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Gender, Labor, and Virtue in Eighteenth-Century Georgia

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

GENDER, LABOR, AND VIRTUE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GEORGIA

By

Lauren E. Lane

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Coral Gables, Florida

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GENDER, LABOR, AND VIRTUE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GEORGIA

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This dissertation explores interrelated conceptions of gender, labor, and virtue in early Georgia, focusing on the Trustee period and in particular upon the ways in which the founding goals of the Georgia Trustees, in combination with the cultural values held by the colony's non-elite settlers, fostered largely collaborative gender roles. "Gender, Labor, and Virtue in Eighteenth-Century Georgia" illuminates the existence of a gender order very different from the more power-based models historians have described among the southern elite in colonies such as South Carolina or Virginia. Although Georgia's officials and colonists certainly favored a gender hierarchy that, in most instances, placed men above women, this patriarchal order was tempered by an emphasis upon mutual obligation and respect.

The value that the Georgia Trustees placed upon spiritual and moral virtue likewise challenges ideas about religion in the colonial South. In more established southern colonies religion has often been downplayed or portrayed as a tool utilized by the plantation elite to reinforce their hold over the social hierarchy. In Georgia, religion was an essential component of the founders' settlement plan that encouraged all colonists to play an active part in encouraging order and virtue in their community. Concerned that

England's citizens – including those in its southernmost North American colonies – were succumbing to the temptations of idleness, sin, and luxury, the Georgia Trustees sought to create a new colony that would serve as a model of industry and moral virtue. In order to ensure the success of their goals, they banned slavery and sent ministers to instruct the people in religious piety. Without slave labor, the physical work of all family members was necessary to establish and maintain successful farms and businesses. And because the Trustees and their supporters associated hard work with moral reform, there was little or no stigma attached to either sex performing even the most strenuous labor. Men and women also worked collaboratively to encourage religious virtue in their families. Although not all of Georgia's colonists agreed with official efforts to promote labor and moral reform, most shared in the view that mutual collaboration between the sexes was essential to the colony's success.

By demonstrating the existence of a southern colony featuring gender ideals based upon mutual responsibility, hard work, and religious models of respect and cooperation – all characteristics associated by recent scholars with gender norms in England, New England, and the Middle Colonies – my work challenges distinctions often drawn between the northern and southern colonies in the eighteenth century. In part, such ideals can be attributed to the unique reform goals of the Georgia Trustees. But they also reflect broader values shared among non-elite whites in the colonial South, whose beliefs are often obscured in the historical record. The sources left by Georgia's founders, because of their reform-minded interest in ordinary people's behavior and welfare, provide unprecedented access into the lives of non-elite white colonists in the eighteenth-century South.

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Introduction

In June 1737, Elizabeth Desborough filed a complaint before Savannah magistrate Thomas Causton against victualler Henry Lloyd. Desborough accused Lloyd of overcharging her husband and sons for meat while they were carrying out carpentry work in his home. Initially, Causton was swayed by Desborough's account of the events, and suspected Lloyd of selling foodstuffs to workers in his home at an inflated price. Upon further investigation, however, it became clear that John Desborough had repeatedly pressured Lloyd to give him bacon and smoked beef from his personal stores. After numerous refusals, Lloyd finally relented, but demanded that Desborough pay a generous fee for the goods. Deeming Desborough's purchase a frivolous waste of his family's money, Causton dismissed the case against Lloyd.¹

This seemingly simple tale about a conflict between neighbors over the price of bacon offers an informative glimpse into gender roles and expectations in Trustee Georgia. The fact that Elizabeth Desborough was the one to bring the case before the magistrates is particularly revealing. As the household head, and the party who was directly involved in the conflict, John Desborough would have been the more obvious complainant, yet it was instead his wife who assumed the responsibility for defending the family's interests. It remains unclear why Mr. Desborough did not go to the officials himself; perhaps he was ill that day, or conducting business out of town. Whatever the reason for his absence, it is clear is that both the carpenter and the colonial officials accepted Elizabeth Desborough as an appropriate advocate for her family. Note, for

¹ Sir John Percival, The Egmont (Sir John Percival) Papers, vol. 14203, 17-18, [online database], Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries. <http://purl.galileo.usg.edu/ugafax/egmont>.

instance, that even though Thomas Causton eventually retracted the warrant against Henry Lloyd, he was initially sympathetic to Desborough's case and took her complaints seriously.

There survive numerous other examples of women playing similarly assertive and active roles in Trustee Georgia. They petitioned officials on behalf of their husbands and children, participated in the management of family businesses and farms, and acted as their husbands' surrogates if they were unavailable or otherwise unable to perform their duties as household heads.² In most cases, the officials and male colonists recording the women's behavior left no indication that they found such activities to be in any way strange or objectionable. In several instances, they praised women for carrying out their authoritative roles successfully. In 1738, for instance, a male merchant lauded Catherine Perkins for her ability to manage the family store in Frederica while her husband was out of town.³ In 1739, the minister and highest official in the German-speaking settlement of Ebenezer praised widow Anne Dorothy Helfenstein for her skill in running a tanning business alongside one of her sons.⁴ When interviewed by the Trustees in 1744 about life in the colony, a military officer made a special point to

² For examples of women petitioning or conducting business with Georgia's authorities on behalf of their families, see Allen D. Candler, ed., *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. I* (Atlanta: The Franklin Printing and Publishing Company, 1904), 277; *Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants who Settled in Georgia, vol. VI*, translated and edited by George Fenwick Jones (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 89-90; *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII*, 251. For examples of women participating in the management of family farms and businesses, see *Detailed Reports, vol. XV*, 194; William Stephens, *A Journal of Proceedings in Georgia, vol. II*, (1742; reprint, Readex Microprint Corporation, 1966), 25-27. Women's active roles in contributing to their families' economic as well as spiritual welfare are discussed at greater length in Chapter 2.

³ John Brownfield, "Brownfield to Pytt and Tuckwell, 7 February 1738-39," in John Brownfield Copy Book, University of Georgia Libraries, Special Collections, microfilm of original.

⁴ *Detailed Reports, vol. VI*, 187-188.

mention the productivity of several widows in the town of Frederica who successfully “supported themselves and Families on their Plantations.”⁵ Adding further credence to the notion that Georgia’s authorities were comfortable allowing female settlers to wield a measure of authority is the fact that they hired several women to assume influential positions in the colony. They appointed two women to act as silk experts, for example, and praised them for their skill and expertise in overseeing one of the most important industries in the new colony.⁶ Perhaps the most influential woman in early Georgia was Mary Musgrove, a half-Indian interpreter and cultural liaison, whom Trust officials frequently praised for her “great Service to the Colony in Interpreting for the Indians” and for her contributions “to the keeping of Peace with them.”⁷

Despite clear evidence that Georgia’s officials accepted and even encouraged women who assumed authoritative and influential roles, there are also numerous examples of those same authorities criticizing women for behaving in what they saw as an overly assertive or confrontational manner. In 1740, Ebenezer minister Johann Martin Boltzius labeled midwife Maria Anna Rheinländer as “disorderly and vexatious” because she refused to defer to his spiritual authority.⁸ That same year, officials in Savannah

⁵ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. I*, 446.

⁶ See, for instance, *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. II*, 508; *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, supplement to vol. IV*, 141-142; and *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VI*, 218. Georgia’s female silk experts are discussed at length in chapters 2 and 5.

⁷ “Copy of a Letter from Mr. Verelst to Mr. Thomas Causton dated at Westminster May 15th 1735,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14207, 155-156. For more positive descriptions of Musgrove and her work as interpreter, see *Detailed Reports, vol. II*, 107; “Mr. Inghams journal of his voyage to Georgia,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14201, 189; “For the Revd. D: Bearcroft Secretary to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel &c.,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14212, 68; and Robert G. McPherson, ed., *Journal of the Earl of Egmont: Abstract of the Trustees Proceedings for Establishing the Colony of Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1962), 292.

⁸ *Detailed Reports, vol. VII*, 54-55.

condemned Mary Townsend for speaking out against the Trustee government, labeling her a “Nuisance” with particular skill in “scattering what Venom she [could]” in an effort to disrupt good order in the colony.⁹ In several instances, the officials even criticized the very same women they had previously praised. In September 1741, for instance, when the colony’s female silk expert demanded better pay for her work, magistrate William Stephens noted in his journal that he found her “Insolence ... very shocking.”¹⁰ After receiving a copy of Stephens’ journal several months later, the Trustees also commented upon the “prodigious uneasiness & obstinacy” of “the silk woman.”¹¹ Nearly two years later, the officials were still affronted by what they saw as the “unlimited Demands of a Woman, who sets too great a Value on herself, to admit of any Repulse.”¹² Mary Musgrove also attracted the ire of Georgia’s colonial officials. In 1743, for instance, William Stephens was outraged when Musgrove angrily reprimanded Trust officials for their failure to assist her in the confinement of a Spanish prisoner. In his subsequent report to the Trustees, Stephens dismissed Musgrove’s behavior as the unbridled ravings of a malcontent known for her “haughty temper.”¹³

In recent decades, historians have utilized official criticisms lodged at women in early Georgia as evidence that the colony’s magistrates and ministers were uncomfortable with women who wielded any kind of authority. Lee Ann Caldwell, one of the first

⁹ Stephens, *A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia*, vol. II, 451-452, 461.

¹⁰ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, supplement to vol. IV*, 248-249.

¹¹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. V, 592.

¹² *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XXIV, 66-74.

¹³ William Stephens, *The Journal of William Stephens, 1743-1745* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1959), 19.

scholars to pay significant attention to the lives and roles of women in early Georgia, argued that although the Trustees believed women had important roles to play as wives, mothers, household servants, and workers in the colony's emerging silk industry, they nevertheless tended to view them as less valuable as colonists than men. And even though conditions in the colony – including labor shortages and a desire for women to work as silk winders – provided some female colonists with a measure of power, Caldwell argues, officials were never fully comfortable with women who acted “out of [their] proper feminine role and demeanor.”¹⁴ More recently, James O’Neil Spady has depicted Georgia’s Trust officials as “fundamentally conservative” leaders who sought to impose order upon their new colony by “buttress[ing] patriarchy and hierarchy.”¹⁵ In her recent biography of William Stephens, Julie Anne Sweet likewise depicts the colony’s president as a strict patriarch uncomfortable with women in positions of authority.¹⁶

This dissertation offers a different perspective. While officials were clearly unsettled by the assertive behavior of some women, the fact that they praised and encouraged other female colonists for their active roles in the colony challenges the

¹⁴ Lee Ann Caldwell, “New Deal on a New Frontier: European Women Colonists and Trustee Policy, 1733-1752,” *Journal of the Georgia Association of Historians* vol. 16 (1995), 106-126.

¹⁵ James O’Neil Spady, “Bubbles and Beggars and the Bodies of Laborers: The Georgia Trusteeship’s Colonialism Reconsidered,” *Constructing Early Modern Empires: Proprietary Ventures in the Atlantic World, 1500-1750*, edited by L.H. Roper and B. Van Ruymbeke (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 213-268. This interpretation is very similar to that made by Kathleen Brown in her study of gender, race, and power in early Virginia. She maintains that elite planters in Virginia were fundamentally conservative in their reactions to the disruptive nature of life in the early South (which included factors such as imbalanced sex ratios, tensions between elite and non-elite colonists, and constant fears of slave insurrection). They responded by clinging to and strengthening traditional patriarchal hierarchy as a means of securing social stability. See Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 3, 17.

¹⁶ Julie Anne Sweet, *William Stephens: Georgia’s Forgotten Founder* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), chapter 7. The particular women she discusses are the silk winder Jane Mary Camuse and Mary Musgrove, the colony’s half-Indian translator and cultural liaison with the local tribes. I discuss both women’s stories at greater length in chapter 5.

notion that they rejected female authority outright. Such an interpretation is also undermined by recent scholarship on gender ideology in early America, which shows that colonists of both sexes were encouraged to assume authoritative as well as submissive roles in different contexts.¹⁷ This gender role flexibility had particular importance in early Georgia, where all colonists were encouraged to play active roles in furthering the economic, defensive, and religious success of the colony. So what, then, are we to make of official complaints against some authoritative women but not others, and in some circumstances but not in others? In order to understand what was happening, this dissertation contends, gender cannot be interpreted as a distinct or separate issue, but must be incorporated into broader debates about order, status, authority, and deference in the colony. Gender certainly played a part in the officials' objections to what they saw as efforts to challenge or undermine their own authority, but it was not the only factor at play. Georgia's founding purpose as a settlement intended to teach good habits and orderly behavior to Britain's "worthy poor" meant that the colony's officials placed particular importance upon hierarchy and especially submission to social superiors as a means to promote order and discipline. In this context, any colonist who was seen to defy or challenge Trust-appointed officials was viewed as a threat to good order, and condemned accordingly. Female colonists who defied the authorities may have faced more stringent criticism, since their behavior violated the expected social order on two levels – as women expected to submit to their male superiors as well as colonists obliged

¹⁷ For more on fluid gender roles, particularly in early New England, see Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 8, 39; and Richard Godbeer, "Performing Patriarchy: Gendered Roles and Hierarchies in Early Modern England and Seventeenth-Century New England," in *The World of John Winthrop: England and New England, 1588-1649*, ed. Francis J. Bremer and L.A. Botelho. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 290-333.

to defer to colonial authorities – yet the officials’ complaints cannot be explained as rejections of all powerful or influential women. Men as well as women were expected to defer to those in authority over them. Meanwhile women and their contributions, including the obligation to adopt authoritative roles on occasion, were in fact deemed so crucial to the success of the Georgia project that officials believed that they could not afford to allow them to violate their expected roles as sources of order and stability in the colony.¹⁸

Unfortunately for Georgia’s early leaders, disorderly and non-deferential behavior seemed to be a widespread epidemic that affected colonists of both sexes. Almost everywhere they turned, they found opposition to their efforts to govern the colony. Around the same time that officials were complaining about the unruly behavior of women such as Maria Anna Rheinländer, Mary Townsend, and Mary Musgrove, for instance, they were also facing similar behavior from the colony’s men. In 1739, Magistrate William Stephens complained that John Fallowfield, who had just tried unsuccessfully to have his friend appointed to the position of bailiff, confronted Stephens in an “insolent Manner,” assaulting him with “many rude Expressions.”¹⁹ In 1741, a minister in the settlement of Ebenezer made similar complaints about colonist Michael

¹⁸ Carol Karlsen makes similar conclusions in her study of gender and witchcraft accusations in seventeenth-century New England. She views the preponderance of women among those branded as witches not as an indication that Puritans held a negative view of all women, but argues instead that women’s roles as the “Handmaidens of the Lord” were so important in Puritan society that those who violated this model could face serious consequences – including accusations that they were allied with Satan. Disorderly women in eighteenth-century Georgia were not typically accused of witchcraft, but, as the examples above demonstrate, they did face harsh criticism. See Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1998), 153-181.

¹⁹ *A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia, vol. II*, 226-228.

Rieser's refusals to recognize the authority of church leaders, labeling him an "obstinate and disobedient" man.²⁰

The kinds of non-deferential behavior displayed by some of Georgia's inhabitants would have alarmed colonial officials all across early America, but such behavior was particularly galling in Georgia because of the ways in which it laid bare the contradictions between the settlement's intended purpose and colonial realities. Created in 1732 by a group of elite British philanthropists known as the Trustees, Georgia was intended to be a different kind of settlement from Britain's other eighteenth-century southern colonies, which were characterized by large plantations dependent upon slave labor. Concerned that England's citizens and also its settlers in the southern colonies of North America were succumbing to the temptations of idleness, sin, and luxury, the Georgia Trustees sought to create a new colony that would function as a haven for Britain's unemployed poor and would serve as a model of order, industry, and moral virtue for other colonies. In order to ensure the success of their goals, Georgia's founders banned slavery and placed limits upon the size of the land grants that each colonist would receive. Religion and morality were to play a prominent role in this new colony: the Georgia Trustees maintained that both were essential to establish good order as well as to ensure that the colonists' endeavors received God's blessing.

Although the creation of a colony with the express purpose of reforming the behavior and morals of the poor was new, the Trustees' Georgia Plan was the product of longstanding efforts in England and Western Europe to address the recurrent problems of poverty and unemployment, especially in cities and larger towns. Efforts to reform the

²⁰ *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII, 274.*

poor by providing them with the skills needed to make them self-sufficient and productive members of society date back at least to the sixteenth century, when European secular and church leaders shifted their poor relief efforts away from doling out money and physical supplies such as food and clothing to beggars. They increasingly devoted their efforts instead to identifying and assisting those “worthy poor” who were willing to work for a living and who avoided vices (such as drunkenness) that supposedly led to unemployment and poverty. Those who failed to live up to the authorities’ standards, by contrast, faced imprisonment or forced labor in workhouses.²¹ Yet despite the best efforts of reformers to assist those whom they viewed as deserving and to punish those whom they identified as undeserving, England and other Western European countries continued to face rampant poverty, unemployment, and overcrowding. In the view of Georgia’s founders, the problem was that England had insufficient work or resources to assist even those who were worthy of help. As a result, even hard working and moral citizens could easily find themselves in England’s prisons and workhouses, labeled as vagrants and troublemakers. In order to rectify this situation, Georgia’s founders proposed the creation of a colony where Britain’s poor might find plentiful employment along with the close supervision and guidance necessary to keep them productive as well as morally virtuous. Those chosen to settle in Georgia would receive land, farming tools, and material support. In exchange, they were expected to live orderly, industrious lives;

²¹ For more on the efforts of the church and state to reform the manners as well as the work habits of the poor in early modern Europe, see Natalie Zemon Davis, “Poor Relief, Humanism, and Heresy,” *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), 17-64; Paul A. Fideler, *Social Welfare in Pre-Industrial England: The Old Poor Law Tradition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Steve Hindle, *On the Parish?: The Micropolitics of Poor Relief in Rural England, c. 1550-1750* (New York: Clarendon Press of Oxford University Press, 2004); and R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550-1750* (London and New York: Routledge Press, 1989).

produce silk, grapes, and olives for export; protect the colony from hostile Indians and European powers; and follow the instructions of the colonial officials.

Georgia's officials envisioned themselves as the colonists' saviors and expected gratitude, or at the very least respect and deference, from those who benefited from their support. Yet, as the frequent official complaints about non-deferential behavior attest, such respect was not always forthcoming. This was in large part because a significant number of Georgia's inhabitants were dissatisfied with the ways in which the Trustees and their local representatives governed the colony. For many colonists, Georgia was anything but a heaven on earth: rather than the land of plenty that they had been promised, many found nothing but disease, despair, and continued poverty. Making matters worse, colonial officials often blamed the colonists themselves for Georgia's lack of success and refused to reevaluate their own policies. This prompted many colonists to conclude that the Trustees and their representatives cared little for the settlers' welfare and that they therefore could not be trusted to do what was in the best interests of the inhabitants. It is in this context that we must view the non-deferential behavior of female as well as male colonists, and the officials' complaints against them.

Although colonists of both sexes were criticized for failing to respect official authority and appreciate their paternalistic efforts, this is not to say that the officials' passionate disavowals of women whom they saw as overly assertive or argumentative were not gendered. Georgia's officials, like their counterparts in other regions of colonial America, saw a gender hierarchy in which men wielded authority over women as a prerequisite for good social order. This was because many people in the eighteenth century still believed that the family represented a microcosm of society as a whole and

that the hierarchical relationships between household members, especially between the husband and wife, translated to all other relationships in society. According to this model, a woman's submission to her husband or father within the family promoted social harmony by teaching all subordinates (male and female) to respect authority and fulfill their expected roles. By refusing to submit to their male superiors, officials believed, disobedient women threatened to undermine their already tenuous hold on Georgia's society as a whole.²²

Georgia's gendered hierarchy mandated that the colony's women defer to their husbands and male social superiors, but it did not limit them to a strictly submissive role in all contexts. As the examples at the beginning of this chapter attest, women in the colony frequently wielded informal as well as formal authority, and were often praised for their ability to carry out such responsibilities successfully. Previous studies of gender in early Georgia have often interpreted such roles as being contrary to the founders' intentions, but necessary due to unstable conditions on the southern frontier. Following the lead of scholars of early Virginia and South Carolina, these historians argue that high mortality rates, gender ratio imbalances, and labor shortages fundamentally disrupted traditional patriarchal gender ideals in the early southern colonies and forced women to assume roles ordinarily carried out by men.²³ In his recent study of women's economic,

²² For more on this familial social system, see Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996). She argues that the familial system was the dominant model in early colonial America, especially in seventeenth-century New England, but less so in the southern colonies. I would argue that this model is also appropriate for eighteenth-century Georgia, which shares as many characteristics with early New England as it does with other southern colonies.

²³ See, for instance, Cara Anzilotti, *In the Affairs of the World: Women, Patriarchy, and Power in Colonial South Carolina* (Westport: Greenwood, 2002). Other scholars who assert that demographic instabilities gave women unique opportunities to wield power in the early South, particularly in the seventeenth century, include Lois Green Carr, Lorena Walsh, and Marylynn Salmon. See Lois Green Carr

demographic, and social contributions to Georgia's development, Ben Marsh attributes the apparent abundance of women who assumed "extradomestic" roles to demographic instabilities on the colonial frontier. In his view, the colonists and Trustees alike viewed women's roles as largely separate from those of their male counterparts. Although he acknowledges that the Trustees' emphasis on a good work ethic meant that women were supposed to be industrious, he maintains that their contributions were intended to be domestic in nature.²⁴ According to this interpretation, the colony's officials were uncomfortable with women who wielded power, but were forced by necessity to allow it.

Demographic conditions undoubtedly played a role in providing Georgia's women with more opportunities to assume authoritative roles, but the premise that women wielding such positions went against the desires or expectations of the colonists and the officials who governed them is flawed on two levels. First of all, Georgia was in many ways very different from its colonial neighbors: it was founded in the eighteenth rather than seventeenth century; it featured much more balanced gender ratios; and the population was almost exclusively non-elite. These key differences make early Virginia and South Carolina poor models for understanding Georgia's gender ideology. Secondly, even if the colonies had been more similar, recent work has called into question the idea that elite planter culture was premised exclusively upon male domination of women and

and Lorena Walsh, "The Planter's Wife: The Experience of White Women in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (1977): 542-571; Marylynn Salmon, *Women and the Law of Property in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986). In *Beyond the Household: Women's Place in the Early South* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), Cynthia Kierner demonstrates that women in the South were never confined to a distinct private sphere and could even influence public discourse. Yet although women's lives were not as restricted under patriarchy in reality, ideology nevertheless favored the ideal of the private, domestic woman.

²⁴ Ben Marsh, *Georgia's Frontier Women: Female Fortunes in a Southern Colony* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2007), 36-39, 43, 124. Marsh defines extradomestic work as any "female activity that fell appreciably outside the boundaries of typical household maintenance."

other subordinates, and that instances of women wielding any measure of power were the exception rather than the rule. Linda Sturtz, in her study of female property holders in Virginia, shows that women played active parts in managing their families' economic resources well after demographic factors such as labor shortages, high mortality rates, and imbalanced gender ratios had been largely resolved. She attributes this continuity to broader ideals embedded within Anglo-American culture that encouraged wives to "[take] responsibility for their families' economic interactions in the wider world during their husbands' temporary absences."²⁵ In her recent study of widows in early America, Vivian Bruce Conger describes women assuming authoritative roles as a general phenomenon in the colonies and rejects the notion that women's access to the public sphere declined over time in the eighteenth century, even in the South. By comparing the lives of widows in Massachusetts, Maryland, and South Carolina, Conger demonstrates that, while there may have been slight regional variations, wielding authority was a normative experience for women in all parts of colonial America.²⁶

This dissertation contributes to scholarship that views Anglo-American gender roles as largely collaborative and thus offers a different explanation for women's ability to adopt authoritative roles in early Georgia. Although I do not deny that Georgia's magistrates and ministers objected to women who used their positions to disregard or even challenge official authority, I disagree with the notion that those officials were uncomfortable with all powerful or influential women. In my view, active and authoritative roles were not contrary to traditional gender ideals, but were an expected

²⁵ Linda L. Sturtz, *Within Her Power: Propertied Women in Colonial Virginia* (New York: Routledge Press, 2002), 6.

²⁶ Vivian Bruce Conger, *The Widows' Might: Widowhood and Gender in Early British America* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2009), 1-15.

and even praiseworthy element of a woman's obligations to her family. Within seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British and Western European culture there was a strong emphasis upon mutual collaboration between the sexes. The family was an interdependent locus of economic and social production, to which all members were expected to contribute.²⁷ Scholars of colonial New England have long maintained that the region's colonists imported a gender ethos that encouraged collaborative gender relations and invited women to assume authoritative roles. In her seminal work on womanhood in early New England, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich demonstrated that Puritan women were not restricted to acting within a set feminine or domestic sphere, but instead adopted a range of roles that gave them opportunities to exercise considerable authority. For example, if a woman's husband was for some reason unable to act as the head of the household through absence or illness, she could adopt that role. As "deputy husband," she became an authoritative figure in the community, acting and being treated as if she were a man.²⁸

²⁷ As historians Merry E. Wiesner and Olwen Hufton have shown, women in early modern Europe adopted a wide variety of roles – both inside and outside of the home – and often worked alongside their husbands and male relatives. And while some scholars previously assumed that this model of familial interdependence had largely disappeared by the mid-eighteenth century, in response to the rise of a capitalist system that supposedly took what was viewed as productive work out of the home, recent works have disproven this thesis. Industrialization did not produce distinctly separate spheres of public and private, as historians such as Hannah Barker have demonstrated. Throughout the eighteenth century, Barker shows, both sexes worked inside and outside of the home, and their day-to-day lives remained largely unchanged during the gradual process of industrialization. See Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe, Volume One 1500-1800* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 137-176; Merry Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 102-134; and Hannah Barker, "Women, work and the industrial revolution: female involvement in the English printing trades, c. 1700-1840," in *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities*, edited by Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London and New York: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1997), 81-84.

²⁸ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 8-9. Ulrich's detailed study on the life of midwife Martha Ballard reveals that such practices remained influential at least until the early decades of the nineteenth century. See Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

My work shows that colonial Georgia featured collaborative gender roles very similar to those found in New England and elsewhere in early America. In my view, instances of women in Georgia assuming authoritative roles and masculine-identified tasks reflect broader cultural patterns that favored flexible rather than rigid definitions of gender roles. Although colonists and officials throughout early America identified certain characteristics and behaviors as either masculine or feminine, these qualities and activities could be adopted by both sexes. Authority over others, for instance, was viewed as a masculine characteristic, yet household mistresses regularly wielded power over their servants. And although submission was seen as an inherently feminine characteristic, colonists of both sexes were expected to assume a subordinate role when interacting with their social superiors. Under this somewhat flexible gender ideology, authority was never the sole province of one sex over the other, and even those who wielded a significant degree of power or influence were not supposed to use their authority arbitrarily.²⁹ This was because authority in the eighteenth century entailed not only power over others, but the responsibility to look after the welfare of one's dependents. In theory at least, authority and deference were reciprocal concepts that involved responsibility on both sides. In exchange for protection and guidance from those with superior talents or resources, lower status colonists relinquished their own self-determination and deferred to the wills of their social betters. Masters, household heads, and government officials in turn had the obligation to fulfill their part of this social contract and govern in a way that would best serve the common good.

²⁹ See Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 8, 39; and Godbeer, "Performing Patriarchy," 290-333.

This notion of reciprocity meant that, in addition to being flexible in nature, gender roles were based on mutual obligation and interdependence as well as power and submission. As Lisa Wilson points out in the context of New England, “‘usefulness’ in the domestic realm defined an adult man.” In her analysis, patriarchy did not endorse unchecked male power, but encompassed a “system of obligation and duty” to the family.³⁰ In Georgia, I find a very similar model of masculinity. Men were expected to support their dependents to the best of their ability and always to make decisions that would benefit the family as a whole. Although they were obligated to act as their families’ governors, they were supposed to act as benevolent rulers, and those who failed to look out for the welfare of their dependents faced harsh criticism. In early Georgia, every member of the family was supposed to play his or her part in working for the benefit of the unit as a whole.

While such a collaborative, obligation-based gender ethos was common in many parts of early America, certain key features of the Georgia project shaped the colony’s

³⁰ Lisa Wilson, *Ye Heart of a Man: The Domestic Life of Men in Colonial New England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 2, 10. Anne Lombard similarly avoids approaching masculinity strictly in terms of power. In *Making Manhood*, she explores male homosociality, or the process by which young men were instructed by older men in the skills needed for successful independent manhood, including rational self-control, maturity, and responsibility. She argues that colonists in New England defined manhood in terms of a man’s ability to control his base urges, and as a result, viewed overt displays of masculine power negatively. Like Wilson, she describes patriarchy as encompassing a number of commitments that “entailed both an increased level of interdependence between family members and a heightened level of investment in the future economic as well as spiritual well-being of children.” See Lombard, *Making Manhood: Growing Up Male in Colonial New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 7. Although gender historians of the southern colonies still tend to focus upon the power-based conflict narrative of gender relations, a few scholars have begun to revise this interpretation. In his ground-breaking analysis of elite southern masculinity, Michal Rozbicki depicts the colonial patriarchy as a system of mutual obligation, rather than outright power. As plantation masters, elite southern men were supposed to act as gracious, benevolent patriarchs, a role that entailed looking after and providing for their dependents. According to this analysis, manhood depended on the patriarch’s ability to provide for and maintain the loyalty of his dependents. If a man were a true gentleman, his subordinates would willingly respect his authority. Within this system, at least theoretically, the duties owed to dependents tempered the patriarch’s power. See Michal Rozbicki, *The Complete Colonial Gentleman: Cultural Legitimacy in Plantation America* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 1998), 120.

gender ideals in crucial ways that set it apart from other settlements in the colonial South. The most visible difference was the value that Georgia's colonists and officials placed upon women performing physical labor, including fieldwork. While women in more established southern colonies never abandoned such labor altogether, scholars such as Kathleen Brown and Cynthia Kierner have shown that the ideological value of that work was undermined fundamentally by the slave system, particularly among the wealthiest colonists. Increasingly, a wife who did not have to engage in certain forms of labor became a status symbol within the plantation elite.³¹ In early Georgia, the physical labor of all white women continued to be valued, both in theory and in practice. In part, this difference was the result of the Trustees' efforts to promote hard work as a means of moral reform for all colonists, but it also reflected the social differences between Georgia and other southern colonies. In its first decades of existence, there was no plantation elite able to impose its values on the populace; Georgia's society was instead influenced by the values of non-elite colonists who generally expected all family members, including wives and daughters, to work in the fields or in the family business. This collaborative ethos was further bolstered by the spiritual agenda of Georgia's religious leaders, who often encouraged women as well as men to play active roles in promoting and encouraging religious virtue in their families.

The collaborative efforts of both sexes were thus necessary to ensure the economic and spiritual fulfillment of the Georgia plan. As part of this effort, women were allowed and even encouraged to assume any roles that would further their families' well-being. Yet as the negative official complaints against some authoritative women

³¹ See Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*, 115-121, 295-298 and Kierner, *Beyond the Household*, 16-17, 26, 34, 37.

reveal, there were limits to women's authority in Trustee Georgia. Context was the key determinant in whether or not a woman's behavior was viewed by others as a legitimate extension of her obligation to look after and provide for her family. Seeking legal redress on behalf of one's family, for instance, was acceptable; arguing against whatever decision those officials ultimately made was not. Ordinary colonists – female as well as male – were supposed to play active parts in ensuring the stability and success of the Georgia project. But they were never supposed to use their positions to challenge the authority of their social superiors, and especially their Trustee benefactors. In failing to submit to Georgia's officials, defiant colonists undermined the order and stability of the Georgia project, and were thus viewed as a great threat to the colony's success.

As the last of Britain's North American colonies to be settled, Georgia's history has often been neglected by scholars of Early America. Generally viewed as a largely undeveloped backwater founded merely four decades before the outbreak of the American Revolution, many have assumed that events in the colony had little impact on the rest of colonial America and that it is therefore an unworthy subject of study. Complicating matters is the fact that Georgia's unique foundation as a non-slave colony, intended to reform the "worthy poor" through physical labor and religious instruction, also makes it difficult to fit into the north-south binary often used to distinguish between the eighteenth-century colonies. Rather than reevaluate this narrative to incorporate a colony whose deviance lasted a mere twenty years before it transformed into a slaveholding settlement more similar to its colonial neighbors, many historians have been content to ignore Georgia's early history. This is (a big mistake and) a missed

opportunity. As a carefully planned social experiment, Georgia offers a unique opportunity to explore shifting ideals of gender, labor, and virtue in eighteenth-century Anglo-American culture. Georgia's founders and their supporters in the British government viewed the colony as an opportunity to correct the mistakes that they believed had been made in previous colonization efforts. In particular, they sought to maintain greater control over Georgia and thereby prevent the idleness, luxury, and disorder that supposedly resulted when colonies – especially slaveholding colonies – were left to their own devices. The decisions that they made in Georgia therefore offer a window into mid-eighteenth-century attitudes about colonization and reveal deep concerns about the emergence and growth of plantation societies in the British Empire.

Although Georgia's founders and supporters could not deny that colonies such as South Carolina were economically successful, they held significant reservations about the consequences of rapid social ascension among the colonists and their reliance on slave labor. They feared that affluence and exemption from strenuous labor might turn planters into indolent, lazy, and luxurious people who had no sense of larger obligations, including to the empire as a whole, and who acted solely to further their own interests. Such concerns fit into broader eighteenth-century anxieties about the emergence of an increasingly commercialized and market-oriented society, where individual desires supposedly outweighed a commitment to the common good. These concerns about luxury, laziness, and self-interest were also connected to larger apprehensions concerning Britain's national character. In contrast to their supposedly luxurious and aristocratic rivals in Spain and France, eighteenth-century Britons sought to promote an image of themselves as an active, industrious people whose productivity and rejection of frivolity

would eventually make them the most powerful as well as virtuous nation on earth.³² The colonization of Georgia was one part of a bigger plan to foster these virtues in poor people thought to be particularly vulnerable to idleness. The anticipated success of the plan would then serve as a model to others – in the colonies as well as in Britain – in promoting the benefits of avoiding a luxurious way of life.

Georgia's geo-political location heightened the importance of asserting Britain's active and industrious character. Situated on the very edge of Britain's North American Empire, Georgia's southern and western borders were perilously close to territory claimed by Britain's Spanish and French enemies, not to mention land occupied by hostile native tribes. One of Georgia's primary functions – other than to provide a haven for Britain's "worthy poor" – was to serve as a militarized buffer zone between the British colonies and their Spanish and French rivals in Florida and Louisiana. In this context, encouraging Georgia's inhabitants to follow an active, sober, productive way of life was not only a means of asserting British moral superiority, but also a necessary measure to ensure that the colonists (and especially the men) were prepared to defend themselves from military invasion. Because Georgia was the barrier keeping Spain and France at bay, its fate (and the success of the Georgia Plan) was a matter of great concern for Britain's other North American colonies. Initially, the Georgia Trustees and their allies sought to use colonial militias composed of ordinary settlers to defend their new

³² See Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009), 88, 167-169, 257-258. As Cynthia Kierner shows, British social critics described this contrast between their own industrious and active national character and the supposedly luxurious nature of their European rivals in explicitly gendered terms. While British culture emphasized a "vigorous masculinity," their French and Spanish rivals were described as "effeminate" and frivolous. Kierner utilizes this gendered nationalist rhetoric as a means of demonstrating that critiques of luxury and frivolity in America predated the American Revolution. See Kierner, *Beyond the Household*, 77. I discuss this rhetoric and the way in which it was similarly utilized to criticize plantation society in South Carolina in Chapter 1.

territory from potential threats. Over time, however, it became clear that the colony's defensive needs could not be handled by farmer-soldiers alone, who often struggled to balance the different requirements of their dual roles, and so required instead the presence of a permanent military regiment. Yet despite the arrival of professional soldiers in 1737, military concerns continued to influence Trustee policies and played a part in the everyday lives of many Georgians.³³

Georgia's unique characteristics, including its defensive purpose as well as its foundation as a non-slave colony designed to reform the morals and work habits of England's "worthy poor," make it an ideal location to reconsider the distinctions between the northern and southern colonies in this period. In many ways, Georgia's initial colonization more closely mirrored the settlement patterns found in seventeenth-century New England. In both early New England and Georgia, for instance, the settlers arrived in family groups and settled in or near towns. The value that the Georgia Trustees placed upon religion and moral virtue in their colony also correlates strongly with settlement patterns associated with New England, and serves to challenge ideas about the place of religion in the colonial South. In more established southern colonies religion has often been downplayed or portrayed as a tool utilized by the plantation elite to reinforce their hold over the social hierarchy.³⁴ In Georgia, religion was an essential component of the founders' settlement plan that encouraged all colonists to play active roles in encouraging order and virtue in their communities.

³³ For more information on colonial Georgia's militias, see Larry E. Ivers, *British Drums on the Southern Frontier: The Military Colonization of Georgia, 1733-1749* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1974) and James M. Johnson, *Militiamen, Rangers, and Redcoats: The Military in Georgia, 1754-1776* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1992).

³⁴ See, for instance, Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 58-70.

The specific kinds of records left by Georgia's Trustee government likewise set Georgia apart from other parts of the early South and offer valuable insight into the lives of non-elite southerners. Because of their interest in regulating and reforming the behavior of ordinary settlers, Georgia's officials spent much of their time observing and recording those settlers' everyday activities. Although such sources are potentially biased, since they present official interpretations of the colonists' behavior, they nevertheless offer detailed descriptions of non-elite life and provide access to the experiences and voices of people who are otherwise silent in the historical records, particularly in the early South. By focusing upon the values of non-elite whites, my study illuminates the existence of a gender order very different from the more power-based models that historians have described among the southern elite.³⁵ Although Georgia's officials and colonists certainly favored a gender hierarchy that, in most instances, placed men above women, this patriarchal order was tempered by an emphasis upon mutual obligation and respect. Without slave labor, the physical work of all family members was necessary to establish and maintain successful farms and businesses. And because the Trustees and their supporters associated hard work with moral reform, there was little or no stigma attached to either sex performing even the most strenuous labor. Men and women also worked collaboratively to encourage religious virtue in their families. Although not all of Georgia's colonists agreed with official efforts to promote labor and moral reform, most shared in the view that mutual collaboration between the sexes was essential to the colony's success.

³⁵ Influential works describing a power-based gender ethos among the southern elite include Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs* and Kenneth Lockridge, *On the Sources of Patriarchal Rage* (New York: New York University Press, 1992).

Georgia's settlement presents historians with an opportunity to rethink divisions between northern and southern British America in a period when it is often assumed that the two regions were utterly distinct. The patterns that would later come to characterize the South as a region – including the social and cultural dominance of a planter elite and an economic dependence upon slave labor – were not yet a foregone conclusion, and there was still much flexibility in colonial settlement and development.³⁶ By studying interrelated conceptions of gender, labor, and virtue in early Georgia, my work connects the Trustees' Georgia project to broader trends and developments in eighteenth-century America, complicating long-held ideas about southern society in this period.

This study draws on a variety of sources, including family papers, religious records, promotional literature, letters, journals, government documents, court records, wills, newspapers, and land grants. Perhaps the most valuable records for the Trustee era were those left by the colony's government officials. William Stephens' journals and reports are particularly noteworthy. Arriving in Georgia in 1737 as the Trustees' Recorder, it was Stephens' job to record the daily events that occurred in the colony and send his reports to the Trustees. His hard work and loyalty eventually prompted the

³⁶ There are parallels between Georgia's potential to challenge north-south dichotomies and the seventeenth-century settlement of Providence Island, a Caribbean colony settled by Puritans and funded by the same financial backers as the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Karen Kupperman's study of this settlement challenges the notion that Puritans were fundamentally different from the colonists who settled in the southern regions of Britain's North American holdings by showing that the Puritans of Providence Island, as well as their financiers in England and New England, were heavily involved in slaveowning and privateering; yet most Providence settlers did not interpret either as antithetical to their religious values. I see Georgia as another region with the potential to challenge overdrawn distinctions between north and south in the colonial period. But whereas Kupperman utilizes economic and political developments to undermine divisions between the two regions, I explore the ways in which cultural attitudes towards gender, labor, and virtue in Georgia challenge long-held ideas about the Lower South. See Karen Kupperman, *Providence Island, 1630-1641: The Other Puritan Colony* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Trustees to promote him to the position of President, the highest office in the local colonial government, but even after his promotion, Stephens continued to record his daily interactions with the colony's inhabitants. During his tenure as Savannah's first bailiff (court judge), Thomas Causton likewise kept detailed records of his interactions with other colonists, including the court cases that he oversaw. Other official records supplement these personal accounts, including the proceedings of the colony's president and assistants, government land records, and court documents.

Records left behind by Georgia's ministers provide similarly detailed insight into the spiritual life of the colony's inhabitants. The copious reports provided by the Reverend Johann Martin Boltzius of Ebenezer are particularly useful for exploring the moral values of the colony's leaders as well as the ways in which those ideals diverged from colonial reality. At first glance, the leader of an enclave of German-speaking immigrants might seem like an odd source of information about life in Trustee Georgia as a whole, but Ebenezer was never isolated from the rest of the colony, and the Trustees often promoted the Salzburgers as the ideal colonists. Boltzius kept in constant contact with English officials in Savannah as well as in London. His journals offer invaluable insights into the lives of those colonists who most fit the Trustees' ideal of hardworking Christian settlers. The letters and diaries left by some of the colony's other ministers, including John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield, provide additional insight into the colony's religious culture and show the ways in which ordinary colonists' religious and moral values clashed with those of their ministers.

Direct personal accounts detailing the experiences of ordinary colonists are much harder to come by, in large part because a significant proportion of the colony's populace

was illiterate. The few sources that have survived are primarily letters and petitions written to Trust officials in England. Of particular note are the pamphlets and petitions composed by a group of disgruntled, relatively affluent (and therefore literate) colonists, known as the Malcontents. Yet although the relative scarcity of direct sources on Georgia's non-elite population makes it difficult to access the attitudes and experiences of ordinary Georgians, this does not mean that such an endeavor is impossible. Although the majority of the primary records on colonial Georgia come from official sources, a close reading of the interactions they detail between officials and colonists can reveal much about both parties. Clerical records and judicial proceedings often recorded the statements and actions of the colonists. The conflicts or disjunctions revealed by these sources help to illuminate official expectations, as well as alternate attitudes held by some colonists. When utilized in combination with the available direct accounts left by Georgia's inhabitants, these records make it possible to reconstruct, albeit tentatively, the behavior and beliefs of ordinary colonists.

Similar techniques of extrapolation are required to explore Georgia's royal and revolutionary eras. Because Georgia's later governments were much less interested in recording the everyday lives and concerns of their colonists, it is much more difficult to gain an understanding of issues of gender, labor, order, and virtue in this period. Yet surviving church records, family papers, colonists' journals, newspaper advertisements, and land records have allowed me to trace how Georgia's founding ideals changed over time.

This study consists of six chapters. The first utilizes promotional literature to explore the origins and key tenets of the Trustees' Georgia plan, focusing in particular upon their goal to create a haven for England's "worthy poor" based upon principles of industry, morality, and order. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how the successful implementation of the Trustees' plan to create a stable, virtuous, and industrious society in Georgia hinged upon the establishment of stable families and collaborative relations between the sexes. Chapter two explores the ways in which the expectations of the Trustees, in combination with the traditional values held by the colony's non-elite populace, shaped a largely collaborative gender ethos in which both sexes were obliged to contribute to the family's economic as well as spiritual growth.

Unfortunately for the Trustees, their plan for an orderly, industrious, moral colony did not always work out "on the ground" in the ways that they intended. The third chapter explores the factors that hindered the complete enactment of the Georgia plan, including demographic conditions as well as alternate attitudes about labor and morality. Chapter four looks at official complaints against colonists who failed to fulfill their familial obligations. It concludes that ministers, magistrates, and ordinary colonists alike held men and women equally accountable for violating their duties within the family and viewed such familial disorder as a threat to the social stability of the colony as a whole. Although they envisaged a clear gender hierarchy, they also saw marriage as ideally a partnership focused on mutual responsibility, not just power. The fifth chapter utilizes detailed case studies of male and female colonists who defied official authority to examine the authorities' attitudes towards non-deferential behavior. The fact that officials often described male and female colonists who challenged them in nearly

identical terms indicates that gender was not the only factor at play, and that broader official anxieties about status and the cultural failings of the laboring poor also played major parts in shaping the magistrates' attitudes. But this is not to say that the issues were not gendered. In Georgia, every colonist was supposed to assume the subordinate, or feminine, position when interacting with Trust officials. By not cooperating, such colonists – male and female – in effect became disorderly women and assumed the characteristics which that role entailed. Gender was thus a significant component of hierarchical order, but not an autonomous or distinct issue.

The final chapter analyzes how already contested ideas about gender, hierarchy, labor and virtue in Georgia developed during the second half of the eighteenth century, focusing especially on the introduction of slavery in 1751, the collapse of the Trustee government in 1752, the arrival of royal officials, and the impact of the American Revolution. This chapter demonstrates that although ideas about collaborative gender relations, industry, and moral virtue did not always survive in the same forms as when the Trustees held power, these values continued to be very influential throughout the eighteenth century.

The creation of Georgia was in many ways an ambitious as well as unique undertaking. It was the only British colony in which slavery was banned; it was also the only settlement developed specifically as a haven for Britain's unemployed poor. This foundation, combined with the cultural values favored by the settlement's predominantly non-elite inhabitants, fundamentally shaped ideals of gender, labor, and virtue in ways that further set Georgia apart from more established southern colonies. It is to this unique Georgia Plan that we now turn our attention.

Chapter 1 – The Georgia Plan: An Eighteenth-Century Experiment in Social Engineering

On April 21, 1732, King George II of England signed the charter to create a new colony south of the Savannah River. In many ways, Georgia's settlement represented a marked departure from the patterns that characterized the colonization of Britain's other American colonies, and especially other southern colonies. Georgia's founders envisioned their settlement not as a constellation of plantations dominated by a slaveholding elite, but instead as a refuge for England's "worthy poor," men and women able and willing to work but unable to find employment in the mother country.³⁷ In order to prevent the idleness and immorality that the founders associated with neighboring plantation societies, they outlawed slavery, banned the sale and consumption of rum, and granted colonists only as much land as they and their families could "improve" with their own labor. And because the Trustees believed that moral settlers would also be the most industrious and orderly, they sent ministers to instruct the people in religion and virtuous behavior. This founding vision required Georgia's authorities to wield (at least in theory) an unusual degree of authority over their colonists' day-to-day lives, particularly in a period in which most colonies were left to govern themselves with little outside interference. But Georgia's founders were not content to leave their colony to what they saw as the perils of self-government. They believed that the success of their goal to reform the habits and morals of Britain's "worthy poor" depended fundamentally upon

³⁷ Contrary to popular belief, Georgia was not established as a colony for prisoners and debtors. Very few of the colonists came directly from debtor's prisons. The Trustees were in fact very selective when choosing the "worthy poor" who would settle their colony. They carefully screened applicants who went on charity, and denied passage to those who did not meet their moral expectations. Once in the colony, a settler had to prove that he or she was both industrious and virtuous in order to receive a land grant. See for instance, *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. I*, 292, 404-405; *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VI*, 4-5, 12-14, 17, 34, 50 74, 219, 230, 234, 239-240, 241.

their ability to control and guide the populace, and they put strict regulations in place to enforce their agenda.

The man primarily responsible for Georgia's creation was James Edward Oglethorpe, an English politician, military officer, and philanthropist who sought to find a viable and humane solution to the rampant unemployment and poverty in England's urban centers. The youngest child of a family well known for their staunch support of the deposed James II of England, Oglethorpe nevertheless managed to gain a seat in Parliament in 1722. Perhaps anxious to rehabilitate his family's name, Oglethorpe soon gained a reputation as a hardworking young man devoted to solving Britain's social and economic problems. His early interests included prison reform and defending the rights of naval sailors. Eventually, he turned his attention to reforming and rehabilitating the country's urban poor.³⁸ His solution for dealing with Britain's unemployed and impoverished citizens was to create a new colony, where those who had fallen on hard circumstances would find a new life and a new start, and become productive members of the British Empire. In 1729, he organized a group of similarly reform-minded Parliament members to assist him in fulfilling his goals. By 1732 this group became known as the Trustees for the Establishment of the Colony of Georgia in America, or the Georgia Trustees. Among the ranks of the Georgia Trustees were ministers such Richard Bundy and John Burton; philanthropists, including Thomas Coram, the creator of London's Foundling Hospital; physicians such as Stephen Hales, an anti-alcohol activist and the inventor of surgical forceps; politicians, including George Heathcote, member of

³⁸ Phinizy Spalding, "James Edward Oglethorpe's Quest for an American Zion," *Forty Years of Diversity: Essays on Colonial Georgia*, edited by Harvey H. Jackson and Phinizy Spalding (Athens: The University of Georgia Press), 60-79.

Parliament and Lord Mayor of London; and noblemen such as the Earl of Egmont and the Earl of Shaftesbury. A total of seventy-one men served as Trustees over the Trust's twenty years of existence. A smaller group of active Trustees, known as the Common Council, met more frequently than the full board, and made most of the practical, everyday decisions concerning the colony's development and government. The Trustees were led by a rotating president appointed from among their number, whose term lasted from one meeting until the next. Decisions were made democratically and required a majority to be passed.³⁹

In the early 1730s, Oglethorpe and the other Georgia Trustees began formulating their plan to create a colony with the express purpose of providing steady work for England's unemployed poor. Religion and morality were to play a prominent role in this plan, in part because the Trustees believed that moral reformation was needed to help the colonists to avoid the sins of idleness and luxury that had allegedly infected other parts of colonial America. The settlement of this new colony, in addition to providing a haven for the unemployed poor, would also benefit Britain by solidifying the English presence on the southern frontier and serving as a military buffer zone protecting British interests from hostile natives and other European powers, particularly the Spanish. Georgia and its inhabitants would also further the economic interests of the empire by producing valuable raw resources that were otherwise difficult to obtain in the mother country.

³⁹ Kenneth Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), 89.

Because of Georgia's southern latitude, promoters argued, it would be the perfect site to produce exotic goods such as silk fiber, olives, and grapes.⁴⁰

Previous studies of Georgia's settlement have often downplayed its role as a religious-based reform colony. While these scholars typically at least mention the Trustees' reform goals, they either focus more on the colony's defensive and economic purposes or claim that their reform efforts were primarily secular in nature.⁴¹ Yet as this chapter will show, Georgia's function as a site of economic and moral rehabilitation was at the heart of the Georgia Plan, and these efforts were often explicitly religious in nature. In many ways, the Trustees viewed their economic, military, and reform goals as complementary. They believed that moral and hardworking colonists would also make the best soldiers, farmers, and craftsmen. The colonists' farm work, for instance, would help them to avoid the dangers of idleness as well as provide the agricultural commodities needed to strengthen Britain's trading position. Farmers with families would also be more willing to fight to protect the colony in the event of a military attack. Unlike professional soldiers or hired mercenaries, such men had a personal stake in defending the colony. Religious instruction would reinforce these economic and

⁴⁰ *Some Account of the Designs of the Trustees for establishing the Colony of Georgia in America*, reprinted in *The Most Delightful Country of the Universe: Promotional Literature of the Colony of Georgia, 1717-1734*, introduction by Trevor R. Reese (Savannah, GA: The Beehive Press, 1972), 71-72.

⁴¹ In their introduction to Kenneth Coleman's *Colonial Georgia: A History*, editors Milton M. Klein and Jacob E. Cook claim that life in Trustee Georgia was "dominated less by philanthropic strivings than by practical efforts at defense, the improvement of Indian relations, the promotion of the fur trade, and experiments in silk production and viticulture." However, Coleman himself takes a much more balanced approach, arguing that the Trustees viewed the colony's defense and reform imperatives in an equal light. In his analysis, it was their economic goals that they most often neglected. See Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History*. See also Coleman, "The Founding of Georgia," in *Forty Years of Diversity: Essays on Colonial Georgia*, 4-20. In his recent dissertation, Andrew Lannen promotes a cynical interpretation of the Trustees' reform efforts as a means of increasing their own power and influence in England. See Lannen, "Liberty and Authority in Colonial Georgia, 1717-1776" (PhD Dissertation, Louisiana State University, 2002). Phinzy Spaulding places the Trustees' reform efforts front and center in his work, but he asserts that their charity goals were not primarily motivated by religion. See Spaulding, "James Edward Oglethorpe's Quest for an American Zion," 60-79.

defensive goals by teaching the colonists that it was God's will for them to work hard and defend the colony (as well as Protestant Christendom as a whole) from the Catholic Spanish threat. Establishing strong religious values in Georgia would also promote order by teaching the colonists the importance of submission to higher authorities who had been (presumably) appointed by God. By maintaining good order in society, which entailed encouraging every colonist to fulfill the responsibilities and expectations associated with his or her station, the Trustees assured the success of their economic, defensive, and spiritual goals.

The Trustees' interrelated reform, economic, and defense goals, in combination with the values held by the colony's predominantly non-elite inhabitants, had important implications for gender relations in early Georgia. No one was exempt from hard work and all were supposed to do their parts to ensure that the colony remained productive, moral, orderly, and safe. Georgia, like anywhere else in colonial America, featured a distinct social hierarchy in which men wielded authority over women of equal or lesser status, and social superiors held power over their inferiors and dependents; yet within this hierarchy there were significant opportunities for nearly all members of the community to adopt a range of authoritative as well as submissive roles, according to different contexts. And because the Trustees and their local representatives viewed the colony as an interconnected community where all were supposed to work for the benefit of the common good, even those who held power over others were ultimately supposed to use their authority to benefit their dependents. These factors fostered a largely collaborative gender ethos in early Georgia in which men and women, and indeed all members of society, were envisioned as interdependent actors whose contributions, be they great or

small, were essential to the colony's success. Similar gender ideals could be found in many parts of early America, yet the particular circumstances of Georgia's foundation, including the non-elite status of the majority of the colonists, bolstered this collaborative ethos. The Trustees' founding goals and expectations are key to understanding gender ideology in early Georgia; it is imperative, therefore, to begin any analysis of gendered roles and relationships in the colony with a detailed review of the Trustees' Georgia Plan. This chapter provides an outline of the origins and design of this plan, focusing in particular on the Trustees' intention to create a uniquely orderly, virtuous, and industrious colony. It concludes with a discussion of how the implementation of these three imperatives hinged upon the establishment of stable families as well as the encouragement of collaborative relations between the sexes.

Georgia's role as a reform colony had its roots in broader eighteenth-century English reform movements.⁴² Essentially, the colony represented one attempt among many to resolve what was perceived as one of England's most pressing problems in the eighteenth century: how to deal with the country's overcrowded and unemployed urban population. Over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a significant number of England's rural workers abandoned agricultural labor in the country to seek employment in larger towns and cities. One cause of this migration was a decline in the ability of wage-earning farm laborers to make a good living in the countryside. Although the living conditions of the most prosperous landowning farmers actually improved in the

⁴² For more on Georgia as an eighteenth-century philanthropic endeavor, see Milton L. Ready, "Philanthropy and the Origins of Georgia," in *Forty Years of Diversity: Essays on Colonial Georgia*, 46-59. In a recent essay, James O'Neil Spady discusses how the Trustees' Georgia Plan fit into larger eighteenth-century reform movements and education initiatives. See Spady, "Bubbles and Beggars and the Bodies of Laborers."

eighteenth century, their less successful brethren were not so lucky. While landholders had once offered farm laborers annual contracts and provided them with food, shelter, and other necessary goods during their tenure, this was no longer the case by the late seventeenth century. Increasingly, wealthy farmers resorted to hiring piece-meal workers only during the most labor-intensive times – such as during the harvest season – which often left even the most industrious farm hands out of work for months at a time. The growing trend of landowners enclosing land that had formerly been available for public use further added to the problem by eliminating the ability of agricultural workers to keep livestock or acquire additional food by collecting wild fruit and vegetables or hunting game. Rather than starve in the countryside, many of these former farm laborers decided to move into towns and cities to find better paying jobs. Eventually the number of people in these cities and towns came to outnumber the available jobs, which drove down wages and left many people unemployed or unable to support themselves with whatever jobs they did manage to find. Not surprisingly, this situation left many with no choice but to depend on public charity for support or turn to criminal activities such as theft to get by.⁴³

Contemporary interpretations of the unemployment and crime in England's urban centers and potential solutions varied a great deal. Some took the harsh point of view that most of the poor themselves were to blame for their misfortunes. Because of supposed moral defects, such as laziness and a propensity for vices such as gambling and drinking, some suggested, the poor would never improve their situations unless they were disciplined and punished for their bad behavior. Such thinking led to strict laws that sent debtors to prisons and workhouses, and placed restrictions on the kinds of people that

⁴³ Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), 108-112.

could receive poor relief. The Georgia Trustees and their supporters promoted a different interpretation. While they certainly argued that the plight of some of the poor could be blamed upon idleness and immoral behavior, they maintained that many had reached such circumstances through no fault of their own, and therefore deserved to be treated mercifully by those more fortunate than themselves. In a newspaper appeal for contributions to the Georgia Project in 1732, for example, an anonymous author (most likely James Oglethorpe) asserted that many of England's unemployed poor did not deserve their sad state. "[T]hese are at least Fellow-Creatures," he wrote, "if not Christian Brethren, *for whom we believe Christ died*. And tho' some may be brought into these Circumstances by Vices, yet many are so by their Folly, many by inevitable Misfortunes, and many even by a strict Adherence to Virtue." This last group, the author explained, were perhaps the most sympathetic, because they were reduced to poverty in the act of helping their children, parents, siblings, or neighbors. They spent their savings to prevent their debtor relations from going to prison, for instance, or gave all they had to support their poverty-stricken children. According to the author of the appeal, similar misfortunes occurred all across the country. "The Unfortunate, fallen from better Circumstances into extreme Want, are very numerous," he wrote. "Stocks, Trade, Law-Suits, ... Fires, Servants, ... and other numberless Accidents, reduce good Families from flourishing, into miserable Circumstances." The precarious economic position of many of the urban poor, the author argued, was exacerbated by the lack of available jobs in the cities they lived in. "Numberless are the lower Sort of People who, drawn to *London* by

the Hopes of high Wages, cannot get Employment; each Trade is so over-stock'd, that Masterly Hands only can earn Bread.”⁴⁴

The result, the author lamented, was often starvation, sickness, a life of crime, prison, death, or a combination of these fates. “How generous and Christian an Action would it be,” he inquired, “to preserve such Multitudes?” The solution to England’s great problem of poverty and unemployment, he suggested, was to send able-bodied and otherwise virtuous men and women to a new colony, where they might find ready employment. As the author explained to the readers of the *London Journal*, “[The Georgia] Trustees ... intend to save these wretched People, and give them once again an Opportunity of using their Industry, once again a Chance of living comfortably.... [They] intend to employ the Money collected to relieve the Prisoner, to give Bread to the Hungry, Clothes to the Naked, Liberty of Religion to the Oppressed for Conscience sake; to rescue deluded Youth, or helpless Orphans, from the Temptations Want or idle Company may expose them to.”⁴⁵

James Oglethorpe made a similar argument in another, more detailed promotional tract. In *A New and Accurate Account of the Provinces of South Carolina and Georgia*, he explained that “various Misfortunes may reduce the Rich, the Industrious, to the Danger of a Prison, to a moral Certainty of Starving!”⁴⁶ And despite their efforts to improve their situations by “descend[ing] to mean Employments” such as “keep[ing] Ale-houses, or Coffee-houses, [or] sell[ing] Fruit, or clean[ing] Shoes for an honest

⁴⁴ “Appeal for the Georgia Colony,” in *The Publications of James Edward Oglethorpe*, edited by Rodney M. Baine (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1994), 163.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 164-165.

⁴⁶ James Edward Oglethorpe, *A New and Accurate Account of the Provinces of South Carolina and Georgia*, in *The Publications of James Edward Oglethorpe*, 219.

Livelihood,” they often found such occupations “overstock’d already by People who know better how to follow them, than do they whom we have been talking of.”⁴⁷ Again, the solution to this overabundance of laborers in England’s cities was to send them to Georgia, where jobs were plentiful. Granted, most of that work was agricultural in nature and thus very different from the kinds of jobs that England’s urban poor were used to performing, but Oglethorpe asserted that the fertility of Georgia’s soil would compensate for the colonists’ lack of agricultural knowledge. “[The] Land [in Georgia] is so fertile,” he maintained, “that [the colonists] [would] receive an Hundred Fold increase for taking very little Pains.”⁴⁸

While Georgia’s promoters often emphasized the negative effects of unemployment and misfortune, they, like many of their contemporaries, were also quick to blame idleness and luxury for the plight of England’s poor. However, while some critics focused on individual moral failings among the poor, the Trustees saw luxury as a vice infecting English society as a whole. In their view, the eighteenth century was an era of luxury and extravagance that threatened to destroy the traditional social order. No one, from nobleman to pauper, was immune to the seductive temptations of luxury. According to one Trustee pamphlet, the English elite should shoulder a significant amount of blame for spreading their own vices to the lower classes, particularly by hiring

⁴⁷ Ibid., 219.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 220. Although Oglethorpe and the Trustees’ preference for sending urban craftsmen and laborers to Georgia might seem unusual, they were actually under significant public pressure *not* to send husbandmen, who were still viewed as important contributors to the English economy. Promotional literature for Georgia indicates that some members of the British public feared that the Trustees were sending farm laborers to Georgia, and thus draining the country of its valued agricultural workers. In order to counter this belief, the Trustees publicly emphasized their preference for sending unemployed urban craftsmen to Georgia, rather than any “useful” laborers who might still find plentiful work in England. See for instance, Benjamin Martyn, *Reasons for Establishing the Colony of Georgia*, in *The Most Delightful Country of the Universe*, 18-25.

more and more of them as servants. While the wealthiest had always kept domestic staff, some social commentators believed that the demand for servants had increased in the eighteenth century. This was a problem not only because it indicated that England's elite were becoming even more extravagant, but also because it drew former agricultural laborers away from their supposedly more honest work in the country. As William Penn explained in a treatise on colonial settlement, which the Trustees later reprinted in one of their own promotional tracts, the high demand for domestic staff "hinder[ed] the Plough and Dairy from whence they [were] taken, and instead of keeping People to manly Labour, they [were] effeminated by a lazy and Luxurious Living."⁴⁹ The Trustees believed that the colony of Georgia – and England as a whole – would be best served if all of its citizens devoted themselves to "manly," or active labor or industry, and not fall into the trap of "effeminate" luxury and idleness, which would be a detriment to the empire. The gendered characteristics referred to here did not only apply to their corresponding biological sex; men as well as women could be either active (masculine) or idle (effeminate). Farmers and milkmaids, for instance, fell into the category of "manly," active workers, while butlers and ladies' maids would be viewed as frivolous employees who did little to promote the common good. The goal was for the nation as a whole, regardless of sex, to become active and productive, rather than lazy and luxurious.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ William Penn, *The Benefit of Plantations, or Colonies.*, reprinted in *Select Tracts Relating to Colonies*, in *The Most Delightful Country in the Universe*, 102.

⁵⁰ Such rhetoric had explicitly nationalist connotations, since British political philosophers already linked idleness and luxury (and therefore effeminacy) with their rivals in Spain and France. Fearing that their own colonies were succumbing to the same faults that characterized their enemies, British reformers promoted a return to more "manly" active labor and industry. See Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, 88, 167-169, 257-258.

Unfortunately, the Trustees believed, many people in England had already been exposed to the luxury and idleness that they feared might endanger the welfare of the entire country. The “Luxury of the Age,” one pamphlet claimed, had “spread like an Infection thro’ all Parts of the Kingdom ... by making the People unwilling or unable to live on their small Wages in the Country.” In other words, people who were formerly content to live simple lives in the country now sought to live lives of extravagance; they supposedly used their wages not to buy the necessities of life, but to purchase fashionable clothing and other accoutrements of prosperity. Those unable to maintain such a way of life often “[came] up to *London* to improve their Fortunes,” and soon over-crowded the city’s labor market for craftsmen and domestic servants. And even when these unemployed urban dwellers sought assistance from various charitable organizations, Georgia’s promoters argued, the help they received only exacerbated the problem. Donations of money might provide temporary relief, but ultimately “[served] only to encourage and confirm [a poor person] in a Habit of Idleness.”⁵¹ The charity schools, which were supposed to help the poor learn useful skills, reportedly focused more on reading and writing than on practical knowledge, “[set their students] above the ordinary Business of Life,” and made them unwilling to perform their traditional work in the countryside.⁵²

The Georgia Plan was intended to serve as a different kind of assistance from either the workhouses or the charity schools, one that would “procure not only immediate

⁵¹ Martyn, *Reasons for Establishing the Colony of Georgia*, 27.

⁵² Ibid., 18. For a detailed analysis of colonial Georgia’s connections to larger eighteenth-century moral reformation and education movements, see James O’Neil Spady, “‘Like the Spider from the Rose:’ Colonial Knowledge Competition and the Origins of Non-Elite Education in Georgia and South Carolina, 1700s-1820s” (PhD diss., The College of William and Mary, 2006). See also Spady, “Bubbles and Beggars and the Bodies of Laborers.”

Relief for the Unfortunate, but provide for their future Happiness and Use.”⁵³ The Trustees believed that they had to find a middle ground between forcing people to work, and giving them free reign over their own lives and labor. “To force them to [work],” one promotional pamphlet explained, would be “impracticable; to suppose they will voluntarily do it ... is unlikely.”⁵⁴ The best way to encourage industry and reform the poor, Georgia’s founders believed, was to give the colonists incentives to work hard – including free land and the tools and practical knowledge needed to farm it. They also maintained that it was of the utmost importance to put regulations in place that would “best conduce to the promoting Religion, the Preservation of Peace, the Order of Government, and the Encouragement of Industry and Virtue among them.”⁵⁵

The Georgia Trustees’ plan to solve England’s economic and social problems by reforming the behavior and morals of the poor was greatly influenced by the ideals promoted by other eighteenth-century charitable organizations, and particularly the Associates of Dr. Bray. Thomas Bray was a prominent Anglican minister known for his charitable work. He was especially interested in bringing religion to African slaves as well as to the natives of the New World, founding religious libraries, reforming the morals of the lower classes, and improving prison conditions. His ideas provided the foundation for several prominent religious charitable organizations in the eighteenth century, including the aforementioned Associates of Dr. Bray, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Two of Georgia’s most influential founders, James Oglethorpe and John Percival, had

⁵³ Martyn, *Reasons for Establishing the Colony of Georgia*, 27.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

very close ties to Bray and his reform organizations. John Percival, the future Earl of Egmont and President of the Trustees, was a founding member of Bray's Associates and played an active role in both organizations. Oglethorpe was also a member of the Associates of Dr. Bray, and even after the Georgia Trusteeship parted ways with the Associates, he remained committed to both groups.

It is unclear when Oglethorpe first encountered Bray and his ideas, but it is likely that their mutual interest in prison reform was what initially drew the men together. During his time in the House of Commons, Oglethorpe was a vocal proponent of prison reform, and in February 1729, he made a motion to form a committee to investigate prison conditions in the realm. Eventually, this committee determined that the best course of action to deal with the overcrowded and unhealthy prisons was to release over a thousand imprisoned debtors and resettle them in the American colonies.⁵⁶ Oglethorpe soon began to argue for the creation of a new colony for the express purpose of helping England's poor. Unfortunately, he lacked the money to establish his colony, a problem seemingly solved several months later, when he received a significant monetary reward for representing two men in a legal dispute. When Oglethorpe won the case, the grateful men donated £5,000 to his colonial venture, but stipulated that only a pre-existing charitable organization had the right to handle the funds. It was this condition that brought Oglethorpe into direct contact with Bray and his associates.

Oglethorpe and his allies in Parliament soon became members of the Associates, and in the process expanded the scope of the organization's membership and mission,

⁵⁶ John C. Van Horne, Introduction, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: The American Correspondence of the Associates of Dr. Bray, 1717-1777* (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 9.

also bringing in some much-needed additional funding.⁵⁷ From 1730 until 1733, the Associates (a portion of whom would later become the first Georgia Trustees) devoted most of their time and attention to the creation of this new colony. A committee formed from Bray's Associates drafted the colony's charter and then worked tirelessly to seek its approval, first by the Privy Council, and then by the king. After the charter was approved, the larger body of Associates devoted their time to recruiting colonists and raising funds.

The formal alliance between the Georgia Trustees and the Associates of Dr. Bray was short-lived. As interest in Georgia grew, and the administrative duties involved in running a new colony became more complex, Georgia's founders invited more men to join their ranks. Since many of the new members were not members of Bray's society, it made more sense for the Trust to conduct business separately from the Associates of Dr. Bray. An additional factor prompting the Trustees to seek independence from the Associates was the fact that Parliament was willing to provide them with financial support, making them no longer dependent upon their relationship with the association for funding. The Associates now refocused on their original mission of converting Indians and African slaves, sending missionaries to America, and establishing religious libraries. Yet despite their separation, the Georgia Trustees and the Associates of Dr. Bray remained close: several prominent Georgia Trustees – including Oglethorpe –

⁵⁷ Ibid., 10-11. Oglethorpe may not have been the first person to suggest that the Associates of Dr. Bray turn their attention to establishing new colonies. In his introduction, Van Horne shows that at least one member of the Associates later claimed that, before Oglethorpe's inclusion into the group, Bray was already interested in establishing a new colony for the poor in America.

continued to play active roles in the association and the Associates remained interested in events in the new colony, even establishing a library in Savannah in 1736.⁵⁸

Once Georgia's creation was assured, the Trustees had to turn their attention to the practical tasks associated with founding a new colony. Their first order of business was to set up a government. Early on, the Trustees decided that Georgia would not be run by a centralized governor, but instead put power into the hands of a number of individual officials – including storekeepers, clergymen, naval officers, surveyors, and court officials – each of whom would report to the Trustees directly. Many of these early officials were recruited from among the ranks of ordinary colonists for their particular skills or loyalty.⁵⁹ This decentralized structure was intended, in part, to preserve the Trustees' power over the way in which their colony was run. By avoiding the appointment of a governor, who had to be approved by the king, the Trustees prevented the crown from wielding a direct influence in the colony's affairs. Yet although Georgia's government structure was decentralized in theory, in reality General Oglethorpe wielded a significant degree of power and was often treated by others as the colony's governor. As the only Trustee who ever lived (or even stepped foot) in the colony, Georgia's local officials often relied upon Oglethorpe's guidance and advice. For all intents and purposes, Oglethorpe functioned as the Trustees' representative in Georgia, even though he did not always consult with other members of the Trust's governing board before making key decisions. In 1741, the Trustees made Oglethorpe's

⁵⁸ Ibid., 12-13, 16.

⁵⁹ Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History*, 32, 92-93.

leadership position official, appointing him president of the southern half of the colony and promoting their secretary, William Stephens, as president of the northern portion. After Oglethorpe's departure in 1743, Stephens became the sole president of Georgia, handling all of the day-to-day concerns that were too impractical for the Trustees to deal with themselves.⁶⁰

Assisting Oglethorpe and Stephens in their efforts to govern the colony and enforce the Trustees' rules and regulations were the colony's bailiffs, constables, tithingmen, and conservators of the peace. Many of these positions entailed executive, judicial, as well as military responsibilities. The bailiffs, for instance, were the highest executive officials in the colony, after the president; they also served as justices in the colony's court system. The colony's constables served dual roles as prosecuting attorneys in court and as the chief officers of the militia. The tithingmen were in charge of overseeing the administration of smaller sub-divisions of each town or settlement, called tithings. They also acted as officers of the guard. The conservators of the peace served much the same function as justices of the peace in England, handling petty offenses and suits for small claims.⁶¹

For most of the Trustee period, the colony had a single court in Savannah, often referred to as the Town Court, which oversaw civil as well as criminal cases. In theory, this court followed English law and precedent, but because most of the court officials had little or no legal training the ideal did not always match reality. The members of the Grand Jury, who were appointed by the bailiffs, were in charge of determining which

⁶⁰ Ibid., 92, 101-102, 107.

⁶¹ Ibid., 91-92.

cases received a jury trial. Petit juries, which were composed of ordinary male freeholders, then convened to render verdicts in criminal and civil trials. Less serious offenses and conflicts were dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the colony's bailiffs and other magistrates, who had the authority to administer punishments such as fines or whippings as they saw fit.⁶²

As a frontier colony surrounded by hostile native and European powers, the Trustees also had to erect a military apparatus to protect and defend the populace. Initially, Georgia's founders anticipated that a militia composed of ordinary male colonists would meet the colony's military needs, and required that all able-bodied men between the ages of sixteen and sixty participate in military service. In times of peace, militia service entailed periodic military drills and patrols. But whenever the colony came under attack, the militia was expected to report to the colony's military authorities at a moment's notice. In the view of the Trustees, a militia composed of married farmers and craftsmen was ideal: such men would make exceptionally devoted and loyal soldiers, since the safety of their families and property depended upon their ability to repel hostile invaders. Yet over time, it became apparent to the colony's officials that Georgia's defense required a more sustained military presence, and a regiment of professional soldiers was sent to the colony in 1737 to man the colony's forts and engage in offensive missions against the Spanish in Florida. But even with a regiment in place, Georgia's

⁶² Ibid., 91-94. In September 1733, for instance, General Oglethorpe reported to the Trustees that court officials had immediately sentenced a drunk man to time in the stocks. In 1735, Savannah bailiff Thomas Causton had a servant boy whipped for committing fornication with a maidservant. See Egmont Papers, vol. 14200, 44, 281.

militia continued to play a role in protecting the colony's settlements and was expected to serve as the last line of defense in the event of a Spanish invasion.⁶³

At the same time that the Trustees were planning and implementing the colony's government and military structures, they were also busy recruiting colonists. Because the Trustees believed that only the "worthy" poor should receive the fruits of their charitable project, they devoted a significant amount of their time and energy to identifying and attracting the most hardworking as well as moral colonists. One means that they used to find members of the "worthy poor" was to ask London's clergymen and workhouse directors for recommendations. The Trustees also published promotional literature that emphasized the colony's benefits as a means to attract settlers as well as investors.

Interested parties were then interviewed by the Trust's Common Council, which reserved the right to deny any potential colonists' passage if they did not live up to the Trustees' ideals.⁶⁴ As one pamphlet assured the English public, the Trustees used the "utmost Care" in examining "those who desire[d] to go over," and they "suffer[ed] none to go, who would leave their Wives and Families without a Support; none, who have the Character of lazy and immoral Men; and none, who are in Debt, and would go without the Consent of their Creditors." And, just to be sure that none might slip through the cracks in their screening process, the Trustees "publishe[d] the Names of such as shall be

⁶³ For more information on colonial Georgia's militias, see Ivers, *British Drums on the Southern Frontier* and Johnson, *Militiamen, Rangers, and Redcoats*.

⁶⁴ See Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History*, 36 and Harold E. Davis, *The Fledgling Province: Social and Cultural Life in Colonial Georgia, 1733-1776* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1976), 10. Unfortunately, the existing records do not provide much detail into this screening process. In most instances, the Trustee records simply note that interviews with potential colonists had taken place, and whether or not the interviewees had been granted passage. In rare instances, the Trust secretary might mention that someone had been "well-recommended" or that a person had been refused because his or her religious beliefs, moral reputation, or professional skills did not match the desires of the Trust, but otherwise the process remains largely hidden. See, for instance, *Journal of the Earl of Egmont*, 9-10, 20, 28, 30, 32-33.

chosen at least a Fortnight before an Embarkation,” which gave any potential creditors or persons with contrary opinions of the prospective colonists time to object to their leaving the country.⁶⁵

Originally, the “charity colonists” selected to go to Georgia were offered free passage, fifty acres of land, farming tools, and a year’s worth of other necessary supplies. In 1738, following a number of budgetary cuts, the Trustees revised this policy; instead of sending charity colonists free of charge, they sent them as indentured servants expected to work for a predetermined amount of time in exchange for the same material benefits offered to earlier colonists. Many of these servants were employed directly by the Trust, and were used to clear land, build roads, work in the Trust’s store, or herd the colony’s cattle. Some of the Trust servants were also assigned to work for small families in need of additional workers, or even leased to more affluent colonists. Charity colonists were not the only settlers in Georgia, however. The Trustees offered free land to any potential inhabitant willing to pay for his own passage, as long as he passed the same screening process applied to charity colonists. These settlers, typically referred to as “adventurers” in the historical literature, often brought their own indentured servants with them and thereby gained additional tracts of land, up to five hundred acres. By 1741 the Trustees had sent 1,810 charity colonists and an additional 1,021 had traveled to the colony at their own expense.⁶⁶

In the view of Georgia’s founders, even the most moral and hardworking people needed guidance and encouragement in order to fulfill their important economic,

⁶⁵ Martyn, *Reasons for Establishing the Colony of Georgia*, 26.

⁶⁶ Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History*, 20, 52, 129-130, 137-138. For more on the Trustees’ screening process, as well as statistics on the colonists who went to Georgia, see also Davis, *The Fledgling Province*, 10.

spiritual, and defensive roles in the colony. The plan that they eventually formulated for doing this rested on three interrelated components: encouraging hard work, promoting moral virtue, and maintaining good order. The first plank of this plan, the encouragement of industry, was the one that the Trustees were often most vocal in promoting. In 1741, the Trustees directed magistrate William Stephens “to Exhort the People to apply themselves diligently to Cultivation and Plantation of Mulberry Tress and Vines, and other usefull Produces as a certain means of enabling them to Subsist themselves and Families with Comfort.”⁶⁷ That same year, Trust secretary Benjamin Martyn informed newly appointed bailiff Thomas Marriot of his duties. In particular, the Trustees expected him to “promot[e] Peace and Industry among the People both by [his] example and Advice.”⁶⁸

One means by which Georgia’s officials sought to promote the settlers’ industry was by providing material advantages to those who worked hard. As General Oglethorpe pointed out in a letter to the Trustees in 1737, “no Society can subsist without rewarding those Who do well, and punishing those Who do ill, the Common Council of the Trustees are empower’d by the Charter to give such Rewards as they shall think proper for Services perform’d.”⁶⁹ And officials did indeed make an effort to reward those who lived up to their expectations. When the Widow Gardener petitioned colonial authorities for monetary assistance in February 1743, the governing board decided to grant her request, noting that she was “well known to be a laborious carefull Woman, with two small

⁶⁷ “Copy of Private Instructions to the President of the County of Savannah. 20 April 1741,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14211, 61.

⁶⁸ “Copy of a Letter from Mr. Martyn to Mr. Thos. Marriot dated at Westmr. 24th. April 1741,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14211, 74.

⁶⁹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. II*, 188.

Children” whom she had supported, up until that point, “without any Assistance from the Trust.”⁷⁰ In May 1743, the Trustees decided to provide financial support to an ill woman, as well as her husband and children. This woman was very weak following childbirth, and her husband was unable to care for their young children without help. Because the family appeared “to be very sober industrious People,” the board determined to give them “twenty Shillings ... to support [the wife] under her present Necessities.”⁷¹ That same month, local officials sought to assist Nicholas Haner, who had broken his leg and could no longer work his land. Because he had made such good progress on his farm before the injury, they determined that he was a “worthy Object of Compassion.”⁷² In February 1744, Savannah’s local government decided to place Thomas Lee in charge of setting the psalm tunes during church services. The post had previously been occupied by a young servant whose master pocketed his pay, but the board decided that the job’s salary should now go to Lee, who was “a Sober hard Working Man.”⁷³

The Trustees’ commitment to rewarding industry is perhaps best exemplified in their land granting policies. Although colonists sent on charity, and servants who had served their terms, were automatically granted fifty acres, it was possible to petition for more land, as long as the applicant’s total holdings did not as a result exceed five hundred acres. The Trustees and their colonial representatives possessed the sole right to grant such requests, and based their decisions upon how well each petitioner lived up to their expectations. In October 1741, for instance, the colony’s president and assistants granted

⁷⁰ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. I, 59-60.*

⁷¹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VI, 64.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, 64-65.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 101.

Michael Burkholder's request for five hundred acres in order to build a mill for grinding corn. They justified their decision by pointing out that Burkholder had "a good Genius for such an undertaking" and had already proven himself to be "a very industrious Man." They further stated that Burkholder and his family had done a good job of "cultivating and improving" their initial fifty acre lot.⁷⁴ In December of that same year, James Anderson similarly applied to be granted additional land, and "knowing [him] to be an industrious Man and well disposed to cultivate Land and withal a Man of Substance," the board decided to grant his request.⁷⁵ In 1747, the board rewarded Richard Johnston, who was reportedly well known for his "Abilities and Industry" as well as for his "unblemish'd Character," an additional five hundred acres of land. In their subsequent report on the transaction, the board demonstrated confidence in their decision to provide hardworking colonists with such generous land grants by pointing out that the Trustees "always take great Pleasure to encourage the frugal and industrious."⁷⁶

Occasionally, the Trustees modified their land granting policies to benefit all industrious colonists. In December 1741, for instance, the Trustees decided to grant any freeholder who had "fenc'd and cultivated [his original fifty acre lot] according to the Conditions of his Grant" an additional fifty acres of "Good Land in any Place that the said Freeholder may desire." In addition to placing more of Georgia's land under cultivation, this new regulation was intended to be "for the greater Encouragement of

⁷⁴ Ibid., 4-5.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 12-13.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 197-198.

Industry among the Inhabitants of the Colony.”⁷⁷ Two years later, in 1743, the Trustees decided to show their approval of the colonists’ labors by sending more servants to “assist the Industrious Inhabitants and advance the further settling of the Colony.”⁷⁸

While the Trustees were generous to colonists whom they viewed as industrious, they did not hesitate to penalize those who failed to fulfill their obligation to work hard. In 1737, for instance, the governing board of the Trustees warned Phillip George Frederick de Reck, who had left the colony, that he would lose his lot if he did not return to it within six months. The board wrote that “the Trustees do not propose to subsist any People in the Colony, Who do not intend to cultivate Land for their own Subsistance.”⁷⁹ The Trustees also reserved the right to deny additional land grants to those they believed were lazy or simply not up to the task of developing their land. In August 1742, they denied the land requests of Edward Bush, Peter Morelle, Joseph Wardrope, John Penrose, and Andrew and Thomas Ormston, “it not appearing that the said Persons [had] ever been industrious in cultivating, or [had] any View to the Cultivation of the said Lands.”⁸⁰ During the same meeting, the board similarly rejected the petitions of another group of men, stating that their “past Conduct” made it clear that they did not “have any Intention to cultivate the said lands.”⁸¹

In practical terms, the Trustees’ efforts to encourage industry were intended to ensure that Georgia fulfilled its economic purpose as a source of agricultural

⁷⁷ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. II, 377.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 421.

⁷⁹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. I, 292.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 404.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

commodities such as silk, grapes, olives, timber, and flax. But keeping the colonists busy and employed was also an important component of their plan to transform the “worthy poor” into virtuous British subjects. The Trustees believed that the primary problem afflicting England’s urban poor was a lack of jobs. Thus the very act of relocating able-bodied people to a place where labor was needed would (in theory at least) cure them of any “idle” habits that they had acquired during their time of unemployment. The Trustees believed that ensuring ready employment was essential. In fact, this was one of their key reasons for banning the use of slave labor in the colony. The Trustees believed that slave labor took jobs away from middling and poorer whites wherever it flourished. In Georgia, they hoped, the law outlawing slave labor would ensure that jobs for white farmers and craftsmen remained plentiful. The industries they sought to encourage in Georgia – such as silk, wine, and oil – were small-scale endeavors for which slave labor was not necessary.

The Trustees’ encouragement of white industry and rejection of slave labor were intended not only to keep jobs plentiful, but also to prevent the idle and luxurious way of life that, the founders believed, characterized slave societies such as that found in South Carolina. The whole purpose of the Georgia colony was to transform the unemployed poor into hardworking and virtuous members of society; allowing them to profit from the work of others, while they themselves remained idle, was anathema to this plan. In the eyes of the Georgia Trustees, idleness and luxury led to moral decay, which in turn presented a threat to good order. As one promotional pamphlet explained, utilizing an earlier discourse on colonial settlement by William Penn, the most significant “Cause of Decay” in any state was “Luxury and [a] Corruption of Manners: For when they grow to

neglect their ancient Discipline that maintain'd and rewarded Virtue and Industry, and addicted themselves to Pleasure and Effeminacy, they debased their Spirits and debauch'd their Morals, from whence Ruin did never fail to follow any People.”⁸²

The goal, therefore, was to provide the colonists with a comfortable, yet modest way of life, free from the temptation to use slave labor. “[T]ho’ they will have a sufficient and plentiful Maintenance,” one promotional tract explained, “they will have no room for Luxury, or any of its attendant Vices.”⁸³ One means of doing this was to keep the colonists busy with various kinds of gainful employment. Another measure for preventing luxury and idleness was to limit the size of the land grants given to Georgia’s inhabitants. Under the Trustees’ land policies, each household head would be given enough property to “afford a sufficient and handsome Maintenance,” but not “more Land than what can with Ease be cultivated.”⁸⁴ Such limitations would supposedly eliminate the perceived need for slave labor, while at the same time provide sufficient work (and benefit) for the landholder and his family.

Georgia’s ministers maintained that hard labor fulfilled the colony’s moral ideals in an additional way: by fulfilling God’s mandate that mankind should follow a “calling.” The Protestant notion of the “calling” required that all Christians “devote virtually all their waking hours to ‘improving their time and talent’ for the greater glory of God.”⁸⁵

⁸² Penn, *The Benefit of Plantations, or Colonies*, in *The Most Delightful Country of the Universe*, 100. For a detailed discussion of the Trustees’ objections to slavery, see Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 3-11.

⁸³ Martyn, *Reasons for Establishing the Colony of Georgia*, 32.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁸⁵ For a detailed look at the idea of the calling and its complex connections with earthly economic success in colonial New England, see Stephen Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1995), 58.

Protestant ministers in Georgia promoted work as a way to make a living and simultaneously show a person's devotion and obedience to God. Reverend Johann Martin Boltzius, the Lutheran Pietist minister at Ebenezer, was particularly vocal in promoting his view of everyday labor as a religious duty. In July 1739, Boltzius preached on the value of work and its connection to religious devotion. He asserted that by "living by the sweat of their brow[s]," the inhabitants of Ebenezer would "continue to find refreshment in and from the benevolent word of God." He considered those in his community blessed "that they can work in their calling with the word of Jesus and entrust the results of their labors to Him."⁸⁶

George Whitefield, onetime Anglican minister in Savannah and occasional resident in the colony, promoted a similar view of labor as God's will for mankind, which is revealed in the lyrics to a song he encouraged the children of his orphan house to sing:

Let us go forth, 'tis God's Command;
Let us make hast away,
Offer to Christ our Hearts and Hands,
We work for Christ to Day.

When he vouchsafes our Hands to use,
It makes our Labour sweet.
If any now to work refuse,
Let not that Sluggard eat.

Who would not do what God ordains,
And promises to bless?
Who would not 'scape the Toils and Pains
Of sinful Idleness?

In vain to Christ the Slothful pray;
We have not learn'd him so.
No; for he calls himself the Way,
And work'd himself below.

⁸⁶ *Detailed Reports, vol. VI, 162.*

Then let us in his Footsteps tread,
 And gladly act our Part,
 On Earth employ our Hands and Head,
 But fix on Heaven our Heart.⁸⁷

While the song's lyrics were intended to teach Georgia's orphans the need to "labour truly," the sentiments contained therein were easily applicable to all of the colony's inhabitants. According to Whitefield, God had commanded that all men (including women and children) work; idleness was therefore a sin against God. Those who disobeyed this mandate were "slothful" "sluggards" who did not deserve either material or spiritual sustenance. Even Christ himself, Whitefield maintained, was not exempt from this requirement during his time on earth. In order to follow in Christ's footsteps, therefore, true Christians had an obligation to demonstrate their devotion through working hard in whatever calling God had ordained for them.

The emphasis which Georgia's magistrates and ministers placed upon hard work as a religious calling reflected their devotion to encouraging religious piety and virtue in all aspects of the colony's settlement. Georgia's founders viewed religion – and the moral virtue that supposedly accompanied it – as an essential component of their mission to transform England's poor into orderly and productive citizens. As one minister wrote in 1742, "Colonys not conducted by the Salutary Principles of Religion ... make the Advantage of Situation and a fruitfull Soil Vain." By contrast, if "the Cause of Religion and the good of mankind, which is the Cause and Will of God," were encouraged, "the Assurances of the divine Assistance, as Well in such temporal as Spiritual Concerns ...

⁸⁷ George Whitefield, *An account of money received and disbursed for the orphan-house in Georgia* (London, 1741), *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale (CW104586598).

seldom fail in the Issue.”⁸⁸ In other words, colonies needed God’s blessing in order to succeed and could expect to fail if they did not live up to His expectations of good and orderly conduct.

In order to promote religious virtue, the Trustees did whatever was in their power to encourage morality and discourage vice. One of their first steps towards doing this, as we have seen, was to screen potential colonists and send only the most upstanding members of what they called the “worthy poor.” While all people were susceptible to temptation, those already inclined to virtue were presumably less likely to abandon their values upon their arrival in the colony. An additional strategy that the Trustees used to attract the most moral and pious settlers was offering passage and support to various devout Protestant groups from continental Europe. Of particular interest were persecuted German-speaking Protestants, including the Lutheran Salzburger. In exchange for providing the Salzburger and others with passage, land, and all of the other benefits offered to Georgia settlers, the Trustees and their allies in the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge believed that they were getting some of the most pious and hardworking people in Europe. In James Oglethorpe’s opinion, assisting the Salzburger simultaneously dealt a blow to England’s Catholic enemies, by depriving them of skilled workers while at the same time protecting Protestants from the dangers of Catholic influence and strengthening the British Empire. “It is ... highly for the Honour and Advancement of our holy Religion to assign a new Country to the poor *Germans*,” Oglethorpe wrote in 1732, “who have left their own for the Sake of Truth.” By “snatch[ing] a great Number of poor Christians out of the Danger of Apostacy,” he

⁸⁸ “For the Revd. D: Bearcroft Secretary to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel &c., St. Martins Street Leicester Fields, 19 Feby, 1741-2,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14212, 69.

explained, English benefactors could “at once do so much for the Glory of God, and for the Wealth and Trade of *Great Britain*.”⁸⁹ Over the course of the Trustee period, the Trustees sent three transports of Salzburgers to Georgia, a total of approximately two hundred and fifty persons. This number was supplemented by several smaller groups of German-speaking Protestants who made their way to the colony separately.⁹⁰

The next line of defense that the Trustees used to protect the colony from moral corruption was the church. In their view, even the most pious colonists faced constant moral temptation, and therefore needed assistance in order to remain orderly, hardworking, and virtuous settlers. From the colony’s foundation, the Trustees were committed to providing Georgia with a plentiful supply of ministers who would labor to “Promot[e] Piety amongst the People” and “Suppress Vice and Immorality.”⁹¹ In 1732, shortly before the first colonists embarked for Georgia, the Trustees “authorize[d] & empower[ed]” minister Henry Herbert with the power “to do and perform all religious & Ecclesiastical Offices that Shall be necessary for the better establishing & promoting the Christian Religion in the Said Colony.”⁹² Herbert’s ministry proved to be short-lived,

⁸⁹ James Oglethorpe, *Account of the Provinces of South-Carolina and Georgia* (London, 1732), in *The Publications of James Edward Oglethorpe*, 225-226.

⁹⁰ Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History*, 40-48. For more on the history of the Georgia Salzburgers, see George Fenwick Jones, *The Georgia Dutch: From the Rhine and Danube to the Savannah, 1733-1783* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1992); see also Jones, *The Salzburger Saga: Religious Exiles and Other Germans along the Savannah* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984). An additional persecuted group to benefit from the Trustees’ charity were the Moravians, a controversial religious sect from Bohemia. The Moravians were also praised for their industry and virtue, but their doctrinal differences from the colony’s other major denominations, as well as their devotion to pacifism, meant that they were also sometimes viewed with suspicion.

⁹¹ “Copy of a Letter from Mr. Martyn to The Reverend Mr. John Wesley dated at Westminster the 15th. of June 1737,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14209, 3.

⁹² “Commision to Henry Herbert L.D. to perform Ecclesiastical Duties in Georgia, 1732 Novr. 8,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14207, 12-13.

due to his untimely death just weeks after his arrival in the colony, but the Trustees and their allies in the S.P.G. soon sent others to carry out the same responsibilities, including such well-known ministers as John Wesley and George Whitefield. The Trustees initially sought to have at least four Anglican ministers in the colony at a time, but their inability to recruit (as well as retain) clergymen hindered this goal. For most of the Trustee period, there was a single Anglican minister in Savannah and another in the southern town of Frederica. These ministers were supported with funds provided by the S.P.G., as well as by Trust money allocated to religious purposes.⁹³

The absence of ordained ministers from the Church of England in places outside of Frederica and Savannah does not necessarily mean that the people were left without clergymen. Since the colony's charter offered religious freedom to all Protestants willing to settle there, ministers from other denominations were welcome in Georgia. In fact, because the Trustees were so devoted to fostering religious virtue in the colony, they actively encouraged a number of non-Anglican Protestant ministers to come to Georgia, and even provided them with financial and other material assistance. Perhaps the most well known of these non-Anglican ministers was Johann Martin Boltzius, the Lutheran Pietist religious leader of the colony's Salzburgers. In order to provide religious instruction to the colony's German-speaking inhabitants, the Trustees officially endorsed Boltzius' ministry with the same words they used to authorize their Anglican clergymen. In November 1733, they provided Boltzius with written permission to "perform all Religious and Ecclesiastical Offices in the German Tongue for the Instruction and

⁹³ Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History*, 144-159.

Benefit of the Protestant Saltzburghers and other German Protestants” in the colony.⁹⁴

The Trustees also eventually authorized Boltzius to act as the secular leader of the predominantly Salzburger settlement of Ebenezer. Georgia’s leaders similarly supported the ministries of several other non-Anglican clergymen, including Boltzius’ assistant, the Reverend Israel Christian Gronau; John Ulrich Driesler, the Lutheran minister at Frederica; Presbyterian John MacLeod; and Moravian ministers August Gottlieb Spangenberg, David Nitschmann, and Johann Hagen.⁹⁵

Protestant ministers were considered to be so important to the Georgia Plan that, whenever there was a shortage of clergymen (which turned out to be a recurring problem), officials feared that the colony’s moral and social order was in danger of collapsing. In April 1741, for instance, William Stephens reported to the Trustees’ treasurer the colony’s desperate need for another minister. “[H]ere is such distraction among us, in Religious matters as well as Civil” he explained, “that without a steady adherence to the establishment of both, most sad confusion unavoidably will be the consequence.”⁹⁶ Several months later, Stephens expressed gratitude for the Trustees’ efforts in finding “a Minister to put us in mind of our Duty as Christians.”⁹⁷ In addition to instructing the people in religious ideals and reminding them of their “duties as Christians,” ministers also had the responsibility of correcting those who strayed from the

⁹⁴ “Copy of the Power to Mr. Bolzius to perform Ecclesiastical Offices in Georgia, dated the 21st. of November 1733,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14207, 61.

⁹⁵ For more on religion in early Georgia and the careers of several of the colony’s most prominent ministers, see Davis, *The Fledgling Province*, 193-232.

⁹⁶ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XXIII, 46.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 144.

moral path. The first step that most ministers took in correcting a wayward congregant was to confront that person about their behavior, most often in private. If this did not work, they then moved on to more public forms of chastisement. Both Johann Martin Boltzius and John Wesley, for instance, refused to administer communion to those whom they believed had refused to follow God’s will, until they repented of their sins. Ministers in Georgia might also publicly renounce a particularly disorderly person, both as a means to shame them and in an effort to warn others about the consequences of sinful behavior. Similar methods were used by ministers elsewhere, but they held particular weight in Georgia, where a person’s moral reputation was crucial to receiving favorable treatment from the Trustees.⁹⁸

In order to assist ministers in their efforts to promote religion among the colonists, the Trustees occasionally sent religious books to help instruct the people in good Christian behavior. In November 1732, a private donor provided “Six Bibles, twelve Guides to Christian Families, Nine Duty of Man ... twelve Christian Monitors ... One Quarto Common Prayer, twelve Lewis’s Catechism, ... Six Bishop Gibson’s Family Devotion [and] three Nelson’s Practise of Free Devotion,” which the Trustees forwarded to the colonists.⁹⁹ Several months later, in May 1733, the Trustees received another, much larger, assortment of religious books, which they sent on to Georgia. In addition to many of the same books that they had sent in the previous packet, this shipment also included two hundred copies of a tract by Dr. Thomas Gouch “shewing how to walk with

⁹⁸ For examples of public refusals to administer communion to disorderly colonists and other public denouncements for immoral behavior, see *Detailed Reports vol. IV*, 116; *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII*, 7-8, 266-267; John Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., vol. I*, edited by Nehemiah Curnock (London: The Epworth Press, 1938), 376.

⁹⁹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. I*, 84.

God,” one hundred psalters, two hundred copies of *A Friendly Admonition to the Drinkers of Brandy*, and an equal number of Common Prayer books.¹⁰⁰

In return for their efforts to promote religion, the Trustees hoped that “the People [would] set a just Value on it and be constant in their Attendance on Divine Worship and duly consider to whom they are indebted for their Preservation and from whom they must expect a Blessing on their Labours.”¹⁰¹ But organized religion was not the only means they devised to secure God’s blessing upon their colonial endeavor. Encouraging virtuous behavior in general was their key aim, and ministers were certainly not the only authority figures who could promote moral behavior among the colony’s inhabitants. The Trustees viewed their settlement as an organic entity that depended upon the efforts of all, especially its leaders, to promote the general welfare. The presence of even one disorderly person could threaten the colony’s stability and it was therefore the responsibility of those in power to remain vigilant and neutralize any perceived threats before they had a chance to infect the rest of society. As the Reverend Boltzius pointed out during a prayer meeting in 1739, the need to regulate the moral virtue of the colonists was a God-ordained duty for all of those who held positions of authority. To illustrate his point, he related the story of Joshua and the children of Israel’s failed first attempt to conquer the city of Ai. The minister attributed this defeat, in part, to the presence of “an accursed thing” among the Israelites, which they were obligated to eliminate or risk further punishment. The “accursed thing” referred to in the story was one man’s theft of an item during the conquest of Jericho, an act which God had specifically warned the

¹⁰⁰ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. I*, 121.

¹⁰¹ “Copy of a Letter from Mr. Martyn to the Bailiffs and Recorder of the Town of Savannah dated at Westminster the 28th. of October 1734,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14207, 108.

people not to commit.¹⁰² Thus the negative act of one person brought God's anger upon them all. In order to prevent God from turning against Georgia, Boltzius maintained, the colony's leaders had to regulate the people's behavior closely. God, he declared, "approves if those who are in positions of authority seek out malice and malicious persons and try to expose godless behavior; for, if they are slack and negligent and fail to expel the rotten members, to their own shame and as a warning to others, then they will be participating in the sin of others and God will charge them with the sins of one or several others.... He has put each of us in charge of his neighbor."¹⁰³ In other words, God would punish not only immoral people, but also those who failed to correct them. Immoral people were a cancer that might easily spread if not kept in check by those in authority. This sentiment was clearly expressed in another journal entry recorded by Boltzius in 1739. "Mr. Oglethorpe and many other impartial people in Savannah well recognize the damage that wicked and disorderly people cause by both word and example," he wrote, "and what a benefit it is for a young colony if it is cleansed in time of such offensive, seductive, and malicious people."¹⁰⁴

Georgia's secular officials were often explicitly encouraged by the Trustees to take particular care in enforcing morality. In 1741, for example, when the Trustees appointed William Stephens to serve as the president of the northern portion of the

¹⁰² Joshua 6:18-19; 7:1-26, King James Version.

¹⁰³ *Detailed Reports*, vol. VI, 16-17.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 75. Although Boltzius's focus here is upon expelling wicked people, in practice he spent more time trying to discourage immoral behavior and reforming those whom he believed were sinful. In his view, no one was past redemption and it was therefore his duty to do whatever was in his power to turn wicked people back to the light. However, he was not averse to punishing them for their harmful actions, and thereby demonstrating to others the negative consequences of sinful behavior. His efforts to rehabilitate one particularly unruly man, Josef Ernst, are detailed in Chapter 4.

colony, they instructed that he “must do the utmost of [his] Power discourage all Vice Prophaneness and Immorality.” Stephens was also responsible for making sure that other officials likewise played their parts in eliminating immoral behavior. “And if any Minister or School Master in [Stephens’] district d[id] by his Life or Doctrine set a bad Example,” the Trustees wrote, the president was to “Admonish him of the same, and immediately acquaint the Trustees thereof, that in Case of his remaining incorrigible, he may be recalled.”¹⁰⁵ Other prominent officials clearly understood the Trustees’ expectations and, when corresponding with their superiors in England, often emphasized their own efforts to combat what they saw as immoral behavior. In 1735, Recorder Thomas Christie boasted to his employers of the good moral example he set for the colonists under his care. “[I]t is notoriously known by my Example [that I] have led a Sober and regular Life always paying regard to [the Trustees’] Orders,” he wrote. In particular, he made a point to follow and enforce their laws “against Rum & [had] been most Instrumentall in decreasing the Consumption of it in this Colony.”¹⁰⁶ In a letter to his superiors in February 1742, official Thomas Jones reported on his “Endeavours to restrain the Growth of Imorality, and Profaness” in the colony. He discussed how he had “sharply reprov’d” some colonists and formally punished others under the colony’s legal

¹⁰⁵ “Publick Instructions to the President of the County of Savannah,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14211, 64.

¹⁰⁶ “Copy of a Letter from Mr. Thomas Christie to the Trustees dated at Savannah May the 28th 1735,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14200, 336. Ironically, Christie’s boasts were motivated by the need to defend himself from the accusation that he had broken the Trustees’ rules against selling rum. See Julie Anne Sweet, “That Cursed Evil Rum”: The Trustees’ Prohibition Policy in Colonial Georgia,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Spring 2010, vol. 94 issue 1, 7.

system. The vices he was most concerned with were “Profane Swearing, Drunkenness, And contemptuous Profanation of the Lords Day.”¹⁰⁷

In order to assist local officials in their efforts to promote moral virtue, the Trustees put regulations in place that condemned and penalized activities that they viewed as particularly immoral or disorderly, such as drinking certain kinds of strong alcohol. Early on, the Trustees decreed that no one in Georgia was allowed to sell or imbibe rum, along with other varieties of distilled liquor. As Trust secretary Benjamin Martyn informed Savannah’s local authorities in the fall of 1734, the Trustees expected that the people would “abstain from the use of that pernicious Liquor.” And if individuals disobeyed this rule, the magistrates were obligated to “put the Laws for staving it in execution with the greatest Strictness and Severity.”¹⁰⁸ A year later, in 1735, the Trustees sought to bolster their ability to regulate alcohol consumption by seeking to outlaw the importation as well as use of rum in the colony. That January they presented an act before the king, “to Prevent the Importation and Use of Rum and Brandies in the Province of Georgia.” They defended the new legislation by claiming that it would help to prevent the “dangerous Maladies” and “great disorders” that supposedly accompanied the use of such hard liquors. The Trustees also determined to regulate closely the sales of other kinds of alcohol in order to “better prevent prophane Cursing and Swearing Vice and Debauchery too frequently occasioned by Tippling Houses and disorderly publick Houses.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXIII, 312.*

¹⁰⁸ “Copy of a Letter from Mr. Martyn to the Bailiffs and Recorder of the Town of Savannah dated at Westminster the 28th of October 1734,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14207, 102

¹⁰⁹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. I, 44-46.*

The Trustees' concerns about alcohol consumption in the colony were based upon their belief that excessive drinking was bad for the soul as well as for the body. The use of gin and other strong draughts among the laboring poor was a topic of great interest among many English reformers, including several members of the Georgia Trustees, and particularly minister and physician Dr. Stephen Hales. Hales was apparently so concerned about alcohol's harmful effects upon the poor that he was motivated to write a pamphlet in 1733 entitled "A Friendly Admonition to the Drinkers of Brandy, and other Distilled Spirituous Liquors." This tract warned that hard liquors physically harmed imbibers by damaging their blood, liver, stomach, and brain. But an even greater danger, Hales maintained, was that excessive alcohol use also supposedly turned those in its thrall away from God, and thus caused them to surrender their immortal happiness in exchange for fleeting earthly pleasure. Yet despite alcohol's well-known and harmful effects to spiritual as well as physical wellbeing, Hales argued, many were seemingly unable to temper their desire for it. And so the only way to ensure Britain's (as well as its colonies') future prosperity was to prohibit strong liquors and encourage moderate consumption of wine and beer.¹¹⁰

Georgia's court officials played an important role in enforcing regulations such as the ban on hard liquor and in punishing what the authorities viewed as immoral behavior in general. Although surviving court records from the Trustee period are relatively scarce, the available evidence shows that, in addition to dealing with criminal offenses such as murder and theft, court officials also heard cases concerning drunkenness,

¹¹⁰ Stephen Hales, *A Friendly Admonition to the Drinkers of Brandy, And other Distilled Spirituous Liquors* (London, 1733), *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, Gale (CB127750274). For more on the Trustees' efforts to discourage the sale and consumption of rum and other distilled liquors, see Sweet, "That Cursed Evil Rum," 1-29.

slander, fornication, sodomy, and bastardy. The judicial options for punishing such behavior, and discouraging others from engaging in similar actions, included fines, confinement, time in the stocks, ducking, whipping, or a combination thereof.¹¹¹ It was especially important that men in positions of authority set a good example. In 1741, court officials in Savannah and Frederica initiated an investigation into accusations that the Reverend Norris had impregnated his maid servant. When officials initially questioned the maid, she denied that Norris was the father. Later, however, she confessed to several different people, including the Reverend Boltzius, that Norris was indeed the father of her child, prompting the magistrates to reopen their investigation. Unfortunately for them, Norris had already left the colony for England.¹¹² In 1742, a Trust official in England reaffirmed the Trustees' view that the courts were to serve as one of the primary means of regulating moral behavior in the colony when he chastised Frederica magistrate Thomas Hawkins for "Stopping Proceedings on a particular Presentment of the Grand Jury of Frederica against several Persons for Immoralities." He then demanded that Hawkins explain his actions to the Trustees.¹¹³ Hawkins was not the first official accused of failing in his duty to punish vice; in one case from 1741 the Grand Jury in Savannah brought charges against one of their own officials for failing to punish offenders. Upon hearing that bailiff Thomas Jones had heard Thomas Upton

¹¹¹ For more on Georgia's early court system see Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History*, 32, 91-96, 107; Davis, *The Fledgling Province*, 80-86; and E.R. Lanier, "Love, Law, and Litigation in Colonial Georgia: The Trial and the Tribulation of John Wesley in Savannah," *Journal of Southern Legal History* 31 (2005), 55-57.

¹¹² For more on the case against Norris, see Egmont Papers, vol. 14205, 297-300; Egmont Papers, vol. 14206, 23-28; *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, supplement to vol. IV*, 97, 104-105, 107-109, 176-177.

¹¹³ "Mr. Verelst to Mr. Thomas Hawkins, by the Hector Capt. James Rodger. Georgia Office Westmr. 25 Aug. 1742," Egmont Papers, vol. 14213, 43.

“profanely Curse and Swear, and threatned to punish him,” but then neglected to follow through in enforcing his threat, the Grand Jury charged Jones with acting “Contrary to the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King his Crown and Dignity.”¹¹⁴

In addition to judicial recourses, the local officials’ control over the colony’s resources gave them the power to deny support to colonists who did not live up to the Trustees’ moral or behavioral standards. In June 1742, for instance, a group of men petitioned the board, requesting that they be granted town lots in Savannah. In response, the president and his associates granted the first two petitions without comment. However, they decided to deny the request of the third man, a newly freed servant named James Scott, on the grounds that he had “lived a Disorderly life for some time past” and was therefore “not Looked on as a proper person to be a Freeholder and Inhabitant of [Savannah].” Yet despite their reservations about his character, the board could not completely dismiss Scott’s request for land. Recall that in exchange for agreeing to work in Georgia for a set number of years, the Trustees guaranteed that all servants who came to the colony would receive fifty acres of land. As a result, the president and his assistants were forced to provide Scott with land, but they reserved the right to determine where his tract would be. Eventually, they decided to grant him land “in some Adjoining Place to this Township,” where he would pose less of a threat to good order.¹¹⁵ A year later, in 1743, Savannah’s governing president and his assistants denied John Browne’s petition for monetary relief on the grounds that he “[was] not to be trusted with Money to purchase the Necessaries of Life” but instead “squander[ed] away what he g[ot] in

¹¹⁴ “Savannah Ss. July 9th 1741,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14206, 30.

¹¹⁵ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. VI, 34.

Debauchery.” They were not completely deaf to the man’s pleas, however, and did grant him an allowance of bread for his family.¹¹⁶ In some cases, even a petitioner’s proven industriousness was not enough to secure him a land grant. In December 1747, for instance, the board denied the petition of Joseph Barker, even though he had already made “considerable improvements” on the tract. They defended their decision by pointing to Barker’s “notoriously bad” behavior during his time as a Trust servant. Yet although the board refused to grant Barker his desired lot, the terms of his indenture induced them to grant him a lot elsewhere, presumably in a less desirable location.¹¹⁷

While Georgia officials were quick to punish colonists whom they saw as immoral, they were just as swift to reward those who met their expectations of virtuous behavior. Recall, for instance, the previously mentioned case of Richard Johnston, who was granted five hundred acres of land in 1747. While Johnston’s industry was one important factor in the magistrates’ decision to grant his request, they also made a point to emphasize his “unblemish’d Character” as another trait that deserved to be rewarded.¹¹⁸ In August 1748, the Trustees similarly rewarded William Hester with a three-hundred acre tract on the southern shore of the Midway River, but only after he successfully demonstrated his industriousness and upstanding character. As a new settler in the colony, Hester proved his “good Character and Ability” by presenting the board

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 74.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 199.

¹¹⁸ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VI, 197-198.*

with “Certificates from several Justices of Peace and other Gentlemen of Note in North Carolina.”¹¹⁹

Promoting moral virtue and religious piety was thus a matter of great concern to Georgia’s officials. In addition to ensuring that the colony receive God’s blessing, religion and morality were also fundamentally linked, in the Trustees’ minds, to social harmony and “good Discipline.”¹²⁰ This connection between religion and good order was affirmed in a 1732 promotional pamphlet that featured reprinted portions of Niccolo Machiavelli’s *Discourses on Livy*. One of these extracts, from chapter eleven of the book, placed religion at the heart of good social order, concluding that “Religion ... was one of the first Causes of [the city of Numa’s] Felicity, because Religion produced good Laws, good Laws good Fortune, and good Fortune a good End in whatever they undertook. And as strictness in divine Worship, and Conscience of Oaths, are great Helps to the Advancement of a State, so Contempt of the one and Neglect of the other are great Means of its Destruction. Take away Religion, and take away the Foundation of Government.”¹²¹ A lack of religion, Machiavelli argued, would spell certain doom for the state, since religion was so closely linked to social order. People who rejected religion would reject all forms of virtue and authority and thereby become threats to good order in society: “contemners of Religion, Subverters of Governments, Enemies of Virtue, of Learning, of Art, and in short of every Thing that is useful and honourable to

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 219.

¹²⁰ *Some Account*, 72.

¹²¹ *Select Tracts Relating to Colonies*, 89.

Mankind; and of this Sort are the Prophane, the Seditious, the Ignorant, the Idle, the Debauch'd, and the Vile.”¹²²

In the view of the Trustees, colonists who believed that they owed submission and obedience to God, and were willing to subsume their own base desires for the greater good, would also be more likely to obey their social superiors on Earth. In the eighteenth century, many people (including the Trustees) believed that good order depended upon everyone knowing their place and submitting to those whom God had placed over them in the social hierarchy. Servants should submit to their masters, children should obey their parents, soldiers should follow the orders of military officers, and colonists should defer to the authority of their appointed governors. If this order broke down, they believed, the end result would be chaos and disorder. Everyone would work only for their own benefit, and the common good would be neglected. In the worst-case scenario, all of human society would collapse and anarchism would reign supreme: violence would dominate the streets, people would starve, and no one's property would be safe. The Trustees believed that they had to do whatever was in their power to preserve the established social hierarchy.

The Trustees' commitment to reform people whom they viewed as lacking good order in their lives went hand in hand with their determination to implement a strict social hierarchy in Georgia. Without such order, they maintained, none of their other economic or moral goals would ever come to fruition. Unfortunately, the Trustees argued, social order was fragile in England's American colonies, and had nearly disintegrated in locations such as Jamaica and South Carolina – where individual greed, idleness and

¹²² Ibid., 88.

luxury supposedly ruled the day, and where colonists by no means always obeyed their superiors, either within the colony or across the Atlantic in England. As a promotional pamphlet from 1732 explained, Carolina had “had a very promising Beginning,” and featured a number of “wholesome Regulations.” Unfortunately, the author asserted, the Lord Proprietors never sufficiently enforced their own rules, and, as a result, “the Inhabitants grew unruly and quarreled about Religion and Politicks.” Eventually, the pamphleteer asserted, “Anarchy” spread among the colony’s settlers.¹²³ Minister Johann Martin Boltzius shared the opinion that the unrestrained freedoms allowed to South Carolina’s planters were “often more harmful than useful.”¹²⁴

The Trustees and their supporters believed that individual colonists could not be trusted to always act for the common good, but needed proper guidance to ensure the colony’s safety and success. As one observer commented in a letter to the Earl of Egmont in 1742, Georgia’s leaders had to “restrain men from pursuing their private interest contrary to that of the Publick.”¹²⁵ In order to maintain their original vision and avoid social chaos, the Trustees determined to maintain tight control over their inhabitants and any social-climbing aspirations that they might hold. Georgia was, after all, at its heart an experiment in social engineering, and the Trustees’ goals depended fundamentally on their ability to monitor and regulate the lives of the people they sent there. Such close regulation would supposedly shield Georgia from succumbing to the dangers of undue

¹²³ *A New and Accurate Account of the Provinces of South-Carolina and Georgia*, in *The Most Delightful Country of the Universe*, 121-122. Although the author of this pamphlet is unknown, several historians suspect that James Oglethorpe was the writer.

¹²⁴ *Detailed Reports*, vol. VII, 174.

¹²⁵ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XXIII, 530.

freedom and individual greed, which were apparently to blame for England's lack of control over some of its more established colonies.

The Trustees' attempts to regulate closely all aspects of life in Georgia were also, in part, an attempt to ensure that their colony never challenged the wellbeing of the mother country. Even as early as the 1730s, it appears, the English had become concerned with the growing independence of their colonies, and some even feared that those colonies might one day seek to break away entirely from British influence and control. The issue was apparently such a pressing concern that the Trustees felt compelled to reassure the public that their colony would never become disloyal to the mother country. In *Reasons for Establishing the Colony of Georgia*, Trust Secretary Benjamin Martyn inserted an entire section rebutting the suggestion that the English colonies "may in Time grow too great for [England], and throw off their Dependency." In his discussion, Martyn downplayed the desire of even the most established colonies to remove themselves from England's influence and protection, and maintained that despite their self-sufficiency in some aspects, they would always "retain a Love for their Native Country." Furthermore, in the unlikely event that other colonies did eventually seek independence, Martyn maintained that Georgia would not be among their number, in part because of the control that the Trustees and their local representatives would wield over all elements of life in the colony.¹²⁶

Yet despite the potential benefits that the mother country would derive from the Trustees' careful regulation of their Georgia project, the primary aim of these efforts was to benefit the colonists themselves. Many of the Trustees' regulations to promote social

¹²⁶ Martyn, *Reasons for Establishing the Colony of Georgia*, 17-18.

order were concerned with discouraging colonists from seeking rapid social ascension, thereby avoiding the luxury, vice, and disorder that supposedly accompanied such advancement. As Trust Treasurer Harmon Verelst reminded one unruly colonist in 1737, it was “every one’s Duty in the Colony to Act in their Proper Stations, and mind their own Business to raise a Maintenance for themselves and Familys; and by a peacefull and orderly Behaviour to be quiet with each other and enjoy the Fruits of their Labour with Comfort; Which will best conduce to their own Happiness and the Favour of the Trustees.”¹²⁷

One important means that the Trustees used to prevent the colonists from living above their means (and from gaining too high an opinion of themselves) was to impose sumptuary regulations. In April of 1737, for instance, they decided to enact a law “against the Use of Gold and Silver in Apparel and furniture in Georgia, and for preventing Extravagance and Luxury.”¹²⁸ Similar laws regulating the purchase of luxury items had a long history in both Europe and colonial America, and were often intended to preserve social distinctions between the “better sort” and their less fortunate brethren. As we have seen, clear social hierarchies were strongly correlated with social order, and preserving these hierarchies, by regulating the purchases of middling and poorer people, was viewed as a means of promoting social harmony. In the view of many in the eighteenth century, clothing literally made the man. In the very act of acquiring and wearing the accoutrements of the wealthy, the Trustees feared, colonists would adopt the negative characteristics associated with that class of people: they would refuse to work in

¹²⁷ “Copy of a Letter from Mr. Verelst to Mr. William Bradley dated at Westminster the 14th. Day of December 1737,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14209, 72.

¹²⁸ *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. I, 280-281.*

the fields, spend all their time and energy pursuing luxury and vice, become greedy and self-serving, and disobey colonial authorities. In other words, they would come to resemble the wealthy and morally corrupt plantation owner.¹²⁹

Although the Trustees' efforts to discourage social ascension may be interpreted as an attempt to keep the poor in their place, or even worse, as an effort by the Trustees to maintain their own power at the expense of everyone else, their intention was not to keep ordinary settlers from gaining any power, authority, or wealth of their own.¹³⁰ Their approach was certainly condescending in the sense that the Trustees believed that they, and not the colonists themselves, had the best understanding of what the settlers needed to succeed in life. And their means of controlling all aspects of the colony's government was self-admittedly authoritarian. Yet whatever their faults, the Trustees' regulations were ultimately meant to improve the lives of the people they sent to the colony. Immigration to Georgia was intended to be a benefit to the colonists, not a punishment. And the Trustees were not opposed to modest social advancement. Recall that their goal was to allow those "who would otherwise starve" to become "masters of houses and lands" in Georgia.¹³¹ As ministers such as Boltzcius often pointed out, hard work would

¹²⁹ For more on sumptuary laws in England and colonial America, see Francis Elizabeth Baldwin, *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1926); Linzy Brekke, "The 'Scourge of Fashion': Political Economy and the Politics of Consumption in the Early Republic," *Early American Studies* (Spring 2005): 111-139; Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Random House, 1992); Peter Goodrich, "Signs Taken for Wonders: Community, Identity and a History of Sumptuary Law" *Law and Social Inquiry* 73 (1998); and Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

¹³⁰ In his dissertation, Andrew Lannen maintains that the Trustees did indeed seek to keep the colonists from gaining any measure of economic or political power, as a means to bolster their own authority. See Lannen, "Liberty and Authority in Colonial Georgia, 1717-1776."

¹³¹ *Some Account*, 71.

keep the settlers from the poorhouse as well as shield them from idleness and its attendant vices.¹³² The Trustees themselves freely provided their colonists with homes, land, and all the tools they needed (at least in theory) to rise out of poverty and become prosperous farmers. The goal was therefore not to keep Georgia's settlers downtrodden, but to prevent the rapid social ascension that the Trustees believed had spelled the ruin of other southern colonies.

The Trustees' Georgia plan envisaged social engineering on a grand scale. It was an ambitious undertaking that combined the Empire's economic and military goals with the Trustees' own efforts to transform the country's unemployed poor into virtuous, hardworking citizens. In order to fulfill their vision, the Trustees determined to control nearly every aspect of life in the colony. They regulated the distribution of land, forbade the use of slave labor, outlawed rum and other hard liquors, and created policies that rewarded colonists who followed their expectations. They also sent magistrates and ministers to ensure that their policies and desires were followed as well as to represent them in the day-to-day matters that they could not oversee themselves. But despite all of their efforts, the Trustees realized that they and their representatives could not accomplish their goals without the assistance and support of the colonists who would settle Georgia. The Trustees believed that societies were organic entities, where the actions of every individual could have implications for the community as a whole and where everyone depended upon everyone else. Those in positions of power had to do whatever they could to promote good order, industry, and virtue. But their efforts would

¹³² *Detailed Reports, vol. VII, 174.*

be in vain if ordinary colonists did not cooperate with these goals. Ultimately, they believed, the colony's future lay in the hands of colonists at the household level, male and female. This was because the Trustees believed that the family was the fundamental unit of society, and served as the primary training ground where people learned important social rules, proper moral behavior, and the economic skills needed to survive. Without stable families in place, and the willing cooperation of the men and women within those households, the Trustees believed that their goal to create an orderly, virtuous, and productive colony could not succeed.

The presence of stable families was particularly important to establishing and maintaining order in the new colony. In the eighteenth century many people, including the Trustees, equated social stability with the existence of a patriarchal gendered hierarchy that served as a microcosm of the broader social order. According to this familial model, the hierarchical relationships between household members – especially between husband and wife – translated to all other relationships in society. Within the family, the wife's submission to her husband supposedly promoted social harmony by teaching all subordinates (male and female) to respect authority and fulfill their expected roles. In a colony premised upon teaching the “worthy” poor proper submission to authority, this family model and the relationship between the sexes that it promoted was especially important.¹³³ Yet the familial model was based not only upon hierarchy and submission to power: the family was also a collaborative unit based upon mutual obligation, affection, and responsibility among its members. Although there was a clear gendered hierarchy in place, everyone in the household was supposed to share the same

¹³³ For more on this family-based worldview, see Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers*.

goals and work cooperatively for the betterment of the entire unit. And because of the perceived connections between family and society, if any member of the household neglected his or her duties, society as a whole might suffer.

The importance of the familial social model in early Georgia is revealed in the familial language that officials used to describe the relationship between the Trustees and their colony. The Trustees and other magistrates often described themselves (and were characterized by others) as the colony's "fathers" and depicted the colonists as their "children." In 1735, for instance, minister Benjamin Ingham characterized General Oglethorpe as a benevolent paternal figure. "He is a pattern of fatherly Care and tender compassion," Ingham reported in his journal, "being always ready night or day to give up his own ease or Conveniencys to serve the poorest Body among the people."¹³⁴ In February 1736, Johann Martin Boltzius similarly described Oglethorpe while praising his willingness to assist the Salzburgers, noting his "Fatherly Mercy towards persecuted and distressed People." In June 1736, Trust secretary Benjamin Martyn in turn informed Boltzius that the Trustees did indeed look upon the Salzburgers with a "Fatherly Eye" and would therefore be ready to "grant whatever is reasonable for them to ask."¹³⁵ General Oglethorpe often described himself as a father figure and characterized the colonists as his beloved offspring. In 1741, for instance, he commented that he viewed the argumentative bailiffs of Frederica as his "Children" and gave them fatherly advice

¹³⁴ "1 May 1736 Mr. Inghams journal of his voyage to Georgia," Egmont Papers, vol. 14201, 183.

¹³⁵ "Copy of a Letter from Mr. Martyn to the Reverend Mr. Bolzius dated at Westminster the 10th. of June 1736," Egmont Papers, vol. 14208, 91.

“not to carry private differences into publick Contentions.”¹³⁶ That same year, Oglethorpe also used familial language in his complaints about the poor treatment he believed he had received from some colonists. “I am [so] daily teared with impertinencies, Insults, and abuses from the people of the Colony,” he wrote, “... that I really do not know what measures to take, did I not love them as my children, I Should let them perish in their follis.”¹³⁷

In the view of the Trustees, the entire colony was a family and everyone shared in the responsibility of deferring to their Trustee ‘fathers,’ as well as for looking out for the welfare of real as well as fictive spouses, brothers, sisters, and children. And while gender relations within the family were inherently hierarchical, this does not mean that those in subordinate positions – such as the wife in relation to her husband – always assumed strictly submissive roles. Within the social hierarchy, there was significant room for both men and women to assume authoritative and submissive roles. Wives often wielded authority over children and servants for instance, while all colonists (male and female) were expected to submit to the colony’s ministers and government officials. Colonial Georgia was intended to be a society based upon mutual obligation. Everyone had a place and a particular set of responsibilities to fulfill. Even those at the top of the social hierarchy, including the Trustees, did not have the right (at least theoretically) to wield their power arbitrarily. In their roles as the colony’s fathers, the Trustees and their appointed officials were obligated to act only for the benefit of their colonial children.

¹³⁶ “Col. Oglethorpe to the Trustees, arrived 19 April 1741, Frederica 24th. Jany. 1740/1,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14205, 131.

¹³⁷ “Col. Oglethorpe to Mr. Vernon Recd. 19. Aprl. 1741, Frederica 26 Jany. 1740/1,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14205, 152.

Colonists were not shy about reminding them of this responsibility. As Elisha Dobree expressed in a letter to the Trustees in 1735, “It were well if all Judges of Provinces & men in Power ... to whom the Government of the People is Committed would Endeavour to Copy after Our Late Kings & Queens in their Fatherly Endeavours more to gain the Love and Affection of the people than in Rigid Tyranical way of Government in Using their Subjects more like Slaves than Christian Freemen.”¹³⁸ In the view of colonists such as Dobree, authoritative positions entailed responsibility and obligation, rather than outright assertion of power. This belief in the duty of authoritative figures to demonstrate “love and affection” towards their social subordinates was grounded in their vision of the ideal family. The father was the household head, and wielded the most power within his family, yet he was supposed to use his authority to promote the common good.¹³⁹

Stable, collaborative relations between the sexes were therefore essential to the success of the Trustees’ goals. As the next chapter will show in more detail, men and women were expected to work together to build their family farms and businesses and they each had the obligation to encourage industry as well as moral virtue in their households. Everyone in colonial Georgia – magistrate, minister, man, woman, and child – had an important part to play in enacting the Trustees’ utopian vision.

¹³⁸ “Copy of a Letter from Mr. Elisha Dobree to the Trustees Dated at Savannah January 27th 1734/5,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14200, 209.

¹³⁹ Similar familial language would later be used in the buildup to the American Revolution to characterize the dysfunctional relationship between Britain and its colonies. Many colonists who opposed the Stamp Act and other unpopular measures accused the king of being a tyrannical and cruel father who misused his authority over his colonial children. See Richard Godbeer, *The Overflowing of Friendship: Love Between Men and the Creation of the American Republic* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press), 142-152.

Chapter 2 – “Capable” Wives and “Useful” Husbands: Enacting Gender Ideals in Trustee Georgia

Mutual responsibility and collaboration between the sexes were at the heart of the gender order in Trustee Georgia. Although men and women were not typically viewed as equals, they were nevertheless supposed to work together as economic and spiritual partners. Women in Georgia were often praised by colonists and officials alike for their ability to adopt a range of different roles and tasks. Capability, rather than delicacy or gentility, was the ideal quality for a wife in Georgia to possess. And while men were often lauded for their ability to promote order in their households, a good husband was always careful to moderate his use of power. His actions were supposed to be for the benefit of his family, and his reputation depended in large part upon his ability to provide for his family’s economic and spiritual needs.

The Georgia Trustees and their colonial representatives favored this collaborative gender ethos in part because they believed that their economic and moral goals depended fundamentally upon the active participation of colonists of both sexes. In a settlement where slave labor was banned, the work of all family members was required to ensure the success of the colony’s farms, craft shops, and businesses. Colonists could not afford to be overly rigid when delegating tasks to their family members. This included women occasionally adopting authoritative or “masculine” tasks in an effort to keep the farm or business running smoothly. And since hard work was such an important element in the Trustees’ goal to reform both male and female members of the “worthy” poor, there was no stigma attached to colonists of either sex who performed hard physical labor. The Trustees’ efforts to promote moral virtue and religious piety likewise required the active contributions of women as well as men. Both were expected to encourage orderly and

pious behavior in their families, and had the responsibility to admonish those who did not live up to the Trustees' ideals.

Frequent instances of officials praising colonists of both sexes who worked hard, lived virtuously, and encouraged similar behavior in their families demonstrate that a significant number of Georgia's early inhabitants met the founders' expectations. To a large degree, this was because the gender roles practiced by the colony's predominantly non-elite population were congruent with the values and goals promoted by the Trustees and their supporters. Studies of women's work in eighteenth-century England and Western Europe have shown that middling and poorer women and children, in addition to their own domestic tasks, were expected to work alongside the household head in whatever profession he pursued. Shopkeepers' wives, for instance, regularly worked on the shop floor with their husbands, and often assisted them in management and record keeping. The wives of farmers played similarly active parts, participating in fieldwork and helping to run their family farms.¹⁴⁰ Georgia's settlers thus brought with them the expectation that men and women would labor side-by-side and that hard work, including manual labor, was a necessary and valued part of every family member's contributions to the welfare of the household.

Western European religious and cultural beliefs, which many of Georgia's settlers shared in common with the colony's ministers and magistrates, further contributed to the

¹⁴⁰ For more on women's roles and work in non-elite English society in the eighteenth century, see Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), 45-48. See also Hannah Barker, "Women, work and the industrial revolution: female involvement in the English printing trades, c. 1700-1840," in *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles Representations and Responsibilities*, edited by Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London and New York: Longman, 1997), 81-100. Scholars have found similarly collaborative gender roles in continental Europe. See Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her*, 143-145, 152-176 and Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 102-140.

collaborative gender ethos found in Georgia. This included the religious model of the helpmeet, which promoted an image of women as capable spiritual as well as temporal companions to men, and a contemporary belief in flexible gender roles, which included the expectation that both sexes would adopt authoritative as well as submissive roles.

The concept of the helpmeet had its origins in the biblical story of Adam and Eve, in which God created Eve to be a companion to Adam.¹⁴¹ Based upon this story, seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Christians (especially Protestants) maintained that God had specifically created womankind to be helpers “meet,” or suitable, for men. They were to be natural, spiritual, as well as economic companions to their husbands. As mothers, helpmeets were fundamental to fulfilling mankind’s God-given obligation to go forth and multiply. Helpmeets were also entrusted with the obligation to foster religious virtue in their mates. Finally, a helpmeet was intended to assist her husband in his efforts to provide for the family. In everyday terms, this meant that women were expected to be capable of carrying out nearly any task her husband or family needed her to perform. If her husband had to go on a trip, for instance, she would assume his place as the head of the household; and if extra hands were needed during harvest time, she worked in the fields. Although the traditional gender hierarchy most often placed women in a subordinate position to men, Protestant theology also recognized women as active and

¹⁴¹ In the second chapter of Genesis, after creating Adam, God realized that his creation needed a companion: “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” Initially, God attempted to assuage Adam’s loneliness by creating animals to roam the earth. But He soon determined that none of these creatures would make an appropriate partner for his creation, and decided to make Adam a mate from his own flesh. See Genesis 2: 18, 21-24, King James Version.

capable temporal companions who could be entrusted to assume more authoritative roles when the situation required it.¹⁴²

While the paradigm of the multifunctional helpmeet is most often associated with Puritan New England, it was not a model limited to that region.¹⁴³ The Puritans imported imagery of the helpmeet from England, and recent work on gender in early modern Europe has shown that this model remained influential in Western Europe well into the eighteenth century.¹⁴⁴ Georgia's colonists, who came primarily from England and several German-speaking states, likewise carried the model of the helpmeet with them to America. In fact, the colony's inhabitants and ministers frequently referred to women as "helpmeets." In 1738, colonist John Brownfield described his recently deceased wife as a "Tendr helpMate" whose "Virtues Merritt[ed] [his] everlasting Esteem." According to Brownfield, his beloved wife was a gift from God, a gift he believed he did not deserve. "I was unworthy of her," he wrote, "and the All mighty donor recalcd his Gift, lest I should have grown forgetfull of Eternall happiness by fixing my Affections upon one that

¹⁴² For more on how the image of Eve as a helpmeet influenced ideals of womanhood in Early America, and particularly in Puritan New England, see Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 106-107. I do not explicitly address women's roles as reproductive mothers in this dissertation, but historians such as Ben Marsh make it clear that the Trustees held mothers in high esteem, particularly for their ability to increase the colonial population naturally, which decreased the need to import more colonists. I would argue that they also valued mothers for their roles in instructing the next generation of Georgians in industry and virtue. See Marsh, *Georgia's Frontier Women*.

¹⁴³ See especially Ulrich, *Good Wives*.

¹⁴⁴ In *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, Merry E. Wiesner shows how the ideal of the helpmeet allowed European women to adopt a variety of different roles – both inside and outside of the home. She argues that men and women often performed the same kinds of work, but that gender determined how that labor was defined. Whereas a man's work was viewed as the fulfillment of a distinct vocation, a woman's work – even if she was doing the exact same labor as a man – was seen as part of her broader role as wife and helpmeet. See Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 102-134.

was Mortall.”¹⁴⁵ Lutheran minister Johann Martin Boltzius also often referred to women as “helpmeets” and emphasized their importance to the colony. In February 1752, he reported that God had rewarded a particularly pious young man in his community by allowing him to marry “a virtuous and skillful helpmeet.”¹⁴⁶ In June of that same year, he similarly remarked that God had granted Christopher Kraemer, a hardworking and pious locksmith, “a righteous helpmeet.”¹⁴⁷

Although references to the model of the helpmeet focused primarily upon women’s roles in assisting their husbands, it was implied that husbands also had an obligation to look after their wives, since they were made of the same flesh. As settler John Brownfield pointed out in the above quotation, women were intended to be gifts from God; it was therefore man’s responsibility to look after them and ensure that they were treated well. Men and women alike were expected to act as good companions to

¹⁴⁵ “John Brownfield to Mess. Pytt and Tuckwell. Savannah Nov 8 1738,” in John Brownfield Letter Book.

¹⁴⁶ *Detailed Reports, vol. XV*, 168-169.

¹⁴⁷ *Detailed Reports, vol. XV*, 194. Although it could be argued that “helpmeet” was just another term appropriated by the colonists to refer to a married woman, the specific context of the word’s usage in Georgia highlights its religious connotations. Several recent scholars have shown that women in the eighteenth-century southern colonies continued to assume roles associated with the position of helpmeet – such as acting as deputy husbands – but most do not explore how these roles fit within Protestant religious ideology. Most assert that continuing demographic instabilities, particularly in the Lower South, help to explain southern women’s ongoing ability to assume authoritative roles on behalf of their families. See, for instance, Anzilotti, *In the Affairs of the World*. In *Within Her Power*, Linda L. Sturtz acknowledges that demographic conditions in Virginia played an important part in allowing women to assume typically masculine duties, but also points out that English cultural expectations already encouraged women to adopt such roles. Although she mentions the term “helpmeet,” Sturtz does not describe how the religious aspects of that role allowed women to wield authority on occasion. One exception to this tendency to downplay the religious roles of southern women is Michelle Louise Henley’s 2006 dissertation, which shows that German-speaking pietists in Georgia explicitly endorsed the religious ideal of the helpmate. However, she insists that the gender ideals among Georgia’s German-speaking inhabitants were very different than those favored in the rest of the colony. In contrast, I argue that the helpmeet ideal applied to all of Georgia’s female inhabitants, at least in the view of the colony’s founders and ministers. See Henley, “Gender and Piety in the German-speaking communities of Ebenezer, Georgia and Ephrata, Pennsylvania circa 1730 to circa 1785,” (PhD diss., Girton College, 2005), 72-74.

one another in spiritual as well as temporal terms. At least one Georgia minister even implied that men could act as helpmeets to their wives. In 1739, during one of his many trips as an itinerant minister, George Whitefield wrote a letter to an unnamed couple, and referred to the “happy pair” as “help-meets for each other.”¹⁴⁸

The ability of men to assume the role of helpmeet, as well as the ability of women (and indeed all colonists) to adopt both assertive and obedient positions, was facilitated by the contemporary belief in flexible gender roles. Recall that although certain behaviors or characteristics in England and British colonial America were labeled as masculine (authoritative) and feminine (submissive), they were not necessarily limited to either male or female bodies. In order for the household and society as a whole to work, men as well as women had to be able to assume a variety of roles and responsibilities. This included men sometimes adopting submissive roles – as servants, employees, and subjects, for instance – and women occasionally assuming positions that allowed them to wield significant authority. If carried out within the proper contexts, instances of men and women adopting authoritative as well as submissive roles were viewed as necessary and even praiseworthy. There were limits to this flexible ideology, however. A woman who seemed too masculine when wielding power or who was perceived as using her influence for inappropriate ends was vulnerable to criticism. In the same vein, men who were seen to behave in inappropriately feminine ways might also face social condemnation. Yet within socially accepted bounds, the inhabitants of England and

¹⁴⁸ George Whitefield, “Letter XCII. To Mr. And Mrs. D. Philadelphia, Nov. 10, 1739,” in *A Select Collection of Letters of the late Reverend George Whitefield ... written to his most intimate friends, and persons of distinction, in England, Scotland, Ireland, and America, from the year 1734, to 1770, vol. I* (London, 1772), 88-89, *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, Gale (CW3318026858).

many parts of British North America were comfortable with women occasionally embodying masculine characteristics and with men adopting feminine roles.¹⁴⁹

A shared cultural heritage which depicted women as capable spiritual and temporal companions and favored flexible gender roles meant that there was significant overlap between the gender ideals held by Georgia's inhabitants and those promoted by the colony's magistrates and ministers. For their part, the colony's founders attached this collaborative ethos to their economic and moral reform agenda, arguing that the active contributions of all colonists were necessary for the success of the Georgia project. Since the cultural traditions of many of the colonists also favored interdependent relationships between men and women within the family, their behavior often received official approval. Foremost among those inhabitants whom the Trustees and their representatives lauded for meeting their expectations were the colony's German-speaking Protestants, and especially the Salzburger of Ebenezer. While some scholars have treated the German-speaking inhabitants as completely distinct from the rest of Georgia's population, the evidence makes it clear that Trust officials often viewed them as the ideal colonists and fully supported their ethos of hard work, spiritual piety, and mutual collaboration between all members of the community. As early as 1734, General Oglethorpe noted the piety and wisdom of the Salzburger ministers, Johann Martin Boltzius and Israel Gronau, and praised the people in general for being a "religious, industrious and cheerful People" who would "in all probability ... succeed very well" in

¹⁴⁹ For more on the potential consequences for those who were seen to violate the limits of gender role flexibility in Early Modern England and Colonial America, see Godbeer, "Performing Patriarchy."

Georgia.¹⁵⁰ Subsequent reports proved Oglethorpe's initial impression to be correct. In a 1735 letter to the general, Captain Dunbar reported that they remained a "Chearfull and pious Laborious Sober people."¹⁵¹ In 1737, Trust secretary Benjamin Martyn likewise praised the inhabitants of Ebenezer for "liv[ing] in sobriety," "maintain[ing] great order and decency," and being "very regular in their public worship."¹⁵²

The richly detailed and abundant sources left behind by the Salzburger ministers provide unusual insight into the everyday lives of those whom the colony's founders saw as the ideal colonists. And while the specific gender ideals described among Georgia's German-speaking population can be attributed in part to their Lutheran Pietist background, the surviving English records make it clear that the Salzburger settlers' views often coincided with those of many English officials and inhabitants. Used in concert, the diverse ministerial and official records left behind by the colony's English and German-speaking authorities provide a unique window into the gendered ideals and expectations held by the colony's officials, ministers, and inhabitants, revealing that most Georgians understood relationships between men and women in terms of mutual responsibility and collaboration.

¹⁵⁰ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XX, 52.

¹⁵¹ "Copy of a Letter from Captn. Dunbar to Mr. Oglethorpe dated at Savannah January the 23d 1734/5," Egmont Papers, vol. 14200, 198.

¹⁵² Trevor R. Reese, ed., *The Clamorous Malcontents: Criticisms and Defenses of the Colony of Georgia, 1741-1743* (Savannah, Ga.: Beehive Press, 1973), 5. This selection is cited in its entirety in Jones, *The Georgia Dutch*, 115-116. See also "Mr. Geo. Whitefield to Mr. Newman, Savannah 20 June 1740" Egmont Papers, vol. 14200, 3.

The economic realm was perhaps the most visible arena in which men and women in Georgia worked collaboratively. According to the founders' reform plan, both sexes were expected to work hard in order to avoid the idleness and sin that supposedly afflicted England and its colonies. Active, "manly" work would in turn transform female as well as male members of the "worthy" poor into productive, moral, and orderly colonists. Work thus served practical and moral ends, and Georgia's magistrates (as well as many ordinary inhabitants) maintained that the labor of all family members was required in order for the yeoman household to succeed. This was particularly the case between husbands and wives. While each spouse had their own particular skills and duties, they frequently joined forces to improve their family's economic situation. One example illustrating this ideal economic relationship between the sexes was the case of a husband and wife who worked together to make thread suitable for weaving cloth. In May 1735, merchant Samuel Eveleigh visited the garden of an unnamed Savannah resident who had successfully cultivated flax. The man, proud of his crop, informed Eveleigh that "he could dress it fit for the Spinner, which his Wife could do; and that there was a Weaver among them that could make it into Cloth."¹⁵³ This cloth could then either be sold in the town market, or used to make clothing and other cloth items for the family.

Johann Martin Boltzius similarly praised Ruprecht and Margaret Kalcher for working together to further the colony's economic interests. The minister often praised the pair for their industry, and was particularly impressed with their work as the caretakers of Ebenezer's orphanage. "The dear Lord is giving Kalcher and his wife grace

¹⁵³ "Copy of a Letter from Mr. Saml. Eveleigh to Mr. Oglethorpe dated at Savannah 28th May 1735," Egmont Papers, vol. 14200, 333.

to get along loyally and thriftily,” he wrote in 1739, “with the blessing that He has granted for maintaining His work.” In particular, the minister noted that the Kalchers knew “how to make everything useful for their economy.” Husband and wife played complementary roles in this endeavor. For her part, Mrs. Kalcher knew how to prepare nutritious and appetizing meals from the limited ingredients in her pantry. “The food is, to be sure, simple and common fare,” Boltzius reported, “but so well and purely prepared that no one could ask for anything better; and for this Mrs. Kalcher has a beautiful talent.” Both Kalchers had a reputation for frugality, a fact pastor Boltzius made a point to emphasize. “They both are most careful not to let the least thing spoil so that it would be thrown away, or not to use everything faithfully,” he recorded in his journal.

Although men’s and women’s economic contributions frequently overlapped and neither sex was confined exclusively to a discrete, gender-specific set of tasks, certain responsibilities were typically associated with one sex over the other. Men, for instance, were supposed to act as their family’s providers. Although other family members assisted them in their endeavors, men were the primary field laborers, craftsmen, and shopkeepers in the colony, and the magistrates had nothing but praise for those who were successful in their various callings. Since Georgia’s economy was based largely upon agriculture, the bulk of the officials’ praise focused on colonists who successfully carried out their farm labor. In 1741, for instance, Trust treasurer Harmon Verelst informed colonist Patrick Houston how impressed the Trustees were by his “Industry in Cultivation” which had resulted in a “Considerable Share of Bounty” from his corn

crop.¹⁵⁴ That same year, official Thomas Jones praised Christian Steinhevel, one of the Trust's servants, as a "very industrious & carefull" man who had "Planted thirty Acres, & cleard more for planting ... next Season." Furthermore, Steinhevel "[kept] the Fences in good repair." In order to encourage Steinhevel's continued industry – and persuade others to follow his example – Jones promised him a special reward, "over & above what is paid him as a Servant."¹⁵⁵ In 1744 military officials applauded several members of the colony's regiment for their industry in agricultural labor. They paid special praise to Captain Carr of St. Simons Island. According to Captain Dunbar, in one season Carr was able to harvest nearly fifty bushels of corn, cultivate grapes by grafting European vines to native ones, and grow cotton and white mulberry.¹⁵⁶ Lieutenant George Cadogan similarly described Carr's plantation as "thriving," and noted that he had once seen the captain raise twelve hundred bushels of corn in a season, much of which was used to feed neighboring settlements.¹⁵⁷

Part of the Trustees' reason for encouraging industry among their settlers was to ensure that the colony fulfilled its economic purpose of producing raw goods to send to England's manufacturers. But mercantilist concerns were by no means their sole motivation for promoting industry. Idle or unskilled men, in addition to undermining the economic wellbeing of the colony, were also believed to pose a threat to the welfare of their families. As the husband and household head, it was the man's responsibility to

¹⁵⁴ "Copy of a Letter from Mr. Verelst to Mr. Patrick Houston by the Mercy Captn. James Wright dated at Westminster 27. April 1741," Egmont Papers, vol. 14211, 94.

¹⁵⁵ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XXIII, 58.

¹⁵⁶ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. I, 447.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 448.

provide for his family, and male settlers who failed in this duty could face harsh criticism. In 1749, the son-in-law of widow Ursula Meyer was denounced by Johann Martin Boltzius for his inability to support his family. Because of the young man's lack of agricultural knowledge, the minister anticipated that he would be a burden rather than a help to Meyer and her daughter. While the two women had "[put] a lot of effort into raising cattle and planting crops," he "fear[ed] they [would] lose more than they [would] gain because the husband, who [was] often not there, [did] not understand field work and husbandry."¹⁵⁸

Georgia's colonists agreed that an incapable or negligent household head was a detriment to the household's welfare. In one case, a prospective female settler refused to join her husband in Georgia precisely because she believed that he was an incompetent family provider. In 1737, Elisha Dobree sent a request to the Trustees in England that they send his wife and family to Georgia. However, when the Trustees summoned Dobree's wife to inform her of their decision to send her and her children at the Trust's expense, the woman declined their offer and defended her decision by claiming that Dobree "was a whimsical Man, and not able to maintain her & her 3 children."¹⁵⁹ Wives of incompetent providers who were already in the colony were forced to find other means to escape their predicaments. Some ran away to find greener pastures elsewhere. Such

¹⁵⁸ *Detailed Reports, vol. XIII, 9*. This emphasis upon men's responsibilities and "usefulness" within the family is very similar to the models of manhood historians have found in colonial New England. See, for instance, Wilson, *Ye Heart of a Man*.

¹⁵⁹ John Percival, *Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont: Diary of the First Earl of Egmont (Viscount Percival), vol. II* (London: Published by His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1923), 379, quoted in J. Thomas Scott's *The First Families of Frederica: Their Lives and Locations* (St. Simons Island, Ga.: Fort Frederica Association in cooperation with Fort Frederica National Monument, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the interior, 1985), 17.

was the case of midwife Elizabeth Stanley, whose husband was well known for his idleness. As magistrate William Stephens explained in a report from 1740, Joseph Stanley was “weak and past any Labour,” which prompted his wife to leave him. Although officials did not typically appreciate it when their settlers abandoned the colony, particularly someone as valuable as a midwife, in this case it is likely that Stephens sympathized with Elizabeth Stanley, since her husband “never did any Thing towards maintaining himself by planting whilst [in Georgia].”¹⁶⁰

According to Georgia’s ministers, men who neglected their duty to support their families through their labor were not only a detriment in practical terms but also violated God’s ordained vision of society and therefore risked bringing His wrath upon their households. As Anglican minister George Whitefield pointed out in a sermon from 1738, “He that does not provide for his own House, in Temporal Things, has denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.”¹⁶¹ It was therefore the husband’s spiritual as well as temporal obligation to support his family with his labor. A man who was unwilling to take on this responsibility turned his back not only on his family, but also on God.

In addition to supporting their families through their labor, men held the additional responsibility of ensuring that the other members of their household lived up to the Trustees’ labor ideals. One colonist who met this expectation was Michael Burkholder. Burkholder was often cited as an ideal man in early Georgia. Schoolmaster John Dobell described him in March 1742 letter to the Trustees as the “best Planter” in Georgia. “He of all others has made the greatest Proof of his Skill and Industry,” Dobell

¹⁶⁰ *A Journal of Proceedings in Georgia, vol. II, 460-461.*

¹⁶¹ George Whitefield, *The great duty of family religion: a sermon preached at the parish church of Saint Vedast, Foster-Lane....* (London, 1738), 4, *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, Gale (CW3323014257).

wrote. He was likewise characterized as “an Honest Man & a regular liver, [who was] Master of several handycraft Trades, such as a Millwright, a Wheelwright a Cooper, and a Carpenter.” Burkholder was the Georgia equivalent of a renaissance man: he was skilled in a multitude of useful trades and willingly devoted his time to carrying out the tasks that would most benefit his family. But Burkholder was notable not only for his personal industry; he was also admired for his efforts to make sure that his children – male and female alike – grew up to be equally useful members of colonial society. “His Eldest Son is a Shoemaker and Carpenter; his Son in law the same,” Dobell reported. The man’s daughters and younger children also played their parts. His oldest daughter “suppl[ied] the place of a Taylor,” while his remaining five children were “daily train’d in those Trades.”¹⁶²

No matter what his level of individual industry, a man who failed in his obligation to induce his dependents to work hard in fulfilling their earthly callings neglected one of his primary tasks as household head. If the succeeding generation was not encouraged to embrace industry, the colony would fall swiftly to ruin. According to Georgia’s ministers, the potential consequences for failing in this task could be dire. In one case, such negligence allegedly resulted in a man’s death. In 1739, an unnamed German servant was found dead in his cell in Savannah, a day after being sent to prison for resisting arrest. One of the arresting officers, angered by the man’s refusal to surrender, had apparently hit him on the head with a riding crop. Once in jail, the man complained of a severe headache, became ill, and died overnight. Because the man was a native German-speaker, the authorities in Savannah requested that Johann Martin Boltzius assist

¹⁶² *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXIII, 439.*

them in their investigation. Upon reviewing the facts, Boltzius acknowledged the death as a tragedy, but was concerned that people were too focused on the immediate events leading to the man's demise. The deeper cause of the servant's sad end, he maintained, was his bad behavior during his life, including his failure to promote industry in his household, which caused God to turn against him. "The deceased was a wild man," the minister explained, "spiteful and obstreperous during his life, and once would rather have me refuse him Holy Communion than promise his masters to improve and to hold his wife to her work."¹⁶³

Colonial magistrates and ministers placed a significant amount of responsibility on male household heads for embodying and promoting their labor ideals, and the perceived consequences for those who did not fulfill these responsibilities could be severe. However, men were not left to shoulder these burdens alone: women too played active roles in supporting their families economically and in influencing others to be similarly industrious. In fact, women's economic contributions were considered to be so important to the Georgia plan that whenever officials believed that things were not going well, one of their first measures was to request that more women be sent to the colony. In a 1739 report, General Oglethorpe lamented the lack of agricultural improvements in the fort town of Frederica. The outlying areas, by contrast, were "very well Cultivated, and great Improvements [had been] made." Much of this land belonged to married soldiers who were "the most Industrious and willing to Plant." In Oglethorpe's estimation, the solution to the colony's agricultural woes was the importation of more women, whom the

¹⁶³ *Detailed Reports, vol. VI, 34-35.*

general viewed as “very necessary for the Support of the Place.”¹⁶⁴ If the Trustees could send more “Laborious Women,” he declared, “a little Time will make this Province the most flourishing of any in America.”¹⁶⁵ Two years later, in 1741, Oglethorpe again expressed the opinion that what the colony needed were more hardworking women. In his report to the Trustees that April, he stated that the “greatest Service that can be done is to send over married Recruits with Industrious Wives.”¹⁶⁶

In some ways, Oglethorpe’s requests were no different than earlier appeals for women to settle in colonies such as Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas. Like his predecessors, Oglethorpe was interested in women as a stabilizing force that would make young men more comfortable and willing to settle permanently in the colony. He also shared their view of women’s reproductive roles as a great benefit for building the colonial population. Where Oglethorpe’s appeal diverged from past requests was in its emphasis upon them as laborers. While women certainly worked in other southern colonies, and were valued for their efforts, colonial officials typically left out or deemphasized this aspect in their appeals for female settlers.¹⁶⁷ In Oglethorpe’s writing, by contrast, women’s physical labor was explicitly valued and praised as a significant factor in the colony’s development. The whole purpose of the Georgia plan, after all, was to reform the colony’s inhabitants by encouraging productivity and avoiding idleness. As

¹⁶⁴ “Coll. Oglethorpes State of Georgia 11 Oct. 1739 Recd. 13 March 1739/40,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14204, 30.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁶⁶ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XXIII, 24.

¹⁶⁷ For a good overview of attempts to gain female settlers in Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas, see Julia Cherry Spruill, *Women’s Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 3-15.

members of the worthy poor, women as well as men were required to engage in hard work. The practical requirements of life in a colony where the family was the primary source of labor, and where everyone was supposed to do their part to contribute to the common good, likewise lent weight to women's work.

Other Georgia authorities were just as vocal in expressing their regard for women's economic contributions to the colony's welfare, and they wasted no time in praising those who met their expectations. Sophia Hopkey, the niece of official Thomas Causton and one-time love interest of the Reverend John Wesley, was particularly praised for her willingness to work hard. In 1736, the minister characterized Hopkey, or "Miss Sophy," as an "active, diligent, indefatigable" woman in her daily business. And despite her physical infirmities, he maintained, she did not "at all favour herself on account of that weakness.... Softness and tenderness of this kind she would not know, having left the delicacy of the gentlewoman in England.... She was patient of labour, of cold, of heat, wet, of badness of food or of want."¹⁶⁸ The ideal woman in Georgia was thus not a gentlewoman too delicate to work: she was a hard worker willing to sacrifice her own wants and comfort for the benefit of her family. Another female colonist who fit this ideal was the widow Anne Harris. In March 1741, magistrate William Stephens praised Harris as "one of the most valuable Inhabitants amongst us, remarkable for her Industry, having during her widowhood, cleared and well planted her five-Acre lot, whereupon she had last year a plentiful Crop." In addition to her agricultural success, Stephens asserted, Harris had also "attained to a fine Increase of live Stock, having a

¹⁶⁸ Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, vol. I, 292.

Dozen or more now in being.”¹⁶⁹ In 1750, the Reverend Boltzius praised the daughter, and apprentice, of midwife Bacher as “a sensible, capable, and honest woman.”¹⁷⁰ And, in 1752, Boltzius praised another female member of his congregation for “tend[ing] industriously to her calling.” This woman was soon to be married, and the minister predicted that she would make “a virtuous housewife and loyal mother for [her husband’s] three children.”¹⁷¹

Women in Georgia were supposed to be hardworking, capable settlers. They were unafraid of getting their hands dirty and willing to engage in just about any task that was required of them. In other colonies, even the most genteel plantation mistress was expected to know how to manage her household effectively and thereby display the respectability and hospitality of her family.¹⁷² Yet in a colony in which there was not yet a planter elite to dominate the social order and attach negative connotations to women performing manual labor, the range of tasks that even the most respectable female Georgians were expected to assume was much broader. Without slave labor, very few women had the option of delegating the bulk of their household labor to others. And their efforts received the explicit support of the Trustee government. A woman’s ability and willingness to work hard was apparently so valued by Georgia’s authorities that they were sometimes willing to grant that woman’s family special assistance, even if the rest of the household did not meet their expectations. This was precisely what happened

¹⁶⁹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, supplement to vol. IV*, 100.

¹⁷⁰ *Detailed Reports, vol. XIV*, 170.

¹⁷¹ *Detailed Reports, vol. XV*, 227.

¹⁷² For more on the everyday work of elite women in the eighteenth-century South, see Spruill, *Women’s Life and Work in the Southern Colonies*, 64-84.

when John Brown petitioned the colony's president and his assistants for monetary assistance in 1742. The board was initially hesitant to grant Brown's request, noting that he was "an idle disorderly Person, meriting no Favour from the Trustees." Despite their early reservations, however, they eventually decided to grant Brown's request in order to reward and further encourage his wife, whom they knew to be "an industrious, sober Woman."¹⁷³

From the colony's very foundation, then, women's labor was considered a crucial component of the colony's success. Much of a woman's day-to-day work was intended to provide for the health, comfort, and productivity of her family. As General Oglethorpe had explained in an unpublished promotional pamphlet from the early 1730s, women and their work would "save so much labour to the Men, such as preparing their Food, cleaning and mending their Cloaths, gathering Wild Fruits, Roots, or Shell fish etc.... The being kept clean and having wholesome food prepared at regular hours would tend greatly to the preserving the health of the people."¹⁷⁴ Magistrate William Stephens similarly argued that women's household work made their families more healthy and comfortable, which in turn gave men more time and energy to perform their own labor. In a 1741 letter to Trust treasurer Harman Verelst, for example, Stephens indicated that the return of colonist Harry Lloyd's wife from an unspecified absence would increase his

¹⁷³ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VI, 46.* The board did impose some stipulations on their grant to the Browns: in order to prevent John Brown from squandering their bequest, they actually gave the money to a local constable and charged him with the duty of purchasing whatever goods the couple needed.

¹⁷⁴ *Some Account, 26.* Ben Marsh includes this quotation in its entirety in *Georgia's Frontier Women*, 11. This view of women, as a stabilizing force who contributed to the colony's success by making the men more healthy and comfortable (and therefore more willing to settle), is nearly identical to the arguments for female settlement put forth by earlier colonial administrators. See Spruill, *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies*, 3, 9. But, as we will see, this was not the only role Georgia's founders had in mind for their female settlers.

“Comfort” and “influence him to be more lively at work.”¹⁷⁵ At least some of Georgia’s young men likewise promoted the view that women were essential to their wellness and prosperity. In 1736, Johann Martin Boltzius commented that two young men in his congregation desired to get married. “They do not want to stay single and without a helpmate much longer,” he explained, “because it does not help either their health or their household.”¹⁷⁶ Men without wives were subjects of pity. Widower Ruprecht Steiner of Ebenezer, for example, supposedly suffered “much harm to his health, childraising, and housekeeping” in the absence of his wife.¹⁷⁷

Georgia’s officials and inhabitants anticipated that many of a woman’s daily activities would take place in or near the home. And the evidence confirms that women in Georgia did indeed devote much of their time to cooking, gardening, cleaning the home, sewing, spinning, nursing, and caring for children.¹⁷⁸ Yet even though Georgia’s women devoted much of their time to carrying out tasks often viewed specifically as women’s work, such labor was not always confined to the home. Women frequently performed identical tasks in the wider community to earn additional income. Trust officials often hired women to perform domestic work for those without female relations. Although a woman’s first responsibility was to look after the needs of her family, she was

¹⁷⁵ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXIII, 6.*

¹⁷⁶ *Detailed Reports, vol. III, 109.*

¹⁷⁷ *Detailed Reports, vol. XV, 149.*

¹⁷⁸ For more on women’s work in colonial America, particularly in the southern colonies, see Kierner, *Beyond the Household* and Spruill, *Women’s Life and Work in the Southern Colonies*. Collectively these works argue that, although white southern women never abandoned physical work altogether, the ideological value of that labor had declined by the eighteenth century. In addition, as slave labor became more widely available, middling and elite women were increasingly able to delegate many of their more demanding daily tasks to slaves.

also expected to play a part in fulfilling the needs of the wider community; thus even her domestic work was never confined to a distinct separate sphere. In 1738, for example, General Oglethorpe entrusted Barbara Campert to look after the storehouse in Frederica, and expected her to “dres[s] the victuals there.”¹⁷⁹ Several months later, the Trustees paid Campert a salary for her role as cook for the Trust’s servants.¹⁸⁰ Women were also hired to maintain the public welfare as nurses. In fact, caring for the sick was considered to be such an important task in the fledgling colony that Trust officials were willing to pay skilled women to care for those settlers who did not have the benefit of healthy female relatives. On the 1735 voyage of the *Two Brothers* to Georgia, for example, James Horner hired four single women to look after the health of their fellow passengers – particularly those who were already weak or ill.¹⁸¹ In 1741, William Stephens noted that “Several of [the colony’s] German Wives” had been “employ’d” in caring for sickly new arrivals from Europe.¹⁸² A year later, in 1742, Stephens paid Margaret Fritz and Elizabeth Reiter for their month-long efforts to take care of a number of sick Swiss colonists.¹⁸³

Women also assisted in ensuring the maintenance and growth of the colonial workforce in their roles as midwives. By facilitating the birthing process, midwives simultaneously helped to preserve the health of the colony’s mothers as well as ensured

¹⁷⁹ “Coll. Oglethorpes State of Georgia 11 Oct. 1739,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14204, 42.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 44.

¹⁸¹ “From James Horner, Gravesend, January 27, 1735,” *General Oglethorpe’s Georgia: Colonial Letters, 1733-37*, edited by Mills Lane (Savannah, Ga.: Beehive Press, 1990), 117.

¹⁸² Stephens, *The Journal of William Stephens, 1741-1743*, 25.

¹⁸³ “Payments made by Col. Stephens on the heads of Sickness Relief and burials from 1 Oct. 1741 to 31 Jany. 1741/2,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14206, 81. For a more detailed discussion of women’s roles as nurses in early Georgia, see Marsh, *Georgia’s Frontier Women*, 46-47.

(to the best of their abilities) the safe arrival of their children, who represented the next generation of Georgia's workers. From the colony's very foundation, the Trustees made an effort to make sure that their new settlement had competent midwives, in part by using Trust funds to support women skilled in midwifery. In 1737, for instance, the Trustees learned that Elizabeth Stanley, the midwife in Savannah, "had brought into the World Since her going over [to Georgia in 1732] ... 128 children, of whom 40 were dead." They determined to pay her 5 shillings for every woman she assisted.¹⁸⁴ The Reverend Boltzius of Ebenezer often went out of his way to praise the skill, industry, and piety of his settlement's midwives. In 1742, for example, the minister had very positive things to say of the two women who assisted at a particularly difficult birth. He described Maria Bacher, the first midwife to arrive, as a "righteous" woman. He then praised the second, unnamed, woman as "a very skilled and practiced midwife" who "kn[ew] how to administer medication for female circumstances very well."¹⁸⁵ Several years later, in 1748, the minister again praised Bacher, describing her as "a very pious and understanding widow who is a very well-liked midwife in our village."¹⁸⁶ In 1751, Boltzius's admiration for the midwife remained unchanged. That August, he commented that God had "noticeably blessed [her] so far in her office." He further reported that she was "loved and respected by all the married women" in Ebenezer.¹⁸⁷ In 1752, the

¹⁸⁴ *Journal of the Earl of Egmont*, 243.

¹⁸⁵ *Detailed Reports*, vol. IX, 201-202.

¹⁸⁶ *Detailed Reports*, vol. XII, 39.

¹⁸⁷ *Detailed Reports*, vol. XV, 107.

minister called Bacher “a jewel among us” for her skill in saving a woman “in very dangerous circumstances into which other people had brought [her].”¹⁸⁸

Women also contributed actively to the family’s economic success through their work in producing thread and cloth, which could either be used to provide the family with clothing and other textile goods, or could be sold at market. Official records frequently referred to women’s work in producing textiles. In February 1740, Johann Martin Boltzius proudly reported that women in Ebenezer had begun spinning cotton, which freed the community from its dependence on store-bought cotton goods.¹⁸⁹ In his 1747 report to the Trustees, Captain William Horton similarly emphasized women’s roles in producing thread and cloth. Since hemp, flax, cotton, and silk were so plentiful, Horton asserted, the colony’s women and children were “in constant employment,” and found a ready market for the fruits of their efforts in Savannah. “Whatever [the family’s] Women and Children Knit or Spin,” Horton reported, “they can with great Ease bring in their Canoes to Savannah or this Market and receive ready Payment for it.”¹⁹⁰

One particularly important form of textile manufacture that all of the colony’s women were encouraged to participate in was the production of silk fiber and thread. According to the Trustees, silk was to be the “principal Commodity of the Province,” and work in silk was supposed to play a major role in fulfilling the colony’s economic as well

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 172. For more on midwifery in early Georgia, and particularly its role in encouraging population growth, see Marsh, *Georgia’s Frontier Women*, 28-30.

¹⁸⁹ *Detailed Reports*, vol. VII, 44.

¹⁹⁰ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XXV, 164-165. Spinning and weaving were commonly viewed as women’s tasks in places such as South Carolina, Maryland, and Virginia, but were performed almost exclusively by poorer white women and slaves. In Georgia, by contrast, all women were expected to produce thread and cloth. For more on poorer women’s work as spinners and weavers for their families, see Spruill, *Women’s Life and Work in the Southern Colonies*, 80.

as reform goals.¹⁹¹ By producing silk in Georgia, the Trustees argued, England would no longer have to import this expensive commodity from other nations. In addition, silk work also served a social and moral function, since it was counted “among the many useful Employments designed for those industrious Poor, that shall become the new Inhabitants of *Georgia*.” As a promotional pamphlet from 1733 explained, “In whatever Country the Silk Trade is propagated... the Nation in general reaps this one very great benefit: that it employs a great Number of their industrious Poor: for not only Men, but Women [and] Children ... may be made use of in this Work.”¹⁹² Silk production provided a means to both enrich the mother country and employ (thereby reforming) the colony’s women and children.

In an effort to support this endeavor, the Trustees and their representatives often went out of their way to encourage women willing to participate in the emerging industry. In 1734, they rewarded Tabitha Atherton forty shillings “for her trouble in taking care of the Silkworms.”¹⁹³ In early May 1747, Johann Martin Boltzius reported with pride that several women in Ebenezer had “begun to make a Trial” of winding silk, and he was “in great Hopes they w[ould] by degrees bring it to Perfection.”¹⁹⁴ A few weeks later, Boltzius was able to give a positive final report on the season’s silk crop. “This year God gave his special blessing to silkmaking,” he wrote, “and therefore our

¹⁹¹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XXX, 143; For more on women’s roles in the emerging silk industry, see Marsh, *Georgia’s Frontier Women*, 53-61.

¹⁹² Thomas Boreman, *A Compendious Account of the whole Art of Breeding, Nursing, and the Right Ordering of the Silk-Worm*, (London, 1733), iii, *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, Gale (CW110352627).

¹⁹³ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. II, 52; Atherton’s first name is revealed in her death notice from April 1741, see *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. II, 365.

¹⁹⁴ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XXV, 169.

people have been encouraged to devote their time to this useful enterprise.”¹⁹⁵ Two years later, Boltzius again praised the progress of Ebenezer’s women in the silk industry. In a letter to the Trust’s treasurer, Harmon Verelst, the minister thanked the Trustees for sending instructional pamphlets on silk winding, remarking that the instructions were “very acceptable to our well inclined industrious Women who [have] discover[ed] a great Zeal in drawing off the Cocoons this Year with great dexterity.”¹⁹⁶ Two years later, in 1749, the Trustees paid a Salzburger woman “five Pounds Sterling ... Who [had] acquir’d the Art of winding Silk, as a reward for her Industry.”¹⁹⁷

Ideally, every woman in Georgia would play a part in the silk industry, including even the most prominent women. In fact, the participation of these women was considered to be especially important because officials believed that they would present a positive model for less privileged women. Johann Martin Boltzius’s wife was one such influential woman who invested her time and skill in silk manufacture. Within his household, Boltzius reported, “the Silk Cocoons ha[d] been under care of my Wife in a Room near my Study.”¹⁹⁸ Even though Boltzius initially had doubts about the value of silk work, he felt that it was his and his wife’s duty to act “as an example and encouragement for other people,” particularly since Ebenezer’s English benefactors were so devoted to the trade. And it appears that the Boltzius’ efforts paid off. By the spring of 1751, the minister reported that “the experience learned in [their] house as to how to

¹⁹⁵ *Detailed Reports, vol. XI, 55.*

¹⁹⁶ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXV, 372-373.*

¹⁹⁷ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. II, 491.*

¹⁹⁸ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXV, 373.*

rear the worms in a safe, easy, and advantageous way soon became common in the community.” And his wife’s efforts were apparently so profitable that Boltzius came to view the silk trade as a gift from God, granted to him as “a means for [his] and [his] dear family’s better support.”¹⁹⁹ Martha Causton, the wife of Savannah’s storekeeper and bailiff, likewise took an early interest in silk production. In 1738, she wrote a letter to the Trustees describing the state of silk manufacture in Georgia. In addition to laying out her own accomplishments in raising silk worms, she also emphasized her efforts to persuade other prominent women to participate in silk production. “While the worms continued working,” she explained, “I frequently carried the gentlewomen of this place to view them and endeavoured to raise in them a desire of breeding them, which they have cheerfully resolved to do, for soon as they can procure mulberry trees for that purpose.”²⁰⁰

In order to promote the silk industry in Georgia, the Trustees appointed several female colonists to act as silk experts and paid them salaries for their work. In 1743, for instance, the Trustees paid Jane Mary Camuse sixty pounds for her efforts that year.²⁰¹ Several years later, in 1748, the President and his Board sought to reward Camuse’s primary successor, Elizabeth Anderson, for her hard work in producing silk and training others in the trade. Unfortunately, they were unable to pay her in full without explicit permission from the Trustees in England. Yet because they were “Eye Witnesses of her Care and Industry and of her having duly managed the said Manufacture,” they decided

¹⁹⁹ *Detailed Reports, vol. XV, 55.*

²⁰⁰ “Martha Causton to the Trustees, Savannah, January 16, 1738,” *General Oglethorpe’s Georgia: Colonial Letters, 1738-43*, 325-326.

²⁰¹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. II, 419.*

to give her twenty pounds in advance.²⁰² A few years later, in 1751, the Trustees again praised Anderson and her work, instructing Georgia's governing board to reward her with "twenty pounds Sterl[ing] as an Encouragement to her to persevere in her Industry." They furthermore advised local officials to "procure her a larger house, (in which She is to live without Rent) and such Accommodations and Materials as shall be found necessary for keeping the Worms, and for reeling of Silk."²⁰³

In their roles as silk experts, women such as Jane Mary Camuse and Elizabeth Anderson were often given significant responsibilities and could wield considerable influence, even authority. This was particularly true in Camuse's case. Although her entire family was knowledgeable in silk winding, and her husband initially held the formal title as silk expert, it was she who most often met with and advised Georgia's officials in silk matters.²⁰⁴ In November of 1743, the president of the colony, William Stephens, and his assistants summoned Mrs. Camuse to discuss her family's progress and negotiate her salary and duties. After Camuse presented a letter on behalf of her husband, the magistrates questioned her directly about her family's intentions. First they asked, "Whether She would Accept of the estimated Salary of Sixty Pounds a Year 'till an Answer [could] be recd from the Trustees to her Proposals?" In response, Camuse answered "That the General [Oglethorpe] (being one of the Trustees) had allowed her in Mony and Provisions to the Amount of One Hundred Pounds a Year, and therefore She

²⁰² *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VI, 218.*

²⁰³ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. II, 508.*

²⁰⁴ For more positive depictions of Jane Mary Camuse, and examples of her interactions with Georgia's officials, see *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. IV supplement, 136-137; Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VI, 85-86, 95; Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXII, 64-67, 194, 492-493; Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXX, 131-132, 138-139, 143, 167.*

would Accept of nothing less.” The magistrates then asked her if she would be willing to take on apprentices, “and receive Mony on Account (as heretofore) till an Answer could be had from the Trustees?” Camuse responded “[t]hat she would take two or Three [apprentices] such as [the magistrates] should send and teach them the Art of Manufacturing Silk, but that She would Accept of no pay for Instructing them ‘till She had an Answer from the Trustees to her former Proposals, And that She would receive Mony on Account (as heretofore) and no otherwise.”²⁰⁵

Although it is unclear why officials did not summon her husband, the fact that they called upon Camuse to discuss her husband’s proposals and then questioned her directly about her family’s payment and willingness to accept apprentices demonstrates their respect for her position and knowledge. Her attitude in responding to the magistrates is equally revealing. She displayed no evidence of timidity or even deference when summoned before some of the most prominent officials in the colony. Instead, she demanded a salary of one-hundred pounds a year and “would Accept of nothing less.” Likewise, she dictated how many apprentices she was willing to take on and the method of payment for accepting them. Although the relationship between Camuse and Trust officials eventually soured, particularly because she later refused to train the apprentices she had been hired to instruct, initially officials had nothing but praise for her efforts. In May 1741, for example, William Stephens praised Camuse’s knowledge and skill, estimating that she had produced “more than double to what has been the work of any

²⁰⁵ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VI, 85-86.*

other Family.” With her cooperation and assistance, he concluded, “the Silk Manufacture ... must in a few Years more become a very advantageous Trade.”²⁰⁶

Women in Georgia contributed to their family’s success not only by performing traditionally feminine work such as nursing, midwifery, and textile manufacture; but also frequently assumed masculine-associated responsibilities when working alongside their husbands, servants, and children on the farm or in the family business. The records of Ebenezer's minister, Johann Martin Boltzius, indicate that women often engaged in fieldwork. In May 1740, for instance, Boltzius decided to visit the home of one couple, and, upon his arrival, he found the unnamed wife “at work in the field.”²⁰⁷ In June of that same year, he again went to visit an unspecified congregant’s household and reported finding the wife “working in the fields while her husband was helping [a neighbor] build a hut.”²⁰⁸ The casual way in which Boltzius mentioned his female congregants working in the fields implies that he found that labor to be in no way unusual or surprising. His words indicate that he viewed fieldwork as a required and necessary part of a woman’s everyday tasks. In fact, he even chastised one woman for seeking to neglect her farm work. In 1740, Maria Magdalena Rauner’s husband joined an English military expedition against the Spanish in Florida, and she sought to join him. When Boltzius learned of this plan, he protested her decision on the grounds that such an action would prevent her from completing agricultural work on her family’s farm. “The woman along with her children has planted much land and cleared it of grass, and also planted a few

²⁰⁶ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, supplement to vol. IV*, 141-142.

²⁰⁷ *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII*, 108.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 149.

beans,” he reported. “There is much work still to be done on it before the harvest, however; and I don’t know whom she will delegate to do the work.”²⁰⁹ If Rauner left, Boltzius implied, all of her family’s hard work would be in vain. He believed that her place was on the farm, not following the troops to Florida.

In Boltzius’ view, a woman who did not work in the fields was the exception rather than the rule. In March of 1739, for instance, the minister noted that the only people he found at home during his religious house visits were mothers with small children “who [could not] join their husbands in the fields.”²¹⁰ Yet although caring for small children was viewed as a valid reason to avoid field labor, the most hardworking women did not let childcare deter them from participating in even the most strenuous labor. One such woman was Elizabeth Klocker, a particularly industrious Ebenezer resident whom Boltzius often praised for her hard work and piety. After her untimely death in July 1742, the minister made a point to highlight her virtues and lauded her as a positive example for others to follow. Although her illness had recently prevented Klocker from working on the family farm, Boltzius recounted that in her healthier days “she worked very hard in the fields, and indeed had her suckling little child with her in its cradle.”²¹¹

Without the assistance of women, Boltzius believed, all efforts to improve the colony would come to naught. In a letter to General Oglethorpe in February 1736, Boltzius complained that Jean Vat, a Swiss man appointed by the Trustees to act as the

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 108.

²¹⁰ *Detailed Reports, vol. VI, 55.*

²¹¹ *Detailed Reports, vol. IX, 154.*

highest secular administrator in Ebenezer, had initiated an attempt to collectivize work in the settlement in order to clear the land that would be used for the people's garden lots. Vat apparently wanted a large group of men to work together, supervised by an overseer. Boltzius immediately rejected this plan, in part because it excluded women and children from assisting in the effort. "Some People have very good Assistance by their strong Wives and some Boys," he wrote to the general, "who can't and won't work if the Work must be done jointly according to Mr. Vat's Method."²¹² In Boltzius' view, the loss of the work of Ebenezer's "strong Wives" would be a great detriment to the Salzburger's productivity. The fact that he used this argument to convince Oglethorpe to interfere in Vat's labor plans demonstrates that he thought that the general would hold similar views on the subject.²¹³

Although existing accounts from English sources are often much less detailed than those provided by Ebenezer's authorities, the available evidence reaffirms that they also greatly valued women for their contributions to their family's farm work. In 1735, for instance, merchant Samuel Eveleigh visited the plantation of Sir Francis Bathurst, and gave a glowing report of what he saw to General Oglethorpe. According to one of Bathurst's neighbors, Eveleigh reported, the "old Gentleman" owed much of his success to "his Wife and Son [who] work in the Fields themselves."²¹⁴ In a letter to the Trustees

²¹² "Copy of a Letter from Mr. Bolzius to Mr. Oglethorpe Dated at Ebenezer 28th Febry. 1735/6," Egmont Papers, vol. 14201, 137-138.

²¹³ In her study of gender ideals among Georgia's German-speaking pietists, Michelle Henley similarly asserts that German women were expected to work in the fields on their family farms. She argues that this expectation set them apart from English women elsewhere in the colony, yet the evidence suggests that all women in Georgia occasionally worked in the fields, and that English officials recognized and lauded their efforts. See Henley, "Gender and Piety," 74.

²¹⁴ "Copy of a Letter from Mr. Saml. Eveleigh to Mr. Oglethorpe dated at Savannah 30th May 1735," Egmont Papers, vol. 14200, 340-341.

from 1744, military officer Alexander Heron reported in positive terms that several widows on St. Simons Island “supported themselves and Families on their Plantations” without assistance, while many other colonists were struggling to establish viable farms.²¹⁵

In addition to working alongside their husbands in the fields, and occasionally with other women, wives were also sometimes entrusted with the responsibility of managing the family farm or business on their own as “deputy husbands.” In early Georgia, some of the most visible examples of married women acting as “deputy husbands” were those who sought legal redress for perceived economic slights against their families. Recall, for instance, the case of Elizabeth Desborough, who made a complaint in June 1737 before Savannah’s officials about her neighbor, Henry Lloyd, overcharging her husband for meat. In response, magistrate Thomas Causton issued a warrant for Lloyd, accusing him of extortion. Although Causton eventually dismissed the charges, his initial willingness to pursue Desborough’s complaints shows that he took her seriously. His account likewise indicates that he did not find it unusual that the carpenter’s wife was the one to bring charges, and not John Desborough himself.²¹⁶ Just a few days later, the wife of Thomas Atwell similarly approached Georgia’s magistrates to register a complaint on behalf of her husband, who was conducting business elsewhere. She accused neighbor William Bradley of failing to deliver a calf that her husband had purchased. After a drawn-out and complicated investigation into the matter,

²¹⁵ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. I, 446.*

²¹⁶ *Journal of Thomas Causton, Egmont Papers, vol. 14203, 17-18.*

Mrs. Atwell eventually accepted payment in lieu of the calf.²¹⁷ In each of these accounts, the officials never indicated that there was anything strange or distasteful about married women seeking legal redress for what they saw as infringements upon their families' economic wellbeing.

Other visible examples of women acting as deputy husbands were those who occasionally took over their husband's roles in running the family business. In 1739, for instance, Frederica resident Samuel Perkins left his wife, Catherine, in charge of the family store while he dealt with business matters elsewhere in the colony. She was apparently so competent in managing her husband's business affairs that one visitor to the shop made a point to mention her in a letter to his business partners in England.²¹⁸ Elizabeth Penrose, wife of public house owner John Penrose, similarly managed the family business while her husband carried out his other occupation as a ship pilot. And although some colonists and authorities criticized her for selling alcohol without a license, at least one official entertained visitors in her establishment.²¹⁹ The wife of Nevill Smith likewise ran her husband's bakery while he was away, an action that Georgia's officials seem to have supported wholeheartedly. In 1743, Frederica official

²¹⁷ Ibid., 22.

²¹⁸ "Brownfield to Pytt and Tuckwell, 7 February 1738-39," John Brownfield Copy Book. I first came across this case in J. Thomas Scott's *The First Families of Frederica*, 25. See also Scott, "Success and Yet Failure: Women in Early Frederica," in Phinizy Spalding and Pamela B. Wilson, eds., *Women on the Colonial Frontier: A Study of Frederica and Early Georgia* (St. Simons Island, Ga.: Fort Frederica Association in cooperation with Fort Frederica National Monument, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the interior, 1995), 22-26.

²¹⁹ "Copy of a Letter from Mr. Peter Gordon to the Trustees dated at London 7th. May 1735," Egmont Papers, vol. 14207, 152-153. For more on the Penroses and their position in early Georgia, see Sarah Gober Temple and Kenneth Coleman, *Georgia Journeys: Being an Account of the Lives of Georgia's Original Settlers and Many Other Early Settlers from the Founding of the Colony in 1732 until the Institution of Royal Government in 1754* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1961), 16, 20, 70, 188, 202-207, 297.

John Terry reported to Trust treasurer Harman Verelst that Nevill Smith was headed to England to pay off a debt and acquire a few servants. But despite Smith's absence from Frederica, Terry wrote, the settlement would not be left without the services of a baker, since Smith's wife would "carry on the Baking business" while he was away. Terry then made a point to praise the Smiths as "the very quietest & Sobrest couple in the Place."²²⁰ Although Terry did not discuss Mrs. Smith's talents in detail, he clearly viewed her as a capable stand-in for her husband. His subsequent description of the couple as quiet and orderly further bolsters the idea that Georgia's officials saw nothing wrong with women occasionally assuming authoritative (and therefore masculine-identified) roles. In his view, the ideal settlers were those flexible enough to assume whatever roles and responsibilities would best forward the family's (as well as the colony's) wellbeing.

While the model of the deputy husband was certainly not new or unique to Georgia, conditions in the young colony – such as labor shortages and relatively high mortality rates – may have made this role more frequently required of Georgian women than of their counterparts elsewhere in the eighteenth-century South. In at least one case, this role was also open to a woman who was neither formally married nor of fully European descent: the mulatto mistress of Caleb Davis. Davis was a semi-retired sea captain who owned several trading ships and ran a store in Savannah. According to William Stephens, he was "regarded, by all who wished well to the Colony, as an useful Man to promote Traffick." But despite his usefulness to the colony, his past willingness to trade with the Spanish in St. Augustine made him a controversial character. Adding to

²²⁰ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXIV, 57-58.* Mrs. Smith's management of the family bakery is mentioned in J.T. Scott's "Success and Yet Failure: Women in Early Frederica," 25. For more on the Smith family and their lives in Frederica, see Scott, *The First Families of Frederica*, 12-13.

his ambiguous image was the fact that Davis, who was unmarried, lived openly with his mulatto servant and mistress. In practice, Davis treated this woman more like a wife than a servant. Because he was an invalid whose exposure to tropical climates had “nigh bereft him of the Use of both his Legs and Arms,” he depended upon his mistress to assist him in nearly every aspect of his day-to-day life. As William Stephens explained to the Trustees, “[t]he Girl ... was of much Use to [Captain Davis]; not only as an Helper to put on his Cloaths, dress him, and look after his Linen, &c. which she did to great Perfection; but having very good natural Parts also, and by Length of Time having obtained good Knowledge of his Business, and learnt to look into Accounts; he suffered almost every Thing to pass through her Hands, having such Confidence in her, that she had the Custody of all his Cash, as well as Books; and whenever he ordered any Parcel of Silver to be weighed out for any Use ... she had the doing of it.” According to Stephens, this had been the state of affairs for several years, and although he seemed uncomfortable with her status as a mixed-race woman and with the fact that she and Davis were not actually married, he nevertheless praised her as “very faithful, and of great Service to [Davis].” Because Davis and his business were so valuable, and his mistress was so essential to the running of his shop, it appears that Stephens and others in the community were willing to overlook Davis’s “Foibles.” In fact, Stephens noted that it was common knowledge that “all Persons who had any Business with Captain Davis, were expected not to treat her with Contempt.” The casual way in which officials such as William Stephens described the role that Caleb Davis’s mistress played in running his shop demonstrates just how commonplace it was for women to assume their husband’s roles in the family business or on the family farm. The unusual part of this case was not that a

woman was keeping the books and handling money transactions, but that the particular woman in question was of mixed racial heritage as well as not formally married to the man she worked with.²²¹

A number of women also contributed to their families' economic wellbeing by running independent businesses. Many, but not all, of these money-earning endeavors hinged upon work traditionally associated with women, such as dressmaking or keeping a boarding house. Some of the women who ran their own businesses were those whose husbands had left the colony for long periods of time. Take, for instance, the case of Ann Emery. Her husband, a ship pilot, spent significant amounts of time away from his family. In order to support herself during his absences, Emery "kept a Chandler's shop and sold a good Store of retail Ware."²²² Abandoned women were similarly obligated to find ways to maintain themselves and their families. After Thomas Wattle suddenly left

²²¹ *Colonial Records, vol. IV*, 344. Evidence for Stephens' discomfort with the woman's racial background can be found in his efforts to downplay her African heritage and emphasize instead her similarities to European women. In his report to the Trustees, he made a point to explain that she "was of an exceeding fine Shape, and setting aside her swarthy Countenance, might compare with an *European*." Informal marriages were a relatively common phenomenon in early America as well as in Early Modern Europe. For a variety of different reasons, some couples did not feel the need to formalize their unions in a church. Although church officials and other authority figures often condemned their unions as illicit, the couples themselves, as well as many of their neighbors, saw nothing wrong with such relationships and were often treated as if they were actually married. In the case of Captain Davis, the racial background of his mistress likely prevented him from formalizing their union. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that many of his neighbors – as well as at least one magistrate – were willing to overlook the informal nature of his relationship. For more on informal marriage in Early America, see Richard Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 7-9, 14, 38-43, 119-121, 125-135, 144, 148, 303, 308-311, 313, 336. Ben Marsh offers a slightly different interpretation of this case, arguing that the woman's sex as well as her race made her role as shop manager unusual. See Marsh, *Georgia's Frontier Women*, 48-49.

²²² *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, supplement to vol. IV*, 114.

the colony to settle in New York his wife stayed behind and made a living by taking in boarders.²²³

Although some of the women who earned money independently from husbands or male relatives were (at least technically) married, the majority of those who ran their own businesses were widows forced to assume more permanent positions as household providers. Widows in the colony did whatever they could to make a living and support their families, which often included engaging in a wide variety of tasks. Ursula Meyer of Ebenezer, for instance, sold handicrafts, cleaned the local orphanage, and cared for others' children for money. Her young daughter brought in additional income by doing sewing work for members of their church. Far from looking down on her for these activities, the Reverend Boltzius praised Meyer as a good, pious woman who was "content and satisfied with the little that God bestow[ed] on her." Even though Meyer was poor, Boltzius was convinced that her hard work and piety would earn God's blessing. "Good people manage well," he wrote, "and experience what is found in the 1st Psalm: '... whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.'²²⁴ In 1741, Francis Brooks' widow supported her two children by doing needlework in Savannah.²²⁵ Later that same year, widow Lydia Dean made extra money by cleaning the courthouse.²²⁶ In 1744, widow

²²³ "A True Accot. Of the Inhabitants in the Village on the Island of Skidoway," Egmont Papers, vol. 14205, 169.

²²⁴ *Detailed Reports, vol. IX, 55.*

²²⁵ "A True Accot. Of the Inhabitants in the Village on the Island of Skidoway," Egmont Papers, vol. 14205, 168.

²²⁶ "Sallarys to Magistrates & Officers pd. By Col. Stephens & Hen. Parker from 1. Oct. 1741 to 31 Jan. 1741/2," Egmont Papers, vol. 14206, 79.

Fitzwalter provided temporary lodging for newly arrived colonists, including ministers and Trust officials.²²⁷

Some widows continued to run their husbands' former businesses. In 1739, the widow Helfenstein and her young son decided to take over the family tanning business.²²⁸ Several months later, the Reverend Boltzius noted that Helfenstein had come to "understand that craft quite well." And since she was such a hardworking and pious woman, he endeavored to assist her as much as possible in her new business. When he learned of her need for a kettle and an iron scraper, he made note of it in a report to his superiors, apparently hoping that one of Ebenezer's European benefactors might send the requested items.²²⁹ In 1752, Margaret Kalcher – whom Boltzius had long promoted as the epitome of the ideal pious, hardworking woman – assumed management of the family's inn following Ruprecht Kalcher's death.²³⁰ Other widows took on the responsibility of running the family farm. A petition to the President and his Assistants in 1742, for instance, reveals that the widow Sturtz depended solely upon her agricultural endeavors on her family's farm to support herself and her children.²³¹

In some cases, officials believed that widows did a better job of running a farm or business than their deceased husbands. Take for instance the case of Widow Reuter of Ebenezer. According to Johann Martin Boltzius, "[s]he and her two small children ...

²²⁷ Stephens, *The Journal of William Stephens, 1743-1745*, 78.

²²⁸ *Detailed Reports*, vol. VI, 187-188.

²²⁹ *Detailed Reports*, vol. VII, 142.

²³⁰ *Detailed Reports*, vol. XV, 194.

²³¹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. VI, 105.

enjoyed good health, something she lacked almost entirely throughout the years of her marriage. God blessed her work in the fields and her cattle so that she was able to pay off her husband's debts as well as buy more clothes and food than while her husband was still alive. She has quite a good harvest of European crops, as well as others, such as wheat, rye, Indian corn, beans, and squash."²³² Though the minister admitted that Reuter benefited from the assistance of two field hands for a week, he asserted that "she herself did all the other work in the fields."²³³ The minister similarly praised the success of the widow Graniwetter in supporting herself by planting "all kinds of produce as well as cotton and flax," and making clothing for herself and her children.²³⁴ He was so impressed with her endeavors that he argued that she had no economic need to remarry, and reported approvingly in 1749 that, despite a recent opportunity to wed, she was "content to be a widow."²³⁵ English officials also praised widows who were particularly successful in supporting themselves. In one case they even argued that a widow made a more responsible and law-abiding business owner than her male neighbors. In 1734, Benjamin Martyn revoked tavern keeper John Wright's alcohol license for illegally distributing rum to his patrons. Martyn then ordered that Wright's right to distribute spirits be transferred to the Widow Hodges, who "doth not ... sell any distilled Liquors" to her customers.²³⁶

²³² *Detailed Reports, vol. XI*, 111.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 112.

²³⁴ *Detailed Reports, vol. XIII*, 26.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

²³⁶ "Copy of a Letter from Mr. Martyn to the Bailiffs and Recorder of the Town of Savannah dated at Westminster July 27th. 1734," Egmont Papers, vol. 14207, 98. Although rum and other distilled liquors were banned in Georgia, registered tavern keepers were allowed to sell beer and wine to their customers.

Married as well as unmarried women were seen as capable contributors to the Trustees' economic plan and were praised for their efforts. Yet just as in the case of men, it was not enough to be personally industrious: women also had an obligation to encourage and inspire others. According to Oglethorpe, the very presence of women would induce men to work harder to support them. Women's domestic work was also supposed to free their male counterparts to work harder in their own tasks on the farm. In addition to their supportive roles, officials believed that women would also play a more active role in fostering industry in the colony. In at least one case, the example set by industrious women inspired others in the community to be similarly hard working. In 1735 an official reported to the secretary of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge that the women of Ebenezer had "resolved to clear some Ground by themselves for Gardens." Apparently motivated by the industry displayed by the town's women, the single men "took thereby Occasion to do the like." Their combined efforts eventually resulted in a fenced-in garden that provided additional food for the people of Ebenezer.²³⁷

In everyday terms, a woman was responsible for encouraging industry in her family, and particularly in her children. This role was considered to be so important that the loss of a wife often created much pressure for their husbands to remarry, lest they leave their children – and particularly their female children – without someone to teach them the skills necessary to become productive colonists. This was precisely what happened in the case of William Spencer, whose wife had died, leaving him alone to raise

²³⁷ "Copy of a Letter from Mr. John Vat to Mr. Newman dated at Ebenezer 30th May 1735," Egmont Papers, vol. 14200, 344.

their young daughters. Fortunately for Spencer, he was able to find a good stepmother to instruct his children in their future responsibilities. When describing his remarriage to officials in 1746, Spencer placed special emphasis upon his new bride's good influence upon his young daughters. "[She] makes an Excellent Step Mother to my Daughters," he wrote, "being Mistress of her Needle, [and I] don't doubt of her making my Girls the same."²³⁸ Five years later, Spencer was still praising his wife for her diligent efforts to instruct his daughters in housewifery. In a letter to Trust secretary Benjamin Martyn, he related her skill in "learn[ing] them to be good House Wives and also experts at their Needles."²³⁹

In their roles as household mistresses, women were also responsible for ensuring that their servants were industrious. In many households, this took the form of training female servants in particular skills. In April 1742, Johann Martin Boltzius lauded Gertrude Kornberger for her efforts to instruct her new servant, Christina Häusler, in "field work and household management."²⁴⁰ In July 1747, the minister similarly recognized Gertrude Glaner as a "wise, careful, and hard-working" woman "who labor[ed] lovingly and seriously" and served as a positive example for the young orphan girl who lived with her, as well as for others in the community.²⁴¹

All colonists were supposed to work diligently at whatever tasks were necessary for the maintenance of their families. They were also entrusted with the responsibility of

²³⁸ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXV, 105-106.*

²³⁹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXVI, 7.*

²⁴⁰ *Detailed Reports, vol. IX, 88.*

²⁴¹ *Detailed Reports, vol. XI, 91.*

ensuring that their subordinates likewise played their parts in supporting the family economy. But men's and women's efforts to run and maintain family households, farms, and businesses were by no means the only arenas in which the sexes were expected to work collaboratively. Husband and wife were also supposed to be spiritual companions to one another. And as the previous chapter makes clear, the Georgia Trustees believed that all of the colonists' hard work would mean nothing if they were not also morally virtuous, since such virtue supposedly ensured good order and made God more likely to grant His blessing upon the colony. Just as in the case of physical labor, colonists of both sexes were supposed to strive to be personally virtuous as well as cultivate moral behavior in others. Ideally, the colonists themselves should play an active part in their own moral reformation.

The importance that colonial officials, and particularly ministers, placed upon moral virtue can be found in their numerous positive descriptions of virtuous colonists. As previously mentioned, the Trustees often rewarded colonists whom they regarded as well-behaved or particularly pious with material incentives, including larger land grants. They also often made a point to praise colonists who lived up to their behavioral standards. And although Trust representatives favored moral behavior in general, their praise of specific settlers often focused upon their religious piety. In 1739, for instance, Johann Martin Boltzius lamented the untimely death of Johann Caspar Ulrich, and reported that the colony had "lost a pious man" whose absence was "much regretted by the entire community."²⁴² In 1743, official Thomas Jones gave a glowing report about his former clerk, Francis Harris. Since Harris' arrival in 1738, Jones maintained, he had

²⁴² *Detailed Reports, vol. VI, 171-172.*

“at all times” displayed “Sober & inoffensive Behavior every way becoming a Christian & a Member of the Church of England” and had thereby “gain’d the Esteem of all good men.”²⁴³ Several different women were similarly praised for their religious virtue. Maria Bacher, the previously mentioned midwife of Ebenezer, was often lauded as a model colonist for her piety. Following the death of her husband, the Reverend Boltzius praised her for her “sincere resolution to spend the short remaining period of her life in the service and praise of her Lord and thus preparing for a joyful and blessed departure.” He then went on to describe her as a “quiet soul” who did not worry about material matters, but found comfort in the belief that God would provide for her.²⁴⁴ Other women in Ebenezer were likewise praised for their piety. In 1747, Boltzius related God’s generosity in granting Steven Rottenberger a “pious and virtuous helper” for a second wife.²⁴⁵ Similarly, in 1748, he praised one widow for her virtuous behavior, calling her a “true Israelite without guile.”²⁴⁶

Georgia’s English ministers similarly praised women in their communities for their spiritual piety. John Wesley seemed particularly pleased with the religious enthusiasm displayed by several young women he encountered in Savannah. In July of 1736, during the eventually fatal illness of Rebecca Bovey, one of his most virtuous followers, he was especially impressed by the religious nature of the young woman and her friends. When Bovey first fell ill, Wesley asked her and her companions whether or

²⁴³ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXIII, 321.*

²⁴⁴ *Detailed Reports, vol. XII, 40.*

²⁴⁵ *Detailed Reports, vol. XI, 16.*

²⁴⁶ *Detailed Reports, vol. XII, 40-41.*

not they thought themselves too young to contemplate religious matters. Apparently expecting them to answer in the affirmative, he was surprised when one of them responded, ““If it will be reasonable ten years hence to be religious, it is so now; I am not for deferring one moment.””²⁴⁷ Several days later, Wesley returned to the Bovey household and was again impressed by the girls’ religious convictions. When James Oglethorpe, who was also present, mentioned the prospect of a sudden death, Rebecca Bovey proclaimed that she did not fear death because ““Jesus Christ [was] always prepared to help [her].”” When Bovey unexpectedly took a turn for the worse and died two days later, Wesley went to comfort her family, and found her sister Margaret grieving, but resigned to her sibling’s fate. ““All my afflictions are nothing to this,” she reportedly told him. “I have lost not only a sister, but a friend. But ‘tis the will of God. I rely on him and doubt not but he will support me under it.””²⁴⁸ Sophia Hopkey, Wesley’s favored devotee and potential love interest, was similarly praised for her close spiritual relationship with God. “What appeared of it was a deep, even reverence ripening into love and a resignation unshaken,” Wesley recorded in his journal, “She saw the hand of God, and was still.””²⁴⁹

Men and women in Georgia were expected to embody spiritual virtue, but it was not enough for each colonist to cultivate their own piety. Each settler also shared the obligation to encourage a similar piety and virtue in others. This was particularly important because man’s supposedly fallible nature made even the most virtuous

²⁴⁷ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. XVIII: *Journals and Diaries (1735-1738)*, edited by W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 164.

²⁴⁸ Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. XVIII, 165.

²⁴⁹ Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, vol. I, 292.

colonists susceptible to the temptations of sin and vice. As minister Thomas Bosomworth explained in a letter to the Trustees, “Man is by Nature weak & indigent; & not capable of making any comfortable Provision for his own Welfare, but in several Respects stands in Need of the Protection & Assistance of his fellow Creatures; & in short the whole Species are necessarily fixt in a State of Dependency on each other.” This dependency upon others consisted not only of giving physical support to those in need, but also of spiritual succor. Bosomworth’s comments came in a letter in which he discussed the need to provide charity to the colony’s poor orphans, but his sentiments likewise reflected his beliefs about colonial society in general. In fact, Bosomworth referred to Georgia’s orphan house as a microcosm of the colony as a whole.²⁵⁰

As we saw in the previous chapter, ministers and other officials assumed much of the burden of monitoring and encouraging the spiritual growth of their populace. But individual households, as the basic units of social organization, also played a significant role. Husbands, as the religious heads of the family, were particularly obligated to encourage piety and morality in their household. As one-time parish priest of Savannah George Whitefield explained in a sermon from 1738, “[E]very House is as it were a little Parish, every Governour ... a Priest, every Family a Flock: and if any of them perish through the Governour’s Neglect, their Blood will God require at their Hands.”²⁵¹ The father or husband therefore had the obligation to serve as “a Prophet, to instruct; as a

²⁵⁰ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXIII, 234-235.* This obligation to look after the spiritual welfare of others fits within the broader Protestant emphasis upon mutual stewardship. Because all men were susceptible to sin, theologians held, they needed the constant supervision and guidance of their neighbors to avoid temptation. For more on mutual or informal stewardship in early America, and particularly seventeenth-century New England, see Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, 84-86.

²⁵¹ Whitefield, *The great duty of family religion*, 5.

Priest to pray for and with; [and] as a King, to govern, direct, and provide for [his family].”²⁵² If he failed in these duties, Whitefield maintained, he placed both his and his subordinates’ immortal souls in danger. Some ministers asserted that the household head’s guidance was particularly important because of women’s supposedly greater vulnerability to sin. Although spiritual views about women were undergoing significant change during the eighteenth-century, Protestant theology that characterized them as equally capable of spiritual salvation, yet more susceptible to temptation remained influential.²⁵³ As Johann Martin Boltzius pointed out to one of his female congregants in 1739, marriage was intended to be a “great blessing ... wherein God has joined man and wife and given the woman, as the weakest tool that is subject to so many accidents, her husband as an advisor, protector, and helper.” If couples expected to receive God’s blessing, he argued, “[t]hey should take care that Satan might not pervert the Lord’s wise providence.”²⁵⁴ George Whitefield likewise argued that women needed male guidance.

²⁵² Ibid., 4.

²⁵³ Although Protestant thinkers valued women as ideal spiritual companions to men, lingering images of Eve’s role in the fall of mankind predisposed them to suspect that within even the most pious woman lay the potential to fall to temptation. It was for this reason, they maintained, that a patriarchal hierarchy was necessary to guide and protect women from themselves, as well as to protect men from women’s potentially negative influence. Yet despite their supposed weaknesses, women (and indeed all Christians) were nevertheless supposed to do whatever was in their power to encourage their family’s salvation. For more on Protestant views of women, particularly in the context of seventeenth-century New England, see Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 97, 107. In *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, Carol Karlsen explores the darker implications of this lingering negative view of women in Protestant religious thought and demonstrates that challenges to the gender hierarchy in Puritan New England were often viewed in explicitly religious terms. By the late eighteenth-century, theologians and social philosophers had turned this ideology on its head, arguing instead that women were the more virtuous sex, and should use their unique charms to reform the behavior of their husbands and children. For more on this transformation, see Ruth Bloch, “The Gendered Meanings of Virtue in Revolutionary America,” *Signs* 13 (1987), 47-50; Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, 265-266, 277-288; and Jan Lewis, “The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 44, no. 4 (Oct., 1987), 689-721.

²⁵⁴ *Detailed Reports*, vol. VI, 167. The specific “accidents” that the minister referred to here were the “temptation, great fear, and all sorts of fantasies” that the woman in question claimed to experience whenever she was away from her husband. For a detailed discussion of early German Pietist attitudes towards women, and the roles women played within the movement, see Denise Danielle Kettering,

In his sermon, “The Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent,” he explained that Eve (and by implication all other women) was “the weaker Vessel, and when she was alone from her Husband ... [she] was more liable to be overcome.”²⁵⁵ Even though women were a positive good in society, created by God to assist man in his spiritual as well as temporal endeavors, ministers such as Whitefield and Boltzius argued that they were also more vulnerable to bodily and spiritual temptations. As we will see later in the chapter, Georgia’s ministers were not always consistent in their depictions of women as the more spiritually vulnerable sex, and even encouraged some wives to act as their husband’s spiritual guides. Yet in most instances, they maintained that the male household head was the family’s more appropriate religious leader.

Several examples in the records of Johann Martin Boltzius illustrate his expectation that men in Ebenezer would act as spiritual guides in their families. When Ruprecht and Margaretha Zimmerebner married in 1747, for instance, the minister reported noticing an abrupt change in the woman, whom he and his assistant had formerly considered a worldly person who neglected her spiritual relationship with God. Boltzius attributed this change to the influence of the woman’s new spouse, whom he

“Pietism and Patriarchy: Spener and Women in Seventeenth-Century German Pietism,” (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2009). Although Pietists promoted a patriarchal familial structure, Kettering argues, the movement’s emphasis upon spiritual equality among all believers offered some women significant opportunities for religious influence and expression. These opportunities declined over the course of the seventeenth century, however, as Pietists gravitated towards more traditional Lutheran gender ideals – which excluded women from public religious roles. Although much changed over time, Boltzius’s journals reveal that eighteenth-century Pietists still promoted the view that women could play important spiritual roles in the family as well as in the community. Yet despite their spiritual equality, on earth women, as the “weaker” sex, were supposed to submit to male authority. Michelle Henley comes to a similar conclusion in her comparative study of German speaking Pietists in Georgia and Pennsylvania. See Henley, “Gender and Piety.”

²⁵⁵ George Whitefield, “The Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent,” *Nine sermons upon the following subjects....* (Edinburgh, 1742), 30, *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, Gale (CW122659378).

described as “a blessed tool for her soul’s unburdening and rebirth by word and example.”²⁵⁶ In September 1740, Boltzius encouraged a man named Leimberger to marry the widow Bach. Each would be a good match for the other, the minister argued. For her part, Bach would receive “an upright, very capable, diligent, and, in his husbandry, clearly blessed man.” Leimberger, in turn, would get a “modest wife” who could be “steered towards everything good.” And because Leimberger was “quite knowledgable in all matters” he could ensure that his new wife “bec[ame] a real helpmeet to him.”²⁵⁷

Georgia’s English ministers and officials similarly expected men to cultivate piety in their households, particularly among their children. In a March 1742 letter to the Trustees, schoolmaster and register John Dobell praised colonist Michael Burkholder as a pious man who was always “careful of observing the Lords day” and was “performing continually Religious duties in this Family and as he lives himself, so he brings up his [children]: and his Houshold also in the Fear of God.”²⁵⁸ Male household heads were also supposed to promote piety among their servants. As William Stephens pointed out in 1740, “the Laws of God and Man require all Masters, to take care that their Servants, who are baptized into the Faith of Christ, do frequent his Church.” Masters who did not fulfill this obligation were unfit to govern others, as Stephens concluded was the case with Andrew Duchee. When Duchee was mentioned as the potential recipient of a young servant in 1740, Stephens objected, citing Duchee’s habit of allowing his servants do

²⁵⁶ *Detailed Reports, vol. XI, 24.*

²⁵⁷ *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII, 230.*

²⁵⁸ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXIII, 439-440.*

whatever they pleased on Sundays, as well as his reputation as a “professed Deist, and a Ridiculer of Christianity,” qualities that would make him a bad master.²⁵⁹ The ideal man in Georgia was thus a deeply spiritual household head, who took care to ensure that his subordinates fulfilled the Trustees’ religious expectations.

While men may have held the bulk of the responsibility for encouraging moral virtue in their families, they were certainly not the only colonists expected to do so. The Trustees viewed Georgia as an organic and collaborative society in which everyone had a part to play. And this was as much the case when it came to fostering moral behavior as it was in fulfilling the colony’s economic goals. Everyone in the community had a responsibility to monitor the behavior of their neighbors, lest even a single disorderly person threaten Georgia’s moral order. Women, as mothers and household mistresses, shared in the burden of looking after the spiritual welfare of their subordinates. As George Whitefield pointed out in a sermon on family religion, the master and mistress of the household shared the responsibility of cultivating spiritual piety in their children and servants. In order to be “true Lovers and Honourers of God,” he maintained, “Masters and Parents must take *Solomon’s* good Advice, and train up and catechize their respective Households in the Way wherein they should go.”²⁶⁰ Even though Whitefield made it clear in this sermon that male household heads were most responsible for looking after their families’ religious state, he also maintained that both parents should play an active part in that task. He reiterated this point later in the same sermon. “*Father and Mother* may both *forsake their Children*,” he explained. And while temporal neglect was

²⁵⁹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, supplement to vol. IV*, 58.

²⁶⁰ Whitefield, *The great duty of family religion*, 13.

certainly to be condemned, spiritual negligence was even more dangerous: “For what greater Degree of Forgetfulness can they express towards them, than to neglect the Improvement of their better Part, and not bring them up in the Knowledge and Fear of *God*.”²⁶¹ As household mistresses, women were also supposed to instruct their servants in spiritual virtue. In the spring of 1742, for instance, a minister praised Gertrude Kornberger as “a very honest mistress and leader [for servant Christina Häusler] in all spiritual goods” who would help to transform the girl into “a pure maiden of the Lamb, and someday a good housewife amongst us.”²⁶²

As helpmeets, women were also supposed to play a role in encouraging their husbands to be virtuous. In Georgia this role seems to have been bolstered by the Trustees’ conviction that the very presence of women might induce otherwise unruly men to settle down and follow a more virtuous way of life. At least some colonists seem to have shared in this belief. In 1735, for instance, colonist Francis Piercy claimed that he had experienced a moral transformation following his marriage to the daughter of prominent colonist, Sir Francis Bathurst. Whereas Piercy had previously made a habit of drinking rum (a drink that Georgia’s founders viewed as sinful and the cause of all sorts of social ills), upon his marriage he “left off[f] drinking quite.” “Instead of drinking Rum in [the] morning,” he reported to a minister in England, he “[drank] tea with [his] Wife” and “live[d] very happy and loving with [her].”²⁶³

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁶² *Detailed Reports*, vol. IX, 88.

²⁶³ “Fra. Piercy’s letter to the Revd. Mr. Forester, Georgia, 1 June 1735,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14200, 351-352. The Trustees were in fact so opposed to rum that they banned its sale and consumption in 1735.

Women's success in encouraging spiritual piety in their husbands featured prominently in the records left by the colony's German-speaking ministers, and show that theological depictions of the female sex as more vulnerable to sin were not applied to all women in all circumstances. Following the marriage of tailor Carl Flerl to the widow Gruber in January 1742, the Reverend Boltzius made it clear that a wife was not only her husband's partner in labor. "We hope that through this marriage God will bestow on the man not only an easing of his difficult household tasks but also much progress in his Christianity, for he is getting in her a true helpmeet."²⁶⁴ In June 1741, Boltzius similarly praised one woman for being a "real good companion" to her sickly husband. Although the man often felt discouraged by his inability to perform all of his "household and field work," his wife was able to assist him by "making use of the help she ha[d] received from God to strengthen his faith."²⁶⁵ Even after death, a wife's example could influence a husband to become more virtuous, as a case from 1748 reveals. After the passing of his wife, Balthovar Bacher, who had formerly neglected his spiritual relationship with God, completely reformed his ways. The primary motivation for the change, his minister argued, was his "wife's good example and her memorable words and prayers [that continued to touch] his heart every day and in a blessed way." From that point forward, Bacher was a model Christian who resigned himself to following God's will.²⁶⁶

Although in most instances the husband was supposed to act as the spiritual head of the family, in some cases the wife might serve as his temporary spiritual guide,

²⁶⁴ *Detailed Reports, vol. IX, 29.*

²⁶⁵ *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII, 253-254.*

²⁶⁶ *Detailed Reports, vol. XII, 78.*

especially if he were less devout or lacked the ability to read written prayers and devotions. In 1739, the Reverend Boltzius reported that one woman, in an effort to promote her illiterate husband's spiritual growth, "directed [him] to the example of N. and his wife, where the wife prayed first and was followed by her husband; but now that he has learned the prayer, he prays first and his wife prays after him." The unnamed woman suggested that she and her husband follow the same procedure, an idea Boltzius seemed to approve of, since he subsequently predicted that "[t]he dear Lord would certainly assist them in this." The minister further agreed with the woman's conclusion that "no one should take care of himself alone, but should also take care of others," pointing out that "it was only proper for a married couple, who were joined in the flesh, to take care of each other's soul and thus be bound to each other in spirit."²⁶⁷

Ministers such as Johann Martin Boltzius implied that wives could serve as the first line of defense when attempting to correct the behavior of a disorderly or sinful husband. In February 1741, for example, Boltzius sought the assistance of Anna Maria Rieser in his attempts to reform her husband, a frequent troublemaker in Ebenezer. Boltzius began by asking Rieser what she made of her husband's "bad speeches and behavior," and when he found that she "realize[d] his many sins," he instructed her that she was duty-bound to soften Michael Rieser's heart by acting as a model Christian. Boltzius knew from previous conflicts between the couple that Michael Rieser did not respond well to verbal correction, but he still maintained that Anna Maria could help her husband by "convinc[ing] him without a word but only by her way of living." She was

²⁶⁷ *Detailed Reports*, vol. VI, 33. In her comparative study of gender roles among Lutheran Pietists in Pennsylvania and Georgia, Michelle Henley draws similar conclusions about the ability of some women to act as their husband's spiritual guides. However, she characterizes this role as a distinctive feature of German Pietism, rather than a colony-wide phenomenon. See Henley, "Gender and Piety," 108-110, 114.

not to remain silent forever, but had to “choose the right time for talking to him about his change for the better.” And though such an act could be seen as a challenge to the established household hierarchy, Boltzius defended a wife’s duty to correct (gently) a wayward husband as a responsibility ordained by God. As he explained in his journal, a wife who remained silent in the face of her husband’s sins helped to facilitate his continued bad behavior, thus endangering his soul and disobeying God. In his opinion, a righteous person “must obey God more than men.”²⁶⁸

The case of the religious conversion of Barbara Zorn serves as a final example of the ways in which women as well as men were expected to encourage moral virtue in their families and communities. Before coming to Ebenezer, Zorn had been a servant in Savannah. But her “honest and hard-working” mother had requested just prior to her death that her daughter come to Ebenezer and receive religious instruction. Unfortunately, according to Boltzius, Zorn’s exposure to “English freedom” in Savannah had made her a carefree and worldly young woman resistant to the “quiet and strict order” favored in Ebenezer.²⁶⁹ Unwilling to give up on Zorn, the minister placed her as a servant in the household of Israel Gronau, his catechist and fellow clergyman. In Gronau’s household, Zorn “gained a thorough understanding and a healthy experience of Christian dogma” and soon “quieted down” and became one of the community’s most devout young women. While Boltzius’s report gave his colleague Gronau primary credit

²⁶⁸ *Detailed Reports, vol. VII, 51.*

²⁶⁹ Ebenezer’s ministers often criticized English society in towns such as Savannah and Frederica for being too “worldly” in comparison with their settlement. As we will see in subsequent chapters, many colonists – in Savannah and elsewhere – did indeed hold alternate views about proper spiritual and moral behavior than the Salzburger pietists. Yet this does not mean that those people were not spiritual, they just did not share the same religious ideology as Ebenezer’s ministers and were in general much more heterogenous in their spiritual outlooks.

for facilitating Zorn’s religious conversion, he also emphasized the role played by other women in the community in encouraging her continued piety. Following Zorn’s initial religious instruction, the minister noted that she began to “[seek] the company of pious, adult women” who furthered her education in “proper Christianity” and taught her “various female skills” which would help her to run a household.²⁷⁰

In Trustee Georgia, all colonists were expected to do their parts to embody industry and piety as well as to encourage those traits in their family members. In doing so, officials argued, the ordinary men and women who settled in Georgia would play an active role in ensuring the success of the Trustees’ utopian vision. The lessons that each person learned within their families about hierarchy, mutual responsibility, hard work, and moral virtue also helped to promote social stability by teaching the settlers how to interact constructively with social superiors and inferiors in the broader society. Although Georgia’s society was inherently hierarchical, it was a system based more upon mutual obligation and dependency than the outright exercise of power. Within this larger system, most colonists – male as well as female – had opportunities to adopt both authoritative and submissive positions, and, as long as their behavior stayed within socially accepted bounds, Georgia’s officials had no problem with either sex adopting such roles. And even the most powerful colonists and officials could not do whatever they pleased, but had to consider how their actions affected others in society and constantly strive to set a positive example for their inferiors.

²⁷⁰ *Detailed Reports, vol. XIV, 160.*

As the examples in this chapter demonstrate, a significant number of colonists lived up to the ideals promoted by the colony's magistrates and ministers. Unfortunately for the Trustees, these colonists were not representative of all men and women who settled in Georgia. As the following chapters will show, many other inhabitants did not share the founders' vision of the colony. They held alternative ideas about appropriate work for white colonists, followed different moral codes, rejected some of their ministers' religious ideals, and refused to submit to colonial authorities. Yet despite their differences with the Trustees, most settlers still expected men and women to work together on a daily basis; some even held more permissive attitudes towards women's work than the Trustees and their colonial representatives. And unfortunately for Georgia's founders, this cooperation extended into the colonists' efforts to challenge their authority. Men and women often worked together to undermine the Trustees' plans and to oppose unpopular officials. Whatever their religious or economic beliefs, the evidence suggests that most inhabitants in Georgia, for better or worse, shared their officials' emphasis upon collaborative relations between the sexes.

Chapter 3 – ‘A Very Hell on Earth’: Colonial Realities and Alternate Views of the Trustees’ Georgia Plan

Despite the best efforts of the Trustees and their colonial representatives to create a uniquely moral, industrious, and orderly colony, the realities of Georgia’s settlement did not always live up to their expectations. While a significant number of colonists did work hard and live virtuously, Georgia’s officials were nevertheless plagued by constant complaints and criticism from unhappy settlers who objected to their strict regulations against slave labor and efforts to control land inheritance. Many of Georgia’s officials likewise grew increasingly frustrated by the colony’s slow economic development as well as by their own inability to maintain order. Some of the colony’s early problems were outside of the control of the Trustees, such as disease epidemics or unfavorable weather conditions, both of which had the power to cripple Georgia’s nascent economy. As several recent studies of colonial Georgia have demonstrated, demographic conditions during the early years, including gender ratio imbalances and relatively high mortality rates, were a particularly important factor in the inability of the colony’s founders to implement their plan fully.

For the first decade of settlement, a significant number of young men were unable to find marriage partners and form families. At first glance, this trend seems paradoxical, particularly considering that most people who went to the colony arrived in family groups and that gender ratios were much more even than in other early southern colonies. As Ben Marsh has shown, early settlement patterns in Georgia more closely resembled those in seventeenth-century New England than those in early Virginia or Maryland. Between the years of 1733 and 1741, for instance, women made up approximately thirty-four

percent of the population, a number very similar to the thirty-five percent found in New England's founding decades. In Virginia's earliest years, by contrast, there was only one woman for every five or six men. In other words, women made up a little less than twenty percent of the population. Yet as Marsh points out, these numbers are deceptive, since a significant portion of Georgia's female population was either already married or too young to marry during the colony's first decade. This left significant numbers of young men without wives and families.²⁷¹

Because of the importance of families to the Trustees' economic, moral, and social goals, this situation presented a major problem. Recall the Trustees' expectation that the family would form the cornerstone of the social order in the colony and would teach all members in society important lessons about authority, submission, and mutual responsibility. Men without families, they feared, would become selfish and unruly and not learn the importance of working for the common good of their families as well as for Georgian society as a whole. They would also be left without economic and spiritual partners to assist them in their daily struggles to survive. Such men, the officials feared, would be more likely to abandon the colony to seek better opportunities, leaving Georgia bereft of able farmer-soldiers to cultivate and protect it.²⁷² The problems created by the lack of marriageable women were compounded by a constant shortage of sufficiently able-bodied colonists in general. Modest levels of immigration, combined with relatively

²⁷¹ Marsh, *Georgia's Frontier Women*, 24-25.

²⁷² For more on the potential consequences for colonists unable to form stable families, and the demographic factors that contributed to this problem, see Ben Marsh, "Planting Families: Intent and Outcome in the Development of Colonial Georgia," *The History of the Family: An International Quarterly*, vol. 12.2 (December 2007), 104-115.

high mortality rates, led to constant labor shortages, which further damaged the economy and disheartened even the most industrious settlers.

Demographic factors therefore clearly played an important role in hindering the successful implementation of the Trustees' Georgia plan, but they were not the only – or even the most pressing – issues faced by the colony's founders. An even more significant problem was that many colonists never shared the Trustees' views on issues of labor, morality, and good order. These settlers often held very different ideas about the purpose of work, as well as what kinds of labor were appropriate for white colonists. There was also little agreement – even among some officials – about what constituted moral behavior. While some followed more rigid moral codes, others were more flexible in their beliefs and accepted, or at least tolerated, behavior often condemned by local ministers. Finally, a vocal minority of inhabitants refused to defer to the Trustees and their appointed officials, viewing them as tyrants who sought to deprive British citizens of their God-given rights. These colonists viewed the Trustees' ban on slavery and restrictions on land size and inheritance not as beneficial policies to discourage idleness and luxury, but as infringements upon their liberty and hindrances to their economic survival. By the end of the 1730s, those who opposed the Trustees' economic, religious, and social policies began an organized effort to challenge and overturn many of Georgia's founding ideals. This group, who were later known as the Malcontents, presented an alternate view of the colony and its purpose, and forced local officials to reevaluate their policies. In some cases, and particularly when it came to land inheritance regulations, the Trustees eventually acquiesced to the Malcontents' wishes. But the

Trustees refused to budge on the issue of slavery, and kept the ban on slave labor in place until 1750.

This chapter takes a detailed look at the factors that created such unrest in early Georgia, focusing in particular upon the views and values of the colonists themselves. As we will see, there was little agreement on issues of labor, virtue, and order in the colony. Gender was perhaps the factor upon which there was the most agreement, yet even here there was not complete consensus. As the previous chapter demonstrates, many ordinary colonists shared with the founders the view that collaborative gender relations were essential to the colony's success. But in this chapter we learn that, at least on the issue of land inheritance, ordinary colonists sometimes held even more permissive attitudes towards women and their roles in society than the Trustees. The colonists also held contrasting views about other gendered issues, including sexual and marital behavior and the paternal imagery used by the Trustees to bolster their authority over the colonists. These disagreements on issues of gender, labor, virtue, and order were just as important as demographic factors – if not more so – in the slow, but steady, erosion of the Trustees' Georgia plan.

One of the first planks of the Trustees' Georgia project to come under attack was their economic plan. Georgia never lived up to its proposed role as a source for exotic agricultural resources such as grapes, olives, mulberries (for the silk worms), and spices. Attempts were made to grow such crops, but most were abandoned after the first few years of settlement. European grape species often died soon after they were planted, and the colonists quickly learned that olives were similarly difficult to grow. Growing white

mulberry bushes to feed the silk worms proved to be a more successful endeavor, but most of Georgia's inhabitants never fully embraced silk production as an important element in their economic survival. Efforts to produce essential foodstuffs like corn and peas were similarly unsuccessful. Almost from the very beginning, the colonists complained that they were unable to support themselves, much less devote their time to growing the crops needed to create wine, olive oil, or silk. As a result, it took the settlers much longer than the anticipated year to achieve self-sufficiency. In the meantime, they depended upon the generosity of the Trustees and their stores to survive.²⁷³

In the view of many of the colony's officials, this lack of agricultural development was the result of the colonists' own laziness. Rather than follow the Trustees' labor expectations, they argued, a number of settlers viewed themselves as above "honest" work such as field labor. In April 1741, James Oglethorpe noted the lack of agricultural progress and attributed it, in part, to the "Idleness wickedness & Folly" of some of the colonists.²⁷⁴ Others similarly noted the unwillingness of some of the inhabitants – and particularly the servants – to work. In 1739, for instance, when William Thompson, captain of one of the ships used to transport settlers to Georgia, was questioned by the Trustees about the colony's lack of progress, he blamed the personal faults of the colonists themselves, "who were never used to hard labour, or [believed themselves to be] above it, and lived luxuriously in England." According to Thompson, the only exceptions were the non-British Protestants, who were industrious "above all." Because of their willingness to work hard, Thompson opined, the colony would have

²⁷³ For more on the failure of the Trustees' agricultural agenda, see Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History*, 111-128.

²⁷⁴ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XXIII, 24.

been much more successful if it had been “Settled ... with none but [German-speaking Protestants], especially at first.”²⁷⁵ Magistrate William Stephens likewise repeatedly characterized most of the colonists as lazy. In December 1740, he complained that although laborers were in high demand, some colonists nevertheless “lie idle and sotting, refusing to work (though intreated) till all is spent which they earned last; and when they are prevailed on, it is with exorbitant Wages.”²⁷⁶ The following year, Stephens again commented upon the “lazy & sottish” behavior of some inhabitants who were content to perform only as much work as they needed to survive, “& if one Days Work would maintain ‘em two they sought no further.”²⁷⁷ In 1742, Stephens complained that many of the colony’s “ablest young people” chose “to go into Publick Service, (either in Scout boats, or as Rangers &c) [rather] than labour in clearing and improving Land, which too many of ‘em shew an aversion to.”²⁷⁸ John Pye, a magistrate in Savannah, held a similar opinion of the colonists. In 1741, he expressed the opinion that Savannah “would be the Most Delightfullest Place in America” if it were not for “the Indolence of those that should Manure the Land.”²⁷⁹ And in 1750, the Reverend Boltzius of Ebenezer observed that “people who lived in poverty while they were still in Germany think that in this

²⁷⁵ Egmont Papers, vol. 14209, 214-215. Although Thompson did not specify which “Foreigners” he was referring to, he almost certainly meant the German-speaking settlers, and particularly the Salzburger, who were widely praised for their industry.

²⁷⁶ *Colonial Records, supplement to vol. IV*, 48.

²⁷⁷ *Colonial Records, vol. XXIII*, 175.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 444.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 113.

country even a moderate amount of work is an unbearable burden,” and so refused to perform farm labor.²⁸⁰

Despite the tendency of Georgia’s officials to blame the colony’s lack of agricultural improvement upon the colonists themselves, the evidence makes it clear that a variety of factors, natural as well as manmade, combined to make even modest agricultural success a difficult undertaking for most Georgians. Demographic conditions, including a chronic shortage of laborers, played a major role in determining the colony’s lack of economic success. Despite frequent shipments of new colonists, the Trustees were never able to provide sufficient workers to clear the land and cultivate crops. One significant problem was their inability to keep the settlers that they sent to Georgia in the colony. Some, especially in the first years of colonization, succumbed to the fevers and maladies that often accompanied settlement in hot, humid, swampy regions. In the year following the arrival of the first settlers, for instance, up to twenty-five percent of the population died from disease. Mortality rates decreased over the course of the Trustee period, but illness nevertheless continued to weaken Georgia’s populace.²⁸¹ Other colonists, disheartened by the difficult realities of life in the settlement, abandoned their plots of land to start life anew in more prosperous colonies, while still others fled during Georgia’s hostilities with Spanish Florida in the early 1740s.²⁸² It has been estimated that

²⁸⁰ *Detailed Reports, vol. XIV, 88.*

²⁸¹ Davis, *The Fledgling Province*, 89-90. In 1742, for instance, a suspected malaria epidemic struck the colony.

²⁸² During the War of Jenkin’s Ear (which was itself part of the War of the Austrian Succession), British troops stationed in Georgia launched an offensive against the Spanish in Florida. Led by General Oglethorpe, the British attempted to capture St. Augustine in July 1740 but were forced to retreat after a month-long siege. In the aftermath of this failed expedition, many Georgians anticipated Spanish retribution. They were proven right in the summer of 1742, when the Spanish attempted to seize control of

the colony lost nearly fifty percent of its population between the years of 1737 and 1740, dropping from around 2,500 colonists to close to 1,250. The population increased steadily for the remainder of the Trustee period, but growth was slow and officials still struggled to find potential recruits.²⁸³

Servants in particular were in short supply in early Georgia. In 1741, several former residents noted the “great Want of Servants in this Town [Savannah] and Country,” which they believed “render[ed] the Free-holders thereof incapable of proceeding with proper Vigor in the Cultivating [of] their Lands.”²⁸⁴ And even those who were able to procure servants were nevertheless often left without a sufficient number of workers, “it being a general Misfortune, that during the hot Season of the Year, hardly one Half of the Servants are able to do their Masters any Work, by Reason of the violent Sickneses; which hath very much prevented the Inhabitants from making Improvements.”²⁸⁵ Illness was not the only impediment to servant productivity: the fact that many of them ran away before their terms were completed was also a major problem for the colony’s landholders. In April 1749, a young servant boy belonging to the widow Graniwetter fled with two of his siblings to Carolina, leaving her unable to take care of

St. Simons Island. The British successfully repelled the Spanish invaders during the Battle of Bloody Marsh on July 18, 1742.

²⁸³ Marsh, *Georgia’s Frontier Women*, 23-24. Many of those who left in the late 1730s were Jews and Moravians. A relatively large population of Jews immigrated to Georgia early on and settled in Savannah. Following escalating tensions between the English and Spanish at the end of the 1730s, many of this population left in order to escape a hostile Spanish takeover, and the religious inquisition that might accompany it. The Moravians, who were strict pacifists, left because they feared that they might be forced to take up arms if the Spanish did indeed invade the colony. Not surprisingly, their pacifist beliefs often gained them the scorn and ridicule of Georgia’s other colonists.

²⁸⁴ Tailfer, Anderson, Douglas, and others, *A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia*, in *The Clamorous Malcontents*, 76.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

her “household matters.” Upon hearing of the incident, the Reverend Boltzius commented that the “majority of the [new] German servants [were] unscrupulous people who [were] ungrateful for the goodness they enjoy[ed] from this land.”²⁸⁶ That October, Boltzius’s interpretation was reinforced when six of their number fled from Savannah.²⁸⁷ The following spring, the minister learned that two more had absconded from their masters, which left only two remaining servants from the latest transport of German laborers. This last report induced the minister to reflect upon the “wickedness and ingratitude” of the most recent German-speaking migrants. He asserted that he would have been sympathetic if they had left because of poor treatment, but because he knew “how well our and other servants are kept in this colony and how much more care they enjoy than those in Carolina,” he was inclined to view those who absconded as nothing more than ungrateful idlers.²⁸⁸ Boltzius’ comments thus indicate that even German-speaking servants, who were widely reputed to be the best workers, did not always live up to expectation, especially by the end of the Trustee period.

The backgrounds of the workers that the Trustees did manage to acquire further contributed to the colony’s lack of agricultural success. As we saw in the first chapter, the Trustees were under significant pressure not to send farm laborers from England to Georgia, because such workers were viewed as particularly valuable to the English economy. Only “useless” workers were supposed to be sent to Georgia. Unfortunately for the Trustees, an overabundance of urban craftsmen in England meant that the most

²⁸⁶ *Detailed Reports, vol. XIII, 37.*

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 115-116.

²⁸⁸ *Detailed Reports, vol. XIV, 54.*

likely candidates for the Georgia project were also those with the least agricultural knowledge. Out of the 827 charity colonists whose occupations are noted in the official records, only ninety were listed as either farmers or husbandmen. The bulk of the remainder worked formerly as either craftsmen or domestic servants.²⁸⁹ Despite the lack of agricultural experience among the colonists, Georgia's founders initially assumed that the colony's soil would be so fertile that even inexperienced farmers would soon grow sufficient crops to feed their families and produce goods for export. But as was the case with so many other aspects of their plan, expectation did not match reality. Farming in Georgia was never as easy as anticipated and many trained craftsmen were reluctant to abandon their trades for agricultural work. Even newly arrived indentured servants were disinclined to work on Georgia's farms. In 1749, for example, Johann Martin Boltzius complained that servants in Ebenezer were "restless because they [could not] practice their trades as apprentices and journeymen but must work as farm hands." He then went on to say that he "pit[ied] [the] Lord Trustees for having spent so much money for these people," as they had not achieved their purpose. "It is a great harm for us and the whole country that we have not received the kind of servants we described, those who have been nothing but farmers."²⁹⁰ Early the following year, the minister was still complaining about the servants sent to Ebenezer as well as to the rest of the colony. "It is a great trial for our inhabitants," he wrote in his journal, "that, instead of the servants [the people of

²⁸⁹ Davis, *The Fledgling Province*, 95. See also Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 12-13.

²⁹⁰ *Detailed Reports*, vol. XIII, 123.

Ebenezer] had described and desired from proper places in Germany, they have received all sorts of wild artisans who are unfitted to agriculture.”²⁹¹

Agricultural development in Georgia was further hampered by the poor quality of the land that many of these inexperienced colonists received. In their effort to make the colony militarily defensible, the Trustees assigned farm lots close to the primary settlements, without regard for the fertility of the soil.²⁹² This policy had very unfortunate consequences for the inhabitants who received inferior land, as naval officer John Brownfield pointed out to the Trustees in May 1737. In an effort to defend his fellow settlers from accusations of idleness, Brownfield asserted that many of them had been given tracts of land in areas unsuitable for cultivation. “The Lotts which lye in Swamp Lands & are overflowed, cannot be Improved without a considerable Number of Hands,” he informed the Trustees. He then related the specific difficulties experienced by several of his neighbors. Of John Penrose, he wrote that his tract “was upon Pine Land & unless he could get a Stock of Cattle & so turn his Farm into a Cowpen for some time; that it would not be worth Planting; the land being very poor.” According to Brownfield, “a good Number” of the inhabitants were industrious people “who would strive even in the roughest Posture of Affairs to live like Men upon the Fruits of their own Industry,” yet without better support and more careful attention to land distribution policies, Brownfield feared, “scarce any can live without frequent help.”²⁹³

Colonist James Burnside painted a similarly dire picture of the land in the colony. “Tis above 7 Years since I landed in Georgia,” he wrote in a letter to the Trustees in

²⁹¹ *Detailed Reports, vol. XIV, 4.*

²⁹² Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History*, 123-124.

²⁹³ “Letter to the Trustees, Savannah May 17, 1737,” John Brownfield Copy Book.

1741. “At my Arrival I was assign’d Lands on the Ogeatche ... River, I continued there one Year, Clear’d & Fenced 7 Acres, & planted part of it.” But despite his efforts, he claimed, “the Barrenness of that Soyl ... induced [him] to quit it.” Burnside then moved to his town lot in Savannah and applied for an additional farming plot on an island called Rotten-Possum. In the mean time, he tried to plant crops on his smaller town lot. For three years he waited for a response to his petition, and after numerous failed efforts to live off of his town lot, decided to move his family to Carolina. But just before Burnside and his family could make good on their decision to leave, the officials finally granted him an additional plot of farmland. This development was not as lucky as it first appeared, however, as the new tract of land was little more productive than the first, and Burnside was forced to move his family back to Savannah. As it turned out, Burnside’s streak of bad luck would follow him into Savannah; after a short time in town his house burned to the ground.²⁹⁴

A petition to the Trustees written by several unhappy colonists in 1741 likewise identified the distribution of land without regard for its fertility as a serious issue hindering the colonists’ productivity. According to the authors, “No regard was had to the Quality of the Ground in the Divisions, so that some were altogether Pine Barren, and some Swamp and Morass, far surpassing the Strength and Ability of the Planter.”²⁹⁵ Later in the same piece, the authors again emphasized the poor quality of many of the settlers’ plots of land, stating that the “Proportion of Pine Barren to either good Swamp or

²⁹⁴ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. II, 15-17.*

²⁹⁵ Patrick Tailfer, Hugh Anderson, David Douglas, and others, *A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia in America*, 48.

Oak and Hickory Land [the most productive lands] is at least six to one.”²⁹⁶ Without good land, these colonists argued, even the most industrious settlers would find it difficult to succeed. Such claims were bolstered by the complaints of colonists who had managed to clear their land and plant crops, yet were nevertheless unable to make a good living. One such unsuccessful settler was Alexander Monroe of Darien. During his time in Georgia, he asserted, he had “cleared, fenced in, and planted five Acres of Land, built a good House in the Town, and made other Improvements, such as Gardening, &c.,” yet he was “never able to support his Family by Cultivation, tho’ he planted the said five Acres Three Years and had a good Crop.”²⁹⁷ Thomas Neale of Savannah claimed that he was so desperate that he was forced to seek temporary work in Carolina, an act that prompted the authorities in Georgia to accuse him of abandoning the colony. In an effort to defend his behavior, Neale asserted that he had not been “able to support himself by Cultivation ... in Georgia.”²⁹⁸

Poor planning on the part of the officials concerning other aspects of the colony’s settlement likewise hampered agricultural success, as the story of Samuel Perkins makes clear. In a 1741 letter to the Trustees, in which Perkins attempted to justify his decision to leave Georgia, he depicted himself as a model colonist, yet claimed that he was unable to make a fruitful living. As he informed the Trustees, he had “expected to reap the Benefit of those several little Encouragements, that ... were promised to those that were

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 154.

²⁹⁷ “Deposition of Alexander Monroe,” *A brief account of the causes that have retarded the progress of the colony of Georgia....* (London: 1743), appendix, 1. Accessed via *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, Gale (CW105672165). See also *Colonial Records*, vol. XXIII, 22.

²⁹⁸ “Deposition of Thomas Neale,” *A brief account of the causes that have retarded the progress of the colony of Georgia....* (London: 1743), appendix, 1. Accessed via *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, Gale (CW105672165). See also *Colonial Records*, vol. XXIII, 62.

industrious and behav'd well." He acknowledged that the Trust had provided him with land and livestock, but claimed that those gifts were either destroyed or made useless by the demands and regulations made by local officials. After devoting four months to clearing and fencing land outside of Frederica, for instance, Perkins claimed that he was forced to abandon his lot by officials who, fearing an imminent invasion by the Spanish, had ordered that all colonists should remain close to the town. The next planting season, when he attempted to cultivate the larger of his two lots, he found that "not above one Acker (sic) ... [would] answer planting" and was induced to grow crops on his much smaller five-acre lot instead, which was "never sufficient to defray the Expence of maintaining his Servant who was employed thereon."²⁹⁹ The livestock that the Trustees granted him turned out to be similarly useless. When he arrived in Georgia, Perkins had received a cow and two pigs. The cow died soon after, but the pigs survived and produced several litters of offspring, which Perkins kept in the town. A subsequent regulation against keeping pigs in Savannah, however, forced him to move his livestock to his outlying plantation, where they had little supervision. Six months after they were removed from the town, several of Perkins' pigs escaped from their pen and wandered back into town, where they were shot and killed by a Trust servant. The rest eventually escaped into the woods, where they were killed by soldiers stationed in the area.³⁰⁰ Perkins' neighbor, Daniel Cannon, also reportedly lost a large number of the hogs that he owned as the result of Oglethorpe's new regulation. Most were either shot in town or

²⁹⁹ "Deposition of Samuel Perkins," *A brief account of the causes that have retarded the progress of the colony of Georgia...*, in *The Clamorous Malcontents*, 290-293. See also *Colonial Records*, vol. XXIII, 25-27.

³⁰⁰ *Colonial Records*, vol. XXIII, 25-27.

killed by poachers in the forest. According to Frederica inhabitants John Roberson and Joseph Cannon, a number of others in the town were similarly deprived of their livestock.³⁰¹

Even efforts to reward colonists by assigning them important roles in the colonial government sometimes had the unintended effect of hindering those colonists' economic productivity, as the case of James Carwels reveals. Carwels was one of the colony's tithingmen, peacekeepers charged with preserving good order in their communities. In theory, his duties were not supposed to conflict significantly with his ability to plant crops, but because he had more experience than the other tithingmen, the bulk of the work fell to him. His office thus "took up [most of] [his] time ... [and] occasioned that after having cleared and planted [his] five Acre Lott [he] lost the benefit of [his] crop." Carwels' military service during Oglethorpe's attempted invasion of St. Augustine likewise hindered his ability to make a living – and even deprived him of some of his most useful possessions: during one battle with the Spanish, his horse, saddle, and bridle were taken. As a result of these misfortunes, Carwels sought monetary compensation from the Trustees. He defended his request by citing their "unperform'd Promisses" of support, despite his nine years of "zealous" work. Without the Trustees' assistance, Carwels claimed, he could no longer make a living, having grown "Stricken'd in years and unable to perform hard Labour and ... reduced to very low and melancholy Circumstances."³⁰²

³⁰¹ "Deposition of John Roberson and Joseph Cannon," *A brief account of the causes that have retarded the progress of the colony of Georgia...*, in *The Clamorous Malcontents*, 293-296.

³⁰² *Colonial Records*, vol. XXIII, 115.

At least two other colonists similarly complained that their assigned duties prevented them from succeeding. In a 1741 deposition made following their removal to South Carolina, former Frederica residents John Roberson and Joseph Cannon made it clear that the demands of the colony's local officials were to blame for their lack of agricultural productivity. In 1736, for instance, they – as well as the other inhabitants of Frederica – received orders from General Oglethorpe that they should devote their time to making bricks and erecting twenty-seven brick houses. According to Roberson and Cannon, the people worked on this project from May until December of that year, but had little to show for their efforts. Many “[found] the Task too heavy for them and were obliged to leave off,” they explained. After eight months of hard labor, the residents of Frederica had managed to erect only two houses, both of which remained unfinished. But even worse than the lack of progress was the fact that the project had prevented them from doing anything “towards raising their own Provisions; tho’ nine Months of their one Year’s Provisions promised them by the Trustees were expended.”³⁰³

The combined effects of labor shortages, poor land quality, inexperience in farming, and inept planning on the part of Georgia's officials thus made agricultural productivity in the colony very disappointing. These realities discouraged even the most industrious colonists, and made many lose faith in the Georgia plan. As the authors of one 1741 pamphlet pointed out, Georgia was not the utopia advertised by the Trustees. Promised that they would find “healthy air,” soil that would “produce any Thing with very little Culture,” and land “not hard to be clear’d,” they instead faced backbreaking

³⁰³ “Deposition of John Roberson and Joseph Cannon,” *A brief account of the causes that have retarded the progress of the colony of Georgia...*, appendix, 9.

labor in return for a very meager profit.³⁰⁴ It is therefore not surprising that some colonists abandoned farm work in order to pursue what they believed might be more lucrative work elsewhere – either in the colony’s towns or in other parts of colonial America. But failed promises and disappointment about the realities of life in a new settlement were not the only factors hindering the implementation of the Trustees’ agriculture-based economy. A number of colonists, perhaps influenced by similar beliefs in surrounding colonies, also held alternate views about the kinds of work that were appropriate for white colonists, and were therefore unlikely to cooperate with the Trustees’ plan even if conditions were more favorable. Prominent among these beliefs was the notion that Georgia’s hot and humid climate was dangerous for white men, and that the colony’s economic ends could therefore never be met without the use of slave labor. At the heart of the debate about appropriate forms of labor for white colonists was the assumption that peoples of African descent were fundamentally different from Europeans. In the view of many advocates for the use of slave labor, black slaves found the hot climate in the southern lowcountry “no Way disagreeable nor hurtful to them.” In contrast, white workers suffered from a variety of serious ailments when forced to work during the hottest months, including “inflammatory Fevers of various kinds both continued and intermittent; wasting and tormenting Fluxes, most excruciating Cholicks, and Dry-Belly-Achs; Tremors, Vertigoes, Palsies, and a long Train of Painful and lingering nervous Distempers; which brought on to many a Cessation both from Work and Life.”³⁰⁵

³⁰⁴ Tailfer, Anderson, Douglas, and others, *A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia*, xv-xvi.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

Several prominent freeholders, including Patrick Tailfer, Hugh Anderson, and David Douglas (all of whom were later identified as Malcontents), were particularly vocal in promoting the need for slave labor. In their 1741 account of life in Georgia, they claimed that many of the tasks expected of Georgia's settlers, such as clearing land and hoeing the ground, were "Task[s] very unequal to the Strength and Constitution of white Servants." Hoeing the ground was supposedly especially cruel to the constitutions of white laborers, who were thereby "exposed to the sultry heat of the Sun." Such work, they maintained, was difficult even for African slaves, who supposedly had "Constitutions ... much stronger than white People." It was therefore "insupportable" to expect such labor from the colony's white population.³⁰⁶

Not all of those who supported the use of slave labor were Malcontents, however. John McLeod, the minister in Darien, painted a similarly dire picture for even the most industrious white inhabitants. Upon his arrival in Georgia in 1736, McLeod stated that he and the rest of the Highland Scots who settled in the town had "expected something more than being able barely to support themselves and Families by clearing Land, and planting it, or feeding Cattle." However, by 1738, it had become clear "that the Produce of Land in Georgia did not answer the Expence of Time and Labour bestowed on it, either by themselves ... or indeed by any white Men at all." As a result of their lack of success, the people of Darien decided to resettle in South Carolina, "where they would be free from such Restraints, as rendered them incapable of Subsisting themselves and

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

Families.”³⁰⁷ McLeod’s reference to the inability of white men to make a living in doing agricultural work makes it clear that one of the primary “restraints” that he believed was stifling Georgia’s economic progress was the ban on slavery. In his view, Georgia could never succeed on its present course, because white men were physically unable to improve their farms in the colony’s hot, humid climate. The implication was that African slaves, because they came from a warmer climate and were used to working in such conditions, were much better suited to working in similarly “tropical” conditions in America.

Minister George Whitefield was another vocal proponent of this point of view. In a pamphlet from 1741, in which he detailed the progress of his orphan house in Georgia, Whitefield expressed his fear that the project would not succeed without the use of slave labor. “[T]he Produce of the Land cultivated by white Servants,” he explained, “will scarcely furnish them with ordinary Food and Raiment, exclusive of the Expences of Sickness and Wages. I cannot see how it is possible for the Colony to subsist on its present Footing.”³⁰⁸ The only way to correct this problem, he believed, was to allow the use of slave labor. For his part, Whitefield anticipated using “a few Negroes” to manure the land needed to grow food for his orphan house, work which he believed was too difficult for his current servant boys to carry out.³⁰⁹ Further evidence of Whitefield’s support of the use of slave labor can be found in a 1747 letter that he wrote to the Reverend Boltzius of Ebenezer, in which he claimed that he could not “get enough farm

³⁰⁷ Deposition of John McLeod,” *A brief account of the causes that have retarded the progress of the colony of Georgia....* (London: 1743), appendix, 19-20.

³⁰⁸ Whitefield, *An account of money received and disbursed for the orphan-house in Georgia*, 3-4.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

work done at the orphanage with white laborers for sufficiently maintaining the orphans and the people who were hired to keep things in order.” In order to better support his charges and staff, Whitefield informed Boltzius that he was gathering money to purchase land and slaves in South Carolina, intending to grow much of the orphanage’s needed food there.³¹⁰ In Whitefield’s view, the use of slave labor was not incompatible with the Trustees’ goal of reforming England’s laboring poor through steady employment. As we have seen in previous chapters, he was a staunch advocate of the redeeming value of work. However, he held a more limited view of the kinds of work that white colonists – including his orphans – should be expected to perform. In his orphan house for instance, he sought to train the boys and girls in particular skills and (in the case of the boys) trades, leaving most hard manual labor to his slaves in South Carolina.

Even in Ebenezer, the location often held up by the Trustees as the model of agricultural success in early Georgia, not all of the inhabitants thought that farm labor was appropriate for all white settlers. In 1748 Johann Martin Boltzius was forced to concede that some of the town’s young men, in addition to disliking fieldwork, were “too weak for farming.” In order to prevent them from leaving the colony, he encouraged them to learn other useful trades.³¹¹ Later that same year, the minister again admitted that agricultural work in Georgia could be difficult for some colonists, particularly during the “dog days” of summer. That August, for instance, he noted that men and women who worked in the fields during the summer months often succumbed to fevers and other ailments. “It is impossible for them to work in the summer heat,” he recorded in his

³¹⁰ *Detailed Reports, vol. XI, 25-26.*

³¹¹ *Detailed Reports, vol. XII, 12.*

journal, “and if they cool down too fast after they have been too much exposed to the heat, or if they drink a lot of cold spring water, they ruin their health completely.”

Particularly vulnerable, in his view, were the settlement’s women. “It would be better if their men would plant so much flax that the women could spin it in the shade or weave some household linen or material out of cotton,” he advised.³¹² As we have seen in previous chapters, Boltzius was certainly not averse to women performing fieldwork. However, by the late 1730s he had concluded that they were more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses, and should engage in other useful tasks during the hottest parts of the day.

Although most of those opposed to the Trustees’ ban on slave labor limited their protests to complaints and written petitions, some colonists went one step further and disregarded the ban altogether. Rather than abandon their possessions in Georgia and move to a colony with less strict regulations, they quietly purchased and employed slaves on their farms. This strategy was most feasible for those who lived further away from the major settlements. The inhabitants of the frontier town of Augusta, which was on the South Carolina border, were particularly notorious for flouting the regulation against slave labor. As William Stephens explained, some settlers in Augusta also held land on the other side of the river, in Carolina, where they employed slaves. This arrangement gave them the “Opportunity of sliding two or three Negroes now and then at a Pinch into their Plantations.” And because that region of the colony was so isolated, they were able to avoid official scrutiny. It was often only when one of the slaves committed some sort of offense that he or she was brought to the magistrates’ attention. In the fall of 1741, for

³¹² *Detailed Reports, vol. XII, 78-79.*

instance, the authorities seized two slaves from a white settler after one of them was caught allegedly raping a white servant girl. The authorities imprisoned the slaves and summoned their owner to appear at the next court day in Savannah. Unfortunately for the officials, the two slave men escaped before the case could be brought to trial.³¹³ At least a few residents of the colony's more populous settlements also violated the regulation against slaves, including Mrs. Wood and Mr. Jenys, both of whom were schooner owners who used slaves to man their ships. When officials learned of the slaves, they seized them and likely sold them for profit. A third colonist, Mrs. Lyford, was also indicted for owing a slave girl, but managed to send the girl away before the magistrates could take her.³¹⁴

It is unclear how many of Georgia's inhabitants owned slaves prior to the repeal of the ban in 1751, since the official records discuss only those colonists who were caught with slaves in their possession, but it is likely that at least a few others were able to avoid official scrutiny. But regardless of how many people actually broke the law against using slave labor, the evidence makes it clear that a significant number of Georgians supported the use of such labor and hoped that the ban would one day be overturned. For many, this desire was grounded in the fear that fieldwork in Georgia's brutal climate was a death sentence for white laborers. Other advocates for slavery, however, seem to have aspired to a way of life more similar to their wealthier neighbors in South Carolina. This was particularly the case with several of the Malcontents, who were not satisfied with the moderate social advancement advocated by the Trustees.

³¹³ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, supplement to vol. IV, 271-272.*

³¹⁴ "Extract of a Letter from General Oglethorpe's Secretary," *A brief account of the causes that have retarded the progress of the colony of Georgia...*, appendix, 81-82.

Evidently, their goal in coming to Georgia was not to pursue religious virtue or to work for the common good, or at least not the Trustees' version of it, but to improve their social and economic standing. In their view, the regulation against slavery was a hindrance to their economic goals and must be overturned.

The Trustees' efforts to promote religion and moral virtue faced nearly as much resistance as their efforts to encourage industry. Early on, the situation seemed more hopeful. In his introduction to a sermon published in 1738, for instance, George Whitefield praised the people of Savannah for their "constant daily Attendance upon Publick worship." He then went on to note their "general Dislike of Heretical Principles."³¹⁵ As time went on, however, such reports were increasingly outweighed by negative descriptions of the colonists' immoral behavior and lack of spiritual devotion. In 1735, Anglican minister Samuel Quincy reported to the secretary of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge on the poor state of spiritual affairs in Savannah. "The Publick Worship of God is very much neglected & Vice and Immorality are very open and flagrant amongst us," he wrote. Rather than the three hundred congregants he thought he "might reasonably expect" at his Sunday services, the number of attendees rarely exceeded forty people, and the number who "[gave] their Constant attendance" was even smaller.³¹⁶ In 1739, Savannah bailiff Thomas Jones reported that he found the behavior of some people in the town to be "very disagreeable and offensive," including "[t]he profanation of the Lord's Day ... [and] the uncommon lewdness practiced by many

³¹⁵ George Whitefield, *The eternity of hell torments. A sermon preached at Savannah in Georgia. By George Whitefield, A. B. of Pembroke-College, Oxford.* London, MDCCXXXVIII. [1738]. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, Gale (CW119935242), vi, viii.

³¹⁶ George Fenwick Jones, ed. and trans., *Henry Newman's Salzburger Letterbooks* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1966), 528-529.

and gloried in it.”³¹⁷ In 1741, Johann Martin Boltzius complained about the “frightfully godless” lives led by many Georgians, and surmised that the colony was in real danger of God’s “terrible judgment.”³¹⁸

According to officials and colonists alike, part of the problem was that the recurrent scarcity of ministers in Georgia made it difficult for even the most devout settlers to practice their faith. This was particularly the case for those who lived in settlements far from the primary religious centers of Savannah, Ebenezer, and Frederica, but even in these towns there was no guarantee that colonists would find a minister at any given time. This was because the Trustees had a very difficult time in hiring and retaining clergymen. By 1740, just seven years after the first colonists arrived, the church in Savannah had been led by four different men. The first minister, Henry Herbert, died shortly after his arrival, but the remaining three left the post of their own accord. The Reverend Samuel Quincy left the colony for New England after two unsuccessful years as the settlement’s minister. As his above-mentioned complaint about a lack of congregants suggests, Quincy was an unpopular minister who was never able to gain a significant following; he was apparently so disillusioned by his job that he once abandoned his position for a six month period, leaving a layman to conduct church business in Savannah. Not surprisingly, the Trustees were only too willing to allow him to leave permanently. His successor, John Wesley, was more popular, but even he was forced to flee after offending the niece of a prominent local official. George Whitefield, who was perhaps the most respected of the colony’s early ministers, resigned from his

³¹⁷ “Thomas Jones to Harman Verelst, Savannah, February 17, 1739,” *General Oglethorpe’s Georgia: Colonial Letters 1734-1743*, vol. II, ed. Mills Lane (Beehive Press: Savannah, 1990), 393.

³¹⁸ *Detailed Reports*, vol. VIII, 144.

post in order to devote more time to itinerant preaching and establishing his home for orphaned children.³¹⁹

The difficulty in keeping ministers was a major point of concern for many Georgia officials. As Trust treasurer Harmon Verelst reported in a 1740 letter to George Whitefield, the Trustees were frustrated that, despite their “great Care and Readiness” to build churches and encourage religious worship, the ministers they sent there often “returned [to England] at their own Pleasure and left the Inhabitants destitute of a Minister.”³²⁰ The situation was so dire by November 1741 that Johann Martin Boltzius was compelled to exclaim that there was “no preacher now in the whole country of Georgia,” other than an unqualified divinity student.³²¹ Although Boltzius’ statement exaggerated the problem, it was certainly true that, because of the high turnover rate, the colony’s settlements were periodically left without ordained clergymen while they waited for the previous minister’s replacement to arrive. In smaller settlements such as Frederica, such periods could last a particularly long time.

The Trustees’ difficulty in hiring and keeping ministers was the result of two primary factors: the quality of the ministers willing to come to Georgia and the diversity of beliefs held by the colony’s settlers and other officials. A ministry in Georgia was not an attractive post for most ministers in England and mainland Europe. Although they were offered free land, assistance in building a house, and a salary provided by joint donations from the Georgia Trust and the S.P.G., these modest benefits were not enough

³¹⁹ Davis, *The Fledgling Province*, 193-232.

³²⁰ “Copy of a Letter from Mr. Verelst to the Reverend Mr. Whitefield dated at Westminster the 11. June 1740,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14211, 20.

³²¹ *Detailed Reports*, vol. VIII, 487.

to induce most clergymen to uproot their lives and assume the risks associated with settling a new colony. In practice, the only ones willing to take such risks tended to be young, inexperienced, and desperate.³²² In many cases, this lack of experience was an unfortunate combination with the diverse, and often unruly, nature of the congregations found in Georgia. While more charismatic and experienced ministers might have been able to gain a widespread following, or at the very least garner a measure of respect, most of the colony's young clergymen found themselves in constant conflict with the people whom they were supposed to advise. Many of the settlers were disinclined to listen to them, and often ignored their attempts to enforce religious morality. Such conditions made Georgia a very inhospitable place for many of its ministers, and when those ministers returned to England and told their stories to others, the Trustees' difficulty in finding new recruits only increased.

The unruly behavior of some colonists does not necessarily mean that the colony's inhabitants were generally irreligious or opposed to all ministers. In fact, many colonists were just as disturbed as their superiors about the religious situation in Georgia. Some even blamed local officials for their inability to keep ministers and thereby promote religion. In a 1741 letter to his brother, former Georgia resident Samuel Perkins expressed his disappointment at the lack of order and religion in the colony. In his view, Georgia was not the "fine Place, so much talk'd of in England." "Neither Law nor Gospel find any Encouragement there," he claimed. He attributed this situation, in part,

³²² In her study of Anglican missionaries and popular culture in eighteenth-century America, Annette Laing shows that the majority of ministers who went to America were clergymen from modest backgrounds with few connections. Facing a dismal job market that reserved the best positions for the sons of the elite, newly ordained ministers (as well as some older curates, chaplains, and minor vicars) were forced to resettle in the colonies if they wanted any chance at advancement. See Annette Laing, " 'All Things to All Men': Popular Religious Culture and the Anglican Mission in Colonial America, 1701-1750," (PhD diss., University of California, Riverside, June 1995), ix, 77-129.

to the local officials' mistreatment of the ministers. "[O]ur Minister (who is a very worthy Gentleman)," Perkins wrote, "was obliged (thro' ill Treatment from the General) to leave the Place, and return Home."³²³ The minister in question was most likely Charles Wesley, who had a tense relationship with General Oglethorpe. The friction was in part the result of efforts by several of the town's inhabitants to discredit Wesley's ministry by spreading negative rumors about him to the general. Relations between the men improved over time, but Wesley's unpopularity eventually induced him to return to England. Yet even though Oglethorpe did not in reality force Wesley to leave, it is clear that at least some colonists blamed him and other top officials for their inability to keep competent ministers in Georgia. In Perkins' opinion, this recurring issue prevented the Trustees from realizing their goal of creating a colony based on religious principles, which was a betrayal of those who sought to settle in Georgia because of its advertised emphasis upon religion and morality.

As Samuel Perkins' letter suggests, at least some of Georgia's inhabitants viewed themselves as religious people. How then, do we explain the officials' frequent claims that the people of Georgia were irreligious? One of the key factors here was that the colonists did not always share the same religious views as the Trustees and their appointed ministers. In a colony in which religious freedom was granted to all Protestant inhabitants, doctrinal disagreements were inevitable. And although many of the colony's ministers and other officials claimed to be religiously tolerant, they nevertheless often

³²³ "Samuel Perkins' Letter to his Brother, Charles-Town, South Carolina, Oct. 12, 1741," *A brief account of the causes that have retarded the progress of the colony of Georgia...* (London: 1743), appendix, 78. Accessed via *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, Gale (CW105672165).

viewed those who held divergent beliefs as suspect – or even ungodly.³²⁴ In the same report in which Anglican minister Samuel Quincy lamented the poor attendance at his own services, for instance, he also complained about the “great many Dissenters amongst us.”³²⁵ In May 1738, magistrate William Stephens likewise noted a significant degree of religious diversity in the colony, and particularly in Savannah. Although Stephens himself was a staunch supporter of the Church of England, he acknowledged that the Lutherans of Ebenezer and Calvinists of Darien “lived soberly” and were generally hardworking, useful colonists. The dissenters in Savannah, however, were a different story. “Tis much to be wishd the Inhabitants of Savannah could equally lay claim to a commendation for Regular living,” he wrote to the Trustees, “but as they are a mixture of various people, bred up in different modes of Religion; it can hardly be expected ... to find Uniformity among ‘em, either in Doctrine or Faith immediately.” Part of the problem, in Stephens’ mind, was the lack of religious uniformity. Despite his willingness to acknowledge the virtues of some of the colony’s non-Anglican inhabitants, his solution to Savannah’s problems entailed the conversion of the dissenters to congregants of the Church of England. “[I]t may be hoped in time to see Protestant Dissenters here in this Town in Communion with our Church,” he wrote. However, he remained skeptical that

³²⁴ Patricia Bonomi demonstrates that ministers and officials in other parts of colonial America likewise interpreted contrasting theological beliefs in terms of a religious declension. She shows that, in reality, many of the so-called ungodly people would have considered themselves to be religious; they merely held different views than the ministers. See Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Annette Laing has shown that many colonial Americans, and even self-professed adherents of particular denominations, cared little about doctrinal orthodoxy and favored instead a more flexible religious ethos that allowed them to adopt whatever beliefs and practices they favored and discard those that interfered with their personal religious preferences. Not surprisingly, such latitudinarianism brought the colonists into conflict with ministers who tried to enforce doctrinal orthodoxy. See Laing, “All Things to All Men,” 27-76, 130-186.

³²⁵ Henry Newman’s *Salzburger Letterbooks*, 529.

such a conversion would take place in the near future, considering the current state of religion in Savannah. As it stood, he explained, even the few non-Christians in the colony made a better impression than some of the self-identifying Christians. “[I]t cannot without Shame be said [that] the Jews who live among us, are not in appearance greater Infidels than some are in practice, who pass for Christians in name, but scarce ever joyn in any Religious Worship.”³²⁶ Lutheran ministers such as Johann Martin Boltzius were similarly alarmed by the diversity of religious beliefs and practices. In a 1747 journal entry, for instance, the minister emphasized the need to provide what he thought was an appropriate religious instruction to children, particularly in a place “where all sorts of sects and hawkers of strange beliefs thrive.”³²⁷

The problem, therefore, was not necessarily that Georgia’s inhabitants were irreligious, but that they held a variety of conflicting views about what constituted proper Christian doctrine and belief. The evidence suggests that the relatively dismal rates of church attendance in Georgia, and particularly in the Anglican Church, were not solely or even primarily the result of a rejection of religion, but often reflected doctrinal (as well as personal) disagreements with particular ministers. John Wesley’s controversial ministry in Savannah serves as a case in point. Although he had a number of passionate supporters, others in Georgia were not so impressed with Wesley’s ministry, and even other Anglicans viewed a number of his practices as unusual or strange. In June 1736

³²⁶ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXII, pt. I*, 166. Trustee Georgia was home to several Jewish families, many of whom were among the first group of settlers to arrive in the colony. Although the colony was supposed to be a haven for Protestant Christians, Oglethorpe and the other Trustee officials tolerated the presence of Jewish colonists, perhaps because of their particular skills and knowledge; one of the first Jewish settlers to arrive was a doctor, while another was skilled in viticulture. For more on Georgia’s Jewish colonists, see B.H. Levy, “The Early History of Georgia’s Jews,” in *Forty Years of Diversity: Essays on Colonial Georgia*, 163-182.

³²⁷ *Detailed Reports, vol. XI*, 68.

William Horton, a magistrate and military commander in Frederica, explained to Wesley why he and other colonists opposed the minister. In addition to their objections to his habit of publicly criticizing specific colonists in his sermons, the people were also perplexed by his religious beliefs. “[The people] say they are Protestants,” Horton told Wesley. “But as for you, they can’t tell what religion you are of. They never heard of such a religion before. They don’t know what to make of it.... Indeed there is neither man nor woman in the town who minds a word you say. And so you may preach long enough; but nobody will come to hear you.”³²⁸

Although Wesley’s time in Georgia preceded his theological break with the Church of England by several years, the evidence suggests that he already promoted beliefs and practices at odds with mainstream Anglicanism. In fact, in 1737 the Savannah Grand Jury published a list of grievances against Wesley, most of which concerned what they interpreted as “deviat[ions] from the principles and regulations of the Established Church.” In particular, they objected to Wesley “changing or altering such passages as he thinks proper in the Version of Psalms publicly authorized to be sung in the Church.” They were also concerned about his strict control over who could receive communion, and claimed that Wesley had a habit of refusing to admit “well-disposed and well-living persons” who would not “submit to confessions and penances for crimes which they utterly refuse, and whereof no evidence is offered.”³²⁹ Another key issue of contention was Wesley’s insistence that infants receiving the sacrament of baptism be fully immersed in the water. One of Wesley’s early goals as a minister was to return the

³²⁸ Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. XVIII, 162.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 555.

Church to the “primitive” traditions favored by the first Christians, and he believed that full immersion baptism was included among the rites practiced by the early Church. Yet this baptismal style was very different from that practiced in eighteenth-century Anglican congregations, where it was customary to sprinkle holy water on the forehead of the infant. When Wesley attempted to submerge children in Georgia fully in the water, many parents objected, seeing such an act as a strange variation of a common sacrament and even an unnecessary danger to their children, who might become ill from the exposure to the cold water.³³⁰ Thus at the same time that ministers were complaining about the variety of religious beliefs in Georgia, the colonists were expressing doubts about the legitimacy of some of those very ministers.

In addition to the presence of a variety of doctrinal beliefs, many of Georgia’s inhabitants also seem to have led their lives according to rules not always compatible with any church-sanctioned moral code. Historians have shown that ordinary people in England as well as in the North American colonies often held very different attitudes about what constituted moral behavior from their church officials.³³¹ This disjunction between religious views of proper morality and those held by some of the colonists is perhaps most evident in cases concerning sexual behavior. Instances of what many officials and ministers viewed as illicit sex were apparently so prevalent that, in 1738 George Whitefield made a special request to the Trustees that they would create a

³³⁰ Many people in the eighteenth century still subscribed to the humoral theory of medicine, which held that exposure to any extreme condition – including sudden immersion in cold water – might throw the body out of balance and cause sickness. See Mary Lindemann, *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 13-17. For an example of parents refusing to baptize their child according to Wesley’s method, see Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. XVIII, 157.

³³¹ For more on these alternate moral codes, see Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*.

“particular Law for restraining Fornication and Adultery.” Otherwise, he feared, “people who Come to Georgia ... would think to have License for Such crimes,” and thereby anger God and threaten to remove his blessing from the colony.³³² Whitefield believed that the colonists’ troubles and tribulations during the first years of settlement were “owing to God’s not permitting [the colony] to prosper whilst such barefaced Wickedness was ... suffered to remain among us.”³³³ In response to Whitefield’s request, the Trustees reassured him of their desire “to See Virtue encouraged and Vice repress,” and promised to instruct the colony’s magistrates to be more diligent in their efforts to regulate the colonists’ moral behavior.³³⁴ Subsequent reports suggest that these efforts were in vain. In 1740, William Stephens expressed outrage that one particularly troublesome colonist, Andrew Grant, lived openly with his “Bastard Family,” and even entertained other colonists in his home.³³⁵ In 1741, Johann Martin Boltzius recorded an account from a visiting Savannah resident, who informed him of the “abominable horrors ... being practiced quite with impunity in the town through adultery and fornication.... In Frederica it is said to be even worse.”³³⁶

Although Georgia’s ministers and other officials often understood extramarital sexual behavior as illicit, the colonists themselves did not always agree. This was in large part because a variety of alternate sexual and marital codes coexisted alongside the

³³² “Proposals from the Reverend Mr. Whitefield to be considered upon Wednesday the 20 of December 1738,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14209, 167.

³³³ Stephens, *A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia*, vol. II, 256.

³³⁴ “Proposals from the Reverend Mr. Whitefield to be considered upon Wednesday the 20 of December 1738,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14209, 167.

³³⁵ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, supplement to vol. IV*, 24.

³³⁶ *Detailed Reports*, vol. VIII, 130.

mores favored by the colony's ministers. Some colonists, for instance, apparently saw nothing wrong with living with a partner they were not formally married to, as long as they remained faithful to that person. In such informal relationships, community recognition and acceptance were often deemed more important than church sanctification. Historians have shown that informal, or private, marriages were not uncommon in either England or her colonies. In fact, until 1753, English law recognized private declarations of marriage as valid. According to this tradition, marriage was defined by the consent of the partners and their ability to live together harmoniously. Because of the informal nature of such relationships, they were also easily dissolved. As a result, it was not unusual for practitioners of informal marriage to have several monogamous relationships in a lifetime.³³⁷ While such colonists' first marriages were often officially recognized, authorities typically labeled their subsequent relationships as adulterous or bigamous. The case of Samuel Penseyre is a good example. In 1734 Penseyre was accused of abandoning his wife in England for another woman in Georgia. He attempted to defend his behavior in a letter to General Oglethorpe:

Sir, in a few lines I will acquaint you of the whole truth of it, for why I did do what I have done, having been married to that woman [his wife] about ten years and lived very happy for about seven years. But she got acquainted with some people that was debauched in the way of drinking.... And when she once got in the way of drinking, she could not leave it off and generally got drunk almost every day. At last my life began to be very troublesome to me... I could not bear it any longer that I was in a manner forced to go away from her, on purpose to find peace and

³³⁷ Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, 125-126. Ben Marsh offers a somewhat different interpretation of cases of cohabitation and adultery in early Georgia, viewing such behavior as the result of frontier conditions, including weak institutional authority and a lack of strong kinship networks, that allowed the development of relationships "less static and stable than in most of Europe and the northern colonies." See Marsh, *Georgia's Frontier Women*, 80.

rest my mind. After a while meeting with this woman now at present in Georgia with me... we concluded both to go to Georgia.³³⁸

Although Penseyre admitted that he had a wife in England, he felt justified in leaving her for another woman. In his eyes, his wife's drunken behavior invalidated their marriage, leaving him free to pursue a new relationship. But on some level, it seems, Penseyre knew that officials in England would not share his sense of justification, since he felt the need to flee to the colony with his new partner. Perhaps he believed that he could establish a new life with a new spouse in Georgia, where other colonists either did not know or did not care about his previous relationship. Penseyre clearly hoped that Oglethorpe would share, or at least understand, his point of view. He even warned the general that if his officially-recognized wife was in Georgia, he would be "incapable of getting [his] bread or either to serve God or men." Penseyre also asked that Oglethorpe, before passing judgment, would first consider his usefulness to the colony as a surgeon. He wrote, "I hope Your Honour will take these into consideration that I have not been the least useful person in Savannah Town but rather most useful of anyone, that is of my employ."³³⁹ Although Penseyre recognized that his behavior went against traditional moral standards, he hoped that his "usefulness" would outweigh his indiscretions. This suggests that although many colonists were undoubtedly aware of officially illicit sexual behavior, they may have overlooked such activities if the person in question contributed to the strength of the community. Unfortunately, the existing records do not reveal

³³⁸ "Samuel Penseyre to James Oglethorpe, Savannah, January 7, 1735," *General Oglethorpe's Georgia: Colonial Letters 1733-1743*, vol. I, 85.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 85-86.

General Oglethorpe's response to Penseyre's letter, and Penseyre himself became sick and died only six months after sending it.³⁴⁰

Some of Georgia's colonists also seem to have interpreted pre-marital sexual relationships differently than ministers and other Trust-appointed officials, as frequent official references to the prevalence of fornication attest. The evidence suggests that a number of colonists thus accused believed that their sexual relationships were unproblematic as long as they eventually resulted in marriage. Consider the comment of an anonymous author concerning the unusual "fruitfulness" of brides in Georgia: "I am told that some of these wives will hardly stay the nine months out to create a progeny, whether by reason of the fruitfulness of the air or of some trial of skill beforehand I do not determine."³⁴¹ Apparently couples did not always wait until marriage to experiment sexually. This trend in part reflects the difficulties faced by couples who wished to marry in a frontier colony, including the shortage of ministers. But couples could justify their behavior to themselves and to the community as a whole if they made it known that they intended to wed formally. In the view of many ordinary people on both sides of the

³⁴⁰ "Copy of a Letter from Mr. Elisha Dobree to Mr. Verelst dated at Savannah 8th July 1735," Egmont Papers, vol. 14201, 78-79. As Richard Godbeer has shown in a New England context, early American settlers were often willing to overlook controversial sexual behavior if the person in question was otherwise viewed as a useful member of the community. Nicholas Sension, a Connecticut resident with a predilection for making sexual advances towards his young male servants, for instance, avoided formal action for several decades in large part because his neighbors were hesitant to report his behavior. Although it seems that many opposed his sexually aggressive actions towards the community's young men, they also valued him as a hardworking friend and neighbor, and did not want to accuse him of an act that potentially carried the death penalty. Penseyre's case in Georgia is nowhere near as extreme, but it appears that he hoped that Oglethorpe and others would consider his greater value to the colony, and overlook his adultery. For more on the case of Nicholas Sension, see Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, 44-51.

³⁴¹ "Extract of an Anonymous Letter, Purrysburg, January 26, 1734," *General Oglethorpe's Georgia: Colonial Letters 1733-1743*, vol. I, 39.

Atlantic, engagement, not formal marriage, determined the boundary between licit and illicit sex.

The case of Lieutenant William Francis demonstrates that many in the colony were at least familiar with the belief that a promise of marriage validated sexual relationships. In 1741 Francis impregnated the maidservant of bailiff Thomas Jones after what appears to have been a long and open courtship. In a letter to General Oglethorpe, Jones accused Francis of “begetting a Maid servant of the Trusts (at [his] house) with Child, whom he had long Courted and promised to marry, but now refuse[d].”³⁴² The maid’s complicity in the relationship is unfortunately unknown, but Jones’ account suggests that Francis convinced her to engage in sexual relations with a promise of marriage. It is possible that neither party, in reality, intended to wed the other, and that the maid invented the promise of marriage as a means of defending her behavior (and subsequent pregnancy) to her master. Or she may have genuinely believed that Francis intended to marry her. Regardless of her role in the case, however, it appears that all parties involved understood the correlation between a promise of marriage and pre-marital sexual activity. In this context, Francis’s relationship with the maid was not problematic within the community until she became pregnant and he refused to take the next appropriate step and marry her. Many Georgians were clearly aware of alternate sexual codes in the colony, and often condoned such behavior as long as it did not threaten community stability.

Ordinary members of the community were not the only ones complicit in condoning sexual behavior considered illicit by the colony’s ministers. The evidence

³⁴² “Mr. Tho. Jones to Genl. Oglethorpe, Savannah 22d April 1741,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14205, 296.

suggests that some of the authorities themselves (many of whom were drawn from the ranks of the ordinary colonists) shared in the different sexual codes of their charges. Thomas Christie – the official in charge of administering oaths and keeping court records – was notorious for engaging in a number of extramarital relationships while in the colony. In 1740, Bailiff Thomas Jones reported that Christie had “brought with him a concubine from England (disowning his wife whom he left behind) with whom he lived for some years, but at length turned her off and took to him the wife of one Turner now living with whom he cohabited for some time past in a very lewd and scandalous manner.”³⁴³ Though the records are silent as to Christie’s interpretation of his behavior, he may have thought of his actions as legitimate, since it appears that he cohabited with only one woman at a time. Like other colonists in informal relationships, Christie probably felt justified in living with women who were not officially recognized as his wives, as long as these relationships were exclusive and the participants accepted one another as husband and wife.

Apparently unaware of Christie’s reputation, in 1739 the Trustees promoted him from Recorder to First Bailiff, one of the highest positions in the colonial court. This appointment soon earned the condemnation of other high-ranking officials, including William Stephens, who commented in a report to the Trustees that Christie’s advancement “was a little shocking to almost every Body, even the best of the Inhabitants; that a Man, who for some Time past was grown so obnoxious among them, ... for his Scandalous living in open Adultery with a Man’s Wife ... insomuch that, not

³⁴³ “Thomas Jones to John Lydes, Savannah, September 18, 1740,” *General Oglethorpe’s Georgia: Colonial Letters 1733-1743*, vol. II, 483-484.

without good Reason, they were apprehensive [of] his future Behavior on the Bench.”³⁴⁴ Yet despite the objections of local officials, and even some other colonists, to Christie’s appointment, there was little that they could do until they received instructions from the Trustees in England. In the meantime, colonial officials asked the Reverend Whitefield to convince Christie to “put away his House-keeper ... that there might be no farther Occasion of Scandal.”³⁴⁵ But the minister’s efforts were in vain. Though Christie initially promised to leave his mistress, they were still together several months later when Christie left for England. In June of 1740, the Trustees finally responded to the situation by revoking Christie’s appointment, but by that time Christie himself had already left the colony.

Christie’s case demonstrates that different moral codes did not unambiguously divide officials on one side and colonists on the other. Some colonists doubtless supported the more formal sexual and marital code favored by many of the authorities. For example, it is clear that many couples were eager to marry when provided the services of visiting clergymen. During the few weeks that the Reverend Orton visited the

³⁴⁴ William Stephens, *A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia*, vol. II, 157.

³⁴⁵ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. IV, 499. The fact that Christie attempted to pass off his mistress as his housekeeper indicates that he was aware that others might object to their relationship. Female servants did, after all, sometimes live with single male masters. It is unlikely, however, that Christie’s particular companion, Sarah Turner, was his live-in servant. First of all, as a married woman, even one whose husband had left the colony without her, she was an unlikely candidate for such a position. Even if she were trying to earn money as a housekeeper, she already had a home that she could return to when she finished her work. Secondly, it was widely reported that their relationship was romantic in nature. Adding weight to the theory that Turner was Christie’s common-law wife was the fact that when Christie left Georgia for England, she accompanied him. As we have seen, Christie also had a previous history of similar behavior, having abandoned his own formal wife in England to come to Georgia with another woman. See Egmont Papers, vol. 14205, 71-73; William Stephens, *A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia*, vol. II, 308-309.

town of Frederica in 1742, he married nineteen couples.³⁴⁶ Likewise, not all officials shared the same utopian moral values that the Trustees hoped to encourage, as demonstrated by Thomas Christie's unconventional relationships. The lack of consistent moral codes among officials and ordinary colonists alike made official efforts to enforce moral behavior a difficult, if not impossible endeavor.

While many cases of unorthodox sexual behavior in colonial Georgia can be explained by the existence of alternate moral codes among the colonists, in other cases the motivations of the participants are more ambiguous. Although many colonists followed some kind of moral code, others most likely disregarded social rules altogether when it suited their purposes. In Georgia, just as in other colonies, some people knowingly violated sexual norms. Take for instance the case of Dennis Fowler, a servant punished in 1735 for "lying with Carwall's wench in his master's yard ... in the time of divine service."³⁴⁷ Although the details of the case remain unclear, Fowler likely knew that he was violating the norms of his community, especially considering that the alleged act took place at a time when most of the community was in church. His actions may have been a form of protest or defiance. As a servant, Fowler had little say or influence in the community and his personal frustration may have prompted him to rebel in the most outrageous manner he could imagine: to have sex in an open space, owned by his master, during church services.

The link between social protest and disregard of officially sanctioned sexual mores is made particularly clear in the behavior of several prominent colonists, many of

³⁴⁶ Stephens, *The Journal of William Stephens, 1741-1743*, 97.

³⁴⁷ "Thomas Causton to James Oglethorpe, Savannah, March 24, 1735," *General Oglethorpe's Georgia: Colonial Letters 1733-1743*, 144.

whom were directly associated with a fraternal organization known as the Scots Club. This group was infamous for challenging the Trustees' regulations on the use of slave labor and issues of land inheritance, and many of its members would go on to become the first Malcontents. In 1741, Thomas Jones described the group and the trouble they had caused in the colony in a letter to a friend. "What has been the greatest bane to this part of the colony," he wrote, "has been a company of proud, idle and turbulent-spirited Scotch." According to Jones, "every one of this Scotch club (one Douglas excepted) kept his concubine publicly, by whom they have had a number of spurious children now living.... They have at all times shown their aversion to and contempt of whatever had the appearance of religion."³⁴⁸ When officials and two different clergymen pressured the men "both in public and private ... to part with or marry their concubines," they refused.³⁴⁹

While the behavior of the Scots Club might indicate that these men followed alternate codes of moral behavior, their blatant refusals to obey Georgia's ministers and officials indicate that they may have openly disregarded traditional mores as a means to demonstrate their own autonomy and flout authority. As we will see later in this chapter, these were men who challenged authority in other ways as well, as many of them vocally opposed the Trustees' policies on slavery and land tenure. In this context, unorthodox sexual behavior may have been just another way that they could challenge the Trustees and their representatives. Men such as the members of the Scots Club may have regarded the colonial setting as a place to escape traditional moral prohibitions and so resented the

³⁴⁸ "Thomas Jones to John Lydes, Savannah, September 18, 1740," *General Oglethorpe's Georgia: Colonial Letters 1733-1743*, vol. II, 479.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 480.

interference of officials, especially since those officials were of similar rank to the men they were chastising. Another possibility is that the members of the Scots club self-consciously sought to fashion an image of themselves as libertines who used their sexual behavior as a means of displaying their freedom and gallantry. Although originally a model favored by some members of the British gentry, historians have shown that wealthy planters in places such as South Carolina and Virginia adopted the image of the libertine as a means to prove their power and wealth. Supporting the possibility that the Scots Club, and later the Malcontents, may have also embraced libertinism is the fact that many of them also demonstrated a marked interest in becoming planters. These were among the most prosperous men in Georgia, and their support of unrestricted land grants and the use of slave labor suggests that their ultimate goal was to become wealthy and powerful planters like their counterparts in South Carolina. Unsuccessful in their efforts to overturn policies such as the ban on slavery, their sexual behavior was among the few means they had left to demonstrate their rank as influential, carefree, and affluent men on the rise.³⁵⁰

The inability or unwillingness of some colonists to live up to the Trustees' economic and moral expectations is indicative not only of disagreements about those specific issues, but also of a broader rejection of official authority. The Trustees and their local representatives expected deference from the colonists, no matter what personal beliefs they held about labor or morality. They saw their mission in Georgia as beneficial

³⁵⁰ For more on libertinism and its close association with elite southern notions of masculinity, see Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, 190-194.

to the “worthy” poor they sent there, and justified their rules and regulations as being for the colonists’ own good. As a result, they expected gratitude as well as deference from the colony’s inhabitants, and when those settlers failed to live up to their standards and openly criticized Trust policies, they were labeled as ungrateful and disorderly.

A number of colonists, especially the so-called Malcontents, viewed the situation very differently. They saw regulations such as the ban on slavery and the ministers’ efforts to police their moral lives as infringements upon their rights as English citizens.³⁵¹ A 1741 pamphlet written by three disgruntled former settlers demonstrates this viewpoint. Although the colony’s charter had offered the people “the fullest Rights and Properties, all the Immunities of their Mother Countries, and Privileges,” the authors alleged that the Trustees’ controlling regulations (including the ban on slavery and restrictions on land inheritance) actually curtailed those rights and condemned the colonists to poverty. “You consider’d Riches like a Divine and Philosopher,” they accused the Trustees, “and knew that they were disposed to inflate weak Minds with Pride; to pamper the Body with Luxury, and introduce a long Variety of Evils. Thus have you *Protected us from ourselves* ... by keeping all Earthly Comforts from us.”³⁵² In the view of the pamphlet’s authors, then, the high ideals of the Trustees were a major hindrance to the survival and well-being of the colonists whom they were supposed to

³⁵¹ In his study of conflicting notions of liberty and authority in colonial Georgia, Andrew Lannen explores the various ways in which the colonists believed that the Trustees’ policies violated their rights as British citizens. He ultimately sides with the colonists, depicting the Trustees as “ambitious politicians and ruthless social climbers who desired power” and who “purposely worked to delay the province’s social, economic, and political development” as a means to bolster their own control over Georgia. See Lannen, “Liberty and Authority in Colonial Georgia, 1717-1776.”

³⁵² Tailfer, Anderson, and Douglas, *A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia in America*, iii.

help. Such a critique characterized the Trustees as high-minded, but naïve and hypocritical, benefactors who lived lives of comfort in England but expected the recipients of their charity to struggle for their daily bread, all in the name of avoiding vice and luxury.

Adding to these colonists' outrage was their observation that, at the same time that the people of Georgia were scrambling to get by, their neighbors in South Carolina and elsewhere were prospering. A pamphlet penned by Malcontent Thomas Stephens, the son of President William Stephens, emphasized this disparity between Georgia and other British colonists, claiming that the colonists had been denied "those Rights and Liberties, which *British* Subjects consider as an unalienable Inheritance and Patrimony." According to Stephens, the "ill Circumstances" faced by Georgia's colonists were "too evidently owing ... to the Want of *that Liberty*, which has enriched and established the neighbouring Colonies, and extended the *British* Trade and Empire in Proportion."³⁵³ Included among these denied freedoms, according to Stephens, were the right to full ownership of land and the option of owning slaves. If the use of slaves and fee simple land ownership were truly harmful, Stephens maintained, other colonies would not be as successful as they were. "If the Liberties of former Colonies had really prevented, or even retarded their own Increase and Prosperity, or their Benefit and Advantage to *Great-Britain*," he wrote, they would have failed. Instead, the evidence seemed clear that everywhere *but* Georgia was prospering.³⁵⁴

³⁵³ Thomas Stephens, *A brief account of the causes that have retarded the progress of the colony of Georgia, in America; attested upon oath* (London, 1743), 3.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Other than the ban on slavery, one of the most contentious Trust policies that Stephens and other dissatisfied colonists interpreted as a violation of their rights as British citizens was their regulation against allowing the colonists to acquire and distribute land to their heirs as they saw fit. Recall that the Trustees placed limits upon the sizes of land grants in order to make the colony more defensible and to prevent the luxury and extravagance that they believed accompanied the ownership of large tracts of property. In order to maintain similar control over the land holdings of subsequent generations of Georgians, the Trustees initiated a land inheritance policy often referred to as “tail male.” Under this system, the property belonging to a Georgian landholder could be inherited only by that person’s eldest male child. The other male children could petition the Trustees for new tracts of their own, while daughters were expected to acquire homesteads through marriage to a male landholder. The goal was to make sure that tracts of land remained unbroken and that greedy land speculators did not marry female heirs in order to gain more property than could be received via official land grants. The Trustees also sought to ensure that there was a male household head (and potential soldier) at each home site.

In practice, the Trustees’ tail male policy was much more flexible than theory would suggest. If a man had no legitimate heirs, for instance, he had the option of suggesting someone else to take control of his land and assets. If he had only female heirs, he might also petition to have one of his daughters inherit his land. In most cases, the Trustees were inclined to follow the wishes of the colony’s landholders, as the example of Ann and Susannah Cook demonstrates. The Cook sisters were the daughters and sole heirs of Major William Cook, a military officer in Oglethorpe’s regiment.

During his lifetime, Cook took measures to ensure that both of his daughters would be provided for after his death. In 1738, when Peter Gordon and his wife petitioned to leave Savannah, they requested (likely at the urging of Major Cook) that their property be divided between the Cook sisters, a request that the Trustees soon granted.³⁵⁵ Just a few weeks later, Captain Cook himself petitioned the Trustees and asked that his property in Frederica, upon his death, be given to his daughter Ann, who would thereafter relinquish her share of the Savannah property to the sole custody of her sister. The Trustees once again agreed to the proposed terms, making the Cook sisters heirs and property holders in their own right.³⁵⁶ There are many other instances of the Trustees granting inheritance rights to female heirs. Their only stipulation, in most cases, was that if the daughter (or other female heir) married, either she or her husband had to relinquish ownership of his or her original land grant. The Trustees also took measures to support widows. If a widow's male children were minors, or if there were no male heirs, the Trustees often allowed her to retain control of her deceased husband's property. If she did have adult sons, they were expected to provide for her, and the Trustees often granted her at least a portion of the property for her lifetime. By 1739, the Trustees codified their efforts to protect and support widows, stipulating that they would, at the very least, retain control of the house and half of their husband's property for the remainder of their lives, or at least until they married another landholder.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁵ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. II, 229.*

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 239.

³⁵⁷ For more on tail male in colonial Georgia, see Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History*, 122-125. For a more detailed discussion of how the policy affected women, see Lee Ann Caldwell, "Women Landholders in Georgia," in *Forty Years of Diversity: Essays on Colonial Georgia*, 183-197. For more examples of the Trustees' granting land to widows, female heirs, and other appointed heirs (other than the

Despite the officials' efforts to accommodate the wishes of individual colonists, the tail male land policy remained a major point of contention during the Trustee period. In a 1737 letter to the Trustees, naval officer and register John Brownfield did not personally object to tail male, but made it clear that many others did. And despite his efforts to explain to his neighbors "the Necessity of Male Inheritance especially in the beginning of our Settlement," which would ensure that the colony had enough potential soldiers to defend it, many nevertheless held firm in the belief that "Unless a Man may Leave his Inheritance to Daughters, Relations, or Friends there is but little Encouragement for him to make Improvements; since a Stranger may perhaps enjoy all he as been labouring for." Brownfield maintained that he himself found such arguments to be "weak," but lamented that "the greatest number of People here are guided by them."³⁵⁸ In a 1739 letter to General Oglethorpe, Trust gardener and Malcontent organizer Hugh Anderson further clarified the people's objections to tail male. Of particular concern was the stipulation that "only the Eldest Son could reap the Benefit [of the family's hard work]." The younger children, in contrast, were "left to be fed by him, who feeds the Ravens; and if they have no Children, their Labour and Substance descends to Strangers." "Are not our Younger Children and Daughters," Anderson asked the general, "equally entitled to our Bowels and Affections?" "And does humane nature end with our first Born, and not extend it self to the rest of our Progeny and more distant Relations?"³⁵⁹

eldest son), see *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. I*, 345-346; *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. II*, 35, 64, 96, 112, 126.

³⁵⁸ "John Brownfield's Letter to the Trustees, Savannah May 17 1737," John Brownfield Copy Book.

³⁵⁹ "Mr. Hugh Anderson's letter to Genl. Oglethorpe, wrote to him from Savannah 6 Jany. 1738/9," Egmont Papers, vol. 14203, 256.

Many colonists therefore viewed the tail male policy as an unwarranted hardship for their daughters and younger children. Although they would all have a chance to possess land of their own (through marriage or by petitioning the Trustees), there was no guarantee that their property would be of the same quality as that cultivated and planted by their parents. Those who were given undeveloped tracts of land in effect had to start their new lives from scratch, and could not benefit from the previous hard work of their families. Such circumstances were considered especially unfair because the female and younger male children often played equal roles in cultivating their family's land along with their elder male sibling. This policy, and especially its effect upon female settlers, was so unpopular that it even drove away some prospective colonists. In 1734, for instance, the Reverend Dumont considered coming to Georgia and bringing a group of settlers with him. However, he decided against it because of the ways in which he believed that the Trustees' land policies unnecessarily harmed women. As he pointed out in a letter to the Trustees' secretary, female colonists could be just as valuable as men – both in the colony's agricultural success and military defense. In his view, “Women might equal & even outdo the Men in the furnishing and fortifying of Lands.” They might also fight as courageously as men to defend their property, he argued, and pointed to the example of the Vaudois women, inhabitants of the Swiss province of Vaud, who had “shewn as great Examples of Courage as the Men” during their war against German-speaking occupying troops from Bern.³⁶⁰ Yet despite women's great value to the colony,

³⁶⁰ “Translation of the Revd. Mr. Dumont's Letter to Mr. Benjamin Martyn,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14207, 80.

Dumont asserted, they were punished by the Trustees' land policies, simply because of their sex.

The Trustees' land policies – and their refusals to alter them until 1739 – prompted some of the colony's critics (as well as several later historians) to conclude that they did not value female colonists, or at least did not view them as being as valuable as male settlers. Yet, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the Trustees viewed women and families as an essential part of their plan. It was in fact this very expectation, that families would form the basic social and economic unit in Georgia, that led them to support the tail male land policy. Each family was supposed to have a plot of land sufficient to support itself and grow exotic crops for export. The founders feared that if they let landholders distribute their land as they saw fit, the divided holdings would never be able to support subsequent generations. The Trustees did not seek to deprive women of support and resources, but expected that most (if not all) would be married or live with male relatives who would provide for them. Yet although the Trustees did not intend for their policies to hurt women, their assumption that most would marry – or in the case of widows remarry – reveals a narrower conception of women's lives and roles than those held by some of the colonists. The colony's male landholders, by contrast, were not willing to leave their daughters' and wives' fates to the whims or benevolence of the Trustees, but sought more authority to determine the division of their property. It appears that they were more realistic about the possibility of their female relatives having to support themselves and their families without the assistance of a husband or father, and thus desired a clear policy in place allowing women – or indeed any desired heirs – to make a living on their property in the event of the household head's untimely death. The

debate on the Trustees' land policy thus reveals a fundamental disagreement between the Trustees and colonists on this gendered issue.

Objections to the Trustees' land policies also reaffirm that the colonists, Trustees, and their colonial representatives often held very different attitudes about the rights held by individual settlers. According to Georgia's magistrates, everything in Georgia was a gift from the Trustees. As storekeeper and bailiff Thomas Causton reportedly informed a group of disgruntled colonists, they had "neither Lands, Rights or Possessions" in Georgia, and what the "Trustees gave, ... [they] could freely take away."³⁶¹ In Causton's opinion, the colonists did not have the right to govern the land as they saw fit, but had to follow the rules established by the Trustees. Trust secretary Benjamin Martyn further defended the Trustees' land regulations as being for the ultimate good of the colonists. In response to claims of tyranny, he maintained that the tail male policy should not "be deemed a hardship" to the colonists, but instead viewed as a strategy "most suitable to the Infant State of a Colony, and wisely calculated for its Defence." According to this narrative, everything the Trustees did was intended to be for the good of the colonists. Recall that they envisioned themselves as the benevolent fathers of the colony. According to this familial model, the "infant" colony of Georgia depended upon the wise guidance of its Trustee parents.³⁶² The Trustees did not see their land regulations in terms of an effort to infringe upon the colonists' rights, but as policies that would further the economic and military success of their fictive colonial children. Many colonists, by contrast, saw the Trustees' regulations as an attack on their personal rights and freedoms.

³⁶¹ *A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia in America*, 64.

³⁶² For more on this familial model of society, see Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers*.

The Trustees and their unpopular policies were not the sole targets of the colonists' displeasure, however. Several local officials faced even harsher criticism for their "tyrannical" behavior. As one 1741 pamphlet alleged, it was the magistrates "who ruled over [the colony] with unlimited Power, exercising illegal Acts of Authority, by Threatnings, Imprisonments, and other Oppressions."³⁶³ "[I]nstead of such a free Government as we had reason to expect, and of being judged by the Laws of our Mother Country," the authors alleged, they were ruled by "a *Dictator*, (under the Title of *Bailiff* and *Store-keeper* ...) whose *Will and Pleasure* were the only Laws in *Georgia*." The particular "dictator" in question was Thomas Causton, a former calico printer whom the Trustees had appointed as their storekeeper in Savannah. In this position, Causton was in charge of distributing the goods provided by the Trustees to the colonists and keeping track of their accounts. His access to the colony's resources, and distance from the Trustees in England, gave him a significant measure of power and influence – power that many colonists believed he misused. Throughout his career, Causton was accused of playing favorites and providing himself and his supporters with the best supplies, while leaving rancid meat and moldy bread for everyone else.³⁶⁴ If someone displeased him, his critics alleged, he might withhold resources altogether. In 1734, for instance, he denied Mr. Gordon, a rival magistrate, goods from his store, "which in a little Time rendred [Gordon] incapable to support himself and Family, whereby he was obliged, after about six Weeks Stay, to leave the Place."³⁶⁵ Causton was also accused of threatening Savannah's jurors whenever "their Verdicts did not agree with his Inclination or

³⁶³ *A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia in America*, xi.

³⁶⁴ Davis, *The Fledgling Province*, 60-61.

³⁶⁵ *A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia in America*, 33.

Humour,” and of assigning overly harsh punishments to those found guilty of minor infractions. His propensity to hand out such punishments was allegedly so extreme “that the *Georgia Stocks, Whipping-Post* and *Log-House*, soon were famous in *Carolina* and every where else in America.”³⁶⁶

The complaints against Causton eventually prompted the Trustees to dismiss him from his position in 1739. He was replaced by former bailiff Thomas Jones, who soon faced similar accusations of tyranny. Jones was viewed as such a threat that in 1742 the grand jury in Savannah, which was composed of ordinary freeholders, indicted him for infringing upon the “*Liberties and Properties* of his Majesty’s Liege People, inhabiting of this Colony,” and urged the court to take immediate action against him.³⁶⁷ Jones’ subsequent actions did little to assuage their fears: when he arrived at court, he took his usual position upon the bench and immediately cleared all of the charges against him. He then requested that several soldiers be sent to Savannah, claiming that there were Spanish spies in the town. Jones’ critics suspected a more sinister motive. In a 1742 letter from merchant William Ewen to Malcontent Thomas Stephens, Ewen claimed that Jones’ request “was done under a false Colour, *in order to introduce Soldiers into the Town and enslave the People.*”³⁶⁸

Reverend Boltzius was also condemned by some colonists for the way in which he wielded his authority in Ebenezer. As the town’s religious as well as secular leader, he had control of nearly all aspects of the village’s operation. Early on, the Trustees had

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 32-33.

³⁶⁷ “A Representation from the Grand Jury to the Court of Savannah, Savannah May 20, 1742,” *A brief account of the causes that have retarded the progress of the colony of Georgia...*, appendix 69-71.

³⁶⁸ “Extract of a Letter from Mr. William Ewen to Mr. Thomas Stevens,” *A brief account of the causes that have retarded the progress of the colony of Georgia...*, appendix 71-72.

attempted to send a secular leader to the settlement, but he proved to be so unpopular that they eventually gave full authority to Boltzius. Although he was generally viewed as a much more benevolent leader than either Causton or Jones, his considerable power over the way in which Ebenezer was run made those who did not agree with his methods and ideology uncomfortable. As one critic pointed out, Boltzius acted as the “King, Priest, and Prophet” of Ebenezer. Among the most controversial of Boltzius’ powers was the ability to distribute material and financial resources according to his own whims; if someone did not live up to his expectations, he often withheld assistance until they reformed their ways to his satisfaction. Not surprisingly, this upset some of the inhabitants, including John Speilbeigler, whose family had frequent conflicts with the minister. In a deposition reprinted in a Malcontent propaganda piece, Spielbeigler claimed that the people of Ebenezer “could not live were it not for the Assistance they received from their Friends in Europe and the Trustees Store.” Unfortunately for those not in Boltzius’ good graces, he asserted, the minister “distributed among them as *he* thought fit.” In Speilbeigler’s particular case, the minister had redistributed farming tools from his plantation after he left Ebenezer to seek work in Savannah. Speilbeigler viewed this seizure of his equipment, “without Judge or Jury,” as a violation of his rights, particularly because he felt that he was in no way “indebted to the said Boltzius.”³⁶⁹ According to Speilbeigler, Boltzius’ power gave him much influence over the inhabitants of Ebenezer, and made them reluctant to displease him. The minister’s efforts to gain signatures for an anti-slavery petition was used as a case-in-point: according to

³⁶⁹ “From Ebenezer,” *A brief account of the causes that have retarded the progress of the colony of Georgia...*, appendix 33-35.

Speilbeigler, the signatures were not the result of the desires of the people, but had been coerced. Many of them, he maintained, “would not have signed it, had they not been compelled to do it by the said Boltzius.”³⁷⁰

The conflicts between Georgia’s magistrates and ministers and the people whom they were supposed to govern demonstrate two fundamentally different views of the colony and its purpose. For their part, the Trustees and many of their representatives viewed themselves in effect as the colony’s fathers, who had devoted their time, energy, and resources to assisting people who would otherwise remain hopeless and destitute. They viewed the recipients of their charity as their children, and expected them to be grateful for their good fortune and to demonstrate appropriate deference to their fictive fathers. Many of the colonists viewed the situation very differently. Although initially anticipating that emigration to Georgia would offer them greater opportunities than were to be found in England or the Continent, upon arrival many colonists found the Trustees’ regulations to be overly stifling, and felt that they had lost many of the freedoms offered to English subjects elsewhere. Yet this emphasis upon rights and freedoms as citizens does not necessarily mean that the colonists rejected the Trustees’ familial ideology. In fact, in at least one case, the colonists’ criticisms of the colony’s supposedly tyrannical officials were explicitly connected to the failure of those authorities to act as caring, devoted fathers to their charges. In *A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia in America*, for instance, the authors, addressing criticism that they were overly naïve for buying into the Trustees’ promises of fruitful soil and easy labor, defended themselves on the grounds that they had viewed Oglethorpe as a benevolent paternal

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

figure who was looking out for their best interests. “Could a Person with the least Faith,” they asked, “have question’d the Committing his interests to such Guardians, and such a tender Father as Mr. Oglethorpe was believed to be?”³⁷¹ The authors of the piece thereby turned the Trustees’ familial imagery on its head. In their view, the Trustees and their representatives did not fit the benevolent, fatherly image that they sought to cultivate, but were instead tyrants who held no regard for their charges. They did not challenge the familial model itself, but the ways in which they believed that the Trustees were enacting it. If they were such good fathers, the Trustees’ critics asked, then why did they allow their colonists to suffer in poverty? This attack was likely, at least in part, a calculated attempt to use the founders’ rhetoric against them. But this does not mean that those who opposed the Trustees’ policies did not also view good order in familial terms. The difference was that these colonists sought fathers who were less authoritarian and more benevolent.³⁷²

Such conflicts between officials who expected unconditional deference and colonists who refused to bow to their supposed superiors had a long history in the North American settlements and reveal the inherent tension between contrasting ideals of dependence and freedom in colonial America. While colonial governments and their elite allies sought to impose order and solidify their positions by establishing hierarchies

³⁷¹ *A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia in America*, xxii.

³⁷² Such a desire for a less authoritarian colonial government draws interesting parallels with similar debates that emerged just a few decades later, during the build-up to the American Revolution. One of the key grievances of the colonial patriots was that their ultimate father figure, the king, had turned his back on his colonial children. In their view, he had abandoned his role as a benevolent figure who made decisions for the good of his colonial subjects, and was instead an abusive tyrant. According to late eighteenth-century familial ideology, such a violation of the king’s paternal role legitimized the rebellion of his colonial children. For more on the connections between the familial social model and the American Revolution, see Godbeer, *The Overflowing of Friendship*, 142-152.

similar to those found across the Atlantic, implementing policies that preserved that social order, colonists often fought vociferously against actions that they believed might deprive them of the same opportunities for social mobility held by their fellow countrymen in England as well as their colonial forebears.³⁷³ Among those most likely to object to efforts to impose a strict social order on the colonists – in Georgia as well as elsewhere in early America – were young male landholders who feared what they saw as increasing levels of inequality around them, and particularly the mistreatment of white servants. Yet their goal was often not to eradicate all forms of inequality, but to preserve their own piece of the colonial pie.³⁷⁴

The colonists' discontent with the realities of life in Georgia and what they perceived as the failures of the Trustee government eventually prompted some of them to launch an organized campaign to challenge their unpopular policies. Labeled as

³⁷³ Historians have long debated the extent to which colonial American society was based on hierarchy and deference. While historians such as Aaron Fogleman and Alfred F. Young assert that, prior to the Revolution, early American society was firmly hierarchical, and featured elaborate rituals of deference that reinforced the power of the colonial elite, others such as Michael Zuckerman demonstrate that non-elite white culture in pre-Revolutionary America already featured a strong antiauthoritarian streak. See Aaron Fogleman, "From Slaves, Convicts, and Servants to Free Passengers: The Transformation of Immigration in the Era of the American Revolution," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 85, no. 1 (June 1998), 43-76; Alfred F. Young, "George Robert Twelves Hewes (1742-1840): A Boston Shoemaker and the Memory of the American Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, vol. 38, no. 4 (October 1981), 562-623; and Michael Zuckerman, "Tocqueville, Turner, and Turds: Four Stories of Manners in Early America," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 85, no. 1 (June 1998), 13-42.

³⁷⁴ In "Antiauthoritarianism and Freedom in Early America," Kathleen Brown suggests that the apparent contradiction between the anti-authoritarian behavior of some colonists and the overwhelmingly hierarchical nature of life in colonial America can be explained as the efforts of a select few (mostly male) colonists who held a modicum of power and sought to preserve their status during times of what they perceived (often rightly) as periods of increasing unfreedom. This certainly seems to hold true in Georgia, since the most vocal opponents of the Trustees, the Malcontents, fit the profile of those Brown asserts would be most likely to seek to oppose the established hierarchy: young, comparatively successful men who had not yet broken into the ranks of the colonial elite. See Brown, "Antiauthoritarianism and Freedom in Early America," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 85, no. 1 (June 1998), 77-85.

“Malcontents” by the Trust officials, this group was spearheaded by a number of relatively affluent men in Savannah, including physician Patrick Tailfer, merchant David Douglas, and Trust gardener Hugh Anderson. Often described by the colony’s officials as a unified and organized core of disgruntled and greedy freeholders who used their influence to “enflame” the poorer sort, the Malcontents were in reality a heterogenous group of people who joined together to oppose different aspects of the Trustees’ plan. Some members did indeed fit the profile of ambitious settlers who sought to turn Georgia into another South Carolina; but others who participated in their protests were conscientious objectors to what they saw as the Trustees’ stifling rules and regulations.³⁷⁵

As this chapter demonstrates, some colonists were unhappy with Georgia almost from the very beginning. The first complaints about the lack of slave labor began in 1735, for instance, and concerns about the land restrictions (and especially tail male) emerged even earlier. Yet organized protest did not begin until December 1738, when Patrick Tailfer and his associates penned a formal complaint to the Trustees, arguing that the colony would never succeed without lifting the ban on slavery and the restrictions on landholding. One hundred and twenty-one colonists signed the document, but it received little attention from the Trustees in England, especially after Oglethorpe and other local officials claimed that the petitioners were “lazy” and “idle” men who were falsely representing conditions in the colony for their own selfish ends. In 1739 the Malcontents

³⁷⁵ For more on the Malcontents, and a collection of their published works, see Reese, *The Clamorous Malcontents*. For a more detailed description of the backgrounds of the malcontents and their efforts to overturn the Trustees’ ban on slavery, see Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 24-58. Of the 121 colonists who signed the Malcontent’s 1738 petition to the Trustees, Wood finds that 67 were freeholders, 45 were charity colonists, and 9 were servants. Arguing for the fluid nature of malcontent membership, Wood also found that almost half of the original petitioners did not support subsequent protests against the Trustee government – though she admits that this may have been (at least in part) the result of those colonists’ death or desertion.

made another attempt to present their case before the Trustees by sending Thomas Stephens (the son of President and major Malcontent opponent William Stephens) to speak with the Earl of Egmont. Egmont, not yet realizing that Stephens was himself a Malcontent, listened to the young man's concerns, but would not offer him any support. Two weeks later, Stephens again attempted to sway the Trustees by presenting them with his written account of the problems in Georgia, and when his words were again ignored, he initiated a drawn-out campaign to turn the British Parliament against the Trustees.

Back in Georgia, the Malcontents were becoming disheartened by their lack of success and, in the summer of 1740, many of the group's leaders abandoned the colony. Yet despite their relocation, the Malcontent threat was far from over, since a number of their supporters remained in the colony and continued to challenge local officials. Those who left – including former leaders Patrick Tailfer, David Douglas, and Hugh Anderson – also continued to criticize Georgia's government, and even published a harsh critique of the colony, entitled *A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia* (1741). They were joined in their efforts by Thomas Stephens, who soon published his own anti-Trustee pamphlets, *The Hard Case of the Distressed People of Georgia* (1742) and *A Brief Account of the Causes that have retarded the Progress of the Colony of Georgia* (1743). For much of the remainder of the Trustee period, Georgia's officials feared the Malcontents and their influence upon not only the colony's inhabitants but also their sources of funding across the Atlantic. Their fears were somewhat assuaged in 1742 when the House of Commons formally rejected Thomas Stephens' complaints against the Trustees, yet much damage had already been done.

Regardless of its ultimate failure, the strength and persistence of the Malcontents' campaign against the Trustees' founding ideals reveals just how alluring the desire for slave labor and unrestricted access to land was for even newly arrived colonists. Despite the rhetoric of the Trustees and many of the colony's ministers, many colonists did not view slavery as a moral issue; it was instead an institution that preserved the health of white laborers and offered them the prospect of economic and social advancement. To modern eyes, the Malcontents' desire for slaves contradicts their frequent calls for freedom from tyranny. Yet we must remember that in the highly hierarchical world of many early Americans, the use of slave labor seemed little different from the forms of servitude that they were accustomed to. Slavery was a much more permanent condition, yet for many early Georgians, so was their own poverty. In order to overcome their own station in life, many Georgians were willing to build their wealth on the labor of an enslaved people whom they already believed were fundamentally different from themselves and naturally suited to work in the hot and humid climate of the southern lowcountry. Aware of the wealth and success of their neighbors in Carolina, many of whom came from similarly modest circumstances, a significant number of Georgians were deeply attracted to plantation society and the affluence and power it promised.

Chapter 4 – Familial Disorder: Betrayals of Mutual Responsibility and the Gendered Hierarchy

By the late 1730s it had become increasingly clear to Georgia's officials that, despite their best efforts to create a colony based upon principles of order, industry, and virtue, not all of the colonists were willing to defer to the Trustees' authority or follow their rules and expectations. Colonists who opposed the Trustee government, such as the Malcontents, challenged nearly every tenet that the Trustees held dear: they refused to bow to official authority, they questioned the Trustees' land restrictions and ban on slavery, and they openly ridiculed the colony's ministers and their efforts to enforce morality. In an effort to curb what they saw as a decline in good order, Georgia's magistrates and ministers initiated efforts to identify and correct the sources of this unruly behavior. And since the Trustees and many of their ministerial and secular representatives viewed the family as the foundational unit of the social order, it is not surprising that officials began to pay even closer attention to Georgia's families around the same time as the Malcontent crisis.

Initially, officials such as General Oglethorpe attributed the unruly behavior of their colonists, and particularly of young men, to an inability to find eligible mates and start families. In 1742, for example, the general insisted that the establishment of families was crucial to restoring social stability in the colony. Unfortunately, he explained, eligible men outnumbered available women. In order to solve this problem, he requested that the Trustees send single women, since "married soldiers live easiest many of them having turned out very industrious Planters." Oglethorpe, like his predecessors in early seventeenth-century Virginia, maintained that demographic instabilities were behind the unruly behavior of the colony's young men, and argued that more women

were needed. In his view, married men with families were more loyal, orderly, and industrious.³⁷⁶ But magistrates and ministers alike realized that demographic instabilities were not the only sources of the colony's distress. They also looked to unstable or disorderly relationships within the family as factors in what they perceived as a breakdown of order in the colony. As we have seen, Georgia's officials believed that the family represented a microcosm of society as a whole: the hierarchical relationships between household members, especially between the husband and wife, translated to all other relationships in society. According to this model, the wife's submission to her husband promoted social harmony by teaching all subordinates (male and female) to respect authority and fulfill their expected roles.³⁷⁷ Husbands in turn had the responsibility to support, nurture, and protect their dependents. In this family-based social system, any disruption of familial order threatened to undermine all other hierarchical relationships in society – including that between Trust officials and the “worthy poor.” Familial instability also presented a significant spiritual threat to the colony's wellbeing. Georgia's ministers argued that since God had ordained the household hierarchy, any violation of familial order or responsibilities represented an affront to God's will and might easily bring divine punishment upon the transgressors, as well as on the colony as a whole. In order to get Georgia back on the correct path, it was therefore imperative for the colony's ministers and other officials to encourage stable relations between men and women at the household level.

³⁷⁶ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXIII*, 488-489. Ben Marsh discusses these demographic instabilities, as well as the importance of family formation to the Georgia plan in *Georgia's Frontier Women* and “Planting families: Intent and outcome in the development of colonial Georgia,” 104-115.

³⁷⁷ For more on this familial social system, see Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers*.

Unfortunately for the Trustees and their representatives, examples of familial disorder seemed to abound in early eighteenth-century Georgia. Wives disobeyed their husbands, husbands abused and refused to support their spouses and children, and colonists of both sexes failed to act as positive moral and hardworking examples to their families. A close analysis of accounts of colonists who violated gendered expectations provides a detailed picture of the magistrates' values and expectations and ultimately serves to reaffirm just how important gender was to Georgia's social order. Of particular interest in this chapter are the detailed records left behind by Johann Martin Boltzius, the minister and highest secular official in Ebenezer. As the only clergyman whose ministry lasted the entire Trustee period, his accounts of the everyday interactions between men and women in Georgia offer valuable insight into the behavior of colonists on a household level, as well as official interpretations of that behavior. His particular views as a Pietist Lutheran played an important role in shaping his gender ideals, yet this does not mean that his beliefs were significantly different from those promoted by Georgia's other magistrates and ministers. Recall that Georgia's Trustees often promoted the Lutheran Salzburgers and their ministers as the inhabitants who best matched their religious and economic ideals. Similar descriptions of disorderly colonists provided by other ministers and officials – in this chapter as well as in the next – show that there was a significant level of consensus among the colony's authorities concerning proper gender roles and responsibilities. And since many of these magistrates were drawn from the ranks of ordinary colonists, their descriptions also offer insight into the gendered views held by at least some Georgia settlers. The less numerous accounts left by Georgia's inhabitants support the notion that Trust officials and many settlers shared similar views

about the connections between gender and order. Taken together, such descriptions make it clear that gender hierarchy was essential to Georgia's social organization and, moreover, that the hierarchy envisioned by the Trustees and many colonists incorporated a significant degree of mutual responsibility.

Julianna Ortmann, the wife of the schoolmaster in the predominantly German-speaking settlement of Ebenezer, exemplifies the kind of female colonist that officials criticized for failing to fulfill familial responsibilities. Ebenezer's ministers and other local authorities often accused Ortmann of domineering over her husband in their home and thereby challenging the established gender hierarchy. Far from being a private matter between Ortmann and her husband, officials argued, her disorderly behavior represented a threat to the stability of their entire community. Julianna Ortmann's story serves as a good introduction to the kinds of behavior that most concerned Georgia's magistrates and provides a concrete illustration of the connections that officials drew between familial unrest and broader forms of social disorder.³⁷⁸

The first stirrings of trouble within the Ortmann household emerged in 1734. In January of that year, the Reverend Johann Martin Boltzius reported that "Mrs. Ortmann has once more started to go on in her own frivolous and unchristian way, and even her

³⁷⁸ For a somewhat similar interpretation of Julianna Ortmann's behavior, see Michelle Henley, "Gender and Piety," 133-134, see also 146-150. Henley utilizes Ortmann's negative interactions with her husband as well as with Ebenezer's officials as an illustration of the potential consequences for pietist women who took their independence too far. Although Lutheran pietism allowed women some power, she argues, this empowerment sometimes provoked negative reactions towards those seen to push the limits of their authority. In contrast to my own work, Henley assumes that such "independence" – and the dangers that accompanied it – was unique to the German Salzburger at Ebenezer. Yet the evidence makes it clear that this was a colony-wide phenomenon, and not just the result of pietist beliefs that occasionally allowed women to "circumvent traditional gender hierarchies." Although there were clear anxieties about women going too far when adopting authoritative roles, such behavior (as long as it stayed within certain bounds) did not go against the expected gender order.

husband is incapable of keeping her under control.” Although the exact nature of Ortmann’s behavior remains unclear, Boltzius indicated that she had already gained a reputation as a quarrelsome and difficult woman who refused to obey her husband. In order to remedy the situation, the minister encouraged Christopher Ortmann to pray for God’s assistance in governing his wife, and for a time it seemed that his efforts were successful.³⁷⁹ By the following March, however, Julianna Ortmann was once again causing trouble. “Today Mrs. Ortmann again gave us a sample of her very bad temper,” Boltzius reported. “She not only picked an annoying quarrel with the commissary’s servant, but struck him in the face for no reason at all and caused altogether a great disturbance.” At the heart of her misbehavior, according to the minister, was her husband’s continuing inability to control her. “Her husband is a slave to her,” he explained, “and can’t govern her, and she won’t listen to other people at all.”³⁸⁰

Julianna Ortmann’s efforts to “rule over” her husband became a common theme in official complaints about her over the following years. In early December of 1736, Boltzius again confronted Christopher Ortmann about his wife’s behavior. Julianna Ortmann had recently announced her intention to take an extended trip to Charlestown, allegedly to bring gifts to a friend, though rumors soon spread that she was actually going to meet a former male lodger, an action many in the village considered inappropriate for a married woman. But regardless of her actual intentions, Boltzius feared that Mrs. Ortmann’s “worldly disposition” and propensity for trouble would lead her astray in

³⁷⁹ *Detailed Reports, vol. III, 305.*

³⁸⁰ *Ibid., 311.*

Carolina, a place the minister viewed as a den of vice and impropriety.³⁸¹ In order to prevent the disorder and scandal that might arise in their small community from her behavior, the minister took it upon himself to convince Ortmann to cancel her trip. He began by speaking with her husband and attempting to persuade him to forbid the excursion. But as the minister would soon learn, such a measure would do little to change Julianna Ortmann's mind. Upon Boltzius' arrival to the Ortmann home, Christopher Ortmann "attested that this planned trip was occurring against his will," but lamented that "she could not be held back." When the minister subsequently spoke to Julianna Ortmann herself and attempted to convince her to alter her plans, she "entirely revealed her wicked nature through her rude, defiant, and awkward words."³⁸² In response, the minister forbade her from boarding a ship scheduled to travel downriver to Savannah. Yet for all of his efforts, Boltzius's attempts to halt Julianna Ortmann's excursion were in vain, and that very evening she covertly left Ebenezer and began her journey over land to Charleston. When she returned nearly eight weeks later, in the company of a "suspicious-looking guide," Boltzius commented that her behavior was "hardly becoming for a schoolmaster's wife."³⁸³

In 1737, Julianna Ortmann's behavior again drew official attention. That June, an Englishman employed by the Trustees to deliver cattle to a neighboring settlement became ill. When Ortmann subsequently rushed to his side, despite his distance and the fact that there were others available to take care of him, Boltzius immediately suspected

³⁸¹ See for instance, *Detailed Reports*, vol. VI, 19; *Detailed Reports*, vol. VII, 174; *Detailed Reports*, vol. XIV, 73.

³⁸² *Detailed Reports*, vol. III, 253-254.

³⁸³ *Detailed Reports*, vol. VI, 11.

that her intentions were less than pure. In response to the “scandalous matter,” Boltzius and his assistant paid another visit to Ortmann’s husband. Initially, Christopher Ortmann attempted to defend his spouse, and made it clear that he “considered his wife honest, the travel necessary, and [the ministers] overly suspicious.”³⁸⁴ Later, however, he admitted “that his wife could not do without the company of Englishmen, to which she was already too accustomed.” “Finally, he could no longer hide his grief at this,” Boltzius reported in his journal, “and he spoke of either moving away or leaving his wife, if only to get his peace. He also admitted . . . that she did not take any advice and intended shortly to travel to Charleston again, and that nothing could be done to dissuade her.”³⁸⁵ Several years later, Ebenezer’s minister yet again accused the schoolmaster’s wife of causing public controversy by inappropriately asserting her own authority over that of her husband. In February 1741, she came into conflict with Mr. Krüsy, a carpenter and tenant in her home. When Boltzius looked into the matter, he determined that the primary issue was that Mrs. Ortmann spent too much time “worry[ing] about things which should not be settled by her but her husband.”³⁸⁶

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 120.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 121.

³⁸⁶ *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII, 66.* There are some interesting parallels between Julianna Ortmann’s interactions with the carpenter Krüsy and the well-known seventeenth-century case of Ann Hibbens of New England. Both women were condemned for the ways in which they treated male carpenters doing work in their home. In particular, authorities maintained that they were inappropriately assertive and had assumed authoritative roles that more rightfully belonged to their husbands. The ministers in Boston eventually excommunicated Hibbens for failing to admit her fault in the case; several years later, she was accused of witchcraft and sentenced to death. The consequences for Ortmann were not quite so dramatic, though Pastor Boltzius did periodically exclude her from taking communion. For more on the Hibbens case, see John Demos, *Remarkable Provinces: Readings on Early American History* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 262-282.

Julianna Ortmann's defiant disregard of her husband's authority represented a direct inversion of the traditional gender order. According to Boltzius, Ortmann "ruled at home in all things" and "did not let herself be dissuaded from her purpose even by her husband."³⁸⁷ But Julianna Ortmann's behavior was controversial not only because of the ways in which she challenged male governance in the home. Officials often connected the disorder they perceived within the Ortmann household to the couple's habit of rejecting the authority of the colony's magistrates and ministers. In the spring of 1737, for instance, Julianna Ortmann allegedly convinced her husband to send an insulting letter to Boltzius. Earlier that day, the minister had confronted Ortmann on evidence that she had a stolen item in her possession. In retaliation, she "persuaded her husband to send [Boltzius] ... a piece of paper on which had been written all sorts of Biblical sayings and expressions as to the bearing of false testimony, lying witnesses, malicious libel, persecution, and envy." Upon receiving the letter, Boltzius lamented the decline he observed in Mr. Ortmann's behavior. Although Ortmann had recently made good spiritual progress, the minister recorded in his journal, "since his wife's return from Charleston, he has again become evil and full of guile; and there is much to be feared for the state of his soul."³⁸⁸ Two years later, in 1739, Julianna Ortmann was still influencing her husband to challenge his superiors. That July, after Boltzius barred the Ortmanns from taking communion, Christopher Ortmann attempted to take revenge by complaining about his and his wife's treatment to officials in Savannah. In particular, Ortmann accused Boltzius of being an "insufferable tyrant" who repeatedly launched unfounded

³⁸⁷ *Detailed Reports, vol. III, 254-255.*

³⁸⁸ *Detailed Reports, vol. IV, 61.*

attacks on his “poor innocent lamb” of a wife. But even though Christopher Ortmann was the main accuser, Boltzius laid most of the blame upon his mate, claiming that she was once again using her influence over her husband to turn him against the minister. As he later reported to one Trust official, “the man is grown by his Wife’s Wicked Contrivances and Insinuations obstinate and disobedient.”³⁸⁹ When James Oglethorpe came to Ebenezer to investigate the matter, he soon dismissed the Ortmann’s charges against Boltzius, in part because of Julianna Ortmann’s behavior during his visit. As Boltzius later reported, as soon as Ortmann suspected that the general was siding with Ebenezer’s ministers, she “conducted herself so impertinently and outrageously before Mr. Oglethorpe’s very face that her wicked heart became clear for everyone to see, and Mr. Oglethorpe saw ample evidence of how she tends to behave toward me.” And when Oglethorpe announced his decision to reject the case against Boltzius, Ortmann “loudly declare[d] the judgment . . . invalid and unjust.”³⁹⁰

In many ways, Julianna Ortmann represented the antithesis of the ideal woman in early Georgia. She explicitly rejected the authority of both her husband as well as male magistrates and thereby overturned the expected gender hierarchy. She also failed in her responsibility to encourage virtuous behavior in her husband. Ortmann’s conduct was particularly threatening to colonial authorities because of the close connections they drew between gender disorder and broader forms of social instability. If women such as Julianna Ortmann refused to defer to the authority of their husbands and neglected their obligation to nurture moral virtue, officials feared that such disorder might spread beyond

³⁸⁹ “Copy of a Letter from Mr. Bolzius to Mr. Vernon Dated at Ebenezer July 19th 1739,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14204, 13-14.

³⁹⁰ *Detailed Reports, vol. VI*, 155-156.

the confines of the household. And this was exactly how the magistrates interpreted Ortmann and her husband's subsequent refusals to obey either Pastor Boltzius or General Oglethorpe.

Official condemnations of Julianna Ortmann's efforts to dominate her husband do not necessarily mean that Georgia's magistrates and ministers objected to all assertive or influential women. As we have seen in previous chapters, wives, like nearly all other colonists, were expected to adopt both submissive and authoritative roles. Women often had opportunities to adopt assertive roles within the home as household managers, for instance, and were expected to oversee the work of the family servants. Yet although women had opportunities to wield authority, there were limits to the appropriate uses of their power. In the most basic terms, a woman had to ensure that she used her authority or influence for the good of her family, rather than for individual gain. And whenever her husband was around, she was expected to defer to his higher authority. This somewhat ambiguous view of women as similarly capable with, yet most often subordinate to, men stemmed from the Protestant background of the colony's founders and settlers. Although the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers emphasized the spiritual equality of men and women, Protestant theologians maintained that, in the physical world, a gendered hierarchy was needed to prevent disorder.³⁹¹ Because of their descent from Eve, they asserted, each woman carried within her the potential to either be a good helpmeet or a sinful seductress. It was therefore imperative that women submit to

³⁹¹ For more on Protestant attitudes towards women, and how they differed from Catholic views, see Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent: Sex and Politics in Early Christianity* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1988) and Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) and *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

the guidance and protection of men, lest they fall into temptation and become a danger to themselves as well as to others.³⁹² Women who rejected male governance opened the door to Satan's influence and thereby threatened to anger God. As Boltzius pointed out in August 1741, no good could come from "such a perversion of God's order in a marriage in which the wife is the husband's master and head."³⁹³ If the colony were to succeed, the minister believed, the colonists must take care to follow God's established gender order.

Officials and ministers were not the only Georgians who saw defiant or overly assertive women as a threat to good order. The evidence suggests that many ordinary colonists likewise saw a domineering woman as an inversion of the proper gender hierarchy, as one particularly colorful case demonstrates. In December 1732, on his voyage from England to Georgia, future settler Peter Gordon recounted an impromptu entertainment put on at the expense of a married couple. "After dinner," he wrote in his journal, "we were diverted with cudgell playing and riding of skimingtons on account of Mrs. Coles having beat her husband."³⁹⁴ In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English culture, "Riding of Skimmingtons" was a social ritual intended to ridicule couples who did not follow the expected gender hierarchy in their marriages. It was usually reserved for instances where a wife physically abused her husband. The couple would typically sit

³⁹² For similarly ambiguous views of women in Puritan New England, see Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 97, 107. For more on the potentially dangerous consequences for women who did not meet Puritan gender expectations, see Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*. In *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997) Elizabeth Reis likewise explores the "darker side" of Protestant belief, and Puritan theology in particular, arguing that Puritans linked unwomanly or sinful behavior with witchcraft.

³⁹³ *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII*, 359.

³⁹⁴ Peter Gordon, *The Journal of Peter Gordon*, edited by E. Merton Coulter (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1963), 31.

atop a horse or donkey, with the wife facing forward and the man behind her, facing the animal's backside. They would parade through the town or community, accompanied by "rough music" produced by neighbors banging pots and pans and other everyday implements.³⁹⁵ The travelers would have needed to adapt this ritual, given the cramped conditions of an overseas voyage, in ways that Gordon did not specify in his account, but what is clear is that Georgia's colonists saw female domination of their husbands as an act that required social commentary and punishment.

Yet despite the best efforts of officials and colonists to maintain the traditional gender order, there seemed to be an abundance of women who did not meet either official or popular expectations of female submission and deference in early Georgia. Many of the women whom officials and colonists complained about allegedly misused their authority when carrying out their expected authoritative roles as household managers or deputy husbands. In 1740, for instance, mercantile agent and former naval officer John Brownfield reported to his business associates in England that the wife of Frederica storekeeper Samuel Perkins "indulged a too liberal way of living Whilst her husband was upon his Business from Home."³⁹⁶ As a "deputy husband," Catherine Perkins had the responsibility to run the household and manage her husband's business. She was not, however, supposed to use her husband's absence as an opportunity to reject ordinary rules of order and decorum. Although the specific nature of Catherine Perkins' mismanagement remains unclear, the implication was that her actions violated the

³⁹⁵ For more on "riding skimmington" and its social significance in English culture, see B. Howard Cunnington, "'A Skimmington' in 1618" *Folklore*, vol. 41, no. 3 (Sept. 30, 1930), 287-290. See also Martin Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music and the Reform of Popular Culture in Early Modern England," *Past & Present*, no. 105 (Nov., 1984), 79-113.

³⁹⁶ "March 1, 1739/40," John Brownfield Copy Book.

expectation that poorer and middling colonists would live simple lives and seek to avoid luxury. Subsequent complaints about Perkins seem to confirm this interpretation. In April 1741, for instance, former Frederica resident and military officer Jacque Carteret reported to the Earl of Egmont that Samuel Perkins owed nearly £600 to local shopkeepers, “yet his wife wears silk.”³⁹⁷ By misusing her delegated authority over the store’s funds and merchandise, perhaps purchasing luxury goods for her own use, Perkins directly violated her responsibility to run the family business and household as a responsible household head. By using her influence to indulge her own whims, rather than to further her family’s interests, Perkins violated her husband’s trust. When running his business, she was supposed to act as his representative, not as an actor in her own right. Perkins’ actions were troublesome not only because of the ways in which they challenged the established gender hierarchy; her behavior also undermined the Trustees’ efforts to discourage luxury and vice. As chapter one makes clear, the Trustees and their supporters viewed luxury as the doorway to corruption and sin. In this context, Perkins’ actions threatened to allow the dangerous seed of luxury and its attendant idleness to take root in the Perkins household. In the view of the Trustees and the colonists who supported them, a woman who was willing to undermine the gender hierarchy was also likely to reject other social norms and rules – such as the colony’s regulations against luxury. The fact that the Perkins’ eventually abandoned the colony for Charleston, a

³⁹⁷ Percival, *Diary of the First Earl of Egmont*, vol. III, 216.

place many officials viewed as the ultimate den of material luxury and vice, likely confirmed these fears in the minds of the colony's magistrates.³⁹⁸

Disorderly women were dangerous not only because of the ways in which they disrupted the family hierarchy and undermined the Trustees' moral and social initiatives. In at least one case the stress of having an "unruly" wife was thought to endanger the health of her husband. Boat captain Roger Lacy's wife had been implicated in the illegal slaughtering of a neighbor's cattle while he was away on a trip. Although she did not participate physically in the actual slaughter, she was accused of ordering her servant, Francis Elgar, to aid two other men in the crime; she was also implicated for "assist[ing] in salting and barreling the Meat, [despite] knowing it belonged to other People."³⁹⁹ When questioned in July 1738, the servant Elgar claimed that "what he did was by his Mistress's Orders." He also confirmed that she had been "privy to all that was done."⁴⁰⁰ On July 12, the jury found the three male accomplices guilty, but Mrs. Lacy was "admitted to give Bail for her Appearance at the next Court" out of "Regard for her Sex, and the Character of her Husband."⁴⁰¹ Captain Lacy returned to the colony before his wife had the chance to come before the court. William Stephens reported that he had "grown very ill" and was so weak "that his Recovery was much doubted." But Roger

³⁹⁸ *Diary of the First Earl of Egmont (Viscount Percival)*, vol. III, 216. John Brownfield's previous praise for Perkins and her efforts to run her husband's store (which are discussed in Chapter Two) make it clear that the primary issue was not the simple fact that she was a woman managing the family business. The real problem was the manner in which she used her authority. By using her influence to indulge her own whims, rather than to further her family's interests, Perkins violated her husband's trust and thereby disobeyed him. When running his business, she was supposed to act as his representative, not an individual actor. See "Brownfield to Pytt and Tuckwell, 7 February 1738-39," John Brownfield Copy Book.

³⁹⁹ William Stephens, *A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia*, vol. I, 237-238.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 242.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 243.

Lacy's inability to recover was not simply attributed to general ill health; it was blamed in part on the stress caused by his wife's recent behavior: "his Wife's Behavior, and Actions of late, together with his principal Servant *Elgar*, in killing Cattle, &c. stuck close to him, and made the Impression stronger, which formerly he had conceived from his Wife's Conduct, and loose Way of living."⁴⁰² Following Lacy's death two days later, Stephens made the connection between ill health and the mental distress caused by a "troublesome" wife even more explicit. Stephens admitted that Lacy had been "a Valetudinarian for a long while, and afflicted with epileptick Fits," but argued that his symptoms had proceeded "from an inward Trouble of Mind, which first grew unhappily through some conjugal Dissentions."

In the view of eighteenth-century doctors, illness was the result of an imbalance in the four bodily humors – blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlem. Each of these humors was associated with specific qualities and an overabundance of one was believed to cause mental as well as physical symptoms. According to this humoral system of medicine, any kind of distress or disorder – from abrupt weather changes to strong emotional reactions – could throw the bodily humors out of balance and thereby cause illness. In the case of Roger Lacy, officials surmised, the shocking behavior of his wife caused too much stress to his already fragile body, and resulted in serious illness. Household disorder could therefore easily translate into physical disorder.⁴⁰³

In addition to causing physical illness, officials believed that disorder within an individual household might easily spread like a disease to the rest of society. As the

⁴⁰² Ibid., 253.

⁴⁰³ Lindemann, *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe*, 13-17.

previously mentioned cases of Julianna Ortmann and Catherine Perkins make clear, officials often linked wives' efforts to undermine their husbands' authority directly to other forms of social disorder. Influential tavern keeper Elizabeth Penrose was described by officials and her neighbors as a source of significant tension within her family and in the community at large. According to prominent magistrate William Stephens, she was a "notorious Termagant" - a scolding, or quarrelsome woman – who refused to submit to her husband's will. Stephens found her behavior so shocking and unruly that in 1740 he concluded that her husband would be better off without her. The previous September, fearing that the Spanish would soon invade Georgia, the wives of several prominent Malcontents had fled the colony. Elizabeth Penrose went with them, even though her husband had forbidden her from leaving. But instead of lamenting her flight, Stephens commented that John Penrose likely "[thought] himself well rid of [her]."⁴⁰⁴ Colonist Joseph Hetherington most likely would have agreed with Stephens' assessment. In 1735 he had his own run-in with Penrose, when she allegedly encouraged one of his servants, John Godly, to desert him. Godly had fled to Savannah in the hopes of catching a ship back to England, but was unable to get passage for several weeks. When officials tried to convince Godly to return to his master, he refused. Upon hearing of his servant's continued disobedience, Hetherington concluded that Godly had been "Encouraged by mother Penrose for she kept him in her Employ the whole time[.]" He further expressed that he was "sure nobody else would give [Godly] Encouragement" and then went on to

⁴⁰⁴ Stephens, *A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia*, vol. II, 498.

describe her as “Conqueror over the whole place.”⁴⁰⁵ Hetherington’s accusation against Penrose indicates his frustration with her power in Savannah. In his view, Penrose was an audacious “conqueror” who did not respect the authority of others in the colony over their own dependents, and especially male freeholders like himself. In theory, women and families were supposed to be stabilizing presences in the colony, but a woman who instead created disorder was of no benefit – either to her family or to the colony as a whole.

Perhaps one of the most notoriously disobedient women in early Georgia was Ursula Landfelder of Ebenezer. In 1741, Johann Martin Boltzius characterized Landfelder as a sinner “full of anger, obstinacy, and disobedience,” who challenged the local ministers, had frequent conflicts with other settlers, and who defied her first and second husbands, as well as other male relatives. Boltzius directly linked Landfelder’s generally “troublesome” behavior to her failure to follow the traditional gender hierarchy. The minister asserted that her attempts to rule over her husbands were “against God’s and men’s laws.”⁴⁰⁶ Her relationship with her first husband was allegedly so dysfunctional that when he was on his deathbed, he requested that Ebenezer’s ministers “take away” their young daughter, rather than allow the girl to remain with her “malicious and provoking mother.”⁴⁰⁷ Landfelder’s relationship with her second

⁴⁰⁵ Egmont Papers, vol. 14200, 268. In *Georgia’s Frontier Women*, Ben Marsh also cites this case as an example of feminine disorder. However, his interpretation is premised on the idea that men in Georgia were uncomfortable with nearly all forms of feminine power, but were forced by demographic conditions and labor shortages to allow some women to adopt typically masculine (authoritative) roles. See Marsh, *Georgia’s Frontier Women*, 51-52.

⁴⁰⁶ *Detailed Reports*, vol. VIII, 265-266.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 265.

husband, it appears, was little better, since in June 1741 Boltzius wrote that she treated him “just the same as she did her late husband,” and went on to describe him as “her slave” who must “follow her blindly.”⁴⁰⁸ Boltzius reported to his superiors that Landfelder had a history of familial disobedience extending all the way back to her childhood in Germany. In August 1741, he wrote that Ursula Landfelder’s sister, Elizabeth Pletter, had once warned Mr. Landfelder about her negative behavior, stating, “There had never been any good in all her life. She had never wished to obey her father, and that is why he so gladly let her move to America.”⁴⁰⁹

As the criticisms lodged against Landfelder by her sister and first husband make clear, her relatives were just as disturbed by her behavior as the minister. In fact, her former husband saw her as such a threat that he attempted to have their child taken away from her, lest she mistreat the girl, or worse yet, spread her disorder to her. Boltzius likewise viewed Landfelder as a bad influence upon others in the community. He even once referred to her as “Satan and seducer” of several other colonists, “under the guise of friendship.”⁴¹⁰ Landfelder apparently had a particularly strong influence over Michael Rieser and his wife, as well as an older woman named Rosina Spielbigler and her adult son. The Riesers and Spielbiglers seemed to follow Landfelder’s lead in their attitudes towards the church and the local minister; on the few occasions when they attended church services, they did so together; when Landfelder rejected Boltzius and his

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., 265-266, 338-340.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 340-341.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 260. Boltzius does not explicitly name Ursula Landfelder as the “Satan” he is referring to in this entry, but subsequent passages make it clear that it is she who is influencing her neighbors’ bad behavior. See *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII*, 265-266.

teachings, they followed suit.⁴¹¹ Landfelder's influence was supposedly so strong that she was able to convince the men in her coterie to travel to Savannah to complain to English officials about Pastor Boltzius' supposed mistreatment of her. In June 1741, Boltzius noted that "Mrs. Landfelder [had] sent her husband and Michael Rieser to Savannah in order to bring an action against [him] before the authorities there" because Boltzius would not tolerate "her willfulness and evident malice." Her intention, he declared, was "to cause damage and harm to the entire community." Upon the men's return, the minister inferred that their efforts had been in vain, since the Landfelders subsequently pretended to "submit to external order." Nonetheless, he vowed that if they had "caused difficulties for [his] ministry by discrediting it in Savannah ... they should get their deserts as an example for others." Boltzius was true to his word; at a later public gathering he exposed the Landfelders' "spiteful disobedience" to the rest of the community.⁴¹²

The close relationship between the Riesers, Spielbiglers, and Landfelders can be attributed, in part, to the fact that they knew each other long before they came to Georgia. Following their expulsion from Salzburg, all three families settled for a time in Memmingen, a town in what is now the state of Bavaria.⁴¹³ The bonds that these families forged in their common experiences as religious exiles, neighbors, and settlers in North America likely fostered many similarities in their attitudes and opinions. But whatever the influence of their shared background, the minister and other Ebenezer officials interpreted the situation in terms of a particularly disobedient and disorderly woman

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 274, 345-346.

⁴¹² Ibid., 269-270.

⁴¹³ Jones, *The Georgia Dutch*, 130.

actively encouraging similar behavior in others, and thus requiring the immediate attention of the colonial officials. In 1741 Boltzius urged local magistrates in Ebenezer to take decisive action against Landfelder, noting that “because of [their] overlooking [her behavior]” other colonists were “following in her footsteps too and [were] trying to disobey good order openly.” In order to remedy the situation, he proposed that they renew their efforts to convince her to submit; if those efforts were unsuccessful, they should summon English officials from Savannah to help them.⁴¹⁴

Ursula Landfelder was by no means the only disorderly woman denounced for setting a bad example for others in the colony. Recall Boltzius’ complaints about Julianna Ortmann’s ability to persuade her husband to challenge the minister. Every time that Christopher Ortmann accused Boltzius of being a “tyrant” or mistreating his family, the minister assumed that Julianna Ortmann played a major part in encouraging his behavior. English officials similarly denounced Mary Townsend, a widow and prominent critic of the colony, for “tainting” her new son-in-law with the “Sourness of that family.” As magistrate William Stephens explained, “this good Mother-in-Law of his expose[d] the Bitterness of her Heart continually” and, as a result of this constant barrage of “venom” against the colony, the man had fallen “into the same Way of thinking with Regard to this Colony, as other of our Malcontents are.”⁴¹⁵

The behavior of women such as Ursula Landfelder, Julianna Ortmann, and Mary Townsend directly violated their expected roles as helpmeets, entrusted to encourage

⁴¹⁴ *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII, 305.*

⁴¹⁵ *Stephens, A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia, vol. II, 450-451.*

moral virtue in their families. Rather than use their influence to facilitate spiritual piety and social harmony, these women instead encouraged their husbands' and neighbors' acts of sin and rebellion.⁴¹⁶ In so doing, they represented a significant threat to the colony's wellbeing. And since the social order depended upon the model of female deference, the magistrates placed at least some of the blame for colony-wide rejections of authority upon these women and others like them. Yet this does not mean that they viewed men as helpless victims. Although the female sex was believed to have the power to seduce men into either virtuous or sinful behavior, this did not mean that men had to follow them blindly. As George Whitefield made clear in a sermon about the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden, "God compels no Man to Sin. *Adam* might have withstood the Solicitations of his Wife, if he would.... The Devil and our own Hearts tempt, but they cannot force us to consent, without the Concurrence of our own Wills."⁴¹⁷

A husband, as the head of his household, was particularly responsible for guarding himself against moral corruption. In a conversation between Veit Landfelder and Pastor Boltzius in 1741, for example, Landfelder attempted to blame his wife for his recent bad behavior and decision to leave the colony. In response, the minister

⁴¹⁶ Prior to the eighteenth century, women were often viewed as the more sinful and sexually voracious sex who seduced men into evil and corruption. Although Protestants no longer viewed women as a "necessary evil," they nevertheless maintained that women were more vulnerable to temptation. Carol Karlsen discusses this view of women as more sinful than men, and its potential consequences, in colonial New England, in *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*. Starting in the mid-eighteenth century, this ideology began to shift. Gradually women came to be seen as the morally superior sex and were entrusted to use their powers of seduction to persuade men to be morally virtuous. For more on this transformation, and its potentially insidious consequences, see Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, 264-267. For more on the image of women as the morally superior "guardians of virtue" in the late eighteenth century, see Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic," *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 44, no. 4 (Oct., 1987), 689-721. In Trustee Era Georgia (1730s-1740s), women (as well as men) were expected to promote moral virtue in their families, though it is clear that officials feared that either sex might just as easily lead their families into moral corruption.

⁴¹⁷ Whitefield, "The Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent," 30.

“reminded him of his duty by citing the catechism and what was read at his wedding, namely, his duty to be his wife’s master and not to let the dear Lord’s order be perverted.”⁴¹⁸ Wives had an undeniable influence upon their husbands, but husbands were not to allow women to rule over them and thereby overturn God’s ordained gender hierarchy. Official descriptions of the case of Julianna and Christopher Ortmann further illustrate this point. In 1741, Boltzius noted that the elderly schoolmaster had begun to “recogniz[e] his perdition and sinfulness and [was] departing from his own self-righteousness and [was] learning to search for the grace of Christ.” The minister attributed this change to Ortmann’s newfound reluctance to listen to his wife: “He no longer blindly follows his wife the way he used to but tries to soften her anger and overhastiness with Christian encouragement.”⁴¹⁹ Thus, the ministers in Ebenezer believed that men had the free choice, and the obligation, to reject a wife’s influence when she attempted to seduce him into evil rather than good.

Men were not supposed to resist their spouses’ influence arbitrarily, however. In fact, officials also held men responsible in cases where they failed to listen to their wives’ good advice. In 1744, English official William Stephens implied that if Malcontent Andrew Duchee had listened to his wife, he would not be at odds with Georgia’s officials. According to Stephens, Mary Duchee was the ideal wife: “a discreet prudent Woman, utterly averse to her husbands projects and Wild Attempts to reform whatever he thought amiss in the Constitution of the Colony.” But even though she “continually advis[ed] him to lay aside politicks,” he refused to listen, and let his “great Genius ... be

⁴¹⁸ *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII, 340-341.*

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 305.

so circumscribed.”⁴²⁰ In 1750, the Reverend Boltzius similarly indicated that Johann Caspar Walthauer’s disorderly personal life might have been avoided if he had listened to his devout wife, “who [was] more than willing to aid in saving his soul. However, he ha[d] but little esteem for her and [did] not pay attention to what she ha[d] to say.” If he continued to refuse to follow the advice of his wife and let go of “worldly concerns,” the minister warned, his family might “come to a bad end and be a proper warning for the rest of us.”⁴²¹ The examples of Andrew Duchee and Johann Walthauer demonstrate that although men were expected to resist negative female influence, they also had the obligation to remain open to more positive forms of female persuasion. In other words, officials expected men to have the discernment to distinguish between positive and negative influences in their day-to-day lives. As household heads, men were ultimately responsible for their own behavior and decisions.

Male household governors also had the responsibility to maintain proper control of their family members – which included ensuring the orderly behavior of their wives, children, and servants. In the view of Georgia’s officials, men who failed to manage the behavior of others in their family posed as great a danger as non-deferential women to the social order. Recall how whenever Julianna Ortmann caused unrest in the community, Boltzius met with her husband rather than with Ortmann herself. According to the minister, a key component in Julianna Ortmann’s disorderly behavior was her husband’s inability to govern her. She may have been the primary actor in most of the Ortmanns’ conflicts with others, but Christopher Ortmann’s reluctance to correct her behavior was

⁴²⁰ Stephens, *The Journal of William Stephens, 1743-1745*, 69-70.

⁴²¹ *Detailed Reports, vol. XIV*, 61.

what allowed her to become such a significant source of disorder in Ebenezer. Other officials in Georgia similarly criticized men who seemed unable or unwilling to restrain the behavior of their wives. In 1739, following a heated conflict between Savannah official Thomas Jones and Martha Causton, the wife of the colony's bailiff and storekeeper, Jones criticized Mr. Causton for his failure to control his wife's temper. Mrs. Causton was angry because several servants, under orders from Jones, had come to her family's property and harvested Mulberry leaves without her knowledge. As a result, Martha Causton "made a public Exclamation among all People, of the harsh Treatment she had met with; not refraining from some ... foul Language, ... and alleging, that the Trees were spoiled through the Ignorance of those who were employed." In response, Thomas Jones "went to Mr. *Causton*, and required him to keep his Wife's Tongue in Order."⁴²²

While Georgia's authorities often criticized men who failed to control their wives and families, they were also quick to praise those who successfully enforced family order. In 1739, for instance, Boltzius reassured Simon Steiner that his efforts to correct his wife were just, noting that "she had been most unreasonable and in need of serious discipline and admonishment." Yet even though the minister asserted that Steiner's actions were warranted, and even praiseworthy, Steiner was concerned that his neighbors "might remember, and still be offended by, some of the actions he took with his wife," making it clear that the line between appropriate and inappropriate marital discipline was

⁴²² Stephens, *A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia*, vol. I, 453-455.

not always clear, and that colonists were anxious to avoid being characterized as overly harsh husbands.⁴²³

Men had to walk a fine line between maintaining the expected gendered order when wielding authority as the heads of the household and acting as caring, supportive husbands and fathers. The goal was to ensure proper behavior in the family, yet avoid being characterized as a tyrant. This ideal was, in part, the result of a shift in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from a more authoritarian model of familial relations to one based increasingly upon mutual responsibility and affection. According to this ideal, wives and children no longer owed unconditional obedience to the household head and had the right to challenge fathers or husbands who misused their authority.⁴²⁴ In most instances, men were supposed to use gentle correction to achieve their goals. Even in the case of Julianna Ortmann, Boltzius praised Christopher Ortmann for using gentle “Christian encouragement” to “soften [his wife’s] anger and overhastiness.”⁴²⁵ Ortmann did not force his wife into submission, despite the threat that officials believed she posed to the social order. The husband of Maria Rheinländer was similarly praised for his moderation in attempting to correct his troublesome wife’s behavior. At one time, Boltzius had complained about the “self-righteousness” and pride of both Rheinländers, but by November 1735 it appeared that Frederick Rheinländer had

⁴²³ *Detailed Reports, vol. VI, 187.*

⁴²⁴ This is not to say that mutual affection was not an element in earlier relationships. In fact, Lisa Wilson argues in *Ye Heart of a Man* that the ideal marriage in both seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New England was a partnership between spouses who loved and respected one another. See Wilson, *Ye Heart of a Man, 75-98*. For more on the shift from authoritarian to more affectionate forms of family governance, and how it affected relationships between parents and children, see Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America, 237-238*. As we will see in chapter 6, this ideology continued to be influential in eighteenth-century Georgia, particularly during the era of the American Revolution.

⁴²⁵ *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII, 305.*

reformed his ways. Maria Rheinländer, however, remained defiant, and one morning her husband came to the minister to ask for assistance in controlling her behavior. As Boltzius reported, “He complained to me of the domestic burden because of his wife and how he endeavored as best he could to take her along the right way. And, because he well knew her emotions and extravagances, he was noting the proverbs and verses from the hymns with great diligence that are precisely against her and her behavior, and with them he had so far accomplished something.”⁴²⁶ According to Boltzius, the husband was supposed to act within the family as his wife’s protector and guide. And even if a woman “should exceed the barriers of her duty,” the minister argued, her husband was not supposed to quarrel or use harsh words against her, but “behave to his wife as a father of a family and husband.”⁴²⁷

In Boltzius’ view, a man’s position as household head entailed responsibility as well as power and he was obligated to treat his subordinates with respect, even when they failed to fulfill their own obligations. In 1749, Boltzius reported another case of “vexing discord between two married people” in the community. The cause of the conflict was the wife’s lack of housekeeping knowledge, which “sometimes gave her husband the occasion to sin no little against [her].”⁴²⁸ But instead of blaming the wife, the minister focused on her husband’s “angry and mean” behavior as the primary source of marital discord, and expressed relief when the husband finally repented of his misdeeds and reconciled with his spouse. Thus, even when a wife neglected her expected duties, that did not give her husband free license to mistreat her. In most instances, husband and wife

⁴²⁶ *Detailed Reports, vol. II, 204.*

⁴²⁷ *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII, 55-56.*

⁴²⁸ *Detailed Reports, vol. XIII, 78.*

were supposed to encourage one another gently and patiently to fulfill their responsibilities. Even though men were expected to use firmer discipline in some instances, they were never supposed to allow their anger or frustration to get the better of them.

If a husband did attack or use harsh words against an unruly wife, he became another source of disorder within the household. And Georgia's magistrates and ministers were just as critical of men who misused their authority in the family as they were of inappropriately assertive women. Ministers and many officials in early Georgia believed that the marital state was intended to be a gift from God, a benefit to both sexes and to their offspring. Minister Charles Wesley, for instance, viewed marriage as a spiritual union that men should not enter into lightly. In 1736, he attempted to dissuade a colonist, Peter Appee, from marrying a young woman, "not thinking either sufficiently prepared for it." In response, Appee admitted that "he had made little progress in subduing his will, and ought to be more dead to the world before he threw himself into [marriage]."⁴²⁹ Men were not supposed to see marriage as an opportunity to do whatever they pleased, but as an institution that entailed the responsibility to sacrifice one's own desires for the greater good of God and of the family. Spouses – whether male or female – who perverted the intended purpose of marriage by mistreating their significant others presented a direct challenge to God's plan for mankind. In June 1747, for instance, Boltzius related the story of a man who struggled to contain his "constant anger in his present marriage." Despite efforts to "improve his conduct and ... not give [the minister]

⁴²⁹ Charles Wesley, *The Manuscript Journal of the Reverend Charles Wesley, M.A., vol. I*, edited by ST Kimbrough, Jr. and Kenneth G.C. Newport (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2008), 33.

cause for sadness,” he continued to lash out at his wife. “Yesterday evening he got angry at something,” Boltzius reported, “and made his wife suffer for it although she had nothing to do with it.” But soon after this outburst, “he fell ill suddenly, complaining of pains in his side and coughing hard.” Frightened, the man called for the minister and confessed that he was “ashamed of his ill temper,” and prayed to God that “He may not yet take him from this world and cast him into the perdition which he so richly deserves for his poor conduct.”⁴³⁰

Boltzius warned that God might similarly punish Josef Ernst, a Salzburger inhabitant of Ebenezer, for misusing his marital authority. Official descriptions depicted Ernst as an angry and spiteful troublemaker who had frequent arguments with his wife, neighbors, and colonial authorities. Most of their complaints about him, however, concerned his harsh treatment of his wife. In August 1739, for instance, Boltzius reported that Ernst’s wife was afraid to move with her husband to their outlying plantation, because he “[had] threatened to kill her or to beat her to a pulp and then to run away. And, since there [was] no one in the vicinity, she would have nowhere to beat a retreat.”⁴³¹ Several months later, in January 1740, Boltzius again reported that Ernst had “sinned greatly” by “swearing and cursing” at a number of people, including his wife. “Now we see nothing but malediction and misfortune in every corner of his hut,” Boltzius wrote, “and everything is deteriorating because of his continuous quarrelling, discord, and even fighting with his wife. Therefore, we cannot prophesy any good

⁴³⁰ *Detailed Reports, vol. XI, 73-74.*

⁴³¹ *Detailed Reports, vol. VI, 189.*

outcome for him unless he repents.”⁴³² Ernst’s mistreatment of his wife was apparently so grievous that the minister prayed that God would make him “feel the wrath that he has merited so far through his un-Christian and vexing behavior.” This would hopefully correct Ernst’s wayward behavior lest he end up “in eternity with the defiant Goliath and all godless people.”⁴³³

Boltzius’s prophecy that Ernst’s behavior would result in misfortune turned out to be eerily accurate. Later that same evening, the minister received word that, while chopping wood the previous day, Ernst had cursed a “pious Salzburger,” and before he could even “[finish] with his disgraceful speech ... he chopped a serious wound in his left hand, through which he is now hindered in his work.”⁴³⁴ This event seemed particularly significant since Henry Bishop, a witness to Ernst’s angry outburst, later confessed that he had just been “marvel[ing] that God could witness such wickedness and insolence.” “If God wished,” Bishop reported thinking, “he could punish [Ernst] with his very own ax.” And at that very instant, Ernst’s blade came down upon his hand. When Boltzius heard Bishop’s account, he immediately interpreted the event as a sign of God’s wrath, and sought to impart to Ernst the full implications of his injury.⁴³⁵ And it appears that the minister’s words finally found a receptive audience. Following the injury, Ernst apparently reformed his ways and became an oft-cited example of God’s ability to transform the hearts of even the most serious sinners. In August 1741, Ernst, fearing for

⁴³² *Detailed Reports, vol. VII, 25.*

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*

the state of his immortal soul, confessed his previous sins to Boltzius and asked that the entire congregation pray to God on his behalf. Chief among the past transgressions causing his “great pangs of conscience” was the way he had “conducted his married life very scandalously.” In response to Ernst’s confession of repentance, the minister “commended him to God’s mercy” and reassured him that even a “great sinner” could receive God’s forgiveness.⁴³⁶ Henceforward Ernst made a point to act as a good husband towards his wife, and encouraged her to follow his lead in devoting her life to God.⁴³⁷ Unfortunately for Ernst, his spiritual reformation on earth was short-lived, since the same injury that the ministers believed had saved his soul also took his life. In late August 1741, Ernst’s hand became so infected that he had to have it amputated. After the surgery, his health declined steadily and he died three months later.⁴³⁸

Despite the efforts of ministers such as Boltzius to discourage men from mistreating or abusing their families, official complaints against abusive husbands and fathers attest that such behavior remained a key issue of contention in early Georgia. In 1736, Boltzius related the case of a husband “who was otherwise very serious in his religious practices” but who “[had] shown little patience with his young wife in her sickness and [was] very severe and rough with her.” In response, the minister paid a visit to the man and reminded him of his biblical duty to contain his “fiery temper.”⁴³⁹ In February 1741, Boltzius reported that shoemaker Salomo Adde was mistreating his wife

⁴³⁶ *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII, 370-371.*

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 498, 500.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, 373, 458, 497-498, 499-503.

⁴³⁹ *Detailed Reports, vol. III, 254.*

and children. “As long as [Adde] has been married to his wife,” the minister complained, “he has sinned through disputes, quarrels, and beatings.”⁴⁴⁰ In August of that same year, Boltzius lamented that the preceding Friday the local schoolmaster, Mr. Hamilton, had “attacked his wife very angrily and otherwise acted most unruly” while in a “delirious state.” While admitting that Hamilton may not have been “right in his head,” the minister also indicated that his behavior towards his wife was a symptom of his generally sinful and unrepentant nature, which included refusing to admit his sins or go to church.⁴⁴¹

Georgia’s ministers and officials maintained that male familial disorder, including the mistreatment of a spouse, often extended into more general forms of social disorder, just as in the case of unruly women. Minister Boltzius’ description of the behavior of Michael Rieser, a particularly troublesome colonist in Ebenezer, illustrates this connection. In January 1741, Boltzius complained about Rieser’s attempts to undermine church authority. In the same passage, the minister also made a point of calling attention to Rieser’s “disorderly” marriage. According to Boltzius, Rieser frequently mistreated his wife, causing her to be “in slavish fear of him.”⁴⁴² In the minister’s opinion, Michael Rieser’s abuse of his wife and rejection of church teachings were not unrelated behaviors, but were instead symptoms of his general sinfulness and disorder. A later report further elaborated on the connection between Rieser’s sinful nature and his abusive behavior towards his wife. In April 1741, Maria Rieser complained to Boltzius that her husband could not “stand any contradiction or admonition, but immediately fl[ew] into a rage.” In

⁴⁴⁰ *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII, 53.*

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 384-385.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 47.

response, Boltzius warned her that God would punish her husband if he continued to behave in such a sinful manner, and advised her to “pray to God to let her husband recognize these and other sins penitently and hold back His judgment and punishment.”⁴⁴³

Verbal or physical abuse of a spouse was not the only way in which a man might disrupt familial order or earn the condemnation of the colony’s officials. Failure to support a family was also considered a serious transgression. Take for instance the case of a freeholder named Wilson. In 1740 magistrate William Stephens described him as an “able-bodied” man with an “utter Aversion” to “all sorts of Labour,” whose wife became so frustrated with both his abusive behavior and reluctance to support her and their children that she fled to a relative in Carolina.⁴⁴⁴ Stephens similarly criticized a tythingman named Gough for his failure to support his family. Like Wilson, Gough was “a very idle Fellow” who “had little to shew of any Improvement” to his farm. According to Stephens, Gough’s abandonment of the colony in December 1737, far from representing a tragedy to his remaining family, would ultimately be to their benefit. “[Gough] now went off in many Peoples Debt, leaving a Wife and Child behind him, who even in this forlorn State scarcely grieve at his Absence, since he used to beat them more than feed them.”⁴⁴⁵ In 1747, Boltzius related the story of a previously “good-for-nothing” man, who had changed his ways and devoted his life to God. Upmost among the man’s former sins was his abandonment of his wife and children to find employment

⁴⁴³ Ibid., 157-158.

⁴⁴⁴ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. IV supplement*, 51.

⁴⁴⁵ Stephens, *A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia, vol. I*, 46.

in Savannah.⁴⁴⁶ Earning a living was important, but a responsible husband did not abandon his family in order to pursue his own economic interests.

In practical terms, a man's efforts to ensure the economic success of his family were among his most important responsibilities as household head.⁴⁴⁷ If a husband or father was unable to provide the material resources necessary to survive in a frontier colony, all of his other efforts to maintain order in his family would be doomed to failure as well. However, once basic survival was taken care of, ministers argued, a husband had an even greater responsibility to fulfill. To be a successful household head, a man was expected to act, like his wife, as a positive moral example in his home. In the view of Georgia's ministers, a husband or father who set a poor moral example within the household directly hindered his family's spiritual and temporal progress – perhaps even more so than a man who simply abused or neglected his wife and children. One such negative influence was frequent troublemaker Michael Rieser, whose example allegedly caused his wife's poor behavior towards others in the community. In July 1741, Reverend Boltzius complained that Anna Maria Rieser had been spreading harmful rumors about one of her neighbors. But instead of fully blaming the woman herself, the minister maintained that her actions were encouraged by the poor example set by her husband. According to Boltzius, "she had heard these shameful words from her insolent husband and then passed them along." When the minister later sought to correct Rieser's behavior, "she spoke as insolently and rudely as her husband," and refused to listen to his advice. Once again, Boltzius placed a significant portion of the blame for her disorderly

⁴⁴⁶ *Detailed Reports, vol. XI, 51-52.*

⁴⁴⁷ Lisa Wilson makes a similar conclusion in her study of manhood in colonial New England. See Wilson, *Ye Heart of a Man*, 99.

behavior upon Michael Rieser, lamenting that “Whatever good [Mrs. Rieser] had gained from God during her husband’s absence [while working on a plantation in South Carolina] was completely lost.”⁴⁴⁸

Ministers in Georgia maintained that men who violated their appointed roles as spiritual guardians of their families risked bringing God’s wrath upon their households. Recall, for instance, George Whitefield’s sermon in which he likened the family to a “little Parish.” If the family head neglected his duties and allowed his subordinates to fall into sin, Whitefield warned, their spiritual blood would be on his hands, and God might easily seek retribution.⁴⁴⁹ And Georgia’s ministers found ample examples that God did indeed punish negligent household governors, as the case of Ebenezer resident Johann Walthauer demonstrates. In 1750 Walthauer married the Widow Granewetter, a woman Pastor Boltzius praised for her piety and contentedness. Although Ebenezer’s minister usually viewed the remarriage of a widow as a blessing, in this case he speculated that Granewetter would have been better off if she had not wed Walthauer. Before their union, the minister reported, Granewetter was “healthy, contented, and calm.” After the marriage, by contrast, “she ha[d] fallen into much disquiet.” Although she had remarried in the hope of “better[ing] her domestic situation,” in reality the union brought her and her children nothing but unhappiness.⁴⁵⁰ The entire family suffered from recurrent illnesses, which Boltzius attributed to the poor example set by Johann Walthauer. Instead of encouraging religious piety in his household, Walthauer reportedly influenced his new

⁴⁴⁸ *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII, 288.*

⁴⁴⁹ Whitefield, *The great duty of family religion*, 5. This quotation is used in its entirety in Chapter Two.

⁴⁵⁰ *Detailed Reports, vol. XIV, 11-12.*

family to neglect their spiritual welfare, and as a result, brought God's wrath upon them. In January 1750, for example, Boltzius blamed the illness of one of the widow's children upon the family's sinfulness. The girl was suddenly "seized by a very severe epilepsy and brought into a very dangerous condition." According to the minister, this girl was aware of the cause of her affliction, "and her first and last words since the attack of sickness were, 'Something is pressing on my heart, and that is my sins.'" For a time, the girl's "plight and apparent mortal danger" stirred "the consciences of her parents and siblings."⁴⁵¹ Upon their daughter's recovery, the minister took the opportunity to warn Walthauer of the dangers of his continued sinfulness and Walthauer was initially moved by the minister's words, but the family's reformation was short-lived. By the end of the same month, one of the children once again faced serious illness, but he was not as lucky as his sister and died shortly after. When Boltzius learned of the child's death, he lamented that the boy had been "ruined by his parents' badly run household."⁴⁵² By that May, the minister was still complaining to his superiors about the family's bad behavior, focusing in particular on the father's negative influence on his children and stepchildren. According to Boltzius, Walthauer's sinfulness and refusal to abandon his "worldly concerns" made him a poor model for his children. As evidence, the minister only had to point at the progress, or lack thereof, of Walthauer's adult children. "The oldest son still lives [in Ebenezer], a miserable creature both spiritually and physically," Boltzius reported, while one of the younger brothers "suffer[ed] from dropsy" and another was a "useless and corrupt man who [would] probably not amount to anything." One of their

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 9-10.

⁴⁵² Ibid., 15.

daughters was “still unmarried.... She is not without any talent ... but her mind is turned towards worldly matters, and in this, she follows the steps of her parents and siblings.”⁴⁵³

Several days later, it appeared that the minister’s prophesy of “a bad end” for the family had indeed come to pass. Both the wife and one of the younger children again became ill, prompting the minister to place the blame upon that “old, stingy, ill-mannered” Johann Walthauer. Although his wife was not entirely blameless, the minister argued, it was ultimately “her husband’s conduct [that] encourage[d] her transgressions.”⁴⁵⁴

According to ministers such as Boltzius, a man’s moral influence within the household determined whether or not his family would receive God’s blessing and succeed in the colony. As the guide and governor of his family, the husband set the tone for the ways in which his subordinates were to conduct their lives. In the view of Georgia’s ministers, an immoral, unruly household head was not merely an annoyance, but a significant threat to the wellbeing of his entire family – in both practical and spiritual terms. In their eyes, moral corruption was clearly related to economic misfortune and physical illness. God was the ultimate determiner of whether a family failed or succeeded, and a husband who openly rejected His ordained moral order risked attracting His wrath. However, as we have seen, men were not left to shoulder this burden alone. As helpmeets, wives were entrusted to assist their spouses in ensuring the family’s success and were expected to embody orderly behavior. This included acting as virtuous moral examples and guides for their families. Together, husband and wife were to work hard to ensure the spiritual and economic welfare of their household. If either

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 61.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 62.

spouse failed to do his or her part, the family might fall into spiritual as well as temporal ruin.

A close analysis of official complaints about disorderly familial relationships between men and women reveals a complex picture of gender expectations and relations in early Georgia. The colony's ministers, magistrates, and many colonists held that both sexes played crucial parts in ensuring the colony's success, and in many ways the roles of men and women overlapped. However, the ways in which they were expected to foster such traits as obedience and moral virtue often varied. Women were supposed to lead by example, but had to avoid being viewed as too assertive. If their husbands appeared to be on the wrong moral path, they had license to correct them gently, but they were never supposed to scold or challenge their spouses directly. In contrast, men had the duty to persuade and command others to work hard and live virtuously; they were expected to administer moderate correction if a subordinate – such as a wife, child, or servant – failed to fulfill their prescribed duties.

Because the contributions of both sexes were believed to be crucial to the colony's success, settlers who violated those ideals – men and women – were vulnerable to harsh criticism. Women whom the magistrates believed were using their legitimate influence within the household to challenge the gendered hierarchy, rather than in accordance with their normative roles within the family, faced particularly harsh condemnation. Yet the Georgia magistrates did not have a problem with powerful women, *per se*. As chapter two makes clear, there were many women who performed authoritative roles successfully – as deputy husbands, widows acting as household heads,

and even business owners – whom authorities did not complain about, and often praised. The key difference between these women and those analyzed in this chapter was that the magistrates did not perceive the behavior of the former as overt attempts to reject masculine authority. Context was therefore key in determining how officials interpreted assertive female behavior. Men in the colony also had to maintain a delicate balance between successfully asserting their authority as household heads and avoiding being characterized as “tyrants”: they were expected to “correct” their subordinates, but men who verbally or physically abused their wives or children were looked down upon for not maintaining proper control over their own behavior.⁴⁵⁵

Official descriptions of “unruly” colonists make the connection between the establishment of “proper” gender relations in the family and social stability in general very clear. Note, for instance, that almost all of the colonists criticized for failing to live up to the officials’ gender expectations were also perceived as troublemakers in the wider community. The family was the cornerstone of the social order in Georgia: officials believed that colonists who violated their roles in the family – whether it was a woman who tried to rule over her husband or a man who abused or abandoned his wife – were also more likely to reject other forms of established order. Because proper gender relations were so fundamental to Georgia’s social order, the magistrates could not risk allowing either male or female colonists to violate or reject their “proper” roles in the family. In a settlement intended to reform the “worthy poor” by teaching them proper behavior and encouraging order and discipline, any challenge to the established social

⁴⁵⁵ In *Making Manhood*, Anne S. Lombard demonstrates that self-restraint was an essential component of successful manhood in early New England. It appears that this was the case in Georgia as well.

hierarchy –including the gendered social hierarchy – undermined the purpose of the colony.

Chapter 5 - “Clamorous” Colonists: Gender, Status, and Disorder in Trustee Georgia

Officials in Trustee Georgia believed that maintaining established social boundaries was a matter of great importance. Such boundaries were thought to preserve social harmony and ensure the success of the Trustees’ economic and religious goals. Unfortunately, as the previous two chapters have shown, Georgia’s colonists were not always willing to accept their prescribed roles in the social hierarchy – particularly within the family. But the problem did not stop at the level of individual households. The existing records reveal numerous instances of colonists who directly defied authority in society at large. Of especial concern were those who challenged the colony’s top officials and even the Trustees themselves. The fact that many of the non-deferential colonists about whom officials complained were women in significant positions of authority indicates that at least part of the issue had to do with the magistrates’ anxieties about what they saw as inappropriately assertive female behavior. This is the interpretation that several recent scholars have emphasized in their depictions of colonial Georgia’s gender order. While demographic conditions such as labor shortages and relatively high mortality rates may have given women opportunities to assume authoritative roles, they argue, the colony’s officials were never comfortable with the situation, and expressed their anxieties in rants and condemnations against assertive women.⁴⁵⁶ Yet as the case studies in this chapter will demonstrate, gender was by no

⁴⁵⁶ In her recent biography of William Stephens, the president of Savannah, for instance, Julie Anne Sweet utilizes Stephens’ heated encounters with several prominent female Georgians to argue that he was uncomfortable with assertive women. See Sweet, *William Stephens: Georgia’s Forgotten Founder*, chapter 7. In her work on gender and land policy in Georgia, Lee Ann Caldwell maintains that the Trustees held an ambiguous view of women. While they believed that their presence was crucial to the colony’s growth and stability, they nevertheless viewed women as potential liabilities, due to the supposed weaknesses of their sex. And while some women were able to gain prominent positions in the frontier colony, the officials

means the only factor in the officials' discomfort with disobedient and unruly colonists. Other women in Georgia also wielded significant influence or power – petitioning government officials, running businesses, acting as “helpmeets” and “deputy husbands,” even serving as employees of the Trust – and the magistrates did not complain about them. Further complicating matters is the fact that Georgia's magistrates often described non-deferential male colonists in nearly identical terms as the women. By comparing official characterizations of “unruly” male and female colonists, it becomes increasingly clear that gender was not the only factor at play in official attacks on “disorderly” women, and that such condemnations did not necessarily reflect widespread or automatic antagonism towards influential women. The evidence reveals that the officials' specific concerns about disorderly and non-deferential colonists, of both sexes, were influenced by broader anxieties about establishing and maintaining order and hierarchy. But this is not to say that the issues were not gendered. In Georgia, every colonist was supposed to assume the subordinate, or feminine position, when interacting with Trust officials. By not cooperating such colonists – male and female – in effect became disorderly women and assumed the characteristics that that role entailed. Gender was therefore a significant component of the broader social order, but not an autonomous or distinct issue, nor focused exclusively on women.

This chapter begins with the story of one of the colonists about whom officials complained the most for attempting to defy their authority: Jane Mary Camuse, the colony's silk expert. Officials understood Camuse as a colonist who, despite the favors and benefits the Trustees had granted her in her role as silk winder, refused to show the

often objected to those who did not act in properly feminine (domestic, submissive) ways. See Caldwell, “New Deal on a New Frontier.”

proper submission to authority expected of a person of her sex and rank. At first glance, official descriptions of Camuse seem to indicate that her gender was the primary issue in the magistrates' rejection of her behavior. However, a closer examination of the language officials used to describe Camuse – in combination with a detailed analysis of the terms that they used to characterize other “unruly” colonists – reveals that their outrage at her behavior was much more complex than a simple rejection of a particularly assertive and argumentative woman.

On March 20, 1744, Jane Mary Camuse stormed into the home of prominent official William Stephens and assaulted him with “such a parcell of Scurrilous words, and abusive Language as [he] h[ad] Scarcely ever heard.” Camuse’s behavior shocked Stephens, who soon concluded that, since he could see no reason for her anger, she must be mad. “The part she now acted was more like a Woman come out of Bedlam than a rational Creature,” he wrote in his report to the Trustees. And as Stephens attempted to determine the best way to ameliorate the situation, Camuse continued “raving, Clapping her hands, [and] clinching her fist.” The fact that Camuse’s tirade was sprinkled with equal doses of French and Italian did little to enlighten either Stephens or his clerk as to her specific complaint. Finally, after spending half an hour “giv[ing] Vent to her Passion,” and not allowing Stephens to get a word in edgewise, Camuse “threw her self out of doors, leaving [him] not one Jot more knowing what she meant than when she began.”⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁷ Stephens, *The Journal of William Stephens, 1743-1745*, 83.

This was not the first time that Jane Mary Camuse had verbally challenged Trustee officials, nor would it be the last. As the colony's sole silk expert for much of the Trustee period, Camuse frequently met with the magistrates to discuss her family's progress in silk production and even negotiated her own salary for winding the silk and taking on apprentices.⁴⁵⁸ Because the success of the silk industry was so important to Georgia's founders, the colonial magistrates often went out of their way to keep Camuse and her family happy and productive. In May 1741, for instance, William Stephens recorded in his journal that Camuse was "much out of Humour," after meeting with another official, Thomas Jones, about her salary. But "knowing her to be a high-spirited Woman" who "knew what Use she was of," Stephens and Jones decided to give into her demands for extra provisions and money for her family, after which "all was well again, and she went to her Business in good Temper."⁴⁵⁹ Following another heated encounter with Camuse over her salary in 1743, colonial officials again decided to cater to her requests, noting that otherwise "the Silk Manufacture might possibly suffer by her Obstinacy." "Knowing the Trustees had the Success of [silk production] very much at Heart," they explained, they "Thought it least Injurious to the Trust that [they] complied with her at present altho [they] thereby gave way to her perverse Temper Rather than

⁴⁵⁸ See, for instance, *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VI*, 85-86. This encounter is described in more detail in Chapter Two, and demonstrates the Trustees' respect for her knowledge and skill.

⁴⁵⁹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, supplement to vol. IV*, 136-137. For other examples, see *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, supplement to vol. 4*, 231, 248-249; *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. 30*, 144-145, 150-151.

hazard the loss of a Manufacture always designed by their Honours as a Staple of the Country.”⁴⁶⁰

Jane Mary Camuse was apparently not an easy woman for officials to deal with. She was argumentative and had no problem letting even the most prominent men know when she was displeased. She was also well aware of her importance and did everything in her power to ensure that her family received the best salary and material support possible. Not surprisingly, Camuse’s attitude and cognizance of her own power and influence often put her at odds with the colonial magistrates, and particularly William Stephens, the Trustees’ secretary and later president of Savannah. From 1741 until her dismissal in 1747, Stephens complained continually about Camuse’s excessive demands and her “obstinate & untractable Humour.”⁴⁶¹ “[A] fresh Vexation came upon me,” he explained to his superiors in England in September 1741, “concerning Mrs. Camuse, who... was got into one of her former Freaks again, reviving her late Complaints of her not meeting with Justice in what had been paid her.” And despite his previous efforts to calm her by giving into her requests, “she was now become exceeding clamorous and ill-conditioned again.”⁴⁶² Two years later, the silk winder was again causing so much trouble that Stephens complained to a friend that “[he knew] of nothing, during the whole course of time that [he had] had the Honour to serve the Trustees ... that [had] given [him] more Disquiet of Mind, than this unparalleled behaviour of hers.”⁴⁶³

⁴⁶⁰ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. VI, 85-86.

⁴⁶¹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XXIV, 186-188.

⁴⁶² *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. IV supplement, 248-249. As we will see in Chapter 6, women were not the only colonists accused of being inconstant as well as over-emotional.

⁴⁶³ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XXIV, 187.

In their descriptions of Camuse's behavior, officials often emphasized the emotional nature of her outbursts against them. Stephens' use of the term "Freaks" to describe Camuse's behavior is particularly revealing. In the eighteenth century, a "freak" was understood as "a sudden turn of mind."⁴⁶⁴ By labeling Camuse's encounters with him as "freaks," Stephens highlighted the inconstant and irrational nature of her behavior. In his opinion, Camuse's behavior was unpredictable, and her mood fluctuated constantly with little or no warning. In some ways this description correlates with contemporary criticisms of women as being prone to overly emotional and irrational behavior. Although sensibility was often perceived as a positive attribute in both men and women in the eighteenth-century, unrestrained emotions (especially in women) were understood as potentially destructive forces in society. Stephens' use of the term "clamorous" to describe her behavior reaffirms that he viewed her actions as unrestrained and overly emotional. A "clamour" in this context was a "vehement expression of feeling, especially of discontent or disapprobation, often including noisy manifestation."⁴⁶⁵ By labeling her complaints as a "clamour," Stephens implied that her behavior was noisy and emotional, rather than restrained and reasonable. Collectively, Stephen's descriptions of Camuse and her behavior indicate that he believed her to be a "high-spirited" woman controlled by her emotional temper, which in turn motivated her unreasonable demands upon the magistrates.

⁴⁶⁴ See the entry for "freak," Dictionary.com. *Online Etymology Dictionary*. Douglas Harper, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/freak>.

⁴⁶⁵ "clamor," *Oxford English Dictionary, Second Edition* (1989), Online Edition, <http://iiprxy.library.miami.edu:2160/cgi/entry/50040718>.

In a colony based upon the principle of order, Camuse's emotional behavior represented a profound threat because the magistrates linked unrestrained passion with chaos and disorder. The authorities believed that Camuse's emotions often ran unchecked, and that she thus represented a potential threat to the colony's stability. Furthermore, her husband was apparently unwilling – or unable – to restrain his wife's behavior, while the magistrates themselves were similarly unsuccessful in their efforts to control her actions, due to their dependence upon her silk knowledge. Camuse's behavior represented an inversion of the normal social and gender order. Because of her position as silk expert, Camuse was able to bypass the cultural mandate that wives should obey their husbands as well as other male authority figures. The officials' objections to her behavior were at least in part expressions of gendered fear about the disorder inherent in allowing women and other people in subordinate roles to challenge the established hierarchy.

The officials' most serious issues with Camuse were her refusals to obey their orders and her attempts to undermine their authority. This is demonstrated in one early encounter when, following an argument over her salary, William Stephens learned that Camuse was threatening to leave the colony in order to travel to England, "and carry the Silk herself to the Trustees, where she expected farther Encouragement." A few days later Stephens surmised "that she found herself now become so necessary, she thought she would make what Terms she saw fit with the Trust." He then attempted to dissuade her, but his attempts were apparently in vain, because that October he complained that Camuse's "continual clamour...appear[ed] everyday more," and concluded that "She means to make her own Terms, & set such a value on her self, as will render the Silk

manufacture precarious at best.” Thus, not only did Camuse challenge colonial officials by attempting to dictate the terms of her employment, but she also planned to undermine them by attempting to go to England and negotiate directly with the Trustees rather than allow the magistrates to act in their roles as official mediators between the colonists and the Trust. And though her attempt to usurp the magistrates’ authority by negotiating her own terms with the Trustees failed, Camuse nevertheless continued to undermine them by refusing to submit to their requests.

No issue demonstrates Camuse’s refusal to submit to the colonial officials more clearly than her reluctance to train apprentices. One of her primary responsibilities as the colony’s silk expert was to train others in the trade, but Camuse did everything she could to avoid teaching other women how to wind silk. When the magistrates attempted to encourage her to take on a few girls as apprentices in 1741, for example, she refused, declaring that they “must not think her such a Fool to bring up any in her Art of winding Silk.”⁴⁶⁶ In Camuse’s view, any apprentices she took in might become her future competition. In obeying the magistrates and instructing others in her trade, she would undermine her own family’s power and influence. As Stephens explained in June 1742, Camuse viewed teaching apprentices as “breeding up young Birds to pick out her eyes.”⁴⁶⁷ Camuse may have also had cultural reasons for refusing to teach apprentices. She and her family originally came from the Piedmont region of modern Italy, an area known for the secretiveness of its skilled craftsmen. As William Stephens later learned, custom dictated that “any Piedmontois ... who ... divulge[d] the Art [of silk] in another

⁴⁶⁶ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. IV supplement*, 248-249.

⁴⁶⁷ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXIII*, 343-344.

Country” would be sentenced to death. Although Camuse was far from her mother country, deeply ingrained taboos against teaching foreigners her craft may have influenced her reluctance to give up her trade secrets to others.⁴⁶⁸

Despite Camuse’s apparent reservations about sharing her knowledge with other women, the magistrates were eventually able to convince her to accept apprentices by paying her an additional fee for every girl taken in, but even then she insisted upon determining the terms of the apprenticeship. In February 1742, after much debate she agreed to take in apprentices, but limited the number she would take to two, arguing that “more would be rather an Incumbrance than of any Service to her or the Trust.” But despite her promise to train girls to care for the worms and spin silk, they often returned to their families and communities when the silk season was over with little more knowledge of silk spinning than when they arrived. In 1744 Johann Martin Boltzius reported that, instead of training the girls he sent to her, Camuse employed them “mostly in trifling work, that needed no skill.” She apparently refused to teach the girls to spin the silk until their third season with her and even hid her tools from them in order to keep the process a secret.⁴⁶⁹ It appears that Camuse defied the magistrates whenever it served her purposes and thereby sought to control the terms of her employment.⁴⁷⁰

Though the Trustees actively sought to replace her, they were unable to find

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 468-469.

⁴⁶⁹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XXIV, 296-298, 301-302.

⁴⁷⁰ In “The Very Sinews of a New Colony” Ben Marsh suggests that Camuse was a shrewd businesswoman who consciously manipulated the authorities for her own benefit. In both *Georgia’s Frontier Women* and “The Very Sinews of a New Colony,” Marsh utilizes the example of Camuse to demonstrate the potential opportunities – and authority – women with particular skills had in a frontier colony. See Marsh, *Georgia’s Frontier Women*, 58-59 and “The Very Sinews of a New Colony: Demographic Determinism and the History of Early Georgia Women, 1732-1752,” in *Gender, Race and Religion in the Colonization of the Americas*, edited by Nora Jaffary (Aldershot, Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 46-47, 50, 52-53.

another potential silk winder for several years. In the meantime, they were forced to cater to Camuse and her demands, or risk halting the progress of silk production in the colony. By 1747, however, one of Camuse's apprentices, a widow by the name of Elizabeth Anderson, acquired enough knowledge to become a silk expert in her own right. The first indication of the officials' success in finding a replacement for Camuse came in late 1746. That December, William Stephens notified Trust secretary Benjamin Martyn that Anderson was "at least equal in Genius, & Diligence, to any that have yet employ'd themselves, under the Direction of Mrs. Camuse; & 'tis to be hoped ... that She'll become able before next Winding Season is over, to go through the whole Work from the Beginning to the End." With Anderson as the new silk expert, Stephens anticipated that "proper Care [would] be taken not to waste the Trustees Cash, in bestowing it on any, who do not fulfill the Conditions appointed; whether in Teaching or Learning." The colony's new silk winder would be a more tractable woman, willing to follow the will of the Trustees. If she proved otherwise, she would receive no payment, and they would find someone else to replace her.

It remains unclear how much Camuse knew about the magistrates' efforts to replace her. Similar attempts to find other silk experts in the past had failed. In 1744, minister Johann Martin Boltzius had convinced Mrs. Barriky, a Piedmontese silk winder living in Carolina, to move to Ebenezer and teach the women there to wind silk thread. Unfortunately, Barriky proved to have a very similar attitude towards teaching others as Jane Mary Camuse. By November of that same year, Boltzius informed the Trustees that Barriky refused to allow her pupils to perform any silk work themselves, and instead expected them to learn by watching her. "I observe she & Mrs. Camuse will have the

Monopoly in this Art,” Boltzius wrote, “& they are jealous to let have any body else a Share or Interest in it.”⁴⁷¹ As a result of Barriky’s attitude, Boltzius abandoned his plan to recruit silk experts to Ebenezer and instead encouraged the young women in his community to experiment with silk winding on their own.

Camuse may have been aware of such failed attempts to hire additional silk experts, and may have assumed that her monopoly on silk knowledge would continue indefinitely, as long as none of her students acquired full mastery of the craft. Yet despite her best efforts, Elizabeth Anderson was finally able to obtain sufficient knowledge to wind silk without assistance in the late 1740s. And the evidence suggests that Camuse had become increasingly concerned about Anderson’s growing skills. As Anderson reported to the Trustees in late 1746, the previous year Camuse “appeared uneasy ... to see her advance so speedily in attaining the Knowledge She did.”⁴⁷² Camuse’s anxieties turned out to be well founded. In August 1747 President William Stephens and his assistants summoned Camuse before them for the final time and informed her that they had resolved to suspend her salary until further notice.⁴⁷³ Nearly two weeks later, the board invited Anderson to demonstrate her skills to them, and she reportedly performed “to the great Satisfaction of ... all present.”⁴⁷⁴ The following January, the magistrates informally (since they had yet to receive official instructions from the Trustees) appointed Anderson as the new expert and provided her with the

⁴⁷¹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXIV, 319-320, 343-344.*

⁴⁷² *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXV, 140-142.*

⁴⁷³ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VI, 190.*

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

colony's silk winding implements.⁴⁷⁵ Soon after her dismissal, Camuse and her family “left the Colony in Discontent” and settled for a time in Purysburg, South Carolina, where they continued to ply their trade as silk winders. Camuse's tenure in Carolina would prove to be short-lived, however: in June 1749, nearly a year and a half after leaving Georgia, the colony's officials informed the Trustees that Camuse had died in Purysburg.⁴⁷⁶

Official criticisms of Camuse's “obstinate” or “clamorous” behavior were clearly driven in part by gendered hostility towards a particularly disorderly and non-deferential woman.⁴⁷⁷ As the previous chapter demonstrates, male officials frequently condemned women who failed to obey their husbands or who violated their expected roles as wives, mothers, moral guardians, and religious instructors. Camuse certainly fit the criteria of a disorderly wife who refused to submit to male authority and who failed in her duty to set a good example for her family. Although the magistrates never directly mentioned the negative influence Camuse had over her relatives during her lifetime, their actions after her death make it clear that they saw her as the instigator of her entire family's “obstinacy.” After his wife's passing, Jacque Camuse and their surviving children requested permission to return to Georgia and continue to work in the silk trade. At first, officials were hesitant to allow the family to return, but when they determined that the

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 206-207.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., 251.

⁴⁷⁷ In “New Deal on a New Frontier,” for instance, Lee Ann Caldwell uses Camuse as an example of a woman whom the authorities believed “put a value on herself” that was “out of her proper feminine role and demeanor.” See Caldwell, “New Deal on a New Frontier,” 116. Julie Anne Sweet makes a similar conclusion in her recent biography of William Stephens. She uses Stephens' interactions with Camuse to argue that he was uncomfortable with authoritative or powerful women. See Sweet, *William Stephens: Georgia's Forgotten Founder*, chapter 7.

Camuses “appeared to be very submissive,” they decided to grant their request. The officials attributed this change in the family’s demeanor to the absence of Mrs. Camuse. As one magistrate explained, since “Mrs. Camuse was the Occasion of their Former bad Behavior,” he believed that without her influence, “her Husband and Children... will endeavor to oblige.”⁴⁷⁸

Unfortunately for Georgia’s male magistrates, Camuse was not the only influential woman in the colony who defied their authority. In the predominantly German-speaking settlement of Ebenezer, midwife Maria Anna Rheinländer similarly refused to submit to colonial officials. The community’s ministers described her as “disorderly and vexatious” and objected in particular to her refusals to recognize their spiritual authority.⁴⁷⁹ In January 1735, for example, Johann Martin Boltzius complained that Rheinländer and her husband were “full of self-righteousness and become right angry if one tells them that they still lack true conversion and that their hope of being saved in this condition is only imaginary and therefore dangerous.” Five years later, Rheinländer was still challenging her minister’s spiritual authority. In June 1740, Boltzius attempted to advise Rheinländer that she must submit to God’s (and her minister’s) will, or risk endangering her soul. He asked her to “take earnest care of her soul so that she may still be saved like a brand plucked from the fire.” But instead of acknowledging her faults and submitting to the minister, Rheinländer declared that “she did not need [his] own and others’ prayers as long as she could pray herself.” She further explained that, “she knew

⁴⁷⁸ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol XXVI, 143-146.

⁴⁷⁹ *Detailed Reports*, vol. VII, 54-55.

better that she was going to heaven, because Christ had died for her and she believed in Him.”⁴⁸⁰ That July, the minister was surprised to see Rheinländer in church, recalling that she had recently told him “in quite a bold manner that she had no desire to come to a pastor like [him].” She had even reportedly claimed that “she had enough good books to read,” and therefore had no need for the minister.⁴⁸¹

At the heart of many of the disagreements between Rheinländer and Boltzius was her assumption that she, and not her minister, could best determine the appropriate spiritual course for her own religious welfare. Similar conflicts were common occurrences in early America, and indeed in most places where Protestant Christianity flourished. The Protestant emphasis upon the idea of a priesthood of all believers encouraged all Christians to cultivate a personal relationship with God, which included learning to read and interpret scripture. This ideal often caused friction between the laity and clergy, who did not always see eye-to-eye on doctrinal issues. And when ministers tried to assert their spiritual authority, the ambiguities inherent in a hierarchical religion that also encouraged personal priesthood became particularly apparent.⁴⁸² In Maria Rheinländer’s case, the minister attempted to correct what he saw as her theological errors before it was too late. When she rebuffed his attempts, and declared that she knew

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 157-158.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 185.

⁴⁸² For more on the ways in which this emphasis upon the priesthood of believers created tension between the clergy and laity in Puritan New England, see David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989), 139-147. Annette Laing has shown that the American colonists were often latitudinarian in their beliefs, and saw no reason to follow the strict religious orthodoxy favored by their priests. They viewed it as their right to embrace the practices and beliefs that they favored and discard those that interfered with their personal preferences. Not surprisingly, this flexible system of religious beliefs brought colonists and clergymen into frequent conflict. See Laing, “All Things to All Men,” 27-76, 130-186.

better what was best for her spiritual welfare, Boltzius saw this not as her right to interpret scripture as she saw fit, but instead as a dangerous challenge to God's ordained order on Earth. In his view, there was only one correct interpretation of scripture, and trained ministers were the ones best suited to lead their charges to the right conclusions. He certainly supported members of the congregation who read the Bible and who were interested in theological issues, but took offense when they did not ultimately defer to his superior knowledge in doctrinal practices. He believed that God had appointed him and other ministers to lead the Christian flock, and therefore saw Rheinländer's vocal rejections of his authority as a direct threat not only to her spiritual welfare but also to a God-ordained hierarchy.

Maria Rheinländer's status as a respected midwife added additional weight to her disrespectful behavior, since her example might influence others to defy the minister. Officials apparently feared Rheinländer's negative influence so much that, following her brief absence from the colony in the late 1730s, they felt compelled to debate over whether or not she should be allowed to return. In late February 1740, Boltzius reported that after consulting with authorities in Savannah, he found them willing to "take all precautions ... against all the disorders that we fear and the vexations that arose here previously because of her." As a result, she could "return to [Ebenezer], but in cautious terms."⁴⁸³ Her subsequent behavior seemed to indicate that the officials' fears were justified and Boltzius continued to worry about how her behavior would affect others. In June 1740, a few hours after yet another confrontation with Rheinländer, the minister made a point to visit one of Rheinländer's neighbors, Mrs. Helfenstein, in order to advise

⁴⁸³ *Detailed Reports, vol. VII, 54-55.*

her not to follow in her unruly friend's footsteps. He "admonished her neither to deport herself like [Rheinländer] nor give her any encouragement in her blasphemies, indiscreet remarks about her fellow man, false comfort, and empty hopes of salvation." Otherwise, the minister argued, "she would be a party to [the instigation of sins] and would be helping [Rheinländer] to strengthen her blindness and malice."⁴⁸⁴

Beatre Hawkins, the wife of prominent surgeon Thomas Hawkins, similarly caused disorder in her community by disobeying – and even physically attacking – Trust-appointed ministers and other officials. Even though her husband was a minor magistrate in the predominantly English settlement of Frederica, she was nevertheless notorious for verbally challenging local officials and ministers whenever she did not agree with them or their policies. One particular target of her rage was Charles Wesley, the minister at Frederica. Although Hawkins had once enjoyed a cordial relationship with John Wesley, especially during the voyage to Georgia, her encounters with his brother Charles were tense from almost the very beginning. In particular, she objected to his interference in her household affairs, as one example from 1736 illustrates. In early March of that year, Charles Wesley found the Hawkins' maidservant crying. When he questioned the girl, she claimed that Mrs. Hawkins had struck her. The minister then convinced the maid to return to her mistress and accompanied her back to the Hawkins' home. Once there, he attempted to convince Beatre Hawkins to forgive the girl for running away, but she "refused ... with the utmost roughness, rage, and almost reviling."⁴⁸⁵ And when Hawkins

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 157-158. The actual words replaced by the bracket are "alien sins," the translator's version of the original "peccata aliena," which refers to the instigation of sin. I have substituted the bracketed definition of the original words for better clarity. See footnote 15, *Detailed Reports*, vol. VII, 294.

⁴⁸⁵ Wesley, *The Manuscript Journal of the Reverend Charles Wesley*, 2.

observed Wesley speaking with her maidservant several days later, she “fell upon [him] with the utmost bitterness and scurrility” and even threatened to “blow [him] up.”

Wesley apparently found her outburst so shocking that he was compelled to write that, up until that point, he had “thought no *woman*, though taken from Drury Lane [a district in London thought to be overrun with vice, crime and disorder], could have spoken [as she had].”⁴⁸⁶

Charles’ brother, John, likewise felt the wrath of Beatre Hawkins, and in his case, she was not inclined to limit her assaults to words alone. Despite their previously close relationship, in August 1736 Hawkins attempted to shoot and then stab him for depicting her in a negative light to his brother and then failing to defend her honor after Charles Wesley wrote a damaging account of her behavior that was later circulated around the town. What really upset Hawkins were two Greek words in the piece, which she was unable to decipher or determine to whom they referred. John Wesley proceeded to tell her the meaning of the words and that they referred to her and another woman in the community. (Although Wesley’s journals and diary do not directly reveal the words in question, the other woman later confronted the minister for calling her an adulteress). Two days after John Wesley’s meeting with her, Hawkins requested that he again come to her house to speak with her. When he complied, she confronted him about his treatment of her. “Sir, you have wronged me,” she reportedly told him, “and by God I will shoot you through the head this moment with a brace of balls.”⁴⁸⁷ She then attempted to make good on her threat by brandishing a pistol before him, and when he

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁸⁷ Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. XVIII, 412.

restrained her, she grabbed a pair of scissors and attempted to stab him instead.⁴⁸⁸

Wesley's struggle with Mrs. Hawkins soon attracted attention, but rather than halt her attack, Hawkins sought to include others in the fray. When her maidservant entered the home to investigate the source of the commotion, Hawkins ordered her to bring her a knife, and swore that "she would be the death of her if she did not." When the woman refused to help, Hawkins ordered her two servant boys to help restrain Wesley, which they likewise refused to do. Finally Mr. Hawkins returned with two constables in tow. But when the men attempted to take his wife away, he "commanded them, at their peril, not to touch [her]." It appears that this threat temporarily halted the constables' efforts, which gave Beatre Hawkins the opportunity to resume her attack. She immediately "seized on [Wesley's] cassock with her teeth, and tore both the sleeves of it to pieces, and then fixed upon [his] arm."⁴⁸⁹ Mr. Hawkins finally halted the attack by taking hold of his wife and lifting her away from Wesley. When General Oglethorpe questioned Hawkins about her behavior later that day, she allegedly scolded him for not "[doing] her justice for the wrong she had received [from the Wesley brothers' words against her], and therefore she had done herself justice." Yet she soon reversed her attitude and for once adopted a conciliatory tone and promised that she and her husband would practice "better behavior in the future."⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., 412-413.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., 413.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid. For more on Hawkins' run-ins with the Wesley brothers, as well as their other negative encounters with Georgia's women, see Carol Ebel, "Women and the Wesleys at Frederica, 1736-1737," in Spalding, ed., *Women on the Colonial Frontier*, 27-41.

The Wesley brothers were not the only prominent men to face the violent temper of Beatre Hawkins. In 1736, Hawkins physically assaulted both a military guard and a town constable who attempted to bar her from entering Frederica's military camp. That March Hawkins had been transporting a number of bottles, presumably delivering them to the troops stationed at the fort. When she arrived at the camp's entrance, the guard informed her that he could not allow her entry, but volunteered to carry the bottles for her. This offer did nothing to calm her outrage at being refused admission, and she announced that she would enter the camp, regardless of what he said. And when he tried to stop her, she took one of her bottles and smashed it over his head. The guard eventually managed to restrain Hawkins, but her subsequent cries of "Murder!" attracted more participants to the fray, including Thomas Hawkins and his neighbor, Mr. Welch [whose wife was the other woman whom Charles Wesley had allegedly called an adulteress]. Eventually the guard's reinforcements were able to put an end to the conflict, but not before constable Thomas Hird suffered a blow to the head, courtesy of Beatre Hawkins and another of her bottles.⁴⁹¹ When Hird later confronted Hawkins at her house and "entreated her to return quietly to her husband and trouble the public peace no longer," she drew her gun at him. However, before she could fire the weapon, the constable's reinforcements managed to restrain her and take her gun away.

Beatre Hawkins' verbal outbursts and physical assaults were bad enough, but her status as the wife of a prominent official and surgeon lent additional weight to her actions. Her rank gave her much influence in Frederica and she was supposed to set a good example for other colonists, especially other women. Officials feared that her

⁴⁹¹ Wesley, *The Manuscript Journal of the Reverend Charles Wesley*, 7.

unruly behavior would prompt her friends and neighbors instead to reject their authority. According to Charles Wesley, this was indeed what was happening. Over the course of the spring of 1736, the minister lamented that the behavior of Anne Welch, one of his former converts, was becoming more and more like that of her friend, Beatre Hawkins. Early that March, Wesley noted that his words no longer seemed to have an effect on Welch. “Toward noon I found the opportunity of talking at the tent-door with Mrs [Anne] Welch,” he recorded in his diary. “I laboured to guard her against the cares of the world, and to give herself to God in the Christian sacrifice; but to no purpose. God was pleased not to add weight to my words, therefore they could make no impression.”⁴⁹² The next day Wesley again attempted to speak with Welch, but “found [her] all storm and tempest. The meek, the teachable Mrs Welch (that *was* in the ship) was now so wilful, so untractable, so fierce, that [he] could not bear to stay near her.”⁴⁹³ By the end of the month, Wesley thought that he had found the cause of Welch’s change of heart: her friendship with Beatre Hawkins. On March 24th, Wesley reported that he prayed on behalf of Mrs. Welch, hoping that “Satan, in the shape of that other bad woman [Hawkins], might not stand at her right hand.”⁴⁹⁴ Several days later, Wesley wrote that he was concerned after “hearing that Mrs. Welch [was] growing more and more like Mrs. Hawkins; [she] declares she will be no longer priest-ridden, jests upon prayers, and talks in the loose, scandalous dialect of her friend.”⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹² Ibid., 2.

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., 9-10.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., 15.

According to Charles Wesley, Beatre Hawkins was not only a troublemaker, but also a proven danger to those with whom she associated. Her ability to influence her friend's religious opinions was particularly threatening – in part because she drove her friend away from God, but also because such behavior directly undermined the authority of Wesley's ministry. Note, for instance, Welch's declaration that she would not be "priest-ridden." The women apparently made jokes during religious services and gave Wesley none of the respect or deference that he believed his position warranted. It was a situation faced by many ministers in early America, where the members of a congregation often had significant power over their clergymen. This was particularly the case in churches where vestries and other lay bodies determined the ministers' pay and even had the power to dismiss them if they were too unpopular.⁴⁹⁶ In Georgia, the Trustees and their allies in the SPG held the sole power to hire or fire the colony's religious leaders, but ordinary colonists nevertheless had much influence. They, like Hawkins and Welch, could openly disobey ministers whom they did not like with few or no serious repercussions. They could also try to make a minister's life so miserable that he voluntarily decided to give up his position. Unfortunately for ministers such as Wesley, there was little they could do to protect themselves from such attacks, especially if they lacked the support of other officials in the colony. By the time Beatre Hawkins initiated her challenges to Wesley's ministerial authority, he was already a controversial character, due in part to what many colonists saw as his overly strict and rigid religious beliefs. As a result, few in the colony were willing to come to his defense. Beatre

⁴⁹⁶ For more on lay influence over ministers in colonial America, see Laing, "All Things to All Men," 187-266.

Hawkins' position in the colony, as the wife of an important magistrate and surgeon, also lent particular weight to her side of the conflict and made other officials reluctant to do anything more than complain about her behavior.

At least one other wife of a prominent man with much needed skills was also able to use her position to defy Georgia's colonial magistrates. In 1744, Margaret Avery, widow of surveyor Joseph Avery, attempted to use her possession of important maps of the colony as leverage to attain the best compensation for her recently deceased husband's work for the Trustees. Instead of immediately submitting the maps to William Stephens and another official, as requested, Avery sought to keep her husband's papers until she had the opportunity to negotiate directly with the Trustees in England. Stephens, seemingly insulted by her lack of faith in Georgia's local officials, warned Avery that her behavior would not incline the Trustees to view her case favorably, but his efforts had little effect. Avery refused to submit the maps and rebuffed all of the magistrates' attempts to change her mind for the next two and half months, prompting Stephens to complain to his superiors that she "persisted in obstinately refusing to comply on any other terms... [than her own]."⁴⁹⁷

As time went on, Stephens' encounters with Avery became even more hostile, particularly after officials caught the widow attempting to leave the colony with the maps still in her possession. Instead of submitting to the authorities, Avery confronted them and defended her right to leave the colony. Stephens wrote that some time after he "orderd [her] Goods to be stopped," she "came in an Angry Mood, and whilst Messrs. Parker and Spencer were eating a Commons with [him], She burst in upon [them], and

⁴⁹⁷ Stephens, *The Journal of William Stephens, 1743-1745*, 163.

shew'd her Talent in railing and foul language, reproaching each of [them] for Cruelty," before leaving "in the like Rage she came in."⁴⁹⁸ As a widow, she did have some claim to her husband's remaining property, including his surveying plans, but her refusal to cooperate with the magistrates prompted them to identify her as an "obstinate" abuser of her position as the head of her family.

Mary Townsend was another widow with a habit of challenging Georgia's magistrates.⁴⁹⁹ She was particularly notorious for her public criticisms of the Trust government and her active participation in organized efforts to undermine the political power of local officials. According to William Stephens, Townsend had no reason to be unhappy with her life in Georgia, since General Oglethorpe had always been very generous to her family. But instead of showing her gratitude, he claimed, she "reviled her kind Benefactor, and g[ave] herself most unwarrantable Liberties with her Tongue to defile his Character."⁵⁰⁰ In addition to directly insulting the most prominent man in the colony, officials also maintained that Townsend played an active part in spreading her "Poison" to the rest of the populace. In July 1740, the Malcontents sent her a piece of anti-Trustee propaganda from Charleston, which she dutifully forwarded to other like-minded colonists. According to William Stephens, Townsend was known for her "Faculty of scattering what Venom she can," a talent which the paper's authors hoped to

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., 174.

⁴⁹⁹ The official records never provide Townsend's first name, but William Stephens' report on the Malcontents reveals that before her marriage to Edward Townsend, she had been married to a man named Hodges. Although most sources refer to her either as widow Hodges or Mrs. Hodges/Townsend, an early record of the colonists who arrived in Georgia states that the name of Richard Hodges' wife was Mary. Before marrying Townsend, Mary Hodges ran a public house to support herself. In fact, she is listed as one of the few Savannah retailers with a valid license to sell beer and wine. See Egmont Papers vol. 14203, 220; Egmont Papers vol. 14207, 16, 99, 111, 152.

⁵⁰⁰ Stephens, *A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia*, vol. II, 450-451.

utilize, “to see what good Use she could make of it.”⁵⁰¹ Not surprisingly, when Townsend decided to leave the colony several days later, officials were not sorry to see her go. William Stephens in particular made no secret of his relief that she was gone. In a journal entry from late July, he gave thanks to God that “the eminent Mrs. Townsend thought fit to leave [them], whose Tongue ha[d] been a Nuisance to this Town ever since [he] knew it.”⁵⁰² Unfortunately for the magistrates, Townsend’s tongue continued to plague the colony, even from as far away as New York. In November 1741, after learning that Townsend had sent a letter to her remaining Malcontent compatriots, Stephens complained that even in New York she “continued still to shew her Disposition to this Colony, as far as she could, in the same Manner she did at the Time she lived among [them], feeding the Discontented with false Rumours (mostly of her own invention) lest Animosities should sleep.”⁵⁰³

Perhaps the most well known woman criticized by Georgia’s magistrates for her non-deferential behavior was Mary Musgrove, the colony’s prominent half-Indian interpreter and cultural liaison with the local native tribes. Musgrove was particularly notorious for her refusals to bend to the will of the Trustees and their colonial representatives. Her story reveals the officials’ discomfort not only with what they saw as overly-assertive women, but also with natives who refused to cooperate with English

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 451-452.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 461.

⁵⁰³ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. IV supplement, 177.*

authorities.⁵⁰⁴ Although many magistrates, including General Oglethorpe, admired and respected Musgrove's skills, others viewed her as argumentative and ungrateful. William Stephens, for instance, described Musgrove as a "haughty" woman with an inflated opinion of herself and her value to the colony.⁵⁰⁵ A series of conflicts with Musgrove in the 1740s served to harden Stephens' attitude towards her. In September of 1743, Musgrove offended Stephens when she verbally attacked a Trust representative. The incident began when local Indian men arrived at Musgrove's home with a Spanish prisoner in tow. Musgrove requested assistance from the colony's English officials, but they arrived too late and she was left to confine the man on her own. When one of the English representatives finally arrived, Musgrove became angry and allegedly declared that "She had no occasion for such help now, for that She had gotten some Irons from the Smith, and would Secure them her Self." When Stephens later tried to assuage her temper, explaining that if he had "known Irons would have pleased her, She might have had them for the asking, She then exalted her Voice and said plainly she never would ask at the Stores again for any thing of the trusts."⁵⁰⁶

Subsequent encounters with Musgrove reinforced Stephens' negative opinion of the Indian translator. One of the thorniest issues was her claim that she was the rightful owner of several choice tracts of land in Georgia. In 1747, Musgrove and her third husband, Thomas Bosomworth, met with a Creek chief (probably a relative of Musgrove's) named Malatchee, who allegedly granted them ownership of three sea

⁵⁰⁴ During her tenure as Indian translator and political liaison, Mary Musgrove was married to three different men: John Musgrove, Jacob Matthews, and Thomas Bosomworth. For clarity, I refer to her throughout this chapter by the first name used by Georgia's officials: Musgrove.

⁵⁰⁵ Stephens, *The Journal of William Stephens, 1743-1745*, 19.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

islands off of Georgia's coast. Trust officials were reluctant to support this claim for two reasons. The first was that other Creek leaders never approved the transaction. Their second, and perhaps most contentious, reason was that Musgrove and her husband had overstepped the regulation that the Trustees were the only ones authorized to distribute land to British subjects. Musgrove seems to have viewed herself as a British ally rather than as a subject, but the officials saw her as an influential yet still subordinate subject of the crown. In the magistrates' view, Mary Musgrove's attempts to negotiate a land deal independently of the Trustees were the actions of an ungrateful subject willing to defy good order so as to pursue her own selfish ends. The Bosomworths' subsequent attempts to gain financial compensation for Mary's work as a translator and for her previous efforts to supply and assist the colony's settlers reaffirmed the officials' views of her as a greedy and manipulative subject. While Musgrove argued that she had never been fully reimbursed for her work on the colony's behalf, the magistrates countered that she had already received generous support and was therefore requesting compensation over and above what she actually deserved.

The matter reached a boiling point in 1749, when Musgrove and her husband summoned a number of Creek chiefs to Savannah in an effort to pressure the officials into consenting to their demands. This action accomplished its intended effect of frightening the colony's magistrates, but rather than convince them to bow to Musgrove's demands, it instead strengthened their resolve to contain her disorderly behavior. The magistrates began by reassuring the assembled chieftains that the rumors that they intended to shackle Musgrove in irons and send her to England were untrue; they then reaffirmed their good will towards the Indians by providing them with gifts and lavish

entertainment. Angry with the magistrates' attempts to diffuse the situation, Musgrove stood up and declared "herself to be Empress and Queen of the Upper and Lower Creeks" and claimed that "She could command every Man to follow her." When English officials rebuked her claims to royalty and described her instead as a subject of the English king, "She answered [that] She owed him no Allegiance otherwise, than in Alliance, being herself a Sovereign."⁵⁰⁷ Perhaps reluctant to challenge Musgrove in front of the assembled chieftains, the officials initially ignored her outburst and even invited her to join them for dinner. But rather than submit their request, Musgrove refused to sit with the officials and instructed the Indians to follow her, about half of whom complied.

Following this encounter, Georgia's magistrates seem to have concluded that Musgrove's insolence had reached new, dangerous heights. She was no longer merely a troublesome, greedy woman, but a treasonous subject who rejected not only the Trustees' authority but also that of the king. It was therefore imperative that they find a means of diffusing the situation and demonstrating that her behavior would not be tolerated. And when a number of natives marched through Savannah the following afternoon, they saw their chance to reassert their authority and immediately had the group's ringleader, Adam Bosomworth – brother to Musgrove's husband – arrested in front of the assembled Indians. Georgia's magistrates then proposed another meeting with the chiefs, in order to "make [them] sensible of their Misbehaviour," but just before they were able to enter the President's house, Mary Musgrove ran to them "like a Mad and Frantick Woman" and "endeavour[ed] all she could to irretate the Indians afresh." The officials ordered the guards to restrain her and attempted to calm her down, but their efforts were in vain. As

⁵⁰⁷ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VI, 262-263.*

William Stephens reported, “She rose to such a pitch of Insolence, as repeatedly to threaten the Lives of some of the Magistrates, and the destruction of the Colony, through her influence with, and command over the Indians.”⁵⁰⁸ Musgrove further claimed that all of the land in Georgia rightfully belonged to her. “You talk of your White Town, your General and his Treaties, a fig for your General,” she declared before the assembled crowd, “you have not a Foot of Land in the Colony.” Musgrove then “Stamp[ed] her Foot on the Ground [and] impudently said, That very Ground was her’s.” Not amused by her passionate speech, Georgia’s officials had Musgrove confined until she became “more submissive.”⁵⁰⁹ And rather than defend Musgrove, Malatchee and the other chiefs expressed their embarrassment over the matter and sought to smooth things over with the

⁵⁰⁸ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. IV, 264.* In *William Stephens: Georgia’s Forgotten Founder*, Julie Anne Sweet uses these and other interactions between Stephens and Musgrove to argue that Stephens had a particular dislike of authoritative women. While it is impossible to know Stephens’ personal attitudes towards women for certain, the fact that he described men – including Musgrove’s second and third husbands – in similar terms reveals that gender was not the only factor at play. As Sweet herself points out, Stephens seems to have taken great offense to any colonist who failed to adequately carry out their duties and responsibilities. I would argue that this devotion to duty also explains many of his supposed rants against women.

⁵⁰⁹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VI, 264.* In “The Sexual Politics of Race and Gender,” Michele Gillespie explores this and other encounters between Mary Musgrove and Georgia’s magistrates. Her focus is upon Musgrove’s role as a “cultural broker.” Specifically, she looks at how Musgrove straddled the gulf between her identities as an English “good wife,” a powerful political negotiator, and a half-Indian. Although Musgrove was initially very powerful, Gillespie argues that, over time, Georgia’s officials began to see her as someone whose “power and authority challenged Anglo notions about who deserved privilege and status.” She argues that by the time of this conflict, Musgrove, fed up with her diminishing influence after Oglethorpe’s departure from the colony, had begun to embrace her native heritage over her alliance with the English. However, though her relations with English officials had cooled, she continued to assist them as a cultural broker. See Gillespie, “The Sexual Politics of Race and Gender: Mary Musgrove and the Georgia Trustees,” in *The Devil’s Lane: Sex and Race in the Early South*, edited by Catherine Clinton and Michele Gillespie (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1997), 187-201. In her recent dissertation, Lisa Laurel Crutchfield similarly explores Mary Musgrove’s use of her cultural heritage when negotiating with Georgia’s officials. She shows how Musgrove consciously played up different aspects of her identity to better achieve her ends. See Crutchfield, “‘Indispensably Necessary’: Cultural Brokers on the Georgia Frontier, 1733-1765” (PhD diss., College of William and Mary, 2007). In chapter four of her dissertation, Wendy Lucas Castro utilizes Mary Musgrove’s case to emphasize the dangers inherent when bi-ethnic children of Indian and European parents attempted to claim dual identities. Wendy Elise Lucas Castro, “Cultural transvestites: Bi-cultural mediators along the North American frontier,” (PhD. diss., University of California Riverside, 2004), 124-158.

English. They even went so far as to accuse the Bosomworths of deceiving them, and when Malatchee was asked if he really viewed Musgrove as their empress, he replied that he had not understood her words at the time and seemed insulted that he had been “Ranked with an Old Woman.”⁵¹⁰

Despite Malatchee’s denial of her sovereignty, Musgrove continued to claim royal status in nearly every subsequent dispute with Georgia’s officials. The fact that she was the niece of a prominent Creek chief named Brims bolstered her position.⁵¹¹ Yet despite her claims, Georgia’s officials never formally recognized Musgrove’s sovereignty and instead continued to see her as an influential but ultimately subordinate inhabitant of the colony. Although she provided an invaluable service to the colony as translator and intermediary between the English and their Indian neighbors, this did not in the opinion of magistrates such as William Stephens give her license to disrespect Trust officials. To him, she was a “mad,” overly assertive employee who used her position to defy the Trustees whenever their goals or expectations did not match her own.

Musgrove’s status as a woman of Native American ancestry magnified her supposed efforts to disrupt good order. Officials already associated unrestrained women with disorder, and, in their view, no women were more disorderly than Indian women. Many English settlers who encountered Native American societies observed significant differences between Indian gender roles and those of English society. They saw women working in the fields, for instance, while the men went hunting (an activity the English associated with wealth and leisure), and assumed that wives were the breadwinners who

⁵¹⁰ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VI, 268.*

⁵¹¹ Gillespie, “The Sexual Politics of Race and Gender,” 190.

supported their 'lazy' husbands. They likewise observed that young Indians of both sexes were permitted to engage in premarital sex and that wives and husbands could seemingly dissolve their unions whenever they wished. Furthermore, English observers noted the influence and voice that some women were given in tribal councils and assumed, rightly or wrongly, that women wielded more authority in Indian tribes than was common in English society. Taken together, the unfamiliar nature of gender expectations in native cultures prompted many English observers to conclude that Indian societies were inherently disorderly, and therefore inferior to English ones. When a half-English, half-Creek woman rejected the authority of English officials and dared to claim that she was their superior, she was almost immediately identified as a mad woman and the very antithesis of good order. Her explicit rejection of her English identity did nothing to change this interpretation. Although Musgrove herself, at least initially, seems to have embraced both sides of her heritage, and often played up whatever aspects were most advantageous at the time, the English authorities held a different view. Because she was a Christian who spent the majority of her time living among and assisting the English inhabitants, the magistrates seem to have viewed her (and assumed that she saw herself) as an English subject.⁵¹² Her subsequent claims to the contrary seem to have shocked them. And since they viewed English culture as superior, they concluded that a person who willingly chose to embrace an Indian identity over an English one must be mad. Because of her influence in the colony, such madness presented a serious danger to the social order. Madness and disorder were intimately linked in the eighteenth century. In

⁵¹² Wendy Lucas Castro explores this case and its repercussions in greater detail in chapter 4 of her dissertation. See Wendy Lucas Castro, "Cultural transvestites: Bi-cultural mediators along the North American frontier," 124-158.

the view of many doctors, madness was caused by a dangerous lack of control and an inability to understand and follow the expected rules of social decorum. At its heart, madness represented a rejection of all that was orderly and reasonable and signaled that a person was ruled by his or her base impulses. Since Georgia's officials believed that disorder could easily spread like a cancer to the rest of society, it was imperative that they contain Musgrove's 'madness' and make it clear to all observers that they would not let this emotionally and mentally unstable woman use her power to rip the colony apart.⁵¹³

According to Georgia's officials, Jane Mary Camuse, Maria Rheinländer, Beatre Hawkins, Margaret Avery, Mary Townsend and Mary Musgrove were insolent, disorderly, ungrateful, out-spoken, and perhaps even mad women who did not know how to interact with Trust authorities. Their supposedly unrestrained emotions and propensity to challenge 'rational,' God-ordained social structures, which placed men over women and magistrates over colonists, signaled to authorities that these women were mentally unbalanced and that they posed a serious threat to social harmony. On the surface, such descriptions seem to support the notion that the colonial magistrates were uncomfortable with authoritative women. And as the previous chapter shows, there is more than a grain of truth here. In a society where power was understood in masculine terms, there was always some level of discomfort with women wielding significant authority, especially when women used that influence to defy official expectations. And some of the specific behaviors that the officials objected to in these women, including "passionate" outbursts

⁵¹³ For more on the connections between madness and disorder, see chapters two and three of H.C. Erik Midelfort's *A History of Madness in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999). For a good overview of ideas about madness in the early modern period, see Lindemann, *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe*, 40-49.

and spreading gossip, although not limited to the female sex, were often understood as primarily feminine flaws. Yet as we saw in chapter two, Georgia's officials were at other times very supportive of authoritative women. It is significant that both Jane Mary Camuse and Mary Musgrove were hired by the magistrates to serve important and influential positions in the colony and that those officials initially had very positive things to say about them. In 1735, Johann Martin Boltzius reported that Musgrove had "a special talent for expressing Indian terms in English, a talent not even possessed by her recently dead husband [John Musgrove]."⁵¹⁴ In 1737, the reverend Benjamin Ingham similarly described Musgrove in glowing terms as a "Sensible well civiliz'd woman," who could read and write and was well-versed in both the English and Creek languages.⁵¹⁵ Ingham's choice of words here is significant, particularly considering Musgrove's ethnic background. In his praise, he seemingly sought to emphasize the "civiliz'd" and therefore English aspect of her identity, thereby reassuring his superiors that she was a worthy recipient of their trust. A few years later, another minister reported to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts that Musgrove was a "good Woman" fit to take in her deceased brother's two orphaned children and "direct their Conduct and Instruction."⁵¹⁶ Officials had similarly good things to say about Jane Mary Camuse. In May 1741, William Stephens praised Camuse's knowledge and skill in the silk trade, estimating that she had produced "more than double to what has been the work of any other Family; and all this is done in six Weeks." With her cooperation and

⁵¹⁴ *Detailed Reports, vol. II, 107.*

⁵¹⁵ "Mr. Inghams journal of his voyage to Georgia" in Egmont Papers, vol. 14201, 189.

⁵¹⁶ "For the Revd. D: Bearcroft Secretary to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel &c.," Egmont Papers, vol. 14212, 68.

assistance, he concluded, “the Silk Manufacture ... must in a few Years more become a very advantageous Trade.”⁵¹⁷

Not only were officials willing to praise and support authoritative women of whom they approved, but they also readily condemned men who sought to exploit their abilities or authority at the expense of the Trustees. The fact that Georgia’s officials described disobedient and defiant men in almost identical terms as the women shows that gender was not the sole or even the most prominent issue at play. Men who used their particular skills or advantages to defy Trustee authority were no more immune to official chastisement than women who behaved in similar ways. In fact, they were sometimes treated more harshly. Peter Emery, a ship pilot who attempted to use his valuable skills as a bargaining chip with Trust officials, was eventually fired for his behavior. According to William Stephens, Emery possessed a “perverse Disposition ... had so many Humours to be complied with, and created so much Trouble” that the Trustees were forced to dismiss him.⁵¹⁸ Unfortunately for Emery, it appears that his position was less specialized than that of women like Camuse the silkwinder or Musgrove the translator, making it easier for officials to replace him.

Almost any sort of non-deferential behavior on the part of a man was likely to result in the same kinds of official criticism often directed at defiant women. In May 1738, William Stephens complained about Patrick Grant’s refusal to respect the colony’s magistrates. During a session of the local court, Grant was apparently too vocal in his criticisms of the local officials, and refused to submit when they attempted to silence him.

⁵¹⁷ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, supplement to vol. IV*, 141-142.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 222.

Despite being “a weak man,” Stephens explained, Grant nevertheless “affected to distinguish himself in publick [and] by a pert and saucy Behaviour affronted the Magistrates, by peremptorily refusing to obey their Orders and setting them in open Contempt.” Eventually tiring of his disrespectful demeanor, the authorities “very deservedly committed him to Goal.”⁵¹⁹ Unfortunately, Stephens never elaborated on the specific nature of Grant’s crime, but the implication was that he had challenged the authority of local officials. His subsequent refusals to defer to their superior position further infuriated the colony’s magistrates. Before releasing Grant from prison, the authorities required him to “[acknowledge] his Crime, and [show] some Penitence.” But Grant refused to admit his guilt and instead accused the officials of holding him illegally.⁵²⁰ A week later, when officials offered to release him if he posted bail, he “continued obstinate, and seemed determined to offer none.” He even wrote letters to “all [in] his Acquaintance ... exclaiming against [the magistrates’] Proceedings as arbitrary and illegal.”⁵²¹ It was not until several weeks later that Grant finally posted bail and was released from imprisonment.⁵²²

John Fallowfield, a naval officer and second bailiff of Savannah, was similarly criticized for his unwillingness to defer to his superiors. President William Stephens was particularly frustrated by his efforts to overstep his authority. The first such incident took place in the winter of 1739/40. The matter began in late December 1739, when a

⁵¹⁹ Stephens, *A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia*, vol. I, 207.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁵²² *Ibid.*, 215.

suspicious ship was spotted in the colony's coastal waters. When officials went to investigate the schooner, they found it filled with contraband goods from Hispaniola and seized the vessel.⁵²³ Unsure what to do about the ship and its contents, Georgia's magistrates spent several days deliberating the best course of action. Initially, they resolved to let lawyers and customs officers in Carolina handle the matter, but Colonel Flower, the owner of the vessel (who claimed that he knew nothing of the contraband goods), begged that they not treat the incident "[with] Rigour" and instead take whatever of the cargo that would "be of Service to the Colony."⁵²⁴ It was at this point that Fallowfield offered to take charge of the situation, claiming that he, as a naval officer, had more experience in such matters than anyone else in the colony. He volunteered to take the ship's illegal items into his custody until he received further instructions from officials in England, and offered to take any blame for the decisions he made. The local officials, convinced of Fallowfield's experience and reluctant to assert their authority in a case they knew little about, agreed to allow him to deal with the matter, but stipulated that the goods be stored in the Trust's stores. Fallowfield agreed to this stipulation, and all seemed to be well. Several days later, however, Fallowfield went to the home of President William Stephens to present a draft of the bond he had prepared for Colonel Flower to sign. Stephens was shocked to see that the bond was made out to the king, rather than to the Trustees. And when he attempted to convince Fallowfield that the Trustees were the proper recipients, his words were ignored. Fallowfield even refused Stephens' request to submit the executed bond into his hands, saying that he [Fallowfield]

⁵²³ William Stephens, *Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia*, vol. II, 225-226.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, 229-230, 240-241.

“saw no Occasion for [it].” Angered by Fallowfield’s behavior, Stephens asked him “whose Servant he thought himself to be?” and pointed out that all of his authority had been delegated to him by the Trustees and that he therefore owed them obedience. Apparently unfazed, Fallowfield “turn[ed] a deaf Ear” to the president’s warnings, and continued to insist that Stephens assist him in drawing up the bond. Fed up with Fallowfield’s behavior, Stephens vowed that he would no longer “meddle, or offer to mend what he had so warmly taken on himself, exclusive of all others.”⁵²⁵ Stephens’ negative opinion of Fallowfield was further bolstered several days later, when he learned that the contraband items had never been submitted to the Trustees’ custody. “[Fallowfield] has not kept his Word,” Stephens complained to another official, “in any one Thing insisted on, which he had promised.”⁵²⁶

Fallowfield’s disobedience to authority soon became a recurrent theme in the official records. His rank as Savannah’s bailiff made his behavior particularly galling. Rather than setting a good example by displaying grateful obedience to the Trustees and their representatives, Fallowfield instead used his position to challenge his superiors. Even worse, he publicly allied himself with some of the colony’s staunchest critics. Beginning in early 1739, rumors circulated that the new bailiff had friends among the Malcontents. Such stories were seemingly confirmed that November, following an altercation between Fallowfield and his fellow magistrates. Earlier that day William Stephens had called a special meeting of the court. Upon learning of the upcoming session, Fallowfield confronted Stephens and expressed his displeasure that he had not

⁵²⁵ Ibid., 245.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., 248. Despite his initial refusal to listen to Stephens’ instructions, the records indicate that Fallowfield did eventually clear his acquisition and sale of the contraband goods through the Trustees. See *Diary of the First Earl of Egmont*, 132.

been consulted in the matter. When Stephens tried to explain that he, as the highest official in Savannah, was authorized to convene court meetings, and that two other magistrates were present when he made the decision, Fallowfield “appeared pretty warm, and began to throw out some angry Reflexions upon his Brother Magistrates.” He then threatened to write to the Trustees in England and “acquaint them with what he thought they were wanting to be informed in,” and then retreated to the home of a prominent Malcontent. Just a few days later, William Stephens informed the Trustees that Fallowfield had recently “appeared [as] the Head of these troublesome and discontented people” and was leading their efforts “to propagate bad Notions among their Neighbors.”⁵²⁷

Schoolmaster Holt of Savannah was another Trust-appointed employee who assumed that he did not have to submit to his local superiors. Upon learning of Holt’s unspecified “ill Conduct” towards his pupils in 1750, Georgia’s governing board summoned him to appear before the council. But instead of immediately responding to their request, Holt sent word that “He would come when He had Time.” Not amused, the council demanded that the schoolmaster answer their summons immediately, but received the reply that Holt would come only after he had dismissed his students for the day. Furthermore, the schoolmaster informed the board’s messenger that he, and not they, “was the properest Judge of the Time.” As reward for Holt’s behavior, the board ordered that he be arrested and confined. But even then the schoolmaster defied them, declaring that “He was not under the Controul of any Authority [there].” Fed up with Holt’s

⁵²⁷ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, supplement to vol. IV, 22-24.*

disrespectful behavior, the board dismissed him as public schoolmaster “at least ‘till he came to a sense of his Duty.’”⁵²⁸

Georgia’s unruly men were just as likely to challenge the authority of the colony’s ministers, as the case of Michael Rieser reveals. Like Maria Rheinländer, Rieser often challenged the teachings of Ebenezer’s minister, claiming that he had enough knowledge to interpret scripture on his own. In January 1741, for example, Boltzius complained that Rieser “dared to pervert the clearest and most important verses to interpret them according to his own sensuality to the comfort of the old Adam.” And when the minister attempted to speak with him about his dangerous religious beliefs, Rieser “said many more rough and unbecoming things” before finally informing Boltzius that he “need not care for his soul, [since] he could do that himself.”⁵²⁹ Encouraged by the idea of the priesthood of all believers, Rieser, like Maria Rheinländer, seems to have believed that it was his right to read and interpret scripture according to his own conscience. Boltzius, by contrast, viewed Rieser’s behavior as a direct challenge to his ministry as well as to God.

Schoolmaster Holt, Peter Emery, Michael Rieser, John Fallowfield, and Patrick Grant used their positions in the colony to challenge the authority of Georgia’s officials, and those authorities objected to their behavior just as vehemently as they did to that of similarly non-deferential women. Regardless of gender, these were all colonists whom officials characterized as “obstinate,” “insolent,” and inappropriately defiant. But generally insolent or disorderly behavior was not the only characteristic officials assumed

⁵²⁸ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. VI, 343-345.

⁵²⁹ *Detailed Reports*, vol. VIII, 46-47.

was common among non-deferential colonists of both sexes. Unruly men who challenged the established hierarchy were just as likely as disorderly women to be characterized as “mad.” In fact, a close examination of official correspondence reveals that William Stephens and other magistrates had a habit of attributing almost any variety of disorderly conduct to madness on the part of the offender. In 1734, for example, Thomas Christie reported that a group of angry Indians had killed a man in a fit of madness. Offended by the abusive behavior of Indian trader Joseph Watson (who was accused of physically assaulting some of his native contacts) a group of Creek men went to the house in which he was staying to confront him. When they were unable to find Watson there, the group attacked and killed another man in what Christie described as a “Mad Freak.”⁵³⁰ In 1736, Georgia’s magistrates confined Watson himself for “lunacy,” after he bragged that he had killed an Indian associate by “dr[inking] him to Death.”⁵³¹ Several years later, Watson again ran into legal trouble, this time for “defaming” his business associates “in a most Scandalous manner.” When the court asked him to explain his behavior, he “made no Defence; but in wild and Extravagant Speeches and Gestures, seemed to act a part of a Madman ... not forbearing to Insult the Magistrates, and ridiculing their Authority.”⁵³² The disorderly behavior of the colony’s (mostly) male Malcontents was also attributed to madness. In December 1740, for instance, following an attempt by the Malcontents to gain signatures for a petition protesting the Trustees’

⁵³⁰ “Copy of a Letter from Mr. Thomas Christie to Mr. Oglethorpe dated December the 14th 1734,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14200, 148. Recall William Stephens’ similar characterization of Jane Mary Camuse’s outbursts as “freaks.”

⁵³¹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. I*, 286; “Creek Indian Talk 3d July 1736” in Egmont Papers, vol. 14202, 29-33.

⁵³² Stephens, *The Journal of William Stephens, 1743-1745*, 174-175.

policies on slave labor, William Stephens urged the Trustees to grant local officials the authority to punish even the most prominent Malcontents. If they did not, he argued, the officials' "lenity ... [might be] construed by these licentious People, as to encourage them in proceeding to farther Degrees of Madness."⁵³³ The efforts of Jacob Matthews, Mary Musgrove's second husband, to criticize the colony were similarly attributed to mental instability. In August 1741, one official reported that Matthews had recently completed a "Course of Debauchery" in which "he out-did his own Out-doings, in Raving, Rant and Madness."⁵³⁴ His behavior earned him the title of "Champion of Misrule" from William Stephens, who inferred that his ultimate goal was to "trample over all that should stand in his Way."⁵³⁵ In English and Western European culture the Champion or Lord of Misrule was the leader of the "Feast of Fools," a celebration typically held during the Christmas season. During this feast, the ordinary rules of social order and decorum were suspended temporarily, and those normally expected to adopt submissive roles became kings and queens for the day. Peasants dressed as lords and clergymen, young apprentices mocked their masters, and masked revelers of every description drank alcohol and danced through the streets. By likening Jacob Matthews to the leader of this topsy-turvy feast, Stephens highlighted the disorderly – and therefore mad – nature of his behavior.⁵³⁶ That same month, Stephens again attempted to explain

⁵³³ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. IV supplement, 49.*

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, 216-217.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁶ For more on the history and social function of celebrations such as the Feast of Fools, see Harvey Gallagher Cox, *The Feast of Fools: A Theological Essay on Festivity and Fantasy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).

objections to Trust authority in terms of madness, this time by likening the entire colony to a madhouse. In a letter to another official, he commented that “Madness ... seem[ed] to reign” among the people in Georgia to such a degree “as might entitle [the colony] ... to be One of the Out Wards of Bedlam.”⁵³⁷

Madness was therefore not a trait associated exclusively with unruly women but instead a convenient and powerful means of comprehending and describing any behavior or belief that went against the social order. Colonists – male or female – who defied the colony’s ministers and magistrates were viewed as lacking self-control as well as reason. According to eighteenth-century doctors, madness, like physical illness, was the result of an imbalance, or disorder, of the four bodily humors. Thus, officials often referred to what they saw as particularly irrational or emotional behavior as being “out of humor.”⁵³⁸ A multitude of different circumstances – including a lack of sleep, an overindulgence in food, a sudden change in weather, or the experience of a particularly strong emotion – were thought to push the humors out of balance. Women, because of their supposed bodily weakness, may have been considered more susceptible to such afflictions, but since men as well as women could experience these conditions, both were vulnerable to mental disorder.⁵³⁹

Disorderly men were not only described as escapees from the madhouse. Officials also depicted them – just as they often depicted unruly women – as “clamorous” people unable to master their own passions and impulses. In January 1741, the Reverend

⁵³⁷ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXIII, 88.*

⁵³⁸ See, for instance, their descriptions of Jane Mary Camuse at the beginning of this chapter.

⁵³⁹ Lindemann, *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe*, 40-49.

Boltzius chastised Michael Rieser for his “horrible fury and rage” as well as his “obvious disobedience, scolding, [and] cursing.”⁵⁴⁰ Similarly, in 1752, a minister in Ebenezer prayed that God would help a sinful man in his community, by “chang[ing] his heart and free[ing] him from the slavery of his unbridled emotions.”⁵⁴¹ In Georgia, the predominantly male Malcontents were condemned in particular for their “mad” outbursts and willingness to make “much noise.” William Stephens considered the colony’s critics to be a group of “Miscreants, who were incensed at they knew not what.”⁵⁴² In December 1740, Stephens characterized one new convert to the Malcontent cause as “always clamorous, and complaining at he knows not what,” as well as “a noisy zealot in promoting . . . Demands on the Trustees.”⁵⁴³ That same month, Stephens described another recent associate of the group as one “prepared to make as much Clamour as possible.”⁵⁴⁴ In 1741, Stephens again referred to the Malcontents as “clamorous People whom nothing will satisfy.”⁵⁴⁵ And, in October of the same year, Stephens described those who opposed the Trustee government as “people who are so clamorous, Banding together, & inveighing against every thing done.”⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁰ *Detailed Reports, vol. VIII*, 43. The use of the word “scolding” here is particularly significant. Although, as this example shows, anyone could be accused of being a scold, the word was especially associated with women. In the eighteenth century, a scold was widely understood as an overly outspoken or quarrelsome woman.

⁵⁴¹ *Detailed Reports, vol. XV*, 43.

⁵⁴² *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. IV supplement*, 53.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 258.

⁵⁴⁶ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXIII*, 144. For more references to the “clamorous” behavior of the malcontents, see *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXIII*, 63, 126.

By characterizing the Malcontents and their followers as “passionate” or “clamorous,” Georgia’s officials implied that their demands were unwarranted and even illogical, prompted not by reason but by emotional impulse. Authorities further emphasized this in their descriptions of several prominent Malcontents. Robert Williams, another early convert to the Malcontent cause, was infamous for his emotional outbursts against Georgia’s authorities. In the fall of 1738, for instance, Williams approached magistrate William Stephens to enquire whether or not the Trustees had replied to Malcontent petitions requesting a repeal of the colony’s anti-slavery law and a loosening of land restrictions. When Stephens replied that the colony’s leaders were devoted to “adhering to their first Determination,” Williams “broke out into great Warmth” and threatened to abandon the colony. When Stephens tried to “reason with him as well as [he] could, and soften him into better Temper,” Williams only “[grew] more and more vehement.”⁵⁴⁷ According to Stephens, Robert Williams’ passionate nature prevented him from seeing the reason behind the Trustees’ policies, and prompted his self-serving requests for slave labor and the power to dispose of his land as he saw fit. His continued anger against Trust regulations also demonstrated an inappropriate lack of deference to his superiors. Williams and his compatriots had already expressed their discontent in their petition to the Trust. In Stephens’ view, the Trustees’ negative response to the petition should have put the matter to rest, but Williams’ lack of control over his own emotions caused him to continue to reject the rulings of his superiors.

Williams’ attacks against Georgia’s authorities were not only limited to words. His alleged lack of self-governance occasionally erupted into more physical expressions

⁵⁴⁷ Stephens, *A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia*, vol. I, 289-290.

of disorder, including physical violence. In April 1739 Williams assaulted Bailiff Thomas Jones following a heated conflict with the official. The argument began when Jones implicated Williams in the mishandling of beef distribution. Williams had been put in charge of managing one of his neighbor's cow pens, which held several steers belonging to the Trust. That spring, officials noticed that some of the meat that should have gone to the public stores was instead sent to a local carpenter. Upon investigating the matter, Thomas Jones came to believe that the sale of meat to the carpenter was no accident, and accused Williams of using the meat from a Trust steer to pay off his personal debts.⁵⁴⁸ Upon learning of Jones' accusations against him, Williams defended himself by claiming that the meat sent to the carpenter was meant to pay off his neighbor's debts, and not his own. After engaging in a heated argument, Williams asked Jones to question the carpenter in order to see the truth in his words, but Jones left to deal with other matters before the man could be summoned. Later, Williams went to Jones's home, informing him that the carpenter was at Jenkins's tavern and was willing to be questioned. When Jones refused, "more angry Words ensued ... till at length Williams run his Fist in Mr. Jones's Face."⁵⁴⁹

Officials such as Thomas Jones were not the only targets of Robert William's violent outbursts. In August 1741, during yet another conflict over livestock, an enraged Williams threatened to murder gardener Joseph Fitzwalter. The incident began when Fitzwalter killed a goat belonging to Williams after it destroyed his garden. When Williams learned of the animal's death, he sought revenge by attempting to kill his

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., 466-467.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 468-470.

neighbor's geese. Unfortunately, Williams' anger overwhelmed his sense of caution and discernment, and he accidentally shot and killed geese belonging to the widow Vanderplank instead. But even though his first attempt to seek vengeance resulted in embarrassment and the destruction of another's property, Williams was not willing to give up his vendetta. Upon observing Fitzwalter driving his geese through town several days later, Williams took the opportunity to shoot one of the birds. According to William Stephens the incident should have ended there, but Williams "not containing himself," went on to threaten Fitzwalter "in his Passion, that he should find some fit Place and Opportunity to serve him in the like Manner."⁵⁵⁰ In Stephens' view, Williams was so blinded by rage that he was a direct threat to the property and even the safety of others in the community. He was out of control and did not seem to care who he hurt in his efforts to seek revenge.

"Champion of Misrule" Jacob Matthews was likewise depicted as unable to govern his violent impulses. In February 1740, Bailiff Thomas Jones complained to William Stephens "of a most outrageous Insult made upon him" recently by Matthews. The incident began when a drunk Matthews attacked one of the Trust's servants. As the servant tended to his oxen, Matthews approached him, "asking him how he dared to drive his Oxen? And, without farther Words, knocked him down with his Fist."⁵⁵¹ Matthews claimed that the oxen belonged to him, and pointed out that they had been branded with the initials "J.M." Colonial officials countered that the initials actually stood for John

⁵⁵⁰ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. IV supplement, 208.*

⁵⁵¹ *Stephens, A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia, vol. II, 281.*

Mellidge, whom the Trustees had placed in charge of overseeing their cattle.⁵⁵² Jones, who was aware that the cattle did not actually belong to Matthews and who was standing nearby when he attacked the servant, decided to intervene. But Matthews did not appreciate Jones' involvement and, "cursing and swearing, told him he would beat him too; and immediately coming at him, in Spite of two or three with-holding him, gave him a Blow in the Face, and a Kick in the Belly."⁵⁵³ The attack only ended when some of Matthews' friends managed to restrain him and send him home.⁵⁵⁴

Matthews' assault on Georgia's magistrates did not stop there. Adding insult to injury (literally), instead of hiding from officials, Matthews decided to throw a party. Just a few days after attacking Jones, William Stephens learned of a gathering at Matthews' house, which lasted for two or three nights. "It looked like a Piece of Daring in *Matthews*," Stephens noted in his journal, intended to "show the World he had no Concern upon him for that violent Outrage he had been so lately guilty of." Stephens acknowledged that Jones, in his position of bailiff, could have "sent an Officer, and spoiled their Entertainment by taking mine Host into Custody," but knowing how important Matthews' wife (the former Mary Musgrove) was to the colony, he decided to take a more cautious approach, and submitted a detailed written account to General Oglethorpe instead.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵² Ibid., 282.

⁵⁵³ Ibid., 281.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., 289-291.

Andrew Duchee was another Malcontent whom officials often depicted as overly passionate and disorderly. In 1740, William Stephens asserted that Duchee often “acted furiously, with all the Bitterness and Rage, that a Man possessed with an evil Spirit may be supposed capable of.”⁵⁵⁶ Like the widow Mary Townsend, Duchee was particularly infamous for spreading damaging rumors about the colony. Although Duchee was illiterate and inexperienced in politics, according to Stephens, he had “an artful Knack of talking, and by a glib Tongue deceiving, such as [were] not aware of his Designes.” Stephens further noted that Duchee’s “chief Employment of late” was “to seduce all he [could] prevail with, to believe that it [was] in vain to hope for any Good coming to the People of this Colony,” unless slave labor and full ownership of land was permitted.⁵⁵⁷ But Duchee was not the only Malcontent with a disorderly tongue. In October 1740, following a report that the colony’s critics were warning people in Charles Town against going to Georgia, William Stephens painted the entire organization with the same brush, lamenting the Malcontents’ “incessant” use of their “vile Tongues ... in uttering their Venom against this Colony.”⁵⁵⁸

Official descriptions of the behavior of the Malcontents and other disorderly men demonstrate that overly-passionate behavior – including scolding and spreading gossip – though viewed as feminine flaws, were not necessarily limited to female bodies.⁵⁵⁹ Just

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., 46.

⁵⁵⁷ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. IV supplement, 25.*

⁵⁵⁸ Stephens, *A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia, vol. II, 507-508.* Recall how Stephens used nearly identical terms to describe the “poisonous tongue” of Mary Townsend.

⁵⁵⁹ Jane Kamensky comes to a similar conclusion in her study of the politics of speech in early New England. She argues that although “sins of the tongue” were particularly associated with women, they were not confined to the female sex. For instance, she found that male accused witches were also described as gossips and scolds who used verbal threats as weapons against others. Kamensky explains that the

as men could adopt positive feminine attributes such as humbleness and submission when the situation called for it, they might also acquire more negative female qualities.

Because officials understood gender roles as flexible, they did not assume that unruly “feminine” traits were always connected to female bodies. Men too might assume such characteristics. Lower status men were regularly expected to assume submissive roles when interacting with others in society and indeed all members of the “worthy poor” were supposed to assume the submissive, or feminine, role when interacting with Georgia’s magistrates. Non-deferential men, on the other hand, in effect became unruly women, and assumed the negative female traits that that role entailed. They became “mad,” “clamorous,” and inappropriately “passionate” colonists who did not know their proper places in the colonial hierarchy. Such a lack of self-restraint in a man was a flaw with serious gender-specific implications. Ideals of manhood in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were often correlated with a man’s mastery both of himself, as well as his dependents. If a man were unable to keep his own actions in check, he could no longer function as an effective household head.⁵⁶⁰ Such behavior reinforced the magistrates’ assertion that non-deferential men – and the Malcontents in particular – were fundamentally disordered individuals who could not be trusted and whose objections to Trust authority were unfounded. Official views of certain qualities as masculine or

“feminine” nature of the men’s behavior was interpreted as evidence of their general disorderliness as well as further proof of a potential alliance with demonic forces. See Jane Kamensky, *Governing the Tongue: The Politics of Speech in Early New England* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Although Georgia’s male Malcontents were never accused of allying themselves with the devil, their overly passionate behavior and propensity for using gossip were seen as significant sources of disorder.

⁵⁶⁰ For more on the importance of self-mastery to models of colonial manhood, see Lombard, *Making Manhood*. For discussions of mastery (of one’s self as well as of others) in a specifically southern context, see Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs* and Lockridge, *On the Sources of Patriarchal Rage*.

feminine show that gendered ideas played a fundamental role in shaping the ways in which they viewed non-deferential behavior. But these gendered qualities were not limited to one sex or the other. This was therefore not a case of male officials rejecting particular kinds of behavior in women alone. All colonists who were expected to assume subordinate roles, but who instead refused to give up their personal authority, might be interpreted as disorderly and womanly (in a negative sense) “malcontents” unable to check their own emotions and passionate impulses.

Gendered ideas about authority and submission clearly play a crucial part in explaining the ways in which Georgia’s magistrates understood disorderly behavior. Yet gender was not the only element at work; broader concerns about social status often played an equally crucial role. Many of Georgia’s officials believed that the laboring poor were inherently disorderly and therefore needed their care and guidance. Recall how Trust representatives often emphasized the need to correct and discipline the behavior of the “worthy poor” who settled their colony, and repeatedly requested ministers to assume this responsibility. Although the Trustees made a point of sending only the most moral and industrious settlers, they seem nevertheless to have feared that the same disorders supposedly afflicting the laboring poor in England might follow them to Georgia.⁵⁶¹ And when some colonists began to rebel against Georgia’s administrators, officials often attributed such disruptive behavior to lingering moral faults among the working poor. The fact that nearly all of the colonists they complained about came from a roughly equivalent social rank seems to validate this idea. In the view of Georgia’s magistrates, these were all settlers who owed their newfound prominence – directly or

⁵⁶¹ For more on the supposed faults of the laboring poor, and the Trustees’ efforts to reform them, see Spady, “Bubbles and Beggars and the Bodies of Laborers.”

indirectly – to the Trustee government. But instead of being grateful for their success, settlers such as Jane Mary Camuse, Mary Musgrove, Margaret Avery, Peter Emery, Jacob Matthews, Robert Williams, Andrew Duchee and others used their positions to defy authority and create disorder in the colony.

Officials' descriptions of these colonists often emphasized their "ungrateful" behavior. Officials particularly criticized silkwinder Jane Mary Camuse for behaving in a manner unbecoming her social status. In October 1741, William Stephens noted that he found her "Insolence...very shocking."⁵⁶² Likewise, in 1742, he commented that he hoped that she would not "resume her late Airs."⁵⁶³ Both passages indicate that Stephens was frustrated with Camuse because he believed that she was attempting to overstep her social bounds. Stephens further supported this view of Camuse when he compared her to an unruly male skilled artisan. He wrote,

I must observe here, that I take the Case of this Woman to be of a Piece with many Instances I have known in England, where a Fellow that is a curious Artist, in any Manufacture, very often is given to drink and in such a Course, the Master whom he works for is obliged to humour him, and in a Manner court him to his Business, till he comes to his Senses again.⁵⁶⁴

In a journal entry from 1743, Stephens again made it clear that he believed that Camuse's behavior was inappropriate for someone of her social status. Following a number of failed attempts to convince her to comply with the Trustees' instructions, he wrote that she "[found] it in her power to set what value on her self She please[d]; & without Remorse, usurp[ed] the Quality of a Mistress, where a gratefull Obedience as a Servant,

⁵⁶² *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. IV supplement, 248-249.

⁵⁶³ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XXIII, 263-264.

⁵⁶⁴ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. IV supplement, 231-232.

who has been obliged by so many and great Favours, would better become her.”⁵⁶⁵ This passage is particularly revealing because Stephens stated explicitly what he believed Camuse’s proper role to be: a servant. She may have been skilled and valuable, but she was ultimately expected to defer to the wishes of her masters, the Trustees and their representatives in the colony.

Officials similarly cited Mary Musgrove’s formerly humble status when objecting to her assertive behavior. Following one incident, William Stephens claimed that the translator had been in “mean and low Circumstances” before the English arrived in Georgia, “being only Cloathed with a Red Stroud Petticoat and Osnabrig Shift.”⁵⁶⁶ Mary’s second husband (and former servant), Jacob Matthews, was likewise criticized for his supposedly overreaching behavior. In 1740, William Stephens complained that the elevation from servant to master of a household had gone to Matthews’ head, noting that his “Promotion from Obeying to Commanding had the usual Effect ... and he soon grew vain ... and began to behave insolently among all he kept Company with, looking on himself at least equal to the best Man in the Colony.”⁵⁶⁷ A year later, Stephens again attributed Matthews’ disorderly behavior to rapid social ascension, describing him as one who, “on his Master’s Death ... had found Means to get into Saddle in his Stead, fitly qualified to verify the old Proverb of a Beggar on Horseback.” Following Matthews’ marriage, Stephens claimed that he began to dress in “gay Cloaths” and “was flattered to believe himself a Man of great Significance.” Matthews even reportedly threatened

⁵⁶⁵ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXIV, 187.*

⁵⁶⁶ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VI, 272.*

⁵⁶⁷ *Stephens, A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia, vol. II, 290.*

officials that they should be “careful to oblige him in all he should expect,” or he might use his wife’s influence upon the natives to turn them against the Trust.⁵⁶⁸

In 1736, the ministers in Ebenezer condemned Maria Rheinländer and her husband for their ungratefulness and desire to live beyond their means. That April, one of the ministers expressed doubt about Frederick Rheinländer’s claims of spiritual reform, in part because of his family’s prideful assertion of their superiority over others. “He is exceedingly poor,” the clergyman explained, “and has a wife who still acts arrogantly despite all their wretched circumstances and decks herself with superfluous clothes. Still, one can convince neither him nor her that they are steeped in pride as in other vices, although it shines forth in all their looks, words, and behavior.”⁵⁶⁹ The Rheinländer’s prideful behavior violated the colony’s social and religious expectations. In addition to being grateful to the Trustees, they were also supposed to be content with the place God had ordained for them to occupy. Their “pride” indicated that they thought that they were too good to humble themselves before God.

As punishment for their disorderly behavior, the authorities decided to withdraw their support from the Rheinländers, and instead give their share of the Trust-funded provisions to a more deserving family. When Mr. Rheinländer learned of their decision several weeks later, he “remained defiant and departed stomping and snorting.” But the minister remained adamant in enforcing the authorities’ position, and defended himself by pointing out that the officials’ previous and more lenient efforts to encourage the family’s deference had failed. “Previously we have shown all degrees of warnings,

⁵⁶⁸ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. IV supplement*, 218.

⁵⁶⁹ *Detailed Reports, vol. III*, 108.

patience, and indulgence toward him and his wife,” the minister noted. “But since nothing has been accomplished up to now through the way of love, except that they have played the hypocrite a long time for the sake of their own interest, we can not do otherwise with their continuing disorders than to be serious and strict.”⁵⁷⁰ The ungrateful and arrogant behavior of the Rheinländers in the 1730s likely colored official interpretations of Maria Rheinländer’s subsequent rejections of Boltzius’s authority. She was not just a woman rejecting the power of a male clergyman, but a member of an unruly and ungrateful family already known for their pride and disobedience.

Prior conflicts between the Avery family and local magistrates likewise seem to have played a significant role in later official objections to the widow Avery’s defiant behavior. Before their interactions with Margaret Avery, the authorities had had ongoing problems with Mr. Avery. In particular, they argued that he accorded himself too much importance as a result of his position as mapmaker. Evidence for this comes from a comment William Stephens made about Captain Avery in a 1743 letter. Stephens described to a friend why the Trustees required Avery to follow a strict set of rules as the colony’s surveyor. According to Stephens, the rules were in place to “check, & restrain the Mechanick to his proper Sphere.”⁵⁷¹ Stephens also revealed his opinion of Mr. Avery in a journal entry from November 1744. In response to another man’s question about whether or not Mr. Avery enjoyed full possession of his surveying work while he was alive, Stephens replied that the plans were always the property of the Trust, because “Mr.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., 122.

⁵⁷¹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XXIV, 101.

Avery could be looked on in no other light, than a Servant of the Trust at a certain Stated Salary.”⁵⁷²

Officials repeatedly characterized infamous Malcontent Andrew Duchee as someone who sought to overstep his humble social status. In many reports about Duchee, officials made a point to refer to his occupation as a potter, implying that he was in no position to question the authority of Trust-appointed officials. In November 1740, William Stephens admitted that “the Potter” would be a valuable asset to the colony if he would only “stick to his own Business.”⁵⁷³ Nearly a month later, Stephens again indicated that Duchee’s critiques of the government were inappropriate, commenting that he was “addicted a little too much to Politicks.”⁵⁷⁴ Finally, in January 1741, Stephens advised Duchee that he should “mind his own Affair of making Pots, rather than kick against those from whom he had received such great Encouragement.”⁵⁷⁵ It appears that this advice fell upon deaf ears; two years later, the Earl of Egmont complained to General Oglethorpe that “Duchee the Potter” was “perverse as ever” and remained an “outrageous Rascal.”⁵⁷⁶

The emphasis upon status in negative descriptions of male and female colonists shows that hierarchy and deference to authority were matters of great importance to officials in Trustee Georgia. The colony’s magistrates may have been particularly sensitive about issues of status because they had never felt particularly secure in asserting

⁵⁷² Stephens, *The Journal of William Stephens, 1743-1745*, 171.

⁵⁷³ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, supplement to vol. IV*, 25.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁵⁷⁶ “Earl of Egmont to Genl. Oglethorpe, London 18 Feby. 1742/43,” Egmont Papers, vol. 14213, 60.

their power, largely because the chain-of-command was never well defined and because the ultimate authorities – the Trustees – were thousands of miles away. When the Malcontents began to oppose the Georgia Trustees and spread damaging rumors about the colony beginning in the late 1730s, the situation became much worse. In particular, authorities feared the influence that the Malcontents might have upon the “lower” sort in the colony, who made up the majority of colonists and were seen as already vulnerable to moral corruption. It is probably no coincidence that most of the above-mentioned complaints about non-deferential colonists were made during the 1740s, at the height of the colony’s crisis of authority.

The magistrates’ fears that their “Adversarys” were trying to turn the people of Georgia against them and create disorder in the colony are revealed in several of their complaints about non-deferential colonists, including the cases of both Jane Mary Camuse and Jacob Matthews. In February 1740, for example, William Stephens blamed Jacob Matthews’ insolent behavior on his association with the Malcontents, who had “so blowed up their new Favourite among them, that he was taught to believe he ought to be distinguished.”⁵⁷⁷ A year later, President Stephens again made another explicit connection between Matthews’ rejection of official authority and his association with the colony’s critics. In a journal entry from August 1741, Stephens noted that Matthews had become a “Member of that memorable Club at *Jenkins’s* [the favored meeting place of the Malcontents], where he was initiated soon to rail at whatever they dislik’d, and in

⁵⁷⁷ Stephens, *A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia*, vol. II, 290-291.

Time was look'd on as a great Proficient in their Way of forming Schemes, how to subvert all that obstructed their Views."⁵⁷⁸

William Stephens similarly explained the behavior of Jane Mary Camuse as the consequence of her having fallen victim to the bad influence of the colony's "Mutineers." On one occasion he compared her explicitly to Jacob Matthews. After an argument with the silkwinder in September 1741, during which she threatened to go directly to the Trustees in England if local authorities would not give in to her demands for payment, Stephens surmised that "she had lately been under the Teaching of some such, as formerly taught *Jacob Matthews*, how necessary it was for the Trust to keep them at any Rate in good Humour."⁵⁷⁹ He then lamented that it was "a melancholy Consideration to think it in the Power of such a Dame to put an intire Stop to [the colony's silk manufacture] whenever she please[d]: And it is too well known how many live round us ... whose Employment is to defeat all that is attempted in Georgia, either by Corruption or otherwise."⁵⁸⁰ The following month, Stephens again implied that Camuse may have been "infected" by the Malcontents' disorderly behavior, noting that "there seems to me too much Ground to fear, that She has been instructed by our Malitious Adversarys, to wrangle and Quarrel."⁵⁸¹ In January 1742, following yet another conflict with Camuse,

⁵⁷⁸ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. IV supplement, 218.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 248.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 248-249.

⁵⁸¹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XXIII, 137-138.

Stephens blamed the colony's "mischievous Parricides" for teaching her to "set a Value on herself."⁵⁸²

The fact that officials blamed at least some of the behavior of Camuse and Matthews upon the influence of the Malcontents makes it clear that criticisms of "ungrateful" colonists – male or female – must be understood in the larger context of the perceived crisis of authority that escalated in the early 1740s. In this volatile atmosphere, officials were predisposed to interpret any challenge to their power as part of a larger plot to overthrow them. To Georgia's magistrates, non-deferential or disorderly behavior was not merely an annoyance, but potentially an indication that the Malcontents had been successful in their efforts to challenge good order. Any perceived rejection of the established hierarchy - whether it took the form of a servant disobeying his master, a man refusing to defer to colonial officials, or a woman who rejected male authority – became a challenge not only to the authorities involved, but also to the Georgia Plan as a whole. Those characteristics often became more threatening when embodied in a woman, since non-deferential women violated the colonial hierarchy on two levels – as women expected to submit to male authority as well as ungrateful members of the "worthy poor." Yet the authorities were concerned with "obstinacy" and insubordination in all colonists. Gender was, after all, a component of social hierarchy and order. Gendered disorder was significant as part of a larger problem.

⁵⁸² Ibid., 198-199.

Chapter 6 – The Transformation of Georgia: Continuity and Change in the Late Eighteenth Century

Georgia's lack of economic success and the colonists' constant challenges to official authority eventually took their toll on the Trustee government. The colony never successfully produced the exotic items that it was intended to provide, and the behavior of disgruntled and disorderly colonists such as the Malcontents indicated to some observers that the Trustees were unable to transform the colony's inhabitants into virtuous and industrious citizens. As a result of these perceived failures, interest in and support for the Georgia project gradually waned. By the early 1750s, most of the more influential Trustees were no longer around, and only two of the original Trustees remained active members of the Trust's governing board. John Perceval, the Earl of Egmont, who had served as the first president of the Trust's Common Council and acted as the Georgia project's primary champion in Parliament, retired from his position in 1742 and died several years later in 1748. James Oglethorpe left the colony in 1742, after successfully repelling an attempted Spanish attack on St. Simons Island during the Battle of Bloody Marsh. Following his return to England, he attended Trust meetings only infrequently. The British Parliament, which had provided the colony's primary source of funding, eventually wearied of Georgia's lack of progress and recurrent problems. In 1751, they cut off all support to the colony, leaving the remaining Trustees in the impossible position of running the settlement without sufficient financial support.

Facing insurmountable financial difficulties, and still dealing with the same economic, social, and cultural conflicts that had characterized Georgia's earliest decades, the few remaining Trustees were soon forced to relinquish their hold over the colony. On June 23, 1752, the Trust formally renounced its right to govern Georgia, handing the

colony over to the Crown. Georgia's transition into a royal colony was a slow process, however, and for the first two years, the colony was still governed by the Trustees' appointed president and assistants. It was not until October 29, 1754, when Governor John Reynolds first arrived in Savannah, that the colony's royal government came into existence. This new governor ruled (at least in theory) with the advice and consent of his council, which was comprised of twelve prominent men appointed by the governor himself. Beginning in 1755, the governor and council were obliged to share power with an elected assembly, known as the Commons House of Assembly.⁵⁸³ Directly overseeing the colony's governor, council, and House of Assembly, albeit from afar, was the newly revitalized Board of Trade, led by Lord Halifax.⁵⁸⁴

The goals of Georgia's new royal government were in some ways very different from those of the Trustees. Although royal officials were still interested in defending English interests in the colonial southeast, they did not share the Trustees' negative views of large-scale plantation agriculture. In fact, all three of the colony's royal governors viewed the establishment of staple-crop agriculture as a major prerequisite for the colony's rapid economic growth, which they unanimously agreed was a desirable goal. And even though the new government certainly favored moral behavior, they were much too busy dealing with land distribution and resolving political disputes with the Indians to devote their time to regulating the colonists' day-to-day activities.

The most visible difference between the colony's royal and Trustee periods was the widespread use of slave labor, although the transition to a slave colony actually began

⁵⁸³ Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History*, 175-178.

⁵⁸⁴ Edward J. Cashin, *Governor Henry Ellis and the Transformation of British North America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 53.

during the final years of the Trustee era. Despite the Trustees' persistence in defending their ban on slave labor, by the late 1740s they were forced by public pressure to reconsider their policy. Georgia was clearly not succeeding under the conditions favored by the Trustees, and the Trustees' argument that slaves might endanger Georgia by running away and defecting to the Spanish in Florida lost weight following General Oglethorpe's military victory in expelling the attempted Spanish invasion of Georgia in 1742. In a desperate attempt to bolster the already flagging public support for their colony, the Trustees finally revoked the ban on slavery in 1750, effective January 1, 1751. Slavery would be allowed in Georgia only on their terms, however: only four slaves were permitted for every white servant, in order to check the number of slaves coming to the colony; and slaves could only be used as agricultural laborers, preserving more skilled trades for white craftsmen; masters were strictly forbidden from treating their slaves cruelly; and masters were required to provide religious instruction to their slaves.⁵⁸⁵

Despite the Trustees' efforts to restrict the use of slave labor in Georgia, their carefully planned slave code was never put into widespread practice. By the time the code reached Georgia, the colony was already in a state of political upheaval. In addition, relatively few Georgians owned slaves in the early 1750s. When the new royal government arrived, it created a new slave code, which was modeled heavily upon South Carolina's 1740 slave legislation. Slaveholders could now own twenty slaves for every white servant, and the regulations were much more concerned with protecting the

⁵⁸⁵ Betty Wood provides a detailed discussion of Georgia's first slave code in her study of slavery in early Georgia. See Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 82-86. See also Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History*, 228 and Davis, *The Fledgling Province*, 126-127.

property of the master than with the welfare of the slaves. Slaves who committed crimes could be punished much more harshly than white servants for similar offenses, for instance, and masters were under no obligation to instruct their slaves in religion.⁵⁸⁶

This new slave code, in combination with more relaxed land granting policies, drew a significant number of established planters into Georgia, who often brought their slaves with them. The new policies also encouraged Georgians already in the colony to pursue slave and land ownership as a means of improving their economic fortunes. This growing demand for slave labor dramatically increased the slave population during the second half of the eighteenth century – especially in the rice-growing coastal regions. Historian Betty Wood has estimated that by 1763, the colony was comprised of approximately 9,700 people, 3,600 of whom were African slaves. By 1775, the slave population had grown to nearly 15,000, almost half of the total population of 33,000.⁵⁸⁷ The upheaval of the American Revolution disrupted these numbers, but Georgia's planters and middling farmers soon resumed their efforts to acquire more land and labor, prompting the percentage of slaves in the population to grow once more after the war ended.

The arrival of plantation slavery paved the way for the emergence of a very different social structure from that found in Trustee Georgia. Whereas previously most Georgians were of a roughly equivalent status, society in the royal period and afterwards was much more stratified. At the apex of the social pyramid were the planters and wealthiest merchants, who grew rice and indigo on their coastal plantations or owned

⁵⁸⁶ For more on Georgia's 1755 slave code, see Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 112-123. See also Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History*, 229 and Davis, *The Fledgling Province*, 127-130, 140.

⁵⁸⁷ Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 89.

trading houses in the colony's largest towns. These planters and merchants often owned many slaves and were also the most likely to hold public office, since many of these positions were limited to those who owned five hundred or more acres of land. Below them were the middling farmers and small plantation owners who produced corn and grain or tended livestock in Georgia's growing upcountry region. The colony's urban craftsmen and shopkeepers made up the remainder of the middle ranks. Frontier subsistence farmers, who rarely owned slaves, comprised the lowest ranks of white society. At the bottom of the social pyramid was the colony's growing slave population.⁵⁸⁸

Georgia's transition into a slaveholding royal colony (and later state) substantially transformed many aspects of life in the settlement. This chapter explores the ways in which these transformations shaped already contested ideals of industry, virtue, and gender. Unfortunately, detailed records on these subjects are much harder to come by in the royal and revolutionary eras. This is in large part because later officials were much less interested in monitoring the everyday lives of the colonists than their Trustee counterparts, and devoted much of their time instead to matters of land acquisition, political negotiations with the local native tribes, and (during the latter quarter of the century) dealing with the Revolutionary War and its aftermath. This is not to say that Georgia's later officials did not want the inhabitants to be hardworking and virtuous, but the reform of the "worthy poor" was no longer one of their primary goals. And since official records make up the majority of the existing primary sources on eighteenth-century Georgia, it is much more difficult to trace how labor ideals, gender roles, moral

⁵⁸⁸ Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History*, 210, 213.

values, and religious beliefs changed over time. Thankfully, other kinds of sources (albeit sparse) including church records, family papers, colonists' journals, and newspaper advertisements, are available for the period and, when used in concert with the existing official records – make it possible to extrapolate the behavior and beliefs of Georgians in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the ways in which life in the colony changed after 1752, focusing in particular upon how the introduction of slavery and the emergence of a planter elite changed the ways in which at least some Georgians thought about gender roles, appropriate labor for white settlers, and the value of material wealth. But despite the many changes that took place in Georgia over the course of the eighteenth century, there was also a significant measure of continuity, which the second half of this chapter explores. Although the Trustees' original values did not always survive in the same forms, the evidence shows that ideals of industry, virtue, and collaborative gender relations remained important in Georgian society. This continuity was in part a result of continuing conditions in the colony that in many ways replicated life in the Trustee era. Some measure of ideological persistence was also ensured by the fact that a significant number of the Trustees' original supporters remained in Georgia, and even attained positions of influence within the royal and later state governments. Lingering cultural emphases on the value of religious virtue, hard work, and intra-familial collaboration among the colonists at large likewise ensured that many of the colony's original principles remained influential. Finally, ideals associated with the American Revolution and its aftermath, particularly less authoritarian models of the family and the emerging

view of women as the guardians of moral virtue, served to bolster collaborative gender relations in late eighteenth-century Georgia.⁵⁸⁹

There is no doubt that the collapse of the Trustee government and transformation of Georgia into a slaveholding colony had important implications for ideals of gender, labor, and virtue. The formation of a true planter elite played an especially influential role in generating ideological change. Many of these planters and their families came directly from South Carolina and brought with them the very economic and moral views that the Trustees had once condemned as luxurious and sinful. In particular, this emerging elite, like the earlier Malcontents, promoted the view that certain forms of work – and especially field labor – were no longer appropriate for respectable white people to perform.⁵⁹⁰ This was particularly true for elite women, who were not typically expected to engage in any form of strenuous labor, and who often delegated their most onerous household tasks to slaves and servants. There is no mention of elite women working in the fields in the royal era, and although detailed descriptions of their everyday activities in the period are scarce, later accounts make it clear that women were increasingly viewed as delicate, genteel, domestic, and therefore unsuited to hard work. In his

⁵⁸⁹ The persistence of Trustee-era ideals in late-eighteenth-century Georgia parallels similar cultural holdovers in Puritan New England. Scholars have shown that many aspects of Puritan culture remained in place in New England long after the Puritans no longer dominated society in the region. For more on the survival of Puritan religious culture in the colonial period, see Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) and Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570-1700* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1991). For information on how Puritan ideals continued to influence economic development in New England, see Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*. In *A Midwife's Tale*, Laurel Ulrich demonstrates that gender ideals associated with the Puritans remained in place at the end of the eighteenth century.

⁵⁹⁰ Timothy Lockley, *Lines in the Sand: Race and Class in Lowcountry Georgia, 1750-1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 18.

inaugural speech at the opening of a girls' academy in Savannah in 1786, for instance, minister Penuel Bowen asserted his view that women should not display "valor or fortitude," which "belong[ed] alone to man, but meekness [and] gentleness," which were more suited to the female sex. "[Women] were not made for field or war-like action," he opined, "[and] therefore the virtues proper to it become [them] not, but rather deform." "Gentleness and Delicacy," rather than a willingness and ability to work in the fields on occasion (or join men in battle), were thus the ideal qualities in a respectable woman.⁵⁹¹ The remainder of Bowen's speech further outlined the differences he perceived between men's and women's roles. While men were to be assertive actors in the public realm, women were supposed to devote themselves to making the domestic sphere a comfortable haven for their families. A woman's primary "office of life," according to Bowen, was to make the home "peaceful & joyous to a man ... a resting place of the highest domestic bliss."⁵⁹² Although this view of women as primarily domestic creatures who inhabited a separate sphere from men predated the American Revolution, scholars have shown that it became more influential and widespread in the period following the war. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, an essentialist view of the sexes that depicted women as naturally delicate, gentle, and domestic – and therefore unsuited to warfare, politics, or hard labor – had gained prominence among America's elite. In Georgia, such

⁵⁹¹ Penuel Bowen, "Upon Virtue in general, and female Education & manners in particular, Being An Inaugural Disertation ...," Nov. 26, 1786, 20-23, Georgia Historical Society.

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, 23.

an ideology had clearly taken hold among Savannah's wealthiest inhabitants by the latter decades of the eighteenth century.⁵⁹³

Although elite women did not typically work alongside their husbands to run the family plantation (at least in theory), this does not mean that they did not contribute to their family's success. By the second half of the eighteenth century, Georgia's emerging elite, like their counterparts in other southern colonies, viewed refinement and gentility as key indicators of social status as well as political legitimacy.⁵⁹⁴ Particularly among families who had only recently ascended the social scale (which included most if not all

⁵⁹³ For contrasting views on the ideology of separate spheres in post-revolutionary American culture, see Jeanne Boydston, *Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980); and Rosemarie Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). While scholars such as Mary Beth Norton and Linda Kerber admit that the consequences of the emergence of the separate sphere gender ideology were ambiguous, both maintain that women were able to use that ideology to their advantage. By assuming the role of the Republican mother, a figure entrusted with the important task of educating and fostering civic virtue in her children, women were able to appear domestic, yet also wield a measure of influence in society. In Norton's analysis, this role represented public recognition for the important roles women had played in the revolution; Kerber takes a more pessimistic view, arguing that women were largely excluded from post-revolutionary society and therefore had to carve a new niche for themselves. Rosemarie Zagarri sees little positive in the new separate sphere ideology, which she views as the result of a conservative backlash against women and the active roles that they played in the revolution. By identifying certain traits as essentially feminine – such as delicacy or domesticity – women could be removed from the political sphere without violating revolutionary rhetoric that favored equality. Historians of the southern colonies have long argued that the pre-revolutionary plantation mistress was ideally a domestic figure, although she, like the republican mothers who followed her, could use her particular skills and virtues to assert her influence in society as a whole. See, for instance, Kierner, *Beyond the Household*. See also Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*.

⁵⁹⁴ Such a development mirrors the earlier rise of gentility in more advanced southern colonies such as Virginia and South Carolina, where the planter elite used displays of refinement and civility to bolster their control over the social order. Unlike the gentry in England, most colonial planters could not base their self-worth upon a prestigious genealogy. They instead had to legitimate their position at the apex of the social hierarchy through displays of their own power and refinement. For more on gentility in early America, and particularly in South Carolina, see Edward Pearson, "Planters Full of Money: The Self-Fashioning of the Eighteenth-Century South Carolina Elite," *Money, Trade, and Power: The Evolution of Colonial South Carolina's Plantation Society*, edited by Jack P. Greene, Rosemary Brana-Shute, and Randy J. Sparks (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 299-321. For similar developments in early Virginia, see Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*, pt. 1; and Rozbicki, *The Complete Colonial Gentleman*. For more on the origins and development of gentility in American culture in general, see Bushman, *The Refinement of America*.

of the elite in Georgia), establishing the household's respectability was of the utmost importance, and women played a crucial role in this endeavor. It was the wife's job, for instance, to ensure that the family home was decorated in the most tasteful manner; it was also her responsibility to select the finest and most fashionable clothing for her family to wear. The household mistress likewise played an important role in entertaining and providing for any guests that came calling. Additionally, an elite wife spent much of her time visiting neighbors and thereby building crucial social bonds with other members of the planter elite. Even her personal appearance and behavior could be read as an indication of the family's worth as a whole, and she therefore took care to present herself in a favorable light, and cultivated the refined skills and fine manners that might earn her family the admiration of others.⁵⁹⁵

Not all of an elite woman's tasks were geared towards displaying her family's refinement, however. Although she was no longer required to perform the bulk of the household work herself, she was expected to manage the labor of the household's servants and slaves, a task that required her to possess at least a modicum of knowledge about housework. The household mistress was also typically in charge of planning and overseeing the preparation of meals, tending vegetable and herb gardens, and producing homespun.⁵⁹⁶ In her memoirs, former Georgia resident Elizabeth Lichtenstein Johnston recalled her early life in Savannah before the Revolution, and particularly her aunt's

⁵⁹⁵ Kathleen Brown and Cynthia Kierner each argue that elite and middling white women played active roles in demonstrating and promoting gentility in their households, a quality which was central to establishing and maintaining a family's status and respectability in southern society. See Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs* and Kierner, *Beyond the Household*.

⁵⁹⁶ For more on the activities and responsibilities of elite women in the eighteenth-century South, see Kierner, *Beyond the Household*. See also, Spruill, *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies*.

attempts to “make [her] a notable needlewoman.” Although Johnston admitted that she resented her aunt’s strictness as a girl, and would have preferred to pursue other activities, in later life she expressed gratitude for her relative’s efforts to teach her the practical skills needed to be a competent housewife.⁵⁹⁷

Although elite women certainly never abandoned their roles in contributing to the household’s success, the evidence suggests that at least some husbands no longer viewed their wives as fully competent deputies capable of managing the plantation without supervision if their spouses were absent or otherwise unavailable. In his examination of Georgia’s colonial wills, for instance, Ben Marsh has found a marked decline in the number of men who named their wives as the sole executors of their estates. While approximately fifty percent of married men who appointed their wives as executors made them the sole executors between 1733 and 1742, only twenty-six percent did so between 1763 and 1772.⁵⁹⁸ By the early national period, elite men such as planter Thomas Gibbons were apparently no longer comfortable leaving the full management of their estates to their wives, even for relatively short spans of time. During one extended business trip, for instance, Gibbons advised his wife to seek the counsel of a male advisor to assist her in managing the plantation during his absence. That same advisor was also appointed to supervise Gibbons’ overseer.⁵⁹⁹ Although, as this chapter will show, a significant number of elite women (as well as women of other ranks) continued to manage plantations and act as deputy husbands well into the nineteenth century, it cannot

⁵⁹⁷ Elizabeth Lichtenstein Johnston, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist* (New York and London: The Bankside Press, M.F. Mansfield & Company, 1901), reprinted by Bibliobazaar, LLC, 43, 51.

⁵⁹⁸ Marsh, *Georgia’s Frontier Women*, 125.

⁵⁹⁹ Wayne-Stites-Anderson Collection, MS 846, box 15, folder 325, Georgia Historical Society.

be denied that at least some men increasingly viewed women as unsuited to wielding long-term authority.

Another major change in Georgia after 1752 was the emergence of a more tolerant view of material acquisitiveness and luxury. Although earlier colonists may have desired luxury goods, most lacked the means to acquire them, or the willingness to challenge Trust officials who condemned such purchases as frivolous and potentially sinful. After the collapse of the Trustee government, the stigma attached to luxury items largely disappeared, at least among Georgia's emerging elite. Letters, wills, and store inventories from the period reveal that many of Georgia's more affluent inhabitants had developed a healthy appetite for luxury items. Merchant Thomas Raspberry's inventory records show that by the late 1750s his store included a variety of fine goods, including "fine bright coloured furniture," "good black Taffety for Mens waistcoats," crape and sarsnet (particular kinds of silk fabric) for hatbands and scarves, and silk trim for clothing.⁶⁰⁰ Advertisements in the *Georgia Gazette* show an increase in luxury items on offer in the 1760s. In May 1763, merchants Morel and Telfair advertised a new shipment of "European and East-India Goods, proper for the place and season." Among the particular items for sale were "East-India and silk handkerchiefs," satin cloth, gold and silver lace, feather mattresses, "fashionable silk and satin hats," ladies' fans, silver watches, ... wine glasses, and glass decanters.⁶⁰¹ In 1764, the trading house of Kelsall, Darling, and Munro offered "A very genteel eight-day [grandfather] clock, and a few

⁶⁰⁰ *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, vol. XIII* (Savannah: Georgia Historical Society, 1959), 1, 22.

⁶⁰¹ *Georgia Gazette*, 5-26-1763.

NEAT SILVER WATCHES” in their shop.⁶⁰² The following year, shopkeeper Philip Box advertised a similar inventory, offering silk cloaks, silk gloves, fine wine, and a variety of teas.⁶⁰³ The personal records of Georgia’s elite inhabitants reinforce that they were avid consumers of the accoutrements of gentility. Prominent merchant and planter James Habersham, for instance, took pains to ensure that his parlor was fashionable, even going so far as to order decorative “dark brown or chocolate colour[ed]” fabric from London.⁶⁰⁴ Planter John Roberts had a similar desire for luxury goods, which was revealed when he purchased silk, velvet, and gilt buttons from Mr. Clay, a merchant in Savannah.⁶⁰⁵ And after her death in 1799, Henrietta Roberts, widow of the aforementioned John Roberts, left behind a number of luxury goods, including silver tableware.⁶⁰⁶

The acquisition of fine goods constituted another means by which Georgia’s elite could display their gentility and refinement. In an effort to prove their worth – to themselves as well as to those who suspected that the wild and “exotic” nature of life in the colonies would never allow for true civility – the planter elite built grand houses, wore the finest clothing, and practiced refined manners that set them apart from the

⁶⁰² Ibid., 07-19-1764.

⁶⁰³ Ibid., 05-02-1765.

⁶⁰⁴ *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society*, vol. VI, 155.

⁶⁰⁵ Wayne-Stites-Anderson Collection, Manuscript 846, Box 15, Folder 358, Georgia Historical Society.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid., Box 12.

“vulgar” masses.⁶⁰⁷ Unlike the Trustees and their previous supporters, this new elite (and the merchants who catered to them) viewed luxury goods as a positive means of displaying the fruits of their economic success. And because Georgia’s elite increasingly dominated the colony’s government, formal critiques of luxury largely disappeared.

In fact, the new royal government was in general much less concerned with regulating the everyday lives of the colonists, leaving much of the responsibility for encouraging and enforcing moral behavior to Georgia’s churches and ministers. Many of the Trustees’ earlier efforts to promote moral behavior – such as offering additional material benefits to those who met their moral expectations – were abandoned, and these advantages instead came to be based on industry alone. This was particularly the case with the royal government’s land policy. Applicants were still required to prove their willingness to cultivate the land, but most no longer needed to prove that they were also men of good character.⁶⁰⁸ In June 1752, for instance, Benedict Bourquin petitioned for a three-hundred acre lot to add to the two hundred acres of land he already possessed. The board soon granted his request, noting that they were “well satisfied of his Industry and Diligence.”⁶⁰⁹ In December of the following year, Adam Rheinstetler of Vernonburgh supported his request for land by “setting forth that he had made very considerable Improvements on fifty Acres of Land formerly granted to him.” Apparently satisfied

⁶⁰⁷ For more on how the purchase of luxury goods factored into the efforts of elite southerners to assert their refinement and civility, see Edward Pearson, “Planters Full of Money.” For more on material culture in general and its connections to gentility, see Bushman, *The Refinement of America*.

⁶⁰⁸ Of the hundreds of land grant applications available from the royal period, only a handful explicitly mention the applicant’s character as a contributing factor in the governing council’s decision-making process. See, for instance, *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. IX, 529, 632-633.

⁶⁰⁹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. VI, 374.

with his industry, the officials granted him an additional fifty acres.⁶¹⁰ In 1754, former servant Francis Lewis Parry petitioned the colony's governing board for a hundred acres on the Ogeechee River, emphasizing that he had "by his Industry, gained sufficient Ability to cultivate some Land." The board subsequently granted his request.⁶¹¹ In October of that same year, Robert Johnson was granted two-hundred and fifty acres of land after he proved his status as a productive colonist, by "setting forth" that during his six months in Georgia, he had "set down on a Piece of Land, on which he had built a good dwelling House and made other Improvements."⁶¹²

Industry therefore remained an important aspect of Georgia's land-granting policy. Yet this "industry" was no longer exclusively defined as the physical work of the individual landholder and his immediate family, but also encompassed the work of slaves. In the view of the colony's governing board, the actual identity of those who cleared and cultivated the land did not matter as long as the landowner was successful in developing his tract. Such a change in policy was apparent even during the interim period between the departure of the Trustee government and the arrival of the new royal governor. In the fall of 1754, for instance, William Small supported his request for land by maintaining that he already possessed "some Hands" to cultivate it. During the same session, the governing board read a similar petition from John Young, which stated that he had "acquired a sufficient Strength of Hands to cultivate a Tract of land." In both cases, the board decided to grant the men's requests for land, although they only gave

⁶¹⁰ Ibid., 375.

⁶¹¹ Ibid., 432.

⁶¹² Ibid., 456.

Small half of the five hundred acres he requested, perhaps because he had only recently arrived in the colony.⁶¹³ In 1755, Georgia's royal government (which was composed of many of the previous local officials, in addition to the newly arrived governor) formally codified their land policy. That February, Governor Reynolds and his council put in motion a requirement that all new landholders had to take an oath, swearing that they had sufficient workers – including slaves as well as family members – to work their proposed land grant. The purpose of this measure, according to the council, was to ensure that petitioners did not acquire land that they were unable or unwilling to “improve in a proper Manner.” In part, this rule was intended to prevent landowners from speculating in land. Like the Trustees before them, the royal government sought to prevent wealthy colonists from acquiring land simply for the purpose of reselling it for profit. They objected to such behavior because it left otherwise fertile land unused and deprived hardworking, but less affluent, settlers of the best land. But the wording of the oath makes it clear that the royal government, unlike their predecessors, expected slave labor to play an important role in the colony. After establishing whether or not the petitioner had a wife and children, he (or she) then had to specify how many “Negroes [the applicant held] now in this Province.”⁶¹⁴

The inclusion of labor performed by slaves in determining a landholder's industriousness highlights that the royal government held very different views on the value of physical labor, particularly among elite whites, from their Trustee predecessors. Both governments valued industry and encouraged hard work in their populace, but by

⁶¹³ Ibid., 455.

⁶¹⁴ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VII, 101-102.*

the royal period ideas about the specific kinds of labor appropriate for Georgians of different statuses had begun to change. While personal industry – defined in part by a willingness to work in the fields – remained an important virtue for poorer and middling whites, the industry of elite planters and merchants was often more managerial in nature. This brought Georgia’s labor ideals more in line with those historians have described in other parts of the Lower South. As Joyce Chaplin has shown, even the wealthiest planters in South Carolina sought to cultivate an identity for themselves as industrious men struggling to eke a living from an exotic and often unforgiving environment. Yet the specific tasks they pursued did not involve fieldwork, which they (much like the Georgia Malcontents) asserted was too difficult for most white people. Their days were instead devoted to managing and ensuring the efficiency of their workforce, while at the same time engaging in more refined sorts of labor, such as scientific experimentation or philosophical study.⁶¹⁵

The social, economic, and cultural changes that occurred in Georgia during the second half of the eighteenth century attracted much of the same criticism that had been previously leveled against wealthy planters in other southern colonies. Famed Philadelphia botanist John Bartram, during his survey of the southern colonies in the mid-1760s, portrayed many of the Georgians he encountered in a negative light. He described the highlanders of Darien, a group previously renowned for their industry, as “lazy and careless” and observed that the people of both Georgia and South Carolina typically

⁶¹⁵ Joyce Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 92-130.

“lived on the industry of their slaves.”⁶¹⁶ During his travels through Georgia and Florida a decade later, Bartram’s son William made similar observations. Although he made special note that the people of Wrightsboro, who were predominantly Quakers, “liv[ed] by their own industry,” the implication was that they were the exception rather than the rule.⁶¹⁷

Not surprisingly, many of those who criticized the colony were former supporters of the Trustee government who came to believe that Georgia was succumbing to the same idleness, luxury, and sin that supposedly characterized the plantation societies that it was coming to resemble. The ministers in Ebenezer were especially alarmed by what they viewed as a general decline in morality in Georgia. In 1760, the Reverend Christian Rabenhorst, one of Johann Martin Boltzius’ co-pastors at Ebenezer, complained about an increase in worldliness among the people of Savannah. Although he acknowledged that the town was prospering in material terms, he maintained that “Frivolty of the mind, worldly and carnal inclinations, and course and subtle conformity to the world [were] gaining the upper hand.”⁶¹⁸ Of particular concern to the Salzburger ministers was a perceived decline in morality and family values – even among their own congregants. In 1759, for instance, Johann Martin Boltzius was so worried about the spiritual state of his congregation that he gave “a serious and emphatic witness before the community to the corruption to be found in many families in regard to Christianity, marriage,

⁶¹⁶ John Bartram, *Diary of a Journey through the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida*, in *Journals of John and William Bartram* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1942), 29, 30.

⁶¹⁷ William Bartram, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida...*, in *Journals of John and William Bartram*, 139.

⁶¹⁸ *Detailed Reports*, vol. XVII, 265.

housekeeping, neglect of one's rightful vocation, [and] the upbringing of children.”

According to the minister, such a situation was the source of “countless sins, disorder, and physical ills among the people.”⁶¹⁹ Conditions were reportedly even worse in the surrounding communities. When the widow Hirsch married a plantation overseer who lived outside of Ebenezer in August 1759, Christian Rabenhorst wished them well, but took a dim view of their future success. “In their area there is much disorder in marrying,” he wrote, “and therefore there are many unhappy marriages. May God have mercy on His church, which suffers very much from this.”⁶²⁰ Although neither minister elaborated on the specific nature of these familial disruptions, they were clearly concerned about the disorder that they caused and feared the potential consequences of such unruly behavior. Recall that the Salzburgers, as well as many ministers and other officials in early Georgia, viewed familial disorder as a gauge on the level of disorder in society in general. In their view, the colonists' unruly behavior reflected what they saw as an increase of worldliness and sin in Georgia. Although Ebenezer's ministers had made similar complaints in the Trustee era, they clearly believed that vice and immorality were on the rise in Georgia. They most likely connected this moral decline, as they saw it, to the emergence of plantation slavery and the royal officials' more tolerant attitude towards material acquisitiveness. During the colony's founding decades, Johann Martin Boltzius and his assistants had made it clear that they found the luxurious lives of planters in places such as Carolina to be “offensive and atheistic.”⁶²¹ By 1750, Boltzius

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., 99.

⁶²⁰ Ibid., 100.

⁶²¹ *Detailed Reports, vol. VI, 19.*

was reluctant to condemn slavery outright, since he knew that his superiors, the Trustees, had already decided to allow it, but he expressed the fear in a report to his superiors that the colony's new slaveowners might "easily be tempted" and "fall ... into sin" as a result of their "conformity to the world."⁶²² The Salzburger ministers were thus predisposed to connect disorderly behavior to the emergence of plantation slavery. Their previous anxieties about what might happen if slavery were allowed and Georgia became a "worldly" settlement similar to its colonial neighbors were now seemingly realized by what they believed was a rise in immorality. Although it is impossible to know whether behavior such as adultery, fornication, drunkenness, or idleness was actually occurring more frequently, what matters is that previous supporters of the Trustee government believed it to be the case.

The German-speaking ministers were not the only ones who believed that the colony was undergoing significant moral and spiritual decline. In February 1760, Joseph Solomon Ottolenghe, a silk expert and catechist to the colony's African slaves, wrote to Ebenezer's Christian Rabenhorst about the "spreading sins of ingratitude, lack of love, cunning, hypocrisy, injustice, falsehood, and lies" that had become commonplace in Savannah. The prevalence of such behavior forced Ottolenghe to conclude that the colony was "ready for divine judgments like the inhabitants before the flood."⁶²³ James Habersham, a long-time associate of George Whitefield and later member of the governor's council, also expressed concern about the spiritual state of Savannah's inhabitants in a 1773 letter to a friend in London. Although he made a point to explain

⁶²² *Detailed Reports, vol. XIV*, 112-113.

⁶²³ *Detailed Reports, vol. XVII*, 127.

that the town had three churches, his hopes that a newly arrived minister might “be instrumental to revive many sleepy, and quicken many dead souls,” reveals that not all of the inhabitants shared his religious devotion.⁶²⁴

Taken at face value, the complaints made about Georgia after 1752 indicate that many of the ideals originally favored by the Trustees had been replaced by an increasingly worldly ethos that favored individual gain and material success over personal industry and spiritual devotion. Yet although many things had indeed changed since the Trustee era, these criticisms do not tell the whole story and likely reflect more generalized anxieties about rapid change and development. In fact, similar critiques can be found all across eighteenth-century America. Religious leaders – and especially those associated with the First Great Awakening – often promoted the belief that American society had fallen into sin and worldliness and that the people needed to re-devote their lives to God. Political thinkers on both sides of the Atlantic also often promoted negative, or at least ambiguous, views of social and economic development. They too, often looked to particular periods in the past as the height of good order and civilization, and viewed more recent trends, such as commercialization, as corrupting and potentially dangerous. Yet although such attitudes were common all across America, they may have been even more poignant in Georgia, where some seem to have held an increasingly nostalgic view of the Trustee period as a time of simplicity, founded on an honest work ethic and good morals. This was certainly the case for George Jones, a prominent planter, doctor, judge, and politician in Savannah and grandson of one of Georgia’s first inhabitants. In an 1805 letter written to the secretary of the Georgia Medical Society to

⁶²⁴ *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, vol. VI, 224.*

commemorate the lives of his father and grandfather, Jones also devoted a portion of text to describe General Oglethorpe and his Georgia Project. In particular, Jones lauded the colony's former leader as a man of "great talents" who "by his example & precepts inculcated Industry, Sobriety, Economy, Morality, & Religion." In Jones' view, the Trustee era represented a purer, less complicated time, when an "active & vigilant" man like Oglethorpe had been able to impose order, temperance, and industry upon an unruly populace and landscape. And although early Georgia lacked institutions such as schools, Jones implied that colonists such as his father and grandfather were able to make a good living through their hard work and perseverance.⁶²⁵ To some Georgians, the rapid changes that took place during the latter half of the eighteenth century were disconcerting, predisposing them to long for a return to an earlier, seemingly simpler era. Those who had experienced Trustee Georgia firsthand knew better than to view the colony's founding years in such glowing terms, yet they too were sometimes concerned by what they saw as the colony's decline. This was particularly true for those who subscribed to the Trustees' critique of plantation societies. To them, Georgia's transition into the very kind of colony it was intended to counter was horrifying.⁶²⁶

⁶²⁵ *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, vol. XVII, 31-32.*

⁶²⁶ For more on religious culture in the eighteenth century, and particularly the impression (right or wrong) that the world had become increasingly secular or worldly, see Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven*, and Frank Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 21-53. For more on late eighteenth-century political theory and its critiques of modern society, see Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967); J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975) and *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge and New York: University of Cambridge Press, 1985); and Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969). In Chapter Two of *An Anxious Pursuit*, Joyce Chaplin demonstrates the ways in which oppositional or "Country" thought created anxiety among southern planters who were allured by the potential benefits offered by their socioeconomic

Yet although many things changed in Georgia after 1752, Trustee-era ideals never completely disappeared. The family continued to be valued as an economically and spiritually collaborative unit, founded upon ideals of mutual respect and obligation. Religion and moral virtue remained important social ideals. And even though Georgia's government and culture were increasingly dominated by the colony's growing planter elite, they were never able to control Georgia's society to the same degree as their counterparts in Carolina: middling and poorer colonists continued to be recognized for their key defensive and economic contributions. One important contributing factor to the continuity of earlier ideals was the fact that much of Georgia remained a frontier until the end of the eighteenth century. With the exception of the extreme coastal region and larger settlements such as Savannah, much of the colony remained sparsely settled and rural. The majority of those who inhabited this backcountry region had a similar status to settlers in the Trustee period: they were predominantly farmers and small-scale craftsmen unable to purchase more than a few slaves, if any at all. Far from being a marginalized, disenfranchised underclass, Georgia's backcountry inhabitants were respected and even occasionally favored by the colony's new government, who viewed them as essential for developing and populating Georgia's frontier. Although any overt Spanish hostilities had largely disappeared by the royal era, increasing tensions with the natives made the threat of Indian attack a constant source of anxiety. In the view of Georgia governors Ellis and Wright, one of the best means of securing and protecting Georgia's expanding frontier holdings was to settle the land with white farmers and their families. As Governor

progress, but feared that they might actually be experiencing the cultural degeneration that supposedly characterized commercialized societies.

Wright explained to the Board of Trade in December 1763, the “Middling Sort of People, such as have Families, & a few negroes” were the best settlers to “most effectually People, enrich & strengthen the Province at Present.” Elite landholders, by contrast, sought to acquire large tracts of land, but often refused to settle it themselves and instead “[sent] an overseer & a few Negroes to make a show of Cultivation.” According to Wright, this situation was not conducive to “Settling or Peopling a Colony” and was “Rather a Real Injury to it.”⁶²⁷

Like their Trustee predecessors, Georgia’s royal governors feared the potential consequences of leaving their newly acquired backcountry territory unsettled. Their emphasis upon settling families with only a “few Negroes” may also have reflected continuing anxiety about the potential dangers of allowing significant numbers of African slaves to settle in the backcountry, where they might find more opportunity to run away or, even worse, join forces with hostile Indians. Governor Ellis once even proposed limiting the size of land grants (and thereby curtailing the number of slaves needed to cultivate each lot), but failed to gain the support of Britain’s Board of Trade. Another of his efforts to encourage the settlement of poorer and middling whites was more successful: In 1758, he convinced the Colonial Assembly to protect recently arrived debtors from other colonies (except South Carolina) from the efforts of creditors to collect on their debts for a period of seven years.⁶²⁸ This policy, combined with easy access to land, made Georgia an attractive location for down-on-their-luck inhabitants of

⁶²⁷ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. XXVIII part I, 455.*

⁶²⁸ Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History*, 191. South Carolinians were exempt from this policy because of fears that large numbers of debtors would flee across the border to avoid paying their creditors.

other colonies, and the colony became a haven for significant numbers of poorer white Virginians, North Carolinians, and Pennsylvanians.⁶²⁹

Although the colony's governors never said as much, their support of middling and poorer colonists was likely intended in part to prevent the planter elite from gaining too much power and influence. Although British colonial officials were satisfied with the economic growth of colonies such as South Carolina, they were also concerned that the local planter elite wielded an undue amount of power and influence. In the view of the Board of Trade, Georgia's transition into a royal colony under their direct influence represented an opportunity to assert greater influence in the American colonies, and part of their strategy, it appears, was to check the power of the emerging colonial elite.⁶³⁰ By supporting middling and poorer white settlers, the royal government hoped to gain the loyalty and support of a body of people who comprised a significant portion of the population. As such, the values and interests of non-elite settlers, although increasingly overshadowed by those of their wealthier neighbors, remained influential.

A measure of ideological continuity in Georgia was also ensured by the fact that a number of those who originally supported the Trustee government remained in the colony. Many Salzburger, who were previously praised by the Trustees as the most industrious and virtuous colonists, were still in the colony during the royal period and they continued to assert their influence in Georgian society. As revealed in their critiques of Georgia's growing worldliness, the Salzburger leaders and many of their supporters continued to espouse the virtues of hard labor and moral behavior, and condemned luxury

⁶²⁹ Marsh, *Georgia's Frontier Women*, 101.

⁶³⁰ Cashin, *Governor Henry Ellis and the Transformation of British North America*, 53.

and material acquisitiveness. Other holdovers from the Trustee era likewise continued to assert the importance of religious piety and industry; some were even able to attain influential positions in Georgia's royal, and later state, governments. Recall, for instance, that the Trustee government's last president and assistants became the first members of the new governor's ruling council. Many of these men continued to wield significant influence over the way in which the colony was run throughout the remainder of the colonial period. James Habersham, who arrived as an assistant to George Whitefield and eventually became one of Georgia's most influential merchants and planters, is particularly representative. Although he does not appear to have fully supported all of the Trustees' original ideals, in that he became a slaveholder, he nevertheless continued to promote industry and religious piety in Georgia. As we will see later in this chapter, he actively encouraged his sons to make sure that they remained industrious and warned them to be ever vigilant against the sin of idleness. Although the specific tasks that he encouraged his sons to perform were focused on training them to become successful businessmen, rather than farmers or craftsmen, he nevertheless argued that all Georgians should follow a "calling," according to their station. Habersham also continued to promote religious virtue in his family. In a 1768 letter, he reminded his son Joseph of the supreme importance of looking after his "precious and immortal Soul." As a "Sinner by Nature," he explained, it was his son's duty – as well as the duty of all Christians – to first look after their spiritual welfare before concerning themselves with worldly matters.⁶³¹

⁶³¹ *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, vol. VI, 69.* For more on Habersham and his life in early Georgia, see Frank Lambert, *James Habersham: Loyalty, Politics, and Commerce in Colonial Georgia* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2005).

The available records suggest that a number of Georgians of all backgrounds – newcomers as well as long-time residents – likewise continued to advocate religion and moral virtue. In 1803, George Jones, an affluent planter, encouraged his son to follow a virtuous spiritual path. Following the death of a particularly pious woman named Mrs. Tatnall, Jones praised her to his son as “a pious [and] virtuous” woman whose “well spent life” allowed her to meet death with “true fortitude.” He then informed his son that his “sincere prayer” as a parent was that the young man would “be as well prepared as she was, when it shall please God to call [him] hence.”⁶³² Jonathan Bryan, one of Georgia’s most prominent planters as well as one of the colony’s largest landholders, was also well known for his religious piety. Even before he moved to Georgia from his native South Carolina, he was a devout follower of George Whitefield as well as a benefactor to the Salzburgers of Ebenezer. He was perhaps best known during his lifetime for his efforts to spread the Christian religion to African slaves.⁶³³

The arrival of religious groups such as the Congregationalists of Midway, who came to the colony in 1758 from Dorchester, South Carolina, bolstered Georgia’s devout population. Led by the popular Reverend John Osgood, the Midway Congregationalist Church attracted a large number of members from the surrounding countryside. By 1771, they could boast of an active church membership of nearly three hundred and fifty souls. Surviving epitaphs from their church cemetery reveal the continued piety of their members until the end of the century, and beyond. After his death in 1791, Thomas

⁶³² *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, vol. XVII, 19.*

⁶³³ For more on Jonathan Bryan and his role in early Georgia, see Alan Gallay, *The Formation of a Planter Elite: Jonathan Bryan and the Southern Colonial Frontier* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2007).

Quarterman was remembered in particular for his “prudence and candor, Benevolence and piety,” qualities that were “esteemed by the good and Respected by all.”⁶³⁴ On her tombstone, dated October 1804, Mrs. Mary Roberts was lauded as “a christian” whose “unaffected goodness & piety ... afford[ed] her surviving friends a consolatory belief, that she was among the happy number of those, who a voice from heaven pronounces blessed in their death, who then rest from their labours, & their works do follow them.”⁶³⁵

The journal of John Newton, a farmer, saddlemaker, apothecary, and occasional Baptist preacher, demonstrates that religion was a part of everyday life among at least some of Georgia’s backcountry inhabitants as well. Many of his entries describe the religious events that he and his neighbors attended. In an April 1786 journal entry, for instance, Newton commented upon a church service that he had attended. He wrote that “a good many people” had come to listen to the sermon that day, “and they behaved very well.” The experience was apparently so positive that Newton expressed his hope that God was undertaking a “great work” in Georgia.⁶³⁶ The following year, Newton himself led a meetinghouse service, and reported that his preaching had attracted “a small congregation [of] 8 families.”⁶³⁷ In the fall of 1788, Newton recorded that he and his

⁶³⁴ *Epitaphs in Midway Cemetery, Midway Georgia*, compiled by the Historical Research Project of the W.P.A. of Georgia (Savannah, Ga.: s.n., 1937), 206.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, 213. Groups of Quakers and Baptists also settled in Georgia during this period.

⁶³⁶ John Newton, *Reverend John Newton Diary, 1781-1791*, [microfilm], MS 2022, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries, 4/23/1786.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*, 7/1/1787. Patricia Bonomi describes similar scenes all across the American backcountry in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the absence of ordained clergymen, lay people often assumed preaching responsibilities. Such conditions also opened the door to religious sects (including Baptists) that did not require the presence of a trained minister and allowed ordinary lay people to assume important religious roles in the community. See Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven*, 18, 74-77, 92, 126.

neighbors had gone to hear a Methodist preacher.⁶³⁸ In addition to attending religious events, Newton also spent much of his time reading religious texts. In June 1787, he noted that he was concerned by the biblical scripture he had read that evening that “[made him] think [that] there [was] great danger at hand.”⁶³⁹ In November 1790, Newton reported that he had spent several days reading George Whitefield’s journal, which he found to be a very positive and enlightening experience.⁶⁴⁰

Although men such as John Newton, James Habersham, Jonathan Bryan and George Jones were not necessarily representative of all Georgians, their accounts reveal that at least some inhabitants were devoutly religious. Periodic requests made by ordinary settlers for more churches and clergymen bolster this point. In 1755, for instance, forty-three freeholders petitioned the colony’s governing council for a tract of land in Savannah to build a Presbyterian church, which the council granted.⁶⁴¹ In March 1761, several German-speaking colonists similarly petitioned for a tract of land in Savannah, stating that they were “desirous to erect a Place of Public Worship” there.⁶⁴² In 1773, the Congregationalists at Midway wrote a letter to a minister in New Jersey, requesting a new clergyman to assist the elderly Reverend Osgood in his duties.⁶⁴³ Just as had been the case in earlier decades, Georgia’s inhabitants held a variety of religious attitudes and beliefs; some were clearly devoutly religious, while others were less so.

⁶³⁸ Ibid., 11/27/1788.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., 6/16/1787.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., 11/7/1790.

⁶⁴¹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VII*, 183.

⁶⁴² Ibid., 501-502.

⁶⁴³ Davis, *The Fledgling Province*, 202.

Despite complaints about growing worldliness, there is little to suggest that religion in Georgia was experiencing a decline in the latter half of the eighteenth century. If anything, records from the royal period and beyond suggest that Georgia's religious institutions experienced modest growth after 1750.⁶⁴⁴ By 1773, for instance, there were twelve Anglican parishes in Georgia. And although only two had regular ministers, most held weekly religious services led by traveling clergymen or lay readers. The Anglican Church in Savannah was particularly successful in this period. Led by the charismatic Reverend Bartholomew Zouberbuhler, church attendance rose to an unprecedented degree in the 1750s and 1760s. Eventually, the congregation was forced to expand the church building to include more pews.⁶⁴⁵ Although the Church of England became the established church in 1758, the Trustees' policies allowing religious toleration for all Protestants remained in force, and many dissenting congregations experienced similar expansion as Georgia's Anglican churches. The Congregationalists at Midway, for example, founded a branch congregation in the nearby coastal settlement of Sunbury. The Presbyterian Church in Savannah was also very successful, and included among its congregation many of the most influential Georgians, including members of the city council and the Commons House of Assembly. Near Augusta, a Baptist church emerged, led by the Reverend Daniel Marshall. A number of Quakers also settled in Georgia, founding the southern settlement of Queensborough.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴⁴ Such a pattern follows Patricia Bonomi's contention that, despite the impression that religion in America was on the decline by the eighteenth century, religious life was in reality experiencing proliferation and growth. See Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven*.

⁶⁴⁵ Davis, *The Fledgling Province*, 204.

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 204.

The continuity of ideals such as industry and religious virtue in Georgian culture – in combination with the fact that a large contingent of the colony’s white population lived in the backcountry, which in many ways replicated conditions in the Trustee era – meant that many Georgians, and particularly those of middling and poorer status, continued to favor gender ideals somewhat similar to those found in the Trustee era. In purely practical terms, the fact that the vast majority of Georgians owned five or fewer slaves meant that most of the population still relied upon the labor of all of their family members to survive. Royal era land records show that family members remained crucial as laborers. In the oath required of all potential landholders, for instance, note that before the petitioner listed the number of slaves he held, he first had to establish whether or not he was married and then state how many children he had. Since the purpose of the oath was to make sure that the applicant “sincerely intend[ed] to cultivate and improve Lands” and that he had sufficient man (or woman) power to succeed, the explicit inclusion of the family among the available “hands” makes the continued importance of immediate family members clear.⁶⁴⁷ In fact, there is clear evidence to suggest that, at least when it came to granting land, Georgia’s royal officials favored married settlers. Although the governor’s council granted the vast majority of land requests, more than half of the petitions that were rejected came from single men.⁶⁴⁸

The existing evidence detailing the everyday activities of Georgia’s less affluent inhabitants reaffirms that in many ways their lives followed the same work patterns as

⁶⁴⁷ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. VII, 101-102.*

⁶⁴⁸ Marsh, *Georgia’s Frontier Women*, 105, 212.

were common in the Trustee era. The records show that many of Ebenezer's less affluent families continued to work collaboratively on their modest farms. In April 1759, for instance, Johann Martin Boltzius made a passing comment that made it clear that all family members were still expected to work in the fields. When the town's new schoolmaster requested that Boltzius delay the start of the new school year, the minister agreed, in part because the school's pupils were still needed to "work with their parents in the fields."⁶⁴⁹ Later that same year, Christian Rabenhorst, one of Boltzius's assistants, again made it clear that all household members were supposed to perform field labor. That September, Rabenhorst lauded the Meyer family for their combined efforts in working on the family farm. Although the old couple had "only one grown daughter to work with them," the minister noted, they were able to produce "a fine blessing of crops on their plantation."⁶⁵⁰

Poorer Georgians of both sexes in other regions of the settlement likewise continued to perform the bulk of the work on their farms, even those who owned a few slaves. The diary of the previously-mentioned John Newton provides an especially valuable window into the various kinds of work that ordinary settlers performed in late eighteenth-century Georgia. In an entry from March 1786, for instance, he wrote that he and a neighbor had "finished planting petators."⁶⁵¹ That April, he reported that while he "turn'ed nine bowls [crafted wooden bowls on a lathe]," his son-in-law William Smith

⁶⁴⁹ *Detailed Reports, vol. XVII, 38.*

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 105. See also 209.

⁶⁵¹ *The Reverend John Newton Diary, 1781-1791, 3/29/1786.*

planted corn.⁶⁵² Much of the work he described involved all members of the family, including the women and children. In the fall of 1789, for instance, Newton recorded that his daughters had “gathered cotton out of the patch” before joining him in “[picking] it out of the hull” later that night.⁶⁵³ In September of the following year, Newton noted that his daughter Phebe came to his house to help make harnesses.⁶⁵⁴ Newton’s journal makes it clear that poorer Georgians also continued to appoint their wives to run their farms and businesses in their absence, even expecting them to work alongside the family’s slaves. In 1786, he reported that while his neighbor Mr. Lumpkins was away buying fabric, Mrs. Lumpkins “went to the mill to help the negroes to pick out Cotton.”⁶⁵⁵ And even when their husbands were around, backcountry wives oversaw the labor of the family servants and slaves and often worked beside them. In 1776, for instance, William Bartram reported observing a north Georgia woman “superintending” the dairy work of the family’s slaves and then accompanying them to make butter and cheese.⁶⁵⁶

In each of these examples, the authors’ casual tones when describing the women’s work indicated that they saw nothing unusual or distasteful about women – including in one case the writer’s own daughters – performing the same work as their male relatives and even slaves. The wives and daughters of Georgia’s more prosperous shopkeepers,

⁶⁵² Ibid., 4/22/1786.

⁶⁵³ Ibid., 9/14/1789.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., 9/ 28/1790.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid., 10/18/1786.

⁶⁵⁶ William Bartram, *Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida*, 317. In his study of the interactions between non-elite whites and blacks in nineteenth-century Georgia, Timothy Lockley observes a similar willingness of backcountry whites to work alongside their black slaves. He concludes that, among the white non-elite, “the ideological constructs separating black from white” remained “flexible and permeable.” Lockley, *Lines in the Sand*, xvi.

tavern owners, and artisans likewise continued to work alongside their male relatives and play active roles in managing their family's businesses. The wife of shopkeeper Matthew Mauve, for instance, worked in her husband's store and handled his business transactions while he was away, as a receipt from January 1768 reveals. After merchant William Gibbons delivered several goods ordered by Mr. Mauve, his wife signed for the items, writing that she had "Receiv'd the Contents of the within order in full. – for my husband Matthew Mauve."⁶⁵⁷ A significant number of women also managed shops and handled business transactions in their own right. In 1764, widow Abigail Minis received a license to run a tavern house in Savannah, a business that she and her daughters successfully managed until 1779. She also oversaw the cultivation of more than one thousand acres of land, and managed the family's mercantile firm.⁶⁵⁸ The records show that other women likewise kept taverns and ran shops and other businesses in the second half of the eighteenth century. In February 1764, Mary Smith and Elizabeth Catherine Zetler were listed alongside Abigail Minis as legal tavern keepers.⁶⁵⁹ While staying with the Basket family of St. Simons Island in the 1780s, traveling Englishman William Butterworth observed that at the same time that Mr. Basket was carrying out his trade as a blacksmith, his wife "and her assistants manufactured cotton shirts [and] trowsers ... for the use of the Indians, supplying the different stores at which they used to trade."⁶⁶⁰ In his

⁶⁵⁷ "Receipt, 22 Jany 1768," William Gibbons Papers, 1728-1803, [microfilm], Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Diary, University of Georgia Libraries.

⁶⁵⁸ *Georgia Gazette*, 1/19/1764. For more on Abigail Minis and her family, see Kaye Cole, *The Minis Family of Georgia, 1733-1992* (Savannah, Ga.: Georgia Historical Society, 1992).

⁶⁵⁹ *Georgia Gazette*, 1/10/1765.

⁶⁶⁰ William Butterworth, *Three Years' Adventures of a Minor in England, Africa, the West Indies, South Carolina and Georgia*, Margaret Davis Cate Collection, MS 997, [microfilm], folder 208, Georgia Historical Society.

examination of newspaper advertisements in the *Georgia Gazette*, Ben Marsh has found numerous other examples of women – married as well as unmarried – who managed their own shops and other businesses. Ann Cunningham, the wife of a wharf owner, ran a shop selling molasses, liquor, sugar and a variety of other foodstuffs. In 1769, Elizabeth Bedon, the wife of a clerk and bookkeeper, advertised her intention to open a boarding school “for the education of young ladies.” In the 1770s, Henrietta Bourquin, the widow of a doctor, made a living by selling a variety of medical treatments to the inhabitants of Savannah.⁶⁶¹

Elite women likewise continued to work with their husbands and male relatives, albeit in different ways. Recall, for instance, the important roles they played in establishing the gentility and respectability of their families. The evidence shows that some elite women also continued to participate in the management of their family’s plantations, especially when their husbands were away. Even those who advocated an ideology of separate spheres acknowledged that women still occasionally had to adopt masculine roles, and argued that they be taught the rudimentary business skills to carry out such roles successfully. In his speech promoting the opening of a girls’ school in Savannah in the 1780s, for instance, Penuel Bowen related the story of a “very fine woman” who had been “variously toss’d about by misfortunes,” and who was eventually

⁶⁶¹ Marsh, *Georgia’s Frontier Women*, 130-133. For the original advertisements, see issues of the *Georgia Gazette* for the following dates: 1/5/1764, 8/16/1769, and 8/30/1775. Marsh uses these and other examples to argue that Georgia’s middling women adopted increasingly specialized roles in the second half of the eighteenth century in order to cater to the colony’s emerging elite. Yet many of the examples he provides (tavern keepers, shop owners) have clear antecedents in the Trustee period, a fact that he himself admits. In my view, the desire for fine goods may have been a boon for shopkeepers and dressmakers, but women in Georgia already had a history of running shops and other businesses. In her study of property holding widows in Virginia, Linda Sturtz finds a similar pattern of the wives, daughters and widows of middling merchants and shopkeepers playing important roles in their family’s businesses throughout the colonial period. See Sturtz, *Within Her Power*.

forced to take a prominent role in her husband's business. Yet because she was "untrained & unaccustomed to common concerns of business," she found her new role very difficult. Although Bowen asserted that the duties associated with conducting business "more commonly belong[ed] to man," he believed that practical necessity required that even the daughters of the "better sort ... sho'd be made acquainted with modes of doing business."⁶⁶²

The records of Savannah's merchants make it clear that at least some elite women did indeed continue to conduct business on their husbands' behalf. In a 1759 letter, merchant Thomas Raspberry discussed business matters with Elizabeth Butler, the wife of a local planter, who was acting as her husband's representative. He began the letter by reminding her of a deal that he had previously made with her husband, to resolve a matter with one of Butler's neighbors in exchange for "80 or 100 Barrels" of rice, which he believed that she was "doubtless acquainted" with. Raspberry then informed Mrs. Butler that he had recently carried out his end of the bargain, and wanted to determine "whether [he] could depend on the above Quantity ... [of] Rice & when it would suit [her] to deliver it."⁶⁶³

Although the numbers of wives appointed to act as the sole executors of their husband's estates declined over the course of the eighteenth century, some middling and elite men continued to trust their wives to manage their affairs after their death.⁶⁶⁴ In his 1793 will, planter John Roberts expressed his confidence in his wife's ability to act as

⁶⁶² Bowen, "Upon Virtue," 32-33.

⁶⁶³ *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, vol. XIII*, 91.

⁶⁶⁴ Marsh, *Georgia's Frontier Women*, 125.

household head by entrusting her to “conduct the business of [his] estate as to be for the interest & benefit of [his] children.”⁶⁶⁵ Court records reveal that Ann Theis was similarly appointed as the administrator of her deceased husband’s estate. In 1797, she petitioned the court for the right to sell a portion of her husband’s property, which she was granted.⁶⁶⁶ The evidence makes it clear that a number of other widows likewise assumed the role of plantation mistress after their husbands’ deaths. An advertisement in the *Georgia Gazette* from December 1765, for instance, made it known that a gray horse had been stolen from a plantation belonging to Mrs. Kennan. As payment for her horse’s return, Kennan promised a “handsome reward.”⁶⁶⁷ Runaway slave advertisements likewise indicate that widows often assumed their husbands’ roles in managing their families’ plantations. In 1765, widow Elizabeth Anderson offered an award to anyone who could return a young female slave to her custody.⁶⁶⁸ Two years later, Anderson again made an appearance in the *Georgia Gazette*, this time as a landholder. In October 1767 she published her intention to sell three hundred acres of land adjoining her own tract. In the advertisement, she herself (and not a lawyer or other representative) was listed as the party responsible for carrying out the transaction.⁶⁶⁹ In July 1765 Ann Raspberry, widow of prosperous merchant Thomas Raspberry, similarly sought to sell

⁶⁶⁵ John Roberts’ Will, 1793,” Wayne-Stites-Anderson Papers, box 15, folder 359, Collections of the Georgia Historical Society.

⁶⁶⁶ Chatham County Inferior Court Records, 1795-1802, [microfilm], GHS X-1742-01, Georgia Historical Society, 63.

⁶⁶⁷ *The Georgia Gazette*, 12/22/1765. This example and the one that follows it first came to my attention while reading Helen R. Bartlett’s 1939 study of women in early Georgia. See Bartlett, “Eighteenth Century Georgia Women,” (PhD thesis, University of Maryland, 1939), 63, 64, 66.

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 3/14/1765.

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 10/14/1767.

land in her possession. In the advertisement that she placed in the *Georgia Gazette*, Raspberry instructed interested parties to direct any inquiries about the property to her. She further advised prospective buyers that “Credit [would] be allowed,” so long as the “purchaser [gave] appv’d. security.”⁶⁷⁰

The royal government demonstrated its confidence in women’s abilities by granting large tracts to widows and other non-married women who intended to support themselves through managing plantations. In late 1766, South Carolina widow Ann Wilkins, who already owned a four hundred acre tract, petitioned for another 1,550 acres, stating that she, her three children, and twenty-six slaves sought to move to the colony and build a plantation there. The council immediately granted her request.⁶⁷¹ In October of the same year, “spinster” Priscilla Jones requested that she be granted two-hundred and fifty acres to be worked by her three slaves, which the council approved.⁶⁷² The following month, widow Sarah Bevill, who already possessed her deceased husband’s four-hundred and fifty acre tract, petitioned and received an additional three hundred acres to be cultivated by her nine slaves.⁶⁷³ Several months later, in February 1767, Bevill joined three of her male neighbors in a joint venture to build a lumber mill. The mill itself was to be erected on land already belonging to one of her male associates, but the group requested that the council provide them with an additional one thousand acres

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid., 7/7/1765.

⁶⁷¹ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. IX, 639-640.

⁶⁷² Ibid., 648.

⁶⁷³ Ibid., 674.

of wooded pineland, a request that they immediately granted.⁶⁷⁴ That same month, the widow of Ephraim Gilbert petitioned that she be given possession of a thousand-acre tract granted to her husband shortly before his death in order that she might “improve the Same for her Children.” Sympathetic to her predicament, the council granted her request.⁶⁷⁵

The continuing ability of women of all ranks to wield authority as deputy husbands and (in the case of widows) permanent household heads was not unique to the colony. Recent scholarship has shown that even the most affluent women in more established southern colonies – and particularly those in the Lower South – were likewise able to own property, act as proxies for their husbands, and conduct business on their behalf. According to historians such as Cara Anzilotti, the ability of planters’ wives to assume such authoritative roles was primarily the result of lingering demographic instabilities in many parts of the South. Aware of the dangers that accompanied life in the lowcountry, prosperous planters knew that there was a good chance that they might die before their children reached adulthood. In order to ensure that their families were not left destitute after their passing, some were inclined to delegate significant authority to their wives, and thereby guarantee that their hard-earned wealth remained within the family. The need for planters to travel in order to conduct business likewise encouraged some husbands to leave their plantations under the management of their wives. The planters’ practical reliance on their wives and female relatives to assume authoritative positions, these scholars maintain, contradicted the English standards of gentility and

⁶⁷⁴ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, vol. X, 48-49.*

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.

female domesticity that many wealthy southerners sought to emulate.⁶⁷⁶ In Georgia, an even less developed colony that faced similar epidemiological threats as other parts of the lowcountry, elite women may indeed have been called upon to serve as substitutes for their husbands and other male relatives more often than women of a similar status elsewhere. Yet to argue that such circumstances went against elite gender ideals is not completely accurate. While it cannot be denied that newspapers and other printed materials in the late eighteenth century did indeed portray women as delicate, over-emotional creatures dependent upon men for protection, this image was countered by lingering, often religious-based interpretations of women (as well as men) as “useful” and capable companions.⁶⁷⁷ In fact, references to women as helpmeets, even among Georgia’s elite, continued throughout the eighteenth century. In 1766, James Habersham, whose wife had recently passed away, wrote to his friend William Knox that he doubted that he would ever find another “Help-mate,” but “heartily wish[ed] [that Knox] may[,] as no one more cordially wishe[d] [his] Happiness.”⁶⁷⁸ Several years later, in March 1771, Habersham again characterized the ideal wife as a helpmate. While describing the new wife of Mr. Ambrose, the keeper of the colony’s orphan house, Habersham praised her as a “prudent and discreet Woman ... who [would] be a good Helpmate to him.”⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁶ Anzilotti, *In the Affairs of the World*. In *Within Her Power*, Linda L. Sturtz offers an interpretation of southern deputy husbands much closer to my own analysis. She acknowledges that demographic conditions in Virginia played an important part in allowing women to assume typically masculine duties, but also points out that English cultural expectations already encouraged women to adopt such roles.

⁶⁷⁷ For more on negative depictions of women and their capabilities in early southern newspapers, see Anzilotti, *In the Affairs of the World*, 109.

⁶⁷⁸ *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society*, vol. VI, 56.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 123.

In addition to performing whatever tasks would best ensure the success of her family, the late eighteenth-century Georgia helpmeet also continued in her role as a spiritual guide to her spouse and children. Not surprisingly, the Salzburger ministers remained vocal proponents of women's religious roles within the family. In January 1759, the Reverend Johann Martin Boltzius related the story of a pious woman who was a "great help" to her elderly husband "through her words, example, and prayers as he prepare[d] for eternal blessedness."⁶⁸⁰ Women who failed to promote piety, by contrast, faced the same sorts of condemnation as their counterparts in the Trustee era. In June 1759, just a few months after praising the above-mentioned woman, Boltzius complained about an unnamed congregant who had been refused communion for his "ignorance, laziness in spiritual exercises, and quarreling in his house." Part of the problem, the minister asserted, was that his wife was "too sluggish and irresponsible to help him." Although her husband made some improvement and began to "[show] a desire for prayer and the word of God," Boltzius maintained, her "rude and mendacious" behavior hindered his spiritual reformation.⁶⁸¹

The existing evidence suggests that elite women also acted as their family's spiritual guides. In April 1781, Elizabeth Lichtenstein Johnston, the wife of a Loyalist military captain from a prominent Savannah family, assumed the responsibility of discouraging her husband from gambling. Usually deferential and even timid in her correspondence, it appears that this was one arena in which she felt comfortable making

⁶⁸⁰ *Detailed Reports, vol. XVII, 5.*

⁶⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

her voice heard.⁶⁸² In this letter, she reminded her husband “of the promise [he] made [to her] not to enter again into that dreadful vice, gaming.” To further ensure his good behavior, she advised him to “think of her happiness, [and] think of [their] child who claim[ed] [his] support.”⁶⁸³ Johnston’s efforts to correct her husband’s behavior were unfortunately not as persuasive as she might have wished, and the following month she again attempted to convince him of the negative consequences of his gambling habit – not only for him but for their entire family. “You must know, my dear husband,” she wrote in a letter to him that May, that “your propensity to play; ‘tis a great misfortune, especially as your family are increasing.” She then begged him to “guard [himself] against a vice so destructive and ruinous in nature.”⁶⁸⁴

Women of all ranks, therefore, continued to play similarly important economic, spiritual, and moral roles in their families. And while the specific tasks expected of them might vary greatly, depending upon social status, their contributions continued to be valued. In fact, emerging late eighteenth-century ideals may have bolstered some of the roles already expected of women in the previous decades. In particular, new interpretations of women as the more virtuous sex likely reinforced women’s pre-existing obligations to encourage the spiritual and moral development of their spouses and children. Prior to the mid-eighteenth century, popular print culture in British America

⁶⁸² In a letter from 1781, for instance, in which she requested that her husband send her several items that she was not able to purchase in Savannah, she apologized profusely for “troubling [him] with [her] trifling commissions.” See Johnston, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 196.

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 200. For more on Elizabeth Lichtenstein Johnston and her life in colonial and revolutionary Georgia, see Ben Marsh, “Shot Round the World but Not Heard,” in *Georgia Women: Their Lives and Times – Volume I*, edited by Ann Short Chirhart and Betty Wood (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 58-81.

tended to depict the female sex as more susceptible to temptation and warned men that it was their duty to avoid being seduced by women's lustful and sinful appetites. Yet by the latter half of the eighteenth century, this interpretation began to be turned on its head, and women were increasingly promoted as the sex more inclined to virtue. Women were still assumed to possess the power to seduce men, but they were now said to be able to use their influence to promote moral virtue.⁶⁸⁵ Although such an ideology predated the American Revolution, women's roles in fostering virtue became increasingly important as Americans sought to uphold the ideals of republicanism in their new nation. As Republican wives and mothers, women were entrusted with teaching their husbands and children to embody the civic virtue that would allow them to put aside individual greed and work for the common good of the nation.⁶⁸⁶ As the supposedly more virtuous sex, then, late eighteenth-century Georgia women may have been encouraged to assume even more active roles in promoting moral virtue than in the Trustee era, when women were still assumed to need male guidance to avoid succumbing to their own sinful natures.

Ideals of manhood – elite as well as non-elite – likewise remained unchanged in certain crucial ways in late eighteenth-century Georgia, and may have been similarly

⁶⁸⁵ For more on this emerging view of women as the more virtuous sex, see Bloch, "The Gendered Meanings of Virtue"; Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, 265-266, 277-288; and Lewis, "The Republican Wife." In her study of southern womanhood in the colonial and early national periods, Cynthia Kierner describes a similar transformation in women's roles, beginning in the 1740s. See Kierner, *Beyond the Household*, 26.

⁶⁸⁶ For more on the emerging ideal of the republican mother or wife, see Ruth H. Bloch, "American Feminine Ideals in Transition: The Rise of the Moral Mother, 1785-1815," *Feminist Studies*, 4 (1978), 101-126; Bloch, "The Gendered Meanings of Virtue"; Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic*; Lewis, "The Republican Wife"; Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*; and Rosemarie Zagarri, "Morals, Manners, and the Republican Mother," *American Quarterly*, vol. 44, no. 2 (June 1992), 192-215. While scholars such as Linda Kerber view the Republican mother as a specifically American invention that emerged in the aftermath of the American Revolution, others such as Rosemarie Zagarri and Ruth Bloch interpret the role as part of a broader eighteenth-century transatlantic transformation in attitudes towards women.

bolstered by emerging popular ideals about marriage and the family. Idealized familial relationships became significantly less authoritarian over the century, and increasingly shifted away from the expectation of unconditional obedience. Love, affection, and the obligation to provide for and protect family members became much more important.⁶⁸⁷ No matter their status, men in Georgia continued to be judged by their ability to support and contribute to the welfare of their families as well as for their contributions to the wellbeing of the colony as a whole. Elite men in particular seem to have been conscious of the need to prove their usefulness. In contrast with poorer men, who often had little choice but to support and defend their families, since their families were also their primary source of labor, elite men had the luxury of delegating work to their slaves and servants. To some affluent Georgians, their good fortune was also a potential source of danger that might transform them into the lazy, luxurious, and useless creatures that critics of plantation societies (such as the Trustees) had long warned them about.⁶⁸⁸ James Habersham, the prominent planter and merchant who was also a former supporter of the Trustee government, was especially vocal in promoting “usefulness” as a key

⁶⁸⁷ Richard Godbeer discusses this change, as well as its consequences for the relationship between parents and children, in *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, 237. For more on this emerging model of the family and its connections to the American Revolution, see Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution against Patriarchal Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), Godbeer, *The Overflowing of Friendship*, 142-152, and Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1993), 145-168. For more on similar family transformations in England, see Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Academic Press, 1978), chapter 2, and Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977). Holly Brewer offers a different interpretation, arguing that parental authority actually increased over the course of the eighteenth century, in concert with the transformation of early American society from one based upon birth status to one founded upon consent and contract. Under this new ethos, children, because they lacked the reasoning ability to give their consent, were dependent upon their parental guardians. See Brewer, *By Birth or Consent: Children, Law, and the Anglo-American Revolution in Authority* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

⁶⁸⁸ In *An Anxious Pursuit*, Joyce Chaplin explores this desire among some slaveholding lowcountry planters to assert their industry in greater depth.

component of respectable manhood. In 1771, Habersham described a young relation as an extraordinary child whom he hoped would one day “turn out a usefull Man.”⁶⁸⁹ Habersham held similar hopes for his own sons. In 1764, he expressed his wish that his eldest son would follow the “good example” of Mr. Clay, a merchant “whose industry is highly commendable, and his Abilities for Trade unquestionable.”⁶⁹⁰ Four years later, Habersham again emphasized the importance of encouraging hard work in his sons. “I have no great Fortune to give my three Sons,” he claimed to an associate in England (despite being one of the most successful merchants and planters in Georgia), “and consequently they must depend on their Industry to improve the little I may be able to give them.” As a result, he expected his second son, Joseph, to spend his time in London learning “how to get his Bread in an honest and reputable manner.” He was not to spend his time “in an idle and hurtfull way,” but “have [the] sense to know, that Industry, submission and a punctual and cheerful obedience to all others” would earn him the “best recommendation to the esteem of [his father] and [his] Friends.”⁶⁹¹ In a letter to Joseph later that same year, Habersham directly informed his son of his belief that “[e]very man ought to be industrious and diligent in that Station wherein Providence has placed him,” warning him that “An Idle man is the lumber of Creation and if it could be, I would almost say ought to be expelled [from] Society.”⁶⁹² In another letter from the same year, Habersham further expressed his personal distaste for idleness, stating that if his children

⁶⁸⁹ *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, vol. VI, 124.*

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 66-67.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*, 69.

were “idlers” rather than “men of Business and Integrity,” they would not only “entail Beggary on themselves,” but place “Grief and Shame on [him].”⁶⁹³ In Habersham’s view, elite men – because of their wealth and privilege – were particularly charged with working to better society as a whole. They were even expected to display “cheerful obedience” to others.⁶⁹⁴

James Habersham was not the only affluent father to encourage his sons to live lives of usefulness. In 1773, Dr. Lewis Johnston, a prominent physician and planter from Savannah, encouraged his son, William Martin Johnston, to pursue his education with “unwearied diligence.” In particular, Johnston hoped that his son would study to become a physician like himself, and thereby join the ranks of “the most respectable and useful persons in society.”⁶⁹⁵ Like Habersham, Johnston hoped that his children would learn good work habits by associating with other industrious men. In a letter to William from 1774, for instance, he recommended that he befriend Mr. Read’s son, whom he described as a “sober young man, very diligent in his application to his business & therefore a very proper companion for you.”⁶⁹⁶ He also strongly advised his son to “Avoid carefully as [his] greatest bane ... idle, disorderly, and vicious company.” “Many a young man of the best disposition,” he warned, had been “ruined by falling into that snare.”⁶⁹⁷ Future

⁶⁹³ Ibid., 76.

⁶⁹⁴ For more on James Habersham, and particularly his role as a father and views on idleness, see Lambert, *James Habersham: Loyalty, Politics, and Commerce in Colonial Georgia*, 138-150.

⁶⁹⁵ “Letter from Dr. Lewis Johnston to his son William Martin Johnston, Savannah, July 17, 1773,” *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 165-166.

⁶⁹⁶ “Letter from Dr. Lewis Johnston to his son William Martin Johnston, Savannah, March 13, 1774,” *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 174-175.

⁶⁹⁷ “Letter from Dr. Lewis Johnston to his son William Martin Johnston, Savannah, September 6, 1773,” *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 170-171.

Georgia senator George Jones likewise hoped that his son would follow the good example set by other men. In 1805 he advised his son to cultivate the same good qualities exemplified by his deceased grandfather, Noble Jones, a close associate of Oglethorpe in the Trustee era. “Imitate, my son, his temperance, chastity & every virtue,” Jones instructed, “& like him you may sleep away life, with the composure of a Christian, after long usefulness, greatly beloved & generally regretted.”⁶⁹⁸

According to men such as James Habersham, Lewis Johnston, and George Jones, a successful life was one of “long usefulness,” and a man who failed in this obligation was barely a man at all. The evidence suggests that these elite men dreaded the time when old age and infirmity might rob them completely of their ability to assert themselves as active men. James Habersham was particularly anguished by his growing inability to work late in life. In a letter to a benefactor from the spring of 1775, just months before his death that August, Habersham described his declining health and lamented that he was on the verge of becoming “a poor, helpless, Useless Man.”⁶⁹⁹ Such fears correlate with similar anxieties that historians of masculinity have found in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New England. As Lisa Wilson has shown, men in the northern colonies based their self-worth, in part, on their ability to support others, and faced significant anxiety when they considered the “uselessness” and feebleness that often accompanied old age. Georgian men thus still shared much in common with their counterparts in the northern colonies, and the arrival of plantation slavery did not

⁶⁹⁸ *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, vol. XVII, 37.*

⁶⁹⁹ *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, vol. VI, 243.*

completely eradicate Trustee-era ideals that promoted a model of manhood based upon obligation to others.⁷⁰⁰

Habersham and the other elite men cited above were not necessarily representative of all Georgians. As their own warnings to their sons make clear, these men believed that others of their status often succumbed to the temptations of idleness and vice. Yet this belief in elite manhood as a series of obligations and responsibilities was not unique and may have been at least partially rooted in the ideal of the benevolent plantation master. As historians such as Michal Rozbicki have demonstrated, one influential model of elite manhood in the eighteenth-century southern colonies entailed not only authority over others, but also a significant degree of responsibility for the welfare of a man's dependents. In order to establish himself as a gracious patriarch, a planter could not openly mistreat his wife, children, servants, or slaves, but instead needed to demonstrate his benevolence towards them. This is not to say that planters in reality did not misuse their power over others, but such men acted in opposition to the very ideology that they used to justify their authority: that their mastery was for the benefit of others.⁷⁰¹ In fact, Georgia's ministers put significant pressure on masters to protect and nurture their family, servants, and slaves. In a published pamphlet from 1756, for instance, the Reverend Zubly reminded masters and heads of household of their obligations to their dependents, by relating the final words of a dying gentleman from Prussia. In the piece, the man advised his son to "[b]e a grave, just, orderly, meek and kind Master, and consider that your Servants are Men like your self.... Endeavour to be a

⁷⁰⁰ Wilson, *Ye Heart of a Man*, 171-185.

⁷⁰¹ Rozbicki, *The Complete Colonial Gentleman*, 120.

Pattern of good Example to your Family, and consider that a Master demeans himself shamefully in the Eyes of his Domesticks by vicious and leud Practices.” Instead, the man maintained, a master should “rule in the Hearts of his Servants.” One of his key duties in this role was to “continue the daily Worship of God in [his] House, that it may abide an House of Prayer.” Devotion to God would not only make a man a better authority figure, the author asserted, but would also ensure the obedience and love of his dependents, “for if ... Servants fear God and walk before Him in the Paths of Virtue,” the household governor would “be free from many Perplexities, that some Masters are tortured with by wicked Servants, and it will contribute much to make your life easy.”⁷⁰²

Gravestone epitaphs from the late eighteenth century reaffirm the continuing importance of a man’s nurturing and supporting his dependents, including his immediate family as well as his servants and slaves. The gravestone of the Reverend John Osgood of Midway, for instance, lauded him as “an affectionate Husband, a tender Parent, [and] a kind Master.”⁷⁰³ Another erected in 1774 for Edward Splatt similarly described him as “An affectionate Husband” as well as “A kind Master.”⁷⁰⁴ After the untimely death of William Elliott Way in November 1802, he was remembered as “a kind husband, a tender parent, and humane master.”⁷⁰⁵ Although epitaphs in this period were often formulaic in nature and used the same terms again and again to describe the deceased, they are nevertheless a good indicator of social values in late eighteenth-century Georgia.

⁷⁰² Zubly, *The Real Christians Hope in Death*, 179-180. The fact that the man used in Zubly’s example was Prussian indicates that some of Georgia’s authorities still viewed German Protestants as the ideal to follow.

⁷⁰³ *Epitaphs in Midway Cemetery, Midway Georgia*, 175.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁷⁰⁵ *Epitaphs in Midway Cemetery*, 306. See also 176, 200, 306.

Although not all men described after death as “affectionate husbands” or “kind masters” may have lived up to these characterizations during life, the fact that their families sought to remember them as such reveals that they idealized manhood not only in terms of authority, but also as an obligation to be kind, affectionate, and humane to all members of the household.

Many Georgians, male and female alike, thus continued to advocate the need for every family member to play his or her part in looking after the household’s economic, moral, and emotional needs. And even though the particular ways in which men and women contributed to their family’s welfare were increasingly dependent upon their status, everyone was nevertheless expected to play an active part in that endeavor. Even plantation masters, who theoretically wielded supreme household authority, were supposed to devote their lives to the welfare of their families – including their slaves. The example of Georgia thus demonstrates that the southern patriarchy was often much more complex than it has often been described. Although the assertion of power over dependents such as women, children, servants, and slaves was undoubtedly part of elite southern masculinity, it was, at least in theory, tempered by an emphasis upon mutual obligation, affection, and responsibility. In some ways, then, ideals of manhood in Georgia and other southern colonies remained similar to those found among men in the rest of colonial America. Yet in the southern colonies, such rhetoric could have insidious implications. While the obligation of a master to be “humane” to his slaves could be seen as a positive good, this ideal was also a powerful justification for the institution of slavery as a whole, since a slaveholder could easily argue that slavery was ultimately for the benefit and wellbeing of the slaves.

Although much changed over time, the emphasis that Georgia's settlers and officials had placed upon ideals of industry, virtue, and collaborative relations between the sexes never completely disappeared in the late eighteenth century. However, these founding ideals, already contested during the Trustee era, were increasingly challenged by a multitude of competing ideologies concerning proper work for colonists of different sexes, races, and statuses. Over time, the perspectives of the colony's newly minted planter elite came to dominate Georgia's cultural ideals – but their views remained contested, especially in the backcountry. In short, Georgia did indeed come to resemble other southern colonies. But this does not mean that its early promotion of cooperative labor disappeared; such collaboration merely became more complex and varied, and the specific ways in which the people interacted were determined increasingly by a person's social status.

Such continuities are initially surprising, since ideals such as industry and moral virtue were originally promoted by the Trustees as being in opposition to the supposedly sinful, idle, and luxurious societies found in other southern colonies. According to this way of thinking, Georgia's later transformation into a colony much closer to the South Carolina model should have resulted in the disappearance of values such as the importance of hard work or the obligation to be "useful" to one's family and to the community as a whole. But the Trustees' one-dimensional critique of other plantation societies failed to acknowledge the complexities of life in the eighteenth-century southern colonies. There is no doubt that there were distinct differences between early Georgia and more established southern settlements, especially when it came to ideas about

physical work and the value of material wealth, but there were also many similarities. Many white southerners of all ranks, for instance, believed that personal industry was a positive quality, although their ideas about what constituted such industry varied greatly. And contrary to claims that southerners were less religious than other inhabitants of early America – or that religion in the southern colonies was primarily a functional means to keep slaves, poor whites, and others in their place – many southerners were devoutly religious, although their forms of worship (particularly among Anglicans) were not as demonstrative as those of evangelical denominations.⁷⁰⁶ And even though elite men and women did not always work together in the same ways as their less affluent neighbors, they nevertheless worked collaboratively to further the wealth and prestige of their families.

The continued presence in late eighteenth-century Georgia of collaborative gender relations, an emphasis upon hard work and industry, and respect for moral virtue – all qualities associated by scholars with New England, the Middle Colonies, and England – suggest the need for historians to reevaluate the strict distinctions often drawn between the various regions of early America in this period. Although it could be argued that lingering Trustee ideologies were the sole cause of such continuing similarities, such an argument does not take into account the fact that significant numbers of Georgia's inhabitants by the second half of the eighteenth century came from the Carolinas and Virginia. And many of these newcomers seem to have shared very similar viewpoints

⁷⁰⁶ This interpretation fits within a growing body of work that shows that significant numbers of southern colonists were devoutly religious. See especially, Louis P. Nelson, *The Beauty of Holiness: Anglicanism and Architecture in Colonial South Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008). Other historians have drawn different conclusions. In *The Transformation of Virginia*, Rhys Isaac depicts Anglicanism in largely functional terms, asserting that religion was largely a tool utilized by the planter elite to assert and justify their dominance over the rest of society.

with long-time residents. While the different parts of British North America did have distinct features, they also shared a common cultural heritage. And although this cultural heritage was often adapted to fit local conditions, the essence of the cultural values remained largely the same. Even at the end of the eighteenth century, then, the distinctions between North and South that would come to characterize the nineteenth century were not yet fully in place.

Epilogue

There is no denying that by the late eighteenth century Georgia had undergone a number of significant changes. Founded as haven for Britain's "worthy poor," where slavery was banned, industry and virtue were explicitly encouraged, and most colonists were of roughly the same social status, by the closing decades of the century, Georgia featured a socially stratified society based upon plantation agriculture and slave labor. Georgia's government had also undergone a number of transformations within the span of a few decades: it had begun as a proprietary colony governed with a heavy hand by a group of elite reformers in England, transitioned into a royal or crown colony more similar to its colonial neighbors, and finally emerged as a state in the new nation created by the American Revolution. Yet despite these great changes, everyday life for many white Georgians – and especially those from middling and poorer stock – remained largely unchanged throughout the eighteenth century. This was particularly the case when it came to collaborative gender roles. For most Georgians, the family remained the primary economic as well as spiritual unit, and each member of the household continued to be expected to contribute – often through physical labor – to the common good.

If the colony's first generation of European inhabitants had been somehow able to travel through time to late eighteenth-century Georgia, they would have found many aspects of life recognizable. Elizabeth Penrose, the influential tavern keeper in early Savannah, for instance, would have found much in common with Abigail Minis if she had visited her tavern in the 1760s and 1770s. Both women were well-known in Savannah, entertained some of Georgia's most prominent inhabitants, and wielded a

significant measure of power in the community.⁷⁰⁷ If Michael Burkholder, who was widely praised in the Trustee period for his efforts to encourage industry in his daughters as well as his sons, had been able to meet Mr. Club of St. Simons in the late 1780s, he undoubtedly would have respected Club's efforts to train his daughters "to useful industry, either spinning with the hand wheel or weaving."⁷⁰⁸ If the Salzburger women whom the Reverend Boltzius had observed working in the fields near Ebenezer in the 1740s had been suddenly transported to the Georgia backcountry of the 1780s, although they might have remarked upon the presence of cotton in the fields or the use of slave laborers, they would have seen nothing unusual about women such as Mrs. Lumpkins working in the fields or helping her slaves to remove seeds from the cotton.⁷⁰⁹ And if Anna Maria Rieser, the wife of frequent troublemaker Michael Rieser, who was commissioned by Ebenezer's minister in 1741 to use her influence to help her husband "realize his many sins," had been able to meet Elizabeth Lichtenstein Johnston, she surely would have identified with the latter woman's efforts to discourage her husband's gambling habit.⁷¹⁰

In some ways, then, Georgia's transformation into a plantation society more similar to its neighbors in Virginia and the Carolinas was not as drastic a change for many white Georgians as one might expect. Particularly when it came to collaborative gender relations and gender role flexibility, there was much continuity over time and both

⁷⁰⁷ For more on Penrose and her position in Savannah, see The Egmont Papers, vol. 14207, 152-153; see also Temple and Coleman, *Georgia Journeys, 1732-1754*, 16, 20, 70, 188, 202-207, 297.

⁷⁰⁸ *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, vol. XXIII, 439; Butterworth, *Three Years' Adventures of a Minor in England, Africa, the West Indies, South Carolina and Georgia*.

⁷⁰⁹ *Detailed Reports*, vol. VIII, 108, 149; The Reverend John Newton Diary, 1781-1791, 10/18/1786.

⁷¹⁰ *Detailed Reports*, vol. VII, 51; Johnston, *Recollections of a Georgia*, 200.

remained key strands in Georgian society. Change was a gradual as well as complicated process, and although nothing remained completely static, strong cultural imperatives favoring interdependence and collaboration between the sexes remained influential throughout the eighteenth century.

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