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The Purloined Letters: A Collection of Mail Robbery Reports from Ohio Papers, 1841–1850

Marc Cibella

In 1841, Edgar Allan Poe’s detective C. Auguste Dupin induces that the culprit in the double murder central to “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” was an orangutan wielding a barber’s razor. Then in 1842, Dupin surmises in “The Mystery of Marie Roget” that in order for the Parisian police to track down the killer of the titular victim, they must find the boat that dumped her body in the Seine. But it wasn’t until 1844 that Poe described the greatest mystery of Dupin’s investigative career.

Stolen mail.

Yes, in “The Purloined Letter,” Dupin goes from a murderous orangutan and a case inspired by a real-life slaying to trying to track down a single letter.

*Nineteenth-Century Ohio Literature* pairs forgotten readings with new essays that explain them. In this installment, Marc Cibella’s essay introduces and explains why nineteenth-century Americans got excited about newspaper reports of mail robbery. *Nineteenth-Century Ohio Literature* is edited by Jon Miller at The University of Akron. For more information, visit http://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/nineteenthcenturyohioliterature/
The story, set in Paris, ends rather benignly for a Poe tale: Dupin, the detective hero, produces the letter and collects his reward, giving him the opportunity to dazzle the audience with his reveal of how he snatched the letter back from the Minister D—, a man so nefarious that Poe doesn’t even give him a full name.

Had Poe wished to liven up “The Purloined Letter,” perhaps he would have let Dupin take a journey abroad to America and star in a mail caper with a little bit more excitement, greater danger, and higher stakes. As evidenced by the newspaper articles following this introduction, all of which were published in Ohio between 1841 and 1850, reports and comments on real-life mail robberies were often characterized by thrills and intrigue.

In 1838, mail was on the move across the United States. Stagecoach lines delivered mail to 12,553 post offices across twenty million miles annually, and Congress expanded and expedited mail delivery by declaring all rail lines to be routes for carrying mail (Fuller 40).

At this point, however, Congress’s declaration was merely a formality. With the Erie Canal connecting New York City to the West through Lake Erie, and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad’s establishment ten years prior, steamboats and railroads were already carrying mail 2,500,000 miles a year (Fuller 40).

Two improvements to the postal system sent the amount of letters being mailed skyrocketing. The Postal Act of 1845 lowered postal rates, making mailing a letter financially feasible for all American families, and the introduction of postage stamps in 1847 made the whole process simpler (Straight 56). These changes, along with fast methods of delivery, meant a substantial growth in the United States postal service.
But what were Americans sending in the mail? Letters, of course. After all, the nation was growing, expanding, and heading West. But what could Americans be sending in those letters to prompt the attention of thieves and scoundrels? An account from British traveler John M. Duncan explains: “Remittances from one part of the Union to another, even large sums, are generally made by transmitting banknotes in letters by the post office; scarcely a letter bag is made up for any of the larger cities, which does not contain in this way large sums of money” (John 54–55).

That’s right: Americans used cheap stamps and the train-and-steamboat-powered postal system to move mass amounts of money across the country.

A Philadelphia merchant in 1833 claimed that he sent three million dollars in banknotes, checks, and drafts between his home city, Cincinnati, and New Orleans. Postal journalist Pliny Miles estimated that around a hundred million dollars passed through the postal system in 1855, which was almost double the federal budget for that year. The practice of sending money through the mail had become common, as if there was no risk in it, reported Lexington, Kentucky postmaster Benjamin Ficklin (John 54–55).

However, the system was not perfect, as observed again by British traveler Duncan, who said: “Robbery of the mail is very frequent in the United States. The mail
is totally unprotected; there is no guard, and the driver carries no arms” (John 54–55). For a solid estimate on how much money was possibly lost through mail robbery during this time, look no further than postal journalist Pliny Miles. Of his own money he entrusted to the mail system, Miles estimated that one-third had miscarried. When looking at the country as a whole, he speculated that no more than one percent had miscarried; however, that one percent equaled somewhere between five hundred thousand and one million dollars, no small sum of money in 1855 or today (John 55).

With so much money traveling unprotected across the country, it’s easy to see why the robbers featured in these Ohio newspaper articles endeavored on such high-stakes heists, robbing stagecoaches, steamboats, and trains, making off with mailbags chock full of letters potentially containing money from all over the country. However, it’s important to keep in mind that these articles come from a time when newspapers sought not only to inform, but also to push biased goals.

Unbiased journalism in the United States didn’t develop overnight. The first American newspaper, Publick Occurrences, surfaced in Boston in 1690, while the first push for ethical standards in journalism wouldn’t arrive until 1880, as the nineteenth century started to wind down (Vaughn 155).

During this time period, each paper had its own goals, and most stories were opinionated or biased (Vaughn 156). In partisan papers, these biases stemmed from whatever political party backed the newspaper. An example of this can be found in the Democratic Standard article “The Uniontown Mail Robbers” featured below. In the piece, the writer takes a swipe at a rival news-
paper for being against Democrats: “The persons, (or gentlemen as our neighbor of the Chronicle would say, provided they had murdered a democrat).” The same article also features a rambling last paragraph where the writer advocates for jail time for the mail thieves.

Many more partisan papers were started in the 1830s in the form of penny presses. These papers were cheaper, making them available to a wider audience, and printed sensational stories that were more in line with entertainment than informative articles (Vaughn 156). “The Great Mail Robbery” from The Portage Sentinel, included below, may fall in this category; although small, it spends a few lines theorizing how the robbers were able to make off with a box full of mail on a steamboat: “More than likely, the villain approached the mail boat in a skiff, shipping their booty, and took down the Ohio and buried it in some lone spot” (The Portage Sentinel 2).

Another article, entitled “Southern Mail” by The Portsmouth Inquirer, is easily the most sensationalized of the bunch. A much longer piece than the others, the writer spends an entire paragraph setting up the environment of the robbery and how it may have contributed to the crime: “The moon was shining, yet the sky was darkened by clouds of dust, created by the high wind that prevailed, and this may have blinded the eyes of the foremost passenger car, so as to have prevented him from seeing what was going on at the hind part of the mail car directly ahead of him” (The Portsmouth Inquirer 2). Articles such as this, where the information is presented more as a story than as a typical news story, are most likely why early journalism was referred to as “the poor white’ brother of literature” by George

These pieces are rooted in historical fact, yet represent a time in American journalism when objectivity was fluid and in flux. They lend themselves to fascinating observation in two different lights: historical accounts of mail robberies in the mid-nineteenth century and intent in journalism during the time period. The articles appear below in chronological order, from 1841 to 1850, in their original forms with no corrections.

The Democratic Standard (*January 26, 1841*)

Published in *The Democratic Standard* out of Georgetown, Ohio, “Great Mail Robbery” recounts a mail robbery in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, and how an agent of the Post Office Department uncovered the scheme and recovered the mail. It includes a brief send up to Dr. Kennedy, the agent who foiled the plot, as well as a letter from a member from the House of Representatives, where the information originated.

**GREAT MAIL ROBBERY.**

The numerous mails missing between this and New York, turn out to have been stolen at Uniontown, Pennsylvania, and the robbers detected. Several were concerned in the robbery, headed by a Dr. Bradee, of Uniontown. A stage driver concerned in the robbery, by the name of Corman, has turned States’ evidence, Bradee and Purnell, his clerk, and Strayer have been
taken, and the stage driver is in custody. A letter states that Dr. Bradee’s house has for years been the head quarters for a host of Blacklegs and Counterfeiters.

Dr. Kennedy, the Agent of the Post Office Department, deserves great credit for his vigilance and untiring zeal in ferriting out the robbers of the United States Mail. He is hard to escape. His retirement would be a serious loss to the public service. A large amount of money has been recovered. The mail-bags were found in Dr. Bradee’s privy.

The following extract of a letter was handed us by a membre of the House of Representatives:

Hillsborough, Washington Co.,
January 8, 1841.

“Dear Sir! Yesterday a mail stage driver was arrested in Washington, on suspicion of being concerned in certain robberies which have recently been committed on our road. Simultaneously with the arrest at Washington, a Dr. Bradee of Uniontown, Fayette county, his clerk and another individual, were arrested. The driver at Washington has turned State’s evidence. I had proceeded thus far when I received the news that a stage agent has just arrived from Uniontown. I dropped my pen and away to get the facts, and obtained what follows. In the search which was had today, in the vault of Dr. Bradee’s privy were found five mail bags, the remains of broken fragments of two trunks, with some other matter. Money to the amount of thirty thousand dollars, in the shape of Treasury Drafts, Bank bills, &c., were found in his hay mow, tied in a silk handkerchief. The above is the statement of the agent, who assisted in the arrest, search, &c.”
The Democratic Standard (January 26, 1841)

A follow-up to the “Great Mail Robbery” article published in the same issue, this article offers a biased look at the mail robbery at Uniontown. The writer alleges that the men who stole the mail were active Whig party members and advocates for them to be imprisoned in the penitentiary. It also takes a political swipe at a neighboring newspaper, referred to as “the Chronicle.”

THE UNIONTOWN MAIL ROBBERS.

The hard cider Tippecanoe head quarters are breaking up in all directions. Robberies, arson and murders are as common since the coon skin camps are broken, as hard cider kegs were before the election:

The persons, (or gentlemen as our neighbor of the Chronicle would say, provided they had murdered a democrat.) who robbed the Mail near Uniontown, Pa., were active in the whig ranks, during the last election; the Washington Examiner says: “For the benefit of all honest feds, we will mention that whole gang are thorough going Harrison men. And during the last canvas shouted lustily for “Tippecanoe and Tyler too,” and complained most piteously at the dishonesty, aye, downright rascalility of Van Buren and his office holders.”

Those wicked priests that headed these hard cider debauches, can never atone for the disgrace they have brought upon their calling, for justly answer for the crimes they have encouraged, and the reproach they have brought upon the name of religion. A temperance man with a keg of hard cider on his back, hurraing for
old Tip, was a beautiful sight, and the debased mortals who by such examples, became bold in inquiry, must now atone for their crimes in the walls of a Penitentiary.

The Portage Sentinel (June 17, 1846)

Not to be confused with the previous article of the same name published by The Democratic Standard in 1841, a story of stolen mail in Cincinnati, mail that was on route to Louisville, Kentucky, was covered by The Portage Sentinel, out of Ravenna, Ohio. The writer spends some time contemplating how the thieves managed to steal the mail from the deck of the boat and speculates as to where they may have hidden it.

THE GREAT MAIL ROBBERY.

U. S. Mail Stolen.—The Cincinnati Commercial of Saturday, 6th inst., contains the following: “The great Southern letter mail bag was stolen from the box on the mail boat at our landing, after two o’clock yesterday morning. Up to the time of writing, no trace of it has been found! The mail bags between this city and Louisville, are carried in a large box, which is made fast to the deck of the boat, and kept locked. The lock was opened—the bag taken out and carried away between 2 o’clock and 4—the boat having come in at the former time, and people were stirring at, and after the latter hour. This is doubtless a heavy robbery, as the bag contained all the great Southern mail—the letters alone being a load for two men! How many thousands of dollars are lost, no one can tell at present; every exertion is
being made to trace the robbers. More than likely, the villains approached the mail boat in a skiff, shipping their booty, and took down the Ohio and buried it in some lone spot. Strenuous exertions should be made in that quarter, as well as in others, to ferret out the bold perpetrators.”

The Portsmouth Inquirer (October 21, 1850)

Out of the four articles in this collection, “Southern Mail,” published by The Portsmouth Inquirer of Portsmouth, Ohio in 1850, is the longest. The piece covers a Philadelphia mail robbery in detail, including the destinations of the mail bags, the order of the train cars, the conditions the night of the robbery, and more.

SOUTHERN MAIL.

THE GREAT MAIL ROBBERY.—The Philadelphia papers of to-day bring us the particulars of the great robbery of the mails at Philadelphia. From these it appears, that about past 10 o’clock, as the Baltimore train was on its way from the depot, corner of Eleventh and Market streets, to Gray’s Ferry, the mail car was entered and robbed of three pouches, containing valuable southern and western matter. The bags were from the New York Post Office, and were destined, one to Richmond, Va., another to Raleigh, N.C., and the third to Wheeling, Va.

The mail car was coupled to the express car, which was ahead, and the two were drawn by one team. These were followed by teams with the passenger and baggage cars. To show the boldness of the robbery, at the
time it must have taken place, the foremost passenger car was scarcely more than one hundred and fifty feet in the rear of the mail car.

The moon was shining, yet the sky was darkened by clouds of dust, created by the high wind that prevailed, and this may have blinded the eyes of the foremost passenger car, so as to have prevented him from seeing what was going on at the hind part of the mail car directly ahead of him.

At Gray’s Ferry, the driver of the mail car discovered that the back door was open, and the brakeman of the train entered the car with a light to see whether any one was in there. Discovering nothing to excite his suspicion, he came out under the impression that all was right, and the door was locked. It seems that these two persons then had not suspected anything wrong, they doubtless attributing the circumstance of the door being open to accident or forgetfulness.

The robbery is believed to have been committed at or near the curve, corner of Broad and Prime streets, in the District of Moyamensing. It is supposed that the mail car was entered from behind, by the door, with a false key.

The first information of the robbery was received about breakfast time yesterday morning, by Robert Huddell, Agent of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad Company. A person came to his house, and informed him that the stolen pouches, rifled of their contents, had been accidentally found, at an early hour in the morning, in the bushes of Remenier’s farm, about a square west of Broad street, and two squares south of Prime street.

The great Southern mail is now put in canvass bags, which are sealed and put into leather pouches, which
are locked. The robbers cut the pouches, drew out the bags, and opened these by cutting the strings that tied them. The contents of the bags were then emptied out, and the letters, packages, &c., broken open.

All the money in the letters was taken, but promissory notes, checks payable to order, sight drafts, &c., were thrown away. There were strewn over the ground about two bushels and a half of letters, &c. The letters numbering about one thousand, were gathered up, and Mr. White, Post Master of this city, yesterday, had them, with the checks, drafts, &c., returned to the Post Office at New York, where they are by this time, and where they can be examined by the Post Master of that city, at his leisure, so as to ascertain the names of the losers, and the amount of the loss.

No idea could be formed by the Post Master of Philadelphia of the extent of the loss. The supposition is that the most valuable matter was in the Richmond pouch. Mr. White examined one letter (from Carpenter & Vermilea, of this city, to J. W. Mowry, of Richmond,) that had contained $750. An empty box, which had been filled with jewelry, was picked from among the scattered letters; there was nothing to indicate how much was in it, or to whom it belonged.

The train was delayed at Gray’s Ferry from 11 o’clock on Saturday night until 3 o’clock Sunday morning in consequence of the burning of a small trussel bridge over a gulley, crossing the road, about three miles below that place. This may have had something to do with the plan of the robbery; but the officers of the road think that the bridge was set fire by the sparks from the locomotive of the train that came up about half-past seven o’clock in the evening.
Mr. Anderson was the mail agent on the train, when the robbery occurred. No information in relation to the robbery had been received from south up to a late hour last evening. It is most probable that the agent, conductors, and other officers and employees on the train, had no intimation of the robbery until they got to Baltimore, and perhaps not then. Mr. White, Postmaster, promptly communicated with the Postmaster General at Washington, for instructions.

The mail bags stolen had arrived by the mail pilot line, and were put into the mail car, which came down for them on the city railway, at the Post Office. They were thrown through the side door into the middle of the car. The robbers must have known their exact position in the car. They had to walk over a number of other bags in order to reach therein. The bags contained the richest treasure of the whole mail, and of this the robbers must have been aware.

Works Cited


“When one shingle sends up smoke”:
*The Summit Beacon* Advises Akron About the Epidemic Cholera, 1849

*Elizabeth Hall*

Asiatic cholera was a deadly pandemic phenomenon. Howard Markel’s account of the early cholera outbreaks in the nineteenth century stresses the deep anxiety that the disease inspired: “No disease, with the possible exception of yellow fever, aroused more fear in nineteenth-century America than cholera.… Before the development of intravenous fluids in the twentieth century, cholera victims could dehydrate and die within a matter of hours after an attack.” Markel reveals a crucial factor that contributed to the 1849 strain of Asiatic cholera, which claimed the lives of thousands of Americans: “the Atlantic Ocean ceased to play its traditional role of buffer to the spread of epidemic diseases, as steamships transported growing numbers of emigrants from impoverished and unhealthful regions

*Nineteenth-Century Ohio Literature* pairs forgotten readings with new essays that explain them. In this installment, we have an essay by Elizabeth Hall introducing a collection of newspaper articles on the 1849 cholera epidemic in Ohio. *Nineteenth-Century Ohio Literature* is edited by Jon Miller at The University of Akron. For more information, visit ideaexchange.uakron.edu/nineteenthcenturyohioliterature.
of the world to the United States.” The want of public health and sewage systems in various cities and towns throughout America became more apparent, especially with the humid weather in the summer of 1849.

Several cities in Ohio, including Cincinnati and Sandusky, were adversely affected by this disease. Ron Davidson describes Sandusky’s 1849 outbreak as the “most devastating” of the many that broke out in Ohio cities. This outbreak was also distinguished by the great number of residents who fled the city. Davidson estimates that “nearly two-thirds (or more) of the population left Sandusky.”

While the Sandusky Board of Health authorized strict ordinances to contain the cholera outbreaks of the 1830s, the 1849 pandemic was far more severe. Surviving newspaper records indicate that travelers from Cincinnati, who came to Sandusky via the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad, may have skirted these ordinances.

Once the epidemic had spread beyond municipal control, coffins for victims were often “nailed hastily together” with “rough unfinished boards” (Rosenberg 116). Hundreds of others were buried in a long, trench-style grave on Harrison Street (“Cholera Cemetery”; Davidson “Cholera in Sandusky”). The cemetery was restored in 1924 after being neglected for several decades (Davidson “Cholera in Sandusky”).

Newspaper coverage of the cholera at midcentury typically focused on isolated, local cases. The bone-chilling account written by George Lippard about Poe’s final visit to Philadelphia is one such example. Supposedly, Poe was ill, destitute, and lost: “[H]e went from door to door, but everybody was out of town. It was a wretched day; cholera bulletins upon every news-
paper door, and a hot sun pouring down over half deserted streets.” “If you fail me,” Poe wrote to Lippard, “I can do nothing but die” (Eaves). Poe’s solemn plea for assistance in escaping Philadelphia is but one anecdote of the widespread suffering endured by Americans during the 1849 cholera outbreak.

False reports minimizing the danger of the cholera were also published with the intention of increasing tourism and maintaining local economies (Galishoff). Historical equivalents of press releases from state health boards were also published in local papers. Walter J. Daly notes that even “divine punishment” was cited as a cause, both by the public and by physicians. In addition, “the intemperate, the wicked (particularly in 1832), and the impoverished (especially Irish immigrants in 1849)” were most often targets of scathing letters to newspaper editors (Daly). Such stories, however, did not often attend to the scale of the epidemic.

As newspapers increased the number and variety of comments published on the cholera, so did local medical communities. Many American physicians continued to bleed patients and prescribe drugs such as calomel in combination with household spices (Rosenberg 152). Furthermore, when traditional prescriptions failed to produce results, doctors “seized upon the novel, upon anything which promised a cure” (152).
Akron’s canal system and proximity to Lake Erie powered the numerous farming, textile, coal, and engineering communities there (Miller 5–6). Although the town’s population was in the low thousands, *The Summit Beacon* published scholarship on the cholera that had already been reviewed and published in international medical and scientific communities. These kinds of news reports included pragmatic measures for people living in urban areas, which is where the disease was most prevalent. In more populated areas, sewage could pollute the drinking water as heavy rains, for example, flooded cesspools and streets and drained into open wells. The public was often quick to blame cholera epidemics on people who came from other places, but the epidemics were only made possible by grossly inadequate infrastructure.

As naturalists and sanitarians could more accurately describe the various causes, symptoms, and holistic treatments for the cholera on a global scale, city infrastructure changes and improvements in public health were also more widely reported. Based on emerging medical research in London, John Griscom’s *The Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population of New York* (1849) advocated for housing reform to provide citizens with living quarters that were properly aerated, in addition to removing the filth and squalor rampant in dwellings throughout the city (1–25).

Daniel Drake, a naturalist from Cincinnati, consulted with numerous patients and doctors throughout Ohio (Shapiro). His claim that illness was never an isolated incident in an individual’s life appears to pre-date the establishment of holistic medical practices (Acad-
emy of Integrative Health and Medicine). Much like Griscom, Drake considered “the character and extent of municipal responsibility for public health, especially in response to the cholera epidemic” (Shapiro).

The letters that Drake wrote to readers of the *Cincinnati Daily Gazette* do make liberal use of harrowing local tales. However, Drake also cites current medical information, including suggestions from William Alcott’s *The Library of Health and Teacher on the Human Constitution* and Sarah Hale’s *The Good Housekeeper*. It is no surprise, then, that John Teesdale printed these letters from Drake along with reports of emerging cholera research discovered and endorsed globally.

**Note on the Texts**

To faithfully and carefully preserve these texts in this edition, the original articles were first transcribed as they appeared in print. Later, the texts were then edited for clarity and consistency to make the texts more accessible for modern readers. Finally, a few notes on specific terminology were added to adapt the text for modern readers.

The collection of three articles authored by Daniel Drake entitled “Epidemic Cholera” that appear in this edition come from the series as it was printed in *The Summit Beacon*’s May 23, 1849, volume. This collections has been copied and compiled from three separate issues of *The Cincinnati Daily Gazette* published on May 10–12, 1849. The version of the articles that appear in this edition have been edited for clarity in punctuation, especially in the use of em dashes be-
tween phrases in a series, as well as for consistency in formatting, such as the use of italics for emphasis. With respect to the article from May 11, the text has been edited, in one instance, for clarity in phrasing. Furthermore, these texts have been emended to account for a recurring foul case error where the “f” was replaced with the “t” in words such as “if.”

The article “Sanitary Regulations for Cholera” that appears in this edition comes from the May 16, 1849, volume of The Summit Beacon. The article printed in The Summit Beacon is an exact copy taken from The Louisville Courier with some differences in the formatting of the quotation from the editor of the London Lancet; the article in the Courier is a compilation of quotes extracted from The Louisville Journal of Medicine and Surgery regarding sanitary measures to prevent the spread of the cholera epidemic. The version of the article that appears in this edition has been edited for consistency in the formatting of publication titles, spacing between punctuation marks, and use of quotation marks between paragraphs; furthermore, this version has been emended to account for a single foul case error that appears in the word “minute” of the original text.

Drake’s letter titled “Epidemic Cholera—Traveling” that appears in this edition comes from the July 11, 1849, volume of The Summit Beacon. The article, as it is printed in The Summit Beacon, was directly copied from the Cincinnati Commercial. The date at the bottom of Drake’s letter indicates that it was published on or after June 12, 1849. This text has only been edited for consistency and clarity in punctuation.
To the people of Cincinnati: The publication of the Board of Health, and the weekly report of the Trustees of the Hospital, in yesterday’s Daily Gazette, having shown that the Cholera has at length begun to prevail among us as an epidemic, I propose to say a few words on certain points in which all have a deep interest.

In the first place, then, let no one leave the city because the epidemic has come.—In whatever unknown manner that disorder travels from country to country, it is not, like smallpox, a catching disease; if it were, going out of the city would be a preservative. As in 1832, the cases which have now occurred, were in various retired parts of the city, and largely among women and children, who had been in no degree exposed to boats, railroad stations, or hotels, where they could have caught any disease. In fact, the cause has spread through the city, and already been received into the bodies of its inhabitants—old and young—rich and poor, and they who escape to the country and are likely—more likely—to be ill, than if they remained at home. The true and safest course is for families and friends to draw closer than common, and watch over and assist each other.

In the second place, it ought to be known, that Epidemic Cholera has no preliminary symptoms. When the sentinel on the walls of a fortified city fires his gun, it is a premonition that an enemy is at hand—when there is a circle around the moon, it is a premonitory sign of a storm; but Cholera attacks without any premonition.
We are accustomed to apply the word Cholera to a summer disease of our own climate, which generally begins with vomiting, or that symptom and diarrhea combined; and have, therefore, fallen into the fatal error of regarding the first stage of Epidemic Cholera, as a fore-runner of the disease. Every man, woman, and child, ought to know that, from the moment when the diarrhea sets in, the Cholera is as positively present as when it has advanced to vomiting, or coldness and collapse. When one shingle sends up smoke, the roof is as positively on fire as when the flames light up the city. The man who should stand still when he saw the smoke, saying it was only a premonitory sign that his house might be on fire after a while, would be regarded as insane; yet his absurdity would be no greater than that of the individual who does not regard himself as laboring under the Cholera from the moment the diarrhea begins.

In the third place, it may be declared as a fact, that the disease may generally be stopped, if met in the early stage; at all events, if it cannot then be put an end to, it cannot afterwards. It will run its course, and the patient may or may not recover, according to his constitution. But let no one believe that this first, mild stage can be successfully treated if the patient continues on his feet. His life depends on his lying by—no medicines can succeed it he should not. They may check it for the moment, and delude him into a fatal security, but can go no farther.

In the fourth place, all persons who have worn flannel during the winter should keep it on until the epidemic has passed away. They may put on cooler clothing, but should not throw off what they have worn next to the surface of the body.
Tomorrow, these practical remarks will be extended. Meanwhile, I may say, that they most certainly express the experience and settled opinions of the medical professionals, both in Europe and this country.

DANIEL DRAKE, M. D.
Cincinnati, May 10, 1849.

From the Cincinnati Gazette

EPIDEMIC CHOLERA

To the people of Cincinnati:

I briefly pointed out yesterday, in the public prints, that no one should leave the city for the purposes of escaping the Cholera, that it is not a disease which has premonitory symptoms, but that it is present from the beginning of the diarrhea, which is its first stage; that early treatment and rest are indispensable to its cure; and that warm clothing should not be laid aside till the epidemic shall have passed away.

The last opinion relates to the prevention of the disease, and that point I propose now to say a few words.

Strictly speaking, there is no preventive of the Cholera; but all constitutions are not liable to it, any more than all are liable to ague and fever, influenza, or any other form of disease. But although we know of nothing that will prevent the disease, we know of many things which can and do bring it on after the poison has been taken into the system. These are exciting causes and ought to be carefully avoided. The disease will, however, assail some constitutions, notwithstanding all exciting causes may be avoided.
Of the exciting causes, one has just been mentioned—the premature laying aside of flannel clothing. In addition to this (and belonging to the head) getting wet in a shower, remaining long in damp places, sitting in a strong current of air at night, and sleeping with but little bed covering, should be carefully avoided. Every sitting and lodging room ought to have a fire in it for a part of every day, especially for a few hours before occupying it. Thus, the shop, office, family sitting room, church, and schoolhouse should have fires kindled in them early in the morning, and kept up for two or three hours; but this is still more necessary in lodging rooms, which should be warmed and dried by brisk fires, kindled in the early part of the evening, and allowed to burn down before bedtime.

A second class of exciting causes is connected with diet. Loading the stomach with any kind of food, especially at night, may bring on the disease; and omitting to eat at the usual time might do the same thing.—Much reduction in the quantity of food (the individual still being in health,) is not proper. In fact, a *nourishing diet* is best; but it should be plain and digestible. Meat or boiled eggs should be eaten every day.—Boiled ham, corned beef, corned mutton, well seasoned beef-steak, and poultry, are the best. On the whole, salted meats are more proper than fresh; and all should be well seasoned. Veal, fresh pork, and fresh fish should be avoided. Of salt fish, mackerel and salmon are too hard; but codfish with potatoes is proper. Old cheese is safe; and macaroni prepared with cheese may be eaten. Hot bread⁠—should be avoid-

1. According to Sarah Hale’s *The Good Housekeeper*, “hot bread,” or unleavened bread, is the most frequent cause of dyspepsia and is more difficult to digest, which Keith Stavely and Kathleen Fitzgerald also note in *America’s Founding Food* (Hale 119; Stavely & Fitzgerald 239).
ed—stale bread, or crackers only, should be used.—Of culinary vegetables, mealy potatoes, well boiled hominy and rice, are not only the best, but all others had better be omitted. Pies, tarts, and all kinds of pastry are improper, except, perhaps, well baked and highly spiced ginger-bread.

Of drinks, sweet milk, tea, coffee, and chocolate may be taken as usual. Those who drink malt liquors at their meals should limit themselves to freshly brewed strong beer, well hopped. As to brandy and whisky, they cannot prevent Cholera. They who are in the habit of using either should not lay it aside; but they should avoid all excess. They who have not such a habit should by no means begin now. The use of brandy in the treatment of disease must not be confounded with its use as a preventative. The irritation of the stomach and bowels produced by the first impress of alcoholic drinks may even contribute to bring on the disease, and sour wines are still likely to have effect.

DAN. DRAKE, M.D.
Cincinnati, May 11, 1849.

From the *Daily Cincinnati Gazette*

**EPIDEMIC CHOLERA.**

*To the People of Cincinnati:* When the Cholera prevailed here in 1832, some persons who most carefully refrained from everything that was said to be an exciting cause fell victim to it; and thus, many were led to

However, a review of N.A. Michael Eskin’s *Biochemistry of Foods* does not reveal any particular element of bread leavening that would exacerbate digestion.
suppose that it was a matter of indifference whether they observed any rules or not. But this was a very bad conclusion. Such cases can be explained away.

First. When any disease is Epidemic, there are individuals whose constitutions so pre-dispose them to it, that they will be attacked, and, perhaps, destroyed, let them live as they may.

Second. One reason, with many persons, why the warning against exciting causes was so rigidly observed at that time, was their terror of the disease. Now, that terror was, and ever will be, one of the greatest of all the exciting causes; and hence, while the subjects of it were, as they supposed, scrupulously avoiding the whole, they were unconsciously cherishing one of the most mischievous. This terror sometimes made the disorder seem to be catching. Thus, at the period when the particular remote cause was every where present, and acting on the systems of the people, but not with sufficient force to produce the disease, a traveller would be taken down with it among strangers, and, the next day, or even in a few hours, some one who had been near him would be seized with the complaint, having, as was supposed, caught it, when in fact, it had been excited by fear in those who were already pre-disposed to it.

Through the whole of that epidemic this emotion of fear was very strong and widely spread, for the disease was new, and was regarded as a dreadful pestilence. I have no doubt that this emotion greatly increased the mortality. The present epidemic has inspired much less terror, both in Europe and the United States, and has been much less fatal. I cannot doubt that its diminished prevalence and mortality should be ascribed, in part, at least, to an abatement in the dread which the epidem-
ic then spread throughout all the countries west of India. The danger now is, that this abatement may render many persons indifferent to what they ought to do; for, in the matter of preserving health, by regulating and governing their appetites, or suspending their business, the majority of persons do nothing till they are frightened. If they are not alarmed, they do what will bring on the disease; if they are so alarmed as to act prudently and wisely, their terror then is apt to excite it. To act discreetly, without being scared into it, is the true wisdom.

There are causes which predispose to the disease, as well as causes which excite it.—I will mention one—an in·firm or disordered state of the bowels. Every person who labors under chronic diarrhea should consider himself more likely to be attacked than if such were not his condition. Hence it is, that a large proportion of those who served long in Mexico,2 especially on the southern line, where the heat was great, will be liable to the disease, and should not only, more carefully than others, avoid all exciting causes, but should report to medical aid at an earlier hour of the attack, for their danger is greater.

DAN DRAKE, M.D.
Cincinnati, May 12, 1849.

SANITARY REGULATIONS FOR CHOLERA

The Louisville Courier copies the following sanitary regulations from the forthcoming number of the Louis-

2. Drake is likely referring to people who fought in the Mexican-American War from 1846 to 1847 (Yaudes).
ville Journal of Medicine and Surgery. Common sense, experience and observation have abundantly testified to the value of these regulations.

The editor of the London *Lancet* says:

“These simple measures are worth all the nostrums or specifics which have ever been vaunted for the cure of Asiatic Cholera.”

The quotations we make are exactly conformable to the laws of malaria, and show a more triumphant proof of the accuracy of the doctrine of the malarious origin of Cholera. Here are the sanitary regulations of London, based upon one of the most minute investigations that ever was made into the circumstances attendant on an epidemic disease:

“Let every impurity, animal or vegetable, be quickly removed to a distance from the habitations, such as slaughter houses, pig sties, and all other domestic nuisances.”

We do not believe that animal putrefactions are ever connected with epidemic diseases, but there can be no objection in their removal from habitations.

“Let all uncovered drains be carefully and frequently cleaned.

“Let the grounds in and around the habitations be drained, so as effectually to carry off moisture of every kind.

“Let all partitions be removed from within and without habitations which unnecessarily impede ventilation.

“Let every room be thrown open for the admission of fresh air; and this should be done about noon, when the atmosphere is most likely to be dry.

“Let dry scrubbing be used in domestic cleaning, in place of water cleaning.

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3. *The Lancet* is one of the most prestigious British medical journals and is still in publication today.
“Let excessive fatigue and exposure to damp and cold, especially during the night, be avoided.

“Let the use of cold drinks and cold liquors, especially under fatigue, be avoided; or when the body is heated.

“Let a poor diet, and the use of impure water in cooking or for drink, be avoided.

“Let a flannel or wool belt be worn around the belly.

“N.B. 4 This has been found serviceable in checking the tendency to bowel complaint, so common during the prevalence of cholera. The disease has, in this country, has been found to commence with a looseness in the bowels, and in this stage is very tractable; it should, however, be noticed that the looseness is frequently attended by no pain or uneasiness; and fatal delay has often occurred from the notion that cholera must be attended with cramps. In the early stages here referred to, there is often no griping or cramp, and it is at this period that the disease can be most easily arrested.

“Let personal cleanliness be carefully observed.

“Let every cause tending to depress the moral and physical energies be carefully avoided; let exposure to extremes of heat and cold be avoided.

“Let crowding of persons within houses and apartments be avoided.

“Let sleeping in low or damp rooms be avoided.

“Let fires be kept up during the night in sleeping or adjoining apartments, the night being the period of most danger from attack.

“Let all bedding and clothing be daily exposed during winter and spring to the fire, and in summer to the heat of the sun.”

4. Nota bene; this is a Latin term that translates to “take note” or “please note” in present-day English.
From the *Cincinnati Commercial*

**EPIDEMIC CHOLERA—TRAVELING**

To the people of Cincinnati:

In a short paper, two or three weeks since, I gave a professional opinion against leaving the city to avoid the cholera. Every day’s observation has convinced me of the correctness of the advice, and at the same time shown, that the tendency to fly is strong, and that the danger of being taken down with the disease does not deter those who had planned excursions of business or pleasure, from carrying them out. It may be well then to explain how and why it is that those who travel at this time, are in more danger from the epidemic, than if they remained at home.

They cannot regulate their diet; and as travelling generally increases the appetite, they are in danger of occasionally eating too much, as well as of things improper to be eaten when their systems are imbued with cholera poison.

They are liable to lose sleep, and few things would be more likely to invite an attack than the weariness produced by this cause.

Traveling is apt to occasional constipation of the bowels. It is a fatal error, that such a habit is a preservation against that disease. It is only better that the opposite condition. Safety lies in a perfect regularity as much as possible without the aid of medicine.

But there is another source of danger in traveling, greater than all these taken together. It is the motion of the vehicle; be it steamboat, single coach, or railroad car; but especially the two former. The rocking and swinging of a stage coach or a boat, tends to disturb the stom-
Many persons cannot ride in the former without being made sick. Those who voyage upon the lakes are very generally made sick. On the Ohio and Mississippi rivers the motion produces less effect, but it is far from being harmless. It renders the stomach irritable, if it had been previously acted upon by the remote cause of cholera and thus tends to bring on an attack, which might not have occurred at all if the person had remained home in his ordinary business. It also brings on earlier and more fatal vomiting, than would otherwise take place. The mortality on board our steamboats has been frightful.—

Many of them have, in a few days, lost a tenth part of all who were on board. This has been ascribed to want of timely attention. That want would explain the great mortality in proportion to the number of sick; but as the disease is not contagious, it does not count for the great number of cases. One of the Pittsburgh packets, which left here three or four days ago, lost seven of her passengers or crew before she reached that place. I know not the number of persons on board, but supposing it to be 176, the loss would be 4 out of 100. The difference needs no comment. One of the victims of the voyage just mentioned was a young lady from the East, the daughter of a deceased naval officer of high rank whose family, in a state of alarm, had written to her to return. Her friends here urged her to remain—a physician warned her against steamboat traveling—but she persevered: She left here in perfect health and a telegraphic communication from Wheeling, last evening, announced that she was brought into that city a corpse, from cholera. Had she remained here she would have been less

5. Here, “packet” is short for “packet-boat,” which was a small ship originally meant to carry parcels of mail (“packet-boat, n.”).
likely to be attacked, and had the disease seized her, it
might by that timely aid which cannot be had on steam-
boats, have been arrested, and her life preserved.

Those who desire to take country exercise, should
make excursions and return the same day or next. A trip
to and from Fort Ancient, Xenia, the Yellow Springs, or
Springfield, may be made in one day, and refreshing exer-
cise be had without getting far from home—safe home.
While the pestilence prevails, every man’s house, wheth-
er it be a cabin or a mansion, should be regarded as his
citadel—there he can best contend with the destroyer.

DAN DRAKE M.D.
Cincinnati, June 12, 1849

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Kayla Hardy-Butler

Introduction

Frederick Douglass’ Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave was originally published in 1845 as a testament to his time in captivity and the eventual struggle to attain liberty within a country that resisted the surrendering of such autonomy. It is the first in a string of autobiographies, followed by My Nineteenth-Century Ohio Literature pairs forgotten readings with new essays that explain them. In this installment, Kayla Hardy-Butler presents a famous letter by Frederick Douglass, as it was published in Ohio, with the letter that prompted it. This edition also includes a summary of Maryland slave statutes from the time to better explain the day-to-day experience of slavery debated in this correspondence. Nineteenth-Century Ohio Literature is edited by Jon Miller at The University of Akron. For more information, visit ideaexchange.uakron.edu/nineteenthcenturyohioliterature.
Bondage and My Freedom (1855) and The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass (1881). The later accounts expand to encompass Douglass’ steadily changing public persona as an escaped slave to abolitionist and celebrated orator. His autobiographical writings circulated in a prevalent canon of slavery accounts—and fictitious tales—that includes Harriet Jacobs’s Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (1861) and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin (1852). These writings, however, function as much more than as a retelling of bondage; upon closer reading, they also function as historical documents concerned with the sensitive political nature of liberty.

The Encyclopedia of African American History: 1619–1895 notes that slave statutes were enforced to restrict a variety of rights of African Americans: “Laws passed between 1800 and 1860 restricted African American access to the courts, took away their vote, punished vagrancy with forced labor, barred them from occupations coveted by whites, and restricted their travel” (Finkelman). Passed by U.S congress in 1793, the Fugitive Slave Act stipulated that slave owners and those that they employed could return by force or arrest runaway slaves form any territory or state if sufficient proof was provided to governing magistrates that the arrested blacks in question were in fact, fugitive slaves. It should also be noted that anyone who aided or hindered the arrest of a fugitive slave—usually by providing asylum or haven—were also liable for arrest. In his antebellum summary of slave statutes, The American Slave Code In Theory And Practice: Its Distinctive Features Shown By Its Statues, Judicial Decisions, And Illustrative Facts, William Goodell paraphrases one Maryland statute that permits
law enforcement to designate any person a fugitive, if he or she is found to be traveling suspiciously, either by fault of lacking proper documentation, or by appearance alone: “any person or persons whatsoever, ‘traveling beyond the limits of the county wherein they reside, shall have ‘a pass under the seal of said county;’ otherwise, ‘if apprehended, not being sufficiently known, nor able to give a good account of themselves,’ the magistrate, at his discretion, may deal with them as with runaways” (226–27). Surely, when considered in context with Douglass’ own words regarding slave statutes—“I am sure I have recorded in my narrative, nothing so revoltingly cruel, murderous, and infernal, as may be found in your statute book” (Douglass)—it is most certainly inferable that the aforementioned statute specifically applied to his altercation with Mr. A. C. C. Thompson, as described in this edition’s presentation of letters.

Issues with the authenticity of his Narrative notwithstanding, Douglass’ writing—his speeches, letters, and series of autobiographies—remain cornerstones of abolitionist literature and rhetorical distinction. The Encyclopedia of African American History poignantly encapsulates Douglass’ significance:

he endures as a thinker, important for his insights into both the alienation of blacks from and their embrace of America’s ideals. No one ever exposed America’s hypocrisy of sustaining slavery while
celebrating freedom quite like Douglass. As activist, artist, and thinker, Douglass exemplifies the best and the worst in the American spirit, of slavery and freedom in a land of promise and contradiction. (Finkelman)

By the conclusion of Douglass’ final, most complete autobiography, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, he states that his life has included a multitude of experiences: “First, the life of slavery; secondly, the life of a fugitive from slavery; thirdly, the life of comparative freedom; fourthly, the life of conflict and battle; and fifthly, the life of victory, if not complete, at least assured.” If *The Life and Times* is a contemplative reflection of the vast experiences of Douglass’ life and a final account in which he closes the door to the record of his experiences as a freeman, then the *Narrative*, as his first account, is a first, fiery step through the doorway to liberty. Concluding with his first speaking experience at an anti-slavery convention in Nantucket in 1841, the closing scenes of the *Narrative* invite readers to share in Douglass’ first tentative taste of not only the power of oration, but of autonomy among likeminded individuals.

Douglass’ narrative, however, was not always taken to be true. In 1845 A. C. C. Thompson, an associate of the Aulds—the slave owning family Douglass describes in his narrative—attempted to invalidate Douglass’ account in his letter “Refuge of Oppression.” In 1846, from the green moors of Scotland, Douglass issued his reply to Thompson, a reply that cites the Maryland slave statutes. In addition to the full text of Thompson’s letter and Douglass’s reply, this edition presents a summary of these slave statutes, so that readers today can bet-
ter understand the legal context that so charges this famous exchange.

This edition seeks to more thoroughly illuminate the autonomous rhetoric of Douglass’ *Narrative* by presenting a context of its reception through the presentation of both Douglass’s and Thompson’s letters. The racial disparity—and by extension the disproportion of authority—present between both men brings into question the influence of racial hierarchy and its relation to providing textual validity. By reading the letters in tandem, one is better able to see the paradox of Thompson’s letter wielding the power to both disrepute and validate Douglass’ autobiographical account, a fact Douglass both scorns and embraces.

*Note on the Texts*

The following is a selection of texts regarding the authenticity of Frederick Douglass’ first account of slavery found within his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*. The first of the texts is Frederick Douglass’ reply to Mr. A. C. C. Thompson’s attempt to discredit the validity of his narrative in which Douglass does not withhold his (well-earned) satisfaction concerning Thompson’s ill-fated attempt to invalidate his narrative. Douglass’s letter was reprinted and circulated widely; the source for this *Nineteenth-Century Ohio Literature* edition is *The Anti-Slavery Bugle* of New Lisbon, Ohio. Although Thompson did, quite ignorantly, believe that his public refutation of Douglass’ account would serve to discredit Douglass, it only validated many of the events described within his narrative. The second text is Thomp-
son's original letter to the *Delaware Republic* which was later reprinted in the *Liberator*. The original spelling and punctuation have been retained to preserve authenticity and all texts have been collected from their original sources.

**Letter from Frederick Douglass:**

*Reply to Mr. C. C. Thompson.*

To the Editor of the *Liberator*:

Dear Friend:—For the sake of our righteous cause, I was delighted to see by an extract copied into the Liberator of 12th Dec., 1845, from the Delaware Republican, that Mr. A. C. C. Thompson, No. 101, Market street, Wilmington, has undertaken to invalidate my testimony against the slaveholders, whose names I have made prominent in the narrative of my experience while in slavery.

Slaveholders and slave-traders never betray greater indiscretion, than when they venture to defend themselves, or their system of plunder, in any other community than a slaveholding one. Slavery has its own standard of morality, humanity, justice, and Christianity. Tried by that standard, it is a system of the greatest kindness to a slave—sanctioned by the purest morality—in perfect agreement with justice—and, of course, not inconsistent with Christianity. But, tried by any other, it is doomed to condemnation. The naked relation of master and slave is one of those monsters of darkness, to whom the light of truth is death! The wise ones among the slaveholders know this, and they studiously avoid doing anything, which, in their judgment, tends to elicit
truth. They seem fully to understand, that their safety is in their silence. They may have learned this wisdom from Junius, who counselled his opponent, Sir William Draper, when defending Lord Granby, never to attract attention to a character, which would only pass without condemnation, when it passed without observation.¹

I am now almost too far away to answer this attempted refutation by Mr. Thompson. I fear his article will be forgotten, before you get my reply. I, however, think the whole thing worth reviving, as it is seldom we have so good a case for dissection. In any country but the United States, I might hope to get a hearing through the paper in which I was attacked. But this would be inconsistent with American usage and magnanimity. It would be folly to expect such a hearing. They might possibly advertise me as a runaway slave, and share the reward of my apprehension; but on no other condition would they allow my reply a place in their columns.

In this, however, I may judge the “Republican” harshly. It may be that, having admitted Mr. Thompson’s article, the editor will think it but fair—negro though I am—to allow my reply an insertion.

In replying to Mr. Thompson, I shall proceed as I usually do in preaching the slaveholder’s sermon,—dividing the subject under two general heads, as follows:—

¹ Junius was the pseudonym of a writer who contributed a series of letters to the Public Advertiser from 21 January 1769 to 21 January 1772. Sir William Draper, who Douglass alludes to as well, attempted to defend—and rather poorly too—John Manners, Marquess of Granby, the commander in chief of the Forces, thus “giving” Junius, his public opponent, a victory in their ongoing conflict. It is likely that Douglass alludes to these figures to draw a parallel between his “victory” over Thompson’s unsuccessful testament and Junius’ “victory” over John Manners’ weak argument.
1st. The statement of Mr. Thompson, in confirmation of the truth of my narrative.

2ndly. His denials of its truthfulness.

Under the first, I beg Mr. Thompson to accept my thanks for his full, free and unsolicited testimony, in regard to my identity.—There now need be no doubt on that point, however much there might have been before. Your testimony, Mr. Thompson, has settled the question forever. I give you the fullest credit for the deed, saying nothing of the motive. But for you, sir, the pro-slavery people in the North might have persisted, with some show of reason, in representing me as an imposter—a free negro who had never been south of Mason & Dixon’s line—one whom the abolitionists, acting on the Jesuitical principle,² that the end justifies the means, had educated and sent forth to attract attention to their faltering cause. I am greatly indebted to you, sir, for silencing those truly prejudicial insinuations. I wish I could make you understand the amount of service you have done. You have completely tripped up the heels of your pro-slavery friends, and laid them flat at my feet. You have done a piece of anti-slavery work, which no anti-slavery man could do. Our cautious and truth-loving people of New England would never have believed this

2. The “Jesuitical principle” may be a reference to what Douglass believes is the Jesuits’ reasoning for owning slaves. Thomas Murphy describes the Jesuits reasoning to be related to their ideological struggle with English rule: “…Jesuits found the owning of chattel to be indispensable to the Catholic struggle for civil liberty under English rule” (xxii). Thus, Douglass’s words of “the ends justifies the means” is most likely a reference to the Jesuits' moral and theological dilemma of owning slaves while aspiring to treat them as “…equal in dignity to all other baptized Catholics…” (34). For further information see: Murphy, Thomas. *Jesuit Slaveholding in Maryland*, 1717–1838. Psychology Press, 2001.
testimony, in proof of my identity, had it been borne by an abolitionist. Not that they really think an abolitionist capable of bearing false witness intentionally, but such persons are thought fanatical, and to look at everything through a distorted medium. They believe you—they will believe a slaveholder. They have, some how or other, imbibed (and I confess strangely enough) the idea that persons such as yourself are dispassionate, impartial and disinterested, and therefore capable of giving a fair representation of things connected with slavery. Now, under these circumstances, your testimony is of the utmost importance. It will serve to give effect to my exposures of slavery, both at home and abroad. I hope I shall not administer to your vanity when I tell you that you seem to have been raised up for this purpose! I came to this land with the highest testimonials from some of the most intelligent and distinguished abolitionists in the United States; yet some here have entertained and expressed doubt as to whether I have ever been a slave. You may easily imagine the perplexing and embarrassing nature of my situation, and how anxious I must have been to be relieved from it. You, sir, have relieved me. I now stand before both the American and British public, endorsed by you as being just what I have ever represented myself to be—to wit, an American slave.

You say, ‘I knew this recreant slave by the name of Frederick Baily’ (instead of Douglass.) Yes, that was my name; and, leaving out the term recreant, which savors a little of bitterness, your testimony is direct and perfect—just what I have long wanted. But you are not yet satisfied. You seem determined to bear the most ample testimony in my favor. You say you knew me when I lived with Mr. Covey. “And with most of the persons” men-
tioned in my narrative, “you are intimately acquainted.” This is excellent. Then Mr. Edward Covey is not a creature of my imagination, but really did and may yet exist.

You thus brush away the miserable insinuation of my northern pro-slavery enemies, that I have used fictitious not real names.—You say—“Col. Lloyd was a wealthy planter. Mr. Gore was once an overseer for Col. Lloyd, but is now living near St. Michael’s, is respected, and [you] believe he is a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Mr. Thomas Auld is an honorable and worthy member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and all that can be said of him is, that he is a good Christian,” &., &., Do allow me, once more, to thank you for your triumphant vindication of the truth of my statements; and to show you how highly I value your testimony, I will inform you that I am now publishing a second edition of my narrative in this country, having already disposed of the first. I will insert your article with my reply as an appendix, to the edition now in progress. If you find any fault with my frequent thanks, you may find some excuse for me in the fact, that I have serious fears that you will be but poorly thanked by those whose characters you have felt it your duty to defend. I am almost certain they will regard you as running before you were sent, and as having spoken when you should have been silent. Under these trying circumstances, it is evidently the duty of those interested in your welfare to extend to you such words of consolation as may ease, if not remove, the pain of your sad disappointment! But enough of this.

Now, then, to the second part—or your denials. You are confident I did not write the book; and the reason of your confidence is, that when you knew me, I was an unlearned and rather an ordinary negro. Well, I have to
admit I was rather an ordinary negro when you knew me, and I do not claim to be a very extraordinary one now. But you knew me under very unfavorable circumstances. It was when I lived with Mr. Covey, the negro-breaker, and member of the Methodist Church. I had just been living with Master Thomas Auld, where I had been reduced by hunger. Master Thomas did not allow me enough to eat. Well, when I lived with Mr. Covey, I was driven so hard, and whipt so often, that my soul was crushed and my spirits broken. I was a mere wreck. The degradation to which I was then subjected, as I now look back to it, seems more like a dream than a horrible reality. I can scarcely realize how I ever passed through it, without quite losing all my moral and intellectual energies. I can easily understand that you sincerely doubt if I wrote the narrative; for if any one had told me, seven years ago, I should ever be able to write such an one, I should have doubted as strongly as you now do. You must not judge me now by what I then was—a change of circumstances has made a surprising change in me. Frederick Douglass, the freeman, is a very different person from Fredrick Bailey, the slave. I feel myself almost a new man—freedom has given me new life. I fancy you would scarcely know me. I think I have altered very much in my general appearance, and know I have in my manners. You remember when I used

3. Douglass’ arrival to the Auld household is described in Chapter IX of his Narrative. Douglass describes Thomas Auld’s tendency to not feed his slaves sufficiently as being particularly cruel: “I have said Master Thomas was a mean man. He was so. Not to give a slave enough to eat, is regarded as the most aggravated development of meanness even among slaveholders” (Douglass 39). See: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, ed. William L. Andrews and William S. McFeely, Norton, 1997.

4. My former name. [Douglass’s note.]
to meet you on the road to St. Michael’s, or near Mr. Covey’s lane gate, I hardly dared to lift my head, and look up at you. If I should meet you now, amid the free hills of old Scotland, where the ancient “black Douglass”\(^5\) once met his foes, I presume I might summon sufficient fortitude to look you full in the face; and were you to attempt to make a slave of me, it is possible you might find me almost as disagreeable a subject, as was the Douglass to whom I have just referred. Of one thing, I am certain—you would see a great change in me!

I trust I have now explained away your reason for thinking I did not write the narrative in question.

You next deny the existence of such cruelty in Maryland as I reveal my narrative; and ask, with true marvelous simplicity, “could it be possible that charitable, feeling men could murder human beings with as little remorse as the narrative of this infamous libeler would make us believe; and that the laws of Maryland, which operate alike upon black and white, bond and free, could permit such foul murders to pass unnoticed?”—“No,” you say “it is impossible.” I am not to determine what charitable, feeling men can do; but, to show what Maryland slaveholders actually do, their charitable feeling is to be determined by their deeds, and not their deeds by their charitable feelings. The cow-skin makes as deep a gash in my flesh, when wielded by a professed saint, as it does when wielded by an open sinner. The deadly mus-

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5. The “ancient black Douglas” that Douglass refers to is most likely the ancient clan of the Scottish Lowlands during the Late Middle Ages, particularly James Douglas also referred to as “Sir James”; he gained the moniker Black Douglas from his dark deeds, although some have speculated the “dark” refers to his complexion or coloring. For further information see Brown, Michael. *The Black Douglases: War and Lordship in Late Medieval Scotland, 1300–1455.* John Donald, 2007.
ket does as fatal execution when its trigger is pulled by Austin Gore, the Christian, as when the same is done by Beal Bondly, the infidel. The best way to ascertain what those charitable, feeling men can do, will be to point you to the laws made by them, and which you say operate alike upon the white and the black, the bond and the free. By consulting the statute laws of Maryland, you will find the following: “Any slave for rambling in the night, or riding horses in the day time without leave, or running away, may be punished by whipping, cropping, branding in the cheek, or otherwise—not rendering him unfit for labor.”—p. 337.

Then another:—“Any slave convicted of petty treason, murder, or wilful burning of dwelling-houses, may be sentenced to have the right hand cut off, to be hanged in the usual way—his head severed from his body—the body divided into four quarters, and the head and quarters set up in the most public place where such act was committed.”—Page 190.

Now, Mr. Thompson, when you consider with what ease a slave may be convicted of any one or all of these crimes, how bloody and atrocious do those laws appear! Yet, sir, they are but the breath of those pious and charitable, feeling men, whom you would defend. I am sure I have recorded in my narrative, nothing so revoltingly cruel, murderous, infernal, as may be found in your statute book.

You say that the laws of Maryland operate alike upon the white and black, the bond and free. If you mean by this, that the parties named are equally protected by law, you perpetrate a falsehood as big as that told by President Polk, in his inaugural address. It is a notori-

6. Douglass's dispute of Thompson's claim that the "law acts alike
ous fact, even on this side of the Atlantic, that a black man cannot testify against a white man in any Court in Maryland, or any other slave State. If you do not know this, you are more than ordinarily ignorant, and are to be pitied rather than censured. I will not say “that the detection of this falsehood proves all you have said to be false” for I wish to avail myself of your testimony, in regard to my identity,—but I will say, you have made yourself very liable to suspicion.

I will close these remarks by saying your positive opposition to slavery is fully explained, and will be well understood by anti-slavery men, when you say the evil of the system does not fall upon the slave but the slaveholder. This is like saying that the evil of being burnt is not felt by the person burnt, but by him who kindles up the fire about him.

Frederick Douglass.
Perth, (Scotland,) 27th Jan. 1846.

To the Public.
Falsehood Refuted.

From the Delaware Republican.

It is with considerable regret that I find myself measurably compelled to appear before the public; but upon the white and the black” is clearly supported by slave statutes. One such Maryland statute notes that intermarriages with whites are punished by enslavement—a punishment only lawful when enacted towards blacks not whites: (Maryland, Act of 1717, chap. 13, sect. 5.) “If any free negro or mulatto intermarry with any white woman; or if any white man shall intermarry with any negro or mulatto woman, such negro or mulatto shall become a slave during life, except mulattoes born of white women…who shall become servants for seven years” (Goodell 278).
my attention has lately been arrested by a pamphlet which has been freely circulated in Wilmington and elsewhere, with the following superscription:—*Extract from a Narrative of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, written by himself*.

And although I am aware that no sensible, unprejudiced person will credit such a ridiculous publication, which bears the glaring impress of falsehood on every page, yet I deem it expedient that I should give the public some information respecting the validity of this narrative, because I was for many years a citizen of the section of country where the scenes of the above mentioned narrative are laid; and am intimately acquainted with most of the gentlemen whose characters are so shamefully traduced, and I am also aware, that the Narrative was not written by the professed author; but from statements of this runaway slave, some evil designed person or persons have composed this catalogue of lies to excite the indignation of the public opinion against the slaveholders of the South; and have even attempted to plunge their venomous fangs in the vitals of the church.

I shall, therefore, briefly notice some of the most glaring falsehoods contained in the aforesaid Narrative, and give a true representation of the character of those gentlemen, who have been censured in such an uncharitable manner, as murderers, hypocrites, and everything else that is vile.

I indulge no animosity against the fabricators and circulators of the Narrative, neither do I know them; but I positively declare the whole to be a budget of falsehoods, from beginning to end.
1st. The identity of the author. About eight years ago, I knew this recreant slave by the name of Frederick Bailey, (instead of Douglass.) He then lived with Mr. Edward Covy, and was an unlearned, and rather an ordinary negro, and am confident he was not capable of writing the Narrative alluded to; for none but an educated man, and one who had some knowledge of the rules of grammar, could write so correctly. Although, to make the imposition at all creditable, the composer has labored to write it in as plain a style as possible: consequently, the detection of this first falsehood proves the whole production to be notoriously untrue.

Again. ‘It is a common custom in the part of Maryland from which I ran away, to separate children from their mothers at a very early age.’

This also I know to be false. There is no such custom prevalent in that section of the country; but, on the contrary, the children are raised with their mothers, and generally live with them in the same house, except in some few instances where the mother is hired out as a cook or laborer in some other family.

The gentlemen whose names are so prominently set forth in the said Narrative are Col. Edward Lloyd, Capt. Anthony, Austin Gore, Thomas Lamdin, (not Lanman,) Giles Hicks, Thomas Auld, and Edward Covy. Most of these persons I am intimately acquainted with, and shall give a brief sketch of their characters as follows: Col. Edward Lloyd was one of the most wealthy and respectable planters in the State of Maryland. He was at one time the Governor of the State, and for several years, a member of the Legislature. He owned several thousand acres of land, and between 4 and 500 slaves.
He died before I had much knowledge of him; but I know that he was a kind and charitable man, and in every respect an honorable and worthy citizen.

Most of the same slaves are now owned by his three sons, and they manage their servants in the same manner as did their father; and I know there are no such barbarities committed on their plantations.

Could it be possible that charitable feeling men could murder human beings, with as little remorse of conscience, as the narrative of this infamous libel wishes to make us believe; and that the laws of Maryland, which operate alike upon black and white, bond or free, could permit such foul murders to pass unnoticed? No! it is impossible; and every sensible man knows that these false accusations are the ebullition of an unchristian prejudice.

Captain Anthony and Giles Hicks, I know but little of. The accused murderer, Mr. Gore, is a respectable citizen, living near St. Michaels, and I believe a worthy member of the Methodist Episcopal Church: he was formerly an overseer for Col. Lloyd, and at this time, all who know him, think him anything but a murderer.

Thomas Lamdin, who, it is said, (in the Narrative,) boasted so frequently of his murders, is at this time an honest school teacher in the District where I formerly lived; and all the harm that can be said of him is, that he is too good-natured and harmless to injure any person but himself.

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7. Although Thompson’s claim that the law “acts alike upon black and white” is an overarching claim, one such statute did exist that mandated consequences for both blacks and whites: “White as well as colored persons are forbidden, under heavy penalties, to entice, transport, or secretly carry away slaves. (Laws of Maryland of 1715, chap. 19, sect. 4. Snethen’s Dist. Col., p. 12.)” (Goodell 23).
Capt. Thomas Auld, whose hypocritical meanness is so strongly depicted in the aforesaid Narrative, was for many years a respectable merchant in the town of St Michaels, and an honorable and worthy member of the Methodist E. Church, and only notable for his integrity and irreproachable Christian character. He is now retired from the turmoil of a mercantile life, and engaged in the worthy occupation of tilling the soil, little dreaming of the foul accusations that are circulated against him.

Edward Covy, the renowned ‘negro breaker,’ is also a plain, honest farmer, and a tried and faithful member of the Methodist E. Church. Mr. Covy lived for several years on a farm adjoining my father’s, at which time this runaway negro lived with him, and I am well aware that no such bloody tragedy as is recorded in that lying Narrative ever occurred on Mr. Covy’s farm. All that can be said of Mr. Covy is that he is a good Christian, and a hard working man, and makes every one around him work and treats them well. By his honest industry, he has purchased a fine farm, and is now reaping the reward of his labor.

Such are the characters of the men whom the imposers of this dirty Narrative have so uncharitably traduced, and by blending these false accusations with the Methodist religion of the South, they wish to lacerate her already bleeding wounds.

I was raised among slaves, and have also owned them, and am well aware that the slaves live better and fare better in many respects than the free blacks.

Yet, I am positively opposed to slavery, for I know it is a great evil; but the evil falls not upon the slave, but on the owner.
Intrigue and false accusations will never liberate the slave of the South; but, on the contrary, every such attempt will only forge for them new and stronger fetters.

Let the tender-hearted philanthropists of the North speak truth and love towards their southern brethren, and make a liberal application of their gold for the removing the blacks from the country, and their chance of success will be more flattering:

I have given a true representation of the persons connected with the aforesaid Narrative, and I respectfully submit the facts to the judgment of an impartial public.

A. C. C. THOMPSON.
No. 101 Market-st. Wilmington, Del.

This attempt to invalidate the Narrative of Frederick Douglass, only confirms its correctness, as Mr. Thompson admits every thing but the cruelty described by Douglass—and on that point the latter speaks from experience and knowledge.


slave statutes and to criticize their use and practice. In his book, Goodell explains the following detrimental conditions of slavery: slave ownership; slave trafficking; the seizure of slaves; the inheritance of slaves; various uses of slaves for “profit” and “pleasure”; marriage or the lack thereof between slaves, free blacks, and whites; the disallowance of the family unit; the unlimited power of slaveholders; labor; shelter; lack of compensation and wages; murder and killing; power of overseers; protection of property against slave tampering; fugitive slaves; lack of legal recourse; inheritance of freedom and slavery; lack of access to possession and education; general lack of civil rights; and the disenfranchisement of all “persons of color.” What follows is a collection of the slave laws of the state of Maryland, the setting for Douglass’s youth and experience.

Although the slave statutes of Maryland sought to lessen the amount of so called “fugitive slaves,” the statutes often referred to “all persons” or “any persons,” as many of these laws also applied, often with explicitly less force, to poor white children and teenagers fleeing apprenticeships, indentures, and abusive homes. For example:

An Act of Maryland, (1715,) chap. 44, sect. 6, “for the better discovery of runaways, &c., requires that “any person or persons whatsoever,” traveling beyond the limits of the county wherein they reside, shall have “a pass under the seal of said county;” otherwise, “if apprehended, not being sufficiently known, nor able to give a good account of themselves,” the magistrate, at his discretion, may deal with them as with runaways (226–27).

Such a distinction in language meant, in theory, that this specific statute could have applied to “persons”who
were either white or black (or both), or Native Ameri-
can—to anyone. As Goodell notes, this law was “particu-
larly remarkable as being without distinction of color,
and so applicable to the class of low whites” (227). Of
course requirement of a “pass under the seal of said coun-
ty” could be easily met only by those with access
to both literacy and official (or official-looking) statio-
nery. And statute is also prejudiced against those who
are less able to make a “good account of themselves”
in the eyes of law enforcement. Finally, as Goodell also
notes, this statute limited the time a magistrate could
detain a white runaway to six months. The statute did
not limit the amount of time that “negroes and mulat-
toes” could be detained.

The following statute is written in much of the same
vein as the prior. It applies equally to runaway slaves
and to slaves who ventured away from their quarters in
the evening, perhaps to visit relatives on another plan-
tation: “By the law of Maryland, for ‘rambling, riding, or
going abroad in the night, or riding horses in the day-
time without leave, a slave may be whipt, cropped, or
branded on the cheek with the letter R, or otherwise
punished, not extending to life, or so as to unfit him for
labor” (229). In essence, if slaves were to travel with-
out authorization, or at certain times of day that might
increase chances of escape, they risk subjecting them-
selves to the punishment of torture, or social embar-
rassment by way of branding, like that done to cattle.

Maryland slave statutes also permitted slave owners
to lawfully punish slaves that did not belong to them,
so long as the slave in question remained on their re-
spective land: “If any slave shall presume to come upon
the plantation without leave in writing from his mas-
ter, employer, &c. not being sent on lawful business, the owner of the plantation may inflict ten lashes for every such offense” (230). This statute was written, perhaps, to dissuade slaves from encouraging other slaves to flee; to lessen aid in fleeing; and to reduce communication between slaves on the whole.

The statutes also sought to make lawful the punishment of slaves who destroyed plantation property, as Goodell describes:

In Maryland and District of Columbia, ‘If any negro or other slaves, absenting themselves from their master’s service, running out into the woods and there remaining, killing and destroying hogs and cattle belonging to the people of this province, shall refuse to surrender themselves, and make resistance against such persons as pursue to apprehend and take them up, being thereunto legally empowered, it shall be lawful for such pursuers, when such resistance is made, to shoot, kill, and destroy such negroes or other slaves” (231).

What is interesting to note here is not only does this statute exemplify how slaves were terrorized not only by their owners and masters, but by the common people. And to that end, the language “kill” and “destroy” does nothing short of inspiring total violence in those seeking to administer it.

Maryland statues permitted compensation to those slaveholders whose slaves were lawfully killed. “The ‘owner’ of slaves sentenced to death,” Goodell explains, “is probably remunerated out of the public treasury. This is the law of Maryland” (232). That the slave “owner” could be “remunerated,” or lawfully compensated by the state, only furthers the notion that the local gov-
ernments collected taxes to enforce and support the institution of slavery. “Crimes” against slavery often warranted drastic, if not overly torturous punishment: “In Maryland, thirty-nine stripes is the penalty for harboring one hour” (232). What is significant about this particular statute is that it does not specify race. And to that end, whites or blacks could be punished with “thirty-nine stripes” if found to be sheltering a fugitive slave for just one hour.

Similarly, other Maryland statutes did not fail to punish whites as well. This suggests that upholding the institution of slavery was more important to lawmakers than merely discriminating against people of color. “White as well as colored persons are forbidden, under heavy penalties, to entice, transport, or secretly carry away slaves” (233). While Goodell does make clear that the act of covertly transporting slaves by both whites and blacks is punishable under “heavy penalties,” he does not expand upon the nature of these possible punishments.

Goodell highlights the particular importance of documentation or “certificates of freedom” in that, if they are misused or mishandled by free blacks, the punishment is particularly dire:

Giving passes to slaves is prohibited in Maryland by Act of 1796, chap. 67, sect. 20. (Snethen, p. 29.) And ‘free negroes or mulattoes’ who may sell or give away their ‘certificates of freedom,’ may be fined $300, which, if not paid, may be raised by the sale of such free persons into slavery! (234)

The verbiage makes clear, and grossly so, that the possibility of slavery remained for all blacks; freedom, once established, was something that could be, under certain laws, taken away.
Goodell explains how many people were born or carried into slavery, with no prospect of manumission:

In Maryland, ‘All negroes and other slaves, already imported or hereafter to be imported into this province, and all children, now born or hereafter to be born of such negroes and slaves, shall be slaves during their natural lives.’ (248)

In antebellum Maryland, a person could marry themselves into slavery, too. As Goodell explains:

Intermarriages with whites are punished by enslavement....If any free negro or mulatto intermarry with any white woman; or if any white man shall intermarry with any negro or mulatto woman, such negro or mulatto shall become a slave during life, except mulattoes born of white women...who shall become servants for seven years (278).

It is worth noting that the only parties punished here, unsurprisingly, were the blacks or slaves. It is also curious that “mulattoes born of white women” were subject to only seven years’ labor. Also, the antebellum Maryland statutes forbade the marriage of white men and black women, but it did not forbid sexual relations between the same. As Goodell notes, for a white man “to live in adulterous concubinage with his slave woman, incurs no penalty at all” (278).

Goodell explains that the Maryland slave statutes exonerated those who, in attempting to apprehend slaves, killed them:

In Maryland, ‘If any slave shall happen to be slain for refusing to surrender him or herself, contrary to law, or in unlawful resisting any officer, or other person who shall endeavor to apprehend such slave or slaves, &c., such officer or other person
so killing such slave, as aforesaid, making resis-
tance, shall be and is by this Act indemnified from
any prosecution for such killing aforesaid,” &c.

What is less clear, is the motive of such apprehending
persons or even the nature of such an occurrence. One
can only speculate this law exonerated not only those
looking to “innocently,” if such a thing existed, return
escaped slaves to bondage, but to those looking to egre-
giously torture, hurt, or rape. Similarly, Goodell explains
that the Maryland statutes often punished slaves that
“struck” or hurt a white man, no matter if the action was
done in self-defense: “For striking a white man, in Mary-
land, no matter for what cause, a Justice may ‘direct the
offender’s ears to be cropped, though he be a free black’”
(357). In this aspect, the punishment, whatever the
cause, bears resemblance to the treatment of livestock.

Goodell explains that the Maryland slave statutes
often required certain travel practices for blacks that
were not slaves. Here he cites William Jay’s 1825 Inqui-
ry into the Character and Tendency of the American
Colonization, and American Anti-Slavery Societies:

Should a colored citizen of Maryland cross its
boundary, on business never so urgent to himself
and his family, on returning home, more than a
month after, he is liable to be seized and SOLD,
unless, previous to his departure, he had complied
with certain vexatious legal formalities, and which,
from ignorance, he would be extremely likely to
neglect, or perform imperfectly. (360)

One might assume, that from the overly tedious, if not
unclear and unspecific language, that the requirements
were fashioned so as to make lawful the seizing and en-
slaving of free blacks.


Myers, Peter C. “Frederick Douglass on Revolution and Integration: A Problem in Moral Psychology.” American Political Thought 2.1 (2013): 118–46. JSTOR.
MESSRS. EDITORS: —I am requested by an old and esteemed friend to give some account of the celebrated warrior, Tecumtha, I state the Indian orthography, which, it will be perceived, is somewhat different from the common practice of writing his name, the interpretation of which, substantially is, the Panther or Tiger crouching ready to pounce on its prey—a name most appropriate and characteristic of the man.

Tecumtha was a Native Shawanoese, born on the banks of Mad River, near the site of the present city of Springfield, Clarke county, Ohio, about the year 1770, and was of unadulterated Indian blood, both by father and
mother. His father became a distinguished war chief, and fell in the battle of Point Pleasant, Kanawha, in 1774. The hatred of the son to the white man was doubtless much aggravated by this occurrence. Tecumtha never was a chief in any sense of the term. Having failed to involve his nation in war with the United States, he early separated himself from the government and control of his legitimate chiefs, and established himself at the head of certain banditti in 1806 on the Wabash, near the mouth of Tippecanoe river. His followers and adherents here were composed of outlaws from the Indian tribes, principally from those west and adjacent to the Mississippi. The largest number were of the Winebagoes, although the hearts of all were estranged from us, mainly by reason of our frequent encroachments upon their country, driving them farther and farther from the graves and homes of their ancestors. The frontier tribes, embracing the Wyandots, Delawares, Shawanoese, Miamies, Senecas, and many of the Ottowa and Potawatimie towns, being more immediately under our control, and within the reach of chastisement, were afraid to join in any hostile demonstrations against us; not many persons of the tribes named were found in the ranks of Tecumtha.

The Kickapoo tribe of the Shawanoese, of which Tecumtha was a member, were invariably distinguished for their hatred to the white race. Often when the chiefs were disposed to make peace, persons of this tribe would go off clandestinely and commit murder on the frontier, in order to defeat their proposed intent. The tribe was nearly annihilated in the year 1812. Nearly all the murders on the north-western frontiers during that period were perpetrated by them. At the Pigeon Roost in Indiana, where twenty old men, women and children
were murdered, the leader of the party, one Pasheto, a notorious villain, was of this tribe, as were most of his party. My own life was several times in jeopardy from this daring assassin. He was killed after the war of 1812 in a personal encounter with one of his own people, at Malden, on the English side of Detroit River. He was stabbed in the vitals through the liver, but lived afterwards seventeen days; the Indians affirming the Great Spirit had thus procrastinated his sufferings, as a punishment for his manifold coldblooded cruelties.

My personal intercourse with Tecumtha was of short duration, he having left his nation soon after my agency for them commenced, and before he had acquired any great amount of celebrity as a warrior and leader. His habit was to shun as much as possible, all intercourse with United States officers, or persons in authority. He was known to say, that he never looked on the face of a white man, without horror or feeling his flesh creep on his bones. In person he was about five feet ten inches, compactly built and well-formed for strength and agility. He would receive no presents for himself, and when anything was given, he would throw the article contemptuously to his followers. His garments were all made of deer skin, dressed and made up by the women. He was killed at the battle of the Thames near the end of the year 1813 and aged about forty-four years.
Finding the English no longer able to protect the Indian allies, their fleet on the Lake captured, their army under Proctor defeated, the cause hopeless, it was doubtless the desire of Tecumtha to perish in the last onslaught. He sought death and met it, but at whose hands is, I think a matter of uncertainty. Anthony Shane, a half-breed raised among the Indians, one of my Interpreters, was in the battle, examined the body of Tecumtha, and affirmed he was not the Indian killed by Col. R. M. Johnson.—Tecumtha in early life had his thigh bone broken, and where the bone united, a ring had formed around the fracture, which could be felt by the hand. This mark was not on the Indian killed by Johnson. I heard Gener-al Harrison in 1839, interrogated on the stand at Piqua, Ohio, as to his belief who killed Tecumtha. His reply was that he did not know.

Tecumtha was for a few times guest at my table at Fort Wayne. He would not taste any intoxicating liquor, drinking nothing but pure water; would eat meat, potatoes, and corn bread, and very sparingly of those. His whole course in view of his people, was to teach them by precept and example to become independent of the white race.

He took a wife agreeable to the urgent request of his friends; it was evident, however, he had little partial-ity for the softer sex. The wife and himself occupied the same cabin, but had separate beds. A son was born, who had grown to mature years in my time—a very common person, bearing no resemblance either in person or character to his reputed father. He continued to reside with the Shawanoese at Wapaghkonetta until 1826, when he emigrated to the south-west of Missouri.
Although Tecumtha became renowned in war, it is undeniably true, that he ran away the first battle he was engaged in. This fact I received from Cutewekas or Black Hoof, the head chief, who was in the action. He was never known to flinch afterwards. The increase of our population north of the Ohio river, and the frequent demand upon the Indians for more of their lands, alarmed the nations occupying and claiming the Territory now embraced within the States of Ohio and Indiana—a subject of all others best calculated to inflame the minds of the natives. Although Tecumtha had no right to interfere in a question involving the title to territory, the Shawanoese having come into the northwest within a comparatively short period, and being considered by the other tribes somewhat in the light of tenants at will, he was too wily not to take advantage of the excited feelings of the Indians arising from
the loss of their country. This was the commencement of his turbulent career. He appeared too late upon the stage of action; such a spirit fifty or sixty years earlier, might have set bounds to the progress of the white man in the West. In contemplating the wretched fate of the natives of this continent, we are almost instinctively led to approve a sentiment uttered many years ago in the House of Representatives in Congress by Mr. Hopkinson, of Pennsylvania, “that when he beheld the wrongs and ruin of the Indian race, he almost wished that the mariner’s compass had never been invented.”

The brother of Tecumtha, who claimed inspiration as a prophet of the Great Spirit, was a very different character; what we would call a brawling, unprincipled demagogue. He encouraged the Indians to war against the Americans, but took care himself to keep out of danger. At the battle of Tippecanoe and the Thames, although present, he took no part in the fight. In the outset of his career as a prophet, he took the name of Elsquataway, the meaning of which is, a new way, a door of hope for the Indians. Pending the war of 1812 his influence was great, drawing crowds after him. None of his prophecies being fulfilled, after the overthrow at the battle of the Thames he sunk into contempt and forgetfulness, and finally removed with his people in 1826 southwest of Missouri.

I had much more to do with the Prophet than with his brother Tecumtha, and on the whole formed a very contemptible opinion of him. He possessed none of the noble qualities of his race; neither truth, honor, honesty or courage. After the war of 1812, he avoided me as much as possible, and seldom appeared in Council with his people, ashamed and afraid to meet me. I had repeatedly warned him of taking up the hatchet against us, and
joining the English, and that the result would be the ruin of his people, all of which turned out true to the letter. It is due to the memory of Black Hoof and his associate chiefs, to say that they used every means in their power to prevent their people from taking part in the war, and with the exception of the Prophet's tribe, they remained faithful to their engagements with the United States. It is seldom that a tribe is unanimous for war; the nation never is, and within the memory of the oldest men among them, it is not recollected that much more than half of the nation have been for war at the same time, or taken, as they express it, the war talk. War is always determined on by the head warrior of a town or district which has in their own estimation been injured. He lifts the war hatchet and is followed by all who are for war. The head chief and his counsellors sometimes interpose and arrest the further progress of the party for war. This is not often attended with success; because the law, "blood for blood," predominates, and the right of satisfaction is conceded to the injured party, to the town and tribe to which he belongs. Peace is always determined on and concluded by the head Chief of the nation and his counsellors, and peace talks or communications are always addressed to them. In some cases where the resentment of the warriors runs high, the Chief and his counsellors have been much embarrassed.

In case of murder the family alone of the deceased have the right to take satisfaction. The rulers of a town or the nation have nothing to do or say in the business. The relations of the deceased person consult first among themselves, and if the case is clear, and the family not likely to suffer by their decision, they determine on the case definitely.—When their tribe may be affect-
ed by it, in a doubtful case, or an old claim for satisfaction, the family consult them, and when they have resolved on satisfaction, they take the guilty one, if to be come at; if he flies, they take the nearest of kin. In some cases the family who have done the injury promise reparation, and in the case are allowed a reasonable time to fulfil their promise; and they are generally earnest of themselves in their endeavors to put the guilty to death to save an innocent person.

The right of judging and taking satisfaction being invested in the individual family or tribe, is the sole cause why the treaty stipulations between the United States and the Indian tribes, respecting murder, are so seldom executed. In like manner a prisoner taken in war is the property of the captor and his family; it being optional with the captor to kill or save at the time. This right is sometimes purchased with property.

During my agency for the Miamies, a shocking murder was committed on the widow of the Toad, who was one of their beloved men. The woman lived alone and was well off with clothing, trinkets, and furniture. She took for a companion and fellow-lodger, a single woman of the same nation. This person, coveting her property and ornaments, basely murdered her benefactor in the night, by battering her skull with a large stone; then robbed the house and fled, seeking concealment in the wilderness. The victim, who was named Jenny by the ladies of the Fort, was a great favorite with all, often assisting them in sewing and making quilts. A universal wish was expressed at the garrison and among the Indians, to have the murdered apprehended; after some weeks she was brought in, and her own father appointed jailor, until her fate could be decided upon.
No influence from any quarter was used to save her; the brother of the deceased was appointed to execute the law. Armed with a tomahawk, at the appointed time he passed through the town, and when opposite the cabin where the murderer was kept, her father thrust her out of the door and she was put to death on the spot. Thus ended the matter, nor did any bad feeling ever after arise between the family or friends of the parties. Atonement had been made, life for life, and all were settled. During the time I was commissioner for treating with the Wyandots of Sandusky, in 1841 and ‘42, a murder had occurred in the nation, between two of their people. The chiefs having become somewhat familiarized to our laws, took the matter into their own hands, consulted and decreed the execution of the murderer, and he was publicly shot accordingly.

This was the first instance of departing from the primitive custom of taking satisfaction for the loss of life. Since that time, the Wyandots made a treaty with the United States relinquishing their Tribal character, and providing for their becoming citizens of the Union; for reasons unknown to the public, that provision of the treaty was stricken out by the Senate. During the administration of Mr. Monroe, and at his instance, a similar attempt was made in some of our treaties with the natives of the Northwest, and with the further provisions of dividing their lands and giving the fee of six hundred and forty acres to each head of a family. These stipulations were also vetoed by the Senate. Doubtless that body had good and sufficient reasons in the opinions of the members for so acting, yet it must readily occur to the minds of any one acquainted with the condition of the Indians, their past history and future prospects,
that if some such security is not provided for them, a few more generations will witness the total extinction of their race, and then how the weeping page of history will tell of the wrongs and blasted faith visited on the red men by the rulers and people of this nation! How keenly all our sensibilities are enlisted in the cause of the African, yet not a voice is scarcely heard in or out of Congress, to vindicate the claims of the Indian. Is it because no political capital can be made out of the misfortunes of the latter?

For many successive years the chief Black Hoof was one of my companions in my early excursions among the Indians. He had lived long, was intelligent, and had more of the history of his people on his mind than any of his nation.

Our talk sometimes extended far into the night, around the camp fire. The subject of removal to the West was often discussed. In adverting to the distress which these matters occasioned to his people, he would conclude by saying, ‘We will go anywhere if you will let us alone; but we know by experience, go where we may, your people will follow us, drive us again and again, until we reach the seas beyond the mountains, and then we must jump off;’—meaning there would be no resting place for them, at last, on the face of the earth. At this very moment, attempts are making to purchase out and remove the Indians who only a few years ago emigrated from Ohio to the new territory of Nebraska. Is it any wonder that they so obstinately refuse to receive the religion or the arts of civilized and Christian people?

In 1842, nine men, women and children of the Seneca and Delaware Indians, were barbarously murdered within the limits of what is now Madison county, In-
diana, by a company of five lawless white men. The slightest provocation was not alleged for the outrage; the victims being among the peaceable and inoffensive of their race. The particulars of this horrid tragedy are not fit for the public eye. As soon as I was informed of the outrage, being fully aware of the danger that awaited the frontier settlers from the enraged Indians, I repaired to the scene of action, raised and alarmed the country, got a party in pursuit, and apprehended four of the murderers. The principal actor having escaped, as was afterwards ascertained, changed his name and enlisted in the army. I had a jail built, picketed in, procured bolts, bars and locks, and employed a guard to insure the safety of the prisoners.

The Governor of the State, apprehending his popularity with the people, declined interfering. I reported the case to Mr. Calhoun, then at the head of the War Department, who promptly responded to my call by giving me full power and authority to prosecute the murderers, to spare no expense and to draw on him for funds. Able counsel was employed on both sides, and, after a delay of fourteen months, the murderers were convicted and ordered for execution. Gov. Ray, who was then in the Executive chair, was kind enough to attend a short distance from the execution, for the purpose of communication, should it be found advisable to pardon any of the criminals. The son of S., being under age, and as it appeared coerced by his father into the murder, with the consent of the Indian Chiefs who were at my urgent solicitations present and witnessed the execution, was pardoned by the Governor; the other three suffered.

The Indians had never before witnessed an execution by hanging, and they were affected to tears at
the death-struggle of the unhappy men. Thus was the justice of the country, at least for once, vindicated in the sight of the Indians, and they were content, thanks to Mr. Calhoun, who, with all his political aberrations, was an honest and honorable man. The whole affair from first to last, cost the United States seven thousand dollars. The money was well spent, as the execution of the murderers doubtless saved many innocent persons from savage vengeance. This case is most respectfully held up to the view of those speculative, benevolent and misguided persons, who advocate the abolishment of capital punishment in all cases whatsoever.

Note on the text

“Biography of Tecumtha” has been transcribed from the June 29, 1854, Gallipolis Journal. In the original, the author chose to write the name Tecumseh as “Tecumtha” to represent the pronunciation of the warrior’s name. The author also uses alternative spellings (“Shawanoese” for Shawnee). This edition preserves consistent usage of such spellings, since they do not affect the understanding of the text. Inconsistencies in spelling, however—such as “Missouri” and “Missouri,” “Wyandots” and “Wyandottes,”—have been changed to be consistent throughout the text. And three noticeable typographic inaccuracies have been modified since they are believed to have been printing errors: this text supplies a missing hyphen (“well formed” has been changed to “well-formed”), closes a space (“any thing” has been changed to “anything”), and separates two words (“thematter” has been changed to “the matter”).
Since his death in 1813, the Shawnee warrior Tecumseh (c. 1768–1813) has been memorialized by numerous historians. As R. David Edmunds explains in his biographical article for the *Western Historical Quarterly*, the British and American officers both spoke highly of the Shawnee warrior in their reports, especially during the War of 1812. Tecumseh’s leadership in this war created a legend with superhuman qualities (261). Until recently Tecumseh’s brother, Tenskwatawa (The Prophet), however, has been historically preserved—as Alfred Cave describes in his article for the *Journal of the Early Republic*—as “shrewd, cunning, superstitious, fanatical, cowardly and cruel, utterly lacking in those qualities of courage, grace and magnanimity that elevated his warrior brother to greatness” (637). As this essay will illustrate in depth, comparison of old and new biographies of the Shawnee brothers helps us to understand both the actual history of early nineteenth-century Ohio and the way that this history has been written and revised over the past two centuries.

This edition presents the “Biography of Tecumtha” published in an 1854 issue of the *Gallipolis Journal*, a newspaper published in Gallipolis, Ohio. A thriving village in southeast Ohio on the Ohio River, Gallipolis had about 2200 inhabitants in 1854 (Baldwin and Thomas 413). The *Gallipolis Journal* indicates that the
text was copied from the *Dayton Gazette*; located in southwest Ohio north of Cincinnati, Dayton was Ohio’s fourth-largest city in 1854, with about sixteen thousand inhabitants (Baldwin and Thomas 309).

In this letter to the editor, American Indian Agent Colonel John Johnston recounts his experiences with the Shawnee brothers Tecumseh and The Prophet. In a biography posted on a website for genealogical researchers of Miami County, Ohio, Johnston is credited for keeping the peace between about ten thousand Indians and settlers in many northwestern territories. His role as an Indian agent is described as being distinguished by “the integrity of the man, the honesty of his dealings with the Indians, [and] his humane and judicious policy with them and his fidelity to the government” (“Colonel”).

In his letter, Johnston presents common facts about the Shawnee brothers—as they were written by Benjamin Drake (c. 1795–1841) and other early Tecumseh biographers. Present-day Tecumseh scholars believe some of the information presented as fact in these early biographies is inaccurate; they argue that earlier biographers painted the Shawnee brothers in a false light. Gregory Dowd, Alfred Cave, John Sugden, and R. David Edmunds explain that early historians and biographers could have romanticized information of doubtful authenticity from unreliable sources. Colonel Johnston’s account also differs from accounts given by other Indian agents and government leaders. Modern scholars believe the falsified reports from agents and United States government leaders were used to justify violent acts against tribes (Edmunds 275).
Although John Johnston’s letter to the editor is labeled as the “Biography of Tecumtha,” he spends little time discussing the biography of the great Shawnee warrior. He, instead, depicts a basic overview of his interactions with Tecumseh and The Prophet, as well as their influence over the Shawnee. Johnston also paints an image of how clans reacted to the push from the American government during his time as Indian Agent and how tribes, generally, agreed to enter war. As previously stated, Johnston’s account does not align with themes of modern Tecumseh documentation. It is worth noting where the differences lie and why the differences may exist.

The beginning of Johnston’s letter to the editor supports the general understanding historians have of Tecumseh’s early life: he was born the son of a war chief in 1768 near the Scioto River in Ohio. In his letter to the editor, Johnston refers to Tecumseh as “Tecumtha,” stating that the orthography of his name means “the Panther or Tiger crouching ready to pounce on its prey,” which historians believe references a clan affiliation to Tecumseh’s father’s tribe. During the American Revolution, the Shawnee fought alongside the British due to their widespread fear over US territory disputes. Due to militia attacks on their villages, the Shawnee were displaced numerous times, and in 1786, the tribe coordinated “intertribal resistance to the white settlement of the Northwest” (Sugden, “Tecumseh”). It was during this transitory period that Tecumseh gained the reputation as a brave and skilled warrior. In 1807, Tecumseh was one of many who spoke at the Chillicothe courthouse to assure the governors of Ohio that the Shawnee
did not encourage any hostility toward the Americans. This may have been one of Tecumseh’s most important diplomatic initiatives, later continued in his travels amongst northwestern tribes and his meetings with American and British officials. These meetings and travels to instill peace influenced his reputation as a skilled speaker with charisma, dedication, and courage in times of war, ultimately leading to the justification for early biographers to identify him as the greatest American Indian (Sugden, “Tecumseh”).

As Johnston relates below, Tecumseh’s father was a celebrated Shawnee war chief who was killed in 1774 at the Battle of Point Pleasant. It is believed by numerous historians that his father’s death greatly influenced Tecumseh to become a Shawnee warrior. Tecumseh is portrayed as a strong political and military figure whose behavior was “logical and praiseworthy” (Edmunds 262). It is also commonly known that Tecumseh traveled through the Indian country in 1811 and 1812 to promote a nationalist multitribal confederacy to resist the cession of tribal lands to the US (Sugden 274). Tecumseh may have been motivated to create a Pan-Indian confederacy by observing similar goals from his tribe in 1786, after the Shawnee had already faced the destruction of their settlement. Tecumseh was killed at the Battle of the Thames in 1813.

While Tecumseh has been portrayed as a noble and respected warrior, his brother, Tenskwatawa (The Prophet), was found by early historians to be “ineffec-
thual and inept…a vicious, one-eyed drunk…supersti-
tious and cruel” (Cave 638). Colonel Johnston writes that The Prophet was called “a brawling, unprincipled demagogue” who lacked all the honorable qualities
of his race: “truth, honor, honesty, or courage.” These common beliefs spread when Tenskwatawa, who was born Lalawethika, was said to have fallen into a drunken coma in 1805. He was believed to have been dead, and when he miraculously regained consciousness, he expressed that he was visited by the Master of Life and told how to lead Indians to deliverance. It was after this vision that Lalawethika renounced his old ways and changed his name to Tenskwatawa (meaning “the open door”) to symbolize his new role as a holy figure (Edmunds 265–66). Additionally, it is commonly accepted by modern scholars that The Prophet was the religious leader at the founding of Prophetstown as a rival community to Greenville. Early and present scholars also know Tenskwatawa’s continuous disagreements and miscommunications with Governor Harrison were instrumental in the events that led to the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811 (Cave 651–53).

Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa became influential following the 1795 Treaty of Greenville, which established a boundary line between Native American territory in Ohio and land open for American and European settlement, causing bitter disagreements amongst the Shawnee (Lakomaki 600). As Colonel Johnston writes, unfortunately, the treaty was ignored and white settlers continued to encroach on Indian lands through the early 1800s. Tribes retaliated, causing many Indian and settler casualties (Edmunds 262). During this time, Tenskwatawa established Prophetstown as a place for tribes to unite to “cultivate peace” and “become one great People” (Lakomaki 617). The fighting and boundary disputes led to the Treaty of Fort Wayne (1809), which was an agreement between the United States and selected
tribal leaders, allowing America to purchase roughly two million acres of tribal lands (Dowd 321).

It is at this point in Colonel Johnston’s account that readers can begin to question the validity of his testimony and the soundness of earlier Native American historians. John Sugden suggests that because Native Americans were not literate, “facets of their history which did not directly involve the whites remain obscure… and much that was reported by Indian agents, frontiersmen and military officers came as inaccurate rumor” (273). This may be especially true in regards to the Shawnee brothers; although the Americans and British present similar accounts of their interactions with Tecumseh and The Prophet, their commentary is often vague. For example, modern historians agree that Tecumseh traveled to various Indian tribes to promote unity in 1811 and 1812; however, as Sugden points out, Drake and other early biographers “have woven a mosaic of improbable legends about his journeys, while others have overreacted and implied most of those travels never took place” (273). It’s troubling, then, to read Colonel Johnston’s account without considering the possibility that his reports may have been influenced by rumors about Tecumseh and The Prophet.

The biggest inaccuracy presented in John Johnston’s letter is The Prophet’s involvement and fall from grace at the Battle of Tippecanoe. Johnston writes that The Prophet encouraged tribesman to declare war against the Americans, but then took no part in the battle. Early Native American scholars commonly believed that Tenskwatawa was a coward at Tippecanoe, hiding from the battle; and that this, consequently, cost him the respect of his followers and the collapse of Prophetstown.
They wrote that The Prophet then became an outcast in the community, was demoted from his role as the spiritual leader, and was forced to relinquish his leadership to Tecumseh, who evidently was so mad about the defeat at Tippecanoe, he threatened to kill his brother (Cave 639–40). Gregory Dowd, however, suggests that this historical account is misunderstood and was presented by unreliable witnesses. Earlier scholarship leaves out the caveat that Tippecanoe was perpetuated by Governor William Henry Harrison leading his men to ambush Prophetstown out of his fear of The Prophet’s influence over northwest tribes (Cave 652). Dowd claims the historical account that The Prophet was blamed for Indian losses and that Tecumseh reacted in such a visible display of rage was founded without evidence (322). And modern scholars have identified opposing accounts that suggest Tenskwatawa was still commanding a large following after his “fall from grace” at Tippecanoe. It turns out that much of the first-person accounts about The Prophet’s downfall came from rivals of The Prophet and/or Tecumseh. Anthony Shane, for example, dictated to Tecumseh’s early biographer Benjamin Drake in 1822. Shane was an individual of mixed origin who lived amongst the Shawnee, but he was employed as an Indian agent interpreter and was loyal to the American government. Modern scholars believe Shane was the originator of the false tale that Tecumseh was “always cognizant of his brother’s fraud, was twice on the verge of killing Tenskwatawa, the second time after the Tippecanoe fiasco” (Dowd 324–25). He also delivered the narrative that The Prophet ran from battle, while contemporary sources agree that The Prophet didn’t cower away from the battle; that he only withdrew to a higher vantage point to better com-
mune with the Great Spirit, guaranteeing a victory for his men (Cave 658–59). For all intents and purposes, Shane was The Prophet’s enemy, yet his biased accounts were accepted as truth by Drake and other biographers into the early twentieth century. The issues with Shane’s testimony further perpetuate the belief that much of the scholarship on the great Shawnee brothers was founded upon rumor and prejudice.

In his letter, Johnston inadvertently contradicts Shane’s widely-told story about Tecumseh’s hatred for his brother. Tecumseh’s early biographers wrote accounts of the brothers that suggest Tecumseh did not believe in or follow the religious teachings of The Prophet. Shane encouraged this belief by reporting to Indian agents that Tecumseh never believed in his brother’s religion and only followed Tenskwatawa’s policies to promote the Indian confederacy he desired. Early accounts, such as Benjamin Drake’s Tecumseh biography, often force a nonexistent wedge between the brothers by continually pointing out their differences and underestimating the “strength, resilience, and credibility of their shared beliefs” (Dowd 327). Modern sources, however, agree that Tecumseh was faithful to his brother’s religious teaching and that he often preached about it on his travels (Cave 659). In his letter, Johnston doesn’t claim to know Tecumseh’s feelings for his brother. He does, however, provide accounts of his interactions with Tecumseh which support the idea that the brothers were unified in their beliefs. Johnston explains a time when Tecumseh was a guest at his table at Fort Wayne recalling that he “would not taste any intoxicating liquor, drinking nothing but pure water; would eat no meat, potatoes, and corn bread, and very sparingly of those.” Johnston believes Tecumseh did this to further
his message for the clans to remain independent of the white race. Although that is most likely true, his refusal to accept food and alcohol from the Americans directly aligns with The Prophet’s new religious teachings. Tenskwatawa instructed the Shawnee to “use only the food, implements, and dress of their fathers” and to abandon all American manufactured items (Edmunds 266–67). Modern scholars believe the brothers shared the goal of unity against Euro-American influence (Tenskwatawa, for religious union and Tecumseh, a political confederacy) and that Tenskwatawa’s visions from the Great Spirit may have been the basis for Tecumseh’s widespread travels across the northwest territories (Bottiger 29). So, realistically, Tecumseh was following his brother’s influence through his daily interactions with outsiders and even spoke in defense of The Prophet. Despite the widespread belief of early Tecumseh biographers, he did not try to surpass The Prophet’s power following Tippecanoe (Edmonds 274).

So, when we read Colonel Johnston’s letter “The Biography of Tecumtha,” we must ask ourselves why early historians, like Drake, pitted the brothers against one another and why Tecumseh was remembered so favorably while The Prophet was condemned. Alfred Cave suggests, numerous times, that part of the answer lies within the interactions between Native Americans and Americans. Indiana Governor William Henry Harrison may have been the ultimate gossip in perpetuating the damning reputation of the Shawnee brothers. Harrison and federal Indian agents listened to rumors that The Prophet’s followers were murdering white settlers between 1806 and 1808. The Americans quickly believed that The Prophet was pushing for war; however, after
a few personal encounters, Harrison retracted his negative view of The Prophet and said he was “a good influence on his people and a valuable ally” (Cave 646). Rumors continued to spread across the northwest territories and, consequently, in 1809, Harrison changed his mind again; he grew skeptical of the Shawnee prophet and reported to Washington that Tenskwatawa was planning to attack their settlements. William Wells, a regional diplomat and relative to the Miami tribe’s leader Little Turtle (a well-known opponent of the Shawnee) hated The Prophet because he believed Tenskwatawa’s teachings would disrupt the regional stability. He was suspicious of Tenskwatawa and he may have used his hatred to manipulate and influence Harrison’s decisions (Bottiger 36–37). Wells was known to provide Harrison with conflicting advice, at one time stating his support for The Prophet’s desire for peace and then the next moment spreading rumors that Tenskwatawa asked men to “receive the Tomahawk... and destroy all the white people” (Bottiger 40). Harrison knew about the duplicity of Wells’s observations; however, he allowed these conflicting reports to feed his doubt and insecurity about the Shawnee. Harrison’s main concern was the future of American expansion and, with Wells’s influence, he saw Prophetstown as a roadblock for future land purchases. In her book, An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz explains that many American settlers possessed the same fears as Harrison. Settlers wrote a petition to President Madison demanding action against the Shawnee to ensure safety for people and property in the frontier (85). The Treaty of Fort Wayne was a turning point for Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa because Harrison did not
believe the Shawnee had any claim to the ceded territory; therefore, he badgered and bribed Delaware, Miami, and Potawatomi into signing the treaty (Dunbar-Ortiz 85). Tecumseh and The Prophet condemned the treaty and, in response, the brothers threatened any chiefs who agreed to the new land cessions (Lakomaki 618). The treaty may have been the launch for Tecumseh’s widespread travels to form a Pan-Indian confederacy. Tecumseh, ever the diplomat, met privately with Harrison to attempt to avert war; he urged for a revision to the Treaty of Fort Wayne to promote a peaceful relationship. Harrison promised to discuss the revisions with the president; however, Harrison lied. He, instead, wrote to the secretary of war exclaiming that the brothers refused to be compliant with the treaty and that Prophetstown must be eliminated (Cave 649). Harrison then led his men to Prophetstown, launched the attack to start the Battle of Tippecanoe, and provoked further violence which preceded the War of 1812 (Gutzman, “Harrison, William Henry”). The Shawnee brothers and their followers continually attempted to reassure agents and American leaders of their friendly intentions, despite the malevolent stories about them. Generally, Indian Agents, such as William Wells, corroborated these tales of violence and decimation to protect the local settlers. One agent who did not, however, is Colonel John Johnston. Johnston worked hard to confer with tribes to dispel rumors against the Shawnee violence, even writing a letter to the newspaper in 1809 to assure settlers that none of the “Indian groups posed even the ‘smallest danger’” to frontiersman (Cave 651). Unfortunately, early historians questioned The Prophet’s friendly intentions, going so far as to say that The Prophet “hoodwinked”
the agents. Johnston is noted as one of the American Agents who was swayed by The Prophet’s convincing plea for friendship (Edmunds 272). Recent scholars have looked closer into the encroachment of the settlers and believe that early Americans “exaggerated, manipulated, and misunderstood the Prophet’s nativist message…to empower their own agendas” (Bottiger 30). The agendas, of course, were to eliminate Indian power across the frontier. As Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz writes, the “ethnic cleansing targeting Indigenous civilians continued to define US war making through the nineteenth century” (93). Once again, there is no real agreement on what transpired during this time; however, the ongoing warfare against Native tribes may corroborate the idea that the American settlers’ goal was to annihilate all Indigenous nations. However, Harrison’s habit to lie and exaggerate is quite condemning and may suggest that he perpetuated these rumors as an excuse to enact violence toward the tribes following The Prophet.

The possibility of rumors spreading as truths to justify American violence may be significant in considering how the Shawnee brothers have been remembered. R. David Edmunds believes there is enough evidence that proves The Prophet, not Tecumseh, was “the most important figure in the emergence of the Indian movement” due to Tecumseh’s failure to create a lasting multi-tribal confederacy (275). So, why is Tecumseh memorialized as the “good” Indian, while The Prophet was remembered as a cowardly religious fanatic? The answer lies with the ideals of the American government, military, and citizens. Tecumseh’s behaviors, particularly his focus on tribal unity with a central leader and his diplomatic attempts to reach peaceful political agreements,
directly appealed to Americans because “it was what they would have done” (Edmunds 275). So, Tecumseh exemplified the traits the Americans and the British valued in warfare and better aligned with their concept of a “noble savage.” And Tecumseh’s peaceful attempts and his admirable and heroic actions, including his “fight to the end,” have appealed to American citizens who, historically, want to celebrate or mourn Native Americans. Consequently, Tecumseh’s biographers romanticized his strengths and, unfortunately, presented a “white man’s Indian” as fact (Edmunds 276). Tenskwatawa, who was viewed as reclusive, cowardly, malevolent, and fanatical, did not “meet white expectations of an Indian leader” (Cave 671). Since there is a lack of true understanding about Shawnee culture and religion, it is easy to see that early American historians did not comprehend or appreciate The Prophet’s influence over his people and, therefore, could condemn his behavior.

With the opposing historical accounts in existence, it is impossible to know what is factual and what is rumor. Even John Sugden, who is often viewed as a premiere Tecumseh biographer today, often uses words such as probably, erroneous, could have, fictitious, may have, and exaggerated to show that a lack of “eye-witness reports” led to a “fantastic story” about Tecumseh (279). With agents and government officials, like Harrison and Wells, spreading false truths, it is hard to tell if Colonel John Johnston shared in the views of his peers, was a true advocate for the Shawnee brothers (and Native Americans in general), or if he was, indeed, “hoodwinked” by a false pretense of friendship. However, when forming opinions of this Indian agent, I urge readers to consider how Johnston asserts himself at
numeros times in “Biography of Tecumtha.” First, as Colonel Johnston writes about the failed attempt for Tecumseh’s multiracial confederacy:

He appeared too late upon the stage of action; such a spirit fifty or sixty years earlier, might have set bounds to the progress of the white man in the West. In contemplating the wretched fate of the natives of this continent, we are almost instinctively led to approve a sentiment uttered many years ago in the House of Representatives in Congress by Mr. Hopkinson, of Pennsylvania, “that when he beheld the wrongs and ruin of the Indian race, he almost wished that the mariner’s compass had never been invented.”

Johnston also mentions a time when the Wyandots wished to relinquish the nature of their tribe to become citizens of the United States and the Senate struck down the treaty:

Doubtless that body had good and sufficient reasons in the opinions of the members for so acting, yet it must readily occur to the minds of any one acquainted with the condition of the Indians, their past history and future prospects, that if some such security is not provided for them, a few more generations will witness the total extinction of their race, and then how the weeping page of history will tell of the wrongs and blasted faith visited on the red men by the rulers and people of this nation! How keenly all our sensibilities are enlisted in the cause of the African, yet not a voice is scarcely heard in or out of Congress, to vindicate the claims of the Indian. Is it because no political capital can be made out of the misfortunes of the latter?
Furthermore, the agent discusses his relationship with the chief, Black Hoof, and expresses his companion’s belief that Native tribes would never be able to escape the encroachment of white men. The colonel asks, “Is it any wonder that they so obstinately refuse to receive religion or the arts of civilized and Christian people?”

Even though Colonel Johnston presents information about Tecumseh and The Prophet that was founded on rumor, might we look at him as a champion of the Native American people? Might we consider that, if he had known he was reporting falsehoods, he would have advocated against the common beliefs of his peers? Or, perhaps he was simply a man, doing his job, trying to keep the peace across the northwestern frontier? We may never know his intentions, but it is worth contemplating as we read “Biography of Tecumtha.”

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“Jailed on the Charge of Sodomy”: A Same-Sex, Interracial Marriage in 1888

Adam Yeich

The story, printed in Springfield, Ohio, about an occurrence in Fort Smith, Arkansas, began on July 13, with a white man, identified as Chesser, being arrested for disorderly conduct at the home of a black man, identified as George Burton, who was said to be known as a hermaphrodite.¹ In the course of Chesser’s trial, it came to light that he and Burton were married. Records were found that Chesser had gotten a marriage license on May 10 to marry a George Ann Holly, who was said to be George Burton. They were placed under arrest for sodomy.² The article concluded with the statement that this was thought to be the first case on record of two men living together as a married couple. This type of event is unheard of in historical texts concerning same-sex relations between men in the nineteenth century in America. There are a few accounts of relationships like

Nineteenth-Century Ohio Literature pairs forgotten readings with new essays that explain them. In this installment, Adam Yeich explains and presents an Ohio newspaper report of a same-sex, interracial marriage in 1888. Nineteenth-Century Ohio Literature is edited by Jon Miller at The University of Akron. For more information, visit ideaexchange.uakron.edu/nineteenthcenturyohioliterature.
this between women, but none between men and none between men or women that went so far as attempted legalization of the relationship, i.e. marriage. The fact that the story occurred in Arkansas but was found in a newspaper from Ohio requires looking briefly at background on both locations to provide some context for the text in question.

The source of this text, the *Springfield Daily Republican*, was printed in Springfield, Ohio, in Clark County from January 1887 until September 1888, when the name was changed to the *Springfield Republic-Times* after a merger with the *Champion City Times*. The paper was printed daily, as a smaller publication, with only four-page issues (“About Springfield daily republic”). As for the town of Springfield itself, by the 1880s it had grown to a population of over 20,000 from the industrialization of the city (“Springfield, Ohio”). Serving one of the major cities of southwestern Ohio, Springfield’s paper attended not only to local issues and articles, but those on a national level, as seen in the text below.

The national news on this page of the July 13, 1888 *Springfield Daily Republic* has a horrible, sensational consistency. Floods run up millions in losses in Ohio; a cyclone passes over Michigan; a young mother burns to death after her coal oil stove explodes. A handsome train agent knocks down his wife and leaves town with his pretty young stenographer; an immigrant toddler is decapitated by the wheel of a train; a man chloroforms his companion and mutilates his body so he can stuff it into a trunk; and in Virginia a “colored demon,” charged with criminal assault on a “respectable white lady,” is taken from the sheriff’s custody and hung in a nearby grove. In addition to the story on Chesser and
Burton’s marriage, two more stories describe Arkansas: in Hot Springs, “country” toughs “perforate” and kill a policeman in a drive-by shooting, and a “race war” is predicted to be “imminent” between “White and Black Citizens” of Crittenden County, where blacks outnumber whites five to one and have control of nearly all political offices.

The changes in life, society, and economy in Arkansas reflected the changes occurring across the United States after Reconstruction and into the Gilded Age (roughly 1875–1900). There was massive economic growth, and a mass market was created. These growths were primarily (but not solely) a result of the expanded railroad. Railroad companies—often through newspapers—encouraged people to move to Arkansas to help cultivate the previously untapped lands available to grow and harvest crops. Many immigrants from Germany, Russia, and Poland, among others, moved into the area for this chance to prosper. The development of a national economy also led to demographic changes, as many people moved to cities and towns from rural areas. In 1888, for example, Fort Smith was well on its way to becoming the second largest city in the state, a status it established by 1900 (Moneyhon).

The location named in the dateline of the Springfield article concerning Chesser and Burton’s marriage, Fort Smith is likely where they were “jailed on the charge of sodomy.” A search of library catalogs suggests that Fort
Smith had perhaps nine newspapers in publication in 1888. Between the organization of Fort Smith’s Sebastian County in 1851 and the end of the nineteenth century, more than forty newspapers were started and published in the county, most from the city of Fort Smith. The newspapers of Fort Smith are the most likely of all to have printed the story concerning “Jailed on the Charge of Sodomy,” but as of now the original, Arkansas source for the Springfield article has not been found. It is not probable that the story printed in the *Springfield Daily Republic* was the original story, and while an article concerning the story may have likely run in one of the state newspapers, if it did, it also would have probably run in one of the Fort Smith papers.

Concerning Fort Smith, in 1870, a fire destroyed the officers’ quarters at the fort, and the federal government decided to sell the Fort Smith property and land, but a later decision was made to move the Western Arkansas Federal District Court to Fort Smith from Van Buren in Crawford County, where Fort Smith was located. The city never had a sizeable African American community (Boulden). The fact is interesting to this study, as George was black and James, his husband, white. It seems their relationship, however it was defined, both before and after their marriage, would have been more conspicuous in a town with fewer African Americans than was typical of other large cities in the South.

To understand the events of “Jailed on the Charge of Sodomy,” the historical context of the event must first be understood. The nineteenth century was a turning point in both the history of same-sex sexual behavior and the history of how society at large viewed and reacted to same-sex sexual behavior. Up until the last half
of the nineteenth century—near the end of it, actually—there had never been a defined sexuality. People did not define themselves in any way based on their sexual behavior. There was no gay or straight, no heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, or any other term by which a person identified. Of course there were moral and legal constraints on having any sex deemed unnatural, constraints which many a man (and woman) struggled against, both within themselves and from within
society. From a legal standpoint, anti-sodomy laws existed in almost every state in the union during the nineteenth century. What is interesting is that, in all of the cases Jonathan Ned Katz examines in Love Stories, there was not a single case in the state of Arkansas for the nineteenth century.

Men who had sex with (and often loved) other men did not do so in the terms of relationships as we would see them today. The nineteenth century did not offer the means for these sorts of relationships. Men had “friendships,” “companions,” and “lovers,” whom they met either via a set of understood codes and behaviors or the use of coded language and innuendoes designed to keep their intentions private from those of society outside their small “community” of man-loving men. Katz wrote of men having lasting “friendships,” but these did not extend to marriage, and he implied that most of the time, romance between men did not include sexual relations, and sexual relations did not include romance. He explained, “Romantic lovers and sodomites [men having sex with men] inhabited separate, parallel universes, leaving a great unmapped space between them” (Katz 90). From the context of Chesser and Burton’s marriage, it would appear this was not always true.

While Burton and Chesser’s situation was unique for its permanence of marriage in a time where that was less than common, it was also unique on the level of race. Relations between blacks and whites were strained, especially in the South, though there is no evidence that this was prominent in Fort Smith at the time the marriage occurred. The marriage would, however, have been illegal according to anti-miscegenation legislation, which prohibited interracial marriage be-
between any white person and another non-white person (Thompson 357). Burton is clearly identified as “colored” in the text of the article, as Chesser is identified as “white.” Marriage between races was illegal, but there were no clear laws preventing the amalgamation of people of different races (Berry 839). Sex between men of different races in America is also not touched upon in the historiography of same-sex behavior in the nineteenth century. The only exception found was the claim that because it was seemingly ignored in writings of the period, it could be presumed that “interracial sodomy may have been so uncommon it was invisible” (Katz 57). This is yet another reason urging greater study of Burton and Chesser’s marriage.

Why this story is so rare has been established, but another question—why media coverage of same-sex behavior between men was so infrequent in the nineteenth century—is also worth consideration here. Prior to the Civil War, there was very little mention of “sodomy” or any of the other terms of reference to same-sex behavior in American newspapers. As it was so often referred, the crime of sodomy was to be unnamed; it was reprehensible to be spoken. However, at the end of the nineteenth century, “men-lusting men were exposed to public view as a new form of urban entertainment” (Katz 288). This revelation shows how the activities of these “men-lusting men” went from hidden in whispered shadows to being moved into prominence for the entertainment of the general public. In addition, earlier media articles concerning sodomical behavior were brief, where they appeared at all, giving no details past the man’s name and the vague nature of his crime, “sodomy.” Katz’s observation may explain why this 1888
story has as much information as it does; forty or fifty years earlier, the notice may have been only “Burton and Chesser arrested for sodomy on July 13.”

Despite the information and context assembled here, the resources needed to flesh out this story into a further historical study are scarce, as only a few (and not nearly enough) Arkansas newspapers have been digitized. There is no information for Chesser or Burton in the criminal records of Arkansas for the period as documented in the National Archive. Physical copies of Arkansas newspapers are archived in various locations across Arkansas, Texas, and Oklahoma. However, this story is far too important to the history of same-sex behavior between men and the history of their homosexual counterparts today (as they are now identified) to be ignored. Further research will need done to give this event the attention it deserves and disseminate this finding to the larger community both within the scholarship and without.

**Note on the Text**

“Jailed on the Charge of Sodomy” was printed in issue 227 of volume 34 of the *Springfield Daily Republic*. The story appeared on the third page, at the bottom of the third column. As the story originated in Fort Smith, Arkansas, it is likely that this is not the original article told of the event. What is more likely is that this story was found in an Arkansas newspaper and was then reprinted in Springfield. The information about and the presentation of this text would be more complete with the inclusion of the originating article(s) from Arkansas. At this point in the research of this historical
text, there was no access to the archives of Arkansas’s newspapers. None of the newspapers for the second half of the nineteenth century have been digitized into the *Chronicling America* database. As far as I was able to find, these necessary newspaper resources—if they exist—are only available in hard copy, stored in various archives around the state of Arkansas.

When recreating this text for use in this edition, I wanted it to remain as true to its original publication as I could possibly make it, errors or not. For this reason, there were only two minor changes made, both for simple clarity of the text, and neither of which at all affected the integrity of the original. The first change made was to the second paragraph. In the text of the *Springfield Daily Republic*, the section changed in the first line of the recreated text (second line of the original text) of the second paragraph read “and it was found that on May 10 Chester procured a license to marry George Ann Holly.” Here, I changed “Chester” to “Chesser” as that is the name by which he was referred to throughout the rest of the article—three more times. In addition, from my research, I found the marriage license referred to in the text, confirming that the man’s name was in fact Chesser, not Chester, which could have been a simple typographical error on the part of the printer (“Arkansas, County Marriages, 1837–1957”).

The second change I made was in the second line of the recreated text (third line of the original text) in the third paragraph, and it was a simple punctuation change. The section originally read “Finally a physician was summoned and the so-called Mrs. Chesser subjected to an examination. when it was discovered that Burton was not what he professed to be, but a natural
man.” The period between “examination” and “when” makes the second half of the sentence a fragment and some clarity of the likely intended message is lost. For that reason, I changed the period to a comma, as the sentence seems to be structured in such a way that the reason “Mrs. Chesser” was subjected to an examination at all was because Burton was not the hermaphrodite “he professed to be” but a natural man. Therefore, the officials needed to confirm that “Mrs. Chesser” was also a natural man before they could charge both of the men with the crime of sodomy and imprison them.

Jailed on the Charge of Sodomy

Fort Smith, Ark., July 13.—A white man named Chesser was arrested for disorderly conduct Monday at the house of a colored man named George Burton, who has been known here for some years past as a hermaphrodite. At Chesser’s trial it came to light that he was married to Burton.

The county records were examined, and it was found that on May 10 Chesser procured a license to marry George Ann Holly, who is no other than George Burton, and the marriage ceremony was duly performed at the house of Burton, a preacher named Campbell officiating. This rather stumped the official, as there could be no law found on the books covering the case.

Finally a physician was summoned and the so-called Mrs. Chesser subjected to an examination, when it was discovered that Burton was not what he professed to be, but a natural man. Upon this discovery both were lodged in jail on a charge of sodomy. This is thought
to be the first case on record where one man was duly married to and living with another.

Notes

1. “Hermaphrodite” today is understood to mean a person (or animal) with both male and female reproductive organs. While this was one of its meanings back in the nineteenth century as well, it was also a term used to refer to a man who had sexual relations with other men. It was a term to imply a man was effeminate, as there was apparently no other way for the people of that period to comprehend same-sex sexual attraction in men other than the feminization of those men (“Hermaphrodite”).

   This idea of hermaphroditism and effeminacy in men is also elaborated in Jonathan Katz’s text, where he elaborates on the idea of effeminate men and masculine women (301).

2. “Sodomy” is generally understood today to mean anal sexual intercourse (typically between two men), though it can also be used to describe oral sex in a negative connotation (“Sodomy”). However, this use is less common. In the nineteenth century—as well as prior to it—sodomy was an umbrella term used to describe any kind of sexual activity deemed unnatural, and “natural” meant sex that was procreative. If there was no reproductive possibility in the sex, it was unnatural and thus considered sodomy.

   Jonathan Katz explains, providing evidence from literature and legal documents, how “sodomy” was a blanket term up to and during the nineteenth century to refer to all acts of “unnatural” or nonprocreative sexual intercourse. It is useful to note that in most cases, some form of penetration was necessary to constitute sodomy. Oral “penetration” or copulation was not recognized as a form of inappropriate sexual contact until later in the nineteenth century, when it was then added to the list of sexual contacts referred to as “sodomy” (64–71).

3. The term “homosexual” (and later, its supposed opposite, “heterosexual”) was not invented until 1869, and it is credited to an Austro-Hungarian writer, Karl Maria Kertbeny (Hatheway 103). The idea of homosexuality as a sexual identity—or really the idea of a person having a sexual identity at all—was not recognized until the end of the nineteenth century and into the first years of the twentieth century (Hatheway 49). Before this point, people were not known to identify as part of any group or “orientation” based on with whom they have sexual contact.


Moneyhon, Carl H. “Post-Reconstruction through the Gilded Age, 1875 through 1900.” *The

Search results for James Chesser, Sebastian County, Arkansas. Family Search, Intellectual Reserve, familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&query=%2Bgivenname%3AJames~%20%2Bsurname%3AChesser~%20%2Bmarriage_place%3A%22Sebastian%20County%20Arkansas%22~


Female Cyclists: Two Essays from the 1869 *Hancock Jeffersonian*

*Paige Zenovic*

Under the section titled “FOREIGN GOSSIP” of the October 30, 1868, edition of *The Hancock Jeffersonian* ran what may have been the first mention of the bicycle—the “velocipede”—in the Findlay, Ohio newspaper. The brief line informs readers that “the latest Paris velocipede carries two persons and a footman to propel.” Three months later, a lengthy, front-page article called “The Velocipede” was published in the paper. The almost five-thousand-word article may have been published due to an increase of public interest in the machines. And it may have been published because the velocipede was coming to town: on the third page of the January 22, 1869, paper, the editors note the “Messrs. H. Kob, & Co., of this place, have ordered one of these machines.” The editors describe the front-page essay “The

*Nineteenth-Century Ohio Literature* pairs forgotten readings with new essays that explain them. In this installment, Paige Zenovic introduces two essays on women riding bicycles from the time when they were first being introduced to Ohio. *Nineteenth-Century Ohio Literature* is edited by Jon Miller at The University of Akron. For more information, visit [http://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/nineteenthcenturyohioliterature/](http://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/nineteenthcenturyohioliterature/)
Velocipede” as containing “much information in regard to this invention” and hope that “Its length should not prevent any from reading it, as these machines bid fair to become of practical utility, and may bring about a complete revolution in the present means of travel.” “The Velocipede” is presented in full, below, as the first of two nineteenth-century readings on the subject.

As these articles evidence, the velocipede was enjoying widespread and international attention in 1869. At this time, American roads were not yet familiar with the “iron horses” that had picked up speed in a few year earlier in Western Europe. Velocipedes were revolutionizing travel. Whether it was for leisure, sport, or transportation, the use of velocipedes attracted attention and inspired the imagination.

The history of velocipedes in America is intertwined with its industrialization. As transportation improvements allowed people to travel with greater speed and ease, people were also gaining more time to pursue leisure activities (Guroff 93–94). The introduction of velocipedes into American culture was due not only to innovations from the industrial revolution, such as steel and rubber, but also from people’s desires to improve the quality of their free time (Christie-Robin 3; Guroff 93). The first rudimentary velocipede had reached America in 1866 by a French immigrant, and in two years’ time tungsten steel, a material that was
used in the production of later velocipedes, was invented (Christie-Robin 3; Guroff 93). This catalyst allowed what one of the following articles called “velocipede mania” to roll in.

*The Hancock Jeffersonian* published two long articles on velocipedes in 1869, and both are reproduced below. This newspaper is perhaps only known to Amer-
ican literary historians for their initial publication of the “Nasby Letters” by David Ross Locke, who began working at the paper in 1861. 1869 was a notable year for the “iron horses” and the paper seemed aware of its growing popularity. In 1869, *The New York Times* reported that “no sooner does a man try a machine anywhere than out comes the exclamation of, ‘I must get me one of these’” and predicted that velocipede races would soon become popularized entertainment (Guroff 94–95).

*The Hancock Jeffersonian* was interested in this new form of entertainment and republished “The Velocipede” in January of 1869. “The Velocipede” details the history of the velocipede and the mechanics of the machine. Additionally, the article makes a passionate plea to readers to accept the velocipede as part of American society. The author of the article even claims that the use of such devices by women would have a positive impact on their overall health. In March of 1869, “Riding the Velocipede” was published. Unlike the previous article, “Riding the Velocipede” was written to entertain the readers rather than inform them of the workings and culture that surrounded the machines. This leisure-class humor piece describes a man who happens upon a cycling school in New York city. There, he witnesses men and a woman trying to master the iron horse before returning to his hotel, where he dreams of owning a velocipede for work. His dream is so vivid that he wakes up and finds himself clinging to the bedpost and straddling the footboard.

While both articles detail the velocipedes with different intentions, one remarkable aspect of both pieces is the way they describe the experience and future of women riders. When describing how female riders in-
teract with their machines, “The Velocipede” and “Riding the Velocipede” view such an activity with perhaps different motives. Both articles make the reader aware that men regarded the invention as something by and for men. Both articles describe the velocipede, however, as something that may interest women, too. And both articles speculate about the experience women might have riding bikes. For instance, in “Riding the Velocipede,” the sole female rider is introduced as such:

Among them was a solitary woman, apparently a female, dressed partially in pantaloons; her waterfall had come off, and she looked kind of demoralized. One fellow was holding her up, and I heard him ask her in gentle tones ‘if it hurt her much?’ The others were occasionally casting shy glances at her, and looking as if they were very much amused at something that had been done.

The female rider’s attempt to ride the velocipede seems to be sexualized; she is described as looking “demoralized” after a ride. Her hair has come undone, a man whispers “if it hurt her much?,” and other men find amusement in following her situation with “shy glances.” It appears that something intimate, and perhaps sinister, has taken place.

While “Riding the Velocipede” may make a tongue-in-cheek reference to bicycle riding as a kind of sexual experience for women, there were additional concerns that the riding of a velocipede was an activity unbecoming of a Victorian woman. In “The Velocipede” the author declares that “the two wheeled velocipedes, or bicycles as they are styled, are intended for the male sex only, and are by far the swiftest machines.” He suggests that women choose to ride the slower three-wheel op-
tion instead or try their luck on the poduscaph (a rudimentary human-powered watercraft) despite the very real risk of tipping the pedal boat over and getting wet.

This sexualization of the female rider was a common viewpoint of many males during 1869. The velocipede offered women the opportunity to be mobile, to be outside, and there were fears that many conservative men had about woman having access to such freedom (Christie-Robin 2; Guroff 110). Concerns were raised
about how the unsupervised travel could lead to “wan
ton behavior,” about how the physical exertion of riding would be more than what a woman could afford to put out, and about how the seat would teach a woman to masturbate (Guroff 111). The velocipede and its female rider was bound to cause much controversy during this time period, and these fears were being expressed to the readers of *The Hancock Jeffersonian* in 1869.

*Note on the First Text*

“The Velocipede” has been faithfully transcribed from the January 22, 1869, *Hancock Jeffersonian*. The article was originally published in the *Chicago Times* on December 31, 1865, with no author indicated in either paper. A few edits were made for the comfort of the modern reader such as deleting duplicate words, fixing capitalization errors, and the addition of punctuation at the end of several sentences.

**THE VELOCIPEDE.**

“Nothing is at once invented and perfected,” says an old Latin maxim, the truth of whose application was made manifest in the early history of the velocipede. Like all things of earth it had its forty years in the wilderness. It first made its appearance in Paris and received notice to the following effect in the *Journal de Paris*. The date of the *entree* was July 27, 1789. It was stated that a certain vehicle, invented by M. M. Blanchard and Massurier—the former the celebrated aeronaut—was exhibited in rapid motion in the Place Louis XVI on July 27, 1789, in
presence of many members of the French academy and a large concourse of spectators.¹ At the front of the machine was the head of an eagle with outspread wings, to which was attached to the apparatus with which the driver directed its movements. Behind him was seated an individual who gave an impetus, more or less rapid, to the machine by pressing his feet alternately on the ground. He sat down or stood at discretion, with his legs half concealed in a sort of box, where the springs that communicated movement to the machine were evidently placed. The inventor subsequently transported the vehicle to Versailles, and exhibited its capabilities in the presence of Louis XVI, Maria Antoinette and their court. There is nothing to show why this experiment failed, but it is to be supposed that it had its defects.

The second appearance was in 1808, and public exhibitions were made of its workings in the Jardin du Luxembourg, but without success. At the time it was mounted on very low wheels, and the rider had to support himself by placing his feet directly on the ground. Such a mechanism was of course rudimentary, and the result was that the invention was extensively ridiculed and caricatured, and in these archives only do any traces of the first experiments made with this machine in the garden of Luxembourg exist.

But the modern railroad locomotive was also sneered at and caricatured, and so was the modern steamboat. And the early inventors, who sought to make the world wiser, were called disciples of the black art, and friends

¹ Marie Madeleine-Sophie Blanchard, a French balloonist. In 1814 she performed for Louis XVIII, who named her “Official Aeronaut of the Restoration.” She was the first woman to be killed by an aviation accident.
of the devil. And more, they were socially ostracized; they were hooted at and stoned by the mob, and sometimes burned at the stake. But they never ceased scheming and planning, nor was the velocipede to stop here. Twenty years after its first exhibition the velocipede re-appeared in Paris. This time, a public functionary, one M. Drenze, perfected the machine of twenty years before, and again exhibited it in its improved form. M. Drenze secured the rider's point of support upon the axletrees to the two wheels instead of the ground, and this created the actual modern velocipede. The inventor, who belonged to the administration of postoffices, also formed the further idea of proposing this machine for the use of rural postmen, as being of greater availability in the matter of speed and promptness, and at the same time causing them less fatigue. The plan was adopted, but, unfortunately, just in the winter season, when difficulties existed in the way of locomotion. The wheels slipped about in the hard sand without advancing, and the enterprise was once again considered a failure. At this late day, it would have been suggested that it was only necessary to iron the wheels, or suspend the use of the vehicle during the winter. But the French Government disliked innovation, and dropped the velocipede.

“Three times and out,” is the old saying, but not so much with our subject. A few years on, and, undiscouraged, the velocipede appeared a third time, and again in an altered form—this time being a little carriage upon three wheels, and propelled by the hands of the rider. This machine did not succeed on account of the difficulty of guiding it, and the fatigue it caused the guider. It is a well-known fact that the muscles of the legs can
be used much longer than those of the arms, and, act-
ing upon this hint, all good velocipedes are so arranged
that the action of the arms is merely complementary to
that of the legs. This failure was the result of not attend-
ing to this fact.

“The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind
exceedingly fine.” Science and improvement move like
the tortoise, but still they move, as Galileo said of the
world. When a pebble is dropped in the water your eye
loses the ripple. But that little splash has displaced ev-
ery drop in the stream, and the water you see before
you has been completely changed. The velocipede as
it has been exhibited thus far was an idea dropped into
the mind, and that idea must grow, and the mind must
be revolutionized before its work ends. In the presence
of success who is so bold as to laugh. Ridicule falls
harmless before the iron armor of prosperity. And the
velocipede succeeded. Paris, where it was hooted at
and frowned down, now lifts up the prostrate work,
and the thing despised yesterday is the idol worshipped
to-day. It is the poetry of justice, and the two share the
triumph. The thoroughfares of Paris are thronged with
countless riders on the strange creature, and the pub-
lic have warned the velocipede votaries that they must
carry their lanterns on their vehicles to avoid accidents.
The mania has spread to all classes, and to the subur-
ban cities of the capital. In St. Cloud, Vincennes, En-
ghein, Pantim; in Bordeaux, Marseilles, and the other
principal cities, the people are all riding this economi-
cal species of iron horse, which requires no feed, har-
ness, stable, or groom to care for it.

The velocipede and velocipede mania has reached
America. It struck New Orleans many years ago. But
the inhabitants of that benighted burgh thought it might be the “yellow jack”\(^2\) in disguise, and gave it the cold shoulder. Time passed, and all Europe was ablaze with enthusiasm and astride of their favorite steeds. When the mania reached here, it found us deep in the mysteries of “planchette.”\(^3\) With true popular fickleness, the “many-headed multitude” dropped the mystic symbol, and vaulted into the saddle of the velocipede. New York, Philadelphia and Chicago are all infected.

New York, the Paris of America, is, in this instance, emulous of her model. Divines, lawyers, preachers, and editors have mounted their iron steeds with the same vigorous enthusiasm they mount their favorite hobbies. Beecher has left off worshipping himself and is doing penance on the velocipede; Dana is practicing for an aeronaut in the same machine; and Greeley is getting one ready for the next lecture season. Reporters are mounting them and galloping around Gotham after items. Bennett is fast becoming an expert in this line of horsemanship, with that idea of escaping from the horse-whippings which are threatened him at every corner.\(^4\) And to finish the record, the ladies are entering the lists in the pleasures and excitement of the new style of horsemanship.—Velocipedes are to be met in every street and in the parks, public and private.

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2. Refers to a disease typical of the time period (yellow fever).
3. Refers to the teardrop-shaped device, usually with a small window in the body, used to maneuver about the Ouija board.
4. Henry Ward Beecher was a well-known clergyman and author; Charles A. Dana was editor and part owner of the *New York Sun*; Horace Greeley was the founder of the *New-York Tribune*. James Gordon Bennett, Sr. and James Gordon Bennett, Jr. were both publishers of the tabloid *The New York Herald*. 
Female Cyclists

Philadelphia, staid and quakerish, has adopted the velocipede with but little less enthusiasm than New York. Forney is practicing, and so are the young swells and bloods of the town. The ladies here are also catching the fever, and the broad thoroughfares of the rectangular city bid fair to rival New York and their exhibitions of the new order of equestrianship.

Chicago, alert and awake, is not to be outdone in anything, and velocipedes are becoming a matter of everyday occurrence on our streets. Our tradesmen and merchants are beginning to lay them in for sale, and, as the fever is catching, by the time the season opens we will see them becoming among our regular institutions. If they are to prove a success, there is no city and surrounding country better adapted to their use than this; a city perfectly level, and its surrounding country perfectly flat, are elements for the use of this machine best calculated to test its merits.

Chicago, as is her wont, is not to be beaten even in velocipedes, and comes to the rescue with a machine which differs from any other extant, not only in its general appearance, but in its motive power. This Chicago velocipede has three wheels, two behind and one in front. The hind wheels are considerably the largest, being four feet and two inches in diameter, while the front wheel is only two feet and one-half. The front wheel is for the purpose of guiding the machine, and is connected by a lever with the body, and reaching within convenient distance of the seat, a straddle runs up from the axle of the front or guiding wheel, about a foot from the tire, which is surmounted by a lamp. This velocipede is

5. John Weiss Forney founded the independent Democratic newspaper, the Philadelphia Press.
propelled by spring-power, which works as follows: On the axle of the hind wheels is fastened a pinion, which is operated upon by a cog wheel, five times its size in diameter. Fastened to each side of this large cog-wheel is a dog, which works into a ratchet, upon the hub of which ratchet is fastened the centre of the springs. The other end of the spring is fastened to a rod of iron, which runs through the body of the velocipede. These springs are made of the very best English spring steel, two inches wide, one-tenth of an inch thick, and nine feet long, and when wound up their power is estimated at over 3,000 pounds each. Immediately outside of the spring, and in the ratchet hub, is fastened one of the treadles. The large cog-wheel and ratchet work loose around the shaft on which they are placed. The treadles are two feet long, and reach from the ratchet shaft to within convenient distance for the foot of a person occupying the seat. On the end of each treadle is a slipper to keep the foot from being shoved forward. By an ingenious contrivance the wheels can be thrown out of gear, so that the velocipede, even under full headway, can be turned around within a space of fourteen feet.

The seat has the appearance and general characteristics of a buggy seat, and can carry two persons with ease. It was designed for the use of ladies only, but can be used by anybody. The grand feature of this Chicago velocipede is, that it is worked by spring power, and that the springs can be perpetually wound up by simply using treadles alternately. It only takes one-fourth the power to wind the springs that the springs exert in unwinding. By pressing upon the treadle with the foot the ratchet is turned, on which is placed the spring, which of course is thereby wound. It differs from the Alton in-
vention in this, that the springs are being continuously wound by the alternate treadles, and this can always be kept in motion; while the Alton invention runs only a mile and then stops to be wound again. This Chicago invention has been tested and all who have seen it are sanguine of its success. The cost of one of these machines will be about $100.

Velocipedes are of various kinds. Some have two, and other three, and even four wheels; all have either pedals or rests on which to place the feet, and usually either brakes or levers regulate the speed.

THE TWO-WHEEL VELOCIPEDES.

The two-wheeled velocipedes, or bicycles as they are styled, are intended for the male sex only, and are by far the swiftest machines.

They are usually of wrought iron, and have pedals or reels attached to the front and large wheel, and the working of which, by a light movement of the feet, gives the requisite impulse to the vehicle. The saddle is poised upon a bar iron, suspended a few inches above the top fore wheel. The hands rest on a handle in front of the machine, which, working on a pivot, serves as a balancing pole, the equilibrium being preserved by giving a slight twist to this handle. The brake, which at once stops the revolving motion of the wheel, is applied by means of a sharper twist.

THE THREE WHEEL VELOCIPEDE.

The three-wheel velocipede, or tricycle, is easier to guide and safer to use than the bicycle. Its speed, however, is less rapid; still it can be made to pass a carriage at full trot.

As the fair sex largely patronize the tricycle, the seat is more commodious than that of the bicycle, having
sides and backs of wicker, and a horse hair cushion to sit upon. The hind wheels, though large, are light, and revolve with facility. The fore wheel, which is smaller, serves to guide the machine, being acted upon by means of the handle, which causes it instantly to turn in the direction indicated by the rider. The pedals are shaped like slippers, which facilitate the movement of the legs, and at the same time admits of the foot being disengaged instantaneously. The movement required to impel the machine is a perfectly natural one, analogous to that of walking. That is, it requires but the slightest pressure of the foot, and produces no unusual fatigue to the leg. In addition to these advantages, the largest three-wheeled velocipedes have a bar which follows the line of the eccentrics attached to the pedals and fits on the axles. By assisting the movement of this lever, the speed of the vehicle is considerably increased, and a simple pressure against it checks the rotary movement of the wheel and stops the progress of the machine. This lever is, in fact, both a means of impulsion and a brake.

THE PRICES.

The prices of velocipedes range according to their arrangement.—Those that are imported into this country, range from $80 to $125. Of course this is exclusive of those numerous etceteras, such as a grease-box, india rubber cushions for the iron bar in front of the machine, on which the legs rest, and the like.

THE SPEED

attained by the swifter kind of velocipedes, averages from 12 to 13 miles an hour; adepts find no difficulty whatever in accomplishing 50 miles within five hours,

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6. Refers to an eccentric, a circular disk fixed to a rotating axle
without once alighting from their vehicle. It is recorded that a couple of amateurs making a tour through part of France, challenged each other as to which could perform the greater distance within 24 hours. One gave in after having accomplished 87 miles; the other went on until he made 123 miles in the allotted time.

THE LABOR TO WORK IT.

It should be understood that, in impelling a velocipede, the limbs are not constantly in motion, as on level ground; when the impetus is at the average rate, or when the machine is descending an incline, the feet may be removed from the pedals and the legs may be placed on the bar fixed in front of the velocipede for this purpose. A slight impulsion given from time to time suffices to keep up the speed.

THE ASCENT.

The ascent of any incline greater than 1 in 25 is said to be impracticable. When the rider, therefore, encounters a hill of more than average steepness, he has to dismount and lead his velocipede by the hand, which it is said can be done with almost the same ease as in carrying an ordinary walking stick.

AMERICAN MANUFACTURE.

The manufacture of this locomotive novelty has now commenced in this country. Americans, with their usual fertility of invention, have begun to improve on the French model as above given, and when these improvements will end, the archives in the patent office at Washington can only foreshadow. New York, Philadelphia and Boston have already started shops for their manufacture, while it is expected that Chicago will soon do the same. The French models are not only expensive, owing to the peculiar shape and construction
of the iron frame, and consequent difficulty of forging it, but are heavy, owing to all parts being solid, and no effective provision has been made for the removal of any part that may be broken or worn out.

AN IMPROVED VELOCIPEDE,

recently patented in New York city, overcame all the before-mentioned objections to the French model. The reach or frame of the New York velocipede is tubular, and thereby great strength and lightness are secured. The bearings are all of composition, or gun metal, and so attached that when too much worn out they may be replaced by others, which are interchangeable, like the parts of sewing machines and fire-arms. The hub of the binder wheel is hushed with composition or gun metal; and the apis is of peculiar construction, constituting in itself an oilpot by being made tubular and closed at either end by a screw, on the removal of which it may be filled with lard oil. This oil finds it way out to the bearing as fast as required, through two or three fine holes made for the purpose in the axle. Another important feature in the American velocipede is the arrangement of the tiller or steering handle, which is brought well back and sufficiently high to require the rider to maintain an erect position, with his arms well back and hands well separated, thus keeping the chest well expanded, and allowing free play of the lungs. The stirrups also differ from the Parisian model. These stirrups are three-sided with circular flanges at each end; and as they are fitted to turn on the crank-pins, the pressure of the foot will always bring one of the three flat sides into proper position. These flat sides are roughened to prevent the foot from slipping, and are so shaped as to permit the use of the fore part of the foot and bring the ankle joint into play,
and thereby relieve the knee considerably, making the propulsion much easier than when the shank of the foot is used exclusively. The cranks are made adjustable, to suit different persons and different kinds of roads and inclines. The saddle is supported on a spring, giving an elastic seat. The brake is exceedingly simple and effective, being composed of a block of hard wood attached to the under side of the back part of the saddle, which is shaped to form a good brake or rest for the lower part of the back of the rider. The spring of the saddle being adjusted to suit the rider, the break-block clears the face of the hind wheel until it is required to be used, and then a pressure forward against the tiller with the hands, and backward against the after part of the saddle with the back, instantly compresses the saddle spring and brings the brake into action on the wheel. Several firms are new engaged in the manufacture of this patent in New York. Their price is about $80.

AN ILLINOIS VELOCIPEDE.

This prairie country, almost as level as a parlor floor, will afford a future range for the use of velocipedes unrivalled. And it is not strange that our citizens are paying no inconsiderable attention to the machine. Mr. B. E. Lowe, of Upper Alton, has invented a velocipede by which it is claimed he can climb the steep hill between Upper and Lower Alton.7

RULES FOR MANAGEMENT.

The following rules for the guidance of beginners have been drawn up by one of the most skillful Parisian amateurs, and are here submitted for the benefit of Chicago novices:

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7. Alton is a city on the Mississippi River in Madison County, Illinois, United States, about fifteen miles north of St. Louis, Missouri.
Run beside your iron horse, leading it, as it were, with you hand, so as to familiarize yourself with its movements; this will be an affair of a few minutes merely. Then commence practising with it on a slope, and, after mounting it, let it move forward of its own accord, while you occupy yourself in studying the effects produced by the inclination which you give to the balancing pole or handle of the machine. When you thoroughly understand the action of this, place one foot on the pedal, and follow its movements without assisting them. The difficulty with beginners is to restrain the unnecessary expenditure of muscular force; they ordinarily perform ten times the labor that is requisite. Next repeat the experiment on level ground, having both feet on the pedals, and working them alternately with scrupulous regularity. Speed is obtained by simply accelerating this movement. After an hour or two’s practice, the tyro\textsuperscript{8} will be able to accomplish a distance of 30 to 40 yards without running the risk of an upset. Should the machine incline on one side, all that is necessary to be done is to remove the foot on the same side from the pedal, and place it on the ground. This can, of course, only be accomplished when the velocipede is of moderate height, which, by the way, is the proper kind of machine for beginners to make their first essay with. To alight, both feet are raised from the pedals at the same instant, which has the effect of slackening the speed of the machine; the feet are then placed simultaneously on the ground, without the handle being let go.

**PARISIAN USE OF VELOCIPEDES.**

Velocipede races are getting to be fashionable in Paris, and are patronized by a much better class of people

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\textsuperscript{8} Beginner or novice.
than is usually found congregated at a race course. The officials turn out *en masse*.

The accounts are graphically described in Paris papers, from which the following features of the races are complied:

The racing ground is all marked out with flags, and there is certain to be a large cluster of banners flying from the starting place, near to which scores of the jockies of these irons horses are exercising their docile steeds. There is no coursing as with horses. The moment of starting arrives, and the competitors are drawn up abreast with as great a distance between each as the width of the course will allow. At the grounding of the starter's flag, legs work up and down with a surprising amount of energy, like the piston of a steam engine.

At these races the average length of the course is 1,800 metres—nearly a mile and an eight. At Engheinm this distance was traversed (a portion of it being over a stone-paved road) in four minutes and twenty-five seconds by a velocipede with two wheels. At Vincennes, the same distance took five minutes forty-five seconds respectively to accomplish, two-wheel velocipedes only competing. Greater speed was attained at St. Cloud, where the course of a mile and a half, with an incline of three in a hundred for a third of the distance, was traversed in four minutes and fifty seconds; whereas the final race at Vincennes, over a level course of nearly two miles, took nine minutes and ten seconds to accomplish.

A FURTHER NOVELTY.

A further novelty is offered in the velocipede line in the shape of a marine machine, called the poduscaphé,
or velocipede marin. This machine is formed of a couple canoës covered with canvas and joined together with two iron bars, between which is a padelle-wheel put in motion by means of two pedals placed at the extremity of the arc. These machines may be constantly seen in action on the lake at Enghein and even on the Seine itself opposite the Tuilleries. The inventor is sanguine that these machines will eventually attain the same rate of speed as the land velocipede already accomplishes. Quite recently an enterprising amateur offered to wager $10,000 francs that he would cross the channel between Boulogne and Folkstone (30 miles) on a velocipede marin within the limit of three hours—wind and weather permitting.

The prizes are not given at these races for speed alone, but are also accorded to those who occupy the longest time in traversing a specified distance, a far more difficult proceeding than accomplishing a mile in a few minutes, as, when going at a snail's pace, it is almost impossible to preserve the proper balance, and velocipede and riders are usually both capsized. In a contest of this character at Vincennes, over a course of 160 yards in length, out of six experienced amateurs who started only two arrived at the winning post. The prizes given at the foregoing contests have been usually gold and silver medals and silver cups; now and then, however, money prizes of 500 francs are awarded. Several efforts have been made to induce the fair sex to compete in these races, but hitherto without success, although they are ready enough to engage in a contest with any casual cavalier whom they may encounter on his velocipede in Bois de Boulogne.
THE LAST PHASE OF THE MACHINE.

As if to show what may be done when the human mind is all ablaze upon one subject, and that what is beneficial in one part of the world by a slight alteration may be made of equal service in another, another phase of the velocipede mania is opened up. It is this: It is stated that a Dane has changed the rim of the wheel and has given it the form of a skate’s iron or runner, so that a very high rate of speed may be obtained on the ice. A box behind the rider’s seat enables him to carry a good load with him. This phase of the velocipede is said to be growing in favor in north Europe.

CONCLUSION.

The above are the outlines and phases of an excitement—nay, a mania—which is not only agitating this country, but is sweeping like wildfire over the whole civilized world. There must be something in this matter, or it would not have struggled so long for success to at last partially attain it. There is no doubt a principle in all this hubbub, and a great want yet remains to be satisfied in the world. We have horse and steam cars, and steam boats, but there is still a vacuum, and horse flesh cannot supply it. There is travel to be done where cars do not run, and where horse-locomotion would be impossible. Is not the velocipede just the thing desired? Whether for business or pleasure, whether from necessity or exercise, does it not seem to fill that vacant chair which vain chimeras have attempted to sit in for ages? May it not be a revolution? And revolutions once commenced can never go backward. If the thing is possible, if a velocipede, having the powers attributable to the machines at present in vogue, is within the range of human ingenuity, is not this the age of all others in
which it could be best tested?—This is the age of invention—the era of mechanics. The professions stand with cap in hand, while the builders and workers take all the honor and profit. It is the age of iron. If this velocipede is a bubble, it will soon be pricked, and its emptiness shown. If there is the atom of a principle in it, brains will scheme and hands will work until it is fully developed. If it is a success in any one of its numerous forms, it will be in all—whether on land or in the sea, whether with one wheel or six.

Once a success, its merits firmly established, and the velocipede would become a national institution. The broad prairies of the West are just the places to afford it ample scope, and we would see repeated here the extravagances that occur in Paris. Races would be the order of the day, and we would fairly live out of doors.

And another grand benefit that would result from these machines would be the out-door exercise it would give the ladies and children. The working of their velocipedes would so cultivate the muscles and expand the chest that consumption and dyspepsia would, in a few years, be hardly known among us. A journey of ten or twenty miles or so on a velocipede would be a trifle, even in the most remote and out-of-the-way districts, and would cost only the effort mounting the iron steed. And then no hostler to feed it, no groom to rub it down, no harness to hold it, no halter to try it, no stable to shelter it, no noises to frighten it, no spavin, no losing wind, no shoeing, no limping, no stopping to drink. Its nerves never wear out. You do not need to examine its teeth when you buy it; you needn’t care who sired it; whether its blood Morgan or plebeian, or both. You

10. Refers to a disorder of a horse’s hock joint.
needn’t ask if it be gentle, if it will shy, or whether it follows the carriage, or only goes under the saddle.

It is a dumb thing; but of inestimable service. Once brought into general use, and the price for a velocipede would range so low that it would be within the means of all to purchase one. The beggar might then own his immortal horse, and the crippled soldier, as he moved swiftly around, could laugh at the way in which he was cheating his crutches. And, perhaps, for the idea has been thrown out, our soldiers might hunt the Indians on the plains with the velocipede. Think of it! A velocipede regiment making a charge on the Utes and Cheyennes, and “paling the ineffectual fires” of Balaklava, or a velocipede battery rushing right up to the breach which itself had made, and using 400 pound guns as we now use pistols! Well, time will tell.

Note on the Second Text

“Riding the Velocipede” has been faithfully transcribed from the March 19th, 1869, Hancock Jeffersonian. A few edits were made for the comfort of the modern reader. For instance, in the first sentence—“I have just returned from New York, and I am happy to say that while there I had the pleasure of feasting my eyes upon the velocipede”—the word feasting was easting with

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11. Refers to an equestrian term in which the horse moves suddenly to being frightened.
12. Native American tribes in the west.
13. Refers to the line “The glow-worm shows the matin to be near, / And ‘gins to pale his uneffectual fire” from Hamlet (I.V.90–91).
14. A Crimean city made famous for the Battle of Balaclava during the Crimean War as the location of the suicidal “charge of the light brigade.”
an unclear letter. In the second paragraph, a period was added at the conclusion of the sentence that begins with “It is an elephant,” as the original mark had faded or was never present. The next edit is a more perplexing one. In the final paragraph, the original text read “Of course my mind was mostly occupied, during the balance of the day, thinking of the velocipede.—About 11 o’clock, more or less, P.M., I retired to my virtuous couch, and was soon in the arms of Orpeous.” After looking into the term Orpeous, I concluded the author misspelled Orpheus. Still, this mistake leaves questions about the author’s knowledge of Greek mythology. Finally, “sane nm” was corrected to sanctum.

RIDING THE VELOCIPEDE.

I have just returned from New York, and I am happy to say that while there I had the pleasure of feasting my eyes upon the velocipede. As regards the moral character of this new beast of prey, I have come to the conclusion that the exercise is very interesting so long as you are riding the velocipede; but when the velocipede takes a notion to ride you, I can not conscientiously assert that there is not anything particularly exhilarating in it.

The morning after my arrival in the city I was walking around, looking for elephants and other insects when, as I was passing a building on the corner of Broadway and an ample stand, I heard an unusual commotion up-stairs. ‘It is an elephant,’ thinks I to myself and up I went. On arriving at the head of the stairs, I opened the door of the room from which the noise proceeded, and walked in. There for the first time, I sweetly gazed
on the comical actions of the skittish little cuss which I afterward found out was called a velocipede.

About a dozen individuals were present. Among them was a solitary woman, apparently a female, dressed partially in pantaloons;\textsuperscript{15} her waterfall\textsuperscript{16} had come off, and she looked kind of demoralized. One fellow was holding her up, and I heard him ask her in gentle tones ‘if it hurt her much?’ The others were occasionally casting shy glances at her, and looking as if they were very much amused at something that had been done.

I turned to a man near me, who seemed to be a sort of master of ceremonies, and asked him what was the matter with the woman?

‘Velocipede,’ he said, with a very Frenchified accentation.

‘She what?’ said I, not exactly undeerstanding him. ‘Ve-loc-i pede,’ he repeated in measured accents. ‘Did they catch her in the act?’ I whispered.

At this a bystander took pity on our mutual misunderstandings, and informed me that the person was talking to was a French gentleman who had crossed the broad and briny deep on purpose to teach illiterate Americans how to ride horseback on a wheelbarrow, and that he couldn’t understand English every fluently.—Also that the young lady was a strong-minded female who had been determined to conquer the velocipede or die in the attempt; that she had inserted herself into a pair of pantaloons expressively for the occasion; that she mounted the velocipede with a valor that did honor to both sexes she represented; but that the thing got the upper hand

\textsuperscript{15} Refers to a type of loose trousers.

\textsuperscript{16} Refers to a hairstyle that was popular during the period. In a waterfall, the hair was tucked in a low bun at the back of the head.
of her the first move, which accounted for the disordered state of her clothes.

After this satisfactory information, I took a general survey of the apartment. It was filled with velocipedes in various stages of growth. Here was one man riding a velocipede; there was a velocipede riding another man. A third fellow had got the thing under control that with a little effort he could fall off on whichever side he pleased which is a very desirable stage of the process—it makes your clothes wear even.

For the benefit of those who have not seen it, or a picture of it in the illustrated papers, I will attempt to give a brief but accurate description of this new and useful animal; the velocipede, in its natural state, when in motion resembles the posterior circulator of two ambitious wheel-barrows climbing a race up a greased ax handle.

Of course my mind was mostly occupied, during the balance of the day, thinking of the velocipede.—About 11 o’clock, more or less, P.M., I retired to my virtuous couch, and was soon in the arms of Orpheus. And dreamed a hideous dream.—Methought I was a local editor. I dreamed I had bought a velocipede—on credit, of course—to enable me to gather news more rapidly than would otherwise be possible. I dreamed I was seated in the editorial sanctum, when a rumor reached me of a hideous murder in the upper part of town. How lucky that I had a velocipede—saddled, bridled, and near at hand. I flung myself upon its back, and started. No, I didn’t start,

17. Orpheus refers to the legendary Greek hero with supreme musical talent. It may be that that author of the article is confusing his Greek mythology around, because the Greek figure of dreams is Morpheus and not Orpheus.
for—horrors of horrors!—the thing wouldn’t go! What was the matter? Had my velocipede gone back on me? Was it bulky? Were my contemporaries and competitors to get ahead of me in obtaining the particulars of that item? Perish the horrible thought! I did everything in my power to start my velocipede, but all in vain; I could not budge the thing an inch. With one despairing effort I shouted, “On to Richmond!”—and woke up. I found myself a straddle of the foot board of the bed, with my arms around the bedpost, endeavoring to induce them to carry me to the scene of the imaginary catastrophe. It is perhaps unnecessary to remark that after I woke up, no more than before, the bedpost wouldn’t go.

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