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Corrupting the Mother Tongue/Broken Constitutions

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Corrupting the Mother Tongue/Broken Constitutions

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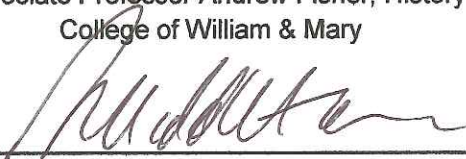Approved by the Committee May 7, 2018

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ABSTRACT

Corrupting the Mother Tongue: Comparing the Effects of Residential Schools on the Cultures and Languages of Native American and Deaf Students

Focusing on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this work explores the changes in the goals and approaches to education in residential schools for Native American and deaf students, and how these changes impacted their languages and cultures. This study of residential schools, students, and educational reformers in the United States reveals the pervasive desire to design school systems that would assimilate both Native Americans and deaf students into dominant American culture. Although the residential schools for deaf students developed independently from those for Native Americans, they share similar motivations, practices, and impacts. Despite the paternalistic nature of educating these students, the goal to eradicate Native Americans and deaf students of their cultures and languages and assimilate them into normative, white culture ultimately failed, but nevertheless left a lasting impact upon the identities of Native Americans and members of the Deaf community.

Broken Constitutions: Veterans of the American Revolution and the Language of Disability

This work focuses on the presence and use of terms such as "disability" in the early nineteenth century as found in Revolutionary War pension records, showing that a shift in the way people perceived disabilities occurred prior to Industrialization. The policies of the Revolutionary War pensions and the cultural representations of veterans indicate that a social concept of disabilities in relation to labor existed before Industrialization. Therefore, rather than supporting the claim that the concept of disability was a symptom of Industrialization, this work argues that the concept had already existed in pre-Industrial American society and further evolved alongside a changing labor system, adhering to the social-construction theory of disabilities.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dedicated to the one and only Shirley Whirley, for making me fall in love with reading and writing, encouraging my curiosity, and for being the greatest grandmother anyone could ever dream of. I miss you dearly.

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Intellectual Biography

Although my two theses projects have been independent of each other in their scope, they collectively share the overarching theme of the history of disabilities. With the field of disability history being relatively new, there is much room for growth in the application of disability theories to historical analysis. As I began both of my research seminars, I had no inkling what direction my research would take, only that I wanted to focus on the theme of disability. Both projects ultimately opened my eyes to the wider historiographical importance of studying disabilities, and what they not only reveal about people, culture, and society, but what they reveal about other themes in history and other categories of analysis.

My first paper, "Corrupting the Mother Tongue: Comparing the Effects of Residential Schools on the Cultures and Languages of Native American and Deaf Students," focuses on the nature and evolution of residential school education for Native American students and deaf students as comparative histories. I first became intrigued by the potential for comparing education systems for Native Americans and deaf students in America during the first discussion in Dr. Fisher's research seminar, talking about settler colonial theory, Indian child removal, and residential schools. I was struck by how similar the motivations for instructing Native American children were to the motivations behind educating deaf children in America, and as I began looking further into the experience of Native American students and deaf students, I realized that not only were their school systems similar, but their own experiences. After conducting preliminary research, I found that in much historiography of

disabilities, and deafness specifically, there was little mention of the educational similarities between these two groups, and when there were mentions of the comparison, they were short, one-sentence statements that simply recognized the similarities. I then encountered the same situation with Native American studies, giving only simple statements recognizing the similar residential schools for the deaf that existed. Using disability as a category of analysis works against the depiction of people as victims, passive actors, or heroic individuals overcoming their unfortunate situations, just as Native American studies do. The histories of boarding schools for both Native American and deaf students have been broadly studied independently, but research within the collective, comparative study of Native American boarding schools and schools for the deaf requires much more attention.

Desiring to explore the residential school systems for both deaf students and Native Americans in more depth, I decided to focus my research project on the similarities between the motivations for establishing the schools, the views towards both groups of students, and the experiences of students, and how these forms of education affected the languages and cultures of these students. Just as Native American tribes are recognized as distinct cultural and linguistic groups, the Deaf community is linked by their unique language and culture, and history as well. Religious reformers took a special interest in the education of Native Americans and deaf individuals in the early nineteenth century, but as the century carried on the educational systems set in place for both Native

Americans and deaf students experienced changes, growing from religious based bilingual instruction into English-only assimilation programs.

Educating the "uncivilized" groups in society, of which both deaf individuals and Native Americans were a part of, pervaded the nineteenth century, and the goals of education evolved alongside a changing society. Through analyzing these educational systems, we can see the need for Native Americans, deaf students, and other marginalized groups to be re-assimilated into society in order to adhere to new cultural values. Methods for educating the Deaf journeyed from manualism to oralism to a more individually based education system, and Native American education transitioned from "becoming uncivilized" to assimilation, each method reflecting the dominating cultural values of their times. While Native American students and deaf students both had unique experiences within boarding schools, through analyzing them together, the similarities demonstrate just how pervasive dominant ideologies can be in society while at the same time revealing the commonalities of human experience. Despite the paternalistic nature of the residential schools for these students, the goal to eradicate the respective communities of their cultures and languages and assimilate students into normative, white culture ultimately failed, but nevertheless left a lasting impact upon the identities of Native Americans and members of the Deaf community.

For my second paper, "Broken Constitutions: Veterans of the American Revolution and the Language of Disability," I focused on the development of the concept of disability alongside the early American state following the American

Revolution. Generally, the earliest period of American history that I study is the 1840s, so when trying to find a topic relating to disabilities before then, I became curious about the experience of disabled veterans of the Revolutionary War. One of the main sources I found were the pension records for these veterans, and after reading through them I became more specifically interested in language used to describe disabled veterans, and how the way people used the language could reveal the way society understood disabilities prior to Industrialization in America. While conducting the research for this project, I realized that the emphasis on the invention of disabilities being a symptom of industrialization, as is often found in the historiography of disabilities, is misleading. I see the policies surrounding Revolutionary War veterans' pensions and their cultural representations as indicative of the presence of an earlier social concept of disability. By studying the presence and use of terms such as "disability" in the early nineteenth century as found in the pension records, sources reveal that a shift in the perception of disabilities occurred by the time of Industrialization, supporting the social-construction theory of disability. The cultural understandings of labor capabilities changed when systems of labor evolved during Industrialization, clarifying the idea that the concept of disability is dependent on the dominant cultural systems of the time.

These records show that disability was established as a political and social welfare category much earlier in the policies of the United States, and instead argue that the category of disability widened to include more individuals/types of impairments as the nineteenth (and later, twentieth) centuries

carried on. The early United States, in its pre-industrial culture, is an important period in which the history of disabilities needs to be further considered. There is much room for further investigation and development of these ideas relating to disabilities in early America as well as into the pension systems of the Revolution and the experiences of veterans.

Although my thesis projects have been independent of each other in their subject matter, they both encompass the theme of disability, and show how effective disability theory is in historical analysis. I hope to use these research projects as foundations for further, more in-depth research in the future. With my first paper, "Corrupting the Mother Tongue," I would be interested in expanding my research into the relationship between Native American gestural and signing languages of their own with their perception of deafness and American Sign Language, especially after having found sources from Native students describing their interactions with students at the residential schools for the deaf. If I were to expand my second paper, "Broken Constitutions," I would like to spend more time tracing the changes in social and political ideologies leading up to and following the Revolutionary War, and how these changes may have influenced perceptions of people with disabilities more broadly. All in all, each of these papers has brought me insight into the development of disability throughout American history, and more importantly, how studying disabilities broadens the overall analysis of culture and society.

Corrupting the Mother Tongue: Comparing the Effects of Residential Schools on

the Cultures and Languages of Native American and Deaf Students

"Education should be useful for everyone, but to those suffering
from a handicap it must be useful to enable them to earn a living."-
C.P. Cary[1]

"Every creature, every work of God, is admirably well made; but if
any one appears imperfect in our eyes, it does not belong to us to
criticize it." -Laurent Clerc[2]

"It is a great mistake to think that the Indian is born an inevitable
savage. He is born a blank, like the rest of us. Left in the
surroundings of savagery, he grows to possess a savage language,
superstition, and life."[3] -Richard Henry Pratt

With the emergence of the Second Great Awakening in the early

nineteenth century, changes in religious thinking were not limited to exclusively

religious practices. The morals and beliefs accompanying Christianity were the

standards to which citizens were upheld to in America.[4] Therefore, the effects of

the Second Great Awakening found their way into many social, political, and

cultural areas of American society, one of the major areas being education.

Driven by a strong paternalistic nature, religious reformers took a special interest

in the education of Native Americans and deaf individuals.

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[1] Douglas C. Baynton, *Forbidden Signs: American Culture and the Campaign Against Sign Language* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 98.
[2] R.A.R. Edwards, *Words Made Flesh: Nineteenth-Century Deaf Education and the Growth of Deaf Culture,* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 31.
[3] Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc, *Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 13.
[4] Douglas C. Baynton, "'A Silent Exile on This Earth': The Metaphorical Construction of Deafness in the Nineteenth Century." *American Quarterly* 44, no. 2. (June 2002): 217

As the nineteenth century progressed, the mentality of dominant culture began to shift, and the ways in which Native American and deaf students were educated shifted as well. Alexander Graham Bell, known for patenting the invention of the telephone, became an even more active member of American society with his advocacy for both eugenics and deaf education. In late nineteenth century, as Charles Darwin's theory of evolution produced Social Darwinist concepts of "survival of the fittest," drastic changes occurred in society. These changes interrupted culture and society of the earlier part of the nineteenth-century and Darwin's theories, among others, were adopted and used to explain societal systems, as Alexander Graham Bell demonstrates in his discussion of the growth of a new form of deaf education: "Where you have a free competition of methods and schools, and a struggle among them for existence, natural selection will surely operate to bring out survival of the fittest. Time will reveal the best."[5] With talk of "natural selection" and "survival of the fittest," Bell applies scientific beliefs of the time to education. His quote however can expand to express the changes in education of Native Americans as well. The educational systems set in place for both Native Americans and deaf people experienced changes, growing from religious based bilingual instruction into English-only assimilation programs.

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[5] Alexander Graham Bell, "Growth of the Oral Method of Instructing the Deaf." Speech given on November 10, 1894. *Alexander Graham Bell Family Papers.* Retrieved from the Library of Congress, accessed November 1, 2017. https://www.loc.gov/item/magbell.37600101/

In the period following the Civil War, deaf education was faced with a competition between two methods of instruction, while a new policy of peace drove the government to find ways to overcome their "Indian problem." One solution was to educate and assimilate American Indian children into dominant white culture, and soon after the first federally funded Native American boarding school emerged. Boarding schools were not the end of violence toward Natives, but a more humane approach to ridding the United States of the Indian; a form of cultural genocide.[6] The later part of the 19th century was host to a competition of cultural survival, with the dominant hoping to eradicate inferior cultures and identities. For reformers, whether they were concerned with education, Americanizing immigrants, assimilating Native Americans, or elevating the working class, to truly be equal to the dominant culture, one had to share the dominant cultural and linguistic identity.[7] To be different was to be deficient.

While investigations into the history of boarding schools for both Native American and deaf students have been a subject of interest for some time, research within the collective, comparative study of Native American boarding schools and schools for the deaf requires much more attention. Just as Native American tribes are recognized as distinct cultural and linguistic groups, the Deaf community is linked by their unique language and culture. Working within the theoretical frameworks of settler colonialism and disabilities, this essay seeks to demonstrate the similarities within the experiences of Native Americans and

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[6] Walter L. Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism: A History*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 139.
[7] Baynton, *Forbidden Signs,* 34.

American deaf individuals in boarding schools during the 19th and 20th centuries. The theory of disability analyzes disability as a common experience of lived realities, with vast meanings. Because the definition of a disability changes depending on culture and society, and because the category includes many types of disabilities, there cannot be a static, singular "disabled" experienced. Furthermore, the use of disability in historical analysis does more than to depict victims, passive actors, or heroic individuals overcoming their unfortunate situations.[8] The same can be said of writing about Native Americans.

The motivations behind the educational systems for Native American and deaf students that sought to unmake their diverse cultural and linguistic identities grew out of the societal standards established by the dominant group, of which Native Americans and deaf individuals were not included. Designed from paternalistic perspectives, the Native American and deaf boarding schools of the 19th and 20th centuries failed to eradicate the respective communities of their cultures and languages, but nevertheless left a lasting impact upon the identities of Native Americans and members of the Deaf community.

A Savage Language

By the nineteenth century, American settlers had already determined Native Americans and their cultures to be uncivilized. Once the concept of the Indian was created, so too was the binary definition of savage vs. civilized.

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[8] Susan Burch and Michael Rembis, *Disability Histories*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 1-2.

Savagery was used in defining people racially, culturally, religiously,

economically, and through abilities.[9] A person's use of objects reflects their

competency in the eyes of the dominant group, and as historian Katherine Ott

explains, "Scientists ranked people's relationship to savagery by assessing the

degree to which they used tech like railroads, weapons, and telegraphs."[10]

Settler colonialism, replacing indigenous culture with that of settlers' and

structuring society to continue to suppress indigeneity, is strongly linked to

nation-building. American settlers sought out to design a nation through their

perspective as the superior, dominating group, leading to paternalistic

determinations of norms and the "other."[11] As these same settlers moved across

the continent, they continually displaced the Natives, believing they were

destined to be removed from the land. The immense number of Native

Americans to die of diseases only fueled settlers' beliefs that they were

superior.[12] When the idea of educating the Indians and assimilating them into

mainstream society gained momentum, the settlers no longer needed to remove

them from the land, they simply needed to erase their cultures and languages.

Deaf people, however, were already scattered throughout society, unable

to be easily identified in public. Deafness, like many so-called disabilities, is an

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[9] Margaret D. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940,* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 78.
[10] Katherine Ott, "Disability Things: Material Culture and American Disability History, 1700-2010," in *Disability Histories*, ed. by Susan Burch and Michael Rembis, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 126.
[11] Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism,* 9-11.
[12] Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 25.

"invisible" impairment. A person missing a limb can be easily spotted and labeled as different, just as a skin tone or hair color can be observed. And unlike Native Americans, they were mostly isolated from other deaf individual and living in a world designed for hearing and speaking individuals, which isolated them further. Where spoken words failed, actions and body language prevailed, developing into a "language of signs." These bodily movements intended to express thoughts in place of words were and are nothing new to humanity. Gestures, facial expressions, and body language are as much a part of spoken languages as the actual words. Still, by the nineteenth century, signing languages were considered to be "savage" languages, and even inferior to the spoken languages of Native tribes.[13] Over time, even as sign language developed into a more intricate linguistic system, it became increasingly viewed as an uncivilized, savage language. By linking the language of signs to Native American languages, reformers placed not only signed languages but deaf people on the same level of inferiority.

Sometimes, Native American students visited schools for the deaf and would communicate with the deaf students and teachers there using the sign languages of their own cultures.[14] Even coming from different cultures, students were able to communicate with each other through signing. Sign language could be used as an educational tool, a form of natural human communication, and

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[13] Baynton, *Forbidden Signs,* 40.
[14] Ibid., 40.

eventually would become a legitimate language.[15] And yet, instead of this being an impressive and admirable occurrence of connecting humanity, it became demonstrative of the linguistic inferiority of both Native American and deaf students. Similarly, when Native American students first arrived at their boarding schools and were immersed with other students from different geographical locations and different tribes who spoke different languages, they would use sign language to communicate with each other and overcome the language barrier.

Saving the Savage Soul

In the early 1800s, religious reformers of the Second Great Awakening sought both to instill and improve morals in American society. Both Native Americans and deaf people were identified as groups in need of moral and spiritual uplift, so missionaries set out to be their guides to finding the "light." Leaders of religious reform saw those who were deaf to be unable to connect to the gospel. In order to correct this "atrocity" (the atrocity being the inability to connect to the gospel, not the lack of hearing) and using a method known as "manualism," these reformers founded the first school for deaf students, the American School for the Deaf, in 1817 and gave rise to a unique and close-knit Deaf culture.

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[15] Elizabeth S. Parks, "Treatment of Signed Languages in Deaf History Texts," *Sign Language Studies* 8, no. 1 (2007), 73. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26190632

Until the 19th century, there were no schools dedicated strictly to educating deaf students. At the American School for the Deaf, "instruction was in sign language, with the goals of imparting literacy, training for productive labor, and religious salvation."[16] At this school a method of instruction referred to as "manualism" was used by students and teachers. Sign language, to reformers of the Romantic period, was more natural and therefore closer to God than speech, and so was highly revered.[17] This method comprised of using sign language as the primary means of communication, and was highly supported by both the deaf and hearing populations in America until the late 19th century when the opposing oral method gained increased support.

The driving force behind the manual method rested in advocates of religious reform. The concern was that the deaf were in need of spiritual and moral salvation, living uncivilized, without a means of understanding the Bible. "Until the 1860s, deafness was most often described as an affliction that isolated the individual from the Christian community. Its tragedy was that deaf people lived beyond the reach of the gospel." [18] One of the most prominent leaders for deaf education during these early years of the 19th century was Thomas H. Gallaudet, a preacher and founder of the American School for the Deaf. Gallaudet was an avid supporter of spreading the Gospel to those populations not yet in touch with God's grace. In his "Sermon on the Duty and Advantages of

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[16] "History of Deaf Education in America." ASD History. Accessed November 15, 2017. http://www.asd-1817.org/page.cfm?p=1239
[17] Baynton, *Forbidden Signs,* 40.
[18] Baynton, "'A Silent Exile on This Earth'," 216.

Affording Instruction to the Deaf and Dumb," Gallaudet discusses the current state of the deaf and mute populations in society saying "these are some of the heathen;–long-neglected heathen;–the poor Deaf and Dumb, whose sad necessities have been forgotten, while scarce a corner of the world has not been searched to find those who are yet ignorant of Jesus Christ."[19] Claiming the deaf and mute to be heathens, Gallaudet is expressing the idea that to be without knowledge of the Christian God is to be uncivilized. He also touches on the fact that while much of the world has been immersed in Christian missionary services, American society has failed to provide the same necessary services to its own "long-neglected heathen; –the poor Deaf and Dumb." Without offering the same education and salvation from ignorance, the deaf and mute peoples of America would be left as neglected savages.

The education of Native Americans, then, was seen just as necessary to religious reformers. As Gallaudet expresses in the above quote, to be ignorant of Christianity is to be neglected and uncivilized. Around the same time that the American School for the Deaf was founded, congress passed the Indian Civilization Act,[20] giving the President the power to appoint "persons of good moral character" to educate Native American youth.[21] These people of worthy morals would be the missionaries, who then established schools (many on-

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[19] Thomas H. Gallaudet, "A Sermon on the Duty and Advantages of Affording Instruction to the Deaf and Dumb." (1824). Concord: Hill. Retrieved from the Hathi Trust Digital Library, accessed November 20, 2017. https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001743757/Home. (6).
[20] The Indian Civilization Act was passed in 1819, just two years after the American School for the Deaf was founded.
[21] Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc, *Boarding School Blues,* 10.

reservation) to carry out the moral education of Natives in order to civilize them. Until the late nineteenth/early twentieth century, many reformers believed that through a good education and a simple change in environment, any Native American could be "rescued" from their savagery.[22] These missionaries sought to control the behavior of the indigenous students, and immerse them in Christian values, European languages, and other aspects of civilized culture.[23] What many European settlers failed to realize was that indigenous communities had their own systems of education before their arrival. Much of their indigenous identity and knowledge of Native cultures originated with their tribal stories, cultural lessons, songs, etc.[24] Nonetheless, reformers viewed the ways of Native Americans to be inferior to their own, and so they justified the educational systems they appointed for them.

At the same time, other Christian reformers believed the deaf to be innocent from the corrupt nature of the world, as well as ignorant because they lacked the ability to interact with the world the same way as "normal" hearing individuals could.[25] As Thomas Gallaudet summarized this concept:

> they have, nevertheless, been defended, by the very imprisonment of their minds, against much of the contagion of bad example; against the scandal, the abuse, the falsehood, the profanity, and the blasphemy, which their ears cannot hear nor their tongues utter […] Thus, they have been kept,

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[22] Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, 67.
[23] Clifford E. Trafzer, Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, and Lorene Sisquoc, *The Indian School on Magnolia Avenue: Voices and Images from Sherman Institute,* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2012), 2.
[24] Ibid., 4.
[25] Baynton, "'A Silent Exile on This Earth'," 216.

by the restraining grace of God, from much of the evil that is
in the world.[26]

The belief in the deaf community as "innocent" possibly encouraged the

manualists in their promotion of educating the deaf, viewing them as worthy of

their aid and guidance towards knowledge and salvation. However, the fact that

the deaf were viewed as needing help reinforced the notion that deafness made

a person inferior to their hearing counterparts.

Reformers saw Native Americans in the same innocent, ignorant, un-

corrupted light as deaf people, leading missionaries to seek to "protect" the

Natives from becoming corrupt. Through education, the missionaries relied

heavily upon Christian values to instill the Native American students with proper

morals. These beliefs in innocence also expanded into claims that the Natives

would become dependent societal burdens, public charges, if children were not

educated and assimilated into white culture.[27] Furthermore, the impoverished

and struggling reservation lifestyle that existed was viewed as proof of the Native

American tribes' inability to care for themselves, instead of questioning the

government's role in failing to provide proper resources to the indigenous groups

they had displaced.[28]

Without access to the gospel and an education, Native Americans and

deaf individuals were seen to be lacking humanity. As time went on, these beliefs

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[26] Gallaudet, "A Sermon on the Duty and Advantages of Affording Instruction to the Deaf and
Dumb," 9.

[27] Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, 14-26.

[28] Ibid., 45.

of inferiority continued. Eventually, the population of individuals seen as having a disability or affliction would be even more stigmatized. Race, gender, and class became intertwined in one's physical and mental abilities to create an identity group. Even white citizens, members of the dominant group, were seen as "tainted" if they had a disability, including deafness.[29] The true differences between a hearing and deaf individual, being a difference in hearing ability and the form of communication, were overshadowed by ideas that deafness prevented a person from being a part of the "normal" group in society. Similarly, reformers sought to teach Native Americans English and Christian values with the hope that they would develop into civilized populations like that of the dominant society. The normal standard to which citizens were held to in the early 19th century centered around a person's morals, and knowledge of the gospel.[30] For manualist deaf educators and for missionary indigenous teachers, it mattered less that students were deaf or indigenous than did the fact that they were not able to connect to Christianity and find salvation for their souls. Nevertheless, this insistence that these students were "outsiders" was firmly established. In later years, the measure of what constituted Native American and Deaf communities as outside the realm of normalcy would change, in response to changes in societal values.

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[29] Anna Stubblefield, "'Beyond the Pale': Tainted Whiteness, Cognitive Disability, and Eugenic Sterilization." *Hypatia* 22, no. 2 (Spring, 2007): 163

[30] Baynton, "'A Silent Exile on This Earth'," 220.

Oralism, Assimilation, and "Making Them Useful"

After the Civil War, defining American identity and culture became immensely important. As the dominant white culture in America struggled to maintain power after the devastation of the Civil War, many aspects of society changed. No longer was religious reform the prominent force. The theme of nationalism, instead, took the place religion had held in society earlier in the century. Spurred by multiple factors stemming from scientific discoveries, increased diversity and immigration rates, and societal changes brought on by the war, Americans searched for a way to not only define what it meant to be American, but also ways to exclude "undesirable" groups.

Lurking behind concepts of nationalism and "undesirables" was eugenics. Francis Galton first used the term "eugenics" in 1883, explaining it as a "moral philosophy to improve humanity," by encouraging that the "healthiest" members of society procreate, in order to maintain the presence of the "best."[31] From there, the public took hold of the concept and applied their own interpretations. Once again, the standard of normality relied on the dominant group in society. Only traits that described the dominant group in society were considered "desirable." This concept of eugenics then was applied to scientific theories such as the theory of evolution, and concepts such as "survival of the fittest," both of which are products of Charles Darwin's research and the resulting interpretations, provided a sense of justification for believing in the existence of a

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[31] Eugenics Archive. "Scientific Origins of Eugenics." Scientific Origins. Accessed November 11, 2016. http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/list2.pl

superior biology and led to the concept of "undesirables." Ultimately, new views in how to properly educate these "undesirables" convinced the public that it would help prevent the degeneration of a dominant, able-bodied white race.[32]

One such example of an "undesirable" group was people with disabilities, which included the Deaf community. A method of education known as "oralism" began replacing manualism, as the social and cultural climate of the United States changed drastically. Accompanied with the argument for America to be a nation with one language and one culture, sign language and Deaf culture began to be seen as threats to the American way of life. Oralism refers to the method that seeks to teach deaf and hard of hearing individuals how to articulate speech sounds as well as how to read lips, in hopes of making the use and necessity of signing nonexistent. Because Deaf culture and sign language were different from the dominant speaking culture and language of the United States, a movement to eliminate their existence occurred. Moreover, the dispute over sign language reflected the larger societal debates taking place in the 19th century, as historian Douglas Baynton describes, "fundamental issues as what distinguished Americans from non-Americans, civilized people from 'savages,' humans from animals, and men from women; what purposes education should serve; and what 'nature' and 'normality' meant and how they were related to one another."[33]

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[32] Stubblefield, "'Beyond the Pale': Tainted Whiteness, Cognitive Disability, and Eugenic Sterilization," 162.
[33] Baynton, *Forbidden Signs*, 1.

Supporters of oralism often supported this move to eradicate the use of sign language, while others may have simply believed that an oral education was beneficial to deaf students. The oral method involves instructing students in how to properly produce a vocal sound, as well as how to read lips.[34] Alexander Graham Bell, who spent much of his professional life studying speech and sound as an active oralist, explained his perspective on oralism, saying "I realized that deaf children whose vocal organs were perfect could be taught to speak. I understood, of course, that no one naturally speaks a language that he has never heard, and that as a matter of course a child who has never heard the English language could only acquire it by instruction."[35] While Bell was enthusiastic over the possibility of teaching deaf students to speak, he felt "extremely sceptical [sic] in regard to the possibility to their understanding speech by watching the movements of the mouth," referring to the process of lip reading.[36]

The first permanent school in America using pure oralism was the Clarke School, opened in 1867, fifty years after the emergence of the American School for the Deaf. "Clarke became the first school in the country to teach deaf students using the oral method and the first to recognize the importance of successfully mainstreaming deaf students into their neighborhood schools."[37] By contrast, "the American School for the Deaf, during this period, tried out students in oral

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[34] Alexander Graham Bell, "Visible Speech as a Measure of Communicating Articulation to Deaf-Mutes." *American Annals of the Deaf and Dumb* 17 (January 1872): 5-6.
[35] Bell, "Growth of the Oral Method of Instructing the Deaf," 4.
[36] Bell, "Visible Speech," 5.
[37] Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech. "Welcome to Clarke." Accessed November 15, 2016. http://www.clarkeschools.org/about/welcome

classes first, and if they did not succeed, put them in manual classes instead,

under a philosophy called the Combined System. Many other schools for the

deaf embraced the oral method to a greater extent."[38] Just as supporters of the

manual method viewed deaf students with an air of superiority, so too did the

advocates for oralism. However, the motivations behind this idea of the inferiority

of deaf individuals transitioned from religious to a more scientific base of

observation.

Sign language was discouraged from use, except for cases in which the

combined method was used. The combined method included aspects of both

manualism and oralism, essentially using sign language as well as teaching how

to make sounds and read lips. However, sign language in the combined setting

was often used only if a student was especially struggling with the oral method.

Sign Language, oralists believed, isolated deaf individuals from the hearing world

and kept them from learning to communicate normally with the hearing

population.[39] Additionally, those students who failed in the oral method were

seen as especially unfit for society, labeled as idiots and degenerates.[40]

Apart from the climate of nationalism and eugenics being a fertile breeding

ground for oralism, this method of education was also able to gain popular

support due to a large amount of public and financial support, as well as from the

highly respected and celebrated figures who promoted the oral method, such as

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[38] American School for the Deaf, "History of Deaf Education in America."

[39] Baynton, "'A Silent Exile on This Earth'," 218.

[40] Susan Burch, "Reading Between the Signs: Defending Deaf Culture in Early Twentieth-Century America," in *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, ed. Paul Longmore and Lauri Umansky, (New York and London: New York University Press, 2001), 231.

Helen Keller and Alexander Graham Bell.[41] Helen Keller, being blind and deaf

herself, was a key figure for the oralists due to her well-known story, as well as

the fact that she was a deaf student. Since members of the Deaf community

were the fiercest opposition to the oral method, Keller's advocacy in support of it

stood out. At the age of sixteen, Keller spoke about her feelings in regard to

teaching the deaf to speak, saying

> I want every little deaf child in all this great world to have an
> opportunity to learn to speak. I know that much has been said and
> written on this subject, and that there is a wide difference of opinion
> among teachers of the deaf in regard to oral instruction. It seems
> very strange to me that there should be this difference of opinion; I
> cannot understand how any one interested in our education can fail
> to appreciate the satisfaction we feel in being able to express our
> thoughts in living words.[42]

Keller's perspective shows the eagerness in being able to speak aloud, and her

support of oralism, but fails to discuss the effects of sign language, whether they

be positive or negative.

Alexander Graham Bell's already prestigious reputation in society drew

much attention and support towards the spread of the oral method. Bell

supported the idea of preserving American culture, and therefore diminishing

subcultures such as Deaf culture, including the use of their manual sign

language. His support of eugenics and nationalism drew followers from those

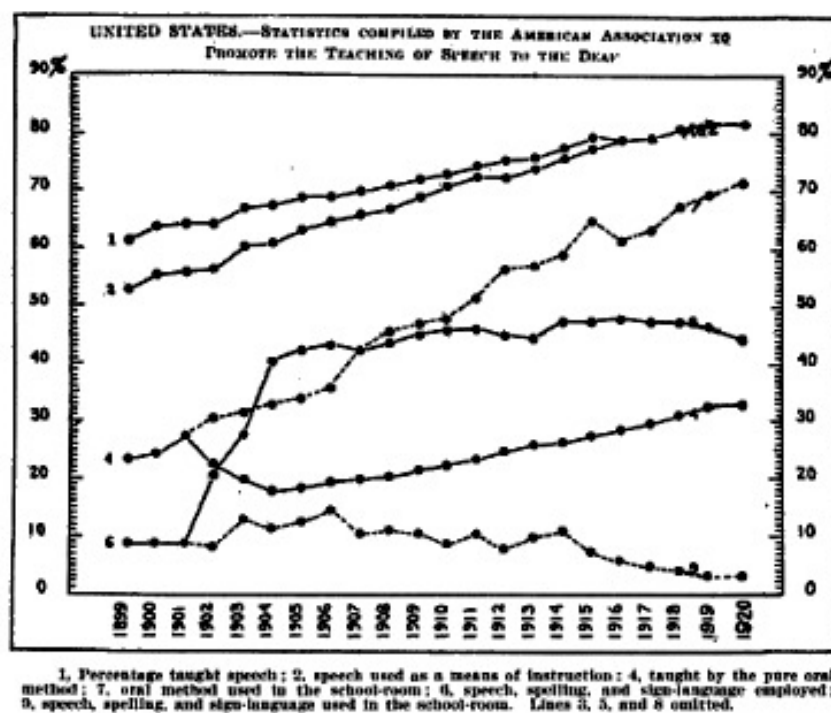groups, and his command of science and knowledge of speech and sounds was

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[41] Ibid., 217

[42] Helen Keller, John Albert Macy, and Anne Sullivan. *The Story of My Life*. New York, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1924.

highly respected, adding to his power as a leader and advocate for oralism.[43] Bell

and other oralists wanted to make the Deaf community "normal," which included

attempts to impress dominant cultural values upon deaf students, believing in the

possibility for them to assimilate into dominant culture. This hope for becoming a

part of mainstream society also attracted public support, especially from families

with deaf loved ones.[44]

Bell, as an avid supporter of oralism, was biased in his analysis of its

success. In his speech on the "Growth of the Oral Method of Instructing the

Deaf," he provides a few tables and graphs which show not the success in

educating students, but rather the increase in the use of oralism in deaf schools.

1, Percentage taught speech; 2, speech used as a means of instruction; 4, taught by the pure oral method; 7, oral method used in the school-room; 6, speech, spelling, and sign-language employed; 9, speech, spelling, and sign-language used in the school-room. Lines 3, 5, and 8 omitted.

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[43] Baynton, "'A Silent Exile on This Earth'," 219.
[44] Burch, "Reading Between the Signs," 216-217.

This graph, from the *Volta Review,* shows the increase in oralism, and the decrease in the use of sign language. By the 1920s, the number of students being taught without sign language was at about 80% (line 4).[45]

This increase in the oral method simply shows the popularity of its theory, not the success in teaching deaf students through its use. He then attempts to claim that since there is an increase in the use of oral education, that it is the best option, especially when in competition with another method. "Is not this continuous advance in spite of bitter opposition an evidence of intrinsic superiority? Without a struggle for existence, natural selection cannot operate to bring out the survival of the fittest."[46] However, he does go on to say that "the ultimate verdict of time has yet to be given," giving recognition to the possibility that the manual method may "survive" as the most "fit" instead of oralism.

For Native American boarding schools in the late 19th century, the main goal of education was no longer to bring Natives into the light of the gospel, but rather to assimilate the Natives into American culture, again signifying the importance to nationalism ideals of America as a nation with one language and one culture. Richard Henry Pratt, known for founding the first federally funded boarding school for Native Americans, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in 1879 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, was one of the leading spokesmen for assimilation style education. Students at these schools came from Native tribes all around the United States. Some left their tribes willingly or with the

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[45] "The Speech Statistics for 1920," *The Volta Review* 22, no. 6 (June 1920): 372.
[46] Bell, "Growth of the Oral Method of Instructing the Deaf," 10.

encouragement and cooperation of their families, while others were coerced and

taken without proper consent. In some cases, child removal was akin to

kidnapping.[47] Indigenous communities at times banded together to confront

officials and oppose child removal, requesting more on-reservation schools to be

built instead, or for Native American students to be allowed an education at

public schools. They did what they could to negotiate the circumstances of child

removal, such as choosing the schools their children would be sent to.[48]

At the schools, students were exposed to a strict, military-like school

structure. When the first arrived, students would be stripped of their clothing, and

often had their hair cut in attempts to erase the "Indian" from their appearance.

Their tribal names were viewed as savage and uncivilized, and so they were

given new, "normal" names. Students even grew to be embarrassed of their

names due to the extent at which teachers and administrators would ridicule

them.[49] Unfortunately, students were subject to much worse than just cultural

attacks. Many dormitories and bathrooms were centers of poor sanitation and

immense overcrowding. Malnourishment was also common, as was disease and

illness, leading to many student deaths.[50] Luther Standing Bear, a well-known

Native American leader and student of boarding schools recorded his experience

with the food at Carlisle he was given his first day there: "All we were given was

bread and water. How disappointed we were! At noon we had some meat, bread,

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[47] Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, 151.
[48] Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, 186-191.
[49] Brenda J. Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families 1900-1940,* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 28-29.
[50] Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, 252.

and coffee, so we felt a little better. But how lonesome the big boys and girls were for their far away Dakota homes where there was plenty to eat!"[51] Many times, when students were sick, and even when they passed away, parents and families were not informed. At times, students were even kept at school against their parents' wishes, with one mother claiming that "It seems it would be much easier to get her out of prison than out of your school."[52]

Amidst the dark side of these institutions were "well-meaning" leaders such as Captain Pratt. He and his supporters believed hard labor to be essential to civilizing and moralizing the Native American students, and so students often performed chores around the institutions as well as off-campus in "outing programs." These programs acted as sources of cheap labor for local employers, as well as opportunities for educators to provide students with skills and experience to make them "useful" to society. Instead of being taught about running businesses, these students were being taught how to be good, hard workers. These programs often came at the price of academics, and student class-time was replaced with vocational training. Schools even controlled the wages of their students taking part in their outing programs. For example, Sherman Institute had a policy that only granted students 1/3 of their paychecks, with the rest being placed in their student accounts. Sometimes, students would have trouble getting ahold of the money they were owed.[53] Generally, boys were

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[51] Luther Standing Bear, *My People, the Sioux*, ed. by E. A. Brininstool, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 134.

[52] Child, *Boarding School Seasons*, 46-47.

[53] Kevin Whalen, "Labored Learning: The Outing System at Sherman Institute, 1902-1930," in *The Indian School on Magnolia Avenue: Voices and Images from Sherman Institute,* ed. by

the focus of hard labor skills, while girls were taught skills in the "domestic sciences," projecting the dominant group's view that a girl's place was in the home onto Native Americans.[54]

Female students were not exclusively confined to learning skills related to domesticity. Some schools, such as the Sherman Institute, initiated student nursing programs which gave Native American girls the opportunity to learn an important trade outside of the "domestic sciences." Programs like these demonstrate an acknowledgment of the intelligence and capabilities of Native American girls.[55]

Leading into the 20th century, the belief that Native Americans were capable of only certain types of jobs was prevailing in education. Instead of holding onto the goal of assimilation into mainstream society, educators began preparing students for jobs they believed they would be "useful" in. Parents and students had high expectations of their boarding school educations, but the schools had low expectations for the usefulness and the capabilities of Native American students. [56] Part of this was due to the language barrier, with students coming to boarding schools with little to no knowledge of English, the language

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Clifford E. Trafzer, Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, and Lorene Sisquoc, (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2012), 126-128.

[54] Clifford E. Trafzer and Lelua Loupe, "From Perris Indian School to Sherman Institute," in *The Indian School on Magnolia Avenue: Voices and Images from Sherman Institute,* ed. by Clifford E. Trafzer, Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, and Lorene Sisquoc, (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2012.), 25.

[55] Joan A. Keller, "Healing Touch: The Nursing Program at Sherman Institute," in *The Indian School on Magnolia Avenue: Voices and Images from Sherman Institute,* ed. by Clifford E. Trafzer, Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, and Lorene Sisquoc, (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2012) 81.

[56] Kevin Whalen, "Labored Learning," 117.

barrier prevented students from learning quickly and slowed their advancement in coursework. This may be another reason why vocational training was so attractive to the school teachers and administrators.[57] The character of Native American students was consistently evaluated and determined based on how well they measured up to the standards of dominant culture.[58]

This idea of "usefulness" could be found within the residential schools for the deaf as well. Sign language was believed to be useless in the workplace, and since deaf people were viewed as inferior and less capable, as well as suffering from a limiting affliction, they were not trusted in certain jobs.[59] Some deaf students would become teachers, but even that profession was limited to them by the 20th century. For either Native American or deaf students, usefulness was dependent upon and defined by one's service to the settler economy, not to their own cultural communities.[60]

Rebellion and Punishment

With their lives monitored so closely, students in boarding schools were faced with having to adhere to school expectations or face harsh punishments.[61] And yet, students still took steps in active rebellion against the attitudes of

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[57] Clyde Ellis, "'We Had a Lot of Fun, but of Course, That Wasn't the School Part': Life at the Rainy Mountain Boarding School, 1893-1920," in *Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences*, ed. by Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 80.
[58] John Bloom, *To Show What an Indian Can Do: Sports at Native American Boarding Schools,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 24.
[59] Edwards, *Words Made Flesh*, 123.
[60] Jacobs*, White Mother to a Dark Race*, 82.
[61] Ibid., 252.

dominant culture that sought to destroy their own cultures and languages, and their individuality.

In the student clubs and organizations students were a part of, they would find ways to use their languages or take part in cultural practices. Their refusal to be stripped of their culture inspired their resistance, and formations of communities within schools.[62] Luther Standing Bear explained his own realization: "I felt I was no longer Indian, but would be an imitation of a white man."[63] It was realizations such as this that drove Native American students to seek to protect and maintain their indigenous identities. Even in small ways, such as picking berries, students were actively rebelling against the dominant group and staking a claim into their identities. Other forms of rebellion took the form of faking sickness to get out of class or work, working slow or poorly to be reassigned other duties, or hiding from administrators with friends where they could speak their languages and practice their cultures. Students would surreptitiously use their languages, such as while saying their prayers at night.[64] One student, Viola Martinez explained that she had decided that she "was not going to forget my language…My cousin Evelyn and I would climb up where we wouldn't be seen or heard."[65] Even choosing to remain silent could be a form of resistance, as it brought students pride, dignity, and strength against an

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[62] Ibid., 265-268.
[63] Standing Bear, *My People, the Sioux*, 141.
[64] Child, *Boarding School Seasons*, 28.
[65] Trafzer and Loupe, "From Perris Indian School," 26.

oppressive educational force.[66] Some students would dedicate belittling nicknames to school staff that were disliked, or would play pranks on them.[67]

Student rebellion was not confined to these small actions, however. Students would use the skills they obtained through these schools to benefit their tribal communities, using the efforts of dominant culture to their advantage. Those who were a part of outing programs would find ways to enter jobs of their own choosing. Boarding schools were even resources for Native Americans, whose tribal communities suffered economically from the hands of the U.S government. Native American students, as well as deaf students, were not passive actors in boarding schools. They actively fought against poor treatment in whatever ways possible.[68]

Even parents and some employees of the school took part in resisting efforts to strip students of their cultures. Employees who broke school rules to support students were punished in their own ways. At schools for the deaf, teachers who supported sign language would encourage students to use it, even when oralism was taking over. These educators were often removed from the school as they stood as role models for subversive cultures, and were therefore against dominant culture. Families of Native American students would do all they could to stay in touch with their children, writing letters, requesting them to be free to visit their homes, or trying to visit them at the schools. Administrators tried

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[66] Celia Haig Brown, *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*, (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1988), 88.
[67]Trafzer, Keller, and Sisquoc, *Boarding School Blues,* 22-23.
[68] Whalen, "Labored Learning," 125.

to keep contact between students and their tribal communities as limited as possible.[69]

Perhaps the most dramatic form of rebellion employed by students was running away from boarding school. Things like homesickness, loneliness, dislike for school/trade work, and harsh punishments could lead students to running away.[70] Punishments were common, and were often humiliating, terrifying, and dehumanizing. Students may lose privileges, be forced to clean bathrooms and/or kitchens, have food withheld from them, be reprimanded publicly, hit, whipped, and jailed. If found using a language other than English, school staff would sometimes wash the mouths of students out with soap and even lye.[71]

Finding Community

The boarding schools that existed for deaf students and Native Americans were far from perfect, with many flaws, but they also had positive aspects. Even though these schools were dedicated to unmaking and eradicating cultures different from dominant society, their efforts to stifle the cultures and languages of students did not produce their intended results.

The establishment of deaf schools provided students access to knowledge, as well as a space to develop their identity alongside other deaf individuals. So, not only did these institutions provide deaf students with an

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[69] Child, *Boarding School Seasons*, 13.
[70] Trafzer, Gilbert, and Sisquoc, *The Indian School on Magnolia Avenue*, 7-8.
[71] Trafzer and Loupe, "From Perris Indian School," 26-28.

education, they allowed Deaf culture to develop.[72] The language the students

and teachers at these schools cultivated together became what is known today

as American Sign Language, or ASL.[73] Soon, the deaf community had a culture

and language all their own. To generate a more cohesive system of signing, Deaf

leaders began creating dictionaries to legitimize and maintain their signs.[74] This

development of culture brought deaf individuals together and gave them a sense

of belonging within a society which failed to do the same. Today the American

School for the Deaf explains that

> an important feature of manual communication as a teaching
> language is that it allows deaf people to be teachers. Many alumni
> did go on to become teachers and principals at schools for the deaf
> throughout the United States, which spread sign language
> throughout the country. A deaf culture developed during this period,
> with periodicals, organizations, social relations and all the other
> features to be expected of a minority culture dispersed through the
> general population. So rapid and positive was the spread of this
> language and culture that the period is today referred to as a golden
> age.[75]

A major part of this manual method of instruction, as well as Deaf culture, was

the use of sign language. Like missionaries in Native American schools,

manualist teachers adopted the primary form of communication used by the

population they were working with.[76] Instead of expecting deaf students to

communicate mainly in written and spoken English like "normal" students,

educators of manualism saw no issue in working with sign language. Again, the

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[72] Baynton, "'A Silent Exile on This Earth'," 217.

[73] Edwards, *Words Made Flesh*, 42.

[74] Susan Burch, *Signs of Resistance: American Deaf Cultural History, 1900 to World War II,* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 75.

[75] American School for the Deaf. "History of Deaf Education in America."

[76] Baynton, "'A Silent Exile on This Earth'," 217.

main desire with manualism was to provide an education and development of morals, to give deaf students access to salvation, not to make deaf students communicate the same way as hearing students. Moreover, since sign language allowed deaf students to be educated and freed from their ignorance and isolation from the world, educators of the manual method saw no problem with its use.[77] Even though manualist teachers were using sign language, they were teaching students to read and write in English as well.[78]

Because sign language was accepted, the manual method encouraged the employment of many deaf teachers as well, who were supported for their ability to connect to their deaf students due to a shared cultural identity. "The fact remains that their thorough understanding of their charges, their bond of sympathy and ready adaptability to their environment make them well-nigh indispensable to a school of this character."[79]

Members of the Deaf community were strongly opposed to the oral method and felt that not only was their language and primary means of communication being threatened, but also the very existence of their culture. Oralists sought to bring an end to residential schools, viewing them as further isolation of deaf students from mainstream society, while to the deaf community, residential schools were the origin of their unique culture.[80]

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[77] Ibid., 230
[78] Edwards, *Words Made Flesh*, 51.
[79] J.H. Cloud, "Public Opinion: The Deaf Teacher." *The Silent Worker,* January 1920.
[80] Burch, "Reading Between the Signs," 218.

being isolated from others like themselves to being immersed in an environment thriving with Deafness, the boarding schools created the environment for transitioning from deaf to Deaf.[84] Students joined clubs and sports, where they experienced comradery, teamwork, and pride. Even working student newspapers brought students together, and gave them the ability to express their thoughts and ideals with the written word, and work in a space that did not dwell on their physical differences. Student clubs were the "extended family" of deaf students; places they could defy mainstream portrayals of deafness and disability and show positive portrayals instead. Clubs were a sort of sanctuary for Deaf culture and sign language.[85]

Native Americans similarly experienced a creation of a culture in boarding schools, something assimilationists didn't intend to do. Boarding schools became a part of the new indigenous identity, and allowed for the growth in a "pan-Indian" identity and increased inter-tribal relations.[86] In the total-Indian environment of the boarding schools, students found familiarity and security within each other. As one student put it, "I didn't learn my Indian ways at home; I learned them right here."[87] Just like with deaf students, student clubs and organizations allowed Native American students to form bonds, as well as practice their cultures and languages in a system that attempted to prevent such things from happening.

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[84] "Deaf" refers to the unique cultural community comprised of deaf individuals.
[85] Susan Burch, *Signs of Resistance,* 72-75.
[86] Child, *Boarding School Seasons,* 2-4.
[87] David Wallace Adams, "Beyond Bleakness: The Brighter Side of Indian Boarding Schools, 1870-1940," in *Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences*, ed. by Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 59.

Sports, while used by assimilationists to show the fitness of the Native students, became an important aspect in building indigenous identity in schools, and brought them immense pride. One student at Carlisle claimed that "the thing that pulled me through was the athletic training at Carlisle."[88]

Survival of the Fittest?

The 19th and 20th centuries hosted major changes in American ideologies, which impacted the subversive, "othered" groups in society. Educating the "uncivilized" portions of society became paramount in the 19th century, and the goals of education evolved alongside a changing society. Native American students and deaf students both had unique experiences within boarding schools, but through analyzing them together, the similarities demonstrate just how pervasive dominant ideologies can be in society while at the same time revealing the commonalities of human experience. Settler colonialism demonstrates the motivations behind the efforts to assimilate these two cultures and eradicate their cultural and linguistic ties. Disability theory shows how the Native American identity was a disabling factor, just like deafness. The paternalistic nature of these systems of education continued well into the 20th century, and are still existent to an extant today. However, by the 1970s, both Native Americans and Deaf reformers finally gained more direct involvement in making educational decisions for their communities.

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[88] Bloom, *To Show What an Indian Can Do*, 97.

Neither proponents of deaf education nor Native American education placed their main concern in bridging the gap of communication between their unique communities and that of dominant society. Instead, both systems focused on reforming education to better fit the values of the dominant society. There was simply an agenda to better assimilate people into the normative, culture of American society. For the manualists and missionaries, the goal was to free deaf people and Native Americans from "darkness," and to provide them with a means of understanding the Gospel and Christian morals, offering a chance for salvation.[89] With these morals and knowledge of the Bible, these students could be seen, relatively, as equals to their "normal" counterparts. In contrast, the oralists and Progressive assimilationists could only see success with these populations if they did away with their unique languages and cultures, and adhered to the true "American" way of life, which in other words implied adhering to the language and culture of the dominant group. Elof Carlson offers an explanation of this shift in his work "The Hoosier Connection: Compulsory Sterilization as Moral Hygiene":

> Before there was a science that could discern and interpret the causes of these disorders, most people assumed that misfortune was an act of God. As society secularized and advances in science and medicine offered interpretations that seemed equally plausible or even superior to religious determinism, degeneracy theory emerged, relying on the authority of science to explain the existence and experience of society's less fortunate members.[90]

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[89] Baynton, "'A Silent Exile on This Earth'," 220.

[90] Elof Axel Carlson, "The Hoosier Connection: Compulsory Sterilization as Moral Hygiene," in *A Century of Eugenics in America: From the Indiana Experiment to the Human Genome Era*, ed. by Paul A. Lombardo. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011). 14.

Gradually, science began to replace religion's influence in the social aspects of society in ways that described deafness not as a punishment from God, but as an undesirable trait. When this happened, with concepts such as social Darwinism, the entire education system of Native Americans and deaf students was called into question; as was their status on an evolutionary scale.

At first, with the use of the oral method, Deaf culture was limited with the inhibition of their primary means of communicating. This primary method of communication (sign language) used between students was removed from use in the classroom, which on the surface weakened the unity of deaf students. Still, this ultimately resulted in strengthening Deaf culture as students searched for ways to retain it, bringing the deaf community closer.[91] This strength and unity within the deaf community would prove a strong force against the oral method, advocating instead for more say in their own education methods or for a combined method, where the exclusivity of the oral method disappeared. Furthermore, the opposition to the oral method was increasingly reinforced when deaf teachers were replaced with hearing teachers, and their language and culture was challenged even more. "It is a fact to be regretted, the deaf teacher is becoming extinct. The onward march of oral teaching is the predominating factor in the process of this extinction."[92] Interestingly, this quote shares the rhetoric of evolution, with the mention of extinction, similar to rhetoric used by Alexander

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[91] Burch, "Reading Between the Signs," 215.
[92] Cloud, "Public Opinion: The Deaf Teacher."

Graham Bell earlier in his description of the contest between manual and oral education. Similar events occurred in the realm of Native American education, with assimilationist efforts to weaken and unmake their cultures to fail, and provide new arenas of indigenous identity.

Eventually, the oralist education system and that of the assimilation agenda were weakened not only by cultural resistance, but also by changes in society, as society began to foster care for the individual's needs and abilities rather than the teacher's ability to follow an ideology.[93] In the end, methods were not measured by their quality of education, but rather on their social and cultural popularity. Alexander Graham Bell applied his eugenics values not only to oralism and the Deaf community, but also to the competition between manualism and oralism, believing one would ultimately overcome the other. However, these were educational methods, designed upon the values of their societies. As society changes, and as the dominant ideologies change over time, groups that have been marginalized and labeled as "outsiders" must be re-assimilated in order to adhere to new cultural values, just as the methods for educating the Deaf journeyed from manualism to oralism to a more individually based education system, and Native American education transitioned from becoming uncivilized to assimilation, each method reflecting the dominating cultural values of their times.

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[93] Burch, "Reading Between the Signs," 222.

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Broken Constitutions: Veterans of the American Revolution and the Language of

Disability

"What think ye of a soldier who fights for liberty;/ Do ye think he fights for money, or to set his country free?"-Anonymous[1]

"They suffered, they fought, and bled, not to swell the triumphs of a proud conqueror, not to enslave any portion of mankind, but in the cause of justice and humanity, to ameliorate the condition of their fellow men and their achievements were such as to astonish and delight the world. They broke the rod of the oppressor, and procured for an aggrieved people freedom, sovereignty, and independence."-Josiah Cushman[2]

The Revolutionary War, like all wars before and since, wreaked havoc on the bodies of soldiers, resulting in severe wounds, injuries, disabilities, and death. It is curious then, why the discussion of disabilities in the time of the Revolution remains to be largely overlooked in scholarship. While much has been written about the "rage militaire," the great battles and the military leaders of the Revolution, as well as the social and political landscape that characterized the American Revolution, there are still many concepts and themes to be thoroughly researched, especially in relation to the experiences of soldiers after the war.[3] This paper seeks to contribute to this scholarship, concentrating on the language of disabilities used in describing soldiers and veterans.

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[1] Emily J. Teipe, *America's First Veterans and the Revolutionary War Pensions* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002). 151.

[2] Josiah Cushman, as quoted in John Resch, *Suffering Soldiers: Revolutionary War Veterans, Moral Sentiment, and Political Culture in the Early Republic.* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999). 137.

[3] On soldiers of the Revolution see John A. Ruddiman, *Becoming Men of Some Consequence: Youth and Military Service in the Revolutionary War.* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014); Susan M. Browne, "United States Soldiers and Veterans in War, Peace, and Politics

As historian David Gerber claims, war creates disabled bodies, but it is people and their associated cultures that create the meanings attached to disabilities.[4] The social model of disability describes the concept of a disability as socially/culturally constructed and subject to change over time, depending on the dominant culture and values upheld in society. People understand and interpret disabilities in different ways, even in today's culture. There are social, legal, medical, and personal definitions of "disability," supporting the claim of disability being a social construct.

Using federal pension records, this paper explores the ways in which disabled veterans, policymakers, and the general public constructed and understood the concept of "disability" in the early American Republic. Beginning with the First National Pension Act in 1776, the emergent United States committed to the very first federal agreement on a pension system, a large part of which related to invalid, or disabled, soldiers.[5] Just over 200 years after this act, in 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act passed, declaring the legal definition of disability:

During the Revolutionary War and State-Formation Period," (PhD diss., The New School, 2003); John Resch, *Suffering Soldiers: Revolutionary War Veterans, Moral Sentiment, and Political Culture in the Early Republic.* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999); Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783.* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979); On veterans and pensions, see Emily J. Teipe, *America's First Veterans and the Revolutionary War Pensions* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002).

[4] David Gerber, "Creating Group Identity: Disabled Veterans and American Government," *OAH Magazine of History* 23, no. 3 (2009): 23-28. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40505999.

[5] This was the first federal pension act of the new United States nation. The colonies had established previous pension systems based on English pension laws as early as 1636. "U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: A History," VCU Libraries Social Welfare History Project, last modified April 6, 2017, accessed April 20, 2018. https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/federal/u-s-department-of-veteran-affairs/

> The term `disability' means, with respect to an individual--
> (A) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual;
> (B) a record of such an impairment; or
> (C) being regarded as having such an impairment.[6]

It is important to clarify that this legal definition from 1990 did not apply to the public's understanding of disability in 1776, legally or culturally. The purpose of including this definition is to highlight the vague definition of "disability" in federal legal terms. This vagueness leaves much space for interpretation, and further demonstrates the difficulty in defining just what it means to be disabled.

Even though the United States was a new nation, many of the cultural and political ideals and practices were inherited from Europe, and cultivated in the colonies. Therefore, while federal policies regarding disabled veterans did not emerge until 1776 with the birth of the nation, the policies had preexisting ideological roots. In other words, understandings of disabilities, impairments, defects, illnesses, etc. were already embedded in American culture. Faced with the consequences of war, the new nation was forced to come together and agree on a federal pension system to care for the growing number of disabled veterans. So, what did it mean to be disabled or able-bodied, and how were these terms used? How were disabled veterans perceived? How did disabled veterans understand their impairments? How did these perceptions complicate the policies

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[6] The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, "An Act to Establish a Clear and Comprehensive Prohibition of Discrimination on the Basis of Disability," Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, accessed April 19, 2018. https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/thelaw/ada.html

surrounding pensions? These questions and others have guided the inquiries to this study.

The concept of disability was developing alongside the early American state, the same period that the professionalization of medicine was occurring. The government relied heavily upon the interpretation of medical practitioners in determining the nature and extent of disabilities, revealing a relationship between the concept of disability with medicine, labor, and the state. These ideas challenge the historiography that suggests disability to be a socially and culturally constructed concept that occurred during the mid-nineteenth century in conjunction with industrialization and the growth in scientific understandings of humanity (such as the notion of natural selection/survival-of-the-fittest).[7] By studying the presence and use of terms such as "disability" in the early nineteenth century, sources reveal that a shift in the perception of disabilities occurred. The concept of disability was not "invented" in the mid nineteenth century, but it did change, supporting the social-construction theory of disability. Through examining Congressional records of pension lists and court-documented pension applications and veteran testimonies, the discourse of disability is not only present, but being defined as well.

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[7] See Sarah F. Rose "No Right to Be Idle: The Invention of Disability, 1850-1930" (PhD diss., University of Illinois Chicago, 2008). For more specific historiography of disabilities in America, see Kim E. Nielsen, *A Disability History of the United States*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012); Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky, eds., *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, (New York: New York University Press, 2001); Susan Burch and Michael Rembis, eds., *Disability Histories*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014); Daniel Blackie, "Disabled Revolutionary War Veterans and the Construction of Disability in the Early United States, c. 1776-1840," (PhD diss., University of Helsinki, 2010); David M. Turner, *Disability in Eighteenth-Century England: Imagining Physical Impairment*. (New York: Routledge, 2012).

Poverty, Disability, and the Pension System

> "Though their emergence be sometimes quick, the abiding tenets by which man governs himself do not spring full-armed from the mind of any one person, king or spiritual leader though he be: they are the sum total of the feelings and desires of generations in the mass. They are custom become law."-Robert W. Kelso[8]

In order to comprehend the importance of the pension system in the early American Republic, we must understand the socioeconomic attitudes and struggles of the time. By the time of the American Revolution, the number of indigent individuals had increased, requiring the colonies to further develop systems of poor relief. Inherited from British practices, much of this relief was considered private, or "informal," meaning it was largely provided by family members and friends or neighbors, individual members or groups in society, rather than whole communities and institutions. Systems of poor relief brought over from Europe found their way into colonial societies and combined with the particular social, political, and economic climates of the colonies, evolving across time and place.[9] These colonial systems eventually influenced the future state and federal policies of the United States.

The culture of the early American colonies considered those receiving such forms of private, informal relief to be the "respectable" or "deserving" poor, while those without access to informal relief systems were more harshly

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[8] Robert W. Kelso, *The History of Public Poor Relief in Massachusetts, 1620-1920.* (Montclair: Patterson Smith Publishing Corporation, 1969). 1.

[9] Priscilla Ferguson Clement, *Welfare and the Poor in the Nineteenth-Century City: Philadelphia, 1800-1854.* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 1985). 21.

stigmatized.[10] Some communities characterized the able-bodied poor who were without family, friends, or neighbors willing (or able) to support them as "willfully" poor, or impoverished due to idleness. Such individuals were expected to prove their destitution, and their genuine need for aid.[11] Women and orphaned children, along with the elderly and the disabled/infirm, were generally favored and characterized as "deserving" poor before able-bodied men.

As the young nation continued to develop, institutions replaced systems of informal relief and became the norm by the 1820s. Hoping to decrease vagrancy and the appearance of pauperism within communities, reformers and institution officials attempted to create systems that would decrease dependence and bring people to a state of self-reliance, a desire which proved easier said than done.[12] Populating such institutions were poor individuals (often times women) without access to the care of family and friends, many of which suffered from illnesses (broadly including alcoholism), disabilities, or the difficulties of old age. Some were unable to work, and some struggled just to find work. However, poverty wasn't only tied to sick, disabled, or elderly individuals. The climate of the early U.S. was painted with war, economic instability, and general challenges in establishing personal, familial, political, and social stability, all contributing to the hardships that could lead to poverty and destitution.[13] The institution-base

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[10] Gary B. Nash, "Poverty and Politics in Early American History," in *Down and Out in Early America*, ed. Billy G. Smith. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004). 9.
[11] Kelso, *Public Poor Relief*, 33.
[12] Robert E. Cray, Jr., *Paupers and Poor Relief in New York City and Its Rural Environs, 1700-1830.* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988). 134.
[13] Nash, "Poverty and Politics," 9.

system appeared more economically favorable, attracting support from both rural and urban communities that saw institutions as shelters for the poor from temptation, corruption, and exploitation.[14]

The connection between disability and poverty, then, is no surprise in the early American Republic. As Simon Newman claims, "poverty is physical."[15] This idea, of poverty being not just an economic, but a physical phenomenon, relates to the discussion of disabled veterans and the pension acts of the early nineteenth century. It wasn't disability that was of concern, it was the economic consequences, specifically relating to access to labor and the ability to perform laborious tasks, that drew attention. Disability wasn't necessarily a constant label, or a relevant descriptor of a person's abilities in every situation, but a relative description relating to a person's labor capacity. Being disabled was not an *identity,* but rather a simple description of one's physical capabilities in relation to labor. This connection to labor created a bridge between disability and poverty. Although the disabled poor existed, disability and poverty were not mutually exclusive. There were plenty of poor individuals without disabilities, just as there were disabled people with plenty of wealth and resources to avoid needing public aid.[16] Moreover, people understood themselves in more economic-based ways, meaning they were probably more likely to claim a status of impoverishment over one of "disability," even if they did suffer impairments.

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[14] Cray, *Paupers and Poor Relief,* 134.

[15] Simon Newman, "Dead Bodies: Poverty and Death in Early National Philadelphia," in *Down and Out in Early America*, ed. Billy G. Smith. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004). 41.

[16] Turner, *Disability in Eighteenth Century England*, 10.

If the systems of poor relief in the American colonies were inherited from British systems, it is no surprise then that the early United States pension systems also borrowed from England.[17] Just like systems of poor relief, the pension systems calculated the amount of aid veterans needed, and whether they were *truly* in need. After the colonies declared independence and established the new nation of the United States, and especially after the Revolution, the responsibility for creating and overseeing pension systems and poor relief transitioned from mainly local communities to the state and federal government. This transition required the new states to arrive at a general sense of agreement regarding how to best support and handle both veterans and the country's poor populations. The new government of the United States would continue to develop its policies surrounding veterans' pensions and poor relief throughout the nineteenth century and beyond.

Rather than objects of compassion, a people unable to secure comforts on earth, society began to perceive the poor as personal failures, examples of laziness, a pattern which tended to surround economic struggles. When the economy was doing well, it seems that the "culture of sensibility" of the eighteenth century inspired more humanitarian-like action and motivations behind caring for the downtrodden members of society. In contrast, when the economy was suffering, the financial struggles overshadowed that same humanitarian

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[17] Ruth Wallis Herndon, "'Who Died an Expence to This Town': Poor Relief in Eighteenth-Century Rhode Island," in in *Down and Out in Early America*, ed. Billy G. Smith. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004). 136.

"culture of sensibility."[18] The brutality of war and the economic depression that followed the Revolution helped to influence such a change. There was a growing sense of distrust between the poor and the tax-paying families who were not dependent on the state for aid, and who saw the poor as immoral and intemperate. Additionally, whether driven from economic or social factors, some believed that public welfare encouraged and supported pauperism, rather than curing it.[19]

These views, along with the distrust of standing armies, contributed to the negativity soldiers and the pension systems received during the war and in the early years after the war.[20] Professional armies seemed threatening to the early United States, home to a populace that believed standing armies were professional tools used by tyrants to strip people of their liberties, a very un-American notion.[21] The animosity between soldiers and civilians in the early United States was clear, and the idea of a pension system only aggravated the already strained relations. Generally, the republican ideals of the early U.S. claimed pensions to be aristocratic in nature, systems which favored a certain group of citizens and placed them above others, directly undermining civic virtue.[22] For the young, developing nation, a challenge to civic virtue was

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[18] Turner, *Disability in Eighteenth Century England*, 7.

[19] Clement, *Welfare and the Poor,* 51.

[20] J. Richard Olivas, "'God Helps Those Who Help Themselves': Religious Explanations of Poverty in Colonial Massachusetts, 1630-1776," in *Down and Out in Early America*, ed. Billy G. Smith. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004). 279.

[21] Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War,* 12.

[22] Ibid., ix.

unpatriotic. Soldiers were bitter towards civilians, and distrustful of them.[23] Some

feared that a bill would show that "military merit elevated soldiers above the

citizenry" (favoring a certain class of citizen).[24] It is also possible that simply

through requesting aid in the early years of the pension system prior to 1818,

veterans unintentionally marked themselves as the "undeserving" poor, aligning

themselves with "pauperism," or the lazy, corrupt, immoral poor.[25]

In the post-Revolution years, and the early nineteenth century, Americans

generally believed that the *people* won the war for independence: the whole

citizenry, not just the soldiers. Veterans, then, became a sort of ignored and

undervalued group.[26] As the nineteenth century went on, the Revolution came to

be ever more celebrated, and the veterans began gaining attention and

popularity. With the War of 1812 bringing back memories of the Revolution, and

the previous confrontations with the British, the memory of the Revolution began

to change. The war, and the image of the "suffering soldier" became

romanticized.[27] Veterans of the revolution were suddenly seen as symbols of

American patriotism and masculinity, while simultaneously depicted as aged,

weakened, and impoverished men, deserving of the nation's gratitude, and in

need of aid. The real-life experiences of the veterans didn't matter to society

nearly as much as the public images of them, as noble sufferers. While the idea

of the "suffering soldier" gained much attention, the every-day lives of the

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[23] Ibid., 44.
[24] Ibid., 109.
[25] Clement, *Welfare and the Poor,* 51.
[26] Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, x.
[27] Resch, *Suffering Soldiers*, x.

veterans remained out of public understanding. Still, the image of the "suffering

soldier" contributed to the rise in respect towards veterans, replacing the view of

corrupt soldiers with symbols of patriotism and national pride.[28] The trauma and

anguish that soldiers had faced became interpreted as examples of their altruistic

heroism.[29] The fact that there were disabled veterans, and/or veterans facing

destitution contributed greatly to the image of the nobility of a soldier's sacrifice,

and the quixotic image of the "suffering soldier."

Why did veterans have to become aged, infirm, and impoverished before

people paid attention to their status? Looking back at the treatment of the

veterans immediately following the war versus their treatment in the years

following the War of 1812, it is evident that an ideological change occurred. A

renewed sense of patriotism replaced the bitterness felt towards veterans. This

patriotism was directly connected to stories of the sacrifices given and sufferings

that veterans had faced, and were facing, in society. Even though policymakers

saw pensions as due payment for the sacrifices veterans had to make to secure

their independence, the systems were still need-based. Being poor meant losing

control over one's own life, becoming dependent, and losing one's status, and

lead to further challenges to notions of masculinity. If "the head of the family was

compelled to support his dependents,"[30] and men were expected to be the heads

of their households, becoming a dependent, public charge was equivalent to

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[28] Ibid., 5.
[29] Ibid., 65.
[30] Kelso, *The History of Public Poor Relief*, 33.

failure. For veterans, the fear and shame surrounding dependency was great, whether they were disabled or not.[31]

The misery and destitution that veterans faced drew both pity and praise, and inspired patriotism. Poverty became equated with a sort of "service-disability."[32] Praise and pity became intertwined in the narratives of the heroic veterans who sacrificed life and limb for the future of their new nation.

This subject of pity is one that saturates disability studies, as people with disabilities in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came to be treated in a paternalistic manner, believed to be incapable of taking care of themselves, labeled as "less fortunate," and became pitiful objects for middle and upper-class individuals to care for.[33] However, this study of the veterans of the Revolution complicates this trend in studying disability, as it shows that these ideas of the necessity in caring for the poor, disabled, subjugated people in society began much earlier in America than scholarship suggests. The disabled and the poor were no longer just living proof of inherited sin, or opportunities to test one's virtues,[34] but as an unfortunate group in need of aid, aligning again with the humanitarianism that pervaded the "sensibility of the time. This also supports the claim that the definition of disability was changing and developing in the Revolutionary era.

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[31] Herndon, "'Who Died an Expence to this Town'," 137.
[32] Ibid., 106.
[33] See Joseph Shapiro, *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement*, (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1993).
[34] Turner, *Disability in Eighteenth-Century England*, 57.

While the public's general attitudes towards veterans were changing, the

United States government was still evolving. The relationship between civilians,

veterans, and the state was being molded, as the government attempted to

determine its proper role to play. One of the main issues being considered was

whether it was necessary for the government to provide all veterans with

pensions, or if only certain veterans, then what the qualifications would be. From

1776 well into the 1870s[35], the pension system for veterans of the Revolution

was repeatedly revised, demonstrating both the importance of veterans in society

as well as the government's struggle to define its role in supporting civilians and

veterans. The various pension acts from 1776 to the 1870s faced economic and

social scrutiny. Prior to the Pension Act of 1818, pensions were only awarded to

disabled veterans, and even then, only about 2,200 men total were included on

the pension rolls.

The First National Pension Bill was passed by congress on August 26th,

1776, as an incentive for recruitment. This bill provided compensation for

disabled veterans and half-pay for life for officers. In 1782, the act extended

benefits to anyone sick or wounded in the military, and gave wounded soldiers

the option of either being discharged or serving in the Invalid Corps.[36] In a bill

from 1804, the revision to the pension system states:

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[35] On March 9th, 1878 Congress approved an act that expanded widows' pensions: "Under this act any widow of a Revolutionary soldier who served fourteen days or was in any engagement shall be placed under the pension-rolls of the United States, and receive a pension at the rate of eight dollars per month." https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/45th-congress/session-2/c45s2ch28.pdf
[36] Teipe, *America's First Veterans,* 13.

Revised to include all those persons, whether in the militia, state, or continental service, who, in consequence of their disability, either resigned their commissions, or took discharges, or did not renew their enlistment; or if militia, did not return into service; and also all those who, after incurring their disability, were taken captive by the enemy, and remained either in captivity or on parole, until the close of the war; and also, all those persons who, in consequence of known wounds received in the actual service of the United States, during the revolutionary war, have at any period since, become disabled in such a manner as to render them unable to procure subsistence by manual labor.[37]

The Pension Act of 1818 declared that Congress would grant veterans of the Revolution pensions if they had served at least nine months in the army and were "in need of assistance from their country," or in "reduced circumstances," giving $96 to privates and $240 to officers annually.[38] This updated act brought together previous pension laws and poor laws. As a result of the new standards, about 20,000 vets applied (nearly ten times more than expected).[39] But the question remained whether pensions were generous acts of benevolence for pity and charity for the "respectable poor," or if they were just, due payment for the service of soldiers. This paradox surrounding the pensions did not disappear. The pension system maintained notions of both pity and pride towards veterans.

The image of the miserable soldier proved useful when the pension system faced a scandal after the 1818 act, as proof of fraud pervaded the War

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[37] "A Bill, in Addition to An Act to Make Provision for Persons That Have Been Disabled by Known Wounds Received in Actual Service of the United States, during the Revolutionary War." (Washington: Early American Imprints. Second Series; No. 7447). 2, lines 8-18.
[38] Resch, *Suffering Soldiers*, ix.
[39] John P. Resch, "Federal Welfare for Revolutionary War Veterans Article," *Social Service Review* 56, no. 2 (June 1982): 171-172.

Department, and the nation faced economic challenges with the Panic of 1819.[40]

The pension system ended up being approximately seven times more expensive

than originally projected, and nearly bankrupted the government.[41] The Pension

Act of 1820 brought an end to the scandal, and established the pension system

as both a reward for veterans' sacrifices as well as a system of support. The

general public came to believe that every veteran was deserving of aid, but

questioned whether they were in need of it.[42]

The Pension Lists

In the process of determining which applicants qualified for pensions, the

War Department assembled lists of soldiers and their ranks, regiments, and

physical descriptions. The language of disability permeates these Congressional

records of the pension lists. This section explores the rhetorical use of disabilities

to demonstrate the way it was viewed and used in descriptions of soldiers. To

explore the early pension system in the United States, the only rich source of

surviving records is that of the Congressional lists and reports, as fires in the War

and Treasure Departments destroyed their records prior to the 1800s. Since the

only pensions awarded prior to 1818 were for disabled veterans of the

Continental Army exclusively, there were far fewer individuals receiving pensions

prior to the Pension Act of 1818, going from about 2200 pensioners to 20,000.

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[40] Clement, *Welfare and the Poor,* 64.
[41] Resch, *Suffering Soldiers*, 135; 142.
[42] Resch, "Federal Welfare," 191.

This pension act is perhaps one of the most important, as it not only expanded its general standards from just disabled veterans to those "in reduced circumstances," but it also rewarded life-long pensions, a factor that had been missing from the previous pension acts.

Between March and July of 1818, the pension office received about 1,000 claims per week. The overwhelming number of applications likely contributed to inconsistencies or errors in processing claims.[43] Some of these inconsistencies lay in the language used to describe soldiers and their disabilities, wounds, and injuries; the way in which they incurred such impairments, and whether such impairments qualified veterans for a pension. Pensioners claiming disability were required to provide notes from two physicians to confirm and describe the nature and extent of disabilities, and whether or not they were service-related.[44] As the government had not explicitly detailed their own definition of a disability, they gave such power to medical practitioners, thus instigating the existence of a medical definition of disability. In turn, physicians looked to a person's capacity for labor as the standard of determining the extent of disabilities. However, as claims began at the local level, the number of people involved in defining the extent of and the nature of disabilities allowed for considerable variety in explanations of disabilities, and whether they were service-related. Individual physicians held a lot of power in interpreting physical wellness, and there was no standard other than their own understanding of the language of the pension acts.

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[43] Resch, *Suffering Soldiers*, 123.
[44] Ibid., 124.

Applicants were required to swear an oath, to provide true testament to their poverty (or wealth). The value of their possessions and property was calculated, and considered in determining the degree of aid required to support veterans. They also had to have proof of service, either through documentation (often times, documentation was lost), or through corroborated testimonies of fellow servicemen, community, or family members. To receive aid, veterans essentially had to qualify at a certain level of indigent, or be recognized as "unable by manual labor, to support himself without the assistance of his country."[45] This proved frustrating for those who believed the pensions were for justice, not charity. In some ways, this tarnished the image of the veteran with poverty and incapacities.

Within the lists, the ways in which soldiers' wounds, injuries, and disabilities are discussed are inconsistent, and vary greatly, down to the words used to describe their physical conditions, and how they were caused.[46] The general language seems used in a matter-of-factly manner, functioning as simple descriptions. Furthermore, many of these examples fail to clarify what part of the body was disabled, and to what extent, while others are contrastingly specific. The descriptions range from simply "disabled," "Lost arm in 1777 in gun explosion at Saratoga," "Disabled in both hands by powder explosion," "Lost one eye and disabled," to "Totally disabled by a fall in 1779; discharged in 1780" and

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[45] Ibid., 128.
[46] To see more detailed examples of the pension list descriptions from 1792-1795, see Table 1 in the Appendix.

"Suffered frostbite while a prisoner at Philadelphia, with no proper care, totally disabled."[47] Furthermore, in the early nineteenth century, "disabled" referred to exclusively physical deficiencies, not cognitive disorders. "Disabled" wouldn't have even been used to describe deafness or blindness, instead the description would read more like "disabled by blindness," explaining disability as a consequence of something else, not a label or state of being.[48]

There doesn't seem to be any correlation between one's rank, the year they applied, the regiments they belonged to, or even the courts in which they submitted their pension applications and the ways in which their disabilities are described. What did it mean to be "totally disabled," or to have "lost one eye and disabled"? Examined alone, these sources reveal only simple insights into the language used to describe disabilities. However, the sheer existence of such discourse reveals one very important fact about the early U.S.: society was trying to make sense of the nature of disabilities and how individuals lived with them.

This lack of consistency exemplifies the general lack of clarification in what it meant to be "disabled." This also acts as evidence to support the thesis that disability is a socially constructed concept, as this attitude and treatment of disabilities changed in the later nineteenth century, and into the twentieth when being disabled became less of a description of labor capabilities and more of an identity. Disability came to mean so much more, to the point that by using or hearing the term, an image of a certain kind of person was conjured. As evident

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[47] Ibid.
[48] Turner, *Disabilities in Eighteenth-Century England*, 20.

here, the image (and understanding) of a "disability" was so diverse that there was no simple classification.

Henry Knox, the Secretary of War seemed himself frustrated with the lack of specificity and definition in the invalid pension claims, stating in his Congressional report that "the number of eighty-five certificates of the examining physicians are defective and not according to law, inasmuch as they do not certify the degree of disability of the applicants; which defect will, in a great measure, prevent the precision necessary in the assignment of the pensions."[49] Concerned with maintaining consistency and accuracy within the pension system, Henry Knox sought to tighten definitions of disability and infirmities. He especially advocated for the explanation of the extent of disability. In other words, he wanted physicians to clarify how disabled a person was. In the same report from April 25, 1794, Knox outlined the statistics pertaining to the extent of disabilities, which mirrored the amount of money veterans received in their pensions:

> that of the number of cases on which the examining physicians
> have given opinions, twenty are full pensions, one nine-tenths; two
> seven-eights; one six-sevenths; three five-sixths; on four-fifths; one
> five-eights; four three-fourths; fifteen two-thirds; forty one-twelfth
> pensions.[50]

Physicians were expected to declare the fractional extent of disabilities, which resulted in people being labeled as "five-eights" disabled. In turn, these fractional

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[49] Henry Knox, "Invalid Pension Claims," based on pension records from the American State Papers Class IX Claims, compiled by Murtie June Clark in *The Pension Lists of 1792-1795 with Other Revolutionary Pension Records.* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company Incorporated, 1996). 15.
[50] Ibid., 15.

representations of disabilities balanced with the value of veterans' pensions. For example, if a veteran was declared as being four-fifths disabled, they would receive four-fifths of their monthly pay as pension. For commissioned officers, who received $20/month during the war, this would equate to a pension of $16/month as a veteran. For non-commissioned officers and all other enlisted men, whose pay was about $8/month, this would equate to $6.40/month as a veteran. The challenge though, was that these pensions were not designed to sustain veterans and their families as their sole source of income. As the early economy of the United States faced economic instability, these wages were difficult if not impossible to live off of.[51]

In addition to the general pension lists are the lists of pension certificates.[52] These certificate lists share similar characteristics of the pension lists (Table 1) in their descriptions of disabilities and impairments. The certificates however, were required to be more specific, resulting in descriptions such as Lieutenant Benjamin Thompson's, who was reportedly "disabled by illness contracted in the service in 1777, making him incapable of working as a blacksmith; commissioned Nov 6, 1776, supernumerary Jan 16, 1779; evidence incomplete."[53] This description provides a little more information in how he was disabled, but what stands out is the mention of his inability to continue working in his profession as a blacksmith due to his disability. While his certificate required

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[51] Browne, "United States Soldiers," 172.
[52] See Table 2 in the Appendix.
[53] Ibid.

more evidence to establish his pension, the connection made between his disability and his trade demonstrate the government's focus on the way in which disabilities would affect people's livelihood, and the standards for which physicians examined injuries and wounds to determine disability.

In contrast, Private Samuel Rosseter's description explains he was "injured when building a redoubt at Neilson's Point, Aug 1781…Evidence incomplete, disability not proven to be derived from known wounds, therefore not entitled by law to a pension."[54] This example highlights the emphasis that in order to receive an invalid pension, a soldier's disability had to be a result of *known* wounds contracted in the service.

The following examples include the proportional determinations of disability that Henry Knox mentions in his report: Private George Mour, "wounded in both shoulders in an action with the Indians at Oriskie, Aug 7, 1777; entitled to full pension"; Private James Slater, "wounded in head and eye by a musket ball in action with the Indians on the Mohawk in Oct 1780; half pension"; Private John Carr, "disabled by an injury in the line of duty; enlisted Oct 1777 for three years; discharged Oct 6, 1779; four-fifths pension."[55] Mour's entitlement to a full pension translates into the medical determination of being "totally disabled," or else he would not qualify for a full pension. Private Slater, with his awarded half pension characterizes him as partially or fifty-percent disabled. Private John

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[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.

Carr then represents an example of a four-fifths pension, and a person labeled

as being four-fifths disabled.

Knox also included the statistics regarding the number of applicants from

the districts that provided information to the War Department, as can be seen in

Table 3 below:

Table 3: Pension Claim Statistics, April 1794[56]

State	Number of Invalid Pension Claims for April 25th, 1794
Connecticut	40
Kentucky	1
Maine	17
Maryland	5
Massachusetts	5
New Jersey	9
New York	60
North Carolina	4
Pennsylvania	52
Rhode Island	5
South Carolina	2
Vermont	3
Virginia	8
Total	**211**

While this table is only representative of a single report of only one year, the

information still inspires inquiry. For example, what does the varied number of

claims per district reveal? For the districts of New York, Pennsylvania, and

Connecticut with the three highest numbers of pensioners, does this suggest that

there were more disabled veterans from these areas? Perhaps, these districts

were easier to apply for pensions in, or it could be that they supplied more

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[56] Ibid.

soldiers overall. Unfortunately, much more research and accessible sources would be required to determine answers to such questions, and as many records were destroyed in fires, some of the necessary records are missing.

These sources from Congressional records act as one example of the way disabilities were discussed and understood in the government, guided by physician's interpretations. Of course, physicians themselves characterized the nature and extent of disabilities relating to individuals' impairments and their ability to perform labor tasks, reiterating the connection made in early U.S. society between disability and labor, and how the government deliberated over notions of disabilities and policies.

Pension Applications and Veteran Testimonies

In addition to Congressional reports, records of pension applications and veteran testimonies recorded at district courts serve as document-rich, insightful samples of veterans and the language of disability they used, in comparison to the way the War Department discussed disabilities. More specifically, these records provide insight into the way veteran pensioners used the language of disability to convince the government they deserved and needed pensions. Some actively used language that would trigger sentiment and compassion from the government and the public.[57] This language pervades the discussion of wellness, highlighting the ill health and disabilities many aging veterans were facing.

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[57] Browne, "United States Soldiers," 159.

Veterans, then, used the language of disability, colored with pity, to appeal to courts in order to receive pensions.

Applicants were required to take an oath while testifying for pensions in the courts, and the law expected them to inform the court of their military record and experience, provide necessary documentation or witness testimonies; provide information about their marriages, families and dependents (how many, how old, health, etc.); many applicants also included information on their birthplace and residencies during their enlistments and since the end of the war. Most of the pension applications for Revolutionary War veterans were filed after the Pension Act of 1818.

While there are countless examples of veterans expressing their need for aid based on debilitating health and impoverished circumstances, the testimony of Zachariah Hurt from 1823 presents a well-articulated case to begin the analysis of the language of disability used in pension applications. "Given to the Honorable Speaker and Members of both Houses of the General Assembly":

> Gentleman, I Zachariah Hurt an old and infirm Revolutionary soldier would beg leave to humbly represent to your honorable body that I was a drafted militia man from the county of Powhatan during the Revolutionary War in the year 1781 and served in a company of militia commanded by Captain Robert Hughes and attached to General Lawson's Brigade and was in service about three months before the battle Guilford in the State of North Carolina at which place I was engaged in battle and received a wound by a ball which passed through my body and lodged near my back bone which never could be extracted. For five years after receiving the wound I was unable to walk or do any business whatsoever, but was supported by my father at considerable expense and trouble during the whole of which time I was attended to and nursed as a child, not being able to help myself. For five or six years after I was not able to get about. I could not labour more than one half of my time

and when at labour experienced great pain in the consequence of my wound and I can further state that I have never received one cent for my services from the General Government or otherwise, and I have been informed that from the length of time that I was in the service that the provision made by the Act of Congress does not reach me and that I have prospect of relief only through your interference. I am about 60 years of age very infirm and quite poor and have an aged wife and a family to support. I therefore pray your Honorable body to take my case into serious consideration and place me on the pension list and allow me something for present relief or to do what you may in your justice and wisdom conceive best and I as in duty bound will every pray etc. Zachariah Hurt.[58]

Zachariah Hurt was eventually added to the pension list in Smyth County, Virginia in 1840. Hurt's testimony highlights key themes and issues that veterans faced, and that people with disabilities continue to face today. He mentions his age, "I am about 60 years of age very infirm and quite poor and have an aged wife and family to support," eliciting the idea that aging strips people of their youthful abilities, and connects to the notion that as people age, they in some ways become "disabled." In that same line, he claims his wife to be "aged" as well, another common trend within these records. Whether to encourage more compassion or establish standards of masculinity, many veterans referred to their wives and other female dependents as equally if not more "infirm" as themselves.

As he describes his wound, he touches on his difficulty to perform labor tasks because of it, and how he was "attended to and nursed as a child, not being able to help myself. For five or six years after I was not able to get about."

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[58] Zachariah Hurt, R5434, Wythe County Legislative Petition, February 3, 1823. Based on the pension applications from the National Archives, collected by Mary B. Kegley in *Revolutionary War Pension Applications of Southwest Virginia Soldiers*. (Wytheville, VA: Kegley Books, 1997). 187.

By comparing himself to a child in need of care, he is reducing himself to a state of dependency, challenging cultural concepts of masculinity. The early American Republic encouraged notions of economic productivity and contributions to society, in addition to marriage and being the patriarch of one's family to be markers of manhood. To be considered a grown man, a man was expected to be in control of something (ex. a business) or have authority.[59] The expectations of manhood challenged the status of veterans who were falling into destitution. The inability to provide for oneself and one's family may have felt emasculating to some veterans, but more research into these notions of masculinity is necessary to accurately understand the extent to which veterans' sense of manhood was challenged. Furthermore, if disability is linked to labor, then labor tasks could be linked to gender roles. Pensioner William Leech claimed he was "by occupation a day laborer & able to perform about one quarter of the labor of a man," and another pensioner, Henry Danforth, echoed his sentiment, declaring he had "not sufficient ability to do more than half a man's labor." Whether or not these men personally felt emasculated is unclear, but they are expressing possible emasculation by cultural expectations. [60]

However, by including the information about his family needing his support, Hurt, like other veterans, is also making the claim that there are people depending on him. This simultaneous status as a dependent and a provider is one that pervades much of the testimonies of veterans, both disabled and non-

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[59] Ruddiman, *Becoming Men of Some Consequence,* 5-6.
[60] Blackie, "Disabled Revolutionary War Veterans," 115-116.

disabled. Even if veterans were characterized as being able-bodied, their economic struggles could create dependency. This paradoxical status of a dependent-provider also challenges the understanding of people with disabilities. Disabled individuals have been characterized as needy, dependent, incapable individuals who can't care for themselves, let alone families. Yet the testimonies provided by veterans in their pension applications show that they were just as likely to need support as they were to be depended upon for support.

One thing that truly makes Hurt's testimony stand out is his claim that he only served three months before being discharged for his wound. The pension system gave support to veterans who had served at least nine months, so Zachariah Hurt was concerned that he may not receive any aid.

Throughout his testimony, Hurt uses respectful and pleading language in addition to the language of disability and poverty to capture the compassion and attention of the court. Such rhetoric seems quite common in other pension application records and veteran testimonies. John Cooper, for example, invoked language that seems to echo phrases directly within the Pension Act of 1818, stating he was "infirm and in very reduced circumstances and stands in need of assistance of his country for support…His occupation is that of a farmer, but from age and infirmities he is totally unable to pursue that calling."[61] The phrases "in reduced circumstances" and "in need of his country for support" are almost

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[61] John Cooper, W6715; Montgomery County, Virginia, Order Book 20, 53-54, 148. Based on the pension applications from the National Archives, collected by Mary B. Kegley in *Revolutionary War Pension Applications of Southwest Virginia Soldiers.* (Wytheville, VA: Kegley Books, 1997). 83.

identical to actual statements within the Pension Act of 1818, showing that not

only was Cooper invoking pity and compassion, but directly using policymakers'

words to his benefit. Another example, John Perry in 1812 reported in his

application that

> he had a wound in the right arm, one in the right hand, one in the
> breast, two in the neck and four in the head made by swords, and he
> has ever since been deprived of the use and strength of his right arm
> and hand and he is now 74 years of age and destitute of a family or
> any one to support him. He is altogether unable to labour for his own
> support, and therefore requests his case be taken under
> consideration so that he may be placed on a pension list the
> 'remnant of his days.'[62]

From this testimony, the nature of the wounds is relatively vague; are these

wounds now scars? Is Perry reporting as many injuries as possible to encourage

more sympathy from the court? This testament includes language of disability,

age, and poverty/destitution. While to some this may seem overdramatic, Perry's

report shows how powerful rhetoric can be. Many of these narrative records are

incredibly embellished and manipulative over their intended audience. Veterans

used the notions of the "suffering soldier" to their advantage and invoked

vulnerable rhetoric that stimulated sympathy and compassion to receive aid,

noticeably appealing to the humanitarian values of the time, rather than giving

long reports about their military action. Instead of going into depth discussing

their individual military records or their masterful, heroic actions, the aging

veterans chose to invoke compassionate pity, suggesting that pity may have

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[62] John Perry, Virginia Legislative Petition, Pension 322, microfilm reel 10., Ibid., 223.

been easier to obtain than heroic praise. Moreover, praise could have been easier to gain after having first shown vulnerability.

Even George Washington, the leader of the Continental Army and the "father of America," made a show of vulnerability, or at least was memorialized as having done so, as evident in this famous anecdote:

> His Excellency, after reading the first paragraph, made a short pause, took out his spectacles, and begged the indulgence of his audience while he put them on, observing at the same time, that he had grown gray in their service, and now found himself growing blind. There was something so natural, so unaffected, in this appeal, as rendered it superior to the most studied oratory; it forced its way to the heart, and you might see sensibility moisten every eye. The General, having finished, took leave of the assembly…[63]

If their noble leader could be vulnerable ("begged indulgence of his audience"), aging ("he had grown gray in their service"), and impaired ("found himself going blind"), why should the lowly foot-soldier feel shame for feeling the same? After all, it was not the disability that brought these men shame…it was the inability to provide for themselves and their families when their disabilities prevented them from performing labor.

Conclusion

The pension records of the Revolution are densely populated with the language of disability. Still, not only are the pension records filled with such language, but sources related to the memory of the Revolution and veterans as

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[63] "Samuel Shaw to the Reverend Mr. Eliot, April 1783," Center for the Study of the American Constitution, University of Wisconsin Madison, accessed March 4, 2018.

well. The theme of disability is infused within the patriotic and nationalistic narratives of the Revolution. These narratives have contributed to the way in which the Revolution is remembered, and have created a romanticized and slightly distorted history.[64] Yet, by exploring these narratives, much can be revealed about the cultural values of the early United States.

So, did soldiers of the Revolution fight for economic benefits, or for liberty and independence? Trying to discern such motivations is difficult, as there is no single reason behind joining in or staying out of the war for independence. However, it is possible to grasp how the public viewed soldiers and their choices. At times, the economic instability of the young nation and the republican ideology of civic virtue created animosity between soldiers and civilians, and influenced the belief that soldiers were only fighting for economic reasons, not for liberty and justice. Realistically, the amount of pay soldiers received was nearly impossible to survive off and provide for their families with, sending many soldiers back into the workforce after the war, so the notion that they were fighting for economic benefits may not be as strong a motivator as people thought. Soldiers may have been enticed with the possibility of economic stability when enlisting in the armed forces, but this enticement likely lost its appeal as soldiers were immersed deeper into the horrors of war. Additionally, the romanticized idea that soldiers willingly sacrificed themselves for liberty and independence is equally questionable. Soldiers' motivations behind their enlistment were just as varied as

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[64] Ruddiman, John A. *Becoming Men of Some Consequence,* 14.

their own personal experiences. Nevertheless, the memory of the Revolution in

the early nineteenth century shows just how enamored the nation was with

praising the sacrifice of soldiers through patriotic and pitiful rhetoric. Bringing it

back to Josiah Cushman's quote at this paper's opening,

> They suffered, they fought, and bled, not to swell the triumphs of a
> proud conqueror, not to enslave any portion of mankind, but in the
> cause of justice and humanity, to ameliorate the condition of their
> fellow men and their achievements were such as to astonish and
> delight the world. They broke the rod of the oppressor, and
> procured for an aggrieved people freedom, sovereignty, and
> independence.[65]

The language in Cushman's statement on the soldiers of the revolution

represents the extravagant pride and respect people grew to have towards

veterans, and their noble suffering. These romanticized memorials of veterans

still exist today, and similar language can be found about soldiers of other wars.

In an article from 1893, the "pensioners of '76" were remembered:

> One by one the few remaining pensioners from the revolutionary
> war are passing away. In almost every instance these worthy
> recipients of Government aid have lived to a good old age…the last
> actual survivor of the great war, Samuel Downing, died in 1867. As
> he had drawn a pension for some eighty years, he is probably
> entitled to hold a national record in this respect…The first
> legislation in the interests of the brave soldiers who risked their
> lives in the struggle to throw off the yoke of foreign domination
> occurred as far back as 1776. In that year the Continental
> Congress, recognizing the debt of gratitude owed by the nation by
> her brave defenders, turned its attention to military pensions.[66]

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[65] Josiah Cushman, as quoted in John Resch, *Suffering Soldiers,* 137.
[66] "Pensioners of '76." *Wisconsin State Register.* October 13 1893. *19th Century U.S. Newspapers*, accessed 3 Mar. 2018.

This article shows not only rhetoric of praise, but also an understanding of the pensions themselves, as due payment towards a "debt of gratitude" for the "brave defenders" and "worthy recipients of Government aid." The danger that veterans faced (whether disabled or not) was becoming objects of pity and sentiment, rather than men deserving their due pay for service.

In these pension records and the memory of the Revolution, the claim that "disability" was created as a social and political category in the mid-nineteenth century alongside the rise of industrialization is challenged. These records show that disability was established as a political and social welfare category much earlier in the policies of the United States, and instead argues that the category of disability widened to include more individuals/types of impairments as the nineteenth (and later, twentieth) centuries carried on. Furthermore, these records support the social-construction theory of disability, demonstrating that the description of labor capabilities changed when the systems of labor evolved during Industrialization, clarifying the idea that the concept of disability is dependent on the dominant cultural systems of the time.

The early United States, in its pre-industrial culture, is an important period in which the history of disabilities needs to be further considered. The amount of discourse surrounding the subject of disability/people with disabilities in the post-Revolutionary years proves the claim that the concept of disabilities was developing alongside professionalized medical practices and the new government of the United States. The later changes to the understanding of disabilities and the people afflicted by them in the later nineteenth century, then,

supports the idea of disabilities as an ever-changing, socially constructed concept.

Disabilities in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries came to be understood through the lens of labor performance and the interpretation of physicians. People did not hold an identity of being "disabled," rather people were disabled from performing certain tasks; moreover, people were not totally disabled 100% of the time. The language of disability that developed in this time sought compassion and pity, and was presented through medical and laborious understandings of abilities. The way we understand disability today further supports the concept of disability as an ever-changing ideal, as our definitions differ greatly from those of the early American Republic. The distinctions we use today in reference to different abilities are very much products of our own contemporary cultural values, especially the concept of disability being an "identity," notion that Revolutionary War veterans did not adhere to.[67] Additionally, contemporary studies *recognize* disabilities as social constructions, something that lacked in the post-Revolutionary era. The description of disability as "based on characteristics that are beyond the control of such individuals and resulting from stereotypic assumptions not truly indicative of the individual ability of such individuals to participate in, and contribute to, society" was only put into policy very recently, in the ADA of 1990.[68]

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[67] Turner, *Disabilities in Eighteenth-Century England*, 17.
[68] The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990
https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/thelaw/ada.html

There is much room for further investigation and development of these ideas relating to disabilities in early America as well as into the pension systems of the Revolution and the experiences of veterans. This study is not a comprehensive survey, rather an attempt to begin to examine more closely the language surrounding disabilities that created social and cultural understandings of the experience of disabled veterans.

Appendix

Table 1: Pension Claims[69]

Name	Rank	Description
John Clough	Private	Lamed by wounds in the highlands, 1779
Ebenezer Fielding	Private	Lost use of left eye from Small Pox in the Retreat from Canada in 1776
John Reed	Private	Right arm lost when charging a field piece Mar 26, 1777
William Taggart	Ensign	Wounded in 1777 in shoulder during retreat from Ticonderoga; lost sight in one eye from smallpox inoculations in 1778
Joseph Goodridge	Private	Lost right eye from blow by gun muzzle, summer 1775
Peter Hemmeway	Private	Lost arm in 1777 in gun explosion at Saratoga
Asa Merritt	Private	Lost an eye when inoculated for smallpox, 1777
Simeon Noyes	Sergeant	Wounded in battle of Behmus' Heights in October 1777 and disabled by camp fever in 1779
Moses Cass	Private	Disabled from inoculation for smallpox at Valley Forge, transferred to New Hampshire Jul 31, 1785.
Peter Hopkins	Private	Disabled by sickness in service, 1776
Enos Blakely	Private	Disabled in 1782

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[69] Clark, *The Pension Lists of 1792-1795.*

Ebenezer Patchkin	Private	Lost by sickness his left eye and right eye impaired
Thaddeus Reid	Private	Disabled while in service
Yale Todd	Private	Disabled
Samuel Ball	Private	Lost one eye and disabled
Elijah Bennett	Private	Disabled by a wound in right arm at Bunker's Hill
Zimri Hills	Private	Disabled by a wound in his right hand
Lemuel Barns	Private	Disabled by smallpox which injured his sight on the retreat from Canada; disabled by fatigue on march four days before the battle of Monmouth
Ebenezer Bement	Brig Maj	Wounded in the retreat from Ticonderoga and disabled while a prisoner
Joseph Cox	Private	Lost his right leg at battle of Monmouth
William Eaton	Sergeant	Lost sight of left eye by wound
James Easton	Colonel	Disabled by diseases contracted in Canada in 1775
Ozias Judd	Sergeant	Disabled in the campaign to Canada
Theodore Andrus	Private	Totally disabled by a fall in 1779; discharged in 1780
Amos Barns	Private	Disabled, discharged from corps of Invalids in 1783
Elisha Clark	Private	Disabled by frostbite in 1777
Joseph Dunbar	Corporal	Disabled by leaping on his horse
Joel Gillet	Ensign	Disabled by sickness while a prisoner on a prison ship
Ashbel Kilbourn	Private	Suffered frostbite while a prisoner at Philadelphia,

		with no proper care, totally disabled
John McKinsey	Private	Disabled by illness, discharged Dec 31, 1782 as unfit
John Hodge	Captain	Disabled in both hands by powder explosion

Table 2: Lists of Certificates[70]

Name	Rank	Description
Noah Clough	Private	Wounded at siege of Quebec Dec 31, 1775; no evidence of military service
Dudley Bradstreed	Private	Injured at Ticonderoga in 1777; wounded while serving on a guard ship at Boston Sept 19, 1777; joined invalid regiment 1778; discharged Dec 14, 1779
Benjamin Thompson	Lieutenant	Disabled by illness contracted in the service in 1777, making him incapable of working as a blacksmith; commissioned Nov 6, 1776, supernumerary Jan 16, 1779; evidence incomplete
Silas Hubbard	Private	Disabled by sickness in 1777 at White Marsh; enlisted Apr 28, 1777 for eight months; discharged Jan 1, 1778; disabled by sickness, not wounds, therefore not entitled by law to a pension

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[70] Ibid.

Samuel Rosseter	Private	Injured when building a redoubt at Neilson's Point, Aug 1781; enlisted Jan 15, 1778 for the war. Evidence incomplete, disability not proven to be derived from known wounds, therefore not entitled by law to a pension
Stephen Barnum	Sergeant	Disabled by illness in the battle of Monmouth in 1778; enlisted Apr 21, 1777; discharged Apr 5, 1781; evidence complete but service connected disability not proven
Henry Bradt	Lieutenant	Received two wounds in the battle of Herkimer on Aug 7, 1777; physician reports no disability due to wounds; no militia rolls in War Department
Daniel Flannegan	Private	Wounded in knee when quelling a riot in winter quarters at Newburgh, Dec 12, 1777; enlstd Aug 28, 1777; discharged Aug 28, 1780; physicians do not designate disability
George Mour	Private	Wounded in both shoulders in an action with the Indians at Oriskie, Aug 7, 1777; entitled to full pension
James Slater	Private	Wounded in head and eye by a musket ball in action with the Indians on the Mohawk in Oct 1780; half pension
John Carr	Private	Disabled by an injury in the line of duty; enlisted Oct 1777 for three years;

		discharged Oct 6, 1779; four-fifths pension

Table 3: Pension Claim Statistics, April 1794[71]

State	Number of Invalid Pension Claims for April 25th, 1794
Connecticut	40
Kentucky	1
Maine	17
Maryland	5
Massachusetts	5
New Jersey	9
New York	60
North Carolina	4
Pennsylvania	52
Rhode Island	5
South Carolina	2
Vermont	3
Virginia	8
Total	**211**

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[71] Ibid.

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