UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

RELATIVE DISTANCES: SAILORS AND WOMEN ON THE PHILADELPHIA WATERFRONT, 1760-1825

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By
BETHANY R. MOWRY
Norman, Oklahoma
2023

Downloaded from SHAREOK. Persistent Handle URL: https://hdl.handle.net/11244/337573

RELATIVE DISTANCES: SAILORS AND WOMEN
ON THE PHILADELPHIA WATERFRONT, 1760-1825

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. Jennifer Davis, Chair

Dr. Lauren Duval

Dr. Jennifer Holland

Dr. Adam Malka

Dr. Justin Wert

© Copyright by BETHANY R. MOWRY 2023
All Rights Reserved.

Abstract

This dissertation uses Philadelphia as a case study to reveal the varied and significant relationships—business, sexual and romantic, and familial—that connected Anglo-Atlantic sailors and women across land and sea between 1760 and 1825. Placing traditional social history sources such as city directories, maps, insolvency petitions, Alms House records, public-private aid society minutes, newspapers, and personal correspondence alongside analyses of maritime culture texts such as sailor songs, broadsides, periodicals, novels, plays, and prints, it reveals the motivations, close connections, and patterns of behavior that facilitated Philadelphia's seafaring labor cycles. This research adds nuance to enduring portrayals of common seamen as footloose "Jack Tars" whose work separated them from land-based community and domestic life by choice or by fiat, and instead focuses on the everyday choices that sailors and women made to transcend physical distance and deliberately incorporate maritime labor cycles into their domestic, communal, and commercial lives. Connecting Atlantic history with histories of urban port cities, commerce, women and gender, and the family, this project also traces various changes over time, from the transformation of both sailors and working-class women into objects of moral intervention or nostalgic caricature to the transition between wooden and steam ships, the increased appearance of women as passengers and proxy crew on commercial and naval vessels, and shrinking legal and economic opportunities for women to act as *femes soles* in the absence of a male head of household. At the same time, it highlights key continuities, including the ubiquitous presence of women in and on the Philadelphia waterfront, interconnected oral performances and written transmissions of songs by and about sailors, and sustained patterns of cross-gender contact and connection in a diverse, dynamic, and expansive cityscape.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
Acknowledgments	vi
List of Illustrations	x
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Mapping Maritime Philadelphia	27
Chapter 2: Transactional Relationships	68
Chapter 3: Sexual and Romantic Relationships	131
Chapter 4: Familial Relationships	184
Conclusion	222
Bibliography	234

Acknowledgments

Both this dissertation and I have gone through several sea changes since I entered my PhD program, and I have been constantly reminded that even the most seemingly isolated of enterprises requires a vast network of external connections. It is a privilege to look back and remember all those who have traveled the course with me.

I have been exceedingly fortunate when it comes to outside support for my research, especially as a first-generation college student. The Library Company of Philadelphia's summer fellowship program let me immerse myself in their collections as well as those at the neighboring Historical Society of Philadelphia, and the Cassatt House gave me a perfectly located (and cost-friendly) home base for that trip and others. My special thanks to Jim Green and Fran Dolan for coordinating those logistics, and to the staff members at both the LCP and HSP for keeping me supplied with a steady pipeline of incredible books, diaries, pamphlets, broadsides, and ephemera. The Anne Hodges & Wayne Morgan Dissertation Fellowship from the University of Oklahoma History Department funded subsequent research trips to the LCP and HSP, as well as to the Philadelphia City Archives and the Independence Seaport Museum, and gave me the freedom to plan and schedule those trips when they were the most necessary. I am especially grateful to the City Archives staff, who had nothing but patience and kind assistance for myself and all the other researchers amassing as much material as we possibly could in the last two weeks before the entire archive moved across town. Receiving the Nancy L. Mergler Dissertation Fellowship allowed me to devote myself full-time to writing for an entire year, a luxury that became a necessity as I wrapped my brain around the vastness of this project. Throughout my research and writing cycles, I have also depended on the understanding and kind

forbearance of my colleagues and supervisors at the University of Oklahoma Press, University Press of Kansas, and Indiana University Press. Juggling full-time work and a dissertation is an exercise in madness under any terms, but knowing I had their support made all the difference.

People have defined my path through higher education just as much as practice, and I am grateful to the scholars and faculty members whose passion, keen questions, and rigorous dedication to their craft carefully cultivated my historical interests. The small but mighty Washburn University history department set me on the historian's path as an undergraduate, and always provided support and encouragement when uncertainty and doubt reared their heads. I am particularly grateful to Tom Prasch, Kim Morse, and Alan Bearman for making me a better writer and thinker, for introducing me to Atlantic history, and for not only tolerating but often encouraging all the conversation and chaos that flowed alongside the department lobby's steady supply of free coffee. At the University of Pittsburgh, I learned the true depths of what I wanted to know and what I still needed to learn about the Atlantic World and its sailors, and also discovered the delights of working with sailor songs. I thank Marcus Rediker for helping me realize my goals and validate my choices, and for continuing to be a prime example of how dedicating oneself to the art of writing is and should be part and parcel of the historian's craft. Whenever I said that I studied maritime history at the very much landlocked University of Oklahoma I usually received some interesting looks, but more often than not, all I had to say was that I went there to work with Paul Gilje and all became clear. Dr. Gilje's willingness to foster my interests, to challenge me as needed while always being scrupulously fair, and his conviction that good history depends on staying true to the sources have made me a better scholar and person, and I will always be grateful for his guidance. When retirements and other job transitions upended my original committee, Jennifer Davis stepped up to take the reins, and she has proven

to be the most considerate and stalwart of mentors. Her calm willingness to always find a way forward, and to work with all manner of crises, guided me true. I am grateful to her and to the past and present members of my committee—Catherine Kelly, Kevin Butterfield, Lauren Duval, Jennifer Holland, Adam Malka, and Justin Wert—for all they have done to shape my ideas, refine my writing, and ground my work in good historical practice.

Friends and colleagues inside and outside of academia have also played a crucial role in keeping my momentum moving forward. I am grateful to my graduate cohorts at Pitt and OU for the hundreds of fleeting moments in seminars, TA lounges, libraries, and conference rooms that combine to create a lively and collaborative graduate experience. I am equally grateful to the fellow graduate students and their partners who provided much-needed social respite from our intellectual labors, whether that meant trivia nights, dance parties, movie excursions, board game and tabletop RPG sessions, or late-night snack runs. I feel especially lucky to have met Alexandria Gough as a fellow first-year PhD student at OU, and to have her as a friend, ally, and sounding board as our paths developed in tandem despite our very different areas of scholarly interest. Matt Corpolongo provided feedback and validation when it was most sorely needed and, along with Derek and Stephanie Donwerth, Kayla Griffis Molina, Michael Molina, and John and Courtney Buchkoski, also provided a great deal of laughter and mutual geekery as we made it through our semesters together. From safe places to vent to random acts of origami and other benign conspiracies, I thank Hannah Thompson and Julie Dillman for always welcoming my presence and presents in all of their, um, glory. Laura Simone continues to prove that making her the best woman at our wedding was the right call, and that there's always time for random adventures, art appreciation, and good sushi.

Throughout this intellectual odyssey, my family has always been there to remind me who I am, where I'm going, and when it's time to go out exploring or to come back home. My sister, Nicolle Mowry, was a voracious reader, and I wish I could have used my bratty little sister privileges one last time to make her read this. In the months since her passing, though, I've come to appreciate what a gift it is to find her common sense and wry wit lingering in unexpected places. It took me much too long to realize that having two parents who met as sailors in the Navy—one of whom continued going to sea for several years while the other stayed on shore with home and children—might have influenced my interest in maritime-connected women and sailors' work, love lives, and families. Luckily for me, my parents Dave and Annette Mowry have amply proven that even when I'm being a little obtuse, they still love and support me. With Kari and Trino Ramos, I have also been blessed with the best possible parents-in-law, and gaining Eric and Ritchie Ramos as brothers-in-law only proves my fortune. The greatest gift has been my husband and partner, TJ, whose unending support and affection humble and delight me every day. This has been a hell of an adventure, and the only reason I've reached the end is because even when you weren't there in person, I always had you with me.

List of Illustrations

Figures

Figure 0.1. Frontispiece of *The Nautical Songster, or Seaman's Companion* (1798).

Figure 0.1. Frontispiece of *The Sailor's Medley* (1800).

Figure 0.2. Frontispiece of *The Frisky Songster* (1802).

Figure 0.3. Frontispiece for *The Festival of Mirth, and American Tar's Delight* (1800).

Figure 1.4. 1776 Map of Philadelphia.

Figure 1.5. Plan of Philadelphia, 1777, as published in the 1778 *Philadelphia Almanac*.

Figure 1.6. Detail of 1779 Plan of Philadelphia and its environs.

Figure 2.1. "The Sailor's Pleasure," printed by Bowles and Carver, c. 1790-1800.

Figure 2.2. Engravings from William Birch, *The City of Philadelphia*, 1800.

Figure 2.3. Thomas Rowlandson, "Wapping," September 1807.

Figure 2.4. George Cruikshank, "Sailors on a Cruise," 1825.

Figure 3.7. George Cruikshank, "Sailors Carousing, or a peep in the Long room," 1825.

Figure 3.2. William Russell Birch, "Arch Street Ferry, Philadelphia," 1800, with detail.

Figure 3.3. Thomas Sutherland, "A Scene on the Main Deck of A Line of Battle Ship in Harbour," 1820.

Figure 3.4. Examples of sailors' tattoos, c. 1796-1818.

Figure 3.8. Detail from a map derived from *A Guide to the Stranger, or Pocket companion for the fancy* (1849).

Figure 5.1. Frontispiece of *A Sketch of the Life of Elizabeth Emmons, or the Female Sailor* (1841).

Maps

Map 1-1: Philadelphia's Seafaring Population, 1795.

Map 1-2: Philadelphia's Seafaring Population, 1810.

Map 1-3: Philadelphia's Seafaring Population, 1825.

Map 2-1. Selected female business owners, c. 1808.

Map 2-2. Path taken by John Joyce and Peter Matthias, December 18, 1807.

Tables

Table 1-1. Maritime Professions, 1785-1825.

Introduction

The land-sea divide created distances between colony and metropole, market and manufactory, and seafarers and land-dwellers—but distance is a relative term. While it would be disingenuous in the context of the Anglo-American Atlantic to suggest that distance is an empty word and does not exist, the assumed barrier between life in port and life at sea merits further interrogation.[1] The sailors and seafarers who regularly crossed this line have been often understood as a unique group of individuals in a globalizing world, whether that made them cosmopolitans fluent in many worlds but struggling to belong in one, or de facto captives of an isolated shipboard environment whose physical removal from alternative living spaces limited their options for freedom and self-reliance. Both of these interpretations also imply that their bodies' extended physical removal from land-based communities also detached them mentally and emotionally: distance not only from relatives, but from forming any happy lasting relationships, save for fleeting sexual relations. Excluded from the fellowship of the forecastle by occupation or gender, those relatives in turn were left waiting on the shore, often in vain and at the mercies of a harsh seafaring labor cycle that economically supported towns and cities around the ocean even as it ruptured traditional social ties.

Taking a closer look at a selection of maritime songsters that circulated in Philadelphia during its height as the United States' leading port reveals another image of sailors and the women they purportedly "left behind" them: moments where they formed clear physical and emotional connections, on and off board ships. Merchants and booksellers like Mathew Carey

[1] For the original quotation ("La distance est un vain mot, la distance n'existe pas!") see Jules Verne, *De la terre á la lune: trajet direct en 97 heures 20 minutes* (Urbana, IL: Project Gutenberg, 1997 [Paris: Pierre-Jules Hetzel, 1865]), https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/799 (accessed January 13, 2023).

regularly advertised their shops' inventory of musical offerings in Philadelphia's many newspapers, from pamphlets and broadsides to larger collections of poetry and song. Often, these publications were full of poems and ballads to sing about—and be sung by—ordinary seafarers plying their trade on the Atlantic. *The Nautical Songster* (1798), *The Sailor's Medley* (1800), *The Frisky Songster* (1802), and *The Festival of Mirth, and American Tar's Delight* (1800) all circulated around the same time in Philadelphia, though they were originally printed in Baltimore, Philadelphia, London, and New York, respectively. They were all longer-form publications, with the shortest at 64 pages (the *Nautical Songster*) and the longest at 95 pages (the *Frisky Songster)*. They all contained songs about sailors and seafaring, some bawdier than others. Yet all four books provided a similar initial depiction on their frontispieces: sailors and women, arm in arm or holding hands, aware of and pleased by the other party's presence.

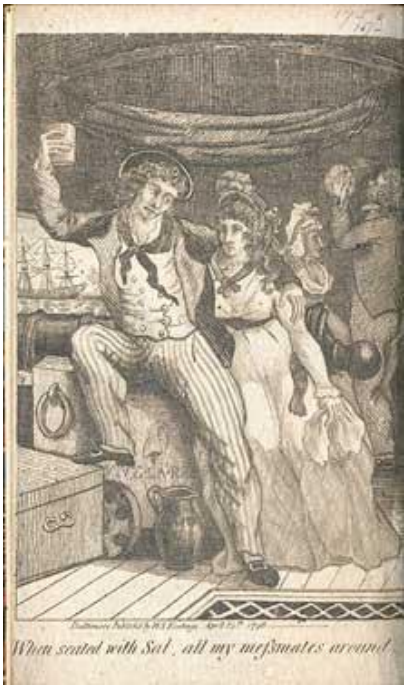




Figure 0.9. Frontispiece of The Nautical Songster, or Seaman's Companion *(Baltimore: Henry S. Keatinge, 1798).*

Figure 0.10. Frontispiece of The Sailor's Medley (Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, *1800).*

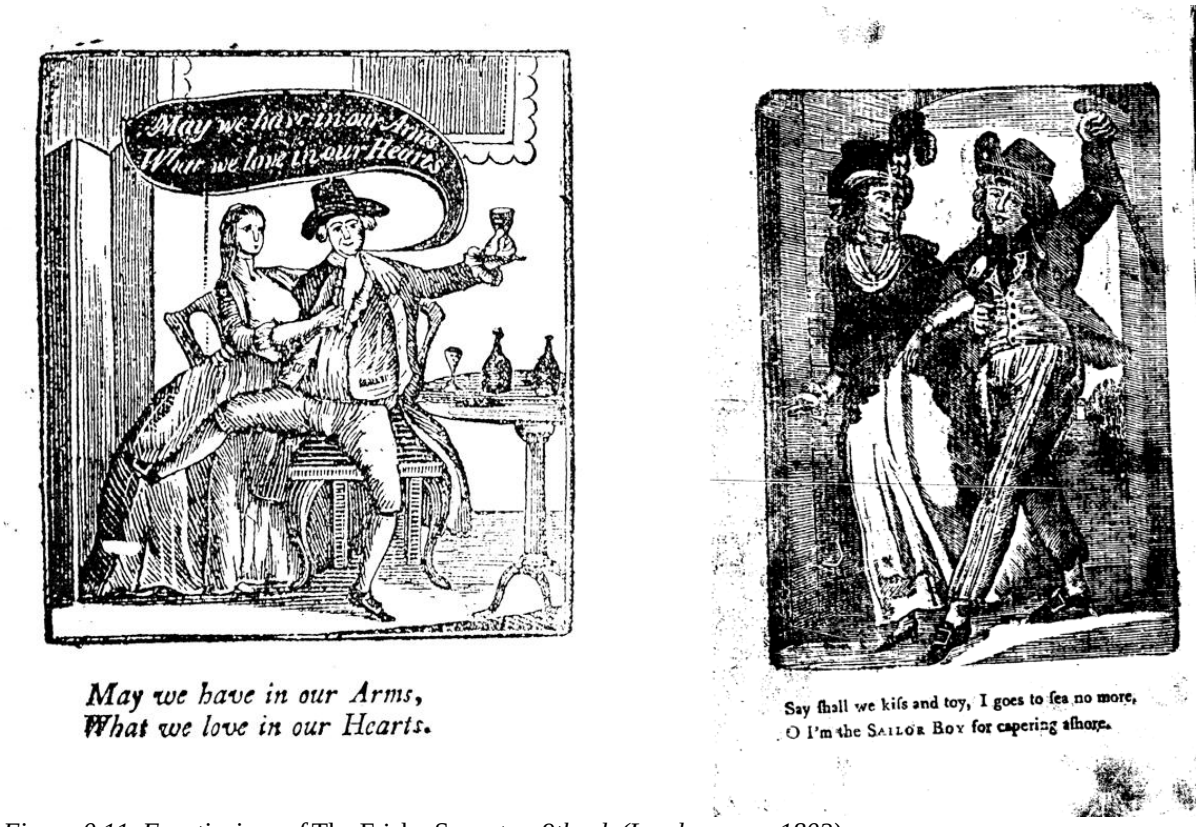


Figure 0.11. Frontispiece of The Frisky Songster, *9th ed. (London: n.p., 1802).*

Figure 0.12. Frontispiece for The Festival of Mirth, and American Tar's Delight *(New York: Thomas B. Jansen & Co., 1800).*

Sailors in the Anglo-American Atlantic had a reputation for transience and pleasure-seeking that their interactions with women purportedly reflected. Cultural caricatures thrived upon sailors caught in the inexorable tides of sex and romance, wringing comedy and tragedy alike from their liaisons. Even those narratives in which sailors strove to cement their ties to women always pushed against another unstoppable force: sooner or later the sailor was bound to head back to sea again, leaving his beloved on shore to either worry about his fate or abandon him. This was a compelling narrative—so much so, that it has carried over into contemporary histories of sailors and the women with whom they formed social bonds. Scholars have either downplayed the significance of sailors' ties to women or have largely focused on the ways that the harsh realities of seafaring tested the bonds between men and women on the waterfront, often

to the point of breaking, and curtailed their efforts to reach domestic ideals. At the same time, studies of the laboring class in Philadelphia and other Atlantic port cities have demonstrated the ubiquitous presence of women and families within those cities' economic networks, legal processes, and the other ties that bound Atlantic commerce and community. Proponents of the enduring image of footloose, feckless sailors might view these frontispieces as relatively chaste references to the waterfront's fleeting pleasures, and the women within them as temporary interlopers brought into maritime spaces as objects for sailors' masculine desires. Yet what happens if one assumes that these women not only belonged in these spaces, but that their presence was just as vital to those spaces' existence as their seafaring male counterparts? And how does that perception shift when one also considers the numerous other women with whom Atlantic sailors shared conversation, trade, and other currencies?

In this dissertation, I examine the spectrum of relationships between sailors and women on Philadelphia's waterfront from 1760 to 1825, at the peak of its position as the American seaboard's leading port. I argue that these cross-gender relationships intrinsically shaped sailors' labor and lives, affecting not only their immediate decisions but the contours of Anglo-American seafaring itself, making their female relationship partners a crucial aspect of these processes whose contributions must be considered when analyzing sailors' local, national, and transnational impact and influence. Whether they drew upon their memories of actual, lived relationships or upon cultural conceptualizations of how those bonds operated, Philadelphia's sailors understood themselves as active participants in the cross-gender social connections they and the women they knew acted to form, navigate, and preserve, and while their repeated physical distance from portside women could test both partners' attachments, it also enabled and sustained them. Finally, as both sailors and women's socioeconomic power in urban spaces

declined into the nineteenth century, I show how their social and cultural definition of each other inspired their shifting rhetorical portrayals from economic contributors to objects of dependence, inadequacy, and necessary intervention.

Historiography

My project fits into multiple fields of historical study, from the history of sailors in early America and the Atlantic to histories of women, gender, and sexuality, labor and the working class, and urban and capitalist spaces. Beginning with Jesse Lemisch's 1968 article on Jack Tar, which exemplified his famed "history from the bottom up" approach, scholars such as Marcus Rediker, Peter Linebaugh, and Christopher Magra have continued to cast the sailor as part of a proto-proletariat whose labor at sea hearkened toward the industrial working-class struggles of the nineteenth century.[2] But scholarship on sailors has drawn far more diverse viewpoints, to include research that adds nuance to visions of sailors-as-proletariat *en masse*. W. Jeffrey Bolster, Isaac Land, Paul A. Gilje, and Nathan Perl-Rosenthal have complicated issues of race, nationalism, and political participation amongst the working population of sailors, showing that sailors supported the status quo as much as they upended it.[3] Historiographically, this has created a field with great diversity but also with strict party lines that politicize the study of early

[2] See Jesse Lemisch, "Jack Tar in the Streets: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (July 1968): 371-407; Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700–1750* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Peter Linebaugh & Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000); Christopher J. Magra, *The Fisherman's Cause: Atlantic Commerce and Maritime Dimensions of the American Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), and Magra, *Poseidon's Curse: British Naval Impressment and Atlantic Origins of the American Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[3] W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Isaac Land, *War, Nationalism, and the British Sailor, 1750-1850* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) and *To Swear Like a Sailor: Maritime Culture in America, 1750-1850* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016); and Nathan Perl-Rosenthal, *Citizen Sailors: Becoming American in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

American seamen, and an enduring tendency among all of these authors and more to consider seafarers primarily as exceptionally connection-free individuals either set adrift from mainland society or clinging to one another amidst the constant turmoil of their unique profession.[4] In many ways, sailors were exceptional and stood out from mainstream of plebeian society, and these authors should be lauded for accurately revealing those differences. Yet my research shows that even as sailors plied trades that took them far from home and exposed them to far different living circumstances than other land-dwelling denizens, they simultaneously made daily and long-term choices to facilitate life, love, and family on land, and they fundamentally understood that land-based life as one populated and sustained by both men and women. By the same token, the women with whom they formed relationships understood the exceptional aspects of sailors' labor and reconciled them with their everyday lives. Maritime families tried, and in many cases succeeded, in creating everyday lives that were *both* comprehensible and foreign to their neighbors—and they also depended on their neighbors to facilitate them. My project maintains a focus on these lived experiences and perspectives of ordinary seamen, while also acknowledging the porosity of their sociocultural laboring experiences as part of a wider maritime labor force which included ships' officers, artisans and tradesmen in various seafaring support industries, "unskilled" dockside workers, and those involved in freshwater travel.

[4] This theme permeates the works cited above but its totality can be demonstrated by highlighting the diverse array of circumstances in which their authors write about sailors as "exceptional," "unique," "special," or otherwise set apart from other laborers: in their ships which "did not—indeed, could not—resemble a workshop" (Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea,* 199); the "exceptional difficulty" of their work (Magra, *The Fisherman's Cause*, 55) but also its "exceptionally high earning potential" in times of war (Magra, *Poseidon's Curse,* 285); their "special grievances" against the Stamp Act (Lemisch, 397); their *not* unique "libertine ethos" but exceptional social and naval atmospheres that "worsened and intensified [its] elements" (Land, 33); the "special urgency" the sea environment brought to maritime life (Rediker, 154) and "special hazards" of naval conflicts (Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 151); the "extraordinarily harsh" laws that governed maritime discipline in a "special way" (Lemisch, 377-378); the "special bonds" they formed with other seamen (Gilje *Liberty*, 80, and Gilje, *To Swear Like a Sailor*, 119); and the list goes on. Certainly there are more widely common causes, grievances, and patterns noted in these works as well, but the authors' conclusions perennially circle back to sailors' exceptionalism (and often their exceptional suffering), even when they have deliberate designs to puncture the romanticism of seafaring (see Lemisch, 376-377).

While it is undeniable that Anglo-Atlantic mariners regularly found cause to place themselves in opposition to the goals of merchants—and were often caused to find themselves on the other side of a strict shipboard hierarchy that drew sharp lines between captains and seamen—my research also reveals consistent and varied examples of ways that the identity of "seaman" or "sailor" overwrote these class differences without subsuming them. As Thomas M. Doerflinger has argued, Philadelphia's merchants formed a dynamic, if inchoate, occupational group which contained "both wealthy traders and many petty capitalists who lived no more sumptuously than a successful cooper or grocer."[5] While it bears repeating that even this latter group's "modest capital" set them apart from sailors in the lowest echelons of wage labor—save for the scarce few who made the jump between seafaring and trade, though often these merchant-mariners came from more exalted roots than their humble appellation suggested—it also should be noted that merchants and sailors regularly formed ties within in the same "fabric of adversity" whose high commercial risks and economic volatility could just as easily strangle or succor those who tried to manipulate it.[6] Scholars have written much on Philadelphia's merchants; the city's archives are rife with their personal diaries, business records, and writings, and as Toby L. Ditz has noted, they wrote even their personal correspondence with a keen understanding that both familiar and public eyes would glean information from them.[7] Merchants also played a significant role in Philadelphia's revolutionary and early republic political activity, especially among the Federalists, making them a potential subject of interest beyond (or rather, alongside)

[5] Thomas M. Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 15.
[6] Ibid., 16, 136. Doerflinger cites only four instances of "merchant-mariners": Captain Samuel Bunting, who pivoted his knowledge of foreign markets and friendship with Quaker merchants Abel James and Henry Drinker into wholesaling; New York's Enoch Hobart, who was also a captain; an account of a "shipping syndicate" between a "mariner, grocer, and shopkeeper" found within a book on Commodore John Barry; and Stephen Girard, who started seafaring as an apprentice officer thanks to his sea captain father and grandfather.
[7] Toby L. Ditz, "Shipwrecked; or, Masculinity Imperiled: Mercantile Representations of Failure and the Gendered Self in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *The Journal of American History* 81, no. 1 (June 1994): 54.

their economic activities.[8] The availability of source material, and the dovetailing of their commercial success with American ideals of entrepreneurship, independence, and self-made "great men" has also made them perennial favorite subjects of biographies and edited papers for decades.[9] My work is not designed to stand in opposition to theirs or to dismiss these merchants' presence and power within the city, but rather to focus on the silent partners whose labor facilitated the far-flung trade networks for which Philadelphia and its merchants became so lauded.

Before the 1960s, women historians and historians who wrote about women were few and far between; Mary Beard was the United States' most prominent example of both, but it took the second-wave feminist movement of the 1960s, including the 1975 implementation of Title IX, to establish the subfield of women's history as not only plausible to find, but important enough to reconstitute and place in the mainstream historical timelines of the United States. The first major new argument in American women's socio-economic historiography focused on the nineteenth-century establishment of the "cult of domesticity" or "true womanhood," which excluded women from public economic activity. Usually attributed to Barbara Welter, this thesis tethered women's frequent historical absence from politics, the highest echelons of the

[8] For classic works on this political-economic nexus with merchants at its center, see Jack M. Sosin, *Agents and Merchants: British Colonial Policy and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965); Michael G. Kammen, *A Rope of Sand: The Colonial Agents, British Politics, and the American Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968); and Robert F. Oaks, "Philadelphia Merchants and the Origins of American Independence," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 121, no. 6 (Dec. 1977): 407-436.

[9] For a sampling of works that demonstrate the chronological and interpretive extent of this merchant mystique in Philadelphia, see Stephen Noyes Winslow, *Biographies of Successful Philadelphia Merchants* (Philadelphia: J. K. Simon, 1864); Henry Atlee Ingram, *The Life and Character of Stephen Girard, of the City of Philadelphia, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Mariner and Merchant*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: n.p., 1886); William Vincent Byars, ed., *B. and M. Gratz, Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754-1798: Papers of Interest to Their Posterity and the Posterity of Their Associates* (Jefferson City, MO: The Hugh Stephens Printing Co., 1916); Thomas P. Cope, *Philadelphia Merchant: The Diary of Thomas P. Cope, 1800-1851*, ed. Eliza Cope Harrison (South Bend, IN: Gateway Editions, 1978); Gary B. Nash, "The Early Merchants of Philadelphia: The Formation and Disintegration of a Founding Elite," in *The World of William Penn*, ed. Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986); Herbert Ershkowitz, *John Wanamaker: Philadelphia Merchant* (Conshohocken, PA: Combined Publishing, 1999).

intelligentsia, and the wage-earning workforce to a collection of socio-cultural values that bound their "happiness and power" to their status as "hostage[s] in the home."[10] The identification of the True Woman, Welter claimed, created a straight evolutionary line to the New Woman, and from there straight to the dissatisfied women of the 1950s and 1960s who had read Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and found it revelatory.[11] All of these women were white and middle- or upper-class by default, their values writ large for all early American women. This argument would inspire a slew of monographs that expanded on this turning point in female subjugation, testing its lineage, investigating its preceding period, and finding new information that showed women's agency and ability to deviate from this societal norm, but few of these works prioritized economics over culture and politics.

Between 1976 and 1982, books and articles by Nancy Cott, Linda Kerber, Mary Beth Norton, and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich established that women's inclusion in America's historical narratives was no longer eccentric, but essential.[12] Even as these monographs opened that door, though, their primary focus on middle- and upper-class women who left traditional text-based sources, and the tendency to conflate these women's experiences as universal for their gender,

[10] Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2, part 1 (Summer 1966): 151-152.
[11] Welter, 174. The article ended with a citation of Friedan's work as well as a tongue-in-cheek to "the stereotype, the 'mystique' if you will, of what woman was and ought to be" (Ibid.).
[12] See Mary Beth Norton, "Eighteenth-Century American Women in Peace and War: The Case of the Loyalists," *William & Mary Quarterly* 33 (1976): 386-409, as well as her monograph *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (New York: Little, Brown, 1980); Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Linda K. Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment-An American Perspective," *American Quarterly* 28, no. 2, *Special Issue: An American Enlightenment* (Summer 1976): 87-205 (where she coined the now-ubiquitous term "republican motherhood"), as well as her monograph, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute and University of North Carolina Press, 1980); and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), which was based on her 1980 dissertation at the University of New Hampshire.

demonstrated the need for women's histories that gave equal weight to gender and class.[13] Some shorter works of this time made attempts at filling this need but also cited a lack of sources for the questions they posed, including Carole Shammas's 1983 article on Philadelphia women's social and economic structure in 1775.[14] One major monograph within this wave of feminism-inspired histories demonstrated the viability and value of such an approach: seven years after Nash's *The Urban Crucible* made its debut, Christine Stansell's *City of Women* (1986) revealed the gendered economic working-class world that Nash had left out of his examination of New York.[15] This pathbreaking volume revealed the city-within-a-city of lower-class women's labor hidden beneath the glittering vibrancy of New York's merchant capitalist growth. In the process, Stansell left a breadcrumb trail of citations that linked New York's growth and laborers with those in Philadelphia, though her study avoided sustained comparisons between New York and its urban contemporaries. While Stansell's work does not always feature in histories of urban capitalism—Smith's *The "Lower Sort"*, for example, cites Kerber and Norton for women's

[13] This is not to suggest that works focusing on the same upper- and middle-class women disappeared or even declined in later years; a more recent prominent volume on women's history, Rosemarie Zagarri's *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007) centered on the same echelon of "white, middle-class, and elite" American women and their participation in early American politics. Though her primary goal was to reveal women's centrality to American politics by using the "traditional sources of male political history, including newspapers, legislative records, political pamphlets, and correspondence among political elites," Zagarri also saw the necessity of clearly acknowledging her sources' racial and class constraints. (Zagarri, 9)

[14] Carole Shammas, "The Female Social Structure of Philadelphia in 1775," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 107, no. 1 (Jan. 1983): 70.

[15] Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), and Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1987 [New York: Knopf, 1986]). Stansell's book was based on her doctoral dissertation, "Women of the Laboring Poor in New York City, 1820-1860" (Yale, 1979) but the book contains a brief citation of Nash's *The Urban Crucible*, as well as an earlier journal article connected to his book ("Urban Wealth and Poverty in in Pre-Revolutionary America, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6 (Spring 1976): 545-584). While Stansell's work thus came after Nash had made his mark on the field, the concurrency of Nash's book and Stansell's dissertation clearly demonstrates that whatever Nash's reasons were for being largely silent about women, at least one of his port cities had substantial archival material that would have been available to him had he sought it out.

history in its stead—it shares a similar longevity and frequency of citation to these other major monographs.

The last 25 years have been the most prolific for nuanced studies of working-class women in Revolutionary-era and early republic Philadelphia, and the great majority of these works include these women's economic opportunities and contributions as part of the understanding that race, gender, and class are interdependent, inseparable categories. They also include recognition and discussion of these women's romantic and familial ties. In my study of the Philadelphia women who formed relationships with sailors, I have been guided most ably and frequently by the works of Karin Wulf and Clare Lyons.[16] Where both Wulf and Lyons have treated sailors' wives, widows, and sexual and romantic partners as part of a wider study of women defined by either their *feme sole* legal status (Wulf) or the combination of their sexual conduct and economic status (Lyons), my study takes a closer look at women whose lives intersected with maritime labor in order to better understand how its unique economic factors shaped women's lives and choices. Indeed, Lyons herself notes in passing some key differences between mariners and others from "lower and middling" occupational groups, such as the preponderance of mariners submitting self-divorce petitions and mariners' wives gaining feme sole status.[17] But these hallmarks of difference are rare and mostly mentioned in the first quarter of the book, raising the question of a specialized study of "sailors' women" but stopping short of following through on it.

Studies of women in other American port cities have also brushed up against women's familiarity with the town's maritime labor force but have not fully placed those relationships

[16] See Karin Wulf, *Not All Wives: Women of Colonial Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), and Clare A. Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender and Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006).
[17] Lyons, *Sex Among the Rabble*, 20, 30n23.

front and center. Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor's *The Ties That Buy* reinforced women's deep connections, as individuals and through their homes, to complex commercial markets via purchases, credit, debt, and litigation. While she noted that "the working women of Newport" found economic opportunities by providing temporary lodgings for sailors and their families, beyond boarding and clothes-washing her work largely relegates sailors to the background with other occupational groups and "transients," and their families vanish entirely.[18] The 2012 edited volume *Women in Port* covers more than 400 years of women's experiences within the Atlantic world but only mentions a few sailors' wives in passing. The chapter on early Philadelphia briefly mentions seafarers as clients of the "poor establishments" for boarding on the waterfront, but largely focuses on how middle- and upper-class men's business dealings redefined tavern spaces and intersected with separate spheres ideology to decrease the number of official and middle-class female tavern owners.[19] More recently, Sarah Damiano's *To Her Credit* elucidates free women's central roles in the personal credit relationships that defined economic networks in colonial Boston and Newport, and discusses how sailors' wives sought to draw upon either their spouse's wages or the mercy of the court to relieve their debts, as well as one female shopkeeper accused of tricking foreign sailors into signing over bills of sale.[20] Yet within this crucial focus on the intersection between finance and law, other factors that fed into these credit relationships—affection, sustained contact, cultural understandings, or non-marital familial ties—become obscured, if not entirely absent.

---

[18] Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, *The Ties that Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 42.
[19] Sheryllynne Haggerty, "'Ports, Petticoats and Power?' Women and Work in Early-National Philadelphia," in *Women in Port: Gendering Communities, Economies, and Social Networks in Atlantic Port Cities, 1500-1800*, ed. Douglas Catterall and Jodi Campbell (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 116. 120.
[20] See Sarah Damiano, *To Her Credit: Women, Finance, and the Law in Eighteenth-Century New England Cities* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021).

The situation of women within maritime histories of America and the Atlantic has generally transitioned away from blatant omission, but the notion that seafaring labor and relationships with women were irreconcilable enterprises remains persistent. Rediker's work acknowledged "men and women" in the "masterless" class of workers who engaged in collective action but excluded them from shipboard environments, save as "ill omens" or temporary partners in portside "frolicking."[21] Lemisch failed to mention them entirely. The seminal edited volume *Iron Men, Wooden Women*—in which Rediker contributed an essay about female pirates Anne Bonny and Mary Read—argued for the "importance of expanding … maritime history to include land-based experience[s]" with an ambitious two-centuries-plus historiographical sweep.[22] The essays by Lisa Norling and Ruth Wallis Herndon followed through on this promise but both pieces are New England-centric and primarily if not entirely whaling focused, and as such are complementary to studies based in other American port cities but have key regional and occupational differences that prevent their conclusions from being accurately writ large upon all sailors' experiences.[23] In a similar fashion, Elaine Forman Crane's *Ebb Tide in New England* also reinforced the separation of sailors and women, largely treating the former as "strangers" from "American and foreign ports" who came to Boston, Salem, Portsmouth, and Newport and "occasionally became lovers."[24] David Cordingly's *Seafaring Women*, originally published as *Women Sailors and Sailors' Women*, began with the declaration that sailors at sea "spent, and no doubt do spend, a great deal of time thinking about women," but both the book's structure and

[21] Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 80, 182, 65.
[22] Margaret S. Creighton and Lisa Norling, eds., *Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 55.
[23] See Ruth Wallis Herndon, "The Domestic Cost of Seafaring: Town Leaders and Seamen's Families in Eighteenth-Century Rhode Island" and Lisa Norling, "Ahab's Wife: Women and the American Whaling Industry, 1820-1870," in *Iron Men, Wooden Women*, 55-91.
[24] Elaine Forman Crane, *Ebb Tide in New England: Women, Seaports, and Social Change 1630-1800* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 202.

content fell short of fully interrogating that statement.[25] Structured as a "voyage," Cordingly's chapters privileged the viewpoints and experiences of those who traveled the sea, except for one middle chapter limited to "whaling wives" and another about "a wife in every port."[26] In the latter case, the chapter focuses almost entirely on the sexual exploits of a small number of ship's officers, and this trend of focusing on historical elites and exceptional figures persists throughout the book. The promised final chapter on "the sailors' return and see[ing] how the women fared in their absence" is only 14 pages long and focuses mostly on sailors returning home riddled with disease, or on sources of aid for their widows should they not return at all, giving little to no impression of the cyclical, generally non-fatal nature of seafaring life.

Even the most expansive studies of sailors' relationships with women retain some of these biases, and also tend to relegate women to a single chapter. In *Liberty on the Waterfront* (2004) Pail A. Gilje devotes a chapter to "The Maid I Left Behind Me," analyzing how relationships with women affected sailors' notions of liberty. Covering more than a century of American maritime history, Gilje's work provides a much-needed overview within maritime historiography of women's lives on the waterfront and of sailors' romantic attachments, one that assumes complexity, nuance, and strong connections between romantic partners as well as between those couples and their familial and professional ties. He also engages with cultural sources, particularly songs, delineating several tropes and feminine character archetypes while also cautioning against "confus[ing] popular images of womanhood with reality."[27] Yet the chronological and methodological constraints of his work—a long century along the entire

[25] David Cordingly, *Seafaring Women: Adventures of Pirate Queens, Female Stowaways, and Sailors' Wives* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2002), xiii. For the original see Cordingly, *Women Sailors and Sailors' Women: An Untold Maritime History* (New York: Random House, 2001).
[26] Cordingly, *Seafaring Women*, 122-137, 171-191.
[27] Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 35.

American waterfront, studying how seafarers of all sorts sought and understood liberty—avoid interrogating the perpetual and cyclical nature of sailors' relationships with women, as well as delving into local differences or change over time. He reinforces the division between sea and shore, with the former "releas[ing] the sailor, at least temporarily, from those relationships and compel[ing] him to live in an all-male society where his imagination could run wild."[28] In *Young Men and the Sea*, Daniel Vickers and Vince Walsh laid crucial groundwork for studying sailors' lives on land and at sea, and specifically examined the ways that both wives and children supported men's seafaring.[29] This work in turn followed Vickers's earlier call in his brief 1993 article "Beyond Jack Tar" to "integrate what we now know about life at sea with our increasingly sophisticated understanding of life in port"—with an added aside that maritime historians had also neglected gender and that women of the waterfront "clearly deserve[d] more attention."[30] Despite its important progress in revealing sailors' family ties, key factors limited Vickers and Walsh's analysis: as a smaller port steeped in patriarchy and specializing in codfishery, Salem housed seafaring men whose ability and desire to sail for a small number of employers, and its retention of close-knit and insular maritime communities into the nineteenth century, made it exceptional even in the already-rife-with-outliers seascape of New England sailing.

Methodology and Sources

My dissertation examines relationships between sailors and women on Philadelphia's Atlantic waterfront during the Revolutionary era and early republic. While the word

[28] Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 34.
[29] See Daniel Vickers with Vince Walsh, *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), especially Ch. 5.
[30] Daniel Vickers, "Beyond Jack Tar," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 50, no. 2, Early American History: Its Past and Future (April 1993): 422, 424.

"relationship" is one of the more capacious and easily manipulated terms in the English lexicon, my focus here is on connections between two or more people, based on real or imagined social interactions, and usually for deliberate and/or mutual fulfillment of emotional needs, personal satisfaction, or common interests and goals.[31] While there is often an assumed correlation between a relationship's duration, or the time spent in direct social interaction, and its importance to its participants, I have chosen not to impose such temporal qualifications within this category, as my research shows that even the most fleeting interactions could simultaneously impact multiple lives. I have further chosen to focus on relationships between male sailors and the women with whom they formed these bonds. In doing so, my goal is not to claim that sailors' homosocial or homosexual relationships were insignificant or nonexistent, or to otherwise reify the male-female gender binary. Indeed, I dearly hope that my own work will facilitate future research into the multi-layered connections and forms of intimacy between Atlantic sailors and non-seafarers, the everyday domestic arrangements of sailors who loved other sailors, and the historical recognition of non-binary, trans, asexual, and other non-cishet and queer individuals as de facto participants rather than as salacious outliers, cultural caricatures, or ahistorical confabulations, in this network of maritime relationships.[32] The task I have undertaken here, however, has been to address the persistent lacuna between Atlantic and maritime labor history and the history of women, and to demonstrate that discussing the former while omitting or sequestering the latter prevents a full understanding of how and why men went to sea. By operating within the sex and gender categories that dominated normative discourse within this

[31] I have paraphrased some of this terminology (but eschewed other aspects) from definition 2a in the OED. See "relationship, n.". *OED Online*. December 2022. Oxford University Press. https://www-oed-com.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/view/Entry/161816?redirectedFrom=relationship (accessed January 8, 2023).
[32] For a recent work which reveals the merits of carefully combing the historical record for non-cis individuals, including "female sailors and soldiers," see Jen Manion, *Female Husbands: A Trans History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

historical context, I have also been able to pinpoint several gender-driven omissions and biases in record-keeping, historical memory, and cultural relevance, whose recurrence and persistence amply demonstrate the endemic injustices and manifold consequences of an imbalanced power/gender binary.

For the purposes of this study, I have divided these relationships into three categories: transactional relationships, primarily premised upon the exchange of goods, services, and/or currency; sexual and romantic relationships, including actual and imagined connections; and familial relationships, based on blood or affective kinship. As a heuristic device these categories do not imply exclusivity, nor should they be seen as static states of being: some sailor-woman relationships could and did transition between multiple categories over their duration, while others contained business, pleasure, and/or affection from their onset, and the prevalence of one factor over the other fluctuated depending on time and circumstance. Additionally, while the order of these relationships reflects an overall pattern of frequency from short-term, temporary bonds to more permanent ties, each category also contains examples of connections whose endurance and depth of mental or emotional entanglement ran counter to this trend. With these caveats in mind, these three categories provide the necessary framework to delve into the diverse and complicated bonds that connected sailors to women, showing how cross-gender relationships are essential to understanding sailors' social and cultural roles in the Anglo-American Atlantic. Within these gendered categories, I also examine several other themes that shaped the ways sailors and women understood their relationships with one another and how their relationships were understood by others within the city, nation, and world. Age, race and ethnicity, class, and family all intersected with issues of identity, belonging, and power, and understanding the

separate and concurrent implications of these categories of division is necessary to grasp the full complexities of these connections.

Recovering the existence, let alone the perspectives, of the men and women who lived, loved, and labored in maritime Philadelphia between 1760 and 1825 has required careful reading and selection of source material. While I have looked at demographic data and comparative sources for seafarers in the higher echelons of rank and pay, including their personal correspondence, my primary focus has been on those whose lives coincided with mariners, the great majority of the city's maritime labor force. In the overwhelming absence of written records composed by these men and women in their own words, I turned to the techniques of social history as well as print culture, non-literary texts, and cultural analyses to reconstitute the networks of connection and discourse that defined the lives of these laborers. Recognizing that the sorts of official records in which laboring class individuals most often appear are those tied to exceptional or less than positive circumstances—including criminal records, bankruptcy claims and pleas for public aid, and accounts of natural or manmade disasters—I have followed in the footsteps of those who have read between the lines and against the grain of such records to acknowledge bias and tease out nuances of laboring class experiences. Yet my focus on mariners and seamen provided another challenge vis-à-vis the archive: as Billy Smith has noted, the city's maritime population was in constant flux, and this limited opportunities for traditional entries into the historical record. Tax records, church records, and legal dockets held some clues, but their central organizational method around names, with few to no other identifying markers, quickly became a guessing game at best and a futile search at worst for confirmation that a plaintiff or penitent was also directly connected to ocean-going seafaring. In several cases,

simply putting a name to a previously unidentified shop worker, wife, or mariner was an accomplishment in and of itself.

Yet the city's robust archival record bore substantive fruit within key record groups, starting with the city's regularly issued directories. First published in 1785, these predecessors to the phone book (itself now a relic vis-à-vis Google and map apps) provided crucial pairings of names, addresses, and occupations that enabled demographic assessments of a given year as well as cross-referencing of other sources to confirm a sailor or woman's identity. I have also combined their use with historical maps of the city to reinforce the importance of the waterfront and ocean-going trade, while also revealing the city's diffuse and class-agnostic maritime population spread. When the dockets of the Court of Common Pleas grew too piecemeal or opaque to serve my purposes, I was able to turn to several other sources with similar or coinciding information, from the city archives' extant collection of insolvency pleas to the voluminous records kept by the Overseers (later Guardians) of the Poor, and the more direct records of the Managers of the Alms House that they ran. I also consulted the records of the Magdalen Society, whose outreach efforts to the city's prostitutes I discuss in Chapter 3, and the city's legal acts from 1682 to 1809 as collected in the 18-volume *Statutes at Large of Philadelphia*. Several daily and weekly newspapers and periodicals also flourished during this time in Philadelphia, and through online databases and on-site research I combed them in search of sailors, women, and sailors' women. Often these newspaper accounts toed the line between fact and fiction, from apocryphal anecdotes of maritime disasters in other cities to serialized novellas about the woes of impressment. Rather than assess their levels of truth to the finest grain, my analysis instead treats these works as part of a wider maritime social-cultural landscape whose presence reflected a public concern with the lives of sailors and women, and a

site of discourse in which sailors and women participated as consumers and producers of stories that often paralleled their own lives.

While these sources often referenced diverse races and ethnicities, reinforcing previous scholarship about Philadelphia being "cosmopolitan from the beginning" due to its welcoming immigration policies and religious tolerance, these identifiers were not always consistent.[33] Often the category of "mariner" or "sailor" subsumed all other descriptors within a source, following Benedict Anderson's observations on the state's "intolerance of multiple, politically 'transvestite,' blurred, or changing identifications" and applying it to other official entities' desires to parse diversity into order.[34] Other times the level of detail recorded by a secretary or notary changed alongside the handwriting when a new individual picked up their pen. Sometimes the source itself did not track race until later years, as with the city directories, which did not systematically demarcate racial difference until 1810. Most commonly, sources categorized sailors and others as "colored," "Negro," or other epithets that usually but did not always describe African heritage or descent. I have provided these identifiers as I have found them, with the understanding that between Philadelphia's significant percentages of Black or "colored" residents at various times within its history and W. Jeffrey Bolster and Gary Nash's discussions of how many Anglo-American seafarers and Philadelphians were "black jacks," more Philadelphia sailors and women had non-white ancestry than were or could be indicated in the sources of the time or their racial categories.[35] This applied to other ethnic differences as well:

---

[33] Gary B. Nash, *First City: Philadelphia and the Forging of Historical Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 78.
[34] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006 [1983]), 170.
[35] Gary Nash estimates that 20 percent of Philadelphia's "large maritime labor force" was Black; see Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 146. Bolster reported a range between 17.0% and 22.4% of Philadelphia berths being held by Black sailors between 1803 and 1830; see W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 236. Another source estimates the city's Black population at

while the only source I have found that noted the presence of Native American sailors in Philadelphia was from 1842 and thus fell outside the bounds of this study, other scholars' work on persistent Native presences within early American cities more than suggests that members and descendants of the Lenni Lenape, Poutaxat, and other Indigenous groups lived in this corner of Lenapehoking long after they had supposedly vanished.[36] While leaving allowances for the widely varying percentages of the city's population that the always fluctuating maritime labor force constituted in Philadelphia according to Billy Smith (see Chapter 1), my baseline conceptualization has been that during the years of my study, Nash and Bolster's demographic percentages for Philadelphia are often minimums that expand when consolidating other non-Black identities beneath "non-white," and when considering the rising numbers of Black migrants to the city between 1760 and 1825.

I have also drawn upon various manifestations of cultural discourse on, by, and about the maritime, centered on the use of sailor songs. Oral traditions have been well established in Anglo-American seafaring, with categorizations of different songs for different tasks and shipboard locations, heated debates over who originated the tradition of shanty-singing, and

1/12 (8.3%, or approx. 1,300) of 16,000 in the Revolutionary era, and 15,000 in 1830, when the population rested at just over 80,000 per the census (thus 18.75%); see James Wolfinger, "African American Migration," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, 2013 (https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/african-american-migration/).

[36] For two Native American seafarers—Seminole sailor John Douglas Bemo and Narragansett sailor John Nedson—whose maritime labor led them to the city, see Female Seamen's Friend Society, *Tenth Annual Report, from the Origin, and Fifth Since the Reorganization of the Female Seamen's Friend Society of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: William Stavely & Co., 1842), 16-20. Nancy Shoemaker has also written about Bemo in her work on nineteenth-century Native American whalemen in southern New England, though he is her work's only tie to Philadelphia; see Shoemaker, *Native American Whalemen and the World: Indigenous Encounters and the Contingency of Race* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015). For more on the deliberate erasure of Natives from colonial spaces and early American historical memory, see Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010). For recent discussions of Native and Indigenous peoples living in or traveling to early American urban spaces, see Michael John Witgen, *Seeing Red: Indigenous Land, American Expansion, and the Political Economy of Plunder in North America* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute and University of North Carolina Press, 2022) and Colin Calloway, *The Chiefs Now in This City: Indians and the Urban Frontier in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).

quotations of songs to add both color and substance to discussions of seafaring identities, sailors' recreational activities, and forms of protest on ships and in ports. Songs served as tools of knowledge transmission for sailors as well as for entertainment. While their written forms often lack scores or tunes to fully reconstitute their aural/oral components, were regularly (though not always) censored for profanity or incendiary content, and cannot reflect the verbal plasticity of actual performances by sailors, the various pamphlets, songsters, and broadsides that circulated the Atlantic contain ample material to trace the possible contours of sailors' relationships with women. At the same time, they must be understood as texts produced within and for a culture of entertainment. To read them by themselves invites the conflation of caricature and stereotype with reality—a phenomenon which almost certainly happened in these sailors' contemporary times, and which I am understandably hesitant to replicate here.[37] Yet I also find much to value within the approaches of historians like Clare Lyons and Paul Gilje who have used sailor songs in a similar fashion, connecting cultural text to social knowledge and the songs' cross-class performative elasticity.[38] As with the aforementioned newspaper stories, I have sought not to distill truth or find out "what the sailor really sounded like," but to be clear about where these songs diverge from written lived experiences, and where they are most likely to overlap with the realms of possibility in an average sailor or woman's life.[39] While a rollicking, raunchy ode to

[37] This slippery slope from entertainment to social harm has been more thoroughly studied in other contexts, including stereotypical portrayals of Blacks in plantation melodies, minstrel songs, and other performances; for one example centered on a noted composer see Steven Saunders, "The Social Agenda of Stephen Foster's Plantation Melodies," *American Music* 30, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 275-289.

[38] For example, Lyons directly tethers a sailor's song in the play *The Prostitute* (1767) to real-life knowledge of "a new world of underground involuntary sexual services" and, despite the play's lack of performance due to its bawdy content, logically posits that "the sailors in the gallery would have joined in the chorus sung to Molly." See Lyons, 106-107. Other, more established historical models have also taken this ability of culture to reflect human possibility in their stride; for example, Natalie Zemon Davis's classic work *The Return of Martin Guerre* places personal documents at equal importance and value to "literary sources—plays, lyric poems, and stories—which, whatever their relation to the real lives of specific people, show us what sentiments and reactions authors considered plausible for a given period." See Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press ,1982), 1-2.

[39] Gilje, *To Swear Like a Sailor*, 56.

vice almost certainly did not reflect an actual maritime population constantly engaged in the most extreme debaucheries, its stereotypes reveal a common rhetoric based on exaggeration even as they expose a wide array of possible insights into the performer's desires, motivations, and entertainment tastes, as well as those of its audience.[40] I also acknowledge that the more performative aspects of songs provide a unique opportunity for these shorter musical texts to "speak for" the sailor and, through his rendition and repetition, shape his thoughts and actions and become his own.[41] As David J. Hargreaves and Adrian C. North have argued, music serves several key social-psychological functions, including the "formulation and expression of self-identity," mood management, and a means to establish and maintain relationships with others—drawing from pop music, for example, to "determine stereotypically appropriate ways of responding" to social groups.[42] While that act of performance usually can only be implied by the survival of these songs and their lyrics, it still represents a "doing" whose echoes deserve to be recognized within the historical record.[43]

While not every extant song or source can be reliably dated, I have relied on sources that were published in Philadelphia, are known to have circulated in the city at the time of this study, or in the cases of those publications that were plausibly part of the city's repertoire of maritime song literature, have traced them as close as possible to the city without misrepresenting their place of origin. In addition, I have also read and referenced plays, dance performances, novels,

[40] For a similar discussion of the interplay between rhetoric and reality, see Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (Oct. 1987): 695.
[41] I draw particular inspiration for this argument from Gilje, *To Swear Like a Sailor*, especially the discussion of "Image and Reality" in Chapter 1 (pp. 56-66).
[42] David J. Hargreaves and Adrian C. North, "The Functions of Music in Everyday Life: Redefining the Social in Music Psychology," *Psychology of Music* 27, no. 1 (April 1999): 79-80.
[43] I borrow this idea of performance as "doing" from Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 25.

art and caricatures, and other entertainment texts that both featured maritime culture and could be directly tied to Philadelphia or to the Atlantic at large.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation assesses Philadelphia sailors and women's relationships on a categorical basis, with each chapter covering the full span of its chronology. In Chapter 1, I set the stage for these relationships' interplay by tracing the contours of Philadelphia's maritime community from the city's founding through the early years of the republic. Designed for seafaring trade from its inception, Philadelphia became the Anglo-American seaboard's leading port by the American Revolution, and its wide array of sailing opportunities for naval and merchant seamen, associated occupations and trades into and between which sailors could transition during their working years, and commercial connections to other Atlantic port cities made it an appealing place for sailors to make their temporary or permanent home. These commercial opportunities—and its unique allowances for single women to live and work as legal heads of household—also made it a city of (working) women. Interrogating the concept of the "waterfront" through a study of Philadelphia's demographics, I demonstrate that sailors' residential experiences in this port were innately cross-gendered, cross-class, and often cross-racial, and that the geographic spread of their dwellings contained nuances and expansions far beyond the strip of land between Front and Water Streets that bordered the Delaware River.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 examine transactional, romantic, and familial relationships, respectively. I begin with a discussion of how both sailors and women were woven into the economic fabric of Philadelphia, with women's constant presence as business owners, partners, and workers providing sailors with stable opportunities to perform transactions within the city. I

also discuss women's endemic presence within sailors' social and cultural expectations of economic exchanges, from their provision of goods and services to their roles as recipients of purchases and as creditors. Women have been most often included in maritime histories as sailors' sexual and romantic partners, and in turn those women feature in urban histories as exceptional figures whose seafaring partners' absence put strain on their romantic connections even as it enabled or forced them into unique opportunities for socioeconomic self-determination. While recognizing these impacts of sailors' physical absence on their female romantic partners' portside activities, I argue for a more holistic interpretation of sailors, women, sex, and romance that examines seafaring labor and cross-gender intimacy as interconnected, rather than oppositional, enterprises. As Philadelphia's sailors and women demonstrated, both participants in these relationships understood how to build their bonds of affection into the cyclical labor of seafaring, and both used their lived experiences and cultural ideals of sex and romance to justify their occupational choices and assess a relationship's success or failure—to themselves, and to their communities. I also discuss the various ways that women and feminine presences appeared on wooden sailing vessels, complicating previous histories' discussion of Atlantic ships as exclusively homosocial, hypermasculine spaces. My final chapter concerns familial relationships, predicated on kinship via blood, affection, or marriage. Extending the argument for connecting sailors' labor and cross-gender relationships to their non-romantic intimate relationships with women—most frequently, through their bonds with their mothers and daughters—I discuss the recurring and demonstrable pattern of Philadelphia seamen and their female family members seeking out and maintaining these domestic bonds. Picturing sailors as members of family units and showing that they held familial roles *because* of their occupation's recurring physical separations from their home port, not in spite of them, offers an important

corrective to exceptionalist narratives of maritime labor. It also brings the women with whom they shared familial bonds to the forefront as active partners in seafaring labor and deepens contemporary understandings of how women on the waterfront drove the engines of Atlantic commerce.

Amidst consistencies in working-class life on the Philadelphia waterfront and in the topics, themes, and tropes of maritime literature, I incorporate multiple discussions of changes over time within the years of my study. Chapter 1 traces the shifting demographics of the city over several decades, noting eras of population growth and stagnation, the changing number of sailors and maritime workers traceable to Philadelphia, and the influence of violent and deadly crises such as wars and the 1793 yellow fever epidemic on waterfront populations. Chapter 2 elaborates upon established procedures as well as systematic alterations to how Philadelphians applied for public relief from debt and hardship, along with reductions in earning opportunities over time and in relation to other trades and industries. Chapter 3 pays heed to the enduring cultural focus on romance and romantic narratives while also detailing the increasing drive to police sex—including and especially commercial sex—within Philadelphia, along with changing perceptions of sailors' promiscuity from a benign source of amusement to a threat to public order and health. Chapter 4 also similarly notes the consistent themes of filial devotion and motherhood, and how they included sailors, but also traces their transformations as nationalist rhetoric offered alternative visions of the maternal in mother countries, and as middle-class domesticity ideals placed new strictures of public performances of motherhood, daughterdom, and heterosexual family norms. My conclusion offers a brief look at changes on the horizon in 1825 for the city's seafaring population and its working-class women, along with some unexpected consistencies into and beyond the era of steam ships.

Chapter 1: Mapping Maritime Philadelphia

For Moravian merchant and amateur historian Abraham Ritter, Philadelphia was a city defined by its men of commerce. In the largest port city of the American colonies and of the United States in its early years, it was tradesmen who "moved the waters and enlivened the land," inspiring Ritter to reminisce on paper about "the blossom, the bloom, and the flower of the mercantile life of my early times."[44] Driven by a keen memory and organized by the orderly grid of Philadelphia's streets, Ritter's account rests largely on visions of his middle-class compatriots' late eighteenth-century salad days spent atop a thriving network of trade that reached south to the West Indies and across the Atlantic to Europe, Africa, and even China.

Yet amidst Ritter's reverence for traders and oft-indulged penchant for name-dropping, one catches glimpses of the wider social landscape in which Philadelphia's merchant elite plied their wares—and suggestions of the rollicking landscape of waterfront vice that populated Philadelphia's songsters, stages, and broadsides. The clarion call of the "merry mariner" echoes throughout his book, with varying degrees of both anonymity and approbation. Harry Pratt's "first-class three-story brick house" on Water Street, so named for its direct proximity to the Delaware River, required "iron railing in front of the lower windows, with slab pave inside" to bar contact with "the too near approach of the many passing sailors." Unnamed mariners came to Isaac Wainwright's block and pumpmaker business to acquire some of the tools of their labor, such as sheave-and-block pulleys. Though Ritter remembered it most fondly as the site of Samuel Allen's home, by the time he wrote his book the corner of Water and Walnut Streets had

[44] Abraham Ritter, *Philadelphia and Her Merchants, as Constituted Fifty @ Seventy Years Ago: Illustrated by Diagrams of the River Front and Portraits of Some of the Prominent Occupants, Together with Sketches of Character and Incidents and Anecdotes of the Day* (Philadelphia: Published by the author, 1860), 4.

housed the Mariners' Church for more than thirty years. Some denizens of the city, such as the "heavy, round-shouldered, notorious mariner" William "Bully" White and the "old-fixture" James King, appeared in Ritter's Philadelphia for their higher social position as sea captains and their ability to switch back and forth between seafarer and merchant, as well as for their colorful characters.[45]

These faint contours of Philadelphia's thriving body of maritime laborers appear much more vibrant when compared to Ritter's barely-existent descriptions of Philadelphia's women. Beyond descriptions of the mothers, wives, or daughters of his beloved merchants—lauded most often for their "fine" physical features with an occasional nod to their "industry and frugality"—one gets the sense that for Ritter, the most important "her" in the story of Philadelphia was the city itself.[46] Indeed, Ritter's account borders on salacious only when, in his conclusion, he descends into metaphor to celebrate the city's trade supremacy before the ascendancy of New York: "She had a proud bearing on the world of commerce; her port was courted, caressed, and embraced by almost every nation, and was the very bosom of the nurture of commerce."[47] Even so, there are brief glimpses of the network of women whose lives and labor ran throughout this lively landscape of commerce. Dry goods storekeeper and widow Mrs. Hannah Holland may have been "of very extensive proportions, heavy, and doubtless very inconvenient to herself," but she gained both wealth and patronage—and was able to leave her earthly earnings to her daughter Mrs. Singleton.[48] Before he gained fame and wealth, Stephen Girard cohabitated with

[45] Ibid., 21; ibid., 84; ibid., 7, 96.
[46] Ibid., 114.
[47] Ibid., 203.
[48] Ibid., 147.

his wife as well as an unnamed "old lady" who was his wife's seamstress.[49] Even so, the author's mention of any "she" was as likely to be a ship laden with cargo as a resident of Philadelphia.

From Ritter's words, one could sketch a vision of a city of merchants in which both maritime workers and working women existed as a shadowy backdrop to its leading lights of commercial virtue, their lives coursing alongside the currents of the waterfront. Decades of scholarship focusing on both of these groups have revealed the centrality of working-class men and women to the everyday happenings of port cities across the Atlantic, showing the importance of the "elusive but important workers who inhabited a wooden world" as well as the women who were "quintessential market participants" at the center of urban economic networks.[50] Yet it would be equally incorrect to create a photo-negative view of Philadelphia in which merchants, ship-builders, and other wealthy traders and tradesmen recede into the shadows via a restaging of "mariners, renegades, and castaways" as history's heroes.[51] Philadelphia's maritime laborers—and the women with whom they traded goods, cohabitated, and formed intimate ties—ran through the tapestry of the city itself, creating a waterfront community that was more geographically diffuse, racially diverse, and tethered to everyday life on land than either Ritter's words or musical visions of "grog aboard and girl ashore" portrayed.[52]

* * * * *

From its establishment as a colonial English capital, Philadelphia was built to foster ocean-going trade. William Penn's original instructions for the town's commissioners called for

---

[49] Ibid., 72.
[50] Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World 1700-1750* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 6; Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, *The Ties that Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 2.
[51] Peter Linebaugh & Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), 9, 268.
[52] "The honest tar," *Nautical Songster, or Seaman's Companion* (Baltimore: Henry S. Keatinge, 1798), 55.

a riverside location for his "great town" of ten thousand acres, chosen with an eye to "navigation, healthy situation, and good soil for provision."[53] The first proviso called for the most explicit of instructions:

> And be sure to make your choice where it is most navigable, high, dry, and healthy; that is, where most ships may best ride, of deepest draft of water, if possible to load or unload at the bank or quayside without boating and lightering of it. It would do well if the river coming into the creek be navigable, at least for boats up into the country, and that the situation be high, at least dry and sound, and not swampy, which is best known by digging up two or three earths and seeing the bottom.[54]

In contrast to the oceanic proximity of New York's harbor and Boston's bay, Philadelphia was founded one hundred miles from the Atlantic proper, past the Delaware Bay onto the banks of the Delaware River. Despite the commissioners' efforts, these waters were more treacherous than expected or desired: sandbars, shifting winds and currents, and winter freezes would all plague the port during the years of wooden ships.[55] Man-made improvements from early Dutch settlers of the area and from residents of Penn's city provided relief from some of these environmental drawbacks. Dutch navigators marked the more dangerous shoals of the Delaware with wooden buoys, which remained unattended for the early years of English control of the area until Penn's government intervened to make their maintenance and extension a government affair. Private citizen Samuel Carpenter created the first of the wharves that would enable direct unloading of vessels, with both his fellow citizens and the proprietary government contributing to the array of landing spots that soon populated the city's Delaware coastline. When the build-up of silt, refuse,

---

[53] "Instructions given by me, William Penn, Proprietor and Governor of Pennsylvania, to my trusty and loving friends, William Crispin, John Bezar, and Nathaniel Allen, my commissioners for the settling of the present colony this year transported to the said province," *William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania, 1680-1684: A Documentary History*, ed. Jean R. Soderlund (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 83.
[54] Ibid. "Boating and lightering" referred to the use of a barge or lighter (a flat-bottomed, shallow-draft barge) to convey goods from ship to shore.
[55] Jeffery M. Dorwart, "Shipbuilding and Shipyards," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, 2013, https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/shipbuilding-and-shipyards, accessed August 6, 2019; Marion V. Brewington, "Maritime Philadelphia, 1609-1837," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 63, no. 2 (April 1939): 96.

and discarded ballast made dockside landing no longer feasible, later Philadelphians lengthened the wharves for lack of a reliable method of dredging. In 1756, merchant and navigation aficionado Joshua Fisher used funds collected from some of the city's ship owners and merchants to publish his twenty-year labor of love: a map of Delaware Bay and River which, unlike the coastline charting done by the Dutch more than a century before, detailed their "Shores, Creeks, Harbours, Soundings, Shoals, & Bearings."[56] There was no easy solution for ice, though: as a freshwater river, the Delaware was more susceptible to freezes than New England's saltwater harbors and bays, and the frozen river perennially halted trade and destroyed ships. Nor could the city's denizens figure out a way to overcome the river mouth's lack of natural cover to calm the nexus of winds and currents that fought against incoming vessels. A lighthouse established in 1725 provided scant guidance toward the river's entrance, but the construction of a stone harbor wall or of piers to act as breakwaters took more than a century to conceive of and to build.[57] Still, the port's natural resources, friendliness to commerce, and existing improvements served to overcome the worst of these travails, and so colonial Philadelphia's population remained centered upon the Delaware, with trade spurring the city's swift growth in the eighteenth century.[58] By 1760, as Gary Nash has noted, "New York had gained on Boston, and Philadelphia had surpassed it" as the thirteen colonies' largest and most important metropolis and port—a far cry from its 1700 population of approximately 2,200.[59]

---

[56] Brewington, 96-99; Joshua Fisher, *To the merchants & insurers of the City of Philadelphia this chart of Delaware Bay, from the sea-coast to Reedy-Island containing a full and exact description of the shores* [map], Philadelphia: Engraved by Jas Turner, and printed by John Davis, for, and sold by the author in Front-Street, 1756.
[57] Brewington, 100-102.
[58] Mary M. Schweitzer, "The Spatial Organization of Federalist Philadelphia, 1790," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24, no. 1 (Summer, 1993): 32-35.
[59] Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: The Northern Seaports and the Origins of the American Revolution*, abridged ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 202, 1.

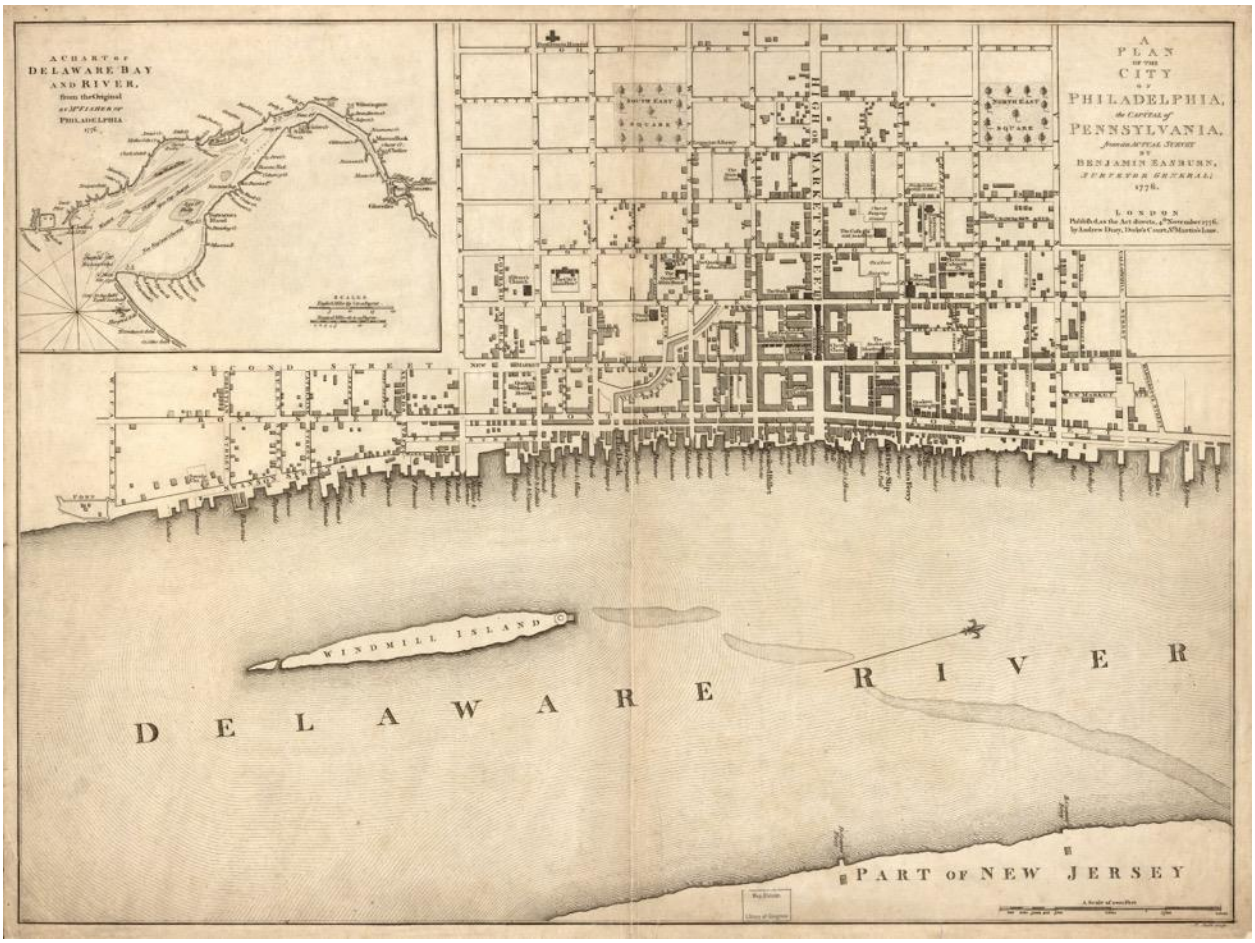


Figure 1.13: 1776 Map of Philadelphia. Though it omits surrounding environs such as the Northern Liberties and Southwark, this map provides a "water's-eye" view of the city as well as an inset of Joseph Fisher's chart which demonstrates Philadelphia's navigational benefits and pitfalls as a port.

Philadelphia's unique combination of cosmopolitanism and Quaker ideals also fed into its growth. Penn himself had sought to recruit settlers from inside and outside of England's Quaker population, despite his private visions of Pennsylvania as a "holy experiment" that would set "an example … to the nations [of the world]."[60] In addition to keeping this notion out of the promotional materials he had distributed in England, Penn provided various benefits to entice maritime trade—and necessary capital—to his new colony and its crown city. Though it fell far short of the trade monopoly its nine London merchant founders envisioned, the Free Society of

[60] "Letter to James Harrison, August 25, 1681," *William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania, 1680-1684*, 77.

Traders negotiated special benefits with Penn in exchange for its promotion of trade. Their efforts both coincided with and preceded the generations of individual businessmen whose "initiative and investment," as Jean Soderlund has noted, paved the way to Philadelphia and Pennsylvania's development.[61] Religious freedom for the colony, set forth in Penn's first Frame of Government and its accompanying Laws, was confirmed by the colony's Assembly and Penn in the 1701 Charter of Privileges. This freedom was, of course, relative: residents had to "confess and acknowledge the one Almighty and eternal God, to be the Creator, Upholder and Ruler of the world; and … hold themselves obliged in conscience to live peaceably and justly in civil society" to benefit from the Laws' banning of compulsory worship, while all court officials and legislators had to believe in Christ and also could not be "convicted of ill fame, or unsober and dishonest conversation."[62] Penn also sought to confirm his acquisition of his royally-granted land by purchasing land rights from the Algonquin-speaking Lenni Lenape (Delaware) who already lived there. His efforts, since interpreted as a kinder form of imperialism set amidst an already-established Native-white diplomatic landscape, generally succeeded in maintaining the peace, but his successors would later overturn many of these purchases and treaties, as well as override Penn's insistence that the colony avoid having a militia.[63]

Between Penn's public advertisements for his new colony and its relatively lax social strictures when compared to New England's colonies, the new city gained immigrants from England, Ireland, and Wales, with surges of Scots-Irish immigration after 1717 and Germans

---

[61] "Charter for the Free Society of Traders," *William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania, 1680-1684*, 147.
[62] "The Frame of Government and Laws Agreed Upon in England," *William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania, 1680-1684*, 120-133.
[63] Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010 [New York: Norton, 1975]) provides a more in-depth look at the Lenni Lenape, and their dealings with Penn and his successors, in conversation with both New York and the Iroquois Confederacy. For a detailed examination of the Lenni Lenape's role in diplomacy and its feminine connotations, see Gunlög Fur, *A Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters Among the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

circa 1727. By 1730, these colonists had also brought 4,000 African slaves to Pennsylvania, with the colony's Black population more than doubling in the next sixty years.[64] As Erica Armstrong Dunbar has shown, the Dutch, Swedes, and Finns had already introduced Black slavery to the Delaware Valley decades before Penn's arrival, and "very little changed for … men and women of African descent" in the new colony, save for the slowly increasing number of enslaved Black men and women entering the city alongside fluctuating droves of European indentured servants.[65] And, though they moved to lands to the north and west of Philadelphia after selling the land in and around Philadelphia to Penn, the Lenni Lenape remained in close contact with the city and its residents, making seasonal moves to different rural areas, trading furs, and sometimes even working as domestics in Philadelphia itself.[66] By the time of the American Revolution, Philadelphia's "intense" social and ethnic multiplicity had created a cityscape built on integration and diversity, whose people spent their days "living, shopping, drinking, and sharing housing with people from various European backgrounds and, more than occasionally, even across racial lines."[67]

Those who lived and labored in and around Philadelphia engaged in a variety of commercial and extractive activities, many of which would prove crucial to the support of maritime growth. Vast forests of oak and pine awaited lumbermen's axes, ready to be transported into the city. Farmers grew wheat, corn, and a wide array of vegetables, for their own

[64] Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, "1681-1776: The Quaker Province," Pennsylvania History, last modified August 26, 2015, http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/pa-history/1681-1776.html
[65] Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *A Fragile Freedom: African American Women and Emancipation in the Antebellum City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 9, 12.
[66] See Dawn G. Marsh, *A Lenape among the Quakers: The Life of Hannah Freeman* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014) for one, albeit exceptional, example of this trend, which contradicts Dunbar on Native erasure in the region; see Dunbar, *A Fragile Freedom*, 11-12.
[67] Billy G. Smith and Paul Sivitz, "Identifying and Mapping Ethnicity in Philadelphia in the Early Republic," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 140, no. 3, Immigration and Ethnicity in Pennsylvania History (October 2016): 395.

consumption and for that of urbanites. With timber and wheat acting as the early pillars of trade, Philadelphians began to reach out beyond their New England and Chesapeake neighbors to send vessels to England and the West Indies, receiving manufactured goods from the former and molasses and sugar from the latter. These trade networks would expand even further in the early 1800s, with regular voyages to China and India departing directly from Philadelphia.

By the 1750s, the city's access to lumber, iron, and cereal crops, as well as the presence of Quaker shipwrights in Philadelphia's early years, had directly led to thriving industries in shipbuilding, sail-making, and several other occupations necessary to build, repair, and properly stock sea-going vessels. As Billy Smith has noted, building a standard ocean-going vessel required the labor of at least thirty craftsmen over the course of a year.[68] While some of those listed as shipbuilders in city records had enough personal property to own their own shipyard or otherwise act as one of the commercial elite, they were far outnumbered by the many artisans and lesser skilled laborers whose work built ships from the ground up.[69] Artisanal occupations that supported these ships' construction included ship-carpenters, caulkers, joiners, blockmakers, pumpmakers, and more. Though they depended on imported cloth to ply their trade, numerous sailmaking lofts also enjoyed regular work in the city. Riggers combined these sails with ropes, pulleys, and masts to assemble or maintain the complex network of simple machines that enabled sea travel as well as the lifting and hauling of cargo. Ropemakers used hemp and tar to twist together these ropes, and ropewalks (long wooden sheds designed for creating and housing rope) could be found interspersed with the waterfront's warehouses and businesses.[70] Stevedores

[68] Billy G. Smith, *The "Lower Sort": Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750-1800* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 78.
[69] Smith lists shipbuilding as a source of personal wealth alongside trade, privateering, and real estate. Shipowners also reaped disproportionate monetary reward from the sailors who actually seized foreign vessels and their cargo. See Smith, *The "Lower Sort"*, 88-89.
[70] While sailors themselves have been associated with rope manufacture—hence the "spinning of yarns"—as Paul Gilje notes, their work was actually for the creation of spun-yarn rope made of two already-crafted ropes and used

loaded and unloaded cargo from docked vessels. Drawing upon Pennsylvania's other leading commodity, biscuit bakers produced the unleavened backed rounds of flour and water that formed the basis of merchant and naval shipboard stores. While the preference of wealthier Philadelphians for the lower initial costs and shorter service terms of indenture limited the number of Black enslaved men in these occupations, rising antislavery sentiment spurred by the city's Quakers and growing efforts to increase manumission rates and educate Black children brought more free and enslaved Black men, women, and families to the city to seek "better opportunities for freedom and the improvement of life's conditions."[71] Sailmaker Thomas Forten (Fortune) was one of them, and his son James would both follow in his professional footsteps and benefit from an education at Quaker abolitionist Anthony Benezet's African School.[72]

A thriving population of mariners seems to be a forgone addition to this whirl of seafaring activity, but while Penn's initial plan for the colony mentioned how its export of trade goods would be "to the advantage of English merchants and seamen," the latter were not listed in his roll call of those "that Providence seems to have most fitted" for colonial life.[73] After all, Pennsylvania's first Laws explicitly banned those entertainments most often attributed to society's "lower sort" (and sailors in particular), from swearing and cursing to "drunkenness, drinking of healths, obscene words, incest, sodomy, rapes, whoredom, fornication, and other uncleanness (not to be repeated)" and any other activities that might "excite the people to

---

for a variety of shipboard uses. See Paul A. Gilje, *To Swear Like a Sailor: Maritime Culture in America, 1750-1850* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 108-109.

[71] Dunbar, *A Fragile Freedom*, 14-20, quote on 17; see also Wolfinger, "African American Migration." For a study of Quakers' changing attitudes toward abolitionism and slavery in early Philadelphia see Jean R. Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery: A Divided Spirit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).

[72] For more about Thomas Forten, his wife Margaret, and the ways that the Fortune/Forten household encapsulated the complex free-slave dynamics of early Black Philadelphia, see Julie Winch, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 11-23.

[73] "Some Account of the Province of Pennsylvania," *William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania, 1680-1684*, 59, 63-64.

rudeness, cruelty, looseness, and irreligion."[74] Yet the city was undeniably part of a wide-ranging Atlantic circuit whose wooden ships depended directly upon human labor. As a result, seafarers of all ranks made Philadelphia their home. Philadelphia's sailors were not especially unique in their approach to their labor: like most seafarers, they generally originated from poorer families and balanced the grueling, long-term work at sea with its potential rewards. Sailors generally received their wages at the end of a voyage, a bulk payment for what could be months of labor differentiating their pay cycle from their fellow, already uncommon wage earners.[75] While their food on-board ship may have been of lesser quality and often went bad before the voyage concluded, as Janet Macdonald has shown, they enjoyed a greater quantity and regularity of sustenance than many other urban working poor.[76]

Both rural and urban men often first went to sea as boys, learning the seafaring trade and earning coin either for their families or as independent earners bereft of a family unit. Common seamen, the most numerous group of sailors, had basic experience with shipboard labor. Some among their number were recognized for their greater knowledge and experience and, as "able seamen," benefitted from merchants and shipowners who sought them out for their expertise and paid them accordingly—but that same expertise also made them a tempting target for the press-gang.[77] Life at sea also took its toll on working sailors' bodies, and those who survived shipboard life often found themselves battling physical deficiencies as early as their thirties if they wished

[74] "Laws Agreed Upon in England," *William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania, 1680-1684*, 132.
[75] See Chapter 3 of Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, for an exploration of eighteenth-century seamen's wages.
[76] See Janet Macdonald, *Feeding Nelson's Navy: The True Story of Food at Sea in the Georgian Era* (London: Greenhill Books, 2006) for an excellent account of British naval stores and their regulation.
[77] For further discussion of these categories of experience and how they could differ in various industries or on different varieties of ship, see Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 72-78. For analysis of press-gangs' deliberate targeting of experienced sailors see Denver Brunsman, *The Evil Necessity: British Naval Impressment in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013).

to continue their life's work. Some few, like Stephen Girard, were able to exploit various opportunities such as prize shares or trade opportunities to become merchants or shipowners in their own right; many more transitioned to land-locked but maritime-adjacent occupations, from ropemaking and innkeeping to piloting, fishing, or carpentry. Common sailors who ascended to the ranks of ship's mates or sea captains were the exception rather than the rule. On merchant and naval vessels, these positions demanded the sort of social clout that led a wealthy shipowner to trust his vessels in a man's hands, as well as an education in navigation. Considering the high rate of illiteracy that marked seafaring men in early national Philadelphia, rank outside of privilege was practically unheard of, no matter how much a sea captain might physically resemble a grizzled tar of humble origins.[78] Philadelphia's city records indicate a greater margin of sea captains and mates to mariners, though as other historians have noted, these records are also subject to undercounting the presence of non-resident or semi-permanent sailors.[79]

Philadelphia's riverine access on both sides, and the necessity of guiding larger vessels up the Delaware, also encouraged men to engage in trades that relied on shorter-term oceanic or riverine labor. Boatmen and watermen guided passengers or cargo up and down the city's rivers,

[78] Simon P. Newman, *Embodied History: The Lives of the Poor in Early Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 110-111, provides a sample size in which nearly 80 percent of Philadelphia sailors were barely literate at best, and Edward Stevens, Jr., "The Anatomy of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century United States," in *National Literacy Campaigns: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, R.F. Arnove and H.J. Graff, eds. (Springer Science & Business Media, 1987), 101, briefly cites a figure of 40 percent illiteracy for merchant seamen. As Newman notes, despite the republican-inspired growth of public education in early republic cities, rural-born sailors were slightly more likely to be literate.

[79] Several historians have encapsulated the lives of sailors aboard merchant and naval vessels of various times and nationalities. For an excellent overview of Anglo-American sailors' lives at the turn of the eighteenth century, see Chapter 1 of Nathan Perl-Rosenthal, *Citizen Sailors: Becoming American in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2015); for full monographs on this topic, see N. A. M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (New York: Collins, 1986); Brian Lavery, *Nelson's Navy: The Ships, Men and Organisation 1793-1815*, revised ed. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2012); Roy and Lesley Adkins, *Jack Tar* (New York: Little, Brown Book Group, 2011); and Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*. In addition to these secondary sources, the "Sailors' Memoirs Project" on the blog *British Tars: 1740-1790* (https://www.britishtars.com) provides texts and/or citations of the diaries of several eighteenth-century common sailors, some of whom sailed to and from Philadelphia.

while pilots guided larger ships into harbor (and in at least one memorable broadside, could earn supplemental pay for locating or guiding certain ships or captains to those vexed with their activities).[80] Shallopmen, who conveyed or peddled goods aboard smaller vessels designed for trade along rivers or coasts, also lived and worked within the city. While their shorter-term trips allowed more contact with a home port than the months-long voyages that ocean-going sailors endured, shallopmen used many of the same skills as mariners in their work, and the two occupations were easy to transition between during a man's lifetime. So too could a seafarer transition to life as a fisherman or oysterman, procuring and selling the fruits of the sea.

Philadelphia was also a nexus of maritime culture. The city's printing presses, which originated in its Quaker population's demand for religious texts, rapidly secularized as the city's non-Quaker population expanded over the eighteenth century. While Benjamin Franklin famously got his start in his brother's printing shop, it was Irish-born publisher Matthew Carey who revolutionized the city's publishing industry, adding publicity, proofreading, and better book distribution to his publishing house's repertoire.[81] Of the dazzling array of pamphlets, novels, and encyclopedic works that bore the imprint of Carey or his fellow Philadelphia-based publishers, a substantive number included popular songs that described the Atlantic sailor's life with varying degrees of accuracy. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, autobiographical shipwreck narratives—written by sailors or taken from their verbal accounts—

[80] To the Delaware Pilots [and] To Capt. Ayres [Philadelphia, 1773], https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.14303100/. As noted in Benjamin H. Irvin, "Tar, Feathers, and the Enemies of American Liberties, 1768-1776," *The New England Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (June 2003): 212, the existence of the broadside's author, the Committee for Tarring and Feathering, may have been an actual assemblage of individuals or a literary device; the promise of reward for enabling vigilante justice suggests the former, though the conditions and amount of pay are also vague enough to allow for literary license. For a closer examination of Philadelphia's pilots see Simon Finger, "'A Flag of Defyance at the Masthead': The Delaware River Pilots and the Sinews of Philadelphia's Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century," *Early American Studies* 8, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 386-409.

[81] Christopher Munden, "A Brief History of Early Publishing in Philadelphia," *phindie: independent coverage of Philadelphia theater and arts*, April 29, 2010, http://phindie.com/a-brief-history-of-early-publishing-in-philadelphia/

dominated the city's literary landscape, even as their romantically-excessive depredations and formulaic prose impugned the author's sworn adherence to truth. In many, the sailor's voyage either began in Philadelphia or was recorded there by the lucky wordsmith who "happened" across a weathered salt with an adventure to share. Maritime literature positively flourished in times of war, as new and old patriotic songs found fresh relevance and soldier-sailors found new cause for audience sympathies. Advertisements for stage performances centered on maritime themes regularly ran in the city's many newspapers, with some of their written texts surviving into the present day.

Philadelphia also ran on the labor of women, who by choice or necessity entered a wide array of trades. As Karin Wulf notes, unmarried women alone constituted a "cultural and statistically significant population" in the colony.[82] When paired with the wives of sailors, who often had to enter the labor force in their husband's absence or to permanently supplement his wages, that significance only increases. While the common law of coverture restricted the economic-legal rights of female workers, Philadelphia's laws allowed for *feme sole* status—and a 1718 Assembly act that extended this status to the wives of mariners—spelled opportunity for women to make an independent living, even if that living was often meager at best.[83] As Jeanne Boydston has shown, though difficult to quantify due to the legal "covering" of married women's economic activity, its existence and importance to a port's overall economy cannot be denied, and the women tied to maritime workers certainly did their share of this work.[84] Philadelphia's women could and did labor as live-in domestic servants, shopkeepers, hucksters,

[82] Karin Wulf, *Not All Wives: Women of Colonial Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005 [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000]), 2.
[83] Wulf, *Not All Wives*, 2-5; Clare A. Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender and Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 30n23.
[84] Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

seamstresses, and washerwomen, under fluctuating terms of freedom, servitude, and slavery.[85] Some women were also schoolmistresses but that position was most likely outside of the purview of the average Philadelphia working-class woman, who was probably even more illiterate than a passing sailor. Property ownership as a *feme sole,* or as a widow lucky enough to see a substantive return of one-third of her husband's estate and to evade Pennsylvania's colonial law that allowed her husband's creditors to take her dower, had further opportunities.[86] With an owned or rented property, a woman or widow could run an inn, boarding house, or tavern. While official taverns and lodging places required a license from the city, it was both possible and likely that a woman could surreptitiously allow a boarder to stay in her residence and be paid under the table. Women traders in colonial Philadelphia sold everything from luxury goods to basic household needs, and their operations struck an interesting balance between extending the sphere of domesticity and the development of female entrepreneurship.[87] Even female hucksters—lower-class who sold small quantities of food in the streets and in the city's markets—made a viable living in Philadelphia, and played a significant role in the colony's economic-political landscape.[88]

In short, by 1760 Philadelphia was a hotbed of maritime activity and of female enterprise, all but guaranteeing a proliferation of cross-gender relationships at all levels of contact. These

[85] For discussion of how Black women's often delayed position as the "last recipients of freedom," post-emancipation and after the end of indentures, see Chapter 2 of Dunbar, *A Fragile Freedom*.
[86] Carole Shammas, "The Female Social Structure of Philadelphia in 1775," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 107, no. 1 (Jan., 1983): 74. See also pages 75-77 for a statistical breakdown of these women's possible jobs.
[87] Patricia Cleary, "'She Will Be in the Shop': Women's Sphere of Trade in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia and New York," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 119, no. 3 (July 1995): 182.
[88] Candice L. Harrison, "'Free Trade and Hucksters' Rights!': Envisioning Economic Democracy in the Early Republic," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 137, no. 2 (April 2013): 148. As Harrison notes, the refashioning of the War of 1812's clarion call for maritime liberty originated in a satirical newspaper mocking these women's agitation to maintain their place in markets and to operate without increasing restrictions. I also posit that the social-cultural connections between female hucksters and mariners would have been close enough at this time to add another dimension to this analysis.

groups' daily choices, economic activity, and social-cultural bonds did not merely coincide with the establishment of Philadelphia as a "multiethnic, multireligious, and multiclass society": they created it.[89] While we may never know every detail of these intimacies, or even the given name of a sailor's wife, mother, or lover, it is both possible and necessary to substantiate their claim to space in revolutionary America's fastest-growing port.

* * * * *

Mapping out maritime Philadelphia, and the complex weave of its cross-gender social relationships, begins with locating the residences of its mariners (rarely listed as seamen), mates, and sea captains. From the locations of these three primary seafaring occupations, one can extrapolate two accompanying sets of data for a given year: first, a listing of the female heads of house who lived in close proximity to (or at the same address as) these men; and second, the streets, alleys, and city blocks in which maritime populations tended to reside most frequently, so that one might get a better sense of how adjacent temporary housing structures such as inns, taverns, or boarding houses enabled visiting sailors to interact with women. Keeping a list of those employed in related maritime occupations handy is another necessity, because of how frequently sailors moved from seafaring to other jobs and back again, as well as to track how often these workers lived at addresses previously or subsequently claimed by seafarers. As previous historians, including Billy G. Smith, have argued, the combination of mobility and poverty led to the perennial underrepresentation of mariners in public records, with Smith going so far as to posit that despite what those numbers said, mariners were the single largest workforce in early Philadelphia.[90] Nonetheless, the most regular demographic surveys of the

[89] Jean R. Soderlund, "Women in Eighteenth-Century Pennsylvania: Toward a Model of Diversity," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 115, no. 2 (April 1991): 183.
[90] Smith, *The "Lower Sort"*, 214.

city's population, its city directories, remain the best resource for mapping the broad sweep of residents by their occupation and address.

Philadelphia's first city directory, published in 1785 by intelligence office employee and securities dealer Francis White, contains 3,764 entries, but translating its contents into a sense of the city's overall population and size is a complex undertaking.[91] As John K. Alexander has noted, getting exact numbers for Philadelphia's population prior to the first federal census in 1790 is a "numbers game" at best, due to an overall shortage of colonial records compounded by wartime gaps in official record-taking (and the flight of Philadelphians during the city's British occupation).[92] This was especially true for those Philadelphians of the "lower sort," who had probable cause to lie about having sizeable families when tax collectors were the ones doing the counting. With the return of fleeing citizens to the city under its new government as well as the rising centralization of power—and people—in the nation's new capital, and with the devastation of the late eighteenth century yellow fever epidemics yet to come, placing the 1785 population somewhere between Alexander's 1777 estimate of 34,244 and the 1790 census count of 42,520 seems somewhat reasonable, though both his average household size of 6.27 and his discussion of the city's wartime population decline suggest a more conservative estimate at the lower end of the spectrum would be most accurate.[93] Unlike some later directories, White's does not include a map of the city, or a summary of general information about the city and its environs such as the

[91] Francis White, *The Philadelphia Directory* (Philadelphia: Young, Stewart, and M'Culloch, 1785). Though John MacPherson published a directory in the same year *(Macpherson's directory, for the city and suburbs of Philadelphia*, Philadelphia: n.p., October 1, 1785) his directory only provided occupational data for less than one-tenth of the individuals listed and as such was far less useful for this study than White's. MacPherson's directory listed 6,251 individuals and businesses, along with 452 addresses which were either vacant or whose heads of household declined to provide their names.

[92] John K. Alexander, "The Philadelphia Numbers Game: An Analysis of Philadelphia's Eighteenth-Century Population," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 98, no. 3 (July 1974): 314-315.

[93] As the 1790 census notes, this latter figure includes both the city proper (28,522) and its suburbs (13,998), though it omits the remainder of Philadelphia County (11,875).

one found in the beginning of Clement Biddle's 1791 directory. Indeed, extant maps of 1780s Philadelphia are all wartime sketches or surveys, predominantly concerned with encampment locations, specific battles, or the terrain surrounding the city. The two most useful maps for accurately envisioning the city's urban sprawl—a map drawn for the 1778 almanac by John Norman, and a 1779 map engraved and published in London of the city under General William Howe's control—give some sense of the city's size, but the rough contours of the former and lack of detail in the latter necessitate making reference to the 1796 John Hills map used (and lauded) by Smith and Sivitz. This map combines coverage of the city's riverine boundaries—the Schuylkill to the west and the Delaware to the East—as well as the orderly grid of streets that set Philadelphia apart from towns built more like European villages. It shows the general nomenclature trends of the streets—north-south streets numbered, increasing from east to west, with Water on the Delaware and Front running perpendicular to it; east-west streets usually named after various tree varieties, with High, or Market, Street as the central promenade. The 1796 map also includes then-suburbs of the city which would be incorporated into Philadelphia by the 1850s, including the Northern Liberties, Kensington, and Southwark. As will be shown, these areas fully participated in the movement of maritime populations and industries alike, particularly for the shipbuilding business that thrived on the edges of Philadelphia's ever-expanding array of street wharves and landings. Finally, this map leaves plenty of room for expansion, making it useful for mapping later years even when its drawn details did not match up with contemporary new buildings. As such, its use has been echoed here for these maritime maps.

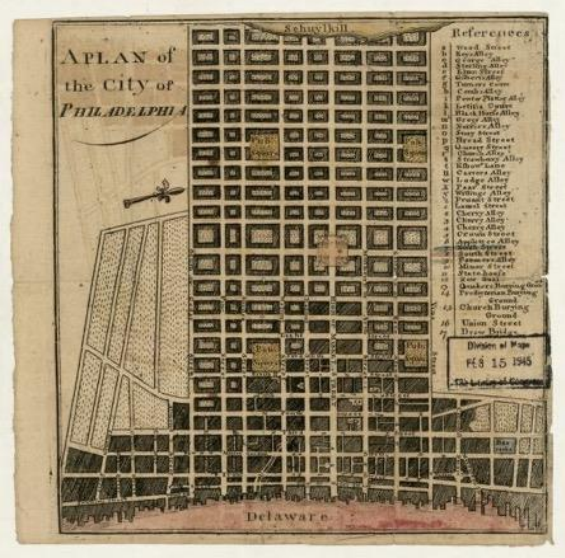


Figure 1.14: Plan of Philadelphia, 1777, as published in the 1778 Philadelphia Almanac. As demonstrated by the preceding and following maps, this map's simplified outlines obscure the number of dwellings in a given block and extend the city's western boundary into the realm of planned expansion rather than lived-in space. http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3824p.ar131600



Figure 1.15: Detail of 1779 Plan of Philadelphia and its environs. A key at the top of the original map provides references to public buildings marked with letters, and the areas marked appear to be those that are actually inhabited, but street names have been omitted. http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3824p.ar132700

In White's 1785 directory, twenty-two Philadelphians identified themselves as mariners, two as mates of a ship or vessel, and five as sea captains, though an additional six men listed themselves as "captain of a vessel." However, while most of the fifty-three men who simply gave "captain" as their occupation appear to have obtained their rank in the Continental Army,

several were in fact sea captains, bringing the total of sea captains closer to twenty, if not more.[94] Nine men declared themselves in other water-based professions, six of them shallopmen.

White's directory lacked the street numbers of subsequent directories, giving addresses in terms of city blocks. Nonetheless, its listings reveal the contours of the city's burgeoning seafaring population. Eight mariners lived on Water or Front Street, and the remaining population formed a rough semi-circle centered on the High Street Landing. Three pairs of mariners had identical coordinates, suggesting they could have been neighbors, or possibly even roommates: George Aitken and Andrew Allen (Union between Third and Fourth), Joseph Campbell and Robert Stewart (Branch between Third and Fourth), and William Cavill and Richard Denny (Water between Almond and South[95]). Water Street was a popular address for sea captains and captains of vessels as well, with four men giving addresses on the busy trade thoroughfare. Their distribution pattern followed the same arc as the city's mariners, though they tended to cluster on the northern and southern endpoints of the arc (near Keys and George Alleys, between Sassafras and Vine and Front and Second, for the former, and in the northeastern edges of Southwark for the latter). Sea captain Elisha Brown, mariners William Cavill, Thomas Wells, and Richard Denny, and shallopmen Thomas Morris and William Ogden made Little Water Street, between Cedar and Almond/Argyle Streets, their home. One of the

[94] Samuel Williams, Joseph Vanscyth (Vancise), Woolman Sutton, Matthew Strong, William McFadden (McFaden), Benjamin Loxlely (Loxley), and Matthew Lawler were listed as "captains" in the 1785 directory but as sea captains in the 1795 directory. Sampson Hervey (Samson Harvey)'s occupation in the 1795 directory is listed as ship-chandler, suggesting that he was initially a sea captain who subsequently entered into the ship chandler (outfitting of vessels) trade. Several men also included the title of "captain" as part of their name and alongside their trade; while it is difficult to determine the origins of these men's titles, of these 21 individuals, ship chandler Robert Bethell, innkeepers Mathew Hand, John Barker, and Jacob Bender, and shopkeepers Robert Hardy, William Graham, Joseph Elliot, and James Boylan are the most likely to have had a previous seafaring occupation.

[95] The 1796 Hills/Cooke map identifies South Street as Cedar Street, with Water turning into Swanson south of Almond/Argyle Street; Race Street as Sassafras Street; and Arch Street as Mulberry Street. For the sake of continuity between image and text, as well as future directories' nomenclature, I have adhered to these names rather than those used in the first directories.

directory's two ship's mates, William Caldwell, also lived on Water Street between Christian and Queen, in close proximity to various shipbuilders but only a few blocks south of the aforementioned captains.[96] The other, Joseph Burges, lived one street to the west, on Penn. Four of the directory's six shallopmen also lived on Water, either between Catharine and Almond Streets or Almond and South. As mentioned in Ritter's book, Water Street saw frequent social activity from sailors and other seafarers, with certain offshoots marked for licentiousness or entertainment. Pegg's (later Willow) Street, on the cusp of the Northern Liberties and the city proper (and thus in a grey area re: municipal enforcement), acted as Philadelphia's "first red-light district," catering to "common laborers, privateers, sailors, gamblers and swindlers of all types."[97] Prime Street was popularly known (and in some directory entries, recorded as) "Love Lane" because it housed a row of lewd establishments.[98] Though the city's Delaware Avenue would not exist until 1845, its construction east of Water between Vine and South, and subsequent association with "bars for sailors and stevedores" in the early 1900s, suggests that Water had previously served this social function for common laborers in the waterfront area.[99] Indeed, thirty-seven inns, taverns, and boarding houses already populated Water Street by this time. Though some had maritime-flavored names—the Turk and Galley, the Sailor's Return, the Jolly Tar, or the Ship—this nomenclature trend appears to have been a citywide phenomenon

[96] Out of 3,764 entries, White's directory listed 360 individuals with Water Street as their primary residence, or approximately 9.6% of the population. At least 54 of those 360 (15%) were employed in a maritime trade as defined in this work.
[97] Kyriakodis, 24-25.
[98] "18th Century Street Names," *Early Philadelphia, 1682-1800*, http://www.philahistory.net/streets.html, accessed August 6, 2019. The cited source (John F. Watson, *Annals of Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania, in the olden time; being a collection of memoirs, anecdotes, and incidents of the city and its inhabitants, and of the earliest settlements of the inland part of Pennsylvania*, vol. III (Philadelphia: Edwin S. Stuart, 1884)) discusses the street's name change but does not reference any "lewd establishments." It does, however, describe a similarly unsavory sight: "On the north side, between Eleventh and Twelfth streets, back of Potters' Field, there was a large square pit — a receptacle for the filth of the city. To pass this magazine I held my nose between the thumb and forefinger and ran for my life." Watson, *Annals of Philadelphia*, 394.
[99] Ibid., 141.

that spoke more to the ubiquity of seafaring references in popular culture than any attempt at customer outreach, as the city's second (and far further inland) Jolly Sailor located on Eighth between Walnut and Chestnut could attest. Indeed, an examination of tavern location vis-à-vis the docks provides a far more interesting incident of comorbidity: city and county coroner John Leacock also kept an inn on Water between Mulberry and Sassafras, a mere block north of the city's main Public Landing.

Several maritime workers had also already begun to live well outside of Water Street's confines, a trend that would continue into the future. Mariner John Lee resided on Mulberry between Sixth and Seventh, more than a half-mile west of the Delaware and nearly double that distance to the city's largest nexus of fellow mariners, Little Water Street. While several shipbuilders' residence on the Kensington waterfront were further still from the central wharves, their location on the water yet away from the whirl of trade made perfect sense for the requisite space needed to build and dry-dock vessels of varying size. Less sensical was the residential location of choice for shipbuilder James Mainers, who made his home on Vine between 7th and 8th, just northwest of the city's powder magazine. Only ropemakers William Newman and Conrad Wilmer lived as far inland, with both men on Market between the same north-south streets.

Nearly all of these seafarers lived in close proximity to women outside of their domestic units—many of whom ran just the sort of businesses that would cater to a mariner's needs. Little Water Street hosted the homes and businesses of two dozen Philadelphians, including the aforementioned seafarers and shallopmen; it was also where Margaret Fisher kept a shop and Mary Jones ran an inn. To the south, in the two blocks' worth of buildings on Water (Swanson) between Almond and Catherine, sea captains James Josiah and Nicholas Vallence, mariner

Samuel Currey, and shallopmen Alexander Gardner and John Hover worked alongside shopkeepers Ann Fitzpatrick and Mrs. Reynolds, baker Elizabeth Fuller, and gentlewoman Ann Penrose. On Front Street between Sassafras and Vine, mariner Alexander Gowan's forty neighbors included boardinghouse owners Mrs. Brannom and Mrs. (Martha) Stackhouse,[100] shopkeepers Mrs. Denton, Mary Harper, and Mrs. Toub, schoolmistress Mrs. (Ann) Sage,[101] and midwife Mrs. Smith. Though Gowan was no longer listed as a resident of the city in 1791, only Mary Harper, Martha Stackhouse, and Ann Sage remained on Front Street by that date, with Mrs. Denton's address replaced by that of Thomas Denton, broker, in an addendum to the Biddle directory.[102] Several blocks to the south, between Lombard and Pine, mariners Richard Kean and Thomas Fisher also had female neighbors of diverse occupation on Front Street, from gentlewoman Mrs. Bernard and shopkeeper Mary Johnson to boardinghouse owner Mrs. Cameron and trader Mrs. Ackley. In the same block of Dock Street as mariner Jeremiah Cronning lived Mary Warsh (occupation unlisted), though both may have been outliers in a city block populated with a blacksmith, a tanner and currier, and two livery stables. Even more likely to be out of place, though, was mariner Frederick Winters: of the forty-five Philadelphians who lived on Front Street between Mulberry and Sassafras, he was the lone seafarer of any stripe, though his neighbors included shopkeeper Mrs. McCulloch and two gentlewomen, Mrs. Merredith and Mrs. Miller. Tailors, merchants, and artisans dominated this city block, including a fringe and lace maker, a bookbinder, and a hairdresser; perhaps these more middle-class

[100] Clement Biddle, *The Philadelphia Directory* (Philadelphia: Jacob Johnson & Co., 1791) provides Mrs. Stackhouse's first name and her status as a widow, with the occupation of "boarding house" no longer listed.
[101] Biddle (1791) provides Ann Sage's first name, her new occupation of "boarding house," and an address of 105 N. Front St.
[102] Biddle (1791) lists Thomas Denton's address as 168 N. Front St., a location commensurate with the placement of the Sassafras/Vine block as well as Mary Harper's 1791 address of 134 N. Front St. Biddle also lists a Mary Smith as one of the city's six midwives, though her address is given as 32 Coates' Alley—incidentally, a street with a much higher density of maritime workers than Front Street (six of 26 residents listed, or approximately 23 percent).

professions encouraged Winters in his switch to running a boarding house by 1791. In a similar fashion, though mariner Samuel Williams lived in the same block of Front Street (between Chestnut and Market) as gentlewoman Mrs. Budden and shopkeeper Mrs. Miller, the neighborhood was populated mostly by merchants with the occasional artisan and inn. By 1791 Samuel had moved to a residence on North Third Street—still surrounded by several merchants to the north and south, but whose trade focused more on iron goods than luxury items. Mariner John Lee shared a section of Mulberry Street with Mrs. Brown and her inn under the sign of the Leopard. Even those seafarers who lived in areas without listed female heads of house, such as Walter Stephen (Sassafras between Front and Second), were highly unlikely to have two dozen unmarried male neighbors with only male children—or to have no wives, lovers, female relatives, or children of their own.

The decade after White's directory saw two successive efforts to map out the city's population, as well as two major shifts in residency and record-keeping. In 1791, former Revolutionary Colonel and then-U.S. Marshal for Philadelphia, Clement Biddle, published *The Philadelphia Directory*, which reshaped the demographic landscape of the city for decades to come. Biddle's compilation drew upon his work overseeing the city's first United States census for 1790, but also implemented a new street numbering system reinforced by brand-new street signs. These signs, half of which had been placed by the time of publication with the rest to come later that spring, marked the intersections of lanes and alleys, with main streets featuring "[their] names painted on boards, with an index hand pointing to the progression of the numbers."[103] Whereas the 1785 numbering system in MacPherson had followed the Enlightenment-influenced European pattern of numbering houses in a clockwise fashion per street, Biddle's system placed

[103] Biddle (1791), xii.

odd numbers on the north or east side of a street and even numbers on the west and south sides, with the numbers for East-West streets beginning from the street's easternmost boundary (usually the Delaware River) and High Street marking the "common line of division" for North-South Streets.[104] Streets that crossed High, such as Front, Water, or numerically named streets, would thus change from "North" to "South" at the point where they crossed High Street, with their numbers starting from No. 1 on the street's eastern side and No. 2 on the western side. At the time, Biddle's system provided fresh clarity for locals and visitors within the new republic's largest city to navigate its streets, though city expansion, poor coordination between the city proper and its outlying districts, and constant rebuilding necessitated a new numbering system by 1856.[105] While Biddle's system improved on-the-ground location of specific buildings, the street numbers' dependence upon a constantly shifting array of buildings rather than the generally permanent existence of cross streets clearly led to some confusion, as Edmund Hogan's 1795 directory provided cross streets between blocks of street numbers.

Another, less benign occurrence fundamentally altered Philadelphia's demographic landscape: the 1793 yellow fever epidemic, which claimed the lives of nearly a tenth of the city's population in four months and led 20,000 people to flee the city.[106] A disease associated largely with sailors due to its tropical origins, yellow fever struck various American ports throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but this was by far the longest-lasting and most

---

[104] Ibid.
[105] Andrew Heath, "Street Numbering," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, 2018, https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/street-numbering/, accessed August 6, 2019.
[106] Several books have been written on the 1793 epidemic, including J.H. Powell, *Bring Out Your Dead: The Great Plague of Yellow Fever in Philadelphia in 1793* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993 [1949]); Billy G. Smith, *Ship of Death: A Voyage That Changed the Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); Jim Murphy, *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793* (New York: Clarion Books, 2003); and J. Worth Estes and Billy G. Smith, eds., *A Melancholy Scene of Devastation: The Public Response to the 1793 Philadelphia Yellow Fever Epidemic* (Canton, MA: Science History Publications/USA, for the College of Physicians of Philadelphia and the Library Company of Philadelphia, 1997).

fatal epidemic for Philadelphia. The 1793 outbreak accompanied the thousands of refugees who had fled the revolution in Saint Domingue, seeking refuge in Philadelphia as well as Baltimore, Newport, Charleston, and other major United States ports.[107] When paired with the city's close quarters and an unusually hot summer in which droves of mosquitoes facilitated the disease's spread (though city dwellers were unaware of this correlation at the time), sickness, panic, and death soon began to grip the entire city. Though the epidemic had run its course by the end of the year, its effects continued to ripple throughout the city as Philadelphians from all walks of life grappled with the devastation. Dr. Benjamin Rush, the first physician to confirm that the deadly disease was yellow fever rather than the usual "summer complaint" that annually swept through the city, swiftly (and erroneously) traced its origins to "the sailors of the vessel who were first exposed to the effluvia" of a damaged load of coffee that arrived in the city on July 24.[108] Prothonotary Charles Biddle, Clement's cousin once removed, claimed that most of those who died were foreign-born or non-citizens. Other publications firmly disproved this notion: Mathew Carey's 1793 *A short account of the malignant fever, lately prevalent in Philadelphia* named 4,044 deceased Philadelphians, though later historians' work suggests an actual death count of over 5,000.[109] The 1794 city directory by James Hardie also included a short account of the "mighty destroyer" of "many 52ortune52s [sic]—and many of those of the most distinguished

[107] Powell, *Bring Out Your Dead*, 5.
[108] Benjamin Rush, M.D., *An Account of the Bilious remitting Yellow Fever, as it appeared in the City of Philadelphia, in the year 1793* (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1794), 156.
[109] Mathew Carey, *A short account of the malignant fever, lately prevalent in Philadelphia: with a statement of the proceedings that took place on the subject in different parts of the United States* (Philadelphia: Printed by the author, 1793). Due to popular demand, Carey published three editions of the work in November alone, with the third edition providing the list of those buried in the city's graveyards from August to November. Powell notes the shortcomings of Carey's methodology, qualifying his own estimate of 5,000-plus deceased with a caution that the final number "cannot be known" (Powell, *Bring Out Your Dead*, 282) while Smith more confidently concurs with this assessment, adding that the fatalities skewed more towards a one-in-five ratio for poorer Philadelphians and that the scope of deaths would be "equivalent in our own times to a million people dying of a disease in New York City or Los Angeles" (Smith, *Ship of Death*, 212).

worth," while Hogan provided mortality figures for various streets throughout his 1795 publication.[110]

As Smith's work suggests and Hogan's directory demonstrates, the 1793 epidemic had particularly harsh consequences for maritime Philadelphia. Where Biddle's 1791 directory had identified 145 mariners, Hogan's listed only 55 individuals with that occupation. Sea captains fared relatively better, with a reduction from 118 to 86, with neither directory differentiating mates from mariners. Part of this decline can be credited to the exclusion of the Northern Liberties and Southwark from Hogan's directory, an omission which he addressed on the last page of his publication: "The Names of the Inhabitants of the Southern and Northern Liberties have been taken down some time ago, and great changes having taken place since, the Editor is advised to postpone the publication of them until another survey shall be completed."[111] However, White's directory also omitted the Northern Liberties, only including Kensington (Kingsinton), where no mariners, sea captains, or mates were recorded. Even with the 31 sea captains listed in the Northern Liberties and Southwark making up for most of the decline in that occupation, the 51 mariners credited to those neighborhoods in Biddle's 1791 directory still left a deficit of 31 mariners between 1791 and 1795. Nor can White's entries for Southwark fully explain the decline in numbers, as they constituted three mariners, four or five sea captains, one mate, twelve ship builders, one sailmaker, and two biscuit bakers.

While the 1795 map holds the echo of the previous decade's arc-like population pattern, it shows some significant changes as well. More mariners and sea captains moved in toward the nexus of High Street and the public landing, and out to the farther reaches of the city, to Fifth

[110] James Hardie, *The Philadelphia Directory and Register* (Philadelphia: Printed for the author by Jacob Johnson & Co., 1794), 219; Edmund Hogan, *The Prospect of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Francis & Robert Bailey, 1795).
[111] Hogan, *The Prospect of Philadelphia*, 180.

Street and beyond. While some areas had higher concentrations of sea captains, particularly Union Street and the area between Front and Second and Sassafras and Vine, mariners were more diffuse. Peaking trade and subsequent higher wages for sailors explains some of this housing mobility, but pairing the decline in population with the map of the yellow fever's areas of concentration provides a more compelling, if bleak, reason for the scattering of maritime laborers. Those who once dwelled in the areas of highest fatality from the fever had left those areas, one way or another.[112]

By 1800, the maritime population had mostly bounced back from the yellow fever epidemic, either nearing or surpassing its 1791 numbers. While the 1800 directory was still 15 mariners short of its pre-fever totals, the number of sea captains had gone up by 67—implying both that the exodus of Philadelphians with enough money to leave the city had begun to return, and other ships' captains with them. This was also the beginning of a national change that directly affected the city: the Front Street shipyard established in 1776 for naval use became an official United States Navy shipyard in 1801, and some naval personnel were already living in the city. This included elites from Commodore John Barry to naval officer William McPherson, who resided on Chestnut Street "opposite Morris's building," a location which likely referred to the unfinished house at 30 Chestnut that was built for founding father and "financier of the Revolution" Robert Morris.[113] However, it also included naval store keeper Robert Gill, living at the decidedly less glamorous location of 35 S Water. The population recovery trend also

[112] Paul Sivitz and Billy G. Smith, *Yellow Fever Epidemic, 1793* [map], *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia* (https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/philadelphia-and-its-people-in-maps-the-1790s/slide11/, accessed August 6, 2019).
[113] William Russell Birch, artist, and Charles Desilver, *An unfinished house, in Chesnut Street Philadelphia. Built for the late Robert Morris Esqr. / designed & published by W. Birch enamel painter,; republished by Desilver 1841* (Philadelphia, 1841) [Restrike from a Print Designed and Published in 1800], Photograph, https://www.loc.gov/item/2013650034/.

included other water-based professions (minus seven shallopmen from 1791 but plus four pilots), as well as those who built ships and supplied their materials.

One inadvertent opportunity of the epidemic was the sharp increase of those maritime support workers who had two addresses attributed to their names, with one usually marked as their dwelling and the other as their place of work. Biscuit baker Francis L. Faures likely resided at 47 S. Water while he plied his trade at 22 South Wharves. In similar fashion, sail maker James Moyes worked at 80 South Wharves and lived at 97 Pine Street. Anthony Cuthbert worked at his mast-making yard at the corner of Almond and Catherine Streets and lived at 41 Penn Street, next door to Ann Cummings's boarding house and across the street from sea captain Jeremiah Tatem and mariner George Hood. Thomas Bickham was more likely to work as a boat builder on Swanson Street than at 254 South Front, even though both addresses were located in Southwark—an easy commute, but still topped by that of ship carver William Rush, who claimed both 172 and 174 N. Front. While mariners and sea captains did not seem to share in this expansion opportunity, the sea-based nature of their labor also eliminated the need for a land-based divide between work and home.

However, class lines between captains and mariners had a lingering porosity. While Almond Street had already begun to harden into a street where sea captains dominated the population—nine of them called the small avenue home—mariners George Brown and Joseph Edwards lived on the edges of the street, while pilots Joseph Robinson and Philip Rice were close neighbors with ships' captains. On the much larger Callowhill Street near the Northern Liberties, sea captains such as Silvester Church, Henry Green, John Lawson, John Fletcher, and Richard Tice were neighbors with two mariners and various ship artisans. Fletcher and Tice also both resided at 11 Callowhill, whose location between Front and Water Streets placed them in

the middle of seafarers, warehouses, and the sounds of the docks. On queen Street, sea captains, mariners, pilots, and a few ship artisans lived closely together with no evident concentration of one occupation at the street's ends or middle. These were days of booming trade for the city, beginning in the 1790s and lasting until the Embargo Act of 1807 and the War of 1812 curtailed the port's activities. While seamen's wages (actual and real) were not as high in 1800 as they had been circa 1795 and 1796, mariners' actual pay rate of 209 was quite comparable to mates' (233) and sea captains' (250).[114]

Women continued to work and live in close contact with mariners and their ilk, with some even officially sharing their quarters. Sea captain Mr. Nicholson lived at 126 Callowhill, across the street and slightly east of the widow Ettwine's tavern. While Almond Street itself lacked any public or lodging houses, Bridget O'Conner's tavern at the corner of Front and Almond likely catered to maritime visitors and residents, though she may have faced stiff competition from Isaac Phipps's establishment on the Almond Street wharf. Two doors west from mariner Richard Potter on Queen Street, Eleanor Fullerton ran a boarding house, and Mary Rihl's boarding house five houses further had a sea captain living across from and next to it. In similar fashion, Mary Lloyd and Martha Wilson ran a boarding house and tavern, respectively, on the aptly-named Shippen Street. This was the same street where in the *Annals of Philadelphia* John F. Watson had marked a tavern with an inscribed sign: "The sea-worn sailor here will find / The porter good, the treatment kind."[115] Mariner John Phillips, located at 70 Spruce Street, had a plethora of female boarding house or tavernkeep neighbors, including Mary Courtney (31 Spruce), Hannah Lapesse (50 Spruce), the widow Mary Currie (66 Spruce), and Mary Williams (104 Spruce). In even closer quarters, mariner Charles Stiskling lived at 69 Christian; widow

[114] Smith, *The "Lower Sort"*, 114.
[115] Watson, *Annals of Philadelphia*, 355.

Elizabeth Hughes resided in the back of the same address. Ship carpenter William Cook lived at the same address (306 S. Front, well Into Southwark) as the widow Elizabeth Cook, her title and name suggesting that she was his mother or aunt.

The year 1805 marked a peculiar watershed for the mapping of mariners in early Philadelphia: for the first time, the city directory listed more seafarers (mariners, mates, sea captains, and others whose labor took place upon the sea) than purveyors of temporary housing or respite (innkeepers, tavernkeepers, boarding houses). Ocean-based trade and industry had continued to thrive, as did naval activity at the shipyard in Southwark, even after the federal government officially departed the city in 1800 to relocate upon the Potomac. Shipbuilding industries had exploded into new productivity, spurred by the growth of trade as well as the demand from Europe for ships to wage war upon the high seas with Napoleonic France. More than three times the number of shipwrights in 1800 now plied their trade in Philadelphia, and the trades and industries that supported wooden ship construction did their best to keep pace. Common mariners enjoyed some of the fruits of this growth in enterprise, but also faced drawbacks of expanding economic specialization: where only one person claimed the position of stevedore between 1785 and 1800, there were now seventeen men who made their living by unloading cargoes, closing off an opportunity for supplemental or off-season employment for mariners. Sailors' rate of pay may have been more substantive than the daily wage that merchants gave to stevedores to perform this labor, but neither group of workers made a comfortable living.[116]

Queen, Shippen, Christian, and Almond Streets retained their maritime flavor, in addition to Water and Front Streets, where sailors who joined the bulk of the city's inhabitants in making

[116] Smith, *The "Lower Sort"*, 113.

their homes. Queen Street could refer to a street in Southwark or in Kensington; these were usually demarcated, though, so one can find that most seafarers lived on the former and more artisans lived on the latter. Mary Rihl still ran a boarding house on Queen, though the address was at 40 rather than 30 Queen. Her next door neighbor was now a pilot, Winser Lowe, and two doors to the east there now lived a sea captain, James Hughes. Mates, mariners, captains, and even a stevedore lived on Shippen, as did the widow of a Captain Vallence. On Christian Street, where the maritime population had left scarce room for women in 1800, one could now find the widow of pilot Jeremiah Holden. Sixteen sea captains, as well as two mariners and one mate, now resided on Almond Street, and these captains had also begun to cluster together in particular number blocks (21-28, and 41-47). Though Isaac Phipps no longer ran a tavern on the Almond Street wharf, the Widow Duncan did, and Elizabeth Bickerton ran a boarding house at 20 Almond.

Some neighborhoods began to solidify racial identities instead, though they too could be more porous and prone to interracial "mingling" than the appellation of "Black" or "white" neighborhoods would suggest.[117] As the terms of slavery and freedom shifted in stops and starts along gender and class lines, Black men and women established temporary and permanent residences outside of Philadelphia slaveowners' homes. The lack of racial identifiers in city directories until 1810 requires drawing upon other, sometimes later source bases to establish these geographic trends. Gary Nash has identified various nexuses of Black community growth between 1790 and 1820, tracing a relatively equal population distribution in 1790 between the city's commercial core, northern sector (including the Northern Liberties), and southern sector (Southwark and Moyamensing) through a dispersal from that commercial core by 1800 and

[117] Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 169, 173-174.

increase to 75.1% of the city's Black households to the southern sector by 1820.[118] Black churches like Mother Bethel formed the nucleus of many of these communities but also intersected with Black mothers' leveraging of social ties and rhetorics of domesticity to shape their communities, as Erica Armstrong Dunbar has shown.[119]

While fever and social change had swept through Philadelphia and foreign wars drove its economy to greater peaks, its resident sailors had faced a heightened challenge on sea: despite the new nation's professions of neutrality, both Great Britain and France continued to seize American ships and impress their sailors. In response to numerous provocations, President Thomas Jefferson instituted an embargo in 1807 against both countries, though Britain's blockade of France made it more of a weapon against the former.[120] While smuggling goods across embargo lines almost certainly occurred in Philadelphia as in other American port cities, the ports of New England and New York could leverage another benefit to keep their balance of trade afloat: their proximity to Canada, still a British colony and therefore a prime avenue for indirect smuggling.[121] While the embargo galvanized Philadelphians' efforts to jump-start their own production of manufactured goods, it left swathes of mariners unemployed for much longer stretches of time than their already-precarious seasonal labor schedule allowed, unless they shifted into these new manufacturing jobs.[122] In the city and in other ports, sailors took to the streets, demanding relief from hunger and poverty.[123] Many simply departed for friendlier, less hazardous shores. While the number of mariners listed in the 1810 directory saw a small increase

[118] Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 164-169.
[119] See Chapter 3 of Dunbar, *A Fragile Freedom*, especially pages 50-52.
[120] Jeffrey A. Frankel, "The 1807-1809 Embargo Against Great Britain," *The Journal of Economic History* 42, no. 2 (June 1982): 291.
[121] Ibid., 295-296.
[122] Ibid., 301.
[123] Walter W. Jennings, "The Agitation for the Repeal of the Embargo Act," *Social Science* 3, no. 3 (May, June, July, 1928): 217-246 gives a general overview of the sailor-led riots in Philadelphia and elsewhere.

from 1805, both the number of shipbuilding workers and of inn, tavern, and boarding house proprietors decreased. The shipping boom of the 1790s had hit a wall.

Though the literature on sailors at this time provides a closer glimpse at how the war affected their lives at sea, the constant flux of city directories in both quantity and quality during the war.[124] A return to the 1816 directory shows some of the changes that had taken place. For the first time, an entry specified that a captain was in fact at the helm of the New Castle steamboat (Wilmon Whilldin, who in 1810 was the captain of the New Castle packet but had ostensibly changed his vessel). The city's employment rolls now boasted a record nine inspectors of customs, signifying a tightening of illicit activities and greater control of foreign goods now that imports had become a matter of national pride. Hotels had begun to crop up alongside boarding houses, while the city also saw its first "master stevedore" state his profession for the record. The Schuylkill Navigation Company and Nautical & Mathematical Academy had full-time instructors and buildings on Walnut and Chestnut Streets, respectively, reflecting the wave of specialized labor that had picked up steam in shipping as Philadelphia ships traveled to ever-more-distant berths. For the first time in nearly thirty years, a sailor had declared himself not just a mariner but a "seaman" (William Johnson). Even "damaged vessels and cargoes" had their own surveyor.

Nearly nine hundred seafarers now called Philadelphia home, but the growth came directly from the lower ranks of sailors. While the number of mariners nearly doubled between 1810 and 1816, higher ranks stayed constant between those years. Other water-based professions, on the other hand, had more than doubled, particularly the number of shallopmen

[124] For a sense of how sailors conceived the War of 1812 intellectually and culturally vis-à-vis their own lives, see Chapter 6, "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights," in Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*. For a closer look at the cultural and rhetorical roots of the war's political arguments and outcomes, see Gilje, *Free Trade and Sailors' Rights in the War of 1812* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

who navigated rivers. The reason for this was likely twofold: the Schuylkill River to the west was becoming increasingly important to Philadelphians' trade and travel, while many who were once seafaring mariners likely sought a sailing occupation less likely to involve the hazards of the open sea. Shipbuilding thrived once more, with its support industries following close behind.

The boom was not to last, though. In addition to a post-war slump in ship production and naval activity and the far-reaching Panic of 1819, by 1820, Philadelphia was also fending off two arguably more viable ports as trade contenders: New York to the north, and Baltimore to the south. This time, while the number of mariners increased slightly between 1816 and 1820, the number of sea captains plummeted by more than one-third. Ship carpenters managed to swell their ranks, but all other maritime artisans saw declines in their populations as well. Even though the war-driven shift from flaxen sailcloth to cotton canvas gave sailmaking "a new lease on life," the profession's numbers stagnated alongside every other maritime support industry besides ropemaking.[125] In an accompanying conceptual shift driven by market changes, the specialization of labor spurred by industrialization and the growing pool of workers carried over to positions that did not produce material goods. Now Philadelphians claimed the occupation of "barkeeper at a hotel"; now captains ranged from seafarers to "coasting captains." Diversification of one's economic base also reached unprecedented heights. Tavernkeepers had also been grocers before, but never in such numbers. Sea captains like John Kelly also professed themselves to be pilots. Mastmaker John Lang also ran a china store.

In terms of sheer numbers, by 1825 Philadelphia's maritime community looked more like the new nation of Jefferson than of Jackson. Most of the sea captains from 1820 still lived in the

[125] Julie Winch, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 94. As Winch notes, this shift had moral pitfalls for Forten, a freeman, and his fellow sailmakers, many of whom were Black and/or abolitionist: cotton canvases were produced domestically but directly depended on slave labor.

city, but only 187 mariners or seamen held a permanent address in the town. Shallopmen, fishermen, and pilots had grown scarce—or at least, those who considered themselves full-time practitioners of those occupations. Many of the city's shipyards had also been abandoned, with a workforce less than half of that in 1816, and supplemental industries suffered accordingly. Yet the city itself continued to thrive and act as a major metropolitan area, even though it was no longer the supreme hub of the nation's economy. Visitors still demanded—and found—a wide selection of inns, boarding houses, hotels, and taverns, now spread more diffusely between the city's Delaware-to-Schuylkill expanse, up into the Northern Liberties and down to Southwark's lowest reaches.

Yet while maritime Philadelphia no longer occupied a primacy of space in the city, its population had settled into a pattern of endurance. As maritime scholars have noted, the notion of a transition from wooden to iron ships has been oversimplified at best. Rather, the two worked in tandem to complete different tasks: iron-hulled vessels for transatlantic trips and to go upstream on rivers, with wooden ships designed and used for purposes of speed and coastal trade. Steamboats also still needed sailors to work and power them, and the United States Navy only grew in the decades to come. The patterns of future sailors' lives came directly from the intricate weave of relationships that had bolstered their predecessors and defined the lives of Philadelphia's most important labor force—as were those of the women with whom they, too, shared those business and intimate ties.

Table 1-1: Maritime Professions, 1785-1825

	1785	1791	1795	1800	1805	1810	1816	1820	1825
Seafarers	**37**	**265**	**142**	**335**	**577**	**674**	**874**	**764**	**452**
Mariner / seaman	22	145	55	130	215	261	452	497	187
Mate	2	--[126]	--	1	42	59	67	46	29
Sea captain	11[127]	118	86	185	309	341	341	213	208
Misc. seafarer (supercargo, ship master, naval officer, packet captain, coaster, etc.)	2	2	1	19	11	13	14	8	28
Other water-based professions	**9**	**42**	**6**	**37**	**65**	**70**	**193**	**257**	**109**
Shallopman / boatman / waterman	6	22	--	10	12	26	98	115	55
Bargeman	--	--	--	2	3	1	3	1	--
Pilot	--	15	1	19	26	21	36	39	20
Ferryman	3	5	--	1	4	7	9	39	20
Fisherman	--	--	--	1	13	10	33[128]	51	8
Misc. port authority (harbormaster, shipwatch, warden, collector, surveyor, inspector, gauger, etc.)	1	5	5	4	7	5	14	12	6
Shipbuilding professions	**50**	**148**	**11**	**126**	**292**	**247**	**451**	**383**	**225**
Ship/boat builder, shipwright	35	37	3	51	172	132	279	224	143
Ship carpenter, ship carver	4	73	2	25	11	10	13	36	11
Mast maker	1	10	1	12	20	20	27	20	18
Caulker	--	9	--	--	25	13	37	37	7
Joiner	3	11	3	13	31	36	44	29	18
Rigger	6	8	2	22	27	31	44	29	19
Misc. (shipsmith, anchor smith, ballast maker, painter, oarmaker, pumpmaker)	1	--	--	3	6	5	7	8	9

[126] Mates were not listed as an occupation in this year's directory or in that of 1795. From subsequent directories and the sharp hierarchy of command that came with seafaring, one can extrapolate that mates, like able and ordinary seamen, were included in the catch-all category of "mariners."
[127] See text for explication of the listed difference between sea captains and captains, and the possible extent of their overlap.
[128] This count specifically included a fisher*woman*, the unnamed widow of Daniel Beideman.

Supplemental sailing supplies/support	**45**	**74**	**32**	**79**	**136**	**155**	**211**	**224**	**123**
Sailmaker	12	15	11	31	44	56	51	54	36
Ropemaker	4	26	3	14	26	27	71	90	37
Ship chandler	12	14	8	16	16	19	19	16[129]	19
Biscuit baker	17	14	10	14	23	15	26	22	13
Wharf builder, wharfinger, dock cleaner	--	4	--	4	10	14	22	21	8
Stevedore	--	1	--	--	17	24	22	21	10
Temporary lodgings	**236**[130]	**282**	**245**	**343**	**473**	**465**	**578**	**694**	**735**
Innkeeper	92	105	71	111	103[131]	119	178	212	152
Tavernkeeper	78	81	26	130	167	147	117	238	303
Boarding house, French boarding house, lodging house, hotel	66	96	148	102	203	199	283	244	280

[129] Includes Mary Collar, who "puts up sea stores."

[130] Seventy-seven entries in this directory give occupations in terms of the public house, inn, or tavern run by the listed individual (i.e., "sign of the Battle Kegs," "Bunch of Grapes inn"). I have included these individuals under the category of tavern keepers, as the lone listing under that occupation, and the figures of subsequent years, suggests that this was an implicit declaration of one's tavernkeeping occupation.

[131] This included one "marine inn" at 7 S. Water, run by S. Dillingham. Dillingham's entry appeared again in 1810, implying some success at his occupation.

Map 1-1: Philadelphia's Seafaring Population, 1795.



Map 1-2: Philadelphia's Seafaring Population, 1810.



Map 1-3: Philadelphia's Seafaring Population, 1825.



Chapter 2: Transactional Relationships

In a two-story building in Black Horse Alley, one block south of Market Street and less than 500 feet from the Delaware River, the widow Sarah Cross kept a shop. Born in 1757, Sarah did not appear in city directories until 1805, where she was listed simply as "Cross, widow, Black Horse alley."[132] While sources lack specifics on the sort of shop she ran—"general store," "dry goods store," and "grocer," the most common descriptors used in city directories, never appeared next to her name—we know that she sold at least some fresh fruit and candy, and that customers came from as far as lower Southwark to purchase her wares. Employees at David Kennedy's tavern in nearby Laetitia Court shared both custom and conversations with her, and children from surrounding houses came to her with a penny in their pocket to buy sweets. Sarah lived above her shop, and her worldly goods at the time of her death suggest she had some means: hard currency, gold and silver coins or items, a bed with a mattress, multiple sets of

[132] For all city directories between 1785 and 1810, the surname Cross never appeared more than four times a year, and no one by that surname lived in Black Horse Alley until Sarah first appeared in the 1805 directory. The most likely candidate for her deceased husband (assuming she did not move to the city after she became a widow) was John Cross, a tobacconist who lived at nearby 8 Laetitia Court and first appeared in the 1791 directory. John was a tavernkeeper at the same address in 1793 and 1794, an innkeeper at 9 Laetitia Court in 1795-1797, tavern keeper at 14 Laetitia court in 1798 & 1799, tobacconist and tavern keeper at 14 Laetitia Court and 13 Chestnut Street in 1800, tobacconist at 13 Chestnut Street and tavern keeper at 9 Laetitia Court (separate listings) in 1801, and did not appear in the 1802 directory but reappeared in the 1803 & 1804 directories as a tobacconist at 13 Chestnut with no occupation for his second address at 9 Laetitia Court. In 1805 David Kennedy, tavernkeeper, was now listed at 9 Laetitia Court, ostensibly taking over for the deceased or departed John Cross. That same year, a John Cross, tobacconist, was listed at 241 S Second Street, as well as a John Cross, storekeeper, at the corner of Third and Brown, along with Sarah in Black Horse Alley. All three appeared in the 1806 directory at the same addresses but in 1807 and 1808 only the tobacconist at 241 N Second and 166 N Water (the change from S to N was likely a typographical error since the Front/Water addresses were always parallel) and Sarah remained. In 1809, Sarah no longer appeared in the directory but a "Cross, widow of John" now lived at 241 N Second Street, suggesting that the tobacconist on Second Street may not have been the same John Cross who lived at Laetitia Court—or if he was, he was not Sarah's husband, though he may have still been a relative. In the 1811 directory, Black Horse Alley only had one listed resident: a breechesmaker named Adam Hepple.

clothes, and a small mirror. She also had a small stove in her shop to keep herself and her visitors warm.[133]

Just over a mile to the southwest, Jenny Miller ran an unregistered tavern and dance hall in Southwark's Pine Alley.[134] While Philadelphia's laws required male and female tavern owners to petition city authorities yearly for permission to run their establishments, such petitions depended on the proprietor's "suitable character," as well as a legal record clean of any offenses to public order, and a fee.[135] Lacking this essential paperwork, Miller was but one of several Philadelphia women who turned property ownership into a living on the margins of the law. This included Margaret "Peggy" Tucker, who took in boarders without a license half a block west of Miller, on Fourth Street below South Street, and Mary Lee and Caroline Cedars, who lodged both men and women at their unlicensed boarding house on Fifth Street below German Street, just over 1/3 mile southwest of Miller. Tucker also hosted dances, and both she and Miller made their businesses more attractive to patrons by regularly hiring musicians. While none of these women advertised their establishments in city directories or local newspapers, both customers and neighbors referred to these women's shops and houses as "theirs," demonstrating that female business ownership was part and parcel of Philadelphia's everyday socio-economic fabric.

---

[133] John Joyce and Peter Matthias, *Confession of John Joyce, Alias Davis, Who Was Executed on Monday, the 14th of March, 1808. For the Murder of Mrs. Sarah Cross; With an Address to the Public and People of Colour. Together with the Substance of the Trial, and the Address of Chief Justice Tilghman, on His Condemnation* (Philadelphia: Printed by Richard Allen for the Benefit of Bethel Church, 1808).

[134] Distance calculated from a 1796 map of the city, as the crow flies; walking distance would have been slightly longer as the city's grid-like street pattern severely limited the number of diagonal streets and alleys.

[135] Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution: Taverngoing and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 37-42; Stephen Nepa, "Taverns," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, 2013, https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/taverns/; Database Description, "Tavern and Liquor License Records (1746-1863)," Historical Society of Philadelphia. While Thompson claims magistrates enforced licensing regulations more thoroughly after this flashpoint, Nepa argues that the city had a "tendency to ignore licensing requirements" and that by 1800 the law was seen as a failure. The substantial number of petitions that lack proper dating, signatures, or any indication of officials' recommendation or refusal in the HSP's collection suggests a bureaucratic laxity at the very least.

Tucker, Lee, and Cedars were of African descent, adding another layer of complexity to their interactions with city dwellers and tourists.[136]

These business relationships included sailors and other maritime laborers, as well as mariners who followed shifting seasons and fortunes into other occupations. One of Margaret Tucker's boarders, John Joyce, lived a life revelatory of the American seaboard's mobility and occupational fluidity. A former slave and seaman who had served in the United States navy and previously sailed out of both Boston and Washington, D.C., Joyce moved to Philadelphia to seek his fortune in the aftermath of his wife's marital infidelity while he was at sea. Moving through brief periods of residence with various employers and renters all over the city, Joyce worked as a stablehand, servant, coachman, and waiter.[137] While working this last job at David Kennedy's tavern—which he lost due to leaving the tavern door open while he attended a late-night dance—Joyce exchanged conversation and commerce with the widow Cross.[138] Joyce's friend, Peter Matthias, took a similarly winding path through captivity and maritime employment to arrive at Philadelphia. Like Joyce, Matthias was born a slave in Maryland, though he gained his freedom by manumission (and de facto distance from the mistress waiting for the remaining cash payment for his freedom) rather than through naval service. He did, however, work on a shallop that traveled between Wilmington and Philadelphia before he stayed on land in the latter. His history of odd jobs in Philadelphia also included "picking oakume [sic] and at nights playing the violin at dances," both of which were heavily associated with seafarers on ships and on land.[139] Matthias lived at Mary Lee and Caroline Cedars's Southwark residence—the latest in a series of

[136] Joyce and Matthias, 13, 16.
[137] Ibid., 12-13.
[138] Ibid., 7-8.
[139] Ibid., 13-14, 31.

short-term rentals—with Hester Cook, a Black woman who was almost certainly his romantic partner as well as his roommate.[140]



Map 2-1. Selected female business owners, c. 1808.

[140] The pamphlet identified Cook as "the woman of the house with whom Peter lived," and Matthias's confession suggests that his relationship with Cook was sexually or romantically intimate.

As reflected in this microcosm of individuals and their intertwined relationships, between 1760 and 1825 Philadelphia was both a city of sailors and a city of women, its leading status as the nation's busiest port driven by a laboring population of diverse races, classes, and genders. Though their occupation made them one of the city's more transient groups of workers, enough sailors called Philadelphia home for long enough intervals that from 1760 to 1825, they made up anywhere from five to thirty percent of the city's free adult male population.[141] Mariners had permanent residences throughout the city, with areas of greater concentration in the city's center, Southwark, and the Northern Liberties, and they also had several options for short-term housing provided by both men and women thanks to Philadelphia's laws of coverture. Women of all ages and backgrounds made their living in Philadelphia as well, working within and sometimes beyond the legal limitations of their gender to provide a variety of goods and services to residents and visitors.

Sailors' seabound labor and the strictures of desertion-wary captains limited the time they could spend in port cities' shops, complicating the historical narrative which surrounds the social obligations and underpinnings of business in colonial and early-republic America. Yet like the warp threads of a loom, Philadelphia's women acted as the constant presence through which the weft of sailors' economic exchanges swiftly passed to reinforce both groups' webs of commerce. As a result, the benefit of sailors' custom and of hard currency spread to business owners of both sexes, even as the repeated pattern of relatively quick transactions informed sailors' cultural and commercial expectations of their time spent in port and shaped their opportunities and lives at

[141] This figure is based on Billy Smith, *The "Lower Sort": Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 130-147, 213-214, as well as counts from the city directories of 1785, 1795, 1800, 1805, 1810/1811, 1816, 1820/1821, and 1825. As Smith notes, the number of seamen in the city at any given time could be up to four times that of the number who appeared on tax documents, and his numbers did not include sea captains. Counting mates, mariners, and sea captains increases the top range of this total.

sea. The exceptional elements of sailors' labor, from their access to wages and repeated distances from the mainland, did not disrupt the steady repetition of everyday commercial exchanges but rather reinforced them.

Women, Business, and Sailors in Atlantic Philadelphia: A Historiographic Overview

While Philadelphia operated as a single stop in a network of Atlantic port cities, the diversity, significant size, and economic power of its female population make it a prime site to analyze the ways that sailors and laboring women exchanged social capital and learned socio-cultural behavior alongside goods and currency. As stated in Chapter 1, Philadelphia stood out from other port cities on the American seaboard for its racially and ethnically diverse population, strong Quaker influences in its public life and official policy, and its riverine remove from the sea. At the same time, though, it shared several commonalities with other port cities that "provided the nucleus for the consolidation of the Atlantic commercial community and for the socio-political integration of the Americas": an emphasis on facilitating commerce via exchange and ship repair and support, its substantive transient population, diversity of urban occupations, and the presence of multinational cosmopolitan entities and influences.[142]

The same radical social and political movements that launched second-wave feminism and racial equality initiatives also inspired several urban histories that revealed American cities' racial diversity and dismantled triumphalist Whig narratives of the early republic's perpetual progress and capitalistic growth. Most of these works acknowledged working women's presence and societal contributions but privileged the writings and experiences of laboring-class men. In *The Urban Crucible* (1979), Gary Nash mentioned laboring-class women in passing, noting that

[142] Peggy K. Liss and Franklin W. Knight, "Introduction," in *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850*, edited by Knight and Liss (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 3, 6-9.

wives of mariners, laborers, and artisans in all three of America's major port cities "had probably always contributed by helping in their husbands' shops, taking in washing, serving as seamstresses for middle- and upper-class families, and doing daytime domestic labor in the houses of the well-to-do."[143] This omission continued rather than began a trend: Nash's prior article on slavery in colonial Philadelphia had largely discussed Black female slaves in the context of their fertility, save for a brief mention of their roles as domestic helpmeets.[144] Billy Smith, arguably still the most influential historian of working-class Philadelphia, briefly discusses women's relatively lower wages in his 1981 dissertation "'Struggles of the 'Lower Sort': The Lives of Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750 to 1800," which evolved into his flagship book *The "Lower Sort"* (1990).[145] For the most part, though, he ties his gendered analysis to passing mentions of laboring men's wives, with the occasional comment on female servants or midwives.[146]

In the late 1980s and 1990s, a new wave of works focusing on working-class women in both rural and urban early America coincided with third-wave feminism and a generation of scholars both eager and able to build on the ground broken by social and gender historians twenty years prior.[147] Locating women and working-class laborers in the historical record remained important in specific contexts but overall, this simple act of "discovery" had lost its

---

[143] Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: The Northern Seaports and the Origins of the American Revolution*, abridged ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 120.
[144] Nash, "Slaves and Slaveowners in Colonial Philadelphia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 20 (April 1973), 251.
[145] Billy G. Smith, "'Struggles of the 'Lower Sort': The Lives of Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750 to 1800," PhD diss., (UCLA, 1981); Smith, *The "Lower Sort."* Parts of the dissertation appeared in two prior journal articles, "Death and Life in a Colonial Immigrant City: A Demographic Analysis of Philadelphia, *Journal of Economic History* 37, no. 4 (Dec. 1977): 863-889, and "The Material Lives of Laboring Philadelphians, 1750-1850, *The William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (April 1981): 163-202. A revised version of the latter article also appeared in *Material Life in America 1600-1800*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987), 233-260.
[146] Smith, *The "Lower Sort,"* 112, 23, 41.
[147] Sometimes these historians used later books to correct their own initial biases and omissions: for example, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard Based on Her Diary, 1785–1812* (New York: Knopf, 1990) focused on the life of a working midwife, to great critical acclaim.

novelty. Even if they skirted around postmodernist gender theories or pushed back against the Marxist underpinnings of the New Left, even the most dedicated establishment historians now had to acknowledge that women, laborers, and other minority groups actively participated in the historical record, or invite castigation.[148]

Claudia Goldin's 1986 article in the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* marked a watershed moment for the study of women and business in Philadelphia, as it provided strong, city-wide, quantitative data about working women's employment. Examining what had become known as the "golden age thesis"—the idea put forth by Gerda Lerner in 1969 that after a Revolutionary-era efflorescence, all women's status declined in the early republic era due to cultural perceptions of women and the simultaneous expansion of American markets—Goldin used statistical mathematics, city directories, and census manuscripts to reveal that argument's inaccuracies as well as its contributions.[149] She demonstrated that the transformation from work-

[148] See, for example, Gordon Wood's Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1992) and its reception. Unlike his first major book, *The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and University of North Carolina Press, 1969), which featured the words "woman" or "women" a grand total of three times, Revolutionary-era women were mentioned throughout the text but rarely as significant, independent actors—or even as named individuals. Wood did, however, also link the Revolution's success to future freedoms for both women and slaves in the nineteenth century and beyond. (Wood, 7) While some reviewers did not engage with Wood's treatment of gender or excused it, others excoriated him for this omission: see Barbara Clark Smith, "Review: The Adequate Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (October 1994): 684-692 (quotation on 690), and Michael Zuckerman, "Review: Rhetoric, Reality, and the Revolution: The Genteel Radicalism of Gordon Wood," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (October 1994): 693-70 (quotation on 698). For more positive reviews see Joyce Appleby, "Review: The Radical Recreation of the American Republic," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (October 1994): 679-683, and Edward Countryman, "Review: Revolution, Radicalism, and the American Way," *Reviews in American History* 20, no. 4 (December 1992): 480-485. Two other reviewers acknowledge the absence of women but present it as a non-issue overshadowed by the book's triumphs: see Frank Shuffelton, "Reviewed Work(s): *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* by Gordon Wood," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 26, no. 4, Special Issue: Thomas Jefferson, 1743-1993: An Anniversary Collection (Summer 1993): 687-692, and Colin Bonwick, "Reviewed Work(s): The Radicalism of the American Revolution by Gordon S. Wood," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 49, no. 4 (October 1992): 725-727.

[149] Gerda Lerner, "The Lady and the Mill Girl: Changes in the Status of Women in the Age of Jackson, 1800-1840," *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* 10 (Spring 1969): 5-14. For key works that helped entrench the "golden age thesis" in American women's historiography see Mary Beth Norton, "Eighteenth-Century American Women in Peace and War: The Case of the Loyalists," *William & Mary Quarterly* 33 (1976): 386-409, as well as *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (New York: Little, Brown, 1980); Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Linda K. Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment-An American

at-home to marketplace employment had made the latter less accessible for women, who became cut off from familial transmissions of job-related knowledge and priced out of the start-up costs for plying a trade in a market economy.[150] Tracing the occupations of these women's husbands as well, she found that property-centric occupations such as boardinghouse keeper, shopkeeper, and grocer tended to transfer over to widows, while husbands "on the lower end of income distribution," including mariners, had widows who became hucksters or washerwomen.[151] In addition, the percentage of Philadelphian businesswomen who dealt in men's or ungendered goods either increased or stayed consistent between 1790 and 1860, disproving the thesis that by the mid-nineteenth century the only prominent businesswomen remaining were those whose trades or goods catered to other women. The following year, Lisa Wilson Waciega's article on Philadelphia's widows directly "challenge[d] [the] limited view of the role of women" found in Barbara Welter's work on the "cult of domesticity."[152] Waciega argued that men's wills showed husbands' frequent decisions to leave more than the legally-guaranteed amount of their estate to their widows, and that widows' increased liability for their husbands' debts could and did make them more active protectors of their future livelihoods. Moving beyond the legal strictures of property inheritance to compare specific bequests, she found that Philadelphia's upper- and middle-class widows were entrusted with family funds or businesses and expected to manage

---

Perspective," *American Quarterly* 28, no. 2, *Special Issue: An American Enlightenment* (Summer 1976): 87-205 (where she coined the now-ubiquitous term "republican motherhood"), as well as *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute and University of North Carolina Press, 1980); and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), based on her 1980 dissertation at the University of New Hampshire.

[150] Claudia Goldin, "The Economic Status of Women in the Early Republic: Quantitative Evidence," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary* 16, no. 2 (Winter 1986): 375-404.

[151] Ibid., 400.

[152] Lisa Wilson Waciega, "A 'Man of Business': The Widow of Means in Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1750-1850," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (Jan. 1987): 40; Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18 no. 2, part 1 (Summer 1966): 151-152.

them with their own economic knowledge and experience. Wills from those with "Lower Sort" occupations, with "mariner" first on the list, appeared in a single table of husbands who left wills between 1750-1850 with 11.8% of total wills with listed occupations. In the "middling groups," captains had no extant wills.[153]

At the same time, there was still plenty of academic space for more monographs that largely supported earlier theses about women, economics, and domesticity in the nineteenth century. Glenna Matthews's *"Just a Housewife"* (1987) and Jeanne Boydston's *Home and Work* (1990) both argued that the labor of "housewives" and "goodwives" played a critical role in the American economy but from there, their assessments of early America's social and cultural climates diverged. Matthews claimed that as late as 1850, American housewives still recognized the importance of their work for both family and society and benefitted from the cult of domesticity until the end of the nineteenth century. Boydston, however, argued that the valuation of women's work was at its peak in the colonial era but rapidly diminished as early republic Americans increasingly used wages to determine what was and was not "real" work.[154] Neither book claimed a specific place within the United States; both works tended to focus on New England subjects and texts used as America writ large, though they both mentioned Philadelphia at least in passing.

The assessment of women's business ties often implicitly examined port cities like Philadelphia by centering their works in early America's largest urban areas, but the rarity of women in maritime histories only grew when women's business and labor entered the picture.

---

[153] Waciega, 50. She noted that she referenced Susan Klepp's dissertation for her categories and supplemented it with material from Nash's *The Urban Crucible*.

[154] Glenna Matthews, *"Just a Housewife": The Rise and Fall of Domesticity in America* (New York: Oxford, 1987); Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York: Oxford, 1990).

One important exception to this trend was Elaine Forman Crane's *Ebb Tide in New England* (1998). Crane shared Christine Stansell's assertation that women's economic status regressed in early American port cities, creating a "feminization of poverty" that spread across the United States in the nineteenth century and beyond.[155] Where Stansell's work focused more on unearthing a subculture of women laborers, Crane's work traced the feminization of poverty to its origins on the New England seaboard. Much like Stansell, though, Crane relegated Philadelphia largely to her citations and deliberately distanced herself from comparisons between Philadelphia and her chosen quartet of American seaports (Boston, Newport, Salem, and Portsmouth).

Fortunately, other scholars of this time period did place Philadelphia front and center in their work, navigating the same impetus to elaborate on why and how women's economic lives mattered. Though her work provided an important corrective to works on Philadelphia businesswomen that relied too much on tax documents and therefore obscured the frequency and importance of married women's work in family shops, Patricia Cleary's 1995 article "'She Will Be in the Shop'" focused largely on women who sold imported or luxury goods—and the upper-class women who bought those sundries. Cleary, however, was also careful to note that the same tax records privileged wealthy over poor shopkeepers, and also revealed the wholesaler-retailer economic chain that linked a New York merchant to a mariner's widow.[156] From her 1993

---

[155] Elaine Forman Crane, *Ebb Tide in New England: Women, Seaports, and Social Change, 1630-1800* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 141. See also Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1987 [New York: Knopf, 1986]). Stansell's book was based on her doctoral dissertation, "Women of the Laboring Poor in New York City, 1820-1860" (Yale, 1979) but the book contains a brief citation of Nash's *The Urban Crucible*, as well as an earlier journal article connected to his book ("Urban Wealth and Poverty in in Pre-Revolutionary America, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6 (Spring 1976): 545-584). While Stansell's work thus came after Nash had made his mark on the field, the concurrency of Nash's book and Stansell's dissertation clearly demonstrates that whatever Nash's reasons for being largely silent about women, at least one of his port cities had substantial available archival material on them.

[156] Patricia Cleary, "'She Will Be in the Shop': Women's Sphere of Trade in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia and New York," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 119, no. 3 (July 1995): 181-202.

dissertation, Karin Wulf first published an article in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* about how gender strongly factored into the city's tax assessment process and skewed the available historical record itself, as assessors' exclusion of women regularly failed to coincide with their actual taxable wealth.[157] Soon after came her seminal work, *Not All Wives* (2000), which placed not just women, but unmarried women—widows, divorcées, never-married, or otherwise *femes soles*—at the heart of Philadelphia's economic activity and its cultural portrayals of marriage, making them "a prism through which vital connections among politics, economics, and gender are refracted."[158] It delved into various elements of these women's economic lives, from their household relations and community roles to their positions as wage-earners, property owners, and in some cases dependents upon public poor relief. As one reviewer noted, *Not All Wives* dispelled the notion that single women were "deviant" or outliers in early America and demonstrated the important scholarly contributions to be found by historians willing to remove that particular set of blinders.[159] While her declension narrative of women's lost economic(/political/cultural/social) power in the nineteenth century was not new, and her hermeneutic of singledom required careful acknowledgement of the vast differences between poor and wealthier non-wives, Wulf's work reconfigured the terms of engagement with the historical record in an unprecedented manner. Wulf also provided tantalizing glimpses at future potential areas of study through the wide array of occupations mentioned in her overview.

---

[157] Karin Wulf, "Assessing Gender: Taxation and the Evaluation of Economic Viability in Late Colonial Philadelphia," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 121, no. 3 (July 1997): 234. By the end of the article, this disconnect led Wulf to correct Carole Shammas's assumption in "The Female Social Structure of Philadelphia" that Chestnut Ward resident Margaret Trotter, along with other women in the area, were "excused from taxation" due to extreme poverty. Citing Gary Nash's discussion of working men's rising poverty, Wulf instead suggested that these women "may have been in equivalent or better financial positions than their male neighbors who were rated and then abated." Wulf, "Assessing Gender," 233-234, fn73.

[158] Wulf, *Not All Wives*, 9.

[159] See Anne Myles, "Review: Not All Wives: Women of Colonial Philadelphia by Karin Wulf," *Early American Literature* 38, no. 3 (2003): 532-536.

This included a very brief mention of mariners' wives, one that placed them within the ranks of *femes soles* but focused more on normalizing the potential disruption of a mariner's long absences from port with other women who were married by law but *femes soles* in practice.[160]

Around the time that Wulf's book debuted, early US historians had begun to explore in earnest a new transnational framework that privileged the connections between people and the circulation of goods over teleologically-imposed state, colonial, or regional borders. Atlantic history became the field's new watchword, with one leading scholar of the British Atlantic quipping in 2002 that "We are all Atlanticists now."[161] While this paradigm has since been interrogated by various proponents and detractors—and in some cases eschewed in favor of either a return to microhistorical hyperfocus or farther-ranging historical frameworks such as oceanic or hemispheric history—for the first decade of the 21st century, even those who might not consider themselves textbook Atlanticists today saw plenty of reasons to try the title on for size. Histories of port cities fit perfectly within the Atlantic paradigm: one of the new field's major shortcomings, the exponentially larger amount of research, time, and funding needed to trace histories in motion across multi-national archives, could often be carefully circumscribed via a case study of a single port city or by a comparative history of two or three.

Studies on Philadelphia appeared in various compilation volumes and journal articles on Atlantic history but there were no books focused solely on the city's history, let alone its women or its economic activity, that also explicitly employed an Atlantic framework to revisit new topics or explore new possibilities outside of the city's politically drawn borders. A 2006 special forum of *Early American Studies* gathered six authors on the topic of "Women's Economies in

[160] Wulf, *Not All Wives*, 97-98.
[161] David Armitage, "Introduction," in *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 13.

North America before 1820," a panel which had originated two years prior at the Program in Early American Economy and Society (PEAES).[162] Introduced in the journal by PEAES Director Cathy Matson, herself a scholar of colonial and early republic Philadelphia, the forum members deliberately "situated their case studies within the long-term development of a domestic North American and wider Atlantic world economy that was growing in unprecedented and startling ways by the 1740s, development that was in very important respects linked to the economic activities of women."[163] Combined, the six articles covered New York City; Newport, Rhode Island, and Charleston, South Carolina; Chester County, Pennsylvania; New England; North Carolina; and Harford County, Maryland. Matson's introductory article mentioned previous studies from Philadelphia like Goldin's that had shaped these articles' content, but the most recent of those citations was a case study of a single Philadelphian middle-class woman, in the edited volume *Family and Society in American History* (2001).[164] Otherwise, the city's name appeared most prominently in the credit lines for pictured archival materials.

More historical information about Philadelphia women's economic and business lives has surfaced in both books and articles of the last decade, though often suborned by the main theses of the former and circumscribed by occupation, race, or age in the latter. As discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, Clare Lyons's *Sex Among the Rabble* (2012) focused largely on the ways that sex defined and redefined Philadelphians' gender, class, and racial differences and power relations, and economics formed a less explicit part of that calculus of power. Lyons noted the various commercial opportunities that poor or working-class women could find in the city and

[162] Cathy Matson, "Women's Economies in North America before 1820: Special Forum Introduction," *Early American Studies* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 271.
[163] Matson, "Women's Economies," 271.
[164] Susan Branson, "Women and the Family Economy in the Early Republic: The Case of Elizabeth Meredith," in *Family and Society in American History*, ed. Joseph Hawes and Elizabeth Nybakken (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 72-94.

sketched a brief portrait of their most common trades, which ones would have paid them in wages, and gender gaps in compensation.[165] Short-term transactions like those discussed in this chapter would have fallen within those bounds and, as in the case of Philadelphian sailors' women, also created social connections and cultural understandings far beyond their brief durations, but Lyons chose instead to focus on monetary elements with the clearest ties to poorer Philadelphians' sexual relationships, marital ties, and performances of gender. These included how women used their husbands' lack of "economic performance" as proof they had failed to meet their marital obligations, how they sought public or private redress for financial insolvency when outside of the increasingly normative role of submissive yet succored wife, and the ways that prostitution acted as an avenue for independence (and could be a temporary occupation).[166]

Candice L. Harrison's 2013 article on Philadelphia's female hucksters in the early republic era both revealed the role they played in the city's burgeoning open markets as small-scale vendors of foodstuffs and the ways they used their economic position to engage in wider debates about democracy and capitalism. While hucksters were not limited by ordinance to one gender or race, women outnumbered men and, as Harrison noted, informal norms reserved huckstering "for those who could find no other 'useful' employment" in order to deter them from seeking charity or alms.[167] Harrison's article hinted toward these women's ties to maritime laborers: female hucksters hypothetically included widows "who may have lost their husbands to yellow fever or at sea," and when state legislators sought to exert control over the city's markets post-Revolution hucksters resisted their expulsion through petitions and the same political

[165] Clare A. Lyons, *Sex Among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender & Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 29-33.
[166] Lyons, 52-53, 281-286.
[167] Candice L. Harrison, "'Free Trade and Hucksters' Rights!' Envisioning Economic Democracy in the Early Republic", *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 137, no. 2 (April 2013): 150.

rhetoric used by sailors, so thoroughly that the satire newspaper *The Tickler* featured a story on "Free Trade and Huckster's Rights" in 1813. These connections remained largely implicit, though, as Harrison focused more on placing hucksters' story within the larger, now-familiar story of increasing gendered restrictions premised on republican motherhood. The "fear of morally depraved huckster women violating newly forming class-based gender norms and contaminating the economic culture of the early republican city" created conditions in which female hucksters resisted their demonization and demonetization, but ultimately lost out economically, politically, and even culturally.[168] Two years later, another article on itinerant traders—hucksters as well as peddlers and hawkers—by Robert J. Gamble appeared in an *Early American Studies* special issue on "Everyday Connections of Colonial Economies." Where Harrison's Philadelphia hucksters fought for their position to do business in the city's markets during and after the American Revolution, Gamble focused on colonial Mid-Atlantic traders who "radiated outward from the marketplace" and brought trade goods to those unable to access shops or stalls in person.[169] Even more terse than Harrison about these traders' personal maritime ties beyond "makeshift vendues" on wharves, Gamble also focused less on the ways that gender defined these workers' danger to the body politic and more on how the racial heterogeneity of itinerant traders clashed with fears of mobility "in all colonies with considerable slave or servant populations."[170] A 2016 article by Karol K. Weaver expanded on the city's female funerary workers, usually referred to in city directories as "layers out of the dead," who were largely

[168] Harrison, 168, 176.
[169] Robert J. Gamble, "'For Lucre of Gain and in Contempt of the Laws': Itinerant Traders and the Politics of Mobility in the Eighteenth-Century Mid-Atlantic," *Early American Studies* 13, no. 4, Special Issue: Ligaments: Everyday Connections of Colonial Economies (Fall 2015): 840. Gamble's article mentioned traders in Baltimore and, once, a statute about peddling in colonial Connecticut, but largely focused on Philadelphia.
[170] Gamble, 841-842.

widows or senior female heads of house.[171] Written over a much broader chronological sweep from the late eighteenth to late nineteenth century, Weaver's work indicated a similar declension narrative of women being forced out of an industry that allowed them some form of economic and social independence, but situated it in broader themes of medical specialization and industrialization. The "formally trained and licensed professionals" who replaced these women—undertakers, funeral directors, embalmers—were, of course, all male.[172]

Taken as a collective, all of these works have done much to fill in the map of women's labor in revolutionary and early republic Philadelphia, but nobody has yet written a comprehensive analysis of the city's working-class women, and several sub-topics on women's economic activity in the city remain under-studied. In part this circles back to the issue of sources: as the historians who have written about wealthy and poor women alike have all noted, the records they use are already "much less voluminous, less accessible, and more scattered than those of men," and within this imbalance, historical actors' poverty creates further scarcity.[173] While the discovery of unique treasure troves, creative source interpretation, and constantly evolving research methodologies and theories have, as mentioned above, begun to fill in the gaps, the time and effort required to do so makes the completion of more magisterial works a much more intensive commitment for any individual scholar. Even so, when taken as a collective the historiography of working-class women in Philadelphia, and in early America and the Atlantic, indicates that the task of writing about laboring women is both worthy and workable.

[171] Karol K. Weaver, "'Painful Leisure' and 'Awful Business': Female Death Workers in Pennsylvania," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 140, no. 1 (January 2016): 34-35.
[172] Weaver, 54.
[173] Zagarri, 9.

By contrast, a great deal of the work on Atlantic sailors has consistently and successfully focused on their economic roles and class status.[174] Marcus Rediker, Billy Smith, and Paul Gilje have all done extended work to determine Atlantic sailors' actual wages and purchasing power, with Gary Nash, Smith, Dirk Hoerder, and Richard Oestreicher paying particular attention to the latter for sailors and other laborers in and around Philadelphia.[175] Within more general histories of lower-class citizens, sailors are regularly cited as a significant percentage of laborers who were working-class, subsisted at the lowest level of economic activity, or otherwise "scraping by."[176] Against this consensus of sailors' lack of financial resources, historiographic debates have instead centered upon identifying their roles in perpetuating (or resisting) capitalism and/or slavery, whether their relationship to the merchants and nations that hired them was mutually beneficial or exploitative, and the extent to which their flouting of social or economic norms constituted conscious political revolution or the formation of a proto-proletariat.

Sailors' Earnings and Expenditures at Sea

Philadelphia's sailors were generally "concentrated at the bottom of the economic ladder of freemen," with wages low enough in 1772 to merit charging most of them the minimum tax

[174] For key works in this strand of historiographic thought, see Jesse Lemisch, "Jack Tar in the Streets: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (July 1968), 371-407; Eric Hobsbawm, "The General Crisis of the European Economy in the 17th Century," *Past & Present* 5, no. 1 (November 1954): 33-53; and Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700–1750* (New York: Cambridge, 1987).

[175] See "Appendix C: Wages in the Merchant Shipping Industry, 1700-1750" in Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 303-304; Smith, *The "Lower Sort,"* 230-237; Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 11, 20-32; Gary Nash, Billy G. Smith, and Dirk Hoerder, "Laboring Americans and the American Revolution," *Labor History* 24 (Summer 1983): 414-439; Richard Oestreicher, "The Counted and the Uncounted: The Occupational Structure of Early American Cities," *Journal of Social History* 28, no. 2 (Winter 1994): 351-361. Nathan Perl-Rosenthal, *Citizen Sailors: Becoming American in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015) also discusses wages but uses Rediker's data.

[176] See Smith, *The "Lower Sort";* E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pelican, 1968); Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

on their earnings.[177] Merchants' wages for mariners in overseas trade peaked during military conflicts as vessels competed for able seamen's labor and the ability to "strike it rich" via privateering, and also fluctuated with the rise and fall of the city's trade efforts, reaching high pots in the 1790s and 1820s.[178] Maritime historians also agree that sailors' labor was exceptionally physically demanding, even in a time when most occupations depended on raw human or animal muscle.

In several ways, sailors' wages set them apart from land-bound laborers, placing them outside of some of the Atlantic seaboard's webs of commerce but exposing them to unparalleled financial risks and opportunities. Ship's masters and navies regularly paid crews in specie, rather than in barter or credit, and their pay usually came in the form of a lump sum at the end of a voyage that could take months to complete. Philadelphia's sailors were no exception to this payment pattern, and while winter weather usually forced the city's mariners to take up other occupations until the spring, for most their labor, commercial, and seafaring patterns had more in common with southerly Atlantic ports than the New England towns from which whalers and cod fishers set sail on years-long voyages for a percentage of the vessel's profits. While some captains or merchants provided partial advance payments, such requests greatly outnumbered approvals, and ship's captains were far more likely to succeed in their own entreaties for advance pay. Social interactions accounted for part of this imbalance, as captains regularly mingled with their employers and often had years to build up the relations of trust that undergirded cash loans. So too did the fear of desertion create a lack of trust between sailors and their employers,

[177] Smith *The "Lower Sort,"*, 112; see also Priscilla Ferguson Clement, *Welfare and the Poor in the Nineteenth-century City: Philadelphia, 1800-1854* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1985) to corroborate this assertion, and for a comprehensive overview of the mechanisms of poverty relief in early republic and antebellum Philadelphia.
[178] Smith, *The "Lower Sort,"* 115.

supported by numerous hearsay and popular accounts of sailors who received partial pay upfront and promptly decamped in the next port city, leaving a ship's officers with the unappealing prospect of trying to find replacement crew members outside of their home port.

A more reliable enticement for a sailor to join a crew was the possibility of cargo space on a merchant vessel: when given square footage in which to stow trade goods, a sailor could invest in a commodity at home or at a foreign port, have it stowed with the rest of the ship's cargo, and through luck and skill might manage to sell these goods at a profit. This possibility, however, was neither guaranteed nor free of restrictions. Finally, as some of Philadelphia's seafarers experienced firsthand, a sunken, seized, or capsized boat could send both people and profits to a watery grave.[179] The same opportunities and dangers applied to sailors who joined privateer or naval crews for a percentage of the prize money gathered on their voyage. These vessels sailed out of Philadelphia on a regular basis; a news snippet from the November 22, 1800, *Philadelphia Repository* noted that the "crew of a certain ship of war" had each received prize money of 40 pounds sterling.[180]

The occupation of sailor was also much more fluid than many other Philadelphians' occupations. Seasonal downturns and upswings in voyages, physical wear and tear, economic necessity, the geopolitical landscape, and the occasional opportunity for upward mobility created a dizzying ebb and flow of employment that not every seaman could navigate to his advantage. With its port cities focused in the north, the American seaboard generally saw far fewer voyages in the winter than in the summer. This pattern held particularly true for Philadelphia, as the constant addition of fresh river water to its seaport often froze the water entirely while vessels could still sail into Boston, Newport, and other oceanside ports. In the absence of sufficient coin

[179] See discussion of the insolvency petitions of William Bunce and Robert Boker later in this chapter.
[180] "The Economical Sailor," *Philadelphia Repository, or Weekly Register* (Philadelphia, PA), Nov. 22, 1800, 14.

to subsidize his stay, it was up to a stranded sailor to use social connections, knowledge of the city's businesses, or sheer dumb luck to find work that would sustain him until spring when he could re-enter his seafaring trade. Age also contributed to changes in seafaring labor. The physical markings of a life at sea, at least, provided an egalitarian element to maritime labor: even a sea captain with the means and connections that enabled a transition to merchant or tavern-keeping life forever bore the mark of a bandy-legged old salt.

Common sailors were far less likely to ascend to any ship's officer ranks, let alone a captaincy, or to strike it rich as merchants. While contemporary sources—and some present-day historians—celebrated Stephen Girard's self-propelled rise from the "obscure and vulgar life" of a "humble French mariner" that led him directly to his position as the city's most "*munificent philanthropist*," as a son and grandson of sea captains he entered his first berth as an apprentice officer and rose through the ranks from there.[181] His ability to turn his seafaring years into the basis for his massive fortune relied upon his rank, which granted him firsthand exposure to buying and selling cargo, the chance to gain individual recognition for his skills, and social access to merchants and shipowners in the American colonies and France who could provide him with lucrative employment or guide his burgeoning business acumen.[182] Most mariners' occupational transitions were much more horizontal, and far less likely to draw the attention of the public at large. Within a port city's quotidian life, a sailor might decide to continue his work as a carter beyond the winter, or to turn his hand to ropemaking, sailmaking, or another seafaring support occupation. Those with additional work experience or family connections might engage in skilled trades or crafts when not at sea, but seafaring itself was its own skillset and its seasonal

[181] Stephen Simpson, *Biography of Stephen Girard, with his Will Affixed* (Philadelphia: Thomas L. Bonsal, 1832), 14, 217.
[182] Mike DiMeo, "Stephen Girard: Merchant, Mariner, Banker, Philanthropist, Humanitarian, Patriot," Independence Hall Association, *UShistory.org* (https://www.ushistory.org/people/girard.htm).

nature better coexisted with per diem jobs based on unskilled yet physically demanding labor, rather than the juggling of two trades. He might also find himself unexpectedly drawn back to life at sea when an economic boom created a surfeit of seafaring opportunities, or when a downturn in personal fortunes made the call of a lump sum cash payment difficult to resist. Wartime also drove up wages for merchant seafaring vessels, as naval service cut into their labor pool through both volunteers and impressment. While sailors pressed into labor on British naval ships received pay as well as rations, their wages were perpetually low and did not include the same advance payments or future bounties available to those who volunteered to join a naval crew.[183] A sailor could also use his labor as an escape route, departing a home port with the intent to make a fresh start elsewhere—or to reconnect with family and friends in a previous residence.

Sailors-as-consumers also operated from a similar inside-outside position within the Anglo-American business world. On the one hand, both merchant and naval ships regularly provided rations and other supplies to their crews, with navies establishing official guidelines to do so as the nineteenth century began. Quartermasters and ship's companies for merchant ships made similar acquisitions, guided by experience or at times by doctors' advice. The same Scottish physician who first determined that citrus fruits could cure scurvy suggested that every ship, naval or not, provide "eleven gallons of water, two pounds of salep,[184] and two pounds of

[183] Denver Brunsman notes that British navy volunteers "customarily received a bounty, two months' advance wages, and the opportunity to select their ship captain," while the less valued Royal Marines received lower bounties but still evaded impressment. See Brunsman, *The Evil Necessity*, 57, 60.

[184] Salep, also called salop, sahlib, sahlep, sahlab, or salop, was a flour made of powdered orchid roots, and had made its way from the Middle East to Europe and America by the late 1700s. A starch similar in origin and effect to arrowroot powder, it was exotic enough to be served in coffee shops as a Turkish novelty but affordable enough for even the poorest city-dwellers to purchase. The physician in question, Dr. James Lind, suggested that sailors consume the highly-nutritious substance as a "strong paste," mixing it with seawater "in cases of great extremity." See "Dr. Lind's Advice to Prevent the Want of Provisions at Sea," in *The Narrative of Captain David Woodard and Four Seamen, Who Lost Their Ship While in a Boat at Sea, and Surrendered Themselves Up to the Malays, in the Island of Celebes* (London: J. Johnson, 1804), 231-232.

portable beef soup" per sailor for a month's supplies.[185] Some ships also outfitted sailors with clothing and other seafaring supplies, though again, this benefit more frequently applied to those on-board naval vessels. Texts about maritime maladies that circulated in Philadelphia and other American port cities, such as Samuel Holden Parsons Lee's short pamphlet *Medical Advice to Seamen* (1795) and William Burrell's book *Medical Advice, Chiefly for the Consideration of Seamen* (1798) were written for the provider, not the beneficiary, of medical treatments at sea. Both Burrell and Lee also wrote their volumes to complement the medicine chests they sold, and so some of their medicines were only described by their assigned number, their preparation, and purpose, with more easily identifiable medical substances like laudanum and Peruvian bark used interchangeably with their number. Between these prescriptions and the books' general descriptions of diseases' symptoms and curative processes, a ship's surgeon or master could apply these pamphlets' information to a self-compiled medicine supply. A literate sailor could, at the very least, diagnose an illness and/or treat it with substances on hand; purgatives did not necessarily require emetic powders, feverish patients could at least be kept cool, and the "lint and flour" that Lee suggested to staunch a bleeding wound would be relatively easy to find elsewhere on the ship. Other treatments, such as curing gonorrhea with a combined regimen of purging powders and the injection of sweet oil into the ailing sailor's "yard" two to three times a day,

[185] Portable soup was made by boiling down beef or mutton legs (herbs and spices optional) and skimming off the fat until one ended up with a gelatinous reduction. This jelly-like substance was then dried and either stored as a whole disc or broken up into pieces, to be reconstituted in hot water or, as Lind suggested, "be allowed to melt in the mouth." A part of British Royal Navy rations since at least the mid-1700s, portable soup could last for up to five years without going rancid, but supposedly its "nourishing juices" left much to be desired in the way of taste and texture. See "Dr. Lind's Advice," 231.

In a colonial instance of a female business-owner being directly linked to sailors and seafaring, Elizabeth Du Bois (later Bennet) used her late husband's family recipe for portable soup to support herself in her widowhood, becoming an official naval supplier in 1756. An advertisement from the October 8, 1757, issue of *Read's Weekly Journal* notes both her name change due to remarriage and her designation as the "Portable-Soup Maker to his Majesty's Navy." Her second husband and she continued her business enterprise, with their soup being served to "gentlemen of all Ranks, as well as Officers both by Sea and Land, at home and abroad."

required at least some medical finesse.[186] Expert or amateur aside, the onus of providing medical supplies while at sea fell to the ship's owners or officers and not its common sailors. Once they were back in port, though, sailors were on their own and had to pay any medical costs out of pocket.

Generally, the expectation was that when a sailor boarded a ship he only brought along a small amount of his worldly goods, stored in a canvas satchel or a sea chest, the latter made of wood with rope handles on either side. As Paul Gilje notes, the sailor's sea chest was both an emblem and a microcosm of a sailor's life at sea, and could contain everything from clothing, food, and drink to musical instruments, specialized tools, and mementos.[187] Sea chests' sizes depended on both the artisan who crafted them and the space a mariner could expect to have on a ship. Longer voyages generally correlated to larger chests, as did the ship's hierarchy, with officers generally having larger, more sturdy chests than common seamen. The chest itself could be either a new purchase for a fledgling sailor or passed down from a seaman to his son. Clothing was especially important as between the cramped quarters of a wooden ship, the sailors' high level of physical labor, the omnipresence of damp and salt water, and changes in climate, fabrics wore out at an accelerated rate. Some sailors also supplemented their rations by bringing fresh produce on board with them.[188]

Patterns (and Stereotypes) of Portside Acquisitions in Philadelphia

[186] Samuel Holden Parsons Lee, *Medical Advice to Seamen* (New London: Samuel Green, 1795), 11-12. "Yard" was a fourteenth-century synonym for the penis, though by the late 1700s its usage had generally been reduced to medical or veterinary texts and contexts. The OED traces its etymology to the Middle English word *ȝerde*, meaning a scepter, rod, or bar. See *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "yard, n.2," https://www-oed-com.www2.lib.ku.edu/view/Entry/231201?rskey=TNEkXW&result=2 (accessed December 8, 2020).
[187] Gilje, "Epilogue: The Sailor's Sea Chest," in *To Swear Like a Sailor*, 263-273. While some sources use the term "ditty box" to describe smaller sea chests—"ditty" being an abbreviation of "commodity"—this terminology seems to have first appeared in the mid-nineteenth century and has been used retroactively.
[188] Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 78.

When allowed to disembark the ship, Atlantic sailors would by necessity or whim procure goods and services. An 1819 anecdote from the Philadelphia newspaper *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* sketches out the typical sailor's arrival in a port, albeit with room for exaggeration:

> The first object of the seaman, on landing, is to spend his money. … He buys every thing [sic] he comes athwart—nuts, gingerbread, apples, shoe-strings; beer, brandy, gin; buckles, knives, a watch, (two if he has money enough;) gowns and handkerchiefs for Bet [the woman on his arm] and his mother and sisters, dozens of "superfine best men's cotton stockings," dozens of superfine women's best ditto; best good checks for shirts (though he has too much already[)]; infinite needles and thread (to sew his trowsers [sic] with some day;) a footman's laced hat, bears' grease to make his hair grow, (by way of joke;) several sticks, all sorts of Jew articles; a flute, (which he can't play and never intends;) a leg of mutton which he carries somewhere to roast, and for a piece of which, the landlord[189] of the ship makes him pay twice what he gave for the whole; in short, all that money can be spent upon, which is everything but medicine gratis, and this he would insist on paying for. He would buy all the painted parrots on an Italian's head on purpose to break them, rather than not spend his money.[190]

As both Paul Gilje and Marcus Rediker have noted, by the late eighteenth century the image and reality of rollicking Jack Tars who swiftly spent their money on fleeting pleasures while in port had saturated Atlantic social and cultural life. A wide array of songs, plays, and broadsides presented this shared cultural understanding of sailors' cyclical spending patterns and labor, and Philadelphia was no exception. As one song in the *Sailor's Medley* proclaimed,

> Let them throw out their wipes, and cry, spite of the crosses
> And forgetful of toil that so hardly they bore
> That "Sailors at sea earn their money like horses,
> "To squander it idly like asses ashore."[191]

[189] "Landlord" refers here to the ship's victualler, or supplier of foodstuffs. This task often fell to innkeepers and publicans, making the two terms largely interchangeable.
[190] "The Sailor on Shore," *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia, PA), Apr. 10, 1819, 2. The same piece was reprinted verbatim four years later *The Oracle of Dauphin* (Harrisburg, PA), May 3, 1823, 4.
[191] "Song [#2]," *The Sailors Medley: A Collection of the Most Admired Sea and Other Songs* (Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1800), 5.

Another song published in 1790 corroborated this envisioned cycle of spending and sailing:

> What's got at sea we spend on shore,
> With sweethearts, or our wives,
> And then, my boys, hoist sail for more!
> Thus pass the sailors' lives.[192]

Poor money management, a resulting lack of both social mobility and a traditional land-based household, and free-footed frivolity had become iconic and endemic to Anglo-American sailors' cultural identity. In at least some cases, this stereotype was well-deserved. The aforementioned *Philadelphia Repository* article about prize money reported that one of the crewmen had "spent *the whole* in *two days*, and contrived to get *fifteen pounds in debt* to his landlady."[193] In this instance, popular portrayals of sailors' spendthrift ways had given portside society the language to interpret actual instances of poor economic planning, and in doing so revealed the complex web of motivations, and the mutual creation, for social and cultural understandings of overindulgence.

Most sailors who entered foreign ports sought brief exchanges of their wages for trade goods, services, consumables, and entertainment, and possibly a place to rent for the duration of their stay. Those who considered a particular port their home city would put down more permanent roots, finding long-term rentals (or rarely, purchasing houses) and making regular expenditures with nearby grocers, dry goods vendors, shoemakers, and/or other artisans or traders. While ephemeral in nature, sailors' purchases of a night's food, drink, or entertainment pumped revenue and hard currency into the economic arteries of a port city, as did their acquisitions of any trinkets, small sundries, or commodities purchased for resale. Seamen's

[192] Untitled song, *The Charmer; being a select collection of English, Scots' and American songs, including the modern: with a selection of favourite toasts and sentiments* (Philadelphia: W. Spotswood, T. Seddon, and Rice & Co., 1790), 5.
[193] "The Economical Sailor," 14, original emphasis.

propensity to immediately outfit themselves in a fashion worthy of strutting through the city spread those benefits to artisans as well, from tailors to haberdashers and watchmakers. A sailor fortunate enough to have a permanent residence would be particularly well-poised to acquire certain artisanal or import goods meant to furnish or support a home, though even a property-owning sailor could find himself with no real or personal goods at the time of his death.



Figure 2.1. A satirical depiction of a sailor spending his overflowing purse on punch and tobacco, with letters to multiple women, or "doxies," at his elbow. Artist unknown, "The Sailor's Pleasure," printed by Bowles and Carver, c. 1790-1800. Hand-colored mezzotint. 348 mm x 249 mm. The British Museum, acc. No. 1935,0522.1.17.

When sailors disembarked in Philadelphia, they almost immediately entered a cross-gendered public business world where women of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds plied their wares and sold their labor. An 1810 account of Philadelphia's street scene and its "cries"—loud, often trade-specific or rhythmic vocalizations of wares for sale—figuratively and literally captures the sights and sounds of the city's markets. In wide, straight streets bordered by three-story brick houses and buildings, women and girls walked around carrying baskets full of local, seasonal fruits and vegetables like strawberries, cherries, peaches, and radishes. (The booklet also noted sales of Caribbean citrus fruits and pineapples, as well as watermelons from New Jersey, but it gave no information about the vendor's gender, showed a male merchant in the accompanying woodcut, or both.) Others sold prepared foods that could be carried about without

spoiling, from "little black girl[s]" who sold baked pears from a clay dish to the girls who carried baskets of hot corn atop their heads so that the women accompanying them could collect customers' money, hand them their corn, and provide a pinch of salt upon request.[194] The girls most "in distress," per the booklet's anonymous author, were the "little match girl[s]" whose trade provided warm fires and a lesson in gratitude for those of greater fortune.[195] Inside the "market house"—a row of enclosed sheds that ran west on Market Street from the Delaware River toward the Schuylkill—Black women prepared and sold "pepperpot," a heavily spiced soup of Caribbean origin made with offal, tripe, and leftover cuts of meat, vegetables, and hot peppers, for a few pennies.[196] While not "cried about [the] streets," bakers traveling by cart to deliver bread to regular customers called out the name of their product to clear out any pedestrians in their path, and men with carts full of sand to cover tavern and public house floors did the same. While the booklet attributed oyster and clam selling to men, though, Harrison's aforementioned work on hucksters shows that these vendors could be women as well. Some wares or trades were more appealing to seafaring customers than others, just as those customers were less appealing to some businesswomen. Several wares were purchased by both men and women, though the young boy who appeared between three and four o'clock with a basket of rusk (twice-baked rectangles of bread or, in this case, cake) found his particular clientele among female vendors and customers ready for their tea.

---

[194] *The Cries of Philadelphia; Ornamented with Elegant Wood Cuts* (Philadelphia: Johnson and Warren, No. 147, Market Street, 1810), 17-19.
[195] Ibid., 21-22.
[196] Ibid., 15. Technically, Caribbean pepperpot itself originated in callaloo, another Caribbean dish of stewed greens that itself developed from West African palava (palaver) sauce. While sources vary on the Indigenous or Spanish elements added when both callaloo and pepperpot came to North America, the connection to African food traditions is clear. See Theresa Altieri Taplin, "Philadelphia Pepper Pot," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, 2020, https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/philadelphia-pepper-pot.



Figure 2.2a and 2.2b. Engravings from William Birch, *The City of Philadelphia*. The first image shows the covered market area's proximity to the street's multistory buildings. The second image, which was not used in the book, shows the size and positioning of empty stalls on a non-market day.
2.2a: William Birch & Son, "High Street, From the Country Market-place, Philadelphia," 1800. Hand-colored engraving. https://www.loc.gov/item/2002718872/ 2.2b: William Birch & Son, "High Street Market – Philadelphia," 1800. Hand-colored engraving. https://www.loc.gov/item/2002718871/

Itinerant ordinary seamen, or Philadelphia sailors planning an imminent return to shipboard labor, would most likely have had fleeting transactions, with a chance to form transactional relationships, with women in and around these markets. Hucksters and other hot food vendors bridged the gaps between a sailor's shipboard rations and kept him fed when he lacked access to a kitchen. Female grocers and grocers' wives and daughters also provided comestibles, usually with a longer shelf life, while dry goods vendors could sell sailors anything from useful odds and ends to gifts for relatives and items for resale elsewhere. Most sailors were handy with a needle and thread by necessity but those looking for fancier clothing, or a simple break from such labor, could pay a seamstress to ply her trade on his behalf. Though Philadelphia had a number of washerwomen, many of them indentured servants or former slaves, these women generally performed this grueling, lengthy task for wealthier white families, and

sailors themselves were accustomed to doing their own laundry while at sea.[197] As two occupations at the bottom of the city's economic scale, they were far more likely to be neighbors or have intimate ties than for one to patronize the other. Sailors' fleeting transactions could also be collective, could extend beyond the marketplace to other women, and could more directly include their families: in one rare instance involving all three of these possibilities, a group of sailors and their wives all suffering from fever headed up the Delaware in 1777 to prevail upon Quaker widow Margaret Morris, known as a "skillful woman" who "kept medicines to give to the poor" in Burlington, New Jersey. After Morris rendered them aid, one of the sailors responded in kind by smuggling a batch of dry goods from Morris's sister in Philadelphia back to Burlington, which had been plagued by supply shortages.[198]

As discussed in Chapter 1, enough of Philadelphia's taverns, inns, and boarding houses were owned or run by women, and were located within walking distance of the docks, that sailors of every rank were incredibly unlikely to enter and leave port without some sort of cross-gender exchange. In addition to these property-owning women, taverns also relied upon women's labor to maintain their businesses. While tavern owners served customers, barmaids and other waitstaff also conveyed comestibles from the kitchen to the tables where sailors waited to sup on liquor, food, or both. Not every tavern served food, and starting in the 1750s, those that did most commonly served prix-fixe meals at a shared table (called the table d'hôte, or host's

[197] Shammas, "The Female Social Structure of Philadelphia in 1775," 76, 78; Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 34, 81. While land armies usually had washerwomen among the camp followers that took care of day-to-day needs so that the soldiers could expend their energy on the battlefield, there is no evidence to suggest that women did the same for naval ships in the field.

[198] Margaret Morris, *Private Journal Kept During a Portion of the Revolutionary War, for the Amusement of a Sister*, ed. John J. Smith (Philadelphia: privately printed, 1836), 23–25, 30–31, as discussed in Susan H. Brandt, *Women Healers: Gender, Authority, and Medicine in Early Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022), 130.

table).[199] As in other major cities of the early republic, restaurant-style dining akin to today's table layout and menus did not take off in Philadelphia until the mid-nineteenth century.[200] Early city directories that included occupations had few entries for waitstaff and none for barkeeps by any name; these workers were and could be considered "servants" of a head of household, and thus would not appear in directories.[201] Tavernkeepers with wives and/or children, or other live-in family members, regularly employed them in the family business, potentially bringing customers into transactions with female Philadelphians of all ages, but these women would not have appeared in directories either (with one exception in 1825, waiter Margaret Cook, who shared her address at 98 Gaskill with washerwomen Sine Cooper and Rachel Williams; all three women were "persons of color").

As will be discussed further in Chapter 3, sailors' wives also made business transactions with vendors of both sexes as their husbands' proxies and de facto heads of household, chiseling out an existence in the cracks between *feme sole* and *feme covert*. Some had their own occupations, while those with children were usually left with a store of cash that they had to make last until their sailors returned home with a fresh lump sum payment. In New England whaling towns, sailors' wives and families could request advances from ships' companies; as Lisa Norling notes, these were not guaranteed, but neither were they rare or exceptional until the

[199] The table d'hôte earned its name from term for the common table and limited menu shared by a host and his or her guests, with the eighteenth century's more public setup keeping the name but usually eschewing the presence of the host. Also called an "ordinary," the meal was served at regularly scheduled intervals in the day. See Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution: Taverngoing and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 3; see also Stephen Nepa, "Restaurants," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, 2016, https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/restaurants.
[200] For a discussion of this transformation, using Boston as a case study, see Kelly Erby, *Restaurant Republic: The Rise of Public Dining in Boston* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).
[201] The only exception to this was in the 1818 directory, which listed Nathan Johnson as a servant at 338 S. Third Street. He shared this address with Mary Dolby, a widow. Neither Johnson nor Dolby was listed in the 1819 directory, and the same address instead listed Joshua Clark, labourer (Black) as its sole resident.

mid-nineteenth century.[202] While Philadelphia certainly had its share of local ship owners and merchant fleets, the variety of seafaring job options was far more diverse—a benefit for new or experienced sailors seeking out potential jobs, but a detriment to any dependents in need of assistance when their cash reserves ran out before their sailor sailed back into port. Sailors' wives regularly relied on credit with local grocers and the sympathies of their landlords. Absentee husbands gave these women a unique position in Philadelphia's business world: as married women and therefore *femes sole*, their access to the market depended on the past or future earnings of their husbands as well as their husbands' distance, but it was these women's constant presence in their communities, and *their* direct promises and pleas to businesses and lenders, which informed the social connections and personal knowledge that were core to early American credit. Cultural portrayals of this crucial cross-gender intersection reflect the monetary anxieties and uncertainties that bound this particular tie. Within the themes of sailors' twinned pride in and doubt of their lovers' infidelity, some songs showed these women's monetary power as an imposition to the jolly tar's free-wheeling lifestyle. At the same time, songs from a woman's perspective maintained the necessity of holding the house's purse-strings when dealing with a husband or lover who played fast and loose with his money.

Sailor songs that circulated in Philadelphia as well as other Atlantic port cities revealed some of the possible female recipients of some seamen's purchases. As another Charles Dibdin song claimed, sailors' fidelity to their lovers was not their only allure: where a tailor could only provide a woman "three threads to drink," a sailor could keep her in biscuit and grog.[203] While

[202] Lisa Norling, *Captain Ahab Had a Wife: New England Women and the Whalefishery, 1720-1870* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 26-37, 144-147.
[203] Charles Dibdin, "Ballad–In The Honest Impostors," *A Collection of Songs, selected from the work of Mr. Dibdin* (Philadelphia: Printed by J. Bioren for H. & P. Rice, and sold by J. Rice, Baltimore, 1799), 77-78. This song appeared in numerous publications in both America and Europe, as did many of Dibdin's other tunes.

certainly tongue-in-cheek, the song reflected the social expectation that men provided for women, which included sailors' obligations to their dependents. The song "Oh! Yes, To That I Do Object," which appeared in the *English Songster, or John Bull's Musical Horn* in the early nineteenth century, showed a snapshot of expected gendered reciprocities:

He: […]
I don't object, I don't object
To pay for trinkets without end;—
Nay, my whole fortune to expend
To see you fashionably deck'd—
I don't object, I don't object;
But to you seeking to make me
One of those husbands whom we see
Forming so numerous a sect—
I do object, I do object—
Oh yes, to that I do object.
She: I don't object, I don't object
To be precise, and not coquet;
And not to run you more in debt
Than you in reason can expect—
But that a husband should presume
The tyrant ever to assume,
And dare to lecture and correct—
I do object, I do object.—
Oh, yes, to that I do object.[204]

Few songs described the gender of those who held relevant or prominent occupations for arriving sailors but there were some exceptions, and in some cases the fictional women who held these jobs contrasted with official records of male-only employment. An 1800 song that meditated on the ways an oak tree's lumber might be used in an urban setting provided a rough sketch of possibility:

The tree now fell'd by this good man,

[204] "Oh! Yes, to That I Do Object," *English Songster, or John Bull's Musical Horn* (New York and Philadelphia: Turner & Fisher, 18[??]), n.p. This version of the pamphlet was accessed at the Historical Society of Philadelphia, and the pamphlet's title page also credited potential publishers in Boston and Baltimore (though strangely, none outside of the United States). This particular song experienced exceptional popularity and longevity, likely due to its malleability of theme, as it appeared verbatim in the *Bunker Hill Songster, Containing National and Patriotic Songs, as Sung by the Principal Vocalists Sung by the Principal Vocalists* (New York: Murphy, Printer and Publisher, 1850), 23.

Perhaps may form the spruce sedan,
Or wheelbarrow, where Oyster Nan
So vulgar runs her rigs;
The stage, where boxers croud in flocks,
Or else the quacks, perhaps the stocks,
Or poles for signs of barber's blocks,
Where smiles the parson's wig."[205]

This song also circled back to drinking, as the last verse revealed the lumber had been used to press and store wine, as well as the "hall … where tipplers join/To crack their mirthful joke."[206] All of these occupations and more appeared in Philadelphia's city directories (albeit with less derogatory names), and most if not all of them were well inside the range of daily perambulations of a freshly arrived or resident sailor. And, as in the passing mentions of the city's insolvency records, each stretch of the economic latticework that fueled the city's business relationships had the potential—and more likely, the absolute certainty—of encountering a woman involved with the exchange of those goods and currency.

Sounding the Bowl (and the Alarm): The Hazards of Business

Sermons aimed at sailors tried to correct their thriftless morals, pairing the "lust" for material vices with sexual excesses and the gendered threat of potential exploitation. Reprinted in Newburyport, Massachusetts, in 1796 and then circulating in Philadelphia and other Atlantic port cities, English minister John Flavel's (c. 1630-1691) book *Navigation Spiritualized* (1677) arose from personal circumstances, as his parish in Dartmouth, England, had consisted largely of sailors. Flavel's book used seafaring-related metaphors to "clothe spiritual matters" in nautical terms and concluded each chapter with a poem to "try… by all means to assault your [sailors']

[205] "Song [#21]," *The Sailor's Medley*, 23.
[206] Ibid.

several affections."[207] While Flavel began his preface with an Aristotelian proverb that cautioned men from trusting secrets to a woman along with avoiding sea travel, he also referenced the association between sailors and their vices: "It was an ancient saying… He that knows not how to pray, let him go to sea. But we may say now, (alas, that we may say so in times of greater light) He that would learn to be profane, to drink, and swear, and dishonour God, let him go to sea."[208] From there, Flavel's prioritization of saving sailors' souls focused largely on the abstract battle between sailors' "monstrous lusts" and the power of redemption, with scattered references back to this core set of economically-fueled sins. In one chapter, Flavel critiqued seamen's focus on worldly goods and obtaining an estate without paying similar heed to their spiritual condition, associating this shortcoming to "carnal minded men" who "labour[ed] for the meat that perisheth."[209] Rather, sailors should trust God's provision for their earthly needs, while avoiding Satan's "golden baits" designed to tempt men's "constitution-evils": "Dost incline/To drunken meetings? Then he baits with wine./Is this his way; if unto this he'll smell,/He'll shortly pledge a cup of wrath in hell."[210] Prosperity issued from God, but punishment did as well, and it fell to sailors to cast off material and sensual pleasures, be wary of sharing their "substance" with women, and thus ensure their eternal rewards. The book's aforementioned reprintings, alongside the numerous sailor-focused religious tracts that will be discussed later in this dissertation, suggests that the threats of sexual and financial excess remained a perennial concern of religious

[207] John Flavel, *Navigation Spiritualized; or a New Compass for Seamen, Consisting of XXXII Points; of Pleasant Observations, Profitable Applications, and Serious Reflections, All Concluded with So Many Spiritual Poems* (Newburyport: Edmund M. Blunt, 1796 [1677]), 7. This was the first American printing of the book, and was preceded by three English printings in 1677, 1682, and 1726. These editions' subtitle contained a more detailed listing of sailors' "horrible and detestable sins of drunkenness, swearing, uncleanness, forgetfulness of mercies, violation of promises, and atheistical contempt of death." It also broadened the potential audience beyond seamen to "profane relations … [of] all such as unfeignedly desire their welfare."
[208] Flavel, 4.
[209] Flavel, 76.
[210] Flavel, 116-119.

leaders—and that for more than a century, those figures found observational evidence to fuel their concerns.

Some texts paired their warnings about sailors' financial irresponsibility with cautions specifically against involving women in one's purchases—or even making purchases at all. Peter Longueville's novel *The Hermit,* originally written in 1727 but reprinted numerous times in revolutionary-era and early republic America, neatly summed up the desired middle-class standards of sailors' conduct through its locksmith-turned-sailor-turned-island-dwelling-hermit protagonist:

> Make not the world your enemy, nor rely too much on its fidelity.
> Be not too free with your friend; repetitions of favours often wear out friendship.
> Waste not your vigour or substance on women, least [sic] their weakness and want be your reward.
> Secrets are not safe in a woman's breast; it is a confinement the sex cannot bear.
> Pass no contract over liquor; wine overcomes reason and dulls the understanding.
> He who games puts his money in jeopardy, and is not sure of his own.
> There is but little honour to wager on sure grounds, and less wisdom to lay upon a chance.[211]

Maritime cultural literature also elucidated another vector of sailors' purportedly careless expenditures: the dispensation of their wages outside of sale transactions. In addition to their service to king and country (or freedom and liberty, in the post-monarchy United States) and their friendly personalities, popular culture also lauded seamen for their generosity. Despite *The Hermit*'s cautionary tenet to "be not too free with your friend," the fictional sailor who celebrated "America, Commerce, and Freedom" was a man who shared his prize money with his "brother Tar[s]" and would also hand over his share if they experienced financial woes.[212] The

[211] Peter Longueville, *The Hermit; or, the Unparalleled Sufferings, and Surprising Adventures, of Philip Quarll, an Englishman* (Boston: Belknap, 1795 [1727]), 27. The book was also printed worldwide, in several languages, sometimes with the title *The English Hermit*.
[212] Longueville, *The Hermit*, 27; "America, Commerce, &c," *Nautical Songster*, 6, and Susanna Rowson, "New Song, sung by Mr. Darley, Jun. in the pantomimical dance, called the Sailor's landlady," broadside, (Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, [1794]).

same song that portrayed sailors as "asses" ended each verse with the words "succour a friend," a cue for its refrain:

> For money, cried Bill, and them there sort of matters,
> For money, cried Bill, and them there sort of matters,
> What's the good on't, d'ye see, but to succour a friend?[213]

William Rufus Chetwood's shipwreck-narrative-as-novel *The Voyages and Adventures of Captain Robert Boyle,* written from the first-person perspective of the "Captain" himself, included an anecdote that both praised and looked down upon sailors' handling of monetary affairs. Chetwood's work was unmistakably a work of fiction, despite its "protestations of authenticity," a device that was itself already established as a fictional conceit by Daniel Defoe and other novelists of the era.[214] However, its frequently co-published companion work, *The Voyage of Richard Castelman,* has recently been shown to be more of a "hybrid of fact and fiction," and certainly there are elements of Boyle's adventures whose mundanity could reflect actual sociocultural understandings of and behavior by ordinary sailors.[215] After Boyle peacefully ended a skirmish with a French vessel in return for the French ambassador's aid during his earlier captivity in Morocco, some of his crew protested his decision not to plunder the ship or its captain. In response, Boyle explained his "Obligation" and offered to share £500 among them in recompense. The sailors turned his offer down—"not one of them would accept a Penny"—and in exchange Boyle told them he would not hesitate to plunder any French vessel they encountered thereafter. "They were very well pleas'd with my Declaration," he finished,

[213] "Song [#2]," *The Sailor's Medley*, 5.
[214] Hazel Wilkinson, "*The Voyage of Richard Castelman* (1726): A New Document for Transatlantic Literary Studies," *The Review of English Studies* 70, no. 295 (June 2019): 469.
[215] Wilkinson, 484.

"and some of them prais'd my Generosity; for tho' most Sailors are rough and blunt in Speech, yet they can in their way admire a generous Action as well as other Men."[216]

In contrast to more top-down condemnations of sailors' rambling and carousing ways by concerned citizens, several popular sea songs celebrated the joys of excess and linked alcohol acquisition and consumption to physical, pre-sexual contact with women or to collective celebrations of absent wives and lovers. Largely written in the first person, these songs privileged the subject-as-singer's perspective: an individual maritime laborer surrounded by like-minded individuals, procuring and then consuming his liquor of choice (usually a rum-based punch), whose potency might determine his proclivity to sing. The popular song "The Wandering Sailor" painted a scene where the crew gathered "round the bowl" to "[renew] the early scenes of youth," each man boasting of his "favorite fair" but toasting to the seamen's perennial hope to "call anchor on our native shore."[217] A song attributed to popular playwright and lyricist Charles Dibdin deployed sounding—checking the water's depths—to celebrate "sounding the bowl" while surrounded by "brother[s]" and "honest souls."[218] In *The Sailor's Medley*, one enterprising mariner (named Jack, in true sailor fashion) not only maintained his belief that "there was nothing like grog," he converted his parents, siblings, chaplain, and some fellow parishioners to his dogma by sharing swigs from his "cann of good stuff."[219] Another

---

[216] [William Rufus Chetwood], *The Voyages and Adventures of Captain Robert Boyle, In Several Parts of the World. Intermixed with the Story of Mrs. Villars, An English Lady, with whom he made his surprising Escape from Barbary: The History of an Italian Captive, and the Life of Don Pedro Aquilio, &c. Full of various and amazing Turns of Fortune. To which is added The Voyage, Shipwreck, and Miraculous Preservation of Richard Castelman, Gent., With a Description of The City of Philadelphia, and the Country of Pensilvania* [sic], 10th ed. ([Philadelphia?]: n.p., 1781), 174. Though the book was originally published in 1726, it was reprinted several times in several American and European cities until at least 1850.

[217] "The Wandering Sailor," *The American Songster: being a select collection of the most celebrated American, English, Scotch, and Irish songs* (New York: Samuel Campbell and Thomas Allen, 1788), 69; also printed with the same title in *The Charmer*, 6-7.

[218] "Ballad," *A collection of songs, selected from the works of Mr. Dibdin. To which are added, the newest and most favourite American patriotic songs* (Philadelphia: J. Bioren, 1799), 119. This turn of phrase is also known as "fathoming the bowl," reinforcing the term's nautical origins.

[219] "Song [#10]," *The Sailor's Medley*, 12-13.

song defiantly disparaged landsmen of various occupations, particularly those of higher social status, and embraced drinking over thinking:

> We jollily join in the practice of wine,
> While misers 'midst plenty are pining;
> While ladies are scorning, and lovers are mourning,
> We laugh at wealth, wenching, and whining.
> Drink, drink, now 'tis prime; toss a bottle to time,
> He'll not make much haste to o'ertake us;
> His threats we prevent, and his cracks we cement,
> By the stypical [sic] balsam of Bacchus.[220]

Both songsters and artworks of the time assumed the omnipresence of women in public performance spaces for sailor songs, bringing them into the dialogue of maritime culture as both listeners and singers. As mentioned in the introduction, images of sailors carousing on shore frequently depicted women in their grasp or in the picture's background, and these images circulated on both sides of the Atlantic. Thomas Rowlandson's "Wapping" (1807) showed women dancing, drinking with, kissing, and preparing food and drink for sailors on shore leave within a nondescript open-air space at the waterfront's edge. English caricaturist George Cruikshank's 1825 etching "Sailors on a Cruise" depicted sailors riding inside and atop a carriage through the streets of London with several bonnet-wearing women in tow, both genders holding bottles of alcohol as multiple Union Jacks flew from their transport and the coachman urged his team of horses to higher speeds.

[220] "Song," *The Sailor's Medley*, 41-42.



Figure 2.3. *Thomas Rowlandson, "Wapping," hand-colored etching, September 1807, Rudolph Ackermann, London, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1959, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.*



Figure 2.4. George Cruikshank, "Sailors on a Cruise," color etching, 1825, Jas. Robins & Co Ivy Lane Paternoster Row London.

Some songsters' accompanying ephemera revealed that women had access to on-ship performance spaces as well. Looking back at the frontispiece of the *Nautical Songster* (1798) in Figure 0.1, one sees a ship's forecastle packed with sea-chests and hammocks behind a sailor who has a can of grog in one hand and a woman beneath his other arm. In the background was another woman and other sailor, while the caption at the bottom of the image quoted a song lyric: "When seated with Sal, all my messmates around." The song itself, titled "When seated with Sall [sic]," was attributed to "the farce of the Purse," a one-act musical by J. C. Cross. While the act of singing with Sal had a double layer of imagined performance in the musical—the character of Will Steady sang it while imagining the chance to "come along side Sal, a few old messmates in our wake"—the frontispiece indicated the same cross-gendered performance space on-board a ship as one found in a tavern and on the stage.[221] Even more compelling, while in *The Purse* Will sang his song solo and on land, the frontispiece's depiction of two couples inside a ship's forecastle heavily implied that such a scene was just as familiar, if not more so, to the sort of person who would acquire a copy of the *Nautical Songster*.

The musical's own finale song also featured solos for Edmund, Will, and Sally, with Will making a toast "Round the sparkling bowl,/To my lovely Sal!".[222] Toasts to and praises of women appeared frequently in drinking songs, from explicit celebrations of individual women to lyrical space where one could either cheer on a feminine collective or improvise a tribute. As Peter Thompson has shown, Philadelphia tavern-goers drank toasts despite early official condemnation of the practice, and sought toasts whose "relatively uncontroversial statements"

[221] "When seated with Sall," *Nautical Songster*, 43; J. C. Cross, *The Purse, or Benevolent Tar: A Musical Drama* (London: J. Barker, 1794), 18.
[222] Cross, 31-32. In addition to Sally being played by a female actor, the role of the page was also often played by a young woman, adding another feminine voice to the show. (The noblewoman Louisa was referenced throughout the play but never appeared on stage.)

could foment social cohesion.[223] Yet shifting the focus from the men who spoke these toasts to the celebration of these deeper romantic or maternal cross-gender ties, in a place of business where the women present could offer alcohol, sustenance, or a fleeting sexual connection, shows the ubiquitous presence of both real and imagined women in the popular sociocultural customs that bound sailors to each other and to other working-class individuals.

When songs encouraged sailors to spend their Saturday nights with their fellow "jolly tars" and "drink to Poll and Bess," the lines between actual and imagined women became even more blurred.[224] Names like Poll, Bess, Sal, Nan, Kitty, Peggy, and Chloe were easy to tether to a song's rhythm, but they were also common enough names in the Anglo-American Atlantic to possibly overlap with a sailor's existing female connections and indicative enough of the working-class women who labored for and alongside sailors to easily ascribe to one of them as they passed by. These land-based cross-gender experiences, when not replicable on-board a ship, could also be evoked when sailors huddled in a forecastle to spin yarns and mentally escape from the hard labor and frequent tedium of shipboard life if they chose. Feminine contact saturated the spaces where sailors both earned their wages and spent them, creating a cultural trifecta in which drinking, singing, and feminine contact defined seafarers' leisure and their identities.

Other popular and print culture texts published and circulated in Philadelphia discussed sailors' association with public drinking and spendthrift purchases from a far less sanguine perspective than the songs and sketches that celebrated rollicking good times. John Flavel's "cup of wrath" was but an early serving of the tidal wave of temperance literature aimed at all American men, but particularly at sailors, in the early republic era. Philadelphia had seen early efforts to curtail alcohol consumption in limited contexts, such as in the vicinity of iron furnaces

[223] Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution*, 99.
[224] "Song," *The Sailor's Medley*, 7-8.

and by political candidates exchanging liquor for votes. In the 1770s prominent residents like Benjamin Rush and Anthony Benezet had begun to advocate for temperance, along with more localized congregational efforts, and though their success was mixed the movement continued to pick up steam into the 1800s.[225] Sermons and pamphlets to specifically help sailors abstain from alcohol consumption became increasingly popular, albeit less likely to explicitly mention women. Individual religious officials and church or charitable aid societies wrote and published these largely unbound texts, circulating them along the United States seaboard and throughout its shipping routes. Shortly after his 1791 visit to Philadelphia, the Reverend Andrew Brown published *A Sermon on the Dangers and Duties of the Seafaring Life*, based on a sermon he "hastily prepared at sea" and gave in Halifax and then published in Boston "at the desire of the marine society of [Halifax]" before returning to his homeland of Scotland in 1795.[226] The perils of their labor and of the sea itself filled a sailor's life with fear, danger, and uncertainty—and, Brown argued, should inspire a gratitude in the divine that translated to godly living. In addition to superstition and swearing, Brown warned against the "stupifying [sic] vice" of drunkenness, linking loss of one's mental or physical capabilities to both "the vilest or the most atrocious crimes" as well as "immediate death."[227] He then advised sailors to be equally moderate with their wages and their health, and to set aside money for their post-seafaring lives rather than succumb to the "spirit of prodigality and wastefulness [that] has long been regarded as one of the distinguishing characteristics of the seafaring life."[228] Brown's work was Atlantic in both creation and circulation, and he was far from the only author who irrevocably tied sailors to

[225] Asa Earl Martin, "The Temperance Movement in Pennsylvania Prior to the Civil War," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 49, no. 3 (1925): 198-200.
[226] Andrew Brown, *A Sermon, on the Dangers and Duties of the Seafaring Life; preached before the Protestant Dissenting Congregation, at Halifax; and published at the desire of the Marine Society, in that place, by Andrew Brown D.D., Minister of the Protestant Dissenting Congregation* (Boston: Belknap and Hall, 1793), 5-6.
[227] Brown, 36-37.
[228] Brown, 39.

alcoholism or financial ruin—twin afflictions that implicitly involved women in their execution or consequences.

Some tracts on temperance likely made for better reflections of religious groups' concerns and presumptions about sailors' conduct than they did realistic tools of persuasion. During a short stay in Philadelphia circa 1816 and 1817, South Carolina Baptist minister Edmund Botsford published a three-part dialogue between two African slaves in South Carolina, to which he appended a much shorter dialogue "between two seamen, after a storm." In his youth, the orphaned Botsford had dreamt of going out to sea but served as a soldier instead before moving to Charleston in 1766, gaining his license to preach five years later.[229] Despite his long life on the American coastline Botsford failed to imbue his two fictional sailors, "Jack" and "Tom," with the same accessibility as found in Brown's sermon. Between several long-winded nautical metaphors Jack used to navigate Tom's self-avowed ignorance on "any thing [sic] about religion," he struck a much more direct tone when Tom asked about alcohol consumption:

> Tom: You are so strict, then, I suppose you would not drink a merry cann [sic] of grog with your shipmates.
> Jack: If by a merry cann, you mean drinking to excess, I would remind you, that God, whose commands are for man's good, as well as for his own glory, has charged us—*be not drunk*, Eph. v. 18. Drunkenness is a great crime; it unfits for every service, and whatever we may think of it, *no drunkard can inherit the kingdom of God*. 1 Cor. vi. 10.—Gal. v.21. "Have, therefore, no fellowship with these unfruitful works of darkness; but rather reprove them for conscience [sic] sake."[230]

While Jack's previous dialogue included Biblical citations, this section of the tract marked a sharp increase in "his" vehemence and was also much terser in comparison to Tom's professed inability to parse who could be the "Owner" of the Bible-as-spiritual-navigation chart, whether

[229] "Biographical Sketch," Edmund Botsford Correspondence, 1785-1819, Furman University (accessed Jan. 5, 2021), https://libguides.furman.edu/special-collections/edmund-botsford-corresp/biography
[230] Edmund Botsford, *Sambo and Toney, A Dialogue between Two Africans in South Carolina. To which is added, A Dialogue between Two Seamen, After a Storm* (Philadelphia: D. Hogan, 1816), 52-53.

the Bible could tell men how to avoid Hell, if Jack was the only religious seaman in existence, how to "read the Bible or pray on ship-board," or indeed how to pray at all.[231] Being spendthrift with material wealth, particularly when in the realm of women, was too clear and present a danger to a sailor's physical and spiritual health to mince words.

Finding the Everyday Within the Exceptional: *The Murder of Mrs. Sarah Cross* and Insolvency Petitions

The Philadelphia of Sarah Cross, Jenny Miller, Margaret Tucker, and Mary Lee and Caroline Cedars was a dynamic, cosmopolitan port where their services catered to everyone from temporary visitors to more permanent residents. These multiracial laboring women and their everyday activities were the threads that anchored an international social and economic weave, and a key component of the city's economic livelihood and its networks of credit and debit. Yet all but one of these women never made it into the city directories that guided strangers and residents around Philadelphia, and none left evidence of printed business advertisements in its newspapers. It took an exceptional event to bring these particular women into sharp relief against the quotidian array of female workers in the City of Brotherly Love: Sarah Cross's murder in December 1807 at the hands of John Joyce and Peter Matthias.[232]

On the evening of December 18, 1807, Joyce met Matthias at his residence and convinced him to abandon his previous engagement to play at a dance, "promising him as much or more money than he could get by playing the fiddle." Acquiring a section of "rope or clothes line [sic]" before they left the house, the two men stopped at two shops on their way to Laetitia Court to buy gin at each shop, drinking the alcohol as they walked. Joyce also acquired a piece of

[231] Botsford, 48, 49, 54-55.
[232] Joyce had also previously gone by the surname of Davis, while Matthias was also known as Peter Matthews.

sawed wood during their travels on Front Street. Joyce's initial intent was to recoup owed back wages from Kennedy but when he looked inside the building, Kennedy was nowhere in sight. Taking a detour to Cross's shop, they bought a half-dozen apples from the widow and conversed with her, with Cross noting that Joyce had "left his place" at Kennedy's and otherwise catching up with him as she offered Matthias the chance to come and warm himself by her stove. Matthias stepped outside to leave and Joyce made his move, striking Cross in the head with his makeshift wooden club and, after she fell to the floor, strangling her with the rope.

Though their accounts varied as to when Matthias re-entered the building and saw what Joyce had done, they agreed that another female resident of the area soon entered the tableau around 7 o'clock: Anne Messinger, a teenaged girl sent by her guardian to Cross's shop to buy licorice.[233] Noticing that "contrary to custom," Cross's shutters were closed, Messinger looked through the door's keyhole to see Joyce "shaking Mrs. Cross by the neck."[234] When Messinger entered the room, Joyce dropped his victim to go lock the door, still holding the rope that was tied around the widow's neck, while Matthias looked on.[235] Messinger tried to escape through a window but failed and was subsequently coerced into following the men upstairs, where she held a candle to provide light as they looted the widow's bedroom. Joyce's confession indicates he had more than casual familiarity of Cross's financial circumstances, saying that he "went upstairs to find the money" and uncovered caches of coin hidden in her bed and in the shop counter, which he stole along with some clothes and a looking glass.

---

[233] The trial account estimated her age between 13 and 14 years. Joyce and Matthias, 7.
[234] Joyce and Matthias, 25.
[235] Matthias claimed he had been outside the room for the murder but Messinger's testimony placed him there, as did Joyce's initial testimony to the Mayor, which Joyce recanted his statement almost immediately after the Mayor departed from his cell. The courts clearly sided with Messinger's version of the story, though whether this was due to the men's race, Joyce's lie, or the "striking distinctness and precision" of her testimony is unknown. Joyce and Matthias, 17, 7.

Waiting for a lull in passersby, Joyce and Matthias made their exit, with Joyce restraining Messinger by her wrist. As soon as they reached Second Street, she sounded an alarm and caused the two men to flee, dropping most of their stolen goods in the process. Returning to Matthias's house, Joyce had Cook stow away their ill-gotten gains before he sent her out for brandy. Upon her return they drank it alongside Lee and Cedars, who he identified as "two women of colour who lived upstairs … [and were of] loose character." (In his confession, Matthias noted that the women twice declined Joyce's offer to exchange sex for money, declaring that they had husbands.) Joyce traveled back to Tucker's house while Matthias went to play fiddle at "Jenny Miller's in Pine Alley," and at the home of a Mrs. Jordan, before he came back to Tucker's to play at a third dance there.[236] Though some of the women at Tucker's turned away the city watchmen that evening with a false alibi for the two men, soon after Hester Cook found Joyce there, the city watchmen apprehended him—and found Matthias the next day, hiding just outside of town at the home of Cook's aunt Rebecca Brunswick.[237] Both men were then interred at the Walnut Street prison. Two months later at the trial, the state's principal witness, Anne Messinger, identified both men to the courtroom, adding that she "knew [Joyce's] face well" because Kennedy's tavern was "within a few doors of the house where [she] lived." Joyce and

[236] Ibid., 14-16, 25-26, 31-35. Miller does not appear in any of the city directories from 1805 to 1811, and it is unknown whether or not this was a private residence or a public entertainment space. According to the 1811 directory, of the 11 people reported to live on that street, there was one boarding house at 7 Pine Alley which was run by a black man named Daniel Anderson.

[237] Ibid., 26, 35. Matthias noted that "Hester Cook took the trunk, containing the money and clothes, to carry it to her aunt's, (Rebecca Brunswick,) on the Banks of Schuylkill. I accompanied her late at night. […] About eleven o'clock next day I was apprehended here, by Mr. Smith and others, and brought to Prison." The court transcript included with the combined volume of the pamphlets mentioned that Matthias "was taken up the next day, a mile or two out of town in the garret of a house where he had secreted himself." As only Cook and possibly her aunt knew where he was, it is possible if not likely that Cook led the law to Matthias's hideout.



Map 2-2. Path taken by John Joyce and Peter Matthias, December 18, 1807.

Matthias were convicted and sentenced to death by hanging, and their sentence was carried out on March 14, 1808, at mansion-turned-makeshift-hospital Bush Hill.[238]

Joyce and Matthias were only Walnut Street's fourth and fifth cases of capital punishment in the nineteenth century.[239] After an act of April 22, 1794, deemed that first-degree murder would be the only capital crime in the state, it took six years for the state to enact its next execution, against three sailors—Joseph Baker, Joseph Bruce (Brous), and Pierre Lacroix (Lacrose)—who were hanged for piracy and for murdering a ship's mate and supercargo.[240] Though they shared a common maritime identity with these sailors, Joyce and Matthias's crime was far more sensational: two free Black men had killed a white female resident and business owner in the heart of the city, solely for material gain. The city's Black community swiftly realized how important it was to separate Joyce and Matthias's crime from the color of their skin. Bishop Richard Allen, a minister and co-founder of Philadelphia's Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, acquired both men's confessions and arranged to have

---

[238] Bush Hill was where Richard Allen and Absalom Jones had gone in 1793 to aid victims of the yellow fever epidemic and found "as wretched a picture of human misery, as ever existed … a great human slaughter house, where numerous victims were immolated at the altar of intemperance." See Absalom Jones and Richard Allen, *A narrative of the proceedings of the black people, during the late awful calamity in Philadelphia, in the year 1793: and a refutation of some censures, thrown upon them in some late publications* (Philadelphia, William W. Woodward, 1794), 9-10. It is unclear as to why Joyce and Matthias were executed at the hospital (located north of Vine Street, a relative hinterland of the city at this time) and not closer to the scene of their crime, save for its association with Allen and the African-American community at large; no subsequent executions took place on this spot, and were instead held at the Potter's Field in what is now Logan Square, the public burial space where the city buried those who were too poor to afford a burial or whose identity were unknown.

[239] Between 1776 and 1789, there were 43 executions of 61 individuals (at least one of whom was a woman) confined in the Walnut Street Prison. For a complete list see John Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884*, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Company, 1884), 1831-1832. While the State Assembly had purchased the plot for the prison in 1772, it was first opened in December 1775 by the Continental assembly to house British prisoners of war and, from 1777 to 1778, was used by the occupying British forces under General Howe to house American prisoners of war. "The Old Prisons of Philadelphia," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 13, 1896, 13.

[240] Ibid.; Joseph Baker, *The confession of Joseph Baker* (Philadelphia: Printed by Richard Folwell, no. 63, North Front-Street, 1800). While the *Inquirer* identified the three pirates as "Baker, Bruce and Lacruse" and their lone victim as the schooner *Amelia*'s supercargo, Baker's confession gave the men's full names, detailed their crimes, and identified the ship as the *Eliza*, captained by William Wheland. Scharf and Westcott also state that the execution took place on Windmill Island but this change in nomenclature was due to a later name change, as Smith's and Windmill Islands were a single piece of land until a canal bisected it in 1838.

them published as pamphlets.[241] Enslaved since his birth in either Philadelphia or Delaware, Allen had joined the Methodist Society at age 17, officially became a preacher in 1784, four years after he had purchased his freedom, and alongside fellow Methodist preacher Absalom Jones, had spearheaded Black community growth and abolitionist activity through his founding of and involvement with the AME, the Free African Society, and numerous other civic organizations.[242] Stepping in to mediate the potential for interracial mob violence, Allen prefaced Joyce and Matthias's words with his own sermon to the public, tying the "atrocious [sic] crime" of murder to a "path of sin" littered with vices:

> Fly for thy life from the chambers of the harlot. … Go not to the tavern; the song of the drunkard will soon be changed to weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Drunkenness hurls reason from the throne, and when she has fallen, Vice always stands ready to ascend it. Break off, O young man your impious companions. If you still grasp there [sic] hands they will drag you down to everlasting fire.[243]

Allen's sermon then moved into a special exhortation to "people of colour" to take this murder as a sign to repent of their sins:

> See the tendency of dishonesty and lust, of drunkenness and stealing, in the murder, an account of which is subjoined. See the tendency of mid-night dances and frolics. While the lustful dance is delighting thee, forget not, that "for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Be these, O man, O woman of colour, thy resolutions:
>
> > "In God's name and strength, I will never more attend a frolic. Drunkards and swearers, Whoremongers and Sabbath breakers, I have done with you for ever. … O my injured parents, my unhappy wife, my miserable children, I pray that I may

[241] The account is unclear if Allen himself took the men's confessions or if one of his subordinates did and gave him their transcript.

[242] For the definitive biography of this "Black founder" see Richard S. Newman, *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers* (New York: NYU Press, 2009). Newman briefly discusses the Joyce/Matthias incident on pages 151-154 within his chapter on Allen's efforts as a "Black mediator."

[243] Joyce and Matthias, 4-5. This sermon also included a direct address to any fallen women who might have acquired the pamphlet: "Perhaps the person at this moment reading is a female of ill fame--if thy reputation be not yet quite blasted, pause, thou art on the way to ruin. The midnight revel, the polluted couch, thy diseased body, and thy affrighted conscience testify against thee. Perhaps thy Mothers heart is already broken.

"Poor miserable Creature! it is not yet too late. Hast thou made some guilty assignation this very night? Break it off; for thy soul's sake break it off; to-morrow thou may'st be in Hell. Ask the protection of the Magdalene Society, lately established in this City; above all, let the eyes that have been full of fornication, become fountains of tears; smite on thy breast and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner.""

> be enabled to do all that can be done, for repairing the evils I have made you suffer.[244]

This historical nexus of events exists as both an exceptional occurrence that disrupted a city's social fabric and a revelation of that city's everyday economic underpinnings. Without Allen's pamphlet, it would have been nearly impossible to recreate the ties that bound John Joyce and Peter Matthias—men who had worked and traveled on and up the American seaboard to end up as laborers in Philadelphia, but not as heads of household—to Sarah Cross, Jenny Miller, Margaret Tucker, Mary Lee, and Caroline Cedars—businesswomen whose establishments varied in both legitimacy and prominence. While Joyce and Matthias were not employed as sailors at the time of Cross's murder, their status as boarders rather than permanent residents, and the parts of the city they frequented, overlapped considerably with the physical, social, and economic geography of Philadelphia's maritime laborers. The tragedy of Sarah Cross, as published by Bethel Church, captures a rare glimpse at a socio-economic flashpoint whose contours corroborate other cultural texts about maritime laborers in Philadelphia and the wider Atlantic world.

As the grisly and sensationalized tale of Cross's death made its way throughout the city, the business worlds of Philadelphia's women and maritime laborers continued to intersect, even as they took on new patterns alongside the changing city. Sailors and other working men, their widows, wives, and relatives, and the women with whom they conducted business continued to petition the Overseers of the Poor or the city's courts for aid, and Philadelphia's population continued to grow. The city also experienced ebbs and flows in its prosperity, particularly during times of conflict such as the War of 1812. Leading American businessmen, including Philadelphia's Stephen Girard, provided the federal government with millions of dollars in loans

[244] Ibid., 5-6.

to fund the war effort when the treasury ran dry in 1813.[245] While Girard gained personal financial benefits from the arrangement, the city also avoided the British blockades, work force decimation by enlistment and imprisonment, and seizures of cash and cargo that beset other American port cities. Thanks to its selling of supplies (including gunpowder from the nearby DuPont powder mills) to the Army, and the major supply route that ran between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, the city had enough cash in its coffers to not only sustain its economy but expand its infrastructure as well. However, the combination of economic downturns emanating from New York, increasing government wartime debt, and maintenance of the British naval blockade until March 6, 1815, made it necessary for even the upper echelons of sea captains and officers to ask the court for succor.[246] From these fallen elites to common laborers caught in the cycle of poverty, Philadelphia's women remained tethered to sailors, seafarers, and the maritime world. At times this relationship could be used against them; the August 14, 1813 edition of *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* relayed a tale of a "pretended sailor" who fleeced a widow shopkeeper in East Ham, Essex, using a "Jew" accomplice to trick her into paying almost five times what of a pair of shawls was worth.[247] While the incident took place on the other side of

[245] Of the $16 million loan issued by Congress on February 8, 1813, just over $10 million remained unsubscribed (i.e., the unsold government-established shares in increments of $100 at 6% interest). Combining cash from his recently established eponymous bank, his own fortune, the fortunes of other magnates like John Jacob Astor and David Parish, and the smaller subscription purchases Girard encouraged among his friends and business associates, the government fulfilled the loan. Girard himself held $8 million worth of subscriptions. For a thorough record of all federal loans during the war and how its economics shaped American ideas of finance, see Lisa R. Morales, "The Financial History of the War of 1812," PhD diss. (University of North Texas, 2009). For an overview of Girard's role in particular, see Kenneth L. Brown, "Stephen Girard's Bank," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 66, no. 1 (January 1942): 29-55.

[246] Paul Campbell, "War of 1812," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, 2014, https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/war-of-1812/; Kim Burdick, "Gunpowder Industry," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, 2015, https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/gunpowder-industry.

[247] According to the tale, the "sailor" (whose actual occupation was never mentioned, and who was referred to as "the sailor" throughout) told the widow the shawls were worth £30 but because he "wanted money" he would take £7. At this point the "Jew" offered to give the sailor his asking price, but the sailor told the woman he couldn't sell to him, and the other man told her that if she bought them for £7 he would pay her £9. The "Jew" walked to the door and once the sailor made his sale, they both left the shop, leaving the hoodwinked shopkeeper with a pair of shawls "not worth 15s. each."

the Atlantic, its republication in Philadelphia was clearly intended to forewarn any of the city's shopkeeping women (and men) to this potential danger.

Changes to insolvency petitions after 1810 reflect these transformations in everyday life. Seeking a discharge of debt under insolvency almost always took place under exceptional circumstances, as appealing to the courts for debt relief denoted dire circumstances for both debtors and creditors. Before appealing to the mercy of the court, debtors sought relief from financial hardship through loans from family and friends, credit from merchants, landlords, and artisans, sustained efforts to secure more and better employment, and sometimes efforts to flee the city. As Michael B. McCoy notes, creditors who sought legal redress usually only did so when they anticipated a debtor's flight, the demands of their own creditors, or knew their debtors had a history or certainty of nonpayment, as they feared either a rupture in community relations or that a ruling would substantively reduce the amount they were due.[248] It became even more hazardous for debtors to reach the point of insolvency after 1814, when new laws backtracked from discharging both the debt and the person of the debtor to a discharge of only the debtor's person, leaving creditors free to seize property acquired after the discharge to settle the debt.[249]

These documents of last resort nonetheless reveal a great deal about Philadelphia sailors' everyday business ties with women in the early republic, from details of individual lives otherwise lost to the historical record to general trends in the rise of poverty, the stagnation of wages, and the bureaucratization of legal processes. More and more insolvency petitions included a statement that the petitioner had been a resident of the city for a minimum of six

[248] Michael B. McCoy, "'The High Price of Living': The Lives of Insolvent Laborers in Jacksonian-Era Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, 1815–1842," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 84, no. 2 (Spring 2017): 192.
[249] McCoy, 173; S. Laurence Shaiman, "The History of Imprisonment for Debt and Insolvency Laws in Pennsylvania as They Evolved from the Common Law," *The American Journal of Legal History* 4, no. 3 (July 1960): 207.

months—a restriction likely rooted in earlier resentments of vagrants who traveled to Philadelphia to reap the benefits of its more generous Quaker-rooted public aid policies as well as the city's growing population, which had reached 100,000 by 1810.[250] Insolvency petitions also became more standardized in their phrasing and paperwork. While the insolvency process largely stayed the same, petitioners or their agents, as well as city authorities, could now simply fill in the blanks of pre-printed forms that left spaces for the petition's date, the names of the petitioner and his or her major creditors who sought to recoup their losses, the reason for the petitioner's changed fortunes, the comprehensive listings of his or her credits and debits, and their inventory of worldly goods.

Following the Revolution's model, the War of 1812 generated a similar rise in aid petitions for injured or destitute soldiers and sailors, and their dependents, during or near the end of the war. In March 1815, War of 1812 veteran William Cummings, who had sailed with Commodore Stephen Decatur on the frigate *United States* between 1811 and 1814, found himself unable to pay his debts. The *United States* crisscrossed the Atlantic during the war, patrolling the American seaboard to capturing British ships south of the Azores, and eventually was trapped in New London by the blockade. When Decatur's command transferred to the *President* in May of 1814 it is most likely that Cummings did not follow the commodore and instead made his way from New London to Philadelphia, probably by way of New York City and by land to avoid the blockade. Either during this journey or shortly after his arrival in Philadelphia, Cummings became "confined to his Bed by sickness," and was still ill when he petitioned the court for debt

[250] *Cries of Philadelphia*, 1. Smith's population figures ended at 67,811 in 1800, but the approximately 25,000 new residents that arrived between 1790 and 1800 would place a similar 10-year growth between 1800 and 1810 well within the realm of possibility, and would demonstrate a clear yet comparable population boom.

relief months later in early March.[251] Cummings's debts were for relatively small amounts but had become numerous enough to overwhelm a sailor who could not ply his trade or physically engage in any other work, and who was also owed a large sum of money by another Philadelphia resident. Tavernkeepers, mariners, and shipyard artisans dominated his list of creditors, David Kennedy among them, but he also owed money to three women: six dollars to Jane Burk, forty dollars to Sarah Merriner, and twenty dollars to Mrs. Hannah Lauch. Neither Burk or Merriner appeared in the 1814 or 1816 city directories under these or variant spellings, though they did list a waterman (Andrew) and a widow (Susan) with the surname Mariner as well as a ship's pilot named Fenwick Marriner. There were two entries for a Hannah Lauck in the 1814 directory: one for a widow shopkeeper at 128 Sassafras Street, and a widow who lived in the back of 238 High Street.[252] Cummings's lone debtor, James F. Lee, owed him $200—an amount larger than any of his individual debts and possibly enough to have staved off his creditors for more recuperation time.[253]

The same day that William Cummings completed his insolvency paperwork, Hannah Comly entered her own plea for debt relief. Comly was far from the only woman who filed an insolvency petition in early republic Philadelphia, and like many of these women she is difficult to find outside of her petition at all, let alone to conclusively place within maritime Philadelphia. There were no Hannah Comlys listed in the 1810 or 1814 directories, and while there was a Hannah Comly jr., storekeeper who first appeared in the 1816 listings, her address did not match any of the Comlys in previous directories. Of the 15 Comlys or Comleys (including the junior

[251] "William S. Cummings, 3/9/1815," Insolvency Petitions and Bonds, 1790-1868, City Archives of Philadelphia (PCA), Philadelphia, PA.
[252] Persons with two addresses—usually a home address and then the address of their business—usually appeared once after the individual's name, but this was not always consistent and so it is possible that these widows Lauck were the same individual.
[253] There were four entries for James Lee in the 1814 directory; the entry that specified a James F. Lee was for a "druggist &c, 378 south Second."

Hannah) listed in the 1816 directory, four had occupations directly linked to maritime activity, while six were merchants or shop keepers. Hannah Comly the petitioner also listed a "Hannah Comley" as a creditor, so it is possible that Hannah the elder had been previously obscured by laws of coverture and that her daughter had acquired or inherited the necessary means to set up her own business as a *feme sole*. While Hannah's petition itself had only one tenuous possible maritime connection—she owed money to a Margaret Dunbar, and the only two people with that surname in the 1814 directory were a Black sailmaker named Nicholas in Grissell's Alley and the wife of M. Dunbar who lived in the back of 18 Filbert Street—her petition highlights the often-repeated pattern of the city's female residents being more likely to owe or lend money to other women. It also demonstrates the layers of difficulty inherent in identifying specific women's source of income and loanable currency: while at least nine of Hannah's seventeen creditors were women, only Hannah the younger was listed in city directories under her own name in the years preceding and following Hannah the elder's petition.[254]

There was at least one other seafarer and war veteran with female creditors: in December 1815 Robert Boker identified himself in his insolvency plea as a sailor—and claimed this profession before his entry into service on the ship *Rattlesnake*.[255] Boker wrote that when the vessel was seized in the Delaware River (ostensibly by the British) he had lost $500 worth of

[254] "Hannah Comly, 3/9/1815," Insolvency Petitions and Bonds, PCA. There were also two creditors identified only by their last name who could have been women as well, and there was a listing for both a "Lemon White" and a "Lem White." Lemon was a male name at the time, and there was also a portrait painter named Lemuel White listed in the 1814 directory, so whether these were the same person or not, neither was likely to be female.

[255] "Robert Boker, 12/8/1815," Insolvency Petitions and Bonds, PCA. This was likely a privateer vessel owned by merchant Andrew Curcier that was commissioned via letters of marque in late 1812 and captured by the British frigate HMS *Hyperion* in 1814, rather than the frigate USS *Rambler* that the Navy purchased and renamed *Rattlesnake* in 1813. The latter was captained by Master Commandant John Creighton and later Lt. James Renshaw and was captured near Nova Scotia. The ship in Boker's account was captured in the Delaware River and commanded by a "Capt Shoffet"—possibly David Maffett, the commander of Curcier's privateer boat. "American Privateer brig 'Rattlesnake' (1814)," *Three Decks – Warships in the Age of Sail*, © Cy Harrison 2010-2020, https://threedecks.org/index.php?display_type=show_ship&id=22464; "Rattlesnake," Naval History and Heritage Command, August 26, 2015, https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/r/rattlesnake.html.

goods. Whether spurred by this personal economic disaster or a patriotic fervor, Boker next entered naval service on the USS *Mohawk,* which launched in Lake Ontario under the command of Captain Jacob Jones in June 1814. Boker's bad luck continued, as he contracted an illness severe enough to confine him to Watertown, a port in New York on the lake's eastern edge, for three months. Half of Boker's listed creditors were women: he had borrowed $20 from Miss Catherine Gallagher, owed a Mrs. Stewart $5 for groceries, and owed the same amount to a Mrs. Marsh for sundries. Owing that much cash to a single woman like Gallagher was a rarity; even if the lendee stayed the same, the laws of coverture would have more than likely subsumed her identity beneath her male guardian's. To be a single unmarried woman capable of entering debt relationships solid enough to be featured in official legal records, Gallagher would have needed to inherit her wealth or otherwise lack a male guardian figure. From available evidence, Gallagher was most likely related to a widow Gallagher in the 1816 directory, whose husband was sea captain Andrew Gallagher. The daughter of a sea captain would have been well situated to not only have lendable cash assets but also to cross paths with a career sailor like Robert Boker. Mrs. Stewart's identity remains mysterious due to the preponderance of her surname in the historical record, but the only two listings for the last name March in the 1814 directory were for James Marsh, mariner, and Joseph Marsh, late shipbuilder, so the chances of Mrs. Marsh having an intimate or familial relationship with a maritime worker were high. Of Boker's other three creditors—Henry Naglee (Naagle), William Holmes, and William Crockett & Co.—he owed the most money to Naglee and Holmes, and subsequently signed his remaining assets over

to them. Like William Cummings, Boker's solvency had suffered due to others' unpaid debts, as he noted that four men in Boston owed him an undisclosed sum of money.[256]

Another war veteran, Francis Farrall, also submitted his plea for relief in December 1815.[257] Written in a more slapdash manner than the statement of William Cummings, Farrall's account placed his insolvency firmly within the war itself. Setting off on a schooner named in honor of Philadelphia's Governor Thomas McKean (1734-1817, served 1799-1808), Farrall was captured by the British in the "Bay of Wiskey [sic]" [258] and endured six months in "Dartmouth Prison" before he returned home.[259] Between lost wages during his imprisonment and difficulty finding employment back in the city, Farrall, his wife, and his three children could no longer sustain themselves. Like Cummings, Farrall's debts were numerous but in small amounts. While Farrall only had one female creditor, an Ann Lippincott from whom the family had purchased grain, most of his creditors were owed money for rent and groceries, making it very likely that these debts had come from Farrall's wife trying to house and feed herself and their children during the years her husband was at sea. Ann Lippincott did not feature in city directories of the time but there was a grocer named Benjamin Lippincott also on the list of creditors, whose store was located at the corner of Arch and Front Streets, and if the two were married then Ann would and could have issued credit under the coverture of her husband and the family business. Perhaps

[256] "Robert Boker, 12/8/1815," Insolvency Petitions and Bonds, PCA. Holmes was owed $50 for "Board &c.," while Naglee was owed a writ of execution for $39.50. (Naglee's listing also included a half-illegible word that may have ended in "watch" but the writing is obscured enough to prevent a higher level of conjecture.)
[257] There is some question as to whether Francis's last name was Farrall or Tarrall. While the label on the folder of this record used the latter, the script itself was unclear. There was no Francis Tarrall listed in any of the directories between 1810 and 1816 under this or any variant spellings; 1816, however, had a "Francis Ferrel, ropemaker" as well as a "Margaret Ferrel, boardinghouse." Both lived in the Northern Liberties but not on the same street.
[258] This was most likely Whiskey Bay, near Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. While Louisiana has a Whiskey Bay near Baton Rouge, that particular extension of the Atchafalaya River was only made navigable in the 1930s.
[259] This was likely a misspelling of Dartmoor Prison, a compound in southwestern England that housed American pirsoners of war during the conflict. For more on this particular prison and its infamy, see Paul Gilje, *Free Trade and Sailors Rights in the War of 1812* (New York: Cambridge, 2013), 262-287, and Reginald Horsman, "The Paradox of Dartmoor Prison," *American Heritage Magazine* 26, no. 2 (February 1975), full text online at https://www.americanheritage.com/paradox-dartmoor-prison.

Mrs. Farrall went directly to Ann for some of her staple goods, echoing the monetary exchange patterns seen in the credit relationships of Hannah Comly and other Philadelphians.

As more sailors and shipwrights of various sub-trades placed themselves at the court's mercy during the war years, even the highest ranks of sailing men found themselves in dire straits. The June 1815 insolvency petition of Captain William Bunce bore the marks of his station: where Boker, Farrall, and other sailors signed their forms by their mark (an X or + with their name written around it by the court official taking their dictation), Bunce signed his own name, and the sheer amount of paperwork submitted on his behalf suggests he was either able to retain better legal assistance than common laborers or personally knew more about organizing one's court documents. While his circumstances were also born from misfortune at sea, Bunce's plea also noted that a legal suit brought by the United States government against himself and the ship *Pennsylvania* had detained him in Charleston, South Carolina in 1809 and 1810. The next cause of his insolvency, a loss of goods on the *Calypso*, paralleled Robert Boker's misfortune, but Bunce's losses added up to $2,600. At a time when common laborers made $1 a day in wages and artisans averaged $1.91, this significant loss for Bunce would have been nigh impossible to risk in the first place for the majority of the city's residents.[260] Finally, Bunce declared that while was a sea captain by trade (and was still listed as such in the 1814 directory), he had been unemployed for two years and counting, and thus was unable to meet his debt obligations. The ability to claim this profession under long-term unemployment stands in particularly sharp contrast when compared to sailors' occupational flexibility. Bunce's lengthy list of creditors reflected the hundreds of dollars he owed, primarily to tailors, grocers, and

[260] Bureau of the Census, "Series D 715-717. Average Daily Wage Rates of Artisans, Laborers, and Agricultural Workers, in the Philadelphia Area: 1785 to 1830," in *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial times to 1970*, Bicentennial ed. (Washington: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1975), 163.

tavernkeepers. This included a judgment for Mary Wilson and a Ms. Claypoole; the former was either a widow or a seamstress, while the only two Claypooles listed in the directories of the time were a mantuamaker (Eliza) and a boarding-house keeper (Temperance), and both occupations fit the overall theme of Bunce's expenditures.

Comparing Bunce's plea to those of Farrall, Boker, and Cummings provides nuance not only to the financial ties that bound seafarers to women (and other men) in port cities, but also to the benefits and drawbacks of his social class. Like the common seamen with whom he sailed, Bunce most frequently patronized sellers of temporary lodgings, alcohol, and consumable goods. Yet by necessity of social performance or the luxury of additional income, Bunce also drew upon various artisans and laborers to cloth himself, from seamstresses and mantuamakers to hatters, tailors, and merchant tailors (those who dealt in selling cloth as well as clothing manufacture). He clearly patronized a wide array of taverns and inns, suggesting that if a "man of the sea" dressed well enough and had the coin, he could blend into neighborhoods that were too genteel for a common seaman to traverse. The scale of Bunce's debt also indicated that Bunce's social currency was much more valued and/or reliable, providing him a high line of credit not limited to a few close friends willing to trade favors or small loans. Finally, the thoroughness of Bunce's written plea provides a rare glimpse at a part of the paperwork that did not always feature in the records: a detailed list of those who received official notice from the court that Bunce had made an insolvency petition and the date on which they should appear in court to secure their portion of his surrendered assets. While it is unclear if this additional paperwork made it into the archives because of the court's inclination to err on the side of documenting procedures for a higher-class individual, the length and complexity of his list of creditors, or a particularly detail-oriented court clerk, Bunce's list details not only the official holders of his debt but also the

individuals to whom the formal notice was delivered. The list confirmed that Mrs. Claypoole and Mrs. Wilson held the debt owed to them, listed as "judgment," in tandem, and that Mrs. Claypoole received the notice. Robert Ralston (likely a grocer or an accountant) had his paperwork delivered to a "woman at [his] dwelling," while Henry King (occupation unknown) relied on his wife to accept the court's notice. While the city's legal system clearly did not think that *femes coverts* merited first names, their informal role as go-betweens for their husbands or fathers was official enough to discharge the court's legal obligation.

By 1819 the number of mariners living in the city had started to decline, and increasingly calcified class and gender divides restricted the possibilities of both maritime laborers and the women with whom they directly and indirectly exchanged goods and currency. The Panic of 1819, and its widespread effects on Philadelphians of all social and economic classes, exacerbated this pattern. As the home of the Second Bank of the United States, Philadelphia was ground zero for this unprecedented economic crisis which, despite its name, continued to grow and evolve until an economic upswing in the early 1820s slowly brought the city back to prosperity.[261] With no large-scale domestic or foreign wars being waged under American flags, merchant ships employed the vast majority of the city's sailors, and when trade suffered those same sailors lacked the ability to find steady work—or to leverage multiple employment opportunities. Simultaneously, the threshold of debt relief also became more difficult to reach, and the legal mechanisms to guarantee recompense grew more complex. Whereas in 1800, twenty Guardians of the Poor "had little difficulty walking about this area and personally

[261] J. David Lehman, "'The Most Disastrous and Never-to-Be-Forgotten Year': The Panic of 1819 in Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania Legacies* 11, no. 1 (May 2011): 6-11 provides an excellent brief overview of how the crisis affected the city from its wealthiest individuals to its poorest citizens.

attending the poor," the official population within the waterfront districts had nearly doubled and so had the number of temporary travelers, and each Guardian found himself beholden to 126 poor persons on average.[262] Around 1820 and 1821, petitions started to include surety forms, documentation in which debtors had to have another individual co-sign for them in the event they could not repay their debt. Debtors selected these co-signers but had to declare their net worth after deducting all of their own debts and obligations.

The number of extant petitions in Philadelphia's city archives takes a dramatic downturn in 1826, with entire letters of surnames missing from the records and several folders only containing surety bonds. Looking at the surviving segments of these records, though, it is clear that despite these new roadblocks, growing amounts of people were desperate enough to seek even the most complicated ways to alleviate the burden of debt. By 1825, the city's poverty levels were so dire that organizations like the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Economy and public figures like economist and publisher Matthew Carey successfully campaigned to curtail city-funded monetary relief to near extinction. No longer would the city's upper and middle classes tolerate the transformation (real or imagined) of their city into an "Emporium of Beggars."[263] Instead, they sought these and other remedies, including the establishment of savings banks, to police the spending habits of the working poor.

---

[262] Clement, "The Philadelphia Welfare Crisis of the 1820s," 160.

[263] Lehman, 11. While Lehman does not cite the phrase "Emporium of Beggars," it first appeared in a Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Economy report on public economy in February 1817 and was first put into print in the June 1817 issue of *The Port Folio*, a monthly magazine that combined English and French poetry and prose with essays, opinions, and even recipes for handy home remedies. In a letter titled "Condition of the Poor in Philadelphia," addressed to "Mr. Oldschool," a commentator under the pseudonym Patricia used the Society's report to paint a picture of a Philadelphia whose employment opportunities and high wages only drew in "those … unwilling to work any where [sic], [who] are ever ready to go where they can find bread with the least possible exertion." Despairing of these "deplorable" individuals and their multiple poorly-clothed and neglected children, Patricia first suggested that authorities find a way to "place their children in families, where they would be trained up to moral order and future usefulness," as a lack of reform and reluctance to engage in the topic had created an "affliction" of thieving, lazy, and flight-prone house servants. While conveniently vague on how exactly one might encourage "good" servants to find their way to Philadelphia instead, Patricia noted that anyone who led those

Though their overall numbers had decreased in relation to other occupational identities among American laborers, sailors remained notorious for their spendthrift habits. As one bank in neighboring New York noted, "Seamen are, proverbially, improvident, not so much perhaps from a love of waste, as from a total ignorance how to dispose of their money."[264] Sailors continued to spend their wages in Philadelphia, and Philadelphia women remained constant threads in the city's economic fabric—but hardening class lines and wider economic hardships had begun to recast those interactions as sites of public and private intervention.

reforms would "deserve the civic crown indeed!" *The Port Folio, for June 1817* (Philadelphia: Harrison Hall, 1817), 505-506.

[264] *First Report of the Bank for Savings in the City of New-York* (New York, 1820), 5, 9, quoted in Wendy A. Woloson, "In Hock: Pawning in Early America," *Journal of the Early Republic* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 40.

Chapter 3: Sexual and Romantic Relationships

When her brothers left Philadelphia to travel the world, Sarah Sword was more than a correspondent; she was a social secretary. Her elder brother, James Brade Sword, was a supercargo who traveled as far away as Montevideo and Buenos Aires and as close by as Niagara Falls and Pottsville, Pennsylvania; her younger brother John Dorsey Sword acted as a supercargo for voyages to the West Indies, South America, and China, and in the 1840s lived in Macao with his wife and children as an intermediary for the family's activities in the tea and silk trades.[265] Despite their frequent travels the siblings regularly kept in touch via letter-writing, sending their post through either their vessels' captains or mutual friends who were traveling back to the continental mainland or to Philadelphia itself.

While the brothers told their sister some of the sights they saw abroad, more frequently, they asked her to "remember them" to the rest of the family and to their community—including several single women—and whether driven by their requests or by her own instinct for social connections, Sarah did just that. "Anna Musgrave is still single […] E. Walker still the same no beaus," she informed James in one letter, also updating him on the marital status of other young men in the city.[266] Even when Sarah was the one out of town, visiting their cousin Ann in

---

[265] "Sword family papers, Collection 1878 (finding aid)," Historical Society of Pennsylvania, April 2008, https://hsp.org/sites/default/files/legacy_files/migrated/findingaid1878sword.pdf. The finding aid does not list James Sword's occupation but a letter from Sarah Sword to him, dated July 28, 1824, identifies him as "Super Cargo of Brig Ariel," while a letter from October 28, 1838, gives him the title "Esq.," locates him at "Com & Raid Road Bank, Vicksburgh, Miss.," and includes a question about having any mulberry trees there "to sell." That said, his earlier occupation in landlocked Pottsville remains a mystery. John Dorsey Sword's son was also named James Brade Sword (1839-1915) and is arguably the better known of the two due to his lengthy career as a prominent Philadelphia artist; see "James Brade Sword," Oxford Gallery, https://www.oxfordgallery.com/Period_Artists/sword.html, and "James Brade Sword," Schwarz Gallery, https://www.schwarzgallery.com/artist/james-brade-sword.

Both the siblings' father John Ewer Sword, and grandfather, William Sword, were sea captains, but by their generation had shifted to more mercantile activities, albeit ones that necessitated long-distance travel.

[266] Sarah Sword to James B. Sword, October 28, 1838, Sword Family Papers (Coll. 1878) Box 4, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Baltimore, her brothers drew upon her social connections to young women of their acquaintance. "How is Sally Thomas[?] – I have not seen or heard from her this long time […] I suppose she has a great many beaux," James wrote in one letter, while in another written shortly after his return from a voyage abroad he asked her to "give my best respects" to a Miss Jackson "and all enquiring friends."[267] Even when he professed to his sister that he was "determined not to marry until I have made a fortune," James used his correspondence with Sarah to gossip about his romantic prospects and maintain those avenues to potential intimate relationships.[268] Sarah's extant letters to John all date from after his marriage to Mary Parry Sword and do not include similar social updates about possible wives, though they do provide updates on his wife's health as well as her emotional state. Sometimes they even featured addendums written by Mary herself. Both women's efforts thus sustained the bonds of affection between husband and wife, despite the former's physical location thousands of miles away in Canton.[269]

The very existence of Sarah Sword's correspondence, let alone how much of it has survived to the present day, denotes the family's privileged status. James and John Sword sailed on seafaring vessels but their activities and familial wealth placed them well above the ranks of ordinary seamen, and as such they paid heed to middle- and upper-class social norms which working-class Philadelphians would have had little time, money, or purpose to fully embrace. Yet we know that ordinary seamen engaged in romantic relationships and fathered children; that even when literacy or reliable methods of postage provided impediments, they still attempted to keep contact with those on shore; and while away at sea they created sentimental objects or got tattoos to remember the female lovers with whom they had temporarily lost physical

[267] James B. Sword to Sarah Sword, August 16, 1818, Sword Family Papers, HSP; James B. Sword to Sarah Sword, May 26, 1819, Sword Family Papers, HSP.
[268] James B. Sword to Sarah Sword, May 28, 1821, Sword Family Papers, HSP.
[269] See Sarah Sword to John D. Sword, October [12?], 1839, Sword Family Papers, HSP.

proximity.[270] Sifting through the archive for the women with whom they shared these bonds of affection suggests that Philadelphia's working-class women were also capable and desirous of maintaining their romantic ties to sailors, and did so through connections with other people as well as with sailors' assistance. Ann Keith maintained her husband William's "bed and board" in his absence and made purchases for their household, appearing in the historical record only when she chose to cease doing so.[271] Isaac Jones, one of the Overseers of the Poor, accepted Lydia Luce's promise to repay a loan based on both her marriage to her sailor husband and his known position on the ship *Rose* under Captain Messnard.[272] Sailors like Francis Farrall and sea captains like Albert Coffin both relied on their wives to maintain and succor them when they were bound to shore by illness or unemployment, and used those bonds in turn to leverage sympathy from creditors.[273] These dedicated efforts to sustain a marital household existed within a robust culture of romance, where sailors and women alike used local social networks, public resources, and cultural texts to cement the bonds of intimacy and affection.

Romantic relationships between sailors and women were extensive, complex, and shaped participants' lives whether they were on land in a dynamic mixed-gender port community or at sea surrounded almost exclusively by men. Far from objects of affection traumatized by the repeated experience of being "left behind," Philadelphia's maritime women were active participants in those relationships who used resources at hand to continue them, facilitate them,

---

[270] For discussions of sailors' sentimental material culture, including tattoos, see Paul A. Gilje, *To Swear Like a Sailor: Maritime Culture in America, 1750-1850* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), especially Ch. 7, "Tar-Stained Images"; Simon P. Newman, "Seafaring Bodies," Ch. 5 in *Embodied History: The Lives of the Poor in Early Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); and Ira Dye, "The Tattoos of Early American Seafarers, 1796-1818," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133, no. 4 (Dec. 1989): 520-554.

[271] *Federal Gazette* (Philadelphia, PA), December 28, 1790, 3.

[272] Overseers of the Poor Minutes, 1768-88, August 29, 1782.

[273] Albert Coffin, 9/21/1815, and Francis Tarrall [Farrall], 12/12/1815, Insolvency Petitions and Bonds, Philadelphia City Archives.

and in some cases sever them, all as part of their everyday, normal lives. Their actions on shore perpetually affected sailors' lives at sea—just as sailors' sea-bound labor shaped their lives in turn. When coupled with a maritime culture that thrived on songs and stories of sex, love, and romance and was undergirded by sailors' memories of the women they loved, these bonds of affection brought women on-board ships even when law or custom prevented their physical presence.

Transactional Intimacy: Sailors and Prostitutes

Colonial and early republic American port cities perpetually contained districts and domiciles devoted to prostitution, and Philadelphia was no exception. Despite the profession's often clandestine nature and repressive treatment by officials, scholars have located substantial evidence of prostitution's persistent presence in the other four major American port cities of Boston, New York, Newport, and Charleston, and others have found evidence of it in smaller ports like New London and Savannah. Studies of these cities and of Philadelphia also share another common thread: a direct correlation between sailors' presence and the creation of commercial sex spaces, sometimes to the exclusion of considering other potential driving forces behind their growth. Located just north of New Street, the city's North End housed its nascent manufacturing operations, but Harry Kyriakodis correlated its formation of "Philadelphia's first red-light district" to the "outlaws" who came there to revel and cause violence—"common laborers, privateers, sailors, gamblers and swindlers of all types."[274] He also swiftly moved past a mention of Market Street's prostitutes "prey[ing] on … naïve rural farmers" to assert that from the eighteenth century onward, the waterfront formed the locus of their operations thanks to

[274] Harry Kyriakodis, *Philadelphia's Lost Waterfront* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 23-25.

"[d]ozens of ships … filled with seafarers who had not seen a woman in weeks. The ladies—often the wives or widows of sailors—took their johns back to rented room at sordid inns along the alleys or courtyards near the docks."[275] Marcia Carlisle correlated prostitution's appearance in the city with "the beginning of American drama" as prostitutes walked venues' upper galleries with occasional jaunts to the pit, but also noted early commercial sex zones in the "older waterfront area" and the South Street corridor that housed numerous seafarers as well as a significant part of the city's free black population.[276] Clare Lyons noted that at least after the 1760s, prostitution occurred "in every district of the city" and much more openly than it did in Boston and New York City. She also confirmed Joseph J. Kelley, Jr.'s assertion that its earliest occurrences were on the waterfront and placed the earliest examples of public outrage about prostitution at the feet of "rough sailors," whose violent behavior at a brothel brought down the condemnation of authorities and the community.[277]

Histories of other Atlantic port cities also perpetuate this trend. Timothy Gilfoyle located "the little prostitution that existed" in New York City before its 1790s population boom in "streets and taverns close to the dock and wharves," with its prostitution havens during the American Revolution earning the monikers of "Topsail Town" and "Canvass-town" and public complaints in 1802 about the "sailors, shipyard workers, and prostitutes" who populated Barclay Street.[278] Barbara Meil Hobson contrasted Boston Puritans' seventeenth-century bans against brothels and bawdyhouses with the state of affairs at the end of the eighteenth century, in which "[s]ailors who landed in Boston's bustling port had no trouble locating rowdy taverns with loose

[275] Kyriakodis, 76-77.
[276] Carlisle, "Disorderly City, Disorderly Women," 556, 554.
[277] Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble*, 106-110.
[278] Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994 [1992]), 23-25.

women."[279] Hemphill situated the birth of commercial sex in Baltimore at the time of the city's own emergence, and located it "around waterways, where it ebbed and flowed with the maritime economy, with influxes of sailors into and out of town."[280] Julia Laite's discussion of London's long history of prostitution noted both the dominance of sailors and soldiers in the ranks of sex workers' clientele, and the state's vested interest in their "attendant sexual health."[281] Other studies in the same edited volume as Laite's echoed this correlation in early modern Amsterdam, Bruges, Casablanca, and Istanbul.[282] Marion Pluskota's book-length study of prostitution in eighteenth-century Bristol and Nantes also attributed sex work to "the high number of sailors and single men" and linked sailors' extended absences to both "women's sociability" among their wives and these wives' engagement in "casual prostitution."[283] In nearly every instance, specific chronologies and start dates remained amorphous at best; as Paul Gilje declared in his study of the American waterfront, "Wherever the haunts of sailors … there were sure to be houses of prostitution," and thus finding one implied the presence of the other.[284]

Marcia Carlisle's discussion of Philadelphia prostitution remains the most cited study on the topic for nineteenth-century America, but it focuses primarily on the years between 1830 and 1860, placing it just outside of bounds of this study. Her description of the "disorderly city" and

---

[279] Barbara Meil Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990 [1987]), 15.
[280] Katie M. Hemphill, *Bawdy City: Commercial Sex and Regulation in Baltimore, 1790-1915* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 25; see also Katie M. Hemphill, "Bawdy City: Commercial Sex, Capitalism, and Regulation in Nineteenth-Century Baltimore," PhD diss. (Johns Hopkins University, 2014), 19.
[281] Julia Laite, "A Global History of Prostitution: London," in *Selling Sex in the City: A Global History of Prostitution, 1600s–2000s*, ed. Magaly Rodríguez García, Lex Heerma van Voss, and Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2017), 121.
[282] See Marion Pluskota, "Selling Sex in Amsterdam," 27-59; Maja Mechant, "Selling Sex in a Provincial Town: Prostitution in Bruges," 60-84; Liat Kozma, "Colonial and Post-Colonial Casablanca," 261-277; and Mark David Wyers, "Selling Sex in Istanbul," 278-305, all in *Selling Sex in the City*.
[283] Marion Pluskota, Prostitution and Social Control in Eighteenth-Century Ports (London: Taylor & Francis, 2018 [Routledge, 2015]), https://www.google.com/books/edition/Prostitution_and_Social_Control_in_Eight/vnx0DwAAQBAJ.
[284] Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 63.

its numerous locations for "public women" to ply their trade relies primarily on an 1849 guidebook to the city's brothels, which focused on approximately 45 "gay houses," many of which would have been out of the common seaman's price range and his ability to assimilate—if they were even active in the first half of the century.[285] Other locations mentioned in Carlisle's work had already been established as hotbeds of iniquity by the late eighteenth century, though, including the South Street corridor that ran west from the Delaware and coincided with a majority segment of Philadelphia's free Black population. Market Street formed another nexus of strolling prostitutes, while the city's theaters were a notorious site of solicitation. Alleys and dark corners all along the Delaware promised locations for clandestine behavior, and by the 1840s the city's public squares had become well-known for their nighttime availability of sex workers.[286] When paired with the general areas mentioned by Kyriakodis and Lyons above, it becomes clear that even if they could not easily access the highest echelons of the city, the porosity and permissiveness of vice culture, the variety of venues in which commercial sex took place, and the largely accessible construction of the city's streets gave sailors and female sex workers an array of choices when it came to exchanging sex for payment.

Philadelphia's Magdalen Society provides another avenue to examine sailors' sexual and romantic ties to prostitutes and how their presence both threatened the Society's mission and guided its actions. Formed by 22 well-established male citizens in March 1800, the Society was a private charitable endeavor with strong ties to the city's Presbyterian and Episcopalian leadership—and to the higher echelons of its maritime labor community. The Society's first

[285] Marcia Carlisle, "Disorderly City, Disorderly Women: Prostitution in Ante-Bellum Philadelphia," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 110 no. 4 (October 1986): 549-568; [Anonymous], *A Guide to the stranger, or Pocket companion for the fancy: containing a list of the gay houses and ladies of pleasure in the city of brotherly love and sisterly affection* (Philadelphia: [s.n.], 1849).
[286] Magdalen Society Managers in 1840, as quoted in Negley K. Teeters, "The Early Days of the Magdalen Society of Philadelphia," *Social Service Review* 30 no. 2 (June 1956), 166.

batch of elected officers included several waterfront merchants, and mast-maker William T. Donaldson served on the six-man Standing Committee.[287] In February 1803 biscuit baker Chalkley Collins was one of two new members elected to join the Society, and in the following year sailmaker Joseph Wright joined their ranks.[288] Men from other seafaring occupations of similar prestige would continue to join the Society's ranks, including sea captain Peter Van Pelt, though it remained limited to white men only.[289]

The 1807-1808 establishment of an Asylum to temporarily house these fallen women and reform their morals and behavior reflected concerns about how continued contact with their former clientele—which assuredly included sailors—could negatively impact the Society's work. The Society had purchased a four-acre plot of land in 1805 for $1,500 and gotten plans from London's Magdalen Society to construct an asylum,[290] but less than two years later their patience and inmate roster had been tested by outside forces:

> […] a number of females whom the committee believed to be proper objects of their attention, have within the last twelve months come to their knowledge, but for want of a suitable home or Asylum where they might be restrained from the company and corrupt conversation of their former associates, as well as secluded from public notice a suitable length of time and industriously employed, your Committee have been deterred under existing circumstances from taking them under their immediate care.[291]

---

[287] *Minutes of Annual Meetings of Magdalen Society, 1800-1810,* Magdalen Society of Philadelphia Records, Historical Society of Philadelphia, 23. The following year a John Harris was elected to the Standing Committee; the only John Harris listed in the 1800 city directory was a sea captain, but Harris's later prominence in the Society coupled with the addition of other John Harrises to the directory and the disappearance of the sea captain John Harris from directories by 1805 complicates the matter of whether or not this John Harris was a sea captain who later transitioned to another occupation, or a merchant who simply failed to be listed in the 1800 census or directory. See *Minutes of Annual Meetings of Magdalen Society, 1800-1810,* 31, 40, 59, 82, 95.
[288] Ibid., 41, 43, 59.
[289] Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble*, 323; *Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the Magdalen Society, 1800-1825,* Magdalen Society of Philadelphia Records, 183.
[290] *Minutes of Annual Meetings of Magdalen Society 1800-1810,* 65. The minutes located the lot as #14 in the Bank of North America's Springetsbury [sic] lots, which likely referred to the location of William Penn's pleasure garden property, on the banks of the Schuylkill River. The price paid out of the Society's treasury was actually $2,000 but the Bank's directors agreed to immediately donate $500 to the Society upon purchase. Ibid., 66.
[291] February 10, 1807, ibid., 79.

To that end, they located "a lot with suitable Buildings thereon for a temporary Asylum," located at the corner of Race and Schulykill Second Streets, albeit much smaller than their purchased lot at one acre.[292] The lot was also much more expensive at $4,000 total but Society members wished to "shelter and employ immediatly [sic] at least Thirty Magdalens besides the Matron and the necessary attendant."[293] That May, though, several members of the Society protested the Currie lot's purchase, noting that the original lot was much larger and, more importantly, had the benefit of seclusion. The Currie lot's location along two major streets, they argued, made it "utterly impossible" to

> preclude designing persons from without having communication with such of the inhabitants within as may in moments of weakness or thro' the force of temptation be inclined to have communication with them … the Magdalen however affected with remorse or desirous of returning to a life of rectitude cannot in such a place be protected from the assaults & temptations of insidious men until their virtuous resolutions are confirmed by habit for there is no part of these buildings so remote from the Street but that a person standing in front can call by name to, and make himself understood by any one of the Maddalens [sic].[294]

Nonetheless, by the February 9, 1808, meeting of the Society, the temporary lot had been "provided and fitted up" for use. However, the recruitment numbers were less than promised, due to the "lamentable … insensibility" of "deluded females" who did not appear to trust the Society's charity via this new endeavor. Four Magdalens were admitted, but by this meeting one had already "eloped about three weeks after her admission."[295] Perhaps it was this tendency for easy elopement so much as it was the fear of the city's "insidious men" that led the Society to increasingly choose to place Magdalens leaving the Asylum in service with "religious famil[ies]"

[292] Ibid., 81.
[293] Ibid., 82.
[294] Ibid., 91.
[295] Ibid., 93.

several miles outside of the city, as they did with Sarah Wood (Magdalen No. 9) in November 1808.[296]

The Society's records only used numbers in the text to reference the women they assisted but beyond that their notes sometimes included biographical information on the Magdalens who they sought to elevate from the ranks of iniquity.[297] In addition to their various places of origin, which Clare Lyons has mapped out for the 138 women who entered the Asylum between 1807 and 1820, these biographies also provide further information on these women's circumstances.[298] Most records are frustratingly vague about who led these women astray and what exactly constituted a "disorderly life," but some records indicate definite connections to sailors. In 1808 Elizabeth Johnson (Magdalen No. 17), a 22-year-old Dutch woman, had been "seduced 5 or 6 years past by the Master of an American Vessel" who lured her to Philadelphia with the promise of marriage. Upon her arrival she discovered he was already married but he "kept her in secret for some time" until he abandoned her. While she "did not usually reside at brothels, but mostly at service," Johnson "continued in evil courses" until illness took her to the Alms House and thus to the Asylum.[299] By August 8, 1810, she was placed in service, after which point she no longer appears in the Society's records.

Others hint toward the likelihood of maritime contacts, particularly for the few women known to work in boarding and public houses. Sophia Smith (Magdalen No. 14), admitted to the Asylum on September 6, 1808, was a 26-year-old Irish-born woman who had moved to the country twelve years prior. While she subsequently married, her husband died seven months

[296] Ibid., 124.
[297] A list at the back of the second Minutes volume (1810-1818) listed numbers and names for 115 women; as the volume ended with No. 115, I have used those names here.
[298] See Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble*, Ch. 7, 323-353, for a thorough discussion of several of these women and a full analysis of their demographic data as provided in the Minutes.
[299] Ibid., 132. The record noted that the illness was not "the usual disease which is generally the consequence of such a life," i.e., venereal.

later, and she entered domestic service but ended up working in a boarding house where she was seduced. The time intervals given for her domestic service (18 months) and sex work career (six years) plus her marriage leave just under two years unanswered for, making it most likely that at least a few months separated her arrival and her marriage.[300] While it is impossible to say whether or not Smith's husband or any of her clientele were seafarers, her need to enter the wage-earning market so soon after her husband's death, the fact that he apparently died relatively young, and her domestic and sex work in a boarding house make it very possible that she encountered Philadelphia's mariners multiple times before she entered the Asylum.



Figure 3.16. George Cruikshank, "Sailors Carousing, or a peep in the Long room." Hand-colored etching. London: Jas. Robins & Co., 1825. From Philadelphia Museum of Art. https://philamuseum.org/collection/object/211427 Many taverns featured a "long room" as a larger venue space for eating, drinking, and carousing—Cruikshank's subjects did all three, with and surrounded by women.

[300] *Minutes of Annual Meetings 1800-1810*, 120-121.

Sailor songs explicitly about prostitution were difficult, though not impossible, to find in Philadelphia's mainstream printing press offerings. While censorship and Philadelphia's particularly stringent laws on profanity undoubtedly curbed its explicit discussion in larger volumes, the topic of sailors seeking sex for money still surfaced in oral texts, clandestine publications, witty double entendres, and maritime slang. Drinking songs set the stage for women's presence on laps and in toasts, but rarely made explicit mention of the real-life possibility that these women were sex workers, or how their presence in public spaces otherwise translated to a single night's intimacy in which "Bacchus invites us, and Venus delight's [sic] us."[301] The *Nautical Songster* contained a plethora of love songs and references to sailors' affection for women but carefully elided direct statements that these women's amorous favors were for hire. The same song in which "Sall" joined a sailor and his "mess-mates" for drinking, dancing, and toasts included a call to "wives and sweethearts" as well as a toast to "the girl I love the most," while other songs firmly set their reminiscences of women in shipboard environs where men could pass a can of grog without female company.[302] *The Sailor's Medley*, published in Philadelphia in 1800, shared these characteristics, with some mentions of either multiple romantic/sexual partners or women of loose morals. One song described a series of women who, while not explicitly sex workers, were derided as "strumpets and jilts," while another praised the virtues of Peggy in contrast to "False Betty."[303] In another song a fun-loving Tom Bowling boasted, "Among the fair, the black, the brown,/My daily course I run;/I chat with Bet ? [sic] I toy with Sall,/I dance with Kate and Sue;/My part I play with ev'ry girl,/So fond of something

[301] "A Sailor's life's a life of woe," *The Sailor's Medley*, 13. Other songs in the same volume ("Anacreon they say was a jolly old blade," 28-29; "Ye lads of true spirit, pay courtship to claret," 41-42) echo this praise to "Bacchus and Venus" and/or "Beauty and Bacchus."
[302] "When Seated with Sall," in *Nautical Songster*, 43-44.
[303] "Come, fill me a bumper, my jolly brave boys," *The Sailor's Medley*, 57-58; "Peggy, I Must Love Thee"/"As frm a rock past all relief," ibid., 58-59.

new."[304] By and large, though, monogamy was the theme of the day in this songster, with the occasional condemnation of "female impert'nance and noise" and women "ever false in their word."[305] The only "vulgar" woman in the songster was "Oyster Nan" selling her wares from a wheelbarrow.[306] Even then, while other songs of the era described oyster-selling women in terms of sexual promiscuity and otherwise ill repute, this maritime-focused volume did not follow that thread.[307] While it is unlikely that a specific woman or women inspired any of these fictional catchalls, the songs' popularity and performability relied on their plasticity, and thus their plausibility.

Attributed to American sailor and prisoner of war Timothy Connor, the handwritten collection transcribed and published as *A Sailor's Songbag* provides a rare glimpse of sea songs' oral and written transmission alongside, yet partially unfettered by, the sensibilities of most mainstream printing presses and publishers. Its contents demonstrate that working-class sailors had great familiarity with published song texts, used written and oral transmission to claim them for themselves and make them their own, and felt more than comfortable finding or adding instances of (hetero)sexual behavior ranging from chaste romantic longing to ribald fornication. They also show an imagined range of women's sexual behavior capacious enough to include enthusiastic consent and demure reticence. References to "whores" and recreational sex appear throughout this collection, starting with its first song, in which two prostitutes (Nancy and Betsey) come across "Country John" on his way to London. Goaded by Betsey, despite there

[304] "I am a lad well known in town," *The Sailor's Medley*, 46.
[305] "Come, fill me a bumper, my jolly brave boys," *The Sailor's Medley*, 57; "Fill your glasses, banish grief," 36.
[306] "It was far retired from noise and smoke," *The Sailor's Medley*, 22.
[307] For example, in *A Collection of Songs, with Some Originals* (Dublin: n.p., 1769), the song "Oyster Nan" features a titular character who, by the end of the song, has engaged in carnal relations with a vintner, borne his child, and now "daily ventures" at "the pleasing game … And shuts and opens like an oyster." ("Oyster Nan" in *A Collection of Songs*, 25-26.) Another song in the same volume, "The Jolly Old Parson," features an encounter with "Oyster Nelly,/With a C—t as black as charcoal;/He f---d her so quick, that he burnt his P---k,/For the Bitch carried fire in her arse hole." ("The Jolly Old Parson," ibid., 148-149.)

being "no bed to be found," Nancy and John negotiate to have sex "as [they] lay on the ground," for which John pays Nancy a crown (five shillings).[308] Another song relied upon nautical euphemisms to describe a sailor's encounter with a "well fitted" prostitute on a waterfront street: the woman in question was a "lovly [sic] Frigate" with "sails … of the Sattin [sic] fine" and "collours [sic] flying both red and blue."[309] *A Sailor's Songbag* also included references to prostitution in a parody to the tune of "The Sailor's Resolution," a popular song that appeared in broadsides and multiple songsters of the late eighteenth century. Where the original was a paean to masculinity via British nationalism and a corresponding attack on the French, this version—also found in a 1769 songster published in Dublin—rooted sailors' masculinity in their sexual prowess and "yards of steel."[310] The song alternated between explicit mentions of prostitutes and more general references to women and their genitalia but emphasized the former. "No dangers can affright us,/No bullies ere shall flout;/We'll make the harlots teach us,/New riggles, in and out," boasted the first verse, with the final verse turning the original song's praise of their ship's leader and the British Crown into an enthusiastic cheer for drinking and whoring:

(original song)	*(parody)*
While here at Deal we're lying	Whilst we're at Haddock's lying
With our noble commodore,	With a naked plump thigh'd whore
We'll spend our wages freely, boys,	We'll send our s---d in flying,
And then to sea for more.	And drink 'rack punch galore;
In peace we'll drink and sing, boys,	In peace we'll drink and f---, boys,
In war we'll never fly:	In war we'll stand the brunt;
Here's a health to George our king, boys,	Here's health to that good thing, boys,

[308] "Song No. 1" in George G. Carey, ed., *A Sailor's Songbag: An American Rebel in an English Prison, 1777-1779* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976), 24-25.
[309] "A Tar's Song No 46th [sic]" in Carey, ed., *A Sailor's Songbag,* 128-129.
[310] For this earlier version—which included several off-color songs and is rife with hyphen-edited swear words—see *A Collection of Songs, with Some Originals* (Dublin: n.p., 1769), 166-167. As noted by Steve Roud in *Folk Song in England* (London: Faber & Faber, 2017), this pamphlet is hard to find in print; the scan available via Google Books comes from the Bavarian State Library. Even so, *A Sailor's Songbag* makes clear that in some form, its contents circulated to American sailors, traveling from written to oral sources and back again in a particularly piquant microcosm of maritime culture's cycles of transmission.

And the royal family. Which mortals call a C---t.[311]

In parodies and in other personal narratives of the time, sailors themselves took on the task of pairing nationalism with manhood: sometimes to encourage their service to the nation, and sometimes to spite it.[312]

Nautical songsters later in the nineteenth century contained songs that closely associated prostitutes with noted maritime locations such as London's Ratcliffe Highway, but it is difficult to ascertain if earlier iterations of them circulated before 1842.[313] It is at least plausible, though, that earlier, unrecorded songs contained inventories of the women available at specific public houses similar to the following:

> The Old Rose, and Britannia,
> Such Frigates there's at hand,
> There's crooked Loo, and squinting Sue,
> And bandy Mary Anne.
> There's skinny Nell the yellow girl,
> And flash Maria neat,
> There's bouncing Het, and brazen Bet,
> That's been all through the Fleet.[314]

Such songs served the needs and tastes of sailors at their most crass: they reduced women to sexual objects identified by their most exaggerated physical and racial features, as well as their age, behavior, and reputation, and it is difficult to imagine that the women themselves could directly edit the text of a song beyond confronting the singer during a given performance. Even so, these songs' core plausibility, and thus their effectiveness as either entertainment or as a

---

[311] For the version transcribed from an American prisoner of war's diary, see "A New Song No 42" in Carey, ed., *A Sailor's Songbag,* 116-117. There are minor discrepancies between the two but several of the latter appear to be transcription errors on the part of the editor, including an elision from "send our" to "find our" in the third line, third verse.

[312] For more on how sailors intersected with contested meanings of these concepts in the early republic see Myra C. Glenn, *Jack Tar's Story: The Autobiographies and Memoirs of Sailors in Antebellum America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[313] See "Ratcliffe Highway in 1842" in John Ashton, ed., *Real Sailor Songs* (New York: B. Blom, 1972 [1891]), 149, and "Ratcliffe Highway" in Stan Hugill, *Shanties and Sailors' Songs* (New York: F.A. Praeger, 1969), 213.

[314] "The Sailor's Frolic; or, Life in the East," in Ashton, ed., *Real Sailor Songs,* 145.

guide to portside recreation, depended upon an actual waterfront populated by women of diverse races, ages, appearances, and demeanors—which Philadelphia certainly possessed.

Prostitutes who slept with sailors faced no unique potential consequences for doing so, and while sailors faced the same potential dangers as other solicitors of sex they received special warnings about monetary exploitation outside of the relationship's core transaction. As discussed in the previous chapter, merchant and naval sailors' pay cycles were generally dispensed in bulk at the end of a months- or even years-long voyage and left them with a relatively substantial lump sum even after the payment of debts incurred before and during their time at sea. This much gold on a single person made them a tempting target, and multiple songs relayed the tried-and-true tactic of a woman or prostitute engaging in robbery once the sailor was impaired by alcohol or sex. In "The Jolly Sailor," which dated from 1740 but still appeared in print decades later, one enterprising woman got a sailor drunk on brandy, stole his money and clothes, and left him in a lice-ridden bed next to a "loaf of stale bread" in some versions and a "Whore that was dead" of the "French pox" in others.[315] "The Sailor's Frolic; or, Life in the East," printed on a broadside in the early 1800s, described a sexual encounter with a "Frigate tight" that ended in disaster: "She took my watch and money to [sic], / And clothes without delay. / Two Bullies stout they turn'd me out."[316] As Marcia Carlisle has shown, prostitutes frequently appeared in Phialdelphia courts due to accusations of theft, with more harsh consequences for Black prostitutes, and court records in London and other Atlantic port cities also reflect this common trend.[317]

[315] Ballad Society, Vol. 36, page 568; also referenced in Gilje, *To Swear Like a Sailor*, 150.
[316] "The Sailor's Frolic, or, Life in the East," pamphlet, (n.p., 18??), https://prints.itma.ie/es_pdfs/1988-bs.pdf
[317] Carlisle, "Disorderly City, Disorderly Women," 563-564.

The private problem of venereal disease could and did become a public one when sailors either contributed to its spread or were obligated to seek assistance from institutions like the Philadelphia Alms House because of their ill health. Even though George Bateman (occupation unknown) had agreed in advance to pay for his board and medical care, the Alms House clerk nonetheless extensively detailed that sailor Jacob Felsy's admittance on June 23, 1800, was due to "affliction [of] the Venereal disease," and carefully mentioned his last shipboard posting as well as the two men who had remanded his care to the House.[318] Two sailors admitted to the House later that summer for rheumatism and a sore leg, respectively, did not merit nearly as much detail or assurance of others' potential to subsidize or take over their care. On the other hand, when sailor's wife Eleanor Williams entered the House two months later on August 19 with the same affliction as Felsy, her entry included not only the details of her husband Robert's current position at sea but also the names and addresses of her uncles and of a tavernkeeper who she stated would be her "friend" if asked, and even her birthplace and how long she had lived in Philadelphia.[319] These detailed entries could have been included due to the note-taker's personal predilection for detail, but their surrounding entries indicate an established conception of sailors and their women as vectors of venereal disease whose reliance on the public good for their recovery earned them special approbation.

"A Wife in Every Port": Fleeting Romance

While casual dalliances generally precluded circumstances in which an individual man or woman continuously guided and shaped the life of their heterosexual counterpart, they reinforced and created several key connections in the affective networks that bound Philadelphia sailors and

[318] [Alms House Managers], Daily Occurrence Docket, 1787-1888, City Archives of Philadelphia, 89.
[319] Ibid., 114.

women together. I argue that when considered as part of a larger pattern of forming relationships that tied seafarers to women, casual sexual and romantic encounters reveal the full extent of both parties' ability to choose their partners, imagine the possibilities of sexual and romantic fulfillment, and define themselves by the bonds they eschewed with individual people as much as the ones they chose to grow and sustain over cycles of sustained physical distance. Longer-term relationships regularly shared common points of origin with these fleeting romances as well: a short-term entanglement could unintentionally transform into a regular arrangement or precede marriage, and the methods of gauging and encouraging sexual or romantic interest in the short and long terms had significant overlap.

When sailors across the Atlantic used their time in port to engage in sexual or romantic conduct, they did so within wider cultural expectations of good-natured promiscuity and short-sighted excess. "Jack Tar" was a bandy-legged, swaggering font of bravado and libido, who staggered into and out of the taverns of any and every port city along the Atlantic, leaving behind memories of rollicking good times, a surfeit of liquor in whichever tavern he frequented, and a bevy of women to whom he gave, and from whom he received, affection that was fickle but light-hearted nonetheless. He was childlike, a "libertyless ward [sic]" in the eyes of the law, yet "he has the passions of a man: he is lawless and bold, always ready for a fight."[320] Even for the thousands of sailors who engaged in monogamy, saved their money for their wives and families or sent their wages home, and avoided the ruinations of poverty, press-gangs, and venereal disease, this image endured, and as such it guided their conduct as well as the actions of those who interacted with them.

[320] Jesse Lemisch, *Jack Tar vs. John Bull: The Role of New York's Seamen in Precipitating the Revolution* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 3.

Polygynous relationships formed a key part of this trope and showcased its core paradoxes, as the behaviors meant to show a sailor's personal disconnect from a foreign port simultaneously revealed his numerous and powerful connections to women. According to these stereotypes, sailors not only solicited prostitutes but also used their labor-driven cycles of physical absence to set up domestic situations so that in each port they visited, they had a "wife" who could provide sex, affection, and the niceties of home during his brief stay. Maritime literature that drew upon this notion in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries usually took extra care to avoid any insinuation of malice or exploitation on the sailor's behalf, and to also imply that his motivations originated in an endemic lust for life rather than any selfish or cruel desires. It also usually avoided discussing whether these "wives" knew of each other or that they were one of many sexual connections a sailor made during his "roving life." Instead, these fictional portrayals usually appeared within brief descriptors not unlike those used for prostitutes, adding geographic diversity to the variety of their physical attributes:

> I've a spanking wife at Portsmouth gate,
> A pigmy at Goree,
> An orange tawny up the Straights,
> A black at Saint Lucie;
> Thus whatsoever course we bend,
> We lead a jovial life,
> In every mess we find a friend,
> At every port a wife.[321]

The women's physical distance, the trope implies, facilitates this operation and makes such domestic configurations unique to the sailor. Beyond women potentially themselves taking offense at their sailor lover's activities, the idea is that were he to be caught out at them, he could simply leave again and avoid both their wrath and the social judgments of any portside communities. Yet at the same time, such a system would only work if a sailor reasonably

[321] "Jack in his Element," *Nautical Songster*, 28-29.

anticipated that he would regularly return to those ports. The same repudiation of normative sexual and romantic behavior—monogamy, marriage, and regular cohabitation—relies upon its fulfillment, as Jack goes through the extra complications of setting up these arrangements to gain not just women, but "wives," and still makes claims to "constancy."[322] While the extent of their descriptions in songs like the one above left something to be desired—the women's names, for one—they also reveal that within numerous foreign port cities, a sailor took care to remember a woman's location, knew her appearance well enough to find her again, and had strong motivations to do so. Additionally, as Karin Wulf has noted, for the women themselves such arrangements provided them the opportunity to be "captains of their households"—and left open the possibility that they had their own rotating rosters of "husbands" bound to seafaring cycles.[323]

Sources that detail sexual appetites, and common initiatives to slake them, from the perspectives of the women who slept with sailors are more difficult to find. Certainly, their presence in the sources mentioned above denotes women's willing participation in these fleeting relationships, and outside of false pretenses one can assume they possessed an awareness that seafarers' stints in port were temporally limited jaunts by necessity of their labor. Sailor songs warred with idealism versus practicality when it came to expectations of female partners' sexual abstinence in absentia. On the one hand, countless songs cried out for both sexual and romantic fidelity and insulted women who violated both; on the other, sailors who readily acknowledged and accepted their own promiscuity often had a laissez-faire attitude toward women who embraced the same, especially if their connection had been emotionally and temporally brief. In maritime songs that hinted at or detailed sexual intimacies between sailors and women, the latter

[322] Ibid.
[323] Wulf, *Not All Wives*, 97.

were usually portrayed as enthusiastic participants. Kissing and embracing, particularly upon a sailor's departure or arrival, were perfectly acceptable and in fact desirable for both parties. Just as sailors longed to "steal an ambrosial kiss" from Mary, there were women who equally longed for their "Corrydon's kiss."[324] One exceptional song from this era in a particularly bawdy collection suggested that beyond cultural tropes of promiscuity and bawdiness, not only did sailors' female sexual partners enjoy penetrative sex but that they also sought out artificial substitutes for use while their lovers were away at sea. Titled "The Blue Bells of Ireland," its several verses describe the female customers of an unnamed narrator with a "waggon-load of thund'ring p---ks … to sell." His customers included women of all ages, marital states, and size requirements, including the wives of a sailor and of a boatswain. Each of these women "swore" in her verse to clear out the man's stock, with the sailor's wife offering to buy "waggoner and all,/To ease the itching of her C—t while Jack was at *Bengall*."[325] The boatswain's wife did not include the man in her offer but made it with such profane language that nearly every word was censored. Around the admittedly contrived existence of a traveling salesman who peddled dildoes to the masses, "The Blue Bells of Ireland" used the plausibility of female sexual appetites to bolster a rhetoric of maritime women's especial need for sexual satiation in sailors' physical

[324] "Tweed Side," *The Syren: A Choice Collection of Sea, Hunting and Other Songs* (Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1800), 20; "What virgin of shepherd in valley or grove," *The Sailor's Medley*, 67. The latter song also appeared in *The Festival of Mirth, and American Tar's Delight* (New York: Thomas B. Jansen, 1800) as "The Wedding Day," pp. 71-72.

[325] "The Blue Bells of Ireland," *A Collection of Songs, with Some Originals* (Dublin: n.p., 1769), 146-147. This song was likely a parody of an existing song about blue bells as the chorus contained the simple, limited-word references used when publishers assumed a reader already knew the song in question. A slightly later bawdy London songster contained the song with slight variations and with the chorus; see *The Frisky Songster* (London: n.p., 1802), 14-15. Nineteenth-century ballad scholar William Chappell was unable to find the song but mentioned it was different from "The Blue Bells of Scotland" in meter, and that song also did not have a chorus. See William (W.) Chappell, *The ballad literature and popular music of the olden time: a history of the ancient songs, ballads, and of the dance tunes of England, with numerous anecdotes and entire ballads* (London: Chappell & Co., 1871), 739.

absence—and at least one possible creative solution that did not necessarily result in sexual or romantic infidelity.

As discussed by Peter Thompson and Marcia Carlisle, among others, the same locations that enabled prostitutes to secure seafaring customers—taverns, public houses, and theatres—also facilitated other forms of sexual and romantic connection, and it could be difficult to tell at first glance whether payment was part of the equation.[326] A low-cut dress and a willingness to drink in mixed company did not a commercial sex worker make, and it is entirely possible that budding affection or mutual lust brought together any of the real-life Philadelphian counterparts of the men and women shown in Cruikshank's caricature. In its depiction of a waterfront location where women fished for sustenance alongside laboring dockworkers, William Birch's 1800 etching of the Arch Street Ferry contains an even more intimate snapshot: in its back left corner, beneath the rear awning of what is most likely a ferry house or tavern, a man in the blue shirt and white pants of a sailor offers his arm to a figure in a long skirt and purple shawl. Against other caricatured drawings of disorderly sailors and drunken women causing chaos with their revelry, this imagery is subtle and difficult to find, but all the more important for its reflection of the far more frequent and everyday realities of sailor's intimacies with women.

[326] Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution*, 15, 45, 92; Carlisle, "Disorderly City, Disorderly Women," 550.



Figure 3.17a. William Russell Birch, "Arch Street Ferry, Philadelphia." Hand-colored engraving. Bristol, PA: W. Birch, 1800. From the Library Company of Philadelphia. https://digital.librarycompany.org/islandora/object/Islandora%3A13326

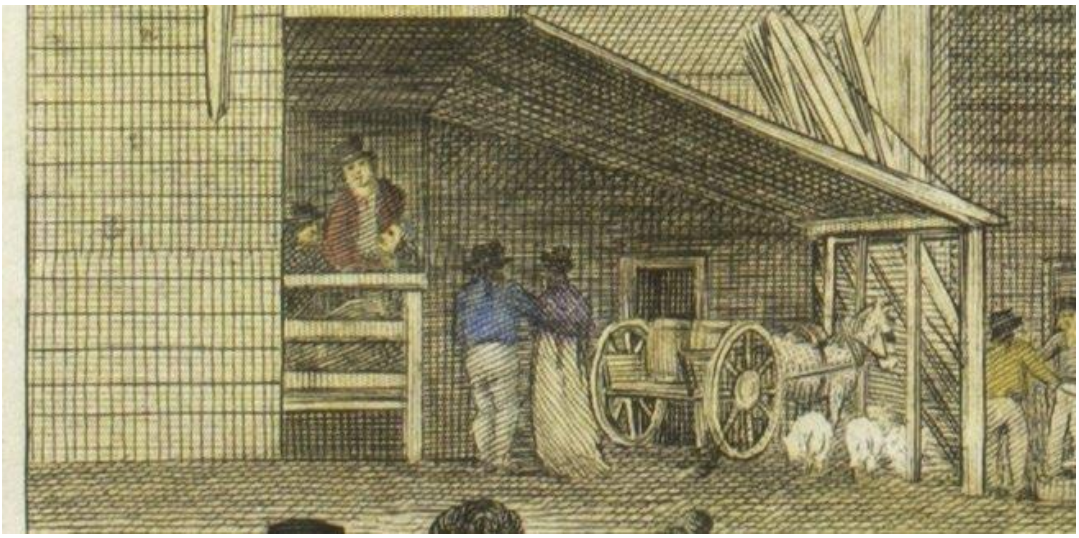


Figure 3.2b. Detail of Birch, "Arch Street Ferry, Philadelphia."

Common ways to verbally gloss over sexual congress further blurred the lines of sailors' socially acceptable romancing and lewd commentary, ranging from the barest implications of intimacy to combinations of physical admiration with emotional praise. One song declared the sailor's only two desires were "grog aboard and girl ashore," but the song ended with the "honest Tar … drink[ing]" the latter, which unclear verbiage undoubtedly involved the sailor's mouth.[327] Sometimes songs either faded to black before sexual congress or skipped ahead past a liaison or wedding night. Within a week of being married, the shy lovers Roger and Kate had overcome their reticence: "Kate quite left off blushing—Roger boldly could speak,/Could joke with his deary; laugh loud at the jest;/She could coax too and fondle as well as the best."[328] Romance could give a veneer of respectability to the images that sailors created when they sang. "When Fair Susan I Left" described her "soft swelling bosom" as well as her "heart full of woe"; another sailor's lover possessed numerous moral virtues, particularly fidelity, but was most often lauded as "buxom Nan."[329] This wordplay carried over into more nautical euphemisms for sexual partners, sex acts, and genitals, where the terms used to describe new or ephemeral relationships tended largely toward playful witticisms and jests about constancy that were good-natured until they became serious. In addition to referencing commonly-named parts of a ship or known nautical imagery, these phrases often added an extra layer of specialized linguistic knowledge by drawing upon words and terms that shipboard specialists used to describe their shipboard surroundings, and using context to sexualize their meaning.[330] Metaphors such as the

[327] "The Honest Tar," *Nautical Songster*, 55-56.
[328] "Roger and Kate," *The Festival of Mirth*, 66-67.
[329] "When Susan I Left," *Nautical Songster*, 22-23; "Song [The wind was hush'd, the storm was over," *The Syren*, 54.
[330] Gilje (*To Swear Like a Sailor*, 142) concludes that non-sailors were familiar enough with general nautical terms that much of these metaphors were "thin disguise[s]." Still, this language could get rather convoluted for those not in the know if the metaphor was not properly conveyed, considering multiple publishers of this era offered nautical dictionaries to help aspiring sailors learn the lingo or to help British and American sailors better understand one another's slang. For a contemporaneous example of these publications produced in Philadelphia, see *The mariner's*

aforementioned use of "yard" or of "mast" for a penis, or a "poop deck" or "bottom" for a man or woman's rear, were both popular and easy to decode, as were references to entering "port holes" or "cubby holes." Most non-sailors might not realize that a "foul bottom" referred to unclean or debris-filled conditions either on the bottom of a ship or at the bottom of the water, but would likely be able to deduce the intended disgust and exasperation when it also referred to a disease-ridden sexual partner's genitals.

Fleeting romances shared some of the same risks as sailors' interactions with prostitutes—venereal disease and availability conflicts chief among them—and while they usually precluded the same economic risks because they took place between the transactional element of prostitution and the household element of longer-term romances, illegitimate children could create or exacerbate those needs. As Clare Lyons has mentioned, the definition of bastardy differed legally and practically for most Philadelphians of this time due to the prevalence of common-law marriage, serial monogamy, and self-divorce. The Overseers of the Poor—and the women who appealed to them—saved their exertions for those cases in which insufficient time, connection, or cooperation within a sexual or former romantic relationship necessitated outside intervention to establish paternity and set up child support.[331] Those applications further push against the notion that sailors who engaged in casual sex or fleeting romance with women in port did so because their mobility prohibited stronger ties or enabled them to escape personal and official consequences. Philadelphia mariner John Studham, brought before the Overseers by Rebecca Holland in 1762, was far from the only seaman solicited to pay bond for a bastard child in the late eighteenth century, and the plethora of records without listed occupations for a child's

dictionary, or American seaman's vocabulary of technical terms, and sea phrases, used in the construction, equipment, management, and military operations, of ships and vessels of all descriptions (Washington City and Philadelphia: Duane, 1805).

[331] Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble*, 64-66.

father suggests that there were even more beyond those that the historical record can conclusively identify.[332] Whether it was due to a genuine desire to fulfill parental obligations, a fear of transgressing authorities, the threat of discipline from ships' owners or superior officers, promises of violence from a woman's family, friends, and neighbors, or other motivations entirely, even a brief sexual or romantic relationship shaped a sailor's conduct in port and his future life plans. For women the consequence of bearing a sailor's child could be more lingering, though they also had ways to lessen or evade the burdens of motherhood, as will be seen in the next chapter.

Longing, Memory, and the Language of Love: Sailors, Sex, and Romance at Sea

The maritime songsters and ballad books that circulated through the city's markets and print shops, teeming with tales of passion and yearning, made their way to Philadelphia sailors' hands and minds in both written and oral form. Of the 76 songs in *The Sailor's Medley,* at least 47 feature strong sexual or romantic themes, while 23 of the *Nautical Songster*'s songs focused on the same.[333] *The Syren* compiled "sea, hunting, and other songs" to the tune of 41 romantic songs amidst 81 total, while the similarly subtitled *The Festival of Mirth, and American Tar's Delight* contained 33 love songs out of 67 total.[334]

As Paul Gilje has noted, maritime literature features a plethora of female tropes or "types."[335] Of the seven that Gilje has identified, four were romantic or sexual in nature: the

[332] Overseers of the Poor, Bonds, November 11, 1762, cited in Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble*, 11.
[333] *The Sailor's Medley* (Philadelphia: Matthew Carey, 1800); *Nautical Songster* (Baltimore: Henry S. Keatinge, 1798). For all of the collections under discussion, this count does not include several nationalistic or drinking songs that mention romantic bonds with women as an aside; to make this list, at least half of the song's content had to focus on sex, love, or romance.
[334] *The Syren* (Philadelphia: Matthew Carey, 1800); *The Festival of Mirth, and American Tar's Delight* (New York: Thomas B. Jansen & Co., 1800).
[335] See Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 35-53.

"loyal sweetheart or wife, playful Mol, exploitative harlot, and exotic native."[336] These portrayals of womanhood were literary devices that did not and could not encompass the complex lives of the actual women with whom sailors lived, laid, and loved. At the same time, they should not be dismissed as mere fantasies, created in isolation as responses to deprivation. Sailors knew women, carried those women on-board ships in their memories and as still-relevant and influential parts of their lives despite their physical distance, and it was only with those memories and motivations firmly in place that the creation and repetition of maritime literature occurred. Even the most hackneyed and trite portrayals of the feminine could be and were connected, by sentiment, correlation, or comparison, to actual women on the waterfront.

It bears mentioning that despite long-standing and still current popular beliefs that women were banned from eighteenth-century British and American ships due to superstition or regulations, there were specific contexts in which sailors not only tolerated having women on-board but demanded their presence. "Jolly boats," also known as "bumboats," regularly crossed the land-sea divide. These smaller vessels took officers to and from the ship and brought male and female merchants selling fresh food, trinkets, and trade goods to sailors who, despite having their vessels anchored in port, were regularly not permitted to leave their ship due to fears of desertion or lost discipline. Their most infamous cargo, though, were their "hundreds" of sexually available women. One British admiral described this practice that remained common to Anglo-American sailors in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Atlantic despite being regularly decried or officially banned:

> It is well known that immediately on the arrival of a ship of war in port, crowds of boats flock off with cargoes of prostitutes. … [T]he waterman takes as many as his boat will hold, upon speculation, and hovers round the ship until she is secured … The men then go into the boats and pick out each a woman (as one would choose cattle), paying a shilling or two to the boatman for her passage off. They then descend to the lower deck

[336] Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 35.

> with their husbands, as they call them. … where in bed (each man being allowed only fourteen inches breadth for his hammock), they are squeezed between the next hammocks and must be witness to each others [sic] actions … giving way to every excess of debauchery that the grossest passions of human nature can lead them to[.][337]

Amidst this harangue, the same account indicated that some of these women were wives in truth:

> During this time, the married seamen are frequently joined by their wives and families (sometimes comprising daughters from ten to fifteen years of age), who are forced to submit to the alternative of mixing with these abandoned women … who are either forced to come into the midst of such brutality, or remain still separated from their husbands[.][338]

Notably, Hawker assumed that as "decent married women" they would be horrified by proximity to commercial sex workers and would not take the opportunity of physical reconciliation to engage in sexual intercourse themselves.[339]

Making similar sexual arrangements—and having bumboat pilots make significant profit off of them due to the sheer quantity of transactions they managed per boatload—was a less pressing matter for most merchant vessels. Their crews were usually much smaller than the hundreds-strong sailing and fighting crews that served on naval frigates, and there was a much lower chance (except in wartime) that a significant part of the crew had been impressed into service and thus the risk of allowing even the smallest degree of mobility was too high. At the same time, merchant vessels' operations were much more subject to a captain or ship owner's individual whims. A sailor's ability to enact immediate change should their officers decide to deny them their time in port depended largely on sailors deploying unofficial power mechanisms,

---

[337] [Edward Hawker], *Statement respecting the prevalence of certain immoral practices in His Majesty's Navy* (London: Ellerton and Henderson, 1821), 2-3. Though it was published anonymously, Suzanne Stark attributes the pamphlet to Hawker (1782-1860), a reform-minded evangelical admiral in the Royal Navy; see Stark, *Female Tars: Women Aboard Ship in the Age of Sail* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2017), 7-8. This text is also quoted in Carey, ed., *A Sailor's Songbag*, 148, albeit attributed to "Admiral Hawkins" in 1822 and cited indirectly from Christopher Lloyd's *The British Seaman, 1200-1860: A Social Survey* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1970), 224-225. For more on the official banning yet practical allowance of prostitutes onboard ships, see Stark, *Female Tars*, 13-14, 18-24.
[338] [Hawker], *Statement respecting the prevalence of certain immoral practices in His Majesty's Navy*, 1, 3.
[339] Ibid., 3.

from collective uprisings and overt or subtle refusals to work to negotiating via personal connections, the promise to deprive a captain of their experience with future voyages, and threats to tell other maritime laborers to avoid working on that captain's vessel.[340]



Figure 3.18. Thomas Sutherland, "A Scene on the Main Deck of A Line of Battle Ship in Harbour." Hand-colored caricature. London: J.B. East, 1820. From the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London. https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/rmgc-object-147286

Rare actual instances of women successfully joining Atlantic ships' crews in the guise of men fed into a growing maritime literature of heroic girls and women whose romantic motivations brought them to sea. As Pauline Greenhill as noted, while the majority of ballads about cross-dressing female seafarers invites a heterosexualist reading due to their protagonists' overwhelming tendency to seek love and marriage, they also demonstrate the "mutability of

[340] As Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker have noted, such strategies had significant crossover with those used by Black slaves, though their discussion largely leaves out successful instances where common cause or collaboration between bourgeois and proletariat historical actors created an acceptable compromise. The word "negotiation" appears in their book only three times, and all three instances ended in the systematic top-down violence of slavery, "treacherous" top-down violence by a bloodthirsty individual, and utter failure due to mistrust spurred by top-down violence and neglect, respectively. See Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), 128, 137, 265.

gender" and provide an elastic imaginary that enables audiences' intimate desires to fall both outside of and within those normative gender binaries.[341] These songs regularly followed a branching series of events, beginning with a description or a conversation in which the sailor and his lover discussed his impending departure to sea. One broadside ballad's unnamed female speaker decided that she was done "repining" for her sailor lover and would dress "in man's array" to find him and, if necessary, to avenge him:

> And when I come upon the seas,
> No danger will I fear,
> For let the storms be e'er so long
> And cannon loudly rattle,
> I'll go to sea for my true love,
> Unto the field of battle.
>
> And if my true love should be slain,
> So boldly I'll proceed in,
> To fight with gun and sword in hand,
> While my love lays a'bleeding.[342]

If the song or story continued beyond this point it next described the lovers' reunion, including the woman's success or failure in her disguise as well as any valorous efforts she undertook in her quest. Most of these songs finally ended with the lovers returning home to an implied life of married bliss.

Real (or at least realistic) stories of women who went to sea as men were usually far less romantic, and correlated far more strongly and frequently to the economic and personal hardships that goaded men to take up seafaring than it did to any thirst for adventure or search

---

[341] Pauline Greenhill, "'Neither a Man nor a Maid': Sexualities and Gendered Meanings in Cross-Dressing Ballads," *The Journal of American Folklore* 108, no. 428 (Spring 1995): 165. Greenhill's analysis has certain limitations: it focuses partially upon historic performers and partially upon her interviews with her contemporaries and their interpretations of these songs, and her source material comes from a single collection of songs compiled in mid-twentieth-century Newfoundland. That said, her central thesis about widening the interpretive possibilities of these songs holds true for audiences in both eras, and the contents of similar song collections have been successfully traced back to eighteenth-century and earlier iterations. See Dianne Dugaw, "'Rambling Female Sailors': The Rise and Fall of the Seafaring Heroine," *International Journal of Maritime History* IV, no. 1 (June 1992): 180.

[342] "A lover's lamentation for the Girl he left behind him," broadside (United States: n.p., 178-?).

for love. The newspaper account of seventeen-year-old Marianne Rebecca Johnson (also discussed in the next chapter) may have had the appellation of "Female Sailor" but painted her as a far more forlorn figure than a warrior woman. Clad in a "shabby jacket and trousers" with her "black hair cropped," Johnson was found crying in the cold rain by a bricklayer. Though her tale ended on a slightly more optimistic note and a reassurance to the reader that her "person, aspect, and demeanor" were "no means uninteresting" and she had retained her "natural softness and submissive modesty," the relater of this anecdote made clear that this was a "poor girl" in need of parental care despite being of marriageable age.[343] Another story of a "female sailor," this one set in Ipswich but appearing once again in Philadelphia's newspapers, conveyed similar hardships but with less sympathy for the woman's choices. Through the intervention and cooperation of the ship *Edmund and Mary*'s master and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Embleton, they confirmed Mr. Embleton's suspicion that one of his apprentices—who usually would have been a preteen or teenager—was female. The "young adventurer" willingly told Mrs. Embleton that while in her widowed mother's household she had become pregnant and, after delivering her child, had "quit her maternal house." This was her second voyage under indenture to the ship's owners and while she refused to share her name and to return home, the article suggested that Mr. Embleton had managed to procure her mother's name and residence. Grudgingly, the piece concluded that it was "due to the female tar to mention, that aboard the Edmund and Mary she conducted herself with extreme propriety, and was considered a very active clever *lad*."[344] The short obituary for Mary Pote that appeared in the December 15, 1823, edition of *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* was much more cheerful: after serving on "several British men of war" during and after the American Revolution in male disguise, the revelation of Pote's sex had

[343] "Female Sailor," *Democratic Press*, February 2, 1808, 2.
[344] "Female Sailor," *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, November 8, 1813, 3.

charmingly arisen "from the feminine action she betrayed in catching oranges in her lap," and she had indeed purportedly gone to sea to follow her lover. Though he tragically had fallen in action, her title of Mrs. implied she had been married, and at the time of her decease she was 64 years old and a female sexton, or butt-woman, for her Devonshire parish church.[345]

Bumboats, portside jaunts, and disguised women aside, a male sailor spent most of his time at sea physically separated from potential female sexual and romantic partners. For many this created extended jaunts of forced abstinence; self-stimulation would have been the most direct way to alleviate sexual frustration but some sailors engaged in same-sex intercourse due to their standard preference, while others felt compelled by their surroundings to temporarily redefine the boundaries of their sexual attraction and activity.[346] In these circumstances, memory, language, and performance—all powerful tools of personal expression and identity formation in their own right—combined to conjure the presence of real and imagined womanhood on ships' decks and in sailors' hammocks. As sailors from Philadelphia and other Atlantic ports shared stories of their loved ones with one another, sang songs from the massive repertoire of maritime

[345] "Obituary [Mary Pote]," *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, December 15, 1823, 5.

[346] As Gilje notes, from 1700 to 1861 the British Navy punished buggery with execution but argues that the lack of similar sources for the American navy suggests that the crime was, at least, punished less frequently. Gilje also claims that homosexuality on-board ship was "not a rampant practice" and had "little evidence" to support its notorious correlation to sailors; see Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 37-39, and Gilje, *To Swear Like a Sailor*, 31-33. Recent studies by other scholars suggest other avenues by which to discover the full contours of sailors' sexual identities and preferences outside of official records, where it only appears when witnessed, reported, and punished. For expanded information on the U.S. Navy's early handling of sodomy cases as well as more on the historiographically elusive discussion of sailors' self-masturbation and mutual masturbation, see B. R. Burg, "Sodomy, Masturbation, and Courts-Martial in the Antebellum American Navy," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 23, no. 1 (January 2014): 53-78; for more on the interplay between naval concerns about sodomy, the eighteenth-century correlation of sodomy to effeminacy, and the politics of performing homosexuality on and off the theater stage, see Laurence Senelick, "Mollies or Men of Mode? Sodomy and the Eighteenth-Century London Stage," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1, no. 1 (July 1990): 33-67; for wider-ranging newer books on male homosexuality in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that include some mention of sailors, see William E. Benemann, *Male-Male Intimacy in Early America: Beyond Romantic Friendships* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2014 [New York: Harrington Park Press, 2006]). The only monograph on the topic by a trained scholar thus far, Benemann's *Unruly Desires: American Sailors and Homosexualities in the Age of Sail* (n.p.: William Benemann, 2019) suffers from repetition and frequent overextension beyond its sources, but has potentially provocative arguments about flogging, tattoos, and how threats of sexual danger on ships might be interpreted differently by those who identified sailing vessels as safe havens for homosexuality.

music devoted to sex and romantic love, and tethered those thoughts to material objects and even their own flesh, they made heterosexual romance endemic to their shipboard experiences.

Sailor-narrators in these songs often dreamt of returning to the arms of their lovers, where they could find rest, refuge, "a calm," or a confirmation of love and fidelity.[347] One song of the Revolutionary era, purportedly written by a "Captain Thompson," reified the tethers of longing and memory that he brought with him on-board ship:

> The topsail shivers in the wind,
> The ship she calls to sea,
> But yet my soul, my heart, my mind,
> Are Mary, moor'd with the [sic]:
> For tho' thy sailor's bound afar,
> Still love shall be his leading star.[348]

A 1780s broadside published side-by-side perspectives of a longing sailor at sea and the woman who remained on shore. Thinking on the "hours I past away" with his lover, the anonymous sailor recollected her beauty, love, and grace, and commented on how even in her absence she consumed his energy:

> My mind her image doth retain,
> Whether asleep or waking,
> I long to see the lass again,
> For her my heart is breaking,
> If ever I return that way,
> And she has not deceiv'd me,
> I'll reconcile myself again,
> With the girl I left behind me.[349]

His lover, who was none other than the woman mentioned above who was willing to brandish "gun and sword" should her lover need to be avenged, expressed the desire for peace that the

[347] "Song [A sailor's love is void of art,]," *The Syren*, 60-61.
[348] "The Sailor's Farewell, written by Capt. Thompson," *Songs, Naval and Military* (New York: James Rivington, 1779), 56.
[349] "A lover's lamentation for the Girl he left behind him," broadside (United States: n.p., 178-?).

sailor could not express beyond his desire to return home, as she condemned the "cruel wicked war" and wished for other sailors and their lovers to reunite.[350]

The act of performance also reified sailors' memories of relationships with women and reinforced their desires to enter them. Sharing songs about sex, love, and romance on the forecastle circulated them amongst sailors, and tied their content to the emotional experiences of singing as well as listening. One song, usually titled "Saturday Night at Sea," captured sailors' collective performance of mutual boasts about and toasts to their lovers, done while they "push'd the grog about."[351] Each sailor used his brief time holding the can of grog to tell his messmates his lover's name and to describe his "heart's delight" with effusive praise. In the song, each sailor took care to note his lover's physical attractiveness as well as their mutual loyalty: Peg, Poll, and Nan were all "comely" and "tight," but just as appealing was their fidelity, which the sailors declared they each would return.[352]

A portion of this maritime love song literature featured female narrators, creating unique opportunities for sailors onboard vessels to perform femininity before their fellow seamen and in their own imaginaries. The unnamed narrator of "I Never Will Be Married" allowed its performer to assume the air of a woman who refused several suitors with a "scornful air" until only one suitor "tarried" and she "thought 'twas time to change my strain."[353] Another tune gave a sailor the opportunity to either use his own Scottish accent or try one on for size from the perspective of a "bonny bride sae gay," telling the story of a happy and fulfilling marriage

[350] Ibid.
[351] For confirmation of these performances actually happening on ships see Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 190-191, and Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 74, 81-82.
[352] "Saturday Night at Sea," *The Songster's Companion* (Brattleborough, VT: Printed for the book-sellers, 1815), 135-136; also in *Nautical Songster*, 54-55, and *The Sailor's Medley*, 5-6.
[353] "I Never Will Be Married," *Nautical Songster*, 23-24.

despite her mother's disapproval.[354] Whoever sang "He Stole My Heart Away" took on the role of a girl among "rural lads and lasses gay," who in this instance waxed poetic about the charms of "young Jocky": "He pip'd so sweet, and danc'd so gay,/Alas! he danc'd my heart away."[355]Another song's "Young Jockey" was less courtly in his attentions: as the narrator "turn'd my spinning wheel" he went from compliments to hugging, kissing, and implied groping ("Till bolder grown, so close he prest,/His wanton thoughts I quickly guess'd") that inspired the woman to push him back in rage until he declared his intent to marry her.[356] Sometimes a song could shift its narration without warning. The first verse of "Tack and Tack" took a first-person perspective from a woman named Poll, who bid her "gallant sailor" adieu, referred to herself in the third person, then shifted back to "I," all in the first verse. The rest of the song took on a third-person omniscient narration, though the final verse could be arguably from the sailor Jack's first-person point of view.[357] Another song in *The Sailor's Medley* was more clear about its narrative shifts but of its four verses, the central two were spoken from the view of a spurned woman scolding her unfaithful lover before falling to "the heavy hand of death" in the final verse, just as her swain repented of his actions.[358]

Sailor songs also included male and female duets, some of which originated in stage shows, and their performance on-board ships also would have involved the assumption of a feminine persona as well as the replication of socially anticipated romantic behavior. "The Maid of the Mill" alternated between William and Phoebe, both of whom professed to having fifty suitors each but only one true love (the titular maid for the former, and "Young Harry" for the

[354] "When Sandy told his tale of love," *The Sailor's Medley*, 24. In this text, the songs are all titled "Song" but the index at the end lists them by their first line, which I have replicated here.
[355] "He Stole My Heart Away," *The Festival of Mirth,* 54.
[356] "To ease his heart, and own his flame," *The Sailor's Medley*, 43-44.
[357] "Tack and Tack," *Nautical Songster,* 56-57. There was also a song in this collection called "Tack and Half Tack" (pp. 6-8) but it described the shipboard activities of a vessel's departure, not a romantic parting.
[358] "As Sylvia in a forest lay," *The Sailor's Medley*, 59-60.

latter).[359] In "La Gloire and Madelon" the two titular characters sang to one another. Madelon vowed that she would fearlessly follow La Gloire into battle, with the two singing the final verse together:

> Then let the world jog as it will,
> Let hollow friends forsake us;
> We both shall be as happy still,
> As war and love can make us.
> Ah! non, non, non,
> Pauvre Madelon
> Shall never quit her rover!
> Ah! non, non, non,
> Pauvre Madelon
> Shall go with you-[me] all the world over![360]

A similar song in the same collection, this between "Inkle" and "Yarico," followed the same format and theme of constancy, particularly as shown by the female half of the couple fearlessly following her lover out into the world.[361]

Other Philadelphia sailors evoked memories of their female loved ones with their very flesh, by getting tattoos. Extant records suggest that at least 10 percent of sailors who worked and/or lived in Philadelphia had at least one tattoo, though on average they had more than that.[362] While many tattooed sailors bore marks of their own names or initials—likely to make it easier to identify their remains if they drowned at sea—Ira Dye notes that it was "not uncommon" for sailors to be tattooed with a woman's name. Certainly some of those who were tattooed with initials clearly not their own could trace those letters to a specific woman in their lives, even if

[359] "The Maid of the Mill," *The Syren*, 25-26.
[360] "Duet—La Gloire and Madelon," *The Festival of Mirth*, 40-41.
[361] "Songs, in Inkle and Yarico," *The Festival of Mirth*, 61-62.
[362] This number is based on Ira Dye, "The Tattoos of Early American Seafarers, 1796-1818," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133, no. 4 (Dec. 1989): 523-528. Working from extant applications for Seaman's Protection Certificates (citizenship affidavits designs to prevent foreign impressment) in Philadelphia, Dye lists a total of 979 tattooed sailors with 2,354 separate designs, out of a total of 9,772 men, between 1796 and 1818. He notes that some years were statistically unreliable due to a dearth of records, and estimates that only 28 percent of his record set survived, but in his yearly breakdowns the percentage of tattooed men ranged from a low of 5.34% (1815) to a high of 27.75% (1801).

the historical record has only preserved the tattoo's existence and not its meaning.[363] Drawing upon Seaman's Protection Certificate Applications (SPCAs) submitted between 1796 and 1818, which asked sailors to provide thorough descriptions of their physical attributes to clearly show that they were the individual identified in the certificate as an American citizen, both Dye and Simon Newman estimate that between 7.5% and 8.5% of those sailors' tattoos referenced love and loved ones.[364] These included a plethora of heart tattoos, ranging from simple heart shapes to interlocked hearts and, for one sailor who applied for a certificate in Philadelphia in 1805, a wreathed design that contained a man and woman, doves, a heart, and the word "LOVE."[365]



Figure 3.19a and 3.4b. Examples of sailors' tattoos, c. 1796-1818. The set on the left is drawn from various Seaman's Protection Certificate applications, many of which included rough drawings of sailors' tattoos. The mermaid tattoo on the right is a drawing made from an 1808 tattoo preserved on a piece of human skin, housed at the Gordon Museum of Guy's Hospital, London. Both images can be found in Ira Dye, "The Tattoos of Early American Seafarers, 1796-1818," 529, 545.

Other listed designs included "female figures," which could have ranged from tattoos of "the sailor's farewell"—a sailor and woman "tearfully departing" one another—to more salacious depictions of the feminine.[366] The vast majority of tattoos were located on the arms or

[363] Ira Dye, 542.
[364] Dye, 533, and Simon Newman, *Embodied History*, 114.
[365] Proofs of Citizenship, Philadelphia, William Calwell (October 11, 1805), Entry 13057, RG 36, National Archives, cited in Dye, 544.
[366] Dye, 458.

hands, where a sailor could easily view them without the aid of a mirror or reflective surface.[367] Nineteen-year-old runaway potter's apprentice Frederic Gosner, who had previously absconded to serve at sea and was suspected of doing so in a sojourn a year later, sported several tattoos on his arms with "our Saviour on the Cross" on his right arm, and "The Anchor, Mermaid, and sundry other devices" on his left.[368] Some sailors, like Charles Davis, bore multiple marks of heterosexual affection: his 1808 application listed several "Indian ink" tattoos on his right arm, including "a double Hart [sic] with the printed letters P.M." and a depiction of a mermaid.[369] While Dye and Newman categorized mermaid tattoos as variations of the "maritime tattoos" that tattooed sailors acquired to show "pride in their profession," these wearable artworks were also a manifestation of idealized or imagined femininity.[370] Depicted either partially or fully nude from the waist up, often these mermaids held mirrors, combs, or hearts in their hands, signifying their physical appeal but also a hint of danger, as that allure could lead a sailor to his doom.[371] Amidst a wider maritime and mainstream culture where sailors on stage declared women "beautiful as a mermaid" while proselytizers from Philadelphia to Charleston encouraged young men to evade the "gust[s] of passion" and "mermaid[s] of pleasure," choosing a mermaid tattoo rather than an anchor, fish, ship, or compass star heavily implied that beyond wanting other sailors to recognize

[367] Dye, 536, notes that arm tattoos made up a whopping 82.3% of tattoos with hands at 12.8%, and body, leg, and foot tattoos making up the remainder. While the 1796-1818 data set he used contained no evidence of genital tattoos, his second set from 1900-1908 had enough instances of this to justify adding it as a category.
[368] "20 Dollars Reward," *Aurora General Advertiser* (Philadelphia, PA), October 14, 1800, 3. Issued by his master Joseph Rine, this notice mentioned Gosner's stint on the frigate *United States* as taking place in 1779 but considering Gosner's age this was most likely a typographical error.
[369] Proofs of Citizenship, Philadelphia, Charles Davis (November 4, 1808), Entry UD-1066A, RG 36, National Archives.
[370] Dye, 542, 553, and Newman, 114.
[371] Dye, 542. For the most widespread and popular pairing of mermaids and peril in Atlantic maritime culture of this time, see the song "The Mermaid," also called "The Seamen's Distress" or "The Sailor's Caution" during this time, in which sailors' sighting of a mermaid is directly linked to their ship sinking. Its earliest known appearance is in *The Glasgow Lasses Garland* (Newcastle?: n.p., 1765).

his maritime credentials, a mariner might enjoy looking at a female form that evoked past and future sexual or romantic encounters.[372]

Sailors also reaffirmed their sexual and romantic ties to women by providing them with gifts, whether handmade or purchased in foreign ports or on returning home. When he was brought before London's Central Criminal Court on theft charges in December 1782, Philadelphia sailor George Peters denied taking the shoes and stockings of fellow pub visitor Samuel Moorley, which were also not found on his person. He was, in fact, carrying only three things at the time of his arrest: a pound of tobacco, a brass weight, and a new pair of women's shoes he carried under his jacket.[373] Pub employee John Trinby noted that Peters had brought a "young woman" in with him but there was no sign of her when Peters was "overtaken in the street," and the shoes were still on Peters at that time, suggesting that these were intended as a gift for another woman elsewhere in London or at his next port of call.[374] Carved whalebone mementos created by sailors to give to women upon their return home, including corset busks, swifts, and pie crimpers, remain the most enduring and emblematic examples of American sailors' cross-gender gift-giving despite the more limited availability of those raw materials to mariners outside of this particular New England industry.[375] Scattered contemporary cultural references to sailors' individual acquisition of gifts, or of their general trend toward generosity to

---

[372] John O'Keeffe, *Wild Oats: or, The Strolling Gentleman, A Comedy, in Five Acts* (Philadelphia: Matthew Carey, 1793), 27; "From the Charleston City Gazette," *The Philadelphia Evening Post* (Philadelphia, PA), April 13, 1804, 3.

[373] Trial of George Peters (t17821204-57), December 4, 1782, *The Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?div=t17821204-57.

[374] Ibid. Moorley also clearly knew Trinby, who "came and told him" that he had seen Peters take the bundle containing Moorley's goods rather than intercept him himself, though Trinby also claimed he had "called out to one of my fellow-servants to go after him." This muddied sequence of events, and the bundle's disappearance between Peters's supposed theft and apprehension, was likely why he was given a not guilty verdict, though it is also possible that Peters's mention of his seafaring career and current injury swayed matters in his favor.

[375] Lisa Hix, "From Whale Jaws to Corsets: How Sailors' Love Tokens Got Into Women's Underwear," *Collector's Weekly*, April 29, 2015, https://www.collectorsweekly.com/articles/how-sailors-love-tokens-got-into-womens-underwear.

women (albeit often tinged with the implication that new material goods meant sexual remuneration for the sailor), properly situate this niche market within a much wider trend of sailors choosing to spend their wages in a way that perpetuated heterosexual relationships. When sailors infamously made tailor shops one of their first stops in port so that they could go out on the town in style, it was often implied that any women with them had either arrived in similar accoutrements or had been provided "gowns and handkerchiefs [and] dozens of superfine best women's [stockings]" by their seafaring beau, and were provided with food and drink as well.[376] In at least one sailor song—written in the style of a growling song, or critique of the ship's officers, though this example took a more jovial tone—the anonymous sailor singing the song poked fun at his boatswain for selling his "mammoc" (hammock) and other necessities to "buy trinkets for Poll."[377] Shops on Philadelphia's waterfront and Market Street teemed with women's accessories, most of them imported from Europe, with both vessels and shops taking out front-page advertisements to alert city-dwellers that everything from fancy fabrics to "crimson silk umbrellas" were available for purchase. While most of these goods might have been too costly for common seamen, some shops offered simpler accessories like cotton hose, as well as smaller luxuries like satin and sarcenet ribbons, at "reduced prices."[378] More unique gifts, such as the shell mosaic "sailor's valentines" that became increasingly popular after 1820, often came from the hands of craftswomen in Barbados and other foreign ports.[379]

---

[376] "The Sailor on Shore," *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, April 10, 1819, 2.
[377] "Jack at the Windlass," *Nautical Songster*, 11-13.
[378] *Aurora General Advertiser*, October 13, 1807, 1.
[379] Anna Marlis Burgard, "Sailors' Valentines Were Painstakingly Crafted, But Not by Sailors," *Atlas Obscura*, February 14, 2019, https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/sailors-valentines. See also John Fondas, *Sailors' Valentines* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2002), and Grace L. Madeira, Constance Marshall Miller, Mary S. Page, & Ann T. Schutt, *Sailors' Valentines: Their Journey Through Time* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 2006).

Women responded to these gifts with material and intangible contributions of their own, creating bonds of material reciprocity amidst their sexual and romantic ties. A 1797 song by Charles Dibdin, "The Sailor's Mistress," handily reflects the wide variety of possibilities for real-life women in similar situations. In the song, Tom's lover, Molly, protests his threat to seek out other female companions and his accusations that she has been "false" with several points of evidence.[380] Whether Molly is a prostitute or a romantic partner is unclear; she claims that despite lacking "the name" she has "the truth of a wife," but the scene takes place at "Wapping Old Stairs," one of the oldest and best-known of the various sets of stairs that ran between the aforementioned Wapping Highway and the shores of the Thames. First, Molly reminds Tom that before his last departure she gave him a "'bacco box mark'd with my name"—a particularly apt gift for a sailor with very limited storage space on a ship, as it combined a sentimental object and reminder of affection with storage and facilitation of a stress and appetite suppressant into a compact package.[381] She then reaffirms her sexual fidelity under what were apparently extreme conditions: "When I passed a whole fortnight between decks with you,/Did I e'er give a buss, Tom, to one of the crew?" Her laundry list of kindnesses literally includes washing his clothes, as well as preparing bumbo (grog with sugar and spices) for him, thus caring for his physical domestic needs. Despite these efforts, Tom has threatened to "walk the mall" with two other women who Molly knows by name, implying damage not only to their romantic and sexual bonds but also to her local reputation and, potentially, to her economic stability. She adds her restrained response to this threat as another unasked-for gift, as she "only upbraided my Tom

[380] "The Sailor's Mistress," Charles Dibdin, *Dibdin's museum, being a collection of the newest and most admired songs* (Philadelphia: R. Aitken, 1797), 19.
[381] Tobacco also served as a trade good, socialization aid, and frequent bribe for a storyteller to ply his trade on-board a ship, and many vessels included it alongside grog in their rations; see Gilje, *To Swear Like a Sailor*, 54, 114, 119-120, 271. Gilje also mentions tobacco boxes within the contexts of the sailor's sea chest, where he stored such things alongside other "talismans"; see ibid., "Epilogue: The Sea Chest," 263-273 (quote 271).

with a tear" rather than with scolding or violence. The song ends with Molly reiterating her "faithful and fond" heart and a cautionary moralization for Tom and the audience: "For falsehood in wedlock too often is prized,/And the heart that is constant should not be despised."[382] Understanding this dramatic threat to Molly and Tom's domestic bliss relied less upon the listener's ability to find two specific individuals in the historical record whose actions directly correlated to theirs, than it did to the everyday patterns of multiple sailor/women sexual and romance arrangements that underpinned their tale's rhetorical strength and made it comprehensible to those who heard or performed it.

Romantic Love, Marriages, and Long-Term Partnerships

While it is impossible to tally an overall percentage of married sailors in Philadelphia or other Atlantic port cities, married sailors' presence in even the most scattered historical records suggests that despite their vaunted mobility and physical absences from typical marital homes, sailors found marriage and long-term romantic partnerships not only tolerable but usually ideal. Philadelphia mariners appear to have been no more or less likely to enter into common-law or self-marriage arrangements as other working-class men in the city, considering the practice was so widespread.[383] Maritime-themed cultural literature reflects this emphasis on long-term romance in both subject matter and song selection, as "wives and sweethearts" maintained place of primacy in sailors' songs, toasts, and in their fond memories of home.[384]

Despite the various songs and stories in which a wealthy man's daughter ran away to marry a dashing sailor, most Philadelphia mariners appear to have married women within their

[382] Ibid.
[383] Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble*, 36.
[384] "When Seated with Sall," *Nautical Songster*, 43-44.

own class and without additional dowries or parental support.[385] Some sailors did engage in clandestine marriages or elopements, but those were often done by marrying a girl or woman from a rural environment or another city and then moving to Philadelphia with her, and usually only entered the historical record when and if one of them betrayed their marriage vows. While the population density and mixed encounters found within a major port city like Philadelphia opened up the world of possible long-term romantic partners for both sailors and working-class women, such relationships grew within and were fostered by wider connections in the rest of the city, and thus adhered to its social rules. When those rules changed for other laborers, sailors and their wives were not immune.

The consequences and hardships of a marriage gone bad were largely the same for Philadelphia sailors' wives as they were for other women of their class but with some extra considerations. As Suzanne J. Stark has noted, the system for wives to obtain a portion or advance on their husbands' wages was spotty at best until the 1850s.[386] The multiplicity of seafaring options offered in the United States' largest port also meant that a wife's ability to directly contact her husband's employer not only depended on his choices and not her own, but that there were also a daunting number of possibilities if she did not know where to start—and success did not necessarily mean she could repeat the process with the same ship's owner, captain, or company in the future. Philadelphia sailors' wives could seek out their own wage-earning work within the city but wages were often low, and having children in the mix added extra difficulties. Women could and often did rely on their families, friends, and communities for everything from sharing economic resources to loaning money and providing childcare. Some

[385] Most Philadelphia church records did not list occupations for marriages, making it difficult to find seafarers without their names.
[386] Stark, *Female Tars*, 23-24.

sailors' wives and long-term partners turned to prostitution to maintain their households as well.[387] While sailors also had easy access to long-distance travel away from the city that facilitated marital abandonment, it bears mentioning that the maritime nature of the city and sailors' own presence granted this benefit to plenty of other male residents; the difference was that sailors could directly use their labor to be paid instead of pay for their escape, and unlike soldiers, were not temporally limited to wartime conditions to exert this strategy.

Songs painted women as deceivers when they married someone else in their sailor's absence, even if he had been gone for years or they had received news of his demise. "The Sailor Deceived" told of one romance gone sour: the sailor obtained a promise of marriage from his lover before his departure, but she refused to answer his correspondence, and only upon his return did he learn that she had married "a rich old Miser" in his absence. The sailor's response was less than sanguine:

> Curse on gold and silver too,
> Curse on that old Miser, who
> Made your daughter change her mind,
> For women's words are like the wind.[388]

A similar fate befell the title character of "Jack Robinson," who returned to shore laden with gold and trinkets for his beloved Polly Gray only to find that she had gotten married to someone else in his absence and was the landlady at the public-house he visited upon his return. That she could gain "no tidings" of him for years and had heard of his death through word of mouth was irrelevant: Jack still felt that he had been "made such an ass, / To be bilk'd by a woman."[389] "Tack and Tack" featured a tale between another Jack and Poll with the same series

[387] Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble*, 286 mentions at least one example of this happening in Philadelphia in this era.
[388] "The Sailor Deceived," *Real Sailor-songs*, 55-56.
[389] "Jack Robinson," *The American Sailor's Songster* (Philadelphia: Fisher and Brother, [1846?]), 157-158.

of events and the same disgust on Jack's part, even though in the song itself Jack ostensibly perished:

> Next day a brisk south-wester a heavy gale brought on;
> Adieu, cri'd Jack, for ever,
> For much I fear that never,
> Shall I, sweet Poll, behold you more.
>
> Poll heard that to the bottom was sunk her honest tar […][390]

Despite the ostensible belief that wives and domestic partners operated beneath a single household budget, these fictionalized women were also accused of exploitation, thievery, or using their feminine wiles to secure a sailor's funds, creating a linguistics of expected negative female behavior and of proper male responses to it. Even if a song included clear instances of wishful thinking or dramatic twists, it retained this utility. The protagonist of "Jack Williams" fell victim to the treachery of a "false deluding girl" who encouraged him into a life of robbery to fund her lifestyle, but when he wrote a letter to his lover after his subsequent imprisonment, she "proved to me unkind."[391] Women in songs and other cultural texts were also tested by the sailor's own deception, to see if their affections relied solely on his riches; when and if they did, he usually revealed his wealth and then took his leave. One British song featured a sailor named Jack whose lover initially disdained him, but swiftly changed her tune when he "pull'd out handfulls [sic] of gold." Her attempts to say she was "joking" in her earlier refusal did not convince Jack, who informed her that she would "never have [her] sailor."[392] In an unnamed song from *The Sailor's Medley*, a "shipwreck'd tar" approached his numerous love interests to look for aid, but all of them turned him away. Only on the fifth try did the loyalty of Nancy prove true, and thus did the sailor reveal to both her and the audience that he was in far less dire

[390] "Tack and Tack," *Nautical Songster*, 56-57.
[391] "Jack Williams" in *The American Sailor's Songster*, 167-168.
[392] "The Tarry Sailor" in Ashton, *Real Sailor-songs*, 47-48.

straits than he appeared.[393] To be fair, many songs began the same as these but ended in proof positive of fidelity, such as "Fair Phoeby and Her Dark-Eyed Sailor," where the lady in question declared to her disguised suitor that "for my dark ey'd sailor, a maid I'll live and die."[394] Rarely one could find love ballads where tethering sex or romantic affection to coin meant betrayal by a man to a woman. "I can't be your wife[,] I'll not be your whore," declared one "fair damsel" whose faithless suitor married an old, infirm widow for money and then attempted to retain his first love's affections with promises of adoration and wealth.[395] This range of outcomes indicates audiences' satisfaction with all possibilities, whether it arose from a shared understanding of their potential accuracy or the appreciation of a well-executed denouement.

Occasionally, a song or play not only described a situation where a sailor left a woman but also wrote it from a perspective wholly sympathetic to hers. One song that appeared in the March 9, 1792, edition of *Dunlap's* claimed it arose from a true-life incident three years prior to the "recent East India War,"[396] a blending of truth and fiction indicative of colonial and early republic newspapers' claims to truth despite their clear inclusion of fictionalized accounts.[397] This ballad, "Jane of Dover," told of an Englishwoman whose sailor lover had left her for "a young splendid Indian Maid." Despite her "matchless charms," "faultless face," and devotion to her lover George, when his ship arrived in harbor she found that he had abandoned her, leaving it

[393] *The Sailor's Medley*, 6-7.
[394] Ashton, *Real Sailor-songs*, 72.
[395] "A Love Song no 26," in Carey, ed., *A Sailor's Songbag*, 76-77.
[396] This war was most likely the Third Anglo-Mysore War (1790-1792), fought between the British East India Company and the Kingdom of Mysore.
[397] For decades historians have debated over the use of newspapers as historical sources due to this mingling of genres as well as other concerns about their reliability. However, within the last three decades, scholars have conclusively shown that newspapers yield crucial and unmatched historical information and have thus become "essential" sources, especially in the digital age. See Jerry W. Knudson, "Late to the Feast: Newspapers as Historical Sources," *Pesrpectives on History* (October 1993), https://www.historians.org/research-and-publications/perspectives-on-history/october-1993/late-to-the-feast, and Helen R. Tibbo, "Primarily History in America: How U.S. Historians Search for Primary Materials at the Dawn of the Digital Age," *The American Archivist* 66, no. 1 (Spring-Summer, 2003): 9-50.

up to the crew to tell her of George's marriage abroad. The final verse mirrored those songs in which female characters discovered their sailor's death at sea: namely, Jane "pin'd a while" before dying from her heartbreak. Here, though, the final couplet made clear its condemnation of George's actions: "Heaven struck by War his hopes, who broke,/The tender heart of Jane of Dover!" This directly referenced the wartime misfortunes of the supposed "Gentleman" who inspired the song, which included "considerable" and near-fatal property damage.[398] Another song saved its condolences for "Crazy Jane," who roved the streets as a "wand'ring wretched creature" after her faithless lover drove her to "phrenzied looks" and "sing[ing her] love-lorn ditty" to passersby at the site of his betrayal.[399]

In Philadelphia, the actual women who waited in vain for absent husbands and lovers to return from afar often entered a situation where their portside ties to friends, family, neighbors, and other women, as well as their ability to manage their health and balance the dangers and reward of wage-earning work, were more likely to make or break their survival than a broken heart. Their success could be measured in weeks, months, years, or even the rest of their lives. After her husband left her five years into their marriage with no living children, one 25-year-old Amsterdam native (Mary Benson, Magdalen No. 26) managed an entire year of scraping by before turning to prostitution, and spent four more years in that occupation before her illness—rheumatism—drove her to the Alms House.[400] She then transferred to the Magdalen Asylum in May 1810, but by July had been discharged due to her "wicked disposition."[401] While it is unclear if a seafaring career directly aided her husband's mobility, both her ability to migrate and his ability to leave without reprisal constitute key linkages to the network of mobility that

[398] "Jane of Dover," *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, Philadelphia, PA, March 9, 1792, 3.
[399] "Song," in *The Sailor's Medley*, 19-20.
[400] *Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Magdalen Society, 1810-1818*, 8.
[401] Ibid., 13.

powered life on the maritime Atlantic. Another woman, Ann Carson, pushed all social boundaries in the physical and fiscal absence of her sea captain husband: first she opened up a china and tableware shop, then she entered into numerous adulterous relationships, and when he returned home after several years' absence to find her romantically involved with army lieutenant Richard Smith, her lover then murdered her husband and was found guilty. Initially imprisoned as an accessory to the crime but found innocent, Ann conspired to kidnap the state's governor to force a pardon for her lover but failed; after his execution, she turned to ghostwriter Mary Clarke to help write her memoir and thus sensationalize Philadelphia's reading public, even as she gladly and "irrevocably [entered] into the criminal underworld of robbers, counterfeiters, and conmen."[402] Carson relied heavily on an extensive, cross-gendered social network, including but not limited to maritime workers and women, to navigate her notorious life of crime, but in 1824 she died in prison of typhoid fever.[403]

Disorderly Women, Desolate Wives, and Hapless Sailors

As the first quarter of the nineteenth century reached its end, relationships between sailors and women continued to proliferate but the contexts in which they operated had begun to shift. Changes laid ahead for the reform of prostitution in the city, as the Magdalen Society altered its tactics. Middle- and upper-class women had already begun to increase their activism within the city, following national trends as well as the long-standing Quaker tradition of women's civic involvement, and part of their efforts included joining forces with the Society. In

[402] Susan Branson, *Dangerous to Know: Women, Crime, and Notoriety in the Early Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), x.
[403] Ibid., 128-129. While her parents were "impoverished" when she married Carson, Ann's father had been a ship's captain, she received "an education typical for a young woman of means," and could otherwise continue to reap some of the benefits of social capital even when she lacked tangible currency, making her an outlier from most maritime wome"s experiences even before she engaged in such exploits. See Branson, ix, 1.

1819 the Society reached out to Susanna Tate, Sarah Munns, and other "pious females" to get their aid in both instruction and as counsel for the Asylum's future operations, and from there the partnership grew.[404] By the 1830s, as Gary Nash has noted, these female reformers had begun to meet directly with prostitutes at their homes to convince them to enter the asylum. While their attempts to curb male promiscuity fell short due to their condemnation falling as heavily on their male counterparts as it did upon sailors, their efforts to combat prostitution by increasing women and girls' educational and employment prospects proved more successful.[405]

Despite these condemnations, prostitution continued to proliferate in Philadelphia, with commercial sex workers gaining clientele from all social classes at locations throughout the expanding city. The waterfront continued to be a prostitution hub past the 1830s but wealthier Philadelphians—at least when speaking of their activities to the public or each other—made a point to decry its crime and poverty.[406] A notorious mid-nineteenth-century guide to brothels aimed at "the fancy … stranger" and "gay city bucks" pointedly eschewed locations within three blocks of the Delaware River's shores; the lone exception, Mrs. Hubbard's house at 23 Drinker's Alley, was listed as a "third rate house, and third rate people go there. Let the wayfaring man keep his top eye open when he enters this brothel."[407] Even with the author's attempts to shift patronage away from the "low dens of infamy and disease with which this city abounds" added to reformers' prohibition efforts, the world's oldest industry continued to grow in Philadelphia,

[404] *Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the Magdalen Society, 1818-1825*, 32.
[405] Gary B. Nash, *First City: Philadelphia and the Forging of Historical Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 183-184.
[406] See Rodney Hessinger, "Victim of Seduction or Vicious Woman?: Conceptions of the Prostitute at the Philadelphia Magdalen Society, 1800-1850," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic* Studies 66, Explorations in Early American Culture (1999): 201-222 for a discussion of how middle- and upper-class male attitudes toward pursuing women for sex and seduction moved from "class-transcending constructs" of female virtue and chastity to class-based distinctions that enabled men to "protect … bourgeois womanhood" while sating their sexual appetites with urban prostitutes whose working-class status made them both "alien and available."
[407] [Anonymous], *A Guide to the stranger, or Pocket companion for the fancy*, 8, 16.

and though the location of its next phase of prominence coincided with railroad rather than ocean-going business, the city's dockside brothels, boarding houses, and taverns remained active sites of sexual solicitation.[408] Sailors and soldiers remained part of their clientele into the early twentieth century, particularly on Market Street.[409]



Figure 3.20. Detail from a map derived from A Guide to the Stranger, or Pocket companion for the fancy *(Philadelphia: [s.n.], 1849), created by Wendy A. Woloson for the Library Company of Philadelphia's exhibition, Capitalism by Gaslight.* https://digital.librarycompany.org/islandora/object/Islandora%3A13375

Meanwhile, in the higher echelons of seafaring crews, ideals of middle-class domesticity brought officers' and senior sailors' wives along on voyages with increasing frequency. Laurel

[408] Ibid., 8. For a brief overview of the Tenderloin, Philadelphia's major vice district of the Gilded Age and beyond, see Annie Anderson, "Tenderloin," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia* (2016), https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/tenderloin/.

[409] Michael B. Kahan, "'There are Plenty of Women on the Street': The Landscape of Commercial Sex in Progressive-Era Philadelphia, 1910-1918," *Historical Geography* 40 (2012): 39-60.

Seaborn places this development after the War of 1812, arguing that both peacetime conditions and Victorian social conventions led wives to join their husbands at sea to "fulfill th[e] covenant" of domestic caretaking.[410] She further argues, with Lisa Norling, that whalers' wives were often some of the earliest examples of this trend, spurred by the increasing duration of voyages as well as the tendency of higher-ups on these crews to maintain ties to the same whaling hubs.[411] As this chapter has shown, women on-board ships already cropped up with some regularity but largely did so indirectly, as passing presences in media accounts about seafaring events, without making it on ship's manifests save for very occasional records of female passengers. More accurately, what had begun to change was the more overt recognition of these women's presence, and their ability to argue in favor of their presence on-board the ship by exerting their identities as middle-class wives and thus as proxy mothers to sailors who now needed their guidance and care at unprecedented levels.

According to one naval admiral, fleets were "compelled" to have "a few women, to wash and mend, &c.," a gendered differentiator of labor that ran counter to sailors' long-standing tendency to do their own mending.[412] While this sight was apparently jarring enough that he had to admonish his guest for a shipboard performance to not "stare so" at one "*real* woman, the wife of a fore top man [sic]," this instruction seemed counterintuitive when her additional role that evening was to dance the hornpipe following a theatrical production by the rest of the crew in which sailors played the female parts.[413] A news story that appeared in Philadelphia's

[410] Laurel Seaborn, "Gamming Chairs and Gimballed Beds: Seafaring Women on Board Nineteenth-Century Ships," *Journal of Maritime Archaeology* 12 no. 1 (April 2017), 73.
[411] Seaborn, 73; see also Lisa Norling, *Captain Ahab Had a Wife: New England Women and the Whalefishery, 1720-1870* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 214-261.
[412] Gilje, *To Swear Like a Sailor*, 259-261.
[413] "Naval Theatrics," *Franklin Gazette*, April 30, 1819, 2. This was an excerpt from Jewish playwright and anti-emancipationist Mordecai M. [Manuel] Noah's *Travels in England, France, Spain, and the Barbary States* (New York: Kirk and Mercein, 1819), with Noah as the guest in question. The play performed was O'Keeffe's *Wild Oats*, cited above, and while Noah noted that the female parts were "awkwardly sustained by men" he praised the

newspapers in 1823 told of another woman, Elizabeth Stephens, who had joined a British ship's crew as a cook and steward, ostensibly as the captain's wife. However, the situation as discussed before the Admiralty suggested that not only was this possibly untrue but that in her time on board the ship, Stephens had also extended her duties to include keeping the ship's stores and allegedly acting at least once as a "mariner and seaman." Stephens sued for unpaid wages and the judge's words, and his verdict, rewarded her domestically inclined work while also allowing for her other actions in exceptional circumstances. He also used the opportunity to cast aspersions on the captain's character, and to reiterate that seafaring work was "man's labour of the coarsest and roughest species."[414]

Public statements about sailors in Philadelphia increasingly decried their overindulgence in sex and alcohol, on civic as well as religious grounds. In Edmund Botsford's 1816 sermon about two sailors (see Chapter 2), after Jack denied Tom the joys of drinking to excess, Tom asked if his moral restrictions extended to sailors with a "girl on shore." "Don't jest with sin, Tom," Jack retorted, citing scripture against "whoremongers and adulterers" before admonishing those who "not only sacrifice their health, money, and character, but destroy body and soul in hell for such poor sensual indulgences."[415] Beyond its clear-cut textual expectations, this pamphlet's publication indicated a growing sense that sailors had to be trained into proper sexual and romantic relationships because they could not be trusted to manage their own affairs. Just as the working-class women with whom they interacted experienced similar interventionist

"genuine sailor" who played John Dory, the character who spoke the quote about mermaids above. A foretopman is the crew member stationed on the platform at the head of the foremast, where they act as lookout and control the mast; the position usually required the expertise of an able seaman, and Melville's Billy Budd was a foretopman.

[414] "A Female Sailor," *National Gazette*, September 6, 1823, 4.

[415] Botsford, "A Dialogue between Two Seamen After a Storm," 53.

dialogues, making them objects of pity and charity, these once-charming and accepted “rambling Jacks” were becoming a social problem that could not solve itself.

Chapter 4: Familial Relationships

"The following relation is addressed to those who will not turn away from a tale of domestic woe. Alas! its foundation is fixed on truth," began the pseudo-historical serialized novella of "The Impressed Seaman."[416] Appearing over five issues of the weekly periodical *The Philadelphia Minerva* in 1797, this front-page-worthy narrative told of a British family's suffering due to its patriarch's capture by a press-gang. Dramatic death scenes and identity reveals, moral proselytizing, and heartfelt rebukes of impressment abounded in the story, but at its core laid the most ordinary of premises: a sailor's family connections. Far from a rarity in the maritime workforce, these bonds of blood and kinship grew from sustained affection, endured over physical absences, and altered the lives of both seafarers and their relatives—which this harrowing tale drew upon for touches of realism amidst its more histrionic flourishes and literary tropes. The story's protagonist, Henry Randolph, had grown up in an unnamed English town with his pawn broker uncle, but at age eighteen went to sea "on board a ship of war." Though he returned "neglected, moneyless, and friendless," he found employ on shore as a porter and more importantly, reconnected with his childhood sweetheart Nancy, a fellow orphan whom he soon wed.[417] The couple welcomed a daughter, Harriet, and for thirteen years lived a simple yet happy life in which Henry doted upon his wife and his daughter. Then, tragedy struck: on the evening of October 25, 1778, a knock sounded at the Randolphs' door, and Henry opened it only to be set upon by a press-gang, who carried him off to the sound of his family's screams.[418] The press-gang conveyed him from their smaller vessel to the Nore, where the Thames met the North Sea,

[416] "The Impressed Seaman, A Moral Tale," *The Philadelphia Minerva* (Philadelphia, Pa.), October 14, 1797, 1.
[417] Ibid.
[418] "The Impressed Seaman, continued," *The Philadelphia Minerva*, October 21, 1797, 1-2.

so he could be transferred to a man of war. Suffering at sea from poor treatment and the memory of his wife and daughter's anguish, Henry made his way back home at the end of the war only to find his wife dead and his daughter "lured" from her guardian's home by an unknown seducer.[419] Though aided by a former shipmate, Mr. Wilkins, and given a place to stay with the man and his own wife and daughter, Henry's hardships afflicted his long-term health. Within a couple of years, he was on his deathbed, where convoluted circumstance brought him back to his daughter Harriet—who had actually left her guardian to marry an aristocratic suitor and become Lady Middleton—for a reconciliation just as he expired. The lady herself soon followed him into death, bequeathing her worldly possessions to the kind Dr. Spencer who had tended her father as well as herself so that he might use them for the comfort of "some future Randolph," a "deserted mother," or any other "daughters of affliction."[420] "[T]he writer can add no more than that the mother, the father, and the child rest under one tomb," the story concluded.[421]

Henry Randolph, like real Anglo-American sailors who sailed from Philadelphia and other Atlantic port cities, deliberately and repeatedly connected himself by blood and marriage to an extensive network of women. These familial relationships defined sailors' lives and labor in both environments, and understanding their power and extent provides a much-needed corrective to images of sailors as single male agents of economy and empire. Family ties were indelibly written into legal definitions of kinship and its social obligations: under English common law, a sailor's property transferred through both blood and marriage, with space for greater female inheritance in specific localities and/or in the absence of lone male heirs. Emotional bonds also overlaid and strengthened these ties, guiding the daily actions and life goals of sailors and the

[419] "The Impressed Seaman, continued," *The Philadelphia Minerva*, October 28, 1797, 1. The "war" was not specified but was most likely the American Revolution, due to the story's timing and nationalistic themes.
[420] "The Impressed Seaman, concluded from our last," *The Philadelphia Minerva*, November 11, 1797, 1.
[421] Ibid.

women in their families. Sentiment and affection drove sailors to think about loved ones while at sea, to plan for their future security amidst the dangers of impressment, illness, and poverty, and to return to their side when their work was done, just as it led those women to miss their male relations, maintain households in their absence, guard against seduction, abandonment, and other threats of family dissolution, and ensure that there was a home to which they might return. Anxieties about that future—particularly cogent for sailors, working-class women, and other workers at the bottom of standard wage scales, whose often irregular work and payment cycles exacerbated their financial uncertainties—were just as effective at strengthening those ties, if far less pleasant to conjure or dwell upon. And in some cases, negative emotions like anger, betrayal, and sorrow defined the family ties between sailors and women, particularly when one party severed the relationship by absence or by death.

In this chapter I will explore Philadelphia sailors' real and imagined familial relationships with women, focusing primarily on their two most common and direct female kinship figures: mothers and daughters. City directories, newspapers, alms house records, and insolvency petitions reveal the presence and power of these women in sailors' lives, particularly in the absence of autobiographical materials correlating to literacy and wealth, such as diaries, memoirs, and family heirlooms. Cultural sources, including songs, plays, novels, and art, further demonstrate that in Philadelphia and across the Atlantic, sailors' lives at sea and their recurring physical separation from home coincided with a desire to maintain familial units and sustain their relationships with women. Without denying that some sailors used their occupation's forced physical distances to evade familial obligations, I argue that just as many sought stability and fulfillment through the maintenance of those traditional family ties.

Bridging the Gap Between Maritime, Atlantic, and Family Historiography

In a recent *William and Mary Quarterly* forum, Julie Hardwick, Sarah M. S. Pearsall, and Karin Wulf gathered several Atlantic historians and scholars to "map the contours of where the histories of the Atlantic and the family coalesce."[422] Writing against decades of studies centered on "individuals … separated from their households," they argued that those very households were in fact the core unit of Atlantic commercial economies, imperialist enterprises, legal and political establishments, and social-cultural norms.[423] Answering the call to place the family at the center of Atlantic historiography reinforces the methodological strengths of the field and offers key correctives to some of its long-standing critiques. Acknowledging the existence, and endurance, of family ties reiterates the core conception of the Atlantic as "a large, multifaceted, interconnected world" where people spun "webs of empire," "wider web[s] of connections," "web[s] of contacts," and more.[424] The wide array of family formation strategies employed by people across the Atlantic to connect to, protect, remember, and empower one another demonstrates their ability to shape their everyday lives within that vast world—just as authorities' efforts to codify, expand, restrict, and control those decisions highlights the strength of connection between centers of state power and their geographically distant claims to territory and sovereignty. Family history also offers another avenue through which historians can discover and better understand individuals who were marginalized in life or in historical memory due to

[422] Julie Hardwick, Sarah M. S. Pearsall, and Karin Wulf, "Introduction: Centering Families in Atlantic Histories," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 70, no. 2, Centering Families in Atlantic Histories (April 2013): 224.
[423] Ibid., 211.
[424] Alison Games, "Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities," *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (June 2006): 747; Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," in *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, edited by David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 21; J. Gabriel Martínez-Serna, "Procurators and the Making of the Jesuits' Atlantic Network," in *Soundings in Atlantic History: Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500-1830*, ed. Bernard Bailyn and Patricia L. Denault (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 193.

their race, class, gender, or age, fulfilling Atlantic history's core assumption of a "multilayered" and "complex" worldview with further studies of "previously ignored workers and peasants, women, and peoples of many nations, races, and ethnicities."[425]

Applying the lens of family history to Atlantic sailors and the women with whom they shared familial relationships reveals the shortcomings of previous studies that have assumed sailors' physical distances from their societies of origin left them—and, one can only assume, their female relatives—a "community apart" grasping for "new social relations" to replace those torn from them by their work's "harsh conditions, excessive work, and oppressive authority."[426] Subsequent works in this vein have mentioned the conceptual "mothers" of trade and country as much as they cited sailors' mentions of their actual mothers, a particularly egregious oversight when examining the problem of impressment, as will be discussed below.[427] Even those maritime historians who have mentioned individual sailors' familial ties with women have persisted in primarily portraying sailors as single men unfettered by traditional bonds of domesticity—and these images of sailors as "striving European men, set adrift from families" thus populate other historians' discussions of the Atlantic, as they do in Hardwick, Pearsall, and Wulf's introduction to their forum.[428] Paul Gilje's *Liberty on the Waterfront* mentions numerous married sailors and sailors with mothers but also declares that sailors "reject[ed] the traditional

---

[425] Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 43; Michael Jiménez and Marcus Rediker, "What is Atlantic History?," *CPAS Newletter: The University of Tokyo Center for Pacific and Asian Studies* (October 2001), http://www.marcusrediker.com/articles-and-opinions/what-is-atlantic-history/.

[426] Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 110.

[427] See Christopher P. Magra, *Poseidon's Curse: British Naval Impressment and Atlantic Origins of the American Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), which mentions the word "mother" 11 times total: five times for a sailor's mother, five times for a conceptual "mother," and once for the author's own mother in his dedication. Even Denver Brunsman's *The Evil Necessity*, which bucks this family evasion trend and reveals impressment's effects on sailors' loved ones, rarely mentions sailors' mothers beyond confirming their existence; of the 13 "mothers" in his book, two are Brunsman's own, one is England, one is trade, one is Napoleon's, and the remaining eight are scattered and repeated among five sailors and the abstract "seaman."

[428] Hardwick, Pearsall, and Wulf, "Introduction," 211.

hierarchy of pre-revolutionary society" with "behavior [that] represented the antithesis of the rising bourgeois values that became the hallmark of the Age of Revolution."[429] He also considers relationships with female relatives a "loss" while aboard ship, and contrasts regret over that loss with "the liberty he [the sailor] gained by going to sea and the liberties he took with women along the waterfront."[430] Not every Anglo-American sailor had a living mother or father (let alone siblings or extended families) or fathered children, and as seen in the previous chapter, plenty of sailors both lived and lionized sexual or romantic relationships that expressly avoided the entanglements of family expansion. But as Philadelphia's historical record reveals, they were at the very least matched in size and scope by mariners whose seafaring labor was part of a life strategy built to grow and sustain familial connections with women.

Paradoxically, these ties can be difficult to find when one (only) uses the traditional methodologies of family history. Working-class people with little to no inheritable property, who rented their lodgings and signed their names with basic marks, rarely left behind "simple bequests of property from one generation to the next," let alone "small stitched notebooks" or "prose accounts" to be handed down in family lineages and well-preserved for their descendants or modern scholars to peruse. Common sailors might not even leave the "arrangements of [their] dead bodies," were they to die at sea.[431] Outside of the "never unpoliticized" nature of archival access and materials that, as Jerome de Groot notes, "efface … huge numbers of persons because of their gender, class, or race," most of the more "democratic" amateur genealogical sources that have cropped up in recent years use first and last names as starting points.[432] While city

[429] Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront,* 54, 6-7.
[430] Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront,* 45.
[431] Wulf, "Women and Families in Early (North) America and the Wider (Atlantic) World," *History Compass* 8 No. 3 (2010): 244.
[432] Jerome de Groot, "International Federation for Public History Plenary Address: On Genealogy," *The Public Historian* 37, no. 3 (August 2015): 106.

directories enable historians to find those names for hundreds of sailors and other working-class individuals in revolutionary and early republic Philadelphia, hundreds more sailors who lived in the city never appeared in directories, to say nothing of the thousands of women listed only as "widow," "Miss" or "Mrs.," or "wife of" their husband or parent's surname. Time and effort in general source bases like court records can yield small flashes of hidden knowledge; specialized source bases with reason to document family ties, including Alms House and Overseers of the Poor records and insolvency bonds, provide more consistent evidence points for sailors' cross-gender family relationships, albeit with the constant caution against reading events such as bankruptcy and alms-taking as unexceptional undertakings. When carefully combined with newspaper articles and anecdotes, songs, plays, and other cultural texts, though, they show that even those who most often exemplified "Atlantic sojourners" were never so far from their familial relationships that those bonds ceased to matter.[433]

Sailors' Mothers

Of all the potential feminine figures in a sailor's life, his mother was the most universal: even if death, abandonment, or other circumstance removed her from his formative years, every sailor had been born of a woman's body. The levels of attachment between mother and sailor, and the balance of dependency between the two, could and did vary widely during the relationship's lifetime, especially as they both aged. Some adult Philadelphia sailors' mothers lived near them, if not at the same residence; others maintained their maternal ties at a distance through correspondence or the provision of funds. Mothers prepared their male children for entry-level seafaring positions and in some cases, their personal or familial need for financial

[433] Hardwick et al, 211.

support inspired sailors to enter the maritime workforce. When mothers were absent or unable to provide such guidance, organizations such as the Guardians of the Poor stepped in to arrange the apprenticeships that often began a boy's life at sea. When sailors abandoned their mothers, these women sought aid from the same institutions. As sailors endured various hardships—war, impressment, and the increasing public sense that their dissolute social habits merited outside moral intervention—newspaper articles, poems, songs, and popular literature reminded Philadelphians that sailors were all mothers' sons and worthy of sympathy.

Mothers and Seafaring Youths

Legal ties bound Philadelphia sailors and their mothers—and sailors and their daughters—from birth. As Carole Shammas and Karin Wulf have both shown, English common law lasted in its American colonies through independence and well into the nineteenth century, even as local variances created exceptional opportunities for women's expanded property rights.[434] Some legal core tenets were relatively simple: blood ties determined inheritance, with parents being worked into the inheritance order after children in the 1680s.[435] In the absence of a property owner's written and notarized intentions and desires, the laws of Pennsylvania also determined inheritance rights through blood kinship and marriage, usually privileging one's descendants and spouse before siblings or parents. Age created some complications to this general rule. A 1764 supplement to the 1705-1706 "Act for the Better Settling Intestates' Estates" decreed that if a child who was owed part of an intestate estate died in their minority without a will of their own, their share would be divided among their siblings—unless they died

[434] Carole Shammas, "English Inheritance Law and Its Transfer to the Colonies," *The American Journal of Legal History* 31, no. 2 (April 1987): 145; Karin Wulf, *Not All Wives: Women of Colonial Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 19.
[435] Shammas, 160.

during the life of their mother, in which case she was entitled to an equal share during her lifetime. The same statute also explicitly gave daughters intestate rights in the event that an inheritance of land could not be separated "without prejudice to or spoiling of the whole," if there were no sons or the sons had refused their part. Most importantly, any widow or child of an intestate was entitled to petition their county's Orphans' court to obtain an impartial judgment on any property disputes.[436] The language of later legal supplements to the act retained these rights for both groups, specifying "he or she" (or "he, she, or they") for any estates' heirs, children, interested parties, and/or their legal representatives.[437] While both widows and daughters lacked the full rights of male progeny, their inclusion in these legal proceedings gave them footholds to achieve financial subsistence, and sometimes independence. They had legal and economic power due to and within their relationships with men, which in turn shaped social understandings of those relationships.

Even for those who left behind little to no real or actual property, legal hierarchies of one's immediate successors shaped social and cultural understandings of which familial relationships mattered most in the Anglo-Atlantic world. Fondness and personal preference could overcome legal precedent but often, people formed their strongest bonds with their immediate family members. This held true for sailors who lived in Philadelphia's streets and in its stories, even when their work took them physically from the domicile. While sailors maintained relationships with women in other familial roles—sister, aunt, stepmother, cousin, niece, and so on—mothers and daughters dominated in their affections and their anxieties, and often a sister or

[436] *The Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania from 1682 to 1801, compiled under the Authority of the Act of May 19, 1887*, ed. James T. Mitchell and Henry Flanders, Commissioners, Vol. VI – 1759 to 1765 (Philadelphia: Wm Stanley Ray, State Printer of Philadelphia, 1899), 340-341.
[437] *The Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania*, Vol. 17 (1802-1805), act of April 2, 1804 (17St.L.838, Ch.2498), 839, http://www.palrb.us/stlarge, accessed May 1, 2022; Ibid., Vol. 18 (1806-1809), act of April 7, 1807 (18St.L.508, Ch.2825), 512.

aunt with special recognition had gained her place of prominence in a sailor's life by assuming the role of one of those figures in absentia.

When and how a woman became a sailor's mother depended on several factors. Both rural and urban boys and men went to sea, but those in the former category had to take the extra step of independently traveling to a port city like Philadelphia to get hired onto a vessel. Captains and ships' owners preferred experienced (able) seamen to crew their ships, in part so they could instruct or make up for the deficiencies of less experienced crewmembers. The ranks of ship's "boys" regularly included adult landsmen or "greenhorns" whose only qualifications were a reasonable expectation that they had the physical stamina and prowess to do the work, and a willingness to accordingly earn the lowest wages on the ship.[438] A mother could facilitate the first steps a sailor took toward seafaring, from making travel arrangements to the nearest port or passing along some starting cash to sustain her son as he sought a berth, to actively binding out her son as an indentured servant or apprentice. If her husband or other family members engaged in maritime labor, her personal connections could give her son better job opportunities. She might also inspire a sailor's career choice as a female family member dependent on the new sailor's earning power, particularly in the absence of a husband or other wage-earner in the immediate family unit. She could even be a reason for a sailor to permanently leave his home and take to seafaring to flee the potential responsibility for her economic support. Elsewhere in the Atlantic, American sailors impressed into service by the British wrote their mothers asking

[438] For a concise discussion of this multivalent labor structure see Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 21-22, 72-73.

them to provide documentation that would prove their citizenship and, it was hoped, secure their freedom.[439]

While ship's boys were traditionally closer to ten or twelve years in age, younger lads also went to sea, as seen in both archival records and print sources that straddled the line between fact and fiction. A "Naval Anecdote" from the July 12, 1815, *Poulson's Daily American Advertiser* told of an enterprising nine-year-old sailor's son who had been "taken … from his widowed mother" at age seven by a "generous sailor" after his father's death left his family on "the shoals of poverty." Now serving on then-Commodore Stephen Decatur's ship, the boy intended to earn wages and prize money; half for his mother, and the other half for his education.[440] While it is impossible to prove the veracity of this tale, especially as it involved such kindly intervention by a well-known figure like Decatur, such instances of intergenerational patronage certainly had real-life parallels, and the other elements of this story rang true to life as well. When Mary Murray and her nine-year-old son William resided at the Philadelphia Alms House in 1800, the House's managers bound him out to mariner Joseph Ingram "to learn the Art and Mystery of a Mariner, and to be taught navigation … reading, writing, and cyphering thro' the Rule of Three" until his twenty-first birthday, at which point he would be freed and given two sets of clothes (at least one of which was required to be new) and $30 cash.[441] The records do not state how Mary felt about this indenture, or if she had any say at all. She surely did not receive any direct monetary gain from the sale of her son's labor, as such contracts fed back into

[439] See William Burton's 1809 letter to his mother as cited in Nathan Perl-Rosenthal, *Citizen Sailors*, 236, as well as Black sailor Silas Cuffee's 1811 letter to his mother Rebecca and Sheppard Bourne's 1812 letter to his unnamed mother sent via Major Nathaniel Cousins, both reprinted in W. Jeffrey Bolster, "Letters by African American Sailors, 1799-1814," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (January 2007): 178-180.
[440] "Naval Anecdote," *Poulson's Daily American Advertiser*, July 12, 1815, 3. According to the story, Decatur himself intervened to secure a midshipman position for the boy and put him under his protection, with the expectation that the boy would become an "accomplished officer."
[441] Guardians of the Poor, Minutes, January 13, 1800.

the Alms House's coffers. Still, the fact that the Managers mentioned her at all suggests they felt it important to officially document the connection between mother and son—a thin thread to sustain a bond for either sentimental reasons, or in case they needed an adult William to maintain his mother.

Written for classroom use, the fictional tale of "sailor boy" Jack Halyard showed a plausible example of the wide network of maternal connections and decision-making potentially involved in sending a minor child to sea. Left in dire straits by her farmer husband's death and the depredations of a greedy neighbor and his lawyer, Catherine Halyard counteracted some of their plotting with the help of her neighbors, including Mrs. Smith, an old school friend who "was like a sister to her."[442] But her true deliverance came via a letter from her uncle, Jacob Lawrence, who sent a $50 bank bill and promised to help the boys, especially the "promising young lad" Jack, find employment and lodging in New York.[443] Again, her friends helped with advice and with settling her affairs once she determined to relocate. While Mrs. Halyard initially hesitated to send her son to sea, between the merchant and captain who wanted to recruit Jack, Lawrence, and Jack himself, she changed her mind and thus "an agreement was made."[444] Unable to send Jack to sea with extra money, she ensured he brought "some gingerbread and crackers" as well as his books, including "a nice new Bible to carry to sea." When he departed, his sisters "hung round their dear brother's neck, as though they would never let him go," but his mother escorted him to the dock and who sent him off with tears, good advice, a request for correspondence, and a "charge" to his captain to keep him safe.[445]

[442] William Samuel Cardell, *Story of Jack Halyard, the Sailor Boy,* Part II (New York: E. Bliss and E. White, 1824), 2.
[443] Ibid., 10-11.
[444] Ibid., 51.
[445] Ibid., 56-58.

In the absence of mothers, groups like the Alms House Managers and Overseers of the Poor stepped in to send real-life boys to sea, albeit with far less personal attention or care to detail. Unlike the bonding of William Murray, most indentures to maritime laborers in the Alms House Minutes gave only the names of the master and bonded along with the term of indenture, or the amount paid to the Alms House's privy chest. John Bruce was bound to Captain Andrew Gwin on April 16, 1800, for a simple six-year term of indenture.[446] Sometime prior to June 26, 1796, John Keyle was bound to mariner John Hebbight, with the indenture brought to the Alms House's attention after the fact along with the standard privy payment of 7 shillings, 6 pence (7/6).[447] In November 1796, fourteen-year-old James Stewart was bound to mariner Edward Stokesbury but with no other terms of indenture listed.[448] The fact that the Alms House was responsible for making these arrangements suggests that these individuals were either orphans and therefore lacked parental intercessors for their futures, or their parents were also objects of charity for the Alms House but were not worth mentioning in the rote diligence of marking down such arrangements in the House's minutes.

Mothers, Widows, and Domestic Arrangements in Philadelphia's City Directories

As Marcus Rediker, Daniel Vickers, and other maritime scholars have noted, seafaring was a "seasonal and often casual" occupation in which sailors spent varying intervals of time ashore, and potentially entered other maritime trades when not at sea.[449] As a result, sailors'

[446] Guardians of the Poor, Minutes, March 25, 1801.
[447] Guardians of the Poor, Minutes, June 26, 1796.
[448] Guardians of the Poor, Minutes, November 14, 1796. In the same series of entries, seventeen-year-old Henry Friar was bound to sailmaker Edward Dowers, suggesting that as a maritime artisan there might have been a higher age allowance.
[449] Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 82; see also Daniel Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994) and Vickers with Vince Walsh, *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

household arrangements ranged from footloose port-hopping and weeks-long stays at one of a port city's boarding houses, to establishing residences as heads of nuclear families, sharing lodgings with other sailors or single men, or staying with a mother or other relative. According to city directories, several Philadelphia sailors shared addresses or lived within close proximity to women of the same surname between 1760 and 1825. It can be difficult to ascertain the exact relationship between these men and their female cohabitants, particularly without data concerning either party's age, but the most likely instances of sailors living with their mothers are those in which sailors and widows shared the same address and surname. Were they married, there would be no mention of the woman being a widow, as she would be a *feme covert*; and with Philadelphia property laws dividing estates as previously mentioned, a widow could easily have some legal independence or be listed as a taxpayer while still relying on her children for her maintenance. Certainly, some of these widows might have been sisters in law, aunts, cousins, stepmothers, or even more distant relations bound by familial duty. Several households unquestionably also included minor children, whose care formed another bond of obligation and/or affection between sailors and women on shore.

Some common seamen lived separately from their widowed mothers, though sea captains and other ships' officers did so more frequently, as shown by entries where maritime workers and widows shared unique surnames. In 1791, mariner John Dawkins lived at 14 Cedar but widow Mary Dawkins resided at 51 Elm. Widow Ann Emerson lived at 60 S Fifth Street in 1791 and sea captain Thomas Emerson resided at 47 Walnut. Sea captain Richard Budden lived at 48 Race Street but "widow gentlewoman" Susannah Budden lived at 5 Laetitia Court. Sea captain John Brice lived at 121 Callowhill while Elizabeth Brice owned a china and glass store at 110 South Second Street. In 1810 mariner James Overstack lived at 489 N Third while the widow

Sarah Overstack lived at 160 Sassafras (Race). Mariner Anthony Kean lived at 84 Plum while the widow Hannah Kean lived at 3 Plum; both appeared in the 1811 directory's separate "Directory of Colored Persons" and were the only two people there with the same surname. In 1816, widow Susanna Stoneman lived on Oak near Browne in the Northern Liberties, while sea captain Samuel Stoneman resided at 345 S Second. Other seafaring workers followed similar patterns. In 1791 ship carpenter Daniel Murray lived at 53 Duke with widow Esther Hulings; boat builder Abraham Hulings was listed as "near the Northern Liberties hay scales," a style of address usually associated with businesses, so perhaps he also resided on Duke Street as part of Esther's household. Sailmaker George Muschert's only address in the 1816 directory was at the Vine Street Wharf; he may have lived there, or perhaps he resided with widow Catharine Muschert at 225 St. John. Both fisherman John Beideman and widow Elizabeth Beideman lived in the Northern Liberties in 1816; John's address was "Beach near Warren" while Elizabeth's was "Warren near Beach."

In other cases, maritime laborers cohabitated with widows who did not share their surname, such as the unnamed widow of mariner William Murdock and pilot John Kelly, who both lived at 55 Meade Alley in 1816. The wife of sea captain John D. Nelson shared 139 Cedar with oysterman J. Siliven. Mariner Charles Main and widow Mary Vince both lived at 2 Parham's Alley in 1820. Mariner William Story and the unnamed widow of Casper Albert both lived at 414 N Third but the latter was an innkeeper, making it unclear if their relationship was based on business, romance, or kinship. Even more convoluted was the 1795 directory entry in which mariner Richard Crips and widow seamstress Elizabeth Crook lived at 179 N Front Street—along with scrivener James Boyle, plaisterer John Robert, and French mantua maker Margaret La Forque. In some instances, these women clearly resided in the main house of a

residence while partitioning out spaces for sailors. In 1816 widow Rachel Porterfield lived at 12 Christian but in the back of the building, mariners Thomas Bell and Francis Benson and caulker Benjamin Govett made their homes. The widow of Samuel Thompson lived at 96 Gaskill but also provided space for mariner Anthony Marara, rigger Daniel Marks, and Black waiter John Tusan.

As frequent as these examples are within the historical record, they are also notable for their brevity: the vast majority of these arrangements vanished within five years. Some widows might have been considered independent immediately after their husband's death but, after moving in with their children or vice versa, gone below tax thresholds or discharged enough property to no longer make tax rolls or be considered their deceased spouse's estate agent or executor, thus negating the rationale behind including them in a directory. As older women in an urban environment, some might have succumbed to disease or infirmity, quietly passing their estate portion to their children in a transaction much more commonplace than the exceptional circumstances that created a *feme sole*. Some widows might have remarried, though Karin Wulf, Lisa Wilson, and other scholars note that this was rare.[450] Some arrangements may have been temporary, particularly those in which a sailor might have supported a fellow seaman's mother in his absence. Finally, the tendency of individual mariners themselves to flit in and out of directories and other records also affects the ability to trace their female relatives.

Over time the number of widows listed separately in city directories decreased, including those tied to sailors. As Wulf has argued, the late colonial "public erasure" of women led to the legal and social restriction of all women under the restraints previously only given to wives.[451]

[450] Wulf, *Not All Wives*, 14-16; Lisa Wilson, *Life After Death: Widows in Pennsylvania, 1750-1850* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 149, 172.
[451] Wulf, *Not All Wives*, 204, 209.

When paired with the growing trend of identifying widows by their deceased husbands' names rather than their own first names, as well as the ever-increasing population within the city itself, this decrease in known widows suggests that this erasure continued into city directories. Some widows still made it to directories if their occupations were public-facing; boarding house mistresses and female tavernkeepers were the most obvious and frequent of these women, but others like widowed midwife Elizabeth Mingle, who lived with mariner William Mingle at 22 Appletree Alley in 1825, also appeared on their own recognizance.

Sailors' Filial Devotion

Plenty of mariners had cause to miss their mothers when distance and circumstance separated them—though perhaps not quite so ardently as Boston's Moses Adams, who clung to the relic of his "sainted" mother's hair and the memory of her love throughout his seafaring career.[452] Direct sources of sailor mothers' internal lives are even more rare than first-hand accounts of common sailors, but the voluminous cultural literature of women waiting ashore for their loved ones to return from a seafaring expedition certainly included them. Poems, songs, and stories in which sailors perished also regularly featured mourning maternal figures. One poem, an "ellegiac" [sic] that appeared in the *Gazette of the United States* in 1794, described a mother's anguish after her son fell from his ship's mast during rough weather:

> Ah! what the widow'd mother's pain,
> Is conscious of my plaintive song;
> The object of his little gain,—
> Diurnal subject of his tongue;
> Aloft, below: in foul or fair;
> In serious mood, or merry glee;
> In blooming health, or sallow care;

[452] Moses Adams Common Place Book, 2 vols., Special Collections (John J. Burns Library, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Mass.), May 20, 1817, I, 59, quoted in Alan Rogers, "A Sailor 'By Necessity': The Life of Moses Adams, 1803-1837," *Journal of the Early Republic* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 34.

The filial topic sure was she![453]

Another song from 1822, "The Tree That Built My Bonnie Bark," evoked a similar combination of foul weather and maternal suffering, ending with a dour couplet: "The mother wails her sailor-boy/As she hears the tempest blow."[454] Such sorrow carried over to other female relatives and loved ones when, in the absence of a verse for the woman who bore him, "comely Ned that died at sea" was mourned in turn by his commodore father, his sister Peg who "her brother lov'd," his sweetheart Grace, and his "friends who loved his manly worth."[455]

Sailors who financially supported their mothers followed no specific guidelines or universal metrics, save for the call to keep her from destitution. Younger Anglo-American sailors usually sent their mothers at least part of their wages, and sailors of any age brought trade items, dry goods, or trinkets to their mothers as well as to their "wives and sweethearts." News stories about sailors regularly painted their mothers as wholly dependent upon their wages and bereft of support in the case of the sailor's death, a portrayal that often contradicted actual portside Philadelphia women's communal connections. In an 1802 news story from the *Gazette of the United States*, ship's mate Alexander Stewart and an unnamed seaman got into a "scuffle" on the Arch Street Ferry Wharf, during which they "tottered over … into the river" and "were both unfortunately drowned." The account had strong classist tones: it dismissed the anonymous seaman as "not a man of family" while praising Stewart as "an active, intelligent, and useful man in his profession." It also mentioned his young widow but saved its full sympathy for his "aged mother, whose sole reliance for support was on his exertions … deprived of her only consolation,

[453] J. J. M., "The Sailor, an Ellegiac," *Gazette of the United States*, August 7, 1794, 3.
[454] "The Tree that built my Bonnie Bark," *National Gazette*, February 10, 1823, 4. This song appeared verbatim as part of "The Second Tale of Allen Lorburne," a prose piece interspersed with songs from the perspective of a yarn-spinning mariner, in the *London Magazine*; see *The London Magazine*, vol. 6 (London: Baldwin, Craddock, and Joy, 1822), 543.
[455] "Song—in Christmas Gambols," *The Syren*, 33.

and the object of [her] hopes."[456] In a short opinion piece calling for Philadelphia to establish its own counterpart to London's Society for the Recovery of Persons Apparently Drowned (predecessor to the Royal Humane Society), the anonymous author painted a verbal portrait of a doomed mariner and his mother's subsequent suffering. This "*young, active Sailor*," already a tragic figure as he fell overboard and perished after a "most tedious and hazardous voyage," was an especial loss to the city because he "has an ancient widowed mother who has no other help—he sinks!—there is *no* assistance!"[457] Another piece from 1809 asked readers to imagine a "young seaman who has tried the stormy ocean to obtain bread for a widowed mother and orphan family … cruelly torn from them at the moment of his return."[458]

Alongside longing for and devotion to their real mothers, nationalist cultural rhetoric encouraged sailors to venerate the nation as a maternal figure.[459] American songsters celebrated "Columbia" and declared sailors to be her loyal "Sons," protecting "her reign" and "the virtues which sport in her train."[460] They should seek "fair" liberty and freedom, but as her progeny sailors had to protect Columbia with the "arrows of Jove."[461] British loyalists also grasped the benefits of convincing sailors to devote themselves to a feminine personification of the "Mother Country." In a 1779 public letter to John Montagu, the 4th Earl of Sandwich and First Lord of the Admiralty, an anonymous "plain, open-hearted Sailor" deplored the misguided sentiments and wretched circumstances of the "Rebels." He held some faith in their former "filial" regard for the

[456] "Communication," *Gazette of the United States* (Philadelphia, Pa.), August 10, 1802, 2.
[457] "To the Printer of the Pennsylvania Packet," *Pennsylvania Packet*, March 20, 1775, 3.
[458] Columbianus, "The New World, No. VII," *Democratic Press*, October 24, 1809, 2.
[459] For a succinct discussion of the innately gendered nature of nationalism, and how women have been "subsumed symbolically" into the body politic through it, see Anne McClintock, "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family," *Feminist Review* 44, Nationalisms and National Identities (Summer 1993): 61-80.
[460] "The Stockbridge Federal Ode," *Patriotic Medley* (New York: Jacob Johnkin, 1800), 3.
[461] "Song [Columbia's Bald Eagle displays in his claws," *Patriotic Medley*, 21.

"Parent-state," but even more so in the ability of Montagu to remind these "ungovernable Subjects" of "what was a proper Respect to the Mother-country."[462]

While maternal conceptions like Columbia helped national interests leash sailors to the state through imagined bonds of affection, Philadelphia maritime news and cultural texts on impressment also reveal and rely upon the unique and enduring emotional power of real mothers. As Paul Gilje has shown, "free trade and sailors' rights" formed the true crux of the War of 1812's origins, and media accounts before and during the conflict drummed up sympathy for impressed sailors. These real and fictionalized stories mentioned families but primarily conjured images of destitute mothers—either the sailor's mother or his wife, who was a mother herself—as the ultimate sympathetic dependent. Railing against defenses of impressment that emphasized British officers' use of "discretion" to minimize the risk of impressing American sailors, one commentator countered that this made "British insolence through the medium of an intoxicated ship's crew of a man of war" the American sailor's only "safety."[463] If this was official policy, the author wrote,

> what mother would part with her son to pursue the occupation of a seaman without the most distressing reluctance? What sister would but sigh with the most throbbing anguish when bidding farewell to a beloved brother? … Would not every sailor's family become a place of mourning and lamentation when he gave the affectionate kiss of departure to his children, and when he grasped the hand of his lovely Poll with the hearty benediction, "God save you in my absence!"[464]

Another anecdote presented as news in *The Democratic Press* told of the dire aftermath of a London worker's impressment: given the chance to accuse him of elopement, his landlord and

[462] Unknown author, *A Letter to the Right Honourable the Earl of Sandwich on the Present Situation of Affairs, By a Sailor* (London: J. Wilkie and R. Faulder, 1779), 34, 38-39.
[463] "The Rights of Seamen," *Aurora General Advertiser* (Philadelphia, Pa.), December 23, 1807, 2. The language of discretion likely referred to Lord George Grenville's 1793 defense of the British navy's boarding of American vessels to Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Pinckney, as discussed in Gilje, *Free Trade and Sailors' Rights*, 102-104.
[464] Ibid.

creditors "seized on his furniture, and his wife and child were turned to the door." The wife gave birth a few days later in a garret, only to rise prematurely from her childbed and turn to theft to clothe her "two naked children." The article condemned both the English legal system and the woman's community as, despite her dire straits, she was "ordered for Tyburn," England's most famous hanging site, where ultimately "*The hangman dragged the sucking infant from her breast, when he straitened* [sic] *the cord about her neck*."[465]

After the war's onset, this sympathetic rhetoric extended to mortality reports of both ship's captains and common seamen. A brief snippet written to laud the patriotism of John Cheeves, a sailor on the USS *Constitution*, noted in passing that with his brother killed in the same combat, "they have left an aged and helpless mother at Marblehead, who depended entirely upon the fruits of their industry for a subsistance [sic]."[466] Even wartime news that was not shaped to appeal to nationalist rhetoric conveyed the existence of cross-gender familial bonds and their connective power over distance and through peril: a brief obituary for Black seaman Jack Morris noted his death in the Springfield, Massachusetts Alms House. The six-line notification likely appeared in *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* because, as it noted, Morris had been "on his way from impressment in Halifax to Philadelphia, where he said he had a mother and sister residing."[467] Whether inspired by sympathy or a perceived need to either arrange for remuneration to the Alms House, someone deemed the connections between Morris and his female relatives important enough for one of the latter's major local newspapers to try informing them of his demise even when their names were unknown.

---

[465] "From the Richmond Enquirer. Relations with England," *Democratic Press* (Philadelphia, Pa.), November 18, 1807, 2.
[466] [*Boston Chronicle*], Untitled, *Weekly Aurora of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, Pa.), March 2, 1813, 360. The story also appeared (without the accreditation to the *Boston Chronicle*) in *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia, Pa.), March 8, 1813, 3.
[467] Untitled mortuary notice, *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, June 6, 1814, 3.

Amidst such emotionally heavy and high-stakes material, more humorous portrayals of sailors' parentage also reinforced audiences' understandings of sailors' maternal bonds of affection. The dangers of mocking a man's mother, exemplified by the high crime of referring to someone as a "son of a bitch," meant that to avoid physical violence, songsters and singers had to tread a fine line when crafting comic narratives about mothers that might either ring too close to home or be plausible enough to imply that the singer held such opinions about a specific audience member's mother.[468] It was far safer to do so in a first-person song, such as "Paddy O'Brian," where the narrator relates that his father "suspected" his "fly" mother of infidelity due to Paddy himself being "the devil."[469]

Breaking the Bonds of Motherhood

The ties that bound mothers to sons held strong but could be broken by either party. Sailors who left their hometowns or otherwise physically distanced themselves from their mothers found it easier to either rewrite their personal narratives to excuse their abandoned obligations or avoid mentioning them entirely. The clandestine nature of such arrangements makes them difficult to find in the archival record but their presence in cultural literature shows that reading audiences, at least, were well aware of this possible solution to the problem of filial responsibility. The popular tragic poem "The Beggar," which appeared in *Poulson's Daily American Advertiser*, the *Gazette of the United States*, and the *Philadelphia Repository and Daily Register* within an eighteen-month stretch, portrayed a mother reduced to begging on the streets. While she had lost both her husband and her daughter to "intemperance … vice, and

[468] See Gilje, *To Swear Like a Sailor: Maritime Culture in America, 1750-1850* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 12-15, 19-28 for an excellent discussion of how "son of a bitch" and "bitch" reached the height of pejorative connotations for sailors.
[469] "Paddy O'Brian," *The Festival of Mirth, and American Tar's Delight* (New York: Thomas Jansen, 1800), 63.

scorn," near the end of the poem she revealed that she was first abandoned by her only son, who seven years prior "by a roving passion led,/He left us all and went to sea./He's gone so long he must be dead." In rapid succession, the poem revealed that the sailor to whom she narrated her suffering not only resembled her son George "in garb and manner" but was indeed the same—a disclosure that literally stopped his mother's "woe worn heart."[470] Though George "fault'ring cri'd" his shock at his mother's circumstances and embraced her as she died, his mother had already given up on obtaining "relief" from her truant son, and as her sudden and tragic end implied, in the absence of George's own drive to return home there was no other force able to expedite their reconciliation or enforce his filial obligations before it was too late. Even if it was written to proscribe sailors from abandoning their mothers for a life at sea, the poem's ability to tug upon readers' heartstrings relied upon its premise's plausibility.

Maritime mothers—whether the mothers of sailors or the mothers of their children—could also abandon their children, driven by economic hardship, mental or emotional upheaval, or social pressure. It is logical to assume that some seafaring lads departed from their childhood homes on desperate and unfriendly terms, as mothers overburdened with economic dependence (and dependents) made difficult choices to reduce their household sizes. The terms of departure could be thus construed as a mother abandoning her maternal duty to care for a child, leaving the newly independent young person socially, economically, and emotionally unmoored. Other mothers, or their social peers, disapproved enough of their sons' desires to go seafaring to willfully sever the familial bond and ban them from returning home. As Clare Lyons has shown, some mothers in Philadelphia also abandoned their children in infancy, either leaving them behind when they left town (and/or left their husbands) or placing them at the Alms House or, in

[470] "The Beggar," *Poulson's*, August 22, 1803, 2; *Gazette of the United States*, March 30, 1803, 3; *Philadelphia Repository, and Daily Register*, iss. 35 vol. IV, September 1, 1804, 280.

one case, the doorstep of one of the Overseers of the Poor.[471] While most of these children did not go to sea, nor were they all fathered by sailors themselves, the seafaring life's ease of entry would have suited their circumstances. In some cases, other female family members stepped in to fill the gap left by absentee mothers. According to the more quotidian details of a biographical sketch of Captain James Lawrence, the naval hero of the War of 1812 whose defense of the *Chesapeake* inspired the Perry Flag's iconic "DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP" inscription, his mother died within a few weeks of his birth but his care "devolved on his sisters, to whom he ever showed the warmest gratitude for the tender care they took of his infant years."[472] In turn, when Lawrence reached adulthood and became the "last male branch" of his family he provided his two widowed sisters' "helpless offspring" with a paternal figure, even as his premature death left behind "a wife and two young children to whom he was fervently attached."[473] For Jacob Jones, captain of the USS *Constitution*, it was his stepmother who raised him after his father died when Jones was only four years old. Only identified as a "Miss Holt" and as the granddaughter of Delaware judge Ryves Holt, this "excellent woman" provided him with "a truly maternal care and tenderness" that saw him through careers in medicine and law before he signed on as a midshipman at age twenty-nine.[474]

At least one Philadelphia newspaper anecdote told the story of a seafaring boy forcibly removed from his mother's side. The twelve-year-old "young Prather"—one of nine children—had been "stolen from his parents by a runaway negro man" in South Carolina two years prior, leading his mother, Mrs. Prather, to travel all the way up to Virginia to search for him "on horseback, with an infant in her arms." The boy had been taken all the way to New York to

[471] Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble*, 25, 266, 92.
[472] "Biography of Captain James Lawrence," *Poulson's Daily American Advertiser,* August 13, 1813, 2.
[473] Ibid.
[474] "Biography of Captain Jacob Jones," *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, July 27, 1813, 2.

facilitate his captor's escape, where he was subsequently abandoned. Starting with menial work at an oyster house, he used his proximity to the waterfront to offer his services to various sea captains, eventually finding employ with a captain "by whom he was kindly treated, and who parted with him reluctantly." While clearly written to evoke "sensations of delight" in readers, the Prather saga also revealed the continued opportunity for young men to enter a seafaring lifestyle with no prior experience, and as a clear way to escape dire economic circumstances.[475] It also revealed the strength of mother-son bonds and their widespread social acceptance on the American seaboard: even with the unjust circumstances of his laboring life at an age when other preteens were considered old enough to join the maritime work force and other occupations in entry-level positions, Mrs. Prather received both on-the-ground aid in her travels and national-level adulation in the media during her odyssey to rejoin her son and bring him back to the family home.

Sailors' Daughters

Though not regularly portrayed in the maritime musical canon, sailors' relationships to their daughters—and by extension, to their dependent children—formed another part of the web of familial bonds that bound sailors to portside communities and shaped their laboring lives at sea. Paternal obligations to daughters, normative standards of affection, and the often-complex social networks that sustained sailors' paternal ties during their physical absences played out across the city during the revolutionary and early republic eras, almost always appearing in the historical record only in cases of dysfunction, or through passing references to a lived constancy of connection. Cultural texts like plays, novels, and the occasional song shed more light on the

[475] "Fredericksburg, (Vir.) Sept. 21," *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, September 24, 1816, 3.

possible nuances of a sailor's bond to his female offspring, as well as societal expectations of a sailor's parental obligations, how they varied by class, and the alternative solutions that arose when the sailor was unable or unwilling to meet their children's needs.

Sailors and Parental Responsibilities

No matter how far down they ranked in the wage scale of Philadelphia's working poor, as with all heads of household, society expected sailors to provide financially for their children. This did not (and often could not) mean that sailors were the sole wage-earners in their household. This state of affairs was so commonplace that most mentions in the surviving historical record of Philadelphia's working poor and their relationships to their children only appear when the status quo became unmoored. Even then, the record rarely if ever distinguished between sailors and other lower-class laborers, and evidence of preexisting custody arrangements between individuals but formalized by the state is scarce. The city's records on bastardy and natural children demonstrate this trend. In early republic Philadelphia, city authorities such as the Guardians of the Poor primarily sought to secure financial support from a child's father when the child became "chargeable," i.e., a ward of the city. For example, when Jane Boyd's husband Andrew deserted her to marry another woman (though Jane remained his "lawful wife"), the Guardians of the Poor interceded on the behalf of their young daughter, Elizabeth, to "examine into the case and if practicable to obtain a maintenance for the said Child as well as the Mother" from Andrew.[476] While the record lacks a follow-up to Jane and Elizabeth Boyd's plight, the Guardians frequently and regularly succeeded in similar endeavors, as evidenced by multiple

[476] Guardians of the Poor, Minutes, March 5, 1801. While the 1800 city directory lists an Andrew Boyd who was a shopkeeper, this Andrew Boyd was listed as a resident of Charles Town, Chester County, making it difficult to determine if the two were the same. At the very least, Boyd's behavior was highly reminiscent of the footloose serial monogamy regularly ascribed to sailors.

formulaic entries over the years that note two bond-givers (one usually the father and the other a surety) who provided funds "for the support of said [father's] Child by [his or her mother]."[477] These bonds, as Clare Lyons has shown, indemnified the city against charges for the child's care and acted as surety for future child support payments, usually made on a weekly basis.[478] Sailors would have been uniquely poised to make these payments thanks to their wage-earning work during an era whose economics were more commonly defined by barter, and the intercession of the Guardians or other authorities would have been necessary for the regular dispensation of funds when a mariner father was out to sea. At the same time, though, their low pay rate and lump sum payments would have made it difficult to meet even the most bare-bones requisite payments. When Philadelphia's seamen made a maximum annual wage of £49, even a minimum obligation of 3s. a week (£7 16s. annual) made a significant dent in a sailor's finances.[479]

In many cases, these costs included lying-in expenses, birth attendants' fees, or burial costs in the case of the child's death. However, there is also evidence of pushback against these additions: the Guardians found it necessary in the summer of 1801 to formally inquire into their legal capacity to recoup lying-in costs from fathers in cases where mothers had "been deterred by threats, promises or her own neglect from swearing such child against the Father until after its birth."[480] Their consultant, attorney C. (Collinson) Read, assured them that the "Circumstance" of a plea's timing made no difference to the legal obligation of fathers to cover costs "for [the mother's] Lying in expences [sic] & the Support of the Child from its Birth till its arrival to the

[477] See, for example, Guardians of the Poor, Minutes, March 25, 1801, which contains several sequential entries to this effect, as well as entries from June 6, 1803, which omitted the names of the children's mothers but included the bond amounts.
[478] Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble*, 64, 77-78.
[479] For seamen's wages see Smith, *"The Lower Sort,"* 113-114; for standard support payments see Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble*, 92. A £49 annual wage breaks down to just under 19 shillings a week, though maritime pay cycles were much less consistent due to seafaring's seasonal nature in Philadelphia and across the Atlantic.
[480] Guardians of the Poor, Minutes, April 17, 1801.

Age of Seven Years."[481] The Guardians—and later, the Alms House Managers—also handled the indentures of children who aged out of these child support payments; as previously mentioned, sometimes they bound these children out to mariners, or more commonly to ship's captains, bringing the system full circle for the city's maritime laborers.

Plays, stories, and songs also hint at the possible parameters of a sailor's paternal financial duties. Often these obligations became a concern due to the sailor's untimely demise; while actual sailors perished just as easily on land or by natural causes, those in dramatic settings almost always succumbed to the dangers of seafaring life. Richard Cumberland's play *The Sailor's Daughter* (1804), first performed in Philadelphia in December of that year and regularly showcased at the New Theatre for several years after, placed financial support as the baseline expectation for a sailor to his daughter—and in his absence, to any man who would support his child in his stead.[482] The play's titular heroine, Julia Clareville, was the daughter of an Irish sea captain who had perished on-board ship from a cannonball injury and failed surgery. Two of her father's maritime cohort took up her protection: the ship's surgeon-turned-apothecary Hartshorn brought her to live in his home alongside his wife, while her father's protégé Captain Sentamour regularly and anonymously sent money to "[keep] off indigence" and satisfy "those wants, that money could supply."[483] At least some of this security implicitly derived from her father's higher status in the maritime world but even for the most ordinary real-life sailor, a child—especially a

[481] Guardians of the Poor, Minutes, May 7, 1801. Lyons notes a gender differential in the maximum age for support, with girl children only needing support until age five "when the law provided that the child could be bound out to service if it should require financial aid." Her source for this assertion is unclear. See Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble*, 78.
[482] Richard Cumberland, *The Sailor's Daughter: A Comedy in Five Acts* (New York: David Longworth, 1804). The play had debuted earlier that year in London in April and was also performed in New York before its Philadelphia production. Newspapers from the *Aurora General Advertiser* to *The United States Gazette* advertised the initial performance as well as its follow-up stagings on December 13 and December 17. Speaking to its popularity, the New Theatre restaged the play at least four more times in February 1805, January 1806, January 1807, and March 1813, and Matthew Carey also sold copies of the play in his shop on Market Street.
[483] Cumberland, *The Sailor's Daughter*, 29.

daughter—expected some level of protection until they reached working age. A possibly apocryphal story "from a late London paper," reprinted in the February 2, 1808, issue of the *Democratic Press*, conveyed the tragic tale of a "Female Sailor" forced to sea in men's garb by her cruel stepfather. This "female orphan of a British seaman" had been "at service" in her hometown "from the time she was able to work until she was 13 years old," at which time her "unnatural" stepfather removed her from her employ as a lying-in assistant to bind her into an apprenticeship on a coal ship with the threat of murder "if ever she discovered her sex." (Supposedly by this time he had already done the same to the girl's mother, except he had "forced her on board a ship of war, in seamen's clothes"; rather than return to her husband, the article claimed, the mother had continued her tour of duty on multiple ships for seven years, until she was "mortally wounded in action" during the 1807 Battle of Copenhagen.) The story saved most of its outrage for the physical abuses of the stepfather and of the ship's mate who had "flogged her [so] severely" that she fled the ship, and its ultimate solution of returning the girl to her "native parish" seemed less than ideal, but its condemnation of the stepfather's perversion of his responsibilities remained clear.[484]

Sailors and Fatherly Sentiment

Social convention and cultural texts also expected sailors to hold and express paternal affection for their daughters. While nobody in *The Sailor's Daughter* explicitly tells Julia of her father's love, they assure her of his affectionate actions: namely that in his "dying moments" he sought to protect her by entrusting her care with "a man [he] form'd, protected, trained to his profession; whom he lov'd, approv'd, confided in."[485] Sentamour's own assessment of his

[484] "Female Sailor," *Democratic Press*, February 2, 1808, 2.
[485] Cumberland, *The Sailor's Daughter*, 13.

duties' fulfillment also reveals the perceived necessity of paternal affection. He expresses regret to his close friend, the surgeon Lindsay, that his naval duty precluded his presence in her life: "Can there be a duty more sacred than I owe to her, the relect of my benefactor! none; and the reflection of how imperfectly I have fulfill'd it weighs heavy on my conscience."[486] Hartshorn's most extreme actions in the play—threatening his wife with physical violence when she tells him to turn Julia out of their home, and threatening both Sentamour (disguised as Lindsay) and Julia's conniving suitor Mr. Varnish with the same when he believes they plan to seduce Julia—rest upon the presumption that Captain Clareville cared for his daughter's happiness and not just her economic security. While sailor songs about daughters or children appeared comparatively less frequently than those about romantic relationships, some tunes briefly mentioned sailors' longing for or concerns about their absent children, as in one song from both an 1800 songster and an 1805 broadside which evoked "mourn[ing]" separation from one's offspring amidst "wild waves … beating" one's ship.[487] Another song from an 1815 songster painted a more detailed image of fatherly love and a longing for absent family bounded by duty:

> When he enters the door of that cabin so dear,
> Where his Poll and his children he left to abide,
> With what mingled emotions of joy, hope and fear,
> Does he, eager, look round, till they all are espied!
>
> Then, how melts his stout heart, in love's soft delight,
> Whilst strain'd to the joy-heaving breast of his bride;
> And how proud to behold, as with infantile might,
> His young ones contend for the stand next his side!
>
> […]
>
> But the time rolls on fast, and soon, at his post,
> The rough son of Neptune is called to attend;
> Then farewell to his Poll, and the babes he loves most—

[486] Cumberland, *The Sailor's Daughter,* 29.
[487] "Cease, rude Boreas, blust'ring railer!," *The Syren*, 50; [George A. Stevens?], "The Tempest," broadside (Philadelphia?: n.p., 1805?).

His country now calls him, her rights to defend.[488]

Certainly these texts and others could have been composed with the intent of tethering sailors to middle-class domestic ideals, though as Erica Armstrong Dunbar has shown in the case of Black mothers in Philadelphia at this time, those being targeted by the rhetoric of domestic life had plenty of reasons to see its appeal and adopt it as their own, and judge their success in doing so far differently than might their supposed social superiors.[489] Limiting their potential interpretation to that of a corrective cultural text imposes unnecessary limits on the ability of sailors to interpret those texts for themselves, and to self-identify with aspects of their sentimental content. If elite seafarers like the Sword brothers could ask for updates on their wives, mothers, and children, or receive them without making an explicit request, it is not difficult to posit that ordinary seamen shared those same concerns, or that their friends and family would believe they did and act accordingly unless proven otherwise.

Longer-form cultural texts, such as shipwreck novels and maritime plays, more frequently mentioned a sailor's children and his relationship to them. Again, reading around these works' most dramatic flourishes and formulaic elements reveals the quotidian presence of and ideas about sailors' children that supported these stories' premises. Upon discovering both the wife he thought dead and the young son he never knew, W. R. Chetwood's adventurous hero Captain Robert Boyle noted of the latter, "at the first Sight … I could not help feeling a tender Regard for him."[490] Boyle also sought to reconcile his friend Don Jaques with his own daughter, Isabella, who had gone to sea disguised as a man out of love for Boyle himself. Derived from the

[488] "Song [How sweet is the sailor's return to the soil]," *The American Song Book: Being A New Collection of the Best Patriotic, Military, Naval, Amatory, Quizical and Sentimental Songs, Extant* ([New York or Boston?]: Printed for the New-York and Boston book-sellers, 1815), 32-33.
[489] For an excellent discussion of republican motherhood and how Black mothers used it, and the church, to adopt domesticity and define it on their own terms, see Chapter 3 of Dunbar, *A Fragile Freedom*.
[490] Chetwood, 325.

much larger anthology collection *The Mariner's Chronicle* (1804), Philadelphia publisher Matthew Carey's *Narratives of Calamitous and Interesting Shipwrecks, &c.* (1810) also had its fair share of (possibly fictitious, if less overblown) sailors who followed Boyle's model of paternal fidelity, albeit with less dedication to reinforcing their romantic prowess. Alexis Himkoff, one of four Russian sailors purportedly shipwrecked off Spitsbergen (a small island north of Scandinavia), was the ship's mate and the implied hero of one narrative. Not only did he find a hut in which the stranded mariners could survive the intense cold, but he was primed for dramatic suffering: "having left a wife and three children behind, he was deeply afflicted at his separation from them. He declared, after his return, that they were constantly in his mind, and that the thought of never more seeing them rendered him very unhappy."[491] The 1802 "Disaster attending the Margate Hoy," a small vessel sailing from Kent's Margate resort to London, hit closer to home for sailors of the Atlantic. There were many "Margate hoys," the name reused for the several "broad-bottomed barge-type sailing vessels" that crisscrossed the waters between these two locations.[492] This vessel had carried not only by its four-man crew but also twenty-eight passengers, several of whom were women. One was the wife of the ship's carpenter, Mr. Field, and as the vessel foundered and he bound them together with rope, "he could not forbear calling after his dear companion, who was now perishing, and who just before had embraced him, saying, 'O my dear, what will become of our dear children!' expecting that they would be left orphans."[493] Where the Russian sailors had been stranded for six years, though, the Margate survivors (including the Fields) soon found themselves "strewed along the shore," and the vessel

[491] *Narratives of Calamitous and Interesting Shipwrecks, &c.: with Authentic Particulars of the Sufferings of the Crews, published by Matthew Carey* (Philadelphia: Printed by A. Small, 1810), 85.
[492] Harriet Guest, "A Motley Assembly: 'The Margate Hoy,'' in *Charles Dibdin and Late Georgian Culture*, ed. Oskar Cox Jensen, David Kennerley, and Ian Newman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198812425.003.0010.
[493] *Narratives of Calamitous and Interesting Shipwrecks, &c*., 91.

itself was recovered within a couple of days.[494] While Charles Dibdin's 1795 song about a "voyage to Margate" provided a glimpse of a "motley crew" of colorful, boisterous passengers, and later inspired illustrations about it, the severity of this incident and the lack of common names between this shipwreck's victims and the song's seasick passengers suggests that even if this story was a fictionalized narrative that used "Margate hoy" as cultural reference, it was designed to rely even more heavily on plausibility to evoke sympathy.[495]

Sailor's Daughters and the Sexual Dangers of Paternal Abandonment

The hinted-at (yet ultimately unfulfilled) romance between Captain Robert Boyle and his friend's daughter Isabella points toward the potential dangers for real-life sailors' daughters who either evaded or were deprived of their fathers' protection, and the mixed bag of tactics they might employ to avoid economic and/or social ruination. In some cases, these daughters became another sailor's sweetheart or wife if they were lucky—or a prostitute or abandoned mother, if they were less so. In Philadelphia's records of prostitution, it is even more difficult to determine which women came from a maritime background than it is to pinpoint exactly which sex workers catered to mariners, mates, or sea captains. Examining cultural portrayals of fallen women, however, indicates that the idea of a sailor's orphaned daughter unwillingly entering a life of depravity and hardship was far from foreign.

Even when men gave sailors' daughters money or shelter in loco parentis with a clear denial of trading money for sex, cultural texts show that women had to be constantly aware of that possibility, and sometimes had to guard against communal assumptions forcing them into a sexual or romantic obligation. Hartshorn tells Julia at the start of *The Sailor's Daughter* that she

[494] Ibid., 91-92.
[495] Guest, "A Motley Assembly," https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198812425.003.0010.

should be "kind" and "grateful" to whoever is funding her, a sentiment seemingly not at odds with his estimation that such financial support was so generous it could only be done by a sailor.[496] The way that Varnish and Sentamour handle this potential debt serves as a, if not the, major indicator of the moral differences between them and their aptitude as romantic partners. Where Varnish attempts to leverage his supposed generosity to convince Julia to let him set her up as either his wife or his mistress, Sentamour's deceit rests upon his desire to "look into her heart" without the burden or influence of any prior obligation:

> I would not approach her as Sentamour, because I would make no claim upon her gratitude; I would not purchase an opinion from her by money, by worldly prudence, or even by filial duty and obedience to her father's wishes. If she prefers Varnish, and he honorably proposes, let her marry him; as Lindsay, I obstruct her not; as Sentamour she shall never know me.[497]

Julia's own assessment of Varnish's false claims of generosity, in conversation with Mrs. Hartshorn, reinforces those complications and cements the side of moral rectitude. When Mrs. Hartshorn insists that Julia "quit this house, and put yourself under mr. Varnish's protection," and adds that she is under "very great obligations" to him, Julia retorts that his "favors" were "unsolicited" and would be an "insult" should they require her to act or appear to act without virtue. Later in the same scene she declares that rather than accept a proposal from someone who "may have it to say he has purchased me with money, or supported me on charity," she would instead "work for [her] bread."[498] She also declines a £100 banknote sent directly by Varnish, and also asks for a full accounting of "the extent of [her] obligations" to him, noting that money "is so suspicious a thing to pass between a fine, rich gentleman like you, and a poor destitute young woman like me."[499] Clearly her father's absence creates a vulnerability implicitly

[496] Cumberland, 13.
[497] Ibid., 30.
[498] Ibid., 31, 34.
[499] Ibid., 43.

understood by the audience: by disrupting the everyday transmission of financial support from father to child, a man with ill intent could use money as a means of extorting sex or affection from a sailor's daughter, and at least some members of the community would not only allow for such behavior but see it as his right. The harm to her reputation is clear, but the consequences for the man are less so. While it was possible and even accepted for another man to assume those responsibilities for an absent or deceased sailor, it was also not so formalized or commonplace as to not require frequent thoughts and expressions of gratitude.

Other women formed an inextricable part of this relationship network, from actual mothers to surrogate maternal figures, friends, and fellow workers, and they could help or hinder a sailor's bond to his daughter or young children. Daughters themselves also had greater recourse to economic self-subsistence thanks to Philadelphia's unique property laws, though the possibilities were not as expansive for them as they were for a widow or an abandoned wife. As de facto heads of household (and often wage-earners in their own right), mothers also took on the responsibility of protecting their children in their husbands' absence. As seen in Chapter 2, these women's daily lives relied upon cross-gender economic networks that ranged from borrowing currency to vital but unremarkable exchanges of goods, as much if not more than they used their sailor partner's wages to maintain their family unit while he was at sea. By the time a sailor like Francis Farrall petitioned the courts to discharge the debts in his name, evoking the specter of an unnamed and wholly dependent "Wife and 3 Children" to do so, it was more than likely that the wife in question had been monitoring the household finances—and dispensing them by her own judgment—for years.[500] Chances were also good that any daughters in the household would and

[500] Francis Farrall, 12/12/1815, Insolvency Petitions and Bonds, City Archives.

could learn by example, or that a mother would recognize a daughter's relatively precarious position and use her *feme sole* status to provide a haven for an older unmarried daughter.

* * *

No matter how far they sailed in or beyond Atlantic waters, family brought Philadelphia's sailors home. For some, the desire to physically reunite with family remained unfulfilled, as they arrived to find that their female relatives had chosen to sever their connection, been removed to the Alms House or hospital, or had perished due to ill health, exposure, or deprivation. Perhaps the Philadelphia waterfront had a real-life analogue to Henry Randolph's wife Nancy, driven "bereft of reason" to the point that she "gave up that being whose existence had been thus imbittered by the cruelties of war."[501] More often, both the sailor's return and his eventual departure for his next voyage fulfilled their intended purpose as at least one of the economic bases by which his family eked out a living in one of the American seaboard's largest urban centers. In turn, his female family members facilitated the creation and sustainment of the sailor's household through a wide array of community connections and their own actions: supplementing his income with their own wage-earning endeavors; undertaking the hidden and unpaid labor of the household, from cooking and cleaning to paying rent and taxes and rearing children; or maintaining social networks by sharing news and other resources with their neighbors or more distant relatives. Whether driven by necessity, obligation, patriarchal ideals, or affection, throughout the revolutionary and early republic era sailors and their female relatives reaffirmed their mutual bonds even when they complicated their lives or threatened their economic survival.

[501] "The Impressed Seaman (continued)," *The Philadelphia Minerva*, October 21, 1797, 2.

Maritime and Atlantic historians have done much to restore common sailors to the study of the sea, and thus dispel the "*mischianza* of mystique and elitism" that guided Jesse Lemisch's calls to study history "from the bottom up."[502] Their careful work has salvaged individual seamen from the archive and reaffirmed their macro-level influence as cosmopolitans, as laborers with collective bargaining power in a unique working environment, and as humans concerned with pursuing happiness in all its forms. In most cases, though, these powerful arguments rest upon understanding sailors *only* as individuals (or as a collective of individuals bound by their labor), excluded from family ties by their physical separation and repurposed to instead form the connective tissue of "a world made only by capital and migration (forced and voluntary)."[503] Envisioning sailors as key components in family units—and their seafaring labor cycles as natural components of, rather than aberrations from, their family identity and composition—provides much-needed nuance to understanding how and why sailors went to sea despite its many hardships. It does even more to draw attention to the women with whom they shared familial bonds of blood or affinity, and whose choices and actions within their family unit directly enabled "the mobility on which Atlantic development hinged."[504]

As the first quarter of the nineteenth century ended, sailors continued to pour through the city's docks, and women living in port maintained their kinship ties to seafarers despite ever-greater physical distances between them. For decades to come, even as seafaring slowly declined as a key sector in Philadelphia's labor market, the city's newspapers, songsters, stage performances, and religious pamphlets told both laudatory and cautionary tales of sailors who

---

[502] Jesse Lemisch, "Jack Tar in the Streets: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (July 1968): 373. For his first use of "history from the bottom up" (but certainly not the last), see Lemisch, "The American Revolution Seen from the Bottom Up," in *Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History*, ed. Barton J. Bernstein (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1968), 3-45.
[503] Hardwick et al, "Introduction," 221.
[504] Ibid.

were also sons, brothers, and fathers, and who were surrounded by their mothers, daughters, and wives. The experiences of Philadelphia seafarers during the city's heyday as America's number one port make it clear that the sailor-as-family-man may not have been as bawdily entertaining as his Rambling Jack counterpart, but he was just as true to life.

Conclusion

While Philadelphia's importance as a port had begun to wane by the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the city remained a major urban hub and booming population center, and its various seafaring industries remained part of the city's social and economic fabric for decades to come. As their clothing, skill sets, and other visual markers changed, sailors from the heyday of Atlantic seafaring increasingly became objects of nostalgia, and the class of women with whom sailors traditionally formed relationships found their power fluctuating amidst evolving ideals of domesticity, continued legal abridging of their political and property rights, and burgeoning movements for temperance, abolition, and women's suffrage. Within these often-fraught changes, though, seafarers continued to ply their unique trade and actively adapt to its new developments, and maritime women found greater public prominence in both news stories and cultural texts. Though the Age of Sail had already reached its apex—at least in Philadelphia—sailors and women continued to shape the city and be shaped by it in turn.

Philadelphia continued to expand, largely to the north and west, and especially along its new canals and railways. The city's first railroad, the Philadelphia, Germantown & Norristown Railroad (PGN), opened in 1832 and facilitated suburbanization in the Germantown area.[505] Within two years, more railroads connected Philadelphia to Columbia, PA, in the west, to Trenton and Camden in New Jersey, and from there to New York City, while lines within the city connected systems to one another and sped up travel on Broad Street and along Southwark's Washington Avenue to the Delaware River. Various industries boomed, including textiles, gunpowder, coal and iron, and machining firms that manufactured everything from building

[505] John Hepp and Charlene Mires, "Railroad Suburbs," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, 2019, https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/railroad-suburbs/, accessed January 8, 2023.

castings to bank weights and false teeth.[506] The Delaware waterfront remained an important commercial hub, as did Market Street, but areas of equal importance appeared further and further inland and the need for ocean-going trade to build or sustain their success varied according to their specialty. As mentioned previously, new pleasure districts sprang up alongside these economic centers as well, with brothels, theatres, and other public spaces favored by sex workers scattered throughout the city's center. By 1855 Blackberry Alley near Washington Square had become one of the city's more notorious centers of vice.[507] Transatlantic immigration rates fluctuated, with a steady flow of approximately 20,000 total migrants direct from Liverpool in the 1820s followed by 60,000 incoming immigrants from overseas and from nearby ports like New York and Baltimore between 1830 and 1847. Between 1847 and 1854, immigration rates skyrocketed to approximately 120,000 due to famine and new sailing ship lines, but the ice blockages and overall longer voyages to get up the river to Philadelphia kept its directly incoming population numbers far lower than New York, and it also lagged behind Boston, Baltimore, and later New Orleans.[508] Still, between immigration and several decades of positive increase, the city's 1825 population of 143,126 people had already more than doubled by 1845 and would increase by as much again by the eve of the Civil War.[509]

Maritime occupations had also begun to transform, but a close look at their lexical shifts tempers the conclusion that traditional seafarers had already started to disappear after the War of

---

[506] Robert F. Smith, "Machining and Machinists," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, 2017, https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/machining-and-machinists/, accessed January 8, 2023.
[507] Marcia Carlisle, "Disorderly City, Disorderly Women: Prostitution in Ante-Bellum Philadelphia," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 110, no. 4 (October 1986): 564-565; see also Thomson Korostoff, "Ill-Fame on Blackberry Alley: Prostitution and Sport in 19th-Century Philadelphia," *Undergraduate Humanities Forum 2015-2016: Sex*, University of Pennsylvania Scholarly Commons (May 2016): 1-17.
[508] Fredric M. Miller, "Philadelphia: Immigrant City," Balch Online Resources, Historical Society of Philadelphia, http://www2.hsp.org/exhibits/Balch%20resources/phila_ellis_island.html, accessed January 8, 2023.
[509] Susan E. Klepp, "Demography in Early Philadelphia, 1690-1860," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133, no. 2, Symposium on the Demographic History of the Philadelphia Region, 1600-1860 (June 1989): 107-108.

1812. By the 1850 city directory, only 90 individuals listed their occupation as "mariner," but there were another 253 who claimed "seaman," along with four "sailors." Sixty-one men also claimed to be either "sea captains" or captains in the U.S. Navy.[510] By comparison, 43 people lived on Mariner Street, but most of them were weavers and laborers: despite its maritime name, only one seaman and one waterman lived on this two-block street, located more than a mile from the waterfront but less than half a block north of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad's tracks on Washington Avenue. The lexicon of steam travel had added new occupational titles to the realm of seafaring but they were also slow to appear in the directory. Only 11 men identified as firemen (those who shoveled fuel into a steamship or steam locomotive's engine), and there were no stokers (another name for firemen), roustabouts or longshoremen (manual laborers who loaded cargo and, on river boats, moved the ship when it caught on sand bars or ice), or deckhands (the closest equivalent to common sailors) listed. The directory mentioned 44 pilots but it was unclear whether these were steamship workers or those who directed wooden vessels on the high seas or the city's rivers.[511] There were also seven "mechanics" but their numbers paled in comparison to the 160-plus people who lived on or near one of the city's two Mechanic Streets, two Mechanics' Streets, and Mechanics' Court. The term mechanic had also been used to describe manual laborers since the sixteenth century and by this point carried the potential to refer to railroad and industrial workers as well as steamship laborers.[512] Coal yards, merchants, dealers, and agents abounded but the very few manual coal laborers listed—three heavers and a porter—likely worked in nearby coal yards or mines, where

[510] *McElroy's Philadelphia Directory* (Philadelphia: A. McElroy & Co., 1850). There were 17 more captains but they did not specify seafaring in their occupation. There was also a single "steam boat pro.," Caleb S. Wright, but he was likely an owner (proprietor) rather than a worker.
[511] Ibid.
[512] "mechanic, adj. and n.". OED Online. December 2022. Oxford University Press. https://www-oed-com.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/view/Entry/115543?rskey=DQbkbH&result=1&isAdvanced=false, accessed January 8, 2023.

their job titles would have been much more common. Of the 175 engineers listed in 1850, it is unclear how many of them (if any) could have possibly been steamship engineers by another name, though the several men listed as civil engineers and at least one mining engineer were almost certainly land based. Wooden ships and traditional seafaring knowledge remained in use for decades to come in both British and American vessels; steamships often had backup sails and as Valerie Burton has noted, on British foreign-going vessels firemen and coal trimmers (who handled the ship's coal and kept it "trim", or evenly floating in the water) only began to firmly outnumber seamen in the twentieth century.[513]

Wooden shipbuilding continued to flourish in Philadelphia, driven by industrial growth and new technologies like the screw propeller that melded wood and steam power. Along with William Cramp's shipyard and other private shipbuilders, the Philadelphia Navy Yard facilitated the creation and maintenance of various vessels, including the 120-gun *Pennsylvania*, launched by the U.S. Navy in 1837.[514] Yet at the same time, other naval stations along the seaboard began to rise in prominence, as the Delaware River became harder to navigate due to sand buildup and winter ice, and the Navy Yard's lack of dry docks and increasingly crowded premises spurred the federal government to place its naval personnel of all ranks elsewhere. Despite the city's multiple asylums and hospitals and its reputation for medical advancement, the Navy established its first three hospitals in Boston, Portsmouth (VA), and Pensacola, suggesting that it expected to house its seafarers in other, more accessible ports. Philadelphia would not construct a naval hospital until 1935, more than 60 years after the Yard itself had been relocated to League Island

[513] Valerie Burton, "Counting Seafarers: The Published Records of the Registry of Merchant Seamen, 1849-1913," *The Mariner's Mirror*. 71, no. 3 (1985): 314, as cited in More Than a List of Crew Project, "Seafarers Under Steam: 'Each Task Has Its Man, and Each Man His Place," *Maritime History Archive*, Memorial University of Newfoundland, https://mha.mun.ca/mha/mlc/articles/introducing-merchant-seafaring/each-task-has-its-man.php, accessed January 8, 2023.
[514] Jeffrey M. Dorwart, "Shipbuilding and Shipyards," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, 2013, https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/shipbuilding-and-shipyards/, accessed January 8, 2023.

at the confluence of the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers. While the post-Civil War era saw most ship carpenters and other wooden ship builders either fully transition into building ironclads or move into other occupations, collectively they created at least one major change that rippled through the nation. Inspired by a recent failed strike by Boston's carpenters and other manual laborers, in June 1835 Philadelphia's "journeymen shipwrights, joiners, caulkers and mast makers" joined forces with other laborers in the continent's first general strike and successfully appealed to the Board of Navy Commissioners for a 10-hour workday.[515] Their success inspired several more strikes in other American cities and towns, and by March 31, 1840, President Van Buren was compelled to issue an order that granted the same "10-hour system" to any laborers employed by the executive branch.[516]

Though they continued to make their homes in Philadelphia and patronize its temporary housing, in public sentiment the disapproval of sailors' stereotypical behavior, particularly their established love of alcohol, warred with lasting tropes of their genial nature and a growing nostalgia for past days of seafaring glory. Print rhetoric increasingly cast sailors as both scions of vice and hapless victims of sin, easily turned to worldly evils and thus in need of outside charitable aid. Spurred by the Reverend Joseph Eastburn, the Mariners' Church held its first sermon in a sail-loft in October 1819, and by 1824 the church had constructed its own building and opened its doors to mariners and their families. Their efforts were inspired by those in other port cities, which Eastburn noted in his memoirs:

> The reflections arising from a review of the peculiar smiles of Providence attending the efforts using in favor of the best interests of mariners, are calculated to fill the mind with wonder and astonishment at the goodness and mercy of the Lord. Surely it conveys the

[515] "Rules to Regulate the Work of the Journeymen Shipwrights, Joiners, Caulkers, and Mast Makers of Philadelphia," circular (Philadelphia: n.p., 1985), National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC Board of Navy Commissioners, Letters Received, RG 45, E314 Volume 91; see also O. L. Harvey, "The 10-Hour Day in the Philadelphia Navy Yard, 1835-36," *Monthly Labor Review* 85, no. 3 (March 1962): 258-260.
[516] Harvey, 260.

> encouraging hope, that the set time to favor seamen is come. The interest excited in their behalf, was simultaneous on both sides of the Atlantic. Only seven or eight years have elapsed since the public feeling has in any measure been alive to this object; and what has been the result, both in Europe and America, since that period? *Bethel Unions*, *Floating Chapels, Mariner's Churches,* and *Prayer-Meeting Establishments*, we hear of from almost every large sea-port. Can this be any other than a supernatural influence operating at one and the same time, without concert, without the knowledge of each other's exertions, and yet, all tending to the same GODLIKE work of benevolence—the salvation of the souls of poor neglected mariners.[517]

His claim of non-collaboration was disingenuous at best, but Eastburn's was the second such mission for seamen in the United States, and even after his death in 1828 it survived and eventually brought the Seamen's and Landsmen's Aid Society under its aegis in 1878.[518] Within the Mariner's Church, the Female Seamen's Friend Society arose in November 1832 and, while reorganized five years later, celebrated its tenth anniversary in 1842. Formed of both married and unmarried women, the Society "laboured to gather into that Church wandering seamen, and their families, to encourage their children to attend its Sabbath schools, aided in clothing their children, in relieving their distressed, visiting their sick, and … assisting decently to bury the dead"—all hallmarks of appropriately feminine charitable activity.[519] They also encouraged temperance and facilitated the establishment and use of a Seamen's Clothing Store, where "poor, distressed, and shipwrecked seamen" found clothing (sometimes with their wives paying the bill) and their "poor widows … who greatly prefer eating the bread of industry rather than live upon the hand of charity" found work.[520] More religious institutions aimed at sailors soon followed: the Seamen's Church Institute of Philadelphia and South Jersey began in 1843 as the Churchmen's Missionary Association for Seamen of the Port of Philadelphia, housed in the

---

[517] Ashbel Green, *Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Eastburn, stated preacher in the Mariner's church, Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: G. W. Mentz, 1828), 80.
[518] "Biographical Note/Administrative History," Guide to the Mariners' Church (Philadelphia, Pa.) Records, Presbyterian Historical Society, https://www.history.pcusa.org/collections/research-tools/guides-archival-collections/rg-124, accessed January 8, 2023.
[519] Female Seamen's Friend Society, *Tenth Annual Report*, 3.
[520] Ibid., 6-7.

Floating Church of the Redeemer. Resting on the hulls of two barges, the Church was consecrated in 1848 and traveled along the Delaware to meet sailors where they worked.[521] Despite their reportedly large crowds at both venues, though, the 1878 society's aim remained the "Spiritual, Moral and Temporal welfare" of its constituents, suggesting a continued perceived need for interference. At the same time, newspaper snippets about actual sailors mostly paid heed to instances of implied drunkenness—when sailors fell off of ships to their deaths—and outright licentious behavior, as with the "Dangerous Jack Tar" held on $300 bail after he drunkenly "broke the glass and crockery of the ship's cabin, insulted some lady passengers, and drew a pistol on them."[522] In fiction, the era of Melville held strong and Philadelphia's *Dollar Newspaper* contained at least one "graphic whaling sketch" that featured a crew of colorful mariners, from a "tall, gaunt, wild looking chap, of Indian descent" who was "the very impersonification [sic] of reckless energy, or of stupid ignorance as the case might be," to the "profoundly ignorant" captain, "angry skipper," and "drunken harpooner," who still managed to bring in several whales.[523] These fictional (or at least exaggerated) seafarers were less of an immediate public threat and so could combine skill with their vices, but had to possess the latter nonetheless to be considered authentic (or at least realistic enough to maintain the plausibility of fiction).

As Clare Lyons, Karin Wulf, and Candice Harrison have shown, female tavern keepers, seamstresses, hucksters, and other working women who did business with sailors and other laboring men saw their opportunities for inclusion and acceptance in the wider market economy

[521] Harry Kyriakodis, "The Floating Church And Its Successors Along The Delaware," *Hidden City: Exploring Philadelphia's Urban Landscape*, February 21, 2014, https://hiddencityphila.org/2014/02/the-floating-church-and-its-successors-along-the-delaware/, accessed January 8, 2023.
[522] "A Dangerous Jack Tar," *North American*, February 4, 1850, 1.
[523] H. M. Klapp, "Touch-and-Go!: A Graphic Whaling Sketch," *The Dollar Newspaper* (Philadelphia, PA), June 5, 1850.

decline by mid-century, though they continued to ply their trades by necessity and at the margins of society.[524] Sailors' lovers and relatives, however, received greater attention and adulation, and their wives began to appear more frequently onboard ships as well, as previously discussed in Chapter 3. Some even kept diaries or wrote accounts afterwards of their travels.[525] The 1840s and 1850s also saw an increase in accounts of "female sailors" in the news and in stories like those earlier tales of shipwrecks and seafarers which straddled fact and fiction. Often these women maintained their femininity despite their masculine actions, yet also claimed that they had avoided sexual contact with or assault from the crew. Following the aforementioned story of Elizabeth Stephens, the April 14, 1835, issue of the *National Gazette* related the tale of Anne Jane Thornton, hired "at St. Andrews in North America" by an Irish sea captain sailing to London. Though she dressed in sailors' clothes and her skin had been toughened and browned by sun and hard labor, supposedly the sailor who discovered Anne's true nature by catching her mid-bath declared her unexposed skin to be "white as snow," and her crewmates had already been suspicious of her sex due to her refusal to drink grog. Nonetheless, they also deemed her a "capital *seaman*," and her story of 31 months at sea made her "all the go in London."[526] Five years later the story of female sailor Mary Ann Arnold, though more brief, also featured in the *Gazette*, with Mary both "comely" and skilled at seafaring despite her youth.[527] The next month,

[524] See Clare Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble*, 310-312; Karin Wulf, *Not All Wives*, 201-202; Candice Harrison, "'Free Trade and Hucksters Rights,'" 169-177.
[525] For a discussion of several of these women, some of whom traveled to Philadelphia, see Joan Druett, *Hen Frigates: Passion and Peril, Nineteenth Century Women at Sea* (New York: Touchstone/Simon and Schuster, 1998). For a more intimate look at a New England woman who transcended class, race, and national barriers in her second marriage to a Black sea captain after the Civil War, see Martha Elizabeth Hodes, *The Sea Captain's Wife: A True Story of Love, Race, and War in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006).
[526] "Singular Adventures of a Female Sailor," *National Gazette* (Philadelphia, PA), April 14, 1835, 4. Extant sketches and publications about Anne's seafaring years, some housed in the Royal Greenwich Museum, support this claim; see Victoria Syrett, "'A Female Sailor bold': How disguise and daring helped women run away to sea," *Royal Museums Greenwich*, August 17, 2021, https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/blog/library-archive/female-sailor-bold-how-disguise-daring-helped-women-run-away-sea, accessed January 8, 2023.
[527] "Female Sailor," *National Gazette*, September 12, 1840, 2.

"Another Sailor Girl" with no name but higher rank of birth received the same praise for the "singularly romantic affair" of her attempted (though less successful than Anne and Mary's) flight to sea, with similar stories to these three proliferating in the *Gazette, Public Ledger, North American,* and *Philadelphia Inquirer* into the 1850s.[528] In pamphlet form, readers along the American seaboard and beyond read the story of Elizabeth Emmons, who supposedly started her seafaring journey in Boston but traveled across the Atlantic and through Philadelphia before marrying a sea captain and meeting a tragic end in 1841 at the hands of one of his crewmen. The work itself had been published that same year and was already in its second edition, hinting at its popularity.[529] It featured an engraving of Emmons that showed her on a ship in sailor's garb, a small book tucked in her pocket, and also portrayed the eye whose vision she had lost due to an accident before going to sea. Though much more melodramatic and perilous in its treatment of her seafaring adventures, *The Life and Sufferings of Miss Emma Cole* also featured a virtuous woman driven to sea by necessity, and enjoyed its fair share of popularity.[530]

[528] "Another Sailor Girl," *National Gazette*, October 20, 1840, 4; see also "The Female Sailor," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, PA), August 6, 1841, 2, reprinted in *Public Ledger* (Philadelphia, PA), August 7, 1841, 1; "Another Female Sailor," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 26, 1841, 2, reprinted in *Public Ledger*, August 30, 1841, 4; "A Female Sailor," *Public Ledger*, November 29, 1843, 2; a mention of "A Female Sailor Discovered" under "Thrilling Domestic News" in an advertisement for "The Dollar Newspaper," *Public Ledger*, January 31, 1844, 3, and February 2, 1844, 3; "A Curious Freak of a Young Woman," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 20, 1849, 3; "A South Sea Adventure," *North American* (Philadelphia, PA), January 26, 1850, 1; "Female Sailor" in "Local Items," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 19, 1855, 1, and a follow-up in December 22, 1855, 1; unnamed advertisement, *Public Ledger*, January 4, 1856, 3; and "Local Items," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 29, 1856, 1.
[529] *A Sketch of the Life of Elizabeth Emmons, or the Female Sailor,* 2nd ed. (Boston: Graves & Bartlett, 1841).
[530] [Emma Cole Hanson,] *The Life and Sufferings of Miss Emma Cole, being a faithful narrative of her life*, 2nd ed. (Boston: M. Aurelius, 1844).



Figure 5.21. Frontispiece of A Sketch of the Life of Elizabeth Emmons, or the Female Sailor, *2nd ed. (Boston: Graves & Bartlett, 1841).*

This brief glimpse ahead into Philadelphia's antebellum years makes it clear that sailors and the women with whom they formed transactional, sexual and romantic, and familial bonds remained powerful social and cultural forces in Philadelphia and throughout the Atlantic, even as the advent of railroads and steam engines altered their vital role in local, regional, and transnational economies. In many ways, these men and women were not able to control their narratives within public discourse, whether that meant the tropes of popular literature or the legal and social precedent that guided the city's political and religious authorities. Yet the bonds between them also facilitated ways in which they could—and had—made themselves heard.

Business transactions created credit networks and exchanges of personal knowledge that made sailors more than mere strangers to those who bought and sold goods, even if the buyer and seller had never previously met. Those connections in turn facilitated sailors' ability to independently spend their wages, potentially sidestep the forced monopoly of a ship's purser, and seek economic relief from the public welfare when their personal or familial resources ran dry. Sexual and romantic expectations of sailors' conduct, and of the women with whom they entered these relationships, made stories of breadwinners lost at sea, abandoned wives or shipwrecked sailors, and women burdened with either pox or progeny familiar to those who could help them, even if sympathies for these men and women waxed and waned according to specific contexts. Just as stories of female dependent relatives of sailors provided the same sort of sociocultural understanding, seafaring men also reaped the benefits of humanization even if their immediate conduct was socially unacceptable; even the most drunken, licentious sailor theoretically had a mother who loved him.

Just as important as the ability to leverage these relationships for material or physical gain were the intangible benefits of building such varied cross-gender connections. Relationships between sailors and women staved off loneliness; provided pleasure and moments of respite; created space to share common cause and lighten the load of everyday burdens; and gave both parties chances to build fond memories to sustain them when the hardships of life at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder ebbed and flowed. To suggest that in the immediate physical absence of their female friends, family, and loved ones, sailors swiftly formed brand-new bonds of solidarity to replace them ignores the power of these memories and the ways in which sailors' bonds with women guided their forging of new social connections amongst their fellow seafaring laborers. The forecastle was not a vacuum that housed a "community apart," nor was the

waterfront without sailors a "separated sphere"; they were spaces populated by both men and women, present in body and in thought, rife with opportunities to figure out where new members did or did not fit into existing networks of common cause, affection, and kinship.[531] As the lives of Philadelphia's sailors and women repeatedly revealed, these relationships could be strong enough to stretch across an ocean and beyond, and understanding their importance to their participants is vital to comprehending the choices they made in their laboring lives.

[531] Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700–1750* (New York: Cambridge, 1987), 110; Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 59.

Bibliography

Archival Collections

Alms House Managers, Daily Occurrence Docket, 1787-1888. City Archives of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.

Insolvency Petitions and Bonds, 1790-1868. City Archives of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.

Lunacy Dockets, 1781-1824. City Archives of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.

Magdalen Society of Philadelphia Records. Historical Society of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.

Overseers of the Poor, Minutes, 1768-88, City Archives of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.

Guardians of the Poor, Minutes, 1788-1887, City Archives of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.

Sword Family Papers. Historical Society of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.

Philadelphia Newspapers, 1760-1850

Aurora General Advertiser

Democratic Press

The Dollar Newspaper

Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser

Federal Gazette

Franklin Gazette

Gazette of the United States

National Gazette

North American

Pennsylvania Packet

The Philadelphia Evening Post

Philadelphia Inquirer

The Philadelphia Minerva

Philadelphia Repository, or Weekly Register

Poulson's American Daily Advertiser

Public Ledger

Read's Weekly Journal

Weekly Aurora of Philadelphia

Philadelphia City Directories

(in chronological order)

White, Francis. *The Philadelphia Directory*. Philadelphia: Young, Stewart, and M'Culloch, 1785.

Macpherson, John. *Macpherson's directory, for the city and suburbs of Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: n.p., 1785.

Biddle, Clement. *The Philadelphia Directory*. Philadelphia: Jacob Johnson & Co., 1791.

Hardie, James. *The Philadelphia Directory and Register*. Philadelphia: Printed for the author by Jacob Johnson & Co., 1794.

Hogan, Edmund. *The Prospect of Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: Francis & Robert Bailey, 1795.

Stephens, Thomas. *Stephens's Philadelphia Directory for 1796; or, Alphabetical Arrangement.* Philadelphia: Printed for Thomas Stephens by W. Woodward, 1796.

Stafford, Cornelius William. *The Philadelphia Directory, for 1800*. Philadelphia: William W. Woodward, 1800.

Robinson, James. *The Philadelphia Directory, for 1805*. Philadelphia: Printed for the publisher, 1805.

Robinson, James. *The Philadelphia Directory, for 1810*. Philadelphia: Printed for the publisher, 1810.

Robinson, James. *The Philadelphia directory, for 1811*. Philadelphia: Printed for the publisher, 1811.

Aitken, Jane. *Census Directory for 1811*. Philadelphia: Jane Aitken, 1811.

Robinson, James. *The Philadelphia Directory, for 1816*. Philadelphia: Printed for the publisher, 1816.

Paxton, John Adems (J. A.). *The Philadelphia Directory and Register, for 1818*. Philadelphia: E. & R. Parker, 1818.

Paxton, John Adems (J. A.). *The Philadelphia Directory and Register, for 1819*. Philadelphia: E. & R. Parker, 1819.

Whitely, Edward. *The Philadelphia Directory and Register, for 1820*. Philadelphia: McCarty & Davis, 1820.

The Philadelphia Directory and Register, for 1821. Philadelphia: McCarty & Davis, 1821.

Philadelphia Directory and Stranger's Guide for 1825. Philadelphia: Thomas Wilson & Wm. D. Vanbaun, 1825.

Desilver, Robert. *Desilver's Philadelphia Directory and Stranger's Guide, 1830*. Philadelphia: Robert Desilver, 1830.

McElroy's Philadelphia Directory. Philadelphia: A. McElroy & Co., 1850.

Printed Primary Sources

A Collection of Songs, with Some Originals. Dublin: n.p., 1769.

A Guide to the stranger, or Pocket companion for the fancy: containing a list of the gay houses and ladies of pleasure in the city of brotherly love and sisterly affection. Philadelphia: [s.n.], 1849.

A Letter to the Right Honourable the Earl of Sandwich on the Present Situation of Affairs, By a Sailor. London: J. Wilkie and R. Faulder, 1779.

"A lover's lamentation for the Girl he left behind him." Broadside. United States: n.p., 178-?.

A Sketch of the Life of Elizabeth Emmons, or the Female Sailor. 2nd ed. Boston: Graves & Bartlett, 1841.

The American Sailor's Songster. Philadelphia: Fisher and Brother, [1846?].

The American Song Book: Being A New Collection of the Best Patriotic, Military, Naval, Amatory, Quizical and Sentimental Songs, Extant. [New York or Boston?]: Printed for the New-York and Boston book-sellers, 1815.

The American Songster: being a select collection of the most celebrated American, English, Scotch, and Irish songs. New York: Samuel Campbell and Thomas Allen, 1788.

Ashton, John, ed. *Real Sailor Songs.* New York: B. Blom, 1972 [1891].

Baker, Joseph. *The confession of Joseph Baker*. Philadelphia: Printed by Richard Folwell, no. 63, North Front-Street, 1800.

Birch, William Russell. *The City of Philadelphia, in the State of Pennsylvania North America; as it appeared in the Year 1800*. Philadelphia: William Birch, 1800.

Birch, William Russell, and Charles Desilver. *An unfinished house, in Chesnut Street Philadelphia. Built for the late Robert Morris Esqr. / designed & published by W. Birch enamel painter,; republished by Desilver 1841*. Philadelphia, 1841. [Restrike from a Print Designed and Published in 1800] Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2013650034/.

Botsford, Edmund. *Sambo and Toney, A Dialogue between Two Africans in South Carolina. To which is added, A Dialogue between Two Seamen, After a Storm*. Philadelphia: D. Hogan, 1816.

Brown, Andrew. *A Sermon, on the Dangers and Duties of the Seafaring Life; preached before the Protestant Dissenting Congregation, at Halifax; and published at the desire of the Marine Society, in that place, by Andrew Brown D.D., Minister of the Protestant Dissenting Congregation.* Boston: Belknap and Hall, 1793.

Bunker Hill Songster, Containing National and Patriotic Songs, as Sung by the Principal Vocalists Sung by the Principal Vocalists. New York: Murphy, Printer and Publisher, 1850.

Burrell, William. *Medical Advice, Chiefly for the Consideration of Seamen.* New York: Wilson, 1798.

Cardell, William Samuel. *Story of Jack Halyard, the Sailor Boy.* New York: E. Bliss and E. White, 1824.

Carey, George G., ed. *A Sailor's Songbag: An American Rebel in an English Prison, 1777-1779*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976.

Carey, Mathew. *A short account of the malignant fever, lately prevalent in Philadelphia: with a statement of the proceedings that took place on the subject in different parts of the United States*. Philadelphia: Printed by the author, 1793.

The Charmer; being a select collection of English, Scots' and American songs, including the modern: with a selection of favourite toasts and sentiments. Philadelphia: W. Spotswood, T. Seddon, and Rice & Co., 1790.

[Chetwood, William Rufus.] *The Voyages and Adventures of Captain Robert Boyle, In Several Parts of the World. Intermixed with the Story of Mrs. Villars, An English Lady, with whom he made his surprising Escape from Barbary: The History of an Italian Captive, and the Life of Don Pedro Aquilio, &c. Full of various and amazing Turns of Fortune. To which is added The Voyage, Shipwreck, and Miraculous Preservation of Richard Castelman, Gent., With a Description of The City of Philadelphia, and the Country of Pensilvania* [sic]. 10th ed. [Philadelphia?]: n.p., 1781.

The Cries of Philadelphia; Ornamented with Elegant Wood Cuts. Philadelphia: Johnson and Warren, No. 147, Market Street, 1810.

Cross, J. C. *The Purse, or Benevolent Tar: A Musical Drama.* London: J. Barker, 1794.

Cumberland, Richard. *The Sailor's Daughter: A Comedy in Five Acts.* New York: David Longworth, 1804.

Dibdin, Charles. *A Collection of Songs, selected from the work of Mr. Dibdin.* Philadelphia: J. Bioren, 1799.

Dibdin, Charles. *Dibdin's museum, being a collection of the newest and most admired songs*. Philadelphia: R. Aitken, 1797.

English Songster, or John Bull's Musical Horn. New York and Philadelphia: Turner & Fisher, 18[??].

Female Seamen's Friend Society. *Tenth Annual Report, from the Origin, and Fifth Since the Reorganization of the Female Seamen's Friend Society of Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: William Stavely & Co., 1842.

The Festival of Mirth, and American Tar's Delight. New York: Thomas B. Jansen, 1800.

Fisher, Joshua. *To the merchants & insurers of the City of Philadelphia this chart of Delaware Bay, from the sea-coast to Reedy-Island containing a full and exact description of the shores* [map]. Philadelphia: Engraved by Jas Turner, and printed by John Davis, for, and sold by the author in Front-Street, 1756.

Flavel, John. *Navigation Spiritualized; or a New Compass for Seamen, Consisting of XXXII Points; of Pleasant Observations, Profitable Applications, and Serious Reflections, All Concluded with So Many Spiritual Poems.* Newburyport: Edmund M. Blunt, 1796 [1677].

The Frisky Songster. London: n.p., 1802.

The Glasgow Lasses Garland. Newcastle?: n.p., 1765.

Green, Ashbel. *Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Eastburn, stated preacher in the Mariner's church, Philadelphia.* Philadelphia: G. W. Mentz, 1828.

[Hanson, Emma Cole.] *The Life and Sufferings of Miss Emma Cole, being a faithful narrative of her life*. 2nd ed. Boston: M. Aurelius, 1844.

[Hawker, Edward.] *Statement respecting the prevalence of certain immoral practices in His Majesty's Navy*. London: Ellerton and Henderson, 1821.

Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial times to 1970. Bicentennial edition. Washington: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1975.

Hitchcock, Tim, Robert Shoemaker, Clive Emsley, Sharon Howard and Jamie McLaughlin, et al. *The Old Bailey Proceedings Online, 1674-1913*. http://www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 7.0, 24 March 2012.

Joyce, John, and Peter Matthias. *Confession of John Joyce, Alias Davis, Who Was Executed on Monday, the 14th of March, 1808. For the Murder of Mrs. Sarah Cross; With an Address to the Public and People of Colour. Together with the Substance of the Trial, and the Address of Chief Justice Tilghman, on His Condemnation*. Philadelphia: Printed by Richard Allen for the Benefit of Bethel Church, 1808.

Lee, Samuel Holden Parsons. *Medical Advice to Seamen.* New London: Samuel Green, 1795.

The Narrative of Captain David Woodard and Four Seamen, Who Lost Their Ship While in a Boat at Sea, and Surrendered Themselves Up to the Malays, in the Island of Celebes. London: J. Johnson, 1804.

Longueville, Peter. *The Hermit; or, the Unparalleled Sufferings, and Surprising Adventures, of Philip Quarll, an Englishman.* Boston: Belknap, 1795 [1727].

The mariner's dictionary, or American seaman's vocabulary of technical terms, and sea phrases, used in the construction, equipment, management, and military operations, of ships and vessels of all descriptions. Washington City and Philadelphia: Duane, 1805.

Mitchell, James T., and Henry Flanders, Commissioners, eds. *The Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania from 1682 to 1801, compiled under the Authority of the Act of May 19, 1887*. Philadelphia: Wm Stanley Ray, State Printer of Philadelphia, 1899.

Narratives of Calamitous and Interesting Shipwrecks, &c.: with Authentic Particulars of the Sufferings of the Crews, published by Mathew Carey. Philadelphia: Printed by A. Small, 1810.

Nautical Songster, or Seaman's Companion. Baltimore: Henry S. Keatinge, 1798.

Norman, John. *A plan of the city of Philadelphia*. [Philadelphia, ?, 1777.] Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/74692113/.

O'Keeffe, John. *Wild Oats: or, The Strolling Gentleman, A Comedy, in Five Acts*. Philadelphia: Matthew Carey, 1793.

Patriotic Medley. New York: Jacob Johnkin, 1800.

The Port Folio, for June 1817. Philadelphia: Harrison Hall, 1817.

Ritter, Abraham. *Philadelphia and Her Merchants, as Constituted Fifty @ Seventy Years Ago: Illustrated by Diagrams of the River Front and Portraits of Some of the Prominent Occupants, Together with Sketches of Character and Incidents and Anecdotes of the Day*. Philadelphia: Published by the author, 1860.

Rowson, Susanna. “New Song, sung by Mr. Darley, Jun. in the pantomimical dance, called the Sailor's landlady.” Broadside. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1794.

“Rules to Regulate the Work of the Journeymen Shipwrights, Joiners, Caulkers, and Mast Makers of Philadelphia,” circular. Philadelphia: n.p., 1985. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC Board of Navy Commissioners, Letters Received, RG 45, E314 Volume 91.

Rush, Benjamin, M.D. *An Account of the Bilious remitting Yellow Fever, as it appeared in the City of Philadelphia, in the year 1793*. Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1794.

“The Sailor’s Frolic, or, Life in the East.” Pamphlet. n.p., 18??. https://prints.itma.ie/es_pdfs/1988-bs.pdf

The Sailors Medley: A Collection of the Most Admired Sea and Other Songs. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1800.

“The Second Tale of Allen Lorburne.” *The London Magazine*. London: Baldwin, Craddock, and Joy, 1822.

Simpson, Stephen. *Biography of Stephen Girard, with his Will Affixed*. Philadelphia: Thomas L. Bonsal, 1832.

Soderlund, Jean R., ed. *William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania, 1680-1684: A Documentary History.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983.

Songs, Naval and Military. New York: James Rivington, 1779.

The Songster's Companion. Brattleborough, VT: Printed for the book-sellers, 1815.

The Syren: A Choice Collection of Sea, Hunting and Other Songs. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1800.

“The Tempest.” Broadside. Philadelphia?: n.p., 1805?.

To the Delaware Pilots and To Capt. Ayres Philadelphia. Philadelphia, 1773. Pdf. https://www.loc.gov/item/rbpe.14303100/.

Watson, John F. *Annals of Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania, in the olden time; being a collection of memoirs, anecdotes, and incidents of the city and its inhabitants, and of the earliest settlements of the inland part of Pennsylvania*. Philadelphia: Edwin S. Stuart, 1884.

Secondary Sources

“18th Century Street Names.” *Early Philadelphia, 1682-1800.* Accessed August 6, 2019. http://www.philahistory.net/streets.html.

Adkins, Roy and Lesley. *Jack Tar*. New York: Little, Brown Book Group, 2011.

Alexander, John K. "The Philadelphia Numbers Game: An Analysis of Philadelphia's Eighteenth-Century Population." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 98, No. 3 (July 1974): 314-324.

Anderson, Annie. "Tenderloin." *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*. 2016. https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/tenderloin/.

Armitage, David, and Michael J. Braddick, eds. *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Bailyn, Bernard. *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005.

Benemann, William E. *Male-Male Intimacy in Early America: Beyond Romantic Friendships*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2014 [New York: Harrington Park Press, 2006].

Benemann, William E. *Unruly Desires: American Sailors and Homosexualities in the Age of Sail.* n.p.: William Benemann, 2019.

"Biographical Sketch." Edmund Botsford Correspondence, 1785-1819, Furman University. Accessed January 5, 2021. https://libguides.furman.edu/special-collections/edmund-botsford-corresp/biography

Bolster, W. Jeffrey. *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Bolster, W. Jeffrey. "Letters by African American Sailors, 1799-1814." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 64, No. 1 (January 2007): 167-182.

Boydston, Jeanne. *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Brandt, Susan H. *Women Healers: Gender, Authority, and Medicine in Early Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022.

Branson, Susan. *Dangerous to Know: Women, Crime, and Notoriety in the Early Republic*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

Branson, Susan. "Women and the Family Economy in the Early Republic: The Case of Elizabeth Meredith." In *Family and Society in American History*, edited by Joseph Hawes and Elizabeth Nybakken. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001.

Brewington, Marion V. "Maritime Philadelphia, 1609-1837." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 63, no. 2 (April 1939): 93-117.

British Tars, 1740-1790. https://www.britishtars.com.

Brown, Kenneth L. “Stephen Girard's Bank.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 66 no. 1 (January 1942): 29-55.

Brunsman, Denver. *The Evil Necessity: British Naval Impressment in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World.* Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013.

Burdick, Kim. “Gunpowder Industry.” *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*. 2015. https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/gunpowder-industry.

Burg, B. R. “Sodomy, Masturbation, and Courts-Martial in the Antebellum American Navy.” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 23 no. 1 (January 2014): 53-78.

Burgard, Anna Marlis. “Sailors’ Valentines Were Painstakingly Crafted, But Not by Sailors.” *Atlas Obscura*. February 14, 2019. https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/sailors-valentines.

Campbell, Paul. “War of 1812.” *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*. 2014. https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/war-of-1812/.

Carlisle, Marcia. “Disorderly City, Disorderly Women: Prostitution in Ante-Bellum Philadelphia.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 110, no. 4 (October 1986): 549-568.

Catterall, Douglas, and Jodi Campbell, eds. *Women in Port: Gendering Communities, Economies, and Social Networks in Atlantic Port Cities, 1500-1800*. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Chappell, William (W.). *The ballad literature and popular music of the olden time: a history of the ancient songs, ballads, and of the dance tunes of England, with numerous anecdotes and entire ballads*. London: Chappell & Co., 1871.

Cleary, Patricia. “‘She Will Be in the Shop’: Women's Sphere of Trade in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia and New York.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 119, no. 3 (July 1995): 181-202.

Clement, Priscilla Ferguson. *Welfare and the Poor in the Nineteenth-century City: Philadelphia, 1800-1854*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1985.

Cordingly, David. *Seafaring Women: Adventures of Pirate Queens, Female Stowaways, and Sailors' Wives.* New York: Penguin Random House, 2002.

Cott, Nancy F. *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977.

Crane, Elaine Forman. *Ebb Tide in New England: Women, Seaports, and Social Change 1630-1800.* Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998.

Creighton, Margaret S., and Lisa Norling, eds. *Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Damiano, Sarah, *To Her Credit: Women, Finance, and the Law in Eighteenth-Century New England Cities.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021.

de Groot, Jerome. "International Federation for Public History Plenary Address: On Genealogy." *The Public Historian* Vol. 37 No. 3 (August 2015): 102-127.

DiMeo, Mike. "Stephen Girard: Merchant, Mariner, Banker, Philanthropist, Humanitarian, Patriot." Independence Hall Association, *UShistory.org*. Accessed January 8, 2023. https://www.ushistory.org/people/girard.htm.

Ditz, Toby L. "Shipwrecked; or, Masculinity Imperiled: Mercantile Representations of Failure and the Gendered Self in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia." *The Journal of American History* 81, no. 1 (June 1994): 51-80.

Doerflinger, Thomas M. *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

Dorwart, Jeffrey M. "Shipbuilding and Shipyards." *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*. 2013. https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/shipbuilding-and-shipyards/.

Druett, Joan. *Hen Frigates: Passion and Peril, Nineteenth Century Women at Sea.* New York: Touchstone/Simon and Schuster, 1998.

Dugaw, Dianne. "'Rambling Female Sailors': The Rise and Fall of the Seafaring Heroine." *International Journal of Maritime History* IV no. 1 (June 1992): 179-194.

Dunbar, Erica Armstrong. *A Fragile Freedom: African American Women and Emancipation in the Antebellum City*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

Dye, Ira. "The Tattoos of Early American Seafarers, 1796-1818." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133 no. 4 (Dec. 1989): 520-554.

Estes, J. Worth, and Billy G. Smith, eds. *A Melancholy Scene of Devastation: The Public Response to the 1793 Philadelphia Yellow Fever Epidemic*. Canton, MA: Science History Publications/USA, for the College of Physicians of Philadelphia and the Library Company of Philadelphia, 1997.

Finger, Simon. "'A Flag of Defyance at the Masthead': The Delaware River Pilots and the Sinews of Philadelphia's Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century." *Early American Studies* 8, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 386-409.

Frankel, Jeffrey A. "The 1807-1809 Embargo Against Great Britain." *The Journal of Economic History* 42, no. 2 (June 1982): 291-308.

Fur, Gunlög. *A Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters Among the Delaware Indians*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.

Gamble, Robert J. "'For Lucre of Gain and in Contempt of the Laws': Itinerant Traders and the Politics of Mobility in the Eighteenth-Century Mid-Atlantic," *Early American Studies* 13 no. 4, Special Issue: Ligaments: Everyday Connections of Colonial Economies (Fall 2015): 836-855.

García, Magaly Rodríguez, Lex Heerma van Voss, and Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, eds. *Selling Sex in the City: A Global History of Prostitution, 1600s–2000s*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2017.

Gilfoyle, Timothy J. *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1994 [1992].

Gilje, Paul A. *Free Trade and Sailors' Rights in the War of 1812*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

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

Gilje, Paul A. *To Swear Like a Sailor: Maritime Culture in America, 1750-1850.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Goldin, Claudia. "The Economic Status of Women in the Early Republic: Quantitative Evidence." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary* 16, no. 2 (Winter 1986): 375-404.

Greenhill, Pauline. "'Neither a Man nor a Maid': Sexualities and Gendered Meanings in Cross-Dressing Ballads." *The Journal of American Folklore* 108 no. 428 (Spring 1995): 156-177.

Guide to the Mariners' Church (Philadelphia, Pa.) Records. Presbyterian Historical Society. Accessed January 8, 2023. https://www.history.pcusa.org/collections/research-tools/guides-archival-collections/rg-124

Hardwick, Julie, Sarah M. S. Pearsall, and Karin Wulf. "Introduction: Centering Families in Atlantic Histories." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 70, No. 2, Centering Families in Atlantic Histories (April 2013): 205-224.

Hargreaves, David J., and Adrian C. North. "The Functions of Music in Everyday Life: Redefining the Social in Music Psychology." Psychology of Music 27, no. 1 (April 1999): 3-104.

Harrison, Candice L. "'Free Trade and Hucksters' Rights!': Envisioning Economic Democracy in the Early Republic." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 137, no. 2 (April 2013): 147-177.

Hartigan-O'Connor, Ellen. *The Ties that Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

Harvey, O. L. "The 10-Hour Day in the Philadelphia Navy Yard, 1835-36." *Monthly Labor Review* 85, No. 3 (March 1962): 258-260.

Heath, Andrew. "Street Numbering." *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*. 2018 https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/street-numbering/.

Hemphill, Katie M. *Bawdy City: Commercial Sex and Regulation in Baltimore, 1790-1915.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Hepp, John, and Charlene Mires. "Railroad Suburbs," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*. 2019. https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/railroad-suburbs/.

Hessinger, Rodney. "Victim of Seduction or Vicious Woman?: Conceptions of the Prostitute at the Philadelphia Magdalen Society, 1800-1850." *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic* Studies 66, Explorations in Early American Culture (1999): 201-222.

Hix, Lisa. "From Whale Jaws to Corsets: How Sailors' Love Tokens Got Into Women's Underwear." *Collector's Weekly*. April 29, 2015. https://www.collectorsweekly.com/articles/how-sailors-love-tokens-got-into-womens-underwear.

Hobsbawm, Eric. "The General Crisis of the European Economy in the 17th Century." *Past & Present* 5 no. 1 (November 1954): 33-53.

Hobson, Barbara Meil. *Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990 [1987].

Hoerder, Dirk. "Laboring Americans and the American Revolution." *Labor History* 24 (Summer 1983): 414-439.

Horsman, Reginald. "The Paradox Of Dartmoor Prison." *American Heritage Magazine* 26 no. 2 (February 1975), https://www.americanheritage.com/paradox-dartmoor-prison.

Hugill, Stan. *Shanties and Sailors' Songs.* New York: F.A. Praeger, 1969.

Irvin, Benjamin H. "Tar, Feathers, and the Enemies of American Liberties, 1768-1776." *The New England Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (June 2003): 197-238.

Jennings, Francis. *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010 [New York: Norton, 1975].

Jennings, Walter W. "The Agitation for the Repeal of the Embargo Act." *Social Science* 3, no. 3 (May, June, July, 1928): 217-246.

Jensen, Oskar Cox, David Kennerley, and Ian Newman, eds. *Charles Dibdin and Late Georgian Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Kahan, Michael B. "'There are Plenty of Women on the Street': The Landscape of Commercial Sex in Progressive-Era Philadelphia, 1910-1918." *Historical Geography* 40 (2012): 39-60.

Kerber, Linda K. "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment-An American Perspective." *American Quarterly* 28, No. 2, *Special Issue: An American Enlightenment* (Summer 1976): 87-205.

Kerber, Linda K. *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America.* Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute and University of North Carolina Press, 1980.

Klepp, Susan E. "Demography in Early Philadelphia, 1690-1860." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133, no. 2, Symposium on the Demographic History of the Philadelphia Region, 1600-1860 (June 1989): 85-111.

Knight, Franklin W., and Peggy K. Liss, eds. *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991.

Korostoff, Thomson. "Ill-Fame on Blackberry Alley: Prostitution and Sport in 19th-Century Philadelphia." *Undergraduate Humanities Forum 2015-2016: Sex*, University of Pennsylvania Scholarly Commons (May 2016): 1-17.

Kyriakodis, Harry. "The Floating Church and Its Successors Along the Delaware." *Hidden City: Exploring Philadelphia's Urban Landscape*. February 21, 2014. https://hiddencityphila.org/2014/02/the-floating-church-and-its-successors-along-the-delaware/.

Kyriakodis, Harry. *Philadelphia's Lost Waterfront.* Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011.

Land, Isaac. *War, Nationalism, and the British Sailor, 1750-1850.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Lavery, Brian. *Nelson's Navy: The Ships, Men and Organisation 1793-1815*. Revised ed. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2012.

Lehman, J. David. "'The Most Disastrous and Never-to-Be-Forgotten Year': The Panic of 1819 in Philadelphia." *Pennsylvania Legacies* 11 no. 1 (May 2011): 6-11.

Lemisch, Jesse. "Jack Tar in the Streets: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (July 1968): 371-407.

Lemisch, Jesse. *Jack Tar vs. John Bull: The Role of New York's Seamen in Precipitating the Revolution*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1997.

Lerner, Gerda. “The Lady and the Mill Girl: Changes in the Status of Women in the Age of Jackson, 1800-1840.” *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* 10 (Spring 1969): 5-14.

Lewis, Jan. “The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (Oct. 1987): 689-721.

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

Lyons, Clare A. *Sex among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender and Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Macdonald, Janet. *Feeding Nelson’s Navy: The True Story of Food at Sea in the Georgian Era.* London: Greenhill Books, 2006.

Magra, Christopher J. *The Fisherman’s Cause: Atlantic Commerce and Maritime Dimensions of the American Revolution*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Magra, Christopher J. *Poseidon’s Curse: British Naval Impressment and Atlantic Origins of the American Revolution*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Manion, Jen. *Female Husbands: A Trans History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Marsh, Dawn G. *A Lenape among the Quakers: The Life of Hannah Freeman.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014.

Martin, Asa Earl. “The Temperance Movement in Pennsylvania Prior to the Civil War.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 49, no. 3 (1925): 195-230.

Matson, Cathy. “Women’s Economies in North America before 1820: Special Forum Introduction.” *Early American Studies* 4 no. 2 (Fall 2006): 271-290.

Matthews, Glenna. *"Just a Housewife": The Rise and Fall of Domesticity in America*. New York: Oxford, 1987.

McCoy, Michael B. “‘The High Price of Living’: The Lives of Insolvent Laborers in Jacksonian-Era Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, 1815–1842,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 84, no. 2 (Spring 2017): 171-213.

Miller, Fredric M. “Philadelphia: Immigrant City.” *Balch Online Resources*, Historical Society of Philadelphia. Accessed January 8, 2023. http://www2.hsp.org/exhibits/Balch%20resources/phila_ellis_island.html.

Morales, Lisa R. “The Financial History of the War of 1812.” PhD dissertation. University of North Texas, 2009.

More Than a List of Crew Project. "Seafarers Under Steam: 'Each Task Has Its Man, and Each Man His Place.'" *Maritime History Archive*, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Accessed January 8, 2023. https://mha.mun.ca/mha/mlc/articles/introducing-merchant-seafaring/each-task-has-its-man.php.

Munden, Christopher. "A Brief History of Early Publishing in Philadelphia." phindie: independent coverage of Philadelphia theater and arts. April 29, 2010. http://phindie.com/a-brief-history-of-early-publishing-in-philadelphia/.

Murphy, Jim. *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793*. New York: Clarion Books, 2003.

Nash, Gary B. *First City: Philadelphia and the Forging of Historical Memory*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.

Nash, Gary B. *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Nash, Gary B. "Slaves and Slaveowners in Colonial Philadelphia." *William and Mary Quarterly* 20 (April 1973): 223-256.

Nash, Gary B. *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979.

Nash, Gary B. *The Urban Crucible: The Northern Seaports and the Origins of the American Revolution*. Abridged ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Nash, Gary B. "Urban Wealth and Poverty in in Pre-Revolutionary America." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6 (Spring 1976): 545-584.

Nepa, Stephen. "Restaurants." *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*. 2016. https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/restaurants.

Nepa, Stephen. "Taverns." *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*. 2013. https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/taverns/.

Newman, Richard S. *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers*. New York: NYU Press, 2009.

Newman, Simon P. *Embodied History: The Lives of the Poor in Early Philadelphia.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003.

Norling, Lisa. *Captain Ahab Had a Wife: New England Women and the Whalefishery, 1720-1870.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

Norton, Mary Beth. "Eighteenth-Century American Women in Peace and War: The Case of the Loyalists." *William & Mary Quarterly* 33 (1976): 386-409.

Norton, Mary Beth. *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800.* New York: Little, Brown, 1980.

Oestreicher, Richard. "The Counted and the Uncounted: The Occupational Structure of Early American Cities." *Journal of Social History* 28 no. 2 (Winter 1994): 351-361.

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. "1681-1776: The Quaker Province." Pennsylvania History. Last modified August 26, 2015. http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/pa-history/1681-1776.html.

Perl-Rosenthal, Nathan. *Citizen Sailors: Becoming American in the Age of Revolution.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015.

Powell, J.H. *Bring Out Your Dead: The Great Plague of Yellow Fever in Philadelphia in 1793.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993 [1949].

Rediker, Marcus. *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700–1750*. New York: Cambridge, 1987.

Rockman, Seth. *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009.

Rodger, N. A. M. *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy*. New York: Collins, 1986.

Rogers, Alan. "A Sailor 'By Necessity': The Life of Moses Adams, 1803-1837." *Journal of the Early Republic* Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring 1991): 19-50.

Scharf, John Thomas, and Thompson Westcott. *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884.* Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Company, 1884.

Schweitzer, Mary M. "The Spatial Organization of Federalist Philadelphia, 1790." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24, no. 1 (Summer, 1993): 31-57.

Seaborn, Laurel. "Gamming Chairs and Gimballed Beds: Seafaring Women on Board Nineteenth-Century Ships." *Journal of Maritime Archaeology* 12 no. 1 (April 2017): 71-90.

Senelick, Laurence. "Mollies or Men of Mode? Sodomy and the Eighteenth-Century London Stage." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1 no. 1 (July 1990): 33-67.

Shaiman, Laurence. "The History of Imprisonment for Debt and Insolvency Laws in Pennsylvania as They Evolved from the Common Law." *The American Journal of Legal History* 4, no. 3 (July 1960): 205-225.

Shammas, Carole. "English Inheritance Law and Its Transfer to the Colonies." *The American Journal of Legal History* 31, No. 2 (April 1987): 145-163.

Shammas, Carole. "The Female Social Structure of Philadelphia in 1775." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 107, no. 1 (Jan. 1983): 69-83.

Smith, Billy G. *The "Lower Sort": Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750-1800.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994.

Smith, Billy G. *Ship of Death: A Voyage That Changed the Atlantic World*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

Smith, Billy G., and Paul Sivitz. "Identifying and Mapping Ethnicity in Philadelphia in the Early Republic." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 140, no. 3, Immigration and Ethnicity in Pennsylvania History (October 2016): 393-411.

Smith, Billy G., and Paul Sivitz. *Yellow Fever Epidemic, 1793* [map]. *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*. Accessed August 6, 2019. https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/philadelphia-and-its-people-in-maps-the-1790s/slide11/.

Smith, Robert F. "Machining and Machinists." *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia.* 2017. https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/machining-and-machinists/.

Soderlund, Jean R. "Women in Eighteenth-Century Pennsylvania: Toward a Model of Diversity." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 115, no. 2 (April 1991): 163-183.

Stansell, Christine. *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1987 (New York: Knopf, 1986).

Stark, Suzanne. *Female Tars: Women Aboard Ship in the Age of Sail*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2017.

Stevens, Jr., Edward. "The Anatomy of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century United States." In *National Literacy Campaigns: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, R.F. Arnove and H.J. Graff, eds. Springer Science & Business Media, 1987.

Taplin, Theresa Altieri. "Philadelphia Pepper Pot." *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*. 2020. https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/philadelphia-pepper-pot.

Teeters, Negley K. "The Early Days of the Magdalen Society of Philadelphia." *Social Service Review* 30 no. 2 (June 1956): 158-167.

Thompson, E. P. *The Making of the English Working Class*. New York: Pelican, 1968.

Thompson, Peter. *Rum Punch and Revolution: Taverngoing and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982.

Vickers, Daniel. "Beyond Jack Tar." *William and Mary Quarterly* 50, no. 2, Early American History: Its Past and Future (April 1993): 418-424.

Vickers, Daniel. *Farmers and Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1850*. University of North Carolina Press, 1994.

Vickers, Daniel, with Vince Walsh. *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005.

Waciega, Lisa Wilson. "A 'Man of Business': The Widow of Means in Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1750-1850." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44 no. 1 (Jan. 1987): 40-64.

Weaver, Karol K. "'Painful Leisure' and 'Awful Business': Female Death Workers in Pennsylvania." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 140 no. 1 (January 2016): 31-55.

Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860." *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2, part 1 (Summer 1966): 151-174.

Wilkinson, Hazel. "*The Voyage of Richard Castelman* (1726): A New Document for Transatlantic Literary Studies." *The Review of English Studies* 70, no. 295 (June 2019): 467-488.

Wilson, Lisa. *Life After Death: Widows in Pennsylvania, 1750-1850*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992.

Winch, Julie. *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Wolfinger, James. "African American Migration." *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, 2013. https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/african-american-migration/.

Woloson, Wendy A. "In Hock: Pawning in Early America." *Journal of the Early Republic* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 35-81.

Wulf, Karin. "Assessing Gender: Taxation and the Evaluation of Economic Viability in Late Colonial Philadelphia," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 121 no. 3 (July 1997): 201-235.

Wulf, Karin. *Not All Wives: Women of Colonial Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005 [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000].

Wulf, Karin. "Women and Families in Early (North) America and the Wider (Atlantic) World." *History Compass* 8 no. 3 (2010): 238-247.

Zagarri, Rosemarie. *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.