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## “Fighting Without Firing”/ “My Fellow Slaves”

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“Fighting Without Firing”/ “My Fellow Slaves”

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Charlotte, North Carolina

Bachelor of Arts, The Catholic University of America, 2017

A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty  
of The College of William & Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

Harrison Ruffin Tyler Department of History

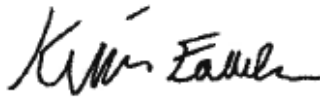
College of William & Mary  
August 2021



## APPROVAL PAGE

This Thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

History, Master of Arts



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Kevin Fowler

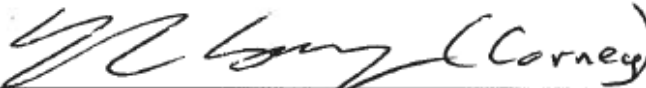
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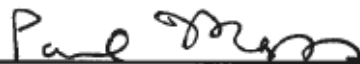
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## ABSTRACT

### “Fighting Without Firing”: Massacre, Tactical Development, and Propaganda at Paoli and Tappan

This essay examines the effects and tools of the American Revolutionary massacres at Paoli in 1777, and Tappan in 1778. These massacres were ordered by the same officer, Major General Charles Grey, and committed by the same soldiers. The essay argues that committing massacres and defining battles as “massacres” served British and American patriot causes during the American Revolution. Committing massacres provided models for tactical innovation and defining battles as massacre was a powerful propaganda tool for American revolutionaries. The essay secondarily argues that bayonets, night attacks, and close combat were essential to the creation of these massacres, and that Charles Grey played a significant role in the proliferation of this tactic in the American Revolution and subsequent British conflicts.

### “My Fellow Slaves”: Identity, Faith, and Space in the Construction of American Slave Communities in Algiers, 1785 to 1796

This essay explores the creation of communities among American and European slaves in Algiers from 1785 to 1796. Examination of the narratives of John Foss and James Cathcart, the only two authentic slave memoirs from Algiers, reveals that American Protestants forged bonds with European Catholics due to the influences of identity, faith, and space. The essay argues that American perceptions of identity, the charity and support of Catholic religious orders, and the sharing of communal space was essential to the creation of inter-Christian communities among Algerian slaves.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ii
Dedication	iii
Intellectual Biography	1
“Fighting Without Firing”: Massacre, Tactical Development, and Propaganda at Paoli and Tappan	5
Bibliography	32
“My Fellow Slaves”: Identity, Faith, and Space in the Construction of American Slave Communities in Algiers, 1785 to 1796	36
Bibliography	71

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This portfolio is dedicated to Katie, whose love and wisdom inspires daily, and to F.J. Dugan, who told me to never stop writing.



## Chapter 1. Intellectual Biography

In December 2016 I submitted my undergraduate thesis titled, “Reading Between the Lines: Mutual Knowledge Between the Irish and English in the Remonstrance of the Irish Princes and the Parliament of 1297,” exploring cultural exchange and conflict on the Anglo-Irish medieval borderland. I was, and continue to be, interested in social and religious interaction as well as legal and extra-legal violence in zones of armed contention. However, I was unsure of where I wanted to continue my research geographically and temporally. When I applied to the College of William & Mary, I hoped to explore these themes in the context of the 1630-1641 Providence Island colony. I decided to shelf that topic to explore my preferred themes in the context of the American Revolution, a period I had been immersed in through my work at the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Beginning in Dr. Middleton’s *The American Revolution* in the fall of 2020, I was stumped. Three years removed from undergrad and anxious about the safety of my spouse, a healthcare provider, I developed my thesis later than anticipated. Despite these setbacks, I wrote “‘Fighting without firing’: Massacre, Tactical Development, and Propaganda at Paoli and Tappan” an investigation into the products of massacre in the Revolutionary War. My major argument was that committing and defining massacres served both the patriot and British cause. By examining the engagements at Paoli in 1777, and Tappan in 1778, I argued that battle tactics that encouraged or were perceived as “massacre” contributed to tactical developments for both British and patriot forces. Further, defining a battle as “massacre” served as a propaganda tool. British and

patriot soldiers invoked the memory of massacre to discourage retreat and justify slaughter.

This topic surprised me. Originally, I had no intention of researching Revolutionary battles. Instead, I hoped to find a topic better suited to my interests in religious history. I entered the seminar hoping to research comparative counterrevolution in the Revolution and the 1793 War in the Vendée. Finding the subject untenable, but still intrigued by French Revolutionary counterinsurgency, I began investigating British punitive raids and stumbled upon the character of Charles Grey. I noticed that Grey repeatedly engaged in battles later defined as “massacres,” and the tactics used in these battles inspired later patriot “massacres.” I relied heavily on accounts of Tappan and Paoli written in letters and memoirs of American and British combatants. Unfortunately, I had to tease further primary source information from several secondary sources, as the archival material I desired was inaccessible. I hope to revise this thesis by including Grey’s papers, as well as other archival materials I was unable to access during the height of the pandemic. Further, I plan on strengthening the opening section to provide a better framework for the essay.

Moving on to Dr. Grasso’s seminar on the Early American Republic, I knew I wanted to explore religious exchange or conflict. I was, however, far less familiar with the historiography on religion in the Early American Republic. Intrigued by several readings on American slavery during the semester and inspired by an interest in the religious dynamics of piracy (originally with the Providence Island Company) I researched the capture and enslavement of American sailors in North Africa from 1785-1796. In researching Americans in North African captivity, I found that the historiography

on enslaved American communities was limited. Christine Sears, who addressed the actions and contributions of these communities, did not explore how these communities were formed. Rather, when discussing community, she emphasized a difference in American and European experiences of slavery in North Africa and asserted that community was limited and frequently broken. Intrigued by this argument, and having read some fictional and authentic primary sources on the subject, I began exploring theories of community creation and attempted to apply these theories to Algerian-American slaves. My research culminated in the thesis, "My Fellow Slaves': Identity, Faith, and Space in the Construction of American Slave Communities in Algiers, 1785 to 1796." In this work I argued that American perceptions of identity, the contributions of Catholic religious orders, and the occupation of communal spaces fostered community between American and European slaves in Algiers. In researching and writing this project, I relied on authentic written accounts of Algerian captivity. I hoped to investigate fictional literature on slavery in Algiers, but I found that most fictional accounts of North African slavery eschewed state-owned slavery in the cities for tales of personal slaves. As such, I relied heavily on the narratives of John Foss and James Cathcart, two American sailors enslaved in Algiers. I also employed newspaper extracts of letters when relevant.

I was proud of the product of my research, but there are several changes I intend to make to strengthen this paper for publication. First, I was unsure on how to contextualize my study, and as such I believe my conclusion posits many unrelated and unsupported claims about the impact of American captives in Algiers. I plan on investigating the impact of Algerian slavery and Algerian slave narrative in fostering

Euro-American unity and strengthening the claims I make in my conclusion.

Additionally, I plan to further clarify my use of sources. I write that the genre of the North African slave narrative was prolific from 1790-1810, and mention the republication of various narratives in that period. However, my reasoning for emphasizing James Cathcart and John Foss's accounts is weak. Further, I need to elaborate on why Cathcart's account is relevant despite being published a century after the events. Overall, I hope to clarify and contextualize this work better, and emphasize that the research is on a small community in Algiers, and may not result in broader changes in America.

These two research papers focus on drastically different subjects and themes. The only bond linking these two works is personal interest. I have, however, strengthened my understanding of those interests, and hope to find a geographical or temporal focus in the future. Additionally, I have confirmed that my primary interests are socio-religious interaction, conflict, and their convergence. I am keen to move beyond digitized sources, and to strengthen my research with the addition of archival material. Through these research projects I have confirmed my interests, expanded my understanding of historical theory, and been exposed to the periods and subjects I did not foresee. Perhaps I will return to the shackled slaves in Algiers, or to the bayoneted bodies at Paoli, and expand my research in those topics. But for now, I remain unsure of where history will bring me next.

## Chapter 2. “Fighting Without Firing”: Massacre, Tactical Development, and Propaganda at Paoli and Tappan

Paoli Memorial Grounds is home to a modest, eroded memorial obelisk erected in 1817, upstaged later by a grand obelisk in 1877, bearing descriptions of the “American Soldiers who were the victims of cold-blooded cruelty in the well-known Paoli Massacre.”<sup>1</sup> Much effort is taken to remind visitors of the harrowing experience of these slaughtered Americans. The vestiges of revolutionary propaganda survive here, the plaques claimed Paoli to be the birthplace of the first battle cry of the American Revolution – “Remember Paoli!”<sup>2</sup> Signs relayed the quotes of soldiers who participated in Paoli. These combatants described “a Dreadful scene of havock,” that created a legacy of fire, suffering, and death.<sup>3</sup> But what other consequences did this battle, and other British “massacres” like it have on the revolutionary world?

We should begin by defining massacre. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines massacre as, “The indiscriminate and brutal slaughter of people or (less commonly) animals; carnage, butchery, slaughter in numbers;” This differs slightly from Merriam-Webster, which offers, “the act or an instance of killing a number of usually helpless or unresisting human beings under circumstances of atrocity or cruelty” and “an act of complete destruction.” Massacre is often favored to describe circumstances in line with the latter. Americans hear massacre and imagine redcoats gunning down unarmed

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin Fowler, *Paoli Obelisk 1*, 2020, Paoli Battlefield Historical Park, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/190864204@N02/50554835993/>

<sup>2</sup> Kevin Fowler, *Remember Paoli Info*, Paoli Battlefield Historical Park, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/190864204@N02/50554837483/>

<sup>3</sup> Kevin Fowler, *Paoli Info 2*, Paoli Battlefield Historical Park, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/190864204@N02/50626165038>

patriots in Boston, or perhaps the wanton slaughter committed by the Imperial Japanese Army in Nanking. Infamous historical massacres encourage readers to view these butcheries as acts committed against the unarmed. Massacre, too, is frequently coupled with genocide, strengthening the image of violence against the defenseless.

This definition can be molded to fit circumstance. Military defeats have been painted as massacres. Engagements in which both sides were armed and disposed to kill, can adopt the definition of massacre when an opponent routes or meets and unexpected disaster. Historians have long fought back against military engagements being defined as massacres. George Otto Trevelyan in 1922 denied the existence of a massacre at the battle of Paoli, decrying that the battle had been “unfairly and almost absurdly” misdefined.<sup>4</sup> Armstrong Starkey and Thomas McGuire disagreed with Trevelyan’s assessment of massacre, claiming that the British scorned conventional military morality and committed a massacre at Paoli. Historians contesting the label of massacre is a prominent aspect of the historiography of atrocity. This work will not focus on the classifications of historians, but the description and use of massacre by patriots and Tories in the American Revolution. My scholarship is, as would be described by Ben Rubin, as a “treatment of atrocity” focusing on the events and aftermath of “specific events for which atrocity rhetoric becomes an important element.”<sup>5</sup>

There were several “massacres” born out of military defeats in the American Revolution. What are the consequences of these massacres? To assess this question, I will examine two minor engagements won by British forces in the American Revolution –

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<sup>4</sup> George Otto Trevelyan, *The American Revolution* (London, 1922), Vol. 4, 234

<sup>5</sup> Ben Rubin, “The Rhetoric of Revenge: Atrocity and Identity in the Revolutionary Carolinas” *Journal of Backcountry Studies* 5, no. 2 (2010), 5

The Battle of Paoli in 1777 and the Battle of Tappan, otherwise known as the Baylor Massacre, in 1778. I will address them chronologically and examine the effects of each conflict. Examination of these battles will show that there was value in defining and committing massacre in the American Revolution. Committing massacres served both patriot and the British, as it could provide models for tactical innovation, and defining battles as massacre was a powerful propaganda tool for American revolutionaries, used to encourage patriots in battle.

I have chosen these two battles, typically defined as massacres, because they are engagements against armed combatants. Additionally, these two battles were won by close combat. These battles provide intriguing insights into the effects and value of massacres in the revolutionary world. One is inclined to ask why more infamous massacres, like the Boston Massacre, are not addressed in this work. Certainly, the Boston Massacre provided an exceptional propaganda tool for patriot printers and agitators. The Boston Massacre is, however, the subject of innumerable works investigating all angles of the event. Not only do I wish to investigate some of these lesser-known massacres in order to fill in the periphery of literature on revolutionary massacre, but the massacres I wish to examine were battles fought between armed combatants, not acts of accidental state terrorism. Additionally, these battles were selected because the situations in which they occurred were similar – in these two battles soldiers attacked at night and used tactics and weapons in ways that encouraged intense violence.

This work relies heavily on the memoirs and journals of individuals who fought in or received and transmitted information about the battles. Some letters are used when

available. Unfortunately the personal papers of several important individuals involved are inaccessible at this time. Charles Grey's papers would have potentially been a boon to this research, but as they are unavailable, I am indebted to the work of Paul David Nelson's *Sir Charles Grey, First Early Grey: Royal Soldier, Family Patriarch*. Additionally, some archival material on the battle of Paoli has not been digitized. As Thomas J. McGuire's *Battle of Paoli* makes excellent use of these sources, I will be using his extensive research on the battle to fill in the gaps of my research.

### Tool of Massacre

Before examining the effects of these massacres, it may be prudent to review the primary weapon used in these battles. What tools were at the disposal of British forces that would allow a victory to devolve into a massacre? The battles in which they occurred were military victories for British, victories that were won by the sword or bayonet by men who held deep grudges against their patriot opponents.

In the two massacres investigated here the bayonet and sword are used extensively. The bayonet, a blade attached to the muzzle of a long gun, was first used with the plug bayonet by the turn of the eighteenth-century, eventually removing the need for long pikes and other stabbing weapons.<sup>6</sup> In his 1783 work on tactics and discipline, military veteran William Dalrymple described the mixed effectiveness of bayonets in battle. The weapon was found to be useful as a counter to mounted opponents, as well as a boon during the "attack and defense of retrenchments" or fortifications.<sup>7</sup> The musket with a fixed bayonet, however, was not an easy weapon to use; Dalrymple wrote "the bayonet being placed at the end of the firelock, renders it a

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<sup>6</sup> Archer Jones, *The Art of War in the Western World* (Chicago, 2001), 268

<sup>7</sup> William Dalrymple, *Tackticks* (Dublin, 1783), 113-114



weapon most unwieldy, and with which it is not easy to fence.”<sup>8</sup> During a bayonet charge the unwieldiness of the weapon led to “impracticability of two Battalions, opposed to each other...[in a] close encounter.”<sup>9</sup> To avoid fighting with cumbersome weapons and a lack of armor “one body must give way before they get into action.”<sup>10</sup> The bayonet held its value not necessarily in its effectiveness in close combat, but the psychological effect of a charge. As G.J. Guthrie, a surgeon and witness to Napoleonic combat recalled, a bayonet charge usually ended before the adversaries met, as one side fled.<sup>11</sup> The belief that bayonet charges often led to inconclusion or route was echoed in American newspapers published during the American Civil war, as the Philadelphia *Saturday Evening Post* declared on the “Delusions as to Bayonet Wounds” that “opposing regiments, when formed in line, and charging with fixed bayonets, never meet and struggle hand to hand... for the very best possible reason, that one side turns round and runs away.”<sup>12</sup>

Despite the mixed effectiveness of the bayonet in battle, the British military elite revered the weapon. British officers like Burgoyne were hyper confident of a British soldier’s effectiveness with the bayonet. The idea that “the bayonet in the hands of the valiant is irresistible” permeated the British officer corps.<sup>13</sup> The officer’s perceived irresistibility of the British soldier with the bayonet was actively fostered among the troops. According to Matthew H. Spring, British soldiers were known to wait for signs of

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<sup>8</sup> Dalrymple, *Tackticks*, 114

<sup>9</sup> Dalrymple, *Tackticks*, 114

<sup>10</sup> Dalrymple, *Tackticks*, 114

<sup>11</sup> G.J. Guthrie, “Lectures on Some of the More Important Points in Surgery” *Medical Times* 17 (1847-1848), 305

<sup>12</sup> “Delusions as to Bayonet Wounds,” *Saturday Evening Post*, Nov. 9, 1861, 6

<sup>13</sup> James Hadden, *Hadden’s Journal and Orderly Book* (Albany, 1884), 74

fear among rebel troops and to capitalize on the fear by bayonet charge. Upon seeing signs of disorder among rebels, such as the unsteadiness in the bearing of arms, the British infantry charged and attempted to further frighten and confuse patriot forces.<sup>14</sup> Actual violence in pitched battle by bayonet may have been limited to stragglers, and as the previously mentioned insights of G.J. Guthrie and William Dalrymple, opponents usually preferred to avoid close quarters combat with the bayonet. Here there is an important difference between the field battle and massacres that we will now introduce. At Paoli and Tappan, the opponents were surprised and pursued by both bayonet wielding soldiers and mounted forces, which promoted an unusual amount of violence during and after the battles.

### Paoli

In 1777 the British army under William Howe pursued George Washington's men through the Delaware valley, in what would later become Chester County. Martin Hunter, an officer serving with the British 52<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Foot light infantry under the command of General Charles Grey, recalled that Washington crossed the Schuylkill River and ordered General Anthony Wayne to stay behind to attack the British flank.<sup>15</sup> The soldiers under Wayne and Washington, following the failure at Brandywine, feared the worst. William Knox, brother of patriot general Henry Knox, complained of lacking shelter and supplies, of repeated defeats, and of failure to meet with favorable

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<sup>14</sup> See Matthew H. Spring, *With Zeal and with Bayonet Only: The British Army on Campaign in North America, 1775-1783* (Norman, 2008) for insight into British bayonet charges during the American Revolution.

<sup>15</sup> Martin Hunter, *The Journal of Gen. Sir Martin Hunter and Some Letters of his Wife, Lady Hunter* (Edinburgh, 1894), 30

engagements with the British during the Philadelphia campaign.<sup>16</sup> Wayne's position had been discovered, and he received information of potential assault by the British. He was, however, determined to remain as he was "awaiting the arrival of Gen. William Smallwood and Col. Mordecai Gist, along with 2,100 Maryland militiamen and three iron cannons," to accompany him, and decided to holdfast until Smallwood's arrival.<sup>17</sup>

Wayne had the area scouted and established pickets on the exterior of his camp to prepare for potential British assault that night.<sup>18</sup>

On the night of September 20, 1777, Martin Hunter prepared himself for a night raid on the camp of General Anthony Wayne. General Grey informed Major Thomas Maitland, commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of Light Infantry, that the assault would be a surprise. To maintain the surprise the British were instructed to remove their firing pieces or ammunition, and attack with bayonet. Hunter and 1,200 comrades marched out of camp at 8pm on the evening of the 20<sup>th</sup>.<sup>19</sup> The sentries guarding the exterior of Wayne's camp were alerted by distant shots from mounted scouts, but alertness did not prevent their fateful end.

The absence of British shots escalated the confusion of the night assault, and led to calamitous friendly fires between patriot pickets, believing the shots in the dark to be British soldiers.<sup>20</sup> Hunter and the light infantry charged through the woods towards the

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<sup>16</sup> William Knox, *Account of the campaign of September and October 1777 including a report on the Battle of Paoli*. Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. GLC02437.00654

<sup>17</sup> Thomas McGuire, *Battle of Paoli* (Mechanicsburg, 2000), 62

<sup>18</sup> See *British Camp at Trudruffrin the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 1777. With the Attack Made by Major general Grey Against the Rebels near White Horse Tavern. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of September*. Map. London: Faden Charing Cross, 1778. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3824t.ar134200/> for map of battle plans and picket locations

<sup>19</sup> McGuire, *Battle of Paoli*, 70

<sup>20</sup> McGuire, *Battle of Paoli*, 76

patriot encampment, catching some soldiers by surprise. In a hellish scene, the camp was put to the flame and bayonet – “the light infantry bayoneted every man they came up with; this, with the cries of the wounded, formed, altogether the most dreadful scene I have ever beheld.”<sup>21</sup> Anthony Wayne attempted to conduct a retreat of the patriot forces, which quickly devolved into a bloody rout. The British light infantry pursued the fleeing revolutionaries; they “stabbed great numbers and pressed on their rear till it was thought prudent to order them to desist.”<sup>22</sup>

The brutality of this midnight raid is undeniable; those who survived and heard of it recorded tales of abject horror. Surviving victims of the assault were reported to have multiple bayonet wounds. Captain Andrew Irvine received seventeen stabs and lacerations, and Private Jacob Justice’s injuries “were so severe that he was originally listed as killed.”<sup>23</sup> Some soldiers, like Private William Leary and Captain Robert Wilson, received both bayonet and blunt force wounds from musket beatings; such a blow had broken Wilson’s jaw.<sup>24</sup> William Hutchinson, a patriot residing in Chester County, Pennsylvania, was stationed at a tavern near the battle of Paoli. Two days after the battle, a patriot suffering from “forty-six distinct bayonet wounds” was found in the local woods in which he had been dying for some twenty-four hours. The victim “had neither hat, shoes, nor stockings, and his legs and feet were covered with mud and sand which had been fastened to his skin by mixing with his own blood as it ran down his limbs.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Hunter, *The Journal of Gen. Sir Martin Hunter*, 31

<sup>22</sup> John André, *André’s Journal: An Authentic Record of the Movements and Engagements of the British Army in America...As Recorded from Day to Day* (Boston, 1903), vol. 1, 94

<sup>23</sup> McGuire, *Battle of Paoli*, 101

<sup>24</sup> McGuire, *Battle of Paoli*, 101

<sup>25</sup> John C. Dann, ed., *The Revolution Remembered: Eyewitness Accounts of the War for Independence* (Chicago, 1980), 150

The “indiscriminate and brutal slaughter of people” is evident at Paoli – the nature of a surprise close combat encounter encouraged British soldiers to act with exceeding violence.

### Tappan

The engagement at Tappan occurred just one year after the Battle of Paoli, with the same British commanding officers and units involved. After returning to New Jersey from a raiding expedition in New England, General Grey and several other British generals were instructed to conduct foraging expeditions to antagonize the patriots into battle.<sup>26</sup> While crossing the Hudson the British encountered a group of patriot militiamen and dragoons under the command of General William Wins and Colonel George Baylor. A plan was hatched by the British to conduct an encirclement and surprise attack on the encampment of the patriot forces. On the evening of September 27, 1778, Wins was informed by British deserters of the attack and retreated, “but did not notify Baylor that the latter officer was completely on his own.”<sup>27</sup> General Grey and the Second Light Infantry which accompanied him at Paoli maintained the same distinct silence he had found successful at his previous surprise attack. The light infantry surrounded the buildings Baylor’s men were sleeping in and let out a cry to announce the slaughter as they did at Paoli.<sup>28</sup> Martin Hunter, serving with the Second Light Infantry, scoffed at the foolhardiness of Baylor’s men in his journal, “so perfectly secure

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<sup>26</sup> Paul David Nelson, *Sir Charles Grey, First Early Grey: Royal Soldier, Family Patriarch* (London, 1996), 49

<sup>27</sup> Nelson, *Sir Charles Grey*, 50

<sup>28</sup> André, *André’s Journal*, vol. 2, 47

did the enemy think themselves, that not even a sentry was posted.”<sup>29</sup> Again, as in Paoli, Hunter wrote that “not a shot was fired” during the engagement, and “the whole regiment, except a very few that were bayoneted, were taken prisoners.”<sup>30</sup>

Here Hunter seems to underplay the violence undertaken that night. To start, several of those captured suffered and later died from bayonet wounds. Most notably the commanding officers of the patriot dragoons were both bayoneted while attempting to hide in a chimney.<sup>31</sup> Patriot victims of the assault claim to have heard some British officers refuse to take quarter. Dr. David Griffith, a patriot surgeon from Virginia, recorded the testimony of several victims of the battle; one Southward Cullency, who received twelve bayonet wounds, claimed “he and all the Men asked for Quarter, which was refused.”<sup>32</sup> Thomas Talley, being captured by the British, was “stripped...of his breeches” and later received six bayonet wounds after capture.<sup>33</sup> The stripping involved in the attack also occurred at Paoli, as mentioned in the recollections of William Hutchinson. The burial site of several Baylor dragoons, excavated in 1967, offers further evidence of the brutality committed. One of the dragoons, likely 18 or 19 years of age, was found with an oval fracture on the side of his cranium. Investigations found that the victim was prone when he received the wound, likely caused by a blunt force beating with the butt of a musket.<sup>34</sup> Despite the small scale of the engagement, with only 104

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<sup>29</sup> Hunter, *The Journal of Gen. Sir Martin Hunter*, 43

<sup>30</sup> Hunter, *The Journal of Gen. Sir Martin Hunter*, 43

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Demarest, "The Baylor Massacre: Some Assorted Notes and Information," *Bergen County History Annual* (1971), 44

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Demarest, "The Baylor Massacre: Some Assorted Notes and Information," *Bergen County History Annual* (1971), 44

<sup>33</sup> Demarest "The Baylor Massacre: Some Assorted Notes and Information," 44

<sup>34</sup> D. Bennett Mazur and Wayne M. Daniels, *The Massacre of Baylor's Dragoons, September 28, 1778: Excavation of the Burial Site* (1968), 24

patriot soldiers billeted at the farm with 16 killed, 16 wounded, and 38 imprisoned, many perceived the assault as barbarous and unreasonably violent.<sup>35</sup>

### Massacre and Tactical Innovation

The massacres at Paoli and Tappan are immediately notable for their bloodiness. Regardless of the number of killed, captured, or wounded, the individuals who suffered at these battles endured horrific suffering. Even British soldiers like Lt. Colonel Charles Stuart viewed what may have been an impressive victory at Tappan sullied by “the barbarity of [the Light Infantry’s] behaviour.”<sup>36</sup> These massacres should be recognized for their brutality, but they should also be recognized for the tactical prowess with which they were conducted. The tactics of exclusive bayonet use at night employed by the soldiers and officers at Paoli and Tappan contained dangerous potential. Despite the gruesome nature of the tactic, it showed a potential for extraordinary victories—few attackers perished, and victims lost most of their supplies to the attackers. Officers and soldiers from both sides learned from these experiences and mimicked aspects of it elsewhere.

As noted by Paul David Nelson in Charles Grey’s biography, Grey previously experienced firsthand the surprise attacks at Minden and Klosterkamp while serving in the Twentieth Regiment of Foot in the Seven Years War. At Minden on August 1, 1759, Grey witnessed the confusion of a converging surprise attack, in which both the French commander Louis de Contades and the opposing Anglo-German commanders planned

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<sup>35</sup> Nelson, *Sir Charles Grey*, 52

<sup>36</sup> E Stuart Wortley, *A Prime Minister and his Son: From the Correspondence of the 3rd Earl of Bute and of Lt. General the Hon. Sir Charles Stuart* (New York, 1925), 137

surprise attacks to be launched the same evening. Confusion reigned during the early morning battle, commanders made uninformed decisions, and both sides were unaware of the volume of enemy combatants and their locations.<sup>37</sup> Night bled into morning, and the Anglo-German coalition bested the French, who took the opportunity to retreat before accumulating extensive losses. At Minden, the intent to surprise was replaced by confusion, musket and cannon fire quickly alerted the opponent of the location of assaults. The attempted surprise Battle of Klosterkamp (also called Campen) a year later displayed similar issues in maintaining the element of surprise. At Minden, Duke Charles William Ferdinand of Brunswick planned to attack a French force “encamp[ed] behind the Convent at Campen” before the French could receive reinforcements the following day.<sup>38</sup> While approaching after 10pm, the Prince of Brunswick found it necessary to “dislodge [the French] corps which occupied the Convent of Campen, at about half a league’s distance from the front of their army.” Removing the French threat from the monastery, from the perspective of Sir Charles Hotham, who served with the British under Brunswick, “could not be done without firing some musket shot, which gave the alarm to [the French camp].” The exchange of musket fire provided the French with valuable time to arrange a defense, obliging the Anglo-German to retreat before accruing further losses.<sup>39</sup> The surprise attack, in the end, collapsed. The failure to maintain silence ruined the surprise, and allowed opposing forces treasured time to

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<sup>37</sup> Frank McLynn, *1759: The Year Britain Became Master of the World* (New York, 2004), 270-273

<sup>38</sup> Charles Hotham, *The Operations of the Allied Army, Under the Command of His Serene Highness Prince Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswic and Luneberg* (London, 1764), 176

<sup>39</sup> Hotham, *Operations of the Allied Army*, 177



organize a defense or conduct organized retreats. At the Battles of Paoli and Tappan, Charles Grey attempted to correct the faults of Minden and Klosterkamp.

Before the Battle of Paoli, Grey ordered his men to attack with bayonets only. This was his first solution to the issue of surprise. Popular claims abound that Grey ordered that the flint, used to fire the weapon by creating a spark in the gunpowder pan, be removed from his soldiers muskets before battle in order to force the use of the bayonet. However, evidence on this is mixed; Martin Hunter's commanding officer Major Thomas Maitland received the order to "draw their pieces"<sup>40</sup> before battle but refused and pledged that his men would not fire.<sup>41</sup> John André, also at the battle, wrote "no soldier ... was suffered to load, those who could not draw their pieces took out the flints."<sup>42</sup> Other contemporaries such as Major Carl Baurmeister, aide-de-camp to several officers involved in the Philadelphia campaign, heard that Grey ordered his men not to load their muskets.<sup>43</sup> Grey's soldiers, either unloaded or without flint, all the same attacked at both Paoli and Tappan without firing a shot.

To speak to its efficacy, British casualties were minimal in both engagements. At Paoli, John André reported only three British deaths and at most five wounded, while Martin Hunter claimed "not more than twenty men killed and wounded."<sup>44</sup> <sup>45</sup> Hunter and André make no mention of casualties at Tappan. At Paoli Thomas McGuire's research revealed a total of three deaths from the light infantry, an additional two British

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<sup>40</sup> In this case "pieces" likely means the cartridge, a lead ball with gunpowder wrapped in paper.

<sup>41</sup> Hunter, *The Journal of Gen. Sir Martin Hunter*, 30

<sup>42</sup> André, *André's Journal*, vol. 1, 93

<sup>43</sup> Carl Baurmeister, Bernhard A. Uhlendorf and Edna Vosper, "Letters of Major Baurmeister during the Philadelphia Campaign, 1777-1778" *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 59, No. 4 (Oct., 1935), 412

<sup>44</sup> Hunter, *The Journal of Gen. Sir Martin Hunter*, 32

<sup>45</sup> André, *André's Journal*, vol. 1, 94

dragoons, and eight wounded.<sup>46</sup> Compared to the patriot losses, these numbers were staggeringly low. Reports of rebel losses at Paoli varied wildly; Captain John Montrésor, attached to the camp of William Howe at the time, wrote “between 4 or 500 [rebels were] put to the Bayonet and the rest fled except about 100 that were taken prisoner.”<sup>47</sup> Hunter recalled “four hundred and sixty of the enemy ... lying dead the next morning.”<sup>48</sup> Baurmeister reported “100 bayoneted, some 70 wounded, 82 taken prisoners.”<sup>49</sup> John André, who accompanied General Charles Grey into battle, reported “near 200 must have been killed, and a great number wounded. Seventy-one Prisoners were brought off, forty of them badly wounded.”<sup>50</sup> As aide-de-camp to General Grey, André likely had an accurate representation of the volume of prisoners taken. Patriot casualties at Tappan were similarly one-sided; André reported that the “whole corps within six or eight men were killed or taken prisoners.”<sup>51</sup> Casualty reports varied for both the British and patriot reporters, and although casualties were difficult to track the losses were considered significant.

Material gains from these massacres further demonstrate the effectiveness of Grey’s silent night assault. John Montrésor reported the capture of “nine loaded wagons with 4 horses each, and ... their cattle.”<sup>52</sup> Baurmeister report of the battle includes the

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<sup>46</sup> Thomas McGuire, *Battle of Paoli*, 103

<sup>47</sup> John Montrésor, “Journal of Captain John Montrésor, July 1, 1777, to July 1, 1778, Chief Engineer of the British Army” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 6, No. 1 (1882), 39

<sup>48</sup> Hunter, *The Journal of Gen. Sir Martin Hunter*, 32

<sup>49</sup> Baurmeister, “Letters of Major Baurmeister during the Philadelphia Campaign, 1777-1778” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 59, No. 4 (Oct., 1935), 412

<sup>50</sup> André, *André’s Journal*, 94

<sup>51</sup> André, *André’s Journal*, 47

<sup>52</sup> Montrésor, “Journal of Captain John Montrésor...” 39

British confiscation of “about one thousand” muskets discarded during the massacre.<sup>53</sup> British troops nearly captured the four cannons and additional munition wagons during the attack, but these carts escaped before the melee reached them.<sup>54</sup> The material gains from Tappan were more limited, as the victims of the assault were members of a smaller detachment. Here the light infantry captured the “the horses, saddles, accoutrements, &c” used by the patriot dragoons.<sup>55</sup> Neither André nor Hunter note the number of horses and supplies captured. Considering Paul David Nelson’s casualty estimates, with around 70 patriots killed, captured, or wounded, of the 104 members of the unit, it is likely that the British captured upwards of 70 horses and related riding supplies.

Disciplined silence led to resounding success in the field, visible in the relative lack of casualties and the volume enemies and supplies destroyed or captured. These battles demonstrated for British and American soldiers and officers the potent effectiveness (and potential for excessive brutality) of disciplined, silent bayonet night assault. Generals Wayne and Grey both replicated the tactics used at Paoli and Tappan in later battles and campaigns.

On July 16, 1779, a year after Tappan, and two years after Paoli, General Anthony Wayne conducted a surprise night attack on the British outpost at Stony Point, New York. General Washington wrote to Wayne prior to the battle to detail the plan. As in Paoli and Tappan, the attack would be conducted close to midnight by a force of light

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<sup>53</sup> Baurmeister, “Letters of Major Baurmeister during the Philadelphia Campaign...” 412

<sup>54</sup> Montrésor, “Journal of Captain John Montrésor...” 39

<sup>55</sup> André, *André’s Journal*, 47

infantry.<sup>56</sup> Wayne was instructed by Washington to attack the British camp “with fixed bayonets and muskets unloaded.”<sup>57</sup> Officers made similar threats of drastic consequences for those who fired their weapons during the assault; “if any man attempted to load his piece... or retreat, he was instantly to be put to death by the officer or soldier next to him.”<sup>58</sup> As in Tappan and Paoli, the close combat was brutal and violent. William Hull, an American officer who fought alongside the light infantry in the assault on Stony Point, recorded his account of “dreadful slaughter owing to the fierce and obstinate resistance of the enemy.”<sup>59</sup> Hull stated that the British did not surrender until they had suffered nearly one hundred casualties, but as with Paoli, it is impossible to know if the victims of the assault attempted surrender before the patriot assault concluded. Modern casualty estimates claim the British lost 63 soldiers, with an additional 70 wounded in battle and 543 prisoners.<sup>60</sup> The patriots, as in the massacres, suffered relatively few casualties; 15 killed in actions and 83 wounded.<sup>61</sup> Despite the number of dead and wounded at the hands of the bayonet, in a similar style of surprise bayonet combat as at Paoli and Tappan, patriots saw the battle as an example of “valor, perseverance and superior physical strength” of the Americans.<sup>62</sup>

Washington and Wayne’s experimentation with Grey’s tactic used at Paoli and Tappan yielded some degree of success. A successful assault and lessons learnt about

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<sup>56</sup> George Washington to Anthony Wayne, Jul. 10, 1779, in Henry P. Johnston, *Storming of Stony Point on the Hudson* (New York, 1900), 155

<sup>57</sup> Washington to Wayne, Jul. 10, 1779, in *Storming of Stony Point on the Hudson*, 155

<sup>58</sup> William Hull’s Account of the Attack, in Henry P. Johnston, *Storming of Stony Point on the Hudson* (New York, 1900), 190

<sup>59</sup> William Hull’s Account, in *Storming of Stony Point on the Hudson*, 191

<sup>60</sup> Armstrong Starkey, “Paoli to Stony Point: Military Ethics and Weaponry During the American Revolution” *The Journal of Military History* 58, no. 1 (Jan., 1994), 22

<sup>61</sup> William Hull’s Account, in *Storming of Stony Point on the Hudson*, 191

<sup>62</sup> William Hull’s Account, in *Storming of Stony Point on the Hudson*, 192

the value of this style of assault. Grey took his successes further. In 1793 the British organized an expedition to the Caribbean intended to capture the French islands of Martinique, Guadeloupe, St. Lucia, and Saint-Domingue to “deprive republican France of her last source of revenue.”<sup>63</sup> The expedition left Portsmouth on November 26, 1793 with 7,000 soldiers, 10,000 fewer than he had originally been promised.<sup>64</sup> With his limited supply of soldiers, Grey informed his subordinates that they would use the same tactics he had employed in the American Revolution to win the campaign. On January 24, 1794, during the first month of the campaign, Grey encouraged his soldiers to rely on their bayonets. Grey informed them that lack of ammunition was not cause for retreat, as they had with them “the bayonet...the best and most effectual weapon in the hands of a gallant British soldier.”<sup>65</sup> He also informed them of his tactical use of the bayonet during night attacks, in such surprise attacks “ammunition and firing are totally out of the question, and the bayonet is ever to be preferred.”<sup>66</sup>

Grey defended his order by citing personal experiences the value of the bayonet night attack. First, he claimed that it “conceals your numbers.”<sup>67</sup> The confusion of numbers of attackers can be seen in the records of American survivors of Paoli and Tappan, where the actual number of British soldiers involved in the attack becomes exorbitantly high. Second, Grey noted “the enemy direct their fire wherever they see or hear fire, consequently fire upon eachother while you are concealed, and they fall an

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<sup>63</sup> Nelson, *Sir Charles Grey, First Early Grey*, 118

<sup>64</sup> Nelson, *Sir Charles Grey, First Early Grey*, 123

<sup>65</sup> Cooper Willyams, *An Account of the Campaign in the West Indies, in the Year 1794...* (London, 1796), 92

Index includes orders and dispatches during the campaign.

<sup>66</sup> Willyams, *An Account of the Campaign in the West Indies*, 92

<sup>67</sup> Willyams, *An Account of the Campaign in the West Indies*, 93

easy prey.”<sup>68</sup> A friendly fire event very similar to this was recorded between two patriot pickets outside Wayne’s camp at Paoli.<sup>69</sup> Col. Thomas Hartley, an American present at Paoli, wrote of the rampant friendly fire at Paoli, “many were killed ... some times by Enemy’s and some Times by Friends.”<sup>70</sup> He concluded this section of his orders by declaring his knowledge of this from his “own repeated experience” and assuaging his soldiers by claiming “if [the orders are] strictly adhered to, it will seldom, if ever, fail of success.”<sup>71</sup> Grey understood the tactical potential and effects of the strategy he experimented with at Paoli and Tappan. As in the American Revolution, the ordered exclusive use of the bayonet had bloody consequences.

Cooper Willyams, chaplain of the expedition’s flagship *Boyne*, recorded several bayonet attacks during Grey’s West Indian campaign. One attempted assault on February 16, 1794 directed at the artillery emplacement at Morne Rouge bears similarity to Paoli, as soldiers were ordered to remove “all their flints” for the 2 AM assault.<sup>72</sup> Willyams records several minor bayonet assaults, but does not witness the violence of the battles until the aftermath of the battle at Fort Fleur d'Epée, Guadeloupe on April 12, 1794. Here the British planned an early morning amphibious attack with bayonet only. Sailors were also instructed to join battle and make exclusive use of swords and pikes.<sup>73</sup> Attacking at 5 AM, British soldiers quickly advanced, killing the pickets outside the fort and meeting fierce resistance at the gates.<sup>74</sup> Willyams reminds the reader here of the

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<sup>68</sup> Willyams, *An Account of the Campaign in the West Indies*, 93

<sup>69</sup> Thomas McGuire, *Battle of Paoli*, 76

<sup>70</sup> Thomas McGuire, *Battle of Paoli*, 76

<sup>71</sup> Willyams, *An Account of the Campaign in the West Indies*, 93

<sup>72</sup> Willyams, *An Account of the Campaign in the West Indies*, 30

<sup>73</sup> Willyams, *An Account of the Campaign in the West Indies*, 56

<sup>74</sup> Willyams, *An Account of the Campaign in the West Indies*, 56

violence seen at Paoli and Tappan, “a scene of dreadful conflict took place: the enemy ... were put to the sword in great numbers.”<sup>75</sup> Following the victory, British troops continued to pursue the fleeing French, driving them nearly 35 miles to Basse-Terre.<sup>76</sup> Willyams decided to visit the captured fortress that day; what he witnessed corresponds with the brutality recorded at Grey’s American massacres. At the fort’s gate he encountered “a heap of the slain, who all died by the sword or bayonet” – inside the fortress “the destruction appeared more dreadful.” He witnessed “a multitude of miserable wretches expiring of their wounds” and amongst the carnage sat Sir Charles Grey, “writing his dispatches on a table.”<sup>77</sup> At Fleur d’Epée forty-four British troops were lost, compared to the French two hundred and fifty.<sup>78</sup> Another unnamed massacre occurred at Trinité, where Major General Thomas Dundas attacked the French with bayonets. A British dispatch from the expedition headquarters at Riviere Sallée celebrated the “great slaughter” that took place during the rout.<sup>79</sup>

The bayonet-exclusive night assault was something significantly different from previous patriot attacks, and the actions that were undertaken during the planning and assault bear striking similarities to British actions at Paoli and Tappan. This style of assault was new for soldiers and officers alike. One American soldier was put to death during battle for loading his musket and intending to fire, telling his superior officer that he “did not understand fighting without firing.”<sup>80</sup> In the British East Indian expedition of 1794, Grey’s insistence on the value of the bayonet attack, and the assurance he

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<sup>75</sup> Willyams, *An Account of the Campaign in the West Indies*, 56

<sup>76</sup> Willyams, *An Account of the Campaign in the West Indies*, 56

<sup>77</sup> Willyams, *An Account of the Campaign in the West Indies*, 57

<sup>78</sup> Willyams, *An Account of the Campaign in the West Indies*, 56

<sup>79</sup> Willyams, *An Account of the Campaign in the West Indies*, 95

<sup>80</sup> William Hull’s Account, in *Storming of Stony Point on the Hudson*, 193

provided to his soldiers that “it will seldom, if ever, fail of success” if done properly, displays a need to justify this unusual strategy to soldiers unfamiliar with its use.

The battles at Tappan and Paoli were not planned as massacres, neither was Stony Point or the battles of the British West Indian Campaign of 1794. Historians have noted that Grey’s use of bayonet night attacks were intended as an “effective shock action” and to gain a “psychological edge [for] those on the offensive.”<sup>81</sup> However, these night attacks created the opportunity for extreme violence that was difficult to restrain. Soldiers participating in these night assaults had been assured that no enemy was their equal, and that their use of the bayonet was superior to all. Commanders in all circumstances train their soldiers, as Amelia Green explains, to “increase combatants’ predisposition to violence.”<sup>82</sup> To win battles and wars “commander must, and do, cultivate violence to succeed.”<sup>83</sup> But in fostering violent predisposition soldiers become more willing to commit unrestrained and unordered acts of violence.<sup>84</sup> The dark of a night assault and permission given to soldiers to attack violently and with close combat only create the perfect scenario for outbursts of unrestrained violence. Perhaps the extreme violence of these battles further encouraged the enemy to flee, and Grey and other commanders used this tactic with complete knowledge of its murderous potential. As it stands, it is not clear whether commanders learned from Paoli the value of the tactics used, or the value of the violent aftermath. Grey’s reputation having been damaged by his soldiers’ conduct at Paoli, likely developed his strategies despite the

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<sup>81</sup> Nelson, *Sir Charles Grey, First Early Grey*, 193

<sup>82</sup> Amelia Hoover Green, *The Commander’s Dilemma: Violence and Restraint in Wartime* (Cornell, 2018), 30

<sup>83</sup> Green, *The Commander’s Dilemma*, 28

<sup>84</sup> Green, *The Commander’s Dilemma*, 30



potential for massacre. The victories at Paoli and Tappan, despite their brutality, were also military engagements, and presented opportunities for soldiers and officers to learn from the victory and perfect this type of attack.

### Propaganda

The battles at Tappan and Paoli resulted in a bevy of tales of horror and cruelty, as well as bravery and strength. Depending on the perspective, the retold events of battle could change from legitimate conflict to massacre. For the patriots, this propaganda focused on the cruelty of the British, attempted to promote a belief that the British took no prisoners, and deserved retribution for the misdeeds of Paoli and Tappan.

Some reported brutality of the battles of Paoli and Tappan can seem absurd, fictitious, or otherwise excessive. This phenomenon is seen in the records of both battle survivors and those who heard about the battle. For example, the account of John Robert Shaw offers a tale of the barbarity at Tappan that is not verifiable from other sources or archaeological evidence. John Robert Shaw was a British drummer stationed at Long Island, but was not present at Tappan. However, he believed in and regurgitated tales of the battle believing the events to be true. He claimed that his regiment was close enough to hear the “screams of the hapless victims whom our savage fellow soldiers were butchering.”<sup>85</sup> He claimed that the first casualty of the surprise was a sentry who had fallen asleep outside; a British officer, finding him, “instantly cut off his head.”<sup>86</sup> He claimed that “some were seen having their arms cut off,

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<sup>85</sup> Shaw, *A Narrative of the Life & Travels*, 20

<sup>86</sup> Shaw, *A Narrative of the Life & Travels*, 20

and others with their bowels hanging out crying for mercy.”<sup>87</sup> In his tale, the killed and wounded amounted to 250 patriots. He concluded this section with a rousing declaration of British calamity, “let Britain boast no more of her honour, her science [sic] and civilization; but with shame hide her head in the dust; her fame is gone; Tappan [sic] will witness against her.”<sup>88</sup> There are immediately evident several issues to his account. To begin, he claimed that the first murder was committed by “one of the officers of the grenadiers,” when in fact there were no grenadiers present during the assault.<sup>89</sup> Thomas Maitland’s Second Light Infantry conducted the attack at Tappan, as evidenced by Martin Hunter, who served with the light infantry and was present at the battle.<sup>90</sup> Dr. David Griffith, surgeon and chaplain who examined the wounded after Tappan, makes no mention of victims having suffered loss of limb, only the expected stabs and lacerations of a bayonet.<sup>91</sup> The battles of Tappan and Paoli were conducted under strict orders of silence, as such it is difficult to imagine any officer believing it practical to attempt to behead a sleeping soldier instead of dispatching him in a similar manner to the other victims at Tappan, with the use of bayonet or musket butt. Shaw’s account of the battle at Tappan, like others concerning Tappan and Paoli, are not significant for dubious stories they present but for the propagandized story it markets. As Shaw was not present at the battle, information he told in his account were secondhand. He believed the tale enough to record it in his memoir and to moralize the event, despite his retelling inconsistent with known primary sources.

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<sup>87</sup> Shaw, *A Narrative of the Life & Travels*, 20-21

<sup>88</sup> Shaw, *A Narrative of the Life & Travels*, 21

<sup>89</sup> Shaw, *A Narrative of the Life & Travels*, 20

<sup>90</sup> Hunter, *The Journal of Gen. Sir Martin Hunter*, 32

<sup>91</sup> Thomas Demarest, "The Baylor Massacre: Some Assorted Notes and Information," *Bergen County History Annual* (1971), 44

The use term “massacre” was not universal among patriots in discussions about Paoli and Tappan. Terms abound, some masking the event with the phrase “Wayne’s affair,” seen being used by patriots and British in the Martin Hunter’s memoir.<sup>92</sup> American officers in particular employed the term “affair”<sup>93</sup> when describing Paoli. Major Francis Menges of the 11<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment, in giving testimony for Wayne’s court martial, called the battle “the affair of the 20<sup>th</sup>.”<sup>94</sup> Anthony Wayne also called his loss at Paoli “last Nights Affair.”<sup>95</sup> Others, from British officer John André to delegate to the Continental Congress George Ross, used military terms like “Surprize” and “Action.”<sup>96</sup> As with the use of “affair” or military descriptors like “action,” the term “massacre,” when used, was employed by both British and patriot sympathizers. Baurmeister observed that the British at Paoli “deployed so fast they massacred it.”<sup>97</sup> Communications sent by Dr. William Shippen Jr. of the Continental Hospital include casualty returns from Paoli, in which the communique describes the wounded as “General Wayne’s Division massacred at Paoli.”<sup>98</sup> A lack of a unified description of the battle should not, however, connote a dearth of emotional responses. Patriots used a variety of terms to justify retributive violence in the wake of Paoli and Tappan.

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<sup>92</sup> Hunter, *The Journal of Gen. Sir Martin Hunter*, 32

<sup>93</sup> It should be noted that the term “affair” was defined as “A fight or battle between armed forces; a military engagement” in the Oxford English Dictionary, and use of the term “affair” in a military context can be found in use, according to the OED, at the beginning of the eighteenth-century. It was, then, a vague term for a battle.

<sup>94</sup> Thomas McGuire, *Battle of Paoli*, 152

<sup>95</sup> Thomas McGuire, *Battle of Paoli*, 111

<sup>96</sup> Thomas McGuire, *Battle of Paoli*, 134

<sup>97</sup> Baurmeister, “Letters of Major Baurmeister during the Philadelphia Campaign...” 412

<sup>98</sup> “Continental Hospital Returns, 1777-1780” ed. John W. Jordan, *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 23, no. 1 (1899), 35

Justification for retribution became an important response to the propaganda on Paoli and Tappan. Calls for retribution emerged in two varieties. American soldiers created battle cries intended to inspire fury towards the British. The most used battle cry was the call to “Remember Paoli” or “Remember Wayne’s affair” or other modifications on remembrance. Martin Hunter recalled several such shouts during later battles during his revolutionary war service. At the Battle of Germantown on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1777, before firing at the British line patriots shouted, “Revenge Wayne’s affair!”<sup>99</sup> Hunter was aware that Anthony Wayne led the forward column of this attack, and he expected some degree of vengeance from the American troops under him. Hunter mused that if they had fallen victim to a surprise attack the night before battle, he was confident that “we should all have been bayoneted.”<sup>100</sup> Propagandized battle inspired Americans long after the immediate aftermaths of Paoli and Tappan. John Robert Shaw claimed that calls of “Remember Paola [sic] and the massacre of Lady Washington’s light horse at Tapaan [sic]” provided inspiration to soldiers and officers alike at the Battle of Stony Point in 1779.<sup>101</sup> These calls acted as reminders to patriots of the perceived barbarity of British soldiers during the battles of Paoli and Tappan. It offered license for retribution against the British. Martin Hunter understood this retributive desire, and expected no quarter given at Germantown.

Propaganda born from the battles of Tappan and Paoli also included claims that the British were unwilling to take prisoners during the battles. The patriot Colonel Adam Hubble who was present at Paoli remembered British soldiers shouting, “no quarters!”<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Hunter, *The Journal of Gen. Sir Martin Hunter*, 34

<sup>100</sup> Hunter, *The Journal of Gen. Sir Martin Hunter*, 33

<sup>101</sup> Shaw, *A Narrative of the Life & Travels*, 23-4

<sup>102</sup> Thomas McGuire, *Battle of Paoli*, 99

Other reports claimed the British only took prisoners begrudgingly, as John Shaw wrote, “to preserve...some appearance of clemency, 43 were admitted prisoners of war [at Tappan].”<sup>103</sup> The American surgeon Dr. David Griffith, who recorded the injuries of Tappan survivors, claimed that “very few, or none of the British Officers entered the quarters of our Troops on this occasion, that no stop might be put to the Rage and Barbarity.”<sup>104</sup> Griffith claims there would have been no prisoners taken, had a British officer not “had the feelings of remorse & ventured to disobey his Orders” and given quarter to the “4<sup>th</sup> troop.”<sup>105</sup> Reports of the volume of prisoners taken at both Tappan and Paoli discussed earlier show that the British clearly had an interest in capturing prisoners. However, in this case as in others in propaganda, the validity of the claims did not matter as much as the belief in their veracity.

In response to the growing perception that the British offered no quarter to patriots, Americans fought viciously, intending to take fewer prisoners in return and to enact revenge on British soldiers. Inspired by the memory of Paoli, patriots at Germantown attacked the British light infantry with furious abandon. Wayne’s officers attempted to “save many of the Poor Wretches who were Crying for Mercy – but to little purpose.” Wayne’s soldiers, he wrote, “Remembering the Action of the Night of the 20<sup>th</sup> Sepr. Near the Warren – pushed on with their Bayonets – and took Ample Vengeance for that Nights Work.”<sup>106</sup> Adam Hubley, present at both Paoli and Germantown, wrote that Wayne’s troops had retaliation on their minds, “Justice call'd for retaliation, and we

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<sup>103</sup> Shaw, *A Narrative of the Life & Travels*, 21

<sup>104</sup> Demarest “The Baylor Massacre: Some Assorted Notes and Information,” 43

<sup>105</sup> Demarest “The Baylor Massacre: Some Assorted Notes and Information,” 43

<sup>106</sup> Thomas McGuire, *Battle of Paoli*, 126

paid in the same Coin that we received on the bloody Night.”<sup>107</sup> With the memory of Paoli on their mind the Americans “shew'd them No quarter and without distinguishon put their Bayonets, thro' all ye came across, at the same time reminding them of thier Inhumanity on that Night.”<sup>108</sup>

Witnessing American refusal to give quarter, nearly 100 British soldiers barricaded themselves in a mansion near the battlefield, and defended it without cease, well aware that surrender meant death.<sup>109</sup> The fear those 100 British felt during the battle of Germantown was akin to the fear the propaganda around Paoli and Tappan fostered. The battle cry created to remind patriots of the cruelty of Paoli and Tappan, as well as the perception that the British took no prisoners, gave justification for American soldiers to commit similar atrocities as those committed at the massacres. Inspired by this propaganda, patriots likely fought with more ferocity out of a greater fear of death; in their new perception, surrender equated to death.

### Conclusion

The bloody conflicts at Tappan and Paoli are bleak reminders of the gory reality of warfare, especially the gruesome nature of close combat. When investigating these massacres, they provide intriguing insight into the propaganda and military value of defining and committing massacres. Officers and soldiers loyal to either side of the conflict witnessed the terrible potential of Charles Grey's surprise night raids, and either adopted the practice, or continued to develop its use. Along with tactical knowledge,

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<sup>107</sup> Thomas McGuire, *Battle of Paoli*, 128

<sup>108</sup> Thomas McGuire, *Battle of Paoli*, 128

<sup>109</sup> Thomas McGuire, *Battle of Paoli*, 127

propaganda was born out of the gore of Paoli and Tappan. The tales of horror, fictional or true, inspired Americans to fight with fervor, rationalizing extreme retributive violence using Paoli and Tappan as their justification. It is likely that other massacres, in the American Revolution and a broader historical context, result in similar phenomena.

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### Chapter 3. “My Fellow Slaves”: Identity, Faith, and Space in the Construction of American Slave Communities in Algiers, 1785 to 1796.

In 1589 Damian Montenegro lay captive in a prison cell in Constantinople. He was a Christian slave in the service of Ottoman privateers, unable to return to his home in Ragusa without ransom. Montenegro, not content to remain a slave, plotted his escape. Come summer, he would return to a galley with dozens of other slaves – there he and his co-conspirators would revolt. With the aid of Orazio Acquaviva Romano and Nicolo Rizzo, two men of different national and lingual backgrounds, Montenegro convinced 500 captives in two separate galleys to reclaim their freedom. They collected weapons while stationed at different Mediterranean ports and replaced their restraints with faulty ones to free themselves. On a prearranged date, the conspirators revolted, reportedly killing 300 “Turks” in the process. Having taken their prizes, they rowed for Barcelona, and found their freedom.<sup>110</sup>

Mediterranean slave cooperation over cultural and linguistical lines was not limited to the sixteenth century, during the height of Early Modern Mediterranean slavery and piracy. In October 1793, American captive John Foss reported a similar, if smaller-scaled attempt at freedom. Fourteen Christian “slaves of different nations,” living in the bagnios of Algiers, “made an attempt to run away with a boat, but were finally overtaken after they were several leagues at sea, and brought back to Algiers.”<sup>111</sup> Two agitators were executed, and the remaining twelve received the serious

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<sup>110</sup> Daniel Hershenzon, *The Captive Sea: Slavery, Communication, and Commerce in Early Modern Spain and the Mediterranean*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 37-39.

<sup>111</sup> John Foss, *Journal, of the captivity and Suffering of John Foss; Several Years a Prisoner at Algiers...* Newburyport: (1798), 31

punishment of “five hundred bastinadoes each,” blows of a cane to the sole of feet, and an additional fifty pounds of chain added to each prisoners leg along with a seventy pound wooden block, to be carried “for life.” They continued to bear this punishment when Foss departed Algiers with his freedom in 1796.<sup>112</sup> Foss bemoaned the “miserable situation” of his co-religionists and “brother sufferers”— he imagined the descriptions of slavery, abuse, and death in his work to be equal to the “records of hell.”<sup>113</sup>

Christian captives, enslaved in bagnios (slave prisons), galleys, and palaces, constructed communities and forged new bonds with other enslaved peoples. North African corsairs only captured Christians, and as such the slave population in major ports like Algiers was exclusively Christian. Historian Daniel Hershenson notes that the frequent mobility of Mediterranean slaves allowed them to forge connections with individuals of varied religious, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. That is not to say antagonism between confession, country, and language was removed upon capture. Robert Davis documents the prevalence of “regular brawls between varying contingents of Spanish, Portuguese, French, [and] Italians” in bagnio life – with religion, politics, and language frequently kindling conflict.<sup>114</sup> However, these brawls seemed to have waned by the late eighteenth century, as no American captive recorded any cross-national skirmish in captivity.<sup>115</sup> Historian Christine Sears, examining community involvement of Americans in Algerian and West Saharan slave communities, asserts that Americans

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<sup>112</sup> Foss, *Journal of the captivity and Suffering*, 32

<sup>113</sup> Foss, *Journal of the captivity and Suffering*, 38.

<sup>114</sup> Robert Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 112-113

<sup>115</sup> Christine Sears, *American Slaves and African Masters: Algiers and the Western Sahara, 1776-1820* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 37

created transnational relationships in Barbary captivity. However, cramped bagnio conditions were as likely to foster conflict as they were to foster community. She contends that, while black and African slaves in the U.S. “greatly valued their social and religious ties,” Americans in Barbary captivity hoped for a “temporary enslavement” and “focused their energy on surviving and being ransomed, rather than building and maintaining families or religious connections.”<sup>116</sup> Further, European and American slaves adhered to preexisting categories based on nationality and class, and resisted identification perceived others.<sup>117</sup>

The existence of both community and conflict, then, is widely noted by historians. Less studied is how these slave communities were constructed despite conflicting nationality and religion.<sup>118</sup> With the mass introduction of Americans from 1785 to 1793 into the centuries-old system of Mediterranean slavery in Algiers, how did they construct community among themselves and other Christian captives? I contend that identity, faith, and space played an essential role in the inclusion and exclusion of Americans and Europeans in Algerian slave communities. The influence of identity, faith, and space in community creation can be examined clearly in American slave narratives written by James Cathcart and John Foss. The captives’ personal understandings of self in relation to slavery, shared identity, and experiences as “Christian slaves” fostered community. Catholic orders provided charity, rest, and stability to all Christian captives

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<sup>116</sup> Sears, *American Slaves and African Masters*, 29, 53

<sup>117</sup> Hershenson, *The Captive Sea*, 4

<sup>118</sup> Eric Dursteler and Daniel Hershenson have, however, noted the importance of French in facilitating communication between free and enslaved people in the Mediterranean. See Eric Dursteler, “Speaking in Tongue: Language and Communication in the Early Modern Mediterranean,” *Past and Present* 217 (2012): 47-77

and demonstrated how Christians ought to survive in slavery. Shared spaces, whether bagnios, taverns, or workplaces, also fostered community by offering slaves opportunity to relax, sympathize, and resist enslavement together. Through the publication of these narratives, which were influenced by the cooperation of Americans with Europeans in Algerian slavery, enslaved Americans and American readers at home saw the need for Christian solidarity against a new Muslim rival.

### Mediterranean Slavery and the Introduction of Americans

Christian and Muslim people played a centuries old role in the system of Mediterranean slavery in the early modern era. Through raids or piracy, Christian and Muslim raiders captured individuals of the opposing faith and forced them into slavery as oarsmen on galleys, laborers at bagnios in major ports, servants in palaces, or personal attendants to individuals. Mediterranean slaves typically remained in contact with their families and communities while enslaved through letter writing.<sup>119</sup> Additionally, Christian slaves could own property, collect money, and achieve an elevated political status. By 1800, slavery in the Muslim world was still understood as temporary, religiously based, and political, whereas slavery in North and South America was defined as permanent, racial, and economic.<sup>120</sup> The distinction between these styles of slavery, and the freedom permitted to white slaves in Muslim captivity, should not degrade the horror of forced servitude in either situation. Christian and Muslim slaves in

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<sup>119</sup> Robert J. Allison, *The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslims World, 1776-1815* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), 107

<sup>120</sup> Allison, *The Crescent Obscured*, 109

the Mediterranean were bereft of freedom, forced into grueling labor, and subject to deplorable punishments and living conditions.

Americans were largely unacquainted with the Mediterranean system of slavery, although exposed to tales of “Barbary captivity” through novels and sermons, with notable contributions from Joshua Gee in 1680 and Cotton Mather in 1703.<sup>121</sup> Following the Revolution, America sought new trade partners in the Mediterranean.<sup>122</sup> Americans witnessed a spike in captures after losing the protection of the Anglo-Algerian treaty of 1682, which permitted English subjects to roam the Mediterranean without fear of North African corsairs.<sup>123</sup> As American captivity narratives returned home in the form of letters and autobiographies, American readers became enthralled with authentic and fictional accounts of North African slavery.<sup>124</sup> North African privateers captured some thirty-five American ships between 1785 and 1815. Algerian-based corsairs accounted for twenty-two of these abductions. In total, some 130 U.S. sailors were held in North Africa from 1785 to 1796.<sup>125</sup> Most of the Americans captured by Algerians from 1785 and 1796 became state-owned slaves, forced into hard labor or servitude at the Dey’s (North African ruler) palace. Interchangeably described as slaves or captives, Americans in North Africa suffered until 1796, when the U.S. and Algerian governments agreed to a treaty, and the surviving Americans returned home.

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<sup>121</sup> Paul Baepler, ed., *White Slaves, African Masters: An Anthology of American Barbary Captivity Narratives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 303

<sup>122</sup> David J. Dzurec III, *Our Suffering Brethren: Foreign Captivity and Nationalism in the Early United States* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2019), 45; Baepler, *White Slaves*, 25

<sup>123</sup> Sears, *American Slaves and African Masters*, 28

<sup>124</sup> Baepler, *White Slaves, African Masters*, 24

<sup>125</sup> Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 18



Among those 130 sailors were James Leander Cathcart and John Foss, the former captured in 1785 and the latter in 1793. Both Cathcart and Foss wrote autobiographical accounts of their captivity in later-published journals. James Cathcart was born in West Meath, Ireland, on June 1, 1767. During his childhood he was placed under the care of the sailor Captain John Cathcart, whom he followed to America. Cathcart spent some time with the US navy as a midshipman aboard the US frigate *Confederacy*.<sup>126</sup> While serving as a sailor aboard the *Maria of Boston*, an American merchant vessel, Cathcart was captured by Algerian-based corsairs on July 25, 1785.<sup>127</sup> Cathcart was just 17 when captured, and 28 when released. Cathcart originally composed a journal during his captivity, and later edited portions of the journal to compose a cohesive narrative.<sup>128</sup> Although this work was compiled and published by his daughter Jane Cathcart in 1899, Cathcart's hoped to portray himself in his letters and memoir as an industrious diplomat. Although absent of academic diplomatic accreditation, Cathcart uses much of his work to describe foreign affairs and his interactions with foreign diplomats. Cathcart, later in his captivity, became the highest-ranking enslaved Christian in Algiers, and after his enslavement, serves several posts as an American diplomat.<sup>129</sup> Cathcart hoped not only to display his abilities as a politician, but to present the Algerian landscape as a beautiful, prosperous place, inhabited by cruel and undeserving government and people. Cathcart believed that

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<sup>126</sup> James Cathcart, *The Captives: Eleven Years a Prisoner in Algiers*. Ed. J. B. Newkirk. La Porte, 1899.iii-x

<sup>127</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 29

<sup>128</sup> Cathcart references original journal passages throughout this work. Cathcart, *The Captives*, 109, 115, 167

<sup>129</sup> For more on Cathcart as a diplomat, see Martha Elena Rojas, "Insults Unpunished": Barbary Captives, American Slaves, and the Negotiation of Liberty." *Early American Studies* 1, no. 2 (Fall 2003), 159-186.

Algiers was "one of the most beautiful [places] in the world" and "if this country [was] blessed with a good government which would promote the welfare of its subjects and encourage agriculture, arts and manufactures, it would become in a very few years a perfect paradise" and an economic powerhouse.<sup>130</sup>

John Foss's journal is far less self-serving in its ambitions. Foss's childhood and origins are not as clear as Cathcart's but he too served as a mariner aboard an American merchant vessel. Foss departed aboard the Polly from Newburyport, Massachusetts, and was captured on 25 August 1793, by Algerian corsairs some 35 leagues west of Cape St. Vincent.<sup>131</sup> Like Cathcart, Foss recorded his tribulations in a journal, which he later edited into a published narrative in 1798. Foss's believed that his captivity demonstrated to him that Algerian people were "taught by their religion to treat the Christian Captives with unexampled cruelty."<sup>132</sup> Foss emphasized the cruelty, tyranny, and senseless violence of Algerian slavery, and hoped to teach readers that Muslim North Africans were barbarous and lacking humanity. In contrast, he elevated white Americans as a "race of men endowed with superior souls."<sup>133</sup>

Both Foss and Cathcart were at least nominally Protestant. Cathcart's faith is evidenced by a rejected invitation to convert from a Catholic slave.<sup>134</sup> Further evidence of Cathcart's Protestantism is seen when he argued with a slave-master by distinguishing Protestant Americans from Catholic Maltesers. Cathcart claimed that

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<sup>130</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 89; for more on Cathcart's career in general, see Brett Goodin, *From Captives to Consuls: Three Sailors in Barbary and their Self-Making Across the Early American Republic, 1770-1840* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020).

<sup>131</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 8

<sup>132</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, ii-iii

<sup>133</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 126

<sup>134</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 25

Americans should not suffer for Muslim enslavement at the hand of the Order of St. John because they practiced a “different religion.”<sup>135</sup> Foss’s religious persuasion is less clearly defined, but his faith may be evidenced by his mocking of Catholic slaves. He claimed that Catholics were “exasperated,” being taught that “*they* are the only true Christians,” witnessed the liberation of protestant Americans and Dutch and exclaimed, “why...are true Christians, unnoticed, by our country ... while the Protestants, ... are daily emancipated, and are not suffered to wear the yoke of slavery?”<sup>136</sup> He added that they lamented that Protestants “set examples of humanity” instead of Catholic governments.<sup>137</sup> The veracity of these statements beside, Foss conflated the Americans with Protestantism, and further described Catholics as “they.”

Cathcart and Foss’s narratives are emphasized here for several reasons. To start, Foss and Cathcart provide the only two substantial accounts of American captivity in Algiers from 1785 to 1796. Letters are useful as a supplement, but they often focus on personal discomfort. Algerian captivity provides a unique experience for American captives, as they were forced to share their experiences with unfamiliar Europeans of various religious, national, and lingual backgrounds in a population-dense environment. Other American captives taken in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century were either owned as personal slaves in the Sub-Sahara and lived separate from the interaction with other Europeans and Americans, or were imprisoned alongside countrymen in short-term wartime captivity.<sup>138</sup> Finally, Cathcart and Foss were both

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<sup>135</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 48

<sup>136</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 145, my emphasis.

<sup>137</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 145

<sup>138</sup> For examples of other accounts of American slavery in North Africa, see Baepler, *White Slaves, African Masters*.

multilingual, allowing them to converse with various slave groups. Cathcart claims he understood French and Spanish, while Foss spoke French.<sup>139</sup> These conditions created an intriguing environment for cross-cultural exchange and cooperation, and these sources provide an optimal lens to view that cooperation.

In addition to personal narratives, many American slaves wrote to American newspapers and political officials. American slaves' only route to freedom was through ransom or religious conversion. To win this ransom they wrote letters home describing their experiences, hoping to persuade the American government and populace to aid them. Although English Barbary captivity narratives existed for two-hundred years prior to their explosion in popularity in the eighteenth century, the new enslavement of American seamen alarmed and horrified the Early Republic.<sup>140</sup> Between the publication of John Foss's story in 1798 and James Riley's 1817 narrative, American publishers printed "over a hundred American Barbary captivity editions."<sup>141</sup> American audiences "learned about the sufferings of their compatriots in captivity from sermons, from efforts to raise contributions toward ransoms, and from the narratives written by captives who had returned home."<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 22; Foss, 18

<sup>140</sup> Baepler, *White Slaves, African Masters*, 6, 24; Mario Klarer, in the introduction to *Mediterranean Slavery and World Literature: Captivity Genres from Cervantes to Rousseau*, writes, "Ever since Miguel de Cervantes decided to incorporate aspects of his Algerian captivity experience into his writing, Mediterranean piracy and captivity provided a fruitful source of inspiration for major authors in the early modern period." English language captivity accounts appear as early as 1563. Mario Klarer, ed., *Mediterranean Slavery and World Literature: Captivity Genres from Cervantes to Rousseau*. (New York: Routledge, 2020), 9

<sup>141</sup> Baepler *White Slaves, African Masters*, 24

<sup>142</sup> Martha Elena Rojas, "'Insults Unpunished': Barbary Captives, American Slaves, and the Negotiation of Liberty." *Early American Studies* 1, no. 2 (Fall 2003), 166

American slaves, when writing letters to an American audience, hoped to convince government officials to work faster for their redemption. To do this, personal accounts emphasize the cruelty of North African slave-masters. As such, the accounts describe punishment and torture in graphic detail, eager to stir an audience into sympathy for American “sufferers” in Algiers. These accounts are also heavily influenced by a post-revolutionary patriotism.<sup>143</sup> This patriotic inclination frequently can present contradictory narratives. For example, in December 1793, the U.S. government provided a stipend to all American slaves in Algiers.<sup>144</sup> Foss claims that “No nation of Christendom had ever done the like for their subjects in our situation.”<sup>145</sup> He also claimed that his Algerian masters looked at this singular “example of humanity” with “admiration.”<sup>146</sup> Simultaneously, Foss claims these same slavers laughed at the mutilation of a Christian slave at work and beat Christians without provocation.<sup>147</sup> As such, historians should rightly call into question the veracity of Algerian praise of U.S. “humanity,” along with statements in both narratives written in this patriotic sycophancy. North African slave narratives were also influenced by the popular American Indian captivity narratives and proto-orientalism.<sup>148</sup> Robert Allison argues that Indian slave stories all displayed a “rough path [that] ended with a glimpse of sublime pleasures,”

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<sup>143</sup> Anti-Catholicism faded in vehemence after the American Revolution. Additionally, Marcus Rediker argues that, although Protestants and Catholics squabbled on 18<sup>th</sup> century vessels, a general religious tolerance pervaded among sailors. See Maura Jane Farrelly, *Anti-Catholicism in America, 1620-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 173.

<sup>144</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 123

<sup>145</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 123

<sup>146</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 123

<sup>147</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 42

<sup>148</sup> For more on Orientalism and Algerian Captivity, see Robert Battistini, “Glimpses of the Other before Orientalism: The Muslim World in Early American Periodicals, 1785-1800,” *Early American Studies* 8, no 2 (Spring, 2010), 446-474

meaning, most frequently, freedom and praise. These narratives were meant to “encourage Americans at home” to behave in with a benevolence that contrasted “the brutality of Algerians and Arabs”.<sup>149</sup>

### Redemptive Orders, Charity, and Catholic Spaces

For Americans sailors captured from 1785 to 1793, Catholic orders played the greatest role in fostering community between the new arrivals and Algerian slaves. Catholic religious orders had been involved in ransom efforts on the Christian-Islamic frontier since the twelfth century.<sup>150</sup> Outside of Paris in 1198, John of Matha established the Order of the Most Holy Trinity and of the Captives, better known as the Trinitarians (or Mathurins in France), the first of the major redemptive orders.<sup>151</sup> Their activities spread through medieval Castille and France. Later, in 1218 in Barcelona, Peter Nolasco and Ramon de Penyafort established the Order of Our Lady of Mercy and the Redemption of the Captives.<sup>152</sup> These religious orders worked extensively with polities to raise money and rescue captives in North Africa and the Middle East. Spanish Trinitarians alone may have rescued as many as 15,573 slaves in the 1600s.<sup>153</sup> Historian Jean Dams estimated that the Trinitarians ransomed more than 100,000 slaves from North Africa and the Middle East from the crusades through the eighteenth century. Although substantial, the yearly redemption efforts of these orders during the

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<sup>149</sup> Allison, *The Crescent Obscured*, 109-110

<sup>150</sup> James William Brodman, *Ransoming Captives in Crusader Spain: The Order of Merced on the Christian-Islamic Frontier* (1998), 16-17

<sup>151</sup> Hershenson, *The Captive Sea*, 45

<sup>152</sup> Hershenson, *The Captive Sea*, 45

<sup>153</sup> Hershenson, *The Captive Sea*, 19

peak of white slavery from 1580 to 1680 accounted for only 2 percent of the total enslaved.<sup>154</sup> Despite the paucity of slaves recovered, redemptive orders provided a form of national pride for French and Iberian monarchs, who projected an image of Christian protection by supporting and cooperating with ransoming orders.<sup>155</sup> Redemptive orders also established chapels and hospitals in North African slave bagnios to tend to the spiritual and physical needs of slaves. Well-funded and staffed bagnio chapels held masses at least three times a week and included all the trappings of a Catholic community: devotional confraternities, choruses, Christmas creches, sacraments, and counseling.<sup>156</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Catholic redemptive orders from France, Iberia, and beyond worked closely with European polities to ransom and care for slaves from their respective countries. These activities attracted many captive Catholics, who hoped for ransom and took solace in spiritual guidance.

Recognition of these charitable orders was not limited to Europe. Several American newspaper reports appeared as early as the 1730s and recounted Trinitarian and Mercedarian redemption efforts in North Africa. In 1730, a note from Paris in the *Boston Gazette* acknowledges a successful Trinitarian redemption from Algiers.<sup>157</sup> Various reports featured in the *Boston Weekly Post-Boy* in 1749 and the *New York Gazette* in 1752 discuss the various pitfalls and successes of redemption efforts and North African slave life.<sup>158</sup> One notable extract, published in the Philadelphia

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<sup>154</sup> Hershenson, *The Captive Sea*, 19, 20

<sup>155</sup> Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 93

<sup>156</sup> Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 120-121

<sup>157</sup> "Paris, Nov. 16." *Boston Gazette* (Boston, Massachusetts), no. 538, March 30, 1730: [1].

<sup>158</sup> "Extract of a Letter from Algiers, June 12. N. S.." *Boston Post-Boy* (Boston, Massachusetts), no. 774, September 25, 1749: [1].

*Independent Gazetteer* and the *Pennsylvania Packet* in 1786 notes the redemption and subsequent ritual procession of French slaves.<sup>159</sup> In this report, the writer mourns the sorrow of the slaves' wives, as some had not seen their husbands for thirty years. Three remarried women, having found their estranged husbands, were struck with "surprise...as great as their sorrow at the appearance of their former husbands."<sup>160</sup> The story remarks that one woman was struck dead with shock. In addition to a familiarity with the redemptive orders from letters and newspaper reports, the Algerian capture of American sailors in 1785 drove American diplomats to negotiate directly with the Trinitarians to organize a ransom.<sup>161</sup> Thomas Jefferson, working with the Trinitarians in France, requested funds to liberate the American captives, but American logistical failures and the rise of anti-clericalism in France forced the order to suspend operations in 1790. Despite these failures, it is possible that some American readers were familiar with the mission of redemptive orders. The captive Americans in Algiers were both witnesses and recipients to the charity of redemptive priests. Inspired by their charity, they spoke highly of priests, and forged bonds with non-American, non-Protestant clergy, which encouraged interaction with other Catholics.

American-Algerian captivity narratives comment on the charitable assistance of priests to enslaved Americans. John Foss's earliest interaction with a Catholic priest in

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"Madrid, November 30." *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy* (New York, New York), no. 480, March 30, 1752: [1].

<sup>159</sup> "Extract of a Letter from Paris, October 21." *Independent Gazetteer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) V, no. 225, February 18, 1786: [3]

"Extract of a Letter from Paris, October 21." *Pennsylvania Packet* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), no. 2197, February 18, 1786: [3].

<sup>160</sup> Extract of a Letter from Paris, October 21." *Independent Gazetteer*: [3]

<sup>161</sup> James G Lydon, "Thomas Jefferson and the Mathurins." *The Catholic Historical Review* 49, no. 2 (1963): 195, 192-202.



Algiers was on his first day, after waiting with his fellow American captives in the Bagnio Belique.<sup>162</sup> After a considerable time of “condoling” their “hapless fate” in the bagnio, a French priest visited them, and asked if any understood French. He was “answered in the affirmative” and spoke with Foss and his crew. After speaking, he departed and returned half an hour later with “two Moors ... who brought two baskets full of white bread, and ...gave each man a loaf, weighing nearly a pound, which was a very delicious meal for us, we having eaten nothing during the day.”<sup>163</sup> The priest informed the American crew that the Algerians only allowed a small loaf of bread to the slaves on their first day, and the food he provided was “out of his own pocket.” He concluded his kindness by saying “if [I] was able, [my] charity would further extend.”<sup>164</sup> The quality and volume of the meal in Foss’s account is of substantial value to understanding the priest’s assistance. The bread the American captive received later that day from the Algerians was a much smaller, and poorer quality “small loaf of very black, sour bread weighing about three ounces and a half.”<sup>165</sup> The slaves, from then on, received “three ounces and [a] half” of bread three times a day. Foss claimed the bread was “so sour, that a person must be almost starving before he can eat it.”<sup>166</sup> Slave letters also mention the poor quality of slave rations – Thomas Manning’s 1793 letter called the bread “as

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<sup>162</sup> Written as “Bilic” by Foss and “Belique” by Cathcart.

<sup>163</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 18

<sup>164</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 18

<sup>165</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 20

<sup>166</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 27

Note: Cathcart estimates bread rations at about fourteen ounces of bread a day, as compared to Foss’s estimate of about ten and a half. The same color and quality are mentioned. See Cathcart, *The Captives*, 62.

black as ones hat."<sup>167</sup> The priest, in a single donation, gave a crew of Americans more bread than they would receive in a full day, and the bread was a far better quality. Foss was immediately taken to appreciating his "kind benefactor" who provided both information and food for survival.<sup>168</sup>

American narratives frequently praised of the priests stationed in Algiers. Cathcart wrote what is essentially a hagiographic account of Father Joseph, a resident of Algiers for thirty years. Father Joseph accompanied the slaves when the Algerian government sent them into the countryside to prevent recapture during the Spanish attacks of 1775 and 1784.<sup>169</sup> Cathcart admired Father Joseph, writing, "This holy man never abandoned them in these times, he hired mules to accommodate those who were sick and even dismounted and walked nearly all the way, giving his mule to such of the slaves whose feet were lacerated..."<sup>170</sup> Cathcart noted that the priest donated his last dollar to bribe to the Algerian wardens, in hope that they would better treat the Christians. The saintly figure Cathcart portrayed even tended to captives sick with the plague, falling ill to the disease himself. He also notes that the priest rejected invitations home, refusing promotion, and instead dedicating his life "to those poor, abandoned, and dejected creatures."<sup>171</sup> Cathcart concludes his miniature hagiography with a final touch of veneration: "If I ...was worth of obtaining an especial grace from Almighty God, I would pray to be enabled to be as good a man as Father Joseph; for I can scarcely

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<sup>167</sup> "Extract of a Letter from Thomas Manning, of the Schooner Jay, Calder, of Gloucester, to His Parents at Ipswich. Algiers, 6th Dec. 1793." *Courier of New Hampshire* (Concord, New Hampshire) V, no. 9, April 10, 1794: [3].

<sup>168</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 18

<sup>169</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 113

<sup>170</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 113

<sup>171</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 113

believe there was a better.”<sup>172</sup> Along with the praise of individual priests, Cathcart complimented the Mercedarians as a whole, recalling, “this is certainly one of the most charitable and laudable institutions in the world, [as it] extends its benign influence to Christians of all nations.”<sup>173</sup> Americans, as evidenced in Cathcart’s and Foss’s narratives, held positive opinions of Catholic priests and their charity. The priests presented in these narratives tend to Christians of any denomination, and debased themselves for the wellbeing of a greater Christian community.

American slaves also took advantage of the spaces created and operated by redemptive orders in Algiers. The principal Christian hospital in Algiers adjoined the Bagnio Galera. Cathcart noted that the hospital served Christians slaves of “all denominations” and all patients were “treated all alike, without any distinction, much to the credit of the priests, surgeon, and apothecary.”<sup>174</sup> Sick slaves were provided raised wool mattresses, sheets, and pillows – a shocking contrast to the usual sleeping arrangement of bagnio slaves. According to Foss, slaves were permitted one blanket, which they kept for the entirety of their captivity, and slept on stone floors or tables with “neither bed, nor bedding.”<sup>175</sup> In addition to providing food and supplies otherwise refused to slaves, the Catholic hospital allowed slaves who were “not really sick” with a place to of comfort to “rest a few days.”<sup>176</sup> Foss’s chronicle also described priests as active nursing staff in the hospitals. In addition to tending to the physical and spiritual needs of captives, the priests and hospital staff attempted to convince Algerian slave

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<sup>172</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 114

<sup>173</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 111

<sup>174</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 110

<sup>175</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 20

<sup>176</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 111

drivers to wait for patients to fully recover.<sup>177</sup> Foss and Cathcart visited the hospital occasionally to see sick American and European friends. If the hospital had not existed, Cathcart asserts, American slaves would have “died, either in the street at their labor, or in some corner in the prison, without any person to assist them or to console them in their last moments.”<sup>178</sup> Along with providing a place for the Christian sick to recuperate or die comfortably, the hospital served a social function. The hospital building was a large ward with an altar in the center along with several smaller rooms around the perimeter. Slaves, both sick and healthy, were present to the faith-based community activities of daily mass and rosary.<sup>179</sup> Slaves may have also forged bonds with members of varied backgrounds in the close, safe area of the hospital.

The hospital, however, was not the only space created by Catholic priests that fostered community. If Foss’s description of Christian burial prior to the purchase of the cemetery is to be believed, dead slaves in the sixteenth century were “not allowed to be interred, but were carried out about half a Mile to the eastward of the city, and precipitated down the banks into the sea.”<sup>180</sup> A Catholic priest on a tour of Barbary North Africa in the seventeenth century witnessed this burial ceremony during a plague. According to Cathcart, the priest, motivated by a “humane heart” purchased “at an exorbitant price, about one acre of land for a burial place for Christians.”<sup>181</sup> The burial site, although by no means a serene place, acted as the interment land for all Christians

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<sup>177</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 51-54

<sup>178</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 111-112

<sup>179</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 110

<sup>180</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 54

<sup>181</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 54

in Algiers since its inception.<sup>182</sup> Cathcart claimed to have been at the burial of every American at this site, “reading prayers over them, and remaining until they were decently covered.”<sup>183</sup> Cathcart noted that Christians who died in the hospital were “carried on a bier covered with a pall” to the gravesite.<sup>184</sup> Intriguingly, he made a distinction between two groups that may accompany these processions “friends *or* countrymen.”<sup>185</sup> The site operated as a community gathering location to mourn deceased slaves, both collectively and for national groups. Additionally, Foss’s knowledge of the tale behind the burial ground belays an interest and appreciation of the site for its value to Christian slaves.

American slaves interacted with various forms of Catholic redemptive charity and infrastructure. Foss and Cathcart’s accounts are filled with stories of group ransom, many of which involved Mercedarians. Further, Cathcart described how the priests distributed money to impoverished bagnio slaves weekly, or more frequently if the funds were available.<sup>186</sup> Intriguingly, Cathcart also attested that donations were not only

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<sup>182</sup> Foss describes the site as follows: “It lies about half a mile westward of the city, where is a piece of low land or meadow, this is dyked in with a mound to prevent the sea from washing in, and destroying the produce of the land. The burial ground is between this mound and the sea, consequently, in a heavy gale of wind, the violence of the waves washes the dead bodies out of their graves, into the ocean, as the place is nothing more than a sandy beach, and the corps are seldom buried more than one foot under the sand. According to the records of the nation, upwards of 98,000 Christians have already been buried here, and scarcely any marks of a burial ground is to be discovered, more than the great quantities of human bones which are to be seen laying upon the beach. They keep four slaves whom age has rendered incapable of any other employment, to bury their deceased companions...” Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 55

<sup>183</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 136

<sup>184</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 112

<sup>185</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 112. My emphasis.

<sup>186</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 111

augmented by foreign powers, local merchants, and consuls, but also “sometimes by such of the slaves as are in the way of saving money, and are charitably inclined.”<sup>187</sup>

Did priestly generosity inspire Christian slaves to act charitably despite personal suffering? Cathcart strained to mention his personal charity to other slaves. He wrote, “I believe those who survive will do me the justice to acknowledge, that they never wanted a good meal while I had it in my power to give it to them.”<sup>188</sup> Later in his autobiography he praised his charity again upon visiting a Christian owned tavern, where he planned to buy food and “give some to my unfortunate brother sufferers...as was generally my custom to do.”<sup>189</sup> He also wrote that, in general, the Christian slaves were “liberal to each other” and “made a merit of assisting our unfortunate brother sufferers, who were not in as good a situation as ourselves.”<sup>190</sup> Cathcart was in frequent contact with priests, who regularly prayed mass in the bagnios and provided care for the poorest Christian slaves. Further, Cathcart claimed that he personally financed the coffins of several American slaves during his slavery.<sup>191</sup> Perhaps Cathcart was motivated by the charitable activities and spaces of the Trinitarians and Mercedarians and roused by the inspiration of Father Joseph (whom he prayed to emulate). Even if his personal charity originated from other encouragement, the connection and spaces provided by Catholic priests encouraged Americans to create community amongst themselves and with others. Whether visiting a sick acquaintance in the hospital, like his friend Giovanni de

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<sup>187</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 111

<sup>188</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 136

<sup>189</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 145

<sup>190</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 139

<sup>191</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 112

la Cruz, or participating in the charity of redemptive priests, Americans engaged with and benefitted from the community fostered by Catholic clergy.

### Cultural and Religious Identity

Beyond the role of clergy in community foundation in Algiers, Americans found unity by bearing the epithet “slave” and “Christian,” and framing their titles in opposition to Muslim masters. Foss noted the emotional weight of being designated a “slave.” When he left Algiers, he wrote that slaves not only suffered a “miserable existence,” but also suffered the “woeful appellation of slave preying upon their mind.”<sup>192</sup> Foss’s imagined connection to men bearing the title “slave” crossed regional and religious barriers. When his ship stopped at the island of Elba on the return journey to America, he observed slaves owned by the Duke of Tuscany “employed in fortifying the place, and cleaning the harbour.” He wrote that these individuals were “kept constantly chained” and that the “sight of such a number of miserable wretches, doomed to perpetual slavery, was really affecting.”<sup>193</sup> Following this section he included a poem with the line “the galley-slave with horror struck my soul.”<sup>194</sup>

Along with imagining and creating connections with other people called “slave,” all European and American captives were assigned the designation “Christian.”<sup>195</sup> When Foss arrived with his crew he was paraded through Algiers, and among the cheers he

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<sup>192</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 30

<sup>193</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 151-152

<sup>194</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 152

<sup>195</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 17

heard Algerians calling them “Christian dogs,” another epithet cited frequently by Foss and Cathcart.<sup>196</sup> Along with receiving a collective title, the first basis for a collective of slaves, Foss and Cathcart were berated for their religious identity. Both accounts recorded various Muslim Algerians denigrating them as “infidel dog[s] without faith,” or some variation of the phrase, a total of seven times.<sup>197</sup> On one occasion, Cathcart took exception to a Muslim noble who called him a “dog without faith.” Cathcart responded by saying “you dare not call me a dog...was I not a captive? ... As far as being without faith I believe in the faith of my forefathers.”<sup>198</sup> As can be seen in his response, the denigration of his faith bothered him more than his station as a slave, although both had a tremendous effect on the psyche. Foss also includes instances of religious denigration. After his capture, Foss claimed that the Algerian captain told the crew that they were to be treated as they deserved, because of their “bigotry and superstition, in believing in a man who was crucified by the Jews, and disregarding the true doctrine of God’s last and greatest prophet Mahomet.”<sup>199</sup> Marcus Rediker argues that the practice of religion among Anglo-American was limited and infrequent.<sup>200</sup> But the assigning of titles and degradation of religious identity spurred American captives to adopt the title as a distinction from their Muslim captors, thereby blunting the distinction between Catholics and Protestants.

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<sup>196</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 17; Cathcart, 59

<sup>197</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 34, 36, 42; Cathcart, *The Captives*, 59, 146, 176, 252

<sup>198</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 146

<sup>199</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 12

<sup>200</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 146



Personal views on how Christians should survive slavery also encouraged Americans to forge or reject connection with individuals and groups. In the beginning of Foss's narrative he wrote, "all the poor, forlorn, miserable Captive has to do, is to resign himself up to his fate, and in silence wait for the event."<sup>201</sup> This resignation did not mean acceptance, but modest survival. Living as an example of "resignation" was a requirement for Americans to view other cultural groups as proper "Christian slaves." Cathcart after being exposed to the plague for the third time, signed off his letter by noting that he was "Wholly resigned to the will of God."<sup>202</sup> Some slaves, especially former Spanish garrison members from Oran, lived in opposition to this resignation, and actively defrauded and stole from fellow slaves. The former garrison at Oran contained adventurers and pressed soldiers from "almost every country in Europe," including German, French, Spanish, Italian, English, Swiss, Polish, and Prussian men.<sup>203</sup> Foss and Cathcart described Oraners as "villains" who opted into their slavery by choice, and lashed out violently by threatening priests, ambassadors, and fellow slaves.<sup>204</sup> Cathcart, previously praising the charity and goodness of the Catholic priests in Algiers, observed that priests were "in danger of their lives."<sup>205</sup> Oran slaves were cast in a negative light in both accounts because of their lack of Christian dignity. When Cathcart befriended an individual from the Oran garrison he made sure to note a distinction that separated him from the typical Oraner. Cathcart claimed he was a cadet, sent to Oran "for some

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<sup>201</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 5

<sup>202</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 154

<sup>203</sup> "From a Late London Paper. Account of the Inhabitants of Algiers." *Commercial Advertiser* (New York, New York) III, no. 917, September 16, 1800: [2].

<sup>204</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 118-119

<sup>205</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 119

irregularity... [and] from whence he deserted in hopes of regaining his liberty."<sup>206</sup> This picture is in jarring opposition to Cathcart's general description of Oraners, who he described as people who "come into slavery like sheep to the slaughter and are not captives but voluntary slaves."<sup>207</sup> Other characters beyond the Oraners acted in a perceived un-Christian fashion and were rejected from American companionship. Cathcart met a Spanish woman shortly after his capture aboard whom he described as "a facetious creature, who seemed perfectly reconciled to her situation, and endeavored to reconcile every one to theirs."<sup>208</sup> This woman, like the Oraners, was willing to be enslaved. These individuals were the "others" of Barbary captivity and, in Foss and Cathcart's perception, were excluded from proper Christian community.

### Bagnios

Christian slaves in Algiers occupied three major spaces: the bagnio, the tavern, and the workplace – be it a palace, port, graveyard, or office. These locations provided the backdrop, and occasionally, the impetus to forge relationships in Barbary. Interestingly, they also provided the stage for conflict. The bagnios Belique, de Gallera, and Siddi Hamouda were home to a substantial portion of Christian slaves in Algiers. Whether slaves worked at the city's quay, tended the Dey's garden at his palace, or served at a foreign embassy, many were housed in bagnios for the night. Slave society in the bagnios was a complex system of classes. In these buildings, slaves held an

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<sup>206</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 60

<sup>207</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 52

<sup>208</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 7

array of economic, social, and occupational rankings. Some Christians, like Cathcart, were promoted from the slave populace to operate as corporals, clerks, and other administrative officials.<sup>209</sup> Along with receiving a salary and additional privileges, Christian officers could own a greater degree of property and received surprising privileges. The chief clerk, for example, received a separate apartment, complete with two rooms and a kitchen.<sup>210</sup> Slaves could make money from assigned professions, and some had the chance to earn additional income by working after labor hours.<sup>211</sup> Bagnio slaves rented rooms from the Bagnio taskmasters or risked sleeping exposed to the elements in the center of the open structure.<sup>212</sup> An accurate estimate of the volume of slaves in any given bagnio is difficult to ascertain. If Foss's estimate is to be believed, more than 600 slaves lived in the Bagnio Belique, but Foss, Cathcart, and various letters mention the frequent ransom and death of slaves that made for a constantly fluctuating population.<sup>213</sup> These cramped slave prisons, complete with a class structure and filled with prisoners from a multiplicity of Christian nations and religions, forced Americans to live with different national, religious, and lingual groups. Christine Sears argues that proximity played an important role in fomenting conflict among bagnio slaves, sparking brawls and murders.<sup>214</sup> Americans needed to form bonds to learn about their new environment, and no American was involved in inter-Christian scuffles. Despite the poor living conditions of the bagnios, Americans may have found

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<sup>209</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 50-51; Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 24

<sup>210</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 55

<sup>211</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 74

<sup>212</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 28-29

<sup>213</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 18; "Extract of a Letter from William Penrose, Late Master of the Ship President, Belonging to Philadelphia, Dated Algiers." *Aurora General Advertiser* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), no. 1296, February 2, 1795: [3].

<sup>214</sup> Sears, *American Slaves and African Masters*, 50-53

collaborators in the space of the bagnio – as it was there that Christian slaves spent most non-work hours.

### Taverns

The tavern, a structure recognized for its importance in cultivating community, also contributed to fostering unity among Algerian slaves. Each bagnio kept its own tavern, converting the bottom floor of the multi-floored structures into taverns by constructing tables, kitchens, and storage for alcohol.<sup>215</sup> These bagnio taverns were all “kept by Christian slaves who [paid] their rent and very high duties for permission to sell liquors and provisions” to Christian slaves and visitors, including Muslim locals.<sup>216</sup> These taverns also served food, and offered a venue for local Algerians and slaves to commune. Bagnio taverns also operated as a sleeping spot for slaves unable to pay the rent for covered apartments in the bagnio.<sup>217</sup> Bagnio tavern keeps, and likely their workers, paid for the privilege to avoid hard labor, and remained working at the tavern all day.<sup>218</sup>

Historian Vaughn Schribner argues for the importance of tavern culture and the creation of an American revolutionary culture. Taverns provided essential “food, drink, and camaraderie” to white Americans in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>219</sup> Anthropologists have also noted the importance of taverns – indeed, “drinking may operate to cement friendships

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<sup>215</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 115

<sup>216</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 53

<sup>217</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 115

<sup>218</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 77; “From the *American Minerva*.” *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), no. 4854, October 30, 1794: [2].

<sup>219</sup> Vaughn Schribner, *Inn Civility: Urban Taverns and Early American Civil Society* (New York: New York University Press, 2019.), 16

and produce ties and feelings of solidarity between individuals who have different social positions within a community.”<sup>220</sup> Further, taverns and pubs operated as an “important social institution for producing interlocking ties and thereby increasing social cohesion.”<sup>221</sup> In addition to this general cohesion, some taverns in American and British localities became associated with particular social groupings; when this occurred, taverns smoothed over “social divisions” within a community, but also “enhanced the differences between ... social groups.”<sup>222</sup> Taverns in eighteenth century America catered to specific classes and social groupings, and numbered as many as one tavern for every 100 to 130 residents in major cities.<sup>223</sup> Although taverns in Algiers were not exclusively for Christians, they operated at ratio of one tavern per 66 slaves, plentiful enough to support unique Christian social groups and classes – with around twenty-seven to thirty taverns in and outside of bagnios operated by 50 to 90 slaves.<sup>224</sup> However, Cathcart provided no explicit description of group exclusivity in taverns, and brawls between slaves from the Spanish garrison at Oran occurred in various taverns.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Geoff P Hunt and S. Satterlee, “The Pub, the Village, and the People,” *Human Organization* 45, no. 1 (Spring 1986), 66

<sup>221</sup> Hunt and Satterlee, “The Pub...,” 66

<sup>222</sup> Hunt and Satterlee, “The Pub...,” 66

<sup>223</sup> Scribner, *Inn Civility*, 14

<sup>224</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 109; Foss’s estimate varies from 1,200 to 2,000 bagnio slaves in Algiers in 1793, but other contemporary estimates vary from 500 to 2,000, and frequently exclude religious and national groups. These numbers are constantly in flux from captures, redemptions, and slave deaths. The ratio is given if one assumes 2,000 captives and 30 taverns; See Davis for slave population estimates, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800*, xiv-xxiii, 3-26.

<sup>225</sup> In 1795, a Christian Oraner slave stabbed two Christian slaves to death in a bagnio tavern. Foss, *The Captives*, 34.

Along with food, taverns sold alcohol and tobacco, and provided a venue for local Algerians and slaves to commune and perform. Cathcart and Foss cited the attendance of Algerians, Turks, and other visitors from the port or the city visiting the taverns. Alcohol and tobacco purchases from local visitors and Christian slaves in Cathcart's taverns alone contributed to a substantial salary.<sup>226</sup> The tavern at the Bagnio de Belique was so filled with smoke upon Cathcart's visit that it was "nearly impervious to the view."<sup>227</sup> These tavern were popular locations to smoke, drink, and relax after labor or on Fridays, when slaves were occasionally permitted a day of respite.<sup>228</sup> Cathcart also wrote that a variety of instruments could be heard from the taverns. Songs of various instruments and languages poured from the taverns. Cathcart recalled the sounds of "a triboocca, a tabor or quinterra, and a guitar and sometimes a fiddle and Turkish guitar, and not infrequently an Italian mandolin and Spanish guitar, each singing or rather shouting in different languages."<sup>229</sup> Although these locations were also the site of brawls, as Cathcart reminded the reader, the functions of drink, tobacco, music, and camaraderie contributed to a general cohesion among Christian slaves.

Besides providing drink, food, and song, taverns also served as establishments in which Christian slaves supported each other. Cathcart, who later became owner and operator of "the Mad House Tavern, ... half a tavern in the Bagnio Gallera, and another in Bagnio Liddi Hamuda" provided free food and drink to Americans in need during his captivity.<sup>230</sup> The thirty taverns in Algiers also supported an estimated 200 of the "most

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<sup>226</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 138

<sup>227</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 53

<sup>228</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 53

<sup>229</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 53

<sup>230</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 138

indigent” Christian slaves. Without the support of these taverns, Cathcart was certain that these slaves “would in all probability starve for want of food, as it would be impossible for them to live long upon the allowance...from the Regency.”<sup>231</sup> Taverns, and some who owned and visited them, provided an essential communal and philanthropic function by providing sustenance to poor slaves.

Finally, along with providing food, drugs, music, camaraderie, and charity, taverns functioned as a central location of slave resistance in Algiers. Cathcart, upon viewing and participating in these forms of resistance and collaboration, imagined a connection between himself and other resisting slaves. The first notable form of tavern resistance in Cathcart’s narrative occurred when he became inebriated at the Mad House tavern. An Algerian noble requested Cathcart to forfeit his chair, and Cathcart, “aided by a glass or two of wine,” refused, telling him “I [am] in my own house.”<sup>232</sup> Cathcart then threatened to cut off his ears, and engaged in a theological discussion in which he tried to prove his knowledge of Islam. Cathcart claimed that the ensuing argument drew the attention of all Christians in the tavern, and the noble forgot his threat to remove his ears in the shouting. His argument was misinterpreted, and the noble assumed him to be a crypto-Muslim. In response, Cathcart attempted to bribe the Christian and Muslim tavern goers who were present. Nothing negative came from this episode, but Cathcart was terrified by the idea of him becoming a renegade or being misinterpreted as an apostate by the Algerian government. He had, however, resisted his slavers by arguing and threatening.

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<sup>231</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 109

<sup>232</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 146

A second notable episode of resistance occurred in 1796, when two (likely drunk) Spanish slaves from Oran fought in the Bagnio de Gallera. One of the slaves, Domingo Gomez, stabbed the other five times. The Christian corporals of the bagnio attempted to disarm him but were stabbed in the process. The city guard was called, but Gomez maintained control over the prison for three hours, “armed only with despair and a common Dutch knife.”<sup>233</sup> A fellow Oran slave with whom Gomez had “no suspicion” surprised Gomez, knocking him down with a club. The “cowardly” guards then captured Gomez. They beat him, from Cathcart’s perspective, “most cruelly and treated him when a prisoner most unmercifully.”<sup>234</sup> Cathcart, intriguingly, lamented Gomez’s failure, calling him “a man of some education, and before this affair was esteemed a good man.”<sup>235</sup> Further, he claimed to capture Gomez’s final lamentations – Gomez cried out, regretting that he “had not sacrificed all those villains who had caused his despair – especially the traitor who had knocked him down.”<sup>236</sup> In this narrative of resistance, Cathcart grieved the loss of Gomez, an instigator and murderer, rather than the loss of two Christian slaves with whom he fought. Gomez became a hero in this small portion of Cathcart’s story, and Cathcart described the Oraner who subdued Gomez a “traitor.” Cathcart imagined himself as an ally of Gomez in a resistance effort prompted by inebriation.

After this episode, the Algerian Dey demanded that the tavern keepers pay a fine of 2,000 sequins for the lost slaves, “for if they had not sold intoxicating liquors they

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<sup>233</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 259

<sup>234</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 259

<sup>235</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 259

<sup>236</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 259



would not have quarreled.”<sup>237</sup> The punishment for refusal or inability to pay would result in a severe beating and the loss of all property. Cathcart, who “endeavored to intercede for those poor people” collaborated with the owners of the twenty-five taverns in Algiers, and designed a deal by which the taverns could avoid the heavy fine by paying an additional monthly fee of five sequins. Additionally, Cathcart offered his person and property as security for the taverns’ monthly fee. Cathcart’s collaboration allowed the less prosperous taverns in Algiers to continue operation. Taverns, then, supported community and collaboration beyond the camaraderie of socializing, drinking, and resisting; they also made a collective of tavern owners that worked together to continue their business.

It is important to note that Islamic prohibitions on alcohol consumption were not universal at the turn of the eighteenth century. For example, scholars have noted that although alcohol consumption by Muslims was forbidden in the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth-century, wine consumption was an important part of courtly tradition in the Iranian-influenced world.<sup>238</sup> Further, Christian and Jewish subjects of Muslim polities were typically permitted to continue their production and consumption of alcohol if they paid a tax.<sup>239</sup> Algiers was a nationally diverse city, which likely included Muslims who either skirted prohibition, or did not believe it essential for their personal faith.

Scholarship on the legal status of alcohol in 18th century Algiers is limited. But through

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<sup>237</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 260

<sup>238</sup> Makhach Musaev, “The Prohibition of Alcohol in Islam: Religious Imperatives and Practices in Seventeenth- to Nineteenth-Century Dagestan,” *State, Religion, and Church* 4, no. 1 (2017), 9-10; Laurence Michalak and Karen Trocki, “Alcohol and Islam: An Overview,” *Contemporary Drug Problems* 33 (Winter, 2006), 526

<sup>239</sup> Musaev, “The Prohibition of Alcohol in Islam,” 526

Cathcart's narrative, it seems as though Muslims visited Christian operated bars to purchase alcohol and tobacco, as they may have been the only institutions that sold alcohol in Algiers.

### Workplace Community

Finally, the workplaces occupied by slaves forced various groups to work, suffer, and identify with one another, effectively imposing a community on them. Daniel Hershenzon argues that the constant change in workspace within the Mediterranean slave environment forced them continually to forge new connections with various slaves.<sup>240</sup> Foss, likely because his work remained at the British embassy and at the quay, did not mention work relationships. Cathcart, however, frequently met new work associates, and described his positive view of them. For example: Cathcart was forced to serve as apprentice to a "genteel looking" Spanish carpenter.<sup>241</sup> Cathcart noted that for eight months he constantly accompanied this carpenter, whom he described as the "best house carpenter in the Regency," having "applied himself to learn the trade he was put on."<sup>242</sup>

Along with forcing slaves to cooperate, the Algerian slave workplace encouraged slaves to sympathize and bond with each other through suffering. Foss and Cathcart repeatedly described injuries, mistreatment, and death among non-American slaves in Algiers. Foss recalled two separate work-related slave accidents in 1794. The second

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<sup>240</sup> Hershenzon, *The Captive Sea*, 18-19

<sup>241</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 60

<sup>242</sup> Cathcart, *The Captives*, 60

accident resulted in the death of a Corsican slave, whose “legs and knees” were “crushed in such a manner, that it was impossible to distinguish one part from another.”<sup>243</sup> His father, brothers, and sons with whom he was captured witnessed this Corsican’s death. Foss reflected, “This melancholy event, deprived a father of his son, six unhappy men of a brother, three children of a father, and a woman of her husband. In addition to the horrors of slavery, these miserable relatives were left to bemoan the untimely death of the unfortunate sufferer.”<sup>244</sup> Along with accidents, Christian slaves sympathized with the punishment received by other slaves during work. Foss recalled two Americans being beaten “without hesitation” for sitting during work hours, and Cathcart claimed to have witnessed the beating of palace slaves for “mere trifles, such as speaking loud, procrastinating...or speaking to any of the cooks or the Christians in the garden, and on a thousand other pretenses.”<sup>245</sup> American accounts wrote about punishments, and the punishers, as “tyrants” who punished violently and without reason. Both the portrayal of the punishers and the slaves show that American slaves imagined a bond among slaves that was forged by suffering. The fruit of this sympathy was recognized by the enslaved; Cathcart himself believed that “shared adversity” allowed friendships to be “heighten’d” in Algerian captivity.<sup>246</sup>

## Conclusion

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<sup>243</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 42

<sup>244</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 42

<sup>245</sup> Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 34; Cathcart, *The Captives*, 21

<sup>246</sup> James Cathcart, “The Diplomatic Journal and Letter Book of James Leander Cathcart, 1788-1796.” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 64, no. 2 (Jan 1955): 426

Community creation among slaves, and the literature made by enslaved Americans who experienced these communities, may have altered American understanding of Christian solidarity in the Atlantic world. Prior to American captivity in North Africa in the 1780s and 1790s, American magazines, novels, and newspapers published literature that had not yet become tainted with orientalism. For Americans, Muslims were not yet obscure “others.” But by the 1790s American sense of “self” and “other” transformed.<sup>247</sup> With the proliferation of slave narratives, Muslims became a rival. This much has already been recognized by historian Robert Battistini, but the cooperation of formerly enslaved Americans and Europeans adds another layer to this rivalry. Americans, formerly ambivalent, joined the rhetoric of a Christian alliance in opposition to North African pirates that had been in European circulation since the seventeenth century.<sup>248</sup>

In his early enslavement, Cathcart believed that Americans were separate from religious conflict between Muslim and Christian Europeans. Cathcart argued with an Algerian slaver, who recently returned from a 14-year captivity in Malta, that Americans should not suffer for “injuries [the slaver] had received in Malta... [as Malta is] situated at the distance of 6,000 miles from my country and were likewise a different religion, which taught them from time immemorial to view the Mahometans with enmity.”<sup>249</sup> Cathcart suggested that there had never been a Muslim in America, and that the US had never been in any conflict with a Muslim nation. The slave master, per Cathcart,

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<sup>247</sup> Battistini, 447-448

<sup>248</sup> For more on European attempts and understanding of potential pan-Christian alliance against North Africa, see Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, 147-155

<sup>249</sup> Cathcart, 49

villainously “curl[ed] his whiskers,” and responded “true...but you are Christians and if you have not injured Mussulmen it was not for the want of will, but for want of power.”<sup>250</sup> Cathcart threatened that the US would “retaliate upon those who treat their unfortunate citizens with undeserved cruelty.”<sup>251</sup> Cathcart’s argument here presented a transformation. Americans were formerly friendly and uninterested in the affairs of Muslim-Christian conflict, but the mistreatment of Americans prompted a response.

Foss’s narrative is filled with calls of Christian vengeance. Foss included several poems that call for a violent response against North African corsairs; “Revenge! revenge! the voice of nature cries/ Awake to glory, and to vengeance rise!” Further, Foss’s poetry is imbued with sacred tones. Conflict against Algiers was not only a necessary act of vengeance, but it was “GOD himself” who “commands” Americans to “Save human nature from such deadly harms,/ By force of reason, or by force of Arms.”<sup>252</sup> Foss also included a poem in his conclusion, titled “The Algerine Slave,” that calls “Columbia” to “unsheathe thy glitt'ringsword/ Ride on and conquer—speak, O speak the word.”<sup>253</sup> In this poem, Algiers, the “scourge of Christians,” is transformed into “barren plain” by Christian revenge.<sup>254</sup>

Although Foss’s poetry focused on a sacred American military response, Christian unity in the bagnios was echoed by imagined Christian unity against Islam at home. Newspapers published a variety of letters in the 1780s to 1810s that praised Christian victories and lamented Christian defeat against North African corsairs. An

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<sup>250</sup> Cathcart, 49

<sup>251</sup> Cathcart, 49

<sup>252</sup> Foss, 21

<sup>253</sup> Foss, 182

<sup>254</sup> Foss, 182, 183

extract published in the Boston-based *Herald of Freedom* in 1790 praised the crew of a Papal coastguard vessel, which was defeated by Algerian corsairs only after a “brave and gallant resistance” that inflicted extensive Algerian casualties.<sup>255</sup> A second notable extract in 1794 relayed a Sardinian victory over two “Barbary zebecks,” in which the Christians were able to capture a vessel and 92 Algerian sailors. The writer was pleased that the Sardinians “happily” avoided greater casualties.<sup>256</sup> In 1798, a stunning battle that reads like a Crusade epic, was relayed via letter. The extract claimed that in November, 1797, a fleet commanded by a “noble knight of Malta” engaged a fleet led by the “daring infidel” Aza.<sup>257</sup> The battle was narrated with much spectacle, as both commanders dramatically inflicted mortal wounds on the other, and both fleets struggled until every ship sunk. Invoking crusading imagery, the letter played on the growing desire to destroy a new Muslim nemesis with the help of Christian allies.

Identity, space, and religion played a significant part in creating slave communities among varied Christian groups in Algerian slavery. The cooperation of Christian slaves, and the discussion of slaves cooperation in America, contributed to a desire for Christian solidarity.

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<sup>255</sup> "Extract of a Letter from Algiers, Feb. 10." *Herald of Freedom* (Boston, Massachusetts) IV, no. XIX, May 18, 1790: [73].

<sup>256</sup> "A Letter from Leghorn..." *The Farmer's Library: Or, Vermont Political & Historical Register* (Rutland, Vermont) II, no. 7, May 20, 1794: [2].

<sup>257</sup>

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