of George Washington. She describes the floors of Washington's Headquarters as "those which the great chieftain has walked in many weary hours" and the windows "unchanged since the days when anxious eyes looked through them at the soldiers' huts upon the hills."<sup>58</sup> She probably would have chosen to ignore the unscrupulous conduct of military personnel in order to keep the image of the army untainted.

During the first decade of the twentieth century several members occasionally presented historical papers. Most of them were readings from published historical books such as excerpts from the *Sleeping Sentinel of Valley Forge* and an account of Montgomery Farm from a "geography of Pennsylvania published in 1835."<sup>59</sup> However, when a younger member, Emma L. Newitt, an enthusiastic amateur historian, joined a slight change occurred. First she delivered a paper on the "Army of Valley Forge during

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<sup>58</sup> Anna Morris Holstein, "Washington's Headquarters at Valley Forge, 1777-78," in *History of the Centennial Memorial Association Valley Forge*, 90.

<sup>59</sup> 5 February 1904, *Ibid.*

the Winter of 1877-1878.”<sup>60</sup> Based on diaries and period letters, she presented a detailed account of the soldiers at the encampment. Impressed by her work, the Regent - Harriet Eisenberg - submitted it for publication in the DAR magazine.<sup>61</sup> On the subsequent month Newitt read a paper written two years earlier by Herman Vandenburg Ames titled “Some Peculiar Laws and Customs of Colonial Days.” Her third presentation marked a turning point in historical subjects when she introduced the “Women of Philadelphia during revolutionary Times”.<sup>62</sup> This was possibly the first instance in which the chapter to delved into the history of women. As part of a younger generation, raised at the turn of the century when women’s public role included involvement in temperance, women’s clubs, settlement houses, and suffrage, she valued women’s role and sought to make an impact with her writings.

Newitt also initiated her own research and produced a personal genealogical presentation that paid homage to the country’s historical founders. In contrast, when Holstein had urged the members to write about their ancestors none of the two women who worked on the project presented their findings. While other members occasionally paid homage to traditional revolutionary leaders in subjects such as “Washington at Prayer at Valley Forge” and “Philadelphia Assembly,” Newitt delivered a paper of a trip taken by one of her ancestors, John Harper, a Quarter Master of the Pennsylvania

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<sup>60</sup> Newitt, a bachelor, received her teacher’s certificate in 1882. See: *Sixty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Public Education, First School District of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: E. C. Markley & Sons, Printers, 1882), 81-82.

<sup>61</sup> 1 February 1907, Min. 2; see also footnote 54.

<sup>62</sup> 1 February 1908, Minute Book Valley Forge Chapter D.A.R., Dec. 6, 1907 - Dec. 1, 1916, No. 3,” Valley Forge Chapter DAR, Norristown, Pennsylvania. (Min.3 thereafter).

Battalion, in 1776.<sup>63</sup> In the following month, Fornance presented her family history perhaps as a result of Newitt's focus on her ancestors, or out of a desire to enter her relatives into the local historical narrative. As the hostess of the meeting, she introduced the history of her house on Main Street in Norristown titled "Selma and the Porters." Mrs. Harry S. Righter, the hostess of the subsequent meeting, presented the history of her house in Spring Mill titled "A Sketch of the Legaux Homestead".<sup>64</sup> The Daughters continued their focus on local history by reading selections from the *Real Daughters of the American Revolution*, penned by a member of the Merion Chapter, Margaret Harvey, in October. In the end of the year the members featured "reminiscences by those who were associated with Anna Morris Holstein, organizer and first regent of Valley Forge Chapter." Hunsicker read "three very interesting letters" written by Holstein and the account of the first meeting of the Valley Forge Chapter while McIness spoke of the initial meeting. Members also read the early history of the chapter and a biography of Holstein from the *Centennial and Memorial Association Valley Forge*.

The tribute to Holstein posed a unique opportunity to introduce an exclusive history. The society fostered historical memory and the recovery of any evidence before it was lost. The women could have organized a memorable evening to celebrate their

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<sup>63</sup> 6 February 1914, Min. 3.

<sup>64</sup> See minutes of 1914, Ibid. The ancestors of Ellen Knox Fornance lived on Selma Farm. See: M. Auge, *Life of the Eminent Dead and Biographical Notices of Prominent Living Citizens of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania* (Norristown: Published by the Author, 1879), 593-594. Peter Legaux, a French viticulturalist, planted large vineyards on his estate, Montjoy, in Spring Mill, Pennsylvania, in the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. His attempts to produce American wine were unsatisfactory and he died in debt. See: Thomas Pinney, *A History of Wine in America from the Beginnings to Prohibition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 107-114.

chapter inception and produce a collection of reminiscences written by those who shared years of public activity with their first regent. Fornance, McInnes, Hunsicker, Sarah R. E. Groverman, Mary Kraus Preston, and Mrs. P.Y. Eisenberg were all members of the Montgomery County Historical Society and all but the Eisenberg had been charter members of the chapter. Moreover, McInnes treaded by Holstein through most of her public career. During the Civil War, she joined the United States Sanitary Commission and often visited soldiers in Union camps.<sup>65</sup> She was also among the incorporators and first directors of the Centennial and Memorial Association of Valley Forge and served as Holstein's vice regent between 1897 and Holstein's death in 1900.<sup>66</sup> These women could have vividly portrayed Holstein through their powerful stories and shared experiences. They could have reflected on the complexity of her personality and testify about her intriguing interest in history. Regrettably, they chose to memorialize her on the last meeting of the year, when the lengthy business section of the meeting included the annual election of officers. They read Holstein's letters without interpretation or comment and left the minutes of the first meeting to represent the inception of their chapter instead of reminisce about the trials and tribulations of its first six years under the leadership of its founder. Perhaps they considered conferring attention upon their own history an impertinent act. Several years earlier, the Daughters refrained from contributing funds for a tribute to Julia K. Hogg, the former Pennsylvania State Regent, despite repeated requests from the State Office. They insisted that it was "not in line of their work, being

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<sup>65</sup> "Obituary," *DAR Scrapbook*, Valley Forge Chapter DAR, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

<sup>66</sup> Holstein was the Regent of the CMAVF from its inception until her death.

engaged in Historical research rather than in work of a personal nature.”<sup>67</sup> They held a gendered view of keeping contemporary women’s work inconspicuous. They approved the acknowledgement of colonial and revolutionary women’s acts as a means of inculcation, but did not want to present themselves as the ones to assume outright acknowledgement. Consequently, the history of the chapter remained factual, concise, and lacking personal experience of members.

During their twentieth year, 1914, excluding a presentation on Valley Forge and one on Historic Churches, the Daughters documented members’ family history and the history of their chapter. In the formative years of the chapter’s existence, between 1895 and 1913, the women dedicated their historical effort primarily to the memory of soldiers who encamped at Valley Forge. In the twenty-first Continental Congress, on April 1912, Mary C. Bassett, the Regent of the Baltimore Chapter, asserted members’ historical consciousness and self-appreciation:

We have become a conventionalized organization with customs, usages, methods, which are beginning to count for very much. Let us look at our own Society’s history. What purpose was fundamental in the organization of the Daughters of the American Revolution? What set it in motion? What will distinguish it through the years and mark it off as characteristic?<sup>68</sup>

With over a decade of historical work, the Daughters had come to recognize the significance of their organization to the nation’s history. They were

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<sup>67</sup> 6 February 1899, Min. 1. They eventually acquiesced and contributed a minor sum of \$5. See: 6 November 1899, Min. 2.

<sup>68</sup> *Proceedings of the Twenty First Continental Congress of the Daughters of the American Revolution* (Washington, D. C., 1912), 45.

ready to include themselves in the national historical narrative as the “contributors of the future by being conservators of the past history of America”.<sup>69</sup> Valley Forge members internalized her significant message and followed suit. The following year several members wrote their family history. It provided them with the construction of their origin and a trace of their pedigree. It also established their connection to the land and defined their exclusive identity. The members often used their family estate as a focus of their project, which proved that property and class were directly linked to comportment and good breeding. After decades of attention to revolutionary soldiers and sites, most linked to Valley Forge, they started to memorialize themselves through their male ancestors.<sup>70</sup>

The encampment, however, remained the most exciting historical site for the members partly due to the chapter’s name and partly due to its increasing popularity. In January 1900, Hunsicker, the second regent, suggested that the chapter furnish Washington’s bedroom at the Headquarters.<sup>71</sup> The women proceeded to receive permission from the CMAVF and organized a concert to raise funds for the purchase. Inspired by a visit to Mount Vernon, Mary McInnes proposed to have a rag woven for the bedroom on Martha Washington’s loom. In replicating the work of the accomplished wife, the Daughters could reinforce the value of domestic production and inform future visitors of women’s contribution to the creation of the nation. In furnishing Washington’s most private space in the encampment the Daughters could have emphasized Martha’s

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>70</sup> The histories of Selma Farm and Montjoy emphasize the work of men who lived in them.

<sup>71</sup> 8 January 1900, Min. 2.

dedication to her husband during his difficult hour. They never questioned whether she had actually woven a rag; producing the item would have served to present her as a domestic ideal wife and therefore suited the room. In addition, by carrying Martha's work and preserving her memory for posterity, the Daughters could exhibit continuity in women's service to the nation. They could also emphasize their role as preservationists by linking their work with that of the lucrative preservation project of Mount Vernon. Unfortunately, the idea never materialized as the carpet weaver was absent from the premises for several months. Unable to utilize Martha's loom, the women decided to hold a rag-sewing party instead. By making the essential item they took ownership of the room and projected domesticity and continuity of women's patriotic work.

Once permission was granted by the CMAVF the members agreed "to use only genuine old furniture if possible".<sup>72</sup> The Daughters encountered difficulty in finding an appropriate colonial bedroom set, but in June 1901 they finally settled on furniture from a Pottstown antique dealer. Their painstaking work proved worthy. When the state took over the Headquarters it found the furnishing suitable and left the bedroom intact. As an additional indication of their work the women enlarged a "good picture" of Holstein into a life-sized photograph, and hung it in the newly preserved room.<sup>73</sup> The presence of Holstein's photograph in Washington's bedroom at the Headquarters emphasized her public life activity which, apart from the Civil War, had been linked to the memory of the Continental Army General. The Daughters had included her in the historical narrative of

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<sup>72</sup> 1 October 1900, Min. 2.

<sup>73</sup> 7 June 1901; 3 April 1903, 5 June 1903, Min. 2. *Sixth Annual Report of the National Society of the Daughters of the Revolution, October 11, 1902-October 11, 1903* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), 303.



preservation. Similarly to Washington, who commanded the army in the encampment, Holstein directed the women of the CMAVF and the DAR in the preservation of his headquarters. Her large image left no doubt of her prominence; like an exquisite portrait of a distinguished military leader or politician, it commanded the room with a presence of female authority. It also resembled the act of the Centennial women who included Gillespie's bust in the Loan Exhibit, asserting the continuity of women's activism throughout history.

The furnishing of the room constituted only part of the chapter's preservation work. Memorializing burial places of revolutionary soldiers remained one of the chapter's main goals. The memorials they erected marked a significant shift in revolutionary memory. Instead of George Washington, the commander of the army, they memorialized the unknown common soldiers. With a great number of immigrants coming into the country mainly from Southern and Eastern Europe, hereditary societies' members sought to teach patriotism and loyalty en masse.<sup>74</sup> Focusing on dying for a cause without recognition presented the most selfless act of sacrifice for the common good and a proper lesson on loyalty for those who were required to conform to new cultural and political practices. In the summer of 1906 Fornance, the chair of the Committee on Markers, suggested to mark the graves of revolutionary soldiers buried in the yard of St. James Church in Evansburg. The women had a stone quarried in Schwenksville and concluded

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<sup>74</sup> America accepted over 3.5 million immigrants during the years 1891 and 1900 and almost 8.8 million in the following decade between 1901 and 1910. See: Reports of the Immigration Commission, *Statistical Review of Immigration 1820-1910* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911), 7-8.

that for a national historic memorial the inscription should be cut to appear shiny.<sup>75</sup> In the dedication ceremony that was held on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1908, former Pennsylvania Governor Samuel Whitaker Pennypacker addressed the audience with a poignant question, which would have been unthinkable two decades earlier – “Why is it that we should give our honor to the successful general at the head of the army, with the stars of a major general on his shoulders? He *has* his reward.” He continued decisively:

Vastly more is credit due to him who surrenders everything – and that was the fate of these men who gave their lives, their homes, their name for their country to lie far away in unknown graves.<sup>76</sup>

In elevating unknown soldiers above high officers, Pennypacker presented the act as distinguished. And by arguing that “causes are maintained by the individual men” he suggested that men carry the responsibility to protect the cause – their nation.

With an impressive project behind them, the Daughters considered their next memorial. In 1909, Magdalena S. Stauffer’s suggested to memorialize the unknown dead in Valley Forge. This was undoubtedly the most exciting project the women ever considered and “was discussed with much enthusiasm and was unanimously carried.”<sup>77</sup> During the first decade of the twentieth century, with

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<sup>75</sup> “Meeting of Boulder Committee,” 28 August 1907, Min. 2.

<sup>76</sup> Emma L. Newill, “Valley Forge Chapter,” *American Monthly Magazine*, Vol. XXXII (August 1908): 447-448.

<sup>77</sup> 8 January 1909, Min. 3.

popularity of the site increasing, private organizations and the state hastened to stake a claim in the encampment and erect fitted monuments to the Continental Army in order to show their respect and demonstrate their authority as custodians of historical memory. The Daughters of the Revolution were the first hereditary organization to act. They erected the Waterman Monument, a fifty-foot high obelisk carved with a colonial flag and decorated with a bronze seal of the society. With an impressive 360-foot walkway leading to it, the imposing monument dominated the landscape. It was dedicated to the soldiers of Washington's Army and to John Waterman, the only soldier whose grave was marked in the encampment. In 1908 the State of Pennsylvania dedicated an impressive equestrian statue of General Anthony Wayne to honor his service during the Revolutionary War.<sup>78</sup>

The Daughters requested permission from the Valley Forge Park Commission, and in March, approval in hand, they excitedly discussed the means to raise the money for "such a noble cause."<sup>79</sup> The project became their main goal and, for the first time, the Daughters refused requests for donations from other chapters and were reluctant to allocate money for requests from the national headquarters. When a letter arrived from the State Regent for contribution for Memorial Hall they decided that since they had always been generous and because "of the proposed memorial at Valley Forge" they would give only \$15.

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<sup>78</sup> William Herbert Burk, *Historical and Topographical Guide to Valley Forge* (Philadelphia, 1910), 39, 89-92.

<sup>79</sup> 5 March 1909, Min. 3.

Upon a request to contribute toward recognition of the past president general, Mrs. Donald McClean, they declined due to other projects. At the same time, the Daughters took measures to raise their funds. They resolved that each chapter member should raise \$10 for the cause. By May, Stauffer's unrelenting fundraising effort had collected \$185, \$50 of which was donated by U.S. Senator Philander C. Knox.<sup>80</sup> The regent, Mrs. Howland Brown, announced that more than \$500 had been raised and hoped that the chapter would "make this memorial a credit for years to come."<sup>81</sup> The members agreed that a Boulder Committee would be formed under Stauffer's chairmanship with Fornance, Eisenberg, Miss McInnes, and Miss Emeline Henry Hooven as members, but by the summer of 1910 they resolved with great enthusiasm that all members of the chapter would be included in the committee. As the Valley Forge Chapter, placing a memorial at the encampment held special significance for the Daughters and they wanted to enable all their members to participate in the unique project.

The Daughters chose the unveiling day, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1911, the anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill, to signify the importance of Valley Forge in the revolutionary narrative and tie a historic battlefield to the encampment site. Samuel W. Pennypacker and Rev. Charles H. Roer of the First Methodist Church in Norristown addressed the crowd of several thousands. Five decades after the Civil War, Roer did not overlook the opportunity to link the Union position to the

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<sup>80</sup> Stauffer raised a total of \$300 from outside sources. See: Magdalena S. Stauffer, "Report of Valley Forge Chapter, DAR, 1910," DAR Scrapbook, Valley Forge Chapter, DAR.

<sup>81</sup> 7 May 1909, Min. 3.

revolutionary episode: “Valley Forge tested the sons of the fathers. It educated a generation for new problems in the new nation, with a new flag, that has never lost a star.” He also recognized revolutionary women who “in the houses of the spinning wheel, graduates in the art of housekeeping, gave us husbands, fathers, sons, brothers and lovers for the common cause. Woman’s faith, love and sacrifice were placed on the altar with man’s strength, devotion and courage. Their patriotism was one.”<sup>82</sup> By drawing on an image of domesticity and by gendering patriotism Roer appealed to the Daughters whose local historical memory activism had been focused primarily on male ancestors and who had been careful to frame female ancestors within conventional gender roles. Arguing for keeping the union intact resonated with the older generation who remembered the war and was a subtle reminder of government loyalty to the younger one.

The following speaker, the Valley Forge Regent Ellen Knox Fornance, described a romantic perception of the battlefield. Her description of the soldiers who lost their lives “not in glory of the battle with drums beating and banners flying” seemed like a battle scene taken from the paintings of John Trumbell or the popular *The Spirit of '76* (1875) by Archibald Willard. Glorifying death in the battlefield emphasized loyalty and patriotism. Sarah J. Purcell argues in her important study *Sealed with Blood* that military memories played a role in the creation of a national ideology and identity. She demonstrates that a shift toward democratization of the nation’s political culture during the Jacksonian era brought

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<sup>82</sup> Valley Forge Chapter DAR, *Unveiling of the Marker of the Unknown Dead*.

forth a similar change in the portrayal of Revolutionary War memories. The previous emphasis of military leaders gave way to the common soldiers in a process of “democratization of public memory.”<sup>83</sup> Contrasting with Purcell’s observation, the DAR’s goal was to instruct from the top down rather than enable a popular-generated process. The women intended the unknown dead to serve as an illustration of ultimate loyalty to the nation and its leaders, an example that would develop political culture of support of governing institutions.

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During the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century women were active in temperance, suffrage, and social justice fighting for government intervention on issues such as compulsory education, minimum wage, and the restriction of child labor. But even those involved in reform issues often found means to incorporate their conservative views to advance their goals. Southern members of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) exploited racial attitudes in order to further women’s suffrage. Leaders of the Southern suffrage movement originated from prominent families. They received quality education, were economically secure, and possessed ties to key political figures.<sup>84</sup> As founders of the NAWSA reached advanced age in the end of the 1890s, the movement entered a period of doldrums, a lack of interest

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<sup>83</sup> Sarah J. Purcell, *Sealed with Blood: War, Sacrifice, and Memory in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2002), 2.

<sup>84</sup> Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, *New Women of the New South: The Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in Southern States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 39.

due to a pressing need to fill the ranks with younger members.<sup>85</sup> The southern flank of the organization, carried by several enthusiastic leaders, developed the “white supremacy strategy”. They stipulated that enfranchisement of educated tax-paying women would bar most African American women from voting and effectively increase the number of white voters in their region. One of the proponents of the tactic, Anna Howard Shaw, the vice president of the NAWSA addressed male politicians in 1903 at the organization’s conference in New Orleans:

You have put the ballot into the hands of your black men, thus making them the political superiors of your white women. Never before in the history of the world have men made former slaves the political masters of their former mistresses!

Acknowledging the humiliation of the situation, she added:

If American men are willing to leave their women in a position as degrading as this they need not be surprised when American women resolve to lift themselves out of it.<sup>86</sup>

The NAWSA never adopted this posture but did not repudiate it either. It claimed to recognize states’ rights and regional differences. The strategy did not gain legislatures’ support – they believed that literacy tests, grandfather clauses, and poll taxes guaranteed to bar African Americans from voting.

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<sup>85</sup> Elna C. Green, *Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 3-4.

<sup>86</sup> Anna Howard Shaw and Elizabeth Garver Jordan, *The Story of a Pioneer* (New York: Harper’s & Brothers Publishers, 1915), 312, 313.

The DAR did not form a public strategy for racial exclusion but discreetly guarded their ranks via the requirement for members' recommendations. Davies asserts that the organization's conservative tone was evident from the outset by their choice of leadership. The positions of the president general and the vice president general had been filled by women who received their public acclaim through their husbands' success. Lockwood's comment on Harrison, the first president general may serve to describe the Daughters' general view "a conservative woman, standing on the threshold of a new era, still holding fast to the old ideals, even while stretching forth a timid hand towards some things new."<sup>87</sup>

The Valley Forge Chapter DAR linked the main body of their work to the encampment. In recognition of Washington, they replicated the work of the Mount Vernon Women's Association and furnished the Commander's private quarters in his headquarters at Valley Forge. But the revolutionary furniture, beddings, rag, and curtains were not the only articles they placed in the space. They hung an impressive portrait of their leader, Anna Morris Holstein, as a monument of her successful effort in preserving the mansion. Like portraits of colonial and revolutionary leaders memorialized by Charles Wilson Peale and Thomas Sully, the Holstein portrait championed women's historical work and inserted the chapter and its leader into the continuous history of the Revolution.

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<sup>87</sup> Quoted in: Davies, *Patriotism on Parade*, 96.



Washington's Headquarters constituted only part of the encampment. The Continental Army included over ten thousand soldiers who camped on the site, waiting for an appropriate opportunity to strike the enemy. The Daughters sought to commemorate the unknown soldiers who demonstrated the ultimate dedication for the revolutionary cause. The monuments at Evansburg and Valley Forge were made of local granite left in their original state as boulders. Their sheer size and natural resilience hinted at the traits of the soldiers – enduring, persevering, determined, and decisive. Their untreated surface suggested their anonymity. By seeking to honor the nameless forgotten casualties the Daughters shifted their attention from the leader to the common soldiers – to serve as a reminder to the public, particularly to immigrants, that loyalty to one's country is a selfless act embedded in discipline and loyalty. Their sites, at a church and at the "sacred ground," suggested places of honor and reverence.<sup>88</sup>

The DAR prized revolutionary artifacts for the period values and ideals they projected. They often discussed the issue in the *American Monthly Magazine* where they praised "what is valuable through association, a veneration for the links which 'bind us to past generations.'"<sup>89</sup> The members of the Valley Forge Chapter chose to promulgate the lessons of self-sacrifice through artifacts made of shrubbery grown on the encampment's grounds and part of the Headquarters' floor that required replacement. To compensate for

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<sup>88</sup> During the Civil War the image of grounds sanctified by the soldiers who died on it. The DAR often referred to various Revolutionary War sites in similar term. The Historian General named the encampment 'sacred ground'. See: Mary Jane Seymour, "Report of the Historian General," *American Monthly Magazine*, XVIII (January 1901): 87.

<sup>89</sup> "The Mission of the Daughters of the American Revolution is That of Restoration, Preservation and Education," *American Monthly Magazine*, III (July 1893): 3.

the lack of articles that belonged to any of the Continental Army's soldiers or officers the Daughters resorted to other elements connected to the site. They believed that the intersection of the artifact and its historical landscape would translate into patriotic values once viewers were exposed to them. Their approach implicitly suggests that those who observed their artifacts knew of the history that transpired at the encampment. Since the article made, the laurel wreath, was used in a local official occasion, its symbolism probably did not escape the crowds.

The Daughters' historical research proved taxing on most members. At a time when "the historical memories that cluster around Valley Forge become more and more interesting as years go by" only a few members assumed the task.<sup>90</sup> Their history resembled that of the scientific historians, aimed at the reconstruction of historical truth from documents for a contemporary moral example. While continuing to discuss the suffering Continental Army, the Daughters accepted new documented information that modified the image of isolation and law-abiding troops. At a time when Progressive historians interpreted revolutionary leaders as actors on behalf of their own interests, the DAR remained convinced that the very same commanders and politicians acted for the betterment of all. The idea of the Revolution as an element of unification of all regions of the country did not lose its luster, particularly among the older members of the chapter. "The American citizens or their ancestors were in Colonial days all represented in the struggle for freedom" – reiterated Holstein on the pages of the DAR magazine. Hers was

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<sup>90</sup> "Valley Forge To Be Made a State Park," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 7 January 1900, 4.

a fading voice among those who demanded a radical transformation of the political and economic practices to better address society's social ills and injustices.<sup>91</sup>

While historians wrote women out of history and interest in the memory of the Civil War was fading, the Daughters insisted on researching and writing their own history. Ignoring male professional historians, they asserted their status of ancestral origin to fill in the gap in the historical record and write revolutionary women and their successors into the national historical narrative.

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<sup>91</sup> "Reminiscences of Valley Forge," 552.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

On the morning of June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1916, on the 138<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the evacuation of Valley Forge by the Continental Army, a large group of history-minded people gathered at the temporary structure of the Washington Memorial Chapel for the dedication ceremony of a prayer desk. The Valley Forge Chapter DAR donated the article in the name of its founder, Anna Morris Holstein. The chapel, intended as a collection of individual memorials connected with the American Revolution, was the brainchild of Rev. W. Edmund Burk, a well-connected pastor who worked diligently to raise the money and build the monumental building.<sup>1</sup> The guests included a large attendance by the Valley Forge Chapter DAR, representatives of nearby chapters, and relatives of Holstein. Members of local organizations such as the Sons of the American Revolution, Society of the Cincinnati, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Historical Society of Montgomery County, and Valley Forge Park Commission were also present. The Regent of the Valley Forge Chapter, Mrs. Fisher, unveiled the desk. It bore the insignia of the DAR and its book-shelf was sustained by two angels with outstretched wings. An inscription cut in brass filled in pewter read:

To the Glory of God and in Memory of Anna Morris Holstein, who in War  
served the Nation as a nurse and in Peace preserved Washington's

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<sup>1</sup> For a full description of the chapel and its memorials see: Loretta Treese, *Valley Forge: Making and Remaking A National Symbol* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 1995), 99-101.

Headquarters. This desk is given by the Valley Forge Chapter, DAR, of which she was the founder and first Regent, 1916.<sup>2</sup>

The dedication of the desk, a fitting memorial in an Episcopalian church dedicated to the Continental Army and the thirteen colonies, marked the symbolic continuity of women's role in the service to the nation. The Daughters placed the desk in a chapel adorned with glass windows that portrayed the life of Christ, George Washington, and Revolutionary War soldiers. The ceiling above it – the Roof of the Republic – was adorned with the seals of the states to symbolize national unity. The addition of the desk introduced Holstein into the chapel's masculine memory as a female patriotic actor who served her country in war and in preservation of its history. Unlike the chapel's memory, which honored the deeds of past historical male figures, the meticulously crafted article epitomized a single woman's contemporary work. It represented Holstein's service, historical foresight, and remarkable achievements in preservation – qualities that placed her on equal footing with the men memorialized in the chapel.

Indeed, women had come a long way since the Civil War, when they had to ask male organizers of the United States Sanitary Commission for permission to assist in the war effort.<sup>3</sup> During the period between 1860 and 1914, Philadelphia and Montgomery County women constructed a gendered and classed

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<sup>2</sup> Ellen Knox Fornance, "Valley Forge Chapter," *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine*, L (January 1917), 44. The inscription was suggested by Rev. Burk. See: Jan. 1916, *Minute Book Valley Forge Chapter*, 3, Valley Forge Chapter DAR, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

<sup>3</sup> See: Chapter 2, P. 74, *Report of the General Superintendent of the Philadelphia Branch of the United States Sanitary Commission February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1864* (Philadelphia: King and Baird, 1864), 7.

historical memory that aimed at including white women of colonial and Revolutionary War periods in the national historical narrative and presenting themselves as custodians of history. They evoked a subversive history that placed women and domesticity at the center of the historical discourse, arguing that women were significant actors in shaping the national historical narrative.

In the first three decades, they advanced an ideal memory of consensus, represented by Martha and George Washington, in order to reconcile the rift caused by the Civil War. In the early 1890s, with the formation of the DAR, white women of colonial and Revolutionary War ancestry had assumed legitimacy as custodians of historical memory. They constructed a more inclusive memory of revolutionary soldiers with the intention of inculcating the public, particularly recent immigrants, in patriotic and civic values.

During the Civil War, Philadelphia and Montgomery County women sought an ideal memory of consensus as a means of escaping the horrors of the protracted military conflict. The simplicity of Quaker culture of colonial domestic production provided a respite for Sanitary Fair visitors and enabled them to imagine an ideal colonial past. On the front lines, the experience of Anna Morris Holstein demonstrated how women identified the debilitated state of revolutionary sites with the tattered state of the nation, feelings that possibly contributed to women's preservation impulse. The historical exhibits and writings of women during this period established continuity with the successful preservation project undertaken by Ann Pamela Cunningham and the Mount

Vernon Ladies' Association. While Cunningham hoped that the restoration of George Washington's home would encourage regional reconciliation, Philadelphia and Montgomery County women employed their historical memory to establish domesticity as a site of historical significance and assert themselves as guardians of history.

The advent of the centennial of the nation's independence presented an additional opportunity for elite women, who were called to assist in promoting and fundraising for the planned Exposition. The women utilized the experience they had gained during the war in a national campaign that spawned great interest in the enterprise and raised a considerable amount of funds. They advanced the cult of Martha Washington at a time when her illustrious husband had been increasingly becoming a symbol of a unified past. With period artifacts and costumes and staged period receptions, they evoked a subversive memory that placed Martha on equal footing with period male historical figures. By recalling the memory of the Court of the Republic, the women asserted their privileged social status as a birthright from their colonial and revolutionary ancestors. In addition, they provided women in other parts of the country with a narrative they could alter to fit their political views and their concepts of historical memory. Their interpretation, however, was not limited to the past. They also included their leader, Elizabeth Duane Gillespie, into the annals of the Centennial. The women argued that their meaningful work had been part of a long tradition of elite

women's participation in the history of the nation from colonial times to the present.

Eager to reconcile the schism caused by the Civil War, Philadelphia women refrained from mentioning the past conflict and appealed to their sisters in Southern states with a reconciliatory tone, recognizing their economic hardship. They had the foresight to realize the value of creating a national network ready for mobilization when future projects or political objectives arose.

Privileged rural women employed different means to achieve their goals. More conservative in their social outlook, they emphasized the memory of George Washington and the soldiers who encamped at Valley Forge, portraying Martha as inconspicuous and almost trivial in the annals of the encampment. Additionally, their political position was far from conciliatory. They insisted that the anti-secessionist stance protected the values of the Revolution, a view which probably cost them the support of some of elite Philadelphia women.

Several Montgomery County women were also interested in the recovery and documenting of local historical narratives. The findings of this study are consistent with the works of Nina Baym, Bonnie Smith, and Julie Des Jardins.<sup>4</sup> The women of the Montgomery County Historical Society aligned their work with that of nineteenth-century scientific historians as they stressed the guidance

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<sup>4</sup> Nina Baym, *American Women Writers and the Work of History, 1790-1860* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995); Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000); Julie Des Jardins, *Women and the Historical Enterprise in America: Gender, Race, and the Politics of Memory, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 2003).



of God in the progress of nations, presented history in a romantic style, and based their work on available primary sources. They aimed to include women in the local historical narrative and assert class distinction as custodians of history and successors of families of colonial origin. Similar to the celebrated nineteenth-century historian Elizabeth Fries Ellet, they were radical in seeking publicity, but their material remained conservative in its portrayal of women within their conventional gender roles.

Between the years 1860 and 1890, elite women's historical practices were consistent with those of professional historians. Similar to the male historians, who emphasized influential male figures, Philadelphia elite women sought to present worthy women who contributed to progress. They primarily focused on Martha Washington and her Court of the Republic. More conservative in their outlook, the women of Montgomery County dramatically described the heroic deeds of George Washington and the soldiers at Valley Forge, emphasizing fortitude and self-sacrifice. Like George Bancroft, they described the events with a dramatic tone and acknowledged providence as a force in shaping history. In the 1890s, with the emergence of the Progressive historians, women's historical work diverged from that of professional historians. While Progressive historians challenged scientific historians' ideas by stressing the common people's struggle against the elite, Montgomery County women emphasized utmost loyalty to the republic and its leaders. As Progressives sought reform and social change, women sought a conservative agenda of strengthening governing institutions and

maintaining social hierarchy. Their historical activity focused on inculcating immigrants and maintaining their own elite status through their revolutionary ancestors.

Regardless of their conservative effort, some women sought to improve their political, legal, and social status. Anna Morris Holstein joined the suffrage movement in her effort to enable women to play a greater role in public life.

Though elite women aimed to include colonial and revolutionary women in the national historical narrative, they probably did not express their intentions in writing until women's public activism became more prominent through suffrage organizations, women's clubs, and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. In addition, hereditary societies legitimized members' pursuit of historical effort by arguing for the importance of immigrants' inculcation. With a spike in immigration from eastern and southern Europe and an economic depression that exacerbated cultural and political tensions, established Americans were increasingly anxious over the decline of their political and cultural influence. Free to initiate their local projects, the members of the Valley Forge Chapter DAR erected memorials to the unknown soldiers of the revolution. They shifted the construction of historical memory from a focus on George Washington to anonymous soldiers in order to introduce immigrants to the concept of self-sacrifice of common people and inculcate them with patriotic and civic values.

Work of a domestic character accommodated the Daughters' conservative stance. When they received permission to furnish the most exclusive part of

George Washington's quarters, his bedroom, at the Valley Forge headquarters they embarked on the mission with great enthusiasm. They painstakingly searched for appropriate period furniture and articles that would best represent a colonial room. They also included a large picture of Holstein, the founder of their chapter and the force behind the preservation of the structure. Similar to the Centennial women, who exhibited Gillespie's bust at their exhibition, the Daughters entered Holstein into the historical memory and claimed a tradition of women's contribution to the national historical narrative. By honoring Holstein, whose lifelong activity had been focused on patriotic causes, in the Commander of the Continental Army's center of domesticity, the Daughters left no doubt as to the meaningful role she had played in the history of the nation.

This dissertation expands the knowledge of gender, class, and memory studies. Historians have started to explore memory in the 1990s. They have only recently employed gender as a category of analysis in connection to it.<sup>5</sup> This dissertation fills the gap by examining the construction of gendered and classed historical memory by elite women at a critical period, during the Civil War and its aftermath, when the processes of urbanization, industrialization, and immigration, and economic depression rapidly transformed the urban and rural landscapes.

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<sup>5</sup> One publication attempts to include articles from different parts of the world to demonstrate that the construction of memory within a gendered context has been a universal phenomenon. See: Selma Laydesdorff, Luisa Passerini and Paul Thompson, eds., *Gender and Memory* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1996). Southern history, race and iconography are linked in this recent study: Kimberly Wallace-Sanders, *Mammy: A Century of Race, Gender, and Southern Memory* (Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, 2008). A more recent monograph that explores gender and ethnicity demonstrates how women in Zoot Suit threatened traditional gender roles and called Chicano identity into question. See: Catherine Sue Ramirez, *The Woman in the Zoot Suit: Gender, Nationalism, and Cultural Politics of Memory* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

The study also adds to the historiography of Martha and Mary Washington. In recent years, historians have become interested in their lives but little is known about the way in which had been perceived by later generations.<sup>6</sup> James Michael Lingren's discussion of the cult of Mary Washington illuminates the effort of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities in the preservation of Mary Washington's home as a museum and their interpretation of her life.<sup>7</sup> Karal Ann Marling demonstrates that Martha Washington fundraising galas for the Centennial Exposition took place in other parts of the country.<sup>8</sup> Further research would contribute to the burgeoning field of notables' gendered memory.

The study also demonstrates the different social attitudes and the degree of adherence to gender roles that existed between urban and rural women. And since the geographic scope of the study resembles other urban centers in northeast United States, it can be used as a fundamental base for exploring how local historical events shaped the construction of gendered memory of urban and rural women in other regions during this period.<sup>9</sup> The work of women in other regions of the country could further enrich historians' knowledge about the impact of

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<sup>6</sup> For a collection of her papers see: Joseph E. Fields, ed., *"Worthy Partner": The Papers of Martha Washington* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994). Recent studies about Martha Washington include: Helen Bryan, *Martha Washington: The First Lady of Liberty* (New York: Wiley, 2002); Patricia Brady, *Martha Washington: An American Life* (New York: Viking, 2005); Betty Boyd Caroli, *First Ladies: From Martha Washington to Michelle Obama* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> James Michael Lindgren, *Preserving the Old Dominion: Historic Preservation and Virginia Traditionalism* (Charlottesville, Virginia: The University Press of Virginia, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> Karal Ann Marling, *George Washington Slept Here: Colonial Revivals and American Culture, 1876-1986* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988), 38-52.

<sup>9</sup> See Introduction, footnote 21.

political, cultural, and economic factors on urban and rural women's attempts to memorialize their ancestors and provide an insight into the forging of a gendered and classed identity.

The dissertation contributes to a better understanding of the development of the professionalization of history and the inevitable trivialization of scholars who were excluded from the privileged academic circle. It demonstrates that between the Civil War and the early 1890s, women adopted research methods employed by early scientific historians and altered them to fit their needs. The institutionalization of the profession under the American Historical Association in 1889 and the advent of Progressive history in the 1890s did not affect the Daughters' perception of history, who neither considered themselves marginalized nor perceived their history inferior. They recognized the civic education of American youths as a significant contribution to the nation's future existence.

The Sanitary Fair exhibits, Centennial galas and Loan Exhibit, and the fundraising events and celebrations that surrounded the preservation of Valley Forge headquarters and the monuments erected by the DAR add to the studies of the preservation movement and museum studies. The various exhibits created by the Sanitary Fair committees and the Centennial Women enhance museum studies as an interim phase between the private collection, viewed by a select few, and the institutionalization of the museum as a permanent space for public view.

Lastly, the dissertation expands the knowledge on the history of Philadelphia. Undoubtedly, the thorough volume *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History* edited by Russell Weigley and fellow historians represents a comprehensive historical volume about the subject. In addition, growing body of literature has explored the economic, social, political, and cultural history of the city in different periods. The dissertation adds details about the historical and preservation activities of privileged Philadelphians and Montgomery County women and the objectives that spurred their efforts.

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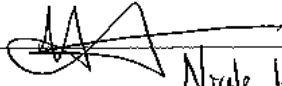
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History Department