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From the Fangs of Monsters: Gender, Empire, and Civilization in the Pacific, 1800-1850

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FROM THE FANGS OF MONSTERS:
GENDER, EMPIRE, AND CIVILIZATION IN THE PACIFIC, 1800-1850

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Michael David Chavez

2017

Dedication

To my wife Araceli, I would be lost at sea without you.

FROM THE FANGS OF MONSTERS:
GENDER, EMPIRE, AND CIVILIZATION IN THE PACIFIC, 1800-1850

by

MICHAEL DAVID CHAVEZ, B.A. History

THESIS

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Introduction

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In the late 1750s, Englishman John Hawkesworth was an established writer and contributor for the *Gentlemen's Magazine*, a leading British periodical originating in 1731. Sometime in 1771, Hawkesworth was commissioned by Lord Sandwich, the First Lord of the British Admiralty, to assemble a history of the Polynesian voyages completed by Commodore Byron, Captain Wallis, Captain Carteret, and Captain Cook.¹ The author most likely considered this to be a culminating moment for his lifelong literary career. The public anticipated the release of his work that was to detail the voyagers' experiences throughout the newly "discovered" Polynesian Islands. Hawkesworth's prestige, however, was fleeting. Upon completion of his work, *Account of the Voyages*, in April 1773, he received criticism for writing the three volume work as a first person novel filled with much inaccuracy.² That the public waited anxiously to read about the South Seas says a great deal about the mood in late eighteenth century England. In both England and its American Colonies, individuals anticipated news of a "passage to the East-Indies, so much wished for..."³ As they waited, newspapers reported on travelers' accounts describing a "race of people

¹ For this study, the term *Polynesia* refers to various islands of the eastern Pacific Island region. Contemporary geographic and political maps enclose the islands there within a large triangle formed by the Hawaiian Islands towards the north, New Zealand in the southwest, and Easter Island towards the east. It is important to note, however, that early nineteenth century travel accounts referred to this region as the South Seas.

² For accounts on the life of John Hawkesworth, see John Abbott, "John Hawkesworth: Friend of Samuel Johnson and Editor of Captain Cook's Voyages and of the Gentleman's Magazine," *American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS)* 3, no. 3 (Spring 1970):339-342; *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature*, 2006 Online edition., s.v. "Hawkesworth, John," accessed July 22, 2017. <http://0-www.oxfordreference.com.lib.utep.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780195583489.001.0001/acref-9780195583489-e-519>; and *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "John Hawkesworth," accessed July 22, 2017. <http://0-academic.eb.com.lib.utep.edu/levels/collegiate/article/John-Hawkesworth/39611>.

³ Editorial, "London," *Providence Gazette* (Rhode Island), October 21, 1775. See also Editorial, "Louisville; Capt. William; Mr. Lewis; South; Pacific Ocean" *Federal Republican* (Elizabethtown, NJ), September 27, 1803.

as singular in their manners as they are whimsical in their appearance.”⁴ Images of “whimsical” Pacific Islanders from travel accounts flowed in and merchants along with missionaries became curious as to whether these peoples should or could be integrated into western civilization.

On both sides of the Atlantic, groups of missionaries and traders began contemplating and justifying their personal desires to venture into Polynesia. Cook’s voyages had proven to England that the region promised handsome profits in whale and seal hunting.⁵ This knowledge served American merchants well allowing their New England whalefishery to recover from the effects of the Revolution and expand into new waters. Thus by 1790, Boston merchants were exploiting the Cape Horn route that led them to China, the Pacific Northwest and Polynesian Islands.⁶ As much as Polynesia was a new frontier for the merchant, it was instantaneously seen by evangelists as a “savage” space lacking “civilization” and Christ. This was an effect of Cook’s voyages to Polynesia, the new knowledge he acquired of the region and his untimely death in Kealahukua Bay, Hawaii, at the hands of Islanders in 1779. News of his death and stories of backward heathenism alarmed readers back home. A little over a decade later, missionary societies would be formed on both sides of the Atlantic. The London Mission Society was formed in England 1795 and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions by 1808. These societies were the first of many to attempt to bring Christianity and civilization to the so-called “heathen.”

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Matt Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 141.

⁶ Barry Alan Joyce, *The Shaping of American Ethnography: The Wilkes Exploration Expedition, 1838-1842* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press), 11. For a brief history on the development of the American whalefishery, see Lisa Norling, *Captain Ahab Had a Wife: New England Women and the Whalefishery, 1720-1870* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 8.

As the nineteenth century commenced, contact between Pacific Islanders and Anglo-Americans increased as did the concern for what resulted from those interactions. In the United States, antebellum *restrained men*—those who upheld their Protestant faith, self-reliance, and familial values—used ideals of gender to combat the perceived “savagery” of Pacific Islanders and the corruption of American sailors among them.⁷ In the mission field, restrained men consciously sought after Anglo-American women’s influence often believing them to be the moral authority of a softer form of empire.⁸ This particular form of empire was not government led; nor did it entail the immediate conquest of Pacific Islander’s territory. Instead, it was a gendered alliance between Anglo-American manhood and Anglo-American womanhood that guided their version of conquest as they sought to instill civilization and Christianity at home and across the Great Ocean.

Late in the mid-eighteenth century, Jonathan Edwards’ New Divinity movement was beginning to shape New England’s first Great Awakening. The revival reinstated among a select group of evangelists the belief that humanity was insignificant and heavily depended on God for salvation. In order to prove true conversion, it was thought that an individual had to actively

⁷ Amy Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 11-12. Here, Greenberg focuses on “two preeminent and dueling mid-century masculinities: restrained manhood and martial manhood.” Martial manhood differed from restrained manhood in that they “often drank to excess with pride, and they reveled in their physical strength and ability to dominate both men and women.” My study provides a temporal extension towards Greenberg’s ideas of manhood to include early nineteenth-century men who were demonstrating similar traits that Greenberg highlights.

⁸ A contemporary definition of *empire* refers to the political element established when a major city or sovereign of a nation initiates control over various other nations and their respective regions. This study utilizes the term *soft empire*, a form of empire that does not entail state sponsored control, coercion or oppression of foreign peoples. Instead, it highlights the cultural incentives that restrained men sought to impose on Pacific Islanders and their fellow American sailor. Missionaries, reformers and their proponents believed they could *soften* the martial tendencies of “heathen” and sailor in order to lay a path for more informal modes of conquest such as the expansion of United States’ and England’s commercial influence. See Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); and more specifically Joseph Nye’s concept, “Soft Power,” which validates the idea of a soft empire. He distinguishes between soft and hard power explaining that hard power is “ordering others to do what [the state] wants.” With soft power, he argues, “If a state can make its power seem legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes. If its culture and ideology are attractive, others will more willingly follow.” Joseph S. Nye, Jr. “Soft Power,” *Foreign Policy* 80, Twentieth Anniversary (1990): 166-167.

promote God's will in the public realm.⁹ Many evangelical Christians thus began to feel religious tensions believing their obligations as Christians had not been met. The most zealous believed it was their duty to actively spread the gospel to all parts of the world. My research utilizes published reports from the London Mission Society, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions along with their published magazines, mission journals and memoirs to demonstrate their anxieties as they endeavored to proselytize their faith. More importantly for this study, they also reveal a conscious gendered alliance that was used to establish and maintain missions to Polynesian Islands. The fact that most of these sources were written by men has not escaped the attention of historians who have uncovered the hidden influence of women in the mission field. This study intends to use this new outlook towards Anglo-American women in Pacific studies in order to see them more as national allies of antebellum men than the typical "help-meets" they are presented as in much of the literature.¹⁰

As mission work progressed into the early nineteenth century, the soft empire fused with the antebellum reform agenda in the United States that held concerns over religion, domesticity, education, sex and alcohol. I have also consulted sources from the *American Seaman's Friend*

⁹ Sandra Wagner, "Mission and Motivation: The Theology of the Early American Mission in Hawaii," *Hawaiian Journal of History* 19 (1985): 65.

¹⁰ Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," *American Literature* 70, No. 3 (Sept. 1998): 582. Kaplan argues, "...when we oppose the domestic to the foreign, men and women become national allies against the alien, and the determining division is not gender but racial demarcations of otherness." For more on women's influence in the mission field, see Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989); Janet Wilson James, ed., *Women in American Religion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980); Catherine Hall, "Missionary Stories: Gender and Ethnicity in England in the 1830s and 1840s," in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 240-276; Anna Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Clare Midgley, "Can Women Be Missionaries? Envisioning Female Agency in the Early Nineteenth-Century British Empire," *Journal of British Studies* 45, No. 2 (April 2006): 335-358; Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of their Thought and Practice* (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1997); Jennifer Thigpen, *Island Queens and Mission Wives: How Gender and Empire Remade Hawai'i's Pacific World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2014).

Society, a product of the reform period that published the *Sailor's Magazine*. Contributors to the magazine hailed from different parts of Polynesia, as well as eastern and western parts of the U.S. Excerpts from letters, diaries, and log books of restrained sailors were submitted to the magazine for print to be circulated for sailors at sea. Time and again, their writings exemplify how often restrained men sought to utilize a more feminine conscience to combat the more aggressive inclinations of martial men. The *Sailor's Magazine*, then, coupled with travel accounts of restrained merchants and sailors, exhibit the gendered alliance reformers utilized to combat “savagery” and the corruption of civilization in Polynesia. The study further demonstrates that phenomena continued well into the California Gold Rush and perhaps beyond. The journals and travel accounts of restrained men demonstrate how they sought to remind Gold Rush voyagers of the proper notions of manhood before reaching the gold fields.

This is by no means is the first history of gender and empire in Polynesia. Pacific historians have sought to highlight the ways in which missionaries helped to shape the colonial enterprise. This study is indebted to two highly influential writers. First, historian Anna Johnston’s, *Missionary Writing and Empire*, argues that London Missionaries were conscience of their effect on colonial cultures and the Imperial nation. She convincingly states that missionaries sought to “remake colonial projects in the image of religious conversion.”¹¹ The myriad of sources produced by mission societies form the “imperial archive” that help shape the argument of both Johnston’s work and my own.¹² This study rests along this foundational tenet and yet takes on a comparative approach of its own by looking at *both* LMS and ABCFM mission societies — including amateur

¹¹ Anna Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

¹² Ibid., 3

missionaries of the Seamen's societies — to show how both recruitment and the missions were shaped by prevailing ideas of Anglo-American manhood *and* Anglo-American womanhood.

Jennifer Thigpen's, *Island Queens and Mission Wives*, is the second influential work for this study. Thigpen analyzes missionaries in Hawaii arguing that mission men allied themselves with Hawaii's women of rank to establish diplomatic relationships. Thigpen highlights that it was the mission wives who were instrumental in constructing these alliances. This work builds on the significance of Thigpen's notion of a gendered alliance and pushes it further to include an often invisible alliance between Anglo-American men and Anglo-American women. This alliance entailed restrained men utilizing the virtuous influence of white women to correct the behaviors of both "savage" and wayward American sailors. Simultaneously, restrained men believed their efforts in the Pacific were demonstrations of their manhood and not just requisites of their faith.

The first chapter begins by narrating Captain Cook's voyages in order to provide the reasoning behind many early nineteenth century journeys to Polynesia. Both English and American sailors read Cook's accounts and became inspired to make the journey towards the Pacific Islands. His descriptions of the Islanders led zealous protestant men to a belief that Islanders lacked civilization. This in turn inspired the establishment of both the London and American mission societies to take the civilizing influences of Christianity to the region. By no means were these missionaries the only people to venture off into Polynesia.¹³ Nor were they the only missionaries to take on evangelical projects. Brian Stanley explains why the Protestant evangelical project overshadows Catholic efforts in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He writes,

¹³ David Igler's discussion of the myriad of peoples who encountered one another in the Pacific is noteworthy. He writes that the Pacific "was not a single ocean world. Rather it represented a vast waterscape where imperial and personal contests played out in isolated bays and coastlines, where indigenous communities sought to control the terms of exchange, and where maritime traders plied the waters for profitable commodities." David Igler, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4.

“Roman Catholic missions, which had dominated the field from the sixteenth century, were in the doldrums following the suppression of the Jesuit order in 1773 and the vicissitudes of the papacy during the Napoleonic era; only gradually, in the course of the nineteenth century, did the Catholic missionary enterprise revive.”¹⁴ The suppression of the Jesuits by the governments of France, Spain and Portugal paved the way for a Protestant mission project in the Pacific. Therefore, this study takes a closer look at the formation and implementation of the London and American mission societies in order to demonstrate a gendered alliance between Anglo-American men and Anglo-American women. Early in the nineteenth century, restrained men appealed to their Christian brothers’ sense of manhood to recruit for the mission project. At the same time, these men would refer to Christian women’s domestic virtue — both directly and indirectly — to guide their efforts overseas. Reports from the mission societies and missionary journals exhibit this consciousness throughout the early years of the project. In particular, concerns over Pacific Islander’s work ethic and domestic space consumed missionary minds. It is in these two concerns the alliance comes to fruition.

As the century progressed, the American evangelical mission abroad expanded to include the salvation of a perceived unruly class of sailor that often sailed to Polynesia for new commercial interests. The second chapter examines how missionaries received support from New England reformers who pursued the salvation of Anglo-American sailors who were assumed to have lost their Christian faith and morality while venturing to Polynesia. It was out at sea that sailors were thought to be neglected and forgotten in a place where sex, intemperance and impiety was rampant. It became common then among Seamen’s societies to believe that elements of domesticity could save a sailor’s soul. Restrained men relied on the construction of gendered symbols in port cities

¹⁴ Brian Stanley, ed., *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 2.

to ensure the continuation of the soft empire. Savings Banks, libraries, reading rooms and schools were created to assure the American public that their sons had not been forgotten. The formation of ladies associations were crucial to the funding and maintenance of many of these domestic accommodations placing women in a more visible role within the soft empire as well as in the market economy. These attempts at reform both abroad and within the home would continue through the Gold Rush.

By 1847, the missions in Tahiti and of the Leeward Islands (the western portion of the Society Islands) in central Polynesia were slowly coming to an end for the London Missionary Society. By that year, the French government declared the islands a protectorate allowing Catholic missionaries to enter and begin competing for souls. American missionaries on the other hand believed their project in Hawaii was a success and by 1853 began withdrawing missionaries from that region. Concerns over piety, temperance and civility that consumed members of the American Seamen Friends Society shifted momentarily towards gold seekers during the rush to California in 1848. Restrained men often found themselves aboard ships bound for California concerned with their fellow shipmates' ability to maintain sobriety and faith as they embarked on a new mission that entailed dreams of wealth and success. Much like restrained men of the early decades of the nineteenth century, they often drew from their knowledge of women's domestic influence to guide both their conscience and actions as they headed to California. Sources within the Sailor's Magazine, however, demonstrate that the Gold Rush did not overwhelm the ASFS. On the contrary, it became absorbed by the soft empire. San Francisco did receive a chaplain from the society to help promote morality among the gambling, drunkenness and vice that circulated the mines. Simultaneously, the society was establishing chaplains at ports in Chile, Peru, Panama and maintaining existing ones in the Hawaiian Islands. I examine missionary reports, their published

magazines and travel literature of the antebellum period with an effort to highlight the ways in which gender influenced the decisions of men as they ventured off into the waters of Polynesia, many of them for the first time.

Studies on gender during the national period have helped to shape this study. It incorporates the significance of both manhood and womanhood which Bruce Dorsey argues are “critical for understanding antebellum reformers and that those categories were inextricably bound together in the reforming work that men and women shared.”¹⁵ This study also follows in the footsteps of gender historians such as Nancy Cott and Drew Gilpin Faust. Their analysis of Gender History underscores the need for a “gender-conscious” history of Polynesia. They explain that Gender History shows “that the past cannot be understood without looking at women and men as such, without exploring the constantly present but always changing patterns of differentiation between womanhood and manhood, masculinity and femininity.”¹⁶ The sources used here are mainly written and published by men of the antebellum period, however, that does not limit our understanding to concepts of manhood and masculinity. The key feature of my argument highlights the gendered-conscience of men and finds that they were heavily influenced by ideas of womanhood and femininity throughout their travels in Polynesia. The aim then is to show “that

¹⁵ Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002), 3-4. For studies on nineteenth century manhood in the United States, see Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990); Amy Greenberg, “*Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*,” (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For studies on Womanhood and Women’s History, see Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: “Woman’s Sphere” in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977); Gerda Lerner, *The Majority Finds its Past: Placing Women in History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Nancy Cott and Drew Faust, “Recent Directions in Gender and Women’s History,” *OAH Magazine of History* vol. 19 no. 2 Recent Directions in Gender and Women’s History (March 2005), 4-5; Jeanne Boydston, “Gender as a Question of Historical Analysis,” *Gender and History*, vol. 20 no. 3 (November 2008): 558-583.

¹⁶ Nancy Cott and Drew Faust, “Recent Directions in Gender and Women’s History,” *OAH Magazine of History* 19 No. 2 Recent Directions in Gender and Women’s History (March 2005), 4.

every historical actor is shaped and influenced by gender attributes and by the existence of gender categories in social organization and in structures of representation.”¹⁷

By highlighting the influence of womanhood and femininity on the conscience of men, we run the risk of forgetting the restrictions, subordination and frustration that antebellum women experienced. Cott’s influential work, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, argued that the “cult of domesticity” enabled women to gain self-awareness and a feminist conscious. Gerda Lerner reminds us that women were undeniably restricted from accessing a public role for themselves, were barred from voting, holding office or owning property. She writes, “[m]ost importantly for women of all classes, despite the rhetoric of the cult of domesticity and despite slight and relative advances, the gap in status and opportunity between men and women *widened* during this period.”¹⁸ It is not the intention of this work to overlook the frustration and subordination of women during the nineteenth century and somehow force a sense of equality upon the sexes.

Historian Noenoe Silva has provided me with an awareness of the myths surrounding the histories of Hawaii and the methods which have removed the voice of the Islander from the historical narrative. One could only imagine the extent of this dilemma given that Hawaii is but one chain of islands in Polynesia that Anglo-Americans encountered. This examination entails the use of Anglo-American sources in order to better understand their mindset going into Polynesia. I do recognize the need to “recenter” the Islander into historical narrative, however, it did not seem fitting to do so here. While the sources used are propagandist by nature and hardly reveal any

¹⁷ Nancy Cott and Drew Faust.4.

¹⁸ Gerda Lerner, review of Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: “Woman’s Sphere” in New England, 1780-1835*. Signs 4 No. 3 (Spring, 1979), 573.

blemishes the soft empire may have had, they are valuable in providing a new angle in which to explore gender; as an alliance between Anglo-American men *and* Anglo-American women.

John Hawkesworth's story then serves as a starting point to begin exploring the development of this relationship. Despite the public outrage and loss of reputation that he endured, Hawkesworth provides us with a moment of historical change; a moment in which Anglo-Americans envisioned the Polynesian realm as a place they could introduce trade and religious belief.

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Chapter 1

On Heathen Shores: Gender in the Euro-American Missionary Establishment

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James Cook—British naval captain, navigator, and explorer—is well known for his expeditions along the coasts of Canada in 1759 and 1763-67. From 1768 until 1779, Cook would undergo three expeditions to the Pacific Ocean primarily to explore, map and improve knowledge for future ventures into the vast waterscape. Cook's third voyage into the Pacific was aimed at finding a northwest passage that would provide British ships a northern transportation route between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans by sailing over the Americas and returning through the Indian Ocean. It is in this third voyage that Cook would not only meet his death, but create a legacy that often times deified the naval captain in many Anglo-American minds. Once the writings of Hawkesworth began to circulate Cook's travels, merchants sought new commercial opportunities in what seemed to be a new frontier in trans-oceanic trade. Religious reformers on the other hand anticipated the diffusion of Christianity and "civilization" into Polynesia.¹ Consciously, notions of manhood and womanhood were shared among these supposed civilizers which helped shape the decision for both Anglo-American men and women to deploy a soft empire across Polynesia.

In mid-January of 1779, Cook stopped for a layover at Kealahou Bay, Hawaii, where he received a warm welcome from islanders. Historian Matt Matsuda has noted the timing of Cook's

¹ For more on Euroamerican efforts at "civilizing" the Pacific, see John A. Andrew, *Rebuilding the Christian Commonwealth* (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1976); Terry Crowley "The Indigenous Linguistic Response to Missionary Authority in the Pacific," *American Journal of Linguistics* 21, no. 2 (2001); Ernest S. Dodge, *Islands and Empires*, vol. 7, *Western Impact on the Pacific and East Asia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976); Rod Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific: Colonial Discourse from Cook to Gauguin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Anna Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Jennifer Thigpen, *Island Queens and Mission Wives: How Gender and Empire Remade Hawaii's Pacific World* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2014) and Doug Munro, *The Covenant Makers: Islander Missionaries in the Pacific*, ed. Andrew Thornley (Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific, 1996).

arrival during “the festival of *makahiki* season — a time of spiritual activities and games, when conflict and struggle were to be put aside, and reverence paid to Lono, God of the harvest, of fertility and growth.”² Pacific historian Matt Matsuda, highlights the controversy amid scholarship as to whether or not islanders had believed Cook was indeed a god who landed upon their shores. He argues that it is “an unlikely claim” to say the islanders believed Cook was a god and it is more important to highlight the timing of his arrival which “coincided with the sacred observances, and his treatment fortuitously gave practical shape to the celebrations, as well as the authority of the chiefs and kahunas.”³ The timing of Cook’s arrival then ensured his warm welcome.

Cook’s stay at Kealahou Bay during *makahiki* required islanders to provide him with provisions. Weeks passed before he left in early February to continue his voyage only to return to the bay with torn sails. He soon realized that his warm welcome along with *makahiki* season had ended. Cook was now dealing with theft and resentment from his hosts. A stolen cutter from his ship motivated Cook and his crew to take King Kalaniopu’u hostage. This move ultimately led to the Hawaiian chiefs clubbing and stabbing Cook on February 14, 1779. In his chapter, “Killing the god: the afterlife of Cook’s death” author Rod Edmond writes, “[i]n Europe the death of Cook became the Pacific’s original sin, its fall for which Polynesians must atone.”⁴ It was the death of this British naval captain that would inspire two missionary societies, the London Mission Society (LMS) and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Affairs (ABCFM), to embark on their mission to civilize the Pacific.

² Matt Matsuda. *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 140.

³ Matsuda, 140.

⁴ Rod Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific: Colonial discourse from Cook to Gauguin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 23.

Historians have detailed the impact Cook's death had on establishing missions to Polynesian islands. Matsuda explains that many traveled with "an evangelical fervor, a martyr's view into a world of both savagery and salvation."⁵ Prior to Cook, explorers such as English Captain Wallis, and French Captain Bougainville, had once admired and "reconfigured 'the Pacific' from a place of Asiatic trading, slaves and treasure to that of an unspoiled natural paradise overgrown with wild ginger, tree ferns, and tropical flowers."⁶ Cook's journal, Nicholas Thomas writes, provided "a fresh body of knowledge, which was by the standards of the time rich and empirically precise, [and] captured the imagination of a new and broad reading public."⁷ His rise to prominence and subsequent death in Kealahukua Bay, Hawaii, had a dramatic effect on Euro-American descriptions of Southern Pacific peoples. The idyllic landscape that they portrayed Islanders to be in had suddenly changed to one that characterized Polynesians as savage, morally depraved and in need of salvation. This was enough to convince members of the LMS to consider a voyage to the so called "heathen shores" of Polynesia. By September 1796, LMS planning and implementation of a voyage to Tahiti was well underway.

Similarly, by February 1812, an Act of Incorporation had been written creating "a body politic by the name of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions" whose purpose was "propagating the gospel in heathen lands, by supporting missionaries and diffusing a knowledge of the holy Scriptures... to be incorporated in order more effectually to promote the laudable object of their association."⁸ The LMS, according to scholar John Andrew, had inspired

⁵ Matsuda, 145.

⁶ Matsuda, 134.

⁷ Nicholas Thomas, *Islanders: The Pacific in the Age of Empire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 26.

the creation of the ABCFM which “sought cooperation and advice from the London Missionary Society.”⁹ Quickly after their incorporation, the ABCFM sponsored missions to India and Ceylon from 1812-1815 but “none had produced much excitement among New Englanders.”¹⁰ It is not until the society planned a mission to the more popular Hawaiian Islands that the ABCFM gained the attention of New Englanders. “Never before in the history of American foreign missions had so much attention been directed toward a single object,” suggests Andrew.¹¹

Both London and American societies saw to it that missionary men needed a wife to accompany them into Polynesia. Historians have noted the significance of mission wives and their perceived sexual and domestic virtue that was thought to combat the vulnerabilities of men at mission stations.¹² Their work underscores the impact that feminist literature has had in making women’s agency visible. However, if every individual is shaped by gender attributes, we must consider that both men and women from a similar society may at times consciously share gender conventions of the opposite sex. The majority of sources used here were written by missionary men, however, their literature often drew upon feminine symbolism and valor that highlights the significance of women’s participation in the mission project. Furthermore, women’s discourse at times reflected the religious and social tensions that men faced when taking on the mission project.

⁸ American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *Instructions of the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Sandwich Islands Mission* (Lahaina Luna, Hawaii: Press of the Mission Seminary, 1838), 2.

⁹ John A. Andrew, *Rebuilding the Christian Commonwealth* (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1976), 22.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² For accounts of mission wives, see Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989); Anna Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Jennifer Thigpen, *Island Queens and Mission Wives: How Gender and Empire Remade Hawai'i's Pacific World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2014).

Together, the thoughts and beliefs of both Anglo-American men and Anglo-American women help illustrate the shared conscious that fueled missions to Polynesia.

This chapter then brings together Pacific World scholarship that has discussed the formation of the LMS and ABCFM societies and examines how ideals of proper manhood and womanhood helped to shape and implement missions in Polynesia. Missionaries developed a gender-conscious alliance that utilized Christian women's domestic virtue to spread western meanings of social happiness and comfort while simultaneously carving a space for themselves that helped maintain their sense of manhood and womanhood. Together, men *and* women of these societies shared in a belief that they would be the promulgators of civilization over the foreign threat of "savagery" and "heathenism."

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Richard Lovett, author of *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895*, was asked by the LMS directors in 1893 that he write an official account of the society's origins. His preface reflects the optimism that many Anglo-Americans had for civilizing projects of the organization. He wrote that the aim of his work was to provide "an accurate and complete picture of the origin and the administration of the society, and of the great results which have been achieved by the consecrated men and women who have, on the one hand, maintained the home administration, and on the other carried through the complex toil which the Society has undertaken in so many of the great mission-fields of the world."¹³ Lovett, an obvious supporter of the LMS, took great care in writing a history for the society that identified it as noble and virtuous. These traits, as Anna Johnston writes, were sure to inspire "public support for the missionary endeavors; to ensure an

¹³ Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895* (London: Oxford University Press, 1899), vii.

ongoing supply of donated funds from individuals, institutions, and governments... and to encourage a community of potential missionary recruits.”¹⁴

Lovett explains that the origins of the LMS can be traced to the evangelical Protestant movement that occurred in England by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He wrote, “[t]he enormous and energetic Methodist Societies had sprung into vigorous life, every other section of the Nonconformist Church had stimulated into energetic action, the Church of England had been shaken out of its spiritual torpor, and upon the hearts of all evangelical Christians had been laid the burden of the world’s sin and sorrow and needs in a way quite new in English history.”¹⁵ Anna Johnston writes that “[t]he evangelical revival led to the establishment of the main Protestant missionary societies around the turn of the eighteenth century: the Baptist Missionary Society (1792); the LMS (1795); the Church Missionary Society (1799); and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (1813).¹⁶ It is in the context of the Protestant movement where evangelical Christians utilized concepts of both manhood and womanhood to inspire a missionary spirit among their fellow brethren.

Anthony Rotundo has argued that the idea of manhood for New Englanders at the dawn of the nineteenth century experienced a shift from *communal* to *self-made man* manhood.¹⁷ Rotundo’s analysis of communal manhood—coupled with late eighteenth century LMS sources—reveals that English *and* American missionaries were experiencing this phenomenon. It is important then to

¹⁴ Anna Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 6-7.

¹⁵ Lovett, 3.

¹⁶ Johnston, 15.

¹⁷ Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era*. (New York: BasicBooks, 1993), 10-30.

understand communal manhood before applying the theory towards early LMS recruiters. Rotundo explains that before 1800, to be the head of household was a clear indicator of one's manhood.¹⁸ This entailed a heavy responsibility both to a man's family and to his community. It was believed that family served as the "basic unit" of the community and therefore required men, or heads of household, to "anchor the status system, preserve the political order, provide a model of government, sustain piety, ensure productive activity, and maintain the economic support of one's dependents."¹⁹ These responsibilities, along with men's sense of *duty* towards their family and the community played a major role in shaping their own mission project. The writings of William Carey, David Bogue, and Thomas Haweis reveal the presence of communal manhood anxieties that ultimately helped to inspire a mission project to Polynesia.

William Carey, a Baptist minister, wrote a pamphlet in 1788 titled, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to use means for the Conversion of the Heathen*. According to Lovett, on May 31, 1792, Carey preached at Nottingham, England, where he encouraged his audience to "[e]xpect great things from God; [a]ttempt great things for God."²⁰ When people were leaving his sermon, he clutched the arm of another minister present, Andrew Fuller, and cried to the departing crowd, "[a]nd are you, after all, going again to do nothing?"²¹ This melodrama exemplifies how communal manhood was present in late eighteenth century Nottingham. To Carey, it was his responsibility to "sustain piety" and "ensure productive activity" among his fellow Christian brethren. When he saw people leaving without a clear sign of this energy, he felt the need to cry

¹⁸ Rotundo, 11.

¹⁹ Ibid., 12.

²⁰ Lovett, 4.

²¹ Ibid., 5.

out to them. According to Lovett, Carey's plea led to the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society for "propagating the Gospel among the Heathen."²² That society was formed on October 2, 1792, and William Carey along with John Thomas were sent for mission work in India. After six weeks, Carey and Thomas wrote a letter to one of the future LMS founders, David Bogue, which detailed their experiences in Bengal. Evidently, the letter inspired Bogue to hold a meeting with fellow ministers in Bristol about how "they could arouse the public mind to the grievously neglected duty of attempting to send the Gospel to the heathen."²³

Carey's writings also demonstrate his ability to motivate using a zealous appeal to the masculine and feminine conscious of Anglo-Americans. For example, his critics disagreed that foreign mission work was more important than addressing the "multitudes in our own nation, and within our immediate spheres of action, who are as ignorant as the South-Sea savages."²⁴ They advised, "we have work enough at home..."²⁵ Carey on the other hand, saw the "ignorant" at home as yet another reason Christians should realize the "ten-fold diligence in our work, and attempts to spread divine knowledge amongst them is a certain fact."²⁶ He appealed to men's sense of compassion—typically a trait reserved for women—for their fellow human who, in Carey's mind, lacked civilization and the gospel. He defended the "savages" by saying, "with them the case is widely different, who have no Bible, no written language (which many of them have not) no

²² Lovett, 5.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to use means for the Conversion of the Heathen* (Leicester, 1788), 13.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Carey, 13.

ministers, no good civil government, nor any of those advantages which we have.”²⁷ He continued, “[p]ity therefore, humanity and much more Christianity, call loudly for every possible exertion to introduce the gospel amongst them.”²⁸ Stanley calls this the “Evangelical apologetic,” and writes that “missions appealed to the basic humanity of the ‘heathen’ as constituting in itself a reason for seeking to restore to them those dimensions of a fully human existence that had been supposedly lost as a result of sin.”²⁹

Carey calculated the population of the world to be about seven hundred and thirty-one million people specifying that “four hundred and twenty millions of whom are still in pagan darkness...”³⁰ He argued that “it must undoubtedly strike every considerate mind, what a vast proportion of the sons of Adam there are, who yet remain in the most deplorable state of heathen darkness, without any means of knowing the true God... or of any means of obtaining it.”³¹ Carey’s description of the “heathen” as the “sons of Adam” must have established a sense of familial relationship among his readership and the “heathen.” He wrote that peoples in North and South America, the South-Sea Islands, New Holland, New Zealand, and New Guinea were “led by the most childish customs and traditions.”³² Rod Edmond explains that “[t]here is a long tradition of representing primitive cultures as feminine and child-like, with civilization as masculine and patriarchal.”³³ By representing foreign societies as child-like, Carey was projecting Christian men

²⁷ Carey, 13.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Stanley, 11.

³⁰ Carey, 62.

³¹ Ibid., 62-63.

³² Ibid.

as the heads of household where they could find the justification and moral duty to lift “the Heathen” towards a civilized state. He hoped his readers would see themselves as the father figure who could guide “their children” towards civility.

The letter that William Carey sent to David Bogue, a congregational minister at Gosport, Hampshire, inspired Bogue to publish an article within the *Evangelical Magazine* in August 26, 1794, that further demonstrates how communal manhood helped establish missions to the Pacific. It was believed by Lovett to be “one of the most important steps in the great and providential work of originating the London Missionary Society.”³⁴ Using Carey’s findings, Bogue too appealed to men’s compassion when he wrote, “[a] survey of the state of the world presents to us more than one-half of the human race destitute of the knowledge of the Gospel, and sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. Their deplorable condition it is utterly impossible for words to describe? And what have we done for their salvation?”³⁵ Bogue, like Carey, seem to consciously establish the foreign as an extension of the community. This, in turn, allowed them to criticize the lethargy among their readership in order to help push forward the mission project.

Bogue recruited for the LMS project by demonstrating his capacity to “ensure productive activity” among his brethren. He emphasized the meaning of zealous effort, writing, “[s]hould we even fail in the attempt, we shall not lose on labour; for though the Heathen should not be gathered by our means, ‘yet we shall be glorious in the eyes of God.’ But we have no reason to expect such an issue. For all who are engaged have met with such success...In no one place have pious and

³³ Edmond, 74.

³⁴ Lovett, 6.

³⁵ David Bogue, “To the Evangelical Dissenters who practice Infant Baptism,” *Evangelical Magazine*, September 1794, 378.

persevering missionaries labored in vain.”³⁶ Bogue then placed the devotion of the community above personal piety stating, “can we suppose that though we endeavor *personally* to live to His honour, our obligations are fulfilled, while we have employed no methods as a *Christian body* to lead our brethren in Pagan lands to glorify Him also, by making them acquainted with His nature, government, and grace?”³⁷ Bogue strove to instill a sense of shame among men that they had failed their community. “*We alone* are idle” Bogue wrote, “[t]here is not a body of Christians in the country, except ourselves, [to] have put their hand to the plough.”³⁸

The following year, Dr. Thomas Haweis,—at the time director of the LMS—wrote a propagandist essay within the *Evangelical Magazine* in July, 1795. In it, he utilized his understanding of both manhood and womanhood to appeal to his fellow members of the LMS in providing reasons for establishing a mission to the Polynesian island of Tahiti. Haweis appealed to the manhood of his Christian readership by praising missionaries such as the Moravians who labored in Greenland and North America admitting to his audience that he “bow[ed] before such ardent zeal, and [felt] the sharp rebuke of [his] own lukewarmness.”³⁹ He questioned his audience “will no man rend his clothes like Paul, and rush in among them, to teach them the knowledge of the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent?”⁴⁰ Haweis’ essay aimed to spur his readers into action by comparing manliness among different Christians. The Moravians, in his mind, had taken up missionary work in “soils so little promising...” and highlighted that despite “afflictive losses

³⁶ Bogue, 378.

³⁷ Bogue, 379.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Thomas Haweis, “The Very Probable Success of a Proper Mission to the South Sea Islands,” *Evangelical Magazine*, July, 1795, 262.

⁴⁰ Haweis, 262-63.

they have sustained in the work, so far from discouraging them, have but the more animated their exertions...”⁴¹ Haweis, like Carey and Bogue, seems to have believed that in order to recruit Christian soldiers for the mission project, he needed to aim for their manhood.

Simultaneously, Haweis strove to dismiss doubts among missionaries by describing the hospitable Polynesian environment. He described the climate as “genial” with tempered heat and refreshing breezes. He softened the physical labor—farming—that recruits would endure considering it “rather exercise than toil in that fertile spot, and necessary to amuse and beguile the hours.”⁴² A portrayal of the climate then could help his male readership imagine themselves performing mission work “outdoors” where most men believed their place in society was. Haweis sought to instill a sense of freedom to establish a home on the island writing, “[u]nder these delightful groves the inhabitants have erected their habitations, each distinct, and formed according to the state of the occupier and his family.”⁴³ He concluded, “[f]rom every survey of this pleasing abode, a Mission would, without the least difficulty, find ample means of subsistence; and the great calls of first necessity, food and raiment, be easily and abundantly supplied.”⁴⁴ This may have allowed men to see opportunity where before they saw none. Haweis helped them imagine a home for themselves and a chance to demonstrate their personal achievement as the head of household. Gender, or more specifically, *communal manhood*, was implicit throughout late-eighteenth century published accounts and descriptions and had a profound impact on the formation of the mission societies.

⁴¹ Haweis, 262.

⁴² Ibid., 265.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Dr. Haweis believed that artisans were most favorable in creating opportunities for proselytizing Christianity upon Pacific Islanders; gender dictated the particular forms of labor required. Haweis believed carpenters, blacksmiths and gardeners “would render us peculiarly serviceable to them; in assisting and instructing them in these, an excellent opportunity would be afforded of introducing Christian instruction...”⁴⁵ Men were to fill these roles; Haweis, consciously or not, was imagining a gendered reconstruction of the Tahitian economic system. Men would do the work outdoors while women would work indoors. However, early missionaries debated the role of women. In their thoughts, many were still hesitant if women should participate in the project. It was believed by Haweis and other like-minded men that there was risk of “exciting the passions of the islanders.”⁴⁶ Anna Johnston writes that these opinions were part of a larger “sexualized vision” that was prevalent in the European imagination which further supported the need for missions.⁴⁷ In any case, Haweis did show his support for ladies in the mission field noting that a “gracious woman would be of most excellent use among the females...”⁴⁸ At the very least, Haweis, believed, a “few families established would offer a seed to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and probably equally taught both the language of father and mother.”⁴⁹ The American mission too saw the importance of providing model families as examples of “civilization” for “savage” and “heathen” peoples and, like the LMS, required that missionaries find a wife to accompany them overseas. Published memoirs and mission journals demonstrate the

⁴⁵ Haweis, 266.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 267.

⁴⁷ Johnston, 2.

⁴⁸ Haweis, 267.

⁴⁹ Haweis, 266.

significance of women as missionaries and as heroines in the field. They also provide an opportunity to examine the shared conscious they held with men as they sought to spread civility throughout Polynesia.

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Equivalent to Lovett's work for the LMS is that of Joseph Tracy, author of *The Great Awakening* (1842). In the same year, Tracy published his *History of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*. In it he describes the formation of the ABCFM and the missions it sponsored in Africa, Europe, Asia, Indonesia, North America and the Pacific. He begins by discussing the society's origins and highlights a meeting between Samuel J. Mills, Gordon Hall and James Richards at Williams College in Massachusetts in 1806. It was at a "distant meadow" that Mills invited the others for a moment of prayer. After conversing awhile, they realized they had one idea in common – a desire to engage in missionary work to the "heathen."⁵⁰ By 1808, a society was formed "for the purpose of making inquiries and forming plans for future missions."⁵¹ Tracy noted that much of the history of this early society is unknown, though it seems from this date forward, these few individuals would begin developing the ABCFM.

By 1810, Samuel Mills had gained the attention and support of individuals such as Dr. Worcester, a reverend of the General Association of Massachusetts, and subsequent Board member of the ABCFM. It is important to note the credit given to Worcester by Tracy for coining the name of the ABCFM. Mills also had support from Gordon Hall, Adoniram Judson, Samuel Newell, and Samuel Nott who all agreed "to unite their efforts to establish a mission among the heathen in

⁵⁰ Joseph Tracy, *History of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (New York: University Press, 1842), 23.

⁵¹ Ibid.

some foreign land.”⁵² A meeting was held at Bradford, Massachusetts on June 27th, 1800 in order to present their plan to the General Association of Massachusetts to inquire “whether they ought to direct their attention to the eastern or western world; whether they may expect patronage and support from a Missionary Society in this country, or must commit themselves to the direction of a European society; and what preparatory measures they ought to take, previous to actual engagement.”⁵³ The upstart society truly needed guidance and were willing to solicit help from the LMS if they could not find help at home.

In late June, 1810, a committee including Dr. Worcester from the Massachusetts Association unanimously adopted a report instituting the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions “for the purpose of devising ways to and means, and adopting and prosecuting measures, for promoting the spread of the gospel in heathen lands.”⁵⁴ Similar to the founding of the LMS, the Board of the ABCFM proceeded to create a constitution that would formalize plans such as the name of the association, develop methods to spread Christianity, assign duties for officers and members of the board, and when to produce reports of transactions for the society. Lack of funds proved to be a difficult obstacle in establishing the first missions. The Board requested the LMS to provide partial financial support of a few missionaries in “any part of the heathen world” only to be denied. Evidently, they explained to the Americans that “two governing powers, on opposite sides of the Atlantic, could not act with the necessary promptness of decision and unity of design.”⁵⁵ The ABCFM would have to rely on the financial support of the American public.

⁵² Tracy, 23.

⁵³ Ibid., 26.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Tracy, 29.

In late January 1812, Samuel Newell and Gordon Hall learned that the *Harmony*, would sail in early February to the port of Calcutta, India.⁵⁶ The board—with funds totaling a mere \$1,200—was not yet capable of supporting missionaries abroad that was then estimated to amount to at least \$5,000 for one year.⁵⁷ The Prudential Committee—a second body for the mission organization charged with carrying “into effect all resolutions and orders of the Board”—decided it would send four missionaries with half a year’s salary.⁵⁸ Tracy wrote “if the Board should be unable to forward the other half to them in India, two of them should cast themselves on the London Missionary Society for support.”⁵⁹ Missionaries aboard the *Harmony* set sail for Calcutta—after weather delay—on February 20th.⁶⁰ A second vessel, the *Caravan*—carrying the other half of the group—sailed earlier on the 19th.⁶¹ By this time, the Prudential Committee had been appealing to their American brethren to aid the hopeful missionary project. Tracy wrote that “money had flowed in from all quarters” and that “collections were made at Philadelphia” so that “three weeks from January 27, when the Committee determined to go forward, more than \$6,000 were collected for the mission.”⁶² By June 17th, 1812, the board managed to land their first missionaries—including Luther Rice, Gordon Hall, Adoniram Judson and wife Ann Hasseltine

⁵⁶ Ibid., 32.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 32; For duties of the Prudential Committee, see American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *Instructions of the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Sandwich Islands Mission* (Lahainaluna, Hawaii: Press of the Mission Seminary, 1838), 9.

⁵⁹ Tracy, 32.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 33.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Tracy, 34.

Judson; Samuel Newell and wife Harriet Atwood Newell; and Samuel and Roxana Peck Nott—on the shores of Calcutta, India.

Historians such as Jennifer Thigpen acknowledge that the early mission to India was not successful as hoped for. She writes “[t]he entire enterprise was a disaster. Landing in India was more complicated than any of the missionaries had envisioned at home, and indeed, the missionaries quickly realized that ‘the British East India Company was formed’ for entirely ‘commercial purposes’ and without any regard to the ‘religious condition and destiny of millions.’⁶³ Progress would come in 1818, when the ABCFM published, *The Memoirs of Henry Obookiah*, whose life story many came to understand was about a native Hawaiian youth who embraced civilization and Christianity. Obookiah’s account helped to spread awareness of the Polynesian archipelago serving as a fundraiser for the mission that landed in Hawaii in March 1820.⁶⁴

The Prudential Committee was soon responsible for creating the instructions for missionaries to the Hawaiian Islands. Published in 1838, their rules help to show that women were necessary early in the missionary endeavors of the ABCFM. First, there was four general points that “all” missionaries had to follow. The four points were “[d]evotedness to Christ; subordination to rightful direction; unity with one with another; and benevolence towards the objects of their mission.”⁶⁵ The committee set aside instructions for women directing them to handle “domestic concerns, in the education of heathen children, in the various cares, and labors, and trials of the

⁶³ Jennifer Thigpen, *Island Queens and Mission Wives: How Gender and Empire Remade Hawaii’s Pacific World* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 37.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *Instructions of the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Sandwich Islands Mission* (Lahainaluna, Hawaii: Press of the Mission Seminary, 1838), 2.

mission...”⁶⁶ Early missionary women of the ABCFM would center their efforts on both the domestic and educational roles overseas. Most could not have anticipated their influential role in recruiting future generations of missionaries overseas. Their main concern would have been to obtain the proper training and education to take on the life of a missionary. One particular avenue women could take to enter into missionary life was through the Bradford Academy.

The Second Great Awakening brought about an increase both in church membership and in the participation of women in either a Congregational or Baptist church.⁶⁷ The democratization of the Christian faith brought about the idea that women could participate in the revival by bringing the Gospel to those who had not yet experienced God’s grace.⁶⁸ The Bradford Academy, founded in Bradford, Massachusetts in 1803—the same place where the ABCFM was established—was one of the earliest academies that allowed women to learn Reading, Writing, English, Arithmetic, Geography, Needlework, Drawing and Painting.⁶⁹ Dana Robert discusses how the religious revival swept through the Bradford Academy in 1806. She writes “the combination of education and piety at the academy was the explosive mixture that propelled young women into the world as primary school teachers, as clergy wives, and as missionaries. Between 1816 and 1846, at least twenty Bradford girls became missionaries and hundreds married ministers.”⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of their Thought and Practice* (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1997), 4.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Jean S. Pond, *Bradford: A New England School, Sesquicentennial Edition*, Revised and Supplemented by Dale Mitchell (Bradford, MA: Bradford Academy, 1954), quoted in Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of their Thought and Practice* (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1997), 15.

⁷⁰ Robert, 16.

Portraits of Rufus Anderson, Mrs. Ann H. Judson and Mrs. Harriet Newell were formally presented to the Academy on March 26, 1884. Markedly, there was “a large audience, including many distinguished friends of the school from Boston and other leading cities and towns in New England.”⁷¹ Harriet Newell and Ann Judson’s portraits were presented to those gathered to honor the first females to join the missionary cause. Dr. Crowell, charged with giving a speech about Harriet Newell, passionately stated “[h]ow, under its glowing beauty, has woman given up the allurements of home and friends and joined the noble army whose banners now stream in every clime! Such a life is not in vain.”⁷² This speech was given 1884 when women were at last afforded the label of missionary. It is important to note, however, that Judson and Newell were some of the first females to go on missions overseas when the LMS and ABCFM originated.

Newell’s writings showed her thoughts about mission work that seemingly reflected that of her male counterparts. Crowell read to the audience an excerpt from a letter Newell had written to her friend. She wrote, “[s]hall we be content to live indolent, inactive lives, and not assist in the great revolution about to be effected in this world of sin? Let worldly ease be sacrificed; let a life of self-denial and hardships be welcome to us...”⁷³ Newell’s thoughts reflect the tension that middle class men held about work. She too felt the need to remove herself—and inspire her friend to do the same—from the comfort of home and place herself into the foreign where she could exert her influence upon others deemed less fortunate than herself. Crowell exclaimed, “[b]ut, oh, what an impulse did her sweet young life give to the great cause of Christian missions! How did her

⁷¹ Bradford Academy: *Historical Sketches of Rufus Anderson, Mrs. Ann H. Judson, Mrs. Harriet Newell*, (Massachusetts: American Printing House, 1885), 1.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

example inspire faith and courage in many timid and doubtless souls!”⁷⁴ Unfortunately, Newell’s missionary work was cut short due to “disease...hardships and much suffering.”⁷⁵

Ann Judson’s work was presented to the Academy by Mr. Porter. His discussion about a girl from Bradford, born in 1789, explained the “life and character of this remarkable woman...”⁷⁶ He noted that “she not only managed the domestic affairs of the home, but she taught the Burmese women and children, besides writing tracts, and assisting in the translation of the Bible, being herself an apt scholar in the language, and commanding her time with marvelous ability and wisdom.”⁷⁷ Judson’s letters to her sister reflect the tension and sacrifice that men confronted when deciding to go on a mission. She wrote, “[h]ow can I ever pray for the promotion of the gospel among the heathen, if I am unwilling to offer my little aid when such an opportunity is given?”⁷⁸ Guilt plagued her mind as the thought of inaction pushed her into missionary service. She wrote to a friend in Boston, “[s]hould I refuse to make this sacrifice, refuse to lend my little aid in the promulgation of the gospel amongst the heathen, how could I ever expect to enjoy the blessing of God, and peace of conscience, though surrounded with every temporal mercy?”⁷⁹ Missionary wives such as Newell and Judson faced the same religious and social tensions that men did during the antebellum era. Their labors—painstakingly delayed as they were— earned the attention and

⁷⁴ Bradford Academy: *Historical Sketches of Rufus Anderson, Mrs. Ann H. Judson, Mrs. Harriet Newell*, (Massachusetts: American Printing House, 1885), 10.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 12.

⁷⁷ Bradford Academy, 12.

⁷⁸ Harriet Newell, *The Life and Writings of Mrs. Harriet Newell* (Philadelphia, American Sunday School Union, 1831), 103.

⁷⁹ Newell, 105.

respect of the Bradford Academy in 1884. Johnston rightly declares that “in the LMS archive up to about 1860, women’s published writing is hard to find.”⁸⁰ On the other hand, memoirs of mission wives written within the early to mid-nineteenth century—such as the memoir of Lucy Thurston—support the idea that their efforts were visible to the antebellum public and significant to the missions.⁸¹

The death of Lucy Thurston and her published obituary caused a significant amount of interest that inspired members of the American Board to call for “a more extended memoir” to be published and “given to the public.”⁸² Rev. Dr. Anderson, the Secretary of the Board of the ABCFM suggested the memoir would “not only subserve the cause of youthful piety, but have a favorable bearing on the cause of missions.”⁸³ The memoir contains eighteen chapters that discuss her life from childhood to her untimely death at age seventeen on February 24th, 1841. It details the first missionary group of the ABCFM who landed at Kailua, Hawaii, crediting both Rev. Thurston and Bingham along with their wives to be the “interpreters to the missionaries on their arrival.”⁸⁴ The Thurston’s were also recognized for making “the experiment of rearing their

⁸⁰ Johnston, 44.

⁸¹ For other memoirs of mission wives and women, see Arabella Stuart, *The Lives of Mrs. Ann H. Judson and Mrs. Sarah B. Judson with a Biographical Sketch of Mrs. Emily C. Judson, Missionaries to Burmah* (Auburn, Derby and Miller, 1852); Harriet Newell, *The Life and Writings of Mrs. Harriet Newell* (Philadelphia, American Sunday School Union, 1831); Fanny Woodbury, *The journal and writings of Miss Fanny Woodbury, including some interesting correspondence between her and the late Mrs. Newell...* (Edinburgh, J.T. Smith, 1818). For an analysis of early female memoirs as a neglected genre, see Clare Midgley, “Can Women Be Missionaries? Envisioning Female Agency in the Early Nineteenth-Century British Empire,” *Journal of British Studies* 45, No. 2 (April 2006), 335-358.

⁸² American Tract Society. *The Missionary’s Daughter: A Memoir of Lucy Goodale Thurston, of The Sandwich Islands*, (New York: American Tract Society, 1842), 4.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ American Tract Society. *The Missionary’s Daughter: A Memoir of Lucy Goodale Thurston, of The Sandwich Islands*, (New York: American Tract Society, 1842), 27.

children on heathen ground.”⁸⁵ Robert explains this was part of an overall strategy of adhering to the domestic role assigned to them due to the “savagery” they encountered. She writes “[b]ecause the favorable climate of Hawaii permitted the survival of large numbers of children, family needs preoccupied the missionary wives.”⁸⁶ Mission wives believed that children — both native and their own — needed protection from “savage people, who, in their daily intercourse, pass about almost, and often entirely naked, whose children are familiar with vice....and the most gross, obscene, and shocking character.”⁸⁷

The life of Lucy Thurston, growing up among the “heathen” was meant to inspire a younger generation of mission hopefuls to take on their evangelical duty. The author described Lucy as an “industrious scholar...far removed from the improvements of this age and country, which so facilitate the labours of the teacher and scholar.”⁸⁸ He explained that “while engaged in preparing for future usefulness, and devoting much time to the acquirement of knowledge, she felt the responsibility of a professed servant of Jesus to make efforts to win souls.”⁸⁹ Noteworthy, is the belief of a young Lucy Thurston in the position as a teacher. This was sure to inspire girls—and surely boys—back home to take on mission work any way they could. The author writes “[w]hile yet a child, she began to instruct the benighted children of Kailua, and when she came to the close of her short life, expressed no other wish to live, but to go back and continue her labors among

⁸⁵ Ibid., 34.

⁸⁶ Robert, 57.

⁸⁷ American Tract Society. *The Missionary's Daughter: A Memoir of Lucy Goodale Thurston, of The Sandwich Islands*, (New York: American Tract Society, 1842), 33.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 208.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 215.

them.”⁹⁰ The author then called into question their zeal, “[w]ho among the youthful members of our churches may not profit by the example of this young disciple?”⁹¹ He concludes his work by encouraging his readers to remember that Lucy “loved the heathen, and ask what you can do for the Saviour who died for their redemption.”⁹² Through their passionate writings about faith and serving the missionary cause, women such as Ann Judson, Harriet Newell and Lucy Thurston inspired a generation of wives to take on the life of a missionary.

In 1836, Rev. William Ellis of the LMS also wrote a memoir for his wife Mrs. Mary Ellis, which provides further evidence of women’s indispensable role in mission work. This work, similar to Thurston’s memoir, discusses Mrs. Ellis’ voyage to Polynesia and her role as missionary in places such as Huahine, the Society Islands, Hawaii, and Maui. William Ellis described a woman who was not content with providing the natives of Huahine “European Apparel” and “better habitations.” He notes she “longed to be able to speak to them of Christ and his salvation.”⁹³ He explains that “Mrs. Ellis went down to the native school every morning soon after sunrise, taking her two children with her, and confiding them to the care of native girls, who nursed them in the school, while she taught in her class or superintended the whole.”⁹⁴ Her efforts also led to the administering of baptism to a group of native females which gave a sense of accomplishment within the mission. William Ellis wrote “the new relation in which they now stood to the wives of

⁹⁰ American Tract Society. *The Missionary’s Daughter: A Memoir of Lucy Goodale Thurston, of The Sandwich Islands*, (New York: American Tract Society, 1842), 215.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid. 222.

⁹³ Ellis, William, 1794-1872. *Memoir of Mrs. Mary Mercy Ellis: Wife of Rev. William Ellis, Missionary In the South Seas, And Foreign Secretary of the London Missionary Society ; Including Notices of Heathen Society, of the Details of Missionary Life, And the Remarkable Display of Divine Goodness In Severe And Protracted Afflictions*, (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1836) 95.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

the Missionaries not only quickened the sympathies which the latter cherished towards those of their own sex in general, but proved sources of hallowed and grateful joy, from being sisters in Christ...”⁹⁵

The journal of Charles S. Stewart provides insight into the gendered alliance between Anglo-American men and Anglo-American women. Aboard the ship, *Thames*, in November 1822, Stewart explained the rough seas they encountered heading towards the Hawaiian Islands. He described his wife enduring “severe gales of wind” and the “tossing of the ship.” He sympathized with her as she showed signs of apprehension for the mission and questioned if he should have allowed her to go. He then confidently wrote, “I am fully persuaded, that I have done right, and that she has done right, informing the determination, and in pursuing the measures we have.”⁹⁶ He then placed himself and his wife in a conscious alliance against the “heathen.” He wrote, “[w]e are not on a warfare at our own charge; nor do we undertake to build not having counted the cost.” In Stewart’s mind, they were ready to “welcome the simplicity and rudeness of a missionary hut.”⁹⁷

In early October, 1825, Stewart, now in Lahaina (Maui), was on his way to visit his fellow missionary friends, Mr. and Mrs. Richards. He was shocked to be greeted at bayonet point by a “watchful sentry.”⁹⁸ After realizing it was a friend, the Richards greeted Stewart with “cordial embraces.”⁹⁹ Stewart was told that they were in “peril...not from the heathen, but from the

⁹⁵ Ellis, William, 1794-1872. *Memoir of Mrs. Mary Mercy Ellis*, 95.

⁹⁶ Charles S. Stewart, *Journal of a Residence in the Sandwich Islands: During the Years 1823, 1824, and 1825...* (New York: Sleight & George, 1828), 32.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 314-315.

⁹⁹ Stewart, 314-315.

degenerate sons of a civilized and Christian country!”¹⁰⁰ He explained that the “seamen of a large British ship at anchor in Lahaina, exasperated at the restraints laid on their licentiousness...had carried their menaces and open acts of violence, against Mr. and Mrs. Richards...”¹⁰¹ Stewart was told that two days earlier, Mrs. Richards rushed between the seamen and her husband in an attempt to save his life. She is quoted saying, “my only protection is in my husband and my God; I had hoped that the helplessness of a female, surrounded only by heathen, would have touched the compassion of men from a Christian land—but if such cannot be the case, know that I stand prepared to share the fate of my husband!”¹⁰² Stewart explains that local natives interfered with the display of heroism and rescued the lives of the Richards. Whether real or imagined, Mrs. Richard’s display of courage shows how missions to Polynesia were occupied with gendered meaning. Her “helplessness” was considered a weapon against corruption and her profession was to instill compassion and propriety among the foreign and the sailor. Women could then blur the lines of gender roles as she experimented with the realm of the martyr and the heroine.

Reverend John Williams, missionary for the LMS, also included tales of heroism in his famed, *Missionary Enterprises*. Williams told an account of a convict coming upon the shore at Raiatea. Word had spread that he was not paying harbor dues. According to Williams, a “high spirited chief” would not leave until the captain paid his dues. The captain threatened the young chief with a loaded pistol forcing him to leave the ship. The young chief returned to the boat with “a large body of people” armed and ready to confiscate the vessel. Mr. Williams’s absence stirred his wife into action. She “wrote to the captain, to beg him to pay what was due, and, hastening

¹⁰⁰ Stewart, 314-315.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

down to the beach, she prevented more people from going off to the ship, and sent a boat with some respectable natives, to convey to those on board an earnest request from her that no violence might be offered to the captain.”¹⁰³ Mrs. Williams had prevented a tragedy and Mr. Williams used the example of heroism as a reason for the necessity of missionaries in the Pacific Islands. They were there to soften the “savage” and the corrupt to make way for civility. Simultaneously, the experiences of both the Richards’ and Williams’ sparked a major concern in the minds of missionaries. They reminded missionaries of a martial world that had been shaped in the Pacific by “degenerate sons of a civilized and Christian country” who opposed the benevolent reform that missionaries brought with them. The next chapter examines the shifting contours of the soft empire in the 1820’s which now sought to include the moral reformation of Euro-American sailors.

Missionary wives assumed great responsibility in their respective missions. Ellis writes “the wives of the Missionaries were as oracles to the native females; and the former felt as if the whole station or island were one vast school, in which they were called to inculcate and exemplify ‘whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are of good report.’”¹⁰⁴ More significant, he concludes the “example and instructions of the female missionary were most import; and by the Divine blessing they were rendered beneficial and acceptable.”¹⁰⁵ An excerpt of a letter that Mrs. Ellis writes to a friend seems to be a fitting way to conclude a discussion of missionary wives. It exemplifies the ways in

¹⁰³ John Williams, *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands: With Remarks upon the Natural History of the Islands, Origin, Languages, Traditions, and Usages of the Inhabitants*, (London: Snow, 1837), 153.

¹⁰⁴ William Ellis, 1794-1872. *Memoir of Mrs. Mary Mercy Ellis: Wife of Rev. William Ellis, Missionary In the South Seas, And Foreign Secretary of the London Missionary Society; Including Notices of Heathen Society, of the Details of Missionary Life, And the Remarkable Display of Divine Goodness In Severe And Protracted Afflictions*, (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1836), 97.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

which women shared a gender conscious with men as they established a soft empire across Polynesia. She wrote “[c]ontinue to pray for us; our work is arduous and important, our enemies numerous and powerful, while we are weak and feeble; but, if strengthened by the arm of Omnipotence, we shall come off more than conquerors through him that hath loved us...”¹⁰⁶

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Captain James Cook, more often than not, is the one individual that Pacific historians look to as a point of origin for sustained contact between Anglo Americans and Pacific Islanders. Hawkesworth’s narrative of Cook’s voyages brought about a desire to travel to Polynesia for opportunities in trade and adventure. Men and women of the London and American societies shaped their own opportunity which was to promote their values and religious beliefs to the Polynesian peoples they encountered. At times, they shared a conscious that was often governed by their perceptions of gender. They shared the same religious and social tensions as their friends and family did back home. Their goal was to take their notion of civilization to the Polynesian Islands where it was thought that people there were living in a state of “savagery” and “heathenism.” This project was complicated, however, as missionaries’ encountered wayward sailors who sought to exploit Pacific Islanders for their personal interests. The ABCFM and the American Seamen’s Friend Society together sought to combat the corruption of “civilization” among their fellow sailors at port cities throughout the Pacific.

¹⁰⁶ William Ellis, 102.

Chapter 2

More than Conquerors: Evangelical Benevolence in Pacific Ports

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American missionaries Hiram Bingham, Abraham Blatchely, Levi Chamberlain, Samuel Ruggles, and Elisha Loomis wrote a joint letter from Oahu, dated October 15, 1825, to the board of the ABCFM detailing their difficulties with British sailors. They described their situation as being “confined in the midst of a vast ocean, 10,000 miles from help, liable, when single-handed, to be insulted and persecuted by murderous mobs of unprincipled seamen, who hate the light, and would gladly put it out...our lives are in jeopardy.”¹ The realities of mission work shook their confidence regarding the viability of their objectives. They expressed “disgust” and “indignation” toward the events surrounding Mr. and Mrs. Richards’s station in Lahaina (Maui). They explained to the board how the “riotous crew of the whale-ship *Daniel*,” under direction of Captain Buckle, had purchased a female slave with the intentions of taking her aboard the ship’s cabin. The crew became enraged when they were not allowed to take her on board because of the island’s tapu (taboo) which prohibited females from visiting ships. Anger drove the unruly sailors towards the house of Mr. Richards demanding “to have his life, or his consent for females to go on board—the former of which he would have surrendered first.”² That Mr. Richards would have surrendered his life on behalf of the safety of an enslaved Islander shows the combative encounter between restrained manhood and martial manhood during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Restrained men sought women’s benevolent influence coupled with the ideals of proper manhood to battle against the corruption of civilization itself.

¹ *Panoplist and Missionary Herald*, vol. 22, 208.

² *Ibid.*

Five years into the Hawaiian mission and it was clear that the project became twofold. The missionaries explained that “about 20 seamen recently came to our doors, to demand the reason why they could not have women as formerly.”³ They explained to the sailors, “It is forbidden by the word of God, and prohibited by the tabu of the chiefs.”⁴ While their letter exhibits optimism that the island chiefs initiated a taboo, missionaries began to see that their efforts required larger numbers of pious individuals if they were going to remain safely in their mission posts. They appealed to the board declaring, “...we greatly desire that the number of its advocates may shortly be increased by a reinforcement from the Board for our enfeebled forces, lest the enemy should gain an advantage, and we should be put to shame.”⁵ Surprising as it must have been for the missionaries, they were now more concerned with the “unprincipled seamen” from the Christian world than the so-called savage “heathenism” of the Pacific. Wayward sailors at ports of call could very quickly undo the years of work that missionaries invested in softening the behaviors and traditions of the Pacific Islander. By the mid 1820’s, benevolent reformers ushered in a second phase of the soft empire. Their efforts would be aimed at reforming sailors—a class of men considered deprived from the comforts of civilization and Christianity and thought to be forgotten at sea. Their efforts would initially concentrate in ports such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, Savannah, and New Orleans. In time, their efforts would expand to include ports in the Pacific such as Valparaiso, Callao, Lahaina, Honolulu, Panama City and San Francisco.

As mission societies in both London and America established operations in Polynesia, benevolent societies in the New England states grew concerned for their mariners at sea. In the

³ *Panoplist and Missionary Herald*, vol. 22, 208.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

early years of the republic, people in need often turned to charity organizations for food, clothing, shelter and financial assistance.⁶ Missionary societies such as the ABCFM and LMS, on the other hand, established a model for a more evangelical reform that re-centered benevolence towards conversion and moral reform as an alternative to providing for a person's material needs. Bruce Dorsey has shown how this applied to societies in Philadelphia and the urban north in general.⁷ Dorsey writes, "[s]oon after 1800, religious activists founded benevolent societies with more expressly evangelistic objectives. Inspired by foreign missionary efforts begun in the 1790s, Philadelphians founded the nation's first Bible society in 1808, the Bible Society of Philadelphia. Tract and missionary societies soon joined with Bible societies and evangelical Sunday schools to introduce a new type of benevolence that aspired to convert unbelievers, reform sinners, and spread the knowledge of the Christian gospel."⁸

American trade across the Pacific shed light on the "men and boys who manned the ships."⁹ Sailors, according to George Webster's *The Seamen's Friend*, were a "class apart from the landmen by virtue of their calling, [and] their peculiar needs require[d] a unique service."¹⁰ Rev. John Truair, pastor and preacher from New York, believed "Christendom [had] long slumbered over the maritime world, and [was] almost entirely regardless of the moral condition of seamen."¹¹

⁶ Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2002), 52.

⁷ Dorsey, 10.

⁸ Ibid., 52-53.

⁹ George Webster, *The Seamen's Friend: A Sketch of The American Seamen's Friend Society* (New York: The American Seamen's Friend Society, 1932), 14.

¹⁰ Ibid., 1.

¹¹ John Truair, *A Call from the Ocean, or, An Appeal to the Patriot and the Christian, in behalf of Seamen* (New York: New York, 1826), 3.

His supporters would agree that “generation after generation, [seamen had] been made the prey of vice in every form, with scarcely ‘an eye’ to pity or a hand to save.”¹² The society he helped to create, the American Seamen’s Friend’s Society (ASFS), formally established in May 1828, was a national organization that helped unite more than seventy “port societies” throughout the eastern seaboard.¹³

This was not a novel idea for the Americans. London was reported to have held Bethel prayer meetings since 1814 while the British and Foreign Sailor’s Society (BFSS) was established in 1818.¹⁴ The Secretary for the Port of London Society for Promoting Religion among Seamen, Nathaniel Sloper, wrote to the secretary of the ABCFM congratulating “their transatlantic brethren, in that they are now vying with us, in paying attention to the spiritual interests of those, ‘who go down to the sea in ships, and do business in the great waters;’ and to acknowledge with gratitude the receipt of a most pleasing letter from the secretary of the Seamen’s Society at New York.”¹⁵ As with the mission project, London had inspired New England Protestants to project their zeal towards sailors at sea. New Englanders did not hesitate to reveal origins of their new found benevolence.

In an “Address to the Public,” the first issue of the *Sailor’s Magazine*—published for the ASFS—included notes from the Annual Report of the BFSS, dated May 1825, which called for a “Sea-boys School, to train up a new generation of sailors in the fear of God.”¹⁶ They asked that a

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Lisa Norling, *Captain Ahab Had a Wife: New England Women and the Whalefishery, 1720-1870* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 219; for more on antebellum reform, see, Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2002).

¹⁴ Ibid., 5.

¹⁵ *Panoplist and Missionary Herald*, vol. 17, 199.

“Seaman’s Library and Reading Room” along with “Savings Bank” and boarding houses be provided in port stations around the world.¹⁷ Objectives for the ASFS closely followed those of the British which were to improve the “social and moral condition of Seamen... by promoting in every port, Boarding Houses of good character, Savings Banks, Register Offices, Libraries, Reading Rooms, and Schools.”¹⁸ The society published the *Sailors Magazine* to offer American sailors “a rich variety of entertainment and instruction.”¹⁹ By providing a proper education, reading material, and reformed officers to lead a ship’s crew, the society could “rescue sailors from the fangs of monsters in wickedness, who live by their destruction, and... hope to see religion more generally influencing the sea-population of this and other countries.”²⁰ This coincided with the Euro-American mission establishment to bring Christianity and civilization to the islands of the Polynesia.

Concerns over religion, domesticity, education, and alcohol for both sailor and “savage” occupied the minds of members for both the ABCFM and the ASFS. One contributor to the *Sailor’s Magazine*, for example, criticized U.S Navy sailors for drinking in front of those same “heathen” peoples whose souls were to be saved. He wrote, “The poor heathen think they are showing them their religion, and look upon the drunkenness, and noise, and debauchery, and bloodshed of a Sunday revel, as a celebration of the ceremonies of the Christian religion.”²¹ Such accounts led many evangelical reformers, both men *and* women, to believe it was their Christian

¹⁶ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, vol. 1, September 1829, 3.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 1.

¹⁹ Ibid., Preface iii.

²⁰ Ibid., 3.

²¹ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, vol. 3-4, March 1831, 209.

duty to provide domestic *and* foreign reform. By the 1820's, the contours of the *soft imperial project* now extended American concepts of gender to both sailor and "savage" at ports throughout the Pacific.

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Rev. John Truair's influential appeal, "A Call from the Ocean," is considered a foundational text which helped bring about the ASFS. His appeal exemplifies the anxieties that reformers held for American sailors during the early nineteenth century. Truair could charm his readers using a restrained form of manhood to describe them. "Seamen are not only *men*," Truair argued, "[t]hey are, in many things, men of a noble and generous character to be met with in few other men."²² He continued, "[t]hey are men of feeling, and that often of a peculiarly tender kind."²³ Words like "noble" and "generous" were suitable for an audience that primarily consisted of reform-minded individuals. The clashes that missionaries were facing at sea with sailors, however, polluted this "man of feeling" image. This was because society itself was experiencing a change in the concept of manhood. Anthony Rotundo explains that the nineteenth century brought about a change from *communal manhood* to *self-made manhood*. "The new manhood," Rotundo writes, "emerged as part of a broader series of changes: the birth of republican government, the spread of a market economy, the concomitant growth of the middle class itself."²⁴ Individual interests now superseded the interests of the community. Words like "ambition," "rivalry," and "aggression," began to influence men and ultimately defined what it was to be a man.²⁵ Women, on the other hand, would

²² Truair, 3.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Rotundo, 3.

²⁵ Ibid.

help men by providing a domestic influence helping to curb their new manly aggressions. The product of these changes is seen in the writings of benevolent reformers—like those of the ASFS and ABCFM—as they sought to combat manly “vice” and “wickedness” with womanly “feelings” and “tenderness.”

Truair appealed to his readers’ perception of domesticity concentrating on a sailor’s ability to deliver the luxuries and comforts of home life. “[W]e depend on them for most of our luxuries, and for many of the necessities of life” Truair said, Look upon your table! And then into your wardrobe! And see how many articles you can discover there, which has been provided for your comfort, or convenience, by the sailor’s toils, privations, and sufferings? Some of these very articles may have come to your convenience at no less expense to some poor sailor than the loss of his life, and to his family the loss of a husband and a father!”²⁶ Truair thus exhibited how the aggressive nature of a sailor’s work could simultaneously support a softer image of the home. What Truair and his supporters believed was that by providing sailor’s homes at various ports of call, they could then be compensated for their sacrifices at sea.

A major concern for the ASFS then was to ensure every sailor would feel the comforts of domesticity in ports they visited. Written for current and former sailors of the early to mid-nineteenth century, the *Sailors Magazine* wanted to let its readers know they were not forgotten at sea. The society planned to “have decent and well-regulated houses, where the seaman may find a comfortable home, and orderly society, whilst he remains in port.”²⁷ For the majority of sailors, wives may not have accompanied their men aboard ships across the Pacific, however, their influence would certainly be felt. Books and virtuous companionship in the Sailor’s homes

²⁶ Truair, 7.

²⁷ *The Sailor's Magazine*, vol. 1, September 1829, 20.

theoretically supplanted “the haunts of immorality, drunkenness, and vice.”²⁸ It was also believed to be a moral duty for captains and ship-owners “to see the poor Sailor placed in a comfortable house, where he would be lodged and taken care of; and not abandoned as prey to those who are anxious to rob him of his hard earned pittance, to deprive him of his senses with intoxicating liquors, and to plunge him into the greatest sins, at the hazard of the loss of his soul.”²⁹ Domesticity was believed to be a weapon that could be deployed by either a man or a woman, and that fought the ill effects of alcohol and therefore the corruption of the family and civility. The ASFS made it a point to explain as often as possible its benefits to both sailors and the world.

The ASFS believed there were three main reasons that highlighted the importance in maintaining boarding houses for sailors. First, the boarding house was the one place the sailor “sees domestic life at all, and as this has always charms for him, he is likely to spend most of his time one shore amidst its scenes.”³⁰ Second, it was believed that boarding housekeepers would be in the best position for “exerting over them a salutary influence.”³¹ Sailors who were accompanied by their wives for example would be “directed in a great measure by these two individuals. Whatever he sees them appear to enjoy, he is likely to think will afford him pleasure also...”³² The discussions between these individuals was hoped to be centered on family and relatives. Finally, boarding housekeepers could help maintain a sailor’s preparations for the next journey. This could be anything such as “selecting his ship, putting in order his clothes, providing his books and other

²⁸ *The Sailor's Magazine*, vol. 1, September 1829, 20.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

means of improvement or recreation, and in giving him that counsel and advice by which his future course is to be governed.”³³ The society thus envisioned a hegemonic domestic hold on their fellow sailors, or “inmates” as they called them. The complexity of bringing civilization to the Pacific now required the support of Christian women’s influence to help establish boarding houses that could promote social and moral reform.

Benevolent women played a significant role in collecting funds and organizing projects for the society. The Charleston Female Seamen’s Friend Society, for example, reported in June of 1832 that one hundred sailors anchored in the city’s port “have annually become inmates.”³⁴ American women from the society were largely responsible for providing “a large part of the furniture, and have regularly paid the rent of a house, amounting to about \$300 a year.”³⁵ Budget deficits however made running two boarding homes a difficult task. They reported “when arrears were accumulating, in consequence of the additional expense of both houses, this society contributed \$150 beyond its usual appropriations, and thus in connection with the Bethel Union, which furnished the same amount, supplied the deficiency.”³⁶ The society however boasted the “[g]ood effected.”³⁷ Their efforts, they believed, led to a “gradual improvement” in manners and character and believed that “feeble piety [had] been strengthened, and in some cases peace in believing [had] been found.”³⁸ Still, the conflict with martial men remained in the path of reform.

³³ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, vol. 5, (1832-1833), 377-378.

³⁴ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, vol. 3-4, (1830-1832), 307.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

They admitted, “[h]abit on the part of the sailor, and interest on the side of his former landlord, conspired to keep him from coming to the place.”³⁹

Writing “to the Ladies,” an anonymous columnist reminded their female audience that “they are the mothers, the sisters, the wives, the daughters of seamen, and we are sure the ties resulting from these relations cannot fail to exert an influence.”⁴⁰ It was believed by the author that sailors would be “subdued” if they knew that “pious females [were] laboring for his good.”⁴¹ He recommended “that females should form associations for their aid, and become auxiliary to such societies.”⁴² The Ladies Bethel Association, among others, were a product of these appeals. Formed on January 11, 1830, the Ladies Bethel Association’s goal was to promote “the moral and religious improvement of seamen.”⁴³ A report from their annual meeting held in February of 1831 reminded the public that “their path was novel and unexplored, with nothing to direct their course but reason and sympathy [for seamen]... and a sincere desire to do good to all, as far as their limited influence can be made to extend.”⁴⁴ Despite their inexperience, the ladies association provided a house in Portland, Maine for “the weather beaten tempest-tossed mariner...”⁴⁵ The house contained “a reading-room which contained a small library, appropriated exclusively for the seamen’s benefit.”⁴⁶ They modestly noted, “but should it be the means of turning one individual

³⁹ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, vol. 3-4, (1830-1832), 307-310.

⁴⁰ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, vol. 1, September 1829, 25-26.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, vol. 3-4, (1830-1832), 217.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

aside from the paths of vice, or prevent one youth from entering that whirlpool of dissipation...we should be amply remunerated for any personal inconvenience we may have encountered.”⁴⁷ Women’s influence, or domesticity, in ports such as Charleston and Portland were crucial to a soft imperial project despite the modest tone of their writings. Restrained men also counted on women’s efforts and the success of local societies to save their fellow sailor.

The ASFS, designating itself the “National Society,” held a cache of reports, correspondence, and travel journals from local institutions that it used to shape public opinion regarding its progress made each year. The ASFS never claimed to possess power over local institutions. To them, it was simply “a bond of union, and a medium for collecting and diffusing information connected with the seamen’s cause.”⁴⁸ In 1831, for example, the ASFS reported on the “good effects which have resulted from the depository of books for circulating sea libraries.”⁴⁹ They also recorded “130 vessels as being navigated without the use of spirituous liquors.”⁵⁰ In the port of New-Bedford, land had been purchased for the building of a “Mariner’s Church” due to the increase of the whaling business there. In New York, it was reported that the “Mariner’s Church [had] become so full it [would] soon be indispensable to enlarge it, or build another.”⁵¹ In Philadelphia, a boarding house had been constructed and “continued with increased interest.”⁵² The society at the port of Charleston stated that “the various institutions for seamen maintain[ed]

⁴⁷ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, vol. 3-4, (1830-1832), 217.

⁴⁸ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, vol. 3-4, (1830-1832), 311.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

their efficiency.”⁵³ These reports provided both the propaganda and legitimacy of the soft imperial project. It was formally documented by decentralized institutions—designated as auxiliary societies—of local reformed men and women who then sent out their reports to the more centralized ASFS who would publish information on a national level. Despite the reported success, stories of frustration and shortcomings dotted the magazine highlighting the minimal effect they were producing on America’s sailors.

In June 1833, The New Bedford Port Society reported that a minister, Mr. Mudge, would “visit the boarding houses and families of Seamen, and particularly the sick.”⁵⁴ He would also be found at New Bedford’s local chapel conversing with sailors and providing religious services. Unfortunately for the Port Society, their Treasury’s account reported a deficiency in funds to provide a boarding house. They reported that “considerable reliance [was] placed upon the generous disposition of the friends of seamen...to add so important an establishment to what has already been done in their cause.”⁵⁵ In place of a boarding house, a reading room, library, and apartments were constructed at their chapel in New Bedford. The society apprehensively reported that “the number of seamen who have availed themselves of their advantages has not been large...”⁵⁶ They could only hope for an increase in sailors that would put such resources to use. The New Bedford Society showed resolve by once more requesting the “friends of Seamen” to send “books and pamphlets of an improving kind, to make the library more attractive by the number and variety of the works embraced in the collection.”⁵⁷

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, vol. 5, (1832-1833), 305.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

A reformer's tenacity could be exasperated by the sheer volume of seamen and "savages" at ports of call across the Pacific. In June of 1831, the demand for a chaplain for seamen at the port of Honolulu had evolved to include the reforming of certain "gentlemen in this country connected with the whaling business in the Pacific Ocean."⁵⁸ The ASFS admitted that "the burden of attending to the religious wants of some thousands of American seamen who annually visit that port [Honolulu] is too great for the missionaries, who are already overborne with their labors among the natives."⁵⁹ In the early 1820s, Hiram Bingham had revealed frustration realizing the civilizing project required more than just introducing faith to the Hawaiian peoples. He criticized the lives of Islanders he met writing, "their uncouth and disgusting manners were to be corrected, their modes of dress and living to be improved, their grossness, destitution, and wretchedness, if possible, removed; and taste, refinement, and comfort, substituted."⁶⁰ This excessive reproach by Bingham illustrates the cultural tensions that existed within missionaries as they encountered different peoples. Feeling overwhelmed, he added, "it is the work of an age; and if those who undertake it should sometimes feel discouraged, it would be very natural."⁶¹ By May 1833, the ASFS designated Rev. Diell—accompanied by his family—to be a chaplain for the port of Honolulu. His job would be to build a chapel and provide religious books and services to sailors who visited the port. This would, in theory, alleviate the mounting pressures of missionary work in the Islands. An informal alliance had been established between American missionaries and reformers concerned for the welfare of both "savage" and sailor.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ *The Sailor's Magazine*, vol. 3-4, (1830-1832), 309.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Hiram Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands* (New York: 1848), 169.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Martial men—those men whose ideals ran counter to a reformer’s spirit—ventured into the Hawaiian Islands seeking sex further eroding the power of the soft empire. David Igler’s, *The Great Ocean*, explains that “whatever else happened on Pacific voyages—trade, exploration, conflict with villagers, surveying, and a lot of hard work—sexual attractions ranked high on most every sailor’s agenda.”⁶² In October, 1827 several native women from port Lahaina, Maui, went on board an English whaler the *John Palmer*. These women had been in violation of the taboo (government restriction) placed by the Maui government. Governor Hoapili demanded that Captain Clark, who happened to be an American, set the women free. The American captain refused. Hoaplili ordered Clark’s boat to be “taken up on dry land.”⁶³ Captain Clark, upon seeing that his vessel had been seized, “hastened to the house of Mr. Richards, in much perturbation.”⁶⁴ Clark gave orders to his men to fire on the village if he didn’t return within an hour. Captain Clark next made a deal with Mr. Richards—the same missionary from the ABCFM who dealt with Capt. Buckle from the whale-ship *Daniel*, stating that he would return the women the next day if his ship was released. Before Clark returned, “the ship commenced firing cannonballs, which by their horrifying sound, as they passed near us, and by their ploughing the ground...appeared with little room for doubt to have been aimed at the house of Mr. Richards.”⁶⁵ Upon his return to the ship, Captain Clark ordered the ceasefire but sailed away “without discharging the women or making any reparation.”⁶⁶ It was clear that savagery and martial men were the enemy of the soft imperial

⁶² David Igler, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 48.

⁶³ Hiram Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands* (New York: 1848), 313-314.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

project. The battles often played out at ports where either missionary groups or the ASFS had established a presence.

Despite the conflict, from 1820 through the 1840's, benevolent reformers and missionaries alike sought to instruct particular traits of a softer form of empire such as the notion of work. In a letter from the ABCFM missionaries to the American board, a sense of Manifest Destiny was present as they reflected on the moment of arrival in the islands in 1820. They explained that the Hawaiian "King Tamahamaha was dead...The Taboos are Broken; and the idols are burnt."⁶⁷ The death of the king and a perceived end to the Hawaiian religion was a sign that provided the missionaries a sense of relief for the initial phase of the mission.⁶⁸ Missionaries brought their notions of a proper work ethic and were willing to endure the challenge of mission work. They wrote, "[l]ong indeed did we expect to toil, with slow and painful progress, to undermine the deep laid foundations of the grossest idolatry."⁶⁹ By teaching Hawaiians their perceptions of industry, they would be combatting "imprudence," "vice," and conveying civilization among the heathen.

Upon meeting the royal family, however, missionaries began to feel the challenge of imparting an acceptable work ethic. They wrote disappointedly "the four wives of the king sat down upon the mats at one corner...pleasantly [enjoying] a game of cards; while we were endeavoring to interest the feelings of the royal family in the great objects of our mission."⁷⁰ They later wrote, "Eating, drinking, sleeping, bathing, and gambling consume most of the time of the

⁶⁷ *Panoplist and Missionary Herald*, vol. 17, 111.

⁶⁸ Jennifer Thigpen, *Island Queens and Mission Wives: How Gender and Empire Remade Hawai'i's Pacific World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 47. Thigpen explains that missionary's sense of relief did not last long. She writes "[d]espite the missionaries' optimism regarding the success of their endeavor, they faced numerous challenges."

⁶⁹ *Panoplist and Missionary Herald*, vol. 17, 111.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 117.

king and chiefs... They know nothing of laborious industry which [is] so common and so commendable in good magistrates and men of business, in civilized countries.”⁷¹ Missionaries believed an industrious lifestyle symbolized a successful civilizing project; Hawaiians on the other hand were merely enduring a longer pattern of Western contact and negotiation. Jennifer Thigpen, writes “[f]rom the outset of the mission, the Hawaiians with whom the missionaries had contact appear not as passive victims of Western intentions but as agents in their relationships with foreigners from around the globe.”⁷² In 1821, for example, early accounts of the missionaries’ experiences indicate native resistance to the missionary project by maintaining their religious symbols on the islands. An excerpt from a missionary journal printed in the *Missionary Herald* explained that “a small image, dressed out with tappa and beads” was discovered near the missionaries’ settlement.⁷³ It was believed by the missionaries to be “Alooah hoodah-hooduh, the god of the dance.”⁷⁴ Exasperated, they wrote, “we should have distressing reason to fear, that, in spite of the light of revelation...a great portion of the people would return to their abominations.”⁷⁵ Teaching native girls to sew was another way to instill “domestic economy” into Hawaiians allowing the “untutored native females to assist in the domestic concerns, and to be instructed in the best things.”⁷⁶ Mr. Whitney and Ruggles of the ABCFM encouraged their “Christian friends” to send cloth to the missions “as our little girls can already sew tolerably well, and we wish them

⁷¹ Ibid., 118.

⁷² Jennifer Thigpen, *Island Queens and Mission Wives: How Gender and Empire Remade Hawai’i’s Pacific World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 103.

⁷³ *Panoplist and Missionary Herald*, vol. 18, 203.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 189.

to improve, and be kept from idleness.”⁷⁷ These “educated natives,” it was believed, would become “ornaments of the cause.”⁷⁸

Captain Benjamin Morrell, explorer and shipbuilder from Stonington, Connecticut, provides another example of reform-minded individuals who valued industriousness. Morrell’s ship anchored at the Guayaneco islands of the coast of Southern Chile. He observed the Caucaes natives whom he described having “a very dark, swarthy complexion, of middling stature, and courteous in their demeanour to strangers.”⁷⁹ He seemed to value the work of the Caucaes woman calling them “expert divers.”⁸⁰ He explained that five to six women would dive into the sea in search of sea-eggs. Upon reaching a desired amount of sea-eggs, the women would return to shore, clean the eggs and “approach the fire, where their indolent husbands are all this time seated, toasting their shins.”⁸¹ Clearly, Morrell valued the hard work women were demonstrating. Not surprisingly, he did not value the fact that women were the ones doing it. He lamented, “these females are not very tenderly treated by the sex whom Heaven intended for their protectors.”⁸² Captain Morrell’s observations reflected an awareness of American notions of gender and manhood which he criticized Pacific islanders for not having.

An ally of the soft imperial project, Captain Morrell encouraged missionary work into West Coast of South America. “Here,” he wrote, “the natives are living in the most wretched condition

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 141.

⁷⁹ Benjamin Morrell, *A Narrative of Four Voyages to the South Sea, North and South Pacific Ocean* (New York: J&J Harper, 1832), 100.

⁸⁰ Benjamin Morrell, 100.

⁸¹ Ibid., 101.

⁸² Ibid.

that can well be conceived, in one of the finest countries in the world.”⁸³ Morrell believed the missionaries would pave the way for America’s commercial expansion in the Pacific. He continued, “The arts of civilization particularly that of agriculture, with a true knowledge of practical religion, would make them a happy and grateful people.”⁸⁴ This, Morrell believed, would allow the United States to utilize the region as a commercial hub. He explained, “this country is claimed by no civilized nation, the Spaniards never having extended their conquests south of the archipelago of Chonos, or Chiloe.”⁸⁵ Ultimately, the importance of missionaries would soften up the region for the expanding marketplace. Morrell argued, “if commerce be a blessing to the world...then the missionaries to the Pacific islands have done much to promote its interests, and have thereby added much to the sum of human prosperity and happiness.”⁸⁶ Speaking against the martial men’s belief in force of arms, he argued that “all ships have not sufficient arms or men to force a landing against thousands of ferocious savages with poisoned weapons.”⁸⁷ Moreover, he believed the voyage was too long and exhaustive for soldiers to endure. He explained, “[t]here have been instances where the ship’s company, officers and all, have been too much weakened and emaciated by famine and scurvy to maintain a contest with savages. Such have perished with hunger, or became themselves the food of cannibals.”⁸⁸ Missionaries, according to Morrell, were the only ones to impart “spiritual riches to strangers and savages.”⁸⁹

⁸³ Ibid., 159.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Benjamin Morrell., 158.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Abby Jane Morrell, wife of Captain Benjamin Morrell, accompanied her husband on board the *Antarctic*, headed for the Pacific from 1829-31. As a woman, A. Morrell's writings provide an opportunity to understand how women incorporated themselves into a public role in society by using their supposed sense of virtue and morality. A. Morrell, like the ASFS, "felt an irrepressible desire" to improve the condition of American seamen.⁹⁰ She too believed "that their habits [could] be reformed; and it require[d] no arguments to prove how much this reformation would subserve the best interests of commerce."⁹¹ A. Morrell believed she was "better qualified to offer a few suggestions on this subject than any one engaged in the navy or the merchant service."⁹² She assumed she could "cultivate virtue" among seamen which made her believe she was more than qualified—more so than any martial man in the navy or merchant service—to argue for their improvement. A. Morrell then speculated on "foreign" subjects such as American sailors at sea and commerce because its domestic framework would be aimed at improving the American nation back home.⁹³

A concern for American seamen was interwoven throughout A. Morrell's narrative. Reflecting the goals of antebellum reform, Morrell believed in domesticating her fellow seamen, even if that meant going out into the foreign to do so. She wrote, "I have been at sea long enough to find that the art of managing sailors consists in keeping them temperate, industrious, cleanly,

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Abby Morrell, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Ethiopic and South Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Chinese Sea, North and South Pacific Ocean* (New York: J&J Harper, 1832), Preface.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity." *American Literature* Volume 70, no. 3 (September 1998): 584. My thinking here is influenced by Kaplan when she writes, "Through the process of domestication, the home contains within itself those wild or foreign elements that must be tamed; domesticity not only monitors the borders between the civilized and the savage but also regulates traces of the savage within itself."

and cheerful. They are always obedient when healthy and comfortable.”⁹⁴ Moreover, she held a deep seeded belief in the notion of *family* to redirect unruly sailors. She argued, “I am convinced that men will do but little good without their wives and families. The ignorant natives feel the influence of example more than of precept, and when they see whole families living in peace and domestic affection, they strive to imitate them...and [strive] to acquire such comforts as can easily be attained in these fruitful countries of the East.”⁹⁵ Thus Morrell believed that reforming and domesticating American sailors would consequently domesticate “heathen” peoples of the Pacific. She combined family with the desire to educate as a secondary measure to reform America’s seamen. “if sailors were properly educated and kept sober,” Morrell wrote, “there would be less chance of their turning pirates, and of committing crimes at which all mankind shudder”⁹⁶ Abby Morrell’s spirit then embodies the soft imperial project. She was aligned with restrained men’s reform goals for both sailor and savage across the Pacific during the antebellum era. Her femininity—and the notions of virtue and morality that were believed to accompanied her sex—gave her an indisputable advantage over the restrained man. If commerce and prosperity were to be provided to the American nation, it would be her morals and virtue that would soften a path across the Great Ocean.

⁹⁴ Abby Morrell, 24.

⁹⁵ Abby Morrell, 120.

⁹⁶ Abby Morrell, 198.

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The Spiritual Mariner

1. The Bible for my Chart,
The unerring compass Faith,
My vessel rigged with promises,
Will make the port of bliss.

2. When crossing o'er this sea,
If Jesus stand at helm,
No rocks nor dangers will I fear,
Nor waves that can o'erwhelm.

3. Though storms may gather fast,
And troubles on me pour,
The winds send forth their chilling blast,
And seas and billows roar;

4. My Pilot at the helm
Commands them all at will,
When sought unto by faith in prayer,
Says to them peace, be still.⁹⁷

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⁹⁷ *The Sailor's Magazine*, vol. 5, (1832-1833), 344.

The poem, *Spiritual Mariner*, reflects the anxieties reformers held over the dangers of life at sea. With the Bible as his map, the restrained man used the good book and his faith to guide him along his voyage with the hopes of inspiring Christ's message among sailors and so-called "savages" across the Pacific. Many knew these journeys would challenge the morals, faith and bravery of all who participated. Nevertheless, they felt confident that their societies such as the ABCFM and ASFS would provide the resources needed to pass such tests. The ASFS believed, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter, that captains and ship-owners held a large responsibility to direct sailors into the moral and virtuous path. They needed a personal relationship with Christ if they were to leave a direct influence on their crew. This was a strategy used by the ASFS to overwhelm the waves of vice and licentious behavior that could tempt the sailor.

Many Americans failed to appreciate the important role that women were playing in this soft imperial project. The sources examined in this chapter highlight men's dependency on the moral influence of American women. In order for sailors to be saved, restrained men needed a woman's influence to redirect sailor's wayward behaviors. Only when these behaviors were instilled could merchants and sailors expect to see America's commercial reach expand across the Great Ocean. Complicating this project was the conflict between restrained men and martial men throughout the Pacific. To overcome this challenge, domestic accommodations were provided to sailors by the ASFS and it was hoped that captains would encourage their use. Unfortunately, the lures of the sex trade and alcohol throughout the Pacific often outweighed the benefits of any boarding home. The national scope of the ASFS ensured reformers and seamen alike that they were not alone in the war against evil.

This objective of the soft empire continued as middle class men ventured towards the California gold fields in 1849. Pious individuals such as the captain of a ship or a minister on board

could represent the moralizing influence of Victorian womanhood. This becomes the focus of the next chapter. By highlighting the gendered consciousness of men on homo-social environments—such as the sailing vessels that launched towards the Pacific in 1849—the alliance between Anglo-American men and Anglo-American women remained intact as it did during its inception at the beginning of the late eighteenth century.

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Chapter 3

He brought them Safe to the Port: Benevolence across the Early Gold Rush, 1848-1852

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In November of 1857, John Sutter recounted to *Hutchings' California Magazine* the discovery of gold nine years earlier near his settlement at Coloma, California. Plans to build a saw-mill there were led by his contractor, James W. Marshall. According to Sutter, it was Marshall who had found gold while working at the mill. On a rainy afternoon in January 1848, Marshall arrived at Sutter's office wanting to share some "important and interesting news which he wished to communicate secretly to me..."¹ Marshall had taken out a rag that held two ounces of gold which the two men had tested and found to be genuine. Sutter then calmly informed Marshall that he would venture to Coloma to prospect in the morning. That evening, Sutter, perhaps ominously, "thought a great deal during the night about the consequences which might follow such a discovery."² Sutter could not have possibly imagined the consequences that the discovery of gold would have on his settlement nor on the young republic for that matter.

In the month following the discovery of gold, the historic *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo* was signed between the United States and Mexican governments officially ending the U.S war with Mexico. This would ultimately establish the necessary conditions for a migration to California. First, it established a border between the United States and Mexico using the Rio Grande and Gila Rivers. It hammered out a land transaction that gave 525,000 square miles of Mexico's northern lands (today's Arizona, California, Western Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas and Utah) to the United States for a mere \$15,000,000. With this deal, the U.S agreed to

¹ John Sutter, "The Discovery of Gold in California," *Hutchings' California Magazine*, November 1857.

² Ibid.

settle \$3,000,000 in claims made by U.S citizens on Mexico. Amy Greenberg, in *A Wicked War*, examines the divisions that existed regarding the signing of the Treaty. She writes that some “opposed annexing Mexican territory because they feared the increasing power of slaveholders. Some simply concluded that Mexican land wasn’t worth the sacrifice of American blood and money.”³ Yet, by years end, Americans would be scrambling to secure their passage west to the lands of El Dorado.

Malcolm Rohrbough explains that after signing the treaty, the search for gold, initially done by native *Californios* who caught wind of the discovery, would go unchecked due to the absence of either Mexican or American government policing. He writes “[a]ccess to the rivers, streams, and valleys was, for all practical purposes, without limits. The issue of land ownership was in abeyance, for the land was open and largely unclaimed by Europeans, except for a few large grants, of which John Sutter’s eleven square leagues was among the grandest.”⁴ As rumors of a new El Dorado trickled to the east, people were skeptical about the validity of their claims. Rohrbough explains “[w]hat the story required was confirmation—testimonies and physical evidence of some kind to overcome the understandable distrust of rumors that gold might be picked up from the streambeds of distant California.”⁵ That confirmation would come from President Polk himself.

On December 6, 1848, the *North American and United States Gazette* printed President James K. Polk’s message to Congress. Polk began by encouraging all to “congratulate ourselves, that we are the most favored people on the face of the earth.”⁶ He continued by highlighting the

³ Amy Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S Invasion of Mexico* (New York: Vintage Books, 2013), 263.

⁴ Malcolm Rohrbough, *Days of Gold: The California Gold Rush and the American Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 12.

⁵ Ibid., 22.

⁶ James K. Polk, “President’s Message,” *North American and United States Gazette*, December 06, 1848.

positive results of the war with Mexico. Among them were the ability to demonstrate to the world the military strength and support capabilities of the government in times of war. He believed that the new territory would “add more to the strength and wealth of the nation, than any which have preceded them since the adoption of the constitution.”⁷ He provided a glimpse into the republic’s economic future, proclaiming “[a] great emporium will doubtless speedily arise on the Californian coast, which may be destined to rival in importance New Orleans itself. The depot of the vast commerce which must exist on the Pacific will probably be at some point on the bay of San Francisco... [t]o this depot our numerous whale ships will resort with their cargoes, to trade, refit, and obtain supplies...it must become our great western naval depot.”⁸ By the time Polk gave his speech, migrants from Oregon, the Hawaiian Islands, Mexico and Chile were streaming into California. New England Merchants who had been ploughing the Pacific since Cook’s famous explorations would arrive by spring 1849 and overland trails would follow soon afterwards in the fall.⁹

President Polk verified the gold findings in California for the eastern half of the nation. He explained, “[t]he accounts of the abundance of gold in that territory are of such an extraordinary character as would scarcely command belief were they not corroborated by the authentic reports of officers in the public service, who have visited the mineral district, and derive the facts which they detail from personal observation.”¹⁰ Towards the end of 1848, news reports of Sutter’s mill led many in the republic to feel a mild case of gold fever; the President’s address erased any doubt

⁷ James K. Polk, “President’s Message,” *North American and United States Gazette*, December 06, 1848.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Rohrbough, 19.

¹⁰ Ibid.

that a rush to California could prove profitable. Polk described the first season of the Gold Rush in autumn of 1848, “[l]abor commands a most exorbitant price, and all other pursuits but that of searching for the precious metals are abandoned. Nearly the whole of the male population of the country have gone to the gold district. Ships arriving on the coast are deserted by their crews, and their voyages suspended for want of sailors.”¹¹ Brian Roberts explains that by January 1850, approximately 40,000 young men from the northeast pursued their own passage by sea towards California.¹² It is easy to brush aside the benevolent efforts of restrained men for the more stirring analysis of the Gold Rush. Rohrbough argues that the Gold Rush “called into question so many basic values—marriage, family, work, wealth, and leisure; led to so many varied consequences; and left such vivid memories among its participants.”¹³ Yet underneath all the shimmer of the Gold Rush stood firm the ideals and mission of a soft empire.

The religious zeal that fueled the soft empire since the late eighteenth century continued to burn its way *through* the years of the California Gold Rush. President Polk failed to acknowledge the missionaries and reformers who had been scouring the Pacific not in search of gold, but for their fellow sailors and “savages” thought to be lost and deprived of civilization. The Gold Rush redirected sailor’s attentions towards California which in turn alarmed benevolent reformers of the ASFS so that by August 1851, San Francisco acquired a chaplain from the society. Sources demonstrate that by 1849, sailors heading to the gold fields had become a new concern for the ASFS. More significantly, contributors to the *Sailor’s Magazine* and 49ers’ journals also reflect the continuities of the soft empire. As decades before, restrained men sought to convey religious

¹¹ James K. Polk, “President’s Message,” *North American and United States Gazette*, December 06, 1848.

¹² Roberts, 94.

¹³ Rohrbough, 2.

and domestic influence onto their fellow sailors aboard ships and at ports along their journeys. This time, many of these sailors were now heading for California. This is not to say that San Francisco became the only site that the ASFS now focused on. Ports in the Pacific such as Panama City, Taboga Island, Callao, Peru and the Hawaiian Islands continued to be supported by the ASFS demonstrating the broad scope and duration of their project. Because of this, women's moralizing influence was unrelenting as a weapon against the martial instincts of overly aggressive and intemperate men. Very few northeastern women made the perilous voyage to California, yet that does not negate their influence on the reformers who did. Men—particularly captains and ministers—at times were expected to symbolize women's moral influence by demonstrating their piety and compassion towards their fellow ship mates. This consciousness seemed to justify their actions and support a belief that a superior form of manhood and civilization could pave the way for national, commercial, and religious expansion across the Pacific.

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In August of 1849, the ASFS reasserted the goals of the soft empire. Their successes, it was believed, were demonstrated in the monthly publication of its magazine. But when would their promises and prophesy be accomplished? The ASFS anticipated “when the vessels of war shall be dispatched on only on errands of peace and fraternal relationship; when the vessels of commerce shall carry on a merchandise richer than that of silver and gold, and the men of the sea are at once the shining ornaments and the efficient agents of the gospel, how rapidly will the world's redemption hasten on!”¹⁴ Their vision endured a little more than half a century remaining in line with restrained men such as Captain Benjamin Morell, who had believed in the 1830s that a reformation of culture and religion at sea could prove more successful than any form of military

¹⁴ *The Sailor's Magazine*, vol. 22, (1849-1850), 93.

conquest. This also included the efforts of the London and American mission societies that had similar aims for Polynesians since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Reformers' combined efforts in the region would soften both the "savage" Islander and unruly Anglo American sailor facilitating growth for the expanding marketplace of the United States.

The birth of the Market Revolution in the 1820s eroded traditional farm labor in the northeast and introduced factory work that paid its employees an hourly wage. Brian Roberts explains that by 1849, average Americans were earning between \$200 and \$300 annually.¹⁵ Economically, the Gold Rush brought about dramatic changes to California, 49ers, and ultimately the nation. Malcolm J. Rohrbough argues for example, that in California, "[t]he prices of all goods and services rose in proportion to the new, enlarged circulating medium."¹⁶ Sailors—alongside with masons and carpenters—seemed to be some of the first to benefit from the increasing value of their labor. In November 1849, ASFS Hawaiian Island chaplain, Samuel. C. Damon, aboard the U.S *Massachusetts* stationed off Benecia, San Francisco Bay, wrote to the editor of the *Sailor's Magazine* about the increase in sailor's wages there. He wrote that "gold is now operating as a more potent leveler than any other agency that was ever brought to bear upon human society."¹⁷ He reported that sailor's wages in the port of San Francisco had increased to \$100 to \$350 per month.¹⁸ In his log book, Damon wrote, "[t]here are many hundreds of seamen now scattered through the mines, which of course, keeps the price of seamen's labor exceedingly high. I hear of no seamen receiving less than from \$120 to \$150 per month, and the wages of officers and masters

¹⁵ Roberts, 22.

¹⁶ Rohrbough, 17.

¹⁷ *The Sailor's Magazine*, vol. 22, (1849-1850), 29.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

are correspondingly high. It is now exceedingly difficult to engage sailors to go upon foreign voyages. One thousand dollars are offered seamen, by the run, to ship on board vessels bound to the Atlantic states, but they will not go.”¹⁹ The amount of money that was instantly made available to sailors—both in wages and in gold—seemed to trouble moralizers such as Damon. Brian Roberts writes, “[f]or if doubts over the existence of this gold were increasingly muted beneath an official corroboration of its abundance, criticisms of gold seeking were not. Gold remained a filthy lucre.”²⁰ Men like Damon weren’t searching for gold, instead they were troubled regarding the vice and vulgarities that gold seekers would carry out both in route to and in California.

Damon’s report to the ASFS about conditions in the mines shows how he tried to grapple with what he witnessed. On one side, he was “surprised to witness the general order and quietness that everywhere reign. Every man seems intent on one object, the acquisition of gold, either by digging or trafficking for it. Personal property is much respected, and I certainly never was in a country where property was so much exposed, and where men had such temptations to theft if they were so inclined.”²¹ Damon was not so favorable towards the widespread use of profanity and intemperance. He believed that the soft empire could place a check on the corruption of civility in San Francisco. He wrote, “[m]ost sincerely do I hope that the late emigrations from New England will exert a salutary influence upon the society in California, checking the swearing, drinking and gambling propensity of so many in this country.”²² Damon appealed to restrained men to travel to California and provide moral guidance to those in need. He warned his readers, “[m]any in coming

¹⁹ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, vol. 22, (1849-1850), 70.

²⁰ Roberts, 37.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 71.

²² *Ibid.*

to this country, it is feared, will be ruined in both body and soul, for time and eternity. Here a man acts out the native tendencies of his heart.”²³ Damon seemed to anticipate many would fear the martial instincts of gold seeking men. He assured readers that, “[m]inisters of the Gospel, from the very first, have been well received, and found encouragement to labor in their calling. Such places as are not already supplied, will doubtless be supplied by clergymen reported as having left the Atlantic states.”²⁴ He believed that “...if they keep aloof from the spirit of speculation so exceedingly rife, [clergymen] will accomplish much in their Master’s cause.”²⁵ Damon hoped to overwhelm the gold mines with restrained men who could help replace the corruption of California with civility.

Damon also understood the economic opportunities that trans-regional trade in the Pacific would ultimately bring to the United States. He wrote, “California, Oregon, Sandwich Islands, China, and other countries lying upon the shores of the Pacific, are to be brought into closer connection than has hitherto been the case.”²⁶ He foresaw San Francisco as a port that would compete in commerce with London and New York. “Here is the wealth,” he wrote, “here the facilities for commerce—and hither tends or rushes the tide of emigration.”²⁷ He reflected over the significance of missionary and reformist efforts in the Pacific as well as his own place in the soft empire. “My lot is not permanently cast in [San Francisco],” he wrote, “but the influence of this country upon the [Sandwich] Islands is now very great, and it is becoming increasingly so; hence

²³ Roberts, 72.

²⁴ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, Vol. 22 (1849-1850), 72.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, Vol. 22 (1849-1850), 73.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

I shall return to my station and home, there to labor in connection with my missionary brethren, in order that the moral influences emanating from the Islands may be of the right kind.”²⁸ He hailed the alliance between missionaries and reformers that had been established early in nineteenth century, writing “[o]h who can now estimate the incalculable benefits to result from the establishment of the American mission at the Sandwich Islands, even so far as our own rule is concerned!”²⁹ While 49ers were digging for gold, ASFS reformers were mining the conscience of New England men hoping to unearth inspiration to travel to California to serve as miners’ moral compass.

In December 1850, Damon wrote again to the editor of the *Sailor’s Magazine*. He included a lengthy discussion explaining what he considered to be an indirect yet powerful influence of California on the Hawaiian Islands. Waves of immigrants from England’s colonies were landing at the Island’s ports. “The report of the gold mines,” Damon wrote, “no sooner reaches the British Colonies of New Zealand, New South Wales, Van Dieman’s Land, than it creates a general movement.”³⁰ He foreshadowed the conquest of civilization over the Island’s indigenous peoples should the sailors stay. “Many of the emigrant vessels touch at our ports, and as not a few of those who started for the mines, have concluded that they and their families would be far better off at Honolulu, and in other parts of the Islands, it is quite impossible to tell just how many have concluded to remain, but the number is considerable.”³¹ He concluded, “[l]et the streams continue to flow for one or two generations in these two channels which have been opened, and our hills

²⁸ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, Vol. 22 (1849-1850), 73.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, Vol. 23 (1850-1851), 99.

³¹ *Ibid.*

and valleys must inevitably be inhabited by another race.”³² These were the hopes and aspirations of proponents of the soft empire; and while San Francisco was receiving gold seekers, travelers continued to enter into ports where the ASFS established sailor’s homes and chaplains. Places such as Valparaiso, Chile, Panama City, Taboga Island, Lahaina, Honolulu, Hawaii, and Callao, Peru, were among the various ports the ASFS established a presence for sailors in the Pacific. To manage a project with such a large scope, many reformers found themselves appealing to captains and clergymen at sea to serve as men’s moral compass. Seen in this light, the Gold Rush becomes a catalyst to the soft empire. It becomes yet another reason why reformers felt they needed to extend the sobering effects of domesticity and Christ to Anglo-American sailors.

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From its first publication in 1829 and on through the Gold Rush, the *Sailor’s Magazine* acknowledged the overwhelming influence a sea captain had on his crew. The sentiment was that, “[t]heir pious example in attending to the means of grace, and their religious advice to their crews, would have a most happy effect.”³³ Through its magazine, the ASFS was able to publish testimony of pious captains who cared about their crews’ religious and moral well-being. One remorseful captain in November 1828, at anchor off Quarantine Ground (north-east shore of Staten Island) recognized “[t]he charge that I now have over men is truly responsible, and it gives me pain to think I can do no more for them. I pray that God will give me grace and wisdom to enable me to do all things to his honour and glory, to bear the cross as a true and faithful disciple of Christ.”³⁴ These testimonies may have provided assurance to the reading public that their sons were not alone

³² *The Sailor’s Magazine*, Vol. 23 (1850-1851), 99.

³³ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, Vol. 1 (1828-1829), 93.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

at sea. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, however, writings in the magazine also highlighted various attitudes of captains and sailors which further complicated the soft empire. Captains could be impious and severe while others compassionate and religious. Sailors too held a variety of attitudes that often times put them at odds with a reformer's agenda. Other more pious sailors often faced the fury of an authoritarian captain.

In November, 1848, writing to the *Sailor's Magazine* in New York, Rev. Dr. Spring maintained the importance of pious captains and observing the Sabbath while at sea. He wrote, "[e]very ship should bear a healthful moral influence to every land, and every seaman should be a light shining in a dark place. And what is so fitted to create and preserve such influence as the Sabbath at sea? But for the narrow and short sighted, as well as wicked policy of shipowners, and shipmasters, which has so profaned this day as to make it a day of needless, and sometimes augmented labor; and when not of labor, a day of mirth and glee; seamen might have been among the moral and more useful class of men."³⁵ Spring highlights a common sentiment that sailors felt for decades, if not longer, towards captains who blatantly ignored the Sabbath. In 1834, for example, Richard Henry Dana Jr. reflected disappointedly on the passing of a Sabbath without religious instruction. He wrote, "[o]n board some vessels this is made a day of instruction and of religious exercises; but we had a crew of swearers, from the captain to the smallest boy; and a day of rest and of something like quiet, social enjoyment, was all that we could expect."³⁶ Even a day of rest could be hard to come by, Dana expressed the arduous life at sea with the "Philadelphia Catechism." He wrote, "six days shalt thou labour and do all thou art able, And on the seventh,—

³⁵ *The Sailor's Magazine*, Vol. 21 (1848-1849), 80.

³⁶ Richard Henry Dana, Jr. *Two Years Before the Mast* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1899), 19.

holystone the decks and scrape the cable.”³⁷ Seamen Chaplain D. Trumbull stationed in Valparaiso, Chile, 1848, felt tension between a shipmaster and himself after offering an invitation for religious services and religious tracts to the crew. The captain “answered to the invitation to church with ‘ough’ turned on his heel and would not take a ‘Neighbor.’”³⁸ Trumbull continued, “the captain broke forth once more; if you want to give away papers, come when the people are not at work.”³⁹ Through their ability to create endless amounts of labor—captains could make it difficult to maintain the piety that was required of restrained sailors as they ventured towards the Pacific.

Sailors too could refuse religious services that captains provided further complicating the ASFS’ efforts. Trumbull wrote in his journal that he had spoken with a captain on board the *Cyane*. He described the captain as “attentive and kind.” He wrote, “speaking of seamen, [the captain] said he was almost discouraged, they seemed to yield so little to good influence. He had conducted religious services on the Sabbath, but the men appeared very obdurate, often ungrateful and deceitful; though there were some good exceptions.”⁴⁰ As 49ers began making their decision to voyage towards California in the beginning of 1849, the ASFS for decades had been tirelessly working in the Pacific mindful of all forms of vice that endangered their fellow sailor. Gold was only one more form of evil that reformers would have to combat.

In December of 1848, the same month President Polk delivered his message to Congress, Linville John Hall, a Connecticut printer, joined the Hartford Union Mining and Trading Company. Hall, together with one hundred and twenty-two men, had purchased a ship, the *Henry*

³⁷ Ibid., 16.

³⁸ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, Vol. 21 (1848-1849), 90.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, Vol. 21 (1848-1849), 91.

Lee, and made the necessary preparations for a three year voyage to the California gold fields. From the beginning of the voyage, Hall wrote in familial terms in order to explain the organization of the mining company. He related the formation of the company to that of a fraternal society stating “[t]hey [are] organized--fortified by law--and bound themselves into a golden brotherhood, full of mutual promises of sympathy, protection and equal profit.”⁴¹ This organization reflected the interests of restrained men who utilized feminine qualities of family and sympathy to justify their trip to California. As men, they had to deal with their energies according to proper notions of nineteenth century manhood. What better way than through a fraternal society? Anthony Rotundo argues that in the nineteenth century, there were two methods employed to control male passions. The first, he explains, was that “[w]ith little conscious articulation, men devised experiences that helped transform the impulsive passions of the boy into the purposeful energies of the man. Academies, colleges, and apprenticeships in commerce and the professions served some of these purposes.”⁴² Before these would-be 49er’s embarked, they ensured a sense of purpose for themselves promising their families reward for their sacrifice.

The second idea to control male passions “directed women to bridle the aggressive drives—the engines of individualism—that were associated with men and their sphere.”⁴³ Rotundo explains that mothers devised various methods in order to nurture a sense of virtue among their sons. It would be the boy’s responsibility to make their mother’s lessons on virtue and “make them part of his conscience.”⁴⁴ Linville Hall’s journal shows his virtuous conscience at work. On a Sabbath, he

⁴¹ Linville J. Hall, *Around the Horn in '49; Journal of the Hartford Union Mining and Trading Company. Containing the name, residence and occupation of each member, with incidents of the voyage. Printed by L.J. Hall, on board the Henry Lee, 1849* (Wethersfield: Reprinted by L.J. Hall, 1898), III.

⁴² Rotundo, 21.

⁴³ Rotundo, 25.

revealed a sense of satisfaction about the maintenance of the ship and virtuous behavior of the crew. He wrote, “[t]he cleanliness of the ship, the neatness of the men, and the reverence paid to the day, speak well for Connecticut. Bibles, religious tracts, and good moral works in every corner and amidships, meet the eye. New England’s sons, with all of her nobleness and dignity, are with us, and never will they forget the precepts and examples of their fathers.”⁴⁵ The long voyage to California provided restrained men an opportunity to reflect deeply in religious and moral thought. Hall proudly wrote, “[a]t 11 o’clock the bell rung for religious services. The 103d Psalm was read and made the subject of remarks, which were listened to with profound attention.”⁴⁶ It is important to recognize that men knew their wives at home would read their letters, filtering the failures and disappointments of the journey so that the public could hear of the wonders of the gold fields. Whether these men actually maintained a “neat” and “orderly” ship remains in question. They ultimately may have been lip service to their wives back home.

The long dreary voyage to the west provided many occasions to reflect on the behavioral expectations set by the women in their lives—most importantly, their own mothers. Rotundo explains the characteristics of virtue that mothers taught their sons. He writes, “[i]t was a warning against drink, gambling, and sex. But more persistently, it was an injunction against those vices that came easily in a world engulfed by commerce—selfishness, greed, envy.”⁴⁷ A letter from a mother to her son published in the *Sailor’s Magazine*, reflects the advice given to their boys at sea. She wrote, “[d]o not seek to gain favor or respect by joining in the profane oath, vulgar jest, or

⁴⁴ Ibid. 29.

⁴⁵ Hall, 62-63.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Rotundo, 30.

infidel jeer. You know that every man, in his heart, respects another for doing right.”⁴⁸ She continued, “[t]hink over the instructions of your childhood. Do not forget your catechism, nor those precious hymns you have been accustomed to repeat.”⁴⁹ This was the root of the soft empire. Mothers sought to impart their virtue and piety to their sons so that they could in turn share their message. A selection from Mrs. Hawkes’ memoir demonstrates how mothers could permeate both a man’s and woman’s conscious. Writing about her deceased mother, she wrote “[h]ow present is her image! How sweet my communion with her departed spirit!”⁵⁰ She prayed that her brother had her within his conscious as well. She wrote, “[o]h may his mother be much upon his mind, and upon all our minds, and may we meet her in glory!”⁵¹ Linville Hall’s mother was indeed in his conscience as he headed to California. He reflected on a windy afternoon, “[o]ur mothers at home would scold some if they could see how the mattresses, blankets and pillows fly.”⁵² When the situation called for a more serious response, however, certain men had to step in and exemplify the missing virtuous mother. Captain David P. Vail of the *Henry Lee*, symbolized this role on behalf of the crew after discovering some had broken a pledge of temperance.

Hall observed the actions Captain Vail took after he discovered the pledge had been broken. He stated, “[t]he Captain to-day stopped suddenly and looked at the watch on deck, who were full of frolic--all did not keep their sea-legs well. One would dance a hornpipe or shuffle a break down, yet with good nature endeavor to obey commands...”⁵³ He continued, “An examination was made.

⁴⁸ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, Vol. 21 (1848-1849), 326.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, Vol. 21 (1848-1849), 91.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Hall, 147.

The unknown barrel was discovered, with bung out and a lead pipe by its side. *Good Apple Jack*, as the cider-brandy was called by the sailors, had been creeping up the pipe and down the throats of the crew. It was rebunged, put in a hogshead, headed up, and secured. Inquiries were made among the brotherhood, and the young men, with the hope of saving the balance of the contents of the barrel, confessed that they had put it aboard--not knowing that it was a violation of the compact--for a private speculation.”⁵⁴ Captain Vail confiscated the alcohol and proved to his crew that he would enforce the notion of virtue and morality on board the *Henry Lee*. To men like Hall, Captain Vail was indeed a true man. Upon arriving in San Francisco, he reflected on the journey and on his shipmaster, “Three times we had been so near wrecking that the apparent chances were against us, but his indefatigable spirit, his vigilant eye, his heart of resource had, through Divine Providence, saved us. His manly aids, the first and second mates, by genial and social qualities, had also endeared themselves to all.”⁵⁵ Samuel Upham had a similar experience on board the *Osceola*, heading to San Francisco from Philadelphia in January of 1849. He reflected, “[c]onsiderable excitement was caused today in consequence of the man at the wheel being found slightly inebriated. This led to an investigation of the matter, and in searching the forecabin a jug of whiskey was found in the chest of one of the sailors, which the Captain ordered thrown overboard.”⁵⁶ Adhering to the temperance pledge was one method of instilling virtue among crews heading for California.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁵⁵ Hall, 163.

⁵⁶ Samuel C. Upham, *Notes of a voyage to California via Cape Horn, together with scenes in El Dorado, in the years of 1849-'50* (Philadelphia: By Samuel C. Upham, 1878), 26.

Upon arrival in California, the captain could also serve as a refuge from the “rife, reckless” gambling of San Francisco. William McCollum wrote, “The captain of our vessel had very kindly favored our company, by allowing us to remain on ship board, until we were ready to start for the mines.”⁵⁷ McCollum was writing about Captain Henry Cleveland, whom he reflected was “not only a good specimen of a sailor, but equally a good specimen of a man.”⁵⁸ It became McCollum’s goal, or so he wrote, to avoid “the plague spot” of San Francisco. McCollum was conscience of the lack of virtuous behavior and remained on the *Nyantia* until he found another more suitable spot to disembark. Temperate men such as Henry T. Havens, with “bumpers of cold water, and interspersed with appropriate music...” celebrated Independence Day with a toast to women. Havens proclaimed, “[to] [o]ur wives and mothers—may their influence keep up in the path of duty through all the vicissitudes of a California expedition.”⁵⁹ It was a woman’s influence that kept these 49ers’ behaviors in restraints.

At times, priests or ministers could be found among the ship’s crew which would further skew notions of manhood for would-be 49ers. Rotundo argues that men associated priests with feminine traits. He writes, “...nineteenth century ministers spent their days at home alone or in predominately feminine company, plying such womanly qualities as sympathy and nurture for the good of others.”⁶⁰ Rotundo claims that professions such as physicians and the ministry “conferred a lesser social status on its practitioners than did the callings of business, law, finance, and

⁵⁷ William M’Collum, *California As I Saw It: Pencillings by the Way of its Gold and Gold Diggers! And Incidents of Travel by Land and Water* Edited by Dale L. Morgan (Los Gatos: The Talisman Press, 1960), 126.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Hall, 132.

⁶⁰ Rotundo, 206.

politics.”⁶¹ He continues, explaining “[n]uture and care were women’s tasks, while men were expected to wield power and wealth—elements that characterized the higher-status vocations.”⁶² While Rotundo claims that the clergy were held in lesser regard than other occupations, on board vessels to California, a different scenario played out. Priests took on a virtuous role that was admired. Take for example the treatment of Reverend Parker aboard the *Henry Lee*.

The “worthy clergy man” Reverend Parker, had offered to “conduct the Sabbath exercises” for the crew of the *Henry Lee*. Hall observed the respect and attention that the men paid to the Rev. Parker. He wrote, “[t]he scene was an impressive one; all showed reverence and gave a fixed attention throughout the hour. The singing from ‘Sacred Songs for Family and Social Worship’ harmonized with the feeling arising from the worship of the Creator in the midst of his works—a feeling, we presume, shared by all on this our first Sabbath at sea; for this may be considered the first, the last being a mere blank in memory.”⁶³ Reverend Parker maintained respect throughout the voyage earning several spots in Hall’s lengthy journal. On another occasion, Hall again noticed the influence of the clergy. He wrote, “[a] meeting was called on the quarter-deck. The 27th chapter of Job, selected by the Captain, was read. The Rev. Mr. Parker followed with an appropriate address, and a few remarks were made by others. It was pleasing to notice the attention during the exercises, and the good order and quiet throughout the day.”⁶⁴ Together, both Captain Vail and Reverend Parker imparted virtue among their crew as if they symbolized the missing feminine influence.

⁶¹ Ibid., 209.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Hall, 26.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 33. For other examples of the respect given to Rev. Parker, see Hall, 49-50.

On Independence Day, the day the crew of the *Henry Lee* toasted to the influence of the wives and mothers, the clergy earned a moment of honor as well. Mr. Hamilton raised his glass to the clergy, hailing “[t]he Clergy—[t]heir services in the days of the Revolution were gratefully acknowledged by Washington and Congress. Their influence is now felt on the side of right and freedom.”⁶⁵ On board the *Nyantia*, McCollum felt the crew was “fortunate in having for our fellow passenger, the Rev. Mr. Mines, an Episcopal clergyman, who was going out to found a church in San Francisco, in which enterprise he has been successful, as we were all glad to hear, for few could be better fitted for such a mission” He boasted that services were held every Sunday and that theirs would “shame some worshipping congregations on land--where gay dresses, frippery, lolling upon cushioned seats, worldly thoughts and aspirations are so mixed up with serious things--to have witness[ed] ‘the rough and weather beaten sailor,’ the ‘dare devil’ California adventurer, the officers men and passengers of the good ship *Nyantia*, listening with deep and ‘reverential awe,’ to the spiritual teachings of the Rev. Mr. Mines, upon the quarter deck.”⁶⁶ According to McCollum, the crew on the *Nyantia* far surpassed notions of virtue owing to the presence of Rev. Mines who would otherwise be understood as feminine in a largely masculine world.

When priests were absent, captains took on the role of a priest to provide a moment for the crew to mourn the loss of a ship mate. The journals of Stephen David and J.M Letts help illustrate this phenomenon. Stephen David recognized that “there [was] no divine service” on Sunday. He recounted the death and “burial” of a Mr. Hurd from Memphis, Tennessee, who died of dysentery. He described the scene, “[h]is body was sewed up in canvass with a heavy weight at his feet, and he lay on a plank in the lea gangway with the ‘American Jack’ thrown over him. The Capt then

⁶⁵ Hall, 132.

⁶⁶ McCollum, 115.

read the English burial service and at a given signal the body was consigned to the deep. His brother was on board and mourned bitterly.”⁶⁷ Having a captain reading the English burial service could be the closest sailors could get to a proper funeral and comportment on board a vessel. On another occasion, David recalled the death of a crew member from New York who died of “Isthmus fever.” He too was “sewed up in his canvas shroud, was committed to the deep, the Capt. reading the English burial service.” Filled with empathy and admiration, David recognized a sober moment that only a restrained captain could provide. He explained, “[t]o me this occasion was very solemn, knowing that the deceased was returning from the ‘land of gold’ after an absence of many months, to receive the warm greetings, and hearty congratulations of his friends and the sincere welcomes of his family and kindred.” He continued... “[b]ut just before he came in sight of his native land, he is called to depart from time to eternity, surrounded by strangers to none of whom did he chose to confide his dying charge to his family.”⁶⁸ Restrained sailors who were fortunate enough to travel under a restrained captain typically shared these sentiments and experiences when heading to California.

On his return from California, J.M Letts similarly traveled on a ship that did not have a minister on board. His story reflects the difficulties that reformed men experienced as they encountered men with discordant morality. On December 6th, 1849, Letts described the announcement of death and funeral at sea, “[a] rope was tied around the body; thence, passing down was tied around the ancles, and to the end was attached a canvas bag, filled with sand. The body was then sewed up in the canvas, over which was thrown the ensign of California. The

⁶⁷ Stephen David, *California gold rush merchant; the journal of Stephen Chapin David*, Edited by Benjamin B. Richards (San Marino, California: Huntington Library, 1956), 12.

⁶⁸ David, 4.

passengers now surround the corpse, with heads uncovered.” He explained, “[a] prayer is read by the captain, the ensign is removed, and at the word one end of the plank is raised, and the body passes gently into its grave.” The same day, a similar service was performed for “Mr. Cook, a young man from Sag Harbor, where he left a wife and child.”⁶⁹ At this point in his voyage, Letts held no qualms about his captain who seems to have provided the opportunity for passengers like Letts to reflect over the importance of family as they mourned the deaths of their fellow seamen. One month later, Letts’ experience on board the *Edward Everett* drastically changed his view of the captain.

On January 6th 1850, J.M Letts drew up a “Protest” against Captain Henry Smith of the ship *Edward Everett*, for not fulfilling his duties as a proper captain. Charges against the captain stated that passengers “had been grossly deceived.”⁷⁰ Evidently, Captain Smith had ensured would-be passengers that his ship had extra supplies and provisions for a safe and comfortable trip. They were charged \$100 in the first cabin and \$25 in the second for such items. Upon boarding, they learned that the provisions they paid for were damaged even before they had left San Francisco. Other charges of the protest criticized that many “invalids...suffered for want of nourishing food, of which the ship was entirely destitute, there not being a particle of dried fruit, preserved meats, wines, or any one of the articles thought indispensably necessary on ship-board.”⁷¹ The physician on board was slated for “dealing out medicines, which he did only at the most exorbitant charges.”⁷² Some passengers, “having been sick for days without nourishment,

⁶⁹ John Letts, *California illustrated including a description of the Panama and Nicaragua routes* (New York: R.T. Young, 1853), 28. For other examples of J.M Letts experiences with funeral services, see Letts, 175.

⁷⁰ Letts., 178.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

were obliged to buy flour of the Captain at exorbitant prices, and cook with their own hands something to sustain life.”⁷³ While the Captain performed religious service on board for those who died during the voyage, he was still required to fulfill the duties of his position with contemporary propriety.

In *Young Man's Own Book*, a mid-nineteenth century etiquette guide, being charged as a fabricator could mean a loss of dignity and respect. It warned “[f]rom that moment, we lose all trust, all credit, all society; for all men avoid a liar as a common enemy; truth itself in his mouth loses its dignity, being always suspected, and often disbelieved.”⁷⁴ Lying, dishonesty, and connivance were traits that young men were to avoid as they grew to become men.⁷⁵ The protest that J.M. Letts wrote up was essentially putting Captain Smith’s manhood on trial. These charges must have been difficult to draw up given the amount of respect a Captain held aboard a ship. Letts wrote in remorse, “[w]e regret exceedingly that we are obliged to make the above charges against an American Captain, a class of men so justly celebrated for philanthropy and kindness; but the circumstances under which we are placed leave no alternative; and we hereby most respectfully request that our Consul at Panama will immediately enforce the law in this case, believing that a few public examples will put an end to the abuse.”⁷⁶ While it is not clear whether charges were officially drawn against Captain Smith as they approached the Consul at Panama. What is clear is that Captain Smith failed to meet the expectations of restrained gentleman like John Letts.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ J. Howe, *The Young Man's Own Book: A Manual of Politeness, Intellectual Improvement, and Moral Development Calculated to Form the Character on a Solid Basis, And to Insure Respectability and Success in Life*, (Philadelphia: Key, Mielke & Biddle, 1832), 132-133.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 131.

⁷⁶ Letts, 178.

Sailors often described a sense of repulsion towards a captain's improper behavior. In some cases, the only refuge a sailor had left was their conscious. Charles Hotchkiss wrote in his journal, *California in 1849*, that “[g]ambling, rum and oaths were the circulating medium the whole trip, morning, noon and night. Gold was the absorbing topic of conversation.”⁷⁷ An impudent passenger disturbed Hotchkiss when he described a careless funeral service for one of the crew members. He explained that “[o]ne of the passengers, with a cigar in his mouth, stood at the head of the corpse, prayer book in hand, the body, except the head, was placed in a piece of old canvas, having about 100 lbs. of coal at the feet...”⁷⁸ Dumbfounded at the insolent behavior, he explained that “the man of the prayer book took his cigar from his mouth, and held it by the thumb and fore finger, read a few short sentences...when the man with the book cried out: ‘Launcho!’ and the body slid from the board, a few bubbles remained on the surface a moment, and the ship was on her course again.”⁷⁹ Hotchkiss was troubled about the company he was venturing to California with and its perceived lack of morality. He acknowledged, “[n]o notice was given of the intended ceremonies; the colors gave no evidence of sympathy; the ship did not lose her ‘way;’ no notice was given about the ship, nor were the gambling parties in any way disturbed, and I asked myself: ‘If such scenes are enacted on the Atlantic, what shall we witness on the Pacific?’”⁸⁰ The lack of a restrained captain in this scenario exemplifies the impact they had on voyages to California.

In 1850, Samuel Rodman, President of the New Bedford Port Society issued an “Address to the Commanders of Ships” to “solicit their co-operation in the important work they are now

⁷⁷ Charles F Hotchkiss, *California in 1849* (New York, N.Y, William Abbatt, 1933), 135.

⁷⁸ Hotchkiss, 135.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 136.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

laboring to carry forward among seamen.”⁸¹ The important work entrusted on captains was gendered and centered on familial designs. Most significantly, it expected captains to symbolize the moral and spiritual authority of women that otherwise would be absent as many ships sailed to California and the Pacific without them. For example, Rodman reminded captains that many of their crew were most likely minors “who are directly or indirectly placed under his care by parents and guardians of youth...[the captain] should exercise a parental care over the health, morals, improvement and usefulness of youthful sailors.”⁸² Rotundo writes about the various ways mothers sought to extend their moral domestic dominion into boys’ world. He explains that mothers sought to keep close contact with boy culture, conduct surveillance on them or use their voice of conscience to maintain an influence on their actions.⁸³ The far distances that their sons traveled on ships negated many of their abilities to hold the domestic influence on their sons. Captains then had to be both the mother and the father, the priest and the judge. Rodman argued, “Captains of ships are emphatically placed as lights and guides before their men. In them centre the expectations of owners—the repose of wives—the hopes of children—the confidence of parents—the happiness of families—the peace of society—the honor of the nation—and often instrumentally the salvation of souls. Duties corresponding to all these views are to be conscientiously regarded by them.”⁸⁴ To ensure the successful maintenance and transfer of western notions of gender, the soft empire relied on the conscious alliance between Anglo-American men and women. This alliance

⁸¹ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, Vol. 22 (1849-1850), 144.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Rotundo, 50.

⁸⁴ *The Sailor’s Magazine*, Vol. 22 (1849-1850), 144.

continued to reveal itself in sources through the California Gold Rush demonstrating the effectiveness of soft power over a hard, militaristic one.

In the early years of the Gold Rush, 1848-1852, notions of gender accompanied American men as they embarked on voyages around Cape Horn or through Panama to cure their “gold fever.” In this homosocial environment it would be the captains, clergymen and other self-reliant men who momentarily symbolized the missing virtuous mother or wife to ensure proper displays of mid-nineteenth century manhood. If these types of men were not available to maintain a virtuous company, virtue could only be found within the conscious of those men who sought such a life. This perspective can help further the understanding that women did play a major role in the California Gold Rush and ultimately in the soft empire. Through their efforts in teaching men how to be virtuous they would have an invisible presence on those ships destined for California and the Pacific.

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Conclusion

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This study has argued that by the turn of the nineteenth century, a softer form of empire was created by the Protestant men and women who collectively made up the Second Great Awakening. The religious societies they formed and their subsequent evangelical missions were caused in part by the death of Captain James Cook whose expeditions into the Pacific improved Euro-American knowledge of that vast waterscape. The killing of Cook in Kealahou Bay, Hawaii, shocked observers in both London and the New England states and led them to believe that the peoples of Polynesia were “savage” and morally depraved. The island paradise, described as such by earlier voyagers such as Captain Wallis and Bougainville were then seen as a space lacking civilization. By 1796 and then later in 1812, the London and American mission societies would lead the missionary project to Polynesia. Richard Lovett in his, *History of the London Missionary Society*, reflecting on the day that the first missionaries sailed to Tahiti on the *Duff*, wrote “England has both before and since sent out many a fleet from Portsmouth intent on voyages of commerce, discovery, of scientific research; but she has never done anything fraught with more hope for men, and calculated to reflect more glory upon herself, than this voyage of the *Duff*.”¹ Lovett’s words shed light on the belief that a new era of imperialism was beginning. He wrote that missionaries were “[s]ent out not by Government, but by private energy and zeal, in strong faith and humble dependence upon God.”² The formation of these mission societies then represents the moment which a softer form of empire was established.

The women who participated in these mission societies have been the subject of increasing significance for the history of the Pacific World. Jennifer Thigpen, for example, uncovers women’s agency in the mission field arguing that an alliance was struck between Hawaiian women of rank and mission wives in the early nineteenth century. That alliance, she argues, played a significant role in developing diplomatic contacts between American and Hawaiian Islanders. This study

¹ Lovett, 132.

² Ibid.

recognizes another much broader form of alliance. One that was consciously held between men and women missionaries as they traveled to Polynesia. It was heavily reliant upon the notion that Anglo-American women were more virtuous and moral than their male counterparts. Without them, it was thought that missionary men would quickly fall to the temptations of the South Seas. If wives, sisters or mothers could not travel with their men, they would have to have a heavy impact on men's conscience. These restrained men—who through their writings demonstrate a substantial reliance on notions of domesticity—were a product of this belief. They used ideals of male self-restraint and female morality to guide their way towards Polynesia. Women's writings too reflect this oscillation as they experimented with the idea of women's work outside the home and into the foreign. By the 1820's the era of reform ushered in benevolent societies that were complementary, if not allied with the mission project. The Anglo-American gendered conscious continued to play a significant role in shaping the decisions of restrained men and women.

Benevolent reformers of the New England States joined the endeavors of missionaries to employ the softer version of empire. Within that region, in cities like Philadelphia, it became commonplace for people there to rely on private societies for help in dealing with social problems. Bruce Dorsey writes that by 1800, "Philadelphians had organized the nation's first abolition society, prison society, free medical clinic, female charitable society, and Sunday school. Dozens of other associations followed these early leaders, providing food, clothing, and shelter for the poor, charity schools for indigent children and adults, schools for enslaved and free blacks, homes for orphans and widows and reformation for city prostitutes."³ These myriad reform efforts did not stop at the shoreline. The American Seamen's Friend Society was established by 1828 to "improve the social and moral condition of Seamen."⁴ Many of these sailors would find themselves in ports throughout the Pacific utilizing elements of domesticity that the society provided. Boarding homes, Savings Banks, and libraries were only a few "blessings" that would be available to travelers.

³ Dorsey, 52-53.

⁴ *The Sailor's Magazine*, vol. 1, September 1829, 1.

Contributors to the *Sailor's Magazine* argued that sailors “had long been neglected, that they have to a great extent become corrupt, intemperate, and profane, and that a great work is now to be done in order to reclaim them and prepare them for heaven.”⁵ The goals of mission work and reform combined as the number of souls to be saved grew.

This study concludes with an analysis of how the Gold Rush impacted the soft empire. I argue that the rush to California was eventually absorbed by the broader soft empire. San Francisco received a chaplain from the ASFS due to the gambling, drinking and other vice associated with the rush, however, the society continued to monitor its chaplains in ports such as Valparaiso, Panama City, Callao and the Hawaiian Islands. The scope of the soft empire then required a strategy that had been in use since the founding of the ASFS. This study argues that reformers appealed to ship captains and ministers who ventured off towards Polynesia or California in hopes that they would serve as examples of virtue and morality. Again, a woman's conscious was needed to needed to employ such an approach. This notion of the soft empire continued well into the late 1850's. Take for example a column in the *Sailor's Magazine* in 1858 that claimed it was becoming common to hear “shipmasters and seamen generally talk about making this part of the world [the Pacific] their home. Why should they not? Why may not the families of masters and officers become settled at the Islands as well as in New Bedford, or in other ports from which the whaling business is conducted?”⁶ Restrained men continued to rely on the morality and virtue of women. It quickly became, and continued to be the heart of the empire. The writer concluded, “[w]e hope the time may come when every married man in this part of the world will be accompanied by his wife.” He believed “What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”⁷

⁵ *The Sailor's Magazine*, vol. 1, September 1829, 13.

⁶ *The Sailor's Magazine*, vol. 30-31 (1857-1859), 210.

⁷ Ibid.

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Vita

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