

PHILANTHROPIC COLONIALISM: NEW ENGLAND PHILANTHROPY IN
BLEEDING KANSAS, 1854-1860

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ABSTRACT

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In 1854 the United States Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska bill which left the question of slavery in the territory up to a vote of popular sovereignty. Upon the passage of the bill, New England's most elite class of citizens, led by Eli Thayer, mobilized their networks of philanthropy in New England to ensure the Kansas-Nebraska territory did not embrace slavery. The effort by the New England elite to make the territories free was intertwined in a larger web of philanthropic motivations aimed to steer the future of America on a path that would replicate New England society throughout the country. The process and goal of their philanthropy in the Kansas-Nebraska Territory was not dissimilar from their philanthropy in New England. Moral classification of those in material poverty mixed with a dose of paternalism and free labor capitalism was the antidote to the disease of moral degradation and poverty. When Missourians resisted the encroachment of New Englanders on the frontier, the New England elites shifted their philanthropy from moral reform to the funding and facilitation of violence under the guise of philanthropy and disaster relief. For six years, until the outbreak of the American Civil War, New England philanthropists facilitated and helped fund the conflict known as Bleeding Kansas.

Frances A. Huehls, Ph.D., Chair

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Introduction

In anticipation of the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, Eli Thayer submitted proposals for corporate charters in Connecticut and Massachusetts for an assisted immigration company. When the congressional legislation was finally passed, it left the issue of slavery in the territory open to popular sovereignty, and philanthropists throughout the United States plotted ways to influence the territorial vote. The New England elite were particularly active in assisting the settlement of the territories.

The final charter granted and the one accepted by investors was in Massachusetts for the New England Emigrant Aid Company, a for-profit corporation. Although Massachusetts was a favorable legal climate for incorporation, it was still a relatively new type of organization and a rarely granted privilege by states. The company also included philanthropic objectives such as protecting emigrants from fraud and violence, aiding in the construction of schools and churches, in its governing documents. The sum of those philanthropic endeavors was intended to produce “the advantages of an advanced civilization.”¹ As a result, all of the companies actions were legally sanctioned philanthropy and all of the company’s philanthropy was official business.²

¹ Massachusetts State Legislature, “An Act to Incorporate the New England Emigrant Aid Company,” February 21, 1855. New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers, 1854-1909. Kansas State Historical Society, Lawrence, KA. Found at, http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi-bin/index.php?SCREEN=show_document&SCREEN_FROM=immigration&document_id=100124&FROM_PAGE=&topic_id=129.

² The company most closely resembled what we know today as social entrepreneurship. The terms social enterprise, mixed enterprise, venture philanthropy, and the most obscure, philanthrocapitalism, also describe the fusion between an organization organized for profit with philanthropic objectives central to its business model. The terms have not been concretely defined by scholars or the public. There is no single scholarly field of inquiry devoted to the study of these organizations although specific university curriculum related to them is increasingly common.

A few months later the company played the leading role in Bleeding Kansas, seven years of deadly conflict in the 1850s when free-state philanthropic organizations fought Missourians and their less sophisticated network of support organizations.³ Throughout the conflict, the Company operated from Boston, sent thousands of settlers to the Kansas Territory, and built several complete towns to facilitate their arrival and permanent settlement. This “prelude to the Civil War,” as it came to be known, was an armed conflict instigated, organized, and fought by philanthropic organizations.

In Bleeding Kansas, New England philanthropists tried to assimilate the individual’s moral imaginations into a collective value system they could use in colonization. Why did the elite men of New England care so much about Kansas? What values of theirs did their organizations embody? Were those values widely held in New England? How did they plan to reach their goals? How was it portrayed to New Englanders and the emigrants? What was the response to these organizations from New Englanders and settlers in Kansas territory? Investigating and attempting to answer questions like these can tell us a great deal about American philanthropy, but why is this information important now?

Significance of the Study

Minxin Pei’s 2003 article in *Foreign Policy* can tell us something about the contemporary relevance of this study. Like Tocqueville, Pei claimed, “The growing unease with the United States should be seen as a powerful global backlash against the spirit of American nationalism, which shapes and animates U.S. foreign policy.”⁴ What does U.S. foreign policy and American nationalism have to do with philanthropy? Pei

³ The term Bleeding Kansas was coined by newspaper editor, abolitionist, vegetarian, and founder of the New York Tribune, Horace Greely.

⁴ Minxin Pei. “The Paradoxes of American Nationalism,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 136 (May-Jun., 2003), 31.

claimed the most exceptional thing about American nationalism was the way Americans expressed nationalism in daily life through civic voluntarism or, “the willingness of ordinary citizens to contribute to the public good, either through individual initiatives or civic associations.”⁵ In short, Pei believed the global community in 2003 was uneasy about the power and reach of American civil society.

Seven years later, in the summer of 2010, I studied as an exchange student in the International Studies in Philanthropy program at the University of Bologna in Italy. Before I arrived in Italy I was confident about the way I would be viewed as an American. In the seven years between Pei’s article and my trip the United States elected Barack Obama as President who was wildly popular abroad. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize twelve days after taking office, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the wealthiest charity on the planet, was in the news regularly for their efforts to address global problems. Uneasiness, however, was still lurking.

My American colleague and I were asked regularly, by our peers and visiting lecturers from abroad, to explain and justify the actions of American philanthropy operating abroad. More specifically, the questions were targeted at American philanthropy in places where the United States was fighting “the War on Terror,” and where American organizations and philanthropy were helping countries meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Those questions were partial curiosity driven by uneasiness and partly a consequence of our studies. Two of the most common questions asked by my colleagues and professors were, “How does war promote human

⁵ Ibid, 32. Pei’s comments and the public sentiment at the time can likely be attributed to the fresh wounds of the September 11th terrorist attacks, the national sentiment expressed in America following the attacks, and the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom which commenced just two months before the publication of the article.

rights, freedom, and philanthropy?” and “Why is the United States so concerned with helping ‘under-developed’ countries industrialize quickly?”

Another, more explicit incident was particularly telling. One day while returning from lunch, my colleagues and I walked through a piazza near campus. We headed toward a café for the traditional Italian post-meal espresso. In the middle of the piazza, standing on top of a crate in front of a group of students was a short Italian man wielding a megaphone. Public activism and dialogue of this nature was a daily occurrence in the city’s piazzas. As we passed the man turned to our group and yelled into his megaphone. I understood only a few words of his profane Italian tirade, so I asked my colleagues to translate. When I asked, their faces became red and they were reluctant to answer. Finally, our classmate Anna turned to me and said, “He is saying that the American government and the American people are shit.”

The man on the crate was well known to the University community in Bologna. He worked at a popular student hangout which was notorious for its young activist clientele. The walls inside and out were painted red and littered with Palestine Liberation Organization memorabilia and anti-Israeli and anti-American posters. I asked Giorgia, a classmate from Bologna, about the posters and memorabilia and she explained that the patrons and bar staff installed the posters and memorabilia because they did not understand why the United States cared so much about Israel. Anticipating some response about Iraq and President Bush, I was taken back that the skepticism did not solely stem from contemporary controversies and politics, but from decades old policies. After some conversation it became evident that the patrons at the bar did not have problems with specific American policies. As they saw it, the totality of American

foreign policy was condescending and it stemmed from Americans' arrogance about their ability to address international problems independently. Global uneasiness about the United States, although it exists in varying degrees, is still alive. A reflective look at American philanthropy can help us understand why expressions of American nationalism through philanthropy provoke continual uneasiness abroad.

The remainder of this introduction will serve two ends. The first is to illustrate the context and limitations of the study within the historical discourse. Secondly, it provides the reader with an outline of the process of historical analysis, including the selection of primary sources and how those sources were utilized. Since I am seeking to fill a gap in the historiography of American philanthropy, I will start with an explanation, or at least a summary, of the scholars' explanation for the existence of this gap before reviewing the relevant literature.

Historiography

After the Second World War, a wave of anti-intellectualism and suspicion of large private institutions swept the United States. One hundred years prior, the profession of academic history was created in part to justify, rationalize, and protect large private institutions. Consequently, the liberal policies and breakup of the liberal political coalition in the 1960s "broke the ties between scholarship and power that had existed since the mid-nineteenth century."⁶ Thus, it became possible to "view the American past holistically: chronology has become a coherent developmental process; sectors of activity that had been viewed as discrete have become interrelated manifestations of a system of

⁶ Peter Dobkin Hall. *The Organization of American Culture, 1700-1900: Private Institutions, Elites, and the Origins of American Nationality*. (New York: New York University Press, 1982), 6.

collective behavior.”⁷ Peter Dobkin Hall was correct in that historicism was groundbreaking and yielded results, but in the study of the history of American philanthropy, the literature failed to develop the way historian’s hoped.

The recently published book *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, a compilation edited by Lawrence Friedman and Mark McGarvie, is a good guide to starting a study in the history of American philanthropy. The chapter, “Philanthropy in America: Historicism and its Discontents,” outlined the current state of the historiography as “scattered over a wide array of disconnected topics... Cooperative, focused, and closely coordinated research efforts by those trained in the historical discipline have been almost nonexistent.”⁸ Although I am not a professional historian, I will try to build on the findings of the historians in the compilation. In Chapter One, I will try to build on their sixth theme which was “change and continuity in the government, private, and voluntary mix (primarily though not exclusively through legal and public-policy measures).”⁹ Friedman claimed that the idea of an independent sector, distinct from government and private organizations, is a “prescription of contemporary figures” and not “a grounded historical reality.”¹⁰ Chapter one also confirms Tocqueville’s observation that Americans in the antebellum period perceived themselves as members of larger groups and part of collective behaviors rather than separate individuals.¹¹

⁷ Ibid, 6.

⁸ Lawrence J. Freidman and Mark D. McGarvie ed., *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3.

⁹ Ibid 15.

¹⁰ Ibid, 15.

¹¹ Ibid 17.

In Chapters Two and Three, I will build on a theme similar to chapter one. It “concerns fluctuations in the American mix of public, private, and voluntary agencies to meet peoples’ needs, and the role of law in defining the mix.”¹² In Chapter Three, I will build on the theme that philanthropists were never a homogenous group, but “shared a missionary-like temperament and have been inclined to impose their vision on others.”¹³ Throughout the study, I will expand on the consensus that philanthropists missionary-like drive is charged by “desires to transform the insufficiently civil world that is into the world that might be.”¹⁴ Those themes, Friedman claimed, tended to lead amateur historians to the same historical documents and monographs. With that warning in mind I tried to pull together some unique sources in unique combinations when possible.

This is first a study of the New England Emigrant Aid Company as a philanthropic enterprise. It is also an examination of the ways philanthropy animated New England culture and influenced national progress. There are three main historical topics which are essential to placing this study in the historical discourse; the history of American philanthropy, Bleeding Kansas, and the New England Emigrant Aid Company. Although some studies specific to the New England Emigrant Aid Company exist, the bulk of the literature regarding Bleeding Kansas and the New England Emigrant Aid Company is intertwined. For that reason they will be dealt with simultaneously in this historiography.

¹² Ibid 13.

¹³ Ibid, 9.

¹⁴ Ibid, 10.

New England philanthropy

One of the early studies in the history of American philanthropy was Robert Bremner's *American Philanthropy*.¹⁵ The second edition of Bremner's study covered the length of American history from colonial times to the late twentieth century. This monograph, like many others related to these historical topics, reads like a chronicle of major events and major players with little in depth analysis. To Lawrence J. Friedman's discontent, Bremner's study was a reliable basic reference point for this inquiry.

Another central work in the history of American philanthropy was Peter Dobkin Hall's *The Organization of American Culture*.¹⁶ Hall's stated purpose was to demonstrate the evolution of American nationality and the ability of Americans to conduct their affairs on a national level. The focus of the book was the social groups that organized private institutions and utilized them to forge a national economy, social classes, and values. Nationalism then, was a cultural expression. In this definition of nationalism, culture is not "a set of aesthetic and intellectual formulation, but a set of social institutions used by a people in organizing the entire range of their fundamental activities."¹⁷ It is a narrative of the development of national institutions, why they developed, and the social groups that created them. These national institutions, Hall contended, slowly replaced familial, local, and regional, institutions in many economic and cultural roles from 1700-1900.

Hall asserted that New Englanders used the legal entity of the corporation, both for profit and not for profit, as a way to maintain individual accountability, while seeking

¹⁵ Robert Bremner. *American Philanthropy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

¹⁶ Peter Dobkin Hall. *The Organization of American Culture, 1700-1900: Private Institutions, Elites, and the Origins of American Nationality*. (New York: New York University Press, 1982).

¹⁷ Ibid, 2.

to achieve collective national aims. Private corporate institutions, particularly those involved in the production, distribution, and communication processes, created American nationality. The New England men who created and operated the organizations were some of the most powerful men of their day. The class of New England elites which forged these institutions was a type of artificial aristocracy. They were men who became rich in the nineteenth-century by inheritance, commercial enterprise, and sometimes both. The first generation of Boston elites Hall dubbed the “Standing Order.” The second generation was famously dubbed “Brahmins” by Oliver Wendell Holmes.¹⁸

Barbara M. and Kenneth H. Tucker published *Industrializing Antebellum America: Manufacturing Entrepreneurs in the Early Republic* in 2008.¹⁹ The book highlighted three New England families and their impact on industrial society and philanthropy in antebellum America. The families included the Colts, the Slater’s, and the Lawrence’s. All three families helped industrialize the country and they were all active philanthropists. Amos A. Lawrence’s personality was highlighted for much of the section regarding the Lawrence’s as a family. It was argued that Amos A. Lawrence’s philanthropy was aimed deeper than relieving misfortunes. Lawrence used his philanthropy to reform the morality and work ethic of the lower socio-economic classes of New England. Like the other major manufacturers, paternalist tendencies permeated the self-reliance style philanthropy they advocated.

David Ward’s book *Poverty, Ethnicity, and the American City, 1840-1925: Changing Conceptions of the Slum and the Ghetto* illustrated the conditions that drove New England philanthropist’s anxieties. Ward argued that many of the philanthropist’s

¹⁸ Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*. (New York: MacMillan, 1928).

¹⁹ Barbara M. Tucker and Kenneth H. Tucker, Jr. *Industrializing Antebellum America: The Rise of Manufacturing Entrepreneurs in the Early Republic*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

decisions were based on assumptions about the environmental factors of the inner city. “Although poverty is confined neither too ethnic minorities nor to the inner city, several presumed indicators of pathological social behavior have for long been attributed to those minorities that are concentrated in the inner city.”²⁰ During periods of mass immigration like the 1850s, philanthropists emphasized the moral and cultural differences between immigrants and the native population. The differences were more than emphasized, however. According to Ward, the differences were highlighted as deficiencies and those deficiencies of character were linked to the conditions of the inner city. Ward expanded on his argument of the 1850s by claiming the rejection of immigrants was part of an emerging consciousness of an Anglo-American nation. In an effort to relieve the problems of the inner cities, philanthropic reformers sought first to classify the poor according to their morality.²¹

Bleeding Kansas

The first major study of Bleeding Kansas was Alice Nichols’ *Bleeding Kansas* published in 1954.²² This was a complete narrative of the settling of Kansas, from the removal of the Indians through the acceptance into the Union and the Civil War. It was a fairly basic narrative that lacks any depth of criticism or analysis. Nichols did not make any strong or unique arguments but constructed a meta-narrative of the events of territorial Kansas through the lens of eastern newspapers and journalists. Like many other histories that are the first to cover a particular historical phenomenon, it reads much like a chronicle of the events. Nichols contended that the New England Emigrant Aid Company

²⁰ David Ward. *Poverty, Ethnicity, and the American City, 1840-1925: Changing Conceptions of the Slum and the Ghetto*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), xi.

²¹ A similar argument more recently published was Joel Schwartz,. *Fighting Poverty with Virtue: Moral Reform and America’s Urban Poor, 1825-2000*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

²² Alice Nichols. *Bleeding Kansas*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954).

would have failed had Amos A. Lawrence not dug so deep into his own pocket to finance the company. Nichols portrayed John Brown as a renegade motivated by a disdain of the immorality of slavery and funded by a handful of duped Bostonians.

The most noteworthy element of her study was the continual reference to the New England Emigrant Aid Company as the New England Emigrant Aid Society, a common mistake in antebellum America and a critical mistake in historical scholarship. Although she walked through the Company's awkward process of incorporation, she concluded that the final act of incorporation was for the New England Emigrant Aid Society. Nichols noted the uniqueness of the Company's mixed motives of benevolence and profit, but failed to articulate the legal difference between a voluntary association or "society," and a company in the antebellum era. This distinction may seem insignificant, like calling scarlet red, but for a historian of philanthropic organizations in America this distinction makes a world of difference. A full discussion of this distinction will come later in the paper, but for now it will suffice to say that failing to make this distinction misleads any analysis of the company.

Samuel A. Johnson wrote several articles and books on the New England Emigrant Aid Company. Johnson's article, "The Genesis of the New England Emigrant Aid Company," described the contrasting personalities, particularly Eli Thayer and Amos Lawrence, involved in creating the company and the difficulties and compromises that resulted.²³ Johnson focused on the key difference of Thayer's advocacy for a commercial, profit-driven organization of the company and Lawrence's opinion that it should be organized as a philanthropic venture, as a society. This study was innovative in that it

²³ Samuel A. Johnson "The Genesis of the New England Emigrant Aid Company," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol.3, No.1, (Jan. 1930): 95-122.

was the first to give a critical eye to the conditions in New England that affected the company rather than focusing on the effects of its actions in Kansas.

Johnson's *The Battle Cry of Freedom: The New England Emigrant Aid Company in the Kansas Crusade* was the most comprehensive history of the New England Emigrant Aid Company.²⁴ It was primarily a political history, but Johnson did touch on all aspects of the company and its operations. Johnson argued the main driving force behind the creation and operation of the New England Emigrant Aid Company was to advance free labor into the western United States by defeating slavery in Kansas through the political process of popular sovereignty.

Nichols and Johnson's monographs differ primarily in scope with Johnson's being narrower by focusing only on the New England Emigrant Aid Company. Both authors' arguments were written as a sectional analysis of Bleeding Kansas, the typical North vs. South view of the Civil War era and they both emphasize the political importance of this era and series of events. These studies, whatever their limitations, are valuable in illustrating the changing historiography as well as being complete narratives that contain detailed information and exact timelines of the events in Kansas in the 1850s.

Gunja SenGupta's monograph, *For God and Mammon: Evangelicals and Entrepreneurs, Masters and Slaves in Territorial Kansas, 1854-1860* was a social history that illustrated the type of people immigrating to the Kansas territory, both northern and southern.²⁵ SenGupta argued that evangelicals and entrepreneurs from the Northeast were coming to Kansas to recreate the Christian kingdom their forefathers attempted to build.

²⁴ Samuel A. Johnson, *The Battle Cry of Freedom: The New England Emigrant Aid Company in the Kansas Crusade*. (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1954).

²⁵ Gunja SenGupta. *For God and Mammon: Evangelicals and Entrepreneurs, Masters and Slaves in Territorial Kansas, 1854-1860*. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996).

SenGupta connects this argument to the appeal of antislavery politics in the North while attempting to search beyond northern antebellum perceptions of Missourians and the South to a more thorough understanding of the South in Kansas. Southern masters and slaves went to Kansas motivated by notions of southern honor and cultural survival essential to Southern republicanism. SenGupta's argument stands with many of the earlier analysis of Bleeding Kansas. He viewed The New England Emigrant Aid Company as a political instrument designed to secure long term economic benefits in the western United States for Massachusetts.

Jeremy Neely's *The Border between Them: Violence and Reconciliation on the Kansas-Missouri Line* was a study limited to border counties in southwestern Missouri and eastern Kansas.²⁶ Neely's study is unique in that his primary data set were federal censuses. With this data Neely reproduced sample populations, representative of each border county, of the 1850s-1880s. Then, he used accounts of people living in those areas at that time to give some narrative to the sample populations. Neely essentially argued that the Kansas-Missouri border has always represented a divide in the American nation no matter whether it is geographic, cultural, social, or economic divide. Neely contends that much of the factual and mythical ideology of the Kansas- Missouri border came to fruition during Bleeding Kansas and he covers the viewpoint of both free-state Kansans and pro-slavery Missourians.

Jeffery Rossbach's *Ambivalent Conspirators: John Brown, the Secret Six, and a Theory of Slave Violence*, highlighted some of the most outlandish and radical philanthropists in New England and how their radical vision of society manifested into

²⁶ Jeremy Neely. *The Border between Them: Violence and Reconciliation on the Kansas-Missouri Line*. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007).

violence in Kansas Territory.²⁷ Rossbach's introduction is a wealth of secondary source material on the Secret Committee of Six and John Brown. Rossbach argued that all of these men's views were shaped by the urban-oriented North, which demanded professional achievement and by a culture where a man's identity was in question unless solidly grounded in his professional identity. These men were all concerned with proving their masculinity and they romanticized the revolutionary generation and frontiersmen's masculinity. The Secret Committee of Six all questioned the intellect's and the minister's place in an increasingly professional world. This was partly articulated through their career of reform and leadership in philanthropic organizations. Each man viewed violence and masculinity differently and their views on both changed often, but all of them viewed the two as inherently linked. Their ambivalence was in the shape of the paradox between thought and action that historian of American intellectual history Merle Curti articulated in *American Paradox*. Ultimately, this was an essential secondary source for understanding the intellectual anxiety and ideology ambiguity that gripped the men in the Secret Committee of Six. Rossbach suggested that John Brown's passion for abolitionism and southern institutions yielded early success in Kansas and the remainder of Brown's life was spent travelling the country crafting new violent episodes and soliciting funds from New England's leading philanthropists. He viewed himself as a martyr and at one point in their relationship, all the men of the Secret Committee of Six saw him as a martyr. Rossbach's notice of the internal conflict and debate between the Secret Committee of Six and their close associates shed light on important ideological differences as well as the state of intellectualism in antebellum New England.

²⁷ Jeffery Rossbach. *Ambivalent Conspirators: John Brown, the Secret Six, and a Theory of Slave Violence*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982).

As indicated by the literature mentioned here, historians have ambivalent views of American philanthropy. Few scholars of American history have accepted the challenge of studying American philanthropy. Out of that handful of studies, none focus on the conflict in Kansas. Political and economic analyses of Bleeding Kansas and the New England Emigrant Aid Company are most prevalent and thorough analysis of the company as an agent of philanthropy is underdeveloped.

Methodology

The temporal bounds for this study are roughly 1854-1860. It is necessary to touch on events and ideas prior to 1854 but the primary focus will be from the company's conception to the start of the Civil War. One advantage to studying philanthropy in New England in the antebellum period is the extensive documentation that exists. Charitable presses were active publishing a variety of types of documents. The New England Emigrant Aid Company was no different. Particularly unique to the company, however, was its newspaper, which transported New England ideas to the American frontier, and the histories and memoirs published later by the Company leaders. In addition to official company documents and the writings of company officials, I will utilize popular literature and the writings of New England elites.

A corporation is an agent, an independent entity that acts on behalf of another person or group of people. This offers two different historical contexts for the analysis. One is territorial Kansas, the United States territory and stated target of company operations; and the other is antebellum New England, the geopolitical and cultural region where the company was conceived and controlled. The former offers an opportunity to see the specific results the company's agency produced. The latter, the place and time in

which this study is contextualized, offers us insight into the intellectual justifications for the company's existence and the ideological and cultural influences that affected the leaders' decision-making.

Researchers can also benefit from the extensive efforts at the inter-class socialization and intermarriage of many of the elite New England families. As a result of their interconnectedness, most of the intellectual, cultural, and social elite of antebellum New England were personal friends or intellectual colleagues. Consequently, literature from people like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, James Russell Lowell, Orestes Brownson, Bronson Alcott, Samuel Gridley Howe and Theodore Parker offer insight into the ideas being exchanged at the time and the concerns of the New England Elite. Scholars can also make use of fiction written in antebellum New England which is some of the most sophisticated and enjoyable fiction in American history including novels, short stories, and poetry by Oliver Wendell Holmes, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allen Poe, Washington Irving, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Slave literature such as *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* can be used in a similar capacity.

Primary documents for the New England Emigrant Aid Company are digitized on the Kansas Historical Society website. In addition, the University of Kansas and the Kansas Historical Society collaborated to create *Territorial Kansas Online 1854-1861: A Virtual Repository for Territorial Kansas History*, an archive of digitized documents, photos, and secondary literature of Kansas up to statehood including substantial sections devoted to immigration and settlement.²⁸ Items related to the New England Emigrant Aid Company in these collections include: personal correspondence between company

²⁸ www.territorialkansas.org

officials and officials of other organizations, documents such as the articles of incorporation, plan of operations, expense reports, meeting minutes, stock subscription lists, pamphlets and flyers, articles from the official company newspaper, and lists of the emigrants on each expedition to Kansas. In this study three groups of primary documents are the focus of analysis: the collection of New England Emigrant Aid Company documents at the Kansas Historical Society, the writings of New England elites, and memoirs written by company executives.

The official company documents reveal several things. First, because we are dealing with a state incorporated organization, the articles of incorporation can tell us a great deal about long term purpose and legal restrictions. At this time, the corporate form of organization was relatively new for the United States, and because a charter to incorporate was a privilege granted by the state, we can also learn about the political atmosphere because the company was a product of legislation, a statutory creation. The company's plan of operations outlines a specific strategy for simultaneously pursuing a moral mission as well as a healthy bottom line. Stock subscription lists will help to illustrate the interconnectedness and close relations of the wealthy and powerful in New England as well as the occupational types who were most attracted to this endeavor. The official documents of the company will tell us what its authorized purpose was, what its limitations were, and how its organizational and operational structure were suited to fulfill its purpose. Personal correspondences illustrate the personalities of company officials and affiliates as well as offering a detailed timeline of company actions. This information, particularly how the company leaders responded to problems can tell us a great deal about their ultimate motivations and goals.

There are a number of questions these documents will be helpful in answering. What was the legal purpose of the company? Was it a profit making company or a charitable organization? Who were the directors and who were the stock subscribers? What were the company's legal bounds? Why did it take the attempts to incorporate before it was successful? What changes were made between each proposed organization? Company documents, if they cannot answer these questions outright, will at least offer some guidance toward an answer, even if that is by instigating the process of elimination.

The New England Emigrant Aid Company newspaper, the *Kansas Herald of Freedom*, was the official organ of the company and was distributed in Kansas and eastern Massachusetts. Information in this newspaper served two purposes, to promote the company, and inform the subscribers of issues the company wanted them to know about. It was, without question, the central propaganda tool of the company. Despite this extreme bias, it can tell us a great deal about the way the company wanted to be viewed. Did the company portray itself as a profit making company or a charitable organization? Did it suggest explicitly, or imply, that the company was part of a nationalist movement or was involved in starting one? What measures was the company taking to promote its cause? Was it willing to compromise with individuals or other organizations? Did the company obey the law? In addition to the *Kansas Herald of Freedom*, the company published a number of pamphlets and tracts which were distributed in New England and Kansas. One was a pair of tracts by B.F. Stringfellow and D.F. Goodloe, *Information for the People: Two Tracts for the Times*, which was distributed widely in New England and Territorial Kansas.

Other primary documents widely available in print are the memoirs of company executives including: Eli Thayer, *New England Emigrant Aid Company, and Its Influence, through the Kansas Contest, upon National History* (1887); *A History of the Kansas Crusade, Its Friends and Its Foes* (1889); Edward Everett Hale, *A New England Boyhood* (1900); *Kansas and Nebraska* (1854); *...Historic Boston and its Neighborhoods* (1898); Charles Robinson, *The Kansas Conflict* (1892); and Samuel Gridley Howe, *Letters and Journals of Samuel Gridley Howe* (1906). These memoirs can tell us how the executives viewed its impact and whether or not their beliefs about the company and its mission remained the same. In sum, I will utilize two main groups of primary documents to examine the causal forces behind the New England Emigrant Aid Company. The sources help illustrate what the philanthropic motivations were and how they translated into practice in Kansas Territory.

Chapter One: Philanthropy in Antebellum New England

Philanthropy in antebellum New England was abundant, active, and a growing part of social and cultural life. Public charity was primarily aimed at eliminating avoidable dependency through a system of moral classification and moral reform. New England law favored charity and invented solutions to preserve charitable gifts and promote future gifts. Private charity proliferated in a number of variations. Associations continued to make up the bulk of civil society, the legal entity of the chartered corporation became more familiar, and religious institutions continued as powerful agents of philanthropy. Both eleemosynary and testamentary trusts were popular in the antebellum period but it was the testamentary trust and the overlap of trustees that helped to consolidate and protect huge family fortunes. Language related to philanthropy was often used interchangeably in everyday discourse but intellectuals and philanthropists understood distinct differences in the language of philanthropy.

Despite a boom in almost every measurable element of philanthropy, good deeds did not go without scrutiny and discontent. Some of the loudest critics were the New England transcendentalists because it conflicted with their belief in anarchism, or one person's freedom from human control and influence. They viewed the reform movements as a fad that did more harm than good because it was just a new way of organizing the influence of and control over beneficiaries.

Definitions

Noah Webster was an educational reformer, philologist, and lexicographer in Connecticut in the early nineteenth century. He used education as a way to differentiate

the American people and the American continent from England and continental Europe. Designed to instill a strong sense of patriotism in young Americans, Webster's dictionary was the centerpiece of American education for the first half of the nineteenth century. Webster proclaimed that the dictionary was the English language properly spoken, proof of American superiority over the British. New editions of the dictionary were published regularly to ensure changes in American English were documented.

In the 1850 edition of Webster's dictionary, alms was defined as, "a gift to the poor."²⁹ Charity was, "love, alms, and candor."³⁰ Benevolence meant "good will," and to be benevolent was to be, "kind and affectionate."³¹ A philanthropist was, "a person of general benevolence," and philanthropy was, "the love of mankind."³²

The first two families of terms related to alms and charity were closely related with a gift economy. Although the definition of charity leaned toward a qualitative, abstract understanding of help, it was used to describe gifts to alleviate material and immediate poverty. Benevolence and philanthropy reflected sentiments and general positive and kind emotions. They were abstract ideas with no specific execution, application, or desired ends. Despite their differences, charity and philanthropy were used interchangeably. In the most articulate crowds alms and charity were used to describe immediate, "outdoor relief" and philanthropy was "comprehensive love."³³

The distinction between charity, alms, benevolence, and philanthropy as action and sentiment was also supported by Conrad Edick Wright's claim in *The*

²⁹ Noah Webster and William Greenleaf Webster. *A Primary School Pronouncing Dictionary of the English Language, Abridged from the American Dictionary*. (New York: Huntington and Savage, 1850), 16.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 47.

³¹ *Ibid*, 32.

³² *Ibid*, 175.

³³ Conrad Edick Wright. *The Transformation of Charity in Postrevolutionary New England* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), 120.

Transformation of Charity in Postrevolutionary New England. Wright stated, “Most New Englanders in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries defined ‘charity’ as neither an emotion or an act, but as something intermediate – an emotion necessarily requiring an action.”³⁴ In short, charity and alms failed to enact a comprehensive solution and were consequently linked to efforts of immediate relief. In contrast, “Philanthropy became a shorthand notation for universal love.”³⁵

Even the narrator of Herman Melville’s short story “Bartleby the Scrivener,” noticed the difference between charity and philanthropy. A young scrivener named Bartleby was hired by a lawyer to help copy and proofread the firm’s documents. After an initial effort, Bartleby soon turned to passive resistance and refused to work or leave the office when it closed. Bartleby made no disturbance at the law office but as time wore on his reluctance to work or leave irritated the lawyer. Further irritating the lawyer was Bartleby’s refusal to defend his attitude.

After discovering that Bartleby was living in the office, the lawyer became conflicted. He deliberated with himself and his two employees about how to proceed with Bartleby. Finally, the lawyer decided he would move his office and leave Bartleby for the next tenant to deal with. The lawyer thought to himself,

So true it is, and so terrible, too, that up to a certain point the thought or sight of misery enlists our best affections; but, in certain special cases, beyond that point it does not. They err who would assert that invariably this is owing to the inherent selfishness of the human heart. It rather proceeds from a certain hopelessness of remedying excessive and organic ill. To a sensitive being, pity is not seldom pain. And when at last it is perceived that such pity cannot lead to effectual succor, common sense

³⁴ Ibid, 7.

³⁵ Ibid, 120.

bids the soul be rid of it...I might give alms to his body; but his body did not pain him; it was his soul that suffered, and his soul I could not reach.³⁶

The lawyer viewed Bartleby's problems, and subsequently his own response, holistically – philanthropically. The lawyer did not limit himself to a charitable response such as giving Bartleby money or having him institutionalized. Instead he looked into the soul of Bartleby's problems and conducted a comprehensive evaluation of his human condition; he acted philanthropically.

Eleemosynary Law-Legal Forms of philanthropy

The foundation for a robust civil society was laid in New England with state constitutions. Howard Miller, an American legal scholar, summarized the favorable conditions for philanthropy in the Massachusetts State Constitution: “Encouraging all other types of philanthropy as well, the constitution also enjoined the state’s legislators and magistrates ‘to countenance and inculcate the principles of humanity and general benevolence, public and private charity...among the people.’”³⁷ That mentality of promoting “general benevolence,” was illustrated by 1797 gift from Hon. William Phillips to the City of Boston for a hospital and a 1798 gift from Thomas Boylston for a small-pox and lunatic hospitals in Boston.³⁸ Private philanthropy was supported and encouraged by constitutions in other New England states as well. States like Vermont and New Hampshire incorporated the charitable language from other states constitutions into

³⁶ Herman Melville. *Bartleby the Scrivener*, in Herman Melville, *Billy Budd and Other Stories*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 25.

³⁷ Howard S. Miller. *The Legal Foundations of American Philanthropy, 1776-1844*. (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1961), 17.

³⁸ Franklin B. Sanborn. Massachusetts Board of State Charities, Massachusetts Centennial Commission. *Public Charities of Massachusetts During the Century Ending Jan. 1, 1876: A Report Made to the Massachusetts Centennial Commission*. (Boston: Wright and Potter, 1876), 28.

their own.³⁹ As exhibited by the two gifts in the late eighteenth-century, the state and private citizens in Massachusetts acted as stewards of a long relationship of collaborative philanthropy and charitable partnerships.

In 1819 the Supreme Court case *Dartmouth v. Woodward* solidified the sovereignty of private corporations and enhanced protection for trustees of private eleemosynary organizations. When the President of Dartmouth College was ousted by its trustees, the New Hampshire Legislature attempted to take control of the college and grant the Governor authority to appoint a new president and trustees. The legislature claimed that, because the College was founded under a Royal Charter, it was intended to benefit the public of New Hampshire. As a result, they contended that, it was a public institution though not operated by the state. Chief Justice John Marshall wrote the majority opinion and in it he clearly separated the responsibilities and liabilities of the donor, trustee, and beneficiary and granted full authority of the management of the college to the trustees.

In every literary or charitable institution, unless the objects of the bounty be themselves incorporated, the whole legal interest is in trustees and can be asserted only by them. The donors, or claimants of the bounty, if they can appear in court at all, can appear only to complain of the trustees. In all other situations, they are identified with, and personated by, the trustees; and their rights are to be defended and maintained by them.⁴⁰

With this statement Chief Justice Marshall endowed trustees with enormous influence over the affairs of eleemosynary institutions and elevated their station as stewards of wealth.

³⁹ Miller, 17.

⁴⁰ Supreme Court of the United States, "Trustees of Dartmouth College v. Woodward," 1819, Legal Information Institute, Cornell University Law School, Found at, http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0017_0518_ZO.html.

After absolving trustees' of their liability to donors and beneficiaries in the management of eleemosynary institutions, Justice Joseph Story's concurrence focused on private institutions sovereignty from the public domain. First, Justice Story reinforced Marshall's decision regarding charities.

The charity, then, may, in this sense, be public although it may be administered by private trustees; and for the same reason, it may thus be public though administered by a private corporation. The fact, then that the charity is public affords no proof that the corporation is also public; and consequently, the argument, so far as it is built on this foundation, falls to the ground.⁴¹

Next, Justice Story expanded the protection for eleemosynary institutions to include all private corporations.

Public corporations are generally esteemed such as exist for public political purposes only, such as towns, cities, parishes and counties, and in many respects they are so, although they involve some private interests; but, strictly speaking, public corporations are such only as are founded by the government for public purposes, where the whole interests belong also to the government. If, therefore, the foundation be private, though under the charter of the government, the corporation is private, however extensive the uses may be to which it is devoted, either by the bounty of the founder, or the nature and objects of the institution.⁴²

Justice's Marshall and Story revolutionized the way philanthropic and business corporations were used. Before the *Dartmouth v Woodward* case, corporations were "organizations reserved for the wealthy, learned, and respectable, acting in what they defined as the public interest."⁴³ After the case was decided corporations became popular ways for all Americans to pool their resources, without fear of full liability, in order to pursue their private interests.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Peter Dobkin Hall. *The Organization of American Culture, 1700-1900*. (New York: New York University Press), 80.

The corporation was gaining popularity in the world of philanthropy and business in antebellum America. In the first half of the nineteenth century, state chartered corporations transitioned from a rarely granted privilege to a common way of organizing business's as well as philanthropic institutions. One reason was a consequence of the favorable treatment of corporations in American common law. Another reason was a corporation's ability to uniquely meet the needs of Americans in an industrialized free-market democracy. Thomas Cochran, a pioneer of the field of business history stated, "The corporation was a device for gathering moderate sums from many investors" and "they satisfied the urge to join in group activities, to solve common problems by getting together. One became a 'member,' became associated in the 'cause' of local growth."⁴⁴

Corporate charters were few and far between in the early nineteenth century and the charters that were granted were custom made to fit that particular endeavor. Early state chartered corporations were a grant by the state for that private entity to undertake an activity which produced a public benefit. Chief Justice John Marshall stated in *Dartmouth College v Woodward*, "The objects for which a corporation is created are universally such as the government wishes to promote. They are deemed beneficial to the country, and this benefit constitutes the consideration, and in most cases, the sole consideration of the grant."⁴⁵ Many of the first corporate charters granted were for infrastructure projects such as bridges, canals, roads, and railroads. As the public benefited from those projects, corporations and an advanced infrastructure were linked to the economic and moral health of New England. In his autobiography *The Education of*

⁴⁴ Thomas Cochran and William Miller. *The Age of Enterprise: A Social History of Industrial America*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), 42.

⁴⁵ Supreme Court of the United States, "Trustees of Dartmouth College v. Woodward," 1819, Legal Information Institute, Cornell University Law School, Found at, http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0017_0518_ZO.html.

Henry Adams, Henry Adams claimed, “To the New England mind, roads, schools, clothes, and a clean face were connected as part of the law of order or divine system. Bad roads meant bad morals.”⁴⁶ Wealthy elites in Boston took their obligations seriously. They believed whole-heartedly in their position as a steward of public benefit through their corporations. Barbara and Kenneth Tucker claimed, “As a state-chartered corporation, the Boston Associates took seriously the quasi-public responsibilities that were part of the original compact of American corporations.”⁴⁷ The rise of the corporation pushed New England law to adopt specific distinctions and boundaries for the use of corporate assets.

In the early history of the corporation, the task of maintaining corporate integrity with regard to the asset boundaries fell on the shoulders of the highest leadership. Wright stated, “The laws that governed their operation restricted the activities of their officers, assuring that each organization confined itself to a well-defined program about which its supporters were in agreement.”⁴⁸ The corporation in antebellum America was expanding its area of economic influence and maintained a notion of responsibility to the public and the welfare of New England society. *Ultra vires* were infractions committed by a corporation for actions outside those specified by the corporate charter. Due to the specificity of corporate charters, philanthropy needed to be an explicit objective of the chartered corporation otherwise, any acts of philanthropy carried out by the company were illegal.

⁴⁶ Henry Adams. *The Education of Henry Adams*. (Blacksburg, VA: Wilder, 2008), 37.

⁴⁷ Barbara M. Tucker and Kenneth H. Tucker, Jr. *Industrializing Antebellum America: The Rise of Manufacturing Entrepreneurs in the Early Republic*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 172.

⁴⁸ Wright, 140.

The popularity of the corporate entity transcended antebellum gender lines. L.D. Ginzberg claimed, “Benevolent women involved in more traditional causes, who had far greater access to money, set up unambiguously corporate structures for their work.”⁴⁹ Along with the corporation, men and women adopted more professional standards in their business conduct. Both the professionalization of philanthropy and the increased use of the corporation illustrate a transition away from sentimental giving like charity toward more structured a complete philanthropy.

Along with corporations, testamentary and eleemosynary trusts increased in popularity and influence in Antebellum New England. As a legal tool for transferring wealth, trusts were almost exclusively the domain of the New England elite. “Families had, in effect, collectivized their capital resources through endowment and testamentary trusts. Eleemosynary and testamentary trustees were often the same persons.”⁵⁰ The development of trust law in the United States happened in three separate waves from the 1820s to the 1870s. In the 1820s, the evolution of trust law “concerned the most basic features of trusts: their immunity from the claims of creditors and other third parties; the fiduciary responsibilities of trustees; and the length of time a private trust could be permitted to last before its *corpus* was distributed.”⁵¹ Cases in the 1850s focused on the rights and duties of trustees and the judgments for trusts resembled what was achieved by corporations in the 1819 *Dartmouth v. Woodward* case.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the focus on trustees was the result of a large number of challenges by beneficiaries. The challenges were decided in favor of the

⁴⁹ LD. Ginzberg. *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 46.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 72.

⁵¹ Peter Dobkin Hall. “What the Merchants did with their Money: Charitable and Testamentary Trusts in Massachusetts, 1800-1880,” *Program on Nonprofit Organizations at Yale University*, March 1995, 15.

trustees and in the 1850s, trustees were granted independence to invest trust funds at their discretion as well as discretion over the appropriate use of the funds.⁵² Peter Dobkin Hall claimed, “For under the doctrines they established, both the state and the public were effectively barred from interfering with the ability of private groups to fund non-profit corporations and from interfering in their investment activities.”⁵³ This protection allowed wealthy families to avoid partible inheritance through the testamentary trust. The most famous and powerful established in the nineteenth-century was the Massachusetts Hospital Life Insurance Company,⁵⁴ which invested heavily in the corporations owned and operated by its board of directors. The cyclical movement of private fortunes through testamentary trusts, elite families, and private corporations enabled New England elites to maintain a grip on the region’s philanthropic, business, and cultural life.

For the New England elite and their trustees, these privileges were accompanied by the need to justify the perpetuation of their wealth and the legal protection it received. They accomplished this by describing their private philanthropy in terms of public benefit. Rather than allowing suspicion about the private trusts to build, the wealthy elite and their trustees shifted the conversation to the benefits the public received from the wealth and the trustee’s superior management of it.

⁵² Ibid, 15.

⁵³ Hall, *The Organization of American Culture*, 119.

⁵⁴ The Massachusetts Hospital Life Insurance Company was granted a state charter of incorporation as a hospital life insurance company in 1818. The company funded the Massachusetts General Hospital with a portion of its profits. Its board members were members of the Boston elite or the Brahmins as Holmes called them. Although it was created to provide life insurance, it functioned much like modern day investment funds where resources from participants are pooled together and invested by the trustees into securities, mortgages and other financial assets and the earnings are shared among the contributors. For a short but comprehensive history of the Massachusetts Hospital Life Insurance Company see, Gerald T. White, *A History of the Massachusetts Hospital Life Insurance Company*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955.)

Public Charity

Public charities in mid-nineteenth century New England were the institutions that worked most diligently to classify the moral condition of their beneficiaries. The state pauper system was a pride of Massachusetts as well as a concern. The concern was who qualified as a legitimate beneficiary. The need to distinguish between the able-bodied poor and the pauper was felt early in the nineteenth-century. In 1821 Josiah Quincy, a Massachusetts State Representative at the time, stated, “Outdoor relief” – providing money and other help to people in their own homes – was of all methods of relief ‘the most wasteful, the most expensive, and the most injurious to their morals and destructive to their industrious habits.’”⁵⁵ An 1876 report commissioned by the Massachusetts Board of Charities and written by Franklin Sanborn highlighted one hundred years of public charity in Massachusetts. In the report it is evident that there were two main kinds of public charitable institutions, institutions designed to inspire industrious work habits and strict moral conduct in paupers, and institutions for the rest of the poor.

Of the former type, the Rainsford Island facility in Boston Harbor was a good example. The Legislative Act by the City of Boston which created the facility included provisions for the building of three state almshouses with farms to employ the able-bodied poor with no town settlement and foreign paupers arriving by ship were left at Rainsford Island “during the continuance of such inability.”⁵⁶ Despite Sanborn’s persistence that criminals and paupers were not considered in the same class and therefore not treated as such under the law, the Rainsford Island facility, on a small uninhabited island in the middle of Boston Harbor surrounded by cold waters, did in fact,

⁵⁵ Josiah Quincy, quoted in, Lawrence M. Friedman. *A History of American Law*. (New York: Touchstone, 1973), 153.

⁵⁶ Sanborn, 26.

in its physical attributes, resemble Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. In fact, the biggest difference between the two facilities which were operated one hundred years apart was the convicted criminal status of the facility inhabitants. As Sanborn stated, “It was, in fact, an island pest-house.”⁵⁷

The deserving poor were those people in material poverty who were capable and willing to work but could not as a result of circumstances not under their control. These poor, historian Joel Schultz claimed, “were expected to take active steps to get increased resources by and for themselves.”⁵⁸ For state policy then, “it was more important to oppose avoidable dependency than to reduce material poverty.”⁵⁹ This regulation was enforced by the Overseers of the Poor as well as the House of Industry. The Overseers of the Poor, whose duties were later controlled by the directors of the House of Industry, conducted their charity in exactly a way that emphasized moral improvement but neglected the alleviation of material poverty.⁶⁰ This was most evident in the way the agencies dealt with poor children.

Overseers were allowed to bind legally as an apprentice or servant any child of a poor person who was charged to the state. In the city statute, the overseer of a poor child was referred to as master and the child as apprentice or servant. The relationship between master and apprentice more closely resembled indentured servitude than charity. Labor, it was believed, would necessarily develop industrious and virtuous habits in the child. In turn, the child would earn more money and increase their independence from the state.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 27.

⁵⁸ Joel Schwartz. *Fighting Poverty with Virtue: Moral Reform and America's Urban Poor, 1825-2000*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 3.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 3.

⁶⁰ Peleg Whitman Chandler, ed. *The Charter and Ordinances of the City of Boston, Together with the Acts of the Legislature Relating to the City, Collated and Revised Pursuant to an Order of the City Council*. (Boston: John H. Eastburn, 1850), 280.

The City of Boston took an interesting approach to deal with delinquent poor children. It reflected Schwartz's claim that combating avoidable dependency was more important than reducing material poverty.⁶¹ An apprentice or servant who unlawfully departed from their master was taken before a justice and faced a penalty of up to 20 days in common jail or a House of Correction. The parents of a servant child who failed to perform their duties to the expectations of the master were charged with any costs the master may have incurred as a result of the child's "gross misbehavior."⁶²

Public charity in Boston closely resembled the evangelical philanthropy of the antebellum era. Evangelical philanthropists' systematic categorization and treatment of the poor appeared sophisticated and effective but, once it was finally put into motion it did little more than hide the problem. "The focus of the evangelical philanthropy," stated David Ward, "was the delinquent poor, and much more care and attention was devoted to the moral classification of the poor than to the specification of their environs."⁶³ One example of this was *The Report on Truants for the City of Boston* in 1853. For the quarter ending July 1, 1853, the numbers were: "Truants, sixty-one; absentees, forty-one; whole number, one hundred and two. Of the Truants, eight were girls, and fifty-three boys. Of the absentees, seven were girls, and thirty-four boys. Eighty-seven were children of foreign parentage, and fifteen to American."⁶⁴ The twelve-page document is full of these types of statistics along with observations of the children and warnings from the City's Truancy officer about child beggars. No mention was made of the children's environment.

⁶¹ Schwartz, 3.

⁶² Chandler, 241.

⁶³ Ward, 20.

⁶⁴ *Documents of the City of Boston*. The Report on Truants, Document No. 55, July 1, 1853, (Boston: J. H. Eastburn, 1853), 7.

The basis for categorization was “spatial strategies of contact and removal,” which was based on the perceived “contagious nature of depravity and destitution.”⁶⁵ This is evident in *The Report on Truants*. Of the truants documented in the quarter ending July 1, 1853, “Ten have been sent to the House of Reformation for six months each; eleven have been taken charge of by the Overseers of the Poor; two have been sent to the Boylston School; three, by request of parents, have been admitted to Father Haskin’s School; for two I have obtained places in the country.”⁶⁶ Therefore, public charities aimed to document the moral condition of the poor which was a result of their environment, without documenting the environment. Then, without documentation of the environmental characteristics related to poverty, the state transferred the delinquent to a new environment which was supposedly designed to reform their particular moral deficiencies.

Dr. Samuel G. Howe, the leading philanthropist and medical doctor in antebellum New England, based his life’s philanthropy on the idea of separation, and the theory he developed opposed it. Howe’s theory of separation involved some elements of social contact as a way to counteract the prolonged exposure to patients with other defects at the reform institutions. “He called this his ‘theory of diffusion,’ stated Jeffrey Rossbach, “and based it on the assumption that, although handicapped people did need special training at places like Perkins School, prolonged exposure to similarly handicapped persons could be detrimental to an individual’s growth and improvement.”⁶⁷ Howe advocated for the assimilation of those groups who were traditionally isolated. He

⁶⁵ Ward, 20.

⁶⁶ *Documents of the City of Boston*. The Report on Truants, Document No. 55, July 1, 1853, 7.

⁶⁷ Rossbach, 61.

stressed the importance of avoiding the silo-like class formation that typically resulted from stints in those institutions.

The two state agencies that governed the public charity system in Massachusetts were the Alien Commission and the Board of Charities, and over the century of 1776-1876, they created extensive measures to deal with the various kinds of pauper problems. The sum of one hundred years of public charity was summarized by Sanborn as:

1. A gradual extension of the laws of settlement so as to give the right of local relief to at least three-fourths of the poor properly resident in the State; 2. Support of the remaining number at the expense of the State, in establishments suited to the wants of the sick, the aged and the young children, with employment for such as could labor, and instruction for those who could profit by it; 3. The means of classifying the applicants for relief, so as to separate vagrants and persons chargeable to towns and to other States from those properly belonging to Massachusetts, as state charges; and of removing all except the last class to their place of settlement, or to some other suitable abode; 4. Classification of the state paupers themselves, so that those whose poverty was occasioned by vicious lives should undergo the restraint of a workhouse; and the insane be separated from the sane, in order to receive a treatment adapted to their condition; while children of the school age were either to be carefully taught in a state school or placed under supervision in good families of country towns. The sick were to have good hospital treatment, but the able-bodied, unless vicious, were not to be detained in almshouses; 5. Outdoor relief for such as, on account of sickness, or for other sufficient cause, ought not to be sent to an almshouse; such relief to be furnished by the local authorities at the expense of the State; 6. Supervision of this outdoor relief, and of the general management of the overseers of the poor; with regular reports from those officers to the State authorities in regard to the mode and cost of relieving the poor in the towns and cities; 7. Such relations with neighboring States, and such restrictions on the introduction of paupers by land or sea, as would enable Massachusetts to receive all that properly belong to her, while forbidding to enter, or sending from the State, those who had no right to a support in Massachusetts.⁶⁸

Ultimately, public charity in antebellum New England was concerned with classifying the moral characteristics of people living in material poverty. The goal of public charity was

⁶⁸ Sanborn, 95.

to decrease dependency on the state and build self-reliance among its citizens through moral reform rather than the alleviation of material poverty.

Private Charity

Voluntary associations have long been documented as the cornerstone of American philanthropy in the nineteenth century. The innovative association, according to Sanborn, “magnified abilities, and it allowed compassionate men and women for the first time to try to accommodate their efforts to community rather than individual requirements.”⁶⁹ Developments in information and transportation technology impacted voluntary associations in Antebellum New England. According to Wolfgang Schivelbusch, “Motion was no longer dependent on the conditions of natural space, but on a mechanical power that created its own new spatiality.”⁷⁰ Society’s changed relationship to time and space allowed people to associate for reasons other than immediate needs.

In addition to addressing social problems, people who might have once been isolated in their interests were able to connect to people with similar interests in other places. Associations benevolent and otherwise proliferated as a reaction to and with the help of improved transportation and information technology. Female ‘cent societies’ became popular ways for women to coordinate domestic and foreign relief efforts and the American Temperance Society organized nationally to fight drunkenness and its related social ills. The American Bible Society and American Tract Society were both organized to promote Protestant Christianity. Lastly, voluntary associations in New England were a response to government’s failure to successfully address certain social issues, as in the

⁶⁹ Wright, 96.

⁷⁰ Wolfgang Schivelbusch. *The Railway Journey: the Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century*. (Berkeley: University of California Press: 1986), 10.

case of slavery. “Viewed in this light, civil society tests the boundaries and languages of social relations outside the realm of formal politics and establishes the sources of moral authority which define hegemonic social relationships.”⁷¹

Religion played an influential role in New England philanthropy. Robert Bremner introduced religion’s influence on philanthropy in New England as the “Benevolent Empire.”⁷² New England Protestantism was largely defined in this era by sectarian conflict and dissent, but in some cases, particularly those dealing with philanthropy, congregations and religious leaders united.

While all of the different Protestant denominations played a role in New England philanthropy, strong leadership helped them successfully collaborate on shared interests like antislavery. “William Lloyd Garrison headed a heterogeneous delegation of New England Congregationalists like Samuel E. Sewall, Unitarians like Samuel J. May, and Quakers like John Greenleaf Whittier.”⁷³ Garrison was the head of the loudest and most public abolitionist group in America. Those religiously charged abolitionists from New England were well known at the time because of their publishing power. They published newspaper articles and tracts throughout New England, often featured in Garrison’s newspaper, the *Liberator*.

Their collaboration was also illustrated by one of the most widely published clergyman in New England, Rev. Edward Everett Hale. In a letter to Frederic Greenleaf on January 9, 1850, Hale noted the compromise and collaboration on the part of the New England clergy in regards to philanthropy: “We had a ministry at large meeting last night.

⁷¹Howard M. Wach. “Unitarian Philanthropy and Cultural Hegemony in Comparative Perspective: Manchester and Boston, 1827-1848,” *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Spring, 1993), 541.

⁷² Bremner, 45.

⁷³ James Brewer Stewart. *Holy Warriors: the Abolitionists and American Slavery*. (Hill and Wang, 1997), 51.

They agreed to call a general meeting Sunday evening at the Town Hall on what Burton calls the ‘moral condition’ and I ‘the crime and poverty’ of the city.”⁷⁴ The New England religious leaders like Garrison and Hale influenced the conversation on philanthropy through their access to established social networks. The fundraising campaigns took them to the doorstep of each of their congregants where they were able to plug the cause of aid to westerners and influence their opinion on morality and politics.

Of the New England Protestant denominations, the Unitarians influenced New England philanthropy more than any other. Historian Paul Goodman believed, “Unitarians probably dominated philanthropy because so many leading businessmen flocked to the new denominations.”⁷⁵ The businessmen brought with them their fortunes which were protected in eleemosynary and testamentary trusts and growing constantly thanks to their corporations. The Unitarian clergy also left their imprint on New England philanthropy. Jeffrey Rossbach claimed, “The Unitarian minister also formulated a new law...both giving and receiving were simultaneously bureaucratized. In the name of perfecting society, reformers might be inadvertently thwarting the one thing that could bring about such perfection: the individual’s own effort for it.”⁷⁶ Most importantly, Unitarian philanthropy emphasized the individual, and the salvation possible through self-help and independence. “In precisely that sense, Unitarians designed their missions as schools for rational autonomy, for educating individuals to manage themselves and their affairs in a volatile world,” claimed Howard Wach.⁷⁷ The anxiety caused by rapid urbanization and immigration of Roman Catholics during the period powered the

⁷⁴ Edward Everett Hale Jr. *Life and Letters of Edward Everett Hale, Vol. 1*. 215.

⁷⁵ Paul Goodman. “Ethics and Enterprise: The Values of a Boston Elite, 1800-1860,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Autumn, 1966), pp. 446.

⁷⁶ Rossbach, 155.

⁷⁷ Wach, 547.

Unitarian philanthropy and ensured they were able to leave their mark on the philanthropic institutions of Boston.

The proliferation of business corporations during a time when New England was rapidly industrializing produced huge amounts of wealth for several New England families. They included the likes of Samuel Colt, Amos Adams Lawrence and his brothers, and Horatio Nelson Slater and John Fox Slater. Colt was a pioneer in the firearms industry and the Lawrence and Slater brothers were giants of the textile industry. Paternalism was a common feature of their philanthropy. Samuel Colt's philanthropy resembled the philanthropic philosophy of Undershaft in George Bernard Shaw's 1907 play *Major Barbara*.⁷⁸ Colt's paternalistic tendencies were achieved through the corporate towns he built for his employees. John Fox and Horatio Nelson Slater "advocated an early version of moral capitalism with elements of social responsibility that built on the paternalistic beliefs of their respective fathers."⁷⁹ In most cases, the beneficiaries were their employees because they desired to make all of their employees sober, thrifty, frugal, and morally sound Christians which subsequently increased their productive output. Thomas Cochran, the founder of the field of business history stated, "The company will not employ anyone who is habitually absent from public worship on the Sabbath, or known to be guilty of immorality."⁸⁰ This reflected Paul Goodman's statement that, "The center of the commercial ethics was personal responsibility."⁸¹ Although their businesses were not legally able to participate in philanthropic ventures,

⁷⁸ George Bernard Shaw. *Pygmalion and Major Barbara*. (New York: Bantam, 1992).

⁷⁹ Tucker, 4.

⁸⁰ Cochran and Miller, 20.

⁸¹ Goodman, 440.

New England industrialists still used their corporations as tools to reform the morality of the New England wage laboring class.

Discontent with Philanthropy

Although a zeal for philanthropy and social reform are a trademark of New England history, particularly during the antebellum period, growing skepticism and discontent with New England philanthropies and philanthropists was growing. This is particularly evident in the writings of the intellectual and social elite of New England, most importantly, those who were friends and acquaintances of the officers of the New England Emigrant Aid Company. The perceived decline in New England morality and the seemingly faltering solutions were documented in fiction as well as non-fiction literature, in verse as well as prose. Robert Bremner stated, “In an age of criticism and conscience, when vast fortunes were still a novelty, the methods by which wealth was acquired were scrutinized almost as carefully as the ways in which it was used. Thus early Americans began to voice the suspicion that philanthropy was a device used by the rich to atone for their way of acquiring wealth.”⁸²

The short story “Earth’s Holocaust,” in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *Mosses from an Old Manse*, is a story of cleansing and closure. Gathered around a massive bonfire, strangers and friends alike threw in objects which impeded their progress and personal growth. One of the attendees expressed his disdain with philanthropy by suggesting it too could be sacrificed for the better of humankind: “What is this world coming to? Everything rich and racy – all the spice of life – is to be condemned as useless. Now that they have kindled the bonfire, if these nonsensical reformers would fling themselves into

⁸² Bremner, 42.

it, all would be well enough. ‘Be patient,’ responded a staunch conservative; ‘it will come to that in the end. They will first fling us in, and finally themselves.’”⁸³

Ralph Waldo Emerson, a skeptic of everything but nature and the individual unimpeded, had serious reservations about the increasing professionalism in the practice of philanthropy: “There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity am bought and sold; for them I will go to prison if need be; but your miscellaneous popular charities; the educations at college of fools; the building of meeting-houses to the vain end to which many now stand; alms to sots, and the thousand-fold Relief Societies;--though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold.”⁸⁴ Emerson’s most enthusiastic repudiation of New England philanthropy was that “the virtue in most requests is conformity.”⁸⁵ In his view philanthropy was a type of conformity, and the conformity was a “penance,” “an apology for living in the world.”⁸⁶ True philanthropy cultivated an unapologetic individual and liberated the mind to independent thought.

Henry David Thoreau, like Emerson, was skeptical of the increasing professionalism. In *Walden*, Thoreau talked about philanthropy like it was a fad gripping New England culture. “As for Doing-good, that is one of the professions which are full.”⁸⁷ This claim supported the Emersonian idea of self-reliance. Professional charities bred poverty and pauperism, and, to many New Englanders, the expanding and professionalized charity industry was an indicator of a heightened sense of philanthropic

⁸³ Nathaniel Hawthorne. “Earth’s Holocaust,” in *The Complete Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne: Mosses from an Old Manse Vol. II*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1893), 437.

⁸⁴ Ralph Waldo Emerson. “Self-Reliance” in, *Essays and Poems*. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2004), 117.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 116.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 116.

⁸⁷ Henry David Thoreau. *Walden and Civil Disobedience*. (Nashville: American Renaissance, 2010), 37.

duty. Throwing money at social problems was no longer enough to lift the majority, or even the minority, of people out of poverty. Coddling the lowly prohibited them from building the sound moral character that produced self-sustaining habits. Too much philanthropy or the wrong kind of philanthropy was believed to exacerbate the conditions responsible for moral degradation and material poverty. “There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root, and it may be that he who bestows the largest amount of time and money on the needy is doing the most by his mode of life to produce that misery which he strives in vain to relieve.”⁸⁸ The approach to philanthropy in the middle nineteenth-century, Thoreau believed, perpetuated many problems by applying a temporary bandage and failing to address the root issue.

Thoreau was skeptical of professional philanthropists and the American government. In 1849 he published the essay, “On the Duty of Civil Disobedience” in which he argued that the government was an impediment to the American people. “Yet this government never of itself furthered any enterprise, but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way. *It* does not keep the country free. *It* does not settle the West. *It* does not educate. The character inherent in the American people has done all that has been accomplished.”⁸⁹ Thoreau pushed the argument that the best kind of self-reliance was achieved in anarchy, absent of philanthropists.⁹⁰ Fear and anxiety of paternal relationships between philanthropy, government, and the polity informed Thoreau’s philosophy of human nature and embrace of individual self-help.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 39.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 181.

⁹⁰ Webster’s 1850 edition of the *Dictionary of the English Language, Abridged from the American Dictionary*, defined anarchy as, “being without a government.” pp. 24.

The discontent among New England's elite intellectuals and writers was very similar with the exception of Oliver Wendell Holmes. Holmes was a respected writer and conversationalist in antebellum New England. "He had been called on many times to assure the success of social gatherings by his conversation, and had been listened to with flattering and stimulating attention by distinguished people; he had contributed the verse regarded as an essential blend of the social and intellectual elements on many collegiate occasions," stated Franklin T. Baker. In 1857 the first of Holmes' series of essays titled, "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, one of New England's most respected and widely read literary publications.

The essays "are talk put into type; no longer fluid, and shifting, but fixed, set; no longer vivified by tone and gesture, or warmed by the appreciation of the audience, but standing on their own verbal merits, their wit, their wisdom."⁹¹ In this talk, the Autocrat touches on a wide ranging number of topics. Most of the discussion eventually winds its way back to the art of making conversation. Holmes remained largely absent from most of the controversies that gripped antebellum New England which is reflected in the "Autocrat," but one observation about philanthropy does stick out. Unlike most of his contemporaries, Holmes displayed some hesitation about the increasing use of scientific methods to supplant sentimental and emotional methods of charity. The Autocrat warned, "– Beware of making your moral staple consist of the negative virtues. It is good to abstain, and teach others to abstain, from all that is sinful or hurtful. But making a business of it leads to emaciation of character, unless one feeds largely also on the more nutritious diet of active sympathetic benevolence."⁹² This is a sharp contradiction to the

⁹¹ Oliver Wendell Holmes. *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*. (New York: MacMillan, 1928), V.

⁹² *Ibid*, 288.

popular trend of the time from removing sentiment and emotion from philanthropy.

Holmes was one of the few New England writers that did not lash out at philanthropists in his literature.

Conclusion

Eleemosynary law in antebellum New England developed in a way that increased the sovereignty of private charitable corporations and granted new powers and privileges to trustees of eleemosynary and testamentary trusts. Public charity increased throughout the antebellum period. In Boston, public charity employed a system of moral classification to determine the worthiness of a potential beneficiary. This system was aimed at avoiding dependency on the state while shaping the moral character of the materially impoverished. Private charity was dominated by voluntary associations, the Protestant clergy, and corporations. Enthusiasm for philanthropy extended throughout New England, but the elite intellectuals, particularly the Transcendentalists found little to like about the New England brand of philanthropy. According to Sanborn, “In the broad philanthropy, the kindly and shrewd intelligence, the deep sympathies, the plain good sense, the practical Christianity of this People, will be found the moving cause of all that has been done to relieve suffering and to elevate mankind in our Commonwealth. To this affectionate, magnanimous People, whose exploits fill so glorious a page of history, but whose best record is in their social and domestic institutions, I inscribe this imperfect sketch.”⁹³ In his comparative history of Unitarian philanthropy in antebellum Boston and Manchester, Howard Wach summarized the roles of public and private charity: “In both cities, perceptions of deserving and undeserving poor generally corresponded to a *de*

⁹³ Sanborn, 108.

facto division of labor between private and public charity.”⁹⁴ Although innovative organizations appeared to bridge this divide, the public perception of philanthropy followed those lines of distinction.

⁹⁴ Wach, 543.

Chapter Two: Philanthropy in Bleeding Kansas

Continual compromises on legislation in Washington frustrated the country over lingering concerns about the future of slavery in America. Congress's failure to resolve the slavery issue amplified anxieties across the country, and, with the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, geopolitical distinctions increased. Geopolitical differences raged for four years, and in 1854, the U.S. Congress sought to answer the slavery question for good through the doctrine of popular sovereignty. This left the future of slavery in the Territory to a vote and resulted in a decade of civil war for Kansas. At odds were the two dominant economies in the United States, southern slave labor agrarianism and an industrializing wage labor economy in the north. Although these two economic belief systems were in opposition over control of the territory, the reality of 1850s Kansas made both of those economies impossible there. The economy in Kansas had a mix of slave labor as well as free labor and was mostly agrarian. The inhabitants were nomadic, carried debt, and distrusted paper currency. Amidst the chaotic and unorganized economy of Kansas Territory, the two dominant economic belief systems fought to extend their reach there.

The philanthropic context of the Kansas Conflict was a reincarnation of New England philanthropy. Voluntary associations flourished, philanthropic corporations were present, women played a critical role supplying relief, and settlers held deep beliefs about the individual's ability to progress in order for the country to progress. Philanthropy in the Kansas Conflict was predominantly a response to government failure.⁹⁵ Some

⁹⁵ Government failure is the inability, or unwillingness, of the government to resolve an issue the citizens believe is critical to the health and stability of the society.

Utopian communities did sprout up and reflected the variety of New England's romanticized visions of American progress. In many ways, philanthropy in the Kansas Conflict reflected the New England Unitarian brand of self-improvement oriented moral reform.

Philanthropic motives and the organizations they animated were the most inflammatory elements of Bleeding Kansas. New England philanthropy was proactive and invasive, and it was transplanted to Kansas Territory. The conflict was organized, publicized, and facilitated by philanthropic organizations from all regions of the country, but dominated by New England. Most historians attribute the Kansas Conflict to political and economic motives. Gunja SenGupta the author of *For God and Mammon: Evangelicals and Entrepreneurs, Masters and Slaves in Territorial Kansas, 1854-1860*, the most complete book of the Kansas Conflict, claimed that the Kansas conflict was between Missourian squatters and Northern evangelicals and entrepreneurs.⁹⁶ These two occupational groups did play a critical role in the conflict but, whether they acted in accordance to market or religious values, they believed it was philanthropic. Their actions in Kansas were acts of philanthropy that were intended to lead America out of its slide into moral degradation and back on the course set by the revolutionary generation.

Definitions

Emigrant aid was the use of private funds by wealthy individuals to help easterners move to the Kansas and Nebraska territories. The aid typically came in the form of reduced transportation rates, protection, and a guide with knowledge of the territory. W.H. Isely described the emigrants as "sober, industrious, God-fearing; they

⁹⁶ Gunja SenGupta. *For God and Mammon: Evangelicals and Entrepreneurs, Masters and Slaves in Territorial Kansas, 1854-1860*. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996).

generally came unarmed, interested only in peaceable husbandry and in the establishment of a free state.”⁹⁷ The emigrants were voluntary, and the philanthropists preferred them to be families of the lower socio-economic classes.

New England Emigrant Aid Company will always refer exclusively to the company formed under the second charter granted by the state of Massachusetts. This does not include the New Emigrant Aid Company under the Connecticut charter, nor the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company incorporated between the Connecticut incorporation and the final incorporation in Massachusetts. Nor does it include any of the various other emigrant aid companies, associations, or societies organized for similar purposes.

Political Context

The Compromise of 1850 was designed and introduced by Whig Senator Henry Clay. The bill included eight different measures that were intended to bring a comprehensive solution and compromise to issues stemming from the acquisition of the Mexican Cession. The main points of the compromise included: the admission of California as a free state and the formation of territorial governments in the remaining land of the Mexican Cession; Texas was relieved of its financial obligations to the US by giving up its land West of the Rio Grande; the abolition of the slave trade in Washington DC; and finally the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law. The Compromise of 1850 followed the Mexican-American War. The war began after the United States annexed Texas, a sovereign nation-state at the time that the Mexicans believed was still part of their domain.

⁹⁷ W.H. Isely. “The Sharps Rifle Episode in Kansas History,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Apr., 1907), 550.

The war against Mexico and the Compromise of 1850 were perceived by northerners as a gross infringement on their right not to participate in the institution of slavery and its expansion. James Russell Lowell, a leading New England intellectual and Unitarian from Cambridge, Massachusetts, illustrated the growing sentiment in *The Biglow Papers*. His fame as a poet grew throughout the second quarter of the nineteenth century among the New England elite, but the publication of *The Biglow Papers* in 1848 quickly made Lowell one of the most widely-read political satirists. Lowell's character Hosea Biglow, a New England farmer, illustrated the abhorrence of the New England elite at the United States government's accommodation of slavery through territorial and political imperialism.

Aint it cute to see a Yankee
Take sech everlastin' pains
All to git the Devil's thankee,
Helpin' on 'em weld their chains?
Wy, it's jest ez clear ez figgers, Clear ez one an' one make two,
Chaps that make black slaves o' niggers
Want to make wite slaves o' you."
"Wal, go 'long to help 'em stealin'
Bigger pens to cram with slaves,
Help the men thet's ollers dealin'
Insults on your fathers' graves;
Help the strong to grind the feeble,
Help the many again the few,
Help the men thet call your people
Witewashed slaves an' peddlin crew!⁹⁸

New England intellectual elites did not stop there. Ralph Waldo Emerson gave one of his most spirited public speeches to the citizens of Concord respecting the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Much of Emerson's speech was disdain toward the inaction of the State of Massachusetts. Emerson distilled the spirit of American

⁹⁸ James Russell Lowell. *The Biglow Papers*. (London: John Camden Hotten, 1859), 6.

exceptionalism down to the state level and proclaimed throughout the address that America, although exceptional and destined to lead the progress of the world's civilization, was guided by the actions of Massachusetts and her residents. The Fugitive Slave Law forced Massachusetts to participate in activities which lead in the country in a direction contrary to where they envisioned. Emerson concluded, "If our resistance to this law is not right, there is no right. This is not meddling with other people's affairs: this is hindering other people from meddling with us. This is not going crusading into Virginia and Georgia after slaves."⁹⁹ The Fugitive Slave Law was a gross encroachment of what Emerson believed was a Southern Nation, into the affairs of New Englanders, who were ordained by God to lead the United States into the future. It was, "the extension of the planter's whipping-post."¹⁰⁰ Little did Emerson know in 1850 that within a decade some of his closest friends from New England, with Eli Thayer at the helm, would hatch multiple schemes to peacefully invade Kansas Territory and Virginia with New Englanders.¹⁰¹

The Kansas-Nebraska Act was the product of Illinois Democratic Senator Stephen A. Douglas. The Act was controversial because it allowed popular sovereignty north of parallel 36° 30' the dividing line for slavery set forth in the Missouri Compromise of 1820. Section one of the Kansas-Nebraska Act stated that the territory would be admitted into the Union with or without slavery. That issue was left for the writers of the new state constitution. Section fourteen of the Kansas-Nebraska Act continued,

⁹⁹ Ralph Waldo Emerson. "An Address to the Citizens of Concord (on the Fugitive Slave Law) in, Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays and Poems*. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2004), 352.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 357.

¹⁰¹ In addition to Thayer's efforts in Kansas Territory, he incorporated a company for the purpose of land speculation and assisted emigration to Virginia in an attempt to defeat slavery from within the south. The plan was to use similar methods as in Kansas as a kind of philanthropic intervention. For a brief explanation see Otis K. Rice. "Eli Thayer and the Friendly Invasion of Virginia," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Nov., 1971), pp.575-596.

It being the true intent and meaning of this act not to legislate slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form an regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States: Provided, That nothing herein contained shall be construed to revive or put in force any law or regulation which may have existed prior to the act of sixth March, eighteen hundred and twenty, either protecting, establishing, prohibiting, or abolishing slavery.¹⁰²

These two portions of the Kansas-Nebraska Act firmly repealed any legitimacy of the Missouri Compromise. The Act further stated in Section 5 that only free white male residents over the age of twenty-one were allowed to vote in the first election. Once statehood was achieved, the state legislature determined the qualifications for voters and office holders.¹⁰³ Therefore, in the contest of popular sovereignty, families, women, children, and slaves were unnecessary to determine the fate of the territory's domestic institutions.

The Southern whipping-post was extended again by the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. Section 10 of the Act stated,

That the provisions of an act entitled 'An act respecting fugitives from justice, and persons escaping from the service of their masters,' approved February twelve, seventeen hundred and ninety-three, and the provisions of the act entitled 'An act to amend, and supplementary to, the aforesaid act,' approved September eighteen, eighteen hundred and fifty, be, and the same are hereby, declared to extend to and be in full force within the limits of said Territory of Nebraska.¹⁰⁴

The Southern planter's Fugitive Slave Law, according to many New Englanders, encroached on their right to lead the Union into the future as a free nation.

The extension of the Fugitive Slave Law to American territories before statehood validated the sentiments of New Englanders by extending the legitimacy of slave

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

property outside official United States borders. For many New Englanders this was a dramatic step backward after the abolition of the international slave trade and the passage of the Missouri Compromise a few decades earlier. Despite the perceived fervor of New Englanders for racial egalitarianism, political equality was not in consideration in Kansas Territory. Alice Nichols stated, “Ninety-nine out of 100 free-soiler delegates voted that no Negro, slave or free, was ever to live within the bounds of Kansas when she became a state.”¹⁰⁵ New Englanders were not ready to cohabit the American continent with free African Americans, but that prospect was less offensive to them than the encroachment on their freedom to make the choice of racial equality for themselves. New England elites were offended by the encroachment and impediment of southern institutions on New England’s quest for purity.

The questions over slavery and territorial expansion that previously divided along party lines manifested into distinct sectional divisions in the 1850s. Political historian Michael Holt stated, “Sectional divisions widened in response to what politicians in Washington did; divergent sectional opinions about slavery and basic social and economic distinctions between the free-labor North and the slave-labor South did not in and of themselves cause those decisions.”¹⁰⁶ When the major national parties divided along geopolitical lines, distinctly sectional parties like the Know-Nothings and Free Soil Party sprouted up although they were short lived.

Evidence of the political sectionalism was evident in the language of many documents written on the Kansas frontier. In a number of letters, from northerners and southerners alike, political divisions were referred to as north versus south. In contrast,

¹⁰⁵ Nichols. 43.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Holt. *The Fate of Their Country: Politicians, Slavery Extension, and the Coming of the Civil War*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), 4.

language regarding economics and philanthropy was often expressed in the dichotomy of east verses west. The circular, *An appeal from Kansas!*, published by the Territorial Executive Committee was subtitled, “With Suggestion and Directions to our Fellow Men in the East.”¹⁰⁷ Philanthropy was described along lines of geographic divisions which paralleled the perceived division of civilization between the eastern states and the western frontier. In this sense, organized philanthropy was linked to the level of perceived civilization.

Economic Context

The New England Emigrant Aid Company published a plethora of propaganda material as was customary among antebellum philanthropies. One of the Company publications was a pamphlet titled *Two Tracts for the Times*, which featured two Southern authors. One argued for the existence of slavery and the other argued for the institution’s abolition. Daniel R. Goodloe, a North Carolinian, made the argument against slavery. Using census data, Goodloe set out to “show that slavery prevents the rapid settlement of a country.”¹⁰⁸

Free labor ideology asserted that negro-slavery was a bad investment. The industrial revolution introduced methods of agriculture more efficient than slave labor. Goodloe stated, “For these reasons, it is clear that a man can cultivate far more land with a given amount of capital, by the employment of free labor, than by the purchase of

¹⁰⁷ Circular, *An appeal from Kansas!*, Territorial Executive Committee, Dec. 14, 1860, New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers, 1854-1909. Kansas State Historical Society, Lawrence. Found at, http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi-bin/index.php?SCREEN=show_document&SCREEN_FROM=immigration&document_id=100143&FROM_PAGE=&topic_id=101.

¹⁰⁸ B.F. Stringfellow and D.R. Goodloe. *Information for the People: Two Tracts for the Times*. (Boston: The New England Emigrant Aid Company, 1855), 52.

slaves.”¹⁰⁹ Slave labor was also more expensive because of federal legislation restricting the trade of slaves. This drove up the value of slaves already in America. It also made the ownership of those slaves more expensive because they now required better living conditions to encourage procreation. Thus, slavery was made more expensive by the increased standards which slaves required to survive and reproduce.

The southern states were slow to adopt industrial methods of agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce. Goodloe asked, “Is it not as clear as the sun at noon-day, that if this capital were invested in Manufacturers, in Commerce, in Railroads and Canals, that the Old Dominion would stand shoulder to shoulder with New York in Wealth, and Arts, and Power?”¹¹⁰ Southern reluctance to accept the most cutting edge industrial technology signified to New Englanders some malfunction in southern culture. New Englanders perceived southern reluctance as somewhat less civil and it impeded their vision of a civilized nation which spanned the continent. The concerns about labor, industry, and availability of and access to new resources weighed heavily on New England factory owners. “The New England factory owners, who feared the development of the West, lest it drain off their labor supply, speculated nevertheless in western lands and western railroads from which profits could be secured only if the West were developed,” claimed historian Thomas Cochran.¹¹¹ Despite their concerns and fears, New England industrialists approached the problems with the same capitalist mentality which brought them their fortunes in the first place.

Goodloe continued, “These facts are sufficient to show that cities and slavery are at war with each other, and that they cannot thrive together. If cities advance, slavery

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 54.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 43.

¹¹¹ Cochran and Miller. 29.

must recede; and if slavery advances, cities must disappear.”¹¹² Although the executives of the New England Emigrant Aid Company saw eastern cities as a place where vice and moral inferiority were running rampant, they also believed urban centers were necessary to advance civilization. The solution they proposed was to fill the new cities of the American West with the paupers and vagrants from the East. This provided the population necessary to development cities in the West and simultaneously cleansed the urban centers in New England.

In the opposing tract, B.F. Stringfellow, a native Virginian, presented his tract to the Platte County Self-Defensive Association illustrating the robustness of voluntary associations in antebellum philanthropy, particularly as a popular tool on the American frontier. Platte County was a Missouri border county and later the front line in the Missourians fight for the Kansas-Nebraska Territory. The association was organized solely as a response to perceived Northern encroachments and claimed would only involve itself in the defense of Platte County and property held there.

Stringfellow advocated the preservation of slavery in the South and its right to expand west based on moral and economic considerations of the slave and slaveholder: “We assert that Negro slavery, as it exists in the United States, is neither a moral nor a political evil, but on the contrary is a blessing to the white race and the negro.”¹¹³ For Stringfellow and many other slavery sympathizers, the moral question of slavery was answered in Christian theology which justified slavery for centuries. The justification rested in the mutual respect the slave and slave owner showed one another. So long as the slave owner taught his slaves the virtues of Christianity,

¹¹² Stringfellow and Goodloe, 52.

¹¹³ Ibid, 9.

slavery was justified. It was the slave's duty to show proper respect to the master by adhering to their stipulations and acting in accordance to the Christian virtues their master taught. This kind of mutually respectful relationship, based on the exchange of Christian duties and values, disproved the claim that slavery was a moral evil that ran contrary to Christianity.

Agriculture was the basis of economic success in the south and Stringfellow defended it when he said, "Commerce and manufactures, elsewhere the sources of greatest wealth, here are found less profitable than slaveholding agriculture."¹¹⁴ A rural agrarian economy and society had other advantages as well. Urban centers were not necessary for civilization, in fact, they impeded the advancement of the civilized individual. Cities bred vice, which compromised the most esteemed values of men and women, integrity and purity. "If examples were needed, we could point to our cities, where in the crowded dens of poverty such appalling scenes of vice and debauchery are exhibited; and to the country, where the hearth of the cabin is the bed of man's integrity, of women's purity."¹¹⁵ Rural society was the best way to cultivate a pure white society with integrity. Stringfellow and the incorporators of the New England Emigrant Aid Company were not in complete opposition to one another on urban society. Both of them believed the urban centers of the North were sinking deeper into the grip of poverty and vice. The New England Emigrant Aid Company incorporators believed the cities of the North represented the highest level of civilization humanity had achieved. Stringfellow on the other hand, believed a person could only reach the pinnacle of their moral cultivation living in a rural environment.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 25.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 17.

It was illustrative of a southern notion that civilization was an internal quest for the individual while in New England, civilization was a social process.

Philanthropic Context

The role of women's philanthropy in Bleeding Kansas as well as in New England was viewed as more compassionate and sentimental in nature than men's philanthropy. Privately, women played a critical role in their home's literary and religious life. Publically, women supported efforts to supply humanitarian aid and acted as fundraisers for larger philanthropic organizations. Women philanthropists in the northeast stretched their benevolence to the Kansas Territory and maintained strong similarities between their philanthropy in New England as well as Kansas.¹¹⁶

Women's fundraising efforts to provide humanitarian assistance in Kansas came in a variety of forms. Some was spontaneous and unattached to an organized philanthropy. Measures were taken in an attempt to preserve the sentimental and virtuous nature of female philanthropy. After receiving the \$35 gift toward relief to the settlers, Samuel Adair, a Protestant Church leader in Kansas Territory, stressed his efforts to ensure the money would alleviate the suffering of deserving, moral and Christian people. In his letter to Miss Mary P. Green he claimed, "It is impossible so to disburse it that no unworthy person shall not receive of it. But much suffering is being prevented by it."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Today women maintain a strong relationship with philanthropy, both public and private. Their role is becoming more visible in recent decades and their fundraising efforts provide a large portion of private capital in the nonprofit sector. As in antebellum New England, the perception of women in philanthropy remains largely based on maternal nurturing, sentimentality, and donations of time and money, at home and in public.

¹¹⁷ S.L. Adair to Miss Mary P. Green, (LaSalle Co., Ill) Dec. 17, 1856, pg 1. New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers, 1854-1909. Kansas State Historical Society, Lawrence. Found at http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi-bin/index.php?SCREEN=show_document&SCREEN_FROM=immigration&document_id=100539&FROM_PAGE=&topic_id=101.

Like other kinds of New England philanthropy, efforts were made to ensure the beneficiary was worthy of the gift.

Other more organized efforts were made by New England women to provide humanitarian assistance to Kansas Territory. A group of women in Boston supportive of the work of the New England Emigrant Aid Company held a fundraising event there. For the event, the women sewed a quilt made of patches of fabric from Revolutionary War uniforms signifying the revolutionary work being done by New England men in Kansas. The quilt was sold at a charity raffle in Lawrence, Massachusetts, in 1855. In another fundraising scheme in 1860, the Ladies Kansas Aid Society of Richmond placed a donation boxes at a popular store in town, “Where all persons disposed to contribute can deposit any amount of money, large or small, they see proper to give, for the support of the suffering friends of Freedom in Kansas.”¹¹⁸

The importance of female benevolence in the home was reflected in the Kansas Ladies Philomathic Society. This literary society was designed to mimic the role female philanthropies played in New England society: “And, as in our former homes, females participated in and lent their aid to the upbuilding of such ‘Institutions.’ So here in our new Homes where all is in a transition and forming State the Ladies have been acknowledged the proper persons to occupy this position in our Society.”¹¹⁹ This literary

¹¹⁸ Circular, Ladies Kansas Aid Society of Richmond, 1860. New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers, 1854-1909. Kansas State Historical Society, Lawrence. Found at, http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi-bin/index.php?SCREEN=view_image&document_id=101580&file_name=u000392.

¹¹⁹ Kansas Philomathic Institute, *The Prairie Star: A paper edited by the ladies of the Philomathic Literary Society*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (Topeka, KA), 1857. Samuel E. Martin Collection, #434, folder 4, Kansas Historical Society, Lawrence, KA. Found at, http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi-bin/index.php?SCREEN=show_document&SCREEN_FROM=immigration&document_id=100193&FROM_PAGE=&topic_id=107.

society reflected New England philanthropies' emphasis on self-improvement and the cultivation of good moral character as the keystone of philanthropy.

Voluntary associations resembling those found in New England were used extensively during Bleeding Kansas. The most advanced associations, those most intimately involved with provoking and facilitating the violence in Kansas, were founded and controlled by elites in New England. They were operated in Kansas by other New Englanders and their close associates. In this regard they resembled the other dominant cultural institutions gaining power in New England by utilizing a close and exclusive network of intimate relationships among elites in order to maintain access to power and resources in their hands. The associations started and operated by residents and emigrants in Kansas were less advanced in terms of their legal organization and resources, but in all other regards the culture of voluntary associations in Kansas Territory resembled New England. Philanthropy was transferred from New England to Kansas Territory intact. These associations and their characteristics are described in detail in chapter three.

Legally, frontier areas like Kansas Territory were defined by the absence of an organized legal environment. Along the emigrant's journey, "they were in a kind of legal no-man's land – outside the reach of law and order," claimed legal historian Lawrence M. Friedman.¹²⁰ Much of the power of the American legal system in frontier areas rested in the hands of the citizen groups who implemented the law and its consequences. This was most evident in the vigilante movements. Vigilance societies existed all over the country and some of Massachusetts most prominent citizens like Henry David Thoreau, Theodore Parker, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson were active members of vigilance societies,

¹²⁰ Friedman, Lawrence M. *A History of American Law 3rd ed.* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007), 273.

“but the West was the vigilante heartland.”¹²¹ Vigilantes and their supporters were frontier philanthropists. Friedman summarized the vigilante sympathizers philanthropy when he stated, “Those who supported the vigilantes considered themselves decent citizens, using self-help, taking the law into their own hands, striking out against violence, corruption and misrule.”¹²²

Free State vigilance clubs in Kansas territory organized themselves in the federation style like the other philanthropic organizations with New England ties. None of the precincts in Kansas Territory were allowed more than nine members in their local vigilance club. Each precinct reported to the Grand Club in Lawrence, the vigilante club capital in the Kansas Territory. Unlike the self-defensive organizations which will be discussed next, the vigilance clubs took diligent steps to ensure their secrecy. The Free State Vigilance Clubs published the names of those members who leaked the secret sign, password, or information about its membership had their names published in the Grand Club’s newsletter.¹²³ Another group, “The Kansas Legion, used military titles and insignia in their secret meetings – and they were armed by men in the East.”¹²⁴

Legal vacuums, distrust, and dissatisfaction with the legal system and its implementation in Kansas Territory was resolved through the formation of opposing voluntary associations, self-protective associations and vigilance societies. Each claimed to be the moral and civic authority of their geographic community. Mody Boatwright claimed, “Characteristic of frontier culture were numerous mutual protective

¹²¹ Ibid, 275.

¹²² Ibid, 276.

¹²³ Free State Vigilance Club secret sign, password, and obligations, 1855. New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers, 1854-1909. Kansas State Historical Society, Lawrence. Found at, http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi-bin/index.php?SCREEN=show_document&SCREEN_FROM=border&document_id=100172&FROM_PA_GE=&topic_id=65.

¹²⁴ Nichols, 25.

associations, many of them extra-legal in character. When the police power broke down, the settlers banded themselves together to establish, if not law, at least order.”¹²⁵

Vigilance societies were proactive organizations built to seek out injustices and change the system which created them. The self-protective association was a conservative organization which fought to preserve the community as it was.

Political action in Washington resulted in uncertainty on the Kansas frontier, uncertainty over the fate of the territory and which idea of law and order would ultimately prevail. This created an anxiety among the settlers, and their response to alleviate the anxiety was the self-defensive association. Alice Nichols claimed, “The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill had created a great fraternal spirit stateside of the border. Hundreds of Missourians joined a new brotherhood, the Blue Lodge, variously called The Social Band, Friends’ Society, Sons of the South, The Self-Defensives.”¹²⁶ Unlike the New England philanthropic organizations which proactively moved their vision of the world onto others, Missourians and southerners formed self-defensive associations. This illustrated the proactive nature of New England philanthropy and the reactive nature of southern philanthropy.

The most bizarre philanthropic influences New England left in Kansas Territory were utopian communities. Antebellum philanthropy catered to the whims of the elites, and what better place to exercise that power than Kansas? “Kansas was the reincarnation of eighteenth-century revolutionary America. It was a place of morality, courage, and freedom-loving simplicity. It was tradition of idealism freed a ‘mainchance mentality.’ It was a place where discipline had replaced the chaos of his own society,” according to

¹²⁵ Mody C. Boatright. “The Myth of Frontier Individualism” in, Richard Hofstadter and Seymour Martin Lipset ed. *Turner and the Sociology of the Frontier*. (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 49.

¹²⁶ Nichols, 24.

Rossbach.¹²⁷ In this environment, where romantic notions of remaking society flourished, New England philanthropists gave it their best shot. Two related utopian communities were particularly bizarre, the Vegetarian Kansas Emigration Company and the Octagon Settlement Company, which were essentially self-sustaining anti-institutional institutions.

In 1843, transcendentalist educator and reformer Amos Bronson Alcott and Henry S. Clubb devised a cooperative vegetarian colony in the back woods of Massachusetts. Clubb was an Englishman who immigrated to the United States early in life. He was an abolitionist, state senator in Massachusetts and the President of the Vegetarian Society of America. The colony had little success but provided the experience Clubb needed to pursue another similar venture. In 1855, he proposed the creation of the Vegetarian Kansas Emigration Company and The Octagon Settlement Company. These were similar to other philanthropic organizations in New England because they employed a method of moral reform in order to achieve American progress. The Vegetarian Kansas Emigrant Company's constitution illustrated its brand of moral reform.

WHEREAS, The practice of vegetarian diet is best adapted to the development of the highest and noblest principles of human nature, and the use of the flesh of animals for food tends to the physical, moral, and intellectual injury of mankind, and it is desirable that those person who believe in the vegetarian principle should have every opportunity to live in accordance therewith, and should unite in the formation of a company for the permanent establishment, in some portion of this country, of a home where the slaughter of animals for food shall be prohibited, and where the principle of the vegetarian diet can be fairly and fully tested, so as to demonstrate its advantages.¹²⁸

In some cases New Englanders believed temperance was the key to moral improvement, in other cases it was education, and in this case it was

¹²⁷ Rossbach, 72.

¹²⁸ Russell Hickman. "The Vegetarian and Octagon Settlement Companies," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 4, (November 1933), 379. Emphasis original.

vegetarianism. All the variations of New England philanthropy aimed to reform character. The companies soon encountered a problem familiar to the other emigrant aid companies in Bleeding Kansas, a lack of incentive for people to emigrate.

To sweeten the emigration deal, Clubb formed a new company whose membership was not limited to vegetarianism: “The Octagon Company opened its books for subscriptions in February, 1856,” and “The officers of the vegetarian organization were also to serve in the Octagon Company,” claimed Russell Hickman, a historian of Kansas history.¹²⁹ The two companies shared a finance system through a combination of selling shares and fundraising. They also shared boards of directors and company officers. All donations, stock subscriptions, and other fees were reinvested in the settlement. In this respect, the companies self-imposed a policy parallel to the modern nonprofit corporations non-distribution constraint. Mill profits, however, were divided evenly and distributed among the shareholders like dividends awarded to corporate shareholders.

Kansas Territory in the 1850s was as harsh a place to live as anyone in the United States. The infant nature of the Territory’s civilized infrastructure, a prolonged drought, and the violent conflict between a diverse number of individuals and groups of individuals made Kansas Territory dangerous and difficult living. As a result, humanitarian assistance flowed steadily into the Territory. Leading the organization of the humanitarian relief effort in Kansas was the Central Kansas Committee headquartered in Chicago, Illinois. Each state had a central committee that reported to the Committee in Chicago, and each county had its own committee which reported to the State Committee.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 381.

Relief committees employed agents to solicit contributions throughout the East. They utilized the New England clergy and leveraged deals similar to those the emigrant aid companies received with the transportation companies for relief materials appropriately identified and labeled.

Complaints about the disconnect between the sources of aid and delivery were frequent. In a letter from William Hutchinson, an agent charged with receiving and distributing aid in Kansas, to A. H. Shurtleff, in New York of the New York Kansas Aid Society in 1856, Hutchinson wrote, “One half of the people of Kansas are today in need of aid beyond their ready means, and at least one fourth of the people will actually suffer beyond anything ever known in this country, unless supported almost entirely until Spring, by the donations from the East. This is in no way attributable to indolence or want of enterprise.”¹³⁰ This statement illustrated the desperate situation in Kansas as a result of the mismanagement of donated relief supplies. It also showed that the morality displayed by the settlers was of primary importance for the East to send aid.

Relief organizations in the Kansas Conflict were organized in the federation style and again, the extraordinary antebellum social critic Herman Melville enlightened the situation. *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade* published in 1857 is an ironic take on American optimism and a sharp criticism of the influence of a capitalist industrial economy on American society and philanthropy.¹³¹ The book is a series of encounters

¹³⁰ William Hutchinson to A.H Shurtleff, pg. 3, 1856. William Barnes Collection, Kansas State Historical Society, Lawrence, KA. Found at, http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi-bin/index.php?SCREEN=show_document&SCREEN_FROM=immigration&document_id=100578&FROM_PAGE=&topic_id=101.

¹³¹ *The Confidence Man* is an example of the sometimes misguided expression of philanthropy or, love of humanity. Although *The Confidence-Man* is not written as a play its focus and central character are comparable to two excellent seventeenth century European plays. First was William Shakespeare and Thomas Middleton’s *The Life of Timon of Athens* first published in Shakespeare’s *First Folio* in 1623 and later in 1666 was the first performance of French playwright Moliere’s, *Le Misanthrope*. Timon and

between the confidence man, the central character, and travelers on the Mississippi River aboard the steam ship *Fidèle* on April Fool's Day. One conversation between the confidence-man and an ambitious, naïve, and optimistic philanthropist and inventor illustrated the obsession with federation style organized philanthropy.

In some general talk which followed, relative to organized modes of doing good, the gentleman expressed his regrets that so many benevolent societies as there were, here and there isolated in the land, should not act in concert by coming together, in the way that already in each society the individuals composing it had done, which would result, he thought, in like advantages upon a larger scale. Indeed, such a confederation might, perhaps, be attended with as happy results as politically attended that of the states.¹³²

There was little doubt about the volume of philanthropy in antebellum America but few trusted the effectiveness of so many independently operated philanthropic organizations. Grand schemes to rein in the burgeoning landscape of organized philanthropy were as numerous as the different organizations themselves.

In addition to the national, state, and local levels of hierarchy, the relief committees attempted to organize according to school districts. The relief movement modeled itself exactly like the federation system of the United States and its state and local governments, and they emulated the government's tendency to expand geographically and bring that area under the system of organization. A circular published by the Kansas Relief Society in 1860 stated, "To facilitate the efforts for relief, we ask the citizens of every school district in Western States to organize Relief Committees (and at the various stations on the railroads appoint agents), to solicit and receive money,

Alceste are the protagonists and misanthropes in the plays. They both highlight hypocrisy in the philanthropy of aristocrats as well as the damage that can result from misguided love of humankind.

¹³² Herman Melville. *The Confidence Man His Masquerade*. (New York: Hendricks House, 1954), 42.

flour, wheat, corn ..”¹³³ Samuel Pomeroy, former Kansas agent of the New England Emigrant Aid Society, was voted President of the Committee and conducted the relief business exactly as the New England Emigrant Aid Company operated its emigration. Pomeroy acquired discounted shipping rates from railroads and coach companies for items marked “Kansas Relief.”

In an effort to increase transparency after the reported misuses of power by agents in Kansas Territory, the Territorial Executive Committee published the meeting minutes and resolutions of the first meeting in a circular. At the meeting were 101 representatives representing twenty-four Kansas counties. In the circular, Kansas Territory was compared to some of the worst humanitarian disasters in the nineteenth century. The first comparison was with the 1828 effort to send aid to Greek civilians during the Greek Revolution. Next it was compared to the Irish Potato Famine of 1847, when millions of Irish starved and were forced to immigrate. The first resolution aimed at increasing the committees’ legitimacy with the public. It ensured that all persons formally involved with the relief committees were volunteers: “*Resolved*. That no person engaged in the solicitation, collection, or distribution of funds or goods for the relief of the destitute in Kansas, shall be allowed any compensation for his time or services, but simply their necessary incidental expenses while engaged in the same.”¹³⁴ This meant that none of the funds donated to the Committee would be used to pay an employee, particularly ones

¹³³ Circular, William Frederick Milton Army, Kansas Relief Committee, Dec. 11, 1860, New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers, 1854-1909. Kansas State Historical Society, Lawrence. Found at, http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi-bin/index.php?SCREEN=view_image&document_id=101609&file_name=k301377.

¹³⁴ Circular, *An appeal from Kansas!*, Territorial Executive Committee, Dec. 14, 1860, New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers, 1854-1909. Kansas State Historical Society, Lawrence. Found at, http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi-bin/index.php?SCREEN=show_document&SCREEN_FROM=immigration&document_id=100143&FROM_PAGE=&topic_id=101.

prone to abuse of power; the entire gift, the Committee ensured the public, was put toward aid in Kansas.

In yet another attempt to be more transparent, an independent auditing board was established. The board was comprised of former territorial Governor Medary and then Kansas State Governor Charles Robinson, the States Chief Justice and another State Judge. They were tasked to “inspect and audit, from time to time, the accounts and proceedings of the Territorial Executive Committee and its agents, and to publicly certify to the same.”¹³⁵ The relief committee aimed to legitimize their efforts through a voluntary audit process in which the auditors were high ranking state officials. The idea in doing so was to gain the confidence of the people of the state by using the officials they elect to control and maintain order among the humanitarian aid organizations.

This committee also sought to decrease conflict and animosity among the various humanitarian aid organizations although it did not go so far as to encourage collaboration. They adopted a plan and formal resolutions in order for each of the multitude of aid organizations to stay within their own sphere.¹³⁶ This was not done to maximize efficiency for the relief movement; it ensured each person or group who wanted to start an organization was able to do so without intentionally being squeezed out by other aid organizations. There was no effort to consolidate resources. Instead each relief organization closely guarded its territory and donors, eliminating the possibility of collaborative work, and decreasing efficiency in those areas of humanitarian assistance. This circular was to be “liberally distributed” in the east.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

The intact movement of the culture of philanthropy from New England to Kansas Territory was illustrated entirely in the last will and Testament of Cecil M. Ball. His will demonstrated the constancy of philanthropy in the New England mind. Regardless of political, economic, and racial beliefs, the distinguishing characteristics of New England philanthropy moved throughout the United States unchanged. According to historian Jeremy Neely, “Ball sought to distribute several thousands of dollars among organizations such as the Southern Aid Society, the Missouri Colonization Society, and the Missouri Bible Society, as well as to local churches.”¹³⁸ Ball was a Massachusetts native, Missouri resident and slave-owner and the only restriction in the will was that the Presbyterian Church and Society of Little Osage not employ anyone who publically taught abolitionist or anti-slavery doctrines.

Ball’s will is important because it demonstrated the extensive use of the testamentary trust by New Englanders. It also demonstrated the level of sophistication of New England philanthropy compared to the South and West. The only other major effort to support the southern cause in Kansas Territory was a proposal “pending in the Georgia legislature for appropriating \$50,000 in aid of Southern emigration to Kansas. The bill did not pass, but it served its purpose as material for propaganda in the North.”¹³⁹ New Englanders developed new methods of private philanthropy, and mixes of public and private philanthropy during the Kansas Conflict because they believed the conflict was a result of government failure. In the southern United States, the infrastructure necessary to

¹³⁸ Cecil Ball, Last Will and Testament, April 16, 1859, Ball Papers, Vernon County Historical Society, Missouri. Found in, Jeremy Neely. *The Border Between Them: Violence and Reconciliation on the Kansas-Missouri Line*. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007), 76.

¹³⁹ Ralph Volney Harlow. “The Rise and Fall of the Kansas Aid Movement,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Oct. 1935), 9.

mobilize a private philanthropic effort of that scale did not exist, and the government was not viewed as the culprit of Bleeding Kansas.

Conclusion

Political compromises in Washington frustrated New Englanders who believed their freedom was violated by proslavery legislation. The Mexican War led to the Compromise of 1850, and the extension of the Fugitive Slave Law infuriated New England. When the Federal Government failed to resolve the issue of slavery expansion, Kansas Territory was opened to popular sovereignty by the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, and New England's most prominent citizens led the effort to save the territory. Their beliefs in the effort were mixed between economic, political, and racial motivations. These were combined in a general belief that the work was philanthropic and necessary for the future of the country.

Economically, the New England elites had strong ties to the manufacturing and railroad industries which made the spread of wage labor and industrialized technology paramount to their business expansion. In addition to maximizing profits, New Englanders believed wage labor and industrial technology were philanthropic. They infused Christian values like sobriety, frugality, and education in the classes of citizens they thought were most susceptible to moral degradation. The New England culture of philanthropy was transferred to Kansas Territory by New Englanders intact. Voluntary associations were prevalent and some philanthropic corporations, which were incorporated throughout the North, particularly New England, took part. Hybrid organizations, forms of social entrepreneurship, were not uncommon. Gender roles in philanthropy remained intact as did the New England infatuation with classifying

beneficiaries according to their morality. The preoccupation with developing a systematic implementation of philanthropic efforts was most obvious in the federation style organization of the humanitarian aid movement toward the end of the conflict. The Kansas Conflict was driven by New England philanthropists and their organizations in an attempt to guide the future of the country.

Chapter Three: The New England Emigrant Aid Company in Bleeding Kansas

The New England Emigrant Aid Company was comprised of the wealthiest and most elite class of New England men. They were all friends and acquaintances, all well educated at elite New England colleges, Protestants, many Unitarians, and many of them made their living commercially in manufacturing or as merchants. They were all generous benefactors of New England's most elite eleemosynary institutions. The company's incorporation process was a testament to the friendliness of New England law to philanthropy. Incorporation began in 1854 and was attempted three times in two states. Finally the New England Emigrant Aid Company was incorporated in Massachusetts in 1855. It was legally organized as a profit making corporation, however it was designed to function like a social enterprise. The company's primary objectives were philanthropic.

The company's role in the Kansas Conflict was to act as facilitator of the free-state efforts in the battle for Kansas. The company did that through effective propaganda, by organizing the society of the territory to replicate New England, and finally, by facilitating the violence. Ultimately, the company hoped to colonize Kansas Territory as the first step in their efforts to spread their vision of American progress. If Kansas was won, and the value system of that state reflected New England, philanthropists from throughout the free-states could use Kansas as a launching point to attack all social ills and impediments to achieving their vision of America.

Definitions

New England Emigrant Aid Company always refers exclusively to the company formed under the second charter granted by the state of Massachusetts. This does not

include the New England Emigrant Aid Company under the Connecticut charter, nor the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company incorporated between the Connecticut incorporation and the final incorporation in Massachusetts. Nor does it include any of the various other emigrant aid companies, associations, or societies organized for similar purposes. Imperialism is one state's goal to link a number of geographic areas to the homeland economically, politically, and culturally, through subordination and paternal relationships. Colonization is the process through which imperialism is accomplished. It is the process by which a powerful state actively seeks out weaker states in order to bind them in a paternalistic relationship.

Who?

The officers of the company were: President John Carter Brown of Providence, Rhode Island, Vice Presidents Eli Thayer of Worcester and J.M.S. Williams of Cambridge, Massachusetts, Treasurer Amos A. Lawrence of Boston Massachusetts, Secretary Thomas H. Webb, also of Boston, Agents Samuel Pomeroy, Charles Robinson, and Charles H. Branscomb.¹⁴⁰ The Board of Directors read like a list of New England's most elite and wealthy citizens: Samuel Cabot Jr., John Lowell, Samuel G. Howe, Patrick T. Jackson, Edward Everett Hale, and Horace Bushnell. Thayer, Lawrence, Howe, Hale, Pomeroy, and Robinson are the focus here because they represented the varieties of elite antebellum New England philanthropists. Each of them was a member of the New England Emigrant Aid Company and they were also involved with a number of other activities and organizations in the conflict.

¹⁴⁰ Massachusetts State Legislature, "An Act to Incorporate the New England Emigrant Aid Company," February 21, 1855. New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers, 1854-1909. Kansas State Historical Society, Lawrence, KA. Found at, http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi-bin/index.php?SCREEN=show_document&SCREEN_FROM=immigration&document_id=100124&FROM_PAGE=&topic_id=129.

Eli Thayer was born in 1819 in Mendon, Massachusetts, and he attended several private academies before he graduated from Brown University in 1845. After graduation, he created the Oread Collegiate Institute for Young Women in 1848. Next he went on to serve in the Massachusetts State House of Representatives. While he served he started work on his new venture, a company that aided emigration from New England to the new territories. Eli Thayer can be credited with the initial idea of an emigrant aid corporation, although the idea of assisted emigration was not his.

Amos Adams Lawrence was the other chief character for the company in New England. Lawrence was “the chief pecuniary support and conservative balance wheel of the New England Emigrant Aid Company.”¹⁴¹ Lawrence was born in Groton, Massachusetts, and attended Harvard College. He and his brothers continued his father’s business helping build their enormous textile manufacturing empire in Massachusetts. Beside his shrewd business sense, explicit racism, and support of violence in Kansas, Lawrence was one of the most generous philanthropists. He was a Trustee of the Massachusetts General Hospital and President of the Young Men’s Benevolent Society. His father fought in the Revolutionary War. His family alone had eight separate trusts. Like Thayer, Lawrence was eager to abolish slavery, however, he and Thayer both passionately believed in the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race. According to Barbara and Kenneth Tucker, “Amos Adams Lawrence, the textile magnate, developed a view of national American culture defined by a commitment to capitalism and Protestantism. Fearful of immigrants, he proclaimed the virtues of a nativist, Anglo-Saxon America.”¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Johnson. *The Battle Cry of Freedom*, 15.

¹⁴² Barbara Tucker and Kenneth Tucker, 1.

After leaving the New England Emigrant Aid Company in 1857, Lawrence became a trustee of the Kansas Land Trust in Boston with Charles Robinson as its agent in Kansas.

Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe is a legend in American philanthropic and medical history. He was a graduate of Brown University and Harvard Medical School. Dr. Howe earned his fame working with the blind, particularly the blind-mute girl Laura Bridgman. He dedicated his life to reform, both medical reform or “reform of defectives,” and charity reform. Howe founded the Massachusetts School and Asylum for the Blind and led the development of many of the theories that shaped the public policy of charity in Massachusetts forever.¹⁴³ His reform spirit was sometimes provoked to a revolutionary spirit as when he aided in the Greek Revolution and imprisoned there for his involvement. In Kansas, Howe was introduced to John Brown, the abolitionist responsible for the Osawatimie Massacre in Kansas and the failed Harper’s Ferry raid in Virginia where he was captured and hanged by the United States. Howe was a member of the Secret Committee of Six along with Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Theodore Parker, Franklin B. Sanborn, Gerrit Smith, and George Luther Stearns, who funded and helped organize John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry.

Howe’s motivation for being involved with the New England Emigrant Aid Company was what Thayer referred to as sentimental antislavery.¹⁴⁴ Howe was exceedingly concerned with the moral condition of American society. His idea of philanthropy was summarized in a letter to P.T. Jackson in 1856, while he was travelling with a group of Kansas emigrants, “Lend him no money! Dissuade your friends from

¹⁴³ Johnson. *The Battle Cry of Freedom*, 11.

¹⁴⁴ Some antislavery groups were described as sentimental because they responded to the consequences of slavery emotionally rather than attempting to craft a systematic and more scientific approach to the problem. Many believed sentimental antislavery, like sentimental charity, had the propensity to inflict more harm than good because it was only a band-aid type of fix for the immediate sufferings.

lending him any. He is becoming demoralized, I fear, by borrowing and living on others. Let him undergo the natural cure – suffer and be saved.”¹⁴⁵

Rev. Edward Everett Hale was a Unitarian minister and outspoken American patriot from Worcester, Massachusetts. Hale authored a guide to American patriotism for young Americans titled, *The Man Without a Country*. In 1848 he also wrote *How to Conquer Texas Before It Conquers Us* in which he proposed the emigration of free labor to Texas in order to save it from the encroachment of slavery. In this regard, Hale conceived the plan for emigration to combat slavery. Hale also played a critical role in helping solicit the clergy’s support. “It was he who devised and carried through the plan to enlist the clergy of New England in the enterprise.”¹⁴⁶ Hale’s motivation for joining the Company was similar to Howe’s because it was sentimental. Religion informed his philanthropy and the destruction of moral problems trumped the alleviation of material poverty.

Samuel Pomeroy, a native of Southampton, Massachusetts, was born in 1816. He served in the Massachusetts State Legislature before he started with the New England Emigrant Aid Company. He spelled out his motivations for joining the company in a letter written to Edward Everett Hale July 27, 1854.

I have been anxious to explore it somewhat minutely, with an eye directed particularly to its agricultural & commercial resources. I have always had a special interest in the location of Roads & Mills And of ascertaining the natural facilities for Water Power. Nothing more facilitates the early settlement of a new Country, than the speedy erection of Mills at the best points – There is no progress without them.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Samuel G Howe and Franklin B. Sanborn. *Letters and Journals of Samuel Gridley Howe, Vol. 1*. D. Estes and Co. 1909. Google eBook. January 2011.

http://books.google.com/ebooks?id=1C0AAAAAYAAJ&source=webstore_bookcard, 397.

¹⁴⁶ Eli Thayer. *The New England Emigrant Aid Company and It’s Influence, through the Kansas Contest, Upon National History*. (Worcester: Franklin P. Rice, 1887). 12.

¹⁴⁷ Samuel Pomeroy to E.E. Hale, July 27, 1854. New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers, <http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi->

Pomeroy went on to say, “Also I have been anxious to be early upon the ground, to occupy some of the best points upon the “Pacific R. Road” – which is destined to cross the territory somewhere.”¹⁴⁸ Not dissimilar from the other actors in the Kansas Conflict, Pomeroy saw an opportunity to put his own stamp on the progress of the nation. His idea of progress was decidedly industrial capitalist. Pomeroy finally admitted that his primary interest in the Company was a revolutionary stand against slavery.

That the best principles of our resting fathers, may be transplanted there!
And that thus our untold domain may be saved from the blighting –
withering- deadening – damning – influence of American Slavery!!¹⁴⁹

He was attracted to the conservatism of the Company’s mission and believed that the virtues of the revolutionary generation, which were embodied by antebellum New England, were the savior of the country.

Charles Robinson was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1818. He attended Amherst Academy and Berkshire Medical School. Robinson left Massachusetts in 1849 for the California gold rush and settled in the capitol, Sacramento, where he served a term in the California House of Representatives. While he was in Sacramento he led the Sacramento Squatter Riots, and violent clash between squatters and established residents with large tracts of land. His experience there was critical for the organizers of the New England Emigrant Aid Company because, “this conflict in California was a prototype of the later conflict in Kansas, having many points of resemblance, and having been

[bin/index.php?SCREEN=show_document&SCREEN FROM=kansas_question&document_id=100400&FROM_PAGE=&topic_id=182.](http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi-bin/index.php?SCREEN=show_document&SCREEN_FROM=kansas_question&document_id=100400&FROM_PAGE=&topic_id=182)

¹⁴⁸ Samuel Pomeroy to E.E. Hale, July 27, 1854. New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers, [http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi-](http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi-bin/index.php?SCREEN=show_document&SCREEN_FROM=kansas_question&document_id=100400&FROM_PAGE=&topic_id=182)

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¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

prosecuted by similar, and some of the same, characters.”¹⁵⁰ Charles Robinson returned to Massachusetts after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and quickly joined his Worcester friends as an agent of the New England Emigrant Aid Society. Robinson was in Kansas Territory for the duration of the conflict and served as the state’s first Governor.

These were all highly motivated men. Ultimately their motives were the same, to steer the nation’s progress to a course that mirrored the development of New England and which would benefit New England. Within that motive there were various shades of secondary motivations among the men. All of these men romanticized the revolutionary generation. They could all be described as conservative reformers; they sought to change society in order to return to the values of the past. The men who shaped public and private charity in antebellum New England were also the leaders of the most violent antislavery and civil disobedient groups in America. The Company was a mix of different philanthropists in New England and as Charles Robinson stated, “Mr. Thayer enlisted in his work the most conservative as well as the most radical, the richest and the poorest, the highest and lowest.”¹⁵¹

When and Where?

Eli Thayer was the primary founder and organizer of the venture. He started the work in the winter of 1854 before the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act while he was a Massachusetts State Representative from Worcester. “Suddenly it came to me like a revelation,” Thayer recalled in his history of the company.¹⁵² He formalized the idea in a

¹⁵⁰ Charles Robinson. *The Kansas Conflict*. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1892), 36.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 67.

¹⁵² Eli Thayer. *The New England Emigrant Aid Company and Its Influence, through the Kansas Contest, Upon National History*, 18.

concrete plan on March 11, 1854 at a protest of the Kansas-Nebraska bill in the Worcester City Hall: “I attended the meeting, and not having yet taken counsel of anyone, determined to see how the plan would be received by an intelligent New England audience without any preparation for the announcement.”¹⁵³ After the meeting Thayer rallied the support of his wealthiest friends and wasted no time moving forward.

The first charter was granted by the Massachusetts Legislature as the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company April 26, 1854. That charter was scrapped in May of the same year because of objections from several individuals because, “the charter required stock subscriptions to be paid in ten annual installments, and that they were not willing to bind themselves so far in advance.”¹⁵⁴ New England elites were not looking for an investment in the company but there was some interest in subscribing or making donations with short term or no obligations.

Despite the obstacles, Thayer plugged away and attempted to incorporate in a different state. Historian of the company and *Bleeding Kansas*, Samuel Johnson, claimed, “On July 18, 1854, a corporation was organized under the Connecticut charter with Thayer as president, but Lawrence and most of the other New Englanders declined to participate or to subscribe for stock under the project.”¹⁵⁵ Without Lawrence’s support, Thayer knew the company would suffer financially, so he tried a third time. The final charter was obtained in Massachusetts on February 21, 1855 under the name of The New England Emigrant Aid Company. The articles of incorporation, bylaws, and other governing documents of the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company and the New England

¹⁵³ Ibid, 14.

¹⁵⁴ Johnson, “The Genesis of the New England Emigrant Aid Company,” 99.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 104.

Emigrant Aid Company were nearly identical. The only significant difference was the total amount of capitalization for the company.

How was it organized?

The Company was a hybrid of a philanthropic reform and antislavery association and an imperialist spirited speculation company. Alice Nichols described the New England Emigrant Aid Company as “mainly concerned with personal gain but had a strong streak of righteous concern over the evil of slavery.”¹⁵⁶ Reduced transportation fares and decent accommodations upon arrival in Kansas were the advertised objects of the company but a majority of the efforts were expended prospecting land and building infrastructure. The Company’s articles of incorporation stated,

Its objects are, to impart information and afford facilities to emigrants designing to settle in Kansas; to protect them from fraud; to procure for them cheap fare and good accommodations on the route; to advise them, through agents on their arrival out, in regard to eligible sites for settlements; to secure for their accommodation, by purchase or otherwise, advantageous locations for landing places and for outfitting purposes; to erect Hotels for the convenience of the settlers and travelers; to erect or aid individuals in erecting and conducting Saw Mills, Grist Mills, Machine Shops, and similar establishments essential in new settlements, and to aid in the erection of School Houses and Churches, and thus carry to the extreme borders of population the advantages of an advanced civilization hitherto unknown in the infant settlements of the West.¹⁵⁷

There was no mention of slavery and no mandate that the emigrants vote a particular way or stay a particular length of time. The list of objects represented the variety of motives that combined to make their efforts philanthropic and gave them the ability to enlist the support of the most powerful philanthropists in New England. While the objects of the company were philanthropic aspirations for the

¹⁵⁶ Nichols, 217.

¹⁵⁷ Massachusetts State Legislature, “An Act to Incorporate the New England Emigrant Aid Company, February 21, 1855,” Found at, http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi-bin/index.php?SCREEN=view_image&document_id=100124&file_name=h000438.

spread of “civilized” New England society, the company also aimed to enrich the supporters. The Act of Incorporation stated, “The Capital Stock of the Company is divided into shares of \$20 each, and so far as it is consistent with the objects above the investments in land or other property are made with reference to yielding a profit to the stockholders.”¹⁵⁸ Through an organization like the New England Emigrant Aid Company, like eleemosynary and testamentary trusts, New England elites were able to secure a profit justified by their responsible stewardship of New England’s public interest.

The most persistent objection to the initial plans and charters for the company was the binding nature of the stock-subscriptions. New England philanthropists were willing to donate the money at certain times but they did not want an investment. The philanthropist’s decision was episodic, influenced heavily by the political decisions made in Washington and by the New England press. The organizers encountered staunch opposition from other antislavery and abolitionist groups, particularly from the Garrison camp. Of the organizers, Thayer and Lawrence were most at odds over the organization of the venture.

Lawrence was opposed to the idea of a commercial company, preferring that the emigrant aid enterprise operate as a philanthropic society with an open membership, which would depend on donations for revenue. Johnson claimed, “He believed, as he had previously written to Thayer, that Boston businessmen... would ‘pay down money, but [would] not subscribe for stock’.”¹⁵⁹ He was not one to be stingy in his philanthropy, and his family built a favorable reputation in New England for their philanthropy. He wanted

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Johnson, *The Battle Cry of Freedom*, 25.

to play the role of benefactor or trustee in Bleeding Kansas, not an officer of a corporation.

Lawrence wanted the emigrant aid venture to be a philanthropic undertaking due to concerns for the investors and officers of the company. The chief conflict for Lawrence was the difference in liability for the officers and investors of a for-profit corporation versus a philanthropic association. He understood that the philanthropic endeavors of the company might lead it to commit *ultra vires* leaving the officers liable for the drift from stated company objectives. Organized as a benevolent association, money could have been donated and spent with less strict oversight and if mishaps did occur, the officers and investors would not have been liable. In response to the loss of Company property, Sharp's rifles, Lawrence wrote to Samuel Cabot Jr. explaining, "If we were not officers of the Emigrant Aid Society, we could recover them by suit, but whether or not we can recover them by proxy remains to be seen."¹⁶⁰

Thayer was the greatest advocate of a hybrid enterprise and insisted that it be organized with a profit driven element. Opposition to profit illustrated the belief that the antislavery cause was a philanthropic cause not to be profited from. Thayer explained,

The enterprise was intended to be a money-making affair as well as a philanthropic undertaking. The fact that we intended to make it pay the investors pecuniary brought upon us the reproaches and condemnation of some of the Abolitionists, at least one of whom declared in my hearing that he had rather give over the territory to Slavery than to make a cent out of the operation of saving it to Freedom. In all my emigration schemes I intended to make the results return a profitable dividend in cash.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Amos A. Lawrence to Dr. Samuel Cabot, in Alice Nichols. *Bleeding Kansas*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 97.

¹⁶¹ Thayer. *The New England Emigrant Aid Company and Its Influence, through the Kansas Contest, Upon National History*, 18.

Thayer's insistence on a commercial enterprise had both positive and negative effects in the effort to enlist support. The idea of a commercial enterprise satisfied American's search at the time for a more scientific and efficient application of philanthropy. Thayer believed the science of market economics was the help philanthropy needed. In this respect, especially when Thayer's racial beliefs are taken into account, his philanthropy closely resembled that of one of the people the confidence-man spoke with in Melville's novel. The scheme went, "In brief, the conversion of the heathen, so far, at least, as depending on human effort, would, by the world's charity, be let out on contract. So much by bid for converting India, so much for Borneo, so much for Africa. Competition allowed, stimulus would be given."¹⁶² On the other hand, a commercial model discouraged some philanthropists who viewed the abolition of slavery as an entirely moral issue, tainting any revenue the company might generate. Eli Thayer was also stingy, as Samuel Johnson explained, "With all his talk about millions, he rarely advanced any money of his own; in the entire career of the Emigrant Aid Company, he paid in only four hundred dollars for stock, while he drew over five thousand dollars from the Company treasury in Commissions."¹⁶³ Selfish habits combined with a belief in philanthropic capitalism made Thayer the greatest beneficiary of his persistence of incorporation.

Charles Robinson reflected on the division when he claimed, "Mr. Thayer was favorable to this purchase, as he would have the enterprise self-supporting, but other members were in the movement purely from motives of patriotism and philanthropy."¹⁶⁴ Although Thayer, Lawrence, and the other organizers knew they would lose support from

¹⁶² Melville, *The Confidence-Man*. 46.

¹⁶³ Samuel Johnson, *The Battle Cry of Freedom*, 25.

¹⁶⁴ Robinson, 70.

some regardless of their decision, they continued to seek a compromise. Once the compromise was achieved in the final act to incorporate the New England Emigrant Aid Company, it did little to convince more supporters.

What was the role of the New England Emigrant Aid Company in Bleeding Kansas?

The Plan of Operations for the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company, the predecessor of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, explicitly outlined the Company's intentions in Kansas. The author of the document is unknown and no Plan of Operations was drafted to accompany the final charter of the New England Emigrant Aid Company. After the first effort to incorporate failed to solicit the necessary support, documents like the Plan of Operations related to the Company were absent. The only outline of the company's actions for the final charter was the official legislative act to incorporate the organization and later information published by the company as it operated in Kansas Territory.

The Plan of Operations started, "Purpose---To organize emigration to the West & bring it under a system."¹⁶⁵ For these New England philanthropists, the first step for America to reach the pinnacle of New England civilization was to organize the inhabitants of each geographic area. Charles Robinson stated, "Nothing short of concerted action by the friends of freedom could avail, and that could be secured only by organization."¹⁶⁶ The Plan of Operations also outlined, in order of importance, the groups which the company hoped to benefit. This hierarchy illustrated the philanthropic

¹⁶⁵ "Mass. Emigrant Aid Co. [Plan of Operation]." New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers 1854, 1. Found at, http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi-bin/index.php?SCREEN=show_transcript&document_id=101532SCREEN=immigration&submit=&search=&startsearchat=&searchfor=&printerfriendly=&county_id=&topic_id=129&document_id=101532&selected_keyword=

¹⁶⁶ Robinson, 21.

aspirations for the company. It also demonstrated the idea that their effort had national implications and that they were acting on behalf of future Americans. First, the company operated for the emigrants, next for the United States, and lastly was loyalty to the company's mission as a profit driven enterprise. The plan stated,

1st to the Emigrants---1st by diminishing the expenses of the journey & protecting from fraud & delay by providing food & shelter at the lowest price while they are constructing their habitation saves them & their families from exposure in the wilderness by the Co. being the real Pioneer. 2d is advise & assistance of the Co's agents in securing a good location in the West. 3d by the immediate introduction of the mechanical arts of all kinds among them. 4th by the immediate advantage of the press the school & the church – so that the morals & intelligence of their children shall not be forfeited by a life of semibarbarianism as often happens to settlers in the West.¹⁶⁷

The second beneficiary of the company was the United States. The company's officers fully intended for the company to spread New England life nationally. It also embodied their national efforts to stop the spread of social ills like poverty and slavery.

The vice and degradation of urban living outlined in the Sanborn report played a central role in the New England Emigrant Aid Company's civilization process. That was simultaneously supposed to improve the lives of New Englanders. The plan was for the emigrants to be made up of the poor population in New England cities. Next, the company planned to benefit the United States by,

1st by extending the area of freedom by creating new free states a cordon of the sons of liberty to the Gulf of Mexico. 2nd by reducing the poorer population of our Eastern Cities – necessarily vicious here probably will be virtuous there – vice often comes from poverty. 3d by increasing the Commission of the East by making Free States in the South West-Statistics. It is recommended by your Committee that the first Settlement made by this Company bear the name of that City in this Commonwealth which shall have subscribed most liberally to the capitol stock of the

¹⁶⁷ “Mass. Emigrant Aid Co. [Plan of Operation].” New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers 1854, 1.

Company in proportion to its last decennial valuation & that the 2nd Settlement be named from that City next in order so subscribing.¹⁶⁸

This was a donor recognition device intended to encourage and recognize financial support of the company. It was also another way to solidify the paternal link between New England and the emerging western United States. The frontier was a fresh slate for the emigrants to pull themselves out of poverty. It was an attempt to reproduce the virtues of the industrial free labor economy of the New England cities with the poor and vicious population from the industrial free labor New England cities.

Lastly, the company aimed to benefit its investors. This was accomplished through the colonization of western states by Massachusetts.

3rd to the Co., 1. The pleasure of founding new & free states which bless everybody & injure nobody & of binding them forever to Massachusetts by the strongest ties of gratitude & filial love securing to us in all coming time a Commercial Benefit – Daughters of Massachusetts. 2d by the direct profit to the Co. from the sale of lands increased in value by the Settlement about them a thousand force.¹⁶⁹

In retrospect, Charles Robinson echoed the New England colonial sentiment: “There was not but one way of salvation for Kansas, and that was not through the executive, legislative, or judicial departments of the Government, through anti-slavery societies or political organizations, but the promised land, as of old, must be secured by taking possession of it, or not at all.”¹⁷⁰

How did the company achieve its goals?

The company aimed to organize the society by assimilating individuals into a common value system like New England’s. Then, the Kansas Territory society could be colonized by New England. Max Weber, in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of*

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 1.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 2.

¹⁷⁰ Robinson, 21.

Capitalism, claimed a successful merchant had “sobriety, frugality, a systematic ordering of his conduct, a calculating approach to his business practices, and a conviction that this morality practiced the maxim.”¹⁷¹ Those were the values the company attempted to create, or force, on Kansas Territory. Those values were reflected in a passage from the first history the company published of itself: “The Company propose to carry them to their homes more cheaply than they could otherwise go, to enable them to establish themselves with the least inconvenience, and to provide the most important prime necessities of a new colony.”¹⁷²

The company wasted no time attempting to organize the economy of the Kansas Territory because work was essential to cultivating good moral character. They aimed to organize the labor force in the New England free-labor industrial mold. In an effort to strengthen the economy in Kansas, the company sought to establish business connections. In this case, they chose to pursue international connections that were established through the textile manufacturing industry in New England. This was the most practical place to start because many of the philanthropists’ association with the company already had established connections through their own textile manufacturing empires. The company attempted to establish a business partnership with business associations in Great Britain. In a letter to Dr. Samuel Cabot of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, Frederick Olmsted explained his position in trying to enlist the support of the Cotton Supply Associations of Manchester and Liverpool: “They may be drawn into it gradually, as they gain knowledge of the true character of the society, perhaps, out to be a merely political

¹⁷¹ Max Weber. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (New York: Scribner, 1958).

¹⁷² New England Emigrant Aid Company. *History of the New England Emigrant Aid Company: with a Report on Its Future Operations*. (Boston: J. Wilson and Son, 1862), 2. (Google eBook). January 2011. <http://books.google.com/ebooks?id=XxeyclkePjcC>.

scheme (in a narrow sense), would be likely to prevent their giving the subject a fair hearing.”¹⁷³ The company needed business connections to produce profits but the inherent political nature of its actions were a major hurdle. It was necessary however, to organize a network of business partnerships to support the free-state argument that free labor and industry were the most successful ways to build a virtuous America.

The modern corporation was an advanced and civilized way of organizing human and financial resources which made it a critical tool in civilizing territorial Kansas.

Thomas Cochran noted, “Corporations also suited certain American traits. They satisfied the urge to join in group activities, to solve common problems by getting together. One became a ‘member,’ became associated in the ‘cause’ of local growth.”¹⁷⁴ Eli Thayer noted the ineffectiveness of previous efforts at abolition and emigration in his memoir of the New England Emigrant Aid Company. He claimed that Garrisonian abolitionists failed because their philanthropy was too sentimental. Thayer, and many of his contemporaries, believed scientific methodologies should be systematically applied to philanthropy. Sympathetic philanthropy was ineffective and allowed too many free-riders. For Thayer and others, sentimental philanthropy and government failed to solve what they believed to be the most pressing social issues. The corporation was a new and innovative way to attack those problems.

Lastly, economic organization of Kansas territory required all elements of New England economic culture be presented as a coherent system. Thayer stated,

¹⁷³ Percy W. Bidwell. “The New England Emigrant Aid Company and English Cotton Supply Associations: Letters of Frederick L. Olmsted.” *The American Historical Review* Vol. 23, No. 1 (Oct., 1917), 116. Frederick L. Olmsted was a heavyweight abolitionist. He was a journalist and considered the leading expert on the slavery question.

¹⁷⁴ Thomas Cochran. *Basic History of American Business*. (New York: Van Nostrand, 1959), 42.

That the way to do this was to go to the prairies of Kansas and show the superiority of free labor civilization; to go with all our free labor trophies: churches and schools, printing presses, steam engines and mills; and in a peaceful contest convince every poor man from the South of the superiority of free labor.¹⁷⁵

In line with the New England philanthropists' belief in a holistic approach to social problems, Thayer wanted to package New England economic culture as a holistic approach to ensuring individual freedom and a moral society.

Propaganda was another effective tool to organize the values of a society. One of the central tools in civilizing territorial Kansas was the establishment of printing presses. The newspaper would “be from the very first an index of that love of freedom and of good morals which it is to be hoped may characterize the State now to be formed.”¹⁷⁶ The New England Emigrant Aid Company organized the *Kansas Herald of Freedom* as the official company newspaper and it was published weekly from October of 1854 to 1860.

In the first edition of the newspaper Samuel N. Wood's article claimed, “Here then, is an almost untried field wherein philanthropy may labor, and crown itself with imperishable glory – a field wild and destitute of laborers as the territory of Kansas.”¹⁷⁷ Although Wood opened with a claim of philanthropic motivations, the mixed nature of the motivations was later revealed when he described the newspaper's official logo: “The engraving forming part of the head of the Herald of Freedom, was designed with the purpose of illustrating the commercial city which will soon make its appearance in the Kansas Valley.”¹⁷⁸ The indoctrination of the Kansas settlers with free-state ideologies was essential to assimilate the moral imagination, and the company press was a central

¹⁷⁵ Thayer. *The New England Emigrant Aid Company and Its Influence, through the Kansas Contest, Upon National History*, 19.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 17.

¹⁷⁷ Samuel N. Wood. “To the Reader,” *Kansas Herald of Freedom*, Saturday Oct. 21, 1854, pg. 2.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 2.

tool in the process. Achieving the desired civilization in Kansas also meant utilizing the press in New England to rally support for the company and the emigrant aid movement. The Kansas Herald of Freedom was printed and distributed in Boston as well as Wakarusa, Kansas Territory.

Finally, the philanthropists backing the New England Emigrant Aid Company were willing to use their own time and money as well as the company and its related organizations as a tool to facilitate the forceful colonization of Kansas Territory. Rossbach made the case that “Righteous violence purified men and returned them to manliness and Anglo-American virtue.”¹⁷⁹

When the progress of advancing New England civilization to the frontier was threatened, the company utilized one of the other trophies of the free labor economy, Sharps rifles. After Missourian Border Ruffians crossed the border and fraudulently elected a proslavery government on March 30, 1855, the anxiety that called for arms spread quickly through the ranks of the company. Charles Robinson, wrote to Thayer and Hale in Boston requesting arms. Finally, George Deitzler, a clerk for the company, was given by Robinson an order for one hundred Sharps rifles and sent to Boston. He went immediately to the New England Emigrant Aid Company in Boston to settle the bill and arrange for the shipment of the rifles. The company worked with the Massachusetts Kansas Committee and the Central Kansas Committee to ship the weapons. Deitzler remembered, “The guns were packed on the following Sunday... The boxes were marked ‘Books.’”¹⁸⁰ This transaction is the most scandalous episode in the New England

¹⁷⁹ Rossbach, 72.

¹⁸⁰ Letter from George Deitzler written for the “Old Settlers’ Meeting” in 1879. Quoted in, Isely, W.H. “The Sharps Rifle Episode in Kansas History.” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Apr., 1907), 552.

Emigrant Aid Company history. First, sending weapons to the settlers in Kansas was a breach of their corporate charter. The language in the charter established two very distinct realms of action for the company, directing emigration westward and providing accommodations upon the emigrant arrival. It did not include the provision of arms or property by the company to emigrants. The executive committee knew the actions were illegal, and the official company documents that recorded the event indicate that. Thomas Webb's reply to Robinson was filled with euphemisms so that the transaction resembled a much larger version of what the company had been attempting to do. In the letter rifles were referred to as "machines" meant for the "improvement of Kansas." At that time in 1855, the company had only successfully sent a few mills to Kansas and the funding to provide such a large number of mills was not there.¹⁸¹

A sudden three thousand dollar order for one hundred of those "machines" was an explicit indicator that the "machines" were not mills. The company leaders were willing to breach the articles of incorporation in order to achieve their goals. Thomas Webb, the official who approved the purchase, intended for them to be distributed only to the most responsible individuals so that they might be returned to the company stock subscribers when it eventually liquidated its assets. At a congressional hearing in 1869, in which Lawrence and Webb testified, the company executives insisted that the company never used any of its funds for the purchase or shipment of arms.

A speech given to the Lawrence Association over a land claim dispute by the pro-slavery Kansas Territory congressman Edward Chapman embodied the way pro-slavery

¹⁸¹ W.H. Isely, "The Sharps Rifle Episode in Kansas History," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Apr., 1907), pp. 546-566.

men felt about New England philanthropists in Kansas. Chapman summarized the New England effort as

The seed which they planted with tremulous apprehension are here this day, commingling their patriotic rebukes against that mercenary morbidness, which characterizes the Lawrence Association as stock-jobbers and money-getters – men of exchanges and coteries and self-interest – covered from head to foot with the leprosy of materialism, until it shall submerge all opposition, by secret and unjust invasions which from their first advent in Kansas territory up to the present opulence, title, l and despotism with civil feuds, dissevering all fraternal affections.¹⁸²

The pro-slavery population, like the apprehensive New Englanders, disliked the profit-driven element of the corporation. It appeared to many to be the exploitation of less fortunate settlers and frontiersmen for the pecuniary profit in New England.

Chapman's inflammatory remarks later became more focused on company agent Charles Robinson. Chapman said, "Compromising this plighted faith of the Government that the land we now occupy shall be our future homes upon which eminence we this say invite for the last time the false Belshazzar who with restless gaze views the dauntless energy which guides us to this grand consummation."¹⁸³ The 'false Belshazzar' was Dr. Charles Robinson. Belshazzar was the King of Babylon and the main character of "The Writing on the Wall," from the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament. He was the last King of Babylon and on a night that he through a lavish party, he and his guests became drunk on wine and retrieved the gold and silver his father had taken from the house of God in Jerusalem:

When the gold and silver vessels taken from the House of God in Jerusalem had been brought in, and while the king, his lords, his wives and his entertainers were drinking wine from them, they praised their gods of gold silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone. Suddenly, opposite the lamp

¹⁸² Robinson, 85.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 85.

stand, the fingers of a human hand appeared, writing on the plaster of the wall in the king's palace.¹⁸⁴

Daniel was summoned to translate the writing. It stated,

Mene, Tekel, and Peres. Those words mean: Mene, God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it; Yekel, you have been weighed and the scales found wanting; Peres, your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians.¹⁸⁵

Later that night Belshazzar was murdered. To many southerners, particularly Missourians, men like Dr. Charles Robinson of the New England Emigrant Aid Company were money hungry, materialistic tyrants. Much like the biblical tale, Chapman saw the battle in Kansas as a fight over a kingdom. The kingdom was the United States, and both were battling the maintain control. Chapman thought the materialistic nature of New England society would ultimately doom their chances in Kansas and cede the “kingdom” to the pro-slavery forces.

Conclusion

The New England Emigrant Aid Company was a commercial enterprise organized by New England's wealthiest and best connected men. In this case corporate philanthropy did not mean charitable donations or an extracurricular benevolent endeavor by the corporation. The corporation was also a philanthropic organization. The corporation represented New England civilization at its most advanced stage; it embodied the virtues and ambitions the New England philanthropists believed were necessary for civilized society. The company facilitated Bleeding Kansas through an effort to organize the economy of the territory, through the provision of arms, and through the employment of a printing press for propaganda. In its entirety, the company utilized the best and most

¹⁸⁴ Daniel. 5. 3-5. New American Bible St. Joseph Edition.

¹⁸⁵ Daniel. 5. 25-28. New American Bible St. Joseph Edition.

philanthropic elements of New England society to assimilate the settlers into a common value system. That enabled the company to build colonial ties between New England and Kansas Territory.

Conclusion

The philanthropists in this story, like those in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, “intended to impose their vision of the good society through collective missionary-like (religious and secular) ventures.”¹⁸⁶ Preceding Bleeding Kansas, New Englanders adopted a new strategy to implement their visions for society. Louis S. Gerteis claimed, “During the 1840s, the focus of antislavery reform shifted from evangelical moral reform to a liberal antislavery appeal which pressed for emancipation as part of a broad utilitarian assault on the evils of pauperism, vice, and ignorance in industrializing America.”¹⁸⁷ The philanthropists in Bleeding Kansas were no different. They linked the social ills they were afraid of into an omnibus argument justifying an invasion of Kansas Territory by New England philanthropy.

There were a variety of forms of philanthropy in antebellum New England, and each of these forms assumed a different function. The function of private philanthropy such as churches, eleemosynary and testamentary trusts, corporations, and voluntary associations offered citizens the ability to organize their efforts collectively in a way that best met their mission. The leaders of the large private philanthropic organizations functioned as stewards of wealth and the public good. “The spirit of patronage was closely linked to charitable and philanthropic enterprise and both were expressions of the businessman’s role as steward of wealth.”¹⁸⁸ Public philanthropy was a classification system that identified each poor person according to the morality of their behavior. The

¹⁸⁶ Lawrence J. Freidman and Mark D. McGarvie, ed. *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹⁸⁷ Louis S. Gerteis. “Slavery and Hard Times: Morality and Utility in American Antislavery Reform,” in John R. McKivigan. *Abolitionism and American Reform*. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999), 40.

¹⁸⁸ Goodman, 446.

primary function of public philanthropy was to reduce avoidable dependency. Rossbach stated, "Discipline and control, these were the virtues revered by reformers in mid-nineteenth-century America. Properly applied, they could help abate the social chaos stimulated by industrialization and immigration. Properly applied, they could bring the return of traditional American values."¹⁸⁹ Although public and private charities were often thought to encompass different activities and goals, their functions in antebellum New England was intermixed. Public and private philanthropy in New England were both concerned with the moral improvement of the poor through temperance, discipline, control, and frugality. Public and private philanthropy linked environmental conditions of the inner city to poverty. Public-private collaborations were not uncommon because of the shared concerns and anxieties.

Political follies in Washington D.C. in the first half of the nineteenth century led to the anger and sectional animosity resulting in Bleeding Kansas. The political follies motivated New England philanthropists to mobilize the base of New England philanthropy, in all of its forms, to ensure their idea of American progress would triumph in Kansas Territory and benefit New England. Their efforts reproduced the whole of New England philanthropy in Kansas Territory within a few months of the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. The subsequent violence was dictated by New England philanthropists.

New England philanthropists in Bleeding Kansas were infatuated with developing a systematic application of philanthropy. A major element of that system was effective fundraising and "in their campaigns for funds they often claimed that the indoctrination of young westerners in sound moral principles was the best defense against the twin

¹⁸⁹ Rossbach, 105.

evils of religious indifference and political radicalism.”¹⁹⁰ The back end of the system was flattery through a variety of donor recognition programs. The bulk of the effort to achieve advanced systematic philanthropy was expended organizing the various institutions. For New Englanders this meant shaping each philanthropic enterprise in the federation style with progressively smaller units determined by geography. Franklin Sanborn, the young leader of the Kansas relief movement, protégé of Dr. Samuel G. Howe, and the leader of public charity in Boston after the Civil War, embodied the obsession with organization and systemization. George Stearns, a fellow member of the Secret Committee of Six, which funded John Brown’s murderous raids, “was encouraged by Sanborn’s enthusiasm for the aid movement, impressed by the young man’s effective fund-raising efforts, and eager for his firsthand knowledge of the Kansas situation.” Paramount for Stearns however, was Sanborn’s awareness of the need for ‘system and order.’”¹⁹¹

The Kansas relief movement led by Franklin Sanborn was a predecessor of the charity organization movement that swept the United States in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. At the National Conference of Charities and Correction in 1901, M. E. Richmond stated, “Religious and Secular Activity in philanthropy had created, in our large cities, many different agencies. However well these may have been organized internally, they were not organized with reference to each other, and this fact led to the formation of charity organization societies.”¹⁹² The National Kansas Committee was a charity organization society. While certain elements of New

¹⁹⁰ Bremner, 49.

¹⁹¹ Rossbach, 54.

¹⁹² M.E. Richmond, “Charitable Cooperation,” Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, 1901, p. 298.

England philanthropy organized Kansas Territory, other elements filled the territory with naïve and materially impoverished New Englanders and the foundations of an industrialized free-labor society.

The New England Emigrant Aid Company acted as the facilitator of Bleeding Kansas. The philanthropy the company facilitated was intended to assimilate the moral imagination of individual settlers into the New England mold. That was done to create a homogenous value system which New England philanthropists then used to colonize Kansas Territory. The company officers and board were a cross-section representation of elite New England philanthropists. They were educated, and many of them had experience as board members, executives, or founders of New England's most powerful eleemosynary and corporate institutions. The New England Emigrant Aid Company's incorporation was controversial because the mixture of profit seeking and philanthropic motives made it a risky investment. The hybrid organization model that won out in the end was the embodiment of the utilitarian attack on moral degradation and slavery.

In order to facilitate Bleeding Kansas, the company founded the *Kansas Herald of Freedom* as their propaganda engine. The newspaper did more than spread propaganda in Kansas Territory. The newspaper illustrated to New Englanders the type of aid that was needed in the Territory and it encouraged them to be proactive about the cause. There was no shortage of organizations that were active in Kansas Territory, but ultimately the New England Emigrant Aid Company controlled who participated and how. When the civilized efforts failed to assimilate the population fast enough, the company facilitated a violent response.

The Kansas Conflict may be best described as a conservative reform effort. Romantic sentiment for the past and a common memory of the revolutionary spirit solidified the importance of the past for the philanthropists. Their position as stewards of the public good and entrepreneurs fueled their thirst for moral and material progress which sometimes conflicted with their romantic efforts to return New England to its roots. Robert Dalzell contended, “Rural colleges and academies, religious conservatism, character forged in the citizen-military-revolutionary mold, the Bunker Hill Monument itself: each was yet another step leading ineluctably out and away from the hurly-burly of Boston and its distressing social dilemmas – leading, in fact, to the past.”¹⁹³ Most of all, the question of slavery brought the conflicting sentiments to surface. Henry Adams remembered, “Slavery drove the white Puritan community back on its Puritanism. The boy thought as dogmatically as though he were one of his own ancestors. The Slave power took the place of Stuart Kings and Roman popes.”¹⁹⁴

John Gast’s 1872 painting *American Progress* summarized what the New England philanthropists and the New England Emigrant Aid Company attempted. Gast’s painting is a summation of manifest destiny. It depicts the civilization of the American continent by European settlers. On the left of the painting is the Pacific seaboard and the Rocky Mountains. At the base of the mountains, fleeing toward the Pacific are a herd of American Bison, a bear and other American wildlife along with a tribe of Native Americans with their bow and arrow in hand. Closely behind are the fur trappers, surveyors, an ox pulled pioneer wagon and a lone settler riding a horse behind them. The largest and central figure in the painting is lady liberty flying above the American plains.

¹⁹³ Robert F. Dalzell Jr. *Enterprising Elite: The Boston Associates and the World They Made*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 147.

¹⁹⁴ Adams, 37.

She is dressed in a white toga, symbolizing innocent and pure imperialism. In her arms is a spool of wire and the wire trails behind her to form a telegraph line connected to the city lying along the eastern seaboard. Following lady liberty is a stage coach, farmers, and three railroads. On the far right of the painting the railroads and telegraph line connected to a booming metropolis on the eastern seaboard. Smokestacks tower above the city and bridges rise from high from the water to accommodate the busy steamboat traffic. Gast's most telling piece of symbolism however, is the sky. Contrary to the way modern industrial progress is perceived, the sky above the city and smokestacks and clear and sunny with a few tall white fluffy clouds. The sky above the American continent grows progressively darker and more ominous and large dark clouds dominate the sky implying the perceived cleansing of the continent as industrialized American civilization crossed.

The Company sought to colonize Kansas Territory in the image of New England. That was to be achieved through the organization of the territory into a system where Christianity, education, the printing press, and a free labor industrial economy could flourish. If those plans were threatened, force and intimidation were used to implement the plan. The Descandum Kansas Improvement Company's satirical take on the New England Emigrant Aid Company captured the general sentiment toward the Company and its leaders. Article five of the company's constitution stated, "Any person of fair reputation, and decent wealth, may become a member by taking one or more shares and paying therefor One Dollar per share, and shall receive an equal and just dividend, whenever the Treasurer shall conclude to make a distribution of funds among the

members, and in addition to which, each member shall have his name engraved with the largest kind of Jack-knife upon the largest tree in all Kansas.”¹⁹⁵

Opportunities for Future Research

This project was initially planned to focus on the relationship between American philanthropy and American nationalism in the historical context of Bleeding Kansas. As the project developed, it became clear that incorporating nationalism into a study of American philanthropy during Bleeding Kansas was a much larger project than a Master’s thesis. The first obstacle was the conflict between the perils of historicism and the nature of academic work on nationalism. Whether I adopted the David Potter mentality of utilizing multi-disciplinary research to inform the history of American nationalism, or pursued Lawrence J. Friedman’s advice to maintain strict adherence to the “evidential and methodological imperatives” of professional history, nailing down a definition of nationalism in antebellum America is too complex an issue to comprehensively deal with here. With that said, I will utilize a generic academic definition of nationalism to touch on some important points related to philanthropy and nationalism in antebellum New England and Bleeding Kansas.

Very few professional historians have taken up the task of comprehensively studying American nationalism in the antebellum period. There is a wealth of literature claiming the existence of a fully developed southern nationalism in the antebellum era, but the literature on the existence of northern nationalism is thin. David Potter, Peter Dobkin Hall, and Susan Mary Grant are responsible for three of the most in-depth

¹⁹⁵ Soule, Amasa. “Constitution of the Descandum Kansas Improvement Company,” *Territorial Kansas History*, http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/~imlskto/cgi-bin/index.php?SCREEN=show_document&SCREEN_FROM=immigration&document_id=100114&FROM_PAGE=&topic_id=104.

inquiries of American nationalism. David Potter was one of the early advocates of utilizing historicism to illuminate the history of American nationalism. Potter's 1962 article "The Historian's Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa," outlined a methodology for the study and pointed to the events leading up to the American Civil War as the most fruitful historical period for the study.¹⁹⁶ Fourteen years later Potter published the culmination of his research in American nationalism leading up to the Civil War in *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861*.¹⁹⁷ Ultimately Potter chose to focus on southern nationalism for the book but it still laid a solid foundation for future studies in northern nationalism.

Peter Dobkin Hall's contribution to the debate was the before mentioned book, *The Organization of American Culture, 1700-1900: Private Institutions, Elites, and the Origins of American Nationality*. Most recently Susan-Mary Grant contributed to the literature with *North Over South: Northern Nationalism and American identity in the Antebellum Era*.¹⁹⁸ Grant based much of her study on northern accounts of southern culture. She contended that northerners differentiated their own culture by enhancing the perceived negative differences between their culture and southern culture. The construction of northern identity and northerners' idea of American nationalism was based entirely on their perception of southern identity and southern culture. Southerners did not believe it was necessary to reconcile the cultural differences between north and south but, northerners believed it was essential to create a national culture for the preservation of the Union. The culture that followed the American Civil War, they

¹⁹⁶ David M. Potter. "The Historian's Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (Jul., 1962), pp. 924-950.

¹⁹⁷ David M. Potter. *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861*. New York: Harper and Row, 1976.

¹⁹⁸ Susan-Mary Grant. *North Over South: Northern Nationalism and American identity in the Antebellum Era*. (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2000).

believed, was entirely northern and not an amalgamation of the different sectional cultures.

Michael Hetcher authored one of the best contemporary studies of nationalism, *Containing Nationalism*. Hetcher first defined a nation as “a relatively large group of genetically unrelated people with high solidarity.”¹⁹⁹ He defined nationalism as “collective action designed to render the boundaries of the nation congruent with those of its governance unit.”²⁰⁰ Hetcher’s definition of governance unit was “that territorial unit which is responsible for providing the bulk of social order and other collective goods – including protection from confiscation, justice and welfare – to its members.”²⁰¹ Within this definition there are several components that scholars of nationalism agree are defining features of a nation. They include an attachment to a specific geographic homeland, and a common language and racial identity. Other features sometimes attributed to nations include shared memories of defining moments and widely held cultural values, and some scholars argue, like Hetcher, a common governance unit is necessary for a nation to develop a sense of nationalism. Whatever a nation or nationalism mean for different scholars, nationalism is a process; it is fluid and changes over time. It is not a static sentiment that can be measured precisely. The way it is expressed changes as its meaning does.

One place to start an inquiry of nationalism in this historical topic is with Joshua Searle-White’s *Psychology of Nationalism*. Searle-White stated, “Combined with the research on attitudes, then, we would expect nationalist groups to perceive other groups

¹⁹⁹ Michael Hetcher. *Containing Nationalism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 11.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 7.

²⁰¹ Ibid, 9.

as untrustworthy and immoral, and very different.”²⁰² He went on to state that, “once we believe that the enemy is bad or evil, it becomes easy to justify violence and aggression against them.”²⁰³ According to Searle-White then, New Englanders did constitute a nationalist group. They viewed southerners as untrustworthy because of their perceived political overreaches. New Englanders also viewed the South as immoral for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was the institution of slavery. New England was not just a nationalist group in comparison to the South. New Englanders held similar views of westerners because they were most susceptible to the social ills that caused moral decline. Ultimately as Searle-White suggested, violence prevailed in Kansas Territory. Susan Mary Grant, one of the few historians to take on American nationalism in the antebellum period came to a similar conclusion: “Rather northerners’ fear for their own position within the Union, and their more general concerns about the future of the nation as a whole, encouraged them to view the South less as a partner in the republican experiment and more as an enemy within that sought to undermine it.”²⁰⁴ This insight, combined with the literature on southern nationalism, indicates that northern nationalism existed and that America in the antebellum period was comprised of at least two competing nations.

The existence of a distinct homeland is a tricky issue because both the North and South had a common homeland in the United States, but a closer examination of the language used by northerners and southerners to describe one another indicates that these areas of the country viewed themselves rather autonomously and grounded in their region, not in the totality of United States territory. In Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “Address to the Citizens of Concord,” loyalty to New England was on display front and center.

²⁰² Joshua Searle-White. *The Psychology of Nationalism*. (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 15.

²⁰³ Ibid, 16.

²⁰⁴ Grant, 20.

Loyalty is not the same as nationalism, but loyalty is one indication of nationalist sentiment:

Massachusetts is little, but, if true to itself, can be the brain which turns about the behemoth...I say Massachusetts, but I mean Massachusetts in all the quarters of her dispersion; Massachusetts, as she is the mother of all the New England states, and as she sees her progeny scattered over the face of the land, in the farthest South, and the uttermost West.²⁰⁵

Like most New England elites, the spirit of American exceptionalism was still deeply ingrained in their understanding of New England society. Emerson did not believe the geographic area and governance unit of the nation were any longer connected and aligned.

I wake in the morning with a painful sensation, which I carry about all day, and which, when traced home, is the odious remembrance of that ignominy which has fallen on Massachusetts, which robs the landscape of beauty, and takes the sunshine out of every hour. I have lived all my life in this State, and never had any experience of personal inconvenience from the laws, until now.²⁰⁶

The passage of the Fugitive Slave Law threw off the balance between geography and governance. According to Emerson that was an illustration of the existence of two American nations in the United States: “Under the Union I suppose the fact to be that there are really two nations, the north and the south. It is not slavery that severs then, it is climate and temperament. The south does not like the north, slavery or no slavery, and never did.”²⁰⁷ Again, Susan Mary Grant’s argument confirmed this idea: “By the 1850s, an identifiable northern nationalism had emerged, predicated on opposition to the South. It was an ambitious nationalism that sought to impose its own values on the South and on

²⁰⁵ Ralph Waldo Emerson. “An Address to the Citizens of Concord (on the Fugitive Slave Law) in, Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays and Poems*. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2004), 363.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 348.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 361.

the nation.”²⁰⁸ Evidence of northern nationalism that supports her argument is in many of the documents of Bleeding Kansas. In the letters of both Missourians and free-state settlers, their language reflected a nationalism that was rooted in an attachment to their homeland. Each group described the other as invaders and foreigners, illustrating that both northerners and southerners believed each of those nations had a specific homeland which did not include the Kansas Territory.

Moving forward with the evidence indicating at least two distinct nations in antebellum America, Michael Hetcher’s *Containing Nationalism* can help guide the argument from the psychological nature of nationalism to the sociology of its existence and development. To explain how philanthropy and nationalism relate on a national scale Hetcher claimed,

If collective action emanates from voluntary associations, then the prospects for nationalism are affected by the nation’s institutional completeness. This institutional completeness, in turn, depends on the central state’s tolerance of nationally distinctive cultural and political organizations.²⁰⁹

Following this argument of institutional completeness and using it to build on the idea that northern nationalism was based on the defamation of the south, the New England Emigrant Aid Company and Bleeding Kansas were expressions of Northern-American, and it could be argued New England-American, nationalism. Bleeding Kansas was an act of peripheral nationalism by New England. Peripheral nationalism “occurs when a culturally distinctive territory resists incorporation into an expanding state, or attempts to secede and set up its own government.”²¹⁰ This helps explain the invasive nature of New

²⁰⁸ Grant, 59.

²⁰⁹ Hetcher, 127.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 17.

England philanthropy and the defensive posture adopted by southern philanthropic organizations.

New England philanthropists were gravely concerned about the negative impact of slavery and wanted to see the institution dead. For New England philanthropists, Bleeding Kansas was about slavery. It was not a fight to end the political and economic inequality produced by slavery, but a fight to end the moral insufficiencies that went hand in hand with slavery. Racial equality of any kind was not considered by the company leaders. Some of the leaders were American nativists and among them was a growing sense of racial solidarity. Barbara and Kenneth Tucker stated, “Amos Adams Lawrence, the textile magnate, developed a view of national American culture defined by a commitment to capitalism and Protestantism. Fearful of immigrants, he proclaimed the virtues of a nativist, Anglo-Saxon America.”²¹¹ Eli Thayer utilized ancient mythology to expand on Lawrence’s belief in the virtues of the Saxon race. Thayer stated in his history of the New England Emigrant Aid Company,

The Latin races claim their founders were nursed by a wolf. The Saxons have a higher origin. Their founder was nursed by a polar bear. Deep in the nature of this race is found that untamable ferocity, which fears nothing, but can endure everything... This sublime endurance, this proud defiance, this unvarying courage, all based on a sort of savage ferocity, give assurance that the Saxons will make law and language for the world. These qualities may be usually concealed under the various coverings of all the Christian amenities. We may appear to be perfect examples of amiable submission, and of Christian humility. We may be sympathetic or even philanthropic; but under all this gentle and genial exterior, there slumbers the grizzly ferocity. It is in every Saxon breast.²¹²

Emerson echoed the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race when he illustrated the intimate connections the British colonies had with London:

²¹¹ Barbara M. Tucker and Kenneth H. Tucker Jr., 1.

²¹² Thayer, 40.

Every Englishman in Australia, in South Africa, in India, or in whatever barbarous country their forts and factories have been setup, - represents London, represents the art, power and law of Europe. Every man educated at the northern schools carries the like advantages into the south. For it is confounding distinctions to speak of the geographic sections of this country as of equal civilization.²¹³

In addition to referencing the superiority of Anglo-Saxon empire and civilization, he made the claim that New England was for the United States what London was for the British Empire.

A comparative history of New England and British philanthropy in the mid-nineteenth century would reveal a good deal about the nature of Anglo-Saxon philanthropy. Gertrude Himmelfarb's *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians*, and Frank Dekker Watson's 1922 book *The Charity Organization Movement in the United States: A Study in American Philanthropy* are two good monographs to begin a comparative history of the two countries, particularly a comparative study of the weight morality carried in Atlantic Anglophone philanthropy in the nineteenth century.

One interesting document that has been overlooked by historians of Bleeding Kansas as well as historians of American nationalism is Rev. Edward Everett Hale's *The Man Without a Country*.²¹⁴ This novella is a story about a young man who said he never wanted to hear the name of his country, the United States, again. The President granted his wish and sent him on a navy ship with orders to the captain and crew never to say anything of his country or show him anything that would remind him of the US. He spent the remainder of his life on that ship in agony that he could not go home and that he did

²¹³ Ralph Waldo Emerson. "An Address to the Citizens of Concord (on the Fugitive Slave Law) in, Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays and Poems*. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2004), 364.

²¹⁴ Edward Everett Hale. *The Man Without a Country*. Boston: J. Stillman Smith and Co., 1896.

not know of any news from home. Some of the seamen slipped up and gave him clues. At the end when he was dying one crew men went into his quarters where he found a map drawn of the U.S. from memory, among other things that the man could remember about the U.S. The man died without ever returning home. Although patriotism and nationalism are two different things, the way patriotism is expressed can tell us something about the nationalist sentiment which animated it.

A second area of research that would illuminate our understanding of contemporary affairs is a study of the history of social entrepreneurship in America. Some scholarly articles have been written about the topic, but most of the public's knowledge about those organizations comes from popular journalism. Unfortunately, journalists today write about the field in a broad thematic way emphasizing the innovative and benevolent nature of the organizations. A study of this kind could inform policy decisions as government budgets in America are drying up and the IRS has just recently created a new type of hybrid organization in the federal tax code.²¹⁵

The antebellum period in American history contains infinite opportunity for future studies. The Boston Brahmins and their philanthropy have been largely overlooked in order to study their business success. The Brahmins as trustees and their corporate social responsibility can help inform the contemporary corporate giving and social responsibility efforts.

This study which reflected on one of the most peculiar episodes in American philanthropy, and the topics suggested are vitally important now. They carry policy

²¹⁵ The new hybrid social enterprise organizations can receive L3C status with the IRS affording that organization certain tax advantages and operational boundaries. The issue is explored at length in, Robert A. Katz and Antony Page, "The Role of Social Enterprise" *Vermont Law Review*, Vol. 35, No. 59 (2010), pp. 59-103.

implications for American philanthropy operating domestically and abroad, as well as implications for American foreign policy.

Appendix: Voluntary Associations in Bleeding Kansas

Relief Organizations

1. Territorial Executive Committee
2. Ladies Kansas Aid Society of Richmond
3. New York State Kansas Committee
4. Kansas Relief Committee (National Kansas Committee)
5. Kansas State Central Committee
6. Vermont State Kansas Committee
7. Young Men's Kansas Relief Committee
8. Massachusetts State Kansas Committee
9. New England Kansas Aid Committee
10. Kansas Central Committee of Iowa
11. Boston Kansas Club
12. Worcester County Kansas League
13. Kansas Aid Association of Alleghany County, Pittsburgh, Penn

Emigrant Aid Organizations

1. New England Emigrant Aid Company
2. Connecticut Kansas Colony (Beecher's Bible and Rifle Colony)
3. Free State Kansas Fund
4. American Settlement Company
5. Union Emigration Society
6. Kansas Actual Settler's Association of Cincinnati

7. Susquehanna Western Emigration Company
8. New York Kansas Western League
9. Kansas Settler's Society
10. Vermont Colony in Kansas
11. Kansas Emigrant Aid Society of Northern Ohio
12. German Kansas Settlement Society
13. Vegetarian Settlement Company
14. Octagon Settlement Company
15. Wisconsin State Kansas Emigration Society, Milwaukee, WI
16. Kansas League of Cincinnati

Misc. Charities and Associations

1. Kansas Philomathic Literary Society
2. International Order of Oddfellows
3. Independent Order of Good Templars of Kansas
4. Ancient and Free and Accepted Masons
5. Free State Vigilance Club
6. American Missionary Association
7. American Home Missionary Association
8. Kansas Legion (Kansas Regulators, secret northern society)

Proslavery Associations

1. Blue Lodge (secret southern organization in Missouri)
2. Platte County Self-Defensive Association
3. Proslavery Association of Clay County Missouri

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Curriculum Vitae
Elijah Cody Howe

Education

Indiana University, earned at IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN
Master of Arts, Philanthropic Studies, Minor: History, August 2011

Alma Mater Studiorum Universita' Di Bologna, Bologna, Italy
Master of Arts exchange program, International Studies in Philanthropy, summer 2010

Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana, B.A., History, May 2008

Honors, Awards, Fellowships

The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, Appointed MA Student Representative, Philanthropic Studies Academic Program Committee and sub-committees, 2010 and 2011; Study abroad scholarship, 2010

University College Office of Development, Operations, and Employee Relations at IUPUI, Employee of the Month, 2009

Hanover College, Varsity Baseball, Two-time letterman, 2004-2006

Research and Training Experience

University Library at IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN
January 2011-present

Common Theme Fellowship Research Intern

- Developed and planned Common Theme related library functions and events
- Reviewed and innovated updates for the Common Theme website
- Research and analyzed pertinent literature related to the role of media in defining social entrepreneurship
- Identified and pursued relevant campus activities, possible collaborations and shared events
- Researched and created information packets about the Common Theme with information specific to every academic unit on campus for distribution to faculty
- Developed marketing strategies/teasers for the spring 2011 Common Theme launch

Professional Experience

Office of Development, Operations, and Employee Relations, University College at IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN

June 2008-May 2008

Graduate Assistant

- Developed and managed the creation of *SPOTS*, a freshman coupon book, the first of its kind at IUPUI, which endows a scholarship fund for University College students
- Presented a multi-year partnership proposal of \$22,000 to the management of a fortune 500 company
- Managed the development of a web-based interactive virtual tour of Taylor Hall
- Acted as the United Way Ambassador to University College for three years and led the planning of *Live United* fund raising events at University College
- Led student staff in three advertising campaigns, 2008-2011, for University College publications
- Led the entertainment teams planning of the 2008 and 2009 IUPUI New Student Welcomes
- Wrote articles and sidebars pieces for *Indiana Insight*, and *FamilyEd* magazines
- Solicited articles from leading authors for *The Link* magazine
- Led student staff in the solicitation of event and conference partnerships

Hanover College, Hanover, IN

2006-2007

Telethon Fundraiser

- Contacted alumni to solicit their financial support for the College or a specific program or institute at the College

AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), Madison, Indiana

2006

Tutor

- Tutored high school students in history two days a week

Conferences Attended

IUPUI Research Day 2011, Common Theme-social entrepreneurship poster presentation

Affiliations

The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, Philanthropic Studies Society, 2010

National Institute for Fitness and Sport, Youth Fitness Mentor 2009 and 2010

SS. Francis and Clare Roman Catholic Parish, Parish festival cook, 2007-2009

Indy Homeless Connection, Volunteer, 2008

Hanover College, Ballroom Dance Association, 2007; History Club, 2006-2007, Spanish Club, 2004-2005, Athletics Event Staff, 2004-2006

Little League Baseball, Volunteer Umpire, 2006 and Volunteer Coach, 2003, 2005, and 2006

Mozel Sanders Foundation, Thanksgiving dinner preparations, 2002-2004