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VOLUME VI



FALL 2007

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
GETTYSBURG COLLEGE
GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17325

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Readers,

Each year the *Gettysburg Historical Journal* of Gettysburg College summons the best of the best student compositions of history for publication. Resultantly, each year the editorial board for the *Journal* is swamped with student submissions featuring a wide array of topics from the categories of history, art history and historic fiction. Since many of the submissions are deserving of publication, the selection process is extraordinarily competitive, as well as difficult for the staff of the *Journal*. Out of the many submissions submitted for this year's edition, presented here are the best of the best:

In *Currents of Liberty, Seas of Change*, Skye Montgomery finds that the Atlantic Ocean, while presenting an insurmountable barrier between enslaved blacks and their homelands, also provided a rare opportunity for equality. Black seaman frequently found a degree of liberty in the rigorous discipline of shipboard life and became inspiring models of empowerment to their own people, undermining the efforts of slaveholders to create a docile labor force.

Next, we turn to Brett Jackson who focuses on the jurisprudential treatment of women in the Puritan era. It is commonly assumed that the legal status of American women has been a linear progression from total repression to modern day equity. In this narrative of sequentially gained status, Puritan law has stood as the exemplar of America's most oppressive treatment of women under law. As Jackson demonstrates in *Revealing Zion's Daughters*, it is simply not true.

Brian Matthew Jordan proffers a brief history of the Eighth Ohio Volunteer Infantry in '*The Regiment Bore a Most Conspicuous Part.*' Following the regiment through the Civil War using the letters of participants and contemporary accounts and newspapers, Jordan periscopes inward to find in these Ohioans – and in their apogee at Gettysburg – the larger meanings of the nation's fiery trial.

Subsequently, Joseph D. Gasparro returns us to Pontiac's Rebellion in *The Desired Effect*. After the French and Indian War, the ink on the 1763 Treaty of Paris was barely dry when the victorious British had to deal with this multi-tribe insurgence. Upset over Britain's new policies, the Native Americans took ten forts, pushing the British to desperate measures including the distribution of blankets infected with smallpox to the Indians.

Finally, Daniel Scotto examines the possibility of Soviet involvement in the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II. He suggests in his Greninger Prize winning *Pope John Paul II, the Assassination Attempt, and the Soviet Union* that there is substantial evidence of Soviet complicity.

As will be seen, Gettysburg College students strive above and beyond expectations of undergraduate level historic writing. The high levels of integrity seen in the following compositions can derive only from a student's devotion and willpower supported by the prominent professors and mentors that Gettysburg College provides. What makes the *Gettysburg Historical Journal* stand out among others is the fact that from conception, submissions, selection and collation, the *Journal* is processed solely through the hands of students. Both the authors of the essays and the *Journal's* editorial board devote vast amounts of time and energy making the *Gettysburg Historical Journal* a success. It is my pleasure to present here a true testament to the hard work and dedication of the students of Gettysburg College.

Kevin Bowman
General Editor

CURRENTS OF LIBERTY, SEAS OF CHANGE: BLACK SAILORS AS SUBVERSIVE AGENTS OF FREEDOM IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC



SKYE MONTGOMERY

Years after being kidnapped from his native Ibo village as a young boy, Olaudah Equiano vividly recalled his wonder at seeing a European ship for the first time.¹ Although he failed to realize it at the time, that same ship, and the Atlantic currents it navigated, would shortly transport him and millions of his countrymen to lives of slavery on the far shores of a distant continent. In addition to providing a convenient avenue for the initial transport of slaves, water enabled the development of a trade network linking scattered plantations in the Caribbean to centers of trade in North America and Europe where the products of coerced black labor were bought and sold. Even more detrimental to African identity than the systematic exploitation the sea enabled was the insurmountable barrier it presented to the continuance of native customs and identities. Like the slave ships that traversed the ocean currents, however, black culture eventually subverted the rigid order imposed by nature. The presence of black sailors onboard the ships which sustained the colonial Atlantic World created an unparalleled opportunity for strengthening black identity. The seamen assumed the roles of cultural ambassadors, spreading word of the diverse cultures and patterns of life they encountered in their travels to their brothers and sisters in bondage. Capitalizing on the inherent inequality of shipboard life to assert their identities as autonomous equals, black sailors brought hope and, occasionally, freedom to American slaves, all the while undermining the efforts of slaveholders to create a docile labor force.

In the eighteenth century, the first generation of manumitted blacks quickly discovered that the promise of freedom obtained in the wake of the American Revolution did not extend to equality. While African Americans still toiled under the lash in the South, their northern counterparts vainly searched for economic opportunities through which they could support fledgling families and prove their dignity as human beings. While deeply entrenched racism closed many occupations to them, black males consistently found employment on the sea. Ultimately, myriad economic, social, and historical factors account for the acceptance of black labor by the maritime industry. In the most immediate sense, black labor served an essential function in the chronically undermanned merchant marine. More important than their mere availability, however, were the skills many blacks had acquired through a vibrant seafaring

¹ Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, ed. Robert J. Allison (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1995), 53.

tradition. Even before the massive demographic reorientation of African Americans around port cities following 1790, black faces had been a common sight in American dockyards.² In northern and southern coastal cities, slaves like Briton Hammon petitioned their masters for the right to hire themselves out for voyages and runaways had traditionally sought illicit employment on seagoing vessels. Although their heritage of seafaring gave blacks the skills to attract potential employers, the nature of shipboard life ultimately secured their acceptance.

Unlike the plantation economy and many other land based industries, seafaring offered little opportunity for the physical segregation of the races. The physical confines of the sailors' living space inevitably compelled blacks and whites to live in close proximity and the communal aspects of their work, as well as its shared dangers and discomforts, only strengthened their solidarity.³ For all the egalitarian qualities of life before the mast, however, seafaring was characterized by a rigid hierarchy defining each sailor's specific duties and the degree of social consideration he deserved.⁴ However, as W. Jeffrey Bolster has shown, race alone did not predestine blacks for the lowest duties. Rather, a host of other qualifications determined their placement within the maritime hierarchy.⁵ Through their talents and initiative, black men rose through the ranks to become officers and some eventually commanded their own vessels.⁶

Ironically, however, the same career that offered black seamen a tantalizing taste of equality and freedom frequently placed them in the power of officers who tried to deprive them of both. In their survey of the laboring class that formed the backbone of the burgeoning Atlantic World, Linebaugh and Rediker identify the ship as the forerunner of the modern factory.⁷ Although this interpretation helps to contextualize the brutality employed by captains in the eighteenth century in order to secure the submissive obedience of their crews, it overlooks its parallel to the oppressive measures leveled against slaves laboring in agricultural production. Like planters, sea captains intimidated the men in their power with arbitrary displays of violence. Some practices, like the public flogging of sailors with an instrument specifically designed to cause excruciating pain, so closely mirrored the tactics of slaveholders that white seamen frequently referred to themselves as negroes.⁸ In addition to corporal punishment, owners of maritime labor encouraged restrictive legislation designed to emulate the discriminatory stipulations of southern slave codes. Laws were enacted limiting the mobility of sailors unless they could present positive proof of employment and a law, in language reminiscent of the Fugitive Slave Act, empowered citizens to apprehend runaway seamen.⁹

² Julius S. Scott, "Afro-American Sailors and the International Communication Network: The Case of Newport Bowers," in *Jack Tar in History: Essays in the History of Maritime Life and Labor* (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Acadiensis, 1992), 40.

³ Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 77.

⁴ Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (Cambridge: University Press, 1987), 155.

⁵ W. Jeffrey Bolster, "To Feel Like a Man: Black Seamen in the Northern States, 1800-1860," *The Journal of American History* 76 (1990): 1173-1199.

⁶ Martha S. Putney, *Black Sailors: Afro-American Merchant Seamen and Whalers Prior to the Civil War* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 52.

⁷ Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), 150.

⁸ Harold D. Langley, "The Negro in the Navy and Merchant Service 1789-1860 1798," *The Journal of Negro History* 52 (October, 1967): 273-286.

⁹ Jesse Lemisch, "Jack Tar in the Streets: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 25 (July, 1968): 378.

One of the planters' primary tactics against black revolt was the intentional sundering of African linguistic ties. When Africans were loaded upon ships bound for the Americas, a contemporary observer explained,

The means used by those who trade to Guinea to keep the Negroes quiet is to choose them from severall parts of ye Country, of different Languages; so that they cannot act joyntyly, in soe farr as they understand not one another.¹⁰

Even as the Africans learned the language of their captors, planters attempted to curtail communication between plantations by restricting the mobility of their slaves.¹¹ In addition to the systematic suppression of black communication, many planters consistently discouraged any emergent self-respect in their slaves by denying them the opportunity to practice skilled trades. Although many blacks resignedly submitted to their masters' dominance, the sea provided an alluring avenue of escape for the intrepid few which dared to attempt escape.

Port cities became havens for runaway slaves because their cosmopolitan compositions often camouflaged black fugitives from detection. In addition to allowing the slave to demonstrate his or her own ingenuity by eluding slaveholders in a bustling crowd, ports often brought slaves into contact with sympathetic sailors. Such men, regardless of their race, evidently saw in fugitive slaves a poignant reminder of their own fragile liberty and frequently aided runaways to freedom. Few historiographical surveys document the impact of individual runaways on planters' authority. Quite possibly the effect of such subversive labor tactics was so significant that planters hesitated to acknowledge it in writing. Whether or not accounts of runaways were ever committed to paper by literate blacks, their escapes undoubtedly figured prominently in discussions between slaves. Each runaway dealt both a tangible blow to his or her owner's purse, as well as a subtle symbolic blow to his absolute authority.

If a runaway slave damaged his or her master's image, the appearance of an autonomous black male within the plantation economy eroded the image of racial inferiority slaveholders so diligently instilled in their chattel. Whereas the majority of manumitted slaves in the South were old and feeble, black sailors typified masculine virility.¹² Even more galling to Southerners was the presence of black sailors in recognized positions of authority. Prior to 1822, ships with all-black crews, commanded by black masters, frequently docked in southern harbors. The mere existence of these men among the enslaved exposed the deceitful teachings of slaveholders and kindled black resistance to enslavement. Even when slaves dutifully returned to their masters after spending time at sea, they were likely to display behavior deemed unsuitable. As one Caribbean planter observed, "[He] never knew a Boy, who had been at Sea, of any use on a Plantation."¹³ More dangerous than their blossoming autonomy in the planters' view was the

¹⁰ David Simson as quoted in Rediker, 48.

¹¹ Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial America 1619-1776* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 61.

¹² W. Jeffery Bolster, *Black Jacks: African-American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 213.

¹³ Scott, 38.

tendency of black sailors to disseminate Republican ideals of liberty and natural rights among the enslaved. In 1826, the Bahamian House of Assembly noted that the number of black slaves employed around the island were certain to, “disseminate among the slave population generally a taste for many of the comforts of civilized life.”¹⁴ However black sailors may have defined the “comforts of civilized life,” they almost certainly held that slavery was hindering their attainment.

Although his very appearance in the South subverted the artificial racial stratification planters had nurtured for centuries, the very nature of a sailor’s profession made him capable of posing an even greater threat to slaveholding society. Through their travels, black sailors helped to regenerate the connections between the far-flung communities of their people rendered asunder by slavery and transmit information about alternative ways of life that the enslaved could only imagine. The importance of the merchant marine as a newsmonger can only be determined by an examination of the extent to which slaveholders attempted to suppress unfavorable news before it reached their slaves. One of the most contentious events in the colonial world, the slave insurrection in St. Domingue, was also one of the most alarming to Southerners. Fittingly, news of the initial carnage sweeping the island was first carried to Charleston by a merchant vessel on September 9, 1791.¹⁵ Slaveholders quickly mobilized to neutralize the reports of racial rebellion in their press and personal correspondence in order to allay the enthusiasm of their own slaves for a similar bloodletting. Although the American South rarely regarded the fledgling Republic of Haiti with anything less than wary suspicion, the region’s newspapers were more charitable towards the initial revolutionary violence than the subsequent attempts of the black nation to govern itself. Whereas papers published lurid accounts of black atrocities on the island, which probably inspired more than one black slave in Charleston to harbor murderous designs, they consistently ridiculed the Republic of Haiti as symbol of economic decay and further proof of the dependency of African-Americans.¹⁶ In addition to racially biased press coverage, southern states attempted to censor the events on St. Domingue by placing limitations on the import of slaves from the region and the immigration of refugees, especially the gens de couleur.¹⁷

In contrast to the pitiful scenarios depicted by the southern press and planters themselves, black sailors heralded the Republic of Haiti as an achievement which proved their racial equality with whites. The extraordinary mobility of the sailors frequently outpaced the free flow of information in the South, and they played an increasingly important role as sources of information about the true nature of the Republic. The sailors consistently pointed with pride to the nation which had managed to throw off the burden of tyranny much as the American colonies had done decades earlier, and heralded the formation of a government on the island as a vindication of their ability to wield political power. Although their positive endorsement

¹⁴ Quoted in Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 135.

¹⁵ Scott, 42.

¹⁶ Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 20, 89.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 141.

of the efforts on St. Domingue directly challenged the rhetoric of slaveholders, black sailors occasionally went to even greater lengths to sabotage the hegemony of white southerners.

One of the most epic attempted slave revolts in American history had its genesis in the ideas of equality and self-worth promoted by the service of black seamen. Denmark Vesey had been a sailor in his youth and had acquired the cosmopolitan views and worldliness that so characterized his fellow black compatriots. In addition to introducing him to exotic cultures and ways of life, however, Vesey's voyages helped him become proficient in French, Gullah, and Creole.¹⁸ Prior to the restrictions leveled at French émigrés by the southern states, Vesey probably freely conversed with Haitian refugees in their native language. In addition to the ideological debt Vesey owed to his seafaring experiences, they figured very prominently in his planned slave uprising in Charleston. Subsequent testimony given at the trials of the conspirators revealed that Vesey had established open contact with the Republic of Haiti through a black sailor, and planned to sail with his followers to the island after they had reduced Charleston to rubble.¹⁹ Although planters had always resented the subversive influence of black sailors, the trial of Denmark Vesey quickly educated them as to how dangerous the seamen truly were. Of the 35 conspirators condemned to death, over half were employed in Charleston's port.²⁰ In the wake of the trial and execution of the slaves involved in Vesey's attempted uprising in 1822, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana passed the Negro Seaman Acts in an effort to curtail the freedoms of black sailors.²¹ Ships entering ports in these states were required by law to incarcerate black crewmen in city jails. In addition to relinquishing black sailors to the authorities during the duration of the stay in port, captains were compelled to offer proof that they intended to reclaim all their crewmen before departure. If they were not claimed by their officers, black seamen could be sold into slavery to recover the expense of their imprisonment.²² Although moderately successful in isolating black sailors from the slave populations, the seamen continued to transmit information from their prison cells and, with their very presence, undermine the authority of white planters.

In the crucible of inequality that was the ship, black sailors managed to forge positive identities for themselves and their race. By ceding control of their fates to the caprices of captains and subjecting themselves to a form of exploitation akin to that endured by their brothers and sisters in bondage, black sailors won a degree of autonomy. Through their willing and unwilling voyages to the far corners of the world, they experienced different cultures and peoples, which they enthusiastically transmitted to those bound to the earth of the plantation through an undisrupted network of communication. Although their numbers would steadily decline as the economic centers of America shifted towards factory production, blacks continued to form a

¹⁸ Edward A. Pearson, introduction to *Designs Against Charleston: The Trial Record of the Denmark Vesey Slave Conspiracy of 1822*, ed. Edward A. Pearson (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1999), 29-30.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 231-232, 238.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

²¹ Philip M. Hamer, "Great Britain, the United States, and the Negro Seaman Acts, 1822-1848", *The Journal of Southern History* 1 (February, 1935): 3-28.

²² *Ibid.*, 4.

visible presence in American shipping through the Civil War. Ultimately, the host of unnamed and largely unsung heroes of the sea forged identities for themselves characterized by a degree of liberty disproportionate to their actual autonomy onboard ship. They fashioned themselves into models of what colonial slaveholders most feared: skilled, self-aware, cosmopolitan freemen—symbols of hope and racial pride, and prophets of resistance for millions of enslaved blacks.



REVEALING ZION'S DAUGHTERS: WOMEN IN PURITAN JURISPRUDENCE



BRETT JACKSON

The legal status of American women has consistently been portrayed as a linear progression flowing from a colonial jurisprudential repression and exclusion to a modern-day legal equity and a female influence within every aspect of justice.¹ In this narrative of sequentially gained status, seventeenth-century Puritan law has stood as the exemplar of America's most repressive jurisprudential treatment of women. However, when its characteristics are triangulated and its subordination of women is juxtaposed with its inclusion of a female voice, a new conception of America's first legal system is seen. The notion of a linear progression is thus replaced with an understanding that the modern day equity enjoyed by women is a product of extensive legal fluctuation. Puritan women were clearly characterized as the subordinate gender and their secondary status evidenced in the symbolic silencing of heretical females and in legal coverture. However, stemming from the Puritan concept of a "Godly-society" attained through equitable legal status, New England women enjoyed liberal divorce laws and a significant presence within the court room when compared with contemporary England and the nineteenth century jurisprudence, which relegated women to the non-public sphere. Thus, as Laurel Thatcher Ulrich emphasizes, we "need to move from static concepts like "patriarchal New England society" to more intricate questions about the interplay of values and practice over time. Zion's daughters have for too long been hidden."²

The Puritans explicitly believed in female inferiority. Even as Protestants "in revolt against the male Catholic hierarchy and convinced of the equality of souls before God, they nevertheless insisted on women's proper subordination within the family."³ John Calvin endorsed male-dominance in saying, "Let the woman be satisfied with her state of subjection, and not take it amiss that she is made inferior to the more distinguished sex."⁴ Portrait renditions of the family reflected the polarization of gender before 1750, distinguishing a dominant group of men and breeched boys from the women and girls dressed in petticoats. Thus, as Mary Beth Norton wrote, "If a girl could be viewed as a miniature adult, the grown woman could be viewed

¹ Jill K. Conway, *The Female Experience in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century America: A Guide to the History of American Women*, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1982), 39.

² Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "Vertuous Women Found: New England Ministerial Literature, 1668-1735" in Nancy F. Cott and Elizabeth H. Pleck eds., *A Heritage of Her Own: Toward a New Social History of American Women* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 76.

³ Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 22.

⁴ *Ibid.*

as a more advanced child.”⁵ While there was much variation in the colonies, “the civil code of the New England colonies embodied a concept of marital unity striking in its expression of the patriarchal ideal that women’s private interests had to be subordinated to the greater familial whole.”⁶ The familial relationship most reflective of the patriarchy was a woman’s relationship to her husband. John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* defines this relation as “he for God only, she for God in him.”⁷ Thus, the subjection of a woman to a man parallels that of a man to God and is indicative of the female role within society as a whole. Indeed, the church was essential in espousing the essentiality of women’s pious acquiescence to the will of the patriarchy.

Women’s subordinate legal status was bolstered by church sermons like Cotton Mather’s *Ornaments for the Daughters of Zion*. In this 1692 oration, he said:

As for her love to her husband, I may say, ‘Tis even strong as death, many waters cannot quench it; neither can the floods drown it. . . .When she reads that Prince Edward in his wars against the Turks, being stabbed with a poisoned knife, his princess did suck the poison out of his wonder with her own royal mouth; she finds in her own heart a principle disposing her to show her own husband as great a love. . . . But her love to her husband will also admit, yeah, and produce the fear of, a cautious diligence never to displease him. While she looks upon him as her guide, by the constitution of God . . . she does not fear his blows, yet she does fear his frowns, being loath in any way to grieve him, or cause a headache in the family by offending him. . . . In every lawful thing she submits her will and sense to his, where she cannot with calm reason convince him of inexpediences, and instead of grudging or captious contradiction, she acts as if there were but one mind in two bodies. . . . ‘tis by the kindness, the sweetness, the goodness of her expressions that she gives law unto him.⁸

Thus, Puritan women were directed by the church to honor their husbands and dutifully submit themselves to his will in order to ensure the health of the marriage and the efficiency of the household. As Thomas Gataker said in his 1620 *Marriage Duties*, “There can be no ordinary intercourse and commerce or conversing between person and person, but there must be a precedencie on the one part, and a yielding of it on the other.”⁹ This familial hierarchy was analogized to the state writ small; the role of husband and wife represented a “litttle commonwealth.”¹⁰ Robert Cleaver spoke of this in his *A Godlie Forme of Householde Government*, published in 1598 saying, “The governours of families . . . upon whom the charges

⁵ Mary Beth Norton, “The Evolution of White Women’s Experience in Early America,” *The American Historical Review*, 89 no. 3 (Jun., 1984): 604.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 598.

⁷ Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty*, 22.

⁸ Sylvia R. Frey and Marian J. Morton, *New World, New Roles: A Documentary History of Women in Pre-Industrial America* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1935), 17.

⁹ Thomas Gataker, *Marriage Duties* (London, 1620) in James T. Johnson, “The Covenant Idea and the Puritan View of Marriage,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 32, no. 1 (Jan-Mar. 1971): 111.

¹⁰ Mary Beth Norton, “The Evolution of White Women’s Experience in Early America,” 610.

of government lyeth, though unequally, are, first the Cheefe governour, which is the Husband, secondly a fellow helper, which is the Wife.”¹¹ Thus the wife’s role within the home was “to guide the house and not guide the husband.”¹² As a microcosm of the state-order, the relationship between married men and women modeled the social hierarchy.¹³ Male-governance from husbands and the colonial patriarchy was fundamental in the maintenance of social order. In accordance with the family-state analogy, women were to be equally deferential to both their husbands and the colonial church-state, while maintaining a “goodness” and “sweetness” toward the larger community. The prosecution of female dissidents and accusations of witchcraft leveled at women who failed to fulfill their proscribed role demonstrates the male dominance of Puritan culture and its value of female conformity.

The church-state of the 17th century effectively prosecuted religious non-conformists as well as transgressors of civil law. While criminals of both genders were put on trial to exemplify the social castigation resulting from immorality, the punishment of female dissidents worked on another level to reinforce women’s subjugation to the authority of the patriarchal governance and to men as a group. Anne Hutchinson was “the most famous heretic of Massachusetts Bay Colony” and was banished for holding home lectures which promoted antinomianism to guests of both genders.¹⁴ “Antinomianism stressed salvation through inner regeneration rather than through conformity to external rules imposed by church and state; this heresy threatened the stability of the Puritan community.”¹⁵ By preaching this ideal, Hutchinson promoted the questioning of religious dogma while also challenging the assumption that women should be non-participants in church affairs. While her prosecution was based on theological heresy, her high-profile banishment rested on “her unprecedented demand that she, a woman, be permitted to think for herself about God and provoke others, women included, into doing the same.”¹⁶ John Winthrop, governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony labeled her “a woman of haughty and fierce carriage . . . of a nimble wit and active spirit, a very voluble tongue, more bold than a man, though in understanding and judgment inferior to many women.”¹⁷ According to Eleanor Fitzpatrick, by “maintaining that an individual could commune directly with God, Mistress Hutchinson was claiming equality for herself and everybody else with the men who ruled.”¹⁸ Hugh Peter, an additional interrogator told Hutchinson, “you have stept out of your place, you have rather bine a Husband than a Wife, and a preacher than a Hearer; and a Magistrate than a Subject.”¹⁹ Her self-assertion had therefore threatened the male dominance in familial,

¹¹ Robert Cleaver, *A Godlie Forme of Household Government* (London, 1598) in James T. Johnson, “The Covenant Idea and the Puritan View of Marriage,” 111.

¹² Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* (New York: Harper and Row, 1944), 43.

¹³ Mary Beth Norton, “The Evolution of White Women’s Experience in Early America,” 610.

¹⁴ Sylvia R. Frey and Marian J. Morton, *New World, New Roles*, 73.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁶ Eleanor Flexner and Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle: The Woman’s Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 9.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁹ Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty*, 32.

religious and political spheres.²⁰ While the Puritans appreciated the midwifery of Hutchinson, they cited the Apostle Paul and condemned women who gained followers by “speaking things which they ought not.”²¹ Frey and Morton conclude that “Hutchinson’s open questioning of the moral and intellectual qualifications of the political religious leadership threatened the male hegemony, especially since she herself had a wide and powerful following.”²²

While trials like that of Anne Hutchinson worked to “silence women as political beings and religious leaders,” witchcraft allegations also surfaced in the 17th century to censure offensive or rebellious women and to purge the Puritan community of undesirables.²³ According to Cornelia Hughes Dayton, the Puritan community “unquestioningly cast women as witches and condoned a prosecutorial double standard for accused men and women such that twenty-eight women and only seven men were hanged for the crime of witchcraft.”²⁴ With a limited intellect and a lower-social status, a woman was thought to be more vulnerable to the Devil’s influence.²⁵ The trials in Salem, Massachusetts point to the conclusion that accused witches were overwhelmingly married or widowed women between the ages of forty-one and sixty, the age in which they were both at the height of their social power and on the verge of losing status with the onset of menopause.²⁶ Cotton Mather’s recording of a specter sighting by an afflicted girl attests to the conception of witches as older women: “What a dreadful Sight are You! An Old Woman, an Old Servant of the Divell!”²⁷ Many accused women had developed a reputation for petulant relations with neighbors and a poor rapport with the community as a whole. Mrs. Anne Hibbens who was known for her “unnatural crabbedness of...temper” was excommunicated following an argument with the town carpenters over their work on her home.²⁸ In 1656 after the death of her husband, who was a well-respected Bostonian, Hibbens was convicted and executed as a witch. It is thus evident that witchcraft allegations functioned within New England society as a mode of social control. The process operated in a straightforward manner on any individual who pondered action censured by the community. It was understood that if one carried out such a violation they would make themselves more vulnerable to the charge of witchcraft.²⁹ The fact that this control mechanism primarily affected women is congruent with the patriarchal nature of Puritan society.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard Based on Her Diary 1785-1812* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 46.

²² Sylvia R. Frey and Marian J. Morton, *New World, New Roles*, 7.

²³ Cornelia Hughes Dayton, *Women Before the Bar: Gender, Law, and Society in Connecticut, 1639-1789* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 9.

²⁴ Ibid., 9.

²⁵ Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty*, 23.

²⁶ John Demos, “Underlying Themes in the Witchcraft of New England,” in Stanley Katz, ed., *Essays in Politics and Social Development Colonial America* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1971), 118; Mary Beth Norton, “The Evolution of White Women’s Experience in Early America,” 611.

²⁷ Ibid., 124.

²⁸ John Demos, “Underlying Themes in the Witchcraft of New England,” 118; Nancy Cott, ed. “Church Trial of Mistress Anne Hibbens” in *Root of Bitterness: Documents of the Social History of American Women* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), 47.

²⁹ John Demos, “Underlying Themes in the Witchcraft of New England,” 124.

The most pervasive and effectual legal restraint placed on women in accordance with a Puritan patriarchy was the policy of coverture. Within a section of Cotton Mather's *Ornaments for the Daughters of Zion*, in which he defines the proper role for widows he bolds Isaiah 54.5: THY MAKER IS THEY HUSBAND.³⁰ It was through clerical bolstering such as this, that the common law practice of coverture retained such an extensive and enduring hold in America. Indeed, coverture for women remained fixed fifteen decades after the governor of Connecticut held the first pre-trial examinations for the New Haven court in 1639. As William Blackstone explained this legal status years later, "The very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is... consolidated into that of the husband: under whose wing, protection and cover, she performs every thing...in our law ...her condition...is called coverture."³¹ England described the policy in *The Lawes Resolution for Women's Rights* of 1632: "A woman as soon as she is married, is a covert, in Latin, nupta, that is, veild, as it were, clouded and overshadowed, she hath lost her streame . . . To a married woman, her new self is her superior, her companion, her master."³² Puritans adopted this foundational doctrine of English common law, also known as "civil death," because they understood it as religiously significant. Civil death rested on Genesis 2:22-23: "And Adam said this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh."³³ Thus, the relationship between a "feme covert" and her husband was accepted as mirroring that of a vassal to a lord.³⁴

In accordance with the Puritan conception religious civil society, the legal diction in *The Lawes Resolution of Women's Rights* describing coverture was flavored with a moral and religious tone. Women's subordinate status was a punishment for Eve's seduction of Adam:

exiled from the Garden of Eden, enjoined to labor, Eve because she had helped to seduce her husband has inflicted on her a especial bane. In sorrow shall thou bring fourth thy children, thy desires shall be subject to they husband, and he shall rule over thee . . . See here the reason . . . that women have no voice in Parliament, they make no laws, the consent to none, they abrogate none. All of them are understood either married or to be married and their desires are subject to their husband . . .³⁵

This explanation of coverture was adopted throughout New England and the policy ensured a husband's dominion over wife as she was prohibited thereafter from "alienating property, entering into contracts, bringing lawsuits, or making a will without the consent and,

³⁰ Sylvia R. Frey and Marian J. Morton, *New World, New Roles*, 31.

³¹ Cornelia Hughes Dayton, *Women before the Bar*, 20.

³² Eleanor Flexner and Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States*, 7.

³³ Sylvia R. Frey and Marian J. Morton, *New World, New Roles*, 92.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 92.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 94.

often, the joint action of her husband.”³⁶ In contrast to married *femes covert*, single women and widows held the status of “*femes sole*,” legal persons free of male-control. Single women over eighteen and widowed women had status within the legal system as individuals. They could sue under their own name, write wills, and bequeath property. Coverture ensured that the funds and property belonging to a woman would be subsumed under the ownership of her husband. Henrietta East Caine, who had owned a profitable millinery shop located on Boston’s Marlborough Street lamented that “her Friends will not supply her with Goods to carry on her business as before,” because she was still under a marriage contract to her bigamist, deserter husband.³⁷ A woman with a large savings was at risk of becoming destitute due to her husband’s fiscal mismanagement; Mary Hunt of Boston was impoverished when her husband spent her fortune of fifteen hundred pounds before deserting her and her small children.³⁸ Thus, Henrietta and Mary were powerless to conduct business to their own economic benefit while still married. As Nancy Cott suggests, the wives’ “adherence to the norm of economic dependence resulted in their own economic powerlessness.”³⁹ While a widow, a *feme sole*, was entitled to dower rights over one-third of her husband’s land, her claim over his larger estate upon her death was void and the land bequeathed to her husband’s male heirs. Thus, the patriarchy was sustained as “wealth, most frequently defined as land, was transmitted from one generation of men to another.”⁴⁰ Indeed, a father’s will usually granted a daughter only one-half of the inheritance reserved for her brothers, and she usually gained personal property rather than real-estate.⁴¹

Coverture ensured women’s non-connection with property, since married women legally owned none. Contemporary wills attest to this fact. As a legal entity, women could only write wills with their husband’s consent. Widows or women who had gained permission to write a will could bequeath their own property, usually amounting to household goods and clothes, and possibly livestock. Anne Burt, a Massachusetts resident wrote a will in 1664 in which, after granting livestock to her children stipulated a beneficiary for each of her possessions, listing:

I give to Elizabeth basset a new feather bed A boulster and a pillow and a pillow beare A blankit and a Rouge and i give to Sarah bassit my ould feather bed a boulster and pillow . . . A tapsterri Covering and i give to meriam bassit A Copper ketel, A table Cltoh and half A doson of napkins and a ew shep, han toweland I give to mary bassit my biggest eiorn pot.⁴²

³⁶ Cornelia Hughes Dayton, *Women Before the Bar*, 19.

³⁷ Nancy Cott, “Eighteenth-Century Family and Social Life Revealed in Massachusetts Divorce Records,” in Nancy Cott and Elizabeth H. Pleck, eds., *A Heritage of Her Own: Toward a New Social History of American Women* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 120.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 121.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Paula A. Treckel, *To Comfort the Heart: Women in Seventeenth Century America* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), 24.

⁴¹ Mary Beth Norton, “The Evolution of White Women’s Experience in Early America,” 603.

⁴² Nancy Woloch, *Early American Women: A Documentary History 1600-1900* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 87.

Women's coverture had remarkable longevity, only in mid-nineteenth century as state legislatures began to enact married women's property rights, did "the edifice of coverture start to crumble."⁴³ Its legacy was an effective suppression of female legal action long after symbolic silencing of maleficent women as witches became outmoded. The wholesale acceptance of coverture within Puritan society demonstrates that New England's legal liberalities regarding women did not flow from an abandonment of British patriarchy. Indeed, the social ascendancy of the husband according to James Johnson was "but a bow to social condition in seventeenth century England."⁴⁴

The New England Puritans, while implementing the British common law as blueprint for their jurisprudence, exhibited a significant departure from English legal doctrine by sanctioning divorce within their colonies. As their contemporaries in England were "locked into marital vows for life," women in New England were granted this considerable legal advantage.⁴⁵ The conception of law in the New World was heavily influenced by the Protestant Reformation which denied the sacramental identity of marriage. Within English common law, marriage as a sacrament was an indissoluble contract. Annulments through ecclesiastical courts or special acts of Parliament were reserved only for the wealthy.⁴⁶ American colonies founded with an Anglican majority adhered to the sacramental concept of England, and within their jurisdiction a consummated marriage was not to be broken.⁴⁷ More liberally, Puritan New England introduced marriage as a civil contract and divorces were an option in cases of desertion, prolonged absence, adultery, or bigamy, with the injured party retaining the right to remarry. Divorce proceedings were heard in secular courts, and the proceedings were based on Luther's reasoning as explained by Dayton: "as with any other contract the gross misbehavior of one spouse in breaking the terms, notably through neglect or infidelity should abrogate the contract and free the aggrieved party to remarry."⁴⁸ New England provided for "absolute" divorce, or divorce *a vinculo*, in contrast to Anglican colonies which limited divorce to a legal separation with no right of either party to remarry.⁴⁹ In addition to their doctrinal dissent regarding Anglican sacrament, New England lawmakers favored liberal divorce policies in order to curtail the widespread bigamy they saw in England and in colonies in which divorce was forbidden. Upon witnessing abandoned wives living in destitution because their coverture prevented them from engaging in commerce and lawsuits in pursuit of self-sufficiency, Puritan leaders saw a social benefit in freeing them from their precarious position. According to Nancy Woloch, "Such arrangements satisfied the Puritan desire to ensure family harmony, prevent destitution, and keep deserted wives and families off the public dole."⁵⁰ Thus, just as Puritan religious leaders had argued for

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁴⁴ James T. Johnson, "The Covenant Idea and the Puritan View of Marriage," 11.

⁴⁵ K. Kelly Weisberg, "Under Greet Temptations Heer" Women and Divorce in Puritan Massachusetts," *Feminist Studies* 2 (1975): 190.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁴⁷ Sylvia R. Frey and Marian J. Morton, *New World, New Roles*, 94.

⁴⁸ Cornelia Hughes Dayton, *Women before the Bar*, 109.

⁴⁹ Nancy Woloch, *Early American Women*, 69.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

a promotion of equal punishment for sexual transgression in 17th century England, they also espoused gender-equality in divorce petitioning. Divorce requests filed by women were heard in Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay as early as the 1630's, but comparable hearings would not occur in England until 1857.⁵¹

Massachusetts and Connecticut as Puritan colonies both allowed for divorce a vinculo and Massachusetts courts between 1639 and 1692, granted some 27 divorces.⁵² It was not until 1677, after divorces had been granted for over 22 years, that Connecticut finally quietly passed a statute listing justifiable reasons for suit: adultery, fraudulent contract, willful desertion, or seven years' absence.⁵³ The codification of this law translated into a greater freedom for colonial women, the gender most likely to file for divorce. Indeed, the most common recipient of a Connecticut divorce was the deserted wife. Men who wished to escape a spouse or children without legal grounds for divorce would often vanish and possibly remarry in a new community.⁵⁴ Even before the Connecticut Divorce Law was enacted in 1677, abandoned women brought suit in order to throw off their coverture and the memory of their husband. Examples from 1660 and 1676 reveal much about the rulings of the Connecticut courts when deserted women stood before the bar:

This Court orders that in case Sarah north hear not of her husband by that seventh year be expired (he haveing bene absent six, already) that then she shal be free from her conjugal bonds. (1660)

Upon the petition of Sarah Towle whoe hath been dserted by her husband above six years, without any care or provision made for supply of her or her child's maintenance by her husband, this Court declares that in case the said Twole shall have opportunity to joyner herself in marriage with another man, she is left at liberty soe to doe without offence to the law or this Court. (1676)⁵⁵

Divorce petitions reflect the presence of women within colonial jurisprudence. In the inclusion of a female voice within New England courts and the promulgation of equitable, gender neutral morality law, Puritan law can be seen as more inclusive than that of England. The seventeenth century courtroom was community-focused and broad in its representation. Its activities centered on "maintaining harmonious neighborly relations, ensuring equitable local trading, and monitoring sexual and moral conduct," all embraced the essentiality of the female perspective. The presence of women as witnesses, plaintiffs, and defendants reflects the informal role of women as "guardians of communal morality."⁵⁶ In opposition to the English

⁵¹ K.Kelly Weisberg, "Under Greet Temprations Heer," 184.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 69.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁵⁴ Carol Berkin and Leslie Horowitz, eds., *Women's Voices, Women's Lives: Documents in Early American History* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 60.

⁵⁵ Nancy Woloach, *Early American Women*, 73.

⁵⁶ Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty*, 31.

jurisprudential tradition, women's access to courts in Puritan New England was advanced by the colonies' prohibition against lawyers, their simple procedural rules, and the magistrates' idea that God would guide their decisions.⁵⁷ The Puritans adopted the English practice of prosecuting moral lapses, yet they rejected ecclesiastical courts in favor of a layman judiciary over a professionalized bar. The early abandonment of more formalistic constructs of English common law thus allowed for a significant female presence in court. While women were not allowed to be lawyers or judges, they were granted considerable credibility both in bringing petitions and on the witness stand due to the Puritan ambition for achieving a "Godly-society."

The Puritan's attempt at equity stemmed from their belief that a God-fearing and pious society required equal punishments for a comprehensive elimination of sin and vice. As Cornelia Hughes Dayton says, Puritan judges in New Haven strove to enact a single gender neutral standard for moral offenses due to their "strongly held belief that godly behavior should be the measure for all inhabitants."⁵⁸ "Hence sinners, whether women or men, servants or wealthy church members, could expect to be lectured from the bench to follow "the rule" of neighborly kindness, to refrain from "wicked" "uncleanness," or to emulate such familiar biblical figures as "Micaell the Archangell."⁵⁹ Thus, as Dayton explains, women who brought charges of sexual assault "had good reason to believe that their voices would not be ignored and that the men elected to the bench would not reflexively use whatever skeptical views they harbored of women's nature to shield accused men from exposure and penalty."⁶⁰ After Mercy Payne explained "a large relation" of her efforts to resist John Frost's advances, the magistrates challenged Frost's denials saying "What temptation should shee bee under to bring sucha thing out to her owne shame?"⁶¹ In cases such as this, and those concerning rape, domestic violence, and premarital sex, the court openly accepted female testimony and severely punished the accused men. The central Puritan dogma that the individual was to be obedient to God's law ensured that men would be punished for sinful behavior. While a double standard of sexual morality did develop, de jure equality was a Puritan ambition and, as Dayton states, "policies that were intended to create the most God-fearing society possible operated to reduce the near-absolute power that English men by law wielded over their wives, to undercut men's sense of sexual entitlement to women's bodies, and to relieve women in some situations from their extreme dependency on men."⁶²

Thus the lay-judiciary, informal procedure, and the focus on morality prosecutions allowed for a significant female presence within the early New England courtroom. The exclusion of women from a fraternal-type jurisprudence was not a Puritan construct, but rather a product of the increasing secularization of New England starting in the 18th century. While secularization

⁵⁷ Cornelia Hughes Dayton, *Women Before the Bar*, 10.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Cornelia Hughes Dayton, *Women Before the Bar*, 32.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 32

⁶² *Ibid.*

has typically been thought of as a force for widening the legal status of women, it was this process which effectively shelved the doctrine of moral equity and suppressed the female voice within New England courts until women were relegated to a domestic sphere removed from easy access to the legal realm.⁶³ Secularization was fueled by the increasing religious diversity stemming from an influx of Dutch, Scottish, German, and Quaker immigrants and the increasing dominance of American-born Puritan generations. However, increasing colonial commercialization was the central development leading toward secularization. New Englanders began to engage in maritime trade, “thus introducing alien commercial elements into the Bible commonwealths.”⁶⁴ As the 18th century dawned, colonial courts increasingly shifted in facilitation of the expanding economy and the court’s constituency became limited to propertied men active in this blossoming capitalism.⁶⁵ While judges and lawmakers made no concerted effort to curtail the courtroom presence of women, the rise of the professional bar and the increased adherence to English common law and rules of evidence raised barriers which would prevent equal court access for women.

As the court-room became increasingly defined as a male arena, the church began to see a rise in female influence. The late 17th century declension was defined by a decrease in male church membership due to a consuming focus on commercial opportunities.⁶⁶ Contemporary men understood that “the goals of religion-to create a godly society-often conflicted with the goals of commerce,” and within this time period, “commerce usually won.”⁶⁷ Fewer men in the church resulted in a loss of clerical power over the community. The church was pushed to the margins of political life just as women were beginning to wield increasing influence within its confines. Thus, while the colonial legal system increasingly shifted away from moralistic prosecutions in order to focus on commercial adjudication, the church began to make “the passive female a symbol of Christian virtues, and associate men and manliness with the materialistic and competitive world of trade.”⁶⁸ Although passivity had always been a characteristic valued in females, as evidenced by the prosecution of vocal dissidents like Ann Hutchinson, the association of women with spirituality and men with secular concerns signaled a divergence from the Puritan ideal of spiritual equality. Thus, the church was defining women as the protectors of spirituality at the same time that the court was adopting common law principles facilitating the shift from court-enforced social morality towards commercial law. In this way the concept of women as moral arbiters hardened and worked in concert with the formalization of courtroom procedure to virtually eliminate the female familiarity with colonial courts. As Laurel Thatcher Ulrich explains in *A Midwife’s Tale*, “for most women, attending court was more than “inconvenient, It was venture into an alien world.”⁶⁹

⁶³ Conway, 40.

⁶⁴ Mary Beth Norton, “The Evolution of White Women’s Experience in Early America,” 601.

⁶⁵ Cornelia Hughes Dayton, *Women Before the Bar*, 9.

⁶⁶ Mary Beth Norton, “The Evolution of White Women’s Experience in Early America,” 606; Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty*, 40.

⁶⁷ Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty*, 40.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale*, 111.

As men and women became encapsulated in narrowing and polarizing social roles, the Puritan commitment to moral equity began to fade. Economics, trade, and an emerging sense of privacy led to a decreased focus on the moral health of the community. The patriarchal legal culture began to abandon the Puritan-style court confessions of moral crimes such as slander, pre-marital sex, and drunkenness. The moral upkeep of the town elites, as was an early Puritan ambition, was abandoned as American law came to mirror the common law. The middle class was increasingly sheltered from public ignominy and punishment as the court began to target impoverished and marginal women when prosecuting sexual deviancy. The legal shift away from prosecutions of moral lapses in an increasingly male-dominated system “introduced skeptical attitudes toward the reliability of women’s charges of male abuse.”⁷⁰ This suspicion is evidenced through contemporary newspapers and almanacs which demonstrated an increasing “toleration of misogynist, anti-matrimonial, and bawdy themes,” previously censored by Puritan purists. This environment not only prevented many women from participating in the legal culture, but it also raised the burden of proof placed upon any woman to secure recompense for an accusation she ventured to bring before the bar. Consequently, not only did divorces become more difficult to obtain, but “the stricter the rules of evidence, the more difficult it was to win a case that required juries to accept the word of a woman against the word of a man, unless he happened to belong to a stigmatized group.”⁷¹ As Ulrich explores a rape case in *A Midwife’s Tale* she discovers that they frequently became “a contest between the men involved, the husband or father, the accused, the judges and jury rather a judgment of the events themselves.”⁷² Therefore, in response to a rapidly commercializing society and an increasing secularism, within the 18th century the “collective commitment to upholding a God-fearing society through the courts had been abandoned and Puritan resistance to the technicalities of English common law practice had faded,” and gender-specific spheres had hardened when “a new public life emerged from which women were excluded.”⁷³

The 18th century legal formalization and mirroring of common-law procedure within New England not only increasingly isolated women from court, but it also “foreshadowed the more explicit nineteenth-century ideology that reserved the public realms of commerce, law and politics to men and gave white women moral dominion over privatized families.”⁷⁴ Thus, women’s legal subordination was augmented as Puritan jurisprudence was replaced in America. While the Puritan prosecuted heretical females and retained a coverture policy in order to clearly define women as the subordinate sex, their focus on Godly equality and maintaining moral order translated into liberal divorce laws and a significant female presence within the colonial courtroom. When Puritan law is viewed in this multidimensional manner, it can no longer be

⁷⁰ Cornelia Hughes Dayton, *Women Before the Bar*, 11.

⁷¹ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale*, 121.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Cornelia Hughes Dayton, *Women Before the Bar*, 11; Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty*, 21.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

simplified in accordance with its traditional classification as America's ultimate jurisprudential repression of women. Indeed, as Cornelia Hughes Dayton concludes, "if Puritan approaches to the law, such as simplifying civil procedure, punishing men and women equally, and receiving women's stories of abuse supportively had been retained as permanent fixtures of the evolving American legal system, the result would have been a less patriarchal society in the long run."⁷⁵

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.



“THE REGIMENT BORE A CONSPICUOUS PART”¹:
**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EIGHT OHIO VOLUNTEER INFANTRY,
GIBRALTAR BRIGADE, ARMY OF THE POTOMAC**



BRIAN MATTHEW JORDAN

On April 10, 1850, a sixteen year-old from Xenia, Ohio named Samuel Sexton copied a stanza of Epes Sargent’s poem, “A Life on the Ocean Wave,” into his notebook:

A life on the ocean wave! A home on the rolling deep!
Where the scattered waters rave, and the winds their revels keep!
Like an eagle caged I pine, on this dull unchanging shore.
Oh give me the flashing brine! The spray and the tempest roar!²

Before his death in New York City, July 11, 1896, Sexton would serve as the Assistant Surgeon of the Eighth Ohio Volunteers, his entire service in the field so strenuous that he was obliged to rest after the second year of combat.³ Arduously contending with the wounds and emotions of the wounded and dying from Romney to Winchester, Fredericksburg to the Peninsula, and South Mountain to Antietam, Sexton acquired an emotional connection to the regiment. This would generate a lifelong correspondence with Lt. Col. Franklin Sawyer, who would command the unit from May 1862 and pen its regimental history.⁴ The Civil War would metamorphose Sexton’s mundane Ohio shore, the “flashing brine” of the trials of the Eighth his vessel.

The trials of the American nation had begun much earlier; exactly one week after Sexton reproduced Sargent’s work, Vice-President Fillmore excoriated Missouri Senator Thomas Benton on the floor of the Senate as the debates which would eventually frame the Compromise of 1850 heated. The compromise would include the Fugitive Slave Act. This legislation was greeted with a Northern acerbity that only increased the intensity of sectional strife. The tortuous litany of key events to follow—the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Bleeding Kansas, *Dred Scott*,

¹ Whitelaw Reid, *Ohio in the War: Her Statesmen, Generals and Soldiers*, vol. 2, *The History of Her Regiments and other Military Organizations* (Cincinnati: Moore, Wiltach & Baldwin, 1868), 68. The author wishes to acknowledge the advice and support of Dr. Allen Carl Guelzo, friend and mentor. This work is dedicated to Samuel Sexton and his comrades in the “Bloody Eighth,” and, of course, to Allison.

² Samuel Sexton, loose notebook page, 10 April 1850, Samuel Sexton Papers, MSS 185, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio.

³ MOLLUS Memorial Circular for Samuel Sexton, November 10, 1896, in Sexton Papers, MSS 185, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio.

⁴ See Franklin Sawyer, *A Military History of the 8th Regiment Ohio Volunteer Infantry: Its Battles, Marches, and Army Movements* (Cleveland: Fairbanks and Company, 1881), reprinted as Franklin Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteer Infantry: Gibraltar Brigade Army of the Potomac* (Huntington, West Virginia: Blue Acorn Press, 2005). In addition to this regimental history and other Sawyer articles and speeches cited within this paper, Sawyer published a six page history of the regiment in the *Firelands Pioneer*, vol. XII (Norwalk, Ohio: Norwalk Historical Society, 1876), 77-83. This abstract of the more formal *Military History of the 8th* was proffered by Sawyer for the Norwalk Historical Society, which since 1858 had been coalescing articles of local interest into a historical journal.

the fraudulent Lecompton Constitution, and John Brown's raid—would for the South be sealed by the election of Lincoln in 1860. This apparent loss for slaveholders in the balance of power led South Carolina to take the lead in forming the Confederacy.

On the morning of April 12, 1861, a bloodless bombardment at Ft. Sumter in Charleston Harbor effectively marked the commencement of hostilities. Three days later, President Lincoln called for 75,000 militiamen to respond to the rebellion; Ohio demonstrated no timidity in responding to Lincoln's supplication. Between April 18 and April 29, 1861, inspirational meetings were held and companies from across northern Ohio were coalesced into a regiment for three months of service.⁵ "On the twenty-third, a rousing Union meeting was held at Medina village," wrote Lorenzo Vanderhoef, Company K. "I am now a Soldier! The United States now claims my services. Who would have thought, two months ago, that Lorenzo Vanderhoef would ever be a volunteer soldier[?] But such is the fact. The actions of the people in the Southern portion of our Republic was of such a nature as to endanger the existence of our present form of government."⁶

On May 2, the regiment was transported to Camp Dennison near Columbus for organizational purposes and the mundane, yet necessary drills.⁷ As these activities transformed the enlistees into men, Vanderhoef's comrades shared his sentiments. Indeed, when it became apparent that the "three months men" would be sent to the cynosure of war and orders mandated the reorganization of the regiment into a three year unit, many continued their service. On July 24, 1861, the Eighth was sworn in for three years service under Col. Herman S. DePuy.⁸ Only Company I was absent, to be reorganized before rejoining the unit in western Virginia that September. Companies D and B were selected as the skirmishers of the regiment and were ordered with their Enfields to occupy the left and right, respectively. The remaining companies were issued smoothbores.⁹

Drill and discipline continued until the regiment was "loaded into boxcars" to participate in McClellan's initial campaigns in western Virginia.¹⁰ McClellan had been urged by Ohio Governor Dennison to cross into western Virginia, support the Unionists, and prevent the Rebel seizure of rail communication lines. Though initially sluggish, McClellan drove the enemy back from Philippi; subsequently, Brig. Gen. William Rosecrans attacked and affected the withdrawal of the Confederates on Rich Mountain July 11, making Confederate Gen. Robert S. Garnett's position on Laurel Mountain indefensible. Garnett retreated, stumbling into a delaying action at Corrick's Ford, where he became the first general added to the casualty rolls

⁵ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteer Infantry*, 9-11; Thomas Francis Galwey, *The Valiant Hours: A Narrative of "Captain Brevet," an Irish American in the Army of the Potomac*, Col. Wilbur S. Nye, ed. (Harrisburg: Stackpole Books, 1961), 1-2; Whitelaw Reid, *Ohio in the War*, 2:66.

⁶ Lorenzo Vanderhoef, diary, April 27, 1861, in Kenneth R. Martin and Ralph Linwood Snow, eds., "I am now a soldier!" *The Civil War Diaries of Lorenzo Vanderhoef* (Bath, Maine: Patten Free Library, 1990).

⁷ Reid, *Ohio in the War*, 2: 66; *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, May 10, 1861.

⁸ DePuy would lead the Eighth Ohio until he resigned for reasons of health effective December 15, 1861. He was replaced by Col. Samuel S. Carroll, who would lead the regiment until his ascendancy to brigade command as of May 24, 1862. It was at this point that Franklin Sawyer assumed the command that would span the remainder of the war. Compiled Service Records, Record Group 94, boxes 29538, 29539, and 29548, National Archives, Washington, District of Columbia.

⁹ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteer Infantry*, 15.

¹⁰ Thomas Francis Galwey, *The Valiant Hours*, 3.

of the Civil War. Garnett's force continued a northeastward exodus; Brig. Gen. C.W. Hill's brigade of the Army of Occupation, which included the Eighth, pursued for about five miles and snared a few stragglers.¹¹ However, Hill's prudent pursuit was ended with what Sawyer described as "a farce of the first water": a war "council" eschewing the demoralized condition of the enemy and the sufficient number of fresh troops available.¹² Even the overly cautious McClellan chastised Hill, who was censured and relieved.¹³

Marching continued in western Virginia, and the regiment was ordered to guard portions of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad throughout the winter. This routine task was made notable with a severe outbreak of typhoid fever contracted at a camp thereafter referred to as "Maggotty Hollow."¹⁴ Along with the marching and bivouacking, skirmishing occurred at Worthington, Hanging Rock, Romney, and Blue's Gap without much consequence.¹⁵ One bizarre incident occurred December 21, though, when two members of the regiment were playing cards and began quarreling. One withdrew his pistol, shot his comrade, and completed the heinous act by ramming a bayonet through the dying man's neck. The murderer was apparently never convicted.¹⁶

On March 1, 1862, the Eighth shifted to Winchester in the Shenandoah Valley, where it was brigaded with the Fourth Ohio, Sixty-Seventh Ohio, Fourteenth Indiana, and Seventh Virginia (Union) and placed under the command of Col. Nathan Kimball in Gen. Shields' division. Save the Sixty-Seventh Ohio, these units would remain together for the duration of the war.¹⁷ This transfer to the Shenandoah was a part of a new stratagem to mass men in the Valley, with two Union forces—one under the command of General Nathaniel Banks, which included Shields' division, and one under the command of General Charles Fremont—driving "Stonewall" Jackson's outnumbered forces south.

Consigned to defeating the federals one element at a time, Jackson attacked what he believed to be the rear guard of Banks' men at Kernstown on March 23, 1862. Instead, Jackson backed into Shields' entire division, commanded by Col. Kimball after Shields was seriously wounded on March 22. What ensued was a handsome federal victory that turned Jackson's left flank and sent him reeling into retreat. The Eighth performed ably in their first real engagement, taking some forty-six casualties. Sawyer recalled:

"Cannon balls were crashing through the trees . . . whizzing fearfully close to use. We were ordered to charge at once . . . The fire from both sides was intense, our men

¹¹ *Ibid.*; Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (Des Moines: F.H. Dyer, 1908), 1499-1500.

¹² Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteer Infantry*, 20.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 21; Galwey, *The Valiant Hours*, 7.

¹⁴ Reid, *Ohio in the War*, 2:66.

¹⁵ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 182.

¹⁶ The murder of Stephen J. Carr at Wire Bridge, near Romney, West Virginia, was confirmed in his service record, Compiled Service Records, Record Group 94, Box 29538, National Archives, Washington, District of Columbia. Mention of the incident is made by Galwey, *The Valiant Hours*, 16. See also *Tiffin Weekly Tribune*, Friday, January 10, 1861.

¹⁷ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 36.

fell rapidly, but gallantly held their places, loading rapidly and firing with unerring certainty, as the dead in our front plainly showed.”¹⁸

After the war, as “Stonewall” Jackson acquired his mystique and popularity, the federal veterans of Kernstown would write about the engagement with flourish and added significance. “Who has not heard of the first battle of Winchester [Kernstown]?” Brevet Maj. Gen. Alvin C. Voris asked. “This was the greatest battle of the late war.”¹⁹ Anniversary ceremonies and commemorations of the battle held in subsequent years probably spoke more to the sentimentality of their baptism of fire and heavy losses than to any true significance, for the battle only forced a continued federal presence in the Shenandoah and near Fredericksburg that would prevent men from joining McClellan’s operations to the east.

Thomas Galwey, Company B, returned to the regiment in April, having visited Columbus briefly on recruitment duty.²⁰ He visited the Kernstown battlefield before setting out with the regiment in search of “Stonewall” Jackson. “[He] is moving somewhere all the time, as lively as a flea,” Galwey remembered.²¹ The same could not be said of the federals. The Eighth became bogged down on perfunctory roads, exacerbated by the incessant rains; furthermore, they were lacking tents, provisions, and shoes. “We look like a pack of thieving vagabonds—no crowns in our hats, no soles to our shoes, no seats to our pantaloons.”²² By May, provisions finally arrived, and on May 12, the men of the Eighth broke their camp en route to Fredericksburg, where they would join with Gen. Irvin McDowell’s force on May 22.²³

At Falmouth on May 23, the division was received by Lincoln and Secretary of War Stanton; however, their stay in Fredericksburg was short-lived. The division was ordered back to the Shenandoah after it was learned that Jackson had driven Banks from the Valley. Crossing the Bull Run Mountains at Thoroughfare Gap, the disheartening return to the Valley was made; Shields’ division descended on Front Royal June 1. “We surprised Col. O’Connor and his Confederate force at Front Royal, capturing about three hundred prisoners and a considerable amount of ammunition and stores,” Galwey reported. The most notable capture, however, was the infamous Confederate spy Belle Boyd. “She is rather handsome and has some accomplishments although their luster is somewhat heightened by her rather romantic career,” he commented.²⁴

Despite these achievements, all was not halcyon in the Valley for the federals. Jackson’s twin victories at Cross Keys and Port Republic expelled the federals from the Valley and freed his

¹⁸ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, pp. 42-43; United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, vol. 12, pt. 1, 368-370. Hereafter cited as OR.

¹⁹ Brevet Major General Alvin C. Voris, “The Battle of the Boys,” in *Sketches of WarHistory, MOLLUS Papers*, vol. 4, Ohio Commandery (Wilmington: Broadfoot Publishing, Inc., 1991), 87.

²⁰ Galwey, *The Valiant Hours*, 18-19.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Martin and Snow, eds., “*I am now a Soldier!*” *The Civil War Diaries of Lorenzo Vanderhoef*, 98-99.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 99-101; Galwey, *The Valiant Hours*, 21.

men to adhere to Lee's troops outside of Richmond.²⁵ Thus in late June, Kimball's men were detached from Shields' division and ordered to join McClellan on the Peninsula between the York and the James Rivers. The men arrived the day following the Battle of Malvern Hill, the last of the humiliating Seven Days' Battles in which Lee had forced McClellan into stagnation at Harrison's Landing. In a torrential rain against the backdrop of Berkeley, birthplace of William Harrison, the men of the Eighth arrived and united with the Army of the Potomac. Kimball's brigade was assigned to "Baldy" Smith's division in the Second Corps.²⁶

The men of the Eighth bowled over the new body to which they belonged. "If ever an army had occasion to be proud of its organization, it is the Army of the Potomac," wrote one member of the regiment in a letter published in the *Cincinnati Commercial*.²⁷ Not only was the Eighth impressed with the discipline, morale, and élan consigned to them with their entry into the Army of the Potomac, they noticed the disparity in supplies, rations, and thus health. "This army has everything it wants. Fresh tomatoes are brought from Bermuda [Hundred]; new potatoes and onions are plenty. Health is improving."²⁸ The army lingered at Harrison's Landing until August 16, when Sumner's Second Corps formed the rear guard of the army as it moved northward to merge with Pope's men. "Our march was most fatiguing," Sawyer recalled.²⁹ At Newport News, the march halted as the federals embarked on steamers bound for Aquia Creek, where another vessel would float them into Alexandria.³⁰

Forming the rear guard, it took the Second Corps several days to coalesce into their new camp near Washington. In the process, the men of the Eighth heard the din of cannon in the vicinity of Manassas Junction, where a didactic battle had been fought in July 1861. Suddenly, "without explanation," the Second Corps was issued ammunition and ordered to cover the road to Centreville. "On every hand was the confusion of a defeated and retreating army," Sawyer wrote.³¹ Only instead of Lee's army, it was Pope's Army of Virginia making the retreat. The withdrawal was covered and the federals slithered into Washington with little time to collect thoughts and reorganize. Lee, in one of his boldest machinations of the war, would thrust his army northward into Maryland, aiming to affect war-weary Northern civilians and foreign observers to intervene on behalf of the Confederacy in a mission that would relieve Virginia of war's toils and garner much-needed supplies and rations.

The news having arrived that Lee's forces had commenced crossing the Potomac on September 4, the Eighth soon marched out of Rockville and into the Maryland countryside to check the invasion.³² On September 13, outside of Frederick, a stray copy of Lee's Special Orders No. 191 was discovered and forwarded to McClellan, who promised to "whip Bobbie

²⁵ See Darrell L. Collins, *The Battles of Cross Keys and Port Republic June 8-9, 1862* (Lynchburg: H.E. Howard, Inc., 1993).

²⁶ Martin and Snow, eds., "I am now a Soldier!", 101; Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 54-60; Reid, *Ohio in the War*, 2: 67.

²⁷ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, August 5, 1862, clipping, Samuel Sexton Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 61.

³⁰ Martin and Snow, eds., "I am now a Soldier", 104.

³¹ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 64-65.

³² Martin and Snow, eds., "I am now a Soldier!", 105.

Lee.” The Rebel army was dangerously divided, six of its nine divisions engaged in an attempt to capture Harpers Ferry. The next day, September 14, proved to be a disaster for the Army of Northern Virginia with the first battle of the campaign. “Heavy cannonading was heard to the front,” Sawyer remembered of South Mountain. “The roar of artillery in front was almost constant, and occasionally the dull, heavy swell of musketry could be distinctly heard.”³³ The Eighth was growing impatient and soon came up as a supporting line, though accomplishing little more than keen observation. As dusk suffocated the “severe” battle, all reflected on a scene “beyond description.”³⁴

For the Eighth, the horror of South Mountain was only a harbinger of Antietam’s miseries. “We formed our line of battle by daylight, and went to the front, fording Antietam[m] Creek, waist deep, and then charging up the hill for the enemy who were posted in strong force on the undulating ridges for a long way both to our right and left,” Daniel Daggett of Company D wrote home.³⁵ French’s division formed the center of the Union battle line; the “gallant troops pressed eagerly forward” into the Roulette orchard. Here, Kimball’s brigade, consisting of the Fourteenth Indiana, Eighth Ohio, 132nd Pennsylvania, and Seventh Virginia (Union), were held in reserve until “tremendous volleys” from the Rebels ensconced in the Sunken Road threatened to overrun the federal lines. Kimball ordered up his brigade, and with an emphatic “Forward, Eighth Ohio!” the men moved up to face “a most savage fire of musketry, grape and canister” for nearly four hours.³⁶

General Israel Richardson, commanding a Second Corps division, had advanced to the left of French’s position to further secure the flank. Meanwhile, the right flank had been “abandoned,” and the Rebels made a flanking attempt, which was repulsed heroically by the Eighth and Fourteenth Indiana as they changed fronts and charged under fire. “We maintained the fight with cartridges taken from the boxes of the dead and wounded,” Daggett noted.³⁷ For Kimball, this maneuver, executed “as veterans and as only brave men could,” had salvaged the right.³⁸ But it was a bloody salvage: of 324 engaged, 165 were killed, wounded, or captured; three companies were left without officers, and seventeen balls passed through the regimental colors.³⁹ Lorenzo Vanderhoef, who in 1861 had been so proud to finally be a soldier, was wounded in four places and began his journey through a litany of the general hospitals established in Frederick.⁴⁰ For the nation, the gruesome realities of South Mountain and Antietam both

³³ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 72; Galwey, *The Valiant Hours*, 35-37.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ George Henry Daggett, “Those Whom You Left Behind You,” in *Glimpses of the Nation’s Struggle: The Papers of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion*, vol. 30, *Minnesota Commandery* (Wilmington: Broadfoot, reprint 1992), 344. George Daggett, son of Daniel Daggett, presented these letters to the Minnesota Commandery on May 14, 1901.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 344-345; OR, vol. 19, pt. 1, 326-328; Azor H. Nickerson, “Antietam,” *Sandusky Daily Register*, November 10, 1862. Nickerson’s article, originally published in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, was not only reprinted in the Sandusky paper, but in the patriotic Philadelphia periodical *Blue and Gray*. Here, it assumed the title “Antietam: A Reminiscence,” in 1893. A year later, a second, virtually identical piece on Antietam appeared in *Blue and Gray* in the form of “Antietam - Sharpsburg 1862.”

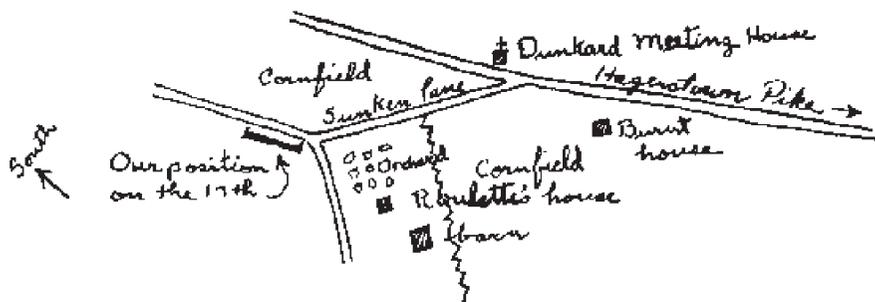
³⁷ George Henry Daggett, “Those Whom You Left Behind You,” 345.

³⁸ OR, vol. 19, pt. 1, 328.

³⁹ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 81-83; Nickerson, “Antietam,” *Sandusky Daily Register*, November 10, 1862.

⁴⁰ Compiled Service Records, Record Group 94, box 29549, National Archives, Washington, District of Columbia.

repelled Lee's invasion and proffered the opportune moment for Lincoln to march forward with emancipation; for the Eighth, it offered a heroic moment to be memorialized in the moniker subsequently consigned to its brigade: the Gibraltar Brigade.⁴¹ Galwey consummated summarized their Antietam experience: "What would have been the result if Kimball's men had not fought gallantly all the forenoon?"⁴²



Thomas Galwey's Hand Drawn Map of the 8th Ohio at Antietam

On September 22, the Second Corps moved to Bolivar Heights, where it would remain until late October. "You have read of this place being surrendered to that traitor Miles," Sexton recorded in his diary from the unit's new position, from which they would depart for Falmouth, across the Rappahannock from Fredericksburg, Virginia.⁴³ By the time the Eighth reached Falmouth, the Army of the Potomac had a new commander. The prudence and politically induced views which constricted the war aims of McClellan finally did enough to effect his replacement by Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside. "The greatest dissatisfaction prevails everywhere in consequence," Galwey wrote, although he noted that next to McClellan, Burnside was the best liked man in the army.⁴⁴

For nearly a month—a month in which the men anticipated a movement on Fredericksburg— all that separated the federal army and its Rebel counterpart was the narrow valley formed by the Rappahannock River, allowing for such verbal interactions as this one:

Secesh to an Ohio picket - "What regiment do you belong to?"

Buckeye - "8th Ohio."

Secesh - "What state are you from?"

⁴¹ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 81.

⁴² Thomas Galwey, "At the Battle of Antietam with the Eighth Ohio Infantry," in *Personal Recollections of the War of the Rebellion: Addresses Delivered Before the Commandery of the State of New York*, vol. 3, MOLLUS Papers (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1992), 85. The Galwey article tersely defends the actions of Kimball's brigade as a key component of the middle phase of the Battle of Antietam, suggesting that the actions had already been unfairly consigned to historical oblivion.

⁴³ Samuel Sexton, diary entry, September 27, 1862, in Sexton Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio.

⁴⁴ Galwey, *The Valiant Hours*, 52-53.

Buckeye - "Ohio! Where else did you think, you darned fool?"

Secesh - "You came here by way of Bull Run, didn't you?"

Buckeye - "No, by Antietam!"⁴⁵

Apparently, mention of Antietam was enough to dissolve the exchange. And soon, for the Eighth, mention of Fredericksburg would have a similar effect. On December 12, the pontoon bridges that Burnside had ordered for a swift crossing of the river finally arrived after administrative failure and miscommunication. The next day, the battle opened with the Eighth forming on the right in Sumner's Grand Division. The regiment moved up Hanover Street with the First Delaware and Fourth Ohio to the left as skirmishers for French's division, meeting intense fire from Barksdale's Mississippians before clearing them out and garnering control of the surrounding buildings.⁴⁶ Summarily, the column was ordered forward at a double-quick to a line at the base of the Mayre's Heights. This frontal assault across an open killing ground was devastating for the Eighth; by 4 o'clock, they were out of ammunition. As Sawyer recollected:

During the entire day we were subjected to a most murderous fire of both artillery and small-arms, which swept our position, and the whole interval from our line to the town of Fredericksburg. Our line was too weak to advance further upon the enemy's works, and our position was not passed by any troops up to the time of our withdrawal.⁴⁷

Hour after hour of futility produced forty-four killed and wounded and a devastating, one-sided defeat for the Army of the Potomac. After the subsequent, humiliating "Mud March," the army would be led not by Burnside, but by Joseph Hooker.⁴⁸

With Hooker came noticeable improvements in morale, esprit de corps, and sanitation. "Our army has not moved, that is, in a physical sense, but I think it is observable that a vast improvement has been going forward," Sawyer wrote to Samuel Sexton from camp near Falmouth.⁴⁹ All expected an active campaign, which commenced on April 28, 1863, when the army crossed the Rappahannock; French's division assumed a position near the Chancellorsville crossroads in the haunting undergrowth known as "the Wilderness" at right angles to the main federal line. A fierce battle raged there the first three days of May, of which the most salient feature was Jackson's march against the federal left, smashing the federal XI Corps and earning another stunning victory for Lee. The Eighth played merely an observatory role in the battle, losing two men. Still, Sawyer understood that it was "quite unlike the three great battles" he participated in previously; it was rather "a series of desperate efforts, by each

⁴⁵ Daniel Daggett, letter, December 3, 1862, in George Henry Daggett, "Those Whom You Left Behind You," 346.

⁴⁶ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 93-94; Reid, *Ohio in the War*, vol. 2, 68.

⁴⁷ *OR*, vol. 21, pt. 1, 298.

⁴⁸ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 98.

⁴⁹ Franklin Sawyer to Samuel Sexton, letter, March 15, 1863, reproduced in Cincinnati Daily Commercial, undated clipping, Sexton Papers.

army to secure different points and positions . . . the battle was rather heard than seen [due to the undergrowth].”⁵⁰

At 11 o'clock May 5, the Eighth fell into the long line of retreat back to Falmouth, where it remained until mid-June, when the news of yet another northern invasion by Lee was received.⁵¹ As the blue lines slithered north in response, Hooker was deposed and replaced by Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade on June 28. Three days later, marching along the Taneytown Road, the Second Corps was drawn into the unassuming borough of Gettysburg, where west of town, a meeting engagement had escalated into a pitched fight. “Towards noon we became sensible of the battle from the roar of artillery and the grim clouds of dust and smoke that gathered gloomily,” Sawyer recalled.⁵² Excitement grew as news disseminated; the Eighth anxiously awaited orders, which would come that evening from Maj. Gen. Hancock. He ordered the regiment to sleep on arms a mile to the rear of Cemetery Ridge line. Reveille sounded at 4 am July 2 and the regiment moved up to an orchard west of Taneytown Road near Ziegler's Grove.⁵³ “For several hours everything seemed unusually quiet,” Sawyer recollected. This ended with clangor and commotion in the direction of Sickles' notorious salient. At 4 o'clock, as the battle raged back and forth to the south, Sawyer was ordered to take the Eighth's 209 men and clear out Rebel skirmishers lodged on the Emmitsburg Road. They charged across the road, drove out the skirmishers, and established their own skirmish line about 250 yards west of the Emmitsburg Road having “awoken the Johnnies.”⁵⁴ As darkness draped the battlefield, guns slowly grew silent and the unit was ordered to maintain their position along the Emmitsburg Road “to the last,” though no assistance could be provided.⁵⁵ For twenty-six precarious hours, the Eighth gave new birth to its brigade epithet. Skirmish fire continued sporadically, but between 7 o'clock and 8 o'clock July 3, it became “murderous.” Galwey recalled that the fire the Eighth directed at the enemy skirmishers became “scientific”; as soon as a puff of smoke rose in their front, they would immediately aim and fire.⁵⁶

The enemy's intensity grew along the extent of the line, climaxing in the symphony of the “terrific cannonade” about 1 o'clock. Artillery shells of both armies whizzed over their heads; “for more than an hour,” the Eighth was literally detained in a forlorn position in the “horrid storm” of Pickett's Charge.⁵⁷ Despite its advanced position, unsupported but for Woodruff's Battery in Ziegler's Grove, the Eighth “sprang” to its feet and deployed into column as the cannonade waned and the Rebel infantry advance commenced. Pettigrew and Trimble's men

⁵⁰ Franklin Sawyer to Samuel Sexton, letter, June 3, 1863, in Sexton Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio.

⁵¹ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 116.

⁵² Franklin Sawyer, *The Eighth Ohio at Gettysburg: An Address of Gen. Franklin Sawyer* (Washington, D.C.: E.J. Gray Printer, 1889), 3.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 4; Galwey, *The Valiant Hours*, 103.

⁵⁵ The other three regiments of the Gibraltar Brigade had been sent from Ziegler's Grove to East Cemetery Hill, where Early's division had launched an attack. See Gary B. Lash, *The Gibraltar Brigade on East Cemetery Hill: Twenty-Five Minutes of Fighting, Fifty Years of Controversy* (Baltimore: Butternut and Blue, 1995).

⁵⁶ Galwey, *The Valiant Hours*, 109-110.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 112-117.

“advanced splendidly,” appearing as if they would overrun the Eighth’s position.⁵⁸ But they received a lashing: the Eighth charged the Rebels, many prisoners either falling back or throwing down their arms. Furthermore, in a consummately executed maneuver, the Eighth changed its front and executed a left wheel while firing, pouring lead into the left flank of Brig. Gen. Joseph R. Davis’ brigade from behind a weathered fencerow.⁵⁹ On the Confederate left that afternoon, there would be three other left flanking movements. The 136th New York, to the right of the Eighth, and the 125th and 126th New York to its left would anchor the envelopment of Davis’ brigade, metamorphosing the “distinct, graceful” Rebel lines into an amorphous mass.⁶⁰ The Eighth collected the colors of three regiments and captured some 300 prisoners, suffering nearly 50 percent casualties. Yet the victory was complete, Lee whipped, and the invasion repelled.⁶¹ The Eighth had played “a most conspicuous part” in the late, great battle, and the men were not only “greeted with rousing cheers” by their comrades, but extensive press coverage citing Sgt. John Miller, who would be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions that day.⁶²

The Eighth passed several weeks in Meade’s cautious pursuit of Lee until orders were received on August 15 to proceed to New York City to quell the draft riots; however, by the time they arrived, the riots had been contained. Likewise, the Eighth simply enjoyed a “continued ovation.”⁶³ For Edward Dickinson, Company B, this ovation ended in charges of intoxication and indecent exposure.⁶⁴

The Eighth returned to the field at Culpepper, seeing negligible pieces of the battles at Bristoe Station, Locust Grove, Mine Run, and Morton’s Ford.⁶⁵ Perhaps the most exciting event of autumn 1863 for the men was the Ohio gubernatorial election between Republican John Brough and the Copperhead leader Clement Laird Vallandigham. “It afforded me the greatest amount of pleasure to get the glorious news of the election,” Sawyer wrote to Sexton upon learning of Brough’s victory, noting so much had been done to “rebuke treason and traitors at home.”⁶⁶ The Eighth cast 191 votes in the election, only one vote for Vallandigham.⁶⁷ It seemed a propitious harbinger for Lincoln’s reelection the next year.

⁵⁸ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 130-131; Jeffrey D. Wert, *Gettysburg Day Three* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), 141; *OR*, vol. 27, pt. 1, 461-462.

⁵⁹ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, p. 131; Sawyer, *The Eighth Ohio at Gettysburg*, 7-8; *OR*, vol. 27, pt. 1, 461-462.

⁶⁰ Keith Snipes, “The Improper Placement of the 8th Ohio Monument: A Study of Words and Maps,” in *Gettysburg Magazine: Historical Articles of Lasting Interest* 35 (2006): 92-93.

⁶¹ Of the 209 men of the Eighth Ohio engaged at Gettysburg July 2-3, 1863, 18 were killed, 83 wounded, and one was missing for a total of 102 casualties. Sawyer, *The Eighth Ohio at Gettysburg*, 9.

⁶² William Kepler, *History of the Three Months’ and Three Years’ Service of the Fourth Regiment Ohio Volunteer Infantry* (Cleveland: Leader Printing Company, 1886), reprinted as *4th Ohio Volunteers Gibraltar Brigade Army of the Potomac* (Huntington, West Virginia: Blue Acorn Press, 1992), pp. 131-132; Reid, *Ohio in the War*, 2:68. On the press coverage, see “Gallantry of the Eighth Ohio,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 11, 1863, and the *Sandusky Register*, July 10, 1863. Sgt. John Miller of Company G had captured the colors of the 34th North Carolina and 38th Virginia and would be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor on October 31, 1864. See Gwen J. Hurst, *U.S. Medals and Rolls of Honor: Civil War* (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1999), 185.

⁶³ Reid, *Ohio in the War*, 2: 68; Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 140.

⁶⁴ Compiled Service Records, Record Group 94, Box 29539, National Archives, Washington, District of Columbia.

⁶⁵ Reid, *Ohio in the War*, 2: 68.

⁶⁶ Sawyer to Sexton, letter, October 22, 1863, in Sexton Papers, MSS 185, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

With 1864 came reorganization, a new general-in-chief, and his stratagem of four federal thrusts to gradually furl the Confederacy into submission. One of those thrusts, an overland campaign against the Army of Northern Virginia and Richmond, was inaugurated in the Wilderness region the veterans of Chancellorsville knew so well. On May 5, the Eighth, along with the Seventh West Virginia, was ordered to advance up the Orange Plank Road to recapture several guns lost to the enemy by Brig. Gen. George Getty's division of the VI Corps. With the Eighth on the south side of the Orange Plank, it was "spiritedly done" and cited in Hancock's official report of the battle.⁶⁸ "Our clothes were literally torn to shreds," Galwey recorded of the peregrination through the underbrush.⁶⁹

With replenished haversacks, the men arose at 4 o'clock am May 6, moving rapidly through the woods before falling almost entirely into the "embrace" of Longstreet's flank attack. With Col. John Coons of the Fourteenth Indiana in command, his unit and the Eighth, with no visibility, were "fiercely attacked."⁷⁰ The Eighth suffered heavily, with eighteen men killed and wounded and two sent to Andersonville; however, the Rebel loss was just as burdensome, and the battle ended in stalemate.⁷¹ Nevertheless, Grant would not retreat like his predecessors might have. Skirmishing continued the next three days as the federals turned south along the Brock Road in a race to Spotsylvania Courthouse.

Lee won the race to that sleepy crossroads, but nobody would win in the ensuing bedlam. The first of two major attacks launched on the Rebel works occurred May 10. At 5pm, the Second and Sixth Corps "struggled stubbornly through the woods . . . only to meet a terrible repulse," an operation in which the Eighth suffered casualties of one killed, 23 wounded.⁷² But just after 5am May 12 came the major attack, led by Hancock's Second Corps. Sawyer led the First Delaware and the Eighth with orders to drive troops on their left before uniting with the balance of Carroll's brigade, at which time they would oblique to the right and attack the enemy trenches.⁷³ Unknowingly, the Eighth had entered one of the most savage fights of the war. As Galwey wrote:

Nothing can describe the confusion, the savage bloodcurdling yells, the murderous faces, the awful curses, superhuman hardihood, and the grisly horror of the melee! Of all the battles I took part in, Bloody Angle at Spotsylvania exceeded all the rest in stubbornness, ferocity, and in carnage.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteer Infantry*, 160-161; *OR*, vol. 36, pt. 1, 320.

⁶⁹ Galwey, *The Valiant Hours*, 199.

⁷⁰ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteer Infantry*, 162-165;

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, 166; Reid, *Ohio in the War*, 2: 69.

⁷³ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 167; Galwey, *The Valiant Hours*, 202-209.

⁷⁴ Galwey, *The Valiant Hours*, 210.

All regimental commanders in the Eighth's division were wounded, including their beloved Sawyer, who was struck in the left arm by an enemy ball.⁷⁵ Carroll was wounded on both May 12 and 13; he was promoted to brigadier general, but unfit for field command, his brigade was assumed by Col. Thomas Smyth.⁷⁶

Still, the campaign continued as the federals kept maneuvering towards Richmond, making bloody sojourns along the North Anna, Pamunkey, and Totopotomoy before once again confronting Lee's army June 1-3 at Cold Harbor.⁷⁷ The Eighth was merely involved in heavy skirmishing on the first. The next day, with shortages and exhaustion pervading the army, Grant delayed Meade's intended attack, proffering Lee an entire day to bolster his defenses and establish a killing ground. The federal assault finally began around 4:30am June 3. Smyth's brigade extended the federal lines south from the left of Brig. Gen. Robert O. Tyler's division, the right of which met the Cold Harbor Road.⁷⁸ Smyth stepped off with Tyler's division; Owen and McKeen's brigades were in reserve. Summarily, sharp skirmishing opened into a murderous fire from the Seventeenth, Forty-Second, and Sixty-Sixth North Carolina of Martin's Brigade (Hoke's Division). The Eighth, moving forward with the Fourteenth Connecticut to its right and the Fourth Ohio to its left, came within sixty yards of the enemy lines, but with thin ranks, the enemy position was "impregnable."⁷⁹ Thus ended what Sawyer dubbed a "sanguinary action" that snuffed out the lives of over 13,000 federals; Smyth's brigade had contributed some 170 to that total.⁸⁰ The macabre overland campaign had come to an end;⁸¹ maneuvering and an impeccable pontoon bridge would not only transport the federal army across the James to the vital rail junction of Petersburg, but transport it to nearly ten months of siege.

In the trenches opposing the city on June 25, 1864, the Eighth's term of service having expired, the unit was ordered to Columbus to muster out; however, there was comparatively little cheering. "Where would we find civilian friends to compare with soldier comrades?" questioned Galwey.⁸² Indeed, the sight of the Ohio River affected mixed emotions.⁸³ And then it was over as quickly as it began. Mayor Senter, brass bands, citizens, veterans, and a banner greeted the Seventh and Eighth regiments in Columbus. The regimental colors were forwarded to Governor Brough, who responded:

The record of the Eighth Regiment is among the most brilliant of those made during the war. ... Upon every field they have fought, and every contest in which

⁷⁵ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 168. Command of the regiment was transferred to Maj. A.H. Winslow.

⁷⁶ David S. and Jeanne T. Heidler, *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, s.v. "Samuel Sprigg Carroll, 1832-1893."

⁷⁷ Dyer, *Compendium*, 1499-1500.

⁷⁸ See Gordon C. Rhea, *Cold Harbor: Grant and Lee May 26-June 3, 1864* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 318-331.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 321, 331, 337-338; Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteer Infantry*, 172.

⁸⁰ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteer Infantry*, 172.

⁸¹ It was estimated that the Eighth Ohio fired nearly 56,000 rounds of ammunition from May 5, 1864 to June 3, 1864. Galwey, *The Valiant Hours*, 236.

⁸² Galwey, *The Valiant Hours*, 236.

⁸³ Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 174.

they have been engaged, the officers and men of the command have displayed earnest zeal, courage and patriotic fidelity to the country.⁸⁴

The Eighth had enlisted 993 members, had witnessed the death in battle of 124, had lost 72 to disease, and had discharged 340 for wounds.⁸⁵ It marched over 2,260 miles, traveled nearly as much by rail and steamer, and participated in 76 battles and skirmishes.⁸⁶ After Antietam, its brigade was christened the “Gibraltar Brigade”; after Gettysburg, it became the “Bloody Eighth.” But statistics and reputations and epithets aside, it was the comradeship fostered in the regiment that was most important to many. Letters exchanged, reunion meetings held, encomiums delivered, and monuments dedicated would attest to regimental pride. On September 14, 1887, “Ohio’s Day” at Gettysburg, thirty-seven survivors of the Eighth and their families came to dedicate a regimental monument along Emmitsburg Road, commemorating those sons “who gave their lives and best energies to their country.”⁸⁷ Gradually, those surviving sons became scarcer, and with their deaths, the stories of their exploits became consigned to archival containers and impersonal publications.

Assistant Surgeon Sexton, who after the war would attain international recognition for his treatment of ear diseases, had come full circle from his childhood poetry recitations.⁸⁸ Oh, had he and the Eighth found the flashing brine! And my, did the spray and the tempest roar!

⁸⁴ Governor John Brough to Franklin Sawyer, August 3, 1864, in Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 177.

⁸⁵ Dyer, *Compendium*, pp. 1499-1500; Sawyer, *8th Ohio Volunteers*, 184.

⁸⁶ Sawyer, 184.

⁸⁷ Keith Snipes, “The Improper Placement of the 8th Ohio Monument: A Study of Words and Maps,” 69; Sawyer, *The Eighth Ohio at Gettysburg*, 1-2. Snipes cogent article suggests that primary sources and reliable observances place the Eighth Ohio some 500 feet to the north of the position indicated by the monument at close proximity to the intersection of Emmitsburg Road and Long Lane. According to Snipes, the substantial influence of Bachelder’s erroneous *Isometrical Drawing* on the development of the battlefield played the major role in this misinterpretation.

⁸⁸ Obituary for Samuel Sexton, July 12, 1896, unmarked clipping in Sexton Papers, MSS 185, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio.



“THE DESIRED EFFECT”: PONTIAC’S REBELLION AND THE NATIVE AMERICAN STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE IN BRITAIN’S NORTH AMERICAN CONQUEST



JOSEPH D. GASPARRO

Ravaged by war and in debt after its victory in the French and Indian War, Britain was not only recuperating, but rejoicing over the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763.¹ This treaty officially ended the fighting and gave Britain all of the land east of the Mississippi River, formerly owned by the French. The ink on the treaty was barely dry when a new insurgence arose in British occupied North America. Native Americans, dissatisfied after the war with their position as conquered people and not as allies, rebelled collectively against British colonists and forts along the frontier. Before the war had started, the French had traded and lived among the Native Americans, but perhaps most importantly, they had given them presents to show respect and diplomacy. The Native Americans had grown accustomed to this act of friendliness and when Britain, in debt after the war, wanted to considerably reduce the number of gifts given, there were severe consequences. In 1763, the Native Americans led an insurgence, commonly called Pontiac’s Rebellion because of Pontiac, the Ottawa leader. This insurgence would culminate in the first extensive multi-tribal resistance to European colonization in America.² In response to Britain’s new policies, the Native Americans took ten of their forts, which led not only to excess in conflict, but to the British exposing smallpox blankets onto the Native Americans.

The term ‘frontier’ will take on two meanings in this paper. A frontier in this paper will be regarded as an uninhabited region, one that has lacked major exploration and study. Because of the absence of examination and official colonization, a frontier will also be viewed as “geographic zones of interaction between two or more distinctive cultures.”³ At the time of Pontiac’s Rebellion, the British considered the Native Americans as savages and themselves civilized, a view echoed by Fredrick Jackson Turner, who felt a frontier was “the meeting place between savagery and civilization.”⁴ The term ‘Native American’ is used frequently throughout this paper, and while the word is vague in identifying certain tribes, the frontier was also vague, as aspects of it were oftentimes indistinguishable and unclear due to its vastness (see Figure 1).

¹ I would like to thank the Gettysburg College History Department, especially Michael J. Birkner, Scott Hancock, Timothy J. Shannon, and, of course, Barbara A. Sommer. I would furthermore like to thank the Carteret, New Jersey School District, especially Mary Comba and Nicholas G. Sysock. My family and friends are also deserving of my gratitude.

² Ian K. Steele, *Warpaths* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 234.

³ David J. Weber and Jane M. Rausch, eds., *Where Cultures Meet* (Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1994), xiv.

⁴ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), 3.

During any given ambush or attack, numerous tribes would come and go as they saw fit, and oftentimes several members of a tribe felt uncomfortable with warfare. Relations between the Native Americans and British were also not uniform. There have been many accounts of Native Americans warning frontier settlers prior to an attack and even aiding in their actual escape.⁵ Similarly, British surgeons stationed at forts often provided medical care for the local Native Americans.⁶ The frontier was a “vast wilderness, interspersed with lakes and mountains,” and this not only impeded communication but access to reinforcements as well.⁷

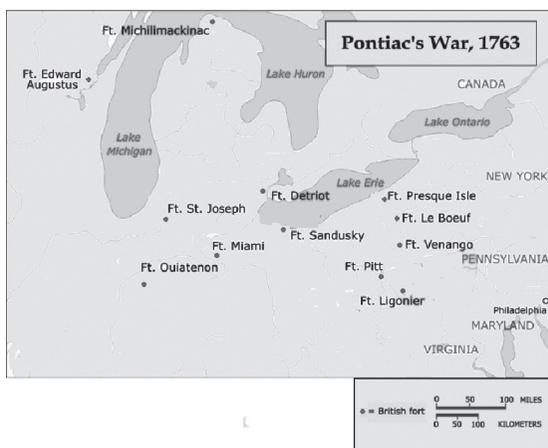


Figure 1⁸

In Fredrick Jackson Turner’s *Frontier Thesis*, published in 1893, he claimed that “[the] idealistic conception of vacant lands as an opportunity for a new order of things is unmistakably present” and that “never again will such gifts [such as] free land offer themselves.”⁹ The land Turner claimed to be vacant and “free” was actually the home of numerous Native American tribes. After the British victory in the French and Indian War, the British struggled to control the Native Americans who had already adjusted to French policy, with whom they had lived and traded more or less as equals.¹⁰ Richard White, who published *The Middle Ground*, described this situation as the “middle ground,” a way of finding a common ground and cooperating.¹¹ It is very likely that the British could have found a “middle ground” if they had kept the same policy as the French, especially in respect to gift giving, which the Native Americans took as a sign of diplomacy. Furthermore, Turner calls North America’s Indian policy “a series of experimentations,” and with good reason.¹² Britain’s policy towards Native Americans, while

⁵ C. Hale Sipe, *The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: Telegraph Press, 1929), 424, 427-428.

⁶ Elias Meyer to Henry Bouquet, 24 September 1761, in *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Vol. 5, ed. Louis M. Waddell (Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1984): 777-780.

⁷ Wilbur R. Jacobs, *Dispossessing the American Indian* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1972), 87.

⁸ Helen Hornbeck Tanner, ed., *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 40-41.

⁹ Turner, *Frontier*, 261.

¹⁰ Gregory Evans Dowd, “The French King Wakes up in Detroit: ‘Pontiac’s War’ in Rumor and History,” *Ethnohistory* 37(1990): 266. The Native Americans were so accustomed to French traditions and way of life that Dowd calls them “Frenchified.”

¹¹ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, empires, and republics in the Great Lakes region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 52.

¹² Turner, *Frontier*, 10.

constructed to help England's economy, also helped to provoke Pontiac's Rebellion. Faced with Britain's strict new policy, the Native Americans now struggled to alter their conceptions of European colonization and comprehend the policies of the victor.

Since Francis Parkman published *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* in 1851, there have been two major arguments on the subject of Pontiac's Rebellion. One of the crucial arguments questions how much power the Ottawa leader Pontiac truly had. Parkman's work portrayed Pontiac as the primary leader of the tribes and admirably said his "authority was almost despotic."¹³ Parkman even called the uprising Pontiac's own conspiracy. Other historians disputed Parkman's views and considered Pontiac's authority to be more akin to a local commander than a great chief. These historians even renamed the rebellion in order to avoid mentioning his name.¹⁴

Although debated for decades, Pontiac was indeed the true mastermind behind the insurgence. While an initial insurgence plot among the Native Americans failed in 1761, Pontiac was a more able leader and used the plans of that spoiled plot as a pattern for his assault upon the British forces.¹⁵ Years later in 1766, when it came time for peace talk, the British sought after Pontiac because they knew no lasting peace was possible without his approval.¹⁶ Historians also questioned the effect of the infamous smallpox blankets on the Native American uprising. Even though both men lack creditable evidence, Parkman, and Francis Jennings in 1988, agreed that the blankets had a major impact on the tide of the war.¹⁷ Contrastingly, in 2005, David Dixon rightfully belittled the consequences with exemplary statistics.¹⁸ Although there have been numerous publications on Pontiac's Rebellion, no author has had the viewpoint that the British were influenced to distribute the blankets because of the Native American's victories. Rather, these historians conclude that the blankets were distributed either for selfish reasons or out of genuine kindness.¹⁹ The idea, however, that the fall of the ten forts directly led to the distribution of the smallpox blankets has never been explored by historians in the past. Nevertheless, as views and sources have emerged and transformed over time concerning Pontiac's Rebellion, so too has the iconographic power of Pontiac and the success of the infamous blankets.

While Parkman, in a flattering language, justified Pontiac as the "Indians' forlorn hope" and the only leader of the rebellion, later historians not only added more leaders to the insurgence but belittled Pontiac's stature.²⁰ When C. Hale Sipe published *The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania* in 1929, he had nearly eighty years of scholarly research, of which Parkman never had had the chance to use. In this work, Sipe included other Native Americans besides Pontiac who helped in the insurgence.²¹ In 1947, when Howard H. Peckham published *Pontiac and the*

¹³ Francis Parkman, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* (New York, 1991), 482.

¹⁴ Gregory Evans Dowd, *War Under Heaven* (Baltimore, 2002), 5; and William R. Nester, *Haughty Conquerors: Amherst and the Great Indian Uprising of 1763* (Connecticut: Praeger, 2000), ix.

¹⁵ Jacobs, *Dispossessing*, 86-87.

¹⁶ Parkman, *Conspiracy*, 482; Thomas Gage to Bouquet, 20 December 1764, *Bouquet Papers*, 733-734.

¹⁷ Parkman, *Conspiracy*, 482; Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988), 447-448.

¹⁸ David Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 152.

¹⁹ Knollenberg, *Germ Warfare*, 493-494; Sipe, *Indian Wars*, 494; Peckham, *Pontiac*, 227; Philip Ranlet, "The British, the Indians, and Smallpox: What Actually Happened at Fort Pitt in 1763?," *Pennsylvania History* 67(2000), 437.

²⁰ Parkman, *Conspiracy*, 485.

²¹ Sipe, *Indian Wars*, 412

Indian Uprising, he was the curator of manuscripts at William L. Clements Library, and learned from the Thomas Gage Papers, delivered to him in 1937, that Parkman's heroic Pontiac was but a local commander who "had fought a losing war."²² Peckham had the pleasure to view the papers of Thomas Gage, who succeeded the arrogant Jeffery Amherst as British Commander-in-Chief of North America in 1763. These papers of Gage were full of "crucial and previously inaccessible information on Pontiac and the ill-fated rebellion."²³ Written during the time of World War II, Peckham does give Pontiac the credit he is due, but in a much more humble light than the prodigious Pontiac of Parkman.²⁴

As time went on, historians were motivated not only by other publications, but by historical revisionism, or a reexamination of the facts. In 1972, Wilbur R. Jacobs published *Dispossessing the American Indian*, in which he stood behind Parkman and asserted Pontiac as the mastermind.²⁵ Jacobs was heavily influenced by Vine Deloria, who in 1969 wrote *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*, in which Deloria felt Native Americans were being labeled as malicious savages. Deloria wanted to break the stereotype and illustrate the atrocious history of American expansionism into the west.²⁶ The publications of Richard White's *The Middle Ground* in 1991 and William R. Nester's *Haughty Conquerors* in 2000 established innovative views on the story of Pontiac due in part to the historical revisionism that emerged towards the end of the twentieth century.²⁷ White follows Peckham's view that Pontiac was only a local commander, but adds that after the uprising was subdued with the signing of a peace treaty, Native Americans' reception of frequent presents resumed again, lands were protected by the new proclamation of their British "father," and the so called 'middle ground' was restored.²⁸ Nester, on the other hand, was motivated by a reexamination of the documented facts and blamed Amherst's supercilious attitude and inability to listen to his British officers about his new policy, which concerned the Native Americans' revolt. Pontiac, Nester asserts, "was but one of many chiefs who took up the Seneca war cry" that was provoked by Amherst's "penny wise, pound foolish" gift giving policy to the Native Americans.²⁹

Aside from the debate over Pontiac's power, evidence that suggests the outcome of the infamous smallpox blankets at Fort Pitt in 1763 raises much discussion, as well as examination of which British officer should take credit for the idea. When Parkman published his renowned book in 1897, he cited two letters between Bouquet and Amherst in early July in which they discuss dispersing smallpox among the Native Americans.³⁰ The letters, however, were written two weeks after Captain Simeon Ecuyer had apparently already given the infected blankets to

²² Howard H. Peckham, *Pontiac and the Indian Uprising* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1947), xvi., 319; and Henry P. Beers, "The Papers of the British Commanders in Chief in North America, 1754-1783," *Military Affairs* 13(1949): 87.

²³ Howard H. Peckham, *Pontiac and the Indian Uprising* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1947), xvi.

²⁴ Peckham, *Pontiac*, xvii.

²⁵ Jacobs, *Dispossessing*, 88.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁷ Ranlet, *Indians and Smallpox*, 429.

²⁸ Steele, *Warpaths*, 246-247; White, *Middle Ground*, 271.

²⁹ Nester, *Haughty Conquerors*, ix.

³⁰ Parkman, *Conspiracy*, 648.

two Native American chiefs. Generals Jeffery Amherst and Henry Bouquet, who were both important and well-known British officers, also embodied the same qualities of leadership that Parkman admired in Pontiac. Captain Ecuyer, who historians affirm gave the Native Americans the blankets, conversely had neither the stature nor the popularity of Amherst or Bouquet.³¹ Parkman would thus not credit Ecuyer, merely a captain and subordinate to Bouquet, for the distribution of the smallpox blankets.

Parkman, who died in 1893, asserted that the smallpox from the blankets wreaked havoc on the frontier. Although Parkman lacked any statistical data, his theory would last among historians until 1954, when Bernhard Knollenberg's article "General Amherst and Germ Warfare" argued the contrary.³² The use of the term 'germ warfare' to describe the incident at Fort Pitt appeared among a generation which had just witnessed the largest armed conflict in world history—the dropping of the atomic bombs. Knollenberg, who, like Peckham, had the advantage of using the Thomas Gage Papers, stated that smallpox did impact the Native Americans, but it was not from the blankets. With the exception of Francis Jennings's *Empire of Fortune* in 1988, historians since Knollenberg's article argue that the blankets did not spread smallpox to the surrounding Native American tribes; rather, the tribes became infected by smallpox while ravaging villages where the disease was prevalent.³³ Before Pontiac or smallpox infected blankets even entered into the minds of the British, they were concerned with attaining land in the Ohio River Valley over the French. This is where Native American unrest first began to form.

The French and Indian War began as a struggle for British expansion west of the Allegheny Mountains in the Ohio River Valley. Prior to the war, three primary Native American tribes lived in the area: the Seneca, the Delaware, and the Shawnee. While their economy was self-sufficient and revolved around fishing and hunting, they had no great attachment to the French, unlike the tribes of the Great Lakes region: the Ottawa, Ojibwas, Potawatomis, and Hurons. These nations traded, lived, and intermarried with the French. France's three newly acquired colonies, Canada, the Illinois Country, and Louisiana, were also extremely dependent upon these Native Americans because their economic system was based upon a close trade relationship. In the late 1740s, both the French and the British laid claim to the land in the Ohio River Valley. Even though neither had settlers in the valley yet, the British needed an outlet for their booming population and the French wanted to protect their economy and authority over the land.³⁴

³¹ Sipe, *Indian Wars*, 424; Peckham, *Pontiac*, 170; Dixon, *Peace Again*, 153; and Elizabeth A. Fenn, "Biological Warfare in Eighteenth-Century North America: Beyond Jeffrey Amherst," *The Journal of American History* 86 (2000), 1557; and Bernhard Knollenberg, "General Amherst and Germ Warfare," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 41 (1954): 493-494.

³² Knollenberg, *Germ Warfare*, 493-494; Sipe, *Indian Wars*, 494; Peckham, *Pontiac*, 227.

³³ Jennings, *Fortune*, 448; Dixon, *Peace Again*, 153; Dowd, *War*, 190; Ranlet, *Indians and Smallpox*, 431; White, *Middle Ground*, 288; Jacobs, *Dispossessing*, 82; Adrienne Mayor, "The Nessus Shirt in the New World: Smallpox Blankets in History and Legend," *The Journal of American Folklore* 108 (1995): 58.

³⁴ William R. Nester, *The Great Frontier War: Britain, France, and the Imperial Struggle for North America, 1607-1755* (Westport: Praeger, 2000), 1-45; D. Peter MacLeod, "Microbes and Muskets: Smallpox and the Participation of the Amerindian Allies of New France in the Seven Years' War," *Ethnohistory* 39 (1992), 53.

There, Ohio River Indians eventually began to trade with the British for provisions such as alcohol. This enraged the French, who did not want to lose their economic monopoly. Aside from hanging plaques on trees by every major river confluence in order to show claim to the land, the French established forts in 1752 under Marquis Duquesne, Governor of Canada, “to make every possible effort to drive the English from our lands.”³⁵ While constructing the forts, the French were dismayed when they were warned by Native Americans to “not build any forts,” and to find out the British eventually set up their own fort a year later.³⁶ When the French received word of the building of the British garrison, they sent numerous troops who successfully surrendered the fort. A year later, in 1754, the British ordered a then unremarkable George Washington to help with the construction of their fort. When Washington realized the fort was under French rule, he attacked a French militia a few miles from the fort, and with that he “set the world on fire.”³⁷ The French and Indian War had begun.

Seven years of conflict and war would follow the Battle of Jumonville Glen, Washington’s attack on the French. Although Native Americans sided with the British before the war with the exception of the Iroquois Confederacy, once the conflict began they primarily fought alongside the French. Once the British began to build trading posts and an eventual fort in the Ohio Region, the French not only began to attack British soldiers but their Native American allies, made up mostly of the Iroquois Confederacy. After unsuccessful attempts to try to obtain weapons from the British in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Winchester, Virginia in order to protect themselves, the Native Americans had no choice but to align themselves with the French. Furthermore, the events leading up to the Battle of Jumonville Glen proved to be particularly important. From the onset, the French had a more personal relationship with the Native Americans, intermarried and even lived among them. Early in the war, in 1758, the British signed the Treaty of Easton, stating that they would not settle west of the Allegheny Mountains as long as the Ohio Nation did not side with the French.³⁸ While the agreement was followed at first by the Native Americans, they eventually disregarded it because their intimacy with the French was stronger.

The war ended with the Treaty of Paris in February 1763, which gave the British all of France’s land east of the Mississippi River. As a result, the French no longer possessed territory in North America. With the French driven out, settlers began to move over the Allegheny Mountains with the motivation to not only advance, but to profit from the fur trade. Not only were the Native Americans angered by the defiance of the Treaty of Easton, but they were stunned to discover that the French had lost the war and that they were now under British rule.

³⁵ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 32.

³⁶ Nester, *Haughty Conquerors*, 53-58.

³⁷ William M. Fowler, *Empires at War: The French and Indian War and the Struggle for North America, 1754-1763* (New York: Walker & Company, 2005), 43.

³⁸ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 278. The Mingos, from the Ohio Country, unlike the Great Lakes region, had no great attachment to the French. The Mingos made peace with the British in 1758, with the Treaty of Easton, with the understanding that the British would withdraw from the Ohio Country. However, the British strengthened their forts in the region, and decided not to abandon. This drove the Mingos to uprising in 1763.

When the British began to enact new policies for their recently acquired people and land, the Native Americans were unwilling to comply with them.

Major General Jeffery Amherst, the commanding officer of the British forces in North America, had the responsibility of implementing these new policies among the Native Americans. Amherst, the 'hero' who overtook Montreal in 1760 to close the French and Indian War in North America, was not interested in conciliation with the Native Americans.³⁹ By late 1762, Amherst also had to deal with the drastic reduction of Britain's once powerful army due to the deployment of troops to participate in attacks on French and Spanish possessions in the Caribbean.⁴⁰ The remaining troops were spread so thinly around the newly conquered land that Amherst found it hard to maintain proper garrisons. Each region had their own distinctive way of treating the Native Americans, and this compounded disarray throughout the frontier. Although people in the Louisiana territory intermarried with the Native Americans, people in the Ohio region did not have any major ties to them. To enforce a universal Native American policy also proved to be a problem because Amherst had to consider the differences in each tribe's viewpoint on political and economical issues.⁴¹ Amherst had a major challenge before him, but whichever policy he employed, he had to consult Sir William Johnson, Native American superintendent, which was a challenge in itself. Johnson, aside from being well-known for the founding of Johnstown, New York, is also known for his cordial Native American policy. Amherst felt Johnson was resistant to change, and oblivious to the economic pressures the crown faced because he kept requesting money that Britain simply did not have.⁴² England was in a debt of over a million dollars, and there was no money left to spend on North America. As troops were deployed elsewhere, Britain focused its attention on more urgent problems and left Amherst to employ his own policies.

Amherst's first experience with Native Americans was when the Cherokees in the Carolinas revolted against their former British allies in the summer of 1761.⁴³ The Cherokees traded not only deerskins but war captives from other tribes to South Carolina. There was an immediate change, however, when Governor William H. Lyttelton imprisoned a group of Cherokee chiefs.⁴⁴ The Cherokees responded by revolting near Charleston, South Carolina. The rebellion died down shortly but not before the Native Americans seized one frontier post, killing twenty-five soldiers in the garrison.⁴⁵ Amherst knew the level of destruction the Native Americans were capable of and the British were already suspicious of their Iroquois allies who, during the French and Indian War, had proven frequent deserters and thieves. In a letter to Pennsylvania Governor James Hamilton, Amherst explained how he felt about his allies' actions:

³⁹ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 407-408

⁴⁰ Dixon, *Peace Again*, 74.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴² Colin G. Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 69.

⁴³ Dixon, *Peace Again*, 77.

⁴⁴ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 460.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 466-467.

If they do not behave as good and faithful allies ought to do, and renounce all acts of hostilities against His Majesty's subjects I shall retaliate upon them, and I have the might so to do tenfold every breach of treaty they shall be guilty of and every outrage they shall committ.⁴⁶

With Amherst's questioning of his Native American allies, and with the Cherokee conflict still fresh in his mind, his first policy initiative was to cut back and deprive Native Americans of arms and ammunition. In a letter to Sir William Johnson, Amherst proclaimed "we have it in our power to reduce them to reason," assuming that Native Americans would be less likely to revolt without firearms.⁴⁷

In addition to decreasing arms for the Native Americans, Amherst also wanted to reduce the distribution of gifts to them as well. Amherst saw little need to supply Native Americans with gifts, as the British were conquerors and the Native Americans were subjects. This new view abolished Richard White's 'middle ground,' which White argued grew "according to the need of people to find a means, other than force, to gain the cooperation or consent of foreigners."⁴⁸ With England's debt in mind, Amherst thought he was doing the crown a favor by limiting gifts, and he verifies this in a letter to Sir William Johnson :

With regards to furnishing the [Indians], with a little cloathing, some arms & ammunition to hunt with, that is all very well in cases of necessity; but as, when the intended trade is established they will be able to supply themselves with these, from the traders, for their furs, I do not see why the Crown should be put to that expense.⁴⁹

The foundation of Amherst's policy was to eliminate presents that served as a token of the entire 'middle ground.'⁵⁰ The French regularly presented gifts to the Native Americans as a sign of diplomacy and peace, but Amherst saw gift giving, except in cases of dire need, as a bribe for good behavior. While Amherst was justifiable in keeping the needs of Britain as his primary objective, White would argue that he ultimately failed because he did not "convince [the Native Americans] that some mutual action was fair and legitimate."⁵¹ When the French had a conflict with the Native Americans, they would try to "gain an audience" with them and speak with kind words, calling them "their children," in order to work out a mutual agreement, 'a middle ground.'⁵² The British, on the other hand, ignored the Native American's opinion of the situation.

⁴⁶ Jeffery Amherst to James Hamilton, 30 March 1760, in *The Sir William Johnson Papers*, Vol. 3, ed. James Sullivan (Albany: The University of the State of New York 1921): 205.

⁴⁷ Amherst to William Johnson, 11 August 1761, *Ibid.*, 3:517; and Michael N. McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its People, 1724-1774* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 163.

⁴⁸ White, *The Middle Ground*, 52.

⁴⁹ Amherst to Johnson, 22 February 1761, *Johnson Papers*, 3: 345.

⁵⁰ White, *Middle Ground*, 257; R. G. Robertson *Rotting Face: Smallpox and the American Indian* (Caldwell: Caxton Press, 2002), 119.

⁵¹ White, *The Middle Ground*, 52.

⁵² Dixon, *Peace Again*, 18.

The French, unlike the British, produced a Métis population from their intermarriage, “bound by family, religion, and culture” to both the French and the Native Americans.⁵³ Not only did the Native Americans resent the new policy, especially the pro-French Great Lakes region, but so did some British, Sir William Johnson among them.

Johnson, known by the Mohawks and other members of the League of Five Nations as “Warrahiyagey” or “the man who undertakes great things,” understood Native American politics best and greatly opposed Amherst’s new policy.⁵⁴ Johnson knew Amherst’s new plan would bring about severe repercussions. Aside from representing diplomacy, the gifts were a tribute to Native American chiefs and payment for allowing the whites to build forts on their land.⁵⁵ As White further described, Johnson tried to make Amherst “understand the world and reasoning of others” because not only would Native American chiefs lose power because they were not receiving tribute, but their suspicions of British intentions would be increased.⁵⁶ In a letter to Charles Wyndham, the Earl of Egremont and the newly appointed Secretary of State for the Southern Department responsible for the American colonies, Johnson wrote:

Your lordship you will observe that the Indians are not only very uneasy, but jealous of our growing power, which the enemy [France] (to engage them firmly in their interest) had always told them would prove their ruin, as we should by degrees surround them on every side, & at length extirpate them. . . . from the treatment they receive from us, different from what they have been accustomed to by the French, who spared no labor, or expense to gain their friendship and esteem, which along enabled them to support the war in these parts.⁵⁷

Johnson thought Amherst was naïve regarding the Native Americans’ capacity to wage war, and the only way to prevent it was to treat them fairly and to keep them supplied with arms, ammunition and, above all, gifts. Amherst, conversely, believed he had the power to demand ‘good behavior’ of Native Americans, rather than gifts, because he was the conqueror. Still, Johnson argued that the expense of presents would greatly outweigh the cost of fighting a war which the natives will not stop “until they have spread havoc over all the frontiers.”⁵⁸ Except for the elimination of presents and gunpowder to the Native Americans, Johnson did not “seriously question British measures; [he] only criticized the speed with which they were taken and the failure to negotiate them according to the diplomatic procedures of the middle ground.”⁵⁹

⁵³ Ibid., 71; Jennings, *Fortune*, 441; Dowd, *War*, 26-27.

⁵⁴ Dowd, *War*, 72-73.

⁵⁵ White, *Middle Ground*, 52.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Johnson to Charles Wyndham, Earl of Egremont, 31 May 1762, in *The Sir William Johnson Papers*, ed. James Sullivan (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1951), 3: 461-462.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ White, *Middle Ground*, 259.

When Amherst repeatedly ignored Johnson's warnings, Johnson said Amherst "was not at all friend of Indians, which I am afraid may have bad consequences."⁶⁰

Johnson was not alone in opposing Amherst's Native American policy. George Croghan, Johnson's deputy Indian agent, also believed that several provisions were cheaper than funding a war against the Native Americans:

The British and French Colonies since the first settling [of] America . . . have adopted the Indian customs and manners by indulging them in treaties and renewing friendships.⁶¹

Captain Donald Campbell, the commander of the British stronghold Fort Detroit, further believed in a course of amiability and kindness when dealing with Native Americans. Campbell supplied Native Americans near his fort with provisions such as ammunition, even though he was fearful of going against the wishes of Amherst. To his defense, Campbell did "what [he] thought was best for the service," fearing a Native American uprising.⁶²

The fear would materialize soon enough. In the summer of 1761, two Seneca—Guyasuta, also known as Kiasuha, and Tahaiadoris—felt they were "ill treated" and called for a council among the neighboring nations for the purpose of planning a strike against all British garrisons.⁶³ Angered by Amherst's new policy, the Seneca leaders came to Detroit to distribute war belts to the Ottawas, Hurons, and Chippewas "to take up the hatchet" and to "cut off the English at Fort Detroit," which would "give [them] the greatest joy and pleasure."⁶⁴ The war belts, made of wampum and painted red, were sent to tribes as a summons of war. On the contrary, a wampum belt painted white was given to an adversary to symbolize peace. The Senecas, with the help of Pontiac, delivered red war belts and also made speeches to try and motivate other tribes to join the cause.

Not long after the Senecas were in the region, Native Americans from the Wyandot informed Campbell about their plan to attack his fort. Campbell told those members of the Wyandot who informed him to go to the Seneca council and report the news back to him. The Wyandot's reported back about the Senecas' well-constructed plan, triggered by Amherst's new policies, but more importantly they discovered that the tribes planned to act as one.⁶⁵ When Campbell learned of the plot, he called the local tribes into his own council and informed them he was conscious of their scheme against the English and that he,

⁶⁰ Amherst to Johnson, 16 January 1762, in *The Sir William Johnson Papers*, 10:354.

⁶¹ White, *Middle Ground*, 258.

⁶² Donald Campbell to Bouquet, 21 May 1761, *Bouquet Papers*, 5:491.

⁶³ Dowd, *War*, 105.

⁶⁴ "Minutes between Indians and Johnson in Detroit," 8 July 1761, *Johnson Papers*, 3:450-451.

⁶⁵ Jon William Parmenter, "Pontiac's War: Forging New Links in the Anglo-Iroquois Covenant Chain, 1758-1766," *Ethnohistory* 44 (1997): 624.

Advise[d] [them] with all [his] heart in the most friendly manner, to return home and ardently recommend it to your chiefs and those of other nations in concert with you to quit their bad intentions and live in peace, for if they proceed in their designs against the English it will terminate in their utter ruin and destruction.⁶⁶

The conference ended with the Native Americans dispersing and Campbell convinced of the Senecas' candor, but in actuality the Native Americans reasoned that since their plan was uncovered, they would wait patiently and allow the war belts to continue to circulate.⁶⁷ Because of the vastness of the frontier, not all the war belts that the Seneca leaders had dispersed had reached their destination. Moreover, once a tribe had received the Seneca war belt, they could circulate it among other tribes that were in their region to get more warriors.

The Seneca plot had mixed reactions throughout the British ranks. Amherst reasoned that the uprising "never gave [him] momentous concern, as [he knew] of their incapacity of attempting anything serious."⁶⁸ General Henry Bouquet, who was the commander of Fort Pitt, one of the largest British forts, decided to not only bring British settlers who had been living on the frontier inside the fort, but also to form two companies of militia to strengthen the garrison. Although Bouquet took those precautions, he felt the entire Native American plot would fail and that they "could only flatter themselves to succeed by surprise."⁶⁹ Johnson, along with his deputy Croghan, however, did not take the plot lightly, and soon Johnson wrote a letter to Amherst in which he exclaimed "[he was] very apprehensive that something not right is brewing."⁷⁰ Johnson did not merely feel troubled over one tribe but all of the tribes. As the British continued to deal with the Seneca hysteria, a new prophet from among the Delaware was emerging, and presented new troubles for the crown.

This new prophet's name was Neolin, who had supposedly fallen into a trance and visited the Master of Life, the supreme deity in Native American culture. During this trance, Neolin, or "Enlightened One," came to three forks in the road, and after two were blocked, he faced the third, alongside a woman who instructed him to purify himself before meeting with the Master of Life.⁷¹ This part of Neolin's trance symbolized for Native Americans a cleansing of themselves of their "white ways" through purification, or ridding themselves of the English.⁷² After Neolin completed his purification process, he was able to listen to the Master of Life, who provided him with a set of orders to take back:

⁶⁶ Campbell to Bouquet, 22 July 1761, *Bouquet Papers*, 5:649.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 648-650.

⁶⁸ Amherst to Johnson, 9 August 1761, *Johnson Papers*, 3:514.

⁶⁹ Bouquet to Campbell, 30 June 1761, *Bouquet Papers*, 5:597.

⁷⁰ Johnson to Amherst, 21 June 1761, *Johnson Papers*, 10:291.

⁷¹ Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 194-195.

⁷² Dixon, *Peace Again*, 96.

The land where ye dwell I have made for you and not for others. Whence comes it that ye permits the whites upon your land. Can ye not live without them? Ye could live as ye did before knowing them, before those whom ye call your brothers [the English] had come upon your lands. Did ye not live by the bow and arrow? Ye had no need for gun or power, or anything else. . . . As to those who trouble your lands, drive them out, make war upon them. I do not love them at all; they know me not, and are my enemies. . . . Send them back to the lands which I have created for them and let them stay there.⁷³

Neolin's message served to further unify the diverse Native American people. The Delawares, Shawnees and Mingoes, all from the Ohio Valley, and the Ottawas and Potawatomes from the Great Lakes all came to believe that the Master of Life was punishing them for allowing the British to come onto their land.⁷⁴ Although Neolin denounced white practices, he really was preaching Native American guilt for embracing the practices; the great advantage of accepting guilt is that it restores power to the guilty party.⁷⁵ The only way to change their fate was to actively rid themselves of the English.

While spending time away from his fort in Philadelphia, Bouquet, who left Captain Ecuyer to command Fort Pitt, was informed by Croghan that war belts were still spreading among Native Americans throughout the frontier. The Native Americans felt it was "time for them to prepare to defend themselves and their country from [the English]."⁷⁶ When Amherst, who knew of the short supply of troops at the forts, heard of the activity on the frontier, he was surprisingly unworried. He felt the Native Americans' "power [was] altogether insufficient," and that they would not "attempt any mischief."⁷⁷ While Neolin was a key motivator for the Native Americans to take up arms against the British, Pontiac, leader of the Ottawa, was an even bigger problem for them.

Pontiac further used Neolin's religious awakening and on April 27, 1763 called all the surrounding nations for a grand council to discuss an attack.⁷⁸ Parkman admiringly stated that Pontiac, whose name was respected "from the sources of the Ohio to those of the Mississippi and to the farthest boundaries of the wide-spread Algonquin race," was determined to launch a surprise attack against the British.⁷⁹ A great orator, Pontiac called the grand council, which

⁷³ John Rutherford, *John Rutherford's Narrative in The Siege of Detroit in 1763*, ed. Milo Milton Quaife (Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company, 1958), 14-15. John Rutherford, a British captive of the Native Americans, witnessed the speech made by Neolin. Rutherford was ambushed while on duty, and ended up a victim of circumstance. Although he was a captive, the Native Americans treated Rutherford with food, water, and shelter. Rutherford's accounts of Neolin, and later Pontiac (see footnote 85), I take to be accurate and not exceedingly biased; once Rutherford escaped captivity he had the chance to kill one of his captors, but decided against it.

⁷⁴ Dixon, *Peace Again*, 98; Parmenter, *Forging*, 672; For examples of the punishments see Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 34.

⁷⁵ White, *Middle Ground*, 283.

⁷⁶ George Croghan to Bouquet, 10 December 1762, in *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Vol. 6, ed. Louis M. Waddell (Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1994):137-8.

⁷⁷ Amherst to Bouquet, 31 October 1762, *Johnson Papers*, 3:920.

⁷⁸ Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of Seneca* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), 115; Thomas J. Maxwell, Jr., "Pontiac Before 1763," *Ethnohistory* 4 (1957): 43.

⁷⁹ Parkman, *Conspiracy*, 483.

consisted of the Potawatomes, Ottawas, Chippewas, and Hurons, to meet a short distance from Fort Detroit.⁸⁰ There, Pontiac used the doctrine of the prophet Neolin and the Master of Life as a supernatural sanction for his conspiracy, and inspired the Native Americans to go to war.⁸¹ Pontiac preached to the council who looked upon him as an “oracle” that the Master of Life had directed them to “drive off [their] lands those dogs clothed in red who will do nothing but harm.”⁸² In his speech, Pontiac urged them to take up arms and rid themselves of the British. The discourse by Pontiac and the fact that some Native Americans had received war belts two years prior to the council stimulated everyone because they were anxious and ready for war. The message was clear: Native Americans must not only purge themselves of English customs, but eradicate the foreigners from their land.

To have a greater chance of a victorious attack in Fort Detroit, Pontiac conceived of a plan that would allow both himself and his followers a better assessment of the fort. On May 1, 1763, while Pontiac and fifty of his faithful Ottawas approached Fort Detroit and were admitted to perform a ceremonial dance for the commander of the fort, Major Henry Gladwin, a few snuck off once inside and looked around to locate the British’s barracks and defenses.⁸³ Gladwin and his soldiers were not worried about Native Americans sneaking around prior to this event, for they had always been restless but never deceptive.⁸⁴ When the ceremony came to an end, Gladwin did not suspect anything to be astray, and Pontiac informed the British that he would return again in a couple of days so that more of his tribe could meet the commander.

Once back in their village, the Ottawas prepared for the attack. Pontiac held a council meeting at the Potawatomi village on May 5 and exclaimed passionately to them:

It is important for us, my brothers, that we exterminate from our lands [the English who seek] only to destroy us. . . . When I go to see the English commander and say to him that some of our comrades are dead, instead of bewailing their death. . . . He laughs at me and at you. . . . Therefore, my brothers, we must all swear their destruction and wait no longer.⁸⁵

At the council it was decided that on May 7, Pontiac and sixty warriors with tomahawks and other weapons hidden under their blankets would enter the fort while their women would enter with muskets under their clothing.⁸⁶ Pontiac would use a wampum belt to signal the attack inside the fort while the other Potawatomes, outside the fort, would attack any English with whom they came in contact.⁸⁷ Although Pontiac employed a wampum belt in a new and creative

⁸⁰ Parmenter, *Forging*, 627.

⁸¹ Wallace, *Death*, 121; For example of inspiring “gullible followers” see Dowd, *Spirited Resistance*, 35.

⁸² Dixon, *Peace Again*, 108; Richer, *Facing East*, 198-199.

⁸³ Rutherford, *Siege at Detroit*, 19-21.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 17-21.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁸⁶ Anderson, *Crucible*, 537-539.

⁸⁷ Rutherford, *Siege at Detroit*, 25.

way, using the belt as a weapon rather than for the more traditional purpose of a summons of war, his plan would end up being spoiled regardless.

Although Pontiac's plan was well organized, Gladwin and his troops were soon informed by several Ottawa Indians who were reluctant to fight. At this, the English began to frantically prepare the fort for an attack. On May 7, Pontiac and his warriors returned to the fort and were startled by the sight of the whole garrison at arms. Pontiac said to Gladwin, "We would be very glad to know the reason for this, for we imagine some bird has given thee ill news of us."⁸⁸ Rightfully chagrined and bewildered that their plan had been uncovered, Pontiac assured the soldiers of the misunderstanding and told the British that he would return once again to smoke the peace pipe.⁸⁹ Now well aware of the Native Americans' plot, Gladwin and his troops had more time to prepare and to welcome in any families living outside of the fortification's walls. When Pontiac and his warriors arrived back on May 9, the guard at the front of the gate was ordered to only let Pontiac and a couple of his leading men in. Pontiac, taking this as a sign of disrespect because all the Native Americans wanted to be involved in the ceremony, told the guard to tell Gladwin "that he may stay in his fort, and that I will keep the country."⁹⁰ Pontiac and his warriors returned to their village, picked up their hatchets and tomahawks and charged at Fort Detroit. With that, the siege of Fort Detroit had begun.

Chanting their war song, Pontiac and his willing warriors killed twenty-four head of cattle and even British Sergeant Fisher and his family on the way to Fort Detroit.⁹¹ Once arriving at the fort, Pontiac ordered the Ottawas to watch the north side of the fort to prevent anyone from entering, while the rest of the warriors tried to hide themselves as firing began from the British. Pontiac, low on supplies, arranged for a peace talk during the cease-fire, and sent envoys to the garrison with the hopes of truce. The British, with a lack of provisions themselves, entertained the idea and sent Captain Campbell, accompanied by Lieutenant George McDougall, to converse with the Native Americans because not only would it take months to get word to Amherst for supplies, but even if the supplies did come they would be confiscated by Pontiac.⁹²

The two British officers apprehensively walked with Pontiac to the house of Antoine Cuillerier, a Frenchman involved in the rebellion.⁹³ Pontiac told them that if the British abandoned Fort Detroit and their provisions, they would be allowed to march to Fort Niagara. The officers asserted that they would have to bring the proposal back to Gladwin, but just as they were about to depart, Pontiac seized them both and unexpectedly made them hostages.⁹⁴ The translator of the confrontation, Pierre LaButte, went back and informed Gladwin of Pontiac's

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 30, 33. Rutherford asserted Pontiac "found himself overwhelmed by various emotions; he looked like a lioness robbed of all her whelps." Pontiac then told the British he would return to smoke the calumet, a peace pipe, "in token of agreement."

⁹⁰ Charles E. Moore, ed., *The Gladwin Manuscripts* (Lansing: Robert Smith Printing, 1897), 619.

⁹¹ Nester, *Haughty Conquerors*, 80.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 81.

⁹³ Dowd, *War*, 121.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

terms and of the capture of two of his officers, but the commander would not negotiate while his officers were held prisoner.⁹⁵ The siege continued after the two sides failed to reach an agreement. The siege eventually ended in a stalemate in October, six months after it began, but not before British captives were taken and eventually killed. The attack on Detroit brought the British's worst fear to life, but it was only the beginning of the brutal violence that would ensue.

The first British fort to fall was Fort Sandusky. Stationed along Lake Erie in Ohio, this was a crucial fort to attack because it was on the vital trail of communication between Fort Detroit and Fort Pitt. The commander of the fort, Ensign Christopher Pauli, was on peaceful terms with nearby Wyandots. After being encouraged by Ottawas and Wyandots already involved in Pontiac's plan, the nearby Wyandots acquiesced to join in the war and on May 16 went to Fort Sandusky and requested to speak with Pauli.⁹⁶ Pauli, unsuspecting of trouble, allowed them to enter and they quickly scattered around the fort emitting war cries as they slaughtered and scalped the troops, fifteen in all.⁹⁷ Having achieved their goal, the Wyandots then burned the garrison, and spared Pauli, whom they took with them as a prisoner.⁹⁸ The Wyandots and Ottawas suffered no casualties in this victory at Sandusky and it helped motivate other Native Americans to join the fight.⁹⁹

The next British fort to be attacked fell in a very similar fashion to that of Ft. Sandusky. Located in southern Michigan, Fort St. Joseph, commanded by Ensign Francis Schlosser, was greeted on the morning of May 25 with a small group of Potawatomes who wanted to introduce their relatives to the commander.¹⁰⁰ The commander consented, and when the Potawatomes left to get their relatives, Schlosser was warned by a French resident of a possible attack.¹⁰¹ By the time Schlosser rushed back to his barracks to warn his undersized regiment of men, he found the garrison swarming with Native Americans. Before Schlosser had time to arm himself, a war cry was heard, and within two minutes the Potawatomes killed everyone except Schlosser and two others. The Native Americans were deceptive in their attacks not only because they wanted to outmaneuver their adversary, but because they felt their actions were justifiable since they were being cheated by Britain's new policy in regard to the allocation of gifts. An alarming pattern of treachery was developing, one to which the British were not accustomed.

The pattern of duplicity continued with the attack on Fort Miami. Commanded by Ensign Robert Holmes, its location was strategic: the intersection of the St. Mary and St. Joseph Rivers in northeastern Indiana, which was the direct route between Canada and Louisiana.¹⁰² When he was warned of cannon fire coming from the direction of Detroit, unlike most British officers who ignored rumors, Holmes put his small company of men on guard and prepared

⁹⁵ Nester, *Haughty Conquerors*, 82.

⁹⁶ Peckham, *Pontiac*, 154.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 154-155.

⁹⁸ Dixon, *Peace Again*, 119.

⁹⁹ Pechman, *Pontiac*, 155.

¹⁰⁰ Dixon, *Peace Again*, 119.

¹⁰¹ Timothy J. Todish, *The British Military and the Pontiac Indian Uprising of 1763-1764* (New York: Purple Mountain Press, 2006), 56.

¹⁰² Nester, *Haughty Conquerors*, 89.

for an attack. Yet Holmes, who was an experienced frontier officer, had foolishly taken a Native American mistress. When a Native American from the Miami village was sick, Holmes's mistress convinced him to assist, and no sooner than he arrived at the village he was killed by a member of the Miami tribe. The remaining soldiers at Fort Miami naturally shut their gates in worry. Two French messengers Jacques Godfroy and Mini Chene, acting on behalf of the Native Americans, approached the fort and convinced the British to surrender, but not before looting the fort and killing four of the eleven soldiers that were left.¹⁰³ The deception of the Native Americans had deepened, and this time it involved a woman.

Located along the Wabash River in southwestern Indiana, the fourth British fort to fall by duplicity was Fort Ouiatenon, commanded by Lieutenant Edward Jenkins. Jenkins, much like Pauli at Sandusky, was on very good terms with local tribes. However, the Ottawa told the Weas, Kickapoos, and Mascoutens about their past victories and influenced them to join in the attack.¹⁰⁴ The lieutenant was not aware of the Native Americans' past victories, and when the local tribes asked him to meet for a council, Jenkins had no suspicions of an attack. When Jenkins appeared at the council he was immediately seized, and his whole feeble garrison soon surrendered but not before the local tribes who subdued them asserted that they were "sorry, but that they were obliged to do it by the other nations."¹⁰⁵ Although the fourth British fort to fall, the Native Americans had yet to take a major garrison; but that was about to change.

The first major fort the Native Americans victoriously attacked turned out to be the bloodiest.¹⁰⁶ Fort Michilimackinac, a major fur-trading center in northern Michigan, commanded by Captain George Etherington consisted of over forty men and was one of the larger garrisons the British possessed.¹⁰⁷ Stubborn to a fault, when a French resident warned Etherington about Native American activity in the area, he ignored the caution and "threatened to send the next person who should bring a story of the same kind a prisoner to Detroit."¹⁰⁸ A few days later on June 2, numerous Chippewa and Sauk congregated outside the Etherington's fort to engage in a game of lacrosse.¹⁰⁹ The fort was not on alert, so British officers and soldiers alike went outside of the fortification to watch the game. As the game went on, Native Americans purposely tossed the ball inside the fort, and as they rushed in to retrieve it, they were handed weapons that were hidden under the blankets of their women, and opened fired on the helpless garrison.¹¹⁰ When the fighting ended, twenty-one British soldiers had been killed, while others, including Etherington, were held hostage.¹¹¹

¹⁰³ Todish, *British Military*, 57.

¹⁰⁴ Dixon, *Peace Again*, 120.

¹⁰⁵ Nester, *Haughty Conquerors*, 91.

¹⁰⁶ Peckham, *Pontiac*, 163.

¹⁰⁷ Todish, *British Military*, 58.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁰⁹ Nester, *Haughty Conquerors*, 96.

¹¹⁰ Dowd, *War*, 93.

¹¹¹ Dixon, *Peace Again*, 123.

The Native Americans spared Etherington and his soldiers' lives, but not before the commander promised more captives. Etherington wrote a letter to Lieutenant James Gorrell, the commander of Fort Edward Augustus, ordering their small garrison to join him and his men.¹¹² If the Native Americans could take one of the British's larger forts in Fort Michilimackinac, he knew Gorrell's garrison would be no match for them. On the same day as the attack on Etherington's fort, Fort Ligonier, commanded by Lieutenant Archibald Blane, purposely set fire to some of its structures rather than surrender it to the Native Americans. Fort Edward Augustus and Ligonier, not as vital or as large as Michilimackinac, likewise fell to the Native Americans without much of a struggle. The triumphant attack on Etherington's fort was a key victory for the Native Americans. By taking one of the larger British forts, it raised not only the Native Americans' confidence and persuaded more tribes to join the attack, but it demonstrated to the British how severe this insurgence truly was.

Positioned in western Pennsylvania, Fort Venango was commanded by Lieutenant Francis Gordon and fifteen Royal Americans. The fort fell on June 16 to the Senecas through the same deceptive circumstances as Michilimackinac: a game of lacrosse.¹¹³ Once the Senecas rushed inside, with the help of the Mingoes, they slaughtered every soldier except Gordon. Instead of killing Gordon on the spot, they forced him to write down their grievances to the crown:

the scarcity and dearness of [gun] powder for these two years past. . . . [and] the English keeping so many posts in their country [which] gave them reason to think that [the English] were determined to posses their country, therefore we would destroy [the English].¹¹⁴

After the letter was written, the Senecas burned not only the fort, but Gordon too. The Senecas then sent the correspondence with a party of warriors who were traveling to Fort Pitt, and were told to drop the letter on the way with the intentions that the English would find it and raise tensions along the frontier.¹¹⁵ Although the purpose behind the letter was to justify to the British their reasoning for the attacks, it was fortunate that the letter was found by a British officer and not lost in the vastness of the frontier.

The Mingoes and Senecas then moved north to attack Fort LeBeouf. The western Pennsylvania fort, commanded by Ensign George Price, had a small squadron of thirteen other soldiers on guard when they were warned by other British officers at Fort Presque Isle that Native Americans had attacked Fort Detroit.¹¹⁶ The Native Americans appeared at Price's

¹¹² Peckham, *Pontiac*, 165.

¹¹³ Dixon, *Peace Again*, 147.

¹¹⁴ "Journal of Indian Affairs," 11 July 1763, *Johnson Papers*, 10:769.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Dixon, *Peace Again*, 148.

fort on July 18, and after being turned away twice by the British upon asking for provisions assuming they were insincere, attacked. Aided by the Delawares, the three tribes added to their gunfire by shooting flaming arrows at the fort's structures.¹¹⁷ As fire spread, the soldiers wanted to evacuate the fort, but were compelled to stay by Price who exclaimed, "We must fight as long as we can, and then die together."¹¹⁸ If they were going to die, however, it would not be fighting the Native Americans, because before long, Price gave in to his soldiers' demand and ordered a retreat. The ninth British fort had fallen.

The Native Americans then concentrated their manpower to Fort Presque Isle, one of the larger British garrisons with twenty-nine men located in Erie, Pennsylvania; it was another crucial link on the communication trail between Forts Detroit and Pitt.¹¹⁹ Commandeered by Ensign John Christie, whom Amherst praised for "being prepared for the defense of his post," soon made Amherst regret his cordial words.¹²⁰ On the morning of July 20, the soldiers awoke to find that nearly two hundred and fifty Native American warriors from four nations had strategically set themselves upon two hills overlooking the garrison.¹²¹ Like the attack at Fort LeBeouf, these Native Americans once again used flaming arrows to subdue the fort. After two days of fighting and a continual bombardment of flaming arrows, which Christie later called a "smart" strategy, the Native Americans broke through the fort's gates and set fire to the officers' quarters.¹²² Convinced he was outflanked and that the Native Americans would only take the garrison and not harm his soldiers, Christie surrendered. Rather than live up to their words, the Native Americans divided the soldiers into groups for each tribe to take as their captives. Amherst would later write "It is amazing that [Christie] could put so much faith in the promises of the Indians."¹²³ Christie was not alone in both trusting the Native Americans and not thinking anything was amiss. With the exception of Fort Presque Isle in which they used sheer force, the Native Americans used deception in every other fort attack. The tenth British fort had fallen, and there was no sign of the Native Americans slowing their attacks.

Throughout late May and June, the soldiers at Fort Pitt under the command of Captain Ecuyer were informed of the destruction on the frontier. William Trent, an Indian trader and Indian agent before taking up the commanding job of the militia at Pitt, wrote down the day to day details of living at the fort. Trent's rationale for keeping a journal at Fort Pitt was to encompass everything from the daily activities of the fort to first-hand accounts from others about the annihilation on the frontier by Native Americans.¹²⁴ Bias in his journal, if any, can be seen in the latter, which contains an overwhelming cultural fear of Native Americans and

¹¹⁷ Sipe, *Indian Wars*, 417.

¹¹⁸ Dixon, *Peace Again*, 148.

¹¹⁹ Nester, *Haughty Conquerors*, 98.

¹²⁰ Amherst to Bouquet, 25 June 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, 6:257.

¹²¹ Simeon Ecuyer to Bouquet, 26 June 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, 6:260.

¹²² Todish, *British Military*, 95.

¹²³ Lorne Pierce, ed., *The Journal of Jeffery Amherst: Recording the Military Career of General Amherst in American from 1758 to 1763* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), 310.

¹²⁴ A.T. Volwiler, "William Trent's Journal at Fort Pitt, 1763," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 11(1924): 391-392.

misconstrued information due to the poor communication of frontier life. Nonetheless, Trent's journal not only gives the most detailed accounts available of life in Fort Pitt during the siege of 1763, but also highlights the succession of brutality leading up to Captain Ecuyer's famous decision regarding the smallpox-infested blankets.

Similar to the siege of other forts, Native American attacks were prevalent around the outlying regions of Fort Pitt in early June. Trent wrote on May 29 about both the death of Colonel William Clapham at his home and of two soldiers who were at the sawmill.¹²⁵ Emotions at Fort Pitt were heightened by this news because Clapham's homestead, along with the sawmill, were a mere twenty-five miles from their fort.¹²⁶ Ecuyer, convinced that a Native American uprising was certain, dispatched riders to Philadelphia to inform Bouquet that he thought "the [Native American] uprising [was] general [and] that he tremble[d] for [his] post."¹²⁷ Well aware of the Native Americans' hostile actions and close proximity to his fort, Ecuyer began to prepare for an attack.

The day after Ecuyer dispatched the letter to Bouquet, Trent's journal illustrated more ambushes and attacks on British settlers living on the frontier that were within the vicinity of Fort Pitt. On May 30, 1763, Trent writes of Thomas Calhoun, a profitable trader at the time, who had arrived at Fort Pitt from the village of Tuscarawas with crucial news. Calhoun was instructed by Delaware Chiefs on the May 27 to leave his trading post with his men on the Tuscarawas, because they did not want to see him killed.¹²⁸ As Calhoun and his men made their way to Fort Pitt, Trent describes how they were fired upon by Native Americans, which killed all but Calhoun and two others. After telling of his heroic escape to the fort, he further explained to Captain Ecuyer that the Delaware Chiefs also told him that, "Detroit was taken, the post at Sandusky burnt and all the garrison put to death, except the officer who they made prisoner."¹²⁹

Aside from Fort LeBeouf, Fort Pitt is unique in that it received firsthand accounts of the destruction of other forts, which undoubtedly prepared them for an attack. Even though Trent's account depicts a Native American victory at Fort Detroit, in actuality the fort did not fall, but as already stated, was stalemated. Still, Ecuyer had no other eyewitness accounts by which to act and truly believed that Fort Detroit, same in size and stature as Pitt, had fallen. While this alarmed him, so too did the surrendering of Fort Sandusky, which showed that the Native Americans were not just attacking major forts. Within Trent's brief account from Calhoun, he rendered Ecuyer and the British army's fear of a Native American uprising a reality.

Within a week, on June 7, Trent described an account by Lieutenant Abraham Cuyler that told of "Lieut. Schlossers Post [being] destroyed."¹³⁰ Cuyler was on a vessel with 139 barrels

¹²⁵ Volwiler, *Trent's Journal*, 394.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Ecuyer to Bouquet, 29 May 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, 6:193.

¹²⁸ Sipe, *Indian Wars*, 420.

¹²⁹ Volwiler, *Trent's Journal*, 394.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 398.

of provisions en route to Fort Detroit when he was attacked by Native Americans. He then made his retreat to Fort Sandusky, which was already destroyed, and on to Fort Presque Isle where he learned of the Native Americans' victory at Schlosser's Fort St. Joseph.¹³¹ When William Trent and Captain Ecuyer heard news from John Calhoun and Lieutenant Cuyler of the destruction of their British forts, they tightened up their patrols with the thought that their time would soon come to defend Fort Pitt. The Native Americans periodically attempted to draw Ecuyer's soldiers out of their fort by setting fire to structures surrounding it, but the commander knew of their past deception and later wrote to Bouquet "[Native Americans] would like to decoy me and make me send out detachments, but they will not fool me."¹³² Even though Fort Pitt was the largest and most expensive of the western forts, Fort Detroit, which they thought had been taken, was the largest post of the Upper Great Lakes.¹³³ Upon taking Sandusky and then St. Joseph, Ecuyer thought that Native Americans had taken three major forts in a row, understandably concluding that this strengthened not only the latter's confidence in their own skills, but had also given them "expansive ideas" of further attacks.¹³⁴

On June 22, Native Americans, made mostly of Delawares, attacked Fort Pitt in hopes of continuing their victorious streak. Trent wrote in his journal that a "great number of Indians appeared on each river and on Grant's Hill" and began firing on the fort.¹³⁵ The firing lessened when Ecuyer ordered an explosive shell be thrown at the Native Americans, but the latter soon recovered as the night drew on. On June 4, a week after Ecuyer sent his dispatches, due in part to the vastness of the conflict ridden frontier, they were received by Bouquet who then sent them to Amherst in New York. Amherst felt "this alarm will end in nothing more than a rash attempt of what the Senecas have been threatening and which we have heard of for some time past."¹³⁶ Still, he assembled two light infantry regiments to hold in Staten Island. Within five days of sending troops to Staten Island, Amherst abruptly ordered them to march to Philadelphia to aid Bouquet. This was because Amherst had received word of Pontiac's actions to the west and wrote "I find the affairs of the Indians, appears to be more general than I had apprehended."¹³⁷ Amherst's immediate deployment of troops displays the urgency he must have felt for his forts. Throughout most of his dealings with Sir William Johnson, he was always careful with his provisions as well as his short supply of men. Although Amherst took the initiative to send troops to Bouquet, ten British forts had already fallen, with an attack on Fort Pitt in motion.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Bouquet to Amherst, 10 June 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, 6:213.

¹³³ Todish, *British Military*, 85.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 155.

¹³⁵ Volwiler, *Trent's Journal*, 400.

¹³⁶ Amherst to Bouquet, 6 June 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, 6:209.

¹³⁷ Amherst to Bouquet, 12 June 1763, *Ibid.*, 6:220; Charles S. Grant, "Pontiac's Rebellion and the British Troop Moves of 1763," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 40(1953): 78-79, 81.

According to Trent, two chiefs, Turtle's Heart and Maumaultee, came before the fort for a truce on June 24 and announced that "all [British] _____ as Ligonier was destroyed."¹³⁸ Although the information in Trent's journal for this entry is misconstrued and missing a crucial word, one could read it as, "All British forts as far as Ligonier was destroyed." Native Americans spread word of their victories at forts to other tribes and regions with the hopes of drawing them in. Therefore, it is very likely that Turtle's Heart and Maumaultee knew of past British forts falling. Although Trent's journal, up to that entry, was written in a very concise and decipherable style, he wrote on June 24 that he was in the midst of a battle, and hence he was doubtlessly more worried about the fort's well being than the clarity of his journal. Nonetheless, even if the excerpt from Trent's journal only meant Fort Ligonier had fallen, then the British would still be troubled to think another British fort fell, making their own total at four.

The two chiefs, representing six nations, told Ecuyer several nations were ready to attack but were going to give the fort time to surrender and retreat.¹³⁹ Ecuyer thanked them but declined, and the chiefs told the fort that they would return after conversing with the other nations. As commander of Fort Pitt, Ecuyer knew he had to ward off the Native Americans and defend his garrison. With the assumption that Detroit had fallen, Pitt was the last major British stronghold the Natives had not taken. When the chiefs came back a second time to inform the commander they were going to hold their position, they requested some provisions for their journey home. Ecuyer, who was well aware of Native American deception, thought they only wanted the provisions in order to enter his fort and attack. The Native Americans had already attempted to draw the commander and his soldiers out of Fort Pitt, and they could easily be attempting to use the same setup again. Ecuyer decided to provide the chiefs with some rations, but among the supplies he deceptively gave them the infamously deadly gift: smallpox. While the two chiefs may have been suspicious that the British distributed gifts to them, they may have also thought the British finally capitulated, and realized that they could not win the war. Trent's words confirm without a doubt Britain's non-capitulating offensive strategy: "Out of our regard to [the chiefs] we gave them two blankets and a handkerchief out of the smallpox hospital. I hope it has the desired effect."¹⁴⁰

Trent and Ecuyer used this aggressive approach because they were well aware of the trickery that Native Americans used to besiege prior forts. That "desired effect" was to infect those two Native American chiefs with smallpox. The chiefs, then, would spread it amongst their tribe. When the two chiefs came to talk during the parley, Ecuyer did not know what their true intentions were. Ecuyer was conscious of the deception used at the prior forts where, for example, Native Americans guided British officers back to their camp under the guise of hospitality and then captured them. Aside from the craftiness Native Americans used, Ecuyer

¹³⁸ Volwiler, *Trent's Journal*, 400.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

also knew of their manpower and the lack of the British's around the frontier. Due in part to the majority of Britain's army being deployed after the French and Indian War to other places, and the scattered placement of British forts around the extensive frontier, the 'powerful' British army was spread so thin they could not maintain suitable garrisons. Along with Fort Detroit, if Fort Pitt had fallen, two of the largest British forts on the frontier would have been in the hands of Native Americans. If Fort Detroit, one of the largest forts in the country at that time was surrendered, Fort Pitt had just as much of a chance of seizure. To Captain Ecuyer, the Native Americans had just taken four major forts from the British, and were coming for Fort Pitt next with the strength of not only manpower but of motivation behind them. He was confident of the ability and morale of his men, but did not want to risk surrendering his fort. The Native Americans' underhanded victories at the previous forts thus compelled the disheartened British to employ germ warfare among them with the hope that it would stop their attack on Fort Pitt.

Even though there has been much discussion about Amherst and the infamous gifts, Captain Ecuyer and the other officers at Fort Pitt should be the ones to receive the credit for the idea.¹⁴¹ Ecuyer had already distributed the blankets when Amherst wrote to Bouquet on July 7, 1763 and stressed that "every commanding officer [should] never trust [Native American] promises," and then questioned "could it not be contrived to send the smallpox among the disaffected tribes of Indians?"¹⁴² Amherst's letter to Bouquet belittled any notion that Ecuyer and his officers at Fort Pitt gave the blankets to the Native Americans with sincere kindness; on the contrary, it was out of distrust. This declaration of mistrusting promises grew out of Amherst's knowledge of his fallen forts to the deceptive Native Americans. The conditions of the frontier meant that Amherst was always notified late of the Native American conflicts, while Ecuyer was informed of the destruction on the frontier daily as described through Trent's journal.¹⁴³ Ecuyer knew he could not await Amherst's orders, and on June 24, acted on his own when Turtle's Heart and Maumaultee came to his fort.

Although the British were commanded by Ecuyer, they may have been influenced to distribute the smallpox blankets by William Trent himself. Among the records of William Trent's trading firm's account against the crown it reads "The sundries to replace in kind those which were taken from people in the hospital to convey the small-pox to the Indians."¹⁴⁴ Recent scholars credit Trent for the infamous idea because not only was Ecuyer an inexperienced commander, but because he was furious that his trading industry was declining partly because of the Native Americans' unrest.¹⁴⁵ Trent was even further enraged when Native Americans stole ten horses

¹⁴¹ Fenn, *Biological Warfare*, 1554; Mayor, *Nessus Shirt*, 57.

¹⁴² Knollenberg, *Germ Warfare*, 492; To see Bouquet's response to Amherst see Noble David Cook, *Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492-1650* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 213.

¹⁴³ Volwiler, *Trent's Journal*, 394-400.

¹⁴⁴ Fenn, *Biological Warfare*, 1554.

¹⁴⁵ Ranlet, *Indians and Smallpox*, 437

that personally belonged to him.¹⁴⁶ Not only were the Native Americans killing his customers, but they were making families living on the frontier disperse to other places. Even though Trent was an experienced soldier, his military skills were not highly regarded. Nevertheless, Ecuyer leaned heavily on Trent, who had spent much time on the frontier among Native Americans.¹⁴⁷ Still, even if Trent had come up with the plan because he had a personal vendetta against the Native Americans, Ecuyer was still in charge of the fort and was consulted on all matters. Ecuyer would not jeopardize his career as a British officer simply to satisfy the vengeance feelings Trent had towards the Native Americans. Although Trent was concerned with his declining financial stability, his duties as a soldier came first and was enraged that the Native Americans took ten British forts practically unopposed. Ecuyer ordered the blankets as an aggressive approach to halt the Native Americans victories, not to please Trent.

Although it was first believed that the blankets were successful in killing many Native Americans, recent studies belittle the blankets' effects. In 1851, when Parkman's book was published, he stated that the blankets "made havoc among the tribes."¹⁴⁸ A reexamination of the incident, however, indicated that the British experiment in germ warfare may well have been a failure. Although the blanket incident was Britain's first trial with germ warfare, the Native Americans attempted their own experiment in 1761 by trying to poison a well at Fort Ligonier "in hopes to hurt ye people."¹⁴⁹ The British, much like the Native Americans in 1761, would come up short of their desired effect. In March 1765, a Delaware chief told William Johnson that "the Shawanes lost in three months time a hundred and forty nine men besides women and children by sickness above a year ago, also many of them dyed last summer of the smallpox."¹⁵⁰ This account indicates that the epidemic took hold sometime later than June 1763, when the blankets were distributed to the Native Americans. Moreover, another eyewitness account in 1764 stated that "the smallpox has been very general and raging amongst the Indians since last spring" and has killed many Mingoes, Delawares and Shawneese.¹⁵¹ This statement, on the other hand, indicated that the epidemic began before June 1763, long before Ecuyer presented the infected blankets. Perhaps the most crucial piece of evidence that belittles the effects of the smallpox blankets was the return of Turtle's Heart and Maumaultee, the chiefs who received the blankets, to Fort Pitt a full month later. While it is plausible that both chiefs were already immune to the disease, it is more likely that the plot failed. Had the scheme succeeded, the "Indians vesting the fort would have been reeling from the plague."¹⁵² If the Native Americans had contracted the disease they would have certainly abandoned their disease-infested location surrounding Fort Pitt and moved to a healthier area. In contrast, the Native Americans continued with the siege through the end of July.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Parkman, *Conspiracy*, 649

¹⁴⁹ Dixon, *Peace Again*, 153.

¹⁵⁰ "Journal of Indian Affairs," 1-3 March 1765, *Johnson Papers*, 11:618.

¹⁵¹ Gershon Hicks to William Grant, 14 April 1764, *Bouquet Papers*, 6:514-523.

¹⁵² Dixon, *Peace Again*, 154.

The siege at Fort Pitt would come to an end not because of smallpox, but due to the advancing British forces led by Bouquet, who would eventually turn the tide of the war. When the Native Americans encountered the British Army led by Bouquet, the Battle of Bushy Run would commence. After the British fought to victory, they moved on and later relieved Fort Pitt on August 20. Even though the Native Americans retaliated a month later when they killed seventy-two British soldiers by Fort Niagara, after 1763, major combat in Pontiac's War was effectively over. In 1763 Amherst was recalled back to London, and replaced by General Thomas Gage, who was more willing to listen to Johnson in regard to Native American policy. The Native Americans, lacking ammunition and realizing they could not wipe out the British, were ready to negotiate. Upon signing the Treaty of Fort Niagara in 1764, and securing peace with the Seneca, Wyandot, Ojibwas and others, the British conducted two military operations that concluded in 1765, to further obtain peace from those Native Americans who were unwilling to negotiate.¹⁵³ George Croghan, Johnson's deputy, was sent in 1765 to the Illinois Country to persuade Pontiac to accompany him to New York where he could sign an official treaty of Peace with Johnson. The British knew no lasting peace treaty was possible without his approval; on July 25, 1766, a formal treaty was signed thus ending the rebellion.¹⁵⁴ Although no lands were ceded and no prisoners were returned, it was the "first major multi-tribal war against European invaders that ended in accommodation, rather than complete Amerindian defeat."¹⁵⁵

While there was tension with Native Americans prior to the French and Indian War, tensions only intensified after the victor, Britain, reconfigured a new policy. Before and during the war the French treated the Native Americans as equals. They established a long standing economy with and even lived among them. The gifts of good fruits and diplomacy the French presented to the various chiefs had additional meaning. When a chief went back to his tribe with the presents he had received, it reassured the tribe of their chief's power and authority. When the British applied new policy changes, specifically reducing the distribution of gifts and armory, chiefs were the first ones to worry. The chiefs knew they would lose power among their own people by being unable to bring back those two valuable necessities to their tribes. In general, the British's policy changes were foreign and offensive to the Native Americans who had followed French guidelines for years. To the British, their new 'subjects' were an impediment to their expansion, and a drain on their economy; the Native Americans could not live harmoniously because British rule by definition meant domination. When the Native Americans unsuspectingly revolted, the British were not only caught off guard, but bewildered to learn that their newly acquired 'subjects,' now adversaries, were so organized and deceptive in their attacks.

¹⁵³ Dowd, *War*, 213, 215-17.

¹⁵⁴ Jacobs, *Dispossessing*, 87.

¹⁵⁵ Steele, *Warpaths*, 246-247.

Within three months of the British imposing their new policies, which reduced the status of Native Americans from allies to their new ‘subjects,’ Native Americans realized that they would have to rise up to regain what they originally had. In only two months, the Native Americans had not only made the British army’s fear a reality, but they created a new fear that their treachery and man power might even be able to overtake them. These new policies were centered around the needs of the British and did not consider the needs of their new ‘subjects.’ Native Americans now had to adjust to not receiving the guns and ammunitions to which they had been accustomed. In turn, their chiefs suffered from losing the prestige they once encompassed within their tribes. By taking ten British forts, Native Americans thus reasserted their claim to their own land and were truly “masters of their country.”¹⁵⁶ Their victories, nevertheless, would stop short of their goal: as the British purged the land of them, the tide of the rebellion would turn. By taking the land and its inhabitants who had lived there for thousands of years, the British imposed an incontestable policy of domination in which Native Americans were an impediment to British rule and needed to be eliminated.

¹⁵⁶ Dixon, *Peace Again*, 150.



POPE JOHN PAUL II, THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT, AND THE SOVIET UNION



DANIEL SCOTTO

“The attempt to murder the pope remains one of the century’s great mysteries,” wrote Carl Bernstein and Marco Politti in their 1996 biography of Pope John Paul II.¹ Indeed, the mystery has remained unsolved since the pope was shot and wounded on May 13, 1981. A recent investigation concluded that the Soviet government was the perpetrator, but the situation should be examined in a broader historical context. What actually happened on May 13, 1981? Was it the sole decision and action of Mehmet Ali Agca, who was expressing his opposition to “Western imperialist policies,” as he had written in a threatening letter to a newspaper in 1979?² Or had “someone else commissioned him to carry it out,” as Pope John Paul II alleged in a memoir written in 2005?³

Before evaluating the question from an historical standpoint, it is necessary to provide some background in order to establish a potential motive for the Soviet Union to support such an assassination attempt. Was Karol Wojtyła (the Pope’s birth name) really “[their] enemy,” as a party directive warned in 1979?⁴ Only then can we evaluate the Soviet Union’s involvement, or whether there was a conspiracy behind the attempted assassination of John Paul II at all. Finally, we should step back and look at the significance of the assassination attempt and the impact of the pope on the Cold War and Soviet dominance of Eastern Europe.

The Rise of Karol Wojtyła

Although he was not elected to the papacy until 1978, Karol Wojtyła first became a concern of the Soviet Union in 1971. As part of a major surveillance initiative across the Soviet Bloc, the KGB monitored the activities of Wojtyła, “whom the Centre considered the leading ideological influence on the Polish Church.”⁵ Poland’s equivalent of the KGB, the *Sluzba Bezpieczenstwa* (SB), had considered bringing charges against Wojtyła as early as 1973 under article 194 of Poland’s Criminal Code, forbidding “seditious statements during religious services.” His fame and his status, however, prevented his arrest.⁶

¹ Carl Bernstein and Marco Politti, *His Holiness: John Paul II and the Hidden History of Our Time* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 296.

² “Alleged Assailant Wrote a Letter Saying He’d Kill John Paul on Trip,” *New York Times*, 14 May 1981, A1.

³ Pope John Paul II, *Memory and Identity: Conversations at the Dawn of a Millennium* (New York: Rizzoli, 2005), 163.

⁴ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), 192.

⁵ Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 269. This early surveillance of Wojtyła was part of the larger Operation PROGRESS, and this particular initiative was in response to the fall of the Gomulka government in Poland.

⁶ Andrew, *The Sword and the Shield*, 509.

Upon his election to the papacy in 1978, the SB sent a report to Moscow, noting that Wojtyla held “extreme anti-Communist views” and had accused the Polish government of restricting human rights, exploiting workers, imposing atheism on society, and denying the Catholic Church its traditional role in Polish culture.⁷ The *National Review*, a conservative American publication, was prescient in its evaluation of the pope’s election, saying that “the papacy of John Paul II may [open] a huge fault along the Western edge of the Soviet empire, where Catholicism still has immeasurable latent power... the lights must be burning late in the Kremlin.”⁸ Indeed, the Soviet Union feared this very occurrence. The news enraged Yuri Andropov, head of the KGB, who quickly grasped the significance of the selection of a Polish pope. Soon after hearing the news, he called the KGB’s *resident* in Warsaw and angrily asked, “How could you possibly allow the election of a citizen of a socialist country as pope?”⁹ Many in the Polish and Soviet governments believed that the United States had conspired to elect Wojtyla to the papacy in order to help undermine the Communist government in Poland.¹⁰ Furthermore, one of John Paul’s first actions was to declare his support for universal human rights, with a focus on Poland and Eastern Europe.¹¹

The Soviet Bloc was justifiably concerned with the prospect of the new pope’s inevitable return to Poland. Premier Brezhnev suggested that Edward Gierek, the Polish leader, should persuade the pope to contract a so-called “diplomatic illness” in order to prevent him from visiting Poland. This absurd suggestion accurately embodies the sentiments in the Soviet Union: utter disbelief at Wojtyla’s election and confusion about how to tolerate it.¹²

Realistically, it was impossible for the Soviet Union to prevent Pope John Paul II from visiting Poland. He was greeted warmly on June 2, 1979 by 20,000 people at the airport, and 290,000 worshippers heard the pope offer the Pontifical Mass in Warsaw. In his homily, he declared,

The exclusion of Christ from the history of man is an act against man... I am asking all of you, through the great eucharistic prayer, that Christ will not cease to be for us an open book of life for the future, for our Polish future.¹³

In his short homily, John Paul II essentially denounced the communist regime for its exclusion of religion. Soon after, while speaking with Gierek, he announced that “The church wishes to serve people also in the temporal dimension of their life and existence. By establishing a

⁷ *Ibid.*, 508.

⁸ “Pope John Paul II,” *National Review* 30 (10 November 1978), 1392.

⁹ George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 279. It is worth noting that, while Andropov’s exasperated question seems to be quite serious, the KGB was most likely not strong enough to be able to affect the election of a pope.

¹⁰ Bernstein, *His Holiness*, 173–4. The Soviets specifically blamed Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, who was President Carter’s national security adviser, an ethnic Pole, and a fierce anti-communist.

¹¹ “Pope Seeks Universal Respect for Human and Religious Rights,” *The Times (London)*, 21 October 1978, 4.

¹² Bernstein, 191; Andrew, 512.

¹³ “Text of Pope’s Homily for Mass,” *New York Times*, 3 June 1979, A12.

religious relationship with people, the church consolidates them in their natural social bonds.” This directly challenged the regime in Poland; one Polish Catholic editor noted that the pope had become “tougher” than he had been in the past.¹⁴

Formally, the pope was visiting Poland to commemorate the 900th anniversary of the death of St. Stanislaw, Poland’s patron saint who was martyred for “[daring] to tell the king himself that he was bound to respect the law of God.”¹⁵ In the days before assuming the papacy, Wojtyla’s homilies frequently referenced St. Stanislaw, who had become a symbol of Polish opposition to the communist regime.¹⁶ Even the timing of the visit was political.

Undoubtedly, the visit to Poland was wholly unfavorable for the communist leadership in Poland and the Soviet Union. The pope spent much of his nine days in Poland attacking the very foundations of the communist system, declaring that man “could not be regarded only as a ‘means of production.’” The impact was not lost on the media at the time; one article declared that the Pope had “demonstrated that his voice would be a source of enormous influence in Eastern Europe.”¹⁷ And, as unfortunate as the pope’s “triumphant” return to Poland was for both the Polish communist government and the Soviet government, the Polish government itself had further struggles. The Gdansk Accords, signed on August 31, included major concessions to striking workers, were signed. When Lech Walesa, the leader of the movement, signed the Accords, he used a large, gaudy pen, one bearing a portrait of John Paul II.¹⁸ The Polish resistance to Soviet domination now had its spiritual leader (John Paul II) in addition to its official leader (Lech Walesa).¹⁹

This background is essential to the history of the attempted assassination of John Paul II. It is inconceivable to imagine someone in Soviet Russia or Poland making a rational, calculated decision to order the pope’s assassination without understanding the impact of the pope on Poland and its communist leadership. Jonathan Steele and Eric Abraham noted that “Establishing a motive [on its own]... is not enough to prove that Andropov would have ordered his men to arrange to have the pope killed.”²⁰ Still, it is necessary to establish a motive before we further examine the assassination attempt.

The Assassination Attempt on John Paul II

While the exact nature and purpose of the attempted murder of John Paul II are in question, the methodology and specific details of it are not. On May 13, 1981, at 5:19 PM, just before

¹⁴ “Pope Gets Big Welcome in Poland, Offers Challenge to the Authorities,” *New York Times*, 3 June 1979, A1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*; Bernstein, 127.

¹⁶ Bernstein, 127.

¹⁷ “Soviet Avows Atheism After Pope’s Remarks,” *New York Times*, 11 June 1979, A6; “Nine Triumphant Days in Poland,” *New York Times*, 11 June 1979, A1.

¹⁸ Andrew, 516; Maryjane Osa, *Solidarity and Contention: Networks of Polish Opposition*, Social Movements, Protest, and Contention, Volume 18 (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 146.

¹⁹ For a more in-depth evaluation of the *Solidarity* movement, see Osa, or Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity*, 3rd edition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).

²⁰ Jonathan Steele and Eric Abraham, *Andropov in Power* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1983), 134.

the start of his weekly general audience, John Paul II was shot by Mehmet Ali Agca in St. Peter's Square in the Vatican. Agca fired four shots from a 9-millimeter Browning automatic, two of which hit the Pope. Two bystanders were hit in the attack: Anne Odre, a 60-year old American, and Rose Hill, a 21-year old Jamaican. The Pope was seriously wounded in the abdomen and underwent over five hours of surgery, resulting in the removal of part of his intestine. He was also less seriously wounded in his right arm and his left hand.²¹ The Pope survived, along with Odre and Hill.

Mehmet Ali Agca's history was retraced soon after the assassination attempt. *The New York Times* compiled a substantial front-page story and demonstrated a link between Agca and the Grey Wolves, a neofascist network in Turkey affiliated with the right-wing National Action Party. While the reconstruction was thorough and justifiable, the major link preceded the failed assassination bid by two years; Agca was involved in the assassination of Abdi Ipekci, a liberal Turkish newspaper editor.²² Agca also wrote a letter to a newspaper on November 26, 1979 declaring his intent to assassinate the Pope on his visit to Turkey later that year. While under interrogation, he explained that it was simply to create a diversion in order to avoid detection; Agca was nowhere near the Pope during that visit to Turkey.²³

The information became more complicated in 1983, when stories began to surface about a potential Bulgarian connection to the assassination. Inevitably, any Bulgarian involvement would have implicitly meant Soviet involvement, for Moscow turned to the Bulgarian *Durzharna Sigurnost* (DS) when it needed to accomplish a "wet-op."²⁴ The most famous "wet-op" was the assassination of Georgi Markov, a Bulgarian dissident living in Britain. In 1978, Markov was lightly stabbed in the leg by an umbrella, which had been modified to inject a small pellet of ricin, a highly toxic poison, into its target. Markov died three days later.²⁵

The DS dealt with a critical defection: that of Jordan Mantarov. The March 23, 1983 edition of the *New York Times* ran a story about Mantarov, who supposedly reported to French intelligence that the KGB and DS had collaborated on the plot to assassinate the pope. According to the defector, Soviet intelligence indicated that the pope was "the keystone of a United States effort to subvert the Polish Government" and move it away from the Communist bloc. An investigation conducted by the *Times* concluded that Agca had *some* connection to the Bulgarians, including the Bulgarian secret police. The information came from someone close to Bekir Celenk, a Turkish smuggler who Agca claimed had offered him a substantial sum of money to kill the pope.²⁶

²¹ These were the details, as report in the *New York Times'* cover story on May 14, 1981. Most of the original account is undisputed, and there were many witnesses. "Pope is Shot in Car in Vatican Square," *New York Times*, 14 May 1981, A1.

²² "Gunman in Istanbul Kills a Leading Editor," *New York Times*, 2 February 1979, A5.

²³ "Trail of Mehmet Ali Agca: 6 Years of Neofascist Ties," *New York Times*, 25 May 1981, A1; Bernstein, *His Holiness*, 305-6.

²⁴ Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, *KGB: The Secret History* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990), 639-40. The term "wet-op" referred to operations in which Moscow would prefer to avoid direct involvement due to the potential international or local ramifications.

²⁵ Yveta Kenety, "The Poison Umbrella," *New Presence: The Prague Journal of Central European Affairs* 7 (Winter 2006): 46-48. The Markov story is a very famous one and surfaced a lot in the last few years with the fear of ricin and bioterror.

²⁶ "Three Bulgarians Linked to Shooting of Pope," *Washington Post*, 8 December 1982, A1; "The Attack on the Pope: New Link to Bulgarians," *New York Times*, 23 March 1983, A1.

The problem was that Mantarov's story was based on hearsay; he had no direct involvement in the plot to kill the pope. Moreover, Bulgarian officials immediately refuted the story, claiming that Mantarov was a maintenance mechanic rather than the deputy commercial attaché as he had alleged.²⁷ Though confirmed in *Time* magazine, it does not eliminate the possibility that Mantarov could have still accessed the information. In his account, Mantarov stated that he had learned about the plot from a close friend in the DS. Further complicating matters, Bulgarian émigrés insisted that Mantarov had defected one month *prior* to the assassination attempt rather than several months after it, as the *Times* article had alleged. The head of French intelligence dispatched a warning to the Vatican in the weeks prior to the assassination attempt, based on his claim that he had "solid evidence in late April 1981 that an assassination attempt against the Pope was imminent." This tip possibly could have come from Mantarov.²⁸

It is difficult to know which story to accept, because each side had compelling reasons to hide the truth. Bulgaria wanted to hide any connection to the reviled assassination of a religious figure, and Mantarov could have thought that giving France more interesting and pertinent stories would earn him a better arrangement as he defected.

Agca's story has changed many times; he has blamed the Bulgarian government and radical Islam, among other causes. Yet it might not be worthwhile to evaluate Agca's testimony as important evidence at all. The pope's spokesman, Dr. Joaquin Navarro-Valls, noted that Agca probably did not know the details of the conspiracy if there even was a conspiracy, because "it was done by professionals and professionals don't leave traces." One of the prosecutors, Antonio Marini, noted that "Agca manipulated us all, telling hundreds of lies, continually changed his story; we have been forced to open tens of different investigations."²⁹

The fact that Agca had announced his intent to assassinate the pope two years before the assassination attempt occurred is a strong point against a conspiracy. It is possible, however, that Agca told the truth about that part of his story. Perhaps his goal was to create a diversion. In looking to execute the directive from Sofia, Agca might have been recruited simply because the letter to the newspaper could serve as a "cover-story" in the event of Agca's capture, in addition to later providing evidence supporting the theory that Agca operated alone. Additionally, assuming a conspiracy, one has to consider the reasons behind the selection of Agca over someone else. He took four shots from a very short distance (less than ten feet away) only to hit his main target with two, failing to accomplish his objective.³⁰ It is possible, then, that Agca was chosen not because of his prowess as a gunman, but rather because of his optimal "cover-story."

²⁷ "Bulgaria Says Defector Was Only a Mechanic," *New York Times*, 24 March 1983, A5.

²⁸ James Kelly, "The Undiplomatic Bulgarian," *Time* 121 (4 April 1983): 38-9.

²⁹ Bernstein, 299; "Ali Agca revient à la liberté avec ses secrets," *Liberation.fr*; 12 January 2006, (accessed from <http://www.liberation.fr/page.php?Article=350162>), writer's translation with assistance from Altavista; "Agca Asserts KGB Aided in Pope Plot," *New York Times*, 9 July 1983, 1.

³⁰ "The assassination conspiracy: Evidence suggests the KGB and Bulgarian secret services plotted John Paul's death," *Ottawa Citizen*, 3 April 2005, A10. This article was the first one that I read that presented the distance. It said "three metres," which converts to roughly 9.8 feet.

There is also evidence that there was a sharp rise in communications between Bulgaria and contacts in Italy in the months prior to the assassination. Moreover, communications suddenly dropped off in the two weeks before it occurred. While on its own, this could be considered merely coincidental, the fact that there are communications anomalies in addition to the other evidence implies that it was related to the assassination attempt.³¹

Recent evidence and conclusions have proven more damning towards the Soviet Union's involvement, while also implicating East Germany's infamous intelligence organization, the Stasi. Documents released by *Stasi* provide background about Agca's history before the assassination. Agca was trained at a guerrilla camp operated by the renowned international terrorist Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, also known as "Carlos the Jackal." Sanchez was affiliated with the Soviet Bloc through his Separat terrorist network, which was partially sponsored by the KGB and *Stasi*. According to Italian Senator Paolo Guzzanti, chairman of a recent investigative commission, all of "the [Separat] meetings at which terrorism attacks were planned were held in the presence of officers of the KGB and the Stasi."³² The same article called Agca's murder of Abdi Ipekci a "contract killing" through the Separat network, rather than an ideologically motivated one or one due to his support for right-wing causes.

More recently, the Mitrokhin Commission, an Italian parliamentary commission investigating the situation, declared that the Soviet Union assisted in the assassination, using the descriptive legal phrase "beyond any reasonable doubt." This accusation was based on new analysis of photographic evidence. The new evidence indicated that Sergei Ivanov Antonov, a Bulgarian accused of hiring Agca in the first place, was in St. Peter's Square during the assassination attempt. Antonov's alibi was that he had been in his office during the attempted assassination, but the new evidence "decisively" disproves that.³³ The Commission's conclusions, however, must be analyzed with a certain degree of skepticism. A London newspaper report of the commission's findings provided the necessary caution, noting,

... the credibility of the report was open to doubt because its author is a close ally of the Prime Minister. In the past the work of the commission, named after the KGB double-agent Vassily Mitrokhin who fled to Britain in 1992, has been seen as a sophisticated effort to stigmatise Italian Communists—once closely linked to the Soviets—as enemies of Italy and of the Catholic Church. . . . Mr Berlusconi is in the habit of stigmatising his opponents, political and judicial, as "communists," and with a finely balanced general election due in a month, an authoritative-sounding denunciation of communist perfidy is grist to the electoral mill.³⁴

³¹ Bernstein, 303.

³² "The Assassination Conspiracy," *Ottawa Citizen*, A10.

³³ "Pope's Shooting Laid to Soviets By Italian Panel," *New York Times*, 2 March 2006, 6.

³⁴ "Italy Blames KGB for Plot to Kill Pope John Paul," *The Independent (London)*, 3 March 2006, 23.

This is an important aspect of the situation: even the “fact-finders” and investigators can have biased interpretations and hidden agendas. The results of the commission should not be ignored; rather, in conjunction with the rest of the evidence, they should be seriously considered. Still, Berlusconi’s electoral considerations and strategies should not be overlooked in the analysis.

One conspiracy theory that Bernstein and Politti discussed and which was posed by several intelligence professionals was the “Becket scenario,” in which an Eastern European security service ordered the assassination because of the repeated complaints in the Soviet government. This patterned the relationship between King Henry II, an English monarch from the twelfth century, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket. Henry II became intensely frustrated with an increasingly intractable Becket who was more eager to defend the Church than to support Henry II. He expressed his outrage in the presence of four knights, bellowing, “Will no one rid me of this meddlesome priest?” or some variation of that exclamation. The knights interpreted this as an order and assassinated Becket, against the will of King Henry II. In a “Becket scenario,” Bulgarian intelligence would have independently planned an assassination attempt without the explicit consent of Soviet intelligence due to the Soviet Union’s increasing consternation with John Paul II.³⁵ Although this theory is certainly interesting, the DS was essentially subordinate to the KGB and it is unlikely that it would have operated on its own. Additionally, investigations implicate the Soviet Union more directly, and, while the Becket scenario seems to tie things together neatly, to disregard Soviet complicity completely is too great a simplification.

It is possible that the original story of Agca’s firm ties to the neofascist Grey Wolves motivated the assassination. It is also possible that Bulgarian and Soviet denials of involvement are acceptable and factual. There is too much evidence, however, that indicates a conspiracy of some sort: Agca’s built-in alibi/justification of his newspaper letter, the Soviet Union’s history of reliance on Bulgaria’s DS for its “wet-ops,” the communications anomalies between Bulgaria and Italy, the Mantarov defection, and the recent findings of the Mitrokhin commission. The Soviet Union also had a clear motive in desiring to eliminate the pope. It could be said that the Solidarity movement, which was becoming a proverbial thorn in the side of the Soviet Union, was a direct outgrowth of the Pope’s visit in 1979. Walesa’s use of the pen with the Pope’s likeness in signing the Gdansk Accords accentuates this point.

So, what forces were actually at work on May 13, 1981? In an article in *Time Magazine* from 1983, a top aide to the pope claimed, “The Soviet intention was to cut off the head of Polish nationalism.”³⁶ The aide’s conclusion is rational. The Soviet Union was growing increasingly desperate and dismayed from John Paul II’s popularity and impact in an

³⁵ Bernstein, 300. For a dramatic interpretation of this story, see Jean Anouilh, *Becket or the Honor of God* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1996). There remains a debate as to whether or not Henry II was ordering an assassination, but the historical consensus is that it was not intended.

³⁶ Kelly, “The Undiplomatic Bulgarian,” *Time* 121 (4 April 1983): 38-9

increasingly discontented Poland. They had also interpreted John Paul's election as part of an American conspiracy. From the Soviet perspective, the pope, who was causing great trouble in Poland, was not an independent religious figure. He was a mere pawn of Washington, which was aggressively trying to dislodge Poland from the Soviet Bloc. The humble priest from Poland was shaking the foundations of the Soviet Empire, something that the Soviet Union could not accept benignly. Somehow, Poland's independence movement had to be suppressed, and various international agreements (Helsinki Accords) and the Gdansk Accords made it increasingly difficult to repress the movement militarily.³⁷ Quietly, the Soviet Union sought to eliminate the pope to "decapitate" the movement by removing what it saw as the movement's spiritual and symbolic leader.

As it had done in the case of other "wet-ops," the Soviet KGB assigned the operation to the Bulgarian DS. In its planning, the DS located an assassin, Mehmet Ali Agca, whose credentials were bolstered by a history of support for right-wing causes, his assassination of a prominent Turkish liberal, and his published death threat against the pope. Most likely, Agca was not supposed to survive the mission. The back-story would have provided sufficient motive in a posthumous investigation: Agca was a mere deranged right-wing terrorist with a personal mission to assassinate the pope.³⁸

The plan clearly failed. The goal in this mission would have been for two deaths, Pope John Paul II and Mehmet Ali Agca, but neither figure died. The investigations have consistently confirmed Bulgarian involvement, and it is too difficult to envision a scenario in which the Bulgarian DS would have acted against the wishes of the KGB. While it is quite possible that the truth could differ from this interpretation, the evidence points in favor of a broad conspiracy in the attempted assassination of John Paul II.

The Triumph of Wojtyła and the Lessons of Involvement

Cold War historian John Lewis Gaddis is quick to credit Pope John Paul II with catalyzing the fall of communism in Poland.³⁹ Biographers Bernstein and Politti take a more guarded view, agreeing with the pope's assessment that communism had imploded due to its own weaknesses.⁴⁰ Still, it can be seen that the worst fears of the communist leadership, for one reason or another, had been realized: the system collapsed, and John Paul II and Poland were among the major contributors to that collapse.

It is easy to criticize the so-called "conspiracy theories" of a Soviet-driven assassination plot against the pope because, on the surface, the assassination attempt does not seem like a

³⁷ The Soviet Union signed the Helsinki Accords in 1975, which were in the spirit of the détente movement. The agreement called for greater respect for human rights and stronger recognition of national sovereignty, among other clauses.

³⁸ Kelly, "Undiplomatic Bulgarian," 38-9. In the article, Kelly writes, "According to Mantarov, the Turk was to meet his own fate there as well: he was supposed to be killed immediately after shooting the Pope."

³⁹ Gaddis, 193.

⁴⁰ Bernstein, 482.

rational action. Yet the evidence appears to indicate that the Soviet Union had a clear, rational motive for eliminating the pope: its own survival. The fact that the Soviet Union collapsed merely ten years after the failed assassination is compelling in its own right; in a way, it proves that the accuracy of their political calculation. In the mind of the Soviet leadership, the pope constituted a direct threat to its Communist bloc, and the only way to address the problem was to eliminate him.

The conclusions of recent investigations, even with their political motivations, should not be ignored. Evidence existed long before investigations concluded a Soviet-led conspiracy. Furthermore, Agca's links to Bulgaria have been established. There was a clear motive for the Soviet Union to address the situation violently, as they viewed the Pope's agenda as a critical threat to their position. Finally, there was precedent for the Soviet Union addressing its "stickiest" problems by sending its "wet-ops" to Bulgaria's DS.

In a court of law, it would be difficult to prove Soviet involvement in the attempted assassination of the pope. Historically, however, the facts appear to support Soviet involvement, at least on some level. Accepting Soviet involvement in a plot is beneficial for analyzing certain aspects of the Soviet government, like how Soviet concerns in Politburo meetings possibly translated into covert activity, or how the Soviet government viewed the Solidarity movement, or how officials miscalculated American capabilities, or how officials underestimated John Paul II individually.

The attempted assassination of the pope appears to have been sanctioned by the Soviet Union as a way to combat the "counter-revolution" in Poland. It was an act of desperation, but, considering the impact of the pope and the Polish crisis, from the Soviet perspective it is certainly understandable.⁴¹

⁴¹ It is worth crediting Tom Clancy, a fiction author, for inspiration in writing this paper. Clancy's *Red Rabbit* was a fictional portrayal of the attempted assassination of the pope, and, while it initially seemed very far-fetched, in doing the research, his story was strikingly plausible. See Tom Clancy, *Red Rabbit* (New York: C.P. Putnam's Sons, 2002).



BIOGRAPHIES

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