"THE YOUNG WOMEN HERE ENJOY A LIBERTY": PHILADELPHIA WOMEN AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE, 1760s-1840s

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A dissertation submitted to the

Graduate School-New Brunswick

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in History

Written under the direction of

Nancy Hewitt and Paul G. E. Clemens

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New Brunswick, New Jersey

May 2016

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

"The Young women here enjoy a liberty":
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This dissertation examines women's access to and participation in the community life of Philadelphia in the decades surrounding the American Revolution. It argues against the application of separate spheres to late-colonial and early national Philadelphia and proposes that women were heavily integrated into nearly all aspects of the city's public life. Women from diverse backgrounds were actively involved in commerce, politics, protest, intellectual and legal debates, social institutions, wartime developments, educational advancements, and benevolent causes. They saw themselves and were viewed by their peers as valuable members of a vibrant and complex city life. If we put aside assumptions about women's limited relationship to the public sphere, we find a society in which women took advantage of a multitude of opportunities for participation and self-expression. This project also examines the disparity between the image of the ideal housewife and the lived experience of the majority of female Philadelphians. Idealized descriptions of Revolutionary women present a far more sheltered range of options than those taken advantage of by most actual women.

This dissertation also challenges the traditional periodization of women's history from the late-colonial through the early national periods. Rather than seeing the

Revolution as an aberration in women's access to the public sphere, this project demonstrates that women drew on pre-war experiences as they participated in revolutionary protests and conflicts, and then carried those lessons into the first decades of nationhood. Revolutionary rhetoric and social changes may have accelerated the rate at which female opportunities proliferated in the early 19th century, but those trends were already beginning in Philadelphia in the 1760s and 1770s. Women relied on past experience as they worked to expand the boundaries of their world. While it was not a fully linear progression, women's participation in the public sphere developed and increased from the 1760s through the 1840s: the way contemporaries understood women's place within local and national communities changed and women grew to far greater prominence by the antebellum period, but those developments were deeply rooted in the mid-to-late 18th century female experience, which was one of involvement and participation, rather than separation and limitation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the help and support of a variety of people and, as such, I would like to thank them. I would like to thank the staff of the Historical Society of Philadelphia and the Library Company of Philadelphia who helped me to identify and utilize multiple collections both obviously and tangentially related to my topic. I would also like to thank Lesley Martin at the Chicago Historical Society, Samantha Kirk and Eri Mizukane at the Van Pelt Library at the University of Pennsylvania, and numerous staff at the National Archives, Kew for their assistance in obtaining specific documents held in their collections. I also owe a debt to the staff at the Alexander and Kilmer Libraries at Rutgers University, the Dickinson College Library, the New York Historical Society, the Pennsylvania State Archives, and the Lancaster County Historical Society, all of whom patiently answered my emails and helped me to acquire books, articles, and manuscript sources without which I could not have completed my research.

I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the exceptionally supportive community within the Rutgers Department of History. My advisors, Nancy Hewitt and Paul Clemens, have been enormously encouraging and supportive as I imagined, researched, re-imagined, and wrote my dissertation. I'm so grateful to you for your enthusiasm, guidance, and friendship. Ann Fabian and Syracuse University's Carol Faulkner also lent incredible insight as they read and commented on my dissertation, raising thought-provoking questions and pushing me to be a more rigorous scholar. I would like to thank Ann D. Gordon, Bonnie Smith, Alistair Bellany, Rudy Bell, and Camilla Townshend for

expanding my historical boundaries and teaching me how to be a better scholar. I would like to thank Dawn Ruskai for her endless patience over the years, and express my gratitude for Dawn, Candace Walcott-Shepherd, and Barbara Cooper, who have become my friends as well as my colleagues. I am also grateful to the Rutgers Department of History for supporting my scholarship through the Mellon Summer Grant program and the Susman Writing Fellowship, which allowed me to focus all my time on researching and writing my dissertation. And I would like to thank Molly J. Giblin for all the pizza and wine, the help and commiseration, and the encouragement and friendship.

Lastly, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my family, all of whom have walked through the years of graduate school with me and without whom I would never have made it to the end. To my mom, thank you so much for listening to me think out loud, reading my drafts, providing eagle-eyed editing, and endlessly supporting me through all the stages of graduate school. To Dad and Sandy, thank you for your interest in my work and your enthusiasm about my research discoveries and experiences throughout the years. To Chip, Kelly Jo, and Vaughn, an enormous thank you for your support, but also for the fun and laughter and great breaks from my work. To Kate and Dan, thank you for being my friends and my family – the past eight years have been so much more fun because of living close to you. I also want to thank the women of PEO Chapter EY, Tulsa Oklahoma for your endless support and for allowing me to try out my ideas on you every spring. All of you are part of this dissertation and I thank you all.

And finally I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my much-loved grandmothers, Virginia Cook Woodard and Mary June Lee, who supported me through every stage of my education and whom I greatly miss.

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Introduction

In 1835, Anne Weston, a leading member of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, wrote a letter to her sisters at the Concord female abolition society, encouraging them to support the free produce movement. She invoked the enthusiasm of female participants in the pre-Revolutionary boycotts as inspiration for abolitionist women concerned about their place in the anti-slavery movement:

> Who doubts for a moment that similar attacks were made upon our grandmothers when the dark days of the Revolution dawned. Did they sit down quietly and attend to their domestic concerns without feeling and acting for their country? Facts innumerable show the ardor and zeal with which they were inspired. Look back and see the societies that were formed to supply the destitute with clothing! See them on the hill-side and in the valley, industriously gathering an herb which they call Liberty Tea, to supply the place of their favorite beverage from which they resolutely abstained. It may be said, sewing and gathering herbs come within 'the appropriate sphere of woman.' Well, remember their readiness to aid their husbands, fathers and brothers…. Did they overstep the bounds of female delicacy and propriety? … Let not the fear of man's ridicule, or his pretended anxiety for the supposed welfare of our sex, deter you from using all proper influence which you possess against sin.[1]

Another abolitionist, Mary Parker, echoed this connection between the women of the Revolution and the female activists of the mid-nineteenth century in an article published in the *Liberty Standard*: "Shall not their [women who supported the Revolution] '*cheers*' be heard by those who seek the deliverance of whipped and manacled women, by the peaceful and sacred power of the ballot."[2] Clearly, female abolitionists looked to the past for inspiration and validation as they worked to end slavery and gain acceptance as activists and advocates for social change.

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[1] Anne Weston to the Concord Female Anti-Slavery Society, 22 July 1835, reprinted without attribution within "Influence of Woman," *Liberator*, 15 September 1837.
[2] *Liberty Standard*, 18 January 1843.

Women of the 1830s and 1840s recognized strong connections between their times and those of their mothers' and grandmothers' generations. While frequently divided into two distinct eras that are usually studied separately, the pre-Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary periods constitute a long arc of gradual change in the lives of American women that should be interrogated together. The Revolutionary War might have been an ideological and political turning point in American history, but for women it did not necessarily create a break in the development of their lives or their access to the public sphere. As Judith Bennett notes in her defense of continuity in women's history,

> We seem to assume that these turning points *must* have affected women's status, leaving to us the straightforward task of weighing the transformation. In so doing, we strive for an overall assessment – women's status getting better or getting worse – instead of considering the possibility that, despite change, shift, and movement, the overall force of patriarchal power might have endured.[3]

If instead of looking at the Revolution as a breaking point in women's history, we consider the years 1760 to 1840 as a period of longer, although not always linear, development, we can recognize the roots of early national developments in women's access to politics, education, the legal system, property ownership, and various types of reform in the pre-war period. By better understanding these long developments, we can more fully grasp how women functioned as part of the public sphere in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and how their place in the public sphere was recognized, valued, debated, and reconsidered throughout this entire period. [4]

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[3] Judith Bennett suggests that women's historians have often focused on change and transformation in the lives of their subjects, rather than seeking out longer periods of continuity and gradual development. As she notes, "our preference for history-as-transformation might limit our ways of seeing the past lives of women" and predetermine certain conclusions by narrowing the questions we ask. Judith M. Bennett, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 62-3.

[4] Much excellent work has been written about women in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. However, these works tend to be broad in focus, looking at women across the colonies and attempting to synthesize their experiences. As a result, they do not focus closely on the women of a single city or

Presaging some of Bennett's concerns, in 1980, anthropologist Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo articulated a major quandary in historical research: "What we know is constrained by interpretive frameworks which, of course, limit our thinking; what we *can* know will be determined by the kinds of questions we learn to ask."[5] Since the advent of women's history, scholars have struggled to understand the nature of early American women's relationship to the public sphere. With the exception of the revolutionary era, historians have largely assumed that they were primarily limited to the home and the church. This dissertation joins work by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Clare Lyons, Marla Miller, and Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor to argue for a more expansive understanding of women's sphere from the mid-eighteenth century forward. It does so by examining women's access to and participation in the public sphere between the 1760s and 1840s in Philadelphia, the capital of Pennsylvania and one of the early national capitals as well. In Philadelphia, women were central to the life of their city both as individuals and as

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colony/state and overlook the many ways women were daily involved in their communities. Monographs that have taken a more in-depth look have demonstrated women's activities within the public sphere, but those arguments have less often been integrated into the traditional narratives of American history. For examples of broader texts, see Joan Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World: Women in Revolutionary America, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980); and, Carol Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence* (New York: Knopf, 2005). For examples of books taking a narrower focus, see Karin A. Wulf, *Not All Wives: Women of Colonial Philadelphia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Clare A. Lyons, *Sex Among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender and Power in the Age of Revolution, 1730-1830* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia by the University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Sarah Fatherly, *Gentlewomen and Learned Ladies: Women and Elite Formation in Eighteenth Century Philadelphia* (Bethlehem, Pa: Lehigh University Press, 2008); Kate Haulman, *The Politics of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); and, Alison M. Parker, *Articulating Rights: Nineteenth-Century American Women on Race, Reform, and the State* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010).

[5] Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo, "The Use and Abuse of Anthropology: Reflections on Feminism and Cross-Cultural Understanding," *Signs* 5, no. 3 (Spring 1980), 390. Colonial historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich echoed this sentiment when she wrote that the problem in researching early American women "is not so much a dearth of sources or even the logistical problems in using them as it is the lack of appropriate conceptual frameworks for interpretation." Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "Of Pens and Needles: Sources in Early American Women's History," *Journal of American History* 77, no. 1 (June 1990), 201.

family members; they were present in public spaces, participating in popular culture and society, moving in both all-female and mixed-sex groups. As members of the public, they were influential in commerce and politics, on the front lines and behind the scenes of the Revolution, important in shaping property and divorce law for the new nation, and visible in the intellectual, civic, and activist cultures of the Early Republic.[6]

Uncovering women's participation in various aspects of the public sphere requires asking new questions and seeking new ways to explore and understand the female experience. Evidence of such participation is not always readily evident, but that does not mean that women were not present and active. After amassing dozens of anecdotes about female combatants in the Revolution, historian Linda Grant De Pauw suggested to Alfred Young: "we should allow for women serving undetected and even serving detected with no one giving a damn."[7] We might apply this strategy to women's lives in late-colonial America on a wider scale. Rather than assuming that when women's activities are not mentioned in historical sources it is evidence of their absence, we should consider the possibility that they were simply not exceptional enough to be noteworthy. Male writers, diarists, and correspondents may not have mentioned women

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[6] Many books have been written about certain women during the Revolutionary period, such as Abigail Adams and Mercy Otis Warren. These women have been lauded as rare examples of women with extraordinary intelligence and adaptability in extreme circumstances. As a result, they were able to manage households and farms, write with insight about the complexities of wartime politics, and serve as sources of strength and advice for the men in their lives. However, these women were not as exceptional as historians have thought. Many women around the colonies were actively involved in the worlds of commerce, politics, and intellectual debate before and during the Revolution and, if we were able to know more about the average female colonist, we would see that they were as central to waging the war as men. For examples of the scholarship on Adams and Warren, see Joseph J. Ellis, *First Family: Abigail and John* (New York: Knopf, 2010); Edith Gelles, *First Thoughts: Life and Letters of Abigail Adams* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998); Nancy Rubin Stuart, *The Muse of the Revolution: The Secret Pen of Mercy Otis Warren and the Founding of a Nation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2008); and, Kate Davies, *Catharine Macaulay and Mercy Otis Warren: The Revolutionary Atlantic and the Politics of Gender* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[7] Linda Grant De Pauw to Alfred F. Young, 27 May 1994 as quoted in Young, *Masquerade: The Life and Times of Deborah Sampson, Continental Soldier* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 8.

who ran businesses, appeared at public rallies, expressed political opinions, and contested current laws because it was not extraordinary or unexpected. If that is the case, we will be more attuned to the anecdotal evidence that does appear in letters, diaries, newspapers, legal records, and other personal and polemical writings.

Many women appear in my dissertation, but the stories of a few demonstrate their access and importance to the public sphere. Eliza Farmer, wife of a rural Philadelphia doctor and farmer, was central to the political and economic life of her family. Before the Revolution, she provided advice about commercial investments in Philadelphia to her British relatives, helped establish her nephew in business, and loaned him money as he built his reputation as a wine merchant. During the Revolution, the location of Farmer's home between British and American lines gave her a front row view of both the battlefield and home front. As she worked to keep her family together, protect her young, female employees, and pacify regional armies, she enmeshed herself in wartime Philadelphia. Following the war, she resumed her role as family advisor, reconnecting with relatives in England and resuming her correspondence on the political, commercial, and military developments in the new nation.

Betsy Ross, known primarily for making American naval flags, was a prominent businesswoman in late-eighteenth century Philadelphia whose political and religious lives collided during the war. As the daughter of a prominent craft family, she was apprenticed to an upholsterer in her teens and had become a successful businesswoman by the time of the Revolution. Her education, begun in her family's shop and completed in that of a friend, reveals the attention paid to the training of daughters of craft families. She and her first husband established a successful business that she continued in her own

name following his death and her remarriage. Ross's marriage to a non-Quaker and her support of the American cause brought her into conflict with the Friends' meeting. Taking an active role in the Revolution, then, was not merely a political decision; it was also a choice between faith and personal conviction. When she combined her commercial talents with her desire to support the American army, she turned her back on her religious upbringing. As a result, Ross's personal, commercial, and political commitments combined to assure her place in the public sphere and historical memory.

Jane Bartram, the pro-Patriot wife of exiled Loyalist Alexander Bartram, thrust herself into the political and intellectual life of the early republic. Left to provide for herself and her son following her husband's flight to Nova Scotia, she executed an unusual contract with Alexander that severed their financial and personal lives and rendered them essentially divorced. Bartram argued that her involvement in their pre-war business, her success at running a store following Alexander's exile, and her publicly-recognized patriotism all entitled her to independence from her husband. She also convinced Parliament that her engagement in the couple's business and financial contribution to their property entitled her to a share of her husband's postwar compensation. Bartram's life not only reveals the ease with which some women moved through the public spheres of politics and legal debate, but also provides a forceful challenge to the idea that wives were necessarily financially, legally, and ideologically dependent on their husbands.

The life stories of Philadelphia women in the late colonial, revolutionary, and early national periods contribute to the rethinking of a number of historical debates and literatures. This includes the history of women and gender in early America as well as

other fields with which this dissertation intersects. Their experiences shed light on two major theoretical debates: that between scholars who emphasize experiential sources versus those who highlight prescriptive literature and ongoing discussions over the significance of separate spheres as an analytical lens. They also influence studies of commercialization and consumerism, popular political expression, and the emerging world of the early republic.[8] In engaging these debates and literatures, this dissertation builds upon the work of numerous scholars to show how women interacted with multiple late-colonial and early national public spheres.

Early American scholars tend to take one of two approaches to understanding women's lives – they emphasize prescriptive and literary sources or they focus on personal and descriptive sources that reveal the patterns of daily life. Vast gaps often exist between the ideal world presented by sermons, advice manuals, legal codes, and other forms of commentary and lived experience. A too great reliance on prescriptive writings can lead to two problems. First, these sources generally present the world as the contemporary author wants it to be or as it is ideally lived by a particular, usually elite, group. These sources generally present a conservative template for women's lives, offering a model that rarely captures the diverse experiences of colonial women. Second, female authors whose writings appear to echo prescriptive ideals are, at least on many occasions, using available discourses in a strategic manner. For example, Mary Beth Norton argued, based on the petitions of 468 Loyalist women following the Revolution, that colonial women did not have a sound understanding of non-domestic economics.

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[8] While these are the most central fields concerned, scholars in other areas such as the Atlantic world, the history of place and space, abolition and benevolent work, Enlightenment thinking, and revolutionary movements of the late eighteenth century will also be interested in the ideas and arguments included in this work.

Female petitioners to Parliament were able to enumerate the moveable items they owned, as well as give a general description of the buildings and livestock on their property, but were "unable to place precise valuations on the property for which they claimed compensation."[9] Yet it is likely that these women, particularly the widows, purposely portrayed themselves as supplicants in need of aid and protection. It was a sound strategy to present themselves as humble wives cast out in the world rather than as assertive and knowledgeable managers of property. They pled for help, stated their ignorance, and asked for mercy.

French historian Caroline Ford has engaged similar sources in a different way, by considering the possibility that female petitioners wielded deferential language as a tactic rather than a literal representation of their position. She writes that because convent girls petitioning the government for assistance were "afforded none of the rights that the head of a family could claim, [they] made strategic use of [their] vulnerability" in appealing for help.[10] American women exiled to England following the Revolution who sought Parliamentary assistance may have similarly believed that their best chance for success was to play on ideals of femininity such as reticence and submissiveness, rather than

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[9] Mary Beth Norton argues: "claimants had nothing to gain by with-holding information, because the amount of compensation they received depended in large part on their ability to describe their losses. Consequently, it may be assumed that what the loyalists told the commission, both orally and in writing, represented the full extent of their knowledge of their families' income and property." Norton, "Eighteenth-Century American Women in Peace and War: The Case of the Loyalists," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 33, no. 3 (July 1976), 389-390. But these petitioners may have thought that such admissions would dramatically lessen their chances of receiving any aid.

[10] In her work on the feminization of religion following the French Revolution, Caroline Ford examines the petitions of converted Protestants trying to gain freedom from their families so that they could take holy orders. She argues that these women, who tended to be well educated, strategically cast themselves as vulnerable and in need of assistance, rather than making an argument based on law and precedent. They portrayed themselves as "submissive," "innocent," and "dutiful" in order to gain the best possible outcome. Ford clearly demonstrates that these petitions cannot be read literally, but need to be understood as employing female stereotypes to gain the favor of the court. For a more thorough discussion, see Caroline Ford, *Divided Houses: Religion and Gender in Modern France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), Chapter Two.

presenting themselves as knowledgeable women demanding reparations.[11] Assuming they were receiving advice in writing their petitions and given the consistency of this approach across hundreds of documents, it is reasonable that these women presented what they considered to be their most effective argument. Without such consideration, we can easily underestimate their intelligence, cunning, and economic knowledge.

Many historians combine prescriptive with experiential sources, but this dissertation follows the lead of historians like Billy G. Smith and Clare Lyons who privilege the latter as a means of gaining deeper insights into the former. With the publication of *The "Lower Sort"* in 1990, Smith became one of the first colonial scholars to highlight the experiences of Pennsylvania's working and poorer classes. In doing so, he demanded our recognition of the interconnectedness of eighteenth-century society and demonstrated that understanding the development of the colonies required attention to the entire class spectrum.[12] Similarly, Lyons, in her groundbreaking work on sexual culture in Philadelphia, uses a range of legal, print, and personal sources to argue for a more expansive view of eighteenth-century society. Her presentation of Philadelphia as a "small but growing, heterogeneous, frequently raucous colonial city" in which Enlightenment thinking "undermined existing social and political organization, challenging both the gender hierarchy and the political order" mirrors the urban

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[11] Elaine Forman Crane reinforces this critique of Norton's work in her introduction to Elizabeth Drinker's diary. She writes, "taken out of context, [Elizabeth Drinker's] own words lend credence to the argument of some historians that women knew little of their husband's financial affairs." She goes on to demonstrate that Drinker claimed ignorance of her husband's business or personal affairs and then proceeded to discuss those issues with complete confidence. Clearly, she was not as uninformed as she claimed. Elaine Forman Crane, introduction to *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, ed. Elaine Forman Crane, vol. 1 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), xxix-xxx.

[12] Billy G. Smith, *The "Lower Sort": Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750-1800* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

experiences my research has uncovered.[13] By at least the 1750s, Philadelphians did not adhere to rigid gender roles. In this fluid and cosmopolitan locale, women moved throughout the streets and alleys, participated in public activities, socialized with a variety of people, and left their mark on the commercial, political, and intellectual culture of the city. Clergy, educators, and other authors of prescriptive literature might argue that women should be demure, stay in their homes, and restrict themselves to working on behalf of their families, but clearly women did not follow that advice.

The public activities of Philadelphia women challenge any notion that the separate spheres ideology developed to describe gender relations in the mid-nineteenth century can be written back into the late colonial era.[14] In the 1970s, historians Nancy Cott and Mary Beth Norton looked to the last decades of the eighteenth century to find the origins of separate spheres. Norton argued that "late 18th century women had fully internalized the roles laid out for them in the polite literature of the day. Their experience was largely confined to their households, either because they chose that course or because they were forced into it." Cott similarly saw the origins of later gender divisions in the emergence of a distinctly female culture of domesticity in the 1780s.[15] Paula Baker echoed this interpretation when she defined women's sphere as limited to a "little-changing round of household tasks [that] dominated women's lives and created a routine

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[13] Clare A. Lyons, *Sex Among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender & Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia by the University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 1-2.

[14] The historical concept of separate spheres was originally intended to describe middle-class white families in the years before the Civil War. For the foundational arguments about the rise of domesticity in this period, see Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18, issue 2 (Summer 1966), 151-174; Gerda Lerner, "The Lady and the Mill Girl: Changes in the Status of Women in the Age of Jackson," *American Studies* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1969), 5-15; and, Aileen S. Kraditor, *Up From the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968).

[15] Norton, "Eighteenth-Century American Women in Peace and War," 408-9 and Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976).

that they found stifling." From the late 1700s, she claimed, "women had limited opportunities for social contact, and those they had were almost exclusively with other women."[16] And Linda Kerber, while focusing on rhetoric rather than daily life, argued for the universality of separate spheres when she advocated for "the application of the concept to the entire chronology of human experience, rather than to the discussion of antebellum society where … historians first encountered it…. it [is] clear that the separation of spheres was not limited to a single generation or a single civilization."[17] Other scholars followed suit, despite growing evidence that early American women played significant roles in both the market economy and political affairs.[18]

In her 2011 book, *Separated by Their Sex*, Norton expands on her arguments about separate spheres in the pre-Revolutionary period by suggesting that women had greater freedom in the seventeenth century, but became increasingly limited to the home during the eighteenth century. She contends that during the 1600s, "gender identity did not exclude a woman from the political realm if in other respects [such as social standing] she qualified as a wielder of power."[19] By the 1750s, however, "new cultural norms and modified uses of language" had removed even elite women from public roles and pushed

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[16] Baker went on to argue that the separation of spheres women experienced during the late-colonial and early national periods informed the nature of women's benevolent and political activities in the nineteenth century: "Together with the social separation of the sexes and women's informal methods of influencing politics, political domesticity provided the basis for a distinct nineteenth-century women's political culture." Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *American Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (June 1984), 623, 625.

[17] Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (June 1988), 18.

[18] Many works continue to rely on separate spheres to understand gender relations in the colonial and early national periods. For example, see Glenna Matthews, *The Rise of Public Woman: Woman's Power and Woman's Place in the United States, 1630-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers & Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York: Knopf, 1996); and, Julie Roy Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

[19] Mary Beth Norton, *Separated by Their Sex: Women in Public and Private in the Colonial Atlantic World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 2.

them into the domestic sphere.[20] Relying heavily on prescriptive sources such as instructive poetry, the philosophical writings of Enlightenment thinkers, and a variety of conduct manuals, she argues that men and women embraced a culture of domesticity over the course of the early eighteenth century. While Norton recognizes recent scholarship that demonstrates female involvement in commercial and socio-political arenas, she argues that the cultural belief in the rightness of separate spheres that developed in the late-colonial period overrode the daily activities of Atlantic women.

While the belief in separate spheres has been widespread, it has never been ubiquitous. Early on, a few scholars questioned the utility of the concept and pushed back against its spread beyond the antebellum period. In 1980, Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo challenged the growing pervasiveness of separate spheres. She argued that, by taking a concept that had originally been intended to explain a specific phenomenon bounded by time and place and applying it widely, scholars have "preserved the nineteenth-century division into inherently gendered spheres and, in doing so, has cast one presumably basic social fact not in moral or relational terms, but, rather, in individualistic ones."[21] At approximately the same moment, historian Rosalind Rosenberg argued in *Beyond Separate Spheres* that historians should be more careful in assuming that gendered spheres in American history were absolute.[22]

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[20] Troublingly, Norton is not particularly concerned with understanding why this shift might have occurred and takes for granted that a rhetorical shift indicated an actual change in the experience of women. She explains, "It is easier to describe the new cultural norms and modified uses of language than it is to explain why such changes occurred. Indeed, the major purpose of the investigation reported in this book is to describe *how* and *when* the transformation took place, rather than *why* they happened." Ibid., 7.
[21] Rosaldo, "The Use and Abuse of Anthropology," 407.
[22] Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres: Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982). Scholars in the 1980s not only argued that using the lens of separate spheres was a flawed method; they also looked for areas of life in which men and women moved in overlapping spheres. Cindy Sondik Aron described what she called the "neutral zone" of bureaucratic offices that employed middle-class, educated men and women as secretaries and office workers. She

Since the early 1980s, more historians have argued against the widespread application of separate spheres. In 1985, Nancy Hewitt asserted that, while separate spheres was originally formulated as a way to understand the uniquely restricted experience of middle-class women in America, the universal application of that concept has denied "the social and material realities of caste and class in America." While white women of the middling and upper classes might have lived relatively sex-segregated, domestic lives, women of color, the working class, and the poor had a very different experience.[23] In her 1990 article "Of Pens and Needles," Laurel Thatcher Ulrich argued strongly against the idea that men and women in colonial America lived discrete lives that could be understood through the lens of separate spheres. She stated that if historians stopped assuming that women were relegated to the home, scholars would find them "everywhere, in gardens and fields, kitchens and taverns, on horseback and in canoes, in stagecoaches and at ferry crossings, in church pews and at the front lines of armies."

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demonstrated that while separate spheres was an important social doctrine in mid-to-late-nineteenth century America, there were men and women who existed comfortably in "sexually integrated environment[s]." While the doctrine remained in effect, it was directly challenged by women who had been educated and gone to work in traditionally male spaces. Thus, Aron argued, the ideology of separate spheres should not be viewed as a constant in the nineteenth century, but as a framework that was being reviewed and revised by the men and women who lived within it. Cindy Sondik Aron, *Ladies and Gentlemen of the Civil Service: Middle Class Workers in Victorian America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 7, 10.

[23] Nancy A. Hewitt, "Beyond the Search for Sisterhood: American Women's History in the 1980s," *Social History* 10, no. 3 (October 1985), 300. Hewitt points to the work of historians such as Deborah Gray White, Elizabeth Jameson, and Dolores Janiewski as examples of women's history that complicate, or sometimes negate, the idea of separate spheres as an applicable lens for viewing women's experiences. All these historians demonstrate that certain groups of women, particularly black and working class women, lived under conditions that required and expected them to function in the public sphere. For examples of this work, see White, "Female Slaves: Sex Roles and Status in the Antebellum Plantation South," in *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History*, eds. Ellen Carol DuBois and Vicki L. Ruiz (New York: Routledge, 1990), 22-33 and *Ar'n't I a Woman: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: Norton, 1985); Jameson, "Imperfect Unions: Class and Gender in Cripple Creek, 1894-1904," in *Class, Sex, and the Woman Worker*, eds. Milton Cantor and Bruce Laurie (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1971), 166-202 and *All That Glitters: Class, Conflict, and Community in Cripple Creek* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1998); and, Janiewski, "Sisters Under Their Skins: Southern Working Women, 1880-1950," in *Sex, Race, and the Role of Women in the South*, eds. Joanne Hawks and Sheila Skemp (Jackson, Miss.: University of Mississippi Press, 1981), 13-35 and *Subversive Sisterhood: Black Women and Unions in the Southern Tobacco Industry* (Memphis, Tenn.: Center for Research on Women, 1984).

Once they gained a better "understanding [of] the ubiquity of women, historians [could] begin to frame more sophisticated inquiries, taking surviving documents less literally, teasing out of the cracks and margins of their sources a more balanced picture of early American life."[24]

Recent scholarship has not directly argued against separate spheres, but has demonstrated that the concept does not fundamentally apply to the eighteenth century. In her 2006 book on the female-led Hardenbroeck merchant family of the Dutch Atlantic, Jean Zimmerman writes, "Wives and mothers have always carried the load of feeding families and minding children. But at the same time, women of generations past often had lives more complex, more active, and less defined by their gender than is generally assumed."[25] She demonstrates that members of this mercantile family had enormous influence in the commercial and political spheres of colonial New York. Similarly Joan Gundersen, in her survey of women in Revolutionary America, contends that the "home was not separate from public life. Men had some public roles that women could not hold, but women could participate by assuming certain other roles."[26] She then provides examples of women who ran shops, taught schools, published in newspapers, fought in the Revolution, and voted in New Jersey following statehood, all of which demonstrate that women were not relegated to a separate domestic sphere in the eighteenth century.

This dissertation reinforces arguments for an expansive notion of women's sphere in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Many traditional sources do not mention women, but that does not mean they were not present and involved in the

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[24] Ulrich, "Of Pens and Needles," 201-2.
[25] Jean Zimmerman, *The Women of the House: How a Colonial She-Merchant Built a Mansion, a Fortune, and a Dynasty* (Orlando, Fl.: Harcourt Inc., 2006), xiv.
[26] Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 153.

commercial, political, intellectual, and social worlds of their city. While many diarists and letter writers did not mention who owned the stores at which they shopped, the advertisements in colonial newspapers reveal hundreds of women running businesses. Similarly, newspaper accounts of public rallies before and during the Revolution do not explicitly state that women were present, but letters and diaries reveal women's presence. Prescriptive literature following the Revolution adamantly admonishes women to remain in the home; however, Philadelphia women continued to involve themselves in the public life of the developing nation. Nor is it clear that most men expected women to retreat from the economic, political, and intellectual realms. Many encouraged women to participate in partisan politics, commercial endeavors, and intellectual discussions. Public figures validated women's access to the public sphere when they supported their petitions for financial recompense and property rights, helped them gain an education, and sought their advice on contemporary issues. While separate spheres has been a popular lens through which to view late-colonial and early national society, the women discussed in this dissertation clearly show that there was no clear gender divide in Philadelphia in this period.

In tracing Philadelphia women's public efforts, this study enters into conversation with several other bodies of literature, including histories of commercialization and consumerism, popular political culture, the creation of the early republic, and women and gender history more generally. Scholars of American commerce and material culture have long recognized women's value as consumers and helpmeets of male business owners, but have generally relegated them to a marginal role in the wider colonial

economy.[27] For example, classic works such as Carol Shammas's *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* and Richard Bushman's *The Refinement of America* discuss the centrality of feminine domestic goods, such as tea equipage, silver and ceramic ware, and textiles, to eighteenth-century commerce. Both authors imagine women as establishing style and determining what items were bought and displayed; however, they also imagine men as being almost entirely in control of the household economy. Women might have expressed aesthetic preferences, but men oversaw the budget and authorized the purchase of household goods. And neither author seriously considers female vendors who helped establish taste and style through the goods they carried and the clientele they attracted.[28]

In his groundbreaking book on the role of consumer culture in fomenting the American Revolution, T. H. Breen recognizes the importance of female consumers and protestors, but relegates them to a minor role. His work was one of the first to place women's buying habits at the heart of pre-Revolutionary protest and to argue that the boycott movement "unwittingly opened up political participation to persons – women, for example – whose only entitlement to a voice in such affairs was that they were

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[27] Two underappreciated historians demonstrated women's centrality to the economies of Philadelphia and New York City. Frances May Manges and Patricia Cleary argued that hundreds of women ran businesses during the eighteenth century and that they were normalized, accepted members of the commercial community. Despite their impressive research and solid arguments, neither scholar has received much attention from either women's historians or scholars focused on eighteenth-century business and trade. See, Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia" (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1958) and Cleary, "'She Merchants' of Colonial America: Women and Commerce on the Eve of the Revolution" (PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 1989). In 1995, Cleary published an insightful article, "'She Will Be in the Shop': Women's Sphere of Trade in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia and New York," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 109, no. 3 (July 1995), 181-202.

[28] Carole Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) and Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

potentially consumers of imported British manufactures."[29] At the same time, however, he marginalizes female shoppers and protestors (along with African Americans, the poor, and the young) as playing merely supporting roles. Moreover, despite the presence of women's names on nonimportation agreements, Breen pays almost no attention to women who protested as business owners, rather than consumers.

Several recent works have attempted to place female consumption and entrepreneurial activity at the forefront of the discussion on eighteenth-century Atlantic and American trade.[30] Ann Smart Martin's work on commerce in the rural South uses the trade in ribbons to illuminate women's role as consumers, vendors, and arbiters of taste. She argues that the consumption of ribbons, as well as other notions, gave female shoppers power over retailers, as they determined whom to patronize and on what to spend their money. Male shopkeepers deferred to their wealthy female customers in order to maintain their business and encourage other women to shop at their store. Women also sold ribbons, either from within a shop or as traveling merchants, using their reputation for taste to shape what their neighbors and customers bought. While these women are not always evident in business records, they are found in the dairies and letters of their customers.[31]

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[29] T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 235-6.

[30] Two articles from the 1980s were ahead of the curve in recognizing women's economic and commercial acumen and involvement in late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century America. See, Claudia Goldin, "The Economic Status of Women in the Early Republic: Quantitative Evidence," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 16 (Winter 1986), 375-404 and Lisa Wilson Waceiga, "A 'Man of Business': The Widow of Means in Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1750-1850," *William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (January 1987), 40-64.

[31] Ann Smart Martin, "Ribbons of Desire: Gendered Stories in the World of Goods," in *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830*, eds. John Styles and Amanda Vickery (New Haven, Conn.: The Yale Center for British Art and The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2006), 179-200.

Two historians, Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor and Serena R. Zabin, have argued that women ran businesses and participated in the economy far beyond the trade in a single, feminine item. Hartigan-O'Connor's colony-wide survey, *The Ties That Bind*, "investigates everyday economic networks in revolutionary America with women at their center." She examines how women, as "quintessential market participants," worked as retailers, consumers, and intermediaries, dealt in credit and in-kind trade, served as informal banks for friends and family, and trained and hired the children of their neighbors, relatives, and associates. She also seeks to understand the paradox women faced at the turn of the nineteenth century: having "long been an active presence in urban marketplaces," women had to reconcile emerging ideas of middle-class domesticity with their own experiences in the world of commerce.[32] Zabin makes similar arguments regarding women in colonial New York. While her work highlights social and economic status, rather than gender, she nonetheless argues that women participated in both local and international trade. She looks at the economic opportunities available to white and black women, including "domestic, artisanal, and marine work" as well as shop ownership and, fascinatingly, confidence work and financial scams. Though women play a less prominent role in her work, she considers their economic contribution as being the equal of men's and gives them their due as key players in the New York economy.[33]

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[32] Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, *The Ties That Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 2-3. Lisa Norling makes a similar argument about the disconnect perceived by the wives of whale fishermen between the cult of true womanhood and their own lives. After discussing the strategies employed by fishermen's wives while their husbands were at sea and the high degree of independence these women exercised in making financial decisions, she demonstrates that these women could not reconcile middle-class ideals of domesticity with their own imperatives for economic survival. See, *Captain Ahab Had a Wife: New England Women & Whalefishery, 1720-1870* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), Chapter Six.

[33] Serena R. Zabin, *Dangerous Economies: Status and Commerce in Imperial New York* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 5-7. Marla Miller's biography of Betsy Ross deserves mention here as well. By focusing on a single artisan family, she illuminates the critical role that women played in

This dissertation builds on these recent works and argues that before, during, and after the Revolution, women ran a great variety of businesses and participated in commerce as entrepreneurs, workers, shoppers, and arbiters of taste. As accepted members of the economic community, female business owners and skilled workers interacted with a wide range of Philadelphians, building long term connections and networking with wholesalers, other vendors, merchants, and consumers throughout eastern Pennsylvania and the colonial world. Following the Revolution, women such as Jane Bartram used their reputation as sound businesswomen to help regain confiscated property and secure independence from exiled husbands. As consumers, women used their financial power to influence taste, express political opinions, and forge relationships beyond their social networks. Embracing their ability to use consumer power to affect politics, women threw themselves into the pre-Revolutionary non-consumption movement, shunning British goods and refusing to patronize businesses that continued to import from England. In the early nineteenth century, abolitionists drew on this experience when they formed the free produce movement, a boycott of slave-made goods intended to damage the economic viability of slavery in the South.

This project also intersects with the literature on political culture before and during the American Revolution. Early books on the role of public displays and various forms of popular expression did not consider women as part of the politicized populace and, as a result, paid them little attention. Gary Nash's *Urban Crucible* and Gordon

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developing and supporting the Philadelphia craft economy. Girls like Betsy Griscom (later Ross) were apprenticed with friends in order to expand their training and knowledge base. Miller also illustrates that many women's skills were so comprehensive that they were perfectly capable of running their own enterprises or carrying on their family business upon the death of their spouse. Rather than merely assisting better trained, more highly skilled male workers, craftswomen were essential to the success of artisanal shops and their skilled workforce in Philadelphia. See, Marla R. Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2010).

Wood's *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* only consider how women were affected by popular politics, not how they actively engaged in this world.[34] More recently, works on festive culture and political affiliation have recognized that women expressed their patriotism, but still in a relatively passive manner. Simon P. Newman's work, *Parades and the Politics of the Street*, argues that women played an essential role in early American politics, but as supporters of men, rarely as actors in their own right. Their presence in the crowd at political displays indicated widespread community support; women, however, were not expected to do anything more than witness.[35] Similarly, Brendan McConville argues that women expressed their support for the monarchy by buying and displaying goods with the likeness of the king, illuminating their windows on holidays, and toasting the health of the royal family. However, he contends, they did not participate in more active forms of royalism, such as crowd demonstrations, protests, and parades. If women were there, both McConville and Newman imagine them as watching the event, not taking part.[36]

Recent scholarship on the development of political culture in colonial America has continued to relegate women to a marginal position. Jessica Roney, in her 2014 work on the development of eighteenth-century Philadelphia's political culture, argues that a hallmark of this system was the active involvement of ordinary "residents" in solving the city's problems. She calls for a "more capacious understanding of individual

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[34] Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979) and Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

[35] Simon Newman does suggest that women sometimes took it upon themselves to be more active in popular political events, but that that was not their proscribed role. Simon P. Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

[36] Brendan McConville, *The King's Three Faces: The Rise and Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia by the University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

participation and popular mobilization" in urban politics.[37] However, women are categorically not part of this politically active populace. She writes that alongside "every other British community, Philadelphia's public forum almost entirely ignored and excluded women" from political expression and activism.[38] Roney briefly considers women's participation in organizations such as the Dance Assembly and benevolent reform as having political overtones, but ultimately eliminates them from the residents she considers necessary to keeping Philadelphia's civic institutions afloat.

Women's historians have also expressed growing interest in political culture and the role women played in both popular and formal venues. Kate Haulman's recent work *The Politics of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America* explores the social and political language of clothing, hairstyles, and display in late colonial and Revolutionary America. While she analyzes how the politics of fashion functioned for both men and women, Haulman argues that consumption and display provided women, in particular, with a means for expressing their political opinions both at home and in public. As pre-Revolutionary conflicts intensified, decisions about which vendors to patronize and which goods to purchase became public statements of affiliation. Moreover, the clothing women wore spoke volumes about their politics: to wear imported fashions rather than homespun, to sport the highroll or wear the federal hat demonstrated to the world a woman's partisan position. The stores women patronized and the clothing they wore "became a flash point of political authority."[39] While T. H. Breen, Linda Baumgarten,

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[37] Jessica Choppin Roney, *Governed by a Spirit of Opposition: The Origins of American Political Practice in Colonial Philadelphia* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 3.
[38] Ibid., 4.
[39] Haulman, *The Politics of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America*, 8. See also, Haulman, "A Short History of the High Roll," *Common-Place* 2, no. 1 (October 2001), www.common-place.org/vol-02/no-01/lessons/. Credit should also be given to Jennifer Jones whose book *Sexing La Mode* first opened my

and Rodris Roth also explore the politicization of women's consumption and display in this period, they do not argue, as Haulman does, that women intentionally manipulated consumer culture to express their partisan political feelings.[40]

Catherine Allgor also demonstrates women's conscious choice in blending social and political influence by hosting gatherings, dinners, and salons. In *Parlor Politics*, she focuses on the role played by the wives and daughters of the first seven presidents in establishing informal social spaces in which political conversations could occur and deals could be made. She argues that these female relatives "appear as political actors in their own right, using social events and the 'private sphere' to … build the extraofficial structures so sorely needed in the infant federal government." As the wives of shopkeepers, cobblers, and taverners helped their husbands in their work, so did these women; "in this case, however, the family business was politics."[41] Their political acumen was recognized not only by their husbands and allies; it was also acknowledged by their enemies, who considered women like Louisa Catherine Adams and Dolley Madison influential and effective adversaries.

Other historians have looked at women who were not directly connected to presidential politics, but nonetheless wielded political influence through their social power. Anne Ousterhout's biography of Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson (the first

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eyes to the possibilities of fashion history and of examining clothing as a political statement. See, *Sexing La Mode: Gender, Fashion and Commercial Culture in Old Regime France* (New York: Berg, 2004).

[40] T. H. Breen, "'Baubles of Britain': The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century" in *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville, Va.: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1994), 444-482; Breen, "An Empire of Goods: The Anglicization of Colonial America, 1690-1776," *Journal of British Studies* 25, no. 4 (October 1986), 467-499; Linda Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federalist America* (New Haven, Conn.: Published for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation by the Yale University Press, 2002); and, Rodris Roth, "Tea-Drinking in Eighteenth-Century America: Its Etiquette and Equipage" in *Material Life in America, 1600-1860*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 439-462.

[41] Catherine Allgor, *Parlor Politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government* (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 2000), 1.

salonnière in America), Susan Branson's book about women and political culture in federal Philadelphia, David W. Maxey's work on Congressional wife Elizabeth Willing Powel, and David Shields and Fredrika Teute's studies of the Republican Court all demonstrate the influence of prominent intellectual women in Revolutionary and early national America.[42] The women they write about were recognized for their intelligence and insight into contemporary social and political issues; they hosted salons attended by politicians, academics, writers, and public intellectuals; and, they were credited – positively and negatively – with bringing together men of influence and providing a space away from prying eyes in which they could conduct business, debate issues, and strike deals.

My dissertation seeks to build on the notion that women participated in colonial, Revolutionary, and early national politics through social settings and expression, and to show that they had access to a far greater range of popular politics than has been previously suggested. While women such as Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson and Elizabeth Willing Powel hosted salons before and after the Revolution, female political expression and activism extended far beyond these social circles. Large numbers of Philadelphia women saw themselves as political creatures; they were invested in the future of their city, colony, and empire and followed political developments as avidly as men. They

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[42] Anne M. Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America: A Life of Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004); Susan Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames: Women and Political Culture in Early National Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); David W. Maxey, *A Portrait of Elizabeth Willing Powel, 1743-1830* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2006); and, David S. Shields and Fredrika J. Teute, "The Republican Court and the Historiography of a Women's Domain in the Public Sphere," *Journal of the Early Republic* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2015), 169-184. French scholarship on female-led salons attributes great social and political influence to the women who presided over those gatherings; American scholarship on the same phenomenon is slowly catching up. For examples, see Steven D. Kale, *French Salons: High Society and Political Sociability from the Old Regime to the Revolution of 1848* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Tjitske Akkerman, *Women's Vices, Public Benefits: Women and Commerce in the French Enlightenment* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1992); and, Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988).

attended public meetings, readings, and rallies, not just to witness the actions of men, but also to take active part and voice their own opinions. They viewed their consumption and display decisions are more than just supporting a political movement. Women saw themselves as being essential to the success of the boycott. During and after the Revolution, they continued to participate in political events, joining crowds of Philadelphians as they celebrated victories and mourned deaths. Women continued their political involvement into the first decades of the early republic, at which point leaders of early political factions and parties actively courted their participation. They also expanded their political role into active leadership in social and moral reform as well as the abolition movement.

This project further intersects with the literatures on the early republic, specifically women's place in the new nation. While the work on women's fashion, salons, and socializing among the elite extends the notion of female political participation, most influential works on the formation of American society in the early national period do not acknowledge women as a significant presence. Many scholars recognize the ambiguity of the language of the Revolution and its potential to empower women, but then conclude that rather than emerging into the public in the postwar period, women largely retreated into the home. Scholars such as David Waldstreicher, Sean Wilentz, and Daniel Walker Howe have considered women to be only minor participants in the social, political, and legal developments of the early republic. While they recognize women's growing power in benevolent reform and the anti-slavery movement, they nonetheless relegate them to a fairly marginal role when it comes to the key issues debated in that period. Historians also rely heavily on the idea that women's value was

more rhetorical than participatory, focusing on prescriptive literature that touted women's symbolic value rather than looking at the ways women actively worked to build their country.[43]

Women's historians have sought to delve deeper into women's experiences in this period and uncover their relationship to the developing nation. Foundational works, such as Linda Kerber's *The Women of the Republic*, argues that, while women were restricted to the domestic sphere, they nonetheless had power that expanded into the public. Kerber's concept of Republican Motherhood asserts that interest in girls' education increased in the early national period because it was deemed essential for women to be able to advise their husbands and guide their sons. While women were not active citizens, they had a passive role as helpers and aides to citizens. Arguing that women held no official political positions, Kerber notes that through Republican Motherhood they

> claimed a significant political role, though [they] played it in [their] home. This new identity had the advantage of appearing to reconcile politics and domesticity … But the role remained a severely limited one; it had no collective definition, provided no outlet for women to affect a real political decision.[44]

This essentially domestic explanation for women's education and political participation dominated historical thinking for a long time. Scholars including Joan Gundersen, Anne Boylan, and Rosemarie Zagarri have embraced Republican Motherhood as the

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[43] David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia by the University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: Norton, 2005); and, Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[44] Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture Williamsburg, Virginia by the University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 12.

compelling explanation for women's education and interest in politics between the Revolution and the rise of the woman's movement.[45]

Other scholars have argued that women did have some political presence in the early national period, but that it was extremely limited. As women became increasingly involved in local social and benevolent reform, some attempted to expand their influence into federal politics. Susan Zaeske, in her work on female abolitionists, argues that women had very few rights of citizenship and that they seized on petitioning as their sole avenue for commanding a national voice. Petitioning Congress granted women a "modified form of citizenship" that allowed them more power on a national level than they could gain through any other process. She goes on to suggest that many abolitionist women chose this less aggressive form of expression over public speaking or activism, because they were more comfortable stating their opinions through an essentially passive mechanism.[46] Beth Salerno, in *Sister Societies*, does excellent work demonstrating the fluidity of the concept of citizenship in the early nineteenth century and arguing that women considered themselves to be citizens, regardless of their lack of access to formal

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[45] Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*; Anne M. Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism: New York and Boston, 1797-1840* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); and, Rosemarie Zagarri, "The Rights of Man and Woman in Post-Revolutionary America," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 55, no. 2 (April 1998), 203-230. Ann D. Gordon is a prominent deviation from this pattern. Her article, "The Young Ladies Academy of Philadelphia," was published the year before Kerber's book, but gained very little attention in comparison. Gordon argues that there was strong support, among men and women, for educating girls because of their inherent ability and value, not because of their future role as the wife and mother of citizens. Further, prominent thinkers such as Benjamin Rush worried that if girls were not educated, then they would be susceptible to manipulation by unsavory men and prone to superstitious and illogical thinking. Gordon demonstrates that many early Americans believed girls should be educated and aware of contemporary events for reasons that had nothing to do with marriage and motherhood. See, Ann D. Gordon, "The Young Ladies Academy of Philadelphia" in *Women of America: A History*, ed. Carol Ruth Berkin and Mary Beth Norton (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), 68-91.

[46] One serious flaw in Zaeske's argument is that she suggests that women had not taken advantage of petitions prior to the early nineteenth century. While she acknowledges that they were aware and supportive of the Revolutionary petitions, she downplays female participation in that movement. Given the scores of women around the colonies who both signed mixed-sex documents and drafted petitions in all-female groups, this oversight is a major detraction from her overall argument. Susan Zaeske, *Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery and Women's Political Identity* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 2, 41.

politics. However, she also suggests that the five decades between the end of the Revolution and the emergence of all-female abolition societies was essentially an incubation period in which women participated solely in non-political reform and self-improvement movements. It was not until they began to form overtly political organizations in the 1830s that they saw themselves as stepping into the political arena.[47]

Not all women's historians working on the early republic, however, have seen women as lacking access to the public and political spheres. Susan Branson and Clare Lyons have provided excellent insights into the ways women influenced social and political developments in the first capital. Branson argues that women were far more enmeshed in early national Philadelphia's political culture than has been believed: "There was more at work in the political consciousness of men and women in the early republic than just a conservative ideology that paid lip service to women's civic roles but in effect reinforced the identity of women with the private sphere."[48] She demonstrates that women were involved in politics across a range of activities from high-class salons to participation in street parades, from wearing political symbols on their clothing to publishing articles in national publications. She concludes that "women's opinions, issues and needs were acknowledged, debated, and sometimes incorporated into the wider political rhetoric and public culture, thus becoming integral to America's developing sense of itself as a nation."[49] Clare Lyons's focus is on gender relations in early national Philadelphia, but she reinforces Branson's notion that women had much broader access to the public sphere than historians have suggested. As Philadelphians

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[47] Beth Salerno, *Sister Societies: Women's Antislavery Organizations in Antebellum America* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005).
[48] Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 2.
[49] Ibid., 5.

reformed their ideas about sexual propriety, women gained greater freedom to move throughout the city, interact with a wide range of men and women, and forge relationships far beyond those of their family circle.[50] When read together, Branson and Lyons present an image of early national Philadelphia in which women had wide-ranging freedom that allowed them to participate in and influence social, political, and commercial developments within the city and nation.

Some of the work on women in the early republic has made a specific argument: that women's public life during the Revolution was an aberration and they largely retreated into the home between the end of the war and the rise of benevolent reform in the 1820s. These scholars have claimed that, despite the brief empowerment of the Revolutionary period, there was no advancement in women's position going into the early national period.[51] In recent years, scholars have attempted to push back against this assumption and demonstrate the continuity between women's lives in the war years and the early republic. Notable among recent scholarship is Rosemarie Zagarri's *Revolutionary Backlash*. She argues that, by the mid-eighteenth century, long-held beliefs in women's inferiority were being reconsidered; indeed, "the American Revolution accelerated this reevaluation of women's role and gave it a specifically political valance."[52] Following the Revolution, due to the public nature of federal politics and the legacy of their wartime agency, women seized a "political role with an

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[50] Lyons, *Sex Among the Rabble*.
[51] For examples of this perspective, see Joan Hoff-Wilson, "The Illusion of Change: Women and the American Revolution" in *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism*, ed. Alfred Young (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), 383-445; Mark E. Kann, *The Gendering of American Politics: Founding Mothers, Founding Fathers, and Political Patriarchy* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1999); and, Pauline E. Schloesser, *The Fair Sex: White Women and Radical Patriarchy in the Early American Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).
[52] Rosemarie Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 4.

independence of spirit and an intellectual assertiveness that impressed some people and alarmed others." Women became so enmeshed in early national politics, Zagarri argues, that a conservative backlash attempted to force women out of political reform and stop the woman's movement before it could take root.[53]

This project seeks to expand the idea that there was a high degree of continuity between the political and economic activities of women before and during the Revolution and those of the early national period. While there was conservative pushback against women's presence in the public sphere following the war, women did not universally retreat into the home. Instead, through their continued involvement in commerce and political protest as well as their expansion into both local and national reform movements, women drew on decades of experience with business, politics, law, and social activism. If the women of Philadelphia are representative of early American women, or even just urban women, then the chronology of women's involvement in the public sphere is far more continuous than discontinuous. While there was concern about women's participation in the public sphere following the Revolution, that is, in fact, another sign of continuity. Some conservative thinkers always objected to women's non-domestic activities, though that had never deterred them from participating in their

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[53] Ibid., 6-7. Much of the work on early women's activism leaps from the Revolutionary period to the antebellum era, dismissing the four or five decades in between as a time when women were not significantly present in social or political protest. Similarly, much of the work on the early national period focuses only on women's charitable and missionary work, which is more easily incorporated into a separate spheres perspective. Zagarri is not the only scholar attempting to bridge these gaps by seriously looking at women's political activism in the early national period. For other examples of historians attempting to link antebellum activism with women's activities in the Revolutionary and early national period, see Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism: New York and Boston, 1797-1840*; Carol Lasser and Stacey Robertson, *Antebellum Women: Public, Private, Partisan* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010); and, Carol Faulkner, "The Root of the Evil: Free Produce and Radical Antislavery, 1820-1860," *Journal of the Earl Republic* 27 (Fall 2007), 377-405 and *Lucretia Mott's Heresy: Abolition and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

community, and they continued to do so through the early national and into the antebellum periods.

Scholars of early American and women's history know many of the figures and sources prominent in this dissertation. Elizabeth Drinker, Grace Galloway, Betsy Ross, Hannah Griffitts, and Esther DeBerdt Reed are all familiar figures. While this project draws on underutilized primary sources such as the letters of Eliza Farmer, the legal records of Jane Bartram, and the newspaper advertisements of Philadelphia businesswomen, it also looks at familiar sources in a new way, asking different questions than those that have previously been addressed. It also utilizes poetry, which has often been seen only as evidence of female participation in literary culture, as expressing women's genuine, independent commitment to and opinions on the evolving debates over Revolutionary politics. This project examines diaries for more than just the female, domestic experiences described. It uses them to illuminate how women experienced their lives as members of the public community, not merely as members of a family and household. Moreover, by reading letters and diaries written by Loyalist and Patriot women in concert, rather than in opposition, it illuminates common female experiences during wartime. And overall, it considers the writings of women in the same light as those of men: even when they are personal documents such as diaries and letters, this project asks what they can tell historians about women's access and commitment to a variety of public issues and spheres. This project approaches all its sources, whether the famous diary of Elizabeth Drinker or the virtually unknown newspaper advertisements of Mary Crathorne, as clues to women's participation in the public spaces and discourses of late-colonial and early national Philadelphia and the larger imperial world.

My dissertation consists of five chapters, each of which examines women's participation in a different aspect of Philadelphia's public sphere. Chapter One, "She 'proposes to carry on the business':[54] Women and Commerce in Pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia," looks at women's activities in the city's commercial realms in the 1750s and 1760s. Women were enmeshed in the market as both consumers and vendors. As shoppers, women not only supported Philadelphia's economy, but also exercised their own knowledge, judgment, and taste. They spent money at myriad vendors and expanded their access to many classes and sectors of the city, bringing them into contract with a broad range of ideas and perspectives. In addition, women shopped for pleasure, taking traditional female socialization from the home into the streets and shops, combining social conversation with discussions about commerce, politics, and contemporary issues. Hundreds of female entrepreneurs, including shopkeepers, tavern keepers, and skilled artisans, conducted business in pre-war Philadelphia. Their shops and establishments ran the gamut from small, short-lived enterprises to prosperous and prominent endeavors. Comprising a sizable minority of Philadelphia's businesses at any time, female entrepreneurs were essential to the success and variety of the city's market, contributed significantly to local and regional economies, and became familiar figures in local commercial spaces.

Chapter Two, "'A Society of Patriotic Ladies':[55] Women and Politics in Revolutionary Philadelphia," demonstrates that women participated widely in political debate and protest in pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia. Far from being excluded from colonial politics, they expanded the concept of political expression and voiced their views

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[54] Mary Cannon's business advertisement, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 22 December 1763.
[55] [Philip Dawe], "A Society of Patriotic Ladies, at Edenton in North Carolina," Mezzotint, London, March 25, 1775, Prints and Photographs Collection, Library of Congress.

through dances and social events, the circulation of poetry, styles of dress, and participation in salons as well as crowd actions and public spectacles. While scholars have argued that female political thought was marginalized, the sources show that women were sophisticated thinkers whose opinions were sought out and who were comfortable expressing their views. In fact, women went beyond just writing about and discussing politics within their circle of family and close friends; they attended public meetings, signed pre-war boycott petitions, expressed their views publicly through consumption and style, and attended parades and political displays. While women were denied access to formal political channels, they flourished through popular politics, working within both all-female and mixed-sex forums to discuss, debate, and shape the course of colonial politics.

Chapter Three, "'Tho a female I was born a patriot':[56] Philadelphia Women and the Revolutionary War," argues that women's public presence expanded during the American Revolution, although often as an extension of earlier activities. Women participated in the war effort in dozens of ways from providing supplies to the armies and quartering soldiers, to acting as spies and petitioning for the release of suspected traitors. Rather than dividing Philadelphia's women into Patriots and Loyalists, I look at their common experiences as women, not their disparate experiences as partisans. While political affiliation mattered, women's experiences were more similar than different. The chapter focuses especially on the Mischianza, the central social event of the British occupation, and the Philadelphia Ladies Association, which supported the Continental Army. Debates over the Mischianza provide rich insights into how fledgling Americans

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[56] L. H. Butterfield, "Annis and the General: Mrs. Stockton's Poetic Eulogies of George Washington," *Princeton University Library Chronicle* VII, no. 1 (November 1945), 25.

felt about propriety, sexuality, and hierarchy. The Philadelphia Ladies Association, whose members raised money and made shirts for Continental soldiers, offers an early example of women's collective organizing in response to the needy. Its activities require that we revise the traditional timeline of female benevolent work by showing that women initiated such efforts decades before their widespread emergence.

Chapter Four, "'Shou'd I leave this place they will … confiscate my estate all so':[57] Philadelphia Women, Property, and the Law in the 1770s and 1780s," examines the decade following the Revolution when numerous women filed suits against the government to reclaim lost property or gain financial compensation. The claims made by four Philadelphia women and the legal results of their cases challenge the idea that coverture was taken literally. Instead, they raise questions about the flexibility of local and regional courts when considering married women's independence and right to petition the government for redress. These women, coming from different social positions and political perspectives, educated themselves about the legal changes affecting women and families during the Revolution, argued that they had a right to property that had been given directly to them, petitioned the government for restitution, and took steps to separate themselves from their husbands in order to secure their financial and property holdings. Though their success varied, multiple attorneys, statesmen, and other prominent Pennsylvanians supported their claims. These stories illuminate a period of development in the conception of married women's independent rights and demonstrate a step forward in the thinking of at least some men regarding their place within the polity.

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[57] Grace Galloway to Joseph Galloway, undated letter, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Grace Growden Galloway Papers 1778-1781, Am. 06865, HSP.

Chapter Five, "'Our young women [are] forming a new era in female history':[58] Philadelphia Women in the Young Nation," concludes the dissertation with a discussion of women's participation in the political, intellectual, and activist spheres of the early republic. For decades, Republican Motherhood has been considered the primary explanation for the post-Revolutionary interest in female education. While some writers were focused on preparing women to function as helpmeets to male citizens, the writings of female students and thinkers, as well as their male supporters, reveal an appreciation for female intellect and a desire to educate women for their own sakes, not solely to prepare them to be mothers. Similarly, women functioned as individuals within the early national political world to a far greater degree than scholars have assumed. In salons and other social settings, they created spaces available to male politicians, offered advice and insight, and served an important, if less visible, role in the formation of the early government. Just as importantly, Philadelphia women, including Quakers and free blacks outside the city's political elite, rose to prominence in the abolition movement by building on and continuing their earlier experiences with protest, commerce, and benevolent work. The women active in abolition and the international free produce movement drew on their knowledge of commerce and boycotts, their experience with political organizing and expression, and their contacts within the world of activism to take a leading role in the anti-slavery movement.

In 1837, antislavery activist and newspaper editor Sarah Towne Smith debunked the idea of separate spheres and indicated that women belonged, and always had done, in the public:

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[58] Judith Sargent Murray, *The Gleaner*, ed. Nina Baym (1798; reprinted, Schenectady, NY: Union College Press, 1992), 702-3.

> If our sphere of action is limited to private life exclusively then we have long since left our own province and entered that of the other sex. We have had Bible, Tract, Missionary, and Education Societies, and in prosecuting these objects it has been necessary, in repeated instances, to step forth from the privacy of that retirement to which we have been of late so carefully consigned. Women have organized associations, held meetings and published reports, appointed solicitors, and resolved themselves into committees, without alarming the guardians of public welfare or outraging public sentiment.[59]

Smith saw the previous decades of women's activism and men's support for their work as proof that they had every right to continue inserting themselves into the public political debates over slavery. Women in the colonial, Revolutionary, and early national periods saw themselves as playing a significant role in the public sphere. As members of their communities, they participated in commerce, politics, warfare, legal debate, and the development of a national social and political culture. Historians need to see these women as they saw themselves: not just as members of families, but as part of their communities, colonies, empire, states, and nations who were invested and involved in both the private and public spheres.

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[59] [Sarah Towne Smith], "The Province of Woman – No. 2," *Advocate of Moral Reform* III (1 October 1837), 333.

Chapter One

She "proposes to carry on the business:"[1] Women and Commerce in Pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia

Over the course of the eighteenth century, Philadelphia evolved into the largest and most prosperous city in the American colonies. By the time of the American Revolution, it led the fledgling nation in both internal and domestic trade. Its market overflowed with goods and services, from basic necessities to expensive luxury items. Philadelphia was considered the most cosmopolitan city in America and English immigrants were surprised to find that certain luxury items were cheaper there than they were in the empire's capital.[2] The Philadelphia marketplace featured a panoply of locally-made and international goods, and competition was fierce among retailers and artisans for recognition of the quality and variety of their stock. When Ann King went into business for herself, after years of working for prominent upholsterer John Webster, she declared herself to be the "first American tossel maker that ever brought that branch of business to any degree of perfection." She set herself apart from, and implied her superiority to, her chief rival George Richey, an Edinburgh-trained artisan reputed for his ability to make high quality "lines and tassels to answer any furniture or chariots."[3] Consumers had choices regarding what to buy and whom to patronize; for a female vendor or skilled craftworker to be successful in the city's booming marketplace, she had to make and sell the best possible goods, forge a reputation for quality, reliability, and

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[1] Mary Cannon's business advertisement, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 22 December 1763.
[2] Recently arrived in Philadelphia, Esther De Berdt Reed commented in a letter to her brother in London, "the city is so much overstocked with goods, that in many shops you may buy cheaper than in London…" Esther Reed to Dennis De Berdt, 20 October 1772 in William Bradford Reed, *The Life of Esther De Berdt afterwards Esther Reed of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: C. Sherman, 1853).
[3] *Pennsylvania Journal*, 17 May 1775 and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 17 October 1771.

reasonable prices, and make connections within both the business and consumer networks of pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia.

Women played a significant role in the commercial life of the city – as shoppers, business owners, artisans, landlords, taxpayers and sightseers, they were integral to the economic success of their community. As members of families, but more significantly as individuals, women contributed to the colonial economy in substantial and significant ways. Historians are only now beginning to recognize the prominent role that women played in late-eighteenth century American commerce.[4] They are looking past old assumptions that women lacked the education to understand the world of business, that they were sheltered from participation in that world, and that when widows or the poor were forced to work, it was only in specific, limited occupations, not as affluent entrepreneurs or skilled craftspeople. As Karin Wulf notes in her study of unmarried colonial women, "the realities of life and work … rarely afforded women the opportunity to engage only in prescriptively 'feminine' activities, even had they wished to do so."[5] In late-colonial Philadelphia, women from a wide range of backgrounds were active in commerce, and it was not exceptional when they operated a business or plied a trade.

Women's importance in Philadelphia's economy forces us to reconsider a number of standard arguments about their overall role in public life. Commercial participation was one of the most pervasive forms of public engagement for women across class,

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[4] For examples of recent scholarship focusing on businesswomen and female workers, see Ann Smart Martin, "Ribbons of Desire: Gendered Stories in the World of Goods," in *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830*, eds. John Styles and Amanda Vickery (New Haven, Conn.: The Yale Center for British Art and The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2006), 179-200; Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, *The Ties That Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Serena R. Zabin, *Dangerous Economies: Status and Commerce in Imperial New York* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); and, Marla R. Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2010).

[5] Karin Wulf, *Not All Wives: Women of Colonial Philadelphia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 115.

religious, and ethnic lines. By better understanding the multiple ways female entrepreneurs, workers, business owners, and shoppers participated in the life of their city, we can also more fully comprehend the ways they functioned within the public sphere. Women's commercial lives demonstrate the fluidity of supposedly concrete concepts such as coverture and the gendered division of spheres. By illuminating women's economic lives, we see that they acted with financial independence regardless of the supposed limits of coverture and appeared in the theoretically masculine spaces of wholesale warehouses, coffee shops, wharves, and metal works, in defiance of separate spheres. We also see that the entire commercial community counted on women for continued flourishing of the city's market: they were expected to be knowledgeable about economic issues; capable of running successful businesses; able to participate in their families' trades; and, attuned to the political nuances of business decisions. Illuminating women's economic lives does not just tell us about how they acted as vendors, laborers, and consumers; it helps us create a more nuanced understanding of the fullness of their lives in the late-eighteenth century.

Women participated in the Philadelphia economy as businesswomen, running their own stores, taverns, inns, and skilled craft shops. While their employment as domestic laborers, nurses, midwifes, laundresses, and shop assistants is well known, their entrepreneurship is less well documented and understood. Yet far from being excluded from business, women were a common and accepted part of eighteenth century commerce, owning stores, taverns, inns, and craft shops. As economic historian Frances May Manges noted in 1958, well before the rise of women's history,

> The colonial businesswomen who were mentioned in the newspaper quietly carried on their economic activities without fanfare or without even attracting

> general interest. They appear to have been accepted as equals in business…. Modern historians may bemoan the quiet acceptance by the colonials of the economic role of women, but this very calm acceptance of them and their activities makes their economic contribution appear to be ordinary and unspectacular.[6]

Women operated a range of businesses that fall into three broad categories: shopkeeping, tavern/innkeeping, and artisanal craftwork. Like male-owned enterprises, their pursuits ranged from small to large, basic to luxurious, short-lived to highly successful. Through these businesses, women proved themselves able members of the commercial empire that defined early Philadelphia.[7]

Moreover, women utilized their commercial knowledge not only as skilled laborers and business owners, but also as consumers. Shopping served a far larger purpose than simply purchasing necessary or desired goods. It was one crucial way in which women engaged in the public sphere: they bought a huge range of items; used their discretion in spending money; visited a multitude of vendors throughout the city; and, forged social networks through these ventures. Shopping was not a simple task. It required an understanding of the relative value of goods, the capacity to judge quality, knowledge of regional and international trade, and the ability to budget money. It also took women all over the city, greatly expanding the circles to which an individual had access. Philadelphia businesses tended to be specialized so the average consumer would

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[6] Frances May Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia" (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1958), 119.

[7] While this chapter confines itself to the pre-Revolutionary period, it is clear that women continued in business well into the nineteenth century. The dominant argument regarding separate spheres and gender distinctions for the nineteenth century asserts that women were systematically excluded from the public, including the commercial, realm. It is recognized that young women worked in factory settings, black women in homes and fields, and poor women of all races in a variety of capacities, but middling and married women supposedly retreated to the home. Questioning that assertion, economist Claudia Goldin examined public records from Philadelphia for the period 1790-1860 and found that women were active and visible in a range of endeavors from shopkeeping to craftwork, innkeeping to teaching and nursing. For her full findings, see Claudia Goldin, "The Economic Status of Women in the Early Republic: Quantitative Evidence," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 16, no. 3 (Winter 1986), 375-404.

visit many stores and artisan's shops, warehouses and tavern-hosted vendues in the course of acquiring the goods she sought. Women's shopping, whether practical or social, helped them forge relationships, gain knowledge about myriad contemporary topics, and further enmesh themselves in the life of their community.

Women have been obscured in the history of colonial commerce partly due to a misunderstanding of how coverture functioned in eighteenth-century communities. Coverture law stated that a married woman's legal and economic identity were subsumed by her husband – a wife was legally "covered" by her spouse and, as such, had no independent ability to make contracts, own land, or deal in business. A single woman could, in certain circumstances, function independently, but it has been assumed that in most circumstances a male relative or proxy acted in her stead. However, as a few scholars have argued, there is a significant gap between the letter of the law and its application in society. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich notes, "Perhaps it would be useful if before walking into an archive scholars reminded themselves that the Anglo-American notion of coverture is a legal fiction, that women 'covered' in surviving documents were quite visible in ordinary life."[8] The legal stricture of coverture was clearly not applied unilaterally in late-colonial Philadelphia. Women – single, married, and widowed – conducted business, executed contracts, engaged in credit, owned property, and were treated as full members of the populace. When historians put aside the legal fiction of coverture and the resulting assumptions about women's options, they discover a far richer world. Women were respected as educated and capable participants in commercial life. They were visible in the colonial public and expected to be responsible members of their

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[8] Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "Of Pens and Needles: Sources in Early American Women's History," *Journal of American History* 77, no. 1 (June 1990), 201-2.

community, through shopping, running businesses, working in diverse occupations, and contributing to the economic success of their city, colony, and empire.[9]

Women's Commercial Knowledge

Late-colonial women both possessed the practical knowledge to participate in their local economy and, often, an understanding of the larger commercial and financial systems of their day. They were capable of negotiating prices, settling debts, purchasing items in bulk, determining value, and discussing broader commercial topics. Lisa Wilson Waciega, in her 1987 article, "A 'Man of Business,'" uses probate and estate records of dozens of widows in the Philadelphia area to demonstrate women's comprehension of their financial situation. She concludes that most women inheriting property had the knowledge to conduct business and the trust of their husbands that they would continue to run the family farm or enterprise successfully.[10] Using two pools of data – the wills of Chester farmers and Philadelphia merchants and business owners – Waciega finds essentially the same pattern repeated for both: in the late-eighteenth century, husbands left their widows the land, property, and capital to continue their businesses with the belief that they were capable of doing so. She argues, "a wife often functioned as a silent partner … [and] frequently understood the investment process and the full extent of the family's holdings."[11] Noting that there are fewer wills available for wealthy families,

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[9] A great deal of research on female businesswomen has focused on the greater Philadelphia and New York areas. See note 4 above. One could suggest that, because these were more liberal and cosmopolitan cities, women had greater freedoms and opportunities than in other locations. However, female merchants were also notable in Boston, a city that was smaller and socially more conservative. Ann Dearden, Sarah McNeal, Alice Quick, Sarah Todd, and Mary Purcell have all been memorialized as "she-merchants" who contributed significantly to the eighteenth-century Boston economy. Memorial Plaque, King's Chapel Burial Ground, Boston, Massachusetts.

[10] Lisa Wilson Waceiga, "A 'Man of Business': The Widow of Means in Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1750-1850," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 44, no. 1 (January 1987), 42.

[11] Ibid., 51.

Waciega uses letters and other manuscript sources to show that those women, too, were involved in family finances: "truly wealthy widows knew the nature of their material worth and how to use it…. affluent widows demonstrated familiarity with real estate values, the nuances of stock investments, and even subtle indicators of change in the economy."[12] Interestingly, Waciega shows that women were more than merely capable; some exceeded their husbands' business acumen. By comparing the wills of their husbands and the women themselves, she demonstrates that some women actually increased the value of the family business.[13]

Contemporary sources demonstrate the breadth of many women's economic knowledge in the Revolutionary era. The letters of Eliza Farmer demonstrate her involvement in the running of her family farm and her confidence in discussing larger, national and international, commercial issues.[14] In a series of letters to her nephew Jack Halroyd, a clerk in the Easy India Company in London, she discussed financial concerns both personal and imperial. In 1774, she and her husband bought a farm on the outskirts of Philadelphia, intending to live there while Richard continued his medical practice in the city. Farmer detailed for her nephew the size of their property, what they were planting in each field, and the expected outcome of the harvest. She also discussed the arrangement of the property, its outbuildings, and its capacity as a successful farm.[15]

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[12] Waciega goes on to tell an anecdote about Elizabeth Willing Powel, the widow of Samuel Powel, one of the wealthiest men in Philadelphia. While arguing with a tenant over the timely collection of rent, she told him that "Every Man of business must be sensible,- that if I wish to preserve integrity in my own engagements I take care that others are punctual in their payments to me." Powel made it clear that she understood the correct way to manage her property and would expect to be treated with the same respect as a "Man of business." Elizabeth Powel to Thomas Pichands, 23 May 1811, Powel Collection, Box 4, Folder 3, HSP as quoted in Ibid., 52.
[13] Waceiga, "A 'Man of Business,'" 56, 58.
[14] Eliza Farmer was the wife of successful Philadelphia physician Richard Farmer.
[15] Eliza Farmer to Jack Halroyd, 3 January 1774, Eliza Farmer Letterbook, 1774-1789, Am. 063, HSP.

While one can assume a woman of Farmer's stature was not actively working the land, she clearly knew the scope and worth of their property.

Eliza Farmer also demonstrated sufficient knowledge of imperial commercial issues to advise her nephew on the wisdom of making American business connections. Many colonial enterprises were family affairs, involving multiple generations and extended family members. This included the international wine business; it took many family members to create the connections needed to become a successful merchant and women were as active in those networks as men. In 1774, Jack had recently begun working in the wine trade, and he reached out to his aunt and uncle for help establishing his colonial connections. They arranged for Mr. Swift, a merchant of Philadelphia, to act as selling agent for his imports. Eliza wrote that Swift agreed to sell the wine and send Jack's commission to London, although it would be difficult for him to make as much money selling in the colonies, as the sale price would be much lower than in England. She also informed Jack that he would begin hearing from Swift directly, "when things are settld he should be glad to corespond with you … when there is a free Importation for it will be at a stand very soon in all the Provinces."[16] The 1774 boycott movement was affecting all forms of trade, and Eliza was clearly aware of the challenges it created for her nephew. While Swift was willing to sell the wine already in Philadelphia, he would not contract new business with Jack until the issue of importing goods from England was settled.

By the end of 1774, Philadelphians joined the pre-war boycott movement, and merchants agreed to cease importing British goods at the start of December. Farmer recognized how this affected both family members and the larger economy. Because no

[16] Eliza Farmer to Jack Halroyd, 14 September 1774, Ibid.

further goods would be allowed in from England, her husband would not be able to receive some personal items he had requested that Jack send from London. But more significantly, some merchants would be put out of business altogether. She noted that Watkins, a recent arrival in Philadelphia, "came over in a very bad time as this Non Importation is agreed on[;] business will be at a stand." As a result he chose to close his business rather than face ever increasing debt.[17] By the next summer, the non-importation movement had become a full-scale prohibition against the receipt or sale of any British goods. As a result, as Eliza Farmer noted, "some great many of our merchants have shut up their stores and more [must] soon as all Trade will be stopd the 20th of July."[18]

A decade later, with the war over and regular trade between England and America resumed, Farmer again advised her nephew on both domestic and international affairs. Interestingly, despite having been involved in business for a decade, Jack still sought advice from his aunt about the situation in Philadelphia. In 1785, she wrote, "we have great plenty of all sorts of goods and I believe most of them as cheap as in London and a great deal at Vendue for less then the prime cost[.] [I]n short I believe there is to much goods and to manny Traders."[19] While Jack could presumably have consulted many business associates about the state of trade in Philadelphia, and perhaps did, he clearly trusted his aunt's knowledge and judgment.

Farmer not only wrote her nephew about local business prospects, but also about her concerns over international developments. In autumn 1785, she commented that the United States had seen a good harvest, "which is very lucky for the poor West Indian

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[17] Eliza Farmer to Jack Halroyd, 1 November 1774, Ibid.
[18] Eliza Farmer to Jack Halroyd, 28 June 1775, Ibid.
[19] Eliza Farmer to Jack Halroyd, 21 May 1785, Ibid.

Islands if they will suffor the American Vessels to go there but if the English are such fools to starve their subjects there is other nations in the same distress solicited to be supplyd so that we have some trade."[20] Farmer understood how the American harvest was tied into the international market: if England refused to supply food to the West Indies, then the United States would step in to fill that gap, creating a market for its own supplies and also potentially creating future political or economic allies. She also discussed international business affairs outside the family. In a letter to Mr. John Lewis Stephensin, she commented on Pennsylvania's efforts to forge business ties in Asia, noting "the Merchants [are busy] in setting a Trade to China and the East Indies our state has send out seven or eight at least and they have all made good Voiages and been very well received."[21] It is noteworthy that in a time when scholars have suggested that the majority of women had little involvement in or understanding of international affairs, Farmer was comfortable commenting on a range of issues, and not only to family members, but also with an associate of her nephew's, whom she was unlikely to have met in person.

Eliza Farmer also seems to have had a full understanding of the complicated wartime changes that affected the financial status of her household. In 1786, Jack appears to have asked for financial assistance and Farmer responded that they wished they could help, but were simply unable. As a consequence of the war, "your Unkle was forced to borrow near 200£ to live on as there was no Money to be got for Rent." Still, they chose "to let the Tennants stay in [order] to keep the soldiers out and when they were gone the rents fell oweing to the great number of duty houses and the great

[20] Eliza Farmer to Jack, Halroyd 2 November 1785, Ibid.
[21] Eliza Farmer to Mr. John Lewis Stephensin, 9 May 1788, Ibid.

depreciation of the Money that when the war was out it would hardly pay the Taxes exclusive of Rent." Once the war was over, due to "such an increase of Inhabitants Rents rose very much by which your Unkle made shift with [illegible] to pay what he borrowed but I am sorry to say what with Rents falling and but indifferently paid … the necessity of borrowing again … about £100." She concludes, "I have been more particular on this bend then I should have been but to lett you see it is not for want of Inclination but Ability that we cannot grant your request."[22] Not only did she demonstrate in-depth understanding of her family finances over the course of the war and its aftermath, but she also presented these monetary troubles as belonging to her and her husband. It was "we," not he, who could not provide the loan.

Eliza Farmer represents the many women of late-colonial Philadelphia who were actively involved in and knowledgeable about their personal finances as well as the larger commercial issues of the city, the empire, and later, the nation. Women were essential to the economy of Philadelphia as consumers, businesswomen, home producers,[23] and taxpayers.[24] They clearly participated in a world that was literally and figuratively much

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[22] Eliza Farmer to Jack Halroyd, 30 October 1786, Ibid.

[23] Historians have paid great attention to women's home production in colonial America. Women saved their family money by processing foodstuffs and clothing at home and added to their household coffers by selling produce, dairy, and meat at local markets. This contribution to the household income was extremely important for economic viability, especially in rural areas and for lower income families. For examples, see Joan R. Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World: Women in Revolutionary America 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Joan M. Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750-1850* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986); Julia Cherry Spruill, *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972); Rolla M. Tyron, *Household Manufactures in the United States, 1640-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1917); and, Sarah Hand Meacham, *Every Home a Distillery: Alcohol, Gender, and Technology in the Colonial Chesapeake* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

[24] The question of women as taxpayers is an interesting one. If we assume that coverture was absolute, then women should not have been able to own or control land independently. Any property they inherited would have been overseen by a male relative or legal proxy. However, if we look at the primary sources, we find women repeatedly paying taxes. Both Deborah Morris and Mary Coates paid land, poor, and lamp taxes. Morris inherited some property and bought some herself, demonstrating that women were able to transact the business necessary to manage property. As they were the ones taxed, it is also clear that the state saw them, not their male relatives, as the responsible parties. See Coates and Reynell Family Papers,

larger than the domestic sphere. And what is significant is that while modern Americans might be surprised by the scope of colonial women's economic participation, Farmer's contemporaries were not.[25]

Frances May Manges argues quite convincingly that the fact that female entrepreneurs' advertisements appeared in Philadelphia newspapers for decades without comment and that their businesses were widely patronized and successful, sometimes also for decades, is proof that their presence in the city's marketplace was totally commonplace. She writes, "the colonial businesswomen who were mentioned in the newspaper quietly carried on their economic activities without fanfare or without even attracting general interest. They appear to have been accepted as equals in business." Moreover, "there [is no] evidence of women asking for more than a continuance of patronage; they asked for no special treatment and got none."[26] So common were female tavernkeepers that many advertisements that mentioned them did not even feel the need to specify that they were in business; they simply

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1677-1930, Collection #140, Series VII – Morris Family, b. Deborah Morris financial papers, 1752-1793, vol. 126 Receipt Book 1788-1793, HSP and Coates and Reynell Family Papers, 1677-1930, Collection #140, Series V – Other Coates Family Members, h. Additional family member, 1706-1759, vol. 119, Mary Coates receipt book (140B) 1745-1759, HSP. Elizabeth Drinker's diary also provides evidence that women purchased and controlled land. In 1759, she went with her uncle to "sign a Deed for a Lot in Mary-Land" and the next year her sister "went out this Afternoon of arrents," that is, to collect rents. It certainly appears that the Sandwith sisters owned property and managed the business of renting it independently. See 22 February 1759 and 30 December 1760, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, ed. Elaine Forman Crane, vol. 1 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991). Frances May Manges, Patricia Cleary, Elisabeth Dexter, and Claudia Goldin all provide evidence of women appearing on Philadelphia's tax roles. See Frances May Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia" (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1958); Patricia A. Cleary, "'She Merchants' of Colonial America: Women and Commerce on the Eve of the Revolution" (PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 1989); Elisabeth Anthony Dexter, *Colonial Women of Affairs: Women in Business and the Professions in America Before 1776*, 2nd edition (Clifton, NJ: Augustus M. Kelley, 1972); and, Goldin, "The Economic Status of Women in the Early Republic." Female taxpayers are a topic ripe for examination and would provide valuable insight into how they functioned as legal and business entities.

[25] There were, of course, some people who objected to women working in any non-domestic capacity, but they were not the norm. They also tended to be people appealing to an elite ideal of femininity and not those concerned with the lives and livelihoods of actual women.

[26] Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 119.

> notified colonists of important business meetings, real estate sales, or auctions 'at the house of _____' or merely 'at _____'s.' Since coffeehouses and taverns were business centers, meetings or auctions 'at the house of' frequently referred to a tavern.[27]

Clearly, it was not especially noteworthy that women ran those taverns. By the time of the American Revolution, female shoppers and vendors, retailers and workers were as normal a part of the commercial realm as their male counterparts. As fully integrated members of the commercial public, women wielded power and influence through the money they spent, the style they established, and the centrality of their businesses to the city's economic diversity and health.

Women as Consumers

Like their commercial knowledge, women's shopping patterns in late-colonial Philadelphia involved far more than just domestic matters. Women purchased a huge range of items; sometimes spent large sums of money; traveled throughout the city seeking goods; and, even if they bought nothing, used shopping as a social occasion. A close analysis of women's consumption patterns indicates a complex and intriguing range of options and actions. It becomes clear that shopping comprised a large portion of many women's time and involved them more widely in the commercial community than previously believed.

Female consumers, married, single, and widowed, frequented Philadelphia shops, markets, artisans, peddlers, wholesalers, and vendues (public auctions) to buy a staggering array of goods and services.[28] They visited artisans' workshops and

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[27] Ibid., xvii.

[28] "A sharp thorn to the shopkeepers in the latter half of the [eighteenth] century was the vendue. In the early days the auction had confined itself customarily to the sale of homes or the effects of a deceased person, but in the later period when merchants could not dispose of their goods through established shops

wholesalers' warehouses, did business in taverns and public houses, and interacted with laborers of all classes. Their consumption practices brought them into contact with the full range of Philadelphia society. The average female shopper went out almost daily to purchase an item or two, whether it was food from the market, cloth from a shop, cookware from a peddler, or home furnishings and embellishments from a craftsman or wholesaler.[29] Women also spent much more money than was long assumed. They certainly made many small purchases, but the receipt books of a number of Philadelphia women confirm that they also had access to and spent exceedingly large sums of money. Moreover, shopping was not restricted to practical tasks. Women, especially single women, appear to have shopped for pleasure, socializing with their friends and visiting stores as much to see what was fashionable as to buy any goods.

The ledger books and diaries of several Philadelphia women offer important windows into their purchasing and shopping habits. Differences are clear based on class and marital status, but commonalities exist as well. Women with leisure time shopped frequently and the majority of their purchases were domestic items such as food, cloth, notions, and accessories. However, they also spent money on services and labor to maintain their homes, on higher priced items such as bulk foodstuffs, furniture, and conveyances; and, they settled debts for old purchases that had been made on credit. The account book of Deborah Morris illustrates the consumption patterns of elite Philadelphia in the 1760s. Morris, a single woman of considerable property, tracked her expenditures

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they put them up at auction. When small lots of goods were sold, the auction became the competitor of the shop and consequently obnoxious to the majority of small shopkeepers. Pros and cons of the value of auctions filled the press. The agrarian interest which favored vendues was dominant, so the Assembly did not prohibit them." Ibid., 43.

[29] Sam Bass Warner, Jr., *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), 19.

on both goods and services.[30] The ledger appears to have been put together retroactively – the entries are not in chronological order and do not always include the amount she spent on any given item. Nonetheless, it provides a sense of what she purchased on a regular basis.

Morris recorded two primary categories of purchases – foodstuffs and fabric. She frequently bought common items such as Bohea and green tea, coffee, and flour, as well as more expensive foods like chocolate and sugar.[31] Philadelphia boasted dozens of locations selling these common items, so there is no way to know where she shopped or if she routinely frequented the same stores. Her clothing-related purchases are more illuminating. She bought basic fabrics such as cotton, muslin, and calico that could have been purchased at a wide variety of retailers. However, as befitted her elite status, Morris also purchased expensive items, such as Prussia blue, velvet, silk, and printed or stamped linen, that would have been sold only at more upscale retailers.[32] In 1764, she also purchased spectacles and a beaver hat, two items that were not sold at many retailers. Eyeglasses could only be bought at specialty stores such as the one owned by Hannah Breitnall, which sold a wide variety of ocular items including empty frames, eyeglasses, magnifying glasses, telescopes, and something apparently akin to a home microscope. Her advertisement in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* indicates that these goods were hard to come by; she took orders via the mail and indicated that she had no competition in the

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[30] Deborah Morris was the daughter of Philadelphia brewer Anthony Morris. Never married, she inherited a farm in New Jersey and owned property in Philadelphia itself as well as in rural Bucks County. She managed these properties herself, with the assistance of her nephew, Anthony Shoemaker. Finding Aid, Collection 140, Coates and Reynell Family Papers, 1677-1930, HSP.
[31] Coates and Reynell Family Papers, 1677-1930, Collection #140, Series VII – Morris Family, b. Deborah Morris financial papers, 1752-1793, vol. 125 Account Book, 1760-1769, HSP.
[32] Ibid.

Philadelphia area.[33] The diversity of items she bought suggests that Deborah Morris ranged widely through Philadelphia's market district, buying specific items that she either desired or needed.

Morris not only purchased goods available for sale in the city, but custom ordered items from England. In August 1766, she received a letter from John Whinney in London informing her that he had shipped the bale of linen she ordered on the *Hope*. He agreed to meet the price she asked, indicating that there had been a negotiation over the cost. In an intriguing comment, he also proposed to ship the saddles she had ordered on the *Ann & Eliza*.[34] Historians have generally argued that women bought less expensive items to be used in the home while men dealt with animals and equipage.[35] If single, some did act through a male representative, but it is clear that at least one woman had the money and confidence to special order saddles directly from England, and a London merchant gladly filled her requests.

Morris also recorded payment for services rendered, at least twice to other women. Many colonial women operated businesses that provided services such as laundry, mending, and making clothing, especially for the wealthy who could afford to outsource that labor. In 1760, Morris paid Mary Car for mending and that same year paid her cousin Molly Jones for sewing and dyeing a short cloak. There are multiple

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[33] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 30 March 1758 and 16 May 1765. See also, Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 53-4 and Dexter, *Colonial Women of Affairs*, 29.
[34] John Whinney to Deborah Morris, 16 August 1766, Coates and Reynell Family Papers, 1677-1930, Collection #140, Series VII – Morris Family, a. Deborah Morris correspondence, 1763-1815, Box 63, Folder 1, HSP.
[35] For a discussion of the gendered differences in eighteenth century consumption and the notion that men were mostly responsible for purchasing items such as carriages, horses, tobacco, and labor-related goods, see Amanda Vickery, "His & Hers: Gender, Consumption and Household Accounting in Eighteenth-Century England," *Past & Present* 1 (2006 Supplement), 12-38; Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009); and, Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

references to settling accounts with Jones for cloth, food, snuff, alcohol, and clothing-related services, which suggests that she might have run a store as well as providing labor.[36] Many women who had fabric shops also sold small amounts of dry goods and milliners sometimes operated out of stores.[37] It is likely, therefore, that Molly Jones was a multifaceted businesswoman who benefited from the needs of her wealthier cousin.

The receipt book of Mary Coates provides another view of women's buying habits in pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia. Wealthy and married, her consumption patterns differ somewhat from Deborah Morris's, but there are also significant similarities.[38] Coates' receipt book, kept between 1745 and 1765, reveals a woman who spent money throughout the commercial world of Philadelphia – on goods and services, in shops, at vendues, and directly to laborers. Although a wife and mother who had a man in her life to handle the business side of things, Coates spent significant sums of money and was responsible for a much larger portion of household expenditures than one might assume. Her book also demonstrates that shopping for goods and services took her all over the city and brought her into contact with a wide array of people.[39]

Mary Coates's consumption pattern was far more varied than Morris's. She spent money on fabric, notions, and foodstuffs, but also bought a wide variety of other items.

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[36] Coates and Reynall Family Papers, 1677-1930, Collection #140, Series VII – Morris Family, b. Deborah Morris financial papers, 1752-1793, vol. 125 Account Book, 1760-1769, HSP.
[37] Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 48-51, 107-8, 118.
[38] Mary Coates and her husband John Reynell headed a very successful Quaker family of professionals and philanthropists. Mary was born in Philadelphia and married Reynell, an English merchant who emigrated to Philadelphia. John dealt mostly in manufactured goods from England, sugar and liquor from the West Indies, and raw materials from around the colonies. They had no surviving children and adopted Mary's nephews – Thomas, Josiah, and Samuel, Jr. – after her younger brother Samuel died in 1748. Mary was a wealthy married woman raising three boys at the time she kept this receipt book. Finding Aid, Collection 140, Coates and Reynell Family Papers, 1677-1930, HSP.
[39] Coates and Reynall Family Papers, 1677-1930, Collection #140, Series V – Other Coates Family Members, h. Additional family member, 1706-1759, vol. 119, Mary Coates receipt book (140B) 1745-1759, HSP.

Her record book thus presents a detailed picture of the complex economic life of a married woman in pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia.[40] While it is impossible to know for sure, some entries in Coates's receipt book raise the possibility that she owned a store, or that she sometimes purchased items for her husband's business. At times she spent enormous amounts of money on large quantities of dry goods: in 1749, she spent £16.5s. on fifty pounds of tea and £17.11s. on a hogshead of rum; in 1750, £59.4s. on two-thirds of a chest of tea on credit; in 1757, £19.4s. for cask of snuff; and, in 1759, £91.14s.3d for tea.[41] While these purchases could have been made for home consumption, Coates might also have been buying goods for resale. Either way, her spending does reveal two crucial and often misunderstood aspects of women's consumption – that they had access to large sums of money and that they could act on credit. Clearly, women did both, even married women.

Coates spent a great deal of money on domestic services and manual labor. Her records give an interesting insight to the variety of laborers with whom a colonial woman came into contact. Over the years, she paid for nurses for her children; tutors for their education; and, washing, ironing, mending, and clothes-making for the entire household. Interestingly, in addition to paying for general "schooling," Coates also paid for her daughter Mary to learn the mantua trade. One time she specifically mentioned paying the wages of a female employee, Christian Wigmore, but did not specify what kind of work

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[40] Patricia Cleary notes a Molly Coates who ran a shop in Philadelphia in the same period the receipt book covers; however, Cleary states that this woman was a widow who passed her business on to her daughter. Records on the Mary Coates who kept the receipt book indicate that while she died before her husband, she had no surviving daughters. It is unclear if Cleary is referring to the same woman or if there were perhaps relatives with similar names. Patricia Cleary, "'She Will Be in the Shop': Women's Sphere of Trade in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia and New York," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 109, no. 3 (July 1995), 181.

[41] Coates and Reynall Family Papers, 1677-1930, Collection #140, Series V – Other Coates Family Members, h. Additional family member, 1706-1759, vol. 119, Mary Coates receipt book (140B) 1745-1759, HSP.

she did. Twice she mentions paying for baking – once for bread and once for hoecakes. While these kinds of domestic expenses might be expected, Coates also paid for manual labor that falls outside the realm of what has been understood as female consumption. She paid workers to re-shingle her home, deliver and chop wood, haul sand, split rails and fix fences at their barn, mend windows, white wash the house, and plaster the walls at the family's tavern in Frankford, Pennsylvania.[42]

Sometimes Coates was far more specific about the work she contracted, revealing the constant upkeep required for both home and tavern. In 1753, she paid just over £1 for a worker to make a sash window – the money paid for the labor and the "use of wood screws, nails, staples and a bit of scanbling for the house." In 1755, she paid for eighteen "Lode of Stone [delivered] at the Tavern at Frankford" and, in 1758, she paid for "lime sand bricks, mortar for fastening and brick layers work" to repair a chimney.[43] Coates interacted with a variety of laborers working at her home and other family properties and demonstrated an understanding of the cost of labor and materials. While it is possible that her husband arranged to have the work done, Coates was clearly involved in overseeing the labor and paying the bills.

Mary Coates's receipt book also shows that women in pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia purchased goods on credit and settled debts with estates. The letter of the common law practice of coverture indicates that married women should not be able to do either since they were legally unable to act independently of their husbands. Even single women were expected to use a legal proxy. However, in reality, women controlled money, were extended credit, and settled their own accounts. Coates settled debts for

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[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

consumables bought on credit, twice paying more than £50. Once she settled an account for £91 worth of tea that had been delivered the month before. Given these large amounts of money, one can assume she bought the tea at a time when she did not have that much cash on hand, but was extended credit because it was known that she would be able to pay in the future. On two occasions she recorded settling unspecified debts, once with the estate of William Lawrance and once with the estate of Rebecca Owen.[44] While neither amount was large, it clearly shows that women were extended credit and then personally paid off their debt.

Elizabeth Sandwith Drinker's diary illustrates other aspects of women's consumer experience. It offers a sense of the items on which a young single woman spent her money, and, later, how a married woman of means organized her consumption. Primarily, she bought clothing and needlework-related items: worsted, silk, and ducape fabrics, crewel thread for embroidery, knitting needles, buckles, handkerchiefs, and stays.[45] The diary is even more illuminating about the frequency, social aspects, and nature of women's shopping. This pastime took up a large amount of her time in the years before she was married. As Elizabeth Sandwith, an unmarried, relatively wealthy young woman, she visited the commercial district frequently, sometimes two or three times in a week, often to purchase just a single item. She and her sister Mary then lived with the family of their uncle Thomas Say; presumably their aunt bought the food and

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[44] Ibid.

[45] For examples of Drinker's shopping habits, see 13 and 16 January 1759, 23 March 1759, 3 May 1759, 13 July 1759, 23 August 1759, 6 November 1759, 2 January 1760, 28 February 1760, 18 and 25 March 1760, 5 May 1760, and 12 June 1760, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.

other items needed by the household.[46] Elizabeth was free to spend her time and money on diversions she chose, and she spent many days socializing and shopping.[47]

Sandwith most often shopped with friends as part of a larger pattern of visiting, tea drinking, and socializing. She recorded days when she "went after Dinner to Stores with M Parr, who with Cat Morgan spent the Afternoon & part of the Evening with us" or

> went out this Morning with H Callender, call'd on B Moode, who went with us to Corry's store to buy Thread, went from thence to view the burnt Buildings on Society-Hill, then walk'd to Uncle Jervis's Pasture, stop'd there, from thence We went to Anthony Morriss Junr. Dinn'd there.[48]

It seems that it was also common for young Quaker women to go shopping following their Sunday meeting: "went after meeting, home with S Wharton, call'd at Thos. Willimss, shoemaker, went after to Bennings the Staymaker" and another time "went after meeting home with Nelly Moode, who went with me to Carrys Store."[49] One might expect that women would spend the Sabbath in quieter pursuits, but it seems that Drinker and her friends often spent time with their peers, going into town and visiting the shops.

Another interesting revelation from Drinker's diary is the frequency with which she and her friends went shopping, but apparently did not purchase anything. Since she specifically mentions what she bought in most entries, it is likely that when she does not mention buying anything she went home empty handed. Among her detailed entries are several like the following where no purchases are mentioned: "went with N Parr to Shops;" "went in the Afternoon with M Parr, to M. Burrows,s and R Steels and several

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[46] Elaine Forman Crane, introduction to *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, xi.
[47] For representative periods, see January 1759, January 1760, and March 1760, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.
[48] 26 December 1758 and 26 January 1760, Ibid.
[49] 28 February 1760 and 22 May 1760, Ibid.

other Shops;" and, "took a walk this Morning to several Shops."[50] One might think this habit of window shopping and socializing was confined to young single women, but even after her engagement and marriage, Drinker continued this practice. In 1760, the year of her engagement, she "went in the Afternoon to S Whartons, took a walk with Sally, to several Shops" and following her marriage, "Went to Town, had our Ironing done up, step'd into Rachd. Waln's."[51] Clearly, shopping and socializing in town continued to be part of Drinker's life. The one noticeable difference is that, once married, she began to mention going into town to accomplish chores – such as dropping off clothes to be ironed – as well as for the pure pleasure of shopping.

The diaries of two other young women in Revolutionary-era Philadelphia reveal similar patterns of social shopping. Sarah Eve recorded, "in the afternoon Anna and I went out to look for some Calico for Mrs. Smith, we were to return immediately, but instead of that, we staid and drank Tea with Betsey Guest."[52] She and Anna thus turned an errand into a chance to have tea with friends. Ann Warder detailed a similar pattern in the years after the war. She wrote, "Early in the forenoon Cousin Nelly Parker and self went shopping and visiting – called at Tommy Fisher's, Nicholas Waln's and Hessy Fisher's, which nearly finished the morning and we had only time before dinner to go to Richard Vaux's for some purple gloves."[53] The following month, she noted

> On coming home to dinner found sister Morris had desired my company to dinner, therefore went there and dined on nice partridge pie, soon after which Lydia and I went out shopping. I had better success than on a former occasion –

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[50] 20 January, 4 May, and 12 November 1750, Ibid.
[51] 30 May 1760 and 19 August 1763, Ibid.
[52] 1 February 1773, Sarah Eve, "Extracts from the Journal of Sarah Eve," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 5, no. 1 (1881), 24.
[53] 4 November 1786, Ann Warder, "Extracts from the Diary of Ann Warder," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 18, no. 1 (1894), 54.

> wanting a piece of purple ribbon to let out a mitt, went to fifteen shops before obtaining it.[54]

For young women in the decades before and after the Revolution, shopping and socializing with friends was a key aspect of life. The diary entries of Sandwith Drinker, Eve, and Warder all illustrate that women had a great deal of control over how they spent their leisure time – they chose where to go, with whom to spend their time, how to spend at least some of their money, and which diversions to pursue.

Shopping appears to have been an especially pleasurable way for women to spend time outside the home. The diaries and letters of women like Elizabeth Drinker and Rebecca Shoemaker certainly make clear that wealthier women spent a great deal of time socializing in their own homes and those of others. Over meals, tea, coffee, or just conversation, women interacted with their friends and relatives on a daily basis. But shopping offered a different way of socializing because it took place outside the home. Women "reinforced their ties to one another through the joint pursuit of an activity they enjoyed. Indeed, shopping habits may have been more than an echo of the informal visiting patterns … in urban areas, shopping together may have been an intrinsic part of those practices."[55] Shopping not only allowed friends to spend time together, it also allowed them to interact with of people outside of their social circle. They visited shops run by both women and men, talking about fashion, commerce, and politics. They visited laborers, artisans, and wholesalers, giving them a chance to socialize with Philadelphians outside of their usual orbit.

In the last half of the eighteenth century, shopping served as a key sphere of sociability for women; they could spend time alone or with their friends, move around

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[54] 21 December 1786, Ibid., 58.
[55] Cleary, "She Will Be in the Shop," 191-2.

town, engage in conversation with a variety of people, and educate themselves on the commercial and social trends of the moment. Patricia Cleary argues that "[shopping] could be characterized as having elements of incipient female networks … [and] provided well-to-do women with an acceptable public pursuit, one of the few they could engage in without male chaperones."[56] The pre-Revolutionary boycott movement, which will be discussed at length in the next chapter, relied heavily on female consumers and gave their presence in the market a heightened political importance. Shoppers would have to decide whether or not to participate in the boycott, whether to patronize pro-British retailers, and whether to forgo the necessities and luxuries that would eventually become scarce. Their participation in the British world of consumption provided the basis for seeing themselves as integral to the political developments of the empire. In turn, their political decisions about consumption shaped their understanding of themselves and their communities and had far-reaching implications for their daily lives. Still, long before they had to contend with the political implications of shopping, women took full advantage of the opportunities to move throughout the city and socialize in all-female and mixed sex groups that took them beyond the confines of their sitting rooms and family circles.

Women as Entrepreneurs

Some female consumers were also entrepreneurs as women throughout the colonial period participated in a variety of businesses and trades, most commonly shopkeeping, tavernkeeping, and assorted artisanal crafts. At the time of the Revolution, Joan Gundersen estimates that about thirty percent of Philadelphia women were in

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[56] Ibid., 191.

business – half in retail or property management and the other half as artisans, boarding house keepers, and teachers. In the years leading up to the war, roughly one-fifth of taverns and one-third of shops, at any given time, were run by women. The records are sometimes unclear, but it seems that many women ran businesses out of their homes – any extra space could be used for a shop or tavern, and some women sold food and drink directly from their kitchens.[57] A growing body of evidence suggests that historians have underestimated the scope of women's access to business. Some scholars have posited that while women did run shops and taverns, their enterprises "tended to be small because they had less access to the developing credit markets necessary for expansion and less opportunity to make trading voyages to establish credit, connections and sources. In addition, many businesswomen were uncomfortable with too public a stance."[58] This may have been the case for some women, but clearly many women operated on credit, ran large and prosperous businesses, and openly advertised in the city's newspapers. A lack of records about most of the female-run stores, taverns, and craftshops identified to date make it hard to estimate the size of the average woman's business and to impute motive to those that were smaller or more temporary. Perhaps some women had a hard time getting credit and building a thriving business, or perhaps they chose to keep their businesses small. However, given the impressive number of women in colonial Philadelphia who ran some sort of establishment in the years leading up the Revolution,

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[57] Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 81.

[58] Ibid., 83. Wayne Bodle represents the typical view of historians regarding colonial women's access to credit and other staples of commerce is this statement about a widow's economic options: "A boarding house would have been a plausible enterprise for her to have engaged in. It would have combined at least a subsistence income with her own shelter. Perhaps most importantly, it would have avoided precisely those elements of commerce (credit, inventories, contracts, suits to enforce contracts) most likely to have run afoul of [her] residual disabilities under coverture." See, Wayne Bodle, "Jane Bartram's 'Application': Her Struggle for Survival, Stability, and Self-Determination in Revolutionary Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 115 (April 1991), 202.

one must consider the possibility that female-run businesses were not only accepted, but considered essential for the city's commercial district to flourish.

Women's businesses existed in a variety of configurations – some ran them alone, some with their spouse, some with their siblings, and some with their children. Most historians have focused on widows who entered or continued in business to support their families, but it is clear that married women also ran businesses independently. Interestingly, sometimes wives ran businesses from which their husbands were prohibited. For example, colonial law prevented Pennsylvania magistrates from selling liquor, but their wives could legally participate in the trade and there is evidence that at least one magistrate ordered the alcohol while his wife sold it.[59] Men who travelled frequently also left their wives in charge of businesses at home. Benjamin Franklin's wife Deborah, with the help of several other women, ran the family shop while Franklin pursued other interests and printer Mary Katherine Goddard rose to prominence while her brother and co-owner traveled as a land surveyor.[60] While we know the biographies of a few businesswomen, the majority remains anonymous. We know what enterprises they pursued and sometimes we know a bit about how successful they were; but for most, all we know is that they participated in the Philadelphia market.

The likeliest business opportunity for women was keeping a shop. Female shopkeepers represented a healthy percentage of the market and participated in all levels of trade from small home-based venues to large, luxury ventures. Scholars have rightly assumed that women primarily sold dry goods, groceries, and millinery, but this does not

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[59] Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 80-1.

[60] In fact, Franklin intentionally hired girls to help his wife, thinking that learning how to run a shop and do basic math would help them on the marriage market and make them better able to participate in business in the future. Ibid., 81 and 85.

tell us everything about the range of choice women encountered when going into business. These kinds of stores were the most common in colonial Philadelphia in general, so it is not necessarily indicative of female preference or the items available to them that the majority of women's businesses sold these goods.[61] Historians Frances May Manges and Patricia Cleary conducted in-depth studies into female shopkeepers in eighteenth-century New York and Philadelphia and have identified more than 300 women running a wide variety of stores between 1740 and 1775. There are significant similarities between the two cities, but more than half those women worked in Philadelphia.[62]

Female shopkeepers acquired goods through the same networks as their male counterparts. They ordered items from international importers, visited wholesalers, purchased items from other retailers (both male and female), and bought goods at vendue.[63] Visiting a wholesaler's warehouse brought merchants into contact with other retailers, giving them an opportunity to compare notes about what goods were popular and what items they ought to supply. Wholesalers' records also indicate that their warehouses were informal meeting places for merchants, male and female. These business circles did not necessarily overlap with a woman's social or religious worlds,

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[61] Historians who have assumed that women specialized in these fields have also argued that they were forced into them because they were deemed the most acceptable for women. That argument does not hold up in light of the number of women who sold traditionally non-female goods such as hardware, liquor, and fur and the women who ran expensive, luxury shops. Manges, "Women Shopkeers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 25, 43 and Cleary, "'She Will Be in the Shop,'" 187-8.

[62] For their in-depth and extraordinarily illuminating work, see Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," Cleary, "'She Will Be in the Shop,'" 183-4, and Cleary, "'She Merchants' of Colonial America." However, there were more female shopkeepers in New York and Philadelphia than these historians identified – neither of them, for instance, mention the feather business run by Elizabeth and Mary Sandwith or the shop run by Lydia Darragh. Thus, we can assume that their numbers are loose estimates.

[63] The records of wholesaler James Logan show that he sold goods to upwards of sixty-five women in the middle years of the eighteenth century. Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 44-5.

broadening the segments of society and the perspectives a shopkeeper might encounter.[64] Vendues provided another opportunity for expanding one's horizons. It appears that literally anything could be sold at a vendue, from land and houses to furniture and household goods to livestock and contracts on servants. They were attended by individuals looking to make purchases and businesspeople hoping to gain stock, making them an opportunity for entrepreneurial Philadelphians to meet and mingle.[65]

Female shopkeepers also likely obtained goods via in-kind trades. Urban women traded more expensive, imported items such as tea and coffee with rural women in exchange for produce, meat, and dairy items.[66] What is unknown is whether the women trading for farm products were consuming those goods themselves or selling them in shops. Women frequently sold groceries – either in dedicated stores or as a sideline in dry goods and specialty shops – and it is certainly plausible that they acquired some foodstuffs through trade.

Shopkeepers relied on word of mouth to bring in customers. They attempted to build reputations for two things – selling quality staple goods and being up-to-date with British trends and fashions. Merchant Peter Anspach explained the need for a good reputation in the highly competitive Philadelphia market. If you were known to stock high-quality basic goods, then you were far more likely to bring in business and be able to sell more expensive items:

> Sugar Tea coffee & Som other Trifling thing is only the one thing that Brings a store Customers … Especially if we have good Sugar Tea & Coffee then we soon will have the Towns Custom & then whenever their Friends Comes to Town and

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[64] Cleary, "'She Will Be in the Shop,'"195 and 196.
[65] Ibid., 193 and Esther Singleton, *Social New York Under the Georges, 1714-1776: Houses, Streets and Country Homes, with Chapters on Fashions, Furniture, China, Plate and Manners* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1902), 84.
[66] Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 70.

> Wants to Buy Anything then they Always will recommend to that Store where they get their things."[67]

In addition to a reputation for a stable and quality inventory, merchants wanted to be known for carrying fashionable goods. Despite being an ocean away from the metropole, Philadelphians considered themselves to be thoroughly English and wanted to keep up with trends in the home country. Many female shopkeepers advertised themselves as "arbiters of taste with metropolitan connections" and hired women with fashionable associations to reinforce this image. Shop women thus created demand for the items they carried and reinforced important notions of gentility and taste.[68] They were careful to both purchase goods that were already considered fashionable and to advertise the wares they had as being extremely stylish, reinforcing their reputation for selling the most desirable goods.

Female retailers ran a wide variety of shops. At some point in the decades before the Revolution, women appear to have participated in the sale of nearly every conceivable consumer good. The majority of women sold dry goods, groceries, and millinery items, but they covered the gamut of retail options. Many women who sold the more common consumables ran small stores, although some appear to have controlled major operations. Many female shopkeepers did not specify what goods were for sale at their shops, but a number of women advertised that their businesses concentrated on one or two basic items: Mary Gordon, Mary Oswald, and Cornelia Smith all sold tea; Deborah Connolly, Mary Oswald, and Widow Penrose sold molasses; and Mary

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[67] Peter Anspach to John Mitchell, 14 February 1773, John Mitchell Papers, Box 2, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania as quoted in Thomas M. Doerflinger, "Farmers and Dry Goods in the Philadelphia Market Area, 1750-1800" in *The Economy of Early America: The Revolutionary Period, 1763-1790*, eds. Ronald Hoffman, John J. McCusker, Russell R. Menard, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville, Va.: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1988), 171.

[68] Cleary, "'She Will Be in the Shop,'" 187-8, 200.

Anderson, Hannah Weston, and Ann Powell advertised only a single item: white wine vinegar, lavender, and garden seeds, respectively.[69]

Other women running general stores clearly maintained a larger inventory. Widow Sharpe advertised that she sold furniture, dry goods, sewing materials, indigo, and "a parcel of Drugs with some chymical Preparations, and a small Box of Instruments belonging to Surgery."[70] Sharpe would have hosted a varied clientele, with people coming in to buy small purchases of food and sewing notions and more expensive items like home furnishings, drugs, and medical supplies. Elizabeth Combs was another merchant whose store likely attracted a wide array of consumers: she sold a variety of common dry goods and textiles such as plain and patterned linen, dimity, and cotton as well as the more unusual sailcloth and sortable shot.[71] Combs not only ran a varied business, but also a long-lived one. Fifteen years after she first advertised her wares, the *Pennsylvania Journal* ran a notice that her creditors should bring in their accounts so that a "dividend" could be made.[72] Jane Kirk also advertised a wide-variety of retail and wholesale groceries, specifically mentioning her competitively low-prices.[73]

Three women sold extremely high-end goods. Mrs. Redmond, over the course of two decades, advertised that her shop carried

> Diamond rings, ear-rings, solitairs, watches, silver tweezers, tooth-pick cases, snuff boxes, patch-boxes, thimbles, buttons, stone-rings set in silver, large knives and forks in cases … All sorts of watch-makers tools and materials, springs, glasses, keys, hands … All sorts of leather and other fans, threads, pins … mahogany tea-chests … spice boxes and powder ditto … All sorts of childrens toys, dogs and sheep, and a variety of other goods too tedious to mention.[74]

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[69] Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 47.
[70] *American Weekly Mercury*, 14 April 1737 and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 20 July 1738 and 3 April 1740.
[71] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 11 December 1740 and 15 January 1741.
[72] *Pennsylvania Journal*, 20 January 1757.
[73] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 4 July 1765.
[74] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 12 April 1735.

In later years, her advertisements were less lengthy and specific, but she still carried fur hats, japanware, high-end clothing embellishments, and diamond rings.[75] In 1774, sisters Charity and Lucy Leonard ran a store that advertised exclusively imported items from Europe and East India. While they did not specify precisely the goods they sold, their advertisement indicates a range of unusual, international products.[76]

A fair number of Philadelphia women ran less exclusive specialty stores selling a range of items far outside the traditional realm of female merchandizing; books, apothecary wares, and hardware provide four prominent examples. At least three women ran bookshops at various times in pre-war Philadelphia. In 1768, Sarah Goddard ran an extensive advertisement for her business in which she claimed to sell a variety of publications including the *Laws of Pennsylvania*, *History of the Province of Massachusetts Bay*, *Study of the Lord's Supper* and other religious works, a tract of *the Proprietary of Imposing Taxes in the Colonies by Act of Parliament*, and an essay on *Oeconomy*.[77] Widow Anna Maria Ott specialized in German-language books and advertised throughout the 1760s and '70s in Philadelphia's German newspapers. She specialized in foreign-language religious materials, although she sold some English-language Bibles and schoolbooks, and, later, second-hand books. She also carried writing paper and other, unspecified, goods.[78] Ott appears to have run a successful shop for over a decade and advertised more frequently than many female merchants. Cornelia Bradford ran the Sign of the Bible, one of the best-known bookstores in pre-war

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[75] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 1 January and 25 April 1754.
[76] *Pennsylvania Packet*, 15 August 1774.
[77] *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, 5 December 1768.
[78] *Der Wochentliche Philadelphische Staatsbote*, 14 October 1765, 12 January 1768, 23 May 1769, 6 November 1770, 9 April 1771, 7 January 1772, 16 November 1773, 15 November 1774, and 9 July 1776. See also, Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 55.

Philadelphia. She printed the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and sold Bibles, prayer books, and other religious materials, histories, spelling and arithmetic primers, writing paper and ink, eyeglasses, glue, compasses, and other goods. Bradford ran her business with her husband William, but advertised frequently as an independent merchant.[79]

While bookshops were likely frequented by shoppers of both sexes, two Philadelphia women broke all the historical stereotypes by owning stores specializing in wares traditionally made and sold by men. As early as 1734, Widow Margaret Mankin ran an apothecary shop specializing in imported drugs from London for the "Modern Practice of Physick, being a great variety of the Materia Medica, both simple and compound, Chymical and Galenical, Faithfully prepared."[80] Mary Eddy meanwhile owned a hardware business that specialized in ironmongery and cutlery. Her inventory was extensive; over the course of several years she advertised joiner's, shoemaker's, and watchmaker's tools, glass and earthenware, cutlery, and metalwares such as bits, knives, locks, bellows, compasses, saws, coffin handles, chains, and stirrups. She was so successful that in 1772 she moved into a larger space.[81] Keeping such a business

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[79] *Pennsylvania Journal*, 25 July and 14 August 1746 and 11 September 1755 and *American Weekly Mercury*, 2 December 1742. Sarah Goddard and Cornelia Bradford both became booksellers via their family's printing businesses. William Goddard (Mary's brother) and William Bradford (Cornelia's husband) printed newspapers that backed rival factions in Pennsylvania politics. Given that they were both active into the 1770s, it would be interesting to know if the women considered themselves rivals and if their book selling businesses took on any of the competitiveness of their presses. For more information on their family's rivalry, see Charles S. Olton, *Artisans for Independence: Philadelphia Mechanics and the American Revolution* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1975), 54.

[80] Mankin's advertisements indicate knowledge of both traditional and modern medicine. One can imagine that she sold a range of herbal and chemical compounds. *American Weekly Mercury*, 28 November and 12 December 1734.

[81] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 15 March 1770, 30 October and 7 November 1771, 6 July 1772; *Pennsylvania Chronicle and Universal Advertiser*, 13 July 1773. I have rarely been able to match up records of purchases with specific retailers, but Frances May Manges indicates that fellow-merchant Joseph Pemberton was a frequent patron at Eddy's store, before and following the Revolution. In 1772 and 1773, he spent at least £18 on nails, sash weights, hinges, pulleys, shovels, tongs, bolts, screws, brass knobs, locks, and other unspecified purchases. Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 58.

supplied would have brought Eddy into contact with a variety of artisans and wholesalers far beyond the social strata within which colonial women were thought to move.

Other Philadelphia women ran small specialty shops that fit better with scholars' assumptions, offering wares that probably appealed specifically to female consumers. Between 1772 and 1774, Rebecca Kearney sold chinaware and imported wines and brandies. However, she appears to have been unsuccessful; when she closed her shop in 1774 for "want of business" she also sold the remainder of an indenture on a male employee.[82] Magdalena Kearnes ran a stocking shop, selling men's, women's, and children's worsted stockings, cheap thread stockings for servants, other kinds of hose in a variety of sizes, and worsted thread for mending.[83] From her home, Elizabeth Thomas sold imported bolting cloth of superfine, fine, middling, and coarse texture. Interestingly, unlike most English-speaking female merchants, Thomas advertised in both the English and German press.[84] Sisters Mary and Elizabeth Sandwith also ran a business from the home of their uncle, importing feathers from Ireland. The quality of the feathers is unclear, as is their final purpose (they could have been used for hats, clothing, or mattresses), but it does appear that they inherited the business upon the death of their father.[85] For three years they conducted business with Edward Stephens of Dublin, sending orders, settling accounts, importing feathers, and selling them in Philadelphia.[86]

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[82] *Pennsylvania Journal*, 9 July 1772; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 9 July and 14 October 1772, 14 April and 11 May 1774; and, *Pennsylvania Packet*, 6 July 1772.
[83] *Philadelphia Journal*, 20 April 1758.
[84] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 13 August 1767 and 11 April 1771; *Pennsylvania Packet*, 11 November 1771; *Der Wochentliche Philadelphische Staatsbote*, 18 September 1770 and 26 May 1772. See also, Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 53.
[85] Crane, introduction to *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, xi.
[86] See 18 October, 5 November and 27 November 1759, 23 February, 27 February, 4 July, 31 July, and 7 August 1760, and 22 August 1762, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.

Perhaps the largest merchandizing effort run by a woman in colonial Philadelphia was the store co-owned by Elizabeth Baynton and George Morgan. Advertising as Baynton and Morgan, in 1775 they opened a business that sold liquors, bar lead, candles, various groceries and dry goods, playing cards, and gunpowder. They quickly expanded into the far more lucrative business of supplying merchant ships and sea travellers with all manner of sea stores as well as wholesaling wheat and wagon flour. The only time the name Baynton appeared in the Philadelphia press, other than in advertising for Elizabeth's business, was in a 1775 advertisement for the sale of 30,000 acres of land on behalf of the late partnership of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan. Later that same year, the widowed Elizabeth began a new business with her husband's former associate, indicating that Morgan must have had a high level of confidence in her as a business partner.[87] He certainly was not compelled to accept Elizabeth Baynton as an associate so it speaks highly of her business skills that Morgan chose to begin a new enterprise with the widow.

Many women inherited businesses upon their husbands' deaths, and they often advertised to assure their patrons that they would continue to run the store. However, entirely female-owned shops that passed to daughters and sisters upon the deaths of their original owners were not unheard of. Sisters Lydia, Sarah, and Elizabeth Hyde ran a dry goods business significant enough that they signed the 1765 non-importation agreement. In the advertisement announcing Sarah's death and estate settlement, her sisters

[87] Interestingly, Baynton and Morgan were one of the few businesses specifying the price of the goods they sold in their advertisement, a practice that would become far more common going into the 19th century. *Pennsylvania Journal*, 15 February 1775; *Pennsylvania Packet*, 27 February 1775; and, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 5 July 1775.

mentioned that they would remain in business as they always had.[88] Similarly, sisters Mary and Ann Pearson, also signers of the non-importation agreement, ran a large and prosperous dry goods and textile enterprise.[89] In 1765, Mary married William Symonds and the sisters dissolved their partnership, although both continued to operate shops. Mary quickly became a widow and ran her store independently until her death in 1773.[90] Ann Pearson never married and operated an independent millinery business. She is unusual in that she not only imported textiles from London, but also travelled there herself to assess current fashions and purchase supplies. Upon her return in the spring of 1771, she advertised a "fresh assortment of the best and most fashionable goods."[91] Esther De Berdt Reed confirmed Pearson's success in a letter to her brother in London: "Miss Pearson is making a fortune by going to England and bringing back new fashions in her way."[92]

Not only sisters, but also daughters inherited businesses. After her health began to fail, Mary Pearson Symonds left her business to her daughter, Mary, then a minor. Her will was probated on 26 June 1773 and afterwards there were periodic notices for the sale of goods "for the benefit of the orphan."[93] For more than two decades, Molly Coates ran a shop, inherited from her husband, selling imported cloth and various other goods. Upon her death she left the business to her daughter, despite having a son to whom she could have bequeathed the venture. Coates seems to have felt strongly that women

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[88] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 18 March 1762; *Pennsylvania Journal*, 25 April 1771; Non-importation resolution(s), Philadelphia 25 October 1765, Am. 340, HSP.
[89] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 18 November and 1 December 1762 and Non-importation resolution(s), Philadelphia 25 October 1765.
[90] Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 51-2.
[91] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 5 December 1765, 16 January 1766, 14 June 1769, 16 July 1772; *Pennsylvania Journal*, 28 August 1766, 14 June 1770; *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, 2 May 1768, 11 June 1770, 15 April 1771; *Pennsylvania Packet*, 13 July 1772.
[92] Esther Reed to Dennis De Berdt, 14 November 1770 in Reed, *The Life of Esther De Berdt*.
[93] Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 51-2.

needed to be able to support themselves – she trained her unmarried daughter in the business and made sure she was economically settled upon her own death.[94]

While shopkeeping was the most common female enterprise, taverns were also frequently owned and managed by women. There was no single establishment that could be called a tavern in late-colonial America. Rather, a variety of establishments met the needs of travelers and local residents. These included four types of gathering places: taverns, which were drinking spots frequented by businessmen, revelers, and locals of many sorts and which occasionally had a room or two to rent for sleeping; inns, which catered to travelers and might or might not serve food and drink; ordinaries, which were eating houses that also served alcohol; and, coffee houses, which served liquor as well as caffeinated beverages and offered meeting places for merchants, ship captains, political thinkers, and men of leisure. Coffee houses were generally considered a step above the average tavern.[95] All of these have traditionally been seen as male spaces where women might have occasionally appeared, but certainly were not routinely found. But as Joan Gundersen notes, this image "ignores the many women who operated and worked in them."[96] Not only did women own and run taverns, they did business there – selling goods, services, and people – as well as socializing, eating, drinking, and sleeping alongside men.

While Philadelphia set licensing rules for taverns from the seventeenth century on, the laws made no stipulation regarding gender and women appear to have participated

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[94] Cleary, "'She Will Be in the Shop,'" 181, 197-8.
[95] Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 71.
[96] Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 83. For a more general discussion of female-owned taverns in England and colonial America, see Dexter, *Colonial Women of Affairs*, Chapter One.

in the tavern trade throughout the last century of colonial rule.[97] During the eighteenth century, Pennsylvania law required tavern keepers to pay annual licensing fees, which varied in cost depending on whether the establishment sold only liquor, or also wine. Taverns were also regulated and fined for disorderly conduct.[98] The issuance of tavern licenses seems not to have been pro forma; instead, colonial authorities sought to control the number of taverns in Philadelphia and examined each application individually. Peter Thompson suggests that this policy worked in favor of men and women of limited means who were granted tavern licenses as a way to keep them out of the poor house. Widows with children to support were often granted licenses, and women ran a quarter of the city's taverns at any given time.[99]

Frances May Manges suggests this number might actually be higher, as a surprising number of women ran unlicensed establishments. Her research uncovered several women in the first half of the eighteenth century who applied for licenses based on financial need, but were denied. Yet the records suggest that some of those women went on to run unlicensed taverns.[100] At least two women, Mrs. Greenman and Mrs. Casey, advertised services available at their unlicensed institutions – at Mrs. Greenman's one could hire a wet nurse, while at Mrs. Casey's sailors could enlist.[101] Apparently they worried little about the repercussions for running illegal establishments. In 1741,

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[97] Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution: Taverngoing and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 36.
[98] Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 74-5.
[99] Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution*, 37, 41. Thompson also demonstrates that, though there was no law against granting women licenses, there was some concern that allowing women to run businesses might set a precedent of female independence that could upend the social order. These men also worried that taverns run by "unnatural" women might attract prostitution and other forms of vice, although there is no evidence that prostitution was more common at women's establishments than those run by men. See *Rum Punch and Revolution*, 43-5.
[100] While these women were fined, sometimes repeatedly, for having unlicensed taverns, there doesn't seem to have been any permanent penalty and some of their establishments were well-respected. Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 78-81.
[101] Ibid., 90.

Margaret Cook was fined for repeatedly hosting "Whores, Vagabonds, and divers Idle Men of a suspected bad conversation and continually [keeping] bad order and Government." She was fined again in 1760 for keeping a disorderly house.[102] What is most interesting is not that a woman was fined for keeping an unlicensed and disorderly tavern, but that her business nonetheless appears to have spanned two decades. Whether she ran a rowdy house the entire period is unclear, but neither her infractions nor the penalties were so severe that she was forced out of business.

The historical record yields virtually no information about female taverners beyond newspaper advertisements and occasional other mentions that women ran such places. There are at least seventy identifiable female tavern/inn/coffeehouse keepers in the pre-Revolutionary period; given that these are merely the women for whom licenses or newspaper advertisements still exist and we know that a good number of women ran unlicensed establishments or did not rely on print advertising, one can reasonably assume that there were far more women running taverns who have been lost to history. The advertisements for the sale of two female-owned taverns give a sense of what a well-respected and successful establishment might have been like. When Elizabeth West sold the inn she had run for forty years, she described it as two stories high, with four rooms, a large, attached kitchen, a log barn with room for stables, and a fresh spring on the property. Similarly, Sarah Mackenet sold the Sadler's Arms, a large tavern, with all its furnishings intact, a stable for forty horses, a fruit-bearing orchard of one hundred trees, and additional land adjacent. Few descriptions of women's taverns exist, but these appear to have been high-end establishments and are likely not representative of most

[102] No primary source citation was offered for this tantalizing information. Ibid., 80.

women's, or perhaps men's, businesses.[103] Still, other women – including Elizabeth Walton at the Mariner's Compass and Four Horseshoes, Widow Bridenthall at the Hens and Chickens, Margaret Ingram at her West Indian coffeehouse called the Sign of the Rose and Crown, and Barbara Lewis at the Crooked Billet – also ran prominent taverns that were known for their comfort, the high quality of their libations, and their ample space for socializing and conducting business.[104]

Much like keeping a shop, many women ran taverns and inns with their husbands and then continued in the business after their deaths. Some taverners are identified as widows and some actually went the extra step of advertising their independent business following the death of their spouse. In 1771, Mary Yeates "[took] this (unusual) method of informing the public that she carries on the business of Tavern-keeping, in the house where her late husband formerly lived, at the Sign of the Fountain and Three Tons." There is evidence that she received licenses to run the business for at least a year after his death.[105] A number of female tavern keepers are known only because they requested that their debtors come in and settle accounts.[106] These women further demonstrate colonial women's ability to deal in credit and accrue debt. Women running a variety of businesses acted on credit, not only borrowing but also lending money. In the event of their spouses' death, many also acted independently to call in loans, rather than relying on male proxies to conduct their affairs.

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[103] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 24 August 1774 and 15 March 1775.
[104] Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 76-7.
[105] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 25 April and 30 May 1771 and Secretary's Office, Licenses for Marriages, Taverns, and Pedlars, 1761-1776, Ledger B, HSP.
[106] For examples, see Ann Jones of the Plume Feathers' going-out-of-business advertisement, *American Weekly Mercury*, 4 July 1723 and 3 September 1724; Barbara Lewis of the Crooked Billet's advertisement, *American Weekly Mercury*, 1 October 1741; and the death announcement for innkeeper Margaret Sims requesting that her debtors settle up accounts with her heirs, *Pennsylvania Ledger*, 18 May 1776.

Some tavernkeepers used their establishments for sidelines that complemented their main business. While running a tavern and later, after retiring from that work, Barbara Lewis sold liquor by the quart or the gallon.[107] Susannah Kryder of the Golden Swan catered to the servant trade, hosting auctions for newly arrived servants, managing rewards for runaway servants, and allowing Philadelphians to advertise servants for hire at her establishment.[108] Mrs. Cummins of the Falls of the Schuykill had access to a "shad-fishery at the door with plenty other Schuylkill fish in their season" which patrons could take advantage of, as long as they remained "genteel and orderly."[109] In the 1760s and '70s, prominent Germantown innkeeper Sarah Mackenet arranged for a "convenient stage wagon that was properly accommodated for any journey either to New York or any similar distance" to operate from the Sadler's Arms.[110] These were savvy businesswomen, taking advantage of all their resources to conduct a successful enterprise.

It is generally difficult to extrapolate about women from what little we know of their taverns; however, Peg Mullen's establishment raises an interesting question about politics. Founded two decades prior to the Revolution, at a time when many American cities were overtly attempting to become more like England, Mullen chose to call her tavern the Beefsteak House.[111] Her establishment was reputed to be extremely

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[107] *American Weekly Mercury*, 1 October 1741.
[108] For examples, see *Der Wochentliche Philadelphische Staatsbote,* 16 August 1774 and 21 March 1775; *Pennsylvania Journal*, 2 and 9 August 1775; and, *Pennsylvania Messenger*, 18 January 1774. See also, Cheesman Abiah Herrick, *White Servitude in Pennsylvania: Indentured and Redemption Labor in Colony and Commonwealth* (Philadelphia: J.J. McVey, 1926), 273-274.
[109] *Pennsylvania Journal*, 28 March 1771 and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 3 January and 28 March 1771.
[110] *Philadelphia Gazette*, 26 May 1763, 9 April and 16 July 1772, 3 February 1773, and 15 March 1775 and *Pennsylvania Packet*, 10 April 1775.
[111] For a discussion of colonists' intentional efforts to Anglicize their culture in the years leading up to the beginning of the revolutionary movement, see T. H. Breen, "An Empire of Goods: The Anglicization of Colonial America," *Journal of British Studies* 25, no. 4 (October 1986), 467-499 and Brendan McConville,

comfortable and welcoming to the various social, political, and dining clubs that became popular among wealthy men in that era.[112] Yet the name suggests an explicitly British connection. The Yeomen Warders (the ceremonial guards of the Tower of London) have been called "beefeaters" since at least the seventeenth century and, to the French, the word beefsteak ("bifstek") conveyed a certain Britishness.[113] Was Mullen seeking to convey her politics and appeal to a certain clientele at the very moment when the contradictory forces of aggressive Anglicization and anti-Parliamentary protests marked Philadelphia?

As interesting as female tavern keepers are, the women who ran two other types of gathering places – coffeehouses and restaurants – are slightly more remarkable. Scholarship on the rise of female tea culture in the American colonies states that coffeehouses were exclusively male spaces focused on masculine business and political discussion.[114] Yet as early as the 1740s, women were running well-respected and well-patronized coffeehouses in Philadelphia. The James Coffee House was run by Widow James and inherited by her sons sometime in the 1740s while Margaret Ingram ran a

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The King's Three Faces: The Rise and Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776 (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia by the University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

[112] Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 78 and Carl Bridenbaugh and Jessica Bridenbaugh, *Rebels and Gentlemen: Philadelphia in the Age of Franklin* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1942), 21.

[113] This interpretation of beefsteak came about through a conversation with Molly J. Giblin, a specialist in nineteenth century French history, and I am indebted to her for this train of thought.

[114] Historians have argued that, in America, the female tea table and male coffee house developed almost in tandem, each providing a highly gendered space for socializing and conversing. Men might join women for tea, but women were not found in coffee houses. For examples, see Beatrice Hohenegger, *Liquid Jade: The Story of Tea from East to West* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006); Alan Macfarlane and Iris Macfarlane, *The Empire of Tea: The Remarkable History of the Plant That Took Over the World* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 2003); and, David S. Shields, *Civil Tongues & Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia by the University of North Carolina Press, 1997). In his history of the British coffee house, Markman Ellis nods towards women's presence without integrating them into his larger narrative. See, Ellis, *The Coffee House: A Cultural History* (London: Phoenix, 2005).

West Indian coffee house, the Sign of the Rose and Crown, which catered solely to "Gentlemen."[115] Manges identifies Mary Roberts, a widow, who took over Henry Flower's coffee house in 1732 as "the most famous of the early coffee house managers … Under her management it continued to attract ship captains and other businessmen, who congregated to do business, attend auctions, and drink coffee or wine."[116] Widow Jones ran an unnamed coffeehouse of such excellence that Richard Penn and other colonial officials frequently met there, as well as prominent businessmen and ship captains.[117] A Mrs. Jones, who may have been the same person as the aforementioned Widow Jones, ran the Three Crowns, a coffeehouse selected by the British to quarter officers in 1758.[118] While little else is known about these proprietors or their coffeehouses, it is clear that women were a presence in this supposedly male space. In addition to serving men, women mingled among them and likely conducted business with them. Both Mary Roberts and Widow Jones hosted vendues and served as go-betweens for Philadelphia businessmen, implying that while women might not have settled down to drink coffee and read the latest international news, they were certainly not absent from the spaces in which men did so.

In the late-colonial period, three Philadelphia women were involved in running innovative new businesses – restaurants. In her book, *The Invention of the Restaurant*, French historian Rebecca L. Spang argues that restaurants first appeared in late-

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[115] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 29 September 1748 and Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 94.
[116] Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 94.
[117] *Pennsylvania Journal*, 3 August 1749; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 3 August 1749, 3 May and 17 October 1754; and, J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts & Co., 1884), 982.
[118] Samuel Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives. Selected and Arranged from Original Documents in the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, Conformably to Acts of the General Assembly, February 15, 1851 & March 1, 1852. Commencing 1756*, series 1, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: Printed by Joseph Severns & Co., 1853), 559.

eighteenth century Paris as essentially health spas that served only restorative beverages and broths. By the 1820s, the restaurant had evolved into the sit-down, full-menu, multi-course entity we know today. Spang argues that, into the mid-nineteenth century, the restaurant was "in many respects peculiar to Paris."[119] This timeline may well hold for European history, but Philadelphia saw establishments resembling modern-day restaurants well before the nineteenth century.[120]

Three eateries that should be considered restaurants existed in the pre-war period. Ann Jones ran the Cheese-cake House, a gathering place where Philadelphians sat out in the garden eating baked goods and drinking various beverages.[121] John White and his wife advertised the opening of their new business, near the therapeutic baths, "to accommodate Ladies and Gentlemen with Breakfasting, on the best of Tea, Coffee or Chocolate, with Plenty of GOOD CREAM, etc. which Articles may be also in the Afternoon."[122] At the White's a Philadelphian could, apparently, enjoy breakfast all day! A third woman, Ann Johnson, along with her husband William, ran an "Eating-House" at the Sign of the Globe, which served "Coffee, Tea, fresh Milk from the Cow, Cream, Whey, Butter, and new Cheese, made on the Premises" as well as offering pleasant gardens for strolling and picking fresh fruit and rooms to rent by the week, month, or

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[119] Rebecca L. Spang, *The Invention of the Restaurant: Paris and Modern Gastronomic Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 2.

[120] Much of the literature on the history of American restaurants begin their studies in the nineteenth century. For two books that begin their exploration of food culture with the inns and boarding houses of the eighteenth century, see Richard Pillsbury, *From Boarding House to Bistro: The American Restaurant Then and Now* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990) and John F. Mariani, *America Eats Out! An Illustrated History of Restaurants, Taverns, Coffee Shops, Speakeasies and Other Establishments That Have Fed Us for 350 Years* (New York: Morrow, 1991).

[121] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 26 September 1754 and John F. Watson, *Annals of Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania, in the Olden Time: Being a Collection of Memoirs, Anecdotes, and Incidents of the City and Its Inhabitants and of the Earliest Settlements of the Inland Part of Pennsylvania*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Edwin S. Stuart, 1897), 493.

[122] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 22 August 1765.

summer season.[123] Philadelphians could do all of these things – eat, drink, socialize, sleep – at other locations, but these establishments were innovative in crucial ways. They advertised not as taverns or inns, but specifically as places to sit and eat in congenial company. Not only were women actively running taverns, coffeehouses, and inns throughout the eighteenth century, but they were also helping to push the boundaries of Philadelphia's social and food cultures.

Taverns, in their many guises, provided Philadelphians with a variety of services and experiences. Because neighborhoods were not segregated by class, any tavern might cater to a variety of customers. Philadelphians also traveled around the city to different gathering places for different purposes. They exercised "elective affinities in taverngoing just as they did in other areas of sociability and consumption," going to whatever location fit their present need or interest.[124] As conflicts with England escalated, tavern preference coalesced around political and class lines, but this was not the case for most of the colonial period. For much of the eighteenth century, one could eat, drink, gamble, play shuffleboard or billiards, conduct business, buy goods, and contract services at the city's taverns, but one could not do all those things at any one place, requiring knowledge of and movement around the city. What is crucial here is that women, as well as men, patronized Philadelphia's taverns for their many services.

Business owners and employees were not the only women who frequented taverns and similar establishments. Coffeehouses intentionally positioned themselves as places of business and provided small booths in which to conduct private conversations. Some attorneys and businessmen held "office hours" in the same booth on a weekly basis, and

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[123] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 12 June 1766.
[124] Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution*, 76 and Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 73.

women went to them to seek assistance and advice. Women of the laboring classes frequently ate and drank at local taverns – in the 1770s, the One Tun Tavern was a common drinking spot for female workers.[125] When traveling, women also dined at taverns. By the middle years of the eighteenth century, more affluent travellers demanded better accommodations and an increasing number of luxury inns began to appear, catering to women traveling alone as well as in groups.[126] To appeal to higher-class female travelers as well as local diners, these establishments advertised food and drink that might satisfy a more refined palette such as roast beef, leg of mutton, ham, and fowl, port, Madiera, bitters, cordials, as well as tea and coffee.[127]

Women also attended vendues where they both bought and sold goods. Vendues were most commonly held at taverns and the range of items sold was so large that they attracted extremely varied segments of the population.[128] Philadelphia newspapers advertised vendues at over a dozen taverns run by women in the thirty years before the Revolution. While virtually nothing is known about these women now, they must have been well known in the community at the time. The advertisements simply announce an auction to be held at their establishment, with no address or directions given, indicating that locals knew where to go.[129] Margaret Donaldson's Sign of the Admiral Kepple hosted a number of property sales in the 1760s, which were distinct from vendues in that

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[125] Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution*, 79, 90.
[126] Ibid., 60.
[127] Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 72-3 and Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution*, 71. Laws required inns to provide "good rooms and ample food" for men and horses. Houses established specifically as traveller's inns tended to be comfortable and spacious and by the time of the Revolution were edging out older taverns with their small bedrooms as the preferred accommodation for all but the poorest traveller. Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 72.
[128] Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution*, 80 and Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 72.
[129] For examples, see *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 15 and 22 September 1763, 7 and 21 July1768, and 9 January and 20 April 1774; *Pennsylvania Journal*, 19 January and 27 April 1774; and, *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, 1 February 1776.

the only thing being sold was land.[130] Mary Jenkins ran one of the most prominent taverns, the Sign of the Conestoga, in the last decade before the war. Catering specifically to the middle classes, she hosted not only auctions, but also served as a center of business and civic activity. At her tavern, one could find advertisements for wet nurses, men seeking employment, and missing or stolen property. She also allowed the city Commissioners to meet at the Conestoga in 1773 to draw up plans to make the Schuylkill River more navigable. Philadelphia diarist Joseph Hilzheimer mentioned spending many evenings at her tavern with his friends, often arriving as late as one o'clock in the morning yet still finding plenty of food and drink![131]

While female entrepreneurs might be able to gain an independent living or achieve success alongside their families by running stores or taverns, far more women worked in craft shops. Their work has generally been viewed as less-skilled assistance, not specialized labor crucial to the success of the family enterprise. Certainly women are known to have conducted "hidden market work," such as assisting their spouse in his trade or minding the business while he was out of the shop, meaning that "they contributed to family business but without recognition as skilled workers."[132] While innumerable women labored in this capacity, their work was not necessarily trivialized by nor hidden from their contemporaries. Women were respected as skilled laborers, both in female dominated trades such as mantua making and needlecrafts and in the full range of artisanal pursuits necessary to keep society functioning. Whether working alongside their

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[130] *Philadelphia Gazette*, 5 May, 15 and 22 December 1763, 11 and 18 July 1765.
[131] *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, 4 July 1768; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, 19 October 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 19 May and 7 July 1768, 8 March and 1 November 1770, 11 November 1772, 17 November 1773; *Pennsylvania Journal, and the Weekly Advertiser*, 23 June 1768; and *Extracts from the Diary of Jacob Hilzheimer of Philadelphia*, ed. Jacob Cox Parsons (Philadelphia: William F. Fell and Co., 1893), 18, 20, 25.
[132] Goldin, "The Economic Status of Women in the Early Republic," 401.

families or as independent laborers, women's craft skills were recognized, appreciated, and relied upon by both manufacturers and consumers in colonial Philadelphia.

Colonial crafts were family endeavors. Entire families, often with the help of hired labor, kept most shops running. Women not only kept the shop organized and assisted male workers, but they were often trained in aspects of, and sometimes the entire, production of craft items.[133] Craft families saw their daughters as assets in two ways – they could be trained to work in the family trade and their knowledge could be valuable on the marriage market. Many artisans' daughters married men with similar skills, bringing together families that shared economic interests.[134] But more than making them good marriage prospects, skilled laborers trained their daughters so they could maintain their own economic viability. Craftwork required multiple, trained workers and having a trade would enable girls to make a living for themselves, if single, and their families, if widowed. When they could not train their daughter personally, or if their child showed capacity for another skill, it was common for girls to be informally apprenticed with friends or relatives.[135] In the same way that apprenticing sons reinforced connections of friendship and collaboration, the less formalized training of daughters also supported those ties.

Marla Miller's extraordinary work on upholsterer Betsy Ross provides an excellent model for how craft families trained their daughters to be self-reliant workers fully enmeshed in the labor networks of pre-war Philadelphia. Elizabeth Griscom (later Ross) was born into a thriving craft tradition: "given the number and variety of artisans

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[133] Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 8 and Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 89-91.
[134] Olton, *Artisans for Independence*, 12.
[135] Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 8.

who populated the family tree, the question before young Betsy was not whether she would enter a trade, but which one it would be." She had relatives in a range of building trades; in addition, her brother apprenticed with a silversmith, her cousin Rebecca was learning the mantua trade, and her aunt Sarah had worked independently for more than thirty years as a highly respected staymaker.[136] Miller argues that Sarah Griscom was young Betsy's "most significant" relative because she was an independent woman working in a trade that had been, until very recently, considered men's work.[137] Griscom provided a model, within the family, for female self-sufficiency and skilled labor.

By the 1760s, when Betsy would have been considering what path to follow, her sister Deborah married and began working in her husband Everard Bolton's dry cleaning shop. She cleaned and dyed delicate fabrics such as silk, velvet, ducape, brocade, and satin. This was a highly valuable craft, as these were expensive textiles and a skilled worker could dramatically extend the life of the fabric.[138] Betsy Griscom frequented her sister's business and may have considered learning that trade before deciding to work in the shop of London-trained upholsterer John Webster, a family friend and neighbor. In 1767, at age fifteen, Webster offered her a position in his shop and she was employed there for the next six years.[139] Webster paid one shilling per piece for Griscom's labor, and she was trained to make mattresses, bed curtains, window curtains, chair cases, seat

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[136] Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 51.
[137] "Sarah's work making foundation garments for women seems natural to us today, but in the first half of the eighteenth century, since a good deal of force was required to push whalebone through the stitched channels, or to stitch through the leather with which the stays were bound, staymaking was generally considered men's work. In the *London Tradesman*, a guide book designed to help parents select appropriate trades for their children, Robert Campbell asserted that 'the Work is too hard for Women, it requires more Strength than they are capable of.'" Robert Campbell, *The London Tradesman* (1747; reprint, London: David and Charles Reprints, 1969), 224-5 and Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 53.
[138] Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 55.
[139] Ibid., 61.

cushions, and various trimmings. She was taught to judge fabric, choose which was right for any given piece of upholstery, and execute a variety of patterns and designs.[140] During the period of Griscom's employment, the female workers were managed by Ann King, a woman with such skill that in 1775 she would set up independently as a fabric worker and embellisher.[141] Webster likely trained three or four girls at a time, though King, not Webster, would have overseen most of their education.[142]

Because most colonial craft shops operated on a relatively small scale, "all workers … had to be skilled in every aspect of the craft." Female workers, as well as male, would have known at least the basics of how to complete a job from beginning to end.[143] Women's training positioned them to work as skilled artisans under the auspice of another person's business or in their own endeavors. Because many daughters, sisters, wives, and non-familial female employees working for a male artisan are "hidden" from the historical record, we know more about widows and single women than other groups. A few exceptions such as Betsy Ross, Cornelia Bradford, and Lydia Darragh exist – married women of sufficient prominence to remain visible to modern scholars. A considerable portion of craft women in colonial Philadelphia worked in traditionally female trades – millinery, mantua making, embroidery, and food-related businesses – but

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[140] Male workers made wooden frames, furniture, installed curtains, and were responsible for the more physically demanding side of the trade. Women would have been responsible for all textile-related work. Ibid., 69.

[141] King advertised in 1775 that she was the "first American tossel [sic] maker that ever brought that branch of business to any degree of perfection." Tassels and other embellishments were essential to demonstrating the style and refinement of a piece of furniture or a room and an artisan who was skilled at making and executing such details could run a highly lucrative business. *Pennsylvania Journal*, 17 May 1775 and Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 69-71.

[142] Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 69 and Patricia Chapin O'Donnell, "The Upholsterers in Philadelphia, 1760-1810," (MA thesis, University of Delaware, 1980), 19. During the 1790s, Webster appears to have trained another member of the Griscom family. On three occasions, Elizabeth Drinker recorded visits from Rachel Griscomb [sic] to refresh their mattresses. See, 9 May 1794, 27 July and 6 October 1796, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.

[143] Olton, *Artisans for Independence*, 9.

there were women running their own shops in a far greater range of trades than previously imagined. That they went about their business uncommented upon and that some rose to prominence over male competition indicates that female artisans were no more shocking than shop or tavern keepers. In a competitive market environment like Philadelphia, for a skilled female worker to remain in business for years or even decades indicates the level of her skill as well as her ability to produce high quality goods that were priced to sell.

Perhaps the best-known female crafts of the colonial period were textile related. Many Philadelphia women advertised as seamstresses, making a wide variety of clothing items. To separate themselves from the majority of dressmakers, some advertised their special abilities.[144] It was common for women to emphasize that they came from London, implying that their knowledge and ability to create fashionable dresses was current. Mrs. Elphiston Rolo, a London-trained mantua maker, offered to show prospective clients letters of recommendation while Elisabeth Braithwhite emphasized her recent arrival from England when advertising her millinery business. Catherine White advertised that her business was moving to a larger space and that she had hired a new, London-trained assistant for her millinery shop, which would supply "up-to-date fashions."[145] One fascinating entrepreneur, Mrs. Dickson, painted custom gowns for wealthy women, a skill that must have been unique and lucrative. Other women focused on the range of their needle skills when trying to attract business. Seamstresses Mary

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[144] Marla Miller has demonstrated that female artisans helped create a "vernacular gentility unique to their city and their clientele." By advertising their wares as fashionable and then selling their goods to elite women with reputations for sociability, artisans participated in the social process of creating and regulating gentility and propriety in colonial America. Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 55.
[145] Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 107-8.

Cahell, Mary Scouvement, and Amelia Tailor all listed an extensive variety of clothing items available when advertising for clients.[146]

Some women went beyond simply practicing a needle trade and advertised their willingness to teach those skills. Nearly two dozen women in the pre-Revolutionary years, including dressmaker Elizabeth Wilson, British-trained mantua maker Elizabeth Fox, and Isabel Hewitt offered to take on female students who showed both the ability and dedication necessary to become skilled workers. When Fox offered to teach qualified girls the mantua trade, she assured them that their training would be the same as if they had studied in "as capital a house as most in England."[147] While many female needle workers were trained by family friends or associates, some women apparently accepted students previously unknown to them. A girl with nimble fingers and the desire to become a craftswoman might well have seen these advertisements as their path into highly skilled labor.

Other women ran shops related to the clothing trade. Like Deborah Griscom Bolton, several women found success cleaning, dying, and altering garments. A far more specialized skill than simple laundering, cleaning expensive fabrics was a highly desirable ability. A good cleaner could extend the life of expensive clothing, saving money and allowing people to continue to wear their favorite items.[148] Alice Williams at the Sign of the Hand and Box Iron refurbished delicate fabrics such as muslin, lawn, lace,

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[146] Ibid., 107-8.

[147] For examples of these female artisans, see *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 24 June 1762, 29 September 1768, 21 December 1774, and 22 March 1775 and *Pennsylvania Packet*, 23 December 1771.

[148] Esther Singleton reminds us that colonial women "were luxurious and fond of dress, they were also economical. They understood the use of the needle and were not adverse to repairing, patching, darning and remodeling old garments. Even if they kept up with new fashions, they wore their clothes carefully and frequently handed them down to the next generation." Women with the skills to help protect and prolong clothing usage were in high demand. Singleton, *Social New York Under the Georges, 1714-1776*, 247-8.

silk, and gauze and also bleached and starched personal linens, stockings, and lace embellishments. Widow Sarah Brown cleaned and dyed silk, advertising that she worked alongside her husband to restore expensive clothing. At their shop, customers could have

> All sorts of silks, quilted coats and gowns, silk stockings, gloves and camblet clokes scower'd, dy'd and dressed; burdets and tabbies water'd; mens cloathes dry or wet scowered; linen and saten dy'd blue, green, or yellow; Likewise mildew or stains taken out of new pieces of silks and stuffs, or worsteds that are damaged at sea: All sorts of worsteds scowered and pressed.

Later, she expanded her repertoire to include dying leather breeches and skins and then added a male partner whom she described as a London-trained silk dyer and scowerer (an archaic term for a person who cleans wool).[149]

Three women assisted the clothing and shoemaking trades by preparing leather. Two were widows of leatherworkers who carried on in the business. When Johannes Zacharias of Germantown died, his widow advertised that she would continue to run his tannery and meet the standard of his work. Similarly, Mary Cowley, with the help of her family, continued her husband's business of "BUCK-SKIN Dressing, she being of Ability to secure to the Owners whatever they shall think fit to entrust her with." Both of these women were confident enough in their own skills to advertise that they would meet the quality of work set by a male artisan. A third woman, Rebecca Tanner, also ran a tannery, although it is unknown if she inherited this business or simply went into trade for herself.[150] At least one woman worked in leather for non-clothing-related purposes:

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[149] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 2 May 1751, 12 April 1753, 13 June 1754, 15 May and 23 October 1755, 20 July 1758, 5 April 1759, and 28 August 1766. See also, Dexter, *Colonial Women of Affairs*, 44-5.
[150] *Pennsylvanische Berichte*, 16 August 1754, *American Weekly Mercury*, 1 October 1741, and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 1 October 1741 and 26 December 1752.

Martha Linton inherited a harness making business from her husband and continued to process leather for that purpose.[151]

Interestingly, one woman who worked in a needle trade advertised herself as a tailor, a term otherwise applied solely to male workers fashioning garments for men. Mary Cannon, upon the death of her husband, "[proposed] to carry on the business of her late Husband (tailor) with some sober qualified workmen they brought from England with them" and "hopes to be enabled to support herself and Family, and all Endeavors will be used to render her Employers Satisfaction." Even more significantly, Cannon did not wield a needle herself. She managed a workshop of male laborers who actually made the clothing. In doing so, Cannon took on two male identities – as a tailor and as a manager of male workers – and seems to have done both successfully, as she remained in business for at least five years.[152]

Many women worked in food-related crafts, an occupation that would be a natural extension of any woman's domestic training and skill set. Philadelphia hosted a large number of gastronomic shops and workers. In the pre-war period, many women advertised as bakers, brewers, vintners, and distillers of liquor, all of which could be made from home. Often they worked in family businesses, or had done so before becoming widows, and it was not uncommon for them to run small grocery stores as well as craft items for sale.[153] Some women practiced some more specific and unusual food

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[151] *American Weekly Mercury*, 19 December 1749.
[152] *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 22 December 1763 and 23 January 1766 and *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, 29 February 1768.
[153] For examples of bakers, see *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 3 February and 12 November 1741 and 5 March 1751. For brewers, see *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 29 January and 9 May 1751, 10 April 1755, 13 October 1757, and 24 October 1765 and *Pennsylvania Journal*, 18 March and 13 May 1762. For vintners, see Freeholder's Tax List, 1756, HSP as referenced by Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 99. For distilleries, see *Der Wochentliche Philadelphische Staatsbote*,

trades. Two women advertised selling pickled sturgeon, a skill described by a New Jersey contemporary as an "art, secret, and mystery." In the 1730s, Susannah Harrwood sold her sturgeon out of the Bradford printing shop while, in the 1760s and '70s, Elizabeth Phillips sold hers from her own "fishery." Phillips sold sturgeon in quantities acceptable for both home consumption and large-scale exportation.[154]

Mary Crathorne manufactured mustard and chocolate in the 1760s. We know quite a bit about her due to a lengthy and public fight with Benjamin Jackson, another local mustard producer. In 1767, Jonathan Crathorne died, leaving his wife full control of his chocolate and mustard works. The following year, Mary moved to a larger house from which she continued to make mustard flour and chocolate, as well as selling various groceries and wines. In an advertisement informing patrons of her relocation, she noted

> As the articles of mustard and chocolate are manufactured by her at those incomparable mustard and chocolate works on Germantown Road which her late husband went to a considerable expense in the erecting, and purchasing out Benjamin Jackson's part; and as she had a large quantity of choice clean mustard seed by her, and the singular advantage of being constantly supplied with that article, she flatters herself that upon timely notice she can supply any person with large quantities of the said articles … either for exportation or the retailing again

At the top of this advertisement, she included the symbol she and her husband had affixed to their packaged mustard and chocolate.[155]

Mary Crathorne continued to advertise for the remainder of the decade.[156] Alongside notices about price and availability, Crathorne engaged in a dispute over the provenance and ownership of her mustard recipe. The conflict began before Jonathan

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11 August 1775 and 26 January 1776 and *Pennsylvania Journal*, 3 January, 16 August, and 27 December 1775.

[154] As a byproduct of picking sturgeon, Phillips also produced caviar, glue, and oil. *American Weekly Mercury*, 27 April 1732; *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, 29 May 1769; and, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 11 August 1768, 24 May 1770, and 30 April 1772.

[155] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 11 February 1768.

[156] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 3 September 1767, 11 February 1768, and 7 December 1769 and *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, 31 August 1767 and 11 December 1769.

Crathorne's death, when his former partner Benjamin Jackson accused Crathorne of stealing his process and trademark. Jackson charged that, following their separation, Crathorne changed the sign on his business and replaced it with Jackson's mark. Before Crathorne's death, Jackson proclaimed himself the original and rightful owner of the mustard-making process. Mary appears to have stayed out of the dispute, but after she announced her move and advertised her exceptional wares, Jackson focused his attention on her, claiming that he was the original and only true mustard manufacturer in Philadelphia. He argued that the Crathornes had worked for him and, although Jonathan bought him out of their partnership, neither Crathorne had any knowledge or skill. He further argued that they had stolen his symbol and that Mary was selling goods based on a reputation that ought to have been his.[157] Throughout this ordeal, Mary Crathorne defended her right to make mustard and her skill as an artisan. She did not shy away from a public confrontation with a rival, nor did she accept the insinuation that she had no place in the trade. In the end, Crathorne emerged victorious, as her business was still thriving in 1769 and Jackson's had folded due to economic hardship and debt.[158]

While mustard making was unusual for a woman, catering was unprecedented. Yet three Philadelphia women advertised as chef/caterers in the 1770s. In their homes, women either cooked for themselves or hired a cook for their family, but in the immediate pre-Revolutionary period, a few women began to promote themselves as high-end chefs who catered specific events, rather than cooking on a regular basis. Grace Price described herself as a "chef" and advertised references with the best families in the

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[157] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 24 and 31 October and 21 November 1765, 9 July 1767, 6 October 1768, and 5 January 1769; *Pennsylvania Journal*, 6 February 1766; and *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, 8 February 1768.
[158] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 5 January and 7 December 1769 and *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, 16 October and 11 December 1769. See also, Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 100-102.

Philadelphia, as well as the ability to cook in both the French and English mode. Elizabeth Bush, former cook for Governor Thomas Penn, advertised that she could cater any event and noted that she did not need to advertise her ability as she was already known to the best families in the colony. The last woman was anonymous, but described herself as a caterer.[159] Much like those running restaurants, these women were innovators in a food culture that was moving away from longstanding modes of subsistence and towards newer ideas of dining as a social, and even a luxury, event.

In addition to running businesses in the traditionally female realms of clothing and food, women were active in almost every other craft practiced in colonial Philadelphia. They were found in metal and woodworking shops, as well as those making nets, ropes, and candles. Rebecca Orr, widow of a brazier, continued to work in copper and brass, selling a large array of household goods made from those metals. Hannah Donaldson also inherited a metalworking business, carrying on her husband's work with brass and copper, selling not only household goods, but also bells, gun-mountings, and pump mechanisms.[160] Widow Ann Page maintained her spouse's work as a turner, crafting articles for carpenters, joiners, chair makers, and other craftsmen. She also made, mended, and sold spinning wheels. Mary Emerson, at the sign of the Chest of Drawers, sold all types of "Joyners work" and specialized in the silvering of glasses. In addition, she ran a small secondhand shop for household goods. Unlike many women in unusual trades, she does not seem to have been a widow.[161] The widowed Elizabeth Russell went into the coachmaking trade, combining metal, wood, and

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[159] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 19 June 1766 and 16 September 1772; *Pennsylvania Journal*, 6 June 1771 and 16 September 1772; and, *Pennsylvania Packet*, 6 June 1774.
[160] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 15 November 1753 and *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, 1 June 1767.
[161] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 11 February 1746 and 30 September 1756.

glassworking skills. Coachmaking was considered "the most complicated of all the crafts since it utilized so many skills." Purchasing coaches was a job supposedly left to men because it required a large outlay of money and a certain knowledge base to chose the correct one; however, at least one woman seems to have been skilled enough to work in this masculine field.[162]

Hannah Beales inherited a netmaking business from her father; as his only child, she was trained in the craft and trusted to carry on his work. She focused on fishing nets, but also supplied horse, pigeon, ninny, and casting nets, billiard table pockets, fowling bags, and "nets of every sort, equal to any made in this city."[163] Sarah Jewell continued her husband's ropemaking trade, supplying rigging and other types of rope.[164] An interesting twist on inherited trades is the estate of Elizabeth Paris. Upon her death in 1741, her unnamed heir announced his intention to carry on her business making candles, soap, and tallow. She operated her shop for at least six years and was successful enough for someone to continue the business in her stead, based on the strength of her reputation. Another chandler, Ann Wishart, is recorded only in Philadelphia's tax roles.[165]

In addition to partaking in skilled craftwork, some women provided services traditionally reserved for men. Many women throughout the colonial period worked as midwives, but some also served as doctors.[166] Margaret Morris Hill was respected in

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[162] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 20 August 1754. See also, Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 104 and Breen, "An Empire of Goods," 467-499.
[163] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 28 December 1758 and 12 March 1767.
[164] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 21 March 1748.
[165] *American Weekly Mercury*, 27 August and 24 September 1741; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 3 September 1741; Freeholder's Tax List, 1756, HSP as referenced by Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 99.
[166] While some women served as midwives in a casual capacity, others advertised their services and saw it as a professional calling. The scholarship on midwifery is comprehensive. For good discussions of midwifery in colonial and early national America, see Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Knopf, 1990) and Richard W. Wertz and

colonial Philadelphia for her medical knowledge, despite lacking any formal training. She owned medical books, recorded her treatment methods, and was sought after during the 1793 and 1797 yellow fever epidemics.[167] Lydia Darragh, best known for warning General Washington of an impending British attack in the winter of 1777, worked as a doctor and ran a store, although it is unclear if her wares were medical in nature. Jacob Hiltzheimer recorded a successful treatment by Darragh in October 1774: "My pain [in his hip, which had seized him suddenly two days earlier] still continued excessive, but with the help of a clever little Irish woman named Darragh, I got some relief by a clyster."[168]

Darragh was also among the women who worked as undertakers, providing a service that would have traditionally been conducted by family members. Darragh sought to "[inform] the Public that she intends to make Grave-Clothes and lay out the Dead … and as she is informed a Person in this Business is much wanted in this City she hopes … to give Satisfaction." Despite positioning herself as the sole undertaker in Philadelphia, Darragh was not actually without competition. At least two other women did the same work in the decade before the Revolution. Widow Seaton ran a mortuary service until her death when Rebecca Richey advertised that she was moving into Seaton's home to take over her business of laying out the dead and attending funerals. Seaton appears to have been more successful than her husband and widower; "her will

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Dorothy C. Wertz, *Lying-In: A History of Childbirth in America*, expanded edition (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989).

[167] Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 86.

[168] Clyster is the eighteenth century term for an enema. *Extracts from the Diary of Jacob Hilzheimer of Philadelphia*, 32.

provided that after her debts were paid the remainder should be divided among her husband's creditor's."[169]

Two women ran successful bookstores and printing businesses. Cornelia Bradford, after the death of her husband Andrew, printed the *American Weekly Mercury* as well as taking on custom jobs. In December 1742, immediately after his death, she ran a column apologizing for the lapse in publishing, but promising she would resume regular printing henceforth. For a seventeen-month period, she took on an editor, Isaiah Warner, before she resumed sole control of the paper.[170] Mary Katherine Goddard ran a printing shop in her brother's absence for over twenty years in three different colonies: Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and finally Maryland. Her brother was technically proprietor of the press, but he was often traveling as postal surveyor and Goddard ran the business in his absence. After retiring from the post in the 1780s, he forced Mary out of the business. In turn, she set up a rival printing business and published a highly successful almanac.[171]

Finally, five colonial women operated service-oriented businesses that took them far outside the traditionally understood realm of female work. Three women, Widow Allen, Widow Hun, and Widow Church, owned and operated wharves on the Schuylkill River. At Allen's business, in addition to docking boats and storing goods, one could

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[169] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 6 February and 4 December 1766 and *Pennsylvania Journal*, 11 December 1766. See also, Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 110.
[170] *American Weekly Mercury*, 2 December 1742 and 30 March 1743 and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 11 September 1755. See also, Clarence S. Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690-1820*, vol. 2 (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1947), 890.
[171] Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 85. Mary Katharine Goddard, by 1776 living in Baltimore, ran a full, front-page copy of the Declaration of Independence in *The Maryland Journal and the Baltimore Journal* on the 10th. Other female printers ran the document in prominent positions in their papers and reprinted it as pamphlets for distribution around the colonies, thus entrenching their status as important members of the commercial and intellectual worlds. Goddard was also the first female postmaster, although discrimination against women in official posts led to her dismissal after fourteen years of service. She appealed to George Washington to overturn that decision, but to no avail. Robin Shields, "Publishing the Declaration of Independence," *Library of Congress* (2010), http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/journey/declaration-transcript.html, accessed 14 April 2014.

purchase contracts on newly arrived servants.[172] Presumably all of these women inherited their businesses; they would have needed a range of skills such as negotiating rents, understanding international shipping, and overseeing manual labor for success in their endeavor. Unless they had male agents who oversaw the daily business, they would also have worked daily among sailors, dock workers, and other less reputable members of society. Widow Sarah Austin and her son William operated the Delaware River ferry, essential for trade with New Jersey. They also ran the New Ferry-House, which might have been a tavern or might simply have been a way stop where they accepted goods and letters for pickup and packages to be transferred to the stage.[173] Sarah Mackenet ran a stagecoach service from her inn for at least a decade. Her newspaper advertisement stated, "those needing the service were to apply to her son in Philadelphia on designated days, or to the owner, at the Sadlers Arms in Germantown. She promised to agree on reasonable terms."[174]

Conclusion

Everywhere a Philadelphian looked, women were present and active in the commercial sphere. They were in the streets as shoppers, employees, businesswomen, and pleasure seekers; they were in the stores, taverns, and craft shops as owners, laborers, and consumers; and, they were actively involved in the creation of new spaces, such as coffee houses and restaurants, that blended social, economic, and political cultures. Due in large part to the misappropriation of the ideology of separate spheres into the late

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[172] *American Weekly Mercury*, 2 December 1725 and 1 October 1730 and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 13 October 1763, 9 and 16 May 1765.
[173] *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, 21 September 1767; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 24 September 1767 and 24 October 1770; and, *Pennsylvania Packet*, 3 February 1772.
[174] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 26 May 1763.

eighteenth century, scholars have underestimated women's comfort within and importance to the public. By assuming that women were restricted largely to the home, and that they had neither the ability nor the desire to participate in the economic world on a large scale, historians have overlooked their centrality within the pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia marketplace. Through a better understanding of how enmeshed women were in late-colonial commerce, we can begin to draw a more fully developed picture of their relationship to the public sphere in general.

Carole Shammas, in her article on female social structure in Philadelphia on the eve of the Revolution, suggests that women had very limited access to public spaces such as coffee houses and taverns, unless they were traveling and appeared in them out of necessity. She continues by asserting that many women did not even have the ability to move comfortably throughout Philadelphia without an escort: "Certainly, *ladies* did not mix freely in crowds or walk about unaccompanied."[175] Shammas quotes from the diary of Sarah Eve to support her claim that genteel women were uncomfortable going into public by themselves. Yet the full quote transforms the point the young woman was actually making. After spending a day in town on 17 November 1773, Eve wrote

> In Race Street I met with Miss K. Vaughan and Miss P. Dunn going out to the General Review;[176] they asked me to make one of their company, part of which had set out before but they were expecting to overtake presently, I readily consented and we hurried on with all possible expedition; notwithstanding this, however we misst them and to our great mortification found ourselves on the Common, without a gentleman to take care of us, and surrounded by people of all ranks and denominations. Pride not Fear urged our return but Curiosity laughed at it, and we determined to venture a little farther before we gave over, which we

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[175] Carole Shammas, "The Female Social Structure of Philadelphia in 1775," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 107, no. 1 (January 1983), 78-9.

[176] The troops on display were "Colonel Robertson, of the 16th regiment, by his Excellency General Haldimand's orders, reviewed the 18th Royal Irish Regiment, commanded by Major Hamilton; together with Captain Huddleston's Company of the Royal Regiment of Artillery." *Pennsylvania Packet*, 22 November 1773.

> were very glad of, as we soon had the great satisfaction of meeting Mr. Ash, Mr. Wilkinson and my Brother, who willing took us under their protection; we then held up our heads and did not care whom we met, which before was quite the reverse. It is certainly more from custom than from real service that the gentlemen are so necessary to us ladies.[177]

She and her friends who found themselves alone on the Common felt discomfort as a result of their pride, not any actual fear, and they soon overcame the discomfort. Shammas acknowledges that Eve "seemed to have some doubts about the true need for this exhibition of chivalry," but she nonetheless uses the account as proof of women's reluctance to move freely throughout Philadelphia's public spaces.[178] However, this portrayal of Sarah Eve's experience directly contradicts her experiences as well as those of women such as Elizabeth Drinker, Ann Warder, Betsy Ross, and Deborah Morris who availed themselves of a range of public spaces and social and economic opportunities.

Perhaps Sarah Eve recognized the humor in needing a male escort because women were ubiquitous in the commercial life of Philadelphia, as vendors, workers, shoppers, and pleasure seekers. Women's presence was commonplace; it was so unremarkable that women participated in business and trades that very few contemporaries commented on their presence one way or the other. By the mid-eighteenth century, women were trained to understand commerce, to run businesses, pursue skilled trades, spend and invest money wisely, and oversee property. Fathers and husbands expected the women in their family to be productive, either in earning or maximizing income, and many clearly fulfilled that role. Throughout the eighteenth century, women ran successful enterprises as shopkeepers, tavern keepers, and artisans;

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[177] Eve, "Extracts from the Journal of Miss Sarah Eve," 203.
[178] Shammas, "The Female Social Structure of Philadelphia in 1775," 79. Eve and her friends might have felt some discomfort specific to attending a military review, given that it was a public holiday at which alcohol was served and the crowd might have been unusually rowdy.

they were competitive with male entrepreneurs and taken seriously as members of the business community. Women not only ran commercial enterprises, but patronized them, moving around the city with confidence and comfort. Their citywide travels for business purposes brought them into contact with a variety of men and women, with whom they likely discussed social, political, philosophical, and other topics of interest.

As the Revolutionary War neared, women's participation in commerce began to take on larger implications and pull them into a world beyond their immediate surroundings. The politics of trade and consumption loomed large in the lives of Philadelphians by the 1760s. Across the commercial spectrum, they felt the pressure of colonial conflict; political leaders urged female shoppers to weigh carefully the implications of each purchase they made. During the boycott era, they saw the marketplace change as businesses folded under the pressure of taxation, items became unavailable, and certain vendors became taboo. They came to understand themselves as political actors every time they spent money. Women "who tended shop, kept taverns, or conducted crafts suffered the same strain experienced by their male counterparts" during the boycotts, as Manges notes. "They suffered from depression, signed non-importation agreements, and worried over their debts and debtors."[179] Women had to make the same business and political choices as men; pick a side in the conflict over taxation and weather the consequences. While certainly not the only entre into politics, women's involvement in commerce became a major aspect of their political consciousness in the fifteen years leading up the Revolution.

[179] Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 27

Chapter Two

"A Society of Patriotic Ladies":[1] Women and Politics in Revolutionary Philadelphia

In 1695/6, two women joined a group of Philadelphia men petitioning the colonial government for assistance in curbing the wild and destructive actions of local youths. Hannah Emlen and Elizabeth Ranstead affixed their name to the document alongside seventeen male plaintiffs.[2] In 1742, Susanna Wright barricaded herself on the second floor of a Lancaster County tavern and distributed campaign materials for the General Assembly election from an open window.[3] Twenty years later, Hannah Griffitts wrote and published a poem exhorting women to participate in the anti-Parliamentary boycotts attempting to repeal the Sugar and Townshend Acts.[4] Throughout the 1760s, '70, and '80s, Philadelphia women took part in numerous public actions, both in support of and against the revolutionary movement. In 1795, Ann Parish and her Quaker co-worshippers worked to address a social and political concern by establishing the first local charity organized by and for women – the Female Society of Philadelphia for the Relief and Employment of the Poor.[5]

Historians have long tried to date the beginning of American women's political activism. At various times, scholars have argued that women were empowered by the

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[1] [Philip Dawe], "A Society of Patriotic Ladies, at Edenton in North Carolina," Mezzotint, London, March 25, 1775, Prints and Photographs Collection, Library of Congress.
[2] Edwin B. Bronner, "An Early Example of Political Action by Women," *Bulletin of Friends Historical Association* 43, no. 1 (Spring 1954), 31-32.
[3] Susan Stabile, "'By a Female Hand': Letters, Belles Lettres, and the Philadelphia Culture of Performance, 1760-1820" (PhD dissertation, University of Delaware, 1996), 480.
[4] Hannah Griffits, "The Female Patriots. Address'd to the Daughters of Liberty in America" in Milcah Martha Moore, *Milcah Martha Moore's Book: A Commonplace Book from Revolutionary America*, eds. Catherine La Courreye Blecki and Karin A. Wulf (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001) and *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 18 December 1769.
[5] Glenna Matthews, *The Rise of Public Women: Woman's Power and Woman's Place in the United States, 1630-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 45.

rhetoric of the Revolution to become politically involved; moved by the Protestant revivals of the early nineteenth century to wield their moral power to assuage social ills; and, inspired by their earlier efforts in charitable and moral reform campaigns, demanded women's economic and political rights in the 1840s. Most of these arguments recognize isolated moments of earlier political action, but contend that women did not become politicized as a group until some time following the American Revolution. Dating the origin of women's involvement in community and national politics is extremely difficult, but it is clear that many eighteenth-century women were enmeshed in the life of their cities, colonies, and empire, including the world of politics. Women saw themselves and were seen by their contemporaries as capable of political thought and action; and they expressed themselves in conversation and writing, through participation in social activities and crowd actions, by attending public meetings and protests, and by taking a lead role in the pre-Revolutionary boycott movements.

Paula Baker argued in her influential 1984 article, "The Domestication of Politics," that "men and women operated, for the most part, in distinct political subcultures, each with its own bases of power, modes of participation, and goals."[6] This perception – that men and women's political lives played out in distinct arenas and through separate modes of action – has dominated the literature on the late-colonial and early national eras. Susan Branson contends, for instance, that following the American Revolution, women began to carve out a political space for themselves through inserting women into a notion of civic virtue that initially only encompassed men.[7] However, a

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[6] Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *American Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (June 1984), 622.
[7] Susan Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames: Women and Political Culture in Early National Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 12-3.

great deal of evidence shows that no clear separation existed; women sometimes acted within domestic or homosocial spheres, but that was not the only place they found an outlet for political expression. Moreover, women took up political roles because they were invested in their communities, and their peers respected their contributions for that same reason. In the late eighteenth century, they did not gain access to politics because they were able to convince men of their civic virtue; indeed, earlier notions that women were less virtuous than men lingered into this period. Instead, women acted politically because it was one component of leading an active life as a member of a household, community, and larger polity.[8]

Touring America in the 1760s, Englishman Alexander Mackraby observed that Philadelphians "are dragons for politicks," women no less than men.[9] Late-colonial women were aware of contemporary commentary that described political thought as unfeminine and, possibly, even beyond female mental capacity. In keeping with this conservative position, they sometimes described themselves as politically unaware or inept, but that representation should not be taken at face value. In fact, female writers often subverted that notion even after proclaiming their supposed ignorance. Susan Stabile has noted that "to read their sentimental fictions as historical truths would sadly

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[8] Michael McGerr has suggested that, by the immediate post-war period, women had a visible role in political events, but always in support of or in roles dictated by men. He writes, "Women were not barred entirely from popular politics. In politics, as in the home, there were tasks that men customarily assigned to women. In nineteenth-century political campaigns, women made food for rallies, sewed banners, and decorated meeting halls. In cities and small towns, women often attended indoor political meetings. In the countryside, women went to outdoor rallies…. Women were not always spectators: younger women and girls sometimes participated in campaign events, mainly as symbols of virtue and beauty." Michael McGerr, "Political Style and Women's Power, 1830-1930," *Journal of American History* 77, no. 3 (December 1990), 867.

[9] 8 October [1767], Alexander Mackraby, "Philadelphia Society before the Revolution," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 11, no. 3 (1887), 276.

miss the cultural performance of gender" common in eighteenth century writings.[10] Similarly, Elaine Forman Crane observed about Elizabeth Drinker, "Although she [described] herself as lacking in political perspicacity, [Drinker] and her female contemporaries were in fact keenly aware of political events and trends on both theoretical and practical levels…. no one who referred to 'the People' as the 'mobility' was politically naïve."[11] While women might have considered it strategically useful to present themselves as lacking political acumen, that does not mean they were actually unaware or uninformed.

Women demonstrated their political opinions and allegiances in a variety of ways in the pre-Revolutionary period. They expressed themselves in writing, using letters and poetry as forums for dispensing advise, commenting on current events, and voicing their shifting allegiances. They used social contact in similar ways. By socializing along political lines, attending partisan events, utilizing the languages of fashion and conspicuous consumption, and participating in the burgeoning salon culture, women pursued specific political agendas. Women also appeared in public crowd actions; their presence provided proof of colonial solidarity, but also allowed them an active role in pre-Revolutionary protest. As Alexis de Tocqueville later observed, politics was America's "biggest concern; so to speak, the only pleasure [they know]… Even the women frequently attend public meetings and listen to political harangues as a recreation

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[10] Stabile, "By a Female Hand," 26.

[11] Elaine Forman Crane, "Introduction," *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, vol. 1, Ed. Elaine Forman Crane (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), xxviii. Drinker was referring to a meeting held by the Price Fixing Committee to inquire into merchants' activities and whether they were adhering to the rules set down by the Committee: "the Town meeting has Concluded more quickly than many expected – tho they are differig much amoung themselves, which may be one reason why peaceable People are left quiet – Johney Drinker, Robt. Jones and 6 or 8 others were nam'd at the State House as Persons against whome they pretended to have found of matter. this was address'd to the People or mobility, but nothing has, as yet come of it." See 29 July 1779.

from their household labors."[12] By attending public events, drinking toasts and singing songs, illuminating their windows, and participating in days of remembrance and mourning, women demonstrated their commitment to the colonial cause. Perhaps most famously, women played a key role in the anti-Parliamentary boycotts of the 1760s and '70s. As consumers and producers, women assumed a prominent place in the non-importation and non-consumption movements, shunning British-imported goods and replacing them with locally made items. Through these various activities, pre-Revolutionary women participated in the political culture of their day, taking an active role in the debates and developments that shaped late-colonial society.

Women as Political Thinkers

For a long time, historians assumed that women had little significant voice in the political life of the American colonies. Many scholars, thinking that their contemporaries saw them as essentially apolitical, promoted the same perspective. A reliance on the doctrine of separate spheres – though initially located in the early nineteenth century – led historians to assume that female colonists were even more fully relegated to the home, away from the public culture of politics and with little involvement in that world. In the 1980s, Linda Kerber challenged this view when she posited that, while colonials believed that "husband and wife shared a single will, … the *feme sole* ought to have met no impediment in the expression of her political choices."[13] But the historical record suggests the situation was even more complex. For example, political and legal

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[12] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. 1, ed. Phillips Bradley (1835; Reprint, New York: Vintage Books, 1963): 259-60.
[13] Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 120.

authorities accepted Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson and Jane Bartram, patriot women married to loyalists, as independent thinkers, holding political opinions different from those of their husbands.[14] In a case of treason against William Hamilton, which was tried following the British occupation of Philadelphia, his sister-in-law, Abigail Franks Hamilton, appeared as a witness for the defense even though her husband did not.[15] Apparently Abigail's opinion was sought after and carried weight in a wartime court. It is clear that opinions of women, even married women, were taken seriously in the political culture of eighteenth century Philadelphia.

Most women in colonial Pennsylvania did not interact directly with the courts or elections, but a few were heavily involved in formal politics. Susanna Wright served as a prothonotary – a clerk of the court – for Lancaster County, in which capacity she transcribed official documents, drafted contracts, mediated local disputes, and negotiated treaties with the Conestoga Indians in central Pennsylvania.[16] She took her involvement in high politics even further in 1742 when she lobbied for an unknown candidate during the Assembly elections. Unfortunately, what we know about her actions comes through a scathing comment from Richard Peters, a member of the losing party, who wrote:

> Could any one believe that Susy culd act so unbecoming and unfemale a part as to be employ'd in copying such infamous stuff and to take her stand as she did at Lancaster in an Upper Room in a publick House and to have a Ladder erected to the window and there distribute Lies and Tickets all the day of the election[?][17]

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[14] Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson and Jane Bartram were Patriot women married to exiled Loyalists. Both women were publicly acknowledged as holding political positions separate from their husbands. Their wartime experiences will be discussed in Chapter Four.
[15] Mark Abbot Stern, *David Franks: Colonial Merchant* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 142.
[16] Stabile, "By a Female Hand," 7-8, 34-5.
[17] Unsourced quotation as quoted by Stabile, "By a Female Hand," 480 and Edmund S. Morgan, *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1988), 193. Stabile misdates this quotation to 1758.

Clearly, Wright was deeply involved in the world of electoral politics even though her actions were perceived by her opponents as masculine and inappropriate. Apparently her supporters, who were powerful enough to get her appointed clerk of the court, were less dismissive of her activities.

Still, Wright was not the only woman whose political participation in the pre-war years was viewed with discomfort. Newspapers, advice manuals, and other publications admonished women not to become active in politics and some suggested that they lacked the mental capacity for such complex thought.[18] In 1771, however, the "Society meeting weekly for their Mutual Improvement in Useful Knowledge" considered allowing women to participate in their "Councils of State," and concluded that they were perfectly capable of advanced political thought. They nonetheless demurred from inviting their participation for fear such efforts would seriously detract from their domestic duties.[19] Such criticisms did not stop many women from engaging in some degree of political participation; and "it is not clear that women really … internalized this [characterization of their limited capacities], no matter what they indicated in the company of men."[20] Elaine Forman Crane, for example, acknowledges that Elizabeth Drinker often claimed ignorance before proceeding to discuss political events and belief systems with great

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[18] Throughout the pre-war period, articles appeared in colonial newspapers cautioning against female over-involvement in political protest. The *Pennsylvania Journal* published an article written by "Philo Publicis" on 23 August 1764 imploring women to give up their finery and support the boycott movement, but implying that it was their vanity and ignorance of the true political cost behind importing fancy clothing and household goods that had led to the political crisis. Similarly, a New York writer, while acknowledging women's importance to the tea boycott, nonetheless blamed resistance to the movement on women: "Eve's fair daughters, or sordid self-interest, encourage our merchants to the importation of this fatal plant." [Anonymous], *The Female Patriot, No. 1. Addressed to the Tea-Drinking Ladies of New-York* (1770). For a greater discussion of male ambivalence towards politically active women, see T. H. Breen, *Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 230-1, 280-1.

[19] Carl Bridenbaugh and Jessica Bridenbaugh, *Rebels and Gentlemen: Philadelphia in the Age of Franklin* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1942), 24.

[20] Anne M. Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America: A Life of Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), xvii.

knowledge and insight. Women may have adhered to certain conventions when presenting their opinions on "political events and trends" – theoretically or practically – but that does not necessarily reflect their actual understanding of and investment in those events.[21]

In fact, the range of women's political knowledge in the late-eighteenth century was vast. Contemporary sources demonstrate the diverse subjects women engaged and the perspicacity they demonstrated. Moreover, women discussed politics among themselves as well as with men. Hannah Callender Sansom's diary demonstrates the ordinariness of political talk among friends in the 1750s. She notes, "went to Catys, company there, conversation on politicks" and "Women either by connections of Husband or Father &cc cant help interesting themselves in Politicks."[22] Elizabeth Drinker records similar entries in her diary, noting that her future husband Henry came to visit and brought the news "of the Death of our good Old King, George 2d, who departed this life October the 25. 1760, - his grand-son George 3d. was proclaim'd at Bristol the 27." On another occasion, she noted, a male neighbor "[was] here this Evening – much talk about Men of War."[23] Women also helped circulate news of imperial events around the colonies. In 1763, Hannah Griffitts served as one link in the chain of information regarding the end of the French and Indian War when she wrote to her friend Susanna Wright, "Charles writes my Uncle the Articles of Peace have received Such an

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[21] Crane, "Introduction," *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, xxviii.
[22] 10 February and 20 November 1758, *The Diary of Hannah Callender Sansom: Sense and Sensibility in the Age of the American Revolution*, Eds. Susan E. Klepp and Karin Wulf (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010).
[23] 26 December 1760 and 14 October 1775, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.

approbation from the Parliament as is not to be met with in our History -& so good a Settlement we may hope will be lasting."[24]

Women not only discussed politics, but also read widely on current events. Hannah Sansom spent a week reading aloud to her father from Quaker writings about the treatment of Indians in the French and Indian War. She also helped him in his writings on the subject, spending many evenings "Copying letters for Daddy to send to England, concerning Politicks."[25] Elizabeth Drinker also spent a considerable amount of time thinking about political topics. By reading the newspaper as well as corresponding with people around the colonies, she followed the military progression of the French and Indian War, the Anglo-Spanish War, and the American Revolution. She read about and discussed events such as the British capture of the forts at Niagara and Ticonderoga, the British capture of Havana, and the arrival of the British navy in Boston.[26] Drinker routinely read the *Pennsylvania Journal* and *Pennsylvania Gazette* and received clippings from newspapers in other parts of the colonies. She and her husband often circulated political news in their personal correspondence, whether writing to each other or to friends around the burgeoning country.[27] While rarely citing specific sources, Drinker demonstrates an impressive knowledge of events throughout the colonies.

Other women also went beyond merely reading about and discussing politics to dispense opinions and advice. In 1774, Elizabeth Fergusson's nephew wrote asking for her "sentiments on the times" regarding Parliament's Tea Act and Boston's reaction. He specifically asked for her views because if they agreed he would be able to incorporate

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[24] Hannah Griffitts to Susanna Wright, 15 April 1762, Norris Family Papers, 1742-1860, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP).
[25] See October and December 1758 and January 1759, *The Diary of Hannah Callender Sansom.*
[26] See 2 August 1759, 3 September 1762, and 13 August 1776, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.*
[27] See September 1762 and August 1776, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.*

her argument into his own and if they differed, her opinions would clarify his thinking. In a later letter, he wrote that he was pleased her "Sentiments on Politcks" agreed with his.[28] Eliza Farmer wrote copiously to her nephew Jack in the pre-war years, advising the London-based merchant about political developments in the colonies. Following the Boston Tea Party, she wrote that "Congress are now setting here & have been a fortnight but nothing Transpires it is keept a profound secret … [but] the Provinces are determined one and all to stand by each other what the consequences will be we dont know." She later added, "Since writing the above the Congress have published some Resolves in they are deeply affected with the suffering of the People of Massachu[setts]."[29]

Throughout 1774 and 1775, Farmer kept him informed of the evolving perspectives on Independence in the colonies, writing that while Congress had sent a petition to the King, "they are very indifferent wither he receives it or no for ~~they are~~ it is to be published and they have bound themselves to abide by those resolves and if necessitated to repel force with force."[30] Later she wrote of military developments in Boston and Philadelphia, keeping Jack appraised of both changing sentiments and ongoing preparations. In 1777, however, she concluded, "I must be very short as it will not be prudent to send particulars at this time." Until the end of the war, Farmer ceased updating her nephew, who eventually served in the British navy, writing merely to ensure him of their safety and enquire after his.[31]

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[28] John Young to Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, 15 July and 10 August 1774, Becks and Montgomery County, Misc. 1693-1869, HSP as quoted in Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 162, 166.
[29] Eliza Farmer to Jack Halroyd, 14 September 1774, Eliza Farmer Letterbook, 1774-1789, Am. 063, HSP.
[30] Eliza Farmer to Jack Halroyd, 1 November 1774, Eliza Farmer Letterbook.
[31] Eliza Farmer to Jack Halroyd, 28 May and 28 June 1775, 11 December 1777, and 5 May 1783, Eliza Farmer Letterbook.

Immediately following the battles at Lexington and Concord, an anonymous "lady from Philadelphia" wrote a letter to a British captain stationed in Boston. The letter was published in newspapers in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, and probably other colonies as well. As part of a larger condemnation of Parliamentary policy, she wrote

> It is not a quibble in politics, a science which few understand, which we are contending for; it is this plain truth, which the most ignorant peasant knows, and it is clear to the weakest capacity, that no man has a right to take their money without their consent. The supposition is ridiculous and absurd, as none but highwaymen and robbers attempt it. Can you, my friend, reconcile it with your own good sense, that a body of men in Great Britain, who have little intercourse with America, and of course know nothing of us, nor are supposed to see or feel the misery they would inflict upon us, shall invest themselves with a power to command our lives and properties, at all times and in all cases whatsoever? You say you are no politician. Oh, sir, it requires no Machiavelian head to develop this, and to discover this tyranny and oppression.

The phrase "no taxation without representation" had been in common usage for at least a decade by the time this letter was written. As an explanation for revolution, it was clearly convincing to this author, who continued, as long as Parliament persists in illegal taxation and aggression towards the colonies, "nothing [would be] heard … in our streets but the trumpet and drum; and the universal cry … 'Americans to arms.'"[32] This woman felt confident not only expressing a political opinion, but also chiding a ranking member of the British military over the foolishness of their position on independence.

Women also served as sources of political information and as confidants for men embroiled in colonial conflict. The correspondence of John and Abigail Adams is the best known, although by no means the only, example of a couple engaging in frequent and in-depth political discussions. The letters of Rebecca and Samuel Shoemaker, Grace and Joseph Galloway, and Esther DeBerdt and Joseph Reed all demonstrate the reliance

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[32] "Female Patriotism," *The Register of Philadelphia* (27 December 1828), 374.

of men on their wives for political news.[33] Esther DeBerdt and Joseph Reed met in London in 1763 or '64, while he was studying law at the Temple. They embarked on a five-year engagement during which he lived in Philadelphia and she remained in England.[34] During that period, Esther served as an invaluable source of information about sentiments in England toward the colonies, and Joseph relied on her when making business and political decisions. De Berdt's letters were detailed and demonstrate a complex understanding of imperial conflicts. She wrote in August 1765, "we are in great hopes something will be done to relieve you, as Lord Dartmouth seems bent on taking some steps to undo what the late Ministry have done." The next year she informed Reed that "The House of Lords are most your enemies. There were but five who voted for your rights of taxing yourselves…. We have many doubts about the repeal of the Stamp Act, as Lord Butte is determined to try all his weight against it, because Mr. Pitt is for it."[35] DeBerdt and her mother sometimes attended sessions of the House of Commons and her father was well connected with English politicians; one can imagine that her news about Parliamentary debates often reached America before any official announcements.

Throughout 1768 and '69, Esther and Joseph corresponded about developments in Boston, the effect of taxes on commerce, his ability to establish himself in law, and her prospects for joining him in America. DeBerdt saw politics as the most "important [factor] in determining [our] happiness" and bemoaned that "the happiness of two lovers

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[33] The Shoemakers and Galloways will be discussed in Chapter Four.
[34] William Bradford Reed, *The Life of Esther De Berdt afterwards Esther Reed of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: C. Sherman, 1853), 24, 37, 150.
[35] Esther DeBerdt to Joseph Reed, 10 August 1765 and 7 February 1766 in Reed, *The Life of Esther De Berdt*.

should depend on the slow debates and wary counsels of politicians."[36] She observed that "a storm [is] gathering, which will break over England as well as America, and what will be the consequence it is impossible to say." For DeBerdt, the colonial crisis was personal, in that her ability to marry Reed hinged on its outcome, but it also involved great matters of principle. Her father, who supported the colonial cause, hosted many Americans at his London home, including a number of Bostonians "who are so hot about these new regulations, that we have heard of little else for a long time." Surrounded by anti-taxation thinkers, DeBerdt had developed a strongly pro-American position by the time she arrived in Philadelphia in 1770. For the rest of her life she would correspond with her brother Dennis who remained in London, becoming a source of in-depth political insight about everyday politics in America.[37]

Women's Writings on Politics

Women did not restrict their political writing to personal formats such as diaries and letters; they also expressed themselves publicly through poetry and newspaper articles. Poetry played a prominent role in eighteenth century Philadelphia culture. Men and women read and wrote, copied and circulated verse, and the moral and social value of the arts was a popular topic of discussion. Anne Ousterhout writes that colonial Americans believed poetry "encouraged the development of virtue and alleviated

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[36] Esther DeBerdt to Joseph Reed, 30 January and 5 April 1767 in Ibid.
[37] Esther DeBerdt to Joseph Reed, 9 November 1765 and August 1768 in Ibid. After arriving in Philadelphia, Esther began corresponding with her brother Dennis in London. Much as she had with Joseph Reed, Esther provided Dennis with a clear picture of political developments in her new home, informing him of Congress's action, the popular sentiment for revolution, and even early military preparations. The frequency with which she wrote about political developments alongside the personal events of her life indicates that, for Esther Reed, there was no separation between those two realms.

despair."[38] By the time of the American Revolution, poetry had an overtly political role, as verse was used to express affiliation and persuade readers to a given cause.[39] Historians have long recognized a few colonial poets as exceptional examples of female intellect; writers such as Phillis Wheatley, Annis Boudinot Stockton, Mercy Otis Warren, and Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson have all received recognition for their artistic skill and political knowledge.[40] But the world of female poetry was far more expansive. Many women read, wrote, circulated, and discussed poetry; and their contributions to colonial literary culture reveal nuances in political thought not always apparent in other sources.

Scholars such as Glenna Matthews and Joan Gundersen have suggested that women were excluded from the public world of poetry, or that they only participated in it through pseudonyms and anonymous works.[41] Women did circulate and publish their poetry in these ways, but this is not necessarily evidence of discomfort with delving into the public world of ideas. Many men also wrote under assumed names: Benjamin Franklin published as Silence Dogood; John Dickinson wrote as "A Pennsylvania Farmer"; and, John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison shared the moniker, Publius. While these men officially concealed their identities, it was generally known who they were. Thus, when Hannah Griffitts signed her poetry "A Woman," "Europa,"

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[38] Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 55-6.
[39] Catherine La Courreye Blecki and Karin A. Wulf, "Introduction," *Milcah Martha Moore's Book*, 24.
[40] See for examples, Vincent Caretta, *Phillis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2011); Carla Mulford, ed., *Only for the Eye of a Friend: The Poems of Annis Boudinot Stockton* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1995); Nancy Rubin Stuart, *The Muse of the Revolution: The Secret Pen of Mercy Otis Warren and the Founding of a Nation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2008); and, Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*.
[41] Glenna Matthews has written that women were completely excluded from the colonial world of public writing and that they only expressed themselves in private writing and correspondence. See, *The Rise of Public Women*, 7-8. Joan R. Gundersen argues that women often "feared criticism for their meddling too directly in politics" and thus published their work anonymously. She points to Mercy Otis Warren's anonymous publication of her early pamphlets and satires as an example. See, *To Be Useful to the World: Women in Revolutionary America, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 177-8.

and "Fidelia," it is debatable whether she truly sought to conceal her identity or whether she was conforming to the standard model for publishing political works in the late eighteenth century.

Some Philadelphia women published their poetry in regional newspapers, but most circulated it among family and friends with the expectation that it would be copied down and shared. Many examples of female poetry only exist today in commonplace books that existed in a liminal space between the public and the private. Women wrote their own poetry and copied down verse that appealed to them, making it private; but they did so with the expectation that the book would be shared and read by others, making it public. The best-known example is that of Milcah Martha Moore, a member of a prominent merchant family whose members spread across the colonies from Pennsylvania to the Caribbean. She avidly collected and shared poetry, recording it in her book and sending it on to friends and family.[42]

Catherine La Courreye Blecki and Karin Wulf, editors of Moore's commonplace book, argue that such books can be read as more than just records of female interest in poetry. Instead, they demonstrate how women thought about political and social issues. Moore, they argue, created a

> dialogue between entries as she broke chronology and used juxtaposition to suggest comparison between entries…. Moore's arrangement of the selections in this manuscript implicitly reflects the national dialogue of the 1760s and 1780s, and American's emerging sense of literary and culture identity.[43]

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[42] Milcah Moore also published a compendium of poetry and verse intended to be used as an educational tool. See, Milcah Martha Moore, *Miscellanies, Moral and Instructive, in Prose and Verse: Collected from Various Authors, for the Use of Schools, and Improvement of Young Persons of Both Sexes* (Philadelphia, 1787). The book, as reprinted in London by J. Phillips, included no attribution for the verse, so it is unclear how much came from previously published works and how much came from authors Moore knew personally.

[43] Blecki and Wulf, "Introduction," *Milcah Martha Moore's Book*, 68-9.

Commonplace books were used to express individual views on politics, religion, love, nature, death, friendship, and many other topics, but also to create debate and discussion among the men and women who read them. They reveal "women's engagement with the full range of issues that affected the course of their eighteenth-century lives."[44] Women took a great deal of pride in their books and the works they compiled. Sarah Eve felt her collection of "recipes, old sayings & scraps of poetry" was good enough that "in a year or two I might have published as good an almanac as Father Abraham's, Poor Richard's, or even Mr. Taylor's."[45]

Notable female poets, such as Susanna Wright, Hannah Griffitts, Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, and Anne Hampton Brewer, circulated and published their work and participated in Philadelphia literary circles.[46] Griffitts's and Fergusson's poems survive through commonplace books, manuscript collections, and colonial newspapers. Their work demonstrates the breadth of women's political knowledge and concern. During the 1760s, Fergusson published poetry in the *Pennsylvania Chronicle* supporting various social causes from providing food to inmates in Philadelphia's debtors prison to assisting victims of a fire in Bridgetown, Barbados.[47] Griffitts wrote poems on topics ranging

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[44] Ibid., 57.
[45] Sarah Eve, "Extracts from the Journal of Miss Sarah Eve," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 5 (1881), 29.
[46] Elizabeth Fergusson and Anne Brewer actually profited from their writing – Fergusson sold a few poems and Brewer was the first female foreign correspondent, living in and writing on happenings in Rome. For biographies of all four women, as well as discussions of their poetry, see Denise M. Larrabee, curator, *"By a Lady": American Women Poets of the 18th and 19th Centuries. An Exhibition, March 4 to May 27, 1988* (Philadelphia: Library Company of Philadelphia, 1988).
[47] Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 117-8. Later in life, Fergusson published a translated edition of Fénelon's *Adventures of Telemachus* and co-edited the poems of her friend and salon-member Nathaniel Evans. See Stabile, "By a Female Hand," 11-12.

from the conclusion of the French and Indian War and the death of King George to Parliamentary debates and the writings of Thomas Paine.[48]

These women and others frequently responded to specific political events through poetry. In 1768, Hannah Griffitts wrote "The Female Patriots. Address'd to the Daughters of Liberty in America" about the Sugar and Townshend Acts and the resulting boycotts. It was circulated among her intimates as well as published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.[49] The poem made female political actors the equal of men, calling them "Patriots" and "Daughters of Liberty." She urged women to participate in the boycotts and also exhort men to action. Griffitts implied that men shied away from boycotts out of fear of retaliation or economic self-interest, so women must encourage them to action:

Since the Men from a Party, or fear of a Frown,
Are kept by a Sugar-Plumb, quietly down.
Supinely asleep, & depriv'd of their Sight
Are strip'd of their Freedom, & rob'd of their Right.
If the Sons (so degenerate) the Blessing despise,
Let the Daughters of Liberty, nobly arise,

In standing up for liberty, women should abstain from purchasing British goods – specifically tea, paper, cloth, dye, glass, and paint – and produce alternate items in their own homes. Griffitts concluded by reiterating women's need to encourage men to join the boycotts and by rejecting any notion that men who refused to participate thereby had the right to ridicule the actions of women who did:

And trust me a Woman by honest Invention
Might give this State Doctor a Dose of Prevention.
Join mutual in this, & but small as it seems
We may Jostle a Grenville & puzzle his Schemes

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[48] See Hannah Griffitts, "Ode to the Late War," "On the Death of King George the 2d," "The patriotic Minority in both Houses of the British Parliament.-1775," "Wrote by the same upon reading a Book entitled Common Sense, Jany. 1776" in *Milcah Martha Moore's Book* and "Wrote – on Reading Some Paragraphs – in the Crisis," full text reproduced in Stabile, "By a Female Hand," Appendix Two.
[49] *Milcah Martha Moore's Book* and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 18 December 1769.

But a motive more worthy our patriot Pen,
Thus acting – we point out their Duty to Men,
And should the bound Pensioners, tell us to hush
We can throw back the Satire by biding them blush.

Elizabeth Fergusson wrote a similar poem about women's participation in the boycotts, "The Dream" or "The Philosophical Farmer."[50] In response to the publication of *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, she encouraged women to go further than John Dickinson suggested by assuming an active role in the boycotts. Specifically, she wrote that women should manufacture their own cloth and refuse to wear anything made from English cloth:

To show proud Albion that you can resign
Her Manufacturers; and her Trade decline:
When weighty Taxes do each Good invade
And strike at Liberty that Lovely Maid!

Women frequently wrote about the various taxes and boycotts of the pre-war period, focusing most often on the Tea Act.[51] Hannah Griffitts circulated multiple poems discussing varying aspects of the tea tax and boycott movement. In "The Ladies Lamentation over an empty Cannister by the Same," Griffitts discussed the impact of the Tea Act on American women.[52] She praised the Continental Congress for defying the tax and calling for a comprehensive boycott. She then wondered why, of all the goods taxed, Parliament had chosen such a popular item: "Why all their Malice shewn to Tea/So near,

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[50] Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, "The Dream," *Poemata Juvenilia*, Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson papers, 1752-1795, Library Company of Philadelphia.
[51] Tea poems appeared around the colonies. In "Wrote on the last Day of Feby. 1775. Beware of the Ides of March," Hannah Griffitts drew an analogy between Marcus Brutus's murder of Julius Caesar and Parliament's taxation of tea imported to America. For examples of poems written by women outside of Philadelphia, see Untitled poem, *Massachusetts Spy*, 2 December 1773 and "A Lady's Adieu to her Tea Table," *Virginia Gazette*, 1774. Unlike the 1774 political print "The Able Doctor, or America Swallowing a Bitter Draught," in which America is portrayed as a half-naked Indian woman forcibly fed tea, these poems put women in a position of power where they resisted a tyrannical government and took action to protect themselves and their rights.
[52] *Milcah Martha Moore's Book*.

so dear – belov'd by me." At the end of the poem, Griffitts indicates that her love of tea and desire to maintain her lifestyle might, ultimately, trump her political duty:

Nor Congress, nor Committee Muster,
With all their Malice, noise & Bluster,
Sure will not dare – to hinder me,
From getting fresh Recruits of Tea.

A marginal note written by Susannah Wright, a close friend and mentor of Griffitts, gives insight into the way commonplace books allowed women to debate political issues. Wright added the following comment to the end of Griffitt's poem copied in Moore's book:

> I cannot for my Life see the propriety of making this innocent aliment the chief object of their Vengence, I have public sp[iri]t enough never to taste one drop of what had pd. the Duty, but for such as has not, I must venture to use it as the Mahometans do Wine, not openly but in a manner to elude scandal and not to give Offence.

Wright thus indicated that she would be willing to drink tea smuggled in by the Dutch and not affected by Parliament's tax, but would only do so in secret, lest she be seen as failing to support the anti-taxation movement.

When a Revolutionary War seemed inevitable, female poets began writing about military developments.[53] Hannah Griffitts wrote two war-related pieces in 1776. In an essay, "The Review of past and present Times in Pennsylvania. June 1776," she related the history of the colony, its growth through industry, and the harmony of its inhabitants

[53] Elizabeth Fergusson's niece Anna wrote several poems included in her aunt's commonplace book. "An Elegy To the Memory of the American Volenters Who fell in the Engagement between the Massachessttes-Bay Militia and the British Troops: April 19 1775" commemorated the death of American troops at the Battle of Lexington and Concord. The following summer she wrote "An Elegy to the Memory of Doctor Warren" after the death of General Joseph Warren at the Battle of Bunker Hill and "Ode to Liberty," championing the American cause. See Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson commonplace book, 1770-1778, Collection MC 2006.3, Dickinson College Library. Following Anna Smith's death in childbirth in 1780, Fergusson had several of her poems published in the *Pennsylvania Magazine* and the *Universal Asylum and Columbian Magazine*.

before Parliament's taxation and oppression threatened to shatter its prosperity.[54] One of the few prose pieces in Moore's book, this essay provides a highly idealized perspective on Pennsylvania's past that reveals more about the emotional relationship of Griffitts to her colony than the circumstances that led to revolution. She also wrote "Peace. August 1776," which provided readers with a meditation on the start of the American Revolution.[55] As a Quaker, she lamented the need for war, though she recognized its necessity, given that Parliament tried to bind "the kindred Race" and "Bretheren dear" through taxation and unjust laws. Still, Griffitts spent the bulk of the poem decrying war and lamenting its presence in North America. Nonetheless, she concluded that it might be the only way for the colonies to repel English aggression. Ultimately, however, she returned to peace as the pre-eminent goal of society and the desired outcome of the Revolution:

A blooming Eden smile, again renew'd
And Heaven & Earth, the Song of Joy attest
'Till by a soft Transition Man exchang'd
A short Probation for the Peace of God.

Griffitts remained a moderate throughout the war, objecting to unreasonable taxation, but also to war as the solution to imperial conflict.

Although many women felt comfortable discussing politics through poetry and the circulation of letters and commonplace books, they rarely submitted prose articles to newspapers. However, in at least one instance, women directly challenged the assertions of a male contributor. In June 1770, "Fidelia" and "Constantia" wrote to the *Pennsylvania Chronicle* to report an argument provoked by an article written by

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[54] *Milcah Martha Moore's Book*.
[55] Ibid.

"Atticus."[56] In his piece, Atticus claimed to quote from a letter written by a woman who did not support the boycott movement. They doubted whether the quotation was truly written by a woman and asked him "to be so kind as to decide a dispute between two girls, who pretend to know something of style, by telling us whether you wrote the letters signed *Betty Telltruth*, or that they were really wrote by a female hand." It is likely they did not expect Atticus to admit fabricating the quotation; instead, this was an inoffensive way of calling him a liar and suggesting that a woman would not have selfishly spoken out against the boycott. Atticus responded only that the letters had not been written to him personally, but he had been assured that a woman wrote them.[57] This response failed to settle the debate, but both Atticus's use of the Betty Telltruth quotation and the reply by Constantia and Fidelia indicate that women were deeply engaged in the political debates of the pre-Revolutionary period.

The Social World of Female Politics

For eighteenth century women, social life provided a venue for demonstrating both personal and family politics. As tensions between the American colonies and English government heightened, politics increasingly permeated every aspect of life in Philadelphia. Women were recognized to have social power and knew how to use social situations to their advantage. A range of venues, such as dances, parties, afternoon teas, and salons, allowed women to express their views through conversation, material display, fashion, and gossip. Politics was a staple of conversation at colonial gatherings, so much

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[56] While Hannah Griffitts wrote as Fidelia, there is no evidence that she co-authored this article. Fidelia, meaning loyalty or faithfulness, was a moniker that could easily have been adopted by more than one Revolutionary woman.

[57] *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, 4 June 1770. See also, Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution*, 279.

so that English traveler Alexander Mackraby observed in his diary, "I have gone dining about from house to house, but meet with the same dull round of topics everywhere – lands, Madeira wine, fishing parties, or politics, make up the sum total."[58]

Colonial women played a crucial role in supporting the political goals of their families. This role was not new in the pre-Revolutionary years, but it gained increasing importance as colonial politics became more central to everyday life. Historian Sarah Fatherly points to the ways women contributed to their families' public position. She observes that through marriage, economic activities, education, and social pursuits, women protected and furthered their own and their kin's political goals. Women's actions were more often predicated on specific family needs and concerns than "universal prescriptions for 'womanly' behavior." Interestingly, she suggests that these efforts did more for women than simply engage them in family politics; they also helped women to develop political awareness and gain power within and outside their households.[59]

Women's political roles were supported by eighteenth-century beliefs that they possessed greater emotional capacity and sensibility than men, making them astute in judging personality and character. As such, their opinions about people – as demonstrated by the individuals they socialized with and what they said about them – mattered. A woman's view of a man's character could shape his reputation and influence

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[58] Mackraby, "Philadelphia Society before the Revolution," 283.

[59] Sarah Fatherly, *Gentlewoman and Learned Ladies: Women and Elite Formation in Eighteenth Century Philadelphia* (Bethlehem, Pa: Lehigh University Press, 2008), 15-6, 18. Karin A. Wulf echoes this idea when she argues that women played a critical role in forming and maintaining networks of association that contributed to family alliances but also gave women power within their community. See *Not All Wives* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 123. Kevin H. Sweeney explores similar issues surrounding the multiple uses women could find for social settings in "High-Style Vernacular: Lifestyles of the Colonial Elite" in Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville, Va.: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1994), 1-58.

his ability to rise in society.[60] Women spread their opinions through letters, conversation, and gossip and demonstrated them by their guest lists, social circle, and introductions made among friends. Men recognized this influence as having far-reaching commercial, political, and social impact; the opinion of women could make or break business deals, political appointments, and marital arrangements. Hannah Sansom's diary reveals the ways that even young women used their shared knowledge of men's characters to advantage; in January 1758, she and a group of friends engaged in "a great deal of talk on liars and calumniators" and the ill effect such men could have on family and society.[61] Some colonists were leery of giving women too much influence over men and doubted their ability to use that power wisely.[62] Nonetheless, women's parties were seen as important forums for making a good impression and cementing one's social position.

One of colonial America's key social events, the dancing assembly, was overseen by women and became highly politicized in the pre-Revolutionary era. Both the gathering itself and the behavior of its participants carried significant political meaning. Dancing was enormously popular in the eighteenth century world.[63] Parties and balls offered an opportunity for mingling and making connections, as well as for demonstrating refinement and class status. Dancing skills provided a measure of social achievement and a "matrix for communication among the elite in matters social,

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[60] Susan E. Klepp and Karin Wulf, "Introduction," *The Diary of Hannah Callender Sansom*, 2 and Stabile, "By a Female Hand," 475.
[61] 15 January 1758, *The Diary of Hannah Callender Sansom*.
[62] Klepp and Wulf, "Introduction," *The Diary of Hannah Callender Sansom*, 2-3; Wulf, *Not All Wives*, 192-3; Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution: Taverngoing and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 10-11; and, David S. Shields, *Civil Tongues & Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA by the University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 106-9.
[63] Social dancing happened with amazing frequency in colonial America. People danced at "public balls, private parties, and assemblies; at all times of day and evening; and for events as wide-ranging as morning teas, wedding celebrations, soldiers' wartime diversions, and the signings of peace treaties." Lynn Matlack Brooks, "Emblem of Gaiety, Love, and Legislation: Dance in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 115, no. 1 (January 1991), 63.

commercial, political, and even military."[64] Throughout the eighteenth century, women paired dancing parties with events such as elections, inaugurations, and royal birthdays; dances were organized to celebrate military victories and treaties; and, balls were thrown to fete visiting politicians and dignitaries.[65]

All the major cities of the British world had formal dancing assemblies by the mid-eighteenth century. The Philadelphia Dancing Assembly was formed in 1748 with an original subscription fee of forty shillings.[66] The Assembly began with approximately two hundred attendees, drawn from families at "the vanguard of the city's commercial and political affairs," meeting together four times a year.[67] Prominent families such as the Willings, Binghams, Franklins, Hamiltons, Hopskinsons, Shippens, and Franks participated in the Assembly in the early years. As the Revolution approached, the politics that divided them would permeate the Assembly, but for the first decade they met together to socialize and cement family, commercial, and civic ties.[68] The gatherings did not only feature dancing; attendees also played cards and games of chance; enjoyed a meal of tea, coffee, chocolate, biscuits, and toast at midnight; and met in smaller rooms provided for conversation and quiet mingling.[69]

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[64] Ibid., 63.
[65] Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 157 and Brooks, "Emblem of Gaiety, Love, and Legislation," 65.
[66] By the second year the subscription fee had raised to £3, an amount equivalent to approximately $350 in modern currency. Thomas Willing Balch, *The Philadelphia Assemblies* (Philadelphia: Allen, Lane and Scott, 1916), 14 and Joseph P. Sims, ed., *The Philadelphia Assemblies 1748-1948: An Account of the Assemblies Printed for the Two Hundredth Anniversary January 2nd, 1948 by Order of the Managers* (Philadelphia: George H. Buchanan, Co., 1947), 8, 10, and 15. For a discussion of currency conversions, see Ed Crews, "How Much Is That In Today's Money?," *Colonial Williamsburg Journal* (Summer 2002), http://www.history.org/foundation/journal/summer02/money2.cfm, accessed September 2014.
[67] Heads of household bought subscriptions and then brought their families to the assemblies. Sims, *The Philadelphia Assemblies 1748-1948*, 9, 13; Brooks, "Emblem of Gaiety, Love, and Legislation," 70; and, Balch, *The Philadelphia Assemblies*, 18.
[68] Stern, *David Franks*, 19 and Sweeney, "High-Style Vernacular: Lifestyles of the Colonial Elite," 9.
[69] Sims, *The Philadelphia Assemblies 1748-1948*, 12, 15 and Brooks, "Emblem of Gaiety, Love, and Legislation," 71.

From the beginning of the war, political divisions affected social dancing in Philadelphia. French minister Conrad Alexandre Gérard recalled in 1778 that he had considered hosting a ball to celebrate King Louis XVI's birthday, but had to abandon the idea because it was so divisive. He could not gather together enough people for a proper celebration because Philadelphians "wish to establish an absolute line of separation between the Whigs and Tories, especially between the Ladies."[70] Interestingly, Gérard indicated that the division was more rigid between women than men. Attendance at dances held to celebrate specific events or figures was also largely determined by political affiliation. When "the Assembly of this Province gave a grand entertainment unto all the delegates from the different Provinces at this time in the city, at what is called the New Tavern, in Second street" in September 1774, for example, only pro-Independence families received invitation.[71]

During the Revolution, the Assembly became exclusively the realm of Patriot families. This division was so complete that when, in 1780, tickets were accidently sold to wealthy Loyalists, a public notice was made that they were not welcome:

> It is expected that no man who has not taken a decisive part in favor of American independence will, in future, intrude on the Dancing Assembly of this city: such characters are either too detestable or two insignificant for Whig Society. The company of those who were so insensible of the rights of mankind and of personal honor, as to join the enemies of their country in the most gloomy moments of the revolution, cannot be admitted. The subscription paper, thro accident, has been handed to some characters of this description.[72]

Despite being the social equals and former friends of members of the Assembly, Loyalist families were no longer welcome among them. While the attendees were understood to

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[70] Marquis de Chastellux, *Voyage de Newport à Philadelphie, Albany, etc.* (1781) as quoted in Charles H. Sherrill, *French Memories of Eighteenth-Century America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 36.
[71] 4 September 1774, *Extracts From the Diary of Christopher Marshall, kept in Philadelphia and Lancaster during the American Revolution, 1774-1781*, Ed. William Duane (1877; reprint, Arno Press, 1969).
[72] *Pennsylvania Packet*, 12 December 1780.

be Patriots, their affiliation could still come into question. The Marquis de Chastellux recalled that the attendance of a Miss Footman was considered suspect as she was "a little contraband, that is to say, suspected of not being a very good Whig; for the Tories have been publicly excluded from this assembly."[73]

To some, hosting dances was controversial in and of itself. Throughout the war, conservative Philadelphians criticized luxury and opulent display. In the autumn of 1775, fears of crowd protest against a ball planned by wealthy Patriots led a group of politically-connected men to intervene. On 24 November, Christopher Marshall, a member of the Committee of Safety, discovered plans for "some commotion's being made that would be very disagreeable" should the ball in honor of Martha Washington and Colonel John Hancock's wife Dorothy be held. Marshall met with likeminded Patriots and several men were dispatched to speak to Martha Washington about cancelling the ball, based on the belief that "no such meeting [should be] held, not only this evening, but in future, while these troublesome times continued."[74] Following the meeting, Major John Bayard, reported that she had received them with "great politeness" and "thanked the Committee for their kind care and regard in giving such timely notice, requesting her best compliments to be returned to them for their care and regard, and assured them that their sentiments on this occasion, were perfectly agreeable unto her own."[75]

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[73] Chastellux, *Voyages dens l'Amerique septentrionale les années*, vol. 1, 293 as quoted in Balch, *The Philadelphia Assemblies*, 87-9.
[74] 24 November 1775, *Extracts From the Diary of Christopher Marshall*.
[75] 25 November 1775, Ibid. For the remainder of the war, Marshall lived in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and chronicled similar conflict over assemblies and balls there. He described those who attended Lancaster's balls as "fops, fools, &c., &c., of both sexes." See 21 February, 4 March, and 6 March 1778 and 21 January 1780, Ibid.

Martha Washington agreed to have the ball in her honor cancelled, but dances and assemblies still occurred throughout the Revolution. They often featured eating and drinking, accompanied by toasts that were explicitly political.[76] Italian merchant and supporter of the American cause, Philip Mazzei, recalled that at parties and dinners thrown for or by the French delegation in Philadelphia, toasts were made to independence, the King and Queen of France, the alliance between the nations, and various individuals and groups, including the patriotic women of America.[77] While scholars have suggested that toasting was a male form of expression and there is no existing evidence of women initiating toasts, it is clear that women were at the dinners, balls, parties, and assemblies where toasts were drunk.[78] It is unimaginable that patriotic women did not raise their glasses alongside men. French ambassador Pierre Adet observed, "It is enough to read the series of toasts proposed in [Baltimore and Philadelphia] to judge of the impression [of] public opinion."[79]

Women expressed their political opinions through association, conversation, and participation in social events, but also through display. In colonial America, a person's possessions said a lot about them: they demonstrated taste, wealth, national origin, religious conviction, and political persuasion.[80] Philadelphians believed private character could be judged through public display and "shared an obsessive interest in posing

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[76] Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution*, 153.
[77] [Philip Mazzei], *Recherches Historiques et Politiques sur les Etats-Unis* (1788) as quoted in Sherrill, *French Memories of Eighteenth-Century America*, 86.
[78] See Simon P. Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 30 for his argument about the masculine nature of toasts.
[79] Pierre Adet to the French Committee of Public Safety, 17 July 1795 as quoted in Sherrill, *French Memories of Eighteenth-Century America*, 90.
[80] For greater discussion of the meaning of the world of goods, see John Styles and Amanda Vickery, eds., *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830* (New Haven, CT: Yale Center for British Art, 2006); John Brewer and Ray Porter, eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London: Routledge, 1993); and, Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Knopf, 1992).

questions of an individual's character by reference to his possessions, clothing, and appearance."[81] Through conspicuous consumption, a Philadelphian advertised to the world who they were and who they wanted to be. During the late-eighteenth century, as conflict between England and the colonies permeated more and more aspects of daily life, women increasingly used fashion and the display of household items to demonstrate their political allegiances.

In the early eighteenth century, a person's clothing options were closely tied to their social rank, religion, marital status, and occupation; in that period, colonists had few choices about what they wore and how they used clothing to express themselves. By the latter half of the century, however, rules of fashion were changing; and women were at the forefront of using clothing for self-expression.[82] Cary Carson argues that "fashion became a badge of membership (or a declaration of aspirations to membership)" in Revolutionary social and political groups where it served as a "shared [symbol] of group identity."[83] A wide range of clothing, notions, and accessories could be used to demonstrate political preferences. One fascinating example of how both men and women expressed themselves is found in the colonial merchant dynasty led by Margaret Hardenbroeck Philipse. In the mid-eighteenth century, fashionable people in urban America wore black silk beauty marks cut into shapes and attached with gum adhesive;

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[81] Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution*, 116-7.

[82] Karin Calvert, "The Function of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America," in *The Economy of Early America: The Revolutionary Period, 1763-1790*, Eds. Ronald Hoffman, John J. McCusker, Russell R. Menand, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville, Va.: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1988), 252-3 and Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 71. For an in depth discussion of how fashion functioned in early-eighteenth century colonial America, see Kate Haulman, *The Politics of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), Chapter One.

[83] Cary Carson, "The Consumer Revolution in Colonial British America: Why Demand," in *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*, Eds. Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville, Va.: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1994), 522.

the placement of the patch indicated political affiliation, on the left for Tories and the right for Whigs.[84] This fusion of high style and politics provided a subtle way for colonials to declare themselves while also embracing up-to-date fashion.

During the pre-Revolutionary years of taxation and boycotts, the politics of clothing reached a fever pitch. The major issue was, of course, the importation of English textiles. Whether a person bought imported fabric and notions, wore clothes made from imported goods, or wore homespun became a major declaration of political affiliation.[85] The conventional wisdom is that most colonial households were capable of producing their own cloth, making homespun a viable option for anti-taxation advocates. However, Carole Shammas has demonstrated that in urban areas only twenty-five to fifty percent of households had a spinning wheel while less than fifteen percent possessed all the supplies and equipment necessary for self-sufficient cloth production.[86] She suggests that, during the taxation crisis, while Patriots wanted to make their own cloth as a political statement, "many women, especially those in towns, [had grown] up without developing the skills of spinning and knitting."[87]

When prominent women held public spinning bees – where they spun thread, wove fabric, knitted socks, and otherwise displayed their commitment to the Patriot cause – they frequently lacked the skill and supplies to produce substantial amounts of clothing. Instead, they were making a highly visible statement about their support for the boycott. Then, poorer and rural women with the necessary knowledge and equipment were

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[84] As Tories, the women of the Philipse family would certainly have worn their beauty mark on the left. Jean Zimmerman, *The Women of the House: How a Colonial She-Merchant Built a Mansion, a Fortune, and a Dynasty* (Orlando, Fl.: Harcourt, Inc., 2006), 235.
[85] The boycott aspect of this issue will be discussed later in this chapter.
[86] Carole Shammas, "How Self-Sufficient was Early America?," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 13, no. 2 (Autumn 1982), 255-57.
[87] Ibid., 256. Joan Gundersen seconds this assessment in *To Be Useful To the World*, 75-77.

employed to undertake large-scale production for more affluent Americans seeking locally produced fabrics.[88] There are conflicting reports about the degree to which women embraced homespun. On one hand, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* lauded women of "good Fashion" who "laid aside all foreign Goods, especially Cloths of a foreign manufacture." They celebrated "young ladies of as good families as any" who supported the homespun movement.[89] However, the same newspaper reported members of the "softer sex" who showed very little interest in forgoing "Silks, ribbons, Lace and every other expensive article of female vanity." Regardless of the percentage of Philadelphia women who wore locally-woven cloth, the decision to do so was widely heralded as a symbol of their "spirit of patriotism" and "love of liberty."[90]

Homespun was not the only fashionable way to declare one's political affiliation during the Revolution. Patriot women found various ways to express their support for the colonial cause and, later, the new nation. Wealthier women wore red, white, and blue sashes and other embellishments to balls, suppers, and parties, while others wore tri-color ribbons and cockades sold cheaply at most dry goods and millinery shops.[91] Later, they sported different hats that championed American nationalism: the "Federal hat" sported thirteen rings and a replica of the "federal edifice" and the popular magazine *American Museum* advertised a "Convention Hat, a Federal Bonnet, or a Congress Cap" as being acceptable for ladies to wear following the end of the war.[92] For the remainder of the

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[88] Shammas, "How Self-Sufficient was Early America?," 258; Haulman, *The Politics of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America*, 112; and, Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution*, 231.
[89] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 14 January 1768 and 23 March 1769.
[90] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 25 May 1769.
[91] Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 75.
[92] Ibid., 68 and Frank Amity, "Address to the Ladies of America," *American Museum* (November 1787), 481 as quoted in Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 71.

eighteenth century, women would use clothing color, style, and accessories to express their alignment with various political movements.[93]

A final form of sociability through which women expressed their politics and wielded influence was the emerging institution of the salon. Salons provided a space for the "inspiration, discussion, circulation and presentation" of belles lettres – fiction, poetry, essays, and correspondence on a wide variety of practical and intellectual topics. Salons did not have to be political, but they could be in several ways: the topics of conversation could include politics; the members could be chosen based on political affiliation; men sometimes sought out salons in order to talk about politics in an informal environment; and, they could be criticized for politicizing what ought to be a social gathering.[94] The French antecedent to the American salon was intentionally not a political space, but in North America the salon, like other realms of social interaction, quickly became a forum for political interaction.[95]

Recent scholarship on the American salon dates its origin to the years immediately following the war, when wives of politicians held socio-political gatherings that were tightly related to party politics, but it is clear that salons existed in Philadelphia

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[93] For an excellent discussion of clothing as a popular and public form of expression in the early national period, see Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*; Clare A. Lyons, *Sex Among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender & Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press, 2006); and, Linda Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federalist America* (New Haven, Conn.: Published for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation by the Yale University Press, 2002).

[94] Blecki and Wulf, "Introduction," *Milcah Martha Moore's Book*, 23-4 and Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 142.

[95] For discussions of the French salon, see Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994); Aileen Ribeiro, *Fashion in the French Revolution* (Teaneck, NJ: Homes & Meier Publishers, 1988); and, Jennifer Jones, *Sexing La Mode: Gender, Fashion and Commercial Culture in Old Regime France* (New York: Berg, 2004).

prior to the Revolution.[96] Late colonial salons were both informal and formal, although most tended towards private events with specific guest lists. Some women held open drawing rooms where people could drop by to chat, but most preferred to select their guests with the intention of creating a gathering of noted intellectuals and conversationalists. Salonnières provided food and drink, and sometimes music, to accompany the conversation; they courted public figures and built a reputation for their own intellect as well as their ability to bring together people who engaged in interesting and lively conversation.[97] Salons were not meant to be forums for heated debate; rather, they were intended to create a space for spirited discussion and friendly persuasion. As a result, participants were generally chosen from among likeminded people who could engage in such conversations without flaring into overt conflict.

Philadelphia was a likely location for the first American salons due to its large concentration of literary, scientific, philanthropic-minded, and well-traveled inhabitants. The city also had a vibrant social scene that melded with its more serious component to form an environment ripe for intellectual and political discussion.[98] The first American salon was likely hosted by Elizabeth Graeme (later Fergusson) at her family's country estate and, subsequently, their home in the city. Graeme travelled in England as a young woman and modeled her gatherings on the salons she visited there. She was recognized

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[96] Not a great deal of recent scholarship has focused on the American salon, but for good discussions of women's role in establishing informal spaces for the discussion of intellectual and political topics, see Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*; Shields, *Civil Tongues & Polite Letters in British America*; and, Catherine Allgor, *Parlor Politics: In which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government* (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia, 2000).
[97] Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 125-6.
[98] Anne Hollingsworth Wharton, *Salons Colonial and Republican with Numerous Reproductions and Miniatures of Men and Women Prominent in Colonial Life and the Early Days of the Republic* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, Co., 1900), 24, 28, 81.

as an impressive thinker and "as word of [her] intellectual accomplishments spread, her number of correspondents and friends grew as people wanted to meet her."[99]

In the late-1760s, Graeme began by having a few women out to her country home two or three times a week to read aloud and discuss intellectual, philosophical, and topical issues. By 1770, she had moved into the city and was hosting a formal salon. She held visiting hours on Saturday evening where a regular set of attendees conversed and exchanged ideas.[100] She invited single men and women as well as married men and couples. Notable members of her salon included Dr. Benjamin Rush, Dr. John and Mary Hopkinson Morgan, Reverend William and Rebecca Moore Smith, Reverend Jacob and Elizabeth Hopkinson Duché, John Dickinson, Francis and Ann Borden Hopkinson, the five Willing sisters, and the entire Stockton family. The attendees were all prominent members of Philadelphia society, but some, including Francis Hopkinson, Rebecca Moore, Benjamin Rush, and Annis Boudinot Stockton, were also celebrated writers. Their inclusion in the salon indicates "the beginning of an American literary consciousness and a desire to create an American culture separate from Britain's."[101] While there is little record of the specific topics discussed at Graeme's salon, her biographer Anne Ousterhout argues that her gatherings became increasingly political as

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[99] Ibid., 13, 19 and Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 120-3. When Benjamin Rush eulogized Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, he wrote, "The genius of Miss Graeme evolved the heat and light that animated [her salon]. One while she instructed by the stores of knowledge contained in the historians, philosophers, and poets of ancient and modern nations, which she called forth at her pleasure; and again she charmed by a profusion of original ideas, collected by her vivid and widely expanded imagination, and combined with exquisite taste and judgment into an endless variety of elegant and delightful forms. Upon these occasions her body seemed to evanish, and she appeared to be all mind." Benjamin Rush, "An Account of the Life and Character of Elizabeth Fergusson," *The Port Folio* I (1809), 523.
[100] Wharton, *Salons Colonial and Republican*, 15 and Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 122. Graeme also hosted a small Sunday night dinner that was more explicitly a venue for political discussion and less likely to include single women, although it did include the wives of politicians and other prominent Philadelphians. Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Women in America*, 133-5.
[101] Ibid., 122 and Larrabee, "*By a Lady*," 4.

the Revolution emerged.[102] They also foreshadowed the emergence of salons as a key component of federal political culture. Women wielded enormous political influence in the semi-private spaces of salons and dances, but those were by no means the only forums they chose for political expression. Though harder to find in the historical record, women were also present at and active in public crowd actions and displays.

Women in the Crowd

The crowd, also called the mob, the masses, or the people, played a huge role in late-colonial and revolutionary society. During the years of crisis leading to war, the consent of the mob held great psychological power and its disapproval could change the course of events. Thus, American leaders courted popular support. They needed both the actual consent of the governed to launch a revolution and the symbolic support of the people to demonstrate the rightness of the anti-Parliamentary movement. While the mob has most often been described as consisting of middling and working men with a few poorer women and children, the crowd often consisted of a larger swath of colonial society. Wealthy men could be found in the masses during public demonstrations and women across class lines played a larger role in crowd action than has traditionally been assumed.[103]

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[102] Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 129.

[103] Some scholars such as Glenna Matthews, Carole Shammas, and Simon P. Newman have suggested that only lower class women had access to mob actions; these scholars propose that wealthy and middling women would have been uncomfortable among the rabble or would not have had access to the spaces in which demonstrations occurred. However, it is clear from studying women's commercial, social, and political lives that women of all ranks moved throughout Philadelphia and appeared in the crowd at political demonstrations. For examples of the more conservative argument, see Matthews, *The Rise of Public Women*; Shammas, "The Female Social Structure of Philadelphia in 1775," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 107, no. 1 (January 1983), 69-83; and, Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street*.

Women moved throughout the city as part of their daily lives and were often in multipurpose spaces, where they could purposefully or accidentally become part of public demonstrations. Certainly many women observed public outcries from the vantage of their porches and doorsteps, but they also participated as they traveled the city, shopping, visiting friends, doing business, and seeking out political displays. Philadelphia's public spaces were used for multiple purposes; for example, High Street in front of City Hall featured the weekly market, itinerant preachers, and political speakers while the wharves, home to commercial and shipping business, also hosted large parties and civic demonstrations.[104] As political protest became a common feature of the urban landscape, women passing along the city's streets and squares were provided with opportunities to join the crowd, or not, as they preferred.

Mass political action was a trademark of Revolutionary-era protest and women's participation in the church, market, and social scene ensured their capacity to take an active part.[105] Beginning in the 1760s, Patriot leaders – and eventually their opposition – felt the need to demonstrate community support for their position and, as a result, courted a wide array of colonists, the lower classes, women, and African Americans included.

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[104] Robert J. Gough, "The Philadelphia Economic Elite at the End of the Eighteenth Century," *Shaping a National Culture: The Philadelphia Experience, 1750-1800* (Winterthur, Del.: Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum, 1994), 20.

[105] Gundersen, *To Be Useful to the World*, 173. Karin Wulf and others have argued that Philadelphia women were more active in the pre-war public than those in other areas because of the large Quaker population. Due to the gender equality of the Society of Friends, Quaker women were more accustomed to public speaking and action. While Quaker practices certainly created many strong women, it was not the only factor that encouraged women to political action in pre-Revolutionary life. Women all around the colonies, regardless of religious affiliation, were involved in public undertakings of the 1760s, '70s, and '80s. Newspapers and archival records report women taking to the streets in protest around the colonies: the largest female anti-tea tax demonstration happened in North Carolina; Patriot women chased a Loyalist women out of town with the very real threat of tarring and feathering in Boston; and, women in Maine and rural Massachusetts held elaborate send-offs for their local militias. While religion might have played a role in Quaker women's public personas, it was clearly not the only path to action. Moreover, given Friends' strictures against members supporting military action, female Quakers may have felt more constrained than other women the closer the colonies moved toward war. For Wulf's argument, see *Not All Wives,* 12.

They believed that women's participation in public actions "sanctioned and enhanced" those events, thus lending legitimacy and solidarity to their cause.[106] Although women were not permitted into the formal rites of voting and holding office, they were nonetheless encouraged to participate in the informal rituals of crowd action and popular protest. Their involvement both demonstrated community solidarity and provided women with an education in political action.

While the evidence is scanty and sometimes circumstantial, historians can recover specific instances of Philadelphia women participating in public events and crowd actions before the Revolution. Sarah Eve intended to spend a quiet day at home on 30 August 1773, but instead, "hearing that Mr. John Penn was to be proclaimed Governor, curiosity led Deby Mitchell and I to go see him." She commented that, "for my part I had rather be his brother than he, the one possesses the hearts of the people the other the Government."[107] Eve could not vote in the election for governor of Pennsylvania, but that did not prevent her from having a strong interest in the man who was to lead their colony. Women also attended public meetings at which proclamations were read and revolutionary courses of action determined. On 10 June 1774, Christopher Marshall noted, "a meeting held at the Philosophical Hall, and also the day after… to advise, consult and deliberate upon the propositions that were to be laid before the general meeting of the inhabitants on the eighteenth instant, near the State House."[108] While women would not have been among those voting on the propositions, they would have

[106] Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street*, 19, 22.
[107] Sarah Eve, "Extracts from the Journal of Miss Sarah Eve," 197.
[108] 10 June 1774, *Extracts from the Diary of Christopher Marshall.*

been in the crowd listening to the debate and among the "general meeting of inhabitants" to whom the propositions were read.[109]

Military funerals were another forum for women to demonstrate affiliation with a political cause, that of the empire during the French and Indian War and, later, the Revolution. In 1759, the unmarried Elizabeth Sandwith "Saw the Grand burial of Brigadier-General Forbes; who was Buryed after the Milatiary form." John Forbes was a hero of the British army who died shortly after the capture of Fort Duquesne. His public funeral at Christ Church was attended by hundreds of Philadelphians, including the entire Sandwith family.[110] As the Revolution drew near, women participated in the ritual destruction of effigies representing British imperial power. In 1774, Elizabeth (Sandwith) Drinker viewed Massachusetts "Govr. [Hutchinson] carted round the Town hang'd and burnt in Effigie."[111] Women also attended anniversary commemorations for events like the Boston Massacre; every year from 1771 through 1775, churches around the colonies held services in honor of the fallen Patriots and the cause of liberty. John Adams reported that, at one such service in Boston, the Old South meetinghouse was "filled and crowded in every pew, Seat, Alley and Gallery, by an audience of several thousands people of all ages and Characters and of both sexes."[112] These public displays were key in distancing the colonies from their imperial roots, and women were

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[109] A. Kristen Foster states that, at the general meeting held on 18 June 1774, there were approximately eight thousand people in attendance. While there is no hard evidence that a portion of those Philadelphians were female, it is extremely unlikely that it was an entirely male gathering, especially as it was a public meeting held in the State House yard where anybody could join the crowd. See, A. Kristen Foster, *Moral Visions and Material Ambitions: Philadelphia Struggles to Define the Republic, 1776-1836* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2004), 18.

[110] 14 March 1759, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker* and Richard B. Morris, *Encyclopedia of American History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 68.

[111] 3 May 1774, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.

[112] 5 March 1773, John Adams, "Diary, With Passages from An Autobiography" in Charles Francis Adams, ed., *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States: With a Life of the Author, Notes and Illustrations*, vol. 2 (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1850), 317.

commonly in the crowds that cheered the destruction of royal figures and the introduction of a new American political culture.

Women participated in political celebrations, not only through attendance, but also through public displays of symbols of solidarity. On holidays and other important dates, Philadelphians illuminated their windows with candles or lanterns. Quakers refused to illuminate their windows due to their pacifist beliefs, which included not supporting military ventures. However, failing to light candles was taken as a sign of dissension and sometimes led to destruction and violence. On several occasions in the 1750s and '60s, Hannah Sansom recalled the repercussions for those who did not participate in citywide illuminations. For example, in August 1758, there was a "Grand Illumination for [the surrender of] Cape Breton for which Quakers paid, broke 20 pains of Glass for us, at John Reynolds house the Windows in general, and some shutters were shattered to pieces." While Sansom personally supported the American military victory, she did not illuminate her home and, like other Quakers, was punished for her stance.[113] Elizabeth Drinker recorded numerous illuminations over the years, none of which she participated in. While her family suffered few ill effects for their pacifism, she knew many Friends whose property was vandalized because they kept their windows dark.[114] In the politically charged environment of revolutionary Philadelphia, non-participation could be thought as bold a political declaration as taking an active role.

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[113] 23 August 1758, *The Diary of Hannah Callender Sansom*.

[114] For examples, see 24 September 1760, 19 May 1766, 4 July 1777, 4 July 1778, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*. She commented on 4 July 1778 that, "Candles were too scarce and dear, for Alluminations, which perhaps sav'd some of our Windows." Because candles were hard to find, dark window did not necessarily indicate a lack of patriotism. Whether she meant that her own personal windows, or those of fellow Quakers, were saved is unclear.

Still, collective and visible action was the most typical form of political expression. Peter Thompson argues that singing songs and drinking toasts not only brought colonial men and women together but also united Philadelphians from diverse backgrounds. Songs and toasts were popular means of expression that allowed men and women of various ranks to participate in one of the most common forms of political expression.[115] While the specifics of revolutionary toasts have rarely survived the passage of time, the lyrics of two tavern songs directly concerning female patriotism still exist.[116] Set to folk tunes or hymns, popular songs were sung at taverns and private parties, by soldiers, sailors, and laborers, and at political celebrations. Given that most colonists would have known the music, new sets of lyrics could be quickly learned and topical songs could become extremely popular.[117] Sadly, little else about the songs, such as authorship and how they were disseminated throughout the colonies, is known.

"Revolutionary Tea" uses the metaphor of an English mother and an American daughter fighting over a tea tax to support the revolutionary cause:

There was a rich lady lived over the sea,
And she was an island queen.
Her daughter lived off in the new country,
With an ocean of water between

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[115] Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution*, 97.
[116] A third song, "Johnny Has Gone For A Soldier," is not about a woman, but instead is written in a woman's voice. It tells the story of a girl whose love has joined the army while she stays home and does what she can to support the military (such as knitting and gathering metal for bullets) while she waits for his return. Alternately, the song sometimes was sung from the perspective of a mother whose son had joined the army. Originally an English song, it was popular on both sides of the conflict during the American Revolution. Lyrics exist today in both the first and third person, indicating that the song was sung as though by women and about women.
[117] "Songs of the Revolution," *Carpenter's Hall*, http://www.ushistory.org/carpentershall/edu/songs.htm, accessed 5 May 2014.

The song describes the mother as wealthy but "never contented," and as a result she levied a "tax of thrupence a pound on the tea." The daughter refused to pay an unfair tax, leading the mother to declare absolute parental authority:

"You shall!" cried the mother, and reddened with rage.
"For you're my own daughter you see.
And it's only proper that daughters should pay
Her mother a tax on the tea"

The daughter rejects the notion of absolute authority and asserts her own rights within the familial relationship. Alluding to the Boston Tea Party, the daughter destroys the tea rather than pay the tax. In a final note of defiance, she declares:

"Oh mother, dear mother…
Your tea you may have when 'tis steeped enough.
But NEVER a tax from me"

While defiance was not commonly seen as a female virtue in the eighteenth-century, this poem casts the conflict around the tea tax in feminine terms, making women central to the dialogue as patriots and protestors.

The song, "Address to the Ladies," admonished women to support the boycott movement. It was directed to "young ladies in town and those that live round" from "a friend" who sought to advise them on patriotic behavior. The presumably male friend focused first on fashion:

First then throw aside your high top knots of pride,
Wear none but your own country linen;
Of economy boast, let your pride be the most,
To show clothes of your own make and spinning.

And if women are concerned about being unattractive, he claims they will only have to wear plain clothing for a short period before a new trend will be created:

For when once it is known this is much worn in town
One and all will cry out 'tis the fashion!

No more ribands wear, not in rich dress appear
Love your country much better than fine things;
Begin without passion, it will soon be the fashion,
To grace your smooth locks with a twine string.

Finally, the song advises women that if they act in a patriotic manner, they will be considered virtuous and win the love and respect of desirable young men:

These do without fear, and to all you'll appear Fair,
Charming, true, lovely, and clever,
Tho' the times remain darkish, young men may be sparkish,
And love you much stronger than ever.

Echoing arguments made by newspapers and broadsheets, this song urged women to participate in the boycotts by appealing to their sense of patriotism, but also by arguing that there was social advantage to rejecting British goods. By bringing women into the middle of the non-importation movement, the song reinforced the idea that they could wield political power through consumption and protest.

Though examples of female crowd participation are scattered, when the various pieces of evidence are taken together, it is clear that women were present and active in popular political culture. Women were in the streets and public spaces where parades, protests, declarations, and celebrations occurred. They were part of the mob that either cheered or jeered military and political displays. They attended parades, fireworks, and public dinners on holidays, and they retreated on days of mourning. They illuminated their windows (or not), attended funerals, held parties, drank toasts, and sang songs to celebrate or commemorate military and political events and figures. While women were barred from the formal politics of elections and office holding, they were very much a part of the popular politics of the masses.

Women, Consumption, and Revolutionary Boycotts

Colonial women's best known form of political action in the lead-up to the Revolution was their participation in the boycotts of the 1760s and '70s. In reaction to various taxes and tariffs passed by Parliament, men and women across North America vowed not to import, purchase, or consume British-produced goods. Colonial leaders in Philadelphia as elsewhere saw women's support of and participation in the boycotts as essential to their success. Voluminous literature has been written on the years of crisis and the movement towards revolution. First to recoup financial losses from the French and Indian War and later to assert their absolute authority over the colonies, Parliament passed a series of taxes and tariffs that applied solely to the Americas. The passage of the Sugar Act, Stamp Act, Townshend Acts, and Tea Act between 1764 and 1773 incited colonists first to mild protests, then to full boycott, and finally to revolution. Scholars have posited various explanations for the American Revolution and attributed the power behind the Revolution to numerous groups. No single motivation (economic, religious, intellectual, or material) or group (urban dwellers, landed elites, intellectuals, or the artisan classes) can fully explain America's move from colony to independence. The revolutionary movement came about through multiple groups pursuing overlapping agendas. Among the most understudied of these groups, however, are women, who played a central role in the protest movements of the pre-war years.

While several scholars have recognized women's centrality to the boycott movement, few have seriously considered their participation as a sign of independent political choice and expression.[118] Gary Nash notes that the boycott movement expanded

[118] One of the best-known discussions of women's participation in the boycott movement as an avenue to political activism is Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution*. He argues that consumerism and boycotts were

the political space for women in cities like Boston, New York, and Philadelphia because the non-importation pacts were signed by the "people," which "included everyone regardless of age, sex, or rank."[119] However, he focuses little on women's roles or the specific, gendered ways urban women engaged with the non-consumption movement. Karin Wulf notes that single women became involved in civic activities such as resisting British taxes, but characterizes their actions more as a byproduct of their status as independent householders than as the result of political conviction. "Women," she writes, "as heads of household, took responsibility for the exchanges that informed the community's own interests." She roots this focus in women's commitment to neighborhood "networks of both interest and place" rather than individual political conviction.[120] Other scholars, such as Simon Newman, Joan Gundersen, Linda Kerber, and T.H. Breen have also discussed anti-consumption activism as part of women's Revolutionary experience, but without serious consideration of the range of opinions expressed through their actions.[121]

Just as importantly, women proved themselves key to the anti-importation and anti-consumption movements through two roles – producers and consumers – but only the latter has been widely recognized. Women who owned shops and worked in skilled crafts made political statements when they decided whether to buy and sell imported

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hugely empowering for non-enfranchised colonists such as women, African Americans, the poor, and the young, but relegates the entire discussion to a single chapter and uses few first-person primary sources to back up his argument, relying instead on commentary and proscriptive literature. This cursory take on women as political figures is typical of the literature.

[119] Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 360.

[120] Wulf, *Not All Wives*, 124.

[121] For examples, see Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street*, 29; Gundersen, *To Be Useful to the World*, 173-4; Linda Kerber, "'History Can Do It No Justice': Women and the Reinterpretation of the American Revolution," *Towards an Intellectual History of Women* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 76-7; and, Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution*, 230-4.

goods, work with British sympathizers, and sign anti-Parliamentary documents. Likewise, as consumers, women made a statement by patronizing Patriot or Loyalist-leaning businesses, buying and displaying imported or locally made goods, socializing with other women who made similar consumption decisions, and taking a leading role in anti-tea tax protests. These public declarations of political affiliation were respected and validated by other colonists. Women's participation in the boycott movement was not only seen as important because it demonstrated wide-spread support for the colonial cause, but also because it contributed fundamentally to the practical success of the anti-Parliamentary movement.

Female business owners faced difficult decisions about whether to support the British taxes of the 1760s and 70s or participate in the various boycott efforts. Women who ran stores, taverns, and craft shops "suffered the same strain experienced by their male counterparts. They suffered from depression, signed non-importation agreements, and worried over their debts and debtors."[122] Like businessmen, female entrepreneurs weighed economic and political concerns against one another, attempting to find a way to assert their personal beliefs while also protecting their commercial status. As members of Philadelphia's business community, they took an active role in the defining movement of the pre-Revolutionary period.

The colonial market proved extremely uncertain during the pre-war years, as the non-importation and non-consumption movements imposed unprecedented strains on business. Eliza Farmer and Esther DeBerdt both observed the difficulties faced by Philadelphians attempting to start new businesses: DeBerdt wrote that "nobody can think

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[122] Frances May Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia" (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1958), 27 and Wulf, *Not All Wives*, 181.

of entering into trade when there is no prospect of anything to do," while Farmer noted that commerce became so strained during the non-importation movement that "some great many of our merchants have shut up their stores and more [must] soon as all Trade will be stopd the 20th of July."[123] Both women noted retailers going out of business as a result of the boycott movement. Farmer told her nephew Jack about Watkins, a recent arrival in Philadelphia, who "came over in a very bad time as this Non Importation is agreed on[;] business will be at a stand." As a result, Watkins's store rapidly failed.[124] Esther DeBerdt Reed, wrote to her brother in London that, "Many failures are expected here; the city is so much overstocked with goods … and the needy trader is constantly obliged for the sake of ready cash to send his goods (often bales unopened), to vendue, where they sometimes sell under prime cost, which is productive of universal bad consequences."[125]

Every shopkeeper, female or male, had to decide whether to continue importing British goods or to support the boycotts and severely curtail the scope of their enterprise. Joan Gundersen suggests that, because many women ran smaller shops and had fewer other means of support, they were not as free as men to pursue politics over business. Given that the result of joining the non-importation movement could be the lessening or even cessation of business, women who were the sole support of their families or who had no savings might feel obligated to remain in business regardless of their personal views on Parliamentary taxes.[126] While we cannot know how many Philadelphia women

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[123] Esther DeBerdt to Joseph Reed, 7 February 1766 in Reed, *The Life of Esther De Berdt* and Eliza Farmer to Jack Halroyd, 28 June 1775, Eliza Farmer Letterbook.
[124] Eliza Farmer to Jack Halroyd, 1 November 1774, Eliza Farmer Letterbook.
[125] Esther DeBerdt to Dennis DeBerdt, 20 October 1772 in Reed, *The Life of Esther De Berdt*.
[126] Gundersen, *To Be Useful to the World*, 174. Women were not the only people vulnerable in the tumultuous pre-war Atlantic market. Men just starting in business or without considerable financial support were also at risk. Judith Sargent Murray's first husband, John Stevens, lost his mercantile business

made their decision about the boycotts based on financial pragmatism, we do know that some were sufficiently prominent within the city's business community to take a lead in initiating the boycott movement.

In October 1765, prominent Philadelphia merchants, alongside those in other commercial centers, signed official non-importation resolutions that were sent to Parliament to register colonial discontent and their intention to resist taxation.[127] Six women – Lydia and Elizabeth Hyde, Elizabeth Paschall, Marcy Gray, Magdalen Devine, and Ann Pearson – affixed their names to the resolution, which used the language "us," "trading people," and "subscribers" to describe the signatories.[128] The resolution was not symbolic. Among the enumerated resolves was one that indicated the consequences for breaking one's commitment:

> Fifthly, It is agreed that if goods of any kind did arrive from Great Britain at such time or under such circumstances as to render any signer of the Agreements suspected of having broke his promise the Committee now appointed shall enquire into the premises, and if such suspected person refuses or cannot give them Satisfaction, the Subscribers hereto will unanimously take all prudent measures to discountenance and prevent the Sale of any such goods untill they are released from this agreement by mutual and general consent.

Clearly, signing the non-importation resolution indicated a commitment beyond mere solidarity. While the resolve says "his promise," the inclusion of six female signatures

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as a result of trade embargoes and strained relationships between England and the colonies. He was never able to recover; his debts mounted throughout the Revolution and, in 1786, he left Boston for the West Indies to avoid debtors prison and attempt to rebuild his commercial reputation. He died there the following year. Judith worked in vain to salvage her husband's business, writing "letter after letter asking local merchants to extend their credit and offer her husband greater leniency," but to no avail. She had no financial support except her husband's earnings and, as a result of her wartime experiences, became a staunch advocate of economic self-sufficiency for women. Judith Sargent Murray, *From Gloucester to Philadelphia in 1790: Observations, Anecdotes, and Thoughts from the 18th-Century Letters of Judith Sargent Murray*, Ed. Bonnie Hurd Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: Judith Sargent Murray Society, 1998), 28-9.

[127] Female merchants in Boston signed a similar petition in 1769. For a discussion of that petition, see Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution*, 287.

[128] Non-importation resolution(s), Philadelphia 25 October 1765, Am. 340, HSP. With the exception of Gray, all were either spinsters or widows. Unfortunately, the historical record does not indicate Gray's marital status.

shows that this movement was not a purely masculine endeavor. Women were recognized as "Merchants & Traders of the City of Philadelphia" and their agreement to boycott was as binding as that of their male peers.[129] It is logical, therefore, that when masculine pronouns were used in other revolutionary petitions and statements, they might also have been addressing the whole community, and not just the men.

Some female shopkeepers supported the boycott, but also sought permission to sell British goods that they had paid for before the beginning of the non-importation movement. The Committee of Safety issued these vendors papers that allowed them to receive and sell such goods without violating the boycott. These forms had blanks that could be filled in to allow individual shopkeepers to sell specific goods that had arrived on the enumerated ship. Three blanks issued to female shopkeepers have survived. On 31 December 1774, Jane Bartram was permitted to sell cargo that came in on the *Peggy and Betsey*; on 18 January 1775, Margaret and William Duncan were allowed to accept "31 Five Bales of Merchandise" from Captain John Barron's ship *Catherine*; and, on 21 January 1775, Mary and Charles Eddy took possession of one cask of merchandise from the same ship.[130] Shopkeepers navigated a complicated course between political and economic interest during the boycotts. Pragmatic means had to be found to allow stores to stay in business while also upholding the anti-Parliamentary campaign and women were as free to avail themselves of these measures as men.

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[129] Ibid. Karin Wulf has suggested that only single women could sign these petitions because their marital status released them from the complications of coverture and allowed them to act independently. However, this idea that women's ability to act independently was tied to their status does not hold up. Women were taken seriously in Philadelphia's commercial realm regardless of their marital state and it stands to reason that they were taken seriously the same way in colonial protest. For Wulf's argument, see *Not All Wives*, 181-3.

[130] Blanks to be filled by Philadelphia importers during existence of non-importation agreement, AM 817, HSP.

While shopkeeping was the best-known forum for female business owners' participation in the anti-Parliamentary movement, craftswomen also found their livelihoods directly tied to the boycotts. Artisans depended on trade and low taxes for financial success; increased tariffs and heightened regulation interfered with artisanal advancement in the colonies. Women who owned and worked in craft shops heard, discussed, and strategized ways to deal with the evolving crisis. Artisans supported the boycotts out of political conviction, but also because they saw an opportunity for increased sales. If British-made goods were no longer being sold in the colonies, local craftworkers could fill those needs.[131] Patriot leaders not only advocated that colonists buy goods made in America, but also encouraged artisans to begin making new items to meet the shortfall left by the boycotts.[132] In the decade prior to the Revolution, a buy local sentiment developed among artisans and consumers who wanted to develop a craft market that would encourage greater economic independence for the colonies.

The focus on purchasing locally-made goods created political and commercial opportunities for colonial artisans. Skilled craftworkers, much like shopkeepers, had to choose whether to support the colonial cause; that meant not only participating in the non-importation movement, but also selecting patrons and commissions along political lines. Before the 1760s, politics played little if any role in determining how artisans

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[131] The buy local campaign was patriotic, but it also made solid economic sense for Philadelphia's artisans. They had had a difficult relationship with Parliament prior to the 1760s. England had intended for the colonies to produce agricultural goods for export, while importing almost everything else, making them dependent on the home country for survival. This mandate kept many skilled trades from thriving in the colonies, although by the mid-eighteenth century craftwork was on the rise in Philadelphia and elsewhere, in defiance of imperial law. The Philadelphia craft community seized upon the boycotts of the 1760s and '70s as a chance to break free, expand their labors, and gain more control over the market. Marla R. Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2010), 77-8 and 86 and Charles S. Olton, *Artisans for Independence: Philadelphia Mechanics and the American Revolution* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1975), 2-3, 19, and 26.

[132] Olton, *Artisans for Independence*, 28 and Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 90-91.

chose clients, but in the immediate pre-war period, such affiliations became a major concern. While consumers shunned merchants who did not support the boycott, artisans refused to accept work from clients who did not embrace the Patriot cause. Moreover, accepting work from a prominent Patriot asserted a shop's affiliation with the struggle for independence. For example, as the Continental Congress met in Philadelphia to discuss responses to the Townshend Acts, John and Betsy Ross accepted a major contract with attorney and civil servant, Benjamin Chew.[133] By taking on a significant job with a prominent Patriot, the Rosses – Quakers who did not necessarily have to align with either side – indicated their support for the American cause.

By the end of the Stamp Act crisis, Americans were beginning to see the advantages of economic self-sufficiency; if they were not so dependent on England for essential imports, then Parliament would have less power through taxation. Artisans encouraged that perspective as it gave them the chance to develop new trades and new markets.[134] Some used local production as a selling point when they reached out to female consumers. Andrew Rutherford advertised "to inform such of the ladies of Philadelphia, as are resolved to distinguish themselves by their patriotism and encouragement of American manufactures, that he makes and sells all sorts of worsted shoes, of all sizes, as near and cheap as any imported from England."[135] Other craftspeople advertised locally produced cloth, ink-powder, and tea at the twice-weekly market and at least one store claimed to sell nothing except colonial-produced wares.[136] Beginning in the late-1760s, then, Philadelphia artisans began to support local

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[133] Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 139.
[134] Olton, *Artisans for Independence*, 27.
[135] *Pennsylvania Journal*, 20 June 1765.
[136] Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 35.

manufacturing efforts as a form of political protest and as a way to gain increasing opportunities for local craftsmen and women.

One of the largest concerted efforts to advance local production and consumption revolved around cloth; political leaders sought workers to make textiles and clothing for the American market while encouraging individuals who were capable to produce cloth for themselves and their families. Women were engaged in this effort at all levels – as spinners, weavers, and seamstresses, as merchants and consumers, and as boosters for the homespun movement. In 1770, the American Philosophical Society attempted to solve two problems through the creation of the Society for the Cultivation of Silk. They hoped to employ poor women and men in caring for silkworms, which would improve the city's unemployment problem as well as create homemade silk for the market.[137] Radical artisans also employed poor women to spin wool thread and sew clothing in their homes. By 1775, the United Company of Philadelphia for Promoting American Manufactures employed four hundred women, and another group employed nearly as many. It has been suggested that by the time the Revolution began, as many as four thousand women in eastern Pennsylvania were spinning for organized local production efforts.[138] For

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[137] Alexander Mackraby described the efforts to raise money for the Society for the Cultivation of Silk in a letter to his brother: "A scheme is proposed here for the culture of silk, in consequence of your offered bounty at home, and it is well supported. Near a thousand pound has been subscribed in a few days, and more could, I doubt, be easily raised. The people of this city are far beyond the inhabitants of any other part of the continent in public spirit." Alexander Mackraby to Brother, 4 May 1770, "Philadelphia Society before the Revolution," 493-4. For more on the Society for the Cultivation of Silk, see Olton, *Artisans for Independence,* 30.

[138] Gundersen, *To Be Useful to the World*, 75; Olton, *Artisans for Independence*, 74, 81; and, Manges, "Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia," 35. The United Company also employed women and children, prisoners, and the poor to make other war materials, including bullets, cartridges, and foodstuffs. Eliza Farmer noted the wide-spread effort to raise supplies for the army underway by 1775: "the People are getting into Manufacture of different sorts particularly Salt Peter and Gunpowder and cannot work fast enough[.] God knows how it will end but I fear it will be very bad on both sides and if your [illegible] Minority and parliament dont make some concesions and repeal the acts England will lose America for as I said before they are Determind to be free[.]" Eliza Farmer to Jack Halroyd, 28 June 1775, Eliza Farmer Letterbook. Not all Philadelphians were in favor of employing

mothers of young children and women with domestic duties, spinning and sewing from home proved particularly appealing as they could blend the work with other obligations and make extra money employing skills they already possessed.[139] Given Carole Shammas's argument that most women interested in wearing homespun did not have the ability to make that clothing themselves, women employed by the United Company and other ventures would have found a ready market for their wares.

Women's participation in the boycotts as shopkeepers and artisans was a substantial contribution to pre-war politics, but it was not the only way they took a stand against Parliament and its taxes. As consumers, women's commitment to the non-consumption movement was considered essential: women bought the majority of household goods imported from England; they spent considerable amounts of money on both necessary and luxury items; and, their support was critical to demonstrating solidarity against unjust laws. As a result, women were both literally and psychologically at the heart of the boycott movement. They supported non-consumption in a number of ways; most significantly, by refusing to patronize Loyalist affiliated businesses, by supplementing the market with home-produced goods, by attending public meetings in support of the boycott, and by abjuring others to political action.

As we have seen, women were targeted with songs, newspaper articles, and sermons encouraging them to participate in the boycotts at a number of levels – to wear homespun cloth and reject finery, but also to patronize stores based on political affiliation

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vulnerable members of the community to support the war efforts. In 1779, an anonymous "Citizen of Philadelphia" wrote that "the poor laboring man, the mechanics, or the poor widows and families" were the main victims of the "avaricious disposition" of various groups including designing artisans and merchants. *Pennsylvania Packet*, 30 September 1779.

[139] In addition to silk and wool, colonial women made other luxury fabrics to supplement the American market. Cambric, duroy, and serge were also locally woven. Gundersen, *To Be Useful To the World*, 75.

and encourage friends and family to join the boycotts.[140] The *Pennsylvania Gazette* appealed to "the *American* ladies" to support the non-importation movement, because their "approbation and assistance would give spirit to our efforts" and it was in their "power to retrench superfluous expenses."[141] Ministers called on women from the pulpit to "strike the Stroke, and make the Hills and Plains of America clap their Hands" in approval of their selfless actions.[142] Political leaders, editorialists, and private citizens sought the participation of women in the boycotts, reinforcing the idea that they were part of the polity and that the whole community was required to force change.

While women were involved in non-consumption and non-importation from the time of the Stamp Act, they rose to prominence resisting the Townshend and Tea Acts. While the earlier tariffs affected women by imposing penalties on some goods and legal transactions, it was the later taxes on common and necessary items such as tea, paper, paint, glass, and lead that truly incensed female consumers. The focus on tea as the primary taxed export after 1770 especially brought women to the fore.[143] Tea featured heavily in the daily lives of colonial women and its consumption played a key role in their understanding of themselves as British.[144] As a result, the tea tax was particularly personal and offensive to many women throughout the Americas.

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[140] Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 77.
[141] *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, 28 December 1767. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* ran a similar piece on 28 March 1765.
[142] William Tennent, "To the Ladies of South Carolina," *South Carolina Gazette*, 2 August 1774 reproduced in James H. Smylie, ed., "Presbyterians and the American Revolution: A Documentary Account," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 52, no. 4 (Winter 1974), 370-372.
[143] When the Townshend Act was repealed in 1770, the tax on tea was left in place as a way to assert Parliament's right to tax the colonies while still attempting to placate Americans who were unhappy about the tariffs. In 1773, the Tea Act was passed, imposing a new and higher tax on all tea imported to the Americas and requiring all tea entering colonial ports to come from England.
[144] Not only was tea drinking associated with women, but female estate records and probate inventories were far more likely to contain tea equipment than men's. Carole Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 186.

By the 1770s, tea was imported into the colonies at an extraordinary rate. Historians estimate that the majority of colonists drank tea daily and that roughly two and a half pounds of tea was consumed per person annually – more tea may actually have been consumed per capita in America than in England, where tea was the preferred social beverage. It was a symbol of "politeness and hospitality" and was served at simple family meals and more elaborate events.[145] Scholars have often emphasized tea drinking's formal and stylized elements, but it was most often an informal meal shared by family and friends. Elizabeth Drinker mentioned drinking tea at her own home and those of her friends' dozens of times, primarily at casual afternoon gatherings.[146] The Marquis Barbé-Marbois recalled drinking tea at various Philadelphia homes where local "social and economic affairs" were discussed, gossip exchanged, and "when there [was] no news at all … old stories" were told.[147] Middling and poorer colonists drank tea with far less ritual than the elite, making it part of their daily routine without the pomp and circumstance that marked more elaborate afternoon tea parties.[148]

While tea was frequently an informal meal, over the course of the eighteenth century a ritualized tea culture developed among wealthier colonists. At these gatherings, social hierarchy, material display, and formalized etiquette marked tea drinking as an

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[145] Ibid., 64 and Rodris Roth, "Tea-Drinking in Eighteenth-Century America: Its Etiquette and Equipage" in *Material Life in America, 1600-1800*, Ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 439-46.

[146] For a representative sample of Drinker's casual tea drinking see, 8 October 1758, 2 April and 5 May 1759, 1 and 14 May 1760, 13 August 1762, 15 August 1763, 2 July 1765, and 6 August 1768, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.

[147] François, Marquis de Barbé-Marbois, *Our Revolutionary Forefathers: The Letters of François, Marquis de Barbé-Marbois during his Residence in the United States as Secretary of the French Legation, 1779-1785*, Ed. and Trans. Eugene Parker Chase (New York, 1929), 123.

[148] Even poor Philadelphians drank tea, to the chagrin of some social critics. When workers demanded high quality tea and denizens of the workhouse complained about the tea served to them, some people worried that the city was at risk of social breakdown. T. H. Breen, "'Baubles of Britain: The American Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century" in *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*, Eds. Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville, Va.: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1994), 456-7.

intricate affair that brought colonists closer to the culture of the British upper classes. Colonists bought tea equipage in porcelain or silver through which they demonstrated their connection to elite culture – tea pots and cups; plates; slop dishes; spoons, tongs, and serving pieces; tables; and, tea chests were used to create a formalized space for tea, far distanced from the daily tea drinking most colonists experienced.[149] The English ceramics industry focused on tea equipage as one particularly lucrative area for export; Josiah Wedgwood and other porcelain manufacturers created lines of tea-related items in varying styles and prices to appeal to colonists across economic lines.[150] While most Americans drank tea from relatively modest vessels, in port cities like Philadelphia many women possessed at least some fancy equipment – either way, drinking tea helped them feel connected to the metropole and the British world of goods and culture.

The colonial market was so dependent on British imports that comfort and survival during the boycotts required local artisans and private citizens to make various goods that were no longer being brought in from England.[151] In addition to cloth, American women produced numerous household goods, the most common being

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[149] Ibid., 456-7 and Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America*, 64, 183.

[150] China and porcelain goods were imported in increasing quantities throughout the eighteenth century. The most common item was cream-colored earthenware glazed with salt that was popular with Queen Charlotte and thus dubbed Queen's Ware. Josiah Wedgewood increased the demand for this product by selling a high-end version to the royal family and members of the court, creating an association with aristocratic society, but then marketing a plainer version throughout the colonies. Porcelain stamped with cobalt blue was first imported into England from China; the style was then copied and passed on to America. Printed china bore a variety of images, such as flowers, landscapes, rural scenes, and Masonic emblems, with the most popular and varied being political and military themes. British-made porcelain was not the only kind of china imported to the American colonies, but it was the most popular and abundant. However, colonists also had ready access to German salt-glazed stoneware, Dutch delft, French faience, Chinese porcelain, and Spanish majolica. George L. Miller, Ann Smart Martin, and Nancy S. Dickinson, "Changing Consumption Patterns: English Ceramics and the American Market from 1770 to 1840" in *Everyday Life in the Early Republic*, Ed. Catherine E. Hutchins (Winterthur, Del.: Winterthur Museum Press, 1994), 221-4 and Esther Singleton, *Social New York Under the Georges, 1714-1776: Houses, Streets, and Country Homes, with Chapters on Fashions, Furniture, China, Plate and Manners* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1902), 119-21, 125, and 131.

[151] Gundersen, *To Be Useful to the World*, 174.

substitutes for tea.[152] Colonists experimented with various local leaves, shared recipes, and passed on advice about how to achieve a pleasing flavor and aroma. Christopher Marshall's wife made something he called "balm tea" and three other blends were popular around the colonies: Labrador Tea, which was made from the leaves of a now unknown native shrub; Hyperion Tea, brewed from the leaves of the raspberry plant; and, Liberty Tea, which could be made from anything, including strawberry leaves, sage, and sassafras bark.[153]

Women also began to drink and serve coffee and hot chocolate. Elizabeth Drinker, whose diary is filled with daily tea drinking, began to note the change to coffee in the early 1770s. She recorded drinking coffee with friends, when she would otherwise have had tea; on one occasion, she actually wrote that she served tea to a guest before crossing it out and writing coffee. During the war, she brewed coffee in a "Tea-Kittle" to take to wounded soldiers at a makeshift hospital at the Philadelphia Play House.[154] While coffee was an acceptable substitute at social events, it was not beloved like tea. Some Philadelphians elected to buy smuggled tea from merchants who bought it from Dutch retailers in Canada. However, this was a dangerous option, as there was no way to discern Dutch from British tea and people who were caught buying, selling, and

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[152] One striking exception to the tea boycott existed; most colonial assemblies passed laws that tea could be made available to the elderly, the infirm, and pregnant women if they possessed a physician's permit. Tea was thought to have such vital medicinal benefits that physical need trumped political conviction. Elisha Williams, a doctor in Wethersfield, Massachusetts, wrote one such statement for an elderly woman: "Mrs. Baxter has applied to me for Liberty to buy a Quarter of a pound of Bohea Tea. I think by her Account of her Age & bodily Infirmities it will not be acting contrary to the Design of our Association to let her have it, & you have my full Consent thereto." William H. Ukers, *All About Tea* (New York: Tea and Coffee Trade Journal Co., 1935), 54.

[153] 18 September 1775, *Extracts from the Diary of Christopher Marshall*; Gundersen, *To Be Useful to the World*, 174-5; and, Beatrice Hohenegger, *Liquid Jade: The Story of Tea from East to West* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006), 124.

[154] 30 July and 7 October 1774, 30 May 1775, and 9 October 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.

possessing the leaves could find themselves or their property in danger.[155] For women, the experience of doing without Bohea tea and finding substitutes for their favorite beverage was bonding, replacing the camaraderie of the social world of tea with that of the common difficulties and successes of home manufacture and recipe sharing. Through these actions they forged both personal and public political identities and gained respect for their commitment to the colonial cause.

Women also enforced the boycotts by publicly shaming and shunning those who did not participate. Consumption took on moral overtones, so that purchasing goods from pro-British establishments was seen to endanger public virtue and colonial liberty. Based on this perception, Philadelphians were empowered to scrutinize and judge their neighbors.[156] Patriot women refused to socialize with those who did not join the protest movement and would not accept invitations to the homes of families with opposing politics. Some women took their social power further; during the Stamp Act crisis, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* reported that some New York women were refusing to obtain marriage licenses in protest of the tax: "As no licenses for Marriage could be obtained since the first of November, for want of stamped Paper … the young ladies of this Place are determined to join Hands with none but such as will to the utmost endeavor to abolish the Custom of marrying with license."[157]

American women protested the tea taxes in more active ways than just refraining from selling, purchasing, and drinking tea. Like merchants who signed non-importation

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[155] Hohenegger, *Liquid Jade*, 124. Scholars estimate that, by the 1760s, merchants in urban centers such as Philadelphia and New York might have actually sold more smuggled tea than sanctioned tea. See Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America*, 85.
[156] Breen, "Baubles of Britain," 466-7.
[157] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 5 December 1765. Marla Miller writes that Betsy Ross read this article, but sadly we do not know what she thought of this form of female protest.

agreements, female consumers drafted, signed, and published petitions promising to boycott British goods, especially tea.[158] In Charleston, South Carolina, prominent women proposed writing an all-female anti-tea petition in 1774. They advertised in the newspaper that they would visit the female representative of every household to solicit their support for the boycott.[159] Similarly, in Worcester, Massachusetts, female Patriots created the American Political Society in support of the colonial leaders. They circulated their own petition "for all women of adult age … to sign."[160] The best-documented all-female petition was the Edenton Proclamation, signed on 25 October 1774 by fifty-one women from the Edenton, North Carolina, area. After the colonial assembly forbade tea consumption on the 9th of that month, most of the prominent women in the region gathered to write a statement in support of the boycott. Their Proclamation was published in America and England, garnering positive feedback as well as ridicule, and becoming one of the most widely discussed events of the early war years.[161]

Women also participated in crowd actions directly related to the boycott. When the ship *Polly*, loaded with tea ordered before news of the tax reached America, neared the port of Philadelphia, citizens had to decide how to proceed. A handbill was issued, calling "the Inhabitants of Pennsylvania" to a public meeting on 16 October 1773 "to consider what Measures will be necessary to prevent the Landing of a large Quantity of

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[158] Gundersen, *To Be Useful to the World*, 174.
[159] Carol Berkin, *First Generations: Women in Colonial America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), 174.
[160] Alfred F. Young, "The Women of Boston: 'Persons of Consequence' in the Making of the American Revolution, 1765-76," *Women and Politics in the Age of Democratic Revolution*, Eds. Harriet B. Applewhite and Darline G. Levy (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 204-5.
[161] Ukers, *All About Tea*, 64; Richard Dillard, *The Historic Tea Party of Edenton, October 25th, 1774: An Incident in North Carolina Connected With British Taxation* (Norfolk, VA: Burke & Gregory, 1907), 5; and, Lindley S. Butler, *North Carolina and the Coming of the Revolution, 1763-1776* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1976), 54-5. In addition to the Proclamation, the women of Edenton organized "relief supplies" gathered from all over the colony to be sent to Boston following the Boston Tea Party and the closing of Boston Harbor. Dr. Thomas C. Parramore, *Cradle of the Colony: The History of Chowan County and Edenton, North Carolina* (Edenton: Edenton Chamber of Commerce, 1967), 30-1.

TEA which is hourly expected."[162] The language of the handbill was entirely gender neutral, reaching out to "Inhabitants" concerned about protecting their "Liberty." Given that women attended other such meetings during the lead-up to the Revolution and that they were prominent in Philadelphia's boycott movement, one must assume women attended this meeting as well. In December, another meeting was called to discuss how to deal with the cargo of the *Polly*, which had been permitted to land in Philadelphia. The handbill announcing this meeting called on "every Inhabitant, who wishes to preserve the Liberty of America [to] meet at the STATE-HOUSE, This Morning, precisely at TEN o'Clock to advise what is best to be done on this alarming Crisis."[163] John Drinker's contemporary account indicates that men and women met to debate the fate of the tea, although he does not make clear what role women took in the meeting other than as members of the audience.[164]

Women in port cities around America joined groups of people protesting the docking of ships and unloading of tea and other goods exported from England. Ceremonial destruction of tea, on a large or small scale, became a popular statement of solidarity around the colonies.[165] The men and women who participated in the Boston Tea Party are the best-known demolishers of tea, but they were not the only colonists to publicly destroy crates and barrels of the vilified leaf. Women and men in Philadelphia and Annapolis gathered on the docks to jeer the captains and crews of tea ships and threatened violence if they came ashore. The threats were taken so seriously that a

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[162] Handbill calling a meeting of citizens at the State House against the landing of Tea from the "Polly," Wed. October 13, 1773, Philadelphia Tea shipment papers 1747-1773, Am. 30796, HSP.
[163] Handbill calling a meeting of citizens at the State House "in this alarming crisis," December 27, 1773, Philadelphia Tea shipment papers 1747-1773.
[164] John Drinker, *Observations on the Late Popular Measures* (Philadelphia, 1774) and Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 122.
[165] Breen, "'Baubles of Britain," 469, 477.

Maryland merchant burnt his ship and cargo rather than risk his own safety. A mixed-gender crowd in Greenwich, New Jersey, and an all-female group in Wilmington, North Carolina, processed through the streets before burning tea leaves in their respective public squares.[166] Women also formed a sizeable portion of the crowds that surrounded shops, followed merchants through the streets, and yelled threats as they attempted to do business.[167] Women were not afraid to take part in public, even semi-violent, demonstrations against the captains, merchants, and consumers who chose not to join the boycott movement.[168] They were fully committed to the Patriot cause, acting within all the forums available to them – domestic, social, commercial, and public – to do what they could to further the political goal of repealing Parliament's unjust taxes and eventually gaining independence for America.

Conclusion

By 1779, American women's support for the pre-Revolutionary boycott movement had garnered international accolades and become a model for female activism in other parts of the British empire. In the midst of their own campaign against importing English-made textiles and home goods, Irish activists pointed to the colonies as an example to their own citizens:

> The American ladies have shown themselves foremost in zeal for the public cause, they have sustained the want of most of the luxuries and many of the necessities of life, without murmur and shall it be said that virtuous Irishwomen have less virtue and love for their country? Do not imagine, that public spirit misbecomes the graceful reserve and amiable timidity of the female character.

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[166] Hohenegger, *Liquid Jade*, 127 and Ukers, *All About Tea*, 59.
[167] Berkin, *First Generations*, 177.
[168] In 1775, a Massachusetts Loyalist named her newborn son Thomas Gage in honor of the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in North America. Her neighbors were so enraged that they attacked her home, threatening to tar and feather both mother and child. While the incident resolved peacefully, there was no doubt among her contemporaries that the Patriot women would have committed violence if they had been able to get inside the house. Ibid., 177.

> No. Public spirit is the accomplishment and perfection of private virtue. Fly therefore, I conjure you to the relief of your country; claim your share in glorious association for the common good, I should say salvation;- let not a shred [or] an atom of English or Scotch manufacture be round about your persons, or in your houses.[169]

Women's involvement in the anti-Parliamentary protests had not gone unnoticed or unappreciated by those around them. Nor had it been relegated to the realm of passive support or periodic, unorganized expression, as many modern historians have described it. American women's political voice had been heard throughout the empire and had been noted.

Women were fully committed to the life of their communities, their colonies, and their nation, including the political issues and crises that arose during their lifetimes. Much as they participated in the commercial world of their city, Philadelphia women played a part in the political arena. Many were astute and knowledgeable about current events and discussed them with friends and family, offering advice, arguing differing opinions, and strategizing to meet changing circumstances. Their thoughts were valued and respected, their admonitions taken seriously. Women felt confident enough in their views to write about politics, both privately and publicly. While much of their writing was shared only within their circle of intimates, some of their poetry and prose was published around the colonies. They were part of both the private and public dialogues occurring in the decades before the American Revolution.

Women also used their social and commercial power to exert political influence. By organizing parties around civic events, arranging guest lists to suit political preferences, and shunning those whose views did not agree with their own, women

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[169] *Freeman's Journal* [Dublin], 7 September 1779. For a greater discussion of Irish emulation of the American boycott movement, see Mary O'Dowd, "Politics, Patriotism, and Women in Ireland, Britain and Colonial America, c. 1700-1780," *Journal of Women's History* 22, no. 4 (Winter 2010), 15.

exerted pressure within their community. They also expressed themselves through their presence at the many and varied crowd actions that marked the pre-war period. By appearing alongside men in support of or against a tax, law, or revolutionary development, women expressed their own opinions while also supporting those of their countrymen. Patriot leaders who sought to show that the whole nation, not just a portion of it, was behind the move for independence viewed women's support as essential. This was most evident in the boycott movements of the late-1760s and 1770s when women were put at the center of protest against Parliamentary taxes and tariffs. Colonial men and women saw female participation as requisite to a successful commercial boycott and a successful intellectual rejection of Parliament's absolute right to rule America.

Colonial women may not have had rights equal to men, but they were not absent or disregarded in the world of Revolutionary politics. Philadelphia women were empowered to express and act upon their convictions and were allowed a public space in which to do so. While some men were uncomfortable with women's political expression, the majority appears to have respected their convictions. Annis Boudinot Stockton commented on what she believed to be Mary Wollstonecraft's misperception about parity between the sexes when she wrote to her daughter, "the Empire of reason is not monopolized by men…. I do not think any of the Slavish obedience [to men] exists, that She talks so much of."[170] Women would continue to act on their beliefs and values throughout the Revolution, taking a stand on both the pro-American and pro-British sides. Philadelphia women's lives in that seven year period would be defined by politics

[170] Annis Stockton to Julia Rush, 22 March [1793], Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia as quoted in Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, xvii.

and war; and they would strive to survive, care for their families, protect their property, and support their respective militaries in a city at the heart of the conflict.

Chapter Three

"Tho a female I was born a patriot":[1] Philadelphia Women and the Revolutionary War

Living in a country at war was fraught at the best of times, but for Philadelphia women, the Revolution presented a constant series of challenges, dangers, encounters, and sometimes opportunities. In her diary, Anna Rawle captured the ways the war affected daily life in the nation's capital city, even as the war wound to a close. Like many other women, she combined war work with routine chores, doing what she could to support the British army. She spent a great deal of time sewing for the soldiers: "A person who had charitably supplied the British prisoners with linnen sent some of it here and to Aunt Fisher's to make into shirts; it was the toughest linnen I ever worked at. It made all our fingers bleed."[2] At the same time, she feared violence at the hands of military men in a city that was constantly occupied by one army or another. Walking in town one day, she was "excessively frightened … A mob of sailors were at the corner of front street huzzaing, and then they formed a ring and one of the men harangued the rest and made such a noise & hollowing as would have alarmed any body."[3] Even in her own home she was not safe from the fear that "soldiers were coming to town to plunder the tories' houses and make good their losses by stripping them."[4] Days of celebration could not be avoided, even by Loyalists who might wish to stay home. Rawle barely escaped seeing "fireworks played off opposite to [a friend's] house … they are rejoicings in

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[1] L. H. Butterfield, "Annis and the General: Mrs. Stockton's Poetic Eulogies of George Washington," *Princeton University Library Chronicle* VII, no. 1 (November 1945), 25.
[2] Diary of Anna Rawle, [23 January 1782], Rebecca Shoemaker papers 1780-1786, Am. 13745, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP).
[3] Anna Rawle to Rebecca Shoemaker, 8 May 1781, Rebecca Shoemaker papers.
[4] Anna Rawle to Rebecca Shoemaker, February 1781, Rebecca Shoemaker papers.

honour of Maryland and Virginia having acceded to the confederation…. It seems impossible sometimes that this should be the once tranquil Philadelphia."[5]

For other women, the war was less a daily reality, but no less a serious concern. Western New Jersey widow Rachel Wells loaned her state a considerable amount of money during the Revolution. When peace finally returned, she moved to Philadelphia to try to make a living; when that failed, she petitioned New Jersey for repayment, portraying her contribution as equal to the sacrifices of those who had fought the war. She described herself as having "don as much to carry on the war as maney that sett now at the healm of government," but she could "nither git interest nor principal nor even security" back from the state. She wrote that she could accept suffering at the hands of the enemy, but "to be robd but [by?] my Country men is very trying to nature." While some people suggested she should simply accept her poverty as the price of independence, she was unwilling to believe that the state would not honor their legitimate debt to a Patriot. She concluded her petition, "Ye poor sogers has got Sum Crumbs that fall from their masters tabel … why not Rachel Wells have a littel interest[?] if she did not fight She threw in all her mite which bought ye sogers food & Clothing & Let them have Blankets & Since that She has bin obligd to Lay upon straw … I do expect to hear Something to my Satisfaction verey soon."[6]

Women were as central to the Revolution as men, although their participation usually took different forms. The Revolution shaped the opportunities and encounters as well as the everyday lives of Philadelphia women for more than a decade. As one unidentified female wrote:

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[5] Diary of Anna Rawle, [1 March 1781], Rebecca Shoemaker Papers.
[6] Petition of Rachel Wells, May 18, 1786, *Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M247, roll 56), 354-355.

> I will tell you what I have done. My only brother I have sent to camp with my prayers and blessings; I hope he will not disgrace me…. I have retrenched every superfluous expense in my table and family; tea I have not drank since last Christmas, nor bought a new cap or gown since your defeat at Lexington, and what I never did before, have learnt to knit, and am now making stockings of American wool for my servants, and this way do I throw in my mite to the public good. I know this, that as free I can die but once, but as a slave I shall not be worthy of life.[7]

Philadelphia women's lives were constantly and irrevocably affected by the Revolution. Whether Patriot, Loyalist, or neutral, their presence in the capital city made the war a daily reality. Their lives were shaped by outside forces, including food shortages, currency inflation, danger from troops, and the difficulties of surviving without men for support and protection. But many women also chose to extend and expand their participation in the public sphere, drawing on pre-war experiences as they entered the fray of Revolution in specifically female ways.[8]

For eight years, the Revolution defined the lives of women living in the American colonies. Many of the challenges experienced by Philadelphia women were common to others living throughout the fledgling nation: they prepared for battle coming to their area and nursed soldiers afterward; they quartered troops and confronted angry, violent men in

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[7] Unsourced quote, Sally Smith Booth, *The Women of '76* (New York: Hasting House, 1973), 264.

[8] While I will be discussing many of these issues, no single chapter could cover all the ways women participated in the Revolution. One area I will not be able to explore is female camp followers and the women who actually fought in the Revolution, either in disguise or in place of their fallen husbands. Many Pennsylvania women travelled with the troops, either for short periods of time when the army was near their home or for the duration of their husbands' service. Molly Pitcher is well known for taking up her husband's place at the cannon after he was killed in action. Less known, and certainly equally deserving of attention, is the wife of Sergeant Grier, a Pennsylvania soldier who died on the march to Quebec. After sitting with her husband until he died and covering his corpse with leaves, she picked up his gun and rejoined the troops, travelling all the way to Canada with them. She suffered the same hardships of travel and exposure as the men; due to her fortitude, none of the soldiers "dared intimate a disrespectable idea of her." Unfortunately, it is not currently known what happened to her following the Siege of Quebec. See, John Joseph Henry, *An Accurate and Interesting Account of the Hardships and Sufferings of That Band of Heroes, Who Traversed the Wilderness in the Campaign Against Quebec in 1775* (Lancaster, Penn.: Printed by William Greer, 1812) and Booth, *The Women of '76*, 51-3. It would be a fascinating and worthwhile project to try and identify more of the women who traveled with the American army and track their participation in the war.

their homes and on the streets; they spied on the enemy and provided supplies for their allies; and, they participated in popular displays of celebration, mourning, and protest. In addition, women struggled to provide for their families in spite of wartime shortages and worked to supply the armies with whatever food, clothing, and other necessities they could spare. They worried about the realities of living near or amidst the fighting – the potential for violence, damage to property, and looting by both armies. Many women closely followed accounts of warfare around the country, corresponded with family and friends in other locations, and hoped daily for the safe delivery of themselves and their loved ones from the conflict. As women actively engaged various aspects of the Revolution, they blended their domestic responsibilities, personal convictions, and public endeavors.

Despite common experiences across the warring colonies, Philadelphia women confronted challenges unique to that city. For over a year the British occupied the area, during which Loyalists experienced a period of grandeur and ease while Patriots suffered great insecurity.[9] The crowning event of the occupation, a gala called the Mischianza, threw Philadelphia women into an international spotlight. A handful of young Loyalist women assumed a central role in the celebration as featured guests of the British officers, highlighting their social prominence but also raising concerns about their chastity and femininity. The fête drew widespread criticism for its decadence in a time of hardship, and the risqué costumes worn by the young women and their seeming intimacy with English officers threw a shadow over the reputations of themselves and their families. While the Mischianza briefly empowered the women who rose to the top of social

[9] For an in-depth discussion of Loyalist women's wartime experience in Philadelphia, see Judith Van Buskirk, "They Didn't Join the Band: Disaffected Women in Revolutionary Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania History* 62, no. 3 (Summer 1995): 306-329.

influence and power, it also had the potential for considerable long-term damage. Contemporary responses illuminate the concerns over propriety and sexuality that emerged when traditional social constraints were upended by the war. Certainly wealthy Philadelphians were expected to participate in a vibrant culture and women were encouraged to demonstrate social skills such as intelligent conversation and harmless flirting. But when Loyalist daughters engaged too closely with British officers, they tested the limits of the community's acceptance of mixed-sex socializing.

Philadelphia women were also empowered through two female-led efforts that foreshadow their later endeavors to organize on behalf of social and political change. First, Quaker women fought to free their exiled husbands and sons. They organized themselves, wrote petitions, and ultimately traveled to both George Washington's camp at Valley Forge and the Continental Congress's temporary headquarters in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to personally plead for the return of their men. While Quaker women had long been accustomed to speaking out within Friends' meetings, their wartime efforts took them beyond the boundaries of this community of faith and into a national debate. Second, elite women formed the Ladies Association of Philadelphia, a society that raised money and provided shirts for over two thousand Continental soldiers. Concerned about the privations experienced the military, they took independent action to address the needs of the troops. They publicized their plans, formed committees, raised money from around the nation, and established a system for managing those funds. In both cases, women fended off male efforts to take control of their work, asserting the integrity of their groups and their equality to men. During this unique period, Philadelphia women drew on skills they had developed in earlier decades to express their partisan opinion,

participate in political demonstrations, and maintain their families and households. At the same time, they began the laying the groundwork for post-war developments regarding women's legal rights, political options, and organized reform.

Revolutionary Beginnings

War was not officially declared until 4 July 1776, but American women had been living in a country preparing for battle for some time. Through the years of protest, colonists knew revolution was possible and, since the attack at Lexington and Concord, they had been waging a de facto war. Around the colonies, troops mustered, communities collected goods such as metal, clothing, and wagons, and families made plans for how to deal with the possibility of battles coming to their neighborhoods. As the meeting place of the Continental Congress, Philadelphia was at the heart of the political debates and decision-making that led to Revolution. Public meetings, newspapers and broadsides, and personal conversations spread rumors of conflict before and during the war. Women living in the city were thus keenly aware of impending conflict and, once independence was declared, the realities of war.

War preparations affected local women well before the Declaration of Independence was signed. Knowing that troops would need to mobilize quickly, communities began to stockpile supplies necessary for waging war. Metal, clothing, wagons, horses, and food were requisitioned from businesses and private homes; in June 1776, men went around Philadelphia collecting metal to melt down into bullets. Sundry items such as "Window Weights" were confiscated if the committee "found them to be Iron." In June of the next year, Elizabeth Drinker noted that "an Officer with 2

Constables call'd on us for Blankets, went away without any – as others had done 3 or 4 times before." Later in the year, they had "a valuable pair of large End-Irons seazed and taken from us, by Philip Mause."[10] This confiscation of goods continued, but became increasingly controversial as supplies became scarcer and the conflict dragged on.

Philadelphians spent the first year of the war concerned that troops would converge on their city. As armies moved through New York, New Jersey, and eastern Pennsylvania, rumors and reports of nearby battles were a constant topic of conversation and source of concern. In some ways life continued as it always had – people attended social events, church, and political rallies, went to the market, participated in commerce, and cared for their families and neighbors – but the backdrop of their lives was now a constant awareness that war was erupting all around them. While eastern Pennsylvania did not see fighting for the first year of the war, they nonetheless experienced violence. In the spring of 1777, several men were hanged for desertion and treason. On 8 March, Elizabeth Drinker recorded that "Brint Debades, an American Soldier, - was Shot upon the Commons, of this City - a City heretofore clear of such Business." And then, later in the month, "a Young Man of the Name of Molsworth was hang'd on the Commons by order of our present ruling Gentr'y."[11]

Given the threat of active war, Philadelphians debated the merits of staying in the city or relocating to safer sites in the area. Afraid that the seat of the Continental Congress would be a prime target for the British, many families left as soon as war was declared. When the city was not immediately attacked, some of those families returned, preferring the comforts of an urban setting to the harder life in the countryside. Between

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[10] Undated entry from June 1776; 5 June 1777; and, undated entry from August or September 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, ed. Elaine Forman Crane, vol. 1 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991).
[11] 8 March and undated March 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.*

spring 1776 and summer 1777, attorney and statesmen Edward Shippen, IV, moved his family to their farm in Amwell, New Jersey, back to Philadelphia, then to a house north of the city, and finally back again. While Shippen worried about his family's safety, his four unmarried daughters hated being out of the city and constantly pestered their father to let them return.[12] Sarah Franklin Bache fled the city twice, each time fearing the approaching British. As the daughter of a signatory to the Declaration of Independence, she feared she would be a specific target for British retaliation.[13] Other families did not immediately depart, but debated the merits of relocating. Eliza Farmer and her husband considered leaving, but worried that they were too old to reestablish themselves and therefore thought it better to remain in Philadelphia. She explained their concerns to her nephew: "I believe if your Uncle could dispose of his estate for its real Value it would be no hard task to persuade him to return to London but he is to far advanced in life to begin business again."[14]

During the winter of 1776-1777, several skirmishes between the British and Pennsylvania navies occurred along the Delaware River. Actual and rumored engagements filled the diaries of women living on opposite sides of the river in Philadelphia and Burlington, New Jersey. Women often had to rely on rumors when making important decisions for themselves and their families; lacking reliable intelligence, they learned to weigh the value of the information they received when

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[12] Wanting to protect his home from looting or occupation, Edward traveled from their country home on the Schuylkill River to Philadelphia "almost every day that [he] could be seen in and about [his] house which [was] constantly opened every day and [had] all the Appearance of an inhabited house." Tiring of this commute was a key reason the family finally relocated to Philadelphia for the duration of the war. Edward Shippen Jr. to Edward Shippen, 18 January 1777, Balch-Shippen Papers, vol. 2, HSP and Randolph Shipley Klein, *Portrait of an Early American Family: The Shippens of Pennsylvania Across Five Generations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 165, 176.

[13] Joan R. Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World: Women in Revolutionary America, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 41, 181.

[14] Eliza Farmer to Jack Halroyd, 11 December 1777, Eliza Farmer Letterbook.

making decisions that could profoundly affect the safety of themselves and their families. Margaret Hill Morris, a Quaker from Philadelphia, had lived in Burlington since being widowed in 1766, but maintained close ties to family and friends in her hometown.[15] Her writings, and those of others in the area, provide insight into the ways women gained information and the decisions they made based on this tenuous knowledge. In December 1776, Morris began noting rumors that the British navy would attack the city: "a Person from Philad[a] told us … that the English fleet was in the River & hourly expected to sail up to the City." She also heard that "several persons of considerable repute had been discovered to have formd adesign of setting fire to the City," but were prevented from carrying out their plans. Given the proximity of the two cities, "inhabitants [of Burlington] were going in haste into the Country, & [her] nearest neighbors were already removed."[16] Morris decided that, given the lack of a safer place to go, she and her four children would stay in their home, putting them at the center of Burlington's interactions with British and German troops that winter.[17]

In early January 1777, British, Hessian, and American troops, as well as sailors from both sides, came through the rural areas surrounding Philadelphia. Despite widespread concerns for the safety of the people and property of Burlington, an English colonel assured them "that if the inhabitants were quiet & peaceable, & would furnish him with quarters & refreshment, he would pledge his honor, that no manner of disorder should happen to disturb or Alarm the People."[18] Such a claim could hardly dispel the

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[15] John W. Jackson, biographical notes to Margaret [Hill] Morris, *Margaret Morris: Her Journal with Biographical Sketch and Notes*, ed. John W. Jackson (Philadelphia: George S. MacManus, 1949), 22, 25-6.
[16] 6 December 1776, Margaret [Hill] Morris, *Margaret Morris: Her Journal with Biographical Sketch and Notes*, ed. John W. Jackson (Philadelphia: George S. MacManus, 1949).
[17] 8 December 1776, *Margaret Morris: Her Journal*.
[18] 11 December 1776, Ibid.

uneasiness among women living in the city, as German and British troops were quartered in private and public buildings around town, and food and supplies were required for their comfort and support. Their presence also brought a very real threat to noncombatants who wound up in the line of fire as the Pennsylvania navy attempted to repel the Hessians from Burlington.[19] Though Morris was certain that the Hessians were their targets, the navy's aim was not accurate and the buildings containing foreign troops were not the only ones hit. Instead, "several Houses were Struck and alittle damagd, but not one liveing Creature, either Man or beast, killd or Wounded" before the attack ended.[20] The next day several American sailors came into Burlington and a rumor quickly spread "that the City would be Set on fire." When Morris encountered a group of sailors, she "begd them not to set my hosue afire – they askd which was my House, I showd it to them, & they said they knew not what hinderd them from fireing on it last Night, for seeing alight in the Chambers, they thought there were Hessians in it."[21] While the Americans did not set fire to the town, Hessian troops were keenly aware of the threat to their safety and left Burlington on 13 December. For at least two more weeks, however, colonial and foreign troops played a game of cat and mouse, causing great unease as the armies made periodic appearances in the town.

The following spring, troop movement around the Philadelphia area caused similar concerns that active warfare might come to the city. Esther DeBerdt Reed relayed to her brother in London the anxieties that came with having soldiers in the neighborhood: "Thank God, our apprehensions and fears have not been altogether

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[19] Margaret [Hill] Morris, *Margaret Morris: Her Journal*, 89-90, fn. 11.
[20] 11 December 1776, *Margaret Morris: Her Journal.*
[21] In fact, Morris was up late nursing a sick child and could only thank "the Guardian of the Widow & the Orphan" for protecting them from American fire. 12 December 1776, Ibid.

realized, but these were sufficient. But one day's escape from an army of foreigners, and for several weeks within a few hours march of them." While American troops were also in the region, Reed voiced concerns about their competence and commitment to fighting a long-term war: "You will be surprised, I dare say, at the rapid and uninterrupted progress the enemy made through this Province; but when I tell you the horrid blunder our rulers made, it will easily account for it. They enlisted their soldiers for a short time, - some four, some six months."[22] The capacities of the troops and the city's residents would continue to be tested throughout the war.

The British Occupation

At the time of the Revolution, Philadelphia hosted the most glittering and impressive social scene in the American colonies. British visitors before and during the war lauded the city as similar to London in the richness of its material culture and its entertainments. During the Revolution, the city's social activities did not end, but they became heavily contested. Believing that wartime should be marked by solemnity and austerity, many Patriots felt that frivolous activities such as balls, theater, and musical evenings should be cancelled. However, not all pro-American Philadelphians agreed, and civil and military officials continued to hold parties and dances throughout the war. Washington and his officers hosted and attended balls and encouraged other military figures to do the same. These events were not purely for relaxation and enjoyment; they were also crucial for "communication and exchange between officers, diplomats,

[22] Esther DeBerdt Reed to Dennis DeBerdt, March 1777 in William Bradford Reed, *The Life of Esther De Berdt afterwards Esther Reed of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: C. Sherman, 1853), 258-9.

financiers, and other national leaders."[23] While social events were held and critiqued throughout the war, this was especially true during the British occupation, when English officers created a vibrant social life that aroused controversy throughout the empire.

Late in the summer of 1777, General William Howe's troops invaded New York by sea and the threat of a British attack weighed heavily on the minds of Philadelphians, Patriot and Tory alike. On 11 September, British light dragoons and Hessian troops defeated American forces at the Battle of Brandywine; fifteen days later, Howe's forces invaded Philadelphia.[24] As much as one-third of the city's population fled in advance of the occupation, leaving behind a disproportionately high number of Loyalists and neutrals.[25] Several Philadelphia diarists, most notably Elizabeth Drinker and Sarah Wister, recorded the rumors and emotions circulating through Philadelphia as the British approached. Drinker noted the very real possibility of an invasion on 19 September. Early that morning she was awoken by a servant "with the News that the English were near; we find that most of our Neighbors and almost all the Town have been up since one in the Morning." She heard that "the British Army cross'd the [S]weeds-Foard last night, and are now on their way heather; Congress, Counsil &c are flown, Boats, Carriages, and foot Padds going off all Night; Town in great Confusion."[26] The next day she recorded rumors that "Washingtons Army has cross'd the Foard … some expect a battle hourly; as the English are on the opposite side." She also noted that preparations were being made

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[23] Lynn Matluck Brooks, "Emblem of Gaiety, Love, and Legislation: Dance in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 115, no. 1 (January 1991), 71.
[24] Wallace Brown, *The King's Friends: The Composition and Motives of the American Loyalist Claimants* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1965), 130.
[25] Booth, *The Women of '76*, 155 and Melissa Lukeman Bohrer, *Glory, Passion, and Principle: The Story of Eight Remarkable Women at the Core of the American Revolution* (New York: Atria Books, 2003), 132.
[26] 19 September 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.* Expecting the British to take over Philadelphia in the next few days, on the 19th the Continental Congress evacuated the city for Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Mark M. Boatner, *The Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (New York: D. McKay Co., 1966), 860.

to protect the city's ships from confiscation: "all the boats, Ferry boats excepted, are put away – and the Shiping all ordred up the River, the next tide, on pain of being burnt, should G. Howes Vesels approach."[27]

Drinker resumed her comments on the potential occupation four days later, noting, "it is reported and gains credit, that the English have actually cross'd Schuylkill and are on their way towards us." She also described the continued efforts to strip the city of supplies that could be useful to the approaching army; over the course of two or three days, men collected "Blankets … Horses … [and] all the Bells in the City… there is talk of Pump handles and Fire-Buckets being taken also." The next day, preparations escalated: goods were confiscated from Josiah Fisher, William Lippincott, and others "by order of G Washington." Drinker also observed "Cannon plac'd in some of the Streets – the Gondelows along the Warfs … the Sign (Over the Way) of G. Washingn. taken down this Afternoon." Worst of all, there was "talk of the City being set on fire."[28] Eliza Farmer recorded few details of the practical preparations being made, but reported a rumor that the British army would be allowed three days of plunder. As a result, in addition to official confiscation of items that could be useful to the British army, many private citizens tried to hide their family treasures or leave town with them: "happy was they who could get Waggons to carry of[f] their familys and effects and manny left a great deal behind them glad to get of[f] with their persons."[29]

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[27] 20 September 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.*
[28] 23 and 24 September 1777, Ibid. On 25 September, Christopher Marshall also reported hearing from his neighbor Mrs. Taggart that Philadelphia had been set on fire prior to the arrival of the British. *Extracts From the Diary of Christopher Marshall, kept in Philadelphia and Lancaster during the American Revolution, 1774-1781*, ed. William Duane (1877; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1969).
[29] Eliza Farmer to Jack Halroyd, 4 December 1783, Eliza Farmer Letterbook.

By 25 September, Drinker voiced her agitation and insecurity in face of what was then a certain British invasion. It was "a day of great Confusion in the City," though she and her family came to no harm. They received reliable news from Enoch Story that the British were "within 4 or 5 miles of us, we have since heard they were by John Dickinsons place; they are expected by some this Evening in the City."[30] While some families stayed home and waited for news, others went out to watch the arrival of the British. Margaret Donaldson Boggs, a niece of Betsy Ross, recalled sitting on her father's shoulders and watching them march into the city.[31] Concerned about pervasive rumors that building might be set afire, "Numbers mett at the State-House since nine o'clock to form themselves into dfferent Companyes to watch the City, all things appear peaceable at present, the Watch-Men crying the Hour without Molestation." Henry Drinker was apparently among that group, as Elizabeth and her sister Mary spent the evening "sitting up" and waiting for him to return home.[32]

Elizabeth Drinker saw the coming British occupation as a potentially disastrous occurrence and worried about the negative effects of having an enemy army in her city, but Sarah Wister had an entirely different reaction. Wister's wealthy merchant family spent the early years of the war in a cousin's house just outside Philadelphia and quartered a number of American officers during the occupation. Their home was ideally situated for monitoring the British army; as a result, soldiers came and went frequently, bringing news of military activities throughout the region, and making the Wister home a center of Continental military activity. For Sally, a teenager who was not responsible for

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[30] 25 September 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.*
[31] [San Francisco] *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 20 January 1876. See also, Marla R. Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2010), 198.
[32] 25 September 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.*

the safety of her family, the presence of two armies in the area presented a dazzling array of possibilities for intrigue, flirtation, and fun.

Like Drinker, in the days before the occupation Sarah Wister recorded a great deal of gossip about troop movement and also encountered both American and British troops as they moved through the Philadelphia countryside. On 25 and 26 September, "Virginia officers call'd at our house" and another visitor "cofirm'd … that Gen'l Washington and Army were near Pottsgrove." An unreliable neighbor told them that the British and Hessian armies were literally passing by their road, although Wister and her family did not see any troops. The night of the 25th, cousin Owen Foulke reported, "Gen'l Washington had come down as far as the Trappe, and that Gen'l McDougle's brigade was stationed at Montgomery." With so many troops in the area, Wister "expected to be in the midst of one army or 'tother" before long. The next day, a contingent of Colonel Henry Lee's Continental troops stopped unsuccessfully to requisition horses and stayed for refreshment. Wister's noted that the soldiers, of whom she had previously been afraid, were "perfectly civil."[33]

As she spent more time around the American officers, Wister came to find them more than civil; she found them dashing and intriguing, entertaining and endearing. Her diary is filled with details of the soldiers her family quartered – their appearance, personality, and conversation as well as the stories they told and the emotions they inspired in her and her female relations. For Sally Wister, having an army in the neighborhood presented an opportunity to explore her burgeoning sense of femininity and sexuality. The day her father agreed to quarter General Smallwood's troops, she put her

[33] Sarah Wister to Deborah Morris, [25 September 1777] and diary entries for 25 and 26 September 1777, Sarah Wister journal 1777-1778, Am. 1925, HSP.

"dress and lips … in order for conquest, and the hopes of adventures gave brightness to [her] before passive countenance."[34] After spending time with the soldiers, she voiced even more romantic notions. Her family spent many evenings socializing with the men, leading to this typical description from Wister: "He (the Gen'l, I mean) is most agreeable; so lively, so free, and chats so gaily, that I have quite an esteem for him. I must steel my heart!"[35] At the end of one lengthy diary entry concerning the many new, dashing officers of her acquaintance she wrote, "I am going to my chamber to dream I suppose of bayonets and swords, sashes, guns and epaulets."[36]

Eliza Farmer's family also lived on a farm between British-occupied Philadelphia and the American camp. As the head of a household, her perspective was very different from Sally Wister's. She wrote to a cousin in England following the war:

> the winter they [the British] were here was mostly distrest as our House was situated between the lines where the Americans and British frequently would be fireing at each other which was very alarming … Mr Farmor was afraid to leave the house with only Sally and I in it for the British had distroyd all our fences and one day taken away a wagon load of our winters wood which made us feel manny cold days for there was not any to be bought … we thought ourselves well of[f] in comparison to some who sufferd cruelly strippd of all turnd out and their houses burnt before their Eyes[.] most of the houses near us have been either burnt or pulled down as would have been the case with us if we had not stayd in it even at the hasard of our lives.[37]

As a grown woman responsible for a household including young female servants, Farmer saw the presence of soldiers as threatening, not exhilarating. The fear of harm to person and property was the hallmark of her wartime experience.

Within Philadelphia proper, most residents appear to have agreed with Farmer. While the presence of the British army offered social and personal opportunities for

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[34] 19 October 1777, Sarah Wister journal.
[35] 27 October 1777, Ibid.
[36] 19 October 1777, Ibid.
[37] Eliza Farmer to Dear Mad^{m}, 25 October 1783, Eliza Farmer Letterbook.

Loyalist and neutral families, most Philadelphians did not welcome soldiers with Wister's aplomb. Nonetheless, historian Paul Engle argues that occupation-era life was so lively for some wealthy families that they "would have had reason to doubt that a war was going on at all. If anything, Philadelphia social gaiety flourished even more, due to the profusion of eligible young men in [the British army] … and the large number of society women who resided in the city."[38] For families willing to associate with the British, the autumn of 1777 offered unparalleled elegance and opportunity. For others, however, it was a time of hardship and insecurity. The political divisions that marked social relations in the pre-war years carried into the early months of the occupation. Women who had previously refused to attend parties and dinners held by Loyalists became increasingly adamant about avoiding British festivities, and families that socialized with English officers were vilified by their Patriot neighbors.[39]

For most women, including Loyalists, parties and social events were not the most prominent aspects of the occupation. Living in a city occupied by English officers used to a certain level of sociability could be glamorous and fun, but more often being at the center of conflict was stressful and frightening. In the first weeks of the occupation, the American army made several attempts to retake Philadelphia, leading to the fear of open conflict breaking out in the city. Within days of their arrival, the British began erecting

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[38] Paul Engle, *Women in the American Revolution* (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1976), 153. Prominent Loyalist Rebecca Franks described life during the occupation in a letter to Anne Harrison Paca: "You can have no idea of the life of continued amusement I live in. I can scarce have a moment to myself…. No loss for partners, even I am engaged to several different gentlemen for you must know 'tis a fix'd rule never to dance but two dances for a time with the same person. Oh how I wish Mr. P wou'd let you come in for a week or two – tell him I'll answer for your being let to return. I know you are as fond of a gay life as myself – you'd have an opportunity of rakeing as much as you choose either at Plays, Balls, Concerts, or Assemblys. I've been now but three evenings alone since we mov'd to town." Unsourced quote, Booth, *The Women of '76*, 158.

[39] Anne Hollingsworth Wharton, *Salons Colonial and Republican with Numerous Reproductions and Miniatures of Men and Women Prominent in Colonial Life and in the Early Days of the Republic* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1900), 118.

batteries on the Delaware while the American navy stationed six vessels in the river.[40] Elizabeth Drinker recorded the first conflict between the two forces:

> the engagement lasted about half an hour when many shots were exchang'd; one House struck, but not much damaged; no body, that I have heard, hurt on shore; but the people in General, expecialy downwards, exceedingly Allarm'd, the Cook on board the Delaware, 'tis said, had his Head shot off, another of the men wounded, She ran a Ground, and by some means took fire, which occasion'd her to stroke her Colours, the English immediately boarded her; the others sheard off – they took Admiral Allexander and his Men Prisoners – it seems he declar'd, that their intentions were to distroy the Town.[41]

Skirmishes such as these would continue for weeks after the British arrived and small fires and sporadic shooting along the river became commonplace. After spending a month trying to regain control of Philadelphia, the American military retreated and the immediate threat to the city ended.[42]

One of the most immediate and personal changes that the war brought about was disruption in communications between family members on opposite sides of the ocean. Eliza Farmer, who had written long, informative letters to her nephew Jack in London for years, suddenly became concerned about the wisdom of sharing political and economic news with someone on the opposite side of the conflict. She wrote, "I must be very short as it will not be prudent to send particulars at this time but am glad to inform you we are all in good health thank God for it and as easy as persons can be who live where the seat of War is."[43] Anna Rawle seconded the concern women had about letters being read and misunderstood when she wrote to her mother in New York, "The freedom I have spoken with in this letter I know must not be used again – do not be uneasy we shall be

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[40] For a discussion of these skirmishes, see William S. Stryker, *The Forts on the Delaware in the Revolutionary War* (Trenton, NJ: J. L. Murphy Publishing Co., 1901), 3-4.
[41] 27 September 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.*
[42] For reports of American attempts to regain control of Philadelphia, see 7-14 October 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.*
[43] Eliza Farmer to Jack Halroyd, 11 December 1777, Eliza Farmer Letterbook, 1774-1789, Am. 063, HSP.

cautious."[44] Grace Galloway echoed this worry in a letter to her daughter, "I wish the Noble Minded Hero's on both sides wou'd let the women write with freedom & not inspect our scrawls, for I find the restraint both disagreeable & Mortifieing…. they see faults not with the partial eyes of a friend, but are too ready to Amuse themselves at the expense of every poor weak woman that falls in their way."[45]

Once the Revolution commenced in earnest and British troops circulated around Philadelphia, women's letters became less frequent and more guarded. Given the changes in the ways that women corresponded during the war, diaries become the more valuable source for understanding women's wartime experiences; since they were private documents, female writers were more candid and comprehensive in their journals than they felt they could be in their letters. Philadelphia diarists record many wartime experiences, both personal and city-wide, including the ways that the British occupation effected their daily lives. The attacks around Philadelphia led to the creation of at least four public hospitals. Individual families took in wounded soldiers and hospitals were established at two Presbyterian churches, the State House, and the Play House.[46] Elizabeth Drinker described this process:

> an Officer call'd this Afternoon to ask if we could take in a Sick or Wounded Captain; I put him off by saying that as my Husband was from me, I should be pleas'd if he could provide some other convenient place, he hop'd no offence, and departed … two of the Presbytearan Meeting Houses, are made Hospitals of, for the Wounded Soldiers, of which there are a great Number.[47]

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[44] Anna Rawle to Rebecca Shoemaker, 30 June 1780, Rebecca Shoemaker papers.
[45] Grace Galloway to Elizabeth Galloway, 17-21 May 1779, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Grace Growden Galloway Papers 1778-1781, Am. 06865, HSP.
[46] Betsy Ross Ashburn nursed men in a private hospital following the explosion of a floating mine in the Delaware River, known as the Battle of the Kegs. Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 200.
[47] 6 October 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.

Nursing was a common female pursuit in the eighteenth century, but generally only within the circle of family or close friends. The presence of wounded soldiers in Philadelphia required women to ply their skills outside the home and for total strangers. On 8 October, Drinker's sister, one of her sons, and several Friends visited three of the hospitals in order to determine what they could do to help. The next day, her son Harry and servant Jenney went "in the rain, to the Play House &c. with a Jugg of Wine-Whey and a Tea-Kittle of Coffee, for the Wounded Men." They would visit at least one more time, again taking food and coffee for the soldiers.[48]

Through the winter of 1777, Philadelphians became used to the British soldiers and the initial panic over the dangers of the occupation settled into a more normal routine. Tensions existed between citizens and soldiers, and among Loyalists, Patriots, and neutrals, but to a significant degree, the city had settled into normal patterns of life by the spring of 1778. That May, the British would hold a grand gala, the Mischianza, that brought tensions among the city's many partisan groups to the surface. In the spring of 1778, Major John André and the British officers in Philadelphia hosted the biggest and most elaborate ball wartime Philadelphia would see. Earlier that year Parliament terminated General William Howe's command of the British army in America and recalled him to England. In addition to a general sense of war-weariness, Parliament had grown tired of rumors that the general spent more time with his mistress than he did commanding the military.[49] Upon learning of his demotion, Howe's subordinate officers planned a lavish going-away party that would be both a statement of support for their

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[48] 8, 9 and 11 October 1777, Ibid.

[49] General Howe's mistress, Jane Loring, was the wife of Joshua Loring, the British Commissary of Prisons. He was appointed to his position by Howe, which furthered the scandal of their relationship. During the occupation, Loring was at the head of the Loyalist social scene and threw a number of lavish, heavily attended parties. Booth, *The Women of '76*, 156.

beloved commander and the crowning social event of the season.[50] André, one of the general's closest aides, organized an event he called the Mischianza. Four hundred of Philadelphia's wealthy Loyalists and neutrals attended the gala.[51]

The Mischianza, held on 18 May 1778 at Walnut Grove, Joseph Wharton's estate, was styled after a tournament from the reign of King Henry IV of France. The event was reminiscent of the fêtes of Catherine de Medici who "waged political and religious diplomacy through her elaborate court entertainments."[52] After a grand procession up the Delaware River, the company disembarked from *H.M.S. Roebuck* and *H.M.S. Vigilant* to a seventeen-gun salute. The Knights' Ladies – a group of young Philadelphia women attending as the personal guests of the organizing officers – were seated at the front of an amphitheater located beside a jousting list built for the event, with the remainder of the guests filling the stands behind them.[53] The British officers began the celebration by performing five rounds of jousting.[54] The remainder of the evening consisted of dancing, fireworks, and an elaborate dinner. During the meal, toasts were made to the King's health, the Queen and royal family, the military, the Knights and their Ladies, the guests,

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[50] *Vive Vale*, Live and Be Well, was one of the mottoes of the Mischianza. The other, *Luceo Discendens Aucto Splendore Resurgam,* meant "He shines as he sets, but he shall rise again in great splendor" and refers to the military career of General Howe which was in great danger of being dishonorably terminated. Both mottoes indicate Howe's subordinate officers' belief that he would persevere and emerge a vindicated man. Mischianza comes from the Italian word *mescolanza* meaning "a medley." Morris Bishop, "You are Invited to a Mischianza," *American Heritage* 25, no. 5 (August 1974), 70-1.
[51] Ibid., 71.
[52] Brooks, "Emblem of Gaiety, Love, and Legislation," 72.
[53] Records conflict as to which families participated in the Mischianza, but daughters of prominent households such as the Chews, Bonds, Franks, and Shippens almost certainly appeared as Knight's Ladies. Anne Hollingsworth Wharton, *Through Colonial Doorways* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1893), 23-64; John André, "Particulars of the Mischianza in America," *Gentleman's Magazine* 48 (1778), 355; John André, "Major André's Description of the Mischianza" as quoted in Benson J. Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution: or, Illustrations, by Pen and Pencil, of the History, Biography, Scenery, Relics, and Traditions of the War for Independence*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1851-52); and, Mark Abbott Stern, *David Franks: Colonial Merchant* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 128-9.
[54] The first tilt featured spears; the second and third, pistols; the fourth, swords; and in the fifth, the whole company engaged in choreographed hand-to-hand combat. André, "Major André's Description of the Mischianza."

and, of course, their beloved General Howe. A chorus of "God Save the King" followed each toast. After supper, the dancing continued until four o'clock in the morning when the party disbanded.[55]

The British officers who assumed the roles of Knights of the Blended Rose and Knights of the Burning Mountain dressed in the garb of the Holy Crusades.[56] The Ladies and the black servants attending them wore costumes intended to invoke the look of Turkish harem girls and slaves.[57] André described the girls' costumes, which caused quite an outcry from Quakers and other Philadelphians, in an account of the Mischianza he presented to his Lady, Peggy Chew:

> They wore gauze Turbans spangled and edged with gold or Silver, on the right Side a veil of the same kind hung as low as the waist and the left side of the Turban was enriched with pearl and tassels of gold or Silver & crested with a feather. The dress was of the polonaise Kind of white Silk with long sleeves, the Sashes which were worn round the waist and were tied with a large bow on the left side hung very low and were trimmed spangled and fringed according to the Colours of the Knight.[58]

In the 1770s, the *robe à la polonaise* rose to immense popularity with wealthy British women. A variation on the elaborate gowns worn at European courts, it symbolized wealth and power.[59] To make these gowns "Turkish," André added wide sashes and turbans embellished with jewels and tassels. While they bore little resemblance to actual

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[55] John André, "Major André's Story of the Mischianza," 2 June 1778, Stauffer Collection, vol. IX, HSP and Brooks, "Emblem of Gaiety, Love, and Legislation," 73-4.
[56] André, "Major André's Story of the Mischianza".
[57] There is a vast and fascinating literature on images of black servants in European cultural productions. For examples see, Frederick Nathaniel Bohrer, *Orientalism and Visual Culture: Imagining Mesopotamia in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Beth Fowkes Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-Century British Painting* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation* (London: Routledge, 1996); and, Mary Ann Stevens, ed., *The Orientalists, Delacroix to Matisse: European Painters in North Africa and the Near East* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1984).
[58] André, "Major André's Story of the Mischianza."
[59] Akiko Fukai and Tamami Suoh, *Fashion, The Collection of the Kyoto Costume Institute: A History from the 18th to the 20th Century* (Koln: Taschen, 2002), 78.

Turkish costumes, these elements were commonly understood to represent Orientalism when combined with traditional English gowns.[60]

Middle and Far Eastern styles of dress came to represent an alluring and sensual alternative that appealed to many wealthy British women and men. Wearing robes of silk gauze or muslin with "Turkish" stylistic elements became culturally chic in the mid eighteenth century.[61] Indeed, cultural cross-dressing became a popular technique for demonstrating the British colonizers' "ability to master the alien and the exotic."[62] Literary and feminist scholar Beth Fowkes Tobin argues that within the British empire, the "display of [a] costumed body [was] carefully constructed to produce a desired effect."[63] When wealthy British women chose to wear "Turkish" fashions, they modeled their clothing on images of high status figures such as empresses and sultanas. They would never have put themselves in the socially and sexually risqué costume of a concubine or harem girl.[64] John André could have chosen to dress the Knights' Ladies as wealthy sixteenth-century women to match the costumes of the officers. Instead, he put them in the clothing of exotic women noted for their sexual availability to men. In

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[60] Aileen Ribeiro, *The Art of Dress: Fashion in England and France 1750 to 1820* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), 223. By the late eighteenth-century, the British had developed an intense fascination with the Orient. As literary theorist Edward W. Said wrote, to the British "the Orient was … a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, [and] remarkable experiences…. [that provided England with] its deepest and most recurrent images of the Other." Interest in the culture and sexuality of Eastern societies began for readers in England and the American colonies in the seventeenth century. Despite the ready availability of factual reports of life at court in India, China, and the Ottoman Empire, the British imagination clung to "crude stereotypes of Oriental lust and violence" that highlighted the sexuality and sensuality of the East. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 1; Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Harems of the Mind: Passages of Western Art and Literature* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), 4-5; and, Reina Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 13.
[61] Kate Haulman, *The Politics of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 172.
[62] Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power*, 2, 85-6, and 110.
[63] Ibid., 105.
[64] Ribeiro, *The Art of Dress,* 222 and Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1986), 4.

choosing these costumes, he was making a statement about America's place in the empire. American colonists had been working steadily for nearly three decades to make their society as British as possible, rendering Andre's choices especially offensive.[65] His decision to dress the young women as harem girls was a declaration of their subservience, not inclusion.

Many Philadelphians disapproved of the Mischianza. Patriots, neutrals, and even some Loyalists saw it as gauche to throw such an elaborate party in the face of wartime deprivations. Opponents openly criticized the families who attended, with Continental Congressman Josiah Bartlett describing "the Tory Ladies who tarried with the Regulars" as "the Mistresses and Wh___s of the Brittish officers."[66] Elizabeth Drinker claimed that "this day may be rememberd by many, from the Scenes of Folly and Vanity, promoted by the Officers of the Army under the pretence of shewing respect to Gen. Howe, now about leaving them…. How insensibly do these people appear, while our Land is so greatly desolated, and Death and sore destruction has overtaken and impends over so many."[67]

Some Philadelphians' antagonism toward the Mischianza was so extreme they attempted to prevent the party from occurring. They worried especially about the sensuality of the ladies' costumes and the young women's fraternization with British officers who had a reputation for licentiousness. In the days before the gala, a group of women from the local Quaker meeting approached the parents of all fourteen girls chosen

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[65] Tobin writes that dressing in colonial garb meant "participating in some form of cultural accommodation and perhaps some form of cultural cannibalism that functions as an act of empowerment," but that the action was context specific. In the case of British officers dressing colonial women as sexually available harem girls, the action was empowering for the officers, but disempowering for the women and, by extension, their families. Despite being staunch Tories willing to stand up beside the British, the colonists were not seen as the equal of those members of the empire born in England. See, Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power*, 7 and 90.

[66] Josiah Bartlett to Mary Bartlett, 24 August 1778 in Paul H. Smith, ed., *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789*, vol. 10 (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1983), 496-7.

[67] 18 May 1778, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.*

as Knights' Ladies to ask that they prevent their daughters from taking part in such an ostentatious display. They suggested that the costumes the Ladies wore were inappropriately provocative and that they would damage the reputations of the young women.[68] For Philadelphians who were already bothered by the air of levity and sexuality prominent among the British soldiers and their supporters, the Mischianza was proof of the dangerous impact the army was having on local families. For parents to permit their daughters to appear in a public spectacle with such obvious overtones of sensuality and depravity was harmful not just for the families, but for society at large. There is no reason to believe that any of the Loyalists who had agreed to participate changed their mind as a result of this intervention. In a letter written to "Miss Shippen," Becky Franks rejoiced at the Quakers' failure: "I'm delighted that it came to nothing as they had the impudence to laugh at Us."[69]

Still, the Quakers may have felt vindicated in the end. The Mischianza had lasting cultural resonance throughout the American and British military establishments. For the remainder of the war, Patriots took every opportunity to shame Philadelphians for taking part in the display. Following the Continental victory at the Battle of Monmouth just weeks after the end of the occupation, General Anthony Wayne gloated:

> Tell those Philadelphia ladies who attended Howe's assemblies & levees, that the heavenly, sweet, pretty red-coats – the accomplished gentlemen of the guards & grenadiers have been humbled on the plains of Monmouth…. The *Knights of the Blended Roses* and of the *Burning Mount* have resigned their laurels to Rebel officers, who will lay them at the feet of those virtuous daughters of America, who cheerfully gave up ease and affluence in a city, for liberty and peace of mind in a cottage.[70]

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[68] Brian Richard Boylan, *Benedict Arnold: The Dark Eagle* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1973), 146-7 and Engle, *Women in the American Revolution*, 156.
[69] Rebecca Franks to Miss Shippen, [Autumn, 1778], Balch-Shippen Papers, vol. 2, pg. 61.
[70] Wharton, *Through Colonial Doorways*, 63-4.

The Mischianza also did damage to the reputation of the British army in Great Britain.[71] Many English officers and politicians saw it as a callous display of opulence and triviality during a time of hardship and suffering. In 1783, when George Augustus Elliot, 1st Baron Heathfield, retired from his post as Governor of Gibraltar, he was asked by his troops what he wanted for a farewell celebration. Appalled by the damage that had been done to the reputation of the British military by the Philadelphia gala, he replied, "Anything but a Meschianza!"[72]

In late-May 1778, shortly after the Mischianza, General Howe sailed for London and General Sir Henry Clinton assumed control of the British army in America. Seeking to reposition his troops and needing more manpower in the northern colonies, Clinton evacuated Philadelphia and moved the British headquarters to New York City.[73] Numerous Philadelphia women noted the return of the American army in their letters and diaries. Grace Galloway and Sarah Wister both remarked upon the change in regime and their uncertainty about what that would mean. Galloway, a staunch Tory, expressed anger: "I was quite Mad with [Howe] for betraying Us to the provincial as it was in his power to have settled the affair."[74] Wister, however, took a more optimistic view: "we have heard an astonishing piece of news, that the British have intirely left the city it is almost impossible," but continued "I now think of nothing but returning to Philadelphia … humbly hoping that the great disposer of events who has graciously vouchsafed to

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[71] In addition to harming the reputation of the British army, there was concern that the Mischianza would lead to harsher reprisals against Loyalists who attended when the American army regained control of Philadelphia. Booth, *The Women of '76*, 169.
[72] Unsourced quote, Ibid., 170.
[73] Boylan, *Benedict Arnold*, 147-8.
[74] Galloway reflected the general Loyalist discontent with the end of the occupation when she wrote, "I was very low & mad to think we that are ruin'd by them was the least noticed[.] every thing wears a gloomy appearance." 10, 11 and 19 June 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Grace Growden Galloway Papers.

protect us to this day through many dangers will still be pleas'd to continue his protection."[75]

Loyalists and others who had enjoyed the presence of the British army found life in Philadelphia following the occupation greatly changed. Galloway wrote to her daughter, who had left Philadelphia with Grace's husband and the British army: "There has been great Animosities between Tory & Continental Ladies all that stay'd in Town are abused as Tories."[76] For the first few months, a strict social separation was maintained between Patriot and Loyalist women; entertainments were divided by political persuasion and families that had supported the British were widely shunned. In time, connections of blood and marriage, social and religious proximity, and other concerns brought many women who had been friends before the Revolution back together, although a certain amount of tension remained until after the war.[77] Rebecca Shoemaker commented upon this phenomenon: "That set [the Tory party] have prudently determined, as they cannot exist in retirement, either at Lansdowne or anywhere else out of public places, to join the others … and all their former intimates, are now as happy at Mrs. Stewart's, formerly M^c^Clanachan at the French Minister's, or in any other Whig Society, as ever they were in the select circle they once were the principles of."[78]

For some, the changes brought about by the British occupation were far more personal and severe than simply nearby skirmishes and alterations in social and commercial patterns. Some families faced forcible separation at the hands of the

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[75] 18 and 19 June 1778, Sarah Wister journal.
[76] Grace Galloway to daughter, 12 February 1778, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Grace Growden Galloway Papers 1778-1781, Am. 06865, HSP.
[77] Wharton, *Salons Colonial and Republican*, 118-9.
[78] Rebecca Shoemaker to Samuel Shoemaker, December 1783, no source given, as quoted in Wharton, *Salons Colonial and Republican*, 120.

Pennsylvania government. The neutral stance of Philadelphia Quakers had been viewed with skepticism since before the war began; as the city faced a potential enemy occupation, their position was scrutinized even more closely. Because they did not overtly support the Patriots, Friends could be mistaken for Tories.[79] Sally Wister was once asked by an American soldier if she was a Quaker, and when she replied in the affirmative, he said, "then you are a tory." Somewhat unsettled, Wister replied, "I am not indeed."[80] While Wister was under no real suspicion, male Quakers who would not come out in support of the American army faced heightened scrutiny, and their families were vulnerable to the prejudices of the state. When Pennsylvania chose to deport a group of Quakers rather than risk them supporting the approaching British army, the mothers, wives, and daughters of the exiled men discovered both the power of the commonwealth to interfere with their lives and their own capacity to fight back.

Quaker Exile

Patriot officials in Philadelphia took their mandate to protect the city from British spies and collaborators seriously. Men who had the interest and power to oppose the American war effort posed the most significant threat. By autumn 1777 the Quaker

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[79] The Society of Friends preached pacifism and required that adherents remain neutral during armed conflict. During the Revolution, not all Quakers were willing to do so. Many men joined one army or the other and women provided material and moral support for the war effort. For women like Betsy Griscom Ross, just marrying a soldier could be seen as active participation. Taking sides in the Revolution often led to estrangement or dismissal from the Society of Friends. The tensions within the Philadelphia Meeting became so intense that in 1781 a group of pro-Patriot Quakers split off and formed the short-lived Religious Society of Free Quakers. While following all other traditional Quaker beliefs, the Free Quakers felt that it was morally just to act on one's conviction and support the war. For a greater discussion of Quakers during the Revolution, see Arthur J. Mekeel, *The Relation of the Quakers to the American Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1979); Rae Tyson, "Our First Friends, The Early Quakers," *Pennsylvania Heritage Magazine* 37, no. 2 (Spring 2011); and, Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*. For the Free Quakers, see Charles Wetherill, *History of the Religious Society of Friends Called by Some the Free Quakers, in the City of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Society, 1894).

[80] 2 June 1778, Sarah Wister journal.

community had become authorities' primary target. Quaker pacifism irritated zealots on both the American and British sides of the conflict; though they claimed to be neutral, Patriot officials doubted the convictions of many Friends. With a British invasion looming, they felt compelled to remove a large, potentially pro-British contingent from the city.[81] The men they targeted included some of the wealthiest merchants, attorneys, and property owners in Philadelphia – men who would have been powerful allies for the British had they chosen to side with them. Twenty-two Quakers were arrested on suspicion of supporting the British and exiled to Virginia where they were held for eight months. Their arrest and deportation without evidence of any wrongdoing was reminiscent of the reviled Administration of Justice Act, which had been a major catalyst to the Revolution. It was antithetical to British Common Law and to the new system of jurisprudence emerging in America. The removal of Quaker men based on nothing but the suspicion of disloyalty was offensive to many people and created a crisis for their wives, mothers, and sisters who were left behind. While these women could have waited to see whether the wheels of justice turned in their favor, they did not. Instead, they organized to gain freedom for their male relatives. With the support of their faith community, they stepped into the fray, writing petitions, traveling to make personal pleas, and otherwise working to bring their men home.

Prodigious diarist Elizabeth Drinker, whose husband was arrested, recorded the nearly daily efforts made by the mothers and wives of the exiles to formulate strategies to gain their freedom. They worked together to contact civil and military leaders and write letters and petitions. While some male Friends apparently thought this was work better left to men, women insisted on maintaining control of the effort. As scholar Elaine

[81] Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 189.

Forman Crane commented, "So much for deference, at least as it related to gender and politics."[82] Quaker women, as wives, mothers, sisters, and members of the Friends community of faith, threw themselves fully into the work of bringing home their exiled men, regardless of the views of some, both women and men, that it might not be appropriate for them to do so.

Early in September 1777, Philadelphia officials visited the homes of prominent Quakers, asking them to sign loyalty oaths to the American cause. Knowing their faith would prevent them from doing so, this action was largely a pretense to give the government cause to arrest the potentially problematic neutrals. When Henry Drinker refused to sign the oath, documents relating to the Philadelphia Quaker Meeting were seized as evidence of possible treason; two days later, on 4 September, he was arrested. That night, Elizabeth "met with the Wives & Children of our dear Friends [who had been arrested] … upwards of 20 of our Friends call'd to see us this Day."[83] The Quaker community rallied around the families of the detained men; women such as Hannah Callender Sansom, who did not have a relative arrested for treason, visited those who did in a show of solidarity and worked with them over the following months to secure the men's release.[84] Initially it was uncertain if they would be fined and released, kept in jail in Philadelphia, or deported. Drinker visited her husband nearly daily, met with other Quakers, and attended special meetings about how to handle the situation.[85]

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[82] Elaine Forman Crane, introduction to *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, ed. Elaine Forman Crane, vol. 1 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), xxix.
[83] 2 and 4 September 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.
[84] Hannah Callender Sansom, *The Diary of Hannah Callender Sansom: Sense and Sensibility in the Age of the American Revolution*, eds. Susan E. Klepp and Karin Wulf (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 266-7. See 2 September 1777 for her reaction to the arrests.
[85] See 5-10, September 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.

By 8 September the prisoners had written and submitted a petition for their freedom to the Continental Congress and the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, protesting their arrest and arguing that they were in no way a threat to the peace or safety of Philadelphia. Aware that the arrests had been quasi-legal, the Continental Congress asked the Supreme Executive Council to give the Quakers a hearing; the Council refused, claiming that in an emergency such as the impending occupation, they had the unilateral right to detain potential enemies of the state and that the Congress did not have the authority to direct their actions.[86] Instead of granting them a hearing, the Council decided to exile the Quaker men to Virginia. On 9 September, Drinker "went this Afternoon to the Lodge, during my stay there, word was brought from the Conscil that their Banishment was concluded to be on the Morrow … [Molly] went back near 10 at Night, found the Prisoners finishing a Protest against the Tyrannical conduct of the Present wicked rulers."[87] Due to difficulties procuring enough horses and wagons to move twenty-two men and their baggage, they were not removed until the 11th. Drinker received word at the last moment that the eviction was finally happening: "I quickly went there; and as quickly came away finding great a number of People there but few women, bid my dearest Husband farewell … the waggons drove of about 6 o'clock and I came home at Dusk."[88] Sally Logan Fisher, the pregnant wife of another exile, recorded the despair many of the women must have felt: "I feel forlorn & desolate, & the

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[86] 8 September 1777, Ibid. See also, Thomas Gilpin, *Exiles in Virginia: With Observations on the Conduct of the Society of Friends during the Revolutionary War* (Philadelphia: privately printed, 1848), 77-85, 96-7 and Theodore George Thayer, *Israel Pemberton* (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1943), 225-31.
[87] 9 September 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.*
[88] 11 September 1777, Ibid.

World appears like a dreary Desart, almost without any visible protecting Hand to guard us from the ravenous Wolves & Lions that prowl about for prey."[89]

Following the banishment, the wives appear to have talked on an almost daily basis, sharing news and providing comfort. When the men had the opportunity to write letters, they tried to include as much news about the other exiles as possible, knowing their wives would share that information with their families.[90] As soon as the men were exiled, their wives and other members of the Quaker community began discussing ways to gain their freedom. On 15 September, Elizabeth Drinker mentioned that there was "great talk of a Habeas-[Corpus] and of our Friends having a hearing."[91] Over the next several months, Friends wrote frequently to the exiled men, and several members of the Philadelphia meeting went to Virginia in hopes of ascertaining their condition. The exiles also continued to petition for their release but with no success; the Supreme Executive Council was not going to reverse its decision and the Continental Congress was not willing to pull rank and force the issue. As they continued into a new year, the women decided to take more forceful action.

In January 1778, Philadelphia Quakers began to hear disturbing rumors about the exiled men. On the 19th, they heard that John Pemberton had died on the way to Virginia and that two others had been jailed.[92] Later in the month, news reached Philadelphia that another petition sent to the Supreme Executive Council had failed to gain the men their

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[89] 21 September 1777, Sally Logan Fisher diary, HSP.
[90] See 15 and 20 September, 5 and 14 October 1777, and 25 February 1778, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.
[91] 15 September 1777, Ibid.
[92] This rumor proved untrue and would not be the only time that false reports reached Philadelphia of the death of one or more of the exiled men. 19-20 January 1778, Ibid.

freedom.[93] On 3 February, Susannah Jones sent for Elizabeth Drinker, because "she intends to go before long to G. Washington, on account of her Son; she hinted as if she would like me to go with her." Drinker wanted to accompany her, but given the small children in her care worried that traveling would "not suit me; tho' my Heart is full of some such thing."[94] Struggling to decide the right thing to do, she confided to her diary, "I have been much distress'd at times, when I have thought of my being still here, when prehaps it might be in my power to do something for my dear Husband." She consulted with the families of other men in exile and prayed for guidance: "I hope it will please the Lord to direct us to do that which is right. it would be a tryal on us to leave our Young Familys at this time, but that I belive, if we could conclude on the matter we should leave, and trust in kind providence."[95]

For the next few weeks, letters were exchanged between the men in Virginia and their loved ones in Philadelphia, while a few male Quakers traveled, again, to Winchester to check on the exiles. At the same time, male Friends sent more petitions to Congress and the Pennsylvania government. The women remained at home, waiting to see if any of these efforts to secure a release would prove effective. In mid-March, the idea of a group of women taking direct action resurfaced. On the 21st, several Quakers met at the Emlen home to discuss the latest petitions sent to state and national authorities.[96] Unhappy with the outcome, four days later Phoebe Pemberton and Molly Pleasants

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[93] The Supreme Executive Council claimed that the exiles were now under the jurisdiction of the United States, not the state of Pennsylvania. For that reason, they could not revoke the deportation order. The petition was then sent to the Continental Congress who sent it to committee and refrained from taking action. Rumor reached Philadelphia that Congress had voted to reprieve the Quakers in early February, although that news proved false. See 24 January and 1 February 1778, Ibid and Gilpin, *Exiles in Virginia*, 188-93, 198-200.
[94] 3 February 1778, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.*
[95] 7 February 1778, Ibid.
[96] 14 and 21 March 1778, Ibid.

"came to consult [Elizabeth Drinker] about drawing up somthing to present to those who shall acknowledge our dear Friends as their prisoners … We went in the Evening to [John Drinker's] – he appeard rather reluctant, but tis likely he will think of it." The women concealed their plan "to take it ourselves, 2 or 4 of us – when we can hear how, matters stand with our dear absent Friends," fearing that the men might be less willing to help them draft a petition if they knew the women wanted to present it in person.[97]

On 27 March 1778, while Drinker was meeting with Mary and Phoebe Pemberton, they received absolute confirmation that one of the exiles, Thomas Gilpin, had died and that several others were extremely ill, including Elizabeth's husband Henry. Spurred by this news, the women began planning in earnest to seek the personal intervention of George Washington. The next day, Drinker invited Rachel Hunt to join the group heading to Valley Forge. She "then went to M. Pleasants, talk'd a while with her about sending necessarys to our dear Husbands … had some talk about Susy Jones going to the Assembly." On the 31st, Molly Pleasants and Drinker finished drafting their petition to Congress; and Owen Jones sent word asking Drinker to "meet the rest of the Women concern'd at 5 o'clock at M. Pemberton's, which I did … Nicholas read the Address, and the Women all sign'd it – it is partly concluded that Sush. Jones, P. Pemberton[,] M. Pleasants and E. Drinker is to take it."[98] On the 2 April, Nicholas Waln "call'd with the Address to Congress for [Drinker] to sign, Mary Pemberton had coppy'd it afresh with some small addition on hearing of the Death of our dear Friend, J.H."[99]

Then a new potential obstacle to their plan arose. The Quaker women had anticipated some concern about them traveling alone, but thus far no one had raised any

[97] 25 March 1778, Ibid.
[98] 27, 28, and, 31 March 1778, Ibid.
[99] 2 April 1778, Ibid.

objections. Then, at the last moment, Owen Jones "call'd to tell [Drinker], that Isreal Morris had been to offer himself to accompany us on our journey, Owen seems inclin'd to favour his applycation, for my part I do not approve of it." The women discussed whether to accept an escort; ultimately, they concluded "to except of Isreal if he would come into our terms." However, he implied that he wanted to go to Congress in their stead, and the women then informed him that

> we could not agree to unite with him in the busyness, we spoke very freely to him, that is MP and myself – that if he could be willing to escort us, and advise when we ask'd it, we should be oblig'd to him for his company, to which he consented – but hinted that he thought it necessary that he should appear with us before Congress, which we by no means consented to.[100]

Having watched multiple failed efforts by Quaker men, the women were unwilling to relinquish control of their petition or their plans. They had devised their own strategy and fully intended to carry it out. On 5 April 1778, the group set off for Valley Forge.

It took less than two days to travel the twenty miles from Philadelphia to the Continental Army camp. They arrived "at about ½ past one; requested an audience with the General – set with his Wife, (a sociable pretty kind of Woman) untill he came in." Washington soon arrived and "discoursed with us freely, but not so long as we could have wish'd, as dinner was serv'd in, to which he invited us." The women presented their petition to Washington, asking on behalf of

> the Suffering and Afflicted Parents, Wives and near Connections of our beloved Husbands now in Banishment at Winchester, what adds to our Distress in this sorrowfull Circumstance is the Acct we have lately received of the removal of one of them by Death, and that divers of them are much Indisposed, and as we find they are in want of necessarys Proper for Sick People we desire the Favour of General Washington to grant a Protection for One or Mor Waggons, and for the Persons we may Employ to go with them In order That they may be accommodated with what is suitable, for which we shall be much Obliged to him.[101]

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[100] 3 April 1778, Ibid.

Following the meal, "we went out with the Generals Wife up to her Chamber, and saw no more of him, - he told us, he could do nothing in our busyness further than granting us a pass to Lancaster, which he did."[102] Regardless of his personal inclination to help the Quakers, Washington was unwilling to involve the military in what he saw as a civil issue. He gave the women a pass to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, the current seat of the Continental Congress, where they could present their petition, but he took no official stance on the issue.[103]

On their way to Lancaster the next day, the women learned that arrangements were being made to free the exiles. The Supreme Executive Council had ordered that the men be sent to Shippensburg, where they would be paroled. The forced exile of men who had not been tried or found guilty of treason had become increasingly unpopular beyond Quaker circles. Given that neither the state nor national government wanted to take responsibility for the fate of the men, it was easier to free them than to continue their banishment. When Thomas Gilpin died in custody, it became politically untenable to keep the men in Virginia and the Council used the multiple, well-publicized petitions as an excuse to free his comrades.[104] Not fully trusting that the men would be released, the group continued on to Lancaster and, on 10 April, submitted "our address, which was

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[101] Mary Pemberton to George Washington, 31 March 1778 in *The Papers of George Washington*, Revolutionary War Series, ed. David R. Hoth, vol. 14 (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 371-2.
[102] 6 April 1778, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.*
[103] George Washington apparently considered sending the women back to Philadelphia, but due to their determination, decided to send them on to Lancaster. He wrote ahead to Thomas Wharton, Jr., President of the Supreme Executive Council, so that Wharton would know to expect them. Washington considered "humanity [to plead] strongly in their behalf," but still would not require the exiles to be returned. George Washington to Thomas Wharton, Jr., 6 April 1778 in *The Papers of George Washington*, ed. David R. Hoth, vol. 14, 416-7.
[104] 9 April 1778, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker* and Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 189.

sign'd by all the Women concern'd" to the Continental Congress.[105] Finally, on the 19th, Phoebe Pemberton received a letter from her husband confirming that they had been released and were traveling to Lancaster. Other petitioners soon received letters as well, which they read "over and over."[106]

On 25 April 1778, the surviving Quaker exiles arrived at Lancaster. Elizabeth Drinker wrote, "I can recollect nothing of the occurances of this Morning – about one o'clock my Henry arrived at J Webbs, just time enough to dine with us; all the rest of our Friends came this day to Lancaster." After eight months of separation, their men had returned, though the exiles were held in custody until the 28th when they were paroled and the whole group "turn'd our Faces homewards."[107] They arrived in Philadelphia two days later and were "wellcom'd by many before, and on our entrence into the City … [we] found our dear Families all well, for which favour and Blessing and the restoration of my hear Husband, may I ever be thankful."[108]

Women were accustomed to taking part in the affairs of the Society of Friends and late-colonial women in general had played significant roles in the economic and political life of their communities. In this case, however, the wives and mothers of the Quaker exiles took their habitual participation in the public sphere far beyond the bounds of their community, injecting themselves into the high political and military dealings of the burgeoning nation.[109] While their efforts alone did not secure the release of their

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[105] 10 April 1778, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.
[106] 19 and 20 April 1778, Ibid. On the 23rd, Friend Philip Bush left Lancaster for Philadelphia and the women "gave him our letters and a Packet for the Wives in Town" so that they would have reputable word that the exiles would soon be restored to them. 23 April 1778, Ibid.
[107] 25 and 28 April 1778, Ibid.
[108] 30 April 1778, Ibid.
[109] Elizabeth Drinker and other Quaker women drew on this experience following the execution of Friends John Roberts and Abraham Carlisle. The two men were hung for treason, despite very real and ultimately correct concerns that they had not aided and abetted the British during the occupation. On the day of their

loved ones, their willingness to petition – on paper and in person – the highest political and military officials made clear that Revolutionary women were willing to push the boundaries of what was traditionally considered acceptable female behavior.

While some women were empowered by their interactions with the militarized public sphere, others found wartime Philadelphia frightening and dangerous. Following the occupation, many men who held office under the British government evacuated Philadelphia for New York, Canada, or eventually England.[110] For wives and daughters who stayed behind, this meant months or years of fear and vulnerability. Some were forced out of their homes when the property was confiscated by the state; others were harassed, had personal property stolen, and faced an abiding uncertainty as to what the future would bring. Other women chose to face increased danger by agreeing to spy on behalf of both the British and American armies.

The Dangers of War

Living in a country at war brought women face to face with a range of difficulties and dangers. Whether or not they were left alone to manage their households, women dealt with problems such as quartering soldiers, food and supply shortages, break-ins and looting, and the threat of violence and rape. Elizabeth Drinker, Margaret Hill Morris, Rebecca Shoemaker, Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, and Sally Logan Fisher reported numerous instances of women struggling to protect and maintain themselves and their

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execution, Drinker went to the Carlisle home to comfort and support the widows. She described the experience, "the poor afflicted widdows, are wonderfully upheld and suported, under their very great tryal – they have many simpathizing Friends." See 4 November 1778, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*. For a discussion of the political motivation behind the trial and execution, see V. Hendrik, "Abraham Carlisle and John Roberts Trials: 1778," *Great American Trials* (2002), http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3498200031.html (accessed 30 November 2014).

[110] The self-exile of prominent Loyalist men and the experiences of their wives and daughters, who stayed behind in Philadelphia will be the focus of Chapter Four.

families.[111] Much has been written about women's fear of violence at the hands of soldiers, but very few episodes of bodily harm are mentioned in newspapers, diaries, and other contemporary sources. Whether this is because the fear of attack outweighed the actual instance, or because women felt it was inappropriate to record such things is unclear. There are, however, several glimpses of women engaged in volatile interactions with soldiers in the Philadelphia area.

During the British occupation, Elizabeth Drinker experienced frightening encounters with aggressive soldiers. Whether drunk, belligerent, or attempting to commit a crime, the men she encountered instilled a sense of insecurity about living in an occupied city. In November 1777, a drunken soldier invaded the Drinker home, brandishing a weapon and threatening those inside. Her sister Mary "went out, and discoverd a Young Officer … Sister held the Candle up to his Face and ask'd him who he was, his answer was whats that to you, the Gate was lock'd and he followd Ann and Sister into the Kitchen, where he swore he had mistaken the House, but we could not get him out." The women and their friend Chalkley James, who was in the house at the time, attempted to get the man to leave, but the soldier "shook his Sword, which he held in his Hand and seem'd to threaten, when Chalkly with great resolution twisted it out of his

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[111] For examples of lone women quartering soldiers, see December 1776, *Margaret Morris: Her Journal;* October 1777-June 1778, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*; and, Anne M. Ousterhout**,** *The Most Learned Woman in America: A Life of Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 193, 210. In a display of how proximity can change a person's attitude about occupying soldiers, by the time Elizabeth Drinker's captain left the family and the city in June 1778, Drinker had come to be fond of him. She made a point to go out and see him as he marched out of town and worried about his safety in the battles the occurred in months following the occupation. See, 9, 14, and 18 June 1778, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.* For examples of food shortages and the difficulty of providing essential goods to a family, see November 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*. For examples of both actual and reputed fires, break-ins, and looting, see December 1776, *Margaret Morris: Her Journal;* November and December 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*; and Anna Rawle to Rebecca Shoemaker**,** February 1781, Rebecca Shoemaker Papers. For discussions of the fear of violence and rape, see 21 Dec 1776; February- March, September, and December 1777; and, March and June 1778, Sally Logan Fisher diary, HSP and Mary Beth Norton, "Eighteenth-Century American Loyalists in Peace and War: The Case of the Loyalists," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 33, no. 3 (July 1976), 398, fn. 30.

Hands and Collor'd him." Neighbor Joseph Howell heard the commotion and came to help, giving the soldier back his sword and escorting him to the door. The soldier still refused to leave, "again swareing in the entry with the Sword in his hand. Sister had lock'd Chalkly up in the Middle Room, and we shut ourselves in the parlor, where he knock'd, and swore desireing entrance, our poor dear Children was never so frightend, to have an enrag'd, drunken Man, as I believe he was, with a Sword in his Hand swareing about the House." He finally went out into the yard and the Drinkers locked the doors against his reentry. The soldier continued swearing and yelling until Joseph Howell and Abel James arrived to take him away. The entire episode lasted nearly three hours and Drinker concluded in her diary, "I have not yet recoverd the fright."[112]

The following month, she had three more unsettling encounters with soldiers in quick succession. On 14 December, her family "were a little fright'n'd" late at night when their dog began to bark and they saw two men climbing the gate into their neighbor's yard. This was the second night the dog had woken the family and they had seen men sneaking through the alley, making Drinker "often feel afraid to go to Bed." The following night, the family again observed "2 Soliders in the Ally, standing by the Fence," and, moments later, their servant Jenney saw them "move off with a large Bundel which she took to be a Bed." Sometime after midnight, there was "a great Noise in the Alley," and the Drinkers saw "the Baker next door runing up the Alley in his Shirt only a little red Jacket the rest of his Family with him." The next morning, she learned that "the Baker had been rob'd of some of his Wifes cloths &c – which we suppose was the Bundle the Fellows went off with some time before."[113]

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[112] 25 November 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.
[113] 14 and 15 December 1777, Ibid.

On 19 December, Major Cramond came to the Drinker home to discuss the possibility of quartering a British officer. Elizabeth hoped that she and her sister as "'lone women would be excus'd." The officer replied that having an English soldier in the house might be to their advantage, as "a great number of the Forign Troops were to be quarterd in this Neighborhood, he believ'd they might be trouble-som." She replied by describing the "perticulars of their bad conduct that had come to my knowledge." She and the officer "had a good deal of talk about the Mal Behaveour of the British officers, which he by no means justify'd." That night Drinker learned that fellow Quaker Owen Jones had been forced to quarter an Officer who "drew his Sword, us'd very abusive language, and had the Front Door split in pieces &c." Friend Mary Eddy's family quartered a group of offensive soldiers who "will not suffer her to make use of her own Front Door, but oblidges her and her family to go up and down the Alley." Despite the protestations of Major Cramond, Drinker resisted quartering a soldier as long as possible. Eventually forced to take in an officer, Drinker continued to worry about his presence even though he proved mostly quiet and polite.[114]

Even more Philadelphia women encountered aggressive and belligerent soldiers in the streets. In the winter of 1776-77, Mrs. James Allen, her daughter Peggy, and friend Lyddy Duberry took the family carriage to go visiting. They turned into a street filled with American militia; the soldiers beat their servant Samson "with their muskets, & pushed at him with their Bayonets, on which to defend himself he made use of his Whip. This so enraged them, that they pushed their Bayonets into the Chariot, broke the glass & pierced the chariot in 3 places." The women cried and begged to be released, but instead the frenzied soldiers "endeavoured to overset [the carriage], while they were within it."

[114] 19 December 1777, Ibid.

They were rescued by David Deschler, Commissioner of Army Supplies for Northampton County, who led them to safety while the troops continued down the street.[115] Wealthy women such as the Allens were traditionally protected by their class status from public assault; however, the military did not follow the usual rules of conduct and many women felt they had reason to fear common soldiers as they walked or rode through town.

Women in the rural hinterlands also feared meeting soldiers on the road and on their property. In May 1778, Sally Wister, along with her sisters and female cousins, decided to walk to a neighbor's house, several miles away. On their way, they passed "two pickets gaurds, meeting with no interruptions." On the return trip, "to my utter astonishment, the centry desir'd us to stop[,] that he had orders not to suffer any persons to pass but those who had leave from the officers who was at the gaurd house." Wister worried about her reputation and her safety as "surround'd by a number of men to go to him would be inconsistent with propriety, to stay there and night advancing was not clever." She "was much terrified[.] I try'd to perswade the soldier to let us pass. [N]o he did not." When one of the girls attempted to pass the sentry, he "presented his gun with bayonet fixed." Just as the girls began to panic in earnest, Captain Emeson, an officer known to them, appeared at the sentry post and ordered the soldiers to let them pass. The girls hurried home "without any farther difficulty," but certainly with a greater recognition of the threats to their safety and reputations.[116]

Following the war, Eliza Farmer recalled the vulnerability of living close to two army camps. During the British occupation, the Farmers were "mostly distrest as our House was situated between the lines where the Americans and British frequently would

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[115] James Allen, "Diary of James Allen, Esq., of Philadelphia, Counsellor-at-law, 1770-1778," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 9, no. 2 (July 1885), 195-6.
[116] [Late May 1778], Sarah Wister journal.

be fireing at each other which was very alarming." During the winter of 1777-78, the British "distroyd all our fences and one day taken away a wagon load of our winters wood which made us feel manny cold days for there was not any to be bought." Nonetheless, "we thought ourselves well of[f] in comparison to some who sufferd cruelly strippd of all turnd out and their houses burnt before their Eyes most of the houses near us have been either burnt or pulled down as would have been the case with us if we had not stayd in it even at the hasard of our lives." While Farmer suffered the loss of property but no physical attack, her husband "was afraid to leave the [house] with only Sally and I" in case soldiers came looking for more supplies. Farmer worried frequently about encountering the English, who "have behaved here worse than Savages in their behavior to the inhabitants and prisoners."[117]

Despite these fears and anxieties, some women chose to confront added dangers in order to assist their side in the war. Popular histories of the American Revolution are replete with tales, mostly unsubstantiated, of women taking it upon themselves to pass information to either the American or British army. Still, it is likely that more women than we can prove acted as spies at one time or another. Spying did not have to mean going to great and dangerous lengths to pass on sensitive information; it could easily mean keeping one's eyes and ears open and sharing observations in a social setting.

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[117] Eliza Farmer to Dear Mad^{m}, 25 October 1783, Eliza Farmer Letterbook. Philadelphia women not only faced violence at the hands of the military, but also by armed civilians. Following the British occupation, the wives of Loyalists would have to protect their homes from looting and confiscation by armed Patriots. Women such as Rebecca Shoemaker, Grace Galloway, and Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson confronted armed men forcing their way into their homes, taking stock of and confiscating their personal property, and threatening the women and their children. After their homes were forfeited for their husband's political actions, these women were forced to vacate; when Galloway refused, her home was broken into and she was dragged outdoors. The experiences of these three women will be explored in detail in Chapter Four. The forced removal of these women was discussed throughout Philadelphia. Elizabeth Drinker, who knew both Shoemaker and Galloway personally, recorded her shock at their evictions. See 20 and 21 August 1778, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.*

Female spies were enough of a threat that Major General Artemus Ward, a close confidant of George Washington, convinced him to ban prostitutes from entering army camps out of concern that they would act as agents for the British.[118] Women acting as spies were taken seriously on both sides and prosecuted fully when caught. While the experiences of most female spies is unknowable to modern scholars, three Philadelphia women definitely gathered and passed on intelligence and at least two others were suspected of doing the same.[119]

The best-known female spy in Philadelphia was Lydia Darragh. While historians agree that she gathered information on Lord Howe for General Washington, there is a great deal of disagreement as to how she passed her message to the Continental army. Lydia and William Darragh were members in good standing of Philadelphia's Quaker meeting; as such, many British occupiers considered them more neutral and less threatening than other residents and often boarded in their homes. In autumn 1777, Howe commandeered the downstairs living space of the Darragh home for his officers while the family continued to live upstairs and were granted access to the lower floor when private meetings were not in session. Seeing this proximity as an opportunity for gathering information, Lydia made plans to spy on the British and pass the information to the Patriots.[120] Her plan was to obtain whatever intelligence she could and have her husband copy it onto small pieces of paper which she would conceal in her son John's coat

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[118] Booth, *The Women of '76*, 34.

[119] Twenty-six women who petitioned Parliament for compensation following the Revolution claimed they had directly aided British prisoners of war, carried dispatches for English soldiers, or otherwise acted as spies. Sadly, very little information was provided to substantiate these claims of espionage, which could possibly have been made in order to help them secure greater financial aid. Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 180.

[120] Bohrer, *Glory, Passion, and Principle*, 127-130; Booth, *The Women of '76*, 154; and, Henry Darrach, "Lydia Darragh, of the Revolution," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 23, no. 1 (1899), 86.

buttons. She would then send him to the Continental camp where he could pass the information to his older brother Charles.[121]

On 2 December 1777, Darragh overheard Howe's plan to leave Philadelphia two days later and surprise Washington's forces at Whitemarsh, Pennsylvania. She did not have time for her elaborate button plan, so instead decided to take the information to Washington's spy master, Elias Boudinot, herself. She gained permission to leave the city in order to get grain from the mill at Frankford, with the intention of going instead to the Rising Sun Tavern, Boudinot's headquarters during the British occupation. She met a patrol on the Germantown road, but was waved on because she had the proper papers and it was not uncommon for women to travel to the mill.[122] This much historians agree upon, but what happened after she left the city is unclear. In 1827, Robert Welsh published an account based on stories told to him by the Darragh's daughter Ann and close friend Hannah Haines. In this version, Darragh met Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Craig on the road to the tavern and related her intelligence to him. He sent her back to Philadelphia and went on to the Rising Sun to warn Boudinot of the attack.[123] When Elias Boudinot's memoir was published in 1906, however, he claimed that a woman came all the way to the tavern to deliver news about the impending attack on White Marsh. He did not identify the woman, but from his description of "a little poor looking insignificant Old Woman" who handed him "a dirty old needlebook" within which was

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[121] Based on the surviving records, it does not appear that the British knew the Darragh's had a son in the American army. Booth, *The Women of '76*, 153-4 and Darrach, "Lydia Darragh, of the Revolution," 86.
[122] Booth, *The Women of '76*, 154, 163-5 and Bohrer, *Glory, Passion, and Principle*, 135, 140-1.
[123] Alex Garden later copied Welsh's account in full, but replaced Craig's name with that of Colonel Allan McLane. It is unclear why Garden thought Darragh met McLane rather than Craig. Bohrer, *Glory, Passion, and Principle*, 142-3, 152.

hidden the message about Howe, it seems unlikely that he was describing Darragh, a middling business owner and private tutor's wife.[124]

Regardless of who delivered the news, Boudinot warned Washington of the impending attack, allowing him time to prepare his defenses. The British troops spent two days attempting to rout the Continentals before abandoning the effort and returning to Philadelphia.[125] Given that the Darragh family was upstairs while Howe's men planned the attack, Lydia and William came immediately under suspicion. An officer questioned them, but found them innocent of all charges. While Howe continued to suspect that the Darraghs had been involved, he found no clear evidence and the British were unable to prosecute them. Lydia Darragh's story raises an interesting question about how the Quaker establishment viewed active participation in the Revolution. While Betsy Ross was called before the women's meeting for marrying an American soldier, there is no evidence that the Darraghs faced any penalty for Lydia's espionage.[126]

Two women also spied for the British army, gathering information both within Philadelphia and throughout the tri-state area. Milliner Margaret Hutchinson was hired by Howe's officers to carry letters to and from British spies among the American troops. Using the excuse of traveling for her work, Hutchinson was able to ferry letters and gather "Verbal Intelligence, of what, she had seen, of their different Movements." It is unclear if she continued spying for the British when the occupation ended.[127] Ann Bates,

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[124] Unsourced quote in Booth, *The Women of '76*, 154, 163-5. See also, Bohrer, *Glory, Passion, and Principle*, 144-5.
[125] Bohrer, *Glory, Passion, and Principle*, 146-8.
[126] It is possible that the Friends chose not to take action against Lydia Darragh, in case doing so gave the British the necessary evidence to charge her with espionage. Charles Darragh was eventually cast out of the Quaker Meeting because he joined the American army, but the rest of the family remained in good standing. Ibid., 148-9 and Booth, *The Women of '76*, 155.
[127] Margaret Hutchinson, Claims Papers, AO 13/96, 601, AO 13/70A, 528, 530, National Archives, Kew, England as quoted in Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 175.

a former Philadelphia schoolteacher and wife of an armorer and ordinance repairman with the British army, also worked as a spy. Hired by Major Duncan Drummand, aide to General Clinton, she traveled throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York with her husband. She visited Continental camps posing as a peddler and gathered information on troop size and morale, supplies, artillery, and battle plans. Though she was arrested once near White Plains, New York, she was released and never again suspected of spying. In 1781, she and her husband traveled with Clinton's troops to South Carolina and then returned to England following the war.[128]

Two more Philadelphia women were suspected of spying during the Revolution. In July 1776, Christopher Marshall attended a Committee of Safety meeting at which "measures [were] taken respecting Mrs. Arrall, who left this City this morning, it's said, for New York. There being reason to suspect that she is carrying on an intrigue between our enemies here and aboard the fleet." The Committee decided "to send an express to overtake her at Princeton, to-night, and bring her and her papers back." She was brought back to Marshall's home where "she was examined, her bundle also, but no letters found. Upon the whole it appeared she had been a little unguarded in conversation, and had no concern with Henry Shaff in the package of cambrics and lawns, found at his lodgings." Once it was determined she had done nothing wrong, she was released.[129] In December 1777, Marshall reported that the British were investigating Robert Riché and his wife for "writing to Gen. Washington … giving them an account of the fortifying of the City, &c." Unfortunately, he does not note the outcome of this inquiry.[130] Had these women been caught with evidence, they would have been tried and convicted of treason,

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[128] Booth, *The Women of '76*, 243-4 and Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 180.
[129] 25 and 26 July 1776, *Extracts From the Diary of Christopher Marshall*.
[130] 11 December 1777, Ibid.

resulting in imprisonment and possibly death. Carrying information for the enemy was a serious statement of allegiance and, while few women might have attempted it, those who did contributed significantly to the military effort on both sides.

Wartime Protest and Celebrations

Far more Philadelphia women took an active role in partisan protests and public displays during the war. In their homes and the streets, in print and through conversation, women expressed their partisanship and injected themselves into wartime debates, asserting their centrality to the public political life of the city. Following its passage, the Declaration was read in front of courthouses, civic buildings, churches, taverns, and in other public spaces across the colonies. Colonists celebrated by eating and drinking; toasting Congress, the military, and revolutionary leaders; destroying royal coats of arms, statues, and other symbols of the crown; and, parading through the streets.[131] Women comprised a significant portion of these crowds as well as those celebrating events such as the French joining the war, the arrival of military and political leaders at Philadelphia, and the surrender of the British at Yorktown. Joseph Mandrillon remembered the day Count Jean-Baptiste Rochambeau's army marched into the city: "this was a day of triumph for the soldiers as well as for the spectators. The streets of Philadelphia overflowed with people, and the fair sex were all attired in their most beautiful finery."[132] Some women greeted incoming troops from their own homes. In May 1779, Christopher

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[131] Simon P. Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 34 and Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 86-7.

[132] Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street*, 34; Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 86-7; and, [Joseph Mandrillon], *Le Voyageur Américain, etc.* (1782) or [Joseph Mandrillon], *Le Spectateur Américain, etc.* (1784) as quoted in Charles H. Sherrill, *French Memories of Eighteenth-Century America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 144. Sherrill does not provide any information in the text to indicate from which Mandrillon memoir he is quoting.

Marshall "went to Nancy Clark's, as the militia, after being reviewed, marched by her door and through part of the city to the Coffee House."[133] Whether in the streets or on their porches, women cheered, waved their handkerchiefs, blew kisses and otherwise expressed their pleasure and support for their army.[134]

Women also gathered in the streets to protest against enemy soldiers and their supporters. Following the American victory at Trenton on 26 December 1777, captured Hessian troops were paraded before a crowd of victorious, yet angry, men, women, and children on their way to the Philadelphia jail. Following the war, a young corporal recalled the long walk through the city center:

> Big and little, old and young, stood there to see what sort of mortals we might be. The old women howled dreadfully, and wanted to throttle us all, because we had come to America to rob them of their freedom. Some others, in spite of all the scolding, brought brandy and bread, and wanted to give them to us, but the old women would not allow it, and still wished to strangle us. The American guard that had us in charge had received orders from Washington to lead us all about the town, so that everybody should see us; but the people crowded in on us with great fun, and nearly overpowered the guard.

While the Hessian made it to the jail essentially unmolested, he described the crowd that trailed the group the entire way as "raging."[135] Similarly, Peter Oliver, a prominent

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[133] 24 May 1779, *Extracts from the Diary of Christopher Marshall*.

[134] Rituals of mourning and symbolic funerals provided an all-too common form of public display during the Revolution, and women almost always played significant roles. On numerous occasions, communities around North America held elaborate public rites for the victims of the British. Women dressed in full mourning appeared in the streets for marches and memorial speeches. Female relatives of the dead were accorded a special place of honor as surrogates for their fallen loved ones. Symbolic funerals gave women a chance to grieve for individual soldiers, but also to express their ongoing support for the Patriot cause. In addition to rituals of mourning, women took an "active and equal part" in rituals of public punishment such as hangings, both of actual traitors and those who were punished in effigy. Women lined the street to the gallows, jeered and shamed the condemned, and celebrated the demise following the execution. For a greater discussion of women's role in these rites, see Alfred F. Young, "The Women of Boston: 'Persons of Consequence' in the Making of the American Revolution, 1765-76" in *Women and Politics in the Age of Democratic Revolution*, eds. Harriet B. Applewhite and Darline G. Levy (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 192, 200, 203.

[135] Max von Eelking, *Die deutschen hülfstruppen im nordamerikanischen befreiungskriege, 1776 bis 1783*, vol. 1 (Hanover, 1863), 138-141 as quoted in Edward J. Lowell, *The Hessians and the Other German*

Massachusetts Loyalist, recalled the Patriots marching a traitor through Boston on his way to be tarred and feathered. Women were so enthusiastic to support this punishment that "one of those Ladys of Fashion was so complaisant; as to throw her Pillows out the Window, as the mob passed by with their Criminal, in order to help forwards the diversion."[136]

In addition to public demonstrations, women also participated in meetings and protests related to wartime hardships, such as food shortages. During the late 1770s, Elizabeth Drinker repeatedly commented on the difficulty of obtaining basic necessities and the related unrest in Philadelphia.[137] In October 1777, she noted her concern about caring for a growing family amid wartime shortages: "if things dont change 'eer long, we shall be in poor plight, everything scarce and dear, and nothing suffer'd to be brought in to us."[138] By 1779, she wrote as well about the anger and strife resulting from years of declining imports and high prices. Rumors circulated around the city about mob violence to retaliate against devalued Continental currency and the rising price of basic goods. By May 1779, "many [were] apprehensive of a Mob rising on second day next-with a view of discovering monopolizers &c." Two days later, Drinker noted the effort to organize the populace against the currency crisis: "threatening hand-Bills pasted at the corners,

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Auxiliaries of Great Britain in the Revolutionary War (New York: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1884), 104-5.

[136] Peter Oliver, *Origin and Progress of the American Revolution: A Tory View*, eds. Douglass Adair and John A. Schutz (1781; reprint, San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1961), 97-8.

[137] Food shortages were a very real problem for urban women, as prices rose throughout the Revolution and availability was unpredictable. During the winters, especially, unrest related to food reached a fever pitch. Between 1776-1779, women participated in at least thirty-seven riots in five states protesting merchants selling goods at inflated prices and, potentially, withholding food to drive up demand. Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 184.

[138] 20 October 1777, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.

with a view to lower the prises of provisions &c."[139] A "Town meeting [was] propos'd to morrow at the State House" to discuss how Philadelphians ought to respond to the growing distrust of Continental currency and whether they ought to petition Congress for changes in the monetary system.[140]

On 25 May 1779, Drinker attended the meeting, which she described as "a great concourse of people assembled at the State House by appointment at 5 this afternoon."[141] It was decided that merchants and private citizens should be held to public account for the goods they possessed, as a manner of discerning what resources were available to the city and whether current prices were reasonable. The Drinkers, as merchants, were visited three days later and their house searched: "George [Shloser] and a young man with him, came to inquire what stores we have; look'd into the middle Room and Seller, behav'd compl[as]ant." The Drinkers complied with the men's wishes because "their Athority [was] the Populace." While they were not upset by the intrusion, Elizabeth mentioned several friends who found the searches unsettling and the mobs that followed them even more frightening. Sally Emlen was "frightn'd by a mobb that surrounded the House at past one in the morning the day before yesterday, after making a noise for some time, went away," while S. Nobles' family was "allarm'd in the night by a Mob." These

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[139] 22 and 24 May 1779, Ibid. The broadside read: "You that have money, and you that have none, down with your prices, or down with yourselves. For by the living and eternal God, we will bring every article down to what it was last Christmas, or we will down with those who opposed. We have turned out against the enemy and we will not be eaten up by monopolizers and forestallers." It resulted in the harassment and arrest of several Philadelphia merchants thought to be hoarding goods and inflating prices. See Steven Rosswurm, *Arms, Country and Class: The Philadelphia Militia and the "Lower Sort" during the American Revolution, 1775-1783* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 178-9.

[140] 24 May 1779, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.

[141] 25 May 1779, Ibid. Drinker's diary, as well as Sarah Bache's correspondence, provides some of the only sources for that meeting, at which a committee was formed to investigate price gouging and to take action against merchants or vendors who were found to be partaking in unfair business practices. At least twenty-one men were arrested. See *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, vol. 1, 359-60, fn. 22.

crowds appear to have caused no physical damage, although "some persons [were] put into Jail" and a great many others were intimidated.[142]

Women certainly joined in public actions and meetings as members of the crowd, but they were also sometimes the victims of protestors. During the Revolution, certain fashions, such as the robe à l'anglaise and the high roll, became closely linked to the English beau monde and, as a result, British sentiment. Stylish women who sported these fashions were frequently viewed as sympathetic to the British cause, regardless of their actual political preference. Throughout the years of conflict, women were abjured to give up luxury for the sake of the American cause. Thus, even Patriot women who continued to wear expensive fabrics, fashionable gowns, and elaborate hairstyles were criticized for not showing enough commitment to independence. According to Kate Haulman, women who participated in high fashion could be accused of "treason to their country and their sex."[143] Still, wealthy Patriots did not give up their stylish mode of dress; the women who attended the Philadelphia Assembly throughout the war, socialized with Congressmen and military officers, and hosted events continued to dress as befitted their status. While these women were not seriously considered pro-British, their attachment to English styles and finery was increasingly criticized, and many felt a genuine tension between demonstrating their social status and their political affiliation.

The high roll, especially, was strongly associated with elite English culture and increasingly considered a symbol of pro-British sympathy. The high roll was first worn in the English court and, by the 1770s, had reached American urban centers. The time

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[142] 28 and 31 May 1779, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*. Twice in June, men visited the Drinker home to take stock of their property as part of the process of assessing a Continental tax to help alleviate the currency crisis. All real and personal property was taxable. 7 and 28 June 1779, Ibid.
[143] Haulman, *The Politics of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America*, 157.

and money that went into constructing the hairdo made it a sign of wealth and luxury.[144] During the Revolution, wealthy women on both sides of the conflict wore high rolls to balls and other celebrations; however, Patriot propagandists intentionally linked it to sympathy for the British cause.[145] In at least two pro-British displays, poor women were paraded through the streets with their hair teased into high rolls. On 4 July 1778, Congressman Josiah Bartlett wrote to his wife that "some Gentleman purchased the most Extravagant high head Dress that Could be got and Dressed an old Negro wench with it, she appeared likewise in public, and was paraded about the City by the mob. She made a most shocking appearance, to the no Small Mortification of the Tories and Diversion of the other Citizens."[146] Congressman Richard Henry Lee reported the same event to his brother Francis:

> The Whigs of the City dressed up a Woman of the Town with the Monstrous head dress of the Tory Ladies and escorted her thro the Town with a great concourse of people. Her head was elegantly & expensively dressed. I suppose about three feet high and of proportionable width, with a profusion of curls &c. &c. &c. The figure was droll and occasioned much mirth. It has lessened some heads already, and will probably bring the rest within the bounds of reason, for they are monstrous indeed…. The Tory women are very much mortified notwithstanding this.[147]

Elizabeth Drinker seconded this report in her diary, writing "A very high Head dress was exhibited thro the Streets, this Afternoon on a very dirty Woman with a mob after her, with Drums &c. by way of rediculing that very foolish fashion."[148] Women could take

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[144] Ibid., 142 and Kate Haulman, "A Short History of the High Roll," *Common-Place* 2, no. 1 (October 2001), http://www.common-place.org/vol-02/no-01/lessons/.
[145] Haulman, *The Politics of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America*, 172.
[146] Josiah Bartlett to Mary Bartlett, 24 August 1778 in *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789*, vol. 10, 496-7.
[147] Richard Henry Lee to Francis Lightfoot Lee, 5 July 1778 in *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789*, vol. 10, 224-5.
[148] 4 July 1778, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.*

direct action as part of the crowd, but they could also become victims of politically motivated mobs.

Some evidence of women's involvement in popular events can only be inferred. In September 1777, Elizabeth Drinker recorded that "this has been a day of Great Confusion to many in this City; which I have in great measure been kept out of by my constant attention to my sick Child." She went on to discuss rumors of an American military loss and the general concern around Philadelphia. One can assume, because she specifically noted that she had "been kept out" of it by the illness of a child, that under normal circumstances, she would have been out in the streets, learning the news and worrying about the fate of the army alongside other citizens.[149]

Philadelphia Ladies Association

While many women, from all classes, participated in public demonstrations, some focused their time and resources on more direct services to the army, especially the Continental Army. By 1780, the privations of the American army led many women to worry about the soldiers' ability to continue waging war. The Continental military was seriously underfunded; money was not available to pay salaries or outfit the troops in shoes, clothing, and other basic necessities. Women around the colonies responded in a variety of ways. They knitted stockings, gathered clothing, made blankets, and otherwise organized goods and food for troops in their area. Mary Fraier of Chester County went door-to-door asking for clothes for Continental soldiers, then mended and cleaned them before sending them on to the troops. Other women answered the call to "the SPINNERS of this city, the suburbs, and country" to make cloth, clothing, and other textile-related

[149] 12 September 1777, Ibid.

supplies.[150] Many acted individually or through their churches, but one group of Philadelphia women organized a much grander effort to raise money and provide necessities and, as importantly, comforts for the American army. Spearheaded by Esther DeBerdt Reed and Sarah Franklin Bache, the Ladies Association of Philadelphia launched a massive, regional, all-female effort to raise funds for Washington's troops.

To advertise her idea and encourage women to contribute, Reed published "The Sentiments of an American Woman" as both a broadside and in newspapers throughout the colonies. In her essay, Reed exhorted women to participate but also celebrated women's courage and prominence throughout history. She began by praising colonial women's response to the Revolution: "On the commencement of actual war, the Women of America manifested a firm resolution to contribute as much as could depend on them, to the deliverance of their country." She went on to make a claim for their "purest patriotism," arguing that women "aspire to render themselves more really useful; and this sentiment is universal from the north to the south of the Thirteen United States."[151] Women had already shown themselves capable of making political sacrifice, having renounced "with the highest pleasure, those vain ornaments … the use of teas, however agreeable to our taste, rather than receive them from our persecutors."[152]

While some Revolutionary-era commentators argued that direct action was unfeminine, Reed insisted that it was in the grand tradition of women working to save their homes, families, communities, and peoples. She cited biblical heroines such as

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[150] Unfortunately Carol Berkin does not provide primary sources for these examples of female wartime activism. See, *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 42-3.
[151] Esther DeBerdt Reed, "The Sentiments of an American Woman," (Philadelphia, 1780), [broadside], Ab 1780-4, HSP.
[152] Ibid.

Deborah, Judith, and Esther, and ancient warriors such as Volumnia and the "Roman Ladies" who "[forgot] the weakness of their sex, building new walls, digging trenches with their feeble hands, furnishing arms to their defenders … to hasten the deliverance of their country."[153] She claimed that American women followed in the tradition of great female leaders who "[disdained] to bear the irons of a tyrannic Government," such as "The Batildas, the Elizabeths, the Maries, the Catharines, who have extended the empire of liberty." And lastly, she invoked Joan of Arc, a "Maid who kindled up amongst her fellow-citizens, the flame of patriotism buried under long misfortunes." Lest her readers think these were the only examples of female leadership she could name, Reed claimed she had to "limit myself to the recollection of this small number of achievements," but that no man or woman could doubt the capacity of female patriots to contribute to the war effort.[154]

Reed then concluded: "The situation of our soldiery has been represented to me; the evils inseparable from war, and the firm and generous spirit which has enabled them to support these." However, over the course of a long war, the resources available to keep the army safe and secure had dwindled and the soldiers were in need of "the offering of the Ladies." She exhorted women to contribute funds toward improving the army's condition. Recognizing that civilians were suffering as well, Reed argued that contributing to this effort was no different than giving up tea and silks during the pre-war boycotts. While it might make individual household budgets a bit tighter, it was a

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[153] Ibid. Reed cited Volumnia an historical figure, although she is actually a character from Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*. In that play about political unrest in ancient Rome, Volumnia encouraged her son Caius Martius Coriolanus to military success and political office; following his exile from Rome, Volumnia prevented him from besieging the city and became a heroine noted for her influence and peace-making. While Shakespeare changed the historical figure's name (her real name was Venturia), his history otherwise appears accurate.
[154] Ibid.

hardship that women should happily embrace to help their army, which suffered to ensure the safety and security of the new nation. Reed concluded, "Let us not lose a moment; let us be engaged to offer the homage of our gratitude at the altar of military valour, and you, our brave deliverers, while mercenary slaves combat to cause you to share with them, the irons with which they are loaded, receive with a free hand our offering, the purest which can be presented to your virtue."[155]

The broadside was printed in Philadelphia on 10 June 1780 and distributed around the city. It was also published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and mailed to women throughout eastern Pennsylvania who might be interested in raising money for the cause.[156] Over the next six weeks, the broadside was reprinted around the colonies. On 13 July, the Boston *Continental Journal* noted, "if ever an Army deserved every Encouragement from the Country it protects, it is that of America: And nothing could make a deeper Impression on the Minds of those brave men … than such a Mark of Gratitude, and Regard, as is proposed from the FAIRER HALF of the United States." The Boston author encouraged local women to contribute: "it cannot be doubted that the Ladies of New-England will exhibit the same amiable Disposition, and an equal alacrity in promoting the cause of their Country." The *Pennsylvania Packet* reported that news of the fundraising effort had reached the army and "is a subject of conversation … We do not suppose that these contributions can be any stable support to the campaign for any length of time; but, as it is a mark of respect to the army, it has given particular satisfaction, and it may be a great temporary service."[157] Responding to this publicity,

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[155] Ibid.
[156] Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 189-91 and Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 178-9, 182.
[157] *Continental Journal* [Boston], 13 July 1780, remarks reprinted in *Connecticut Gazette*, 21 July 1780 and *New Hampshire Gazette*, 22 July 1780; "Letter from an Officer at Camp," *Pennsylvania Packet*, 8 July

similar fundraising efforts were initiated in New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, and Rhode Island.[158]

Reed, Bache, and nearly three dozen other Philadelphia women created a comprehensive plan for canvassing the area for monetary contributions. They divided the city into ten zones and assigned teams of women to go door-to-door in each sector.[159] They published their strategy as a separate broadside, again written by Reed, which was posted around the city and printed in the 21 June 1780 issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. They established clear guidelines for their efforts, although Reed recognized that there was not enough time to ensure that all participants followed the rules and stated that other groups should not feel discouraged from proceeding in their own way. The Ladies Association guaranteed that "All Women and Girls will be received without exception, to present their patriotic offering; and, as it is absolutely voluntary, every one will regulate it according to her ability, and her disposition."[160]

Having opened with this egalitarian statement, the remainder of the guidelines focused on practicalities. A "Treasuress" would be appointed for each section of the city and she would receive all donations from that zone. The women established an exchange rate from Continental dollars to specie and determined in what sums money would be transferred from the treasurers back to the Association. They then reiterated that the fundraising effort was organized solely by women: if money could not be transferred

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1780, reprinted in *New Jersey Gazette*, 12 July 1780; *Indiana Chronicle*, 3 August 1780; and, *New Hampshire Gazette*, 5 August 1780. The broadside was reprinted around the colonies, including in Boston's *Independent Ledger*, 10 July 1780; *Providence Gazette*, 15 July 1780; *Massachusetts Spy*, 21 July 1780; and, *Norwich Packet*, 27 July 1780. For more on the national effort, see Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 182.

[158] Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 183-5.

[159] Ibid., 179-80; Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 191; and, Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 210-11.

[160] Esther DeBerdt Reed, "IDEAS, relative to the manner of forwarding to the American Soldiers, the Presents of the American Women," (Philadelphia, 1780), [broadside] Ab 1780-4, HSP.

back to the committee, it should be sent to "the wife of the Governor, or President, &c. or to Mistress Washington." Ultimately, all the money would be transmitted to Martha Washington, or "As Mrs. Washington may be absent from the camp … the American Women considering, that General Washington is the Father and Friend of the Soldiery; that he is himself, the first Soldier of the Republic … they will pray him to take the charge of receiving it." Lastly, they outlined their intention that the money should be used to make the situation of each individual soldier "more pleasant" and not spent on items such as clothing and weapons that ought to be provided by Congress. Moreover, the organization agreed that they would keep confidential the name of any women who wished to contribute anonymously as well as the sum offered if women "so desire it."[161]

While the Ladies Association stated that donations would only be made voluntarily, some Philadelphia women did not feel free to refuse the canvassers. Loyalist Anna Rawle wrote to her mother that the women seeking donations hounded those who did not want to contribute: "But of all absurdities the Ladies going about for money exceeded everything; they were so extremely importunate that people were obliged to give them something to get rid of them." She described the collectors rather uncharitably, noting that

> H. Thompson, Mrs. [Robert] Morris, Mrs. [Jaspar] Wilson, and a number of very genteel women, paraded about streets in this manner, some carrying ink stands, nor did they let the meanest ale house escape. The gentlemen also were honored with their visits. Bob Wharton declares … They reminded him of the extreme rudeness of refusing anything to the fair … I fancy they raised a considerable sum by this extorted contribution, some giving solely against their inclinations thro' fear of what might happen if they refused, and others to avoid importunities they could not otherwise satisfy – importunities carried to such an excess of meaness as the nobleness of no cause whatsoever could excuse.[162]

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[161] Ibid.
[162] Anna Rawle to Rebecca Shoemaker, 30 June 1780, Rebecca Shoemaker papers.

Given the tension between Patriots and Loyalists in Philadelphia, it is not difficult to imagine pro-American women harassing Tories until they contributed to the effort.

The Association solicited most funds regionally, but some also came via donations from Patriots and their wives in other states and abroad. Upon learning of the fundraising effort, the Marquis de Lafayette offered his support to Esther Reed. He expressed his sorrow that not all Patriot women who might want to participate would be able to do so: "In admiring the new resolution in which the fair ones of Philadelphia have taken the lead, I am induced to feel for those American ladies who, being out of the Continent, cannot participate in this patriotic measure." Certain that his wife would want to contribute, he asked Reed, "Without presuming to break in upon the rules of your respected Association, may I most humbly present myself as her Ambassador to the confederate ladies, and solicit in her name that Mrs. President be pleased to accept her offering."[163] Months later, he wrote to inform his wife that he had given money to the Association on her behalf: "The women have made and are still making subscriptions to aid the soldiers. When this idea was broached I made myself your ambassador to the ladies of Philadelphia, and you are down for one hundren guineas on their list."[164] The Marquise de Lafayette was not the only foreign Patriot to contribute to the cause; the Countess de Luzerne, wife of the French minister to the United States, contributed $6,000 in Continental paper and $150 in specie.[165]

The original goal was to raise money to be given directly to the troops and spent as they wished, and the women raised more than $300,000 to that end from 1,600

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[163] Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette to Esther DeBerdt Reed, 25 June 1780 in Reed, *The Life of Esther De Berdt*, 320.
[164] Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette to Marie Adrienne Françoise de Noailles, Marquise de Lafayette, 7 October 1780 in Sherrill, *French Memories of Eighteenth-Century America*, 255-6.
[165] Reed, *The Life of Esther De Berdt*, 320.

individual contributions.[166] By the time the money had been collected, Martha Washington had returned to Virginia and was no longer available to coordinate distribution of the funds. So the money was sent directly to George Washington.[167] Reed wrote to the General to give him a final total and inform him of the Association's wishes. They raised "in the whole in paper money 300,634 dollars" and "the ladies are anxious for the soldiers to receive the benefit of it."[168] However, Washington worried that if the money were given directly to the soldiers, it would be spent on alcohol and might lead to fighting and theft. He proposed giving the funds to the government instead: "An idea has occurred to me, my dear Madam, which if perfectly consistent with the views of the female patriots may perhaps extend the utility of their subscriptions. It is to deposit the amount in the Bank, and receive Bank notes in lieu of it to purchase the articles intended."[169]

The Association, however, wanted to ensure it was spent on something that would improve the lives of soldiers rather than on some larger wartime goal. Reed informed Washington of the Association's preference to control the outcome of the funds. They proposed "the whole of the money to be changed into hard dollars, and giving each soldier two, to be entirely at his own disposal."[170] Other women suggested purchasing linen and making shirts for the soldiers, but Reed objected to this plan, despite its

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[166] Due to wartime inflation, this amounted to roughly $7,500 in specie. Not all women who participated in the fundraising effort contributed money. Christopher Marshall noted in his diary that local women, "Patience and Betsey bought fifty pounds of coffee [at] Eight Dollars per pound; sent it as their present to the collecting ladies for the army." Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 181 and 17 June 1780, *Extracts From the Diary of Christopher Marshall.*
[167] Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 185-6
[168] Esther DeBerdt Reed to George Washington, 4 July 1780 in Reed, *The Life of Esther De Berdt*, 318-9.
[169] George Washington to Esther DeBerdt Reed, 20 July 1780 in Ibid., 321-2.
[170] Esther DeBerdt Reed to George Washington, 31 July 1780 in Ibid., 323-4.

popularity among the members of the committee.[171] She had learned from her husband that a large shipment of clothing was coming from France, intended for distribution among the soldiers, and she felt that the funds should not be spent on something they were entitled to receive as part of their contract.[172] As she explained to General Washington,

> I have been informed of some circumstances, which I beg leave to mention, and from which perhaps the necessity for shirts may have ceased; one is the supply of 2000 sent from this State to their line, and the other, that a considerable number is arrived in the French fleet, for the use of the army in general. Together with these, an idea prevails among the ladies, that the soldiers will not be so much gratified, by bestowing an article to which they are entitled from the public, as in some other method which will convey more fully the idea of a reward for past services, and an incitement to future duty.[173]

But when Reed died of dysentery in late summer 1780, a final decision had not been made. Soon after, Sarah Bache, Anne Willing Francis, and three other leaders of the Association agreed to proceed with the plan to buy linen and sew shirts. In order to make the effort more personal, they decided that the name of the maker would be embroidered into each shirt. When writing to inform General Washington of the plan, Bache said, "We wish them to be worn with as much pleasure as they were made."[174] Eventually the Association sent over 2,000 shirts to the Continental soldiers.

Contemporary commentators lauded the initiative of the Philadelphia Ladies Association. Washington wrote that the women's efforts entitled them "to an equal place with any who have preceded them in the walk of female patriotism. It embellishes the American character with a new trait; by proving that the love of country is blended with

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[171] Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 191 and Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 185-6.
[172] Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 185-6.
[173] Esther DeBerdt Reed to George Washington, 31 July 1780 in Reed, *The Life of Esther De Berdt*, 323-4.
[174] *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, vol. 21 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1937), 101, n54 and Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 186-7.

those softer domestic virtues, which have always been allowed to be more peculiarly *your own*."[175] An anonymous contributor to the *Pennsylvania Packet* addressed the psychological effect the fundraising might have on the British:

> It must strike the enemy as with an apoplexy, to be informed, that the women of America are attentive to the wants of the Soldiery…. it is not the quantity of the money that may be collected, but the idea of favour and affection discovered in this exertion, that will principally give life to our case, and restore our affairs.[176]

The Marquis de Chastellux, in his memoir of wartime America, recalled a visit to Sarah Bache during which "She led us into a room filled with recent handiwork of Philadelphia ladies. This work … was shirts for the Pennsylvania soldiers. These ladies had provided the cloth at their own expense, and had taken real pleasure in cutting and sewing them themselves. On each shirt was marked the name of the Lady or girl who had made it, and there were 2,200 of them!"[177]

Historians who have claimed that women lacked experience organizing societies and taking political action prior to the early nineteenth century have overlooked the Ladies Association of Philadelphia. These women identified a need, organized a hierarchical society to address the problem, published their organizational agenda, and then proceeded in a logical way to carry out their goals. They succeeded in meeting their aim, raising enough money to outfit more than two thousand soldiers with new clothing. The women who organized the Association clearly studied the political mobilization methods of the leaders of the early Revolution. They organized committees of correspondence, used newspapers for publicity, and relied on interstate social networks to organize support and funds. Mary Beth Norton observed, "Despite their inexperience,

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[175] February 1781, *The Writings of George Washington*, vol. 21, 221.
[176] "Song of Deborah," *Pennsylvania Packet*, 27 June 1780.
[177] Sherrill, *French Memories of Eighteenth-Century America*, 256.

the Philadelphians demonstrated considerable organizational expertise by taking explicit steps to avoid having more than one member contact persons in the same area and by providing for meticulous record keeping. Sarah Franklin Bache, for example, was given the responsibility for correspondence with Bethlehem, Germantown, and Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Esther Reed's task, as befitted her position, was to write to the wives of the governors."[178]

While Norton suggested that it was somewhat surprising that women would take the unfeminine step of traversing the streets to ask friends and strangers for money, the Association leaders were already experienced in public activity. Given women's frequent presence in the economic and political worlds of late-eighteenth-century Philadelphia and their comfort gathering in public places as they went about their social, commercial, religious, and family business, their actions were neither unfeminine nor unacceptable. Women's experiences running businesses, attending planning meetings during the prewar boycotts, managing their own households, and, for Quaker women, participating in the leadership of religious meetings assured that many had the skills to organize and execute a wide scale fundraising campaign. At the same time, they built on those experiences to create a new, independent organizational framework for women's public activities.[179] This form of activism would become more common in the early decades of the nineteenth century as women became deeply enmeshed in organized reform, but in the Revolutionary era many women already considered such efforts within their domain.

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[178] Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 180, 182-3.

[179] For a discussion of how this experience affected women's social and political organizing in the early republic, see Susan Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames: Women and Political Culture in Early National Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 11.

Women at the End of the Revolution

The women of Philadelphia recorded many aspects of their wartime experiences – the battles they heard about, the hardships they faced, the soldiers they encountered, the charitable efforts they participated in, and the births and deaths, parties and celebrations, weddings and funerals that marked their daily lives. Although their experiences varied significantly, they consistently noted the end of the Revolution with relief. However they felt about the war, whichever side of the conflict they and their families embraced, women across the spectrum recorded their sense of deliverance when the fighting ended and peace returned. As early as February 1783, Elizabeth Drinker noted credible intelligence that the war might be drawing to an end. On the 13th she read in the newspaper "the Kings Speech to both Houses Parliament Decr. 5th- bespeaking peace, and Independence." Though she was hopeful this might bring about the end of the war, she nonetheless "fear[ed] they will not long agreed togeather with us."[180]

On 13 April 1783, Rebecca Shoemaker, then living in British-held New York City with her exiled husband, wrote to her daughters in Philadelphia, "We are told by a person come in today that the Official accounts were received in Philad. with as much calmness & as little appearance of Joy as it was here. You cannot think the peace amore inglorious one than they do here." She continued, "There seems to be some negotiations going on between the 2 commanders in chief, we know not of what nature. Sir G C[linton] is almost Idolized by every body in this place."[181] By the end of that year, Shoemaker had returned to Philadelphia while her husband prepared to go to England rather than face

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[180] 13 February 1783, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.* George III's speech, given on 5 December 1782, reached the American press on 9 February 1783. It is unclear which newspaper Drinker read, as the major Philadelphia papers did not carry the text until 15 February. See, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, pg. 409, fn. 1.

[181] Rebecca Shoemaker to daughters, 13 April 1783, Rebecca Shoemaker papers.

treason charges. There she was forced to recognize the "great rejoicing" as Generals Washington and Clinton arrived in the city.[182] Indeed, Shoemaker described in detail the sentiment in Philadelphia once Washington returned and Clinton sailed for England:

> We are now (but I will not say we, for I am sure I bear no part in it) in the height of rejoicing. Gen. W[ashington] has been in town all this week, & has been, & is to be, entertained at Several publick dinners. The Fire works & Illuminations depend of Peale's exertions in preparing the Triumphal arches which, as they are to be paid for by the Assembly, must be laid before the House for their Approbation. I cannot with any certainty give thee any information respecting the general temper of the people, but as far as I can Judge from my own observation it must be considerably changed with regard to the Loyalists, for here are many who walk daily & publickly about the Streets without meeting with any kind of incivility or insult; that could not have been done some months before[183]

Though disappointed by the outcome of the war, Shoemaker could not avoid the celebrations that were taking place all around Philadelphia.

Eliza Farmer, a lukewarm Patriot with strong ties to England, also expressed her great relief that the war was over along with some regret at the negative reputation the British army had made for itself. After learning of the Treaty of Paris, she wrote to her cousin in England: "our share of the trouble which I thank God is happily over but I wish ended more to the honour of England for they have behaved here worse than Savages in their behavior to the inhabitants and prisoners not only killing them in cold blood and otherwise abusing them but actually starvd some."[184] In a later letter, she expressed more pleasure with the return to normality. She wrote to her nephew Jack that "now thank[fully] all those toubles are over and we hope now to injoy the blessings of Peace here are a great manny strangers come to settle here & almost all the houses are shops

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[182] Rebecca Shoemaker to Samuel Shoemaker, 1 December 1783, Ibid.
[183] Rebecca Shoemaker to Samuel Shoemaker, 13 December 1783, Ibid.
[184] Eliza Farmer to a cousin in England, 25 October 1783, Eliza Farmer Letterbook.

and stores all very full of goods"[185] While Farmer was ambivalent about independence and the American victory, she was grateful to have survived the war with very little personal loss and looked forward to a swift return to peace and prosperity.

Drinker said nothing in her diary about the end of the war, but she did comment on the grand celebration held in Philadelphia in January 1784 to honor the ratification of the Treaty of Paris. The celebration was to include a parade past thirteen translucent paintings created by Charles Willson Peale and "Grand Fire-Works … for which the Assembly vouted £600." However, things did not go according to plan. Just as the parade was beginning, "the first thing to be done was to light up the Lamps sudenly, which in performing by some accident the oyl'd pictures took fire and immediately communicated to the powder; blew up the whole affair, so as entirely to spoil all the sport." In addition to property damage, "several lives were lost by the sudden going off of the Rocketts."[186] Although Drinker certainly mourned the loss of any more lives, she may have seen the grand conflagration as an appropriate end to the idea of celebrating such a brutal and prolonged conflict. After all, although Drinker favored independence, she, her family, and many of her friends had suffered greatly at the hands of government officials. It is not surprising that her tone in reporting the spectacular failure is somewhere between amused and smug. She was glad the United States won the war, but could not help but enjoy watching the same men who had threatened her husband be hoisted on their own petard.

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[185] Eliza Farmer to Jack Halroyd, 4 December 1783, Ibid.
[186] 22 January 1784, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.* For further accounts of the parade, see Charles Coleman Sellers, *Charles Willson Peale*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1947), 223-4 and *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family*, ed. Lillian B. Miller, vol. 1 (New Haven, Conn.: Published for the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, by Yale University Press, 1983), 396-401, 405-7.

Many other women, however, not only recorded the end of the war, but also eagerly took part in the public displays around the city. In May 1783, upholsterer John Mason planned to celebrate the new American nation with a "SUPERB SOPHA, mounted on a triumphal car, drawn by six white horses, in honor to the American army." Female craft workers gained "an opportunity of displaying their ingenuity, by preparing garlands, curious knots, and artificial flowers to decorate the car." This symbol of support for the military was then paraded throughout Philadelphia.[187] This was not the only opportunity for women to participate in celebratory processions. When news of the Treaty of Paris first reached the city, a torchlight procession was organized in which thirteen girls – one for each state – dressed in white and marched alongside other symbols of victory and patriotism.[188] A similar procession was held in the summer of 1788, following news of the ratification of the federal Constitution.[189] That women served as symbols in these male-designed celebrations does not detract from their own commitment to expressing their patriotism. They may not have been afforded a more active role, but they seized an opportunity to participate in the popular political culture as it emerged with the Revolution's end and the rise of the new republic.

Conclusion

Historians frequently delineate the Revolutionary experience along political lines – writing about Patriots and Loyalists separately and in opposition – but the reality of the war was much more complicated. Women in wartime Philadelphia shared many experiences, regardless of which side of the conflict they supported. Indeed, differences

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[187] 14 May 1783, *Pennsylvania Gazette*. See also, Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 232.
[188] 4 July 1783, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.* See also, Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 76.
[189] Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 287.

based on political affiliation often mattered less when it came to daily life than differences of class or race. As the war dragged on, Philadelphia women increasingly lived overlapping lives – they might disagree on the hoped-for outcome of the war, but they were neighbors, friends, relatives, and co-worshippers existing side by side. When even affluent women were left to fend for themselves financially or to fend off threats from soldiers, some came to recognize the ways that wealth had once shielded them from the hardships other women faced on a regular basis. Moreover, the desire of Philadelphia Ladies Association to include all female residents in their efforts, regardless of how much they could afford to contribute, recognizes the need for cross-class bonds in the face of wartime challenges.

Family ties, too, often complicated, even muted, partisan affiliations. A 1779 letter written by Loyalist Williamina Bond encapsulates this aspect of women's wartime identities. Writing to her sister, she expressed her concern and respect for her son-in-law, American General John Cadwalader:

> All that I have left me to pray for is peace, [my daughter's] prospects of happiness pleasing as they may now appear depend much on this Favorite wish. I most sincerely Love her husband and believe him to be as Good a man as Lives, and one that has acted from principle. I wish there were more of his character…. I have heard but once from my son since he arrived in England, how Hard has been my lot in being separated from him perhaps forever as to this life, this subject I will not dwell on.

The Bonds were staunch Tories, so much so that their son fled to England rather than fight against his friends and neighbors. Their daughter married an American officer close to General Washington, putting them on opposite sides of the conflict.[190] Nonetheless, her mother loved and respected her son-in-law and did not shun her daughter for her

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[190] Williamina Moore Bond to sister Nancy Moore Ridgely, 30 March 1779 in Mabel Lloyd Ridgely, ed., *The Ridgelys of Delaware & Their Circle: What Them Befell in Colonial and Federal Times: Letters, 1751-1890* (Portland, Maine: Anthoensen Press, 1949), 30-1.

choice. Despite differences in political position, ties of family and friendship complicated the partisanship that many historians have highlighted in this period.

The American Revolution influenced nearly every aspect of Philadelphia women's lives. The political conflict had been ongoing for more than a decade and fighting had been periodic since the battles of Lexington and Concord in April 1775. In a sense, the official beginning of the war caused little change for female colonists. They were already gathering supplies, coping with food shortages, caring for wounded soldiers, and worrying about the men who joined the militias, armies, and navies. For the eight years of armed conflict, Philadelphia women were daily, actively involved in the war. They closely followed political and military developments and worried about what would happen if battles came too close to home. They quartered troops in their houses and dealt with angry and abusive soldiers in their towns. Women gathered supplies for the military, spied on their enemies, and nursed wounded men from both sides of the conflict. They took an active part in popular demonstrations, as revelers and mourners, as members of the crowd and victims of the mob. Women attended public readings of documents and celebrations of victories, or they did not and suffered the consequences of staying home.

In these ways, the histories of Philadelphians were typical of female colonists around the Americas. In other ways, however, the women of the capital city experienced the war in a unique manner. Living at the center of America's political and commercial world defined the way many Philadelphians encountered the Revolution. The concentration of wealthy Loyalists during the British occupation created a social scene unparalleled in wartime America; the wives and daughters of those families participated

in many grand entertainments, most notably the Mischianza. While contemporaries remembered it as one of the most elegant and elaborate parties the city had ever seen, those who attended the gala were criticized by many in America and England. The young women who dressed as Turkish harem girls and attended as the personal guests of British officers found themselves in an especially tenuous position. The sensuality of their costume and their proximity to officers with a reputation for licentiousness harmed the girls' reputations and the legacy of the event throughout the empire.

Some Philadelphia women went beyond the limits of traditional wartime activities and injected themselves into crucial political and military debates. The Quaker women who petitioned on behalf of their exiled husbands and fathers and those who formed the Ladies Association of Philadelphia took an active and public position on crucial issues such as the security of the capital and the conditions of the military. They took it upon themselves to spearhead all-female efforts to affect change, to bring the exiles home and to improve the lot of the soldiers. In a time when historians have generally believed that women had neither the inclination nor the skills to organize for social or political causes, two sets of women formed all-female groups with specific agendas, which they carried out successfully. They wrote letters and petitions to military and political leaders, traveled to speak with them in person, and stayed true to their convictions even when powerful men attempted to sway them. These women had no doubt that they were capable of stepping into the public arena and that they had the right to do so.

Chapter Four

"'Shou'd I leave this place they will … confiscate my estate all so'[1]:
Philadelphia Women, Property, and the Law in the 1770s and 1780s

In October 1781, Anna Rawle stood witness to the threat against Loyalists who chose not to celebrate the American victory at Yorktown. She wrote to her mother, then in New York with her exiled stepfather: "I suppose dear Mammy thee would not have imagined this house to be illuminated last night, but it was. A mob surrounded it, broke the shutters and the glass of the windows and were coming in, none but forlorn women here…. Coburn and Bob Shewell, who called to us not to be frightened … fixed lights up at the window, which pacified the mob, and after three huzzas they moved off." While the Rawle sisters escaped with relatively little damage, just broken windows and a thorough scare, their neighbors were not as lucky. Rawle continued, "for two hours we had the disagreeable noise of stones banging about, glass crashing, and the tumultuous voices of a large body of men as they were a long time at the different houses in the neighborhood.... As we had not the pleasure of seeing any of the gentlemen in the house, nor the furniture cut up, and goods stolen, nor been beat, nor pistols pointed at our breasts, we may count our sufferings slight compared to many others."[2] The threat posed to Tory women and households on celebration days might have been among the most

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[1] Grace Galloway to Joseph Galloway, undated letter, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Grace Growden Galloway papers 1778-1781, Am. 06865, HSP.

[2] Anna Rawle lists specific horrors experienced by their neighbors. "Mr. Gibbs was obliged to make his escape over a fence, and while his wife was endeavoring to shield him from the rage of one of the men, she received a violent bruise in the breast and a blow in the face which made her nose bleed…. [Benjamin Shoemaker] was here this morning; tho' exceedingly threatened he says he came off with the loss of 4 panes of glass. Some whig friends put candles in the windows which made his peace with the mob and they retired. John Drinker has lost half the goods out of his shop and been beat by them … Uncle P lost a good deal of window glass…. Waln's pickles were thrown about the streets and barrels of sugar stolen." [25 October 1781], Diary of Miss Anna Rawle, Rebecca Shoemaker papers 1780-1786, Am. 13745, HSP.

immediate, but it was certainly not the most serious hazard facing the Loyalist community in Philadelphia following the British Occupation.

Displacement and the fear of losing one's house and property were major concerns for women of all political persuasions throughout the American Revolution. Many women and families tried to stay in possession of their homes, in spite of the dangers presented by the proximity to troops and battles. They feared that if they left, even for a short while, they would lose them forever. New Jersey matron Mrs. Tucker told John Adams in September 1777 that "if the two opposite Armys were to come here alternately ten times, she would stand by her Property untill she should be kill'd. If she must be a Beggar, it should be where she was known."[3] Eliza Farmer echoed this sentiment when she contacted her family in England after the Revolution: "notwithstanding we thought ourselves well of[f] in comparison to some who sufferd cruelly strippd of all turnd out and their houses burnt before their Eyes most of the houses near us have been either burnt or pulled down as would have been the case with us if we had not stayd in it even at the hasard of our lives."[4] While this was a concern for many women, the wives of Loyalists were at particular risk of losing their homes, land, moveable property, and even their husbands.

Loyalists and their property had been targets of mob violence even before the Revolution. Prominent Tories such as Governor Thomas Hutchinson of Boston and Joseph Galloway of Philadelphia, as well as Patriots wrongly accused of supporting the British such as Benjamin Franklin, saw their homes broken into, looted, and sometimes

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[3] 20 September 1777, *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams*, ed. L. H. Butterfield, vol., 2 (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1961), 265.
[4] Eliza Farmer to Dear Mad^{m}, 25 October 1783, Eliza Farmer Letterbook 1774-1789, Am. 063, HSP.

burned by pro-American mobs in the decade leading up to the war.[5] Following the British Occupation, the Pennsylvania government passed several treason and confiscation laws that made the displacement of Loyalists and seizure of their homes and goods legal. Loyalists who fled Philadelphia rather than face conviction of treason became easy targets for a financially struggling state. The Supreme Executive Council and General Assembly agreed that the confiscation and sale of Loyalist property was necessary to raise money to support the Pennsylvania militia and improve the state's fiscal position.[6]

In March 1778, the Assembly passed a law accusing thirteen men of supporting the British and requiring them to appear for trial or else be convicted of treason by attainder. The law also allowed the Council to identify further traitors and confiscate their property without trial or due process.[7] The Council determined that anyone who had given aid, intelligence, or other support to the British, or had held a position in the occupation-era government, could be accused of treason by a writ of attainder and found guilty without a trial. Agents were then appointed for each county and empowered to inventory, seize, and sell the houses and moveable goods of those found guilty of treason. If their families were still in residence, they could be forced out and their property taken and stored until the time of sale. The proceeds would be earmarked for use by the

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[5] Joseph Galloway's rural estate in Bucks County was attacked shortly after his wife permanently relocated to Philadelphia. Everything moveable, down to the windows and doorframes, was taken from the house. Anne M. Ousterhout, "Pennsylvania Land Confiscations during the Revolution," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 102, no. 3 (July 1978), 328 and Joan R. Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World: Women in Revolutionary America, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 175.

[6] For a detailed discussion of the legal maneuvers made by Pennsylvania to pass these laws, see Ousterhout, "Pennsylvania Land Confiscations during the Revolution," 329-37.

[7] This act was based, in part, on a 1777 law that allowed the confiscation and sale of property as one possible punishment for traitors. However, under that law, the accused had to be captured and tried before their estates could be taken. The 1778 law allowed for conviction in absentia, making it much easier for Pennsylvania to seize the estates of exiled Loyalists. Land, which would have made the most money for the state, could not be confiscated under the 1778 law. Anne M. Ousterhout, *A State Divided: Opposition in Pennsylvania to the American Revolution* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 170-73 and Ousterhout, "Pennsylvania Land Confiscations during the Revolution," 331-3, 334-5.

legislature, much of it going to support the war effort. Nearly five hundred men were named in the initial stages of identifying traitors, although fewer than half were actually charged, found guilty, and had their property seized.

The Pennsylvania legislature imagined that convicted Loyalists and their families would leave the state, abandoning their property to its fate. And the majority did; however, not all women accompanied their husbands and families to New York, Canada, or England. For a variety of personal and political reasons, some chose to stay in Philadelphia.[8] Whether they had family they did not want to leave, property they wanted to protect, or supported the Patriot cause, some women remained at home while their husbands sought protection behind the British lines. The experiences of four of these women – Rebecca Shoemaker, Grace Galloway, Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, and Jane Bartram – reveal the ways in which wives of Loyalists interacted with and contested Pennsylvania's legal and political systems at the end of and following the American Revolution.

Loyalist Rebecca Shoemaker chose to stay in Philadelphia with her daughters from her first marriage, while her husband and son sought safety in New York and later London. She sought the advice of lawyers and politicians as she educated herself about Pennsylvania's test law in order to advise her husband about the feasibility of returning to their home. Grace Galloway and Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson both came into conflict with the government as they sought to protect their homes from confiscation. Galloway,

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[8] Joan Gundersen suggests that Loyalist women who remained at home after their husbands left for New York were especially vulnerable to harassment, home invasion, and violence. They were viewed by Patriots as a security risk, due to their connection to men who supported the enemy. While the state of Pennsylvania clearly saw Loyalist wives as a potential threat, the personal writings of the women discussed in this chapter do not suggest that they were significantly harassed beyond the official efforts to take their property and displace them from the state. See Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*, 180.

a Loyalist, and Fergusson, a Patriot, made a range of arguments regarding their right to own property independently of their husbands. They explored various legal avenues in their years-long efforts to regain their homes from the commonwealth. Jane Bartram lost her moveable property and her husband following the Occupation. A staunch Patriot, she sought a divorce in order to ensure her economic independence and security. After failing to gain a divorce from the state, the Bartrams signed an extralegal contract granting them a de facto divorce. All four women came into contact with Pennsylvania authorities due to their marriage to exiled Loyalists. In a period when new states and the nation were attempting to codify their laws and women's position was in flux, they show that some female Philadelphians had access to government bodies and inserted themselves into the legal and political realm when necessary to secure their goals.[9]

The wives of Loyalists enter the legal record in large numbers following the Revolution, but this was not the first time many of them had acted in significant ways within the public sphere.[10] Jane Bartram ran a store with her husband for a decade prior to the Revolution, and was prominent enough to be independently included in the nonimportation movement. She and Rebecca Shoemaker both owned property, which they rented as living and commercial spaces. Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson was a published poet who was recognized throughout Pennsylvania for her keen mind and

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[9] Pennsylvania was not the only state in which women sought legal recourse to regain confiscated property during and after the Revolution. In 1801, the Supreme Court of Massachusetts heard a plea from the heirs of Loyalist Anna Gordon Martin for the return of property confiscated during the war. The Court ultimately restored the land Martin had inherited from her father, after vigorously debating women's relationship to the state and their status as citizens or dependents within the new nation. See, Linda K. Kerber, "The Paradox of Women's Citizenship in the Early Republic: The Case of Martin v. Massachusetts, 1805," *American Historical Review* 97, no. 2 (April 1992), 349-378.

[10] Loyalist wives petitioned for financial and property compensation on both sides of the ocean. Like Americans who asked state governments to return or repay property losses, women in England sought compensation from Parliament. Mary Beth Norton's research indicates there were more than 450 women who petitioned the British government in the years following the war. See, Norton, "Eighteenth-Century American Loyalists in Peace and War: The Case of the Loyalists," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 33, no. 3 (July 1976), 386-409.

insight. Prominent intellectuals and civic leaders frequented her salon during the 1770s, and she had a reputation for stimulating insightful conversation on contemporary social, political, and literary topics. Grace Galloway presided over one of the wealthiest and most influential families in pre-war Philadelphia. As the matriarch of a politically important landowning clan, she exerted influence through her companionable and economic activities. Through their active participation in commercial, political, intellectual, and social spheres, Shoemaker, Galloway, Fergusson, and Bartram gained experience and confidence that influenced their ability to question and challenge the post-war legal structure.

While these stories illuminate a great deal about women's ability to function in the public sphere, specifically the realms of law and property rights, they also broaden our understanding of the gap between the theoretical limitations on an eighteenth century woman and her actual lived experiences. Technically, coverture should have restricted Rebecca Shoemaker, Grace Galloway, Elizabeth Fergusson, and Jane Bartram's ability to enmesh themselves in Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary legal debate. In principle, coverture limited a married woman's ability to function as an independent legal entity; taken literally, it erased a wife's identity by subsuming it into her husband's. She could not buy, own, or sell property; sign a contract; accrue credit; sue for her rights; or, have custody of her children if her husband was living. However, scholars have suggested that coverture, at least in colonial North America, was largely a legal fiction, applying in some circumstances but not others.[11] The fact that these disparate Philadelphia women

[11] Historians have disagreed over the degree to which coverture limited married women's access to the public sphere. In Mary Beth Norton's seminal work, *Liberty's Daughters*, she wrote, "Under the common law the colonists inherited from England, married women legally became one with their husbands, and so they could not sue or be sued, draft wills, make contracts, or buy and sell property. If they earned wages,

had the means to educate themselves about the legal and political state of affairs in Philadelphia, confront the state for protection of their property, demand independence from their husbands, and assert their individual rights reinforces claims that coverture was, indeed, a legal fiction. Recovering the lives of Revolutionary women requires examining the distance that separated ideal from reality, the assumed limits of women's lives from the actual scope of their existence. The stories of these four women and their efforts to protect themselves, their families, and their property illuminate the opportunities available to and limitations placed upon women as they drew on their communities, marshaling resources and mounting defenses. While certain cultural and legal ideals might have attempted to restrict women, clearly some Philadelphians moved

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the money legally belonged to their husbands; if they owned property prior to marriage, any personal estate went fully into their husbands' hands and any real estate came under their spouses' sole supervision. Furthermore, the children of the marriage fell entirely within the custody of the father." *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 45-6. This notion has been repeated in multiple works, including Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia by the University of North Carolina Press, 1980) and more recent works, such as, Nancy Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998) and, Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World*. Wayne Bodle, the scholar responsible for the only work dedicated to Jane and Alexander Bartram, seems unaware of the ways in which her story defies and challenges his belief that coverture was iron-clad. He considers the gaps in the historical record as proof of women's legal non-existence: Bartram's "abrupt passage from the actual obscurity of impoverished orphanage in the 1750s and 1760s to the artifactual invisibility of upwardly mobile marriage during the decade after 1767 shows how right historians have been to view the institution of coverture both as a historical impediment to the autonomy of women themselves and as an obstacle to the scholarly recovery of their experiences." Bodle, "Jane Bartram's 'Application': Her Struggle for Survival, Stability, and Self-Determination in Revolutionary Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 115, no. 2 (April 1991), 212. While the belief in the absoluteness of coverture has been popular, for years there have been scholars who have argued that it was a broadly interpreted theory and not a strictly followed principle. For examples of this perspective, see Norma Basch, "Invisible Women: The Legal Fiction of Marital Unity in Nineteenth Century America," *Feminist Studies* 5, no. 2 (Summer 1979), 346-366 and Basch, *In the Eyes of the Law: Women, Marriage, and Property in Nineteenth-Century New York* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982); Hendrik Hartog, *Man and Wife in America: A History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000); Rosemary O'Day, *Women's Agency in Early Modern Britain and the American Colonies: Patriarchy, Partnership, and Patronage* (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2007); and, Tim Stretton and Krista Kesselring, eds., *Married Women and the Law: Coverture in England and the Common Law World* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2013).

more widely and comfortably through the public sphere than those limitations might suggest.

Rebecca Shoemaker

Rebecca Shoemaker and her family experienced social and economic ostracism as Loyalists in Philadelphia. They lost friends, were harassed in the street, and suffered a reduction in their mercantile business. Shoemaker was one of many women left alone to care for her family and mind its property. When her husband was exiled to London, she chose to stay behind with her daughters, advising him on legal developments that might affect his ability to return to Pennsylvania. Born to Edward and Anna Warner in 1741, Rebecca married Francis Rawle, a Philadelphia merchant, in December 1756. He died five years later, leaving her to care for three small children, Anna, William, and Margaret. She then married merchant and statesman Samuel Shoemaker on 10 November 1767.[12]

The Shoemakers were prominent members of the Quaker community and proponents of the British cause. They supported the Crown throughout the Revolution – referring to independence as "odious" – and even maintained an attachment to England following the war.[13] Samuel held multiple civic positions before the Revolution, serving as a Member of the Common Council; a Member of the Board of Aldermen; Mayor of Philadelphia; Treasurer of Philadelphia, succeeding his father; a Member of the General Assembly of the Province; Judge of the Court of Common Pleas and Orphans Court of the County; and, Associate Justice of the Peace. During the British Occupation, he held

[12] Introductory note, Rebecca Shoemaker papers 1780-1786, Am. 13745, HSP.
[13] Anna Rawle to Rebecca Shoemaker, 11 November 1780, Rebecca Shoemaker papers 1780-1786.

the office of Justice of the Peace, a position that brought him into conflict with Patriot leaders.[14]

On 17 June 1778, as the British made arrangements to evacuate Philadelphia, Samuel Shoemaker and his stepson William Rawle left for New York City. Samuel was likely to be arrested for treason, while Rebecca feared that William might be imprisoned as a British-sympathizer because he had not joined the Continental Army. While he claimed to be a pacifist, in line with his Quaker beliefs, Patriots might interpret his position as aiding the British, a view reinforced by his stepfather's open Loyalism. Following his departure, Samuel Shoemaker was convicted of treason in abstentia, and his property was confiscated by order of the General Assembly. Rebecca chose to stay in Philadelphia with her daughters, travelling back and forth between there and New York until November 1783 when her husband and son sailed for England.[15] She spent most of her time in New York during the five years Samuel and William lived there, returning home only when her travel pass expired and she needed to apply for a new one. In March 1780, she was summoned before the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania after her private journal was intercepted by American forces. She was initially considered a security risk, but ultimately her private writings were not deemed dangerous, and she was allowed to continue commuting between the two cities.[16]

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[14] Introductory note, Rebecca Shoemaker papers 1780-1786.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid and 7 March 1780, *Minutes of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, from its Organization to the Termination of the Revolution*, vol. 12 (Harrisburg, Penn.: Printed by Theo. Fenn & Co., 1853), 271. Gaining the right to travel outside of Philadelphia was often fraught. Anna and Margaret Rawle had hoped to go to New York to visit their mother and stepfather, but were denied a travel pass because "others would make it a precedent." The Rawles promised to keep it a secret, but were still refused passage by the Patriot authorities. Anna noted that it was "a sad necessity … which makes us wish for favours from those whom we have such reason not to love! But it is not favours either, it is only justice we demand." Anna Rawle to Rebecca Shoemaker, 8 August 1781, Rebecca Shoemaker papers 1780-1786.

Samuel Shoemaker and William Rawle lived in London until the spring of 1786. During their exile, Rebecca served as the primary source of information and advice about the legal issues surrounding the treason charges and the possibility of reinstating Samuels' citizenship. He sought and trusted Rebecca's advice and, over time, she became extremely knowledgeable about more than one state's test laws and the legal requirements for repatriation. The Shoemakers' cooperative approach to dealing with their separation began long before Samuel sailed for England. In May 1780, as rumors of a possible British surrender reached Philadelphia, Rebecca wrote to her husband that she would delay her return to New York in case "Our Being with you may, (if the City should be attempted,) be very Inconvenient, & prevent thee from taking some Steps thee would think prudent if we were not there. As we must Look at every side of things, I have concluded to Defer my coming a few weeks." While she asked if "I am right in this alteration of my Plan," it is clear that she expected her husband to trust her judgment.[17]

On 20 June 1780, Shoemaker returned to New York, leaving her daughters and other family members to pack up their house, which had been confiscated by order of the Supreme Executive Council. Anna Rawle reported to her mother that, while they were packing their belongings, a group of soldiers came to the house to inspect their goods. She wrote, "I was frightened, and was going down to my Aunt and Sister, when at the foot of the stairs I observed a man placed, rattling the lock of his gun, as if trying to alarm – I ran up again, and in a few minutes two men entered the room, and I soon found their business was to search for arms." While they found no weapons, Rawle was concerned for their valuables: "by the greatest good luck in the world, the little plate that belongs to me remained undisturbed at the bottom of the trunk; they would have taken it, I am

[17] Rebecca Shoemaker to Samuel Shoemaker, 27 May 1780, Rebecca Shoemaker papers 1780-1786.

certain from their behaviour." She further reported that soldiers were searching all the houses in the neighborhood for guns, but that their behavior varied based on the political affiliation of the residents: "There was but one or two houses where they treated people with no little ceremony; at other places they took their word."[18]

As a result of Samuel Shoemaker's treason conviction, the family lost their personal residence. However, they retained several rental properties, possibly by transferring them to Rebecca's daughters. Anna Rawle relayed a rental agreement to her mother:

> Charles F and B were here lately to pay their rent, when we told them for the future it must be £40 a year, which they agreed to, provided it should remain at that price for a twelvemonth, as they said taxes and repairs came high. It sounds a great deal for those old houses, but it is really low compared with what some people ask for stores in Water Street.[19]

In 1782, Rebecca wrote her daughters from New York to advise them on managing several properties. She instructed them to "tell W. Milnor that from every information I have his Rent <u>at £200 p. ann.</u> would be much under the common run; the House alone would rent for near that, & then he has so many stores & priveleges that it must be so. Tell him that you could get more from a stranger (which I have no doubt of,) but do not wish to part with him." She also advised that they make "all of your tenants" pay their own taxes, "or you will have an Amazing deal of trouble." She then asked whether "your little Brick Store [has] a good tenant in it?"[20] By putting Rebecca's daughters by her first marriage in possession of the family's rental properties, the Shoemakers maintained control of several income-generating assets that could not be confiscated as part of Samuel's estate.

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[18] Anna Rawle to Rebecca Shoemaker, 30 June 1780, Rebecca Shoemaker papers 1780-1786.
[19] Anna Rawle to Rebecca Shoemaker, 8 August 1781, Ibid.
[20] Rebecca Shoemaker to Anna and Margaret Rawle, 23 March 1782, Ibid.

In October 1783, having heard news of the Treaty of Paris, Loyalists still living in New York made plans to sail to England, Samuel Shoemaker and William Rawle among them. They set sail on 18 November, just days before the last British troops departed from New York. Their destination was London, where they would live for the next two and a half years.[21] Long before the Shoemakers faced separation, Pennsylvania legislators had acted to ensure the patriotism of its citizens. The General Assembly passed its first Test Act in June 1777. All white men over the age of eighteen were required to take "the test," which meant signing an oath of allegiance to America and renouncing all ties to England. They further had to swear that they would report any and all acts of treason or conspiracy against the Patriot cause that came to their attention. The Test Act was unpopular among many Pennsylvanians: Quakers opposed being forced to swear an oath; lukewarm Patriots were hesitant to affix their name to any document, in case the British won; and, even some staunch supporters of the American cause thought it was heavy-handed to require an official declaration. Despite its unpopularity, the state continued to update and refine the Test Act for the duration of the Revolution and beyond. In April 1778, the Assembly added a new clause, allowing the government to impose a fine of up to £500 and jail time for those refusing to sign. If a person refused to pay the fine, the amount could be taken in kind from his possessions.[22]

Following the war, politicians and private citizens debated whether to allow Loyalists to return to the state. Most states passed new laws, or updated existing ones, establishing the requirements for repatriation. The majority of states required taking "the test" as well as, occasionally, paying a fine or spending a short time in jail. Although

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[21] Introductory note, Rebecca Shoemaker papers 1780-1786.
[22] Ousterhout, *A State Divided*, 161-2, 191.

some Pennsylvanians thought it inappropriate, the wartime Test Act remained in effect, debated annually by the legislature for the first few years after the war.[23] The Pennsylvania test law was one of the most rigid in the newly formed United States. Wanting her husband and son to return as soon as possible, Rebecca Shoemaker considered the possibility of relocating to New Jersey – which had a considerably more lax policy – and having her family join her there. She followed the debates in the autumn 1784 session of the Pennsylvania legislature and, when it became clear to her that they were not going to lessen the requirements for repatriation, she wrote to ask her husband what he thought of moving across the Delaware:

> I want to know thy opinion of the N. Jersey Law. I fear we shall have no alteration in our Laws very soon, for the house breaking up in so disorderly a manner nothing was done about the test Bill, & now it is expected there will be a warm election next week, but there is too much reason to fear the Constitutionalists will be the majority.[24]

She expressed a similar hope to her stepson Edward, who was also living in exile: "I do please myself with the hope of having you both here in America, if not immediately in Philad., I hope in the Neighbourhood of it. The New Assembly for this city & County are Generally what are called Warm Whigs, Such as we have no reason to expect will repeal old Laws, or make new ones more favorable."[25]

We do not have Samuel or Edward's replies, so it is unclear how they initially felt about the idea of moving to New Jersey. By the end of 1784, Rebecca seemed to be focused again on understanding the full implication of Pennsylvania's test law and advising her husband on the possibility of returning to that state. On 29 December she informed him, "We have now lost all expectation of a repeal or revisal of the test law, for

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[23] Ibid., 217-221.
[24] Rebecca Shoemaker to Samuel Shoemaker, 8 October 1784, Rebecca Shoemaker papers 1780-1786.
[25] Rebecca Shoemaker to Edward Shoemaker, 26 October 1784, Rebecca Shoemaker papers 1780-1786.

the [Constitutionalists] Have such a Majority in the Assembly that they carry what they please." Given the strong disinclination among some state officials to allow Loyalists to return, she had no expectation that the law would change in the immediate future. However, she held out some hope, as there was public criticism of the policy. Rebecca included with her letter, "a pamphlet come out on the test Bill" that she thought was "sensible & really exposes the bad policy & injustice of our Legislature in not altering it now they have obtained all they wished, when they say every other State has done it & invited all their old Citizens back again." While her letters during their separation are primarily filled with practicalities, she occasionally expressed her longing to see her husband and her fear that it would not happen: "I am sometimes out of hopes of seeing thee here again, & know not what to Say or think. We are now in the decline of Life & I wish we could spend the remainder together, & I wish it might be permitted in America."[26]

During the early months of 1785, Shoemaker became convinced that it was not safe for her husband to return to Pennsylvania. She wrote Samuel, telling him she had become even more determined that "we must only think of Burlington." The highly conservative disposition of the state government had led to an increasingly "distracted, unsettled" atmosphere in the state. Wanting her family reunited as quickly as possible, she began insisting that she should buy a home in New Jersey and the men should repatriate to that state. She "asked Dr. De Normandy his opinion of the Inhabitants (he lives there) & he assures me he never lived among a more quiet, civil, friendly, set of people any where; not a word of Politicks is ever introduced in Conversation." After again discussing the issue with Benjamin, they proposed that "there are 2 or 3 other

[26] Rebecca Shoemaker to Samuel Shoemaker, 29 December 1784, Ibid.

reasons in favor of Spending one year more in England – that thee will be on the post to attend to thy Claims on Government, that thee can come out as early the next Spring as thee chuses, & Edward will have another year at School all which I think with him is true."[27]

Over the next several months, Rebecca continued to advocate relocating to New Jersey. In her early letters, she only offered advice; but by mid-1785, she began to push her husband for an opinion on her plan. In May, she wrote, "I wish to know [if] thee has concluded to come immediately, for I cannot think there will be the least difficulty attend thy coming into the Jerseys." She reminded Samuel that he did not need to stay in London to personally petition Parliament for compensation for his wartime sacrifices if he had "some frds who would be Attentive to thy Business with Government, & do every thing in thy Absence that would be necessary. I think our Frd B W I believe would be very attentive to thy concerns." She concluded her argument in favor of his immediate return: "I think Thee need not Stay on that Account, & the 2 principal reasons for thy staying another year being in some degree Lessened I am in hopes of seeing you before the fall."[28] It is unclear why Rebecca became so insistent on moving to New Jersey. Maybe the attorneys she consulted convinced her that the law was not going to change in Pennsylvania; maybe she was getting older and feared never seeing her husband again; or, maybe she just lost patience with waiting and wanted to expedite the process. Regardless of her reason, by the summer of 1785 she had stepped out of her role as an advisor and more forthrightly advocated her own preference.

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[27] After consulted her stepson about his opinion on Burlington, Rebecca wrote to Samuel that Benjamin took "infinite pains to be fully informed of the Disposition & Sentiments of the people at Burlington where protection is freely offered to all who become citizens, & take their test, which does not appear to me a difficult one." Rebecca Shoemaker to Samuel Shoemaker, 25 February and 12 March 1785, Ibid.
[28] Rebecca Shoemaker to Samuel Shoemaker, 12 May 1785, Ibid.

At some point before 22 June 1785, Samuel wrote Rebecca, apparently objecting to her insistence that they leave Philadelphia and questioning why he would be in danger if he returned. Rebecca wrote back, explaining that the Pennsylvania repatriation law was rigid and unforgiving: "The danger is that thee will not be considered here in America as a British Subject." Indeed, even if Samuel just came for a visit, he could be detained on account of his wartime treason conviction. After telling him it was not safe to enter Pennsylvania, she again tried to convince him of the virtue of moving to New Jersey: "But about the Jersey test again; the injury & injustice done us is by Pennsylvania, & why, when G. Britain has thrown off first, should we be so loth to renounce those who have had so little regard to suffering Loyalty, promises, &c.?" Rebecca was beginning to believe that Parliament was dragging its feet about considering Loyalist compensation claims and told Samuel that if they did not take action soon, he might need to accept his losses and come home: "If you do not know in the course of this year the intention of Govt. about a compensation, it will with me be over."[29]

The last surviving letter from Rebecca to Samuel Shoemaker, written on 28 October 1785, returned to the possibility that the Pennsylvania Assembly would modify the test law to make it easier for Loyalists to return. The previous election brought more moderate politicians into the government, "republicans [who were] determined to change the Assembly." She heard from reliable sources that they "intend to repeal the Test Law if they can [as] the first Business they do."[30] It is unknown what happened next, but ultimately Rebecca prevailed. When Samuel Shoemaker and William Rawle returned to America in spring 1786, the family settled for a time in Burlington, New Jersey, before

[29] Rebecca Shoemaker to Samuel Shoemaker, 22 June 1785, Ibid.
[30] Rebecca Shoemaker to Samuel Shoemaker, 28 October 1785, Ibid.

returning to Philadelphia.[31] In both places, they lived a quiet life. They stayed in Philadelphia with their children and grandchildren until Samuel died in 1810, followed by Rebecca in 1819.[32]

As the wife of a prominent public figure, Rebecca Shoemaker had a working knowledge of Pennsylvania's legal and political systems. After the war, she put this understanding to work and educated herself about the laws regarding Loyalists and advised Samuel on the wisdom of returning home. She sought advice from lawyers and politicians, consulted friends and family members, and grew increasingly confident in her own evaluation of the post-war political climate. Over time, she went from offering advice to advocating for her own opinion, particularly that the family should relocate to New Jersey rather than risk Samuel's punishment under Pennsylvania's test law. Ultimately, her viewpoint prevailed, as Samuel did repatriate to New Jersey, rather than Pennsylvania. Rebecca Shoemaker's certainty about the course to take reveals a woman who had grown comfortable evaluating the political temperament of post-war Pennsylvania and advocating a course of action to the men in her life. Her more passive relationship with Philadelphia politics as the wife of a statesman grew into an active role as she took on the responsibility for protecting her family's interests and setting a direction for the course of their lives. At times Rebecca expressed doubts about her judgment, but she steadily developed into a confident and knowledgeable woman willing to take a leading role in the affairs of the Shoemaker family.

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[31] Introductory note, Rebecca Shoemaker papers 1780-1786.
[32] Samuel Shoemaker died on 10 October 1810 and Rebecca Shoemaker died on 21 December 1819. John W. Jordan, ed., *Colonial and Revolutionary Families of Pennsylvania: Genealogical and Personal Memoirs*, vol. 1 (1911; reprinted, Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1978), 446-7.

Grace Galloway

Like Rebecca Shoemaker, Grace Galloway remained in Philadelphia after her husband and child went into exile, but for an entirely different reason. At the time of her marriage, Galloway was given a luxurious town house by her father. When her husband left for New York, she remained in her home, fighting for her right to keep her dowry separate from her husband's confiscated property. Over the course of several years, she explored various legal avenues and arguments regarding women's property rights in her efforts to keep her home. Grace was born in England in 1727 to Lawrence and Elizabeth Nichols Growden. Her father was a Pennsylvania merchant living in England, but the family returned to Philadelphia in 1733. The Growdens were wealthy landowners who were prominent in local and colonial government. In 1753, Grace married Joseph Galloway, a Maryland-born attorney. They had four children, only one of whom – Elizabeth – survived infancy. Joseph was elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1757 and held a seat until 1776; for nine years he served as Speaker of the Assembly. In this period, "next to Benjamin Franklin, [he] was the biggest force in Pennsylvania politics which he effectually dominated and controlled for a decade."[33] Joseph was also a delegate to the First Continental Congress, where he vehemently opposed independence and quickly fell out of favor in Philadelphia's Patriot circles. During the British Occupation, he served as Superintendent General of the Police and Superintendent of Imports and Exports To and From Philadelphia, answering directly to Lord William Howe. When the British evacuated the city, Joseph and Betsy fled first to New York and

[33] Raymond C. Werner, introduction to *Diary of Grace Growden Galloway*, ed. Raymond C. Werner (reprinted, New York: Arno Press, 1971), 32-3 and "Grace Growden Galloway," *History of American Women*, (2009), http://www.womenhistoryblog.com/2009/06/grace-growden-galloway.html, accessed 10 February 2015.

then to England. The Galloways multiple, mostly rural, properties were seized by the Supreme Executive Council and their town home was included in that confiscation order. However, having been given the city house by her father, Grace refused to vacate the premises and spent years fighting to retain her dower property.[34]

Joseph and Betsy Galloway left Philadelphia for New York on 18 June 1778. Joseph wanted Grace to accompany them, but she was unwilling to abandon her home. She explained to her daughter that she had been advised that if she left Philadelphia, "they would not let me return here & [illegible] confiscate my estate with your fathers." While she hated being separated from her child, she was determined to preserve Betsy's inheritance. "[F]or your sake only I stay," she wrote her daughter. "I cannot ask you to stay & if you was out of the reach of your enemies in england my mind wou'd be more at ease."[35] She also explained her decision to her husband: "shou'd I leave this place they will not only take the income but confiscate my estate all so, & then perhaps my dearest child may become a beggar, therefore while I have the least shaddow of saving something for her I will stay."[36] Grace immediately began seeking assistance in retaining her home. She approached the Military Governor of Philadelphia, General Benedict Arnold, "but he told me he cou'd do Nothing in the Case[.] I thought I was received rather Cooly but Civilly[.]" The same day she arranged to meet with Benjamin

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[34] Joseph Galloway not only spoke against independence, but actually proposed an alternate plan. He suggested that America should establish its own Parliament with delegates from all the colonies and an elected president. This body would manage colonial affairs while liaising with the British Parliament. This was not a new suggestion. Benjamin Franklin had proposed a similar system at the 1754 Albany Congress. Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York: Knopf, 2011), 25-7; Werner, introduction to *Diary of Grace Growden Galloway*, 33-4; and, Carol Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers: Women and the Struggle for America's Independence* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 93.

[35] Grace Galloway to Elizabeth Galloway, [23 September 1778], Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Grace Growden Galloway papers 1778-1781.

[36] Grace Galloway to Joseph Galloway, undated, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Grace Growden Galloway papers 1778-1781.

Chew, a prominent Philadelphia attorney. She sought "to advise with him about my [case?] he told me to do nothing but give up everything."[37] Over the next few days she spoke with Israel Pemberton who "advised Me to free [my] Servants as the men were nominated to seize our estate" and "promised to Consult Abel James & Mr [Chew?] to see if I cou'd have dower." She also met with Mr. Dickson who "in the most friendly way offr'd his service & advice."[38]

The men informed Galloway that she would soon have to move out of her home as it was being put up for rent, but she refused to vacate the premises. They "told me they would advertise the house[.] I told them they may do as they pleased but till it was decided by a Court I wou'd not go out unless by force of a bayonet." While the inventory agents were still in the house, Benjamin Chew arrived and "advised me to say all I did say but that of the forse of a Bayonet."[39] Chew now supported her right to remain in her home, but he worried that Galloway's aggressive stance might anger the authorities and make them less willing to accommodate her. That night, she sent for Mr. Dickinson, who "told me he wou'd look over the law to see if I cou'd recover my own estate," and the next evening he "told me I cou'd not recover dower & he fear'd my income in my estate was forfeited like wise … but advised me to draw up a petition to the Chief Justice Mccean for the recover of my estate." Galloway offered to pay him for his services, but

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[37] 18 June and 6 July 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Grace Growden Galloway papers 1778-1781, Am. 06865, HSP. See also, "Grace Growden Galloway," *History of American Women*.

[38] Mr. Dickson is probably John Dickinson, a delegate to the Continental Congress and old friend of Joseph Galloway's. 9 and 16 July 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Grace Growden Galloway papers 1778-1781.

[39] Ibid.

he "refused a fee in the Politest Manner but begg'd I wou'd look on him as my sincere friend & told me he wou'd do me any service to the utmost of his power."[40]

Following the disappointing news that she might have no legal recourse, Galloway worried constantly that she would be turned out of her home. As she confided to her diary, "I expect every hour to be turned out of door & where to go I know not[.] no one will take me in & all the men keeps from me."[41] While she absolutely intended to fight for her property, she also began to make plans for other possibilities. On 28 July, she met with Owen Jones and his wife who "invited me to come to their house if I was turn'd out."[42] Later that week, she resolved to rent out her house, if that might prevent it being seized from her. She also met with the President of Pennsylvania, George Bryan who "[seemed] to think my estate wou'd not be meddled with."[43] On 3 August, Galloway "received a letter from [Bryan] informing me that my Estate was confiscated during the life of Mr Galloway." Uncertain as to what that meant, she "sent for Ben Chew[.] he desired me to send for the president & ask him some questions."[44]

Grace Galloway's legal position remained confusing as various Philadelphians gave her conflicting advice. On 5 August 1778, President Bryan visited her to discuss her property; he "said he was no lawyer but the law that was in his letter he had from George Ross nothing to be done." Despite earlier indications from Bryan that she might be able to stay in her house, it now seemed that she would have no choice but to leave. That same day, Charles Willson Peale and several other Agents for Forfeited Estates

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[40] 21 and 22 July 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Grace Growden Galloway papers 1778-1781.
[41] 22 July 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid.
[42] 28 July 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid.
[43] 31 July 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid.
[44] 3 August 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid.

"came to tell me I must go out of my house" because they had made arrangements for the Spanish ambassador to rent it. Galloway replied that she "wou'd tke the advice of my friends" and not move out until forced. Peale admitted that "the House was not let at all yet sold," emboldening Grace to reiterate her insistence that she would stay in the house until the legal question had been resolved.[45]

Despite the confusion about Galloway's right to remain in occupancy, on 8 August Peale brought the Spanish minister to her home and attempted to forcibly remove Grace and install the ambassador. When Galloway locked herself in an upstairs bedroom and refused to speak with the men or leave the house, they "took the key of the front parlour with them after locking the door & leaving the windows open," making the house vulnerable to burglary. Galloway sent a note to Benedict Arnold apprising him of the situation, and he "kindly sent a guard for several nights as I lay open to insult of any Villan & cannot yet get in to fasten the windows."[46] Elias Boudinot stopped by the house to inform her that he and Mr. Lewis would be presenting a petition before the Supreme Executive Council on her behalf. Galloway hoped that they would decide she could stay in the house, or at least that "the sale of the goods will be defer'd (they were advertised to be sold on the 20th of this month) as their Law says the Personal Estate shall not be sold in less than three months: all my Estate is taken possession of but I have yet some hopes

[45] 5 August 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid.
[46] Grace Galloway to Elizabeth Galloway, undated, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Grace Growden Galloway papers 1778-1781 and 8 August 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Grace Growden Galloway papers 1778-1781.

to recover my own."[47] Having heard that Grace might be cast out, Deborah Morris offered her a place in her home, "but told me not to let them" force me out.[48]

The seizure of women's property was a highly contested area, but the legal confusion did stop the government from seizing lucrative property from prominent Loyalists. By 10 August, it became clear that Philadelphia's Patriot establishment was going to take action against Galloway's property. That morning a group of men including Peale and "a Spanish merchant & his attendants" arrived and "took possession of my house." When they finally left, Peale gave the Spaniard the keys to the house and, again, left the parlor windows wide open, but the door to the room locked.[49] Desperate for help, Grace sent for Israel Pemberton and "told him they had taken forsible possession of my house[.] he advised me to stay in the house & take the lock [off] the door." He further told Galloway that, while he believed she had the right to maintain her property, he did not think that the law was going to support her and that if she wanted any compensation, she needed to give up the house willingly: "he was desirous I shou'd have my estate, but was violent in respect to their laws & told me the lawyers flatter'd me for I must give up possession or I cou'd have no maintenance."[50]

Despite Pemberton's advice to vacate peacefully, Galloway refused to leave her house. Two days later, Peale returned and "asked me what roomes I intended to let the spanish Gentlemen have[.] I told him none nor woul'd I give up possession of my

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[47] Grace Galloway to Elizabeth Galloway, undated, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Grace Growden Galloway papers 1778-1781 and 9 August 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Grace Growden Galloway papers 1778-1781.
[48] 8 August 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Grace Growden Galloway papers 1778-1781.
[49] This happened, despite a letter from the Estate Agents reassuring Galloway that they would not "molest me till the Opinion of the executive council was known." 10 August 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

house." She accused him of making her vulnerable to theft and attack by leaving the parlor windows open. The two then engaged in what seems to have been an extremely heated fight. Peale

> told me if I intended to dispute with the executive council of the state he had no thing more to say: I told him not to mistake me for I wou'd not contend with the executive council but I contend with you sir & this spanish gentleman & will not get out of my house till I know the Opinion of the council[.] he told me I must[.] I reply'd not & if I did go they must turn me out[.] he reply'd then we must turn you out[.] I said very well[.] he said my servants had affronted the spanish gentleman's servants by saying this house is Mrs Galloways & they had no business there[.] I told him it was false, I had no servant that had any thing to say to them[.] he reply'd then it was your visiters[.] I saw the fellow wou'd say any thing & treated him with the contempt he deserv'd.

That night Elias Boudinot came to the Galloway home. Grace showed him the letter stating that she would not have to leave her house until the Council had reached a consensus. He "told me to keep it in my house & if they made a forcible Entry he wou'd bring an election against them." Two days later, Boudinot wrote again, reiterating "his opinion that I may stay in the house till the affair is determined by the Council."[51]

On 15 August, Peale stopped by Galloway's house to "inform me I must go out of the house to morrow at 10 oclock." She "was much shocked as I expected the council had put a stop to it." She sent for Benjamin Chew and Mr. Lewis who were "suprized [and] concluded to go to the President in the morn: to know the meaning of it."[52] The next morning, a group of women arrived at Grace's house to provide support and protection and to witness to the events of the day. Lewis sent "word that I must shut my doors & windows & if they wou'd come to let them Make a forcible Entry[.] accordingly I did so & a little after 10 oclock they knocked violently at the door three times." Grace called out to "tell them I was in possession of my own House & wou'd keep so & that

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[51] 12 and 14 August 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid.
[52] 19 August 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid.

they shou'd gain no admittance Here Upon which they went round in the yard & Try'd every door but could get none open." The women stood "in the Entry in the dark" for "8 or 10 minutes before they got [the kitchen door] open."[53]

When Peale and a group of men came into the house, Galloway "show'd them the Opinion of the Lawyers[.] Peel read it: but they all dispised it & Peel said he had studied the Law & knew they did right." When Galloway insisted again she would not leave the house unless by force, one of the men said "they knew how to manage that & that they wou'd throw my cloaths in the street." He went on to boast that "Mrs Sympson & forty others" had been put out of their homes in a single day. Galloway and a growing group of women sat in the entry hall while Peale and the men "went over the House to see Nothing was Embassall'd." Some of the men took Galloway's personal items to the Erwin home while Peale sent to General Arnold to borrow his carriage.[54] Towards the end of the afternoon, Peale "went upstairs & brought down my work bag & 2 bonnets & put them on the side table." The group of women returned to the entry hall; Molly Craig confronted the men, asking "for my Bed but they wou'd let me Have nothing & as I told them acted entirely from Malice." Peale again told Grace that the carriage was waiting, and she again stated that she "was at home & in my own House & nothing but force shou'd drive me out of it."[55]

The issue finally came to a head. Peale picked up Galloway's belongings, gave one bonnet to her and the other to Craig, and "then with the grates[t] air said come Mrs

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[53] 20 August 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid.
[54] Galloway refused to accept the use of the carriage as long as she believed that Peale was behind the generosity. Benedict Arnold sent his housekeeper "with His compliments & to let me know that I was wellcome to His Chariot & he wou'd have it ready any hour I pleased." Galloway was then willing to use the carriage when she finally left her home. 20 August 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid.
[55] Ibid.

Galloway give me your hand." When she refused, he "took hold of my arm & I rose & he took me to the door." She then looked round at the assembled crowd, held on tightly to the doorframe, and said "pray take notice I do not leave my house of my own accord or with my own inclination but by forse & nothing but forse shou'd have made me give up possession." Peale led her out of the house, after which she said "Mr Peel let go my arm[.] I woul'd not your assistance … you are the last man on earth I wou'd wish to be obliged to." She and Craig then entered the carriage and drove away.[56]

Although Galloway would never regain possession of her house, she did not stop fighting for it. She continued to work with friendly attorneys and statesmen to explore the legal options available to her. However, the emotional toll of being cast out of her home intensified and she struggled to maintain her stamina and optimism. She became increasingly isolated, partly due to poor health and partly due to a disinclination to circulate among society given her reduced circumstances. She filled her diary with episodes of sorrow and shame, like this day in November 1778,

> as I was watching the rain, my own Chariot Drove by Town[.] I then thought it hard but I Kept Up pretty well but then I turn'd into the alley My dear Child came into my mind & what wou'd she say to see her Mamma walking 5 squares in the rain at night like a common woman & go to rooms in an Alley for her home.[57]

She was forced to accept money for basic necessities such as firewood and, while the men and women offering to help were friends, Galloway despised being dependent and pitied.[58]

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[56] Ibid.
[57] 13 November 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid. See also, Grace Galloway to Elizabeth Galloway, 17-21 May 1779, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Grace Growden Galloway papers 1778-1781.
[58] 2, 18, 20-25 November 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Grace Growden Galloway Papers 1778-1781.

In early December 1778, Galloway suffered another disappointment. Some Loyalist families who had been evicted from their homes were subsequently allowed to rent them from the state. Grace hoped she might be able to do the same, was not extended the opportunity. This reinforced her perception that she was being persecuted more than most Loyalists: "Now I see they are Cruel as the grave & never to be Satisfied."[59] On the day she was finally forced out of her house, one of the men sent to take possession "hinted that Mr G had treated people Cruely; I found the villan wou'd say any thing so I stop'd after hearing several insulting things."[60] While Superintendent of Police, Joseph Galloway was responsible for keeping order in Philadelphia; his duties included keeping the peace, which covered a range of activities from investigating security threats to confiscating food and setting the conditions for its redistribution to organizing spies to gather intelligence on Patriot men and women.[61]

Grace dismissed the notion that Joseph had acted cruelly while holding this position, but she might have been right that the Galloways were targeted for harsher treatment than most. They were extremely wealthy and prominent and Joseph was especially disliked due to his active support for the British military. Before the occupation, Joseph traveled into the country to meet with British officers and pass information about the American military in Philadelphia; he might even have been instrumental in convincing Lord Howe to take over the city.[62] According to historian

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[59] 2 December 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid.
[60] 20 August 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid.
[61] For a discussion of Joseph Galloway's actions as superintendent of police, see John M. Coleman, "Joseph Galloway and the British Occupation of Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania History* 30, no. 3 (July 1963), 272-300.
[62] Coleman, "Joseph Galloway and the British Occupation of Philadelphia," 279, 283 and Sir William Howe, *The Narrative of Lieut. Gen. Sir William Howe: in a Committee of the House of Commons, on the 29th of April, 1779, relative to his conduct, during his late command of the King's troops in North*

John Coleman, as Superintendent of Police Galloway's control over civilian matters was "practically dictatorial." He was subject to almost no oversight as he ran a spy ring, led commando-type raids to confiscate goods the British, and harassed outspoken Patriots.[63] Even following his exile to England, Joseph continued to be a thorn in the side of the Revolution; he spent years attempting to convince various Members of Parliament that, if properly motivated, there were hundreds of Loyalists still in America willing to rally around the British flag. Various parties in England and Pennsylvania thought his rabble-rousing might have actually extended Britain's interest in fighting the war.[64] Many Patriots disdained Loyalists following the British Occupation but the hatred they felt for Joseph Galloway was exceptional. His actions had endangered American troops and discomforted civilians; in his absence, Grace might well have been a convenient target for the Patriot leaders retribution.

Grace's perception that she was being unfairly persecuted was apparent in her view of Rebecca Shoemaker, who had also been evicted from her home.[65] Galloway noted in her diary that Owen Jones and Israel Pemberton were also advising Shoemaker to "stay in her house" and opined that, "Israel minds becky shoemaker but takes no care of me."[66] Following the first visit by Peale and the Estate Agents, she wrote Pemberton but received no reply and recorded in her diary, "the indeifference of my friends I am to be turn'd out of doors they support shoemaker but care not if I sink."[67] She became

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America: to which are added, Some Observations Upon a Pamphlet Entitled, Letters to a Nobleman, 2nd ed. (London: Printed by H. Baldwin, 1780), 60.

[63] Coleman, "Joseph Galloway and the British Occupation of Philadelphia," 287-8, 290-3.

[64] Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, 41 and 119.

[65] Shoemaker and her daughters voluntarily left their home and moved in with a relative, which could help account for the drastic difference in their and Grace Galloway's experiences.

[66] 5 August 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Grace Growden Galloway Papers 1778-1781.

[67] 8 August 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid.

convinced that because Shoemaker was Quaker, she had the support of the community in a way that Galloway, an Anglican, did not: "I find shoemakers has been before me the quakers all assist her but they wou'd let me fall."[68] After her eviction, she began to take the perceived difference in their treatment even more personally: "Shoemakers wife will not let me be look'd on as her friend & all the quakers are for her but I belong to no body."[69] Her perception that the community did not support her was not wholly correct. While Shoemaker might have had a more obvious network of support, Galloway had the support of nearly a dozen prominent Philadelphians, as well as their wives.[70] She was far from alone.

Despite her loneliness and unhappiness, Galloway found a sense of freedom in being separated from her husband. As a young woman, she wrote the verse: "never get Tyed to a Man/for when once you are yoked/Tis all a Mere Joke/of seeing your freedom again."[71] Her marriage seems to have fulfilled her concerns about marital unhappiness, as she wrote in her diary three months after evacuating her house:

> as to myself I am happy & if Liberty of doing as I please Makes even poverty more agreable then any time I ever spent since I married but my Child is dearer to me then all Nature & if she is not Happy or any thing shou'd happen to her I am lost … indeed I am concerned for her father but his Unkind treatment makes me enjoy nay happy not to be with him & if he is safe I want not kept so like a slave as he allways made me in preventing every wish of my heart.[72]

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[68] 16 August 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid.
[69] 22 August 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid. Ironically, following Galloway's eviction, she became friends with Shoemaker, socializing with her and noting in her diary that Rebecca was "very friendly" and "agreeable." 19 November and 7 December 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid.
[70] For examples of the range of people offering advice and support, see 16 - 23 July, 5 - 27 August, and 2, 18-27 November 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Ibid.
[71] Unsourced quote, Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers*, 94.
[72] 25 November 1778, Diary of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1779, no. 1, Grace Growden Galloway papers 1778-1781.

Perhaps it was this dissatisfaction in her marriage that led Galloway to resist joining her husband and daughter in New York, even after she largely gave up on her property. On 14 August 1778, Joseph wrote Grace, "Is your Staying from us likely to be of any Service[?]" He went on to propose, "Betsey will stay here [illegible] till you come or if you stay where you are she will come to you…. Your own Estate they [illegible] can forfeit only during my Life – get some friend to purchase that for you" and join the family in Manhattan.[73] We do not have Grace's response, but a letter she wrote to her daughter nearly nine months later, after Joseph and Betsy had sailed for England, survives. It reveals how she felt about the idea of her daughter returning to Philadelphia: "in short America is not the same[,] the very climate seems changed nor do I [wish?] ever to see my darling child on this side of the Atlantick. If your papa must return I beg you will stay with your Aunt."[74]

Galloway never explicitly said that she would prefer to remain in America on the charity of her friends than join her husband and go back to the restrictions of her marriage, but she implied it in multiple letters to her daughter. In September 1778, following a letter in which her husband insisted that "your stay will not [be to] any good purpose, you cannot join us too soon," Galloway told Betsy that "if I can preserve my estate for you shall think myself well off."[75] She even implied that she had sought Joseph's help in saving her estate; before he left she "desired [him] to make over my

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[73] Joseph Galloway to Grace Galloway, 14 August 1778, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Grace Growden Galloway Papers 1778-1781. Joseph would revisit his wish that she would abandon her inheritance and join him in a letter written just before he and their daughter sailed for England: "it is my wish that you had come with us and left your Estate to the Event of war. I wish you would yet do it and follow us to England as soon as possible." Joseph Galloway to Grace Galloway, undated, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Ibid.

[74] Grace Galloway to Elizabeth Galloway, 17-21 May 1779, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Ibid.

[75] Joseph Galloway to Grace Galloway, undated letter and Grace Galloway to Elizabeth Galloway, 27 September 1778, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Ibid.

estate to me & leave [illegible]," but it seems that he was unwilling to grant her independent control of her property.[76] Despite her hardships, Grace had no desire to leave Philadelphia and expressed a certain pride in her ability to cope with the difficulties: "few men cou'd have supported what I have gone through nor borne the many indignities I have received with that fortitude I have hitherto bore it but the state of my body has now so weaken'd my mind that I fear I cannot support my spirits to the last. I think it cannot be called Vanity in a Woman to say she has fortitude when the facts are freely stated."[77]

By the end of 1779, Galloway felt that she had lost all hope of regaining any part of her estate. She wrote to Betsy, "All our estate is gone & nothing Allow'd me even out of my own." Her country properties, as well as her town house and moveable goods, had been divided up and sold off. She found it "very mortifying to see my whole estate now more valuable than ever Devided by strangers & myself quite neglected…. I am ruin'd, this is the fruits of Politics but I mourn not for myself but for my beloved Child."[78] At the auction of her household items, her enemies "bid against those I sent to bid for me" and, as a result, she was not able to buy back any of her things.[79] She petitioned the state for an allowance as part of compensation for seizing her home, but "no Maintanance [was] allow'd … I have not the least hope of Restitution for all my losses."[80]

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[76] Grace Galloway to Elizabeth Galloway, 2 October 1778, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Ibid.
[77] Grace Galloway to Elizabeth Galloway, 20-23 May 1779, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Ibid.
[78] Grace Galloway to Elizabeth Galloway, 28 December 1779, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Ibid.
[79] Grace Galloway to Joseph Galloway, undated letter, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Ibid.
[80] Grace Galloway to Elizabeth Galloway, 20-23 May 1779, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Ibid.

The final decision regarding Grace Galloway's townhouse was that "all my estate is sold during your pappa's life but you [Elizabeth] are not barr'd in the inheritance, all his is confiscated & sold forever but do not Afflict yourself."[81] While Galloway had not succeeded in retaining the use of her town house, she had insured that it would be given to her child upon the death of her husband. While this was not the outcome she had hoped for, Grace was satisfied that she had at least been partly successful. She informed her husband, "it would be a great relief to my Mind not to leave my child liable to the insults of our unthinking World … they will not Allow me one penny out of [my estate]" but it was "in my power … to set her above the malice of her enemies."[82]

At the end of 1780, the Supreme Executive Council decided to allow Grace Galloway to remain in Philadelphia for the duration of the war. Most wives of Loyalists were sent out of the city, but due to her declining health, she was permitted to stay in Deborah Morris's home. She explained to her daughter that she would not be joining her family in England:

> I am still in Philadelphia … I sent in a Petition to the Counsil & with the [illegible] of Mr Thomas Barclay and Dr Joneses Affidavit I have been permitted to remain in peace, as I never have either directly or indirectly done or been Charged with doing any thing inimical to the state…. Nor is there a person in this Citty that ever suspected me of a base Action.[83]

In an unsent letter written to Betsy in late 1781, Galloway wrote that even if she had been inclined to leave Philadelphia, she "was in too low a state of health to undertake a journey." She reassured her daughter that "I neither borrow nor am Dependant on any

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[81] Grace Galloway to Elizabeth Galloway, 24 September 1779, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Ibid.
[82] Grace Galloway to Joseph Galloway, February 1780, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Ibid.
[83] Grace Galloway to Elizabeth Galloway, 5 November 1780, Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Ibid.

body" and that despite retaining none of her original belongings, she lived comfortably. She concluded, "my Health now so impaired that I never hope to have it in my power to see my relations or Native country more, Want of health & to save your inheritance Alone detains me if by it I save my Child all will be right."[84]

Grace Growden Galloway died in Philadelphia on 6 February 1782 of unknown causes after years of fragile health. Joseph Galloway died nearly twenty years later in Watford, England; he lived his final years as a pensioner of the state. Little is known about Betsy's life, although she was still living in England in the 1820s.[85] Whether she made any effort to regain her Philadelphia property is unknown, although there is no indication that she ever returned to the United States. Grace Galloway's fight to retain her property reveals important tensions between the letter of property law and women's options in Revolutionary America. If strictly interpreted, coverture would have disallowed Galloway the ability to own property independent of her husband or to sue the state for her legal rights to that home. Contemporary lawyers disagreed on the rights of married women, although a contingent of Philadelphia attorneys and politicians supported her ability to contest the state and gain control of her dowry. Grace Galloway, strong-minded and highly motivated, challenged the limits of a married woman's right to own and control her own property and helped set a precedent for other women seeking financial and legal independence. Her actions also help illuminate the distance between the legal limits of women's lives and its actual scope; many women, like Galloway, had more options and opportunities than a close reading of the law might suggest and in order

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[84] Grace Galloway to Elizabeth Galloway, [after August 1781], Letter Book of Grace Growden Galloway 1778-1780, Ibid.
[85] "Grace Growden Galloway," *History of American Women* and Finding Aid, Joseph Galloway Family Papers, MSS21840, Library of Congress.

to fully discern the world of late-eighteenth century America, that difference needs to be more fully understood.

Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson

Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson's story is very similar to that of Grace Galloway. She was married to a Loyalist who fled Philadelphia; property that had been given to her by her father was seized as part of her husband's estate; and, she lobbied for years to regain it. However, there was one crucial difference. Fergusson was a staunch Patriot who made a political as well as legal case for her right to regain her estate, Graeme Park. For years, she sent petitions and asked politicians to argue her case. She claimed that, not only did the property belong to her alone but, as a Patriot, she should not be punished for her estranged husband's politics.[86] Elizabeth, the youngest daughter of Thomas and Ann Diggs Graeme, was born on 3 February 1737 to a prominent and respected family. Her grandfather, Sir William Keith, was governor of Pennsylvania from 1717 to 1726 and her father, a physician, served as a Naval Officer of Philadelphia, Member of the Governor's Council, Justice of the Supreme Court, Justice in the Court of Oyer and Terminer, and Justice of the Peace and Gaol Delivery for Philadelphia, Bucks, and Chester counties.[87] As a child, Elizabeth and her family moved between their town house and their country

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[86] Anne M. Ousterhout's work on Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson deserves acknowledgment for its role in shaping my understanding of her life. While the biography focuses more on her personal and literary achievements than her political experiences, it was nonetheless extremely helpful. See, *The Most Learned Woman in America: A Life of Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).

[87] Ibid, 29-35. The court official in charge of gaol delivery was required to ensure that all prisoners awaiting trial were granted space on the current or next docket, thereby ensuring that they would be tried within the window specified by local, state, or national statutes. See, John Bouvier, *A Law Dictionary, Adapted to the Constitution and Laws of the United States, and the Several States of the American Union: With References to the Civil and Other Systems of Foreign Law* (Philadelphia: Childs and Peterson, 1856).

estate, Graeme Park. By 1772, she had settled permanently in the country, giving up her urban home for the duration of the war.[88]

As a young woman, Graeme had a relationship with William Franklin which might have led to marriage had her father not objected to Benjamin Franklin's political views. By 1758, that courtship had ended and Elizabeth seems to have made her peace with being a single woman.[89] She devoted herself to scholarly pursuits and was widely read, active in Philadelphia's intellectual circles, well traveled, and considered by men such as Benjamin Rush to be one of the most intelligent women in the colony.[90] From the mid-1760s onward, she was the mistress of her family's household. Her mother died in 1765, followed quickly by her sister and brother-in-law. At age twenty-eight, she was left to care for her ailing father, her sister's two young children, and two lavish homes.[91] In December 1771, she met Henry Hugh Fergusson, a dashing and erudite Scot eleven years her junior.[92] Elizabeth and Henry had a whirlwind romance. Despite the strong objections of her father, primarily to their age difference and Fergusson's ability to manage the Graeme estate, Elizabeth agreed to marry Henry in March 1772. They were wed on 21 April without the knowledge or consent of Thomas Graeme. Dr. Graeme died the following September, leaving Elizabeth in sole possession of the estate and a

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[88] Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 36-9.
[89] For more on the relationship between William Franklin and Elizabeth Graeme, see Ibid, Chapter Two.
[90] Ibid., 43, 77-9, 120-122, 133-4.
[91] The life of a wife and mother does not seem to have been one that Elizabeth Graeme craved. In a letter to her friend Mrs. Campbell, she admitted, "If I had not my Father, and the Children, I hate housekeep so much that I Never would encumber my Self with it in any degree; for I find it a very good Tryal to the Temper." Further, she wrote that she "never was so fond of Children As many People are," but she would do her best to care for her niece and nephew, Annie and John. Elizabeth Graeme to Dear Madam [Mrs. Campbell], 25 March 1767, "Some Material," Gratz Collection, 386-88, HSP. See also, Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 105, 120.
[92] Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 140-141.

considerable amount of debt.[93] The Fergussons struggled, both financially and personally, through the first few years of their marriage. An initial attraction did not develop into a successful partnership. By the beginning of the Revolution, Henry was living in town while Elizabeth stayed at Graeme Park.

Henry Fergusson was widely known as a staunch Loyalist, while the Graemes had supported the Patriot side in the years leading up to the war. By 1775, Elizabeth was worried about Henry's safety in Philadelphia due to his outspoken and increasingly radical pro-British positions. When he returned to Scotland to attend to family business that autumn, she hoped he would continue "his Absence at so critical a period, and all [her] Letters breathed that Sentiment uniformly."[94] She, meanwhile, remained at Graeme Park and cared for the property. During this period, she allowed Continental troops to camp on her land several times, including a ten-day period prior to the Battle of Brandywine.[95] Henry, however, was convinced that England was going to win the war and returned to America in 1776 with Lord Howe's fleet, traveling with the British army until he reached Philadelphia. It is unclear whether Henry served in any official capacity in the military. During the occupation, he appears to have served the British unofficially by, according to the postwar affidavit of a British officer, "frequently procur[ing] intelligence, of considerable consequence … upon which the Kings troops acted."[96]

Hearing that the Supreme Executive Council was considering confiscating Loyalists' property and knowing that Henry's behavior might put Graeme Park at risk,

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[93] Elizabeth sought to sell the extra land around Graeme Park, retaining only the house and the immediate property, in order to pay off the debt. Ibid., 141-148.
[94] Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson petition to Supreme Executive Council, 26 June 1778, Chicago Historical Society.
[95] Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America,* 193, 210.
[96] Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson petition to Supreme Executive Council, 26 June 1778 and Audit Office Records (hereafter A.O.) 13/002 XC/A/2156 and 13/102 XC/A/2156, National Archives, Kew, England as quoted in Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 192.

Elizabeth sought advice from two close friends who were also officers in the American army – General Daniel Roberdeau and Colonel Elias Boudinot. They preemptively asked the Council to protect her property, arguing that she personally supported the American cause and had done everything she could to separate herself from her Loyalist husband:

> I should be very sorry, my worthy patriotic friend Mrs Ferguson, should be involved in the same predicament with her Husband as to her interest, when her bosom glowes with her love to these States and has displaied such a specimen of heroism as will make her name renowned thro history by alienating herself from a beloved husband on Account of his taking part against her Country.

Roberdeau continued by defending Fergusson against rumors that this separation was strategic. He testified that it was "no finesse as some have imagined, who do not know the virtuous principles and magnanimity of this Lady." They concluded by asking the Council to single her out for special consideration, and not punish her merely by association.[97]

Worried that this would not be enough, Fergusson sought help from her politically well-connected friend Annis Boudinot Stockton. Stockton passed the letter on to her son-in-law Benjamin Rush who was so moved by Fergusson's situation that he offered to speak to the Council on her behalf: "Can I serve you in diverting the attention of the legislature or Council of Pennsylvania to your property if anything is intended against it? Most of the gentlemen of the Council are of my acquaintance."[98] During this period, Henry and Elizabeth Fergusson corresponded and occasionally saw one another, although he did not return to Graeme Park. Elizabeth begged him to abandon his attachment to the

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[97] Gen. Roberdeau to President Wharton, 24 December 1777 in Samuel Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives. Selected and Arranged from Original Documents in the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, Conformably to Acts of the General Assembly, February 15, 1851 & March 1, 1852. Commencing 1777*, vol. 6 (Philadelphia: Printed by Joseph Severns & Co., 1853), 131.

[98] Benjamin Rush to Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, 24 December 1777 in *Letters of Benjamin Rush*, ed. L. H. Butterfield, vol. 1 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951), 177-79.

British government in America because it was putting her property and future security at risk. Henry replied that the British would win the war and their supporters would be rewarded, so she should not worry about any action taken by the Pennsylvania government.[99]

As noted previously, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed an act in March 1778 charging thirteen men who had supported the British army with treason and ordering them to appear for trial or face being convicted in abstentia. Henry Fergusson was not included in that group, but given his continued support of the British, Elizabeth feared he would soon be named a traitor. She was not surprised when, on 18 May, the Supreme Executive Council charged Henry with aiding the British; he had to report by 25 June or his property would be confiscated. As the British were soon expected to leave Philadelphia, Elizabeth begged Henry to stay behind and make peace with the Patriot leaders who would be taking over the city; but he refused. By early June, Elizabeth realized that her husband would not change his plans simply to protect her property. Instead, he asked her to abandon her home and move to the British stronghold in New York City. This time she was the one who refused.[100]

That summer, Elizabeth Fergusson traveled to the temporary capital in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to again try to secure her property. She wrote and presented a petition to the Supreme Executive Council personally, seeking advice from Joseph Reed, but ultimately taking responsibility for her own case. She argued that Henry was born in Scotland and had never claimed citizenship in the state, therefore he could not be a traitor: he "may be deemed an Enemy; yet I mean to insinuate is not a Traitor."

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[99] Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson commonplace book, 1770-1778, Collection MC 2006.3, Dickinson College Library.
[100] Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 212-3, 219.

Moreover, he was out of the country in February 1777 when the Assembly passed the treason law that allowed the state to confiscate Loyalist property. He had, she noted, "left his own Home in September 1775 and sail'd in a Merchant Ship for Bristol; his Business was entirely of a domestic Nature to settle some Family-Affairs." In concluding, she hoped the Council would "have a Tendency to induce a Relaxation in the present Instance"; but if not, it would be her "Duty cheerfully to bear a Link of the Chain of heavy Calamities incident to a Civil War."[101] Perhaps in an effort to lessen any offense she caused by taking a proactive position to save her property, she reminded the Council that any flaws in her argument could be explained by "the Ignorance of a Female, whose Line of Writing has been confin'd to Epistolary Subjects, in a careless Way, unsuspicious of the Eye of Criticism or severe Examination".[102] A widely circulated and published poet who was sought out for her insight and commentary, Fergusson sought to present herself as a woman in need of assistance.

The Council allowed Fergusson to speak, but the record does not indicate that they seriously discussed her petition. Despite Boudinot and Roberdeau's continued support, on 9 July 1778 the Council ordered that the estates of all persons who had gone to the enemy, including Henry Hugh Fergusson, be seized, inventoried, and sold.[103] Following the advice of Philadelphia attorney Andrew Robeson, Elizabeth submitted a petition to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court for permission to keep enough furniture for a living room, bedroom, and kitchen, four hundred books, and the grain and flax stored at

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[101] Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson petition to Supreme Executive Council, 26 June 1778.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Henry Fergusson, along with dozens of other men, was found guilty of treason by act of attainder on 8 May 1778. Andrew Robeson to Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, 8 and 12 July 1778, Gratz Collection, HSP and 8 May and 9 July 1778, *Minutes of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, From Its Organization to the Termination of the Revolution*, vol. 11 (Harrisburg, Penn.: Theo. Fenn & Co., 1852), 483-5, 529.

Graeme Park. The Court allowed it and granted her permission to stay in her house until it was sold, although she was required to pay rent. Fergusson was reassured by these decisions, as well as the unofficial opinion of the chief justice, relayed to her through Francis Hopkinson and William White, that once the property had been surveyed, she would be allowed to stay in her home due to her compromised "Station in Life."[104]

On 25 September 1777, while dining with the Vice President of Pennsylvania George Bryan and other prominent Patriots, Elizabeth Fergusson received a letter from her husband. He was near Philadelphia and hoped that she would meet him. Uncertain what to do now that the British had evacuated Philadelphia, he proposed returning to Graeme Park, but Washington refused to grant a man who had actively aided the British army permission to take up residence so near the city. He was concerned that Henry would gather intelligence on the American military and then return to the British.[105] Unable to rejoin his wife, he stayed with the army and, by December, had been named Commissary of Prisoners. Elizabeth told the Supreme Executive Council that the position was merely a "temporary Affair" and that he did not have a "regular Commission," nor had he taken "the Oath customary on those Occassions." She suspected that "my simple Assertion would avail Little as an Individual, and less as a Woman or a Wife" to make the Council view Henry Fergusson as less of a traitor, and

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[104] As part of her petition to the Supreme Executive Council, Fergusson argued that Graeme Park barely turned a profit and, as a result, would be of little gain to the state. Since she herself was barely turning a profit from the estate and was on the brink of financial ruin, she hoped that both the house and herself would be left alone. Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson petition to Supreme Executive Council, 26 June 1778 and Francis Hopkinson to Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, 12 September 1778, Brown University as quoted in Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 226-7.

[105] Washington was not the only military leader unwilling to allow Henry Fergusson to return to Graeme Park. He asked General Howe's secretary, Captain McKenzie, for permission to return to the estate, but was told, "M^{r}. Ferguson I am much surprized at your making such a request, and would by no means have you ask it as it will not be granted." Fergusson had a reputation for perfidy and Howe might well have worried that he would take his knowledge of the British military straight to Elizabeth's Patriot friends. Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson petition to Supreme Executive Council, 26 June 1778 and Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 198-9.

she was quite right.[106] Even if his position as Commissary of Prisoners was unofficial, he was an agent of the British and that was enough evidence for the Council to move forward in confiscating his property.

In late September 1778, the Supreme Executive Council asked the Pennsylvania Attorney General to clarify the status of estates belonging to women but held by husbands who had been declared traitors. At this point, Elizabeth Fergusson was still contending that her husband could not be a traitor; however, she was also asserting that her property had been willed to her by her father in fee simple and belonged fully to her and not to Henry. At her death, it would pass to her familial heirs, her niece and nephew. As a result, she and her advisors argued, the property could not be considered part of her husband's estate. The Attorney General decided that estates like Elizabeth Fegusson's could be confiscated, but Pennsylvania would have to abide by the rules pertaining to dowries, meaning they would have use of them only until the death of the owner's husband.[107] On 15 October 1778, George Smith and John Moore, two of the men responsible for confiscating Loyalist estates, sold all of Fergusson's property with the exception of Graeme Park and the goods that the Supreme Court had set aside for her. Vice President Bryan declared that Fergusson should be allowed to stay at Graeme Park; Smith and Moore abided by that ruling, but required her to pay a rent of £260, an extreme sum for a woman without an immediate income.[108]

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[106] Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson petition to Supreme Executive Council, 26 June 1778.
[107] This is presumably the same ruling that allowed Pennsylvania to maintain control of Grace Galloway's estate until Joseph's death, or, if she died first, until Elizabeth was old enough to inherit. 29 September 1778, *Minutes of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania,* vol. 11, 587.
[108] Pennsylvania made £537 11s 8p from the sale of the Fergusson estate. George Bryan to Agents for Confiscated Estates, 15 October 1778, Gratz Collection, HSP and Inventories and Sales – The Ferguson Estate in Thomas Lynch Montgomery, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives*, series 6, vol. 12 (Harrisburg, Penn.: Harrisburg Publishing Co., 1907), 647-653.

In February 1779, Elizabeth renewed her efforts to regain full, unqualified possession of Graeme Park. She petitioned the General Assembly, repeating her arguments that Henry was not a citizen of Pennsylvania and thus could not have committed treason and that the estate belonged to her alone, not her husband. Then she put forth a new rationale for why her home should be returned to her: because the property could only be possessed by the state until her death and "(oppressed and afflicted as she would find herself in that case) [her life] would probably be of short duration," there was no benefit to the state in renting out the property. Since they would have to return it to her heirs soon, they might as well "restore her to the use and absolute possession of her own patrimony, which she never forfeited by any act of her own."[109] The Assembly discussed her petition and then tabled it for future consideration. Several members told Fergusson in confidence that she had support within the Assembly, but those men were afraid to speak on her behalf in case it tarnished their reputation and standing.[110]

Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson's efforts to separate herself from her husband and establish her right to her property were complicated by her affiliation with two political scandals early in the war. In the fall of 1777, she became involved in a conflict surrounding her longtime friend, the Reverend Jacob Duché, Chaplain of the Continental Congress. Duché was a staunch Patriot who was arrested for treason and mistreated by the British during the occupation; following his release, he wrote to General Washington asking him to lay down arms and negotiate peace for the sake of the men and women on

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[109] 6 February 1779, *Minutes of the Third General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Which Met at Philadelphia, On Monday the Twenty-Fifth Day of October, A.D. One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy-eight; And in the Third Year of the Independence of America* (Philadelphia: Printed by John Dunlap, 1778), 37-8.
[110] Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 231.

both sides. As soon as the contents of his letter became publicly known, Duché was branded a traitor and exiled to England.[111] Having no access to Washington at Valley Forge, he sent the letter to Fergusson who then delivered it to the General. Washington informed the Continental Congress, "I, yesterday, thro the hands of Mrs. Ferguson of [Graeme] Park, received a letter of very curious and extraordinary nature from Mr. Duché." He then noted that he had told Mrs. Fergusson "that I highly disapproved the intercourse she seemed to have been carrying on, and expected it would be discontinued."[112] When it became common knowledge that Elizabeth had acted on Duché's behalf, many people saw that action, combined with Henry's politics, as evidence of her secret loyalism.

As the war continued, Fergusson supported the Patriot cause but came to believe that war did more harm than good. Acting on her desire to speed the end of the Revolution, she again damaged her reputation when she agreed to serve as an emissary for George Johnstone, former governor of Florida and British peace commissioner. In June 1778, she carried a letter from Johnstone to her friend Joseph Reed, saying that if Reed used his influence to stop the war he would receive 10,000 guineas and a high post in the new British government. Reed refused the bribe and attempted to keep Fergusson's involvement a secret, but ultimately people learned that she had once again acted on behalf of a Loyalist. Despite his rigid stance against Tories, Reed defended

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[111] As Chaplain of the Continental Congress, Duché refused to include the British royal family in his devotions, going so far as to excise those prayers from his copy of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. This act was both sacrilege and treason. The reality of war had begun to change his perspective, as he became increasingly horrified by the death and privation. By the time of the Revolution, Duché's conviction was wavering, but he was nonetheless considered a traitor by the British. For more on Jacob Duché, see Kevin J. Dellape, *America's First Chaplain: The Life and Times of the Reverend Jacob Duché* (Lehigh, Penn.: Lehigh University Press, 2013).

[112] "Some Material," 290, Gratz Collection, HSP. See also, Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 202-205.

Fergusson against charges that she had acted against America's interest.[113] Elizabeth, aware that her actions might have harmed her claim to being a Patriot, commented on the situation in a private letter to Reed that he subsequently published:

> I am sensible, Sir, that the political opinions of women are ridiculed among the generality of men, but I own I find it hard, very hard (knowing the incorruptness of my heart) to be held out to the public as a tool of the Commissioners. But the impression is now made, and it is too late to recall it. How far, at this critical juncture of time, this affair may injure my property, is uncertain; that, I assure you, is not a secondary thought.[114]

Other prominent Patriots, including Elias Boudinot, John Dickinson, and Robert Morris, also defended Fergusson, pointing out her longstanding support of the Patriot cause.[115]

When the General Assembly debated her 1778 petition, several members who doubted her patriotism mentioned Fergusson's role in the Johnstone affair. Frustrated by the fact that her reasons for acting as an emissary were not clearly understood, Elizabeth decided she needed to clarify her involvement in the affair. On 16 February 1779, she published her account of the events and presented an explanation different from the one circulated by Joseph Reed. She denied his suggestion that she had agreed to help Johnstone because she thought it would help gain Henry a better position with the British. She also implied that Reed had been dishonest, leading her to think that he had heard from Johnstone independently, but when he published his account he made it sound as though she had been the only connection between the two men.[116]

Fergusson's attack on Reed proved a major misstep in her effort to repossess her property. In December 1778, Reed had been elected president of the Supreme Executive

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[113] Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 215-224 and Sally Smith Booth, *The Women of '76* (New York: Hasting House, 1973), 150-152.
[114] Joseph Reed, *Remarks on Governor Johnstone's Speech in Parliament with a Collection of all the Letters and Authentic Papers relative to his Proposition* (Philadelphia: Francis Bailey, 1779).
[115] Booth, *The Women of '76*, 152.
[116] Ousterhout does not provide a source for the 16 February 1779 publication. She only cited a letter Fergusson wrote to the *Pennsylvania Packet* on 20 February 1779.

Council, giving him an enormous amount of power over Fergusson and her estate. Furious that he had been publicly criticized, Reed attacked Elizabeth through the press and informed the Council that, while the government had the power to return her property to her, "it was very distant from their intention to do it."[117] What had been an academic argument over Fergusson's legal right to her property suddenly became a very personal conflict between her and her former friend. Shortly after the publication of her defense, James Abercrombie advised Elizabeth that Reed was her "professed enemy" and would make sure that any petition she submitted to the Assembly or Council would be "in vain."[118] Abercrombie seems to have been correct; on 16 March 1779, the Assembly read her petition again and did not refer it to committee, then adjourned three weeks later, again without considering her plea. Before adjourning, however, the Assembly did pass an act ordering the President, Vice President, and Supreme Executive Council to "with all convenient speed, sell or cause to be sold by public auction to the best and highest bidder, all and every the estates of traitors duly forfeited to this commonwealth" and deposit the money in the treasury.[119]

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[117] Samuel Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives. Selected and Arranged from Original Documents in the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, Conformably to Acts of the General Assembly, February 15, 1851 & March 1, 1852. Commencing 1778*, series 1, vol. 7 (Philadelphia: Printed by Joseph Severns & Co., 1853), 202-3.

[118] James Abercrombie was a Philadelphia merchant and, later, Anglican priest who was connected to many of Revolutionary America's leaders. However, I can find no record that he was involved in Pennsylvania's government during the 1770s and it is unclear from where he got his information about Joseph Reed. James Abercrombie to Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, n.d., in William Buck, "Notes on Graeme Park," Chester County Historical Society as quoted in Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 238.

[119] "A Supplement to an act intitled 'An ACT for the attainder of divers traitors if they render not themselves by a certain day, and for the vesting of their estates in this Commonwealth, and for more effectually discovering the same, and for ascertaining and justifying the lawful debts and claims thereupon," 29 March 1779 in *Laws Enacted in the Second Sitting of the Third General Assembly, of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which Commenced at Philadelphia, on Monday the First Day of February, A.D. One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy-Nine, and Continued till Monday the Fifth Day of April of the Same Year* (Philadelphia: Printed by John Dunlap, 1779), 187-190.

Understandably, Elizabeth Fergusson saw these two actions – the failure of the Assembly to consider her petition and the mandate to sell all seized estates – as serious concerns. Making matters worse, in June 1779 the Grand Jury for the City and County of Philadelphia recommended forcing the families of exiled Loyalists to leave the state, theoretically because the letters they sent their husbands and fathers might pose a security risk. Henry was no longer in New York and Fergusson had no close friends there, making the idea of relocation especially frightening.[120] The act ordering the sale of property included a provision mentioning the ongoing debate over the claims of married women.[121] Hoping to take advantage of this potential loophole, Richard Stockton suggested that Fergusson write to the Supreme Court for leniency. While Reed would likely prevent the Assembly and Council from helping her, Stockton thought the Court might be more even handed.[122]

Because her previous petitions had failed, Fergusson wanted to make a different argument when she appealed to the Supreme Court. Rather than asserting that Henry could not have committed treason, she was willing to stipulate that he had, but argued that she independently owned Graeme Park and it could not be confiscated because it was hers alone. She suggested that when the Assembly passed a set of rules related to the estates of married women, they were talking about property they owned jointly with their husbands; because Graeme Park had been willed to her by her father, it did not fit that category. It should, instead, be returned to her. In order to draw out that distinction, she asked the Chief Justice to explain her rights under the law. She hoped that he would "be

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[120] *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, 12 June 1779.
[121] "A Supplement to an act intitled 'An ACT for the attainder of divers traitors…" 29 March 1779 in *Laws Enacted in the Second Sitting of the Third General Assembly*, 187-190.
[122] Ousterhout offers no source for Stockton's advice. Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 239.

good enough to Answer this plain Question. Have the States or the State of Pennsylvania a power to sell an Estate of a Woman (the Fee-Simple Vested in Her) for the Attainder of Her Husband?" If a husband did not have the right to sell such land without his wife's consent, then what right did the state have to confiscate it?[123]

Elizabeth Fergusson's correspondence with Chief Justice Thomas McKean no longer survives, but the man who served as their intermediary, the Reverend William White, left behind a record of McKean's response to Fergusson's questions. He agreed that she owned the property outright and that before Graeme Park was sold, the Court should consider the legality of the sale. Therefore, he proposed to block the sale until the next session of the Court in September 1779. He told her she should submit an official claim to the Court detailing the specifics of her inheritance and the nature of her marriage to Henry Fergusson.[124] Elizabeth asked McKean two additional questions. First, would her petition to the Court prevent her from being able to continue petitioning the Assembly and the Council? McKean replied that it would not and that she should continue to seek redress from the Assembly. Second, did either body have the power to return her property to her? McKean did not know; given the highly politicized environment in which the confiscation laws were being passed, he was uncertain who actually had the power and the ability to restore her property.[125]

Elizabeth Fergusson wrote the General Assembly when they reconvened in September to remind them that they had failed to act upon her petition from the previous session. She asked them to reconsider and find in her favor, reiterating her two major

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[123] Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson to William Smith, 6 June 1779, William Smith Papers, University of Pittsburgh, Applied Research Center.
[124] William White to Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, 20 July 1779, Gratz Collection, HSP.
[125] Ibid.

arguments – that Graeme Park was fully hers and that her husband could not be considered a traitor. The Assembly adjourned on 10 October without taking action on her petition, again referring it to the next session.[126] In the spring of 1780, the Supreme Executive Council, led by Reed, overturned the Court's moratorium on the sale of certain estates, including Graeme Park. On 10 March, they debated properties that were linked to Loyalists through marriage. Given that the traitorous men did not own them outright, adjudicating their status had been more "burdensome" than "profitable" and their legal status was unclear. However, rather than returning the properties to the women, the Council determined they would be sold, beginning in May.[127]

Fergusson, who had believed she would ultimately get her property back, panicked. It now seemed she had finally truly lost Graeme Park. In a last effort, on 16 May 1780 George Meade, Thomas Franklin, and William White petitioned the Council on her behalf, begging for "justice and humanity in the execution of the Law." The Council refused to help, referring her back to the Assembly.[128] Two days later, Franklin, White, Meade, Elias Boudinot, and Francis Hopkinson went before the Assembly to ask them to consider her case. Their plea was so affecting that the Assembly finally acted, and quickly, before the Council could direct the Estate Agents to sell Graeme Park. In less than a week, they read her petition, referred it to committee, and approved the committee's recommendation "to defer the sale of the estate commonly called Greame Park, on which Mrs. Elizabeth Ferguson now resides; and that the said Elizabeth Ferguson be permitted to live rent-free thereon … she paying the public taxes."

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[126] Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 246-7.
[127] 10 March 1780, 8 May 1780, and 12 May 1780, *Minutes of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania*, vol. 12, 273, 341, 347.
[128] 16 May 1780, *Minutes of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania*, vol. 12, 351-52.

However, they did not enact a law concerning her case, but only recommended a course of action for the Council.[129]

Despite sending her to the Assembly for relief, the Council was furious that they had found in Fergusson's favor. Reed led the Council in rebuffing the Assembly, decrying the "interference of your Hon'ble House in matters merely of an Executive nature, and which have been already under the cognizance of this Board, and received a full determination." It then refuted their recommendation of leniency. Reed stated that the Assembly needed to support the decision of the Council, as disagreement between the two bodies "have an evident tendency to lessen the weight and importance of the Council in the Eyes of the people." He further accused the Assemblymen of lacking objectivity and being overly susceptible to pity and a desire to be liked.[130] The Council also partially overrode the Assembly's decision; she could stay on the property, but she had to pay taxes and rent. For 1780, she was to pay £464, a tax assessment £200 more than any other in the county. Clearly, the Council was trying to force Fergusson out. George Meade intervened and the assessment was lowered to £300, which could be paid in two installments.[131]

Having settled her right to stay on her property, even if not in the way she had hoped, Elizabeth Fergusson found herself faced with a new problem. Due to the continued concern that women were passing information to their husbands, brothers, and sons in New York, in March 1780 the Supreme Executive Council announced that any

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[129] 18, 22, and 26 May 1780, *Minutes of the First Session of the Fourth General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Printed by John Dunlap, [1779-1780]), 238, 241, 243-4.
[130] 26 and 7 May 1780**,** *Minutes of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania,* vol. 12, 365-7.
[131] Supply, and State Tax Lists for the City and County of Philadelphia, for the Year 1779, 1780, and 1781 – Horsham Township in William Henry Egle, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives*, series 3, vol. 15 (Harrisburg, Penn.: Wm. Stanley Ray, State Printer, 1897), 424.

Loyalists' wives still in Philadelphia would be sent behind British lines by 15 August. If they did not go voluntarily, they might be forcibly removed.[132] Henry Fergusson had by this time sailed to England; no longer having a husband in the country, Elizabeth did not believe she should be considered a security risk. On 6 June, the Council ordered any wife who had not voluntarily left the city to do so within ten days or they would be declared enemies of the state. At wits end, Fergusson did something she probably thought she would never do – she asked Joseph Reed for help. Her nephew-in-law Dr. William Smith delivered a letter stating that she had no one in New York, wrote no letters there, and was not a threat. Moreover, she had no connections within the British military or government in America and no one to ask for help or to give her shelter. Reed promised to present the letter to the Council, but told her that nothing would be done. He insisted that no exceptions could possibly be made, even for a woman who had no connections in New York.[133]

Elizabeth Fergusson also appealed to Chief Justice McKean who responded favorably. In his opinion, "in all cases of this sort discrimination should be made." McKean spoke to Reed on her behalf, arguing that the innocent should not be punished due to their proximity to the guilty, but Reed was unmoved. McKean also spoke with William Smith who said he had heard that she might be allowed to stay unofficially – the Council would not grant her an exception, but would ignore her presence.[134] Due to the lack of agreement between the Council and the Court, and the dissent of some members

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[132] 7 March 1780, *Minutes of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania,* vol. 12, 270-71.
[133] 6 June 1780, *Minutes of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania,* vol. 12. 377; Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson to Joseph Reed, 9 June 1780, Joseph Reed Papers, New York Historical Society; William Smith to Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, 13 June 1780, Gratz Collection, HSP; and, Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 252.
[134] William White to Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, 13 June 1780, Dreer Collection, American Clergy, HSP as quoted in Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 252-3.

of the Council regarding her removal, no immediate action was taken. Fergusson was told to stay at Graeme Park and be prepared to leave if the Council ordered it. McKean was right; she was never given an official dispensation, but she was left alone.[135] In October 1780, a new government was elected and Fergusson believed it would be more sympathetic to her position than any government of the previous three years.

With Pennsylvania's treasury struggling to pay its soldiers and civic leaders, the Council moved in December 1780 that any unsold forfeited estates would be sold on 1 July 1781 and the money sent directly to the military. Since the Council had not upheld the Assembly's ruling about Graeme Park, Fergusson again faced losing her home. Once more, she wrote her friends for support and petitioned the Supreme Executive Council and the General Assembly for full possession of her property. While the Council was unhelpful, the Assembly passed a resolve "*recommending* to Council to Grant the prayer of her Petition." The Council, however, did not see this recommendation as anything more than a suggestion and chose not to act.[136] She appealed to the Assembly again and they finally took definitive action. On 27 February 1781, the members heard her petition and referred it to a committee. A bill, "An Act for vesting the estate, late of Henry Hugh Ferguson, in Elizabeth his wife" was presented by the committee, read twice, published, and enacted into law on 2 April returning Fergusson's property.[137] After years of contestation, Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson was the sole owner of her home.

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[135] Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 254-5.
[136] "Some Material," 305-8, Gratz Collection, HSP and Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America*, 255-56.
[137] 27 February, 13 March, and 2 April 1781, *Minutes of the First Sitting of the Fifth General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which met at Philadelphia on Monday the twenty-third day of October, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty* (Philadelphia: Printed by John Dunlap, [1780-1781]), 377, 389, 413.

Elizabeth Fergusson elected to stay in Philadelphia for the remainder of her life, despite Henry's occasional efforts to convince her to join him in England. She refused to relocate in part because she would not abandon Graeme Park after fighting so hard for it and in part because her "Principles and Interest is on the Side of America."[138] Despite difficulties in raising enough money to pay her taxes and keep the estate in repair, she "seem[ed] to prefer this sequestered Spot to any other on this habitable Globe."[139] At the same time, Henry Fergusson chose to remain in England for the rest of his life; he received a pension for his wartime service as well as Parliamentary compensation for lost property in Philadelphia. Little else is known about his life. He may have gone back into the army, but after 1801 he completely disappears from the historical record. Elizabeth lived the rest of her life at Graeme Park. She spent time with her niece and nephew and their families; she read books and wrote poetry; and, she avoided public, political debate until her death on 23 February 1801.[140]

Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson was a woman well used to the public and political spheres of pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia. As a prominent poet and salonnière, she was at the center of discussion and friendly debate on a range of topics from the arts to imperial politics to trans-Atlantic commerce and fashion. She also had connections to many of Pennsylvania's most prominent statesmen, attorneys, and citizens. Fergusson drew on all these resources in combating the state's right to confiscate her property. She utilized her social connections and her understanding of politics, economics, and the law

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[138] Henry Hugh Fergusson, Testimony, 3 February 1785, A.O. 12/38/12 and Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson to John Young, [n.d.], A.O. 13/102/762.
[139] Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson to Ann Ridgely, 25 December 1785 as quoted in Mabel Lloyd Ridgely, ed., *The Ridgelys of Delaware & Their Circle: What Them Befell in Colonial and Federal Times: Letters, 1751-1890* (Portland, Maine: Anthoensen Press, 1949), 42-3.
[140] For more about the final years of Elizabeth Graeme and Henry Hugh Fergusson's lives, see Chapters Ten through Twelve, Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America.*

to craft and present a variety of arguments in defense of Graeme Park. As a woman long accustomed to the respect of her peers, she expected to be taken seriously; for years she had been at the center of Philadelphia's intellectual world and the empowerment she gained from that experience led her to expect a place in wartime debates. While there is no evidence that she knew Grace Galloway, their efforts worked in tandem to create a space for married women to assert their independent property rights in a period of Revolutionary upheaval.

Jane Bartram

Unlike the other women discussed in this chapter, Jane Bartram was not wealthy, educated, or entitled. She did not interrogate the Pennsylvania government about her husband's ability to repatriate or fight to regain an estate that had been given to her by her father. The property she lost following the occupation was dry goods inventory, savings, and lands that she and her husband had worked hard to accrue. Bartram came into the public record following the Revolution in a singular way: she sought official financial and personal independence from an unhappy marriage. Unable to gain a divorce from the state, she convinced her husband to execute a contract providing each of them with a financial settlement in exchange for a total severing of their claim to the monies, properties, and bodies of the other.

Jane was born in the early 1740s to William and Miriam Martin somewhere in the countryside surrounding Philadelphia. William was a tailor and farmer and the Martins were Quakers in good standing. Both of Jane's parents died suddenly in 1747, leaving six young children and substantial debts. The Martin siblings were split up among

relatives, members of the church, and other Philadelphia households. The Philadelphia County Orphans Court appointed guardians for all the children, but it is not known what happened to Jane over the course of the following fifteen years.[141] In 1763 she reappears in the Philadelphia records and, four years later, married Alexander Bartram, a moderately successful merchant, at Zion Lutheran Church. Alexander emigrated from England in 1764, setting up shop in Market Street as a wholesale and retail vendor of dry goods, imported china, and domestically produced pottery.[142] The Bartrams do not appear to have had a happy marriage; following the war, Jane testified that "ever since the Arrival of the British at Philadelphia [her husband had] used her grossly ill for her attachment to the cause of American Liberty" and they were widely known to "not agree in politics."[143] Their marriage produced one son, James Alexander, born in the early 1770s.[144]

During the 1770s, the Bartram's business flourished. They expanded their stock of glass and ceramic goods, eventually purchasing a local business that made earthenware, which allowed them to increase their stock even further. By the start of the Revolution, they owned one of the largest shops specializing in ceramics, cloth, and

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[141] I am indebted to Wayne Bodle for bringing Jane Bartram to my attention. As Bartram was an otherwise unknown figure, his work provided an invaluable starting place for my own research. Petition of Hannah, John, Jane, Enoch, Merian and Mary Martin to the Justices of the Orphans Court, 5 May 1748, Records of the Orphan Court, Book 3, #120, reel 45, Philadelphia City Archives and Bodle, "Jane Bartram's 'Application': Her Struggle for Survival, Stability, and Self-Determination in Revolutionary Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 115, no. 2 (April 1991), 186-7.

[142] Bodle, "Jane Bartram's 'Application,'" 188-9; Evidence on the Claim of Alexander Bartram, late of Philadelphia, 10 May 1786, A.O. 12/40/54; and, *Pennsylvania Journal*, 12 March 1767.

[143] The Petition of Jane Bartram, Wife of Alexander Bartram, 23 May 1782, Records of Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Governments (RG-27), reel 30, frame 89, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) and Evidence on the Claim of Alexander Bartram, late of Philadelphia, 10 May 1786, A.O. 12/40/57.

[144] While James Alexander Bartram's marriage to Ann Nicholson on 17 February 1795 is well documented, the date of his birth is unknown. However, a Bartram family page on Archives.org dates his birth to the early 1770s. Park M'Farland, Jr., comp., *Marriage Records of Gloria Dei Church, "Old Swedes," Philadelphia, 1750-1863, Compiled from the Original Records* (Philadelphia: M'Farland & Son, 1879), 171.

foodstuffs in Philadelphia.[145] In this same period, the Bartrams sought to increase their wealth through land speculation. Alexander bought undeveloped lands in central and southern Pennsylvania as well as property in the immediate Philadelphia area. In 1773, he bought a lot in the Southwark neighborhood and built five rental houses.[146] During this period, Jane may have been purchasing property as well. One of their properties, a small piece of land with two tenements located on Second near Christian Street, was described after the Revolution as "that property his wife bought." Alexander himself characterized it has having been purchased by Jane "by his advice."[147] Jane also appears to have acted somewhat independently within their business. During the non-importation movement, she was given permission to sell cargo that had been ordered before the start of the boycott, but arrived in Philadelphia after. While presumably the merchandise was for their jointly-owned store, the Council of Safety granted the dispensation to her alone.[148]

During the pre-Revolutionary boycotts, the Bartrams supported the non-importation agreements and closed their shop. However, Alexander displayed a level of sympathy with the Loyalist position that staunch Patriots found troubling. In 1770, he was one of four men to sign his name to a broadside in support of the merchants who did not comply with the non-importation movement. The signatories were bothered that, despite the contrition of those merchants, "members of our fellow citizens still continue

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[145] *Pennsylvania Packet,* 13 April 1771; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, 25 February 1777; and, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 16 July 1777.
[146] Estimate of Losses sustained during the dissentions in America by Alexander Bartram, late of Philadelphia, 10 May 1786, A.O. 12/40/52-5.
[147] Evidence on the Claim of Alexander Bartram, late of Philadelphia, 10 May 1786, A.O. 12/40/58 and Further Evidence on the Claim of Alexander Bartram, late of Philadelphia, 13 February 1789, A.O. 12/44/15.
[148] Blanks to be filled by Philadelphia importers during existence of non-importation agreement, AM 817, HSP.

to censure those penitential Gentlemen" and felt that their actions "merited taring and feathering" as though they were "informer[s]." In order to defend the "Gentlemen, Merchants, and Men of real Property," Bartram, William Semple, James Stuart, and Robert Wilson, "at [their] own expense got five thousand copies" of the broadside printed and distributed to further the "vindication of these unhappy men."[149] By the time of the Revolution, for reasons unknown, Alexander Bartram had decided to support the British cause. Despite having "trained with the Militia early in the Troubles," Bartram swore to Parliament that he "took no part with the Americans" during the war.[150] Moreover, during the occupation, he worked for the British in various capacities, assisting "in the Barrack department," "quartering His Majesty's Troops," and confiscating "Arms and Warlike Stores" from any household not supporting the English army.[151]

Alexander Bartram fled to New York with the British army at the end of the occupation and was found guilty of treason in May 1778 as part of the first group of Loyalists tried by the newly installed Patriot government.[152] Jane Bartram had always supported the American cause. This had been a source of conflict in her marriage and when it came time for her husband to leave Philadelphia, she "staid behind."[153] Like the homes and land belonging to Rebecca Shoemaker, Grace Galloway, and Elizabeth

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[149] In this same document, Bartram, et. al. admit that, though they signed the non-importation agreement, they actually broke that trust. In the dead of night, on 10 March 1770, they received goods from the Scottish ship *Sharpe*, but then turned them over to the Committee to be held until they could be returned to Great Britain. The men apologized to the public and pledged to, henceforth, "strickly and faithfully observe" the terms of the agreement. Perhaps that breach explains why they were so sympathetic towards the merchants who did not sign the Non-Importation agreement. William Semple, Alexander Bartram, James Stuart, and Robert Wilson, *To the Public* [Broadside], 4 July 1770, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscripts, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library, University of Pennsylvania.
[150] Evidence on the Claim of Alexander Bartram, late of Philadelphia, 10 May 1786, A.O. 12/40/54, 58.
[151] Estimate of Losses Sustained During the Dissensions in America by Alexander Bartram, [December 1783], A.O. 13/57/43.
[152] Proclamation of Traitors, William Henry Egle, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives*, series 3, vol. 10 (Harrisburg, Penn.: Clarence M. Busch, State Printer, 1896), 519 and Bodle, "Jane Bartram's 'Application,'" 195.
[153] Evidence on the Claim of Alexander Bartram, late of Philadelphia, 10 May 1786, A.O. 12/40/57.

Graeme Fergusson, the post-occupation government targeted Jane's property for confiscation. The personal effects of the Bartrams' house and shop were inventoried by 6 July 1778 and might have been among the earliest Loyalist property to be sold.[154] They were auctioned at public vendue on 28 August and made the state £586 5s.[155] The couple rented their home and shop, which benefitted Jane. While the moveable items could be taken and sold, she could continue to live and work in both spaces as long as she could pay the rent. To prevent her from losing everything she possessed, her brother John Martin claimed that most of the "shop goods" belonged to him, not Alexander. Charles Willson Peale did not believe Martin and it is unclear if the siblings were able to save any of Jane's inventory.[156]

Jane Bartram stayed in Philadelphia for at least eighteen months after her husband left for New York, continuing to run their store.[157] She finally evacuated in July 1780 when the Supreme Executive Council required all remaining wives of Loyalists to leave the city. Bartram and three other women were ordered to appear at the workhouse where they would be held, unless they swore to leave the state and not return without permission. At that point, she moved with her son to New York City where they were reunited with Alexander who was keeping shop behind the British lines.[158] Jane spent two years petitioning the Pennsylvania government for permission to return. She asserted

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[154] [Charles Willson Peale], A Summary Account of the Proceedings of Agents for Confiscated Estates in the City of Philadelphia, [July 1778], RG-27, reel 43, frame 991-2, PHMC and Bodle, "Jane Bartram's 'Application,'" 196.
[155] Sales of Confiscated Property in the City of Philadelphia, [July 1778], RG-27, reel 43, frame 1031, PHMC and Notice of Public Auction, 28 August 1778, A.O. 13/57/41.
[156] [Charles Willson Peale], A Summary Account of the Proceedings of Agents for Confiscated Estates in the City of Philadelphia, [July 1778], RG-27, reel 43, frame 991-2, PHMC.
[157] *Pennsylvania Packet*, 5 December 1778 and Bodle, "Jane Bartram's 'Application,'" 198. See also, Merril D. Smith, *Breaking the Bonds: Marital Discord in Pennsylvania, 1730-1830* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 171.
[158] 17 July 1780, *Minutes of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania,* vol. 12, 425 and The Petition of Jane Bartram, Wife of Alexander Bartram, 23 May 1782, RG-27, reel 30, frame 89, PHMC.

that she was no threat to the safety of the city as she had always supported the Patriot cause. She claimed in a 1782 petition to the Supreme Executive Council that any suggestion of Loyalism stemmed "merely from a fault of her Husbands" and that she, personally, had always "manifested a friendly and warm desire for the Liberties and rights of the United States of America." As evidence of this, she stated that while living in the British stronghold of New York, she had been "as serviceable as [was] in her power in alleviating the distresses of such Americans as had the misfortune of falling into the hands of the British."[159] On 29 May 1782, the Council finally issued her a pass to return to Philadelphia.[160]

In 1784, Jane Bartram submitted another petition to the Pennsylvania government, asking the General Assembly to grant her a divorce, claiming that her marital discord with Alexander had been so extreme that they would never be able to resume cohabitation. The Assembly chose not to take up the request. The following year, Bartram again sought a divorce, this time making a much more detailed argument in favor of her case. She asserted that she had been abandoned without "a maintenance or support for her or her son" and that she needed to be released from her marriage in order to support herself and her child.[161] Judicial divorces were not granted in Pennsylvania until 1785, but there was some precedent for the state legislature dissolving unions in response to specific allegations such as extreme abuse, abandonment, or bigamy.

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[159] The Petition of Jane Bartram, Wife of Alexander Bartram, 23 May 1782, RG-27, reel 30, frame 89, PHMC. While such claims could be exaggerated, Bartram listed multiple American servicemen she had known while in New York. One, William McFadden, had been held on the British prison ship *Jersey* and supported her claim that she had visited and cared for American prisoners. Bodle, "Jane Bartram's 'Application,'" 200 and Smith, *Breaking the Bonds*, 143-44.

[160] 29 May 1782, *Minutes of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, From Its Organization to the Termination of the Revolution*, vol. 13 (Harrisburg, Penn.: Printed by Theo. Fenn & Co., 1853), 294.

[161] *Minutes of the Eighth General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1784), 304 and *Minutes of the Ninth General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1785), 177.

Bartram seems to have been hoping to take advantage of that precedent by claiming abandonment and financial neglect and hinting at the possibility of abuse.[162]

Late in 1783, Alexander Bartram relocated to Nova Scotia and began working to establish himself in business there. Shortly after arriving in Canada, he petitioned the Loyalist Commission for compensation for the property and income he had lost during the war.[163] He was unsuccessful with his initial effort, leading him to return to Philadelphia in September 1785 to "procure proofs of sale under confiscation" of his holdings in order to petition Parliament again.[164] However, Alexander had few friends remaining in Philadelphia; he was widely snubbed by the men he needed to certify his evidence of property ownership and personal wealth. His wife, however, was in good standing with the Philadelphia civic and business community, and she made Alexander an offer. Jane would help him gather the proof he needed in exchange for a monetary settlement and de facto divorce. Alexander and Jane, with William Johnson and James Stewart as co-signatories, executed a contract on 13 December 1785 stipulating the terms of their agreement.[165]

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[162] Divorce in 18th century America was difficult to obtain. Prior to the Revolution, several colonies passed laws that would allow them to grant divorces to their citizens, but they were struck down by the English Privy Council, which wanted to maintain sole control over divorce in the growing British Empire. In 1773, the Council notified the governors of all thirteen colonies that Americans were subject to Parliament in matters of marriage and divorce; moreover, the governors were given explicit instructions to strike down any laws passed by colonial legislatures regarding divorce. While the Pennsylvania government had periodically granted divorces in extreme cases, they stopped doing so at this point and did not resume until 1785 when they passed a law establishing the guidelines for applying for a divorce in the state. While Jane Bartram seems to have been aware of the historical precedent for judicial divorce in Pennsylvania, none had been granted for at least a decade when she began petitioning the General Assembly. Marylynn Salmon, "'Life, Liberty, and Dower': The Legal Status of Women After the American Revolution" in *Women, War, and Revolution*, eds. Carol R. Berkin and Clara M. Lovett (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980), 96-7.

[163] Estimate of Losses Sustained During the Dissensions in America by Alexander Bartram, [December 1783], A.O. 13/57/42-44.

[164] Evidence on the Claim of Alexander Bartram, late of Philadelphia, 10 May 1786, A.O. 12/40/54.

[165] Articles of Agreement and Transfer … Between Alexander Bartram … and William Johnson [and] James Stewert [in trust for] Jane Bartram, 13 December 1785, A.O. 12/95 and Bodle, "Jane Bartram's 'Application,'" 203-4.

The resulting document was unparalleled in Revolutionary American history. The Bartrams' spelled out their marital problems, came to an alimony and child support agreement, and swore that they would consider themselves fully divorced going forward. The couple agreed to a history of "diverse disputes and unhappy differences" that made it impossible for them to continue living together. Alexander wanted to return to Nova Scotia while Jane preferred to remain in Philadelphia; however, he could not leave until he had gathered the proof necessary to make his claim to Parliament. Jane agreed to loan Alexander £50 5s to continue his efforts and he agreed to the effective, if not legal, dissolution of their marriage:

> at any time hereafter on any pretense whatsoever [Alexander would not] molest or disturb the said Jane his wife in her separate state, nor claim or demand any Estate, Right, Title, Interest or Property in any Lands, Tenements, goods, chattels, moneys or effects whatsoever which shall come to her or be acquired by her.

Further, any property Jane acquired would be entirely hers, "in the same manner as if she were sole and unmarried, nor shall the same nor any part thereof be liable or chargeable with the debts, contracts or incumbrances or to the control of her said Husband." While Alexander claimed to want to ensure Jane's ability to operate as a single woman, he also stated that the "natural love and affection" he felt towards his son James led him to want to ensure "his support, maintenance, education, and advancement in life," although he made no effort to gain custody. The child had been sickly, generating high medical costs that had been extremely "burthensome to the said Jane Bartram."[166]

The money Jane lent Alexander was not only meant to allow him to finish his business and leave Philadelphia; it also guaranteed her a portion of his eventual

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[166] Articles of Agreement and Transfer … Between Alexander Bartram … and William Johnson [and] James Stewert [in trust for] Jane Bartram, 13 December 1785, A.O. 12/95/23-24.

settlement. In exchange for the money and her assistance gathering the necessary evidence, Bartram swore to give Jane

> One full equal half part, the whole into two equal parts to be divided, of in and out of all and every the monies, securities, certificates [and] annuities … which shall by the Commissioners or Agents of the British government be awarded the said Alexander Bartram in lieu or compensation of the sufferings and losses which he has sustained by the confiscation, seisure and sale of his Estate in America.[167]

The remainder of the document established the means through which the money would be made available to Jane. The settlement was to be sent to her proxies who would then invest it, giving Jane access to the interest to be used at her discretion. When James came of age, he and Jane were to be given the principle "in equal proportions as tenants in common." The proxies had the option of lending "the whole or any part [of the principle] to Jane Bartram on her own bond, without interest, she supporting, maintaining and educating her said son" rather than investing. Finally, if Alexander met the terms of this agreement, he would be free from responsibility for their upkeep, but if he failed he would be liable for their living costs and James's education.[168]

Alexander Bartram returned to Nova Scotia early in 1786 while Jane upheld her end of the agreement, gathering evidence of his property losses and getting that proof certified by the Pennsylvania government. In May, Alexander filed an amended compensation claim, asserting that his estate in Philadelphia had been worth £6,000.[169] A witness for Alexander claimed that he had been "a man of considerable property in

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[167] Ibid.

[168] Ibid. This kind of de facto, extralegal divorce brought about by contract seems to have been rare during the colonial period. However, in the nineteenth century, several couples achieved a similar result in Virginia via separation agreements, which were not legally binding, but nonetheless apparently accepted by the community. See, Suzanne Lebsock, *The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1984), 69.

[169] Estimate of Losses sustained during the dissentions in America by Alexander Bartram, late of Philadelphia, 10 May 1786, A.O. 12/40/53-8; Evidence on the Claim of Alexander Bartram, late of Philadelphia, 10 May 1786, 12/40/53; and, Bodle, "Jane Bartram's 'Application,'" 208.

1775," had "carried on considerable trade," and "might [have been] worth £10,000 currency."[170] Despite these grandiose claims, the Commissioners in Nova Scotia awarded Alexander a mere £797 sterling.[171] Hoping to gain a larger settlement, Alexander wrote to Jane asking her to investigate the details of the land they had owned in Northumberland County. While it is unknown what further proof she found, in 1787 Alexander wrote the Commissioners in London asking them to reconsider the size of his award considering the new evidence of property holdings in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Speaking before the Commission in England, Joseph Galloway testified that before the war, Alexander "was considered a thriving man, and of good credit in Philadelphia [where] he kept a Shop." Galloway concluded, "he must be worth some money." In light of this new information, in 1789 the London Commissioners increased his award to £1,978.[172]

While she had a contract guaranteeing her half of Alexander's award, Jane Bartram did not trust her husband to honor his part of the agreement. After gathering the evidence of their property holdings and sending it to Nova Scotia, Jane sought to ensure that she would get the money to which she was entitled. In November 1786, she traveled to New York City and met with Sir John Temple, the British Consul-General to the United States. She explained her relationship with Alexander and asserted her right to a portion of his compensation; she likely brought the contract with her as evidence.

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[170] Evidence on the Claim of Alexander Bartram, late of Philadelphia, 10 May 1786, A.O. 12/40/57-8.
[171] Extract of a Letter from Alexr Bartram to his wife; Rec'd from Mrs. Bartram July 24, 1786, RG-4, Forfeited Estate Files, Box 3, PHMC.
[172] Extract of a Letter from Alexr Bartram to his wife; Rec'd from Mrs. Bartram July 24, 1786, Records of the Comptroller-General (RG-4), Forfeited Estate Files, Box 3, PHMC; Alexander Bartram to Peter Hunter, 27 August 1787, A.O. 13/57/46; Further Evidence on the Claim of Alexander Bartram, late of Philadelphia, 13 February 1789, A.O. 12/44/15-16; A Statement of the Claim Examined and Losses Allowed, 13 March 1790, A.O. 12/109/98-99; and, John Antsey, "In the Case of Mr. Alexander Bartram," 30 June 1787, A.O. 12/95/21-22.

Temple acted on her behalf, writing to the London Commissioners of American Claims that

> As this Lady claims a right in opposition to the rights of her Husband, I have thought it advisable to make this report … The object of her Application is, that she may receive the Moiety of what her Husband may or shall receive by way of compensation for losses in consequence of Loyalty, pursuant to the Agreement between her and her husband.[173]

The next month, Temple wrote the Commissioners again, reiterating his position that a "Very reputable application hath been made to me in behalf of Mrs. Bartram" which guaranteed her a portion of Alexander's financial settlement. He went on to ask them to pay Alexander no more than half of any compensation until they had considered Jane's right to a share of the money.[174] The Commissioners opinion of Jane's claim does not exist, but following this exchange they more than doubled the Bartram's payout and Jane received her portion.

Relatively little is known about the remainder of Jane Bartram's life. In the 1790s she lived and worked at 98 South Front Street in Philadelphia, perhaps continuing to run a store as she had over the previous two decades. By 1805, she had relocated to Newtown, Pennsylvania, and was "preparing to retire from the prosperous life of a county-seat shopkeeper."[175] Jane was still living in Newtown in November 1813 when she wrote her will, leaving her estate to her grandson and her Martin nieces and nephews.

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[173] John Antsey, "In the Case of Mr. Alexander Bartram," 30 June 1787, A.O. 12/95/21-22 and Bodle, "Jane Bartram's 'Application,'" 210.

[174] Sir John Temple to the Honorable Commissioners of American Claims, 7 December 1786, A.O. 12/137/6.

[175] Clement Biddle, *The Philadelphia Directory* (Philadelphia, 1791), 7; Country Tax Assessment Ledger, 1791, Dock Ward, Philadelphia City Archives; and, Bodle, "Jane Bartram's 'Application,'" 202, 215. Bodle suggests that Jane Bartram might have run a boardinghouse because it would have allowed her to earn an income from within her home. Plus, running a boardinghouse would have allowed her to avoid the pitfalls of coverture, specifically the inability to receive credit and build up an inventory. However, given that the restrictions of coverture were not always followed and Jane had past experience running a shop independently, it is highly plausible that she continued to do so in this period. She could easily have operated her business out of the front rooms of her house, accounting for her home and work address being the same.

Because she left a fifth of her estate to James's son, rather than James himself, one must assume he predeceased her. Alexander also seems to have died before Jane, as she is described in the genealogical text *Chester (and its Vicinity,) Delaware County in Pennsylvania* as a widow at the time she wrote her will, but no information about his death is provided beyond that he died in Nova Scotia.[176] Jane Martin Bartram's will was probated on 15 August 1815, shortly after she died.[177]

Jane Bartram provides evidence of the complex martial and property relations of revolutionary Pennsylvania. Had coverture been rigidly applied, Jane would never have been able to execute a contract with her husband, since she would not have existed as a legal entity separate from him. She would not have been deemed capable of agreeing to the terms of a contract, receiving a financial settlement, and then proceeding to run an independent business. Nor would she have been allowed full custody of her child. Jane's capacity to do these things, and her communities' acceptance of her as a businesswoman – both before and after her separation from Alexander – reveals the fluid nature of women's relationship to the law. Like Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, she asserted a political identity for herself, independent of her husband. She extended that political autonomy to personal and economic independence, asserting her right to sole control over her earnings and property. While Grace Galloway and Elizabeth Fergusson both sought a passive break from their husbands, Bartram did something extremely rare in post-Revolutionary America and took steps to codify their separation. The Philadelphia

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[176] James Bartram's son, Alexander James, is listed as the child of Ann Nicholson Bartram and no mention is made of James. Presumably, James had died but Jane's daughter-in-law Ann was still living. John Hill Martin, *Chester (and its Vicinity,) Delaware County in Pennsylvania; with Genealogical Sketches of Some Old Families* (Philadelphia: Printed by Wm. H. Pile and Sons, 1877), 189, 330-331.

[177] Jane Bartram's Will, 9.63 in "Wills: Abstracts: Book 9: Bucks Co, PA 1815-1821," USGENWEB ARCHIVES, http://files.usgwarchives.net/pa/bucks/wills/willabstbk9.txt, accessed 1 April 2015.

community supported this effort, affirming her right and ability to sever ties with her husband and conduct her life as a single woman. Eighteenth century laws and social codes were not uniformly applied, and Jane Bartram is a fascinating example of how one person was able to take on roles not theoretically available to married women.

Conclusion

In the years following the American Revolution, the newly formed government debated which of England's laws they would carry over to the republic and which should be abandoned. On a state and federal level, politicians sought to define the prerequisites for citizenship and the rights that came with it. By and large, women were not part of that discussion. The requirements for voting, the hallmark of American citizenship, in most states included property ownership and/or paying taxes. While women were able to do both those things, only New Jersey briefly allowed them to vote. Various rationales supported the idea that women did not need full citizenship or the right to vote. Among them were doubts about women's capacity to carry the burden of political enfranchisement and the belief that their fathers, husbands, and sons would represent them at the polls. Beliefs about women's inability to function as citizens and carry out the duties of full political participation became increasingly common in the early decades of the new Republic, bringing debates about women's place in the public sphere into sharp focus.

The Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary experiences of Rebecca Shoemaker, Grace Galloway, Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, and Jane Bartram indicate that early national views on women's political capacity were likely far more complicated than they

appear on the surface. While men might claim to doubt women's abilities, they could not have been unaware of the myriad ways women had proven themselves capable. Instead, it seems likely that men knew women were competent to take an active role in public life and intentionally sought to diminish their possibilities. As women who lived alone during the 1770s and 1780s injected themselves into the legal and political workings of the state and acted in the best interests of themselves and their families, they proved themselves more than capable of understanding contemporary issues and expressing their ideas through petitions and court documents. They educated themselves about the laws pertaining to Loyalists and their wives and voiced their opinions in letters, conversations, petitions, published statements, and legal suits. They defied the doctrine of coverture by living independently, laying claim to property, and challenging the state for their material and economic rights.

Revolutionary women not only understood the social and political systems of their day, but also knew how best to position themselves within them. Some eighteenth-century men believed that women were inherently weaker than men and needed their assistance and protection. Rebecca Shoemaker and Grace Galloway were Loyalists, technically enemies of the state, who nonetheless gained the help of numerous attorneys and statesmen by appealing to their sense of compassion and paternalism. Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson and Jane Bartram, who had proved themselves to be capable and independent, similarly positioned themselves as women in need of support. All four women considered themselves to be intelligent and self-sufficient, but they were willing to take advantage of contemporary ideas that stated that women needed the protection of men. While their success in pursuing their goals varied, their strategies reveal the degree

to which women understood not only society, but also the best way for women to work within that system.

The experiences of these women, despite the limits of their success, demonstrate that the public sphere during and immediately after the Revolution was broad and flexible enough to encompass female Philadelphians. The wartime public was not imagined as a space in which only men could function; it was a matrix of arenas in which all members of the populace, male and female, participated. The subjects of this chapter demonstrate the comfort and ease with which women negotiated the political and legal publics, continuing trends that had begun decades before. Rebecca Shoemaker took it upon herself to learn as much as she could about the Pennsylvania Test Act in order to advise her husband about the possibility of returning to America. As she spoke to attorneys and statesmen and came to understand the political climate in multiple states, she gained confidence in herself. She went from providing information to advocating strongly for her own opinion, attempting to persuade her husband to follow the course of action she thought best. She came to view her opinions as more valid than those of her male relatives thousands of miles away and she felt adequate to the task of arguing for a specific resolution.

Grace Galloway and Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, both wealthy and educated women, challenged the state's right to seize their property and render them paupers. They asserted their personal rights to own property independently of their husbands. Galloway was given a house as part of her dowry and Fergusson inherited an estate upon the death of her father; both women argued that the homes had been given to them alone and that the state had no right to seize them as part of their husband's property. They

consulted lawyers and petitioned multiple state bodies in their efforts to regain possession of their homes. While Fergusson's argument partly hinged on her own pro-Patriot politics, she and Galloway both challenged the notion that a married woman's property belonged to her husband during his lifetime. They saw themselves as independent of their husbands and capable of possessing, controlling, and paying taxes on property as individuals. While the state ultimately established a halfway solution, claiming the right to possess their property until their husbands died and then return it to them or their heirs, they did not deny these women the right to claim property as individuals.

Jane Bartram, while trying to protect herself and her property, provides the strongest evidence of the malleability of late-eighteenth century Philadelphia society. Estranged for nearly ten years from an incompatible husband, forced to support herself and her son, Bartram wanted to ensure her financial and personal independence. In order to do so, she sought a divorce, first through the state, and then through the execution of a contract severing her ties to her spouse. Bartram's conviction that this separation was possible and her success in executing a contract to that effect demonstrates a married woman's capacity to see herself as independent from her husband and to gain public support for that position. While the legality of the contract is questionable, it was validated by agents of the British government and members of the Philadelphia community, all of whom were willing to accept Bartram's separation from her husband, her claim to a portion of his post-war settlement, and her independent identity as a shopkeeper and mother. Jane Bartram was not wealthy and entitled; in many ways, she had less reason to expect her community to accept her as a capable and independent member of society than the far wealthier Grace Galloway and Elizabeth Fergusson.

However, she proved herself adept at running a business and participating in the political culture of Philadelphia and was supported in her efforts to gain financial and personal independence.

Women may have been denied full citizenship following the Revolution, but it was not because their activities of the prior decades had demonstrated their inability to function in the public sphere. Women had proven themselves capable of doing most of the same things as men. They owned and operated businesses, enmeshing themselves in the commercial culture of pre-war Philadelphia. Although denied access to formal politics, they proved knowledgeable about contemporary issues and willing to express their opinions on matters affecting their families, cities, colonies, and countries. They actively participated in the Revolution in myriad ways, supporting both the American and British sides emotionally, materially, and physically. At the time and afterwards, women's roles in the war were applauded by memoirists, writers, and public speakers who highlighted women's sacrifices, but downplayed their political motivation. And, in the final years of the Revolution and first years of the Republic, women entered public debates on repatriation, property rights, and citizenship as they expressed their opinions and fought for their right to reunite their families and regain confiscated property. Going into the early national period, Philadelphia women had a long history of functioning within the public sphere and a confidence in their right to be there. While their presence would be challenged in the first decades of the republic, women did not disappear from the spaces and spheres in which they were accustomed to move.

Chapter Five

"Our young women [are] forming a new era in female history":[1] Philadelphia Women in the Young Nation

During the formative years of the American republic, women played an active role in shaping public thought through their access to and participation in politics, education, and social reform. Following Federalist Congressional victories in the late 1790s, politicians chose to place women at the forefront of their public celebrations. When militia officers invited prominent Philadelphians such as Elizabeth Willing Powel, Sally Duane, and Emily Mifflin Hopkinson to make annual presentations to their units, the women spoke before the assembled troops, though they highlighted their supporting role in the Federalist body politic. Thus the women noted how "the fortitude of a Roman matron" could "inspire true courage," even as the commanders accepted their gifts as symbols of "female patriotism and independence."[2] These discursive differences reveal ongoing tensions and negotiations regarding women's place in the public sphere. Were they to be supportive mothers and guardians of the household or active participants in the government and public life; and were women or men to determine that role?

This tension remained a hallmark of gendered experience into the antebellum period. While women increasingly claimed a place for themselves in public discourses and arenas, they and their male counterparts continued to voice concerns about the propriety of taking such roles in social and political debates. By the 1830s, female abolitionists seized a prominent and more typically masculine role in advocating for the

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[1] Judith Sargent Murray, *The Gleaner*, ed. Nina Baym (1798; reprinted, Schenectady, NY: Union College Press, 1992), 702-3.
[2] *Country Porcupine*, 23 and 24 October 1798 and Susan Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames: Women and Political Culture in Early National Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 84.

end of slavery. When Lucretia Mott and Angelina Grimké Weld joined William Lloyd Garrison on the stage of Philadelphia's Pennsylvania Hall in 1838 to address an audience of over 3,000 men and women, black and white, they proclaimed at least some women's commitment to public protest and activism. Weld directly addressed the objections to her and her sisters speaking out against slavery, but claimed such objections were voiced by "deluded beings" and insisted that any violence against herself or the crowd would be nothing "compared with what the slaves endure." She spoke eloquently about the condition of slavery and the necessity of northern women to do all in their power to end the institution. In conclusion, Weld argued that women must stand up boldly and publicly against slavery that "we may feel the satisfaction of *having done what we could*." The threats of violence that such efforts inspired came from people who objected to interracial and mixed-sex organizing as well as those who opposed women's presence on any public platform. But Mott, Weld, and other antislavery women insisted on standing in solidarity for a cause they wholeheartedly supported.[3]

Eighteenth-century writers and twentieth-century historians have both debated women's public roles in the aftermath of the American Revolution, including their right to a political voice.[4] In the post-war era, some people feared a backlash against women's

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[3] Angelina Grimké Weld, Speech at Pennsylvania Hall, 17 May 1838, *Africans in America*, PBS, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2939t.html. Pennsylvania Hall was such a strong symbol of antislavery activism and interracial cooperation that it was burned to the ground by a racist mob on 18 May 1838, four days after it was dedicated. For more on the controversy surrounding the building, see Ira V. Brown, *Mary Grew* (London: Associated University Presses, 1991), 19-20.

[4] A major area of interest for scholars of the early national period has been the formation of distinctly American ideas of citizenship, patriotism, independence, and virtue. Gender has long been a component of that debate, with many historians concluding that women were largely excluded from the political world of the new republic. Many, if not most, early American political theoreticians defined citizenship, and the resulting political personality, as exclusively male, requiring the exercise of certain responsibilities such as participating in the militia, paying taxes, and expressing independent political opinions. Most women, due to their dependent position as wives, could not possibly fill those roles. They might be citizens in the broadest sense, but they were not political beings. Rosemarie Zagarri argues that women's rights in the Early Republic were made up of "privileges, which were nonpolitical in nature." For women in this period,

overt political efforts during the war; others sought to reinstate restrictions on women's public activities; while still others justified increased educational access and ongoing political influence by highlighting women's traditional roles as mothers and wives. Since 1980, the concept of republican motherhood, coined by Linda Kerber, has dominated much of the discussion around women's roles in the new nation, but scholars have offered other perspectives as well, including the virtuous wife and the independent woman.[5] None of these tropes can fully capture the variety of views and actions taken by the women who lived through the early decades of nationhood. Confronted by diverse, and sometimes contradictory, views on their suitability for education, public service, and politics, they followed – or carved out – many different paths through the shifting terrain.

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rights were construed "as benefits, conferred by God and expressed in the performance of duties to society. The stress on duty and obligation, rather than on liberty and choice, gave women's rights a fundamentally different character from those of men." Rosemarie Zagarri, "The Rights of Man and Woman in Post-Revolutionary America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 55, no. 2 (April 1998), 203, 205. See also, Linda K. Kerber, "The Paradox of Women's Citizenship in the Early Republic: The Case of Martin v. Massachusetts, 1805," *American Historical Review* 97, no. 2 (April 1992), 350-351; Joan R. Gundersen, "Independence, Citizenship, and the American Revolution," *Signs* 13, no. 1 (Autumn 1987), 60; and, Jan Lewis, "A Revolution for Whom? Women in the Era of the American Revolution," in *A Companion to Women's History*, ed. Nancy Hewitt (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 87-90.

[5] Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia by the University of North Carolina Press, 1980). For examples of scholars who have echoed republican motherhood as the primary explanation for women's expanding role in early national public life, see Rosemarie Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); A. Kristen Foster, *Moral Visions and Material Ambitions: Philadelphia Struggles to Define the Republic, 1776-1836* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2004); and, William Huntting Howell, *Against Self-Reliance: The Arts of Dependence in the Early United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015). For conceptions of women's role being more rooted in marital partnership, see Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 44, no. 4 (October 1987), 689-721; Anya Jabour, *Marriage in the Early Republic: Elizabeth and William Wirt and the Companionate Ideal* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Cynthia A. Kierner, *The Contrast: Manners, Morals, and Authority in the Early American Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 2007); and, Sarah Fatherly, *Gentlewomen and Learned Ladies: Women and Elite Formation in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Lehigh, Penn.: Lehigh University Press, 2008). For characterizations of women acting more independently, see Susan Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames: Women and Political Culture in Early National Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); Clare A. Lyons, *Sex Among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender & Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia by the University of North Carolina Press, 2006); and, Marla R. Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2010).

During the early decades of the nineteenth century, women explored opportunities for political participation, education, and social activism, affirming their fitness for public life and broadening popular conceptions of women's appropriate spheres of activity.

Following the Revolution, Philadelphia women continued to participate in local and national politics, especially during the decade in which the city was the American capital. Even when they acted as members of families, women in the postwar period increasingly "articulated a vision of themselves as political actors, with rights and obligations that were entirely independent of their relationships with men."[6] They rose to prominence within federal political culture as hostesses and salonnières, creating ostensibly private, social spaces that proved crucial for the discussion, negotiation, and deal making that shaped the public sphere. The women who hosted these events were not only applauded for their ability to organize a lovely gathering but were also respected for their political acumen in engaging guests in convivial and productive conversation. Female Philadelphians also participated in an increasingly partisan culture that featured a wide range of events, some public, some private. Wives and daughters played central roles in the memorial culture that arose around American holidays such as the Fourth of July, George Washington's birthday, and, later, his death. They attended and hosted events, presented flags and other memorials, engaged in displays of celebration and mourning, and continued to be a common and important part of the popular political culture.

As early national Philadelphians debated women's role in both popular and formal politics, they also discussed their need for a more comprehensive education. Men

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[6] Simon P. Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 68.

articulated a number of arguments in favor of female education, ranging from improving their ability to give advice to their husbands and sons to equipping them with the skills for independent household management. Women, however, wanted to overcome what Gerda Lerner calls "educational disadvantaging," the intentional suppression of female education and access to learned professions.[7] The Young Ladies Academy of Philadelphia, one of the first all-female schools in America, provided a quality education in both classic and modern subjects that encouraged women to cultivate their minds and embrace their inherent intellectual abilities. While much of the rhetoric surrounding female schooling in this period focused on preparing them for marriage and family, the women who attended the Academy received training modeled on the best boys schools of the day: they were challenged to compete with one another; they were rewarded for excellence; and, they were expected to undergo public evaluation of their learning and skills. Through this curriculum, female students gained confidence in both their own intellect and their ability to express themselves clearly and confidently on a public stage. Even in less comprehensive institutions, expanded educational opportunities aided women's ability to participate in early national politics and helped prepare them for the social and political reform movements of the nineteenth century.

Given Philadelphia's unique makeup of Quakers, free blacks, and politically-engaged citizens, efforts to promote moral reform and abolition began almost immediately following the Revolutionary War. Women were actively involved in all-female and mixed-sex efforts to improve the situation of widows, orphans, and the poor as well as enterprises to alleviate the conditions of American Indians and end slavery. By

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[7] Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to 1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 21-45, 192-219.

the early nineteenth century, the antislavery movement had blossomed in Philadelphia, offering women multiple opportunities to engage in reform as well as more overt political protest. Drawing on pre-Revolutionary experiences, they played a prominent role in supporting an international boycott effort, the free produce movement, which sought to end slavery by making it economically untenable. In the 1830s, the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society (PFAS), composed of black and white women, increased awareness about the conditions under which slaves suffered, raised money to support various abolition efforts, circulated petitions, and sponsored speakers. Through the PFAS, female abolitionists were able to work alongside black and white men and women from Great Britain, other parts of the United States, and the Caribbean. In their efforts to "change a world with which nearly everyone else seemed content,"[8] abolitionist women combined pre-Revolutionary precedents with more recent experiences in politics and education to step fully into a public arena where they were not yet entirely welcome.

Early National Politics

In the early years of the republic, politicians, public intellectuals, and moral theorists considered the nature of independence and citizenship as it applied to inhabitants of the United States. Despite the rhetoric of the Revolution, national leaders were not certain that all Americans deserved, or were capable of handling, full membership in the polity. As political writers increasingly focused on the divide between dependence and independence to determine fitness for citizenship, white men, regardless of economic status, were considered deserving of inclusion, while women, people of color, and minors were generally labeled incapable of wielding political power. While

[8] Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women in Antebellum Reform* (Wheeling, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2000), 2.

many male thinkers embraced this dichotomy, it does not accurately reflect how women saw themselves fitting into the American citizenry. Historian Joan Gundersen suggests that women "were more likely to see particular women or roles as either independent or dependent and to apply both halves of the dichotomy to themselves."[9] Drawing on years of experience and observation, women knew themselves to be political beings and continued to act that way in the formative years of the early national period, regardless of how men envisioned their capabilities.

Men who did not participate directly in these theoretical debates were largely silent on women's public political participation, and some scholars have supposed that such silences reflect the fact that late-eighteenth century men, in general, did not consider women capable of anything more than the most passive citizenship. Men did not write about it because they did not think about it.[10] However, this assumption underestimates the possibilities recognized by many people in the early national period. Following the Revolution, politicians were fully aware that women were capable of behaving as something other than just wives and mothers. Moreover, cities like New York and Philadelphia had large populations of single women (whether not yet married, spinsters, or widows) who were active in commercial, political, benevolent, and religious circles. It is impossible that their male counterparts had such a limited view of women's abilities.[11]

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[9] Joan R. Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World: Women in Revolutionary America, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 201.

[10] For example, Linda Kerber suggests that political philosophers sought "to limit the political responsibilities of married (by which they actually meant adult) women. They found it impossible to imagine adult women as anything other than wives." Kerber, "The Paradox of Women's Citizenship in the Early Republic," 354, 378.

[11] One clear piece of evidence that men could imagine women as active citizens is the case of post-Revolutionary New Jersey, in which single, property-owning women were enfranchised and exercised their rights for approximately thirty years. Both the 1776 state constitution and a 1796 revision of the voting laws permitted women who met the qualifications of independence and personal wealth to vote. Women were disenfranchised in 1807, when rampant voter fraud led them to be accused of acting on behalf of the

Given that late-eighteenth century politicians had ample evidence of women's ability to function in the public sphere, we must assume that they made a choice not to empower women politically, rather than not considering the possibility.

Assertions about gender roles and rights in the early national period occurred in two realms: the world of rhetoric and ideas and that of lived experience and action. The American Revolution created spaces in which women were not only allowed to take a strong political stand, but publicly exhorted to do so. And as we have seen, patriot and loyalist women readily answered that call, supporting their side of the conflict practically and emotionally. While some scholars have suggested that this was a brief and atypical moment of politicization for American women, in fact they drew on decades of experience as political thinkers, writers, and actors.[12] After the Revolution women continued to behave politically, writing and discussing current events, hosting gatherings, and attending public events where they voiced their support for various causes and figures. However, they also stepped into formal politics in ways they had not done before. The rise of party politics created new opportunities for women to influence both local and national discourse. The wives of politicians and diplomats played key roles in furthering specific political agendas. They also proved crucial in establishing widespread

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men in their lives rather than expressing their independent political willpower. For a greater discussion, see Gundersen, "Independence, Citizenship, and the American Revolution," 65-6 and Judith Apter Klinghoffer and Lois Elkis, "'The Petticoat Electors': Women's Suffrage in New Jersey, 1776-1807," *Journal of the Early Republic* 12, issue 2 (Summer 1992), 159-193.

[12] Scholars such as Rosemarie Zagarri and Anne Boylan have suggested that, rather than being part of a long arc of increased access to the public sphere, women's activities during the Revolution were an aberration. While women would again gain prominence through organized activism by the 1820s, they suggest that the wartime involvement of women in the political arena was born of necessity and not representative of women's place in the late-eighteenth century public sphere. As a result, the postwar period saw a return to women being confined to the domestic and private spheres before they would emerge in benevolent organizations thirty years later. See, Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash* and Anne M. Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism: New York and Boston, 1797-1840* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

popular support for specific parties and platforms and were courted by civic leaders for that purpose.

In the first decades of nationhood, emerging political factions and later parties were heavily invested in demonstrating that they had the backing of a majority of the people, and they meant a true majority, including non-voters. Thus, women immediately became a routine part of the elaborate displays of patriotism hosted by politicians, militia groups, and private citizens. In the late-1790s, the First Troop of Philadelphia City Cavalry formally asked Elizabeth Willing Powel to present them with a new standard as a sign of female support. While she declined to be present due to poor health, she did send a flag "as Evidence of her confidence in their valor and Patriotism." Susan Branson notes that Powel was "a symbol of Philadelphia's Federalist leadership," and her participation would have been a strong sign of support.[13] The following year, Sally Duane and Emily Hopkinson appeared on behalf of the city's Federalist leadership, presenting the Troop with a painting depicting MacPherson's Blues as an "offering to Patriotism."[14]

As nascent political parties sought legitimacy and power, they desired the community approval that the presence of women granted. Historian Simon Newman suggests that by the late 1790s women participated in events hosted by both parties, but Federalists were more comfortable with overt female political expression than their Democratic Republican opponents.[15] He argued, "[w]ith their hierarchical conception of

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[13] Elizabeth Powel to Captain Dunlap, 16 March 1797, Powel Collection, Elizabeth Powel papers, Box 1, 1788-1799, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP). See also, Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 83-4.

[14] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 9 July 1798.

[15] Formal political parties did not solidify until the mid-1790s, but factions emerged almost immediately after the Revolutionary War and played a key role in shaping political debate in the 1780s and 1790s. During the capital period, Philadelphia saw extreme partisan disagreement over the future of the government and women were swept up in that. Because they were considered to be part of the "people" by both of America's first formal parties, they were involved in establishing and carrying out the socio-

republican society, Federalists applauded the actions of their wives and daughters who went beyond simple spectatorship."[16] However, members of both parties felt comfortable criticizing women who supported the opposition while applauding the "American Fair" who appeared at their own events.[17] Each party assigned their female supporters largely subordinate roles that they considered essentially passive. Many women, however, saw the invitation to be part of partisan gatherings as an opportunity to assume an active role in the politics of the early republic.

The election of George Washington as the first president of the United States reinforced women's opportunities, creating a culture of reverence and celebration that provided them a central position in popular political celebrations. In some cases, women even determined the nature of these events. In 1789, as George Washington passed through Trenton, New Jersey, on the way to his inauguration in New York, a group of local women erected an eighteen foot high arch covered in flowers and laurel leaves, bearing a sign that celebrated his triumph in that city over the Hessians. It read, "THE DEFENDERS OF THE MOTHERS WILL ALSO PROTECT THEIR DAUGHTERS." As Washington and his entourage passed through the arch, the women sang and their daughters, dressed all in white, threw flowers across his path.[18] While this greeting was part of a male-dominated celebration of Washington, women found a way to insert

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political agenda of the Federalists and Anti-Federalists that would evolve into the Federalist and Democratic-Republican parties. For more on the rise of the party system and women's role in early factional politics, see Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street*; Saul Cornell, *The Other Founders: Anti-Federalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788-1828* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); and, Robert W. T. Martin, *Government by Dissent: Protest, Resistance, and Radical Democratic Thought in the Early American Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 2013).

[16] Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street*, 67, 78.

[17] *Porcupine's Gazette*, 31 October 1798.

[18] Jane Ewing to James Hunter, Jr., 23 April 1789, Manuscripts in Vault, New Jersey State Archives; "ACCOUNT of the Manner of receiving, at Trenton, his Excellency GEORGE WASHINGTON, President of the United States, on his Route to the Seat of Federal Government: Communicated in a Letter to the Editor," *Columbian Magazine* 3 (1789), 288-90; and, Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street*, 47.

themselves into the opening moments of the event. Motifs at such celebrations were typically militaristic, but women often substituted symbols of peace for guns, cannons, or flag and eagle designs. By having their daughters spread flowers, mothers reinforced the idea that Washington had a duty to protect his female subjects as much as he did the men who voted for him.[19]

During his presidency, Washington's birthday became a national holiday, celebrated by men and women of every political persuasion. In Philadelphia, the annual birthday ball was attended by politically important families from the city as well as other parts of Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. People who were not sufficiently wealthy or powerful to gain invitations stood outside, watching the guests come and go, and hoping to catch a glimpse of the first family. Sarah Cox, daughter of Colonel John Cox, a wealthy merchant and landowner and a personal friend of the president, recorded the popularity of Washington's birthday in a 1797 letter:

> The common topic of conversation here is the Birth night, which is next Wednesday. It is to be the most superb entertainment I hear that ever has been here; It is to be in the same place it was last year – I suppose it will be a genteel mob – for I believe everybody is going,- They all say it is to be the last time we shall ever have it in our power to celebrate the Birthday of our good President, that they will go at all events – Half Trenton is down already & I hear that all Princeton will be here – Mrs Dr Smith has come to go although she is quite lame with the rheumatism, but you know what a good Federalist she is.
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> I talk of taking two pair of shoes with me for I danced one pair nearly out at the last Assembly and I am sure if I could do that when it had nothing to do with the President, what shall I do when I have his presence to inspire me.[20]

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[19] Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street*, 49. Women in other parts of the country similarly took part in celebrations of George Washington. In 1796, the women of Newburyport, Massachusetts, organized their own, all-female celebration dinner for his birthday, at which they toasted a range of women, including Martha Washington; heroine of the French Revolution, Marie-Charlotte Corday; and, "the fair patriots of America" who they hoped would "never fail their independence which nature equally dispenses" to them as well as men. "Female Patriotism," *Maryland Gazette*, 17 March 1796 and Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street*, 68.

[20] Unsourced quote, Anne Hollingsworth Wharton, *Salons Colonial and Republican with Numerous Reproductions of Portraits and Miniatures of Men and Women Prominent in Colonial Life and in the Early Days of the Republic* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1900), 157. Colonel John Cox had been a wealthy

Washington's birthday was an opportunity for all Americans to express their patriotism and love for the president, but over the course of the 1790s, as factions developed into adversarial political parties, the celebration was increasingly dominated by the pro-Washington Federalists. Women traditionally enhanced their gowns with red, white, and blue adornments to indicate their attachment to the United States, but in 1798 they instead wore black silk roses, a favorite symbol of the Federalist Party. That birthday ball was noted as being particularly festive due to "the generous and patriotic spirit of our fair countrywomen."[21] However, some Democratic Republicans boycotted public recognitions of the day late in Washington's second term, preferring to stay home rather than take part in an event hosted by their adversaries.[22]

Despite the increasingly partisan character of national politics, the vast majority of Americans considered Washington's death in 1799 a national tragedy and participated in both private and public mourning rituals. It was an important way for women, especially, to show their support for the young nation regardless of their political preferences. Certainly no one could have remained unaware of Washington's death given the public rituals surrounding it. Churches across the country muffled their bells; militias shot off cannons; municipal buildings, stores, churches, and homes closed for

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merchant in Philadelphia prior to serving as Quartermaster General during the American Revolution. Following the war, due to poor health, he focused more heavily on accruing land and property in eastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey. He and his wife Esther were longtime friends of Martha and George Washington. They had six daughters, of whom Sarah was the fifth. The year after this letter was written, Sarah married her cousin John Redman Coxe, a prominent physician. Their second child, Esther, married one of Martha Washington's grandsons. Rev. Henry Miller Cox, *The Cox Family in America: A History and Genealogy of the Older Branches of the Family from the Appearance of its First Representative in this Country in 1610* (New York: Printed by the Unionist-Gazette Association, Somerville, N.J., 1912), 38, 215-6, 224-5 and *Pennsylvania Society of Colonial Governors*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1916), 152-3.

[21] *Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, 27 February 1798 and Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames,* 83.

[22] Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street*, 60-65.

business and festooned their doors with black crepe ribbons; and, men and women wore mourning clothes in memory of the late-President. First Lady Abigail Adams directed the "Ladies of the officers of the general government" to wear appropriate clothing and intimated that all respectable women would do the same.[23] All around the country, women attended funeral ceremonies honoring Washington.[24] By Congressional decree, Philadelphia held a memorial service with an oration by retired General Henry "Lighthorse Harry" Lee. Elizabeth Drinker estimated that she and her three daughters were among "4000 persons, or near that number, who were, 'tis said, within the church." The mourners included women and families across the economic spectrum: Betsy Ross, her family, and her servants joined the grieving crowds "of people in the streets, and at the windows" of Zion Lutheran Church.[25]

Philadelphia women participated in a variety of other political events as well.[26] During the 1790s, Washington and his cabinet held a multitude of public dinners at which elite women mingled with important national figures. Henrietta Liston, wife of Robert Liston, the British minister, recalled one such event at the end of Washington's second

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[23] Ibid., 69.

[24] Margaret Bayard Smith, the wife of a Democratic-Republican journalist, wrote to a relative and predicted that it would be "almost an impossibility for ladies to be present," at the memorial service in New York City, "as the crowd will be so large." Margaret Bayard Smith to Mary Ann Smith, 26 December 1799, Rebecca Gratz Collection, Library of Congress.

[25] Elizabeth Drinker recorded the complicated political and religious considerations that went into deciding whether to attend Washington's memorial. While she and her family did attend, she noted that she expected many Quakers to "make no show" because such public displays were "out of our way." However, she also expected that "many [Philadelphians] will join in the form that cared little about him" because it was considered the proper thing to do, regardless of political opinion. 25 and 27 December 1799**,** *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, ed. Elaine Forman Crane, vol. 1 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991) and Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 311.

[26] One fascinating area for exploration that is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this dissertation, is American women's active support for the French Revolution. Springing from their partisan affiliations, women took very public stances on various events and figures connected to the French Revolution. Susan Branson laid the foundation for an in-depth study of American women and their various reactions to the French Revolution in her work, *Those Fiery Frenchified Dames*, but a more comprehensive, national study would be an excellent addition to our understanding of female political development in America.

term, at which "I sat between the rising and setting sun [Adams and Washington], there is a good deal of amusement in the conversation of Adams, a considerable degree of wit and humour, and I feel myself perfectly easy and familiar with both Great Men."[27] While the dinners required an invitation, Congressional sessions and other meetings were often open to the public and women as well as men attended. Apparently these events were extremely popular with spectators; one woman had trouble finding a seat to hear Washington's last opening address before Congress as "the Hall was crowded and a prodigious Mob at the Door."[28] Throughout the eighteenth century, women attended open sessions of the English Parliament, and it seems that American women felt comfortable continuing this tradition with the newly established Congress.

As they had before and during the Revolutionary War, women continued to act independently as individuals as well as part of families to promote political aims. In the early national period, they hosted salons and other events that allowed them to express their opinions and support their husbands' agendas. Over time, those roles took on added importance. As wives of elected officials, hostesses participated in supporting a much larger agenda and became a crucial element in creating and maintaining early political alliances and agendas. These women were well aware of the significance of the gatherings they presided over and acted carefully to ensure the success of whatever goal their husbands and allies pursued.

Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson had hosted an extremely prominent salon in the immediate pre-war period, and other Philadelphia area women carried on that tradition

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[27] Henrietta Liston to her uncle, 3 January 1800 in Bradford Perkins, ed., "A Diplomat's Wife in Philadelphia: Letters of Henrietta Liston, 1796-1800," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 11, no. 4 (October 1954).
[28] Henrietta Liston to her uncle, 9 December 1796 in Ibid.

when she retired from public life following years of conflict with Pennsylvania's state government. Early salons had been primarily social gatherings at which political topics were sometimes discussed, but the post-Revolutionary salon was an explicitly political gathering. When the national capital moved from New York to Philadelphia in 1790, the importance of socio-political spaces such as salons and the influence of their hostesses increased. Salon culture rapidly developed along partisan lines and many salonnières determined their guest lists solely according to party affiliation. Federalists Anne Willing Bingham and her niece Elizabeth Willing Powel hosted the most prominent and influential gatherings during Philadelphia's tenure as the national capital.[29] Bingham and Powel disregarded the common practice of selecting guests based on political party and instead brought together families of different persuasions in a neutral setting where they could discuss politics without rancor.[30] French visitor the Marquis de Chastellux complimented Powel for the "use that she knows how to make of her understanding and information" in creating a space for political discussion and debate.[31]

At the same time, the prominent role played by women such as Bingham and Powel invited a level of criticism not seen prior to the Revolution. The critiques were not necessarily aimed at the political character of their gatherings, but more at the ways some women entered into political discourse, which was considered unfeminine. John and Abigail Adams along with their daughter Nabby derided the lavish Philadelphia social scene and accused salonnières like Bingham of extravagance and immodesty. Abigail

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[29] Susan Branson notes that while Martha Washington hosted the official Philadelphia salon during her husband's presidency, it was Anne Willing Bingham's gathering that was actually the most opulent and influential. Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 126.
[30] Ibid, 133-4.
[31] Susan Branson does not make clear which of the Marquis's several memoirs of his travels through America this quotation is drawn from. See, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 133.

specifically criticized Bingham's style when she described her as "a [leader] of fashion, but [showing] more of the [bosom] than the decent Matron, or the modest woman."[32] While Nabby did not deny that Bingham was an intelligent and accomplished woman, she questioned whether her "exuberance of sprightliness and wit" was becoming in a proper woman.[33] Prominent Philadelphian Joshua Francis Fisher disliked the casual and confident way Bingham spoke with men and accused her of having "too much freedom of speech and an interlarding of oaths, a most detestable custom."[34] Similarly, Elizabeth Powel's position in local political culture raised concerns among her sisters about the propriety of a woman assuming such a prominent place within masculine discourse. Anne Francis wrote to their sister Mary Byrd that

> when in society [Elizabeth] will annimate and give a brilliancy to the whole Conversation, you know the uncommon command she has of Language and her ideas flow with such rapidity…. her address and Conceleating Manner Attract Attention. I sometimes think her Patriotism causes too much Anxiety, Female Politicians are always ridiculed by the other Sex.[35]

While female-led salons had existed in Philadelphia for more than twenty years by the time Bingham and Powel initiated theirs, that did not save them from being accused of

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[32] Abigail Adams to Mrs. Cranch, 15-18 March 1800, *New Letters of Abigail Adams, 1788-1801*, ed. Stewart Mitchell (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 1947), 241-2.

[33] Despite not liking Bingham personally, Nabby Adams could not deny her appeal. She recorded in her diary that "She joins in every conversation in company; and when engaged herself in conversing with you, she will, by joining directly in another chit chat with another party, convince you, that she was all attention to every one." October 26, 1784, *Journal and Correspondence of Miss Adams, Daughter of John Adams*, ed. Caroline Amelia Smith DeWindt (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1841), 28-9; Robert C. Alberts, *The Golden Voyage: The Life and Times of William Bingham, 1752-1804* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), 142-7; and, Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 134.

[34] Joshua Francis Fisher, "Biography of George Harrison," p. 24, HSP as quoted in Wendy A. Nicholson, *Making the Private Public: Anne Willing Bingham's Role as a Leader of Philadelphia's Social Elite in the Late Eighteenth Century* (MA thesis, University of Delaware, 1988), 16.

[35] Anne Francis to Mary Byrd, 19 March 1808 in Everard Kidder Meade, "The Papers of Richard Evelyn Byrd, I, of Frederick County, Virginia. A Note on the Valuable Collection of Family Letters and Other Documents with Extracts Therefrom," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 54, no. 2 (April 1946), 117.

immodesty by those who disliked their opinions, their style, or their prominence in political discourse.

Despite the concern that women should not wade so enthusiastically into political debates, even in the relatively contained space of a salon, some women took it upon themselves to advise politicians on matters of state. Samuel and Elizabeth Willing Powel were close friends with George and Martha Washington during his first administration, and Elizabeth was one of George's preferred confidants. In the autumn of 1792, Washington considered not running for a second term, inspiring her to write a seven-page letter urging him to run again:

> Your resignation would elate the Enemies of good Government … They would say that you were actuated by Principles of self-Love alone – that you saw the Post was not tenable with any Prospect of adding to your Fame. The antifederalist would use it as an argument for dissolving, the Union, and would urge that you, from Experience, had found the present System a bad one, and had, artfully, withdrawn from it that you might not be crushed under its Ruins.

Powel went on to insist "at this time, you are the only Man in America that dares to do right on all public Occassions." She concluded that the nation needed Washington and "that you are not indifferent to the Plaudits of the world I must conclude when I believe that the love of honest Fame has and ever will be predominant in the best, the noblest and the most capable Natures. Nor is the approbation of Mankind to be disregarded with Impunity even by you.'"[36] Biographers of both Powel and Washington concur that he was, at least in part, referring to Powell when he told Thomas Jefferson that he decided to

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[36] Elizabeth Powel to [George Washington], 17 November 1792 in *The Papers of George Washington (Presidential Series)*, ed. Christine Steinberg Patrick, vol. 11 (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 2002), 395-97. Powel is not the only woman who felt free to write the President regarding her views on national politics. Annis Boudinot Stockton wrote Washington: "And now that I am speaking of your Sex, I will ask whether they are not capable of doing something towards introducing federal fashions and national manners? A good general government, without good morals and good habits, will not make us a happy People." See Annis Boudinot Stockton to George Washington, 31 August 1788 in *The Writings of George Washington, from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, vol. 30 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1939), 75-77.

run again due to "strong solicitations" from Philadelphia.[37] Certainly the force with which she exhorted him to do his duty indicates that she expected the sitting president would take her opinions seriously.[38]

Elizabeth Powel and Anne Bingham were the most prominent salonnières in the Philadelphia area, but they were by no means the only women to host important gatherings. First Lady Martha Washington held an official Friday evening gathering as well as less formal afternoon teas. She and her husband also hosted an official drawing room on Tuesday evenings, when Congressmen and other political figures brought their wives and children to socialize and discuss contemporary topics.[39] Poet Annis Boudinot Stockton hosted a popular gathering at her home in Princeton, New Jersey, during the period in which that city was home to the United States Congress. Stockton's social circle drew heavily on people living in eastern Pennsylvania, many of whom owned second properties in southern New Jersey. She was well known in Philadelphia, whose prominent residents often graced her gatherings.[40] Other political wives, such as Mary

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[37] See David W. Maxey, *A Portrait of Elizabeth Willing Powel (1743-1830)* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2006), 35 and Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington: A Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), 383.

[38] Powel's reputation for intelligence and wisdom was widely felt in early national Philadelphia. She was so strongly praised for her blend of intelligence, sociability, and political acumen that she was convinced to publish a short conduct manual, *The Economy of Human Life*, in 1816. For a discussion of her as a model for early national literary women, see Susan Stabile, *'By a Female Hand': Letters, Belles Lettres, and the Philadelphia Culture of Performance, 1760-1820* (PhD Dissertation: University of Delaware, 1996), 66-67.

[39] Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 126 and Wharton, *Salons Colonial and Republican*, 40, 47. Attendance at Martha Washington's gatherings were not optional for all women. Henrietta Liston felt compelled to attend the First Ladies' salon as part of her duties as the wife of a foreign minister, despite her incredibly busy social calendar. Henrietta Liston to her uncle, 8 April 1797 in Perkins, ed., "A Diplomat's Wife in Philadelphia," 610.

[40] Karin A. Wulf, "Milcah Martha Moore's Book: Documenting Culture and Connection in the Revolutionary Era" in *Milcah Martha Moore's Book: A Commonplace Book from Revolutionary America*, ed. Catherine La Courreye Blecki and Karin A. Wulf (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 25; Stabile," By a Female Hand," 12-14; and, Carla Mulford, ed., *Only for the Eye of a Friend: The Poems of Annis Boudinot Stockton* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1995).

White Morris and Lucy Knox also held meetings of Philadelphia men and women that combined sociability, culture, and politics.[41]

The melding of social and political spaces had become fully institutionalized by the beginning of the Jefferson administration, at which time the national capital relocated to Washington, D.C. Many Philadelphia families such as that of Samuel and Margaret Bayard Smith followed the government to Washington; Smith was editor of the first national newspaper and a leader in Republican political thought. The Smiths and couples like them continued a tradition of blending social gatherings and political conversations, which they parlayed into significant circles of local and international friends and visitors who mingled at formal and informal events. As presidential and congressional wives created and expanded the role of drawing rooms, dinners, afternoon visits, and other politically-inflected social events, salon culture moved out of private homes and into the official spaces of government. By the time John Quincy Adams became president in 1825, salons had ceased to be an external sphere in which informal negotiations occurred and had instead become integral to the political process. Under the watchful eye of their astute hostesses, members of opposing parties could meet and discuss issues of national importance, while claiming that they had merely attended the same social function and denying the political negotiations that became the hallmark of the federal salon.[42]

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[41] George Washington's diary from May through September 1787 gives a good sense of how often he and other political figures were hosted at the Morris, Powel, and Bingham homes. In the early years of nationhood, politically astute women's salons provided one of the major forums for political discussion and social mingling. See, *The Diaries of George Washington*, eds. Donald Jackson and Dorothy Twohig, vol. 5 (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1979) and Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 133.

[42] Catherine Allgor has done excellent work examining the role women played in creating the political culture of Washington, D.C. Looking at the activities of the female relatives of presidents, congressmen, and other prominent figures, she argues that the federal government relied upon the social world run by women as an alternative space in which negotiations and deals could be made. In a system in which compromise and exchange of favors was a key aspect of the process, having a theoretically private and

Increasingly during the 1790s and early 1800s, the wives of politicians took on the role of supporting their husbands' agenda as a full-time occupation. The letters of Henrietta Liston, wife of British minister, reveal the amount of work that went into being a politician's wife. She viewed her role in supporting his diplomatic agenda as a job, one that she frequently found difficult and stressful. The moment the Listons arrived in New York, their social responsibilities began: they dined "abroad every day, with, We scarcely know whom, but are always splendidly entertain'd."[43] In one of her many letters to her uncle back in Scotland, she described her relief at finding a house large enough to maintain their social calendar: "We were, however, very thankful to get it, as there was no other to be procured in which we could entertain Company at all, and that seems to be a necessary part of our Trade."[44] Her worry over finding an acceptable house was not just about finding lodgings that were comfortable and befitting their social status, but also about finding a place in which she could carry out the work required of a political wife.

Once settled in Philadelphia, Liston found herself almost completely consumed with negotiating the complex politics of the capital city. Unlike Bingham and Powel, she often longed for a quieter, less public life. She wrote to her uncle that

> upon my first coming to Town the apprehension of what I was to go through really damped my spirits and almost deprived me of my zest – but I have now got into the Vortex, and tho' I do not find it easy, I am reconciled to dine abroad, have Company at home, or attend a publick amusement in the Evening.

Finding that even these social events did not provide enough opportunity to mix and converse with all the men and women who were connected to her husband, Liston

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nonpolitical space such as a drawing room gathering or dinner party hosted by a political wife in which to negotiate was essential. The power of political wives became increasingly controversial, which Allgor suggests is further testimony to its centrality within the Washington, D.C. political culture. See, Catherine Allgor, *Parlor Politics: In which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 2000).

[43] Henrietta Liston to her uncle, 8 May 1796 in Perkins, ed., "A Diplomat's Wife in Philadelphia."

[44] Henrietta Liston to her uncle, 21 July 1796, in Ibid.

decided to open her drawing rooms "to receive Company every Monday from seven OClock in the Evening till nine or ten – tea, Coffee, and Cards." She found the pace of life exhausting and reflected,

> [I] look forward to our return as the reward of all the trouble I go through, yet I sometimes recollect how many Women there are to whom what I call trouble would be pleasure. –different feelings give very different names to the same thing, yet Mr. Liston is so amiable and indulgent that I endeavour to conceal how extremely disgusted and tired I often am of this busy scene.[45]

The work of being a politician's wife involved more than attending parties and mixing with other political families; it also required a keen understanding of national and international politics that informed decisions about whom to socialize with and whom to snub. As a foreign emissary, Robert Liston was careful not to take sides in American party politics. As a result, the Listons socialized with members of both parties: "Mr. Liston is of no party, but rather endeavours to reconcile all: the greatest Democrates in Town visit us, both English and American [but] not French."[46] The latter comment reflects the couple's need to be careful about their international connections. In the autumn of 1796, England was on the brink of war with France and Spain. Unsure of the status of hostilities at home, the Listons had to decide how to treat representatives from those countries in America. Carlos Martinez d'Yrujo, Spanish ambassador and son-in-law of Pennsylvania governor Thomas McKean, attended many of the same functions as the Listons. Prior to hearing the outcome of the Treaty of San Ildefonso, which put Spain

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[45] In addition to finding the life of a political wife tiring, Henrietta Liston resented the degree to which it limited her options. Over the course of their tenure in Philadelphia, Liston's aunt and uncle began to suffer from various health issues. She badly wanted to return to Scotland to care for them, but saw herself as duty-bound to stay in American and continue doing her part in supporting her husband's agenda. She described herself as "tied to the oar" of international politics. Henrietta Liston to her uncle, 15 January 1797 and 10 April 1798, in Ibid.

[46] Henrietta Liston to her uncle, 15 January 1797, in Ibid.

and England at war, the two couples maintained a civil relationship but once notified of the outcome, their relationship changed:

> the present Spanish minister, a lively good humoured young Man, sent me a pr. of Partridges the other day; Mr. Liston and I called next evening to compliment him upon his kindness in feeding his Enemies, as no official accounts, he said, had yet reached him, he was determined not to quarrel with us sooner than he was obliged, and such is the strict formality required that if a War takes place We must not visit or meet this man.[47]

Certainly being a member of a highly visible political family could bring a woman into the public spotlight in a manner not likely to occur with other people. In early national Philadelphia, newspaper editors often supported specific political parties and published articles, opinion pieces, and cartoons that aligned with their views. As Congress debated the nation's relationship with France and whether or not to involve themselves in the Anglo-Spanish War, the British ambassador and his family came under attack. As Henrietta wrote, "since the meeting of Congress our time has past less quietly, and I have been so little acquainted with the politics of Courts that I cannot yet with perfect composure read personal abuse of my Husband in democratic news-papers, even tho' I know that the most scurrilous of the Editors is paid by the French for doing it."[48] Despite having been married to a public servant for years, Liston found the personal nature of these attacks especially difficult to withstand. In a subsequent moment of unusual candor, Liston revealed how deeply she was affected: "Bache the Democratic

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[47] Henrietta Liston to her uncle, 16 October 1796 in Ibid. For other examples of Henrietta Liston's astute response to international politics, see the letters written on 28 June 1797 regarding developments in France; 12 and 14 July 1797 about Spanish efforts to recapture Florida; 11 June 1798 regarding England's reactions to the French Revolution; and, 12 July 1798 about French and American naval conflict in the Atlantic.

[48] The Listons were not alone in facing criticism in the press and Henrietta was not the only woman who felt she had to put on a brave face, despite any personal pain the attacks caused. She commended Abigail Adams for doing the same, after John was attacked by Benjamin F. Bache in his Republican leaning newspaper, the *Aurora*: "I believe I told you how much pleased I am with Mrs. Adams, she has spirit enough to laugh at Bache's abuse of her Husband, which poor Mrs. Washington could not, I hope to acquire that sort of spirit in time, but the thing is new to me yet." Henrietta Liston to her uncle, 12 July 1797 in Ibid.

Printer and grandson to Franklin (who is talked of in this Country as having been an Old Rogue), died of [yellow fever]…. I was, upon reflection, shocked at the momentary pleasure I felt when I heard of his Death."[49]

As they had done since at least the mid-eighteenth century, Philadelphia women actively participated in public political culture during the city's capital years. More elite and politically-connected women attended formal events and helped shape the city's discourse, while middling and lower-class women expressed their opinions by participating in popular events and expressions of party loyalty. In the years following the Revolution, women's political nature was increasingly discussed, and theorists and writers attempted to find a way to reconcile the political activity occurring around them with their less sanguine opinions about women's place in the polity. Beginning in the 1790s and carrying into the early nineteenth century, this debate increasingly overlapped with discussions of women's intellectual capacity and right to an education. As Americans worked to create a new form of national politics, they disagreed over the role women ought to play, but nearly unanimously believed that if women were going to participate in the political sphere in any way, they needed an education that would prepare them to do so.

Expanding Educational Opportunities

In the 1790s, salonnière Annis Boudinot Stockton wrote to her daughter Julia Rush, "In this country, the Empire of reason is not monopolized by man."[50] Two decades later, Hannah Mather Crocker echoed this sentiment in the first book fully dedicated to

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[49] Henrietta Liston to her uncle, 28 September 1798 in Ibid.
[50] Annis Stockton to Julia Rush, 22 March [1793], Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia as quoted in Anne M. Ousterhout, *The Most Learned Woman in America: A Life of Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), xvii.

the rights of American women: "The wise Author of Nature has endowed the female mind with equal powers and faculties, and given them the same right of judging and acting for themselves, as he gave to the male sex."[51] Following the Revolution, few people could deny that greater attention needed to be paid to women's education, although there were disagreements over the nature and application of that education. A popular, but relatively conservative attitude, embraced by the modern term republican motherhood, has received a great deal of attention. Adherents stated that women's role in the polity was confined largely to her moral force within the household; in order to guide their husbands and sons on social and political issues, women needed an education that would allow them to comprehend those topics, but would not embolden them to step outside of their prescribed sphere.[52] However, this was not the only approach to preparing girls for their future in early national Philadelphia. Alongside arguments that tied schooling to domestic life were assertions that women deserved to be educated due to their innate intellectual abilities and to prepare them to be economically capable and even self-sufficient.

Prior to the mid eighteenth century, education for the majority of American women covered basic literacy, numeracy, and domestic training, with only the daughters of wealthier men gaining schooling in languages, arts, and academic subjects like history and poetry. Some fathers took it upon themselves to provide tutors for their daughters in

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[51] Hannah Mather Crocker, *Observations on the Real Rights of Women, With Their Appropriate Duties, Agreeable to Scripture, Reason and Common Sense* (Boston: Printed for the Author, 1818), 5.

[52] While rhetoric connecting female education and political activity to motherhood was popular in the early republic, Kerber's notion of republican motherhood, a term she coined, is overly deterministic. Kerber wrote, "From the time of the Revolution until our own day, the language of Republican Motherhood remains the most readily accepted – through certainly not the most radical – justification for women's political behavior." However, the writings of many post-Revolutionary women express a variety of reasons for wanting access to education that have nothing to do with marriage and motherhood as we will see in the discussion below. See, Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 12.

order to expose them to a wider range of academic areas.[53] In the years approaching the American Revolution, authors of advice manuals and public intellectuals began arguing for greater access to learning for women. While the majority of writers acknowledged women's intellectual capacity, they did not agree on what women should be allowed to do with their education. Scottish physician and moralist John Gregory believed that women could gain intellectual prowess, but he also thought they should keep their accomplishments hidden. In the 1774 edition of *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters*, Gregory advised,

> Be even cautious in displaying your good sense. It will be thought you assume a superiority over the rest of the company.- But if you happen to have any learning, keep it a profound secret, especially from men, who generally look with jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts, and a cultivated understanding.[54]

This, however, seems to have already become a minority perspective. As early as 1758, the editors of London's *Monthly Review* argued in favor of women's unfettered access to education and intellectual debate:

> If women had the benefit of liberal instructions, if they were inured to study, and accustomed to learned conversation – in short, if they had the same opportunity of

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[53] Even before the Revolution, access to formal education was beginning to trickle down from the elite to the higher echelons of the middling classes. During the 1750s, Mary Coates made several entries in her receipt book related to her daughters' education. During this period she became a widow, but continued to prioritize Alice's schooling and Mary's training in the mantua trade. See, 25 January 1750; 14 August 1753; and, 3 April 1754 in Coates and Reynall Family Papers, 1677-1930, Collection #140, Series V – Other Coates Family Members, h. Additional family member, 1706-1759, vol. 119, Mary Coates receipt book (140B) 1745-1759, HSP. In the 1770s and 1780s, Elizabeth and John Drinker began sending their daughters to school at approximately age four. For the first several years of their education, Elizabeth only mentions the dates they began their school term. However, by the time their eldest daughter Sally was eleven, she was attending "Writing School." At age ten, their other daughter Nancy attended "Drawing School." In the winter of 1781, the Drinkers hosted a school run by Charles Mifflin in their front room: "he has lately undertaking to improve a few young Girls in writeing: teaching 'em Grammar &c-Hanh. Redwood, Sally Fisher, Caty Haines and Sister, Betsy Howel, Sally and Nancy Drinker, are his scholars at present-are to take turns at the different Houses." See, 8 April 1765; 21 May 1766; 24 June and undated entry 1770; undated entry 1772; 1 March 1774; 28 June 1779; and, 1 February 1781 in *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.

[54] John Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* (1774) excerpted in Vivien Jones, ed., *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Feminism* (London: Routledge, 1990), 46.

> improvement with the men, there can be no doubt but that they would be equally capable of reaching any intellectual attainment.[55]

Two prominent English writers, Catherine Macaulay Graham and Priscilla Wakefield, echoed this view as they advocated for greater access to academic learning, increased rigor in schooling, and even coeducation for girls.[56]

By the 1790s, advocates of female education were not only focused on intellectual capacity and growth. They were also concerned about a woman's ability to support herself should she lose her parents, never marry, or be widowed. As Priscilla Wakefield argued in her 1798 treatise, *Reflections on the Present Condition of the Female Sex*,

> The necessity of directing the attention of females to some certain occupation is not so apparent, because custom has rendered them dependent upon their fathers and husbands for support; but as some of every class experience the loss of those relations, without inheriting an adequate resource, there would be great propriety in preparing each of them, by an education of energy and useful attainments, to meet such disasters, and to be able, under such circumstances, to procure an independence for herself.[57]

American writers also argued for greater access to education and practical training for women. Judith Sargent Murray, following her own struggle with poverty, became an avid supporter of female education. She was adamant that her own daughter, Julia Maria, be given not only the education befitting a genteel girl, but also enough practical training for her to make a living, if necessary. Murray explained her concerns about female dependence to her mother-in-law in London:

> We are solicitous to lay up for our child a sum, which may enable her, with her own persevering industry, when we shall be called hence, to preserve a kind of independence, and we confess also, that we are desirous of bestowing upon her

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[55] Review of *All the Works of Epictetus, which are now extant … Translated from the original Greek* by Elizabeth Carter, *Monthly Review* 18 (1758) excerpted in Jones, *Women in the Eighteenth Century*, 174-5.
[56] Catherine Macaulay Graham, *Letters on Education. With observations on religious and metaphysical subjects* (London: Printed for C. Dilly, 1790) and Priscilla Wakefield, *Reflections on the Present Condition of the Female Sex; with Suggestions for its Improvement* (London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1798).
[57] Wakefield, *Reflections on the Present Condition of the Female Sex* excerpted in Jones, *Women in the Eighteenth Century*, 123.

> that kind of education, which shall fit her to make a respectable figure in society, these, dear Madam are our views, and yet our means are scanty, the articles of living are very high, the price demanded in this Country for the instruction of young people is extravagant, with the life of her Father as our income will then cease, every human resource will be cut off from our child, and we are therefore naturally anxious to secure her, at least the means of information.[58]

Murray's personal experience convinced her of the importance of female education, but Enlightenment thinking created a more abstract interest in girls schooling that picked up steam following the Revolution and carried into the early nineteenth century.

Political theorists in the early national period believed that a successful republic required a well-educated citizenry. It was agreed that men needed to be informed in order to make wise political decisions; there was less consensus on women's role within the polity, but most commentators agreed that, whatever their position, they needed greater access to the formal education that would allow them to critically engage contemporary social, political, and philosophical issues. As Linda Kerber has shown, Republican writers such as Benjamin Rush believed that one benefit of female education was domestic. In a 1787 address to an assembly at the Young Ladies Academy of Philadelphia, he noted, "our ladies should be qualified to a certain degree, by a peculiar and suitable education, to concur in instructing their sons in the principles of liberty and government." However, in the same speech, he also argued that women needed an education in order to oversee their own property and financial concerns, to manage a household independently, and to expose them to a greater world of ideas than they might otherwise encounter.[59] Late-eighteenth century writers clearly imagined that most

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[58] Judith Sargent Murray to Mrs. Murray, 10 October 1796 in Judith Sargent Murray, *From Gloucester to Philadelphia in 1790: Observations, Anecdotes, and Thoughts from the 18th-Century Letters of Judith Sargent Murray*, ed. Bonnie Hurd Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: Judith Sargent Murray Society, 1998), 44-5.
[59] Benjamin Rush, "'Thoughts upon Female Education, Accommodated to the Present State Of Society, Manners, and Government…' delivered in 1787 at the Young Ladies' Academy of Philadelphia" in *Essays*

women would marry and become mothers, but they did not see that as the only possible future for which women should prepare.

Nor were the sentiments behind the concept of republican motherhood necessarily as limiting as Kerber originally posited. Intellectual historian Mary Kelley suggests that some women saw the domestic goals of female education "as a point of departure" that empowered them "in their relationships with men other than their kin." These women saw the role of moral guide as granting them a platform from which to speak out on social and political issues.[60] Susan Branson argues that while many political thinkers indicated that women should restrict themselves to the home, in their actual lives "women's opinions, issues, and needs were acknowledged, debated, and sometimes incorporated into the wider political rhetoric and public culture." Women's education prepared them to assert their needs and view themselves as capable of a larger role in civic affairs.[61] Simon Newman goes further by claiming that early national women sought education from more than a "desire to serve the republic by raising virtuous male citizens." Instead, he argues, they imagined themselves as "political actors" and worked to gain the means to articulate identities "entirely independent of their relationships with men."[62] Many women in the early republic eagerly engaged rationales for female education, including but not limited to the needs of marriage and motherhood.

Following the Revolutionary War, middling and wealthy young women began to gain access to education through academies, some of which catered solely to girls and

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on Education in the Early Republic, ed. Frederick Rudolph (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), 27, 40.

[60] Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand & Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia by the University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 25-6.

[61] Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 2-5.

[62] Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street*, 68.

others that were co-educational. Believing that girls had as much right to cultivate their minds as did boys, academies and seminaries formed in every state in the nation. By 1830, nearly two hundred all-girls schools existed and up to twenty percent of America's youth was being formally educated, with roughly ten percent of the girls attending all-female academies.[63] One of the earliest of these institutions was the Young Ladies Academy of Philadelphia. While embracing some claims about the importance of women's domestic role, the Academy demonstrated the diversity of thinking that surrounded women's intellectual capacity. The founders of the Academy, prominent men such as William White, Thomas Mifflin, and Jared Ingersoll, believed that girls were capable of studying the same basic curriculum as boys. As Ann Gordon notes, these men "believed that woman's nature differed from man's except in its capacity to reason. They stood out from most eighteenth-century men because they built a school to celebrate the idea that women shared so much of man's nature."[64]

Founded in 1787, the Academy modeled itself on the best boys schools of the day and began with a curriculum of grammar, arithmetic, composition, rhetoric, and geography, the basic skills considered necessary for survival in a commercial society. Further modeling boys academies, they quickly added history, the natural and mechanical

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[63] Kelley, *Learning to Stand & Speak*, 67; Nancy Beadie, "Female Students and Denominational Affiliation: Sources of Success and Variation among Nineteenth-Century Academies," *American Journal of Education* 107, no. 2 (February 1999), 75-115; and, Beadie, "Academy Students in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: Social Geography, Demography, and the Culture of Academy Attendance," *History of Education Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (Summer 2001), 251-262.

[64] William White was the first bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, Thomas Mifflin was a prominent merchant and member of the Supreme Executive Council, and Jared Ingersoll was a lawyer who served as Pennsylvania's Attorney General for more than a decade. Ann D. Gordon, "The Young Ladies Academy of Philadelphia," in *Women of America: A History*, eds. Carol Ruth Berkin and Mary Beth Norton (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1979), 71, 73.

sciences, and English literature.[65] While the focus of the school was on academic subjects, there was also instruction in music, drawing, dancing, and languages, which were considered necessary for a woman to excel in polite society. Wealthier women had always learned these genteel subjects, as they were considered part of the social skills that demonstrated gentility and class standing. By including them in the curriculum at the Young Ladies Academy, the trustees seemed to be seeking a balance between a more masculine curriculum and the skills that a prosperous young lady would need to succeed in society.[66]

Attendance at the Ladies Academy was transformative in several ways. Over time, the school gained an international reputation for providing a high quality, secular education. As a result, it drew students from all thirteen states, the Caribbean, and Canada. Despite living with either their own family or boarding in another household, the students experienced a world that was not bounded by the expectations of their parents. Girls had their first chance to be their own persons, to make friendships based on factors other than their families' social or religious circles, and to be recognized for their intellectual skills and interests.[67] The young women who attended the Academy treasured the friendships made while students. In her 1791 valedictory address, Molly Say suggested that, though they might move apart, their bonds would never diminish:

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[65] In addition to formal training in these subjects, the students at the Academy attended special lectures on topics such as chemistry, natural philosophy, and astronomy, given by both local and visiting scholars. *The Rise and Progress of the Young-Ladies Academy of Philadelphia: Containing an Account of a Number of Public Examinations & Commencements; The Charter and Bye-Laws; Likewise, a Number of Orations delivered by the Young Ladies, and several by the Trustees of said Institution* (Philadelphia: Printed by Stewart & Cochran, 1794), [2] and Gordon, "The Young Ladies Academy of Philadelphia," 69, 73. While modeling female academies on boys' schools curriculum became the norm nationally after 1820, the Philadelphia Ladies Academy adopted this strategy more than two decades before it became widespread. For a discussion of how curriculum developed for most girl's schools, see Kelley, *Learning to Stand & Speak*, Chapters One and Three.

[66] Gordon, "The Young Ladies Academy of Philadelphia," 75.

[67] Ibid., 69, 77, 79.

"No, my dear companions, I cannot leave you, for tho' I take away my person, a great share of my respect and affection will associate with you; for I cannot forget those endearing ties, which have bound us together."[68] In a world where social connections were essential for building business, political, financial, and dynastic power, and in which women were expected to play a significant role in cementing those ties, the friendships made at school based on mutual experiences and the enjoyment of each other's company proved especially important.[69]

The Young Ladies Academy also broadened the female experience by treating its students like boys. The school encouraged competition among classmates and awarded intellectual progress and success. A girl's advancement was not determined by her age or the amount of time she had been in attendance; it was based on mastery of the subject and demonstrated readiness to progress to the next level. A girl who showed real ability in a certain subject could progress quickly through her coursework and attend classes with girls working on her level, rather than in her age group. As a result, students learned to value their own academic talents and recognize their ability to work hard and achieve intellectual success. They not only competed with themselves, but also with one another. Philosophies of education had long held that boys would perform best, and be best prepared for the larger world, when expected to compete against one another. Despite the fact that an openly adversarial system contradicted late-eighteenth century ideas about female nature, the Academy put its students in competition for honor and awards. Examinations were held semiannually during which the trustees read anonymously

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[68] *The Rise and Progress of the Young-Ladies Academy of Philadelphia*, 54-5.

[69] Mary Kelley has suggested that these friendships, based solely on affinity, laid the groundwork for later types of female sociability, such as self-improvement societies, benevolent organizations, and reform movements. The ability to thrive in an all-female world such as the academy encouraged women to later seek out and flourish in other homosocial spaces and groups. Kelley, *Learning to Stand & Speak*, 51-4.

submitted papers and heard students spell, read, and demonstrate proficiency in their subjects. Prizes were awarded to the best student in each class and they were publicly celebrated before families, friends, and prominent Philadelphians.[70]

Female students were fully aware of the debates surrounding their education and the arguments against granting them access to formal academic training. Occasionally, they challenged those critiques directly, pointing out that education served purposes beyond applying their knowledge domestically and that schooling in the classical tradition thus made as much sense for girls as it did for most boys. In 1792, Molly Wallace highlighted this discrepancy before the graduation assembly:

> Why is a boy diligently and carefully taught the Latin, the Greek, or the Hebrew language, in which he will seldom have occasion, either to write or converse? Why is he taught to demonstrate the propositions of Euclid, when during his whole life, he will not perhaps make use of one of them? Are we taught to dance merely for the sake of becoming dancers? No, certainly. These things are commonly studied, more on account of the habits, which the learning of them establishes, than on account of any important advantages which the mere knowledge of them can afford. So a young lady, from the exercise of speaking before a properly selected audience, may acquire some valuable habits, which, otherwise she can obtain from no examples, and that no precept can give.[71]

If boys were being trained in ancient languages and advanced mathematics because it gave them polish, then why could the same not be done for girls? If dancing and art were considered essential for girls despite the fact that they provided no practical value, then might not the same be true for science and rhetoric? Students might have found it necessary to "defend the exercise in which [we] have been engaged," but that did not stop them from pursuing "the ample and spacious field of knowledge: which has been, and I am sensible will always be the reward of the studious."[72]

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[70] Gordon, "The Young Ladies Academy of Philadelphia," 80-82.
[71] *The Rise and Progress of the Young-Ladies Academy of Philadelphia*, 74-5.
[72] Ibid., 74, 76.

The following year, salutatorian Priscilla Mason went even further in questioning the nature of women's education. Annually, the top two students in the graduating class gave commencement addresses, but unlike those of their male counterparts who looked forward to a bright and promising future, the girls rarely spoke about what their future would hold.[73] Mason not only pointed out the discrepancies between the content of women's education and their likely roles as wives and mothers, but also suggested that women had fewer options than men only because men wanted it to be that way. She began by claiming that women had a historical right to a place in public discourse. Pointing to Xanthippe, who publicly challenged her husband Socrates's beliefs, Mason "claim[ed] for [women] the further right of being heard on more public occasions – of addressing the reason as well as the fears of the other sex." She also noted the mother and grandmother of Roman Emperor Heliogabalus, who served in his Congress and Senate respectively, as examples of women flourishing in public roles. She then directly accused men of systematically attempting to suppress women's intellect and ability. Men, she argued, "have denied us the means of knowledge, and then reproached us for the want of it."[74]

Mason went far beyond her predecessors in using her graduation speech to challenge the traditions and assumptions that kept women from accessing education and professions. She argued that women could attain any level of education, but that they would still be prohibited from using their knowledge:

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[73] Gordon, "The Young Ladies Academy of Philadelphia," 82-3.

[74] *The Rise and Progress of the Young-Ladies Academy of Philadelphia*, 91-2, 94. Reading Priscilla Mason's address, one wonders if, in the course of her education, she read Thomas More's *Utopia*. Her discussion of women's educational oppression is highly reminiscent of More's comment on society's relationship to the poor: "for if you suffer your people to be ill-educated, and their manners to be corrupted from their infancy, and then punish them for those crimes to which their first education disposed them, what else is to be concluded from this but that you first make thieves and then punish them?" Thomas More, *Utopia* (1516; reprint, London: Bibliolis Books, 2010), 24.

> But supposing now that we possess'd all the talents of the orator, in the highest perfection; where shall we find a theatre for the display of them? The Church, the Bar, and the Senate are shut against us. Who shut them? *Man*; despotic man, first made us incapable of the duty, and then forbid us the exercise. Let us by suitable education, qualify ourselves for those high departments – they will open before us.[75]

Mason accused the church of playing an especially important and longstanding role in the suppression of women. She suggested that the Apostle Paul had been spurned in love and, as a result, "declare[d] war against the whole sex: advise[d] men not to marry them; and ha[d] the insolence to order them to keep silence in the Church –: afraid, I suppose, that they would say something against celibacy, or ridicule the old bachelor." She concluded her address with the hope that these examples of women's suppression as well as the claim that women could flourish under the right circumstances would "fire a female breast with the most generous ambition, prompting to illustrious actions…. [and] call forth all that is human – all that is *divine* in the soul of woman; and having proved them equally capable with the other sex, would lead to their equal participation of honor and office."[76] Regardless of the limitations that surrounded and constrained women, at least some female scholars saw themselves as capable of greater intellectual pursuits and hoped for the day when they would be able to step fully into professional and political worlds.

The advances in education that occurred during the early national period primarily benefitted middling to wealthy women who had access to schools, academies, and seminaries. However, the daughters of working and craft families also experienced more systematic training in this period to equip them with the practical skills to work, contribute to a family economy, and maintain themselves and their children. The

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[75] *The Rise and Progress of the Young-Ladies Academy of Philadelphia*, 93.
[76] Ibid., 93, 95.

majority of prescriptive literature on women's education pertained solely to the genteel sectors of society; however, British writer Priscilla Wakefield included the argument that training girls in a trade would not only give them economic security, but make them better able to secure a good marriage, as they could be seen as a partner in work as well as in life:

> The knowledge of a trade is a probable means, which ought not to be neglected, of enabling [daughters of tradesmen] to give their family assistance towards the support of their family; but should it be more eligible for the husband and wife to unite in the prosecution of the same design, her former subjection to regular application, would render her more apt in accommodating herself to her husband's business. Thus the benefit of apprenticing girls of this rank to some trade is equally apparent, whether they marry or live single.[77]

Making the same basic argument as Judith Sargent Murray, Wakefield encouraged parents to provide their daughters with as many skills as possible to guarantee their financial security as either single or married women.

As discussed earlier, entire families participated in craftwork, and many women in them had the skills necessary to run independent businesses. While the sons of craft families were actively educated and apprenticed in order to go into business or trade, it is clear that daughters were also intentionally trained. Daughters learned how to run a shop or tavern, how to oversee a craft workshop and perform artisanal skills, how to process food and beverage for sale, and how to settle accounts, make trades, and negotiate deals. Although they often lacked access to formal apprenticeships, craftsmen taught their daughters marketable skills and sometimes sent them to study with other artisan

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[77] Wakefield, *Reflections on the Present Condition of the Female Sex* excerpted in Jones, *Women in the Eighteenth Century*, 127.

families.[78] Having the skill and knowledge to run a shop or business, undertake craftwork, or oversee laborers provided women like Betsy Ross, the Hyde sisters, and Elizabeth West with greater economic security and made them more marriageable. They would be an asset to a new family, not just as a wife but as a true partner. Many people also sought to create business or artisan dynasties by marrying their children into families with similar skills and interests. A woman who had practical training was crucial to this economic strategy.[79] Very little scholarly attention has been paid to how the daughters of craft families received their training, but given the vast number of women plying trades in eighteenth century America and the growing awareness of the need for girls to have the knowledge and skills necessary for self-sufficiency, one can imagine that working class parents were as invested in the education of their daughters as were more elite families.

Women's Activism in the Early Nineteenth Century

In early national Philadelphia, women's participation in political culture and their expanding access to varied types of education fueled their involvement in campaigns for moral reform and abolition. They drew upon decades of experience managing money and honing other practical skills, writing letters and speeches, participating in political demonstrations, and engaging in community affairs. Organized activism, however, took women further into the public sphere than they had gone before by providing "opportunities for members to be political actors and behave in ways ordinarily defined

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[78] Frances May Manges, *Women Shopkeepers, Tavernkeepers, and Artisans in Colonial Philadelphia* (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1958), 115, 117 and Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 48, 53-4.
[79] Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*, 48 and Gundersen, *To Be Useful to the World*, 99.

as male."[80] Benevolent and antislavery societies drew up constitutions and bylaws; held elections in which women ran for and voted on offices; debated and set agendas; raised, pledged, and donated money; and, took part in public efforts to effect social change. When describing their work, women did not always describe their efforts as political, despite the fact that they were engaging in actions that, when done by men, were the hallmarks of political organizing.[81] Instead, women characterized their activism in a number of ways. Some emphasized the feminine and domestic nature of reform; others drew on the moral necessity of fighting for social change; and, others embraced a burgeoning idea that women deserved a political voice including, but not limited to, social activism. All of these ideas were represented in Philadelphia where women committed themselves to moral reform, benevolent work, and antislavery activism in the decades following the Revolutionary War.

For many American women, evangelical articulations of feminine virtue and the moral necessity of working to uplift the poor and downtrodden served as a primary motivation for entering into benevolent and antislavery movements.[82] Quakers, however, did not articulate a female-centered concept of morality. Believing in equality of the soul, Friends saw neither women nor men as inherently more moral, and encouraged all their members to testify against injustice. They were among the first white people to embrace abolition and, by the 1790s, the Philadelphia and other Yearly Meetings insisted that members emancipate any slaves they owned. Friends asserted they should advocate

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[80] Anne M. Boylan, "Women and Politics in the Era before Seneca Falls," *Journal of the Early Republic* 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1990), 365.
[81] Ibid., 365.
[82] For examples of this argument, see Julie Roy Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Ginzberg, *Women in Antebellum Reform*; and, Beth Salerno, *Sister Societies: Women's Antislavery Organizations in Antebellum America* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005).

abolition out of a belief in the humanity of all persons, not because it was the responsibility of white Christians to help the disadvantaged. Still, most Friends believed that they were best able to influence issues like slavery and the exploitation of Indians by testifying against such abuses within Quaker meetings. Indeed, the Discipline of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, like most yearly meetings, opposed Friends working alongside people of other faiths in the public sphere. Initially, then, Friends – women and men – organized their own efforts to relieve poverty, help widows and orphans, alleviate the suffering of American Indians, and end slavery.[83] These efforts pre-dated the rise of evangelical Christianity by several decades and empowered women as activists due to their humanity, rather than their femininity. While Friends were certainly not the only women to have been involved in social activism and moral reform prior to the early nineteenth-century, the inclusive nature of Quaker organizations and their acceptance of female participation created a familiar network of female reformers that influenced all Philadelphians.[84]

Philadelphia's large and well-established free black population also shaped the nature of benevolent and antislavery activism in Philadelphia.[85] In many American cities,

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[83] Bruce Dorsey argues that different perspectives on the appropriateness of working with other Christian denominations towards common reform goals was a major cause of the schism between Orthodox and Hicksite Quakers. Orthodox Friends "could see no harm in associating with the successful enterprises of their evangelical neighbors," while Hicksites "opposed both the methods of evangelical benevolence and Orthodox Friends' infatuation with those new benevolent societies." Dorsey, "Friends Becoming Enemies: Philadelphia Benevolence and the Neglected Era of American Quaker History," *Journal of the Early Republic* 18, no. 3 (Autumn 1998), 399-400, 405-6.

[84] Though often overlooked in discussions of female activism, Jewish Philadelphians worked alongside their Christian neighbors to pursue moral reform. Rebecca Gratz, for example, worked at various times for the Female Association for the Relief of Women and Children in Reduced Circumstances, the Philadelphia Orphans Asylum, and the Hebrew Sunday School Union. The first two groups encompassed activists of various religious persuasions, allowing Jewish women to work alongside Christians to alleviate the suffering of poor women and children. Ginzberg, *Women in Antebellum Reform*, 29.

[85] By the 1830s, Philadelphia County had more than 15,000 free black inhabitants, who supported fourteen churches, two public halls, more than sixty benevolent societies, as well as numerous schools, temperance societies, and other social reform organizations. Julie Winch, "'You Have Talents – Only Cultivate Them':

black and white reformers might have worked in tandem, but seldom in interracial groups. That was not the case in Philadelphia, where the Quaker insistence on racial tolerance and the early organization of educational, literary, and reform efforts in the black community inspired the integration of activism in the city. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, black churches and moral reform societies spoke out against slavery while Quakers founded the Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage in 1775. By 1833, however, black and white women joined forces to create the Philadelphia Ladies Anti-Slavery Society (PFAS), and the American Anti-Slavery Society (also formed in 1833) invited African Americans and a few women to participate in their meetings.[86] Julie Roy Jeffrey describes the abolition movement as developing at the "intersection of public and private, male and female"; in Philadelphia it also emerged at the intersection of black and white.[87] Emma Lapansky suggests that, as they worked within an acceptably female definition of public activism, black Philadelphians could be "praised and revered rather than condemned, pitied, or ostracized" for their work on behalf of benevolence and abolition.[88] Yet their very involvement with white Quaker women who, though affluent and respectable, were among the most radical members of a society considered unusual (even suspect) for its

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Philadelphia's Black Female Literary Societies and the Abolitionist Crusade" in *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America*, eds. Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 101.

[86] Julie Roy Jeffrey has stated that while black women were part of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society from its founding, they never served as president or held significant office. This does not appear to be true, however; black women served on the Board of Managers and Margaretta Forten served more than one term as recording secretary. Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism*, 44 and Emma Jones Lapansky, "Feminism, Freedom, and Community: Charlotte Forten and Women Activists in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 113, no. 1 (January 1989), 11.

[87] Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism*, 8.

[88] Lapansky, "Feminism, Freedom, and Community," 13.

recognition of gender equality makes clear that boundaries of acceptable female activism were being stretched.

Given the diverse economic strata, religious affiliations, and racial communities from which female reformers emerged in early national Philadelphia, it is not surprising that the city hosted an astonishing array of benevolent, charitable, and reform organizations. Some of them were cause-specific and short-lived, others more general and ongoing. Alongside large-scale organizations such as the Female Society for the Relief and Employment of the Poor, the Female Association for the Relief of Women and Children in Reduced Circumstances, and the Philadelphia Orphans Asylum, women raised money and awareness to address a range of particular issues from the 1790s on.[89] Unlike later benevolent and moral reform efforts, these were not necessarily hierarchally-organized and long-lasting groups. Some of them existed for a very short time, raising money and awareness for a given problem and then dissolving once their goal had been achieved. However, they provide important precedents for later reform organizations. When women came together to raise money for a given cause, canvassed Philadelphia for donations, and then passed those monies on to the group in question, they were building skills that would later be utilized in other more sustained efforts. They were also reinforcing an idea that stretched back to the pre-Revolutionary era: women were capable of entering into the politicized world of benevolence, moral reform, and civic responsibility, and perhaps more importantly, their doing so was neither shocking nor controversial.

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[89] For a greater discussion of these early female Quaker efforts, see Margaret Morris Haviland, "Beyond Women's Sphere: Young Quaker Women and the Veil of Charity in Philadelphia, 1790-1810," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 51, no. 3 (July 1994), 419-446.

Elizabeth Drinker's diary gives a sense of the range of charitable causes that an individual woman supported during the 1790s. She noted women coming to her door asking for donations for poor relief, aiding chronically ill women, and building a school infirmary. In 1795, "18 young women … embarked" to raise "a subscription for the relief of the poor this winter" and her daughter Molly donated twenty dollars.[90] Two years later, a moderately well-dressed woman and child came to the door, bearing "a paper directed to charitable Ladys" asking for donations to help an ill, genteel woman pay her rent. The petition was signed by Anne Willing Bingham and Drinker suspected the woman in question was "some one who had not been used to ask Charity: many of that class, I do believe suffer deeply." In the summer of 1800, two women came to her door raising money for an infirmary at "the Western School," presumably one of the Indian schools that Philadelphia Quakers supported. Drinker noted, "their application is to Women only."[91] The activism of Quaker women like Drinker continued into and expanded in the nineteenth century. In 1823, for example, they formed the Female Prison Association of Friends, and five years later raised money to open a women's House of Refuge as an alternative to prison.[92]

Antislavery protest, too, had been part of Philadelphia's activist world from the time of the Revolution, but came into sharper focus in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The unique combination of large Quaker and free black populations inspired

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[90] 13 November 1795, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*. These women were probably fundraising for the Female Society for the Relief and Employment of the Poor, founded that year by Quaker Ann Parish. During the decade, Drinker noted other opportunities to donate money to Quaker causes. On 13 October 1796, a representative of the Quaker Women's Meeting visited to ask for, among other things, a "Donation for the poor – I gave, what I afterwards thought, too little."
[91] 9 June 1797 and 24 June 1800, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*.
[92] Emma Jones Lapansky, "The World the Agitators Made: The Counterculture of Agitation in Urban Philadelphia" in Yellin and Van Horne, *The Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 139-141.

concerns about slavery in Philadelphia from the 1770s onward.[93] However, during the 1820s and 1830s, opportunities for women to engage in public, organized abolition work increased exponentially. One important inspiration for this expansion was the free produce movement, launched in England by Quaker Elizabeth Heyrick. The transatlantic networks among members of the Society of Friends served as a crucial conduit for this effort, but once initiated in the United States, free blacks as well as whites joined the campaign.

The free produce movement, initiated by British women, evolved into an international boycott of goods grown or manufactured by slaves that quickly spread to the United States.[94] In 1824, Elizabeth Heyrick wrote a pamphlet, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition; Or, An Inquiry into the Shortest, Safest, and Most Effectual Means of Getting Rid of West Indian Slavery*, calling for the boycott of slave-made goods imported from

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[93] Internationally, the Society of Friends began protesting slavery in the late-seventeenth century, while Philadelphia Quakers began to organize around abolition in 1775. Many Quaker households manumitted their slaves voluntarily in the late eighteenth century and took other actions to assist the free black community following the Revolution. Elizabeth Drinker's diary for the 1790s notes multiple instances of reading literature related to abolition, signing petitions sent to Congress by the Society of Friends, and even socializing with black women in her own home. For examples, see 21 January 1796, 30 November 1797, and 14 June 1798, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*. For a greater discussion of early Quaker abolitionism, see Larry Gragg, *The Quaker Community on Barbados: Challenging the Culture of the Planter Class* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2009) and Brycchan Carey, *From Peace to Freedom: Quaker Rhetoric and the Birth of American Antislavery, 1658-1761* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2012).

[94] Carol Faulkner argues that the importance of the free produce movement to early abolition has been downplayed by many scholars, primarily because it was dismissed by prominent abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips Garrison, and Lucretia Mott's granddaughter, Anna Davis Hallowell. Early historians of abolition, many of whom overlapped with participants in the movement, took their cue from leading activists or their children who characterized free produce as overly sentimental and a distraction from the political work that resulted in the end of slavery. Free produce, which was rooted in the eighteenth century and gained international momentum in the 1820s, called on adherents to take whatever measures were necessary to bring about the immediate end of slavery. This predates the rise of Garrisonian abolition's focus on immediate emancipation and requires historians to rethink women's place in the rise of the radical antislavery movement in America. Carol Faulkner, "The Root of the Evil: Free Produce and Radical Antislavery, 1820-1860," *Journal of the Early Republic* 27, no. 3 (Fall 2007), 378-80. See also, Kathleen Brown, "Undoing Slavery: Abolition and the Argument over Humanity" (unpublished paper, Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis Ethical Subjects Seminar, Rutgers University, New Jersey, 13 October 2015).

the British West Indies, primarily sugar.[95] The pamphlet was reprinted the same year in Philadelphia. Heyrick argued that the contemporary efforts to end slavery were too moderate to produce speedy results, and looked back to earlier boycotts for examples of how the average person could use consumption to influence politics.[96] An adherent of political theorist Adam Smith, she proposed that slavery would not end until it became economically untenable:

> It is often asserted, that slavery is too deeply rooted an evil to be eradicated by the exertions of any principle less potent and active than *self interest* – if so, the resolution to abstain from West Indian produce, would bring this potent and active principle into the fullest operation, - would *compel* the planter to set his slaves at liberty.[97]

Heyrick coupled this argument with a moral appeal, suggesting that supporters of free produce would be rewarded by "the Great Searcher of hearts," who "declared that a cup of cold water only, administered in Christian charity, 'shall in no wise lose its reward.'"[98]

While Heyrick's ideas resonated with abolitionists around the United States, they were especially well received in Philadelphia where reform-minded Quakers were already advocating for emancipation.[99] In 1811, Elias Hicks had published a pamphlet titled *Observations on the Slavery of the Africans and Their Descendants* that argued that northern consumers created the necessary market for slavery, which would only end

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[95] Elizabeth Heyrick, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition; Or, An Inquiry into the Shortest, Safest, and Most Effectual Means of Getting Rid of West Indian Slavery* (London, 1824).
[96] Faulkner, "The Root of the Evil," 380.
[97] Heyrick, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition*, 5.
[98] Ibid., 24.
[99] Free produce has often been characterized as a movement kept alive almost entirely by Hicksite Quakers. While they were early and enthusiastic supporters, they were by no means the only people to champion the boycott. Congregationalists Henry Ward Beecher and Calvin and Harriet Beecher Stowe, Baptists Henry and Mary Grew, Presbyterian Gerrit Smith, and nondenominational Frederick Douglass actively supported free produce. Faulkner, "The Root of the Evil," 379.

when they withdrew their support.[100] The idea of free produce was also popular among women and free blacks who embraced ways to wield their economic power, however limited, to protest slavery. They looked back to earlier precedents such as the Revolutionary-era non-consumption movement that empowered female and black consumers and the female-dominated sugar boycott in England as evidence of the power of consumerism to force political change. As individuals and in groups, female Philadelphians across class, racial, and religious affiliations embraced this movement, following the precepts of free produce both in their homes and in the public market.

Maintaining a free produce household placed enormous strain on a family and was, thus, a strong statement of a woman's commitment to the cause. While ideologically simple, there were significant difficulties associated with the free produce lifestyle. First was the problem of verifying that goods labeled as free truly were. Most goods coming out of the South or the Caribbean passed through at least two stages of labor – harvesting raw materials and manufacturing final products. Ensuring that only free workers were involved in both stages was extremely difficult. Second, goods made solely with free labor were often poorer in quality than those to which consumers were accustomed. Free cotton was coarse and "many people complained that free sugar candy was disgusting." Women who could not afford to buy free cloth sometimes chose to abstain from buying new clothing at all, leading to a shabby appearance that could be embarrassing when seen in public.[101] Elizabeth Margaret Chandler, a prominent

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[100] Hicks's insistence on material simplicity and free produce, as well as other critiques of the Society of Friends, were largely responsible for the schism that led to the creation of the sect now known as Hicksite Quakers. Elias Hicks, *Observations on the Slavery of the Africans and their Descendants* (New York, 1811) and Faulkner, "The Root of the Evil," 381, 383.

[101] As had been the case during the pre-Revolutionary boycotts, free produce adherents attempted to supplement their households with locally grown or alternate goods, leading to culinary experimentation and

abolitionist writer and editor, tried to convince women that wearing poorer quality clothing was a sign of moral commitment: "the texture of your garments will perhaps be coarser than that of your accustomed wear, but they will cling less heavily around your forms, for the sighs of the broken-hearted will not linger among their folds."[102] Philadelphia abolitionist Sarah Pugh acknowledged these various difficulties in an 1844 diary entry, "In my attempt not to partake of the gain of oppression I have not for a moment supposed myself clear; all that I have supposed possible is to cease from *direct* support."[103]

Carol Faulkner has dubbed Philadelphia "the capital of free produce agitation" and, during the 1820s and 1830s, multiple efforts were made by various groups to further the boycott. In 1827, James Mott and other white abolitionists founded the Free Produce Society of Pennsylvania, and two years later, members of Philadelphia's Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church established the Colored Free Produce Society. The following year, the Colored Female Free Produce Society was founded. Several of the women involved would soon become active in the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.[104] Also in 1829, local white women founded the Female Association for Promoting the Manufacture and Use of Free Cotton, a group that funded the production of cloth by free, northern labor. By years end, they estimated they had turned 2,515

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sometimes disaster. Brown, "Undoing Slavery," 11-12 and Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism*, 48.

[102] Elizabeth Margaret Chandler, *Poetical Works of Elizabeth Margaret Chandler with a Memoir of her life and character*, ed. Benjamin Lundy (Philadelphia: Lemuel Howell, 1836), 21.

[103] August 1844 diary entry, *Memorial of Sarah Pugh: A Tribute of Respect from Her Cousins* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1888), 136.

[104] Faulkner, "The Root of the Evil," 390 and Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism*, 20. Free produce was also extremely popular in new western states such as Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan, which had many transplants from eastern Pennsylvania. Michigan, especially, had a large free black population who actively supported abolition and the free produce movement. For a discussion of women's antislavery activism in that region, see Stacey Robertson's *Hearts Beating for Liberty: Women Abolitionists in the Old Northwest* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

pounds of freely grown cotton into "ginghams, checks, bed-tickings, stripes, knitting and sewing cotton, and cotton hose."[105] Elizabeth Margaret Chandler, a founding member of the Association, suggested that it was the moral duty of white northern women who were "too sensitively refined to bear a description of the horrors of slavery" to support the free produce movement. She argued that by providing an economy for slave-made products, northerners "though not perhaps in an equal degree, must be sharers of the guilt" of slavery, and the only way to lessen that was to actively work on behalf of the boycott.[106] The Association did not confine themselves to manufacturing and selling free cotton; they also petitioned Congress on behalf of the "Female citizens of Philadelphia and its vicinity" to end slavery in the District of Columbia and work towards emancipation for all slaves.[107]

In 1830, Lydia White, a Hicksite Quaker, opened the city's first free produce store, which she would run for sixteen years. Her business was so successful that she advertised nationally in the *Liberator* and shipped orders to states as far away as Vermont, Indiana, and Ohio. By the 1850s, Philadelphia hosted multiple free produce stores selling food, clothing, and household goods.[108] The longevity of White's store and the number of free produce options in the city indicate Philadelphians' commitment to the effort over the course of several decades. Yet, in addition to the difficulties of acquiring goods that could be authenticated as untainted by slave labor, free stores had trouble selling their wares at competitive prices. Free goods were generally produced in

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[105] "Free Produce Society," *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, 30 October 1829; "Free Dry Goods' Store," *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, May 1830; and Faulkner, "The Root of the Evil," 383.
[106] Lundy, ed., *Poetical Works of Elizabeth Margaret Chandler*, 20.
[107] "To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress Assembled," *Liberator*, 18 February 1832.
[108] *Liberator*, 7 and 28 May and 20 August 1831; *Pennsylvania Freeman*, 19 April 1838, 11 April 1844, 7 August 1851; Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism*, 20; and, Faulkner, "The Root of the Evil," 385, 390.

smaller quantities and the laborers had to be paid a reasonable wage, which drove up the cost for purchasing and shipping goods. That increase was then reflected in the sale price; combined with the poorer quality of many free goods, the stores that sold them struggled to remain open.[109] The fact that Philadelphia had multiple, long-lasting free stores is a testament to the passionate commitment of local women and their households to the movement.[110]

Although women had taken part in the free produce movement and a few had joined male-directed efforts against slavery, in 1833, a diverse group of forty-five women decided to establish the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society (PFAS). Though dominated by Hicksite Quakers, the PFAS included members from a variety of Christian denominations, and nine of the founding members came from prominent black families.[111] The original roster of the PFAS reads like a who's who of early abolition. Founding members included Angelina and Sarah Grimké, Lucretia Mott, Esther Moore,

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[109] Brown, "Undoing Slavery," 12.

[110] Various abolitionist groups in Philadelphia and nationally drew on the arguments of the free produce campaign in the broader fight against slavery. The interracial American Anti-Slavery Society supported the boycott in their 1833 founding Declaration, by stating that they would "encourage the labor of freemen rather than that of the slaves, by giving a preference to their productions." Despite initially being denied full membership in the male-dominated Society, Lucretia Mott, Sidney Ann Lewis, and Lydia White all signed the Declaration. Faulkner, "The Root of the Evil," 390-1.

[111] In addition to Hicksite Quakers, the PFAS also included Orthodox Quakers, Episcopalians, Baptists, and members of the African Episcopal and African Methodist Episcopal churches. Bruce Dorsey argues that this represents a major shift in female Friends activism; prior to antislavery work, Quaker women were rarely involved in any initiative that crossed denominational lines. As large number of Hicksite Quakers became active in abolition, women became increasingly open to mixed societies that included women from a range of Protestant backgrounds. Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism*, 44; Jean R. Soderlund, "Priorities and Power: The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society" in Yellin and Van Horne, *The Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 70-71; and, Dorsey, "Friends Becoming Enemies," 417. For a greater discussion of the 1827-28 division between Orthodox and Hicksite Quakers, which included drastically differing opinions on how to approach antislavery work, see H. Larry Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict: The Hicksite Reformation* (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1986); Hugh Barbour, et. al., *Quaker Crosscurrents: Three Hundred Years of Friends in the New York Yearly Meetings* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995); Dorsey, "Friends Becoming Enemies," 395-428; Ryan B. Jordan, *Slavery and the Meetinghouse: The Quakers and the Abolitionist Dilemma, 1820-1865* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2007); and, Carol Faulkner, *Lucretia Mott's Heresy: Abolition and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

Lydia White, Sydney Ann Lewis, Sarah Pugh, Mary Grew, Grace Douglass, Charlotte, Margaretta, and Sarah Forten, and Harriet Forten Purvis. At the same time, members represented some of the city's prominent black and white families, including the Fortens, Purvises, Motts, and Pughs.[112] The Society's original constitution reflects its interracial character; while most white abolition groups downplayed the nature of northern prejudice, the PFAS emphasized the sin of racism and the need for mitigation against unequal conditions. One of their stated goals was "to adopt such measures, as may be in our power to dispel the prejudice against the people of colour, [and] to improve their condition."[113]

The politically engaged and interracial character of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society challenged many contemporary ideas about acceptable behaviors for genteel women. However, the inclusion of members of some of Philadelphia's most prominent families added respectability to the Society's "unsettling new demands" and softened the criticisms aimed at their work.[114] Abolitionist women were aware that their public and inherently political critiques of slavery were considered unfeminine and inappropriate by many members of their community. However, they also believed that "the concept of duty allowed women to ignore inconvenient rules of conduct" and that

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[112] The Fortens are representative of the deep activist roots present in many elite black Philadelphia families. The women of the Forten-Purvis clan all found individual ways to wield their influence in favor of enslaved and free blacks. Sarah was an organizer of the 1830s national convention of black women and published poetry in the abolitionist press. Margaretta ran a school for black women and served as secretary of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, of which she was a founding member. Harriet, who married mixed-race abolitionist Robert Purvis, was active in both the PFAS and the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. Charlotte was a founding member of the PFAS, published poetry in the *Liberator*, and taught in black schools first in the north and then, following the Civil War, in the South Carolina Sea Islands. As a group, the Forten-Purvises refused to pay taxes when their children were denied access to Philadelphia's segregated public schools. Lapansky, "Feminism, Freedom, and Community," 11; Ginzberg, *Women in Antebellum Reform*, 69; and, Soderlund, "Priorities and Power," 69.

[113] Pennsylvania Female Anti-Slavery Society Minute Books, 1833-1870, 14 December 1833, Pennsylvania Abolition Society Papers, HSP as quoted in Soderlund, "Priorities and Power," 76 and Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism*, 4, 44.

[114] Lapansky, "The World the Agitators Made," 92.

the definitions of proper female behavior were far more malleable than others might choose to acknowledge.[115] Abolitionist women knew how fine the line was between public activity on behalf of moral reform, which was considered acceptable, and that which was seen as entirely unfeminine. They were skilled at both acknowledging the gendered system within which they lived and overstepping those boundaries when necessary. In the Third Annual Report of the PFAS, the Society's officers articulated this tension: "We will never overstep the boundaries of propriety, but when our brothers and sisters, lie crushed and bleeding … we must do with our might, what our hands find to do … pausing only to imagine, 'what is right?'"[116]

During the 1830s and early 1840s, the Society focused on spreading awareness about the conditions of slavery, circulating antislavery petitions, and raising money to support abolitionist causes. In order to attract new members and inform the public about the horrors of slavery, the PFAS regularly sponsored speeches by black and white abolitionists such as Robert Forten, Robert Purvis, Joshua Coffin, and the Grimké sisters. This proved to be an extremely successful tactic, as membership rapidly expanded during the first five years of the Society's existence.[117] Between 1834 and 1837, the Society focused heavily on petitioning Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia and prohibit the interstate slave trade and petitioning the state of Pennsylvania to allow

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[115] Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism*, 69.

[116] Minutes of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, 12 January 1837, Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society Records, HSP.

[117] By 1845, the Society had more than two hundred members. Most of the new membership, however, was white, so in March 1839, the Society decided that they needed to work specifically to increase their black membership. They appointed Sarah Douglass head of a committee for this purpose and extended an "invitation to our colored sisters to co-operate with us in our labors for the emancipation of the slave." This effort appears to have brought in at least seven new black members, including prominent teacher Amelia M. Bogle. Soderlund, "Priorities and Power," 69, 72 and Pennsylvania Female Anti-Slavery Society, Minute Books, 1833-1870, 14 March 1839 as quoted in Soderlund, "Priorities and Power," 71.

jury trials for people accused of being runaway slaves.[118] While scholars disagree over whether abolitionist women saw the act of petitioning as being inherently political, they agree that the right to petition was the most powerful political tool that American women could employ individually and, more importantly, collectively.[119]

Pennsylvania women had actively petitioned the government for social, political, and economic change since at least 1695 and applied that practice with vigor to the effort to end slavery. Echoing the methods of previous organizations such as the wartime Ladies Association, the PFAS assigned one member to correspond with abolitionists in each county in eastern Pennsylvania and divided Philadelphia and the Northern Liberties into districts, with a pair of members to canvass each. They were encouraged by the organizers of the first Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, held in Philadelphia in 1837, who suggested that petitioners go to every house and ask every individual to sign, "for when all the maids and matrons of the land knock at the door of Congress, our Statesmen must legislate." In just two years, the Society gathered nearly

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[118] Soderlund, "Priorities and Power," 77.

[119] Susan Zaeske argues that antislavery women downplayed the political nature of petitioning, characterizing it as "a pure expression of individual moral conscience" rather than a statement of political desire. She further states that, while petitioning had immense potential for granting women a voice in public discourse, they worried about criticism for wading too openly into political debate and, thus, preferred less-political tools such as social networking and boycotts to more overt forms of protest. Susan Zaeske, *Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, & Women's Political Identity* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 3, 39-41. Ann Boylan echoes this argument when she suggests that the deferential language of the petitions circulated by activists indicate that these women saw themselves as utilizing private, personal influence rather than agitating for political change. Boylan, "Women and Politics in the Era before Seneca Fall," 372. Julie Roy Jeffrey, however, suggests that petitioning was one of the most powerful political tools wielded by abolitionist women while Carol Faulkner and Mary Hershberger emphasize the political nature of women's petitions to Congress, beginning with those protesting Cherokee removal. Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism*, 5; Faulker, *Lucretia Mott's Heresy*, 63-4; and, Mary Hershberger, "Mobilizing Women, Anticipating Abolition: The Struggle against Indian Removal in the 1830s," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 1 (June 1999), 15-40. Clearly, some women saw petitioning as more political than others, but regardless of how they characterized it, petitioning was an important political tool for activist women and was often seen so by those who opposed their efforts.

10,000 signatures.[120] Mary Grew commented that, although they were often turned away by people unwilling to sign, the PFAS did not lose hope that "the seed then laboriously sown, falls into good ground, and after a little season spring up, bringing forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold."[121]

Beginning in 1838, the Society focused less on petitioning and more on raising money for abolitionist causes. The shift was partly due to Congressional passage of the Gag Rule in 1836 and partly due to an increase in racial violence in Philadelphia, which simultaneously discouraged women from joining the PFAS and kept existing members from being as bold in their pursuit of signatures.[122] Rather than circulating petitions that appeared to be achieving little, the Society decided to focus on organizing an annual antislavery fair. The Board of Managers proposed that the Society hold their first fair in 1835, after observing their popularity in other cities. Initially, the PFAS resisted the initiative due to the concern that more conservative Quakers would find a fair inappropriate and it might diminish enthusiasm for participating in the Society more generally. Nonetheless, some members began meeting weekly to sew handkerchiefs, workbags, and other sale items to be inscribed with abolitionist sayings.

The Society held their first fair in 1836 and were surprised to raise over $200. Encouraged, they continued to hold a fair every year and, by 1840, were charging a small entry fee and raising more than $700 annually.[123] The women who worked at these fairs emphasized that they gave their labor freely and "the example of labor untainted by base

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[120] Soderlund, "Priorities and Power," 78 and Brown, *Mary Grew*, 17-8.
[121] Pennsylvania Female Anti-Slavery Society, Minute Book, 1839-44, 19 April 1842, HSP as quoted in Brown, *Mary Grew*, 15.
[122] Soderlund, "Priorities and Power," 78.
[123] Pennsylvania Female Anti-Slavery Society, Minute Books, 13 June 1835, 8 September 1836, and 12 March 1840 as quoted in Soderlund, "Priorities and Power," 80-81.

desire for personal gain, free from the ignominy of the lash, made a powerful moral statement." In Philadelphia, not only were the women's time and talent donated to the cause, but only free labor materials were used to create the goods for sale.[124] One member of the PFAS expressed her reason for supporting the annual fair: it was "a means of keeping an interest alive among many who otherwise would care little & do less for the cause [and] a means of pecuniary benefit, almost the only one of which women can avail themselves."[125]

Historian Jean Soderlund has suggested that the Society's shift in focus from lectures and petitioning to the antislavery fair was not a retreat from the political arena, as it might initially appear. Rather, the PFAS "transformed female domestic skills into political activities. The shift from petition drives to sewing circles was not a regression from the political realm to women's domestic culture, but rather an expansion of politics."[126] Further, the women of the Society were incredibly canny in the ways they used the funds they raised. Beginning in 1836, they sent a considerable amount of money to the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, gaining both recognition and power within this male-dominated organization. In 1838, the report of the state executive committee stated that

> if the amount of money contributed by every society in the state, bore the same proportion to the number of its members, as does that of one Female A. S. Society of 142 members, this state would probably have raised during the present year, not less than twenty or thirty thousand dollars for antislavery purposes.[127]

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[124] Minutes of Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, 18 May 1843, Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society Records, HSP and Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism*, 123 and 123, fn. 76.
[125] Pennsylvania Female Anti-Slavery Society, Minute Books, 20 January 1842 as quoted in Soderlund, "Priorities and Power," 82.
[126] Soderlund, "Priorities and Power," 68, 84.
[127] Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, Minute Book, 30 October-1 November 1838, Pennsylvania Abolition Society Papers, HSP as quoted in Soderlund, "Priorities and Power," 83-4.

The amount of money they provided gained PFAS members a place on various boards and committees over the years, allowing them considerable influence within the state society: Mary Earle and Sarah Lewis served on the business committee; Mary C. Pennock on the committee on petitions; Sarah Pugh, Lucretia Mott, and Elizabeth Neall on the state executive committee; while, Pugh served as treasurer and Mary Grew as corresponding secretary.[128]

Abolishing slavery was the primary goal of the PFAS, but the Society also undertook projects that benefitted local black communities. Both Hicksite Quakers and free blacks believed that access to education was crucial for African Americans to undermine white prejudice and advance socially.[129] Within the first year of its existence, the Society committed itself to supporting black education in Philadelphia. They formed a committee to assess local public education and, by the end of 1834, decided to establish a girl's school of their own. Run initially by Mary Grew and then for most of its tenure by Sarah Douglass, the Society paid the rent and teachers' salaries and provided furniture, books, and other items for the school until it closed in 1849. The PFAS also

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[128] Soderlund, "Priorities and Power," 84. Contributions to the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society were not the only way the PFAS used their funds. In the late-1830s, they contributed a large amount of money to the construction of the new Pennsylvania Hall. The Society struggled to find a public location in which to hold meetings and host speakers; in exchange for supporting the new building, they would be allowed to host functions there. Unfortunately, the Hall burned to the ground in 1838, days after it was built, in a racially charged incident. Lapansky, "The World the Agitators Made," 93-4.

[129] Philadelphia's black women were committed to self-education, as well as providing schooling to girls and boys. By the 1830s, Philadelphia had three black women's literary societies, the Female Literary Association, the Female Minervian Association, and the Edgeworth Literary Association. According to a 1 March 1834 article in the *Liberator*, the stated goal of these women's groups was to "improve the mental condition of all who feel disposed to participate" and membership was "not confined to any particular class," although scholars suspect that the women who participated were primarily of the middling and elite classes. Members of these groups read and discussed a range of literature, listened to invited speakers, and wrote and published poetry. While the goals of the literary societies did not include abolition, there was a large overlap in the membership between these groups and the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, and the overall agenda of black uplift was consistent among all the groups. For a greater discussion of black women's literary societies and their links to abolition activism, see Lapansky, "The World the Agitators Made," 97 and Winch, "'You Have Talents – Only Cultivate Them," 101-118.

organized scientific lectures specifically for black audiences and taught sewing skills to women and girls.[130] In the 1840s, the PFAS expanded its scope further. Black members won the Society's support for Robert Purvis's Vigilant Association, which secretly raised funds to help runaway slaves, and for a temperance retreat for black Philadelphians.[131]

The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society was one of the first antislavery groups founded solely by women, and other groups used it as a model for forming their own organizations. In 1836, Melanie Ammidon of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society wrote the PFAS for advice. By way of introducing herself and asking forgiveness for ignoring the traditional rules of social introduction, she suggested that their common goal would allow them to "forget all those little forms of etiquette, which under other circumstances we might adhere to."[132] Historians have argued that sharing knowledge and tactics was essential in building female antislavery networks, and the PFAS shared a great deal with women throughout the North.[133] In addition to passing information through correspondence, the Society published its annual reports in pamphlet form. These documents circulated among other women's antislavery groups, giving them insight into how one of the earliest and most prominent organizations functioned.[134] Women launching abolitionist societies could emulate men's groups, but they were often

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[130] Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism*, 84-5; Soderlund, "Priorities and Power," 76-77; and, Brown, *Mary Grew*, 15.
[131] Minutes of the Pennsylvania Female Anti-Slavery Society, 9 September and 9 December 1841, 10 February and 23 June 1842, Pennsylvania Female Anti-Slavery Society Records, HSP. See also, Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism*, 105, fn. 18. At least one member of the PFAS, Hester Reckless, was also on the board of the Vigilant Association of Philadelphia. See, Joseph A. Boromé, "The Vigilant Committee," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 92, no. 3 (July 1968), 320-351.
[132] Melanie Ammidon to the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, 15 April 1836, Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society Records, Massachusetts Historical Society as quoted in Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism*, 60. Some groups, such as the Fitchburg (Massachusetts) Female Anti-Slavery Society published their founding documents in the *Liberator* so that other groups could model their forms and procedures.
[133] Jeffrey, *The Great and Silent Army of Abolition*, 60.
[134] Brown, *Mary Grew*, 15-6.

more interested in modeling themselves on societies run by women and were willing to ignore social niceties in order to make contacts and gather the information they needed.

The PFAS, from its beginning, had been dedicated to supporting the free produce movement. In 1834, they codified their commitment by adding a tenth article to their Constitution recommending that "the Members of this society should, at all times and on all occasions, give the preference to free produce over that of slaves believing that the refusal to purchase and use the products of slave labour is one of the most efficient means of abolishing slavery."[135] The PFAS so strongly believed in free produce that they raised money to publish their own edition of Elizabeth Heyrick's pamphlet in 1836. In it they noted that free produce had been so influential in ending the British slave trade that the members of the PFAS "belie[ved] that a republication will be attended with very beneficial consequences."[136] The Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, which met in Philadelphia in 1838, confirmed female support for free produce throughout the North: "This is the duty of all those who call themselves abolitionists to make the *most vigorous efforts* to procure for the use of their families the products of *free labor*, so that their hands may be clean, in this particular, when inquisition is made for blood."[137] The next year they reaffirmed this commitment, by resolving that "we should regard slave

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[135] 14 December 1833 and 15 January 1834, Minutes of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, Pennsylvania Abolition Society Papers, HSP and *Fourth Annual Report of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society* (Philadelphia: Printed by Merrihew and Gunn, 1838).

[136] Elizabeth Heyrick, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition; Or, An Inquiry into the Shortest, Safest, and Most Effectual Means of Getting Rid of Slavery* (Philadelphia: Published by The Philadelphia Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, Printed by Merrihew and Gunn, 1836), 2.

[137] Unlike the PFAS, the majority of female anti-slavery societies were not integrated. Even among abolitionists, there was concern about white women mixing with black women and men. For some groups, the free produce movement was a way to reach out to black activists. *Proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, Held in Philadelphia, May 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th, 1838* (Philadelphia, 1838), 7-8. See also, Faulkner, "The Root of the Evil," 392.

labor produce as the fruits of the labor of our own children, brothers, and sisters, and from such a view decide on the propriety of using it."[138]

In the early 1840s, free produce began to lose its popularity. William Lloyd Garrison, who had originally supported the movement, distanced himself from the boycott and many of his followers did the same. While free produce lost momentum nationally, the members of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society remained committed to supporting free labor and boycotting slave-made goods. Comprised of women who valued individual action, the Society continued its free produce activism even at the risk of alienating potential new members.[139] Over the years, various members articulated their reasons for supporting this strategy. Writing to the Buckingham [Pennsylvania] Female Anti-Slavery Society, PFAS Corresponding Secretary Mary Grew explained that the boycott was important as "evidence of our sincerity" and insisted that abolitionist women must not fall prey to the hypocrisy of "purchas[ing] the products of the slave's unrequited labor, thus hiring the oppressor to continue in the commission of sin, from which they are, at the same time, solemnly warning him to desist."[140] Frances Ellen Watkins Harper echoed this sentiment when she wrote, "Oh, how can we pamper our appetites upon luxuries drawn from reluctant fingers? Oh, could slavery exist long if it did not sit on a commercial throne?"[141]

The financial success of female efforts such as the antislavery fair and Lydia White's long-lasting free produce store required the support of male, as well as female,

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[138] *Proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, held in Philadelphia, May 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, 1839* (Philadelphia, 1839), 7-8, 13.
[139] Carol Faulkner suggests that their persistent commitment to free produce may have been one of the reasons that new membership in the PFAS waned in the 1840s. Faulkner, "The Root of the Evil," 397-8.
[140] "Correspondence between the Buckingham Female A. S. Society and the Female A. S. Society of Philadelphia," *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, October 1837.
[141] William Still, "Frances Ellen Watkins Harper," *The Underground Railroad* (Philadelphia, 1872), 759 as quoted in Faulkner, "The Root of the Evil," 396.

consumers. Men could have chosen to avoid those spaces and reject women's public abolition work, but they did not. Instead, most antislavery men in the city supported the efforts of their female counterparts. This was true as well for other activist women in Philadelphia, who represented a broad spectrum of society. Female reformers and abolitionists came from a range of classes, religious perspectives, and racial groups and embraced a variety of tactics: some worked only in all-female organizations, others in mixed-sex and interracial groups. While the husbands of benevolent ladies might spurn female abolitionists and support only women working in all-female societies, there are reasons to believe that many men "saw positive aspects to women having power," especially when women used that power in ways that their fathers, husbands, and brothers approved.[142]

Women's inclusion and eventual prominence in organizations such as the Gilbert Lyceum and the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society indicate that male activists valued women who contributed to the success of self-improvement and antislavery groups.[143] Similarly, city leaders willingly accepted the contributions of charitable ladies in dealing with problems of poverty, crime, and poor health. Lastly, activist families such as the Forten-Purvises, Grimkés, Grews, and Beechers not only allowed but expected their female members to take an active role in fighting for social change. Whether it was through religious or secular benevolent and reform organizations or large-scale abolition societies, female activists were expected to balance their private, domestic duties with a public, activist life. From early on, Charlotte Forten perceived the strain of these

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[142] Lapansky, "The World the Agitators Made," 97. For a discussion of how this dynamic played out among activist women in Rochester, New York, see Nancy A. Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822-1872* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), especially chapters 2 and 4.

[143] Lapansky, "The World the Agitators Made," 97.

expectations when she wrote in her diary that she suffered from "a want of energy, perseverance and application … and here I am, nearly twenty-one, and only a *wasted life* to look back upon."[144] Her words reflect less an actual state of malaise than they do the extraordinarily high expectations to which activist women held themselves. These women, supported by the men in their families and communities, committed themselves to an important cause and were willing to devote extraordinary time and resources to achieving their goals. Most could not have done so without the support of their male relatives, neighbors, and coworkers.

Conclusion

Just ten years after Lucretia Mott spoke before abolitionists at Pennsylvania Hall, she addressed the Seneca Falls Convention, the first American gathering devoted specifically to women's rights. Mott, alongside sixty-seven women and thirty-two men, signed the "Declaration of Sentiments" which attested:

> When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

They went on to lay out their evidence in favor of a "history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her" and swore that they would "use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object" of equal rights for women.[145] The Seneca Falls Convention has long been viewed as a watershed in American women's history, in that it

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[144] Charlotte Forten Journal, #2, 15 June 1858 as quoted in Lapansky, "Feminism, Freedom, and Community," 18.
[145] *Report of the Woman's Rights Convention, Held at Seneca Falls, N.Y., July 19th and 20th, 1848* (Rochester, NY: Printed by John Dick at the North Star Office, 1848).

was the first time a group of women gathered solely to advocate for their right to full civil equality. But it was also part of a much longer trajectory of female participation in social, economic, political, and reform activities stretching back to before the American Revolution.

Historians have struggled to define the exact moment the woman's rights movement began and have disagreed over whether there even was a single point of origin.[146] So, too, did many of its participants. In 1855, Mott wrote Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a co-organizer of the Seneca Falls Convention, about this very issue: "From the time of the 1st. convention of women – in New Y[ork] 1837 – the battle began."[147] As women's history emerged as a distinct field in the 1970s and 1980s, several scholars tried to chart a straight path "from benevolent work through evangelicalism and abolition to

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[146] For opposing sides of this debate, see Ellen DuBois, "The Radicalism of the Women's Suffrage Movement: Notes Toward the Reconstruction of Nineteenth-Century Feminism," *Feminist Studies* 3, no. 1/2 (Autumn 1975), 63-71 and Lisa Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Woman's Suffrage Movement, 1848-1898* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

[147] Lucretia Mott to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 16 March 1855 in *Selected Letters of Lucretia Coffin Mott*, ed. Beverly Wilson Palmer (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2002). This was not the first time Mott had expressed this idea to Stanton. In 1848, she stated that the abolition movement was empowering women in very specific and important ways. After attending sessions of an antislavery convention in Philadelphia, she wrote: "they include women - & white women too, I can do no less, than be present & take a little part". Ann Gordon affirms Mott's position that the 1837 Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women ought to be seen as the beginning of the woman's movement, because it sought to define women's role within the abolition movement independent of men and, in the process, validated women's political rights, inequalities, and demands more broadly. Indeed, a resolution from the 1837 meeting found its way into the "Declaration of Sentiments." Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who was highly invested in controlling the historical narrative of woman suffrage, suggested various possible beginnings to the movement other than Seneca Falls, at times claiming it began in 1840 at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London or in 1850 at the first National Woman's Rights Convention held in Worcester, Massachusetts. See, Lucretia Coffin Mott to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 3 October 1848 in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, vol. 1, In the School of Anti-Slavery, 1840 to 1866*, ed. Ann. D. Gordon (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 126-130; Ann D. Gordon, introduction to *African American Women and the Vote, 1837-1965*, eds. Ann D. Gordon and Bettye Collier-Thomas (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 3; Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More* (1898; Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 82; and, Paulina Wright Davis, *History of the National Woman's Rights Movement for Twenty Years: with the Proceedings of the Decade Meeting held at Apollo Hall, October 20, 1870, from 1850 to 1870* (New York: Journeymen Printer's Co-operative Association, 1871), 5. For more on the 1837 and 1848 resolutions, see Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Woman's Rights Emerges Within the Antislavery Movement, 1830-1870: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000).

woman's rights."[148] However, female activism did not progress in a linear fashion from the more acceptable forms of charitable efforts and moral reform to more radical claims for women's economic, social and political equality. At the same time, Seneca Falls did not mark the emergence of an unprecedented movement dedicated to fighting for equality for women. Ideas that were articulated at Seneca Falls were stirring among various activist groups for twenty years before the Convention, even though many women activists continued to object to women's direct political involvement long after 1848.[149] Thus, while the Seneca Falls Declaration was in many ways the culmination of a long trajectory of women's participation in various public spheres, it was not the end-point of a continuous or monolithic progression.

The experiences of Philadelphia women in the early national period wove together decades of participation in community life and expanded their role in civil, economic and political spheres. Following the Revolutionary War, as the meaning and

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[148] Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change*, 22. See also Hewitt, "From Seneca Falls to Suffrage?" in her edited volume, *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 15-38 for a stronger statement of the multiple origins of woman's rights in the 1830s and 1840s.

[149] Regarding the progression of women's activism towards Seneca Falls, Anne Boylan writes, "By speaking out on issues such as slavery, by mobilizing women to lobby for specific legislation, and be engaging in petition campaigns to Congress, activist women had already defied accepted conventions. They had also begun to reconceptualize women's relationship to politics and to question their exclusion from voting, which emerged in the 1840s as a key symbol of male political privilege. The debate at the Seneca Falls Convention (1848) over whether women should exercise 'their sacred right to the elective franchise' culminated a decade of discussion concerning acceptable political activities for women." Similarly, Julie Roy Jeffrey argues that the radicalism of abolition had little to do with a woman's eventual position on suffrage: "The tendency to classify some women abolitionists as radical and others as conservative, usually based upon their attitude towards feminism, misses an essential truth about abolitionism and the ways in which it led its adherents to transgress ideological norms. No matter what one's attitude might be toward women's rights, to embrace abolitionism was to embrace radicalism." Jean Soderlund suggests that the members of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society might have been an unusual abolition group in that its members were more inclined towards the woman's movement than most. Due to the large percentage of Quakers and other women coming from a more egalitarian background, as an organization the PFAS was more outspoken in its support for the emerging suffrage movement than the majority of its sister societies. Kathryn Kish Sklar has thoroughly documented the roots of the suffrage movement in particular sectors of female abolitionism. Boylan, "Women and Politics in the Era before Seneca Falls," 363-4; Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism*, 6; Soderlund, "Priorities and Power," 67-8; and Sklar, *Woman's Rights Emerges Within the Antislavery Movement, 1830-1870.*

boundaries of citizenship and political participation were being defined for the new nation, women continued to take an active role in both private and public events. Despite changing and contradictory rhetoric about their place in the republic, women worked to pursue personal, familial, and partisan agendas. As factions increasingly dominated politics, women rose to new prominence hosting and attending events that furthered the goals of a specific party. While salons had played a role in national politics before the Revolution, during Philadelphia's capital period they became a key venue for discussion and compromise, and the women who hosted them were at the center of an overtly political social mechanism. Moreover, as parties increasingly legitimated women as part of the politicized citizenry, female attendance at public rallies and parades and their participation in rituals of celebration and mourning took on new significance. Thus even as women continued many of their prewar activities, their importance to the developing political system pushed them to new levels of prominence and gained them greater recognition within the political process.

Alongside women's increased importance to the political system arose a new focus on female education. The reasons behind this shift differed: some Philadelphians focused on fitting women to be supportive of their husbands and sons; some on equipping them to take financial responsibility for themselves; and, some on nurturing their inherent intellectual abilities. Regardless of these differences, there was widespread agreement by the 1790s that female schooling needed improvement. Schools like the Young Ladies Academy of Philadelphia provided girls with educations that allowed them to advise their families on civic matters and manage their own finances should they find themselves single. However, they also encouraged women to celebrate their academic strengths and

see themselves as having value beyond their roles as future wives and mothers. Using a competitive system modeled on the best boys schools, the Academy encouraged its students to develop their intellectual abilities and take pride in their advancement. Most graduates accepted that they were likely to marry and have limited scope for their learning after graduation, but they expressed a hope that eventually women would prove their worth and have greater opportunities for educational and professional advancement. Thus, even as they made significant strides beyond the schooling available to most women before the Revolution, they also held out hope for even greater gains for future generations.

As importantly, women in Philadelphia embraced their first opportunities for organized reform in the years immediately following the Revolution, although the groups they formed often had roots reaching back to the mid-eighteenth century. Working in all-female and mixed-sex groups, they tackled a range of social ills including aid to the poor, widows and orphans, and American Indians. Quakers organized many of these groups, but women from a range of backgrounds came together to pursue social reform. In the late-1820s, local women began to expand their activism, especially into antislavery campaigns. Working first alongside men to institute a free produce movement in the city, abolitionist women soon founded their own organization, the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society. Under its auspices, black and white women formed committees and societies, circulated petitions, raised money, held public events, boycotted slave-made goods, and networked with other abolitionists around the Atlantic World. Unlike female groups in other cities, the Philadelphia Society was integrated from the beginning, bringing together white and black women from a range of class and religious

backgrounds. They were at the forefront of the antislavery movement, taking a more progressive stance on both racial and gender cooperation than many groups were able to achieve until years later. While racial tensions worsened over time and rolling back slavery proved to be an extraordinarily slow process, abolitionist women took comfort, as Angelina Grimké Weld said, in knowing that, regardless of the outcome, they had "*done what we could*."[150]

Whether they went on to support the woman's rights movement or not, the women who expanded female access to the public sphere in the decades following the Revolution proved an inspiration for later generations of activists. Emma Lapansky argues that women who stepped into the realms of political participation, formal education, moral reform, and antislavery work forged a "functional feminism" that might not have overtly supported the goals of the rising woman's movement, but which set a clear precedent for later claims to equality and independence. She wrote that the

> willingness [of activist women] to travel alone, to subject themselves to the curiosity and ridicule of public audiences, to eschew needlework and housework in favor of taking their self-image from something 'useful,' to postpone or forgo marriage and children, to seek the exposure of publication, to openly (if modestly) state their resentment at men's superior privilege

set an example for the kinds of public life women would later claim.[151] As part of a decades long arc of increasing access to and comfort within the public sphere, the women of early national Philadelphia contributed to the political, economic, intellectual, and moral landscape of their city and country and, in doing so, paved the way for future generations who would look back for inspiration even as they continued to push the boundaries of women's proper sphere forward.

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[150] Angelina Grimké Weld, Speech at Pennsylvania Hall, 17 May 1838.
[151] Lapansky, "Feminism, Freedom, and Community," 19.

Conclusion

In 1840, Charles Francis Adams, the son and grandson of early American presidents, lamented that women's contributions to the Revolutionary War were already disappearing from popular memory. He wrote, "The heroism of the females of the American Revolution has gone from memory with the generation that witnessed it and nothing, absolutely nothing, remains upon the ear of the young of the present day."[1] While activist women still held close the memory of their foremothers, the personal, individual, and distinctly female experiences of the Revolution were disappearing from oral and written histories as women's contributions to the war were increasingly relegated to the sidelines. Historian Joan Gundersen argues that the "active participation of women in the revolutionary war was effectively masked by the new domestic ideology" of the post-war period. She goes on to suggest that the early historians of the Revolution were comfortable discussing some activities – such as sewing, making flags and cartridges, nursing the sick, and helping their husbands as camp followers – because they were consistent with women's household duties. However, "they would have to work harder to reinterpret women's active roles and political mobilization during the war."[2]

It is not just women's involvement in the Revolutionary War that was obscured over time but also their broader public presence. Both before and after the war, women were thoroughly enmeshed in multiple aspects of the public sphere and functioned both independently and as family members in commerce, politics, and the greater social world.

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[1] Charles Francis Adams, introduction to *Letters of Mrs. Adams, the Wife of John Adams; with an Introductory Memoir*, ed. Charles Francis Adams, vol. 1 (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1840), xix.
[2] Joan Gundersen, *To be Useful to the World: Women in Revolutionary America, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 173.

During the late-colonial and early national periods, Philadelphians in particular recognized the importance of women to the life of their city: they respected women as consumers and business owners; they sought their participation in events leading up to and during the Revolution; they validated women's legal claims following the war; and they involved women in the intellectual, political, and activist developments of the new republic. Quaker Anne Emlen, writing about political developments within the British empire in the 1770s, encapsulated women's relationship to the public sphere: "How shall I impose a silence upon myself when the subject is so very interesting, so much engrossing Conversation - & what every Member of the Community is more or less concerned in?"[3] Invested in the future of their city, colony, and later state, Philadelphia women saw themselves as "Member[s] of the Community" and participated in the public sphere in that capacity. Over time, historians have lost sight of what their contemporaries knew: that women were actively involved, to some degree, in almost every aspect of public life.

The richness of women's experience from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century was, for many years, obscured in the historical literature as scholars ignored them, relegated them to a domestic role, or highlighted exceptional women who were not intended to represent the female experience more widely. Concepts such as separate spheres, republican motherhood, and coverture were utilized to contain women within a relatively narrow and largely passive space in late colonial, Revolutionary, and early national history. While there has been pushback against these interpretations, including a recognition of certain aspects of their revolutionary activities, the idea that prior to the antebellum era American women were largely denied access to the arenas of

[3] Anne Emlem, "On Politicks," Commonplace Book, Emlen Family Papers, 1715-1885, HSP.

commerce, politics, protest, legal reform, and intellectual debate has remained intact for decades. These positions are supported largely by prescriptive sources: legal codes, literary sources, advice manuals, and other writings that critiqued the idea of women's participation in public labors of any kind. However, a closer examination of descriptive and first person sources reveals the breadth of women's activities in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Coverture, republican motherhood, and separate spheres did constrain women to some degree in these periods; however, they were neither universally embraced nor applied. While experiences differed by class, race, religion, ethnicity, and family disposition, Philadelphia women participated in the public sphere in important and influential ways.[4]

Setting aside traditional periodization and looking at the decades from the 1760s to the 1840s as a long arc of gradual but non-linear development, we see not only how women were involved in Philadelphia's public sphere, but also how they built on past experiences as they continued to push the boundaries of their world outward. Female abolitionists of the 1830s and 1840s drew on the pre-war boycotts, Revolutionary organizations such as the Philadelphia Ladies Association, and early national benevolent activism as they formed their own organizations. Women who fought for legal and financial independence following the Revolution referenced their own, but also many other women's, involvement in business, political debate, and support of the Continental

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[4] Joanne Meyerowitz makes a similar, and, for me, influential argument about Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique*. She contends that, "While many historians question Friedan's homogenized account of women's actual experience [in the 1950s], virtually all accept her version of the dominant ideology, the conservative promotion of domesticity." Meyerowitz goes on to explain that when she began researching the post-World War II era, she accepted this version of history, but that her study of the "public culture … books, articles, and films … contradicted the domestic ideology" and demanded a more in-depth examination. She ultimately concluded that mass culture both perpetuated and responded to "contradictions, ambivalence, and competing voices" to such a striking degree that no single work, including *The Feminine Mystique*, could be considered authoritative. Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946-1958," *Journal of American History* 79, no. 4 (March 1993), 1456-1457.

army as they argued in favor of married women's rights. Women who advocated for expanding female education gave examples of female capacity and the need for improved schooling from antiquity through the revolutionary period. And political activists, including woman's rights advocates, found inspiration in the women who took a partisan stance before and during the Revolution, who battled against injustice in the early national period, and who established themselves as public intellectuals throughout that entire period. All of these women recognized that the public opportunities they seized in their own times were made possible by the experiences and actions of those who had come before.

The foremothers applauded by later activists engaged in economic as well as political ventures. From at least the pre-Revolutionary period, women played a significant role in the Philadelphia commercial community. They owned businesses, ran taverns, and worked as skilled artisans, contributing substantially to the diversity and success of the city's economy. Businesses such as Elizabeth Combs' highly successful dry goods store and Mary Jenkin's renowned tavern operated for years, underpinning the marketplace and bringing commercial, political, and social life into conversation. Entrepreneurs such as Betsy Ross, the Hyde sisters, and Mary and Ann Pearson carried their economic clout into the political arena, signing merchants' agreements to support the non-importation movement and contracts to supply the American army and navy. Female vendors and consumers mingled with their male counterparts in commercial spaces such as vendues, wharves, and warehouses, demonstrating the limits of coverture and ideologies of gendered spheres in the late-colonial period. As women made business deals based on credit, traveled to parts of town not traditionally considered feminine, and

negotiated contracts with suppliers and laborers, they acted as equal members of the commercial community, not women encumbered by their gender. Not every woman had full and equal access to the commercial spaces of the city, but as a group, female businesswomen and laborers were essential to the continuing prominence of Philadelphia within the British empire and the emerging United States.

Female businesswomen and consumers found themselves enmeshed in the pre-Revolutionary political debates, but this was by no means the only avenue women had to express their political opinions in the late-colonial or early national periods. Women found multiple ways to participate in popular protest and debate even as they carved out new spaces for political expression. Writers such as Hannah Griffitts and Susanna Wright circulated poetry within all-female and mixed-sex groups and published it in Pennsylvania newspapers, expecting that their commentary would be read both privately and publicly. Familiar figures such as Elizabeth Drinker, Betsy Ross, and the Shoemaker daughters attended public meetings, rallies, and protests along with countless lesser-known or unknown women. Moreover, in some instances, they played a key role, making presentations, participating in parades, and signing documents protesting pre-Revolutionary injustices. During the early national period, women oversaw a new, female-dominated space that combined politics with sociability and became increasingly central to the formal political process. Salonnières, from Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, Elizabeth Willing Powel, and Ann Willing Bingham to Dolley Madison and Louisa Catherine Adams were renowned for their intellect and perspicacity as well as their ability to bring together important thinkers and public figures in spaces that blended private conversation with matters of colonial and national importance.

Despite conservative pushback against their increasing importance to the political process in the first decades of nationhood, women gained a toehold in the formal partisan politics of the federal period. As early factions and the later Democratic Republican and Federalist parties vied for electoral support, they sought to demonstrate that they had the approval of a majority of Americans, women included. Partisan leaders originally invited women to appear within the crowds supporting male action, but they quickly assumed more active roles in celebrations and other public events. Women made presentations and short speeches at memorial events, dressed in symbolic colors and costumes as part of parades and commemorations, and occasionally shifted the tone of public displays to feature feminine symbols of patriotism rather than more martial emblems. This newly politicized role in early national politics did not go unchallenged. Ironically, while partisan groups were willing to bring women into their fold, they lashed out at those who supported the opposition. Federalists lambasted the Democratic Republicans for deferring to "bold, daredevil, turban-headed females" who talked "about liberty and equality in a good masculine style."[5] Thus even as women gained a greater role in the formal mechanisms of government, any overtly political actions were debated and criticized by those who did not agree with their position.

Such critiques emerged during the American Revolution as women across the ideological spectrum found their lives significantly impacted by the war. Living in a prominent American center, Philadelphia women interacted with both the British and

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[5] *Porcupine's Gazette*, 27 July 1798 and William Cobbett, "Introduction," William Playfair, *The History of Jacobinism, Its Crimes, Cruelties and Perfidies: Comprising an Inquiry into the Manner of Disseminating, Under the Appearance of Philosophy and Virtue, Principles which are Equally Subversive of Order, Virtue, Religion, Liberty and Happiness. With an Appendix by Peter Porcupine, Containing a History of the American Jacobins, Commonly Denominated Democrats* (Philadelphia: Printed for William Cobbett, 1796), 25.

American militaries and blended their domestic responsibilities, personal convictions, and public endeavors on a daily basis. Some women were not merely affected by the presence of a war in their city, but intentionally stepped into highly public roles either supporting or opposing military positions and policies. It was then that they were mostly likely to become the focus of oppositional critiques. Loyalist women who attended the Mischianza as the special guests of the British officers participated in a social event that gained attention throughout the empire. Their willingness to align themselves with a group of men disliked for their frivolity and licentiousness brought them to the fore in the debate over propriety, sexuality, and gentility. Other women's public actions during the war were more kindly looked upon. Elizabeth Drinker and the other Quaker women who petitioned the state, national, and military leadership for the return of their exiled relatives extended their habitual practice of speaking out within the Friends' meeting into the wartime public sphere. Still, female Quakers who refused to display patriotic symbols in their windows or on their persons came under attacks similar to those of male Friends who refused to serve in the military. And many Loyalist women complained about being pressured by Esther De Berdt Reed, Sarah Bache Franklin, and the other members of the Philadelphia Ladies Association who sought financial support for Washington's troops. Still, the Association drew on past commercial experiences and foreshadowed later female activism when they formed an organization, publicized their intentions to raise money for the Continental Army, and distributed more than three thousand shirts to patriot soldiers. The actions of these women created a bridge between the late-colonial and early national periods by encouraging women to build on their early experiences in commerce, politics, and social action and setting precedents for later

participation in more formal politics and reform. Yet despite these heroic foremothers, later activists, too, would be criticized for stepping beyond their sphere; and they, too, would ignore such critiques.

Revolutionary women not only took action to advance particular causes, but also challenged the theoretical limits of married women's legal rights. Hundreds of female petitioners in America and England appealed to their governments for compensation or the return of confiscated property and funds. Many were widows making claims about the need to support themselves and their children after losing their husbands in the war. Philadelphia women such as Grace Galloway, Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson, and Jane Bartram, however, were not widowed. They were women who chose to separate themselves from their husbands over personal or political differences, and then argued that they had a right to full possession of their dowry or other property gained independently. Their experiences challenge the belief that coverture limited both married women's actual capabilities and the way society viewed their rights. Instead of finding that, as wives, they had no right to petition the government or possess property independently, the Pennsylvania courts and Parliament determined that all three women had the right to petition; and Fergusson and Bartram succeeded in their suits. These stories shed light on early changes to married women's position in American law and reinforce the argument that there was, at times, considerable distance between legal and social ideals and the lived experience of Philadelphia women.

Seizing, in part, upon this gap between feminine ideals and the reality of life in the early republic, women, and their male supporters, began to advocate for greater access to education. While many conservative commentators focused on women's need

for schooling in order to be better wives and mothers, female students and their liberal allies focused instead on women's inherent scholastic abilities and their desire to be more informed and self-sufficient. The Young Ladies Academy of Philadelphia offered one of the most progressive curriculums in the country, challenging students both academically and personally. The attendees were expected to complete a rigorous course of study, but also to compete with one another for placement within their class and to demonstrate their accomplishments before the school's board of directors. These educational practices, which were intended to prepare male students to succeed in the professional world, were here applied to women who had few prospects after graduation. In 1790, valedictorian Ann Loxely encapsulated many students' appraisal of female education:

> It appears from the little experience I can collect, that the female sex, in point of scholastic education, in some measure, have been neglected. But now daily experience and common observation teach us, that the paths of science are laid open and made plain to us – that no age, sex or denomination, are deprived of the means whereby an ample and sufficient knowledge of the different branches of the arts and sciences may be acquired…. the veil of female ignorance will be laid aside, and our tender intellects be gently led forth by our kind instructor, in the flowery fields of knowledge, where they shall ripen with golden fruit.[6]

Women did not begin gaining widespread access to higher education until the 1830s and 1840s, but students such as Ann Loxely and her peers held out hope that their experience would both enrich their own lives and help create new educational opportunities for women and greater access to the world of intellectual and public pursuits.

At the same time women gained increased access to political participation and education, they took a leading role in a variety of activist movements, from benevolent reform to abolition. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, women gave their time and

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[6] *The Rise and Progress of the Young-Ladies Academy of Philadelphia: Containing an Account of a Number of Public Examinations & Commencements; The Charter and Bye-Laws; Likewise, a Number of Orations delivered by the Young Ladies, and several by the Trustees of said Institution* (Philadelphia: Printed by Stewart & Cochran, 1794), 39-40.

talents to helping the poor, widows and orphans, refugees from revolutionary France and the Caribbean, and Native Americans on the western frontier. Unlike women in many cities, Quaker women in Philadelphia began participating in antislavery activism in the 1770s. They supported male-directed efforts until the 1820s, when they began to take a leading role in the free produce movement. Drawing inspiration from women's pre-Revolutionary commercial activism, they were at the forefront of the international effort, writing articles in favor of the boycott, supporting free produce stores, and advocating in favor of the movement at state and national conventions. In the 1830s, they formed the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, one of the first all-female abolition societies and the first to welcome black members alongside white. The PFAS proved inspirational for other female abolition, who modeled their organizations and outreach on the Society. The women of the PFAS also used their fundraising activities to assist in national abolition efforts and thereby gain credibility and influence within the male-dominated Pennsylvania and American Anti-Slavery Societies.

Many women who began their public lives in abolition, such as Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony, became active in the woman suffrage movement, although not all women who supported abolition advocated women's rights. There was no direct progression from moral and benevolent reform to abolition to woman suffrage; nor did all women who supported one kind of public action believe that others were appropriate. However, abolitionist women laid the essential groundwork for the rise of the suffrage movement when they carved out space for female activists on the national stage. They pushed the boundaries of acceptable behavior for women when they spoke before integrated and mixed-sex crowds, petitioned Congress, canvassed their cities and

towns, and argued that they had the right to a voice on a national political issue. While many abolitionists did not become suffragists, and many woman suffrage activists did not get their start in the antislavery movement, it is undeniable that the women who worked to free the slaves helped pave the way for advocacy of their own rights.

Cicero said, "The life of the dead is placed in the memory of the living."[7] In many ways, historians are the guardians of that memory, the protectors of the lives of the dead. The way we remember the past matters. By better mapping the contours of the decades between the 1760s and 1840s, we do more than just broaden our understanding of that period and complicate our ideas about the scope of women's lives in those decades. We also resurrect the diverse people who make up history and commemorate the complexity of their lives. Philadelphia women in the late colonial, Revolutionary, and early national periods led rich existences that took them far beyond their households and into the public spaces of their community. As family members, businesswomen, intellectuals, protestors, petitioners, students, and activists, women were essential participants in the public sphere. The men and women who lived alongside them recognized their importance to the community; it took all members of society to make late-colonial and early national Philadelphia a vibrant and successful city. By recognizing these women's importance to the public sphere, scholars help restore them to their place within the world they knew and within the history we remember.

[7] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Philippicæ*, IX.

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Coates and Reynell Family Papers, 1677-1930, Collection #140, Series V – Other Coates Family Members, h. Additional family member, 1706-1759
Coates and Reynell Family Papers, 1677-1930, Collection #140, Series VII – Morris Family, a. Deborah Morris correspondence, 1763-1815
Coates and Reynell Family Papers, 1677-1930, Collection #140, Series VII – Morris Family, b. Deborah Morris financial papers, 1752-1793
Coates and Reynell Family Papers, 1677-1930, Collection #140, Series VII – Morris Family, b. Deborah Morris financial papers, 1752-1793
Emlen Family Papers, 1715-1885
Eliza Farmer Letterbook, 1774-1789, Am. 063
Sally Logan Fisher diary
Grace Growden Galloway papers 1778-1781, Am. 06865
Gratz Collection
Non-importation resolution(s), Philadelphia 25 October 1765, Am. 340
Norris Family Papers, 1742-1860
Pennsylvania Abolition Society Papers
Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society Records
Philadelphia Tea shipment papers 1747-1773, Am. 30796
Powel Collection, Elizabeth Powel papers, 1788-1799
Reed, Esther DeBerdt. "IDEAS, relative to the manner of forwarding to the American Soldiers, the Presents of the American Women," (Philadelphia, 1780). [broadside]. Ab 1780-4
Reed, Esther DeBerdt. "The Sentiments of an American Woman." (Philadelphia, 1780). [broadside]. Ab 1780-4
Secretary's Office, Licenses for Marriages, Taverns, and Pedlars, 1761-1776

Rebecca Shoemaker papers 1780-1786, Am. 13745
Stauffer Collection
Sarah Wister journal 1777-1778, Am. 1925

King's Chapel Burial Ground, Boston, Massachusetts

Memorial Plaque

Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscripts, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library, University of Pennsylvania

Semple, William, Alexander Bartram, James Stuart, and Robert Wilson. *To the Public* [Broadside], 4 July 1770

Library Company of Philadelphia

Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson papers, 1752-1795

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[Philip Dawe], "A Society of Patriotic Ladies, at Edenton in North Carolina." Mezzotint, London, March 25, 1775
Joseph Galloway Family Papers, MSS21840
Rebecca Gratz Collection

New Jersey State Archives, Trenton

Manuscripts in Vault

New York Historical Society, Manhattan

Joseph Reed Papers

Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg

Record Group 27 – Records of Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Governments, 1775-1790, Division of Archives and Manuscripts

Philadelphia City Archives

Country Tax Assessment Ledger, 1791, Dock Ward
Records of the Orphan Court

University of Pittsburgh, Applied Research Center

William Smith Papers

CONTEMPORARY PERIODICALS

Advocate of Moral Reform

American Weekly Mercury

Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser

Connecticut Gazette

Continental Journal [Boston]

Country Porcupine

Daily Evening Bulletin [San Francisco]

Der Wochentliche Philadelphische Staatsbote

Freeman's Journal [Dublin]

Genius of Universal Emancipation

Independent Ledger [Boston]

Indiana Chronicle

Liberator

Liberty Standard

Maryland Gazette

Massachusetts Spy

New Hampshire Gazette

New Jersey Gazette

Norwich Packet

Pennsylvanische Berichte

Pennsylvania Chronicle

Pennsylvania Chronicle and Universal Advertiser

Pennsylvania Evening Post

Pennsylvania Freeman

Pennsylvania Gazette

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