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THE EVANGELICALS' WESTERN VISION:

UNION, EMIGRATION, AND EMPIRE IN THE LONG CIVIL WAR ERA

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THE EVANGELICALS' WESTERN VISION:

UNION, EMIGRATION, AND EMPIRE IN THE LONG CIVIL WAR ERA

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

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ABSTRACT

This project examines the nineteenth century emigration aid movement by which northern evangelical reformers subsidized westward expansion. Settlers used subsidies to defray the cost of transportation and import the foundations of communities, including presses, churches, and schools. Reformers used emigrant aid in an attempt to build the ideal western society, one that would reflect the political and religious obligations that they saw as central to the survival of the Union. Believing they could transform the West into a free-soil, free-labor, evangelical example for the nation, reformers used emigrant aid as a vehicle to implement their vision of a virtuous society.

Although reformers had many concerns about the West, including foreign immigration, religious plurality, and racial diversity, these men and women were initially successful by framing their concerns in the language of free labor and republicanism. After the Civil War, reformers could no longer unite through their opposition to slavery. Charitable donors were less willing to fund emigration schemes when there was no immediate political threat to the Union. Although westerners had always resisted the paternalism of the Northeast, they also increasingly had more power to implement their own plans for the region.

This project compares the settlement movements of California Gold Rushers, Latter-day Saints in Utah, Orphan Train emigrants, free-state settlers in antebellum Kansas, and the Exodusters. It shows that colonization was not the result of a singular vision of Manifest Destiny but a product of debates among reformers and westerners. The emigration aid movement demonstrates the many complicated layers of the American empire, as the state, the reformer, and the emigrant all vied for control over the West.

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I. Introduction: Emigrant Aid and American Empire

In 1835, Reverend Lyman Beecher toured the Atlantic Coast on a speaking engagement, where audiences reveled in his warning—the settlement of the American West could spell the end of Republic as they knew it. In what he would later publish as a popular tract titled *A Plea for the West*, Beecher argued that the "religious and political destiny of our nation is to be decided in the West."[1] He feared that as the "young empire" rushed quickly into "giant manhood," its rapid settlement would add a dangerous faction to the Union. If the West did not grow up under the influence of New England, the region could be the ruin of the nation. "The conflict which is to decide the destiny of the West," Beecher warned, would be a battle "between despotism and liberty." Despite the region's threat to the Union, Beecher promised that there was still hope. If the West embraced the republican tradition of the North, Beecher predicted that the it could yet become "the joy of the nation—the joy of the whole earth, as she rises in the majesty of her intelligence and benevolence, and enterprise, for the emancipation of the world."[2]

In the nineteenth century, northern evangelical Protestants agonized over how to effect national moral, societal, and political reform.[3] Motivated by their anxiety over the expansion of slavery and other threats to republicanism, including religious plurality and urban growth, these

[1] This tract so fully summed up the Northern evangelical opinion about the West that historian John C. Pinheiro calls it part of the "Beecherite Synthesis" which crystalized Protestant anxiety about the West. John C. Pinheiro, *Missionaries of Republicanism: A Religious History of the Mexican-American War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[2] Lyman Beecher, *A Plea for the West* (Cincinnati: Truman & Smith, 1835), 10-11.

[3] As Richard Carwardine argues, evangelical Protestants were among the principle shapers of American political culture in the mid-19th century. As Michael F. Holt and William E. Gienapp demonstrate, the fear among evangelicals of Catholics was a major factor in breaking up the second party system. Carwardine argues that this break up was the result of politicians' perceived lack of Protestant fiber in defending the republic against Catholics, drunkards, and slaveholders. Holt demonstrates that the Republican incorporation of anti-Catholicism allowed their success on a national stage. Richard Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1997); William E. Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1983).

reformers also saw a dire need to reform the West.[4] Northern reformers feared that the addition of western territories could sow the seeds of national disunion, but hoped that by controlling emigration, they could make the West reflect their values. Reformers applied the principles of imperialism to the western half of the nation, reasoning that if the right types of settlers controlled institutions in the new states, the region would serve as an extension of the North and bind the nation together.[5]

Emigrant aid was an essential component of the nineteenth century reform movement. Reformers used emigrant aid to fund westward expansion for certain settlers in hopes that they could build an ideal western society, one that would reflect the political and religious obligations that they saw as central to the republican experiment. They used joint-stock corporations and charitable donations to subsidize westward expansion for settlers, who used this it to defray the cost of transportation and establish presses, churches, and schools. Northern reformers envisioned the West as a virgin land, a place untouched by humans where they could create a new society.[6] This new western society would bind the Union together under the principles of

[4] The slave power idea was the belief among northerners in the antebellum period that supporters of slavery held immense power in the federal government. Eric Foner marks the repeal of the Missouri Compromise as the moment in which some northerners came to believe in the slave power, which Republicans would not fully accept until after the Dred Scott decision of 1857. *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 97. Leonard Richards argues that this hostility to the slave power was the common ground by which the Republican and Free-Soil parties came together. Leonard L. Richards, *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000). Corey Brooks demonstrates that anti-slavery third parties made effective inroads in the 1850s by their promotion of the slave power idea. Corey M. Brooks, *Liberty Power: Antislavery Third Parties and the Transformation of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

[5] As Elizabeth R. Varon argues in *Disunion!: The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789-1859* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), the idea of disunion invoked fear of the dissolution of the republic and a failure of the founding fathers to establish a lasting representative government. Varon argues that the idea of Union had a "transcendent, mystical quality as the object of…patriotic devotion and civic religion." Gary Gallagher similarly proves that loyal Americans saw the preservation of the Union as "the only hope for democracy in a western world that had fallen more deeply into the stifling embrace of oligarchy since the failed European revolutions of the 1840s." Gary Gallagher, *The Union War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 2.

[6] Conversations about the mythic West in Western history, began with Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950). Smith's work identified the "Myth of the Garden," which Eastern promoters harnessed to portray the West as ideal to both agricultural and democracy. Smith argued that the image of a "vast and constantly growing agricultural society in the interior of the

free labor and evangelicalism. A union bound together by emigration networks, moral standards, and free labor politics, they reasoned, would maintain the principles of the republic set out by the founding fathers. Believing they could transform the West into a free-soil, free-labor, evangelical example for the nation, reformers used emigrant aid as a vehicle to implement their vision of a good society.

Emigrant aid connected the East and West as reformers promoted their vision of republicanism throughout the nineteenth century. Westward expansion was not a bottom-up project of individualism, but a movement that relied on extensive planning by northern evangelicals.[7] Westerners remained tied to eastern political and religious debates, as middle-class cultural elites used their investment to influence where emigrants settled, how they voted, and what types of institutions they established. The American empire was also not the top-down

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continent became one of the dominant symbols" in nineteenth century society—a collective representation that defined the promise of American life. The East came to see the West as a safety valve that would protect the rich from the poor. This safety valve was an "imaginative construction" based on faith in American exceptionalism. Other work on the mythic West includes Robert G. Athearn *The Mythic West in Twentieth Century America* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1986), William F. Deverell, "To Loosen the Safety Valve: Eastern Workers and Western Lands," *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Aug. 1988), 269-285, Richard Slotkin *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), David M. Wrobel *Promised Lands: Promotion, Memory, and the Creation of the American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), Louis Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and the Wild West Show* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005).

[7] The narrative of the individualism of westward expansion persists implicitly, if only because of the relative lack of attention paid to the methods of emigration. This is the result of the bifurcation of the topic into two categories—the journey West and the story of the development of the West. Work on overland emigration was classically focused on social history—minute details of day-to-day life. Although these narratives sometimes gesture toward communalism, they often focus on cooperative events on the trails, not planned cooperative emigration. See John D. Unruh Jr., *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans Mississippi West, 1840-1860* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1979); John Mack Faragher, *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979). In other narratives, scholars investigate the effect of Western settlement, leaving the history of emigrants before they were westerners unexplored. See Robert G. Athearn, *In Search of Canaan: Black migration to Kansas, 1879-80* (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1978), Robert V. Hine, *Community on the American Frontier: Separate but Not Alone* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), Josiah Royce, *Race Questions, Provincialism, and Other American Problem* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908). Part of the problem is simply that the New Western history took a decided turn away from nineteenth century social history, although there are notable exceptions. See Anne Hyde, "Transients and Stickers: The Problem of Community in the American West" in William Deverell, ed. *A Companion to the American West* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2004); Frederick C. Luebke, *European Immigrants in the American West: Community Histories* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), vii.

project of the state, or a heavy-handed importation of northern culture. Instead of perfectly replicating the societal hierarchies valued by reformers, emigrant aid allowed settlers to create their own types of society in the West. The emigration aid movement demonstrates the many complicated layers of the American empire, as the state, the reformer, and the emigrant all vied for control over the West.

The reformers who promoted emigrant aid were inspired by the rise of liberal Christianity in the Second Great Awakening. Adherents to liberal Christian denominations, such as Unitarianism and Methodism, these men and women believed that humanity was not predestined to damnation but could prove itself worthy of salvation, a concept known as Arminianism.[8] Charles and John Wesley popularized the concept in Methodism, and it was later adopted by revivalists such as Lyman Beecher and Charles Finney. Arminianism posited that every person had the free will to overcome original sin, which made conversion central to the evangelical message. Whereas in Calvinism human souls were subject to predestination and no amount of effort could earn their salvation, this revision of theological doctrine made salvation the choice of the sinner. The desire among Protestants to achieve collective as well as personal salvation was further reinforced by the popularity of millennialism. Millennialism suggested that if the nation collectively atoned for its sins, it could facilitate the Second Coming of Christ. Various strains of millennialism also held that the Second Coming would commence a thousand-year

[8] As Mark Noll argues, evangelicals adapted the language of republicanism into their theology in the mid-1740s. By the early decades of the nineteenth century, "it had become a matter of routine for American believers of many types to speak of Christian and republican values with a single voice." Mark Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 73. Much of the scholarship on the benevolent empire focuses on its evangelical roots. See Robert H. Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Clifford S. Griffin, *Their Brothers' Keepers: Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800-1865* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983); Steven Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers: America's Pre-Civil War Reformers* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995). Matthew Mason argues that the movement's members were not always evangelical abolitionists, but moderates committed to preservation of the Union. Matthew Mason, *Apostle of Union: A Political Biography of Edward Everett* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

period during which Jesus would rule the Earth. Christ would only return, however, to a nation that was pure and morally just. Evangelicals now needed to convert the nation and indeed, the world, if they were to fulfill Christ's mission on Earth. It was no longer enough to love thy neighbor, evangelicals also needed to cleanse the nation of immorality and vice, a task which meant that literacy, temperance, and anti-slavery had to expand alongside the nation's territory.[9]

Reformers connected the spiritual mission of conversion to their political goals. Evangelicals were the most politically influential of the Christian denominations. By the 1830s, their theology synthesized, broadly, evangelicalism, republicanism, and nationalism. They believed that the same attributes that made one a good republican—vigilance and virtuosity—were the very traits that would bring the new millennium. This synthesis of republican political thought and the urgency of national conversion made evangelicalism the most powerful value system defining the nation in the nineteenth century.[10] They saw Protestantism as the cornerstone of republicanism and feared that if it did not prevail in the West, the nation would face widespread moral decline. Evangelicalism in the North became tied into the popularity of free labor ideology.[11] Proponents of free labor believed that it had created a dynamic capitalist society in the North, built upon the opportunities offered to the average laboring man. While

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[9] For more on the broad acceptance of Arminianism among evangelicals, see Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980) and Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned Over-District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950).

[10] Noll, *America's God*, 15.

[11] Eric Foner argues that free labor was "an affirmation of the superiority of the social system of the North—a dynamic, expanding capitalist society" based in "the dignity and opportunities which it offered the average laboring man." Foner identifies Protestantism as a cornerstone of this ideology because of its theological insistence on mobility and economic independence. Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 11. Jonathan Earle complicates Foner's notion of free labor republicanism by showing the broad range of Democrats who also harnessed free soil ideology. These Democrats, who were veterans of the anti-bank and anti-monopoly battles of the 1830s, fashioned their own argument against slavery extension in radical labor ideologies that pressed for land reform. The Jacksonian element of the Republican Party, Earle argues, cohered Democrats, Liberty Party members, and Whigs to oppose the expansion of slavery in the West. Jonathan Earle, *Jacksonian Antislavery and the Politics of Free Soil, 1824-1854* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

slave labor depended on a worker who had no hope of a just reward, free labor advocates promised that wages would lead to a more productive economy. Reformers believed that they could export these principles into the vast and unsettled territories of the West.

The northern commitment to free labor was matched by their fear of the expansion of slavery during debates over the annexation of Texas and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in the 1840s. They worried that if the South added to its empire of slavery before they could expand their empire of free labor, the North would soon be outnumbered in the political battles over the peculiar institution. Instead of slavery gradually diminishing as reformers hoped it would, it would be reinvigorated in the West, where land was abundant, but workers were few.[12] Strengthened by political debates surrounding slavery's potential expansion, the emigrant aid movement took on an essential function in safeguarding the West for northern labor ideals.

Evangelicalism was also politically tied to the concept of nativism, as reformers used emigrant aid to quell their fear that the Catholic Church would take over the West. As American Protestantism became increasingly denominational in the early nineteenth century, evangelical reformers saw the seeds of disunion grow within their ranks.[13] Freedom of religion strengthened the unified Catholic Church and fractured the Protestant churches, as evidenced in no small part by ecclesiastical splits in the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches in the 1830s and

[12] Historians have noted the importance of westward expansion to the coming of the Civil War. Two important histories of the Civil War indeed start with the territorial crisis, see James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) and David M. Potter and Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Impending Crisis 1848-1861* (London: Harper & Row, 1976). John Craig Hammond and Michael Morrison both demonstrate that Northern anxiety about disunion were fundamental to debates about expansion and the coming of the Civil War. John Craig Hammond, *Slavery, Freedom, and Expansion in the Early American West* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007); Michael A. Morrison, *Slavery and the American West: The Eclipse of Manifest Destiny* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

[13] For more on disestablishment and its unique effect on American Protestantism, see Mark Noll, *America's God* and Daniel Walker Howe "The Evangelical Movement and Political Culture in the North during the Second Party System" *Journal of American History* 77 (Mar. 1991): 1216-39.

1840s over slavery.[14] A woefully divided Protestant church, many evangelicals feared, was no match for the unified and densely populated cities teeming with Catholic immigrants. The same cities that were the hotbeds of evangelical revivalism—Boston, New York, and Philadelphia—also became centers of nativism, as Protestants became increasingly concerned that Catholic immigrants could not Americanize. The white phenotype of Irish and German immigrants made them particularly dangerous because of their ability to join the voting republic undetected, unlike other minorities.[15] Evangelicals saw immigrant loyalty to the Catholic Church as a dangerous adherence to European despotism that threatened to infiltrate American democracy.[16]

Protestants feared that a Catholic West would adhere to the whims of European leaders instead of the American president. Evangelical anxiety about the rise of Papal autocracy surged in the West starting in the 1830s, with a flurry of anti-Catholic propaganda. Samuel Morse's *Foreign Conspiracy against the Liberties of the United States* and Samuel B. Smith's *The Flight of Popery from Rome to the West* both stoked the rumor that the Pope was aligned with European rulers in an attempt to secure the Mississippi Valley.[17] The West needed a new Reformation,

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[14] Jon Gjerde, ed. S. Deborah Kang, *Catholicism and the Shaping of Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 109. For more on the ecclesiastical splits over slavery see Mark Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); C.C. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the American Civil* War (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985); Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, Charles Reagan Wilson, eds., *Religion and the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[15] Matthew Frye Jacobson argues that nativism's differentiation between the different white races and "immigrant difference" was a continuation of republican tradition. Furthermore, Jacobson contends that "religion was sometimes seen as a function of race," especially when considering whether Catholics could effectively assimilate. Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 69-70. Gunther Peck demonstrates the close connections between race and nationalism, arguing that immigrants who "became white" during the nineteenth century did so within "strongly partisan, electoral contexts." Gunther Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in The North American West, 1880-1930* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 170.

[16] By the 1840s, Anglo Saxonism had become as integral to arguments in favor of republicanism and territorial expansion as it was to nativist opposition to Catholic immigration. See John Pinheiro, *Missionaries of Republicanism*.

[17] Samuel F.B. Morse, *Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States: The Numbers of Brutus, Originally Published in the New-York Observer* (New York: Leavitt, Lord, & Co., 1835); Samuel B. Smith, *The Flight of Popery from Rome to the West* (New York: The Office of the Downfall of Babylon, 1836).

according to nativists, that would drive Catholics from the land and secure the nation for Protestantism.

The widespread belief in New England and "Yankee" regions of the Old Northwest in the radical theological shifts of Arminianism and Millennialism led to the rise of a powerful reform movement. Reformers constructed a "benevolent empire" that they hoped would perfect individuals and the nation. The loosely interconnected web of evangelical organizations sought to reform the nation by creating a new moral order. Reformers worked to spread Christianity by distributing Bibles and religious tracts, building Sunday schools, embracing Sabbatarianism, and fighting against vices like alcohol and prostitution. They also promoted humanitarianism by promoting prison reform, public schools, and asylums for the disabled. These reformers politicized their morality in legislation and social organizing, as they sought to make the nation conform to their vision of society.[18]

Like other reform movements, emigrant aid promoters envisioned a fundamental problem. This problem was the West. Evangelical reformers believed that they could bring the West under their control using the subsidization method. If the right types of settlers went west, the region could reflect free labor and therefore feature an efficient economy and institutions of education and religion. These free labor settlements would ensure that slavery never encroached upon the nation and that the North never became politically subservient to the West and South. Emigration aid could also evangelize the nation. It could plant the institutions of the church and the state, bolstering the burgeoning union against the threat of Catholics and tyrannical European political forces. If entire eastern communities, who were strong in their values, could move simultaneously, reformers believed that the Union would be secure morally and politically.

[18] Matthew J. Grow, *"Liberty to the Downtrodden:" Thomas L. Kane, Romantic Reformer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers*, xiv.

Emigrant aid was the method by which reformers could nationalize their many platforms and ensure that the West reflected evangelical values. If reformers could create western societies that rejected sinful practices like slavery and alcohol consumption, they believed the nation would be closer to eradicating its sin entirely. The reformer obsession with disunion in the West did not stay an issue of religion but became paramount to national debates over sectionalism and the Union's future. In the process, empire became the legacy of reform.

The emigration aid movement peaked in the antebellum era, when reformers could point to the threat of southern expansion to fund their subsidies. The Civil War changed the landscape of emigrant aid as the crisis of disunion faded and questions of citizenship complicated the relationship between white Protestants and other Americans [19] Evangelical churches faced immense changes over the course of the Civil War. In what some historians have described as moral exhaustion, the end of the Civil War splintered the evangelical political and cultural hegemony that characterized the antebellum era. White protestants turned away from radical reform at this time and instead organized for more conservative causes like the protection of family, the end of sexual oppression, and temperance. [20]

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[19] Historians of the Civil War and Reconstruction eras have debated the role of the West during reconstruction. In a seminal essay, Elliott West coined the term "Greater Reconstruction," and described national policy between 1846-1877 as part of a federal effort to build a new racial order in both the West and South. Nicolas Barreyre and Heather Cox Richardson have made convincing arguments about fiscal sectionalism during this time period and the agricultural connections between the West and South. Heather Cox Richardson, *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Nicolas Barreyre, *Gold and Freedom: The Political Economy of Reconstruction* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015). Elliott West, "Reconstructing Race," Western Historical Quarterly 3 (Spring 2003): 6–26. For critiques of Great Reconstruction and West's updated response, see Gregory P. Downs and Kate Masur, "Echoes of War: Rethinking Post–Civil War Governance and Politics," in *The World the Civil War Made*, ed. Gregory P. Downs and Kate Masur (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 4; Elliott West, "The Future of Reconstruction Studies," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 7, no. 1 (2017): 14. Whether or not reconstruction policies intended to reform the West, the northern fear of disunion after the war was persistent and had consequences in the West and South.
20 Edward J. Blum, "'To Doubt This Would Be to Doubt God': Reconstruction and the Decline of Providential Confidence," in *Apocalypse and the Millennium in the American Civil War Era*, ed. Ben Wright and Zachary W. Dresser (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 244. For more on the decline of evangelical authority after the Civil War, see Edward J. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865-1898* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005); Edward J. Blum and W. Scott

The evangelical concern for the West also changed as part of the post-war reform movement's shift. While the West had been a fundamental pillar of the reform movement's concern about the Union before the Civil War, domestic imperialism remained imperative to the northern evangelical's national vision. As the evangelical authority diminished, however, so did the ability of reformers to directly impact western politics. As westerners rose as their own political section, they no longer relied on the emigrant aid companies and charity networks of easterners. Reformers also found that the West was not a blank canvas, but a diverse region that was difficult to control. Emigration aid schemes faced insolvency as the idea of disunion, the fundamental pillar of antebellum reform, could no longer inspire charitable donation. In the post-war period, emigration aid companies faced popular scrutiny for their methods, as voters became suspicious that companies were fronts for land speculation. And far from the white, Protestant haven the reformers hoped for, the West quickly became engulfed in conflicts over race and religion as groups such as Catholics, Chinese, Mormons, and African Americans also used emigrant aid to their advantage.

The emigration aid movement nonetheless had a significant impact on western colonization and national politics throughout the nineteenth century. The first major emigrant aid movement in the West occurred during the California Gold Rush. In the midst of sectional debates about the expansion of slavery in 1848, the massive emigration sparked by the California Gold Rush increased northern panic over the West's future. Reformers feared that greedy emigrants were failing to build a proper society there. Evangelicals concerned about California supported cooperative gold rush companies, which subsidized the journey of miners through joint stock emigration. Reformers, like Lyman Beecher's son, Edward, supported companies to

Poole, eds., *Vale of Tears: New Essays on Religion and Reconstruction* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2005).

control emigrant behavior and try to ensure that society in California reflected the cooperative spirit of Puritanism, rather than individualism. Miners promised to abide by the moral standards imposed by companies in exchange for protection. Evangelical concern regarding California continued well past the Gold Rush, as the West and East debated international immigration policies in the form of Chinese exclusion. As Californians worked to protect their own vision of a free white labor hierarchy, eastern evangelicals decried the decline of Californian society into barbarism.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were also early adopters of emigrant aid. Brigham Young employed the method to strengthen his religion's small settlement in Utah. The Mormon Perpetual Emigrating Fund pooled the resources of Utahans to fund the transatlantic voyage of Europeans to the settlement. Young also used cooperative emigration schemes to create the United Orders, which used collectivism to settle small regions outside of Salt Lake City as part of the Mormon expansion. New Englanders watched fearfully as the young religion used these tactics for their own expansive purposes. In the post-war period, reformers shut down the PEF, claiming that emigrant aid served to grow polygamy.

In the 1850s, Methodist minister Charles Loring Brace harnessed emigrant aid to solve the problem of crowded immigrant enclaves in New York City. Concerned by the rapid increase in foreign immigration, especially of Catholics, Brace's Children's Aid Society removed future dissident factions from the city. Reasoning that children of Catholic immigrants would never learn the fundamentals of republicanism within ethnic city enclaves, Brace placed them into Protestant homes in the West, where children became agricultural laborers. After the Civil War, the agency faced increased scrutiny, as the Catholic Church gained enough political power to resist removal policies and westerners increasingly rejected the importation of eastern poverty.

In 1854, as debates in Congress over the Kansas-Nebraska Act reinvigorated public concern about the future of the West, Unitarian minister Eli Thayer started the New England Emigrant Aid Company to promote northern settlement in Kansas. Thayer reasoned that northern emigration could influence the popular sovereignty vote there, ensuring that the slave power was unable to expand west. This method of emigrant aid became controversial nationwide, as free-state settlers clashed with Missourians in the sectional disputes of Bleeding Kansas. Thayer continued his quest to promote free labor imperialism in Virginia, Texas, Florida, and Oregon, quickly finding his land speculation tactics harder to implement without the drama of disunion to inspire donation.

The reformer vision of a white republic in the West resulted in a protracted debate with the black community about the appropriateness of the region for independent black colonies. In the antebellum era, white reformers theorized about using the West as a training ground for freedom, while westerners rejected importing competition for low wage jobs. White reformers instead promoted international colonization as the ideal way to implement emancipation. After the Civil War, Benjamin "Pap" Singleton led black emigrants and followed to Kansas and settled black towns. These emigrants fulfilled their desire to move west using the networks of black churches to fund their journey. Their movement was scrutinized by white and black intellectuals alike, as elites debated the prudence of exporting the South's laboring population.

Emigrant aid had a pervasive impact on the colonization of the West and the political debates surrounding its addition to the United States. Companies influenced where people settled, what types of institutions they established, and helped settlers maintain their land claims by offering charitable aid. The settlement of the West was the result of a consistent debate

between cultural elites and emigrants as evangelical reformers agonized over what type of society would prevail there.

The idea of the West, therefore, was essential to the American conception of the union throughout the nineteenth century. Reformers harnessed fear of disunion to convince donors to fund settlement and settlers to join cooperative ventures. They came to believe that theorizing and debating about the region's future in the halls of government was not an effective answer to their concerns. As Beecher argued, the North would not win the moral battle for the West "by prayers and supplications only, nor by charities alone." Instead, northern settlers needed to go out into the West and affect practical changes there. If northerners were to "mingle with the people of the West, and be absorbed in their multitude," the region would easily build the institutions necessary to republicanism in the form of small farms, churches, and schools.[21] Emigration aid would be the method by which evangelicals would save the Union and make it reflect their values.

[21] Beecher, *A Plea for the West*, 16.

II. Rushing for God and Gold: Competing Visions of Emigrant Aid in California

As the Gold Rush attracted thousands of emigrants into the West in the late 1840s, cultural elites in New England feared for the future of the Union. Reformers such as Edward Beecher believed that society in California was rapidly developing with very little institutional or moral structure. Drawing on his father Lyman Beecher's fear of the West, the great preacher's son also worried about the danger of settling a distant state quickly, with no guidance from the foundational institutions of the Union. Beecher preached that gold seekers had a higher purpose that the mere attainment of wealth but should do the "work of affecting for evil, or for good, the character of the future generations of California." The transfer of New England values into the territory was akin to the pilgrim journey to the New World, Beecher extolled, for here, "upon the shores of the Pacific…an American community is to be founded." California could directly reflect Protestant values. It could be proficient in resources, education, and religion, and become an ally to the North's vision of a free labor republic.[1]

Beecher and his fellow evangelical ministers feared that if California did not embrace republicanism, it would fall to barbarism, a term first coined by the Congregationalist minister Horace Bushnell. Bushnell argued that barbarism was the opposite of civilization, marked by "social decline" and a "fatal lapse of social order." The idea of barbarism took on a special meaning in the minds of New Englanders as they considered the colonization of California. If the right types of settlers and institutions, including those of free-state politics, education, and religion, did not prevail in the territory, it could be the death knell to the American experiment. As the Protestant magazine *The New Englander* argued, "what the West is, the whole country

[1] Edward Beecher, *Address to the Members of the New England and California Trading and Mining Association, delivered by Rev. Edward Beecher D.D., at the Tremont Temple, on Thursday Evening January 25, 1849* in *Constitution and by-laws of the New-England and California Trading and Mining Association* (Boston: J.B. Chisholm, 1849), 23-26. American Antiquarian Society (hereafter AAS).

will be." The gold rush, then, was vital to saving the West from barbarism. New Englanders had to "introduce the influence of the preached gospel, while laying the very foundation of society."[2] California held the promise of another New England, but in the wrong hands, could become a hotbed for disunion.

Reformers promoted cooperative emigration companies to combat the potential dangers of mass migration. Of the fifty thousand emigrants who traveled from the United States to the California territory for the Gold Rush, approximately ten thousand, or one-fifth started out in one of these companies.[3] Cooperative companies pooled the travel funds of emigrants, who promised to maintain their community in the West, mine cooperatively and send gold back to their families at home. Gold Rush companies required a strict adherence to moral order, banning alcohol and enforcing worship on the Sabbath. Companies adopted constitutions which regulated emigrant behavior and ensured that societal standards could endure the temptations of western life, while simultaneously promising individual miners protection on the journey to the goldfields.[4]

As middle-class reformers sought to influence the colonization of California from afar, they envisioned that they were importing the structures of free labor into the gold mines. They

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[2] "'A Beautiful Aceldama': Horace Bushnell in California, 1856-1857," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (September 1984), pp. 384-402' "The Hand of God in the Gold Region," *The New Englander*, Vol. VIII (New Haven: John B. Carrington, 1850), 86.

[3] *New York Herald*, January 24,1849; Ibid., January 29, 1849.

[4] Josiah Royce identified these parties as developing "the best and worst elements of frontier political character" because they served to discipline rather than educate emigrants on civility. Josiah Royce, *California from the Conquest in 1846 to the Second Vigilance Committee in San Francisco: A Study of American Character* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1886). The topic of Gold Rush constitutions began with David Potter's *Trail to California*, when Potter acknowledged companies, but lamented that their constitutions had not survived in the historical record. David Morris Potter, *Trail to California: The Overland Journal of Vincent Geiger and Wakeman Bryarly* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945). Octavius Howe called the companies a socialist experiment in *Argonauts of '49: History and Adventures of the Emigrant Companies from Massachusetts 1849-1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923). J.S. Holliday lists Gold Rush constitutions in *The World Rushed in: the California Gold Rush Experience* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981). Recent works that mention companies include Malcom J. Rorhbough, *Days of Gold: the California Gold Rush and the American Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) and Susan Lee Johnson *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000). As a whole, these works focus on the social life of the Gold Rushers and the varied international and racial landscapes of California.

hoped that the imposition of the northern system of capitalism there would be reflected in a society marked by Protestant churches, order, and republican institutions. As settlers flooded west in cooperative emigration companies, they soon resisted the rules put in place by those who stayed behind. Companies broke apart, came back together, and dissolved entirely, as emigrants broke away from the republican model of self-sacrifice and focused on maximizing individual profits. Once in California, many miners abandoned communal ventures and sought their fortunes individually. Reformers nevertheless remained invested in controlling California society, as they regularly pointed to the lack of civilization in California as evidence that the West was a danger to free labor.

The emigrants who settled in California created their own societal hierarchies and rejected those imposed upon them by their former cultural elites. After the Civil War, the two regions clashed over definitions of free labor. Northern evangelicals remained concerned that Californian society did not reflect the new values of republicanism—free labor for all as established by the Fourteenth Amendment. Californians continued to use free labor to prove the superiority of the white worker. Nowhere was this issue more evident than in the debates over Chinese emigration aid. Chinese immigrants also used cooperative emigration to fund their journey to the goldfields, as the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, more commonly known as the Chinese Six Companies, harnessed joint-stock emigration aid to fund overseas travel for laborers. White evangelical missionaries, white Californians, and Chinese laborers debated, from the 1850s until the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, whether foreign emigration aid constituted unfree labor.[5]

[5] Debates over if Chinese labor was free or unfree in this period persist in the scholarship of Chinese exclusion. Gunter Barth first asserted that Chinese laborers came to California under debt bondage contracts, which rendered them unfree. Gunther Barth, *Bitter Strength: A History of the Chinese in the United States, 1850-1870* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964). Scholars who agreed with Barth's assessment include Alexander Saxton, The

Anti-Chinese westerners harnessed the rhetoric of free labor to rewrite their history in California. They portrayed white emigration aid as an extension of American freedom and Chinese emigration aid as a form of involuntary servitude. In the post-war years, Californian attempts to enforce this racial hierarchy through exclusion policies met the resistance of Chinese immigrants and northern missionaries, who hoped to open China to American goods and evangelical Christianity. These detractors painted a different picture of emigrant aid, demonstrating the stark similarity between the two emigration systems. The church communities that had pushed Forty-Niners to replicate the Puritan experiment in California, now chided those same settlers for their refusal to convert foreign populations and assimilate them into American society.

Northern evangelicals first became concerned with society in California as gold mania swept the nation in the late 1840s. Gold mania became the subject of sermons across New England, which reiterated Beecher's concern about the breakdown of civilization. Elisha L. Cleaveland feared that the West was "not like a community of slow growth," but one that had "no infancy, no youth—it will spring at once into manhood, a full-grown state." A state that erupted outside of the confines of New England's cultural control would also imperil the innocent souls of emigrants. Cleaveland warned that even those emigrants who professed a

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Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California (Berkeley, 1974); Patricia Cloud and David W. Galenson, "Chinese Immigration and Contract Labor in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Explorations in Economic History*, 24 (Jan. 1987), 22–42; Gunther Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the North American West, 1880–1930* (New York, 2000), 51–52. For works arguing that Chinese miners were not indentured see Johnson, *Roaring Camp*; Randall Rohe, *After the Gold Rush: Chinese Mining in the Far West, 1850-1890* (Helena, MT: Montana Historical Society, 1982); Stacey L. Smith, *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill; University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Beth Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go: Violence, Exclusion, and the Making of the Alien in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 32. Mai Ngai argues against a strict binary of "free" and "unfree" labor. She contends that Chinese miners were not unfree, in that they were not prohibited from quitting or moving, or unpaid by employers. Mining, did however, include elements of coercion and violation. Mae M. Ngai, "Chinese Gold Miners and the 'Chinese Question' in Nineteenth-Century California and Victoria," *Journal of American History*, 101 (4): 1082–1105.

Christian faith would be found wanting without a community to enforce morality. Reformers feared that the many trials of the trip to California would cause a man to leave "his religion on the plains." As the *New Englander* warned, an emigrant could easily feel the loss of his "early attachment to religious institutions" when he "first leaves an eastern home and finds himself in some western wilderness miles from a sanctuary." Newspapers similarly warned that gold fever would, as one author put it, destroy "communities in one fell swoop."[6]

Reformers saw potential for the California's salvation even as they worried about its future. California could also become a free state, creating a corridor of freedom from the Northern to Southern reaches of the Pacific.[7] Free-state colonization, if done correctly, could ensure the expansion of freedom, rather than slavery. Beecher preached that the "benign power" of New England colonization could save California and extend republicanism beyond the borders of the state, across the Pacific, and be "felt in China, and in India, and in the islands of the sea." The expansion of New England values, religion, and republicanism could reshape both the nation and the world, according to Beecher, if only emigrants carried "the examples, and principles, and virtues of your Pilgrim Fathers." [8]

New England reformers, most of whom never intended to go west themselves, proposed that a cooperative emigration aid movement would eliminate the barbarity that plagued

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[6] Elisha Lord Cleaveland *Hasting to be Rich. A Sermon occasioned by the Present Excitement Respecting the Gold of California, Preached in the Cities of New Haven and Bridgeport.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1849). Miscellaneous Pamphlets, AAS; Timothy Dwight Hunt, "Reminiscences of Pioneer Missionary Life in California-No. IV," *Pacific*, 7 March 1888, 1 in William G. Chrystal, "'A Beautiful Aceldama': Horace Bushnell in California, 1856-1857," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (Sep., 1984), pp. 384-402; "California, The Gold Fever," *Texas Corpus Christi Star,* January 13, 1849 quoted from Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *Days of Gold: The California Gold Rush and the American Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 29.

[7] James Oakes describes this as a "cordon of freedom," which would hem slavery in until its own internal weaknesses destroyed it. James Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2014), xii. The idea that free labor could eventually overwhelm slave labor is discussed in Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[8] Beecher, *Address to the Members of the New England and California Trading and Mining Association*, 26; 28; 32; 34.

California society. Reformers encouraged individual miners to form joint-stock corporations that would help maintain societal institutions, like religion, on the overland trails. Emigration aid, as one New Yorker wrote, harnessed "the great American principle of association," to help maintain the high character of its members. Edward Beecher promised a company of gold rushers that if they avoided temptation, worked diligently, and maintained the bonds of their associations, "the glorious results of the colonization of New England" would contrast the evils that pervaded western society. As Beecher reminded a crowd of gold seekers, "You all have elements of a State among yourselves. See to it, that it is a Christian State."[9]

Gold Rush companies formed under constitutions that sought to mitigate danger and elevate the movement from a mere resource grab into a noble pursuit. Constitutions emphasized republican virtues by demanding that members give up some of their personal liberties for the good of the whole. Instead of a greedy rush for gold, company constitutions portrayed their mission as a benevolent investment of eastern principles onto an unorganized west. Although these arrangements were essentially labor contracts, labeling them constitutions bestowed upon them a sacred quality. Just as the nation's constitution was the bedrock of the Union, mining companies intended their constitutions to be a foundational principle of society in the West.[10]

Most gold rush companies focused on attracting individual miners who would otherwise travel in small, unorganized parties or alone. When a prospective gold miner agreed to join a company, he signed a contract to abide by the constitution and to uphold the "promotion of the common good." Each company raised a sum of money and divided it into shares, which could

[9] "The Effect of the Gold Mania Upon Business New York," *The Daily Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), January 8, 1849; Beecher, *Address to the Members of the New England and California Trading and Mining Association*, 26; 28; 32; 34.
[10] Gold Rush company constitutions were formulaic and contained similar obligations between the company and their stockholders.

range from one hundred to six hundred dollars. To ensure that miners would return home in due time with their riches, companies purchased supplies for a two-year period. As the New York Commercial & Mining Company constitution explained, this time limit would guarantee that the voyagers would not "remain longer in California than that period if possible" because "the objects of the Association will have been accomplished within that time." Within two years, the "expenses and losses" of the company were to be "paid and discharged equally by the members; and all gold acquired…shall be divided in the same manner, *share and share alike*." At the end of the two-year incorporation period, the company promised to divide its proceeds equally among all members. Once in California, many companies also planned to mine communally. [11]

Constitutions also provided protection to the individual from the physical dangers of the voyage. Members were expected to bring their own firearms and know how to use "small arms for mutual defence." As the California Mining and Trading Company of Cincinnati's constitution stated, if a member were to be in "distress or danger of any kind, it shall be the duty of the other members to render him such assistance and protection as lies within their power." If a company member fell ill, became disabled, or died in the course of the journey, companies ensured that the member received his full share of the profits "the same as if in health" or, in the case of death, guaranteed his heirs shares "up until the end of the year of death."[12]

Gold Rush companies instituted these controls on settlers in order to import the institutions of republicanism to the West. Reformers contended that they could counter the greed

[11] *Constitution and By-Laws of the California Mining and Trading Company: of Cincinnati* (Cincinnati: Model Western Printing House, 1849); *Constitution of the New York Commercial & Mining Company in California* (New York: John Belcher, 1849), Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library (hereafter BL).

[12] *Constitution and By-Laws of the Rhode-Island Working Men's Mining Company of Providence, R.I., Adopted August 20, 1849* (Providence: H.H. Brown, 1849), BL; "The Effect of the Gold Mania Upon Business New York," *The Daily Picayune*, January 8, 1849; *Constitution and By-Laws of the California Mining and Trading Company: of Cincinnati*; *Constitution of the New-York Commercial & Mining Company, in California*.

of the gold rush by encouraging emigrants to maintain their obligations to one another. They envisioned that these obligations would persist in the West, where settlers would create a replica of New England in California. Constitutions included a morality clause which required members to observe the Sabbath and abstain from alcohol, duels, and gambling. Any "vicious or disorderly conduct, or a willful violation of any Article of Association" could carry the stiff penalty of expulsion from the party. If a company member participated in a duel, he faced immediate expulsion. In comparison, if a gold rusher drank intoxicating liquors, the penalty assessed was five dollars for the first offense, ten for the second, and the third penalty could result in expulsion by a two-thirds vote of the company. In the most extreme cases, expulsion required a martial trial and a majority vote among company members.[13]

Perhaps the most serious of crimes were those which threatened to break the company's order and excite factionalism among its members. Any promotion of disunion within a smaller party foretold dangerous implications for the future of the territory. One constitution expressed that anyone who promoted "insubordination, or mutiny, or any other schism among the members of this company" would immediately forfeit their shares. Other unseemly acts did not incur penalties but were likewise forbidden. To maintain a spirit of comradery on the voyages, company members were to refrain from "profanity, obscene language, and all abusive words toward his shipmates and associates."[14]

While companies were nominally democratic, often requiring a vote of all members for major changes, they also imposed a powerful hierarchy. Northerners hoped that these

[13] *Constitution and By-Laws of the California Mining and Trading Company: of Cincinnati* (Cincinnati: Model Western Printing House, 1849), BL, 10-11.
[14] *Constitution and By-Laws of the California Mining and Trading Company: of Cincinnati* (Cincinnati: Model Western Printing House, 1849), BL, 10-11; *Constitution and By-Laws of the Rhode-Island Working Men's Mining Company of Providence, R.I.*

hierarchies, which encouraged strict adherence to orders, would reinforce the social obligations of northern society on the journey west. The upper echelons of management were to "perform labor the same as other members of the Company when not occupied by their official duties." This was often a distinction without a difference, however, as leaders were also in charge of assigning all "particular works and duties." Constitutions stipulated that "no member shall be allowed a choice of labor" and refusing to work could result in severe punishment. The company president was expected to "preserve order and good feelings among the members" and "be vigilant in enforcing" regulations. Investors expected that the president would prudently manage financial decisions as the intermediary between the company and the investors at home. Some constitutions included a dictum that members deliver all gold they found to the director each night. To ensure that company money returned east, constitutions instructed the president to only put money into insured banks in major northern cities like New York and Philadelphia.[15]

Cooperative emigration companies quickly became a popular method for individuals looking to subsidize their journey west. Lansford W. Hastings's *Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California* (1845) portrayed cooperative organization as fundamental to overcoming the temptations of disorder on the overland trails. Hastings's guidebook was well read among New Englanders and gained an even wider audience because of its use by the Donner Party.[16]

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[15] *Constitution and By-Laws of the California Mining and Trading Company: of Cincinnati*; *Constitution and By-Laws of the Rhode-Island Working Men's Mining Company of Providence, R.I.; Constitution of the New-York Commercial & Mining Company, in California*; Alvin C. Moore, *For California* (Plattsburgh, 1849), BL.

[16] Hastings's worked diligently to promote emigration to California, as well as his guidebook. He promoted his work though a lecture tour and by writing to newspapers. Hastings advertised a shortcut, known as Hastings Cutoff, as the shortest route to California. The route left the Oregon Trail at Fort Bridger, looped across the Great Salt Lake Desert, and rejoined the California Trail in Emigrant Pass. This detour not only took longer, much of the route was waterless. The Donner Party followed this route, and the delay contributed to their starvation in the Sierra Nevada. Historians disagree about how many miles the Hastings Cutoff added to the overland journey. George Stewart estimated that it was 125 miles longer than the standard route from Fort Hall. Will Bagley estimated the difference at only 10 miles. In either case, the shortcut became so notorious that only one other party attempted the cutoff in 1850, but no emigrants tried after that date. Will Bagley, *So Rugged and Mountainous: Blazing the Trails to Oregon and California, 1812-1848* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 312; George R. Stewart, *The California Trail: An Epic with Many Heroes* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962), 183. For a brief discussion on

Hastings's party started their journey in 1842 with "harmony of feeling, the sameness of purpose, and the identity of interest," but soon faced unrest. Only a few days into their travels, Hastings's companions were all determined "to govern, but not to be governed." Not long after, the company disagreed whether to kill the dogs in the party to save on supplies. The group became so incensed by this matter that they elected new officers, and several members split off from the group completely. Having overcome their first foray with disunion, the party successfully instituted company laws to maintain order and discipline. Hastings's experienced proved that disorder lurked behind every bend on the overland trails. His endorsement of cooperative emigration popularized the concept and the practicality of traveling to California under similar arrangements.[17]

Emigrants agreed to these hierarchical structures and rules because they believed that dangers were abundant on both the overland and overseas journey to California. Overland Forty-Niners passed through Mexico at a time when international relations were unstable. They faced the fierce and capable indigenous nations who occupied the region.[18] Travelers who went through Nicaragua or Panama faced the danger of an overseas voyage. As the 1846 journey of the Donner party so infamously demonstrated, emigrants could also face starvation, disease, and the degraded morals of their fellow travelers.

Newspapers also increased the popularity of emigration aid companies. The *New York Herald* declared "in every Atlantic seaport, vessels are being fitted up, societies are being

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Hasting's promotional efforts, see Donald K. Grayson, *Sex and Death on the Western Emigrant Trail: The Biology of Three American Tragedies* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2018), 20-31.

[17] Lansford Warren Hastings, *The Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California* (Cincinnati: G. Conclin, 1845), 6-7, 9, 18. AAS.

[18] For a reassessment of Indian and settler relations on the overland trails, see Sarah Keyes, "Beyond the Plains: Migration to the Pacific and the Reconfiguration of America, 1820s-1900s" PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2012. For detailed depictions of indigenous life in this region, see Brian Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) and Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

formed, husbands are preparing to leave their wives." One only had to look in the advertising columns of the "*Herald*, or any other journal," to find abundant evidence of the method's popularity. Companies tried to attract different types of miners. The New York and California Mutual Benefit Association advertised for one hundred-fifty members, at the cost of one hundred-fifty dollars each to purchase a ship for California. In this case, the "gentlemen who are desirous to take their wives" were instructed to come to a Tammany Hall meeting, as the route would be "convenient and economical" for even the ladies. Advertisements asked for family men, "for capitalists," for single adventurers, and for respectable families. Newspapers stoked the excitement of the imperial venture with songs like one by Calee Lyong, whose rousing hymn included the chorus "there we go with dauntless spirits, and we go with hearts elate,/To build another empire—to found another State." As one paper put it, "Almost everybody is going to California."[19]

Some reformers used emigrant aid companies to promote more radical ideas of societal upheaval. Eliza Farnham, who was well-known in northern reform circles, believed that societal redemption in California could only occur through matronly activism. In 1849 she hatched a plan to save California from barbarity. She reasoned that an influx of female emigrants was the only solution to taming the land. She issued a circular advertising plans for a "female invasion of California." Her scheme, which was supported by Horace Greeley and Edward Beecher's brother Henry Beecher, proposed that a mass emigration of women to the territory would be "one of the surest checks upon many of the evils that are apprehended there." Unlike her male counterparts in the reform movement, Farnham did not see alcohol, gambling, greed, or gold mania as the

[19] "Emigration to California" *New York Herald*, January 11, 1849. AAS; "The New York and California Mutual Benefit Association," *New York Herald*, January 12, 1849. AAS; "The Gold Excitement" *New York Herald*, January 13, 1849. AAS; "The Ruse to California: Incidents on the Increase" *New York Herald*, January 22, 1849. AAS.

primary downfall of the California's rapid settlement. Instead, she argued that "among the many privations and deteriorating influences" that emigrants would face on the journey, the greatest was the "absence of women."[20]

Farnham proposed to take a company of women, all over the age of twenty-five, to California. She required that each supply a testimony from their clergyman or a town authority to vouch for their education and character. This female company proposed to follow the same regulations as other Forty-Niner parties, as each woman would provide two-hundred and fifty dollars to a group fund, after which Farnham promised to find them suitable accommodation in San Francisco. The company vowed to guard the party and to provide for them in the case of illness. The *Trenton State Gazette* praised Farnham's plan as "worth more than all the gold" because it would "plant the true New England feeling, and do more than a hundred Wilmot Provisos to secure a good and free government." The *New York Tribune* called her plan "among the most truly Christian enterprises of the day" because it provide the territory with "enterprising and benevolent" women.[21]

Although Farnham's plan never came to fruition because she fell ill for nearly two months after the circular's publication, her plan to import civility in the form of emigrant women reflected the deep seeded fear among northerners about the future of California. Reformers did their best to set up societal controls that would reign in emigrants through association, communalism, and policies to ensure law and order. Corporations sought to import not just citizens, but societal order. Those who stayed home watched, full of anxiety about the state of society, as hundreds of their companions trekked across the continent.

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[20] Eliza W. Farnham, *California, In-doors and out; or, How We Farm, Mine and Liver Generally in the Golden State* (New York: Dix, Edwards & Co., 1856), 26.
[21] "Mrs. Eliza Farnham," *Trenton State Gazette*, March 31, 1849; "A New California Expedition," *New York Tribune*, February 14, 1849.

The emigration aid companies that were supposed to keep Protestant values intact on the trails soon faced the reality of individualism, as competitive miners squabbled over routes, pace, and protection policies. The reformers who promoted emigration companies could not enforce cohesion from afar and emigrants turned out to be less than ideal republicans on the trails. Emigrants found that the dangers they thought lurking on the trail in the form of Indian attacks were rare. Trails were also crowded instead of desolate. The trails were still dangerous, riddled with disease and hardship, but many travelers abandoned their communal obligations.

Emigrant wrote home and, in their diaries, depicting the trouble that companies had maintaining constitutional obligations. The northerners who read these letters continued to fear that the West would become a lawless wasteland without republican restraint. The story of the Knickerbocker Exploring Company, told by William R. Goulding, was typical of the type of reports that northerners read about the fate of cooperative emigration companies. Goulding's company left New York on March 10, 1849 under a constitution that bound its eighty members to "mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honors, looking with a firm reliance on Divine Providence for protection." By Goulding's account, the company initially was in good spirits living "luxuriously" on the abundant game on their route to Little Rock, Arkansas. Their arrival at Fort Smith by steamboat brought the Company's first disruption, as "the excitement of getting once more on Terra Firma" convinced the members that "every man was Captain, and with true independence, was determined to have his own way." Goulding described this confusion as a degradation of the gentlemanly intention of the company and refused to participate in the "Helter-skelter" of his peers, as they began "shouting, carousing, swearing & swaggering, hurtling things about, breaking & smashing every thing that was

capable of being broken." When the captain of the company, John Ebbetts, finally returned from scouting out a place to camp, the men returned to their organized companies.[22]

The company soon faced disorder again. On March 17, merely one week since the company's departure, Goulding wrote that there was a "revolution in the camp," lamenting that the "same untamed democracy which can make a constitution, can also unmake it." A small faction had broken out among the company, precipitated by "rowdies" that Captain Ebbetts failed to control. After terse negotiations among the party members, the company dissolved their association and sold their collective property. Goulding soon joined a faction of men from the original group, which traveled for about a month without incident. On April 15, fighting once again broke out over whether wagons were practical, or if the party should pack in. "Dispute was high," Goulding wrote in his diary, and "some messes were broken up and reinstated." About a month later, a few men began to rush ahead, thereby "forfeiting their obligation" to guard duty and the mutual protection of the emigrants. Finally, an exasperated Captain Ebbets stood before the group and resigned his command. He told the disorderly emigrants that they had nearly left Mexican territory and were therefore out of the realm of immediate danger and could disperse along their own ways. At this, Goulding lamented that Captain Ebbetts was "too quiet a man to manage such discordant elements" and that the party would have been better off to follow "a stern & rigid disciplinarian." Company treasurer Peter Ludiwick divided the funds among the members, and the group split in earnest. With the New York Knickerbocker Association "Intirely dissolved" on May 30, Goulding left with a few men to follow the Spanish Trail to California.[23]

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[22] *Constitution of the Knickerbocker Exploring Company of the City of New York* (Fort Smith, 1849), 80; William R. Goulding, *Journal of the Expedition of the Knickerbocker Exploring Company of the City of New York from Fort Smith Overland to California. March 10 to September 18, 1849*, (1849), 12; 17-18. BL.

[23] Goulding, *Journal of the Expedition of the Knickerbocker Exploring Company*, 26, 59, 104, 106-1-7, 121. BL.

Goulding and the Knickerbocker Exploring Company demonstrate the practical difficulty of maintaining a communal expedition to California, and their story occurred repeatedly. When Carlisle Abbot left Wisconsin with a few friends on March 3, 1850, a Frenchman named Sarpie warned him that their small party "might have trouble with the Indians and get wiped out" or drown swimming across the Platte. Sarpie's warning convinced Abbot to join a larger company. Once on the trail, however, emigrants argued over the pace of travel. Some men believed they were moving too slowly "and the gold would be all dug out of California before we got there." Others thought the party went too fast, "and we would kill our horses and not get there at all." Abbot attributed this grumbling to the lack of proper societal boundaries, blaming the company's eventual split in Salt Lake City on men living outside of the "restraint of friends and society." James Abbey's company left New England on May 17, 1850 with seven wagons and an elected captain. Within two months, one wagon of settlers became agitated and left the party, and another completely dissolved their association over disagreements about the weight of their wagons. Abbey logged further complaints about exhaustion, as members of the company were having to swim across the river and cut grass to feed their pack animals. By August 20, Abbey's mess dissolved."[24] Companies disintegrated over minor disputes among members, and it was rare that emigrants enforced their stringent constitutions.

Another reason why emigrants abandoned their contractual obligations was that the trails were not nearly as dangerous as newspapers predicted. Joseph Cline Kiser admitted that he could not even "make a guess" of how many trains were on the trails in 1850 but was surprised that he was rarely "out of sight of teams and some times could stand and count on a hundred teams." Edwin Hillyer joined an association to protect against the "treeless wilderness, and the hunting

[24] Carlisle S. Abbott, *Recollections of a California Pioneer* (Neale Publishing Company, 1917), AAS; James Abbey, *California: A Trip Across the Plains in the Spring of 1850* (New Albany: Kent & Norman, 1850, AAS.

ground of the wild Indians." Hillyer's party faced no such danger, instead facing a crowded trail and delays from losing their cattle among the other herds.[25]

Northern reformers also pointed to overland accounts to prove that emigrants' morals were deteriorating. Reverend John Steele was disappointed by how easily an association that relied on virtue for enforcement could fall apart. Steele signed articles of agreement with a company, which was "no doubt, given in good faith, but it was not long until the day of trial told how easily, by some, it could be broken." When two-thirds of his party lost their cattle in a stampede, the other third quietly stole away with the remaining livestock. Steele realized that this theft was the "violation of a solemn contract, but there was no court to enforce it, and the tide of emigration was so great they had no fear of Indians; hence their heartless desertion." It was not uncommon for parties to get so bogged down in debates over the enforcement of their constitutions that they faced long delays and ran out of provisions. Cline wrote his family that he "saw more distressed people on the plains that ever I have or ever hope to see again." The emigrants who ran out of provisions went from "waggon to waggon beging for something to Eat" but found no charity among their fellow travelers.[26]

Stories of the lawlessness of California further cemented the anxieties of those who stayed home, as reports filtered back detailing the decline of virtue. Hillyer wrote for the Sacramento *Daily* and the *Alta California* of San Francisco, where he wrote tales of a wild West. Instead of confirming the lofty goals described by the *New York Herald* which claimed that "the

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[25] Letter from Joseph Cline Kiser, May 27, 1850. *Joseph Cline Kiser Papers, 1840-1902*, Box 1. Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin; Edwin Hillyer, *A Trip from Waupun Wisconsin, via Cleveland, Cincinnati, St Louis, Council Bluffs and Salt Lake to California, in 1849 by team and the return via Acapulco, City of Mexico, Vera Cruz, New Orleans, Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, and the Lakes to Wisconsin in 1851 1852*, 11, 40, 43. Hillyer-Ford Family Papers, 1848-1868, Wisconsin Historical Society (hereafter WHS).

[26] John Steele, *The Journal of a Journey Across the Plains from Wisconsin to California, with Oxen, During the Summer of 1850*, 35; 57. John Steele Papers, WHS; Letter from Joseph Cline Kiser, September 25, 1850. *Joseph Cline Kiser Papers, 1840-1902*, Box 1, WHS.

intelligent, enterprising, and energetic emigrants" would soon "set California on its legs as a free State," Hillyer illustrated moral depravity. In California, Hillyer proclaimed, there "were no churches" and the common rendezvous was a tent where "you could drink, or play…or listen to the music." Reverend Steele also confirmed rumors about disorder. He wrote home that gambling halls enticed "boys and young men, from respectable homes, from quiet villages and country places in 'the states'" where they became mad with alcohol and resorted to violence. In California, Steele concluded, "there seemed to be no organized government; or if such existed, people were too busy with their own affairs and interests to give attention to the execution of law."[27] Far from the mythic depiction of harmony created by the promotors of communal emigration and settlement, emigrants succumbed to individual competition for wealth.

Eliza Farnham went to California in 1851 and her reports back to fellow reformers confirmed their many fears. California was uncivilized, unchurched, and uneducated. Farnham regaled her readers with tales of kangaroo courts, lynch laws, and a lack of religious discipline among settlers. She wrote that the pursuit of wealth was "so absorbing" that the position of an earnest religious teacher in California "must be one of the most trying and difficult." When Farnham's entire crop was gobbled up by a plague of grasshoppers, she lamented that not a single neighbor offered her aid, as they were "more engrossed" with their private interests than those of the community.[28] Instead of a perfect, New England society built on the principles of Christianity and republicanism, Californians focused on individual gain. Reformers who stayed home tried to control settlement, but failed, becoming appalled at the primitive nature of western society.

[27] "Emigration to California" *New York Herald*, January 11, 1849, AAS; Hillyer, *A Trip from Waupun Wisconsin*, 3-5; Steele, *The Journal of a Journey Across the Plains*, 6.
[28] Farnham, *California, In-doors and Out*, 139; 97.

As emigrants to California defied the expectations set out by northern reformers, the two groups continued to debate the proper form of society in the West. This tension coalesced around competing notions of free labor and Chinese immigration. Northern evangelicals wanted to maintain the Chinese immigration that first started during the Gold Rush. Reformers worried that exclusion policies would hinder their missionary work in Asia. They also became concerned that Californians were eliminating the class of immigrant workers who would perform the worst labor. Henry Ward Beecher argued that as Irish immigrants rapidly assimilated through their hard work and political power, no one would be left to pursue menial labor. The Chinese, he reasoned, could fill the labor gap left by Irish immigrants moving into the middle class.[29] Working closely with Chinese institutions in California, missionaries argued that Chinese and white emigration aid systems were equivalent and fought against exclusion policies.

In California, settlers sought to create a new hierarchical society that would reflect their preference for a white republic. True to the tenants of free labor ideology, settlers wanted to set aside the West for free, white men, who could improve their own condition by their efforts. White Californians did not want to share the treasures of the mines with those they considered outsiders, a position that would bring them into direct conflict with northern evangelical reformers. White Californians portrayed Chinese emigration aid, which closely mirrored their own emigration system, as a form of unfree labor. Anti-Chinese politicians minimized the role of American emigrant aid in their condemnations of foreign emigration. They created an alternative narrative in which white emigration was the outpouring of individuality, while Chinese emigration aid represented dependency and coercion.

[29] "Mr. Beecher's Thunder: the Irish Should Stay and the Chinese Come," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat,* March 29, 1882.

Northerners and Westerners debated exclusion policies between the 1850s and 1880s.[30] These debates were primarily conducted between politicians and ministers, who fought over the proper use of emigrant aid. Californian politicians redefined the history of their own emigration and simultaneously condemned the cooperative methods of foreigners. Cultural elites in California blamed the Chinese for the disorder of society and the lack of republican institutions. Northern evangelicals blamed American settlers for their lack of religious piety and inability to convert Asian immigrants to Protestantism, claiming that cooperative emigration was not equivalent to slavery.

Much like American settlers who came to the mines, many Chinese immigrants hoped to make their fortunes and return home. Chinese immigrants faced dismal conditions at home, as the Qing Dynasty suffered from internal instability and rebellion, and external pressures such as the Opium Wars instigated by the British Empire. Inspired by rumors of the "Gold Mountain," where labor was abundant, and riches flowed freely, Chinese laborers embarked for California.

[30] Scholarship on Chinese exclusion has traditionally fallen in two camps. The California Thesis centers the Californian working class as the agent of Chinese exclusion. Mary Robert Coolidge, Elmer Sandmeyer, and Alexander Saxton all pinpointed 1867 as the start of California labor's united front against Chinese workers. By 1876, these authors saw the exclusion message pushed onto the national political stage. Stuart Creighton Miller challenged this thesis and created a second school of thought, the national racist consensus thesis. Miller argued that negative stereotypes of the Chinese existed nationally and were the key agent of Chinese exclusion. This viewpoint was bolstered by Gwendolyn Mink, who argued that the labor movement against the Chinese was driven by xenophobia. Recently, historians have argued that both schools of thought are correct. Andrew Gyrory argues that the California Thesis, in which West Coast activists demanded exclusion on a national stage, is accurate, but maintains that the "single most important force behind the Chinese Exclusion Act was national politicians of both parties who seized, transformed, and manipulated the issue of Chinese immigration in the quest for votes," 15. Stacey Smith argues that state-level Reconstruction battles over Chinese cooliesm were the key to the national drive for Chinese exclusion. Beth Lew-Williams demonstrates the violent result of American immigration policies and the making of the modern concept of "alien." Mary Roberts Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration* (New York: Arno Press, 1909); Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1998); Stuart Creighton Miller, *The Unwelcome Immigrant; The American Image of the Chinese, 1785-1882* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Gwendolyn Mink, *Old Labor and New Immigrants in American Political Development: Union, Party, and State, 1875-1920* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986); Elmer Clarence Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1939); Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); Smith, *Freedom's Frontier*; Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go: Violence, Exclusion, and the Making of the Alien in America*.

They came to California through emigration aid companies and under contracts that stipulated their behavior. The Six Companies embraced the long tradition of *huigan*, or native-place associations. Wherever the Chinese emigrated, *huigan* existed to maintain cultural values and provide mutual aid to settlers. Like American emigration companies, the Chinese associations sought to emphasize homeland ties and maintain cultural structures in a foreign nation.[31]

The Six Companies funded immigration using the credit-ticket system, which provided miners tickets to California. In exchange, emigrants promised to pay the debt back with their earnings from the mines. The interest on these loans ranged from four to eight percent per month. Much as gold fever had swept through New England, Chinese miners were also inspired by the tales of untold wealth in California. Chain migration often began because of rumors started by returning miners who bragged of the immense wealth available in California. Circulars posted in urban areas bolstered these rumors, promising comfortable passage and high wages in America.[32] And much like Americans, Chinese miners turned to emigrant aid companies to help subsidize their passage to the gold fields.

Even though the credit-ticket system adhered to free labor principles—voluntary contracts and wage labor—Californian Free Soilers attested that Chinese immigrants were unfree "coolies."[33] White miners feared that if they had to compete with what they considered semi-

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[31] Yucheng Qin, *The Diplomacy of Nationalism: The Six Companies and China's Policy toward Exclusion* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 21; Ronald T. Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1989), 35-6; Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 25-26.

[32] Russell H. Conwell, *Why and How: Why the Chinese Emigrate, and the Means They Adopt for the Purpose of Reaching America* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1871), 142. American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA.

[33] The term *cooly*, meaning "hireling" was first used by British merchants in India to refer to Bengalese indentured servants. In the late 1840s, the British began using Chinese "coolie" labor in the West Indies and Peru, and the term coolie became synonymous among Americans with unfree labor. Aarim-Heriot, *Chinese Immigrants*, 31; Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 32-33. Stacey Smith argues that the Free Soiler obsession over coolie labor highlighted their "own anxieties about the emerging capitalist economy" in which white men could become trapped in permanent wage labor. Smith, *Freedom's Frontier*, 10. For more on "coolie" labor, see Johnson, *Roaring Camp*, 193-208, 242-251; Najia Aarim-Heriot, *Chinese Immigrants, African Americans, and Racial Anxiety in the United States, 1848-82* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 30-39.

enslaved Chinese workers, it would depress wages and eventually drive whites out of the mines. They believed that the only way to gradually eliminate slavery and dissuade sectional disunion was to ensure that California remained open to white immigration. This also meant that white settlers in California advocated the creation of strict racial hierarchies in the territories, in which the needs of the white laborer subsumed those of the minority.[34] Therefore, despite California's free state status after its admission to the Union under the Compromise of 1850, the new state politicians had no intention of constructing a racially progressive state.[35]

American settlers argued that the disorder that reformers identified in the state was caused by Chinese culture, rather than their own failures to establish republicanism. They argued that Chinese immigrants would never assimilate properly. As settler William Carrol wrote to his sister, the Chinese were of a "vast number" and "all pagans" who believed in idols and refused to learn the right type of English. Instead, he wrote, they learned "Spanish phrase" and "southern dialect" which resulted in the "very worst English." Another settler named George Murrell wrote that the Chinese worked for far less than an American and spent their money playing card games and smoking opium.[36] Anti-Chinese Californians concluded that Chinese immigrants were the reason for the state's disorder and lack of social structure.

American miners tried to ensure exclusive access to the most productive mines by creating legal barriers against Chinese immigrants. Californian attempts to exclude the Chinese from mining began as early as 1849, when miners in Tuolumne County passed a resolution

[34] As Eugene H. Berwanger agued, prejudice against African Americans was foundational to the development anti-slavery ideology in the West. Westerners were largely against slavery in the 1850s and 60s, but often advocated the removal of emancipated slaves to Africa. This is evident in the negro exclusion clauses that were implement in Oregon's state constitution and debated in Kansas's constitution. Eugene H. Berwanger, *The Frontier against Slavery: Western Anti-Negro Prejudice and the Slavery Extension Controversy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967).
[35] California Constitution (1850), art. 1, sec. 18; Smith, *Freedom's Frontier*, 7-8.
[36] Letter from William Carroll to Anne Carroll Buck, September 8, 1860. Saxton Collection, The Huntington Library (hereafter HL); Letter from George McKinley Murrell to Eliza F. Murrell, 1851, HL.

prohibiting Chinese miners from working claims. In 1850, the California legislature passed the Foreign Miners' Tax Act, which charged all foreign miners a tax of twenty dollars a month. The law stipulated that each foreign miner obtain an official license that was to read "A.B., a citizen of _____, age ____ years, complexion _____, is hereby licensed to work in the mines of California for the period of thirty days." If the sheriff found a miner who refused to comply, the law required him to "summon a posse of American citizens" to "forcibly prevent" the foreign miner from working. The state then created a register of the names and descriptions of miners taking out licenses. Californian politicians hoped that this tax would provide enough money to fund the state treasury and prove to their "Atlantic brethren" that the state was entering the Union on a foundation of "financial prosperity." In the state's first fiscal year ending in June 1850, it collected almost no revenue, while spending over $350,000. Rapid immigration placed financial strains on social services and state officials struggled to keep track of poll and property taxes among transient miners. State officials hoped that the imposition of the foreign miners' tax could make up some of this debt. Revenue from the 1851 tax fell far short of the expected $250,000, instead totaling only $34,000, as the state failed to effectively enforce the tax. In 1852, the legislature revised the tax to three dollars instead of twenty to try and encourage compliance among miners.[37]

In their early iterations, foreign miners' taxes applied to all non-Americans, but in 1852 the legislature focused specifically on Chinese laborers. Democratic Governor John Bigler called on the legislature to prohibit Chinese emigration all together because of their alleged adherence

[37] Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil*, 58; "An Act for the Better Regulation of the Mines, and the Government of Foreign Miners," Chapter 97, *Statutes of California* (1850), 221-23; "Further California News. Financial Resources of California." *Plain Dealer* (Cleveland, Ohio), August 26, 1850: 3; Mark Kanazawa, "Immigration, Exclusion, and Taxation: Anti-Chinese Legislation in Gold Rush California," *The Journal of Economic History* 65, no. 3 (2005), 785-786; "Further California News. Financial Resources of California." *Plain Dealer* (Cleveland, Ohio), August 26, 1850: 3; "An Act to Provide for the Protection of Foreigners, and to Define their Liabilities and Privileges," Chapter 37, *Statutes of California* (1852), 84-87.

to coerced labor. A Senate Committee investigated Bigler's claims and recommended exclusion, agreeing that Chinese immigrants were not free laborers, but "coolies," who could overthrow "the purifying influences of Republican institutions." The Senate argued that California needed only to protect those residents who intended to reside permanently in the state. The legislative body concluded that state services were not intended for the "protection of the adventurer, who…has sought his fortune in the rich fields of enterprise in California, but to return loaded with wealth to his native land." As American miners poured in from the East under contracts that bid them to return home with their earnings, the Senate deemed similar Chinese arrangements unfree and "repugnant to the principles of our government."[38]

Californian politicians used anti-slavery rhetoric to promote Chinese exclusion, thus tying the policies to the concept of free labor in the West. Hoping to nationalize their anti-Chinese policies, Californians used the history of emigrant aid to showcase their individuality and Chinese slavery. This strategy coincided with the rise of wage labor among white miners in the mid-1850s. Geological practicalities led to the decline of individual mining by the third year of the Gold Rush. Early in the gold rush, miners found gold flakes and nuggets which streams washed out of veins and downstream into creekbanks. This gold, called placer gold, only lasted a short time, after which miners had to search for the source of the metal inside the granite of the mountains. This called for more expensive equipment because of the necessity of deep shaft mining techniques, which only corporations could afford. By the late 1850s, emigrants worked for large mining companies in either hydraulic operations or quartz mines. As miners

[38] "Report of Committee on the Governor's Special Message in Relation to Asiatic Emigration" in *Journal of the Third Session of the Legislature of the State of California* (San Francisco: G.K. Fitch & Co. and V.E. Geiger & Co., 1852), 731, 732, 734.

increasingly worked for wages, white laborers feared that their pay would be undercut by Chinese immigrants. [39]

State politicians used anti-slavery arguments to promote exclusion, capitalizing on the public fear of wage competition. The California Senate Committee on Mines and Mining Interests concluded in 1856 that allowing Chinese immigration was the "equivalent to the creation of a distinct caste," who were "nominally free, and yet, virtually slaves." The "coolie" position as a mere laborer who worked under a boss clashed with the American emigrant's ideal of free labor, even though an increasing number of Americans engaged in wage labor. The state government argued that it wanted more white free laborers, rather than foreign ones. The Committee on Mining argued that the Chinese were a threat to state institutions because they did not have wives and families to help them maintain virtue and they imported non-Christian religion into the territory. "Their religion," the committee found, did nothing "that insures, or guarantees moral responsibility."[40] The Chinese population, in the eyes of the new political elites of California, could sow the seeds of disunion there by undermining the institutions of family and religion.

Northern reformers were not convinced by these Californian arguments that Chinese labor was equivalent to slave labor. Instead, reformers saw the potential to open Asia to trade relations and missionary work. Merchants and politicians dreamed of tapping into Chinese

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[39] Mark A. Eifler, *Gold Rush Capitalists: Greed and Growth in Sacramento* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 167. Kanazawa, "Immigration, Exclusion, and Taxation: Anti-Chinese Legislation in Gold Rush California," 782. Historians disagree about the precise timeline of the move from entrepreneurial to industrial mining occurred, but most agree that the change took place by the late 1850s. Ping Chiu, *Chinese Labor in California, 1850-1880* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1967); Ira B. Cross, *A History of the Labor Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1935); Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California*. Kornel Chang examines Chinese labor broker Yip Sang and argues that he facilitated the region's transformation from Gold Rush society to industrial economy by providing a disposable workforce. Kornel Chang, *Pacific Connections: The Making of the U.S.-Canadian Borderlands*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

[40] *Report of Committee on Mines and Mining Interests (*Sacramento: James Allen, 1856), 9, 13.

markets, while missionaries envisioned converting the "heathen." As William Seward told the United States Senate in 1852, commercial relations between California and China could be the "great agent" by which civilization could come to Asia. Stable market relations, Seward argued, would result in the "equalization of the condition of society and the restoration of the unity of the human family."[41]

While politicians in California argued that the Chinese threatened disunion with their foreign customs, northerners blamed the state's disorder on the failure of American emigrants. Elisha Smith Capron, whose travel narrative *History of California* (1854) was popular in the East, argued that the state suffered from a "low standard of private virtue"—evident in their failure to replicate eastern society's law-abiding government structures. In California, the Sabbath was a "desecrated day," and men lived without their families, taking meals in boarding houses, and not creating the permanent roots fundamental to civilization. When families did come to California, they joined in at restaurants and boarding houses, stagnating in the cities instead of colonizing the land. Capron concluded that Californian claims that Chinese workers were unfree were hypocritical. The Foreign Miners' Tax, Capron argued, was prejudicial, particularly because many Americans "dig gold here under contracts with other parties at home, who furnish capital."[42] The stories of the lawless West that filtered back to easterners, therefore, did not promote a vision of a structured society beset by anti-republican slaves, but instead highlighted the failure of American emigrants to create a moral society there.

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[41] *Commerce in the Pacific Ocean. Speech of William H. Seward, in the Senate of the United States, July 29, 1852* (Washington: Buell & Blanchard, 1852), 13.

[42] Elisha Smith Capron, *History of California: from its discovery to the present time; comprising also a full description of its climate, surface, soil, rivers, towns ... agriculture, commerce, mines, mining, &*c (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1854), iv, 146, 157, 171.

The primary opponents of California's anti-Chinese legislation were the very missionaries and reformers who promoted cooperative emigration aid companies. These reformers believed that the Chinese could learn American values of republicanism and provide a crucial link to Asia that would stabilize foreign relations. Denominations like the Baptists and Presbyterians were quick to send missionaries to California, in hopes of eventually using the Pacific as a "channel of emigration" and evangelization.[43] Missionaries reported back to the centers of their denominations in the East that Chinese immigration was no different than American cooperative companies. Reformer arguments against exclusion started in tandem with California's early racialized legislation and continued into the post-Civil War period. Evangelicals regularly rejected Californian arguments that the system of Chinese emigration aid differed from the colonization schemes of their own Forty-Niners.

One of the most active pro-Chinese reformers, William Speer, defended Chinese immigration as part of a free labor model. Speer became a Presbyterian missionary in 1846 and spent four years in Canton, China working toward the conversion of souls. When Speer returned to the United States in 1852, the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions sent him to California. Speer labored diligently to institute republicanism in the Chinese community, building a church, a school, and a bilingual newspaper, *The Oriental*. Speer worked closely with the Six Companies to build a defense of their work as equivalent to that of benevolent associations, rather than emigration agencies. As Speer explained in an address to the state government titled *An Humble Plea Addressed to the Legislature of California in Behalf of the Immigrants from the Empire of China to the United States*, the Six Companies functioned as "a club-house, in being supported wholly by voluntary contributions." He argued that their function was not to make money but

[43] Derek Chang, *Citizens of a Christian Nation: Evangelical Missions and the Problem of Race in the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 22-23.

support their emigrants in assimilating into American culture. Members, Speer argued, were "no more 'slaves' than the members of an American fire-company, or any other voluntary association."[44]

Chinese workers lobbied unceasingly against restrictive laws, working with missionaries like Speer to convince Californians that they were neither heathens nor slaves. A report published in English and distributed locally by the Six Companies asserted that Chinese emigration aid companies were voluntary associations that instructed members in the practices of benevolence and were "somewhat like American churches!" As such, the companies were "perfectly voluntary" and followed the leadership of democratically elected officials. Chinese companies, just like American ones, were established for "mutual assistance, the promotion of order, and the punishment of the unruly." The companies ensured social stability through their laws against gambling, filth, and thievery, which they punished with the threat of expulsion from the association.[45]

While Chinese exclusion remained popular among Californians, who continued to argue that Chinese workers emigrated under the guise of slavery, the federal government rejected their appeals for nationwide exclusion during the Civil War. Republican politicians made a distinction between involuntary Chinese immigrants, which they referred to as "coolies" and the free labor immigrants who arrived in emigrant aid companies. Republican politicians denounced the "coolie" trade as unfree, but maintained that as long as emigration was voluntary, the United States government could have no reason to restrict it. Led by Massachusettsan Thomas D. Eliot,

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[44] William Speer, *An Humble Plea, Addressed to the Legislature of California, in Behalf of the Immigrants from the Empire of China to this State* (San Francisco: Sterett & Co., 1856), 28. AAS.
[45] Lai Chun-Chuen, *Remarks of the Chinese Merchants of San Francisco, upon Governor Bigler's Message, and Some Common Objections; with Some Explanations of the Character of the Chinese Companies, and the Laboring Class in California* (San Francisco: Whitton, Town, & Co., 1855), 5, 11, 13. HL.

a group of eastern legislators worked to ban American work in the "coolie" trade, which was allegedly forming a large part of Cuban labor forces. Eliot decried the "coolie trade" to Cuba as "unchristian and inhuman, disgraceful to the merchant and the master, oppressive to the ignorant and betrayed laborers, a reproach upon our national honor." In 1862, Republicans in the U.S. Congress passed "An Act to Prohibit the 'Coolie Trade' by American Citizens in American Vessels," which prohibited US ships from transporting "coolies" or "involuntary immigrants." Any person that participated in "coolie" importation could be fined $2,000 and spend one year in prison. Federal politicians made it clear that "nothing" in the act was meant to "to apply to or affect any free and voluntary emigration of any Chinese subject." Republicans drew a line between "coolie" and voluntary emigration, denying California's arguments that all Chinese emigration aid was unfree.[46]

Before the Civil War, northern reformers asserted that societal disorder in California, caused by the American failure to import proper institutions, could lead to national disunion. The state could fall to slavery or other moral evils, as emigrants practiced unbridled individualism rather than cooperative community building. After the war, reformers could no longer point to the specter of disunion to scare Californians into reforming their society. Californians had long held that any disorder in their society was caused by the Chinese, of foreign importation of anti-American ideas such as unfree labor. After the war proved that California would not fall to disunion, Californian politicians increasingly blamed the Chinese for the state's problems. While northern reformers continued to place the blame back on the state's institutions, Californians continued to use the language of free and unfree labor to their own advantage. Using the rhetoric

[46] "Coolie Trade. To accompany Bill H.R. No. 657, April 16, 1860." 36th Cong., 1st sess., House Report 443, 24. Moon-Ho Jung, "Outlawing 'Coolies': Race, Nation, and Empire in the Age of Emancipation," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2005), 694; "An Act to Prohibit the 'Coolie Trade' by American Citizens in American Vessels. February 19, 1862." 37th Cong., 2nd sess., 341.

of freedom and no longer hemmed in by threats of disunion, these politicians increasingly used their national electoral power to advocate for federal exclusion policies, despite reformer resistance.

California soon established its independence on issues of race when it refused to ratify the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, joining Oregon and five border states.[47] Governor Henry Haight argued that the federal enfranchisement of African Americans would lead to political rights for the Chinese, who would use their electoral power to promote disunion. He argued that "indiscriminate suffrage regardless of race, color, or qualification, if carried into practice, would end in the degradation of the white race and the speedy destruction of the government." Although Republicans promised that they would never give the Chinese voting rights, Democrats nonetheless prevailed in redirecting the focus of the ratification debates onto the issue of Chinese enslavement.[48] The Fifteenth Amendment passed without the support of California and westerners continued to emphasize that Chinese emigration aid was the same as slavery.

The question of emigrant aid remained central to the Californian political establishment's pursuit of restrictive immigration policies. In 1870, the state passed a bill that limited female Asian immigration. Democrats advertised this law as a way to prevent the importation of enslaved laborers and to ensure that immigrants "desired voluntarily to come into this State." After the Panic of 1873, Chinese wage laborers moved into skilled positions, igniting further assertions by politicians that they were undercutting white labor.[49] Once again, rhetoric about

[47] For more on how debates over coolieism influenced the policy decisions of Republicans after the Civil War, see Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006) and Smith, *Freedom's Frontier*.
[48] Winfield J. Davis, *History of Political Conventions in California, 1849-1892* (Sacramento: 1893), 265. For more on the failure of western states to ratify the Fifteenth Amendment see Eugene H. Berwanger, *The West and Reconstruction* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 174-183; Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988), 279-280.
[49] Political Code of the State of California (1872), Title VII, Chapter 1, paragraphs 2952-53 (Sacramento, CA: State Printer, 1872, 451-2. Sucheng Chang, "The Exclusion of Chinese Women, 1870-1943," in *Entry Denied: Exclusion*

emigration aid was central to white American attempts to create racial hierarchies, as white workers attested that racial slavery was a threat to white freedom.[50] Public fear of the Chinese among Californian laborers grew, even though the Chinese made up less than ten percent of the state's population.[51]

Meanwhile, missionaries continued their efforts to protect Chinese immigrants from discriminatory laws, in the hope of Christianizing Asia. Speer sustained his advocacy for the Chinese by trying to change popular depictions of Chinese emigration aid companies. In 1870, he wrote another book in support of the Chinese, titled *The Oldest and the Newest Empire: China and the United States*. A central tenet of his argument remained that the Chinese obtained support for emigration "in the same way in which they are by our own people in similar circumstances." Speer asserted that none of these laborers were brought to California as slaves. He translated into English a formal application from one emigration company, the Yeung-wo Company, whose constitution denoted that each emigrant paid an entrance fee of ten dollars in exchange for mutual aid services. If an emigrant wished to return to China, the company examined his debt and would allow him to return. The companies forbade their houses to contain stolen goods, restricted strangers from visiting, banned gunpowder, gambling, and drunkenness. They also made specific rules regarding cleanliness, banning filth. They made provisions for those who could no longer work, declaring the "invalids…may be returned to China at the expense of the company for their passage-money." The company offered protection for its members. If a man were killed, the company offered rewards for the perpetrators' capture and

and the Chinese Community in America, 1882-1943, ed. Sucheng Chang (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 98; Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go*, 35.

[50] For more on the concept of contract freedom, see Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1-3.

[51] Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go*, 35.

prosecution.[52] These emigration companies and their by-laws were similar, if not the same, as the constitutions that brought Americans to the goldfields of California. By suggesting the similarity between the two groups, Speer also suggested that the emigrants themselves were not so different from one another.

As anti-Chinese sentiment became more fervent in California during the 1870s, more evangelical missionaries joined in Speer's campaign to prove that Chinese emigration aid was legitimate. Otis Gibson, an evangelical convert and Methodist Episcopal minister from New York came to California in the late 1860s, where he too remained unconvinced by western arguments against the Chinese. Gibson argued that Chinese emigration societies did not differ from those who imported Europeans. He wrote that "our immigrant societies, importing immigrants from Europe, act upon precisely the same plan." He concluded that emigration aid could not be compared to slavery. The fact that companies punished their members for insubordination, Gibson concluded, was not a sign of their servitude, but was no different from what occurred "with a train of immigrants crossing the plains to Oregon or California...These rules are established for the ends of mutual assistance, the promotion of order, and the punishment of the unruly."[53] Eastern politicians and evangelical missionaries maintained that Chinese immigration was voluntary, that the Chinese could assimilate, and that California's intent to exclude them constituted discrimination.

As the nation faced off in a close presidential election in 1876, Californians saw a perfect opportunity to leverage their six electoral votes for federal acceptance of Chinese exclusion. California needed the federal government to intervene on their behalf because the state could not

[52] William Speer, *The Oldest and the Newest Empire: China and the United States* (Hartford: S.S. Scranton and Company, 1870), 479, 482. AAS.
[53] Otis Gibson, *'Chinaman or White Man, Which?' Reply to Father Buchard* (San Francisco: Alta Printing House, 1873), 15. AAS.

formally restrict immigration. White Californians maintained that Chinese emigration aid was akin to slavery and should be restricted by the federal government. Both Republican and Democratic parties in California adopted the language of Chinese exclusion, speaking to popular public opinion. On April 5, 1876, twenty-five thousand people gathered in San Francisco to listen to anti-Chinese political speeches. The governor, William Irwin, former governor Henry Haight, along with leading businessmen and officials, called for an end to Chinese immigration. The *Alta California* concluded from the meeting that the Chinese "element is not a desirable one in our Anglo-Saxon, our Latin-American society," and that the only "relief lies with Congress, with the President and his Cabinet...now we may look confidently to the Federal Government for aid, having given such unequivocal evidences of the great evil." That same month, the State Senate authorized an investigation of Chinese immigration, of which the results would be sent to the leading national newspapers and five copies each to every member of the United States Congress.[54]

The state further promoted their narrative of unfree labor in debates about Chinese exclusion between April and June of 1876, comprised of fifteen sessions and the testimonies of sixty witnesses. The emigration aid methods of the Chinese were front and center in this trial. The special committee reported four "facts" which they believed constituted the truth about Chinese immigration. First, the committee stated that "under the influence of the Coolie system" Chinese immigration to California was a full fifty percent higher than white immigration. Second, the committee claimed that the Chinese Six companies were not merely aiding emigration, but also governing Chinese Americans outside of state power, in "contempt of lawful authority." Third, the Committee reported that the Chinese were "as complete slaves" to their

[54] "Anti-Chinese Meeting and Feeling," *Daily Alta California*, April 7, 1876; Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 78.

emigration patrons as "ever were the negroes of the Carolinas and Georgia." The rigid enforcement of emigration contracts that required the Chinese to work for several years in the mines to pay their passage was no longer accepted by white Americans as free labor, but a continuation of slavery. Whereas white men could travel as part of an indenture in the 1850s, by the 1870s, Californians denied the practice's legality. Finally, the committee declared that the Chinese were trafficking sex slaves, selling them "to the highest bidder, as if they were sheep and cattle."[55]

The committee focused on determining whether Chinese emigrant aid companies were enslaving their members. By 1876, the miners who regularly broke their constitutions on their journey to California had come to embrace their ability to do so as a freedom, rather than an affront to a "solemn contract," as John Steele had described it in his overland journal in 1850. As former San Francisco Mayor Frank McCoppin testified, the Chinese immigration was not free, but an "enforced emigration," by which laborers signed contracts with companies to pay for their passage. Senator George S. Evans, who came from Texas as a miner in 1849, asked McCoppin, "Don't you know white immigrants that came to California that way?" To which McCoppin responded, "Yes, sir; and they never kept their contracts as the Chinese do." The Chinese, McCoppin explained, did not know that under American law, they could break contracts at will. "The guilds," he concluded, "have absolute power over them here and in their own country." [56] California lawmakers therefore reinvented the narrative of their own gold rush companies. The

[55] *The Chinese Question: A Report of the Special Committee, on Assembly Bill #13* (Sacramento: D.W. Gelwicks, 1870), 4. AAS.
[56] *Chinese Immigration: The Social, Moral, and Political Effect of Chinese Immigration: Testimony Taken before a Committee of the Senate of the State of California, Appointed April 3rd, 1876* (Sacramento: State Printing Office, 1876), 12. AAS.

disorder that pervaded their journey west in the 1850s, which at the time caused popular alarm because if its anti-republicanism was now a sign of republican freedom.

The only pro-Chinese testimonials in the 1876 hearings came from local missionaries, who once again blamed white Californians for their disordered society. Augustus W. Loomis, who had taken over Speer's San Francisco ministry, testified that the Six Companies were merely commercial guilds, societies with by-laws, presidents, and secretaries. These companies, much like New England societies, merely maintained the order of the emigrants and provided them "mutual protection and benefit." Otis Gibson testified that it was only natural for men from the same region to seek protection and communalism. Ministers in New England also supported the Chinese from afar. In a pamphlet distributed among his fellow Bostonians, Minister L.T. Townsend argued that Chinese emigration was a bulwark to republicanism, not a threat to democracy. The only relief for California, Townsend argued, would be if its citizens promoted greater industry, drank and gambled less. The Chinese people exhibited the propensity to these virtues, and therefore, Townsend concluded that "the day will come when these Mongolian voters will stand among the staunchest friends of our republican institutions and will be an invaluable corrective at the polls." Public opinion did not align with pro-Chinese dissenters, however, as evidenced by the crowd outside of the hearings that burned Gibson in effigy.[57]

The 1876 testimonials largely excluded Chinese participation, so Chinese immigrants appealed to the federal government for protection. The presidents of the Chinese Six companies as well as the president of the Chinese Y.M.C.A. contacted President Ulysses S. Grant, in hopes

[57] *Chinese Immigration: The Social, Moral, and Political Effect of Chinese Immigration*, 40-41; Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, *Memorial: Six Chinese Companies: An Address to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States. Testimony of California's Leading Citizens before the Join Special Congressional Committee (San Francisco: NP, 1877)*, 41. HL.; T. Townsend, *The Chinese Problem* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1876), 49. AAS; Jennifer C. Snow, *Protestant Missionaries, Asian Immigrants, and Ideologies of Race in America, 1850-1924* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 60.

that the preferences of Californian politicians would not influence federal policy. Chinese representatives argued that their labor was worthwhile to the American state, citing that the Chinese built a large portion of the railroads, leaving "all the results of their industry to enrich the State." Their letter to the President asserted that Chinese laborers did not displace white workers and had not interfered with the state's political or religious order. The Six Companies, the report argued, existed for "mutual protection and care of our people coming to and going from this country" and "are the same as any tradesmen's or protective and benevolent societies." If the Chinese laborer was a slave, the report concluded, "then all men laboring for wages are slaves."[58]

California's attempts to nationalize their narrative of unfree Chinese labor influenced the platform of the national Republican Party. At the 1876 Republican national convention, the party debated the addition of an anti-Chinese platform. Californians hoped to leverage their six electoral votes to convince easterners that Chinese immigration was equivalent to slavery.[59] Northerners like Edward L. Pierce of Massachusetts objected to adding an exclusion policy to the platform, stating that it was "contrary to that great law of Christian love which proclaims that there is no difference between men." In short, he concluded, "it is not the doctrine of New England."[60] Western delegates defended the anti-Chinese resolution. S.B. Axtell of New Mexico rebutted that as the party "that has always been opposed to servile labor" the Republicans had a duty to stop the importation of coolie slaves. John P. Jones of Nevada called Chinese immigration "worse than the plague of the locusts" and a "leprous sore in our midst." Even if the

[58] *Facts upon the Other Side of the Chinese Question: with a Memorial to the President of the U.S. from Representative Chinamen in America* (San Francisco: n.p., 1876). AAS.
[59] Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 79-80.
[60] M.A. Clancy and William Nelson, *Proceedings of the Republican National Convention, held at Cincinnati, Ohio, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, June 14, 15, and 16, 1876* (Concord, NH: Republican Press Association, 1876), 57.

party wanted to protect the Chinese, he concluded "public opinion is so strong against them" in California "that it is almost impossible to do so." J.B. Belford of Colorado informed the convention that the Chinese "refuse to assimilate with our civilization" and "ignore our school system, ignore our church system." The measure to maintain the clause against Chinese immigration in the party platform easily passed 532 to 215, with westerners approving of the measure 42 to 2.[61] In a close election between Samuel J. Tilden and Rutherford B. Hayes, Hayes carried California by 2,800 ballots and would have certainly lost without California's electoral votes.[62] The anti-Chinese debates instructed federal politicians in the importance of appeasing western interests, and especially those of California.

On the ground in California, grassroots political activists continued to push the anti-Chinese cause. Advocates of Chinese exclusion within California cast the issue as one of economics and labor, and it became a popular rallying cry among labor unionists. On an 1879 ballot among California voters, ninety-nine percent declared that they were against Chinese immigration.[63] Continued pressure from westerners on the issue of exclusion led Congress to pass the Fifteen Passenger Bill in 1879, which limited the number of Chinese passengers on any vessel to fifteen. Hayes vetoed the bill because it violated treaty agreements with China, but soon acquiesced to western demands.[64] In 1880, Hayes sent James Angell to the Chinese government to negotiate immigration restrictions, hoping to keep diplomatic channels open as he explored options for exclusion. The Angell Treaty of 1880 gave the United States the ability to "regulate,

[61] M.A. Clancy and William Nelson, *Proceedings of the Republican National Convention*, 57, 59, 61; Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 84.
[62] Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 90.
[63] Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go*, 40.
[64] Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 140,156, 161.

limit, or suspend Chinese migration" but stopped short of allowing Congress to "absolutely prohibit Chinese migration."[65]

In 1882, Congress passed a watered-down version of a proposed bill by California Republican John Miller.[66] The "Chinese Restriction Act" suspended Chinese immigration to the United States for ten years and maintained policies against Chinese naturalization. The exclusion bill balanced the desire of westerners to restrict Chinese citizenship and immigration, while leaving the door open to international trade and diplomacy. The Geary Act of 1892 extended exclusion for another ten years and required that all Chinese residents carry permits. It would not be until 1943, at the height of American involvement in World War Two, that the US would reverse its exclusion policy and allow one hundred and five Chinese persons the right to immigrate each year.[67]

As the West gained national political clout in the mid-1870s, federal politicians had to address their concerns more fully, which resulted in a Chinese exclusion policy that lasted over sixty years. After the Civil War proved that Californian individualism did not lead to disunion, Californians had more success using the rhetoric of involuntary emigration and unfree labor to justify discrimination. The Forty-Niners who came to the state under cooperative labor contracts in the 1850s rewrote their settlement history to reflect individualism, deemphasizing their dependence on labor contracts. White emigration aid was a free choice, they asserted, while

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[65] William *M. Malloy, Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1776–1909* (2 vols., Washington, D.C., 1910), 1: 288.
[66] John Miller's Senate Bill 71 proposed ending Chinese emigration for the next twenty years, requiring all Chinese migrants to secure a passport with approval by a U.S. diplomat, and punished anyone who helped import Chinese workers with fines and prison time. The new bill ended emigration for the next ten years but removed the passport system and fines for those who aided emigration. Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go*, 49, 51.
[67] Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go*, 40, 49, 51; Gwendolyn Mink, *Old Labor and New Immigrants in American Political Development: Union, Party, and State, 1875-1920* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 86.

similar Chinese labor contracts constituted coercion. This narrative mostly worked to convince other westerners, but among northern reformers, it rang of hypocrisy.

Henry Ward Beecher, whose brother Edward had so diligently promoted cooperative emigration companies in the 1850s, became one of the most adamant opponents of Chinese exclusion. He called the 1882 exclusion bill an affront to the nation's honor and the principles of the Constitution. He gave speeches and toasts that mocked westerners for their rejection of the Puritan tradition, stating that New Englanders at the top of society understood that whatever was "right and good for the best is right and good for the lowest." If Californians had such weak institutions that they could not convert the Chinese, he quipped that it would be better to "burn your Bibles, call back your missionaries" because the Chinese could never learn. Between the impetus of the gold rush in 1849 and Chinese exclusion in 1882, northern evangelicals had come to accept that Californians would not replicate a perfect Protestant society in the West. Debates over emigrant aid and its implications for free labor formed a fundamental pillar of national and international debates over the settlement of California and the processes of labor that would persist there. The passage of exclusion demonstrated that the cultural ties that started as fundamental to the settlement of the West were, by the 1880s, considerably weakened, if not altogether broken.

III: Cooperative Theocracy:

The Perpetual Emigrating Fund and the Western Mormon Corridor

In 1847, after years of searching for a refuge for their religion, Brigham Young and the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints (LDS) arrived in Salt Lake City. Despite the Utah Territory's harsh climate and rocky soil, Young declared that God would "temper the climate" and allow the church to build a "city and a temple to the Most High God in this place." Young prayed over the new settlement, dedicating it to Lord with the knowledge that He would make it productive. "There never has been a land, from the days of Adam until now," Young concluded, "that has been blessed more than this land."[1] As blessed as Young believed his new Garden of Eden to be, the one hundred and fifty settlers who joined the prophet in this initial settlement could hardly hope to survive the difficult environment alone. The religious sect, which drew heavily on the most radical tenets of the Second Great Awakening had been cast aside repeatedly by northern reform society, which rejected their claims of universal salvation, divine revelation, and especially, plural marriage.[2] Exiled in their own corner of the West, Young understood that emigration was the key to the religion's survival. More settlers meant more hands for laborious tasks like irrigation and land clearing and better protection against enemies, including indigenous

[1] James Stephen Brown, *Life of a Pioneer: Being the Autobiography of James S. Brown*, (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons Co., Printers, 1900), 121-122; "Celebration in Great Salt Lake Valley," *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, Vol XII, 1850, 342; John A Widtsoe, ed., *Discourses of Brigham Yong: Second President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Desert Book Company), 483.

[2] Joseph Smith's discovery of the Book of Mormon in 1823 in the burned-over district of New York was a radical fulfillment of Second Great Awakening revivalism. Smith created a lay priesthood, encompassing the fervent rise of anticlericism among evangelicals. He fully embraced the doctrine of perfectionism which codified the evangelical rejection of Calvinism's predestination. Mormonism embraced Adventism, predicting the imminent return of Christ, as well as millennialism, looking for the signs that would mark the path for Christ's return. Mormons also incorporated the reformist platform of revivalism, promoting temperance, universal education, and prison reform. Joseph Smith, *Doctrine and Covenants* (F.G. Williams & Co., 1835), section 101, verse 78; section 19 verses 7-12; Marvin S. Hill, "The Rise of Mormonism in the Burned-over District: Another View," *New York History* 61, no. 4 (1980): 424. For more on Joseph Smith's evangelical upbringing and Mormonism's adaptation of evangelical theology, see David Holland, *Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Pres, 2011), 144-154 and D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998).

tribes and the American government, who sought to reign in the rise of a dangerous theocracy in the West. Upon arriving in Salt Lake, Young declared his intention to build "towns and cities by the hundreds," where thousands of "Saints will gather in from the nations of the earth."[3]

As settlers struggled to make the desert bloom, Young worked to reinforce the fledgling settlement with European converts using the Perpetual Emigrating Fund (PEF). The church had been spreading its message internationally since 1837, when Joseph Smith's younger brother, Samuel H. Smith, started the first LDS missionary society. By 1841, the church boasted of 6,614 converts in England, a number which would increase to 32,894 in the next decade. Over ten thousand of these converts would answer Young's call to join the church in Zion. The PEF raised money among the Saints in Utah and then loaned it to poor European converts, who made the oceanic journey to the United States. Once in New York, the church then organized and funded overland parties to the Utah territory, resulting in a cooperative movement of Mormons to the West. Between 1850 and 1887, the PEF enticed over 85,000 northern Europeans to move to the Great Basin. The emigration movement was so successful that by 1870, over thirty five percent of the Mormon population was foreign born, compared to a national average of fourteen percent.[4] Young parlayed the success of the PEF into other cooperative emigration movements before the Civil War, including the United Orders, which the church used to fund a corridor of LDS settlement outside of the Salt Lake Valley.

Northern reformers resisted the religion's emigration movements throughout the nineteenth century. Evangelicals drove the Mormons out of New York, Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri before Young led the faithful to Utah. Once in Utah, the sect's practices of plural

[3] Brown, *Life of a Pioneer*, 121-122.
[4] Gustive O. Larson, "The Story of the Perpetual Emigration Fund," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 18, no. 2 (1931): 184-94; Jeanne Kay and Craig J. Brown "Mormon Beliefs about Land and Natural Resources, 1847–1877," *Journal of Historical Geography* 11, no. 3 (1985): 254.

marriage and strict hierarchical governance made evangelicals fearful that they were building a despotic kingdom. In 1857, easterners responded to the LDS threat to the Union through military intervention in the Utah War. While the two groups formed an uneasy peace during the Civil War, in the post-war period, evangelicals connected plural marriage to the work of the PEF, claiming that the church was illegally importing enslaved European to become plural wives. The evangelical rejection of Mormonism led to fundamental changes in church policy regarding celestial marriage and the federal disestablishment of the PEF. The LDS use of emigration aid was therefore both highly successful and controversial, as it clashed with evangelical conceptions of republicanism.[5]

The church that Young inherited from Joseph Smith had used emigration to its advantage from its inception. As the church grew in adherents in the 1830s and northern evangelical elites became suspicious of the radical sect, the LDS church continually fled west to seek refuge from persecution. Joseph Smith first cultivated the young religion in Kirtland, Ohio. The community grew there until 1837, when Smith's joint stock company, the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company, defaulted. As debt collectors pursued Smith, his church moved further west to Missouri in 1838. That year, violence broke out during an election riot. When a Mormon militia attacked a non-Mormon one, believing them to be an anti-Mormon mob, Missouri

[5] Much of the historiographical discussion about anti-Mormonism has focused on the American distaste for polygamy. I contend that while anti-polygamy was fundamentally important to nineteenth century debates over Mormonism, the threat of LDS emigration and expansion in the West also played a major role in Mormon opposition. For more on anti-Mormonism and polygamy, see J. Spencer Fluhman, *"A Peculiar People"* Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Sarah Barringer Gordon, The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America (Chapel Hill University of North Carolina Pres, 2002); Patrick Mason, The Mormon Menace: Violence and Anti-Mormonism in the Postbellum South (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Christine Talbot, A Foreign Kingdom Mormons and Polygamy in American Political Culture, 1852-1890 (Champaign: University of Illinois press, 2013).

Governor Lilburn Boggs issued an extermination order. Boggs declared that "Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary."[6]

The LDS saints again moved to a frontier settlement in Nauvoo, Illinois where they would remain until Smith's murder in 1844. Smith's demise occurred, in part, because of his intention to run for President of the United States. This declaration whipped up anti-Mormon fervor among those who saw the religion as a dangerous faction that threatened disunion. The sect's practice of plural marriage also drew criticism as an attempt to destroy the foundations of the American family. When a group of dissenting Mormons published newspaper articles criticizing Smith in Nauvoo, Smith's followers destroyed the printing press and established a militia to patrol the city. In response, the state of Illinois charged Smith with treason and conspiracy. On June 27, 1844, an anti-Mormon mob broke into Smith's prison cell and murdered the LDS prophet.[7] After two years of disputes among church members about who would take the reins of prophecy from Smith, Brigham Young rose as the president of the majority of the faith's adherents.[8] As the church grew more unpopular to their non-Mormon neighbors, Young decided it was once again time to head west in October 1845.

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[6] Lilburn Boggs, *Extermination Order 44* (Jefferson City: Governor's Office, 1838). On anti-Mormonism in early LDS settlements, see R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 25-47, Whitney Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955).

[7] For a complete telling of Joseph Smith's murder, see Fawn M. K. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1945). For further information on the Mormon settlement in Nauvoo, see Benjamin E. Park, *Kingdom of Nauvoo: The Rise and Fall of a Religious Empire on the American Frontier* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2020).

[8] Joseph Smith's death threw the church into what is known as the Succession Crisis because Smith did not directly his successor. The two most likely candidates were his brother Hyrum, who was murdered alongside him and Samuel, who died one month later. The crisis led to several sects of Mormonism, including the short-lived Church of Jesus Christ led by Sidney Rigdon (1844-1847), the Strangite branch led by James Strang from 1844-1856, and the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints led by Smith's son Joseph Smith III, currently the second largest branch of Mormonism. For more on the succession crisis see D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," *BYU Studies* 16, no. 2 (1976): 187-234.

It was in this final western emigration movement that the LDS church would first embrace cooperative emigration aid methods. With only four months to plan their departure from Illinois, church members struggled to sell their land for fair prices. Facing poverty and stark economic losses, emigrants entered into the Nauvoo Covenant. This agreement pooled the finances of all the emigrants so that even the poor could come on the westward journey. Church members solemnly vowed that all the faithful would come with the church to Zion, regardless of their ability to pay for the travel. Using their pooled funds, emigrant parties made their way west to Iowa, where they camped for the winter. Inspired by the reports of John C. Fremont, Young decided that the faithful would settle in the Great Salt Lake Valley, where the Mexican government had limited oversight. After wintering in Iowa, the faithful again used cooperative financial methods to move en masse to Utah in 1847.[9]

These initial successes in emigration aid inspired Young to adapt the method for European immigration in 1850, as the Utah colony struggled to survive outside of the confines of American society. Young established the PEF to ensure that every Mormon willing to come to Utah could afford the journey there. Their funding model depended on church members in Utah, who were to give beyond their ten percent tithe to fund the emigration scheme. The company then sent money to company agents in Europe, who assisted settlers in making the oceanic journey to New York, and further helped fund their journey to Utah. Once in Utah, the PEF constitution required emigrants to pay back their passage in money, gold dust, grain, livestock, valuables, property, or labor to the church. The church promised to check in on debts once a year, which would be collected by emigrants' bishops and forwarded to the PEF.[10]

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[9] Smith, *Doctrine and Covenants*, section 124, verses 1–21; Leonard J. Arrington, *An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 20-22.
[10] Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company General files, Minutebook and Ledger (1850-1880), 289-309. Church History Library. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter CHL).

The PEF was under direct control of the church hierarchy, who saw emigrant aid as the ideal way to import reliable workers into Utah. Young served as president of the fund and placed it under the direction of the Quorum of Twelve.[11] The council determined that the PEF was necessary to the growth of the Utah settlement, proclaiming that "labor, industry, and economy" were requisite for "building up and extending the benefits of civilized society, subduing the soil, and otherwise developing the resources of a new country." The Quorum argued that the plan would also benefit emigrants, whose "labor and industry" would "meet their just reward." First counselor to Brigham Young, Herber C. Kimball praised the organization for "laying the foundation to gather all the poor in Israel, from all the nations of the Earth."[12] Young saw the PEF as an extension of the Nauvoo Covenant's promise that church funds should be used to benefit the community, rather than the individual. The labor of immigrants would be a far greater contribution to the building of the kingdom than an abundance of worldly goods.

The PEF quickly got to work importing Europeans for the Utah settlement. Young wrote to Franklin D. Richards, who ran the religion's promotional newspaper, *The Millennial Star*, in Europe and instructed him to gather the poor faithful in England.[13] European emigrants answered the call often found in missionary journals such as the *Latter-day Saints Millennial Star*, which had a weekly circulation of 20,000 copies in England. Richards wrote that emigrants from England would "shake the nations with the power of the Holy Spirit" and described the reception for one of the first emigrants in Salt Lake City. Emigrants were met with a brass band, the roaring of artillery, and a blessing from Brigham Young himself. As Richards wrote, "the arrival of this company of Saints from England created a general sensation in the community, and was

[11] The quorum of twelve apostles is the second-highest governing body of the LDS church after the Presidency.
[12] Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company General files, Minutebook and Ledger, 289-309. CHL.
[13] Brigham Young letter to F. D. Richards August 31, 1853, Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company Records 1853-1880, MSS 843, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University (hereafter BYU).

an occasion that will long be remembered in Zion." These promotional efforts were successful almost immediately. In 1851, the PEF assisted 2,500 emigrants to Utah and another 10,000 by the end of 1852.[14]

Despite Mormonism's inherently American roots, the message was attractive to European working-class evangelicals. Northern evangelicals observed how easily Mormons converted the economically disaffected and thus stoked their general fear of the religion. PEF emigrant Charles D. Miller exemplifies the strength of the faith's message to the impoverished English Christian. Miller grew up in Manchester in a family that was indigent because of his father's early passing, leaving his mother to tend to seven young children. A strong adherent to independent Methodism, in his teen years Miller was swept up in the great revivals, where he preached in his spare time. In early adulthood, Miller came to believe that evangelical revivalism was not radical enough and found himself dissatisfied by the ideas of Calvinism and Methodism. Miller recollected his confusion at the proliferation of new religious sects, each of which seemed to fall short of embracing the truth. Miller found the knowledge he was looking for in a new Bible, the Book of Mormon, as introduced to him by American missionaries. He was further convinced when he found out that Mormonism embraced the most radical elements of the evangelical revivals, including divine revelation, baptism by immersion, and literal translation of the scriptures. Although tortured by the social consequences of his choice, as his wife threatened to leave him and his employer remained suspicious of his conversion, Miller decided that he was

[14] "Seventh General Epistle of the Presidency" *Millennial Star*, XIV (1852), 325; Phillip A. M. Taylor, *Expectations Westward: The Mormons and the Emigration of Their British Converts in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Oliver and Boyd, 1965); "Safe Arrival in Salt Lake Valley of the Saints Emigrated by the P.E. Fund," *The Millennial Star,* Vol 14., 667 (1852).

"ready" to put his "head on the block for the Gospel." In 1840, Brigham Young ordained Miller a high priest, and in the same year, he left for Utah with the help of the PEF.[15]

Emigrants like Miller signed contracts with the PEF promising to obey the directions of company agents. These contracts would eventually draw the suspicion of evangelicals for resembling indenture, which anti-Mormons would later identify as enslavement. Emigrants vowed to "hold ourselves, our time, and our labour, subject to the appropriation of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company" until they remitted the cost of their journey, plus interest to the church. The church installed managing conductors at U.S. ports of entry and forwarded them along to Mormon-run out-fitting posts. Initially, emigrants landed in New Orleans and traveled up the Mississippi River, but later they started from New York, passing through St. Louis or Iowa. On the plains, a church outfitting agent organized the emigrants into parties, which Young required to have at least fifty armed men. The church furnished the party with wagons, livestock, guns, and food. By the end of 1855, over twenty thousand European emigrants had used the company to come to Utah. With a boon of good harvests in Utah in the early 1850s, the 1855 emigration was especially prodigious, with over four thousand total emigrants, over one thousand of whom came through the fund, which expended approximately $150,000 in the effort.[16]

The year 1855 also brought a plague upon Zion and problems for the PEF. A plague of grasshoppers coupled with a summer drought destroyed the year's crop and the harvest was reduced by up to two-thirds in some locations. Adding to the population while facing an

[15] Charles D. Miller, "Journal and General Daily Accounts," Charles D. Miller and Charles D. Fletcher Collection, MSS 1948, BYU.
[16] "Contract with PEF", Charles D. Miller and Charles D. Fletcher Collection, MSS 1948, BYU; Larson, "The Story of the Perpetual Emigration Fund," 190; P. A. M Taylor, "Mormon Emigration from Great Britain to the United States, 1840-1870" (unpublished dissertation, University of Cambridge, Sidney Sussex, 1953)193-194.
[16] Larson, "The Story of the Perpetual Emigration Fund," 190; Leroy R. Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion: The Story of a Unique Western Migration, 1856-1860* (Glendale, Calif.: A.H. Clark Co., 1960), 27.

impending famine, emigrants found themselves under a strict rationing system their first winter in Utah. Economic distress also greatly diminished voluntary donations to the PEF. In 1856, despite Young's best efforts to encourage further emigration, only one in twenty willing European immigrants could come to Utah. In contemplating a solution to the funding problem, Young admitted that the church could not afford wagons and teams as it had previously.[17]

Instead, Young suggested that emigrants pull their belongings by hand-cart across the plains. He reasoned that emigrants could travel "just as quick, if not quicker" and importantly, much cheaper. Young relied on a romanticized vision of overland travel during which emigrants would improve their physical constitutions rather than get weaker on the journey. He estimated that the hand-cart groups would only need ninety days rations, and by walking up to thirty miles a day, the groups would "continue to get stronger and stronger" as they walked, and by the end of their journey, none would be infirm or unable to press on. F.D. Richards, president of the European mission of the PEF, praised the plan as divinely inspired in the *Millennial Star*. Richards reasoned that if emigrants did not have to spend time wrangling unruly cattle, they could start each day quickly, and avoid the disease that livestock carried. Furthermore, if the Muslim made a long pilgrimage to "kiss the tomb of his prophet," the Roman Catholic endured penance to avoid purgatory, and the Hindu suffered self-inflicted tortures to obtain favor "of his imaginary deity," why should not the saints, "who have revelations of heaven" be ready to suffer on behalf of their God?[18]

In 1856, the hand-cart plan commenced, with the first two ships landing in Boston in mid-April. The emigrants constructed handcarts in Iowa City and walked the 1,300 miles to Utah with no major setbacks. These 815 emigrants did not have the easy journey Young envisioned.

[17] Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 150.
[18] "Emigration," *Millennial Star* Vol. XVII, December 22, 1855, 813-814.

Handcarts constructed of green timber broke down repeatedly, and colonists faced illness and hunger. Nevertheless, in the first of the handcart emigrations, the saints reported only thirteen deaths.[19]

The last two handcart companies of 1856, the Willie and Martin companies, met a much worse fate. Their ship left England late in the season, leaving the church's outposting agents in Iowa City unaware of their arrival. With no handcarts ready for the journey, the party faced further delays. Over four hundred emigrants decided to push on, encouraged by church elders who argued that the mission would be protected by divine intervention. When the party finally reached Fort Laramie in October, the church left them no provisions there. Facing severe food rationing, the companies decided to lighten their loads, discarding mostly clothing and blankets. Confronting severe winter conditions, word reached Salt Lake City that the emigrants were in trouble. Young asked church members to mount a rescue mission, which left in mid-October with supplies. An ill-timed blizzard hit the party on October 19. In a tragedy long debated by historians, 213 emigrants died on the way to Salt Lake.[20] The last five handcart companies, who walked across the plains between 1857-1860, were instructed by the church to leave no later than July 7.[21] While the handcart method of cooperative emigration had mixed results, the church remained confident that emigrant aid was the best method of western settlement.

Despite the central importance of emigration to the mission of the church, the PEF continually struggled to fund the journey west. By 1855, the debt of the PEF was $56,000. By 1877, the total with interest was over one million dollars. In 1863, Young wrote to each Bishop

[19] Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion*, 43; 59.
[20] Historians have disagreed on who was to blame for the tragedy. Wallace Stegner point to inadequate planning and denounced Young for using F. D. Richards as a scapegoat. Howard Christy argued that Richards, as the highest ranking official in the area, was in fact, to blame. Wallace Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966); Howard A. Christy, "Weather, Disaster and Responsibility: An Essay on the Willie and Martin Handcart Story," *BYU Studies* 37 (1997): 6–74.
[21] Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion*, 101-107.

to check in on the PEF debts incurred and not remitted between 1855 and 1863. Thirty ward bishops responded and reported that 577 members owed the company money. When PEF emigrants did pay the company back, it was often in jewelry, rifles, stocks, livestock, leather, wheat, or property. In some cases, emigrants promised the church to include their remittance in their estate, or even offered to provide land surveys as a payment of debt.[22]

As a result, the PEF relied heavily on the hard money donations of church members, which had to be made on top of the ten percent tithe they already contributed. The church advertised the fund as a way to prove loyalty to God's mission in Utah. One popular poem reminded the Mormons to "Give to the poor, and God will give you more!" The poem continued "Why should the rich not help the lab'ring poor?/*Both* are *compell'd* to knock at *mercy's door*!"[23] While many of the faithful sacrificed their own time and money to the fund, the lack of remittance by the emigrants continued to hamper the PEF's operations.

In addition to their efforts to increase their population through emigration, Young and church elders also wanted to expand the LDS settlement into surrounding regions to create a Mormon Corridor in the West. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the church settled at least five hundred colonies in the West.[24] The idea of cooperative settlements originated with Joseph Smith's revelation of the law of consecration in 1831. The doctrine of covenants directed the faithful to dedicate their material possessions to the church, after which the bishops would

[22] Larson, "The Story of the Perpetual Emigration Fund."; "Thirty Reports from Various Bishops listing those in their respective wards indebted to PE Fund," Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company Records 1853-1880, Folder 4, MSS 843, BYU; "Trial Balances," Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company Records 1853-1880, Folder 8, MSS 843, BYU. "PE Fund Co Re Receipts," Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company Records 1853-1880, Folder 9, MSS 843, BYU.

[23] John Lyon, *The Harp of Zion: A Collection of Poems, &c: Published for the Benefit of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853), BL.

[24] For a full list of the colonies that the church created between 1847 and 1877, see Milton R. Hunter, *Brigham Young, the Colonizer* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News Press, 1940), 361-367.

assign each member an appropriate amount of property for his family.[25] Smith used this revelation to create the United Order of Enoch, which created collectivist communities in accordance with the New Testament. Between 1855 and 1858, Young considered using the United Orders to help colonize outside of the Salt Lake Valley. Although the deeds of consecration were never formally drawn up, many of the colonies in the 1850s had cooperative elements.

The church built each of its antebellum settlements using emigrant aid methods. The church first scouted locations by funding exploratory parties in the desired region. Then, the church called a colonizing company to settle, which they were to pattern after the Salt Lake settlement. The church hierarchy called the founders of these colonies from the pulpit, where there was little opportunity to refuse. The settlement companies organized in military fashion, much like they did when crossing the plains to Utah. Once the party arrived in their new home, they built a fort or stockade which served as temporary lodging for the community. Settlers went out each day to build roads, plant crops, build homes, and dig canals. The male heads of families met periodically and assigned each colonist work in the settlement. Once the colony was established, families developed their own family plots.[26]

Along with cooperative colonization policies, the church also provided aid to settlements. Church members ran shops and mills in the cities, with prices fixed at fair rates. Salt Lake City also sent settlements grain, flour, livestock, seeds, equipment and supplies. The church ensured their ability to expansion by using communal methods and emigrant aid to bolster the small communities they were continually building in the West. Moreover, Young envisioned that these

[25] Smith, *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 42, Verses 30-39.
[26] Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 89-91. This policy was made possible because Congress did not pass laws that allowed the private acquisition of land in Utah until 1869, which allowed the church to make its own property policies.

colonies could evangelize locals, produce diverse crops for the Salt Lake settlement, convert Native residents, and provide land for newly arrived immigrants. Young initiated plans for the Mormon Corridor in 1848-1849, when the church colonized the Weber, Utah, Tooele, and Sanpete valleys. Between 1851-1856, settlers moved to the surrounding Box Elder, Pahvant, Juab, Parowan, and Cache valleys. These "inner cordon" settlements expanded on the region most immediately within the supply range of Salt Lake City.[27]

The more difficult settlements were those that Young wanted for strategic purposes but were far outside of the reach of the Salt Lake City settlement. Young became interested in colonizing Southern California in 1847, when he received a glowing report of the region from Jefferson Hunt. Hunt described the area that would become San Bernardino as ripe for settlement, claiming that the church could cheaply purchase enough land for 50,000 families and raise cattle and horses. Young theorized that the church could direct future European emigration through Southern California by sea. He ordered Amasa M. Lyman to obtain information about "good locations for a chain of settlements" that would connect Salt Lake City to the Pacific Coast. Using church funds and the enthusiasm of the saints, Young directed the colonization of Carson Valley and Las Vegas in Nevada; San Bernardino, California; Moab in southern Utah; Fort Supply and Fort Bridger in Wyoming; and Lemhi, Idaho between 1849 and 1855. In his continued effort to connect Salt Lake City to the coast, Young followed reports by Mormon gold rushers to create the "Mormon corridor" from Utah to San Diego, California. By 1855, Mormons had colonized twenty-seven strategic locations on the route. [28]

Evangelicals in the East were suspicious of the Mormon faith and their intention to import settlers from Europe and to expand beyond the Salt Lake Valley. In 1854, the *New York*

[27] Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 86, 89-91.
[28] Journal History, May 14, 1847 and September 30, 1849. CHL; Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 84.

Evangelist lamented that the religion was able to increase from four to thirty thousand members in four years and condemned the PEF for doling out over $34,000 to transport immigrants. Between the PEF, "the increase of population among themselves, and the results of proselytism in the United States," the *New York Evangelist* feared that the Mormons threated "to create a powerful and dangerous element among us." Perhaps the greatest threat was that if the community continued to increase, it could soon reach the limit of 60,000 residents required for a territory to enter the Union as a state.[29]

Reformers worried that a state of laborers obedient to the hierarchy of the church, rather than the democratic principles of republicanism, would sow disunion. The *New York Evangelist* called the Mormon colony the most "compact and efficient despotisms ever known" because emigrants were immediately subject to church power and "imbued with the spirit of enthusiastic obedience." Every man was enrolled in the militia, the report concluded, and the Mormons had created an 8,000-man army that could rival that of the United States. Other newspapers reported in 1854 that the church was erecting "fortifications against future attacks and cultivating large tracts of land." The *Newport Mercury* feared that the increase of the Mormons through foreign emigration would "spread their vile influences to the overthrow of morality and civilization."[30]

Northern evangelicals also feared that the LDS church enslaved its members because of the religion's hierarchical structure. Much as evangelical nativists feared Catholic immigration for its potential to import voters beholden to foreign demagogues, they also feared that Mormon converts were under the Quorum's control. Evangelicals declared that PEF contracts were not the same as those of free laborers but were instead akin to indenture. As the *Charleston Courier*

[29] "Recent Progress of the Mormons," *New York Evangelist,* July 27, 1854.
[30] "Recent Progress of the Mormons," *New York Evangelist*, July 27, 1854; "Increase of the Mormons," *Newport Mercury*, September 16, 1854.

reported, PEF emigrants "have done little less than sold themselves to slavery, as the repayment must be completed before they consider themselves free laborers." The PEF, the report concluded, funded its mission by borrowing money from "confiding dupes in Europe" and the tithing of "confiding dupes in Utah." Evangelicals believed that this importation of slave labor into the Union threatened to destroy its republican institutions, which relied on the freedom of voters. As the *New York Evangelical* concluded, "Such a putrid sore cannot exist upon the extremest part of the body politic without peril."[31]

This fear of Mormonism came to a head during the Utah War of 1857-1858. Americans became increasingly concerned about the church's practice of plural marriage, by which an estimated one quarter of church members lived within polygamist households. As early as 1852, northern newspapers reported Young's declaration that "he had the right to take a thousand wives, if he thought proper." The *Albany Evening Journal* reported that Mormons took plural wives to "raise up, as rapidly as possible, a 'holy generation to the Lord,' who shall build up his kingdom on earth." The concern with plural marriage was that it enslaved women and also, that it would help the dangerous community expand.[32]

Northerners were increasingly concerned that Mormonism was fomenting disunion in the West by enslaving its members to the church hierarchy and importing unwilling converts. The *New York Tribune* declared the PEF unconstitutional because Utah's printed laws contained no official act that established the fund. Instead, the church controlled the fund under territorial law. To many in the North, this was a dangerous mix of church and state, which more represented a theocracy than a republic. Furthermore, the *Tribune* reported suspicion about the church's

[31] "Emigration from Great Britain in 1856," *Charleston Courier*, February 7, 1857; "Recent Progress of the Mormons," *New York Evangelist*, July 27, 1854.
[32] "Exploration and Survey of the Valley of Great Salt Lake of Utah, by Capt. Howard Stansbury," *Albany Evening Journal,* August 28, 1852.

commitment to antislavery, noting that their "laws on slavery are for outside show—very fair, just and reasonable, but altogether dependent on the magistrate for their execution." The church would ultimately get to decide whether the territory embraced slavery, making it a dangerous component of the already imperiled Union.[33] As rumors of emigrants enslaved to hierarchy and women forced into plural marriages continued to grow in the popular media, politicians feared the rise of theocracy. LDS leaders held most political positions in the territory, where Brigham Young served as Governor. Politicians fretted that the federal government could not control the territory. The newly formed Republican Party codified their anxiety about Utah in their 1856 platform, which promised to "prohibit in the territories those twin relics of barbarism: polygamy and slavery."[34]

In January 1857, J.S. Morrill, a congressional representative from the state of Vermont, asked President Buchannan to investigate plural marriage in the Utah Territory. Morrill cited the report of gentile court appointees in Utah, which accused the Mormon church of "overshadowing and controlling the opinions, the actions, the property, and even the lives of its members." He quoted a sermon in which Brigham Young defended plural marriage saying "what of that? They have their scores of thousands of prostitutes, we have none." Morrill declared this an "imputation against American women" and decried the Mormon lack of civilization.[35]

Reports of corruption by gentile judicial appointees in 1857 convinced President Buchanan that it was necessary to appoint a new governor. Soon after his inauguration, Buchanan appointed Alfred Cumming to take over the administration of Utah, sending 2,500 troops to ensure his official installment. Remembering the violence the religion faced in Illinois,

[33] "Mormon Legislation," *New York Daily Tribune,* April 24, 1857.
[34] Quoted in Thomas V. Cooper, and Hector T. Fenton, *American Politics from the Beginning to Date* (Chicago: Charles R. Brodix, 1882), 39–40.
[35] "Utah Territory and Its Laws—Polygamy and its License," *The Daily Globe,* March 2, 1857.

Young gathered the saints and prepared them for war. He reactivated the Nauvoo Legion, a militia that previously protected the Mormons before their journey west. Tensions rose as the Legion encountered federal troops in September of 1857. The Legion burned down Fort Bridger but avoided direct engagement with those federal forces until the war stopped for the winter.[36]

Winter allowed the two sides to negotiate, using Thomas L. Kane as a mediator.[37] Fearful that the Mormons would defeat federal troops and cost him popular opinion, Buchanan agreed to pardon the Mormons if they submitted to the authority of the federal government. Young agreed to support Cumming as governor, but not to support the installation of federal troops in the territory. Young ordered the faithful of Salt Lake to start moving south, which they did in large numbers. By 1858, Congress pressured Buchanan to end the conflict, which Sam Houston called an "intolerable evil" because of the federal intervention against territorial citizens. When Buchanan offered peace terms again to Young, he accepted, and the Mormons slowly came back to Salt Lake City when it became clear that the President did not intend to send more troops. As the *New York Herald* reported, "Thus was peace made – thus was ended the 'Mormon war', which ... may be thus historisized: – Killed, none; wounded, none; fooled, everybody."[38] While the Utah War is commonly memorialized as a conflict over polygamy, easterners were also quite concerned about the religion's expansionist policies. Anti-Mormon reformers included emigrant aid and the policies of the PEF as a part of the territory's abuse of power, linking them to slavery and despotism.

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[36] For a complete account of the Mormon War, see Norman Furniess, *The Mormon Conflict, 1850-1859* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); David L. Bigler, *Forgotten Kingdom: The Mormon Theocracy in the American West, 1847-1896* (Spokane: Arthur H. Clark, 1998), 141-58, 181-88; Gordon, *The Mormon Question*.
[37] For more on Kane, see Matthew J. Grow, *"Liberty to the Downtrodden:" Thomas L. Kane, Romantic Reformer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).
[38] Lemuel Fillmore, "How Peace was Made," *New York Herald*, July 19, 1858.

Much of the fear among northerners about the church's loyalty was seemingly confirmed by the church's behavior during the Civil War. Although Joseph Smith had been firmly anti-slavery, Brigham Young considered it a divinely ordained institution. Like many anti-slavery northerners, Young believed that African Americans were inferior, and their dark skin was a result of the Curse of Ham. The Curse of Ham drew from the story of Noah, alleging that when Noah banished Ham after the great flood, he went to Africa. The dark skin of Africans was, therefore, a mark upon them from God that symbolized a biblical heritage of sin and inferiority. Young believed this curse made African Americans unable to vote or hold the LDS priesthood. Despite his tacit support of slavery, Young still considered free labor a far better system of economics. He argued that if the South abolished slavery and instead instituted free labor, "they would be much richer than they are."[39]

During the Civil War, Young was ambiguous enough about the church's loyalty to the Union that President Lincoln sent troops to the territory to keep an eye on the church. Young argued that he had no sympathy for either side of the war, and in fact, the conflict was occurring as divine punishment on all Americans for mistreating the Saints. He declared the LDS community to not be "secessionists, or abolitionists." Perhaps the most important result of the Civil War to Young was that the federal government would have less time to interfere in the church's affairs.[40]

Young used the relative lack of federal scrutiny to bring more settlers to Utah. In the 1860s, he created a new system of bringing emigrants to the plains, known as the "down-and-back" system. This plan called on members to tithe with goods and time, rather than with money.

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[39] Cited in John G. Turner, *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 318.
[40] Brigham Young Office Journal, July 9, 1862 and January 19, 1862 in Fred C. Collier, ed. *The Office Journal of President Brigham Young, 1858-1863* (Hanna, UT: Collier's Publishing Co., 2006).

The church leadership ordered bishops to supply transportation teams to pick emigrants up from railway depots, making it the responsibility of each ward to furnish twelve teams, as well as four thousand pounds of flour and two thousand pounds of meat. The church offered tithing credit in exchange for these material goods. The church hierarchy commended this sacrifice as part of their "increasing anxiety" to "build up the Kingdom of God," promising that "Heaven will most assuredly withhold no good thing" from those who happily contributed. During this decade, the church brought two to three thousand emigrants a year to Utah using this system. Although the poor still borrowed the money needed for their passage, around forty-one dollars, the down-and-back system depended less on hard currency than the PEF. Instead, the church leveraged the material goods and obedience of its members to fund the emigration. From 1862 until 1868, almost 16,000 emigrants came west by this system.[41]

After the Civil War, the Mormon community again faced the scrutiny of outsiders, as Utah petitioned for statehood and non-Mormons interacted with the religious community as part of the American rush for western land. Young continued to worry about the ability of the church to expand beyond Salt Lake. The church faced increased opposition from westerners, from saints the church asked to leave on remote colonizing expeditions, and from the American nation, many of whose citizens continued to fear polygamy and the infiltration of an anti-republican Mormon state.

With the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, the task of aiding emigrants to Salt Lake City became significantly easier. Although the PEF continued to bring Saints from Europe, the church now worried less about their survival and only about funding their passage. The railroad brought other ominous changes to the Mormon region, as gentiles flooded into

[41] "Letter to Bishops," March 17, 1868. Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company Records 1853-1880, Folder 8, MSS 843, BYU; Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 208.

Utah, bringing with them competitive notions of capitalism. President Young had long feared an invasion of Utah, well founded by the federal invention during the Utah War and rumors in 1860 that Congress hoped to repeal the Organic Act and attach Utah to adjoining states.[42] By the 1870s, the influx of gentile population in the region led to continued concern in the church hierarchy about the self-sustainability of the previously isolated community. The Panic of 1873 further underscored the economic fragility of the Saints and led Young to consider other cooperative emigration alternatives.

In 1874, President Young resurrected the idea of the United Order, which he believed would bolster the faithful against the encroachment of capitalists and help his plans for expansion. There were three types of United Order settlements. The first, as demonstrated in St. George, Utah, asked members to contribute their earnings to a communal fund, from which they received dividends dependent on the amount of labor and capital they contributed. The second, known as the Brigham City plan, attempted to reinforce cooperative arrangements already present in communities. Instead of asking members to consecrate all their property and labor, the group focused on profit sharing, issuing dividends on stock. In the Gospel Plan, members gave all their property to the order, and shared equally in the product. Young organized the first United Order settlement in 1874 in St. George, Utah, and over the next twenty years would authorize more than two hundred branches of the order. [43]

The by-laws of the United Order required that members obey the church morally and financially. The constitutions of each order reinforced that members would not take the Lord's name in vain, would keep the Word of Wisdom, and that the community would "cultivate a spirit

[42] Letter from Brigham Young to George Q. Cannon, January 4, 1860. Kane Family Papers, Box 15, Folder 11, BYU.
[43] L. Dwight Israelsen, "An Economic Analysis of the United Order," *Brigham Young University Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Summer 1978): 536-562.

of charity towards all." Furthermore, the order required members to observe personal cleanliness, keep the Sabbath holy, and pray at least two times a day as a family unit. Financially, the order required that members return what they borrowed, eliminate personal debt, and shun all extravagant fashions or imports. Most importantly, the members pledged to combine their "labor for mutual benefit."[44] Much like gold rush contracts, members agreed to abide by personal and financial restrictions that would ensure that their settlements would reflect proper institutions.

When Young announced his plans to resurrect the United Orders, the faithful had varied responses. Some rejoiced that the vision of Joseph Smith and the Law of Consecration was once again realized in the church. As D. H. Wells argued, because God planned to turn the ways of the world "upside down," it was necessary that the church "introduce an order of things in which He could be recognized as the rightful owner of earthly things." Wells ranted against the acquisition of wealth, and "how uneven and unfair" the constant war between "capital and labour" was, calling it the "Devil's Kingdom." George B. Wallace declared that the plan would rid the religious community of charity, but instead allow each laborer a chance at truly free labor.[45]

Other saints expressed concern about how to implement the orders. A group of bishops wrote to President Young concerned that the orders were having to calculate the exact value of a worker's labor. "Can the United Order," they wondered, "be conducted on the system of a well regulated family, where each member of the family...works to accumulate means...without charging in dollars and cents what is eaten or worn?" President Young responded with a lengthy instruction on how the bishops were to properly implement the orders. He reiterated that each member had to be fully committed to the order, stating that the church did "not wish to accept a

[44] Thomas L. Kane Papers, MSS 792, Box 17, Folder 5, BYU.
[45] "Minutes", March 2, 1874, School of the Prophets Salt Lake City records, 1872-1874, CHL; "Minutes," March 16, 1874, School of the Prophets Salt Lake City records, 1872-1874, CHL.

portion of a man's person and a portion of his substance." Young admitted that ideally, the orders would work as a family. For now, however, he recommended that the societies continue to keep meticulous notes on how much each member contributed. "Jealousies," Young reasoned, "are apt to arise...by keeping books this will explain all, so that every one should be perfectly satisfied."[46]

While the orders functioned within existing communities, President Young also used them to help jumpstart colonization in remote regions. The problem of overcrowding in Salt Lake City remained one that the church tried to solve with colonization missions. Between 1876 and 1879, the church founded at least one hundred new settlements outside of Utah. Saints built these colonies in the same manner they had before the Civil War, moving as a group, pooling resources, and building infrastructure through cooperative labor. Again, the church provided these emigrants aid in the form of reduced tithing.[47]

Settlers called to start United Orders in remote and unsettled regions had lived experiences which challenged Young's romantic vision of colonization. The church left these missions to only the most obedient members, who still complained about their difficulty. If they proved that they could handle one mission, elders often sent them on more, all to the detriment of their own finances and family life. David Leonard Savage's experience in the United Orders underscores the dedication of Young's adherents. Savage became a Mormon in Kirtland, after tending bar for Joseph Smith and other Mormon travelers.[48] Over the course of his time in Ohio, Savage became convinced of Mormonism and joined the church, and was soon asked to join early colonizing parties out of Salt Lake. In 1850, he was one of the first settlers in Lehi. In

[46] Thomas L. Kane Papers, MSS 792, Box 17, Folder 5, BYU.
[47] Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 354-355.
[48] Before Joseph Smith's revelation of the Word of Wisdom, which forbade the use of alcohol, hot drinks, and tobacco, Mormon followers readily partook in alcoholic beverages. After Smith's proclamation, a number of Mormons took the order seriously, while others, including Smith himself, still occasionally partook in drinking. Leonard J. Arrington, "An Economic Interpretation of the 'Word of Wisdom,'" *Brigham Young University Studies*, Vol 1. No. 1 (Winter 1959): 40-41.

1853, the church sent him to Millard County, where his family lived in a small village of only ten other families. Savage accepted the task of carrying mail from Salt Lake City to San Bernardino on pack mules. In 1863, the church called Savage once again, this time to colonize the remote region of Bear Lake alongside the Apostle Charles C. Rich. In a region that Savage's wife Mary described as "a cold hard country," the family lost all of their sheep and many mules in the first winter snow. Their settlement was further hampered by the fact that crops failed to grow in the cold weather.[49]

The Savages remained for three years, until the church ordered them to move to Kingston, Utah and help with the United Order there, which broke up almost as soon as the family arrived. After three years in Kingston, the family moved in 1880 to Snowflake, Arizona where Savage died in 1886. The faithful believer who readily followed church orders left behind three wives and nineteen children. The Savage family demonstrate the human cost of Young's plans to colonize outside of Utah. The family suffered through long winters, starvation, and death. Of Mary Savage's nine children, four died. Three in infancy, and her oldest son David was murdered in a scuffle on the overland trails. The dangers of obedience to the church were matched by the family's dedication to the faith.[50]

Young often asked the most experienced settlers to repeatedly leave their homes and start anew apart from their families and the structures of their society. William Coleman Allen was a regular emigrant in Young's colonization schemes. Allen came to Salt Lake City with an overland company in 1847, enlisted in the Union army to guard mail stations in the West during the Civil War, after which he served as an assistant to the overland migrations. He served in the Black Hawk Indian War, married, and worked for a time freighting on the railroads. In 1876,

[49] David Leonard Savage Papers, MSS SC 511, BYU.
[50] Ibid.

when Allen was thirty-three years old, Bishop Isaac Stewart called his family to move to Arizona and start a colony on the Little Colorado. The church believed that the only way the colony could thrive would be through United Orders. Allen later described the stewardship plan as a way for the emigrants to live "as one great family." If the settlers had gone as individuals, Allen believed, they would have soon become discouraged, but "each one combining his strength with his neighbor" motivated all workers. President Young instructed the colonists to "secure all the government land they could" and Allen reported that the order was largely successful. After ten years, the group branched out up and down the river, and the order dissolved, as all settlers "were by this time on firm footing."[51]

Despite his generally positive attitude about the church, Allen also felt the strain of colonizing outside of the valley. Once, Allen spent an entire summer digging a dam for irrigation. Another year, President Young ordered Allen and four other saints to find a better route through mountain passes. After trudging through mountains and canyons, the party ran out of food and nearly ate a mule before nearby Indians stopped to help them. On many of his missions, Allen left his wife at home with six children. When he returned home from one mission, his dam had failed and his crops were dead, so he spent another summer constructing a new dam. By the end of his ten years of colonizing, Allen was "very much run down for a man of forty-two years."[52]

Some settlers openly resisted the church's call to missionize remote regions. The church asked John W. Tate to work at the Little Colorado settlement to which he replied that he would go if he were called, "but I would not volunteer." When the church affirmed their order, Tate complained that he could not afford to take his family, and even had to secure a loan to fund his

[51] George S. Tanner, William Coleman Allen Biography, MSS SC 769, BYU.
[52] Ibid.

own travel. Tate was further confused by his orders to both settle and preach, lamenting that he was "called on two missions at the same time." When Tate arrived in St. John's settlement in January of 1881, he noted the plentiful land, but the difficulty of negotiating with the "Mexicans and gentiles," who speculated on the land and hoped to sell it at exaggerated prices to Mormon settlers. By March, Tate decided to disobey his orders and leave, having made no progress connecting with other missionaries and lacking the money to continue.[53]

The United Orders were controversial among Mormon settlers but even more so among northern evangelicals, who thought Young was using the organization to consolidate Mormon property in the West. Chicago's *Daily Inter Ocean* predicted that the United Order would be the ultimate downfall of the faith, as those with material comfort would not accept giving it up. "That Brigham has made a great, a very great mistake," the paper reported, "cannot be denied." The *New York Herald* deemed the plan "a huge swindle upon the people and destined to reduce them to slavery" because the order required the people to give all their possessions over to the Prophet. The *Herald* decried the plot as a retreat into unfree labor, arguing that the church reinstituted the "chains of bondage" that the Union had only a few years earlier "broken by the might of arms." [54]

The dual threats of the church taking the property of members, which threatened to reduce them to slavery and the faith's continued expansion in the West aligned with other concerns about the religion in the 1870s. The threat of slavery in the United Orders was strengthened by the idea that Mormon women were enslaved in the practice of polygamy. The church found itself at a crossroads in 1877, when Brigham Young died, leaving his Presidency to

[53] "Journal of John W. Tate 1880-1881," John W. Tate Papers, Folder 1, BYU.
[54] "Brigham Young's Power Waning--Failure of the Co-operative Mercantile Association," *Daily Inter Ocean*, May 16, 1874; "Utah. Brigham Young's New Revelation," *New York Herald*, May 26, 1874.

John Taylor. Without Young to lead the church, its opponents saw further opportunities to resist what they considered anti-American economic and social policies.

In 1879, Republicans moved to finally destroy the pillar of barbarism, polygamy, that they identified before the Civil War. They first turned to dismantling the PEF to stymie the religion's importation of foreigners to Utah. Conservative reformer and Secretary of State William Evarts sent an anti-Mormon circular to the US diplomatic and consular officers in Europe, with a request to limit LDS emigration. Attached letters argued that annual immigration statistics showed that large number of LDS converts were still flooding into the Utah territory. Evarts argued that the "system of polygamy" in Utah was "largely based upon and promoted by the accessions from Europe drawn mainly from the ignorant classes" of England. The Secretary concluded that because federal government deemed plural marriage illegal, the PEF's "deliberate and systematic attempt to bring persons to the United States with the intent of violating their laws" could no longer be supported by the United States, or the crown. The British police counsel J. Vaughn responded that the government was powerless to interfere with private belief or to stop the Mormons from emigrating under the PEF.[55] Nevertheless, emigration and the prevention of LDS converts coming to Utah remained a central pillar of the gentile argument against the PEF, one that would eventually disband it.

Evangelical reformers determined that Mormonism was a continued threat to the Republic. Newspapers described foreign immigration as a fundamental pillar in the nefarious scheme of the Mormon hierarchy to enslave women in plural marriages. *Harper's Magazine* warned that the continued work of the PEF to bring Europeans to Utah threatened another civil war. If the "Mormon situation" was "let alone," author C.C. Goodwin argued, it would "break at

[55] "Mormon Emigration Records," MSS 4150, BYU.

last in tears and blood, and drench over the whole land." Goodwin argued that while the original Mormon immigrants were Americans, over the last thirty years, ninety percent came from the "very lowest classes of European society." This foreign immigration allowed the perpetuation of despotism, he reasoned, as "few Americans could ever be made to bear the unquestioned and unquestioning obedience which is exacted from its people." Goodwin also warned of the church's other cooperative emigration schemes, noting that Mormon settlements extended into Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Washington and Wyoming. "Wherever these colonists go," Goodwin reported, "they carry with them joyfully their badge of slavery to a few men in Salt Lake City."[56]

Harper's Magazine reinforced the widespread American belief that the Latter-day Saints enslaved its members. Goodwin argued that the church "again forged the chains of an ignominious slavery on the writs of women," who offered a "perpetual premium for men's lusts." The alleged Mormon disregard for chastity threatened to destroy the sacredness of the American home. Goodwin concluded that the only way to stem the tides of bondage was to cut off the influx of foreign immigration to Utah. Just as anti-slavery gradualists argued that immigration could slowly demonstrate the value of free labor to southerners, anti-Mormon proponents believed that the end of foreign immigration would starve Mormonism of its vigor within two generations. If the "monster in Utah" was "left to grow," however, once again the "country will be hillocked with graves, and the whole land will be moistened by the rain of women's tears."[57]

Evangelical leaders made it a priority to save the Utah immigrants from their oppression. Reverend M. T. Lamb believed that if evangelicals could convert 50,000 young Mormon

[56] C. C. Goodwin, "The Mormon Situation," *Harper's Magazine*, LXIII (October 1881), 756; 759; 763.
[57] Ibid, 762-3.

emigrants, the LDS hold over Utah would greatly diminish. Mormon children, he argued, were "becoming infidels, *not because they want to be infidels, but because they don't know what else to become*." Protestant missionaries to the Mormon communities burgeoned with the railroad, funded by northern congregations. By 1880, Protestantism boasted of twenty-two ministers serving in twenty-four Utah churches, twenty-five mission day schools, including over 2,000 students.[58]

Religious leaders addressed the growing threat of a despotic state in the West. In January 1882, evangelicals held mass meetings in Chicago, Portland, Rochester, St. Paul, and Pittsburg, where thousands of concerned religious adherents signed petitions against Mormonism. In one such meeting, the pastor called the "existence of Mormonism in the very heart of a Christian country" a disgrace that ought to be "put down by the entire military power of the Government."[59] Sermons on Mormonism drew large crowds in the North, as the faithful gathered to hear tales of the mysterious western religion. One meeting held at the Madison-Avenue Congregational Church in 1882 was so "greatly crowded that many persons were unable to obtain seats." The Reverend John P. Newman preached that just as slavery could have been quashed in the early days with no loss of money or life, the church could have easily "suppressed the evil of polygamy" thirty years ago. Now, the church had to contend with the Mormon leadership who were "smart, cunning, unscrupulous men." Newman railed against the "foreigners, clothed with all the rights of citizenship" in Utah, who exercised the same political

[58] *The Situation in Utah: The Discussions of the Christian Convention, held in Salt Lake City Utah, April 1888* (Salt Lake City: Parsons, Kendall & Co., 1888), 88; R. G. McNiece, "The Christian Conflict with Mormonism," in M. Coyner, ed., *Handbook on Mormonism,* (Salt Lake City: Hand-book Publishing Company, 1882), 60.
[59] "Anti-Mormon Movement," *New York Times,* January 24, 1882; "Anti-Mormon Meeting in Chicago," *New York Times*, January 30, 1882; "The Anti-Mormon Crusade," *New York Times*, January 27, 1882; "Steps to Blot out Mormonism: The Movement Started by the Presbyterians of Cincinnati," *New York Times,* January 22, 1882; "The War Against Mormonism: Large Meetings in Chicago, Portland, and Other Cities," *New York Times,* January 24, 1882. "The Clergy on Mormonism: Discussing the Movement Started in Cincinnati," *New York Times,* January 23, 1882.

rights as upstanding evangelical men. He whipped up the crowd by suggesting that the only solution now as to overthrow Mormon courts by military invasion and disenfranchise all Mormons, lest they spread their religion to nearby western states.[60]

Much of the popular sentiment against Mormonism emphasized its enslavement of foreigners. One minister declared that the vast majority of the LDS church were recruited from England, Scandinavia, and Germany, and "almost the only Americans among them are a few shrewd Yankees." Newman lamented that the introduction of the railroad, meant to put an end to the isolated religion, had instead drawn in "trains laden with converts to Mormonism brought from across the seas." Much as Californians pressured the federal government to implement restrictions against Chinese immigration, Methodists in Philadelphia considered whether the federal government could not do more to "anticipate and prevent this constant supply of this organized iniquity."[61]

With a frenzy of popular support, Congress passed the Edmunds Act in 1882, which made the federal punishment for bigamy a heavy fine, jail time, and disenfranchisement. Federal authorities especially sought to capture the leaders of the LDS church, in an attempt to dismantle their theocratic hold on the territory. When the Supreme Court upheld the law in Clawson v. United States in 1885, it started a period in LDS history known as the Raid. Between 1882 and 1896, the federal government brought more than 1,400 indictments against Mormon practitioners of plural marriage. Church officials adopted an official policy of going "Underground," fleeing from authorities with the help of the faithful. The church even created a polygamy telegraph code

[60] "Mormonism Denounced: A Vigorous Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Newman," *New York Times*, January 30, 1882, 5.
[61] "The Clergy on Mormonism: Discussing the Movement Started in Cincinnati," *New York Times*, January 23, 1882; "Mormonism Denounced: A Vigorous Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Newman," *New York Times*, January 30, 1882, 5.

at this time to refer to their top leaders clandestinely. Even President Taylor went underground in February 1885, dying in hiding in 1887.[62]

The Kansas crusaders of the New England Emigrant Aid Company had a brief resurgence in 1885 to "operate upon the Mormon Territory of Utah" by the same means as they had in Kansas. As the NEEAC had overwhelmed the Slave Power, they would "overwhelm the Polygamists by filling the Territory with emigrants opposed to their uncleanness." They proposed a bill to the U.S. Congress to incorporate the Utah Emigrant Aid and Improvement Company for one million dollars. The *New York Times* doubted that such a plan could "keep pace with the immigration of converts, especially in view of the fact that the most attractive parts of the Territory have long been in the hands of the Mormons." Other newspapers lauded the plan. The *Daily News* wrote that the "same men who did so much to free Kansas from the curse of slavery" were set on using "thousands of acres of good government land in Utah" to put "a voter on every square section." This plan would ensure that the gentiles would "before long outnumber the 'Saints' and rescue the territorial government from their hands." The lesson of history, the article concluded, was that "what was done in Kansas can be done in Utah." [63]

The NEEAC sent an unnamed agent to Utah, who advised against the plan, stating that "the only lands which could be settled in this way are already in the hands of Mormons, or persons allied to them." The only available lands, he assured them, were those that would require massive irrigation projects. Disbelieving their first agent, the company sent another agent to

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[62] Gordon, *The Mormon Question*, 157-159; Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 359.
[63] "Something Worth Thinking of," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* Apr. 11, 1885: 122"; Massachusetts Tackling the Mormon Problem," *Daily Evening Bulletin,* Apr. 15, 1885: 4. On the Mormon question see Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). Matthew J. Grow contests the pervasiveness of disdain for Mormons in Matthew J. Grow, *"Liberty to the Downtrodden" Thomas L. Kane, Romantic Reformer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Quoted in William Mulder "Immigration and the 'Mormon Question': An International Episode," *The Western Political Quarterly,* 9 (2): 416-433.

Utah, one who was a "good engineer who had laid out towns in the early settlement of Kansas." The second agent also recommended against the settlement plan. The company was disappointed, especially because "thousands of Kansas farmers were waiting for the opportunity to move once more," and Charles Robinson "had consented to lead the movement as he did in 1854-5." The movement died a quiet death as the courts began to crack down on polygamy.[64]

The Mormon resistance to federal authority led to an even more restrictive law in the Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887. The revised law ended the corporation of the LDS church, dissolved its property, abolished women's suffrage, enacted oaths to disenfranchise polygamists, and importantly, annulled the charter of the PEF. The evangelical crusade against polygamy fervently continued even after the passage of the Edmunds-Tucker Act. In 1888, the Christian ministers of Salt Lake City met for a series of lectures emphasizing the need for "cooperation among the evangelical denominations for the overthrow of certain great evils in this region." These evils included, according to Reverend A. S. Bailey, that Mormons hurt the economy by forbidding Saints to trade with gentiles, that they controlled politics using religious oaths for office, and that they taxed property as a part of tithing. Bailey reiterated the anti-republican nature of the American religion, as evangelicals had long claimed. "It belongs to the nation," he quipped, "not to individuals or organizations, to define what is meant by religion, and to decide what shall be entitled to protection under that name."[65] Bailey also cited generational and future concerns, lamenting that the church was inadequate in educating children, and that polygamy threatened the American family. Polygamy usurped the authority of the state by stripping it of its "civil power" to recognize and protect the American family. This was a problem not likely to go

[64] Amos A. Lawrence, *Settlement of Utah: Report of a Committee* (Boston: 1866).
[65] *The Situation in Utah: The Discussions of the Christian Convention, held in Salt Lake City Utah, April 1888* (Salt Lake City: Parsons, Kendall & Co., 1888), 3, 18.

away because of the abundance of missionaries, a strong lobby in the capital, and "recruits being brought in by hundred from the Old World."[66]

In 1890, the LDS church officially ended its practice of plural marriage and ordered its members to abide by the laws of the United States. Six years later, the territory would join the Union as the forty-fifth state. Within the established power structures of the federal government, statehood was only made possible by the eradication of the church's emigration aid schemes. While Mormons continued to actively evangelize internationally, they no longer imported thousands of believers into Utah each year, as they had throughout the nineteenth century. Emigration aid was a method central to the LDS colony in Salt Lake City and to their expansion into the wider west. Brigham Young embraced the concept as a way to strengthen the church and ensure its survival, despite its remote location and harsh environment. The method's similarity to their own emigration schemes notwithstanding, northern evangelicals decried the church's practice as a way to import enslaved women as plural wives and a trick to build an anti-republican theocracy in Utah. The political debates over Mormon emigrant aid fueled federal anti-Mormon legislation and led to the faith's eventual acquiesce to federal authority. Evangelical northerners saw the utility of supporting Chinese immigrants using cooperative methods of travel because they believed in the possibility of their conversion. Facing the strength of the Mormon hierarchy and the relative isolation of the religion in Utah, reformers condemned their right to do the same.

[66] Ibid, 21, 23.

IV: Exporting Disorder: The Children's Aid Society

In 1853, a young minister in New York City named Charles Loring Brace lamented the changes befalling the city. As Brace ministered to the population of Five Points, one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city, he came to believe that immigrants in the city's ethnic enclaves were not the "good—sober, hard-working people, who have spread over the country and become mingled with our population," but the worst kind of immigrant, who "settled and stagnated in the City," filling the streets, where "vice and laziness stimulated each other." The more Brace observed these impoverished immigrants, the more he believed them a danger to the future of the nation. Brace imagined that immigrant parents would produce an entire generation of children unschooled in the duties of republicanism. The largely Catholic immigrant population, growing up impoverished on city streets, would then give their blind obedience to a demagogue, just as they gave undue allegiance to the priestly hierarchy of the church. New York's Protestant elite agreed with Brace, fearing that Catholic immigrants posed a threat to the city's political future and to the very foundations of the Republic. As nearly a thousand foreign immigrants arrived in New York each day, they feared that the "hideous and unnatural conditions of the Europeans cities—the results of ages of ignorance and inequality and over-crowded population—could be realized" in the United States.[1]

For the next thirty-seven years, Brace worked tirelessly to eliminate the problems he saw plaguing New York's immigrant communities—intemperance, Catholicism, and generational poverty. He tried to quell elite anxieties about the future of the nation when he founded the

[1] "First Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1854, Box 1, Folder 25, Records of the Children's Aid Society 1836-2006, New-York Historical Society (hereafter NYHS). "Eleventh Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society, February 1864, Box 2, Folder 2," NYHS; "Second Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1855, Box 1, Folder 26, NYHS.

Children's Aid Society (CAS) in 1853. Brace advocated the removal of immigrant children from New York City into Protestant homes in the West, where he believed they would grow into true Americans. From 1853 to 1929, the CAS sent approximately 200,000 children to the West, placing them with rural families who agreed to raise them in exchange for their labor.[2] The society removed children from immigrant neighborhoods, particularly those with high densities of German and Irish Catholic residents. The children the organizations "placed out" in western families included orphans, "half orphans," and some who were not orphans at all.[3] All of the children were, according to Brace, "at the turning point of their lives," and could still be saved through his intervention. Removing them would improve New York, with "much expense lessened to courts and prison" and "so much poisonous influence removed from the city." The West, Brace declared, offered a unique combination of "immense space of arable land and practically unlimited demand for labor, especially children's labor."[4]

Brace promoted the Children's Aid Society as a long-term solution to the crisis of disunion. Instead of children growing up in urban poverty, where they were likely to become dependent on low wages and political machines, a childhood in the West would offer them the chance to grow into the ideal republican citizens. The CAS envisioned that placing children out in the West would strengthen Protestant settlements there while reducing the strain of poverty in the East. This form of emigrant aid would assist both evangelical westerners in maintaining their

[2] The figure of 200,000 is an estimate based on company reports. It does not account for children who went West multiple times after return trips, or fully account for the work of branch societies, which also used the placing out method. As Steven Mintz argues, in the nineteenth century only a small group of middle and upper-class children experienced Romantic childhood, which shielded them from adult responsibilities and focused on education. See Chapter Eight, "Save the Child" for Mintz's discussion on the child saving movement, which he argues "attempted both to protect children from the dangers of urban society and to protect society from dangerous children." Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).
[3] The term "half-orphan" refers to a child that has one living parent and one dead.
[4] "First Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1854, Box 1, Folder 25, NYHS. "Fifteenth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1868, Box 2, Folder 5, NYHS.

settlements in the West and children, who would escape the confines of urban wage labor.[5] Reformers imagined the region as a sort of safety valve, where they could export and, therefore, solve, the most vexing problems of the day.[6] If reformers could bolster the fundamental building block of the state—the family—in the West, while removing discordant immigrant factions from New York City, they believed that they could build a Union bound together by its adherence to evangelical Protestantism.[7]

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[5] For an overview of how free labor ideology influenced ideas about child labor, see Marjorie Elizabeth Wood, "Emancipating the Child Laborer: Children, Freedom, and the Moral Boundaries of the Market in the United States, 1853-1938," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2011). Wood draws on larger conversations about the politics of child labor by Hugh D. Hindman, *Child Labor: An American History* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002); and Walter I. Trattner, *Crusade for the Children: A History of the National Child Labor Committee and Child Labor Reform in America* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970); James Schmidt, *Industrial Violence and the Legal Origins of Child Labor* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[6] I am not suggesting that the West served as an actual "safety-valve" in a Turnerian sense, only that Eastern reformers imagined it as one. As David M. Wrobel argues, Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis was not the first manifestation of frontier anxiety, but symptomatic of wider frontier anxiety that emerged in the 1870s. David M. Wrobel, *End of American Exceptionalism Frontier Anxiety from the Old West to the New Deal* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1993). See also William F. Deverell, "To Loosen the Safety Valve: Eastern Workers and Western Lands," *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Aug. 1988), 269-2. Deverell discusses the myth of the safety valve as a conception of labor, where the West would "siphon off" unemployed workers with promises of free land. This would keep wages high in the East and maintain peaceful class relations. This nationwide faith in American exceptionalism and the promise of westward migration, as described by Deverell, was the impetus of Brace's faith in the West to reform the East.

[7] Historians have identified the importance of children to the longevity of the American nation. Jean Baker argues that in the mid-nineteenth century, the family was essential to party socialization, as mothers and fathers formed the basis of partisan instruction in the home. Jean H. Baker, *Affairs of Party: The Political Culture of Northern Democrats in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983). Jon Grinspan also identified children and the politics of family as essential to state building in the nineteenth century, as "young people fueled politics between 1840 and 1900." He argues that political parties offered immigrants a steady national network as they moved and a tool for socialization. Jon Grinspan, *The Virgin Vote: How Young Americans Made Democracy Social, Politics Personal, and Voting Popular in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016. Anne Hyde identifies family networks as essential to state building in the West. She argues that the interconnectedness of indigenous and settler families constructed the bonds of capitalism in the territories before American federal intervention. Anne F. Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A New History of the North American West, 1800- 1860* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011). Scholars of settler colonialism in the West have also identified the family as a site of state intervention, drawing from the work of Michel Focault's notion of biopower, which contends that the state controls populations through disciplinary institutions. Anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler's contention that bodies are the "dense transfer points" of power, where the state sought to make matters of intimacy matters of the state has also influenced this field. Bethel Saler identifies the state control of intimate matters as essential to early state formation in Wisconsin through an examination of territorial marriage restrictions. Margaret Jacobs demonstrates how women in benevolent societies in the twentieth century applied concepts of maternalism to dispossess Native Americans through the Indian boarding school movement. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol.1* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Bethel Saler, *The Settlers' Empire: Colonialism and State Formation in America's Old Northwest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Margaret Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler*

Before the Civil War, Brace's conception that the city needed to remove and reform unruly factions cohered with wider northern concerns about disunion. The society created influential emigrant aid networks that populated the West, in hopes that children could form a moral, civilized state. Nevertheless, the society faced opposition from Catholics who opposed their proselytization mission and children, who exercised their autonomy to choose their own labor arrangements. After the Civil War, the CAS could no longer point to the potential for disunion as a justification of their authority over immigrant communities. The CAS faced competing organizations, pressure to keep children within their ethnic enclaves, and criticism of their lackluster management. When the CAS sent children south to fill labor shortages on plantations and the Catholic Church published exposes accusing the society of kidnapping, Brace's initiative looked less like free labor, and more like a form of slavery. Furthermore, as western states faced their own crises of urban poverty, they were less willing to import New York's indigent. Western states and the Catholic Church both provided their own alternative child welfare programs in the post-war period, which focused less on proselytization, and more on education. Without the fear of disunion to motivate child removal, northern ideas of how best to educate children in republicanism also changed.[8]

Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).

[8] Linda Gordon's *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999) is the only account of the orphan trains centered on adoption in the West. Gordon's analysis focuses on Catholic immigrants who were adopted into Latino families in the early twentieth century. Marilyn Irvin Holt, *The Orphan Trains: Placing out in America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992) effectively tells the story of placing out from an Eastern perspective but does not elaborate on larger political or social effects in the West. Stephen O'Connor, *Orphan Trains: The Story of Charles Loring Brace and the Children He Saved and Failed* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001) examines the question of whether Brace succeeded or failed in an ethical sense. Miriam Z. Lagnsam, *Children West: A History of the Placing-Out System of the New York Children's Aid Society, 1853-1890* (Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1964) investigates whether the society reduced juvenile delinquency in New York. While these accounts effectively elaborate on aspects of the placing out system, this chapter seeks to highlight the connections between eastern ideas about the West and the larger political significance of the family to state building.

Brace came of age amidst early debates over child saving, which influenced his turn to evangelicalism. Although of Puritan ancestry and trained at Yale Divinity School, Brace rejected his Calvinist upbringing for a more flexible view of humanity, which he found in Methodism. Brace was particularly drawn to the ministry of Horace Bushnell, whose 1847 book *Christian Nurture* upended traditional Calvinistic understandings of a child's inherent sinfulness, instead emphasizing a more flexible understanding of the relationships between childhood and self-determination. True to newer Arminian conceptions among evangelicals, which emphasized freedom of choice instead of predestination, Bushnell argued that children could choose salvation as they grew up.[9]

Brace's apprenticeship under Lewis M. Pease, a reform-minded Methodist Episcopal minister, also influenced his understanding of childhood. In the early 1850s, Brace began to work with Pease at the Five Points Mission, located in one of the poorest Catholic neighborhoods in the city. Brace's continued failure to convert the adult population of Five Points convinced him that reform should begin in childhood, with the removal of children from the corrupting influences of the Catholic Church and depraved immigrant parents. He argued that the mechanisms of discipline for children, their parents and the church, were insufficient in ethnic enclaves. Brace argued that the Catholic Church was not strong enough to enforce morality among its adherents, as it cared more about building churches than monitoring its parishioners. Catholic parents, "away from their neighbors and their religious instructors," also tended to turn away from the fidelity of marriage in favor of "free love doctrines." Men left their families for

[9] Marcia J. Bunge, ed. *The Child in Christian Thought* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 350; Wood, "Emancipating the Child Laborer: Children, Freedom, and the Moral Boundaries of the Market in the United States, 1853-1938." Brace's family attended Bushnell's Congregational Church in Hartford, Connecticut, where Brace was influenced by Bushnell's views of children, which he published in in 1847 book *Christian Nurture*. Bushnell argued that children were innocent and could be saved through development of Christian character. Bushnell, *Views of Christian Nurture, and of subjects adjacent thereto* (Hartford, CT: E. Hunt, 1847).

distant work and women failed to maintain their families. Brace concluded that these two failures were what left Catholic immigrant children in menial labor like organ grinding and rag picking, which he believed would lead to a lifetime of degradation and crime. Brace came to believe that the cheapest and most efficient way to "deal with the Dangerous Classes" was not punishment, but education, discipline, and religion. If he could allow poor children to see the way that middle-class evangelicals lived, Brace believed that they would "grow up as useful producers and members of society, able and incline to aid it in its progress."[10]

Evangelical reformers had long been concerned with the state of the American family and Catholicism's threat to its longevity, making Brace's form of child saving relevant to a large portion of influential New Yorkers.[11] American Catholics and Protestants agreed that the family was the building block of the state, which made children central to the continuance of democracy in the East and to the transference of civilization to the West. Revivalist minister Edward Norris Kirk argued that families were "the nation in miniature for, as they are, the nation will be. Whatever rightly affects them, elevates the nation." Catholic Archbishop of New York John Hughes agreed that "a family is in itself a State."[12]

Yet, Catholics and Protestants disagreed on the proper order within the American family, and therefore, the proper makeup of the nation. Evangelical reformers claimed that the nation and the American family had grown in tandem and therefore formed the cornerstone of the state.

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[10] Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years' Work Among Them* (New York: Wynkoop & Hallenbeck, 1872), 41-42; 155; "Eighth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society, February 1861, Box 1, Folder 32, NYHS.

[11] For more on the Know Nothing and nativist movements in New York, see Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984) and Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s* (New York: Oxford University Pres, 1992).

[12] Edward Norris Kirk, *The Church Essential to the Republic: A Sermon in Behalf of the American Home Missionary Society* (New York: Leavitt, Trow & Co, 1848), 8. AAS; John Hughes, *Influence of Christianity upon Civilization* in John Hughes, *Complete Works of the Most Rev. John Hughes, Archbishop of New York: Comprising His Sermons, Letters, Lectures, Speeches, Etc.* Vol 1. (New York: Lawrence Kehoe, 1866), 355;

Each member of the family had individual rights, even children. Children, many Protestants believed, were a *tabula rasa* on which the family could perpetuate the morals of democracy.[13] Catholics, conversely, saw the family as part of a traditional hierarchical order, in which parental rights trumped those of children. Instead of a body of individuals, Archbishop Hughes called the family "a corporation in which there is form, and domination, and order." To evangelicals, the fixed nature of Catholic hierarchy represented a direct threat to the individual freedom inherent in both Protestantism and the American republic. As reformers considered the best ways to diminish the Catholic vision of the family and nurture the development of society in western states and territories, they increasingly focused on amending the American family by influencing its children. [14] Evangelicals saw immigrant loyalty to the Catholic Church as a dangerous adherence to European despotism that threatened to infiltrate American democracy. Boston, New York, and Philadelphia became the centers of nativism, as Protestants became increasingly concerned that Catholic immigrants could not Americanize.

When Brace created the CAS, he emphasized the very issues that evangelicals had been concerned with for the past twenty years. Brace used the Arminian emphasis on works to argue that reformers could redeem children by relocating them to more suitable environments. The very cornerstones of republicanism—education, discipline, and religion—would conform the

[13] The task of preparing children for democracy often became the purview of women as republican wives or republican mothers. Historians have proven that women embraced this role as a political identity, but also pushed beyond it for further rights. Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002); Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Nancy Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Boston: Little Brown, 1980); Rosemarie Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
[14] Maureen Fitzgerald, *Habits of Compassion: Irish Catholic Nuns and the Origins of New York's Welfare System, 1830-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 79, 85.

poor into acceptable middle-class citizens. Removing children to the West would ensure that future generations would not grow up under the influence of Catholic immigrant communities, but the guidance of Protestantism. The West would benefit over the long term through the influx of laborers, who would Americanize into model citizens. The West would be won for Protestantism and the eastern cities would be rid of the sin of the Old World—pauperism, Catholicism, and corruption.

When Brace started the CAS in 1853, his primary concern was emigration, which could quickly reduce the number of poor children in the city, estimated by Chief of Police George W. Matsell at nearly ten thousand. Brace believed that as long as children were removed at a young age, there was "always hope of a speedy improvement under family influence." A secondary goal of the society was the creation of lodging houses and schools within the city itself. These institutions either prepared poor children for families in the West or provided them with a stopgap until parents reached the standards of virtue deemed acceptable by society agents. Brace envisioned a system in which company agents would find impoverished children, remove them from their homes, provide training as necessary in a lodging house or school, and finally send them to a Protestant family in the West. Once the child adapted to their new western life, the CAS expected that adoptive families would write once or twice a year to confirm the welfare of the child.[15]

In the first step of this process, CAS agents removed children from their urban homes into society custody. Standards for removal depended not on set requirements, but the idiosyncrasies of company agents. A state truancy law passed in 1853 authorized the arrest of all truant children between the age of five and fourteen years. "On the final neglect of the parent"

[15] "First Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society, February 1854, Box 1, Folder 25, NYHS; "Fifth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society, February 1858, Box 1, Folder 29, NYHS.

the law stated, it became the duty of a municipal authority to provide them housing, employment, and education, "until indentured or discharged." The law noted that parental rights could only be subsumed by the state if it were in the "best interests of their offspring, and the public safety." These loose restrictions authorized Brace's agents to remove children without parental permission. If parents did protest, Brace encouraged his agents to remind parents of the advantages of a western home over "the poverty, ignorance, and temptation, to which they are exposed in the city." [16] As a result, although some children joined the CAS voluntarily, CAS agents coerced a fair portion from the streets involuntarily.

Once the CAS obtained indigent children, agents took them to industrial schools. These schools served to provide children with an education in republicanism to prepare them for their new western homes. The CAS worked in these schools to impose a specifically gendered view of acceptable children's socialization. The society reasoned that for a young man there was always "a chance for return, for reform," even within the city. Once a young girl trod "the paths of public sin" by engaging in sex work, the CAS believed that her redemption could only be obtained through removal. A prostitute in the eyes of the society was "debased and outcast, contemptible and useless, and…with few exceptions, is lost already!" In industrial schools, the CAS taught every girl middle-class standards of cleanliness. Housemothers encouraged girls to keep "herself and her clothes clean" and employed "in scrubbing, cleaning, cooking, ironing or sewing." In boys' lodging houses, wardens taught the residents financial management to promote self-reliance. Each house opened a mock savings bank in which boys were "induced to leave

[16] "An Act to Provide for the Care and Instruction of Idle and Truant Children Passed April 12 1853" reprinted in *Twenty-First Annual Report of the American Female Guardian Society 1853* (New York: William Osborn, 1853), 11; *The Twenty-First Annual Report of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor* (New York: Trow & Smith Book Manufacturing Co, 1853); "Eleventh Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society, February 1864, Box 2, Folder 2, NYHS.

their money" to gain small amounts of interest. The society claimed that these skills, both girls' housework and boys' financial management, taught the "sharpness and self-reliance" necessary to thrive in the West.[17]

Religious education in CAS schools focused on overcoming what Brace saw as the oppressive Catholic influence on immigrants. The society deemed certain city wards in need of "influence" if they included high populations of Catholic immigrants. Brace believed these wards were particularly troubled because of intemperance. He was concerned about Italian immigrants who employed their children through organ grinding and "statuette" selling, rather than sending them to school. In 1855, the CAS opened an Italian day school, headed by a man that the CAS praised as a "Protestant and patriot." This school focused on converting Italian children to Protestantism and convincing their parents of the value of education. In their pursuit of religious conversion, the CAS declared that a child's "religious future," his or her "immorality—is our strongest and profoundest impulse."[18]

The CAS relied on the northern fear of the immigrant to rally support for their removal policies. They also promoted a mythic vision of the West which emphasized the region as a haven apart from the city. About half of each of their annual reports relayed dramatic tales of orphan train success to prove this assertion. These stories emphasized the company's core values—the superiority of agrarianism, the danger of the city, the triumph of free labor, and the program's mutual beneficence to eastern cities and western towns. In the West, good Christian

[17] "Eighth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society, February 1861, Box 1, Folder 32, NYHS; "Third Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society, February 1856, Box 1, Folder 27, NYHS' "Fifth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society, February 1858, Box 1, Folder 29, NYHS.
[18] "Second Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society, February 1855, Box 1, Folder 26, NYHS; "Third Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society, February 1856, Box 1, Folder 27, NYHS; "Fifth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society, February 1858, Box 1, Folder 29, NYHS.

families had enough work to employ laborers, the charity to form unruly orphans into decent citizens, and a healthful environment to nourish growing bodies.

The CAS had great faith in the "land of hope in the West!" There promotional materials argued that the "peculiar warm-heartedness of the Western people and the equality of all classes," gave the region a special mission to assist the destitute children of cities. The ideal western family was engaged in farming, well educated, and staunchly religious. The CAS argued that the West had unlimited space and a paucity of laborers, which led to a "practically unlimited" demand for children. The West "absorbs them," Brace wrote, "honest occupation employs their energies, and all the Christianizing and humanizing influences of the rural districts continually elevate them." Because Westerners supposedly did not worry about food and common comforts, and the "position of the laborer is one of so much more self-respect and independence," children immediately had a better chance of moral growth. Childless couples in the West were also more willing to adopt than in the East, where opportunities to adopt were "seldom given them in a public manner." [19]

CAS reports depicted western agriculturalists as virtuous and kind-hearted. For example, in 1856, the annual report told the story of a CAS agent stopped at a tavern in Three Rivers, Illinois, hoping to find homes for children. There he found a gentleman of "much consideration out West" who was waiting to catch a stagecoach home. When a CAS child named Danny ran up to him pleading "Oh Mister, please take me home with you; oh, won't you? I want to go home with you so much," the "stalwart specimen of Western giants" began to weep. And so, as the

[19] "Eighth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1861, Box 1, Folder 32, NYHS; "Tenth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1863, Volume 19, NYHS; "Fourth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society, February 1857, Box 1, Folder 28, NYHS; "Sixth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society, February 1859, Box 1, Folder 30, NYHS; *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society* (New York: Press of Wynkoop & Ballenbeck, 1866), 8; F.L. Sessions to Charles Brace, Box 46, Folder 4, NYHS.

CAS story went, a man who chanced to stop at a tavern went home with a new son.[20] The CAS promoted western agriculturalists as models of Christian charity, who had no ulterior motives to taking children into their homes.

The open and healthy western environment formed a fundamental leg of the CAS's mythic West, where children would be almost magically healed by clean air, which would then purify them morally. In its annual reports, the society described the West as "the nursery in whose genial soil the little plants and twigs plucked from the crowded streets and filth-reeking lands of our great city have taken root, and are blossoming with the promise of rich fruit." The West was where the health of the children, would be "invigorated" their "minds strengthened" and their "principles fixed." The CAS described New York City as an environment of "physical and moral filth" and the West as "healthy" and "pure." The CAS estimated that in the city, roughly fifty percent of the children would die before they were seven years old. If the CAS could, "transplant them early" they would "become healthy and useful in the pure, free air of the West."[21]

It was also the place where middle-class philanthropists could break the bonds of hereditary poverty inherent in immigrant populations and replace those families with Americanized citizens. The founders of the CAS believed that "organic imperfections, constitutional weakness, bodily and mental maladies, and even tendencies to crime" were transmittable genetically. In the city, poor diet, shabby clothing, "foul air, impure water, over-exhausting labor, mental discouragement, evil associations, and vicious habits" further

[20] "Fourth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1857, Box 1, Folder 28, NYHS.
[21] "Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1875, Box 2, Folder 7, NYHS; "Twelfth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1865, Box 2, Folder 3, NYHS; "Fourteenth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1867, Box 2, Folder 4, NYHS.

compounded these genetic traits.[22] The CAS asserted that separating children from their parents was beneficial because it removed children from the influences of their inferior genetics.

Brace and his colleagues experimented with the best way to remove children to far away locales that would help inculcate republican ideals. At first, the society placed children out in regions of the West they knew to be secure to Protestantism, like Ohio and Wisconsin. The company defined the West as those areas they could count on to be populated by emigrants from evangelical regions such as New England and New York. In the 1850s, the West included Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Eventually, the society's concept of what counted as "west" shifted and came to include states such as California, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and even the western Canadian provinces.

The CAS used a mixture of convenience and pity to ply rural families into taking children into their homes. The CAS published circulars in city weeklies and rural newspapers in advance of coming to town. These advertisements focused less on the adoptive aspects of the program, and more on the potential for labor. The CAS promised that urban children were a square investment for farmers, because housing and feeding a child would cost less than hiring an extra hand. One such advertisement proclaimed that children fifteen years and older would serve the family until age eighteen for board and clothing. Those between twelve and fifteen would be under the same arrangement, but with schooling for part of the year. If any of these children stayed after age eighteen, the family would owe them wages. Children younger than twelve were under stricter guidance, with families instructed to treat them "as one of their own children in matters of schooling, clothing, and training."[23]

[22] "Fourteenth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1867, Box 2, Folder 4, NYHS.
[23] Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years' Work Among Them*, 228; "Terms on Which Boys are Placed in Homes," Box 45, Folder 4, NYHS.

On the first day that the CAS came to town, crowds of farmers would meet the train at the station, as families competed for the best children. The next day, citizens met the children at a church or town hall. There, a CAS agent explained the "benevolent objects" of the Society, hoping that the sight of the children's' "worn faces was a most pathetic enforcement" of the agent's arguments." Those who were childless got priority to choose their children first. Families who already had children had to complete an application. A committee consisting of prominent town members, often ministers and city officials, then reviewed the applications and awarded children to couples. Just as CAS agents in New York enforced middle-class standards by deciding who to send west, the CAS trusted established elites in the West to vouch for families. Presumably, pastors of evangelical churches would best know which families were morally fit to raise children.[24]

By the time children arrived in these rural communities, they had already gone through the arduous process of traveling west, and many had already shed the societal expectations the CAS placed upon them in temporary lodging houses. E.P. Simon led a typical CAS journey to Michigan in 1856 with forty-six children of all ages. The group's first leg of the journey was a boat trip to Albany, New York. Simon quickly disposed of CAS promises to seek references for adoptive parents when he gave away two boys to other boat passengers. During their six-hour layover in Albany, Simon watched the children carefully, fearing that they would run away, and go into hiding until they could return to New York City, which they often did. The next leg of the journey was a train to Buffalo, where Simon was disappointed that they would share a car with a "Babel of at least one thousand Germans, Irish, Italians, and Norwegians." The train riders faced miserable conditions, as some children stood for the journey, other sat in laps, and others

[24] Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years' Work Among Them*, 231-233.

still laid under the benches on the floor. Simon reported that the car had "no ventilation except through the sliding doors, where the little chaps are in constant danger of falling through." He also fretted as "Irishmen passed around bad whiskey," the Dutch smoked and sang, and babies screamed. At nightfall, the conductor told the passengers to furnish their own lights, which left the unprepared orphan company in utter darkness. After a nine-hour layover in Buffalo, the group boarded a lake boat and spent the night in "washing, smoking, drinking, singing, sleep, and licentiousness." Simon declared it the night in the "freight car repeated, with the addition of a touch of sea sickness" as the filth of livestock poured over the gangway. Despite their training in morality by the CAS, Simon caught the boys eating three baskets of stolen peaches on this journey. When the boat landed in Detroit, the group caught another train to Dowagiac, Michigan, where the CAS had determined to unload the orphans.[25]

In Dowagiac, the children scattered to explore the town, coming back to the hotel with stolen apples, corn, peaches, pumpkins, and acorns. Children stood on the road, deciding from the appearance of the driver and horses whether they would try to entice the approaching farmer to adopt them. Despite the ragtag group's misbehavior and Simon's inability to control them, Simon had fifteen applications by the end of the day, all of which still required the recommendation of a pastor and the justice of peace. Simon eventually placed out all the children in homes over the next week.[26] The journey west for orphan train riders was full of uncertainty and CAS agents were barely in control of the process. Children escaped, stole food, and tried to pick their own families. They were run ragged by difficult passages and always in danger of being snatched up by a random fellow traveler. The CAS abandoned the children quickly, confident that the recommendation of pastors and local officials were enough assurance of a

[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

good home. Despite Brace's belief that his reform work in New York made children prepared for wholesome, agricultural lives in the West, children resisted conformity to the society's standards for their behavior.

Once in their new homes, children continued to rebel. The society overestimated their ability to reform children into obedient republicans and westerners soon accused them of importing disorder into the region. The CAS had trouble keeping track of its placed-out children, as they often ran away or became transient. They moved from home to home seeking better wages, or as one boy put it, "to go farther West" to seek a fortune in Oregon. Children changed locations often, moving to whichever neighbors could offer them the best wages or conditions. They did not readily accept their placements into families and instead negotiated their own independence as laborers. The transiency problem led to reports that CAS children were simply becoming paupers in the West. As one newspaper reported, several CAS children were sleeping in stables and barns and "subsisting only on apples and other green fruit," where they would not survive much longer.[27]

Children complained that westerners were not as virtuous as the CAS advertised. Rural indenture, it turned out, could be just as cruel as a life of pauperism in the city. Children wrote to the CAS to complain of abuse from their adopted parents. A boy named "P.J.," wrote the Society explaining that his family forced him to walk a mile barefoot each morning to tend to the cows. In the fall and winter, when the weather was cold, he was furthermore not allowed to warm his feet by the fire. P.J. also reported that the family had lied to the society by telling them that P.J. was their first adopted child, when he was in fact their third. P.J. escaped this home and found

[27] "Tenth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1863, Volume 19, Records of the Children's Aid Society 1836-2006, NYHS; Emigration/Placing-Out Program, Correspondence Received, January 1861, Box 46, Folder 4, Records of the Children's Aid Society 1836-2006, NYHS.

refuge with a Mr. H. The CAS responded by demanding that P.J. return to his original home, which P.J. refused. The CAS included this story in their report, labeling P.J. "A Stubborn Case."[28] Even when confronted with evidence that their disorganization led to abuse, the society ignored the claims and blamed the children for their lack of obedience.

Children, furthermore, did not quickly accept the virtuous republican standards imposed by reformers. Western parents wrote the CAS to complain that their orphans were not obedient enough. Mrs. John Bacon wrote to the society frustrated that her adopted daughter Mary Dudgeon had caused their family to lose "a great many things," and had stolen twenty dollars from them. The Bacons took Mary to the depot and sent her back to New York, declaring her, "awfully profane and a notorious liar."[29] Ellen Maury befell a similar fate when her propensity to spit made Charlotte Otis declare, "your girl is not capable of morals." One boy, Henry, displeased his family with his temper and propensity to "run off every little while." Furthermore, he "seemed disposed to scoff at everything of a religious character." When Henry left for good, the family was happy, but requested "another boy in his place that can wear his clothes."

Parents in New York likewise complained that they could not find their children once the CAS placed them out in the West. William W. Clapper wrote the society inquiring about his son, who was under the care of the society. The CAS did not respond, and a year later, Clapper wrote again, having apparently written the society several times in the intermittent months. The CAS ignored the complainant's letters and because Clapper could not leave his work during business hours he had no other way to inquire about his son.[30] Despite continued protest by children and

[28] "Eleventh Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1864, Box 2, Folder 2, Records of the Children's Aid Society 1836-2006, NYHS.
[29] Letter from Mrs. John Bacon to Children's Aid Society, April 13, 1861. Box 46, Folder 4, Records of the Children's Aid Society 1836-2006, NYHS.
[30] Letter from Margaret David to Children's Aid Society, May 16, 1861. Box 46, Folder 4, Records of the Children's Aid Society 1836-2006, NYHS; Letter from William Clapper to the Children's Aid Society, August 2, 1859. Box 46, Folder 4, Records of the Children's Aid Society 1836-2006, NYHS; Letter from William Clapper to the

parents about the pitfalls of the placing-out system, the CAS brushed aside all complaints and continued to send thousands of children west each year.

The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 proved a fertile testing ground for the society's claims about the effectiveness of placing out and its importance in promoting national unity. Once again, the society harnessed the anxieties of New Yorkers about the decline of the Union and the potential failure of the republic to promote their emigration aid scheme. The CAS promoted former orphan train riders as the protectors of Union. They claimed that they had taken a faction of rebellious street urchins and transformed them into true patriots in a "striking illustration of the elevating and Christianizing operations of our Republican Institutions." The society report of 1862 declared that hundreds of CAS boys were paying back the trustees by "offering their lives, if need be to sustain a Government, under which many of them were not born." The society estimated that four hundred of the boys they sent west were "repaying the city of New York a thousand-fold." Letters published by the CAS reinforced the Americanizing effects of placing out. They reported the account of a young German boy who proclaimed: "This has been a good country to me, and it is my duty to do something to defend its institutions; and I pray God, if I fall in battle, I shall not die like a coward, but like a brave man." To which the CAS report resounded, "an army of such men are invincible!"[31]

The CAS weaved a narrative of their orphans' honorable service in the war as evidence of placing out's effectiveness. Society report pages overflowed with tales of CAS boys who Confederates imprisoned, died in hospitals, and those who "have returned to tell of brave deeds and hair-breadth escapes." The CAS advertised that their orphans were officers and claimed that

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Children's Aid Society, August 19, 1860. Box 46, Folder 4, Records of the Children's Aid Society 1836-2006, NHYS.

[31] "Ninth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1862, Box 2, Folder 1, NYHS; "Tenth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1863, Volume 19, NYHS.

not one of the hundreds in the field had committed a disgraceful act. The company report of 1861 featured the letter of "D.M." who told the tale of helping another young soldier escape the "temptation of his constant accessibility to intoxicating drinks." Another soldier wrote of the Confederate troops, who succumbed to dishonorable vice. The soldier relayed the "sufferings of the forsaken families in the rebel States" by the southern troops, who pillaged settlements of everything "fit to eat or wear, regardless of the entreaties of women and children." The society also used tales of death to dramatize their orphans' commitment to the North. In one story, the CAS tracked down the mother of a slain orphan train rider. When the society agent walked to the residence, he found a "den of the vilest sort." The CAS celebrated that a child of such squalor transformed into a martyr for the Union.[32] The CAS lauded these reports as evidence that dangerous children had quickly adapted to become defenders of temperance, respectability, and the Union.

The promotional campaign worked, as the first two years of the war resulted in record numbers of individual donations to the society. The CAS celebrated that the people of New York, because of the war, had learned to pay "voluntary, as well as involuntary taxes!" The CAS latched onto fears about the dissolution of the Union to further promote their efforts. As the number of orphans increased as a result of war casualties, the CAS warned that the government's limited aid for the poor would "soon cease." Therefore, the private donation of citizens "should be earnestly directed, in the future to protect and save these 'children of the Republic.'"[33]

The Civil War years brought a rapid increase in children in need of new homes. Between 1854 and 1860, the society placed out 5,146 children, according to their reports. On average, the

[32] "Ninth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1862, Box 2, Folder 1, NYHS; "Tenth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1863, Volume 19, NYHS; "Eleventh Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1864, Box 2, Folder 2, NYHS.
[33] "Eleventh Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1864, Box 2, Folder 2, NYHS.

society placed out about seven hundred children a year. In the Civil War years of 1861-1865, the CAS sent 5,394 children West, averaging over one thousand emigrants a year. In the five years after the Civil War, the CAS performed even better, placing out 12,013 children and averaging around 2,400 emigrants a year.[34] The war led to more orphans and fewer available workers, which made the CAS message all the more pertinent to CAS donors. As the 1863 report advertised, despite the effects of war, "the West has never contributed so liberally to our charity, or has called for so many children."[35]

The desire to control immigrant populations in the city grew even stronger among Protestant elites in 1863 with the outbreak of the draft riots. The New York City draft riots erupted on July 13, as white working-class men protested Congress's decision to enforce conscription laws. The draft riots began when employees of the railroads, machine shops, shipyards, and construction industries failed to appear for work. Instead, they met in Central Park, marched collectively to the site of the draft lottery, holding signs that read "no draft." Poor New Yorkers resisted the law because of its inequity—wealthy men could avoid the draft by paying three hundred dollars or providing an acceptable substitute. The protest quickly turned violent, as rioters cut telegraph poles, used crowbars to pull up railway tracks, and attacked police officers. Over the next five days, rioters burned buildings, including the Colored Orphan Asylum and the home of prison reformer Abby Gibbons. The protest quickly became a race riot as poor white workers, many of whom were Irish immigrants, attacked their perceived competitors, free black laborers. Rioters targeted black homes for destruction and the majority of the one hundred and twenty persons killed by the mob were African American. Federal and state

[34] These numbers calculated from statistics reported in Children's Aid Society Annual Reports.
[35] "Tenth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1863, Volume 19, NYHS; "Ninth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1862, Box 2, Folder 1, NYHS.

militia troops eventually quelled the unrest, as President Lincoln diverted troops after the Battle of Gettysburg to the city.[36]

Brace saw this outbreak of violence as evidence of the class warfare that the CAS had been working to eradicate. The 1863 annual report framed the conflict as the tragic result of unsupervised youth and immigrant populations. The report relayed details of "the inconceivable barbarity and ferocity" of the crowd. They alleged that young men were the primary perpetrators of violence. "These sackers of houses and murderers of the innocent" the report chided, "are merely street-children grown up." Brace argued that New York suffered this distress because it was the hub of foreign immigration, from which an unfortunate number had allowed their "animal passions" to be "without control or restraint." The CAS concluded that the incident was only the first of many such violent outbursts that would be perpetuated by the city's ignorant classes, who cared little about the community or the Union's stability. Brace's efforts to "incessantly" warn the public of the possibility of class warfare in New York had failed in this case, but he believed there was still time to prevent future violence.[37]

The CAS argued that their emigration movement contributed to the restoration of law and order. They reported that two of their placed-out children participated in the draft riots, not as rioters, but as the keepers of civil order. The company report boasted that the boys came back to New York as part of a Wisconsin Regiment to quell the violence, "in which undoubtedly some of their old companions had part."[38] The CAS interpreted the riots as proof of the city's continued

[36] Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 18-19; Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City & the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788– 1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).
[37] "Eleventh Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1864, Box 2, Folder 2, NYHS.
[38] Ibid.

problem with immigrant children, and their success in teaching orphans the virtues of republicanism.

The draft riots also brought increased scrutiny against the CAS from the Catholic Church. The draft riots augmented Protestant New York's rampant anti-Catholicism and convinced many in the Catholic Church to organize against Protestant encroachments. The Catholic Church blamed Protestants for the events of the riots, claiming that the CAS policy of breaking up families exacerbated class antagonism and pushed the poor to violence. They believed that instead of child removal, the city of New York should focus on providing money to urban childcare institutions. Catholics worked to diminish public funding to the CAS and created their own welfare system to minimize Protestant interference. [39]

Catholics found an ally in the Democratic Party, which had long courted the votes of immigrant communities. William Tweed began pouring money from the New York State Senate Committee on Charitable and Religious Societies to Catholic organizations and immigrant voters in 1863. The committee previously put a vast majority of its money into Protestant and nonsectarian charities, but Tweed convinced the fund to allot $90,000 to Catholic charities, giving $83,000 to Protestants, and $26,000 to Jewish organizations.[40]

The Catholic Church also benefitted from a transfer of power when Archbishop John Hughes died in 1864 and John McCloskey took over his office. While Hughes preferred to keep the church out of politics, McCloskey's approach to political activism was more permissive. McCloskey permitted Catholics to compete for public funds, which allowed Catholic charities more money for their educational initiatives. The Church became further associated with Tweed

[39] Fitzgerald, *Habits of Compassion*, 105; Dorothy M. Brown and Elizabeth McKeown, eds. *The Poor Belong to Us*, 17.
[40] Jason K. Duncan, *Citizens or Papists?: The Politics of Anti-Catholicism in New York, 1685-1821* (New York: Fordham University, 2005); Fitzgerald, *Habits of Compassion*, 113.

as McCloskey's close friend John Kelly became Tammany's first Irish Catholic boss, starting a tradition of Catholic leadership among New York Democrats that would last until the New Deal.[41]

Catholics used their newfound political influence to resist CAS child removal. In 1863, Catholic reformers established the Society for the Protection of Destitute Roman Catholic Children in the City of New York, known in short as the Protectory. The Protectory charter established that the society would care for poor Catholic children until they could find permanent refuge in the city. The children had to be under the age of fourteen, and unlike the CAS, the Protectory required direct written consent of parents to take children "for protection or reformation." The society reserved the right to place children in "suitable employments" or "bind out the said children, with their consent, as apprentices or servants" in the city, but largely avoided rural indenture. The Protectory further required any potential employer of children to "execute a bond to the said organization in a sufficient penal amount" on the condition that the employer treat the child well and offer him or her academic instruction, a new suit of clothing, and five dollars.[42]

The Protectory's first president, Levi Sillman Ives, embodied the society's anti-Protestant mission. Ives rose to the office of Bishop within the Episcopal Church, only to abruptly join the Catholic Church in Rome in 1852, where he was received into the Church directly by Pope Pius IX. A scandalous figure among the Protestant elite of New York, Ives was the first Protestant bishop to convert to Catholicism since John Clement Gordon did so during the Glorious Revolution. Evangelicals found Ives a dangerous figure because he knew the internal workings

[41] Dorothy M. Brown and Elizabeth McKeown, eds. *The Poor Belong to Us*, 18.
[42] *Thirteen Annual Reports with the Charter and By-Laws of the New York Catholic Protectory; to which are added all state laws affecting this institution from May 1, 1863 to Sept. 30, 1875* (West Chester, NY: New York Catholic Protectory, 1876), 8-9.

of Protestant reform circles and knew how to undermine their mission. In his first address to potential donors, Ives celebrated that the Catholic Church could now protect its destitute children. Supporters of the protectory rallied around the cause, excited that they could finally defeat that "doughty foe of the Pope of Rome," Charles Brace. With the help of the Church's new political ties, the legislature approved a $50,000 building grant to the society and a per capita allowance of $110 per child per year in 1865. [43]

Unlike the CAS, which envisioned the West as a dangerous space that needed conversion, the Protectory was much more concerned with maintaining Catholic enclaves in the city. Ives condemned Brace using many of the same critiques Protestants made against Catholics, including that the CAS was secretive and conniving. The CAS was not a charity, Ives argued, for what many "supposed charity, turns out to be only sectarian zeal." The Protectory argued that despite Brace's claims of benevolence, he was actually using a "secret process, by which, it is hoped, that every trace of" the Catholic children's "early faith and filial attachment will be rooted out" in the far West. Without the protectory, the society asserted, destitute children were "almost certain to lose their *faith*, and consequently to peril their *souls*!" The protectory hoped to provide a safety net for Catholic poor, but more importantly, they wished to guard young souls against Protestant enemies, like Brace. As a Catholic alternative, the protectory promised to provide more thorough religious and intellectual training before placing children into homes. This would ensure that the protectory would "be infusing into our new settlements an element of moral and intellectual strength and advancement."[44]

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[43] *Statement of the Difficulties between the Diocese of North Carolina and Dr. Ives, Lately Bishop of Said Diocese* (Fayetteville, NC: Edward J. Hale & Son, 1853), 16–17; *Thirteen Annual Reports with the Charter and By-Laws of the New York Catholic Protectory*, 15; "An Exhibition of Mr. Dexter A. Hawkins," *The Catholic World*, March 1880.

[44] L. Silliman Ives, *The Protection of Destitute Catholic Children: A Lecture Delivered by Cooper Institute Nov. 23, 1864* (New York: The Society for the Protection of Destitute Catholic Children, 1864), 16; 72. Dorothy M. Brown and Elizabeth McKeown, eds. *The Poor Belong to Us*, 21.

Catholics also called the CAS's lack of organization in the West into question. The *Catholic World* stoked the fires of Catholic anxiety about the CAS by reporting on children wronged by the society. It reported that two Catholic children were sent to Protestant homes in the West and when they returned, they had "*both become, or rather been made, Protestants,* and hated the very mention of their religion." While the children's mother was dead, their father served in the Civil War and was gravely injured. When he returned from the war looking for his children, the CAS refused to tell him where they had been sent. Only by the insistent prodding of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul did the man retrieve his children.[45]

The protectory did not see emigration as its primary focus, but instead hoped to keep children within their own familial and parish networks in cities. In 1868, when the protectory first began reporting statistics about the children in their care, the society housed 1,079 children, but only indentured 371, around thirty-five percent. By 1877, this number had decreased to about 332 children of 3,322, or about eleven percent. The society focused on teaching children trades that they could use to find work in the city. When the Protectory did "collect poor and vagrant children," it strived to send the children only to "'carefully-selected homes' in the West." When the Protectory placed children out during the 1870s and 1880s, they settled in Iowa and among the German settlements of Nebraska. By the mid-1870s, the Catholic Protectory was overflowing with children. By 1879, the Protectory was operating twenty industrial schools, twelve night schools, six lodging house, and a summer home on Long Island. As Brother Teliow, rector of the Asylum, put it, the Catholic Protectory "is no longer a light placed under a bushel; it stands prominently conspicuous in the vanguard of our empire city's magnificent charities."[46]

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[45] "Specimen Charities," *The Catholic World: A Monthly Magazine of General Literature and Science*, June 1875, 21, 123; 289.

[46] *Seventeenth Annual Report of the New York Catholic Protectory to the Legislature of the State and to the Common Council of the City* (West Chester, NY: New York Catholic Protectory, 1880), 32; "Report of the Rector of

As New Yorkers became less concerned that immigrants would undermine the electoral process and instigate disunion, they became more critical of CAS leadership. In 1874, the *New York Herald* accused Brace of being nothing more than a crook who preyed upon charitable New Yorkers and their "peculiar sympathy" for orphans.[47] The newspaper investigated the actual number of children the CAS placed out in the year 1874 and found the number added up to 1,876 rather than the CAS's reported 3,200. The remainder of these placements were not of children, but adults, the *Herald* alleged. The editorial also questioned how many of the emigrants went to the West temporarily, returning to New York after only a few months. The editor found a "little street Arab" who confided that the society colluded to help boys "emigrate back and forth as often as they please, always, however, counting one on the outward trip, but blank on the homeward journey." The true end goal of Brace and the CAS, the report concluded, was financial. "It may be safely stated," the newspaper reported, "that if this kind of benevolence did not pay New York would not have so many societies akin to this." Without the CAS, Brace, the "the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the ending—of the Children's Aid Society, would not be able to draw the fat salary ($5,000) that he does."[48]

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the Male Department of the New York Catholic Protectory," *Tenth Annual Report of the New York Catholic Protectory to the Legislature of the State, and to the Common Council of the City* (1873), 318-9.

[47] In the 1870s, the *Herald* constituted the most popular newspaper for non-Irish, Democratic establishment. It boasted a circulation of more than 130,000 subscribers, which was more than all other New York daily papers combined. Christopher G. Bates, *The Early Republic and Antebellum America: An Encyclopedia of Social, Political, and Economic History* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 132-133. For more on James Gordon Bennett and the origins of the New York Herald, see James L. Crouthamel, *Bennett's New York Herald and the Rise of the Popular Press* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1989). Anti-corruption investigations were particularly popular in the 1870s after the *New York Times* uncovered massive corruption in the Tweed Ring in 1871. The press on both sides explained Ring's rise and fall as an assault on republicanism, depicting the case as "individual malfeasance in which a small faction seized power and exploited it for personal gain at the expense of the community." James J. Connolly, *An Elusive Unity: Urban Democracy and Machine Politics in Industrializing America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 32. After the scandal broke, both sides of the political press attempted similar tactics to delegitimize their opponents.

[48] "The Children's Aid Society. Charity that Never Faileth," *New York Herald*, February 22, 1874.

The *Herald* exposé also declared the work of the CAS as akin to slavery, alleging that the company sold children in the West for "Ten Dollars a Head." The newspaper portrayed Brace as a villainous and corrupt purveyor of forced child labor. It told the story of a boy named Eugene who lived a respectable life until 1868, when he acquired a love of dime novels. These novels, his brother attested, filled Eugene's mind "with the mythical prairie scenes" which led him to declare that he was '"tired of city work." Eugene disappeared under the CAS emigration scheme, while his family assumed him dead. After six months, the disgraced Eugene wrote from Peoria County, Illinois, begging his father for twenty-five dollars to return to New York. Declaring that he was "hungry and ragged and tired of involuntary slavery" and "living with a heartless farmer," Eugene lamented his long work hours and meager rations. Although the CAS promised the boys that they would get a farm stock at age twenty-one, Eugene concluded that it was "all nonsense, for it they work all boys as they do me they would be in their graves before that time." And like the father of the prodigal son, Eugene's family welcomed him back to the city with open arms, laughing off the trip "as a boyish freak."[49]

Eugene lived a normal life for fifteen months, until he had the displeasure of again running into Charles Brace, who asked him "if he was happy, and if he would like to go West." Brace promised Eugene a place as the head of a party of children to Missouri, "where the scenery was ravishing." Much like a dime store novel villain, Brace again enticed Eugene to move west. Eugene's concerned brother inquired on multiple occasions at the CAS offices about his whereabouts. Brace promised to "do his best" to find the boy, but the family did not hear from Eugene until "the romance of Western life in Missouri, with its deserts of corn fields and waving grass, had become obnoxious to him." Again, the family welcomed Eugene back from his

[49] Ibid.

temptation. Seemingly determined to make the same mistake for a third time, Eugene soon left again on his "own account and with his own money." His family forever were to "blame the Children's 'Aid' Society (so called) for Eugene's ruination, and shall continue to do so till we hear that this villainous system of entrapping, shielding, and encouraging runaway children is broke up."[50] The *Herald*'s depiction of the journey out west was full of misery and it presented the work of the CAS as similar to the trickery of the slave power.[51]

The increased criticism of Brace led other New Yorkers to oppose the society. One detractor, convinced that society was a corrupt organ for swindling charitable donations, argued that if the CAS was sending thousands of children west each year they "must have well-nigh filled the Western states." In 1879, the New York *Journal of Commerce* accused the society of "drawing off the best of our poorer youth for the West, and thus leaving in the City only its vicious, lazy and destitute children." The author proclaimed this a "process of unnatural selection" which drained New York of "the flower of her youth." The city was not so evil that the children could not grow up "as well as in Kansas."[52]

These critiques did not stop the CAS from believing that their reform movement could transform the eastern city and improve areas in need of labor and civilization. During Reconstruction, the society turned their operations toward the South. The end of slavery did not diminish the utility of the free labor principle in the eyes of CAS reformers. The society argued that the South was agrarian, like the West, and in need of an influx of free laborers because of their loss of enslaved black labor. Between 1870 and 1875 the CAS sent a small trickle of

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[50] Ibid.
[51] Questions of free and unfree labor among immigrants continued for the rest of the long nineteenth-century, as demonstrated by Gunter Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the North American West, 1880-1930* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
[52] "Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1874, Box 2, Folder 12, Records of the Children's Aid Society 1836-2006, NHYS; "Twenty-Seventh Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1879, Box 3, Folder 4, Records of the Children's Aid Society 1836-2006, NYHS.

children to the South. In that period, they funded the journey of forty-four children to Virginia and twenty-one to South Carolina. In 1875, the CAS began placing children throughout the South in earnest, sending children to Louisiana, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, South Carolina, and Virginia. Their 1877 parties to the South showed mixed results, as the CAS reported that the party sent to Virginia, "has done well," but the party sent to North Carolina at the same time "have all returned." By 1880, the company had sent 1,100 children to the South. The society considered this a success, as Southern farmers "cordially received" the children, who "generally like the country." The CAS defended the system as one of free labor. "The boys ask for work," the CAS stated, "and many people at the South are very anxious to employ them." [53]

In the CAS vision, any agricultural labor would be an improvement to wage labor in cities. Even if children went south instead of west, they would be removed from the detrimental influence of priests and padrones and grow up under the empowering influence of rural life. The idea of sending children into the South as laborers hewed too closely to slavery for detractors. The Republican *New York Tribune* published a summary of these allegations in the form of a letter from a "Mr. Mills" of Oxford, North Carolina. Mills denounced the placing-out operation as one reminiscent of slavery, declaring that the South did not "want any barbarians or vagabonds." Boys sent to the South, he argued, "generally take the places of emancipated slaves and naturally grow worse under a sense of their wrongs until they run away." Mills concluded that "the enslavement of free-born boys is not a charity, but a sin, a foul wrong, and it ought to be stopped."[54]

[53] "Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1877, Box 3, Folder 2, NYHS; "Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1878, Box 3, Folder 3, NYHS; "The Children's Aid Society and the South. Four Shallow Accusations Answered in Short Order," *New York Tribune*, May 7, 1883.
[54] "The Children's Aid Society and the South. Four Shallow Accusations Answered in Short Order," *New York Tribune*, May 7, 1883.

The CAS faced criticism from southerners at the National Conference of Charities, held in 1883 in Madison, Wisconsin. The southern delegation insisted that the CAS stop sending unfree laborers to meddle in southern workplaces. The delegation rejected the work of the CAS as benevolent, and considered it a Yankee invasion, akin to carpetbagging. The CAS responded that their methods were not inherently sectional, as the "plan at the South has been the same as at the West." They argued that because they chose a local committee of reputable men to recommend homes for the children, no child was the victim of slavery. White labor was so rare in the South, the CAS concluded, that the boys could easily find other work if they disliked their appointments. Brace dismissed cases of neglect alleged by the South at the conference as "bosh." If abuse occurred, Brace declared, "we should be the first to hear of such cases and such are scarcely ever reported to us." Of the 500 boys sent to Virginia, the Brace claimed only one case of abuse, which the society prosecuted, eventually fining the offending party $450. The editors at the *New York Tribune* agreed that these delegates to the National Conference of Charities were "criminally reckless in their charges." The delegates should know, the *Tribune* concluded, that Brace was "one of the most active, intelligent, and useful agents of American benevolence."[55]

As the CAS faced allegations by the Catholic Church, northern newspapers, and southerners that they were reinstating slavery, the society continued to promote their antebellum vision of northern superiority. As the West rapidly urbanized in the second half of the nineteenth century and gained its own political power as a region, westerners increasingly resisted the imposition of the CAS's emigration aid scheme. While there were still plenty of western farmers

[55] "The Children's Aid Society and the South. Four Shallow Accusations Answered in Short Order," *New York Tribune*, May 7, 1883; "Children's Aid Society. A Reply to Attacks Upon its Work," *New-York Tribune*, March 27, 1883.

willing to accept indentured laborers from the society, other factions opposed the CAS message so completely that Brace exclaimed by 1875 that "some one is always after us."[56]

Western reformers adopted Brace's child saving vision to their own needs. Western branches of the CAS organized under similar constitutions as the New York society, but focused less on labor agreements and more on arranging adoptions. In 1864, Elizabeth Parrish started her own branch of the CAS in Salem, Oregon. She emigrated to the region from New York as a Methodist missionary with her husband Josiah L. Parrish in 1839. Parrish wanted to donate some of the couple's land to establish an orphanage, and despite the "discouragement from many good people" who thought the West would avoid such urban problems, it soon became clear that such a home was necessary. Parrish thought the home could "be governed by Christian women and mothers," who built the home in 1867; and it opened its doors in 1870. [57]

Instead of the vague promises of the New York CAS, the Oregon CAS created clear legal boundaries and stipulations for the parents who gave up their children. The by-laws of the Oregon CAS created several branches of supervision for children, including a committee on discipline and discharge, which the society tasked with "inculcating principles of religion, sobriety, and honesty." The committee attended to all discharges from the house, "whether by adoption or indenture," maintaining a trial period of six months during which time the orphan or parent could rescind on the arrangement. The Oregon CAS also did not indenture children who were illiterate or under the age of twelve and vowed to correspond with each child twice a year.[58]

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[56] Letter from Charles Brace to AH Barnes, May 16, 1875, quoted in in Charles Loring Brace and Emma Brace, *The Life of Charles Loring Brace: Chiefly Told in His Own Letters*, 344.
[57] Children's Aid Society: A History of this Important State Institution" *Oregonian*, November 12, 1887. For more on the turn toward maternalism as a form of charity in the West, see Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race* and Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue.*
[58] "Signed Agreements for Child Custody," January 14, 1884, Box 1, Folder 1, Oregon Children's Aid Society records, 1866-1960, Oregon Historical Society (hereafter OHS); Third Annual Report of the Oregon Children's Aid Society (Salem, OR: Oregon Stateman Job Print, 1870), 12-13.

Like southerners, westerners increasingly resisted the New York CAS's mission as an exercise in unfree labor. Westerners asserted that the society was transplanting the problems of the East into the West. In 1876, at the National Prison Congress meeting in New York, several men from the West argued that the CAS was "crowding the Western prisons and reformatories." The CAS representatives denied these charges. To prove otherwise, they sent company agent Charles P. Fry to examine the prisons, houses of refuge, and reformatories in Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan. Fry concluded that of the ten thousand children sent by the CAS to these three states, "not a single boy or girl from this Society could be found in all their prisons and reformatories." The CAS responded that if the objection that the society was "scattering the seeds of vice and crime" in the West, there "would have arisen from the whole West, an united groan of opposition" to the placing out system. As the CAS reported, their agents visited the places where they left children and inquired of local committees if there were any conduct problems. This indirect system had allegedly left them hearing "no instances of ill-treatment" in the past several years.[59] Nevertheless, westerners continued to insist that their charitable organizations could better serve their own population, outside of the control of eastern elites.

Brace continued to promote the placing-out method as a legitimate way to reform both New York and the West but realized that he needed to communicate better with westerners. Brace had to revise his own vision of the West as an uncivilized territory waiting for influence and acknowledge that even rural communities faced the challenges of immorality among children. In 1880, Brace outlined a plan by which reformers across the nation could replicate New York's successful experiment in child saving. He admitted that the mere existence of a rural

[59] "Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1876, Box 3, Folder 1, Records of the Children's Aid Society 1836-2006, NYHS; "Tenth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1863, Volume 19, Records of the Children's Aid Society 1836-2006, NYHS.

western community could no longer maintain the morality of children, as "each well-to-do and Christian family will naturally know in their town some semi-vagrant and half-criminal family, living on the outskirts of the village." Brace suggested, as he had in the 1850s, that this issue could not be fixed by mere charity, but would require principles of free labor, mainly that money had to be righteously earned. He encouraged benevolent persons to "gradually make the children self-supporting" by making every donation dependent on the child "doing some little job of work."[60]

For branches of the CAS to be successful, Brace contended that breaking up families and removing children from the influence of "bigotry and superstition" remained the primary goal. Other functions of societies could include reading rooms, night schools, industrial schools, lodging houses for the homeless, and summer homes for sanitary rejuvenation.[61] The primary "object of the benevolent helper," however, "should be to endeavor to break up the vicious family." Brace reiterated that boys could be quickly rehabilitated if sent "off to distant farms." Girls, would be "more difficult," and could be placed out as long as they had not "passed the line of virtue," in which case, the only recourse was institutionalization.[62]

Brace's attempts to enforce the primacy of placing out over other forms of charitable work did not have the desired effect on western philanthropists. CAS branches in the West often

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[60] Charles Loring Brace, *The Best Method of Founding Children's Charities in Towns and Villages: A Paper Presented at the National Conference of Charities, June 29th, 1880, at Cleveland, Ohio* (Cleveland, 1880), Pamphlet Collection, WHS, 1-3.

[61] George Frederickson demonstrated that the post-war obsession in philanthropic organizations over sanitary issues was a top-down program instituted by elites with "an almost obsessive concern for the preservation of discipline in all forms." See chapter seven, "The Sanitary Elite: The Organized Response to Suffering," in George M. Frederickson, *The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965). As historians Natalia Molina and William Deverall have argued, the language of cleansing was essential to city officials' early gentrification efforts in the West. Natalia Molina, *Fit to Be Citizens?: Public Health an Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of Its Mexican Past*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[62] Brace, *The Best Method of Founding Children's Charities in Towns and Villages*, 1-3.

took ideas from the CAS piecemeal, but focused the needs of their region, rather than the evangelical mission of the New York branch. In urban areas, CAS branches did not place children out, but focused on exposing children to nature. In San Jose, California, the CAS focused on sanitary work, taking a large land grant in the estate of wealthy bachelor E. Searles to establish a location for urban youth to experience the western environment. In St. Louis, the CAS established a sanitarium in the idyllic environment in a park that overlooked the Mississippi River, where they secured a mansion to hold eighty infirm children. The same society sent children to country homes, but rarely for adoption, "on a plan similar to the Children's Aid Societies of New York, Boston, and other large cities." One division in Albuquerque, New Mexico did organize to rescue "cases of children in immoral environment" and did the "aggressive work" of placing out children in "homes for adoption or by contract." Their leaders, however, eschewed any relation to the CAS, claiming to be "wholly independent of any other organization."[63]

The principles of middle-class reform in the West blossomed into their own form of social control. Much as the CAS in New York set out to impose specific standards of order on the city, western philanthropists imposed their own vision of acceptable household management on the poor. In Duluth, North Dakota, the local CAS branch made it their mission to remove the sons of a local ne'er-do-well named Baldwin. "A large number of philanthropic ladies" decided that Baldwin's sons were "being abused and needed the help of the society." The CAS declared Baldwin a "worthless character" who was "bringing up his young boys in the same way and

[63] "Deeds Property to the Poor. Wealthy Bachelor Gives Farm to Children's Aid Society," *Evening News* (San Jose, CA), November 23, 1904; "Children's Aid Society, Establishment of a Sanitarium in O'Fallon Park-Excursion Tuesday" *St. Louis Republic*, July 14, 1889; "Children's Aid Society, A Good Work Commenced—What can be done to Help the Poor Boys and Girls," *Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco, CA), March 18, 1874; "Children's Aid Society Doing a Great Work: Many Homes Have Been Found for Helpless Little Ones and Organization is Now on Fine Basis," *Albuquerque Morning Journal*, July 23, 1908.

resents all efforts to better their condition." Despite his parental rights, Baldwin's refusal to accept CAS standards of childcare resulted in an effort by the society, which partnered with the county to remove the children.[64]

In Omaha, the Nebraska Children's Aid Society found a child living in a house of ill repute, under the care of a grandmother. A member of the society, Mrs. Quivey, decided to broker the release of the child, which she did in writing. Per CAS rules, this gave the society the "right to dispose" of the child "as it sees fit." The CAS placed the child in a new home, until the child's mother, Laura Thompson, sued for the child's freedom. Given that Thompson produced the child illegitimately at the age of fourteen and that Quivey still believed that the child needed protection "from contaminating influences," the CAS moved to keep the child. The child remained in the custody of the CAS, although two board members resigned over the case fearing association with "an organization which would do anything illegal."[65]

Westerners continued to criticize the New York CAS at annual charitable conferences, claiming that New Yorkers had no right to export their worst residents to the West. At an 1883 delegation, westerners, including E.W. Chase of Minnesota, charged that New York boys were running away and remained unsupervised by CAS agents. The CAS responded that their western agents "frequently revisit their parties" and that they could point to positive letters about boys "doing excellently in Minnesota." Other westerners, including W.J. Scott of Ohio, argued that placed-out children were hereditary criminals and therefore would certainly repeat this behavior in the West. Brace retorted that the children were not the descendants of criminals, but "simply

[64] "Not As They Should Go: Children's Aid Society to Set Aright the Trend of Three Young Boys" *Duluth News-Tribune*, April 8, 1893.
[65] "Kidnaped a Little Girl: The Nebraska Children's Aid Society Becomes Too Enthusiastic in One Case," *Omaha World Herald*, June 27, 1894.

of poor laboring people and others who have become unfortunate."[66] Again, the CAS had little recourse but to flatly deny these claims, as they were unable to point to any systematic and comprehensive system by which they checked on placed out children.

At a later conference of charities held in Omaha in 1887, the charge would persist that the society failed to look after their children in the West. The Wisconsin State Charities Board did its own investigation to test if the society regularly checked up on its charges. It claimed that the very first child it investigated failed the test. The child had been adopted by a man five years earlier, only to have the man die one year into the adoption period. Four years later "the society was evidently ignorant of the changes." The Wisconsin State Charities board also found that people "frequently did not like the children after they got them and then place them in almshouses." In conclusion, the report stated, "the Wisconsin people are highly indignant, and say that much dissatisfaction exists in other parts of the West."[67]

By the late 1870s, evangelical reformers like Brace no longer had a stronghold on emigration to the West, as the region asserted its own political and charitable agency over its own residents. Although the CAS tried to adapt by reinforcing the placing-out mission, westerners focused on local issues rather than the desire of eastern philanthropists. The placing out movement became increasingly irrelevant by the end of the nineteenth century. By the time that Frederick Jackson Turner declared the western frontier "closed" in 1893, the region no longer wanted or needed scores of child laborers from New York. Large urban areas in the West faced their own problems with immigration and poverty and grew increasingly hostile to importing more unsupervised children. In 1895, Michigan passed a statue prohibiting out-of-state

[66] "Children's Aid Society. A Reply to Attacks Upon its Work," *New-York Tribune*, March 27, 1883.
[67] "Philanthropy Astray. Some Practical Criticism of the Children's Aid Society," *New York Herald*, September 25, 1887.

children from placement in the state, unless the organizing party paid a bond guaranteeing that the children would not become public charges. Similar laws soon passed in Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, and Nebraska. While the CAS continued to place children out into other states, they had to pay large bonds as security, no longer able to abandon the children in the region.[68] The West of Brace's mythology, which would never run out of room or patience for the labor of children, no longer existed.

In 1880, Brace lamented that despite twenty-seven successful years of placing out, the CAS "meets from its very nature with strong opposition from both ends of the line." In New York, the relatives and friends of the poor were still Catholics, or as Brace put it "suspicious" and "the bigoted portion of their clergy" resisted the plan as a form of evangelization. In the West, he bemoaned, "if a single unfortunate case, among the thousands sent out, occur in a village, the whole effort is discredited, and the thousands of boys and girls doing well are forgotten." Older boys in the West fell under "the restless example of all working people in the United States, and change their places often, which frequently creates much prejudice against them, and the Society which sent them." This criticism was unfair, according to Brace, because of the thousands placed, "great numbers have grown up to be successful men, or the mothers of respectable families. In the city they would have been outcasts or criminals."[69] Brace clung to the evangelical belief that the right type of Christianity could perfect and Americanize the nation's discordant factions, despite assertions by his opposition to the contrary.

The work of the CAS in the second half of the nineteenth century placed emigration aid and the politics of childhood into debates about free labor, religion, and the future of the Republic. Brace and his cohort of evangelical child savers harnessed deep-seeded anxieties

[68] Rebecca S. Trammell, "Orphan Train Myths and Legal Reality," *The Modern American,* Spring 2009, 3-13.
[69] "Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1880, Box 3, Folder 5, NYHS.

among New Yorkers about the future of the nation and of Protestantism to promote a vision of a mythical West in which immigrant children could be trained in the ideals of republicanism. The West could be the savior of the nation's founding principles, as cities like New York fought against the influence of the Old World—namely Catholic immigrants who refused to assimilate. As Brace argued, this was "a reproduction of the family institution—the true American system."[70] Although Brace believed that placing out would fix the fundamental building block of the state, the family, in both the East and the West, the mass deportation of children had unexpected consequences. Children fought back against their captors, the Catholic Church created competing social welfare programs, and Brace faced opposition to his moral authority across the nation. Brace adapted emigration aid to create a safety valve for the children he saw as festering in New York but did not anticipate that in growing up with the country, they would come to depose his evangelical authority.[71]

[70] "Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society," February 1876, Box 3, Folder 1, Records of the Children's Aid Society 1836-2006, NYHS.
[71] In 1854, Horace Greeley famously told Josiah Grinnell, "Go West, young man, and grow up with the country." Greeley personally supported this mission by leaving the CAS with ten thousand dollars in his will.

V: The Political Efficacy of Emigrant Aid: New England Emigrant Aid Company

In the spring of 1854, Eli Thayer heard the voice of God calling him in the night. The Lord told Thayer he was to become the prophet of the Kansas question and instructed him that the only way to halt the march of slavery west was through organized emigration. [1] The state representative from Massachusetts began to spread the message, arguing that if New England families poured into the territory, they could win the popular sovereignty vote and make Kansas a free state. By the time Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act on May 30, 1854, Thayer had already obtained charters for the New England Emigrant Aid Company (NEEAC) from both Massachusetts and Connecticut. [2] In July, he assembled a joint-stock enterprise, and by February 1855, the Massachusetts legislature granted the NEEAC a charter with a maximum capitalization of one million dollars.[3]

The Kansas-Nebraska Act was causing a panic among northerners about slavery's expansion west. Stephen Douglas's bill moved to negate the sectional boundaries of slavery as written in the 1820 Missouri Compromise, which banned slavery north of the 36°30′ parallel. Douglas suggested that the nation embrace popular sovereignty instead, by which residents of the

[1] Thayer and his many supporters followed the doctrines of Unitarianism. Unitarianism grew almost exclusively in New England in the nineteenth century and was based on liberalizing Enlightenment rationalism. A fundamental tenant of Unitarianism was belief in salvation by moral improvement instead of bloody sacrifice. This made some Unitarians, like Thayer, proponents of anti-slavery gradualism. Daniel Walker Howe called Unitarianism "Puritanism without Calvinism." Conrad Wright, *The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America* (Boston, 1955); Mark Noll America's God, 284. Daniel Walker Howe, *The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy, 1805-1861* (Cambridge, 1970), 137-138. The turn toward direct divine intervention is indicative of theological changes in Protestantism more generally. While Quakers had long believed in the Inner Light and divine revelation, it became more common to hear God's voice directly in the wake of Second Great Awakening's focus on emotionalism.
[2] The hotly contested bill passed in the Senate with a vote of 37 to 14 and in the House of Representatives with a vote of 113 to 100. In the House, Northern Democrats split 44 to 44, Southern Democrats passed the measure 69 to 9, and Northern Whigs unanimously opposed the measure. David Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 160-167.
[3] Eli Thayer, *A History of the Kansas Crusade: Its Friends and Its* Foes (New York: Harper Brothers, 1889), 18-27.

territory would vote to decide the fate of the new states.[4] The proposal reignited the slavery controversy in the nation and elicited a renewed northern concern about the spread of slavery into the West. Salmon P. Chase called the bill part of "an atrocious plot" by the Slave Power to close off the West from free laborers "and convert it into a dreary land of despotism, inhabited by masters and slaves."[5] Free Soilers denounced the bill as a plot to subvert the foundational liberties of the Union. The Committee of Boston Clergymen, headed by Lyman Beecher, collected three thousand and fifty signatures from clergymen in the Northeast opposed to the bill, calling on clergy of all denominations to condemn it, "through the Press and even the Pulpit."

Thayer and his colleagues in the NEEAC harnessed northern anxiety about disunion and the slave power to subsidize a substantial emigration from New England to Kansas. Thayer insisted that a stream of northern immigrants, "clothed with moral power, enjoying the confidence, and wielding the pecuniary resources of the whole body of Anti-Slavery men in the North" would win Kansas to freedom.[6] The company's promoted their emigration scheme as the best way to ensure that the West, where land was abundant but workers were few, become populated by free laborers. Thayer harkened back to the Puritan city upon a hill as evidence that all that was needed to create ideal society in the West were the right types of settlers. He envisioned free state emigration to the West as part of a cosmic battle in which northerners could prove once and for all the superiority of free labor, and gradually end slavery by example, as

[4] For more on the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the rise of popular sovereignty see Christopher Childers, *The Failure of Popular Sovereignty: Slavery, Manifest Destiny, and the Radicalization of Southern Politics* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2012); Nicole Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004); Michael A. Morrison, *Slavery and the American West: The Eclipse of Manifest Destiny and the Coming of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Rachel A. Shelden, *Washington Brotherhood: Politics, Social Life, and the Coming of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

[5] "Appeal of the Independent Democrats in Congress to the People of the United States" *Congressional Globe*, 33d Cong, 1st sess. 1854, 281-2; Morrison, *Slavery and the American West*, 152; "Origins of the Clerical Protest," *New York Times*, April 24, 1854.

[6] Eli Thayer, "The Suicide of Slavery." Speech to Congress, February 24, 1859.

southerners witnessed their success. As the sectional contest over Kansas heated up throughout the 1850s, the NEEAC became controversial to southerners, who accused the company of illegally influencing elections and created their own emigration movements. The violence of Bleeding Kansas marked the first instance of sectional violence and propelled Thayer and his ideas into the national spotlight.

Thayer reasoned after his success in Kansas that a free state emigration movement could quell other regions subject to the perils of disunion. In addition to the free state settlement of Kansas, the company determined to infiltrate the South with emigrant movements to Texas and Virginia. Thayer also challenged the filibuster movement with his own proposed free-state colony in Central America. Thayer continued efforts to apply free-state emigration in the South during and after the Civil War, proposing a colony in Florida as an illustration of the transformative power of emigration.

Thayer's promotion of free labor imperialism throughout the nineteenth century was innately connected to his belief that the gradual emigration of northerners into "less civilized" regions could eliminate their threats to the Union. Before the Civil War, Thayer's plan gained traction among northerners who helped fund his ventures in their panic over the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Without the pressure of disunion in the post-war period, Thayer found less financial support for his emigration business, but nevertheless continued to promote free labor imperialism as the solution to societal disorder in the West and South. The NEEAC maintained that emigration was the key to converting barbaric regions into republican strongholds. They promoted free labor as the only necessary ingredient to transform the Union into a paradigm of New England.

The NEEAC' stated purpose in 1854 was to apply "New England energy, industry, and perseverance" to "found another New England" in Kansas. The company offered competitive advantages to induce New England settlers to move west, including reduced rates of fare, protection against speculators, advice on suitable sites for settlements, and "the opportunity of forming communities at once," which the company promised would increase the speed by which settlers could enjoy the "benefits and privileges of settlement." With one hundred dollars investment, the company vowed that a person of "good moral habits, and reasonable and moderate desires" could always be able to "keep above want" in Kansas.[7]

The NEEAC operated on the fundamental principles of free labor ideology. Free labor advocates attested that the booming capitalist society in the North was the result of offering the average laboring man the chance for self-improvement. As such, Thayer hoped that the NEEAC would function as a profitable land company, under a principle he deemed "business antislavery," rather than as a charity. The company planned to invest in the best territorial lands early and sell them after the vote made the territory a free state. In keeping with free labor principles and Puritan values of self-sufficiency, the company's charter promised not to offer direct aid, as its objects were not charitable, "but *philanthropic*." Thayer free labor ideology as evidence of the North's inherent superiority and believed the NEEAC could create a northern stronghold in the West. As company secretary Thomas H. Webb argued, it was of utmost importance that New England influences pervade the territory. "No matter how heterogeneous the great living mass which flows in the territory may be," he wrote, "it will all eventually be

[7] Thomas Webb, *Information for Kanzas Immigrants* (Boston: Alfred Mudge & Son, 1855), 3, 8, 9. AAS.

molded into a symmetrical form," the benefits of which would be "freedom, knowledge, and pure and undefiled religion."[8]

Thayer believed that gradualism, as imported by emigrant aid, would be the ultimate solution to the slavery question. As company agent Charles Robinson wrote, an abolitionist was a person who would "sanction the interference with slavery, in the slave states, by inhabitants of the free states." The NEEAC's plan, Robinson argued, was denounced by these radical abolitionists, who did not understand that the gradualism of free labor emigration would save both Kansas "and the territory west of it."[9] Instead of ending slavery nationally, Thayer believed that the successful free-state colonization of Kansas would peacefully ensure that New England values, rather than slavery, expanded into the West. [10] Like most free labor advocates of the 1850s, Thayer's movement was about empowering the rise of the white laborer, not the emancipation of the black slave.

Thayer promoted his vision of free labor imperialism to both the religious and business communities. Thayer first approached Amos A. Lawrence, one of Boston's preeminent philanthropists. Lawrence funded early company efforts and provided Thayer with wider connections in the business community. Unitarian minister and Worcester resident Edward E. Hale linked the company to religious circles. The company set out to fund their venture by reaching out to local doctors, lawyers, merchants, politicians, and journalists. In 1854, Thayer undertook a promotional speaking tour in New England and New York, forming "Kanzas" leagues of supporters and selling shares in the NEEAC for five dollars apiece. On this tour,

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[8] Thayer, *A History of the Kansas Crusade*, 58, Nicole Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era*, 36; Webb, *Information for Kanzas Immigrants*, 23; Thomas H. Webb to Samuel C. Pomeroy, October 30, 1854, New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers, microfilm, Kansas State Historical Society (hereafter KSHS).
[9] Charles Robinson to NEEAC, August 2, 1855, New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers, microfilm, KSHS.
[10] James Oakes describes this as a "cordon of freedom" that would hem slavery in until its own internal weaknesses destroyed it. James Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861–1865* (New York: Norton, 2014), xii.

Thayer stated that he would raise five million dollars and that the company would help twenty thousand New Englanders go west. The NEEAC enlisted Horace Greeley of the *New York Tribune*, William Cullen Bryant of the *New York Evening Post*, and Thurlow Weed of the *Albany Journal* to further promote the venture editorially.[11]

Thayer's promotional tours attracted capital and settlers to the project. Isaac T. Goodnow attended one of Thayer's speeches, which convinced him to settle in Kansas. He promoted the NEEAC in the *Greenwich Weekly Pendulum*, stating that "The *only* way to save the territory from the curse of human bondage, is for the men of puritan blood, the *practical Christians* of New England to rouse themselves, and emigrate by hundreds and thousands." Potential settlers flooded the company with requests to join a NEEAC party to Kansas, praising the benefits of communal organization. Franklin G. Adams wrote the company stating that he wanted to travel with fellow New Englanders, for he believed them excellent "above all others."[12] Others wrote asking for more information on price, route, and benefits. The company promised that the first party would leave in early March 1854 and cost forty dollars per adult and half price for children. Although the company charter required no pledge or obligation to vote, promising that emigrants were "free agents," settlers wrote to assure NEEAC agents that they were "opposed to slavery in every form" and hoped that the territory might be "saved from the blighting—withering—deadening—damning influence of American Slavery." [13]

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[11] New England Emigrant Aid Company, *History of the New-England Emigrant Aid Company: With a Report on its Future Operations* (Boston: Press of John Wilson and Son, 1862), 8. AAS. *Charter and By-Laws of the Emigrant Aid Company Incorporated by the State of Connecticut, 1854* (New York: A Baptists Jr., 1854), 10, AAS. John G. Brown to Thomas H. Webb, December 19, 1855, NEEAC Company Papers, KSHS.

[12] Franklin G. Adams would become the first president of the Kansas State Historical Society. For more on the relationship between Thayer and Adams after the Civil War, see Courtney Buchkoski, "'Luke-Warm Abolitionists': Eli Thayer and the Contest for Civil War Memory, 1853–1899," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 9 No 2. (June 2019), 249-274.

[13] Quoted in Kevin G.W. Olson, *Frontier Manhattan: Yankee Settlement to Kansas Town, 1854-1894* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012), 31; Franklin G. Adams to Edward E. Hale, December 25, 1854. NEEAC Papers, KSHS; *Charter and By-Laws of the Emigrant Aid Company Incorporated by the State of Connecticut, 1854* (New

Thayer was quick to set up his own promotional outlet in Kansas to promote settlement. The NEEAC provided a loan to George Washington Brown who became the editor of *The Kansas Herald of Freedom*. Thomas H. Webb wrote to Agent Samuel C. Pomeroy in 1854 that it was essential to company trustees that the NEEAC "rightly and directly control that paper" and its message. The company sold newspaper subscriptions to settlers in Kansas and to their supporters in New England. They issued a circular which begged Bostonians to pay "two dollars a year, for a short time" to ensure that the paper continued. The circular quoted Thayer, who declared that the *Kansas Herald of Freedom* was the true "organ of the Emigrant Aid Company, and, if well sustained, will be one of the mightiest agencies in making Kansas a free state." The NEEAC claimed to have over one hundred subscribers in Thayer's hometown of Worcester, Massachusetts alone.[14]

The NEEAC also published a pamphlet for emigrants concerning the quality of land and climate in the region. The advertisement deemed Kansas a "garden of Eden" that was "about to be re-occupied by the descendants of Adam." The company declared the region's soil even better than that of California and looked forward to the day that it would be the thoroughfare for the Pacific Railroad. They advertised the region as a link between northeastern markets and the West. The NEEAC reported prolific coal deposits and cheap land prices. Kansas, the pamphlet proclaimed, was "geographically in the centre of the most important country on the globe," and

York: A Baptists Jr., 1854), 7. Henry O. Norris to New England Emigrant Aid Company, June 24, 1855, NEEAC Papers, KSHS; Samuel C. Pomeroy to New England Emigrant Aid Company, May 21, 1854, NEEAC Papers, KSHS.

[14] Thomas H. Webb to Samuel C. Pomeroy, October 16, 1854, *The New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers*, Kansas State Historical Society, reel MS-619; Stephen Barker, *Shall Kansas be Free?* (Boston, 1855), Vault Material, KSHS.

would soon be the center of commerce and politics if settlers were to save it from the curse of slavery.[15]

Using the pervasive rhetoric of free labor ideology and advocating the political necessity of replicating New England in the West, the NEEAC began sending settlers to Kansas. The first party of NEEAC emigrants arrived in Kansas on August 1, 1854 and settled in a city they named Lawrence after their principle benefactor. Charles Robinson, known in New England for his involvement in the Squatter Riots of California, led the first party. By the end of 1854, the NEEAC sent five parties and seven hundred and fifty settlers to Kansas. These settlers dispersed within the territory, founding the cities of Topeka, Osawatomie, Boston, Hamden, and Wabaunsee. The company built nine mills in Kansas, which each cost between two and ten thousand dollars. In the summer of 1854, Robinson purchased a house in Kansas City, which the NEEAC operated as a hotel to serve as a stopping point before the final leg of the journey to Lawrence. In Lawrence, the company provided temporary huts as boarding houses, while they planned the building of the Free State hotel. Reverend S. Y. Lum of the Home Mission Board of the Congregational Church came in the second party of the NEEAC, which arrived in September 1854, and quickly established a church. Lawrence gave funds for building a combined church and schoolhouse in Lawrence, while Robinson founded a Unitarian Church in the city, funded by ministers in Boston. The NEEAC also donated a building lot to Episcopalians.[16]

In 1855, Thayer asked northern evangelicals to help fund their land sales and building costs. Edward E. Hale tapped into the religious community's wealth with what he titled "The

[15] *Nebraska and Kansas Report of the Committee of the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company* (Boston, 1854), 12, 28, AAS.
[16] New England Emigrant Aid Company, *History of the New-England Emigrant Aid Company: With a Report on its Future Operations*, 4, AAS. Samuel A. Johnson, "The Emigrant Aid Company in the Kansas Conflict," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, no. 6 (February 1937).

Ministers' Movement." Hale contacted the three thousand and five ministers who signed the petition against Kansas-Nebraska Act, asking them to become lifetime members of the NEEAC for a twenty-dollar donation. In a circular titled "Education, Temperance, Freedom, Religion in Kansas" the company promised that it would establish even more towns dominated by free state men, acknowledging that to sway the state toward freedom, they needed, "first of all, the Gospel." Hale's circular promoted the NEEAC's settlements as missionary hubs that maintained regular Sabbath Schools, and that "traffic in intoxicating liquors scarcely" existed in the towns started by the company.[17] The leading Unitarian publication in Boston, the *Christian Register*, promoted the company's plan as the antidote to the "daily sneer that the churches and clergy of New England can talk about slavery, but do nothing" and promised that this would be the "God-directed Exodus which leads Freemen to Kansas."[18]

The promotional effort resulted in hundreds of responses. One minister celebrated the chance to insert "an anti-slavery spirit into that swelling population" and another prayed that God would "deliver us from servile, Judas-like rulers" who were leaving the territory's future up to a popular vote. Nineteen New England clergymen started a letter writing campaign which asked all ministers in the region to raise sixty thousand dollars to be invested in mills, churches, and bridges, promising that around every mill "springs up at once a free and freedom loving population." Led by Joseph S. Clark and Franklin Rand, the campaign promised that "the virgin soil lies open, and it only depend on whether the good grain or the rate of enemy fall first upon it, to decide its future destiny."[19]

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[17] "Education, Temperance, Freedom, Religion in Kanzas," NEEAC Papers, KSHS.
[18] "The 3,000 Clergymen," *Christian Register*, June 23, 1855. New England Emigrant Aid Company Clippings, KSHS.
[19] W. C. Jackson to Eli Thayer, July 1855; A.F. Jameson to Eli Thayer, September 1855, NEEAC Papers, KSHS; "Aid for Kansas," *Salem Gazette*, October 16, 1855. New England Emigrant Aid Company Clippings, KSHS.

The NEEAC conceived of the settlement of Kansas as part of a cosmic struggle for the collective soul of the nation. They encouraged ministers of any evangelical denomination to settle the territory and gradually change the hearts and minds of their southern neighbors. Unitarian minister W.D. Haley left for the territory in association with the company stating that he could "better serve the cause of Christ and Freedom" in Kansas than in Illinois. It was vital, Haley asserted that, "our faith" should be imported early in the settlement period. Unitarian Ephraim Nute occupied the church built by the NEEAC and reported that a majority of the settlers were in favor of "liberal doctrine." "The struggle for civil liberty" he wrote, "is formidable to the cause of ecclesiastical freedom just as it was in the struggle of our fathers with Great Britain." The company also happily aided a group of Congregationalist Germans under the leadership of F. M. Serenbetz, who wanted to lay the foundation of a Christian community. As long as the community could refuse "the admittance of infidels and adherents of the Pope into our association," they promised to create a model Protestant society in Kansas.[20] The NEEAC considered these movements of ministers and religious people essential to creating a model society in Kansas.

In the mind of Thayer and his many supporters in the Northeast, the NEEAC could be the perfect test of the superiority of free labor. The NEEAC would end the problem of disunion in the West by demonstrating the North's economic prowess in direct competition with southern emigrants. The economic and moral conversion of southerners would end national strife about the West and gradually stymie the expansion of slavery.

Some early NEEAC settlers aided in the promotional cause by sending home accounts of an Edenic land waiting for settlement. Sara Robinson's well-read account of Kansas replaced the

[20] W.D. Haley to Edward E. Hale, June 21, 1854; W.D. Haley to Edward E. Hale, July 24, 1854; Ephraim Nute to Edward E. Hale, October 30, 1855; F.M. Serenbetz to Edward E. Hale, March 12, 1857, NEEAC Papers, KSHS.

former myth of the region as the "Great American Desert, inhabited only by savages and wild beasts," with idyllic tales of a landscape she deemed the "Eden of America." Robinson described Kansas as a bastion of Christianity. She recounted attending a "little white church upon the rolling prairie" which standing on a hill and overlooking woodlands, "reminds one of dear New England." She also minimized the danger of indigenous peoples, praising them for their "chameleon skills" in blending in with white settlers.[21]

Other letters and promotional works aided the company's mission by presenting the journey as simple and the future of the territory as bright. Julia P. Lovejoy, a devout Methodist, wrote "every New England heart throbs for freedom" and that she rejoiced to "labor for God and freedom here, where sin abounds." In addition to her religious motivations, Lovejoy found herself pleased with the beauty of the land and the fact that "a man can build himself a comfortable residence, by doing the work himself, for $150 or $200." William Goodnow, whose brother Isaac moved to Kansas through the enticements of the NEEAC, also promoted this idea, and declared the chief benefit of moving that it placed settlers "in a condition to be above want & care which is now the chief burden of your life." Another declared that "Kanzas will be a glorious State if it is a free state" and with God's help, they could transform the territory from "a wilderness" to the home of "an enlightened people."[22]

Reports of settlers who went west to Kansas did not always adhere to the mythic narrative of the NEEAC. Other settlers found the journey difficult and the experience of settlement unpleasant. A man who traveled to Kansas with the NEEAC wrote the *New York Tribune* warning readers not to believe the "grossly exaggerated statements of this Company."

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[21] Sara Robinson, *Kansas; Its Interior and Exterior Life: Including a full view of its settlement, political history, social life, climate, soil, productions, scenery, etc.*, (Lawrence, 1856), 2, 31.
[22] Julia Louisa Lovejoy Diary, 1856-1864, KSHS; William E. Goodnow to Harriet Goodnow, June 10, 1855, box 1, Goodnow Collection, KSHS; "Letter from Kanzas," NEEAC Vault Materials, KSHS.

Emigrants, he argued, should know "just what they will have to endure; no man should emigrate West unless prepared for toil and hardships of the severest kind." An emigrant would need money and energy, lest they turn back midway through the trip. Many emigrants found that the overland journey was more expensive and strenuous than they expected. Samuel Adair wrote home that he paid five dollars a week in board and paid nearly ten dollars per bag of flour. He suffered from a bout of illness and complained of the "constant, piercing, prairie wind," which "expel almost all the calorie that a man has in him." Reverend Lum came to disparage his fellow settlers, writing that even those raised well in the East "when outside the restraints of eastern society" acted out of "the native depravity of the human heart." He reported hearing profanity and claimed that the sound of rifle fire desecrated the Sabbath.[23] Faced with the realities of western settlement, Goodnow estimated that two-thirds of New England settlers "failed in the hour of trial" and went home.[24]

Even the company's own agents complained about the West in private letters. As Samuel Pomeroy concluded, "it is particularly unpleasant in the western world." NEEAC field agents also came under fire by Reverend Haley, who accused them of using dangerous and cheap boats for transport. He suggested the company consult western men, instead of their New England agents, who had "so far been green as grass." "Poetry," Haley concluded, "is a very good thing in its place, but I assure you by the time that emigrants arrive here they have got all over their singing enthusiasm," and too often had faced hardship "because your eastern agents know absolutely nothing about western travel."[25]

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[23] "What Causes the Discouragement of Emigrants—Le the Truth be Known," *New York Daily Tribune*, December 29, 1854; Quoted in Gunja SenGupta, *For God and Mammon: Evangelicals and Entrepreneurs, Masters and Slaves in Territorial Kansas, 1854-1860* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 57, 71.
[24] Historians estimate the number to be closer to one-third.
[25] Samuel C. Pomeroy to Thomas Webb, September 15, 1855; W.D. Haley to Edward E. Hale, March 9, 1855, NEEAC Papers, KSHS.

In 1855, these complaints by settlers about hardships in Kansas hardly bothered the NEEAC. Company secretary Thomas Webb visited Kansas and gave a glowing report of the settlements he toured. "The God of nature," he wrote, had poured down His blessings on the land, which he believed "was clearly designed to be, an earthly paradise." Webb believed that naysayers who returned east and decried the land as poor, the climate as unhealthy, and the seasons as unsuitable for civilization, simply must have had something "wrong in the physical constitution, moral development, or intellectual character." Everywhere he went, Webb claimed to meet families whose earnest hope was that the NEEAC could provide them more neighbors to aid in their settlement.[26]

The company faced its strongest opposition from southerners who distrusted the company in anticipation of the upcoming territorial elections. As Missourian Matthew R. Walker reminisced, common rumors held that the NEEAC sent emigrants under contract to vote for freedom and that they would turn to overtake Missouri after winning Kansas. Missourians believed the New England settlers had guns and bowie knives prepared for election day, and that Governor Andrew Reeder was delaying the election until the spring to allow as many NEEAC emigrants to vote as possible. Southerners believed that the NEEAC promoted miscegenation, as a common rumor held that company agent Charles Robinson said that "After forming a free State, with free suffrage, by amalgamation of the Indians with the negroes…amalgamation with whites would be an easy matter." Although Robinson would later respond that he was "not a friend of amalgamation," there was a growing fear among Missourians that emigrant aid companies from New England were importing dangerous ideas. In response to the NEEAC's alleged meddling, Missourians started their own secret emigration societies in which members

[26] Thomas Webb to NEEAC, September 8, 1855, NEEAC Papers, KSHS.

pledged to make Kansas a slave state. These southern alternatives were similarly rumored among northerners of inducing voters to cross the border for the election. [27]

Rumors about the sectional importation of voters intensified when residents in the territory voted in its first election on March 30, 1855. Although the census preceding the election recorded 2,905 voters in the territory, more than 6,000 votes were cast for mostly proslavery candidates. Reports flooded into Congress and newspapers of Missourians voting repeatedly by exchanging hats and coats, of election judges eliminating oaths so that nonresidents could vote, and of southerners intimidating northern voters at the polls with bowie knives. President Franklin Pierce blamed the controversial election on the "extraordinary measure of propagandist colonization" that sought to "prevent the free and natural action" of the territory's inhabitants. The NEEAC, Pierce argued, intentionally used "language extremely irritating and offensive" to Missourians, which awakened "emotions of intense indignation." The emigration aid company's promise to upend Missouri's domestic peace, Pierce concluded, led to a confusing mishmash of accusations of fraud on both sides. Pierce sided with Governor Wilson Shannon, who had declared the representatives "duly elected."[28]

With no federal recourse, land settlement quarrels intensified between northern and southern settlers on the ground in Kansas. Soon the gradual, peaceful method of popular sovereignty turned to violence instead of proper democracy. In a one-month long skirmish between November and December 1855 called the Wakarusa War, settlers violently disputed the

[27] *Report of the Special Committee Appointed to Investigate the Troubles in Kansas* (Washington: C. Wendell, printer, 1856), 897-899.
[28] James A. Rawley, *Race and Politics: "Bleeding Kansas" and the Coming of the Civil War* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1969), 87–89; *Report of the Special Committee Appointed to Investigate the Troubles in* Kansas, 343-346. "Kansas Election. Qualification of Voters!! Dissection of the Oath prescribed by the Governor," *Squatter Sovereign*, March 27, 1855, 2; James D. Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents* (New York: Bureau of National Literature, 1897, Vol 7).

existing territorial claims of their neighbors.[29] The simmering tensions between free-state and pro-slavery factions erupted when pro-slavery settler Franklin Coleman shot free-state settler Charles Dow nine times in the back over a land claim. Coleman argued that he acted in self-defense. The pro-slavery sheriff, Samuel Jones, sided with Coleman and instead arrested Dow's friend Jacob Branson for disturbing the peace. When a free-state mob broke Branscom out of prison, Governor Wilson Shannon called up the Kansas militia to stop the rioting. Instead, Jones introduced an army of 1,500 Missourians to cross the border and enter Lawrence. Charles Robinson raised his own army of 800 free-state men. A peace treaty between Charles Robinson and James Lane temporarily halted the violence, but the skirmish was the first taste of Bleeding Kansas. Settlers remained uneasy. Appealing to a need for self-defense, the NEEAC began clandestinely providing its settlers with the opportunity to purchase weapons from New England vendors. The New York State Kansas Committee, an affiliated club of the NEEAC, made direct payments to the company, which bought Sharpe's Rifles to send to Kansas.[30]

As the federal government investigated sectional violence in the West, the NEEAC came under fire for promoting disunion. In 1856, Congress published a twelve-hundred-page report that investigated the "troubles in Kansas." Much of the report considered emigration aid, and whether pro and anti-slavery elements had unduly used the method to influence the election. The majority report, written by William A. Howard of Michigan and John Sherman of Ohio, concluded that the elections were "controlled not by the actual settlers, but by citizens of Missouri." They determined that the "vast majority" of votes were illegal and the election was marked by "shameless fraud," claiming that the Kansas legislature, as a result, had no power to

[29] For more detail on the war, see Nicole Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 82-88.
[30] Samuel A. Johnson, *The Battle Cry of Freedom: The New England Emigrant Aid Company in the Kansas Crusade* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1954), 123-33.

pass valid laws. They found that the NEEAC was lawful in aiding settlement and lamented that if Congress had left the territory alone, natural emigration patterns would have led to a free state. Instead of Kansas "endangering the harmony of the Union," it "would have strengthened the ties of national brotherhood."[31] Northerners defended the work of the company as an extension of free labor, while their opponents pointed to their work as an intentional provocation of disunion.

Southerners argued that the NEEAC intentional provoked violence by importing illegal voters into the territory. The minority report compiled by Mordecai Oliver of Missouri called the majority opinion "highly partisan" and identified the NEEAC as a primary aggressor in the election. The minority report concluded that any competing parties from Missouri "were formed solely and expressly for the purpose of counteracting" the NEEAC. The father of popular sovereignty, Stephen Douglas, blamed the NEEAC for misusing the concept for their own gain. The violence in Kansas, he reported, was the result of "two rival and hostile systems of emigration." He condemned the NEEAC as an "experiment in foreign interference" supported by vain government men who linked "their political fortunes" to emigration companies. Missourians testified to their belief that the North wanted "to carry and control the elections" and furthermore attack the institution of slavery in Missouri. In his testimony, Thayer denied these accusations and swore that he never paid for an emigrant's passage, made no conditions about the political opinions of the emigrants, and did not arm them. In fact, he retorted, "the moment they arrive at the place named in their ticket all connexion between them and the society ceases."[32]

The fear among Missourians that the NEEAC would expand its free-state imperialism after Kansas was well founded. As the skirmishes of Bleeding Kansas culminated with the

[31] *Report of the Special Committee Appointed to Investigate the Troubles in Kansas*, 2, 5, 8.
[32] *Report of the Special Committee Appointed to Investigate the Troubles in Kansas*, 68, 83, 928, 884; Stephen A. Douglas, "Admission of Kansas" March 20, 1856. No. 34, Senate Reports, 34 Cong., 1 sess., v. I; Congressional Globe Appendix, 34 Cong., 1 sess., 286, 288.

competing Lecompton and Leavenworth constitutions in 1857, Thayer set his sights on using the method nationally. As Thayer later explained in a history of the company, he wanted the NEEAC to "grow and expand" until it became "the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night to the lovers of Freedom all over the Earth." He decided that after Kansas and Nebraska were "redeemed," the society would use the same method to create pockets of free labor in the West and South.[33] In 1857, Thayer won a seat in Congress. Kansas had catapulted his political career from the local stage to a national one, in which he planned a broader application of free labor imperialism.

Thayer took the success of the NEEAC in Kansas as a sign that the method could gradually convert southerners into free labor advocates. The problems that Thayer determined plagued the West, particularly the threat to free labor and lack of civility, were also problems he saw in the South. Supporters of the NEEAC's mission believed that they could import New England civilization through religion and republicanism and transform the South and West morally and economically.[34] Thayer harnessed the power of existing imperialist plots and his reputation for "saving Kansas" to promote a gradualist solution to the slavery problem in the South.

The NEEAC first turned its sights upon Texas in 1857, following nearly a decade of northern anxiety about the state.[35] NEEAC member Edward E. Hale first proposed free state

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[33] Thayer, *The History of the New England Emigrant Aid Company*, 28.

[34] Many Northerners followed the ideology of Henry C. Carey to argue that small farms would eventually replace the Southern plantation system, if only Northern capitalists had reason to settle there. Sarah T. Phillips, "Antebellum Agricultural Reform, Republican Ideology, and Sectional Tension," *Agricultural History*, vol. 74, No. 4 (Autumn, 2000), 799-822; George Winston Smith, "Ante-bellum Attempts of Northern Business Interests to 'Redeem' the Upper South," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol 11. No 2 (May 1945), 177-213.

[35] For more on the controversies surrounding the annexation of Texas, see Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U. S. Invasion of Mexico* (New York: Vintage Books, 2013); Joel H. Silbey, *Storm Over Texas: The Annexation Controversy and the Road to the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Andrew J. Torgot, *Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands, 1800-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

colonization of Texas in 1845, the same year it joined the Union. He wrote a pamphlet circulated in New England entitled "How to Conquer Texas before Texas Conquers Us," which contended that Texas could escape the grasp of slavery if "the north pour down its hordes upon these fertile valleys, and bear civilization, Christianity and freedom" unto the land. In the twelve years after Texas joined the Union, free state interests lost out to Southern emigration movements, which rapidly imported a large population of enslaved persons. While there were only 30,000 slaves in Texas in 1845, by 1857 this number quadrupled to 124,781.[36] As the West threatened to become a bastion of slavery, Texas was already fulfilling this promise.

The NEEAC sought to counter the rapid importation of slave interests with a free state opposition. Thayer believed that this competition would demonstrate to southerners the superiority of slave labor and convert the state gradually to free labor practices. The company began a promotional campaign, which they undertook with the help of Frederick Law Olmstead. Olmstead was commissioned by the *New York Daily Times* to tour slave states between 1852 to 1857 and report on the importance of slave labor to the economy. Nearing the end of this assignment, Olmstead became interested in the company's work in Kansas, which he wrote, "served, at least, to show what might be realized, in calm times, by the power of organization of capital." In May 1857, the NEEAC hired Olmstead as their Texas agent. That same year, Olmstead published his findings on the state in *A Journey through Texas: or, a Saddle Trip on the Southwestern Frontier*. He promoted Texas as ideal for free-state settlement, which he argued could convince slaveholders to turn to wage labor. As Olmstead explained, if an Iowan went to Texas, instead of spending his money on slaves, he could simply advertise and hire

[36] Everett Edward Hale, *How to Conquer Texas Before Texas Conquers Us (*Boston: Redding and Co., 1846), 16; 18; 21; Randolph B. Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas, 1821-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Pres, 1989).

hands. With his extra money, the Iowan would be able to "contribute liberally to aid in the construction of the church, the school-house, the mill, and the railroad" which would bring "into play other social machinery, which makes much luxury common and cheap to all." In contrast to the Iowan, the Texas planter would "have personally grown rich, perhaps; but few, if any, public advantages will have accrued from his expenditures." Seeing his free-labor neighbor, the Texan would understand the folly of his ways and convert to the far more profitable practice of wage labor. [37]

Olmstead wrote Hale that although he "said nothing directly" in the book about the NEEAC free-state emigration, he included "much to lead men to think about it." Olmstead's work suggested that free-state settlement was easy, and had already been achieved by Germans, who used "associated capital" to transport emigrants. More than two thousand families came to Texas under this agreement, in which each adult paid $120 for passage and forty acres of land. Although this experiment ended in failure because of "bungling and cruel mismanagement," "in the hands of men of sound sense and ability," the project would, Olmstead argued, inaugurate "a new era for humanity."[38]

With Olmstead's assurance of the plan's feasibility, the NEEAC planned to replicate their work in Kansas in West Texas, where settlers could benefit from the cotton boom and model free labor to their neighbors.[39] NEEAC board member Samuel Cabot Jr. proposed to purchase land at twelve to fifty cents an acre, introduce mills, churches, and schools, and make investment money back through rising land valuations. These free settlements would then make "apparent on a

[37] Frederick L. Olmstead, *A Journey through Texas: or, a Saddle Trip on the Southwestern Frontier* (New York: Dix, Edwards & Co., 1857), ix-x, 282; Johnson, *The Battle Cry of Freedom*, 255.
[38] Hale, *How to Conquer Texas Before Texas Conquers Us*, 175-176; Olmstead, *A Journey through Texas*, 282.
[39] As Sven Beckert argues, territorial expansion was crucial to the explosion of cotton production in the United States. Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Vintage Books, 2015).

large scale that free cotton can be raised and pay well for its production," which would "show to the slave states that white labor not only can compete with slave labor, but vastly excel it." Cabot concluded that all that was needed to increase the supply of cotton and improve its quality, was to convince free white laborers to produce it.[40] The NEEAC began advertising to potential settlers. They produced a pamphlet, the "purpose being to encourage attention to Texas among the right sort of men and diffuse information about the country." Olmstead suggested that it would only take a few hundred New Englanders to jumpstart an emigration movement to the region and show it to be "attractive wholesome and profitable for free labor." One settler wrote back having read Olmstead and praised the plan as "a pure Christian duty."[41]

Thayer also turned toward colonizing Virginia in 1857, as rumors of the state's financial troubles flooded newspapers. Virginia faced thirty million dollars in railroad construction debt, failing banks, and plummeting land prices. As the *New York Evening Post* reported, land sales filled the pages of southern newspapers, including the *Alexandria Advertiser*, which published three full columns advertising farm sales. In his 1856 work, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States: With Remarks on Their Economy*, Olmstead suggested Virginia as "the most attractive field of enterprise and industry in America" to which a free labor movement could "result in a revolution and reorganization of society, with Free Trade in Labor as its corner-stone." With his success in Kansas under his belt, Thayer saw what he later described to his biographer an "opportunity for himself and his associates the parallel of which had seldom if ever presented itself in the history of the world."[42]

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[40] Samuel Cabot Jr. to the NEAAC, July 28, 1857, NEEAC Papers, KSHS.
[41] Frederick L. Olmstead to Edward E. Hale, January 10, 1857; Frederick L. Olmstead to Edward E. Hale, January 30, 1857, C. Paltrex to Edward E. Hale, February 20, 1857, NEEAC Papers, KSHS.
[42] "The Virginians' Road to Ruin," *Evening Post*, April 6, 1857, 2; Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States: With Remarks on Their Economy* (New York: Dix & Edwards, 1856), 304; Franklin P. Rice, *The Life of Eli Thayer* (1900), 10.

Thayer partnered with radical Free-Soiler John C. Underwood to promote the northern colonization of Virginia. A New York native who ran a dairy farm in Virginia, Underwood wrote Thayer asking him to turn "the mighty engine of your emigrant aid system into my own state." James Gordon Bennett, editor of the *New York Herald,* also agreed to promote the venture. Thayer once again won the support of William Cullen Bryant of the *New York Evening Post* and Horace Greeley of the *New York Tribune.*[43] Using his connections and the promotion of newspapers, the pair gained the support of prominent New Yorkers who helped them draft the charter for the North American Emigrant Aid and Homestead Company.[44]

Once again, the company would use the stock subscription model to raise its initial round of funding and serve as an opportunity for self-sustaining settlers. Thayer wrote in *The Liberator* that the company was "strictly a business organization" that intended to "purchase large tracts of land at Slave State prices." Thayer planned to give one quarter of these lands to settlers, sell another quarter at cost, and sell the remaining half at inflated free state prices, "thus probably doubling our money on the speculation." Thayer's allies in the newspaper business lauded this plan as the solution to the "rapidly accumulating millions from Europe" who would soon fill up the North. It was necessary, the *New York Tribune* asserted, that "waves of emigration" overflow into the South.[45]

Thayer assured Virginians that the company did not come as enemies but as friends who wanted to improve conditions in the state. Once the financially unstable state saw the superiority

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[43] Franklin P. Rice, *The Life of Eli Thayer* (1900), 10; Letter from John C. Underwood to Eli Thayer, December 1, 1856. Eli Thayer Papers, KSHS; Otis K. Rice, "Eli Thayer and the Friendly Invasion of Virginia." *The Journal of Southern History* 37, no. 4 (1971): 579.

[44] Members of the company included Rollin Sanford, Charles A. Stetson, and Truman Smith. George Winston Smith, "Ante-bellum Attempts of Northern Business Interests to 'Redeem' the Upper South," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol 11, No. 2 (May, 1945), 195.

[45] Jay McKay to Eli Thayer, March 15, 1857, NEEAC Papers, KSHS; "Letter from Hon. Eli Thayer," *The Liberator*, April 24, 1857 vol. XXVII No. 17; "The New Virginia Colonization Scheme—Another Chapter from Eli Thayer—Wonderful Progress of the Movement," *New York Herald,* April 25 1857.

of his labor system, Thayer promised that even slaveholders would flock to his side, for they "could not withstand the progress of this age and the money-making tendencies of the Yankee." The *New York Herald* dubbed this plan, "The Free White Recolonization of Virginia," and proclaimed that the "waste landowners of Virginia have offered over five million acres to Eli Thayer, 'as cheap as dirt,' for cash." The *Herald* wrote in agreement with a newspaper in Wheeling, Virginia, that believed that "free white labor," even to the exclusion of black labor, "would be the salvation of the State."[46]

Virginians, much like Missourians, saw Thayer's scheme as an effort by northern reformers to undermine their way of life. Richmond's *The South* called the project, "exactly identical with the original Kansas Emigrant Aid Society" and "a crusade against slavery—a propagation of Black Republicanism." The *Richmond Whig* similarly decried the "introduction of a horde of Abolition voters" and the "corrupt, dangerous, anarchy-producing system of free society which prevails in the Northern States." Virginia Governor Henry A. Wise wrote Representative Albert G. Jenkins that while he had no qualms with encouraging immigrants "to come to our waste lands and improve them," he would oppose any association with the "manifest purpose of impairing the value of our property in slaves." Thayer was unmoved by southern calls for his adherence to slavery laws, warning that if the state did not provide his settlers proper protection from its citizens, "popular sovereignty" would be "invoked for the Old Dominion as it has been for Kansas." Nothing could stop New Englanders, Thayer argued, from defying all perils and proclaiming the "Gospel of Freedom." [47]

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[46] Thayer, *The Suicide of Slavery. Speech of Hon. Eli Thayer, of Mass. Delivered in the House of Representatives* (Washington: Buell & Blanchard, 1858); "Letter from Hon. Eli Thayer," *The Liberator*, April 24, 1857 vol. XXVII No. 17' "The Free White Re Colonization of Virginia—More Documents," *New York Herald*, April 21, 1857.
[47] "Colonizing the Old Dominion," *The Liberator*, April 17, 1857; "Colonization of Virginia by Northern Emigrants," *Richmond Whig*, March 6, 1857, 1; Letter from Henry A. Wise to Albert G. Jenkins, August 24, 1857 in Barton H. Wise, *The Life of Henry A. Wise of Virginia, 1806-1876* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1890,

In May 1857, after successfully meeting the company's subscription goals, Thayer took a tour of the Upper Ohio Valley, where he agreed to buy the plantation of Thomas Lee Jordan and several adjoining farms.[48] By July, the company faced what Underwood feared would become "an utter explosion of our company" when stockholders found out that not all of the company's $200,000 minimum capitalization had been subscribed. Stockholders were so disgruntled that the company nearly dissolved that month, until Underwood promised that Thayer would personally buy an additional $60,000 of company stock. The advisory board promised not to purchase any land until they found new subscriptions, a task that became substantially more difficult when the Panic of 1857 reached full force in August.[49]

Thayer's attempts to infiltrate the West and South with free state immigrants were mildly successful after his initial triumph in Kansas. A small group of Germans settled in West Texas under his direction and a group of settlers established Ceredo, Virginia using his methods. Land speculation, however, proved harder to make profitable than Thayer originally estimated. The Panic of 1857 led to a score of financial problems for the NEEAC. Thayer lamented that the panic "fatally" damaged their "hopes of rapidly converting our property into money." The company hedged its financial stability on the assumption that land prices would skyrocket after their initial settlement, instead the company faced market upheaval and plummeting land prices. As the drama of Bleeding Kansas wound down, the company also struggled to maintain charitable donations. Amos Lawrence, a major NEEAC investor, resigned as treasurer saying that the "main object" of the association, "the incitement of free emigration to Kanzas" had been

212.; "Good News for the Old Dominion: Highly Important Manifesto from Hon. Eli Thayer," *New York Herald*, March 30, 1857, 4.

[48] Otis K. Rice, "Eli Thayer and the Friendly Invasion of Virginia," *The Journal of Southern History* 37, no. 4 (1971): 590-593.

[49] Smith, "Ante-bellum Attempts of Northern Business Interests to 'Redeem' the Upper South," 209. For more on the company's financial struggles see, Robert E. Moody, "The First Year of the Emigrant Aid Company," *The New England Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (1931): 148-55.

successfully accomplished. The company faced increased debts in Kansas, and not wanting to sell their property for credit, they were only able to sell a small portion for cash. These financial losses in Kansas stymied their operations in Texas as well.[50] Despite continued financial woes, Thayer and his colleagues continued to believe that free state gradualism was the answer to the nation's sectional discord.

In 1858, Thayer sought to apply his emigration aid plans to another pillar of the slavery expansion debate, filibustering. Between 1848 and 1860, filibustering became increasingly popular as American citizens attempted to take over nations at peace with the United States through privately funded military expeditions. Inspired by the promises of Manifest Destiny, over five thousand men participated in filibustering expeditions, hoping to usher in a new era of American expansionism.[51] As President James Buchannan explained, "expansion is in the future policy of our country, and only cowards fear and oppose it." Although filibustering was innately tied into the expansion of slavery, it also found popularity in the North. The practice became especially controversial in the middle of the 1850s, when American newspaper editor William Walker joined Nicaragua's civil war and became the country's president, beating Texas filibuster Henry L. Kinney in a race to control the nation. Originally a Free-Soiler, Walker eventually became a vehement supporter of slavery to gain the support of interested southerners, who saw the region as a logical place to expand slavery. In May 1857, a coalition army of Central Americans and British forces deposed Walker. Not to be hampered by this defeat, Walker returned to the United States for a fundraising tour to furnish another invasion of Central

[50] New England Emigrant Aid Company, *History of the New-England Emigrant Aid Company: With a Report on its Future Operations*, 22-24.
[51] Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 29. See also Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill.: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

America. Walker won support of southerners, but also those in the urban North, especially in New York, where he was treated "like that of a conqueror…tens of thousands of citizens flocked to see the hero." There was even a musical in New York about the filibuster, titled "General Walker, the Hope of Freedom."[52] In November 1857, Walker returned to Nicaragua only be arrested by Commodore Hiram Paulding and forcibly returned to the United States.

Walker's arrest became controversial in Congress, as politicians debated whether the President had the authority to arrest an American on foreign soil. In January 1858, Buchannan sent an address to Congress stating that although Paulding "committed a grave error," it was done "from pure and patriotic motives" against a man whose actions violated "the principles of Christianity, morality, and humanity, held sacred by all civilized nations." Senator Jefferson Davis dissented, claiming that the President had "no more right to make an arrest than any of those members of the senate who are now listening to me," and debates over the issue lasted for the next three days. William Seward argued that the problem with filibusters was that they were "not peaceful emigrants," but military men who sought no improvement of the land they conquered.[53]

Thayer was determined to interfere with the South's proposed international expansion of slavery and replace it with an empire of free labor. He commented on the topic in the House, claiming not to care if Walker's arrest was legal or not. Instead, he raised the "great paramount, transcendent question, about which everybody is caring and nobody is speaking: 'How shall we Americanize Central America?'" Instead of acquiring new territory through conquest, Thayer suggested an emigration movement "in accordance with the highest laws, human and Divine." If

[52] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 38, 42.
[53] "Arrest of William Walker." 37th Congress, 2nd session, February 25, 1862. *Congressional Globe* 944: 215-216, 217, 219.

Americans harnessed the power of organized emigration, settling in colonies, just as they did in Kansas, Thayer promised they could have all of Central America "as soon as we want it." This emigration would only be effective, he continued, if it were a northern emigration, not a southern one. The North had higher population, better manufacture, and took in most foreign immigrants. "Something must be opened," Thayer quipped, "to the descendants of the Pilgrims." The South, in contrast "cannot afford to lose a man."[54]

This northern emigration movement would make sure that slavery never entered Central America and would focus on spreading American institutions. Thayer called it a "modern kind of missionary emigration" in which the faithful sent not just the ministers "with abstract theological dogmas," but the church, the school, the mechanic and the farmers. "Christianity herself," Thayer reasoned, "goes hand in hand with the pioneer." Just as Kansas was eclipsing all other states with her rapid progress, this form of missionary emigration would quickly transform the region. Thayer suggested the creation of a moneyed corporation that could drum up interest among potential emigrants by promoting the natural resources of Central America.[55]

Thayer's speech "created a great sensation" in the nation. Newspapers proclaimed that Thayer was putting an "end to Walkerism." The *Massachusetts Spy* confirmed that "Central America must be brought under our flag," but through Thayer's "proper manner" rather than by Walker's "nefarious plan." The *Wooster Republican* declared that Thayer's scheme had stricken "the filibusters of the south dumb with amazement," for they would rather "not see Central America colonized at all, if it cannot be made slave-holding at the same time." Even the

[54]Thayer, *The Suicide of Slavery: Speech of Hon. Eli Thayer, of Mass. Delivered in the House of Representatives, March 25, 1858* (Washington: Buell & Blanchard, 1858).
[55] Ibid; "Hon. Eli Thayer of Massachusetts, in Committee of the Whole of the House of Representatives," *Massachusetts Spy*, January 20, 1858.

Liberator, which decried the NEEAC's work in Kansas as an acquiescence to gradualism, accepted the plan, calling it "an anti-slavery argument which traders can understand."[56]

In the South, newspapers took Thayer's plan as evidence that the Republican Party intended to interfere with slavery where it already existed. Southerners connected Thayer's earlier work in Kansas and Virginia to his new project. The *Georgia Telegraph* lamented that "emigrant aid did such wonder for Kansas that they mean to test its efficacy generally" by creating a "cordon of non-slaveholding states around the South." This was a practice they had already seen Thayer attempt in Virginia, where they claimed that he tried to split the state "in twain with a great wedge of free soil emigration." If the South stepped in to colonize Central America, the *Telegraph* believed there was still hope that the "Kansas emigration aid experiment will not be successfully repeated in Nicaragua."[57]

Thayer became an ardent promoter of emigrant aid as Americans debated whether the method could gradually end slavery. Rumors circulated in newspapers that members of both parties ordered more than one hundred thousand copies of Thayer's Central America speech for distribution. Republican Thurlow Weed was reportedly seen "bobbing around" in Washington lobbying on Thayer's behalf. In February 1858, newspapers reported that the New York legislature was considering a bill which would colonize Nicaragua under a company called the Central American Industrial Emigration Aid Society. The *Alexandria Gazette* reported that Erastus Corning of Albany accepted presidency of the company, that several thousand persons applied to join, and that they had permission to emigrate from the Nicaraguan government. The *Daily Commercial Register* of Sandusky, Ohio reported that Thayer expected to send enough

[56] "Mr. Thayer's Speech," *Massachusetts Spy*, January 27, 1858: 1; "Central America," *Wooster Republican*, January 28, 1858: 2; "Legislative Acts/Legal Proceedings," *Liberator* XXVIII, no. 9, February 26, 1858: 33.
[57] "Central American Emigration Aid Society," *Georgia Telegraph*, February 16, 1858: 2.

emigrants to Central America within the year to found two seaports on either end of the country.[58]

Once again, Thayer's emigration plan fed the flames of sectional tension over slavery's expansion but did not result in any practical action. Despite the popularity of Thayer's free state colonization ideas, Thayer's many schemes fizzled out. The NEEAC struggled financially in the final years before the Civil War. A drought in Kansas in 1859 left many of its settlers destitute. The NEEAC used its connections with churches in New England to provide clothing and food for the settlers. The company later lamented that these final antebellum years were a waste, as they suffered through robberies, the financial panic, political oppression, and drought.[59]

Thayer's concept of a free state migration was still very much on the minds of politicians during the Civil War as the Union began considering emancipation policies. Thayer and other company members remained convinced that free state imperialism could relieve the North of its excess population and transform the nation to reflect New England society. In 1861, Thayer wrote two letters to President Abraham Lincoln to outline his plan for a "cheaper & safer method" to save the Union than a civil war. He suggested that a more liberal homestead act would encourage "planting…in sufficient numbers colonies of loyal men from the North & from Europe" into rebellious states. Thayer suggested Virginia and Texas as viable options but reasoned that it would work in any Southern state. Although Thayer was convinced that this would secure "the perpetual loyalty of the Southern States," Lincoln never responded. One year later, Brimmer M. Hook wrote to Edward Hale that Thayer approached Hook about a "scheme

[58] "Mr. Thayer's Speech," *Massachusetts Spy*, January 27, 1858: 1; "[Thurlow Weed; Northern Colonization; America]," *Charleston Courier*, February 5, 1858: 1; "Central American Emigration Aid Society," *Georgia Telegraph*, February 16, 1858: 2; "[Washington; New York; Eli Thayer; Nicaragua]," *Alexandria Gazette*, February 1, 1858: 2; "New York, Jan. 12," *Daily Commercial Register* (Sandusky, Ohio), January 13, 1858: 3.
[59] New England Emigrant Aid Company, *History of the New-England Emigrant Aid Company: With a Report on its Future Operations*, 28.

for establishing a 'colonization department' of the government," which would offer "free passage to free immigrants to the South from all parts of the civilized world." Hook was hardly surprised by Thayer's suggestion, noting that he was even "finer and grandiose" than before.[60]

A triad of laws debated and passed by Congress in 1862 and 1863 popularized the idea that the federal government would soon confiscate vast swathes of southern land. Section 3 of the Second Confiscation Act gave the president the power to order the military to seize Confederate property. The Direct Tax Act (1862) and Captured and Abandoned Property Act (1863) also allowed tax agents to follow the Union army southward. There, they calculated land prices based on figures from 1861 to imposed heavy penalties on the land. When Rebel soldiers inevitably failed to pay these taxes, the government used public auctions to take the land.[61]

Although the NEEAC sold its Kansas property for twenty-five thousand dollars in cash in 1862, it proposed to stay together for another year to promote northern emigration to confiscated southern lands. Thayer believed that southerners still need to learn the benefits of free labor. The company reported that there was a "general desire" among northerners to move south, where residents would "soon welcome the introduction of free labor." They reasoned that soldiers who were fighting the war had "seen the beauty and fertility" of the land but were afraid to move there alone because of the "disturbed" and "angry temper" among Confederates. The availability of cheap land in border states, the NEEAC argued, would allow emigrants to move to cultivated

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[60] Eli Thayer to Abraham Lincoln, October 12, 1861, *Abraham Lincoln Papers*, Library of Congress; Eli Thayer to Abraham Lincoln, November 6, 1861, *Abraham Lincoln Papers*, Library of Congress. Lincoln thought Thayer's plan a concession to slave power. At one point during the Secession Crisis, he wrote to Thurlow Weed that "Eli Thayer's Pop. Sov. Would lose us every thing we gained by the election." Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), IV, 154; Brimmer M. Hook to Edward Everett Hale, April 23, 1862, NEEAC Papers, KSHS.

[61] Joan Waugh and Gary W. Gallagher eds., *Wars within a War: Controversy and Conflict Over the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 34; 46-47. For more on the Confiscation Acts see John Syrett, *The Civil War Confiscation Acts: Failing to Reconstruct the South* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015); Daniel W. Hamilton, *The Limits of Sovereignty: Property Confiscation in the Union and Confederacy During the Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

lands, rather than the "cheap wild lands" of the West. The company proposed to organize groups of twenty to forty families to take over Southern plantations, where they could work together to introduce "presses, schools, and churches" that were true to "the interest of freedom." If the NEEAC could influence even a small movement to Maryland or Eastern Virginia, they were sure that it would call public attention to the wider benefit of southern emigration. Despite the company's desire to fund this emigration, the financial losses they sustained in Kansas did not allow them to take immediate action. They did, however, pledge to "obtain and circulate information on the subject of emigration to the South" using their reputation and connections in New England.[62]

The idea of an internal black colony had precedents in the nineteenth century, but became particularly relevant in 1862, when northerners began to consider what to do with slaves after emancipation. As Union troops steadily freed more slaves, politicians debated how radical to make emancipation policies. President Lincoln suggested international colonization. To this end immigration agents in Denmark, Haiti, and Liberia showed interest in obtaining free black laborers. Samuel Pomeroy, who had used his position as an agent of the NEEAC to become one of Kansas's senators, proposed a colony in Central America, in line with Thayer's earlier suggestion.[63]

Thayer also jumped on the emancipation question in 1862, when he proposed making Florida a state for freed people, setting it aside as "the land of Canaan to the race that is now going forth from their house of bondage." Thayer argued that this concession would make up for the fact that Florida's entry into the Union was a "perfidious trick of the slave power." He called

[62] New England Emigrant Aid Company, *History of the New-England Emigrant Aid Company: With a Report on its Future Operations*, 31-33.
[63] Nicholas Guyatt, "'An Impossible Idea?': The Curious Career of Internal Colonization," *The Journal of the Civil War Era,* Vol 4. No. 2 (2014): 255.

the land amenable to freed people because of its climate that was "admirably adapted to African life and labor." Furthermore, Thayer did not see the benefit in sending these newly freed laborers to a foreign country, where the wealth they created would not benefit white Americans. Why send free people away from the nation, Thayer questioned, if instead they could be settled "without at all displacing, jostling or interfering with our white population?" Frederick Douglass praised this plan as a way to introduce northern civilization in the "place of Southern barbarism," and believed the plan would work as long as the colony was led by an intelligent northern black man who could teach former slaves how to begin a life based on "freedom, order, morality, and religion."[64]

The House Committee on Military Affairs supported Thayer's plan for a black colony in Florida, but his plan once again faced the financial risk of land speculation. Thayer suggested that reconstruction could occur by three means; the military could annihilate the white race of the South, the North could occupy the South by force, or they could place a "sufficient number of loyal free-labor men from the Northern States and from Europe to hold the political and military power." Thayer shifted his plan to mirror his work in Kansas, making it a promotion of free white labor, rather than a black colony. Naysayers dismissed the plan as impractical because it required over forty thousand emigrations and would cost twenty million dollars.[65] Radical Republicans also opposed the plan when Thayer revised his initial proposal for an independent free black colony to a plan to import white land supervisors. Thayer argued that a white "class of employers" would teach former slaves how to work for themselves. Despite their initial support,

[64] "Colonization of Blacks in Florida," *New York Times*, October 3, 1862, 4; "What Shall Be Done with the Freed Slaves?" *Douglass' Monthly*, November 1862, 740.
[65] House of Representatives Report No. 5, 37th. Cong., 3rd sess., January 9, 1863; Eli Thayer letter to Charles Edward Lester, February 1863 in Charles Edward Lester, *The Light and Dark of the Rebellion* (Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1863), 120-121; "Mr. Thayer's Florida Scheme," *New York Tribune*, February 9, 1863.

Congress became unwilling to make risky speculative investments or endure the political controversy that the plan would cause.

Despite their recent interest in southern land, the NEEAC remained invested in sending emigrants to the West. Both regions, it the eyes of the NEEAC, still needed the cultivating influence of the North if the Union were to prosper. In 1864, Edward Hale promoted emigration aid as the solution to Massachusetts's unbalanced sex ratio, which left the state with an abundance of women. Hale calculated 29,166 "surplus" women who he claimed were reducing the wages of all New England workers. In a promotional tract titled, *The Emigration of Women to Oregon*, Hale confirmed that an emigration of women would help Oregon, which the 1860 census reported had twice as many men as it did women. Hale concluded that the only way to organize "all of the best social influences in the civilizing of the State," was to import women of "good character." Hale suggested that the NEEAC provide funds for "seamstresses, housemaids, teachers, and (possibly) matrimonial candidates" with the hope that they would "speedily better the condition" of the territory. In Oregon, women would have comparatively high wages, as Hale reported that even unskilled laborers made a dollar a day. Sending women as wives to Oregon would populate the state, and save men time, since they would no longer have to give up a year of work returning to the East to find wives. [66]

Nine days after Hale published his tract, he assigned company agent Henry Higgins to take a group of women to Portland as a test case. Higgins was to protect and guide women of good character to their homes in Oregon, but he quickly ran into trouble. Higgins wrote the company that sending out a few emigrants at a time was dangerous, and that women "must be sent here with large numbers and kept to themselves otherwise the object will be defeated." He

[66] Edward Everett Hale, *The Emigration of Women to Oregon: A Report to the Directors of the New-England Emigrant Aid Co.* (Boston, 1864) AAS.

reported that one of the single women, Jane J. Miller, had become a "fallen woman" and a "special favorite with the stewards." Although Miller had retorted that "she was capable of taking care of herself," Higgins became worried that her actions "considerably influenced" the other women. Higgins did not consider this the fault of Miller, however, but rather chalked up the offense to the wily nature of western men, who, far removed from northern civilization, receded into barbarism. In small numbers, women easily fell prey to western men, who had lost all virtue. The test case confirmed to Hale the barbaric influence of the West and the need for a large emigration movement to Oregon.[67]

The emigrant aid method remained attractive to northerners anxious about the Union's future. In 1864, Governor John Andrew of Massachusetts attached his name to the NEEAC's female emigration scheme, giving it even more credibility. He reported his concern about the inequality in the numbers of men and women to the state legislature. Faced with these concerns, Andrews teamed up with the NEEAC to argue that women "have not heretofore had their fair rights in the way of emigration." Andrew and the NEEAC suggested that women did not have "the same freedom with men" to find better homes. The problem became that the passage west was "wholly unfit for a woman," who needed protection.[68]

The concern among northerners that unbalance sex ratios were detrimental to their society resulted in several companies similar to the NEEAC. Asa Mercer promoted a similar scheme in Washington State and tried to enlist the NEEAC's promotional prowess in the territory. An advertisement titled "A Change for the Anxious and Aimless" boasted that a

[67] Henry Higgins to Edward Everett Hale, February 15, 1865; Henry Higgins to Edward Everett Hale, February 1, 1865, NEEAC Papers, KSHS.
[68] "Governor Andrew Called the Attention of the Legislature, at the Opening of the Session, To the Inequality of the Numbers of the Sexes in Massachusetts," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, February 20, 1865; Governor John Andrew to Senator B.F Harding, January 15, 1865, NEEAC Papers, KSHS.

steamer was prepared to take three hundred "lady passengers" to the territory completely for free, promising that upon arrival they would receive "good wages, to be paid in gold, and have the added endorsement of probably marriage within three months, if they wish." An organization called the Protective Association also sought to send women to Nevada and Colorado under similar methods.

These schemes drew the attention of women, who wrote the NEEAC for information and emigrated under its auspices. Louise Hannah wrote the company for information, stating that she was "strong and healthy and accustomed to work," and thanked them for "taking an interest in the welfare of working women." Charlotte W. Towne similarly wrote that she wished to go to Oregon to teach, convinced by the stories of female teachers from Lowell whom Asa Mercer took to the Washington Territory in 1865 who "were very soon employed at teaching and some of them are married."[69] Emigrant aid and Thayer's reputation for "saving Kansas" remained popular solution in the minds of northerners who wanted to ensure the nation's stability by creating regional pockets of influence.

Based on the company's success in the West, Thayer still believed that the South could benefit from free labor emigration, despite his initial failing there. In October 1866, investors in the Florida Railroad, which ran from Fernandina to Cedar Key, announced that they would be selling the lands along the damaged rail line. The primary holder of this land, Edward N. Dickerson, wrote the NEEAC in November 1866 suggesting that he could provide this land to their settlers at reasonable rates as low as twenty-five cents per acre. NEEAC members believed that they could combine these railroad lands with land obtained under the Homestead Act of 1862 and those confiscated under the Direct Tax Law. The NEEAC believed that they could

[69] Louise Wallingford Hannah to Gov. Andrews, July 25, 1865; Charlotte W Towne, April 24, 1865; Barnard WE Williams to Gov. Andrews, May 2, 1865; NEEAC Papers, KSHS.

leverage their "reputation through the Northern States" to go forward with Thayer's plan, even without Congressional support. C.G. Barnard, who had recently visited the region, reported to the company "almost boundless openings for any colonies which we wish to plant" of Florida. Barnard believed that by "the hand of God," they would "dot all the old slave states with circles of civilization which, shall, one day, impregnate the whole land." [70]

Assured that northern emigration could transform Florida, the company worked to implement the same land speculation and promotional techniques they had used in the West. The NEEAC employed General J. F. B. Marshall in 1866 to investigate the feasibility of buying small farms in Florida to resell to northern emigrants.[71] The NEEAC agreed to pay for Marshall's travel expenses and salary in exchange for information on the conditions of Florida, specifically information about the St. John's River and the railroad line from Jacksonville. The company claimed that its main object "should be to get reliable information to help the poorer class of settlers who have not much time or money to spend in prospecting."[72]

The NEEAC's promotion focused on supplanting rumors about the South with a new mythic version of the land. The NEEAC again set out to use their promotional arm to advertise the region for settlement. Using Marshall's observations of the territory, the NEEAC published a pamphlet entitled *Florida: The Advantages and Inducements Which It Offers to Immigrants,* which went through two printings. One of the company's major concerns was that "perhaps no soil in America that to the eye of a New Englander could look more forbidding than that of Florida." The NEEAC promised that with a tide of northern emigrants, Florida would transition

[70] E. N. Dickerson to T. B. Forbush, December 1 & [undated], 1866; Chickrey to NEEAC, December 23, 1865; C.G. Barnard to Edward Everett Hale, undated. NEEAC Papers, KSHS.
[71] J.F.B Marshall was also an early imperialist in Hawai'i. For more information on the life of Marshall, see Patricia P. Clark, "J. F. B. Marshall: A New England Emigrant Aid Company Agent in Post-War Florida, 1867," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1975): 39-60.
[72] Edward Everett Hale to J.F.B. Marshall, December 12, 1866, NEEAC Papers, KSHS.

from its "somewhat wild condition" into a "real 'Land of Flowers.'" The pamphlet promoted Florida's weather as of "unsurpassed salubrity" that would make a settler "feel as though the fountain of perpetual youth were indeed there." The climate would make Florida the "winter garden" of America, where the rich fled from disease and snow, but also the "permanent adobe of many a working farmer or mechanic who is warned by some tickling in his throat that his lease of life is short." The company quoted liberally from the writings of Harriet Beecher Stowe, who visited Florida in 1865 and wrote that she had there "more life, more rest, more appetite, more conscious pleasure in existence, then I have had for years in New England.[73]

The NEEAC's mythic vision of free labor also had to overcome rumors about the state's Confederate residents, who many emigrants presumed would not welcome a northern ruling class. The NEEAC assured future settlers that even the "most violent rebels" in Florida were "anxious to have northern men" to settle there and infuse their economy with labor. There would be "no more danger of being molested in Florida," they concluded "than in any of the new Western states." Marshall substantiated this claim with a report that the state's governor, David S. Walker, was "desiring of Northern immigration" and promised that Floridians would "welcome N.E. settlers with open arms," feeling that the state could only benefit from an "influx of Northern labor, capitol, and enterprise." Some southerners wrote the company to assure them that the need for labor was so great, that emigration from northerners was welcome. Furthermore, as far as Marshall could tell, all of the "low class 'crackers'" who owned small farms, or no land at all, were especially willing to sell their land at cheap rates so that they could

[73] A.B. Stonelawe to NEEAC, December 17, 1866, NEEAC Papers, KSHS. New England Emigrant Aid Company, *Florida: The Advantages and Inducements Which it Offers to Immigrants* (Boston, Office of the Company,1868) 3, 6-7. AAS.

"go further south, where they can get out of Yankee neighborhoods, raise cattle, and drink whiskey in peace."[74]

A majority of the NEEAC's work focused on transforming Florida into a Republican state. Company agent J.M. Forbes believed that "5,000 voters introduced into this state will control it for the Union party." In the Company's promotional circular, they argued that one of the major benefits to emigration was increased political influence. The company argued that, "The small number of present inhabitants gives to each settler a proportionally large influence and makes each colony a social and political power." They promised that there were "enough farmers and mechanics in New England alone…to make Florida one of the best states in the Union."[75]

The NEEAC aligned itself once again with the idea that gradual emigration could secure a harmonious Union over time. Advocates of racial equality continued to pressure the NEEAC to consider a black emigration to Florida, rather than pursuing a plan of free labor gradualism. Massachusetts Governor John Andrew pushed the NEEAC to pursue its original plan of turning Florida into a black colony, but the company responded that "the settlement of freemen in large bodies by themselves will not be a success" unless white workers were "among them to set them good examples of industry and direct the labor." J. F. B. Marshall wrote that he understood why freedmen were unwilling to work until they got better terms but compared the freedmen to children, writing that African Americans were "not be as manageable as before, and like a boy with a new knife should be for some time experimenting" with freedom.[76]

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[74] New England Emigrant Aid Company, *Florida: The Advantages and Inducements which it offers to Immigrants* (Boston, Office of the Company,1868), 19. AAS; J.F.B. Marshall to T. B. Forbush, January 9, 1867; J.D. Rankin and Co. to the NEEAC, March 30 1867; James Watson to T.B. Forbush, May 24, 1867; J.F.B. Marshall to T. B. Forbush, January 11, 1867, NEEAC Papers, KSHS.
[75] J.M. Forbes to NEEAC, August 13, 1866; Letter from Office of the New England Emigrant Aid co., May 1867, NEEAC Papers, KSHS.
[76] J.F.B. Marshall to T. B. Forbush, January 9, 1867, NEEAC Papers, KSHS.

Without the looming fear of disunion to fund their subsidies as they had in Kansas, the NEEAC struggled to fund their ventures on land speculation alone. By July 1867, the NEEAC failed to raise the necessary funding for even a small colonizing party and the company decided that if they could not raise twenty-give thousand dollars by October, they would give up on the venture. They lamented that their plan to purchase large tracts of land for immigration resulted in failure, which they blamed on the "unfortunate reality of investments of Northern Capitalists in cotton plantations at the South," the tumultuous political climate, and the land itself. When they continued to fail at their fundraising goals, the NEEAC officially ended the project in March 1868, keeping the doors open to correspondence for another two years.[77]

During the 1850s, Thayer's antislavery gradualism and his promotion of free-state emigration matched the tenor of political discussion in the North, as people continued to search for a compromise that would hold the Union together. In Kansas, charitable donors and settlers believed that a free-state emigration could convince southerners of the inefficiency of slave labor. Thayer's success in Kansas catapulted his ideas into the national spotlight, as sectional understandings of emigration aid fueled debates over Bleeding Kansas. Thayer's brand of moderate and gradual societal change drew on the desire of the North to maintain the Union, and the increasing concern that the West would fall to the Slave Power. Despite Thayer's failure to apply his methodology to the South, his persistent promotion of emigrant aid demonstrates the method's political efficacy and popularity among northerners throughout the nineteenth century. The NEEAC and many free labor advocates honestly believed that the northern example of free labor would change the hearts and minds of slaveholders and reunite the nation during Reconstruction.

[77] "Notes from the Secretary of the New England Emigrant Aid Company," May 26, 1868, NEEAC Papers, KSHS.

VI: Adapting Emigrant Aid: Exodusters and the Black West

In the antebellum era, many northern evangelicals believed that slavery was morally wrong but feared that emancipation would destroy the union. As New York Presbyterian minister Henry Boardman preached in 1850, slavery was a "colossal evil...that no consummation is more devoutly to be wished and prayed for than its removal." Immediate abolitionists, however, were "fanatics" and the "worst enemies of the slave" because of their admonishment of the fundamental principles of Union.[1] Northern evangelical reformers believed that maintaining the Union and Constitution required gradual change and compromise, leading them to agree with policies of t colonization—the removal of free black persons and their replacement with white laborers—was the best course of action in peacefully ending the practice.[2] Many evangelical reformers agreed that slavery was a grave evil but saw colonization as the only socially and politically acceptable way to achieve labor reform.[3]

Before the Civil War, northern reformers used emigration as a tool to implement their vision for a white republic. Following in the footsteps of the international colonization movement, which promoted the immigration of manumitted slaves to Africa, white reformers envisioned the West as a place where former slaves could gradually learn the skills needed to become good republicans. This gradual solution to the slavery problem appealed to evangelicals who came to accept slavery as a moral evil, but nevertheless wanted to protect the nation's

1 Henry A. Boardman, *American Union: A Discourse* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1860), 33.
2 In the context of black movement in the antebellum period, emigration refers to plans that advocated for the voluntary movement of free black people. Colonization refers to the coerced or involuntary movement of former slaves. Martha S. Jones, *Birthright Citizen: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 37. Emigration advocates pushed for black colonies in locales like Haiti and Canada while colonization plans often tried to send former slaves to Africa. For more on the Haitian emigration movement see Sara Fanning, *Caribbean Crossing: African Americans and the Haitian Emigration Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2015).
3 Richard Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 180.

institutions from disunion. They argued that free labor was not an innate skill, but one that had to be learned under the direction of the white reform movement. As northerners fretted over the future of African Americans in the Union and feared their ability to overturn it with violence or ignorance, they turned to emigrant aid. Black Americans reformers advocated for protected enclaves in the West during this era but faced a region that increasingly set up barriers against them.

In 1879, former slaves had their own religious awakening about colonization. Black evangelicals began preaching about an exodus, their God-given march to freedom in the West, where they fled southern oppression and formed their own colonies.[4] Under the unlikely leadership of an aging former slave, Benjamin "Pap" Singleton, the black community took western emigration into their own hands in the Exoduster movement, which aided over 40,000 African Americans leave the South for Kansas. The Exoduster movement harnessed emigration aid to fund their movement out of the South, following the leadership of Singleton and others, who provided information on routes to Kansas, purchased land and resold it to emigrants, and provided charitable aid to those who needed food and shelter. This grassroots emigration movement was a statement of black freedom and mobility, which many white evangelicals feared threatened to sow a new type of disunion in the West.

A movement of primarily impoverished former slaves, the emigrants faced backlash from white and black elites alike. In the West, white settlers feared the influx of black laborers, who

[4] Nell Ivrin Painter, *Exodusters: Black migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (New York: Knopf, 1977) and Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003) consider the Exoduster movement in the Reconstruction era. Both discuss whether or not the leaders of the exodus were acting politically. Hahn also considers the broader communication networks that made the emigration possible, connecting the movement to Kansas with discussions about Liberia. Neither considers the broader connections to black thought about the American West. Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016) considers emigrationism more generally.

they believed uneducated in civilization and a danger to the wage labor system. The Exoduster movement entrusted colonization to working class black leaders, who eschewed the opinions of elite, black intellectuals. The Exodusters asserted their power to escape untenable conditions in the South. They created their own definition of free labor apart from the opinions of white and black reformers who had been theorizing about the black future in the West for decades. The Exodusters harnessed the power of emigrant aid to defy the wishes of reformers and those in power.

In the antebellum years, both white reformers strategized about how emigration and colonization could solve the Union's racial strife. Much of the conversation among white politicians about international colonization stemmed from the popularity of the American Colonization Society (ACS).[5] White colonizationists imagined Africa as the only logical home for free, black people. The ACS promoted the gradual reduction of the black population in the Union to create a purified, white national space. Created in 1816 by Virginia politicians Charles Fenton Mercer, Dabney Minor, and Philip Doddridge, the ACS advertised colonization as a way to "provide suitable asylum in Africa for the free people of colour of the United States."[6] Building on a foundation of already popular ideas, the ACS quickly ascended to national prominence with supporters including Henry Clay and Daniel Webster. In 1822, the society founded a colony on the western coast of Africa at Cape Mesurado under the guidance of

[5] For more information on the American Colonization Society, see Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005); Claude Andrew Clegg, *The Price of Liberty: African Americans and the Making of Liberia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); David M. Streifford, "The American Colonization Society: An Application of Republican Ideology to Early Antebellum Reform," *The Journal of Southern History* 45 (1979): 201-220; Eugene S. Van Sickle, "Reluctant Imperialists: The U.S. Navy and Liberia, 1819–1845," *Journal of the Early Republic* 31, no. 1 (2011): 107–34. Allan Yarema, *The American Colonization Society: An Avenue to Freedom?* (New York: University Press of America, 2006).

[6] *The Colonization Herald and General Register, Vol. 2* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Colonization Society, 1839), 64.

Lieutenant Robert F. Stockton who convinced the Dei King of the island, known as King Peter to the settlers, to sell land to the ACS. With the successful establishment of the colony, which would eventually become the home of over 13,000 freed people, the ACS enjoyed wide popularity among white supporters. In the years between 1823 and 1826, the organization grew from twenty-four auxiliary societies, mostly centered in Virginia, to fifty-five societies across the nation.[7]

The ACS justified colonization as an extension of free labor ideology. They argued that the removal of freed slaves would benefit white society by eliminating the moral blight of slave labor, thus giving slaveholders the opportunity to engage in moral, free labor. The ACS believed that free African Americans living in America could not achieve equality. As a company report put it, they were "only *nominally* free, but who have no interests in common with the community."[8] The ACS promoted removal as a benevolent option for freed people, who allegedly had no desire to assimilate into white culture. As the ACS put it in one of their addresses, "The least observation shows that this description of persons are not, and cannot be, either useful or happy among us."[9]

Reformers also envisioned the West as a location to send black slaves to learn the values of republicanism before reentering civil society. Before the Civil War, between 3,500 and 5,000 African Americans joined organized communities in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan. White reformers intended that these settlements to shield residents from hostility and allow them

[7] The American Colonization Society, *The Sixth Annual Report of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States* (Washington: Davis and Force, 1823); The American Colonization Society, *The Ninth Annual Report of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States* (Washington: Davis and Force, 1823).
[8] Massachusetts Colonization Society, *American Colonization Society, and the Colony at Liberia* (Boston: Peirce & Parker, 1831), 14.
[9] The American Colonization Society, *Address of the Board of Managers of the American Colonization Society to the Auxiliary Services and the People of the United States* (Washington: Davis and Force, 1820), 23.

to pool resources until more individualized settlement was possible. They envisioned colonies as a way to teach slaves the skills of free labor and focused on education. These colonies also served to benefit their white owners. Frances Wright established the Nashoba colony in west Tennessee in 1825. She created the colony because she believed that slaves needed training for freedom and slaveholders needed a way to clear their consciences. Other colonies, like that of John Randolph and Nathaniel Beaufort, bequeathed colonies as a condition in their wills. Randolph used his will to free his slaves and settle them in Ohio, where they were eventually driven from the land by white residents in 1847, who claimed that they would not "live among negroes." In Smithfield, Ohio, Nathaniel Beaufort, a Virginian Quaker, purchased two hundred and sixty acres of land and divided it into five acre lots for black laborers.[10] The founders of these colonies meant to provide African Americas limited freedom and teach them the ways of free labor, while still confining them to a specific area.

White-led settlement movements focused on transforming slaves into free laborers gradually through communal enterprises. White abolitionist Benjamin Lundy traveled to northern Mexico in 1833 to inquire about starting a black colony there, during the height of United States land speculation in the region. Lundy proposed a colony in Tamaulipas that would subsist on growing sugar, cotton, and rice. He published a circular advertising the venture, which invited settlers of any race, as long as they agreed to treat one another equally. Lundy offered each family a lot in the colony and a piece of farming land equal to one-hundred and twenty-three and a half acres.[11] Although the venture failed as the U.S.-Mexican War changed the fate of

[10] William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease, *Black Utopia: Negro Communal Experiments in America* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1964), 4, 27, 39.
[11] Benjamin Lundy, *A Circular Addressed to Agriculturalists, Manufacturers, Mechanics, &c. on the Subject of Mexican Colonization with General Statement Respecting Lundy's Grant in the State of Tamaulipas; Accompanied by a Geographic Description of That Interesting Portion of [the] Mexican Republic* (Philadelphia: Richards, 1835), 4.

Texas, the idea of creating a separate black colony existed even within radical abolitionist circles.

Augustus Wattles, a fervent member of the American Antislavery Society and eventual free state emigrant to Kansas, created a settlement in Ohio that he believed would gradually teach former slaves to "change their character." He argued that the only way to ensure the success of free black labor was to make them "independent and respectable in the same manner" that poor whites did, through land ownership. Wattles aided settlers by housing newcomers in his personal residence, advising on agricultural practices, and helping residents buy land. By 1840, the Carthagena settlement featured the elements of a good republican village—24,000 acres of land, a schoolhouse, and houses of worship. As the *Sentinel of Freedom* declared, the settlement thrived on the "honorable and ennobling" pursuit of agriculture rather than by urban labor.[12]

Robert Rose's Silver Lake community functioned as a sterling example of the evangelical method of gradualism. Rose enlisted the help of Reverend Morris Brown, bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, to recruit African Americans for a colony. The colony required its members to strictly adhere to the religious and republican principles of industry, temperance, and honesty. The colony grew slowly, starting with nine families and five single men. When these emigrants proved their worth, Rose employed black ministers to find more settlers to join the colony. His agreement with the Association of Coloured People at Silver Lake outlined that he would provide the land, implements of husbandry, and stock the land with cattle, oxen, and hogs. The tenants and Rose agreed to split the cost of taxes, salt, and the profits of crops if Rose supplied the seed. Rose demanded that emigrants adhere to his evangelical societal standards,

[12] "Augustus Wattles Again," *Philadelphia National Enquirer*, December 29, 1841; "Important Letter from Augustus Wattles," *Colored American*, October 28, 1837; "Colored Settlement in Ohio," *The Sentinel of Freedom*, December 22, 1840.

and the agreement included clauses requiring sobriety, industry and good conduct. The idea behind the Silver Lake Association was that a rural, communal society would keep the moral behavior of black emigrants in check and provide them a place for education and religion, outside of white society. Rose hoped to teach the emigrants self-sufficiency so that they could leave urban areas and live apart from white society, thus removing their threat to disunion.[13]

While white evangelicals used emigrant aid to remove free black persons from their society, black reformers also considered the benefits of leaving the Union. The Refugee Home Society, led by African American evangelicals Isaac J. Rice and T. Willis, with the support of anti-slavery financiers in Detroit, laid out a program to settle in Canada. The society planned to use aid from white donors to provide homes and land to a colony of fugitives. Rice wanted to procure homes for colonists as well as "steady education and better gospel privileges." As the Oberlin Evangelist declared, this plan to place former slaves on their own land was "incomparably better for them than to linger and longue about the cities with uncertain employment, exposed to ruinous vices." Concerned abolitionists joined the venture and purchased 30,000 acres for resale to black refugees. Black newspaper editor Henry Bibb and his wife, Mary, managed the colony, which by 1861, housed sixty families.[14] These types of Canadian colonies became increasingly relevant to black refugees, as sectional politics soon terminated the idea of black settlement in the North and West.

Black plans to separate from white society took a special significance after Congress passed the Fugitive Slave as part of the Compromise of 1850. The law strengthened a statue passed in 1793 which required the return of fugitive slaves to their owners, which had mostly

[13] Letter from Robert H. Rose to James G. Birney, July 15, 1836. In *Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857* ed. Dwight L. Dumond (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1966), vol. 1, 337-8; 341.
[14] "Letter from Bro. I. J. Rice, Canada West," *Oberlin Evangelist* vol. IV, 4 (1847), 31; Peter Carlesimo, "The Refugee Home Society: its Origin, Operation, and Results, 1851-1876," MA thesis, University of Windsor, 1973.

gone unenforced in the North. The new law punished officials who did not arrest black refugees with a one thousand dollar fine. These arrests could be made based on any white testimony against the black runaway, who was not allowed to testify or ask for a jury trial on their own behalf. Additionally, any person who aided a runaway slave was subject to the same fine and six months in prison. As a result, slave refugees no longer sought the North as a safe haven but flooded into Canada as quickly as possible for asylum.[15]

The Fugitive Slave Act led to increased African American consideration of a separate black colony apart from a nation which seemed intent on infringing upon any hope of black rights. One suggested plan came from John Mercer Langston, who in 1850 became the first black man admitted to Oberlin's theological school. Along with his brother, Charles, he immediately recognized the danger inflicted upon the northern black community by the Fugitive Slave Act. The pair wrote to Salmon P. Chase, Ohio's Free-Soil senator, to propose a different option for the black community. The Langstons suggested asking Congress "for a grant of land in the newly acquired Territories on which we may peaceably settle and enjoy our own political reputation as do the inhabitants of other Territories." If a separate western colony was not possible, the Langstons lamented, they might have to consider to "quit the land of our birth" and seek asylum in a foreign country until the "great principles" upon which the Union formed existed in "practice as well as in theory."[16]

Other black community members also increased their efforts to create colonies after the Fugitive Slave Act. For many African Americans, the Fugitive Slave Act "measurably alienated

[15] Fred Landon estimated 15,000 to 20,000 African Americans went to Canada after the Fugitive Slave Act. Fred Landon, "The Negro Migration to Canada after the Passing of the Fugitive Slave Act," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (1920), 22. For more on the Fugitive Slave Act, see Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* and Steven Lubet, Fugitive Justice: Runaways, Rescuers, and Slavery on Trial (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[16] Letter from C. H. and J. M. Langston to Salmon P. Chase, September 12, 1850. Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

our feelings toward this country" and "dispelled the lingering patriotism from our bosoms." At the Convention of Colored Freemen of Ohio in Cincinnati in January 1852, the most discussed topics of conversation included "emigration to some point on the American continent." The convention condemned African colonization but still considered it essential that black colonies form to avoid settling in large numbers in cities. The key for the black future, the convention concluded, was the formation of separate, rural communities.[17]

In the same year, black intellectual Martin R. Delany, one of the first proponents of black nationalism, published *The Condition, Elevation, Migration, and Destiny of the Colored People* in which he encouraged black migration to Central and South America, Mexico, and the West Indies. Delany admitted that emigration was at times necessary to political elevation and compared the need for black migration to the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt, the Puritan emigration, and the "hundreds of modern European examples." Delany rejected the idea of going to the "so-called Republic of Liberia" but instead urged black emigrants to find their own destinations. "We love our country," Delany concluded, "but she don't love us." As the nation "bids us begone," the only option was to go, but "not go where she desires us." Delany posited colonization as a way to secure black independence outside of the politics of white plans for the community.[18]

By 1854, the National Emigration Convention had abandoned hope that the United States would offer black Americans a territory in the West. At their annual meeting held in Cleveland, the convention declared Canada the only free territory in North America and the "surest

[17] *Proceedings of the National Emigration Convention of Colored People; held at Cleveland, Ohio* (Pittsburgh: A. A. Anderson, 1854), 20; *Proceedings of the Convention of the Colored Freemen of Ohio* (Cincinnati: Dumas & Lawyer, 1852), 19.
[18] Martin Robison Delany, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States: Politically Considered* (Philadelphia: The Author, 1852), 24. AAS.

investment in social as well as political economy." The convention reported that settlers could obtain land at government prices, for about one dollar an acre, that could be paid over ten years. Canada, the convention goers concluded, could be "like a palliative," which would "soothe for the time being the misery" but would not provide long term relief to future generations. Convention attendees did not believe that they would have their freedom at the hands of white paternalists, who whether Democrat or Whig, wanted to "sustain the Constitution as our forefathers *understood* it, and the *Union as they formed it*," which necessarily meant that black people would remain in the service of white hierarchies.

The only solution was for the black community to buy up as much land as possible in Canada before measures prevented them from doing so. Black settlers declared that they would merely be doing what white people in the United States "have for years been engaged in," by securing "unsettled lands," speculating on their value, and through settlement providing "progressive neighboring improvements."[19] Over the course of the next decade, as many as 30,000 black colonists went north to Canada, purchased land, and started their own independent communities.[20] Many of the leaders who would later start black colonies in the West, including Benjamin "Pap" Singleton, lived in these communities before returning to fight in the Civil War and for their civil rights in the South.

Black visions of settling the West in the antebellum era were continually hampered by the protests of white westerners, who feared that their presence would cause an upheaval to their settlement movements. In California, Kansas, Nebraska, and Oregon, legislators to state

[19] *Proceedings of the National Emigration Convention of Colored People; held at Cleveland, Ohio*, 21, 23, 37-38, 66.
[20] For more on black migration to Canada, see Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971); Harvey Amani Whitfield, *Blacks on the Border: The Black Refugees in British North America, 1815-1860* (Burlington, VT: University of Vermont Press, 2006); Daniel G. Hill, *The Freedom Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada* (Agincourt Canada: Book Society of Canada, 1981); Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, 330-333.

constitutional conventions demanded both the prohibition of slavery and the exclusion of free black emigrants. As the *New York Tribune* explained in 1856, many free soilers in the North and West desired "to secure the new territories for Free White Labor, with little or no regard for the interests of negroes, free or slave."[21] As Salmon P. Chase explained, if black emigrants moved west, the free laborer would be "virtually excluded" from the territories, "by being subjected to degrading competition with slave labor.[22] Many westerners also assumed that if they did not restrict black emigration to the territories, that their land would become overrun with the free black population fleeing the South. They pointed to laws in Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky which all required manumitted slaves to emigrate, lest they be re-enslaved as evidence that without restriction, the black population of the West would skyrocket.[23] As westerners fought to preserve the region for the white laborer, they rejected all black claims to control emigration there.

The northern fear of a free black population only heighted during the Civil War years. As soon as the war began, white northerners began to theorize and fret over what to do with the black population, who increasingly escaped the South to Union lines. The Lincoln Administration continued to consider emigration options that removed African Americans from the Union. Abraham Lincoln had long supported international colonization for former slaves, first giving his support to the cause in an 1852 eulogy of Henry Clay and noting in his first debate with Stephen Douglas in 1854 that his "first impulse" was to send free slaves to Liberia. Lincoln admitted that his "own feelings will not admit" the idea that former slaves would be political and social equals.[24] When Lincoln became President in 1861, his cabinet contained

[21] *New York Tribune*, October 15, 1856.
[22] O.C. Gardiner, *The Great Issue* (New York: Bryant & Co., 1848), 119.
[23] For more on black exclusion laws, see Berwanger, *The Frontier Against Slavery*.
[24] *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Volume 2 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 256.

three adamant supporters of colonization—Edward Bates, Montgomery Blair, and Caleb B. Smith.[25]

Lincoln investigated creating colonies of emancipated slaves in Central America. In March 1861, Lincoln sent Guatemalan Minister and former Gold Rusher, Elisha Crosby on a secret mission to secure land there for a colony of freed slaves "more or less under the protection of the US Government." Lincoln also sought to secure land in Chiriqui in New Granada at the hands of Ambrose W. Thompson, where the pair planned to have former slaves mine for coal.[26] Lincoln's annual message to Congress in December 1861 encouraged colonization under the Confiscation Act and suggested diplomatic recognition of Haiti and Liberia, presumably to improve chances of a mass settlement. Lincoln proclaimed that "colonization may involve the acquiring of territory," not ruling out a future imperial venture for the removal of former slaves. In 1862, Congress appropriated 600,000 dollars to the transportation of African Americans, a measure strongly supported by border Unionists and moderate Republicans. [27]

Efforts by the Lincoln administration to promote colonization increased in 1862. James Watson Webb, ambassador to Brazil, proposed a joint stock company to settle African Americans along the Amazon River. The Danish charge d'affaires in Washington asked Lincoln to send freed slaves to St. Croix to harvest sugar. Lincoln appointed Methodist Minister and fellow Illinois native James Mitchell as the head of a new department, the Commission of Emigration. Lincoln also asked former NEEAC member and now Kansas Senator Samuel C.

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[25] Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010; for further discussion of colonization and Lincoln see Foner "Lincoln and Colonization" in Our Lincoln: New Perspectives on Lincoln and His World, ed. Eric Foner (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), 135-66.
[26] Elisha Oscar Crosby, *Memoirs of Elisha Oscar Crosby; Reminiscences of California and Guatemala from to 1864* (San Marino, Calif., The Huntington Library, 1945), 87.
[27] Abraham Lincoln, "First Annual Address to Congress," December 3, 1861 in *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Volume 5 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 43.

Pomeroy to take one hundred families to Chiriqui. Pomeroy eventually envisioned taking ten thousand emigrants and boasted that he received thousands of applications for his first colony.[28]

The black community adamantly opposed Lincoln's plans to colonize African Americans overseas. When a black delegation came to the White House in 1862 to speak to Lincoln about colonization, they called it "inexpedient, inauspicious, and impolitic." This highly publicized meeting resulted in further controversy when Lincoln told the delegation that even if emancipated they were "yet far removed from being placed on an equality with the white race...it is better for us both, therefore, to be separated." Lincoln further remarked that if not for "your race among us there could not be a war" and argued that it would be "extremely selfish" for African Americans not to emigrate. African Americans, including Frederick Douglass responded with ire. Douglass retorted that Lincoln's job was not to decide what was best for African Americans but was to allow them to choose for themselves. [29]

Lincoln's support of segregation explains why he did not pursue the creation of a black colony in the West. Elisha Crosby admitted that he did not understand why the administration refused to settle African Americans in its own western territory, confessing that the question was one he "found very difficult to answer." Montgomery Blair sought a middle ground when he approached Mexican diplomat Matias Romero about establishing a black colony in Yucatan. Romero flatly denied the request, as Mexico had recently ceded one-third of its territory to the

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[28] *Report on Colonization and Emigration, Made to the Secretary of the Interior, by the Agent of Emigration* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1862), 8-9; Mark E. Neely Jr., "Colonization and the Myth that Lincoln Prepared the People for Emancipation," in William A. Blair and Karen F. Younger, eds. *Lincoln's Proclamation: Emancipation Reconsidered* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 58-60; *Boston Daily Advertiser*, August 26, 1862.

[29] "From the Anglo-African. The President's Interview with a Committee of the Colored People of Washington," *Pacific Appeal*, September 20, 1862, 3; "The President and Colonization: Interesting Interview with a Committee of Colored Men. Speech of the President in Favor of Colonization. The Experiment to be Tried in Central America," *New York Times*, August 15, 1862; "The President and His Speeches," *Douglass' Monthly*, 5 (September 1862), 707.

United States. The desire among white politicians to send African Americans outside of the nation ensured that they would not have to offer them political rights or consider them equals socially. As Lyman Trumball, who included a colonization clause in the Second Confiscation Act, explained, "There is a very great aversion in the West…against having free negros come among us. Our people want nothing to do with the negro."[30] Lincoln's promotion of colonization was another in a long line of white, paternalist solutions to questions about what to do with African Americans once they were free from slavery. Although by 1862, Secretary of the Interior Caleb Smith admitted that the administration had "no settled policy" on colonization, Lincoln remained invested in finding a way to separate African Americans from white citizens.[31]

Other white intellectuals suggested keeping former slaves within the Union but providing them colonies in the South. This strategy would guarantee that the free black population did not move north or west and sow discord within communities of white laborers. Daniel R. Goodloe of the *New York Times* published a pamphlet promoted reparation payments to slave holders and black colonization in the South. Goodloe asserted that black landowners could buy the uninhabited swamp lands in the South, drain them using canals and ditches, and cultivate them for crops. He argued that abolition was necessary to the continuation of the Union, but only "liberal compensation" would stimulate industry and keep the North from maintaining a standing army in the South after the war. As soon as they were free, Goodloe believed that African Americans would spark a voluntary southward migration. This "exodus" of black laborers would

[30] Crosby, *Memoirs of Elisha Oscar Crosby*, 88; Thomas Schoonover "Misconstrued Mission: Expansionism and Black Colonization in Mexico and Central American during the Civil War," *Pacific Historical Review*, 40 (November 1980), 611-612; *Congressional Globe*, 37th Cong., 2d sess., 944 (February 25, 1862).
[31] Caleb B. Smith to Samuel G. Howe, October 24, 1862, *Index to the Senate Executive Documents for the First Session of the Thirty-Ninth Congress of the United States of America* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1866), 22.

"be the signal for a rush of white immigration," thus transforming the South into a "land of Caucasian freedom, intelligence, and prosperity" in just a few years. [32]

In an essay considering the depletion of Southern agricultural resources, Elias H. Derby reported the rumors in northern states about the cost of emancipation. There were many in the North, Derby reported, who believed that the emancipation of slaves would lead them to "overrun the North and West." Derby observed that westerners avoided contact with African Americans, preferring to "perpetuate in its purity the Anglo-Saxon blood," by importing only white settlers into the region. Derby predicted that as long as the war ended slavery, there was no danger of African Americans leaving the land that they were "adapted by nature." Conversely, if slavery continued unabated, the North and West would indeed by "overrun by fugitives" escaping their masters.[33]

Like Goodloe, Derby suggested a free black colony which would extend from the Capes of Florida to the Brazos River in Texas. He argued that two hundred million acres of land that could sustain forty million African Americans, included forests, cultivatable soil, freshwaters, and a climate "suited to the negro." Derby concluded that the implementation of free labor in the South would inspire white immigration and "labor would then become honored and respected" in the region. The emigration of African Americans to the southern coast, Derby concluded, was "designed by Providence" and required by Manifest Destiny, to keep black laborers on their native land, but apart from white society.[34]

Federal experimentation in southern colonization began in 1861, when Union forces sailed into Port Royal off the coast of South Carolina, the white residents fled, leaving about

[32] Daniel R. Goodloe, *Emancipation and the War: Compensation Essential to Peace and Civilization* (New York, 1861), 1-2, 7.
[33] Elias H. Derby, "Resources of the South," *Atlantic Monthly*, October 1862, 508–9.
[34] Ibid.

8,000 African Americans behind. Abolitionists and northern benevolent societies saw this as a perfect opportunity to test plans for a black colony. In 1862, Secretary of the Treasury Salmon Chase sent Bostonian abolitionist Edward Pierce to the island, where he became convinced that Port Royal could be the perfect place to experiment in assimilating former slaves into society. With their transportation and rations sponsored by the federal government, northern philanthropists funded most of the other costs of the settlement. In March 1862, over fifty teachers, ministers, and doctors left New England to volunteer to operate the institutions in the colony. Once again, however, the white colony planners in charged aired on the side of paternalism. When the federal government began transferring lots to private ownership in 1863, more than ninety percent went to northern whites. The colony existed under a policy of white ownership and black labor. By 1865, Andrew Johnson ended the experiment completely, when he ordered Brigadier General Rufus Saxton to return the land to its original white owners.[35]

William T. Sherman also worked toward creating black colonies in the South. Instead of promoting emigration outside of the rebellious states, Sherman advocated to "colonize the negroes on land clearly forfeited to us by treason." He believed that if African Americans could settle on land between Memphis and Vicksburg, they would be able to embrace free labor, and "at once" be "useful." In 1865, shortly after his march to Atlanta, Sherman issued Special Field Orders No. 15, in an effort to settle the large number of black refugees who were traveling with his troops. Sherman's order set aside land in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina for the "settlement of the negroes now made free by the acts of war." He ordered that "no white person

[35] Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); Nicholas Guyatt, "An Impossible Idea?: The Curious Career of Internal Colonization," *The Journal of the Civil War Era*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (June 2014): 241-241; Akiko Ochiai, "The Port Royal Experiment Revisited: Northern Visions of Reconstruction and the Land Question," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (March 2001): 4-117.

whatever" be permitted to reside on this land and its managements would be "left to the freed people themselves." Unlike previous federal plans for black colonization, Sherman consulted with African Americans and gave them control over their settlement project. The federal government, however, still held ultimate title to the land, which the black settlers had only possessory, rather than absolute title. The plan soon became defunct when President Andrew Johnson overturned Sherman's directive in the fall of 1865 and returned the land to its original white owners. [36]

After the Civil War, although the southern African American community hoped for progress and to earn wages for the fruits of their labor, it quickly became apparent that even Radical Reconstruction plans would not stay the cruelty of former slaveholders.[37] Black workers soon turned to emigrant aid as a solution to their treatment in the South. The black vision of the West was based on an evangelical desire to bring on the new millennium and an economic vision of the West as a safe harbor for free labor. Black emigrants turned to their community networks

[36] Letter from William T. Sherman to Lorenzo Thomas, April 12, 1864 in William T. Sherman, ed. Brooks D. Simpson and Jean V. Berlin, *Sherman's Civil War: Selected Correspondence of William T. Sherman, 1860-1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); "Special Field Orders, No. 15," Headquarters Military Division of the Mississippi, 16 Jan. 1865, Orders & Circulars, series 44, Adjutant General's Office, Record Group 94, National Archives.

[37] Some historians argue that the racial equality promised in reconstruction never materialized. Eric Foner argues that reconstruction began with good intentions under the Radical Republicans but was eventually coerced by white politicians who rendered its progress unfinished. Heather Cox Richardson furthermore argues that many white politicians believed that emancipation was all the state owed former slaves, leading them to reject more radical land and educational reforms. William Gillette demonstrates that Republicans failed to enforce reconstruction policies, and only did so when they stood to make political gains from them. Other historians argue that white politicians never meant for reconstruction to usher in an era of radical equality. Gary Gallagher contends that the North got rid of slavery to punish slaveholders and to ensure that no threats to Union would exist in the future. Mark Summers argues that reconstruction achieved the goals that white elites had for it—it restored the union and minimized the possibility of future conflict. Whatever the initial intention of reconstruction, it is clear that emancipation did not result in equality for African Americans. Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988); Gary W. Gallagher, *The Union War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011); William Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction, 1869-1879* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979); Heather Cox Richardson, *The Greatest Nation of the Earth : Republican Economic Policies during the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); Mark W. Summers, *The Ordeal of the Reunion : A New History of Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

for emigration aid, drawing on the strength of black evangelicalism and charity to subsidize migration west.

Theories about how to escape from white terrorism and disfranchisement passed through black communities. Henry Adams, a former slave turned preacher, served an enlistment in the Union army and then settled in Louisiana after the war. After five years of maltreatment, Adams joined with other black soldiers to create "The Committee," which investigated abuses against the black population. Adams testified that when he toured the South from 1870 to 1874 as part of the committee, he witnessed high land prices, white landowners whipping black laborers, and violence against Republican voters. By 1877, Adams concluded that there was no hope for free labor in the South, and that there was "no way on earth" that "we could better our condition there." In 1877, he drew up a petition for the "Colonization Council" which advertised an emigration to Liberia. According to Adams, 98,000 African Americans enrolled. Adams and his colleagues petitioned Congress for the funds to leave the nation but came up short.[38]

Plans to leave the South remained fundamental to black conversations about their future in the nation. With many black citizens continuing to oppose international flight, they turned to domestic schemes. In the midst of this crisis, Benjamin "Pap" Singleton heard a calling from God to lead his people out of the South as Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. Unlike the emigration aid movements before it, this movement would not be led by elite intellectuals, but by the working-class freeman. Singleton was perhaps an unlikely hero of what became known as the Kansas Exoduster movement. Born in 1809, Singleton was elderly by the time slavery ended

[38] *Report and Testimony of the Select Committee of the United States Senate to Investigate the Cases of the Removal of the Negroes from the Southern States to the Northern States*, Part II (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880), 101-111; *Report and Testimony of the Select Committee of the United States Senate to Investigate the Cases of the Removal of the Negroes from the Southern States to the Northern States,* Part III (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880), 108.

nationally. He grew up in Tennessee, although his masters sold him many times to states further South. Singleton escaped, always returning to Tennessee, and eventually, to freedom in Canada on his third attempt. Soon after, he returned to Detroit, where he remained throughout the Civil War, living a meager existence as a scavenger. In Detroit, Singleton began his work of benevolence, keeping a makeshift boarding-house for fugitive slaves.[39]

After the war, Singleton returned to Tennessee, and witnessed the ineffectual changes of Reconstruction in the South. Only the millennium, the very return of Christ to Earth, Singleton believed, would allow former masters and slaves to work together again. While some of his friends found hope in the fifteenth amendment, Singleton was more skeptical. Some thought the amendment was going to lead to "Canaan right off," but Singleton predicted that as soon as the "white tramps from the North" used black laborer to "line their pockets," they would drop the cause, "and the rebels will come into power" once again. The only possible way to obtain freedom was to leave the South. This lesson became especially pertinent to Singleton in the 1860s, when he worked as a carpenter in Nashville making coffins for the many black victims of white violence.[40]

By 1870, Singleton was concerned that despite the race's liberation, they were now "worse enslaved" by the denial of rights which the "laws of the land" and the law of "Nature's God" entitled them. Facing "murders, assassinations, and merciless treatment" in the South, the black laborer had no choice but to emigrate. He concluded that their work would be better valued by elites in the West, and that they could endure a colder climate, just as they had in Canada. "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," Singleton concluded, would be "sweeter in a cold

[39] "'Pap' Singleton: The Moses of the Negro Exodus," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, April 21, 1879.
[40] Ibid.

climate than murder, raping, and oppression in the South."[41] Singleton soon began promoting the idea that free people needed their own homes and land apart from their former masters. He first tried to start a colony in Tennessee, but landowners only offered lands at high prices. Kansas became an option, in part, because of its mythic history as a land of freedom, the place where John Brown led the first insurrection of the war of emancipation. In 1872, Singleton sent an exploratory committee to Kansas, and when the report was positive, Singleton visited the next year, now as the president of the Tennessee Real Estate and Homestead Association. Selecting the plots of removed Cherokees, Singleton did not make a serious inquiry into the plan until 1876, when he wrote to Kansas Governor Thomas A. Osbourn, requesting aid for transportation and settlement. When Osbourn refused to aid them, Singleton pooled all the resources he could find and led three hundred African Americans to Kansas in 1878, where they lived in his Cherokee County Singleton Colony.[42]

Singleton's Tennessee Real Estate Homestead Association harnessed the myth of Kansas and of the West as a paradise of free labor. The association promotional literature promised to help the "laboring class, both men and women," to purchase land, "peaceful homes and firesides," undisturbed by the violence of Reconstruction. The association published songs proclaiming Kansas "The Land that Gives Birth to Freedom," which proclaimed that the Lord had gone before them to open the way and save them from the "hard slavery State" in Tennessee. Newspapers described their settlers as "lured by the tales of prosperity in Kansas" and drawn in by its reputation for freedom.[43]

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[41] "An Address from the Colored People," *The Commonwealth*, June 18, 1870.
[42] Letter from Benjamin Singleton to Thomas A. Osbourn, August 7, 1876. Records of the Kansas Governor's Office: Administration of Governor Thomas Andrew Osborn (1873-1877), Box 2, KSHS.
[43] "Ho for Kansas!" Real Estate and Homestead Association, August 28, 1877. Benjamin "Pap" Singleton Scrapbook; "The Land that Gives Birth to Freedom," Benjamin "Pap" Singleton Scrapbook; "The Singleton Settlement," Benjamin "Pap" Singleton Scrapbook, 21. KSHS.

This small emigration was merely the precursor to a movement of thousands of African Americans. In 1877 and 1878, Singleton incited interest in emigration through circular literature and mass meetings in Tennessee. These meetings mixed the evangelical belief that the black exodus would lead to a promised land and discussions of free labor. Singleton claimed that upwards of five hundred "of the laborer class" attended two days of speeches promoting Kansas. Singleton's company harnessed the power of railroad promotion to aid settlers in their pursuit of freedom. The company struck a deal by which groups of emigrants could go from Nashville to Topeka for ten dollars a person. The company put emigrants under the care of leaders, offered cheap rates of transportation, and then helped them find land in various parts of the state. In 1878, Singleton started his second colony in Dunlap, Kansas, where he bought land from the Kaw Reservation from the government for a dollar and twenty-five cents per acre. One hundred and five families settled the land, first building a church.[44]

Between 1879 and 1880, 20,000 African Americans fled the South for Kansas. *Harper's Weekly* called them "fugitives from injustice and oppression" as they journeyed away from the increasing violence of a failed Reconstruction plan. Kansas rose in mythic proportion as the land where John Brown and "martyrs of freedom" fought against the slave power. Many were enticed by circular advertisements that promised that "land is cheap, and it is being taken up very fast." Samuel L. Perry recounted receiving circulars from railroad companies describing cheap government land for sale. His subscription the *New York Herald* further cemented the idea that "people were going to Kansas" and that Perry could "get a colony to go West." Perry organized a colony of one hundred people who began moving west in 1879, using railroad subsidies to fund

[44] Benjamin "Pap" Singleton Scrapbook, Kansas State Historical Society; "The Great Negro Exodus," *Harper's Weekly*, May 17 1879; *Second Report of the Kansas Freedmen's Relief* Association (Topeka: Daily Capital Steam Printing House, 1880), 29.

their travel. The Alabama state labor union delegated George F. Marlow to visit Kansas, where he concluded that it was "well within the reach of every man, no matter how poor" to live in Kansas.[45] These promotions convinced many destitute African Americans in the South that Kansas was could provide them a promising future.

As black emigrants streamed into Kansas from the South as hopeful free laborers, the state turned to a different kind of emigrant aid, one that was largely funded through the charitable donations of other African Americans. In St. Louis, where 2,500 emigrants became marooned, St. Paul's African Methodist Episcopal Church appointed a committee that became known as the Colored Relief Board. Led by Charleton H. Tandy, Reverend John Turner, and Reverend Moses Dickson, the board solicited aid from the different African American societies in the city in hopes of funding the final stage of emigration of Exodusters into Kansas. Along with the Eighth Street Baptist Church and the Lower Baptist Church, St. Paul's AME housed the many Exodusters passing through the city. The St. Louis African American community there offered emigrants food and clothing.[46]

In April of 1879, the relief board renamed itself the "Colored People's Board of Emigration of the City of St. Louis," and began sending agents to Kansas to assess the need for aid there. Tandy went on a tour of the East and New Orleans to raise even more money for the emigration fund. Soon, white evangelicals in the East became interested in funding the cause. General Thomas W. Conway travelled west to Kansas from Philadelphia at the behest of Quakers there, who wanted full details on the Exoduster movement. Conway reported that the

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[45] *Report and Testimony of the Select Committee of the United States Senate to Investigate the Cases of the Removal of the Negroes from the Southern States to the Northern States,* Part III, 361; *Report and Testimony of the Select Committee of the United States Senate to Investigate the Cases of the Removal of the Negroes from the Southern States to the Northern States,* Part I, xii; xiii.

[46] *Report and Testimony of the Select Committee of the United States Senate to Investigate the Cases of the Removal of the Negroes from the Southern States to the Northern States,* Part III, 433.

"burden of their complaint and their hope" was that they were cruelly mistreated in the South and believed that Kansas would afford them a better opportunity to educate their children. Conway also stopped by the Old Settler's Meeting in 1879, where the original white settlers of Kansas territory, including many members of the NEEAC, met to commemorate their efforts to rescue Kansas from the "perils of slavery." There, Conway interviewed farmers, lawyers, doctors, and clergyman from the places where the Exodusters settled. Conway found them "pleased" with the emigrants and in "great demand for their labor."[47]

Radical Republicans and former abolitionists also supported the exodus. At the age of seventy-four, William Lloyd Garrison worked relentlessly to raise money for the Exoduster emigrant aid fund. Only four weeks before his death, Garrison proclaimed that Exodusters were ensuring a "speedy end to "all this bloody misrule" and would soon be "in the safe enjoyment of their rights." John Brown Junior pledged to spend the rest of his life to the cause, as part of the legacy of his father. Abolitionist Wendell Phillips also enthusiastically supported the plan, retorting that southern land holders could "till their own soil or starve."[48]

By March 1879, hundreds of Exodusters flooded into Kansas using the aid from their benefactors in St. Louis. Wyandotte, the city nearest the border with Missouri, saw the biggest flood of emigrants, which only seemed to grow larger as the days wore on. Two hundred came on the *Fannie Lewis* on March 23, three hundred and fifty came on the *Joe Kinney* on March 31, and four hundred and fifty aboard the *E. H. Durfee* on April 6. Gaining one thousand refugees in

[47] *Report and Testimony of the Select Committee of the United States Senate to Investigate the Cases of the Removal of the Negroes from the Southern States to the Northern States,* Part III, 433; *The Kansas Memorial, a Report of the Old Settlers' Meeting held at Bismarck Grove, Kansas, Sept. 15th and 16th, 1879* (Kansas City: Ramsey, Millett & Hudson, 1880), 14.
[48] William Lloyd Garrison, The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, Vol 6. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 580; *New York Times*, August 8, 1879; "Personalities," *The Independent,* May 15, 1879, 7.

two weeks, the black community welcomed the emigrants into their churches and helped some move to Quindaro to be housed on the Freedmen's University Campus.[49]

Kansas Governor John St. John was well apprised of the situation with the Exodusters, having received hundreds of letters from prospective settlers in March and April of 1879. Some letters were from the settlers themselves, requesting information, as Cain Sartain did, about state inducements for settlement, if the state guaranteed the franchise to African Americans, and the state of public education. Other inquiries to the governor came from railroad promoters like W. R. Hill, who promised to find good land in western Kansas to sell to the emigrants, to whom he would also offer cheap transport. [50]

Some white Kansans grew alarmed at the rapid growth in the black population of their cities and called on the state to move Exodusters to rural areas. Wyandotte resident A. N. Moyer wrote St. John about the panic among Wyandotte residents, proclaiming that the "shrill whistle of every boat which comes causes us many anxious thoughts." Moyer feared the refugees would bring disease and desperately hoped that they would soon "move on," and requested that as a "war measure," St. John should aid in dispersing the emigrants throughout the state. The Mayor of Wyandotte, J. S. Stockton, followed up with a telegram on April 12, begging St. John to help in transporting the Exodusters out of the city. Stockton also petitioned Fort Leavenworth for provisions for the refugees, only to be told by Secretary of War George W. McCrary that only Congress could authorize such an action. On April 18, 1879, Mayor Stockton issued a proclamation stopping all boats or agents concerned with "importing destitute persons to our shores." The Citizens' Relief Committee, of which the Stockton was chairman, issued a

[49] Glen Schwendemann,"Wyandotte and the First Exodusters of 1879," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (Autumn 1960), 233-249.
[50] Letter from Cain Sartain to John St. John, March 30, 1879; Letter from W. R. Hill to John St. John, April 10, 1879, KSHS.

supplementary statement condemning the "terrible tide of pauperism" and encouraged emigrants to move further west. The committee begged for donations to provide for the suffering emigrants that "destiny has thrust upon us." The *New York Tribune* echoed the call for philanthropic aid, proclaiming that if the "North does not come to their rescue" the Exodusters would die. Beyond food, clothing, and money, the *Tribune* also suggested more traditional emigration aid in the form of information, encouraging to provide "intelligent advice, direction, and help to secure homes" for the refugees.[51]

Stockton wanted to use aid money to move black emigrants outside of his city's limits and into other communities. With money coming in from aid appeals, Wyandotte's committee arranged for the transportation of one hundred black families to Lawrence. They also sent twenty-eight Exodusters to Toganoxie, one hundred and forty to Leavenworth, two hundred to Manhattan, and two hundred and fifty to Ottawa. In the wake of the mass migration, the *Topeka Commonwealth* demanded that Kansas organize a state relief committee that would provide proper emigrant aid to the Exodusters. The group would give advice "as to where these people should go" help select land and arrange transportation.[52]

With tension building about how best to aid the newest Kansas emigrants and increasing appeals to the state government to investigate methods of emigrant aid, Governor St. John called a meeting at the Topeka Opera House on Sunday, April 20, 1879. The churches of the city dismissed their evening congregations and encouraged their members to attend the meeting, which was packed to capacity with attendees. St. John roused them to donate with rhetoric about

[51] Letter from A. N. Moyer to John St. John, April 7, 1879; Letter from J. S. Stockton to John St. John, April 17, 1879, KSHS; *Daily Commonwealth*, April 20, 1879; "What the Negroes Need," *New York Daily Tribune*, April 14, 1879, 4.
[52] *Wyandotte Herald*, April 24, 1879, May 1, 1879, and Topeka *Daily Capital*, April 25, 1879; *Topeka Commonwealth*, April 19, 1879.

Kansas as a haven for free labor. St. John argued that if Kansas were to live up to her reputation as a state "devoted to liberty," its people would aid the Exodusters, who were not beggars, but people in need of hospitality. James E. Gilbert, pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal church, rebuked the fears of white Kansans that white immigration would soon cease to the state, imploring the Kansas "be true to herself" and to her history. Attendants included Susan B. Anthony, who gave ten dollars to the fund and declared all efforts to help the Exodusters win equality would be "the speediest method" to guarantee "equality of rights to women."[53]

By the end of the night, the meeting raised over five hundred dollars and resolved that because the state government had no means of extending "special aid to immigrating freedmen," individual citizens would contribute to aid in the dispersion of Exodusters onto farmland.[54] The next morning, St. John summoned the executive committee to meet, where they appointed a group of women to solicit potential donors for money and other donations. They also sent attorney N.C. McFarland to Wyandotte, where he convinced Mayor Stockton to desist his efforts to turn emigrants away.[55]

The next night, a group of concerned African American citizens met at the Baptist church to organize their own movement that would provide an alternative to the all-white aid company formed at the opera house. Exodusters shared their testimony and highlighted the necessity of the movement. One fled the South for fear that black codes repealed during the Grant Administration would again resurface after the next election. T.J. Watts recounted his exile from Vicksburg, Mississippi, where he was circulating advertisement for the Exodus until the *Vicksburg Herald* warned him that the state was "too hot to hold" him. Watts fled to Kansas without his family, a

[53] "The Meeting at the Opera House," *The Daily Commonwealth*, April 22, 1879; Letter from Susan B. Anthony to John St. John, April 21, 1879, KSHS.
[54] "The Meeting at the Opera House," *The Daily Commonwealth*, April 22, 1879.
[55] *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 21, 1879, and *Topeka Commonwealth*, April 22, 1879.

refugee from the violence of Reconstruction, and hoped to reunite with them soon. Remembering the dire consequences if they failed and had to return to the South, this group of reformers made plans to extend aid to black emigrants flooding into Kansas.[56]

St. John, perhaps inspired by his Quaker religion's long history in the abolition movement, incorporated the Kansas Freedmen's Relief Association (KFRA) on May 8, 1879. The association's goal was to relieve the wants of "destitute freedmen, refugees and immigrants" coming to the state, providing them food, shelter, and clothing. Furthermore, the association planned to aid in "procuring work, and in finding homes" either with individual families or on "government of other lands." The association planned to work for the next twenty-one years to aid in the transition of slaves into free laborers. The association explained the Exodus as a result of Singleton's promotional efforts in Tennessee, work of mouth from the initial emigrants to Kansas, and the schemes of "unscrupulous men" who promoted the movement to make transportation commission for railroad companies.[57]

The KFRA featured a board of white, elite philanthropists, including Quaker activists Laura S. Haviland and Elizabeth L. Comstock, who solicited donations from religious communities in the North. The association received contributions from thirty-one states, Canada, and England, with the most money coming from New York state. Initially set up at the Topeka fairgrounds, the association moved north of town to a piece of land owned by an Exoduster. There, they built barracks that could house up to five hundred people, a hospital, a commissary, and a funeral home. The association stockpiled clothing, pottery, dry goods, and planting seeds and distributed them weekly to the needy. They also provided aid to Singleton's Dunlap colony,

[56] Ibid.
[57] *Second Report of the Kansas Freedmen's Relief Association* (Topeka: Daily Capital Steam Printing House, 1880), 3, 7.

although it was rarely needed. They investigated sending black laborers to Nebraska, Colorado, New Mexico, and California for employment and into creating their own colony on government land. By the end of March 1880, the association claimed to have aided 20,000 freepersons. Their only reward, they insisted, was the one that "our Savior shall extend to us, remembering too that His sacred mission here was to deliver the captive, to open the eyes of the blind and to preach the gospel to the poor."[58]

Democrats and southerners were suspicious about whether northern emigrant aid to free people was purely altruistic. Democrats in Congress led by Daniel W. Vorhees, Zebulon B. Vance, and George H. Pendleton commissioned an official investigation of the Exoduster movement, claiming that black emigrants were "undoubtedly induced in a great degree by Northern politicians, and by negro leaders in their employ, and in the employ of railroad lines." The majority report asserted the northerners were using emigrant aid to deprive the South of laborers. Its authors condemned aid societies who they claimed stimulated the Exodus through "circulars artfully designed and calculated to stir up discontent." Claiming that these societies were made up entirely of Republicans, the commission denied that the Exodus was the result of deprivation of political rights, but instead claimed it was the result of a clever trick of their enemies to diminish their labor force.[59]

The Vorhees Commission rejected arguments by African Americans that they were leaving the South because of white terrorism. When black laborers complained about landlord tenant laws, the commission pointed to a black man who owned one thousand acres of land, concluding that "if one black man could attain this degree of prosperity" others could. Their

[58] Ibid, 7, 10, 11, 28.
[59] *Report and Testimony of the Select Committee of the United States Senate to Investigate the Cases of the Removal of the Negroes from the Southern States to the Northern States,* Part I, iii; iv.

investigation into the South found no state where black men were excluded from juries and claimed to find no "considerable violence" against the black community. The position of African Americans in the South was "not only as good as could have been reasonably expected" but was certainly better than if large communities moved to a colder climate and where they would have to compete "with a different system of labor."[60]

The Democratic majority on the commission also detested the black use of emigration aid. White southerners far preferred a gradual emigration which might benefit small groups of black emigrants "as it does those of the whites." A mass exodus from the South, they claimed, was foremost injurious to the people of the South, but also to black people themselves. The work of emigrant aid companies constituted "wild and misdirected philanthropy" that cost the South in money and labor. Finally, any additional help offered to the now free laborers would only prevent them from finding "their own salvation."[61]

Although the minority report provided evidence that emigration aid companies were "purely charitable" and had "no connection whatever with any political motive," Democrats remained unconvinced. The minority reported that companies were composed almost wholly of African Americans, who aided those emigrants who had already come west. Exodusters themselves explained the Exodus as a way to flee "intolerable hardships" imposed upon them by Democrats in the South, instead leading them to seek protection "among strangers in a strange land." In addition to pointing out the futility of importing more Republicans into the already Republican state of Kansas, they refuted the majority's insistence that African Americans had equality in the South. Exodusters were leaving the South because of the denial of their rights to self-government, lack of educational opportunities, discrimination in the courts, and the

[60] Ibid, v, vi-viii.
[61] Ibid, vii.

"memory of Democratic outrages." The minority cited the 3,500 black men killed in Louisiana between 1865 and 1877, voting intimidation, and the long history of injustice in the South. They condemned Democrats for claiming to deplore "such lawlessness" but never declining to "accept its fruits." If the South really wanted to fix its emigration problem, the minority concluded, they could begin to treat African Americans fairly. The report argued that emigrant aid originated in the black community and had nothing to do with Republicans luring laborers out of the South. The true cause of the Exodus was political persecution, the monetization of convict labor, and peonage labor contracts. If southern Democrats changed their treatment of laborers, the movement would stop, but if they did not, it would continue to be a great injury to the southern economy. [62]

The black community also disagreed on whether the Exoduster movement was a positive step forward for recently emancipated slaves, and the division along socioeconomic lines. Frederick Douglass, perhaps the most prominent black elite leader of the period, gave a detailed account of his opposition to the Exoduster movement on September 12, 1879 to the American Social Science Association. Douglass believed that southern landholders would only start to respect African Americans if they came to understand the monetary value of black labor. He argued that black laborers needed to leverage their cotton growing expertise, which only they could supply. The southern economy was thus at "the mercy of the despised and hated negro," and now that the black community was free to choose where it labored, the former slave was the arbiter of the South's destiny. Douglass argued that to give way this power now, right as the

[62] Ibid, x, xiii, xvi, xxiv.

black community was on the cusp of achieving equality, was "an evasion of a solemn obligation and duty."[63]

Douglass also criticized newspapers for creating a frenzy over the exodus which he thought drew attention away from those African Americans who stayed in the South. Newspapers, he argued, advertised the destitute emigrant rather than the brave sustainability of black communities in the South. Douglass declared emigrant aid a dangerous concept, because it involved asking the white community for approval and for funding, thus giving them the opportunity to object. Other elite black intellectuals agreed with Douglass's assessment, including Mississippi Senator Blanche K. Bruce, who called Singleton and other organizers "small fry politicians." Prominent black citizen Robert H. Knox agreed that freed people should stay in the South and trust that the President would enforce the law there.[64]

Singleton responded to Douglass by noting the circumstantial distance between the intellectual and the types of people fleeing the South. Singleton argued that Douglass had "good luck," and was now "listenin' to false prophets" and playing directly into the machinations of southern planters. The people moving north, Singleton added, did so for survival, and could not be expected to endure horrendous conditions in the South for the sake of ideological arguments. The Exoduster movement drew support from other important black figures including Sojourner Truth, who advocated for the allocation of federal land for a black colony in the 1860s and early 1870s. Even in her eighties and in frail health, Truth traveled to Kansas to visit emigrants and encourage their journey. John and Charles Langston also visited Kansas to assist the emigration,

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[63] Frederick Douglass, *The Frederick Douglass Papers: Series One, Speeches, Debates, and Interview*s, ed. John W. Blassingame (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 512, 514-515, 529.
[64] Frederick Douglass, *The Frederick Douglass Papers*, 525, 521; Quoted in Painter, *Exodusters*, 213; *Report and Testimony of the Select Committee of the United States Senate to Investigate the Cases of the Removal of the Negroes from the Southern States to the Northern States,* Part I, xiii.

starting the Kansas Emancipation league to help encourage options for black employment and housing in the state.[65] The battle lines of the debate over the Exodus were clear, with its supporters mostly including the destitute black laborer and the Radical Republican who wanted to punish the South by removing its labor force. Elite black thinkers considered the long-term results of a mass migration and concluded that the black community would have to continue to fight and suffer in the South to affect lasting change there. Within these debates, the Exodusters asserted their right to control their own mobility and labor.

Singleton continued to promote the Exodus even as the number of emigrants declined in 1880, proclaiming that every "order, association and church" should contribute to the movement. He called on the black community to do all in its power to help their brethren "whose hearts are yearning for free homes in these Northern States, where they can enjoy life, liberty and the pursuits of happiness." In the fall of 1880, Singleton traveled to Illinois and Indiana to investigate sending Exodusters there, and also to campaign on behalf of James A. Garfield. He delivered several speeches in which he declared that unless Americans elected a Republican who would improve conditions in the South, they could expect a massive migration of African Americans. In 1881, Singleton presided over a convention in Topeka which considered how the Exodusters now in the West could improve racial conditions. The meeting resulted in the creation of the "Colored United Links," which aimed to aid emigrants by eliminating discrimination in labor disputes, care for the sick, and provide black children with training in

[65] "'Pap' Singleton, The Moses of the Negro Exodus. Concerning the Colored Colonists in Kansas," *Topeka Globe-Democrat*, April 18, 1870; Nell Irvin Painter, introduction to *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, by Sojourner Truth (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 22; Richard B. Sheridan, "Charles Henry Langston and the African-American Struggle in Kansas," *Kansas History* 22, vol. 4 (Spring 1999): 274.

trades. Local auxiliary organizations formed in each of the Kansas towns where Exodusters lived and continued to hold an annual convention in Topeka.[66]

Soon, Singleton's dissatisfaction with Republican policies led him to join the Greenbackers, and the black community in Kansas began using their voting power to demand better conditions of the Republican establishment. Singleton became increasingly disappointed in Kansas politics in the 1880s, as questions of proper wages plagued the communities there. As thousands of European immigrants came to Kansas every year, Singleton also saw black opportunities quashed, as even a white European had racial supremacy over the black worker. [67] By 1883, he became convinced that there was "no hope" for the African American in the United States. He published an appeal to the African Americans of the South, urging them to start their own nation as soon as possible. He claimed to have aided 82,000 people to Illinois, Missouri in Kansas, who were doing well, but continued to be excluded from government. [68] "The white people," Singleton concluded "keep us at a distance and keep us down." Singleton lamented that despite working for over two hundred years on the cultivation of the South, their race was not better off after emancipation. "It is within our power to have homes of our own," he concluded, "where none at midnight can strike terror into the hearts of our people." [69]

At first, Singleton promoted a colony in Canada, although he quickly abandoned it when faced with the issue of cold weather. Joseph E. Ware wrote to Singleton and concluded that it was futile to expect that the federal government would still set aside land in the West on which African Americans could settle. Ware instead pointed Singleton to the British, who he claimed

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[66] "Letters from the People, to the Colored People of the United States," *Topeka Commonwealth*, July 31, 1879. Benjamin Pap Singleton Scrapbook, KSHS; *Danville Republican*, July 30, 1880; Benjamin Pap Singleton Scrapbook, 3, 10, 15, KSHS.
[67] *Topeka Commonwealth*, July 23 and August 2, 1881; Benjamin Pap Singleton Scrapbook, KSHS.
[68] This number is about three times as many Exodusters as actually emigrated.
[69] "A New Exodus. Moses of the Negroes to Lead them to a Promised Land," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, nd., Benjamin Pap Singleton Scrapbook, KSHS.

had a "prevailing earnestness and conviction of duty toward the African." Ware suggested that Singleton work with the British to set aside the island of Cyprus for African American emigration. Ware believed that if the "bone and sinew of the colored people," not their politicians, appealed for the land, the British would give it away. He argued that with a "congenial climate" and the protection of the British Government, the Exodusters could finally escape the discrimination of the South. Another promotion in the *St. Louis Republican* advertised the soil in Cyprus as fertile, and the current inhabitants as poor, but "not savages."[70]

Singleton agreed that Cyprus was the ideal location for a new emigration movement. In Cyprus, Singleton believed that former slaves could create their own government. Singleton argued that since neither the elite whites nor elite blacks in power would listen to the working class black laborer, it would be better to take an oath of allegiance to the British government. "The cruelty of the South," Singleton concluded, "has got the emigration ball rolling again, and we can no longer stand the treatment." It would be better to leave the United States than to ever cast another vote in the South, he argued. When Singleton left to investigate a Cyprus colony, he was a frail man of seventy-five, and only made it as far as St. Louis. With his funding depleted, Singleton nevertheless kept planning a black state.[71]

In 1885, Singleton created the United Transatlantic Society (UTS) to promote emigration to Africa. The UTS believed that it could "carry the seeds of liberty" and the "light of civilization" to Africa. The society identified the failure of Reconstruction as the root of their anguish. Since the declaration of their freedom by Lincoln, African Americans had no food or

[70] "A Response to Pap Singleton's Appeal," *Topeka Commonwealth*, October 12, 1883, Benjamin Pap Singleton Scrapbook, KSHS; "For the Republican," November 1883, Benjamin Pap Singleton Scrapbook, KSHS.
[71] "The Great Exoduster Arrives in the City—Off for Cyprus," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Benjamin Pap Singleton Scrapbook, KSHS; "To the Freed Slaves of the South," *Topeka Times*, September 20, 1883. Benjamin Pap Singleton Scrapbook, KSHS.

education, and instead faced "the scum" of foreign immigrants, who "emigrate to America and put their feet on our necks." The UTS had a considerable following for several years, holding regular meetings to promote immigration to Liberia.[72] Although the society never sent any African Americans to Africa, they continued to investigate the option of creating a separate black nation.

By the time Singleton died in 1900, he had experienced a great evolution in the rights of African Americans. Born a slave, he saw the promises of the Reconstruction amendments, and their ultimate failure to secure racial equality. Singleton and his many supporters represented a completely different turn in emigrant aid. Instead of aid provided by elites with the purpose of social control, Singleton harnessed the method to create grassroots, black-led emigration. While in the antebellum period, ideas of black colonization were often promoted by elitist white paternalists, who wanted to use the method for their own benefit, Singleton and the Exodusters harnessed the power of emigrant aid to free themselves from the South. What before the Civil War was largely theoretical, a colony of black people laboring in the West, in the post-war, became a reality.

The Exodus to Kansas furthermore demonstrates the adaptability of the method of emigrant aid. While the method was first harnessed by white evangelicals concerned about disunion and civilization in the West, after the Civil War, the black community gave the method a new importance. They attached their own evangelical significance to the move west, as they compared their travails to those of the ancient Israelites fleeing slavery in Egypt. They also used the method to enforce their own economic sanctions on the South, as the federal government simultaneously allowed white power structures to rise again in the region.

[72] "A Meeting of Colored People," Benjamin Pap Singleton Scrapbook, KSHS. Circular, United Transatlantic Society, 1886, Benjamin Pap Singleton Scrapbook, KSHS.

VII: Conclusion

The story of the emigration aid movement in the nineteenth century provides a new and more complex explanation of westward expansion. The persistent deployment of emigrant aid by northern cultural elites connects the West to the larger story of the nation. It provides an intellectual and cultural explanation for the importance of the West to the Civil War. It adds a new layer to reformer culture, as it ties the reform movement to the project of empire. The movement also demonstrates the primacy of cooperative movements in the West instead of individual migrations. Overall, the prevalence of emigrant aid companies makes westward expansion part of a national story, instead of a regional one.

The emigrant aid movement fundamentally revises that narrative of westward expansion in which hearty individuals tamed the wilderness. The actual story of the nineteenth-century American West is far more reflective of planning and cooperation than of unbridled individualism. Emigrants travelled west at the behest of cultural elites in the North, who subsidized their movement for their own political and religious purposes. Emigration aid companies sought to control settlers and create bastions of republicanism in the West. Northerners envisioned that these settlements would be extensions of their society and would reinforce their political goals, their efforts at moral reform, and civilize barbarous enemies, including southerners and indigenous people.

The story of emigrant aid upends simple narratives of empire. It demonstrates that westward expansion was not only a top-down movement of the state, in which imperialist federal authorities imposed their will upon the West or a bottom-up tale of individuals who wandered west with no support. The emigrant aid movement ties together the broad political concerns of government with the personal goals of settlers. It also adds a third layer of influence by northern

cultural elites, who saw the region as the solution to spiritual and political problems plaguing the nation.

The movement also adds a new layer to the story of reform culture, demonstrating that the northern evangelical movement of the Second Great Awakening that popularized anti-slavery, Sabbatarianism, and temperance was also invested in the project of empire. Evangelical reformers saw western colonization as a contest that they needed to win for the North, lest the vast landscape fall into the hands of the slave oligarchy or the Catholic Church. It could also serve to extend the power and influence of their benevolent empire, stretching it from coast to coast. Evangelicals envisioned their violent expansion into indigenous lands as an outpouring of Christian generosity in which they bestowed the providence of God onto uncivilized peoples. These attitudes did not die out after the end of westward expansion but continued in the American project to secure resources around the globe. The mission that started as an extension of the nation's domestic power in the nineteenth century became part of its foreign policy at the turn of the century. Imperialists who justified the United States' intervention in the Spanish-American War, Hawai'i, and the Philippines as benevolent were adding to the empire started by the previous generation's reformers. The idea that America was liberating barbaric peoples and Christianizing them had a strong precedent in the past. The benevolent American empire started domestically and relied on emigrant aid, as reformers funded expansion with subsidization. The emigration aid movement foreshadowed the rise of the international American empire of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Reformers coupled their sense of Christian righteousness and evangelization with their concern over imposing proper society on others. In the emigrant aid movement, this became evident as northern evangelicals interfered with other groups who used emigrant aid. Northern

reformers increasingly set up legal barriers against rival forms of emigrant aid, particularly after the Civil War. At the turn of the century, this movement by evangelicals to enforce racial and economic hierarchies was reflected in urban renewal projects and the settlement house movement to impose middle class standards among the poor. The middle-class project of reform, in which Protestants worked to evangelize and integrate immigrant communities, continued in the many projects of Progressives.[1] The emigrant aid movement tested the idea of imposing hierarchies through charity and evangelical religion.

The impact of reform culture on westward expansion also highlights the importance of the West to national concerns, including the Civil War. Although the West had few battles during the war and little strategic value in the conflict, the question of disunion in the West, both the national anxiety over it, and the North's effort to control the territory, prove the region's intellectual and cultural importance to the war. The national fear of disunion made the West a testing ground for which sectional interest would control it. The North's cultural project in the West did not begin in tandem with their efforts to reconstruct the South after the war. Reformers started the project of the "Reconstruction West" much earlier in the century with their efforts to bring the region under their cultural hegemony. The emigrant aid movement demonstrates that the North's project of cultural transfer started in the West and then reformers implemented similar ideas in the South, not the other way around. The West, therefore, was not ephemeral to

[1] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001); T. J. Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009); Michael E. McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Reformers also worked to Americanize Indian communities, notably in the Indian boarding school movement. See David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995); Margaret D. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).

the concerns of the Civil War, but in fact, loomed large in the minds of those who engaged in the conflict.[2]

The story of emigrant aid has further layers and applications outside of the reform movement. In the United States, emigrant aid had a federal application, as the government subsidized emigration for individuals, particularly after the Civil War. The project that had formerly been the sole project of cultural elites was subsumed by the government in incentives like the Homestead Act and in federal subsidies to railroad corporations, who also offered settlers incentives to move west. The applicability of the concept was important to other empires globally. The British Empire similarly used both private philanthropy and government programs to subsidize the settlement of remote areas of Canada. Captain Edward Pelham Brenton, with support of the British government, started the Children's Friend Society in 1830, which took poor children from the streets of Britain and sent them to labor in the colonies. This movement was taken up again in 1869 by Annie MacPherson under the name "Home Children." British philanthropist Mary S. Rye applied this concept to unmarried women in 1862 with the Female Middle Class Emigration Society, which exported women and children throughout the British dominions (especially Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) as domestic laborers.[3] The British Empire supported these schemes but also codified similar ones into law. For example, in 1868, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario passed The Free Grants and Homestead Act, by which they tried to entice settlers to rural Canada, mostly from among the British poor.[4] In an effort to

[2] For more on the Civil War West see Adam Arenson and Andrew R. Graybill, eds. *Civil War Wests: Testing the Limits of the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015); Gregory P. Downs and Kate Masur, eds. *The War the Civil War Made* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Megan Kate Nelson, *The Three-Cornered War: The Union, the Confederacy, and Native Peoples in the Fight for the West* (New York: Scribner, 2020).
[3] Marion Diamond, *Emigration and Empire: The Life of Maria S. Rye* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1999).
[4] Donna E. Williams, *Hardscrabble: The High Cost of Free Land* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2013)

control remote parts of their empires and entice the right types of society there, many imperialists turned to the method of emigrant aid.

Other uses of emigrant aid included its use to bring foreigners onto American soil. In the 1860s, the American Emigrant Company worked to entice diversified European labor to come to the United States. Supported by northern bankers and manufacturers, the company promised to provide agricultural labor to western states and supply railroad and mining companies with as many laborers as needed from Europe. The company aimed to import laborers for specific jobs and place them with employers upon their arrival in the United States.[5] The Irish Catholic Colonization Association, founded by Bishop John Ireland, brought Irish immigrants out of eastern cities into rural Catholic colonies in Minnesota in the 1870s, using emigrant aid to entice them out of crowded urban enclaves.[6] The Galveston Movement, operated between 1907 and 1914 by Jacob H. Schiff, worked to move Jewish immigrants from Russia into the West lest they congregate in eastern cities. These international applications of emigrant aid demonstrate the continued use of this method well into the twentieth century and its continued political applications.

Emigration aid companies helped build the West and the nation. They connected the vision of northern reformers, who imagined the West as a land of promise for Protestant civilization, with the settlers' desire to move up the socioeconomic ladder. In doing so, those companies also connected the West to the national concern for disunion. The method had a pervasive impact on how and where emigrants settled and whether they stayed. It also became an

[5] John Williams, *American Emigrant Company* (New York: The Office of the Iron Age, 1865); Merle Curti and Kendall Birr, "The Immigrant and the American Image in Europe, 1860-1914," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 37, no. 2 (1950): 203-30.
[6] Mary Evangela Henthorne, *The Irish Catholic Colonization Association of the United States: Its Origin and Development Under the Leadership of the Rt. Rev. John Lancaster Spalding, Bishop of Peoria, President of the Association, 1879-1892* (Champaign, Ill: Twin City Printing Company, 1932).

essential function of reform society and the story of expansion in the nineteenth century United States.

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