PLAYING FOR THEIR SHARE: 
A HISTORY OF CREATIVE TRADESWOMEN IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY VIRGINIA

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This dissertation reveals the commonality of public and active women who used creative trades to substantiate their lives in Virginia from 1716-1800. A creative tradeswoman, an existence identified by this scholarship, was an individual who used her musical, dancing, and singing abilities to incur wages. This study focuses on prominent creative tradeswomen such as Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick, a traveling musical duo; the singing actresses of the Hallam; Mary Stagg, assembly manager and contributor to the first theater in Williamsburg; Baroness Barbara deGraffenreit, who competed for Williamsburg’s premier dancing manager position; and Mrs. Ann Neill, an enterprising music teacher. Despite times of subordination, these women showcased unique forms of creative agency such as acquiring widespread idolization or organizing traveling musical duos. Creative tradeswomen challenged the conventional oppositions between trade and gentry women, education and creative ability, submission and dominance, amateur and professional culture, public and private spaces. The histories of creative tradeswomen demonstrate the fluidity between these binaries while also remapping cultural and social identities as informed by power, subjectivity, trade, music, and dance. As a result, this dissertation illustrates creative tradeswomen as situated within paradoxical systems of power and subordination.

The archives at the Rockefeller Library, Virginia Historical Society, New York Historical Society, and the Library of Congress supported the research. This dissertation utilizes a feminist historiography methodology, incorporating a consideration of cultural and social conditions that
bring forward creative women’s untold histories. Interdisciplinary in nature, this study makes points of contact between women’s history, cultural history, and gender studies. Creative tradeswomen expands the research on women’s labor while locating gender and class as major influencers informing a woman’s creative labor.

This dissertation expands the normative categories used to shape historical women while demonstrating their contributions to the development of early American culture. This research appends women’s creative trade histories into the scholarly conversation and identifies their contributions as valuable components of American cultural history. The history of creative tradeswomen expands the foundational modes of early American scholarship while presenting a rarely included emphasis on women’s creative trades.
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INTRODUCTION

A creative tradeswoman was an individual who used her artistic abilities, such as musicianship, dancing aptitude, and singing dexterity to incur wages. In brief, women such as Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick, a traveling musical duo, the women of the Hallam family, renowned as singing actresses, Mary Stagg, who aided the management of the first theater in Williamsburg, Baroness Barbara deGraffenreit, who competed for Williamsburg’s premier dancing manager position, and Mrs. Ann Neill, an enterprising music teacher, were prominent cultural laborers. It was these women’s creative trades and social contributions that complicate eighteenth century Virginia’s cultural history. This complication arises from the inclusion of tradeswomen whose lives exposed the instabilities of social and historical categories such as gender, class, and creative ability. The aim of this dissertation is to further develop the enormous diversity of women's experiences in eighteenth century Virginia. As the forthcoming historiography demonstrates, there has been major gain in showcasing early American women as more than hapless victims succumbing to the domineering patriarchy. This dissertation is no exception. However, this project adds the lives of creative tradeswomen to the historical conversation while furthering the scholarship on early American women, trade culture, and gender ideologies. The research supporting this dissertation specifically contextualizes women, gender roles, class, and creative trades. A consideration of dance, music, theater and women expands the foundational modes of early American scholarship while presenting a discursive and rarely included emphasis on creative trade culture.

Cultural histories are viable contributors to the historical record and are central when deciphering the lives of tradeswomen. This dissertation calls for the inclusion of music, dance, and singing as trade practices that directly intersected with historical, social, and gender norms.
Creative tradeswomen challenge the conventional oppositions between trade and gentry women, education and creative ability, submission and dominance, amateur and professional culture, public and private spaces. The collapse of these distinct binaries is imperative to cultural histories. An emphasis on creative tradeswomen explores the fluidity between these binaries while also remapping cultural and social identities as informed by power, subjectivity, trade, music, and dance. Interdisciplinary in nature, this study makes points of contact between women’s history, music history, and gender studies. This results in the demonstration that women used creative labor as foundational to the viability of their trades but also as a method to negotiate overarching social norms. By focusing on music, singing, and dance, this dissertation examines the creative tradeswomen’s lives as situated within multiple and paradoxical systems of power and agency.

An examination of creative tradeswomen in the eighteenth century must also engage the conversation of the so-called “Golden Age” for women. This theory suggests that colonial women were able to participate in more business and social opportunities primarily due to the outnumbering of men by women. Scholars disagree on the varying status and capacities of colonial women when compared to their counterparts in Europe. For example, in Lois Green Carr’s and Lorena S. Walsh’s chapter “Changing Lifestyles and Consumer Behavior in the Colonial Chesapeake” from Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century (1994) the authors understand that women in Maryland had more social power. In Separated by their Sex: Women in Public and Private in the Colonial Atlantic World (2011) Mary Beth Norton disagrees. She contends that especially in New England, women were housebound and rendered asocial. Here we see an explicit debate either rendering women as immobile or authorized citizens. However, this debate also reaffirms a binary system thereby disallowing women any
type of social fluidity. The women in this study demonstrate that the identities of colonial women did not absolutely identify as staid or powerful. Rather their histories display a greater sense of social fluidity. In many cases, the creative tradeswomen moved between both roles and ultimately located themselves at the center of these ideologies. As a result, women frequently exhibited behavior reflective of social power while also adhering to dominant and sometimes oppressive gender norms.

The women occupying creative trades were not subject to a singular cultural condition. As demonstrated throughout this study, women from various classes, ages, and regions utilized creative labors as a means to substantiate their lives. The focus on music and creative culture showcases how these social categories overlapped and influenced one another while infrequently settling at a stable identity. As this research develops, creative trades often anchored this categorical instability. Hence women’s roles in creative trades expose a continuum of women’s subjectivities in mercurial public spaces. The development of this plurality unmasks a monolithic historical voice. An emphasis on creative trade fundamentally develops gendered meanings and representations that intersect with other cultural conditions while expanding our historical understanding of women.

Women as individual public agents did not warrant transgression or abandonment of dominant social norms. Every woman in this study emerged as commanding cultural laborers while also personifying the archetype of the obedient and powerless woman. However it was only through this adherence to social norms that a woman could engage her powerful creative modalities. By examining the women in light of this social negotiation, this dissertation scrutinizes the fluidity of social ideologies that women embodied and systematically negotiated. Despite times of subordination, the women showcased their unique forms of creative dominion
while also situating themselves as central developers of American cultural history. The use of a woman’s creative ability as a means to incur wages develops the spectrum of the eighteenth century’s woman’s skills while furthering contextualizing the competitive, and at times puerile, marketplace in which they occupied. As a result, this research expands the normative categories used to shape historical women while examining the larger cultural conditions informing their trade and gendered identities. This yields narratives of indentured women who labored their way into affluence, tradeswomen in competition with Baronesses for Williamsburg’s prominent cultural position, venerated actresses, and women who endlessly traveled and performed to advance their livelihoods. By expanding women’s social historiography to include music and other creative trades, research only begins to complicate the qualifiers addressing social, class, and gender fluidity.

A focus on the histories of these creative tradeswomen also challenges the dominant understanding of the role of music and culture in the eighteenth century as a frivolous diversion. This sentiment is reflective of class and gender privilege thereby marginalizing the lives of middling and tradeswomen. Therefore creative tradeswomen expands the research on women’s labor while locating gender and class as major influencers dismantling a monolithic understanding of the historical woman. An examination of Virginia from 1716-1800 demonstrates the commonality of public and active women who used creative trades to substantiate their lives while contributing to the development of early America. This research appends women’s cultural trade histories into the scholarly conversation, while also identifying their contributions as avenues that advanced American cultural history.

Virginia, in addition to Philadelphia, New York, and Charleston were the primary areas supporting women’s creative trades. The scholarship examining these additional regions’
musical histories are more expansive yet also fleetingly acknowledge women’s contributions. Nonetheless throughout the scholarship on women’s music history there is also a lack of emphasis on Virginia and other southern colonies. For example Christine Ammer’s *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music - Century Edition* (2001) discusses seventeenth and eighteenth century music. However she primarily focuses on Puritan New England with shorter analytical excursions into New York and Pennsylvania. Similarly, Karin Anne Pendle’s *Women and Music, Second Edition: A History* (2001) overlooks Virginia as a vigorous musical area. Both Ammer and Pendle include considerations of women vocalists and analysis of librettos, specifically John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera*. This proved helpful in shaping the histories of the musical theater. This dissertation explicitly includes Virginia as a viable cultural center in early America.

The geographic focus is on Virginia’s eastern shore including Williamsburg, Norfolk, Alexandria, Fredericksburg, and Richmond. Joshua Fry’s map of Virginia (1751) [Fig 1.] demonstrates the inhabited regions of the colony. Due to the dense populations in specific regions, such as Williamsburg, creative tradeswomen tended to promote their crafts in these regions. For example, the Frenchman’s Map of Williamsburg (1781) exhibits a detailed rendering of Williamsburg and the potential spaces that creative tradeswomen could use to perform music and hold assemblies [Fig 2]. Finally, John Mitchell’s map (1755) of the colonies demonstrates the expansive reach of the British and French dominions in North America. However, due to the distances and road limitations, creative tradeswomen restricted their travels to the eastern established settlements and populated regions [Fig 3].
Figure 1 Fry-Jefferson Map of Virginia. Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA
Figure 2 The Frenchman's Map of Williamsburg. Courtesy of Special Collections Research Center, Swerm Library, College of William and Mary
Figure 3 John Mitchell’s map showing the British and French dominions in North America. Courtesy of the Library of Congress Geography and Map Division
Women were frequently itinerant teachers and musicians, performers in musical theater and public concerts. They also published their own songbooks, organized weekly assemblies, managed performance and musical education spaces. Yet musical historical scholarship has tended to marginalize women by centering histories on their husbands’ musical legacies. For example, sources often illustrate the life of itinerant dancing master Charles Stagg, while rarely mentioning the life of Mary Stagg, his wife and business partner. She was also a prominent dancing mistress and assembly manager. Especially in widowhood, Mary Stagg continued to use music and dance instruction as a trade. The use of creative trades is a theme revisited by the history of the theatrical Hallam family, the public organist Elizabeth Balgrave, the traveling musical duo Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick, and the music teacher Ann Neill.

With the exception of Baroness Barbara deGraffenreit, the female musicians in this study were not members of the gentry. Accordingly, my definition of gentility is partially derived from Carr and Walsh. The authors contend that the culture of gentility was a means of establishing social difference while fueling an early type of capitalistic competition. As they suggest, “by the turn of the [eighteenth] century colonial men of wealth and power began to signal their rank through elegance in lifestyle” (Carr and Walsh 60). As these authors continue, and Rhys Isaac’s and Richard Bushman’s work authenticates, it was commonplace that possession of material culture, rather than holding political or civic office determined social position. Elaborate household designs and the frequency of social ceremonies were also signifiers of status. Culture became an avenue for displaying affluence and social position. Musical performance and ability followed this grading however also showcased the fluidity of materiality. In terms of the former, affording the expense of concert tickets or even hiring musicians for ceremonies demonstrated the splendor of refined living while the ability to actually play music demonstrated the time and
luxury afforded to practice and education. The purchase of musical instruments revealed a type of financial and familial stability. This exhibited that the family or individual had already acquired enough necessities such as household goods, farming equipment, and other daily amenities. They possessed the financial surplus allowing them to afford unessential material goods. This served to distinguish genteel families from middling and trade families who oftentimes were still working towards the amenities necessary to establish a secure livelihood. Yet in terms of creative culture the distinction was not clearly defined. The primary sources demonstrate the ubiquity of concerts held by gentry and middling musicians, the popularity of attending performances, the commonality of music libraries and the diverse ownership of musical instruments across classes reinforced the definition of refinement while also signifying the fluidity of materiality and social position. The tradeswomen promoted their concerts toward an influential and general audience, taught gentry children to dance and play music, performed on estates, and carried out their trades across the region. As a result creative tradeswomen supported the gentry’s race for refinement yet the performers infrequently found membership in that social class.1

I utilize a feminist historiographical methodology as a means of integrating women’s voices in the development of the historical record. The adoption of a feminist historiography recognizes women’s histories as distinct from men’s histories and incorporates a consideration of cultural, social, or geographical conditions, which bring forward women’s untold histories and reveal their viable pasts. The onset of feminist historiography is marked as a response to the

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1 In Cultural History of the American Revolution (1987) Kenneth Silverman adds “A continued demand for family music continued to support many music teachers and music shops, but with slightly less reliance on the mother country for printed music” (Silverman 183). Silverman’s point is directly reflective of the revolutionary era. Thus this is an important idea to consider when addressing the larger social and cultural context of the era.
limitations in social historical scholarship but is also interconnected to a feminist postmodern methodology. A feminist historiography overlaps with key areas of interests to postmodern feminist methodologies such as the deconstruction of social constructions based on grand narratives thereby abandoning a belief in the universal, the mutability of language and discourses as constantly changing identities, and finally the overall impact of culturally constructed meaning. However each chapter’s sources presented a unique challenge to a feminist methodology. For example, the chapter on Mary Stagg exposes the question of record keeping when public sources did not exist. The chapter refiguring Nancy Hallam develops the theories framing the critiques of an androcentric archive. Mrs. Sully’s and Mrs. Pick’s chapter required an in depth examination of newspapers and the overarching cultural conditions informing the privilege of publishing. Throughout the project I present and complicate the nuances of each chapter’s sources. This is in opposition to including a lengthy and unified discussion of the methodology as part of the introduction. Despite each chapter’s unique use of feminist methods, the project also demonstrates some overarching albeit general connections to feminist methodologies.

Feminist methodologies are central to deciphering any sexist or gendered agendas in culture historical research methods. A feminist methodological approach demonstrates an axiomatic consideration in cultural histories that is more complicated than women being silenced. Research and knowledge must include women’s perspectives, voices, or experiences. The influence of feminist methodologies in cultural histories reveals the acceptance and continuity of a singular and dominant form of knowledge; one that is value-laden, riddled with biases, and based on masculinist and Eurocentric assumptions. The distortion of experience points directly to the marginalizing of subjectivity while the support of traditional research
restates methodologies that can be sexist, racist, and classist. However feminist historiographies are indeed a fluid and mercurial field blending and opposing culture while differentiating and pushing the boundaries of conventional knowledge, histories, and linear epistemologies. Thereby one of the foundational assumptions of feminist historiographies is the production of knowledge as not a linear relationship that moves down from oppressor to oppressed or from those in power to the powerless. Instead feminist historiographies determine the production of knowledge as speaking to, including responses from, and representing all women and marginalized peoples. Archive work, specifically diaries, notes, journals, and other primary sources are communicative instruments that can aide a refiguring of the past. The use of these materials breaks down overarching narratives and demonstrates that the historical woman can occupy multiple locations. Furthermore primary sources demonstrate the fluidity of the subjects’ identities and experiences. Even within history, there is no authentic core; these are all products of discursive events. Echoing the work of Joan Wallach Scott’s *Gender and the History of Politics* (1999), researchers must not only question the experience but also question how social factors, power positions, and cultural economies alter knowledge and a subject’s representation.

Women's representations but also their positions in the historical record are informed by social factors such as marriage and naming impact. Throughout the entire study, the creative tradeswomen are identified by their first and surname, for example, Mary Stagg or Ann Neill. This acts as an extension of their social negotiation because it takes into consideration their singular identity in the form of their first names juxtaposed against their married identities. This serves as a balance in identifying the individual and her social factors while also clarifying their contributions as distinguishable from their relatives. To only associate them by their last name, for example just as Stagg, reinforces their connection to heteronormativity and association with
men. In several cases, such as Mrs. Douglass or Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick, their first names are unavailable. In these few cases, the creative tradeswomen are identified by the honorific and surname.

Researchers must also acknowledge the marked positions of the archive and the power and proliferation of dominant epistemologies. Problematically, the abundance of privileged, wealthy, and higher-class voices can dominate feminist historiographies and archival methods. For example, illiteracy and the price of paper prevented the writing, recording, and preserving of narratives. Thus illiteracy influences the availability of the primary sources that recognize the research beyond a particular social, cultural, economic, and historical context. The ability to write caters to a certain privilege not experienced by all classes or individuals. The enhanced quality of extant and readable sources renders the legacy of the higher social classes as more prevalent. Researchers must be ready to call attention to the availability of white, gentry, and privileged narratives while also drawing attention to the marginalized. This includes the history of women, trades people, creative laborers, the illiterate, or the impoverished. When considering the field at large, these narratives are essential in developing a fuller examination of early American history.

Feminist historiography utilizes gender to illuminate social commonalities while expanding our historical understanding. A feminist historiography demonstrates a contested understanding yet systematic dismantling of the past. One that is more complicated than a top-down androcentric construction.\(^2\) This type of historical reading opens scholarship to the inclusion of fields or areas previously put under erasure such as the creative tradeswomen in

\(^2\) It is important to note that by utilizing a feminist historiography, it is not meant to identify a historic subject as feminist, when feminism is a contemporary discourse. To counter this concern, historians such as Eileen Botting utilize the term “protofeminist” as a means to describe early woman based philosophical and historical traditions (Botting 2006).
eighteenth century Virginia. A feminist historiography suggests that researchers not only consider a small quotient of the past, but also its implicit impact on the multimodality of the individual and the collective. Most importantly, a feminist historiography develops the examination of the everyday, the ordinary. It is the commonplace that exposes the narratives so essential in the reconceptualization of the past. In application to this dissertation, women’s creative labor developed the exposure of once forgotten narratives.

In consideration of the everyday, Merrill D. Smith’s *Women’s Roles in Eighteenth-Century America* (2010) is a valuable text that documents the day-to-day life of eighteenth century women. Smith presents a glimpse into “how women were expected to react to wars, pestilence, and a host of other situations they encountered in eighteenth-century America” (Smith xv). Likewise, Carol Berkin’s and Leslie Horowitz’s text *Women’s Voices, Women’s Lives: Documents in Early American History* (1998) is a “collection in which colonial women would speak for themselves about themselves” (Berkin and Horowitz 4). Both texts

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3 Vicki Baker’s article “Inclusion of Women Composers in College Music History Textbooks” (2003), serves as a reminder that women are not only erased from the public performance culture but also from the historical record. Baker’s piece, when considered in connection with the dissertation’s other included texts, represents major themes that merge the individual authors’ arguments. To name a few, the implications of gender on social, political, and cultural constructions or the persistence of gender stereotypes which marginalize women musicians’ contributions to the musical historical record. Much as Tick contends, Baker also argues to reinsert an accurate representation of women musicians into the historical record and the public’s collective memories. Baker concludes that the acceptance of a woman’s public musical career has increased, however reminds readers there is still work that needs to be accomplished.

predominantly utilize primary sources such as court documents, letters, and newspaper advertisements to fully demonstrate the everyday lives of women. Berkin’s and Horowitz’s text also warn against reducing the eighteenth century woman “to a female ideal of the ‘notable housewife’…a helpmeet to her husband, a fertile wife, [instead she was] a competent mother, and an economical and productive manager” (Berkin and Horowitz 48). An apparent theme in the scholarship informing feminist historiography but also the history of women and music is the protestation against reaffirming these types of stereotypes. Berkin and Horowitz contend that a woman’s authority and agency were widespread. As Berkin writes, “when women, who have until now been seen as peripheral to the study of the past, are placed at the center of our inquiry, historical commonplaces are frequently turned inside out and even upside down” (Berkin and Horowitz 3). Other texts such as Mary Kelley’s *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America’s Republic* (2008); Berkin’s *First Generations: Women in Colonial America* and *Women of America A History* (1997); and Elizabeth Eger’s and Lucy Pelitz’s *Brilliant Women of Eighteenth Century Bluestockings* (2008) demonstrate a similar argument while intersecting the civic, familial, and cultural lives of women. Moreover, feminist historiography is limited to scholarship that consciously reflects the writing of history from a women-centric standpoint. Texts such as Gerda Lerner’s *The Majority Finds its Past: Placing Women in History* (1981) and *The Creation of Patriarchy* (1987); Mary Ritter Beard’s *Woman as Force in History: A Study in Traditions and Realities* (1987); and Mary Spongberg’s *Writing Women's History Since the Renaissance* (2003) aide the contextualization of the woman as a stalwart historical figure. Frequently, these texts validate women’s literary roles however exclude music or dance. Consequently the centralization of eighteenth century creative tradeswomen further develops the social parameters of the era.
Despite the opportunities available to women in the eighteenth century, the fact remains that it was a gendered society. I utilize Lerner’s understanding of gendered society as the “societal definitions of behavior and expectations appropriate to the sexes are embedded in every institution of society, in its thought, its language, its cultural products” (Lerner 168). Lerner’s text, *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History* avows the paramount importance of including women’s voices in the historic record. Lerner revisits previous debates regarding the dominant perceptions situated onto class structures, women, ethnic minorities, etc. This debate, however, opened two diametrically opposing modes of historical analysis. On the one hand, there was criticism in which contemporary historians imposed their knowledge and contemporary modes of being onto the subject thereby inaccurately coloring their perceptions. On the other hand, the emphasis on the individual allowed historians to uncover the nature of experience that moved between the realm of the individual and the collective. The experiences of the individual and the collective were not mutually exclusive either. Rather cultural historians demonstrated the availability of these histories to overlap and impact one another. The once stringent realms of race, and class, gender delineated a more complicated and deeper examination into broader cultural historical trends. Simply put, Lerner’s work brought visibility to the invisible.

An examination of the cultural life of eighteenth century Virginia was a necessary foundation for this dissertation. Primarily, Rhys Isaac’s *The Transformation of Virginia 1740-______________

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1790 (1982) and Richard Bushman’s The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, and Cities (1993) were instrumental in contextualizing the culture of early Virginia. Isaac and Bushman approach culture from varying perspectives. Isaac predominantly undertakes “an understanding of the generations of people of all races and religions who lived during the revolutionary decades in the distinct cultural region between the Chesapeake Bay and the Blue Ridges” (Isaac 7). Bushman examines cultural “changes in American society beginning around 1690 and continuing until gentility was thoroughly entrenched in the middle classes in the middle of the nineteenth century” (Bushman xiii). Despite their distinct approaches, both Isaac and Bushman examine material culture’s influence on social histories. Distinctively both authors investigate cultural spaces such as homes, theaters, and ballrooms as signifiers of cultural norms and values. Ultimately these spaces were the infrastructures in which creative tradeswomen labored.

Isaac’s text serves to illuminate the multiplicity of early Virginian identity as contextualized through cultural history. Throughout The Transformation of Virginia 1740-1790, Isaac establishes “a series of linked studies of changing expressions of meaning of life, traced through half century of religious and political revolution in Virginia” (Isaac 5). Isaac’s text served as an important marker in identifying trends of hospitality, dance, regalia of affluence, and dramaturgy as “the most serviceable mirrors of reality” (Isaac 5). Throughout, Isaac identifies the influence of British culture onto Virginian society. This influence reemerges as a central current expressed in the music history in addition to the scholarship on women in trade.

Similar to feminist historiography, Bushman’s and Isaac’s texts illuminate cultural multiplicity while opposing the reinforcement of misrepresentation. This notion of misrepresentation is a central concern for cultural historians while also a consistent consideration of this study. In the face of a history of patriarchal hierarchies, cultural historians must be cautious of conveying a linear production of knowledge that reflects only privileged Western ideals, problems, and resolutions. For example, several secondary scholarly sources support the claim that women were unable to contribute to public musical culture. However, Judith Tick’s use of primary sources identifies this claim as a misconception and a longstanding stereotype based on historical, social, and cultural oppressive forces. Lerner suggests this type of marginalization is reflective of a consistent attempt to cogently reinsert women’s histories amongst patriarchal narratives. By extension, it is essential to disavow the monolithic ideology that all women who participated in public activity did so inappropriately or were consciously subverting dominant gender paradigms. Several primary sources, supported by prominent feminist and cultural historians, give voice to creative tradeswomen and their ability to participate in and develop Virginian culture. This project serves to make visible the reality of women musicians—the next step is hearing their contributions. By learning to listen, researchers can identify and respond to the limitations in the cultural historical scholarship.

A significant portion of this project was inspired by George Lipsitz’s essay “Listening to Learn Learn to Listen: Popular Culture, Culture Theory and American Studies” (1990). Lipsitz contends that critical and scholarly research must “entail listening as well as speaking; it requires patient exploration into spaces and silences as much as it demands bold and forthright articulation” (Lipsitz 616). The research historians and scholars conduct must be aware of the reiteration of dominant ideologies but also take into consideration the non-normative identities or
anyone not represented by dominant ideological paradigms. Creative tradeswomen developed the contours of the relationship between listening and researching. I utilize the work of prominent gender and feminist historians such as Lerner and Tick, in addition to Carol Berkin, Linda Kerber, and Mary Beth Norton to further explore the role of women. However, I add female creative laborers as imperative historical figures when readdressing early America. The use of these scholars as foundational to this study demonstrates how “most cultural historians have sought to work across these concepts often combining them in new and productive ways” (Cook, Glickman, and O’Malley 14). By learning to listen, a cultural historian can realize that the circulations of historic discourses are infused by all elements of social and cultural categorization. This does not separate the margins from the center instead it enables the detection of commonalities and discrepancies across fields of identification.

Music historian O.G. Sonneck’s work was foundational to this study while his research illuminates learning to listen. He wrote a number of books and articles chronicling the history of music in America. Yet *A Bibliography of Early Secular American Music* (1905, rev. ed. 1945) and *Early Concert-Life in America* (1964) were of paramount importance to this study. Sonneck’s meticulous research served as an imperative tool in mapping the traveling patterns for Mrs. Sully, Mrs. Pick, and Ann Neill. Sonneck’s methodology reflects a fairly typical social history in which he merely reported these women’s presences in specific regions rather than interpreting the details framing their legacies. Despite this, his contribution to musical historical studies puts emphasis on the social historical approaches to musicology.

Sonneck’s work supported the foundation for the interpretation of the cultural value of

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6 Sonneck’s other text such as the *The Star-Spangled Banner* (1914); *Catalogue of Opera Librettos Printed before 1800* (2 vol., 1914); served as important contextual readings however the subjects did not apply to my study.
American music. He emphasized human behavior as manifested by music. In “The Significance of Oscar Sonneck: A Centennial Tribute” (1973), Gilbert Chase contends Sonneck’s work functioned in contrast to the “would-be historians of music in America [who] were motivated by aesthetic considerations” (Chase 173). Though Sonneck’s research emphasized the cultural value of music, his research did not reflect the yet to be developed trends in cultural history. Rather his research is generally derived from quantitative figures such as dates, replications of repertoires, or numbers of performances.\(^7\) For example, in *Early Concert-Life in America* Sonneck makes note of Mrs. Sully’s and Mrs. Pick’s concert as advertised in the *Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer* on June 25, 1795. In this particular section, Sonneck attempted to illustrate the concert life of Petersburg, Virginia. The Sully and Pick performance is one of the few concerts validated by extant primary sources. Without more information appraising his understanding of the musicians’ identities, Sonneck simply concludes, “these musicians were not assisted by an orchestra, their program necessarily partook of the character of the average benefit recital…” (Sonneck 59). Here Sonneck prevents his work from reflecting the privileged Western ideals while also thwarting the imposition of contemporary knowledge onto the historical subject. Yet this example also demonstrates the maintenance of an almost purist approach to social histories that references musicians’ existences rather than develop the narratives informing their histories. Despite this, Sonneck’s work forged the path for cultural historians to interpret his observations and pen "the logical and discriminating interpretation of facts . . . that makes history" (Chase 174). Sonneck’s inclusion of female, Native Americans, and the few slave musicians as participants in the eighteenth century musical culture demonstrated his ability to see the

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\(^7\) Sonneck was aware that his scholarship put onus on the factual rather than interpretive components. Throughout his scholarship he refers to this method as the "the drudgery of historical research" (Sonneck 3).
multiplicity of creative identity. Sonneck’s work became the foundation for cultural historians to develop the historical musical record into a narrative rather than a linear transcription of dates.

Sonneck’s work was also highly influential to other research utilized in this study. Primarily the scholarship of Irving Lowens, Richard A. Crawford, Kenneth Silverman, and H. Wiley Hitchcock all used Sonneck’s research as the basis for their theoretical frameworks. For example, Lowens’ *Music and Musicians in Early America* (1964) attempts to describe the biographies Sonneck omits. Yet Lowen did not consider female musicians. Crawford’s *The American Musical Landscape: The Business of Musicianship from Billings to Gershwin* (1993) describes the music between the colonial era and early republic as a business rather than a diversion. Silverman’s *Cultural History of the American Revolution* (1987) compares the relationship between music to other art forms in Early America. Finally H. Wiley Hitchcock’s *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction* (1999) provides a critical overview of music in the colonial era. These texts also develop Sonneck’s research to include broader cultural conditions that informed musicians’ trades and identities. In addition to Sonneck’s work, this dissertation also calls upon these scholars to support the central claim that female creative laborers used music and dance as a business.

Music history disentangles several of the major trends forming the scholarship on women in the eighteenth century. For example, Judith Tick’s work frequently demonstrates the ubiquity of women musicians as early as the twelfth century.\(^8\) In *Women Making Music: The Western Art*

Tradition, 1150-1950 (1987) Tick and Jane Bowers expertly demonstrate the fluidity between private and public musical spaces especially throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Tick’s work in particular takes great strides to exhibit that women readily occupied cultural spaces. In Music in the USA: A Documentary Companion (2008), Tick and Paul Beaudoin examine the prevalence of women musicians in the eighteenth century. These authors contend that women were not only domestic performers but often participated in larger cultural milieus such as the theater. However, the examples they utilize primary encompass women performers in Philadelphia and New York while Virginian performances are not included in their considerations.

Tick’s and Beaudoin’s central argument, that the discourses understanding female musicians’ erasure is not based on social limitations but on long lasting stereotypes, is applicable to tradeswomen in Virginia. Tick acknowledges the existence of early independent female musicians albeit “the advances such groups may make are not accompanied by a disappearance of prejudicial stereotypes” (Tick 126). This argument reflects the cultural historians’ admonition against misrepresentation. This dissertation illuminates the lives of creative tradeswomen without endowing their histories with enduring misrepresentations. Tick argues that public musical spaces paradoxically gave women access to civic engagement, however, without challenging social norms. This is a theme echoed by the scholarship on women in trade while also forming the basis for the social negotiation prevalent throughout this study.

One of the enduring misrepresentations casts historical women as primarily mothers. Various secondary sources privilege a woman’s domestic and maternal identity over their

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working selves. This type of misidentification fails to see tradeswomen who balanced their vocations with their children and domestic responsibilities or women who had no children at all. For example, few of the primary sources illuminate the maternal or domestic identity of these female creative laborers. Instead the newspaper advertisements placed emphasis on their creative abilities. Yet by privileging their domestic identity over any trade liability, secondary sources can mistakenly reaffirm an absolute image of historical women as singularly mothers and wives. In contrast Tick demonstrates that these specific roles were based on sex typing that “includes cultural values and beliefs that justify sexual distribution on normative grounds” (Tick 95). Tick is careful to remind readers that the marginalization of women musicians presents a continuum of gender stereotypes stemming from as early as the sixteenth century. In support of Tick’s scholarship, the women in this dissertation present a counterexample to the absolute motherhood stereotype. Her assessment in conjunction to the creative tradeswomen of this study terminates these anachronisms. Tick’s chapter “Women as Professional Musicians in the United States, 1870-1900,” ends with a suggestion that contemporary Feminist Movements have the potential to cause discursive shifts in cultural historical frameworks while challenging the reception of women in the historical record. Likewise, a feminist historiography can achieve similar results.

Primary sources such as the Richmond Gazette, Virginia Gazette, Norfolk Herald, and Columbian Centinel, in addition to playbills, librettos, and printed repertoires, illuminate the ubiquity of female performers who used their creative abilities to incur wages. This research utilized primary sources archived at the Rockefeller Library, Virginia Historical Society, New York Historical Society, and the Library of Congress. These archives house material texts that further develop the contextualization of women’s cultural trade lives. These texts included valuable newspaper and publication archives that significantly develop the biographies of
women who were active in creative trade. Throughout the dissertation I maintained the integrity of the quotes used from the primary sources. I did not change the spelling, grammatical structure, or syntax. This also includes maintaining original formatting such as italicized words in the middle of sentences or capitalized keywords. In a few cases I added a pronoun, preposition, or article in order to clarify the subject or redirect a clause.

To research this project required certain flexibility around three specific obstacles. First, biographical data on creative tradeswomen in general is scant. This required the piecing of biographies from various sources including newspaper advertisements where the musician self-identified, estate inventories, court records, or fleeting references found in letters or other forms of correspondence. Considering the marginality of women, more information was gathered from the pervasive biographies and histories of men. For example, the information on Elizabeth Balgrave was either derived from the material on her father Peter Pelham, or on her husband Reverend Balgrave. Likewise Mary Stagg’s or even Mrs. Pick’s biographies were pieced together from information on their husbands. It is important to be aware of an inherent bias in the material that bares concession to the male experience and consequentially marginalizes a woman’s perspicacity.

Second, an analysis of newspaper advertisements also assumes that it was actually the women who wrote the documents. This assumes that they were literate. Newspaper advertisements such as the ones announcing Mrs. Sully’s and Mrs. Pick’s concerts, Mary Stagg’s dancing assembly, or Sarah Hallam’s and Ann Neill’s school advertisements, not only demanded a high level of literacy but also the time to compose the adverts in addition to the organization and management of their events. However, the centrality of the newspapers did not suggest that their potential audience was limited. In Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of
American Women, 1750-1800 (1996), Mary Beth Norton suggests that newspapers “printed no more than six hundred to seven hundred copies of each issue” (Norton 150). Despite this, newspapers frequently had a wide readership, as the topics were discussed in social spaces and issues were circulated between individuals, taverns, and households. Despite the limited quantity of printing, the actual newspaper itself was pervasively read. As such, the advertisements these women placed also circulated and were centralized in the publics’ conversations.

Notably the women who printed newspaper advertisements subverted the common assumption that eighteenth century women relied on spoken word or the oral tradition. In Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America (1980: 1997), Linda Kerber examines this point when she argues, "to the extent that female culture relied on the spoken word, it was premodern at a time when male culture was increasing its dependence on written communication" (Kerber 192). The low number of literate women in eighteenth century society substantiates Kerber’s claim. Since many women did not possess the basic skill of writing, they depended on orality to communicate. Yet women, such as Mrs. Sully, who probably produced her own advertisements, did not rely on orality rather they took the pen to claim her own authorship and her own creative position. A dependence on oral communication illuminates a concrete reason for the lack of primary sources contextualizing the lives of musical women. Simply, if creative laborers relied on oral traditions and word of mouth to express their standpoints and trade position, it is inevitable that these stories were lost and are not recoverable. This emphasis on orality must also be used to critique the inclusiveness of this study. Whereas the historical record has revealed several Virginian women who contributed to the region's culture, it is not a complete assessment. There were many more women who could not afford to print newspaper advertisements nor had the literacy skills to recreate their adverts.
Third, the records documenting the musical events are also limited. In a few cases, researchers are lucky enough to stumble across diary entries detailing the dates, repertoires, and locations of performances. But these listings are infrequent. The majority of the historical data on musical performances are derived from newspaper advertisements and announcements that describe pertinent information such as a performance’s date, time, and location. Finally, musical criticism was not common while printed space was often made available to channeling information from the British cultural scene. By the late 1780s, the instances of musical criticism and writing on musical and dance culture began to appear, albeit sparingly, in local newspapers. Here again, the newspaper writing was not complete. For example, the breadth and length of musical public criticism was directly proportional to performers’ popularity. For example, a basic search in *The Virginia Gazette*’s online database will yield two hundred and one returns for Peter Pelham, seventeen for John Oglethorpe, and zero for Mrs. Sully or Mrs. Pick. However, it is necessary to problematize the association between printed space and a creative laborer’s popularity. A consideration of varying cultural conditions develops this claim.

The interest devoted to creative laborers included considerations of their reputations as trades people but also their general social position within the community. For example, all the results from Peter Pelham do not directly relate to music. Many frame his general duties as a jailer, his familial history, and several trade transactions. Pelham directly served his community in various capacities throughout his life, some including the civic responsibilities cast onto him by the governor. Therefore the results yielding Pelham’s name are demonstrative of his general civic responsibilities in addition to his popularity as a musician. Moreover, popularity is not

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9 For example, Norman Arthur Benson’s doctoral dissertation, “The Itinerant Dancing and Music Masters of 18th-Century America,” University of Minnesota, 1963, considers the public attention devoted to musicians as representational of their popularity.
absolutely entwined with gender. This type of critique needs to address more cultural conditions than simply popularity and gender.

Class and economics are also cultural conditions that impact the frequency of a tradeswoman’s name. Those creative tradeswomen with the economic means found the newspaper a viable method of self-promotion. It is possible that the cost of printing deterred many women from printing advertisements for their performances or events. Their histories are incomplete because they did not have the financial support to purchase advertising space or other methods of written promotion. Bushman suggests that to purchase advertising space required some surplus funds and the frequency of advertisement reflects an individual’s wealth. His argument regarding the advertising of shops is helpful in considering creative tradeswomen and the legacy of their printed names. Bushman suggests that some shopkeepers did not have the means to advertise and he argues that “these lesser shopkeepers could not afford advertisements, and perhaps their customers could not afford newspapers” (Bushman 246). This assertion is imperative to the reconstruction of creative tradeswomen especially when attempting to refigure their histories. Keeping Bushman’s assumption in mind, it is likely that musicians and dance mistresses of lesser means could not advertise their services. Much as the shopkeepers, these women relied on word of mouth or reputation to garner an audience.

Accordingly, this also develops the legacies of the women who did advertise. For example, Mary Stagg’s, the Hallams’, Ann Neill’s, Mrs. Sully’s, and Mrs. Pick’s names appear frequently in newspapers throughout early America. Keeping Bushman’s assertion in mind, this suggests they possessed comfortable financial situations thereby capable of affording printed space. It is likely that the money allocated for advertisements was incurred by frequent performance and the attraction of large audience. Unfortunately these advertisements do not
specify the author. However, tradesmen and women commonly wrote their own advertisements. As a result, the women in this study probably possessed basic literacy skills. Thereby literacy also becomes a factor in considering the ubiquity of the primary sources. However, it is not safe to assume that all creative tradeswomen were capable of producing an advertisement or even reading one. It is also an absolute assumption that musical literacy directly reflected one’s alphabetic comprehension.

Finally, traveling and the itinerant lifestyle also complicate the number of search results yielded for creative tradeswomen. Seemingly, Pelham did not travel to other colonies to perform. Rather, he awaited the musical opportunities that arose during his tenure in Williamsburg. This is in opposition to the Hallams or Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick, who traveled throughout the colonies and only settled in one area towards the end of their lives. This clarifies the prevalence of Pelham’s newspaper advertisements as reflections of his commitment to Williamsburg. Since Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick traveled and moved, their advertisements are scattered throughout the early republic rather than concretized in one area. The consideration of interconnected cultural conditions informs the creative tradeswomen social and cultural contexts.

Considering trends in cultural and musical histories in conversation, scholars also point towards the question of intersectionality and the larger social and cultural factors influencing women’s creativity. Jill Halstead’s _The Woman Composer: Creativity and the Gendered Politics of Musical Composition_ (1997) attempts to unpack the overarching social and cultural factors influencing women to fulfill their creative trades potential. Halstead contends, “women’s contribution to musical composition cannot be separated from women’s wider position in a

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10 Halstead focuses her text on female composers, a type of contribution I did not locate for this study.
society within which they lack tradition, value, authority, and power” (Halstead viii). To expand Halstead’s claim, the value placed on women’s music and dance trades is also indispensable. This is a theme that reemerges in the literature on women in trade. Halstead’s analysis is imperative in understanding music and dance as a trade while specifically examining women’s socio-cultural locations. As an example, for women such as Ann Neill and Sarah Hallam, music was not the only skill they used as a trade to supplement their fuller incomes. Women such as Barbara deGraffenreit, despite her position amongst the gentry, turned to creative trades to support her family’s declining finances. A lack of knowledge concerning the context in which these women functioned would severely limit the analysis informing their musical contributions. Hence Halstead’s suggestion that it is in error to separate a woman from the larger socio-cultural ideologies brings together major themes in musical and cultural histories and is essential to this dissertation. Identifying the work of musical and creative female tradeswomen as reflective of their contexts, customs, and practices rather than anachronistically reading their motivations through an essentialist lens.

Learning to listen also challenges the inclusion and credibility of sources. While many point towards social historians’ use of quantitative figures to reformat the historical records, feminist, cultural, and musical historians tend to utilize qualitative and quantitative primary sources that recognize the research illuminating a particular social, cultural, and historical context. For example, personal diaries and letters, newspapers advertisements, playbills, court records, sermons, and various forms of fictional literature remap the identity of early America.

These sources reveal important details shaping the biographies of women as creative laborers. Non-analytic and non-rational forms of discourse, such as music or ballad operas, develop the methods used to convey the complexity of historical experiences. The expression of cultural capital as a system of knowledge can minimize the threat of cultural histories emphasizing misrepresentations. Cultural historians’ use of feminist methodologies emphasizes the past as not static but as necessitating an interpretive mutability.

The inclusion of interpretive historical sources is where Odai Johnson’s work becomes indispensable. Johnson’s work serves as an important extension of Hugh Rankin’s groundbreaking scholarship *The Colonial Theater: Its History and Operations* (1995). For example, Johnson’s *Absence and Memory in Colonial American Theatre: Fiorelli’s Plaster* (2006) attempts to refigure the distinctiveness of the colonial stage in order to fully examine the identities of those involved. Johnson utilizes advancements in archival methods, technology, and digital humanities initiatives to further probe the extant sources. Significantly, these research tools were unavailable to scholars such as Sonneck and Rankin. Johnson contends that there is a dominant understanding of the stage informed from the accounts and primary sources vilifying the cultural activities and its participants. Much as Rankin hopes to dispel the denigration of early American theater, Johnson also contests that the accounts slandering the cultural milieu were a speck of the primary sources yet hold the focus of scholarly pursuits. As a result, this taints the historical lens and results in a skewed representation of the theater. Johnson continues his argument to consider the flourishing theatrical circuit established between 1760-1776 and the

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12 His text, *The Theater in Colonial America* (1965) thoroughly documents the mechanisms of the early American dramatic arts but also the precarious roles of the playwrights, actors, and the audiences.
overwhelming positive and supportive response to the theater. This dissertation contributes a focus on the women of the theater as revered singing actresses rather than disparaged objects.

Much as Tick and Halstead call for a consideration of a wider social-cultural context, Johnson pursues a similar intent. Johnson first identified this trend in his collaborative project with William J. Burling, *The Colonial American Stage, 1665-1774: A Documentary Calendar* (2001). In this text, Johnson and Burling construct an analytical timeline of the theater companies, tours, and productions. For example, the authors organize their text into “seven sections; companies, scenery, ‘habitats,’ and music; theatrical venues; repertory; negotiating authority; company finances, and audiences” (Johnson and Burling 21). The authors also include a detailed consideration of music and attempt to sketch the lives of prominent female musicians. For example, the authors write that “Miss Wainwright, Margaret Cheer, Miss [Nancy] Hallam…were all sufficient instrumentalists and vocalists [used] to fill out the scoring requirements of such well-known ballad operas as *Love in the Village* and *The Beggar’s Opera*” (Johnson and Burling 42). The extant sources Johnson and Burling employ demonstrate that Nancy Hallam’s and Maria Storer’s careers were significantly more supported in New York and Philadelphia than in Virginia. Despite her success in southern Colonies, a larger devotion to her talent was found in northern regions. Rather than demonstrating a downfall in this dissertation’s focus, the northern devotion to Nancy Hallam only serves to open this scholarship for further study.

Johnson and Burling warn readers that the *Calendar* is comprised of extant data and

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13 Rankin’s and Johnson’s texts function as key book ends to other important histories including Jeffrey H. Richard’s *Drama, Theatre, and Identity in the American New Republic.* (2005). In comparison to Rankin, these texts served as minor informants in this research because they contextualize the overall impact of the theater rather than specifically examining the Virginian cultural scenes.
primary sources yet together creates an inadequate and “woefully incomplete record” (Johnson and Burling 21). In turn, the authors are careful to include penetrative consideration into the major players despite the lack of sources informing the history of women. Their text is also clearly informed by trends in cultural histories, as both historians include interpretations and possible explanations for individuals’ behaviors and the motivations of acting companies. For example, the authors include a short analysis of admissions fees in their section on audience members and the exclusiveness of some theatrical performances. This type of analysis was vital in the understanding of Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick who practiced similar modes of social exclusivity. Yet they are not mentioned in this text because they are outside of Johnson and Burling’s scope. Regardless, the authors’ text puts emphasis on the theater and other creative trades as viable markers in the construction of American cultural identity. Moreover, their analysis also demonstrates the audiences’ desire for theatrical and creative arts despite the common considerations that religious and political legislation worked as the ultimate blockade of performances. For Johnson and Burling, this is a singular way of interpreting the past. The fact that acting companies and actresses experienced such heady successes demonstrates a larger craving for art that was not squelched by religious fervor. These authors examine the interconnections of social, political, and creative institutions as markers in the development of American society. Johnson and Burling’s text carefully documents the history of theater as it influenced and collided with the early American experience.

The connection between musicians and the theater is a central component to this dissertation, especially as it reflects the careers of the Hallams, Mrs. Sully, and Mrs. Pick. Yet prominent scholarship does not routinely reflect this association directly. For example, William Dunlap’s *History of the American Theater* (1832) or Brooks McNamara’s *The American
*Playhouse in the Eighteenth Century* (1969) are thorough and expansive histories of the theater. However the theater’s music forms an inconsequential role in these texts. More contemporary historical readings do acknowledge music as a major component of the early theater. For example, Julian Mates, *The American Musical Stage Before 1800* (1986) or *America's Musical Stage: Two Hundred Years of Musical Theatre* (1987), Cynthia Adams Hoover’s article “Music in Eighteenth-Century American Theater,” and Susan Porter’s *With an Air Debonair: Musical Theatre in America, 1785-1815* (1991) situate music as a central component of the performances while musicians were readily employed by acting troupes. Moreover, these texts support the claim evident in this dissertation that the theater became a type of cultural community for musicians such as Mrs. Sully or Mrs. Pick. Undoubtedly, the community, schedule, and employment security lured musicians who sought both financial and creative associations.\(^4\)

This dissertation complicates the claim that public participation must not only include traditional governmental and military practice. Rather, public participation should be expanded to encompass social and cultural practices as well. Typically, balls, assemblies, theatrical productions, concerts, music and dance education or other contributions by creative

\(^4\) In consideration of the colonial theater, texts such as Felicity Nussbaum’s *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater* (2010) examines the cult of celebrity surrounding the eighteenth century British actress. Nussbaum’s argues that gender in relation to social and economic modalities as embodied by actresses were essential in understanding the larger ideologies and discourses informing the stage. In particular, Nussbaum’s works attempts to refigures the association between female actresses and sexual promiscuity while demonstrating their ability to embody powerful and influential social positions. While Nussbaum’s text is helpful in shaping the overall history of the theater, it is in error to assume her analysis absolutely applied to the colonial model. Additionally the work of Heather S. Nathanson, such as *Early American Theatre from the Revolution to Thomas Jefferson: Into the Hands of the People* (2003) examines the development of the New York, Philadelphian, and Boston theaters in post-Revolutionary America. Her texts serves as an important extension to the histories developed prior to the Revolutionary War especially when considering the influence of republican ideology on public culture.
Tradeswomen are considered as insignificant when compared to voting or military service. However, the work of female tradeswomen slowly contributed to the affirmation of class hierarchies, gender ideologies, and the region’s social functionality. It was through social and cultural practices where political discourses were embedded or social conditioning occurred. Creative labor is essential to the understanding of eighteenth-century public culture. Politics are not the sole contributor to public spheres; the realm is shared, overlapped, and contrasted with art, music, and other creative trades.

Much as the cultural and musical histories of Virginia, the research on women’s social contributions in the eighteenth century was similarly crucial to this study. Primarily Carol Berkin’s, Mary Beth Norton’s, and Linda Kerber’s scholarship demonstrated the magnitude of women’s social contributions. Berkin’s *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America’s Independence* (2006) scrutinizes the shifting roles of women during the Revolution. Her other text, *First Generations: Women in Colonial America* (1997), provides a more general

15 Some knowledge of the seventeenth century was also necessary reading, specifically, Kathleen M. Brown’s *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (1996), Edward L. Bond’s *Damned Souls in the Tobacco Colony: Religion in Seventeenth-Century Virginia* (2000), and Timothy Breen’s and Stephen D. Innes’ "Myne Owne Ground": *Race and Freedom on Virginia’s Eastern Shore, 1640–1676* (1980); Philip Bruce *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century: An Inquiry into the Religious, Moral, Educational, Legal, Military, and Political Condition of the People, Based on Original and Contemporaneous Records* (1910). Alice Clark’s *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*, also contextualized the longevity of women’s labor. Clark’s also considers less ubiquitous trades such as musicians, artisans, and actresses establishing that wages came in many forms and historians are still uncovering the multiplicity of trade identities.

16 Dorothy Mays, *Women in Early America: Struggle, Survival, and Freedom in a New World* (2004) significantly calls upon the scholarship of Berkin, Norton, and Kerber as foundational. Mays source is unlike other scholarship because she includes colorized images, detailed copies of primary sources, an exhaustive documentary appendix, annotated bibliographies, links to websites, and more detailed information.
examination of women’s social contribution prior to the Revolution. Throughout, Berkin is careful to make note of the variances in which cultural conditions informed women’s roles especially before and after the Revolutionary War. Similarly, Kerber’s examines the role of education in constructing women as productive members of a Republic while Norton expertly illuminates women’s trade histories. Both Berkin and Norton assert the importance of class when considering the mobility of women. This is a theme reiterated in the scholarship on consumer culture; distinctively the volume edited by Cary Carson, et al. Class was central in locating the histories of women who used creativity as a method to sustain wages. The use of music and dance as a trade inexplicitly demarcated a difference from girls and women who used cultural performances to signify their wealth. Meaningfully Berkin, Norton, and Kerber examine divergent cultural modalities in order to develop the complexity and mutability of the era’s social norms. This dissertation adds creative tradeswomen to this conversation.

An important distinction in studying the history of women is the understanding of an individual’s ability to move between private and public spaces. Norton’s work is crucial in dismantling the misconception that women in the eighteenth century were predominantly housebound with limited municipal opportunities. Norton does not rebuke this belief instead she complicates how class and social status significantly swayed a woman’s social location. As Norton suggests “social standing rather than sex thus served as the key determinant of a man’s or woman’s ability to exercise appropriate authority inside or outside the household” (Norton 2). Mobility was tightly entwined with the individual’s class association thereby ultimately informing levels of social activity and passivity. A central component of class association was an individual’s identity as a tradeswoman. Thereby when considering musical women, their capability to hold creative professions further influenced her acceptability in public culture.
Norton’s research demonstrates that the eighteenth century society was not binarized into shipshape female and male spheres. Rather Norton, in addition to Berkin and Kerber, call attention to the contributions women made to the public sphere. These scholars debunk the myth constructing the woman as simply a domestic denizen. By penning the history of women, Berkin’s, Norton’s, and Kerber’s work overthrows the systematic erasure of women from the historical record.\textsuperscript{17} By extension, this dissertation adopts a similar framework but further develops the significance of women’s roles to include their creative capabilities.

In general, these scholars raise poignant questions developed in this dissertation. For instance, Berkin and Norton both explore how women's social norms changed depending on varying cultural conditions such as class, education, and region. For instance, despite Mary Stagg’s longstanding arrangement as a dancing mistress, it was Baroness Barbara deGraffenreit’s social position that earned her William Byrd’s sponsorship. Likewise, it is plausible that Sarah Hallam’s affiliation with the successful acting troupe earned her a more prestigious social position over the struggling Ann Neill. Clearly, the response to Mary Stagg opposed to Barbara deGraffenreit or Ann Neill in contrast to Sarah Hallam, demonstrate that a woman’s social class greatly impacted her ability to earn wages but also attract audiences, students, and patrons.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} Scholars such as Arthur M. Schlesinger demonstrated an interest in women’s history as early as 1922 in his book \textit{New Viewpoints in American History}. Primarily, Schlesinger worked towards expanding social history to include women’s roles, amongst other marginalized social groups.

\textsuperscript{18} Yet none of the extant sources clarify that creative tradeswomen composed their own music. Scholars such as Jill Halstead attempt to unpack not only the role of women in musical composition but also the overarching social and cultural factors that influence women as a group to fulfill their musical potential. In \textit{The Woman Composer: Creativity and the Gendered Politics of Musical Composition}, Halstead argues that “women’s contribution to musical composition cannot be separated from women’s wider position in a society within which they lack tradition, value, authority, and power” (Halstead viii). Halstead makes room for the consideration that in all likelihood these women were also composers, however the historical records lack of emphasis on their work erased these records from existence.
part, this dissertation contends that the women who demonstrated affiliations with gentility were more successful than their trade counterparts.

Berkin's work creates the catalyst for understanding the social negotiation women faced in the eighteenth century. A central component of this study is the suggestion that despite women’s valued public roles, she was still expected to fulfill specific social norms such as the embodiment of humility, weakness, and modesty. In the same way, Kerber's work dismantles the larger social and political ideologies that at once shaped women’s public roles while prescribing specific gender ideologies. Women could seize opportunities for social and cultural advancement yet did so while reaffirming diffidence. For example, musicians such as Mrs. Sully often printed direct and confident advertisements for her concerts yet she typically adopted a deferential tone throughout the announcement. The social negotiation performed by women is readable as a method of shoring up patriarchal anxieties over reversals of traditional gender norms in both private and public spaces. This is especially apt for anxieties in the revolutionary era when women shouldered the warring men’s responsibilities. As a response, creative women who actively occupied and participated in public culture could leverage her dealings without instilling large-scale discursive shifts.

For this project, I did not find examples of creative tradeswomen during the Revolutionary War (1775-1783). Their absence is clearly due to the Continental Congress's 1774 ban on all recreational entertainments, specifically performances, the theater, and concerts. However, Ann Neill did offer music teaching up to 1777. Yet it is still important to recognize the Revolutionary War as a period that changed the role of creative tradeswomen and the response to their contributions. Many scholars who scrutinize women's roles in the eighteenth century focus
on the revolutionary era as a major moment inciting a change in gender norms. Kerber in particular articulates that periods of crisis do offer heightened political consciousness for all denizens, albeit in varying capacities. Berkin contests the revolutionary era did not drastically alter gender ideology instead “the Revolution did lend legitimacy to new ideas about women’s capacities and their proper roles” (Berkin xvii). Essentially women were given greater opportunity to bend systems of control such as the economic and financial management of farms or family trades. Yet both Berkin and Kerber suggest that the Revolution gave women an outlet to project their political voices and civic contributions. Mrs. Sully’s and Mrs. Pick’s purposeful and certain newspaper advertisements reflect the development of women as self-defined cultural agents in the post-revolutionary era. Thus women’s roles in the Revolution provided a foundation for a woman’s self-definition. Self-definition is the individual ability to describe oneself utilizing one’s own voice or authorship. Individual modes of self-representation, such as the proclamations Mrs. Sully printed, are central in taking account of and valuing women’s experiences as producers of history.

Prior to the Revolution, women lacked the avenues to construct self-defined identities. As a result, this supported their historical invisibility while rendering women as powerless and passive agents. For example, Mary Stagg’s invisibility during the colonial era demonstrates an axiomatic problem that is more complicated than women being silenced: many extant sources and forms of knowledge do not include women’s perspectives, voices, or experiences. Yet as Kerber and Berkin make clear, due to women’s roles in the Revolutionary War and then throughout the early republic, women such as Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick, gained more opportunities to fully employ agency and self-definition. This change is an essential resolution to incorporating women’s voices, contributions, and identities into refigurations of history.
Moreover, the understanding of Berkin’s “new ideas” also accurately contextualizes the lives of women across a broad historical spectrum. As a result, the acknowledgement of social and cultural change brings awareness to the dismal accounting of women as productive participants while also avoiding a misrepresentation of their everyday lives.

Berkin’s and Kerber’s notions pose another important component of women's trade history in the eighteenth century: how did creative women's lives change throughout the era? Scholarship such as Elizabeth Dexter’s *Colonial Women of Affairs* (1924) and Alice Kessler-Harris’ *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (2003) specifically examine tradeswomen as pivotal in understanding the role of women in middling and trade society throughout the century. Dexter demonstrates overarching themes such as common trades, balancing domestic responsibilities, practices of apprenticeships etc. Kessler-Harris’ focus is narrower as she examines specific trades and the interconnections between women’s wages and livelihoods. This dissertation adds creative tradeswomen to this historical conversation. By doing so, the women in this study further develop the spectrum of women’s abilities and trades while expanding the understanding of women in middling and trade classes.

In addition to Dexter and Kessler-Harris, the work of Mary Benson and Julia Spruill aided the contextualization of tradeswomen in early America. Primarily Benson’s *Women in Eighteenth-Century America: A Study of Opinion and Social Usage* (1955), and Spruill’s *Women’s Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* (1998) painted the colonial south’s social

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19 Dexter’s work also examines the lives of female musicians, singers, and actresses as viable trades. However she focuses more on the northern regions such as New York and Pennsylvania rather than the southern Colonies.

20 Both scholars make for an interesting contrast to Kerber who argued that there was an availability of political consciousness for all denizens. For Dexter and Kessler-Harris the level of women’s politicality decreased as her social status lowered. Political consciousness was often a luxury afforded to the genteel while for women in trade, politicality was infrequently a primary concern.
landscape while also substantiating the tradeswomen’s creative legacies. In addition to Dexter and Kessler-Harris, Benson’s and Spruill’s arguments shape major themes prevalent in this study. Specifically the role of women in the family juxtaposed to trade responsibilities, a trade woman’s legal status as informed by marriage or widowhood, or the impact of the restrictions or access to education. Benson’s work was careful to demonstrate the discrepancies between gentry and middling women, never essentializing her subjects by class. Spruill’s work adroitly addresses the commonality of women’s labor as reflected of eighteenth century legalities. This became especially helpful in understanding Mary Stagg’s role in the theater and her dancing enterprises.

This dissertation examines women’s lives from 1716-1800. Accordingly, gender norms and social conditions changed as the century progressed. Janet Wilson James’ Changing Ideas About Women in the United States, 1776-1825 (2012), emphasizes intellectual history as a segment of the social process while contextualizing the changing gender norms that shaped women’s existences. Her work, much as Berkin’s and Kerber’s, situates the revolutionary era as a catalyst for a change in social norms. Yet unlike Berkin and Kerber, James connects this notion to the “ideas about society and woman’s place prevailing in the England they left behind” (James 5). Without directly articulating it, her premise is reflective of the cultural historical notion that colonial society reflected the British model. Moreover, her text readily informs the overarching negotiation women faced. Despite their cultural prominence, women often subverted their own power in favor of reaffirming “the softness, the modesty, and those other endearing qualities natural to the fair sex” (Spurill 243).

The texts compiled for this dissertation present an interdisciplinary approach to the relationship between music, creative trades, gender, and history. The contributing authors’
scholarships, in addition to the archived historical primary sources, utilize varying methodologies including, interpretative reading, reformist histories, historical musicology, feminist historiography, and post-modern gender analysis. The thematic subject connecting these texts is the history of tradeswomen in the Virginian cultural sphere. The various ways to describe and interpret its historical record demonstrates its expansive range as well as its position at the intersection of gender, culture, and trade.

Additionally, this dissertation also contributes an illustration of the social negotiation that enabled a woman’s public cultural position while simultaneously supporting dominant gender and social ideologies. This notion is developed in Chapter 1: The Creative Culture of Virginia: Possibilities, Limitations, and Social Negotiations. Here I provide a general overview of the cultural and social contexts informing a woman’s creative trade. Women’s use of creative trades is a topic revisited in Chapter 2: Mary Stagg and Women’s Contribution to Dance and Creative Trade Culture. Here the histories of music in colonial Virginia specifically identify the life of her husband, Charles Stagg. Yet Mary Stagg was a prominent dancing mistress who also managed Williamsburg’s first theater. The reduction of Mary Stagg to an afterthought demonstrates the lack of emphasis placed on a woman’s role in creative culture while further marginalizing the importance of women in the historical record.

Mary Stagg demonstrated multiple identities as a cultural laborer. After her husband’s death, she shifted her trade focus from dance instruction to organizing weekly dancing assemblies. Chapter 3: Mary Stagg and Barbara DeGraffenreit: Competition, Dancing, and Social Norms, identifies the occupation change and the possible social and economic conditions informing her choice. This chapter also illuminates a theme not reflected in the dissertation’s other chapters. Mary Stagg clearly forged a rivalry with another cultural tradeswoman. The
extant records make clear that the Williamsburg denizen, Barbara DeGraffenreit, vied for the position of premier dancing mistress and assembly manager. The events managed by Mary Stagg and Barbara DeGraffenreit demonstrated the reinforcement of social and gender hierarchies. For example, Barbara DeGraffenreit once offered a cotillion, a signifier of affluence while Mary Stagg organized an assembly, an event marketed toward the general population. The juxtaposition of their histories reaffirms the dominant social negotiation evident throughout this project. A woman’s cultural trades position was supported however she simultaneously maintained dominant gender and social ideologies. This negotiation ultimately eclipsed the value of their work in ways that destabilized their creative agency and identities.

In the subsequent Chapter 4: Musical Theater, Singing Actresses, and the Hallams, I examine singing actresses in general. Women such as Mrs. Hallam, Maria Storer, Margaret Cheer, and Sarah Wainwright were prominent cultural contributors. Moreover, Mrs. Hallam’s history is tightly entwined with her husband, Lewis Hallam the elder, and the development of the colonial theater. However the primary sources document that these singing actresses demarcated a type of creative power while also embodying the dominant gender ideologies that prescribed their behavior. For example, the primary sources reflecting Cheer’s marriage to Lord Rosehill dominated the printed space whilst her performances were typically secondary, albeit lauded, considerations. Similarly, despite Mrs. Hallam’s acclaimed positioned she was often resituated as a mother. Interestingly, it was the audience who marginalized these women’s creative powers, not the actresses themselves or the texts they sang. In many cases singing actresses were considered valued musicians yet faced stringent social norms.

The audiences’ idolization of actresses, specifically Nancy Hallam, is the crux of Chapter 5: Nancy Hallam, Cultural Extraordinaire. Actresses such as Hallam were renowned for their
singing and idolized for their creative abilities. However, their reviewers also frequently centralized considerations of the actresses’ appearances or their affective response to Hallam’s singing. As documented by Reverend Jonathan Boucher’s poem “Miss Hallam” and the portrait of Hallam painted by Charles Wilson Peale, it was often an actress’s corporeality that dominated the primary sources. Despite this, the verses they spoke and sang slowly eroded the frequency of gender and sexual fixity. For example, several of the texts they performed, such as George Coleman’s farce *The Musical Lady* (1762) framed musical women as unsuited for marriage. Yet as a farce, the text demonstrated a subversive response to gender and social dictations. An examination of the actresses’ histories juxtaposed to their scripts and librettos illuminate the social negotiation.

As a whole, the chapters of this dissertation demonstrate that women’s cultural labor was not the target of caustic invective as long as women themselves embodied dominant gender ideology. This is recapitulated Chapter 7: Girls’ Education and the Class Division Reflected by Music and Dance. For example the music and dance teachers Ann Neill and Sarah Hallam taught their female students the mannerisms of a polished wife despite their teachers’ oppositions to this identity. It is important to establish that the girls who could afford a life of refined idleness were not the individuals who took up performance or education as trades. The majority of women in this study probably did not receive the type of education Ann Neill or Sarah Hallam offered. Rather to subsidize their livelihoods both women utilized the norms engendered by the gentry’s daughters. In addition, women such as Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick also provided cultural services for the gentry. This evokes a demonstration of a stark disparity between classes. The education offered by Ann Neill or Sarah Hallam, much as Mrs. Sully’s and Mrs. Pick’s performances, at once supported the emphasis on refinement while insuring their social severance from the gentry.
Chapter 8: Public Concert Life: ‘A Constant Tuting’ of Gender Negotiation, continues the identification of overarching social and gender ideologies. This chapter presents the histories of several women performers whose biographies are limited yet contributed to Virginia’s concert life. For example, the extant source illuminating the lives of Mrs. D’Hemard and her prodigious daughter Marianne reflect their ability to play the piano masterfully. However, this narrative is the singular account refiguring their lives. Moreover, the life of Elizabeth Balgrave, daughter of Peter Pelham becomes another example of a woman’s legacy jeopardized by the centrality of andocentric histories. Her early life is combined with her father’s, while her adult life is overshadowed by the musical legacy of her husband, Reverend Benjamin Balgrave.

In the final chapter, Playing for their Share: The Lives of Itinerate Female Musicians, I examine the musicians Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick. As soloists and part of an ensemble, they traveled throughout the early republic performing and profiting from concerts. Mrs. Sully wrote newspaper advertisements where she heralded her music as the catalyst for musical culture in Richmond. She utilized a basic trade tenant: she advertised and produced an enviable musical commodity that suited exchange in an active and competitive marketplace. Yet she employed language in these advertisements that reiterated passivity, such as constantly emphasizing her humility. This modesty reiterated the standard position for women but also tradeswomen. This subordination appealed to the affluent audiences, who through their beneficence changed the lives of the tradeswoman. Therefore Mrs. Sully intentionally targeted an audience who could financially support her musical trade. Here she practiced an important business tenant while also affirming social and class hierarchies. In contrast, Mrs. Pick’s legacy is often undermined by the emphasis on her husband’s musicality. The performance histories of Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick elucidate their negotiated position between subversive public performers and the hegemonic
gender ideal. Rather than completely disregarding social norms, these musicians at once
reclaimed normative feminization yet ultimately positioned themselves as powerful creative
laborers.

This dissertation does not attempt to present an exhaustive overview of the scholarship
forming the field of women in music. Rather it complicates tradeswomen’s positions in dynamic
and mercurial cultural contexts. Given the available resources I limit my study to white,
middling, trade, and gentry women. I exclude the legacy of female slave and indentured
musicians despite the primary sources, such as runaway slave announcements, that reveal
instances of enslaved women who publicly performed music. Yet their creative labor was often
utilized to benefit their overseers rather than the individual. It goes without saying that the
slipperiness of changing and multiple identities, slave, lower class, or impoverished women and
musicians in other genres are beyond the scope of this dissertation but must be included when
considering the field at large.

This research is found at the intersection of several disciplines. Nevertheless it primarily
addresses points of convergence from the scholarship on women in the eighteenth century, music
history, and the cultural life of early Virginia. An accurate contextualization of the lives of
creative tradeswomen required scholarly research in addition to the use of primary sources that
illuminated the connections and dissimilarities between women’s identities while also
destabilizing the monolithic image of the historical woman. By uncovering the history of female
creative laborers, this research demonstrates the significance of gender in relation to cultural
history while also expanding the scholarship on women in creative trades. Throughout the
dissertation, I examine women who profited from creative labor while demonstrating the
instances when music and dance were used to accumulate wages. At the same time, creative
tradeswomen occupied prominent trade positions but constantly reaffirmed dominant gender and social ideology. As a result, this work illuminates women’s extraordinary social and cultural contributions in relation to developing the historical record to further complicate the role of women in early America.
CHAPTER I: THE CREATIVE CULTURE OF VIRGINIA: POSSIBILITES, LIMITATIONS, 
AND SOCIAL NEGOTIATION

After Jamestown’s settlement in 1607, there are few extant records chronicling the musical culture of seventeenth century Virginia. Scholars point to a few number of seventeenth century texts that briefly reference music however more detailed records are not prevalent.\footnote{Thorough secondary sources include Eric Grundset Research in Virginia. Arlington, Va.: National Genealogical Society, 1998; Carol McGinnis. Virginia Genealogy: Sources & Resources. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1993; John Frederick, Dorman ed. Adventurers of Purse and Person, Virginia, 1607-1624/5. 4th edition. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2004; John Camden Hotten. Original Lists of Persons of Quality; Who Went from Great Britain to the American Plantations, 1600-1700. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1968. Martha W. McCartney Documentary History of Jamestown Island. Williamsburg, Va.: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and College of William and Mary, 2000, and Jamestown People to 1800: Landowners, Public Officials, Minorities and Native Leaders. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2012; David R. Ransome “’Shipt for Virginia’: The Beginnings in 1619-1622 of the Great Migration to the Chesapeake.” Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, vol. 103, no. 4 (Oct 1995), pp. 443-458. For specific primary sources see the Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia. Edited by H.R. McIlwaine. Richmond: Virginia State Library; Journals of the House of Burgesses, 1619-1776. Vols. 1 –3. Edited by H. R. McIlwaine. The Laws of Virginia, from the Year 1619. Vols 1 -3. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969.} For example, John Smith’s Description of Virginia and the Proceedings of the Colonies (1612) is the most complete record.\footnote{Here he compared the Indian pipes to the recorder, or straight flute, while the rattles varied in sizes completing a “Bass, Tenor, Counter-Tenor, Mean, and Trible” (Smith 107) range. However, Smith’s next description demonstrates the lens from which to understand early Indian music. He remarked that the Indian’s singing “makes such terrible noise as would affright than delight any man” (Smith 107).} Scholars suggest that the hardships and time required in establishing a colony dissuaded a complete engagement in musical culture and ultimately jeopardized the leisure time required to participant in and record such events. An alternative consideration suggests that musical activity was not thoroughly documented since it did not directly impact the social or political development of the colony. Scholars speculate that colonists brought and imprinted music as an essential social component. For instance, in “Art Music in Colonial
Virginia” (1961), John W. Molnar suggests the Jamestown settlers were “prototypes of the Elizabethan man of action and art, they brought with them the English tradition of participation in domestic and public singing and play of instruments” (Molnar 63). The musical proclivities of Queen Charlotte established a model of creative recognition readily mimicked by the early colonists. Musical and cultural activities were included as part of the colonists’ lives.

Some sources suggest that religious doctrines also firmly suspended the development of musical culture in the seventeenth century. For example, in *Music in America* (1894), Frédéric Louis Ritter states that during the first era of the colonies, musical culture stood "on as low a degree as it held among the Gauls and the Alemanni in the seventh century, of whom it was said that their rough voices, roaring like thunder, are not capable of soft modulation" (Ritter 10).23 However, Ritter was specifically addressing Puritan New England, where the opposition to musical culture continued through the early eighteenth century. Other scholars disagree and suggest that Puritan’s incorporated some elements of music in their worship. For example, W. Thomas Marrocco and Harold Gleason’s *Music in America: An Anthology from the Landing of the Pilgrims to the Close of the Civil War, 1620-1865* (1964) suggests some psalms were incorporated as part of sacred venerations. However music was limited to worship and was infrequently adopted for secular purposes. Yet, the southern colonies’ response to music was not similar. Undoubtedly, the connection to Anglicanism and the use of music by the Church of England directly influenced the acceptance of music as a facet of daily culture.24

By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, planting culture prospered and Virginians established a more stable economic basis. The musical and creative culture in the eighteenth century also took root. Much as plantation homes became self-sustaining businesses, planters also used their capital to develop their homes into cultural spaces. Plantation homes and other residential spaces such as long rooms became exceptional cultural centers. In many cases, residential spaces were avenues for creative ventures that sublimated economic gain. These designated spaces also served as viable creative areas analogous, except for in scale, to the musical cultures of larger cities such as Richmond or Williamsburg. The music heard in private spaces also demonstrated a creative tradeswoman’s social position. Trades musicians were often hired for large-scale events or musical tutelage thereby charging a fee and incurring wages. For example, in *Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion* (1943), the hiring of a cultural tradesperson is documented by Vickers Fithian when he wrote: “A peripatetic dancing master arrives, the children of the neighborhood gather, and an informal dance is held after they have been singly instructed. Even passing strangers are accorded hospitable entertainment and treated as welcome guests” (Farish: Fithian 27). Fithian’s designation of master affirmed the teacher as male. However, as demonstrated in this study, women were also commonly traveling teachers.

The hiring of teachers demonstrates a stark illumination of social class. Plantation denizens, such as the landowners or their children could often play music as a popular evening diversion. Yet the crucial contrast between landowners and creative tradespeoples was the landowners never charged a fee for their or the children’s’ performances. Additionally, the audiences were often limited to family members and guests. Despite the plantations’
contributions to creative culture, the hiring of musicians juxtaposed against the demonstrations of a daughter’s musical ability created a type of power dynamic between the trade musicians and the planters. Thereby plantations are a central space for considering music as a type of trade and understanding the larger social role of musicians.

Concurrently plantations segregated but also unified musical and creative culture. In terms of the former, a typical plantation formulated a unique and self-standing economic, social, and consequentially cultural sphere. As the plantation was a self-sustaining economic enterprise, the musical culture that catered to plantation denizens adopted a similar autonomous formation. This is frequently demonstrated by the performances of iterant tradeswomen who visited planters’ homes for a short period before heading back out on their circuit. During these stays, the circuit tradeswomen would perform concerts and prepare children for dances unique to

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25 In *The Refinement of America*, Richard L. Bushman examines the importance of the home as a cultural and social marker of prosperity and influence. These homes, especially plantations signified the families influence within society, reflected the owners refinement, and overall reputation. In consideration of the home as a sign of prestige, the space became a quasi public and private geography that at once demarcated a line of privacy but also public influence. Women became central agents in showcasing their homes and demonstrating their wealth. Bushman contends this served as a method of public participation. In the same way, music and concerts served to open the usually privatized home to public scrutiny and reengage the signifiers of prestige.

26 An in-depth and detailed explanation of Virginia’s late-colonial economy is found in T.H. Breen’s, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of the Revolution*. Here Breen examines the intricacies of plantation culture and its dependence on Britain. Taking Breen into consideration, it demonstrates the overall demand women experienced on the plantation and what the requirements were when the men left for other types of engagement.

27 Scholars suggest that due to the nature of tobacco harvesting and other requirements of plantation management, it was more common in the southern Colonies for women to take-on and excel at unconventional occupations. Kessler-Harris establishes this point but noticeably she limits her observation to economic culture and overlooks whether this possibility is likely in creative trade culture as well. As she suggests “southern agriculture, based on cash crops grown by slaves and servants on large tracts of land, required extensive management often undertaken by women” (Kessler-Harris 15). In this regard, it is also likely that the role of creative tradeswoman also sought that women fill the occupation.
that particular plantation. Once word of performances permeated the newly but disparately settled colony, the demand for creative culture also proliferated. Likewise, an iterant tradeswomen, equipped with their talents and creative abilities, often times prepared to present a similar concert or dance in an entirely different location.

Dancing culture was also firmly stamped onto Virginia society. For example, in his *Travels through the Middle Settlements of North America in 1759/60* (1798), Andrew Barnaby describes the fondness for dancing exhibited by Virginian women. The latest dances were also practiced in Williamsburg, at formal affairs thrown by the wealthy gentry; subscription balls were held in the taverns, the Governor’s Palace, and in the long rooms of many a household. Often dances were popular political functions to celebrate the end of battle, the signing of treaties, or to honor important dignitaries. Both informal and formal dancing culture was firmly imprinted onto Virginia society. For example, in Williamsburg the House of Burgesses warmly welcomed Lady Dunmore at a ball on the 27th of May (Purdie and Dixon, *The Virginia Gazette*, May 26, 1774). Despite the air of whimsy, the purpose of the ball was to transcend the difficult political events of the same day. Lord Dunmore dissolved the assembly for passing resolutions calling for a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer in support of the Bostonians, whose port was to be closed on June 1st in consequence of the Boston Tea Party. Here the role of dance served to at once situate the woman in the public sphere while also serving an overarching political purpose.

The politicality of dance culture facilitated a woman’s indirect influence in political and social discourses. Yet the training and rigor of dance and its association as a feminine pursuit reinstated her within the dominant capabilities of a woman. The role of dance mistress served to situate the women in the public sphere by the means of dancing culture. While doing so, the
woman’s body and social position reinstated her into a private and heterosexual compact. In *Dance and Its Music in America, 1528-1789* (2007), Kate Van Winkle Keller specifies that both music and dance, separately but also concurrently, span beyond recreational pastimes and evoked “powerful medium[s] of communication and social dynamics” (Van Winkle Keller 1). Both music and dance integrated and developed the “cultural, commercial, and aesthetic aspects of life in the new world” (Van Winkle Keller 1). This study supports Van Winkle Keller’s claim but expands the consideration to also include the evocation of social and gendered dynamics by creative trades.

In a similar manner, Bushman’s text is a prominent study on refinement and its influence on “impressing and influencing powerful people” (Bushman xix). Artifacts such as instruments signified “a convenient identity and a definition of position in the confusing fluidity of democratic society” (Bushman xix). In particular Bushman examines the materiality of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to argue for an inextricable connection between culture and identity. The public parade of possessions outwardly signified refinement that directly informed social norms. However, possessions do not exceptionally denote assets but public displays of refinement also included dancing ability. For example, Bushman is one of the few sources to explain in eloquent detail the mechanisms of an assembly and the social norms dictated within demarcated dancing spaces.\(^{28}\) Although Bushman specifically examines Philadelphian society, his work is extendable to similar events evident in Virginian society.\(^{29}\)

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\(^{28}\) For other considerations of eighteenth century cultural and social geographic histories, see Darrett B. Rutman’s and Anita H. Rutman’s *A Place in Time: Middlesex County, Virginia, 1650–1750* (1984).

\(^{29}\) The greatest strength in this text is Bushman’s ability to work across class structures. By doing so he deconstructs the multiple levels of refinement and its impact on middling, trades, and the impoverished classes. As he explains, “gentility concentrated among the wealthy, of course and was nearly absent amongst the most abjectly poor, but that did not eliminate perplexity in the
As the initial capital, Williamsburg supported creative culture through the offerings of public concerts; taverns were a space where music and dance was common, while businesses facilitated the purchasing of musical instruments and sheet music. Even the College of William and Mary, first chartered in 1693, included dancing, equipped with musical accompaniment, as part of its curriculum. However, Williamsburg’s emphasis was on politics thus neighboring cities such as Norfolk became the commercial hub for Virginia. Accordingly, by the 1790s, Richmond began to emerge as Virginia’s main cultural center. The separation between cities and the compartmentalization of specialties became one of the striking differences between Virginia and neighboring regions such as Charleston, South Carolina. Unlike Charleston, which acted as the social, commercial, and political center of the colony, the early Virginians found themselves living remotely rather than centralized in one area. As a result, Virginia’s creative culture was more dispersed than in Charleston. The geographic distance influenced the development of divergent creative centers occurred in areas such as Alexandria, Richmond, Williamsburg, Norfolk, in addition to the unique creative cultures of plantations. Concurrently, Virginians were distributed amongst and betwixt these areas thereby drastically impacting audience size and consistency. Consequently Virginia lacked the population density to develop a unified musical culture. However, the demand for music, dance, and theater supported the peripatetic creative trades. The creative tradeswomen served as the connective element.

vast middle” (Bushman xv). He continues to argue the ownership of commodities regardless of class weakened an absolute image of gentility thereby invigorating the middle-class towards social mobility. This consideration opens the understanding of the creative tradeswomen’s audiences who probably represented a cross-class demographic. Bushman’s scholarship supports the claim that there was a cultural need for artisans and musicians such as Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick, or the Hallams. His argument substantiates the notion that the consumption of refinement led to a type of social and cultural expansion that largely benefited artisans and as this study demonstrates, creative tradeswomen.
Eighteenth century Virginia developed a roadway system that facilitated travel between major points. These roadways assisted trade, as it provided the path for planters to move their commodities to ports or commercial areas. In *Transformation of Virginia 1740-1790*, Isaac acknowledges the distance between settled areas but suggests, “occupants were not isolated by drudgery and distance. Virginians of every degree were drawn along the roads toward great places that were marked by potent forms of action” (Isaac 57). Arguably, one form of action was the creative culture facilitated by the tradespeople. For example, the vocation and traveling schedule of the Staggs and other female musicians expanded the availability of their services to larger widespread audiences.

Due to the commonality of the gentry in Williamsburg, the architecture, decor, infrastructure, and cultural availabilities of the capital city, were modeled in the manner and taste of then contemporary London. The developments of these principles were often considered reflections of London’s cultural milieu rather than distinctive colonial edifices. Several of these similarities are developed in *Virginia Colonial Decisions, Volume 1* (revised 2005) compiled by, Sir John Randolph and Edward Barradall for the Virginia General Court. For example, the Reverend Hugh Jones in 1724 aptly observed, "[Williamsburg denizens] live in the same neat Manner, dress after the same Modes, and behave themselves exactly as the Gentry in London" (Barton ed; Randolph and Barradall 135). In the introduction to the *Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian*, editor Hunter Dickinson Farish expands this point to consider the influence of England on early Virginia. As he writes: “in the domestic establishment the planter sought to reproduce as nearly as he conveniently could the residence of the English gentry with its gardens, laws, and parks…All the forms common to the English country architecture of the period were employed in the plantation residence” (Farish xxvi). Finally tutor Philip Vickers Fithian also
alludes to the influence of London in the colonies when he noted in his journal that “[Miss Betsey Lee] was pinched up rather too near in a long pair of new fashioned Stays…For the late importation of Stays which are said to be now most fashionable in London” (Farish: Fithian 173). Though wealthy colonists were inspired to enjoy everything that London afforded, the variety of these enjoyments were limited by local conditions in cities too small to support an expansive professional class of concert and theater performers. This becomes the matchless difference between London’s and colonial America’s creative culture. London had the cultural and economic infrastructure to support, enhance, and archive musical development. In contrast Virginians prioritized the development of a robust economic and political foundation rather than cultural capital.

Isaac’s contention that early American culture reflected British culture is an evident theme transcending the early history of American music and theater. For example, Cynthia Adams Hoover’s article “Music and Theater in the Lives of Eighteenth-Century Americans” (1984), suggests colonists “developed patterns of musical activity and consumerism similar to those in England” (Hoover 309). Yet here Bushman’s contention that many early colonists were producing rather than importing the culture is essential to consider in conjunction to Adams Hoover’s claim. In the case of the eighteenth century, few established musicians arrived to the colonies while the arrival of theater troupes only began mid-century. Predominantly, early America lacked the supportive financial services, institutions, and frankly the audiences to support a sizeable musical and cultural landscape. It is important to acknowledge that many early musicians were amateurs, or individuals who used music as a recreational diversion. However these types of musicians were most common amongst the gentry. While many trades people used music as an additional income source that regularly functioned as a means to supplement other
services. For example Mary Stagg and Ann Neill sold groceries when it became evident their creative trades would not provide enough income. By extension, Nancy Hallam and other women of the theater conducted musical performances on the days they were not scheduled for the dramatic stage. The identity of a musician cannot be considered an absolute trade. Instead many musicians adopted music in addition to other trades to fully diversify their sources of revenue.\(^3^0\)

The claim stating that the colonies were reflective of London must be complicated in order to avoid essentialism. During the eighteenth century, the early American cultural, political, and social infrastructures were burgeoning however still not fully formed. It is arguable that professional musicians either stayed in Europe or migrated to areas such as Charleston, which guaranteed an audience and income. Scholars have established that talented or children born into affluent families in colonial America were often sent to England to develop their education and musical capabilities. The lack of musical interest in America by professional European musicians

\(^3^0\) Similar to the theme found in cultural histories of Virginia, the history of women musicians and actresses also examines the influence of the European tradition on the burgeoning American music. For example, Homer Ulrich’s and Paul A. Pisk’s *A History of Music and Musical Style* (1963) examine the reach of the European musical tradition. This notion is clearly rearticulated in the Virginian eighteenth century primary sources that frequently included printed essays on the English musical and theatrical performers and performances. As Ulrich and Pisk contend, “for two centuries after the first settlements were established on the American continent a tradition of American music did not exist” (Ulrich and Pisk 37). This notion is reaffirmed in James Webster’s “Eighteenth-Century Music as a Music-Historic Period,” from *Eighteenth-Century Music* presents a comprehensive historiography of European musical historical periods. Whereas Webster does not extend his analysis to examine the influence on the Colonies’ music, his analysis serves to articulate an overlap in Hitchcock’s, Ulrich’s, and Pisk’s scholarship. Yet throughout the dissertation I do not consider the lack of Early American musicality but am careful to make connections to the British cultural landscape when evident. Rather than examining the European musical tradition as an all-encapsulating monolith, I contend the sociality created around musical and creative endeavors greatly informed rather than saturated the burgeoning American cultural scene. Throughout the dissertation I acknowledge the work of the creative tradeswomen as distinct cultural endeavors yet their European counterparts profoundly shaped their crafts and the audiences’ responses.
and the exodus of talented youth greatly impeded the development of music in colonial America. However this is not to say that trade musicianship was absent, it existed and grew but was not concretely established until the early republic. Moreover several British traditions were not adopted transnationally. For example, rarely did a colonial family engage a musician as a servant for longer than a short contracted period. Jefferson tried to engage a permanent musician at Monticello but eventually discontinued the practice due to financial pressure (Maurer 512). Peter Pelham’s appointment, as organist of Burton Parish Church, was not financially secure. As Maurer explains in “The Professor of Musick in Colonial America” (1950), Pelham served as the jailer in Williamsburg in addition to his paid position as the Burton Church organist. Regardless of the salaried position, Pelham “also received L20, L25, or L30 a year as organist for the Virginia Assembly” (Maurer 519). Thereby he adopted several other vocations in order to supplement his income.

In Williamsburg, for example, it was common for musicians to hold other occupations such as tradesmen, blacksmiths, or teachers. Ogasapian contends that the majority of professional musicians were itinerant music teachers while few could afford to focus their time on performance as a prosperous trade. In Virginia the majority of trade musicians were circuit-riding teachers catering to the gentry or private tutors hired for a general schooling that included dance and music. Many creative laborers used music and dance as the basis for their trades however also supplemented their income with more traditional trades that held a promise of some type of financial stability. It is in error to discredit the vibrant creative culture of Virginia because it failed to support public artisans. Throughout this dissertation, I centralize those tradeswomen who secured an income from creative trades in any form or were fundamental in the development of creative culture at large. This includes those who were music and dancing
teachers, those involved in the business of musical theater, and the individuals who devoted their time to dancing assemblies. Performance and the promotion of creative culture fell more in line with a trade than a frivolous hobby.

Throughout the secondary sources, the culture of the eighteenth century is divided between amateur and professional. However, it is problematic to see amateur and professional as absolute opposites. The ownership of musical instruments, the ability to play music, and the price of admissions, complicated the definite distinctions between a professional and amateur musician. Primarily, amateur musicians were frequently considered gentlemen and ladies whose privilege afforded them musical lessons as part of their educations. Oftentimes, public performances were spaces utilized to showcase their skill and consequentially their affluence. Yet the title of amateur suggests that the individuals’ interests in music were more akin to a leisure pursuit rather than a trade. Several advertisements denoting gentlemen and lady performers specifically included an admission fee. In the majority of performances, the charge for concerts was returned to the musicians. In this case, despite their elevated positions, it seems the gentlemen in the following advertisements did incur a small income from these performances.

This jeopardized the clear distinction between amateur and professional. For example, a May 11, 1769 advertisement from the *Virginia Gazette* read “Will be performed, At Mr. Thomas Tinsley’s, in Hanover town, A CONCERT Of INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC; To consist of various

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31 In many instances the development of amateur music was quintessential to the overall musicality of the colony. For example, Ogasapian suggests that Boston’s growing merchant class was a major contributor to musical life. As he contends, “many of the merchants were talented amateurs, and men like Stephen DeBlois and Peter Pelham (1697-1751) organized and performed in concerts in which gentlemen played alongside professors, as amateurs and professional musicians, respectively, were termed” (Ogasapian 51). Pelham later became a central role in the development of Virginian musical culture.
Instruments, By Gentlemen of note, for their own amusement” (Hunter, *Virginia Gazette*, May 11, 1769). In this particular advert, the term Gentlemen denoted members of the gentry, individuals who were probably wealthy traders, planters, merchants, and professionals in both rural and urban settings. As this advertisement continues, an interesting inclusion comes into focus. Admission to this concert was determined by a ticket sold “at a dollar each, of Mr. Thomas Tinsley in Hanover town, Mr. Lewis Jordan at Hanover court-house, and of Francis Albertie” (Hunter, *Virginia Gazette*, May 11, 1769). Similarly an advert from October 27, 1768, announced a “CONCERT of INSTRUMENTAL MUSICK, by Gentlemen of note, for their own amusement….TICKETS to be had, at FIVE SHILLINGS each” (Hunter, *Virginia Gazette*, October 27, 1768). In both of these advertisements and throughout the primary sources, gentlemen often performed musical concerts for a fee. Here the price of admissions directly compromised the association between amateurs and gentlemen. However, their reputation as gentlemen rather than tradesmen was verified by the clarification that the performances were “for their own amusement.” This clarified to the public, that despite the admissions fee, their performance was not a method to secure an additional income. Thus the concert was a source of recreation rather than occupation. This poses the question, what differentiates these gentlemen musicians from the trade musicians of this study who undoubtedly used music to subsidize their livelihoods? Social status and gender are the two leading cultural conditions informing this distinction.

Public culture was a trade divided by class. Members of the gentry were exhaustively learned musicians and dancers however their ability to perform was restricted to very specific possibilities. In a Research Report on class and culture published by the Rockefeller Library, the author describes the capability of gentry men to play and perform but their class ranking
prevented any trade possibilities since “they may have aided in the instruction of their immediate family members and may have performed at social gatherings, teaching or performing for pay was not becoming to their station” (no author listed, 2). It is applicable that if a male’s position in the gentry determined limited access to cultural trades; it is safe to say this was also pertinent to women and girls. Thus instances such as Robert Carter’s propensity for music or all the reports of Nellie Custis’ stellar performances note that these occurred amongst a private gathering of family and friends and thus excluded public participation. The limitations imposed on performance further concretized a creative hierarchy based on class and social mobility.

Musicians, such as Ann Neill or even Mrs. Balgrave, were tradeswomen, those who utilized their craft and talent to earn a living, were not of the status of the gentry. Simply, their creativity was not restricted by social sanctions. Therefore it became more acceptable for tradeswomen to play music publicly because they stayed within their socially prescribed class centric spheres.

The identification of musicians as gentlemen served to separate them from men of a lower class. Musicians who were not affiliated with the gentry are identifiable by their lack of title. For example, on December 24th 1767, John Snyder advertised his concert in the Virginia Gazette. He was not identified by a specific honorific. Similarly, Peter Pelham was simply addressed by name. For example, a May 26th, 1768 advert for a musical opera stated that “The musick of the opera to be conducted by Mr. Pelham” (Hunter, May 26, 1768, The Virginia Gazette). By extension, the women in this study are commonly referred to by a Mrs. or Miss honorific. This firmly repositioned them below the gentry while also concretizing their statues as tradeswomen. Yet two tradeswomen, Barbara DeGraffenreit and Lady Rosehill demonstrated
that members of the gentry also used music to accrue wages. Notably, their advertisements lacked the clarification that they performed for entertainment. Instead they demonstrated a deliberate price of admission to their performances. It is clear from this inclusion that music was a method for accruing wages rather than a performance of pedigree.

In the 1790 writings of Benjamin Rush, he offered some encouragement to artists and musicians contemplating migrating to America. In *Information to Europeans Who Are Disposed to Migrate to the United States* he makes clear that cultural activity “prevails very generally in our large cities, and eminent masters in that art who have arrived here since the peace have received considerable sums of money by exercising their profession among us” (Rush: Butterfield 550). Rush specified “since the peace,” this connoted the post-Revolutionary era. Clearly, this is invaluable to contextualizing the lives of Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick who probably benefited from the public’s desire for the “exercise of their profession.” Despite the optimism brimming from this passage, it is not an entirely accurate depiction of the musical culture of eighteenth century America. Extant records make clear that prior to the Revolution; the creative laborers who arrived to this country were not guaranteed employment. Trade musicians who commonly pursued supplementary occupations was a trend exhibited through the century. For example, Williamsburg’s governor appointed Peter Pelham to several vocations in order to prevent financial paucity. Likewise, the city’s denizens also organized benefit concerts in Pelham’s name. The newspaper records do not make clear what the exact intent of this concert

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32 Prior to her marriage to Lord Rosehill, Margaret Cheer, was commonly referred to as Miss Cheer. As discussed in Chapter 4: Musical Theater, Singing Actresses, and the Hallams, scholarship contextualizes Margaret Cheer as one of the few creative tradeswomen who married above her station.

33 Charleston was arguably the region that consistently supported cultural trades. The St. Cecilia Society established itself as a stable supporter of concert life.
was, but since it was a benefit, it is likely the proceeds were intended to alleviate Pelham’s low income.

In terms of geography, Rush’s point is accurate when he suggests that musical activity prevailed in large cities. Creative culture was quite common throughout cityscapes; Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and Charleston were the forerunners in the development of creative culture. Williamsburg, then the largest city in Virginia, is not typically included amongst these cultural powerhouses. Simply due to the fact that the most musical or dance activity occurred during publick times that lasted while the Houses of Burgess was in session. Concurrently, publick times also saw the city’s population expand thus the demand for music, performances, and other types of creative commodities also increased. But returning to Rush’s assessment, it is arguable that large cities were not the only creative spaces cultivating art. Smaller rural areas also developed a taste for musical and cultural activities. Thinking of the Chesapeake area in particular, vicinities such as Norfolk, Fredericksburg, and Richmond also housed diverse yet commonplace cultural tradespeople and events.

Rush’s description of the payment of musicians was also not entirely accurate. Whereas it is conceivable that some creative trades people might receive considerable sums of money” for performing and practicing their music, this was uncommon. Often musicians were required to take on other types of trades that supplemented their income. For example, while teaching Ann Neill also opened a small general store and sold dentifrices. The Staggs continued teaching dance while they managed Williamsburg’s first theater. The benefit concerts held for Peter Pelham were a type of charity thereby ensuring some type of temporary financial assistance. This was not only an issue in Virginia. Throughout the colonies a similar disparity was evident. As a singular example, in 1790 Boston musicians organized a benefit concert for William Billings.
Despite his success as a performer, teacher, and the publisher of his own sacred music, he was also “the holder of such menial part time jobs as municipal ‘scavenger’ or street cleaner, and hogreeve or policer of hogs on the Boston streets” (Hoover: 307; McKay and Crawford: 163). Notably this concert was in the same year Rush wrote his observations on early American culture. These examples merely illuminate the constraints that surrounded creative laborers. Primarily an overarching financial infrastructure that could support creative trades people did not exist, despite the evident demand for musical and creative culture.

Yet music and dance were central components of early Virginian culture. For example, in *Music of the Colonial and Revolutionary Era* (2004), John Ogasapian supports this assertion when he establishes that rural settlers enjoyed the offerings of itinerant musicians while fiddles were common household accessories. Regardless of social status or location, the majority of colonists took pleasure in “English ballads and folk melody, as well as freshly written lyrics on current events and popular topics” (Ogasapian 56). Much as the British model influenced architecture and fashion, music was also based on the European tradition. Additionally, in imitation of European aristocracy, the ownership of musical instruments also denoted an inspired impression of refinement.

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34 Carol Neuls-Bates edited anthology *Women In Music: An Anthology of Source Readings from the Middle Ages to the Present* (1995) demonstrated the longevity of women’s music. This text is a collection of primary sources including letters, diaries, poems, novels, and original newspaper reviews. Neuls-Bates’ collection reveals women's achievements and cultural identities not only as patrons and educators but also as composers, itinerate musicians, and performers. Yet Neuls-Bates contextualizes her text in Europe, however she articulates the strengths of the European tradition. This informs the theories articulating why so few musicians traveled to Early America.

35 The only audio text I could find was Barbara Harbach’s *18th Century Women Composers*, a collection of solo harpsichord pieces composed by women. Moreover, Harbach only utilizes the work of European, specifically English and French composers, thus the work of American composers is still unearthed. Harbach’s CD in conjunction with reviews of the CD reveal an interesting challenge in my forthcoming research. Reviewers criticize Harbach’s linear notes for
Musical instruments provided visitors with the impression that their hosts radiated elegance and prosperity. This became especially important if in actuality the hosts were musically illiterate. It was common for a household to display specific items in order to signify an explicit discourse. As Bushman contends, “households contained more objects valued for their aesthetic or representational qualities” (Bushman 245). The presence of musical instruments in the home, demonstrated Bushman’s notion of “representational qualities” as signifiers of a learned individual but also someone with the leisure time to pursue such a pastime. The display of musical instruments denoted a duplicitous signification. First, the ownership of a musical instrument suggested that the individual had the means to pay for such a purchase. This also suggested that all other household needs and services were managed and fulfilled. Thus the individual had a monetary surplus extending to the procurement of musical instruments. Second, since music itself was an ephemeral commodity, the musical instrument stood as the tangible symbol of affluence. Mary Newton Stanard contends in Colonial Virginia, Its People and Customs (1917) that affluent home, especially plantation homes, were equipped with instruments such as guitars, harpsichords, spinets, violins, and flutes. This is reaffirmed by the inventories made available from the Virginia Gazette that list the instruments amongst the colonists’ effects. Frequently, the instruments were utilized as part of the household’s education for the girls or for evening diversions with family and callers.

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being inconsistent: dates do not match, birthdates position composers in the wrong era etc. This might not be Harbach’s oversight, rather an inaccuracy in the primary sources.

36 The collection of instruments was a material display of affluence and privilege. Ogaspaian utilization of New York’s Royal Governor, William Burnett (1688-1729) can serve as an example. Accordingly, the inventory for Governor Burnett’s estate “included a number of musical instruments, among them a harpsichord and a clavichord, a courtell or bassoon-like reed instrument, and a quarter of string instruments. Burnet also owned a trumpet, which one of his servants played for official ceremonies” (Ogasapian 77). Much as the development of musical acumen demonstrated the cultural capital of an individual, the collection of musical instruments similarly displayed a show of wealth.
In 1771, Jefferson sent notice to London for the order of a clavichord, however rescinded the request so he could purchase a harpsichord instead.\textsuperscript{37} Jefferson himself was an avid musician in addition to a fervent participant in musical culture. He himself played the violin and as the above letter states bought a piano-forte for “a lady,” \textit{(Jefferson’s Letters, June 1771, archive.org: accessed January 10, 2013)} arguably his wife Martha who shared his passion for music. Yet this quote also serves as fodder for the misconception that instruments in the eighteenth century were divided by gender. An essentialist understanding of colonial musicality suggests that men frequently played the violin or flute while women sang, played guitar and pianoforte. The extant records do demonstrate many instances of this categorization, it was not applicable to everyone in eighteenth century Virginia.

From a superficial examination of extant records, it seems that the majority of instruments were divided along gendered lines. For example, the German flute, a popular instrument in colonial Virginia was mostly played by men. The female instrumental counterpart was the guitar, designated to women.\textsuperscript{38} This gendered point is emphasized in Eric Blom’s edition of the \textit{Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians} (1954). As stated “in spite of its feeble quality, the English wire strung guitar had considerable popularity, being the feminine substitute for the German flute” (Blom 947). Blom is accurate in stating that the majority of musicians in the eighteenth century were divisible along these gendered lines. This assumption is supported

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[37] As Jefferson’s order read: “I must alter one article in the invoice. I wrote therein for a Clavichord. I have since seen a Forte-piano and am charmed with it. Send me this instrument then instead of the Clavichord…the workmanship of the whole very handsome and worthy the acceptance of a lady for whom I intend it (\textit{Jefferson’s Letters, June 1771, archive.org: accessed January 10, 2013}).
\item[38] The interpretation of gendering musical instruments then aptly reflects the advertisements of Mrs. Ann Neill, whose history and influence are developed further in Chapter 6: Girls’ Education and the Class Division Reflected by Music. The advertisements she placed in \textit{The Virginia Gazette} confidently and publicly announced her ability to teach girls to play guitars.
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by some of the primary sources. For example, John Essex in his *The Young Ladies Conduct or Rules for Education* (1722) offered this advice about music to young women:

> MUSICK, as it is an Entertainment Innocent and Diverting….is every day improving in this Kingdom (meaning England). The *Harpsichord, Spinnet, Lute,* and *Bass Viol*[in], are Instruments most agreeable to the LADIES: There are some others that really are unbecoming the Fair Sex; as in the *Flute, Violin* and *Hautboy;* the last of which is too Manlike, and would look indecent in a Woman’s Mouth; and the *Flute* is very improper, as taking away too much of the Juices, which are otherwise …employ’d to promote the Appetite and assist Digestion (Essex, no page number listed).

Yet everyone did not follow this advice. Marianne Davies, daughter of composer and flutist, Richard Davies of London, chose this unbecoming occupation. Marianne was a child prodigy, presenting her first public performance at age seven on harpsichord, voice, and the German flute. She presented the world premiere of Benjamin Franklin’s invention, the glass armonica, in 1762. News of this first performance circulated throughout the colonies though Davies never herself performed in the colonies. Yet the fact that her performances were written about and discussed transnationally demonstrated her cultural influence. Additionally, the printing of her name and accomplishments also positioned her within a public sphere. This position is influential despite her disembodiment. Here Davies acts as an agent of change: she located her agency and creativity while also serving as a musical mentor. Moreover her ability to play and perform the flute dispelled the instrument’s association as male. Davies serves as a counter-narrative demonstrating the availability and feasibility of female flutists but also an example of a woman who performed on a large and public scale. Almost single-handedly Davies debunked the gendering of musical instruments.

Despite the presence of musicians such as Davies, the gendering of musical instruments was still commonplace. Fithian mentions the association of guitars with women twice in his

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39 The hautboy was an oboe.
journal. On December 10, 1773 he wrote that “Miss Nancy Carter is beginning on the Guitar” (Farish: Fithian 57) and on January 15, 1774 he specified that “[he] spent some hours to day with the Girls when they were practicing Music on the Guitar and forte-piano” (Farish: Fithian 75). Seemingly, the division between gender and instruments was quite expansive, to the point where male music masters infrequently advertised guitar lessons due to their inexperience with the instrument. Fithian’s demonstrated this point when he noted that Carter’s daughters were taught the guitar by Robert Carter rather than the previous tutor Mr. Stadley because “Mr. Stadley does not understand playing on the guitar” (Farish: Fithian 189). This notion is further developed in this dissertation by examining Ann Neill who specifically advertised her ability to teach female students the guitar.

It is too simplistic to specify that only women played the guitar whereas men played the flute. To reiterate, Fithian contended that Mr. Carter taught the girls to play the guitar thereby it is inferable that Carter himself had been trained on the instrument. Mr. Carter’s guitar training is readable in Fithian’s observation of Mr. Carter’s fondness for instruments in general. As Fithian wrote on December 13, 1773, “Mr. Carter is practicing this evening on the Guitar…. He has a good Ear for Music…and keeps good instruments, he has here at Home a Harpsichord, Forte-Piano, Harmonica, Guitar, Violin, and German Flutes” (Farish: Fithian 83). Finally, records also indicated that Thomas Wall, of the Hallam-Douglas Acting Company also taught guitar lessons. Mr. Carter’s or Mr. Wall’s ability to play and teach guitar is not due to the power privileges afforded to the colonial man. Thus it is also too simplistic and superficial to argue that it was easier for men to transcend the gender norms dictating who could play what instruments. In contrast, their ability to play and teach guitar demonstrates the necessity in refiguring the gendering of instruments. It furthermore demonstrates the availability of musicians to play
instruments beyond the dictation of gender norms. This is clearly supported by Davies, Carter, and Wall. But other women such as the influential Seigniora Sirmen aptly demonstrated the ubiquity of female musicians who also complicated the gendering of musical instruments.

The violin was another instrument commonly coded as male. Even as late as 1791 a critic in London’s *Morning Chronicle* assumed men had certain biological advantages that enabled their violin playing. For example, after hearing a Mademoiselle Larrivèe perform on the violin, the critic wrote that he had “no objections to the efforts of the sex on the Violin per se, [but ] that it requires the more muscular tone of a man, than the delicacy of female nerves to accomplish the instrument” (Wollenberg and McVeigh 87). In contrast, Seigniora Sirmen, an Italian musician, performed on her violin throughout Europe. Her ability to play caused such a sensation that news of her work appeared in the colonial newspapers. For example, *The Virginia Gazette* documented the performance of a Venetian female violinist who performed in London “who’s cast execution on that instrument, so uncommon to the sex, will, it is thought, astonish everybody” (Rind, *Virginia Gazette*, April 6, 1769). That woman must have been Seigniora Sirmen, who two years later on January 16, 1771 performed an equally noteworthy performance. As stated in *The Virginia Gazette*, “it is allowed by all those who have heard Seigniora Sirmen, who now plays the Violin at the Opera House in the Haymarket, that she brings the finest Tone to that Instrument that has been heard; she has also the great Advantage of being a very genteel and beautiful woman” (Purdie and Dixon, *Virginia Gazette*, April 18, 1771). Interestingly, the writer of this review felt it imperative to emphasize her beauty and gentility. This served as a direct contrast to the suggestion that violinists ought to be the “muscular tone of a man” (Wollenberg and McVeigh 87). It is important to note that her performance was deemed as a remarkable occurrence rather than a commonality. Perhaps this is due to the infrequency in which women
played the instrument or the rarity in which women publicly held violin concerts. Regardless, the fact that Seigniora Sirmen did exceptionally play the violin is significant to the point that the news of her performance was printed in the colonies. Much as Davies, their performances positioned them on a transnational level while also demonstrating the ability of women to play the violin. If in fact it was as uncommon for women to play the violin as the extant sources suggests, then Seigniora Sirmen’s performances not only served as an example of female music ability but also acted as a model of creative change. Much as Davies serves as a counter-narrative, both women challenged dominant gender roles.

The rise of secular music in eighteenth century Virginia boasted its share of cultural possibilities and realities. In the shadow of its edifying cousin Charleston or the more staid New England, Virginia’s residents demonstrated an active interest in music and creative culture. Scholars suggest that Virginia served as a comparative medium to prudent Puritan New England and wealthy Charleston. When discussing the former in *Music of the Old South: Colony to Confederacy* (1972) Albert Stoutamire suggests “unlike a more somber group of fellow Englishmen who were colonizing New England, the Virginians were gay, fun-loving people” (Stoutamire 18). Later the author suggests that unlike Puritanical New England, Virginians allowed and embraced musical innovation, theatrical performances, and dance culture within their everyday lives. As quoted by Fithian and aptly recapped by Isaac, this expression establishes the soul of the colony: “Virginians are of genuine blood – They will dance or die!” (Farish: Fithian 177: Isaac 81). As developed later in this dissertation, music, dance, and creative culture are inextricably connected. Particularly, Virginians included music in their daily lives and did not only sequester musical culture to sacred or establish creative spaces, such as churches, concert halls or theaters. Molnar relates an apt example of Elizabeth Hansford, who in
1725 “was fined 20 shillings for singing ‘an opprobrious song’ slandering the King” (Molnar 65). Hansford sang in the streets while music also radiated from private homes, or accompanied larger communal festivities such as horse races or fairs.

In eighteenth-century Virginia, creative culture was the accompaniment to daily living rather than the primary occupational motive even for cultural tradeswomen. Accordingly the social and cultural infrastructure of early America demonstrated the limits of music. In spite of that, Maurer describes the early setting as active and plentiful. As he states: “America needed men to give lessons, arrange concerts, assist in theater orchestras, play church organs, sell music and instruments, and compose minutes and anthems” (Maurer 512). To expand Maurer’s clarification, creative tradeswomen also secured any type of employment that would garner an income. However, Maurer’s text only examines the difficulty of male musicians. Thus historians must ask did tradeswomen experience a similar turmoil. For example, three individuals who are developed more fully later in this dissertation, Ann Neill, Mary Stagg, and Sarah Hallam all held non-musical occupations in addition to their creative cultural involvement. Their histories suggest it was not only men who experienced the instability of creative trades. Women were not excluded from these limitations however Maurer only begins to explore these possibilities. As he writes: “Miss Hallam, Miss Wainwright, Miss Storer, Mrs. Woolls, and other players from the theater appeared in vocal solos, duets, and choruses” (Maurer 517). Here it is important to note that the women who participated in public performances were not only vocalists. However, this requires development and a revisitation of the extant resources. In accordance with Maurer, these women were indeed singing actresses. Although throughout the colonies, records indicate

40 Maurer contends that it was an honor for an amateur musician to assist a music master’s performance as “the best performers of the city assisted the professor in his concerts” (Maurer 615).
that these women also performed on the harpsichords, pianos, and guitars. In addition to the presence of singing actresses, female music and dancing mistresses also dotted the cultural landscape.

Scholarship on women in trades has tended to focus on women in normative occupations. For example throughout Virginia, there were a handful of highly skilled female milliners. Midwifery and the practice of female-centric medicine were also common in almost every large town. The midwife Catherine Blaikley “brought upwards of three Thousand Children into the World” (Lesbock 53). Female cooks were common, especially in the palace of the Governor. When a theater troupe came to town, the actresses’ songs were quintessential to the repertoire. More so there were teachers who offered instruction to both male and female students in numerous subjects. These were frequently enterprising women who offered their instruction for a fee. These examples represent the involvement of women in several aspects of the colonial public life. As a result, creative labor must also be included as a trade option for women.

Women’s roles within colonial trade were not absolute and frequently required a social negotiation. One method of aligning with the dominant paradigms for women was to stay within the socially acceptable female roles: as an example, a midwife instead of a doctor, a school teacher rather than a professor at the College of William and Mary, a milliner instead of blacksmith etc. However, as a means of contorting and realigning the confines of these social norms, women business owners frequently diversified their stock or their business capabilities. Milliners, who were generally the wealthiest of Virginian businesswomen, were in the best

41 Martha Ballard, a midwife from Maine was also a reputable practitioner. Her legacy remains since her letters were preserved and bound into books relating her experience as a midwife in colonial America.
42 There were brothel keepers as well. Since they did not advertise we know very little about them.
position to try this: they often added dry goods to their stocks. Mary Crammer advertised, among other things, snuff, schoolbooks, and birdcages, and Anne Matthews stocked fiddles, spices, gunpowder, and pudding pans. Therefore a common trope in the history of women in colonial America shapes this negotiation that at once exemplified agency but only within socially normative roles.

The paradigms suspending women within the negotiated norms that at once allowed them to pursue public business but within socially accepted standards had one element anchoring this balance together: the home. The home became a central space in which women could pursue business but ultimately were still able to manage her household and children. Thus it is necessary to understand the home as a spatial context that enabled participation in trade rather than avert opportunities. The home was a site of mutability; a space that at once was coded both public and private. In *Women’s Role in Eighteenth Century America*, Merrill D. Smith suggests “the boundaries between work and home were often quite fluid” (Smith 75). Smith’s point is important in refiguring the role of the home as a space that was not singularly coded as domestic and female. Frequently, businesses were located within residential spaces while the actual homes were often above or behind storefronts. This ensured a woman’s adherence to domestic duties while also managing the business. One well-researched example is Clementina Rind, who oversaw the publication of the *Virginia Gazette*. Rind lived in the building that also published the paper thus facilitating her ability to see to both her professional and domestic duties. Similarly Ann Neill and Sarah Hallam used their residences as the site for their schools. Yet the peripatetic lives of creative tradeswomen challenged their connection to domestic spaces. Oftentimes the correlation between creative tradeswomen embodied an abstract rather than literal association. For example women such as Mary Stagg, Barbara DeGraffenreit, Mrs. Sully, and Mrs. Pick sold
tickets to their events out of their homes despite the event’s offsite location. Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick reaffirmed the image of domesticity by consistently including Mr. Pick as part of their performances. Similarly, the women of the theater traveled throughout the region but were typically bound to their families. This type of arrangement was the standard for merchants, artisans, and creative tradeswomen. Putting these women’s histories into conversation with Smith’s suggestions, homes and other residential spaces were not always literal. Rather homes and domestic identity were used as a fluid ideological space that supported trade, creative performances, in addition to traditional domestic duties. This commonality also extends to musical culture. Here again, we see the negotiation that served as a trope circulating amongst tradeswomen: as long as they maintained an air of respectability by working in socially acceptable occupations, spaces, or identities their presence in public culture was rarely denigrated. Almost all of the women who engaged in public occupations appear to have taken this route.

Women were involved with public culture throughout eighteenth century Virginia. However this is not to say that people did not cast caustic invective onto the women permeating the public sphere. Nor did the highly visible success of creative tradeswomen cause their contemporaries to alter the overarching and prevailing paradigms establishing the proper role of men and women. Rind, as a matter of fact, was said to have possessed a “manly sense” (Lesbock 62). This demonstrates the reinforcement of the notion that sense belonged to men and was only rarely found in women. Yet, the primary sources do not always reaffirm women as puerile. Much as Seigniora Sirmen was deemed a sensation, the Hallams, Mrs. Pick, Mrs. Sully, and other creative tradeswomen were often lauded. If we are to refigure the role of women in colonial society, then the accomplishments of these women were not actually exceptions but rather
flourishing tradeswomen were commonplace. This consideration restructures the everyday of the colonies and early America as more inclusive of women rather than completely organized by gender norms and dominant ideology.

Understanding talented women as more than exceptions to the norm is an important consideration. On one hand, when women performed there were several cases that demonstrated a support for their talent and performance. A passage from Fithian’s journal serves as an example: “Miss Washington [Niece of George Washington, daughter of Colonel John Augustine Washington] is about seventeen…she plays well on the Harpsichord & Spinet; she sings likewise to her instrument, has a strong, full voice, & a well-judging Ear” (Farish: Fithian 123). Yet these acclamations were couched within gender norms that reduced the talent of the woman. Despite her ability, Fithian suggested the performance was rudimentary. His observations continued: “[that] most of the Virginia Girls think it labour quite sufficient to thump the Keys of a Harpsichord into the air of a time mechanically, & think it would be Slavery to submit to the Drudgery of acquiring Vocal Music…” (Farish: Fithian 123-124). Fithian’s lengthy quote is of two-fold importance. It at once elucidated the general recognition of the musical aptitude of women while also serving as an observation of the general Virginian creative climate. In terms of the former, when Fithian acknowledged the universality of young women to neglect the principles of music, he is referring specifically to music theory or the more technical mechanics of musical practice. Much like a science, music theory requires an aptitude for the rational and mathematic that verges on the analytical. To assume that most young women were incapable of demonstrating the acumen for the principles of music demonstrates the generally accepted opinion that women lacked the capacity to exhibit rational thinking and analytic thought.
However, Fithian himself was not completely convinced of this gender norm. Whereas he denounced the ability of women in general he also exalted Miss Washington’s talent. Arguably, Fithian’s writing was greatly informed by the widespread belief in a woman’s inability to demonstrate rational thinking thereby influencing musical ability. However, this was at odds with the performance given by Miss Washington. In other words, the theory does not reflect the praxis. Fithian wrote that Miss Washington “understands the principles of Musick, & therefore performs her Tunes in perfect time, a Neglect of which always makes music intolerable” (Farish: Fithian 124). He clarified that Miss Washington had the ability to demonstrate her technical ability. This served to contradict his statement that women generally could not maintain an emphasis on the theoretical and musical principles. Possibly Fithian’s contradiction was shaded by the overarching belief that women were incapable of mastering musical theory despite the frequent performances and concerts. Yet, as the century progressed, the attitude towards women’s musical ability began to transform. Where at once music was considered fashionable and frivolous, the role of creative tradeswomen began to take a more prominent, respected, and distinct public role.

Throughout the eighteenth century, books were available to the affluent and literate women of Virginia. Yet unlike the books encouraging reason and virtue in men, books

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43 Most books were published in England then shipped to the colonies via a type of mail-order system. It could take months or even years to receive a requested title. Music and songbooks formed a central element to many private libraries. For instance, records indicate that Martha Custis ordered the songbook, *The Bull-Finch Being a Choice Collection of the Newest and Most Favourite English Songs circa 1757* from the Robert Cary and Company in 1758 (The Martha Washington Collection of Manuscripts and Books). Custis is the maiden name of Martha Washington, who did not receive the songbook until after her marriage to George Washington in 1759. The handwriting near the top of the front cover is that of George Washington’s who inscribe “Martha Washington 1759” as a sign of the text’s ownership (The Martha Washington Collection of Manuscripts and Books).
published for female audiences restated the suggestion that “modesty and delicacy were the essential female virtues” (Lesbock 43). Despite negotiations of social norms and examples of women who defied the domesticated feminized ideal, women of the eighteenth century were constantly conditioned to comply with the social norms reinforcing acquiescence, passivity, and domesticity. This type of message was not only reinforced in the popular literature, sermons, school teaching, but other forms of social conditioning instilled modesty and virtue as an essential female trait. For example, in 1770 Mary Ambler hoped to shape her daughter’s identity. She copied a sermon emphasizing “[that] a natural softness [combined with a] Christian meekness (Lesbock 44). Here Ambler not only restricted the intellectual and physical agency of her daughter but also conditioned her to take a passive and secondary social position. This meekness was reflected in the creative tradeswomen’s advertisements and the librettos sang by actresses. At once, these laborers demonstrated a recognizable cultural power while also reaffirming the prescribed submissiveness. This further developed the social negotiation reaffirmed throughout this study and the history of women in colonial America. Ambler was informing her daughter that in the company of men, this type of behavior was preferable in order to attract a husband. This type of meekness was more demonstrative of a single woman. The advice directed toward married women emphasized an entirely different set of social norms.44

44 The extent of a woman’s creative agency was highly influenced by her social position. In “Gentry Women and the Transformation of Daily Life in Jeffersonian and Antebellum Virginia,” taken from Women Shaping the South: Creating and Confronting Change (2006) edited by Angela Boswell and Judith N. McArthur, author Philip Hamilton suggests that meekness and subservient behavior was not expected of gentry women. Rather “despite living in a patriarchal society, women of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were not ornamental creatures who meekly waited to be directed this way or that” (Hamilton 7). Hamilton’s consideration demonstrates the extent of a woman’s agency; however, it was still not absolute, especially in comparison to men. Scholars such as Hamilton, and numerous others understand the changing role of women as in conjunction with the newly adopted social norms put onto
Whereas for young and single women the keyword was submission, for married women, the shibboleth was obedience. In *The Lady’s New Year’s Gift, of Advice to a Daughter* (1688), author George Saville Halifax reiterated the female position as subservient while also reinforcing the intellectual superiority of men. As the advice column states: “you must first lay it down for a Foundation in general, That there is inequality in the Sexes, and that for the better Oeconomy of the World, the Men, who were to be the Law Givers, had the better share of Reason bestow’d upon them; by which means your Sex is better prepar’d for Compliance” (Saville Halifax 25). Despite the fact that the popular literature such as Saville Halifax’s dictated specific passive behavior, the question must be asked: to what extent did women conform to this passive and compliant image? For there is a difference in acknowledging the presence and circulation of these dictations but it is entirely separate to fully comply with these sentiments. Moreover, a woman’s cultural conditions, specifically age and class, determined her level of compliance.

In a catalogue compiled for an exhibit called “A Share of Honour: Virginia Women 1600-1945,” curator Suzanne Lesbock calls on Martha Washington as a prime example of an individual who recognized the discourses constructing women as passive and the subsequent social limitations. Yet Lesbock quickly demonstrates that Washington frequently neglected these sentiments if it jeopardized a woman’s wellbeing. In 1794 Washington wrote to her widowed niece, urging her to manage her property herself: “If you do not no one else will,” she counseled, “a dependence is I think a wretched state and you will have enogh if you will manage it right”
However Washington did not necessarily live by those social prescriptions. Lesbock contends that Washington was especially conscientious about the issues facing women who were widowed and often left with a business and property to manage but lacked the necessary skills. Yet this reality was in direct contrast to the prescriptive literature that influenced women to maintain their innocence and fueled their fears. Lesbock addresses gentry women but undoubtedly tradeswomen were also expected to comply. The prosperity of their trades depended on venturesome enterprising while their social reputation predicated subordination. Thus here we see the commencement of the delicate social negotiation required to be a successful women in trade cultures. This negotiation required readdressing gender norms while also safeguarding one’s livelihoods.

Frequently, scholars point toward the publication of fiction written by female authors as a method of resistance and the reinsertion of the female voice in the public sphere. In *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic* (2006), Mary Kelley expands this point when she considers the literature as an essential tool in establishing the public persona of women while also maintaining patriarchal ideology. Kelley contends that during the time “between the American Revolution and the Civil War, women in the North and South emerged as leaders in the nation’s lively trade in texts” (Kelley 10). Kelley narrows her scope to examine fiction. However to limit the contribution of women to written texts such as fiction and poetry does not encapsulate the full extent that women’s cultural products permeated public space. Texts must be expanded to include other forms of cultural production and capital including librettos, compositions, ballads, and advertisements for concerts. An important musical

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45 In *Good Wives: Images and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich argues that women often adopted the role of deputy husbands. These women were expected to conduct business yet “women were inferior to their husbands, but her opinion would be incorporated into his decisions “ (Thatcher Ulrich 36).
composition by Ann Julia Hatton rings as a sterling example of culture permeating the political public sphere.

Ann Hatton’s tremendously popular "Tammany: The Indian Chief" (1794) was the first major opera written in the early America. Concurrently, Hatton’s opera is considered the foremost American opera to include political discourses rather than merely present a commentary on international trends. Hatton’s play is the earliest drama about American Indians as characters who bypass the archetypical role of savage killer. The opera premiered at the John Street Theatre, New York, on March 3, 1794 and featured the English actress and 'grande dame' of American theatre, Charlotte Melmoth. She was the catalyst for controversy because Melmoth refused to speak the opera's epilogue, as she disapproved of its patriotic sentiments. However the public sentiment opposed her discontent. The New York Journal called on the public to boycott the play as long as Melmoth was still in the cast. The production of the play ricocheted throughout the colonies as newspapers ranging from Massachusetts to South Carolina featured commentary about the play’s impact. Scholars understand Hatton’s political and social standpoint as highly influenced by her years spent in poverty and lengthy bout of depression culminating in her attempted suicide. However, to reduce her work as a mere likeness of her life, one based on observation rather than reflective consciousness undermines Hatton’s political and social intent. The overt politicality of the opera, in addition to the widespread public attention, incited a conversation regarding the mercurial relationship between the American Indian and the colonists. Hatton’s work not only began dialogues and considerations of the American Indian but also shaped the public opinion surrounding this issue. Hatton’s use of lyrics as a means to create political discourses demonstrates a woman’s influence in public space while further developing the understanding of a text.
Kelley, much as Berkin and Kerber, contends that post-Revolutionary society saw a restructuring of the limitations set to gender norms and the construction of womanhood. As she argues, “as members of America’s post-Revolutionary elite, [women] empowered themselves in their relationships with men other than their kin” (Kelley 25). Kelley continues her analysis to include specific spaces that enabled a woman’s influence on public opinion through their instruction of republican virtue. For example, formal and informal teas, salons, balls, and other informal gatherings contributed to the engagement of civility while the attendants were held to represent sterling morals and values (Kelley 15). To expand Kelley’s argument, performances such as Hatton’s opera or the cultural contributions by tradeswomen in addition to spaces such as Long Rooms, informal concert halls, and taverns were also vitally important in the construction of civic discourses. The demonstration of an astute aptitude for music and culture allowed women to contradict the ideology constructing men as more reasonable, intellectual, and capable of public persuasion. The display of profound cultural performances such as "Tammany: The Indian Chief" are examples of creative tradeswomen who codified an active type of womanhood that also showcased a broader range of female intellectualism. More, the public position of Hatton also reinserts a fluidity to gendered space that suggests that the public and private were not mutually exclusive thereby validating a woman’s influence and capacity to shape public discourse.

In Terri Synder’s article, “Refiguring Women in Early American History” (2012) she utilizes the work of Mary Ritter Beard to present the opportunity to complicate the understanding women in early America. Building off of Beard, Synder contends that historians must consider “fresh interpretations [that] revealed an emphasis on women’s positions in spatial and collective relations and questioned the normative categories that we use in studying women” (Synder 422).
It is important to acknowledge here that there were limitations to the women’s influence on public opinion. Whereas women utilized cultural enterprises as a means to shape public opinion, it was still within socially acceptable constructs. To influence public opinion through music or culture, as an example, is a more circulatory method to public influence than direct political participation. While culture was used to shift the social and political rhetoric, women were still barred from voting and engagement in direct political practice. Despite Hatton’s opera, music and culture rendered an indirect effect on the body politic while also reinforcing a gendered system which sustained a woman’s role as obligated to the needs of her husband, children, and his estate. However, the dismissal of social participation because it was indirect threatens to undermine the social value of women in general.

Thus tradeswomen not only performed but also were key contributors to public creative and social culture. Individuals such as Ann Neill, the Hallams, Mrs. Sully, and Mrs. Pick ultimately encourage a refiguring of the role of women in colonial America’s creative trades. The reinterpretations of their histories demonstrate their capacity and ability to cultivate and shape creative culture. Much as Ann Hatton shaped the social and political rhetoric determining the perception of the American Indian, these women also created for themselves a public position. Additionally, women such as Mary Stagg were instrumental in the development of the first theater in Williamsburg. Through their labor and art, these women directly influenced the social, political, and economic culture of Virginia. The role of the creative tradeswomen in Virginia was indeed a negotiation that at once required contravention but also an adherence to dominant gender norms.
CHAPTER II: MARY STAGG AND WOMEN’S CONTRIBUTION TO DANCE AND
CREATIVE TRADE CULTURE

Musical and theatrical performances were not the only cultural trades pursued by women. Dance instruction, balls, and assemblies were essential components of Virginia’s social culture. The role of women in dance culture is a vital component when considering the history of creative trades in eighteenth century Virginia. Particularly, dance assemblies were fundamental in the cultivation of music and social norms but also the public role of women. Much as music and theater shared an indelible connection to the visibility of gender multiplicity, assemblies, and dance culture also depended on women to progress the art form. The women involved in these cultural trades faced similar gender negotiations that gave them access to public positions. Nonetheless this access was shaded by an adherence to dominant gender ideologies. The history of Mrs. Mary Stagg illuminates a multifaceted social negotiation that at once affirmed social and class hierarchies while also verifying dominant gender norms. This chapter primarily focuses on Mary Stagg’s influence on Virginia’s theater, dancing, and assembly culture. Despite the ubiquity of her name in the primary records, the sources rarely comment on the music she employed. However, Mary Stagg played a primary role in Virginia’s cultural proclivities and trades.

Since The Virginia Gazette was first published in only 1732 the early life of Mary Stagg is rendered almost undocumented. Accordingly the sources illuminating the lives of the Staggs are derived from contracts, correspondences, and other private letters. For the most part, these letters make note of Mr. Stagg’s itinerate dancing career, unfortunately, the sources often lose sight of Mary Stagg. The erasure of her history is a common outcome from the centralization of androcentric histories. As Lerner explicates “what women have done and experienced has been
left unrecorded, neglected, and ignored in interpretation” (Lerner 4). To expunge Mary Stagg from the history of Williamsburg’s cultural tradeswomen suggests that her story is marginal and unessential in the pursuit of historical significance. Yet women such as Mary Stagg are indispensable in a refiguring of the cultural historical record. This type of erasure only furthers Lerner’s argument that women “have been kept from knowing their history and from interpreting history” (Lerner 5). To add to Lerner’s poignant observation, women’s visibility has been removed from these histories therefore only deepening the obstruction of women “knowing their history.” In order to recover these narratives researchers must interrogate the androcentric histories and rebuild the past from apparent contextual clues. To fully understand the life of Mary Stagg, we must first deconstruct William Levingston’s and Charles Stagg’s history in order to understand Mary Stagg’s social and cultural context.

The earliest extant documentation on the Staggs in colonial Virginia is derived from an indenture contract drawn between the couple and the merchant William Levingston. In this indenture, the Staggs were bound to serve Levingston in the “Colony of Virginia in the Arts, Professions” (York County Records, 1716-1720, 52-54). The engagement of “Arts Profession” suggests the Staggs were hired to teach in Levingston’s traveling dancing school based in New Kent County. Levingston employed both husband and wife thereby substantiating the claim that the Staggs worked collaboratively. Evidently the Staggs’ presence at the dancing school was profitable and this productivity inspired Levingston to expand his enterprise. He eventually ended the Staggs’ servitude to reemploy them as partners for his next cultural endeavor: the construction of the first theater in Williamsburg.

46 See John Oldmizon’s account of “‘Poppet Strowlers’ from England in Barbadoes on or before 1706 in The British Empire in America (1706)” for a fuller account of the ‘strolling life.’
47 Scholars such as Harry Kollatz describe the Staggs as “a Colonial song and dance team” (Kollatz no page # listed, research report for the Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg, Virginia).
Prior to their indentured identities the early lives of the Staggs are unknown. It is plausible that Levingston shared a Scottish background with the Staggs thereby serving as a connective factor between the trio. However the histories of the Scottish theater and dance do not mention the existence of the dancing or acting pair. Johnson and Burling surmise the Staggs might have been in England prior to their arrival in the colonies. As he specifies: “A Mr. and Mary Stagg are advertised as dancing masters in London c. 1712...[and] a Mary Stagg received a benefit concert on February 27, 1712 at the Dancing Room in Piccadilly” (Johnson and Burling 99). The authors specify that they are not sure whether these were the same Staggs. However the similar spelling of their surname in addition to their relationship as husband and wife cultural laborers substantiates a strong connection. Due to the lack of records, the larger questions concerning their musical aptitude, where they garnered the ability to perform, dance, and act, is not known at this time. Moreover the extant sources do not explain how the Staggs and Levingston first developed a partnership. However, details painting their histories can be derived by an examination of their servitude to and partnership with Levingston.

A letter in Mary Stagg’s vertical file made available from the Rockefeller Library develops the details forming Levingston’s biography. Records indicate that William Levingston was the son of a Scottish civil servant who arrived in New Kent County, Virginia.

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49 This is a general reference letter between a patron and head librarian circa 1972. In this letter, the patron seeks ancestral information on Levingston.
around 1716. Archaeological evidence made available from the Rockefeller Library links Levingston to a home on the banks of the Rappahannock and a home in Williamsburg (Stephenson 1946). Levingston was married to a woman named Susannah (née Roots) but it is unknown whether she participated in his business pursuits or took any part in his creative endeavors. Levingston, and by extension the Staggs, were the first to demonstrate a common theme relevant to all the cultural laborers in this dissertation. Levingston did not earn a living solely on his theatrical predilections rather he held multiple occupations. Upon arrival in Virginia, Levingston began his trade as a merchant but soon diversified his occupations to include tavern-keeper and surgeon (Land 11). Later he also maintained a stable and bowling green to facilitate local recreation. In addition to the theatrical enterprise, scholars suggest that Levingston also billed himself as a dancing master (Land: Rankin: Molnar: Stephenson 1946).

Levingston’s actual creative ability is worthy of speculation. On one hand, Levingston seems to have been a competitive businessman with a sharp eye for new financial prospects. However, sharp business acumen does not absolutely suggest he had the creative abilities to support these endeavors. It is plausible that Levingston himself was only moderately capable thus needed the assistance of professionals such as the Staggs. As the son of a civil servant, Levingston was probably from a well to do family. He undoubtedly received a typical gentlemen’s education that included dance instruction. The extant records do not reveal how much knowledge Levingston had of dancing, music culture, and teaching practices. Utilizing

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50 Land, Van Winkle Keller, and Molnar suggest his father’s occupation as a civil servant afforded Levingston with a type of privilege thereby allowing him to pursue risky investments. The fact that he arrived in this country seeking successful business ventures was common for individuals with a comfortable level of affluence. Typically if the business ventures in the Colonies failed, the individual could return home and rebuild their wealth with their family’s assistance. This is the case with Christopher deGraffenreit, the elder, discussed later in this chapter.
biographical notes, Kollatz discerns that Levingston never showcased any type of musical, dance, or theatrical skill or practice. In agreement, the extant primary sources only refer to Levingston’s trade practices rather than his creative abilities. He hired the Staggs to bolster his enterprises while also hiding his inexperience. Other than his tutelage, it is quite likely that Levingston had minimal knowledge of dance or music but identified a market where he could accumulate money. Hence the Staggs administered the instruction while Levingston bolstered the school’s reputation. Once the dancing school was established as an institution of exceptional repute, Levingston relied on the Staggs to present a more robust sense of expertise. The Staggs signed their bodies but also their talent, teaching abilities, and histories of dance, music, and theater into indentured servitude.

It is generally agreed that the first known presentation at the Levingston-Stagg Theater was on May 28, 1718 (Molnar: Land: Johnson and Burling 99). Scholars base this date on interpreted archeological evidence since the sources qualifying the theater’s inaugural performance do not remain. It is also unknown what inspired Levingston to assume that Williamsburg was demographically robust and financially prepared to house a permanent theater. Scholars such as Breen, Bushman, and Isaac reiterate that the inconsistencies of Williamsburg’s population caused financial difficulties for business owners. Other scholars such as Molnar and Land suggest that Williamsburg’s publick times were the only parts of the year that could sustain cultural ventures. Burling, Johnson, and Kollatz assume that the actors hired by Levingston performed infrequently during non-publick times months. Kollatz continues this argument to specify that these actors were actually servants moonlighting on the colonial stage. Thus the Staggs utilized Levingston’s other indentured servants such as Mary Ansell, Mary Peel, Nicholas Hurlston, Alice Ives, and Elizabeth Ives as the core of the theatrical company (Kollatz, no page
listed. It is likely that the theater’s mix of servants and actors played havoc on the production’s quality and rendered performances unpredictable. However since they provided the only space of cultural engagement in Williamsburg, the makeshift troupe still found a small audience.

In the long run, the theater received a lukewarm response and infrequently filled the audience to maximum occupancy. Debatably, Levingston’s theater would have been more profitable if he established it as a peripatetic institution. Throughout the eighteenth century artisans and merchants traveled to other cities to avoid waning interest. In fact, all of the creative trades people sequentially discussed, such as the Hallams, Sully’s, and Pick’s, toured as a means of constantly engaging audiences. This is not a suggestion that Levingston’s endeavors in the 1720s bears exact resemblance to the Hallams’ work in the 1760s or Mrs. Sully’s and the Picks’ music during the early republic. Clearly it is in error to suggest the social and cultural conditions did not alter between the colonial era and early republic. Yet this consideration demonstrates the longstanding difficulty in establishing permanent cultural spaces throughout the eighteenth century. At this point, Levingston was the only individual determined to construct a permanent rather than traveling aesthetic culture.

Nonetheless, Levingston was resolute that Virginia promised lucrative cultural prospects. To expedite the development he turned to England. In one provision of the contract he drafted with the Staggs, Levingston specified that he “hath at his own proper cost and charge sent to England for actors and musicians for the better performance of the plays, it is agreed…that the same allowance shall be made for the musicians and actors as others equally qualified hired here in Virginia” (Molnar xiii). He still relied on the established European cultural model as the foundation for his enterprise. This demonstrates that he thought, or at least hoped, that puerile Virginia fostered a cultural setting that was comparable to England. He assumed that British
actors would agree with his assessment and commit to sailing to the colonies in order to work in his theater. Unfortunately, Levingston was mistaken and he could not secure prominent actors (Land: Rankin: Kollatz: Molnar xiii). The Staggs found it difficult to recruit actors to this country undoubtedly because the enterprise was too callow and the region in general lacked all methods of large-scale financial support. Either Levingston or the Staggs used servants as replacements. Conceivably Levingston was aware of these challenges but the theater’s success in England convinced him to recreate a similar milieu in Virginia. Seemingly undeterred, Levingston continued the construction of Williamsburg’s first theater.

There are several other possibilities framing Levingston’s myopically optimistic outlook. First, it is plausible that he was also aware of the lack of permanent buildings erected for creative purposes. In the early eighteenth century, theatrical productions were performed in a multitude of spaces that served varying purposes or stages were temporarily constructed then dissembled upon completion of the production. Levingston thought he found a niche market in the deficient cultural environs. Ann Morgan Smart’s archeological report on the original theater suggests the he also set aside space for the construction of a dwelling house, kitchen and stable. He later also designated space for a bowling green. (Smart no page #: accessed August 28th 2013: http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary). Quite possibly he established the area as a type of cultural center where attendees could have all their recreational needs taken care of for a price.

Second, it is conceivable that Levingston endeavored to use the theater to bolster his prospects of upward social mobility. The theater was located on the Palace Green in front of the Governor’s Palace (Stephenson 1946). Conceivably this location was strategic as it placed him in

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51 Smart’s report also notes that archeologists unearthed the foundation of the first theater and showed that the playhouse was 30 feet wide, 86.5 feet long and at least 2 stories tall – these dimensions are comparable to English provincial theaters of that day (Smart no page #: accessed August 28th 2013: http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary)
plain sight of Governor Spotswood. Arguably, Levingston hoped to cater his theater to the
governor and his guests thereby endowing the enterprise with respectability and elite attendees.
These attendees undoubtedly had the financial capital to support Levingston’s enterprise. Clearly
the theater caught Spotswood’s eye. Supporting this claim is Governor Spotswood’s decree that a
play was part of the "publick entertainment" honoring of King George I’s birthday (Kollatz:
Rankin 25). This play was likely performed in the Levingston-Stagg Theater. In addition to the
declarative support, the governor also signed the charter permitting the theater. Perhaps these
two motives influenced Levingston to think he found a benefactor in the governor.

In 1716, Levingston entered into agreement with the Staggs and the theater was
constructed. The contract stipulated that the Staggs were to obtain a “patent or lycence from ye
govener of Virginia for ye sole Privilege of acting Comedies, Drolls or other Kind of Stage
Plays” (York County Records, 1716-1720, 52-54). The records indicate that the patent was
granted for three years and specified that the Staggs were under contractual obligation to “teach
and instruct others in ye Way and Manner of acting according to ye best of their skill” (York
County Records, 1716-1720, 52-54). The nature of the Staggs’ commitment to the theater is
worthy of fuller discussion primarily because the Staggs were hired as partners rather than
servants.

It is quite likely that the Staggs used their talents as leverage to secure their freedom and
“requested for himself & his sd wife to be free of ye service mentioned in ye sd Indenture” (York
County Records, 1716-1720, 52-54). Levingston ended the Staggs’ indenture servitude in order
to begin the work with this theater. This suggests that the Staggs and Levingston would only

52 Spotswood's celebration was a disaster due to John Blair’s undermining. Blair and seven other
members of Governor's Council ignored the planned event and staged their own entertainment at
the Capitol where they included free drinks. Blair used the opportunity to embarrass Spotswood.
enter into partnership based on the voidance of the previous contract. Otherwise the Staggs’ contributions were lost. This supports the notion that the abilities and talents of the Staggs were magnificent. Seemingly Levingston was both impressed with the Staggs’ creative ability and realized their talents would help his investment. This benefited both parties. The Staggs’ knowledge bolstered Levingston’s inexperience while their work solidified the theater as a viable cultural marker and financial investment. Moreover, Levingston’s financial venture enabled the Staggs to move out of their position as indentured servants and into a more highly regarded social role as tradespeople. Conclusively the Staggs’ skill and professional talent was paramount to this deal. Accordingly there are no other viable reasons why Levingston would voluntarily void their servitude and enlist their partnership while entrusting almost the entire enterprise to their expertise. Therefore, the Staggs utilized their creative capacity as a means to ensure their freedom and secure their position as contributors to Virginia’s cultural sphere.

It is conceivable that Levingston’s impression of the Staggs was also marred by intimidation. Considering the Staggs demonstrated such remarkable talent and ability that from a business prospective, Levingston was threatened by the prospect of their competition. Hypothetically, if the Staggs began their own theatrical and dance venture this would have severely hampered Levingston’s client base and profits. Levingston’s business sense made this obvious to him as he specifically outlined the parameters of the Staggs’ creative trade prospects. These limitations explicitly stated that the Staggs would only work with Levingston. He made this clear in the contract: “Charles Stagg nor Mary his wife shall Act in any Plays without ye sd Colony of Virga: without ye Consent of ye sd Wm Levingston” (York County Records, 1716-1720, 52-54). Charles and Mary Stagg were also not allowed to obtain a “Patent or Lycence from ye Governr in manner aforesd” (York County Records, 1716-1720, 52-54). Seemingly
Levingston was so fearful of the Staggs’ viable competition that he included a provision in the chance that the Staggs disobeyed. As written in the patent, “Wm Levingston shall have & receive One half of all ye Profits arising by such Plays” (York County Records, 1716-1720, 52-54). Astutely, Levingston prevented the development of a competitive rival thereby ensuring that he monopolized the market. Despite the lack of records framing the actual abilities of the Staggs, the specifications drawn in the contract make it explicit that their talents were formidable. Thereby Levingston eliminated the Staggs as competition while eradicating their creative freedom. In doing so Levingston repositioned himself as the central theatrical linchpin in early Virginia.

It is vital to establish the theater contract between Levingston and the Staggs as a business venture rather than an indenture. Two major components of the contract contextualize this interpretation. First, the fact that this theater contract severed their former indentured contract demonstrates the lifting of the Staggs from their servitude. Moreover, the Staggs were frequently subjected to unambiguous contractual obligations. The Levingston-Stagg contract was based on the Staggs’ specialization with the intent of using their expertise to directly enhance the quality of the theater. In *The History of the American Economy* (2009) by Gary Walton and Hugh Rockoff, the authors suggest a typical indenture included a general understanding of the servant’s duties. A representational indenture did not stipulate a servant’s duties but established “indentured servants, thus bound, performed any work [for] their ‘employers’” (Walton and Rockoff 28). In contrast, the Staggs’ were held to specific labor conditions, such as only managing the Levingston-Stagg theater or employing the actors and musicians. This differentiated the Levingston-Stagg contract from a typical indenture.

Second, and perhaps the most important demarcation differentiating the Levingston-
Stagg theater contract from an indenture, was the payment of money. A typical indentured servant saw no wages during her or his servitude and if any exchange of wages occurred, it was “received at the end of the period of indenture” (Walton and Rockoff 30). As part of the contract, the Staggs and Levingston managed the theater collaboratively, in almost an equal partnership. As the patent makes clear, Charles and Mary “shall also have, receive & Enjoy an Equall share of ye Profits arising thereby” (York County Records, 1716-1720, 52-54). To clarify, this patent specified that the Staggs and Levingston were to share both expenses and profits. However, it was the financial responsibility of Levingston to pay the theater’s rent since the building’s mortgage was in his name. Instead of Levingston only reaping wages based on the Staggs’ skill, both parties enjoyed payments throughout the duration of the theater. This is the central difference establishing this contract as one based on partnership rather than servitude. Yet the understanding of this contract as an equal partnership must be problematized.

The only similarity between the Levingston-Stagg theater contract and an indenture is the specification of labor duration. According to Walton and Rockoff an indenture contract included “a period of service that varied from three to seven years, although four years was probably the most common term” (Walton and Rockoff 28). Notably, the Levingston-Stagg theater contract included a three-year term of service. However it is plausible that Levingston and the Staggs included this stipulation in order to eventually free the couple to pursue other cultural professions

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53 Charles Stagg was permitted to keep any entrance money or other profits related to the instructions of persons in the ‘Science of Dancing’. He also agreed to pay Levingston within eighteen months the sum of L35.17s in full for all advances in money and goods and all expense to which Levingston had been put to provide horses, ferriage, and other assistance to Stagg in attending the various places where he had held dancing classes. Stagg also had to pay Levingston the sum of L60 current money for three successive years, beginning in 1717. (Land 360)

54 The contract specifies that “ye Rent of ye Playhouse at WmsBurgh only Excepted which is declared as aforesd to be ye proper Charge of ye sd Wm Levingston” (York County Records, 1716-1720, 52-54).
and opportunities. This problematizes the contract further. Equal partnerships only referred to
the finances nonetheless the Staggs’ creative abilities were restricted. The Staggs were not
allowed to pursue their own creative endeavors thus granting Levingston power over their
creative agency. This restructured a type of hierarchy akin to the master and servant relationship
since Levingston still maintained control of the Staggs. Despite the lifting of the indentured
contract, Levingston still held the position of an overseer while the Staggs were his underlings.

The equal financial partnership is phallocentric and removes Mary Stagg from the
pecuniary provisions. In this particular section of the contract, the financial involvement was
explicitly drawn between Charles Stagg and Levingston. Mary Stagg’s name is notably absent.
For example, here the contract demonstrates her erasure: “Governour shall be pleased to grant ye
same for ye joint benefit of ye sd William Levingston or Charles Stagg or their assigns & neither
of ye sd parties shall accept of or use such lycense without assuming ye other as partner in
manner aforesaid” (York County Records, 1716-1720, 52-54). This came in direct contrast to
previous contractual provisions that specified Mary Stagg’s participation in all the endeavors of
the theater. For instance, the contract mentioned the inclusion of her labor: “Charles & Mary
shall not only Act in all ye Stage Plays (sickness & other reasonable Accidents Excepted) but
shall also use their best Endea-vours to teach or instruct Others in ye way & manner of Acting
according to ye best of their skill as well for ye Three Years” (York County Records, 1716-1720,
52-54). Considering her erasure from the financial provisions, it seems this creative labor was
not made redeemable by payment or equal sharing of the profits. She sealed her name in
accordance with the provisions thereby finalizing her contribution but not her compensation. It
was probably assumed that as the male representative Charles Stagg was responsible for the
financial management of the couple. Seemingly Levingston assumed Mary Stagg would
eventually receive compensation as soon as it was filtered through her husband. Mary Stagg’s public contribution was financially disavowed despite the evidence of her labor.

Despite this, both Staggs were given almost absolute control of the theater. Their duties included acting and dancing tutelage, recruiting and employing musicians and actors while also drafting the schedule of entertainment, and organizing rehearsal times (Land 360). Ultimately the Staggs were given jurisdiction over the entire enterprise and thus played a substantial role in the development of theatrical culture in Virginia. This endowed the Staggs with cultural power. In their contract, Levingston publicly commits to their power by clarifying “that they bear equal share in all charges of cloathes, musick, and other necessaries for acting in plays” (York County Records, 1716-1720: Bell 52-54). Levingston granted the Staggs the power to administer and control the trajectory of the theater. This recalls the speculations shaping Levingston’s creative Inabilities and Inexperience. The fact that Levingston shared his profits and expenses with the Staggs and positioned the theater as a joint venture concealed Levingston’s ingenuousness. Arguably Levingston granted the Staggs this power because he was not qualified to manage a theater and found the ramifications of the project entirely unlike operating a peripatetic dance school.

Throughout the theater’s term, it endured financial hardship that contributed to legal complications. Ultimately, the tepid response dictated the theater’s demise and the cultural experiment failed by 1723. At this point, Levingston foreclosed on its mortgage to Dr. Archibald Blair. The debt ravaged Levingston and his wife. Upon his death in 1726, Susannah was widowed with tremendous debt and she left the area. The Staggs however avoided the long-term financial hardships. There is a lack of scholarship or extant sources illuminating the reasons Levingston was in such dire debt while the Staggs avoided this pitfall. It is probable that the
theater never made enough money to cover the cost of the mortgage. Since Levingston was solely responsible for this portion of the enterprise, the financial burden fell on him and not the Staggs.\footnote{Tyler’s biography of Levingston in the *William and Mary Quarterly* in addition to scholars such as Rankin contend that Levingston was constantly plagued by legal battles varying in contract disputes with his servants to general payment failures. This also contributed to his overall debt. However, there are no remaining sources connecting the legal battles to his debt and Stagg’s prosperity.}

Arguably there are two primary reasons the Staggs evaded financial ruin. First, for any month the Staggs could not teach dancing due to their theatrical obligations, they were compensated for the financial loss. Markedly, this is expressed in the Levingston-Stagg theater contract. Land explains the particulars of the reimbursement: “It was provided, however, that Stagg could deduct L5 monthly for each month in which he was diverted from giving dancing lesson by reason of ‘being employed in the preparation and Acting of Plays for the joint benefit of himself and the sd Wm Levingston’” (Land 360). There is evidence to suggest that while still under contract with Levingston, the Staggs still traveled the region teaching dance. One specific example is derived from William Byrd’s *London Diary*. On October 20, 1720 Stagg was hired by Byrd to prepare his daughters for an upcoming ball (Byrd 464). Possibly, this teaching was a branch of Levingston’s peripatetic dance school. Since this was Levingston’s enterprise, the Staggs’ participation in this manner of arts and profession did not violate the contracted obligations. Or perhaps by the year 1720, the theater’s dire financial state and lackluster attendance frightened the Staggs into disobeying the signed agreement. It is quite possible that they anticipated the theater’s failure. Thereby they sought other occupations in preparation for the theater’s demise. Notably in his diary entry Byrd only refers to Stagg in the singular,
suggesting that one person was present. This singularity is vital in the reconstruction of Mary Stagg’s history.

Throughout the 1720s, the records indicated that Charles Stagg taught dance in Williamsburg, Carolina Country, and the Northern Neck (Benson: Van Winkle Keller 198). The Staggs probably taught a style similar to both French and British techniques. This claim is supported by Charles Stagg’s estate inventory that specified he owned copies of the John Weaver’s *Orchesography: The Art of Dancing* (1706) and John Essex’s *The Art of Dancing Explained* (1728). A dance master or mistress primarily used these texts in order to develop her or his own abilities to teach the French dance method. Seemingly the Staggs also based their teaching on these manuals thereby infusing their students with an amalgamation of French and British techniques. The assumption that French techniques were evident in the Staggs’ instruction is reaffirmed by Byrd’s penchant for the French dancing style and his employment of Stagg.

Some indications of the Staggs’ peripatetic teaching route are made evident from Robert Carter’s extant journals and letters. Carter’s letters suggest that Stagg frequently visited the Corotoman Estate to teach Carter’s children or oversee other cultural activities. For example, Carter wrote that Stagg supervised the dancing at Ann Carter's wedding celebration in 1722. As Carter expressed, “My daughter Ann married to mr Benjamin…and a few days later Stagg & the music went away” (Carter, no page # given: accessed http://carter.lib.virginia.edu). Mr. Stagg’s presence suggests that he oversaw the dance while also managing the music. Since a violin was mentioned in Stagg’s estate inventory, it is likely that he provided the music with this

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56 Essex’s text was the English translation of Pierre Rameau’s text *Le Maître a Danser* (1725).
In a 1723 entry, Carter specifies that he “paid 20 shillings for Carter & Elizabeth Burwells Entrance with Stagg” (Carter, no page # given: accessed http://carter.lib.virginia.edu). The entrance was likely the fee Stagg charged for instruction. Additionally, Stagg organized balls for Carter. As the ledger states “Staggs ball I gave him 5 pistols” (Carter, no page # given: accessed http://carter.lib.virginia.edu). Carter often hired Stagg to oversee the dance instruction and musical activities. Despite the dependency on Carter’s patronage, the journal explicates Stagg did not spend extended durations of time on the estate. Carter is careful to include in his diary the date and approximate time staff arrived and departed. For example in two different ledgers, Carter logs “last Night Stagg came here about 11[and] September 3 Sunday Stagg & Wood went away” (Carter, no page # given: accessed http://carter.lib.virginia.edu). During the time Stagg was away from Corotoman Estate, it is likely that he continued his dancing circuit through the region. Van Winkle Keller asserts that Stagg navigated “the York River and the Rappahannock to the lower Northern Neck Peninsula; west to John Armistead’s home in Carolina County, up the James River to Byrd’s Westover home…” (Van Winkle Keller 199). Notably, Carter much as Byrd, in addition to the secondary sources, only referred to Stagg in the singular thereby never clearly specifying Mary Stagg’s contribution.

Researchers must ask where Mary Stagg was from 1723-1735. Considering the historiography on women and trade, she probably traveled with Charles Stagg throughout the dancing circuit. Her history as a dance instructor suggests that she was a proficient tradeswoman thereby it is highly likely that she joined her husband. She and Charles Stagg developed a legacy of working in collaboration. As made clear in the contract between the Staggs and Levingston,

Stagg’s estate also yielded several musical instruments and musical accessories. For instance, Van Winkle Keller succinctly lists the items as “a fiddle, case and strings, a harpsichord, and a large collection of music by Handel, Hasse, Stanley, Palma and others” (Van Winkle Keller footnote 91, 200).
Mary was in partnership with Charles. To rephrase Kollatz they were a song and dance team. Considering Mary Stagg’s involvement in Levingston’s peripatetic dancing school, it is reasonable to assume that she was familiar with the life of an iterant dance teacher. This makes room for the consideration that she worked alongside her husband and traveled to each estate. As such she was probably present and participated in the instruction of Carter’s children and the management of his cultural activities. There are several instances in Carter’s journal pointing towards tasks Mary Stagg was capable of overseeing. For example on May 1727, Carter paid 4.5 pistoles to Stagg for his assemblies (Carter, no page # given: accessed http://carter.lib.virginia.edu). In widowhood Mary Stagg continued the organization of assemblies. The fact that she continued the organization of the assemblies, past her husband’s death, suggests that she was accustomed to the occupation. Without doubt, this familiarity and skill was developed during the time she and Charles Stagg traveled and taught. From a refiguring of their histories, it is viable to assume that as half of the Stagg song and dance team, she traveled with her husband, and together they worked to develop their vocations. Yet the documents supporting this statement are non-existent, thereby continuously reestablishing her invisibility. Regardless, it is her history, coupled with her abilities that support the claim that Mary Stagg actually accompanied Mr. Stagg on the circulatory teaching route.

It is too simplistic to point to gender as the specific reason to the infrequent attention given to Mary Stagg. Other cultural conditions such as economic viability, geography, residency, and civic responsibility are also practicable considerations when considering a tradeswoman’s visibility. Putting these cultural conditions together complicates and showcases the primary sources as unreliable when considering the subject’s legacy. These cultural conditions also effect the sources’ positions in the archives. This declarative is shaped by Ann Laura Stoler’s *Along the
Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense (2009). Stoler implores readers to consider the voice of the archive, the materials, and then those who wrote the sources. Stoler provides the pathway to unearth the biases in primary sources and archival material. By extension she provokes researchers to find the voice of the female tradeswomen. Thus researchers must examine the general social contexts of tradeswomen to fully refigure Mary Stagg’s history.

The Charles and Mary Stagg partnership was not an anomaly. In the eighteenth century it was typical for married women to labor alongside their husbands in the family business. Scholars have deftly researched the occupational and entrepreneurial activity of men and women in the eighteenth century. Alice Clark adroitly further develops this point in Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century (1982) when she contests that “husband and wife were then mutually dependent and together supported the children” (Clark 12). Notably, Clark is referencing the norm in the seventeenth century however a similar theme is extendable to the Staggs. This insured that the business was managed efficiently while preparing the women to “support themselves in widowhood” (Kerner 20). The continuity of Mary Stagg’s assemblies pursued in widowhood substantiate Kerner’s and Clark’s claim. The commonality of collaborative trade was widespread yet dominant social norms were intact as tradeswomen were often “their husband’s subordinates” (Kerner 18). Thus it is likely Mary Stagg traveled and worked alongside her husband. Her erasure is not a matter of absence but rather her invisibility was rendered by subordination. Mary Stagg’s professionalism was rendered invisible despite her contributions. Accordingly, Mary Stagg’s exclusion from Carter’s or Byrd’s records reflects her submission while undermining her visibility. As a result her husband was the professional focus. The acknowledgement of contributions to creative labor would have endowed Mary Stagg with a
type of power that threatened patriarchal hegemony. By relocating emphasis on her husband’s work, and by default subsuming Mary Stagg, only reaffirmed the ideologies concretizing patriarchal paradigms.

Throughout his journals and letters Carter does not mention the first name of the women who visited or labored at his estate unless they were his descendants. He frequently referred to female visitors as just the wife of the male visitor or does not refer to them at all. For example, in 1722 Carter wrote, “Captain Smith his wife mr Steptoe his wife/Captain Pinkard mr Edwards was here/ Captain Jones & his wife mr Eustace & his wife” (Carter, no page # given: accessed http://carter.lib.virginia.edu). Even more telling was Carter’s note indicating, “[for] the Concert I gave the Singer 15 Shillings & had given her a Guinea before” (Carter, no page # specified: http://carter.lib.virginia.edu). However, there is no evidence supporting the identity of “her.” Similarly, Mary Stagg fell victim to Carter’s sightlessness. The removal of these women’s names and identities silenced their contributions. Accordingly, this also repositioned the power back onto their husbands. The invisibility of their identities diminished their cultural contribution while marring any freedom to value women’s cultural work.

There are instances in Carter’s diary that hint at Mary Stagg’s presence. For example, Carter’s diary specifies that Stagg did not travel alone. As Carter wrote, “I gave to Stagg's People 10 (schillings)” (Carter, no page # given: accessed http://carter.lib.virginia.edu). Carter does not specify who these people were or elucidate their specific responsibilities. It is more than likely that Staggs’ ‘people’ included Mary Stagg. Carter was functioning under the common assumption that Charles Stagg was the primary wage earner and overseer of the dancing instruction. This echoes the previous discussion regarding the contract and Mary Stagg’s exclusion from the financial provisions. Thereby “the people,” such as his wife, who worked
directly under him, became a faceless assemblage – his subordinate. Consequentially this forced these individuals to assume a secondary trade and social position. Much as Levingston, Carter assumed Charles Stagg was the primary impresario thereby affording him the privilege of distributing the money to “his people.”

Mary Stagg’s contribution to cultural development was undermined as her work becomes indistinguishable from other hired people. Carter granted Mr. Stagg a type of privilege based on gender and social status while prohibiting Mary Stagg’s privilege and disavowing the social and political systems ensuring an even distribution of resources, finances, opportunities, and services. Carter’s statement contextualized Mary Stagg as a nameless helpmate and naturalized social systems that reaffirmed invisibility based on gender. In Mary Stagg’s case, the erasure of her creative identity and contribution supported systems where individual freedoms, access to opportunities, and resources were overruled by hegemonic practices. The reaffirmation of Mr. Stagg as the central patriarch, who managed and oversaw “his people,” was the verification of dominant patriarchal hierarchies. If Carter grouped Mary Stagg as part of her husband’s assemblage, this caused her to lose her individuality and agency. Ergo she was rendered invisible.

When considering Mary Stagg’s trade position, it is interesting to compare the language Carter used in his ledgers in contrast to the contract drafted with Levingston. At first, Carter’s avoidance of Mary Stagg’s contribution served in direct contrast to the inclusion of her name in the Levingston-Stagg theater contract. The overarching difference stems from the fact that Mary Stagg’s first and last name are included in the Levingston contract while her sealed name affirmed her partnership. This contract suggested that Mary Stagg was given responsibility and opportunity within the theatrical enterprise. However her inclusion in the theatrical enterprise
was not based on any type of equitable premise. The invisibility rendered from Carter’s account and the visibility stemming from the theater’s contract reveal a similar ideology: both neglect to place value on her work. The actual stipulations in the Levingston-Stagg theater contract only controlled her behavior rather than elucidate her potential contributions. For example, Mary Stagg’s name frequently emerged in the section clarifying that Charles and Mary were not allowed to act with other troupes or open competing businesses. In the actual provisions on the management of the theater, the contract simply refers to “Charles Stagg his Exec & Admr’s” (York County Records, 1716-1720, 52-54). “Exec and Admr’s” is abbreviated language for Executors and Administrators or the appointed officers of the court that are considered the fiduciaries, or trusted representatives of the deceased. As such, they had an absolute duty to properly administer the property solely for its beneficiaries. Hitherto “Exec and Admr’s” is the legalese for “his people.” In the eighteenth century, wives were commonly appointed to serve as their husbands’ executors. A widow was given a portion of the inheritance but often it was first divided between the eldest son and other outstanding debts. Executors needed to possess the basic understanding of legal concepts, the valuation of property, etc.\(^{58}\) As her husband’s executor, Mary Stagg demonstrated proficiency in managing the theater in addition to the overarching legal and administrative stipulations. Yet, despite these qualifications, Mary Stagg was rendered nothing more than an “Exec and Admr’s.” This erasure is comparable to the invisibility rendered in Carter’s papers while reaffirming the assumption that Mary Stagg was frequently grouped as part of her husband’s general assemblage.

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Mary Stagg’s invisibility sheds light on another facet of the social negotiations commonly embodied by creative tradeswomen in the eighteenth century. On one hand, Mary Stagg was talented enough to pose a type of cultural threat to Levingston and this necessitated barring her from participating in other dramatic performances. On the other hand, the value placed on her work was quieted since her contributions were deleted from the specifications delineating the mechanics of the theater. Mary Stagg was controlled by patriarchal norms that at once maintained power over her body, creativity, and professional opportunities while also erasing her contribution to the development of the theater. Her formidable talent and professional ability informed by dominant gender norms dictated this erasure. Accordingly, Mary Stagg’s invisibility was a result of the absolute power bestowed on her husband, the patriarch.

Lerner identifies this type of power as paternalistic dominance. She describes this trend as “the relationship of a dominant group, considered superior, to a subordinate group, considered inferior, in which the dominance is mitigated by mutual obligation and reciprocal rights” (Lerner 239). Lerner demonstrates that the main difference between patriarchal and paternalistic dominance is the latter descends from a particular mode of the institutionalized patriarchal system. Historically, paternalistic dominance is derived from family relations where the husband or father, acting as the paramount patriarch, provides economic support and protection to his wife and children who are positioned as his subordinates. Paternalistic dominance is an unwritten contract, however, acknowledged by those within and outside of the family structure. The family members embody paternalistic dominance. The referral to Mary Stagg as Mr. Stagg’s people or his Exec & Admrs positioned her as a nameless subordinate who invisibly exchanged her craft for his economic support. In accordance with paternal dominance, the privilege to manage her
wages is given to her husband. Mary Stagg’s invisibility is impacted by this paternalism that substituted absolute power for submission.

It is perilous to assume that Mary Stagg’s involvement in or contribution to paternalistic dominance was voluntary or resulted from internalized oppressions. Rather, it was possibly a rational choice for Mary Stagg to work alongside her husband. The lack of acclaim or acknowledgement of her valuable skill was an unfortunate corollary. Yet from a theoretical perspective, Mary Stagg’s involvement in paternalistic dominance developed the overarching gender negotiation even further. Her position as an invisible cultural entity did not pose a threat to patriarchal paradigms. Her formidable skill was recuperated since she was under the protection and control of her husband. Lerner, in a more general yet applicable sense, contends that the exchange for economic or political subordination allowed women to “share the power of men of [their] class” (Lerner 218). To develop Lerner’s point to reflect Mary Stagg and other creative women in this dissertation, their visible displays of subordination enabled them to share power with men in their respective trades. Lerner makes room for the suggestion that women were able to assert a type of creative agency as long as they functioned within and under larger gender ideologies. A woman’s creative agency and general trade responsibilities were at once encouraged yet oppressed under paternalistic dominance. The system of paternalistic dominance was so ingrained in eighteenth century society it became completely impossible for creative tradeswomen to absolutely transgress this system. For women such as Mary Stagg, negotiation of this paradigm conterminally witnessed their adherence to gender ideology but also provided a space for their creative development. Under the conditions of economic and professional powerlessness, the choice to follow their husbands and internalize paternalistic dominance was the primary method for subverting the system. The appearance of adhering to paternalistic
dominance took the form of Mr. Stagg’s people or a subsumed wife. Yet this observance allowed women to establish themselves as viable cultural figures. Unfortunately, their contribution was, and still is, understated and often rendered valueless, if not entirely subsumed by the histories of their male relations.

In avoidance of anachronisms, Mary Stagg’s awareness of her visibility must be considered. Since the identification of visibility and consequential oppression were contemporary constructions, it was quite likely that Mary Stagg was not aware of this apparent inequality. We do not have the evidence framing an argument in which we recover Mary Stagg’s plight against erasure. Historians must be cautious of endowing a historical body with unearned or unwanted agency. Rather the acknowledgement of visibility and erasure serve to develop the historical record yet must be framed in an accurate context. Wallach Scott argues for equivalence rather than equality. The emphasis on equivalence recognizes the viability and significance of historical agents while maintaining an “indifference to specified differences” (Scott 27). The history of the term equality calls for fairness and understanding of cultural conditions thereby suggesting one human life is not more or less valuable than any other. However, it is unfair to the historical subject to mire her in equality when the concept and the meaning were not yet fully applicable. From a theoretical perspective, one of the most constructive aspects of the identification of visibility and erasure is the attention given to dominant practices, the effects of disparity on subordinate groups, and the potential for shifts in social and cultural historical frameworks. For example, acknowledging a woman’s ability to contribute to the cultural record and addressing the dominant ideologies informing her mobility. Mary Stagg’s history is not a search for the reasons she was denied the same opportunities and resources allocated to men. Thus an argument contextualizing her public and professional role as equal to Mr. Stagg’s is
indefensible. She is though demonstrative of an eighteenth century woman who demands readdressing of the historical record that continuously puts her name and contribution under erasure. A refiguring of Mary Stagg’s work repositions her within an accurate understanding of the era’s social, economic, or political ideologies while also showcasing her talents and significance.

Charles Stagg died in Williamsburg in 1735. The advertisements from *The Virginia Gazette* demonstrate that after his death, Mary Stagg earned a living organizing and managing dancing assemblies. For instance, the first assemblies she publicized were in April of 1737 for an event on “Thursday the 28th and another on Friday the 29th” (Parks, *The Virginia Gazette*, April 10th, 1737). There was a two-year gap between Mr. Stagg’s death and the printing of the newspaper advertisements for Mary Stagg’s assemblies. There are several possibilities for how she spent those two years. First, it is plausible that she ceased a traveling lifestyle and permanently settled in Williamsburg as there are no records framing an itinerate career. The records for her assemblies make it clear she owned a home from where she sold tickets (Parks, *The Virginia Gazette*, October 13, 1738). However, this does not imply that she stopped teaching. Considering the Staggs’ teaching careers spanned nearly two decades, it is likely that she continued teaching local students. Unfortunately, there are few records contextualizing this period thus we are forced to consider the possibilities.

It is also likely that when Mr. Stagg died he left enough money to sustain Mary Stagg for those two years. Molnar suggests that Charles Stagg “died a fairly well to do man” (Molnar 69). Stagg’s estate inventory substantiates this claim. His final effects included household furnishings, livestock and “two slaves, (one old blind man and a woman named Coldstream), and two servants, Ann Walker, (five years service), and violin-playing Thomas Cellers, (two years
service)” (Kollatz: Land 367). The ownership of slaves and indentured servants suggested a level of affluence. The standard price of a slave from auction varied since the “selling-price had to cover the merchants' cost of transporting, feeding, and perhaps even clothing the slaves” (Karras and McNeill 60). This was in addition to extra value placed on productivity all driven by the prices of commodities established in the local markets. Records do not establish the price of their slaves and servants or how much capital the purchase cost the Staggs. Yet, as Phillip D. Morgan suggests in Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry (1998), slave and servant ownership was the pinnacle of economic success. A tradeswoman who owned several slaves and servants for two years passed her husband’s death indicated a degree of financial stability. Despite this, there is also room to conjecture that Mary Stagg was not left with enough money to guarantee long-term financial stability. Thus she sold Thomas Cellers, vended candies, and finally organized assemblies in order to financially provide for herself.

Thomas Cellers’ history begins to unfold Mary Stagg’s financial burdens. During his two year contract with the Staggs, Mary sold him to Colonel Benjamin Harrison. This is substantiated by a runaway announcement printed on January 11, 1737 in The Virginia Gazette. Here Harrison stated he searched for a runaway “named Thomas Cellars, who was a Servant of Mary Stagg’s”

59 The resources documenting slave ownership by trades people or the middling class are inconsistent. Rather this paragraph was patched together by references from a number of sources. These sources included Jeremy Black’s The Atlantic Slave Trade: Volume III Eighteenth Century, Kenneth Morgan’s Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy, 1660-1800; John Pinfold’s The Slave Trade Debate, Phillip D. Morgan’s Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry; Edmond Morgan’s American Slavery, American Freedom; Patrick Manning’s 'Tragedy and Sacrifice in the History of Slavery' taken from Alan L. Karras and J. R. McNeil (eds), Atlantic American Societies from Columbus Through Abolition 1492-1888.
(Parks, *The Virginia Gazette*, January 11, 1737). Considering the timeline, Stagg sold Cellers prior to January 1737. Her first advertisement for an assembly was in April of the same year. It is conclusive that her financial burdens began in late 1736 if not very early in the year 1737. At this time she also began organizing assemblies and by 1738 selling groceries.

There are two likely reasons Mary Stagg sold Cellers to Harrison: either Cellers was no longer essential or she needed the money generated from this sale. Arguably, Mary Stagg did not need Cellers’ services. Cellers’ runaway announcement discerned that he “plays very well on the Violin, or Fiddle” (Parks, *The Virginia Gazette*, January 11, 1737). His specialty was probably music thereby he undoubtedly supported the Staggs on their teaching circuits. If Mary Stagg actually ceased the itinerant teaching trade, she no longer needed Cellers’ music. The selling of Cellers also worked as a method to secure some quick, albeit limited, income. As a result she sold the man to Harrison to elevate some financial burden. Yet selling Cellers was not adequate, and Mary Stagg turned to groceries as another means of establishing her income.

In *The Virginia Gazette*, Mary Stagg wrote a notice that was unlike her other announcements. On September 22, 1738, Mary Stagg gave notice that she sold various grocery products such as “Curran Jellies, & many other sorts of Fruit Jellies: Mackaroons, and Savoy Biscakes” (Parks, *The Virginia Gazette*, September 22, 1738). To entice potential consumers while also demonstrating her awareness of a competitive marketplace, Mary Stagg specified her products were available “in small Quantities, or large if wanted, every Day, at very reasonable Rates” (Parks, *The Virginia Gazette*, September 22, 1738). This is the only extant advertisement in which Mary Stagg sold goods and services that were not directly related to dancing culture or assemblies. This announcement seems more of a keyhole into Mary Stagg’s financial reality. The fact that Mary Stagg announced she sold these items “every day” suggests this was a consistent
occupation utilized to supplement her income. It is not known whether she was not making enough money from assemblies or her inheritance. But what is conclusive is that she needed more money than her trade provided. Thus Mary Stagg sold groceries to substantiate her income.

Here Mary Stagg engendered a common trope made evident by all the creative women in this dissertation. They adopted various occupations in order to maintain incoming revenue. This solidifies the claim that the population of Williamsburg and the surrounding regions, despite appreciating the entertainment, was certainly increasing but substantially inconsistent. This demographic discrepancy was surely a reflection of the prentice colony but also publick times. As a result, the shifts in population prevented the creative tradeswomen from fully flourishing. The key to successful moneymaking and trade practices was the ability to diversify one’s talents and occupations. This echoes the assertion that many men and women could not solely rely on musical or creative activity to insure financial longevity. Many performers, including Mary Stagg, sought varying occupations as financial support. Economic necessity forced men and women such as Mary Stagg to secure any occupation that would ensure favorable financial return.

Mary Stagg’s entrepreneurship did not necessarily reflect poverty. The multiplicity of her trades illuminates the daunting reality of trades people who were constantly indebted to work in order to procure a consistent income. Mary Stagg’s management of assemblies and makeshift grocery speaks to her ability to acquire and participate in economic culture, while also demonstrating the complicated and arduous life of a creative individual. Despite the several avenues Mary Stagg practiced to become financially stable, the combination of assemblies, the groceries, and servant selling was not enough to strengthen her financial position. This illuminates the complexity in understanding the eighteenth century musician or artisan as an
absolute trade. While also demonstrating the challenges presented by pursuing music and cultural activities as exclusive occupations. The fact that Mary Stagg began to sell candies and other groceries does not necessarily suggest that her assemblies were poorly attended or she did not make enough money from these endeavors. The changing albeit expanding population of Williamsburg indisputably impacted the fee-paying participants and consequentially the accrued income. As a result the assemblies were not constant and she needed to diversify her income in between events.

Competition became another factor influencing Mary Stagg’s grocery endeavor. By the 1730s, new music and dancing teachers arrived in Williamsburg offering similar cultural activities. In November of 1737, William Dering arrived in town for the instruction of "all Gentlemen sons" in dancing according to the newest French style (Rankin 33). Another teacher, Jones Irwin, arrived in April 1739. He offered the talents of his indentured servant, Stephen Tenoe, who would hold classes in dance at Hampton, Yorktown and Williamsburg. (William & Mary Quarterly: Land 367-8).

Yet Mary Stagg’s greatest competition came from a woman who did not arrive in this country to pursue a creative occupation. This woman was Baroness Barbara deGraffenreit who arrived to colonial Virginia with her husband. Eventually Barbara DeGraffenreit’s assemblies emerged as a viable competition while also positioning her as a major contributor to Virginia’s culture.

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60 In 1739, Stephen Tenoe's employer advertised that the dance master was a servant and that all his earnings should revert to his employer until his term was complete. Similarly, that same year, a notice appeared for a runaway servant from Maryland, thought to have escaped to Virginia. His wronged employer warned that the runaway professed to teach dancing. A similar notice appeared in 1745. In addition to the legitimate dance masters in Virginia, there may have been a number of slaves and indentured servants who had the ability to teach dance.
CHAPTER III: MARY STAGG AND BARBARA DEGRAFFENREIT: COMPETITION, DANCING, AND SOCIAL NORMS

It is necessary to examine the role of Mary Stagg and Barbara deGraffenreit juxtaposed against Williamsburg’s larger cultural context. The extant records such as estate inventories, contracts, William Byrd’s journals, and newspaper advertisements substantiate Mary Stagg’s and Barbara deGraffenreit’s roles in the development of Williamsburg’s society. Specifically, the Staggs’ role in the construction of the Williamsburg Theater and their position as itinerant dancing teachers established Mary Stagg as a viable cultural player. Likewise, Barbara DeGraffenreit attained a dominant cultural role primarily due to the social and cultural privilege harnessed from her position as a Baroness. Both women’s roles in Virginia’s culture complicate and refigure the lives of women who utilized creativity as their primary mode of trade.

Much as the theater was dependent on music and musicians, dance culture required a similar need. Music was frequently associated with dancing. However, the majority of the primary sources reiterate an evening’s dances while seldom addressing the musical accompaniment. For example, George Washington demonstrated the pairing of music and dance when he wrote that he “went to a ball at Alexandria, where Musick and Dancing was the chief entertainment” (Washington: Fey 181). Yet the similarities between theater, music, and dance are not absolute. For one, the primary records restructuring dance and assembly culture do not frame women as the central managers. Moreover the musicians who aided dancing and

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61 In this particular passage, Washington devoted most of his attention to sarcastically observing the quality of the table linen. For instance, his description of the evening ends with “remembered that pocket handkerchiefs servd the purposes of Table Cloths and Napkins and that no Apologies were made for either” (Washington: Fey 181).
assemblies were infrequently recorded regardless of gender. Rather observers of dance culture typically noted the type of dance yet infrequently documented the quality of music or the practices of the assemblies’ managers. This becomes the central difference when considering dance culture in relation to the responses to music or theater. Whereas the troupe’s managers and singing actresses of the theater were often noted, the facilitators’ contributions to dance culture are generally omitted from the historical record. Frequently, these organizers were women who utilized dance culture as a trade.

Mary Stagg’s name appeared in the assemblies’ advertisements as the primary point of contact. She probably served as the manager and overseer of the events. This claim is substantiated by Mary Stallings who suggests tickets for assemblies were purchasable from the manager’s home thereby signifying to the community the organizer of the affair (Stallings, no page #. Accessed September 9, 2012: http://www.EncyclopediaVirginia.org/Dance_During_the_Colonial_Period). Mary Stagg was always careful to include the locations for tickets sales. As she specified in this advertisement, “Tickets to be had of Mrs. Cobb, at Mary Stagg’s, the said day from Ten in the Morning until Four in the Afternoon. Price half a pistols” (Parks, The Virginia Gazette, October 21, 1737). Similarly, one year later, Mary Stagg assured readers that the tickets for her October 31st assembly were purchasable from her home (Parks, The Virginia Gazette, October 13, 1738). Since she positioned herself as a primary point of ticket sales, this acknowledged her as the assembly’s manager. In this role, she organized and finalized all the logistics including the schedule for the evening’s events, ticket sales, and promotion. No extant sources exist describing

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62 Norman Arthur Benson’s Ph.D. dissertation, “The Itinerant Dancing and Music Masters of 18th-Century America.” University of Minnesota, 1963, briefly discusses the use of local musicians to facilitate dance. Due to the discrepancies in the extant sources, he does not develop the full responsibility of their performance instead notes their presence.
the specifics of Mary Stagg’s assemblies. However, an examination of assemblies’ general characteristics can elucidate her cultural contributions.

Assemblies were common throughout the eighteenth century. In Virginia in particular, newspaper archives demonstrate the hosting of assemblies in Williamsburg, Norfolk, Alexandria, Winchester, Fredericksburg, and Richmond (Stallings, no page #. Accessed September 9, 2012: http://www.EncyclopediaVirginia.org/Dance_During_the_Colonial_Period). Assemblies were held in the taverns, the Governor’s Palace, or in the long rooms of many households. Dance masters taught the children of the affluent dance steps precisely to showcase their pedigrees at assemblies. A young person could exhibit proper breeding based on the gentility of his steps and a young lady increased her chances for a successful marriage through demonstration of her social graces. Bushman’s examination of Philadelphian assemblies is helpful in understanding the logistics of a typical eighteenth century recreational evening. As he writes, “at large events such as the assemblies, a manager staged the performance and scheduled the happenings, a certain order of dances, for example, creating a well-regulated ball” (Bushman 54). Certainly, a Philadelphian assembly probably varied from a Virginian event, as geography dictated distinctive characteristics.63 However, the overall structure and mechanics were undoubtedly similar.

During the first three decades of the eighteenth century, it was common for the dancing masters or mistresses to organize assemblies. By mid-century and onward, private citizens tried their hand at managing the events. When organized by private citizens, the sizes of assemblies were larger and more lavish due to the probable availability of private funding and unrestricted space. The majority of these events were subscription based, meaning that participants paid to attend. Subscription assemblies, much as concerts, were cultural events that were advertised in the newspapers while tickets were sold ahead of time. The price varied thereby influencing the demographics of the attendees. In many cases, the price of attendance was used as a marker of affluence and refinement while frequently excluding those facing financial paucity. However, not all assemblies were designed to demarcate class hierarchies. In many cases, assemblies brought together the surrounding population for evenings of dance and festivities. As such, the continuity of subscription assemblies relied on a public who awaited that scheduled events. It is evident from the extant sources that regular assemblies were cultural facets of life in eighteenth century Virginia.

Bushman fleetingly suggests that there were differences between balls and assemblies. On the surface, many assemblies invited the general population whereas balls were commonly held for an exclusive audience. Moreover, assemblies were apolitical forms of recreation that frequently did not have explicit social or political purposes. In contrast balls usually had some type of overt social or political function. For example, The Virginia Gazette’s listing for Richard Coventon’s ball publicly showcased the event’s social exclusivity. For example, the advertisement read “I purpose to have a Ball for my Scholars: Such Gentlemen and Ladies who

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64 Bushman uses an example from a Philadelphian assembly held in Alexander Hamilton’s home. This particular event was so large and extensive that it required participants to dance in shifts. As Bushman states “one group of eighty gathered on one evening and another of the same size gathered two weeks later” (Bushman 50).
are pleased to favour me with their Company…” (Hunter, *The Virginia Gazette*, October 24th, 1751). The specification of Gentlemen and Ladies signified the participation of the gentry. By extension, this advertisement does not specify an invitation to the public.

In terms of political dictations, Stallings demonstrates that the defeat of the Jacobite rebels at the Battle of Culloden in 1746 was celebrated with a ball. In addition, the ball Nicholas Cresswell attended in 1775 was an annual event held in January to commemorate the birthday of Queen Charlotte, wife of George III (Stallings, no page #. Accessed September 9, 2012: http://www.EncyclopediaVirginia.org/Dance_During_the_Colonial_Period). Balls were popular celebrations to commemorate the end of battle, the signing of treaties, to honor important dignitaries, or serve other socio-political purposes.

In addition to the involvement of dance in political and social culture, the physical and social norms associated with dancing and dance instruction resituated female participants as the controlled subordinate. As Cathleen B. Hellier clarifies in “The Adolescence of Gentry Girls in Late Eighteenth-Century Virginia” (no date), dance served as a method for reiterating normativity. As she writes: “Instruction in dance was deemed important in establishing genteel body carriage, evening social dancing was important preparation for the etiquette of assemblies and because the ability to dance was essential to courtship in Virginian society” (Hellier: accessed online December 2012, no page number, http://research.history.org/Historical_Research/Research_Themes/ThemeFamily/GentryGirls.cfm). Here the role of dance served to at once situate the woman in the public sphere via dancing culture. However in doing so the woman’s body and social position were shaped to reinstate her into a private and heterosexual compact. Notably, Hellier specifically describes the dancing role

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65 Lord Dunmore called for a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer in support of the Bostonians, whose port was to be closed on June 1st in consequence of the Boston Tea Party.
of the female participant. This is a general theme evident in the current scholarship. Frequently emphasis is placed on the women who danced at assemblies while the women who organized the events are seldom examined. Yet as Mary Stagg demonstrated, women did more than simply dance. Therefore, we must examine the role of the women managers in order to fully develop the understanding of the social negotiations reiterated by dance culture.

Despite Mary Stagg’s management, it was unlikely that she presided over the evening. Characteristically, it was more common for the assembly manager to invite a high-ranking official or politician to host the evenings’ wares. The women who managed the evening were rarely the public foci. Rather the courtesies of the attendees were usually drawn to a male official and his wife who presided over the evening. The wife’s responsibilities were few and she typically stood as the visual reminder of heteronormativity and domesticity. Thereby she was required to assume a position subservient to that of the host. The wife’s ornamental role was akin to Mary Stagg’s creative labor that cast her out of the public view. This is reminiscent of Mary Stagg’s role as an unacknowledged participant in dancing instruction. Ultimately her control of the event had the capacity to threaten dominant ideologies as a momentary transgression from social norms. However she ultimately reaffirmed gender ideology through her subservient and unobservable position. Despite the power Mary Stagg exercised in organizing the assemblies, the events reiterated a specific gender hierarchy subsuming her creative position. Yet gender ideology was not the only social order evident at these events.

Notwithstanding the inclusiveness of assemblies, the events still embodied discourses framing social hierarchies and rank that were often signified throughout the duration of an evening. The presence of a high-ranking host who controlled the evening served as a figurative extension of the control granted by his social and political position. As made clear by Giovanni-
Andrea Gallini in his *A Treatise on the Art of Dancing* (1762), the role of the host reaffirmed social hierarchies. As Gallini wrote: “in assemblies or places of public resort, when we see a person of a genteel carriage or presence, he attract[s] our regard and liking... and an air of ease will more distinguish a man from the crowd... “ (Gallini 145). Ideally the host’s presence certainly assured the attendance by other prominent officials while influencing an increase in ticket prices. This constructed the assembly as a cultural space that could grant an individual a jot of upward mobility or further secure their already acquired positions.

Despite the attendance of the socially elite, the community publicity of the events established the space as potentially socio-economically heterogeneous. Thus behavior was often regulated in order to endow the evening with refinement. Performances of social norms were reified throughout the assemblies’ evenings. A primary role of the host was to remind the audience of proper behavior and etiquette. For example the *First Assembly Minute Book* (1746), author not listed, professed:

No Lady to be admitted in a nightgown and no gentleman in boots.  
Dancing is to begin precisely at 5 o’clock afternoon in the winter.  
Each set not to exceed ten couples to dance but one country dance.  
Couples to dance their minuets in the order they stand in their individual sets.  
No dance to begin after 11 at night.  
No tea, coffee, Negus or other liquor to be carried into the dancing room (From the *First Assembly Minute Book*, December 16, 1746).

Guests were conscientious of these norms and their behavior dictated obedience. As Bushman states “guests had to be conscious of individual appearances, just as the host thought of the adornment of the entertainment rooms” (Bushman 55). Notably, here Bushman makes the claim that the hosts were also the managers. Arguably, this is a result of androcentric histories that overlooked the role of the female manager since it was her duty to invisibly oversee the “adornment of the entertainment room.”
The ubiquity of assemblies complicates the theories contextualizing refinement. Isaac suggests that the increased emphasis on refinement directly resulted in less hospitable people. In turn, refinement “expressed an increasingly felt need to shield individuals from close interaction with an enveloping social world, a world that was now held to be impure and vulgar” (Isaac 303). Isaac is not suggesting that entertainment and other types of hospitality were completely sequestered and solipsistic. Rather, entertainment in the eighteenth century became more segmented and moved away from the communal practices of the seventeenth century. As Isaac makes clear, “social occasions even among the gentry in the seventeenth century had involved a degree of merged communality – comparatively unrestrained crowding of body against body…” (Isaac 303). In contrast, social occasions in the eighteenth century reaffirmed opportunities for control. This is substantiated by the role of the assemblies’ hosts and the exclusivity determined by ticket prices. As a result, these social occasions presented opportunities for a type of power that took the form of prohibiting participation, decorum dictations, or body positioning.

Refinement, as Isaac makes clear, is adaptable to assemblies. The dictation of the rules and the supervisory eye of the host maintained an air of constructed dignity. In this particular case, refinement is the coded language for behavioral control. Despite an assembly’s whimsical air, it was actually deeply encoded with specific social and cultural paradigms. Rather than identify the participants as part of a continuum, their behavior and performances were constructed and controlled by the host’s cultural and social beliefs. Refinement not only controlled the subjects but also created a binary opposition between those who followed and those who could not. This binary is further extendable to those who could afford admissions and those who could not. Isaac’s research, in addition to the history of creative tradeswomen, exposes a monolithic understanding of the participants as reduced to observable traits in order to strengthen social
norms and modes of hierarchal power. The policing of social etiquette established the assemblies 
as a place of refinement but also social jurisdiction.

Assemblies connotated very specific discourses constructing gender, social, and political 
norms. However, researchers must ask if the assemblies’ managers own social positions 
affected the reification of dominant ideologies. For example, Baroness Barbara deGraffenreit, 
a member of an influential family both in the colonies and in Europe, emerged as a prominent 
assembly organizer. Unlike Mary Stagg, Barbara DeGraffenreit’s history was one of affluence 
rather than vocation. Yet it is possible to understand Barbara DeGraffenreit’s history in 
accordance with gender, social, and cultural frameworks. Specifically, did Barbara 
DeGraffenreit’s social position influence the response, attendance, or characteristics of her 
assemblies?

Christopher deGraffenreit, the younger was the son of the Swiss Landgrave, Baron 
Christopher deGraffenreit. Christopher deGraffenreit, the younger, stayed to oversee his family’s 
land in North Carolina after his father permanently returned to Europe. His father’s business 
venture in the colonies was a failure and the son was left with few financial prospects. On 
February 22, 1714, deGraffenreit the younger married Barbara Tempest née Needham, daughter 
of the prominent Sir Arthur Needham of Wymendsley, Hartfordshire, England (deGraffenreit 
20). The inscription in the deGraffenreit’s family bible in addition to Book 16 of the Lunenburg 
County supports the date of their wedding. As ascertained from the family’s scrapbook, Barbara 

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66 Barbara deGraffenreit is often mistakenly cited as married to Christopher’s father. As their 
names lack the signifiers clarifying a difference it is quite common that this mistake makes itself 
evident in the records. Accordingly, the records establishing that she began teaching as a means 
to incur an income after her husband’s disastrous investment in the Bern Colony are incorrect. 
Rather this is deGraffenreit the elder and Barbara was not married to him. However, the fact that 
his business venture was a failure is important in contextualizing the deGraffenreit’s larger social 
and cultural role.
was a widow when she married deGraffenreit. Despite their financial hardships, the deGraffenreit’s retained their prosperous image. While in Virginia, the deGraffenreits dined and socialized with the city’s elite. For example, in *Another Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1739–1740* (1942), Byrd dined with Mrs. deGraffenreit but she departed upon completion of the meal (Byrd: Woodfin 86). The deGraffenreits also owned several properties in addition to owning a town house in which the family occupied.67

There is reason to suspect that Christopher deGraffenreit taught dance prior to his wife’s trade endeavors. For instance, Byrd mentioned in his *London Diary 1717-1721: And Other Writings* (1958) that deGraffenreit taught dancing at Nathaniel Harrison’s home “to teach the Colonel’s children to dance” (Byrd: Wright 471). Conspicuously this entry’s date was 1720, fifteen years preceding Barbara DeGraffenreit’s trade announcements. It is likely that Baron deGraffenreit acquired similar trade in order to stabilize his finances after his father’s failed business ventures. Much as Levingston, deGraffenreit probably relied on his genteel education to support his teaching abilities.

The extant evidence from 1720 also supports the claim that the deGraffenreit’s organized assemblies and balls in Williamsburg. An example is derived from Byrd’s diary. After attending Council on November 4, 1720, he went to deGraffenreit’s “ball, where I danced four dances” (Byrd: Wright 471). It is likely that Barbara DeGraffenreit participated in the organization and management of these activities. As made obvious by the frequency of Mrs. deGraffenreit’s assemblies more than a decade later, it is conceivable that she began sharpening her talents and

67 In the “George Pitt House Historical Report, Block 18-2 Building 4B,” Helen Bulloch suggests that deGraffenreit owned several lots in Williams. In 1720 he held lot 175 to the east of the Palace, in 1723 he held Lot 235 and from 1722-1728 he was the owner of Lot 17…they owned Lot 47 from 1722 to 1726, we believe that they resided at Lot 47” (Bulloch 13; http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/View/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports\RR1392.xml; accessed September 27, 2013).
business acumen around the early 1720s if not sooner. Arguably Barbara deGraffenreit only began teaching and organizing out of financial necessity thus she is not mentioned in all of the records. Since her husband was left with few financial prospects, it was Barbara DeGraffenreit’s duty to assist the accrual of the family income. Much as Mary Stagg worked alongside her husband in the family business, Barbara DeGraffenreit followed a similar route. If this was the case, then the family’s finances reached outright turmoil around 1735-1736, as these were the years she began actively publicly advertising her assemblies.

However, there is a possibility that Barbara DeGraffenreit pursued dance instruction prior to the 1730s. The name deGraffenreit, without designation of whether it was Barbara or Christopher, is revealed in conjunction to the teaching of dance in the homes of wealthier Virginia planters. As made evident in a letter from Virginia governor Francis Fauquier to Edward Sedgwick, “I inquired into the State of the Family of the deGraffenreits and was informed that one of that name followed the profession of a dancing master in this colony” (Character sketch, Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg, VA). The indication that “one of that name” was a master suggests that Fauquier was under the assumption that it was Christopher deGraffenreit who served as a dance teacher. It is notable that Barbara DeGraffenreit is not mentioned in Byrd’s or Fauquier’s correspondences. Much as Mary Stagg, it is quite likely Barbara DeGraffenreit’s contribution was overlooked. Arguably this is another example of paternalistic dominance as the letters and subsequent historical records are positioned to focus on her husband. Or perhaps Fauquier was incorrect and the supposed dancing master was actually Barbara DeGraffenreit, a dancing mistress. It is quite likely that throughout the 1720s, Barbara DeGraffenreit instructed dance in several prominent households, including that of the Harrison family (Van Winkle Keller 202). At some point, she also served the Byrds, since Barbara
DeGraffenreit later asked William Byrd II to write her a letter of sponsorship. Typically these sponsorships were based on experience rather than character. There is also room to speculate the deGraffenreits together pursued dance instruction as a trade.

The letter Byrd II wrote confirming Barbara DeGraffenreit’s pleas for sponsorship is the most tangible document framing her profession as a dance teacher. This letter is reprinted in The Correspondence of the Three William Byrds of Westover, Virginia, 1684-1776 (1977) edited by Marion Tinling. Upon Mr. Stagg’s death, Mrs. deGraffenreit took the opportunity to concretize her position as the foremost dance teacher in Williamsburg. In her attempt to succeed Mr. Stagg, she downplayed Mary Stagg’s credentials. As such, Mrs. deGraffenreit assumed that William Byrd’s sponsorship would verify her qualifications and publicly exalt her cultural position. Byrd’s letters reiterated this point: “Madame La Baronne de Graffenreidt is in hopes to succeed to part of [Stagg’s] business in town and were it not for making my good Lady Jealous (which I would not do for the World) – I would recommend her to your favor. She really takes abundance of pains and teaches well” (Byrd: Tinling 471). The fact that she vied for sponsorship from Byrd for the coveted position of premier dancing instructor is telling. To ask Byrd for support suggests that Barbara DeGraffenreit must have boasted a stalwart understanding of dance instruction. Seemingly Byrd would not have attached his name, and by extension his reputation, to an endeavor that was not worth merit. Since Barbara DeGraffenreit secured sponsorship, she also demonstrated active entrepreneurship. This type of effective practice positioned Barbara DeGraffenreit as a tradeswoman who fortified her own business prospects while also insuring her family’s financial gain. This forms a sharp contrast to the passive archetypical colonial woman. Rather Barbara DeGraffenreit made Byrd aware of her position while concretizing her need for financial stability.
Despite the similar professions, the Staggs and deGraffenreits reveal several disparities; class is the starkest point of divergence. The social capital endowed by her title was also advantageous for Barbara DeGraffenreit because this guaranteed her familiarity with influential people such as Byrd. This is substantiated by Byrd’s acknowledgement that he dined with Barbara DeGraffenreit on at least one occasion. Moreover, it was this amicability that probably bolstered her request for sponsorship. Arguably Barbara DeGraffenreit utilized her social position to gain professional credibility. This worked in contrast to the Staggs, who established their trade from a lower social position. They relied on their creative capital rather than social position to secure their locations as viable trades people. It is not surprising that Barbara DeGraffenreit had the privilege but also familiarity to approach Byrd and claim a stake on the Staggs’ title.

Barbara DeGraffenreit’s attempt to secure for herself the Staggs’ trade position illuminates the Staggs as reputable dance teachers. Barbara DeGraffenreit must have been aware of the Staggs’ ability and standing thereby she hoped to capitalize on Mr. Stagg’s death. By doing so, she eagerly anticipated acquiring his students and income. However, the question must be raised: was Barbara DeGraffenreit aware of Mary Stagg’s role or did she overlook Mary Stagg’s contributions? The extant records do not support the answer to this question. Hence it is not known if Barbara DeGraffenreit was usurping Mary Stagg’s cultural trade position. It is quite likely that she disregarded Mary Stagg as viable competition and instead attempted to attain the position while undermining Mary Stagg’s cultural prominence. Perhaps Barbara DeGraffenreit ignored Mary Stagg’s creative labor because of gender thus internalizing the oppressive factions of paternalistic dominance. Another consideration frames Barbara DeGraffenreit’s indifference toward Mary Stagg as extendable to a lofty superiority stemming from class distinction. Quite
possibly, Barbara DeGraffenreit’s class affiliation was threatened. Given that her pursuit of a
creative trade aligned her with individuals such as the Staggs, who probably were still shrouded
in the stigmas stemming from their servitude. Therefore Barbara DeGraffenreit’s claim for
sponsorship was not only demonstrative of trade mentality but also a declaration of class
position.

By gaining Byrd’s sponsorship, Barbara DeGraffenreit clarified a distinct difference
between herself and Mary Stagg. This distinction was based on class but also the gender norms
appropriate in certain class formations. Lerner specifically examines tangible and material
commodities as signifiers of class. However, her point is expandable to include lexical and non-
visible signs such as support, be it financial, structural, or verbal, granted by society’s elite. Since
Barbara DeGraffenreit was facing financial hardship, she lacked the necessary fiscal assets that
would demarcate her class status. Thus Byrd’s sponsorship of Barbara DeGraffenreit acted as a
method that recuperated her social position while reducing Mary Stagg’s competition. Barbara
DeGraffenreit needed Byrd to establish her reputation as more discernibly superior than Mary
Stagg’s. Any conflation between Mary Stagg’s trades juxtaposed to the dance instruction offered
by Barbara DeGraffenreit threatened deGraffenreit’s reputability and social position. As such,
Byrd’s support of Barbara DeGraffenreit’s bid for premier dancing mistress disabled any type of
cross-class alliance or coalition. Barbara DeGraffenreit distinguished her trade and social
position as more refined. Byrd’s sponsorship also affirmed Mrs. deGraffenreit’s class affiliation.

For Barbara DeGraffenreit to secure financial recovery after her family’s failure she had
to occupy a public trade position. Married women in a similar arrangement risked appearing
disreputable due to their disconnect from patriarchal paradigms. Arguably, Byrd was aware of
this norm thereby he included this caveat in his support letter. After he confirmed Barbara
DeGraffenreit’s talent for teaching he warned against any “attaque (of) her virtue in the furious month of May when the sap rises in women they say as well as in vegetables you would find her as chaste as Lucretia (Byrd: Tinling 471). Byrd at once affirmed her social and class station. Byrd was attentive to the ideologies that condemned woman who occupied trade positions as unprotected and detached from men. According to Lerner, the connection a woman had to a man, be it a husband, relative, or acquaintance became emblematic of class distinction. This created a division of women into “respectable women, who are protected by their men, and disreputable women, who are out in the street unprotected by men and free to sell their services…” (Lerner 139). Lerner specifically points towards prostitution as the common trade supporting her statement. Tradeswomen needed to look after their sexual reputation in addition to her skilled position. Byrd’s sponsorship becomes emblematic of protection. His sponsorship supported Barbara DeGraffenreit’s trade while also endowing her with privilege and respectability. Byrd’s sponsorship served as a safeguard thereby making room for Barbara DeGraffenreit to publicly sell dance instruction and evening entertainment without marring her decency. Barbara DeGraffenreit’s request for his support was a means of solidifying her public position without threatening dominant gender norms. This reflects the overarching social negotiation faced by the women in this study. Despite her non-normative and active pursuit of sponsorship, Byrd’s support stood as a type of protection rendering her reflexive and passive. Barbara DeGraffenreit’s trade supported patriarchal and state powers.

By 1737, Barbara DeGraffenreit continuously organized assemblies in Williamsburg. For example The Virginia Gazette printed the following notice: “Mrs. Barbara deGraffenreit, intends to have a Ball on Tuesday the 26th of next April, and an assembly on the 27th (Park, eds. The Virginia Gazette, April 14, 1738). Whereas this advertisement does not specifically address the
ticket price, two notices printed in October of 1737 and March 1738 reveal that tickets ranged from five shillings to half a pistole each (Park, eds. *The Virginia Gazette* October 7, 1737 and March 24, 1738). It is plausible that Barbara DeGraffenreit’s events on April 26th and 27th were priced similarly. Notably, the location of the ticket sales, delivered out of Mrs. deGraffenreit’s home, repositioned her as the events’ manager. At this point, both Mary Stagg and Barbara DeGraffenreit demonstrated a shift in their trades. Seemingly, between 1736-1740 the women primarily pursued the organization of assemblies as a form of profitable profession. At this point the extant records do not make reference to their dance teaching or any other type of theatrical or cultural endeavors.

Mary Stagg and Barbara DeGraffenreit occasionally held assemblies on the same day. More frequently there were weeks when both women held events on consecutive days. Neither woman mentioned the assemblies of her competitor. Rather each newspaper advertisement positioned each assembly as an unique cultural moment. Notice, that in the previous advertisement from April 14, 1738, Barbara DeGraffenreit did not mention her plan to organize forthcoming assemblies. Here she created a demand because she did not assure any hesitant participants that there would be another opportunity to attend such an event. Mary Stagg followed a similar technique. The primary sources begin to paint a picture of two women who organized assemblies as trade pursuits while competing against each other in order to yield the highest attendance and financial gain.

The advertisements in *The Virginia Gazette* construct the relationship between Mary Stagg and Barbara DeGraffenreit as competitive rather than collaborative. Their advertisements never denigrated or undermined the other woman. However their advertisements demonstrated an early example of capitalistic aspiration. Frequently these advertisements were printed in the
same issue of *The Virginia Gazette* thereby bombarding the colonists with their public notices. Moreover, their advertisements played a type of leapfrog: when Mary Stagg listed an advert, Barbara DeGraffenreit would follow suit typically in the same issue, and vise-a-versa. For example, in the October 21\(^{st}\), 1737 edition of the *Virginia Gazette*, both Mary Stagg and Barbara DeGraffenreit printed announcements for cultural events. Notably, the type of events varied albeit slightly. Both notices announced the event’s availability to the public and the price of attendance.

Barbara DeGraffenreit’s advert appeared first on October 21, 1737. Here she wrote that “[she] designs to have a ball at house on Tuesday the first November next, and a cotillion…for which tickets will be delivered at her house for five schillings each. And the next day she designs to have an Assembly, for which Tickets will delivered at her house for a half a pistole each” (Parks, *The Virginia Gazette*, October 21, 1737). The next printed advertisement in this issue was Mary Stagg’s listing for her assembly. Here she wrote, “the first of November next, there will be an Assembly, at the Capitol for the benefit of Mrs. Cobb…” (Parks, *The Virginia Gazette*, October 21, 1737). As the advertisements state, the women provided entertainments on the same evening. However, the overarching difference was that Barbara DeGraffenreit organized a ball and cotillion opposed to Mary Stagg’s assembly. Moreover, Barbara DeGraffenreit reserved her assembly for the preceding evening. Arguably, these advertisements were demonstrative of the cross-class appeal of dance while showcasing Barbara DeGraffenreit’s and Mary Stagg’s adherence to social and class formations.

Barbara DeGraffenreit implied class seclusion by the separation of the assembly from the ball and cotillion. The cotillion, a popular French dance, was a signifier of specific class affiliation. The steps and timing in a cotillion were extremely complex and required significant
training to master. Scholars categorized the cotillion as a “non-progressive dance, usually in closed set formation, suitable for the most elite dancers” (Van Winkle Keller 22). This was a privilege afforded to the affluent, those who had the time and financial resources to devote to learning the dance. The fashionability of the cotillion increased in the 1760s only reaching its height of popularity between 1780 and 1810 (Van Winkle Keller 22). The popularization of the cotillion was largely due to the French dance master La Cuisse perfecting a system of depicting instructional figures. He printed and published his instructions. Almost immediately, English dancers adopted a fairly basic type of French contredanse, the cotillion, anglicized as cotillion. Remarkably Barbara DeGraffenreit’s cotillion was well before 1760. Her familiarity of the dance demonstrated her genteel education; one that included extensive dance and instruction. The advertisement for the cotillion projected a public reminder of her social position despite her participation in the dance trade. Barbara DeGraffenreit’s cotillion served to establish her elite position while also catering to those of a similar status. Unlike the assembly, scheduled for a separate date, the ball with a cotillion was a method of social exclusivity. This dance targeted an elite group of participants and the performance of a cotillion served as a demonstration of their genteel upbringing. In the eighteenth century, public dancing was not a method of practice or experiment. If an individual attended a dance, it was assumed he or she had mastered the footing and technique. Rather than fumbling through steps and seeming a fool, an eloquent dance showcased the depth and richness of their education. In other words, the ball featuring a cotillion would attract participants who knew the dance and were ready to showcase their skills. In a

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68 For an interesting description of the individual steps of a cotillion, see Kate Van Winkle Keller and Charles Cyril Hendrickson, George Washington, A Biography in Social Dance (Sandy Hook, CT: The Hendrickson Group, 1998), pp. 18–23
sense, these demonstrations connoted their class formation. Barbara DeGraffenreit’s awareness of this dance and its signification also demonstrated her affiliation with society’s elite.

In *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (1997), David S. Shields suggests dance events revealed a type of cultural hierarchy. The most prestigious and lavish were state balls celebrating political and military victories or celebrations for dignitaries. Balls held in private homes by a city’s elite family were less splendid but also usually exquisite and fastidious. Interestingly, here Shields suggests the organizers of these balls separated classes by offering distinct events in which “members of the lower orders participated in a related event usually a bonfire or an illumination and procession” (Shields 146). Typically the events for “the lower orders” were held in a varying location or on an entirely different date. To expand Shields’ point, it seems that Barbara DeGraffenreit’s assembly was the event separated from the ball. She hoped her ball, despite publicly announced, was an event she intended to entertain society’s elite. The forthcoming assembly attracted participants from lower classes. The inclusion of the cotillion was the specific method for exclusion because it immediately disqualified those without the proper dance instruction from attending. However, the organization of an assembly, an event that was less splendid, was directed for those from a lower class status. Here, she practiced an important business tenet while also affirming social and class hierarchies. Despite the social exclusion connoted by the ball and the assembly, she still served her entire audience and provided entertainment for a multitude of Williamsburg’s individuals. Rather than simply serving one class segment, thereby minimizing her profits, she scheduled several events that guaranteed a higher profit gain. Despite her use of dance as a means to consolidate the status quo from the middling and lower classes, Barbara DeGraffenreit used the cultural events to secure her own financial prospects.
The partitioning of society is exhibited throughout the women’s schedules of events. Specifically Barbara DeGraffenreit held a ball and Mary Stagg held an assembly on the same day. Quite possibly, Mary Stagg hoped to attract the participants excluded from Barbara DeGraffenreit’s event. The reverse is also a possibility. Aware of Mary Stagg’s event, Barbara DeGraffenreit prepared her evening in order to attract genteel society thereby purposely separating them from the general public. Both possibilities signified a type of segregation based on social status and the dance events served as the marker of distinction.

Interestingly, Mary Stagg’s announcements also demonstrated blatant social coding that served to reinforce class hierarchies. For example, Mary Stagg reinforced a sense of elitism in an April 22, 1737 advertisement. In her typical manner, she wrote that “Tickets are to be delivered out, at Half a Pistole each” (Parks, *The Virginia Gazette*, April 22, 1737). By stating the availability of tickets, she assured the general public that there was space for their attendance. However, she then capriciously made brief mention of a group of people she raptly invited. The people on this list did not need to pay the entrance fee. The specification that this elite group was comprised of Gentlemen and Ladies confirmed Mary Stagg’s intention to populate her event with society’s higher class (Parks, *The Virginia Gazette*, April 22, 1737). Here Mary Stagg demonstrated a type of exclusivity that constructed a social environment in which the presence of a chosen group affirmed refinement. She created this atmosphere without denying admission to potentially improper individuals whose ticket fees served as her income. Considering Mary Stagg probably earned money from the evening, the inclusion of multiple class societies ensured she received the largest financial return. Simply stated, more participants meant more paid admissions. By catering to multiple segments of society, Mary Stagg crossed the invisible lines defining inclusion and exclusion while also commandeering her own trade. Seemingly, Mary
Stagg lacked the cultural capital to hold events as lavish or exclusive as Barbara DeGraffenreit’s. Thus Mary Stagg chose a varying method of elitism.

The price of events also demonstrated exclusivity. For example, admission for the previously mentioned balls was five shillings and the assembly just half a pistole. The pistole was worth almost a pound (.83/1.00 pound), or a little over 18 shillings (McCusker 209). Barbara DeGraffenreit’s ball priced at five schillings while her assembly priced at half a pistole rendered the latter a more difficult event to afford. Despite Shields’ specification that the assembly was a more communal occurrence, the price served as a marker preventing poor people from attending. Attendance at assemblies was contingent on one’s ability to pay the entrance fee hence the price of the ticket became the central element of control and the method of defining inclusion and exclusion. Despite offering assemblies to the public, the ticket prices created spaces where participants could rest assured in their gentility, mingle with others of a similar status, and enjoy the pleasures made available to genteel company. Moreover, assemblies offered a chance for social mobility. To be seen at an assembly was not necessary a chance to demonstrate one’s dancing proclivities instead it was a moment to mingle amongst the upper echelons of society. As Bushman makes clear “though the membership encompassed a larger group than any one individual’s circle of friends, the assemblies were self-consciously and resolutely exclusive” (Bushman 50). Frequently, exclusion came from the ticket price and not the creation of an invitation list.

Mary Stagg marketed her events to include spectacular and dramatic components that were sure to amaze hence attract an audience. In an issue of The Virginia Gazette, Mary Stagg boldly announced her plans to organize social affairs at the Capitol on April 28 and 29. She heightened the intrigue and aura of her event by including "several Grotesque Dances, never yet
perform'd in Virginia" (Parks, *The Virginia Gazette*, April 26, 1737). Here Mary Stagg promoted her event as matchless serving to differentiate her assemblies from competitors. It is clear that Mary Stagg could not contend with Mrs. deGraffenreit’s social status and the reinforcement of class codes embodied by Barbara DeGraffenreit’s cotillion. However, Mary Stagg could use her history as an entertainer and general trade acumen to provide unparalleled theatrical and dramatic entertainment. Barbara DeGraffenreit could offer a cotillion but Mary Stagg would provide innovative entertainment. Seemingly, these two separate dance functions formed in opposition. Yet as the year continued, each woman attempted to eclipse her rival’s events.

The evolution of their advertisements demonstrates a type of competition. In addition to the cotillion and grotesque dances, both women attempted varying marketing methods inarguably used to draw the largest potential participants. Barbara DeGraffenreit advertised her assemblies well in advance. For example, in the February 25th, 1737 issue of *The Virginia Gazette* she printed a notice for a ball followed by an assembly two months prior to the scheduled date. The ball was held on April 26th while the assembly was scheduled for April 27th, 1737 (Parks, *The Virginia Gazette*, February 25, 1737). She then ran another notice on April 22nd as an evident reminder of her event. This served in direct opposition to Mary Stagg’s April event that was advertised on the 26th of April and held three days later. Clearly Barbara DeGraffenreit assumed that a notice given well in advance and printing reminders would multiply partakers.

Arguably, Barbara DeGraffenreit intensified her competition with Mary Stagg when she added a raffle to her events. For her April 28th affair, she offered a raffle for a "likely young Virginia Negro woman, fit for house business and her child" (Parks, *The Virginia Gazette*, April 14, 1738). Here Barbara DeGraffenreit leaped ahead of Mary Stagg by offering two slave people
as prizes. Barbara DeGraffenreit’s finances enabled her ability to monetarily support the offering of two slaves. Barbara DeGraffenreit attempted to interpose her competitor’s marketing and inveigle the denizens of Williamsburg into assuming her event was superior.

Mary Stagg would not allow herself to be outdone and also offered a raffle. In the advertisement for the April 28nd and 29th events, Mary Stagg mentioned the evening included “prizes won by lottery” (Parks, The Virginia Gazette, April 26, 1737). Mary Stagg advertised “several valuable Goods will be put up to be Raffled for; also a likely young Negro Fellow” (Park, The Virginia Gazette, March 24, 1738). Seemingly, this “young Negro fellow” was not one of her inherited slaves, who were an old blind man and a woman. The raffling of the slave required Mary Stagg to either advance his price or utilize a debt system. This is of twofold importance. First it means that she had the money to purchase the prizes in advance. Or she anticipated the assemblies would return a large enough financial gain that she could pay back any debt incurred from the raffle. The chance to win a slave surely attracted eager participants while also intensifying the aura surrounding Mary Stagg’s assemblies. The fact that she raffled a slave demonstrated the depths of the competition to position her events as the leading assemblies.

Using raffles, balls, assemblies, and grotesque dancing, Mary Stagg and Barbara DeGraffenreit vigorously competed to gain a position of cultural eminence. When one woman provided an extravagant door prize, the other woman would quickly offer a more substantial prize. The offering of these commodities in addition to promoting the events’ distinctiveness heightened the desirability of these cultural events while increasing public interest. These women reaffirmed the basic business tenet of maximizing their trade as the most anticipated commodity.
Recalling Sessions, music in this country was always a business. To add to this, cultural activities such as dances and assemblies were also a business used to garner a fruitful livelihood.

Apparently Barbara DeGraffenreit did not practice her creative trade for long. Indeed by the next spring she informed the public that her long indisposition had rendered her incapable of keeping her usual assembly, but added she could offer “the ladies and gentlemen a dance on May 2, furnishing a room, music, candles and liqueur at the customary price of five shillings a ticket” (Land 370). Mary Stagg’s assemblies disappeared from the record in 1739, leaving no trace of the organizer or her history after that period. Considering that by this point she had spent nearly twenty-five years in the colony, it is possible that Mary Stagg passed away. In the History of the de Graffenried Family from 1191 A. D. to 1925 (1925), family historian Thomas deGraffenried writes "Barbara his wife departed this life the 26th day of June, 1744" (deGraffenreid 151). It seems likely that as both Barbara DeGraffenreit and Mary Stagg approached seniority, they ceased their trades.

Much as music and theater provided spaces for women to pursue a trade based on creative ability, dance and assembly culture provided a similar opportunity. Mrs. Mary Stagg and Baroness Barbara deGraffenreit, whose cultural trades ran parallel and at times oppositional paths, influenced Williamsburg’s cultural capital. Mary Stagg’s history is extraordinary. She arrived in colonial Virginia as an indentured servant contracted to teach dancing alongside her husband. Eventually her professional ability and talent revealed themselves as viable methods to procure an income. Throughout Mary Stagg’s life, she contributed to Virginia’s dancing, theatrical, and assembly culture. Similarly, Barbara deGraffenreit’s history is noteworthy. As a baroness, she was positioned as an unlikely cultural tradeswoman. However, due to her family’s financial difficulties, she took on a trade that would contribute to her family’s livelihood. Much
as Mary Stagg, Barbara DeGraffenreit utilized dance and assemblies to provide a steady income. Despite their exceedingly different cultural conditions, one as a former indentured servant and the other as a baroness, both women faced similar gender negotiations. These negotiations at once affirmed social and class hierarchies while also affirming dominant gender norms despite the women’s prominent and public positions. The histories of Mary Stagg and Barbara deGraffenreit complicate the understanding of the cultural-historical role of creative tradeswomen while also establishing a deeper examination of class formation and affiliation, the role of creative tradeswomen, and Virginia’s cultural milieu.
CHAPTER IV: MUSICAL THEATER, SINGING ACTRESSES, AND THE HALLAMS

During the eighteenth century, theaters provided a space for entertaining and socializing. Evening entertainment was a welcomed diversion from the complexities and hardships of daily life. Hence theatrical season became a central component of the cultural life in the cities of the southern colonies (Dexter Anthony 78). During the Revolution, theater performances faced a respite due to the Continental Congress's 1774 ban on all theatrical entertainments. As a result acting troupes and individuals actors sought stages in Europe or in Jamaica. Once the ban was lifted theater production and consumption resumed at a hardy pace. Yet at first the theater struggled to find a cultural niche and faced several false starts usually ensuring the premature cancellations of venues, slapdash performances, and the disbandment of troupes. Thus the

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69 A note on the Hallam lineage:
- Lewis Hallam the elder married Mrs. Hallam (first name unavailable). With their children, they traveled to the Colonies in order to pursue acting and theater productions. Lewis and his brother William financed this project. William established this project as an endeavor that might save him from bankruptcy. Lewis and Mrs. Hallam had several children, two of which were Isabelle and Lewis Hallam, the younger. After Lewis the elder’s death, Mrs. Hallam married Mr. Douglass and then became known as Mrs. Douglass. Isabelle stayed in Europe to pursue her acting career. As Mrs. Mattocks (changed name through marriage), Isabelle became quite popular and maintained a successful acting career through adulthood.
- Lewis Hallam, the younger, was known for his difficult personality but he was also responsible for establishing the longevity of the theater in America. While the troupe is in Jamaica, he married Sarah Hallam, who did not have a knack for the strolling life. Upon their divorce she settled in Williamsburg and eventually opened a dancing school. I do not discuss Sarah in this chapter but I do investigate her life in the chapter on music education.
- Nancy Hallam was probably the daughter of William Hallam, thus she is frequently referred to as the niece of Mrs. Hallam. She comes to America after a recruiting trip by Douglas and achieved vast popularity.

70 England was not the only region to sway to the American stage. The influence of the Caribbean, specifically Jamaica, also served as a crucial point of consideration when examining the colonial stage. Errol Hill’s *The Jamaica Stage, 1655-1900* (1992) tracks the history of the American theater in Jamaica and its cultural connections to England and North America. Hill contends, “from its earliest days as an English Colony, Jamaica attracted touring professional actors and acting companies from England, most coming via North America” (Hill 5). As a result, Hill’s scholarship was essential in tracking the Hallam-Douglass troupes’ tours in order to further develop the careers of the singing actresses.
history of the theater and the actors and actresses involved in its development meandered through the social and political curvatures of the century.

This chapter examines the lives of the Hallams, the first acting family in the colonies. A portion of the chapter is devoted to Mrs. Hallam whose singing and acting abilities exalted her reputation amongst the colonists. To a lesser extent, this chapter also examines the singing actresses Maria Storer, Margaret Cheer, and Sarah Wainwright. The extant records illuminate their virtuosic singing abilities and widespread appeal. However, the sources informing the lives of Margaret Cheer, Maria Storer, Sarah Wainwright, and even the Hallams to a point, are incomplete. For the most part, Mrs. Hallam is described in basic terms that infrequently define her performances but rather endow her appearance with ideology. Additionally these descriptions comment on her understanding of musical and vocal theory in general terms but do not develop these claims. For example, the authors of these primary sources use subjective adjectives, such as “she acted well,” to describe Hallam rather than elaborating on her technical ability. Whereas Maria Storer’s history was shaded by her curious behavior possibly caused by mental illness and her husband’s scandalous public persona. In contrast Margaret Cheer was the first actress to marry into the gentry. However, the prosperity promised through matrimony was never realized. Finally, Sarah Wainwright’s history is virtually unknown despite the possibility that she was a student of the composer Thomas Arne. This chapter explores the common themes embodied by these women in addition to other singing actresses. Despite their widespread idolization, the overarching social negotiation subsuming their creative power was prevalent. Similar to Mary Stagg’s invisibility or Barbara DeGraffenreit’s association with William Byrd II, the singing actresses were constantly aligned with measurements of submission while the physical
descriptions of their performances in addition to the texts they sang frequently recapitulated
women as passive and compliant.

The history of the colonial theater is expansive and has been deeply researched.\textsuperscript{71} Therefore, I only include a very brief overview of the history as it pertains to the actresses’ contexts. The majority of secondary sources are careful to include the history of women, however in many cases these instances prove problematic. For example, scholarship contextualizing the theater infrequently develops the roles Mrs. Hallam played while her company visited Jamaica from 1755 to 1758. Moreover, the histories of the Storer sisters are dominated by their disparate relationships with fellow actor and spouse John Henry. Throughout the scholarship, the histories of these women are marginalized while emphasis is placed on their relationships rather than occupations. This echoes Tick’s cautioning of sex-typing that locates absolute images of historical women as mothers and wives. This chapter demonstrates the ineffaceable relationship between trade, musical theater, and the actresses’ role in facilitating this association. In doing so, these actresses traversed a delicate social position that at once endowed them with creative power and subjected them to social subordination.

Historians contend that a typical evening at the theater began at 6:30 or 7:00 pm and the entertainment spanned an approximate four to five hours. Buildings designated for theatrical purposes were not common in the early to mid-eighteenth century. Rather productions were usually held in converted spaces that initially served a different purpose. For example in *Travels Through the Middle Settlements in North America in the Years 1759 and 1760*, Andrew Burnaby wrote he was in southern Maryland near Upper Marlborough and “went to see their theatre, which was a neat, convenient tobacco house, well fitted for the purpose” (Burnaby 36). Made evident from extant playbills, the pattern of the evening encased the following format. The evening began with opening music, then a prologue that was usually spoken but on occasion was sung by one of the theater players. After the mainpiece, a play that took the form of three to five acts, was the central focus. Molnar suggests the mainpieces often included song, dance, and choruses, as either methods of forwarding or underscoring the plot (Molnar xv). The next part of the evening included an epilogue, followed by a dance in some type of form, preceding an afterpiece. An afterpiece was a one or two act play usually a farce, but also could be a ballad or short opera. Popular vocal and instrumental music came next. This music also served as an accompaniment during intermissions or in between the dramatic segments. Finally, it was common to end the evening with some type of specialty act which included instrumental or vocal music, juggling, pantomimes, acrobatics, dancing etc. Typically the entire evening would conclude with a general dance performed by all the theater’s players (Molnar xv).

Secondary sources have documented the pleasure an audience experienced from the theater’s music.\(^2\) In “Music in Eighteenth-Century American Theater” (1984), Cynthia Adams Eric Walter White’s *The History of the English Opera* also provides an illustrative history of the English Opera and is careful to include the influence on the colonial stage.

\(^2\) Eric Walter White’s *The History of the English Opera* also provides an illustrative history of the English Opera and is careful to include the influence on the colonial stage.
Cooper explains songs, music, and dances between acts while half an hour before the curtain rose “the orchestra, or the Band of Musick as it was always called, played ‘wait-ing’ music” (Adams Cooper 7). Other historians, in addition to Adams Cooper, agree that the music of the theater was divisible into sections usually referred to as "First Musick, Second Musick, Third Musick" (Fiske: Adams Cooper 4). This music was not fleeting ambient sound or a means to distract the audience from the time spent changing scenes. Rather musicians expected to play for a considerable amount of time and typically had several pieces ready to perform.73 Similarly, singing actresses expected opportunities to showcase their vocal talents.

The role of the musician in the theater varied with location and in accordance with the needs of the troupe. In “Stage and Players in Eighteenth Century America” (1920), Oral Sumner Coad aptly describes the musical presence ranged from a singular harpsichord or organist to a small ensemble often composed of gentlemen performers (Sumner Coad 202). Gentlemen performers rarely traveled with troupes, but played engagements with the company for the duration of the troupe’s visit. Coad indicates these musicians were not paid, but rather reveled in the pleasure of performance or in the display of their cultivated talents and privilege. The records do not indicate the existence of Lady performers in Virginia who might have performed for similar reasons.74

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73 Adams Cooper references a 1787 New York newspaper commentator who criticized one production. He claimed "the musicians too instead of performing between the play and the farce, are suffered to leave the orchestra to pay a visit to the tippling houses, and the ladies in the meantime, must amuse themselves by looking at the candles and empty benches" (McNamara: Adams Cooper 7).

74 In Gentlemen Freeholders: Political Practices in Washington’s Virginia (1952), Charles S. Sydnor describes gentlemen as recognizable “by his name, his manners, and his dress, by the wig that he wore and the carriage that he provided for his family...shunning solitude, he sought pleasure in the chase and horse-racing, gaming, and heavy drinking” (Sydnor 61). Here Sydnor illustrates that sociality was a component of the gentlemen persona. Despite the fact that Sydnor does not describe music or performance as a type of entertainment that ‘shunned solitude’ it is
Due to the onstage and in-audience presence of the gentry, theater company managers were concerned with the audiences’ decorum. Coarse and lewd evenings would insult certain spectators and threaten the theater’s overall reputation. There are many newspaper notices that include a statement regarding the acceptable behavior of the audience. For example, in the June 25, 1752 issue of *The Virginia Gazette*, Lewis Hallam reminded the “public that polite behavior is required so that the Ladies and Gentleman may depend on being entertain'd in as polite a Manner as at the Theaters in London” (Hunter, *The Virginia Gazette*, June 25, 1752). By his use of the term ‘Ladies and Gentlemen,’ Hallam was referring to the gentry patrons. This honorific served to separate those with affluence from those without. Hallam feared that the possibility of raucous behavior would invoke invective from influential audience members. It seems that dignity and refinement were also controllable components of an evening of theatrical performances.

A history of the colonial theater is not complete without an examination of the Hallam family and their acting troupe, initially called The London Company of Comedians. In *The William and Mary Quarterly Magazine* Lyon Gardiner Tyler suggests that this troupe “was the first regular company of playwrights who ever came to America” (Tyler 236). Accordingly, Mrs. (no first name given) Hallam became one of the first leading ladies of the colonial stage. But it was her niece, Nancy Hallam, with the ability to dance, sing, and act, who became a sensation amongst the audiences.

In the summer of 1752, Lewis Hallam the elder arrived to the colonies with his troupe of actors. Lewis’s brother William put the company together from the remnants of his own unlicensed London organization, the Goodmans' Fields Theatre and Booths at the London Fairs. Foreseeable that the gentlemen musician used music and performance as a means of “indulging in all his pleasures” (Sydnor 62).
Both Hallams had an eye for showmanship and self-promotion. They frequently endorsed a variety of entertainment in addition to typical theatrical productions. The initial London Company of Comedians included the Clarksons, the Rigbys, a musician named John Singleton, athletic actor Patrick Malone, Mrs. Hallam and their children.\textsuperscript{75} By September 1752, the Company advertised their first performance of \textit{The Merchant of Venice} in Williamsburg (Hunter, \textit{The Virginia Gazette}, August 25th 1752). The advertisement also specifies the inclusion of two farces.

In \textit{The History of American Theater}, Seilhamer quotes Lewis Hallam Sr. who specified that the troupe was in Williamsburg for “eleven months before we thought of removing” (Seilhamer 14). Notably the acting troupe took up residence for nearly a year. This supports the assumption that the troupe found an appreciative and plentiful audience. Finding success in Virginia, the troupe traveled northward and sought venues in larger cities such as Philadelphia and New York.\textsuperscript{76} A playbill from December 20th, 1753 advertised “at the New Theatre in Williamsburg...”

\textsuperscript{75} An athletic actor was akin to a gymnast.

\textsuperscript{76} Seilhamer claims that “Lewis Hallam found greater encouragement in the North than the South, as is proven by the fact that he did not return to Williamsburg after the Philadelphia season of 1754, and never played Annapolis at all” (Seilhamer 81). This claim runs in opposition to other scholarship which contends that the religious nature of the northern Colonies not only shunned but actively dissuaded musical and dramatic production performed within city limits. However, Seilhamer develops the dichotomous relationship between North and South by considering the overall responsibilities of the region’s denizens. The southern Colonies, especially Virginia “were too busy with schemes of territorial aggrandizement to devote much time to the drama, and the comedians of Hallam's company found the columns of the \textit{Virginia Gazette} devoted to negotiations with the Mingoes, Shawnees and Twightees, and accounts of Indian massacres instead of criticisms of plays and players” (Seilhamer 82). The same cannot be said for the Sully’s or the Pick’s who performed almost forty years after the Hallam’s legacy. Their musical performances were probably more widely viewed and accepted since the foundation of the Early republic was establish. When considering early to mid-century Virginia, it is important to understand the hierarchy of responsibilities and every day life. The appreciation of creative trade culture was not entirely spurned, but
Nassau-Street” for a comedy, “Love for Love,” in which Mrs. Hallam, Miss Hall, Mr. Hallam, Mr. Singleton, Mr. Rigby, and Mrs. Adcock appeared (Anthony Dexter 163). While in New York, records indicate that Lewis Hallam, the elder established a new playhouse near the Capitol, “on the east side of Waller Street [that] was a regular theater fit for the reception of ladies and gentlemen” (Tyler 236). The company’s announcements included mention of songs and music as part of the evening’s diversions.

Receiving only moderate success, Hallam the elder took the troupe to Jamaica where he hoped to expand their audience. Unfortunately, while on the island, Hallam contracted yellow fever and passed away. David Douglass, a fellow actor, took control of the troupe in 1756. At the same time Douglass married Mrs. Hallam and here she changed her name to Mrs. Douglass. Accordingly the newspaper announcements interchangeably referred to her as Mrs. Hallam or Mrs. Douglass. David Douglass also changed the name of the theater troupe to The American Company and returned the actors to the continental colonies. In Kollatz’s research report, he establishes that under Douglass’ management, the company experienced immediate success. 

emphasis was placed on the development of land, facilitating conditions with Native Americans and developing a viable and sustainable economic foundation.

77 See the copy of playbill in Elizabeth Anthony Dexter’s Colonial Women of Affairs.
78 A rival group organized by Thomas Kean and Walter Murray also performed. Kean developed his theatrical roots in London’s Drury Lane. The exact specifications of his business collaboration with Murray are unknown however the extant playbills and performances listing demonstrate the company was successful and frequently performed throughout the Colonies. A sniping observer called the Murray-Kean group "stage-struck tradesmen and their wives." Some of them were Dicky Murray (Murray's son); Mrs. Taylor, Mr. Jago, the widow Osborn, Mrs. Beccely, a singer; cabinetmaker John Tremaine and his wife, and the Robert Uptons. Mr. Upton has came from England as an advance man for the Hallam Company. The lure of the stage was too much for him, though, thus without a word to his employers he joins up with Murray--Kean. A Philadelphia girl, Nancy George, runs away from home to be with them (Kollatz, no page # listed). It is not made evident if these women sang or performed instruments. However, the presence of the Murray-Kean group was undoubtedly another factor in Hallam’s initial limited success.
However, Kollatz does not specify what exactly Douglass accomplished that differed from Hallam’s management. Douglass had a sharp eye for talent and frequently conducted recruiting trips to Europe to build the troupe’s expertise. For instance, Douglass recruited Sarah Wainwright and almost immediately reaped widespread acclaim. Quite possibly, Douglass’s eye for showmanship was a central factor in elevating The American Company from moderate to soaring achievement. Or perhaps the gain in popularity was due to the centering of Mrs. Douglass as one of the troupe’s main players. Indeed, Douglass realized the creative power of Mrs. Douglass, and constructed the theater’s repertoires to draw attention to her abilities.

There is some confusion within the scholarship and extant sources on the identity of Mrs. Douglass. First, some accounts portray her as shy and lacking stage presence or desire to be on stage. However, it is arguable that these sources confuse her with her daughter-in-law, Sarah Hallam, who only appeared on stage a handful of times. Other historians recreate Mrs. Douglass as a viable and dynamic dramatic entity. This is a more likely characterization. The archived sources provide more support for the latter claim. For example, the archived *The Virginia Gazette* from 1760 demonstrates that Mrs. Douglass was an aspect of the stage as she became renowned for her role as Juliet. From the extant playbills it also becomes clear that while in Virginia she played the roles of Mrs. Heidelberg in *The Clandestine Marriage* (1770), Mrs. Woodcock in *Love in a Village* (1771), and Lady Wronghead in *The Provoked Husband* (1771) [Fig. 4].

Many sources do not make a distinction between Mrs. Hallam and Miss Hallam. This confusion is exhibited by the playbill for *The Clandestine Marriage* [Fig. 6] in which Mrs.

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79 Despite Mrs. Douglass’ fame rising from her portrayal of Juliet, it does not seem the troupe performed this play in Virginia. Records document its performances in New York, Philadelphia, Maryland, and Charleston.
Douglass, Mrs. [Sarah] Hallam, and Miss [Nancy] Hallam all played parts. In terms of the secondary sources, in the 1867 text, _Record of the New York Stage, From 1750 to 1860_, Joseph Norton Ireland assumes that the Hallam women were the same person. However, Seilhamer problematizes this by demonstrating that the Mrs. Hallam of 1761 was actually the first wife of Lewis Hallam. She essentially disappeared from the record after she remarried, this is when Mrs. Douglass appeared. Moreover, the Miss Hallam who is referred to in newspapers dated 1768 and afterwards is probably the niece of Mrs. Douglass, Nancy Hallam. Seilhamer establishes that “in 1761 the name of Mrs. Hallam appears in the bills playing parts like those previously filled by Miss Hallam” (Seilhamer 88). Seilhamer elucidates this point in order to illustrate the confusion surrounding the identities of the Hallams. He is addressing the common error that Miss Hallam often preceded Mrs. Hallam in the records. However, in actuality, Mrs. Hallam was the first female Hallam performer. In order to correct this error, Seilhamer intentionally establishes the family’s lineage demonstrating that Mrs. Hallam’s legacy and name preceded Miss Hallam.
Figure 4 Playbill. The Provoked Husband or, A Journey to London. Also Love a-la Mode.
Performed by the American Company, Fredericksburg. May 28, 1771 Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
Notwithstanding the confusion, Mrs. Douglass was the first leading actress. She was a woman of striking beauty and elegance, who was esteemed in England before venturing to the colonies. Later Douglass would schedule the troupe’s repertoire around the desire and skill of Mrs. Douglass and her son, Louis Hallam, the younger.\textsuperscript{80} This reputation endowed Mrs. Douglass with creative power. Some of her more notable roles included Lady Anne in Richard III, Indian in Richard Steele’s The Conscious Lovers, Cordelia in Nahum Tate’s version of King Lear, and Columbine in the pantomimes (Johnson and Burling 127-353). Mrs. Douglass’ theatrical popularity also promised her a position as a topic of printed conversation. Yet unlike Maria Storer, it seems that Mrs. Douglass was often publicly lauded. For example, the January 27, 1774 Virginia Gazette reported that Mrs. Douglass acted and spoke the prologue and epilogue. Collectively “all contributed to the Satisfaction of the Audience, who expressed the highest Approbation of their Entertainment” (Rind, The Virginia Gazette, January 27, 1774).

The attention given to Mrs. Douglass’ identity as a mother or matron is evident in few primary and secondary sources. In Memoirs of His Own Time: With Reminiscences of the Men and Events of the Revolution (1846) diarist Alexander Graydon described her as “a respectable, matron-like dame, stately or querulous as occasion required, a very good Gertrude [Hamlet], a truly appropriate Lady Randolph” (Graydon 86). Notably, in the discussion of her roles, Kollatz also described Mrs. Douglass as a matron. For example, when describing her performance as Juliet, Kollatz contends a critic claimed the “actress has matured into rather matronly proportions” (Kollatz, no page listed).\textsuperscript{81} Both Graydon and Kollatz refer to her as a matron

\textsuperscript{80} There is speculation that Mrs. Douglass might have had a third child name Isabella who made dramatic history as Mrs. Mattock’s in an English production. Scholars determine that when the family left for the Colonies she was given the option to leave or stay in England. She elected the latter and utilized the established theatrical milieu to cultivate her own career.

\textsuperscript{81} However, Kollatz does not cite this source.
thereby reminding the audience of her parental status. This prompted the audience to her membership in a heterosexual compact rather than as an autonomous artist. The term matron also signified a woman’s management of households and other domestic duties. The identification of Mrs. [Hallam] Douglass as a mother figure reconstructed dominant ideology while demonstrating a contested understanding of her public position.

The repositioning of Mrs. Douglass’ matronly attributes continued in her death notice. Her skill and craft were repositioned within the image of the family and the “mother of Mr. Lewis Hallam, and of Mrs. Mattock’s of Coven garden theater, and Aunt of Miss [Sarah] Hallam” (Purdie and Dixon; Rind; *The Virginia Gazette*, October 14, 1773). This observance mistakenly noted her niece as Sarah, likely confusing her for Nancy, who was the actual niece. Sarah married Mrs. Hallam’s son, Lewis the younger. Thus Sarah was Mrs. Hallam’s daughter-in-law. As the notice continues, it was made clear that she was a celebrated actress and a “Lady who by her excellent Performances upon the Stage, and her irreproachable Manners in private Life…” (Purdie and Dixon; Rind; *The Virginia Gazette*, October 14, 1773). Mrs. Douglass’ theatrical skills are made evident but are aligned with her faultless private life. Arguably her celebrated theatrical identity threatened her domestic identity thereby requiring the privileging of her parental role in order to avoid transgression. In addition, the death notice prioritized her domesticity, as the maternal identity is listed as her primary characteristic. This technique commonly informed the audience that her duties as a mother were of utmost importance while all her talents and occupations were subsidiary. And although this advert does not differ from the practice of listing the family members of the deceased, it is noticeable this advert does not articulate her ancestry. Rather it emphasized her matriarchal role. This demonstrated the
continuity of writing about prominent public women as mothers and wives first and then listing their accomplishments second.

These sources represent the tendency to figuratively replace women in the home despite their public position. In Douglass’ case, this type of signification removed her from the stage and reinstated her in the domestic sphere. This echoes Betty Friedan’s suggestion from the *Feminine Mystique* (1973), in which she counters the predominate claim that women’s primary duties encompassed the maternal and domestic. For Friedan women are not only capable of successfully holding occupations outside the home, but much as Tick claims, women need to be acknowledged and identified as something more than a wife and mother. To build off of Friedan, it is also imperative that women are remembered as more than wives and mothers, such as Mrs. Douglass who was a successful and popular creative tradeswoman. Their occupational achievements are also indispensable to fully reconstructing their identities as creative laborers.

The existing records that shape Mrs. Douglass reaffirmed her negotiated position. Her public role as an actress was accepted as long as she also represented her domestic capabilities. Where at once, Douglass gained access to public cultural spaces, she was also constantly repositioned within a symbolic passive and private space. This served as the ultimate reminder to women in the audience and on stage, that despite their capabilities and the opportunities they gained, their positioned was predetermined: they were wives and mothers, and anything else was a smoke screen blurring gender equity.

However, in an interesting twist, the previous death notice was false. The October 14, 1773 edition of *The Virginia Gazette* reported “the Death of Mrs. DOUGLASS (taken from Mr. Rivington's Paper) we find to be erroneous; that Lady was in very good Health, and acting on the Stage with her usual Applause” (Purdie and Dixon; Rind, *The Virginia Gazette* October 14,
1773). This printing quickly reaffirmed her popular public position. Notably, this announcement did not affirm her maternal identity but rather entirely focused on her trade.

The Hallam family, as part of the American Company, found success in the Colonial era. Many of the troupe’s actresses, but especially the Hallam women, received widespread acclaim. Notably, the Hallams were not the only women in the acting company who achieved reputable fame. One of the former American Company’s actresses was the fiery-tempered Henrietta Osborne. She frequently performed more popular roles. For example, the extant playbills show she undertook the roles of Mrs. Peachum and Lucy Lockit in *The Beggar's Opera* (Playbill, *The Beggar’s Opera*, Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg, VA) [Fig. 5]. She had made a reputation for herself by almost exclusively taking on the roles that required her to wear men's clothes. This affectation was an eighteenth century theatrical convention called "a breeches part" that gave women the opportunity to "show their leg" in men's breeches (Seilhamer 142). For example, Mrs. Osborne organized a benefit program on May 18, 1768 at The Old Theater in Williamsburg. During this evening, Mrs. Osborne played the part of Sir Harry Wildair in *The Constant Couple* and while dressed in character, she danced a minuet with Miss Yapp (Purdie and Dixon, *The Virginia Gazette*, May 18, 1768; Playbill, *The Constant Couple*, Rockefeller Library) [Fig. 6]. Notably, Mrs. Osborne’s dress and dance was not a transgression since performing in breeches was a common practice. In contrast, the fact that she earned a benefit program demonstrated her popularity. It was common for actors and actresses to receive benefits towards the conclusion of the touring season. Assuming an actress’s popularity would garner ticket sales and the consequential proceeds, a single evening’s benefit concert had the potential to double her profits for the entire year (Henderson 145). The beneficiary usually selected her roles and repertoires
and relied on her reputation to attract the audience. It seems likely that Mrs. Osborne was popular enough to receive an enthusiastic audience for her benefit.

As the colonies’ population expanded and began to develop, music and culture also emerged. The presence of the theater attracted a nucleus of professional female singers, dancers, and instrumentalists who sought new audiences and untapped creative prospects. Unlike many individuals who fled the colonies to develop their creative crafts, many singing actresses arrived hoping to become important members of the eighteenth century creative community. For example, performers such as Mr. and Mrs. John Hodgkinson, arrived from England in 1792. Their popular reputation preceded their arrival however their arrogance slowly emerged. Their duties with the American Company troupe were arranged as both actors and managers. The Dictionary of American Biography (1932) described both as high caliber singers and excellent actors. They were recruited for their talents and ability to contribute to the burgeoning theatrical infrastructure. However, it seems they caused more cacophony than harmony as both developed an insatiable greed for power, money, and recognition (Johnson and Malone eds. 148). Unfortunately, Mr. and Mrs. Hodgkinsons’ identities are entangled thereby rendering researchers are unable to differentiate the characteristics of each individual.
Figure 5. Playbill and advertisement for *The Beggar's Opera* and *The Anatomist*. Performed at the Old Theatre, near the Capitol by the Virginia Company of Comedians. For the Benefit of Mrs. Parker. June 3, 1762. Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
Figure 6. Playbill. *The Constant Couple* or *A Trip to the Jubilee* and *The Miller of Mansfield*. Performed by the Virginia Company of Comedians, Williamsburg. May 18, 1768. Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
Another acclaimed singer actress was the soprano Margaret Cheer. She sailed from England to Charleston, South Carolina in 1763 in order to try her hand at the colonial stage. David Colden described Cheer in a letter dated February 1, 1764, noting that Margaret Cheer’s “fine person, her youth, her Voice, & Appearance conspire to make her appear with propriety” (Colden: Johnson 234-235). A similar letter appeared anonymously in the Pennsylvania Gazette. Unlike Garden’s description, the anonymous author suggested that “Miss Cheer never loses the sweetest accent, or falters in the cleverness of expression…I am not alone, when I pronounce her one of the best players in the Empire” (Pennsylvania Gazette, January 22, 1767: Johnson 260). The letter’s author exalts Cheer’s ability and talent. The description as the ‘best player in the Empire’ endowed her with a type of creative power. However, this type of power was quickly recuperated and Cheer was realigned with dominant gender ideology. As the author clearly articulated, he “believe[d] she is equally delicate” (Pennsylvania Gazette, January 22, 1767: Johnson 260). The adjective “delicate” is comparable to Gardner’s use of the term “propriety.” Despite Cheer’s ability to play many of the leading roles and more secondary roles in both dramatic and musical productions, both letters repositioned her within a dominant discourse constructing women as fragile. It is unclear as to whether the authors are referring to her bodily capacity or intricate workmanship. Perhaps this ambiguity was intentional thereby representational of the authors’ use of homographic rhetoric.

Cheer continued to act and sing throughout the next year. By August 1768, she married a “Lord Rosehill” of Maryland. In support of this marriage, Dunlap, Johnson, and Rankin use a brief announcement printed in the Pennsylvania Gazette and the Maryland Gazette. The same announcement was also printed in the September 22, 1768 edition of The Virginia Gazette. The
wide distribution of this announcement signifies Cheer was a central facet of colonial culture. This marriage announcement deserves deeper analysis.

According to Seilhamer, Cheer was the first colonial actress to marry into the gentry. Seilhamer contends this trend became more a prevalent occurrence in the early republic however was a rare incident in the pre-Revolutionary era. Despite the affluence typically associated with the title Lord, Cheer continued to perform. In “Miss Cheer as Lady Rosehill: A Real-Life Drama in Late Colonial British America” (2010), Susan Rather surmises Lord Rosehill was actually impoverished. As she writes, “Indeed, her ability to support him must have augmented Miss Cheer’s attractions for Lord Rosehill” (Rather 88). Quite possibly, Rosehill’s title was either a courtesy title or an inherited appellation. Thus Cheer’s marriage did not actually achieve a higher social status. This substantiates the reason as to why she continued acting and singing; it was her means of financial support. For example, the October 6, 1768 issue of The Virginia Gazette printed the claim that Douglass paid Cheer to perform “above 10L. per week, and a benefit” (Purdie and Dixon; Rind; The Virginia Gazette, October 6, 1768). This was a fairly large sum of money while the promise of a benefit increased the likelihood of an even greater financial gain. As reflected by Mary Stagg and Barbara DeGraffenreit, it was fairly common for wives to participate in trade in order to supplement a family’s income. However, a wife’s participation in wage accrual did not specify her ownership of the earnings. In Women’s Role in Eighteenth Century America, Smith suggests “[a married woman’s] husband could take charge of any wages she earned” (Smith xvii). In application to the Rosehills, it is more than likely that the money she earned from the stage actually went to her husband’s pockets. Again this is reflected in Mary Stagg’s history as she became one of her husband’s people because he controlled the finances. This reinforces Rather’s assumption that Rosehill was penniless therefore he relied on his wife’s
celebrity status in order to stabilize their livelihoods. Cheer primarily spent the remainder of her career and life in between New York and Philadelphia. The February 15th 1800 edition of *The Columbian Magazine* reported that Margaret Cheer died in Jamaica (Wright 49).

Much as Cheer became a formidable singing actress, Maria Storer also received widespread acclaim for her creative abilities. Unlike Mrs. Douglass, whose acting talent overshadowed her musical abilities, Maria Storer was recognized primarily for her singing. In *A History of the American Theatre from Its Origins to 1832*, William Dunlap wrote she "possessed both beauty and talent, and until the year 1792 was the best public singer America had known" (Dunlap 54). Coad supports this point but includes that Maria Storer was a young and beautiful player, talented in singing as well as acting. She did both comedy and tragedy with spirit, and was “a great favorite with the public” (Coad 206). Dunlap, interestingly, is one of the only critics to actually comment on Maria Storer’s body type that he described as “rather petite” (Dunlap 54).

Maria Storer was a member of a creative family, a theme reinforced by the Staggs, the Hallams and later by Mrs. Sully. Maria Storer was born in Ireland and as a child performed at the Smock Alley Theater in Dublin with her family (White 73). Theater scholars such as Ireland and Hornblower suggest that her début was in 1768 as a child in the play *The Orphan* in which she both sang and acted. Ireland describes Storer as an individual who “developed talent both in singing and acting and as she became Mrs. Henry was an immense favorite with the public”

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82 In development of the claim that Rosehill mainly provided Cheer with a title and not the monetary stability, Rather examines Cheer’s residence and address in New York. Rather points towards a brief advertisement in the *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy* for a benefit for “Miss Cheer, at Mrs. Allen’s, in Bateaux-Street” (*New York Gazette or Weekly Post-Boy*, April 22, 1769). Rather contends that Bateau-Street was a remote area mostly “populated by humble artisans, including carpenters, bricklayers, and cartmen. Batteaux hardly qualified as an auspicious address for a young lord of good standing or his lady” (Rather 90).
Her mother was an active singer in London’s Drury Lane while Storer’s two sisters also pursued singing. For a reason not made explicit in the extant records, Storer’s mother resettled the family in Jamaica. Ireland and Hornblower cite that while in Jamaica they all frequently performed together. Despite sharing a similar level of acclaim as Margaret Cheer, Maria Storer’s private affairs were seldom responded to with goodwill. Storer was a constant subject of scandal and speculation a stark contrast to Mrs. Douglass “irreproachable Manners in private Life” (Purdie and Dixon; Rind; The Virginia Gazette, October 14, 1773). For example, Storer’s husband John Henry, had previously married or cohabitated with all three Storer sisters, albeit at separate occasions. Henry first wed the eldest sister Helen, who died in a shipboard fire. Shortly thereafter he courted and shared residences with Anne Storer. Anne and John never married because she preemptively end their relationship to pursue an engagement with a different actor. Finally, Henry wed Maria Storer (Rankin 208-209; Kollatz, no page #). This type of philandering caused a great public outcry. Dunlap chastised the Storers and Henry because their affairs marred the reputation of the theater. Dunlap assumed that their indignities prevented the theater from representing a virtuous reflection of society. Dunlap also tacitly claimed that public figures had a moral responsibility to the community. He suggested that actors and actresses are the “teachers of virtue and morality, and such instances, even if rare, account for that repelling principle which keeps the cautious and the pure in private society aloof from those who delight them in public” (Dunlap 53). For Dunlap, actors and actresses were models of behavior thus played an important role in public culture. Hence the amorous proclivities of Henry and the Storer sisters only tarnished the theater’s respectability.
Women were a crucial part of the theater’s audience and theater managers frequently accommodated the desires of female patrons. Managers were quite concerned with the behavior of the audience and the morals expressed on stage in order to placate any sensibilities. It is likely that in the colonies, the theater was not always as sumptuous as the British counterpart. In general, the scholarship is split on whether the theater was urbane or lewd. In terms of the former, scholars point to the frequency with which Washington, Jefferson, and other political dignitaries attended the theater and other public performances. Their presence ensured the theater owners’ standards were set high. This required the proprietors to prevent any coarse behavior. In terms of the latter, the theater was assumed a common ground for prostitutes and their clients. The content of performances were the catalysts for lascivious behavior. Especially in England, the blame was centrally placed onto actresses thereby their sexuality often became the subject of scrutiny. The association between the theater and women’s sexuality was not lost on Abigail Adams. After her return from Paris, she “lamented the sad fate of these ‘opera girls’ who were regarded as little more than playthings for rich young men” (Fleming 157). The actresses’ lives evoked mass speculation, gossip, and points of conversation. The misreporting of

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83 Some historians contend that the bawdy and raucous behavior of taverns could also be easily reflected in the English theatre audience (Rankin and Seiheimer). However this analogy was not extended to colonial theater’s audiences.

Mrs. Douglass’ death, as example, is quite possibility a result of hearsay. It was these discourses that reconstructed the musical actresses’ identities to comply with a negotiation of dominant gender norms. As illustrated by Storer and Henry, the public records frequently commented on an actresses’ sexuality or aligned her with any type of lasciviousness. The extant resources shape the idolization of female actresses while also subjecting the women to public scrutiny.\(^{85/86}\)

The lives of the actresses became the channel for the ideologies that reaffirmed accepted norms and social positions. However, ideology is imaginative yet shapes the creation of subjects. In a historic context, this is articulated through the dramas and hailed by the players themselves. For individuals such as Dunlap, the actresses’ performances both on and off stage needed to enforce morality rather than transgression. Through his criticisms of Storer and the colonial

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\(^{85}\) The connection between public female cultural figures and sexual promiscuity was not uncommon throughout the eighteenth century. In *London In The Eighteenth Century: A Great and Monstrous Thing* (2013), author Jerry White examines the famed London writer, Eliza Haywood, known as a novelist and writer of fictional histories detailing the “difficulties of love and the perils of seduction, or the ‘undoing Artifices of deluding Men’ (White 251). However records indicated she published more than rudimentary sultry romances: she edited periodicals for women such as the *Female Spectator*, produced moral manuals for servants, published poetry, was arrested for the writing a Jacobite pamphlet, *Anti-Pamela*, a lewd response to Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* and collaborated with Hatchett to produce an opera libretto (See Eliza Haywood and Henry Fielding *Anti-Pamela and Shamela* (2004)). Haywood was influential contributor to the English cultural milieu, yet much as Woffington, she was denounced as a neophyte and repositioned along the same lines as a prostitute or beggar. Writer Samuel Johnson pens a striking description of Haywood as a “prostitute scribbler.” Yet Woffington did not shy away from the characterization of her sexuality and some might argue even embraced the attention and used it to her professional advantage. As she penned: “My life, for some years, was a continued round of what I then called pleasure, and my whole time engrossed by a hurry of promiscuous diversions. – But whatever inconveniencies such a manner of conduct has brought upon myself, I have this consolation, to think that the public may reap some benefit from it…” (White 251).

\(^{86}\) For example, Margaret ‘Peg’ Woffington achieved fame and popularity in Dublin for her work in the Irish theatre. However dissatisfied with the opportunities Ireland presented, she left for England in order to capitalize on her fame and talent. Considered to be on the most popular actors of the mid eighteenth century, she had “drawn some fire for her free and scandalous relations with men, and another Irish actress from Dublin, Gertrude Mahone, became one of the most successful London courtesans of the 1770s” (White 154).
stage, Dunlap demonstrated the instances when regulatory systems controlled audience reception, social order, and normativity. Dunlap’s criticism reinforced the notion that dominant ideologies are infused through public cultural figures. When women such as Storer disrupted the unadulterated filtering of dominant gender ideologies, she in fact interrupted the conveyance of patriarchal ideals.

John Henry’s relationships with the Storers were only fragments of the deviance framing Maria Storer. She was often cited for her public childish behavior and speaking in gibberish (Ireland 47). Perhaps this behavior was reflective of some type of disability or onset of psychological episode. Since she spent her final days at a psychiatric hospital in Pennsylvania, it is plausible that Storer suffered from some type of invisible ailment. Nonetheless, Dunlap’s disapproval of Storer’s private life collapsed the semblance of normativity. By chastising her behavior Dunlap reassumed his patriarchal location that allowed him to control behavior and police acceptability. By positioning Storer as an Other, one who embodied deviant behavior, he located her as an object of undesirability. Storer became an example of how not to behave rather than a model of creative power and normativity. The public record of her institutionalization further demonstrated to the audiences the consequences of non-normative behavior. This serves as a stark contrast to the stalwart figure of Mrs. Douglass. Dunlap’s chastisement controlled the behavior of the audience while preventing its acceptance of Storer’s transgressive behavior. Essentially, Dunlap attempted to harness the power she garnered from public performance. In doing so he attempted to render Storer’s creative power as ineffective.

In the face of Dunlap’s concern that Storer would tarnish the image of public figures, she was still idolized by the general public. By 1773, printer Edward Cumins advertised the sale of “The Storer, or the American Syren: Being a Collection of the Newest and Most Approved Song
(Purdie and Dixon; Rind; *The Virginia Gazette*, February 11, 1773). Unfortunately, this songbook no longer exists thus researchers are unable to yield any more details shaping Storer’s singing repertoire. It is also unclear as to whether Storer compiled the songbook herself or if Cumins compiled it without Storer’s permission. It is not made evident who profited from this songbook or if the proceeds were split between both parties. Regardless, her songbook was created to teach her music and vocal style to her audience. This demonstrated her influence on Virginians and creative culture in general. The sale of these songbooks occurred despite the condemnation of her private affairs. This suggests that her audience still venerated Storer’s creativity. In spite of her mercurial private life, her popularity did not wane. Despite the weight of Dunlap’s censure, his pen did not represent the mindset of the larger populace.

By the 1770s and through the next decade, Storer held many leading roles. For example she played characters in musical plays such as *Love in a Village*, *Lionel and Clarissa*, *Beggar’s Opera*, and *Thomas and Sally*. Hornblower adds that on May 29th 1786, Storer performed as Patty in Bickerstaff’s *The Maid of the Mill*. Her performance was a sensation and “two hundred persons were turned away from the theatre unable to gain admittance” (Hornblower 168). When considering the history of creative tradeswomen in the eighteenth century, Storer embodied an important trope. She, much as many other musical women, demonstrated that singing and the theater were popular avenues for wage earning. The dramatic stage facilitated their performances, cultivated their musicality, and subsidized their livelihoods.

Sarah Wainwright was another woman who was quite popular and influential despite leaving a scarce biographical record. Dunlap is the only scholar to attempt to document her biography. He primarily positioned her as a “comedic actress” (Dunlap 35). He safely made this conclusion based on her roles in farces and humorous comic operas. Additionally, comic operas
required the presence of stronger singers. Based on her ability to perform Thomas Arne’s compositions, there is reason to suspect she studied under the musician. She was specifically recruited by Douglass to fulfill the singing roles in the 1767 theatrical season. For example, she was the first actress to portray “Sally” in Arne’s *Thomas and Sally* and the first “Rosetta” in the colonial premier of Arne’s *Love in a Village*. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* noted “Miss Wainwright is a very good singer, and her action exceeds the famous Miss Brent” (*Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 29, 1767: Johnson 260). Miss Brent was Arne’s student, Charlotte Brent, who he cast as the original Rosetta. Notably, Charlotte Brent never performed in the colonies however reaped transatlantic acclaim for her abilities. The comparison between Wainwright and Brent suggests they had a similar musical upbringing that moved beyond the portrayal of Rosetta. Arguably that commonality was their association with Arne.

Wainwright’s American debut was a vocal concert performed with Nancy Hallam and organist Peter Valton, of St. Philip’s Church on November 13, 1765 in Charleston, South Carolina (*South Carolina Gazette*, November 9, 1765). Wainwright, along with Nancy Hallam, monopolized the lead singing roles during this period and appeared in concerts throughout the colonies. Margaret Shippen noted in a letter that “Miss Cheer and Miss Wainwright are the best Actresses. The latter is the best woman singer…” (Burd Walker 409). After 1769 Wainwright announced an early retirement only to reappear then disappear again from the stage for the next fifteen years. Wainwright made few public appearances except for an announcement of her marriage. It is not known why she left the stage, but it is plausible that her voice eventually deteriorated due to the harsh conditions and frequent performances.

Vocal performances and singing were a mainstay of both theater culture and the training of actresses. Often, actors and actresses were called upon to sing on stage so they constantly
received vocal training in preparation for these roles. It was also common for theater managers to identify talented singers and provide them with acting classes. Actresses were praised for both their dramatic and vocal capabilities, a theme applicable to proceeding subjects in this dissertation. For example, both Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick used the stage as a means to develop their music, but first made public appearances as actresses. The same can be said for the actress Nancy Hallam. Despite her capable acting, Hallam was sent to England in 1760 to receive instruction for her exquisite voice. Other examples include the acclaimed Maria Storer and Sarah Wainwright who both became the premier songstresses of the colonial stage.

The Hallams, Storer, Cheer, and Wainwright were not the exclusive acting songstresses of the eighteenth century. Rather, the archival sources demonstrate the ubiquity of singing actresses in almost every region throughout the century. Yet few details regarding their personal histories survived. For example, a printed advertisement for the comedy *Way to Keep Him* showcased the singing abilities of Mrs. Stamper (Purdie and Dixon, *The Virginia Gazette*, April 16, 1772). A few days following, a printed advertisement confirmed Mrs. Stamper performed in the plays, *Thomas and Sally, The Provoked Husband*, and *Dorcas* (Purdie and Dixon, *The Virginia Gazette*, April 21, 1772) Despite her appearances in several productions, who was Mrs. Stamper? Extant records do not directly reflect her history. Rather historians must turn to androcentric accounts. More information on her identity is derived from the history of theater manager David Douglass. In an attempt to prevent the decline of his theater troupes, he diversified the repertoires and players. At this point, Mrs. Stamper joined the company and was cast in major roles and sang. She had gained recognition in England, at the Theater Royal in Edinburgh. In Seilhamer argues she worked closely with Susannah and Theophilus Cibber, sister

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87 She first appeared in *Way to Keep Him*, premiering in 1760 in the London theaters. The inspiration for the play was derived from Swift’s poem ‘Stephan and Chloe’ (Rankin 74).
and brother-in-law to Thomas Arne (Seilhamer 314). But apparently she was not up to the challenges the colonies presented, and after the Williamsburg season she seldom took to the stage (Kollatz no page #). These few pieces of her biography are only made evident because of the archived sources available on Douglass. Stamper’s identity is erased.

Another woman who seemed to have had a profitable singing and acting career was Mrs. Hopkins. According to Edward A. Wyatt’s article, “Three Petersburg Theatres” (1941), her musical and dramatic performances were always received with distinguished applause (Wyatt 90). Mrs. Hopkins gained popularity for her musical performances and variety entertainments as well as her dramatic presentations. On one occasion she and her husband presented “The School for Scandal” as their benefit (Wyatt 91). High-ranking families often privately entertained Mrs. Hopkins suggesting she held a favorable and reputable position amongst her contemporaries (Wyatt 91). Other than these minor pieces of her history and the sources validating their performance dates, no additional personal history is evident.

Yet unlike Mrs. Hopkins or Mrs. Stamper, some singing actresses are not favorably remembered. For example, Miss Broadhurst, who arrived from Covent Garden when she was twenty years old, often received, mixed responses to her performances. Some writers praised her as a very fine singer, but others disavowed her ability because of her lack of beauty. For example, Dunlap thought she had "science but no personal beauty or skill as an actress, to recommend her" (Dunlap 127). ‘Science’ refers to her grasp of music and vocal theory and the training she received to refine her acting. Yet Dunlap does not detail why her science was lacking rather he emphasizes her beauty, or lack thereof. The undermining of a woman’s talent in order to critique her physicality proves a common point of consideration for eighteenth century critics and audiences.
The majority of these women’s histories are framed by their theatrical engagements while a jot is devoted to their personal biographies. Historians only know these women existed because their names appeared on extant playbills or as flippant references in personal correspondences. Yet it is important to not overlook these women as contributors to eighteenth century musical and creative culture. From these short references, it is possible to infer that these women excelled in their public singing roles. Notwithstanding the public emphasis placed on Hallam, Cheer, Storer, and Wainwright, many of these other women arguably also held favorable public positions. Mrs. Stamper, for example, must have garnered some type of positive public reputation since the centrality of her name on the advert worked as a method to attract audiences. Mrs. Hopkins also benefited from a positive public reputation. ‘The distinguished applause’ aligned with her familiarity with elite society were undoubtedly informed by the caliber of her performances. It is discernible that these women were viable cultural figures. 88

The songs of the early stage are considered the earliest types of public musical performance. Richard Crawford, in *The American Musical Landscape* (2000), points toward Lewis Hallam’s troupe as composed of singing actors and actresses who were “the first performers to appear regularly before paying audiences in America…” (Crawford 71). Crawford

88 From the evidence collected for this project, it seems that there was a difference: mainly the reputation and public response to the actresses. From the extant sources, the overwhelming belief held toward actresses was that of admiration or even idolization. The praise and acclamation of the singing actresses the Hallams, Miss Wainwright and Maria Storer demonstrated only positive public response to their work. As of today, April 14th, I am yet to find any responses to actresses that were harsh. However, this is important to complicate because I am comparing the physical audience to the public circulation of newspaper advertisements. There is a probability that a person who expressed lewd gestures or behaviors in the safety of a theatrical space might not do the same in the public circulation of a piece he wrote with his own hand. Meaning that despite the tendency for rudeness at theaters, the same sentiment would not be expressed in written advertisements. Quite possibly there must have been a type of politeness to the newspaper where harsh criticism was veiled as constructive or even presented in a passive manner.
is careful to establish that these performers were both men and women. Yet the existence of trade
performers did not create an absolute audience and performer binary. Ballad operas, in
particular, were popular, and audience members learned the words and music to perform on their
own. The circulation of songbooks such as *The Storer, or the American Syren*, scores, sheet
music, and broadsides aided this awareness. In *The Songs of the Williamsburg Theater* (1974),
Molnar contends that Virginians also read “books and critical essays about music and drama,
especially English lyric drama, whose most characteristic form consisted of plays with
interspersed music” (Molnar vii). Similarly, on March 7th 1771, *The Virginia Gazette* advertised
the score of the *Beggar’s Opera* “set to Musick” was available for purchase at the printing office
(Purdie and Dixon, *The Virginia Gazette*, March 1771). The audience arrived to the theater
with a great deal of cultural capital and high expectations for the performers. For instance, the
audience expected the music they knew and assumed that they had the agency to influence the
musical performances. Historians describe the rowdiness of audiences, as they would call out
from their seats, demanding their favorite songs. Molnar contends these requests were
infrequently honored.  

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89 This advertisement also announced the sale of “The Beggars Opera set to Musick . A great
and Steiner ’s Violins, with best Screw Bows. Silver Basses and best Roman Strings. German
and Common Flutes, of different Sizes” (Purdie and Dixon, *The Virginia Gazette*, March 7, 1771)

90 The theatre provided a steady and reliable source of income for musician who was daring
enough to entertain a turbulent and mercurial audience. In the eighteenth century, theatergoing
was more of a participatory event than is currently accepted. Ogasapian aptly shapes this
statement when he writes, “audiences were quick to voice and vent their dissatisfaction with
hoots and well-aimed fruit and some stones” (Ogasapian 131). When not dodging airborne fruit,
a benefit of the position enabled “musicians to take a break from playing during the course of an
evening and slake their thirst at a nearby tavern” (Ogasapian 131). However, the frequency of
soaring fruit and absent musicians caused consternation amongst theater managers who feared
these shenanigans would exasperate certain members of the audience.
The theater provided a secure and somewhat consistent professional and social support system for musicians and creative tradeswomen. The touring schedule and predetermined performance dates guaranteed the tradeswomen a paid engagement. Since theater troupes had the benefit of traveling throughout the colonies they did not rely on the financial assistance of a singular community. Whereas touring monetarily capitalized on the interest of a new and fresh audience. Troupes could leave as soon as the audiences’ interests dwindled. Troupes could also abscond at the peak of audience’s appreciation in order to rekindle the demand upon the company’s return. As long as there was interest in the theater, there was also certain employment for a musician regardless of location. It is also likely that membership in a theater troupe provided some type of affective support. Here amongst liked minded individuals, musicians, actors, and other cultural contributors formed a community that alleviated the burden of potentially dangerous travel, inconsistent wages, and wearisome rehearsal.91

Women such as Mrs. Douglass, Margaret Cheer, and other singing actresses, such as Maria Storer, Sarah Wainwright, Mrs. Broadhurst, and Mrs. Osborne demonstrated the prevalence of women in theater and musical culture. Their varying cultural capabilities, ranging from acting to singing or both, demonstrated the indelible connection between the theater and music. The fact that several of these women were known for their singing capacities illuminates the significance of music but also the depth of tradeswomen’s skills in the eighteenth century. The theater became a central avenue for displaying the music in the colonists’ everyday lives while also demonstrating the theater as a space for trade. Accordingly, the theater was an effective outlet for the positioning of women who used their cultural contributors as a method to

91 These professional roles were singled out by Richard A. Crawford in his 1985 University of California Bloch lectures *The American Musical Landscape*. 
incur wages. It was through these outlets that creative trades were consumed as entertainment while also demonstrating the value of innovative and talented women.
CHAPTER V: NANCY HALLAM, THE CULTURAL EXTRAORDINAIRE

Mrs. Douglass, Margaret Cheer, Maria Storer, and Sarah Wainwright were prominent actresses. Their creative agency captured the audiences’ attention while their performances received widespread acclaim. Importantly, they used the theater as the foundation for establishing themselves as purposeful cultural tradeswomen. Their performances and cultural legacies significantly influenced the development of colonial America’s creative milieu. Despite their accomplishments, their influence was eclipsed by the reputation and impact of Nancy Hallam. Her acting and creative performances instigated a maelstrom of praise and printed superlatives. Poets and essayists rhapsodized about her beauty while painters rushed to their canvases to cement her legacy in the visual form. However, a deeper investigation into Hallam’s creative ability demonstrates acting was not her only reputable quality. This chapter also examines the role of singing as it relates to Nancy Hallam and the overarching ideologies presented in the librettos she sang. These librettos, such as George Coleman’s *The Musical Lady*, served a similar function to prescriptive literature. Hallam’s portrayal of Sophy positioned the actresses as a woman who transgressed the very ideology she was performing. Yet as Nancy Hallam engaged colonial America’s creative echelons, she demonstrated her abilities as a prominent singer, dancer, and actress.

In terms of methodology, this chapter required a varying approach. Similar to the rest of the dissertation, the crux of the research supporting this chapter stems from archival primary sources supplemented with secondary scholar material. I utilize diaries, letters, and newspaper

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92 Nancy Hallam, much as the previously discussed singing actresses, performed in a multitude of roles. I chose to specifically examine Coleman’s *The Musical Lady* because the farce depicted a musical woman and the social response to her creativity. Whereas the other ballad operas and librettos are available texts in refiguring the lives of singing actresses, Coleman’s work is the only piece that specifically aligns with this dissertation’s subject material.
advertisements to refigure Nancy Hallam’s legacy in addition to the responses from her audience. However, Hallam is the only creative tradeswoman depicted in portraiture. This required the inclusion of visual interpretation that integrated analysis of the painter, subject, scene, and painting techniques. A visual interpretative method requires adherence to both historical and technical form. Putting a feminist historiography and visual interpretation into conversation reveals the larger social and cultural context of the portrait, the artist, and the subject.

An examination of material culture places emphasis on reading but also seeing history as signifiers of everyday life. An examination of portraiture yields valuable information shaping Hallam’s history while also serving as a reminder to not dismiss artifacts as viable research tools. Rather an emphasis on material culture, such as the portrait of Nancy Hallam or Coleman’s farce, validates the importance of Hallam’s social position as a signifier of cultural society and trade histories. An inclusion of material culture reveals the semiotics of everyday culture as essential to contextualizing the nonpolitical denizens as imperative to historical and cultural research. Material culture reveals the implicit and explicit relationships of power, creativity, gender, and social position. The emphasis on material culture and artifacts becomes an extension of “learning to listen” as the material articulates everyday histories.

In May of 1769, while in New York City, Nancy Hallam moved into the role of Juliet. She succeeded the aging Mrs. Douglas and the popular Margaret Cheer "to become the third Juliet of the American stage" (Rankin 174). This was the role that propelled Nancy Hallam to theatrical prominence. Despite Mrs. Douglass’ theatrical success and approbation, the idolization of Nancy Hallam reduced her aunt to a trending whim rather than a concrete legacy. Nancy Hallam’s talent for acting, dance, and singing were renowned throughout the colonies. She was
the inspiration for passionate poems published in *The Maryland Gazette* while also the subject of a Charles Wilson Peale painting. In this portrait, he depicted her dressed as the boy Fidele in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*. Her legacy continued through the twentieth century. A 1956 article from the Charleston, South Carolina periodical *The News and Courier* referred to “Nancy Hallam [as] one of the first glamour girls in the American theater, [she] was a talented actress and singer…” (*The News and Courier*, August 5, 1956 5D). The identification of Hallam as a “talented actress and singer” is supported by the extensive histories of the early American stage and the ubiquity of Hallam’s printed name. Many of these advertisements specified that her performances often encompassed many of her talents. For example, on May 1, 1771 in Williamsburg, the American Company performed Samuel Foote’s *The Buck; or, The Englishmen in Paris*. The playbill for this evening specifies that Miss [Nancy] Hallam played the role of Lucinda and that she performed “with a song” (Playbill *The Buck; or, The Englishmen in Paris* for May 1, 1771) [Fig. 7]. Notably, Hallam is the only performer who sang that evening. She also played Sally in *Thomas and Sally or the Sailor's Return* performed in Williamsburg on June 20, 1770 [Fig. 6]. The adoration of Nancy Hallam was longstanding yet despite her social position she still faced stringent norms. Primarily the admiration of her beauty minimized the quality of her acting and singing while also the roles she performed typically portrayed submissive and weak women despite Hallam’s convincing and poised recitals. Moreover, somewhere along the historic process, Hallam’s musical identity was lost to the constant emphasis of her acting talents.
Figure 7 Playbill. Love In a Village and The Buck Or, The Englishman in Paris. Performed by the American Company, Williamsburg. May 1, 1771. Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
Scholars are unclear as to how exactly Nancy Hallam was related to Lewis Hallam, Mrs. Douglass, or Sarah Hallam. Rankin and Kollatz imply that she was Mrs. Douglass’ niece thereby suggesting that she was the daughter of William Hallam, Lewis Hallam, the elder’s brother. It is probable that Nancy Hallam was part of the first group of actors who arrived in the colonies. Utilizing extant New York playbills, Hornblower proposes her first appearances on the colonial stage began in 1759 and her parts were suitable for small children (Hornblower 221). If this lineage is accurate, then it is necessary to question William Hallam’s motivations for sending his daughter to a newly emerging colony. Seemingly, it would have behooved William Hallam to raise his daughter in the company of British actors who could condition her in the techniques of the trade especially when considering his strong managerial ties with the London stage. It must be questioned why Nancy left for the colonies and did not utilize her great skill in Europe? One of the possibilities for William Hallam’s theatrical business venture in the colonies was as a means to repair his ruined finances. Nearing bankruptcy, Hallam organized the troupe to tour the colonies as a final attempt to resurrect his plummeting cash line. Perhaps he sent along his daughter in order for her to avoid his turmoil. Or conceivably, he hoped his brother and sister-in-law would bear the financial burden of rearing a young child.

By 1760 Hallam was sent back to Europe to “began the formal training of her remarkable singing voice” (Kollatz, no page # listed). Scholars such as Kollatz and Hornblower suggest that while studying in England, Hallam’s skills as a singer grew refined and eventually she became renowned for both acting and singing. It was likely that Hallam was sent to England to participate in a type of tutelage akin to a musical apprenticeship. In this arrangement the student would work closely under a musician and learn through example in longstanding methods of the European masters. This method of learning continued as the norm for all aspiring singers through
the nineteenth century. However, this is where the information on Hallam is lost and records documenting her musical education do not seem to exist. Despite this, some assumptions shaping Hallam’s singing ability are derivable based on the general scholarship on singing and vocal training in the eighteenth century.

Scholars such as Molnar, Kollatz, and Rankin suggest that on a recruiting trip, Douglass realized the talents of Nancy Hallam and put forth his best efforts to convince her to return to the colonies. Archival evidence yields that “David Douglas, the manager of the company, announced in 1766 that he had ‘collected some very eminent performers from both Theatres in London, particularly in the Singing Way, so that the English Comic Opera’ (of which [Arne’s] Love in a Village was the first) could be performed ‘to advantage’” (Molnar xiii). One of the performers who was capable in ‘the singing way’ was Nancy Hallam and the other singers were Margaret Cheer and Sarah Wainwright. It is arguable that Douglass’s intent was to create a multi-disciplinary form of entertainment: one that included drama and music. Imperative to this endeavor was the recruitment of actors and actresses capable of fulfilling these roles. Accordingly, these players had to possess both the theatrical and musical acumen necessary to professionally and successfully portray specific characters. No concrete evidence exists delineating where Douglass found these women or what he said to convince them to travel to the colonies. However, the Hallams’ and Douglass’ possible connections to Arne begin to suggest a speculative direction.

It is possible that all three women were studying under Thomas Arne. When the newest troupe members returned to the colonies, Arne’s musical comedies dominated their repertoires. Roger Fiske, in English Theater Music in the Eighteenth Century (1987) suggests that Thomas Arne was a leading teacher in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Considering Hallam’s
reputation as a singer, it seems valid that she would seek tutelage from a master of Arne’s
caliber. Particularly, these women became renowned for their work in the ballad opera Love in a
Village which was written by Arne and premiered in the colonies when Douglass returned with
the new recruits. In view of the apprenticeship system, it was likely that these women were most
familiar with Arne’s work, if he indeed was their teacher. Historians have documented Arne’s
tendency to cast his own pupils in performances of his musical dramas. It is quite likely that
Sarah Wainwright, Margaret Cheer, and Nancy Hallam all arrived with a familiarity with Arne’s
work and music due to their student and teacher relationship. Yet archival records indicate that
these three women did not perform in the British premier rather the role was given to Isabella
Mattocks. Mrs. Mattocks was the daughter of Lewis Hallam the elder and Mrs. Hallam, thus she
was Nancy Hallam’s cousin. Mattocks connection with Arne only reinforces a familial
connection between the Hallams and the composer.

Nancy Hallam’s popularity suggests she was an active performer thereby informing the
dedication she put forth to rehearsing, performing, traveling, and other theatrical responsibilities.
As with any trade, an individual committed herself to the development of her commodity. Data
yielding the exact number of performances a company presented each year does not seem to
exist. However, scholars and historians have reached a flexible estimate based on the conditions
in which troupes performed divided by the time devoted to traveling and rehearsing. Sumner
Coad suggests, “the companies frequently gave as many as seventy dramas a season with about
as many afterpieces” (Sumner Coad 212). A notice in the May 16, 1771 edition of The Virginia
Gazette corroborates Coad’s statement. The advert states: “THE American COMPANY of
COMEDIANS will open the THEATRE in Fredericksburg the latter End of this Month, and
perform every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, during their Residence there” (Rind, The
Performing three times per week is the quantity generally agreed upon in the scholarship. For example, Kollatz suggests “The London Company of Comedians played before large houses three nights a week. During the times of Court, Hallam's troupe sometimes earned 300 pds. a night” (Kollatz, no page #). If theater companies performed three times a week for at least half of the year and the other half traveling and rehearsing, this yields approximately seventy performances a year. In addition, it was also common for performers to present musical and vocal concerts on their days off from the theater. It is thereby conceivable that performers with musical skills performed more often than made evident by the flexible estimate. For example, Nancy Hallam, Maria Storer, and Sarah Wainwright frequently performed concerts on their days away from the stage.

Johnson and Burling specifically address the tendency for theatrical performers to engage in their own musical performances. The authors discern these concerts were completely separate from the acting troupe’s schedule. Therefore music was used as a method to develop the tradeswomen’s creative abilities while broadening their financial prospects. Johnson and Burling describe the staging of separate musical shows as “usually present at a minor venue on off nights, though sometimes staged in the afternoon of the same date of a regular evening performance. These concerts were often for the benefit of the local community in some form, or

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93 From this statement it can be implied that Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick also provided at least seventy performances per year during their tenures with their respective theater companies.  
94 For this study, I could find only one example of Hallam performing a singing concert in Virginia. However, I found countless other references to her concerts in New York and Philadelphia. For example, from the New York Mercury, dated July 3 1769: “A concert of music. Various members of the American Company. Woolls and Miss Hallam of the American Company presented a concert on this evening…further concerts will be held every Monday and Thursday during the season. Price: 2s.” (Johnson and Burling 342). I chose to exclude these performances due to the geographic subject of the dissertation. But found it worth mentioning as it more fully illuminates Hallam’s history.
for the relief of a distressed performer” (Johnson and Burling 43). Notably, Johnson and Burling limited the scope of their examination from 1665-1774. However, this practice continued through the early republic. Notably, Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick also utilized their troupe’s tour schedule to perform their own music. But significantly, Nancy Hallam performed independently almost thirty years prior to the concert activities of Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick. This positioned Hallam as a model of musical enterprise.

Records indicate that Nancy Hallam gave a concert of vocal and instrumental music “At the Raleigh, on Wednesday next, being the 13th” (Purdie and Dixon, *The Virginia Gazette*, November 7, 1771). That evening she was accompanied by Ann Storer and Mr. Woolls while their music included vocal parts by all three actor-musicians. The advertisement also included the performance of “select pieces on the Musical Glasses, and Piano-Forte” (Purdie and Dixon, *The Virginia Gazette*, November 7, 1771).95 This performance correlated with the Douglass-Hallam Company’s tour of the southern Colonies. Records demonstrate that they performed in Williamsburg’s Old Theater from October 23, 1771 through the end of that year. According to the primary sources, the actors were not scheduled to perform on November 7th. Since this day was void of theatrical obligations, they actors were able to pursue their own concerts and productions.

The fact that they performed in a tavern reinforced the understanding that they were functioning within a gender normative space. It was common for women to manage and work in taverns. As in this case Mrs. Vobe managed The Raleigh. The ubiquity of female tavern keepers is directly attributed to the fact that women were still performing their socially prescribed duties,

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95 Musical glasses are glass armonicas.
that of a caretaker, despite occupying a public space. In application to musical culture, taverns consequentially supported women’s creative performances. Women were welcomed to perform within this space, not contesting any type of larger gender paradigms. The fulfillments of these tasks were methods transforming and defining language, society, and identity in favor of the dominant patriarchal culture. This echoes Henri Lefebvre’s theory on the importance of deciphering social space as a means to reinforce control, impose normality and establish identity. Lefebvre argues that the creation of a political or social identity is a key component to any culture and reflected in spatial geographies (Lefebvre 43). Women were granted the agency to contribute to culture as long as it reflected the traditional role of mother and wife. The agency that women achieved as overseers of taverns, or even as touring musicians, allowed them a modicum of social mobility. However their progress was circumscribed by specific social responsibilities and tasks. Doing so regulated the agendas and motivations of women while securing them within socially acceptable gender roles and ideologies controlled by a patriarchal society. Therefore it is not surprising that women musicians such Nancy Hallam performed in taverns. To physically keep a female performer in the home or figurative domestic spaces reaffirmed gender norms and neutralized the threat caused by her agency. Since taverns harbored a space for creative agency while safely ensuring that women functioned within dominant ideological constructs and discourses these establishments reflected the overarching social negotiation public women faced.

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96 As Sarah Hand Meacham makes clear in her article “Keeping the Trade: The Persistence of Tavernkeeping Among Middling Women in Colonial Virginia,” women were often preferred tavernkeepers. She specifically argues that “taverns connected the southern Colonies to European high culture. Jane Vobe exhibited paintings my Mr. Pratt of England in her King’s Arms tavern in Williamsburg. Anne Shields arranged an English style ball at her Williamsburg tavern in 1751” (Meacham 145).
The price of attendance was five schillings thereby reaffirming that singing actresses also relied on admission fees as a means to garner an income. These five schillings also guaranteed that the actor-musicians would provide music as a tradable service so “ladies and gentlemen as choose to dance after the concert” (Purdie and Dixon, *The Virginia Gazette*, November 7, 1771). Interestingly, this advertisement is one of the few that position the musicians in a position of servitude. Specifying that it was the audiences’ decision to dance afterwards endowed the ladies and gentlemen with a type of power. This reaffirmed this concert as a type of musical trade, one in which Hallam and the other musicians offered their craft for consumption but ultimately in trade for monetary returns.

The advertisement listing Hallam’s ensemble performance is quite different than any of Mrs. Sully’s or Mrs. Pick’s notifications. For one, Hallam’s advertisement does not list what the actor-musicians played, the evening’s repertoires, or whether they provided vocal or instrumental accompaniment. This is in direct contrast to Mrs. Sully’s and Mrs. Pick’s advertisement that itemize the entire evening’s repertoire. When considering Hallam’s advertisement, it is quite likely that the women also performed on the pianoforte and musical glasses. The lack of musical designation also qualifies a type of egalitarianism amongst the musicians because grouping them together served to collectively exalt their creative capacity rather than individual reputations. The bonding of these musicians protected their creative interests and established a shared commitment to music and creative trade. On one hand, Hallam divested the power she achieved from her individual stardom in favor of musical solidarity. On the other hand, this also disassociated Ann Storer from the bawdy relationship with her former-husband, then brother-in-law, John Henry. Arguably, this type of collaboration demonstrated the emphasis placed on the

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At this point in the research, I have not found records of musicians or other creative tradeswomen paying tavernkeepers or dwelling owners any fees for the use of their spaces.
financial needs of those involved rather than the personal reputations of the individuals. As such, this ensemble perpetuated a type of musical advancement based on creative equity.

The archival evidence solely describes the timbre of Hallam’s singing rather than detail the technical or musical proficiency. If she was indeed studying under Arne, then it is reasonable that Hallam had a comprehensive understanding of musical and vocal theory and practice. From the extant tune books published and circulated throughout the eighteenth century, it becomes obvious that musical and singing instruction developed theoretical pedagogical methods. In the article “The How and Why of Teaching Singing Schools in Eighteenth Century America” (1989) Allen P. Britton writes an overview emphasizing the music theory evident in published tune books prior to 1800. He suggests, “it is plain from these remarks that eighteenth century singing masters placed a great deal of emphasis upon learning the theory of music” (Britton 27). Applying Britton’s assessment to Hallam, her musical education expertly trained her in the theory and practice of vocal development. The response to her showmanship further supports the claim that Hallam’s ability was based in skill in addition to talent.

Considering the larger historical context shaping singing styles in the eighteenth century, it is possible to make some inferences regarding the caliber and register of Hallam’s voice. It is likely that Hallam had a high voice, possibly in the soprano range. For women, a soprano vocal range dominated the style during the second half of the eighteenth century. It is plausible that the singing and acting training Hallam received affected the higher range of both her verbal and singing delivery. In The History of Singing (2012), John Potter and Neil Sorrell suggest, “since singing before the nineteenth century probably used a higher larynx position than singers do today, it is a likeness of their speech to their singing voices” (Potter and Sorrell 104). The higher voice register was encouraged by the oral tradition and perhaps this range was reaffirmed in the...
dialogues of the theaters. Especially in a ballad opera, clear and intelligible orality was paramount to plot progression. Pragmatically this type of voice could be heard over the music and other ambient noise rendered from the audience or poor acoustics. By extension, a higher vocal range was also associated as a quintessential and unambiguous feminine sound. Michael Scott, in *The Record of Singing* (1978) suggests that a higher register for female singers also suited “the Romantic conceit [of] the fey and hapless heroine” (Scott 15). Scott’s consideration develops Nancy Hallam as the embodiment of the social negotiation shaping women in this study. Despite her powerful creative agency, her method of musical delivery reaffirmed her position as the fragile idol.

It is also likely that Hallam was influenced by the Bel Canto style that gained popularity throughout Europe. *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* (2003) describes Bel Canto as “the Italian vocal technique of the eighteenth century, with its emphasis on beauty of sound and brilliance of performance rather than dramatic expression or romantic emotion” (Randel 93). The entry on Bel Canto continues to specify that this style was influential and popular throughout the eighteenth century. It is plausible that Hallam’s vocal training displayed elements of Bel Canto stylizations and was incorporated into her performances. A Bel Canto style requires command and control of different muscles, breathing methods, phonation, and articulations. Additionally, flourishing singers demonstrated impeccable legato production throughout the singer's range while also dispatching ornate embellishments. Graceful vocal phrasing was rooted in a complete mastery of breath control. But mostly, a successful singer demonstrated a beauty of tone, extension of range, and virtuosity of execution that was often taught but less frequently perfectly reproduced. Arguably, a portion of Hallam’s popularity was due to her ability to color and inflect notes in a
matter that gained audiences’ appreciation. This reinforces the claim that Hallam had a strong foundation in music theory while also showcasing her talent and creative capacity.98

The fact that Hallam was popular and regularly acclaimed for both singing and acting provides more information for deciphering her vocal abilities. A singer’s and musician’s popularity was directly associated with her capacity to demonstrate jurisdiction and power over their instruments. In Hallam’s case, she undeniably demonstrated vocal command thereby elating the audience. In addition, singers faced the challenge of respectively reflecting the composer’s intent while also demonstrating their talents as a creative artist. Somehow, singers were to find a balance between honoring the intention of the composer while using the music to sanction an authentic yet unique creative space. Despite the fact that we do not know how Hallam sounded or how she controlled her voice, historians can deduce that her popularity reflected the matter in which she took control of the composition while incorporating her own creative agency. Hallam’s popularity was probably also stoked by solo vocal performances. In

*Elements of Vocal Science* (1824, reprint 1966), editor Edward Foreman suggests that solo

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98 Scholars suggest that the role of women singers was largely made available by the acceptance of female singers in religious and sacred spaces. Specifically in the late sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth centuries, “the renewed emphasis on secular music gave may more opportunities to women singers” (Potter and Sorrell 79). Moreover, in the article, “A Historical Comparison of Public Singing by American Men and Women,” (1989) J. Terry Gates suggests that despite the inclusive approach to singing, there was a definite gendered response to singers. As he writes, “Men were roundly chastised for singing too loudly, too high, too low, holding pitches too long, using melisma, using more than one tune at the same time, not encouraging women's singing, and being led (by Satan) into contentiousness because they were too ignorant and too stubborn to learn to read music” (Gates 34). By the 1750s and beyond the public role of woman performer was more secured and unrestricted. This shift was primarily due to the ubiquity of singing schools and the general acceptance of vocal training and singing. But specifically refocusing the discussion onto Virginia, I found less influence of the church, other religious sanctions, or singing schools. It seems the only person with extant records who functioned within a scared space was Elizabeth Balgrave. The other women of this study entered the creative trade through other avenues.
singing in the eighteenth century not only gained popularity but also became an expected facet of performances. In adherence to this standard, theater managers commonly listed an evening’s vocal performances in their advertisement. The listing of Hallam’s performance of Lucinda from the 1771 performance of *The Buck; or, The Englishmen in Paris*, specifically included the mention of her song thereby suggesting that she received opportunities for solo performances.

Yet solos also positioned Hallam within a negotiated space. On one hand, a solo performance suggested a type of creative power. One in which Hallam controlled the audience with her voice and singing while also directing the eye and ear of the audience onto herself. In “Action and Singing in Late 18th- and Early 19th-century England” (2012) Robert Toft suggests the acclaim an actor and actress received reflected his or her ability to control the actions of their entire body. Toft’s use of the term action refers to the demeanor of the whole body, including the face and voice, as a conduit in relaying vivid sentiment (Toft 149). As a result, “Their depiction of passion through voice and gesture allowed them to please the eyes as well as the ears of the audience, and the most effective singers perfectly identified themselves with the characters they represented” (Toft 147). During a solo, Hallam and her voice were centered as the primary subject of interest. Singers used the solo to dictate to the audience suavity and sonority made evident by the singer’s abilities as a colorist. Without doubt, the extant sources contextualizing Hallam as her characters rather than an individual actress substantiate her position as an effective singer.

On the other hand, Hallam was not directing the audience to her own words or music. Rather she enabled a connection between the audience and composer made possible through her body and voice. Her duty was to sing the words and music written by the composer and was
expected to do it well. She was responsible for the delivery of songs that were reflective of the composers’ visions. This ensured that the music accurately reflected the intent of the composer rather than the creative interpretation of the performer. This created a type of hierarchy in which the composer was positioned in the primary position, the singer secondary, and the audience last. Hallam was not creating her own musical culture but rather progressing the dictation of taste as made evident by the composer. She was made secondary, a position that subtly reflected her gender while also enforcing the business of musical trade.

Crawford claims the composer, singer, audience hierarchy reaffirmed music as a business enterprise in which the composer controlled the market and the performer was merely a pawn reinforcing the composer’s intent. This type of control does not reflect the taste of the public or performers but rather composers “seek to lead it, in the name of ideals they see as traditional and artistic” (Crawford 42). In this particular argument, Crawford is furthering the work of Richard Session and his claim that all music is a business. The crux of Crawford’s hierarchy is between the composer and the audience as the former provides the commodity for the latter’s consumption. However, Crawford’s consideration removes the importance of the singer and renders her inactive. Applying Crawford’s consideration to Hallam, it seems that she merely became the instrument for the composers’ music and the audience’s desire. Accordingly, she was repositioned within dominant gender paradigms that suggest women’s work was primarily as helpmates who facilitated the success of others. Despite Hallam’s participation in a musical economy, she sang the words of others while she, herself, remained silent.

Yet, the argument that the singer was a mere tool in the commodification of music renders the performer completely powerless. In many regards, the role of the singer demanded a type of creative agency and control of their audience. In one consideration, the impact of the
singer’s voice on the audience was occasionally considered a supernatural element. In this case Hallam cast a vocal spell onto her audience. A vocal spell, according to Robert Rushmore’s *The Singing Voice* (1984), was the development of a connective relationship between singer and audience that verged on fanaticism but also reactions took the form of “excitable, argumentative, jealous, and adoring” (Rushmore 3). In this particular sense, Rushmore’s vocal spell is comparable to Toft’s singing action as both render an affective and corporeal response from the audience. The vocal spell becomes a type of control that takes hold of the audience and renders a response that teeters between admiration and fanaticism. Rushmore approaches the spell through a heteronormative lens and contends that audiences were frequently “attracted to singers of the opposite sex” (Rushmore 14). Problematically this mediates the quality of the singing and reduces the talent to yearning rather than skill. Yet Rushmore’s claim is not unfounded. Specifically, the extant evidence shaping Hallam does emphasize a physical reaction to her singing rather than a response describing her musicality. Critics such as Colonel Hudson Muse who emphasized her physical characteristics in written responses were actually functioning within a vocal spell. If Rushmore’s assumption is accurate, then it is plausible that Muse wrote from a space of idealized corporeal intimacy between him and Hallam, despite the distance created by Hallam’s position on stage and Muse’s position in the audience. However, from his writing it is also likely that he was highly influenced by the gender ideologies that reaffirmed his power over Hallam.

In a 1771 letter printed in *The William and Mary Quarterly* volume 12, from Colonel Hudson Muse to his brother, Muse specified that while in Williamsburg he was “detained for eleven days though I spent the time very agreeably at the plays every night I attended the
Nancy Hallam was the star female actress each evening. However, Muse never specified that he attended the theater specifically to see or hear Nancy Hallam. The primary motivation for his consistent attendance is not made evident. However, Nancy Hallam occupied a significant portion of his private letter. For example, he makes it evident that he and his peers found “Miss Hallam superfine” (Swerm 269). Moreover, he continued the letter to include the recollection of the splendor of her début at The New Theatre in Williamsburg and proceeded to describe the quality of her performance. This suggests that even if Hallam was not the motivation behind Colonel Muse’s theater attendance, then her work left an indelible mark on the Colonel. Yet Hallam’s creative capacity and talent did not maintain his attention for long. He quickly shifted his brother’s focus away from the recapitulation of Hallam and towards women’s corporeality in general. As he writes, “But [I] must confess [Hallam’s] luster was much sullied by the number of beauties that appeared at that court. The house was crowded every night, and the gentlemen who have generally attended that place agree there was treble the number of fine ladyes that was ever seen in town before” (Swerm 269). Despite the caliber of Hallam’s performance and the extent of the audiences’ devotion, Muse denigrated her creative power by positioning her beauty in competition with other women in the audience. With this line in mind and returning to his use of specific adjectives it is not clear as what exactly was ‘superfine:’ was it Nancy Hallam’s acting, her costuming, her countenance, her physique? Considering the parallel between the audience and Hallam, it is likely that it is her body positioning rather than

99 The letter is also reprinted in William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine, Volume 12, Tyler ed, and referenced in part in Rankin’s and Kollatz’s work.
her talent. Here he reaffirms the position of women as an object that was placed in the pathway of the male gaze and rendered powerless while at the same time engaging male’s desire.

The social negotiation embodied by singing women can be read as a method of shoring up patriarchal anxieties over reversals of traditional gender norms. Musical women who actively occupied and participated in public culture could leverage creativity against her interactions with all types of ideologies. In *Babbling Women: Disorderly Speech & The Law in Early Virginia* (2003), Terri Synder examines speech, vocalization, and other methods of communication as demonstrative of the “intricacies of [women’s] struggles to empower themselves amid the changing sea of inequalities that existed in early Virginia” (Synder 2). Synder does not examine music or performance as an extension of demonstrative self-actualization and expression. However, it is possible to make that connection. Much as speech and communications can offer a critique of accepted and dominant paradigms, music and performance also has the capacity to “police boundaries, assert their freedom and autonomy, and resisted legal and patriarch authority” (Synder 3). Essentially, speech, singing, and music are forms of self-expression. These actions are paths of resistance that become central resolutions in creating self-representational epistemologies and radically alter knowledge production and dominant paradigms. The use of speech and music connotes a transition from passive actor to active voice. Keeping Snyder’s argument in mind, speech, and by way of this dissertation, music and singing are ways to take control of the systems of knowledge while disavowing systems of power and disempowerment. However, it is essential for the contemporary scholar not to accept this view as absolute thereby teetering on ahistorical reading. As Synder aptly reminds us, a woman who threatened dominant paradigms “might find vindication through her narrative agency, but regardless of her rank, success was not guaranteed” (Synder 3).
The subordination of an actresses’ talent to lengthy discussions of her beauty or corporeality was commonplace. Many actresses reaped widespread acclaim, and women such as the Hallams held a very distinct privilege and social power. However, the reduction of their skills to conversations on their beauty redefined patriarchal parameters while diffusing any potential threat. This rendered female actresses non-threatening and powerless. The discourses subverting the acting and singing talents of the actresses delivered the women as consumable objects that were put on display and consequentially used for the purpose of male satisfaction. This is a demonstration of the commodification of the female body and voice as a means to gratify male pleasure and desire. What is evident here is another fold to the previously discussed gender negotiation: a woman’s public power and influence are destabilized in favor of the dominant gender ideology. This constructed creative women as passive objects frequently used to fulfill men’s desire.

Muse’s comparison of Hallam’s beauty to other women in the audience established a type of competition based on physical standards. Aligning women in opposition against each other is a common theme in feminist theories and writing. Specifically, bell hooks, in her timeless text, *Feminism is For Everybody: Passionate Politics* (2000) suggests that women are socialized to “see ourselves as always and only in competition with one another for patriarchal approval, to look upon each other with jealousy, fear, and hatred” (hooks 14). Muse positioned Hallam and the women in the audience in opposition to each other while at the same time he emulated a standard of beauty defined by his definitions and his peer’s desires. As a result, Muse created a patriarchal image of beauty while also threatening to undo the social influence achieved by Hallam’s powerful creative capacity. As an actress claiming the stage and public admirations, this afforded Hallam as publicly recognizable. It placed emphasis on her individuality and
subjectivity. Yet by suggesting that she was no more beautiful than any woman in the audience, Muse removed her individuality and generalized Hallam’s agency. Essentially, Muse put her agency and self-actualization under erasure and rendered her normative rather than extraordinary. As such, his writing and the reductionist understanding of Hallam policed her creative power while he recuperated public control of art to reflect patriarchal ideals. By doing so, Muse also reestablished control of the public space where men defined and controlled the normative standards of behavior and power. Specifying her beauty as ‘superfine,’ as yet no more exceptional than the other women, served to equate Hallam as pedestrian. As a result, Muse reclaimed control of the space once threatened by Hallam’s ability.

Perhaps the creative power harnessed by Hallam threatened Muse’s masculinity. He completed his passage on Hallam by reminding his brother “for my part I think it would be impossible for a man to have fixed upon a partner for life” (Swerm 269). The assertion that the beauty of the women in Williamsburg caused Muse’s infidelity reasserts his virility. Perhaps Muse felt threatened by the vocal spell rendered by Hallam. Muse’s devaluation of Hallam’s talent, in alignment with the disavowing comparison of her beauty served to negate the power she rendered from her idolized and creative position. The assertion of his masculinity as it reflected his sexuality served to complete the recuperation that reaffirmed dominant gender norms. As such, a gender binary indicating a woman’s role as the object enabling a male subject’s sexual desire is reestablished. Muse’s referral to Hallam’s beauty while undermining her talent substantiated her alignment to dominant gender ideologies that also secured a patriarchal hierarchy. As a result, her creative power was destabilized.

Despite Muse’s critique, Hallam’s performances demarcated a type of creative and social power. However, harkening back to musical texts as a prescriptive literature, it is necessary to
examine the lines and librettos that Hallam acted and sang. Women were not only performers of musical theater but were also represented and characterized in the plays, music, librettos, and lyrics. Several of librettos reaffirmed dominant gender ideologies that frequently cast women as submissive and subordinate. Yet in contrast, these texts also created roles for women to develop autonomous and creative identities. Essentially, librettos and other musical texts become types of prescriptive literature that convey specific political agendas and cultural norms. This consideration is based on Berkin’s definition of prescriptive literature that she defines as “those that sought to define women’s proper or normative place within society, setting the perimeters and parameters of women’s lives” (Berkin 4). Much as pamphlets, magazines, novels, and other types of prescriptive literature reaffirmed specific gender norms, plays and librettos delineated a similar type of discourse. In terms of the latter, the depiction of musical women in plays demarcated a specific paradox. In light of the social negotiation prevalent throughout this study, musical texts enabled creative tradeswomen to challenge while support the dominant view of women as passive. Historians such as Rankin, Hornblower, and Molnar contend that these performances aided and progressed the role of women in theatrical productions (Hornblower: Rankin: Molnar 19). The “progressed role of women” simply refers to the fact that these productions frequently called for a female lead thereby increasing the visibility of women on the public stage. However, this statement demands a deeper understanding of this visibility juxtaposed against the roles these women performed and the larger gender ideologies informing audiences’ reception and consumption. Keeping within a feminist historiographical methodology, it is important to consider the lines these women recited or sang. Did the librettos also progress the role of women in theater production? An examination of select librettos only begins to answer these questions.
According to Catherine Kerrison’s “By the Book: Eliza Ambler Brent Carrington and Conduct Literature in Late Eighteenth-Century Virginia” (1997), there were two types of advice literature commonly read and distributed in Virginia. As the author contends: “The older, more straightforward instructions of the seventeenth century in which modest submissiveness to male authority was the predominant motif, and the newer literature of short stories and novels in which heroines taught clearly discernable lessons to readers about the need to rely on their own wits, rather than male protection, to preserve their virtue” (Kerrison 28). In several cases, librettos straddled both types. Many plays and musical texts preached female characters’ submissiveness despite the agency displayed by the actresses. At the same time, these plays and texts demonstrated the importance of virtue and the need for women to protect and preserve their virtue in the face of androcentric challenges. Arguably, this is where Maria Storer went awry in Dunlap’s opinion as she allowed her husband’s sexual escapades and did not safeguard her virtue. Moreover, this reflects Byrd’s consideration of Barbara DeGraffenreit’s unsullied reputation. Coleman’s ballad opera, *The Musical Lady*, in which both Nancy Hallam and Maria Storer played the lead character Sophy, albeit at different times, serves as a case and point.

From a notice printed in *The Virginia Gazette*, *The Musical Lady* was slated for performance in the fall of 1771 (Purdie and Dixon, *The Virginia Gazette*, October 24th 1771). For this particular performance, the advertisement did not print the roles of the actresses and actors. However, the *New York Journal* dated December 1773, specifies that for this performance, Nancy Hallam played Sophy while Storer played Lady Scrape (Johnson and Burling 451). Hence it was likely that the actresses played similar roles during their Virginian performances. Written in 1762 by esteemed poet and playwright George Coleman, *The Musical Lady* is a farce centered on the character Sophy. The mere fact that Sophy is the center of the plot
reaffirms Hornblower’s statement regarding theater as a means of progressing the visibility of women. Moreover, the play itself features three distinct roles for women: the character Sophy, Lady Scape, and the Laundress. Additionally, the play includes a trio that sings during designated sections of the performance. According to the reprint of the cast listing from the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane, England, the trio was usually comprised of two female singers and one male. It is not clear whether this ensemble transferred to American productions. However it was typical for eighteenth century theaters to fill trios’ roles with whomever they had available to sing. The inclusion of two female singers was not a concrete element of the plot. But it does demonstrate a space made available for women to perform and sing.

The play begins with the character Mr. Mask. He is in dire debt and seeking the quickest and easiest way to resuscitate his income, diminish his debt, while becoming independently wealthy. He focuses his attention on young Sophy, a woman who Mask notices for her wealth. As he claims “my mistress's lyre is strung with gold, you know. Thirty thousand in her own disposal” (Coleman 6). Sophy is not focused on the prospect of marriage or wifely responsibilities. Her prime motivators and passions are music, opera, and Italy. Sophy’s love for music is matchless. Yet it is her fervor that also renders her vulnerable thereby making space for Mask to seduce her and convince her that he is her romantic complement. To do so, Mask confesses to his peers that he must manipulate her and promise endless hours of concerts, music, and trips to Italy. In other words, he must indulge her infatuation in order to own her.

Mask’s peers do not share his interest in Sophy as a marriage prospect. As his friend Freeman makes clear, Sophy is, after all, “A Musical Lady! [He] would as soon take the Savoyard girl for a wife, with no other portion than her cymbal” (Coleman 5). In this particular case, a Savoyard girl was a type of traveling musician who roamed the streets of London playing
her hurdy-gurdy for alms. These women hovered right above the poverty line. Freeman’s comparison demonstrates the first glimpse of The Musical Lady as a type of prescriptive text. By denouncing the creative tradeswomen or impoverished class he constructs a type of social hierarchy. More, the suggestion that music facilitates impoverishment rather than enrichment stigmatizes musicians and creative women. Above all, Freeman is not exultant with Sophy’s musicality. Her display of musical passion serves to disqualify her as marriageable and even positions her amongst the lower caste. Despite her wealth, Freeman makes clear that her passion for music and Italy is insatiable thus unattractive. This renders her obsessive and distracted ultimately codifying her as unable to fulfill her domestic and matrimonial duties.

Despite this, Mask is unyielding and promises Freeman that his lies will seem so earnest and romantic that it will lead Sophy “To the very brink of desperation and matrimony” (Coleman 12). Freeman and Mask essentially construct Sophy’s musicality and passion as an obstacle that is a hindrance but not an absolute dilemma. They further reduce her musical ability by agreeing to Mask’s suggestion that “she knows little more of music than I do” (Coleman 7). Readers learn that both Mask and Freeman know nothing about music nor do they care to learn. By trivializing her musicality, Mask and Freeman reaffirm Sophy’s fervor as unfounded in addition to diminishing her talent. They thereby reduce her music from a passion to a mere stain.

From a surface reading, Sophy is unintelligent and fanatical thereby enabling the audiences’ disassociation with her character. Sophy’s lack of astuteness is not lost on Mask, who relies on using her unintelligence to his advantage. As he chides Freeman, “Sophy is like one of her own instruments: It requires some skill to manage her, I confess. But I am a connoisseur in the art, and know every one of her stops” (Coleman 14). Coleman positions Sophy as an object, one that is malleable and made to suit the male desire and intention. By aligning Sophy as an
instrument, she becomes nothing more than an object that Mask can utilize to advance his own gain. Mask’s aspirations are granted while Sophy’s are denied.

Sophy displays the typical characteristics prescribed in the seventeenth and eighteenth century literature. The same literature, as Kerrison contends, was a central contributor to social and civic culture. This type of literature “prescribed modesty, meekness, compassion, affability, courtesy, piety, and devotion as ideal feminine virtues” (Kerrison 30). Accordingly Sophy, despite Mask’s manipulation, believes in his promises. At the point of Sophy’s assurance, she even offers to disavow her passion for music because it compromises her modesty and meekness. As she exclaims: “Indeed! I must fairly own that this last circumstance mortifies me, and makes me more ashamed of my musical attachment than all the rest!” (Coleman 32). Here Sophy makes it unequivocally clear that her passion is not a point of empowerment, but rather a remorseful “weakness.” The shame of her passion reaffirms the position that women were to focus on the matrimonial aspect of their lives rather than their musical or intellectual engagements. By extension, audiences are warned to avoid Sophy’s behavior as it is implied that placidity is favorable while women should shore up ardor.

Nevertheless, this is a dominant reading of The Musical Lady and perhaps the ideological discourses are not this explicit. Arguably, there is room in Coleman’s text to discover moments of Sophy’s strength and critiques of marriage. First, Sophy’s name is derived from the term wisdom. This forms a start contrast against Mask, whose name symbolizes the deception and

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100 Yet Kerrison suggests that women read this type of traditional literature but did not abide by the codification of ideology. Rather, the reality painted in these texts was too rigid and not reflective of their everyday lives. Women preferred texts which represented their existence rather than depicted a fictionalized account. Building off the work of Cathy N. Davidson, Kerrison contends that this literature “spoke ‘directly to the fears and expectations’ of female readers by showing heroines struggling to preserve both virtue and the prospect of happiness in marriage” (Kerrison 31).
exploitation covering his true nature. Sophy’s wisdom is represented by her knowledge of European history, music theory, and her ability to play the guitar, harpsichord, and glass harmonica. These subjects comprised the dominant educational subjects for women. However, Sophy’s wisdom lies elsewhere: she is not blind to Mask and soon realizes his deceit. She eventually denies his proposal and refuses his name. She goes as far to suggest that Mask is monstrous and sarcastically says “Best of husbands, indeed! And deny me the enjoyment of musick” (Coleman 18). Sophy returns to her music and in the end abandons Mask rather than her passion. She spurns the marriage compact and elects to pursue music rather than social normativity. Thereby she establishes her own subject position and embraces her passion for music. Despite Mask’s attempted exploitation, she reaffirms her agency and denies the social constructions dictating heteronormativity and marriage. These moments of subversion that engage the actresses and audience to identify, incorporate, or reject, these codes attempting to regulate the social order. It is within these moments of compliance or rejection where subjects can create and redefine their identities in alignment to or opposition to cultural norms.

What is Coleman’s intention? What is the final social commentary? Is Sophy’s lack of intelligence or social acumen the intentional commentary of the playwright? Is the text suggesting a disavowal of music, musical women, or the marriage compact? To answer these questions, let us consider the type of play. The Musical Lady is a farce, a comedy that aims at entertaining the audience through situations that are exceedingly exaggerated and thus improbable. Farces are often highly incomprehensible plot-wise due to the large number of plot twists and random events that often occur. But viewers are encouraged not to try to follow the plot in order to avoid becoming confused and overwhelmed. Since Mask’s seduction of Sophy is the main current of the plot it is arguable that Coleman means to suggest that Sophy’s ineptitude
and distraction are not due to her music but rather marriage in general. Mask becomes the allegory for the ideology that reflects staunch political and social platforms reinforcing marriage. But Sophy’s realization demonstrates to audiences a series of categories used to identify the ideology thereby revealing and interrupting discourse. This is the early working of subversion that can directly challenge the regulatory systems. It does not seem that Coleman is denouncing women or music but rather marriage becomes the ultimate culprit.

In terms of traditional literary texts, Kerrison uses the studies of Cathy N. Davidson to suggest that “Female readers in the early national period ‘read themselves into their fiction and their fictions into their lives’” (Kerrison 31-32). The influence of these texts shaped the role of women but also the expectations women had of themselves. Texts such as The Musical Lady reflect the negotiation women faced on a daily basis. For Sophy, this negotiation embodied fulfilling either the social ritual of marriage or pursuing her own passion for music. Both books and librettos provided the means for women to appropriate the stories’ moments of gendered agency and the imbedded ideologies. As such, texts such as the Musical Lady demonstrate the fragility of women, the negative consequences of passion, and ultimately the control men have over women. Concurrently, these texts also showcase a woman’s ability to embody strength and intelligence enabling the disassociation with patriarchal manipulation. In the end, Sophy is given a choice: this choice can be read as a moment of empowerment as she determines her existence. However, her decision is the product of a male’s manipulation and overarching patriarchal control. She is given the freedom to determine her own agency however in a space created by patriarchal ideology. This becomes the allegory for the role of women in the eighteenth century. Sophy was forced to contend with a decision that was neither productive nor empowering but rather unsatisfactory. This type of dilemma declares an explicit affirmation of the patriarchal
society in which these women lived. In many cases, the lines and lyrics are vital to the plot but also provide implicit social commentary. The ballad opera *The Musical Lady*, serves as a primary example of a text that demonstrates the increased visibility of women. But at the same time this text perpetuates the gender ideologies that reaffirmed women’s subsidiary positions.

Sophy was not the only character who demarcated this social negotiation. Nancy Hallam’s proclaimed role as Imogene in addition to the poem “Miss Hallam” served as examples of the influences of actresses in the progression of prescriptive literature. Despite the approbation cast upon Hallam for her role as Juliet, it was her portrayal as Imogene that caused a significant cultural impact. Following the review of Hallam’s performance in Annapolis, Reverend Jonathan Boucher printed his ode titled “Miss Hallam” in *The Maryland Gazette*. As printed in part:

“Hail, wondrous Maid! I, gratefully hail/Thy strange dramatic Pow'r:/To thee I owe that Shakespear's Tale/Has charmed my Ears once more” (Boucher, *Maryland Gazette*, September 6, 1771). Here Boucher gracefully penned the exceptional caliber of Hallam’s beauty rather than her performance. This is a claim substantiated by Jason Shaffer’s textual excerpt *Performing Patriotism: National Identity in the Colonial and Revolutionary American Theater* (2007), taken from Common-Place.org. Shaffer writes, “Their printed reflections on this spectacle do little to capture the performance for their readers” (Shaffer 2010; accessed February 28, 2014; http://www.common-place.org/vol-10/no-02/shaffer/). The lack of accounts situating her performance is arguably due to the conveyance dramatic power. Boucher’s poem exposed a redistribution of power caused by Hallam. The clarification that it was her “dramatic power” that “charmed his ears” relocated Hallam’s supremacy while Boucher was repositioned as

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101 In the text, Shaffer only briefly discusses Boucher’s poem and does not include his analysis of Peale’s portrait. Therefore, I referenced the Common-Place article as it relates more directly to this study.
passive. However, Boucher’s specification that this dramatic power is strange served to negotiate Hallam while also recuperating his patriarchal authority. In this case, Hallam’s creative power is considered more of an anomaly rather than an innate ability therefore repositioning Hallam as an aberration while her power was a mere eccentricity. This further qualifies the paradoxical position of the singing actress as an individual who was endowed with indelible cultural power. However, this creative agency was often eclipsed by the overarching gender ideologies espoused by her male audience.

As the poem continues, Boucher reaffirmed the negotiation of Hallam and his response to her performance. As he wrote, “Ye Gods! 'Tis Cytherea's Face;/'Tis Dian's faultless Form:/But her's alone the nameless Grace/ That ev'ry Heart can charm” (Boucher, *Maryland Gazette* September 6, 1771). Here Cythera is also known as Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love while Dian is the truncated name of Diana, the Roman goddess of the hunt. To first associate Hallam with Cythera signifies Boucher’s infatuation with the actress. Moreover, the goddess was also associated with a type of unadulterated beauty and sexuality. Here Boucher intentionally realigned Hallam amongst the discourses that paralleled the language used to describe actresses in the eighteenth century. Unlike Muse, Boucher utilized figurative language to recognize Hallam’s beauty. By extension, the goddess Diana, despite her association as a powerful huntress was also the goddess of chastity. Here again, the negotiation evident throughout this dissertation is reiterated. Women such as Hallam, despite their potential to fulfill powerful social positions, were often relocated amongst gender specific discourses. In Boucher’s association of Hallam, he symbolically alluded to her commanding performances and cultural influence yet repositioned her as beautiful and chaste.
Boucher’s poem declared Hallam’s ‘delicacy of manner’ that ‘exceeded the [poet’s] utmost ideal’ (Boucher, *Maryland Gazette*, September 6, 1771). These superlatives were a response to Hallam’s performance of Imogene from Shakespeare’s *Cymbeline*. The association of Hallam with the beauty and chastity relocated amongst gender normative ideologies but also important to the character Imogene. This harkens backs to Scott’s assumption that the female voice evoked “the fey and hapless heroine” (Scott 15). Imogene herself was not a character of utmost empowerment. Arguably, Imogene is one of Shakespeare’s weakest female characters; she lacks the sharp intellect of Portia while overbearingly demonstrates the passivity and chastity of Isabel or Viola. Imogene is passive by nature and her defensiveness is often contested by her submissiveness. Despite her position as the heroine of the play, her primary motive is driven by her passion for Posthumus and her need to justify her love. Her passion and unyielding desire for Posthumus is consistently renegotiated by her exceeding delicacy, and even fragility of person. Imogene, much as many female performers, are consistently realigned with the dominant binary reaffirming a woman’s passivity and position as a tool engaging a male’s desire. As documented by the poem “Miss Hallam,” in addition to the other primary sources, when a woman demonstrated any type of discursive capabilities, she was quickly renegotiated to align with this dominant gender paradigm.

In Hallam’s case, it is difficult to discern if Reverend Boucher was actually responding to Hallam herself or to the prescriptive discourses embodied by Imogene. It is questionable as to whether Hallam reiterated “delicacy of manner” or if she was simply providing an honest performance of Imogene. Clearly, the character Imogene reaffirmed more of the dominant gender norms than Hallam. Thereby it is easy to cast aside Hallam as the person who was transgressing gender norms and refocus one’s attention onto Imogene who was reaffirming
dominant gender ideologies. The method in which Hallam’s acting is described echoes the primary readings of Imogene as a beauty who is passive and submissiveness for the sake of love and male attention.

Similarly, Boucher characterizes Hallam as delicate and then continued his analysis to render Hallam along the lines of a warbling Cibber (Boucher, Maryland Gazette September 6, 1771). The use of the term “cibber” renders two distinct possibilities. First, the author was comparing Nancy Hallam with Susanna Cibber, Colley Cibber's daughter-in-law and sister of Thomas Arne. This relationship established yet another possible connection to the composer. Cibber herself was an excellent singer, and one of the few naturalistic actresses. Second, it is important to note that a cibber is a bird thereby suggesting that the author is aligning Hallam with a tiny bird. Whereas Hallam’s star centered performance could at once position her within a frame of power and social prowess, she is cast to assume a non-subjective and even controlled identity. In this particular case, her power and identity are claimed by Boucher rather than Hallam contesting or even shaping her own performance by her own voice.

Hallam’s portrayal of Imogene, disguised as the boy Fidele, is the subject of her portrait by Charles Wilson Peale (1771) [Fig. 8]. The scholarship is unclear as to how this portrait was contracted. Further, it is not clear from Peale’s extant letters whether the actress and painter ever met. It seems more plausible that Boucher himself was responsible for the creation of the portrait. For example, in the last few stanzas of “Miss Hallam,” Boucher specifically calls to Peale to paint the actress’ likeness. As the poem states: “What Pencil, say, can paint/Th’ unlust’rous, but expressive Gloom/Of Thee, fair, sleeping Saint!/Or thine, or none, self-tutor’d

102 This question is considered by Christine Jones Huber’s doctoral dissertation Playing Shakespeare in the Colonies: Charles Willson Peale, Miss Hallam, and the Paradox of the Actress (2002).
PEALE!” (Boucher, *Maryland Gazette* September 6, 1770). It seems likely that Peale painted Hallam’s portrait using “Miss Hallam” as his source of inspiration. An examination of the portrait reveals Hallam as an amalgamation of Cytherea’s face with Diana’s form therefore demonstrating the connection between Peale and Boucher’s poem “Miss Hallam.”

In contrast to Boucher’s poem, Peale at least attempted to capture Hallam’s performance. As Shaffer claims, “Peale, for his part, captured Miss Hallam’s graces in a more detailed but less reproducible medium than print: a canvas that provided a graphic representation of her performance and imputed to her a much greater degree of social standing than a colonial actor had any reason to expect” (Shaffer 2010; accessed February 28, 2014; http://www.common-place.org/vol-10/no-02/shaffer/). This ‘graphic representation’ included an emphasis on Hallam’s costume and her stance. Peale depicted Hallam in the cross-gendered costume of Fidele. She is adorned in a coat and tunic that elongates Hallam’s figure while straightening any of her bodily contours. This type of slimness was also the typical representation of Diana when she was dressed for the hunt. Scholarship often addresses Diana’s figure as tall and slim with small hips.\(^\text{103}\) As the goddess of hunting, Diana wore a very short tunic so she could hunt and run easily and is often portrayed holding a bow. However, Hallam is not depicted as hunting in Peale’s portrait. Yet the background is pastoral and she is brandishing a sword. Interestingly, this same scholarship also notes that Diana is often said to have a fair face similar to Cythera, which Boucher also noted in “Miss Hallam.” When considering the portrait, Hallam is depicted with a

fair and unblemished English oval face, the standard of beauty. The shape and coloration are the same characteristics of Cythera’s face. Thus it seems quite likely that Peale based his depiction of Hallam on the conventions of mythology, portraiture, and Boucher’s poem.

In this portrait, Hallam stands as Fidele in front of a cave. Keeping Shaffer’s assessment in mind, this is not a portrait of Hallam but rather a depiction of her performance. Paintings were a common type of theatrical portrait that were particularly prevalent in London, and by extension in Early America. Paintings offered some form of publicity to the actress, but ultimately allowed patrons to recollect a memorable performance of a play. Notably, Nancy Hallam’s portrait is the only extant painted likeness of any of the women in this study. This unmistakably speaks to her influence and cultural power. However, the portrait itself never belonged to Boucher, despite his outcry for her likeness. According to Peale’s extant papers and secondary sources, once he completed the portrait it was hung in his dining room. Upon his death, it was classified and sold as a landscape painting. Hallam, despite being the subject of the painting, was ignored.
Figure 8 Charles Wilson Peale’s 1771 painted portrait of actress Nancy Hallam, dressed in her costume as Fidele in Shakespeare's play *Cymbeline*. Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
Clearly Boucher’s poem was an inadequate reminder of Hallam’s performance, so he required a visual memento. This consideration is substantiated by the poem’s stanza “What Pencil, say, can paint/Th’ unlust’rous, but expressive Gloom” (Boucher *Maryland Gazette* September 6, 1770). Hallam’s depiction in character in addition to her stance primarily reaffirmed that Peale commemorated her performance. In contrast, Nancy Hallam the individual is lost to the immortalization of the character Imogene dressed as Fidele. In this portrait she stands in the pressing gesture, a common stance signifying emotion and onstage movement (Toft 157). Her mouth is closed indicating that any sentiment she depicted was through her bodily performance rather than vocal delivery. The angle of the pressed hand and arm determined the degree of sentiment. An upward motion, as signified by Hallam’s turned up sword, demonstrated a high degree of passion. It is highly possible that Boucher was specifically enraptured by Hallam’s ability to physically articulate an affective response. The detail in this painting highlights Hallam’s costume, thereby readdressing her with the theater. Peale placed emphasis on her wardrobe, capturing the luster and shine of the fabrics. For example, the sheen of the costume’s talismans reaffirms the material as a central consideration of the portrait. This forms a direct contrast to the dour depiction of the background and Hallam’s countenance painted in muted hues. This dissimilarity between the dull and polished coloring repositions the eye of the viewer back onto Hallam’s performance. This moves the focus away from the actress while reemphasizing the character.

The gesture and expression of the actresses in theatrical portraits also tended to follow stage convention. This is demarcated by Hallam’s stance and positioning of her hands. As a result, it is Hallam’s use of physical conventions rather than her vocal delivery that convey the scene’s sentiment. Hallam’s left hand is important to consider. In opposition to the gesture
articulated by her pressed upward right hand, Hallam holds her left hand upward, palm facing out towards the audience. This articulates the right hand brandishing the sword as the limb performing the principle gesture. The left hand becomes “the retired hand, placed a whole position lower, assumes a subordinate position” (Toft 151). However, in this case, both hands express sentiment. The vertical positioning of the left hand suggests that Hallam is not halting but rather in verbal transition and using the empty left hand for emphasis. This is referred to as the “stroke” of the gesture. Toft contends that “the stroke should fall on the accented syllable of the word to be emphasized, for it is to the eye what the force of the voice is to the ear” (Toft 155). The lower position of this left hand also suggests Hallam is holding the audience in suspense. The vertical turned-out left hand signifies to the audience that she is in the process of revealing a crucial component of the plot. Ideally, the revelation of this component is exposed and extenuated by straightening the left arm and advancing the hand into a higher position (Toft 156). It is important to note, that Hallam’s outturned hand does not signify aversion. Typically two outturned hands characterized aversion with one elongated arm while the other arm was contracted. In addition, the actress’ head was usually turned away from the source of repugnance. Notably, Hallam stares in deadlock in the direction of her outturned hand. She stands by placing the weight of her body on right leg; this allowed her left foot to be ready for immediate change. Toft claims this position was quite common because “orators achieved grace [and] employed a stronger, more passionate, and diversified form of action” (Toft 151). In this portrait, it is indeed Hallam’s body that is performing the sentiment of the scene.

Hallam is also exposing her ankles, commonly referred to as acting in a “breeches role.” These roles were quite common for actresses further cementing the portrait as a depiction of performance. In her breeches role, Hallam is depicted forever as the performance rather than the
actress who brought this character dimension. Yet the exposure of her ankles also served to
demonstrate the sexuality of the actress herself. In *The First English Actresses: Women and
Drama, 1660-1700* (1992), Elizabeth Howe has confirmed in a detailed study that the male
disguise was "little more than yet another means of displaying the actress as a sexual object"
(Howe 59). Arguably, Boucher was not only enraptured by Hallam’s performance but also
formed a sexual attachment to the character. This echoes Rushmore’s vocal spell as
fundamentally based on a sexual attraction between the performer and audience. Here at once
the social negotiation is reaffirmed. Hallam’s performance was so powerful that it rendered her
audience to turn to poetry and portraiture to immortalize the moment. Yet the portrait depicting
her stance in breeches does not transgress dominant patriarchal power but rather clearly reaffirms
gender ideology. Juxtaposing the analogies to Cythera and Diana in addition to capturing her role
in breeches, her individual identity was put under erasure while commemorating her position as a
sexual object.

Studies that recentralize the lives of prominent women, such as Nancy Hallam, prevent
their histories from being passed over and their contributions marginalized. Accordingly, a
feminist historiographical method reaffirms a women-centric prospective while not losing sight
of an accurate representation of these women. In this particular case the relationship between art
and the individual and the influence men have on the location of the subject is the barrier. Much
as the extant documents are written from a male point of view it is up to the historian to not
accept these narratives as absolute truths. In contrast it is valuable to identify the androcentric
agents in historical analysis and develop a discourse and examination of women. In this
particular case, the role of women in eighteenth century society might not outwardly render itself
as part of the everyday. However to think this is a mistake and demands a closer examination of
the archives and extant sources which are dominated by the masculine perspective but identify the subordination of women and many others. In this particular manner the voice of all historical figures cannot be blunted.

The role of women in the public sphere must not be marginalized because their contribution was indirect. The process of social change is slow and has a tendency to meander between progress and backing over the same ground. Even though the music and performances of these women might not have immediately overhauled dominant gender ideologies, they did negotiate a unique position for themselves as creative tradeswomen. It is imperative to still examine and position these singing actresses as agents who defined their identity while adhering to dominant gendered ideologies. To define one self, whether it is through the means of self-produced newspaper advertisements, concert repertoires, or entire performances, serves as a means of retaking control of the epistemologies that threaten to negatively and harmfully define an individual. In doing so, singing actresses constructed a self-defined standpoint that reflected their legacy of struggle juxtaposed to their creative capital. This counterbalance provided singing actresses with a position to present new narratives while refiguring the accepted historical beliefs. Ultimately this results in the alternation of dominant forms of epistemologies.
CHAPTER VI: GIRLS’ EDUCATION AND THE CLASS DIVISION REFLECTED BY MUSIC

Girls’ education in the eighteenth century is a deeply researched subject. Yet a great deal of the secondary sources connecting gender and education primarily focuses on the quality and type of schooling girls received. As a result, the role of the teacher is sorely overlooked. Nevertheless the teacher played an integral role in the progression of female education, the social conditioning of women and girls, and the delineation of dominant gender ideology. Teaching was a primary trade for women. For many, the education trade was not a choice but rather a normalized extension of their daily work. The literate mothers and other female relatives often taught the children the alphabet and the rudiments of reading. However these women did not establish schools or promote their abilities to teach and frequently limited their pupils to their own children. Thus the women who pursued education as a trade in all probability chose the livelihood. This chapter examines the lives of two prominent cultural teachers in Williamsburg. The first teacher was Sarah Hallam who used her own education and association with the prominent theatrical troupe, Hallam/Douglas Acting Company, to position herself as an esteemed teacher in Williamsburg. A second teacher, Ann Neill, was not as successful. Despite several attempts to organize boarding schools and music educational opportunities for her female students, the sources suggest her endeavors failed. Both women taught essential educational

104 For an expansive overview of women’s and girl’s educations see the following: Linda Eisenmann, ed. Historical Dictionary of Women’s Education in the United States. Westport, CT, 1998; Linda K. Kerber, Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America. Chapel Hill; 1980; Jennifer E. Monaghan, “Literacy Instruction and Gender in Colonial New England.” American Quarterly 40 (1988); Julia Cherry Spruill, Women’s Life and Work in the Southern Colonies, Chapel Hill: 1938; Thomas Woody, A History of Women’s Education in the United States (1966). Several of these texts contend that the small-scale schools made way for larger academies such as John Poor’s Philadelphia experiment or Caleb Bingham’s Boston School. However, during the eighteenth century, these academies did not seem to exist in Virginia.
subjects such as needlepoint, sewing, basic reading, and writing. However the primary difference was Sarah Hallam included dance instruction while Ann Neill incorporated music lessons. Advertisements for their educational services printed in The Virginia Gazette identified these women as trade teachers. As the advertisements demonstrate, both women targeted their practices toward the established norms for gentry daughters. Moreover, both schoolmistresses demonstrated that women profited from educational labor while creative ability was foundational to their trades.

Ann Neill’s and Sarah Hallam’s existing records are uneven and both women’s early histories are unknown. Similar to other women in this study, the majority of the information shaping Sarah Hallam’s and Ann Neill’s histories were derived from their newspaper advertisements. In Hallam’s case, her history is often briefly mentioned in conjunction to the histories of the colonial theater. For Ann Neill, her history is only archived upon her arrival in Williamsburg. Despite this, the fact remains that they both provided girls with educational praxis and provided scholastic and creative spaces for pupils. The public notifications for Ann Neill’s boarding school or Sarah Hallam’s prestigious students demonstrated educational opportunities for young women. As a result, these women contributed to the discourses circulating and constructing the public provisions for education.105

The female music teacher trade supported the gender negotiation embodied by all the women in this dissertation. The female teacher, in particular, illustrated a social negotiation that enabled a woman’s public cultural position while simultaneously supporting dominant gender ideologies. This negotiation was clearly embodied by the music teacher Ann Neill, who taught her female students the mannerisms of a polished wife despite their teacher’s opposition to this

105 This notion is echoed by Benson’s Women in Eighteenth Century and Woody’s A History of Women’s Education in the United States
identity. Sarah Hallam, despite the separation from her husband, still fulfilled idealizations of heteronormative privilege. The evidence indicates that Hallam and Ann Neill were women who prepared young gentry girls to adhere to dominant ideology despite their teacher’s rejection of this identity. By extension the newly opened avenues for education did not promote transgression from dominant social norms and responsibilities. As such, Ann Neill’s and Hallam’s students had no intention of abandoning traditional domestic roles for more radical occupations. Rather both women emphasized a curriculum that would improve their student’s marriageability.

Eighteenth century advocates on social philosophies exclaimed a similar discourse. For instance, Benjamin Rush defended the improvement of female education while reinforcing the relationship of women to their households or marital responsibilities. This reaffirmed the prevalent social negotiation women faced: they at once were given the opportunities to demonstrate their intellectual competences however were still required to occupy and oversee domestic responsibilities. Schoolmistresses taught the female students to hold their position in the marriage market, an arena Ann Neill and Sarah Hallam had no intention of rejoining. The teachers’ separation from heteronormative compacts in addition to Hallam’s and Neill’s public role as educational practitioners became problematic as it threatened to destabilize dominant patriarchal ideologies. Yet, the role of the teacher was commonly located as a figurative mother. Any type of possible transgressions caused by Sarah Hallam or Ann Neill were recuperated by a return to symbolic heteronormativity.

The recuperation primarily stems from the similarities represented in the relationship between a teacher and student juxtaposed to a mother delineating social norms to her child. In

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106 The difference between an English girl’s educations as determined by an upper or lower class status is developed by Myra Reynolds in The Learned Lady in England, 1650-1760 (1929).
this particular case, the student is resituated as the metaphorical child while the teacher occupied the mother position. This is suggested in Lucy Green’s theory of enabling, in which she asserts that the mother/schoolmistresses at once affirmed and reiterated patriarchal definitions of feminine identity despite her position as a conveyer of knowledge. In *Music, Gender and Education* (1997), Green contends that the role of the mother as a teacher was central to the affirmation of dominant ideology. She adroitly writes, “the passing on of music through maternal lines occurs poignantly in the blessed practice of the mother singing to her baby” (Green 48). The role of the teacher/mother as the one who conveyed the music is aligned with the mother figure that transmitted to children modes of acceptable behavior. In eighteenth century society, the onus was placed onto the mother to instill moral value into her children. As a result, these children became productive members of the burgeoning democracy. As such the role of the female music teacher, that had the potential to transgress the archetypical passive female, actually enabled the patriarchal discourses constructing women as mothers. Here both mother and teacher endowed the student/child with social norms thereby projecting the image of the woman as the nurturing caretaker. This role for a woman, despite her position as a public tradeswoman, affirmed the dubious and long-lasting notion of femininity. Women such as Ann Neill and Sarah Hallam fulfill the archetypical feminine identity while also endowing their students with a similar discourse. As Green suggests, “women have taken up position as housekeepers, carers of children and custodians of cultural traditions” (Green 49). Much as these women could use their positions to pass on music they similarly passed on discourses affirming patriarchal ideology. The role of the female music teacher essentially embodied a polemical identity: one that affirmed normative ideals of women as markers of gender norms while relinquishing the power endowed onto schoolmistresses by supporting dominant social norms.
Scholars suggest that female education in the early eighteenth century was inextricably connected to morality and religion. Mays begins her analysis of education by suggesting “the primary motivation for teaching girls reading skills throughout most of the early American period was to promote religious instruction and the ability to read the bible” (Mays 127). However, towards the end of the revolutionary era and into the early republic, girls’ educations shifted from religious organization to more privatized practices. Toward the end of the century, boarding schools, day schools, or hired tutors predominantly managed schooling. Yet a modification in the educational material also occurred. When led by religious affiliates, school material was predominantly liturgies, sermons, and religious material. This changed to an emphasis placed on guidebooks that delineated proper behavior and reiterations of dominant republican ideology. These texts included *The Ladies Calling* (1673), *Newton’s Ladies Philosophy* (1772), *The Governess or The Little Female Academy* (1749), the *Female Spectator* (1711; 1714), the *Oeconomy of Human Life in 1797* (1797), and *The Ladies Compleat Letter Writer* (1763). Notably, these texts were published and circulated as early as the seventeenth century. However they only became the basis for education in the late eighteenth century.

Music was a staple of a proper young woman’s education. For example, in Hester M. Chapone’s guidebook *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind Addressed to a Young Lady* (1786), she listed grammar, geography, basic arithmetic, languages such as French and Italian, music, drawing, and needlework as appropriate educational material for girls. However she amended this list with the condition that accommodations should be taken to reflect the girl’s capacity. Chapone’s specification warned teachers that if a student demonstrated poor

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107 Concurrently, in *Women’s Roles in Eighteenth-Century America*, Smith points towards a 1710 Massachusetts amendment that decreed all boys learned reading and writing skills while girls were only taught to read in order to follow along with sermons in churches (Smith 147).
educational practices then her learning should be decreased to account for her inabilities. Similarly, Thomas Jefferson offered his daughter Martha a comparable curriculum. As he instructed in a 1783 letter, Martha followed a very detailed timetable: “from 8 to 10 o’clock practice music. From 10 to 1 dance one day and draw another. From 1 to 2 draw on the day you dance, and write a letter on the next day. From 3 to 4 read French. From 5 till bedtime read English, write, etc” (Betts and Bears 22-29). Notably, Jefferson listed Martha’s musical responsibilities first. This undoubtedly reflected his passion for the art.

When women showed the desire to learn more expansive curriculums, their tutelage frequently reflected gender normative paradigms. For example, in Virginians at Home: Family Life in the Eighteenth Century (1968), Edmund Sears Morgan contends that Eliza Parker Cutis was primed to believe she was intelligent but her gender limited her capacity for brilliance. Morgan develops this point to include that all children were considered on an individual basis. However “it was a generally accepted belief that the capacities of girls could never equal those of her brother” (Morgan 17). In response to this doctrine, Eliza said “I thought it was hard they would not teach me Greek and Latin because I was a girl – they laughed and said women ought not to know those things, and mending, writing, arithmetic, and Music was all I could be permitted to acquire” (Morgan 17). The Countess of Carlisle was more blunt. She stated, “the Greek and Latin tongues…[are] no part of the polite system of female education at present” (Berkin and Norton 45). Education for girls of the gentry was not an exercise in intellectual or occupational development. Rather it was a vehicle for fitting girls into the dominant social norms that reflected them as passive eye-catching wives.108 Despite the limited instruction, girls’

108 In My Dearest Friend: Letters of Abigail and John Adams (2010) Abigail Adams also expressed her concerns for the state of education and the privileges demarcated by gender. For example, in a 1776 letter Adams restates this point: “if you complain of neglect of Education in
educations still provided some opportunity for intellectual development. As female students developed their intellectual capacities within the socially acceptable subject matter, girls were also cultivating their capacities to write, think, and create.

Scholars situate the development of female education as one of two motives: intellectual development indelibly connected to marriage or frivolous recreation. In terms of the former, the widespread development of female education improved in the late eighteenth century due to the onus placed on strengthening the role of the citizen in the early republic. Ideologies forming Republican motherhood positioned education as a primary factor in creating a valuable democracy comprised of productive citizens. For young women, education involved an emphasis on both practical and academic lessons. Yet the typically limited education a female student received is evident. In *Women’s Roles in Eighteenth-Century America*, Smith makes use of the letters of ten-year-old Virginia Elizabeth Pratt. These primary sources demonstrate the availabilities and limitations of female education. For example, Pratt wrote: “I find you have got the Start of me in Learning very much, for you write better already that I expect to do…but I am Striving to do better every day, I can perform a great many dances and am now Learning the

Musical training was an extremely common component of a young gentry woman’s education. When she demonstrated competency in her musical tutelage, a young woman would provide the entertainment for her family’s informal gatherings. These particular moments showcased the money invested in her education in addition to the pupil’s diligence. Her skill was a tertiary consideration. Wealth and assiduousness was paramount in constructing marriageability. In the essay, “Thoughts on Female Education,” Benjamin Rush stated that true proficiency in a musical instrument required consistent and everlasting daily practice. Yet for Rush, these hours were better spent learning languages and reading; music did not establish itself as a legitimate and worthy intellectual pursuit. Although progressive, Rush’s maligning of music demonstrates a larger cultural understanding toward the aesthetic.
Sibell but I cannot speak a word of French” (Pratt: Merrill 149). With the mention of her dancing, Pratt illuminates the importance of dance as part of her education while discrediting her writing ability. Dance instruction was a method to position a girl as an accomplished individual whose fashionable achievements situated her as an appropriate wife. Writing, however, was in the realm of intellect. Despite the fact the written letter serves as evidence of her writing ability, Pratt disavowed her own intellectual capacities in favor of the sociably acceptable dancing. This reiterated the social negotiation that destabilized her aptitude. Yet the development of dance and music in young women facilitated their participation in social and political culture of Virginia albeit in directly. Here the connection between music and dance as related to gendered education is of considerable importance.

Women such as Ann Neill and Hallam were not the only teachers in Virginia. For example, Maria Smith also opened a school for educating young gentry daughters. As listed in *Virginia Centinel*, Maria Smith opened a school in Winchester “in Reading, Spelling, Tambour, Dresden Embroidering, and all kinds of plain and colored needle work…” (*Virginia Centinel*, May 28, 1788). In a reprinting of the advertisement, Smith reiterated her school’s purpose but added that she also taught “music and dancing” (*Virginia Centinel*, October 21, 1788). In both advertisements, Smith explicitly stated that “had the honor of educating some ladies of the first rank” (*Virginia Centinel*, May 28, 1788; October 21, 1788). Unfortunately, these two advertisements are the only extant sources contextualizing Smith’s educational endeavors. Yet it

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110 A Sibell was a French style dance often taught to young girls.
111 James suggest that an eighteenth century woman’s education “was more expensive than her seventeenth century forebears [but] was less substantial” (James 34)
112 These two advertisements are also referenced in *History of Women’s Education in the United States* vol. 1 by Thomas Woody (1929); *The Story of Winchester in Virginia: The Oldest Town in The Shenandoah Valley* by Frederick Morton (1929); *The Science Education of American Girls: A Historical Perspective* by Kimberly Tolley (2003).
is notable that she taught affluent daughters music and dance in addition to practical skill sets. This trend is represented in Ann Neill’s and Sarah Hallam’s histories.\textsuperscript{113}

As another example of active female teachers in Virginia, scholars have documented the life of Mrs. Ann Wager, a widow hired by Robert Carter Nicholas to teach local slave and free black children to read, write, and recite catechisms (Powers 1998: accessed: http://research.history.org/Historical_Research/Research_Themes/ThemeReligion/Wager.cfm). Unlike Ann Neill and Hallam, Wager never taught the children music, dance, or any type of cultural production. When comparing Neill’s and Hallam’s students to Wager’s, it becomes evident that music and dance were predominantly subjects taught to the affluent. Wager’s teaching of basic reading and writing reflects the desire to endow the slave and free black students with basic trade skills. Residents such as Wager are excluded from this study because the primary sources do not support the claim she taught dance or music to their pupils.

Perhaps a bit more unusual is an advertisement for the return of Sarah Knox, a convict servant in Lancaster County Virginia, who ran away in May 1752. In a runaway servant announcement, her master, David Currie reported that she sometimes “pretended to be a dancing mistress” (Hunter, \textit{The Virginia Gazette} July 3, 1752). Currie determined that Knox would use her dancing ability to earn an income while she evaded her contractual servitude. It is plausible that if she avoided capture, Knox would use her creative abilities as the foundation for her trade. Interestingly, despite his specification that her dancing ability was likely false, Currie still attempted to use her talent as a possible business transaction benefiting his livelihood. As he

\textsuperscript{113} Similarly in a letter Mary Walker Carter wrote to St. George Tucker, she also did not specify that she taught music or dance. Rather the letter, housed in the Tucker-Coleman Collection at Swerm Library, specifies that Carter persuaded her teacher, Mary Cooke, to teach the students history and cartography after prolonged insistences.
specified that “or if any person find her qualified to teach Dancing...he may purchase between 5-6 years of service of her at fifteen pounds currency” (Hunter, Virginia Gazette July 3, 1752). It is unknown whether Knox was actually a dancing mistress or if she exaggerated her abilities to evade servitude. Quite likely Currie bolstered her abilities as means to leverage her servitude. Regardless an important consideration must be made: her overseer ultimately utilized Knox’s supposed ability as a means to benefit himself. The commodification of Knox’s creative talent realigns her as an object, a parable for her servitude. And despite her creative capacity she was aligned with women whose bodies were sold as a means to capitalize. Yet Knox’s creative labor was also used to benefit her overseer. In addition to corporeal servitude, Knox’s narrative is demonstrative of creative slavery, the profiteering from an individual’s talent Regardless, women such as Knox, Wager, and Smith demonstrate the commonality of women as schoolmistresses, a trade continued by women such as Ann Neill and Sarah Hallam.

Sarah Hallam’s account is unlike the previously discussed tradeswomen. For instance, the majority of extant primary sources relate her life after her divorce. This contradicts the norm evident in several primary sources that situate the women’s lives as an extension of their husband’s records. For example, the details informing Mary Stagg’s, Barbara DeGraffenreit’s, Mrs. Douglass’, Mrs. Sully’s, or Mrs. Pick’s identities are inextricably linked to their husbands. Similarly to these women, the information necessary to construct Sarah Hallam’s early life is nonexistent. The sketches of her adult life are mostly garnered from the advertisements she published in the newspapers. These excerpts illuminate the life of Hallam as a successful and well-respected dance mistress despite her reticent role in the history of the theater.

Historians place Hallam’s birth around 1740 (Rankin: Johnson: Seilhamer 43). It is likely she was born in Jamaica since she married there at a young age. Rankin suggests she married
Lewis Hallam, the younger, in Jamaica when the Hallam/Douglas Acting Company resided on the island. Her family history and education are also a mystery. However it is probable that her family was involved in some type of cultural trade therefore crossed paths with Lewis Hallam and the theater troupe. Moreover Sarah either was versed in the family trade or received a well-rounded education since it is viable that she used her early tutelage as the basis for her trade in Williamsburg. By extension the records do not specify if she also received acting lessons as a young woman or if her first theatrical experience was with Hallam. Rankin contends that her performances were infrequent but points to isolated occurrences where she did perform. Other historians such as Kollatz suggest Sarah Hallam appeared on stage only once, in *Hamlet*, when the American Company resided in Providence, Rhode Island (Kollatz, no page #). The playbill from the 1770 performance of *Clandestine Marriage* also substantiates her inability. In this play she acted in the minor role of the Chambermaid, a part only granted speaking lines in one scene.

[Fig. 6].

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114 Rankin’s scholarship primarily develops the histories of the Murray and Kean acting troupe, Lewis Hallam the elder, and David Douglass. Yet it was the histories of these men that often shed light on the women in their troupes. For example, it was the history of Lewis Hallam the younger that brought to the surface the existence of Sarah Hallam. As a result, Rankin’s texts are essential in tracing the paths of the Hallams and sketching an inventory of their dramatic repertoires. Much as Sonneck, Rankin strictly organizes his text as a social history and prominently situates the dates, names of performances and major players without offering interpretation for any of the troupes motivations.
Figure 6 Playbill. *The Clandestine Marriage* and *Thomas and Sally or the Sailor's Return*. Performed by the American Company, Williamsburg. June 20, 1770. Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
Johnson and Burling suspect Sarah Hallam did not have a knack for the strolling life probably due to her lack of experience with the demands associated with a peripatetic existence. Despite her lack of theatrical proclivities, Sarah’s marriage to Lewis Hallam entwined her with the itinerant lifestyle of the theater company. From 1758 through 1761, the company traveled and performed in New York, Philadelphia, Annapolis, and throughout Virginia. From about 1761 through 1766, the company elected to tour a more southern route, and performed more frequently in Virginia (Rankin: Seilhamer: Johnson and Burling 27-55).

Eventually Sarah and Lewis divorced, however the exact cause or date of the divorce is not known. It is deducible that the divorce occurred around the summer of 1770. At this time, the American Company spent three months in Williamsburg and Sarah took up residence in the city while the company continued their tour of the region. Scholars such as Rankin and Molnar suggest that their divorce was not divisive or quick because records demonstrate that Hallam paid for several of Sarah’s luxuries, including a hair dressing in August 1770. Moreover, Hallam’s genealogy specifies that she gave birth of Mirvan Hallam in 1771 (Character Sketch, no page #: Rockefeller Library). Mirvan’s birth suggests that Lewis and Sarah’s divorce was either an elongated process or their relationship stuttered along until the divorce was eventually finalized. For the most part, scholars have addressed these biographical details as a method to readdress the life of Lewis Hallam. Sarah’s own narrative, similar to the other women’s, is made secondary to the androcentric account.

Historians of the theater frame Lewis Hallam, the younger, as cantankerous and short-tempered. Obsessed with the success of his theater troupe, Hallam devoted his attention to the welfare of his trade rather than his family (Molnar 73). Sarah’s hair dressing was the minimal amount of support he showed his wife and children. Rankin suggests that Lewis’ lack of interest
in caring for or supporting his family was the primary reason Sarah stayed in Williamsburg. From an economic standpoint, if Lewis Hallam also neglected to financially support his family, then it is likely that Sarah needed to develop a separate trade as a means to buttress her children’s livelihoods. This placed the responsibility on Sarah to become a financially self-reliant woman through establishing her school.

Records indicate that Sarah Hallam was a well-respected and popular denizen of Williamsburg. Arguably, her esteemed reputation directly affected the positive response to her school thereby indicating she experienced a moderate rate of success. *Tyler’s Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine* corroborate this point while also shedding light on Sarah Hallam’s personal biography. As stated: “it was a well-known fact that Mrs. Hallam ‘fared sumptuously every day’” (Tyler 67). This suggests that Hallam’s school well attended as she afforded a more opulent lifestyle. Additionally, a local planter provided Mrs. Hallam with servants, “and being the only person on whom the citizens of Williamsburg could lavish their attentions, they vied with each other in supplying her with comforts and luxuries” (Tyler 67). Seemingly, neighbors and other Williamsburg dwellers cared for Mrs. Hallam. This care was more likely a response to Virginia’s hospitality rather than an expression of the gender ideology that located a woman’s vulnerability. Considering the general degree of hospitality in Virginia, it does not seem unlikely that neighbors would take consideration of other neighbors. Isaac suggests that Virginians in particular demonstrated a strong tie to community and neighborhoods. It is plausible that Sarah Hallam benefited from this involvement. But interestingly, Isaac contends that a colonist’s tie to community was interconnected with a desire for upward mobility. He clarifies that “it was a close system in which networks of personal relationships had a functional – indeed structural – importance…” (Isaac 119). Considering the
widespread popularity of the Hallams and the general positive response to their theatrical endeavors, it is conceivable that neighbors hoped to create a bond with Sarah Hallam that reflected the general notoriety of the theater. Mistakenly assuming their association with her was also the gateway to reputability and widespread renown.

The care lavished onto Hallam was more complicated than an individualistic desire for social mobility. The support of Sarah Hallam was possibly a means to develop the cultural capital associated with Williamsburg rather than an individual attempt at upward mobility. This is similar to histories demonstrating the vocational opportunities given to Peter Pelham; he was constantly given new jobs, benefit concerts, subscription concerts, or roles in the theater as the incentive for a prolonged residency in Williamsburg. These creative individuals created new trade prospects that encouraged consumer spending. These cultural offerings also enhanced the appeal of the area while contending with more prosperous cities such as Philadelphia and Charleston.

Another consideration includes Hallam’s position as a tradeswoman. Conceivably the neighbors’ attentions or the gifting of a slave was an alternate method of payment for services Hallam provided. These services were not representational of gender ideology, customs associated with hospitality, or the development of Williamsburg’s cultural infrastructure but rather as payments. The primary sources state unequivocally that she taught dance on Friday and Saturday and she charged a fee of “20 schillings at entrance and L4 a year – genteel accomplishment (Purdie and Hunter, *The Virginia Gazette*, August 18, 1775: Tyler 70-71). The specification that classes were purchasable a year in advance demonstrates her protracted obligation to the trade. Considering this was her primary trade, it was likely Hallam held her patrons to their payments and her compensation arrived in the form of goods rather than
monetary sums. The fees affirmed her position as a tradeswoman while the exchange of slaves and services subsidized her livelihood.

Sarah Hallam shied away from the stage thereby supporting the claim that she was not born into a theatrical family. However, it is possible that her birth family used music and dance as their trade. The fact that she opened and managed her own dancing school in Williamsburg suggests she used her own upbringing to manage a dancing school “at Mr. Blovet Pasteur in Williamsburg…genteel accomplishment (Purdie and Hunter, *The Virginia Gazette*, August 18, 1775: Tyler 70-71). A week later, Hallam reprinted a similar advertisement but included a clear statement of her intended audience. On August 26, 1775, *The Virginia Gazette* reprinted Hallam’s statement that read “Gentlemen and Ladies will be Kind enough in sending their daughters” (Purdie and Hunter, *The Virginia Gazette*, August 26, 1775). It is clear that Sarah Hallam targeted her trade towards the gentry by specifically using the honorific ‘Gentlemen and Ladies.’

Smith contends that daughters of the gentry begin dancing lessons as early as twelve or thirteen years old (Smith 162). As part of their education they also attended balls and assemblies to publicly demonstrate their gentility and refinement. Both boys and girls only attended balls and assemblies when they mastered their dancing skills. Cultural events were not an outlet to practice one’s dancing lessons rather a space used to demonstrate their skill while ultimately reaffirming their family’s social position. The specification that Sarah Hallam’s dance instruction qualified as a “genteel accomplishment” in addition to addressing the “Gentlemen and Ladies” illustrate Hallam’s intent on utilizing this cultural tradition as the basis for her trade.

The study of dance and music was typically considered a feminine genteel accomplishment. As Judith Tick suggests in *American Women Composers Before 1870* (2010)
the cultivation of musical ability was equated with fashion. For girls of the gentry musical accomplishment was associated with recreation rather than the development of a trade. Drawing from Gilbert Chase’s *America’s Music* (1992), Tick contends, “music unfortunately had little to do with learning. It was an ‘amusement and elegant accomplishment, along with dress, dancing, and drawing’” (Tick 15). Tick’s statement is supported by the existing primary sources such as Hallam’s advertisement and the scholarly sources that develop women’s education as a culmination of accomplishments rather than knowledge. Accomplishments were essentially diversions that complemented a woman’s role as “the companion equal of men designed to soften our hearts and polish our manners” (Tick 15). A girl’s desire for education was considered detrimental to her marriageability since learning positioned her on an equal level with men. This disallowed her from “softening hearts” because it strengthened intellectual fortitude. The pursuit of education, as an avenue for the demonstration of rationality and shrewdness, was strictly the realm for men. The development of musical and dancing aptitude ensured “women [could] please men because music enabled them to show off their delicate, amiable, and sensitive natures” (Tick 15). This notion was firmly based on the association between women and music as steeped in emotionality, fragility, and vulnerability.

As Tick accounts, a woman’s earnest predilection for music was dismissed and consequentially women were counseled not to “value themselves too highly on their skills in this art, as after their utmost pains, we can hire superior artists to play for us for a few schillings and even a highly accomplished lady generally will suffer the harpsichord to go out of tune after marriage” (Tick 16). Tick’s assessment accurately reflected the relationship between many gentry daughters and music. However, was a similar affiliation applicable across classes? The answer is no. The hiring of artists for “a few schillings” suggests that trades musicians did not
approach music as an inconsequential diversion. The positioning of music as a fashionable accomplishment was a privilege reserved for the gentry. As Tick makes clear, women of the gentry pursued music as a marriageable and music was frequently abandoned after their nuptials.

Other scholars support Tick’s claim. Bushman utilizes Royall Tyler’s 1787 satire *The Contrast* to demonstrate “how soon is the instrument abandoned while the new married lady is learning housekeeping...” (Tyler: Bushman 300). The abandonment of the art separated gentry girls from the labor of creative tradeswomen. For example, women such as the Mary Stagg, the Hallams, Ann Neill and Sarah Hallam did not abandon music or dance after they married rather they continued to pursue the trade. For many women music was not a trifling diversion but rather a major component of their occupations. Sarah Hallam was aware of the gentry’s girls relationship with music and dance ergo she included the art as part of their tutelage. But for the teachers themselves, music was a valuable commodity that was practiced and valued because it insured their livelihoods. When considering the understanding of music in colonial society, gender and class informed the subject’s relationship to trade and education.\(^{115}\)

Music and dance lessons were commonly reserved educational practices for the children of the gentry. As Smith writes, “both rich and poor girls in Virginia received gender-specific instructions, but the daughters of the elite received music and dancing lessons” (Smith 155). The primary sources further develop this claim. The Tucker-Coleman Manuscripts reveal that Dr.

\(^{115}\) In general the pursuit of music as a tangible art form was seemingly undervalued. Scholars such as Ogasapian suggest that the ephemeral nature of music was not demonstrative of affluence and prosperity. In general portraiture, painting, and other forms of art were considered parades of wealth and “portraits were in demand as tangible possession and genealogical icons, so to speak, for prominent families both in England and America” (Ogasapian 118). This is an imperative to this consideration because it stresses the emphasis placed on consumerism and materialism but also the importance of concretizing a legacy of affluence. Whereas music is not confinable or capable of being hung on the wall and displayed, art signified an erudite and affluent capacity.
Judge Tucker sent his children to Hallam for schooling. These records indicate that Tucker paid Sarah Hallam “Fifteen Shillings To one quarters Dancing of miss Tucker…1.5 To Ditto Reading Writing &c…. 15[sh] To Quarter's Schooling of master Carter Twelve Shillings” (Uncatalogued Mss., Folder 101, Tucker-Coleman Collection, Department of Research, University of Virginia). The specification that Master Carter also attended the school is the lone indicator that Hallam also taught boys. However this aligns with the common practice of teaching both gentry boys and girls dance instruction.

The extant records that reveal the names of Hallams’ students demonstrate these were daughters of affluent families. Records indicate two instances of young women who mentioned their attendance at Sarah Hallam’s school: Nellie Custis and Sally Harris from Hampton. Their attendance was revealed in the account for “Miss Hallams boarding school in Williamsburg” from 1780-1781, listed in the Lower County Antiquary, vol. 3. Nelly Custis’ full name was Eleanor (Nelly) Parke Custis’ who was the granddaughter of Martha Washington and the step-granddaughter of George Washington “had just returned from boarding school in Williamsburg, with all Miss Hallams airs and graces” (no author, 48). Much as her family, Nelly was a

116 Records indicate that one of her prized positions was a harpsichord which George Washington purchased for her in 1793 for 71 pounds, 7 shillings and 5 pence or about $317.43. The online exhibits from Mount Vernon specify Nelly’s brother George Washington Park Custis remembered that Nelly practiced often and wrote in his Recollections that she would “play and cry, and cry and play.” Julian Ursyn Niemciewicz, a young Polish nobleman, during his visit in 1798, noted that Nelly Custis’ musical talents were “better than the usual woman of America or even Europe” (http://www.georgewashingtonwired.org/tag/nelly-custis/; accessed March 21, 2013). In 1797 the harpsichord traveled with Nelly and the Washington family from Philadelphia to Mount Vernon after Washington’s presidency; Nelly mentioned to friend Elizabeth Bordley in a 1797 letter that she looked forward to playing duets with her sister on the instrument once it arrived. Many years later, during an 1860 visit, the Prince of Wales attempted to play Nelly’s harpsichord but the instrument could only manage what the local newspaper called a “thin wiry response, even to the touch of royal hands” (http://www.georgewashingtonwired.org/tag/nelly-custis/; accessed March 21, 2013).
passionate consumer of musical culture. The specification of her “airs and graces” illuminated Nelly’s education while also developing the response to Hallam’s role in providing this tutelage.

“Airs and graces” suggests a falsehood or a fabricated performed behavior intended to convince others that an individual was a member of an elite social class. The inclusion of this idiom is of twofold importance. First, it supports the notion that Nelly attended Hallam’s school to learn the proper etiquette and niceties expected of genteel daughters. To describe Nelly’s behavior as composed of “airs and graces” exposed the puerile nature of her behavior thus more extensive practice was necessary. Essentially the young girl was still imitating social norms and undoubtedly faltered when attempting to perform polished manners. As a result she merely performed rather than confidentially embodied these expectations. Second, the “air and graces” idiom is also readable as a passive aggressive comment directed at Sarah Hallam’s station. The Lower County Antiquary attributes the airs and graces to Hallam while Nelly was simply mimicking her teacher’s facade. In this particular case Hallam herself is fabricating the performed behavior opposed to Nelly. It is likely that the author of the extant source was displeased by the idea that a genteel daughter would learn the expected mannerisms from a woman in a lower social class. This also puts into question Hallam’s position as a well-respected Williamsburg denizen while presenting the possibility that Hallam considered herself a member of an elite social class despite her position as a tradeswoman. This is substantiated by the idea that she taught genteel accomplishments because she assumed she embodied this ideal. This shades Hallam as much haughtier than her stage-shy persona.

Another student of Hallam’s was Sally Harris, the daughter of Captain John Harris of Hampton, Virginia, a prominent naval captain during the American Revolution. In The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography (1914), Walter Drew McCaw sketches the biography of the
now obscure captain. McCaw specifies that Harris was a man of means and “Sallie Harris, [was his] only child” (McCaw 161). Sally Harris’s educational account is drawn from Captain Harris’s estate records that indicate a sum “paid to Mrs. Hallams 2nd Quarter schooling and Stage passage to Hampton from Miss Sally…and to cash sent to Mrs. Hallam to buy silk and Canvass for Miss Sally (York County Records, Wills, Inventories, Book 23, 404). Many fashionable women wore gowns spun from silk. Since Hallam was also paid to buy the silk, this suggests she also obtained raw material to spin a wardrobe for Sally. However, no extant evidence suggesting Hallam created the clothing remains.

The extant sources locating Hallam’s enterprise explicitly disqualify her school as a dame school. James describes dame schools as instructional spaces that only facilitated “tiny children to read” (James 75). Other scholars suggest dame schools were one of the few educational opportunities available to girls yet also catered to children from the middling and trades classes. Mays suggests that dame schools were managed by “a local woman [who] would take neighborhood boys and girls, usually three to seven years old, into her home for a few hours per day” (May 129). Sarah Hallam’s school was not directed toward middling children since the payments for the Tucker children, Harris, and Custis demonstrated her clientele was the gentry. Arguably, Hallam organized an adventure school which was “the private undertaking of some individual, who capitalized on special skills in languages or fancy work to earn a precarious living” (James 75). James’ reference to “fancy work” is a reference to music and dance

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education. However, Hallam’s history with the theater and acting were also markers that qualified her skills as “fancy work.”

Hallam’s advertisements challenged the common assumption that music and dance were frivolous pastimes. Hallam’s note specified that she held her students to a high degree of discipline and “she is resolved to spare no pains with her scholars, she does not doubt of being able to give entire satisfaction” (Purdie and Hunter, *The Virginia Gazette*, August 18, 1775). This served to establish her trade and school as a viable pursuit while demonstrating the high caliber and competent tutelage. “Sparing no pains with her scholars” exposed the rigorous practice involved in learning music and dance. This also established Hallam as a mistress of her craft and lawful creative tradeswoman.

Records indicate that Sarah Hallam died in 1792. *The Virginia Herald* and *Fredericksburg Advertiser* on December 23rd 1792 both printed Sarah’s death notice. As the obituary read, “DIED: lately in Williamsburg. Mrs. Hallam spouse of Mr. Hallam, Comedian, Philadelphia” (*The Virginia Herald* and *Fredericksburg Advertiser*, December 23, 1792). In spite of the divorce, Sarah Hallam was still attributed to the legacy of her husband. Her death is supported by another extant source, a letter from William C. Gait of Williamsburg to his brother. This letter specified that “As I kept a memorandum, I shall begin first with deaths, then marriages…Mrs. Hallam the School Mistress November 27th” (Gait May 19th 1793; Tyler 67). Gait’s letter also established the legitimacy of Sarah’s school since her name was indelibly connected to the identity of a schoolmistress. The respectability of her school rings as a stark contrast to Ann Neill’s school. In contrast Ann Neill’s account is marked by impressions of failure since she pursued many other occupations in order to subsidize an income. It is arguable
that Sarah Hallam’s popularity stemming from her longstanding residence acquired her more
interest than Ann Neill, who, perhaps, was still unknown throughout Williamsburg.\textsuperscript{118}

The majority of information on Ann Neill is derived from the advertisements she placed
in \textit{The Virginia Gazette}. These records primarily represent her as a tradeswoman while
contextualizing her teaching abilities yet infrequently provide any biographical information. For
example, her marital status is indeterminable.\textsuperscript{119} Her previous employment as a governess, for
instance, was a position frequently held by unmarried women.\textsuperscript{120} If she was not married, the
appropriation of a Mrs. appellation was an attempt to misidentify herself as a spinster thereby
circumventing “the abhorrence of spinsterhood during this period” (Kerrison 31).\textsuperscript{121} As a result it
was common for unmarried women to adopt the married title, since the adoption of a connubial
title would elicit a greater sense of respectability. The scholarship contextualizing the role of the
music teacher in the nineteenth century suggests teaching was popular for women who chose not
to marry. This claim is also extendable to the eighteenth century. Sarah Hallam adopted the trade
after she divorced her husband. Ann Neill’s and Hallam’s ability to teach was a valuable and
favorable occupation. However, it was the respectability privileged to them by their former

\textsuperscript{119} According to Dale Slender’s text, \textit{Man Made Language} (1980), in the seventeenth century,
the abbreviated form Mrs. commonly stood for Mistress, an appellation designating both married
and unmarried women. By the eighteenth century, the Mrs. designation was predominantly
applied to married women.
\textsuperscript{120} For a more thorough understanding of the role of the Governess or other common trade
positions, see James Joseph MacDonald’s and J. A. C. Chandler’s \textit{Life in Old Virginia; A
Description of Virginia More Particularly the Tidewater Section, Narrating Many Incidents
Relating to the Manners and Customs of Old Virginia so Fast Disappearing As a Result of the
War between the States, Together with Many Humorous Stories}, Norfolk, 1907.
\textsuperscript{121} Kerrison includes an interesting footnote on spinsters from a North Carolina newspaper
derived from Linda Grant De Pauw’s and Conover Hunt’s text \textit{Remember the Ladies: Women in
America, 1750-1815}. The newspaper characterizes spinsters as “ill natured, maggoty, peevish,
conceited, disagreeable, hypocritical, fretful, noisy, gibing, canting, censorious…” (De Pauw and
Hunt: Kerrison 31).
marriage or forged marital identity that granted them the decorum and social capital to practice the trade. This exposes an additional segment of the social negotiation women faced.

Ann Neill’s first whereabouts in Williamsburg are documented in an advertisement from July 2, 1777. Prior to this, she lived at Colonel Warner Lewis’ residence in Gloucester County. Her role in the Lewis household is uncertain since it does not seem she was related to the family by blood or marriage. Research records from the Rockefeller Library suggest that Ann Neill acted as the Lewis’s governess or tutor to his grandchildren. This suggestion is validated by the fact that Ann Neill typically advertised her ability to teach the accomplishments expected of genteel children. Yet the research reports from the Rockefeller Library also suggests “perhaps she was simply a gentlewoman (maybe from England) down on her luck who lived with them for a time before striking out on her own” (Character Sketch 3, Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg, VA, Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg, VA). If this suggestion more accurately reflected Ann Neill’s history, then it was quite likely she was “a particular friend of Mary Chiswell Lewis, that might explain Neill’s decisions to depart the family shortly after Mary’s death” (Character Sketch 3). Despite her incomplete history, it is known that Ann Neill did advertise herself as a merchant, dentifrice-maker, teacher, music instruction for girls.

Mrs. Ann Neill was a capable musician. Her involvement in the benefit concert with the Balgraves was demonstrative of her musical acumen. Much as Mary Stagg, the Hallams, Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick, it was practical for Ann Neill to use her creative ability as the foundation for her trade. In several advertisements Ann Neill specified that she taught “LADIES who are inclined to learn the GUITAR may be instructed on that instrument by a lady lately arrived” (Purdie and Dixon, The Virginia Gazette, March, 30, 1775). Despite the fact that this advertisement does not list Ann Neill’s name, the date of the printing aligned with Ann Neill’s
arrival in Williamsburg while the ability to teach guitar serves as another salient connection. The specification that she taught guitar remerged in a subsequent advert printed a few months later. Her identity as a musician in addition to her ability to teach music serves as the evidence connecting this ‘lady lately arrived’ to Ann Neill.

Scholars such as Smith, Mays, and James suggest that a school’s subject material varied. Educational material was commonly the decision of the schoolmistress, who taught according to her own knowledge base. As demonstrative of her own skills, Ann Neill’s advertisement for guitar lessons reflected her ability to play the instrument and her position as a musician. This is an aspect of Ann Neill’s identity further supported by her performance with the Balgraves. Notably Ann Neill’s ability to teach guitar reaffirmed the dominant norm that associated the instrument as the socially acceptable musical pursuit for female students. The listing of guitar lessons signified to the newspaper readers that her tutelage aligned her with acceptability and the educational standards of the gentry. The emphasis of ‘LADIES’ demarcated the direction of her advertisement towards the gentry. Her advertisement also signified to readers her identity as a female music teacher who utilized her creative ability to support her position as a tradeswoman.

In a subsequent advertisement, the connection between Ann Neill and her ability to teach guitar is more apparent. For example, “Ann Neill…provided a sufficient number of Scholars engage, will also teach the Guitar” (Purdie and Hunter, *The Virginia Gazette*, December 20, 1776). A year later, Ann Neill reprinted a similar advertisement. Here she wrote, “ANN NEILL is now in Williamsburg, where she purposes teaching the GUITAR at one Guinea Entrance, and one Guinea for eight Lessons.” (Purdie and Hunter, *The Virginia Gazette*, July 2, 1777). Ann Neill is an example of a woman who publicly positioned herself as a music teacher.
Musical teachers and dancing masters are frequently considered an occupation dominated by men.\footnote{The primary sources reference examples of several male music teachers who offered their instruction or alerted the public to an impending concert; both opportunities specified attendance fees. For example, Francis Alberti, was a one time teacher of Jefferson and music tutor to Martha Wayles Skelton Jefferson on the harpsichord. Sonneck suggests Alberti introduced a “new Italian method of violin teaching to the Colonies in 1759” (Sonneck 123). In addition, Alberti “was acting as impresario for a concert of ‘instrumental music to consist of various instruments played by gentlemen of note’ in Hanover” (Molnar 80). The ability to publicly perform music was often an opportunity for the musician to widely demonstrate their level of education but also their abilities to teach. For example in an advertisement, music master Cuthbert Ogle specified that he “proposes to teach Gentlemen and Ladies to play the Organ, Harpsichord, or Spinnett; and to instruct those Gentlemen to play on other Instruments, so as to enable them to play in concert” (Hunter, \textit{Virginia Gazette}, March 28, 1755). Similar to dancing, a musician was only ready for public performance once they demonstrated mastery of the instrument. Public performances were an opportunity to exhibit proficiency, anything less threatened to disgrace the performer. It is noteworthy that Ogle specified that he taught gentlemen to perform in these ensembles. This noticeably reduced the availability of music lessons for female pupils. However, music teachers such as Mrs. Ann Neill attempted to provide young girls with the opportunity to learn music.}\footnote{Anthony Dexter uses a card in the \textit{New York Daily Advertiser} from November 6, 1792 as an example. This advertisement called attention to the last in a series of three concerts in which a Mrs. Van Hagen was to play and Mrs. Metchler sing. Mrs. Metchler (also known as Fanny Storer, one of Maria Storer’s sisters) was a popular actress, and Mrs. Van Hagen, newly arrived from Amsterdam was a trade musician. The same paper announced on December 26, that she would teach both vocal and instrumental music (Anthony Dexter 71).} Elisabeth Anthony Dexter establishes this point in \textit{Career Women of America 1776-1840} (1950).\footnote{Anthony Dexter documents the prevalence of music instruction taught by men even in schools where most of the teachers were women. Frances Thompson McKay argues a similar stance in “Virginia’s Voices: An Essay on Virginia Women and Music, 1607-1984” (1985). McKay acknowledges the limited printed representations of female music teachers by specifying that “in the \textit{Alexandria Gazette} between 1784 and 1814, for example, twenty-two teachers advertised lessons in various instruments. Only one of those instructors was a woman” (McKay 3). Anthony Dexter and McKay established these women as exceptions to the norm. However, this is an important point to critique. The tendency for women to teach music was more common than a handful of individuals. The problem of their erasure stems from the} Anthony Dexter documents the prevalence of music instruction taught by men even in schools where most of the teachers were women. Frances Thompson McKay argues a similar stance in “Virginia’s Voices: An Essay on Virginia Women and Music, 1607-1984” (1985). McKay acknowledges the limited printed representations of female music teachers by specifying that “in the \textit{Alexandria Gazette} between 1784 and 1814, for example, twenty-two teachers advertised lessons in various instruments. Only one of those instructors was a woman” (McKay 3). Anthony Dexter and McKay established these women as exceptions to the norm. However, this is an important point to critique. The tendency for women to teach music was more common than a handful of individuals. The problem of their erasure stems from the
availability of sources rather than a contradiction of the historian. The primary sources documenting the male teacher were ubiquitous thereby privileging the history of male music teachers. Similarly the extant sources do not show cases of women who were exclusively music teachers. This runs in contrast to the documented male teachers who primarily taught music and performed concerts. Women music teachers balanced their musical trade with other occupations, such as teaching basic literacy and writing, performing concerts, acting as dancing mistresses, grocers, etc. A central difference in the understanding of the music teacher identity is the realization of the absolute terms constructing these identities. When connecting the lives of Ann Neill, Sarah Hallam with the work of Anthony Dexter and McKay, it is discernable that more female teachers existed than previously surmised. It is imperative to continue the process and wade through the primary sources in order to uncover their histories.

Ann Neill demonstrated the mutability of a woman’s musical occupation since she offered various types of instructions. She also specified she taught “young Ladies in Reading, and Needle Work, in the Mornings, at 30s. per Quarter” (Dixon and Hunter, The Virginia Gazette, July 2, 1777). She reprinted this advertisement on July 11th and July 18th. The frequency of these reprints suggests she targeted a wider audience over a prolonged period. Her use of music as a trade supplements the scholarly belief that in late eighteenth century Virginia, the instances of female music teachers increased primarily due to augmentation of women as active public trades people. Considering Berkin’s scholarship, this was likely caused by the Revolution and the shift of women’s roles. Other scholars such as Norton, Kerber, and Mays suggest that after the Revolution, the relationship between women and education changed significantly. Due

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124 See Maurer Maurer’s article “The Professor of Musick in Colonial America” or Benson’s doctoral dissertation “The Itinerant Dancing and Music Masters of Eighteenth Century America” (1963) for a history of the male teachers.
to the absence of male relatives and husbands caused by war, women assumed their responsibilities and duties thereby drastically shifting their knowledge base. Clearly these scholars statement are accurate but are also extendable to women such as Mrs. Neil who practiced these changes just prior to and during the Revolution.

Music teachers oversaw the everyday working of their enterprises while also managed the long-term goals, projects, and budgets. The impetus to start a school was probably inspired by the educational praxis emphasized by the French philosophers. Writers such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Turgot, Condorcet, and other philosophers of the Enlightenment argued for the gradual regeneration of society through education. For example, Rousseau’s treatise *Emile; or on Education* (1762) is often cited as the text that ignited “the passion of authors and readers for the composition and perusal of systems of education” (Tyler and Woodhouselee 280). Despite this, *Emile* specifically suggested that convention is the safest guide for women. For Rousseau, women received an indirect benefit from the educational philosophy. However, in *The Social Contract* (1762), Rousseau supported public education for all citizens in order to strengthen the popular resolve. Rousseau demonstrated an ideal for free education regardless of gender. Quite likely the discourses stemming from the Enlightenment influenced Williamsburg’s social climate.

The primary sources reveal Ann Neill established a boarding school in Williamsburg. An announcement from *The Virginia Gazette* reads “Ann Neill (who for a considerable time past, has lived in Colonel Lewis’s Family, Gloucester County) proposes to open a Boarding School in Williamsburg for the Reception of young Ladies, on the same Plan as the English Schools, provided a sufficient number of Scholars engage…she will also teach the Guitar” (Purdie and Hunter, *The Virginia Gazette*, December 20, 1776). Scholars suggest that these boarding schools
were small and typically accommodated only six to ten students (Mays 129). The presence of Ann Neill’s school is supported in the Geddy House Report available at the Rockefeller Library which suggests “the school was on lot 19 block 161” (Geddy House History, 18-19: Stephenson; http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/View/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports\\\\RR1441.xml#n41 accessed March 18, 2013). Considering boarding schools were oftentimes managed in the residences of the schoolmistress, this lot was likely Ann Neill’s home.

Ann Neill’s December 20th advertisement was printed a year and half to two years after the anonymous advertisement for “the lady lately arrived.” This time duration supported Ann Neill’s attempt to construct a credible reputation for herself in Williamsburg while also saving enough money to financially sustain her new educational endeavor. The fact that Ann Neill printed her advertisement in December also reaffirmed her intent on teaching gentry girls. During the winter gentry daughters were not occupied by trade unlike middling girls who “were permitted to go to school at the end of the day or during the summer months, when boys were not in attendance” (Mays 129). Ann Neill’s call for students in midwinter suggests middling daughters were not her primary audience rather it was the gentry’s daughters who benefited from the privilege of leisure time in the middle of the winter season. Ann Neill’s catering to the gentry elicits a type of paradox based on class; she would never occupy a refined gentry seat yet taught her students to do so. Ann Neill embodied the socially acceptable role of the teacher who restated the ideologies affirming social etiquette and class position.

125 However, all women did not abide by these standards. Ogasapian calls upon the example of Eliza Lucas Pinckney (1722–1793), who while still in her teens, “ran her own plantation and was among the first to begin the cultivation of indigo as well as rice” (Ogasapian 67) in South Carolina. Pinckney also demonstrated a strong musical aptitude and devoted a disciplined and meticulous effort to her practice. In letter to Miss Bartlett, her nieces, dated April 1742, Pinckney recalls her day and notes that “the first hour after breakfast is spent at my musick… the first hour after dinner as the first after breakfast at musick” (Lucas Pinckney 25). While
Despite the rising popularity of boarding schools in Northern regions, these types of institutions slowly developed in Virginia and other southern colonies. The sparsely settled colonies, separated by farm fields and thick forests, delayed the establishment of permanent schools. Moreover, the scattered population and the lack of consistent residents proved to make permanent schools ineffectual because the student body itself was too small. The hiring of private tutors who taught almost entirely in the homes of the gentry was commonplace. Curiously, Ann Neill did not follow this practice and elected to establish a permanent school in Williamsburg. According to scholarship, the popularity of boarding schools in the south only grew in the nineteenth century. The fact that it was a boarding school for girls was quite uncommon for several reasons. First, to offer girls a boarding school clearly put emphasis on girl’s education. Second, a boarding school took girls out of their domestic spaces, which contrasted with the practice of hiring private tutors. Ann Neill attempted to create a space that required girls to leave the domestic sphere and acquire an education in a more public realm. To leave the home for an education was an unnecessary expense that even few men spared. The fact that Ann Neill attempted to construct a school for girls served to distinguish her ambition as distinctive.

specifying in a letter to her friend Mrs. Boddicott, dated May 2, 1740, that “My Musick and the Garden, which I am very fond of” (Lucas Pinckney ix).


127 For instance, tutor Philip Fithian Vickers describes the education of the Carter daughters as founded in reading and writing. As his 1773 diary reflects, “the oldest daughter is Reading the Spectator, Writing and beginning to Cypher – the second is reading out of the spelling-book, and beginning to write…the next is reading in the spelling book…and the last is beginning her letters” (Fithian Vickers 20). The tutor’s journal clearly exemplifies the onus placed on gentry women’s abilities to read and write. Ann Neill was obviously aware of this hence she hired a master to teach dancing and writing as these subjects were beyond the scope of her instruction.
Similar to other advertisements printed during the era, Ann Neill referred to her pupils as "scholars" (Purdie and Hunter, The Virginia Gazette, December 20, 1776). Sarah Hallam also referred to her students as scholars in the advertisement that stated, "as she is resolved to spare no pains with her scholars" (Tyler 237). In another occurrence, James Blair in 1724 described educational praxis as "Little schools where they teach to read & write and arithmetic are set up, wherever there happens to be a convenient number of Scholars" (Rowe: Stevens Perry 300). However a description such as Blair’s typically referred to schools comprised exclusively of male students or co-educational spaces for young children. The term “scholar” was infrequently attributed to female schools. Rather scholars were more commonly associated with men who were learned in more expansive disciplines such as “Latin, Greek, Prosody, Rhetoric, Logic, Natural Philosophy…Geography, Chronology, Dialing, Surveying, Navigation…” (Kerner 55).

The use of the term scholars suggests that Ann Neill and Hallam probably assumed that girls were capable of more rigorous academic engagements than commonly practiced. Despite this, Ann Neill chose to adhere to the standard ornamental education for girls.

Ann Neill’s decision to teach her students fashionable instruction was likely an extension of that belief that students must find a balance between knowledge and practice. Kerner contends that men were chiefly encouraged to balance book learning with other worldly knowledge. Practical knowledge and skills were essential to a scholar’s identity. Kerner calls upon “George Washington [who believed] that ‘knowledge of books is the basis upon which other knowledge is to be built,’ but he did not think that ‘becoming a mere scholar is a desirable education for a gentleman” (Kerner 57). When applied to boys’ educations this enforced a sense of balance between book and trade learning. For girls, a similar yet oppositional ideology applied. Girls of
the gentry were infrequently taught trade skills however lessons in refinement qualified as the practical contingent.¹²⁹ Ann Neill was not exceptionally revolutionary in her use of the term scholar since this was a common practice of the educational system. However, Ann Neill’s use of the term to describe her female students does contradict the common assumption that scholars were predominately men.

Ann Neill’s students received tutelage in daily functions that were gender specific lessons exclusively reserved for the gentry daughters. This included cooking and household management in addition reading, writing, basic arithmetic, French, musical training, dancing, drawing, and needlework. Ornamental arts were the dominant subjects that aided a woman’s marriageability. The ability to showcase the time spent on embroidery or practicing an instrument demonstrated exceptional wealth. Sewing was common, and girls from multiple classes were taught the skill. Yet there is a clear distinction between embroidery and sewing: the former was a type of decoration while the latter a necessity. Ann Neill does not specify in her advertisements that she taught sewing but rather she trained girls in ‘needlework and embroidery.’ This is another example supporting Ann Neill’s intent on teaching gentry daughters. The education for girls was primarily oriented at preparing young women for their role in genteel society. As Kierner contends the dominant assumption “did not expect young women to aspire to independence or public leadership, they increasingly regarded women as indispensable participants in the genteel

¹²⁹ Scholars such as Kerber, Berkin, and James point to the fact that education exemplified a social hierarchy that privileged genteel instruction over a trade. They utilize Sargent Murray’s “Self-Complacency Especially in Female Bosoms” as demonstrative of the outcry against glorifying “the anti egalitarian habit of assuming that a genteel and impractical education was superior to a vocational one” (Kerber 206). By extension, the more competent the woman, meaning the more able to practice her trade or develop the skills to become economically self-sufficient, the less vulnerable she would be to the pressures of marriage. Accordingly, an education that emphasized competence would also prepare her for widowhood and the shouldering of a family’s responsibilities.
social rituals that complemented and reinforced the existing social hierarchy” (Kierner 59). This is clearly stated by the inclusion of reading juxtaposed to needle working. Echoing the balance developing the scholar identity, these two subjects reaffirmed the encouragement of young women to pursue intellectual capital without compromising gentility.

Frequently the teacher’s knowledge base was not expansive enough to accommodate the needs of her students. Oftentimes teachers hired masters who would teach in the areas the schoolmistress lacked proficiency. For example, Ann Neill specified that for an additional fee she would hire “the best masters to teach dancing and writing” (Dixon and Hunter, The Virginia Gazette, December 27, 1776). This statement suggests Ann Neill lacked the qualified aptitude in these areas. Middling women often answered the call to teach however dancing and writing were commonly tasks assigned to masters because middling women did not have extensive practice with those two forms. The inability to teach these subjects paints Ann Neill in multiple lights.

The first suggestion revokes the consideration that Ann Neill simply practiced the custom of the day that determined schoolmistresses would hire masters to conduct the actual pedagogy. James makes clear that women frequently “[setup] boarding and day schools for girls, hiring masters to give the actual instruction” (Anthony Dexter; Spruill; James 58). The primary sources support this claim. The Virginia Gazette printed an advertisement for E. Armston’s Ladies’

130 In many cases, female teachers taught the art of refinement to young gentry daughters. For example, as stated in The Diaries of George Washington: 1748-1799: “At Mount Vernon, as at Nomini Hall, music school was held, at which time guests appeared with their children. On September 26, 1769, Washington recorded the arrival of “Mr. Stadler, Col. Fairfax and his Lady, Sally and Nancy Carlyle, and seven girls from Alexandria” (Fitzpatrick ed, 254). In connection to Dexter and Spruill, James suggests middling-women benefited from the indoctrination of refinement because it facilitated new crafts and trades. Much as James makes clear, Ann Neill was clearly qualified to teach music however not competent in the teaching of writing and dance.
boarding school where “reading will be her peculiar Care; Writing and Arithmetick will be taught by a Master properly qualified; and if desired, will engage Proficient in Musick and Dancing” (Dixon and Hunter, *The Virginia Gazette*, February 27, 1772). The majority of the scholarship places women as the facilitators of education rather than practitioners. As exemplified by Armston’s advertisement, the female schoolteachers hired male masters to assume the actual teaching. By extension this also reaffirmed the dominant ideology that subsumed women while unbalancing the historical record to predominantly reflect the histories of male teachers.

In part, Ann Neill posed as a counterexample to this claim since she taught the majority of subjects herself, and only hired other masters when it proved necessary. From the same December 27th advertisement, Ann Neill demonstrated her intent on teaching “reading, Tambour and other Kinds of Needle Work...She will also teach the Guitar” (Dixon and Hunter, *The Virginia Gazette*, December 27, 1776). This advertisement explicitly constructs Ann Neill as the educational practitioner. In part Ann Neill worked in opposition to Anthony Dexter’s, Spruill’s, and James’ claim because she was both the teacher and the organizer. Yet the hiring of dance and writing masters was undoubtedly a business practice because she considered the school a business franchise that was improvable with the aid of specialists.

Ann Neill inability to teach dance or writing provides a few insights into her familial history. Unlike Barbara DeGraffenreit who used her genteel education as the foundation for her teaching, Ann Neill was probably not afforded the same privileges thereby incapable of utilizing her background to teach dance. Yet Ann Neill shared more similarities with women such as Mary Stagg, Mrs. Sully, Mrs. Pick and the Hallams who were associated with creative trades due to birthright or marriage. When they all came to age they were trained within the parameters of
their families’ creative trades. It is likely that Ann Neill’s musical identity and knowledge was developed in a similar circumstance.

Scholars suggest reading and writing was often a ability reserved for boys’ educations because these skills formed the basis for successful business and marketplace transactions. Smith builds off Monaghan to develop this point. As she quotes Monaghan, “Writing was a job-related skill. Because girls were being trained not to hold jobs but to be successful home workers, penmanship was an irrelevant acquisition for them…” (Monaghan: Smith 148). However, both Monaghan and Smith locate the practices of gentry girls. For girls in trade classes, basic writing skills were also a necessity as it was assumed they would actively contribute to the family’s trade but also continue the practice in widowhood. Both scholars are correct in aligning educational practices based on gender norms and class privilege. Yet it is also valuable to add that girls raised in a trade class were also taught writing in order to position them as viable and productive family members. However, their writing abilities were limited hence reflected by Ann Neill’s hiring of a writing master.

In “Women and Education in Eighteenth-Century Virginia” (2012) Linda Rowe suggests parents from the middling class “concentrated their daughters’ training on domestic skills useful to running a household or a family business…proficiency in reading and writing would also be an asset” (Rowe 12). Since women and girls in trades classes were active participants in vocational practices, they were also taught to read and write in order to support their respective trades. Typically parents anticipated their children would eventually manage their enterprises thus reading and writing skills, however basic, were necessary. Possibly Ann Neill benefited
from a similar practice. Since Ann Neill published her advertisements it is likely that she was capable of reading and writing because “writing was a job-related skill.” She must have been literate enough to produce the advertisements for her trade however incapable of teaching gentry girls the proper mechanisms of writing. This is barring the possibility that she either verbally dictated the advertisements to the printer or employed a surrogate writer. Functioning under the assumption that Ann Neill wrote her own advertisements, this substantiates the scholarship on the role of reading and writing as an essential trade skill.

From December 1776 to July 1777 Ann Neill printed ten advertisements for various educational prospects. Her intent on only teaching girls and charging fees for her instruction are themes consistent in all her advertisements. The price of instruction varied due to the actual duty and would “them Board and Lodging, Washing, &c. for one Guinea Entrance, and thirty Pounds a Year” (Purdie and Hunter, *The Virginia Gazette*, December 27, 1776). She reprinted this advertisement one week after her December 20th call and then reprinted it once again on January 3, 1777. The December 27th and January 3rd advertisement included an additional line her first advertisement lacked: “Ann Neill will take Day Scholars at one Guinea Entrance, and four Guineas per year” (Purdie and Hunter, *The Virginia Gazette*, January 3, 1777). The inclusion of

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131 Historical analysis suggests that women in the eighteenth century were more likely to read than have the ability to write. For instance, James, Spruill, and Samuel Eliot Morison, suggest that “between sixty and seventy percent were illiterate” (Spruill; Morrison; James 14). Yet the suggestion that the majority of women in the eighteenth century were illiterate does not absolutely align with the primary sources. Meaning that the sources framing the history of the gentry class demonstrates the onus placed on reading and writing for girls’ educations. Then if we consider the middling and trades class, it was desirable to have these women read in order to takeover the family business if widowhood occurred or simply to act as productive members of the business. Primary sources such as the advertisements used in this study in addition to the histories of other tradeswomen such as Clementina Rind or even Martha Ballard demonstrate the prevalence of literate tradeswomen. However, again, we are basing this assumption on the longevity of sources initially written by the literate. The illiterate could never record their memories thereby succumbing to the silence in the historical record.
“day scholars” suggests the idea for a boarding school was not well received or the school did not garner the initial response she expected. In an attempt to refigure her enterprise to reflect the needs of Williamsburg’s gentry, she subsidized her school to include a day only component. However, this probably was also poorly received because she soon resorted to non-educational trades to support herself financially.

Much as Mary Stagg, Ann Neill struggled to obtain a livable income from just her teaching trade. ¹³² Both women turned to selling commodities as a means of supplementing their income. For example, Ann Neill printed that she “The Subscriber…has opened a Store opposite Mr. John Greenhow’s, near the Market Square…to sell all Kinds of European Goods…German Flute, Guitar” (Purdie and Hunter, The Virginia Gazette, November 13, 1777). ¹³³ Here she further capitalized on her musical knowledge by selling instruments. It is quite likely that she also sold songbooks, sheet music, and accessories for instruments such as guitar strings since these were common items in the inventories of other shopkeepers. This proved as a method to diversify her stock by appealing to the general needs of consumers. As a means of stretching and realigning trade prospects, women business owners frequently diversified their stock or their business capabilities in order to increase their marketability. Ann Neill followed suit. In another example, she also sold dentifrices “for the teeth and gums, equal to Dr. Barker's, made by Ann Neill. The public may always be supplied by her, and at Mr. Brand's, Williamsburg. N. B. Ann Neill will allow two dollars for all the empty dentifrice pots that are returned” (Purdie and

¹³² As discussed earlier in this chapter, Sarah Hallam did not struggle to obtain a living from her school.

¹³³ There is evidence of men teaching the German flute. See the advertisements for teaching by Francis Russworm in The Virginia Gazette Purdie and Dixon, May 16, 1771 and Williams Attwood, The Virginia Gazette Purdie and Dixon, May 23, 1771.
Hunter, *The Virginia Gazette*, December 11, 1779). In Ann Neill’s case, she probably witnessed a limited response to her call for scholars and sought alternative methods of income accrual.

As a teacher, Ann Neill embodied a very important and ideological position for women of the era: the conveyance of virtue and instilling this desirable quality into the children. Noah Webster, of the dictionary fame, was a prominent advocate for women’s education as a model of patriotism. James reiterates this point when she captures Webster’s sentiment that “women set the moral tone of society. As mother’s moreover, they molded the character of youth” (Webster 1790: James 80). Webster adopted a utilitarian approach to education that specifically addressed early American citizens as models of service for their government. Despite Webster’s claim emerging almost fifteen years after Ann Neill’s stretch in Williamsburg, Webster’s theory is reflected in Ann Neill’s practice. In several of her advertisements she established the validity of her school as a tool fortifying patriotism and governmental accordance. She wrote, “As Nothing tends more to the Improvement of a Country than proper Schools for the Education of both Sexes, she humbly hopes her Scheme will meet Encouragement, and the Approbation of the Ladies and Gentlemen of this State” (Dixon and Hunter *The Virginia Gazette*, December 27, 1776). She demonstrated the early underpinning of Republican virtue and sought community support as a method of supplementing her school in order to strengthen the developing nation. By doing so, Ann Neill utilized political ideology as a method to secure her fledging enterprise.

Productive women were commanded to demonstrate agency and control of their own lives opposed to the traditional value placed on flirtatious charm and beauty. As Kerber states, “The Republic did not need fashion plates; it needed citizens – women as well as men – of self-discipline and strong minds” (Kerber 204). This ideology opened avenues for women to occupy educational positions but also for girls to obtain better methods of learning. When women such
as Ann Neill occupied the public position of teacher, this was not a marker of transgression. Rather her position as a schoolteacher, whose enterprise led to an “improvement of a Country” served as a stalwart example of virtue. Moreover, by positioning her school as “proper Schools for the Education of both Sexes” she shaped young girls to become productive members of society while reinforcing the best interests of early America.

The connection between self-reliance and opportunity also develops the identities of Ann Neill’s scholars. Since the advertisements construct Ann Neill’s educational practice as genteel education, it is quite likely that she did not teach self-reliance but positioned the girls to utilize marriage as a method to achieve upward mobility. Despite Ann Neill’s apparent acceptance of educational reform and her embodiment of self-reliance, she used her position to teach students to occupy an immobilized position within the marriage market. The term ‘scholar’ addressed Ann Neill’s awareness to the practice of education as a method of constructing ideology and the inevitable impasse with genteel gender norms. Despite the public emphasis placed on educational reform, Ann Neill still adhered to practices constructing her students as suitable marriage prospects. This type of disjunction between the ideology of a girls’ school and its practitioners reaffirmed the dominant gender negotiation prevalent throughout this study.

Ann Neill occupied a fine line between the educational advocacy and the established order of female education. By offering her students the traditional model of education, Ann Neill was able to establish her own self-reliance. By doing so she expanded her potential cliental to include those who abided by the traditional method of educations and those reformers who aligned with burgeoning republican principles. As such the philosophy of the Enlightenment and developing republican ideology informed he importance of women’s influence in a democratic society. Yet she did not subvert the eighteenth century ideals dictating female behavior. As such,
her tutelage and educational practice on one hand improved the cultural conditions of the girls under her influence. Yet on the other hand, she also very deliberately reinforced the prevalent gender paradigm. Ann Neill’s role as the tradeswoman positioned her in a negotiated space where she could project self-reliance without causing a discursive social shift. The extant sources do not suggest that women such as Ann Neill or Sarah Hallam were anomalies. Rather it is the secondary sources that exclude their contributions to the cultural histories of the eighteenth century. Their erasure is symptomatic of a longstanding social negotiation suggesting they could be part of the cultural environ but not contribute their own share without adhering to dominant ideology. Women could teach and embody self-reliance but their curriculum was based on preparing their students for the marriage eligibility. By extension, Ann Neill and Sarah Hallam were not incongruent to other creative tradeswomen. However, the specification here is that they were analogous to women within their class and consistently showcased specific ideologies that sutured any ruptures caused by social or gender transgressions. As creative tradeswomen, they were expected to labor and work in any capacity that would insure an income. Yet the erasure of the cultural contributions reflects their subordination discounting these musicians, teachers, and creative tradeswomen as viable social contributors.

Employment according to Wollstonecraft, was a method to raise women’s ability for self-respect and standard of value. At this point, Wollstonecraft does not condone art, literature, or other methods of self-expression. She extends her argument to include the art of healing and other practices that would require women to maintain an active engagement with society. She continues to examine the professions made available to women as menial. What she wanted were educated women who could fulfill practical positions that also had an impact on societies. Arguably, women who were musical and cultural professionals negotiated Wollstonecraft’s call.
CHAPTER VII: PUBLIC CONCERT LIFE: “A CONSTANT TUTING” OF GENDER NEGOTIATION

Virginian cities such as Alexandria, Fredericksburg, Norfolk, Richmond, and Williamsburg all boasted a robust public concert life. Here the adjective robust refers to the ubiquity of small-scale concerts, usually comprised of local musicians forming duos, trios or quartets. However the fact remains that the establishment of regular public concerts developed slowly in eighteenth century America. In “Italian Music and Actors in Eighteenth Century America” (1946), Howard R. Marraro builds off of Henry C. Lahee’s canonical text *Annals of American Music a Chronological Record of Significant Musical Events* (1922) to trace the Italian roots of early American music. Marraro contends that “concerts and song recitals were not held before colonial audiences until the seventeen thirties” (Lahee: Marraro 103). Possibly Lahee and Marraro were simply referring to public concerts since Robert Carter, as early as 1722 reported in his ledgers that he held concerts in his home. Concerts were probably performed prior to the 1730s but were not formally organized while designated public musical spaces were not constructed. It is important to explore Lahee’s and Marraro’s claim in order to demonstrate the uncertainties of early public concerts. Perhaps the lack of information reflects the extinction of records. An alternate consideration suggests the history of music before 1730 was not consistently recorded. Music in Williamsburg was commonplace, frequent, and popular throughout the century. For example, in 1770 Landon Carter, of Sabine Hall grouchily confided in his diary that “from every house a constant tuting may be listened to from one instrument to

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135 Lahee contends that a concert was held in Boston in 1731; another in Charleston in 1732; the following year in Charleston there was the first song recital. These are the earliest records demonstrating concert activity.

136 In recollection, Carter wrote: “[for] the Concert I gave the Singer 15 Shillings & had given her a Guinea before” (Carter, no page # specified: http://carter.lib.virginia.edu).
another” (Carter: Isaac 236). In this particular case, Carter was not reveling in the musical culture yet he did establish an apt response to the popularity of music in Williamsburg. In brief, music was everywhere and many people eagerly participated in musical culture. Contemporary scholars point towards Williamsburg as a city that housed a vigorous musical concert culture despite the inconsistent populations. Arguably much to Carter’s disdain. Molnar even suggests that the public concert life of Virginia was so vibrant it proved to be an ample picking ground for Charleston’s St. Cecelia Society Orchestra that advertised for musicians in The Virginia Gazette on July 25th 1771. In the same light, when the capital moved to Richmond so did the musical vibrancy. Scholars suggest that it took a decade, but by the 1790s Richmond eventually positioned itself as the musical epicenter of Virginia.

Publick times greatly effected Williamsburg’s population and the consequential commercial and cultural opportunities. Publick times were the period when the courts or the General Assembly were is session thus dictating the growth or shrinkage of Williamsburg’s population. Meaning that when the General Assembly met, the city would swell with the officials, their families, servants but also trades people, artisans, merchants and other craftsmen’s who sought to capitalize on the population growth. As a result, these were the most productive times to also engage in social activities such as dancing, music, and other types of creative trades. As the sessions ended, the families would retire to their plantations and many merchants left to seek other viable markets in more populated cities. Williamsburg’s small population could not consistently support permanent creative trades thereby encouraging the peripatetic lifestyle.

137 As the advertisement read:” THE St. CECILIA SOCIETY give Notice, that they will engage with, and give suitable Encouragement to, MUSICIANS properly qualified to perform at their CONCERT, provided they apply on or before the first Day of October next.—The Performers they are in Want of are, a first and second Violin, two Hautboys, and a Bassoon, whom they are willing to agree with for one, two, or three Years” (Purdie and Dixon, The Virginia Gazette, July 25, 1771).
Musical culture was not a stable entity but rather a wavering component dictated by the touring schedule of acting troupes and musicians and the city’s social demands. Creative tradeswomen traveled to areas that could provide the audiences and wages. Hence Williamsburg, who’s gentry, plantation owners, and other individuals of influence lived outside of the city rather than centrally occupying the area, directly influenced the regularity of musical performances.

The anatomy of an early concert resembled what is currently considered an ensemble performance. The musical ensembles were frequently comprised of three to five musicians who performed instrumental or vocal music. These ensembles either blended the sounds of differing musical instrument families such as piano, strings, and wind instruments or grouped together instruments from the same instrumental family, such as string ensembles or wind ensembles. This arrangement reflected chamber music ensembles probably due to the popularity and influence of Joseph Haydn in both England and the colonies. This type of arrangement was extravagant and more commonly a lone musician would perform or accompany theater troupes. Soloists were not considered ensembles as they only consisted of one musician.

Local musicians became members of informal groups and frequently performed early concerts. Typically these musicians contributed to an evening’s recreation rather than accrued wages. For example, on December 11, 1766, *The Virginia Gazette* announced “a CONCERT of MUSICK in *Frederickburg*, for the Entertainment of all Gentlemen and Ladies, who will favour the Subscriber with their Company. Several of the best Hands in *Virginia* will assist in the *Concert*” (Purdie and Dixon, *The Virginia Gazette*, December 11, 1766). Similarly another advertisement promoted a “concert of instrumental music by Gentlemen of note, for their own amusement” (Purdie and Dixon, *The Virginia Gazette*, May 1769). Finally, a concert in Hanover Town in May 1769 endorsed a comparable concert. However the advertisement “requested by
the Ladies, that the company may be governed by a becoming silence and decorum, during the performance” (Rind, *The Virginia Gazette*, May 11, 1769). These concerts offered a glimpse of the audience while also casting light on the role of women in musical and civil society.

Frequently the musicians sat in a small circle with the audience circled around them. Yet acknowledgment of the concert’s audience is uncommon throughout the primary and secondary sources. Yet the previous three advertisements demonstrate that these concerts specifically attracted both affluent men and women. The request for “silence and decorum” reflected the eighteenth century British audience’s tendency to speak over or ignore performances of all types. In *Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2004), editor Susan Wollenberg and Simon McVeigh suggest “at most London concerts there was ‘a buzz of conversation’ and members of the audience wandered around visiting the refreshment room” (Wollenberg and McVeigh 2).

Considering the influence of London culture on colonial musicality and Virginian denizens in general, the request for silence is clearly an attempt to control while also curtail disturbances to performances. It does not seem that women of the gentry participated directly in these musical performances yet they did impact the nature of the concert. The specification of their demands shaped public musical culture thereby demonstrative of a type of social power.

Prior to 1775, Virginia’s cultural landscape did not include a permanent concert hall or performance space. Typically music was enjoyed in ballrooms, taverns, homes, gardens, and churches. More formal cultural spaces were temporary and often performers would appropriate a public area. If a stage was constructed, it was provisional, and upon completion of the performance it was frequently dismantled. For example, an advertisement for the Hanover County Horse-Race and Entertainment, held on November 30th, 1737 specified “that convenient Booths be erected for that Purpose. That Drums, trumpets, Hautboys, &c will be provided, to
play at that said Entertainment” (Parks, *Virginia Gazette*, September 30-October 7, 1737). The musicians’ identities are unknown as is their repertoire. However it is important to recognize that the author of this advertisement felt it imperative to include the musical entertainment. Debatably this expressed their belief that the inclusion of the music would garner a larger audience or demonstrate the overall sophistication of a horse race. The advertisement also specified that the event would appeal to “the Subscribers, and their Wives (or Ladies)” (Parks, *Virginia Gazette*, September 30-October 7, 1737). The presence of women in the audience suggested a more passive role in the cultivation of musical culture. However as audience members women directly encouraged the performances while also reinforcing the sociality of musical culture.

Virginian colonists commonly exhibited a familiarity with European composers and their music. An illustrative example is derived from a letter Anne Blair wrote to her sister in 1769. Blair demonstrated her familiarity with music when she clarified that in the evenings she could hear the Church organist performing the music of “Felton's, Handel's, Vi-vally's" (Replicated in the research guides at Rockefeller Library, page no. not listed). Despite its brevity, Blair’s letter exhibits characteristics of colonial American musical culture and her fluency with compositions.

Her writing demonstrates the popularity of European composers and their compositions in Virginian society. Concerts throughout the era included the music of Henry Purcell, Thomas Arne, Handel, Mozart, Felice Giardini, Pachobel, etc. Despite the fact that these composers did not visit Virginia, their music was frequently duplicated and sold in songbooks, broadsides, and as individual sheet music. Stores throughout Virginia facilitated the purchase of these specialty items between an individual buyer and a European publisher. As a result, the music of Handel, who had recently died, Mozart, and Vivaldi were commonly heard and played. In fact, this demonstrates the second point of importance regarding Blair’s letter: the popularity of music.
Her specification of composers exhibits her familiarity with music. She used the mention of the composers as a descriptive elements thereby assuming her sister was also acquainted with the music. Whether they became acquainted with this music through private or public performance is not known. It is not known whether Blair herself participated in musical culture. Yet the sisters shared a similar musical understanding thus musical capital was a part of their upbringing. It is also probable that Anne gained an appreciation for music from attending Pelham’s evening musical concerts held at the church. These concerts became staples of Williamsburg’s evenings and were frequently attended by the city’s denizens. The inclusion of music as part of a domesticated system of knowledge also took the form of private libraries and collections. These collected works were a facet of colonial life, if the individual had the means to afford this lifestyle.

Private collections and personal music libraries were another method of experiencing music and learning repertoires. Records from music libraries and estate inventories demonstrate the popularity of Stamitz’s *Concertos* and *Orchestra Trios* (Purdie and Dixon, *The Virginia Gazette* August 3, 1771). As music circulated throughout the colonies it also influenced and shaped private and public repertoires. For example, Benjamin H. Latrobe’s songbook, *Old Fashioned Song and Hymns* contains popular seventeenth and eighteenth century music including the works of the previously mentioned composers. From the notes within the *Songbook*, it seems Latrobe arranged many of the pieces for pianoforte himself. One text bears the inscription “old Fashioned Songs and Hymns copied by BHL Senr” (MS 1981.4, vol. 1). This was Latrobe’s script. Latrobe’s family was also quite musical, especially his brother, the Moravian leader and musical composer, Christian Ignatius Latrobe. Yet unlike his brother, the primary sources do not support the claim that Benjamin performed publicly. However, from the
extant songbooks bearing Latrobe’s signature, it is more likely that he mostly played within his residence. If the compositions contained lyrics, they are transcribed mostly in English, but some are in French and Italian. The songbook demonstrates that some of this music was written for Latrobe’s daughter Juliana. “Her father” (MS 1981.4, vol. 1) addresses one of the pieces to Juliana Latrobe and a different exercise is entitled "for Juliana No. I" (MS 1981.4, vol. 1). The musical legacy of Juliana is unknown. It is possible she also demonstrated a degree of musical ability or at minimum an appreciation of the art since her father honored her name in musical form.

The ubiquity of musical libraries did not decree the privatization of music nor did it seem these libraries only served the gentry. In contrast musical libraries made connections across class designations. Molnar and Stoutamire unearthed an advertisement from *The Virginia Gazette, and American Advertiser* “requesting all lovers of music in Virginia and elsewhere to participate in regular instrumental concerts by the Harmonic Society in Fredericksburg, and to permit the use of their music libraries” (Molnar 84: Stoutamire 81: *The Virginia Gazette, and American Advertiser*, January 10, 1784). This advertisement is devoid of any typical signifiers of social exclusivity such as charging a high usage fee. Rather attendance at the Harmonic Society’s concerts cost “one dollar each and the music of the evening always [consisted] of three acts, which affords a grand entertainment of four hours performed by the Harmonic Society” (Molnar 84: Stoutamire 81: *The Virginia Gazette, and American Advertiser*, January 10, 1784). Musicians of the Harmonic Society and audiences were “all lovers of music, vocal and instrumental (Molnar 84: Stoutamire 81: *The Virginia Gazette, and American Advertiser*, January 10, 1784). Molnar suggests that the Harmonic Society cultivated music as a connective force between individuals while the library facilitated the commonality of public concerts. Despite the
accessibility of the music, the Harmonic Society reaffirmed itself as a cultural space that appealed to the tastes of the gentry. Molnar proposes the Harmonic Society earnestly required the attendance of all gentlemen in the country who were performers on instruments. In support of this suggestion, the advertisement does specify the concerts were “peculiarly intended for benevolent purposes” (Molnar 84: Stoutamire 81: The Virginia Gazette, and American Advertiser, January 10, 1784). Here the term benevolent directly reflected the Harmonic Society’s intent on representing itself as a musical entity supporting a type of patronage system. In doing so the Harmonic Society could ensure the gentry that their public musical concerts adhered to the generous ideal. This also prevented the misidentification of the amateur musicians as tradesman because they were bestowing rather than accruing money. The advertisements for the Harmonic Society in Fredericksburg demonstrated the cultivation of an organized musical edifice in Virginia. This served as a direct contrast to the criticism framing Virginia as puerile in comparison to Charleston or Philadelphia.

Virginia fostered a vibrant concert life that included many prominent women performers. Although this chapter focuses on Ann Neill, the Balgraves, and mother and daughter D’Hemard, there are examples of women who left no biographical history behind other than the listing for their concerts or their roles in creative trades. For example, in the October 7th, 1796 edition of the Norfolk Herald, Mr. Decker and Mr. Graupner announced a benefit concert. This concert featured “A Favorite Song by Mrs. Graupner [and] What is Love? a favorite Duet” (Norfolk Herald, October 7th, 1796). Yet this is the only existing reference contextualizing Mrs. Graupner’s musical history. The biographical data from the Rockefeller Library also lists a Mrs. Newman and Hester Miller as concert/dancing teachers who resided in Williamsburg in 1752. Likewise the data also registers a Katherine Wills (or possibly Willis) who listed her occupation
as a music mistress. The evidence demonstrating their creative trades is the term “mistress” that
connoted these women as proficient and specialized. Throughout the eighteenth century this type
of specialization also affirmed their position as tradeswomen or individuals who utilized their
creative craft to insure an income. Unfortunately, this is the extent of the available information.

Much as her history, Ann Neill’s engagement in public concert life is also vague. However there are a few instances that suggest she participated in public performance. In the
papers of Ebenezer Hazard, Surveyor-General for the Post Office, he recalled the musical
entertainment during his visit in the summer of 1777. He wrote in his diary that he attended a
benefit concert and ball for Peter Pelham held at the Capitol. He specified that the “Music
excellent. A Mr. Balgrave (a clergyman), his lady, & a Mrs. Neal performed the vocal parts”
(Hazard 1777). Despite the misspelling, the Mrs. Neal referred to by Hazard is likely Ann Neill.
The date of his record aligns with her residence in Williamsburg and her ability to teach vocal
lessons suggests she could also perform. Hazard continued his observation, to specify that “they
sang well, especially Mr Balgrave. His Lady played excellently on the Harpsichord” (Hazard
1777). It is possible that Ann Neill’s absence from Hazard’s second observation is not a
reflection on her musical inability nor her gender but rather her social position. As a woman
seeking opportunities for income, even after several failed attempts, Ann Neill was not as
socially influential as the Balgraves. The social role of the Reverend firmly repositioned the
Balgraves in the upper echelons of colonial Williamsburg’s society. Ann Neill arguably was too
insignificant either economically or socially to deserve a more prominent reference.

Mrs. Balgrave, or as stated in Hazard’s record “Reverend Balgrave’s lady,” was
Elizabeth Balgrave (née Pelham). She was the daughter of the renowned Peter Pelham, who the
evening’s concert benefited. Records place Elizabeth Pelham’s birth during the year 1765 in
Williamsburg, since the year overlaps with Pelham’s residence in the city. Little is known about Elizabeth’s childhood and young adult life. However as an adult Elizabeth was both an accomplished organist and harpsichordist supporting Molnar’s claim that she was probably “trained by her father” (Molnar 76). In 1802, Elizabeth succeeded her father for a two year period as the organist of the Bruton Church. Sometime between 1804-1805, Elizabeth moved with her father to Richmond, where he died. This information is established in a May 30th 1804 letter from Benjamin Crowninshield in which he wrote, “the old organist, Mr. Pelham, has removed to Richmond. He has been from here about two years – His daughter took his place, and was the last public performer. She left this town to accompany her father about a year ago…” (William and Mary Quarterly Historical Papers 265) Inventory and estate records do not indicate whether she also took over his salary. However recalling Kerner’s argument regarding the labor conditions of husbands and wives, it was also common to witness fathers and daughters working together. It is without question Elizabeth learned and worked alongside her father and eventually pursued a similar musical trade. Her erasure from the historical records is not a matter of absence but rather her visibility. The exclusion of Elizabeth’s salary history from the records undermines her visibility while centralizing her father as the professional focus. By recasting the lens on her father and his work, and by default subsuming Elizabeth Pelham, this reaffirmed the ideologies concretizing patriarchal paradigms while supporting the longstanding social negotiation.

Elizabeth also maintained an autonomous musical lifestyle. One example is derived from a letter from a Miss P. Davenport, Williamsburg to Miss Elizabeth Pelham dated May 31 1791. Here the letter stated that “…This Morning Miss Cary sent me [Davenport] a bunch of quills for my Spinnet, and I was charm’d with the little present…” (William and Mary Quarterly
Historical Papers 268). This brief quote demonstrates that Elizabeth herself was involved in musical culture and kept acquaintances with other musical women. This is further supported by the partnership with the musical Ann Neill. Furthermore, Elizabeth’s marriage to Reverend Benjamin Balgrave, who “had the reputation of being a fine singer” (Molnar 76) maintained Elizabeth’s position in Virginia’s musical culture.

Returning to Hazard’s record, Pelham’s benefit concert was an attempt to secure some type of financial stability. Since his arrival in Williamsburg, Pelham fixed income infrequently reimbursed his expenses. In the Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia: 1752-1758 Pelham’s petition stated that he was “dependent upon ‘voluntary’ subscriptions from the inhabitants, and that his salary was insufficient ‘recompense for his said service’” (Kennedy 452). This benefit concert served as a type of “voluntary subscription.” The Williamsburg inhabitants’ intentional charity was a method to ensure Pelham’s residency in the city. As a result the public assistance convinced Pelham that his music and presence was appreciated despite the inferior wages. A benefit concert placed value on his cultural contribution to Williamsburg. By doing so, this benefit concert and Ann Neill’s and Elizabeth Balgrave’s performances served as a direct agent that shaped the culture and civility of Williamsburg.

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138 The life and works of Peter Pelham are arguably one of the longest lasting musical histories of the Colonial era. At the age of eleven he studied under Neuremberg organist and composer Charles Theodore Pachabel, who “had the complete equipment of the thoroughly trained professional musician of his time” (Molnar 77). Between 1743-1752, Pelham moved from Charleston to Boston then finally settling in Williamsburg, Virginia where aided the installation of the organ at the Bruton Parish Church. Soon there after he was appointed the primary organist, a paid position. As many other musicians during the eighteenth century, a church organists salary was not enough income to secure a stable lifestyle. Pelham frequently gave lessons, performed concerts, built and repaired instruments, and even during “the Revolution, he was named Keeper of the Public Gaol, a job which also entailed the supervision of British prisoners of war” (Molnar 78). As is, the research and records on Peter Pelham are expansive. However, less research has been conducted on his daughter Elizabeth, who, from the extant records also was a talented musician.
Yet benefit concerts were not defined by gender, and the recipient of the evening was not always a male denizen. Women were also recipients of benefit concerts, and much as Pelham, the reasons for assistance are difficult to determine. In Williamsburg during April 17, 1752, *The Virginia Gazette* announced a benefit concert for Mrs. Beecely who was the "female singer and soubrette of the (Murray-Kean acting) troupe" (Hunter, *The Virginia Gazette*: April 17, 1752: Rankin 62). The bill for Mrs. Beecely's night included *The Constant Couple: Or A Trip to Jubilee*; a dance, *The Drunken Peasant* and a farce, and *The Lying Valet* (Hunter, *The Virginia Gazette*: April 17, 1752: Rankin 62). Thomas Kean took his turn as Sir Harry Wildair in *The Constant Couple* and Walter Murray played Colonel Standard while Mrs. Beecely was Angelica. Since her position was mostly as a stock character, it is likely that Mrs. Beecely joined the acting troupe due to her singing abilities rather than acting talent. The benefit for Mrs. Beecely was the only concert of its kind in Williamsburg at that time. Rankin noticed this as well and contends that she had an "agreement with the managers which guaranteed her a well-advertised benefit..." (Rankin 62). ¹³⁹ Considering her position as a stock character, it is likely that Mrs. Beecely demanded a benefit show in order to reap both affective and financial acclaim. A benefit in her name facilitated the cultivation of her own unique creative space that at once positioned her in the public eye and provided her with an audience.

The connection between women, charities, and philanthropic activities were commonplace in late eighteenth century while this correlation continued throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Benefits and charities developed into gendered pursuits, commonly organized by women and deemed a female cause. In their quest for fulfillment, women often created their own activities outside the home; philanthropic endeavors became a

¹³⁹ Rankin does not elucidate whether the acting-troupe were the actual beneficiaries from the concert.
central activity. Benefits were coordinated by volunteer organizations that intended to aid the needy in their communities and provided a variety of social services. Yet benefit concerts and philanthropic pursuit in general are often under researched. In *Herstory: A Woman's View of American History* (1974), June Sochen asks, “Why has women’s work in charitable and social organizations never received the attention it deserves in history books?” (Sochen 12). Reflecting Sochen’s claim, the secondary sources infrequently documented the benefit concerts or philanthropic endeavors as a social and cultural component. Nonetheless benefit concerts verified empathic outward display as a viable and direct influence on the public culture. In this particular case, benefit concerts that featured female performers served as a direct marker of social influence.

The archived *The Columbian Mirror* and *The Alexandria Gazette* demonstrate that benefit concerts were also ubiquitously given throughout Virginia. One concert was advertised for April 30th 1793 “for the benefit of an unfortunate emigrant” (*The Columbian Mirror* and *The Alexandria Gazette* April 30 1793). Here the role of the female musician is also made clear in the advertisement: “the addition of a Thorough Bass upon the harpsichord, which will be performed by a lady” (*The Columbian Mirror* and *The Alexandria Gazette* April 30 1793). This is the first public concert presented by ‘a lady,’ specifically addressing a woman of high social class. Especially for women of the gentry, a devotion to charities was commonplace since it demonstrated the feminine tradition of benevolence. Here the benefit concert acted as an extension of charitable pursuits thereby again negotiating a woman’s public performance. Genteel women who permeated the public culture with musical performance did so within a socially acceptable pastime of philanthropy. Benefit concerts provided an interesting and multi-dimensional examination of the role of women in colonial America but also their roles in shaping
public opinion. Woman’s philanthropic pursuits extensively shaped civil, economic and social society in addition to affecting the individual.

Ann Neill’s and Mrs. Balgrave’s participation in benefit concerts demonstrated their contributions to a democratic society. Essentially their benefit concert was used as a method to incite a type of social change analogous to the transformations promised by holding political office and voting privileges. Yet the overarching difference acknowledges that benefit concerts typically aided an individual while political reform impacted society at large. Regardless, both methods incited change and presented discursive possibilities. Their concert was demonstrative of a service that provided temporary relief while their support of Pelham also challenged the House of Burgesses denial of his petition. By aligning themselves with Pelham, Ann Neill and the Balgraves identified a social and economic problem that a benefit concert could alleviate. Through their concerts, the Balgraves and Ann Neill verified a pervasive commitment to social change while centralizing the welfare of the individual citizen. Their performances in benefit concerts also painted the rich kaleidoscopic ways in which women engaged in shaping while also participating in society. Benefit concerts validated a new perspective on how to envision the early America, one that is multi-faceted and shaped by all citizens.

Benefit concerts affirm the negotiation informing a woman’s public position was mediated by dominant gender norms and expectations. On one hand, a woman’s public benefit

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140 When considering the history of philanthropy in the article “Women reformers and American culture, 1870-1930” (1971-1972), Jill Conway suggests that an examination of charitable pursuits shapes a “true vision of a democratic society” (Conway 171). Conway focuses her article on the era between the Civil War and early twentieth century thus falls out of range for this dissertation. However, in a similar manner, Conway also suggests that philanthropy was a component of establishing a larger democratic system and intervening in accepted channels of injustice.
concert put her in contact with political, religious, or economic practices. As the Women’s Philanthropy Institute at the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University suggests, “despite the confining role that society imposed on women during the formative years of this country, women carved out a distinct place as capable fundraisers, staunch advocates, fearless leaders” (WPI 1). Benefit concerts demonstrated a means to exercise power through the channels of creative benevolence and musical social change. It is important to not dismiss this type of change as ineffective or even passive. Many philanthropic initiatives provided temporary relief but did not directly challenge dominant culture. In this manner, critics of philanthropic efforts, such as Chuck Collins’ and Pam Rogers’ in their text *Robin Hood was Right*, (2000) argues charities “often fail to achieve lasting solutions… [charities focus] on immediate symptoms rather than on root causes” (Collins and Rogers 32). In Collins’ and Rogers’ terms, social inequality was the root cause that went unchallenged by the temporary relief incited by benefit concerts.

The avenues in which women contributed to the public sphere were also limited. Ultimately their contribution was still informed by dominant gender norms. This was not lost on Ann Neill or Mrs. Balgrave who occupied public spaces yet did so within the confines of a socially acceptable woman. For example the women performed with the assistance of a male while the Balgrave’s reaffirmed an emphasis on marriageability and heterosexual coupling. Moreover, their benefit concerts were located within dominant gender discourses. Philanthropy was a pursuit that reinforced the ascriptions of the feminine ideal: caring, empathic, and nurturing. By extension the benefit concert became an allegory for mothering and the public display of nurturing and caring shaped by economic donations. Women’s public position was rendered undisruptive as long as their position aligned with the image of the mother figure or
reaffirmed the parable of the wife. By doing so they never threatened or subverted dominant ideology.

However, this is not meant as a dismissal of their importance or power. These creative tradeswomen still entered the public sphere and affected the lives of individuals, public opinion, and the workings of civil society. It is imperative to then reconsider the impact of social change not as an immediate and rapid effect but rather as a slow process centralized within the dominant paradigm. Elizabeth Balgrave and Ann Neill did not drastically and instantaneously deconstruct the hegemonic and dominant normative ideals that shaped their society and identity. In contrast, they accomplished a small step toward equity that demonstrated their ability to participate while influencing political and civil society. Women in the early republic could not vote or hold office, were excluded from most public institutions, and were not allowed to fill leadership positions in religious organizations. Yet, in the pre and post-Revolutionary eras, women began to carve a place for those who had “peculiar claims on the public’s beneficence” (Lerner 192).

London’s public concerts were also topics of conversation in early Virginia. From the October 14, 1773 Virginia Gazette, the summaries of London’s cultural life specified that “Mrs. Sheridan has been offered 1500L to sing next WINTER at Pantheon” (Purdie and Dixon, The Virginia Gazette, October 14, 1773). Mrs. Elizabeth Sheridan (née Miss Linley) was a popular and well-respected singer and performer in London. It was written that her singing of “the Oratorios at Drury-lane Theatre; and the science, taste, but above all the enthusiastic feeling which she displayed in the execution of the airs assigned to her, are still remembered by many with delight” (Ladies Monthly, September 1816, p. 121-124: accessed online March 23, 2013). Once she married Mr. Sheridan, her public performances ended despite lucrative offers. As her biography states, “the temptation of so large a sum as two thousand pounds, which might have
been gained in a few weeks, was not merely declined, but rejected with indignation, notwithstanding the earnest entreaties of his wife” (*Ladies Monthly* September 1816, p. 121-124: accessed online March 23, 2013). Mr. Sheridan did not accept the profitable opportunity despite Mrs. Sheridan’s pleas. There is no way of telling if the inhibitions placed on Mrs. Sheridan in her private life framed the lenses of her audiences or the readers of *The Virginia Gazette*. However, it is significant that her name and salary were printed.

The printing of Mrs. Sheridan’s financial offer served as an example to other women that the ability to perform and ultimately secure an income from musical activity was a possibility. The amount Mrs. Sheridan was offered positioned her in a class well above the trade class. As specified in the *Ladies Monthly*, to achieve this amount of earning required several weeks of labor. Despite Mrs. Sheridan’s inability to continue her musical career, the fact that the colonial newspaper printed reports of her performances and earning demonstrated Mrs. Sheridan’s creative influence. Although Mrs. Sheridan never sang or performed in the colonies, the fact that the newspapers printed her name and history validated her contribution to creative culture. Ultimately, this is readable as a type of social power. Yet the compliance to her husband’s demand, despite the potential for her creative and financial fulfillment, relocated her in a secondary position. This theme is also evident in the histories of the D’Hemards.

On November 4th, 1797, an advertisement read that a young Miss Marianne D’Hemard “only five years old, 8 months from Paris” performed a concert at Mrs. Gatewood’s Concert Room (*Virginia Herald* November 4, 1797). On tour throughout the colonies, Marianne was heralded as a gifted musician. She exhibited her talent “in the Battle of Prague – Nicolai’s Favorite Sonata opera 3d – Several pieces by Pleyel – Overture de Iphigenie, par Mr. Edelman, with a number of other pieces which have been the play things of the last six months of her life”
Marianne’s talent and the response to her performances develop two important points worth consideration. First, the fact that she traveled from Paris to perform in the early republic is significant. Sonneck elucidates this point further when he mentions that she was “just on a visit to this place from a triumphal tournee to Philadelphia, Baltimore, Alexandria and Richmond she showed precocious talents” (Sonneck 59). She was a prime example of a young female musician who obviously mastered the instrument and was ready to publicly showcase her talent abroad. 141 Marianne’s tour positioned her as more than a staid housebound girl because her travels permeated the public cultural sphere across two continents and several American regions. Much as Ann Neill and Mrs. Balgrave revealed the early American woman as more complicated than undemanding occupants of private space, Marianne’s history also requires a refiguring of a girl’s ability to use music as a trade.

The second important consideration is an examination of Marianne’s repertoire. The skill and aptitude required to play Pleyel, sonatas, and the Overture de Iphigenie demonstrated that women and girls had the talent and capacity to perform intricate pieces. The pieces Marianne played require an attention to music theory and the cultivation of ability based on intensive instruction. Considering she was 5 years old at the time of her tour reflected her extraordinary skill. To refer to her repertoire as “play things” that capriciously took a mere six months to master, further illuminated her virtuosity. Marianne served as a stalwart example of a female, and in this case a child, whose skill and talent were developed and cultivated to surpass the

141 Sonneck suggests that young children, such as Marianne toured as a means of economically supplementing their parents’ income. Along these lines, children playing benefits concerts in order to support an infirmed parent was also commonplace. However, this is to not to say that Marianne was exploited. When chronicling the history of music in Philadelphia, Sonneck demonstrates that Mrs. D’Hemard was touring with a different daughter in 1797. In the same nature as Marianne, this daughter also performed at a young age. The records do not indicate Marianne’s presence nor suggest the family toured in Virginia.
delicacy that piano tutelage supposedly represented. As Sonneck quotes, “Little Marianne [gave] a Concert which excited the admiration of her bearers, so much so that she was looked upon as a phenomenon” (Sonneck 54). The use of the adjective phenomenon further develops the era’s response to creative tradeswomen while also harkening to the adjectives describing Nancy Hallam.

To suggest that Marianne was a phenomenon puts into question the magnitude of her ability. The phenomenon label connotes the peculiarity of women, especially girls, who demonstrated such expansive skill. She was framed as an exception, an aberration. Rather than commending her on her discipline and talent, the term phenomenon rendered her skill debatable. It is impossible to discern if this phrasing is a response to her gender, age, or musical ability. However her performance was framed as more of a spectacle than a commonplace occurrence.

This argument is expandable to reflect the D’Hemard’s social and class positioning. The honorific Mrs., as demonstrated by Marianne’s mother, denoted their position as middling or trade women. Possibly this tour of America was an attempt to incur an income from her daughter’s specular performances. It was likely that Mrs. D’Hemard was her daughter’s primary teacher. This reaffirmed the expectation that the mother and wife was at the center of teaching her children the proper moral, civic, and educational duties. Mrs. D’Hemard took this one step further and clearly developed her daughter’s creative abilities as well. The D’Hemard’s musical accomplishments might have been radical but the fact that she reared a daughter repositioned her comfortably within the gender expectation that above all, women were mothers. Since Marianne traveled and performed with her mother, this served as a visual reminder reaffirming their position within the patriarchal system.
Mrs. D’Hemard (first name unknown) was also a creative tradeswomen who frequently played the harp alongside her daughter or performed her own solo concerts. On June 27th 1795, in Mr. Albert’s Long Room, Mrs. D’Hemard entertained an Alexandrian audience on the pedal harp. She played sonatas, concertos, favorite airs with variations and songs accompanied by the harp. Prior to the concert, Elisha C. Dick, a prominent commentator on musical culture in Virginia, wrote this testimonial in the *Columbian Mirror and The Alexandria Gazette* on behalf of Mrs. D’Hemard’s musical ability:

> I have heard Mrs. D’Hemard perform upon the harp, and resuming my testimony may, in some degree contribute to promote the object of this lady, on the present occasion; I can venture to predict that the expectations of those who shall attend her performance will not be disappointed. – Mrs. D’Hemard’s judgment, taste and execution upon the pedal harp are not, in my opinion, to be surpassed by any one” (*Columbian Mirror and The Alexandria Gazette* June 23, 1795).

From the timeline, it is clear that Dick was not responding to the performance in the Long Room. Rather he must have witnessed this concert on an earlier date. Mrs. D’Hemard repeated this concert on July 7th thereby supporting the claim that this was her standard repertoire (Sonneck 61). Opposed to the response to her daughter, Mrs. D’Hemard’s testimonial acknowledged the caliber of her performance and heralded her technical aptitude. This placed value on Mrs. D’Hemard’s skill. Dick’s response served as a counterexample to Tick’s articulation of the popular conception that women should not value themselves too highly. Here Tick’s contention must be expanded to reflect class. It was undesirable for gentry women to value their musical skills. In opposition, creative tradeswomen, such as Mrs. D’Hemard were often praised for their abilities. Moreover, creative tradeswomen worked to develop skills because their livelihoods depended on quality. Tradeswomen used concerts to position themselves as practiced and formidable performers. The public lauding of Mrs. D’Hemard’s performance in addition to the publicity of her concert aligned her with these social norms. As a man, Dick is the one who
publicly promoted Mrs. D’Hemard. This directly reflects Byrd’s sponsorship of Barbara DeGraffenreit’s public character. Much as Byrd published his support of Barbara DeGraffenreit, Dick’s printed his review in a newspaper thereby mediating the public position of Mrs. D’Hemard. Despite her stellar performance or the fact that she was a transnational touring musician she was nonetheless subsumed. This also reflected the reduction of her daughter to a phenom.

To understand both the D’Hemard’s as exceptional directly resulted from the fact that organized learning for women was a pale reflection of men’s education. For the D’Hemard’s to perform complicated and technically intricate concerts meant that they received a specialized training that was commonly unavailable for women. Women as experts reinforced the notion that those exceptional women were either paradoxes, wonders of nature, or deliberate creations utilized to stimulate male delight. Dick’s review reinforced their position as objects offered to his male readers. For instance, in *Separated by Their Sex: Women in Public and Private in the Colonial Atlantic World* (2011) Mary Beth Norton suggests “the editors of colonial American newspapers aimed their works at a largely male audience…they acknowledge that women also sometimes perused the papers” (Norton 150). This was a practice continued through the early republic. Dick’s writing and reflection of their music located him in a position of power. Through his narrative, Dick became the creator of the D’Hemard’s musical form, talent, and identities. This is comparable to Pygmalion, the artist who sculpted the ideal woman from a block of marble. Dick’s authorship, in contrast to the D’Hemard’s printed silence, reinforced the patriarchal voice. In doing so the D’Hemards retained all manner of womanly graces and modesty by occupying a subservient position rather than fully engaging their public position.
It is critical when conducting a feminist historiography to consider who wrote these primary sources and whose voice is shaping the historical figure. In the majority of cases, the authors of these documents are men “speaking as individuals or as representatives of social institutions” (Berkin 4). The findings on creative tradeswomen serve as a small step in reinserting women’s histories that dismantle dominant discourses and privileged subject positions. Due to concession of history as the chronicle of men, these discourses can threaten to efface larger social and political issues or completely misrepresent the local issues and identities of creative tradeswomen. As Berkin contends, “in such a world, free white men, usually of the elite, articulated the ideologies, encoded the norms and regulations” (Berkin 4). To accept a straightforward reading of history without interrogating the narrator or examining the marginalized reaffirms dominant discourses. These discourses, in the face of a history of patriarchal control or simply due to a lack of awareness, convey a linear production of knowledge that reflects only dominant ideals, problems, and resolutions.

The D’Hemard’s skill was truncated within a paradox that suggested they were capable of transcending dominant gender norms, however incapable of expressing their own voice. The male pen served as the substitute for their expression of self-definition. This realigned Mrs. D’Hemard with the social negotiation that permitted the transgression from social norm as long as it is with the guidance from a male counterpart. This runs in parallel with Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick who traveled and performed with Mr. Pick. In both cases, the men operated as an allegorical mask that presented the acceptable face of gender ideology. Without the articulation of her own voice, Mrs. D’Hemard was resituated as an object controlled by her male audience. Mrs. D’Hemard’s personhood was controlled and constructed by androcentric discourses thereby putting her creative agency under erasure. This is an important contrast to Mrs. Sully who
promoted and positioned herself as the catalyst of musical culture in Richmond. A consideration of gender hierarchy becomes essential in recounting these women’s performances.

The theory that provides the foundation for this analysis comes from cultural anthropology, with its focus on methods to identify negotiations among groups in hierarchies. The focus on individual agency within hierarchal structures proves useful in the analysis of women’s power in early Virginia. In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (1990), anthropologist James C. Scott points out that there can be hidden transcripts of resistance even within a framework of domination and that “subordinates, for their part, ordinarily have good reasons to help sustain those appearances or at least, not openly to contradict them” (Scott 7). This reflects the suggestion that Mary Stagg, the Hallams, and Ann Neill worked within, rather than in opposition to the circles of patriarchy because it facilitated their abilities to become productive tradeswomen. Similarly the D’Hemards’ performances and acclaim transgressed dominant gender norm. However, Mrs. D’Hemard in particular only achieved public acclaim with the assistance of the male reviewer. To use Scott’s term, Dick’s public affirmation aided the D’Hemards in maintaining “appearances.” Dick at once reaffirmed his power while limiting the D’Hemard’s abilities to contradict public discourses. Since Mrs. D’Hemard did not use her own voice to reflect her performance, this resituated her as an object controlled by her male audience. Echoing the work of Scott, Norton, and Berkin, researchers must not only question the experience but also how social factors, power positions, and cultural economies alter knowledge and a person’s ability to speak. The history of gender and music in early Virginia is a history of power, subversion, and affirmation.

Mrs. D’Hemard’s silence echoes Linda Alcoff’s classic question in feminist theory and women’s studies. In “The Problem of Speaking for Others” (1991-1992), Alcoff asks “who is
speaking, who is spoken of, and who listens?” (Alcoff 12) When utilizing feminist methods, researchers must ask specifically whose politics, viewpoints, and locations are we considering?

Dick’s writing, as an eighteenth century source and extant record, illustrated Mrs. D’Hemard’s identity, skill, and public position based on his standpoint. To fully develop epistemology production, historiographical research methodologies must include diverse perspectives as a means to challenge singular epistemological communities as well as locate voices that can refigure complex social, cultural, and historical systems.

Mrs. D’Hemard’s silence serves as a tool to critically question historical epistemologies. In connection to Elizabeth Balgrave’s or Ann Neill’s performance, these women’s public creative positions restored the value of women’s experience (McCann and Kim 334). Dick’s review constructed gender normative epistemologies that only represented the benefit of the privileged gender while masquerading this welfare as coinciding with universal histories. The voicing of this dominant position prescribed specific cultural, economic, and social traditions that construct social value affirming the male position. In consideration of the history of the development of power structures within the early republic, epistemic privilege becomes a central problem. However, this can be considered another foundational assumption that distinguished these musical tradeswomen and the importance in uncovering their work and musical contributions. The reflection of this issue, of power relations and of subject locations, enables feminist culture studies to continually challenge dominant forms of knowledge and embrace historical innovation. Juxtaposing Mrs. D’Hemard’s gendered mediation against Mrs. Sheridan’s agency serves as a lesson in scholarly contrast as both histories challenged conventional research systems while integrating a woman’s voice into the historical record.
The role of the creative tradeswomen in Virginian public concerts was indeed one of negotiation. As demonstrated by Mrs. Sheridan, Elizabeth Balgrave, Ann Neill, and mother and daughter D’Hemard, women musicians not only performed but also were key contributors to public musical, political, and social culture. Their musical histories distorted the conventional paradigms while engendering epistemologies that are unique to the individuals who created them. In order to scrutinize subjectivity and radically alter accepted forms of history, it is imperative that these female musicians make their social, economic, and cultural experiences, visible without trivialization.

Refiguring the concert history of Virginia reveals the barriers and avenues in which women defined creative agency and constructed their own identity. However in doing, women often embodied the social negotiation that prevented their agency from causing any discursive shifts. Yet an examination of creative tradeswomen demonstrates their talent in addition to their intellectual and creative capability drove them to perform. Regardless of gendered mediation, these women used their creative abilities to support their lives but also improve the existences of their fellow citizens.
CHAPTER VIII: PLAYING FOR THEIR SHARE: THE LIVES OF ITINERATE FEMALE MUSICIANS

Mrs. Sully’s and Mrs. Pick’s histories are associated with musical concerts across the early republic. For instance, Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick formed a traveling team and performed frequently as ensembles. Their music ranged from renditions of Pleyel’s or Clementi’s Sonatas, popular airs, and hymns. The women performed on both the piano and harpsichord and frequently sang yet the records never specify if they ever composed or played their own music. Despite the surviving records anchoring their performance history, very little remaining evidence shapes their identities. This chapter asks who were these women? What were their histories? How did they learn music? What was their relationship to music? Although important questions to raise when considering the larger role of creative tradeswomen in eighteenth century Virginia, the concrete answers are more difficult to resolve.

Researchers can make several assumptions regarding the identities of Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick: they were likely white and not landowners. We can safely assume their racial identities because of the privilege they utilized. They exercised a freedom to tour and perform that was located outside of the confines of servitude. They had access to public resources such as newspapers, theaters, and performance spaces that were highly segregated. Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick gave solo performances or were members of an ensemble organized of their own initiatives. In contrast it was uncommon for slaves or indentured women to perform outside of their

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142 Throughout the extant records, these women are never referred to by their first name. Throughout the dissertation, I include first names of female musicians when they are made available, otherwise I simply refer to the musicians by their honorific and surname.
143 This claim is validated from the newspaper sources utilized throughout the chapter. Accordingly, scholars such as Oscar Sonneck, George O. Seilhamer and Albert Stoutamire initially unearthed some these resources for their histories of music in the colonial era. See the historiography for a complete discussion of their work in relation to this dissertation.
overseer’s jurisdiction. Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick demonstrated the adoption of a trade based on choice rather than by force. This is inexplicitly entwined with race and the privilege attributed to the white citizens of the early republic.

Due to their touring schedule and association with the theater, it is likely Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick were not landowners since their travels separated them from the responsibilities of a plantation or farm settlement. The records insinuate that music was their primary form of trade. Thereby these women were iterant tradeswomen rather than landowners. It is also plausible they were not part of the gentry since their position in a trade would compromise their legacy of wealth and financial reputation. Whereas it was common for women of the gentry to learn music and perform concerts, these performances were not tools for accruing wages. The audiences for these concerts were usually family members, acquaintances, or houseguests and a fee was never charged. Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick regularly charged an admission fee to their performances.

Based on their honorifics and Mrs. Pick’s association with her husband, we can deduce that Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick performed music after their marriages and throughout adulthood. Recalling Rowe’s clarification and Ann Neill’s history, girls from the middling and trade classes were frequently taught the skills necessary to continue the family business. Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick probably learned their music as an extension of their family’s musical trade and adopted the craft as their own vocations. This establishes that they approached music as more than a simple ethereal pastime that would enable the attraction of a husband.\textsuperscript{144} It is possible that their musical cultivation might have begun as a way to achieve feminine accomplishments but they furthered

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{144} Building from Richard Mulcaster’s \textit{Positions} (1581) and Richard Burton’s \textit{The Anatomy of Melancholy} (1640), Richard Leppert supports Bushman’s claim by adding that women studied music “to delight their parents or to help themselves acquire a husband” (Leppert 43–44). Despite Leppert’s use of sixteenth and seventeenth century texts, the commonality of musical abandonment is a frequently identified as a component of female musical practice and education in the eighteenth century.}
their study and trade passed banality. Rather Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick used music not as a method of adhering to dominant gender ideology but as a tool to progress their own trades. In doing so, these women positioned themselves as trade performers and contributors to Virginia’s musical culture.

The biographical and performance data on Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick is also scarce. To paint their histories required the piecing of biographies from various sources including newspaper advertisements where the musician self-identified herself, estate inventories, court records, or fleeting references found in letters or other forms of correspondences. Considering the marginality of musical women from the historical record, more information was collected from the pervasive biographies of male relatives and acquaintances. For example, Mr. Pick’s career was the avenue for discovering the music of Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick. The extant historical records focused on his career and musical abilities thereby repositioning the female musicians as supportive rather than centralized. As a result it is important to be aware of an inherent gender bias found in the extant sources.

It is discernable that Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick gained familiarity with performance due to their stints with musical theater. Records indicate that both women performed with the West Theater in Petersburg, Virginia but also gave a “grand concert at the old Masons’ Hall in Blandford” (Wyatt 91). Wyatt determines that both Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick were affiliated with the theater as actresses. As represented by the Hallams, Margaret Cheer, and Sarah Wainwright,

Accordingly, the biographical information on Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick is garnered from concert listings and advertisements indexed by the general details and dates of the concerts. The concert details are rudimentary and fail to fully illuminate any of the performers’ biographical details. Whereas this does not seem uncommon for any musician regardless of gender, it plagues the histories of creative tradeswomen. I problematize newspaper advertisements in the introduction and include considerations of race, geography, affluence and literacy as cultural conditions impacting the accuracy of primary sources.
the ability to sing and play music was a common characteristic of actresses who were called upon to perform musical roles on stage. Seilhamer also acknowledges a Mrs. Pick who was from the south yet performed with the Boston Theater from 1794-1795. He specifies that she sang and acted but does not note if she played a musical instrument on stage. Considering the geographic proximity, the association with the theater, and Mrs. Pick’s singing proclivities, it is likely that Seilhamer’s Mrs. Pick is the same musician of this study. Mrs. Pick’s ability to sing serves as the salient connection. For example, in a 1795 a concert recited in Petersburg, Virginia, Mrs. Pick sang “A Favourite Song 'Whither my Love'” (Hunter and Prentis, Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer, June 25, 1795). This aligns with a review of the play Rosina, where a Mr. Paine wrote that Mrs. Hellyer “poses a pleasing face and to sing well, but Mr. Paine could not think her equal to Mrs. Pick” (Seilhamer 247). Seilhamer does not clarify whether Mr. Paine was comparing Mrs. Hellyer’s and Mrs. Pick’s countenance or their musical ability. However, if the latter is valid then that is another significant correlation to the musician in this study. Mrs. Pick’s singing ability juxtaposed to her ability to play musical instruments and act, demonstrated her creative acumen but also the spectrum of her trade. This capacity to perform multiple functions diversified the ways to incur an income and this was essential to the lives of creative tradeswomen.

Documents indicate that both Mr. and Mrs. Pick played in various types of concerts, ranging from benefits to grand concerts. The 1792 Columbian Centinel informs that Jacobias Pick taught vocal and instrumental music and he “made the science of music his study at the Academy of Bruxelles” (Columbian Centinel, November 21, 1792). This excerpt exemplifies the emphasis placed on Jacobias Pick rather than Mrs. Pick’s history. Yet from newspaper advertisements it is discernable that Mrs. Pick was also a proficient musician who expertly
played multiple instruments such as the armonica (*The City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*. March 26, 1795).

The lack of documents reforming Mrs. Pick’s history is not surprising. Lerner describes this common problem when she writes: “the denial to women of their history has reinforced their acceptance of the ideology of patriarchy and has undermined the individual woman’s sense of self-worth. Men’s version of history, legitimized as the ‘universal truth,’ has presented women as marginal to civilization and as the victim of the historical process” (Lerner 223). Accordingly, the erasure of Mrs. Pick’s history reaffirms Lerner’s consideration while also supplementing Lerner’s position. The removal of Mrs. Pick’s history forces the reader and scholar to question the records at hand and seek the existence of those who are marginalized or not included at all.

Lerner is specifically concerned with the psychology and consciousness of women. But it is also important to consider other tangible contributions women have made to society, such as music and creative culture. To exclude the music of Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick, for example, reaffirms a woman’s subordinate and inactive role. It is imperative to identify and value their cultural contributions. By doing so, researchers document the progress of women throughout history while also acknowledging the barriers limiting their social mobility and historical legacies.

Gender reification is a necessary consideration when examining creative tradeswomen. The commodification of a woman’s corporeality or any type of skill is a common theme represented in the historical record. In *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1969) Claude Levi-Strauss considers the commodification of women however he exclusively examines a woman’s sexuality and reproductive labor as central pawns in commodity exchange. Lerner furthers Levi-Strauss’ theory when she argues “the ‘exchange of women’ is the first form of trade, in which women are turned into a commodity and are reified, that is, they are thought of
more as things than as humans beings” (Lerner 24). This type of exchange reaffirmed the 
subordination of women despite their public position. In the case of Mrs. Pick it is helpful to 
consider both Levi-Strauss’ and Lerner’s theories in conversation. Sonneck suggests that Mr. 
Pick managed and organized the tour schedule and concert dates, thereby serving as a type of 
impresario. By doing so he also controlled the creative and occupational trajectory of Mrs. Pick. 
She fulfilled her position as a resource acquired by men in order to contribute to an economic 
system. Yet Mr. Pick was not selling Mrs. Pick’s body or sexuality instead he commodified her 
creativity. Mrs. Pick maintained control of her corporeality but relinquished complete creative 
agency to her husband. Reproductive labor was exploited but this is an instance of the reification 
of creative labor. Mrs. Pick was afforded some leverage within a patriarchal system: she toured 
with Mrs. Sully and seemed to continuously perform with Mr. Pick. This does demonstrate a 
modicum of agency. However, to put an absolute emphasis on this creative function is 
ilusionary and her obedience to her husband merely indicated her role as an agent functioning 
under hegemony. She cooperated with patriarchal norms to enact creative agency but ultimately 
placed herself under the control of her husband. Despite her public position, Mrs. Pick did not 
challenge patriarchal control and the basic male dominance within the family structure.

Mrs. Sully also traveled throughout the early republic in order to play her music. There 
are records marking her performances in Maryland and South Carolina. She also played 
concertos and sonatas on a pianoforte at a 1795 Philadelphia concert and during a 1796 Boston 
performance (Seilhamer 146). Either through marriage or birthright, Mrs. Sully was a member of 
a very artistic family. The dates and locations of her performances align with the history of the 
prominent American painter Thomas Sully whose family members sought occupations as actors, 
artists, musicians, and acrobats. Thomas Sully was born in Horncastle, Lincolnshire, England on
June 19, 1783, to the actors Matthew and Sarah Sully. In March 1792, the Sullys and their nine children immigrated to Richmond, Virginia, where Thomas’s uncle managed a theater. The boy attended school in New York City until 1794, when he returned to Virginia due to the death of his mother. By July of that year the family relocated to Charleston, South Carolina. Accordingly, in early 1795, Mrs. Sully’s name begins to appear in association with musical concerts in Charleston.\footnote{We know this because of an advertisement for a benefit concert taken from Charleston’s The City Gazette & Daily Advertiser. In this concert, a Miss Sully and Mr. M. Sully perform in a “Double Allemande and Reel” while Mr. Sully later entertains the audience with “manly feats of activity” (Sonneck 30: The City Gazette & Daily Advertiser March 6, 1794). This leads me to believe that Mr. Sully is indeed Thomas Sully’s father Matthew as the first name initial and stage presence align. While Miss Sully might have been a sister or a step-sister if Matthew Sully did remarry after the death of Sarah.}

In his analysis of early concert history, Sonneck often mentions Mrs. Sully in both his analysis of Virginia and Charleston. When considering the history of Thomas Sully’s mother in connection to Sonneck’s analysis of Charleston’s and Virginia’s music, it is plausible that the Mrs. Sully mentioned in concert listings was not Sully’s birth mother, as she passed away a year prior to the printed debut of Mrs. Sully. This Mrs. Sully might be a wife of one of the Sully sons, or a second wife to Matthew. In terms of the latter, in an advertisement for a concert from the publication Richmond and Manchester Advertiser, Mrs. Sully identifies her first initial as M (Richmond and Manchester Advertiser, September 5, 1795). This supports speculation that she was following the custom of adopting her husband’s first name or initial, Matthew, in formal public settings. This only further concretizes the notion that Mrs. Sully might in fact have been Matthew’s second wife and Thomas Sully’s stepmother.

The connection to the Sully family’s acting history and relationship to the theater is also valuable when trying to determine Mrs. Sully’s background. Sonneck suggests that the majority
of musical concerts held in Virginia during the eighteenth century “were due to the enterprise of the musical members of theatrical companies just then performing at these places” (Sonneck 59). Sonneck does not elaborate on whether this means that concert performers were still active members of acting troupes or that they grew acquainted with the stage and touring habits due to the nature of the theater. However, William’s and Burling’s analysis of Nancy Hallam’s singing suggests that actresses used the days they were not scheduled to perform on the dramatic stage as opportunities to perform musical concerts. Stoutamire supports this claim by contending “her announcement of the forthcoming concert was given in verbose manner characteristic of theatrical advertisements of the day” (Stoutamire 82). It seems likely that the musicians’ connections to the theaters provided the space to hone ones’ craft while also the leniency to perform outside of their theatrical duties. Though the inclusion of music was commonplace during theatrical productions, musicians elected to perform autonomously from their foundational theatrical companies. Mrs. Sully’s musical concerts were, in all probability, an extension of her role in the creative trade.

The Sully family also traveled and performed as independent artists. They frequently presented a variety of entertainments including short plays, gymnastics, music, and comedic farces. While the entirety of Mrs. Sully’s role with the theater is not available, it is probable that she did take part in the theatrical endeavors, production, and management much as Mrs. Hallam and Mary Stagg. Despite the allure of Charleston’s creative opportunities, the Sullys returned to Richmond and acted as contributors in the development of the city’s cultural capital. 147 Mrs.

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147 Sonneck utilizes a concert program from South Carolina’s St. Cecilia Society from 1794. Here he suggests that event was “the important concert” of the year as it was “for the benefit of the distressed inhabitants of St. Domingo now in this city” (Sonneck 29: The City Gazette & Daily Advertiser March 6, 1794). At this concert, Mrs. Sully performs a Sonata Pianoforte, Rondo.
Sully’s musical proclivities append her association to the theatrical Sullys while also contextualizing her proficiency of public performance and the trials of touring.

During the 1790s, Richmond emerged as the main cultural center in Virginia. The Sullys returned to the city in mid-1795 probably because the city offered more opportunities to perform. Mrs. Sully took advantage of Richmond as a cultural milieu and announced “Mrs. M. Sully (with the greatest respect.) Begs leave to inform her numerous patrons in particular, and the public in general, of her CONCERT” (Richmond and Manchester Advertiser, September 5, 1795). As determined from the advertisement, Mrs. Sully in no way reduced her own creative ability but rather used the printed space as a method to sell her art. For example, she specified she “[was] preparing with the utmost assiduity, and will be ready for representation in the course of ONE FORTNIGHT” (Richmond and Manchester Advertiser, September 5, 1795). The inclusion of her preparation process demonstrated Mrs. Sully’s adherence to the custom that dictated only individuals who fully mastered their art, dance, or music would publicly perform. For the eighteenth century musician, performance was the opportunity to demonstrate her masterful ability.

The language she used to describe her musicality was intended to further convince her audience that she achieved musical ascendancy. As she stated, she “flatters herself the subjects dictated by her sound experience, will be considered replete with elegance of taste, added to extraordinary execution; the completion of which, every effort will, on her part, be exerted (Richmond and Manchester Advertiser, September 5, 1795). Her specification of “sound experience” in addition to her “extraordinary execution the completion of which, every effort will, on her part, be exerted” located Mrs. Sully beyond the confines of the demure woman archetype. Instead Mrs. Sully’s advertisements rendered her a masterful and viable public
musician. It was the use of this language and presentation of expertise that certainly drew in an audience who financially insured Mrs. Sully’s source of revenue.

Mrs. Sully specified that she possessed “numerous patrons” which demonstrates her popularity and general favorable regard. The term patron has multiple meanings as both a person who provides affective or financial support. In return, the patron probably received music lessons or private concerts. Another consideration assumes the patron’s benevolence circulated amongst social groups thereby word of mouth bolstered the individual’s generosity and social position. In consideration of affect, the usage of the term patron suggests Mrs. Sully had an audience that was familiar with her body of work. Her intentional separation of “patrons in particular” from “the public in general” validates this assumption because it divided her audience by their familiarity with her repertoire. To address her “numerous patrons” insinuated she might have had something akin to a fan base, or at the very least, audience members who frequently attended her performances. To cultivate a community of individuals familiar with her work provided Mrs. Sully with the affective and public underpinning ensuring a space of incentive and support. Ultimately this also indicates that female performers were not shunned but were publicly encouraged to perform.

Second, the term patron also indicates that Mrs. Sully relied on specific individuals to provide financial support. In this case, Mrs. Sully sought sponsorship that was probably derived from the gentry or other individuals with considerable and expendable financial resources. Mrs. Sully offered her music as commissionable artwork. Ideally following the conventions of the patronage system, Mrs. Sully would then enter into contract with the patron thereby securing wages from her music. The trade of her music for financial sponsorship is the central aspect of the patronage system common throughout the European cultural and musical disciplines.
However, a concrete patronage system based on creative trade was not firmly established in America until the nineteenth century. Yet Mrs. Sully reaped the early seeds for that type of artist and benefactor relationship. Since she publicly acknowledged a type of patronage system in this advertisement, it is likely that at an earlier point Mrs. Sully did receive financial support. She was self-assured in asking for further sponsorship and determined her craft valuable and worthy of financial backing. Accordingly these patrons were wealthy and probably dominated the era’s politics and economics because it was these citizens who could afford cultural diversions. Despite the fact that Mrs. Sully printed her advertisements in a public forum, she was methodically directing her music to a defined group: the ladies and gentlemen of the early republic.

Bushman argues, “gentlemen were persons of superior wealth, perhaps claiming some education, often vested with public responsibilities in the courts, who managed a style of life above the ordinary” (Bushman 248). This becomes imperative when we consider Mrs. Sully’s usage of the phrase. It is clear that she promoted her music towards the gentry thereby suggesting that these musicians sought to fill their audience with individuals who could act as benefactors. This also presents a general comment on the concert’s audience. Mrs. Sully was aware her audiences were comprised of both individuals who could sponsor her work and those who could not. This is clearly supported by the audience division into “patrons” and “general public” or the affluent and the masses. By addressing the ladies and gentlemen and designating these people as

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patrons separated from the general populace, she reinstated and supported a distinct social hierarchy.

It is also important to examine the adjectives Mrs. Sully utilized to promote her music. The fact that she declared her attention to detail and the “extraordinary execution” of her performance demonstrated a high level of confidence and self-actualization. In fact, the advertisement for a solo concert demonstrated Mrs. Sully’s musical acumen and creative agency. This constructs Mrs. Sully as a tradeswoman who was in control of her own ability and visibility. Her self-promotion demonstrated a type of self-authorship, an identity “based solely on their confidence in their own creativity and who empowered themselves as writers and thinkers. Such women recognized that they had talent” (Lerner 167). To expand Lerner’s point, musicality was also a contributing element to a woman’s self-authorization. Mrs. Sully utilized the advertisement to sanction herself while also promoting her craft. By exalting her trade, she demonstrated a type of self-authorship based on her belief in her own musical ability.

In musical settings, Lerner’s notion of self-authorization is problematized by the position of the composer. As it is made clear from Mrs. Sully’s or Mrs. Pick’s repertoires, they never played music they composed. Rather they played the works of other male composers. In the advertisements, Mrs. Sully positioned herself as a self-directed public performer, but she played the work of male composers thereby reestablishing patriarchal structures. This redresses the social negotiation musical women faced. They at once occupied prominent cultural positions but constantly reaffirmed dominant gender ideology. However in the case of Mrs. Sully, this negotiation did not eclipse the value of her work. Rather her self-authorship and method of promotion stabilized her creative agency.

149 See Walter Johnson’s 2003 article “On Agency,” for a complete consideration of the historical subjects relationship with agency and resistance.
To endorse her music, Mrs. Sully employed language and descriptions such as “with elegance of taste, added to extraordinary execution” (*Richmond and Manchester Advertiser*, September 5, 1795). Since she adopted language extenuating her ability, her advertisements are considered promotional in nature. This displayed a type of showmanship were the primary motivation was to attract an audience. By utilizing a promotional technique, Mrs. Sully attracted the attention of potential audiences and consequentially guaranteed her earnings. According to Crawford, the use of advertisements that employed promotional techniques denotes “the public was being sold a chance to see and hear professionals practicing their craft, whether to dramatize real life on stage…divert, or amaze audiences with musical skill” (Crawford 72). Crawford warns that in many cases the events of the evening were sensationalized. Yet this is not to say that Mrs. Sully did not prepare with “utmost assiduity.” Rather she specifically described her talent and discipline as a means to arouse the interest of an intended audience. To do so demonstrated a type of professionalism and awareness of the business model: she sold her craft in order to maximize her profits.

Returning to Mrs. Sully’s concert in Richmond in 1795, one week later, she reprinted a similar advertisement in the *Richmond and Manchester Advertiser* but added one important line. Her performance was the “first formal concert to be held in Richmond” (*Richmond and Manchester Advertiser*, September 13, 1795). This qualifier exalting her formality is essential in deciphering the larger musical and gendered conditions of Richmond in the late eighteenth century. It is plausible that she teased the public with her statement that Richmond lacked a type of formal musical culture until her arrival. She positioned herself as the catalyst of musical change in Virginia and in doing so surpassed the dominant gender norm embodying women as meek and submissive. To outwardly publicize one’s concert while emphasizing it as the first of
its kind exemplifies a type of declarative assurance. This contradicted the accepted gendered
dichotomy “…that included expectations that men ‘had the larger share of reason bestwo’d upon
them’ and women were ‘better prepar’d for…compliance’ (Savile Halifax 26). Gender roles in
the early republic demonstrated that women made political and civic choices thereby were
capable of rational thought. It is necessary to situate Mrs. Sully as a musician and tradeswoman
who defined her identity and self-authorship while productively participating in her trade.

The essentialist understanding of women as meek and compliant limited their
opportunities to express their capabilities in both their histories and the secondary record. As a
result women needed to creatively negotiate requests or public positions. A component of this
negotiation was that women consciously modeled their behavior on the image of the weak and
subordinate woman. Mrs. Sully’s use of specific language is readable as demonstrative of
vulnerability and delicacy. For example, she assumed a type of subordination when she asked her
patrons for “the greatest respect… [and she] Begs leave…” (Richmond and Manchester
Advertiser). However, as these creative women demonstrated, this vulnerability was effectively a
pretense used to adhere to dominant ideology. Their trades and lives required a type of physical
and mental strength. If compliance and weakness were the norm for all women, then the
commonality of women in creative trades would be nonexistent. Tradeswomen did not have the
economic viability to privilege delicacy over trade.

When considering the compliance and fragility of tradeswomen, class status must also be
taken into account. In this advertisement, Mrs. Sully demonstrated the desire to please her
audience. This was a valued trait among the gentry’s relationship with trades people, especially if
a financial transaction occurred. Bushman contends, “In his public persona, the tradesman felt
honored and grateful for the business. The common phrases were ‘grateful acknowledgement’
and ‘return his thanks for all past favors’” (Bushman 250). Mrs. Sully also honored her audience by beginning her advertisement “with the greatest respect” and “flatters herself the subjects approval.” Much as Bushman’s tradesmen, Mrs. Sully positioned herself as subordinate who strived to please. Accordingly, the patron then became a type of stolid figure, who, through their benevolence, changed the lives of the tradeswoman thus reinforcing the obligation to serve and please. To complicate this even further, Mrs. Sully’s adoption of the secondary role also affirmed the accepted gendered position in addition to the dominant class relationship. In both instances this subordination substantiated the accepted depiction of delicacy. By doing so Mrs. Sully affirmed the social hierarchy locating the loftier position of the gentry over the trades people and men over women.

Yet a public advertisement for Mrs. Sully’s solo performance in conjunction to her claim that she was the first concert in Richmond does not align her with submissiveness. By positioning herself as the catalyst for the development of Richmond’s musical culture, she exhibited a type of innovative power. Mrs. Sully’s exclamation surpassed meekness in all forms and radiated a type of buoyancy frequently associated with maleness. Perhaps this is more akin to what Sturtz suggests is part of the gender negotiation that required “women, at least in the upper classes, learned both male and female skills” (Sturtz 10). Tradeswomen were also required to learn both male and female skills. It then becomes necessary to acknowledge Mrs. Sully not as the exception to the norm. Whe was a marker complicating and refiguring female subordination while shaping her own creative identity.

However, who actually performed the first public concert in Richmond is a discussion where scholars disagree. For one, Stoutamire suggests “the first formal public concert in Richmond may have been given by Mrs. Sully, a member of the theater company visiting the
city” (Stoutamire 82). Mrs. Sully’s concert is verified by date and an extant newspaper advertisement authenticates her performance. This is further supported by her supposition that she was the first formal concert in Richmond. Yet Stoutamire complicates this title by contending that Raynor Taylor’s concert, performed only a week prior to Mrs. Sully’s, was actually the first public concert in Richmond. A closer examination of the timeline, performances, and musicians is necessary in order to fully refigure Richmond’s musical culture.

Taking into account the chronology, Raynor Taylor performed the first public concert in Richmond. In clarification Mrs. Sully used the September 5th issue and September 13th issue to advertise her concert on the 19th. Whereas Taylor’s advertisement specified that he performed at the Eagle Tavern “this Present Evening, Being Wednesday the 12th of September” *(Richmond and Manchester Advertiser, September 12th, 1795)*. There is a discernable hint of urgency in his advertisement probably stemming from the short notice he gave his potential audience. The previous issues of *Richmond and Manchester Advertiser* do not show Taylor printed any advertisements prior to this one. It seems likely that Mrs. Sully read the advertisement for Taylor’s concert and her reprint was in response to Taylor’s concert since it reappeared in the newspaper after his performance. It seems plausible that she worried Taylor poached her concert’s audience and consequentially her wages.

The mechanics of these performances are not known. Mrs. Sully could have planned her concert well ahead of time whereas Taylor’s concert was prepared and organized in a shorter time span. Another consideration suggests that Taylor was prepared for the concert however could only afford a singular advertisement. This notion suggests Mrs. Sully was earning a comfortable living since she could afford multiple printings. Finally, Stoutamire’s alludes to the consideration that Mrs. Sully’s popularity in Richmond carried her concert and its reputation to
the premier position (Stoutamire 82). Certainly her position as an established musical facet of Richmond enabled the positive response to her performance. Unfortunately the extant sources do not lay emphasis on one consideration over the other. Rather when considering these three notions in conjunction, they all illuminate Mrs. Sully’s creative and musical power in her era and beyond. Stoutamire is not trying to trivialize Mrs. Sully’s performance but rather put the historical pieces in order. Nevertheless it is imperative not to marginalize Mrs. Sully’s importance, as she was the first self-proclaimed woman to perform a solo formal concert in Richmond.

Considering the inclusion of her formalism, it is also likely that Mrs. Sully did not consider Taylor’s repertoire refined. His concert included “The whole of the Music composed by Mr. Taylor [and a piece called] CONSTANT LASS, or, The Sailor’s Frolic” (Richmond and Manchester Advertiser, September 12, 1795). This was a piece akin to a ballad opera as it consisted of “dialogue, songs, duet, and &c. which will be recited and sung” (Richmond and Manchester Advertiser, September 12, 1795). For this particular concert, Mrs. Sully did not print her repertoire. However her specification that her concert was “replete with elegance of taste” was a specific contrast to Taylor’s more popular program. Conceivably, Mrs. Sully attempted to separate and extol her performance from popular stage acts. It is assumable that she was outwardly demeaning Taylor’s concert as unceremonious and slapdash opposed to her “formal concert.” As a result she reestablished a type of cultural hierarchy that repositioned her performance as the superior tradition.

Perhaps Mrs. Sully was simply being competitive. By exhibiting her concert as formal, she bolstered her performance as a ceremonial cultural feat. In Reflections on the Music Life in

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150 Stoutamire documents that by 1816, Mrs. Sully was appointed organist at the Monumental Church in Richmond (Stoutamire 128).
**the United States** (1956) Roger Sessons argues that any consideration of American musical life must begin with the recognition that music in this country has been and continues to be a business. Mrs. Sully prescribed to a basic business tenet: she produced an enviable musical commodity that suited exchange in an active and competitive marketplace. Additionally she targeted an audience who could financially support her enterprise. In advertising her concert as formal she yet again caters to the gentry. By describing the urbanity of her performance she appealed to the trends cultivated by refinement. Mrs. Sully differentiated her concert from Taylor’s in order to attract an audience who adhered to these standards. This is further supported by her specification that her concert was “replete with elegance of taste” (*Richmond and Manchester Advertiser*, September 13, 1795). The audience arrived poised in their image of refinement and took their role as her patrons. Since she does not list the price of admissions, researchers cannot conclude that she set a deliberately high price to ensure social exclusivity. However, by specifying the formality of the evening, Mrs. Sully played the role of the impresario and colored the evening to entice the audience. By exalting her craft and reducing Taylor’s performance, she sold her music as the more sought-after commodity.

When considering the primary sources, there is an interesting indicator of gender negotiation within Taylor’s listed repertoire. Taylor’s program described in detail his presentation, which indeed was representational of an eighteenth century evening of musical culture. Yet notice the fleeting, although evident, performance by a Miss Huntley. As printed, “Musical Performance will be recited and sung my Mr. Taylor, and his pupil Miss Huntley, late of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.” (*Richmond and Manchester Advertiser*, September 12, 1795). It is crucial to examine and contrast the roles of both Mrs. Sully and Miss Huntley in their respective performances. First, Mrs. Sully was the featured soloist thereby commanding the
audience’s gaze and attention onto herself. This is in contrast to Miss Huntley, who occupied a secondary position. It is unclear as to what Mrs. Sully actually accomplished at her performance, be it playing music and singing, as she chose to describe her musical practice rather than her repertoire. However the sources demonstrate that Miss Huntley’s contribution was singing, which was the socially acceptable artistic endeavor for women, especially young women.

Second, Miss Huntley is described as Mr. Taylor’s pupil thereby positioned in a subordinated position. Throughout the eighteenth century, a pupil’s mastery of music was a direct reflection of the quality of the teacher. Her performance repositioned Taylor’s ability to teach as the primary point of consideration rather than her own skill. Miss Huntley’s proficiency is eclipsed by the attention devoted to her teacher. This is in direct contrast to Mrs. Sully who performed without a teacher or collaborator. Whereas Miss Huntley is escorted into public performance with a man’s assistance, Mrs. Sully does so only in name. Conceivably Mrs. Sully demonstrated a type of resistance to the hierarchal cultural conditions she worked amongst. As Sturz reminds readers, “The fact that [women’s] resistance is not generally recognized is itself a feature of the oppression of women whose activities are made invisible by the historians” (Sturtz 7).

Regardless of whether Mrs. Sully’s concert was actually the second concert in Richmond via historical review or because it was not as socially normative as Mr. Taylor’s, the fact remains that her concert still exemplified a type of historical significance that affirms Mrs. Sully’s creative agency. This type of agency is further developed by her traveling career with Mrs. Pick.

Scholars such as Wyatt contend that Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick performed together as early as 1793, albeit, they toured in connection to their theater troupes. By the beginning of 1795, Mrs. Pick and Mrs. Sully formed a traveling musical team. Later that year in Virginia, Mr.
Pick joined Mrs. Sully’s and Mrs. Pick’s performances. From about 1795-1797, the Sully and Pick musical team traveled throughout the early republic performing concerts and public recitals. For example, *The Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer* demonstrates an entire evening’s program featuring the Picks and Mrs. Sully. Selected features of the evening’s concert included “a grand sonata of Pleyel’s on the Piano Forte, accompanied on the violin – by Mrs. Sully and Mr. Pick; The Marseilles Hymn, in English – by Mrs. Pick; The Favorite Air of Maggy Lauder, with variations on the Piano Forte – by Mrs. Sully [etc]” (Hunter and Prentis, *The Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer*, June 25, 1795). The concert was a benefit in their own honor and they performed the entirety of the program. Together they also announced a grand concert and ball on July 2nd 1795 at the Eagle Tavern in Richmond. Here the program featured the same repertoire as the concert previously performed in Petersburg on June 25th. A different portion of the evening’s entertainment included “The Favourite air of Lira Lira, from the Surrender of Calis, with Variations, by Mrs. Sully [and] A favourite Song, “Cottage Maid,” by Mrs. Pick (*Richmond and Manchester Advertiser*, July 2, 1795). Their traveling musical performances exhibited their capacity to establish a space of self-actualization while also fulfilling the call for a free practice of musical trade. Their histories are demonstrative of the ubiquity of women who played music outside of the home and used the craft as a viable trade. This validates the extent of Mrs. Sully’s and Mrs. Pick’s musical influence and their devotion to their trades.

Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick performed regularly throughout the summer of 1795. Another such concert was from July 16th where they played a Grand Concert in Mr. Albert’s long room in

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151 Sonneck demonstrates that Jacobias organized many concerts throughout the Colonies while Mrs. Pick would perform music and sing in almost each one (Sonneck 30). The evidence situating their performance as a trio is derived from the 1795 “Grand Concert” advertisement in *The City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, March 26, 1795.
Alexandria. Interestingly, Mr. Pick’s name appears on the program however he played a tertiary role in the concert. His presence is even removed from the concert’s headline that read “A GRAND CONCERT By Mrs. SULLY and Mrs. Pick” (The Columbian Mirror and The Alexandria Gazette, July 16, 1795). Yet he does perform at particular points, albeit in moderation. The central focus of the concert was distinctively on the music played by Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick. The few appearances by Mr. Pick mediated any challenges the women’s performances caused to larger patriarchal ideologies. His presence suggested that Mrs. Sully’s and Mrs. Pick’s performances were in some way a socially problematic display of female agency. Yet Mr. Pick’s attendance and the subsequent gender privilege assuaged this threat. This recalls Lerner’s suggestion that men protected public women while disreputable women showcased their disconnection from patriarchal control (Lerner 139). By including Mr. Pick’s performance, the women negotiated their position from subversive public performer to one that is more acceptable, a woman publicly accompanied by a male. As a result dominant patriarchal ideology remained unchallenged.

During these concerts, Mrs. Sully, Mrs. Pick, and Mr. Pick each performed solos while Mr. Pick performed separate pieces with Mrs. Sully. Notably Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick did not perform together. To complicate this further, Mr. Pick’s presence is readable through a feminist methodological lens that considers gender negotiation and the reiteration of dominant gender norms. On one hand, Mrs. Pick’s performances with Mrs. Sully threatened the patriarchal paradigm because it challenged the established value of women as passive and secondary citizens. Performing together was demonstrative of a type of cultural power thereby disavowing their submissiveness. Yet by traveling and performing with her husband, Mrs. Pick sutured the potentially ruptured gender norms. Her willingness to accompany her husband recoded the
normative roles and behaviors deemed appropriate for both men and women. Mr. Pick was marginal to these performances yet his presence prevented a full transgression from dominant ideology. Before Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick could construct any type of discursive narrative, their challenge was recuperated by Mrs. Pick’s allegiance to her husband.

Opposed to the Picks, Mr. Sully was noticeably absent from Mrs. Sully’s performances. This makes room for the consideration that Mr. Pick’s musical accompaniment with Mrs. Sully positioned him as her surrogate husband. For example, the concert listing specified that the evening included “A grand sonata of Pleyel’s on the Piano Forte, by Mrs. Sully, accompanied on the Violin, by Mr. Pick [and] A Grand Sonata of Clementi’s on the Piano Forte, accompanied on the violin By Mrs. Sully and Mr. Pick.” (The Columbian Mirror and The Alexandria Gazette, July 16, 1795). Mrs. Sully’s public appearance without her husband required suturing. Mr. Pick’s physical and musical substitution served as the figurative patriarchal figurehead. Similar to Byrd’s sponsorship of Barbara DeGraffenreit, Mr. Pick’s presence served as a safeguard facilitating Mrs. Sully’s and Mrs. Pick’s abilities to publicly sell their music without compromising their decencies. Again, this reflects the overarching social negotiation faced by the women in this study. Despite their position as active tradeswomen, Mr. Pick stood as the guardian of their virtue thereby rendering the women as reflexive and passive.

However, it is necessary to consider if Mr. Pick needed to act as the figurative patriarch. Mrs. Sully was already implicitly aligned with dominant ideology because her self-identification, specifically her name, recuperated the dominant gender ideology her solo performances challenged. As Sochen indicates, in the eighteenth century, a woman’s primary identification as “the wife of Mr. So-and-So” reaffirmed her association with her husband and reassured she still functioned within a socially normative space (Sochen 29). Mrs. Sully served as the primary
example, as the records reflect the practice of withdrawing her first name, thereby propertizing her identity as mutually entwined with her husband’s identity. This becomes a signifier of dominant gender ideology especially when it seems that her husband did not perform with her or take part in her promotion. Yet by reminding the public that she was indeed married indicated that she was safely sanctioned within dominant gender norms. Mrs. Sully’s name served to reestablish her connection to patriarchal ideals. Notwithstanding her ability to display her creative capacity, occupy public performance spaces, and earn wages, her identity was inextricably aligned with matrimonial and heteronormative compacts. Hence Mrs. Sully’s public persona in addition to her connection with her husband paradoxically demonstrated agency and compliance.

The type of concerts performed by the Picks and Mrs. Sully vary from those conducted in private homes. The overarching difference was that for both solo and collaborative performances, the Picks and also Mrs. Sully charged an entry fee ranging from approximately one to six schillings. From a newspaper announcement for the Grand Concert at Mr. Albert’s Large Room, the advertisement specifies that tickets were priced “at Six Shillings each, to be had at the Printing-Office, and at Mr. Albert’s and Mr. Wise’s Taverns. No MONEY taken at the Door (The Columbian Mirror and The Alexandria Gazette, July 16, 1795; Allen 116, McKay 10-11, Sonneck 59). The majority of concerts held by Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick listed entrance fees and ticket prices. This suggests that they utilized performances as a means to supplement their income. Since these concerts did not directly specify the proceeds would contribute towards an individual’s benefit, it is conclusive that the musicians divided the earnings. It is not clear from the records why the admissions fees ranged in price for varying events. One possible consideration aligns the more expensive concerts with longer performances. Another theory
deciphers the ticket price served as a method to detract audiences who were not capable of affording more expensive ticket thereby reaffirming a type of social hierarchy. Regardless, these types of transactions served as examples of women who used music as a trade in order to contribute to their financial stability.

Creative tradeswomen dispelled the common assumption that women were sanctioned to the home. By traveling and repositioning themselves in public spaces, Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick established the presence of female trades musicians across the burgeoning nation and in a multitude of spaces. The history of creative tradeswomen demand that scholars refigure the role of musical women in eighteenth century America as more than stationary wives.\textsuperscript{152} The cultural geographies supporting Mrs. Sully’s and Mrs. Pick’s musical careers are essential in developing their histories. Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick performed at the Eagle Tavern on July 2nd, which established itself as a filament of musical culture in Richmond. In recollection, taverns frequently supported women’s creative performances. The creative tradeswomen who occupied these spaces demonstrated an adherence to social conformity and hierarchies that provided the opportunities to occupy public spaces without facing caustic invective. As a result these spaces contested a distinct binary between public and private space.

Their July 16\textsuperscript{th} concert was held in Mr. Albert’s large room, indisputably an annexed portion of his tavern (\textit{The Columbian Mirror and The Alexandria Gazette}, July 16, 1795). As previously specified, the admissions fee was 6 schillings. Since it was advertised in the local newspapers to a wide readership, it is likely that the concert was made available to the public despite the expensive ticket price. Their performance serves as an example of a private space

\textsuperscript{152} Women’s roles in the eighteenth century have been well developed. Specifically, scholars such as Carol Berkin, Linda Kerber, Mary Beth Norton, and Merill Smith developed the roles of women throughout the century. See the historiography in the beginning of the dissertation to further develop this consideration.
serving a public function albeit informed by exclusionary discourses. This type of spatial fluidity contested the duplicitous and distinctive divisions between private and public space while also demonstrative of a paradoxically contested albeit supportive space for women musicians. Much as the D’Hemards, Ann Neill, and Nancy Hallam traversed public spaces however within socially acceptable dominant roles, Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick occupied analogous locations. Women were welcomed to occupy public space and contribute to musical culture provided that they adhered to dominant ideology. This type of circumstance was typical for merchants, artisans, and creative tradeswomen.¹⁵³

In many cases private and public spaces were not polemical entities rather the performance spaces Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick occupied demonstrated a fluidity that exposed spaces as overlapping structures. A private space did not immediately suggest the therein events were also reserved for a clandestine audience. In contrast, a public space did not always reflect a homogeneous audience. This consideration is made clear by Jurgen Habermas in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Space, An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1991). Habermas suggests that private people come together to create the public sphere. By extension, in “How Music Created a Public” (2004), Harold Love builds off of Habermas to suggest that musical spaces are more accurately described as a multitude of interlocking and overlapping groups that inform and develop each other. For example, domestic spaces were also public performance areas, such as the homes of Mr. Nicholson or Mr. Singleton (Maurer 514). Residences became another space where the general public could consume entertainment as “private people coming together as a public.”

¹⁵³ One well researched example is Clementina Rind who managed the *Virginia Gazette*. Concurrently, Rind lived in the building that also published the paper, the task she was responsible for overseeing in order to also manage her children and domestic responsibilities.
However public performances were often privatized. From a 1795 announcement in *The Columbian Chronicle*, Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick invited the ladies and gentlemen of Georgetown to a concert and ball held at “Mrs. Doyle’s Long Room.” (Dexter 73). First, their performance in a Long Room resituated them within the private sphere. However, keeping Habermas in mind, their public invitation of ‘ladies and gentlemen’ affirmed the inclusion of a private audience. Yet throughout their advertisements, they constantly utilized exclusionary language and practices that limited the participation of the public. The advertisement for the women’s performance in Mrs. Doyle’s Long Room also specifies that the entry fee for the concert was six shillings, a more expensive admissions fee for concerts. This concert is understandable as a clear example of social exclusivity. The addressing of ladies and gentlemen in addition to the ticket prices was coded language for attracting a more affluent audience. Thus space facilitated the development and contribution of women across the early republic while also affirming social hierarchies.¹⁵⁴

Scholars suggest that in the post-revolutionary era, the overall social role of women changed. For example, Kerber documents a new gender ideal, embodied by the discourses constructing republican womanhood. This ideal demanded that women productively contribute to the development of a democratic nation. This required the promotion of a woman’s intellectual and social capacities. In other words, a woman’s ability to contribute to public culture either intellectually or through other aptitudes was more esteemed in the post-revolutionary era than the colonial era. The active civic role women undertook in the

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¹⁵⁴ Bushman specifically examines concert life in Charleston and the St. Cecilia’s Society performances as factors that excluded the unrefined and constructed artificial spaces of gentility. As he makes clear, “the managers of the concerts defined the city’s elite population by issuing tickets to a certain group of gentlemen, who in turn invited ladies” (Bushman 51). Whereas Bushman is specifically addressing concert life in South Carolina, it is plausible that a similar understanding took shape for Virginian concerts. Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick also catered to the city’s elite with promises of refinement and dignity.
revolutionary era created a higher level of accomplishment and opportunity. Primarily this came from cross-gendering job duties, especially when wives conducted their husbands’ work while he went to war. This mobility created a space for understanding why more women during the turn of the century performed. In previous decades, specifically the 1750s-1770s female performers were sanctioned to creative groups such as theater troupes. Whereas Nancy Hallam and Maria Storer also performed solo endeavors, they infrequently ventured away from the touring schedule of their troupe. But it is here where Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick differ: they traveled, performed, and promoted their own concerts. These productions were independent creative endeavors disassociated from any established theatrical enterprise. Whereas all these women began their careers on the theatrical stage, it was not until the early republic that women found a viable cultural niche, bolstered by republican womanhood that supported their own musical ventures. Mrs. Sully’s first performance in Richmond is vital in the construction of the early republic as a valuable cultural space. Mrs. Sully’s public performance becomes an extension of republican womanhood, because she utilized a creative avenue to serve the country. In this analysis music and other creative outlets become an addendum to nation building. Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick constructed and articulated creative duties that instilled culture, musical, and artistic connections with their audiences.

Since Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick used concerts as a trade, it is necessary to consider the role women played as wage earners. Scholars suggest that the early republic was a crucial moment in the shift from women as inactive household managers to productive wage earners. For example, in Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States (1982), Alice Kessler-Harris documents the demands a burgeoning society created for women to participate in trade. As Kessler-Harris makes clear, “an emerging economy provided flexibility
that allowed individual women to exercise initiatives outside of traditional patterns” (Kessler-Harris 4). Creativity also contributed to a woman’s trade opportunities thus it is imperative to consider her central argument developed by the history of Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick. They were not mere exceptions to the norm but were actual examples of women who furthered our understanding of tradeswomen and the creative role of women in eighteenth century society. From a close reading of their performances, concerts, and advertisements, it is clear that they functioned within long-standing gender normative paradigms. Yet it is conclusive that women in the eighteenth century were not merely domestic beings obediently awaiting the return of their husbands, fathers, or other male relative. Rather women were active and viable participants in social, economic, and cultural practices. There is evidence of women, such as Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick in addition to the women whose histories are lost, who chose to pursue creative occupations as their trade. These women, despite their adherence to normative gender roles, still sought wages and regular entrepreneurial activity.

Assuming that Mrs. Pick and Mrs. Sully elected to utilize a negotiated type of agency also rids history of damaging epistemic privilege. In this case, the epistemic privilege usually reflects an androcentric standpoint and marginalizes women thereby teaching generations the practices of the dominant group. This type of epistemic privilege potentially disregards women’s contribution to historical culture and society. However when considering Mrs. Pick’s and Mrs. Sully’s subjectivity, they inform multiple-subject-locations rather than embodying a simple linear history. These women were born and died in musical spheres and devoted their entire existence to promoting their creative trades. As gatekeepers to a history that has been lost or otherwise marginalized, Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Pick serve as representatives of a vibrant musical culture that included women. Their exclusion from the historical record signifies an erasure that
ultimately narrows the historical scope to a small quotient of society. However, by shifting the focus back onto women, researchers can recentralize their active role in society while also diminishing their marginality.
CONCLUSION

Who speaks for creative tradeswomen and what historical impact do these women have once they are spoken for? Returning to Lipsitz, it is as valuable to listen to the replies and accurately relay the given epistemologies. The creative tradeswomen in this study present several figurative dialogues with the contemporary moment in which they impart the importance of galvanizing epistemologies in order to reflect the depth and multiplicity of historical voices, experiences, and practices. Cultural historians must listen and accurately depict their histories as reflections of the subjects’ everyday lives. A revisitation of the creative trades in colonial America to the early republic, finds tradeswomen were active cultural contributors rather than passive archetypes. An examination of advertisements for public concerts, music education, dancing assemblies, theater culture, and the ubiquity of songbooks demonstrate the deep involvement of women in creative trades culture. Additionally, primary sources such as the Richmond and Manchester Advertiser, Virginia Gazette, and Petersburg Intelligencer, in addition to playbills, librettos, and printed repertoires illuminate the ubiquity of creative laborers who used their abilities to incur wages. These archived sources demonstrate the subjects’ trades, identities, and experiences were not fixed. Rather, these women’s lives and cultural contributions reveal the mutability of women in early America.

This study represents the importance of recentering the creative tradeswoman within the historical record. Despite their marginalization, the primary sources show that women did establish spaces for themselves where they promoted their crafts, competed in an active marketplace, expressed their creativity and self-authorship. Musical cultivation, performance, and creativity are conduits to self-expression and facilitate the emergence of a female voice previously unheard but amplified through music, dance, and theater. The histories of the women
reveal the capacity to disseminate historical epistemological narratives that directly challenge dominant paradigms.

The history of creative tradeswomen demonstrates how women were contributors to the development of American culture. Through their performances and creative trades, researchers witness the development of American culture by the representation of their histories, customs, traditions, politics and economics. Through the examination of creative culture, customs and practices, as defined by trade, the tradeswomen demonstrate their contributions to the growth of American music and culture. Their histories force historians to draw open the monocultural curtain obscuring the political and cultural histories of creative women thereby removing the myopic interpretation that hegemonic power was dictated by men. Their narratives and histories exhibit a precise demonstration of the complexities in all the relationships that existed. This examination of women, gender roles, and creative culture expands the foundational modes of early American scholarship while presenting a discursive and rarely included emphasis on creative trade culture.

Understanding creative tradeswomen as viable contributors to the development of American culture reminds historians and scholars of the importance of incorporating music, sheet music, and playbills into historical analysis that can complicate analytic and objective epistemologies as the dominant form of knowledge. Nonanalytic and nonrational forms of discourse, like music or performance maybe better than other forms to convey complex life experiences – both past and present. The expression of cultural capital as a system of knowledge can minimize the straddling and threat of cultural histories emphasizing the exceptional. These sources implore researchers to consider and listen to the voice of the archive. In these records we find contests over power, efforts to find belonging and community, sentiment, visions of the
future, and revisions of the past. These primary sources can present pertinent truths but more importantly, contradictory testimonies that might have previously been discarded.

The work of creative tradeswomen directly intersected with historical, social, and cultural practices. Their histories developed the fluidity between public and private spaces, amateur and professional, and the gentry and trade classes. These distinct binaries are broken down and complicated by the women in this study. For example, this dissertation restructures the divide between amateur and professional. Scholarship tends to reposition amateur and trade musicians as a polemical identity that lacked any type of fluidity. Individuals of means were frequently amateurs while creative tradeswomen exclusively devoted their energies to music or dance. In opposition, Barbara DeGraffenreit’s position as a gentry woman in addition to a dance mistress undermined the distinction between amateur and professional based on class. Moreover creative tradeswomen were required to construct a unique marketplace that housed their craft while also promoting their creativity. Without a strong patronage system, such as in Europe, creative laborers in the eighteenth century were often required to combine several jobs, including both musical and non-musical occupations. To those tradeswomen, who used their creativity as a means to establish their financial underpinnings, creative labor had more of an utilitarian purpose rather than being a recreational or fashionable pastime.

The women in this study earned wages from their creative labors, dancing assemblies, and theatrical performances thereby adopting culture as a type of trade. For those such as the Hallams, the Picks, Mrs. Sully, and Ann Neal, they separated themselves from amateur musicians because these women’s livelihoods depended on the employment of creative culture. These tradeswomen sought to use their creative capacities as a type of occupation. However, in most cases, early America lacked the population, and by extension financial support to
absolutely fully sustain creative laborers. It is necessary to be critical of the term professional and understand that in eighteenth century America, the occupation of cultural tradeswomen was permanent however supplemented by other associative occupations such as acting or teaching. To achieve these means, women in this study promoted their work, charged a fee, and sought to endow their lives with creative endeavors. These were tradeswomen in every sense of the word.

Without doubt, the majority of women in this study learned their vocations not from boarding schools but from family members. Their histories are void of the desires to strive for refinement or accumulation of material capital. The lives of singing actresses and musicians denied them an existence of showy fashion and extravagance. Instead the constant need to work and accrue an income became the paramount priority rather than an exercise in refinement. A theme throughout this study demonstrates the female tradeswomen did not outwardly align with fashionability rather they provided the aesthetic support to those who did.

Nonetheless both genteel and trades musicians played instruments and demonstrated their abilities to dance. However the creative tradeswomen were rarely considered members of the gentry while the genteel women separated themselves from the middling and trade class. The outlying difference between the two identifications is the accrual of wages. The primary records confirm that even accomplished musicians such as Robert Carter, who frequently played music as an evening’s diversion, never seemed to charge a fee for his music. Instead he often hired people such as Mary Stagg for momentous ceremonies such as his daughter’s wedding. By extension all the women in this study charged a fee for their performances. They also clearly published the intended price of an event’s admissions prices in their advertisements. An overarching difference in contextualizing the creative culture of early Virginia is to understand the varying uses of the cultural commodities as a reflection of the individual’s social position.
For tradeswomen, instruments, the ability to dance, read, and play music was not a signifier of wealth. Rather cultural objects were their gateways to prosperity and the tools supporting their livelihoods. As demonstrated throughout this dissertation, the women utilized varying tools and strategies to negotiate their social position.

For the purpose of this dissertation, it is essential to consider that women’s lives were fundamentally different than their male counterparts. Spanning the range from daily activities, dress, social ideologies, economic sanctions, and even participation in creative culture, women and men occupied the same spaces but were informed by vastly divergent ideologies. It is this difference that makes a woman’s participation in creative culture inimitable. The encouragement to develop her creative aptitude, in most cases, was shaped by far narrower norms constructing idealized notions of trade, familial responsibilities, intellectual capacity, and the embodiment of overarching gender norms. The fundamental difference between women’s and men’s histories must not result in the negligence of one segment of society while laying emphasis on the dominant population’s historical impact. A feminist historiography enables a refiguring of the past while complicating male-centric analyses. The adoption of a feminist historiography recognizes women’s histories as distinct from men’s histories and incorporates a consideration of cultural, social, or class boundaries. As a result, creative tradeswomen’s untold histories are brought to the forefront. This dissertation reinserts women’s cultural trade histories while relocating gender and class as central factors influencing creative production. A feminist historiography is a viable research method that exposes the record as an incomplete portrait of history.

In many instances the common assumption that a woman’s passivity and social position silence contrived her as ideal for marriage. Essentialism is tightly entwined in the
bolstering of a singular historical model. Yet the women in this dissertation demonstrated a negotiated understanding of their social positions that complicated the understanding of gender and social conventions. Rather their histories provoke the researcher to identify gender, trade, creativity, and class identity on a continuum that reflects the subjects’ cultural and social standpoints while exposing early America’s social multiplicity.

Despite the warnings of prominent scholars, essentialism is still trending throughout the secondary sources. As one of the primary assumptions, if a woman was included in creative trade activity, she was not there on her own terms. Rather it was the determination of her father, husband, or other male figure that was masking her as diligent and she had no say in her musical representation, creativity, and agency. Unfortunately, the evidence proving how much say a woman had or did not have is unavailable. However, we can piece this information together through the examination of advertisements for public concerts, music education for women, a woman’s desire for musical instruments, and the number of playbills demonstrating a woman’s involvement in creative trade culture. We have women who spent their lives embedded in musical and creative cultural trades. Whether it was their choice to begin this trade is not known, however, it is significant that they stayed within this trade. In many cases, these women were born and died in creative spheres and devoted their entire existence to promoting their cultural trades. Whether this is a romanticization of creative trades or not, the bottom line is that women in the eighteenth century did used creative trades to establish their intellectual power, creative prowess, while ultimately financially stabilizing their livelihoods. The women in this dissertation as exceptions to the norm, as this supports their exclusion from the historical record at large. Rather, these women are important gatekeepers to a history that has been lost. They serve as
representatives of cultural trades that included women while contesting normative readings of women in early America.

All women did not succumb to the dominant social norms controlling and defining their existences. This research yields instances of accepted and valued female performers who actively participated in and developed cultural society. Once a female musician entered the public realm, the response to her craft and skill was not entirely focused on questioning her capabilities as a mother and wife. In many cases women were considered valued musicians and performers yet faced stringent social norms. Thus many women negotiated dominant gender norms and unavoidable patriarchal social structures that was frequently paradoxical. Creative tradeswomen’s histories challenged dominant systems and reinserted agency while also exhibiting normative roles of women.

Yet this dissertation also demonstrates examples of women who used their creative capacity to develop thereby redefining their social, economic, and cultural standpoints. As a whole the chapters of this dissertation, demonstrate that the creative tradeswomen were not always degraded and their creativity was not entirely stifled. Rather, in the cases of the Hallams, Maria Storer, or Mrs. Sully, women musicians and songstresses were idolized. The role of women in public concerts, the singing roles of female actresses in musical theater, and the influence of female music teachers refigure the eighteenth century as an era that was mutable and culturally expansive. This type of historical reading opens scholarship to the inclusion of areas previously put on the edge and marginalized such as the legacies of cultural tradeswomen.

My research projects the narratives that complicate the theories shaping a woman’s history and her ability to contribute to creative trade culture. As a whole, this dissertation frames women as historical figures who contributed to the development of Virginia’s creative culture
while using their talent as a viable trade. These women were active cultural contributors, although scholarship of the period primarily focuses on their father’s and husband’s legacies. Throughout the dissertation I illustrate the social negotiation these women faced. They occupied prominent trade positions but constantly reaffirmed dominant gender and social ideology. As a result, this work illuminates women’s extraordinary social and cultural contributions in relation to developing the historical record. Their histories are reflective of the major trends in cultural and women’s history that emphasize the past as not fixed but as demanding an interpretive variability. Moving away from structuralism, the centrality of creative tradeswomen more fully complicates the experience of women in early America. In the end, their histories validate the importance of a discursive mode of examination that showcases culture, gender, and trade as major components in social frameworks.

In many instances, historians and researchers have attempted to reclaim and account for the devaluing of women as productive participants in dominant modes of knowledge and society building. Yet as this dissertation demonstrates, it is still imperative to see through traditional modes of historical readings that only affirm and never question patriarchal ideals as universal truths. To not see creative tradeswomen or place value on their contributions is the erasure, distortion, and marginalization of women’s voices. This results in the acceptance and continuity of a singular and dominant form of knowledge that is value-laden. This creates an epistemological barrier not only removing women from discourses but also reiterating a singular type of historical image. This is a singular and biased epistemology that disregards the histories that reflect numerous voices and perspectives. The distortion of experience and the invisibility of women’s identities points directly to the marginalizing of subjectivity and larger cultural contributions. Feminist historiographies endeavor to create spaces for invisible groups to reclaim
the value of their own experiences. A feminist historiography overlaps with key areas of interests to postmodern feminist methodologies such as the deconstruction of social constructions based on grand narratives thereby abandoning a belief in the universal, the mutability of language and discourses as constantly changing identities, and finally the overall impact of culturally constructed historic meaning. To claim that feminist historiography is indebted to feminist postmodernism is not oxymoronic but rather an avenue to understanding the historic in contrast with modernity. Both frame research as a means of privileging female subject-identity, enabling a dissident dialogic, and divesting the historical and cultural record of gender marginalization. The creative tradeswomen in this study demonstrate multiple, overlapping, and contradictory systems of power and identity that operate simultaneously and intersectionally. Hence their histories challenge and critique dominant modes of knowledge. The inclusion of creative tradeswomen accounts for new voices in historical research, developing and practicing new standards for collecting and evaluating evidence, and decentering the dominant voice while empowering marginalized groups. This expands the peripheries of cultural histories. This insures historic authenticity and validity rather than the reiteration of the fictionalized narratives that can reinstate dominant discourses.

In conclusion, the contributions of the women in this study present the visibility of histories that distorted conventional paradigms and publicly represent the availability of epistemologies that are unique to the individuals who created them. A central theme articulated by all the subjects, primary, and several secondary sources is that authentic self-representation demonstrates the importance of visibility. In order to regain subjectivity and alter accepted forms of history, it is imperative that researchers make marginalized historical subjects visible without trivialization. The process of doing so begins when one is introduced to examples of information,
experience, or ways of listening that differ from her assumptions, dominant systems of knowledge, and which she then must integrate into her own knowledge or way of seeing and hearing. Thereby despite the fact that researchers have learned to listen, this is a continual process based on dialogue, critique, reflection, and listening. Researchers must practice the art of historical listening thereby making room for a multiplicity of voices that can subvert dominant practices and disengage lasting imperial epistemologies. By doing so, we can develop histories that listen to historic conversations that reflect individual experiences while including an understanding of how discursive processes can construct systems of knowledge and histories. Cultural history presents the visibility of extraordinary histories such as the lives of creative tradeswomen. These cultural laborers illuminated authentic representation while refiguring their historical roles and heralding their visibility. The identification of brings forward their histories and creative capital while providing a forum to ask the new and radical questions that alter dominant forms of epistemologies.
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