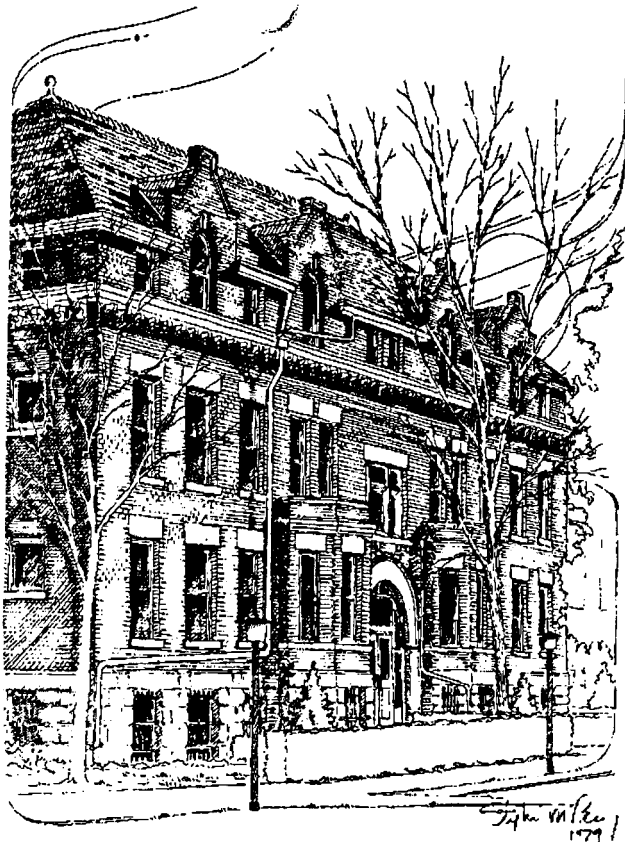


FAIRMOUNT FOLIO

VOLUME 19 2019



PHI ALPHA THETA
GAMMA RHO CHAPTER
WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

FAIRMOUNT FOLIO
JOURNAL OF HISTORY
VOLUME 19
2019

PUBLISHED BY WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY
GAMMA RHO CHAPTER
OF PHI ALPHA THETA

EDITORIAL BOARD

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Printed by POD Print, Wichita, KS.

Fairmount Folio

Journal of History

Fairmount Folio Volume 19 2019

CONTENTS

Editor’s Note

Witchcraft in the American Colonies Beyond the Limits of Salem..... 1

Amanda Underwood

Gender and Division of Labor Associated with Dying, Burial, and Mourning in Early America..... 14

Rhenee Clark Swink

Ross and Watie: The Relationship and Influence of Cherokee Chiefs, from Removal to the Civil War..... 26

Erik Ferguson

“The Crusade Against the Whisker” and the Birth of the Modern Radical Beard..... 38

Logan Daugherty

Breaking a Century of Silence. A Historiography of the Tulsa Race Riots..... 49

Joshua D. Mackey

Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

Back in our Fiske Hall home, this issue of “The Folio” showcases a variety of scholarship. Each volume of the journal often reflects the seminar and course classes offered in the previous year. The articles in volume 19 are uniquely limited to American history topics. While the location of the topics is focused on one country, they range widely chronologically. From colonial America to the 1920s, these papers reflect on serious issues facing daily life. Both Amanda Underwood and Rhenee Clark Swink showcase the lives of women in eighteenth century America. Logan Dougherty addresses the connection between politics and men’s facial hair at the turn of the twentieth century. The personal relationships of Cherokee political families, and the issues which drove them to disagreement are analyzed and reflected upon in Erik Ferguson’s article. We end the issue with Joshua Mackey’s recreation of the decades long effort to tell the tale of the Tulsa race riots. Taken together these articles tell us much about the lives and issues facing Americans.

Thanks are due to the faculty of the Department of History who give of their time, expertise, and guidance throughout the process. Faculty provide invaluable support from the development of paper topics and sources of information in preparation of class papers, to guidance through the final revisions prior to publication. A board consisting of faculty chooses the papers to publish.

On behalf of the students and faculty who made this edition possible, we hope that you will enjoy their work.

Dr. Helen Hundley

Faculty Editor

Witchcraft in the American Colonies Beyond the Limits of Salem

Amanda Underwood

In the United States, witchcraft has become synonymous with Salem. When it comes to the history of witchcraft in the United States the conversation tends to be dominated by Salem, as the words witchcraft and Salem seem to have become synonymous. What is also well known is that the Salem Witch Trials led to the deaths of so many and the imprisonment of dozens more. However, fears of witchcraft and witch hunts and trials have occurred all over the world. There is documentation of witches and persecution of people thought to be witches on every continent that people inhabit. In the last few decades, as the subject of women's history has flourished there has been an abundance of research done on the topic of witchcraft and its impacts in the American colonies. However, a majority of this research and the scholarly writings have focused on the Salem Witch Trials. While this has drawn more of the general population into the topic, there is still far more research that is needed on the other witch trials that occurred in the American colonies. Salem has a well-publicized and understood history when it comes to witchcraft and trials, but there are many trials that preceded and followed those that occurred in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

The earliest, and arguably the most influential, known book on the subject is *Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Hammer of Witches*); it was published in 1486 by two Dominican friars and it was the "definitive work on how to discover and punish witches."¹ While the definitions of witchcraft and terminology vary between different cultures, nearly every culture in the world has some sort of stories about the awful things that witches do, from curses and charms to causing peoples' deaths and using their corpses for foul reasons, even for cannibalistic means. Christians in particular had a great fear of witchcraft and those that were accused of it. The accused were seen as worshippers and servants of the devil that were there only to inflict pain and suffering upon the God-fearing Christians. This led to witch hunts all across Europe with many people, specifically women, being burned at the stake or tortured for confessions.

As European nations colonized other areas of the world, they spread their faith and their beliefs. This spread of beliefs and Christianity, of course, included the spread of the fear of the devil and of those they thought were committing acts of witchcraft. The colonies stayed under the laws of the empire to which they belonged; in the case of the American colonies they fell under English law, as they were a part of the English empire. Each of the colonies had their own experiences when it came to the trials and punishments of accused witches. The Salem Witch Trials in 1692 are well-known and heinous, but there were over ninety-five other cases in the American colonies that involved witchcraft before 1692.² In addition to the cases that happened before the Salem Witch Trials there were dozens more that occurred in the following years.

In the American colonies, there were many cases after the Salem Witch Trials as well. However, as the Age of Enlightenment was changing the world, it was also affecting the witch trials that were occurring. There were witchcraft cases in all of the other colonies, but the first and last cases that are documented today both occurred within the Virginia Colony. The first case being that of Joan Wright who was accused in 1626, but never officially went to trial. The last documented witchcraft case in the American colonies occurred in 1730 with the trial of John Samford's servant named Mary who was convicted and punished.³ The trials that occurred in the Virginia Colony were far less tragic than those that were occurring in the other colonies; there was no mania that occurred when it came to finding witches, as had happened in Salem. Unlike some of the other

¹ Carson O. Hudson Jr., *These Detestable Slaves of the Devill: A Concise Guide to Witchcraft in Colonial Virginia*, (Haverford, PA: Infinity Publishing, 2001), 19-20.

² Frederick C. Drake, "Witchcraft in the American Colonies, 1647-62," *American Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (Winter 1968): 694-725, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2711403>, 697.

³ Hudson, *These Detestable Slaves*, 31-55.

colonies, there were no executions in the Virginia Colony and most of the cases that were brought to court in the Virginia Colony were cases of women and their husbands suing others for slander and defamation because the women had been called a witch. There were not very many criminal cases for witchcraft in the Virginia Colony.

Setting the Stage for the Witch Trials in the American Colonies

Historians do not know exactly when witch trials began happening in England, but there have been scatterings of records for centuries before the first official English law criminalized witchcraft. The first law criminalizing the practice of witchcraft was not passed by Parliament until 1542 during the reign of King Henry VIII.⁴ This act only lasted five years before it was repealed, but it left a heavy impression on the people and it set a great precedent. Before this act, witch trials had fallen under the purview of the Church and had been handled by ecclesiastical courts, but now they were to be handled by the judiciary. The second act that criminalized the practice of witchcraft, called the Act of 1563, was passed during the reign of Henry VIII's daughter, Queen Elizabeth I.⁵

This act was a reflection of the witchcraft manias that were occurring across the continent of Europe. There were witchcraft trials in England, France, Scotland, and many other nations; these trials were occurring as late as 1722 when the last execution for witchcraft occurred in Scotland.⁶ The act also stated that anyone found to have been committing acts of witchcraft that led to deaths or destruction "shall suffer pains of death as Felon or Felons."⁷ Queen Elizabeth I was known to be a strict Protestant, and this most definitely had an influence on this act. She wanted to rid her queendom of the witchcraft that was affecting the continent. Queen Elizabeth's witchcraft law was harsher than the previous one that had been passed by her father, but it was nowhere near as severe and concise as the law that would be passed under King James I. His act would have an even greater impact on the witch trials in the American colonies than was expected, and it was part of the reason that the following witch trials in the American colonies were so varied and dramatic in some areas.

In 1597, James VI of Scotland wrote his *Demonologie*, which was written as "fictional, philosophical dialog between two scholars," that stated that witchcraft and those that practiced it existed and that they needed to be hunted down and prosecuted.⁸ It was a very influential work during this time and it had a tremendous impact on the beliefs of the English. He wrote about how to find witches, different ways that they hurt people, and how they need to be punished. He intended to rid England and possibly Europe of the witch atrocity that he saw to be a great plague set upon Christians by the devil himself. James VI who became James I of England in 1603, also wrote in his book about how witches are more common in the wilder parts of the world.⁹ This anecdote in James I's *Demonologie* influenced the early colonists when they went to explore the New World; it made them fear the natives because they thought that they were devil worshippers and they were trying to help Satan hurt the colonists that were settling in North America.

When he was crowned King James I of England in 1603, he continued his mission to hunt down witches. The following year, James I and Parliament passed a law that was called "An Acte against Conjuracion, Witchcraft and Dealing with evill and wicked Spirits." In this law, witchcraft was split into two levels of severity and it was decided how witches were to be punished depending on which of the two degrees of severity of the crime they had committed. James I decided that when it was the first offense and it did not cause any harm that witches deserved one more chance to repent to God. In his eyes, this seemed the Christianly thing to do as God showed mercy on his children.

⁴ Monica C. Witkowski and Caitlin Newman, "Witchcraft in Colonial Virginia," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, 23 February 2012, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Witchcraft_in_Colonial_Virginia#start_entry (accessed October 20, 2018).

⁵ Hudson, *These Detestable Slaves*, 11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 65-68.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

⁹ James VI and I, *Daemonologie* (Edinburgh: 1597), (London: 1616).

The lesser degree of witchcraft became known as petit witchcraft and that included “offering to find buried treasure, locate stolen goods, or using potions or charms to provoke ‘unlawful love.’”¹⁰ People that were convicted of petit witchcraft were punished by one year of imprisonment and after they were released they had to publicly confess their sins every three months in a public pillory. They received some leniency on their first offense, but if they committed a second offense they were put to death. The other and much harsher degree of witchcraft was defined as:

Any pson or persons,... [that] shall use practise or exercise any Invocation or Conjuraton of any evill and wicked Spirit, or shall consult covenant with entertaine employ feede or rewarde any evill and wicked Spirit to or for any Intent or purpose; or take up any dead man woman or child out of his her or there grave, or any other place where the dead bodie resteth, or the skin bone or any other parte of any dead person, to be employed or used in any manner of Witchcrafte Sorcerie Charme or Inchantment; or shall use practise or exercise any Witchcrafte Inchantment Charme or Sorcerie, whereby any pson shalbe killed destroyed wasted consumed pined or lamed in his or her bodie, or any parte thereof;¹¹

The punishment for any of these practices was pain of death and a loss of benefit of the clergy; anyone that helped the accused or in any way aided them was likely to receive the same punishment as well. The loss of benefit of the clergy was seen as the worst part of the punishment because it was common for people to be able to get out of execution by reading from the Bible. If they were successfully able to read the passage, then they were branded and released instead of facing death. This may not have been of much help to those that could not read, but for those that could it would save them from the hangman. This act was not repealed until 1736; however, the last known witchcraft trial in the colonies took place in the Virginia Colony in 1730.¹²

King James I's Bible published in 1611, along with the passing of the act detailing the punishment for witchcraft, set the stage for the witch trials that were to come in the colonies. He commissioned for the Bible to be rewritten because he believed that some translations were inaccurate and teaching people the wrong message. The new edition that he commissioned would be, in his eyes, uncorrupt and it was this version that was used across England and across the American colonies. In the Virginia Colony, churches used this as the common prayer book of the Church of England. In the new edition that King James I had published, there were two verses in particular that were used when witchcraft was suspected. The first verse was “thou shall not suffer a witch to live.”¹³ The other verse that was commonly used when talking about witchcraft was “there shall not be found among you any that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch.”¹⁴ These verses stuck in the minds of the colonists when they were establishing their homes in North America and they truly believed that these verses were what God wanted and that is part of the reason that so many women and some men were killed during the various witch trials that occurred in the American colonies from 1626 to 1730.

Beliefs About Witchcraft in the Virginia Colony

Within the English colonies there were a few beliefs that were widespread when it came to witches and witchcraft. John Putnam Demos has stated that “a rich lore of occultism arrived with the first settlers of New England” and that cannot be understated because they brought their beliefs with them from England.¹⁵ When

¹⁰ Hudson, *These Detestable Slaves*, 12-13.

¹¹ “An Acte against Conjuraton Witchcrafte and dealing with evill and wicked Spirits,” 1604, 1 Jas. 1, c. 12, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/An_Acte_against_Conjuraton_Witchcrafte_and_dealing_with_evill_and_wicked_Spirits_1604.

¹² Hudson, *These Detestable Slaves*, 54-55.

¹³ Exodus 22:18.

¹⁴ Deuteronomy 18:10.

¹⁵ John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 368.

it came to the Virginia Colony, however, their “beliefs had more to do with folklore than theology.”¹⁶ The Virginia Colony had a far greater population of Anglicans than some of the other colonies. Salem and the Massachusetts Bay Colony for example, had a large population of Puritans and that is also one of the factors that is believed by many historians to have influenced the mass hysteria of the Salem Witch Trials in 1692. When compared to the Puritans they were far less radical in their views of witchcraft.

There were many commonly held beliefs that the American colonists maintained from their English heritage. The first was the belief that witches were always causing problems and that they had sworn their soul to Satan. They were blamed for illness, death of livestock, death of people, failing crops, and many other tragedies and woes that everyday people experienced; they were said to be the servants of the devil to cause strife. One of the very common natural disasters that were blamed on witches were sea storms. They were thought to be bewitching the weather in order to kill those that were aboard sea vessels. This led to three known executions of women in or near Virginia colony waters.¹⁷ The idea that witches caused sea storms seems in contrast to the fact that colonists believed that water was a way to find out if someone was a witch. However, this was another one of the beliefs and traditions that they had inherited from England. To perform this water test, which was often called a ducking, they would bind the hands and feet of the person being accused and drop them into a pond or lake. If the person sank, they were thought to have been accepted by the purifying waters and therefore they could not be evil and working with the devil. If the person floated that meant that they were a witch and then they would likely be convicted and depending on the colony they were likely to be executed.¹⁸ This was a test that was common practice in England and therefore became normal in the colonies as well.

Another common belief among the colonists was that all witches had a devil’s mark. This mark was usually in a hidden place and also called a witch’s teat. In order to find these marks, courts impaneled a group of people that were of the same gender as the accused witch and they would go into a private area to search the body of the accused for any marks that could be a devil’s mark. This mark could be anything from a birthmark or a mole to a scar. Usually the impaneled jury would be a group of older, well-respected women because the majority of those accused of witchcraft were women. The devil’s mark was where the witch was supposed to feed their familiar, another common thing that all witches were said to have had. They were supposed to have a familiar that was their demon servant who was there in order to help them cause chaos. It was supposed to have been given to them when they sold their souls to the devil. Witches were also thought to be able to transform into different creatures like bats or cats in order to sneak around and cause more mischief. There were cases in Virginia where women were accused of turning into cats when they were trying to flee from their curses. In the colonies, there was also the belief that witches would have puppets or dolls that they made in order to curse their victims. The dolls were made of clay, wax, wood, or dough; the dolls often had clothes, hair, or nail clippings from the witch’s intended victim.¹⁹ This was one of the many things that the courts would have people look for in the homes of defendants.

Many witches were accused of having ridden their victims. When a person was ridden by a witch, they were used like a horse to take the witch wherever it was that she needed to go, and they were bewitched so that they had to obey her command. People claimed to have had “experiences of being ‘ridden’ like a beast of burden by supposed witches.”²⁰ Witches were said to have gone on hag rides, in which a witch would bewitch a mare or farm animal in order to get where she need to go, but if the witch was not able to find a mare, they were said to bewitch people instead in order to get where she needed to go. She would climb on the back of a human and

¹⁶ Richard Beale Davis, “The Devil in Virginia in the Seventeenth Century,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 65, no. 2 (April 1957): 131-149, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4246295>, 136.

¹⁷ Hudson, *These Detestable Slaves*, 6-7.

¹⁸ Monica C. Witkowski, “Grace Sherwood (ca. 1660 – 1740),” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, 7 October 2011, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Sherwood_Grace_ca_1660-1740#start_entry (accessed October 20, 2018).

¹⁹ Hudson, *These Detestable Slaves*, 5-6.

²⁰ John Demos, *The Enemy Within: 2,000 Years of witch-hunting in the Western World* (New York: Penguin Group, 2008), 88.

make them gallop, like a horse, and obey the witch's command. These activities were always done at night at that is where the term "night-mares" is said to have come from.²¹

There were two main ways that the colonists, specifically those in Virginia, thought that they could defend themselves. The first was with horseshoes; they were thought to ward off any witches and were often nailed above the doorway and over the place so that a witch could not enter the house, and neither could her familiar or her curses. The other way that the Virginia colonist thought that they could protect themselves was with witch bottles. These were bottles that were usually filled with goat's urine; they also usually had brass pins and a small scroll with a piece of scripture or the Lord's Prayer written on it. They were also thought to keep witches from entering one's home. The witch bottles were "buried underneath of a hearth or at a doorsill or under a windowsill to keep witches from entering the building. The theory was that the glass flask would simulate the witch's bladder, and would burst, or be in pain if they tried to pass" into the dwelling.²²

In addition to the beliefs about witchcraft there were also the beliefs that the individual colonies had when it came to religion and how far that pervaded their lives. In the New England colonies, the majority of the colonists are Puritans and they believed that "because women's bodies were weaker, the devil could reach women's souls more easily, breaching these 'weaker vessels' with greater frequency" and that is why women were so much more likely to be witches than men.²³ Puritans usually had a much stricter view on Christianity and the ways to be a good Christian. They, like Calvinists, demanded that one must fully devote one's life to God and that anyone that did not was undeniably going to burn in Hell. Anglicans, on the other hand, tended to also focus on good works and on personal faith. They were a little more forgiving when a person sinned. Puritans tended to be much more violent when it came to the trials of witches; this may partially have to do with their great devotion to God and the fact that they believed that some people simply could not be saved. They wished to rid themselves of the sinners and that could be why there were far more executions in both the New England colonies.

In comparison, there were no executions in the Virginia Colony. Religion played a huge role in the witchcraft accusations and trials in both England and the American colonies. Religion played a tremendous role in the way that colonists looked at witches because they believed "that two sins of a general character permeate the entire continuum of witches' behavior: the sin of lying and the sin of pride."²⁴ Both of these sins were considered to be very serious. The sin of pride was Satan's greatest sin and the sin of lying and deception was the means by which Satan inflicted his foulness and misery. Since these were considered to be the sins that witches committed in addition to the sin of witchcraft in itself there was a great fear that surrounded witches and there was also hatred and need to get rid of these creatures that were plaguing their lives. Religion drove these fears and strengthened them. However, the Anglicans had a greater tendency to let accused witches have fair trials and to allow them to repent and try to find their way back to God. Puritans were not as forgiving. They feared for not only their mortal lives, but also their eternal lives. They did not want to succumb to the devil and spend an eternity in hell.

In the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the majority of the settlers were Puritan and there were also a great deal of religious leaders that were involved in the witch trials that took place there. Religious leaders and governmental leaders often mixed and overlapped in the New England colonies; this was less true in the Virginia Colony. This is likely to have had to do with the way the judicial and governmental systems were established and ran. In the Virginia Colony, the judicial systems were county based because it was a more rural area. In the counties there were smaller towns that ran independently, but witch accusations and trial handled on the county level. In New England, trials took place at the town level because the societies were somewhat more urban.

²¹ Hudson, *These Detestable Slaves*, 4.

²² Carson Hudson, "Witches in the Colonies," interviewed by Lloyd Dobyns, *Colonial Williamsburg*, 27 October 2008, <http://podcast.history.org/2008/10/27/witches-in-the-colonies/#transcript>.

²³ Elizabeth Reis, "The Devil, the Body, the Feminine Soul in Puritan New England," *The Journal of American History* 82, no. 1 (June 1995): 15-36, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2081913>, 15.

²⁴ Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987), 147.

Therefore, there were fewer respected men to serve in the court systems in New England and the clergy were more likely to be on the juries. Richard Beale Davis argues the fact “there was no black page of real torture or persecution seem due to the fact that the Anglican clergy rarely took part in such beliefs, and that juries of laymen were rational men who shunned hysteria or superstitious credulity.”²⁵ The trials in the Virginia colonies were far less violent and hysterical; there was no witch panic where everyone was accusing their neighbors of bring witches. The leaders in the Virginia colony did everything that they could to prevent mass hysteria from taking over.

However, it was still the same kinds of people that were being accused in the Virginia Colony as were being accused in the other American colonies. There was still an emphasis on women when it came to who was being accused of witchcraft. This was one of the many beliefs about witchcraft that link the England to the colonies. Carol F. Karlsen wrote “perhaps the strongest link between witchcraft in England and in New England was the special association of this crime with women and womanhood.”²⁶ It can be seen in nearly every colony and in England as well that women were far more likely to be accused of witchcraft. It is also worth noting that many of the women who were accused of witchcraft, especially those in New England, had reputations as healers or were midwives. Infanticide was a common reason that women were accused of witchcraft. In many cases when a baby or its mother died during childbirth the midwife was blamed. In the case of Margaret Jones of Charleston, Massachusetts in 1648, she was known as a healer and even was known to have practiced some midwifery. She was convicted with evidence that she caused others harm and sickness and that she created potions.²⁷ She was executed a month after her trial. She is just one of many women that were seen to be healers that were tried as witches.

In the Virginia Colony, there are records of two men being accused of witchcraft out of all the cases that happened in the Virginia Colony.²⁸ When it comes to the New England colonies this is also true. There are records of at least 344 people being accused of witchcraft between 1620 and 1725 and there are 342 cases in which the gender of the accused person can be identified. Of the 342 cases, 267 were female. That is roughly seventy-eight percent. That means that there were 75 males that were accused of witchcraft. However, in 36 of the male cases, nearly half, the men were considered to be “suspects by association”: they were husbands, sons, other kin, or public supporters of female witches.²⁹ Part of this has to do with the social concept of women being the weaker sex, therefore they were also more susceptible to evil. In most of the American colonies the majority of people that were being accused of witchcraft were women. There were a few men that were accused and even convicted of witchcraft, but it was far less likely for the person being accused to be male as opposed to female.

The Salem Witch Trials

The Witch Trials in Salem have basically written the narrative of what happened during the witch trials in the American Colonies. The history of what happened there is far more well-known than the witch trials and panics that took place in the other American Colonies. During the panic that occurred in 1692, there were more than thirty accused witches that were brought before the Court of Oyer and Terminer. Approximately two-thirds of the cases that were brought before that court ended with the accused being hanged and only three known acquittals.³⁰ The panic that took over during this time was immense and generally follows what is seen today as the typical witch hunt narrative, similar to what occurs in Arthur Miller’s novel *The Crucible*. A few girls were afflicted and having fits and they began accusing people of practicing witchcraft on them. While each case was a little different the general stereotype stands. In many cases, a poor woman was accused by her neighbors

²⁵ Davis, “The Devil in Virginia,” 136.

²⁶ Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 3.

²⁷ David D. Hall, *Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century New England: A Documentary History, 1638-1693* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 21-23.

²⁸ Witkowski and Newman, “Witchcraft in Colonial Virginia,”

²⁹ Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 47-48.

³⁰ Mary Beth Norton, *In the Devil’s Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2002), 315-317.

of practicing witchcraft on them and having caused them bodily injury. There are many questions still today about how to understand the actions of the afflicted girls that led to the accusations and often deaths of dozens of people. Mary Beth Norton raises the question of how we should interpret their actions in today's modern light.³¹ Were the girls faking the fits and the other reactions or was there truly something wrong with them? It is possible that they had mental problems or that they had ingested something that had caused them to hallucinate. However, the really wonder is how the panic spread so greatly. There are many different arguments to this question. There is little doubt that religion played a heavy role in the panic. There is one case that is a stereotypical example of what to place in Salem in 1692; it is the case of Bridget Oliver Bishop.

At the time of she was accused on April 18th, Bridget Oliver Bishop had not been connected to the crisis that was taking place. However, she already had a fairly bad reputation, as she had been tried and acquitted of witchcraft twelve years before.³² She did not know any of those that had accused her of witchcraft in 1692 and that was quite different from the previous cases in which most of the people involved in the cases had personal relationships. She was arrested on the following day because of the accusations that were being made.³³ After her first accusation and the following arrest, there were more accusations that arose; many of the accusations were from the afflicted girls. "On May 27, [Sir William] Phips established a special court Oyer and Terminer to try those accused of witchcraft."³⁴

Bishop's trial began on June 2nd, 1692 in the Salem Town courthouse. There were dozens of accusations against Bishop. Some accusations stated that she had caused them bodily harm, while other stated that she had bewitched them or someone that they knew. A couple of the accusations against her said that she had done something to their animals that had made them act odd.³⁵ The entire time she stayed strong and maintained her innocence. She believed that if she told the truth she would be acquitted. However, the accusations and the evidence against her continued to stack up. As was custom during the time, each of the women that were being tried during this session including Bishop were examined by a jury of women to find any witches marks that may be on their bodies.

The first search that occurred found that the three women had an odd mark in the exact same hidden place on their bodies. On the second search the women said that the mark was gone, replaced by dry skin. This was extremely suspicious to the jury of women. They also noted during their first search the breasts of the three women were much fuller in appearance than they were upon the second search. This led them to the conclusion that they must have fed their animal familiars in between the two examinations.³⁶ She plead not guilty to all of the accusations against her but was still found guilty. Bishop was sentenced to "Death accordingly passed ag^t [sic] her as the Law, directs." She was the first person found guilty of witchcraft during the craze. On "Friday, June 10, Bridget Bishop was hanged on Gallows Hill in Salem, without, remarked Robert Calef, 'the least Confession of anything relating to Witchcraft.'³⁷ She like many who followed her, was most likely innocent of any crimes associated with witchcraft and was merely a victim of the witchcraft panic that enveloped Salem in 1692. The trials for witchcraft occurred all over the American Colonies, but few colonies had the violence and panic that occurred in Salem.

The Witch Trials in the Virginia Colony

There were hundreds of witchcraft cases that occurred in the American colonies between 1626 and 1730; both the first and last of these trials occurred in the Virginia Colony. They typically had a more level head when

³¹ Ibid., 305-308.

³² Ibid., 112-113.

³³ Winfield S. Nevins, *Witchcraft in Salem Village in 1692: Together with some account of other witchcraft prosecutions in New England and Elsewhere* (Salem, MA: North Shore Publishing Company, 1892), 148.

³⁴ Sarah-Nell Walsh, "Bridget Bishop," *Salem Witch Trials: Documentary Archive and Transcription Project*, 2001, <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/people/bishop.html> (accessed March 24, 2019).

³⁵ W. Elliot Woodward, *Records of Salem Witchcraft, copied from the original documents* (Roxbury, MA: Priv. Print, 1864): 143-172.

³⁶ Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 204-205.

³⁷ Ibid., 210.

it came to accusations of witchcraft; there needed to be sufficient evidence and even when there was what they then considered evidence it was still unlikely that the person would actually be convicted. In all the documented cases there were no cases in which a person who was convicted of witchcraft actually received the punishment that they should have received under the 1604 witchcraft act that was passed by James I. Those that were convicted, in every documented case, received different punishments than they were supposed to receive according to law and it was always far less severe than that which they should have received. The majority of the recorded cases of witchcraft were actually defamation suits.³⁸ Between the years 1647 and 1662 there was another witchcraft panic that was similar to the one that occurred in Salem.³⁹ Since there were such a great number of cases that were defamation there was a fear that someone would be wrongfully executed. In order to help prevent not only the defamation and slander suits, but also a wrongful execution there was a law passed in a county in the Virginia Colony.

There was only one law that was passed in Virginia regarding witchcraft; it was passed on May 23, 1655. It was passed by the General Court in Lower Norfolk County where there were many accusations of witchcraft.⁴⁰ The act was intended to stop the false accusations of people. It made it illegal to falsely accuse someone of witchcraft and the punishment for committing this offense was a fine of 1,000 pounds of tobacco and if the accusation was serious enough they also could face further charges if the court deemed it necessary.⁴¹ This act made a tremendous difference in the Virginia Colony and is likely the reason that, as far as historians can find record of, there were only two cases of a person being convicted of witchcraft in the colony. However, the fact that this was the only law or act that was passed, in regard to witchcraft in the colony, shows that it was not an important concern for the majority of the colony.

The first case in the Virginia Colony was the case of Joan Wright in September of 1626. She was a married woman and a midwife, and she was accused by her neighbors of using witchcraft to cause the death of a newborn, killing crops and livestock, and accurately predicting the death of another colonist.⁴² There were many testimonies that claimed she was a witch and, in some way, had affected their lives. However, “the evidence presented against demonstrates how charges of witchcraft were so often born out of the grief and resentment of untimely deaths, allowing troublesome members of the community such as Goodwife Wright to serve as likely scapegoats for malefic wrongdoing.”⁴³ It was easy for people to blame witchcraft for the deaths of their loved ones and for the bad things that happened around them because they had no other explanation. They did not have the medical or technical knowledge that is a part of today’s society, so they explained away tragedy by it being the work of the devil and his minions.

This lack of understanding of the natural world also led to the case of Katherine Grady in 1654. She was on a ship that was headed to the Virginia Colony and they encountered a violent storm. During this time, people believed that witches caused sea storms and for reasons unknown she became the target of their wrath and fear and she was the person that the other passengers accused of being a witch. They convinced the captain and he had her hanged in an attempt to end the storm and get them all to shore safely. When they made it to shore the captain was brought in front of a court to answer for his actions.⁴⁴ The court records have been lost and considering the great fears that English settlers had when it came to witches and the supernatural powers that they possessed, especially when it comes to sea storms, it is assumed that the captain was most likely not convicted of any wrongdoings in regards to Katherine Grady’s execution. There most likely was also no real investigation into her death because the ship was not truly in the jurisdiction of the Virginia colony. The

³⁸ Demos, *The Enemy Within*, 88.

³⁹ Drake, “Witchcraft in the American Colonies, 1647-62,” 697.

⁴⁰ Davis, “The Devil in Virginia,” 143.

⁴¹ Witkowski and Newman, “Witchcraft in Colonial Virginia.”

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Lindsey M. Newman, “‘Under an Ill Tongue’: Witchcraft and Religion in Seventeenth-Century Virginia” (master’s thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2009),

<https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/31667/LMNNewmanThesis1.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>, 41.

⁴⁴ Hudson, *These Detestable Slaves*, 35.

passengers and crew were English and the only true relation that they had to Virginia was that it was where they were headed. She was just a victim to the fear of a group of terrified passengers who wanted to make it Virginia and feared that they would not make it due to the terrible storms that they were facing.

The fact that the ship was headed for Virginia is the only reason that this case is generally related to the other case in Virginia. This case is quite controversial for historians because there are those that argue that the case should not be lumped in with other Virginia Colony cases because it did not occur in the colony and there was never an actual case brought against her. There is also the argument that it should fall under English cases because the vessel was an English vessel. However, it usually is tied to the Virginia colony and that is where the disagreement about whether or not there were any executions in the Virginia Colony comes into play.

The case of William Harding occurred two years later in November of 1656 in Northumberland County; he was accused by a local minister of witchcraft and sorcery.⁴⁵ Since the accusation was by a minister and a respected member of the community it carried tremendous weight when it came to the jury. The jury heard several other testimonies and decided that at least some of them accusations were true because he was convicted and sentenced to “ten stripes upon his bare back, and forever banished from the county, as well as paying all the costs of the trial.”⁴⁶

This case is one of only two known legal convictions for witchcraft in the Virginia Colony. He is also one of only two men that were tried in the Virginia Colony for witchcraft and it is worth noting that he was convicted since he was a man and was far less likely to have been found guilty or to have been accused at all because of the fact that he was male rather than female. Even though he was convicted of witchcraft he was not sentenced to death nor did he receive a year of imprisonment and then forced public confessions every three months as the law said he should have since he was found guilty. There obviously was some proof in order for him to have been convicted and received the punishment that he did, but it can be seen that the view that the Virginians took when it came to the prosecution and punishment of suspected witches was far different than that of the other American colonies especially the Massachusetts Bay Colony. This could have been because the Virginia Colony leaders wanted the situation to be over and finished so that there would not be a long and drawn out process of handling the punishment. Instead there was the flogging, a fine, and then William Harding would no longer be a problem because he was exiled. This process was much quicker and more finalized than the punishment that the law has for petit witchcraft. He received one of only two known witchcraft convictions in the Virginia Colony. The fact that only two people were convicted in Virginia during the more than 100 years of witchcraft crazes and panics that plagued the American colonies is quite unique.

In January of 1679, there was another interesting case that exemplifies the stance that the Colony of Virginia typically took when it came to witchcraft accusations; it was the case of Alice Cartwright. She was accused of having bewitched John Salmon’s child and causing the child’s death. If she had been convicted, she, by law, should have faced death and given the circumstance if she had been found guilty, she likely would have faced death. He claimed that she had to have bewitched his child and that there was no other reason for the child to have died. Most of the records from the trial have been lost, but what remains states that a test was ordered to judge her as a witch. The test that was ordered by the court was for a jury of women to search Alice’s body for a devil’s mark.⁴⁷ This was extremely common, especially when it came to witchcraft trials in the Virginia Colony. Searching the accused’s body was an easy and painless way to see if the person was a witch because they believed that anyone practicing witchcraft had to have a devil’s mark. The jury found no such marks on Alice’s body and therefore she was judged to not be a witch and the panel of women recommended to the court that Alice be released and that the accusations be dismissed.⁴⁸

Another case that stands out and helps to define the witchcraft trials in Virginia is the final case that occurred in the Virginia Colony and is thought to be the last case of witchcraft in the American colonies is the

⁴⁵ Davis, “The Devil in Virginia,” 141.

⁴⁶ Drake, “Witchcraft in the American Colonies, 1647-62,” 705.

⁴⁷ Hudson, *These Detestable Slaves*, 41-42.

⁴⁸ “Witchcraft in Virginia,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (January 1893): 127-129, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1939689>, 128.

case of John Samford's servant. His servant, Mary, was a white indentured servant who was accused of "Inchantment, Charm, witchcraft, or Conjuraton, to tell where Treasure is or where goods left may be found."⁴⁹ She was examined for devil's marks, as was typical in a witchcraft accusation in the Virginia Colony, and several persons testified against her. It appears that the justices found the evidence against her to be sufficient because she was found guilty and her punishment was decided to be thirty-nine lashes upon her bare back. Her crimes would have fallen under the category of petit witchcraft and she could have been sentenced to a year of imprisonment and public confessions of her sins every three months, but she was not. It appears that the court wanted the matter to be settled quickly, as seems to have been quite common for courts in the Virginia Colony.

Grace Sherwood: the Virginia Witch

The last case that truly demonstrates the differences between witchcraft accusations and trials in the Virginia Colony as opposed to the other American colonies is the cases that involved Grace Sherwood. Her experiences with witchcraft accusations were quite unique. If she had lived in New England it is highly likely that she would have been killed. Her case shows the divergence that colonial Virginia took from not only the other colonies, but also from England and the laws that they were governed by. In her life Grace Sherwood saw each facet of the Virginia Colony's witchcraft responses. She partook in defamation suits and she faced a full trial and examination by a jury of women.

The most well-known victim of witchcraft accusations in the history of the Colony of Virginia is Grace Sherwood. Her trials are some of the best documented records of witchcraft from that time and her trials were some of the most extensive in the history of colonial Virginia. To this day she is known as "the Virginia Witch." There is little known about Grace from before the trials except that she married her husband around the year 1680, but the accusations of her being a witch first began to occur in 1697 when Richard Capps began calling her a witch. While he never actually accused her of being a witch, he did call her one and the Sherwoods were upset by this. They decided to sue Richard for defamation on February 4, 1698. Richard did not appear in court, so they had a continuance and during that continuance it appears that the two parties decided to settle the matter outside of court because the suit was dropped in March of that same year.⁵⁰

Her case represents how Virginians felt about witchcraft accusations. Since the majority of the witchcraft cases that were brought to court in the Colony of Virginia were suits for defamation and slander when one person was calling another a witch this is a great example. It also helps to show that many instances of witchcraft accusations were related to the issues that individual people were having with others. They likely accused her of being a witch because she was a social outcast and she made them mad for some reason or another and not because they legitimately thought that she was a witch.

The witch accusations did not stop for long because six months later there were more of her neighbors calling her a witch and telling others what she had supposedly done to them. John and Jane Gisburne spread stories around town that Grace had bewitched their cotton and caused the death of their pigs. At the same time another woman in the town, Elizabeth Barnes, told people in the town that Grace had come into her house one night and ridden her then left through a crack in the door like a black cat.⁵¹ This was quite a claim that Elizabeth Barnes made. If these women had taken their accusations to the court, there almost definitely would have been a trial. With these two claims Grace was being accused of bewitching crops and animals, riding another person, and transforming into a creature. With all these claims, under law, she would have been sentenced to death. However, none of them had taken their claims to court until Grace and her husband sued them for defamation in two separate lawsuits. The Sherwoods lost both lawsuits that day, but there were no official charges brought

⁴⁹ Hudson, *These Detestable Slaves*, 54-55.

⁵⁰Edward W. James, "Grace Sherwood, the Virginia Witch," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (October 1894): 96-101, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1914583>, 99.

⁵¹ Hudson, *These Detestable Slaves*, 45-46.

against Grace.⁵² She did not have any other appearances in court until after her husband passed, but there were still rumors that were being spread by her neighbors.

In 1705, there appears to have been a fight of some sort between Grace and one of her neighbors, Elizabeth Hill. After the incident happened, Grace went to court and charged her neighbor with assault and battery. She also brought a suit against Luke Hill and his wife Elizabeth on December 7, 1705.⁵³ She won the suit but was only given a very small amount of money as restitution. A month later, the Barnes formally filed charges against her for witchcraft. It is believed by some historians that the Hills brought formal charges of witchcraft against Grace Sherwood because of the suit and the fact that they had lost to Grace. However, it is entirely possible that they instituted a charge of witchcraft against Grace because they truly believed that she was a witch and that she was a threat to society. Either reasons behind them charging Grace are likely.

On January 3, 1706, Grace Sherwood was brought before the justices of Princess Anne County. Elizabeth Hill claimed that Grace had bewitched her. Since Grace was not in attendance that day the court proceedings were pushed back to February 6, 1706 and on that following day the court ordered that a jury of women be gathered in order to search Grace's body. The panel was convened in order to search Grace's body for a devil's mark which would prove that she was a witch. It was common practice and if they found a devil's mark on her body, they would have strong evidence against Grace. However, they were not able to hold those proceedings right away and they were pushed back another month.

On March 7 of the same year, the court met again, and the women were sworn and proceeded to examine Grace. The exact proceedings of how the examination occurred is unknown, but it is likely that the women, along with Grace, are taken either to a private room or to a house where Grace was stripped of her clothing in order to be examined by the jury of women. When they searched Grace, they stated that they found two marks on her body that were abnormal. The record states "wee of the jury have Serchtt Grace Sherwood and found Two things like titts with Severall other Spotts."⁵⁴ This was a damning statement about Grace, and in other colonies she may have been executed. It is worth noting that the forewoman of the jury of women who examined Grace was Elizabeth Barnes whom Grace and her husband had sued for slander in 1698. Today, this would absolutely be considered a conflict of interest, but since the community in which this took place was not very large there were not very many women that could be considered for the position. The fact that she was on the jury does lead some historians to believe that the marks may not have actually been unnatural.

At this point they were unsure of how to proceed; they could have possibly had a witch on their hands and they had to ensure public safety. Since the local government was not sure how to proceed, they had to consult the Governor's Council and the Queen's Attorney in Williamsburg. The Governor's Council ordered the Queen's Attorney to consider the matter and report back in a month's time. When he reported back on April 16 of that year, he stated that in his opinion they should continue to investigate the matter. On May 2, 1706, the justices in Princess Anne County decided to take the advice of the Queen's Attorney and continued with their investigation of Grace Sherwood. They also decided that in order to ensure public safety they needed to take Grace into custody where she would remain until the trial was finished. They also ordered the search of her "House and all Suspicious places Carfully for all Images and Such like things as may and way Strengthen The Suspicion."⁵⁵ The justices also ordered that another jury of women be assembled in order to search Grace's body again, but they refused to appear. Since they refused to appear a second panel of women was summonsed to search her body and her house again, but, like the previous time, did not appear.⁵⁶ This could indicate that they feared that she truly was a witch and that they feared her powers. However, it could also mean that they

⁵² James, "Grace Sherwood, the Virginia Witch," 100.

⁵³ Hudson, *These Detestable Slaves*, 47.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁵⁵ George Lincoln Burr, ed. "The Virginia Case of Grace Sherwood, 1706," *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1946), https://heinonline.org.proxy.wichita.edu/HOL/Page?handle=hein.death/nwitca0001&div=17&start_page=433&collection=religio_n&set_as_cursor=0&men_tab=srchresults, 439-440.

⁵⁶ Newman, "Under an Ill Tongue," 47-48.

believed that she was innocent and that the charges were ridiculous; given her past and the treatment that she received from her neighbors the former is more likely to have been correct.

On June 6 and 7, the court met again; this time it was considered to be a criminal suit. There were witness testimonies given again and Grace had little to say in her on defense. However, since the women had not appeared to examine Grace the justices ordered that the sheriff assemble another body of women to examine Grace's body by the next court session. The next session was not until July 5. Again, the women did not appear in court as they had been ordered to do, so the justices decided it was time to do another test instead. They "ordered Grace Sherwood 'by her own consent to be tried in the water by Ducking.'"⁵⁷ This showed that even though they feared Grace Sherwood and suspected her of being a witch they still allowed her some rights when it came to her person; they still had some regard for her liberties. They wanted to ensure that she was guilty before they were to hand down any punishments. In their minds, it would determine her guilt or innocence; if she sank, she was innocent and if she floated, she was guilty. This test was not nearly as common in the Colony of Virginia as it was in some of the other American colonies, but it was deemed necessary. The justices did express some concern over the well-being of Grace Sherwood because they postponed the water test a couple of days because of the weather being bad and they feared it would inhibit them being able to get Grace out of the water after it was over. The test actually took place on July 10. She was taken to a pond and stripped down to her shift and inspected by a few women to make sure she was not concealing anything that could affect the test. She was then bound hand to foot and then a rope was secured around her waist in order to pull her out of the water. There were men in a boat near her so that they could keep her from drowning. Grace failed the test; she floated.

After the test was over, her body was searched by a group of five women again. They found the same two marks that were found the first time that the court ordered her to be searched. She was then taken back into custody and imprisoned. She was ordered by the court to have a future trial, but it is unclear of what happened after that as many of the records were destroyed years later during the Civil War. She may have been sent to see a trial in Williamsburg under the Governor's Council or she may have stayed imprisoned until it was seen fit to release her. There are no records of what happened after she was imprisoned except that in June of 1714, she received a land "for 145 acres of land, which had belonged to her father."⁵⁸ From this it can be concluded that she was not imprisoned for more than eight years. This is quite odd considering that she failed a water test. In almost any other colony or in England she would have been executed for witchcraft. Under the law she should have been in the Virginia Colony as well, but instead the justices decided that she deserved to live.

The fact that she was out of jail eight years later is just another example of how the courts in the Colony of Virginia were much different than that of the other colonies. In New England she would have been killed for being found guilty by the water test. Her will was dated for 1733 and it was executed in 1740.⁵⁹ It is a minor miracle that she lived for nearly 34 years after she was accused of being a witch, examined by a jury of women who found what they thought were devil's marks, and failing the water test. In the case of Bridget Oliver Bishop, it took far less than the water test for her to have been sentenced to death.

In many ways the Virginia Colony was quite different from the other colonies, but it was especially different when it came to the way that witchcraft accusations and trials were handled. In the colony, there were far less accusations of witchcraft and often when there were rumors of witchcraft there were not many actual trials. People rarely made formal accusations against their neighbors in the Virginia Colony. During the witchcraft panic in Salem, there were more than one hundred legal complaints relating to witchcraft.⁶⁰ There were only two official criminal convictions for witchcraft in the Virginia Colony and there were also very few cases that were actually criminal accusations. The majority of the cases that dealt with witchcraft in the Virginia

⁵⁷ Ibid., 48.

⁵⁸ Hudson, *These Detestable Slaves*, 52-53.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 52.

⁶⁰ Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 321.

Colony courts were suits for slander and defamation because one person was claiming that another was a witch and that it had impacted them in some way. The courts were focused on keeping their citizens safe, but they also wanted to make sure that the people that were convicted not only received a fair trial, but that they also received a punishment that fit their crimes. This is one of the reasons that the punishments that those convicted of witchcraft received were not what they were supposed to be under law. The punishments that were handed out were much different as well. They gave punishments that were usually ended quickly; in William Harding's case he was convicted and fined and was whipped, but he did not face imprisonment or death like he would have in most other colonies and in England as well. Another way that the Virginia Colony stood out in this area was the fact that no one was executed in the Virginia Colony. This in itself is a major distinction from the other colonies, especially from Salem, and from England.

Gender and Division of Labor Associated with Dying, Burial, and Mourning in Early America

Rhenee Clark Swink

A death notice for Elizabeth Drinker, from December 2, 1807 described the Quaker matron as, a “...lady whose sweetness of disposition and singular propriety of conduct, endeared her through life to all who had the happiness of knowing her.” Drinker kept a diary from the time of her marriage to Henry Drinker in 1761

¹ to the “evening preceding her final illness...”² chronicling life in Philadelphia during the late years of the colonies and early years of the Republic. Diaries such as those left by Drinker and other women provide a feminine perspective of daily life-including rituals associated with death in the late colonial period and early years of the Republic. By examining gendered divisions of labor associated with death and dying among Protestants in early America, women frequently reappear in the narrative assuming roles that were an extension of activities associated with those of the home. Some volunteered their services, whereas others were paid for their services. Members of communities depended on one another through a system of mutual aid in times of loss and rendered aid based on prescribed gendered norms and gendered divisions of labor.

Prior to the development of the funeral industry in the latter half of the nineteenth century, members of the local community were involved in death and burial rituals, with a division of labor that reflected the roles of women and men in society³. During the colonial period, and the years of the new republic, death most frequently occurred in the home. Members of communities engaged in a system of mutual aid by helping families at a time of loss. Women cared for the sick and dying and prepared the body for burial.⁴ Men built coffins, as an extension of the cabinet making trade. The local sexton dug the grave. On the day of the funeral, men transported the coffin to the burial site. Women participated in the funeral service by providing hospitality to mourners and taking part in the procession. Women and men participated in mourning rituals by donning attire and following mourning etiquette based on religion and social status. These gendered divisions of labor and social expectations represented the specified gender roles within colonial society. Although the rituals associated with death and dying particularly in functions outside the home were dominated by men, women still carved out their own place in these rituals based on gender roles of the time.

Care for the Sick and Dying – Herbalists, Midwives and Layers out of the Dead

Women in colonial America cared for the sick, treated basic illnesses, served as midwives, cared for the dying, and prepared the dead for burial as an extension of caring for home and family. In many rural areas women provided most of the medical care. Part of the role of the housewife was to make basic remedies and keep watch over ill family members and children. Some excelled in their role as herbalists or midwives and used

¹ Find A Grave, “Elizabeth Sandwith Drinker”, findagrave.com, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/149000659/elizabeth-drinker> (accessed February 28, 2019).

² Death Notice , Elizabeth Drinker, *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) vol XXXVI, no. 9670, (December 2, 1807) 3, America's Historical Newspapers/* Newsbank (accessed February 28, 2019).

³ Karol Kovalovich Weaver, “Funerals and Burial Practices,” *Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia* , <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/category/karol-kovalovich-weaver/> (accessed November 19, 2018).

⁴ Georganne Rundblad, “Exhuming Women’s Premarket Duties in the Care of the Dead”, *Gender and Society*, 9 no. 2 (April 1995), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/189870>, 175 (accessed November 19, 2018).

their knowledge beyond their own households. Elizabeth Davenport, the wife of the town minister in New Haven colony, prepared herbal remedies, to treat illness in her community. Through a partnership with physician John Winthrop, Davenport was able to secure medications for use in the rural community where she lived.⁵ Other women in the New Haven colony came to assist Davenport when her son John Jr. was ill in 1660. Women traveled from outside the community when her son fell ill in 1666. The partnerships of mutual aid among these women provided moral support, helped avoid caregiver fatigue, and allowed women to exchange recipes for remedies.⁶

Midwives had a distinct role as gatekeepers of the realm of the living. Midwives aided in bringing new life into the world, and cared for women at a time of high infant and maternal mortality. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the maternal mortality rate in America was 1 to 1.5 percent for each birth. Women averaged five to eight children, putting the risk for lifetime maternal mortality as high as one in eight.⁷ Ten percent of children died during the first year.⁸ In New England, maternal death was about one in one hundred fifty, and still births about twenty percent. Midwife Martha Ballard had a much better statistic over her career. Over the twenty-seven years she practiced midwifery, from 1785 to 1812, only 1 in 195 mothers died and two percent of children were stillborn. Childbirth was a feminine, community event, without the presence of men. When a woman was close to delivery, the husband would contact the midwife, female family members, neighbors and friends. Other women in attendance offered moral support, and cared for household chores, such as cooking and cleaning while the mother recovered. Only on rare occasions, would a doctor be called to assist with a delivery. When the mother's life was at risk and the child thought to be deceased, doctors were called in to extract the remains.⁹

With the connection between birth and death in colonial America, some midwives assumed the role as nurses, and layers out of the dead. The same system of mutual support was necessary at times of illness and birth, was at times of death. Martha Ballard began her practice as a midwife shortly after moving to Hallowell, Maine in 1778.¹⁰ Ballard cared for several families in the community, including the family of Colonel William Howard during outbreaks of bilious fever between September of 1785 and 1787, which sickened twenty-five and killed eight.¹¹ Although her fees are not stated in the diary, Colonel Howard gave Ballard a gallon of white rum and two pounds of sugar in August of 1787, "...on account of my attendance of his family in a sickness."¹²

Ballard wrote in her journal that on October 11, 1785 she was, "...called in great haste to Colonel Howards. His wife & five children are very sick." She cared for the family in their home over the next five days, many times staying overnight to keep watch. She returned to Colonel Howard's, where she was "entertained" on October 22, when a severe storm hindered her return home from a delivery. Martha Ballard noted in her diary that the family were still sick, but were being tended to by another nurse. October 28 she was called back to the Colonel's to assist Mrs. Pollard, the wife of the town sexton, and a family member, "...to Lay out the Corps of his wife just now Deceast (sic). His Children yet very sick." One of the children died on November 6, but the rest of the family recovered. The next December, Martha Ballard returned to Howard's home, "to ascist (sic) Mrs. Pollard to Lay out his son James..." after an outbreak of canker rash.¹³

⁵ Rebecca J. Tannenbaum, "What Is Best to Be Done for These Fevers": Elizabeth Davenport's Medical Practice in New Haven Colony" *The New England Quarterly*, vol. 70, no.2 (June 1997) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/366703,282-283> (accessed August 10,2018).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 271.

⁷ G. J. Barker-Benfield, "Stillbirth and Sensibility: The Case of Abigail and John Adams", *Early American Studies*, vol.10, no.1 (winter 2012) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23546680,5-6> (accessed October 21,2018).

⁸ Dorothy A. Mays, *Women in Early America: Struggle Survival, and Freedom in a New World* (Santa Barbra, California: ABC-CLIO Inc., 2004) [googlebooks.com](https://www.googlebooks.com), 100 (accessed November 23, 2018).

⁹ Elaine G. Breslaw, *Lotion, Potions, Pills, and Magic: Health Care in Early America*, (New York: New York University Press, 2014) [googlebooks.com](https://www.googlebooks.com), 114-117 (accessed November 26, 2018).

¹⁰ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1990), 12.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹² *Ibid.*, 67.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 67-69.

At times of death, mutual support of neighbors, community members, and professionals eased stresses on the immediate family. Elizabeth Drinker, a Quaker housewife and herbalist, in late eighteenth century Philadelphia¹⁴ gives the account of a death of a neighbor in her diary on April 19, 1798:

We have lost our Neighbor Waln, she died this forenoon before nine and ten o'clock... I went over and stay'd with the affected children 'till their other friends and relations arrived-Moly Humphriss who lays her out, was also come, I then came away before that awful business commenced.¹⁵

As a good neighbor, Drinker assumed a role similar to the women who gathered at a birth, offering assistance with childcare and household chores in a time of crisis. But preparations of the dead in Philadelphia were less of a community affair, left to family, close friends, and hired professionals. Drinker cared for the children until other family members arrived, but left before preparations took place. The work of layers out of the dead varied based on location and wishes of the family. Laying out of the dead ranged from washing the body to more extensive preservation. The body was washed and dressed, groomed, the eyes and mouth closed. To close the eyes, coins or weighted objects were put on the lids. The mouth was closed by a strap wrapped around head and jaw, or by wedging a stick between the jaw and the breastbone. More extensive preparations could include removal of internal organs, blocking of orifices, and filling the body cavity with charcoal to slow decomposition.¹⁶ More extensive preparations were likely less common as the fear of premature burial persisted into the late nineteenth century.¹⁷

Layers out of the dead provided the family with a necessary service of preparing and dressing the body for burial, relieving a stress from family members who had been attending to a dying loved one. Friends and neighbors in smaller communities often offered assistance in preparing the dead to aid families that had experienced loss. Sara Osborn's memoir describes her feelings during a walk while her son was prepared for burial in 1744. "While friends were putting on his grave clothes, I went out in the field and walked, where, with more fecrecy (sic) and freedom, I could breathe out my foul (sic) to God."¹⁸ In preparation for burial, the deceased was wrapped in a winding sheet or dressed in a shroud. By 1775 use of the winding sheet for burial had fallen out of popularity in England,¹⁹ although the winding sheet was still used in parts of the United States until the mid-nineteenth century.²⁰ A shroud, often referred to as grave clothes, was a long sleeved open backed shift with drawstrings at the neck and wrists, which often had a hood. The garment was tied at the feet. The ankles were tied together, and arms tied to the body at the waist with the waistband of the shroud. By the 1770's the deceased were frequently dressed in stockings, slippers, and mittens, along with a shroud. English law dictated the use of wool alone for grave clothes, without flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold or silver, nevertheless linen was still preferred. Women also made these special clothing items for the deceased. When George Washington died three years earlier in 1799, he was buried in a shroud made by Margret Gretter of Alexandria. Estate records

¹⁴ Elaine Forman Crane, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker The Life Cycle of an Eighteenth-Century Woman Abridged Edition* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), xv-xix.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Drinker, *Diary, April 19, 1798* in Karol K. Weaver, "Painful Leisure" and "Awful Business": Female Death Workers in Pennsylvania," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 140, no.1 (January 2016).

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5215/pennmaghistbio.140.1.0031>, 31 (accessed November 19, 2018).

¹⁶ Karol K. Weaver, "Painful Leisure" and "Awful Business": Female Death Workers in Pennsylvania," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 140, no. 1 (January 2016). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5215/pennmaghistbio.140.1.0031>, 39-40. (accessed November 19, 2018).

¹⁷ Dan Pipenbring, "I'm Not Dead Yet" January 6, 2016, *The Paris Review*. <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2016/01/06/im-not-dead-yet/> (accessed November 30, 2018).

¹⁸ Samuel Hopkins, *Memoirs and Life of Mrs. Sarah Osbourn: Who Died At Newport, Rhodeisland, On the Second Day of August, 1796, in Eighty Third Year of Her Age* (Worchester, Massachusetts: Leonard Worchester, 1799), <https://babel.hathitrust.org>, 68 (accessed November 18, 2018).

¹⁹ Mary V. Thompson, "The Lowest Ebb of Misery: Death and Mourning in the Family of George Washington" *Historic Alexandria Quarterly*, Spring 2001, <https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedfiles/historic/haq/HistoricAlexandriaQuarterly2001Spring.pdf>, 8-9 (accessed November 25, 2018).

²⁰ Jamie Warren, "To Claim One's Own: Death and the Body in the Daily Politics of Antebellum Slavery" in *Death in The American South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 119.

show that Gretter was paid for making the shroud and pall cloth.²¹ Some who had time to prepare for death left instructions to be buried in their own clothing. Martha Washington requested to be buried in one of her own dresses before her death in 1802.²²

In more rural areas the work of preparing the dead may have been viewed as offering mutual assistance to a neighbor. In larger cities such as Philadelphia, women offered their services for hire to aid in supporting themselves and their family. A strong connection between laying out the dead, nursing, and the medical profession remained, although some layers out of the dead worked in fields outside of nursing and midwifery. Philadelphia directories from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century provide evidence that women worked as professional layers out of the dead from the 1790's onward. As early as 1794, a woman named Rebecca Powell appears in the city of Philadelphia directory as a layer out of the dead.²³ Author Karol K. Weaver describes Powell as a woman who embraced "multiple identities". Powell appears in the 1790 census as a young widow with three children, a boy and three girls under the age of sixteen. After identifying herself as a layer out of the dead in 1794, she listed herself as a widow and a mantua maker for the next three years.²⁴ A mantua was a loose fitting gown worn over a separate skirt that "assumed the form of high fashion" without so clearly transgressing prescription for their class or station²⁵ that appealed to women of middle and upper incomes.²⁶ Powell lists herself as a layer out of the dead in 1801.²⁷ Powell offered her services as a tayloress, until in 1808, Powell is listed again as a layer out of the dead. Until 1825, Powell appears in directories as a layer out of the dead and a nurse.²⁸

The 1807 directory includes a separate section for physicians, midwives and nurses. Two women appear as layers out of the dead. Hannah January lists herself as a layer out of the dead. Selah Knowles lists herself as a nurse and layer out of the dead. January's entry as a layer out of the dead included in a section for nurses confirms that laying out of the dead was considered and extension of nursing and medical practice of the time. Knowles entry confirms the different but related roles.²⁹ In the 1808 Philadelphia directory, Powell appears listed as a layer out of the dead, with January, and Knowles, and Mary Humphreys in the section for nurses. Once again Knowles lists herself as "nurse and layer out of the dead..."³⁰ In 1820, thirteen women are listed as layers out of the dead. Knowles is listed as a widow and only a nurse.³¹

It is difficult to determine how many women provided services as layers out of the dead in Philadelphia. From Elizabeth Drinker's diary a woman known as Molly Humphriss was working as layers out of the dead in Philadelphia in 1798. The last name Humphriss does not appear in the Philadelphia directory for 1798. The family name Humphreys does appear in the directory, but there is not a listing for a woman named Molly.³² Molly could have been a recent arrival to the city, been married at the time, or the name Molly may have been the name she was known by, but not her legal name. Early city directories at first only listed the name of the male head of household and only later included the name of the wife of the head of household. Single women were frequently not included in city directories. Later directories often included occupation and marital status if

²¹ Thompson, "The Lowest Ebb of Misery," 9.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Philadelphia directory and register* (Philadelphia: James Hardey, 1794). GeoHistory Resources, <https://www.philageohistory.org>, 123 (accessed November 28, 2018).

²⁴ Weaver, "Painful Leisure" and "Awful Business," 41-42.

²⁵ Marla, R. Miller, "The Last Mantuamaker: Craft Tradition and Commercial Change in Boston, 1760—1845." *Early American Studies* 4, no. 2 (2006) <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.wichita.edu/stable/23546428>, 379 (accessed November 30, 2018).

²⁶ Weaver, "Painful Leisure" and "Awful Business", 41-42.

²⁷ Philadelphia directory (Philadelphia: C.W. Stafford, 1801), GeoHistory Resources, <https://www.philageohistory.org>, 137. (accessed November 28, 2018).

²⁸ Weaver, "Painful Leisure" and "Awful Business," 42.

²⁹ *Philadelphia directory* (Philadelphia: James Robinson, 1807) accessed November 28, 2018, GeoHistory Resources <https://www.philageohistory.org>, IIII.

³⁰ *Philadelphia directory* (Philadelphia: James Robinson, 1808), GeoHistory Resources, <https://www.philageohistory.org>, np. (accessed November 28, 2018).

³¹ *Philadelphia directory and register* (Philadelphia: Edward Whitley, 1820), GeoHistory Resources, <https://www.philageohistory.org>, 72, 103, 158, 190, 194, 222, 225, 231, 235, 256, 354, 471, 480. (accessed November 28, 2018).

³² *Philadelphia directory* (Philadelphia: C.W. Stafford, 1798) GeoHistory Resources, <https://www.philageohistory.org>, 74-75. (accessed November 28, 2018).

a woman was as widow.³³ If Molly were married in 1789 she may not have been listed in the directory. Molly may have had a different legal name than the name she was known by to friends and acquaintances. Molly is an Irish derivative of the name Mary.³⁴ Entries do appear for a woman listed as a widow and later as a layer out of the dead with a similar name, Mary Humphreys, beginning in 1799. The 1799 Philadelphia directory has a listing for Mary Humphreys, “a widow, 30 Carter’s alley” but does not include an occupation.³⁵ In 1808 an entry appears for Mary Humphreys, “layer out of the dead Carter’s alley”.³⁶ Although Molly Humphreys in Drinker’s diary may not be the same person as Mary Humphreys, appearing first as a widow and later as a layer out of the dead, we know from Elizabeth Drinker’s diary that women were working as layers out of the dead in Philadelphia who are not listed in the city directory.

Coffin Makers

Care for the sick, dying, and preparation of the dead was a role assumed by women as an extension of their duties to responsibility for the household. Other aspects of the burial ritual fell into traditionally assigned male roles, including the relationship between carpentry and coffin making. In Colonial America coffins were constructed by local cabinet makers, carpenters or wheelwrights, after a death had occurred. The simple style of early coffins required simple hardware, a limited number of tools, and only a few boards to construct. The coffin was a hexagonal “shoulder” or “pinch toe” wooden box, constructed with a flat lid. Another style of coffin common in Colonial America had a gabled lid. The coffin was rectangular or trapezoid in shape with a gabled ridge running along the length of the coffin lid. Six-sided coffins with gabled lids were also used but required a more skilled craftsmanship.³⁷ Archeological excavations near the site of Jamestown revealed evidence of the use of six-sided flat topped coffin and a six sided gabled lid coffin made from yellow pine during the early seventeenth century. Although more difficult to construct, gabled lid coffins were not uncommon in the early seventeenth century. Use of coffins indicates the individuals were of higher social status.³⁸ Other remains from the 1620s uncovered by archeologists at Jamestown during times of famine and frequent Indian attacks were buried without coffins.³⁹

Until 1670 the most common style of coffin used in England and the colonies was a four sided trapezoid shaped. After 1670 coffins shifted to a hexagonal shape. Timothy Riordan examined coffins at the St. Mary’s city cemetery of graves from 1638 to 1730 and found seven styles of coffins in use, three of which had gabled lids. Coffins from graves after 1700 were hexagonal in shape. All adult burials at the Walton Burial ground in Griswold, Connecticut, in use between 1757 and the early nineteenth century, were in hexagonal shaped coffins.⁴⁰

John Head, a Philadelphia carpenter, joiner, and merchant built over sixty-five coffins and other furniture between 1717 and 1743. Head constructed coffins from pine, black painted pine, and offered more expensive models made of walnut. In the 1750s New York joiner and merchant Joshua Delaplaine sold coffins

³³ Gina Philibert-Ortega, “Genealogy Tip: Using Directories to Find Your Female Ancestors”, *genealogybank.com* (accessed August 22, 2016). <https://blog.genealogybank.com/genealogy-tip-using-directories-to-find-your-female-ancestor.html>, (accessed November 28, 2018).

³⁴ Roots of Ireland, “List of Common First Name Variations, entry for Mary” *rootsireland.ie*, <http://www.rootsireland.ie/help/first-names/> (accessed November 28, 2018).

³⁵ Philadelphia directory (Philadelphia: C.W. Stafford, 1799), GeoHistory Resources, <https://www.philageohistory.org>, 72. (accessed November 28, 2018).

³⁶ Philadelphia directory (Philadelphia: James Robinson, 1808), GeoHistory Resources, np.

³⁷ Charles H. LeeDecker, “Preparing for an Afterlife on Earth: The Transformation of Mortuary Behavior in Nineteenth-Century North America,” in *International Handbook of Historical Archaeology*, ed. Teresita Majewski, David Gaimster (New York, Springer 2009) googlebooks.com, 143. (accessed November 22, 2018).

³⁸ Historic Jamestown. “Jamestown Rediscovery-Archology- Who Shot JR,” *Historicjamestowne.org* <https://historicjamestowne.org/archaeology/map-of-discoveries/other-burials/> (accessed November 22, 2018).

³⁹ Ivor Noel Hume, “Alas Poor...Who? Or, Melancholy Moments in Colonial and Later Virginia” *Historic Jamestowne.orgCW Journal* (Spring 2005), <http://www.history.org/foundation/journal/spring05/funerals.cfm> (accessed November 22, 2018).

⁴⁰ Patricia C. O’Donnell, “This Side of the Grave Navigating the Quaker Plainness in London and in Philadelphia in the Eighteenth Century” *Winterthur Portfolio* 49, no1 (Spring 2015). <https://works.swarthmore.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1078&context=sta-libraries>, 34-35 (accessed November 22, 2018)

including more expensive models made of wood from sweet gum trees. Delaplaine was commissioned to build a coffin for the mother of Lewis Morris from black walnut lined in white calico. On the top of the lid, her initials, date of death and age were added using white nail details. Although Delaplaine built furniture from mahogany he did not use the material for coffins. Through the 1760s coffins in Philadelphia were made of black walnut, with less expensive models being produced from poplar. By the late eighteenth century mahogany had become the preferred material for coffins among the more affluent.⁴¹

In the middle eighteenth century some cabinet makers began making coffins out of more luxurious mahogany, often with silver handles and nameplates. One of the earliest evidence is a bill of sale dated November 9, 1759, for fifty-five pounds from woodworker John Cahoone of Newport, Rhode Island to John Easton for “Mahogany Coffin for Your Wife”. By 1770, David Evans of Philadelphia sold mahogany coffins in a variety of price ranges, suggesting varying qualities of wood or complexity. Documents from 1762 to 1776 show that Job Townsend Jr., a woodworker in Rhode Island, regularly produced mahogany coffins.⁴² Mahogany was the choice material for coffins of the wealthy and elite of the new nation. In 1799 George Washington was buried in a lead lined mahogany coffin, inside a wood case, covered in black fabric.⁴³ Master woodworkers such as Cahoone subcontracted the manufacture of common pieces used in furniture making to keep on hand for assembly. Surviving records indicate woodworking was a male profession that did not employ women.⁴⁴

Although elaborate coffins built by master woodworkers were available to the wealthier clients in urban centers, in rural areas the coffin would have been built by a community member, out of locally available materials. When Hannah Pollard’s young son died in March 1800, a local man Charles Gill built the coffin as a way of coming to aid of a family that had just lost a child. No description is given of the construction or materials, as the importance was not the construction, but the act of aiding a neighbor in a time of crisis.⁴⁵

The Role of the Sexton

A poem published in Portsmouth New Hampshire’s *New Hampshire-Spy* in June of 1787 describes the most notable role of the sexton; “Come, honest sexton, take thy spade, and let my grave be quickly made...”⁴⁶ Sextons were responsible for maintenance of religious buildings and grounds—including adjoining land used for burials, and ringing of the church bell. In larger cities such as Boston, bells were used as a way to announce community events, arrival of important visitors, the end of religious services, and funerals. Common maintenance duties of the Sexton including sweeping the meeting house or church, and maintaining a clock if there was one.⁴⁷ In smaller towns that did not have bells, such as Hallowell, Maine, the town sexton, Amos Pollard would have maintained the meeting house and grounds, allotted places of burial, and dug graves.⁴⁸ The role of a sexton was typically a male profession, although there were a few exceptions. Two Anglican churches in Prince Edward County, Virginia had female sextons in the late eighteenth century. It is possible that these women were hired to perform the duties of a sexton as a way to provide jobs for low income but able bodied widows, to help them remain self-sufficient. Judith Rutledge assumed the position of sexton for the Sandy River church after the passing of her husband, Richard who had been the church sexton. Mrs. Rutledge cleaned the church, escorted parishioners to their pews, and laundered linens used in church services including the ministers, surplice. She also served as a layer out of the dead, but there is no mention of digging graves as part of her duties. Mrs. Rutledge served as sexton for almost twenty years. Another widow, Mrs. Mary Barnett was hired as

⁴¹ Ibid., 36-38.

⁴² Jennifer L. Anderson, *Mahogany, The Cost of Luxury in America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), [googlebooks.com](https://books.google.com/books?id=44-45), 44-45. (accessed November 22, 2018).

⁴³ Mount Vernon.org “Coffin Fragment” Preservation Collection. <https://www.mountvernon.org/preservation/collections-holdings/browse-the-museum-collections/object/w-563/> (accessed November 22, 2018).

⁴⁴ Anderson, *Mahogany, The Cost of Luxury in America*, 44-45.

⁴⁵ Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale*, 257.

⁴⁶ Anonymous, “The Passing Bell”, *The New-Hampshire Spy (Portsmouth New Hampshire) II iss.65 (June 5,1787)*: 260., *America’s Historical Newspapers/ Newsbank* (accessed November 23,2018).

⁴⁷ The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, “Civic Announcements: The Role of Drums , Criers , and Bells in the Colonies- Bells” *Colonial Society.org*, <https://www.colonialsociety.org/node/2044> (accessed November 22, 2018)

⁴⁸ Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale*, 100.

a sexton by the Frenches church in 1771 and performed similar tasks.⁴⁹ Although the role of sexton was not typical for women— the duties they performed as sexton—cleaning, and laying out the dead, remained within the scope of gendered tasks for women of the time.

The Day of Burial - Pall Bearers and Transporting the Coffin.

The rituals on the day of burial varied based on the religious beliefs, location, and socioeconomic status of the family. Typically mourners gathered at the house with the surviving family members, opening with prayer and a short lecture before the journey to the site of the service, whether at a church or meeting house, or at the burial site. In rural areas or when the distance was shorter, the coffin would be hand carried to the site of the service. The number of persons varied and could require up to eight persons.⁵⁰ The coffin was typically carried on a bier, with an outer cloth covering called a pall. Younger men would carry the bier that held the coffin, while older men supported the cloth covering the coffin. If the coffin was to be moved a long distance, another group of men might trade out with those carrying the bier on which the coffin rested.⁵¹ The men were made up of those who had connections with the deceased and “under-bearers” who assisted with moving the coffin but were less closely connected to the family. At the burial of a small child, local children might carry the coffin.⁵²

In urban centers where roads were paved a hearse was at times used to transport the coffin. During the colonial period horse drawn hearses with coachmen were available to rent in cities, catering to the more affluent. The practice of using horse drawn hearses spread to small communities and towns by the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁵³ Although new technology was introduced, transporting the dead remained in the domain of men. The only exception was in the case of the death of a child.

The Day of Burial - The Service

A note sealed with black wax came this evening, inviting us to the funeral of John de Brahm tomorrow, at 3o'clock, at his dwelling at ye old York road. His long stay is at an end! His age I believe is 84 or very near it!

-*Elizabeth Drinker*, Diary, June 6, 1799⁵⁴

Funerals in the early year of the republic were for family and by invitation. Burial customs followed a standardized program including the gathering of relatives and friends, the procession, a sermon or prayers, burial, and assembling of mourners afterwards for refreshments.⁵⁵ Although the Quaker community shunned elaborate funeral and mourning customs, Puritan and Anglican communities adopted many of these rituals including designated mourning attire. Memorial gifts such as gloves and scarves were common. Wealthier individuals frequently commissioned memorial jewelry to be given as mementos.⁵⁶

The dead were prepared for burial in the home and transported to a local church or meeting house on the day of burial for religious services. Others were transported directly to the site of burial for graveside services and interment. Occasionally persons were laid out in the church where they had been members.⁵⁷ Women took part in funerals as an extension of their duties to house and home, provided hospitality to mourners, and took part in funeral processions, accompanying the remains of friends and family to burial.

⁴⁹ Linda Speth, *Women Family and Community in Colonial America: Two Perspectives Women & History No. 4* (New York: Routledge, 2011) [googlebooks.com](https://books.google.com), np. (accessed November 22, 2018).

⁵⁰ Gary Laderman, *These Sacred Remains American Attitudes Toward Death, 1799-1883* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 32-33.

⁵¹ New England Historical Society, “Seven Strange Facts About Colonial Funerals” [NewenglandHistoricalsociety.com](http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/seven-strange-facts-colonial-funerals/) <http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/seven-strange-facts-colonial-funerals/> (accessed November 21, 2018).

⁵² Laderman, *These Sacred Remains*, 32-33.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵⁴ Henry Biddle ed., *Excerpts from the Diary of Elizabeth Drinker From 1759 to 1807 AD* (Philadelphia: J.P. Lippincott Company, 1899) <https://archive.org>, 341-343. (accessed November 19, 2018).

⁵⁵ Robert V. Wells, “A Tale of Two Cities: Epidemics and the Rituals of Death in Eighteenth-Century Boston and Philadelphia” in *Mortal Remains Death in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 58.

⁵⁶ David E. Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 113.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 112.

The Drinker family hosted mourners at their home for a close friend Sally Salter in April of 1781. Drinker noted in her diary of Sally's funeral preparations on April 27, "...her corpse is now at John Salter's, Magnolia, to be brought here to-morrow, and to be buried from our House in ye afternoon." The next day the body was transported to the house at about 10 o'clock in the morning. Funeral preparations went on throughout the day. Mourners and family members gathered at the Drinker home in the late afternoon after dinner and returned to the home after the service for refreshments. "She was interred in ye Church burying ground, at 6 in ye evening. Ye family came back to our House, and several others-15 or 20 drank tea with us."⁵⁸

The gathering of relatives, the procession, and assembling of mourners afterwards for refreshments mentioned in Drinkers diary follows the accepted pattern for burial in the late colonial period and early years of the Republic. As observant Quakers, Elizabeth Drinker and her household would not have donned mourning attire. In the early years of the republic, even the elite refrained from giving out traditional scarves and gloves associated with funeral traditions of the past.⁵⁹ Quaker tradition embraced modesty, plainness and humility. Quakers were not to participate in the tradition of wearing attire designated for mourning to funerals, did not ring bells, or cover the coffin with a pall.⁶⁰ The Quaker community viewed that death should not be feared. Death was the "culmination of a spiritual life", with the deceased going on to a better place, so excessive mourning was discouraged.⁶¹

Although some Quakers adopted common traditions followed at the time it was rebuked by the church. In February of 1797, a group of women took part of a Quaker funeral procession for a child that had died. The women were dressed in white dresses with powdered hair. White was the color at the time designated as mourning attire for the death of a child, or young unmarried woman. Powdered hair was the style of the day. Quakers forbid donning mourning attire and strictly required women to cover their hair with bonnets in public. Although only one of the four women in question was a Quaker, the overseer of the congregation, John Davenport wrote to the reprimand the family for the attire of the four women who took part in the procession. Davenport was, "... much affected, as I believe every solid Friend present also was, with the manner of carrying it to the grave; so different from the plainness and simplicity into which our principles lead." Davenport continued,

I need not remind you that we profess to be a plain self-denying people, called to bear a testimony against the vain and foolish fashions of the world. These never appear more idle and inexcusable than at funerals, when our minds ought to be impressed with a most solemn and awful sense of our own mortality, and the sense of uncertainty in which we exist.⁶²

Anglican services differed due to location, and were more elaborate than those of the Quakers. Many Anglicans lived in the southern colonies and were part of the planter class. Instead of being buried in graveyards they were buried on private burial plots on their plantations. Due to the great distance from rural plantations to the local parish churches, at times up to sixty miles, many could not be transported to the church for services. It had become, "... customary to bury in Gardens or Orchards, where whole families lye interred together, in a Spot generally handsomely enclosed, planted with Evergreens and the Graves kept decently..."⁶³ Anglicans in rural areas frequently held two separate services, a private burial service on the day of internment, followed by a more public funeral service later at the parish church. Religious ceremonies were performed at the home the day of the burial at the home. Another service, a funeral, was frequently performed up to several weeks later at the parish church. If a burial and funeral occurred on the same day with no later service to follow and the burial was not private a procession followed the deceased to the site of burial. Firing of guns at the gravesite was an

⁵⁸ Biddle, *Excerpts from the Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, 133-134.

⁵⁹ Thompson, "Lowest Ebb of Misery," 11.

⁶⁰ O'Donnell, "This Side of the Grave," 48.

⁶¹ Mays, *Women in America*, 102.

⁶² O'Donnell, "This Side of the Grave," 29-30.

⁶³ Hugh Jones, *Present State of Virginia*, (New York: Reprinted for Sabin Jones, 1865). <https://archives.org>, 67-68 (accessed December 1, 2018).

Anglican tradition during the seventeenth century, but had become less common by the eighteenth century.⁶⁴ Anglicans mourned at death but did not fear judgement by God as Puritans did. A banquet followed the ceremony with food and heavy drinking.⁶⁵ By 1700 some excess consumption of alcohol had become a concern, with some wills specifying not to provide alcohol at the funeral banquet.⁶⁶ A meal following a funeral in the 1780s that took place three weeks after a burial describes, men and women going into separate rooms after the service, and “a table was spread with funeral cake and wine sealed with black.” Afterwards, “a cold dinner” was served. The day of the funeral, close members of the family wore mourning attire, ranging from full mourning to a black ribbon or armband. Family members and close friends frequently received mourning rings and gloves as gifts.⁶⁷

Among the Anglican planter class of the south, a multitude of roles associated with death and dying were performed by slaves. During George Washington’s final illness in 1799, slaves tended the fire to warm the sickroom and were sent to bring the doctor. On the day of Washington’s death, he was surrounded by family members, close friends, medical professionals, and attended to by his personal slave, Christopher Sheels. Upon Washington’s death, slave men and women prepared his body, dug the grave, and prepared the post burial banquet.⁶⁸

Puritan anxiety surrounding death derived from a belief in predestination- that God decided the fate of humans before birth. Through contemplation, introspection, Puritans sought signs, to determine if they were of the “few elect” or the multitude of the damned, but there was no way to be certain. Puritan funerals in the first half of the seventeenth century were simple affairs but became more elaborate by the latter half of the eighteenth century. Neighbors and friends gathered as a bell tolled.⁶⁹ A prayer was said before the procession. The procession, led by the most prominent person, usually a minister or magistrate, followed by close family, and other mourners, accompanied the deceased to the site of burial, often without a funeral sermon. The procession would then return to the home of the deceased for meal.⁷⁰ Alcohol was frequently consumed in large quantities. 1678 bill for funeral expenses lists “8 gallons & 3 quarts of wine” and a Barrel of Cider” among the expenditures.⁷¹

By the 1690s Puritan funeral processions advanced to burial grounds to the sound of tolling bells, the bereaved arrayed scarves, gloves, ribbons, and cloaks designed for mourning. The hearse and horses were draped with banners, painted with winged death heads. Invitations were sent out in advance in the form of gloves that mourners wore while attending the funeral. Prayers were included in the ceremony. After the interment, mourners returned to the church or home for banquet, and distribution of commemorative rings to family members and close friends. The gold rings were often inlaid with black enamel, adorned with skeletons, coffins and death heads to remind the wearer of the nearness of death.⁷² Author Allan I. Ludwig observes that Puritans practiced similar traditions at marriage and death, such as sending gloves as invitations and giving rings. Poems by Ann Bradstreet and writings by Puritan Minister Thomas Hooker support his suggestion that some Puritans came to understand death as, “a spiritual marriage between Christ and the soul.”⁷³

⁶⁴ Thad Tate, “Funeral in Eighteenth Century Virginia” *Research Report Colonial Williamsburg, 1956*, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports%5CRR0085.xml&highlight>, 2-4. (accessed November 30, 2018).

⁶⁵ Mays, *Women in America*, 102.

⁶⁶ Tate, “Funeral in Eighteenth Century Virginia,” 4-5.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 2-4.

⁶⁸ Lorri Glover, “When “History Becomes Fable Instead of Fact”: The Deaths and Resurrections of Virginia’s Leading Revolutionaries” in *Death in the American South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 58-71.

⁶⁹ Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death*, 109.

⁷⁰ Mays, *Women in America*, 102.

⁷¹ Alice Morse Earle, *Customs and Fashions in Old New England* (New York: Charles Scribner’s & Sons, 1894), <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/24159/24159-h/24159-h.htm#XV>, 370 (accessed December 1, 2018).

⁷² Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death*, 112-115.

⁷³ Allan I. Ludwig, *Graven Images New England Stonecarving and its Symbols, 1650-1815* (Middleton, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), 61-62.

By the early to middle eighteenth century, Puritan funeral excesses resulted in legislation to curb costly funerals.⁷⁴ Elaborate funerals often consumed up to twenty percent of an estate.⁷⁵ Massachusetts colonial authorities became wary of the potential economic impact of elaborate funerals. The “unnecessary expense” of large funerals could plunge families into poverty. The colonial government of Massachusetts passed laws in the early 1720s and again in the 1740s to curb what they deemed excessive funeral expenditures. The regulations prohibited the giving of gifts at burials including gloves, scarves, wine, rum, and rings.⁷⁶

Mourning in the Late Colonial and Early Republic Periods

Just Imported in Last Ship from London, and Sold by Anna Houghton on the North side of the Town House, the best Padafoys, black bombozense, fine Mourning Crapes, Widows Crapes, Mens, Womens, and Childrens Mourning gloves, hose and handkerchiefs, also all other things suitable for mourning, likewise sundry other sorts of fine English goods at reasonable rates.⁷⁷ Advertisement, *The Boston Gazette*, September 10, 1733

Prior to the eighteenth century, wearing of mourning attire had been limited to the nobility. Black dyes were costly and sumptuary laws prevented persons from wearing clothing above their social status. With the industrial revolution, a new wealthy merchant class drove the demand for goods that had once been limited to the nobility. Mass production of consumer goods and textiles expanded access to products that had been in less plentiful supply.⁷⁸ In the years leading up to and following the Revolutionary War mourning traditions diminished.⁷⁹

By the eighteenth century black had become the traditional color for funerals. For the death of a child light gray or white was preferred.⁸⁰ White was the color for mourning for young unmarried women.⁸¹ Prescribed periods for mourning in the late colonial and early years of the Republic remained isolated in practice among more affluent families. Martha Washington followed prescribed mourning upon the death of her first husband Daniel Parke Custis in 1757 by ordering mourning clothing for herself, her three year old son, and the domestic slaves. A year later she shed her mourning attire for clothing appropriate for a second stage of mourning. She requested her new ensembles neither “to be grave but not Extravagant (sic) nor to be mourning.”⁸² After the death of Martha’s daughter in 1773⁸³ George Washington ordered to England for shoes, gloves, clothing and accessories appropriate for the second stage of mourning for Martha and himself including a men’s beaver hat and a “Second Suit of Mourning” for himself.⁸⁴

In the years following the American Revolution mourning customs became less elaborate even among wealthy households. When George Washington’s mother died in 1789 black arm bands, cockades and sword knots were purchased for the men of the household including domestics and all social activities were canceled for one week. A Congressional resolution in 1774 had called to moderate mourning customs to “...a black crape or ribbon on the arm or hat, for gentlemen and a black ribbon and necklace for ladies.”⁸⁵ By 1765 many had

⁷⁴ Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death*, 115.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 112-115.

⁷⁶ Ludwig, *Graven Images*, 60.

⁷⁷ Advertisement for Mourning Attire, *The Boston Gazette*, September 3, 1733 America’s Historical Newspapers/ Newsbank. (accessed December 1, 2018).

⁷⁸ Dolores Monet, “Fashion History-Mourning Dress-Black Clothing Worn During Bereavement,” January 3, 2018. *Bellatory.com* <https://bellatory.com/fashion-industry/FashionHistoryMourningDressBlackClothingWornDuringBereavement>. (accessed November 18, 2018).

⁷⁹ Thompson, “Lowest Ebb of Misery,” 11.

⁸⁰ O’Donnell, “This Side of the Grave,” 34.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁸² Thompson, “Lowest Ebb of Misery,” 11.

⁸³ Mount Vernon.org, “Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington, entry for Martha Parke Custis,” <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/martha-parke-custis/> (accessed December 1, 2018).

⁸⁴ Thompson, “Lowest Ebb of Misery,” 11.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

begun to abandon elaborate displays of mourning even at funerals. Non-importation agreements may have contributed to this trend during leading up to the Revolutionary War.⁸⁶

Importation of British goods including mourning items resumed after the war, creating concern among some. In 1805, a columnist from the Boston based *Independent Chronicle* expressed dismay regarding the volume of British textile imports flooding into the United States. The “renewal of wearing black at funerals”, posed an economic danger to the United States as many of these goods were imported from Britain. Five-eighths of annual importations from Britain consisted of, “articles of foppery, fashion and superfluities”, of which mourning apparel comprised the majority.⁸⁷

Public Mourning in the Early Republic

In December of 1799, the United States planned its first state funeral. George Washington was laid to rest in a private service at Mt. Vernon four days after his death on December 18, 1799. Infantry and mounted military units took part in the procession to the family burial vault as a band played “a solemn dirge”. Two slaves in mourning attire led Washington’s riderless horse, “bearing his pistols and holsters.” Eleven cannons fired from the estate, echoed by returning fire from a schooner nearby on the Potomac. At the site of burial, a religious service was performed by four ministers, two Anglican and two Presbyterian, followed by a Masonic ceremony.⁸⁸

The death of George Washington was the first large display of public mourning in the early republic. As news of George Washington’s death spread, church bells tolled and shops closed. Military officers wore mourning crape, and flags flew at half-staff at commemorations throughout the country.⁸⁹ On December 25, 1799, eleven days after Washington’s death, Elizabeth Drinker recorded in her diary concerning an event scheduled for the following day.

There is to be great doings tomorrow by way of respect to General Washington’s memory: a funeral procession, an oration, or a eulogium to be delivered by Henry Lee, a member of Congress from Virginia. The Members of Congress are to be in deep mourning; the citizens generally to wear crape round their arms, for six months. Congress-hall is in mourning, and even the Play-house...⁹⁰

As Quakers, Drinker refers to the customs as, “... out of our way,” but others in the community did take part.⁹¹ Events continued for the next two months until what would have been George Washington’s sixty-eighth birthday on February 22, 1800.⁹²

Later events of public mourning adopted similar elements. When a fire destroyed a crowded Richmond theater the day after Christmas in 1811, killing seventy-two, business closed for two days. Days of mourning were observed in Norfolk and ships lowered flags to half-mast. Congress passed a resolution to wear crape arm bands for a month. Other persons around the country wore mourning attire voluntarily for a month to show solidarity with those who lost loved ones in the Richmond Theater fire.⁹³ Although due to distance, citizens could not offer support by directly aiding families in a time of loss the show of moral support was an attempt to follow the older colonial tradition of offering aid at times of loss.

During the colonial period, and the years of the new Republic, death most frequently occurred in the home, as with the wife of Cornel Howards attended to by Martha Ballard.⁹⁴ Women prepared the body and dressed it for burial as part of a system of mutual aid. In urban areas such as Philadelphia, women worked as professional layer out of the dead to aid in supporting families.⁹⁵ Men built coffins, sometimes as a service to

⁸⁶ Tate, “Funeral in Eighteenth Century Virginia,” 7.

⁸⁷ Editorial, “Non-Intercourse, versus British Depredations”, *The Independent Chronicle (Boston, Massachusetts) vol. XXXVII issu.2562 (November 21, 1805) 2*, America’s Historical Newspapers/ Newsbank (accessed December 2, 2018).

⁸⁸ Thompson, “The Lowest Ebb of Misery,” 10.

⁸⁹ Jewel Spangler, “American Mourning: Catastrophe, Public Grief, and the Making of Civic Identity in the Early National South” in *Death in the American South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 93-94.

⁹⁰ Biddle ed., *Excerpts from the Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, 353.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 353.

⁹² Jewel Spangler, “American Mourning” in *Death in the American South*, 93-94.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 101-109.

⁹⁴ Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale*, 67-69.

⁹⁵ Weaver, “Painful Leisure” and “Awful Business,” 41-42.

the family as Charles Gill did for Hannah Pollard's family in 1800.⁹⁶ Other men such as John Head, of Philadelphia built coffins as an extension of his business as a furniture maker.⁹⁷ A sexton dug the grave. Although not all sextons were male, descriptions of the duties of women who served as sextons did not include digging of graves.⁹⁸ On the day of the funeral, men transported the coffin by hand, or by hearse to the site of burial. Women participated in the funeral ceremony by providing hospitality to mourners, as an extension of their role in the home⁹⁹ and taking part in the procession.¹⁰⁰

With exception for those of the Quaker faith,¹⁰¹ women and men participated in mourning rituals by donning attire, based on social status, and community expectations. Martha Washington donned mourning attire and followed the prescribed rites of a mourning widow after the death of her first husband, Daniel Parke Custis in 1757. After the death of her daughter in 1773, Martha and her husband George Washington ordered to England for appropriate mourning attire.¹⁰² Upon the death of George Washington, the new nation developed public mourning traditions. Modeled on older traditions, those of higher social status, such as officers and government officials, wore more visible displays of mourning than those expected of persons of lower stations.¹⁰³ In times of disaster, the new nation sought to reinvent the colonial model of mutual aid, by showing solidarity with those who experienced loss. Although many aspects outside the home were dominated by men, women fashioned a place for themselves in colonies and early republic in death rituals as an extension of caring for home and family.

⁹⁶ Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale*, 257.

⁹⁷ O'Donnell, "This Side of the Grave," 36-38.

⁹⁸ Linda Speth, *Women Family and Community in Colonial America: Two Perspectives Women & History No. 4* (New York: Routledge, 2011), <https://books.google.com>, np. (accessed November 22, 2018).

⁹⁹ Biddle, *Excerpts from the Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, 133-134.

¹⁰⁰ O'Donnell, "This Side of the Grave," 29-30.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁰² Thompson, "The Lowest Ebb of Misery," 9.

¹⁰³ Jewel Spangler, "American Mourning" in *Death in the American South*, 93-94, 101-109.

ROSS AND WATIE: THE RELATIONSHIP AND INFLUENCE OF CHEROKEE CHIEFS, FROM REMOVAL TO THE CIVIL WAR

Erik Ferguson

John Ross and Stand Watie were chiefs and leaders of the Cherokee people through a large part of the nineteenth century. Politically they differed in thought and action. Even though they maintained different political understanding, they both believed in the unity of the Cherokee Nation. Through their lives, their differences shaped each other and their nation. Their actions had major influences on one another. What started as a political divide became a personal grudge over decades. The decisions they made for themselves and the Cherokee people had great effect on each other. Their political movements were not only based on the Cherokee people, but on how the other would react. This relationship began in the early 19th century and went through the Civil War. They were a part of treaties, assassinations, peace, and war. They influenced and changed their nation, and influenced and changed each other.

In order to understand the relationship of Ross and Watie, one must understand the primitive law of the Cherokee. An outside observer may not see any structure or order to early Cherokee society, but even though their laws were not written down they were still understood by their people. Social harmony and popular consensus was the cornerstone of Cherokee order. Consensus did not have to come from vote, but often came when the opposition gave up their side or left the council. It was also custom for young men to defer to their elders, whose opinions held more weight than their young counterparts. Each year the Cherokee would hold a yearly festival where all sins were absolved, except for murder. That was unforgiveable.¹

When a Cherokee killed another tribesman, intentionally or by accident, it was seen as a personal wrong. This in turn, created a personal right for the decessed's clan to take a life in order to balance the death of their loved one. Relatives of a murdered Cherokee had the duty of killing the manslayer or one of the manslayer's relatives.² The Cherokee believed their dead clansman's spirit must have blood spilt in revenge. The blood did not have to be that of the murderer for satisfaction to take place. This law of vengeance, or blood feud, was no concern to the Cherokee Nation; instead it was the responsibility of the deceased's tribal clan to uphold, often falling to the older male relative of the deceased.

After the American Revolution, Southern states began to pressure the Cherokee to cede land to their citizens. The North Carolina legislature granted parts of the Cherokee nation in present day Tennessee to any citizen who would move there. Georgia forced the Cherokee to give up large tracts of land for their citizens to develop. The Cherokee agreed to sign the Treaty of Hopewell in 1785, creating boundaries of their nation and ensuring friendliness among its people and the American citizens of the South. The Southern states did not abide by this treaty and continued to encroach on their land. The Southerners saw great value in the Cherokee lands to be exploited and wanted to use the land for farming and deer skin trapping. The Cherokee were quick to adapt and signed the Treaty of Holston in 1791, putting the tribe under the protection of the federal government, and it encouraged the Cherokees to take up an agrarian way of life like their white Southern neighbors. Treaties signed by the Cherokee National Council could only be upheld if the populace agreed to the terms; furthermore no Cherokee had the right to negotiate treaties without the consent of the National Council, nor could he make decisions on his own. All Cherokee were seen as equal and had a right to participate at the

¹ John Phillip Reid, *A Law of Blood* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), 50-54; Rennard Strickland, *Fire and the Spirits: Cherokee Law from Clan to Court* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), 12, 22.

² Reid, *A Law of Blood*, 73-75; Robert M. Owens, "'Between Two Fires': Elusive Justice on the Cherokee-Tennessee Frontier, 1796-1814," *The American Indian Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (Winter 2016): 42, 47.

national council. The National Council was the beginning of a more centralized system for the Cherokee, but it still lacked authority to punish individual Cherokee for disobeying treaty law, and the Cherokee had no concept of treason. The Cherokee form of government began to take on parts of the U.S. federal government from consistent contact with them. The Cherokee government shifted from tribal councils to a more centralized national government. Even as the Cherokee nation developed, more conservative Cherokees still believed in primitive law such as the blood feud. The Cherokee hoped that by adopting the colonists' way of life they could end the encroachment and call for removal from the Southern states. For many decades this was the case, but the pressure was only relieved, not fully gone.³

The Cherokee adapted to the Southern way of life, creating farms in the English colonist fashion. Men spent more time in fields and less hunting; women became more adapt to maintaining the household. Successful and wealthy Cherokee farmers were able to expand into large plantations buying slaves, buildings, roads, and ferries. These wealthy Cherokee became the economic elite and had control over political affairs in the tribal nation. Most of these elites were of mixed-blood, being descendants of both Cherokee and white colonists. With the rise of developing land came the concept of personal property and the need to protect it. The Cherokee Nation developed a government similar to the U.S., in order to protect property rights as well as preserve their nation.⁴

The written law the National Council passed created regulators to enforce and judge punishment for criminal Cherokee. The second law abolished the blood revenge, or blood feud in 1818. Additionally, outlawry was made a capital offence; anyone who sold tribal land without the permission of the tribe was to be considered an outlaw and could be killed within tribal territory without recourse.⁵ Stand Watie and his family were guilty of such charges by Ross supporters in the coming years.

The Cherokee Constitution of 1827 created a legislative, executive, and judicial system similar to the U.S. Constitution. The Cherokee Constitution set boundaries of the nation, and gave powers to each branch of government, created eight districts to be represented in the General Council, and it gave the right to vote to each free Cherokee male eighteen or older. The General Council would vote on the Principal Chief of the Executive Branch, similar to the electoral college of the U.S.⁶ The Principal Chief would be similar to the president. The General Council, like the Electoral College, had the power to elect the Chief every four years; they would typically refer to the will of the Cherokee they represented in choosing the Principal Chief. John Ross, Principal Chief of the Cherokee, and Major Ridge, tribal council member, were both mix-blood Cherokees who had prominent political influence in the early nineteenth century. The large influence these men had in the Cherokee nation would shape future treaty policy and relations with the federal government. One of Major Ridge's supporters was his nephew, Stand Watie, whose relationship to Ross was shaped by politics and family tragedy. Even as a divide grew between the Ridge family and Ross family, they all did what they believed was the best to keep their people united.

The Cherokee Constitution also made treason a capital offense similar to outlawry. Section 268 states: "...every person who shall contrary to the will and consent of the National Council, enter into a treaty with the government of the United States, or with any department of officer thereof, or with any state of the United States, or officer thereof, and agree to cede, sell, exchange, or dispose of, in any manner the lands belonging to the Cherokees, or any part or portion thereof, shall be deemed guilty of treason, and on conviction thereof, suffer death by hanging."⁷ A Cherokee who deliberately violated community interest for personal gain, was considered to have committed treason.⁸ This is an important issue due to past attempts by Cherokee to negotiate treaties without national consent.

Even after adapting the southerner's way of life and becoming one of what is called, The Five Civilized Tribes, the Cherokee people were still being pressured for removal. The state of Georgia was most adamant for

³ Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents 2nd ed.* (Boston: St. Martin's Press, 2004), 8-11; Owens, "'Between Two Fires'..." 51; Reid, *A Law of Blood*, 60-66.

⁴ Craig W. Gains, *The Confederate Cherokees* (Baton Rouge and London, The Louisiana University Press: 1989), 1; Perdue and Green, *The Cherokee Removal*, 13-14.

⁵ Strickland, *Fire and the Spirits*, 58-60, 78.

⁶ "Constitution of the Cherokee Nation," *Cherokee Phoenix*, February 21, 1828.

⁷ Cherokee Constitution, art I, sec. 268.

⁸ Strickland, *Fire and the Spirit*, 37.

removal since a large portion of the Cherokee Nation was in their state.⁹ The Ridge party, headed by the son of Major Ridge, John; was in favor of creating a treaty with the U.S. in order to secure funds and land in the western Indian Territory. Their support came from many of the wealthy mixed-bloods in the nation.

The Ross party, headed by Principal Chief John Ross, wanted to remain in Georgia on their ancestral lands and was supported by the majority of the Cherokee people.¹⁰ In 1835 The Cherokee leaders agreed to create a delegation to negotiate with the U.S. federal government. The delegation was made up of eighteen prominent men in the Cherokee Nation. The delegation included John Ross, his brother Lewis Ross, Stand Watie, and his cousin John Ridge. President Jackson sent John F. Schermerhorn to represent the federal government and obtain a treaty that would remove the Cherokee from the south. Even though John Ross was the Principal Chief, he would write in his papers that the whole delegation was to determine terms with the federal government over treaty policy. He considered all men at the formation of the delegation a part of the process even though he denies the Ridges and Watie as delegate members in future letters.¹¹

Differences began to arise between Ross and Watie in August of 1835 when Watie and the Georgia Guard seized the printing press of the *Cherokee Phoenix*, the Cherokee national newspaper; from Elijah Hicks, another prominent member of the delegation. Ross wrote Schermerhorn in protest, stating that Watie had no right to the press because it belonged to the Cherokee people. However, his animosity pointed more towards the Georgia Guard and the state rather than Watie. Watie claimed he was seizing the press because it belonged to his brother Elias Boudinot, the founder of the *Cherokee Phoenix*. Boudinot purchased the press with public donations he acquired himself, mostly through churches and wealthy philanthropist who wanted a national paper. Ross claimed that Watie was never an editor to the *Cherokee Phoenix* and had no right or reason to take it. He also expressed his displeasure of the state in his letter to Schermerhorn, "... for the manner of the seizure of the public press could not have sanctioned for any other purpose than to stifle the voice of the Cherokee people, raised by their cries from the wounds inflicted upon them by the unsparing hand of their oppressors and that the ear of humanity might thereby be prevented from hearing them."¹² Watie explained that part of the reason he took the press was because he believed that Ross was trying to re-establish it for himself. Also, likely unknown to Ross, Watie had been the editor of the paper in his brother's absence, before Boudinot resigned his duties to Elijah Hicks. Regardless of who was in the right, Watie did not want Ross to re-establish the paper with Elijah Hicks, in fear that he would use it to promote himself to the Cherokee people. Consequentially the state of Georgia got what it desired in stifling the communication of the Cherokee nation, making it more difficult to spread important information regarding treaty and removal to all the Cherokee people.¹³

Stand Watie's desire for removal was somewhat influenced by his cousin, John Ridge; who had met with President Jackson hoping to dissuade him against removal. But after their conversation, John Ridge realized that Jackson would never support the Cherokee staying in Georgia, and Jackson sternly let it be known that removal was the only action. Watie understood that removal was going to happen no matter what, and he believed the best option for the Cherokee was to work with the federal government to ensure the best possible terms for removal. Even though Ridge and Ross supporters disagreed on removal, the delegation still stayed intact. Major Ridge joined the delegation in November of 1835 on the suggestion of John Ridge and agreement by Ross. One month later parts of the delegation, including John Ridge, Major Ridge, and Stand Watie, met in New Echota, the Cherokee capitol. There the Treaty of New Echota was signed by multiple Cherokee men including, Andrew Ross, John's younger brother. The Ridges and Watie were the only signatures of the original delegation. This was an extreme action by the signers, all aware that signing the treaty would be considered treason and they could be put to death for their actions. The treaty stripped the Cherokee of all their lands in the South and forced them all to move to Indian Territory within the next two years. The treaty was not binding until it was

⁹ Perdue and Green, *The Cherokee Removal*, 71.

¹⁰ Gaines, *The Confederate Cherokee*, 3.

¹¹ Ross Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, Vol. I 1807-1839 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press: 1984) 378, 457-458.

¹² *Ibid*, 358.

¹³ *Ibid*, 352-353,358; Thurman Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy* (New York: The Macmillan Company: 1970) 189-190, 231.

ratified by Congress. Furthermore, without the signatures of the official delegation, it technically should not be upheld by the U.S. government.¹⁴

Major Ridge sent the copies of the treaty to each member of the delegation hoping they would sign it as well. John Ross did not agree with the treaty and did not sign it, but still considered the Ridges and Watie as part of the delegation, writing after the fact that he considered the delegation made up of eighteen men, which at the time consisted of the Ridges and Watie.¹⁵ John Ridge and Elias Boudinot were scheduled to meet with Jackson in Washington after the creation, but before ratification of the New Echota treaty. Elias declined to go, and John Ridge pressed for Watie to accompany him, which Ross agreed to.¹⁶ At this time Ross and Watie were still on familiar terms, since communication between the two was still ongoing on the removal issue. Ross was also under the assumption that the meeting was for working in more favorable terms for the Cherokee for he still did not want removal for his people. This meeting never occurred. Believing that the Treaty of New Echota was their best option, the Treaty Party pushed it through, and it was ratified by the U.S. Senate in March of 1836. The Treaty Party, including Watie, wrote on multiple occasions their belief that this was the best deal. The treaty also gave them the authority over the Cherokee Treasury and the funds to come to the Cherokee Nation from the ceding of the land in the South.¹⁷ The ratification of the New Echota Treaty made Watie and the Treaty Party traitors and outlaws to the Cherokee Nation. This was the large turning point in Ross's feelings toward the Treaty Party and Watie, and he would publicly deny them being a part of the delegation on many writings to come.

Ross wrote the U.S. Senate in March of 1836 shortly after the ratification of the treaty. He insisted that Stand Watie and John Ridge had removed themselves from delegation and met with Schermerhorn on their own account. Ross wrote he considered this action to mean they were no longer apart of the delegation. This letter would contrast with the previous month when he still considered them a part of the delegation before the Treaty of New Echota was ratified. He also wrote the Senate that he recognized their involvement at the general council in October of 1835, but that their involvement did not constitute being a part of the delegation at the present time. After the ratification of the treaty the federal government no longer recognized Ross as part of the delegation unless he agreed to the new treaty and united himself with the Treaty Party.¹⁸

Watie and the Treaty Party wrote Ross on August 17, 1836 asking him to join the general council to discuss the treaty at New Echota. The treaty appointed Ross to the committee, but his appointment was contingent on him agreeing to the terms of the treaty. Ross was still in protest with the federal government on the legality of the treaty and the authority of the Treaty Party. The Treaty Party was still pushing forward with the terms of the treaty and hoping to get Ross's approval or cooperation. Ross did not attend the meeting in New Echota, instead he wrote the Senate again on his disdain for the Treaty Party, calling John Ridge and Elias Boudinot "repugnant;" and claimed they and their friends, including Watie, crafted this instrument to seize all power and funds of the Cherokee people. Furthermore, he writes that all involved are in violation of treaty law and have no real authority or office within the Cherokee nation, and that they should not be considered a part of the delegation.¹⁹ Ross's protest had no effect. The federal government and the Treaty Party planned on moving forward with Cherokee removal. Ross continued his fight until the federal troops removed his people in the winter of 1838-39.

The majority of the Cherokee people did not agree with the Treaty of New Echota and they, like Ross, despised the Treaty Party and Watie for agreeing to such terms. Watie understood the unpopularity such a treaty would bring on him and that by signing it he was committing treason. He wrote Schermerhorn shortly after the ratification. He knew his life would be in jeopardy from "assassins" of Ross and friends, but believed in the long run it would bring "joy" and "prosperity" to his people. He thought that was more valuable than his life and if someone were to take his life or any of the other Treaty Party's, it would be worth it. He considered the current conditions in Georgia to be oppressive for his people and if they were to stay, they would be stripped of

¹⁴ Moulton, *The Papers of John Ross*, 376, 385; Perdue and Green, *The Cherokee Removal*, 148-152; Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 229.

¹⁵ Moulton, *The Paper of John Ross*, 385-386.

¹⁶ Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 272.

¹⁷ Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, 1, 439.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 389, 411-412, 439.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 439, 457-458.

everything and be given nothing in return.²⁰ White Southerners saw the conditions of the poorer Cherokee as one of poverty and Watie may have agreed. Full blood Cherokees were more adapted to maintaining old customs; they fished, hunted, and cultivated small crop plots. Their lack of enthusiasm to develop land and property was seen as lazy by Southern Whites and some mixed-blood Cherokees such as Watie. Their 'poor' conditions were one of the arguments for removal. Boudinot protested these arguments years before removal was imminent in the *Cherokee Phoenix*. Boudinot believed even though their way of life may be considered "poor" by some, they had contented and happy lives.²¹ Regardless of his true perspective of their conditions, Watie had little conception of what would happen to the poorest people of the Cherokee during emigration. At the time, he considered leaving for new territory the best option for the Cherokee.

At the beginning of the winter of 1838-39, the Cherokee were forced from their homes. Most were ill prepared for the journey to Indian Territory; believing that they still had a chance to repeal the treaty. The journey took the tribe through Tennessee, Arkansas, and the Southern parts of Kentucky and Missouri. It was a cold harsh winter, where over four thousand Cherokees died from hunger and disease. About one out of every four people died on the Trail of Tears. The difficult journey only increased the majority of the Cherokees hatred for the Treaty Party.

The Cherokee Nation was established in the northeast part of present-day Oklahoma. Early Cherokee migrants, known as the Old Settlers, from the Cherokee lands in the South, had already established a government and home there after migrating from the home land in the 1820s. The Cherokee had been migrating to parts of western Arkansas as early as 1763. Cherokee who allied themselves with the French during the Seven Years War, migrated west after the French defeat. Similarly, British allied Cherokees migrated west after British defeat during the American Revolutionary War. A third group also migrated west from Tennessee in the early nineteenth century. These three groups, in western Arkansas and northeast Oklahoma formed the large part of the Old Settlers. These large migrations of full blood Cherokees where one of the reasons mixed-bloods, such as the Ross and Ridge family, were able to gain such prominence and power in the eastern Cherokee nation. The new influx of Cherokees after forced removal in 1838, disturbed the Old Settlers. The new migration greatly outnumbered the old and the new migration wanted to establish a new government even though the Old Settlers already had one formed. Watie and his family allied themselves with the Old Settlers hoping to keep John Ross and his majority from controlling the nation.²²

As the Cherokee rift grew wider, and unknown to Watie, a secret trial took place, where Ross supporters condemned the Treaty Party to death for the selling of their ancestors' land under the blood feud and outlawry act. John and Major Ridge, Elias Boudinot, John Bell, George Adair, and Stand Watie were all found guilty and would be put to death. On June 22 1839, over a dozen men surrounded John Ridge's house. Three men drug him from his bed and once outside, he was surrounded and stabbed to death. Major Ridge was riding down a road from Arkansas when multiple shots rang out, killing him in an ambush. Elias Boudinot was visited at his place of work. As he walked up to the visitors who were asking for medicine he was struck in the head with a tomahawk and stabbed multiple times while on the ground.²³ Stand Watie received warning of possible assassination attempts on his life. He and John Bell rode to Fort Gibson in Arkansas to seek protection with General Arbuckle, the commanding officer of the fort. Watie knew that these men who slayed his uncle, cousin, and brother were supporters of John Ross.

Ross claimed to be unaware of the conspiracy to commit murder. His son, Allen Ross, who was a confirmed conspirator, claimed it was his job to keep his father in the dark about planning for the assassination.²⁴ When Ross heard of the murders he sent out John G Ross, his brother, for additional information.²⁵ He was given a message from Elias Boudinot's wife that Watie could be out for revenge.²⁶ Ross wrote General Arbuckle

²⁰ Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 281.

²¹ *New Echota Letters*, Edited by Jack Fredrick Kilpatrick and Anna Gritts Kilpatrick, Elias Boudinot to the *Cherokee Phoenix* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press: 1968) 70-71.

²² Georgia Rae Leeds, *The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.: 1996) 5; Perdue and Green, *The Cherokee Removal*, 129; Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 318.

²³ Stand Watie and John Adair Bell to *Arkansas Gazette*, July 1839, *Voices from the Trail of Tears*, ebscohost.com.

²⁴ Wilkins, *The Cherokee Tragedy*, 321.

²⁵ John Ross to General Matthew Arbuckle, 22 June 1839, *Voices from the Trail of Tears*, ebscohost.com.

²⁶ Ross Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, Vol. II 1807-1839 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press: 1984), 25-26.

seeking protection, but it was unneeded. For once Ross supporters heard he was in danger, they took to guarding his house. In his letter to Arbuckle, Ross also expressed a great remorse for the loss of life and claimed, “No one will regret the circumstances more than myself.”²⁷

Over the next few days one hundred to six hundred Cherokees gathered around Ross to protect him from any reprisals from Watie. Watie and Bell did not see these men as guards, they saw them as an army formed by Ross to wipe them off the map. This large gathering is what spooked Watie and Bell to Fort Gibson, the nearest establishment of federal government power. Watie claims these men were being paid by Ross, receiving twenty-five dollars a month from the national treasury.²⁸ The assassination of Watie’s family was a well-planned out attack, occurring at three different locations just hours apart. Whether John Ross was a part of the conspiracy is still debated to this day. Watie was convinced that Ross was, and believed Ross’s actions after the event only proved his disdain for Watie’s family.

On July 1, 1839, John Ross called for a general convention of the Cherokee people.²⁹ At this convention Ross pardoned all the men who took part in the murder of Watie’s family. He also required all remaining Treaty Party members to sign a pledge to not commit any acts of vengeance against the conspirators.³⁰ Watie and Bell did not attend the convention, but multiple other Treaty Party members did and signed the pledge in fear for their life.

This convention outlawed the old Cherokee ‘Blood Law’ which allowed Cherokee people to seek revenge against murderers and tribesmen who sold Cherokee land. Ironically, Major Ridge was the one to modernize the law in the early 19th century when he and other Cherokee took revenge on fellow Cherokees for selling Cherokee land to the U.S. government. Watie saw the convention as an instrument of “malice” towards him; pardoning the murderers of his family. He saw Ross as a “usurper”, doing his best to become the one and only power of the Nation. Ross’s open denial of the conspiracy and subsequent pardon of the conspirators was evidence of his involvement in the plot according to Watie.³¹

Ross saw the convention as a means to heal his nation, but he did benefit directly from removing the ‘Blood Law’ from his nation. Any reprisal against him would not be accepted by any law-abiding Cherokee. He also mentions that all Treaty Party members who accepted the terms of the convention had been welcomed back to the Nation “with open arms”, and any fear of harm they might perceive had dissipated. Furthermore, Ross claims all Cherokee should agree to the convention and abide by Cherokee law. Anyone who does not agree should leave the nation all together. Watie and Bell were the only remaining Treaty Party members in defiance of the convention.³²

James Foreman was a Cherokee Indian, and he was an avid supporter of John Ross. Foreman was one of the conspirators who shot Major Ridge from his horse. In May of 1842 he was stabbed to death by Stand Watie in and outside a grocery store in Benton County, Arkansas. According to Watie, he was riding through Marysville, Arkansas when he stopped at English’s Grocery to have a drink. James Foreman came into the store with his uncle. Foreman had a whip wrapped around his hand. Foreman, who was out hunting him, according to Watie; walked into grocery and sat next to him at the bar. Foreman offered Watie a drink. Watie agreed to drink saying, “I understood the other day that you were going to kill me and that you are the man who killed my uncle.” Foreman responded with agitation, “Say yourself,” meaning if that is what you believe. Foreman then struck Watie with the whip and the men scuffled in the store until spilling out the front door. Foreman reached for a board on the ground and try to use it to strike Watie, but instead was met with a knife in the side from Watie. Foreman was out to assassinate him according to Watie, he feared for his life, and acted in self-defense.³³

Multiple witnesses testified Watie started the fight when he threw the whiskey in Foreman’s face. They also claimed Watie drew a pistol on Forman, some claiming he fired and missed; others claiming the pistol miss-

²⁷ Moulton, *The Papers of John Ross*, I, 718.

²⁸ Watie to *Arkansas Gazette*, July 1839.

²⁹ *Ibid*.

³⁰ *The Trial of Stand Watie*, 1, (Circuit Court of the County of Benton, Nov. 1842).

³¹ Watie to *Arkansas Gazette*, July 1939.

³² *The Trial of Stand Watie*, Extract from a Letter of John Ross, 11.

³³ *Ibid*, Speech of M.W. Arrington, Esq.

fired. Either way, Foreman had no bullet from any gun.³⁴ Watie rode off after the fight, and Foreman stumbled a hundred feet before collapsing and dying where he fell.

Ross was informed about the event by his brother, John G. Ross, who wrote of what he knew. The information given to Ross portrayed Watie as the instigator of the whole ordeal. Ross was determined to try Watie for the murder of Foreman. Ross learned that Watie would only agree to judgment if the trial was held in Benton County, Arkansas where the supposed crime occurred.³⁵ Ross calls the whole event an “unfortunate affair...”, and partially blames occurrence like these on the consumption of alcohol.³⁶ Watie knew his best chance at trial would be in Arkansas, where he had a good reputation with the citizens he often did business with. His popularity in the Cherokee nation was still very low. Even with low popularity, a minority of Cherokee still allied with Watie and he could still command some power and respect in his nation. Stand Watie was found not guilty by jury. The overall argument made by his defense was that Watie was in constant danger for his life since he did not agree to the convention of pardon after his family’s death. He was not considered protected by law and had a rightful fear of life when a known assassin of his uncles and a man deemed to be out to kill him, made contact with him.

Conflicts continued between the two sides in the following years. A rumor of Ross’s death spread through the nation during the election year of 1843. The rumors were unfounded, but multiple Ross men were attacked in the year by fellow Cherokees and one white man; Elijah Hicks, a friend of Ross, was one of the people attacked. The election continued as planned, and Ross was re-elected Principal Chief of the Cherokee nation by two thirds majority, receiving over eight hundred votes.³⁷

Ross wished to end hostilities between him and Watie. He wrote President Polk on April 11th, 1846, complaining that General Arbuckle was allowing Watie to maintain a force of “lawless” men who could commit acts of “blood” and “plunder” across the Cherokee Nation. He wrote the President again in June of that same year, requesting the federal government to create a commission to settle all disputes. He got what he desired, and the federal government arbitrated the dispute between Ross and Watie. Prominent leaders of the Cherokee nation met in Washington, D.C. They all signed and agreed to the Treaty of 1846. The treaty gave pardon to all crimes committed by both sides, guaranteed the Cherokee Nation land was for all Cherokee people, and paid damages to Watie and his family for the death of their loved ones. Both men agreed to the terms and even shook each other’s hands at the signing in Washington. This settlement eased the tensions in the Cherokee Nation. The 1850s were seen as a prosperous time. The amicable treatment of each other at the treaty signing suggested the two had some interest in the welfare of the Cherokee people, but also an interest of protecting themselves. The two were no longer in open warfare with each other, but trust was never reestablished.³⁸

Wilma Mankiller, Cherokee Chief in the late twentieth century, referred to the 1850s as a “golden era” for the nation. The Cherokee still had a divide, but it was not as prominent. Tensions flared up again, after the Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed, reigniting the slavery issue and creating popular sovereignty, allowing future states to choose if they would be a free-state or pro-slavery. The current slave population for the Cherokee in 1860 was 2500; only 2.3% of tribal citizens in the Indian Territory were slave holders. Many mixed-blood Cherokee slaveholders were affiliated with Southern Methodist churches and shared the same enthusiasm for state’s rights, or Indian nation’s rights from their perspective. Ross and Watie were both slaveholders, typical for men of their stature and wealth during the time. Many Cherokees were fearful of becoming part of the conflict between northern and southern states. Ross and Watie disagreed on many things, but they both understood the importance of keeping the Cherokee nation united against outside aggression. The Cherokee Nation was a separate entity that should rule itself without outside influence. Watie wrote his wife Sarah on September 22nd, 1859, while she was away in Texas. He shows empathy for many sick and dying Cherokee, he

³⁴ *Ibid*, 1-6.

³⁵ Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, 143-144.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 144.

³⁷ “Cherokee Indians,” *Niles’ National Register*, September 16, 1843, ebscohost.com.

³⁸ Gaines, *The Confederate Cherokee*, 6; Moulton, *The Papers of John Ross*, Vol. II, 284,301; Wilkinson, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 327-328.

also asks about the demeanor of Texans, wanting to know if they are “friendly” people or only interested in money and self. At this time, Watie was well aware of Southern sympathies for slavery.³⁹

In 1859 the Cherokee nation population was around twenty-two thousand, with four thousand males eligible to vote. John Ross was re-elected as Principal Chief that year.⁴⁰ Slavery and dissolution were large issues within the Cherokee nation, but the bigger divide still stemmed from past animosity over the Treaty of New Echota.⁴¹ John Ross sent out an address to the Cherokee nation on October 4th, 1860, urging the people to stay united and not let outside interference disrupt order within the nation. He urged reliance on the Union to maintain order and justice. At this time he believed that the Northern and Southern conflict would be resolved by the federal government. As Principal Chief, Ross had to maintain a relationship with pro-slave Arkansas that shared a border with his nation. He also had to maintain treaty policy with the federal government for the Cherokee Nation agreed to come under no other sovereign nation than the U.S. He consistently rode the line of neutrality between the two. He squashed rumors that the Cherokee would invade Arkansas if they seceded from the Union. He also expressed that the Cherokee people have no intentions of allowing abolitionism on their soil. He assured the Arkansas Governor and his people that attacking them would never be in the interest of his people, since Arkansas was a partner in commerce with the Cherokee. He also tells Governor Henry Massey Rector, of Arkansas, that the Cherokee have no animosity toward the people of Arkansas, but will abide by the treaties with the U.S., not to ally with any other nation. He writes Cyrus Harris, Chief of the Chickasaw, a neighboring tribe, to maintain neutrality, believing that the hostilities between the North and South would be resolved and would not lead to war; again urging to uphold the current treaties. He expressed this same attitude in multiple letters to other Cherokee and family members in the first few months of 1861.⁴²

The Southern states began reaching out to the Five Civilized Tribes, hoping for an alliance in the future conflicts to come. The Five Civilized Tribes, including the Cherokee, had a similar life style and economy with the Southern states they came from. Pro-Confederate agents were sent to the Cherokee nation to convince them to join the Southern states or lose slavery, their way of life. Ross was not anti-confederate, but he did not want outside agitators influencing his people. He contacted an Arkansas Judge, John B. Ogden, to remove all confederate agents from the Cherokee nation. He also urged his people not to fall victim to false reports of losing their property. A council meeting between the Five Civilized Tribes was called by the Creek nation, to determine how to respond to the North and South conflict. Again Ross urges neutrality believing the conflict will end soon without blood-shed. Ross’ main goal was to maintain friendly relations with both sides. His largest threat if war broke out would be from Arkansas to the east, who they did a large share of commerce with, as well as Texas to the south of the Five Civilized Tribes. Kansas to the north, was a new state and did not have as large a population near their border with the Cherokee. However, they did have to contend with Osage Indians in that same area who allied themselves with the Union. Pressure increased from both sides after Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumner on April 11th, 1861. Soon after Arkansas succeeded and joined the Confederacy on May 18th, 1861.⁴³

Ross sent delegates to a council meeting of the Five Civilized Tribes. He was looking to take advantage of the conflict in order to bolster Indian sovereignty. Creeks, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Seminoles were convinced to join the Confederacy leaving the Cherokee nation almost completely surrounded by confederate allies. Even after the other tribes joined the confederacy, many northern leaning Cherokees wanted to join pro-Union forces, or at least remain neutral.⁴⁴ Ross still agreed with neutrality in a proclamation written shortly after Arkansas joined the Confederacy; Ross also reaffirmed friendship with Arkansas, but maintained not to be brought into a dispute with them or their “Northern brethren.”⁴⁵

³⁹ Brad Agnew, “Our Doom as a Nation Is Sealed,” *Lincoln: UNP-Nebraska*, (2015): 64-67, ProQuest Ebook Central; Edward Everett Dale and Gaston Litton, *Cherokee Cavaliers* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1940), 57, 95-96; Michael F. Doran, “Negro Slaves of the Five Civilized Tribes,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 68, no. 3 (September 1978): 347, ebscohost.com.

⁴⁰ Perdue and Green, *The Cherokee Removal*, 1.

⁴¹ Gaines, *The Confederate Cherokee*, 8.

⁴² Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, II, 451,460, 462, 464,469.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 459, 466, 469.

⁴⁴ Gaines, *The Confederate Cherokee*, 7.

⁴⁵ Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, II, 469-471.

General Benjamin McCulloch was put in charge by the Confederate States to oversee Indian Territory in order to keep Union forces out and to maintain the alliance with the Confederate Indians. McCulloch writes Ross, urging him to let pro-Confederate Cherokees form a militia in order to repel any aggression from Northern troops. Ross writes back, “Your demand that those people of the nation who are in favor of joining the Confederacy be allowed to organize into military companies as a home guard for the purpose of defending themselves in case of invasion from the North is most respectfully declined.”⁴⁶ He reminds McCulloch of the Cherokees position of neutrality as well as their ability to defend themselves from any “foreign invasion.”⁴⁶ Ross also received pressure from Albert Pike, The Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Confederate States. Pike had successfully created treaties with the other Civilized Tribes of the Indian Territory and was pressuring Ross for a treaty with the Confederates. Ross again denies an alliance, and tells Pike the Cherokee will maintain their treaty with the U.S.⁴⁷

Watie was pro-Confederate, he shared many friendships and business links with the people of Confederate Arkansas. Ross’s indecisiveness left Watie an opportunity to push the Cherokee towards the Confederacy. Watie was also in contact with Confederate agents, urging him to create a pro-Confederate Cherokee company. The agents agreed to supply the company arms and support from Arkansas Confederate troops. Watie stepped over the Principal-Chief Ross and created the 1st Cherokee Mounted Rifles company, made up of Confederate Cherokee.⁴⁸ Union troops left their Indian Territory post shortly after the Civil War began. Maintaining control of Indian Territory was not of major importance for the Union as large battles raged farther east. Confederate victories at Bull Run, and Wilson Creek, Missouri, where a contingent of Cherokee troops fought with McCulloch, made many Cherokee question their position of neutrality.⁴⁹ Watie’s company became the main militia of the Cherokee people during this time. Ross received a letter from fellow Cherokee and ally, John Drew, of Watie’s troops causing a commotion; trying to persuade other Cherokees of joining him and the Confederacy. Ross preached to Drew to impress “. . . harmony and good feeling and avoiding every cause of dissension.”⁵⁰ With the Confederate victories in the east, the other Civilized Tribes joining the South, and Watie roaming the territory with his company of troops, Cherokee enthusiasm for the Confederate States was at an all-time high. Even if he could not maintain neutrality, Ross wanted to maintain the unity of the Cherokee nation; Watie shared the same attitude of unity.

John Ross called a Great Cherokee Council which was held in the town square of Tahlequah, the Cherokee capital, on August 21st, 1861. Some four thousand Cherokee males convened there to discuss what the nation should do about joining a side in the Civil War. Stand Watie was also present at the council with fifty-six of his Confederate Cherokee troops. The majority of the men who spoke supported joining the Confederacy. Watie and his men were planning on declaring the Cherokee Nation as allies to the Confederate States if Ross would not make the call himself, essentially forcing Ross and his allies out of power within the nation.⁵¹ Ross spoke of Arkansas joining the Confederacy, stating that their interest was intertwined with the Cherokees, and standing alone was not desirable.⁵² Ross recommended an alliance with the Confederacy and all present agreed. At the time Ross saw this as the best option to uphold Cherokee unity.⁵³

Watie would not gain complete control of the Cherokee Nation, but the decision to join the Confederacy would reassure his current stance, as well as give true legitimacy to his company of troops. After the council Ross wrote to the Creek Nation, “. . . with one voice we [Cherokee Nation] have proclaimed in favor of forming an alliance with the Confederate States. . . and shall maintain the Brotherhood of the Indian Nations.” He also wrote General McCulloch, telling him of the alliance and the immediate formation of another military company of Cherokee Troops to be commanded by his friend and ally, John Drew.⁵⁴

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 474-475.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 476.

⁴⁸ Gaines, *The Confederate Cherokee*, 8.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁰ Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, II, 477.

⁵¹ Gaines, *The Confederate Cherokee*, 11-13.

⁵² Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, 481.

⁵³ Gaines, *The Confederate Cherokee*, 12-13.

⁵⁴ Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, 482-483.

Drew's new company was called the 1st Cherokee Mounted Rifles, same as Watie's, and both would refer to themselves as the 1st, other Confederate leaders would refer to the companies as either Watie's company or Drew's company to avoid confusion. Ross was able to maintain large control of his nation with his agreement to join the Confederacy; the company under Drew was made up pro-Ross Cherokees, creating a counter-balance to Watie's company.⁵⁵

With the new alliance the Cherokee people sought a treaty with the Confederate States of America. Ross was in contact with Pike on the terms to be signed, but Watie's friends were quite upset with Ross dictating terms and begged Watie to meet with Pike himself. Pike responded by calling a meeting at Tahlequah on September 25th, 1861; both Watie and Drew attended. Watie was in contact with the Confederate agents, but with Ross commanding more of a majority of the Cherokee they referred to him on treaty matters.⁵⁶

On October 7, 1861 John Ross signed the Confederate treaty with the Cherokees and other acting members of the Cherokee Nation. The treaty guaranteed no other state of territory would pass laws for the government of the Cherokee nation. It brought the Cherokee nation under the protection of the Confederate States of America, and guaranteed protection from invasion from white or Indian intruders. It required the Cherokee to raise ten companies of mounted men to protect the nation, guaranteeing the companies would not be used outside the borders of Indian Territory. The Confederate States also agreed to annual annuity payments. These were the same payments the federal government agreed to but discontinued at the start of the war.⁵⁷ The treaty had favorable terms for the Cherokee, guaranteeing sovereignty, protection, and support from the Confederate States. With no federal troops protecting Indian Territory and discontinuation of annuity payments, allying with the Union had little incentive. In Ross' annual message to the Cherokee, he wrote "...as to the purpose of the war waged against the Confederate States clearly pointed out the path of interest."⁵⁸ The "purpose" as the Cherokee saw it, was to diminish rights and abolish slavery. He continued, "...self-preservation fully justifies them in the course..."⁵⁹ Ross was fully for the alliance with the Confederates.

Col. Douglas H. Cooper was put in command of Indian Territory Troops. Watie referred to his command at military engagements. Watie and his troops were very active throughout the Civil War, taking part in over a dozen battles or skirmishes. He was a loyal ally to the Confederacy, any Indian with pro-Union or neutral leanings Watie considered a traitor to the cause. He defended his nephew, Charles Weber, in the slaying of a Pro-Ross Indian, Chunistootie. Watie claims Chunistootie was hostile to the Southern people and any judgement on his nephew should be postponed till after the war.⁶⁰ Murder and destruction of property were prevalent through the Indian Territory during the time. Most of these crimes went unpunished due to the disorder of the war. Watie also notes Ross' disdain for the killing of Chunistootie. He sarcastically writes Col. Cooper on the subject: "This is called a barbarous crime and shocks the sensitive nerves of Col. Drew, Mr. Ross and others, who of course have never participated in the shedding of innocent blood."⁶¹ Watie's perception of Ross is still the "assassin chief" who orchestrated the murder of his family members decades earlier. Ross was most adamant on not being involved in the conspiracy till the day he died.

The Cherokee unity for the Confederacy did not last long, due to increased pressure from pro Union Cherokees. The majority of full blood Cherokees did not own slaves, believed in upholding the old way of life, and viewed the Confederacy to be opposed to Indian customs.⁶² This conservative group was opposed to taking up the customs of the Whites.⁶³ A similar group of pro-Union Creeks formed and broke off from the Confederate allied Creek Nation. This group was led by Chief Opothleyahola of the Creek. He tried to move his people north to the Union friendly Kansas. Col. Cooper and the Confederate Indians, including the

⁵⁵ Gaines, *The Confederate Cherokee*, 13-15.

⁵⁶ Dale and Litton, *Cherokee Cavaliers*, 108-109; Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, 488-489; Gaines, *The Confederate Cherokee*, 14.

⁵⁷ Treaty with the Cherokees, Cherokee Nation, C.S.A., Oct. 7, 1861, The Statutes at Large of the Provisional Government of the Confederate States of America, 394-400.

⁵⁸ Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, Vol. II, 493.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 494.

⁶⁰ Dale and Litton, *Cherokee Cavaliers*, 113.

⁶¹ *Ibid*.

⁶² *Ibid*, xix.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 57.

Cherokee Regiments, were tasked with bringing these pro Union Creeks to heel. During their pursuit, four of John Drew's regiments of Cherokee actually left their company and joined Opothleyahola's group. Drew wrote Ross, telling him some of his Cherokee fought against the Confederacy at the battle of Bird Creek. Drew was also worried that these actions could lead to the Confederacy arresting Ross.⁶⁴ Even in wartime Ross preached of caution to all involved, possibly trying to salvage his reputation with the Confederates.⁶⁵

As tensions grew between Union and Confederate Cherokees, they also grew between Ross and Watie. Ross wrote Agent Pike, asking him to "restrain" Watie and his regiment from "trampling on the rights of peaceable and unoffending citizens."⁶⁶ Ross also asks Pike to station Drew's regiment in the Cherokee Nation to protect citizens from federal troops, which Ross believes will be entering the territory soon. Pike agrees to the request. In early 1862 Ross writes multiple letters to Pike and Confederate President Jefferson Davis, asking for additional troops and supplies to defend his nation. Due to the major battles and conflicts in the East, the Confederates are unable to give the Cherokee sufficient troops or supplies. Feeling unsupported and with many Cherokee going to the other side, Ross official changed his allegiance to the Union. His communications with Confederate agents ceases and he begins writing letters to President Lincoln in mid-1862.⁶⁷

Ross changed his mind and put his support for the Union. In 1862 he was re-elected Principal-Chief by pro-Union Cherokees. Watie was elected Principal-Chief by the pro-Confederate Cherokees. Both only recognized by their aligned governments. Ross fled east to Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. where he spent the remainder of the war. Watie continued his campaign in Indian Territory, battling and ambushing Union troops and pro-Union citizens. Watie had sent his family south to Texas to keep them out of harm's way during the war. He consistently wrote his wife Sarah on events taking place in Indian Territory. In a letter Watie received from Sarah, she tells Watie that she is sorry to hear their sons, Charles and Saladin had killed a prisoner. She wished they would have more mercy and told Watie if he ever caught William Ross, John's son who was still in Indian Territory, that he should show him mercy that would tell Ross he is not afraid of his influence.⁶⁸ Watie took the message from his wife to heart, and spared the life of one of Ross's children, also named John, after capturing him in Indian Territory. Watie contributes his mercy directly to the letter his wife sent him months earlier.⁶⁹ In a letter, Watie wrote to his wife in June of 1864, he speaks of being accused of having a Colonel killed and laments the accusation and claims, "...it still hurts my feelings. I am not a murderer."⁷⁰ Watie is a hardened man, who had survived multiple assassinations and fought on many civil war battlefields, but his feelings for his family and friends are shown in his letters to his wife. He often speaks of the love he has for his friends and family, and of trying to always do what is best; "If I commit an error I do it without bad intention."⁷¹

With the Confederates losing the war, Watie's position as chief was not recognized by the federal government. The federal government considered Ross Principal-Chief for the entire war. John Ross had to defend his original position of joining the Confederacy. He claimed it was the only option at the time to save his nation.⁷² Even though he switched allegiance, the United States did not accept his excuse. The U.S. used the Cherokee alliance with the confederates to strip them of more rights, annuities due, and land. John Ross died shortly after the war in 1866; Stand Watie died not long after in 1871.

Both men were leaders of the Cherokee. The decisions they made shaped the Cherokee Nation. Ross was an ally to the conservative Cherokee and he did his best to maintain peace and stability for his people. Watie was ally to his family and other mixed-blood Cherokee; he signed away the Cherokee ancestral land and maintained that it was what he thought was best for his people. These men disagreed with each other's policies, the allies of these men fought and killed one another, yet they both wanted the Cherokee people to maintain unity, but also, they wanted to limit the power of one another. Their struggle went back and forth; neither one coming out on top. Watie considered Ross an "assassin" and a "usurper;" Ross considered Watie a "criminal"

⁶⁴ Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, John Drew to John Ross, Dec. 16, 1861, 507.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 506.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, John Ross to Albert Pike, Feb. 25, 1862, 509.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 510-518.

⁶⁸ Dale and Litton, *Cherokee Cavaliers*, 128-129.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 156-157

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 230.

out for “blood” and “plunder.” Though they differed in politics, thoughts, and the actions they took, Ross and Watie both wanted what they thought was best for their people and therefore were instrumental in the shaping of their people and the Cherokee Nation.

“The Crusade Against the Whisker” and the Birth of the Modern Radical Beard

Logan Daugherty

On December 5, 1894 a New Yorker named William Wahl was awarded \$200 by a jury of his peers in a suit against his cousin Herman Wahl. William claimed that Herman tore out his beard by the roots on one side of his face. Rendered unable to regrow his beard, William wore only a mustache. The prosecuting attorney, Max Altmeyer argued that his client had “suffered great damage to his reputation,” because he was “compelled to go whiskerless.” William claimed that his “magnificent whiskers” gave him an edge in business, but he has since “been reduced to the level of ordinary mortals.” He found that the prestige he had once enjoyed as a bill collector for a brewery was torn from him with his beard. The jury was sympathetic to William’s plea and awarded him \$200. This jury certainly understood the importance and value of a beard to the man who wears it. In nineteenth-century America, long flowing beards were markers of masculinity. From stereotypical forty-niners to Civil War generals, nineteenth-century America is remembered as a wilder and hairier time. Abraham Lincoln, perhaps the most iconic nineteenth-century American, famously grew his beard in order to appeal to voters. But what happened to this hirsute hierarchy?¹

What William Wahl could not have known was that his case may not have been so successful only a few years later. Shortly after this 1894 dispute, the popularity of beards plummeted. The appeal to masculine dominance that Lincoln used to help his election campaign was no longer effective. In fact, in many cases politicians led the charge against the primacy of the beard. In what may be one of the most dramatic historical shifts in facial hair styles, beards became an oddity increasingly associated with slobs and political radicals. This shift in style was a product of the political climate of 1890’s America. Beards are often indicators of social station and affiliation. In the case of William Wahl, his beard earned him a measure of respect in his career. However, Wahl stood at the end of an era. After the 1890s, the American public began to see beards as uncivilized displays of political radicalism.

This paper seeks to investigate the shift in style in the last decade of the nineteenth century, when it again became customary for men to shave their beards. In order to address this topic, the historiographies of facial hair, masculinity, and radical politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the United States demand attention. The convergence of these three areas of study will provide the basis for this examination into this shift in style, and the social meanings that may have been placed on beards and beardlessness during this period in American history.

The leading beard historian, and author of a good portion of the scholarship on the history of beards, Christopher Oldstone-Moore, claims that facial hair, unlike head hair styles, do not represent passing fashions, but rather “seismic shifts dictated by deeper social forces.” If “seismic shifts” underlay all shifts in facial hair style, this research attempts to identify the “deeper social forces” behind the American shift at the end of the nineteenth century. Oldstone-Moore, as well as other scholars, point to the association of beards with radical left-wing politics in the twentieth century, but they refrain from describing the origins the “leftist hair” in detail.

¹ “For His Whiskers, \$200—A Jury’s Practical Sympathy with William Wahl,” *New York Times*, December 6, 1894; Christopher Oldstone-Moore, *Of Beards and Men: the revealing history of facial hair*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 175-178.

Conceptions of masculinity play an important role in defining the social meanings of beards.²

The study of masculinity in nineteenth-century America often focuses on the moral reforms taking place in the period. The shift in moral attitudes was influenced by, and coevolved with, a rising religiosity that is often termed “The Second Great Awakening”. Moral restraint, rather than excess, came to define manhood in this period.³ Many scholarly writings on the subject of masculinity more broadly do not discuss facial hair styles—unless of course that is the theme of the entire work—despite the fact that a beard is a very dramatic outward symbol of masculinity.⁴ This research seeks to assert that shifts in facial hair styles can be important indicators of shifts in societal views of abstract ideas such as masculinity. Also, relatively little scholarly work has been produced on how ideas of masculinity changed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. However, masculine codes of the industrial age vary dramatically from those of the turn of the century. The masculine codes of this era, however, cannot be fully understood without taking into account the political environment in which they existed.

This essay focuses on radical American politics in the era, which is defined by The Peoples’ Party, though other radical groups such as the IWW or Industrial Workers of the World were active in this period as well. Also known as the Populist Party or Populism, The Peoples’ Party elected William A. Peffer of Kansas to the United States Senate in 1890. In fact, scholarship regarding the People’s Party often hails Peffer as the father of the movement, especially in his home state of Kansas.⁵ In the 1960s, post-revisionists such as Norman Pollack broke with the revisionist school of the 1950s, which believed Populism to be a conservative movement aimed at recapturing Jeffersonian-Democracy. Post-revisionists point to the radical left-wing ideas of the party as evidence that they were in fact a forward-looking socialistic movement.⁶ Despite their differences on the directions of populism, historians agree that populism was a radical and short-lived political movement. Little scholarly work has been done on how Populism, and its iconic leader William Peffer, shaped perceptions of radical politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The shift in popular facial hair style in the late nineteenth century demonstrates larger political attitudes of the time. Third-party radicalism was so disdained by mainstream politics that it drove the facial hair styles of the entire nation, and the legacy of bearded radical leftists endures today.⁷ Men advancing radically left-wing agendas or even countercultural movements, such as Che Guevara or John Lennon, often sported beards to demonstrate their nonconformity throughout the twentieth century. The idea of the radical leftist beard of the twentieth-century has only begun to show signs of weakening in the most recent decades. The era of the radical beard defined the social meaning of facial hair for decades, and the legacies can still be seen today. Understanding the cause of this shift leads to a better understanding of its development. The push to conform and to distance oneself from radicalism by shaving has outlasted the knowledge of its origins. However, the goal remains important, and compels millions of men to shave everyday rather than appear radicalized. The refusal to shave, on the other hand, is used a marker of nonconformity and rebelliousness. This essay will first demonstrate the importance of beards to masculine ideals just before the proliferation of shaving that occurred in the 1890’s. Then, it will discuss the flashpoint that saw beards disgraced in a matter of a few years. Finally, the research will attempt to identify a cause for this dramatic shift in the radical American political environment of 1890’s.

² *Of Beards and Men*, as well as “The Beard Movement in Victorian Britain.” *Victorian Studies*, 48, no. 1 (2005): 7-34. And, “Mustaches and Masculine Codes in Early Twentieth-Century America.” *Journal of Social History*, 45, no. 1 (2011): 47, are excellent sources essential to this research by Oldstone-Moore; Oldstone-Moore, *Of Beards and Men*, 1, 235-259.

³ Richard Stott, *Jolly fellows: Male Milieus in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

⁴ Patricia Kelleher, “Class and Catholic Irish Masculinity in Antebellum America: Young Men on the Make in Chicago,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 28, no. 4 (2009): 7-42. Discusses Irish masculinity in the period without mentioning facial hair styles.

⁵ D. Scott Barton, “Party Switching and Kansas Populism,” *The Historian* 52, no. 3 (1990): 453-467.

⁶ Norman Pollack, *The Populist Mind* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1967): vii-ix.

⁷ Oldstone-Moore, *Of Beards and Men*, 235-259. Chapter titled “Hair on the Left”

The Popularity of the Masculine “Facial Ornament” and the Right to be Bearded

The history of hair, and facial hair more specifically, is often tied to social changes and/or conflicts in the societies that bore these styles. One misconception that many works in the field address is that the history of shaving is dictated by razor technology. In fact, daily shaving has been occurring for millennia, since the conquests of the beardless Macedonian commander Alexander the Great. Rapid advances in metallurgic technology, likewise, have not been tied to increases in the frequency of shaving. The 1847 invention of the hoe-type razor by William Henson, for example, improved on the straight razor model, yet failed to prevent the increase in the popularity of beards in the 1840s and '50s. Oldstone-Moore contends that there have been four major beard movements in Western civilization since the proliferation of shaving by Alexander the Great.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the fourth of these movements made it the social norm for men in America to wear beards. The beard movement of the industrial age reached all classes of American society, and enjoyed a ubiquity, free of divisive political associations. Instead, beards were universally associated with masculinity and strength. This wider beard movement began in earnest, in the 1840s and continued into the 1890s. The origins of this industrial beard movement can be traced to the proliferation of beards among romantic thinkers in the first few decades of the nineteenth-century, who sought a deeper connection to nature and medieval writers.⁸

Understanding the Romantic origin of the Industrial Beard is crucial to understanding the social meanings of the ubiquitous mid-nineteenth-century beard. Romantic, and later transcendentalist, artists and thinkers allowed their beards to grow as an outward symbol of the power of nature, and the natural origin of man. Romantic philosophy held that man should seek a harmonious and reverent relationship with the natural world around him. Since many men naturally grow beards, shaving seemed antithetical to the romantic concept of nature as an ideal. Thus, Romantics favored allowing nature to take its course rather than the slavish maintenance of regular shaving. As result, romantic artists and writers, such as Victor Hugo and Herman Melville, grew flowing full beards. Romantics also wished to imitate both classical Greek and Roman and medieval writers who also customarily wore beards. In the romantic view of the world, modern society had become corrupt and had lost the imagination and connection to nature of earlier centuries. For these men, growing a beard was a way to reconnect with nature and to emulate the classical and medieval writers whom they admired. As romantic conceptualizations of nature and civilization spread through the United States, so did their custom of wearing full beards.⁹

Transcendentalists, who drew inspiration from romantic thought, often grew beards. Writers such as Walt Whitman and Henry David Thoreau sported beards to demonstrate their reverence for the natural. In fact, phrenology, a transcendental medical philosophy, encouraged beard growth, and viewed shaving as unnatural and the cause of shorter life spans.¹⁰ These philosophies seized on the idea that men could demonstrate their natural power and potency with a beard by harkening back to virile classical and medieval figures. As the hairy faces of these romantic and transcendentalist authors became easily recognizable by the American public, the facial hair styles they wore gained popularity. This explosion of beardedness coevolved with changing definitions of masculinity in America at this time. Ideas of asserting natural masculinity, popularized by romantic and transcendental thinkers, meshed well with the moral reforms of the era.

In the early decades of the nineteenth-century the United States experienced the Second Great Awakening. With church attendance on the rise, new moral reforms—namely the temperance movement—

⁸ Bill Severn, *The long and short of it; five thousand years of fun and fury over hair* (New York: McKay, 1971) and Allan Peterkin, *One thousand mustaches: a cultural history of the Mo* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2012) establish this very well; Oldstone-Moore, *Of Beards and Men*, 2; Christopher Oldstone-Moore, “The Beard Movement in Victorian Britain” *Victorian Studies*, 48, no. 1 (2005): 9,3,147.

⁹ Charles Colbert. “Razors and Brains: Asher B. Durand and the Paradigm of Nature.” *Studies in American Renaissance* (1992): 270; Christopher Oldstone-Moore, *Of Beards and Men*, 151-173.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 262.

preached the importance of restraint. The temperance movement and religious revival led to a change in the way that society viewed what it meant to be a man. Masculinity in earlier periods in American history had been tied to violence, heavy drinking, and gambling. Fighting was exceedingly common, and taverns and saloons were the center of male social life. In the mid-nineteenth century, as a result of the changes in American religious views, a “moral revolution” took place. Men in this new period of masculinity were expected to be hardworking and reserved.¹¹ However, changing ideas of masculinity in the nineteenth century did not change the importance of manliness as such. Men were expected to be morally conscious, yes, but also unquestionably masculine. In this time of incredible gender inequality, asserting one’s masculinity meant asserting one’s power. Marginalized men, in fact, particularly took advantage of this power relationship to assert their dominance over women.¹² Thus, asserting masculinity was incredibly important to men who were members of lower social classes or ethnic minorities. The masculine symbol of a beard became particularly important for these men—bereft of significant political power—in the domestic sphere. As a result, masculine symbols emerged as powerful political tools, and one of the most obvious outward symbols of masculinity was facial hair. This association between masculinity and the legitimacy of the rule is evident in the incredible popularity of beards among elected political officials in the later decades of the nineteenth-century.

By the 1880s, beards were already a mainstay among politicians, as well as the general public. An article in the May 27, 1888 issue of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* titled “Whiskers in History—A Facial Ornament Now Popular Once Ridiculed” affirms the primacy of the beard in this period, while seeking to trace the historical legacy of the beard movement. The article claims that the nation’s founding fathers had “faces so clean that their every thought might be read,” and that beards were “unknown to all the officers of the revolutionary army.” The article presents this as the prevailing trend until, suddenly, American men “threw away their razors and turned their faces out to nature for covering.” It goes on to discuss one of the first judges to take the bench with such an “appendage of hair.” There was much uproar about this “unbecoming” choice of style. Many contemporaries believed there would be “no managing a jury.”¹³ The idea that a bearded judge could not control a jury would have been ridiculous in William Wahl’s time. By the time the Wahl case was tried in 1894, bearded judges were likely commonplace. Certainly, a jury that deemed the loss of beard worthy of \$200 would not find a beard “unbecoming” of a judge. The article concludes by arguing that the status of facial hair was divorced from politically meaning, and that no one could determine any one’s political leanings “from the sign he carries on his face.” In fact, “the majority of voters” the article judges “cultivate[d] the beard in some form.”

This article demonstrates that by the end of the 1880s, the choice to grow a beard was no longer a cultural or political statement like it had been in the early days of the romantic beard. Beards had taken root in most of American society, and had become symbols of masculinity rather than ideology or political affiliation. As a result, an American beard culture had developed that prized beardedness, and like romantic artists before them, looked back to historical examples of bearded societies.

A *New York Times* editorial that appeared on October 17, 1890 titled “Beard Culture: Tribulations through which the Bare-Faced Man does not Pass” describes this bearded era. The author tells of his decision to grow a beard, and thus enter the world of beard culture. Though he starts by claiming that shaving is “incontestably the most confirmed of all masculine habits,” and has “given rise to industry,” the author goes on to claim that “denuding his face of its natural covering” was a “tedious and painful sacrifice.” The indictment of regular shaving does not stop there. The author claims the practice “gives pleasure to no one, not even [oneself,]” and suggests that the “fifteen minutes of scraping himself before a mirror” should be “devoted to music or literature” rather than being “productive only of a smooth face.” This eloquent condemnation of shaving demonstrates the importance of a wider beard culture for the author of the editorial. He also associates

¹¹ Stott, *Jolly Fellows*, 282-285.

¹² Kelleher, “Class and Catholic Irish Masculinity,” 7-42.

¹³ “Whiskers in History,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 27, 1888.

beards with learning and saved time, rather than carelessness and a lack of hygiene. Though he did shave after some time, the author argues that he lost something other than his beard, namely a “proudness of heart” that caused him “to look down upon the barber.”¹⁴ This beard culture framed against shaving and barbers, is the result of a peak in the popularity in beards that elevated beards to near mythical heights. Beards were seen not only as masculine displays, but a near sacred right of every individual.

The idea that the right to grow a beard was a human right would most likely have appealed to William Wahl, or at least his attorney, when seeking compensation for his beard. Just months before the Wahl case, an article titled “Beards, Hair, and Human Rights” appeared in the *New York Times*, the same paper that covered the case, espousing just that. The article explains that “the ancient right of man to have as much hair as nature would let him” is only voidable by the disapproval of the man’s wife.¹⁵ This represents an interesting gendered view of a right, in a time when women were denied many rights that men enjoyed. The article even quotes Shakespeare claiming that the inclusion of the phrase “bearded pard” demonstrated the playwright’s approval of bearded men.¹⁶ The idea of the human right to grow a beard is an outgrowth of the intense popularity of facial hair in the years leading up to the publication of this article and the Wahl case in 1894 that coopted language America’s of founding principles of human rights. Shortly after this point, however, beards quickly fell out of favor in American society, and facial hair as a human right would be challenged.

“Long Beard” Peffer and his Populists

Kansas was the center of radical American politics in the 1890s. As a center of power for the eras most successful third party, the Peoples’ Party, Kansas became a hotbed for left-wing radicalism. The Peoples’ Party, or the Populists as they were more commonly known, found their political base in the multitude of indebted farmers of the West and South. The collapse of the agricultural boom of the post-Civil War era in the late 1880s angered and impoverished farmers across the states such as Kansas. The agrarian platform of the Populists appealed to these farmers who advocated for monetary reform, and collective ownership of railroads and some land. One of the biggest successes of the Kansas Populists came in the elections of 1890. Kansas elected the first Populist Senator, William Peffer, as well as four Representatives, and challenged the traditional primacy of the Republican Party in the state. More Populists victories came in 1892, in the Federal and State governments.¹⁷ The press of the time viewed this alliance as a radical example of party-switching. A 1891 *Chicago Daily Tribune* article, “Kansas—Craziest of Alliances” claimed that 1890 election of Peffer was a “greater victory than was ever achieved by a new party in any state.” The article goes on to question the wisdom of electing “obscure men of no known fitness for political life,” to the United States Congress. In fact, popular opinion in states without major Populist followings was certainly anti-Populist. As a result, Kansas became known for its “fanatic” and “crazy” politics in the industrial North.¹⁸

However, Kansas was not known only for its radical third-party politics. It seems that the men of Kansas also enjoyed the reputation of being bearded. A 1910 *Chicago Daily Tribune* article describes the end of this phenomenon. Titled, “Kansas is Shaving” the article reports that “there is going on a quiet but determined crusade against whiskers” in Kansas. Kansas, the article claims, was known as a “nursery of whiskers,” and “impression prevail[ed] over the civilized world that Kansas beats the Boers for beards.” Interestingly, the article argues that Kansas did not deserve this reputation, because whiskers were “less conspicuous in Kansas

¹⁴ “Beard Culture: Tribulations through which the Bare-Faced Man does not Pass,” *New York Times*, October 17, 1890.

¹⁵ A.D. Harvey, “Men’s Beards and Women’s Backsides,” *The Historian* Winter (2009): 20-24. Harvey’s article provides an interesting look at how women, and women’s styles, are related to the development of facial hair style.

¹⁶ “Beards, Hair, and Human Rights,” *New York Times*, August 25, 1894.

¹⁷ Barton, “Party Switching,” 453-461

¹⁸ “Kansas—Craziest of Alliances,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 6, 1891.

than in other states.” “A traveler in Missouri,” may have seen “more alfalfa on men’s faces in a day than he will see in Kansas in a week,” and there may have been “more whiskers in a county of Indiana” than “in all of Kansas.” Yet despite the fact that Kansans did not deserve this reputation, the state was “held up to ridicule the year round as being the country where men run to whiskers.” In 1910, beards had already fallen out of fashion, and this article argues that the bearded reputation of Kansas was “bad for people,” and indicated “poverty..., a contempt for bath tubs..., carelessness..., slovenliness, and other disagreeable things.” The article does provide a reason for the idea of a bearded Kansas in the minds of many Americans. “Insurgency in Kansas” it claims, was “no mere matter of politics.” Suggesting that Kansas was not only politically radical, but also radical in its facial hair styles. “Populism flaunted whiskers,” reports the article, suggesting that Kansas’s reputation was a result of the beards “flaunted” by Populist politicians. Furthermore, the article does not shy away from claiming that the “crusade against the whisker is a patriotic movement,” and even closes with the statement: “Let plutocracy beware a democracy that shaves.”¹⁹ Evidently, Kansas was associated with beards because of its Populist Party politicians who chose to grow long flowing beards. But what caused this association between beards and Populists on the eve of the so-called crusade against the whisker?

The most prominent of Kansas Populists in the 1890s was William Pepper. Pepper was born in 1831, in rural Pennsylvania, and became an advocate of temperance and abolition as a youth. Eventually, in 1870, he settled in Kansas and worked as an editor and lawyer.²⁰ In 1881 Pepper became the editor of *Kansas Farmer*—the most widely read publication specifically for farmers—which was eventually named the official paper of the Farmers’ Alliance in Kansas. In March 1890, the Farmers’ Alliance joined with the Knights of Labor in order to create the People’s Party. The party was founded in order to address the issues of the laboring classes of society, and advocated collective ownership of transportation and banks as a means of achieving a truer democracy. Pepper was elected to the US Senate in 1890, and became the first Populist senator.²¹ Pepper’s importance to the formation of the Populist movement is well known. After his election, Pepper quickly became one of the most famous senators, and was the subject of numerous articles, cartoons, and interviews. He was so heavily associated with the third party movement that before the term “populism” was adopted in late 1891, it was more commonly referred to as “Pefferism.” Populist politicians were in turn known as “Pefferites” or Peffercrats.” Once “Populist” saw mainstream use, “Pefferism” came to mean outcries against poor social and economic conditions, and was used as such for a number of years after the incorporation of the Populists into the Democratic Party.²² “Pefferism,” after its divorce from Populism more broadly, could be seen as a catch all for radical leftist thought. However, Pepper became notorious for more than just revolutionary politics.

Other than the shock of a successful third party in a traditionally two-party system, Pepper quickly became famous for his beard. Pepper’s whiskers reached to his waist, and were the focus of much attention from the American press. Dr. Peter Argersinger, one of Pepper’s most influential biographers argues in his *Populism and politics: William Alfred Pepper and the People’s Party* that Pepper’s appearance lent itself naturally to caricature, and became a more consistent symbol for the People’s Party than the donkey or the elephant for Democrats or Republicans respectively. Moreover, Argersinger claims that Pepper’s nickname of “Whiskers” was an “appellation so compelling that Pepper is known even to historians solely as the possessor of his beard.”²³ Political cartoons were exceedingly popular in this time, and were utilized by both supporters and opponents of the People’s Party.²⁴ Pepper was a favorite of the two leading political magazines of the time, *Puck* and *The Judge*.

¹⁹ “Kansas is Shaving,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 14, 1910.

²⁰Peter H. Argersinger, *Populism and politics: William Alfred Pepper and the People’s Party* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 2014), 1-2.

²¹Barton, “Party Switching,” 456-458.

²² Argersinger, *Populism and politics*, 104-105.

²³ *Ibid.*, 105.

²⁴ Worth Robert Miller, *Populist Cartoons: An Illustrated History of the Third-Party Movement of the 1890’s* (Kirksville, Missouri: Truman State University Press, 2011) is a great resource for People’s Party Political Cartoons.

These magazines were controlled by Democrats and Republicans respectively, and though they could agree on little else, both fiercely opposed the Populists. In fact, Peffer appears in these magazines over 60 times during his term in the senate and is more often than not depicted with a “grossly exaggerated beard.”²⁵ Mention of Peffer’s name in the press is almost always accompanied with mention of his beard. “Peffer of the long beard,” “Long Beard Peffer,” and “Peffer Longbeard” were monikers for the senator often used in the press.²⁶ The September 24, 1893 *Los Angeles Times* article discussed in the last section concerning beards of the US senate focuses mainly on the “well-bearded face” of Peffer. The article argues that Peffer had “the longest whiskers in the senate,” and that they gave “a sort dignity to his features.”²⁷ Nor was Peffer unaware of these depictions, in reference to a bible verse in which King David told his men to “tarry at Jericho...until their beards had grown long,” Peffer claimed on the senate floor that “if the newspaper and magazine caricatures are to be taken in evidence, I have been at Jericho some time.”²⁸

In fact, in an attempt to win compensation for his client’s beard, William Wahl’s attorney, Max Altmeyer, compared Wahl to “the great Senator Peffer.” “Who of us all would ever have heard of the distinguished Kansas statesmen, Senator Peffer but for his whiskers?” Altmeyer asked the jury. “Would you? Would I? No, gentlemen, we would not.” Altmeyer argued it was Peffer’s “fine growth of whiskers” that made him a “national figure.” Peffer’s pictures were “published throughout the length and breadth of the land” Altmeyer claimed, because he had “the finest beard in either house of Congress.”²⁹ If William Wahl was awarded \$200 for his beard because it gave him prestige in the same manner as William Peffer, then what happened to the national fascination with beards that gave these men notoriety?

With the upcoming presidential election of 1896, some Populists favored a fusion ticket with the Democrats.³⁰ A young smooth-faced Democratic congressman from Nebraska named William Jennings Bryant came out in support of free silver. One of the planks of the 1892 People’s Party platforms (known as the Omaha Platform and held up as the quintessential manifesto of Populism) was the free and unlimited coinage of silver. Silver had been legal US currency until it was demonetized in 1873, causing severe deflation. The People’s Party wanted a return to silver with the previous ratio of sixteen ounces of silver to every ounce of gold. This plank of the Omaha Platform appealed especially to poor indebted farmers, the backbone of the People’s Party, who saw the values of their debts increase with deflation. This caused a split in the People’s Party because some Populists were willing to join the Democrats if it meant the promise of silver, while some “true populists” wished to implement the entirety of the Omaha Platform.³¹ Peffer claims that “with the advent of the silver question, the leading ideas of the Populist creed were obscured by the silver glare, and they were allowed to drop out of sight.”³² Peffer was an outspoken opponent of the fusion ticket claiming a “true Populist” would hold to the other principles of the People’s Party such as government ownership of railroads and a graduated income tax not just currency reform. “Principle before policy,” avowed Peffer believing the “poisonous political drug” of fusion would spell an end for an independent People’s Party and its radical left-wing platform. When it was time to set the date for the People’s Party National Convention, the pro-fusion populists favored a convention after the Democratic National Convention, in order to support the Democratic nominee. Even though Peffer claimed 75% of Populists favored an early convention, the Populists chose to hold their convention after the Democratic convention. The Populists nominated Bryan, leaving Peffer with few political

²⁵ Roger A. Fischer, “Rustic Rasputin: William A. Peffer in Color Cartoon Art, 1891-1899,” *Kansas History* 11, no. 4 (1988): 222-239.

²⁶ “Political Gleanings and Gossip,” *New York Times*, November 5, 1894; “Senator Long Beard Peffer’s Plea for a Re-election,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 9, 1896; “Kansas—Craziest of Alliances”

²⁷ “Senatorial Silver: Not Dollars, but in Torsos of Statesmen,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1893.

²⁸ William A. Peffer, *Populism, Its Rise and Fall*, ed. Peter H. Argersinger (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1991), 92.

²⁹ “For His Whiskers, \$200”

³⁰ Barton, “Party Switching,” 463-464.

³¹ Peffer, *Populism*, 72-90.

³² *Ibid.*, 185.

allies. One anti-fusion Populist, Marion Butler of North Carolina, who also happened to sport a fine beard, lamented “they stole our platform and tried to steal our party.” The 1896 combined ticket eventually failed. Bryan and his “DemoPopulists” were defeated and Peffer’s prediction came true. After 1896 the People’s Party began to fade from political prominence, and was subsumed within the Democratic Party.³³

In the months leading up to the 1896 election, representations of Peffer in the press became far more negative. With these negative descriptions of Peffer came attacks on his character, the most common of which were attacks on his beardedness or the hygiene of his beard. In February of 1896, a *Chicago Daily Tribune* article describes Peffer’s beard as “thin,” “sparse,” and “a starved vagrant thing.” Later, it includes an interview from “Sockless” Jerry Simson, a pro-fusion Populist about how Peffer is in the senate for only personal monetary gain. The article goes on to accuse Peffer of nepotism.³⁴ Moreover, Simpson argued that there was “no need for an independent party” and applied to for a position on the Democratic National Congressional Committee.³⁵ A June 1896 *Los Angeles Times* article describes Peffer as “the man of long beard and short of brains,” before claiming that his political strategy was counterintuitive.³⁶ A 1899 *Chicago Daily Tribune* article titled, “The Kansas Pop and His Beard,” explains a maximum barber rate bill proposed by Kansas Populists, and sarcastically refers to the “sacred beard of Peffer.” The article places barbers as the natural enemy of the Populists, who never trimmed their beards.³⁷ These depictions of Peffer stand in contrast to the power of William Wahl’s claim that Peffer is famous for his great beard. Consequently, beardedness became conflated with Peffer and his political stance. No doubt the disgrace of Peffer politically led to the disgrace of his beard.

Peffer, and other devoted populists, were truly radical in their political beliefs. They held to all of the planks of the Omaha Platform so staunchly because they believed that it was the basis for monumental government reform. Peffer, in a series of essays titled *The Rise and Fall of Populism* published in the *Chicago Tribune* in 1899, describes some early Populist meetings at his lodgings in the Washington. They believed they were at the “skirmish line” at “the beginning of a great and powerful organization.” Clearly, these men saw themselves as revolutionaries, fighting against the interests of big business and the “commercial mastodons” of monopolies.³⁸ Populists believed that once the “producers,” agricultural and industrial labor, recognized their shared interest they would band together against the corruption of the two main political parties. The economic ideals espoused in the Omaha Platform, such as government ownership of railroads and telegraphs were coupled with social ideas that were also radically left-wing. Peffer himself was an ardent supporter of women’s suffrage, which was in line with the general attitudes of the Populists. Peffer also held a radical view of race during the early 1890s claiming on more than one occasion that Farmer’s Alliance and the People’s Party recognized no racial differences. He claimed the South should take a similar view, because “the interests of the oppressed transcended race.” He believed the issue of race was used by the powers that be to divide the working class, and keep their focus off their exploitation. This view of race and racism is a recurring theme in communist and socialist thought. After the fall of Populism, Peffer remained staunchly anti-Democrat. Peffer’s biographer Peter Argersinger in his introduction as well as his footnotes to Peffer’s *Populism, its Rise and Fall*, claims that Peffer overemphasizes the differences between Democrats and Populists while “failing to mention” the differences between Populists and Republicans. He instead, Argersinger argues, chose to paint the Republican Party as “an appropriate destination for discontented Populists.” Peffer refused to rejoin the Republican Party for a few years, and when he finally did, he claimed to be “an insurgent” in the ranks of the GOP.³⁹ Peffer

³³ Peffer, *Populism*, 158, 73, 148-151; Argersinger, 244-245. Bryan ran as the Democratic Party candidate in 1900 and 1908. He served as Secretary of War from 1913-15 under President Woodrow Wilson.

³⁴ “Peffer the Populist,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 18, 1896.

³⁵ Peffer, *Populism*, 12.

³⁶ “Peffer Wants Repudiation,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 14, 1896.

³⁷ “The Kansas Pop and His Beard,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 19, 1899.

³⁸ Peffer, *Populism*, 184, 196.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 45, 22.

was not alone in this revolutionary spirit. Other members of the People's Party, especially the faction that refused to support the fusion ticket and remained loyal to the independent Populist Party. However, with Peffer and his Populists politically shamed, his most prominent visual feature quickly fell out of favor as well.

The End of a Harrier Era and the "Manly Devotee"

The September 30, 1906 issue of the *New York Tribune* ran an article titled, "Does a Man Look Better Bearded or Clean Shaven?" The article debates the issue of wearing a beard, which was prohibited by certain corporations at the time. It goes on to provide a barber's and "woman's perspective" on the matter, and leaves the question unanswered. The article is a product of its time, because just a few years earlier beardedness was not up for debate. It comes in the middle of a flashpoint in the history of facial hair styles. As noted in the article, large American corporations began to create regulations that required their employees to shave regularly. What makes this article so interesting is that there is no clear consensus. While possible reasons for the corporate beard prohibitions are given, a man described as "a manly devotee of the curling tongs" as well as a "tonsorial artists" are given ample space to argue against the "rank insult" of prohibiting facial hair. Thus, the picture presented by the article is one of an American society that is split on the matter of beards. Although the author believes that the "trend of civilization is in favor of a smooth face", testimonials from men who "pshaw" at the corporations attempt to force their "harry staff" to shave are included. The article concludes in favor of shaving by claiming that "a face that frightens and inspires distrust" should be "remodeled."⁴⁰ This demonstrates the end of the harrier era that William Wahl enjoyed. Rather than associating beards with power and masculinity, the article associates facial hair with "crookedness." This represents the beginning of a dramatic shift in the social meaning of beards.

This shift in the meanings placed on beards is most evident in the facial hair styles chosen by politicians. In 1893, a *Los Angeles Times* article reported that there were "few faces among our statesmen... which were shaven every morning." It goes on to claim that there were "as many different styles of beard and hair in Congress" as there were members.⁴¹ This depiction of a senatorial cornucopia of beards fits perfectly with the trends described in the previous section. However, just fifteen years after the publication of that article, another *Los Angeles Times* article titled "Statesmen Are Smooth Shaven" appeared on October 27, 1908. The article explains that six of the seven men running for president that year had "smooth-shaven countenances." The seventh, one William Howard Taft, wore only a mustache. While the gift of hindsight tells us that Taft's presidential bid was victorious, the importance of the candidates' beardlessness is clear. These statesmen no longer believed that beards would appeal to their constituencies. Furthermore, the article explains that a publication of 103 pictures of congressmen showed that only ten sported beards. The article goes on to prophetically claim that "the era of bearded politics... is past."⁴² In the ninety-six years since the Taft presidency, not a single one of America's eighteen presidents sported any sort of facial hair while in office. Evidently, the conception of masculinity of earlier periods that held the beard as a symbol of legitimacy of rule, no longer held sway. The diverse beards of the senate of 1893 were shorn by the by the time of this 1908 article. The turn of statesmen, and Americans more generally, to the razor had important implications for the rest of the western world at the time. American styles, for both facial hair and clothing, spread across the globe in the years to come.

As the American beard increasingly became an oddity, the daily shave took over the wider western world that had previously been under the spell of the Victorian beard movement.⁴³ A special correspondence in the *New York Times* titled, "Beards Must Go, Is Dictum in Paris" demonstrates the importance in the American influence in the case of the French shift in style. The article claims that "manly beauty of the American type" recently became the "only kind in favor among the feminine element of Paris" in the spring of 1912. "The day

⁴⁰ "Does a Man Look Better Bearded or Clean Shaven?" *New York Tribune*, September 30, 1906

⁴¹ "Senatorial Silver: Not Dollars, but in Torsos of Statesmen," *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1893.

⁴² "Statesmen Are Smooth Shaven," *Los Angeles Times*, October 27, 1908.

⁴³ Oldstone-Moore, "The Beard Movement in Victorian Britain," 7-34.

of beards and moustaches is now over,” claims the report, “neither beard nor moustache can be tolerated any longer.” The report goes on to say that “hair on the lips or chin should only be worn by men unfortunate enough to have ugly mouths or bad teeth.” Such rapid change is noteworthy, and likely points to a very specific social meaning behind the drive to shave. The article claims that the “change of ideals” is “of course due to the influence of the American invasion of Paris.” As a result, “capillary growth” was quickly becoming as rare in Paris as it was in America at the time, “since the fashion of shaving clean” grew “among Frenchmen every day.”⁴⁴ Evidently, there were those who viewed this trend among Parisians to shave their moustaches and beards was an American import. Since the author of the article was a correspondent for an American newspaper, it is possible that American origin of the decision of Parisian men to go beardless is overemphasized. Nevertheless, the importance of American facial hair styles to the wider western world is represented here. The American style, by the time this article was written in 1912, was so firmly defined as beardless that the author referred to a shaven face as “manly beauty of the American type.” If the French shift to beardless at the turn of the century was influenced by American style, then the question of what exactly drove the American turn to the razor remains to be explained.

The reason for this shaving crusade that began in America and quickly spread to the rest of the western world has received little scholarly attention. Oldstone-Moore argues that shift is due to corporate regulation. He claims “a smooth face” represented “energy and disciplined reliability,” as well as “honesty and sociability.” Thus, appearing younger and appealing to conformity drove many men to shave in this new corporate America.⁴⁵ Though the corporate prohibition of beards was mentioned in the “Does a Man Look Better Bearded or Clean Shaven?” article discussed earlier, it is not framed as the cause of a turn to shaving but rather the result. The article argues that important reformers, muckrakers, and statesmen “thrust forward clean jowls for the inspection of their admiring fellow citizens.”⁴⁶ This trend was already well-established before large New York-based corporations imposed regulations against bearded employees. If this is the case, then the regulations could not possibly be the cause of the shift in style. It is more likely that the corporate prohibitions were a response to changing definitions of what it meant to be bearded. If beards in earlier periods were associated with patriarchal dominance in both politics and the home, then shaving in this new period was associated with conformity. While conformity is a natural goal for large companies with numerous employees, these associations were merely seized upon by corporations that recognized the importance of these ideas. The true origin of the social meaning placed on shaving cannot be fully understood without an examination of what it meant to be bearded at the beginning of this new smooth-faced era.

Once the “crusade against the whisker” had taken its course, beards became exceedingly rare in America. Those who still chose to sport a beard were often subject to criticism, and many men chose to wear just a moustache. Moustaches in the early twentieth century, however, came loaded with social meaning. While in the nineteenth century moustaches had been symbols military aggression, the twentieth century saw moustaches gain a reputation of willful individualism.⁴⁷ Moustaches adorned the faces of villains and rogues in the popular imagination of many Americans. Some even believe that New York governor Thomas Dewey may have lost the 1948 presidential election because of his moustache.⁴⁸ The full beard was not seen in any great numbers in the western world until the middle decades of the twentieth century, and when it did return, it brought with it social meanings that were stronger and often more negative than those attached to the moustache at this time. At mid-century, left-wing radicals who wished to signal their non-conformity to the world sported beards. The

⁴⁴ “Beards Must Go,” *New York Times*, April 7, 1912.

⁴⁵ Oldstone-Moore, *Of Beards and Men*, 213, 234.

⁴⁶ “Does a Man Look Better Bearded or Clean Shaven?”

⁴⁷ Peterkin, *One Thousand Moustaches*, 42-43.

⁴⁸ Christopher Oldstone-Moore, “Moustaches and Masculine Codes in Early Twentieth-Century America.” *Journal of Social History* 45, no. 1 (2011): 47. as well as Peterkin, 86. both make this claim.

political environment of the 1890s that led to the crusade, explains the revolutionary reputation of beards that lasted for decades.

Conclusion

Beardedness in the 1890s was defined by the most prominent beard of the time, that which adorned the face of Kansas senator William A. Peffer. Peffer was raised in the bearded decades of the nineteenth century, and was acquainted with the social meanings placed on whiskers at the time. Asserting masculinity and patriarchal dominance could be accomplished by sporting perhaps the most recognizable outward symbol of masculinity, a beard. Peffer's beard may have added to the legitimacy of his political rule in the minds of Kansas voters, but it most certainly catapulted him to national recognition after his election to the United States Senate in 1890. Peffer and "Pefferism" quickly became associated with radical leftist political causes. After his ideological split with the Populists over fusion in the 1896 presidential election, Peffer was left with few political allies. Depictions of the long bearded senator became increasingly negative. At the same time as Peffer's loss of public esteem, beards lost favor in public opinion as well. The crusade against the whisker quickly spread from American statesmen to the rest of the Western world. In the new era of twentieth-century facial hair styles, moustaches were symbols of willful independence, and beards were unheard of. By the outbreak of the First World War, most of the world was once again shaving daily. When beards did appear they adorned the faces of left-wing revolutionaries, such as Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. In fact, Cuban revolutionaries were referred to as *los barbudas*, or "the bearded one's," by their political opposition. An image of the defiant, bearded Che Guevara is said to be one of the most recreated photographs in history, and is often used to signal a spirit of leftist revolution.⁴⁹ These bearded radicals were unknowingly advocating "Pefferist" politics while adopting his trademark bearded affect. The politically charged environment of 1890s America in effect drove the facial hair styles of the entirety of the western world for more than a century. American politicians today remain almost entirely beardless. They shave themselves everyday day in an unconscious effort to avoid appearing like a "Pefferist." This demonstrates the inextricable nature of masculinity, facial hair, and politics. The 1890s in particular, were a moment of great change in these areas, and American notions of masculinity and the meaning of facial hair from this era have legacies in today's society.

⁴⁹ Oldstone-Moore, *Of Beards and Men*, 47-49.

**Breaking a Century of Silence:
A Historiography of the Tulsa Race Riot**

Joshua D. Mackey

It is impossible to make a full report of the happenings, but what I saw was bad enough, and yet I cannot tell all that I saw. When I fully realized what was happening, I saw men and women fleeing for their lives, while white men by the hundreds pursued them, firing in all directions. As one woman was running from her home, she suddenly fell with a bullet wound. Then I saw aeroplanes, they flew very low. To my surprise, as they passed over the business district they left the entire block a mass of flame.

I saw men, women and children driven like cattle, huddled like horses and treated like beasts. Thus, I fully realized the attitude of the Southern white man when he has you bested. I saw hundreds of men marched through the main business section of "White Town" with their hats off and their hands up, with dozens of guards marching them with guns, cursing them for everything mentionable. I saw large trucks following up the invaders, as they ran the colored people from their homes and places of business. Everything of value was loaded on these trucks and everything left was burned to ashes.

I saw machine guns turned on the colored men to oust them from their stronghold.

Tuesday night, May 31st, was the riot, and Wednesday morning, by daybreak, was the invasion.
— Anonymous.¹

This marked one of the most destructive acts of racial violence in United States history. Looters, murderers, and arsonists devastated Greenwood in less than 48 hours. The black community was left in rubble through the course of the Tulsa Race Riot. What started with the arrest of a young black man over an alleged assault ended in over a hundred deaths and millions of dollars in damages. That story would have been covered up and forgotten, had it not been for the survivors who shared their stories and writers who chronicled the event in later years.

The events of May 31 through June 1, 1921 had been obscured by a lack of official records and a culture of silence for the better part of a half-century. Thanks to the diligent work of amateur journalists and historians like Mary E. Jones Parrish, and civil servants like Maurice Willows of the American Red Cross, we have a historical record to work with. Writers like Ed Wheeler and Scott Ellsworth pioneered investigation into the riot, conducting interviews and collating their findings into some of the first works dedicated to the act. Thanks to the efforts of Don Ross and the other members of the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, the prevailing narrative preserved by Parrish and Willows persisted into acceptance as the official story. Historians working during the commission drafted three distinct histories, built upon past work on the subject and serving different purposes: either to humanize the victims and perpetrators of the riot, make the case for reparations, or examine the context surrounding the riot's remembrance in the city.

Taken together, writings on the Tulsa Race Riot fall into one of three main categories. Firstly, the reports from Parrish and Willows collect as much information as possible in the immediate wake of the riot. Parrish served as an amateur journalist and historian who preserved raw accounts from fellow survivors, shared her own story, and provided conjecture on how victims understood what happened to them. The Red Cross report, while narrow in scope, provides some of the earliest raw data on the event and provides a picture of how much immediate aid was needed in North Tulsa. Secondly, Ed Wheeler's article and Scott Ellsworth's seminal book, *Death in a Promised Land*, highlight the effort taken to counteract the silence that enveloped Tulsa to confront

¹ Mary E. Jones Parrish, *Race Riot 1921: Events of the Tulsa Disaster* (Tulsa: Out on a Limb Publishing, 1998), 65.

the city's past. This effort culminated in the 1997 commission, which legitimized much of the narrative that they discovered in the African American community about what really happened. Finally, journalists Tim Madigan and James Hirsh, and legal scholar Alfred Brophy, all wrote contemporary histories around the time of the commission, publishing each of their works between 2001 and 2002. While they all differed from one another in authorial intent, a clear shift had taken place. Their works are among the first to step beyond justifying the riot's existence as an event as writers of previous decades had. Instead, they worked to flesh out the events and aftermath of the riot as an attempt to humanize and draw people closer to understanding it. This paper traces that development, from immediate information gathering, to justification, to juxtaposition.

In the Wake of the Riot

Events of the Tulsa Disaster

Among the first people to collate Greenwood's experience of the riot was local typist Mary E. Jones Parrish in *Race Riot 1921: Events of the Tulsa Disaster*. The 1998 reprint points out that only 21 copies were originally published, but thanks to Mrs. Parrish and her nephew Clarence Love, who aided in publishing the second addition, this work stands as one of the only complete firsthand written accounts of the riot.² Parrish's forward provides insight into her background and purpose for writing; she was astounded by the bravery of black boys who had gone to serve in the Great war; reflecting on their service and the injustice done to Greenwood: "Tonight, as I write and think of Tulsa then and the Tulsa of June 1st, my eyes well with tears and my soul cries for justice. Oh, America! Thou land of the free and the home of the brave! . . . How long will you let mob violence reign supreme? Is democracy a mockery?"³

Mob violence and lynching was at the forefront of Parrish's mind when she published this work, looking to the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill as a safeguard for the black community in the future, and pinned the origin of the riot on black men needing to protect Dick Rowland from the lynch mob that was gathering for him. Not content to focus only on the wellbeing of African Americans, she also looks to the riot as a cautionary tale for any reader; mob violence had reduced Greenwood to ash and rubble, and the spirit of destruction and mob violence will continue pouring out to the wider public regardless of "place, person or color." Her desired end for this work, then, serves a similar desire for reflection on illuminating the excesses of mob violence and the dangers that come with letting it continue.⁴

Parrish leads into her history with a chapter on her experience in Tulsa, first moving there from Rochester, New York out of an appreciation for the blossoming black community forming there.⁵ She then begins telling the story of the riot from her perspective. The beginning was simple enough in introducing the altercation between Dick Rowland and Sarah Page, as well as the fear of lynching that sparked years of hatred that had been building up. In addition, the lynching of a white boy the year before caused Greenwood residents to distrust city officials, prompting them to band together to protect the accused. That evening, she was at her typewriting class while her daughter watched people gathering and heading to downtown. It wasn't until her daughter told her that men with guns were passing by that Parrish learned about the contingent of black veterans en route to the courthouse to protect Rowland. She watched the crowds pass by her window throughout the night before making a harrowing realization; the devastating violence seen in Chicago and Washington before were coming to Tulsa. When the gravity of the situation finally set in, she turned to Psalms and prayed for courage to withstand what was coming.⁶

Early that morning, Mrs. Parrish and her daughter attempted to flee as the fighting moved towards her home. She ran north on Greenwood Avenue as gunfire closed on her neighborhood. Others called out for her to get out of the street before they got shot, but she pressed on to Standpipe Hill, a high hill in North Tulsa from which she could see Greenwood burn.⁷ They fled Tulsa and were stopped on their trip to Claremore by

² *Ibid.*, 9.

³ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

a white woman who warned against entering the next town, offering instead to let them stay at her home until it was safe to return to Tulsa.⁸

After a couple days, Parrish returned alongside other black Tulsans with the Red Cross through the white part of town, where she was brought to the internment camp at Exposition Park. She was disgusted to see her people rounded up like cattle, yet she felt driven to share in that fate with them; a friend's home had not been burnt down, however, and they invited her to stay with them instead. After passing through the white district, they came to what had once been Deep Greenwood, which they "found to be piles of bricks, ashes, and twisted iron, representing years of toil and savings."⁹ Each black person in her group bore a tag that read "police protection," which they had to wear to be permitted to leave the camps. They finally passed through the destruction to the other side of Greenwood's homes that were left standing, where her friend's home was still standing but ransacked.¹⁰

She got up the next morning and found the makeshift hospital that the American Cross put together at Booker T. Washington High School before heading on to a telegraph office to inform her brother in McAlester what had happened in Tulsa. He heard that nobody had gotten out of her home and thought she and her daughter had burnt alive, and wanted her to get out of town, but she resolved to stay in Tulsa.¹¹ She returned to Booker T. Washington to join the lines of people were receiving aid with armed guard watching over them.¹² She was then approached by Reverend H.T.S. Johnson of the Inter-Racial Commission to report on the event for the organization, which she accepted in part to get her mind off her own trouble in favor of others. Before she could start, however, she was sent to City Hall by the guards for not being branded with a "police protection" tag; upon her arrival, not even the executive director of the Y.M.C.A., Professor W.J. Gregg, could effectively vouch for her. A business firm had to come and identify her before they would grant one to her.¹³

When reflecting on her experience as a reporter, she immediately took note of a few things in those first days following the riot: for one, the dead were disposed of so quickly that no accurate records were kept on the body count; secondly, the African American community both praised the work of the Oklahoma State Troops for their efforts to maintain order, while also condemning the Oklahoma Home Guard for removing them from Greenwood with the promise that their property would be saved if blacks followed their directions; thirdly, she highlights both the efforts made by whites in the Colored Citizens' Relief Committee to help those affected, while the city simultaneously put the Fire Ordinances in place to keep people from rebuilding.¹⁴ As she collected testimonies from survivors, these realities surrounded their rebuilding efforts and questions of authority carried from the riot to its aftermath.

Those interviews formed an invaluable resource for researchers, as they painted a picture of how black Tulsans first thought about their experiences. Those interviews include teacher James T.A. West, who describes being rounded up and herded like livestock to the convention center by the Home Guard.¹⁵ Tulsa Medical, Dental and Pharmaceutical Association president P.S. Thompson outlined racial prejudice and distrust in policing as the main causes of the riot; lynchings and distrust pressed black Tulsans to take matters into their own hands.¹⁶ Greenwood entrepreneur C.L. Netherland's perspective is perhaps the most dire, as he reflected on how his family was reduced from a big brick house to sleeping on a convention center bench. He returned home after the riot and had to stay in his old coal barn; his barber shop reduced to rubble, he had taken to putting a single folding chair out on the sidewalk to replace his storefront.¹⁷ Together with the other testimonies, these stories shined a light on both the brokenness of a devastated community and the variety of individual emotions and experiences that flowed from the survivors.

The rest of Parrish's work focuses on major elements of the riot's aftermath. Among the pieces considered was an editorial from the *St. Louis Argus*, an African-American newspaper, in April of 1922,

⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁹ Ibid., 24.

¹⁰ Ibid., 24-25.

¹¹ Ibid., 25-26.

¹² Ibid., 26.

¹³ Ibid., 27.

¹⁴ Ibid., 31-32.

¹⁵ Ibid., 37-38.

¹⁶ Ibid., 45.

¹⁷ Ibid., 57.

highlighting the rapid reconstruction efforts over the course of that first year. It takes particular interest in the spirit of the people in Greenwood: who “under the most cruel and soul-crushing conditions,” have been determined to stay put in Tulsa.¹⁸ She also expounds on the Inter-Racial Commission’s demands for greater developments in infrastructure, education, and city services, pointing to inter-racial cooperation as the best measure for improving the lot for black and white Tulsans alike.¹⁹ She closes with excerpts from the June 8 publication of the *Literary Digest*. It provides a larger consideration of mob violence and racial hatred in America, with the events in Tulsa serving as a harrowing example, as the conditions for similar destruction exists “in all parts of the country where the Negro is numerous enough to be a problem.”²⁰ Those conditions include “the lynch-law spirit, peonage, race prejudice, economic rivalry between blacks and whites, radical propaganda, unemployment, corrupt politics, and the new negro spirit of self-assertion,,” with the recommended solution being just laws and enforcement, African-American unionization, and the Biblical Golden Rule.²¹

Maurice Willows and the American Red Cross

The second major primary source often relied upon by Tulsa Race Riot scholars is the Disaster Relief Report prepared by Red Cross director Maurice Willows in December 1921. This report focuses primarily on the economic, infrastructural, and medical elements of the riot and its aftermath. The report begins with a narrative reading of events as of the time the report came out, in which Willows placed blame for the violence on “the lack of law enforcement.”²² He established that, although the term “riot” was used to describe the disaster and whites were harmed, “the wholesale destruction of property – life and limb – in that section occupied by negroes (sic) between the hours of daylight and noon, testifies to a one-sided battle.” He also indicated that the arrest of Dick Rowland was incidental to the riot, as both he and Sarah Page drop from the story with no further prosecution. He backed up the cause he gave for the riot as a lack of police response, he refers back to newspaper coverage of Chief of Police Gustafson’s trial as proof. He also pointed out that the majority of the violence and destruction took place “nearly a mile from the courthouse,” and that “All that fire, rifles, revolvers, shot guns, machine guns, and organized inhuman passion could do with thirty-five city blocks with its twelve thousand negro (sic) population, was done.”²³ The organized element of the riot has garnered the attention of researchers, as it challenges the idea of a disordered riot in favor of an organized assault on Greenwood. That forms the crux of the debate over the naming of this event, be it a riot, massacre, or pogrom.²⁴

Willows’ estimation of the dead and injured reflects the toll of this organized assault. While he points out that many bodies were rushed, and few records were kept, he fields estimates from 55 to 300 dead.²⁵ This estimate falls alongside the wounded that the Red Cross treated, numbering 84 blacks and 48 whites in hospitals, and 531 people getting treatment at different stations after three days. In addition, he also associated eight cases of premature stillbirths and numerous birth complications to the trauma of the riot.²⁶ Compared to the conservative estimates of around 30 dead, the Red Cross report, above all, contributes by far the bleakest image of human loss after the event. Among competing claims, the Red Cross stands out as the organization most consistently working with victims, and their consistent work with victims in the months following the riot lends some credence to their estimates.

When considering property damage, the report establishes that the invasion destroyed thirty-five blocks. This widescale devastation left twelve thousand people homeless and caused over four million dollars in

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 107.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 107-108.

²² Maurice Willows, “Narrative Report as of December 31, 1921,” In *Disaster Relief Report: Riot, June 1921* (Tulsa: American Red Cross, 1921), 1. <http://tulsahistory.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/1921-Red-Cross-Report-December-30th.pdf> (accessed November 30, 2018).

²³ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁴ To highlight the debate surrounding the event’s naming, the 1921 Race Riot Centennial Commission changed its name to the 1921 Race Massacre Commission in November of 2018. This came after the last known survivor, Dr. Olivia Hooker, passed away. She had advocated for the name change. Source: Krehbiel, Randy, “1921 Centennial Commission to Replace ‘Riot’ with ‘Massacre’ in Official Title,” *Tulsa World*, November 7, 2018. https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/government-and-politics/centennial-commission-to-replace-riot-with-massacre-in-official-title/article_128d9304-6d59-5b5f-872a-f72509d3ecd8.html (accessed March 22, 2019).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

damages.²⁷ It was amid the burning that the Red Cross immediately began preparations for disaster relief and “before any official request had been made, the Red Cross had by common consent, sprang into action.”²⁸ They prepared 384 army tents but were hobbled in further housing measures because of issues of sanitation and a stubborn city government who would not provide sewage service or enough toilets.²⁹ While they aimed to help until Greenwood’s needs were met, the Red Cross considered reconstruction the responsibility of local government.³⁰ Alongside the raw data they provide throughout the document, the Red Cross report, above all, sets the stage for rhetoric for the historians in the decades after the riot. Its contributions are threefold: first, it places blame squarely on the ineffective action of local authorities who allowed the massacre and burning to transpire; second, it unflinchingly describes the depth of destruction felt by Greenwood, both in terms of life and property, giving researchers a sense of scale for the riot; finally, it places full responsibility on local authorities to redress what had happened, placing further blame on them for shirking their responsibilities before, during, and after the riot.

Silence Falls on Tulsa

Much to the dismay of researchers, the historical record is mostly still after the works of Parrish and Willows. Aside from a University of Tulsa masters’ thesis by Loren G. Hill, no immediately evident major writings surfaced between 1922 and 1972. In the words of journalist and Tulsa Race Riot author James S. Hirsch:

The riot disappeared from sight. There were no memorials to honor the dead, no public ceremonies to observe an anniversary or express regret. Tulsans, black and white, made no public acknowledgement of the riot. Greenwood’s damaged buildings were evidence of the assault, but in time they too were toppled or rebuilt. The riot was not mentioned in Oklahoma’s history books from the 1930s. The *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, a quarterly journal on state history published by the Oklahoma historical Society, has never run a story on the riot. It began publication in 1921.³¹

It is perplexing that the most destructive act of racial violence in American history went unaccounted for through two generations. Hirsch takes interest in this, as his history takes a longer view on Tulsa’s collective memory. First and foremost, white community leaders made a collaborative effort to cover up the event, with official records and the *Tribune’s* destruction of their editorial that called for Rowland’s lynching.³² Morse troubling is an altogether lack of scrutiny on the part of scholars and journalists over the course of that first half-century. Hirsch called the white response a “conspiracy of silence,” as the riot went utterly ignored both by individuals and institutions.³³ He characterizes the white perspective as “one of those inexplicable events, an act of nature,” which people were simultaneously shocked by and unwilling to give serious attention to.³⁴

Worse, the specter of historical revisionism crept over the white story of the riot. Whites who acknowledged the event fit the event into Tulsa’s efforts at boosterism by framing it as “a healing event in the city’s history, a catalyst for progress between the races, and an opportunity for magnanimous outreach.”³⁵ A depression-era Federal Writers Project report made for *Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State* highlighted white paternalism by spinning the story as a humanitarian triumph that led to a sense of commonality and mutual understanding between black and white Tulsans, a read of post-riot history that ignores the monumental systemic barriers put up against blacks.³⁶

The oil boom of the 1920s drew attention away from the riot and instead highlighted the fabulous wealth flowing into the city, with oil barons funding extensive building projects both downtown and around the area

²⁷ Ibid., 4. This figure equals about 56 billion dollars in 2018, adjusted for inflation.

²⁸ Ibid., 5.

²⁹ Ibid., 12.

³⁰ Ibid., 13.

³¹ James S. Hirsch, *Riot and Remembrance: The Tulsa Race War and its Legacy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), 168.

³² Ibid., 168-69.

³³ Ibid., 169.

³⁴ Ibid., 169-170.

³⁵ Ibid., 170.

³⁶ Ibid.

abroad.³⁷ Meanwhile, the strong Tulsa economy and surge in population in the 1920s allowed Greenwood to rebuild and enter into a renaissance, briefly overtaking Harlem in amenities and becoming a cultural phenomenon for the African American music scene in the Jazz age.³⁸

Aside from its own growth, another factor for why Greenwood was publicly silent on the riot was the fear of retribution. Above all, black Tulsans feared an imminent second riot; those fears could not be quelled in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s as black leaders took a more moderate approach to negotiating in hopes of avoiding another riot.³⁹ This highlighted the distrust still operative in Tulsa race relations as fear created an atmosphere where black and white communities had cut off ties and blacks feared history repeating itself.⁴⁰ At the same time, whites also “othered” the black community as the dominant narrative placed the blame on blacks for the riot.⁴¹ With that fear in mind, it is remarkable that victims of the riot provided oral histories in the years after the riot. That required considerable bravery to share those stories, considering how real the fear of possible retribution hung over the community.

Voices Finally Heard: Writings of the 1970s and 1980s Ed Wheeler’s “Profile of a Race Riot”

It was in this atmosphere of tense silence that Ed Wheeler entered the fray as one of the first journalists to investigate the riot in fifty years. Wheeler was a white Tulsa resident who served in the Oklahoma National Guard and built a career as a DJ on KVOO who made a name for himself with his historical dramas.⁴² He was contacted in 1970 by the editor of the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce magazine, Larry Silvey, who had used his position to draw attention to issues of race before. Silvey, who admired Wheeler’s dramas, inquired about what Wheeler considered off limits for his show, to which he responded with the Tulsa Race Riot as he feared the possibility of a public reaction like that seen in Orson Welles’ “War of the Worlds” broadcast. Silvey then asked him to write an article about it for his magazine for the fiftieth anniversary, which Wheeler accepted.⁴³

Wheeler attempted to start his research on public records but was shocked to find none could be found. He then turned to oral histories, interviewing forty blacks and twenty whites who lived through it; this gave him a sense of the gravity of his work, as victims would only meet him at night in the safety of the local churches when sharing their experiences. His meetings with whites also revealed the nature of the rioters’ intents, as one Klan member stated that “If it hadn’t been for the soldiers, we would have killed every god-damn nigger in the city.”⁴⁴ As word got out on his research, Wheeler began getting threatening calls in the night, insinuating that his family could be at risk if his article got published. Those threats came to a head one morning, when someone had written across his car window, “best look under your hood from now on.”⁴⁵ It became clear for Wheeler that some elements in Tulsa wanted to maintain that culture of silence by any means necessary.

When he finished the work, Silvey attempted to get the article published, but other leaders in the Chamber refused to let it move forward, calling it “possibly inflammatory” and fearing that it would cause another race riot to break out.⁴⁶ Luckily, Wheeler found an ally in the editor for *Impact*, a black magazine, named Don Ross.⁴⁷ Ross later served in the Oklahoma state legislature and spearheaded getting the Tulsa Race Riot officially recognized, but Wheeler’s article gave his small magazine the opportunity to take the first step towards breaking the silence. The magazine sold out in Greenwood but did not reach far into the rest of Tulsa; still, the Chief of Police at the time, Bill Wilbanks, confided in him that the Tulsa Police Department had an unpublished official headcount from the riot which closely matches the higher Red Cross estimates from the time. Wilbanks,

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 171-72.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 173.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 183-84

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 184-85

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 199.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 202.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 202-203.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 203.

however, would not grant Wheeler a copy for fear of it affecting his pension.⁴⁸ While the article itself did not get wide circulation, Wheeler briefly entered the national spotlight as “a white patriot who had no affection for Afrocentric history but whose interpretation of the riot essentially affirmed the “black” version of the event.”⁴⁹

His narrative begins by confronting the established white narrative, calling attention to the prejudices that shaped the violence:

The blame for the riot was heaped upon “negroes of the lower class – gamblers and bootleggers” and “a group of negroes who had been worked upon by a lawless element of white agitators, reds and bolshevists.”

But this was hogwash.

Prejudice, suspicion, ignorance and hate caused the riot.

Intolerance, anger, rumormongering and fear fanned its flames.

Such elements were prevalent in abundance on both sides of the racial fence.⁵⁰

He describes the outbreak of conflict in terms of a great battle, with mobs meeting to face each other downtown and upwards of forty-five cars full of whites on the hunt for blacks. In addition, Wheeler lends credence to further scrutiny of Tulsa police response, as the police chief lent a machine gun mounted to a truck to a group of white men and sent it east towards Muskogee to prevent any blacks from coming into Tulsa to help in the fight.⁵¹ This is important, as it proves that the police department had crowd control weaponry on hand that could be used to quell the violence. Had those weapons been mobilized early in the conflict, it may have changed the course of the riot and prevent it from devastating Greenwood. Instead, the police chief sat on the tools he had at his disposal before handing it off to send far afield of the conflict.

The work closes with the new status quo which persisted after the massacre, that the “negroes moved back to their “ghetto,” with its disease, illiteracy and narcotics problem of epidemic proportions,” and “the whites settled back to whisper in their cocktail parties about the “coloreds”, make profound pronouncements for political purposes in political purposes in election campaigns about helping “those less fortunate” and then continued to maintain the status quo,” before asking whether or not the riot was ever truly suppressed, or if it’s waiting to ignite once again.⁵² Wheeler’s choice to close the article by calling out Tulsa’s complacency echoes through the histories that followed, and his work marked the first step of Tulsans who attempted to come to grips with the event.

Death in a Promised Land and the Beginning of a Narrative

Among the first comprehensive histories written on the Tulsa Race Riot was *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* by Scott Ellsworth, a historian currently serving at the University of Michigan who specializes in civil rights and the American South. Completed in 1982, he traces the history of the riot, first through the context of Tulsa’s development as an oil boom city in the turn of the twentieth century, then through the larger context of race relations and racial violence between World War I and the riot.⁵³ He worked through a narrative of the riot, setting the stage first with racial tensions in Tulsa in 1920-1921.⁵⁴ Ellsworth follows up with the conditions immediately in the wake of the disaster, stating that “The aftermath of the riot

⁴⁸ Ibid., 204. Bill Wilbanks retired in Independence, Kansas, and passed away in 2013. This document has not resurfaced but may be worth seeking out from family.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 205.

⁵⁰ Ed Wheeler, “Profile of a Race Riot” (Tulsa: *Impact*, 1971), 3. Web, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/object/nmaahc.2011.60.18> (accessed December 2, 2018.)

⁵¹ Ibid., 8.

⁵² Ibid., 12.

⁵³ Scott Ellsworth, *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 8, 17.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 45.

provides us with a valuable view of the inter-workings of power, race relations, and racial ideologies in Tulsa.”⁵⁵ The final chapter observes the legacy, or perceived lack thereof in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and the United States more broadly as blacks and whites formed vastly different personal and collective memories of racial violence.⁵⁶ Finally, Ellsworth offers a brief epilogue on the post-riot history of Greenwood, describing the rise and fall the community experienced between 1921 and World War II, as well as the steady urban decay that had eaten away at Greenwood into the 1970s.⁵⁷ This work stands as the first major history of the events of the Tulsa Race Riot, and it both solidified his place as an expert on the topic and set the pattern for the authors who tackled the subject after him. Subsequent histories will follow a similar structure, setting the stage with the history of Tulsa and early 20th century racial violence, depicting the events of the riot with the same core narrative intact, depicting the failures of the government to intervene, then working from the aftermath of the riot to present their interpretation of the riot’s value. Thus, Ellsworth made an essential contribution to the academics surrounding the riot, providing a template for future historians to address the narrative of the event as the collective silence surrounding it slowly broke apart.

The Oklahoma Commission: Creating an Official History

If Ed Wheeler and Scott Ellsworth helped crack the door for the story of the Tulsa Race riot to come out of obscurity through the 70s and 80s, The Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 threw the door wide open at the turn of the twenty-first century. Incorporating the collective work of historians including Ellsworth, John Hope Franklin, and Alfred Brophy, the Oklahoma state government employed a wide range of academic and political leaders to investigate the events of the riot and provide an official narrative from the state.

While fielding a variety of uncertainties and differences, the 2001 report establishes that a series of facts asserted throughout the narrative of the riot hold true. For one, as “Black Tulsans had every reason to believe that Dick Rowland would be lynched,” they believed that they alone were responsible for his safety as the authorities failed to act early on. Further officials deputized many whites who participated in the rioting and added to the violence while also providing ammunition to whites not in law enforcement.⁵⁸ This corresponds with claims from Maurice Willows that the local authorities had failed in their duty, and with Alfred Brophy’s assertion that Tulsa’s police and city government were responsible for much of the damage caused by showing that they helped the white rioters and gave impunity to some as deputies.

Further, the commission found that those who entered Greenwood “stole, damaged or destroyed” whatever was left behind and burnt down 1,256 homes, “along with virtually every other structure . . . in the Greenwood District.”⁵⁹ They gave an estimate of 100 to 300 people killed, noting that no criminal prosecutions took place afterwards. The city paid for much of the Red Cross relief but did little else, actually stood in the way of rebuilding, and “in the end, the restoration of Greenwood after its systematic destruction was left to victims of that destruction.”⁶⁰ Forcefully, the section concludes that “these things are not myths, not rumors, not speculation. They are the historical record.”⁶¹ That closing statement is vital, as it presents the darkest elements of the riot as truth, turning the assertion that Tulsa city officials failed to respond in both the short and long term into the state-accepted story of the riot. That acceptance vilifies two decades of efforts by historians to tell Greenwood’s story and serves as a rare case of the marginalized experience in America becoming accepted as objective fact by government leadership.

Histories Reframed: The Battle for Reparations and Representation

The Oklahoma Commission brought with it an explosion of public interest in the Tulsa Race Riot and a wealth of resources for historians to further tap into in addressing the riot. Three historians published sweeping

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 108-109.

⁵⁸ Danney Goble, “Final Report of the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Race Riot of 1921,” in *Tulsa Race Riot: A Report by the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Race Riot of 1921* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Commission to Study the Race Riot of 1921, 2001), Web, <https://www.okhistory.org/research/forms/freport.pdf> (accessed December 3, 2018), 11.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 12-14.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

histories of the riot between 2001 and 2002, and each one built upon the established narrative to different ends. Tim Madigan, Alfred Brophy, and James Hirsch retold the story of the riot, first to humanize the traumatic events, then to illustrate the case for reparations, and finally to explore how the course of the riot and its impact on collective memory. Taken together, their books illustrate the current state of the riot's coverage in academia.

The Burning and Humanizing Vignettes

The first, a journalist named Tim Madigan, published *The Burning: Massacre, Destruction, and the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*. Perhaps more than any other work yet produced for the topic of the riot, Madigan's history focuses on the collection of stories, personalities and experiences that were central to the riot. While many prior writings take an academic tone, expressing a hitherto unknown historical moment to understand the events itself, *The Burning* works chapter-by-chapter to illustrate the perspectives of the biggest black and white players immediately preceding and following the riot.

Madigan built his narrative through the first-hand survivors' accounts starting with Eldoris Ector McCondichie, whose mother had awoken her with news that "The white people are killing the colored folks!"⁶² She and her family were forced to evacuate north of the city, but when they returned they saw their community in ruins.⁶³ As Madigan interviewed her in 2000 she kept tissues on hand, saying that, "by now, I know better to talk about that day without holding a few of these."⁶⁴ Using her example as a prologue, Madigan illustrates the emotional impact that the riot had on her and other black Tulsans.

In the next vignette he constructs focuses on Captain Townsend D. Jackson, a former slave, wildwest lawman, and militia leader who settled in Tulsa in 1913.⁶⁵ He had come to the First Baptist Church in Greenwood to speak, and Madigan remarked on his impressive appearance as "a stately, six-foot fellow whose short, dark hair had gone mostly gray." Among those gathered to listen and feverishly took notes was Andrew J. Smitherman, the publisher for the local African American paper, the *Tulsa Star*.⁶⁶ Greenwood entrepreneur John B. Stradford was also present. Both he and Smitherman listened to the story of the former slave with the rest of the growing Greenwood gentry, seeing Jackson as a prime example of black progress in their day.⁶⁷

The next vignette focuses on Richard Lloyd Jones, publisher for the *Tulsa Tribune*, characterizing the man whose newspaper has been blamed for setting off the riot.⁶⁸ Jones began his journalistic career as a magazine writer, covering the dilapidated state of Abraham Lincoln's birthplace in Kentucky, and eventually purchased it to become its ward, before convincing Teddy Roosevelt to create a memorial there in 1909.⁶⁹ Jones carried his service to memorializing Lincoln as his claim to fame, and was outspoken in his support for Lincoln's place in American history, later stating that, "It is time to put Mr. Lincoln to work. He is the symbol of American society. He is the symbol of the battle against the sins within. He is the symbol of all that is good in our country."⁷⁰

It is with great irony that much of his journalistic career in Tulsa then served to denigrate the black community in Greenwood, which he called "Niggertown." While he was apathetic to "docile" blacks, he commented that, "A bad nigger is about the lowest thing that walks on two feet. Give a bad nigger his booze and his dope and his gun and he thinks he can shoot up the world. And these four things are to be found in Niggertown, booze, dope, bad niggers and guns."⁷¹ It is with this attitude, and the financial strain of a struggling paper, that the *Tribune* entered the fray of civil strife on May 31, 1921 with Jones' scathing editorial on the arrest of Dick Rowland. While the exact words of that editorial are lost in a coverup, the headline "to lynch negro tonight" has been frequently recalled from it.⁷²

⁶² Tim Madigan, *The Burning: Massacre, Destruction, and the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001), 1.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 27-30.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 31.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, 45-46.

The book closes with intimate characterizations of the survivors that he interviewed.⁷³ *The Burning*, then, is a crucial resource for connecting to the emotional impact that the riot had on the survivors and larger community alike. It captures the complications and contradictions that are wrapped up in the people who contributed to, or were afflicted by, violence and hate. While reading the other histories can make the summer of 1921 feel like a distant event, this collection of individual stories provides a personal connection to the events by filtering the riot through many peoples' experiences.

Reconstructing the Dreamland and the Case for Reparations

Much like Madigan, legal scholar Alfred Brophy's *Reconstructing the Dreamland: The Tulsa Riot of 1921: Race, Reparations and Reconciliation* incorporates vignettes of experiences before, during, and after the riots, while also focusing the core of his attention on the culpability of the city, state, and even federal government in the riot's impact on Greenwood. He crafted his narrative with the goal of garnering support for reparations, centering the thesis of the book on the struggle between black demands for justice and white insistence on a code of law that subjugated and controlled blacks.⁷⁴

A major contributing factor to black Americans seeking greater equality in the leadup to the riot was the Great War, as many young men returned from the Western Front to the rougher underbelly of Greenwood with equality on their mind.⁷⁵ In addition, many Greenwood residents had moved to Oklahoma to escape the racial violence and control in the Deep South, and felt "the need to prevent lynchings, to protect voting rights, to develop the community."⁷⁶ A.J. Smitherman's *Tulsa Star* fed the community's interests in equality, reminding them of their equal rights while informing them of the legal and cultural changes happening around the country.⁷⁷ The ideals espoused in Greenwood ran counter to white views, as lynchings grew more prominent as a means of keeping black aspirations in line.⁷⁸ While Oklahoma laws should be protecting black men and women from being murdered by mobs, no punishment would come to lynchers in practice, which made more evident that "when there is a gap between what the society believes and what the law commands, both the law and social system tend to break down."⁷⁹

In the wake of incredible destruction, the problem had been made worse by the city's response, as Greenwood residents had to go to court against the local government to keep from being pushed off their razed land.⁸⁰ Initially, the Chamber of Commerce offered to pay restitutions to riot victims, while the Public Welfare Board voiced its plans to rebuild homes in Greenwood; they, along with white newspapers, insisted on "Tulsa Will," a phrase signifying that the city is coming together to rebuild and recover.⁸¹ After the Public Welfare Board was replaced by the Reconstruction committee by the city government, rebuilding efforts stalled out.⁸² Much of the idealism surrounding the relief effort melted away as the City Council accepted new zoning proposals by the Tulsa Real Estate Exchange to build up industry and rail infrastructure on Greenwood's charred remains.⁸³ While the immediate motivation was land development, a forced removal of Tulsa's blacks would also put greater distance between the races, keeping contact between them to a minimum as an effort to avoid future conflict. In effect, the city put a new fire ordinance in place, requiring new buildings to be fireproofed and at least two stories tall, which was beyond the means of most Greenwood residents who just lost everything.⁸⁴ While the City Commission and county court went back and forth on the technicalities of the ordinance, it still prevented black Tulsans from rebuilding until a permanent injunction finally ended it in September 1921 as a protection of property rights.⁸⁵

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 263.

⁷⁴ Alfred L. Brophy, *Reconstructing the Dreamland: The Tulsa Riot of 1921: Race, Reparations and Reconciliation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), xx.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 88-89.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 90.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 94.

By the time the battle over the ordinance passed, white Tulsans no longer expressed interest in helping rebuild. Further, Tulsa *Star* editor A.J. Smitherman saw a shift by whites towards victim-blaming as many were considering attacking Greenwood again.⁸⁶ As Greenwood residents tried to rebuild for themselves after the ordinance, they ran into further obstacles; insurance companies were denying victims' claims, citing "riot exclusion" clauses that held up in court. The city was also cleared of blame according to the law of the day, so the victims were left without recourse. With four million dollars in damages to account for, relief efforts came to a paltry onehundred thousand dollars.⁸⁷ Thus, as Tulsa grew wealthy the city defaulted on its promises to rebuild, choosing instead to hide behind legal technicality.

With the failure of the city to prevent white Tulsans from destroying Greenwood, promising to aid in rebuilding, and then actively standing in the way of rebuilding efforts, Brophy closes the book with an argument for reparations.⁸⁸ He highlights four principles for reparations: first, that city officials were culpable for the disaster; second, that survivors and their families still feel the pain of the riot; third, that these reparations are in response to specific damages from a specific event, rather than general injustice; and fourth, that Tulsans fully knew that they were responsible for rebuilding and shirked that responsibility anyways.⁸⁹ By illustrating his case for reparations, Brophy explains aftermath of the riot with the intent of illustrating why the City of Tulsa ought to take practical measures to redress the wrongs of the past.

Riot and Remembrance: A Comprehensive Study on the Riot's Impact

Of the books written on the Tulsa Race Riot, James S. Hirsch provides perhaps the most complete work on the subject, as it not only covers the event but subsequent efforts to drag the event back into the public's attention. Hirsch builds upon the established narrative, while also examining the development of the Oklahoma Commission, its leaders, and its detractors. It follows those scholars and community leaders who brought it back into the limelight, the conflict brought on by their efforts, and the state of Tulsa's collective memory in the immediate wake of the Oklahoma Commission. Hirsch provides context for Don Ross's story of learning about the riot and spreading awareness in Tulsa, and how those efforts led to the 1997 commission. In covering the commission, it also highlights the vitriolic response from Tulsans like Beryl Ford and Bill O'Brien, who pushed back against the narrative accepted by the black community and academics alike. By building up the context that surrounded his contemporary scholarship on the riot, Hirsch's work provides insight into the interaction between scholarly and public discourse at the time.

The first of these actors, Oklahoma senator Don Ross, came to know about the riot from his teachers at Booker T Washington High in North Tulsa.⁹⁰ W.D. Williams, his history teacher, introduced the history of the riot to his class and young Ross openly challenged him. After class, Williams brought out a photo album brimming with photos and documentation of the riot, before telling the young man about his experience and introducing him to a football coach who also lived through the riot and corroborated the history.⁹¹ This experience as a teen compelled him as he "would compel Tulsa to confront its history" as a writer for the Oklahoma Eagle.⁹² Through the influence of John Hope Franklin, Ross became convinced that reparations were the way to set things right.⁹³ That opportunity would come with the 1997 commission.

Following the precedent set by Florida's commission on the Rosewood riot of 1923, Ross used their example to press the Oklahoma government for a resolution to pay reparations for the Tulsa Race Riot.⁹⁴ Even further, the commissions surrounding riots in Chicago in 1919, Harlem in 1935, and the Kerner Commission of 1967 all set positive models for Ross to move forward after he spearheaded legislation to create the Tulsa Race Riot Commission.⁹⁵ A few things, however, set this commission apart from those that came before. First, this riot was the worst in American history. Second, the collective memories of black and white communities

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 105-106.

⁹⁰ Hirsch, *Riot and Remembrance*, 186.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 189-90.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 191.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 197-198.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 237-238.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 239-240.

competed with one another, causing both communities to see themselves as the better actors in the event.⁹⁶ With those competing narratives hanging over proceedings, the issue of reparations as admission of responsibility hung as one of the greatest challenges for the commission. In one statement cited by someone writing in to the *Tulsa World*, they said: "I am 43 years old, and I have nothing to do with the Tulsa Race Riot. I'll be damned if my money pays for anybody's reparations. You're going to start another riot."⁹⁷

With all the publicity brought to the Tulsa Race Riot during the commission, Tulsa resident, collector, and local history enthusiast Beryl Ford rose to the challenge of defending the long-running white narrative of the riot. As Hirsch characterizes him:

To Beryl Ford, the black men at the courthouse were not war veterans who stopped a lynching but armed thugs who had driven through white Tulsa, looking for trouble. . . .

He revered the men and women who transformed this piece of grassland into a great city, and he was outraged at the attacks on their reputation. Yes, the riot was awful, but it certainly didn't happen the way the "colored" and their white allies would have you believe today. If the reporters and television cameras and the commissioners would just sit down with him, he would tell them what really happened.⁹⁸

As a respected member of the white community, Ford stood for the established interpretation of the riot that he and other white Tulsans held dear.⁹⁹ He was also a proud Tulsan who amassed a collection of ephemera of Tulsa history, a history which he felt was under assault. He lashed out against black Tulsans, claiming not because of any racism on his part but because they were twisting his city's cherished history for their own gain.¹⁰⁰ The commission granted Ford and Bill O'Brien, one of his compatriots, an opportunity to speak with them, in part because he represented a portion of the white mainstream, and because it would placate other dissenters.¹⁰¹ They came together on January 5, 2001 to discuss the report, where conflict between black and white narratives came to a head.¹⁰² After O'Brien claimed that the riot was set off by "black militants," and he stated that, "you people started it. You initiated the action, you started the shooting, and only after the whites got organized could they contain the blacks," setting the meeting off into a fever pitch with "you people" statements flowing from both sides.¹⁰³ At the close of the book, after the Commission report passed without reparations coming forward, Hirsch turns his attention to the efforts made in its wake, including a private fund for the survivors of the riot, the state giving survivors gold medals, and a musical created to tell the story.¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

After a precursory survey of the scholarship surrounding the Tulsa Race Riot, its problems reflect the difficulty surrounding the public debate over the subject. It is a challenge to find primary sources because, put simply, the city's efforts to cover up the true extent of the riot worked. When searching for a paper trail, few can be found. Without the Red Cross report and the tireless efforts of Mary E. Jones Parrish, the riot would likely have slipped into obscurity. Photos, memoirs, and oral histories are the Tulsa Race Riot historian's only other respite in researching the event. The trouble of limited primary sourcing is problematic for existing literature, as dissenting perspectives on the cause and character of the riot would rely on information that simply isn't present. That leaves a series of books that all essentially tell the same story of the riot in the same fashion since 1982, then backloading their accounts with new applications of that narrative.

To contemporary writers' credit, the differences in their works also indicate that scholarship surrounding the riot is beginning to grow out of its infancy. As they brought new application to the narrative it indicated that they had moved from justifying the riot's existence to an unknowing academic world, to the first steps towards

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 240.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 240.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 276.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 279-280.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 284-285.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 314.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 316.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 328-29.

injecting more nuance into retellings than before. Further academic understanding surrounding Greenwood's post-riot history would provide an understanding of the community that gives it a greater sense of texture and would juxtapose the riot to the community that fell victim to it.

The collective silence that fell over Tulsa also deserves greater attention as a sociological phenomenon. Broad studies on racial violence and collective memory would benefit from the example of the Tulsa Race Riot as a case study with many contributing factors. More serious attention to a comparative study of Tulsa and other communities that have suffered racial violence would also be beneficial. In addition, the coverup also had unexpected repercussions, as it effectively delegitimized any narrative other than the stories that Greenwood preserved. Whether or not the survivors' memories are completely trustworthy, whites from the time did not likewise preserve that experience.

Aside from Hirsch, most of the writers give relatively little time to fielding alternative accounts, in part because any records that could support an alternative have been either hidden or destroyed. Historians and journalists, responding to the information on the riot that currently exists, struggle to seriously consider many white perspectives on the riot because those perspectives are not readily available. While it seems immediately obvious that the perspectives provided by those like Beryl Ford seem incomplete and dishonest, the impact of the Tulsa Race Riot's divided narrative is central to the opposition still felt today. It needs to be taken seriously, because it still forms the framework that shapes how many whites in Tulsa understand the riot. Public historians would be of use in addressing the adaptive challenges that come with introducing a tough historical narrative, especially one that feels demonizing to white people, to Tulsa's white community, which still struggles with a loss in self-image in light of race riot scholarship. Breaking through to that community will be crucial in creating a better environment for discourse.