

HISTORY MATTERS

An Undergraduate Journal of Historical Research



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Appalachian State University

For the History Matters family

The History of History Matters

Appalachian State University

Department of History

Have you ever spent so much time and effort on something that you wanted to share it with other people? Have you ever felt unfulfilled receiving only a grade and your own satisfaction as rewards for your hard work? Have you ever wanted to get your work published?

For these reasons History Matters was founded. In the spring of 2003, Eric Burnette, a freshman at Appalachian State University, was looking for an outlet for his research paper. He was frustrated by the lack of venues for undergraduate research, and he figured that other students probably felt the same way. Dr. Michael Moore, who had edited *Albion*, a professional journal of British history, for over 25 years, began advising Burnette on how best to go about starting an academic journal for undergraduate historical research. Another Appalachian student, Matthew Manes, was asked to join the interesting experiment, and together they laid the groundwork for History Matters.

Our first deadline was in late January 2004. For the editorial staff, it was an extensive and time-consuming process of reading, revising, and communicating with both the authors and the Faculty Editorial Board. In the end, the collaboration published one research paper, one research essay, and three editorial book reviews. This first issue of *History Matters: An Undergraduate Journal of Historical Research* was published online on April 28, 2004.

From the beginning, Burnette and Manes wanted to expand the journal. The more students who were involved, the more students who had the opportunity to be published and the better those papers would be. The 2004-2005 school year saw the participation of the University of North Carolina Asheville and Western Carolina University, as well as submissions from half a dozen schools nationwide. The 2005 issue was published with two research papers, one from Appalachian State University and one from a student at Villanova University. Five book reviews from all three participating departments were also published.

Since 2004, History Matters has grown drastically. Over the years our submission base increased from 11 papers in 2004-2005 to 136 papers in 2016-2017. We now receive submissions from all over the United States from distinguished universities including Yale, Harvard, Brown, Cornell, UC Berkeley, and Stanford. History Matters has also expanded internationally. We have received submissions from Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and South America while also employing international staff members as contributing editors.

Today, History Matters continues to grow and prosper thanks to a supportive faculty, department, university, and, most importantly, the students who have worked hard on their papers and work with us to get them published.

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Bleeding Kansas, the *New York Tribune*, and Republican Rhetoric, 1854-1858

Miranda Christy

Ohio University

The antebellum period was a time of growing conflict and sectionalism and few events make that more evident than what transpired in Kansas in the 1850s. Following the passing of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, settlers flooded into Kansas, and the fight for control of the state continued, sometimes to the point of violence. Kansas captivated the national media. Thousands of articles were published by newspapers in the North and South; the Kansas story was documented in newspapers with drama and rhetoric and little objective truth. In the words of Craig Miner, “It was sustained by a media machine, North and South, that manufactured hyperbole and falsehood faster than it conveyed reliable information.”¹ One of the most curious of those was the *New York Tribune*. Through the *Tribune*’s partisan and often sensationalist reporting of Bleeding Kansas, editor Horace Greeley formed the rhetoric of the then infant Republican party and used Kansas to shape the party’s agenda for the coming decade.

Founded in 1841 the *New York Tribune* quickly rose in popularity, reaching a circulation of 200,000 readers by the Civil War under the influence of editor Horace Greeley². Greeley saw

¹ Craig Miner, *Seeding Civil War: Kansas in the National News, 1854-1858* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 21.

² Daniel Walker Howe, *What God Hath Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 577-8.

prevention of slavery's spread into new territories as the first logical step towards abolition, from which other steps would follow.³ He began his career as a northern Whig, but by 1854 he supported the organization of the new Republican party through the *Tribune*.⁴ Greeley's emerging ties to the forming Republican party in 1854 were part of a bigger shift away from the Whig party, caused in part by sectional divides over popular sovereignty brought to the surface by the Kansas-Nebraska Act.⁵ The Republican party was a mix of former Whigs and Democrats who hoped to challenge Democrat economic policies and Southern party domination.⁶ The *Tribune*'s wide circulation paired with Greeley's involvement in Northern politics put him in a position where he helped shape and popularize Republican ideas in the party's early years.

Through an article in the *Tribune* Greeley asserted that journalism should attach itself to truth and worthy causes over parties and political personalities.⁷ While this was the ideal rather than the reality, Greeley used the *Tribune* as a vehicle to champion social and moral causes, so much so that the equally popular and less radical *New York Herald* criticized Greeley for his moralizing.⁸ Greeley, unlike the *Herald* and many other moderate newspapers, was vocal in his opposition to slavery, and his free expression of his beliefs drew great attention from supporters and critics alike.

The reality of the newspaper's reporting in the 1850s, however, was extremely politically charged. The nature of the Kansas conflict became political; Democrats and Republicans became

³ Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970) 26, 118

⁴ Elizabeth R. Varon, *Disunion! The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789-1859* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 256.

⁵ Elizabeth R. Varon, *Disunion*, 252-3.

⁶ Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 148-153.

⁷ Miner, *Seeding Civil War*, 81.

⁸ Lorman A. Ratner, Paula T. Kaufman, and Dwight L. Teeter, *Paradoxes of Prosperity: Wealth-Seeking Versus Christian Values in Pre-Civil War America* (Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009) 19.

www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt1xcjtt.7.

leading figures in Kansas as a result of national politics, sectional frictions became more tense as the North and the South pushed their perspectives on slavery into the new settlements, elections became an uncertain time riddled with corruption, and the conflict ultimately escalated to violence as the United States experimented with the idea of popular sovereignty in new territories. The struggle for Kansas became a war between two factions: Democrats versus Republicans, freedom versus slavery, North versus South. The *Tribune* was one of many papers to portray the events in Kansas through these dichotomies. The emerging rhetoric of Northern Republicans, as well as the struggles they faced in the 1850s, are preserved in hundreds of articles across four years of thorough *Tribune* reporting.

The *Tribune*'s understanding of the conflicting interests in the North and South was explicit upon the passing of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. They decried the "northern traitors" who had supported the bill. One article lamented, "Their sole object was to propitiate southern favor and to secure the support of the slave power, and their work has been thoroughly and shrewdly done. Not even by accident or oversight is any advantage left for Liberty in their bill. It is all blackness without a single gleam of light, a desert without a spot of verdure, a crime that can show no redeeming point."⁹ This was not an unusual reaction; many Northern politicians voiced their objections to popular sovereignty, both because of their moral objections to slavery and because they believed the North had more to lose if the already politically powerful South was allowed to expand slavery into new territory.¹⁰ Legislation supporting the South was seen as a perpetuation of a slave power, one the North viewed as its political and ideological rival due to sectional differences.

⁹ "The Last Refuge of Crime", *New York Daily Tribune*, June 21, 1854. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1854-06-21/ed-1/seq-4/>

¹⁰ Nicole Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 16.

The *Tribune* did not hesitate to offer a solution to the threat of the growing power of slaveholders. A letter to the editor in the June 17, 1854 paper, written by an Athens County resident, said “The friends of Freedom must act energetically and promptly if they would snatch this magnificent prize from the Legrees and Haleys, the Pierces and Douglasses and the lower crowd of breeders and drivers of human cattle.”¹¹ It seems that within a month of the Kansas-Nebraska Act being passed, the writers and audience of the *Tribune* were decisive in their viewpoint: the settling of Kansas was to be an effort in the struggle between the free states and the slave states, one that prompted swift action.

This sense of competition for quick settlement was coupled by action. *Tribune* issues in 1854 advertised “emigrant aid company”, which was ready to contract transportation by train from Boston.¹² There was a rush to settle anti-slavery voters in time for the election,¹³ and as one of the more pro-abolitionist publications of the time, the *Tribune* took an interest in settlement, both in these advertisements and in numerous publications detailing the settlement of Kansas. This roused complaints from the opposition; an August 1854 article detailed a “slave-drivers’ meeting” in which an organization hoped to remove emigrants sent from the Northern Emigration Aid Societies.¹⁴ The *Tribune*’s advertisement of these emigrant aid programs may have supported the cause of Northern settlement, but it accelerated the development of opposing factions in Kansas, as evidenced by the report of a Southern pro-slavery response.

¹¹ “Slavery – Settlements – Missions – Soil, &c”, *New York Daily Tribune*, June 17, 1854. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1854-06-17/ed-1/seq-6/>

¹² “Emigrant Aid Company”, *New York Tribune*, June 23, 1854; June 28, 1854. LoC.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1854-06-23/ed-1/seq-6/> ;

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1854-06-29/ed-1/seq-1/>

¹³ Etcheson, 52.

¹⁴ “A Slave-Drivers’ Meeting”, *New York Tribune*, 26 Aug. 1854. LoC.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1854-08-26/ed-1/seq-5/>

This North-South rivalry was something the *Tribune* embraced. In March 1855, around the time of Kansas' first election of a state legislature, they published a letter to the editor which expressed disdain for the anti-slavery cause. "We shall beat you. We shall firmly establish slavery in that Territory, because it is in our interest to do so. And what is more, we don't care a damn what the Northern people may say," read the letter.¹⁵ The letter had no attributed source, but the hostile nature of the language so close to an election reflects the tense climate and high stakes surrounding the election. Given the *Tribune's* habit of portraying the South as a group of slave-drivers, it seems likely that Greeley along with his vast readership, would attribute this attitude to the wider Southern population. The sense of sectional differences and how strongly people may have felt them is evident in this letter.

The split between factions was not viewed exclusively through sectional divides; the *Tribune* also understood the struggle to be between Democrats and Republicans. The Republican party was new, but the Kansas-Nebraska Act caused a greater political division over the issue of slavery. Horace Greeley and his *New York Tribune* were some of the first to criticize Douglas's efforts to allow for the expansion of slavery.¹⁶ This coupled with his wide readership put him in a position to vocalize and even form the ideas adopted by the Republican party, whose formation was in part a national response to the events Greeley reported. Greeley himself was one of the men who called for the formation of a new northern party in response to the failure of the Whig Party. Greeley's political attitudes, as well as the growing divides between political parties, is evident in the *Tribune's* portrayal of Kansas politicians.

In 1854, Andrew H. Reeder was appointed as the territorial governor of Kansas. He had never held a political office before, but as a Democrat who supported popular sovereignty, the

¹⁵ "Kansas to Be a Slave State", *New York Tribune*, 31 March 1855. LoC. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1855-03-31/ed-1/seq-6/>

¹⁶ Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 126.

Pierce administration hoped his presence would strengthen the party within the state.¹⁷ The *Tribune* questioned Reeder's morality based on his alleged role in a prominent divorce trial, calling him a "sneak" and "Slave-Driver-in-Chief".¹⁸ Reeder, however, became a supporter of Kansas being a free state,¹⁹ and this shift in his political stance won the approval of the *Tribune*. In an 1855 article reprinted from the *Kansas Herald of Freedom* they reported, "The bold and manly course pursued by Gov. Reeder has endeared him to the American people."²⁰ The shift in Reeder's stance in Kansas policy, as well as the shift in portrayal from slavery enthusiast to hero of the people, shows both the speed at which the circumstances in Kansas shifted and the role of political stance in the portrayal the newspaper presented. In Reeder's case, the *Tribune* went from viewing him as a corrupt member of the slave power to a hero of American republicans in less than a year's time.

Tension mounted as a result of the 1855 election; the previous rush of emigrants left many in the North with high hopes that there would be enough support for the free-state movement. The election was a disaster. Men from Missouri flooded into Kansas to cast their votes, paid by slaveholders. Massive groups of men armed with weapons camped near Lawrence, and the crowding prevented many of their rivals from voting. Threats were issued in more than one instance. In a territory with 2,905 legal voters, over 6,000 ballots were cast – 5,427 of these were pro-slavery.²¹ Many citizens, both in Kansas and in the East, were outraged.

¹⁷ Etcheson, 53.

¹⁸ "A Friend in Need", *New York Daily Tribune*, July 12, 1855. LoC.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1854-07-12/ed-1/seq-4/>

¹⁹ Nicole Etcheson, "The Goose Question", in *Bleeding Kansas, Bleeding Missouri: The Long Civil War on the Border*, Jonathan Earle and Diane Mutti Burke, eds. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013), 58.

²⁰ "Gov. Reeder in Kansas", *New York Tribune*, July 16, 1865. LoC.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1855-07-16/ed-1/seq-3/>

²¹ Michael E. Woods, *Bleeding Kansas: Slavery, Sectionalism, and Civil War on the Missouri-Kansas Border* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 37-39.

The *Tribune* was quick to report on the botched election. Despite the delay in messages from their correspondents in the territory, they speculated on the “elaborate villainy” carried out by pro-slavery Missouri residents and restated a claim from a Missouri dispatch that as many as ten thousand men had come from Missouri to disrupt voting. The election allowed the *Tribune* to become even more explicit in its denouncement of slavery: “This election demonstrates nothing but the incurable depravity of slaveholding – the obvious but often forgotten truth that those who live on the stolen labor of black women and children will not hesitate to rob white men, likewise, of their rights, whenever that may seem likely to promote or prolong their chance of paying for work with stripes instead of wages.”²²

The *Tribune*’s framing of slavery is an interesting one. While it acknowledges the status of slaves, it focuses on the impact on white men, their rights, and the economic impact of slavery. Like many antebellum Republicans, Horace Greeley saw westward expansion as a way to combat urban poverty, and like many Republicans in the East, he embraced the settlement of free farmers in western territories as a way to combat slave labor and to protect the economic interests of free laborers. The superiority of free labor to slave labor became a popular Republican platform, spread in part by the *Tribune*.²³

In constructing its slavery versus freedom rhetoric, the *Tribune* emphasized the broader importance of the actions of citizens in the present. In its encouragement of emigration, it drew on the historical significance of Kansas’ status. “Let there be no bolting, no flinching, no weak recoiling [...] Now will be tested the strength of men’s devotion to Freedom, to Justice and Humanity. History will brand the names of the recreant and hallow the memories of the

²² “Kansas – The Giant Fraud”, *New York Tribune*, 2 April 1855. LoC.
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1855-04-02/ed-1/seq-4/>

²³ Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 11-12; 27-28; 43-48.

unswerving. Stand firm!”²⁴ This approach may imply some awareness on the part of the *Tribune* as to the weight of the outcome in Kansas on the broader question of slavery in the United States.

Another article, printed in May of 1855, takes a similar tone:

Which motto shall be emblazoned on the banner of the North? No freedom outside the Free States, or no Slavery outside the Slave States? Answer, Northern men of all parties and all factions and sects! Choose your colors, whatever they may be, and be ready for the coming struggle! We are in a crisis on the Slavery question, and the issue must soon be determined. Slavery is to triumph over Freedom, or Freedom is to repel the aggressions of Slavery. The North is to be humiliated, humbled in the dust, the Government to be surrendered into the hands of the slave-drivers, all our territory open to their sway; or Freedom must assert its prerogative and firmly resist and quell the audacious attempt at subjugation and conquest now making by the Slave power.²⁵

While the *Tribune* had printed rhetoric like this before, the backlash over voter suppression gave them a platform to be more explicit. More and more, the conflict in Kansas was portrayed as one between two fundamentally incompatible factions. Freedom and slavery, resistance and subjugation, North and South.

This conflict and the rhetoric around it had a place on the national political scene. Prominent former Whigs like Greeley, William Henry Seward and Charles Sumner came together as Republicans to condemn the pro-slavery Kansas party. These political entanglements had taken root before the Kansas-Nebraska Act and continued in the years after its resolution. Before he founded the *Tribune*, Greeley was involved in prominent newspaper publisher Thurlow Weed’s effort to have Seward elected as New York’s governor. This led to a fruitful

²⁴ “The Struggle in Kansas”, *New York Tribune*, 6 April 1855. LoC.
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1855-04-06/ed-1/seq-4/>

²⁵ “Freedom or Slavery”, *New York Tribune*, 7 May 1855. LoC.
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1855-05-07/ed-1/seq-4/>

political alliance between the three men.²⁶ Greeley's relationship with Seward grew tense when the rival *New York Times* was given copies of Seward's speeches before the *Tribune*, and in 1860 Greeley lobbied against Seward's presidential bid,²⁷ but the commonality in their ideas and disillusionment with the Whig Party led them to the Republican Party. Charles Sumner and Horace Greeley had a more amicable relationship; Greeley reprinted an article labelling Sumner "a martyr to one of the dearest of human rights" when he was beaten in the Senate chamber in 1856, and Sumner endorsed Greeley as the 1872 presidential candidate.²⁸ Despite the complicated and sometimes hostile relationships between these politicians, Greeley, Seward and Sumner were united by their belief in a broader Slave Power conspiracy, and that given the opportunity, even non-slaveholders in the South would eagerly embrace free labor.²⁹

As the conflict went on, citizens began to arm themselves. The *Tribune* saw this as a justified, defensive act by the free-state population. They were dismissive of ruffians' concern, referencing rumors of \$100,000 being collected to stockpile weapons to murder their families. In turn, the *Tribune* retorted "If these ruffians did not mean to assail and subjugate the Free State men they would not talk of 'the horrors of Civil War' which will never be experienced unless

²⁶ Lorman A. Ratner, Paula T. Kaufman, and Dwight L. Teeter, *Paradoxes of Prosperity: Wealth-Seeking Versus Christian Values in Pre-Civil War America* (Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009) 27.

www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt1xcjtt.7.

Richard L. Watson. "Thurlow Weed, Political Boss", *New York History* 22, no. 4 (1941): 423.

www.jstor.org/stable/23135212.

²⁷ Donald A. Ritchie, *Press Gallery* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press, 1991) 47, 54. www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvk12rkc.5.

²⁸ *The Philadelphia Times*, "Remarks of the Hon. E. Joy Morris at the Sumner Indignation Meeting at Philadelphia on Friday Night", *New York Tribune*, 11 June 1865. LoC.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1856-06-11/ed-1/seq-6/>

Republican Congressional Committee, and African American Pamphlet Collection. Grant or Greeley--which? Facts and arguments for the consideration of the colored citizens of the United States: being extracts from letters, speeches, and editorials by colored men and their best friends. Sumner's mistake, Greeley's surrender, and Grant's faithfulness. [Washington Published by the National Congressional Committee, 1872] Pdf.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/12008330/>.

²⁹ Elizabeth R. Varon, *Disunion! The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789-1859* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 262-263.

commenced by themselves.”³⁰ This accusation of disunion was one practiced often by Greeley within a broader wave of talk about disunion evoked by abolitionists like James S. Pike, who was a regular correspondent in the *Tribune*.³¹

By December 1855, hostilities had escalated to the point of impending violence, including groups of armed men driving each other out and firing their rifles. A leader of one such group had been arrested and taken to Leecompton, leading abolitionists to rally for his release. In particular, the *Tribune* published several articles covering the murder of free-state man Charles Dow by proslavery Frank Coleman after Dow ordered Coleman to leave his home. Jacob Branson, a man who had lived with Dow, was arrested by the Douglas county sheriff, but a free-state party came to his aid and he was released.³² This drew the ire of proslavery supporters, but headlines in the *Tribune* celebrated the “Manly Attitude of the Free State Men” against the border ruffians.³³ Unlike the agitated proslavery Americans, Greeley saw the actions of the free state party as yet another event in his narrative about the heroic fight against the slave power.

In reality, what came to be known as the Wakarusa War was short and anti-climactic, but that was not the story the newspapers decided to tell. The *Tribune* published articles with titles like “Civil War in Kansas”, “The Kansas Rebellion”, “Treason in Kansas” and “The Invaders – a Meeting – McCrea.” It is unlikely that the paper’s journalists saw this as a true threat of war; a letter from a correspondent in Lawrence stated “Unless there should be some heavy arrivals today, Lawrence is safe at this time, for those here cannot stay down at Franklin, drinking, swearing and idling forever.”³⁴ In media rhetoric, though, the conflict was escalated to a war,

³⁰ “Affairs in Kansas”, *New York Tribune*, 21 Nov. 1855. LoC.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1855-11-21/ed-1/seq-4/>

³¹ Varron, *Disunion!*, 263-5.

³² Miner, *Seeding Civil War*, 137-138.

³³ “Important from Kansas”, *New York Tribune*, 8 Dec. 1855. LoC.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1855-12-08/ed-1/seq-5/>

³⁴ “Lawrence, (K.T.) Dec. 1, noon, 1855”, *New York Tribune*, 13 Dec. 1855. LoC.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1855-12-13/ed-1/seq-5/>

lending itself to the narrative of Kansas as a battleground for Freedom against the ever-oppressive Slave Power.³⁵

Some five months after the Wakarusa War ended, resistance in Kansas was once again in national headlines. Armed men were gathering once again. The *Tribune* saw this as a logical progression, reporting “a bloody collision in Kansas seems all but inevitable – a collision which can hardly fail to shake the Union to its center [...]”.³⁶ Once again, the *Tribune* drew on rhetoric of disunion and Civil War. “If you madly persevere, Kansas will not be without her William Tell, who will refuse at all hazards to recognize the tyrannical edict; and this will be the beginning of civil war.”³⁷ In this instance, invoking the image of Tell’s rebellion against tyranny positions the free-state party as oppressed resistance to an unjust government they must overthrow. The proslavery faction was very clearly the enemy in this narrative. The sack of Lawrence in May 1856 was a continuation of the Wakarusa War³⁸, but the *Tribune* saw it as another burst of unavoidable conflict in the struggle for Kansas. The violent incidents that followed, such as Black Jack and Osawatimie, received media coverage, but it was not unlike coverage of earlier incidents. Narratives of slaveholder violence and impending war continued. Meanwhile, coverage of the Pottawatomie massacre, which saw free-state supporters as the violent party, received scant coverage.³⁹

In September 1857, meetings began in the interest of drafting the Lecompton Constitution, a document written primarily by proslavery advocates to cement the future of slavery in the state. The population in Kansas was as divided as they had ever been, with the

³⁵ Craig Miner, *Seeding Civil War*, 137.

³⁶ “Doings in Congress”, *New York Tribune*, 21 May 1856. LoC.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1856-05-21/ed-1/seq-4/>

³⁷ “XXXIVth Congress, First Session”, *New York Tribune*, 21 May 1856. LoC.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1856-05-21/ed-1/seq-4/>

³⁸ Michael E. Woods, *Bleeding Kansas*, 48-50.

³⁹ Craig Miner, *Seeding Civil War*, 150.

territorial governors trying and failing to convince each side to concede to the validity of the other. The delegates who formed the Lecompton constitutional convention were largely pro-slavery Democrats.⁴⁰

The constitutional meeting was of some concern to the *Tribune*, but their focus was on conflict between involved Democrats: “The Lecompton feud, it will be noted, is almost entirely between these Democratic brethren [...] We have a joyful hope that this quarrel will render further cooperation, especially in the October Election, between the two kinds of Democrats less perfect than it has been.”⁴¹ This evaluation was more than a propaganda piece; various issues caused factional divides within the Democratic party in the 1850s, and 1854 and 1856 saw massive defections from the party, in part due to the efforts of ambitious democrats like Pierce and Buchanan to appease Southern Democrats in their treatment of Kansas and Nebraska. Meanwhile, Republicans recruited many former anti-slavery Democrats into the Republican party by consciously supporting candidates who were former Democrats, which incentivized many disillusioned men to abandon their former allegiance.⁴²

This fracture between Democrats gave free state men hope for the coming election, but media reports balanced that with an undercurrent of fear given the turmoil in the last election. A correspondent from Topeka wrote “Her people will yet be free. Alas! I fear, though, not until her garments are dyed in blood again – the mingled blood of the oppressors and the oppressed.”⁴³ The election passed without the violence of the 1855 election, in part due to military presence at the polls. The free state faction had won control of the legislature.⁴⁴ Soon after, drafting of the

⁴⁰ Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas*, 139, 151.

⁴¹ *New York Tribune*, 15 Sept. 1857. LoC.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1857-09-15/ed-1/seq-4/>

⁴² Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 155-167

⁴³ “The Approaching Kansas Election”, *New York Tribune*, 26 Sept. 1857. LoC.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1857-09-26/ed-1/seq-6/>

⁴⁴ Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas*, 153-155.

Lecompton Constitution continued, and the *Tribune*'s reporting focused again on the efforts of the pro-slavery faction.

The framing of the Lecompton Constitutional Convention was explicit: it was pro-slavery and dangerous to the free state cause. The *Tribune* viewed even the limits set on slavery as supportive of slavery. "It may pretend to limit Slavery to the slaves already in Kansas and their progeny; but, Slavery once established there, how is a subsequently imported slave to establish his freedom?"⁴⁵ The *Tribune* warned Northern states against indifference, which they equated to abandoning the emigrants who were fighting for a free Kansas.

In their coverage of constitutions, the *Tribune*'s reporting was packed with melodrama and misinformation. As they awaited the vote and decision surrounding the Lecompton Constitution, the *Tribune* accused the federal government of being oppressive; regardless of the question of slavery, they said, "it is an outrage to deprive white people of their right to govern themselves, and leave them to only the government of negroes."⁴⁶ The newspaper interpreted the events surrounding Lecompton as a government overreach, and this allowed them to frame the constitution as "a scheme of civil war and disunion," a war the writers saw as inevitable if the Lecompton Constitution was accepted.⁴⁷ Again, the *Tribune* presented the idea of differences that could not be reconciled: an oppressive government versus the white population of Kansas and those who wanted the constitution versus those who did not. In some cases, the *Tribune* went so far as to publish rumors of civil war erupting in Kansas. The *Tribune* acknowledged that other newspapers denied the reports, and that there was a possibility of them being untrue, but they

⁴⁵ *New York Tribune*, 19 Oct. 1857. LoC.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1857-10-19/ed-1/seq-4/>

⁴⁶ "The New Kansas Issue", *New York Tribune*, 18 Dec. 1857. LoC.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1857-12-18/ed-1/seq-5/>

⁴⁷ "The Latest News Received by Magnetic Telegraph", *New York Tribune*, 17 Dec. 1857. LoC.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1857-12-17/ed-1/seq-4/> ; "From Washington", *New York Tribune*, 23 Dec. 1857, LoC <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1857-12-23/ed-1/seq-5/>

saw this as irrelevant. “Although some of the details of the news received may be inaccurate, yet enough is certainly known to show that civil war, if not already begun, is certain to be lighted [...]”⁴⁸ To Greeley, it made no difference whether the events he reported were true; the possibility of a looming conflict was enough to serve his opposition to Lecompton and all it represented. To Greeley, at least in his reporting, the country was already engaged in a political and moral war, so a physical civil war served to take his perspective to what he perceived as its logical conclusion.

The last significant turn in the fight for Kansas in the media was the introduction of the English Compromise by Buchanan’s administration. Despite Stephen Douglas’s warnings, Buchanan offered a deal that would lead Kansas voters to accept the Lecompton Constitution. In exchange for a four-million-acre land grant, Kansas could pass the constitution and become a state. If they rejected the constitution, they had to defer statehood for two years, and could not reapply until they reached a population of 93,000. The bill did not pass.⁴⁹ The *Tribune* remarked that this choice to not come into the Union was “at once amazing and amusing.”⁵⁰ Though Kansas was not admitted to the Union until 1861, the rejection of the Lecompton Constitution and the drafting of the subsequent Wyandotte Constitution marked the end of the “Kansas drama”. Public interest in Kansas waned as events took an anticlimactic turn, and the *Tribune*, like the rest of the spectators, moved on.⁵¹

The struggle for Kansas was thoroughly documented by sensationalist media in the East, and the *Tribune* is a prime example of that. Horace Greeley and his writers approached these

⁴⁸ *The Philadelphia North American*, “Civil War in Kansas,” *New York Tribune*, 7 Jan. 1858. LoC. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1858-01-07/ed-1/seq-6/>; “Rumors of Civil War from Kansas”, *New York Tribune*, 5 Jan. 1858. LoC. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1858-01-05/ed-1/seq-4/>

⁴⁹ Varon, *Disunion!*, 306-307; 314.

⁵⁰ *New York Tribune*, 13 Aug. 1858. LoC. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1858-08-13/ed-1/seq-4/>

⁵¹ Craig Miner, *Seeding Civil War*, 239.

events as an avenue to express their own biases, ideals, and fears. Greeley, like many Republicans from the North, feared that the South would gain power and impose on their rights as white men, both their right to vote and their right to free labor. Sectional and political allegiances became clearer as Greeley used the Kansas news to weave a story of civil war and disunion between two incompatible factions: North and South, Democrat and Republican, Freedom and Slavery, resistance and subjugation. This was the narrative many Republicans from the North took into the 1860 election and, ultimately, the Civil War.

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Introduction

On June 12th, 1777, the Pennsylvania Evening Post, a pro-patriot newspaper in Philadelphia, published a narrative about a soldier who was killed in action the week before. The soldier had been on a scouting mission around Bound Brook, New Jersey, a seasonal encampment where George Washington and the Continental Army had dug in against the British for the summer. After a week in which a number of Continental soldiers had deserted from base, the base command decided to send out a scouting party to search for the troops who had abandoned the encampment. One Lieutenant Martin, whose first name and division are not mentioned, was selected to lead the party, and deployed with ten men on an advanced scouting mission. Soon after leaving base, they engaged a party of Hessians (German mercenaries) and British on horseback, fifteen strong. Martin fired on the enemy soldiers and allegedly killed the “commander of the gang” on his first shot. The enemies turned and fired back, causing all but Martin to retreat. The British and Hessian detachment soon surrounded Lieutenant Martin who, “although he was calling out for quarters,” they “butchered with the greatest cruelty.” All told,

the newspaper report, entitled “Extract of a letter from Middle Brook, June 7,” claimed Martin was stabbed seventeen times, “most of which, it is said, were sufficient singly to prove mortal.”⁵²

Upon discovering Lieutenant Martin’s body on a later scouting expedition, George Washington was reported to have had the body recovered, washed, and displayed prominently at Bound Brook Camp as “evidence of the enemy’s brutality.” Alexander Hamilton, aide to Washington at this time, communicated his observations of the body with congressman John Jay, writing that there was “not a single bullet wound” on the corpse, but that it had been “hacked to pieces” with a sword in an act of absolutely “barbarous butchery.”⁵³ It’s clear that the violent dismemberment of the corpse had an effect on Hamilton, as it likely had on other soldiers and officials in camp, and the people at home in Philadelphia who read the reports of wanton violence being done by British hands.

This paper will explore how, exactly, British soldiers and the violence they performed was leveraged politically to win support for the American cause, considering the racial and medico-legal dynamics that made that propaganda valid in the eyes of the American public. The second part of the essay will then analyze how, in the absence of the British after the Revolution, public resentment and violence towards Indigenous communities continued to be framed in terms of a Revolutionary struggle for nationhood, from which Indigenous peoples had become fundamentally excluded. This is an essay that deals with propaganda and the creation of national myth. As such, its engagement will be almost literary in scope, delving deeply into the language employed in primary sources during the Revolution which set the scene for westward expansion into native lands in subsequent decades.

⁵² *Pennsylvania Evening Post* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) III, no. 364, June 12, 1777: 315. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.

⁵³ Holger Hoock, *Scars of Independence: America's Violent Birth* (New York: Crown Publishing, 2017), 151.

The Revolution as a Civil Conflict

The story of Lieutenant Martin was not an isolated instance. Depictions of the violence being enacted on Continental soldiers, prisoners of war, and innocent civilians were commonplace reading in Revolutionary America. Newspapers regularly published reports from the front, such as the one cited above, which displayed the grisly realities of war for the public. These reports, as well as independently-published soldiers' first-hand accounts, comprised a potent polemical campaign against the British soldiery meant to inspire passion in the war effort on the part of the Patriots. Holger Hooch, in his book *Scars of Independence: America's Violent Birth*, writes that "telling a plausible, well-evidenced story of enemy atrocities against America's combatants" proved to be as critical a weapon than any fighting force in a civil conflict wherein a new nation sought to set itself apart from the beloved motherland.⁵⁴

The American Revolution was a conflict that saw brothers fighting brothers and neighbors betraying neighbors as loyalties were decided. Many colonists were conflicted and unsure. As the reality of a war breaking out between the mother country and its colonies became more pressing, many had to come to terms with the fact that this conflict would involve fighting an enemy "more alike [to them] than any other enemies they had faced." For both the Patriots and the Loyalists, the American Revolution did not look like the "world-historical drama about the forging of a new nation," but rather looked like a sadly unavoidable civil conflict that would pit them against community members that they had long called friends, or at the very least, fellow New Yorkers, Pennsylvanians and Bostonites.⁵⁵

In this context of uncertainty, of facing an enemy that was almost too familiar, new ways of delineating friend from foe, American from British, needed to be articulated in order for the war

⁵⁴ Hooch, *Scars of Independence*, 156.

⁵⁵ Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists In the Revolutionary World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 28.

to remain popular. One central way in which American politicians and newspaper editors achieved this goal was by “othering” the British through their purported relationship with North American Indigenous communities. In deeply racialized language, newspaper reports and personal war narratives published during the Revolution demonized the British for being in league with Indigenous peoples who were perceived to be naturally violent and aggressive “savages” who had little to no understanding of the unwritten rules of war.⁵⁶ Through such propaganda, American leaders spun a moral narrative wherein British alliances with Indigenous peoples became a central claim of a fundamental difference between British subjects, whose blind loyalty to the king made them forget their humanity and become “savages” themselves, and Americans, who merely desired freedom from the oppression of the British monarchy.

These narratives meant to other the British soldiery gained further validity through their use of medical or forensic language. In eighteenth-century North America, forensic evidence presented in trials dealing with violent crimes most commonly took the form of visual observations made by a coroner, whose opinions held much sway in the courtroom. Narratives written about British atrocities that were pushed on the American public were highly descriptive, and often corroborated by a medical professional, such that they became a form of legal evidence in a public trial against the British, inviting members of the public to become witnesses and decide (based on clinical, descriptive accounts of atrocities, vetted by medical professionals) whether the British were guilty of the crimes they purportedly committed.⁵⁷

For decades after the Revolutionary War had ended, the “spirit of ‘76” remained a powerful tool for validating westward expansion and informing the creation of ideas of Manifest Destiny which subjugated and expelled Indigenous communities east of the Mississippi and beyond.

⁵⁶ Jonathan Carver, *Travels through the interior parts of North-America, in the years 1766, 1767, and 1768* (London: Printed for the author; and sold by J. Walter and S. Crowder, 1778), 299.

⁵⁷ Katherine Watson, *Forensic Medicine in Western Society, A History* (London; New York: Routledge, 2011).

When the war ended, the new nation's attention turned from just winning the conflict to fulfilling the destiny that the conflict had supposedly embodied, one in which the United States was fated to conquer the continent. Daniel Richter, in his book *Facing East from Indian Country*, acknowledged sadly that, after the Revolution, "Native people ... could find no place in the mythology of a nation marching triumphantly westward across the continent."⁵⁸ That mythology had its beginnings in the American Revolution and the propagandized narratives the Americans spun about a British-Indigenous alliance which was fundamentally anti-American.

The Racial Politics of Violence During the Revolutionary War

Racial themes persisted "throughout the imperial crisis" of the Revolutionary War, but it was also the base on which that crisis was originally built. Rumors that the British sought to 'set the Indians upon colonists' caused a group of Long Islanders "celebrating the Declaration of Independence" to dress an "effigy of King George III" in native garb and then hang him and burn him at the stake.⁵⁹ John Stuart, a British official in Virginia, had to flee his home when "wild allegations ... lent widespread credence by anonymous letters from his foes published in the *Virginia Gazette*" that he intended to side with local Indigenous communities.⁶⁰

It is not surprising that even a rumor of British-Indigenous alliance would cause such violent consternation, as those insinuations were built into some of the most popular documents of the Revolutionary era: Paine's *Common Sense* and the Declaration of Independence. In the Declaration, one of the grievances set forth against King George III was that the King had "excited domestic Insurrections among" Americans and had "endeavored to bring on the

⁵⁸ Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 252-3.

⁵⁹ Richter, *Facing East*, 218.

⁶⁰ Richter, *Facing East*, 219.

Inhabitants of our Frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of Warfare, is an undistinguished Destruction, of all Ages, Sexes, and Conditions.” In Paine’s *Common Sense* pamphlet that set Philadelphia aflame in early 1776, he wrote that there were “thousands and ten thousands” in the Colonies who wished for the glorious expulsion “from the continent” of that “barbarous and hellish power, which hath stirred up the Indians . . . to destroy us.”⁶¹ Though this narrative was almost entirely fabricated, the popular myth of British and Indigenous entanglement made the specter of war more real and was employed as a tactic to popularize the idea of separation from Britain.

Not only did early Revolutionary documents propagate the idea that the British might be actively inspiring Indigenous insurrections against the Colonies, but they also posited that the British might actually be even more evil than the racialized other of the “Indian savage.” Paine demonstrated disdain for those who claimed that a reason for not engaging in conflict with the British was that they were the “parent country” and, therefore, deserved respect. To that, he responded: “Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young nor savages make war upon their families.”⁶²

Popular literature of the period echoed these foundational documents and articulated anti-British rhetoric using racist, anti-Indigenous language. John Dodge, trader by day and emissary between the Continental Congress and the Iroquois Confederacy by night, penned a popular captivity story entitled “A Narrative of the Capture and Treatment of John Dodge, by the English at Detroit” which was published in Philadelphia in 1779. In the narrative, he described

⁶¹ Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, (London: Philadelphia, printed; London, re-printed, for J. Almon, opposite Burlington-House in Piccadilly, 1776), 20-21.

⁶² Paine, *Common Sense*, 13.

some of what he experienced being imprisoned at Detroit after being discovered coordinating a treaty between the local Indigenous tribes and the Continental Congress.⁶³

At one point in the account, Dodge echoes the Declaration of Independence almost exactly in its racist ideas of Indigenous “savagery” and British-Indigenous allyship as proof of American moral superiority. One Captain Le Mote, temporarily in charge of the Fort, supposedly tried to force Dodge to go “on a scouting party with the Savages.” Dodge responded by saying that it was against his nature “to take up arms” against his “own flesh and blood, and much more so to go with Savages to butcher and scalp defenceless women and children, that were not interested in the present dispute.” Le Mote purportedly sent out the scouting party anyway “with orders not to spare man, woman, or child,” a “cruel mandate” to which “even some of the Savages made an objection.”⁶⁴ Dodge takes the moral upper hand and demonizes the British officer for being so callously violent as to disturb even those perceived at the time to be unhuman savages.

He would double down on this rhetoric of British “savagery” again soon after, when he depicted the scene that allegedly took place when the scouting party returned. Having “induced the Savages” to murder and scalp the “poor inhabitants” of a nearby town, the “British barbarians ... flew to meet and hug [the Savages] to their breasts reeking with the blood of innocence.”⁶⁵ This exchange, as well as many others Dodge incorporates into his account, are almost certainly fabricated or at least embellished with political ends in mind. And while it may be difficult to read such overtly racist language, the political power of such an exchange to a common person living in Philadelphia, on the fence about the prospects of the Revolutionary project, cannot be

⁶³ John Dodge, *A Narrative of the Capture and Treatment of John Dodge, by the English At Detroit* (Philadelphia, PA: Printed by T. Bradford, at the Coffee-House., 1779), 7.

⁶⁴ Dodge, *A Narrative of the Capture ... of John Dodge*, 13-14.

⁶⁵ Dodge, *A Narrative of the Capture ... of John Dodge*, 13-14.

overlooked. As effigies of King George III in native garb burned in Long Island and rumors of British-Indigenous alliances spread like wildfire across the Colonies, authors like John Dodge capitalized on that anger and spun narratives that echoed the most famous political documents of the day in condemning British soldiers for associating themselves with the hated Indigenous peoples of North America. In so doing, they strengthened and validated the claims that departure from the Empire must be the only option.

Medico-Legal Indictments of the British

Throughout the war, reports like the one about Lieutenant Martin which introduced the essay continued to stream in from the front. The Continental Congress, as well as branches of the Continental Army, seized on the opportunity to turn the bodies of soldiers “mangled in small-scale military defeats” into “moral and polemical assets in their war for popular American support.”⁶⁶ In order to accomplish that goal and reach the broadest audience possible, the Continental Congress collected these reports of British atrocities and had them published in the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* in the spring of 1777.

In the first section of the report published in the *Evening Post*, which was actually the third part of the “Appendix to the Report of the Committee, containing proofs and illustrations,” Congress displays evidence collected on the “savage butchery of those who had submitted, and were incapable of resistance.” Two orders allegedly discovered in the order books of British officers found at Trenton and Princeton open the section: any rebels found alone should be “immediately taken and hung up” without being offered a trial or given quarter. Then, the grisly details start in full force. Lieutenant Yates of Virginia was wounded and sitting on the battlefield near Princeton in January 1777 when a British soldier came up, shot him in the chest, stabbed

⁶⁶ Hoock, *Scars of Independence*, 156.

him thirteen times with a bayonet, and then clubbed him to death with the butt of his musket. Another soldier, one “Adjutant Kelly, of Col. Scott’s party” was similarly wounded and left on the field, where he was later found “much mangled, his brains beat out, with two broken muskets lying by him.”⁶⁷

Interestingly, each of these narratives was signed off on by at least one medical professional. Lieutenant Yates’ account was signed off on by none other than famed physician and signer of the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Rush, as well as Anthony W. White, then a Brigadier General in the Continental Army and aide-de-camp for George Washington.⁶⁸ Adjutant Kelly had his tale attested to by “RD. Rose, Surgeon” as well as “one of the Justices of the Peace for the state of New Jersey” who apparently “swore to the truth of the above report” in the presence of two other extremely prominent and well-known physicians of the time, Adam Stephen and Theodorick Bland.⁶⁹ What is one to make of medical officials validating reports about extreme British violence?

Katherine D. Watson, who studies the history of forensic sciences, writes that before the twentieth century introduction of scientific forensic techniques focusing on physical evidence like “bullets, insects and fibres” at a crime scene, the primary piece of evidence in any criminal trial of a violent crime was the body of the victim itself.⁷⁰ Therefore, the medical professionals deemed capable of doing an analysis of the body of a victim for the court held immense legal power. By the eighteenth century, as the population (and, therefore, the instances of violent crimes) swelled, coroners were in high demand for their medical expertise and unique authority.

⁶⁷ *Pennsylvania Evening Post* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) III, no. 350, May 10, 1777: 258. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.

⁶⁸ Biographical information on Anthony W. White from the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

⁶⁹ “Bland, Theodorick (1742-1790),” *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress - Retro Member details*, accessed December 10, 2020, <https://bioguideretro.congress.gov/Home/MemberDetails?memIndex=B000546> ; Samuel K Fore, “Adam Stephen,” *George Washington’s Mount Vernon* (Harlan Crow Library), <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/adam-stephen/>.

⁷⁰ Watson, *Forensic Medicine in Western Society*, 61.

The office of the coroner “had remarkable staying power on American soil” because throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it maintained sole “investigative powers to determine both the cause and the manner of death,” and, therefore, the power to sway the verdict of the whole trial.⁷¹

In the medico-legal understandings of the day, having nationally-recognizable doctors sign off on the narratives of British violence would have given those narratives a large amount of credibility. It also would have given them a legal dimension, such that this two-page spread of gory renderings of brutalization and rape by British soldiers reads like legal evidence. By providing this “evidence” to the populace, the Continental Congress invited widespread participation in a public trial of the British. This idea also played on the popularity among Revolutionaries of the impromptu “trials” of the early 1770s, the famous tarring and featherings of British colonial officials who had fallen out of favor with the Republican mob.

Lieutenant Martin was not the only soldier whose body was put on display. In another instance, George Washington had Brigadier General Hugh Mercer’s body recovered from Princeton, where he had fallen in battle, and displayed at a coffeehouse in Philadelphia for an entire day before the body was interred with full military honors. His body had been similarly mangled as Martin’s.⁷² The act of articulating evidence of atrocities in Congressional reports in medical language and putting those brutalized bodies on display in public places made the public witnesses in a trial of British atrocity, which gave the power of deciding guilt to the population. The people became the coroners deciding guilt in the act of examining the bodies of Continental

⁷¹ Jeffrey Jentzen, “Death and Empire: Medicolegal Investigations and Practice Across the British Empire,” in *Global Forensic Cultures: Making Fact and Justice in the Modern Era*, ed. Ian Burney and Christopher Hamlin (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019), 154-5.

⁷² *Pennsylvania Evening Post* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) III, no. 303, January 18, 1777: 27. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.

soldiers figuratively rendered in newspaper reports from the front, and literally displayed in the coffee shop down the street.

From Revolution to Colonization

Taken together, (1) the racist language that popular captivity narratives such as those of John Dodge deployed about Indigenous people and the British soldiers with whom they were allied, and (2) the Continental Congress reports that worked to put the British on trial for their “savage” violence certainly constituted a powerful anti-British propaganda campaign that helped keep morale high for the Patriots in a difficult civil conflict. But the insidious, unintended consequence of this type of narrative was that it created a racialized world that rejected any notion that North American colonists and Indigenous peoples might live beside one another. As Daniel Richter writes: “When those who arrogated to themselves the right to be called ‘Americans’ seceded from the British Empire, they also seceded from the past they shared with such living, breathing Indians in eastern North America.”⁷³ The anti-British propaganda campaign fomented widespread anger against the British, but also against their purported allies. When the British were removed from the equation after the Revolution, that ire was readily repurposed to legitimize a project of westward expansion that left no room for Indigenous peoples whatsoever. In the public mind, Indigenous peoples were absent for the creation of the national myth and, as a result, were unable to find a place in it.

The “Spirit of 76” became a powerful force in validating western expansionism as proponents of aggressive colonization took up the idea that stopping short of total destruction of Indigenous “enemies” would represent a failure of the Revolutionary project itself. There are numerous instances where this type of language cropped up. Immediately following the

⁷³ Richter, *Facing East*, 252-3.

Revolution, the cash-strapped Continental Congress felt immense pressure from settlers and speculators to remove the Iroquois Confederacy tribes from their native homelands to make space for U.S. land speculators and frontiersmen. Competition was intense between the state governments of New York and Massachusetts and the Continental Congress about who rightfully owned that land (with no attention paid to those who had already been living there for centuries). In June 1784, a New York Congressman spoke on the topic and acknowledged that the “whole world” seemed to “look on that Western Country with a wishful eye.”⁷⁴ That same New York congressman went on to say that nothing short of a massive cession of Iroquois land could allow them to “atone for their malicious deceit and bloody deeds” which they carried out during the Revolution. Cohabitation or treaties were not of interest to this particular American, James Duane, who declared that the adoption of the “disgraceful system of ... courting and flattering them as great and mighty nations” will make Americans “slaves,” rendering the legacy of the Revolution as having “lost more than half its value.”⁷⁵

Many believed that the war still raged on even after the last British ships officially departed from New York Harbor. After the war had ended, Iroquois chiefs sought to create a unified nation that could stand up to western incursion and create a hard barrier against expansionism. Britain remained interested in being on good terms with some of the Iroquois tribes, with whom they had valuable trade connections. As such, the British opposed the confederacy as it might render those trade agreements useless. The British funneled ammunition to certain Iroquois tribes they favored in the hope that they could influence and sway the confederation away from unity. A fractured group of tribes was easier for them to undermine and bully economically than a cohesive nation. But, as Alan Taylor notes in his book *The*

⁷⁴ Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 143.

⁷⁵ Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 143.

Divided Ground, that aid, though explicitly economic in its intent, actually convinced many Americans that “the Indian confederacy was a plot by insidious and powerful Britons to steal the frontier fruits of the American Revolution.” Simply unable to believe that Indigenous groups might seek confederacy for their own purposes of stopping encroachment and maintaining peace on their borders against ever-more violent American infringements on their lands, Americans instead took Britain’s small gifts as indicative of their “reneging on their peace treaty by ventriloquizing docile Indians.”⁷⁶

Andrew Jackson played on similar fears of ongoing British-Indigenous entanglement in a petition to Congress for guns and ammunition to drive the Creeks from their lands on the Tennessee frontier. In a letter written from Jackson to President Thomas Jefferson on April 20, 1808, Jackson claimed that he had been newly alarmed by the “hostile attitude of the Creek Indians” on the frontier. Jackson was afraid because there were “twelve whites with them” on a raid, who he assumed “must be agents of a foreign Nation, exciting the Creeks to hostilities against the United States.” To Jackson, this brought back memories of the “influence during the Revolutionary War, that raised the scalping knife and Tomahawk against our defenceless women and children.” Jackson harkened back to Revolutionary fears of the infamous alliance between the British and the Iroquois Confederacy. His claim both proves the staying power of that conflation as a political tool and demonstrates how British atrocities continued to validate anti-Indigenous campaigns. When Jackson wrote his letter to Jefferson in 1808, tensions with Britain were reaching a flash point yet again. In 1807, public outrage against Britain had sparked over the *Chesapeake-Leopard Affair*, in which a British warship had impressed four U.S. sailors

⁷⁶ Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 116.

after a skirmish. One of the soldiers was hung after trying to desert.⁷⁷ But in these internationally contentious times, it was not the British to whom Jackson directed his attention, but the Creeks. He took the “present . . . situation of our Country with foreign Nations” (the rising tensions with Britain) as requiring a “speedy redress and a final check to these hostile murdering Creeks.”⁷⁸

For the United States in the decades following the American Revolution, their project of demonstrating political difference on the frontier through anti-Indigenous rhetoric allowed for the creation of a new national identity. The historical memory of the Revolution, therefore, became one where any atrocities committed by the Americans were considered necessary retaliation to the unmatched violence of the Indigenous peoples and the British with whom they allied.⁷⁹ Whitewashing America’s role in Revolutionary violence was the natural extension of the project started during the Revolution to claim the moral upper hand over the British by popularizing the reports and popular captivity narratives discussed in this essay. The media painted American soldiers as martyrs, whose sacred bodies were put on display as evidence for the nation to see of a mother country so corrupt that they might become “savages” themselves.

A prime example of how imbalanced the historical memory of the Revolution was even fifty years after its completion can be seen in a document called “Annals of Tryon County or, the Border Warfare of New York, During the Revolution.” Originally published in New York in 1831, this popular book would go through four editions, with the last one being published nearly a hundred years later in 1924. In the preface to that last edition, the editor writes that it is a foundational work of Revolutionary history which has “furnished to the later writers on the subject [of the Revolution] the greater part of their material, and is, upon many points, their final

⁷⁷ Eugene Van Sickle, “The Chesapeake-Leopard Affair (1807),” War of 1812 Essays (Bandy Heritage Center), [http://www.bandyheritagecenter.org/Content/Uploads/Bandy%20Heritage%20Center/files/1812/The%20Chesapeake-Leopard%20Affair%20\(1807\).pdf](http://www.bandyheritagecenter.org/Content/Uploads/Bandy%20Heritage%20Center/files/1812/The%20Chesapeake-Leopard%20Affair%20(1807).pdf).

⁷⁸ Andrew Jackson, *Andrew Jackson to Thomas Jefferson, 1808*, Manuscript/Mixed Material, <https://www.loc.gov/item/maj001191/>.

⁷⁹ Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 7.

authority, even in cases where it is not cited as such.”⁸⁰ This text is a cornerstone in what might be considered the construction of modern historical memory of the Revolution and the violence that took place. And what tale does it tell? This text, written by William Campbell, a state representative of New York, just a year after the Indian Removal Act of 1830 became law, shows just how white-washed the American side of the narrative had become, as all acts of violence against Indigenous peoples were considered valid retribution for the atrocities of the Revolution.

Chapters V and VI of the *Annals* are particularly striking in their contrast. Chapter V, an account of an Indian raid on a village in Cherry Valley, uses the same language popularized during the Revolution to describe British-on-American violence - only now the British have been almost entirely dropped from the picture. What remains is a truly hideous depiction of violence that calls on age-old images of war atrocity. Campbell depicts the Seneca Indians as carrying out an “indiscriminate massacre” wherein at least eleven innocent people were killed. I don’t wish to excuse such actions, and yet one cannot help but notice the gory detail and length of the depictions of each murder. For numerous pages, the deaths of Robert Wells, his wife, his mother, the four Wells children, Robert’s brother and sister, and three servants are trod out, each in excruciating detail.⁸¹

Compare this gory account with the depiction of General Sullivan’s genocidal campaign against the Iroquois, depicted in chapter VI. The difference is striking. Considered an act of simple retribution for “the atrocities of which the Indians were guilty ... along the frontiers of New York” (of which the Cherry Valley Massacre, depicted above, was a primary example), Sullivan’s army, writes Campbell, “was ordered to march into the Indian territory, to waste their settlements and destroy their grain; thus visiting upon them some of the inconveniences and

⁸⁰ William W. Campbell, *Annals of Tryon County, Or; The Border Warfare of New-York During the Revolution* (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1831), VII.

⁸¹ Campbell, *Annals of Tryon County*, 105-8.

hardships attendant upon their mode of warfare.”⁸² The language Campbell uses to describe their campaign was simple, statistical, and unembellished: “On the 28th they destroyed the settlements and grain at Chemung, twelve miles distant from Tioga” during which time “they took 37 prisoners, and killed between 20 and 30 warriors.”⁸³

Numerous scholars, most recently Rhiannon Koehler, have worked to tell the actual tale of Sullivan’s war by articulating the genocidal goals of a campaign expressly devoted to “making the destruction of their settlements so final and complete as to put it out of their power to derive the smallest succor from them,” as stated by George Washington.⁸⁴ Pillaging and burning their way through Indian country, Sullivan and his army killed hundreds of Indigenous peoples, all while decimating their food supplies and leaving them homeless and hungry for the winter, during which hunger caused them to “take scurvy and die[] in great numbers.” Yet William Campbell had little sympathy. In his summary of the Sullivan campaign, he wrote that even though it may “seem that too much severity was exercised in the burning of the Indian towns,” in reality it was “justified by the previous conduct of the Indians.”⁸⁵

Conclusion

The myth of the savage British and their unholy alliance with Indigenous North Americans was a powerful propaganda tool used during the Revolutionary campaign; its prevalence in print culture indicated its success. The depictions of British-on-American violence,

⁸² Campbell, *Annals of Tryon County*, 116.

⁸³ Campbell, *Annals of Tryon County*, 118.

⁸⁴ Rhiannon Koehler, “Hostile Nations: Quantifying the Destruction of the Sullivan-Clinton Genocide of 1779,” *American Indian Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (2018): 433.

⁸⁵ Campbell, *Annals of Tryon County*, 131-2.

coded in racial terminology and validated through medico-legal language, stirred anti-British sentiments and made the project of Revolution against a familiar foe seem not only tenable, but necessary. Any retaliation became warranted against those perpetrating these awful acts.

The moral superiority complex that the Revolutionary moment instilled in the minds of Americans turned into violent, westward incursions into the lands of those who, despite the war having ended decades before, supposedly threatened to stand in the way of the destiny of the Revolution: total American autonomy on its own continent. To keep this superiority complex in place, the historical memory of the Revolution had to be one that deep-cleaned American travesties from the record. Rendering the American soldier's body as that of a martyr, unto which incredible violence was done but which never committed violent acts itself, was a necessary logical fallacy endemic to the thinking of Americans in the Antebellum period. And it originated in the very propaganda campaign that makes up the backbone of this paper.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ It is critical to acknowledge that the scope of the argument detailed above is quite narrow and appears on the surface to take a lot of things for granted. Daniel Richter reminds us that "America is not a problem to be explained, nor an inevitable process to be traced from the first planting of English seeds on Atlantic shores to their flowering in the trans-Mississippi west." In other words, American histories which assume a pre-destined, linear direction to American colonialism might wish to reconsider their orientation. Regardless of the good intentions of some such histories, the act of leaving Indigenous peoples to the wayside as historical subjects who were solely acted upon and who did not act themselves by resisting the challenges of colonization is a damaging thing to do. This essay, at times, lapses into such a linear narrative, and Indigenous voices do not speak from the archive in my research as I would want them to. I acknowledge the shortcomings of my research, but also recognize that, with an eye towards the politics of violence during the Revolution, another historian might read this essay and take up the perspective of Indigenous peoples more robustly.

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Edward Bulwer Lytton and the Norman Conquest: Medievalism in *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*

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“It was a dark and stormy night.” Most people have heard this line, but not everyone knows that it opens the novel *Paul Clifford*, written by Edward Bulwer Lytton and published in 1830.⁸⁷ So well-known is this line that it has inspired a competition at San Jose State University in California for the worst first line of a novel.⁸⁸ Much less well-known, however, is Bulwer Lytton’s 1848 historical romance, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*. This novel retells the Norman Conquest of 1066, when England was taken over by William the Conqueror, of Normandy. *Harold* is a prime example of Medievalism, or the re-representation, reinterpretation or other use of the Middle Ages in literature and popular culture since the end of the Middle Ages. Like most writers of historical fiction, Edward Bulwer Lytton in *Harold* makes many authorial decisions that must be taken into account when analyzing the work from a historian’s point of view. The stylistic and narrative decisions that Edward Bulwer Lytton makes in *Harold* reflect nostalgia for the Middle Ages, which was widespread in Victorian England due largely to the Industrial Revolution and other forces of rapid change.

⁸⁷ Marie Mulvey-Roberts, “Fame, Notoriety and Madness: Edward Bulwer-Lytton Paying the Price of Greatness,” *Critical Survey* 13, no. 2 (2001): 115, url: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41557108>.

⁸⁸ Mulvey-Roberts, “Fame, Notoriety and Madness,” 115.

Not many have written on Edward Bulwer Lytton the man, but Marie Mulvey-Roberts has claimed that he has not received enough credit in literary memory for his pioneering fictional work, and that he has been unfairly undermined by his critics.⁸⁹ There does not appear to be any existing scholarship that delves into the medievalism in Bulwer Lytton's *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, although Carl I. Hammer has analyzed the historical accuracy of the novel alongside four other novels inspired by the Norman Conquest.⁹⁰ Tison Pugh and Angela Jane Weisl, in chapter three of their book *Medievalisms: Making the Past in the Present*, investigate the literary medievalisms of the Victorian Era.⁹¹ While they do not mention Edward Bulwer Lytton specifically, they highlight the motivations for medievalism that were prevalent at the time *Harold* was written.

Numerous historians have written on the Norman Conquest, including R. H. C. Davis and Philip M. Taylor. Davis argued that the Norman Conquest was so quick and so complete because William the Conqueror was able to legitimately claim himself part of the Anglo-Saxon government, and then to use that highly effective government to transfer control of the land to the Normans.⁹² Taylor, 37 years later, argued that two of the Norman primary accounts of the Conquest, that of William of Poitiers as well as the Bayeux Tapestry, can be seen as propaganda designed to help reconcile the newly conquered Anglo-Saxons to Norman rule.⁹³

Fortunately for historians, the Norman Conquest is an event that was very well-documented shortly after it happened. Primary accounts were written from both Norman

⁸⁹ Mulvey-Roberts, "Fame, Notoriety and Madness," 115-134.

⁹⁰ Carl I. Hammer, "Harold in Normandy: History and Romance," in *Studies in Medievalism XII*, ed. Tom Shippey and Martin Arnold (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2003), 79-104.

⁹¹ Tison Pugh and Angela J. Weisl, *Medievalisms: Making the Past in the Present* (London: Routledge, 2013; ProQuest Ebook Central, 2013), 30-44, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy006.nclive.org/lib/appstate/reader.action?docID=1074983>.

⁹² R. H. C. Davis, "The Norman Conquest," *History* 51, no. 173 (1966): 279-286, url: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/24405152>.

⁹³ Philip M. Taylor, "The Norman Conquest," in *Munitions of the mind: A history of propaganda*, by Philip M. Taylor (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 62-66, url: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt155jd69.10>.

and English perspectives. On the Norman side are, most notably, the *Gesta Guillelmi*, or “Deeds of William,” by William of Poitiers⁹⁴ and the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, or “Deeds of the Norman Dukes,” by William of Jumièges.⁹⁵ William of Poitiers was a Norman priest and chaplain to Duke William of Normandy, about which he wrote his *Gesta Guillelmi*. William of Jumièges was a Norman monk. There is also the Bayeux Tapestry, an embroidery, likely from the 1070s, visually telling the story of the Norman Conquest.⁹⁶ The work is believed to have been commissioned by Bishop Odo of Bayeux, half-brother to William the Conqueror, making it another Norman perspective on the Conquest.⁹⁷ In terms of English primary sources, there is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*⁹⁸, a complex set of annals preserved in seven different manuscripts which provides much of the information for English history between the fifth and mid-twelfth centuries.⁹⁹ There is also *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, or “History of Recent Events in England,” written by Eadmer, an English historian, and detailing events in England mainly between 1066 and 1122.¹⁰⁰ The other primary source that will be necessary for this paper is Edward Bulwer Lytton’s novel, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, published in 1848.¹⁰¹

In the year 1066, Duke William of Normandy, also known as William the Conqueror, invaded England and took it over. After the death of King Edward, also called Edward the Confessor, Harold Godwinson had taken the throne of England. Duke William of the Normans, who inhabited what is today northern France, invaded England to challenge Harold’s ascension

⁹⁴ William of Poitiers, *The Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and trans. R. H. C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

⁹⁵ William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni, *Gesta Normannorum Ducum, Volume II*, ed. and trans. Elisabeth M. C. Van Houts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

⁹⁶ “Britain’s Bayeux Tapestry at Reading Museum,” accessed September 10, 2020, <http://www.bayeuxtapestry.org.uk/BayeuxContents.htm>.

⁹⁷ “Britain’s Bayeux Tapestry at Reading Museum.”

⁹⁸ G. N. Garmonsway, trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London: Everyman’s Library, 1954).

⁹⁹ Nicholas Brooks, “‘Anglo-Saxon Chronicle(s)’ or ‘Old English Royal Annals’?” in *Gender and Historiography*, ed. Janet L. Nelson, Susan Reynolds, and Susan M. Johns (London: London University Press, 2012), 35-48.

¹⁰⁰ Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, trans. Geoffrey Bosanquet (London: The Cresset Press, 1964).

¹⁰¹ Edward Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings* (Luton: Andrews UK Limited, 2012; ProQuest Ebook Central, 2012), <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/appstate/reader.action?docID=4460642>.

to the throne. The forces of Harold and William met at the Battle of Hastings on 14 October 1066, and the Normans were triumphant. Harold was killed in battle. William took the English throne, becoming King William I of England, and proceeded to take over the previously Anglo-Saxon society with his Norman followers. While the primary sources all tell this story, they often differ on certain points of the narrative, as well as in their biases, explicit or implicit. One of the greatest debates is whether Harold swore to support William as king during a trip to Normandy in 1064. An overview of each primary account's biases and versions of events will serve to clarify Edward Bulwer Lytton's own biases and narrative decisions in his 1848 novel.

William of Poitiers in *Gesta Guillelmi* is extremely biased toward the Normans. He claims that King Edward appointed William as his heir and sent Harold to Normandy for the express purpose of swearing fealty to him (William).¹⁰² According to Poitiers, Harold did swear this oath to William, and "clearly and of his own free will".¹⁰³ Poitiers paints William as gracious, honorable, and pious, while blatantly denouncing Harold as immoral and even accusing him of bringing ruin to his own land:

Just a few words, O Harold, will we address to you! With what intent dared you after this take William's inheritance from him and make war on him, when you had with both voice and hand subjected yourself and your people to him by a sacrosanct oath...How unfortunate were the following winds...How impious the smooth sea which suffered you, most abominable of men, to be carried on your journey to the shore! How perverse was the calm harbour which received you, who were bringing the disastrous shipwreck of your native land!¹⁰⁴

Poitiers implies that William's invasion was backed by divine will (it was indeed supported by the church¹⁰⁵) and that his success was therefore inevitable. This sense of inevitability is conveyed by Poitiers speaking about William's success before it occurs in his narrative, and by

¹⁰² Poitiers, *The Gesta Guillelmi*, 69.

¹⁰³ Poitiers, *The Gesta Guillelmi*, 71.

¹⁰⁴ Poitiers, *The Gesta Guillelmi*, 77-79.

¹⁰⁵ Poitiers, *The Gesta Guillelmi*, 105.

his assertion that the comet (Halley's Comet) of 1066 foretold Harold's doom.¹⁰⁶ He also makes many references to ancient Greece and Rome, often comparing William the Conqueror to ancient heroes: "Ancient Greece tells us that Agamemnon of the house of Atreus went to avenge the violation of his brother's bed with a thousand ships; but we protest that William claimed a royal crown with more."¹⁰⁷ William of Poitiers' bias can also be seen in the way he speaks differently about the actions of the two armies during the battle. He designates Harold's military position as cowardly rather than strategic: "not daring to fight with William on equal terms...they took their stand on higher ground."¹⁰⁸ When the Normans retreat, however, he excuses them by comparing them to the Roman army, who would sometimes flee if their leader had fallen: "The Normans believed that their duke and lord had fallen, so it was not too shameful to give way to flight".¹⁰⁹ Overall, the most notable aspects of William of Poitiers' account in *Gesta Guillelmi* are his blatant bias toward William and against Harold, his implication that the Norman victory was inevitable and his references to ancient Greece and Rome.

The *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, of William of Jumièges, is another Norman account of the Conquest. It was written around 1070 but was later expanded by English chronicler Orderic Vitalis and Norman monk Robert of Torigni. Perhaps because of the influence of both Norman and English writers, this account seems more balanced in its portrayal of the events than the *Gesta Guillelmi*. For example, it states that William was "the most noble conqueror and hereditary lord," but also that Harold was "the greatest of all earls in his realm in wealth, honour and power," and "a brave and valiant man, very handsome, pleasant in speech, and a good friend to all".¹¹⁰ Despite these seemingly balanced remarks however, the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* is

¹⁰⁶ Poitiers, *The Gesta Guillelmi*, 141-143.

¹⁰⁷ Poitiers, *The Gesta Guillelmi*, 111.

¹⁰⁸ Poitiers, *The Gesta Guillelmi*, 127.

¹⁰⁹ Poitiers, *The Gesta Guillelmi*, 129.

¹¹⁰ Jumièges, *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 161-171.

still clearly biased toward the Norman cause. For starters, like the *Gesta Guillelmi*, it claims that King Edward appointed William as his heir and that he sent Harold to Normandy expressly to swear fealty to William.¹¹¹ It also describes Harold's ascension to the throne as perjury, saying that Harold "immediately seized Edward's kingdom" after the king's death.¹¹² One last primary source on the Norman Conquest that is usually thought to be from the Norman point of view is the Bayeux Tapestry (actually an embroidery). According to this work, Harold took a trip to Normandy and spent time there with William.¹¹³ His motivation for the trip is unclear, however. The embroidery also shows Harold taking an oath on holy relics in William's presence, although he does not appear happy about it.¹¹⁴ The rest of the story then unfolds visually, with Harold ascending to the throne after Edward's death, William invading England with his army, the violent Battle of Hastings in which Harold falls, and the Normans triumphant. There is some debate about Harold's death because of the way it is portrayed in the Tapestry. It appears that Harold is shown dying twice, once with an arrow to the eye and once being cut down by a Norman soldier on horseback.¹¹⁵ Scholars lean toward the second portrayal as more accurate, and some have suggested that the arrow in the first portrayal was actually added later, or even that the figure being shot is not meant to represent Harold. In any case, the image of Harold dying from an arrow to the eye has become well-known in popular culture.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is a set of English annals in seven different manuscripts, known to scholars as A, B, C, D, E, F and G.¹¹⁶ Its most notable difference from the Norman sources is that it makes no reference to Harold swearing any sort of oath to William. In fact, it

¹¹¹ Jumièges, *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 159-161.

¹¹² Jumièges, *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 161-167.

¹¹³ "Britain's Bayeux Tapestry at Reading Museum."

¹¹⁴ "Britain's Bayeux Tapestry at Reading Museum."

¹¹⁵ "Britain's Bayeux Tapestry at Reading Museum."

¹¹⁶ Brooks, "'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle' or 'Old English Royal Annals'?", 35.

does not mention Harold even visiting Normandy. Instead, manuscripts C and D claim that Edward made Harold his heir: “Yet did the wise king entrust his kingdom / To a man of high rank, to Harold himself, / The noble earl”.¹¹⁷ The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* never even mentions that William of Normandy had a claim to the English throne, save noting that he was a kinsman of Edward. Manuscript E also mentions Harold’s legitimacy as king: “Earl Harold succeeded to the kingdom of England as the king granted it to him and as he was elected thereto.”¹¹⁸

According to this account, Harold was not only named king by Edward but was also elected by the English government. Another important English source for this analysis is Eadmer’s *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, or “History of Recent Events in England.” According to Eadmer, Harold “asked leave of the King to go to Normandy to set free his brother and his nephew who were being held there as hostages and, when so freed, to bring them back home.”¹¹⁹ In this version of events, Harold did take a trip to Normandy, but not for the purpose of swearing an oath to William. Eadmer also describes Harold’s status while in Normandy as that of a prisoner, unless he agreed to all of William’s terms: that Harold would support William as king, seeing as Edward promised the throne to William in their youth, that he would build a stronghold and a well at Dover for William’s use, as well as marry his sister to one of William’s nobles and himself marry William’s daughter.¹²⁰ Harold then “perceived that here was danger whatever way he turned,” and that he could not leave for England with his brother and nephew unless he agreed to all William said.¹²¹ According to Eadmer, Harold agreed because of his lack of other options, and swore an oath on holy relics because William forced him to do so.¹²² Like the *Anglo-Saxon*

¹¹⁷ Garmonsway, trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 194-195.

¹¹⁸ Garmonsway, trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 197.

¹¹⁹ Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 6.

¹²⁰ Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 7.

¹²¹ Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 7-8.

¹²² Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 8.

Chronicle, Eadmer claims that Edward made Harold his heir before his death.¹²³ When William sends messengers asking Harold to honor his oath, Harold talks his way out of it, prompting William to attack.¹²⁴ Eadmer seems much less biased than the Norman sources that claim that Edward sent Harold to Normandy to swear fealty to William. However, he still calls Harold's conduct "unjust" and implies that the Normans must have won the battle through intervention by God to punish Harold's perjury.¹²⁵

Edward Bulwer Lytton added his fictional account of the events of the Norman Conquest in 1848. He was already an experienced writer of historical fiction when *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings* was published, and this latest novel was hugely successful.¹²⁶ As Carl I. Hammer points out, Bulwer Lytton's success and impact with *Harold* can be measured by the fact that the next novel about the Norman Conquest did not appear until exactly one hundred years later (Hope Muntz's *The Golden Warrior*, published in 1948).¹²⁷ In 1848, England was in the early years of the Victorian Period, which lasted from 1837 to 1901. This period was marked by rapid and explosive change, mainly from industrialization and globalization. The change conflicted with England's history as a small, conservative country, causing its "often archaic political system" and traditional ways of organizing itself to come under immense strain.¹²⁸ When eighteen-year-old Queen Victoria took the throne in 1837, England's recent victories over Revolutionary and Napoleonic France had increased its influence abroad.¹²⁹ Within England, industrialization and the rising population contributed to migration from rural areas to towns,

¹²³ Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 8.

¹²⁴ Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 8-9.

¹²⁵ Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 9.

¹²⁶ Hammer, "Harold in Normandy: History and Romance", 79-80.

¹²⁷ Hammer, "Harold in Normandy: History and Romance", 80.

¹²⁸ "An Introduction to Victorian England (1837-1901)," English Heritage, accessed September 10, 2020. <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/learn/story-of-england/victorian/#:~:text=The%201840s%2C%20which%20saw%20years,known%20as%20the%20Hungry%20Forties.&text=The%20growth%2C%20from%20the%201840s,Exhibition%20was%20held%20in%20London.>

¹²⁹ "An Introduction to Victorian England (1837-1901)," English Heritage.

where many people lived and worked in horrendous conditions.¹³⁰ The country was also undergoing reform in multiple areas; Parliament, the treatment of Catholics, the management of poverty and the running of the church.¹³¹ This was part of the larger European age of reform, which culminated in 1848—the year of revolutions (peoples’ revolts against various European monarchies) as well as the year in which *Harold* was published. The 1840s was a decade of poor harvests and host to the Irish Famine of 1845 to 1849, earning it the nickname “The Hungry Forties.”¹³² The growth of railway and steamship networks during the Victorian Era, as well as the invention of the electric telegraph, contributed both to England’s economic success¹³³ and increasing globalization. England and the world around it was changing rapidly due to industrialization, but also growing smaller in terms of communication, travel and international influence. This was the environment in which Edward Bulwer Lytton wrote his *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, a novel full of nostalgia for the Middle Ages.

The narrative of *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings* begins in England in the year 1052 and ends immediately after the Norman victory at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. It tells, in great detail, the stories of Harold and William and the Conquest of England. It is a fictional work, but Bulwer Lytton draws heavily from primary sources like the very ones discussed above. He references both Norman and English sources, depending more heavily on the English. Because there is no definitive way to know what version of events happened in the eleventh century, some narrative decisions had to be made on Bulwer Lytton’s part. In *Harold*, Harold does take a trip to Normandy, and it is for the purpose of freeing his brother Wolnoth and nephew Haco from William, who was holding them hostage.¹³⁴ This is also the case in Eadmer’s account, which is

¹³⁰ “An Introduction to Victorian England (1837-1901),” English Heritage.

¹³¹ “An Introduction to Victorian England (1837-1901),” English Heritage.

¹³² “An Introduction to Victorian England (1837-1901),” English Heritage.

¹³³ “An Introduction to Victorian England (1837-1901),” English Heritage.

¹³⁴ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 183.

one of the few primary sources reporting this version of events. When Harold arrives in Normandy, William subtly holds him there until he can privately make him a proposition:

I might, as my ransomed captive, detain thee here, until, without thee, I had won my English throne...Nevertheless, I unbosom myself to thee, and would owe my crown solely to thine aid...On thy part, thou shalt hold for me the castle of Dover...thou shalt aid me in peace, and through thy National Witan, to succeed to Edward, by whose laws I will reign in all things conformably with the English rites, habits, and decrees...On my part, I offer to thee my fairest daughter, Adeliza, to whom thou shalt be straightaway betrothed: thine own young unwedded sister, Thyra, thou shalt give to one of my greatest barons.¹³⁵

Here, William gives Harold a choice between fealty and prison, much like Eadmer reports in his *Historia Novorum in Anglia*. Bulwer Lytton also describes Harold being forced by William to take an oath on holy relics, to make good his previous verbal agreement to William's terms:

“Thou wilt swear, as far as is in thy power, to fulfil thy agreement with William, Duke of the Normans, if thou live, and God aid thee; and in witness of that oath thou wilt lay thy hand upon the reliquaire,” pointing to a small box that lay on the cloth of gold. All this was so sudden—all flashed so rapidly upon the Earl...that mechanically, dizzily, dreamily, he laid his hand on the reliquaire, and repeated, with automaton lips: “If I live, and if God aid me to it!”¹³⁶

Bulwer Lytton decides that Harold made his oath not only under duress, but in a sort of daze.

And on top of that, in his version of events, King Edward releases Harold from his oath. Edward, as a holy man, has the power to do this: “Plain is that law, that oaths extorted by compulsion, through fraud and in fear, the Church hath the right to loose: plainer still the law of God and of man, that an oath to commit crime it is a deadlier sin to keep than to forfeit.”¹³⁷ Edward releasing Harold from his oath does not take place in any of the primary sources listed above. This narrative decision of Bulwer Lytton's implies not only that Harold was justified in failing to support William, but also that King Edward himself supported Harold as king and regarded the

¹³⁵ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 205.

¹³⁶ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 208.

¹³⁷ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 211.

oath as something that would lead Harold to “crime.” Several primary sources also allude to Edward’s support of Harold, including the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Eadmer’s *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, and the Bayeux Tapestry, but in Bulwer Lytton’s novel, Edward expresses clear regret for his earlier commitment to William. Bulwer Lytton also details the process of the Anglo-Saxon Witan Council deciding that Harold would inherit the throne.¹³⁸ This means that not only was Edward behind Harold as his heir, but the English noblemen supported him as well, as stated by Eadmer and in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Bulwer Lytton’s portrayal of Harold’s ascension to the throne directly contrasts the Norman sources saying that he simply seized it after Edward’s death. All these narrative decisions so far serve to represent Harold in a more noble and honorable light than any of the primary sources, even those of English chroniclers. Bulwer Lytton also decides how to portray Harold’s death later in the story. In the thick of his description of the Battle of Hastings, for which he dramatically switches between present- and past-tense narration, he writes:

“Look up, look up, and guard thy head,” cries the fatal voice of Haco to the King. At that cry the King raises his flashing eyes. Why halts his stride? Why drops the axe from his hand? As he raised his head, down came the hissing death-shaft. It smote the lifted face; it crushed into the dauntless eyeball. He reeled, he staggered, he fell back several yards, at the foot of his gorgeous standard. With desperate hand he broke the head of the shaft, and left the bard, quivering in the anguish.¹³⁹

Clearly, Bulwer Lytton has chosen to show Harold dying from an arrow to the eye. While this probably did not happen historically, it is safe to assume that Bulwer Lytton’s fictional depiction of the death affected the public’s understanding of it for years to come.

In addition to his narrative decisions, Edward Bulwer Lytton makes a number of other choices (enhancements, allusions, changes, fictions, musings, etc.) in *Harold: The Last of the*

¹³⁸ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 235-236.

¹³⁹ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 312.

Saxon Kings that can broadly be termed as stylistic. The next paragraphs will examine each of these stylistic elements individually. First, Bulwer Lytton on the whole portrays Harold as honorable and William as scheming, totally opposite to how William of Poitiers represents the two men in the *Gesta Guillelmi*. The first time we see William in the text, he is described (at least in part) thus:

That frown spoke of hasty ire and the habit of stern command; those furrows spoke of deep thought and plotting scheme; the one betrayed but temper and circumstance; the other, more noble, spoke of the character and the intellect. The face was square, and the regard lion-like; the mouth—small, and even beautiful in outline—had a sinister expression in its exceeding firmness; and the jaw—vast, solid, as if bound in iron—showed obstinate, ruthless, determined will; such a jaw as belongs to the tiger amongst beasts, and the conqueror amongst men¹⁴⁰

Our first view of William is of a man not to be trifled with; a man, perhaps, to fear. By contrast, in Bulwer Lytton's first mention of Harold, he is described as having a "vigorous and healthful mind," and as saying such honorable things as "The brave man wants no charms to encourage him to his duty, and the good man scorns all warnings that would deter him from fulfilling it."¹⁴¹

When Harold first arrives in Normandy and William hears of it, his response is as follows: "I have him! I have him!" He cried aloud; "not as free guest, but as ransomed captive. I have him—the Earl!"... William continued to pace the room, with sparkling eyes and murmuring lips."¹⁴² Bulwer Lytton is not subtle about portraying William as scheming. Meanwhile, Harold is shown as almost painfully honorable. When the people of Northumbria threaten violence because of the injustices of Earl Tostig, who is Harold's own brother, Harold says "I will hear the men" and listens to their complaints, though others of his status regard them as merely an angry mob of traitors.¹⁴³ The Northumbrians feel that justice was absent from England while Harold

¹⁴⁰ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 19-20.

¹⁴¹ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 24.

¹⁴² Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 187.

¹⁴³ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 228-229.

was away.¹⁴⁴ Bulwer Lytton very much romanticizes Harold as the people's king, loved by all of England: "in the breast of Harold beats the heart of England."¹⁴⁵ Perhaps Edward Bulwer Lytton does this out of nostalgia for a time when all of England was united around one man, even though this was probably not the case historically (at least not to this extent). A united England would have been a very appealing thought to English readers in the midst of the Victorian period.

Bulwer Lytton also makes several allusions to the "classical" history and literature of ancient Greece and Rome, much in keeping with the style of William of Poitiers in *Gesta Guillelmi*. For example, he writes:

The Norman position in France, indeed, in much resembled that of the Spartan in Greece. He had forced a settlement with scanty numbers in the midst of a subjugated and sullen population, surrounded by jealous and formidable foes...Like the Spartan, every Norman of pure race was free and noble; and this consciousness inspired not only that remarkable dignity of mien which Spartan and Norman alike possessed, but also that fastidious self-respect...And, lastly, as the paucity of their original numbers, the perils that beset, and the good fortune that attended them, served to render the Spartans the most religious of all the Greeks...so, perhaps, to the same causes may be traced the proverbial piety of the ceremonial Normans¹⁴⁶

Bulwer Lytton compares the Normans to Spartans, much like William of Poitiers compares them to the Roman army in *Gesta Guillelmi*. Later, Bulwer Lytton describes this interaction between William and Harold:

(William) passed his hand, as if carelessly, along the Earl's right arm. "Ha!" said he suddenly, and in his natural tone of voice, which was short and quick, "these muscles have known practice! Dost thou think thou couldst bend my bow!"

"Who could bend that of – Ulysses?" returned the Earl, fixing his deep blue eye upon the Norman's. William unconsciously changed colour, for he felt that he was at that moment more Ulysses than Achilles.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 229.

¹⁴⁵ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 51.

¹⁴⁶ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 34.

¹⁴⁷ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 191.

Here, through Harold, Bulwer Lytton compares William to Ulysses (or Odysseus), the crafty, witty hero of ancient Greek epic. This example of referencing classical literature is not meant to glorify William, but rather to continue the theme that he is scheming and calculating. Perhaps Bulwer Lytton is also, by extension, comparing Harold to Achilles, the Greek hero more associated with honor as well as with a young, tragic death. This implied comparison contrasts William of Poitiers' comparison of William to Achilles: "Against Harold, who was such a man as poems liken to Hector or Turnus, William would have dared to fight in single combat no less than Achilles against Hector".¹⁴⁸

Something else Bulwer Lytton does to recall the primary sources is to explicitly mention them in his narrative. When describing the holy relics upon which Harold is obliged to swear his oath to William, Bulwer Lytton writes, "the dry dark skin, the white gleaming bones of the dead, mockingly cased in gold, and decked with rubies... "At that sight," say the Norman Chronicles, "the Earl shuddered and trembled."¹⁴⁹ Portraying the anxious behavior of William after Harold's ascension to the throne, Bulwer Lytton writes, "The Duke turned into the vast hall, in which he was wont to hold council with his barons; and walked to and fro "often," say the chronicles, "changing posture and attitude, and oft loosening and tightening, and drawing into knots, the strings of his mantle."¹⁵⁰ When describing Harold as the new king of England, he writes:

From the moment of his accession, "he showed himself pious, humble, and affable, and omitted no occasions to show any token of bounteous liberality, gentleness, and courteous behaviour." – "The grievous customs, also, and taxes which his predecessors had raised, he either abolished or diminished; the ordinary wages of his servants and men-of-war he increased, and further showed himself very well bent to all virtue and goodness."¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Poitiers, *The Gesta Guillelmi*, 135.

¹⁴⁹ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 209.

¹⁵⁰ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 252.

¹⁵¹ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 257.

Here, Bulwer Lytton cites two English chroniclers, Roger of Hoveden and Raphael Holinshed,¹⁵² making these allusions to primary sources in order to build his credibility. He is an author of fiction, but wants to show that he draws his narrative from historical events, or at least historical accounts. While not an explicit reference to a primary source, Bulwer Lytton's prose at times seems to evoke images from the Bayeux Tapestry. For example, he describes the preparations for William's invasion of England as such: "Every port now in Neustria was busy with terrible life; in every wood was heard the axe felling logs for the ships; from every anvil flew the sparks from the hammer, as iron took shape into helmet and sword."¹⁵³ These images clearly recall scenes 2 and 3 of the "Planning the Invasion" section of the Tapestry (labeled as such by the "Britain's Bayeux Tapestry at Reading Museum" website) in which can be seen the felling of trees, the building of boats and the loading of armor and weapons onto the boats.¹⁵⁴ This may be another subtle claim to credibility on Bulwer Lytton's part; a way to show that he is familiar with all the primary accounts of the story he is retelling.

There is an interesting side plot in *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings* involving mainly Hilda, a practitioner of "the dismal arts of the Wicca and Morthwyrtha (the witch and worshipper of the dead)"¹⁵⁵, and Edith, her granddaughter. This side plot seems purely fictional, and centers on Hilda's predictions of the future, especially in regards to Edith's involvement with Harold:

The stars and the runes assured her of his future greatness, and the qualities and talents of the young Earl had, at the very onset of his career, confirmed the accuracy of their predictions. Her interest in Harold became the more intense, partly because whenever she consulted the future for the lot of her grandchild Edith, she invariably found it associated with the fate of Harold.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 352.

¹⁵³ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 264.

¹⁵⁴ "Britain's Bayeux Tapestry at Reading Museum."

¹⁵⁵ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 13.

¹⁵⁶ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 24.

Later in the novel, there is an entire, albeit short, chapter dedicated to Hilda's magical "researches into the future" and their seemingly conflicted indications in regards to the fates of Edith and Harold.¹⁵⁷ This does not seem to add anything to the plot other than an element of magic and the ideas of fate and destiny, and the events have no historical basis. Why did Bulwer Lytton choose to include these elements in his story? Perhaps he wanted to echo the implications of fate in some of the Norman primary sources, namely William of Poitiers, which claimed that the victory of William was inevitable and divinely inspired. Perhaps the magic and prophecy of Hilda is meant to make *Harold* somewhat like a medieval saga, such as the *Saga of the Volsungs*, in which the female character Brynhild makes prophecies that come true. The side plot of Hilda however also reveals something about Victorian English society: its fascination with the occult. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the movements of Mesmerism and Spiritualism became popular in England, later leading to hybrid religions such as Theosophy, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and Anthroposophy.¹⁵⁸ This was during a time when new scientific thought was challenging traditional religious beliefs, and when "the Church of England was losing congregation to Nonconformist denominations and experiencing internal revolutions."¹⁵⁹ Bulwer Lytton himself was very involved in these occult spiritualities, and J. Jeffrey Franklin even argues that he is representative of the Victorian period's "enthusiasms, reservations, and deep-seated fears concerning occult spiritualities."¹⁶⁰ Bulwer Lytton's more occult-inspired novels, *Zanoni* (1842) and *A Strange Story* (1862), were published before and after *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, but the latter also contains a window into the occultism of Bulwer Lytton and of the wider Victorian period.

¹⁵⁷ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 276-278.

¹⁵⁸ J. Jeffrey Franklin, "The Evolution of Occult Spirituality in Victorian England and the Representative Case of Edward Bulwer-Lytton," in *Spirit Matters*, by J. Jeffrey Franklin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 30.

¹⁵⁹ Franklin, "The Evolution of Occult Spirituality in Victorian England," 30.

¹⁶⁰ Franklin, "The Evolution of Occult Spirituality in Victorian England," 30.

Bulwer Lytton's writing style is very verbose, and he often indulges in copious description, of settings especially. One (somewhat lengthy) example will serve to demonstrate the type of description that makes up a significant portion of the novel:

One side of the ancient peristyle, which was of vast extent, was now converted into stabling, sties for swine, and stalls for oxen. On the other side was constructed a Christian chapel, made of rough oak planks, fastened by plates at the top, and with a roof of thatched reeds. The columns and wall at the extreme end of the peristyle were a mass of ruins, through the gigantic rents of which loomed a grassy hillock, its sides partially covered with clumps of furze. On this hillock were the mutilated remains of an ancient Druidical crommel, in the centre of which (near a funeral mound, or barrow, with the bautastean, or gravestone, of some early Saxon chief at one end) had been sacrilegiously placed an altar to Thor...

Across the peristyle, theowes and swineherds passed to and fro: - in the atrium, men of a higher class, half-armed, were, some drinking, some at dice, some playing with huge hounds, or caressing the hawks that stood grave and solemn on their perches.

The lararium was deserted; the gynoeceum was still, as in the Roman time, the favored apartment of the female portion of the household... The appliances of the chamber showed the rank and wealth of the owner. At that period the domestic luxury of the rich was infinitely greater than has been generally supposed. The industry of the women decorated wall and furniture with needlework and hangings: and as a thegn forfeited his rank if he lost his lands, so the higher orders of an aristocracy rather of wealth than birth had, usually, a certain portion of superfluous riches, which served to flow towards the bazaars of the East and the nearer markets of Flanders and Saracenic Spain.¹⁶¹

While most modern readers would find this writing hard to get through (Hammer states that the excesses of Bulwer Lytton's language "make him practically unreadable today and were even criticised by his contemporaries"¹⁶²), the book was truly popular when it was published in 1848. Perhaps this represents a desire to escape nineteenth-century England, which readers could do by immersing themselves in Bulwer Lytton's detailed, romantic descriptions of a medieval setting. The descriptive style in *Harold* could also be seen as part of the Decadent Movement of the

¹⁶¹ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 14.

¹⁶² Hammer, "Harold in Normandy: History and Romance", 93.

nineteenth century, a western European artistic and literary movement focused on excess and artificiality.

On a related note, Bulwer Lytton makes his dialogue sound old, similar to Shakespearean English, or even reminiscent of Chaucer, with words like “ere,” “thou,” “thy,” and “yea,” and verbs ending in “est.” Hilda sets the tone of the dialogue at the beginning of the novel with phrases like the following:

askest thou if I thought of the Earl and his fair sons? - yea, I heard the smith welding arms on the anvil, and the hammer of the shipwright shaping strong ribs for the horses of the sea. Ere the reaper has bound his sheaves, Earl Godwin will scare the Normans in the halls of the Monk-king.¹⁶³

Similarly, Bulwer Lytton scatters some French words into the speech of the Normans, for example: “Grant merci,” said De Terni... “Beau Sire,” answered Gautier; “par Dex, Merci. But my head is grey and my arm weak...” “Per la resplendar De,” cried William,¹⁶⁴ and “Li Hardiz passent avant!”¹⁶⁵ In both cases, this is not how people in 1066 would have spoken. In England, they would have spoken Old English.¹⁶⁶ Bulwer Lytton of course could not write his dialogue in Old English, so he made it a kind of compromise between sounding old and still being understandable to a modern English audience. The same is the case with the Normans, who would have spoken an older version of French. Bulwer Lytton renders their speech as the same older modern English as the English characters, with occasional bits of French. He also scatters some Old English words into his descriptions, helpfully followed by quick definitions (“near a funeral mound, or barrow, with the bautastean, or gravestone,”¹⁶⁷ “The archers...were armed more lightly...with leather or quilted breastplates, and “panels,” or gaiters, for the lower

¹⁶³ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 14.

¹⁶⁴ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 299.

¹⁶⁵ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 306.

¹⁶⁶ The Norman Conquest marked the transition in England from Old to Middle English.

¹⁶⁷ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 14.

limbs”¹⁶⁸). Bulwer Lytton’s use of language is part of his creation of a romanticized medieval setting into which his Victorian readers can escape. The dialogue does not accurately reflect the eleventh century, but it gives readers the sense that they are reading something not of their time. This, combined with the excessively detailed description, helps the nineteenth century reader feel immersed in the Middle Ages, or at least in a time before their own.

Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings includes some political implications about the Norman Conquest and its effects. In general, Edward Bulwer Lytton implies that the Normans had a good, strong government, but poor national unity and that the Anglo-Saxons had a weak government (especially under King Edward), but strong national unity (embodied in Harold):

The deep dark eye of William dwelt admiringly on the bustling groups, on the broad river, and the forest of masts...And he to whom, whatever his faults, or rather crimes, to the unfortunate people he not only oppressed but deceived – London at least may yet be grateful, not only for chartered franchise, but for advancing, in one short vigorous reign, her commerce and wealth, beyond what centuries of Anglo-Saxon domination, with its inherent feebleness, had effected¹⁶⁹

Bulwer Lytton here implies that the Norman Conquest ended up doing good for the English economy, despite its oppression of the people. He even hints that the Conquest improved English civilization, in describing the superiority of Norman culture through Harold’s eyes:

Much, indeed, there was in that court which...Harold saw to admire – that stately temperance, so foreign to English excesses...that methodical state and noble pomp which characterised the Feudal system, linking so harmoniously prince to peer, and peer to knight – the easy grace, the polished wit of the courtiers – the wisdom of Lanfranc, and the higher ecclesiastics, blending worldly lore with decorous, not pedantic, regard to their sacred calling – the enlightened love of music, letters, song, and art, which coloured the discourse both of Duke and Duchess and the younger courtiers...all impressed Harold with a sense of civilization and true royalty, which...saddened him when he thought how far-behind England was¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 299.

¹⁶⁹ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 29.

¹⁷⁰ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 190.

Normandy's faults, however, are not left unmentioned by Bulwer Lytton:

Miserable and sordid to the last degree were the huts of the serfs; and when these last met them on their way, half naked and hunger-worn, there was a wild gleam of hate and discontent in their eyes, as they louted low to the Norman riders, and heard the bitter and scornful taunts with which they were addressed; for the Norman and the Frank had more than indifference for the peasants of their land; they literally both despised and abhorred them, as of different race from the conquerors. The Norman settlement especially was so recent in the land, that none of that amalgamation between class and class which centuries had created in England, existed there¹⁷¹

This quote represents the lack of national unity in Normandy and also foreshadows the treatment that the English will receive under Norman rule. Contrasting this, Bulwer Lytton plays up England's national unity (providing a nostalgic foil to the tumultuous Victorian England in which he was writing), but he seems to make it dependent on honorable men like Harold. Harold is so much the embodiment of English unity that "His absence had sufficed to loosen half the links of that ill-woven empire."¹⁷² Despite its supposed political unity, England's economy (under Edward especially) is disparaged by Bulwer Lytton:

But alas! now came the time when the improvident waste of Edward began to be felt. Provisions and pay for the armaments failed... The last Saxon king, the chosen of the people, had not those levies, and could impose not those burdens which made his successors mighty in war.¹⁷³

Bulwer Lytton's negative remarks about the English system in *Harold* seem to contradict R. H. C. Davis, who argues that William was able to take England over so completely precisely because of its well-developed, efficient government system.¹⁷⁴ Bulwer Lytton describes Harold as honorable and the Anglo-Saxons as united around him, but England as weak and disorganized. He describes William as scheming and the Normans as oppressive, but implies that they brought

¹⁷¹ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 202.

¹⁷² Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 213.

¹⁷³ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 263.

¹⁷⁴ Davis, "The Norman Conquest," 279-286.

superior economic and political practices to England. Bulwer Lytton's conflicting attitudes about both Saxons and Normans may represent a larger internal conflict in the modern English people in regards to their historical understanding of the Norman Conquest. Perhaps they, like Bulwer Lytton, are tempted to romanticize the lost Saxon past, but cannot deny the benefit that England gained from Norman influence.

Something that Bulwer Lytton emphasizes in his novel are the different peoples, nationalities or "races" that made up medieval Europe, namely England, France and Scandinavia. His characters, and himself as the narrator, often speak as though these groups were very clear-cut and objectively defined. For example: "Then said Fitzoborne, with that philosophy, half grave as became the Scandinavian, half gay as became the Frank: "No man should grieve for what he can help."¹⁷⁵ This quote implies that Scandinavians and Franks each had their own clear-cut temperaments determined by their "race." When surveying his troops on the night before battle, Harold comes "within full sight of the bold Saxons of Kent, the unmixed sons of the Saxon soil, and the special favourers of the House of Godwin."¹⁷⁶ This implies that the Saxons were an objective and exclusive group of people that came from a specific soil, and that these particular ones were pure because they had not mixed with anyone else. In a further description of the troops, Bulwer Lytton writes,

a select band of the martial East-Anglians, - the soldiers supplied by London and Middlesex, and who, both in arms, discipline, martial temper and athletic habits, ranked high among the most stalwart of the troops, mixed, as their descent was, from the warlike Dane and the sturdy Saxon...But the main arm of the host was in the great shield, and the great axe wielded by men larger in stature and stronger of muscle than the majority of the Normans, whose physical race had deteriorated partly by inter-marriage with the more delicate Frank, partly by the haughty disdain of foot exercise.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 252.

¹⁷⁶ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 296.

¹⁷⁷ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 301.

Here, Bulwer Lytton explains the characteristics of the East-Anglian troops in terms of their mixed ancestry. He also disparages the physicality of the Normans as a group, blaming this partially on their mixing with “the more delicate Frank.” On the whole, he assigns traits—physical and temperamental—to each nationality (for lack of a better word) that figures in his narrative, and occasionally uses these designations to either romanticize or disparage entire groups of people. We know, of course, in today’s understanding, that race is a social construct. But even for the Middle Ages, Bulwer Lytton’s defining of ethnicities is probably exaggerated. Perhaps this stems from a desire for objective lines of identity that were absent in the anxious, uncertain time of the Victorian period. While these lines did not exist objectively in the Middle Ages either, Bulwer Lytton and his readers may have taken comfort in the idea of a time when groups and peoples were defined and could be a source of pride and identity.

Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings is called, by Edward Bulwer Lytton, “an historical romance,” and for good reason. The history itself is romanticized, but there are also exaggerated elements of romance in certain relationships, namely between Harold and Edith. For example, Harold’s mother tells him this about Edith:

though she grieved deeply after thy departure, and would sit for hours gazing into space, and moaning. But even ere Hilda divined thy safe return, Edith knew it; I was beside her at the time; she started up, and cried, ‘Harold is in England!’ – ‘How? – Why thinkest thou so?’ said I. And Edith answered, ‘I feel it by the touch of the earth, by the breath of the air.’ This is more than love, Harold.¹⁷⁸

When it is suggested to Harold that he must marry Aldyth, the sister of the earls of Mercia and Northumbria, in order to secure the support of all England, Harold’s response is as follows:

“No – no!” he exclaimed; “not that! – any sacrifice but that! – rather forfeit the throne than resign the heart that leans on mine! Thou knowest my pledge to Edith, my cousin;

¹⁷⁸ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 216.

pledge hallowed by the faith of long years. No – no, have mercy – human mercy; I can wed no other!”¹⁷⁹

However, Harold does marry Aldyth out of political interest, and it is treated as a tragedy by Bulwer Lytton. The following passage is taken from Bulwer Lytton’s telling of the Battle of Hastings:

(Harold) saw, under a lonely thorn-tree, and scarce out of bowshot from the entrenchments, a woman seated. The King looked hard at the bended, hooded form.

“Poor wretch!” he murmured, “her heart is in the battle!” And he shouted aloud, “Farther off! Farther off? – the war rushes hitherward!”

At the sound of that voice the woman rose, stretched her arms and sprang forward... “I have heard him again, again!” murmured the woman, “God be praised!”¹⁸⁰

This, of course, implies that Edith was watching the battle and desperately wanted to hear Harold speak one last time. We can spare ourselves a look at the overly romantic behavior of Edith upon finding Harold’s corpse at the end of the novel. In addition to the exaggerated love between Harold and Edith, Bulwer Lytton implies that Harold is loved (romantically, it seems) by his nephew Haco.¹⁸¹ Haco says, “the sole soft thought that relieved the bitterness of my soul... was the love that I bore to Harold,” and “To me is not destined the love of woman, nor the ambition of life. All I know of human affection binds me to Harold; all I know of human ambition is to share in his fate.”¹⁸² During the battle, when Haco offers to be Harold’s shield-bearer, Harold says, “Thou lovest me, then, son of Sweyn; I have sometimes doubted it.” Haco responds, “I love thee as the best part of my life, and with thy life ceases mine: it is my heart that my shield guards when it covers the breast of Harold.”¹⁸³ Bulwer Lytton reports Haco’s death like so: “He fell with his head on the breast of Harold, kissed the bloody cheek with bloody lips, groaned, and died.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 239.

¹⁸⁰ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 306-307.

¹⁸¹ Hakon Sweynson or Hacon Swegenson, son of Sweyn Godwinson, brother of Harold.

¹⁸² Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 222-223.

¹⁸³ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 309-310.

¹⁸⁴ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 312.

Considering how little historians know about the figure of Haco, it is probable that Bulwer Lytton fabricated his love for Harold. In any case, both Edith and Haco contribute to the romantic sense of the novel, however unrealistic this is. Bulwer Lytton says himself in his “Dedicatory Epistle” to the novel:

The fictitious part of my narrative is...confined chiefly to the private life, with its domain of incident and passion, which is the legitimate appanage of novelist or poet. The love story of Harold and Edith is told differently from the well-known legend, which implies a less pure connection.¹⁸⁵

The romance of *Harold* likely provided Bulwer Lytton’s readers an escape from the stress of life in Victorian England. Along with the copious medieval description and honorable or virtuous characters, it contributes to the creation of a rich, noble landscape of the past, however imaginary, in which Victorian readers could immerse themselves.

The final thing that demonstrates Bulwer Lytton’s nostalgia for the Middle Ages is his tendency to insert historical musings into his narrative. With the voice of the narrator, he reminds the reader that the story he is telling happened in the distant past and that we thus have historical perspective on it. For example, after Harold has become king, Haco shows him his newly minted coins, each with the word “PAX” (peace) on the back. Bulwer Lytton here interrupts his narrative to muse on the irony of this:

Who ever saw one of those coins of the Last Saxon King, the bold simple head on the one side, that single word “Peace” on the other, and did not feel awed and touched! What pathos in that word compared with the fate which it failed to propitiate!¹⁸⁶

This mention of a historic detail made ironic by the events that came after it reminds the reader that the story is being narrated long after it happened. Bulwer Lytton’s note on the irony of Harold’s “Peace” coins shows nostalgia for the time before Harold was defeated and killed in

¹⁸⁵ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 5.

¹⁸⁶ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 260.

battle, for the time when there was still hope of a long, peaceful reign for him. Bulwer Lytton also indulges in romantic musings with the very last paragraph of his novel:

Eight centuries have rolled away, and where is the Norman now? or where is not the Saxon? The little urn that sufficed for the mighty lord is despoiled of his very dust; but the tombless shade of the kingly freeman still guards the coasts, and rests upon the seas. In many a noiseless field, with Thoughts for Armies, your relics, O Saxon Heroes, have won back the victory from the bones of the Norman saints; and whenever, with fairer fates, Freedom opposes Force, and Justice, redeeming the old defeat, smites down the armed Frauds that would consecrate the wrong, - smile, O soul of our Saxon Harold, smile, appeased, on the Saxon's land!¹⁸⁷

In this passage, Bulwer Lytton romanticizes Harold as “the kingly freeman,” whose shade still guards the coasts of England. He says that the relics of the “Saxon Heroes” have won back the battle—that is, won back England—with “Thoughts for Armies.” This implies that the Saxons may have lost the Battle of Hastings, but have more recently won back the hearts and minds of the English people. Whether or not this is true, it certainly alludes to the existence of widespread nostalgia for Saxon England in the modern English people.

Bulwer Lytton's narrative decisions and stylistic choices in *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings* both reflect the Victorian era and show nostalgia for the Middle Ages. As Pugh and Weisl write in *Medievalisms: Making the Past in the Present*, this was a trend across many Victorian writers:

The Industrial Revolution radically transformed British and American society during the Victorian era, and many authors and artists turned to the Middle Ages as an antidote against the pressures of modernity in celebration of a simpler time of simpler technologies¹⁸⁸

For many Victorian intellectuals, medievalism was an escape from the rapidly changing modern day. Pugh and Weisl also mention how Alfred, Lord Tennyson retold the Arthurian legends,

¹⁸⁷ Bulwer Lytton, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*, 316.

¹⁸⁸ Pugh and Weisl, *Medievalisms: Making the Past in the Present*, 40.

“imbuing these medieval tales with a sense of melancholic regret for their inevitable passing.”¹⁸⁹

This is also what Edward Bulwer Lytton has done in *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings*. He retells a historical event of the Middle Ages with a sense of regret at the fact that it is over, that the outcome of the story was known in advance. It could be argued that since Bulwer Lytton put his own bias and stylistic spin on the story of the Norman Conquest, that his novel cannot be regarded as a credible account of the event. However, *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings* is not unlike the primary accounts of the Norman Conquest outlined earlier. Like them, it is one person’s biased version of what happened. In fact, Bulwer Lytton’s novel is arguably more credible than the accounts of William of Poitiers, William of Jumièges or Eadmer, precisely because it draws from so many earlier sources. Hammer mentions that Bulwer Lytton talked about these sources as a control on his artistic freedom, and that as a historical novelist, he was “heir to more than two and a half centuries of tireless and acute historical and textual scholarship.”¹⁹⁰ The primary sources are much narrower and therefore cannot really be seen as more accurate than Edward Bulwer Lytton. After all, there are no flawless accounts of the events of 1066. Bulwer Lytton certainly incorporated plenty of medieval research into his narrative, along with elements and attitudes of his own age, particularly Victorian nostalgia for the Middle Ages.

¹⁸⁹ Pugh and Weisl, *Medievalisms: Making the Past in the Present*, 40.

¹⁹⁰ Hammer, “Harold in Normandy: History and Romance,” 84-88.

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The Unusual Six:

A Case Study of the Horner Sisters in Victorian Women's Networking

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Given the constant presence of women in human history, and the formerly limited scope by which important societal and cultural contributions were deemed “historical”, this author increasingly finds gaps in the historical record. One group of women, The Horner sisters existed in the margins of intellectual history, however they deserve to be brought into the foreground. While the Horner sisters were not necessarily beacons of feminism or trail blazers, they were upper-class women who still left an indelible mark on their social circle. This circle included such shining lights as Mary Somerville, Florence Nightingale and Harriet Hosmer. The purpose of this research into the Horner sisters is not to conduct a wholesale rewriting of history, but to provide a fuller picture of wealthy Victorian intellectual circles and the importance of women's roles in fostering and maintaining them.

Historians have already begun exploring the prominence of women in history, including the Horner sisters. Marilyn Ogilvie and Joy Harvey in 2003 published an updated The

Biographical Dictionary of Women in Science: Pioneering Lives from Ancient Times to the Mid-20th Century which included biographies on both Katharine and Mary Horner. They found their place in scientific history as Katharine published within the botanical field and Mary, wife to Charles Lyell, was known to assist her husband in his geological studies.¹⁹¹ Beyond these two, there are no extensive academic biographies of the other four sisters. This is not without good reason, since on their own they did not step too far outside the conventionally patriarchal boundaries that circumscribed the role of Victorian women. They maintained their socially acceptable spheres as women, but they also expanded that bubble through their independent pursuits. Their pursuits did not happen in a vacuum, but within a community of friends, family, and peers. These women became conductors allowing the flow of intellectual information and professional connection to proliferate in their community.

Elizabeth Yale and Lindsay O'Neill are two historians who have delved into the complexities of British social networks. Both conducted their investigations through the letter networks of their subjects. O'Neill and Yale point toward the rise of the British post office and the invaluable network of earlier couriers, in connection with the rise in the nation-wide exchanging of ideas between similarly interested groups.¹⁹² The rise of the post office in the early 1600's in England connected wealthy and intellectual correspondents across ever-larger swaths of the British empire. It was especially helpful in fostering communication among early British naturalists, who would later evolve into the specialized scientific fields we understand today.

¹⁹¹ Joy Harvey and Marlin Ogilvie, *The Biographical Dictionary of Women in Science: Pioneering Lives From the Ancient Times to the Mid-20th Century* (Taylor & Francis 2003), 813,814.

¹⁹² Lindsay O'Neill, *The Opened Letter : Networking in the Early Modern British World* (University of Pennsylvania 2015), 8; Elizabeth Yale, *Sociable knowledge : natural history and the nation in early modern Britain* (University of Pennsylvania Press 2016), 1.

Yale points to the naturalists who sent letters, specimens and services to each other, forming the new sophisticated letter networks.¹⁹³

Over the course of two hundred years those practices only continued to grow allowing scientists to send specimens throughout the entirety of the far-flung British empire and beyond. Katharine Horner, in particular, sent specimens from India back home to Britain.¹⁹⁴ O'Neill highlighted the swapping of letters among these tight family groups and their wider circles of acquaintance. A letter sent to one person might end up in the hands of several people who would find material of interest in it.¹⁹⁵ This was a common occurrence between the Horner family and a larger Horner-centered network of correspondence. Both Yale and O'Neill focused mainly on the leading male naturalists of the 17th and 18th centuries, in part because their texts and manuscripts have been preserved by different archives and printers of the years. Unfortunately, given the assumed unimportance assigned to much of female correspondence, many female correspondents in earlier eras have been lost to time as their textual sources were not preserved. However, flashing forward two hundred years to the 19th century, much more female correspondence has been recovered, archived, and can be analyzed for their historical offerings.

The nature of a British correspondence network allowed individuals to expand their acquaintances tenfold, but the female portion of this network has rarely been fully recognized. In the Edinburgh library, there exists a letter from Douglas Strutt Galton dated January 30th 1893 to Katharine (Horner) Lyell, together with an archivist's note stating that, "There is no known

¹⁹³ Yale, Chapter 2.

¹⁹⁴ Leonard Horner to Katharine Horner, The Grove, Highgate, 18 November 1851, *Memoir of Leonard Horner, F.R.S., F.G.S.: Consisting of Letters to His Family and from Some of His Friends vol 2*, ed. Katharine Lyell (London: Women's Printing Society, 1840), 192-193.

¹⁹⁵ O'Neill, Lindsay. *The Opened Letter : Networking in the Early Modern British World*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wayne/detail.action?docID=3442439>, 49.

connection between Katharine Murray Lyell and Douglas Strutt Galton.”¹⁹⁶ It is odd then that a letter between two unconnected people should exist, however when taking into account the relationship between the Horner women and the women connected to Galton, a chain becomes evident. Galton’s wife, Marianne Nicholson, was a cousin of Florence Nightingale, who also worked with Douglas Galton. Nightingale was also friends with Katharine’s sister Leonora and Joanna since at least 1859.¹⁹⁷ In a letter dated July 13th 1883, Nightingale addressed Joanna as “My old friend,” and Leonora is known to have performed charity work with her.¹⁹⁸ It is not unlikely then that Katharine would have been acquainted with Nightingale and her circle, or at the very least have access to them for whatever project she was working on in 1893. Thus, while there may be no direct or obvious link between Galton and Katherine Lyell, the long-neglected network of feminine connections and correspondence allows us to see how a letter sent from one to the other could come to exist and survive in an archive. Future research may be completed at the Kinnordy estate, former home of the Lyell family. The letters found there may give more details as to what Katharine was working on, and any other letters she may have exchanged with Douglas Strutt Galton or his wife Marianne Nicholson may provide further insight to her research.¹⁹⁹

An upper-class women’s role in the Victorian era had boundaries that strictly defined her gender and her participation within society. Women’s role commanding the domestic circle consisted of handling the household duties, and for women of wealth that meant overseeing

¹⁹⁶ Galton, Douglas Strutt, British engineer (1822-1899). Autograph letter signed. [London], 30. I. 1893. Small 8vo. 2 pp. on bifolium. Together with a cabinet portrait photograph

¹⁹⁷ Florence Nightingale to Leonora Pertz, 19 September 1854, Florence Nightingale digitization project, box 2 folder 22, <http://archives.bu.edu/web/florence-nightingale/detail?id=287364>.

¹⁹⁸ Florence Nightingale to Joanna Horner, 18 July 1883, Florence Nightingale digitization project, <http://archives.bu.edu/web/florence-nightingale/detail?id=420637>.

¹⁹⁹ Thank you to Veronica Bielat at Wayne State Library; Virginia Mills at the Royal Society in London; the Kinnordy Estate; Daryl Green at the University of Edinburgh Archives for their digital access. These archives may also provide resources for Mary, Francis and Joanna who are not discussed in this paper.

various servants as they performed the majority of the physical housework. It also meant hosting social functions to foster connections and facilitate a rise in status for their families. Yet socializing did not happen only at dining tables and in drawing rooms, it also took place at a distance and thus relied strongly on correspondence networks. Women's social responsibility included parlor room interaction not only with other women but with men. A woman's purpose was understood as a subservient compliment to that of their male counterparts.²⁰⁰ Some women who were more social or ambitious tested these boundaries and pushed them outward.²⁰¹ For the Victorians, this occurred in robust letter networks maintained by families and social circles. The Horner sisters found themselves involved in many different social circles. This was partly due to the status of their Scottish geologist father, Leonard Horner, but also their own acquaintances.

Susan and Joanna found many kindred spirits in the realm of Italian reunification politics, art and history; Mary made acquaintances in geology and conchology; Katharine made acquaintances in the botanical field. Frances made several contacts in the educational and botanical fields, and Leonora found interest in German historical circles. All maintained communications with their own family and their many in-laws, creating a sort of mega-family of scholastic excellence and a vast network of correspondents. The women of this family maintained a large portion of this social network, which proved to be beneficial not only to themselves but also to the men in their lives. The undervalued nature of this "woman's work" provided the structure and connections that held the vast and far flung networks together. While all of these women are extraordinary in their own right with their own accomplishments, through

²⁰⁰ John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (1865; London and Toronto) et al Epstein, James. "Victorian Subjects: Introduction." *Journal of British Studies* 34, no. 3 (1995): 295-99; Diana Cordea, "Two approaches on the philosophy of separate spheres in mid-Victorian England: John Ruskin and John Stuart Mill *Procedia*," *Social and Behavioral Sciences* 71, (2013).

²⁰¹ Roy Macleod and Russell Mosely, "Fathers and Daughters: Reflections on Women, Science and Victorian Cambridge," *History of Education* (1979), 323.

their letters it becomes clear how women were indispensable, even at the most minute level, in the promoting and disseminating new discoveries. This paper only focuses on three of the six sisters; Leonora, Susan and Katharine.

Leonora was the fifth daughter of Leonard and Anne Horner, born on August 28th, 1818. Leonora moved with the family in 1831 at the age of thirteen and they spent two years living at Bonn on the Rhine, which is now Germany, while her father focused on his geological study of Siebengebirge referenced by Leonard as “The Seven Hills.”²⁰² Through their father’s encouragement, Leonora and four of her sisters learned Italian, German, and Dutch. After a move in 1833 back to London, Leonard warned Leonora and Katharine not to forget their time spent learning the German language but to “keep it at hand” practicing it bit by bit every day.²⁰³ Leonora’s command of the German language came in handy as she and her sister Joanna embarked on translating Letters from Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Peninsula of Sinai (1853) by Prussian Egyptologist Richard Lepsius, a contemporary authority on Egypt, from German to English. This journal was influential for British Egyptologists and garnered praise from Leonard’s peers.²⁰⁴ A year later the pair translated The Soul in Nature with supplementary contributions (1852) written by Danish physicist Hans Christian Ørsted for their close friend and daughter of Ørsted, Mathilde Elisabeth Ørsted.²⁰⁵ Leonora did not remain in England long after the aforementioned publication, having made an acquaintance with a respected German historian.

²⁰² Ed. K.M Lyell *Memoir of Leonard Horner, F.R.S., F.G.S.: Consisting of Letters to His Family and from Some of His Friends vol 1*, ed. Katharine Lyell (London: Women’s Printing Society, 1840), 256-257.

²⁰³ Leonard Horner to Leonora Horner, Athenaeum, London, 17 March 1836, *Memoir of Leonard Horner, F.R.S., F.G.S.: Consisting of Letters to His Family and from Some of His Friends vol 1*, ed. Katharine Lyell (London: Women’s Printing Society, 1840), 323-324.

²⁰⁴ Leonard Horner to Katharine Horner, Manchester, 27 September 1853, *Memoir of Leonard Horner, F.R.S., F.G.S.: Consisting of Letters to His Family and from Some of His Friends vol 2*, ed. Katharine Lyell (London: Women’s Printing Society, 1840), 219-220;

²⁰⁵ Joanna B Horner, “Joanna B Horner to Sir John Herschel,” May 4, 1852.

In 1854, at the age of thirty-six, Leonora became engaged to George Heinrich Pertz who was a royal librarian in Berlin and was in the process of publishing the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, a twelve-volume complete history of Germany. Leonora became Pertz's second wife after his first wife suddenly passed in September of 1852.²⁰⁶ They met while Pertz was visiting various British libraries while writing the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. He was introduced to Mr. Horner and his daughters. Leonora's father approved of their union, and thus Pertz was permanently inducted into the Horner family circle.²⁰⁷ Starting in 1855, the couple traveled to England at least once a year to stay in contact with Leonora's family and social circle. Because of this yearly pilgrimage Pertz was able to discover materials in libraries not previously known to him. In 1855 he rediscovered a Roman historian in a Syrian codex and used it in his work as chief librarian in Berlin.²⁰⁸ A month later in 1857, Mary and Charles Lyell, were able to procure access for Pertz to Lord and Lady Ashburnham's extensive library and its rare contents.²⁰⁹ Without this strong connection to Leonora and her social circle it is unlikely that Pertz would have gained access to these materials or found them without spending a great deal more social currency in a foreign country. Pertz repaid his in-laws for their connections by in turn connecting them to German geologists and naturalists:

“As soon as we were certain of being in possession of both [Charles Lyell's] reports about

Mount Etna and Vesuvius, I sent them to Humboldt, telling him, at the same time, to

²⁰⁶ Pertz, *Autobiography and Letters of George Henry Pertz Edited by His Wife ed. Leonora Pertz*, 134.

²⁰⁷ Leonard Horner to Katharine Horner, 17, Queens Road West, London 3 March 1854, *Memoir of Leonard Horner, F.R.S., F.G.S.: Consisting of Letters to His Family and from Some of His Friends vol 2*, ed. Katharine Lyell (London: Women's Printing Society, 1840), 223-224; Leonard Horner to Katharine Horner, Berlin 17 July 1854, *Memoir of Leonard Horner, F.R.S., F.G.S.: Consisting of Letters to His Family and from Some of His Friends vol 2*.

²⁰⁸ Georg Heinrich Pertz to Professor Georg Waitz, Berlin, December 31st, 1855, Pertz, *Autobiography and Letters of George Henry Pertz Edited by His Wife*, ed. Leonora Pertz (London: Women's Printing Society, 1840), 152-153. Pertz does not give the name of this library, only that he was in England

²⁰⁹ Georg Heinrich Pertz to Lady Lyell (Mary Lyell), Royal Library Berlin, April 15, 1856, Pertz, 154, *Autobiography and Letters of George Henry Pertz Edited by His Wife*, ed. Leonora Pertz (London: Women's Printing Society, 1840).

communicate them to Messrs, Gustav Rose, Ewald, Beyrich, and Mitscherlich. Humboldt replied immediately in a few lines, thanking me very much for the privilege of seeing them.”²¹⁰

Without the maintenance of the familial social network by Leonora and Mary, their husbands’ individual work would have been diminished.

The last time Leonora’s name was studied in connection with her husband was in “Great Historical Enterprises III. The *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*” published in 1959, written by Michael David Knowles, former professor at Cambridge University. Knowles chronicled George Pertz’s journey while writing his lifelong work, the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. Knowles dismisses the relationship between the pair as having played little, if any role, in Pertz’s efforts, and completely ignores Leonora’s individual successes. Knowles’s analysis of Leonora could be described as sexist, as he paints her as a hard-nosed, controlling wife. He also insists that Leonora’s role as a mother and scholar hindered Pertz, because of the family’s yearly trip to England, while ignoring the essential assistance that Leonora’s family provided Pertz in facilitating his access to sources in English libraries.²¹¹ He also fails to mention that it was because of that English connection that Leonora’s daughter Doretha (Dora) was able to meet and maintain a working relationship with Charles Darwin’s son, Frances Darwin, and co-publish five papers with him on botany.²¹² It also connected their daughter, Anna Pertz, to different artistic communities in England and aided in her painting career. These connections from Leonora to her surviving daughters Dora and Anna would then be extended to her great-great-great-step-niece

²¹⁰ Georg Henrich Pertz to Lady Lyell (Mary Lyell), Royal Library Berlin, April 15, 1856, Pertz, 154, *Autobiography and Letters of George Henry Pertz Edited by His Wife*, ed. Leonora Pertz (London: Women’s Printing Society, 1840).

²¹¹ Knowles, M. D. "Presidential Address: Great Historical Enterprises III. The *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 10 (1960): 136

²¹² Creese, Mary R. S.; Creese, Thomas M. (January 2000). *Ladies in the Laboratory? American and British Women in Science, 1800–1900 A Survey of Their Contributions to Research*, 61.

Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin, revolutionary 20th century American astronomer, who found strength and connections in her Horner aunts.²¹³

In addition there is evidence that George Pertz wanted his family to spend time with the Horner clan every year, this was often in England.²¹⁴ As political tensions rose across the European continent, it may be speculated that the Pertz's would seek comfort in the isolated British Isles. While Leonora's strict adherence to visiting family in England is snobbishly dismissed by Knowles as an annoyance and a distraction for Pertz, her ability to travel around Europe with her children and provide a vital link between the many branches of the family benefited three generations of Pertz women, in addition to Pertz himself. Leonora's older Susan was also valued for her use of her network of colleagues in others and her own pursuits.

Susan Horner was the third eldest Horner daughter. Born in 1816, Susan was with the family on most of their major moves and trips. The most significant trip for Susan occurred in 1847 when she travelled to Florence with her older sister Frances and her brother-in-law Charles J.F. Bunbury. This visit took place one year before the revolution of the Italian states and fostered her interest in Italian history and art. Many wealthy British socialites and merchants, like her family, were interested in promoting a lasting reunification between the Italian states.²¹⁵ While her 1847 diary is not currently available to the public, Susan returned to Italy and Florence in 1861, and surviving documents from that trip illuminate not only the effect reunification had on the country and its British residents but, also Susan's growing network of Italian scholars and dignitaries who associated with those British residents. These connections furthered her career

²¹³ Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin, *Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin: an autobiography and recollections*, ed Katharine Haramundanis (Cambridge, Newyork,1984) 82.

²¹⁴Georg Henrich Pertz to Lady Lyell (Mary Lyell), Royal Library Berlin, April 15, 1856, Pertz, *Autobiography and Letters of George Henry Pertz Edited by His Wife*, ed. Leonora Pertz (London: Women's Printing Society, 1840), 216.

²¹⁵Leonard Horner to Charles J.F. Bunbury, *Memoir of Leonard Horner, F.R.S., F.G.S.: Consisting of Letters to His Family and from Some of His Friends vol 2*, ed. Katharine Lyell (London: Women's Printing Society, 1840), 128,141.

and interests as a researcher and writer. One of her earlier connections was Carlo Poerio to whom was likely introduced to in London. She worked with him to write A Century of Despotism in Naples and Sicily, which recorded the then contemporary-history of Naples and Sicily and detailed Poerio's unique experience as a revolutionary and former exile.²¹⁶ Susan's interest and connections in the wider art and history community were already well known, and that publication further bolstered her reputation. As described in a letter held at Rice University in Texas.

Susan's reputation as an art historian was recognized by those in the Horner super-circle. She was asked by Henry Edward Bunbury (father of her sister's husband, Charles Bunbury) to introduce himself and a manuscript to the respected artist, art historian and curator of the National Gallery in London, Charles Eastlake. Eastlake was a longtime family friend of the Horner's as well as a long-term resident of Florence.²¹⁷ Susan obliged and connected these men who also shared an interest in the arts.²¹⁸ A letter from Sir George Otto Trevelyan in 1878 displayed the respect her colleagues had for her depth of knowledge on Italian art as Trevelyan answers in detail her questions on Indian mosaic's and provides her with reference materials.²¹⁹ Both of these men respected her opinion on matters of the arts, with one of them using her as a conduit to further his own interests. Susan did not neglect her networks but grew them for her own benefit.

In journal chapters detailing of her 1861-62 Florentine trip, which are held by the British Institute of Florence, in the first month of her visit she recorded fourteen unique contacts, six of

²¹⁶ Poerio, Carlo, Italian poet, Risorgimento and 1848 Revolution activist, politician (1803- 1867). Autograph letter signed. Florence, 13. IV., no year. 8vo. 1 page on bifolium. With a portrait photograph.

²¹⁷ Sir Henry Edward Bunbury, "To Susan Horner from Sir Henry Edward Bunbury," Susan and Joanna Horner collection, Rice University, March 18, 1847.

²¹⁸ Ibid, Henry Edward Bunbury, "H.E Bunbury to Susan Horner," March 30, 1847.

²¹⁹ Ibid, George Trevelyan, "To Susan Horner from George Trevelyan", January 11, 1878.

which were newly made through family and letters of introduction provided by an expanding chain of acquaintances. In one such instance the Ricasoli brothers, friends of Leonard Horner, sent a letter of introduction to Marchese Feroni who worked at the Uffizi Gallery, the prominent art museum in Florence. Marchese Feroni then wrote Susan a letter of introduction to the librarian at the Palazzo Pitti; Professor Parlatore, a scientist at the Natural History Museum; and provided introductions to Signor Compagna, an expert on gems and Greek vases.²²⁰ Compagna and Ferani then introduced Susan to professor Miglarini, an art historian at Uffizi.²²¹ From this single introduction of the Ricasoli brothers, in one month, four unique and important contacts were made that gained her access to some of the most preeminent cultural institutions in Florence

This chain reaction of introductions granted Susan access to the Uffizi's collection of gems, vases and their extensive library which aided in her research. She began studying Greek vases at the Uffizi and the research would later appear in *Greek Vases: Historian and descriptive: with some brief notices of vases in the Museum of the Louvre, and a selection from Vases in the British Museum* published in 1897.²²² Susan also had access to people, books and locations that aided in the writing of *Walks in Florence* in 1873, which she wrote with her sister Joanna a little over a decade after this 1861 family trip. Susan also used her longtime friend, Carlo Poerio, to become acquainted with Gino Capponi. Capponi sent her books for her research and became a constant contact during her time in Florence.²²³

Over the eight months that Susan was in Florence, she was called upon by, encountered, or was introduced to no fewer than fifty-five individuals and families in Italian and British social

²²⁰ Susan Horner Diary: (1861-1862) [diary], October 1861 extracts, p.4 in British Institute of Florence <https://www.britishinstitute.it/media/library/October1861.pdf> [18 October 1861].

²²¹ Ibid

²²² Susan Horner, *Greek vases : historical and descriptive : with some brief notices of vases in the Museum of the Louvre, and a selection from vases in the British Museum* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1897)

²²³ Ibid [20 October 1861]; Gino Capponi, Italian statesmen, 'Letter to Miss Horner (probably Susan) after 1861' in Edinburgh University Horner collection, [accessed 13 July 2020]

circles in Florence. Her most expansive relationship was with Marchese Feroni who connected her with at least nine unique individuals. The Marchese also wrote letters for Susan and her family to access places like Michelangelo's original house, the Magliabechiano library and numerous villas in the countryside. These locations would make their appearances in *Walks in Florence*. Susan's younger sister Katharine also proved to have a large network.

Katharine was the fourth elder daughter with a strong interest in botany. She benefited from living in a house with her eldest three sisters as well as her two younger siblings. Instead of marrying someone with academic related interests, Katharine chose to marry Col. Henry Lyell, brother of Charles Lyell, in 1848 at the age of 31.²²⁴ In November 1848 Leonard encouraged Katharine to publish her discovery of a rare moss in Sir William Hooker's *Curtis Botanical Magazine* and to continue her botanical pursuits.²²⁵ It's not clear if she did publish in Hooker's magazine, as of this time no Katharine Lyell or K.M. Lyell has been found in the magazine.

She went on to edit and publish the works for her father, as well as those of her brother in-law. Charles Lyell. She also assisted her sister Frances in the multi-volume set of Charles J.F. Bunbury's letters. Mary, Charles's wife, had died before Charles or it is likely that she would have been the editor of her husbands' letters.²²⁶ Katharine also wrote and published "*A Geographical Handbook of All the Known Ferns: With Tables to Show Their Distribution*. London (1870)" which was well respected in the botanical field. This was in addition to responsibilities as she headed a household with three children as they lived in India right on the cusp of the 1857 revolution. Generations later, Katharine's step-great-great-grand-niece Cecilia

²²⁴ Leonard Horner, *Memoir of Leonard Horner, F.R.S., F.G.S.: Consisting of Letters to His Family and from Some of His Friends vol 2*, ed. Katharine Lyell (London: Women's Printing Society, 1840), 124.

²²⁵ Leonard Horner to Katharine Horner, Manchester, 7 November 1848, *Memoir of Leonard Horner, F.R.S., F.G.S.: Consisting of Letters to His Family and from Some of His Friends vol 2*, ed. Katharine Lyell (London: Women's Printing Society, 1840), 147-148; William's son Joseph Hooker took over as editor of the magazine and Kew gardens in 1865.

²²⁶ Joy Harvey and Marlin Ogilvie, *The Biographical Dictionary of Women in Science: Pioneering Lives From the Ancient Times to the Mid-20th Century* (Taylor & Francis 2003), 813,814.

described her as a “formidable old lady” that one had to “address as royalty.” These “alarming and delightful” visits occurred in the last year of Katharine’s life while she and Joanna were living together in London.²²⁷ Her son Leonard Lyell went on to House of Lords, her other two children, Rosamond and Arthur faded from history.

Through a letter chain stemming from Charles Darwin, it is evident that Katharine was in communication with a vast swath of a prominent scientific Victorian network. In a set of letters and diary entries in 1873, friend and colleague Thomas Henry Huxley’s health and mental state were in decline, and he was entering a period of financial hardship. Katharine communicated with Emma Darwin, wife of Charles Darwin, and devised a plan to help their friend.²²⁸ Katharine wanted to take up a “testimonial” or collection which would have allowed their circle to fund Huxley’s work while he weathered the new hardships in his life. Emma told Darwin, who told Hooker, who became part of the project.²²⁹ Another friend and colleague, John Tyndall, later convinced Darwin that Katharine should be left out of the subscription and her involvement kept a secret to preserve the male ego of Huxley and the other contributors.²³⁰ Aside from concealing Katharine’s involvement in helping, Darwin and Hooker devised different ways to trick Huxley into accepting the money, in order to circumvent his pride, and their efforts succeeded.²³¹ The final contribution list consisted of all male friends to Huxley and he accepted their help willingly.

²³² Yet all the individuals included in the list were known contacts of Katharine’s, or her family.

²²⁷ Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin, *Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin: an autobiography and recollections*, ed Katharine Haramundanis (Cambridge, Newyork,1984) 80.

²²⁸ *Emma Darwin* (1904): *Emma Darwin, wife of Charles Darwin. A century of family letters*. Edited by Henrietta Litchfield. 2 vols. Cambridge: privately printed by Cambridge University Press. 1904.

²²⁹ Charles Darwin to Joseph Hooker, 6 April 1873, Letter no. 8843, Darwin Correspondence Project, <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-8843.xml>

²³⁰ Charles Darwin to John Tyndall, 11 April 1873, Letter no. 8856, Darwin Correspondence Project, <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-8856.xml>

²³¹ Joseph Hooker to Charles Darwin, 25 April 1873, Darwin Correspondence Project, Letter no. 8880, <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-8880.xml>

²³²Subscribers to T. H. Huxley gift, 25 April 1873, Darwin Correspondence Project, Letter no. 8876, <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-8876.xml>

Though Katharine was essentially excluded from openly participating and executing her idea to help her friend, her thoughts traveled along this trusted network and produced the desired result. Her communication didn't end there. Through her correspondence with Darwin she convinced him to put her into contact with George Robert Waterhouse and John Edward Gray in order to continue her children's interest in different scientific fields.²³³ Letters held in the University of Edinburgh archives show that she was also great friends with Scottish judge and lawyer Lord Cockburn; the writer of Peter Pan, James Matthew Barrie; and Hungarian politician August von Pulszky. Additional connections through letters and relationships yet unseen (such as her connection to Galton) are very likely to exist. Every letter collected for Charles Lyell and Leonard Horner's biographies was a project undertaken by Katharine to great effect. Compiling these letters could only have been completed through numerous family connections.

These three, of the mentioned six Horner sisters are by no means the full extent of communication between the sisters, or their collective communication with the wider Victorian world. Joanna Horner communicated with John Hershel on the subject of translating and introducing Hershel to the daughter of Hans Christian Ørsted, a respected Danish physicist. Mary Lyell was in contact with Fanny Kemble, British actress and later American abolitionist. Frances Bunbury worked with her husband to research and start a school in addition to publishing Sir Charles Bunbury's letters in a multi-volume work.²³⁴ Through each sister the spheres of influence and communication became larger, much larger than they may first appear. With each contact there existed an opportunity for ideas to be shared and connections to be broadened. Without

²³³ Charles Darwin to Katharine Lyell, 26 January 1856, Darwin Correspondence Project, Letter no. 1827, "<https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-1827.xml>."

²³⁴E.R Kelly, *The Post Office Directory of The Counties of Cambridge, Norfolk and Suffolk*. (London: E.R Kelly and Co. 1879), 773; Leonard Horner to Frances Horner, Bedford Place, August 1846, *Memoir of Leonard Horner, F.R.S., F.G.S.: Consisting of Letters to His Family and from Some of His Friends vol 2*, ed.; Frances Bunbury, *Life, Letters and Journals of Sir Charles J.F. Bunbury*.

specific women linking and interacting within their circle, Pertz's life work would have been diminished; the vibrancy of Florentine art, history, and politics would have been less well known; Thomas Henry Huxley might not have received the help from his friends that he urgently needed; and the dozens of people explicitly or serendipitously connected by these women would have been poorer in their experiences.

Yet the Horner sisters didn't simply exist as bridges for the ideas of men to walk across, they also explored their own ideas and made important contributions to scholarship across many fields. All of the sisters, except for Mary, were published authors, editors or translators. Mary pursued her conchology work in collaboration with her husband and was consulted by others for her expertise.²³⁵ While they may not have ruffled the same feathers as Mary Sommerville, or even some Horner descendants, the collective knowledge of the world is only richer for their existence. Their unusual nature lies in their ability to realize their ambitions while remaining socially acceptable, even within the strict patriarchal constraints of Victorian England, molding their surroundings to pursue their goals. While they may be unique as a concentration of excellence from one family, their existence as excellent women is not an outlier. Women of remarkable talent, in adherence to the procedures of the day, are generally hidden in footnotes and ghost written across history. While their talents assisted their husbands in a helpmate capacity, it was often their uncredited status as scribes and social attendants of society that bolstered the discourse of the day. Their unique and uncredited role as upper-class women played a significant and active part in shaping the wider intellectual community, and they could not have exited in their pursuits or correspondence alone. Whether its historians' understanding of Victorian networks or our understanding of the revolutionary events of 19th century Italy, the

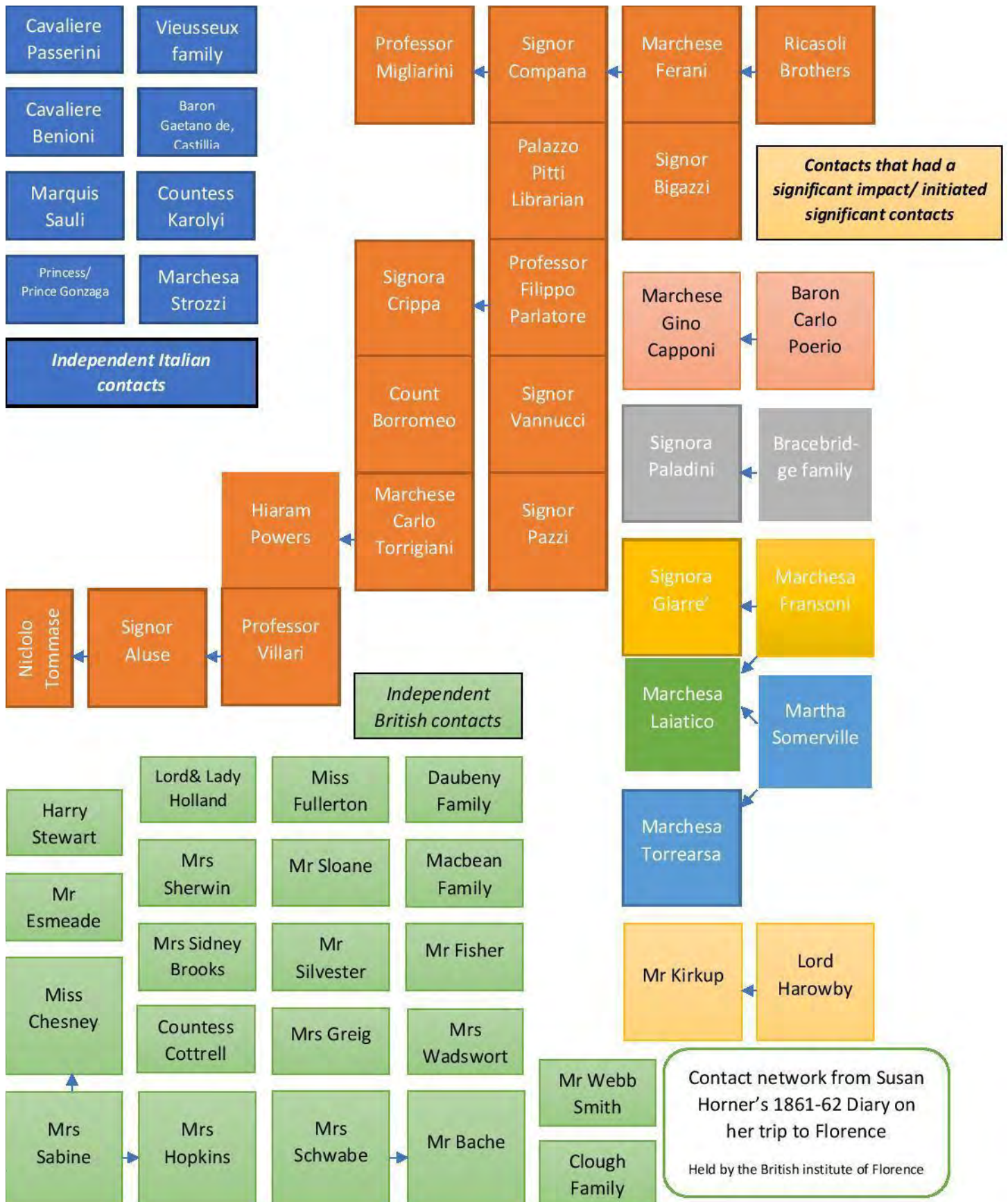
²³⁵Charles Darwin to Mary Lyell, 24 October 1849, Darwin Correspondence Project, Letter no. 1266, <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-1266.xml>

world's global knowledge becomes a bit dimmer with the Horner sister's exclusion, and we find ourselves trying to explain the existence of letters written between two people of "no known connection."

These sisters' status as wealthy Victorian women, and the social and letter-writing networks they maintained, allow historians to understand the intricate nature of social circles as well as the true importance that the "domestic sphere" had over apparently unlinked aspects of Victorian intellectual discourse. As women who took care of their households and acted as guardians of familial reputation and male ego, the Horner sisters upheld the high standards expected of them as Victorian women and extended their influence and social power past expected boundaries. The gendered notion of separate spheres is challenged by the presence and talents manifested in these women, who used their women's work to effect changes beyond their societally accepted scope.

Currently, the University of Edinburgh archives are reevaluating the contents of the Lyell and Horner collections to answer questions about these men. I ask, what about these women? In the near future I hope that the lives and the accomplishments of these women and others like them receive the attention and analysis they deserve. Questions still remain regarding the letters housed at Kinnordy and their contents. Further research can be conducted regarding the moss discovered by Katharine Lyell while she was in India. Her moss research has not yet been found either in Hookers letters or in his popular botanical magazine. There are questions about the sisters' relationship with the feminist Women's Printing Society, which handled many of their publications. Analysis can be further devoted to the fledgling feminist and suffragist ideals that appear across Leonard Horner and Charles Lyell's letters in connection to their relationships to

the Horner sisters. Ideas can be connected by recognizing the value and influence these letters had over their contemporaries.



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The Road Ends Here: Private Enterprise, Tribal Sovereignty, and the Making of the Modern
Navajo Justice System

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Introduction

On May 7, 1957, Nelson H. Begay, a member of the Navajo Nation, was arrested on the side of the highway within the Navajo Reservation.²³⁶ The officer who handcuffed him escorted him to a San Juan County jail in New Mexico, and booked him on charges of driving while intoxicated, driving without a license, and involvement in an accident while intoxicated. As Begay sat in his cell, he found the resolve to fight back.

Begay went to court to free himself. His argument against his charges rested primarily on where he was at his point of capture and where he had come from. Citing a long legal tradition that considered Native lands to be separate legal entities from the states along which they border, Begay wondered what authority a New Mexican officer had to arrest a Navajo man on Navajo lands. Legally, this was as sound as if the officer had arrested a Canadian man in Canada.

In a fight to maintain jurisdiction over cases like Begay's, the state argued that it mattered not whose land the arrest occurred on, but rather whose road. Because the United States government had subsidized the production of Highway 666 where the arrest occurred, it had the

²³⁶ State v. Begay, No. 320 P.2d 1017 (Supreme Court of New Mexico January 22, 1958).

right to arrest lawbreakers for their deeds that occurred on those roads. The court deemed this argument unconvincing, and let Begay go free, making news across the southwest.²³⁷

The state's argument was rooted in Western understandings of property – namely the Lockean theory that held an input of labor contributed to the production of ownership.²³⁸ Because American labor (represented by U.S. dollars) funded the road, it was American police that would enforce it. However, it was another colonial concept that would take precedent over New Mexico's adherence to the Western idea of property – borders. The court decided that the strict border between New Mexico and the Navajo Nation was what determined jurisdiction. Just as USAID resources didn't establish ownership for the United States in other nations after a natural disaster, a road didn't make for legal sovereignty.

In the state with the longest border with the Navajo nation, Arizona, *State v. Begay* was a worrying sign of things to come for settlers. After generations of neglecting what it saw as the northeastern section of its land, the State Legislature had begun work with the federal government to provide infrastructure on the reservation. This infrastructure included roads, power lines, and, most prominently, oil pipes – often sold as a mutually beneficial package to improve Arizona's economy and lift Navajo people out of poverty. State lawmakers also endorsed tactics meant to usurp control from Navajo tribal leaders – including a takeover of the court system and policing. However, it was actually newly discovered oil reserves, along with other deposits of valuable uranium, that piqued the interest of Arizona lawmakers and shaped their conception of the future of reservation lands and helped to spark infrastructure development. Instead of a desert of neglect, they became a cash cow.²³⁹

²³⁷ “New Mexico Loses Case to Indian,” *Arizona Republic*, January 24, 1958.

²³⁸ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

²³⁹* The reactions and strategies of the Navajo people remains the subject of another study. This project, as remains common in the framework of Indigenous studies, found trouble identifying easily accessible archives that supplied

“The Road Ends Here” challenges historical narratives that consider the late 1950s as an era of modernization in the Navajo Nation and instead views the period as the setting for an important battle over tribal sovereignty in which Navajo leaders employed a wide array of tactics to secure the power and future of their people. In this work, I argue that (1) material interests rather than stated goodwill guided Arizona’s colonial politics toward the Navajo at the end of the 1950s; and (2) delegitimizing rhetoric from corporate interests, represented by the *Arizona Republic*, attempted to undermine Navajo claims to sovereignty in land and law.*

Other writers have discussed the ways in which oil and uranium reserves impacted the state strategy toward the Navajos in the mid-20th century. Andrew Needham engages with this most directly in the fourth chapter of *Power Lines: Phoenix and the Making of the Modern Southwest*, in which he argues that a coalition of business leaders, Republican lawmakers, and influential Navajos worked to open the reservation lands to drilling and mining.²⁴⁰ Needham’s analysis is valuable, but underplays the power differential between corporate and tribal interests, and generally neglects the ploy of private enterprise to dominate allocations of profit from natural resource drilling and mining. Linda Robyn’s analysis in the collection *Criminal Justice in Native America* more accurately describes the resource exploitation as “corporate crime,” emphasizing the long-term impacts of the subject of this paper.²⁴¹ Robyn discusses the drastic environmental and health consequences in Indigenous communities such as the Navajos living near current and former worksites. Finally, Luana Ross connects the loss of sovereignty among Indigenous people in the United States to a settler rhetoric of deviancy and criminality used to

ample time and care to the Navajo story of resistance in this era. Future scholars are recommended to seek out the Navajo Nation Tribal Council papers at the National Archives once they open to the public.

“Big Oil Year for Arizona Indicated,” *Arizona Republic*, February 7, 1958.

²⁴⁰ Andrew Needham, *Power Lines: Phoenix and the Making of the Modern Southwest* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

²⁴¹ Linda Robyn, “Native Americans and Uranium Mining as State-Corporate Crime,” in *Criminal Justice in Native America* (Phoenix, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2009).

undermine tribal institutions in her work *Inventing the Savage*.²⁴² As this story reflects, rhetoric is a strong and commonly-used tool used to undermine the leadership of the Navajo in their own sovereignty.

In this study, I engage primarily with archives from the *Arizona Republic*, a Phoenix-based newspaper that often served as a mouthpiece for developers in the state. In addition to helping me set up a timeline for my inquiry, the articles also provide the point of view of Arizona corporate and government officials in their dealings with the Navajo. I also make use of several court cases, including audio from the Supreme Court's hearing of the landmark case *Williams v. Lee*. These records allow me to both articulate the contemporary legal battles that shaped the period as well as glean some of the arguments made by the Navajo that are often lost in the publicly-accessible archive. Together, these primary sources tell a story of settler greed and imagination, but also Indigenous resilience and sovereignty.

Part One: Appeals All Around

Hugh Lee was a White merchant who ran a trading post on Navajo lands in the mid-20th century. After the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) granted him the rights to deal with tribal members, he exchanged goods with Navajo people on credit. One Navajo couple, Paul and Lorena Williams, did significant business with Lee at the trading post, eventually finding themselves unable to pay their outstanding credit of \$81. In response, Lee took them to court in 1957.²⁴³

In their defense, the Williamses' lawyers argued not that the sum was inaccurate, but that the court had no jurisdiction in the case. They cited an 1868 treaty and several federal statutes that thoroughly defined the relationship between those inside and outside Native tribes on

²⁴² Luana Ross, *Inventing the Savage: The Social Construction of Native American Criminality* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1998).

²⁴³ "Indians to Appeal High Court Ruling," *Arizona Republic*, January 18, 1958.

reservation. Interventions, they insisted, could only be made on Navajo land if it concerned schooling, sanitation, and quarantine issues – but not property disputes. Lee, on the other hand, cited an array of cases in which Navajo Nation members were placed under the legal power of Arizona courts. His argument proved more convincing to the court.²⁴⁴

Once the court had ruled in Lee’s favor, he seized hundreds of sheep from the Williams family, depriving them of what would be nearly \$1000 in value today. The Williamses, keen on the return of what they saw as stolen property, appealed to the Arizona Supreme Court. Pleading their case to the state’s highest court, Paul and Lorena Williams were again unsuccessful, with the court ruling against their appeal unanimously. Running out of options, the couple and their allies pushed the case to its final resort: The United States Supreme Court. It would take over a year to learn their fate.

After the Lee decision was settled in Arizona’s courts the state’s legislature took advantage of a favorable legal infrastructure and tried to push the boundaries of using Navajo lands for fiscal gain. On January 8, 1958, state bureaucrats from the tax collector’s office approached the Navajo Tribal Council demanding they subject the tribe to an audit. In response, Navajo Chairman Paul Jones simply refused them access to financial records. State officials walked away empty handed, but determined to make sure they hadn’t seen their last encounter with the Tribal Council. The rhetoric of Arizona Attorney General Robert Morrison, who advocated for Navajos and other Indigenous peoples to be subject to the income tax, in part drove their crusade to Window Rock, the capitol of the Navajo Nation.²⁴⁵

This quest for revenue from the reservation may have seemed fruitless to many contemporary Arizonans even if it were successful. The Navajo Nation was historically known in

²⁴⁴ Williams v. Lee, No. 39 (Supreme Court of the United States January 12, 1959).

²⁴⁵ “Navajos Refuse to Open Books,” *Arizona Republic*, January 9, 1958.

the state more for its poverty than its wealth, and settler logics of production and value would have seen little to gain in seeking profit in the vast desert. However, the final statement in the *Arizona Republic*'s recounting of the events revealed the reason behind changed attitudes: "The amount of money accumulated in the Navajo tribal fund in recent years, primarily through oil royalties, has been variously reported at from \$50 to \$60 million."²⁴⁶ The author's choice to emphasize the size and means of wealth in the Navajo treasury indicates both that Arizona's lawmakers felt driven by Navajo natural resources and felt entitled to them regardless of the existence of Navajo tribal government. Morrison and other Arizona officials found motivation for their search for a stream of revenue from the reservation in the massive oil profits being collected by the Navajo Tribal Council.

This attempt to tax was driven out of a sense of entitlement, that such a large sum could not be made without being at least shared by White settlers – despite the money being legally made on Navajo, not Arizona, lands. The idea of Indigenous wealth untouched by colonizer hands was antithetical to the settler logic, which deems conquering not as a singular event but a constant process that sanctions all current and future assets as the rightful property of the settler, rather than the Native. To allow the Navajo to keep their oil money would be an affront to the entire history of United States relations with Indigenous lands, defined by theft and destruction for profit.

Elected officials in the Arizona State Legislature continued the fight for taxation rights over the Navajo people later in 1958. During that spring's legislative session, lawmakers proposed three separate amendments that would have effectively annexed parts of the Navajo Nation within Arizona, giving the state total control over the area, most prominently in areas of taxation, land use, and law enforcement. While none of these resolutions passed the state's

²⁴⁶ "Navajos Refuse to Open Books."

House of Representatives, the indication remains that a desire of control existed among Arizona's state officials regarding the Navajo Nation. Another failed resolution, arising from the State Senate, called for an amendment to the state constitution that would allow the State Tax Collector to raise revenue through taxing "Indian reservations."²⁴⁷

Arizona Republic columnist W.G. Kneeland pinpointed the driving force behind such proposals in his May 25th column headlined: "State Lawmakers Cast Tax Eyes at Navajo Tribe's Big Oil Income." The headline communicated the strongest takeaways from these state actions. First, it emphasized that these resolutions were not about humanitarian aid, good governance, or a desire for development, but rather simply profits from drilling. Second, it correctly portrayed these proposals as actions intended to target the Navajo Nation specifically. Kneeland referenced again the \$60 million in oil revenue accrued by the Navajo tribal fund. He cited it as not only the biggest, but essentially the only prize of this state-driven cash grab, assessing "most of the others [Native peoples and their lands in Arizona] have little worth taxing by the state."²⁴⁸

Because the contemporary oil regime relied on settler private enterprise, lawmakers recognized that protection of these interests could be enacted through the force of policing, which would prevent physical threats to statewide profits. In the months ahead, more proposals were brought forward by Arizona's public figures, but in recognition that the tax question was a moot point as things stood, their priorities shifted to law enforcement.²⁴⁹ The desire of Arizonan lawmakers to take over Navajo law enforcement falls into a broader tradition of settler agendas of control. Policing represents the monopoly of force, and thus the ability to use violence to erect colonial boundaries and frameworks in addition to protecting physical capital that benefits the

²⁴⁷ W.G. Kneeland, "State Lawmakers Cast Eyes At Navajo Tribe's Big Oil Income," *Arizona Republic*, May 25, 1958.

²⁴⁸ W.G. Kneeland.

²⁴⁹ W.G. Kneeland, "Indian Land Enforcement Would Be Costly to Arizona," *Arizona Republic*, July 14, 1958.

settler state.²⁵⁰ In addition to protecting mines, they could instill disproportionate punishments for things like drunkenness, a racist stereotype that, when observed, posed a threat to the cult of productivity needed to maximize profits in mining for the settler state and its corporations. Arizona, intent on “modernizing” the Navajo lands, saw police as a force of progress, there to install a “civilized” regime of corporate profit and resource extraction. At the same time, the law enforcement officers could enact these same modernization principles on the Navajo people themselves, integrating them into a wider regime of racial capitalism and quashing resistance across the reservation.

Thus, control of policing on Navajo lands could give the state de facto sovereignty over the Navajo – all they needed to extract the oil money they had been drawn to. To further their interest in expanding state power, advocates for the proposal began to spout accusations intended to bend perceptions concerning the Navajos ability to govern themselves. One of these accusations, that “the standard fine in an Indian court for drunk driving is \$7” versus \$100 and a suspension of license in Arizona courts, was a complete fabrication.²⁵¹ Such fabrications often typecast based on racist ideas of incompetence and backwardness. The direct comparison between the “civilized” Arizona Courts and the “uncivilized” Navajo Courts set up a logic of conquest as progress rather than simply a power grab. Arizona’s courts could be trusted to condemn uncivilized behavior, whereas Navajo courts allegedly could not – because they were run by Navajos.

The Navajo Tribal Council made a move to radically change that perception that October. Navajos and their allies had staunchly defended themselves against accusations of leniency, calling such accusations “nonsense,” but made the rising tide of public opinion in the

²⁵⁰ Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771-1965* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

²⁵¹ W.G. Kneeland, “Indian Land Enforcement Would Be Costly to Arizona.”

neighboring state and corporate greed necessitated an insurance policy.²⁵² After time immemorial of a community-based system of criminal justice that placed peacemaking and the Navajo Tribal Council passed Resolution CO-69-58, transforming the tribal justice system into a near-carbon copy of the Arizona State Judiciary.²⁵³

Contemporary analysts cited reasons for the change being efficiency and consistency. However, the change certainly had the added benefit of putting opponents of Navajo sovereignty in Arizona in a rhetorical dilemma. Where before they were able to critique the Navajo Judiciary as foreign and outdated, they now had to critique a system that was nearly exactly the same as their own. In this way, a shifting legal system represented a unique mode of resistance to colonizer rhetoric against the Navajo legal regime.

The change did not receive any coverage in the *Arizona Republic*, lending to the lack of recognition settler interests had for autonomous Navajo governing practices. However, what did appear in the newspaper two days later was an article lauding the progress of oil development in the state, featuring a map that presented pipelines running right through Navajo lands. In particular, the article lauded the development of gas wells in the so-called “Four Corners region” of the state – all of which was within the Navajo Nation. Thus, the *Republic* and corporate interests continued to anticipate ownership of profits from reservation lands, daring to discuss them as if Navajo sovereignty didn’t exist. Within a few months, however, Arizona legislators’ dreams of rule over the area were dashed by the United States Supreme Court.

Part Two: The Decision

²⁵² W.G. Kneeland.

²⁵³ Laurence Davis, “The Navajo Nation,” *Journal of the American Judicature Society* 43, no. 2 (August 1959): 53–55.

On the 12th of January Americans woke up to a new slate of Supreme Court decisions. One of them was *Williams v. Lee*. The opinion of the court, penned by former-Klan member Justice Hugo Black, destroyed the possibility of White legal sovereignty over the Navajos in Arizona. In a complete reversal, Black concluded that “Arizona has not accepted jurisdiction,” referencing the state’s neglect of the Navajo Nation and its lands for generations as recognition of their lack of jurisdiction. This made their sudden claim to legal supremacy in the Navajo Nation unconstitutional – specifically in violation of *Worcester v. Georgia*, which, over a century earlier, gave the Cherokee Nation a separate status within the state of Georgia.²⁵⁴

Justice Black also prescribed the only method of reversal in his decision: an act of Congress at the federal level.²⁵⁵ This was especially devastating to mining corporations and their allies, who had hope for action in the Arizona State Legislature, but no such sway on the national stage. Norman M. Littell, head counsel for the Navajo, declared the decision a “smashing victory.”²⁵⁶ In response to such a harsh blow to the prospect of seemingly unlimited oil profits, corporate interests went on the offensive, pushing harsh rhetoric, racist dog whistles, and even misinformation in an effort to undermine the Navajo leadership that had secured legal proprietorship over their ancestral lands.

The *Arizona Republic* published comments the next day that could only be described as indignant: “We think the U.S. Supreme Court decision is quite likely to lead to ridiculous results, and congress may well have the last say in this matter.”²⁵⁷ Calling the result, Navajo sovereignty, “ridiculous,” indicates a lack of respect for the Nation’s leadership from the editors of the *Republic*. The final part of the sentence refers to an important caveat in Justice Black’s opinion

²⁵⁴ *Williams v. Lee*.

²⁵⁵ *Williams v. Lee*.

²⁵⁶ Ben Cole, “High Court Rules for Navajos,” *Arizona Republic*, January 13, 1959.

²⁵⁷ “Legal No Man’s Land,” *Arizona Republic*, January 14, 1959.

on the side of the Navajo, which states “if this [judicial] power is to be taken away from them [the Navajo Nation], it is for Congress to do it.” Thus, the *Republic* finished their analysis with a statement that to many Navajo may have read as a threat. In a time where so many resolutions had been proposed to dispel Navajo sovereignty, the *Republic* dared Navajo people to imagine if they had passed – and Congress later concurred.

The *Republic* continued its tirade by complaining that Navajo people “on the reservation apparently have the privileges of Arizona citizenship without the corresponding obligations.”²⁵⁸ Of course, this point of view ignored the historical and political fact that the assimilation of Indigenous peoples into white settler society through citizenship and voting rights were often unwelcome replacements for land and sovereignty.²⁵⁹ The writers of the *Republic* likely understood this, yet chose instead to urge its readers toward an anger and skepticism at the prospect of Navajo sovereignty. Their final worry about the policy, that a “white businessman” could hide within the bounds of the reservation and avoid prosecution except from Navajo leaders, indicates a desire not for the betterment of Navajo people, but rather a maintenance of racial boundaries and white sovereignty over Indigenous lands.

Within the next week, the Navajo tribal council began proceedings to establish an independent law enforcement agency, an act the *Arizona Republic* questioned due to its “impracticability,” implying that the Navajo didn’t have the resources to control their vast land holdings.²⁶⁰ Later in the piece, the *Republic* argued that it was the Court’s decision had “added new confusion and complexity to the relations between the reservations in Arizona and the rest of the state.” There was no such confusion, however. The Court had been very clear, evidenced by the succinct explanation of the new law enforcement regime described earlier in that same

²⁵⁸ “Mounting Confusion,” *Arizona Republic*, January 20, 1959.

²⁵⁹ Angie Debo, *And Still the Waters Run* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968).

²⁶⁰ “Mounting Confusion.”

piece: “If a criminal fled from Phoenix and hid out on the Navajo Reservation, only a tribal policeman or a federal marshal could apprehend him. Then he would be tried by a tribal court, or by the U.S. District Court, according to the severity of his alleged crime.”²⁶¹ This faulty logic, fueled further by the headline – “Mounting Confusion” – was no accident. Instead, it was a part of a longer and concerted effort on the part of the *Republic* to bend reality in the interest of undermining the sovereignty of the Navajo people.

Not only did the *Republic* stretch the truth in their description of legal confusion, they did so in their entire position that the Navajo didn’t have the resources to control their territory. In a non-opinion-based piece published the same week about the issue of law enforcement on the reservation, writers described that a separate police force for the Navajo Nation had already been in existence for years, run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Moreover, the Navajo Nation had funded well over ninety percent of its operations, completely burying the notion that running its own law enforcement agency was an impractical task. As for questions on leadership, the same man who had run the BIA legal regime Arizonans were apparently longing for would return to run the Navajo independent law enforcement agency.²⁶² On both questions of practicality and leadership, the *Republic* was willfully ignorant.

It didn’t take long for Arizona lawmakers to respond to the lawsuit with another attempted power grab. State Senator Robert E. Morrow from Mohave, a giant in the State Legislature, proposed SCR 9: “A proposed constitutional amendment to give Arizona jurisdiction over Indian reservations.”²⁶³ It never passed, but illustrated a continued effort from White leaders to take control of the suddenly rich landscape.

²⁶¹ “Mounting Confusion.”

²⁶² “Navajos Ask Full Task of Law Enforcement,” *Arizona Republic*, January 17, 1959.

²⁶³ “Legislative Log for Jan. 27,” *Arizona Republic*, January 28, 1959.

As time passed, efforts to undermine the Williams decision became more desperate. New State Attorney General Wade Church, in collaboration with State Senator Robert E. Morrow, penned an opinion piece arguing that Justice Hugo Black's decision should also hold that Navajo people be deprived of their right to vote.²⁶⁴ Because the state did not have legal supremacy over the area, Church stated, it should not be obligated to give any of its Indigenous peoples voting rights. Norman M. Littell scoffed at the notion, reminding the Attorney General that members of the Navajo Nation paid their taxes to the state, and were deserving of the privileges that accompanied those obligations. Moreover, Littell pointed out that "Navajo police enforce state laws against non-Indians at a cost of some \$500,000 a year without seeking reimbursement."²⁶⁵ The racial lines weren't as defined as Arizona's corporate allies wished them to be.

Conclusion

The build-up and aftermath of the Williams decision revealed a stark contrast between egalitarian language of development and the reality of corporate interests. What was once sold as a partnership quickly became an adversarial relationship between Arizona private enterprise and Navajo leaders. Before long, however, a new legal fight shifted the paradigm once again.

Once the Navajo gained legal supremacy over the oil-rich desert, companies and their supporters were forced to see them as negotiating partners again rather than an obstacle to profit. This transition was spurred by a land dispute between the Navajo and Hopi peoples, which went to court in spring 1959.²⁶⁶ The Navajo had historically been willing to negotiate corporate leases for natural resource extractions within reservation lands. The Hopi, however, were considered far

²⁶⁴ "Indian Vote Issue Flares," *Arizona Republic*, March 15, 1959.

²⁶⁵ "Indian Vote Issue Flares."

²⁶⁶ W.G. Kneeland, "End Near in Navajo-Hopi Dispute," *Arizona Republic*, January 25, 1959.

more resistant. All of a sudden, colonizer interests flipped from an adversarial position in court with the Navajo, to providing substantial legal aid in their fight for land sovereignty.

There was little doubt as to the motivation for such a reversal. In a March 17th article detailing the first day in court of *Healing v. Jones*, the *Arizona Republic* included a cartoon next to the feature. It included two arguing men dressed in stereotype-based depictions of Native attire. Next to them was a man in a hardhat looking in anticipation, a clipboard by his side – a driller in waiting.²⁶⁷

Williams v. Jones did not change the motivation of colonial interests in the southwest region. Instead, it illustrated them, as well as the willingness of the Navajo Nation to fight against them and for itself. Despite the forces of Arizona’s Legislature, its biggest newspaper, and wealthy corporations, Chairman Paul Jones of the Navajo Nation and head council Norman M. Littell won. It took a new legal system and several court battles, but they secured an essential element of land sovereignty: if developers wanted land, they had to go through its rightful occupiers.

²⁶⁷ “Indian Legal Battle Begins,” *Arizona Republic*, March 17, 1959.

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